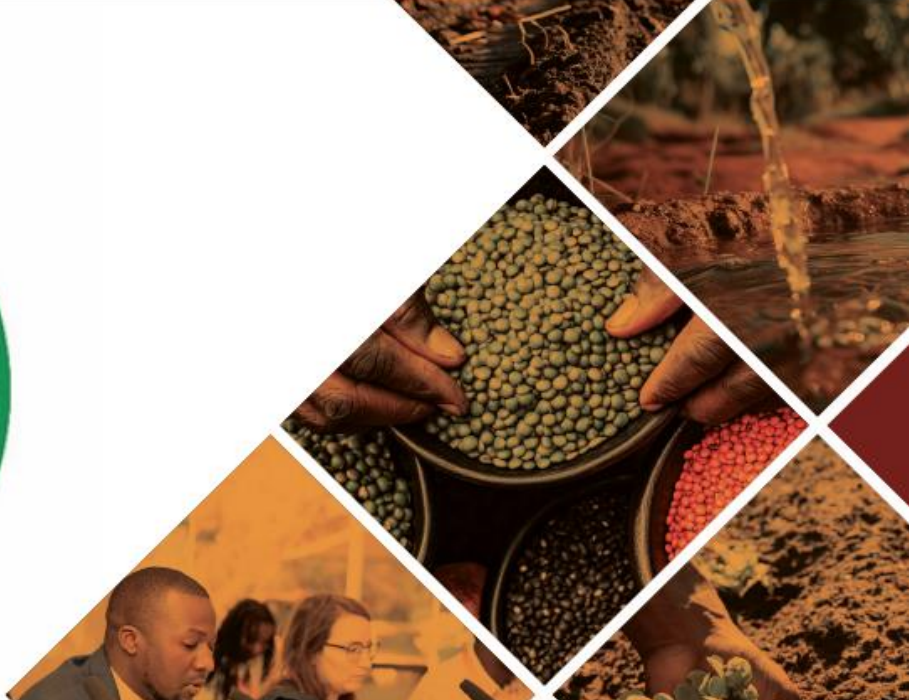




Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

PARTNERS MEETING AND 2025–2035 STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCH REPORT

04 June 2025



BACKGROUND

Since its establishment, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) has been guided by a series of strategic plans that reflect the shifting global and regional development context. The first two strategies were developed during the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), while the third was anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

FANRPAN's inaugural strategic plan (2001–2006) focused on laying the institutional foundation of the network. This involved developing operational protocols, establishing the network's identity and branding, and setting up a functional model at both the regional and national levels. The second strategic plan (2007–2015) advanced FANRPAN's role in facilitating policy dialogue by strengthening linkages between governments and civil society and supporting demand-driven policy research and capacity-strengthening across Africa.

The third strategic plan (2016–2024) marked a shift toward consolidating FANRPAN's role as a leading voice in evidence-based policymaking. It emphasized the transformation of food and agriculture systems through climate-resilient, nutrition-sensitive policies and strengthened the network's position as a reputable think tank in food, agricultural and natural resource (FANR) policy research and advocacy.

With the completion of the third strategy, FANRPAN embarked on a comprehensive consultative process that culminated in the development of its fourth-generation Strategic Plan for 2025–2035. The primary purpose of the FANRPAN Partners' Meeting was to launch and present this new strategy to stakeholders, stimulate dialogue, and foster a shared understanding of the priorities, partnerships, and resource requirements needed for implementation. The meeting also served to solicit feedback, identify synergies for collaboration, and secure endorsements from technical and financial partners.

The meeting held virtually on the 4th of June 2025 was facilitated by Prof Hlami Ngwenya from the University of Free State and brought together over 50 invited participants representing FANRPAN's diverse stakeholder base, including government ministries, development partners, farmer organizations, civil society, the private sector, academic and research institutions, as well as youth and women's groups.



WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The meeting commenced with remarks from Mr. Mooketsa Ramasodi, Director General, Department of Agriculture, South Africa, the host country of the FANRPAN Regional Secretariat. Mr. Ramasodi welcomed participants and commended FANRPAN for its longstanding contribution to FANR policy analysis and development across the continent. He lauded the strategic plan's strong alignment with national, regional, and global frameworks, including South Africa's National Development Plan, the SDGs, CAADP, Agenda 2063, and the Kampala Declaration.

