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Aligning the World Bank AgriConnect Initiative with the CAADP Kampala Declaration

A strategic imperative for transforming Africa's agrifood systems

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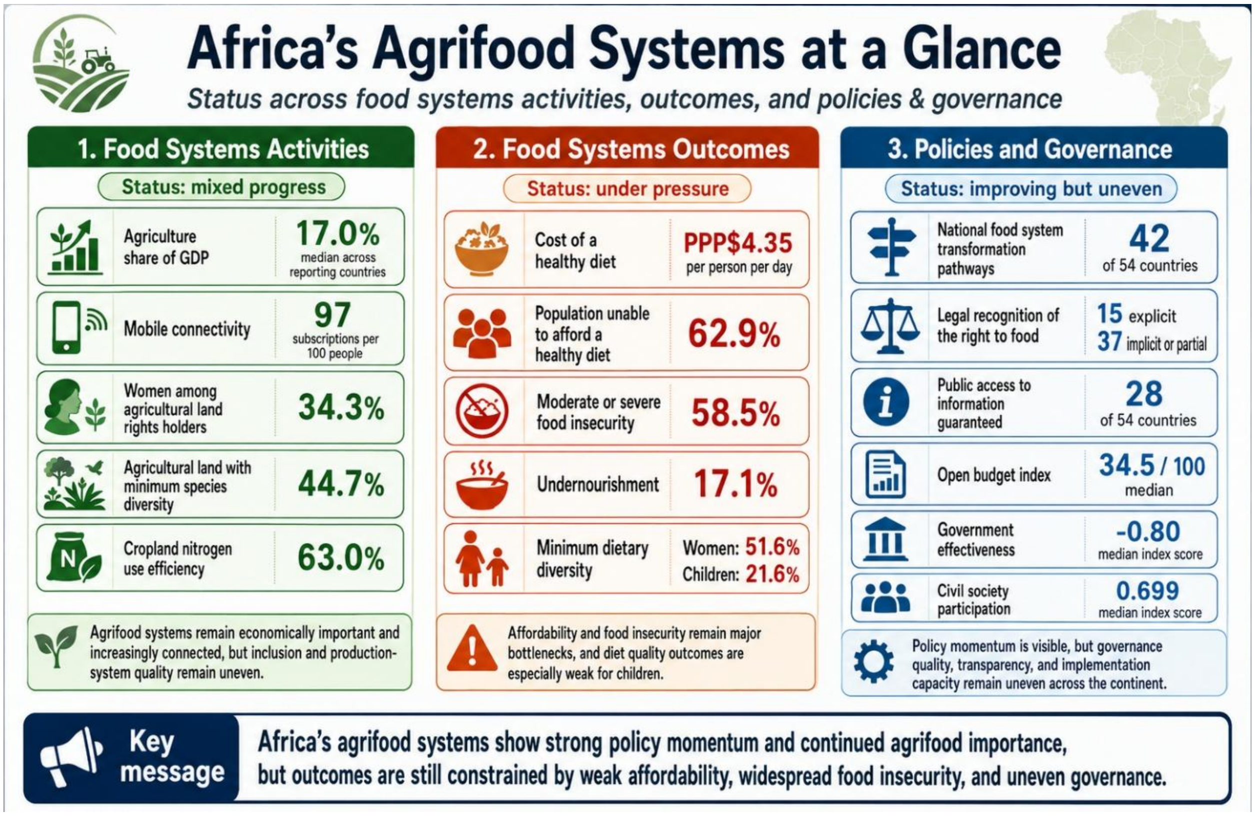
Over the past two decades, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has become Africa's primary, African-owned framework for agricultural transformation. CAADP provides a coherent framework for agrifood sector planning and implementation, guided by shared goals and anchored in core principles of African ownership, evidence-based planning, inclusive dialogue, and mutual accountability. It has elevated agriculture on the political agenda, guided national and regional investment plans, strengthened policy coordination and stakeholder participation, and established continental mutual accountability through the CAADP Biennial Review. Evidence also links CAADP implementation to improvements in agricultural productivity, agricultural trade, poverty reduction, and nutritional outcomes (Benin, 2016; Matchaya, and Greffiths, 2025).

