



UKÀMÀ BRIEF

CATALYZING GREEN INDUSTRIALIZATION IN AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING

**Strategic considerations for Africa-Europe
collaboration**

**Catherine Kilelu (ACTS), Cecilia D'Alessandro (ECDPM), Daniel Adeniyi (ECDPM),
Elisabeth Hege (IDDRI), Gboyega Olorunfemi (CCCD)**

JANUARY 2025

Ukàmà

Solidarity for prosperity

CATALYZING GREEN INDUSTRIALIZATION IN AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING

Strategic considerations for Africa-Europe collaboration

Catherine Kilelu (African Centre for Technology Studies, ACTS),
Cecilia D'Alessandro (European Centre for Development Policy Management, ECDPM),
Daniel Adeniyi (European Centre for Development Policy Management, ECDPM),
Elisabeth Hege (Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, IDDRI),
Gboyega Olorunfemi, Centre for Climate Change and Development (CCCD)

Citation

Catherine Kilelu, Cecilia D'Alessandro, Daniel Adeniyi, Elisabeth Hege, Gboyega Olorunfemi (2025).
Catalyzing green industrialization in agri-food processing - Strategic considerations for Africa-Europe collaboration,
Ukama.

Disclaimer :

The aim of this project was to discuss a variety of views therefore each paper does only reflect the views of the author(s) and not the views of other participants in the project or the Ukama network as a whole.

This paper has received financial support from ADEME (French Agency for Ecological Transition).



Ukama

Solidarity for prosperity

The Ukama platform aims at building an informal dialogue process between a diversity of African and European experts bringing together perspectives of the Europe-Africa cooperation, including Climate, Sustainable Development, Economic transformation, International Cooperation, Finance and Trade to facilitate the emergence of such shared expectations. The main objective of the platform is to convene critical thinkers to help set out the themes and issues that are relevant for shared sense of prosperity for Africa and Europe.

CATALYZING GREEN INDUSTRIALIZATION IN AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING

Strategic considerations for Africa-Europe collaboration

CONTENT

GREEN INDUSTRIALIZATION: SHARED PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICA AND EUROPE	4
UNLOCKING GROWTH AND JOBS IN AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING	5
GREEN INDUSTRIALIZATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING	6
POTENTIAL FOR AFRICA-EUROPE COLLABORATION	8
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	9
REFERENCES	11

KEY MESSAGES

The following recommendations highlight key priorities and actions to advance green agri-food industrialization between Africa and Europe.

1. Embed food processing in green industrialization strategies
2. Leverage the green pathway for economic and nutritional gains
3. Strengthen alignment with domestic and regional market opportunities
4. Place inclusivity at the core of food processing strategies
5. Strengthen EU-Africa collaboration on standards and investments

GREEN INDUSTRIALIZATION: SHARED PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICA AND EUROPE

Green industrialization offers a unique opportunity for Africa-Europe collaboration, leveraging their shared priorities for sustainable development and economic transformation. This collaboration could pave the way for developing joint industrial policies and ecosystems (Treyer, Okereke, Hege, 2024). For Africa, green industrialization represents a pathway to accelerate structural economic transformation, shifting from low to high-productive activities, while creating high-quality jobs. This ambition was recently highlighted during the inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee of the African Green Industrialization Initiative spearheaded by Kenya's President Ruto.¹

Europe, on the other hand, seeks to decarbonize its industrial base, reduce its dependence on China, and strengthen its clean industrial technologies. This vision is reflected in the European Commission's commitment to a new clean industrial deal for the EU, alongside clean trade and investment partnerships with partner countries—which are key to securing the supply of raw materials, clean energy, and clean technologies.² These shared ambitions position green industrialization as a strategic theme for the 7th African Union-European Union Summit in 2025, offering a platform to explore collaborative opportunities that can yield mutual benefits. However, the Africa-EU dialogue around green industrialization risks being framed predominantly around European needs and markets—often limited to discussions on green hydrogen and critical raw materials.

