Putting Africa’s food industry on the map

Agriculture needs to move away from solely producing raw consumables and invest more in value-added processing units and branded food products. This requires strengthening the business skills of entrepreneurs; creating platforms for dialogue; and increasing access to finance, including raising awareness of the different career opportunities and relationships between actors: from farmer to chef. By working together, the African Development Bank, governments, the private sector, universities and other actors can offer young women and men the opportunity to pursue these diverse careers.

An untapped economy:
The African food and cuisine value chain

New innovations in the food industry, one of the world’s oldest and largest industries, are creating attractive opportunities for women and youth on the African continent. As on other continents, the agri-food industry in Africa plays a fundamental role in the creation of income and employment opportunities. The Bank recognises that the African food and cuisine industry has the potential to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) capture more value within global value chains by drawing on African culture as a unique selling point.

Addressing continent-wide issues

Africa has the most diverse food and cuisine on the planet. Its US$ 313 billion food and beverage markets are projected to reach US$ 1 trillion by 2030. This projection offers the prospect of increased jobs, greater prosperity, reduced hunger and improved capacities for African farmers and entrepreneurs to integrate into the global economy. It is imperative that the continent harness this potential in order to shrink unemployment – especially that of women and youth – create rural prosperity, and improve food and nutrition security.

For example, urban food security depends on food availability, access and quality over time. With the rapid growth of urban populations and the low nutritional levels of the urban and peri-urban poor in Africa, there is tremendous scope to increase accessible, safe and nutritious food supplies to ensure food security while safeguarding its sustainable production. One way in which this is already happening is through African chefs and entrepreneurs. As professional consumers, they are increasingly advocating for sustainable, local food systems, making them the shepherds of food cultures and diets – strongly influencing how people eat – and change agents in the development of sustainable diets and promoting food security and health. High-profile chefs, young ‘foodpreneurs’, and institutions across the continent are developing concepts ranging from food trucks and fast food chains, to stand-alone fine dining restaurants that revolve around plant-forward menus. With unusual blends of spices, bold flavours, ‘superfoods’ like teff, baobab and moringa, and innovative techniques, African regions are also the new gastronomic trend in kitchens around the world.
The Bank has created The Economics of FoodCuisine, a digital knowledge-sharing platform that complements the Bank's ENABLE Youth Program by looking at downstream activities. The platform’s purpose is to enhance the viability of food entrepreneurs seeking to start and grow a food-related business through:

1. Knowledge sharing
2. Mentorship services
3. Skills development
4. Access to finance by linking the platform to crowdfunding schemes targeting agri-businesses
5. Blogging.

The objectives are to:
Promote agriculture as a business beyond production, processing and marketing towards downstream business activities, such as restaurants, catering services, food trucks.

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**Improving supply chains for nutritious food products**

Monica Musonda is a corporate lawyer turned entrepreneur in Zambia. She is also the founder and CEO of Java Foods, a food processing company committed to providing high-quality and nutritious food from local products at affordable prices. Its first product, eeZee Instant Noodles, is Zambia’s leading instant noodle brand. Java Foods recently launched eeZee Supa Cereal, a fortified instant cereal made from soya, and Num Num’s, snacks made from and maize flour and corn. Ms Musonda is one of the few Zambian women involved in the processing and distribution of nutritious food products, while also focusing on improving supply chains.

**Niche and natural products**

Owned and operated by Randa Filfili, Zena Exotic Fruits initially produced a range of quality fruit spreads for the market in Dakar, Senegal. After learning that local rural farmers produced cashew nuts for export but did nothing with the cashew apples these trees also produce, she worked with a team of food technologists, marketers and chefs to develop a series of exotic and all natural jams. Zena, with a staff composed mostly of women (95%), is the first Senegalese jam producer to export niche and natural products, such as cashew apple butter and baobab jam, to markets in the United States, Europe and Japan.

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**Investing in the agri-food industry**

Africa has long been known for a wealth of fertile regions where fresh produce is grown, harvested and distributed for local consumption and export. The African market has recently seen a trend where companies are investing in value-added processing units and branded food products. This is important to the continent’s continued economic development as providing value-added products will reduce food losses, improve nutrition, and further its industrialisation. The training of women and youth will be paramount to success.

