



Report of the CAAPs Orientation Workshop on the Development of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Strategy and Projects

July 22–24, 2024, Lusaka, Zambia

A Path to a Continental Strategy for Low-Emission Agro-Industrialization in Africa

Prepared by the CAAPs-Secretariat (FARA) and AFREXIMBANK.
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 –Acknowledgment to the Benevolent Australian Facilitator, Mr. John Reeve–

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CAAPs Orientation Workshop on the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Strategy and Projects, held from 22–24 July 2025 in Lusaka, Zambia, convened diverse stakeholders from the African Union Commission (AUC), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), development finance institutions, technical experts, and private sector actors. The workshop aimed at refining the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) initiative to align strategically with the GCF's funding criteria and mobilize large-scale climate finance.

Participants reaffirmed CAAPs as a transformative continental programme aimed at addressing Africa's urgent climate vulnerability, food insecurity, fragmented markets, and agro-industrialization challenges. Central to the CAAPs vision is the establishment of integrated regional agro-industrial corridors ("hubs and spokes") designed to aggregate production, enhance market integration, promote regional trade, and stimulate climate-resilient agriculture and infrastructure development. The initiative aligns closely with key continental strategies including Agenda 2063, the Kampala Declaration on agricultural transformation, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

High-level statements from AUC and FARA highlighted ambitious targets, including significant greenhouse gas reductions, restoration of degraded lands, and resilience-building for smallholder farmers. The role of Afreximbank, which has already mobilized over USD 1 billion towards agro-industrial infrastructure in Africa, was emphasized for its catalytic role in blended finance mechanisms, trade facilitation, and private sector engagement. The recently formalized collaboration between FARA and Grüner Holding on the Integrated Bioenergy Networks (IBN) initiative was also introduced as a replicable model for circular agriculture and renewable energy.

Technical sessions provided a deep understanding of GCF's operational framework, stressing the importance of Accredited Entities (AEs), National Designated Authorities (NDAs), and the structured process for accessing GCF resources. Presentations clearly articulated GCF investment criteria, funding modalities (grants, concessional loans, equity, guarantees), and project preparation mechanisms, notably the Project Preparation Facility (PPF).

Breakout sessions generated detailed insights on critical enabling factors for successful CAAPs implementation, covering policy coherence, blended finance architectures, inclusive smallholder and SME integration, and climate-resilient infrastructure systems. Participants recommended harmonizing regulatory frameworks, land tenure reforms, and targeted fiscal incentives for private sector engagement. Blended finance models were discussed extensively, highlighting the potential for a 4:1 leverage ratio, substantially multiplying impacts from initial GCF investments.

Corridor-focused discussions illustrated practical implementation experiences, particularly from the Zambia–Zimbabwe (ZimZam) Agro-Industrial Corridor and Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Corridor. Key insights emphasized the need for robust governance mechanisms, market harmonization, climate-smart infrastructure, renewable energy integration, and blended finance solutions. Regional economic communities (RECs) and AUDA-NEPAD were underscored as pivotal actors for regional coordination, policy harmonization, and ensuring alignment with national and regional agriculture investment plans.

International experience shared by Australian experts provided critical insights into green finance structuring, risk management, and innovative financial solutions, offering valuable lessons for CAAPs' funding strategy. The importance of effective stakeholder engagement through NDAs to secure country ownership, alignment with national climate strategies, and Letters of No Objection (LONs) was highlighted, emphasizing transparency, inclusivity, and early national buy-in.

The workshop concluded by outlining clear immediate and medium-term steps, including finalizing CAAPs GCF Strategy, establishing expert committees, initiating FARA's accreditation to GCF, securing necessary feasibility studies, and preparing detailed GCF project submissions. Participants reaffirmed institutional commitments, with FARA coordinating overall implementation, Afreximbank structuring

financial mechanisms, AfCFTA Secretariat advancing trade integration, and national governments providing regulatory and institutional support.

Overall, the workshop demonstrated strong collective commitment to transitioning CAAPs from conceptual planning to actionable implementation, leveraging GCF resources and strategic partnerships. Participants called for sustained high-level political commitment, transparent governance, adaptive management practices, gender mainstreaming, and robust monitoring systems. This comprehensive approach positions CAAPs as a flagship model for transformative climate-resilient agricultural development across Africa, aligned fully with GCF’s criteria and Africa’s sustainable development goals.

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THE MEETING DELIBERATIONS

I. Introduction

I.1-Background and Rationale

Africa faces significant vulnerability to climate change, characterized by increasing temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, and intensifying floods. These climate impacts pose critical threats to the continent's agricultural productivity, food security, and rural livelihoods, potentially reversing hard-won economic and social gains. Recognizing this urgent challenge, African countries, under the leadership of the African Union Commission (AUC), have committed to transformative initiatives aimed at reshaping agricultural systems into resilient and sustainable engines of inclusive economic growth.

Central among these efforts is the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) initiative, an ambitious, continent-wide programme designed to catalyze agro-industrial transformation through climate-smart regional corridors. CAAPs represents an integrated framework aligning agricultural production, value-added processing, regional trade, and climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Established as a flagship programme of the African Union, CAAPs directly aligns with the continent's strategic vision embodied in Agenda 2063, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the operational goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

At its core, the CAAPs model addresses critical issues limiting Africa's agro-industrial competitiveness: fragmented value chains, inadequate infrastructure, limited market integration, insufficient private investment, and vulnerability to climate impacts. By developing regional agro-industrial corridors, CAAPs aims to aggregate production, facilitate efficient trade logistics, drive economic diversification, and significantly improve climate resilience. This transformational approach is expected to unlock substantial private sector investment and stimulate employment creation, particularly benefiting smallholder farmers, women, and youth.

However, realizing such a transformative vision requires significant financial and institutional investments. Traditional sources of agricultural funding have often been inadequate, fragmented, and insufficiently aligned with climate goals. To bridge this gap, innovative finance mechanisms leveraging global climate finance are crucial. Here, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the largest global climate fund dedicated to supporting developing countries in achieving low-emission and climate-resilient development, presents a vital opportunity. The GCF's strategic emphasis on paradigm-shifting projects, coupled with substantial concessional financing, uniquely positions it to support the CAAPs vision.

I.2-Objectives and Scope of the Workshop

In recognition of the strategic importance of accessing GCF funding, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), mandated by the AUC as the CAAPs Secretariat, convened an Orientation Workshop on the Development of the CAAPs Green Climate Fund (GCF) Strategy and Projects in Lusaka, Zambia, from 22–24 July 2025. This workshop represented a critical step towards developing a coherent, well-structured, and scalable approach to mobilizing climate finance for CAAPs corridors.

The primary objectives of the workshop included:

- Building a shared understanding among corridor stakeholders of GCF investment criteria, funding modalities, and the project preparation cycle.

- Co-developing flagship CAAPs project concepts, notably for the Zambia–Zimbabwe (ZimZam) corridor and the Côte d’Ivoire–Ghana Corridor.
- Clarifying institutional roles and expectations, particularly regarding National Designated Authorities (NDAs), Accredited Entities (AEs), and delivery partners.
- Establishing foundational frameworks for blended finance mechanisms that leverage both public and private capital, while aligning with GCF impact metrics and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.
- Strengthening institutional capacities at regional and national levels to ensure effective implementation, governance, and monitoring of climate-aligned investments.

The workshop's participants encompassed a diverse set of stakeholders, including representatives from the AUC, FARA, Afreximbank, AfCFTA Secretariat, COMESA, AUDA-NEPAD, UNIDO, IFPRI, and technical experts of the CAAPs Resources mobilization Committee, facilitated by an Australian CGF Expert. Together, these participants sought to outline clear pathways for operationalizing CAAPs through structured GCF submissions, articulating both immediate actions and long-term strategies.

This report presents a comprehensive synthesis of workshop deliberations, expert contributions, strategic insights, and collaborative recommendations, serving as a foundational document to guide future CAAPs–GCF engagement and resource mobilization efforts across Africa.

II. Opening Session and Strategic Statements

The opening session of the CAAPs Orientation Workshop on the Green Climate Fund (GCF) convened high-level representatives from African Union organs, regional economic communities, development finance institutions, technical agencies, and private sector actors. The collective focus was on advancing CAAPs as a strategic continental initiative aligned with Agenda 2063, while positioning it within the GCF’s climate investment framework.

