

FSTS
Annual
report
2025



Content

Word from Founder & Director

2025 Institutional Highlights

Key Programs 2025

- Technical Advisory

- Research & Knowledge

- High-level Moderation



Word of the Founder & Former CEO



Prof. Fadel Ndiame
Founder & CEO

As I reflect on 2024 and 2025, I do so with deep gratitude and quiet pride. These years marked a key phase in the growth of Food Systems Transformation Solutions, as we strengthened our role as a trusted convenor, strategic advisor, and implementation partner across Africa’s food systems transformation agenda.

We played a central role in advancing regional dialogue on agricultural transformation, notably through our work with CORAF, where we supported the launch of a regional network of women leaders in seed entrepreneurship. We also facilitated high-level policy dialogues bringing together leaders across agriculture, environment, and finance—reinforcing a key conviction: sustainable transformation requires both strong technical solutions and trusted spaces for collective action.

At the same time, we guided the implementation of the ACBF-supported program for women and youth empowerment in agriculture in Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, and Gabon. Beyond technical training, this work helped build confidence, strengthen local ecosystems, and create pathways for women and young people to access higher-value opportunities.

We also deepened partnerships with ACBF, BADEA, IsDB, and platforms such as CORAF and AGRF, expanding our role toward strategic advisory, systems thinking, and partnership facilitation.

These achievements reflect the dedication of our team, the trust of our partners, and the courage of the women and youth we serve. As

Founder and former CEO, I leave this chapter confident in the foundations laid for a more inclusive and resilient future for African food systems.

Message from Our Director

“Providing an innovative economic response to food insecurity in the Sahel and West Africa is at the heart of the New Resilient Terroirs (NTR) model in Senegal. This approach closely aligns with the vision of Food System Transformation Solutions (FSTS), which supports the scaling of impactful, sustainable solutions.

A key achievement of NTR is the effective partnership between Resilient Family Farms (EFRs), led by vulnerable women, and Mobile Agricultural Service Units (UMSAs), managed by young technicians. Results over the past three years confirm that this model works—highlighting inclusion, innovation, and women’s leadership as critical drivers of food system transformation in Africa.



*Dr. Jean Pierre Senghor,
Director NTR Projects Senegal*

2025 Institutional Highlights

Delivery of ACBF Women & Youth Empowerment Program

African Food Systems Forum 2025, Senegal

World Food Safety Day(WFSD) moderation (Webinar)

African Youth Pathways to Resilience and Systems Change (AYPreS) in partnership with Mastercard Foundation, Uganda

