

The AU-EU International Research Consortium



CEA-FIRST

Newsletter No.3

African
Union



Welcome to the first CEA-FIRST newsletter of 2025 !

As we kick off an exciting new year, we ' re thrilled to reconnect with you and embrace opportunities for dynamic interaction and collaboration.

Over the winter, we have been buzzing with activity—connecting with stakeholders far and wide ! From December to March , we hosted a series of **impactful workshops across Africa and Europe**. These gatherings sparked conversations and built synergies between EU-AU Research and Innovation initiatives, funding opportunities, and national policy implementation strategies.

We ' re also proud to announce the **launch of the International Research Consortium (IRC) on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)** ! Now in its pilot phase, this marks a unique chance for you to engage with peers and drive forward shared goals.

This edition brings you a curated selection of highlights: **key project updates, fresh funding opportunities, upcoming events you won ' t want to miss, must-read publications**—all inspired by your valuable feedback.

Your input matters to us ! Keep sharing your thoughts so we can continue tailoring our content to better meet your needs.

Spread the word—forward this newsletter to your network and invite more like-minded professionals to join us on this journey!

PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

International Research Consortium on FNSSA



Secretariat launch and full membership

As announced in the previous newsletter, on 14 March, in Brussels, the IRC on FNSSA secretariat officially launched, marking a major milestone.

Full membership has been validated, key governance bodies are now in place, and the groundwork for innovative working groups is already taking shape.

The journey is just beginning - stay tuned for updates on the formation and progress of these dynamic working groups !



Operationalization

Two consultative sessions were held on 13 March in Brussels on:

(i) the framing of the IRC governance and membership (currently 65), the structure and the operationalization

processes developed during the IRC pilot phase under the CEA-FIRST project; (ii) how best the IRC on FNSSA can support research and innovation systems that enable European and African food system transformations through its services and working groups under development.

Stay tuned for more updates in the next newsletter !



Gender & Youth Strategy

We are proud to announce the completion of the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy, marking a major milestone for our consortium. Co-led by YPARD and CORAF, this strategy was developed by the stakeholder input, through extensive inclusive and evidence-based foundation. With this roadmap in place, our focus now shifts to achieving tangible impact. Next, 3 key flagship initiatives are set to be rolled out:

- The Gender and Youth Capacity sharing Summit;
- The CEA-FIRST Gender & Youth Working Group Convenings;
- The CEA-FIRST Mentorship Forum..

Stay tuned for updates on these engaging initiatives !



Linking Researchers and Policymakers



Supporting FNSSA Roadmap

On 13 March, in Brussels, a Consultation on the update of the AU-EU R&I FNSSA Roadmap was held, where the participants contributed to reviewing and validating the emerging recommendations developed under the CEA-FIRST project, for the next phase of the FNSSA Research and Innovation Roadmap (2027- 2035), to refine and enhance the strategic direction and implementation of future initiatives.

FNSSA database

The FNSSA database currently includes more than 2600 organisations connected to ongoing or closed projects within the FNSSA subject area. By being one of them, you are part of a community with vast opportunities for future project collaboration and funding by finding new partners, as well as being found yourself !

Add your project [here](#)

EUROPEAN UNION - AFRICAN UNION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Promotion of Agricultural Products (AGRIP)



A total budget of **5 000 000 euro** is allocated to highlight at least one of the specific features of agricultural production methods in the Union, particularly in terms of food safety, traceability, authenticity, labelling, nutritional and health aspects, animal welfare, respect for the environment and sustainability, and the characteristics of agricultural and food products, particularly in terms of their quality, taste, diversity or traditions. **Deadline: 23 April 2025**

Read more [here](#)

Grants for Grassroots Projects in Uganda



A total budget of **US\$ 100 000** is allocated by the Embassy of Japan in Uganda for its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) which provide financial assistance to non-profit, development-oriented organizations to support community development projects which directly benefit people at the grassroots level. The designated domains include agricultural development.

Deadline for second submission: **15th July 2025.**

Read more [here](#):

The O' Shaughnessy Fellowships



The O' Shaughnessy Fellowships offer **US\$100 000** equity-free grants to individuals worldwide pursuing research, creative projects, or innovation. Additional **US\$10 000** grants are available to select applicants based on the Fellowship application.

Deadline extended until **30th April 2025.**

Read more [here](#):



More funding opportunities here:

EVENTS WITH CEA-FIRST PARTICIPATION



The Science Forum, 4 to 6 December 2024, Pretoria, South Africa

The Forum served as a large, open, public platform for debating the science and society interface. Details [here](#).

As mentioned in the last newsletter, there was a session on reducing Systemic Research, Innovation, Funding and Policy fragmentation within food systems through the EU-AU International Research Consortium on FNSSA, organized by members of the CEA-FIRST Consortium (ACU, ARC, FANRPAN). The inputs from the audience included: leveling of regulatory barriers across public and private sectors, facilitating identification of policies to be supported through research, getting administrative support for running projects, setting up national databases enabling data collection for projects.