The African Union Commission (AUC) reaffirmed CAAPs as a flagship programme designed to structurally transform Africa’s agro-food systems through climate-smart regional hubs. The AUC underscored the urgent need to mobilize large-scale climate finance to implement the 2025 Kampala Declaration target of USD 100 billion in agrifood investments by 2035. CAAPs was presented not just as a development programme, but as a paradigm-shifting response to the continent’s intertwined climate, productivity, and market fragmentation challenges.

FARA, representing the CAAPs Secretariat, emphasized the initiative’s robust climate impact metrics: over 12.2 million tCO₂e in projected annual GHG reductions, rehabilitation of 4 million hectares, and enhanced resilience for 15 million smallholder farmers. FARA expressed deep appreciation to Afreximbank—especially Dr. Oluranti Doherty—for championing CAAPs through blended finance innovation, catalytic SME instruments, and structured trade support. FARA also acknowledged the catalytic support of the AATB Grant from ITFC and emphasized the importance of collective learning, thanking the GCF experts for their guidance. A key highlight was the announcement of a newly signed MoU between FARA and Grüner Holding Ltd to operationalize the Integrated Bioenergy Network (IBN), offering a replicable model for climate-aligned industrialization.

Afreximbank highlighted its substantial financial commitment to agro-industrialization initiatives on the continent, including over USD 1 billion in investments towards developing industrial parks with a core focus on agro-processing. The bank presented strategic programs such as AFRICOIN 2.0 and the Export Agriculture for Food Security Initiative, specifically designed to boost intra-African trade and agro-industrialization. Afreximbank’s proactive role in co-creating flagship CAAPs projects, mobilizing blended finance, and securing GCF alignment is pivotal for the sustainable and transformative impact of the CAAPs initiative across the African continent.

UNIDO reaffirmed its technical commitment to helping structure scalable, investment-ready CAAPs projects that meet GCF standards. Their pledge to support the development of climate rationale, theory

of change, and institutional frameworks strengthens the CAAPs-GCF pathway. FAO contributed insights on integrating its Hand-in-Hand initiative for high-impact investments, while COMESA shared experience from implementing the ZimZam CAAPs pilot.

The AfCFTA Secretariat outlined its role in designing an impact investment fund with FARA, targeting SMEs in agro-processing. COMESA and AUDA-NEPAD called for stronger REC engagement, while PRM-AUC emphasized AU coordination roles in mobilizing institutional and financial support.

The session concluded with a collective call to transition from planning to implementation, backed by aligned investments, stronger institutional coordination, and a pan-African commitment to inclusive, climate-resilient agro-industrial growth.

III. Technical Sessions and Expert Presentations

The workshop, facilitated by the Australian expert, Mr John Reeve, drew extensively on his substantial expertise in green finance and carbon markets, directly aligning with CAAPs' climate funding objectives. He shared practical insights from Australia's successful self-reliant agricultural models, highlighting transferable approaches suited to Africa's context. His current advisory roles with KVR Engineering and Locton further reinforce his capabilities in mobilizing diverse technical expertise and employing robust de-risking strategies, which are especially relevant for developing large-scale, sustainable agricultural projects within challenging environments across Africa.

III.1- Overview of the Green Climate Fund (GCF)

This session provided an insightful overview of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), highlighting its role as the largest global climate financing mechanism specifically dedicated to assisting developing countries. Emphasis was placed on GCF's strategic priorities and investment criteria, notably the importance of demonstrating clear impact potential, significant paradigm shifts, country ownership, sustainable development co-benefits, and alignment with national priorities.

The presentation outlined the critical importance of articulating robust climate rationales for proposed projects, ensuring that both mitigation and adaptation benefits are scientifically and technically sound. It further detailed the operational mechanisms of accessing GCF funding, underscoring the essential role played by Accredited Entities (AEs) and the critical involvement of National Designated Authorities (NDAs), which are responsible for endorsing projects and ensuring national alignment.

Participants received comprehensive guidance on navigating the GCF project preparation cycle—from initial concept formulation and accessing the Project Preparation Facility (PPF), through detailed feasibility studies and environmental and social safeguards (ESS) assessments, to final project proposal submission. The session concluded by stressing the importance of strong monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) frameworks and gender mainstreaming strategies to meet GCF project implementation requirements effectively.

III.2- CAAPs Programmatic Approach and Corridor Models

This session detailed the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) programmatic approach, highlighting its innovative "Hubs and Spokes" model. Participants learned about the intended structure of CAAPs corridors, which strategically integrate agro-industrial hubs with sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural production areas. These corridors are designed to enhance value addition, improve logistical efficiencies, and facilitate greater market integration.

Two flagship corridors—the Zambia–Zimbabwe (ZimZam) Agro-Industrial Park and the Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Corridor—were discussed in detail. Each corridor was presented with clear commodity-focused strategies, climate-resilient infrastructure plans, and comprehensive value-chain development measures, including renewable energy integration, advanced irrigation systems, cold storage logistics, and bio-circular economic activities.

The session emphasized the expected climate benefits from these corridors, including substantial greenhouse gas emissions reductions (over 120 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent cumulatively by 2035), significant land restoration outcomes, and improved resilience for millions of smallholder farmers. Overall, the programmatic approach highlighted how CAAPs projects are specifically tailored to meet GCF funding criteria, demonstrating high impact potential, scalability, and sustainability.

III.3- Catalyzing Green Transformation through Integrated Bioenergy Networks (IBN)

The Integrated Bioenergy Networks (IBN), presented by Grüner Holding during the CAAPs–GCF workshop, introduces innovative bio-circular infrastructure known as "Bio-Hubs." These hubs convert agricultural waste into valuable bio-products like bioenergy, organic fertilizers, and biofuels. Designed to foster local energy independence, revitalize degraded lands, and significantly reduce carbon emissions, the Bio-Hubs align closely with Africa's Agenda 2063 and AfCFTA priorities. The model emphasizes strong private-public partnerships, supportive regulatory environments, and sustainable financing mechanisms, including carbon finance. The initiative supports FARA's ambitious vision to mobilize USD 2.5 billion to promote green transformation and resilient infrastructure development across CAAPs zones. IBN aims to leverage bio-circular technologies to boost agricultural productivity, foster regional trade integration, create dignified employment opportunities for youth and women, and significantly improve rural livelihoods, representing a replicable model for addressing Africa's climate, energy, and food security challenges. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between FARA and Grüner Holding Ltd, aimed at operationalizing the IBN, demonstrates a strong commitment to advancing a replicable and scalable model for climate-resilient industrialization across Africa.

III.4- Blended Finance Structures

This session focused on innovative blended finance strategies essential for mobilizing resources required for CAAPs implementation. The discussion centered around how public-sector and concessional funding, such as grants and concessional loans from the GCF, can be leveraged effectively to catalyze substantial private-sector investments.

Key financial instruments explored included risk-sharing guarantees, green bonds, impact investment funds, structured debt and equity financing mechanisms, and dedicated Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs). Participants discussed how these instruments could mitigate investment risks—such as currency fluctuations, market instability, infrastructure development costs, and climate uncertainties—thereby making CAAPs corridors more attractive for private-sector investment.

The presentation also emphasized leveraging development finance institutions (DFIs) and impact investors as critical partners to secure patient capital. It was noted that the envisioned blended finance approach could generate an estimated leverage ratio of 4:1, meaning every dollar from the GCF would help attract an additional four dollars in private and public co-financing. This blending strategy would ensure financial sustainability and significantly amplify the environmental and social impacts of CAAPs projects.

III.5- Climate Finance and Pricing for Smallholder SMEs: Challenges and Opportunities

A specialized session addressed the critical role of smallholder farmers and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in African economies. The discussion highlighted the significant contribution of SMEs and smallholders, accounting for approximately 80% of agricultural employment. However, several barriers were identified, including limited access to finance, high transaction costs, vulnerability to climate risks, insufficient market access, inadequate infrastructure, low financial literacy, and complex market pricing mechanisms.

Participants extensively discussed how CAAPs, supported by GCF and blended finance mechanisms, could directly address these barriers. Recommendations included enhancing financial access through tailored financial instruments such as micro-loans, insurance schemes, and venture capital. Digital

platforms providing bundled services (finance, market information, inputs) were identified as essential tools for smallholder integration.