Mr. Ramasodi emphasized the pressing need for robust policy advocacy, improved market access for farmers, strengthened biosecurity systems, and effective risk mitigation strategies. He urged FANRPAN to support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and facilitate inclusive policy dialogue on energy transitions. He concluded by applauding FANRPAN's leadership and technical team for crafting a forward-looking and comprehensive strategy, and he called on all stakeholders to work in unison to amplify Africa's voice.

OFFICIAL STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCH

Dr. Aggrey Agumya, Chairperson of the FANRPAN Board of Governors and Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), officially launched the 2025–2035 Strategic Plan. In his remarks, he expressed appreciation for the contributions of FANRPAN's partners, national node representatives, and the broader network in shaping the strategy through an inclusive and consultative process.

Dr. Agumya affirmed that the new Strategic Plan is deeply rooted in the aspirations of the African continent. He emphasized that while past CAADP cycles provided a strong policy foundation, they often fell short in terms of implementation. He therefore called for renewed urgency and coherence in translating policy into practice, with greater investment in research, policy advocacy, and capacity strengthening across national and regional levels.

He described FANRPAN as a critical intermediary in the policy landscape—serving as the message, the messenger, and the medium that links research, evidence, and policy action. Concluding his remarks, Dr. Agumya invited implementing and funding partners to join FANRPAN in a shared journey to transform Africa's food and agriculture systems and encouraged the regional secretariat to drive collaborative implementation efforts forward.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Delivering the keynote address, Ms. Panduleni Elago, Senior CAADP Advisor at the African Union Commission's Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE), congratulated FANRPAN on the launch of its new Strategic Plan (2025–2035). She noted that the strategy comes at a critical juncture in Africa's food systems transformation journey, where nations are striving to overcome chronic food and nutrition insecurity, strengthen resilience to climate shocks, and accelerate progress toward sustainable development.

Ms. Elago highlighted the strong alignment between the FANRPAN Strategic Plan and the African Union's recently adopted CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035). She commended FANRPAN's approach, which is grounded in localized, evidence-based policy development. She noted that FANRPAN has played a vital role in supporting AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in translating continental commitments into national policy and investment frameworks.

Moreover, she acknowledged FANRPAN's instrumental work in strengthening country capacities for the Biennial Review (BR) process, a key accountability mechanism under CAADP. Ms. Elago also recognized FANRPAN's support in the development and implementation of National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs), which serve as foundational instruments for operationalizing agricultural strategies in line with regional and continental goals.

In addition to its policy and technical contributions, FANRPAN continues to provide thought leadership and represent Africa in key global dialogues, including the UN Food Systems Summit and the UNFCCC COP processes, reinforcing the continent's voice on food security, climate resilience, and sustainable agriculture.

In conclusion, Ms. Elago called on development partners to strengthen coordination and avoid duplication, urging all actors to harness their comparative advantages in support of Africa's agricultural agenda. She reaffirmed the African Union's commitment to working closely with FANRPAN and other knowledge institutions to advance inclusive, Africa-led, and science-informed transformation of food systems across the continent.



FANRPAN STRATEGIC PLAN (2025–2035) PRESENTATION

Ms. Sithembile Mwamakamba, Director of Policy Research and Analysis at FANRPAN, presented the new Strategic Plan for 2025–2035, offering participants an in-depth overview of the network's renewed direction, priorities, and delivery mechanisms for the coming decade.

To provide context for new partners, she began with a historical reflection on FANRPAN's origins, tracing its mandate back to a 1994 call by Eastern and Southern African Ministers of Agriculture. The network was formalized in 1997 under SADC, and in 2006, it gained diplomatic status in South Africa. By 2010, FANRPAN's mandate had expanded to cover the entire continent, positioning it as a pan-African policy think tank dedicated to transforming food, agriculture, and natural resources systems through coordinated research, policy dialogue, and institutional support.

