

# Strengthening knowledge Partnerships in Africa Agriculture

Thematic Policy Brief N° 1/10



## Authors

Benjamin Abugri  
Andreas Brandner  
Victoria Mbigidde  
Fadlulla Olayiwola Issa  
Américo Humulane  
Marilyn Yeboah  
Emmanuel Hinckley

## Designed by

Samuel Oti  
Attakorah (FARA)

**FPB  
N° 4**

Apr 2022

**Citation:** Abugri B., Brandner A., Mbigidde V., Issa F.O., Humulane A., Yeboah M., and Hinckley E. (2022). Strengthening knowledge Partnerships in African Agriculture Thematic Policy Brief No 1/10. Knowledge Management for Agricultural Development (KM4AgD) Agenda. FARA Policy Brief Series N°4 (April 2022): Pp 1-11

ISBN: 2590-9657

For more information contact [babugri@faraafrica.org](mailto:babugri@faraafrica.org)

*FARA encourages fair use of this material. Proper citation is requested*

## **Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)**

12 Anmeda Street, Roman Ridge PMB CT 173, Accra, Ghana Tel: +233 302 772823 / 302 779421 Fax: +233 302 773676 Email: Website: [www.faraafrica.org](http://www.faraafrica.org) : [www.faradatainforms.faraafrica.org](http://www.faradatainforms.faraafrica.org)

Join the network: <https://faraafrica.community/fara-net/join>

Register as an AR4D expert: <https://experts.faraafrica.org/>

Designed By: Samuel Oti Attakorah - FARA Knowledge Management, Learning & Communications Unit ([publications@faraafrica.org](mailto:publications@faraafrica.org))

## **About FARA**

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) is the apex continental organisation responsible for coordinating and advocating for agricultural research-for-development. (AR4D). It serves as the entry point for agricultural research initiatives designed to have a continental reach or a sub-continental reach spanning more than one sub-region.

FARA serves as the technical arm of the African Union Commission (AUC) on matters concerning agricultural science, technology and innovation. FARA has provided a continental forum for stakeholders in AR4D to shape the vision and agenda for the sub-sector and to mobilise themselves to respond to key continent-wide development frameworks, notably the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

FARA's vision is to "Reduced poverty in Africa as a result of sustainable broad-based agricultural growth and improved livelihoods, particularly of smallholder and pastoral enterprises" its mission is the "Creation of broad-based improvements in agricultural productivity, competitiveness and markets by strengthening the capacity for agricultural innovation at the continental-level"; its Value Proposition is the "Strengthening Africa's capacity for innovation and transformation by visioning its strategic direction, integrating its capacities for change and creating an enabling policy environment for implementation". FARA's strategic direction is derived from and aligned to the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A), which is in turn designed to support the realization of the CAADP vision.

## **Disclaimer**

*"The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of FARA or its members. The designations employed in this publication and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FARA concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers".*

# Authors' Affiliations

1. Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
2. Knowledge for Development Partnership (K4DP)
3. National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Uganda
4. National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria
5. Mozambique Agricultural Research Institute (IIAM).
6. Council for scientific and industrial Research-Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (CSIR-STEPRI), Ghana
7. Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI)