Africa Think Tank Summit, Ethiopia

Cities Leading Food Production, UAE Abu Dhabi

Stakeholder engagement for projects: FCI4Africa



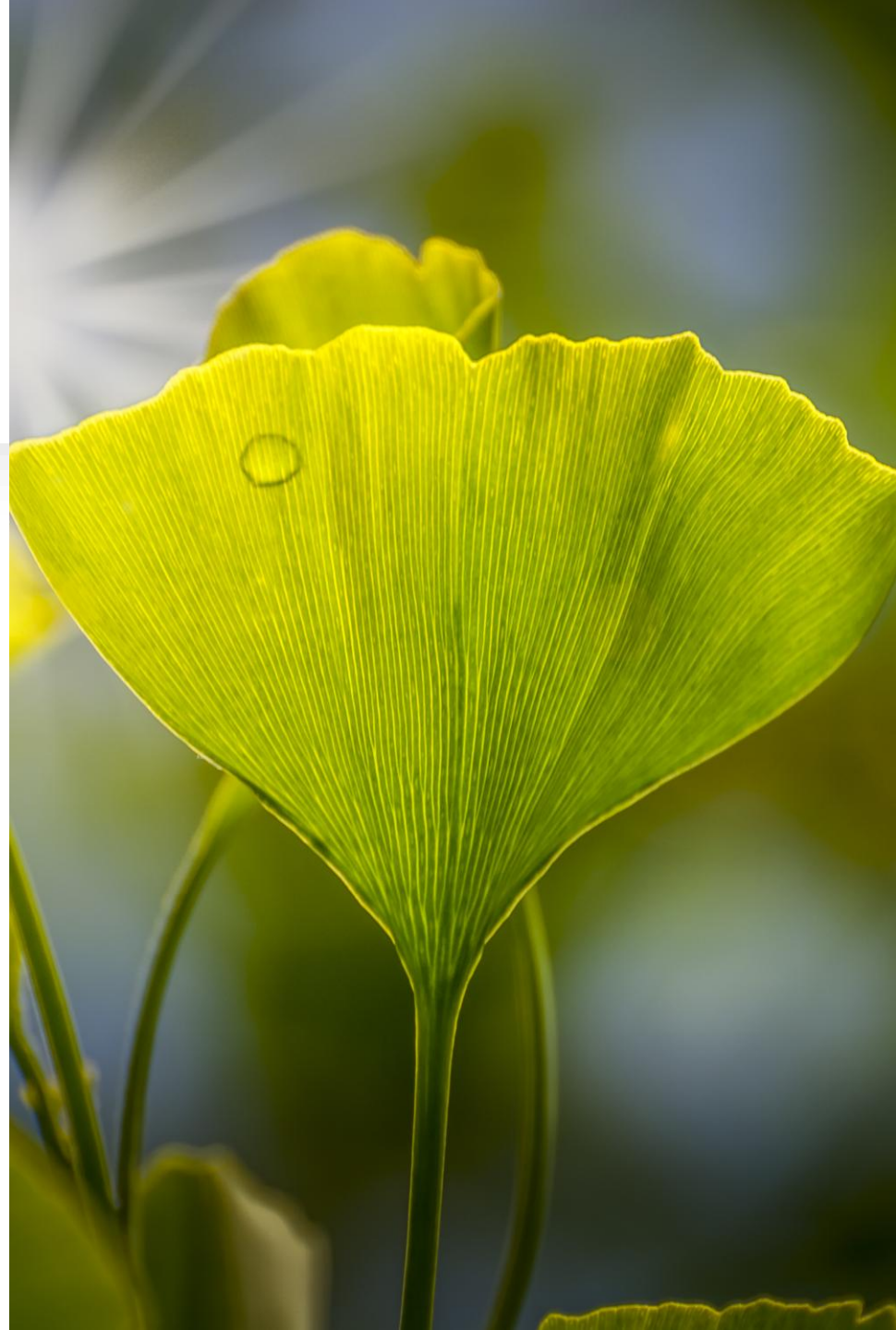
Key Programs 2025

ACBF (detailed in next slides)

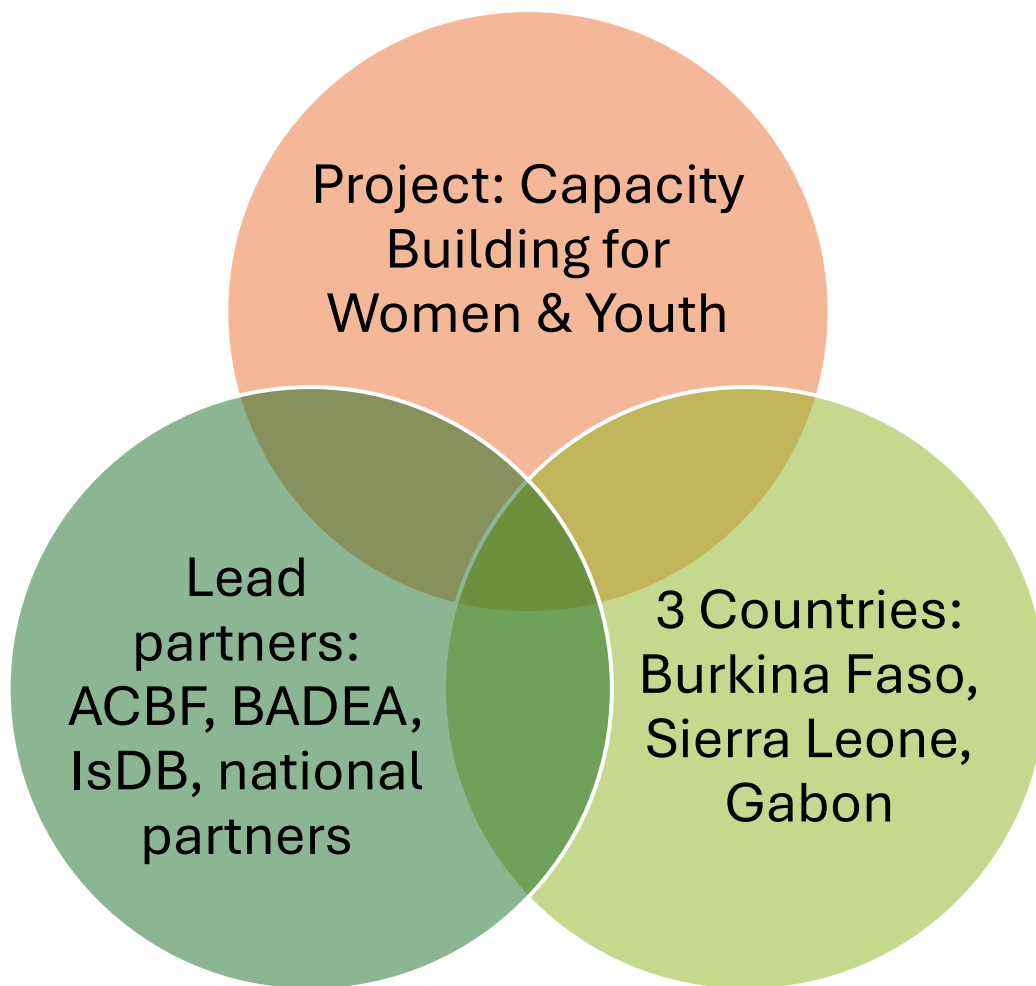
Food Safety for Africa
(FS4Africa)