Capacity-building initiatives, infrastructure investments (particularly solar-powered cold storage, irrigation, and logistics), and supportive policy frameworks were further identified as critical to enhancing smallholder resilience and market access. This session emphasized aligning CAAPs interventions with AfCFTA goals to boost intra-African trade, reduce market fragmentation, and foster SME participation.

III.6- Strategic Relevance of DFIs to the CAAPs Initiative

AFREXIMBANK underscored the crucial role Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) play in realizing the objectives of the CAAPs initiative. DFIs offer vital capital-raising services, including project-finance loans, guarantees, trade lines, grants, and initial working capital loans to ensure that projects become bankable and sustainable. Additionally, they provide indispensable financial advisory and structuring support, transaction advisory, risk mitigation strategies, and credit-enhancement services.

AFREXIMBANK specifically highlighted their capacity to lead project preparation activities, conduct feasibility studies, environmental and social assessments, and provide procurement and advisory services. Their role extends to facilitating intra-African trade by securing strategic partnerships, anchor tenants, and ensuring effective market access. AFREXIMBANK's experience in financing numerous African industrial parks and economic zones positions it strategically to mobilize private investment, deliver comprehensive infrastructure financing, and effectively contribute to sustainable agro-industrial transformation across CAAP corridors.

III.7- International Experiences and Case Studies: Australia's Sustainable Finance Model

This session presented valuable international insights, specifically highlighting Australia's Sustainable Finance Taxonomy model. Key points included clear definitions and classifications of projects eligible for green bonds, adoption of comprehensive risk management frameworks (such as ISO 31000 standards), and innovative financial solutions such as parametric insurance products. Participants discussed practical applications and transferable elements of the Australian model, underscoring the importance of clearly defined environmental and social standards, robust project structuring, and strategic blending of finance sources.

The Australian case study provided practical insights into how structured green finance approaches, rigorous environmental standards, and transparent project management practices can significantly enhance credibility and attractiveness to international climate finance markets.

III.8- Accessing the Green Climate Fund (GCF): *Institutional Roles, Funding Instruments, and Project Windows*

This session provided a comprehensive overview of the Green Climate Fund's (GCF) operational framework, institutional roles, and key funding instruments. GCF strategic impact areas clearly distinguish between climate mitigation and adaptation objectives. **For mitigation**, the GCF focuses on reducing emissions through four key sectors: energy generation and access, transport, forest and land use, and buildings, cities, industries, and appliances. **Adaptation impacts** aim to enhance resilience in four primary areas: health, food and water security; livelihoods of people and communities; ecosystems and ecosystem services; and infrastructure and the built environment. Together, these areas guide GCF's investments and project selections, emphasizing comprehensive climate action addressing both emission reductions and strengthening resilience against climate impacts.

The GCF's architecture includes several **access windows**: the Readiness and Preparatory Support enhances countries' institutional capacities and facilitates accreditation for direct access, while the Project Preparation Facility (PPF), capped at USD 1.5 million per proposal, finances essential

preparatory activities like feasibility studies, environmental assessments, and gender analyses. Additional pathways include the Simplified Approval Process (SAP) for smaller-scale projects (up to USD 10 million), regular rolling-basis funding, and specialized Requests for Proposals. GCF funding accommodates various project scales, ranging from micro projects (below USD 10 million) to large-scale initiatives (exceeding USD 250 million), supporting diverse, climate-resilient development pathways.

III.9- Country Ownership and NDA Engagement

Central to accessing GCF resources are National Designated Authorities (NDAs), which coordinate national engagements, ensure project alignment with national climate policies such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and issue crucial Letters of No Objection (LONs). GCF offers multiple funding mechanisms—including grants, concessional loans, guarantees, and equity investments—tailored to project-specific requirements.

Participants discussed procedures for obtaining critical Letters of No-Objection (LONs) from NDAs, underscoring the necessity of early, comprehensive, and transparent stakeholder consultations. It was emphasized that involving national stakeholders, including governmental institutions, civil society, local communities, and private-sector representatives, is vital to securing broad-based support and endorsement for CAAPs projects.

The session concluded with the sharing of experiences and best practices derived from previous successful GCF engagements. It particularly highlighted the significance of robust national governance structures, transparent consultation processes, and effective multi-stakeholder collaboration. These insights provided practical guidance for participants to strengthen national alignment and effectively engage NDAs throughout the CAAPs–GCF project development process.

III.10- GCF Submission Process and Strategic Role of Accredited Entities (AEs)

The submission process to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) requires clear project definition and close collaboration with an Accredited Entity (AE), responsible for submitting proposals, managing funds, and ensuring compliance with GCF standards. Currently, international institutions serving as AEs within the CAAPs platform include FAO, CGIAR/IFPRI, and UNIDO, each potentially providing critical technical support, facilitating detailed project preparations, and securing institutional backing. The AE guides the project team in developing comprehensive GCF concept notes or full proposals, coordinating with national stakeholders to obtain necessary letters of support. The finalized proposal is then submitted to National Designated Authorities (NDAs) for review, endorsement, and issuance of Letters of No Objection (NOLs), reinforcing country ownership.

Given its continental coordination mandate, securing **FARA’s accreditation as an AE** is strategically essential, as it would significantly strengthen Africa’s direct access to GCF resources, enhancing both ownership and effective implementation of climate-resilient agricultural initiatives.

III.11- Alignment of CAAPs with GCF Investment Criteria

Based on the various interventions, the table below clearly summarizes how the Common CAAPs initiative comprehensively meets each of the GCF’s core investment criteria.:

GCF Investment Criterion	How CAAPs Meets the Criterion
1. Impact Potential	CAAPs significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions through renewable bioenergy and bio-circular infrastructure; it enhances resilience for millions of smallholders by implementing climate-smart agriculture and sustainable water management.

2. Paradigm Shift Potential	CAAPs introduce transformative agro-industrial hubs integrated with bio-circular economies, renewable energy, and zero-waste production models, fundamentally shifting African agriculture towards climate-resilient industrial practices.
3. Sustainable Development Potential	CAAPs generate substantial socio-economic benefits by creating approximately eight million jobs, empowering 15 million smallholder farmers, improving rural livelihoods, and significantly boosting regional food security.
4. Country Ownership	CAAPs aligns with national climate strategies, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and continental frameworks such as Agenda 2063, ensuring clear national and regional ownership.
5. Efficiency and Effectiveness	CAAPs optimizes financial efficiency through strategic blended finance structures, mobilizing private-sector investment alongside public funds, leveraging GCF resources for maximum impact and sustainable returns.
6. Needs of Recipient Countries	CAAPs directly addresses Africa’s critical needs, including vulnerability to climate change, food insecurity, inadequate rural infrastructure, and heavy dependence on agricultural imports, providing sustainable and resilient solutions.
7. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)	CAAPs incorporates rigorous ESS standards, emphasizes soil regeneration, land restoration, sustainable resource use, biodiversity conservation, and supports local community empowerment to mitigate environmental and social risks.
8. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	CAAPs promotes gender-responsive strategies by actively empowering women and youth through targeted employment, entrepreneurial opportunities, capacity-building programs, and inclusive participation in decision-making processes.

IV. Breakout Group Sessions – Deep Dive

To ensure focused and collaborative discussions on critical aspects of the CAAPs–GCF engagement, participants were organized into four thematic breakout groups. Each group deliberated deeply on specific areas essential to effective resource mobilization and successful implementation of the CAAPs initiative. The outcomes from these sessions form key strategic recommendations for the subsequent phases of the CAAPs project development.

IV.1- Group 1: Policy and Institutional Readiness

Group 1 examined the existing policy landscape, institutional capacities, and readiness for implementing climate-resilient agro-industrial corridors. Participants identified critical policy gaps, highlighting inconsistencies in regulatory frameworks, inadequate land tenure policies, insufficient incentives for private-sector engagement, and fragmented trade and investment policies that could impede the development of CAAPs corridors.

To address these gaps, participants recommended:

- Harmonizing regulatory frameworks across countries within each corridor, ensuring clarity and coherence to attract private-sector investment.
- Reforming land tenure systems to secure land rights, particularly focusing on enhancing access for smallholder farmers, women, and youth, thereby incentivizing investment in climate-resilient agriculture.

- Developing clear fiscal and policy incentives such as tax relief, subsidies, or risk-sharing mechanisms to encourage private-sector investments in climate-smart practices and technologies.