This *Policy Brief* argues that agri-food systems, particularly food processing, present strategic industrialization opportunities for African markets' growth and Africa-Europe trade, and there is potential in linking this topic to the broader debate around green industrialization between the two continents. By embracing green industrialization in the agri-food sector, Africa has the opportunity to leapfrog traditional, fossil-fuel-intensive manufacturing, foster green regional and domestic enterprises, and generate substantially more

green jobs, all while aligning with continental and national policy priorities. The objective would be to help close the productivity and competitiveness gap while reducing environmental impacts. The *Brief* also explores how EU-Africa partnerships could support this continental agenda, enabling win-win outcomes and ensuring mutual benefits.

To realize the full potential of agri-based green industrialization, policymakers must tackle critical challenges, including the barriers that have historically impeded agri-industrial growth in Africa, such as imbalances in subsidies, tariff and non-tariff barriers in Europe and the need to fully leverage Africa's comparative advantages, including through regional trade. From 9-11 January 2025, the African Union Assembly will convene in Kampala to decide on the future of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). In the run-up to the Summit and the preparation of the Kampala Declaration, there has been a welcomed renewed focus on the potential of developing food processing industries. At the same time, there is a global and regional push for green industrialization.³ This presents a pivotal opportunity to embed green industrialization within an agenda of agri-food systems transformation and sustainable economic growth, ensuring alignment with the continent's broader development priorities.

¹ Ruto Hosts Inaugural Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative Steering Committee in New York - Cat Radio UK
² POLITICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE NEXT EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2024-2029 Ursula von der Leyen

³ Uganda to Host the African Union Extraordinary Summit on the Ten-Year CAADP Strategy and Action Plan 2026 -2035 in January 2025

UNLOCKING GROWTH AND JOBS IN AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING

The agri-food sector is critical to Africa's development, yet it continues to lag in many respects. Despite notable improvements in many countries, overall productivity lags other regions of the world. The continent still struggles to feed itself with persistently high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, notwithstanding the availability of vast resources. A notable gap is a faltering food processing industry that has barely taken off, despite industrial policy and other interventions that sought to stimulate its growth, domestically and regionally (Malabo Montpellier Panel report, 2024). This lag stems from several factors including infrastructure gaps (e.g. limited energy, transportation and storage); inadequate access to capital and investment to access necessary technologies; market barriers; and a lack of skills and capacities to meet suppliers' demands. Poor quality standards in processing, combined with meagre targeted policy support, further compound these challenges (United Nations University-Wider, 2020). Additionally, weak institutions and poor policy design and implementation have hindered progress in agri-industrialization, despite the continent's agricultural potential. Notably, programs like CAADP have primarily focused on agricultural productivity and food security, rather than explicitly prioritizing food processing. As a result, efforts to promote food processing have often lacked the necessary investment and targeted policy support at the national level.

However, there is now a renewed focus across Sub-Saharan Africa on agri-food processing as a key entry point for inclusive structural transformation. Continental and national policies have increasingly recognized the importance of agri-food industrialization as a catalyst for broader economic transformation and job creation. Key continental strategies such as the Post-Malabo CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement have reinforced the ambitions for investments in food processing to enhance resilience and competitiveness in the agri-food sector. The new CAADP Strategy, in particular, which adopts a food systems approach, spotlights food processing as a crucial component for driving economic growth,

structural transformation, job creation, and shared prosperity.

A major driver of this renewed interest in food processing is the changing demand landscape across Africa, as highlighted in a recent report by the Malabo Montpellier Panel. Factors such as increased urbanization, rising incomes, and shifting dietary preferences are driving demand for processed food. As such, Africa's growing reliance on food imports, particularly processed foods, has become a pressing issue (Malabo Montpellier Panel, 2024). The share of processed foods in Africa's food imports rose from 28% in 2000 to 33% in 2020 (UNCTAD, 2024), and the continent's annual food import bill is projected to reach US\$110 billion by 2025 (AfDB, 2021). This growing import dependency is draining foreign exchange and exacerbating trade imbalances, underscoring the need for stronger local food processing capacity. By investing in food processing, Africa can reduce its reliance on imports, create jobs, and retain more value within the local economy. Moreover, a recent UNIDO-FAO report makes the case for ending hunger and ensuring improved health outcomes through agri-processing by fortification and biofortification to enhance access to nutritious foods, spotlighting the role of the missing or hidden middle (Agra, 2019): small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (UNIDO & FAO, 2024). Women-led SMEs, in particular, face additional barriers such as limited access to finance and markets, despite their significant role in agriculture and agri-processing. These enterprises require targeted support including innovative finance, and access to technical and infrastructure assistance to expand food processing.

