The particular role of technology in agriculture is being addressed in a flagship initiative named “Technologies for Africa’s Agricultural Transformation (TAAT)” as part of the Feed Africa strategy prepared by the Agriculture and Agro-Industry Department (OSAN).

TAAT is designed to scale up proven agricultural technologies in order to boost productivity—which is critical for transforming agriculture on the continent. This would ensure that Africa is not only able to feed itself, but also that agriculture becomes a pathway for long-term growth and shared prosperity.

New techniques, especially in the application of information and communication technologies to agriculture, financial and information services, opened up new ways of modernizing agricultural value chains, in a particularly inclusive manner, thus benefiting segments of populations that are otherwise often underserved, such as women and youth.

“Adopting modernized, commercial agriculture is key to transforming Africa and the livelihoods of its people, for Africa’s agricultural transformation

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Africa’s agriculture

Science and technologies are transforming the agricultural sector, more than ever before. From the use of modern biotechnology, drones, smart systems for efficient management of water and nutrients, technologies and innovations are turning farms into “intelligent farms”.

Africa needs to invest more in science and technology to become more efficient and competitive in agriculture – and to diversify rapidly its economies. Focus on some initiatives launched by the AfDB and its partners to scale up agricultural technologies in order to reach millions of farmers in Africa within ten years.

A roadmap to financial inclusion in Liberia, Todee

Some 150,000 Liberian farmers are to benefit from financing and innovative technology thanks to the Liberian Agriculture Transformation Agenda (LATA), launched by the Government with support from the African Development Bank. With 10% of its adult population having subscribed to mobile money accounts, Liberia can boast of being able to double this figure, with the supports of the AfDB.

The program leverages technology provided by Cellulant Nigeria Ltd., probably the most innovative digital platform supplier in agri-business in Africa. It connects recipients of inputs (fertilizers and seeds) to financial services providers via mobile wallets. This new technology maps existing farms and tags them to their owners in a unique database. Its econometric model could project the amount of input support needed from the information collected (land size, crop type, demand).

In line with its goals, 320 million people should no longer classified as undernourished by 2025. In addition, 130 million would be lifted out of extreme poverty. Africa should be a net exporter of agricultural commodities, representing the substitution of US$110bn worth of imports. Finally, Africa will double its share of market value for select processed commodities.

Fulfilling the potential of Africa’s agribusiness and meeting these goals could open up markets worth more than US$100bn per year by 2025 as the initial set of value chains identified present annual revenue opportunities worth US$ 85bn by 2025.

Feed Africa is underpinned by 7 enablers:
- Increased Productivity;
- Increased Value Addition;
- Increased Investment in Hard and Soft Infrastructure;
- Expanded Agricultural Finance;
- Improved Agribusiness Environment;
- Increased Inclusivity, Sustainability, and Nutrition; and
- Partnerships.

The seven enablers are designed to give life to a range of flagship initiatives — 15 in total. The TAAT program is one of the many initiatives stemming from enabler number 1: Increased productivity.

In innovation to transform
Sudan’s ENABLE Youth Program

A recent country visit and country dialogue revealed that Sudan is among the countries that have expressed keen interest in participating in the ENABLE Youth Program and have requested the Bank’s support. In response, OASAN has secured USD 8.5 million from the Transition Support Facility (an initiative of the AfDB) for the design and preparation of a country-specific ENABLE youth program in Sudan.

The Bank undertook a dialogue mission in Sudan during 20-24 March 2016. The mission held valuable discussions with Government agencies and other stakeholders including development partners to lay the groundwork for the design and piloting of the ENABLE Youth project Sudan.

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AfDB to launch Feed Africa strategy across the continent

The African Development Bank Group will be launching “Feed Africa: A Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa 2016-2025” across the continent with a regional roadshow which will take the strategy to five countries from 8-24 November 2016. The implementation and engagement workshops will be held in Lusaka, Zambia (November 8th); Yaounde, Cameroon (November 11th); Tunis, Tunisia (November 17th), Dakar, Senegal and Kampala, Uganda (both on November 24th).

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Cameroon: a new vision to boost the economy of non-wood forest

The project contributes to poverty alleviation and sustainable forest management in Central Africa in general and specifically in Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, through the value addition to non-wood forest products by local people, including support to developing small scale forest enterprises.

Non-wood forest products (NWFP) became more important in Central Africa during the economic crisis of the mid 1980s, which caused a decline in the international market prices of cocoa and coffee and motivated farmers to diversify their income sources by exploiting increasingly NWFP, partly for consumption, and mainly for sale.

The devaluation of the CFA Franc in January 1994 increased the price of pharmaceutical products and encouraged urban and rural households to turn to medicinal plants for use in curing common ailments.

The objective of the decentralised launches is to engage local audiences with aspects of the Feed Africa Strategy which are directly relevant to their environment.

The workshops will feature key statements made by high profile guests, a presentation of the strategy and a panel discussion featuring local stakeholders. They will provide an opportunity to highlight the most impactful agriculture projects of the AfDB in each of the respective countries.

The event will bring together a wide range of participants including Bank staff, local public and private sector partners, representative from women’s associations and youth, development partners and the media.

“Feed Africa” strategy unveiled during AfDB’s 2016 Annual Meetings

The AfDB has unveiled its Agricultural Transformation in Africa strategy on 24 May 2016 on the sidelines of its Annual Meetings in Lusaka, Zambia. The AfDB plans to improve the agriculture sector in Africa by embarking on an ambitious fifteen-point plan covering seven enablers, which, amongst other things, aims at transforming the sector and empowering smallholder farmers and youths.

AfDB’s Agriculture and Agro-Industry Director, Chiji Ojukwu, said agriculture remained a major source of income in Africa, but its untapped potential had resulted in persistent poverty and deteriorating food security. Ojukwu said among the strategies mapped out was to increase productivity, realize increased production and increased investment in hard and soft infrastructure.

AfDB President, Akinwumi Adesina, who also participated in the panel discussion, said Africa needed to look at agriculture in a different perceptive if the continent was to actualize its dream of diversification. He added that agriculture had the potential to stabilize economies and should be looked at as a business.

“We can’t keep sitting on potential. We need to change our mindset - agriculture is a business. Why is it that people in agriculture are poor? We must change this, agriculture is a business and a source of creating wealth and employment,” Adesina said.

Workshop on the role of agropoles

The AfDB organized a workshop on “The Role of Agropoles and Agro-Processing Zones (APZ) in Feeding and Industrializing Africa” during 22-23 March, 2016 in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. The four recommendations made by the participants were: support the establishment of a network of agropoles and agroprocessing zones; facilitate investments in countries facing situations of fragility; develop strategic guidelines for the creation of agropoles and provide technical assistance to them; integrate the development of agropoles in other initiatives supported by the AfDB such as agricultural value chains, youth employment, commodity exchanges...

Design workshop on the ENABLE Youth Program

The Bank, in collaboration with IITA, organized the ENABLE (Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment) Youth Program Design Workshop from 21-22 April, 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria. Two hundred delegates from more than 30 countries attended the workshop, which featured prominent speakers, including private entrepreneurs such as Aliko Dangote and Tony Elumelu, Ministers of Agriculture and Ministers of Youth from 10 African countries.