# Acknowledgement

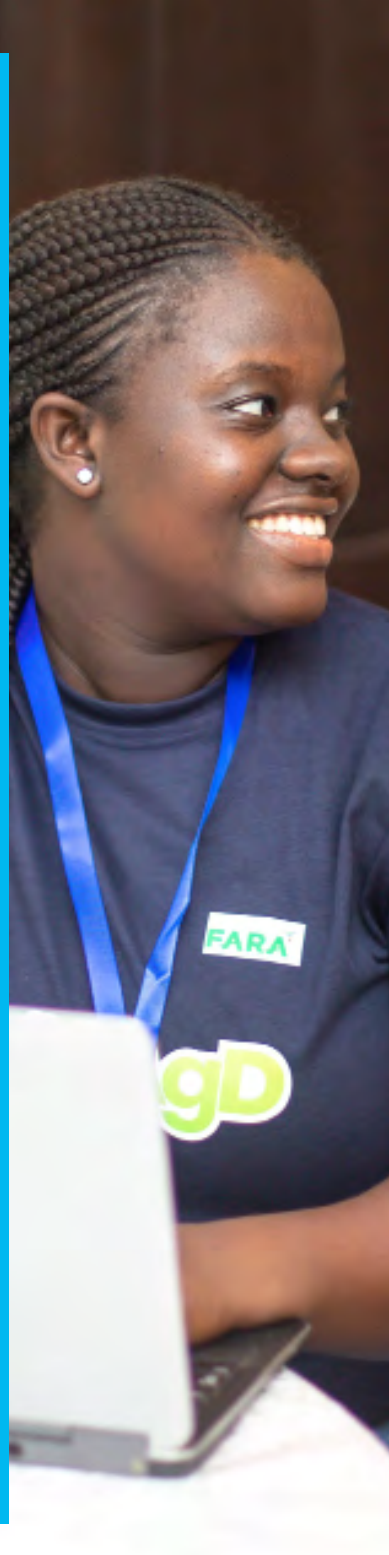
Sincere appreciation goes to the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and all CAADP-XP4 partners (AFAAS, ASARECA, CCARDESA and CORAF) for instituting the knowledge for Agriculture Development (KM4AgD) Challenge and for offering this golden opportunity. Special acknowledgement is extended to all facilitators of the challenge for the training and knowledge they have imparted during this entire challenge life line. A hearty thank you goes to the Knowledge for Development Partnerships (K4DP) for providing technical support to the continent. The excellent and outstanding leadership, support and guidance exhibited during this challenge is one to reckon with. To the respective employers, you are much appreciated for permitting authors to be part of this challenge. Profound appreciation goes to the FARA Team for ably spearheading this groundbreaking activity and for unreservedly sharing their experiences on the subject. All team members are acknowledged for contributing and committing to put this document together. Finally to the European Commission (EC) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for funding the initiative.

# Background

Knowledge can be defined as “subjective and valuable information that has been validated and organised into a model (mental model). It can be used to make sense of our world. Typically, it originates from accumulated experience and incorporates perception, beliefs and values” (Dalkir, 2011). It has the potential to influence action and is retained by encouraging and supporting mentoring, coaching and experiential learning.

Knowledge is a fundamental driver of productivity and economic growth and is a sine qua non for the development of societies all over the world. Knowledge, continues to play a critical role in ushering the knowledge economy where production and services are centered around knowledge-intensive activities. A knowledge economy greatly relies on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources (Agenda Knowledge for Uganda; 2019).

Knowledge is the vital resource for the development of Africa's agricultural sector and economies in general. Its relevance has been recognized by the African institutions in the CAADP and Malabo-Declaration. A lot of knowledge has been generated and disseminated over the years, specifically by the research organizations. However, agricultural productivity has hardly grown in Africa. Although knowledge is available, the implementation and the intended impact towards addressing critical pressing issues remains very unsatisfying. Agricultural technologies, innovations and management practices (TIMPs) are so plenty, yet, a good amount remains on the shelves. This is largely due to institutional inefficiency, the result of which are low productivity, poverty and low standard of living.





The uptake and utilization by targeted users is hampered by a number of hurdles such as: limited skills for communicating, disseminating and transferring the TIMPs, poor access to the available TIMPs and related information and knowledge sources, language barriers, poor financial capacities and weak or non-strategic partnerships. These and other weaknesses widen the gap between stakeholders and practitioners, leading to low uptake and utilization of technologies and consequently innovating and creating more knowledge.

