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Policy Brief

The Case for Post Malabo Agenda Implementation Guidelines

AGRA-IFPRI Policy Brief #2

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About AGRA

Established in 2006, AGRA is an African-led and Africa-based institution dedicated to placing smallholder farmers at the core of the continent's burgeoning economy. AGRA is focused on scaling agricultural innovations that help smallholder farmers towards increased incomes, better livelihoods, and improved food security. AGRA understands that African farmers need uniquely African solutions to the environmental and agricultural challenges they face, enabling them to sustainably boost production and gain access to rapidly growing agricultural markets. In collaboration with its partners, AGRA catalyzes and sustains an inclusive agricultural transformation aimed at increasing incomes and enhancing food security in 12 countries.

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About IFPRI

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), a research center of CGIAR, provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in low- and middle-income countries. IFPRI was established in 1975 to identify and analyze alternative national and international strategies and policies for meeting the food needs of the developing world, with particular emphasis on low-income countries and on the poorer groups in those countries. Partnerships, communications, capacity strengthening, and data and knowledge management are essential components for translating IFPRI's research to action and impact. The Institute's regional and country programs play a critical role in responding to demand for food policy research and in delivering holistic support to country-led development. IFPRI collaborates with partners around the world.

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Policy Brief#2

1. Introduction

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), developed by the African Union (AU) in 2003, marked a significant turning point for Africa's agricultural development. CAADP's objective was to transform agriculture into a key driver of economic growth, poverty reduction, and food security across the continent. Through a focus on increasing agricultural productivity and ensuring that agricultural development was aligned with national and regional priorities, CAADP sought to tackle Africa's persistent challenges of hunger, malnutrition, and economic stagnation.

In 2014, the Malabo Declaration was introduced as the second phase of CAADP implementation, with a new set of ambitious targets aimed at ending hunger and halving poverty by 2025. The declaration reinforced the importance of agricultural-led growth and committed African governments to specific goals, including increasing agricultural productivity by at least 6% annually and allocating at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture. It also emphasized sustainable agriculture, resilience to climate change, and equitable access to resources, particularly for women and smallholder farmers.

As the CAADP-Malabo phase (2015–2025) approaches its conclusion, there is an urgent need to transition into the next phase of agricultural development in Africa. The CAADP Strategy and Action Plan for 2026–2035 represents this next phase, building on the successes and lessons learned from the Malabo Declaration. However, to ensure that this new agenda achieves its objectives, it is critical that clear and practical implementation guidelines be developed and adopted by African Union Member States.

These guidelines will provide a structured framework for countries to follow, ensuring that the post-Malabo agenda aligns with both national priorities and broader continental objectives, such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By providing clarity on how to operationalize the post-Malabo agenda, these guidelines will help countries to address the evolving challenges of food security, climate change, and sustainable agricultural development in the coming decade.

The new CAADP Strategy and Action Plan is especially timely as Africa faces increasing pressure to modernize its agriculture sector and build resilience against global challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, exposed significant vulnerabilities in Africa's food systems, exacerbating food insecurity and economic instability. Climate change, too, continues to threaten agricultural productivity, with droughts, floods, and temperature fluctuations posing ongoing risks. In addition, rapid population growth, urbanization, and shifting consumption patterns are further straining the continent's agricultural systems.

The implementation of the post-Malabo agenda is critical for ensuring that Africa's agrifood sector is not only capable of feeding its population but also plays a central role

¹ John Ulimwengu, Vine Mutyasira, Boaz Keizire. "The Case for Post Malabo Agenda Implementation Guidelines." Policy Brief#2. Nairobi: AGRA, IFPRI, and IDRC.



in driving sustainable economic development. Agriculture remains the backbone of many African economies, providing livelihoods for over 60% of the population and contributing significantly to GDP in many countries. However, for agriculture to become a true engine of growth, there must be greater investment in agricultural technologies, rural infrastructure, and market systems that can connect smallholder farmers to larger, more lucrative markets.

