



MODERNIZING AFRICAN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM

A Business Case for Investment in Agri-Food System Technologies in Africa

Preface

Africa’s population is expected to exceed 2 billion by 2050, nearly a 100% increase over the current level with upto 60% living in cities. It is estimated that the combined spending power of Africa’s top 18 cities could top \$1.3 trillion. While African agriculture employs as much as 70% of the labor force, it contributes an average of only 15% to the continent’s GDP with only 10% of Africa’s farms being mechanized. Given the potential for significant growth, agriculture can be the engine of Africa's economic transformation for the next 20 years or more.

The Modernizing African Agri-food System initiative (MAA) takes a holistic approach in exploring the adoption of modern technologies to accelerate improvements in the food value chain in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Role of ASABE

The MAA initiative is a part of the ASABE global engagement initiative and is organized as E-2050/MAA.

Why ASABE: Agricultural engineers have played a significant role in transforming American agriculture from subsistence farming to the mega industry it is today. ASABE, representing the profession, is uniquely positioned, in partnership with sister societies, to play a pivotal role in modernizing African agriculture. The society provides consistent and reliable access to a network of professionals with a wide range of expertise that can be harnessed in this effort. ASABE’s leadership in standards development, professional meetings, etc. will be especially valuable in the long-term success of the MAA initiative.

Alignment: The MAA initiative is well-aligned with ASABE’s goal to advance ASABE as the leading source of expertise in agricultural, food, and biological systems engineering (Goal 2). This initiative will also help position ASABE as the preferred engineering society for technical professionals in African agri-food systems (Goal 3) and, in general, raise the prominence of the profession in Africa and beyond (Goal 1).

Structure: The subcommittee will facilitate a variety of transformational activities towards modernizing the African agri-food system, culminating in the establishment of a network of MAA Innovation Hubs in Sub-Saharan Africa. This outlook will necessitate engagement with stakeholders and partners outside ASABE and the U.S. and, thus, the structure that is needed for the success of the initiative is more complex than that of other ASABE committees. The proposed structure of E-2050/MAA is provided in the attached document.

Financial: Funding will be pursued from a variety of funding partners as identified in the Strategic Plan. The MAA funding model includes: 1) Planning (\$125K); 2) Recurring (\$250K/yr); 3) Project-based (case-by-case); and 4) Innovation Hub (50 M for 5 yrs) funding. Some of this funding will be retained by ASABE to offset administrative costs.

Timeline: This is a long-term initiative as outlined in the following activities and milestones chart.

Vision
A modern, productive, and profitable agri-food system in Sub-Saharan Africa that ensures food security, provides economic growth, and improves quality of life in a sustainable, equitable, and responsible manner.

Mission
To promote modernization of African agri-food value chains from production to consumption through development and deployment of modern technologies and methodologies.

Goal
The overall goal of this initiative is to create a framework that brings together stakeholders including entrepreneurs, innovators, investors/financial institutions, academic institutions, policy makers and farmers to create an ecosystem to promote modernization of the African agri-food system.

2019

ASABE AIM, Boston, MA
MAA initiative discussed at ANGASABE
Planning committee formed

2020

Special Session at ASABE AIM
Made contacts and connections
Clearly defined MAA activities/outcomes

2021

ASABE AIM, Anaheim, CA
Day-long special events
Present strategic plan, identify stakeholders
Seek funding, engage partners

2023 +

Bi-annual event rotating in different countries in Africa
Continuous assessment, improvement of MAA Initiative

Planning Committee: Ajit Srivastava (Co-Lead); Klein Ileleji (Co-Lead); Margaret Gitau (Co-Lead); Akindele Folarin Alonge; Kifle Gebremedhin; Kumar Mallikarjunan; Umezuruike Linus Opara; Michael Ngadi; Nicholas Kiggundu; Noble Banadda; Senorpe Asem-Hiablie