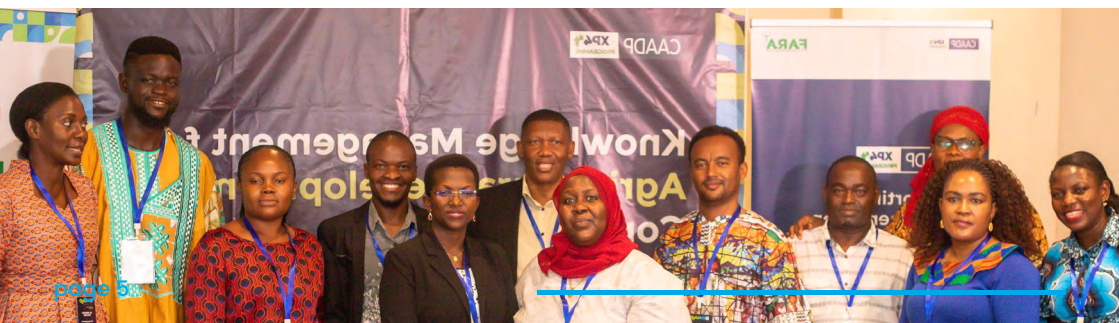
## Knowledge Partnerships

Knowledge Partnerships are associations and networks of individuals or organizations that share a common purpose or goal. They comprise of members who contribute knowledge. They are inclusive, play a complimentary role and support the entire knowledge management value chain from generation to sharing of knowledge thus contributing solutions to address existing (and possibly, future) challenges.

Targeted, systematic and integrated advancement of knowledge requires partnership, dialogue, collaboration, joint action and commitment as no one sector and/or institution knows everything, and so depend on each other to create an effective and efficient knowledge value chain. This may result into relevant actions which can only be developed and implemented in partnership with other relevant/critical stakeholders.

The beauty of a partnership is working together to complement one another and to build something creative and fresh that one may not have otherwise been able to do (Paul, 2019). The benefits of knowledge partnerships may include increased access to existing knowledge, experience, resources and connections; not to mention shared learning and good practice. Partnerships further foster creativity and innovation; increased business process efficiencies; increased visibility; strengthened capacity to advocate and influence policy at various levels; more effective responses to complex realities and scaled-up impact; reduced isolation and increased credibility, and mitigated risks.

However, there is prevailing lack of alignment of knowledge management concepts and policies in agricultural development. Uncoordinated efforts, fragmentation and duplication of actions, and avoidable expenditure of resources, with many organisations and countries working in isolation, thereby posing a huge challenge.



# Challenges



share of value to the network. Tolerance, flexibility, trust and accepting that each partner has strengths and weaknesses are key traits towards understanding and overcoming both cultural and operational differences. In order to manage expectations, establishing clear direction as partners and agreeing on a set of indicators of success in terms of the partnership itself and how it impacts all parties involved is paramount (Paul, 2019). Note should be taken that strong leadership is a prerequisite for creating a culture where partners actively share knowledge, and related resources.

Challenges are certainly anticipated when establishing and implementing partnerships.

These range from contextual, organizational and sometimes individual and may include;

- Lack of trust among partners
- Absence of guiding policy frameworks (agreements and MoUs)
- Security and privacy
- Fear of domination and losing autonomy.
- Inability to agree upon and streamline the common goal to work towards

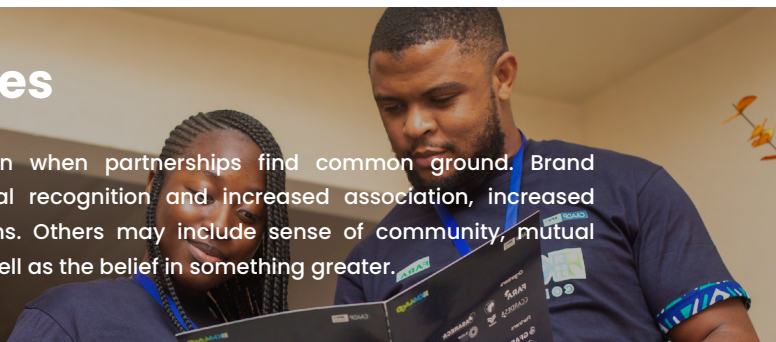
Since organizations are characterized by varying strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, striking a balance in operations and implementation tend to be a big challenge.

It is however critical to agree and set ground rules from the onset that no partner is more important than the other. Regardless of the scope of the organisation, it is advisable to avoid a hierarchical partnership and all partner organisations involved should bring an equal



# Opportunities

Great things can happen when partnerships find common ground. Brand enhancement, trust, social recognition and increased association, increased funding and collaborations. Others may include sense of community, mutual learning and support, as well as the belief in something greater.