Yet these gains have not produced transformation at the scale required. Africa still faces persistent food insecurity, low productivity, limited agro-industrialization, large postharvest losses, weak regional market integration, and rising exposure to climate and economic shocks. Rapid population growth, urbanization, conflict, debt pressures, and constrained public budgets further increase the demands placed on agrifood systems.

Recent assessments confirm that progress toward resilient, healthy, and sustainable food systems remains too slow and that nutritious diets remain unaffordable for many Africans (Dougill et al., 2025). Figure 1 summarizes the central challenge: policy momentum is strong and agrifood systems are economically vital, but food systems outcomes remain under weak and governance performance is uneven.

Figure 1. Status of Africa's agrifood systems



Source: Author using data from https://www.foodcountdown.org/

In January 2025, African Union Heads of State and Government adopted the Kampala CAADP Declaration on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa (AU, 2025b). Covering 2026 to 2035, it broadens CAADP's scope from agriculture to the full agrifood system and establishes 6 commitments, 22 continental targets, and 48 intervention areas, implemented through National and Regional Agrifood Systems Investment Plans (NASIPs and RASIPs), Joint Sector Reviews, and the Biennial Review (AU, 2025a, 2025b; AKADEMIYA2063, 2025).

At the same time, the World Bank Group's AgriConnect initiative aims to connect smallholders to markets, finance, infrastructure, digital technologies, producer organizations, and agribusiness opportunities. It combines public finance, private investment, policy reform, and value chain development under country compacts, backed by the World Bank Group's commitment to doubling annual agribusiness financing to US$9 billion by 2030 and mobilizing an additional US$5 billion annually (World Bank Group, 2024, n.d.).

This creates a major opportunity: AgriConnect can become a financing and delivery platform for Africa's own agrifood systems transformation agenda. To do so, it should align with the Kampala Declaration at continental, regional, and national levels, especially through country NASIPs and regional RASIPs, rather than create parallel planning, investment, implementation, and reporting systems.

This policy note argues that such alignment would strengthen African ownership and accountability, regional integration, and development impact. Drawing on Ingram and Thornton's (2022) food systems transformation framework, it shows that coherent policy, investment, institutional, and market signals are essential for changing actor behavior and achieving shared outcomes.

Africa’s Agrifood Systems: Why Transformation Can No Longer Be Delayed

Africa’s agrifood systems must feed a rapidly growing and urbanizing population, create jobs, improve nutrition, build climate resilience, reduce poverty, and support structural transformation. Persistent hunger, low productivity, limited value addition, high losses, weak regional trade, and climate vulnerability show that incremental improvements are no longer enough.

The Kampala Declaration translates this challenge into measurable goals for 2035: increase agrifood output by 45 percent; halve postharvest losses; triple intra-African agrifood trade; raise locally processed food to 35 percent of agrifood GDP; mobilize US$100 billion in public and private investment; reduce extreme poverty by 50 percent; improve nutrition; empower women and youth; place at least 30 percent of agricultural land under sustainable management; and protect 40 percent of households from shocks (AU, 2025b).

The urgency is reinforced by interacting pressures from climate change, conflict, inflation, debt, pests, and disease, alongside longstanding constraints in finance, technology, infrastructure, market access, and natural resource management (Dougill et al., 2025; Fanzo et al., 2023; IFPRI, 2022; Henning and Ulimwengu, 2026). These constraints reinforce one another across production, processing, trade, consumption, and governance.

A food systems lens is therefore essential. Transformation occurs when policies, investments, institutions, technologies, and markets create coherent incentives for farmers, firms, financiers, traders, governments, researchers, and consumers to change their behavior in ways that improve food security, livelihoods, resilience, and environmental sustainability (Ingram and Thornton, 2022).

Africa needs coordinated investments that address these linked constraints and contribute to measurable outcomes. Table 1 illustrates how the Kampala CAADP agenda seeks to address key structural challenges and related agrifood systems consequences through corresponding transformation interventions, commitments, and targets.