Notwithstanding implementation challenges with regional and country-level policies and strategies, the spotlight on food processing underscores its strategic importance. By advancing this agenda, Africa can stimulate industrialization, accelerate agri-food systems transformation, achieve food and nutrition security goals, and enable inclusive economic growth and regional integration through trade.

GREEN INDUSTRIALIZATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING

The renewed focus on boosting food processing in the continent is unfolding within the broader context of a global and regional push toward green industrialization. Green agri-industrialization involves decoupling economic growth in the agri-food sector from the related negative environmental externalities, addressing challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution—which continue to undermine the continent’s development goals (see **Box 1**).

Box 1. Key elements of green industrialization in food processing

The core components of green industrialization in food processing include:

- ▶ Adoption of sustainable agriculture practices and increased utilization of climate-smart ingredients such as forgotten crops and ancient grains that promote biodiversity as part of expanding the processing of unique, functional food products;
- ▶ Viable, green-focused, agri-processing African firms that have access to the tools and enablers and support to start, grow and expand enterprises that can be the fulcrum for a green-led agri-industrialization;
- ▶ Adoption of renewable energy systems to address energy efficiency, reduce emissions and lower production costs. This is enabled through technological innovation coupled with financial and other incentive mechanisms to ease adoption by agri-processing firms.
- ▶ Integration of green technologies (e.g. equipment and machinery) and practices (e.g. automation, digitization) along the food value chain, including production, packaging, transport, logistics, and marketing. This requires necessary enabling factors to be in place for the agri-processing firms.
- ▶ Generation and application of new knowledge and innovations for greening food processing.
- ▶ Incorporating circular bio-economy principles to minimize waste and convert waste into new products and energy sources.

A green pathway to agri-food industrialization is not an end in itself but a means to an end where green technology and business models can be leveraged to increase food processing to meet the growing demand,

reduce the food import bill and enhance supply chains. These measures can enable the region to consider more resource-efficient and sustainable approaches in driving competitive, inclusive industrialization.

However, the pathways to achieving this transformation remain underexplored in recent policies and strategies pushing for accelerating food processing. For example, the Malabo Montpellier Panel Report (2024) on policy innovation options to advance food processing makes limited reference to the potential of green industrialization in food processing.

Despite these gaps, significant opportunities exist to align green industrialization with Africa’s agri-food processing sector. Several African countries have developed green industrialization and green growth policies that highlight agri-food industrialization as a strategic priority. For example, Ethiopia’s Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy⁴ prioritizes agricultural-led industrialization as a driver of economic development that will transition the country to a medium-income economy. Similarly, the Green Morocco Plan and Rwanda’s Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy emphasize food processing as integral to their green growth plans.^{5 6}

The circular bio-economy agenda also presents a key opportunity for green agri-industrialization, gaining global and regional traction—as shown by the Global Bioeconomy Summit in Kenya in October 2024.⁷ The State of the Bioeconomy in East Africa report illustrates how waste generated by the growing food manufacturing sector can provide avenues for processing novel products Virgin *et. al* (2024). Beyond waste upcycling, a bioeconomy approach emphasizes efficient agricultural resource use and

4 Ethiopia’s Climate-Resilient Green Economy - Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform

5 These strategies should also align with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and UNCCD National Action Plans (NAPs), to ensure consistency with global climate and sustainability goals.

6 Republic of Rwanda. Revised Green Growth and Climate Resilience – National Strategy for Climate Change and Low-Carbon Development: https://www.rema.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Rwanda_Green_Growth_Climate_Resilience_Strategy_06102022.pdf.

Green Morocco Plan: <https://www.ada.gov.ma/en/main-achievements-green-morocco-plan>.

