

PANAP CSA MEL Framework Narrative Report

StEPPFoS Deliverable Report: D3.2



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Abstract	<p>This report outlines the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework for PANAP. The framework provides a structure for monitoring progress, evaluating performance, and enabling learning to strengthen science-policy interfaces (SPIs) across Africa’s agrifood systems.</p> <p>Grounded in developmental evaluation and systems thinking, it set as the foundation for adaptive and participatory learning through single-, double and triple-loop</p>		

	reflection. Core components include a Participatory Theory of Change and Dynamic Learning Agendas, which enable collaboration among policymakers, researchers, and funders to co-identify challenges, co-design solutions, and adapt to complex policy environments. By aligning analytical outputs from the JRC with the institutional and systemic approaches of FARA and StEPPFoS, the framework supports coherent, impact-oriented action. It positions PANAP as a learning network advancing evidence-informed and transformative food system policies across Africa.
Keywords	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning; Formative policy support analysis; Participatory Theory of Change; Dynamic Learning Agenda

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Table of Contents

Index of Figures and Tables	iv
Abbreviations.....	v
Executive Summary	1
Introduction.....	3
PANAP CSA MEL Framework	6
Objectives	6
Methodological Overview	6
Participatory Theory of Change.....	8
Dynamic Learning Agendas	11
Initial Review of PANAP Capacities and Capabilities	12
Conclusion.....	13
References:	15
Annex 1 PANAP Network Members and Collaborators.....	17
Annex 2 PANAP-FNSSA MEL Partnership Framework	19
Broadening PANAP & increasing resource base	21

Index of Figures and Tables

Table 1: PANAP Network Members 17

Figure 1: Limited Theory of Change, based on desk-reviews and meetings with FARA, JRC and PANAP members 9

Abbreviations

ARBE	Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (part of the African Union Commission)
AU-EU	African Union – European Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme Gouvernementale
CEA-FIRST	
CIRES	Centre Ivoirien de Recherches Economiques et Sociales
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FNSSA	Food, Nutrition Security, and Sustainable Agriculture
HLPD	High-Level Policy Dialogue
IRC	International Research Consortium
ISRA	Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MINADER	Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural
PANAP	Pan-African Network for Economic Analysis of Policies
PSI	Policy Studies Institute
R&I	Research and Innovation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
StEPPFoS	Strengthening Evidence-Based Policy Practice for Sustainable Food Systems
SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture

Executive Summary

This report presents the **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework** for the **Pan-African Network for Economic Analysis of Policies (PANAP)**, developed under the Horizon Europe **StEPPFoS** project (*Strengthening Evidence-Based Policy Practice for Sustainable Food Systems*). PANAP was established in 2019 under the **African Union–European Union (AU–EU) Partnership** to strengthen science-policy interfaces (SPIs) that support evidence-based decision-making across Africa’s food and agricultural sectors. The framework establishes the structures, methods, and processes to guide PANAP’s operationalisation, learning, and continual improvement as a continental network linking research and policy for sustainable agrifood systems.

This framework thus stimulates learning processes critical to how PANAP is operationalised. This sets as separate from the PANAP-FNSSA Partnership MEL Framework which stimulates critical reflection on the barriers and emergent opportunities facing Science-Policy Interfaces across Africa and Europe at local, national, regional and continental levels. While the frameworks (**D3.1** and **D3.2**) interlinked, but their focus is separate. The PANAP-FNSSA Partnership framework (**D3.1**) enables reflection and learning on what are required to enable effective Science-Policy Interfaces (SPIs). This deliverable (**D3.2**) stimulates consortium and PANAP-wide learning on how PANAP can best influence SPIs through its activities, capabilities, and vision.

The PANAP CSA MEL Framework provides a foundation for systemic learning and adaptive governance within African agrifood policy systems. This MEL Framework will enable PANAP to work with its members to identify and develop equitable, responsive, and scalable policy processes. It achieves this by linking policy analysis with participatory research and innovation, and systemic instruments that enable the scaling of innovations. As such, this framework further enhances coordination with continental initiatives such as the AU–EU Innovation Agenda and FNSSA Partnership, supporting shared goals of sustainable, inclusive food system transformation.

The framework:

- Enables **single-, double-, and triple-loop learning** to guide adaptive management of PANAP activities.
- Facilitates reflection on the **strengths, needs, and gaps** within existing SPIs.
- Builds **consortium-wide learning processes** that connect policymakers, funders, researchers, and food system actors.
- Strengthens **institutional and systemic capacities** to achieve policy and R&I goals in complex, multi-level environments.

Methodological Approach

Rooted in developmental and formative evaluation, the MEL framework enables continuous StEPPFoS and PANAP reflection and adaptation within dynamic and uncertain agrifood systems. It combines participatory, transdisciplinary, and iterative methods that promote systems thinking and collaborative problem-solving. The approach recognises that policy change is non-linear and that evaluation must capture evolving relationships, capacities, and contexts rather than only predefined outputs.

Key components include:

- **Participatory Theory of Change (ToC):** Developed collaboratively with StEPPFoS, FARA, JRC, and PANAP members to align activities with real-world challenges and opportunities.
- **Dynamic Learning Agendas (DLA):** Facilitate structured reflection on barriers, learning questions, and opportunities to improve SPI functionality.
- **Integration with project-level monitoring:** Ensures synergy with broader StEPPFoS WPs, aims and ways of working.

The MEL frameworks developed under this deliverable (D3.2) and the PANAP-FNSSA (annex 1) focus on providing strategic awareness for PANAP, and thus the StEPPFoS project. Both focus on providing formative assessments that are critical to understanding how PANAP can best support SPIs, and therefore how StEPPFoS must respond. The findings from both MEL frameworks should combine with the work of Task 8.2, on the governance structure of StEPPFoS to provide both static assessments of whether project activities have taken place with the more in-depth assessments of StEPPFoS impact.