Table 1. Selected agrifood system challenges and Kampala CAADP responses

Structural challenge	System consequences	Kampala CAADP transformation response
Low productivity	Low farmer incomes and persistent food deficits	Increase agrifood output by 45%
High postharvest losses	Reduced food availability and farmer income	Reduce postharvest losses by 50%
Weak processing and value addition	Lost jobs and industrialization opportunities	Raise locally processed food to 35% of agrifood GDP
Limited regional trade	Continued import dependence and fragmented markets	Triple intra-African agrifood trade

Structural challenge	System consequences	Kampala CAADP transformation response
Underinvestment	Slow modernization and weak competitiveness	Mobilize US$100 billion in public and private investment
Vulnerability to shocks incl. climate	Recurrent livelihood and food security shocks	Put 30% of agricultural land under sustainable management and protect 40% of households from shocks
Low incomes and costly diets	Rising poverty and hunger	Achieve zero hunger, reduce extreme poverty by 50%, reduce child stunting, wasting, and overweight by 25%; enable 60% of population to afford a healthy diet
Gender and youth exclusion	Lost productivity, innovation, and employment potential	Empower 30% of women and 30% of youth in agrifood systems

Source: Authors' illustration of selected Kampala Declaration targets

Why the Kampala CAADP Declaration Is the Right Framework for Transformation

The Kampala Declaration is the most legitimate organizing framework for Africa's agrifood systems transformation: It is African-led, continentally endorsed, and grounded in two decades of CAADP experience. Its development was informed by extensive consultations involving governments, regional economic communities (RECs), farmers' organizations, the private sector, civil society, research institutions, development partners, and youth and women, complemented by analytical input from African centers of excellence and thematic technical groups.

It is also fit for purpose. The Declaration moves beyond production to cover agro-industrialization, trade, investment, nutrition, inclusion, resilience, environmental sustainability, and governance. Its targets make progress measurable, while NASIPs, RASIPs, Joint Sector Reviews, and Biennial Reviews connect political commitments to investment, implementation, learning, and accountability (AU, 2025a).

For development partners, this architecture provides a common reference point. Aligning major initiatives with Kampala commitments and national and regional investment plans reduces fragmentation, strengthens public institutions, and makes partner contributions visible within Africa's own results and accountability framework. AgriConnect should therefore be treated as an implementation and financing instrument for the Kampala agenda, not as a separate transformation framework.

Why AgriConnect Must Align with the Kampala CAADP Declaration

AgriConnect and the Kampala Declaration are highly complementary. Both emphasize productivity, farmer organizations, rural infrastructure, irrigation, digital agriculture, market access, value addition, agribusiness development, finance, climate resilience, policy reform, and the inclusion of women and youth.

Complementarity, however, does not automatically produce alignment. Separate planning cycles, investment pipelines, indicators, and reporting systems can increase transaction costs, stretch limited institutional capacity, and weaken national ownership. Alignment should operate across four connected levels, as shown in Figure 2:

Continental alignment. AgriConnect as an Africa-wide initiative should explicitly align its objectives and portfolio with the Kampala commitments, targets, and intervention areas. Country investments can then be mapped to the relevant CAADP outcomes without requiring every activity to address every target.

