Foresight training opens a path to continental policy dialogue

Strategic foresight and policy dialogue

Scope • Continental; African agricultural research and innovation systems

Partners • FARA and partners through the Africa Foresight Academy, with CORAF and CCARDESA country focal persons

The starting situation

Agricultural research and innovation systems need ways to anticipate long-term change and consider how current choices affect future food systems. The Africa Foresight Academy began as a platform for building this capacity and connecting practitioners.

How partners contributed

Virtual delivery during the COVID period helped the network begin: eight foresight webinars reached 45 institutions in 2020. In 2021, 135 participants validated the Africa Foresight Academy framework and portal. Subsequent training-of-trainers, regional dialogues, curriculum work and learning hubs extended foresight capacity into national systems. In 2025–26, FARA and partners contributed to an African Union consultation in Nairobi and a high-level Kigali dialogue, bringing foresight into discussion of CAADP, policy choices and investment pathways toward 2050.

What changed

The case reports 20 country foresight focal persons—13 in CORAF and seven in CCARDESA—599 active practitioners, 5,130 Dgroups subscriptions and 59 institutions reached by 2023, equal to 98% of the 60-institution target. The Academy connected national focal persons, regional organisations, practitioners and digital communities. Follow-on work included commissioned country foresight in Kenya, Madagascar and Nigeria and a published guide for high-quality food-systems foresight.

Evidence and source

The figures distinguish focal persons, practitioners, subscriptions and institutions reached. The source describes participation in policy discussions.

Source record • SS11 Infographics

Sustainability and lessons

The next test is whether foresight becomes part of plans, policy choices and investment decisions. The distributed Academy model offers a platform for continued learning, but its influence will depend on country-level application, sustained practitioner connections and follow-up that records where scenarios shape real decisions.