## Rationale for a Pan-African Knowledge Inclusion Programme

Partnership networks have been branded as a new form of global governance with the potential to bridge multilateral norms and local action by drawing on a diverse number of actors in civil society, government and business. They have over time proved to be critical as they enhance effectiveness. They not only empower execution of tasks that one wouldn't be able to accomplish alone, but also expand an entity's' skillsets, resources, and exposure to opportunities. Through partnership, ideas are exchanged, joint operations while complementing one another hence facilitating creative innovations. This café will create a platform for stakeholders to appreciate the role partnerships play towards accelerating the knowledge ecosystem, knowledge flows, and the increasing the impact of available knowledge

Agricultural Knowledge Partnerships that support generation and sharing of knowledge have been proven to have potential to offer solutions to agricultural development challenges. All actors involved in agricultural partnership benefit from knowledge, experience, resources and connections established from the partnership.

Agricultural knowledge partnerships may contribute to amplify new, little-known, or little-understood ideas, giving them weight, and making them more widely understood, offer a means to give members the resources they need to carry out their main activities, bring together different, distinct people, groups of people or actors to discuss issues of common interest, promote and sustain the values and standards of organizations or actors and help members of the partnership to carry out their activities more efficiently and effectively.

It is critical to note that initiation of Agricultural Knowledge partnerships aid creation of common visions and identifying knowledge needs in all stakeholder groups thereby enhancing effective access and utilization of the available knowledge while leveraging on available resources.

Unfortunately, the state of creating, managing, monitoring, and evaluating the knowledge partnerships has not yet reached the desired level that could significantly contribute to the desired Agricultural development.



# Vision and goals of a Pan-African Knowledge Inclusion Programme

**Vision:** Knowledge-based society influencing agricultural transformation

**Goal:** Agricultural actors contributing and collaborating to the global knowledge ecosystem in the most efficient manner

## Recommended actions to be taken in implementing knowledge partnership programmes

1. Establishment of agricultural knowledge partnerships for Agricultural Development to assess pressing challenges in the agricultural knowledge ecosystem (e.g. linking organizational knowledge repositories, sectoral knowledge dissemination, knowledge collaboration, knowledge integration, strategic orientation towards a knowledge value chain).
2. Co-creating a knowledge agenda with actionable measures. These shall be created, and the structure and a process to facilitate the partnership shall be agreed.
3. Foster Communities of Practice and Innovation Labs in key thematic areas to promote and take responsibility in various sectoral Communities of Practice (CoPs)

## Recommended actions to be taken in implementing knowledge inclusion programmes

1. Forming a Knowledge Partnership for Agricultural Development
2. Co-creating a Knowledge Agenda with actionable measures
3. Foster Communities of Practice and Innovation Labs in key thematic areas

# Conclusion

The multi-dimensional nature of the challenges confronting Africa's agricultural development can be diligently addressed using the efficient agricultural knowledge partnerships. The establishment of Agricultural Partnership for Agricultural development is a starting point for Africa's transformation into a knowledge society. Based on common understanding of the knowledge ecosystem, shared visions, aligned activities and programmes, integrated knowledge flows, ambitious capacity building efforts, brave investments in knowledge and information systems, and professionally facilitated collaboration avenues, Africa can be a front-runner in knowledge-based agriculture.







# References

Knowledge Partnership Uganda. (2019). Agenda Knowledge for Uganda: Strengthening Uganda's Vision 2040 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. 1st edition. Kampala, Uganda

Serrat, O. (2012). Designing Knowledge Partnerships Better. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266798127\\_Designing\\_Knowledge\\_Partnerships\\_Better](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266798127_Designing_Knowledge_Partnerships_Better)

Karin, B. (2006). Wallenberg Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, Lund University, Box 52, SE-221 00 Lund, Sweden. E-mail: [karin.backstrand@svet.lu.se](mailto:karin.backstrand@svet.lu.se) ; 2006

Paul, V. (2019). Why Twelve are Better than One; The importance of Partnerships in Impact Work, Best cities : <http://www.bestcities.net/association-partnerships/>

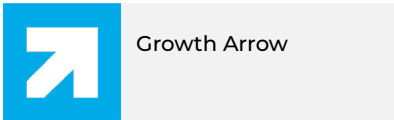
Abugri, B. & Brandner, A. (2021). Continental Data Capture Strategy. A Practical Guide for Knowledge Managers in Africa AR4D. Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Accra, Ghana. PP 1-87