7 See, the 2024 annual trends and outlook report: Advancing the climate and bioeconomy agenda in Africa for resilient and sustainable agri-food systems and the Communiqué from the Bioeconomy summit in Nairobi, 2024.

improved processing methods, enabling Africa to retain a larger share of added value within its economies while reducing environmental impacts (G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy, 2024).⁸

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and efforts to develop regional trade corridors provide additional opportunities to expand Africa's agri-food processing industry. By reducing trade barriers and increasing market access, these initiatives can help scale up the production and marketing of processed foods within the continent, fostering the development of regional value chains and strengthening local agri-food industries—particularly within sub-regional blocs, where agri-food trade dynamics are particularly strong. The elimination of tariffs on 90% of goods⁹ under the AfCFTA is expected to make processed foods more competitive and affordable in these regional markets, driving increased sales and deeper market penetration. Complementary continental initiatives, such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), aim to address logistical bottlenecks by improving transport networks and storage facilities. Ensuring that infrastructure within trade corridors and agri-industrial hubs is developed with sustainability at its core—such as integrating green logistics and sustainable cold chains—will be crucial for advancing Africa's agri-food processing sector and unlocking regional trade opportunities (Fox, 2024; UNEP and FAO, 2022).

Agro-industrial hubs such as those promoted under the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs)¹⁰ and Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZs) also hold significant potential. For example, the SAPZ initiative, supported by the African Development Bank and private-sector partners, has pledged US\$3 billion in new investments to transform rural areas into thriving agro-industrial corridors. If fully realized, these hubs could centralize food processing, reduce infrastructure bottlenecks, and create economies of scale.

While green agri-food industrialization may provide opportunities for African countries to integrate into a growing and differentiated global green economy and not remain in the periphery, it also requires caution to ensure it will enable these countries to be on a stronger industrialization pathway and overcome previous inertia (Triki & Said, 2021). For instance, avoiding more carbon-intensive routes may limit options for industrial growth in the short term, particularly for countries with constrained access to green technologies and infrastructure.

Indeed, realizing green agri-industrialization opportunities is not without significant challenges. Firms supplying processed foods to different markets—whether regional or global—must navigate diverse standards, processes, and consumer preferences, which can strain their capacity to compete. Women-owned and women-led firms, in particular, often face unique constraints in accessing green technologies, financing, and markets, limiting their ability to scale operations. Another major challenge lies in the protectionism surrounding key agricultural markets, with many products figuring on lists of exceptions under regional agreements like AfCFTA. Non-tariff barriers (NTBs), such as regulatory misalignment, complex customs procedures, and inconsistent product standards, exacerbate this issue by impeding formal trade flows. These barriers often force cross-border trade into informal channels, limiting the potential for agri-food industrialization and regional integration. Addressing NTBs through streamlined regulatory frameworks, capacity building, and better enforcement of trade agreements will be crucial to unlocking the full potential of AfCFTA (Karkare et al., 2021). Additionally, the harmonization of standards for labelling agricultural products as 'green' remains a significant challenge. Without clear and consistent criteria across countries, there is a risk of environmental dumping and unfair competition. Finally, systemic challenges such as limited access to green technologies and infrastructure, insufficient financing, and gaps in local competencies and innovation capabilities must also be addressed to unlock the opportunities for green agri-food industrialization.

As such, the considerations for green agri-food industrialization require a pragmatic balance to strengthen the pathways across different countries to create value-added opportunities, foster inclusive growth and build resilience.

⁸ See principles 4 and 5 of the high levels principles on bioeconomy adopted as part of the BR G20 presidency: <https://www.gov.br/fazenda/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/setembro/arquivo/2024-09-11-high-level-principles-final-version.pdf>

⁹ FRAMEWORK FOR BOOSTING INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES AND SERVICES

¹⁰ Launched by the African Union in 2019, the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) initiative seeks to enhance local agricultural processing through the development of five agro-industrial zones across Africa. By strengthening food supply corridors, CAAPs aim to reduce the continent's dependency on food imports and promote regional food trade (The Common Africa Agro-Parks (CAAPs) Implementation to Boost Acceleration of the AfCFTA and Promote Continental Agro-Industrialization and Integration | African Union).