Institutional strengthening emerged as another critical priority. Participants recommended targeted capacity-building initiatives for national agricultural ministries, climate and environment departments, and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Such initiatives would enhance their ability to effectively coordinate cross-border projects, engage with climate finance mechanisms, and provide technical support to stakeholders involved in CAAPs implementation.

IV.2- Group 2: Blended Finance Architecture

The group discussing blended finance structures explored innovative financial mechanisms to leverage public resources, particularly GCF funding, to catalyze substantial private-sector investments into the CAAPs corridors. Participants emphasized the importance of aligning public infrastructure investments (such as roads, renewable energy installations, and storage facilities) with private-sector-led enterprises in agro-processing and agribusinesses.

To achieve this alignment, the group proposed:

- Establishing Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) as dedicated investment vehicles for channeling blended capital into CAAPs projects, clearly allocating risks and returns among stakeholders.
- Utilizing concessional finance from GCF strategically as risk mitigation tools to attract additional private capital, especially through guarantees, green bonds, impact investment funds, and insurance schemes.
- Partnering actively with Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), national and regional commercial banks, and impact investors to ensure patient, stable capital and expand access to local currency financing.

Participants also recommended clear structuring of blended finance approaches to manage risk transparently and effectively, ultimately ensuring financial sustainability and robust climate impact.

IV.3- Group 3: Smallholder Platforms and Market Access

Group 3 concentrated on strategies to ensure the effective inclusion and resilience of smallholders, women, and youth within CAAPs value chains. Participants assessed existing models and highlighted barriers that limit smallholder access to finance, markets, and climate-resilient technologies.

The group's recommendations included:

- Scaling successful digital agriculture platforms providing bundled services (inputs, finance, insurance, market information) accessible through mobile technologies.
- Promoting climate-smart cooperatives and aggregation models that facilitate economies of scale, market negotiation power, and collective access to climate-resilient practices and technologies.
- Investing significantly in rural infrastructure such as solar-powered cold storage, warehousing, and logistics solutions to reduce post-harvest losses and enhance market access.
- Offering capacity-building programs specifically tailored to smallholders, women, and youth, covering climate-risk management, financial literacy, and business development skills.

The group emphasized the need for GCF funding to prioritize inclusive business models and infrastructure solutions, effectively unlocking productivity and resilience gains for vulnerable groups within agro-industrial corridors.

IV.4- Group 4: Green Infrastructure and Climate Systems

Group 4 discussed essential infrastructure needs and climate information systems necessary to ensure CAAPs corridors' sustainability, resilience, and competitiveness. Participants highlighted infrastructure critical for coping with climate stress, including renewable energy, water management systems, climate-proof roads, and logistics networks.

To accelerate the transition to resilient, low-carbon infrastructure, the group recommended:

- Developing renewable energy-powered cold storage and logistics facilities to significantly reduce carbon footprints and improve market competitiveness.
- Promoting decentralized renewable energy systems (solar and bioenergy) to supply reliable, affordable, and sustainable power across rural agro-industrial zones.
- Implementing large-scale watershed restoration and nature-based solutions such as agroforestry, reforestation, and soil conservation to enhance ecosystem resilience and secure agricultural productivity.
- Investing in climate information services and early warning systems, providing timely and actionable data to farmers and agribusinesses, enabling proactive climate-risk management.

Participants further emphasized the vital role of regional and national planning authorities in facilitating coordinated infrastructure planning, promoting regulatory coherence, and actively supporting public-private partnerships that can deliver integrated climate-resilient infrastructure solutions.

V. Key Insights from Country and Corridor Experiences

This chapter synthesizes the critical insights, progress updates, and strategic lessons drawn from practical experiences related to the implementation and preliminary planning of the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) in specific regions. Discussions during the workshop focused significantly on two prominent corridor case studies: the Zambia–Zimbabwe (ZimZam) Agro-Industrial Corridor and the Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Corridor. These corridor-specific experiences provided tangible reference points for understanding the practicalities, opportunities, and challenges of operationalizing climate-resilient agro-industrial models.

V.1- Zambia–Zimbabwe (ZimZam) Agro-Industrial Corridor

The Zambia–Zimbabwe Agro-Industrial Corridor, known as the ZimZam corridor, exemplifies a cross-border agro-industrial zone designed around the key commodities of maize and dairy. This corridor is strategically positioned to leverage existing agricultural potential, infrastructure connectivity, and regional trade opportunities between Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Participants acknowledged that significant preliminary groundwork has already been initiated, including baseline studies, stakeholder consultations, value-chain analyses, and policy dialogues. Nonetheless, discussions highlighted key gaps and opportunities for enhancing climate resilience and market competitiveness. Among the critical needs identified were climate-proofed infrastructure, renewable energy solutions, and modern logistics networks to ensure reliable, efficient market access and reduced post-harvest losses.

The ZimZam corridor stakeholders emphasized the strategic value of harnessing GCF resources to finance critical green infrastructure such as solar-powered irrigation systems, renewable energy-based cold storage facilities, and integrated bioenergy systems. Participants also identified the potential of employing blended finance mechanisms and public-private partnerships to address existing financing gaps and stimulate significant private investment, thereby achieving broader corridor development objectives.

Furthermore, clear institutional governance arrangements were deemed essential to managing the corridor's transboundary nature effectively. Participants recommended strengthening regional

coordination mechanisms between Zambia and Zimbabwe, potentially facilitated through COMESA, to ensure sustained policy alignment, regulatory coherence, and effective dispute resolution.

V.2- Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Corridor

The Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Corridor provides another prominent example within the CAAPs initiative, emphasizing sustainable production and value addition of cocoa and other strategic commodities being identified under an ongoing study undertaken by UNECA. These two countries collectively produce approximately 60% of the world's cocoa, the corridor holds substantial potential to revolutionize the cocoa sector through climate-resilient agro-industrialization and regional trade integration.

Workshop participants noted that the corridor's current stage involves advanced pre-feasibility studies and early project design. Significant opportunities were identified in establishing climate-smart cocoa farming techniques, renewable energy solutions to power processing facilities, and digital platforms to facilitate access to market information and financing for smallholder cocoa farmers.

Stakeholders discussed the critical need to integrate nature-based solutions and agroforestry practices to enhance ecosystem health, improve soil quality, and secure long-term productivity and resilience. These interventions align strongly with the GCF's strategic criteria, providing robust climate adaptation and mitigation co-benefits.

Given the substantial role of the private sector in the cocoa industry, participants highlighted the importance of developing targeted blended finance mechanisms that can effectively mitigate risks, attract investment, and strengthen the participation of SMEs and farmer cooperatives. Strong recommendations were made for dedicated instruments such as guarantees, insurance schemes, and concessional loans to foster investment attractiveness and de-risk private capital.

Institutionally, participants underlined the need to create clear cross-border governance structures and market harmonization mechanisms. Harmonizing trade regulations, standards, and certifications between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana was considered essential to facilitate seamless trade integration and ensure the corridor's sustained competitiveness and attractiveness to investors and markets.

V.3- Lessons Learned and Best Practices from Corridor Implementation

Participants also benefited from sharing broader lessons and experiences gained from similar initiatives within and outside Africa. Successful agricultural corridors and climate-financed projects highlighted common elements crucial to effective implementation, including strong political commitment, clearly articulated climate rationales, inclusive stakeholder engagement, robust governance frameworks, and practical monitoring and evaluation systems.

The discussions underscored the necessity of early engagement with national policy makers, NDAs, and regional bodies to establish trust, foster ownership, and secure high-level political buy-in. Effective stakeholder consultation processes, clear communication strategies, and transparent governance mechanisms were highlighted as critical success factors.

Further, participants reiterated the value of comprehensive capacity-building and knowledge-transfer programs to ensure local institutions, farmers, SMEs, and financial institutions have the necessary tools, skills, and capabilities to participate effectively in climate-resilient agricultural transformation initiatives.

The experiences shared during these sessions provided essential insights into potential challenges, realistic opportunities, and proven strategies that stakeholders within the CAAPs corridors can leverage for successful GCF engagement and long-term sustainable implementation.