# About the KM4AgD Challenge

The KM4AgD challenge is derived from the fourth objective of the CAADPP4 project which aims at enhancing knowledge management and communication for advocacy, decision support and sharing innovation related to climate-relevant agricultural transformation. The challenge is therefore a vehicle/platform towards building appropriate capacities, establishing communities of practice for Knowledge Management (Artificial Intelligence) and strengthening mechanisms for knowledge generation to accelerate the achievement of the CAADP Malabo goals by 2025 and the SDGs by 2030. Implemented through an integrated, strategic, educational and transformational approach, the KM4AgD Challenge is a lighthouse project for knowledge-based development in AR4D in Africa. It will take place annually in a growing number of countries.



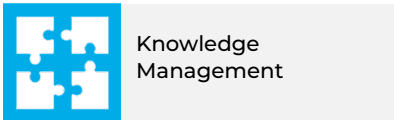
Development  
Symbol



Growth Arrow

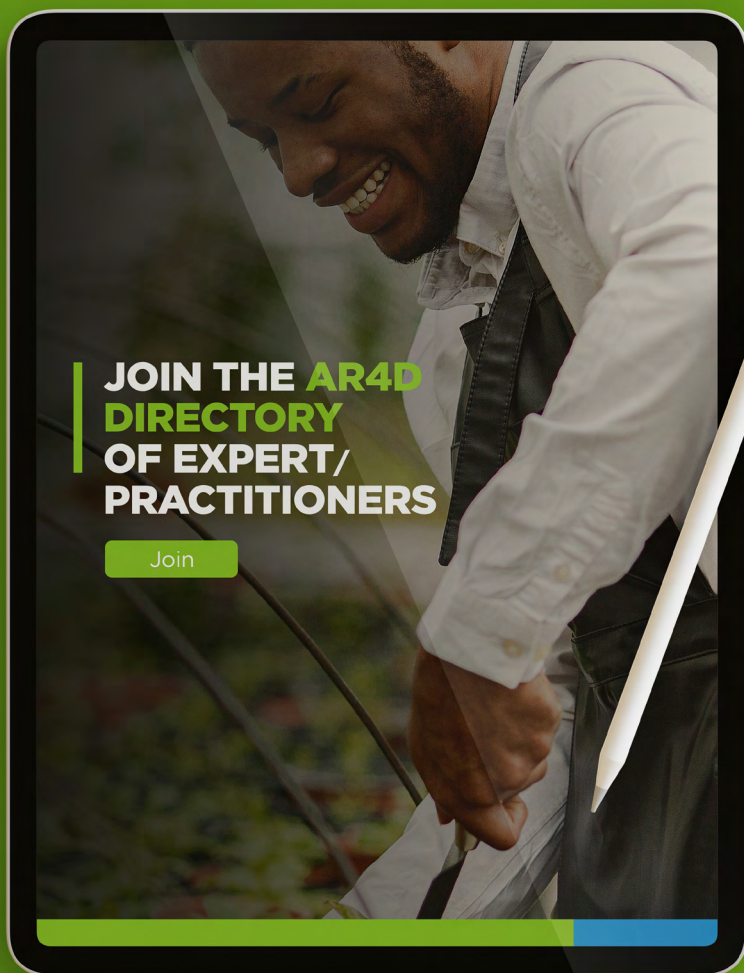


A leaf signifying  
Agriculture



Knowledge  
Management





Are you an AR4D expert  
and want to be part of  
the continental pool of  
Agricultural experts ?

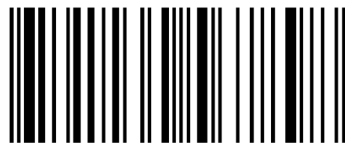
**CLICK HERE TO**

**REGISTER**





**Forum For Agricultural Research In Africa**  
Headquarters 12 Anmeda Street, Roman Ridge  
PMB CT 173, Accra, Ghana  
Tel +233 (0) 302 772823 / 779421  
Fax +233 (0) 302 773676  
Email [info@faraafrica.org](mailto:info@faraafrica.org)  
[www.faraafrica.org](http://www.faraafrica.org)



ISSN: 2590-9657