POTENTIAL FOR AFRICA-EUROPE COLLABORATION

Africa and Europe share a strategic opportunity to collaborate on catalyzing green agri-food industrialization. The EU, with its technical expertise, financial resources, and established market standards, is well-positioned to support Africa in transforming its agri-food processing sector. This collaboration offers Africa a pathway to accelerate economic transformation, create jobs, and enhance food security through sustainable and value-added industries. At the same time, it offers Europe opportunities to diversify supply chains, secure sustainably processed goods, and expand trade relationships, aligning with the EU's goals of decarbonization, clean industrialization, and reduced dependency on concentrated global supply chains.

European companies can act as 'first movers' in supporting increased processing in African value chains, such as cocoa and coffee, building on similar initiatives in the mineral sector. By investing early, European businesses can position themselves at the forefront of emerging green markets, secure stable and diversified supply chains, and strengthen trade relationships with Africa.

Europe can also provide technical assistance in developing and harmonizing food safety and sustainability standards across diverse markets, building on its own experience. Creating robust food safety and sustainability standards would not only facilitate African exports to EU markets but also strengthen regional and domestic trade systems, including under the AfCFTA (Research Network Sustainable Global Supply Chains, 2022).¹¹ In addition, to ensure these standards are inclusive and achievable, the EU should invest in capacity building, infrastructure, and technology transfer to support African producers in meeting compliance requirements and unlock opportunities for regional and global trade.

The Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package, valued at €150 billion, could also offer a starting point to accelerate green industrialization in agri-food processing. While the package prioritizes sustainability and infrastructure development across

Africa,¹² its current list of flagship projects lacks dedicated initiatives targeting sustainable or green food processing. This represents a significant missed opportunity. Given the critical role that agri-food systems play in climate resilience, economic transformation, and job creation, strategically leveraging the Global Gateway to promote green agri-food processing would support Africa's economic ambitions while enabling the EU to strengthen its role as a key partner in sustainable development. Moreover, integrating biodiversity into the framework is equally critical, as biodiversity underpins agricultural resilience and complements climate adaptation efforts, both of which are priorities for the EU's external and internal policies.

The Team Europe approach and Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) further provide an opportunity to pool resources from the EU, member states, and European financial institutions to support Africa's green agri-food transformation. By mobilizing private sector investment, encouraging technology transfer, and strengthening food systems resilience, TEIs can advance green industrialization in Africa's agri-food processing sector. Central to these efforts is the EU's emphasis on leveraging private sector financing, utilizing loan instruments, and encouraging European businesses to invest in Africa's agri-food value chains. While these initiatives present significant opportunities for investment, job creation, and market expansion, challenges such as mitigating debt risks and ensuring equitable partnerships must be addressed to maximize their impact. Global initiatives, such as the G7 Apulia Food Systems Initiative (AFSI),¹³ further complement Africa-Europe collaboration by mobilizing public and private investments for sustainable food systems, with a particular emphasis on Africa. Platforms like these can support agri-food processing initiatives while aligning with green industrialization goals.

¹¹ See also: #11 What is the effect of environmental standards on agricultural value chains? - Shaping Sustainable Supply Chains - Podcast.

¹² The Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package is a flagship initiative under the EU's broader Global Gateway strategy, announced in 2021. It aims to enhance connectivity between Africa and Europe by prioritizing projects in digitalization, climate and energy, transport, health, education, and research. It is designed to advance sustainable and inclusive development while addressing critical infrastructure gaps across the African continent.

¹³ Apulia G7 Leaders' Communiqué Preamble We, the Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7)

Building innovation capacity is key to operationalizing green agri-food industrialization. Across Africa, small and medium enterprises (SMEs)—including many women-led businesses—are already adopting green technologies, such as solar drying systems, to tap into emerging markets for dried food products, including in Europe.¹⁴ The AU-EU Innovation Agenda offers a

platform to foster collaborative innovation through fellowship programs, incubators, accelerators, and partnerships between African and European entrepreneurs. This can fast-track the development and scaling of sustainable technologies for food processing while enabling knowledge transfer and joint solutions that benefit both regions.