Food Convergence and
Innovation (FCI4Africa)

Knowledge products &
advisory services



The Program for Capacity Building for women and youth in 3 countries



BADEA

Arab Bank
for Economic
Development
in Africa



IsDB

ACBF Key Activities



SCOPING STUDIES &
DIAGNOSTICS



TRAINING OF
TRAINERS (TOT)



LEADERSHIP &
INCUBATOR
TRAINING



MSME COACHING



GRANTS &
INCUBATION



In Sierra Leone

25 ToTs

From over 55 applicants, trained in business development services, value chains, branding and marketing standards

120 women and youth agribusiness MSMEs

Selected from 430 applicants, based on innovation potential and market readiness

Professional trainers from accredited databases (SLeCAD, ITC, IFC) facilitated the sessions, ensuring a high standard of capacity-building.

120 women and youth entrepreneurs

Were trained in agribusiness management and entrepreneurship.

45 women and youth

Received leadership and coaching training

10 incubator leaders

Were trained, marking the first agribusiness incubation training in Sierra Leone.

6 women and youth-led MSMEs

Were awarded after a competitive pitching process, primarily in cassava and onion value chains.



Results and Key Outcomes in Sierra Leone

01

Strengthened Capacities

- Over 120 women- and youth-led agribusiness MSMEs were trained in entrepreneurship, business management, marketing, and financial literacy.
- 45 young emerging leaders completed leadership and coaching training.
- 25 female coaches were empowered to support peer-to-peer capacity building.
- 10 agribusiness incubators integrated gender-sensitive approaches into their services.

02

Catalytic Financial Support

- 6 promising agribusinesses were selected through a pitching competition and awarded \$5,000 grants each.
- These businesses formalized operations, expanded production, and prepared for regional and international market access (AFCFTA, AGOA, EU markets).

03

Ecosystem Development

- A collaborative community was created where beneficiaries shared business strategies, best practices, and partnership opportunities.
- Activities such as business competitions, exchange visits (including a key learning trip to Brazil), and mentorship programs fostered innovation and networking.



04

Strategic Alignment with National Development Goals

- The project directly supported Sierra Leone's **Feed Salone** strategy by promoting competitive, resilient, and inclusive agribusinesses.
- **Government stakeholders actively engaged**, ensuring strong political support and integration into broader agricultural policies.

05

Mindset Shift and Empowerment

- Youth and women increasingly saw agribusiness as a **serious career path** rather than a fallback option.
- Participants transitioned from "survival-mode" entrepreneurs to **opportunity-driven**, growth-oriented business leaders.

06

Identification of Structural Barriers

- The project surfaced key challenges that need addressing for future scalability:
- Limited access to investment capital.
- Poor infrastructure for transport and packaging.
- Fragmented and underdeveloped value chains.
- Need for better policy and regulatory support for SMEs.



In Gabon

30 trainers identified and trained out of 25 initially targeted

254 agricultural organizations and agribusiness entrepreneurs trained



Training and coaching in leadership, 25 female coaches (women entrepreneurs in agribusinesses incubators)

8 grants provided to Cooperative organizations (MSMEs, SMEs) and individual women and youth promoters



47 agricultural organizations and agribusiness entrepreneurs trained, including 32 women

6,600 USD granted to 3 MSMEs in agriculture over 8



In Burkina Faso

365 women and youth trained in agribusiness management & entrepreneurship

45 women and youth in leadership and coaching, 25 women female coaches

Over 600 participants engaged in awareness and training activities.

6 leaders trained in managing agribusiness incubators

5 grants awarded (total \$40,000) granted to initiatives including boreholes, greenhouses and land development.