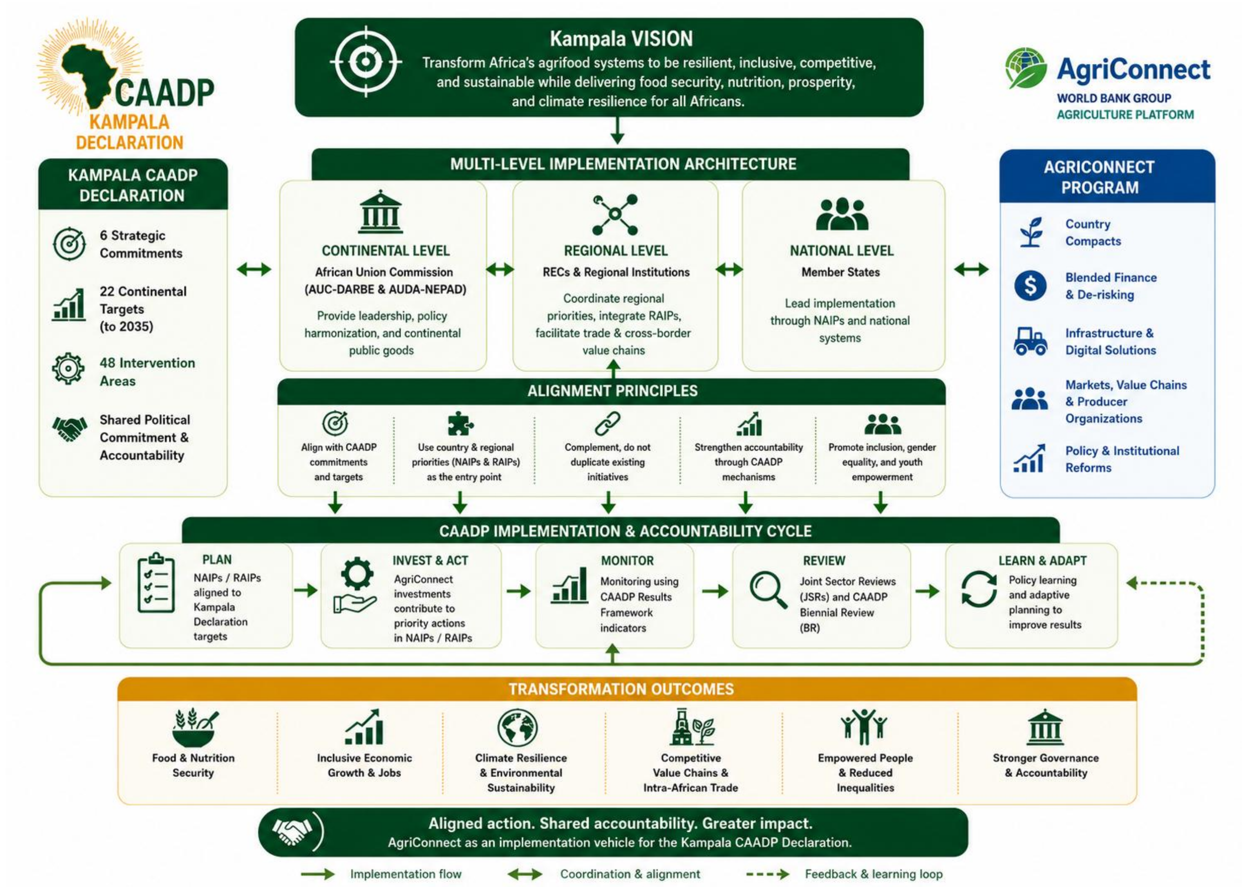
Regional alignment. AgriConnect should support RECs and countries in developing cross-border value chains, logistics corridors, seed and fertilizer markets, livestock systems, food safety standards, and other regional public goods needed to realize the opportunities created by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Domestic agricultural development and regional market integration are mutually reinforcing: trade liberalization alone is insufficient, while productivity gains cannot be fully realized without larger and better-connected markets (Janssens et al., 2022).

National alignment. AgriConnect country compacts should be embedded in NASIPs or equivalent national agrifood investment strategies, medium-term expenditure frameworks, and Joint Sector Reviews, with national governments serving as the principal conveners.

Monitoring and accountability alignment. AgriConnect should use existing indicators from NASIPs, the CAADP Results Framework, Joint Sector Reviews, and Biennial Review wherever possible, rather than creating additional CAADP indicators or parallel reporting systems.

Aligning AgriConnect with CAADP across these four levels would allow the World Bank program to retain its institutional identity while directing its financial, technical, and convening power toward Africa's agreed transformation outcomes.

Figure 2. Aligning AgriConnect with the Kampala CAADP implementation architecture



Kenya case study: Illustrating the need for alignment

Kenya's draft AgriConnect Compact and its 2026–2030 NASIP have substantial overlap in the areas of productivity, irrigation, mechanization, agro-industrialization, market systems, climate resilience, digital transformation, finance, and institutional strengthening. The key difference is institutional: Kenya's NASIP is the country's official CAADP-aligned investment and implementation plan, while the AgriConnect Compact is a World Bank-led financing compact[1]. The NASIP provides the strategic framework and financing, implementation, and monitoring mechanisms needed to transform the country's agrifood systems.