**The role of food and culinary arts in African economies: Tourism and agricultural value chains**

Food and culinary arts also play an integral role through the tourist trade. New linkages and synergies with tourism have emerged in tandem, offering considerable potential to grow demand and develop new products, experiences and markets. Working collaboratively to develop programmes both to attract workers to the industry and to enhance/promote the necessary skills goes a long way toward developing a pipeline of skilled young people for the industry.
A young Ethiopian Chef joins the global culinary scene through a cooking show

High-profile Ethiopian Chef Yohanis Hailemariam trained with French chef Paul Bocuse in Lyon before working at top restaurants in California. He has since returned to Ethiopia and successfully tapped into the country’s growing interest in cooking and gastronomy. A key feature of every episode of his primetime TV show ‘Chef Yohanis Qegnet’ is a recipe specific to each region of the nation.

Supporting the growth of the African cuisine value chain – from farmers to chefs

Africa’s population is projected to more than double by 2050, from 1.2 billion today. Youth form the majority of Africa’s population and the majority of the unemployed. Empowering youth through government and private sector programmes to create enterprises along the agricultural value chain while feeding Africa will go a long way towards optimising the sector and could lead to the realisation of a demographic dividend.

The AfDB recognises just how large the African food and cuisine value chain’s potential is to create jobs for youth and contribute to GDP growth. The AfDB Group Strategy for Jobs for Youth in Africa, 2016-2025 aims to create 25 million jobs and train 32 million young people, impacting 50 million Africans over the next decade.

Feeding the world

Benedict Mundele is an entrepreneur in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who believes the country’s food potential can feed the world, and notably her own country, which suffers from food poverty like the rest of Africa. Mundele is the founder of Surprise Tropicale, an organic, local food canteen and catering company that aims to promote a sustainable and healthy lifestyle in her community in the capital Kinshasa.

By using technology as a driver for the development of the skills and capacity in the food and cuisine sector, the Bank aims to empower the food community and support young entrepreneurs, thereby stimulating women and youth job creation on the continent, from farmer to chef.

Help to stimulate investments in the Africa food and cuisine value chain.

Match the supply of and demand for skills, provide applied educational opportunities, and unite the efforts of the private, public and civil society sectors.

Empower the African food community, support young entrepreneurs, connect food innovators, and showcase new products in Africa.

Connect African food innovators, food and beverage producers, chefs, entrepreneurs, investors, farmers, technologists, global brands and journalists.

Promote cooperation and knowledge exchange between actors, policy areas and levels.

Enable individuals and organisations to try the latest food-tech products and sample the latest food and beverage products by showcasing food start-ups launching their products.

The potential of African cuisine is still untouched.

Chef Yohanis, Chef and owner, Antica Restaurants and Farm, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
The FoodCuisine initiative is fully in line with the Bank’s High-5 agenda, specifically: **Feed Africa, Industrialise Africa and Improve the lives of African people**, and is based on the AfDB’s Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy 2016-2025 and the Gender Strategy 2014-2018.

The economics of FoodCuisine platform stakeholder groups

**Government officials**
- Agricultural ministries
- Trade and investment ministries
- Developmental funders

**Organisations and associations**
- Chefs’ associations
- Agricultural associations
- Trade unions

**Suppliers and businesses**
- Equipment providers
- Support services providers
- Financiers and funders

**Academic organisations**
- Training institutions
- Chefs’ schools

**Interest groups**
- Food bloggers
- Food entrepreneurs
- Farmers
- Chefs (students, emerging and professional)
- Agri-food specialist, consultants, mentors

**Get involved!**

**Entrepreneurs:** see the website and join! www.afdbfoodcuisine.com/registration

**Private sector:** collaborate with us! hello@afdbfoodcuisine.com

**Culinary schools:** register for the platform! support@afdbfoodcuisine.com

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Gender, Innovation and Creative Industries — Agriculture, Human and Social Development Complex — African Development Bank Group

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**We’ve got to have incentives that actually interest youth to participate in agriculture.”**
Simon Motsusi, Assistant Director, Food Resilience Unit, Social Development Department, City of Johannesburg

**African food is big, but it is very underrated, which is why a lot of people are not very into African food because it is not really available to the market... Our food is amazing, so diverse. I mean, Africa has got so many cultures. African food is making its global stage appearance and I think it’s going to be big.”**
Mokgadi Itsweng, Chef and owner, Lotscha Home Foods, South Africa

**You need to work hard! I don’t get intimidated in the kitchen, because if you’re trained, you’re properly trained, you know what you have to do, female or male it doesn’t really matter.”**
Helaria Tloboro Mokoena, Chef, South Africa Chefs Association (SACA)