Results and Key Outcomes in Burkina Faso

01

Training and Capacity Building

- **365 women and youth** received training in agribusiness management, leadership, coaching, and business plan development.
- **25 trainers were trained** to provide ongoing support to local agricultural initiatives.
- **6 leaders of professional organizations** were prepared to manage agribusiness incubators and nurseries.
- **Five beneficiaries received grants** to enhance their production through equipment acquisition, land development, borehole drilling, and greenhouse construction.
- Over **600 individuals were engaged** through awareness-raising, training, and informational activities.

02

Catalytic Financial Support

- **6 promising agribusinesses** were selected through a pitching competition and **awarded \$5,000 grants each**.
- These businesses formalized operations, expanded production, and prepared for **regional and international market access** (AFCFTA, AGOA, EU markets).

03

Empowerment and Institutional Strengthening

- Beneficiaries demonstrated **increased autonomy and professionalism** in agricultural practices.
- Emergence of concrete entrepreneurial projects among women and youth.
- Enhanced its familiarity and involvement in the agricultural sector, aligning with national public policies.



Operational Efficiency

04

Despite challenges due to the absence of a dedicated project team, the **use of digital management tools like "projects.co"** improved planning and activity monitoring

Strategic Insights

05

- The project underscored the effectiveness of approaches centered on women and youth in agriculture.
- It established a replicable model for national scale-up

Strategic Insights

01 Capacity building must go beyond technical skills: Entrepreneurship, leadership development, and business mindset training are essential for real empowerment

02 Access to finance remains one of the biggest challenges for women and youth-led agribusinesses and must be addressed through partnerships with banks and grant programs.

03 Gender-sensitive approaches are necessary: Women face specific structural barriers in agriculture (access to land, finance, markets), and tailored support is needed to overcome these challenges.



05 Incubators and coaching systems are critical multipliers networks ensures that local support structures can continue after the project ends.

06 Scalability requires a dedicated team: For future expansion to all 13 regions of Burkina Faso, setting up a specialized and full-time project implementation team will be necessary

08 Success can inspire national replication: The pilot proved that with the right model, it's feasible to replicate this type of project across the country to maximize impact.



FS4Africa – Overview (2025)

- **Project:** FS4Africa
- **Role:** FSTS – Lead Beneficiary, Work Package 1
- **Reporting period:** January–December 2025
- **Focus:** Enabling policy environment and strategic agenda setting for food safety in Africa

WP1 – Core Deliverables Completed (2024)

Task 1.1 – Assessment of Policy, Legal & Institutional Environment

- Comprehensive assessment across selected African countries
- Outputs:
 - **Assessment Report (D1.1)**
 - **Policy Brief** on food safety governance in the informal sector
- Status: **Delivered (Dec 2024); actively disseminated and used in 2025**

Task 1.2 – Gap Analysis & Best Practices

- Comparative analysis of food safety frameworks and implementation gaps
- Identification of enablers and barriers affecting informal food systems
- Status: **Delivered (Dec 2024); referenced in ongoing work packages**

These two tasks formed the evidence base for all 2025 WP1 activities.

WP1 – Core Deliverables 2025

- **Task 1.3: Evidence-based recommendations and guidelines to create enabling environments for food safety management**

(Lead: NEPAD Participants: CSIR-GH, FSTS, KEF, UP, IITA)

- Deadline: Dec 2025
- Status: Outstanding (extension requested)



WP1 – Core Deliverables 2025

Task 1.4: Engagement Plan with Key Policy and Advocacy Players

(Lead: CSIR-GH Participants: NEPAD, FSTS, KEF, IITA, McGill)

Deliverable:

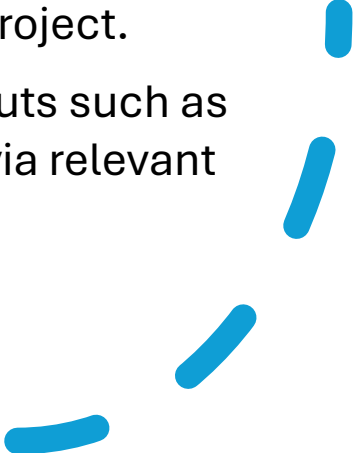
- **Deliverables under Task 1.4**
- Two deliverables per the Grant Agreement:
 - **D1.5 Practice Abstracts – Batch 1** (due M15)
 - **Practice Abstracts – Batch 2** (due M42)
- Batch 1 was submitted in March 2025.

Task 1.4 Continued...

Engagement Plan

- A standalone engagement plan is not a formal deliverable, as it was merged into the DEC Plan under WP5.
- CSIR developed an outline engagement plan, which was shared with and approved by relevant WP1 partners.