As such, the information gathered through this framework, for example through the DLA sessions, can provide the project coordinators information on whether activities are successfully influencing SPIs. Further, the approach of this framework, that it acts as a cross-WP learning mechanism to ensure project activities are successfully influencing identified SPI challenges, should help bring together new, consortium-wide lessons that inform a whole of project approach to meeting StEPPFoS aims.

This framework articulates the information gathering focus of the PANAP-CSA MEL, and a dedicated workshop will be held in 2026 to identify how this framework operates in synergy with the project Implementation Manual which includes Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework and Tools and the Data Management Plan will also be developed to support work package leaders and co-leaders, project management, decision making and conflict resolution and ensure that quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of project delivery are ensured throughout the implementation of activities (Task 8.3)

Introduction

Established in 2019 under the aegis of the African Union (AU) - European Union (EU) Partnership, the Pan-African Network for economic Analysis of Policies (PANAP) aims to strengthen the liaison between researchers and policymakers in Africa, and to stimulate their cooperation around policy priorities that reinforce the stability and enhance the development of African agriculture and food sectors.

To achieve this, PANAP brings academic, research and institutional partners together to co-develop research on agro-economics and food system policy issues. PANAP network members and collaborators (annex 1) are made up of diverse National Offices for Statistics, Regional Development Banks, Agricultural research and policy-focused Universities, Policy Analysis Institutes, and National and Regional Government departments.

PANAP's strategic orientation is directed through the below objectives. PANAP is further framed both by the ongoing R&I and agri-food initiatives funded through EU-AU Partnerships and the complex, relational multi-level policy design and implementation environments found within regions and national and subnational environments of its members. The complexity of this landscape is enhanced by the increasingly pluralised policy implementation mechanisms, including an increased usage of public-private partnerships and participatory governance mechanisms.

PANAP Objectives

- Enhance food and nutrition security, as in the Malabo Declaration - ending hunger in Africa by 2025, and SDG1 – Ending Poverty & SDG2 - Zero Hunger.
- Foster scientific communities providing independent, evidence-based scientific support, data/information, and economic analysis of sustainable agrifood systems and related policies.
- Support continental, regional and national policymakers in Africa in designing, assessing ex-ante and evaluating ex-post the impacts of agricultural policies.
- Serve as a platform for knowledge sharing of micro and macro data, models/economic tools, modelling skills, promote the dissemination of simulation results and create a common knowledge base and practices on the topic of economic analysis of policy.

The network is co-hosted by the European Commission - Joint Research Centre (JRC), the African Union Commission - Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). The establishment of PANAP follows a history of EU-AU collaborations in R&I and policymaking, including the AU-EU FNSSA and CCSE Partnerships and the Innovation Agenda. The histories of these Partnerships are of concern to this CSA MEL Framework for two critical reasons, described in the below boxes.

The PANAP network is in its infancy compared with CCSE and FNSSA Partnerships

Operationalizing PANAP effectively requires learning from the developmental processes of each Partnership. StEPPFoS, the CSA used operationalize PANAP, should thus learn from the CSA's that have supported the FNSSA and CCSE Partnerships. Thus, the CSA MEL framework must enable PANAP and StEPPFoS members explore, learn from and adapt CSA visions, objectives, and activities from both Partnerships.

Box 1 - PANAP CSA Operationalization

The learnings of interest for the operationalisation of the PANAP network are the concern of this PANAP CSA MEL Framework (**D3.2**). This framework directly addresses how the CSA undertakes single, double and triple loop learning processes that enable critical reflection on evolving strengths, needs and gaps within the SPI interfaces of its members and intended beneficiaries.

PANAP is embedded within multi-level, multi-dimensional policy and R&I systems.

Significant political, infrastructural, financial and human resourcing have been channelled into R&I that address topics identified through, for example, the FNSSA Roadmap. However, the linkages between resource deployment and policy design, implementation and reflection remain weak and often exclude the priorities, knowledges and resources of *'intended beneficiaries'*. This is in part due to the complex socio-cultural and relational dynamics inherent at and between AU and EU, regional, national and local systems that limit the effectiveness and equity of the technocratic approaches of current governance systems. This requires new understandings of how to sustainably link multi-level policies, priorities and organisations to enable effective pluralised and participatory governance and R&I.

Box 2 - PANAP Landscape

The PANAP-FNSSA Partnership MEL framework (**D3.1**) prioritises this focus area by establishing how PANAP identifies the key challenges and opportunities facing current science-policy interfaces (SPIs) with a specific focus on the FNSSA Partnership. This framework does so by identifying where multi-level (continental to local) policy design, implementation and reflection are actively supported by FNSSA Partnership R&I, and where R&I is supported to go to scale through alignment with policy implementation. Where there are absent or poorly functioning SPIs, this framework enables the co-definition of structural, relational, and functional barriers and uses this to facilitate co-design of new SPI strategies that enable the achievement of policy and R&I goals through impact-orientated and collaborative ways of working. A critical component of both frameworks is that it links CSA activities, deliverables and learnings with broader systemic and R&I landscapes, challenges and opportunities. This is used to facilitate PANAP-reflection on how to operate within such complex landscapes.

The movements towards transdisciplinary R&I, participatory governance mechanisms and Public-Private Partnerships in policymaking, R&I and development programmes requires the intentional linking of both policymaking & analysis and R&I. This is to enable more effective and equitable coordination of top-down and bottom-up initiatives that seek systems transformations goals. Both MEL frameworks thus seek to combine top-down policymaking & policy research with the bottom-up scaling of innovations to enhance the equity, sustainability and impact intended through the operationalisation of PANAP through the CSA and the continued resourcing of the FNSSA Partnership.