VI. Importance of Institutional Roles and Coordination Mechanisms

Clear delineation of institutional roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms emerged as a pivotal theme during the CAAPs Orientation Workshop. Effective collaboration among various

stakeholders—including continental institutions, national governments, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), private sector entities, and technical agencies—is critical to successfully aligning the CAAPs initiative with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and ensuring efficient implementation. This chapter summarizes discussions around institutional roles, emphasizing strategic responsibilities, coordination mechanisms, and pathways for sustained multi-stakeholder engagement.

VI.1- Role of the AfCFTA Secretariat

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat plays a crucial role in linking the CAAPs initiative with Africa’s broader trade integration agenda. Given that the CAAPs initiative explicitly targets enhanced regional trade through climate-resilient agro-industrial corridors, AfCFTA Secretariat involvement is central to achieving effective market integration and fostering regional economic resilience.

Participants agreed that the AfCFTA Secretariat is strategically positioned to support CAAPs through several critical functions, including:

- Facilitating trade harmonization efforts and reducing barriers to regional agricultural trade.
- Aligning CAAPs initiatives with AfCFTA operational frameworks and protocols, specifically those related to agriculture, trade, and investment.
- Promoting investment in SMEs within agro-processing sectors by designing targeted impact investment instruments and mechanisms for market integration.
- Collaborating closely with FARA and other stakeholders to develop joint resource mobilization proposals specifically targeting SMEs, women-led enterprises, and youth-focused agribusinesses.
- Coordinating cross-border policy harmonization processes to ensure effective trade flows and coherent market standards across CAAPs corridors.

In addition, the AfCFTA Secretariat’s mandate in mobilizing private-sector involvement and facilitating regional trade integration is essential in positioning the CAAPs corridors as attractive destinations for private-sector investment and blended finance engagements.

VI.2- National Designated Authorities (NDAs) and Country Ownership

The workshop underscored the vital importance of National Designated Authorities (NDAs) as central institutional actors in the CAAPs–GCF engagement process. NDAs are instrumental in ensuring project alignment with national climate strategies, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and broader national development priorities.

Participants acknowledged several key responsibilities for NDAs, including:

- Coordinating and validating project proposals to ensure alignment with national climate goals, priorities, and regulatory frameworks—a **joint NDAs coordination mechanism** shall be explored.
- Issuing formal Letters of No-Objection (LONs), which are prerequisites for accessing GCF resources.
- Facilitating inclusive, transparent, and early-stage national consultations, ensuring stakeholder buy-in from government ministries, private sector entities, civil society, and local communities.
- Overseeing and coordinating the submission of national or regional project proposals, maintaining close liaison with Accredited Entities (AEs) and regional coordination bodies.

The workshop highlighted the importance of proactive and continuous NDA engagement, recommending robust mechanisms for regular dialogue, capacity-building activities, and continuous feedback loops to streamline the GCF project cycle.

VI.3- Coordination by the CAAPs Secretariat and Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

The CAAPs Secretariat, hosted by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), has a pivotal coordination role mandated by the African Union Commission. Despite operating without dedicated core funding, the Secretariat's effectiveness has been significantly enhanced by active partnerships, catalytic funding (such as the ITFC grant under the Africa Arab Trade Bridges programme), and collaborative support from continental technical institutions.

Participants recognized several critical coordination roles of the CAAPs Secretariat, including:

- Overseeing the strategic coherence of CAAPs initiatives, ensuring alignment across multiple country-level interventions, project components, and investment streams.
- Facilitating regional knowledge sharing, dissemination of best practices, and capacity-building initiatives targeting national and regional stakeholders.
- Coordinating technical assistance, ensuring compliance with GCF criteria, and overseeing the development of project preparation documents, concept notes, feasibility studies, and monitoring frameworks.
- Acting as the primary liaison between continental institutions (AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, AfCFTA Secretariat, RECs) and country-level stakeholders, including NDAs and AEs.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress of CAAPs implementation, ensuring transparency and accountability through robust governance mechanisms and periodic reporting.

Technical Working Groups (TWGs), including those specifically established for GCF resource mobilization, play essential supportive roles. TWGs provide expert advisory input, technical oversight, and strategic guidance in areas such as finance structuring, policy alignment, climate rationale, and environmental and social safeguards. They facilitate focused dialogue, problem-solving, and innovation, significantly enhancing the quality and coherence of CAAPs project proposals.

VI.4- AUDA-NEPAD and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for Regional Coordination

The AUDA-NEPAD in cooperation with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), notably COMESA, ECOWAS, SADC, and others, emerged as vital institutional partners with critical regional oversight roles. Participants underscored that AUDA-NEPAD through the RECs is strategically positioned to support CAAPs through:

- Coordinating cross-border policy harmonization, regulatory alignment, and institutional capacity-building.
- Providing platforms for regional dialogue, consensus-building, and conflict resolution, which are essential for effective implementation and sustainability of transboundary corridors.
- Promoting regional knowledge transfer, technology dissemination, and collaborative research to enhance climate resilience and agricultural productivity within CAAPs corridors.

Participants recommended clear mandates, dedicated resources, targeted capacity-building, and structured regional coordination frameworks to strengthen RECs' roles in the CAAPs process, allowing them to perform these roles effectively and sustainably.

VI.5- Private Sector and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs)

Participants recognized the private sector and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) as central actors in mobilizing resources, driving investment, and achieving the transformative potential of CAAPs. Their roles include:

- Providing patient, long-term capital for infrastructure and value-chain investments through blended finance arrangements.

- Innovating financial products and risk mitigation mechanisms such as guarantees, green bonds, insurance schemes, and foreign exchange hedging instruments.
- Engaging in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), leveraging their financial and operational expertise to enhance project bankability and viability.

Effective coordination with private-sector entities and DFIs requires clearly defined roles, transparent engagement processes, and strategic risk-sharing mechanisms, thereby ensuring their sustained involvement in CAAPs projects.

VII. Strategic Roadmap and Next Steps

This chapter consolidates the strategic roadmap and immediate next steps identified during the CAAPs Orientation Workshop on the Green Climate Fund (GCF) strategy and projects. Workshop participants collectively outlined a structured action plan delineating short-term, medium-term, and long-term milestones, clearly assigning roles and responsibilities among stakeholders. The roadmap aims to ensure timely, efficient, and effective progress toward fully operationalizing CAAPs projects through strategic alignment with GCF investment priorities.

VII.1- Short-Term Actions (0–6 Months)

Participants emphasized several critical short-term activities essential for laying the groundwork for successful CAAPs project development:

A.1- Establishment of Expert Groups for GCF projects—GCF Subcommittees

- Operationalize **GCF Subcommittees** mandated to guide GCF projects' development, policy coherence, and financial structuring.
- Clearly define terms of reference, roles, deliverables, and timelines for GCF consultants and technical advisors to be involved in the GCF Subcommittees under the ITFC grant and other supporting instruments.

A.2- Finalization of Project GCF Concept Notes and overall CAAPs GCF Strategy

- Complete drafting and review of preliminary GCF project concept notes for the Zambia–Zimbabwe (ZimZam) Agro-Industrial Corridor and the Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana (CIG) Corridor, as well as the Overall CAAPs GCF Strategy.
- Validate these drafts with key stakeholders, ensuring full alignment with national and regional climate priorities.

A.3- GCF Project Preparation Facility (PPF) Application

- Submit formal applications to access GCF's Project Preparation Facility (PPF), securing funding for detailed feasibility studies, environmental and social impact assessments, climate vulnerability analyses, and comprehensive project design documents for CAAPs corridors.

A.4- Engagement with National Designated Authorities (NDAs)

- Conduct comprehensive stakeholder consultations at the national level, securing necessary Letters of No-Objection (LONs).
- Clearly communicate project objectives, expected benefits, roles, and responsibilities to NDAs and relevant national authorities, ensuring early national ownership and buy-in.

A.5- Fast-track FARA's GCF Accreditation Process

- Initiate immediate steps for FARA’s accreditation with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), strengthening internal fiduciary, environmental, and social standards.
- Establish a dedicated team to coordinate compliance and documentation, positioning FARA as a direct African entity accessing climate finance to sustainably scale transformative CAAPs projects across the continent.

A.6- Capacity-Building Activities

- Conduct targeted training sessions and workshops for national authorities, CAAPs Fund Committee, and project teams on GCF processes, criteria, and project cycle requirements.
- Build institutional capacities, particularly focused on fiduciary standards, environmental and social safeguards (ESS), and GCF monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) requirements.