Ongoing Policy & Advocacy Engagement

- Engagement with policy and advocacy actors is an ongoing activity throughout the project.
 - This includes dissemination of outputs such as the recently developed policy brief via relevant platforms and forums.
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- Four thick, blue, hand-drawn style brush strokes are arranged in a curved pattern in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Task 1.4 Continued...

Stakeholder Mapping

- Under Task 1.4, CSIR conducted a NetMap analysis of food safety stakeholders
- The analysis identifies key stakeholders for engagement linked to project recommendations



WP5 – Core Deliverables 2025

D5.2 - Ecosystem Building & Engagement

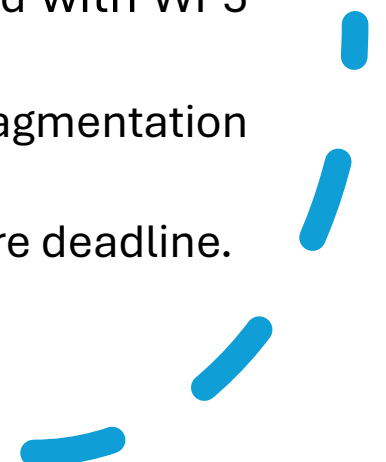
- Community outreach presentations aiming at informing about the project
- Information shared with WP5 before deadline (30 June 2025).

C1.5 Use Case 2 (UC2) brochures in French

- UC2 brochures were translated to French – Shared before deadline: 30 June 2025.

C2.3 – Blog Post

- A blog post was compiled and shared with WP5 entitled: ‘Tackling Food System Fragmentation Through a Mezzanine Approach’ before deadline.
- Deadline: 30 June 2025






FCI4Africa

Food Convergence and Innovation for Africa

- **FCI4 Africa – Overview (2025)**
- **Project:** FS4Africa
- **Role:** FSTS – Lead Beneficiary, Work Package 2
- **Reporting period:** January–December 2025
- **Focus:** Advancing fair trade and health for a sustainable society through NTM harmonization and innovations.

WP2 – Core Deliverables

Task 2.1: Examine the non-tariff measures (NTMs) affecting trade between AU countries and the European Union, including their impacts, using existing research. (MCGILL, UG)


- Deadline: January 2025
 - Delivered by McGill
- 

WP2 – Core Deliverables

Task 2.2: Engage with stakeholders to confirm these findings and uncover any remaining trade barriers. Additionally, analyse domestic food systems to assess their impact on food, nutrition, health, and the environment. This will lay the groundwork for trade modelling analysis. (FSTS; UniBw M)

- **Deadline:** April 2025
- **Status:** Delayed. Draft literature review submitted in April 2025, pending stakeholder engagement
 - Extension granted to October 2025
- **Stakeholder engagement** : conducted in Senegal for both tasks 2.2 and 2.3 in September
- **Final Submission:** October 2025

WP2 – Core Deliverables

- **Task 2.3:** Map out the trade barriers identified, including NTMs, in the context of current global environmental goals (SDG and COP28) (FSTS)
 - **Deadline:** July 2025
 - **Status:** Delayed: Extension requested (granted to October 2025)
 - **Final Submission:** October 2025
- 

Stakeholder Engagement – T2+ T2.3

Work Package 2 – Tasks 2.2 & 2.3


- Conducted targeted stakeholder consultations to complement and validate findings from the literature review
- Engaged 4 actors (farmers, consumers, policy makers & traders) across relevant segments of the value chain to capture:
 - Practical experiences with non-tariff measures (NTMs)
 - Perceived barriers and opportunities in trade and food systems
 - Context-specific challenges in implementation
- Insights used to:
 - Strengthen empirical grounding of WP2 analysis
 - Identify gaps between policy frameworks and on-the-ground realities
 - Inform recommendations and future analytical work

WP5 – Use Case 3 (Resilient Territories)

WP5: Multi-actor use cases co-creating and demonstrating climate-neutral, just and fair food system solutions integrated with national food quality and safety assurance systems. (IITA)

- **Task 5.1:** Establish use cases (Lead: IITA, Participant: WR, M01-M12)

Use case #3: Elaborate approaches to increase the resilience of rural communities against shocks (Lead: FSTS; Participants: IITA, ADC, UniBw, McGill)



Upcoming Priorities 2026–2027

1

Scale ACBF
model

2

Strengthen
MEL & digital
tools

3

Expand FS4A
& FCI4A

4

Increase
publications &
learning
modules

5

Expand
partnerships

Our Team



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Thank you to all partners



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