¹⁴ For inspiring examples of African innovation, check here: <https://pafo-africa.org/en/category/programs/current-programs/coleacp/>.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the opportunities and collaboration pathways outlined above, the following recommendations highlight key priorities and actions to advance green agri-food industrialization between Africa and Europe.

1. Embed food processing in green industrialization strategies: From 9-11 January 2025, the African Union Assembly will convene in Kampala to decide on the future of CAADP. In the run-up to the Summit and the preparation of the Kampala Declaration, there has been a welcomed renewed focus on the potential of developing food processing industries. The Malabo Montpellier Panel Report makes a strong case for investment in food processing value chains, as an untapped economic potential. This renewed focus is happening at a time when there is a global and regional push for green industrialization. This *Brief* calls for embedding food processing into the development of green industrialization strategies and bioeconomy approaches, and leveraging green industrialization investment opportunities to increase food processing and create jobs in the agri-food sector. It emphasizes that food processing investment must be done in a manner that aligns with green industrialization aspirations and strategies. Green industrialization is likely to be a prominent part of ministerial discussions at the 7th AU-EU Summit scheduled for 2025. For these discussions to be not only shaped by EU green industrial needs, African priorities and investment needs in the agri-food sector that will be expressed in Kampala should be an important part of AU-EU discussions.

2. Leverage the green pathway for economic and nutritional gains: A green pathway to agri-food industrialization is not an end in itself but a means to leverage green technology and business models to drive food processing, meet the growing demand, reduce the food import bill and minimize food waste, enabling efficient resource utilization to drive sustainable, inclusive, and scalable impact. Thus, greening food processing can derive multiple benefits for African countries. Addressing high energy costs of processing through renewable energy can pull investment by more enterprises into the sector, resulting in multiplier effects on job creation, increased tax revenue and broad economic growth. Furthermore, green technologies can expand the processing of nutrient-dense and long shelf-life products, improving accessibility in regions with higher levels of malnutrition, thus contributing to food and nutrition security.

3. Strengthen alignment with domestic and regional market opportunities: There is a need to strengthen the link between green industrialization pathways and opportunities to accelerate agri-food processing in a way that realizes African countries' aspirations and the objectives of the EU to advance inclusive green growth. This should be reflected in a drive for investment in agri-industrialization in Africa in EU's policies and strategies. Additionally, the green path offers opportunities in domestic and regional markets to meet the demand for healthy processed foods informed by the changing demographic dynamics and lifestyle and dietary

shifts. Thus, a focus on green industrialization as a window for accelerating food processing intersects with the cascading domestic, regional and international markets that can advance Africa's and EU's trade and other mutually beneficial partnership opportunities.

4. Place inclusivity at the core of food processing strategies:

Inclusivity must be at the core of green industrialization strategies, particularly in agri-food processing, to ensure that small-scale farmers and their organizations and SMEs, the backbone of Africa's agri-food systems, can actively participate and benefit. Building on CAADP's experience, policies should prioritize improving access to affordable green technologies—such as solar-powered dryers and energy-efficient processing equipment—and creating innovative financing mechanisms tailored for small actors, including microfinance and blended finance solutions. Strengthening inclusive value chains by fostering partnerships between small-scale producers, SMEs, and larger market actors is equally critical. Investments in skills development and knowledge sharing are also necessary to enable small-scale actors to adopt green practices and integrate into sustainable value chains. Moreover, as women make up a significant share of Africa's agricultural workforce and SMEs, ensuring women's participation in green agri-food processing is essential. Policies and investments must prioritize gender-responsive solutions, such as targeted financing, skills training, and access to green technologies for women entrepreneurs and producers. By embedding inclusivity into agri-food processing, green industrialization can drive equitable growth, enhance food security, and create resilient livelihoods across the continent.