VII.2- Medium-Term Actions (6–18 Months)

The medium-term phase is expected to involve intensive project preparation and institutional coordination, ensuring readiness for formal GCF submissions and project implementation:

A.7- Completion of Detailed Feasibility Studies

- Undertake comprehensive feasibility studies and environmental and social impact assessments for targeted CAAPs corridors, confirming technical viability, financial sustainability, and climate rationale.

A.8- Institutional Governance and Coordination Mechanisms

- Establish robust corridor-level governance frameworks, including clear cross-border institutional arrangements, regulatory harmonization agreements, and transparent stakeholder engagement mechanisms.
- Finalize regional coordination structures facilitated by relevant Regional Economic Communities (RECs) aligned with national and regional agriculture investment plans (NAIPs and RAIPs)

A.9- Detailed Financial Structuring and Blended Finance Arrangements

- Formalize blended finance structures, clearly defining roles of public and private financial institutions, leveraging concessional funding, guarantees, risk mitigation instruments, and structured financial products for committed projects.
- Secure formal commitments from DFIs, impact investors, commercial banks, and private-sector partners, ensuring complete alignment and clarity of risk-sharing arrangements.

A.10- Development of Full GCF Funding Proposal

- Draft comprehensive GCF project proposals (+ Concept Notes) with clearly articulated theory of change, logical frameworks, environmental and social safeguards, gender mainstreaming, and MRV systems.
- Facilitate rigorous peer review and validation processes with stakeholders, experts, and national authorities to enhance proposal quality and alignment with GCF investment criteria.

A.11- NDA Endorsement and Letters of No-Objection (LONs)

- Finalize and secure official LONs from NDAs, confirming national and regional ownership and endorsement of GCF project proposals prior to formal submission.

VII.3- Longer-Term Vision and Scaling (18–30 Months and Beyond)

Participants acknowledged the importance of planning beyond initial submissions, emphasizing sustainable implementation and potential scaling of CAAPs models:

A.12- Project Implementation Structures

- Strengthen the CAAPs Coordination structure for establishing rigorous monitoring and evaluation frameworks to oversee implementation, manage risks, and ensure adherence to GCF fiduciary and ESS standards.
- Establish a National Focal Person for CAAPs in each country.
- Align the CAAPs project implementation with the country implementation structures.

A.13- Strategic Partnerships and Innovation Hubs

- Develop innovation and knowledge exchange hubs, facilitating continuous learning, technology transfer, and collaboration among stakeholders, research institutions, and private-sector partners.

A.14- Replication and Expansion of CAAPs Corridors

- Identify and plan additional potential CAAPs corridors based on lessons learned and successful implementation models, targeting increased geographic coverage, commodities diversification, and broader climate resilience impacts.

A.15- Ongoing Capacity-Building and Institutional Strengthening

- Implement long-term capacity-building programs targeting key stakeholders, ensuring sustained institutional capability, adaptive management practices, and continuous stakeholder engagement.

A.16- Comprehensive Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV)

- Maintain robust MRV frameworks to continuously monitor implementation progress, climate impacts, co-benefits, and ensure timely reporting to stakeholders, GCF, and national authorities.

VII.4- Immediate Next Steps and Responsible Institutions

To operationalize the identified roadmap, participants clearly delineated immediate next steps with designated institutional responsibilities:

- ***FARA (CAAPs Secretariat)***: Coordinate overall implementation, facilitate stakeholder engagements, and finalize concept notes and GCF proposals.
- ***AfCFTA Secretariat***: Lead trade harmonization initiatives, SME engagement, and support the joint resource mobilization proposal targeting impact investment funds in close collaboration with the CAAPs-Secretariat.
- ***AFREXIMBANK***: Structure and finalize blended finance mechanisms, secure co-financing commitments, and implement financial risk mitigation instruments.
- ***AUDA-NEPAD and RECs (COMESA, ECOWAS, SADC, etc.)***: Facilitate regional coordination, policy harmonization, and cross-border governance frameworks.
- ***National Governments and NDAs***: Provide national-level leadership, issue LONs, oversee national stakeholder consultations, and ensure alignment with NDCs and NAPs.

- **Technical Working Groups (TWGs):** Provide ongoing technical advisory, strategic oversight, and quality assurance of project documents and processes.

This structured and stakeholder-aligned roadmap ensures systematic and coherent advancement toward the successful mobilization of GCF resources and the transformative implementation of the CAAPs initiative across Africa.

VIII. Summary of Recommendations and Action Points

This chapter consolidates the key recommendations and action points identified during the CAAPs Orientation Workshop. These recommendations reflect collective insights, strategic priorities, and specific actions required to effectively mobilize resources from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and to operationalize the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) initiative across participating countries and regions.

VIII.1- Strategic Recommendations

SR.1- Strengthen Policy and Institutional Frameworks

- Harmonize regulatory frameworks, standards, and certifications across CAAPs corridors.
- Reform land tenure policies to secure investments, particularly emphasizing inclusion of smallholder farmers, women, and youth.
- Introduce incentives such as fiscal policies, subsidies, or risk-sharing mechanisms to stimulate private-sector engagement in climate-resilient agricultural value chains.
- Build targeted institutional capacities within agricultural ministries, climate departments, RECs, and NDAs to effectively manage, implement, and monitor GCF-financed programmes.

SR.2- Develop Robust Blended Finance Mechanisms

- Clearly structure blended finance models combining GCF concessional resources, private-sector equity, debt investments, guarantees, insurance, and risk-mitigation instruments.
- Establish dedicated Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) and impact investment funds to channel blended capital efficiently into CAAPs corridor projects.
- Leverage strategic partnerships with DFIs, impact investors, national and regional commercial banks to expand financing sources and manage investment risks effectively.

SR.3- Prioritize Inclusive, Climate-Resilient Smallholder Integration

- Expand successful digital extension services and bundled financial packages (inputs, credit, insurance, market access) to reach smallholders at scale.
- Strengthen climate-smart cooperatives and producer aggregation models, enhancing market negotiation power and economies of scale for smallholders.
- Invest significantly in climate-resilient rural infrastructure such as solar-powered storage, transport logistics, irrigation, and digital market platforms.
- Conduct tailored capacity-building and entrepreneurial training programs targeting smallholders, women, and youth, enhancing resilience and economic participation.

SR.4- Invest in Resilient Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions

- Develop renewable energy-based infrastructure, notably solar-powered irrigation, cold storage, logistics systems, and bioenergy networks within agro-industrial corridors.

- Implement large-scale watershed restoration, reforestation, agroforestry, and other nature-based solutions to protect natural resources and secure ecosystem services critical for climate resilience.
- Establish robust climate information systems, early warning, and data-driven decision-making tools to support informed adaptation and risk management at the farmer level.

SR.5- Ensure Effective Regional and National Coordination

- Strengthen roles of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in coordinating cross-border policy alignment, trade facilitation, and conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities of institutional actors, including CAAPs Secretariat, AfCFTA Secretariat, NDAs, DFIs, and private sector entities, ensuring transparency, accountability, and strategic alignment.
- Foster sustained stakeholder dialogues and consultative processes at regional, national, and local levels, ensuring inclusive participation, ownership, and alignment with national climate commitments (NDCs and NAPs).