The development of the implementation guidelines for the post-Malabo agenda will provide a roadmap for AU Member States to follow as they design and execute their agrifood and food security policies for the next decade. These guidelines will ensure that countries are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and frameworks necessary to transform their agriculture sectors, reduce poverty, and enhance food security.

Crucially, the guidelines must address the shortcomings identified in previous reviews of the CAADP-Malabo framework. While significant progress has been made in terms of agricultural productivity and investment, many countries have struggled to meet the ambitious Malabo targets. The Biennial Review (BR) process, which was introduced to monitor progress, has revealed several persistent challenges, including weak implementation capacity, inadequate funding, and insufficient alignment between national and regional policies. Furthermore, the need to integrate a food systems approach—considering the entire agricultural value chain from production to consumption—has become increasingly apparent.

In light of these challenges, the post-Malabo guidelines must be comprehensive, addressing not only agricultural production but also broader food system issues such as nutrition, sustainability, climate resilience, and inclusivity. They must be adaptable to the diverse contexts across African countries, allowing for flexibility in implementation while maintaining a focus on key objectives such as food security, economic growth, and sustainable development.

Ultimately, the success of the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan for 2026–2035 will depend on the ability of African governments to commit to these guidelines, mobilize the necessary resources, and foster multistakeholder collaboration across the public and private sectors. Through a well-structured and coordinated approach, Africa can harness the full potential of its agriculture sector to drive inclusive growth, reduce poverty, and ensure food security for all its citizens.

This policy brief outlines the case for developing and implementing these critical guidelines, which will serve as a blueprint for the next decade of agrifood systems development in Africa. By focusing on evidence-based planning, systemic integration, resilience building, and accountability, the guidelines will ensure that the post-Malabo agenda delivers tangible results for African farmers, communities, and economies.

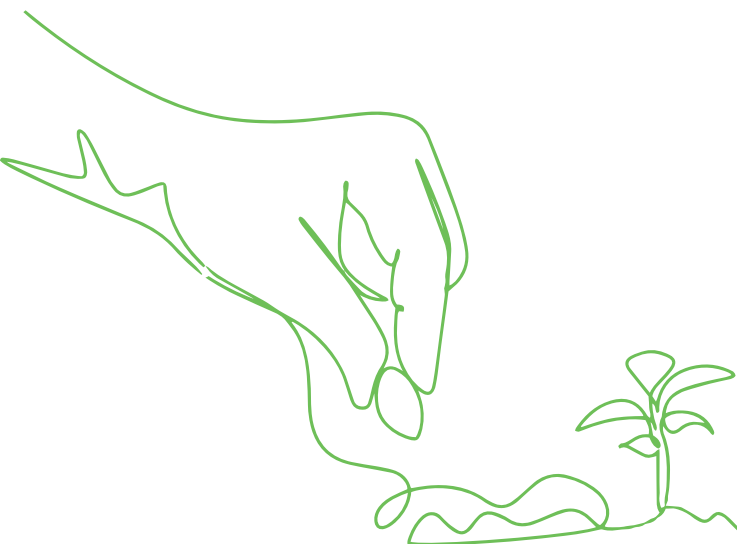


2. Background: CAADP and the Malabo Declaration

The CAADP was created to guide African governments toward agriculture-driven economic development. The initial goals of the CAADP included increasing agricultural productivity, reducing poverty, and improving food security. The 2014 Malabo Declaration expanded upon these goals, setting specific targets to end hunger by 2025 and committing to doubling agricultural productivity.

As part of the Malabo Declaration, AU Member States developed National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans (NAIPs), aligning them with the broader continental vision. Regional economic communities (RECs) developed complementary Regional Agricultural Investment Plans (RAIPs). Despite these efforts, various reviews and evaluations, including the Biennial Review (BR) cycles, have shown that many countries have struggled to meet the Malabo targets.

The lessons learned from the Malabo process and the Biennial Reviews should be applied to inform the post-Malabo agenda. The new CAADP Strategy and Action Plan must build upon the successes of the past while introducing innovations to address emerging challenges.