The PANAP-FNSSA Partnership MEL Framework combines with this PANAP CSA MEL Framework to ensure PANAP activities, objectives and ways of working identify and align with the needs of agri-food systems. A more detailed overview of the PANAP-FNSSA Partnership MEL Framework can be found in **Annex 2**. Both MEL Frameworks will coordinate activities with the IRC, and in particular the FNSSA Partnership MEL team and the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. The interrelationship between the AU-EU Innovation Agenda is considered a critical component to enable the PANAP CSA, PANAP-FNSSA Partnership and FNSSA Partnership

learnings to ‘meet in the middle’ between continental, regional, national and local levels. Meeting in the middle is envisaged to enable the proactive targeting of the development and scaling of innovations to specific policy implementation strategies, activities and resource deployment. The AU-EU Innovation Agenda is a critical component of this systemic intermediation between scales as allows for systemic instruments (*innovation platforms, entrepreneurship hubs and financing mechanisms*) to be brought on board to further develop, institutionalise and scale innovations that help progress policy implementation by creating new markets, jobs, and services (Brodnik et al., 2025; Wieczorek and Hekkert, 2012).

To achieve this in practice, learning components between the FNSSA Partnership and PANAP will work with PANAP regional networks (**CSA Milestone 18**) and the AU-EU Innovation Agenda to bring together policymakers, researchers and the businesses and markets to co-develop strategies that pool multi-level resources to maximise impact.

CSA Milestone 9, PANAP-CSA & PANAP-FNSSA MEL

3 sub-regional PANAP Networks are to be established by M30 of StEPPFoS. The MEL teams for both PANAP-CSA and PANAP-FNSSA Partnership see this as an opportunity to pool StEPPFoS information, networks and lessons learned around common outcomes and overarching project objectives. The MEL teams will ensure that establishment of these networks builds off the foundations of this project by combining the networks, capacity development and strategic awareness activities from across the project. This will ensure that networks build on identified opportunities and address challenges facing SPIs. Further, the MEL teams will bring in wider partners from the IRC and EU-AU innovation Agenda to ensure that the regional networks are established with the required partnerships, access to resources and networks that are critical for the success of partnership/innovation agenda of the FNSSA.

Both MEL Frameworks are used to facilitate PANAP and consortium-wide learning. The levels of multi-actor participation that contribute to the single, double and triple loop learnings established by **D3.2** are deepened through the interlinkages with the PANAP-FNSSA Partnership MEL Framework (**D3.1**). This combines the high-level (continental, regional and national) PANAP policy research, structures and actors with the scales of interest of FNSSA Partnership R&I and the operations of the IRC. FNSSA Partnership R&I are more concerned with stimulating impact at lower levels through a variety of fundamental, applied, and action-orientated research.

To achieve this, the learning mechanisms for the CSA MEL framework (**D3.2**) will stimulate learning activities that bring together the work down by StEPPFoS consortium members, for example:

- D1.1 Survey report identifying capacity gaps and relevant data sources for target groups/ institutions,
- D5.4 Report on Advice to Country-level Policy Impact Analysis, and
- D6.2 Proceeding of the Working Sessions of the Science-Policy Labs including policy briefs

To do so, this MEL Framework establishes the methodological foundation for Work Package, consortium and PANAP members will reflect on how far these deliverable address challenges facing multi-level SPIs. Further, these learnings will combine with the PANAP-FNSSA Partnership MEL Framework to ensure that reflections on PANAP operationalisation include

the priorities, knowledges and resources of AU-EU multi-level, multi-dimensional policy and R&I systems.

PANAP CSA MEL Framework

Objectives

This framework sets the foundation for single, double and triple loop learning that guides the ongoing operationalisation of PANAP. Learning processes will enable critical reflection on evolving strengths, needs and gaps within SPI interfaces of its members and intended beneficiaries. This framework thus aims to stimulate consortium-wide learning that bring together CSA activities, deliverables, milestones to co-define what PANAP should achieve and, importantly, how it can achieve its goals with policymakers, funders, researchers and agrifood system actors.

PANAP-CSA MEL activities have begun with WP-specific visioning, back casting, and systems analysis. These have helped refine a participatory ToC and set the basis for Dynamic Learning Agendas (DLAs) to be held with each WP each quarter of the project life-span. DLA sessions will help WP members reflect on what they have achieved, with reflections strengthened by the bringing in of PANAP-FNSSA information and information from wider WPs and networks, including the IRC.

Methodological Overview

This MEL Framework is rooted in developmental evaluation to enable ongoing reflection and learning that inform activities to respond to the complex, non-linear dynamics of food systems. This considers that PANAP must fit with existing and aspirational policy systems and respond to the structural, relational and legislative challenges and opportunities across PANAP's member base and their constituent food systems.

This further understands that policy analysis and R&I must respond to systemic complexities that contribute to recognisable challenges which persist despite intensive efforts to solve them. Inequities within and between regions and contestation between public goods and private interests continue to stymie impactful responses, while increasing socio-economic inequalities are reducing food, nutrition and income security. As such, new modes of problem-solving are required that differ from those traditionally enacted by policymakers and researchers (Regeer et al., 2024).

The formative, transdisciplinary and iterative evaluation approaches deployed in this framework thus respond to the evolving focus of R&I and policymaking of the creation of new markets and systems (Aerni et al., 2015; Mathe et al., 2022; Mazzucato, 2018, 2016). AU, EU and sub/national policies and R&I funding are increasingly using transdisciplinary, public-private and participatory governance approaches to pool resources around common systems transformation goals (Akerlof et al., 2020; EU SCAR, 2016; Jacobi et al., 2022; Schwarz et al., 2021). The market creation and scaling processes inherent within these approaches requires the formulation, adjustment, and implementation of policies able to adapt to new challenges while capitalising on emergent opportunities that are stimulated through FNSSA R&I and other bottom-up innovations (Engels et al., 2019; Howlett et al., 2025). This places the emphasis of evaluations to providing practical guidance that actively advances policy implementation and the scaling of FNSSA R&I (Lindner et al., 2021; Molas et al., 2021; Wittmann et al., 2022).