VIII.2- Immediate Action Points and Responsible Institutions

Short-Term (0–6 months)

Action Points	Due Date	Responsible Institutions
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.1. Establish GCF Subcommittees , clearly define their mandates.	7th August 2025	CAAPs Secretariat, CAAPs-TWG
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.2. Finalize and validate GCF project concept notes for ZimZam and Cocoa corridors (<i>Template in Annex 3</i>)	15th November 2025	CAAPs Secretariat (FARA) GCF Subcommittees
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.3. Initiate a process for developing the Overall CAAPs GCF Strategy	30th August 2025	CAAPs Secretariat GCF Subcommittees
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.4. Initiate a process for FARA's GCF Accreditation	15th August 2025	CAAPs Secretariat (FARA) GCF Subcommittees
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.5. Prepare and submit applications to GCF Project Preparation Facility (PPF) for CAAPs	30th November 2025	CAAPs Secretariat GCF Subcommittees
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.6. Organize an initial workshop for national or multi-country stakeholder consultations, secure Letters of No-Objection (LONs)	15th December 2025	CAAPs Secretariat Champion NDAs, National Governments,

Medium-Term (6–9 months)

Action Points	Due Date	Responsible Institutions
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.7. Complete detailed feasibility studies and ESS assessments for corridor projects	tbd	GCF Subcommittees, Accredited Entities
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.8. Develop and formalize corridor-specific blended finance structures (SPVs, funds, guarantees)	tbd	AFREXIMBANK, DFIs, private sector partners
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.9. Finalize full GCF funding proposal documentation, validate with stakeholders	tbd	CAAPs Secretariat, GCF Subcommittees , AEs
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.10. Secure final NDA endorsements and formal LONs for GCF proposals	tbd	NDA, National Governments

Longer-Term (9–18 months and beyond)

Action Points	Due Date	Responsible Institutions
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.1. Establish corridor-level project management units (PMUs) and monitoring systems	tbd	CAAPs Secretariat, national implementation units, AEs
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.2. Develop innovation hubs, knowledge exchange platforms, and ongoing capacity-building programs	tbd	FARA, national agricultural research institutions, RECs
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.3. Plan replication and scaling of CAAPs models to additional corridors	tbd	CAAPs Secretariat, AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, RECs
CAAPs-GCF-Dec.4. Maintain comprehensive MRV systems and regular progress reporting to stakeholders and GCF	tbd	CAAPs Secretariat, PMUs, national monitoring authorities

VIII.3- Critical Success Factors

Participants also identified several cross-cutting factors essential to the success of the outlined actions and recommendations:

- *High-level political commitment:* Continued advocacy at the highest political levels within the African Union, national governments, and regional bodies to sustain momentum.

- *Transparent governance and robust accountability:* Implementation of transparent governance mechanisms and accountability frameworks to ensure project integrity, credibility, and sustained stakeholder confidence.
- *Sustained capacity development and institutional strengthening:* Continuous investment in building and maintaining the capacity of national and regional institutions, ensuring ongoing effectiveness and responsiveness.
- *Adaptive management and continuous learning:* Adoption of adaptive management practices that enable continuous learning, iterative improvements, and responsiveness to emerging challenges and opportunities.
- *Inclusivity and gender mainstreaming:* Systematic integration of gender and inclusion considerations into all project stages, ensuring equitable benefits and participation by women, youth, and vulnerable groups.

These consolidated recommendations, clearly defined action points, and assigned responsibilities collectively provide a robust foundation for successful GCF engagement and transformative implementation of the CAAPs initiative. They serve as a roadmap for mobilizing the necessary resources, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, and achieving sustainable, inclusive, climate-resilient agro-industrial development across Africa.

IX. Conclusion

The CAAPs GCF Orientation Workshop convened a broad spectrum of stakeholders—from continental bodies, technical institutions, RECs representatives, private sector actors, and development partners—to build a shared understanding of the strategic opportunity that the Green Climate Fund presents for scaling up Africa’s agro-industrial transformation in the face of climate change.

The workshop provided an inclusive platform to align expectations, unpack the GCF’s programmatic funding modalities, and explore how the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) initiative can serve as a high-impact investment platform for delivering climate-resilient development outcomes across Africa’s diverse agro-ecological zones. It deepened technical understanding of GCF investment criteria, clarified the programmatic logic of CAAPs as a corridor-based intervention model, and initiated preparatory discussions on the development of funding proposals for two priority corridors: the Zimbabwe-Zambia (ZimZam) agro-industrial zone and the Côte d’Ivoire–Ghana value chains.

Through interactive technical sessions, breakout group discussions, and expert-led dialogues, the workshop surfaced a series of critical enablers and success factors. These include the need for strong political leadership, strengthened national capacities, effective coordination mechanisms, strategic private sector partnerships, and the deployment of innovative blended finance models to de-risk investments and maximize impact.

In particular, the meeting underscored the role of the AfCFTA Secretariat in advancing trade integration and value addition, Afreximbank in mobilizing catalytic private capital, FARA and its partners in steering the CAAPs Secretariat, and GCF experts in shaping a pathway for eligibility and program readiness. The strong alignment between the workshop’s outcomes and the priorities of the AfCFTA Impact Investment Platform reinforced the strategic value of integrating climate finance with trade-based economic transformation.

Beyond strategy, the workshop laid down concrete next steps, including the development of a comprehensive CAAPs GCF Strategy, the finalization of two corridor-level concept notes, and the operationalization of a dedicated CAAPs Fund Committee tasked with coordinating resource mobilization. The strong commitment from National Designated Authorities (NDAs) and technical institutions to support the preparation of Letters of No Objection (LONs), environmental and social safeguards, and co-financing frameworks was equally promising.

One of the most resonant takeaways was the spirit of collaboration. Despite resource limitations and diverse institutional mandates, participants rallied behind a shared vision: to build Africa's agro-industrial corridors as engines of green transformation, economic inclusion, and food system resilience. The leadership of FARA—mandated by the AUC to coordinate the CAAPs process—was commended, especially in facilitating early-stage partnerships such as the recently initiated Bio-Circular Infrastructure Networks project with Grüner Holding.

As the CAAPs journey moves from visioning to implementation, the momentum generated by this workshop must be sustained through committed follow-through, inclusive coordination, and innovative financing partnerships. The road ahead requires both technical rigour and political will, but the foundation laid in this gathering provides a springboard for scaling a uniquely African model of climate-aligned agro-industrialization.

The Secretariat and all partners now look forward to reporting progress at the next CAAPs Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting, and to jointly crafting a compelling pipeline of projects that will signal Africa's readiness to lead in climate-smart transformation.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Participants list

African Union [AUC, AfCFTA-Secretariat, AUDA, AfBC]

1. *Mr. Kennedy Ayason, Policy Officer, AUC*
2. *Mr Samuel Onyenobia, Technical Advisor, PRM, AUC*
3. *Mr. Wezi Chunga, Food Trade Advisor, AfCFTA*
4. *Mr. Chola Mfula, Acting Head, the Environmental Sustainability Division, AUDA*
5. *Mr. Migan Casimir, President, Agriculture and Agribusiness TC, AfBC*

FAO

6. *Mr. Koffi N. Amegbeto, Senior Policy Officer & Delivery Manager, FAO Regional Office for Africa*
7. *Ms Edith Tetteh. Administrative Assistant, FAO*

UNIDO

8. *Dr. Dejene Tezera, Director, Division of Agribusiness and Infrastructure Development (IET/AGR), UNIDO*
9. *Mr. Victor Djemba, Chief, Regional Division for Africa, UNIDO*
10. *Mr. Andrew GOODWIN Project Officer, Rural Development, Agro-Industries and Agro-Industrial Parks Unit, UNIDO*

UNECA

11. *Dr. Medhat Elhelepi, Economic Affairs Officer at the Agriculture & Business Enabling Environment Section of the Private Sector Development & Finance Division, UNECA*
12. *Dr Oliver Maponga, Economic Officer, UNECA*

AFREXIMBANK

13. *Mr. , Zitto Alfayo - Director of Project Preparation, Afreximbank*
14. *Mr. Richard Wairegi, Senior Manager, Export Development Finance and Advisory, Afreximbank*
15. *Mrs. Gladys Kingori, Senior Manager, Strategy and Product Development, Afreximbank (Virtual participation)*
16. *Mr. Albert Nyakujarah, Manager, Project and Asset Based Finance, Afreximbank (Virtual participation)*
17. *Mr. Elias Amissah, Assistant Manager, Project and Asset Based Finance, Afreximbank (virtual participation)*

18. Ms. Kimberley Ibale, Assistant Manager, Export Development Finance and Advisory, Afreximbank

19. Mrs. Agnes Allotey, Manager, Export Development Finance and Advisory (Virtual participation)

20. Mr. Kingsley Mbah, Senior Manager - Advisory and Capital Markets, Advisory

FARA (CAAPs Secretariat)

21. Mr. Anselme Vodounhessi, CAAPs Programme Coordinator, FARA

22. Ms. Merline Mensah, CAAPs Programme Assistant, FARA

PAAAC

23. Mr. Wisdom Ayinyiyea Adongo, Senior Project Officer, Private Enterprise Federation, PAAAC

IFPRI

24. Mr. John Ulimwengu, Senior Researcher, IFPRI

Grüner Ltd

25. Gerald Nel, Managing Director (Invited Expert)

AgRee Commodities Pty Ltd (AgRee)