3. The Need for Implementation Guidelines

The CAADP post-Malabo agenda requires a structured and coherent set of implementation guidelines to support Member States in achieving the vision of a transformed agrifood systems across Africa. These guidelines are crucial for several reasons:

- a. Consistency across Policies and Strategies:** The guidelines will help ensure that CAADP principles are applied consistently across NAIPs, NAPs (National Adaptation Plans), and other related national and regional programs.
- b. Alignment with Global Frameworks:** They will also enable the AU to align its agricultural policies with global frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Africa's agriculture sector must be part of the global efforts to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity.
- c. Tracking and Accountability Mechanisms:** Clear guidelines will incorporate accountability mechanisms for Member States and stakeholders. The CAADP Biennial Review process has been instrumental in tracking progress; however, the post-Malabo guidelines must include even more robust tracking tools.



4. Summary of Guidelines Developed under AGRA and IDRC Support

The guidelines developed with support from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), focus on integrating food systems into national agricultural policies, with a clear emphasis on sustainability, equity, and resilience. These guidelines are a key component of the broader CAADP and have been designed to assist AU Member States in reforming and strengthening their food systems as part of their national agricultural investment plans.

Below is a summary of the key elements of these guidelines:

- a. Systemic Integration of Food Systems:** These guidelines stress the need for food systems to be integrated into national and regional development frameworks, particularly the NAIPs. The guidelines go beyond agriculture, focusing on the entire food system, which includes the production, processing, distribution, and consumption of food, as well as its impact on health, the environment, and economic development. The guidelines recommend a holistic approach to food systems that incorporates environmental sustainability, healthy food choices, equitable value distribution, and the resilience of food systems to shocks, such as climate change and economic downturns.
- b. Food Systems Mapping and Appraisal:** A significant part of the guidelines involves conducting a detailed food systems mapping exercise at the national level. This exercise helps governments and stakeholders identify key actors, interdependencies, and systemic challenges within their food systems. The guidelines provide a framework for assessing policy gaps, supply chain bottlenecks, and inefficiencies in the production and distribution of food. This mapping exercise also highlights the environmental, social, and economic impacts of food systems, enabling governments to design targeted interventions that address local needs and challenges.
- c. Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination:** The guidelines place a strong emphasis on multistakeholder engagement and coordination across different sectors of government, civil society, and the private sector. They recommend forming national task forces or working groups that include representatives from various ministries, such as agriculture, health, environment, and finance, as well as non-state actors, to ensure a coordinated approach to food system reforms. This multisectoral collaboration is critical for aligning policies and investments across agriculture, health, and environmental sectors and ensuring that food systems interventions are inclusive and context-specific.
- d. Resilience to Shocks and Vulnerabilities:** The guidelines also highlight the need to build resilience into national food systems. This includes addressing the vulnerability of food systems to climate-related shocks (such as droughts and floods), economic disruptions, and pandemics such as COVID-19. They advocate for strategies including climate-smart agriculture, improved water management, and the adoption of risk mitigation tools such as crop insurance and early warning systems to protect smallholder farmers and ensure food security.



- e. Focus on Equity and Inclusivity:** One of the key principles of the proposed guidelines is promoting equity and inclusivity in food systems. They stress the need for policies and programs that empower marginalized groups, including women, youth, and smallholder farmers. The guidelines propose measures such as improving access to land, credit, and markets for these groups and enhancing their participation in decision-making processes. Additionally, the guidelines advocate for policies that promote gender equity and ensure that women have the resources and opportunities to fully participate in agricultural value chains.
- f. Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms:** The guidelines also call for the development of robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track progress on food systems reforms. They recommend using key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure success in areas such as agricultural productivity, food security, nutrition, and climate resilience. Moreover, the guidelines propose incorporating food systems indicators into the existing CAADP Biennial Review process to ensure that progress toward food systems transformation is regularly evaluated and adjusted as needed.
- g. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:** Finally, the guidelines emphasize the importance of capacity building at the national and regional levels. They encourage countries to invest in training and capacity-building programs that equip policymakers, farmers, and other stakeholders with the skills and knowledge needed to implement food system reforms effectively. The guidelines also promote the establishment of knowledge-sharing platforms that facilitate the exchange of best practices, research findings, and innovations across countries and regions.