The practical implication is that AgriConnect should finance and accelerate NASIP priorities rather than establish a parallel framework. This would strengthen country ownership, reduce duplication, and align World Bank support with Kenya's existing financing, implementation, and monitoring architecture.

[1] https://www.kbc.co.ke/kagwe-launches-11-4b-agriconnect-compact-for-2-4m-jobs/

Table 2. Comparison of the Kenya AgriConnect Compact and NASIP (2026–2030)

Kenya AgriConnect Compact	Kenya NASIP (2026–2030)	Implication for Alignment
Increase agricultural productivity through investments in irrigation, mechanization, improved technologies, and priority value chains (Pillar I).	Flagships 1 and 3 focus on increasing productivity, expanding irrigation, mechanization, and medium-to-large-scale production.	AgriConnect investments can directly finance NASIP productivity priorities rather than establishing parallel investment pipelines.
Value addition and agro-processing to increase processing capacity, reduce postharvest losses, and create jobs (Pillar II).	Flagship 4 prioritizes agro-industrialization, value addition, agro-processing, and stronger market competitiveness.	AgriConnect can serve as a financing vehicle for NASIP's agro-industrialization agenda.
Market systems transformation, including aggregation, logistics, sanitary and phytosanitary compliance, export competitiveness, and regional trade (Pillar III).	Flagships 4 and 5 prioritize improved market access, trade competitiveness, food and feed safety, and value chain development.	Both frameworks seek to improve market performance.
Policy, finance, digital systems, public-private partnerships, blended finance, and regulatory reforms as cross-cutting enablers (Pillar IV).	Flagships 7, 8, and 9 emphasize research and innovation, digital transformation, agricultural finance, institutional strengthening, and blended finance.	AgriConnect should strengthen—not duplicate—NASIP's financing, innovation, and institutional architecture.
Private sector mobilization and crowding-in investment through de-risking and blended finance.	NASIP establishes a KES 1.081 trillion investment framework and a NASIP Blended Finance Facility to mobilize public and private investment.	AgriConnect financing should be aligned with NASIP's resource mobilization framework.
Climate resilience and sustainable food systems integrated across all pillars.	Flagship 6 focuses on strengthening resilience to climate and other shocks across Kenya's agrifood systems.	Climate investments should reinforce NASIP's resilience agenda.
Employment and inclusive economic transformation are central outcomes (2.48 million jobs).	NASIP targets job creation through agrifood transformation while emphasizing youth, women, vulnerable groups, and inclusive growth.	Both initiatives pursue the same development outcomes, suggesting a common results framework.

Source: Kenya NASIP and AgriConnect Compact.

The Cost of Misalignment: Why Parallel Approaches Undermine Transformation

Misalignment would reduce the value of AgriConnect by fragmenting investment planning, multiplying reporting requirements, weakening regional coordination, and sending inconsistent policy and market signals. It could also make it harder to balance commercially attractive investments with essential public goods such as research, extension, rural infrastructure, food safety, climate services, producer organizations, and statistical capacity.

AgriConnect's financing model places strong emphasis on mobilizing private capital alongside public finance through blended finance instruments, derisking mechanisms, and commercially oriented value chain investments. While this approach is essential for expanding investment in Africa's agrifood systems, it also raises the question of how commercially attractive investments can be balanced with investments in public goods and broader development objectives. This is not a criticism of AgriConnect's mix of public and private investment. Rather, it is an argument for using the Kampala framework to ensure that the overall portfolio remains balanced, inclusive, climate-resilient, and connected to national and regional priorities.

Regional misalignment would also limit opportunities to build cross-border value chains and harmonize standards under the AfCFTA. Inclusion and resilience could suffer if commercially connected producers and locations benefit disproportionately while women, youth, vulnerable groups, and fragile or climate-exposed areas receive insufficient attention (Chevallier, 2024).

Ingram and Thornton's (2022) framework helps explain these risks: fragmented policies and investments create inconsistent signals for food systems actors, while alignment around shared outcomes encourages coordinated adaptation across the system.

Table 3 summarizes the main costs of misalignment and the corresponding benefits of alignment with the Kampala CAADP framework.