26. John Angus Reeve, Managing Director (Identified GCF Expert, Facilitator)

Host of the Meeting (COMESA)

27. Mrs. Providence Mavubi, Director, Industry and Agriculture

28. Mrs. Esther Mwimba, Senior Private Sector Development Officer

ANNEX 2: Meeting Agenda

Day 1: Tuesday 22th July 2025 | Strategic Context and Concept Alignment

Timing	Working Sessions	Intervener
08:30 – 09:00	Registration	AFREXIMBANK, FARA
Session 1.1: Opening and Overview (1.5 hour)		
09:00 – 09:05	Note from the Facilitator	Mr John Reeve
09:05 – 09:35	Opening Addresses: - <i>AUC</i> - <i>FARA</i> - <i>AFREXIMBANK</i>	- Mr Kennedy - Mr Vodounhessi - Mrs. Oluranti Doherty
09:35 – 09:45	- Workshop Objectives and Expected Outcomes	- Mr Vodounhessi
09:45 – 10:30	Framing Keynote on Africa's Climate Finance Gap and the Strategic Potential of CAAPs - <i>Demand and import substitution</i> - <i>Emissions intensity of imports</i> - <i>Potential for water, renewable energy, circular and sustainable CAAPs</i>	- Mr John Reeve & - Mr. Dejene Tezera
10:30– 10:45	Coffee break	
Session 1.2: GCF Investment Framework and Modalities (1 hour)		
10:45 – 11:00	Overview of GCF Investment Criteria	- Mr John Reeve
11:00 – 11:15	Lessons from Projects in Agriculture and Regional Development submitted to GCF	- Mr Dejene Tezera
11:15 - 11:30	<u>Concluding discussion and take-away for GCF Investment Framework and Modalities</u>	Facilitator
Session 1.3: CAAPs Concept and Climate Alignment (1.5 hour)		
11:30 – 11:45	Introduction to the AU's CAAPs Programme and Hub-and-Spoke Model Alignment with Agenda 2063's aspirations and AfCFTA	Mr Vodounhessi
11:45 – 12:05	Global examples of Hub-and-Spoke Models and Positioning CAAPs within GCF Criteria: <i>Impact Potential, Paradigm Shift and Sustainability (e.g. emissions intensity), tech adoption, R&D collaboration and Criteria snapshot and sneak peak of Day 3 GCF Workplan</i>	Mr John Reeve
12:05 – 12:25	Overview of Bio-Circular Infrastructure Networks (BCIN) as Climate Investment Vehicles for CAAPs	Mr. Gerald Nel
12:25 – 13:00	Climate finance and pricing Smallholder and SME considerations	Albert Nyakujarah Elias Amissah Gladys Kingori
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break	

14:00 - 14:30	<u>Concluding discussion and take-away for CAAPs Concept and Climate Finance Alignment</u>	Facilitator
Session 1.4: CAAPs Flagship Project Introductions (1 hour)		
14:30 – 14:45	Corridor Overviews: Zambia–Zimbabwe and Côte d’Ivoire–Ghana: Feasibility Insights and Current Progress	-Mr Vodounhessi
14:45 - 15:45	<u>Group Discussion: Replicability, Scalability, and GCF Readiness</u>	Facilitator
15:45– 16:00	Coffee break	
Evening 1 Session – Technical Poster Showcase and Networking (1 hour)		
16:00 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual Displays: Cluster Maps, Value Chains, Investment Concepts, BCIN - Example investor pack Tarboul, Egypt and high-level Middle East projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr John Reeve & - Mr Dejene Tezera
17:00 – 17:15	Closing Day 1	Facilitator

Day 2: Wednesday 23th July 2025 | Strategy Co-Creation and Project Structuring

Timing	Working Sessions	Intervener
08:30 – 09:00	Wrap -up Day 1	Rapporteur
Session 2.1: Designing the CAAPs GCF Strategy Framework (1.5 hour)		
09:00 – 09:45	Strategic relevance of DFIs in the development of the CAAPs Initiative	Kingsley Mbah Richard Wairegi
09:45 – 10:30	Breakout Groups: Thematic Pillars and Enabling Systems	Facilitator
10:30– 10:45	Coffee break	
10:45 – 11:30	Case Study: Australian Sustainable Finance Taxonomy – Compare–and–contrasts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eligibility Criteria - Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) Principles - Alignment with CAAPs Development Goals (<i>UNIDO</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr John Reeve & - Mr Dejene Tezera
Session 2.2: Structuring Flagship Project Concepts (1.5 hour)		
11:30 – 13:00	<i>Parallel Streams – split into two groups:</i>	

	<p><u>Group 1:</u></p> <p>Theory of Change Development – food security and sustainability.</p> <p><u>Flow diagram with five levels:</u></p> <p><i>Enablers (finance, policy, data) – Risk planning and ISO31000 approach</i> → <i>Activities (cluster planning, PPPs, training, infrastructure delivery)</i> → <i>Outputs (parks established, SMEs operating, cross-border trade increasing)</i> → <i>Outcomes (value addition, job creation, climate-smart agriculture scaling up)</i> → <i>Impacts (sustainable agro-industrial transformation, food systems resilience)</i></p> <p><u>Group 2:</u></p> <p>Stakeholder Mapping (NDAs, Ministers etc) and Institutional Anchors and Co-Benefits and SDG Alignment</p>	Facilitator
	<p>Introduction to ClimateBonds.net and the Climate Bonds Taxonomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sector Criteria (e.g. Sustainable Agriculture, Water Resilience)</i> - <i>Science-Based Thresholds for Climate Alignment</i> - <i>Aligning with GCF and Climate Bonds Certification Requirements</i> 	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break	
Session 2.3: Technical Consultancy Terms of Reference (ToRs) (1.5 hour)		
14:00 – 14:45	<p>Review and Refinement of Consultant ToRs –<i>in Interactive brainstorm with guidelines–</i></p> <p>Clarification of Deliverables, Validation Protocols and Quality Standards</p> <p><i>Common elements of both Streams ?</i></p>	Mr John Reeve
Session 2.4: Country Ownership and NDA Engagement (1 hour)		
14:45 – 15:30	<p>Ensuring Alignment with National Climate Strategies and NDAs</p> <p>Letters of No Objection (LON) Processes</p> <p>Tools for Sustained Country Engagement e.g. Framework, Operational manual</p>	-Mr Wisdom Adongo
Evening 2 Task – Consolidation (1 hour)		
15:30 – 16:45	<p>Consolidation of Group Inputs into Draft GCF Strategy Framework</p> <p>Finalisation of Consultancy ToRs</p>	Facilitator
16:45 – 17:00	Closing Day 2	

Day 3: Thursday 24th July 2025 | Operationalization, Tools and Institutional Commitments

Timing	Working Sessions	Intervener
08:30 – 09:00	Wrap -up Day 2	Rapporteur
Session 3.1: Operationalizing the Bio-Circular Infrastructure Networks (BCIN) (0.75 hour)		
09:00 – 09:45	Technical Briefing on BCIN Impact Metrics and Investment Logic	Mr. Gerald Nel
	Integrating BCIN into Flagship Corridors and the GCF Strategy	
Session 3.2: Co-Financing and Institutional Anchors (1.5 hour)		
10:30– 10:45	Coffee break	
10:45 – 11:30	<i>Introduction to Value Network Analysis (VNA)</i> - Mapping Stakeholder Roles, Value Flows, and Leverage Points - Aligning Co-Financing Approaches with Climate Bonds Certification	John Reeve
Session 3.3: GCF Workplan and Delivery Schedule (1 hour)		
11:30 – 12:00	<i>2025–2026 Timeline and Key Milestones (Gantt chart to be presented separately)</i>	Mr John Reeve
12:00 – 12:30	<i>Steps for Concept Note Development, National Consultations and Proposal Submission</i>	
Session 3.4: Closing Reflections and Institutional Commitments (1 hour)		
12:30 – 13:00	Summary of Workshop Outcomes	Mr John Reeve
13:00 – 13:30	Institutional Pledges: Technical, Financial and Strategic Support	AUC, AFREXIMBANK, and FARA
	Next Steps in the CAAPs–GCF Programmatic Roadmap	FARA
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch break	

ANNEX 3: Template of GCF project concept note

WORKING TOGETHER FOR YOU