The proposed guidelines, developed with the support of AGRA and IDRC, provide a comprehensive framework for transforming Africa's food systems. By integrating food systems into national and regional agricultural policies, these guidelines aim to enhance food security, promote sustainability, and ensure equitable development across the continent. These principles align with the broader CAADP post-Malabo agenda, making them a vital tool for achieving Africa's agricultural and food security goals from 2026 to 2035.

5. Recommendations for Successful Implementation

To ensure the successful implementation of the post-Malabo guidelines, the following recommendations should be prioritized:

- 1. National Ownership and Leadership:** Countries must take ownership of the post-Malabo agenda by fully integrating it into their national development plans. Leadership from the highest levels of government will be crucial to mobilize resources and ensure coordinated action across sectors.
- 2. Multistakeholder Engagement:** The guidelines promote multistakeholder collaboration, including partnerships with the private sector, civil society, and international organizations. These partnerships are essential for mobilizing resources and ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned toward common goals.
- 3. Capacity Building and Technical Support:** Many countries may require technical assistance to fully implement the post-Malabo guidelines. The AU, through bodies like AUDA-NEPAD and the RECs, should provide technical support, capacity building, and knowledge-sharing platforms to assist countries in the implementation process.
- 4. Resource Mobilization:** Financing is a critical component for the success of the post-Malabo agenda. There must be strategies for mobilizing resources from domestic sources, international donors, and the private sector. Public-private partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms should be encouraged to ensure that countries can meet their investment targets.





Conclusion

The transition from the Malabo agenda to the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan for 2026–2035 marks a pivotal moment for Africa’s agricultural future. As the continent faces increasingly complex challenges—ranging from climate change to food insecurity, economic inequality, and population growth—the role of agriculture as a driver of inclusive growth and development has never been more critical. The post-Malabo agenda provides an opportunity not only to build on past successes but also to rethink and innovate for the future.

For the post-Malabo CAADP Strategy to be effective, the development and implementation of clear, actionable guidelines is essential. These guidelines will provide a roadmap for aligning national and regional policies with broader continental and global objectives, ensuring that agriculture continues to play a key role in Africa’s socioeconomic development. Moreover, they will facilitate a more integrated food systems approach that goes beyond production to address the broader context in which food is produced, processed, distributed, and consumed—taking into account issues like nutrition, environmental sustainability, and equity.

The success of this next phase hinges on the ability of AU Member States to commit to these guidelines and take ownership of their implementation. Governments must ensure that agricultural policies are not only aligned with the new CAADP framework but also fully integrated into national development plans, ensuring coherence across ministries and sectors. The guidelines also help to ensure that Africa’s agricultural strategies are adaptive and responsive to evolving global trends, such as digitalization, climate resilience, and the rising importance of sustainability.

In addition to government commitment, the post-Malabo guidelines emphasize the importance of multistakeholder collaboration. A coordinated approach involving governments, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations will be essential for mobilizing the resources, expertise, and innovations needed to drive agricultural transformation across the continent. This collaboration should also extend to regional and global partnerships to ensure that Africa’s agricultural development is aligned with international frameworks such as the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

To achieve the ambitious goals set out in the post-Malabo agenda, the guidelines also incorporate strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms. By building on the CAADP Biennial Review process, the guidelines ensure that progress is tracked, successes are celebrated, and challenges are addressed in a timely manner. This will not only help to build trust and transparency but also to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement among Member States.

In conclusion, the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan for 2026–2035 presents a crucial opportunity to transform Africa’s agricultural landscape, ensuring that it contributes meaningfully to food security, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. By adopting clear and robust implementation guidelines, AU Member States can turn the post-Malabo vision into a reality. Through evidence-based planning, resilient and inclusive food systems, climate-smart practices, and strong multisectoral collaboration, Africa can move closer to



achieving its long-term goals of shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and food security for all. The time to act is now, and with the right frameworks in place, the future of African agriculture looks brighter than ever. Top of Form

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