Table 3. The cost of misalignment

Area of misalignment	Likely consequence	Benefit of alignment with Kampala CAADP
Separate planning frameworks	Fragmented national investment priorities	Investments reinforce NAIPs and RAIPs
Parallel monitoring systems	Higher reporting burden and weaker accountability	Common indicators through the CAADP Biennial Review
Narrow investment focus	Underinvestment in public goods and enabling systems	Balanced investment across public and private priorities
National-only programming	Lost opportunities for regional value chains and AfCFTA	Integrated regional investment and market development
Weak inclusion safeguards	Marginalization of women, youth, vulnerable groups, and fragile areas	Inclusive transformation aligned with CAADP commitments
Limited climate integration	Unsustainable productivity gains and increased climate risks	Climate-resilient and sustainable agrifood systems
Multiple policy signals	Inconsistent incentives and slower transformation	Coherent systemwide transformation driven by shared objectives

Strengthening Alignment through a Food Systems Transformation Lens

The need to align AgriConnect with the Kampala CAADP Declaration becomes even more compelling when viewed through the food systems transformation framework developed by Ingram and Thornton (2022). Their framework offers a practical way of understanding how transformation occurs and, importantly, why fragmented interventions often fail to produce systemic change. Rather than viewing transformation as simply increasing agricultural production or expanding investments, Ingram and Thornton argue that transformation should be understood as a deliberate process of improving food system outcomes through coordinated changes in the behavior of actors across the food system, driven by coherent policy and investment signals.

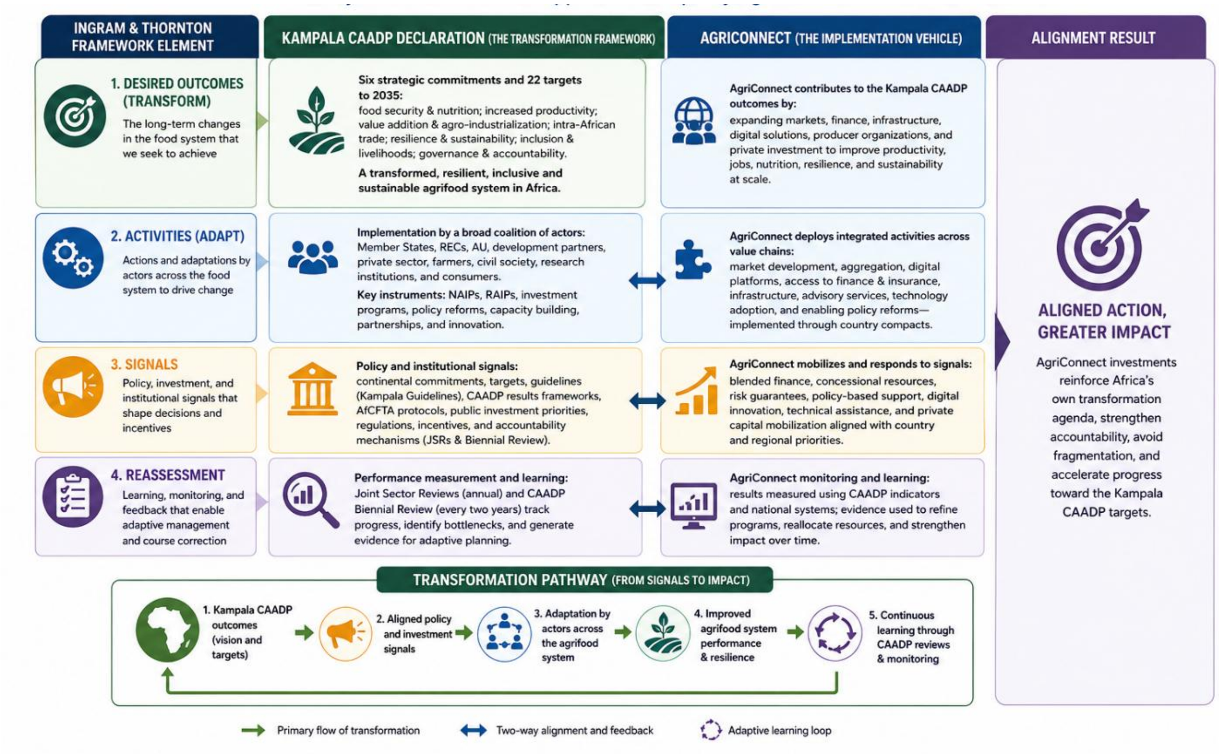
A key contribution of the framework is its distinction between food systems outcomes, food systems activities, and the signals that influence those activities. Outcomes are the ultimate societal objectives, including food and nutrition security, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and resilience. Activities are the actions undertaken by farmers, processors, traders, financial institutions, consumers, governments, and other actors throughout the food system. These activities do not change spontaneously; they respond to signals generated by policies, regulations, investments, markets, technologies, institutions, and incentives. Transformation therefore occurs when these signals consistently encourage actors to adapt their behavior in ways that improve overall food systems outcomes.