The diversity of actors co-contributing to pluralised policy design and implementation are this increasingly likely to lead to non-standardised interventions that are unique to the networks of actors involved (Birner et al., 2009; Klerkx, 2020). Further, the multi-sectoral and boundary spanning nature of systems transformation policies allows requires policy design, analysis and reflection to be opportunistic and build on existing and available resources (Diercks et al., 2019; Hernández-Socha and Zuluaga-Jiménez, 2024).

As the goals of PANAP are rooted in systems transformations, this CSA MEL Framework must consider how to evaluate policy analysis systems while attempting to fundamentally alter the systems policies are situated within (Boon and Edler, 2018; Candel and Pereira, 2017; Kuhlmann and Rip, 2014). This increases the necessity of dynamic evaluations in order to create new understandings of how interventions change the rules that govern cause and effect within a system, thereby changing how scaling unfolds, which in turn changes the rules of cause and effect (Gargani et al., 2024). This requires PANAP assessments to be formative and enable reflection and learning with the diversity of actors and interests included in different policy mixes (Lindner et al., 2021).

These dynamics mean that MEL approaches based on simple causal and programme theory models will be insufficient to generate multi-level and multi-actor critical reflection on the multi-faceted challenges and opportunities facing PANAP members and food systems (Howlett and Ramesh, 2022). Rather, the focus on generating action-orientated learnings within this MEL framework seeks to take into account processes of complex change and in order to stimulate new ways of conducting activities and building systemic relationships that help continuously adapt and integrate policy analysis within food systems.

The complex, wicked problems that PANAP members seeks to address mean that results at multiple levels within food and R&I systems are likely to unpredictable and unknown in advance (Bustamante et al., 2021; Van Mierlo et al., 2010). As such, the MEL framework seeks to stimulate ongoing multi-actor learning opportunities that enable system reflection through MEL activities, rather than assessing whether pre-decided monitoring figures reflect whether systemic change is being facilitated. As such, the foci of both WP3 MEL frameworks are not monitoring whether an activity has been completed, for example whether StEPPFoS/ PANAP has undertaken a workshop, or whether PANAP members have conducted policy analysis using ‘the correct tools’.

Rather, this framework will enable reflection on who has been involved in the workshops/ the development of policy analysis and what partnerships, resources, knowledge and activities can best support policy design, implementation and reflection. This is used to enable new understandings of problems and possible change-making pathways, and how PANAP has been able to stimulate such reflection. As such, there is an embedded focus within this CSA MEL framework methodology to ensure that MEL activities not only collect data that that informs how, who with, and where policy support services operate, but also facilitates critical reflection on food system outcomes, influences, and developmental pathways by PANAP members and agrifood system actors.

PANAP is characterised as a double-complexity program – a multi-level, multi-sectoral, and multi-dimensional grouping of policy actors with differing intervention logics, backgrounds and values, each that are set in complex and uncertain environments, characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability; for example, resulting from violent conflict, political turbulence, or erratic weather patterns. The multitude of unpredictable casual pathways with

both visible and invisible feedback loops require flexible intervention processes that adapt to constantly changing circumstances and dis/enabling environments for the design, implementation and reflection of agrifood system policies. The coupled complexity of policies and contexts means that pathways to impact are difficult if not impossible to anticipate, and interventions are instead designed, steered, and adapted in response to novel and context-specific environments. Within the context of PANAP CSA MEL, this requires a focus on enabling critical reflection on where pathways to impact have been made more or less likely by PANAP, rather than more reductive quantitative assessments of whether impact has been achieved through simple and linear casual logics.

Participatory Theory of Change

Detailed further in this framework, the deployment of this framework should have begun with the development of a participatory Theory of Change (ToC) with members of StEPPFoS and PANAP, as well as relevant FNSSA Partnership members. This ToC aims to ensure increased levels of alignment between StEPPFoS activities, methods and focus areas and the real-world challenges and opportunities facing policymakers and those operating within SPIs. This ToC will be used as the basis from which to facilitate reflection on whether StEPPFoS is undertaking the right activities, and how consortium and PANAP members understood how to find the right activities to achieve PANAP goals.

However, the participatory development of this ToC has been limited to a brief meeting with FARA and the JRC and desk reviews of PANAP outputs (figure 1; box 3). To remedy this, four iterative activities are planned between November 2025 and March 2026:

1. Visioning workshops with StEPPFoS Work Packages to facilitate critical reflection on how the Coordination Support Action (StEPPFoS) will lead to PANAP impact,
2. Challenge-focused workshops with PANAP members and StEPPFoS Work Packages to co-identify systemic barriers and bottlenecks to impactful policy analysis
3. Solution-focused workshops PANAP members and StEPPFoS Work Packages that co-design impact pathways
4. Consortium-wide workshop to develop the Participatory ToC, taking into consideration ongoing and planned StEPPFoS activities, resources and relationships.