Research - policy workshops in 2025

For our sister project, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning team, which operates across both projects held 8 multi-actor workshops between 24 February and 6 March 2025, to explore how to capitalise on synergies between EU-AU R&I funding and national policy implementation efforts. Some of the key findings include: the need to understand funding priorities to target combined efforts to maximise impact; need to connect the various sectors and departments with regards to policy formulation and implementation; research should be more policy oriented from the start of the project proposal; mapping the concerned actors' areas of interest and roles; increase the impact of research-derived policy by actively involving the policy makers in research and innovation processes.

Another research-policy workshop is planned for 30th May in Pretoria, South Africa.

Stay tuned for updates on the outcomes !



Annual Science-Policy event, 10 March 2025, Wageningen, Netherlands

On 10th March, at the annual Science-Policy event organized by the DGIS (Directorate-General for International Cooperation) and WUR (Wageningen University and Research), the CEA-FIRST project Coordinator presented the EU-AU efforts to operationalise an International Research Consortium a long-term platform on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) in line with the FNSSA roadmap of the EU-AU High Level Dialogue (HLPD). These efforts include:

- Creation of a transdisciplinary stakeholder dialogue structure,
- Secretariat support to the AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue and FNSSA Working Group,
- Facilitation of gender & youth and a funders Working Groups, including an innovative funding mechanism,
- Proactive identification of opportunities for the scaling of innovations and sharing of knowledge between projects, programmes, and food system actors,
- Brokerage and clustering between multi-actor groups, including agri-policy makers, extension and advisory services, and researchers.



UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

CGIAR Science Week, 7-11 April 2025, United Nations Office Nairobi, United Nations Avenue, Gigiri, Kenya

Participants will learn about CGIAR Research Portfolio 2025-2030 through dedicated Parallel Sessions on Science Programs & Accelerators, and discover cutting-edge science from CGIAR centers worldwide through Science Talks, Innovation Showcases, and Research Workshops. The event also offers the chance to see, first-hand, transformative innovations improving the lives of vulnerable communities in our Exhibition Area and to explore CGIAR and partner labs and research stations during Field Visits to see science in action.

Read more [here](#):

AfricaWide Agricultural Extension Week (AAEW), 12th May- 16th May 2025, Lilongwe, Malawi

Rebranding Extension for Enhanced Public/Private Sector Driven Commercialization Industrialization and Inclusive Food Systems

Read more and register [here](#):

4th International Conference on Financing for Development, 30 June - 3 July 2025, Seville, Spain

FFD4 aspires to build a renewed global financing framework that will unlock greater volumes of capital at a lower cost. In Sevilla, and through a renewed global financing framework, leaders are taking action to deliver an SDG investment push and to reform the international financial architecture to enable the transformative change that the world urgently needs.

Read more [here](#):

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Book: Pathways to African Food Security Challenges, Threats and Opportunities towards 2050, 2025, Michiel de Haas, Ken E. Giller (Eds.)

This book examines Africa ' s current food system and future challenges for food security over the next 25 years. This book is essential reading for students, scholars and practitioners who work on global food security, sustainable food systems, food, health and nutrition and African development.

Read more [here](#):

Book: Compendium of forgotten foods in Africa, 2024, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)

Transforming food systems in Africa is an imperative for the realization of the UN ' s Sustainable Development Goals, which now has a delivery timeline of less than a decade.

Indeed, Indigenous communities across Africa have used a number of locally adapted crops for millennia mainly for nutrition , medicinal and ornamental purposes. Unfortunately, many of these crops, have been progressively substituted with imported genotypes favoured by industrial agriculture. Pervasive monoculture of the exotic crops and increasingly standardized diets have contributed in part to utter denigration of the indigenous crops, earning them the appellation of "forgotten crops. "

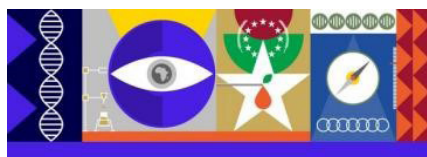
Read more [here](#):

Journal article: Characterizing avocado production systems for Ugandan exports: the need for consolidation and support for sustainable development, 2025, Sseruwagi, P., Lehmann, E., Sigombe, P., Ddamulira, G., Van Casteren, J. W., and De Bauw, P., Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, issue 9

This study highlights several comparative advantages and opportunities for the Hass sector in Uganda and identifies the priority challenges to be tackled in future investments and interventions targeting a sustainable avocado industry.

Read more [here](#):

OTHER INTERESTING NEWSLETTERS



The AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation Newsletter - check the latest version [here](#):

Keep an eye on the upcoming [one](#) !



Newsletter of the EC Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security - check the latest version [here](#):

Watch out for the upcoming [ones](#) !



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**Funded by
the European Union**

We would very much appreciate your insights about our newsletter, so we can tailor its content to better align with your interests. Kindly take a few minutes to fill in our short survey [here](#)

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