5. Strengthen EU-Africa collaboration on standards and investments:

Strengthening EU-Africa collaboration in agri-food green industrialization presents a critical opportunity to drive sustainable development while fostering mutual economic growth. The EU could leverage its expertise in regulation and standard-setting to provide technical assistance for developing robust internal food standards across African markets. These efforts

can help unlock the potential of Africa's agri-food sector by improving product quality, facilitating access to global markets, and enhancing competitiveness. Moreover, the EU's Global Gateway initiative should prioritize targeted investments in green agri-food processing, aligning with Africa's goals for inclusive and sustainable industrialization. Specific investments could focus on technologies like solar dryers and renewable energy systems, which are critical for SMEs. These innovations would enable African enterprises to scale up processing capabilities, reduce food waste, and increase value addition at the local level. By refocusing existing green initiatives to integrate agri-food priorities and fostering knowledge transfer, innovation, and regulatory alignment, the EU can position itself as a partner in Africa's green transformation. This partnership can further align with the ambitions of next 10-year CAADP Strategy and the African Union's agenda for economic integration, driving long-term, scalable impacts for both regions.

By aligning Africa's priorities for food processing with the EU's expertise and investment tools, green industrialization can serve as a bridge for deeper economic collaboration. This partnership holds the promise of accelerating Africa's agri-food transformation while advancing shared goals of sustainability, resilience, and inclusive growth..

REFERENCES

- African Development Bank (2017). African Economic Outlook 2017: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INDUSTRIALISATION. https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/AEO_2017_Report_Full_English.pdf.
- AGRA (2019). Africa Agriculture Status Reports. THE HIDDEN MIDDLE A QUIET REVOLUTION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR DRIVING AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION. <https://agra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/AASR2019-The-Hidden-Middleweb.pdf>.
- Fox, T., Sayin, L., Peters, T., (2024). The Hot Reality: Living in a +50°C World. University of Birmingham. <https://assets.cleancooling.org/downloads/CCN-The-Hot-Reality-Full-Report.pdf>.
- G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy (GIB) (2024). G20 High-Level Principles on Bioeconomy.
- Karkare, P., Byiers, B., Apiko, P., & Kane, M. (2021). A system, not an error: Informal cross-border trade in West Africa–ECDPM Discussion Paper 300.
- Malabo Montpellier Panel Report (2024). *VALUE-UP: Policy Innovations to Advance Africa's Food Processing Sector for Growth, Jobs, and Health*.
- Republic of Rwanda (2022). Revised Green Growth and Climate Resilience – National Strategy for Climate Change and Low-Carbon Development: https://www.rema.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Rwanda_Green_Growth_Climate_Resilience_Strategy_06102022.pdf.
- Research Network Sustainable Global Supply Chains (2022). Sustainable Global Supply Chains Annual Report 2022. Bonn: German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).
- Treyer, Okereke, Hege (2024). After US elections, Africa and Europe should strengthen partnership for green industrialization. Blog post. <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/blog-post/after-us-elections-africa-and-europe-should-strengthen>.
- Triki, C. & Said, J. (2021). Maximising the green path to industrialisation in Africa. Tony Blair Institute for Global Change: <https://institute.global/insights/climate-and-energy/maximising-green-path-industrialisation-africa>.
- UNCTAD (2024). Trade in processed food. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/stat2023d4_en.pdf.
- UNEP and FAO (2022). Sustainable Food Cold Chains: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward. Nairobi, UNEP and Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0923en>.
- UNIDO and FAO (2024). Ending hunger is possible: An income-generating approach through value addition. <https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/unido-publications/2024-10/UNIDO-FAO%20report%20Ending%20Hunger%20is%20Possible.pdf>.
- United Nations University-Wider (2020). *Structural transformation and inclusive growth in Ghana*, WIDER Working Paper 2020/36.
- Virgin, I., Lutta, A., Senyagwa, J., Osano, P., Tesfaye, K., Tafesse, F., Ochanga, P., Munganyinka, E., Masharabu, T., Ongol, M., Adhiambo, R., Muyambi, F., Kilelu, C., & Haileselassie, T. (2024). The State of Bioeconomy in Eastern Africa: 2024. Stockholm Environment Institute, East African Science and Technology Commission, and Bioinnovate Africa. ISBN: 978-9914-772-58-6.

Ukama
Solidarity for prosperity