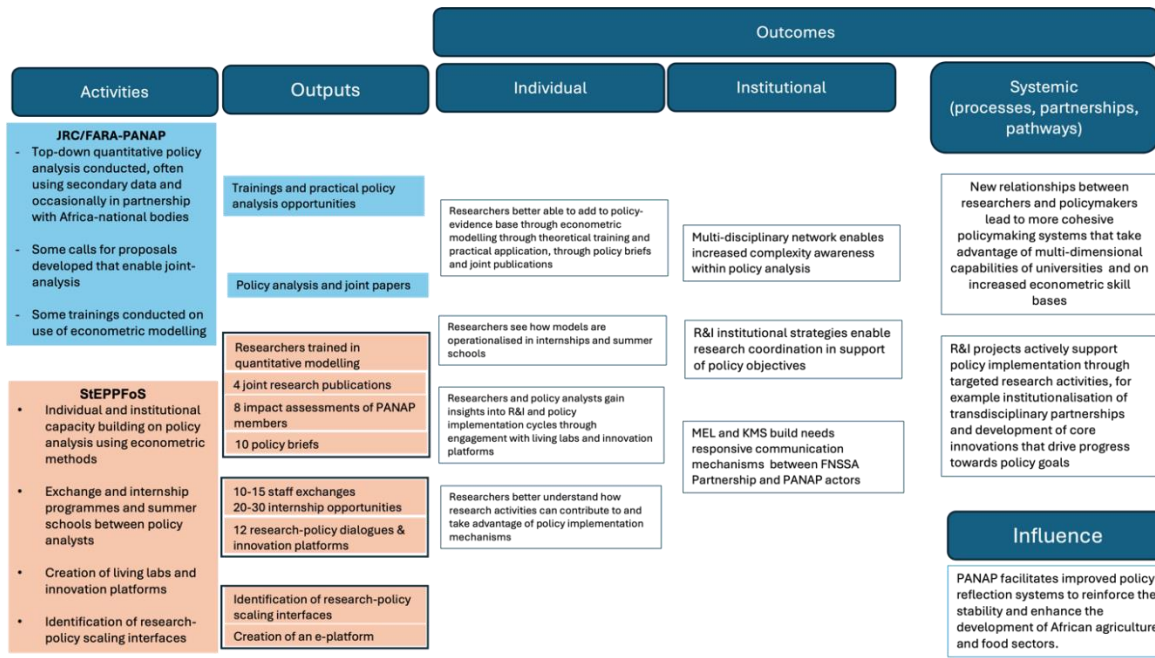


Figure 1: Limited Theory of Change, based on desk-reviews and meetings with FARA, JRC and PANAP members

Limited Theory of Change, based on desk-reviews and meetings with FARA, JRC and PANAP members

This PANAP ToC is influenced by the programmatic structure and history of PANAP and the individual, institutional and systemic shifts in policy analysis that PANAP attempts to influence.

This ToC sets out an indicative map out PANAP's initial and aspirational impact pathways while considering the anticipated influence of StEPPFoS activities, processes and partnerships. Adding a further complexity are the disconnect between the JRC-driven PANAP outputs and the coordination of StEPPFoS. Interviews have been conducted with core PANAP and StEPPFoS actors to articulate where there are strong interconnections between PANAP aims, activities and visions between the JRC and StEPPFoS, and where efforts are necessary to ensure synergistic activities can be held to strengthen the network's influence on agri-food policymaking.

Box 3 - Initial PANAP ToC

This ToC forms the foundation of a wider process of reflection/ visioning with PANAP members and eventually wider R&I/ developmental partners that helps us figure out how StEPPFoS / PANAP can be as effective as possible.

1. Back-casting and visioning with WPs: November - December 2026

Meetings with WPs will facilitate reflection on SPI **strengths, needs, and gaps**. It does this be **establishing ideal states for SPIs**, unpicking **how each WP contributes to ideal states** and, finally, which **challenges WPs/ StEPPFoS are likely to encounter**. Meetings will further establish what policy barriers and supportive environments are seen as critical by the StEPPFoS consortium. The exploration of barriers for StEPPFoS success will ensure that **partnership, resourcing and network gaps are identified**. This will be used to guide what partners to bring on board, and how to communicate how they could benefit from participation in consortium activities.

2. Enabling environments with PANAP members – January – March 2027

Meetings with PANAP members will establish how StEPPFoS activities can best contribute to enabling policy environments. This will build on the barriers identified with StEPPFoS consortium and work conducted by WP1 & 5 to further define existing policy barriers. Meetings will further establish what policy barriers and supportive environments are seen as critical by both StEPPFoS and PANAP.

3. Participatory ToC Development - March 2025

Working session with PANAP members and StEPPFoS consortium will reflect on ideal states for SPIs, likely barriers to achieving ideal states, and how StEPPFoS activities can best be delivered to overcome these. Inputs will form the Participatory ToC, with particular attention on what additional partners, networks, and resources can be mobilised to overcome barriers.

Dynamic Learning Agendas

Dynamic Learning Agendas (DLA) will be used to facilitate ongoing reflection on how StEPPFoS is address the challenges identified by the ToC. DLAs will further interlink with project-based monitoring (FARA WP8) to enable single, double and triple loop learning that ensures StEPPFoS is:

1. Doing the things to advance PANAP operationalization: Single Loop
2. Exploring and understanding causalities for PANAP to do the right things to meet its objectives: Double Loop:
3. Exploring the values and reasons why PANAP is necessary to ascertain an understanding of how StEPPFoS and PANAP members make decisions to frame PANAP operationalization: Triple Loop:

DLAs will use the structure below, framed by the challenges and solutions/ impact pathways identified by the ToC to facilitate WP and consortium-wide learnings. DLAs will focus on how WP activities plan to overcome challenges facing SPI interfaces identified by the ToC. Further, DLAs highlight the learnings developed through the PANAP-FNSSA MEL Framework to include barriers, impact pathways and emergent opportunities identified in broader EU-AU SPI interfaces.