Ms. Mwamakamba then introduced the strategic vision that anchors the 2025–2035 strategy: Resilient African agriculture and food systems, in harmony with nature, delivering prosperity and health for all. The mission of the strategy is equally bold—to promote an enabling policy environment for transformation. She explained that the strategy builds on the achievements and lessons of the 2016–2024 plan, responding to a changing policy and development landscape. It aligns with global and continental frameworks, including the SDGs, Agenda 2063, and CAADP, ensuring FANRPAN's relevance and strategic coherence across stakeholder platforms.

The Strategic Plan is built around four interrelated pillars:

1. **Policy Research and Analysis** – Focused on generating, collating and synthesizing rigorous, policy-relevant evidence to support informed decision-making on critical issues such as climate change, soil health, agri-trade, and youth inclusion.
2. **Knowledge Management and Advocacy** – Designed to translate complex research into accessible knowledge for decision-makers, enhancing awareness and uptake of policy solutions aligned with AfCFTA and AU climate strategies.
3. **Capacity Strengthening** – Aimed at equipping institutions and individuals with the skills, tools, and confidence to meaningfully engage in food system governance and policy processes.
4. **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)** – An integrated framework to track progress, measure impact, and drive adaptive learning across FANRPAN's work.



These pillars are supported by seven thematic priorities: climate change resilience; nutrition and sustainable livelihoods; natural resources and environment; trade and markets; agricultural investment; technology and innovation; and gender, equity, and social inclusion (GESI). GESI was emphasized as a cross-cutting imperative rather than a stand-alone priority.

Ms. Mwamakamba elaborated on each thematic area, outlining how FANRPAN will tackle systemic challenges through context-responsive policies, inclusive engagement, and evidence-led action. From promoting climate-smart agriculture and food safety, to advocating for inclusive trade under the AfCFTA and embracing digital innovation in agriculture, the strategy positions FANRPAN at the forefront of Africa's food systems transformation.

She further outlined the operational focus areas necessary to deliver the strategy: evidence generation, development of policy and advocacy products, and direct service to stakeholders. This structure will enable FANRPAN to remain both scientifically grounded and practically impactful.

The presentation also touched on the institutional architecture of FANRPAN, highlighting its multi-level design—anchored by a regional secretariat, supported by national nodes embedded in local institutions, and governed by a board of African leaders spanning government, civil society, research, and youth sectors. The Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework was presented as a cornerstone of accountability and learning, reinforced by a risk management system to mitigate shocks such as funding shifts or climate events. To support the full implementation of the plan, FANRPAN will pursue a diversified financing model to raise the estimated USD 45 million required, with 80% directed to programmatic work and 20% to institutional strengthening. Funding sources will include government, private sector, nodes and development partners amongst others.

In concluding, Ms. Mwamakamba extended an open invitation to all stakeholders—governments, development partners, private sector actors, researchers, and farmers—to join FANRPAN in driving policy innovation and investment for an inclusive, climate-resilient, and sustainable agricultural future. The strategy, she emphasized, is both a roadmap and a call to action. Through shared commitment and collaboration, FANRPAN and its partners can shape a food-secure and prosperous Africa.



STAKEHOLDER REFLECTIONS ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN

A broad and representative array of stakeholders shared their perspectives on the FANRPAN Strategic Plan (2025–2035), underscoring its relevance, timeliness, and potential for impact across Africa’s food and agriculture landscape.

From the civil society and non-state actor community, Ms. Chikondi Chabvuta of CARE commended the strategy as a bold and progressive step in Africa’s food systems transformation. She emphasized that the participatory process through which the strategy was developed demonstrates FANRPAN’s commitment to inclusivity and accountability. Ms. Chabvuta strongly advocated for enhanced civil society engagement, not just during design but throughout the implementation and monitoring phases. She noted that non-state actors play a critical role in bridging the gap between policy and grassroots realities, particularly in ensuring that policy reforms are responsive to the needs of vulnerable communities, especially women and smallholder farmers.