This perspective has profound implications for the implementation of AgriConnect in Africa. The Kampala CAADP Declaration defines the outcomes that Africa seeks to achieve: higher agrifood productivity, increased value addition, expanded regional trade, improved nutrition, greater inclusion, stronger resilience, and better governance. These outcomes are expressed through measurable continental targets and supported by agreed intervention areas and accountability mechanisms. AgriConnect, by contrast, provides activities that can help deliver these outcomes through investments in finance, infrastructure, digital agriculture, producer organizations, policy reform, irrigation, logistics, agribusiness development, and market integration. The missing link is alignment of signals. Unless AgriConnect's investments, incentives, monitoring systems, and implementation arrangements reinforce the policy signals established by the Kampala Declaration, the program risks driving adaptation in directions that only partially contribute to Africa's agreed transformation objectives.

Seen in this way, the Kampala Declaration functions as Africa's overarching transformation architecture, while AgriConnect becomes one of several implementation platforms that generate the investment and institutional signals needed to move agrifood systems toward the desired outcomes. Rather than creating its own transformation agenda, AgriConnect should reinforce the signals already established through CAADP. This means that financing decisions, value chain selection, infrastructure investments, policy reforms, digital innovations, and private sector partnerships should all be explicitly designed to accelerate progress toward Kampala targets.

The implication is that alignment should move beyond coordination meetings or harmonized reporting. It should extend to the design of incentives, financing instruments, policy reforms, implementation arrangements, monitoring systems, and institutional partnerships (Figure 3). In practical terms, every AgriConnect compact should begin with the questions, which Kampala CAADP outcomes will this intervention help achieve, through which behavioral changes, and by what policy and investment signals? Answering these questions would fundamentally reposition AgriConnect from being a stand-alone investment program to being a catalyst for Africa's broader agrifood systems transformation.

Figure 3. Applying a food systems transformation lens to alignment



Analytical Work for Effective Alignment

Achieving meaningful alignment between the World Bank's AgriConnect Program and the Kampala CAADP Declaration requires more than mapping program activities to continental priorities. It also requires rigorous analysis to ensure investments address the most critical constraints to agrifood systems transformation, reflect country-specific contexts, and deliver measurable national and continental outcomes. Without such analysis, alignment risks becoming a compliance exercise rather than a strategic process that strengthens investment quality and development impact.

Each AgriConnect country compact should be based on an integrated agrifood systems transformation diagnostic that identifies binding constraints affecting productivity, value chains, processing, trade, nutrition, finance, infrastructure, climate resilience, natural resources, governance, gender, youth employment, and institutional capacity.

The diagnostic should map those constraints to the six Kampala commitments and to national NASIP priorities. Regional diagnostics should identify cross-border investments where coordinated action through RECs can generate greater returns than isolated national projects. Evidence suggests that agriculture-led strategies perform best when investments are prioritized within comprehensive national plans, while effective investment in areas such as seed systems requires interpretation of market intelligence rather than data compilation alone (Diallo and Wouterse, 2023; Dirks and Borman, 2023).

The analytical agenda should therefore move beyond traditional feasibility studies. It should include value-chain competitiveness assessments, climate-risk and natural capital analyses, investment gap assessments, nutrition diagnostics, gender and youth inclusion analyses, political economy assessments, regional trade analyses, and institutional capacity assessments. Together, these analyses would enable AgriConnect investments to address the most important system constraints while contributing directly to the targets established under the Kampala Declaration.