1. ToC analysis and brainstorming of barriers that hinder progress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Why are we unable to reach our aims b. What specific factors are preventing us c. Why has this aim not been realised already
2. Prioritisation of ToC barriers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prioritise the barriers b. Reformulate the prioritised barriers with a certain specificity concerning: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Where is the barrier situation in the system</i> ii. <i>Who is involved (specific persons, organisations, or institutions)</i> iii. <i>What is the nature of the barrier</i>
3. Developing learning and action questions	<p>Learning questions address how one may design actions to realise identified aims, conceived on the background of the barriers identified in the PANAP ToC. At a general level, such a learning questions has the following form: <i>“(1) What can we do to achieve (2) this aim while (3) this barrier exists?”</i></p>
4. ToC analysis II: searching for opportunities/ resources	<p>Identification of resources or opportunities that may contribute to overcoming identified barriers</p>
	<p>Design of plans to initiate processes where the resources/ opportunities are mobilised to overcome the barriers</p>

DLAs will be guided by the Participatory Theory of Change and utilise Dynamic Learning Agendas with WPs and the entire consortium. DLAs will explore the identified barriers that hinder ideal state SPIs and StEPPFoS’ interventions. Learning questions will be developed to address how WPs/ StEPPFoS can design actions to realise identified aims, conceived on the background of the barriers identified in the PANAP ToC. At a general level, such a learning questions has the following form:

“(1) What can we do to achieve (2) this aim while (3) this barrier exists?”

Quarterly DLA sessions with consortium members will enable reflection on how far activities have been able to overcome barriers. Further, over the course of StEPPFoS, one goal will be to generate an idea of the more complex, systemic barriers. This will be achieved through tracking which questions remain unanswered, and which have been solved. Questions that have been answered indicate StEPPFoS has been successful at overcoming barriers, while questions that remain will be further explored to describe why and how barriers persist.

DLA Schedule:

- WP1&2: March, June, September 2026 & 2027
- WP3&4: April, July, October 2026 & 2027
- WP5&6: February, May, August 2026 & 2027
- Whole consortium: July, December 2026 & 2027

Further, Dynamic Learning Agenda's will ensure that StEPPFoS deliverables have deeper impact and influence on PANAP operationalisation and SPIs across Africa. WP and consortium-wide learning processes will incorporate the findings of each deliverable and reflect on how this support and change assumptions and impact pathways of the Participatory Theory of Change. Where relevant, this learning process will also include other EU-AU initiatives, including the IRC and EU-AU Innovation Agenda. For example, StEPPFoS **D1.6 Results of the literature review and survey on policy-research interactions** have helped shape back-casting and visioning sessions with StEPPFoS WPs.

Initial Review of PANAP Capacities and Capabilities

Highlighted in the introduction to this MEL Framework, this history, resources and structures of PANAP and StEPPFoS shape what the network can achieve. The ongoing operationalisation of the PANAP through this CSA thus requires considering PANAP's current capacities and capabilities. This are important to understand what PANAP is currently able to achieve and how it must develop in response to its goals and the needs of its membership.

The multi-country and multi-institutional network structure of PANAP provide it with a set of broad ranging and potentially shallow capabilities. These include an ability to connect with policy analysts and policy development institutions across 8 countries while simultaneously possessing limited organisational resources from which to influence multi-level policy analysis structures and capabilities across Africa and continental, regional and sub/national levels. Further, the evolving nature of PANAP has been considered when developing CSA MEL Framework. PANAP was initiated and driven by the JRC and FARA and is now being further operationalised by a Horizon Europe funded Coordination and Support Action StEPPFoS. The inclusion of StEPPFoS consortium partners likely opens access to new networks, knowledges and resources. However, this comes with increasing demands of the coordination of PANAP.

A desk-review of available literature from the PANAP website and from documents attained from the JRC and FARA indicate that there is a fundamental difference in the support provided to PANAP from JRC/FARA-PANAP and from StEPPFoS. This could be a positive, allowing for PANAP to increase the breadth of its influence on policymaking systems and allowing it to

target a greater diversity of policy support needs. Again, the increasing range of PANAP's capacities requires effective coordination to consolidate these into targeted approaches that ensure deep impact. If activities and interventions are not properly targeted through well-coordinated CSA activities that build a cohesive policy support system, this CSA risks having a minor influence on the ability of its members to facilitate systems transformation policy goals. An example of the increasing diversity of PANPA activities is detailed in the below box.

JRC-driven PANAP activities focus on the development of policy analysis as an output, while StEPPFoS's impact pathways focus on building institutional and systemic capabilities through trainings, support for national and international collaborations and articulating synergies between R&I and policy actors.

This can be an advantage for PANAP as JRC-led policy analysis could indicate policy needs-responsive opportunities for StEPPFoS-driven trainings to support and build on. JRC-led analysis further acts as a relationship building tool that PANAP can leverage to gain access to country-level policymakers. This requires the identification of areas of latent synergy between JRC-driven outputs and the more institutional and systemic-orientated PANAP support that is envisaged by StEPPFoS. Ensuring that the activities and outputs of JRC-PANAP and StEPPFoS focus on the same policy issues, individuals and institutions would help to increase the influence of StEPPFoS trainings and multi-institutional collaboration building efforts by allow for experiential learning opportunities that build on more theoretical-focused trainings.

Conclusion

The development of the PANAP CSA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework marks a critical step in operationalising the Pan-African Network for Economic Analysis of Policies (PANAP) as a dynamic and evidence-informed platform for strengthening Africa's agrifood policy systems. By embedding developmental evaluation principles and systems thinking approaches, the framework ensures that monitoring and learning processes are not only accountability mechanisms but also tools for continuous adaptation, reflection, and collaboration.

Through its participatory Theory of Change and Dynamic Learning Agendas, the framework creates structured spaces for diverse actors—researchers, policymakers, funders, and private sector partners—to co-identify systemic barriers, co-design solutions, and co-learn from implementation experiences. This enables single-, double-, and triple-loop learning that connects day-to-day project actions with broader strategic and institutional change processes.

The review of PANAP's capacities and institutional context underscores the importance of strengthening coordination between the analytical functions led by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the capacity-building and systems-oriented activities coordinated through StEPPFoS. Aligning these complementary strengths will be essential for consolidating the network's influence on multi-level policy processes and ensuring that policy analysis is effectively translated into systemic impact.