Representing the media and communications constituency, Mr. Michael Hoevel of Farming First highlighted the essential role of the media in amplifying the impact of evidence-based policy work. He noted that transparency and consistent communication are key to building trust, enhancing public understanding, and driving accountability across food systems. Mr. Hoevel urged FANRPAN to continue investing in strategic communications, media engagement, and storytelling to ensure that its research, policy positions, and advocacy efforts reach a broader and more diverse audience—including farmers, youth, and policymakers.

From the youth constituency, Dr. Mwaka Namukonde, speaking on behalf of the Consortium of African Youth in Agriculture and Climate Change (CAYACC), delivered a passionate message on the need to move beyond symbolic youth inclusion. She affirmed that Africa’s youth are not only ready to contribute but are already shaping innovative solutions in agriculture and climate resilience. Dr. Namukonde called for deliberate, sustained investment in youth-led initiatives, capacity building, and leadership development. She encouraged FANRPAN to institutionalize mechanisms that allow young people to co-create, lead, and scale interventions that address food security and climate change across the continent.

From the private sector, Mr. Jabu Mabobo of the Southern African Business Construction Forum (SABCF) reflected on the enabling conditions required to attract long-term investment into African agriculture. He pointed to the persistent challenge of inadequate infrastructure—such as transport, storage, and irrigation systems—which significantly hampers productivity and market access. Mr.



Mabobo stressed that unlocking private investment will require policy certainty, predictable regulatory frameworks, and strong public-private partnerships. He welcomed FANRPAN's role in convening stakeholders and advocating for reforms that can lower the cost and risk of doing agribusiness on the continent.

Speaking on behalf of farmers and producer organizations, Mr. Ismael Sunga, CEO of the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), reaffirmed the importance of context-specific, research-driven policy development. He noted that the strategy provides a valuable framework for addressing the structural and systemic barriers that farmers face, including access to inputs, land, markets, and finance. Mr. Sunga underscored the need for continuous engagement between research institutions and farmer organizations to ensure that policy recommendations are both relevant and actionable at the farm level.

In a recorded video message, Dr. Antony Chapoto, Director of Research at the African Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ANAPRI), extended congratulations to FANRPAN for articulating a forward-looking and practical strategy. He expressed ANAPRI's keen interest in deepening collaboration with FANRPAN, particularly in the areas of joint research, capacity development, and harmonized policy advocacy at both regional and continental levels.

Speaking on behalf of women's groups, Ms. Ntutu Mbiko emphasized the centrality of gender equity and social inclusion to Africa's development agenda. She welcomed FANRPAN's explicit commitment to integrating gender across all thematic areas of the strategy. Ms. Mbiko called for concrete action to dismantle structural barriers that continue to limit women's participation and leadership in agriculture, particularly with regard to access to land, finance, technologies, and decision-making platforms. She encouraged FANRPAN to work closely with grassroots women's organizations to ensure that the strategy delivers transformative and measurable results for women and girls across the continent.

Together, these reflections painted a unified picture of optimism and support for the FANRPAN Strategic Plan (2025–2035). Stakeholders expressed a shared resolve to collaborate with FANRPAN in the implementation phase and to ensure that the strategy translates into meaningful change for Africa's farmers, food systems, and future generations.



CLOSING REMARKS AND WAY FORWARD

Closing the meeting, FANRPAN CEO and Head of Mission, Dr. Tshilidzi Madzivhandila, reaffirmed the network's mission to support evidence-based policy reform, foster multi-stakeholder collaboration, and scale institutional capacity for food systems transformation. He stressed the importance of moving beyond pilot projects and investing in long-term, scalable solutions.

Dr. Madzivhandila noted that FANRPAN would prioritize the dissemination of the strategy, launch a robust fundraising campaign to mobilize the required USD 45 million, and develop detailed implementation strategies for each thematic area. Particular emphasis will be placed on forming partnerships with research institutions, creating platforms for youth and women's engagement, and strengthening MEAL systems across countries. He also emphasized the need to align national and regional policy efforts and called on national nodes to take leadership in aligning their work with the new strategy.

The 2025–2035 FANRPAN Strategic Plan was widely acknowledged by stakeholders as a bold and necessary step toward a more resilient, climate-smart, and inclusive agricultural future for Africa. Participants expressed strong support and a shared commitment to working alongside FANRPAN to bring the strategy to life.





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