Finally, analytical work should not end once investments are approved. Continuous learning is central to both the CAADP Biennial Review process and the Ingram and Thornton framework, which emphasizes the need to continually reassess whether policy and investment signals are producing the desired behavioral changes and food systems outcomes. AgriConnect should therefore support adaptive management through periodic diagnostics, real-time monitoring, impact evaluation, and policy learning, enabling governments and partners to adjust implementation in response to emerging evidence. In doing so, analytical work becomes not simply a preparatory activity but an integral component of Africa's agrifood systems transformation architecture.

Recommendations

AgriConnect can become a major delivery platform for the Kampala agenda, but only through deliberate institutional, analytical, and operational alignment. The following actions focus on the essential responsibilities of each actor.

World Bank Group. Formally recognize the Kampala Declaration as the strategic framework for AgriConnect in Africa. Require each country compact to include a CAADP Alignment Framework showing links to the six commitments, relevant continental targets, the country's NASIP, and relevant RAIPs. Use NASIP indicators, the CAADP Results Framework, Joint Sector Reviews, and Biennial Review indicators wherever possible. Publish a transparent country-status dashboard covering compact status, financing, priorities, expected outcomes, and alignment with CAADP targets. The World Bank can also leverage its comparative advantage in financing, policy reform, private-sector mobilization, and institutional coordination.

African Union Commission and AUDA-NEPAD. Develop an AgriConnect–CAADP Alignment Protocol setting minimum standards for continental, national, regional, and accountability alignment. Facilitate peer learning and include alignment assessments in CAADP review processes.

National governments. Integrate AgriConnect compacts into national planning, budgeting, NASIP implementation, and Joint Sector Reviews. Use inclusive steering arrangements involving producer organizations, the private sector, women, youth, research institutions, civil society, and development partners.

Regional economic communities. RECs should work with the World Bank and participating governments to identify investments capable of generating economies of scale and increasing regional competitiveness, ensuring that AgriConnect contributes not only to national development but also to regional market integration. This can include identifying and coordinating regional investments in value chains, cross-border infrastructure, seed and fertilizer systems, livestock corridors, sanitary and phytosanitary systems, digital trade platforms, and logistics networks supporting AfCFTA.

Development partners. Use AgriConnect as a platform for coordinated investment around nationally-led priorities. Partners should contribute according to comparative advantage while avoiding parallel planning, delivery, and reporting systems. The African Development Bank can support infrastructure and agro-industrialization; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) can strengthen smallholder institutions and inclusion.

Knowledge institutions. Embed African knowledge institutions in diagnostics, investment prioritization, climate-risk analysis, monitoring, evaluation, and learning throughout the program cycle. CGIAR can provide research and innovation; the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and AKADEMIYA2063 can support policy analysis and monitoring. Together, these actions would establish a partnership model in which international finance reinforces African-owned strategies, strengthens continental institutions, and contributes directly to measurable agrifood systems outcomes.

The Kampala CAADP Declaration provides Africa with a legitimate, results-oriented framework for food security, agro-industrialization, resilience, inclusion, and regional integration. AgriConnect brings finance, technical capacity, policy reform, and private sector mobilization that can help deliver on those ambitions.

The question is no longer whether Africa has strategies or whether development partners have resources. The challenge is ensuring that these resources are deployed through a coherent transformation architecture. Drawing on the food systems transformation framework of Ingram and Thornton (2022), this policy note argues that transformational change depends on aligning policy, finance, institutions, and incentives around shared outcomes. The Kampala Declaration defines those outcomes while AgriConnect provides many of the instruments needed to achieve them.

The future success of AgriConnect should therefore be judged not only by its operational performance but also by its contribution to Africa's own development agenda. When fully aligned with the Kampala CAADP Declaration, AgriConnect can move beyond being a financing initiative to become a strategic implementation platform that accelerates delivery of Africa's vision for resilient, productive, inclusive, and sustainable agrifood systems. Such alignment would strengthen national ownership, improve accountability, enhance regional integration, maximize development impact, and demonstrate a new model of partnership in which global investments reinforce African priorities rather than operate alongside them.

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