Ultimately, this MEL framework provides more than a set of tools—it offers a learning architecture through which PANAP can evolve as a resilient, reflexive, and strategically aligned network. By linking the insights of science-policy collaboration with the ambitions of the AU–EU Innovation Agenda and FNSSA Partnership, PANAP is positioned to contribute meaningfully to transformative, inclusive, and sustainable food systems across Africa.

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Annex 1 PANAP Network Members and Collaborators Prior to StEPPFoS CSA

Table 1: PANAP Network Members

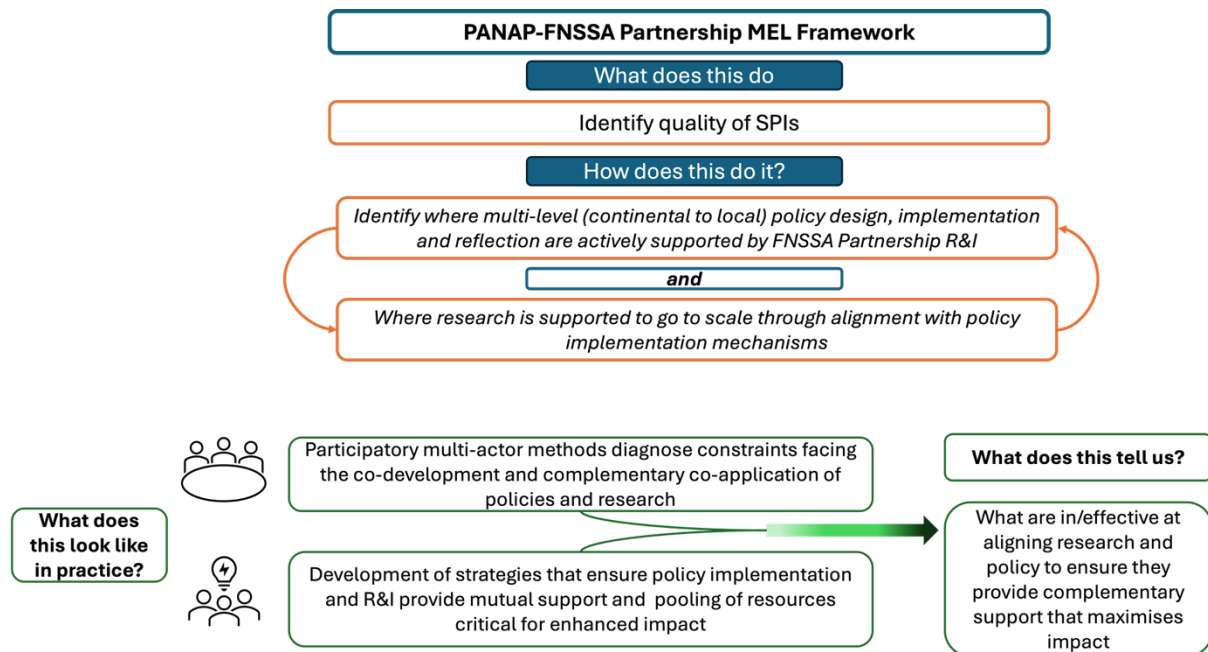
Collaborators	
Organisation name	Country
National Agricultural Research Center (CNRA)	Côte d'Ivoire
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	Eastern and Southern Africa
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)	Nigeria
Insitute National de la Statistique (INS)	Niger
Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)	Ghana
Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage de la République du Niger (MAG/EL)	Niger
Team for "Modelos económicos de simulación" (MESi) of the "Instituto Interdisciplinario de Economía Política" of Buenos Aires (IIEP),	Argentina
République du Cameroun Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural (MINADER)	Cameroon
République de Côte d'Ivoire Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural (MINADER)	Côte d'Ivoire
National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS)	Nigeria
Partners	
Organisation name	Country
Agence Nationale de Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD)	Senegal
African Union	Africa
West African Development Bank (BOAD)	Benin, Burkina, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo
Cellule d'Analyse des Politiques publiques et d'Evaluation de l'action Gouvernementale (CAPEG)	Niger

Centre Ivoirien de Recherches Economiques et Sociales (CIRES)	Côte d'Ivoire
Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR)	Ethiopia
Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)	Ghana
Niger National Institute of Agricultural Research (INRAN)	Niger
Insitute National de la Statistique (INS)	Côte d'Ivoire
Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research (ISRA)	Senegal
Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis	Kenya
Policy Studies Institute (PSI)	Ethiopia
Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)	Tanzania
Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development	Kenya
Western Cape Department of Agriculture	South Africa

Annex 2 PANAP-FNSSA MEL Partnership Framework

Policymaking and policy research of interest to PANAP members are held within broader socio-technical and sociocultural systems. Understanding this requires the development of PANAP to interlink with these systems and identify synergies and trade-offs between R&I activities and policymaking/ policy research.

This MEL framework (**D3.1**) establishes how StEPPFoS identifies the effectiveness and key challenges and opportunities facing current science-policy interfaces (SPIs) with a specific focus on the FNSSA Partnership. This framework does this by identifying where multi-level (continental to local) policy design, implementation and reflection are actively supported by FNSSA Partnership research, and where research is supported to go to scale through alignment with policy implementation mechanisms. Where there are absent or poorly functioning SPIs, this framework enables the co-definition of structural, relational, and functional barriers and uses this to facilitate co-design of new SPIs that enable the achievement of policy and research goals through impact-orientated ways of working.



This framework takes an understanding that SPIs between PANAP and the FNSSA Partnership are currently poorly coordinated, focusing on the static communication of discrete knowledge products rather than the brokering of relationships and partnerships across disciplines, sectors and levels that enable the co-generation of knowledge, coalitions, and innovations. These are inadequate for the systemic, complex, and contested challenges facing food system transformation and poorly aligned with ongoing shifts towards pluralistic policy implementation and transdisciplinarity approaches to R&I. The shifts towards transdisciplinary R&I and mission-orientated & systems change policy mixes necessitates relational capabilities. This is as such policy mixes are increasingly reliant on public-private partnerships and cross sectoral and multi-level mandates, also known as concurrent legislative competences, while traditional top-down linear levers for scaling innovations are no longer fit for purpose.

This framework uses this context to explore existing challenges and opportunities facing SPIs to identify how to close the significant gap between policy goals and actual outcomes. As such,

this framework is not directly concerned with MEL for or on StEPPFoS/ PANAP, but instead on the landscape StEPPFoS seeks to influence. This framework instead seeks to foster critical reflections on the SPI landscape with PANAP policymakers and FNSSA Partnership researchers, and use this to co-develop new strategies, opportunities, and objectives that enable more effective SPIs. This is seen as critical in developing new ways for research and policy to support each other, ranging from high-level coordination and utilisation of innovations to stimulate progress towards policy goals to more micro-level coordination in which research and policymakers combine resources to achieve complementary goals, for example through coordinated visits to target policy-research beneficiaries that reduce the resources spent on travel, coordination, and facilitation.

To achieve this, this MEL framework brings policymakers, food system actors and FNSSA Partnership researchers together to collectively diagnoses problems facing multi-level SPIs. This collective and diverse knowledge base further ensures that new science-policy approaches, coordination mechanisms and impact pathways are co-designed with key stakeholders. This is critical to ensuring that siloed approaches to SPIs are broken down, with pluralistic priorities, ways of working and mindsets included to explore and develop a diversity of ways to enable policies and research to pool resources towards common aims. In methodological terms, this framework achieves this by utilising participatory multi-actor methods to diagnose constraints facing the co-development and application of policies and research. Such constraints are framed by the problems they seek to address and, importantly, the solutions and envisaged transitions/ transformation pathways they seek to stimulate in response.

This framework will identify latent synergies between PANAP-member agri-food policies and FNSSA Research and Innovation activities, relationships, outputs, and processes. Latent synergies are seen as opportunities for policy goals to be supported by research through increased partnerships and improved co-learnings between researchers and policymakers

1. Develop secondary data collection system – December 2025 – February 2026

Secondary data collection and analysis system will focus on national policies. National policies for review will be co-selected by PANAP, with particular attention paid to areas of interest for the JRC. Initial system framework below:

- A) Policy problem-solution directions:** establish policies' scope and complexity. This begins with understanding societal problems have been included and prioritized in the policy formulation. An overarching policy arena is then established by identifying the factors that determine which solutions have been deemed viable and which actors have been included in the search for solutions.
- B) Policy system:** System types are assessed to articulate the extent to which directionality 'fits' policy systems. This will include analysis on; policy type, logic of change, motivation, key stakeholders, instrument mix, coordination requirements, main challenges.
- C) Innovation pathways:** elucidate how policies can capitalise on innovation processes. Innovation processes are critical systems forming mechanisms through which double loop social learning takes place. The novel, directed, and uncertain environments

facing policy design and implementation require social learning to help converge problem and solution definitions and develop collective pathways. This allows for analysis on the alignment of innovation instruments, social learning processes and policy mixes, and how far these meet the needs of mission structures and types

2. Pilot secondary data system – March – May 2026

Secondary data collection and analysis system will focus on national policies. National policies for review will be co-selected by PANAP, with particular attention paid to areas of interest for the JRC. To aid this, a meeting will be called with PANAP, JRC and FARA (and possibly IRC?) to determine which countries are priority.

3. Primary multi-actor co-learning workshops – May – December 2026

Drawing on secondary policy analysis, data collection will group policymakers, agri-food system actors and FNSSA R&I in online workshops (and where possible, in-person) to develop strategies that articulate:

- Where R&I projects are identifying policy strengths and influence on local food systems that can feed into policy reflection, including through the development of policy papers.
- Where novel FNSSA R&I can overcome scaling bottlenecks through closer alignment and support of national agri-food policy implementation mechanisms.
- How food system and R&I policymaking environments can be strengthened through increased integration between R&I, policymaking, and food systems.

National-level strategies will be co-designed by data collection to operationalise effect pluralised policy intervention and add to the knowledge base available for policy analysis, reflection, and design.

Broadening PANAP & increasing resource base

These MEL exercises and deliverables will identify opportunities to expand and strengthen the PANAP network.

- **CSA MEL's exploration of SPI bottlenecks and barriers** articulate which new partnerships, resources, and access are required for PANAP to fully achieve its goals.
- **PANAP-FNSSA Partnership MEL** identifies time policy implementation support that span both R&I and agricultural development funding. This framework does so by identifying where multi-level (continental to local) policy design, implementation and reflection are actively supported by FNSSA Partnership R&I, and where R&I is supported to go to scale through alignment with policy implementation. Where there are absent or poorly functioning SPIs, this framework enables the co-definition of structural, relational, and functional barriers and uses this to facilitate co-design of new SPI strategies that enable the achievement of policy and R&I goals through impact-orientated and collaborative ways of working.

Combining both, a full picture of the partners required to best implement policies by adding new and complementary innovations, networks, resources and organisational mandates and priorities will be provided. This will complement the static policy analysis conducted by the JRC to identify what partnerships are critical to meet specific policy goals. Further, this will

ensure the broadening and deepening of PANAP and IRC memberships to include relevant agri-food system actors that can benefit from closer interaction with SPIs and policy implementation systems. To ensure this benefit is fully captured by StEPPFoS/ PANAP – the MEL activities will provide decision support to PANAP & the IRC, including on how to bring new partners into the networks.



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