



AFRICA FOOD SYSTEMS FORUM

**Highlights of the Food Convergence Innovation
Africa Network participation at the Africa Food
Systems Forum 2025 | CICAD, Dakar, Senegal**

31 August – 5 September 2025



Authors: Fair Food and Trade Systems for Africa through Food Convergence Innovation (FCI4Africa), Food Safety for Africa (FS4Africa), and Integrated and Circular Technologies for Sustainable city region FOOD systems in Africa (INCiTis-FOOD).

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The AFSF2025 being an important regional conference of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) converged nearly 3,000 participants from around the world, including policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, youth representatives, and development organizations under the theme of promoting resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems; was a critical platform for advocacy, dialogue, and demonstration of innovations including via multimedia of innovative technologies.

Therefore, given the critical contributions of the EU-funded projects (FCI4Africa and INCiTis FOOD) and co-funded (FS4Africa) projects, the three projects resolved to forming a cooperation called the FCI Networks of Networks at the Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF) 2025, held from 31st August to 5th September 2025 in Dakar, Senegal (The program is included in Appendix 1). Fair Food and Trade Systems for Africa through Food Convergence Innovation (FCI4Africa), Food Safety for Africa (FS4Africa) and Integrated and Circular Technologies for Sustainable city region FOOD systems in Africa (INCiTis-FOOD) are contributing to advancing food systems transformation. The projects promoted innovative strategies utilised within the projects, such as policy approaches, the use of artificial intelligence via the FS4Africa Knowledge Platform, the application of biotechnological solutions like Aflasafe for food safety, and aquaponics systems to showcase sustainability in urban areas, among others.

The Network hosted two side events: (1) All FCI Convening Event: Showcasing the Food Convergence on Sunday, 31st August 2025, and (2) Food Safety in the African Food System – Innovations & Impact at Scale on Monday, 1st September 2025). Through speaker sessions and panel discussions, the side events served as a melting pot for innovations, dialogue about policy, governance, integration of innovations into food systems. Frameworks like the Progressive Licensing Scheme in Ghana, policy advocacy, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to support informal sector actors and ensure safer markets were spotlighted. The side events culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the formalisation of the FCI Network and Secretariat. The FCI Network serves as a collaborative platform designed to bridge

innovation-driven food system initiatives under a shared framework through a way of thinking, doing and partnering that integrates research, policy and practice.

The Network hosted visitors at an exhibition booth (60 registered and several unregistered) at an exhibition booth tagged FCI Network of Networks. Engaging with visitors in English, French and Wolof, the network demonstrated a high level of commitment to advancing dialogue, partnerships, and innovations. Visitors to the booth included representatives from the United Nations, the African Union, advanced research institutions, national universities, government institutions, farmers' organisations, students and project partners. The collective goal from the interactions was towards transforming the continent's agri-food systems. Promotional materials from the projects were distributed, covering a range of topics including bio-circular agriculture, food safety, digital inclusion, and youth engagement.

The projects' and network's advocacy efforts highlighted digital integration, youth engagement and policy linkages as important drivers of innovation. This closely aligned with the AFSF2025 conference theme "*Africa's Youth: Leading Collaboration, Innovation, and Implementation of Agri-Food Systems Transformation*". Visibility was further enhanced via participation at high-level plenary sessions, side events, and exhibitions.

The projects demonstrated a high level of coordination for continual dialogue that encouraged collaboration and provided a platform to showcase practical solutions to emerging challenges in agriculture, food safety, and value chain transformation. Following the diverse engagements, the FCI Network strongly advocates for the following call to action.

Call to Action

- **Whereas** there is an urgent need to address the disconnect between scientific research, locally generated data and evidence-based policymaking and governance efforts,

- **Investment** in digital innovation, including artificial intelligence (AI) applications that are context-specific and locally adapted is crucial for food traceability, predictive analytics, and inclusive advisory services.
- **Inclusion** of youth, gender and informal sector actors in national and regional initiatives is critical for advancing in agrifood innovation efforts, especially with respect to food safety.
- **Financing** approaches that are innovative are critical for capacity development through training and mentoring that are critical to harness youth participation in food systems transformation, ensuring that food security encompasses quantity, quality and safety of diets.
- **Dedicated** budget allocations and fund mobilization efforts are critical for food safety by 2030 to strengthen interventions and sustain capacity building efforts for food system actors, including as it relates to climate-smart and sustainable management practices.
- **Simple** food safety concepts in local languages, including visual aids and digital communication tools are important for reaching stakeholders across the spectrum of potential users.
- **Multi-actor** approaches are needed for strengthening collaboration among governments, researchers, private sector actors, and communities; breaking institutional silos, and enhancing cooperation for effective implementation.
- **Establishment** of platforms for continuous knowledge exchange and community learning requires regional commitment and investment.

Appendix

Africa Food Systems Summit 2025

Food Convergence Innovation (FCI) Africa Side Event Programmes



Date & Time:

- Sunday 31st August 2025: 12h30 – 14h00 (All FCI Convening Event)
- Monday 1st September 2025: 12h30 – 14h00 (Food Safety Session)

Location: CICAD, Dakar, Senegal

Session 1: Sunday 31st August

Theme: All FCI Convening Event: Showcasing the Food Convergence Innovation Concept

Meeting room: Knowledge Hub - Main Stage

Time	Activity	Speaker/ Facilitator	Notes
12h30 – 12h35	Welcome & Opening	Moderator: Fadel Ndiame and	Brief introduction, objectives of session
12h35 – 12h45	Overview of FCI Concept	Miezah Kwofie and Laurette Dubé	Introduction of FCI and applications
12h45 – 13h05	FCI Network in Action: Thematic Highlights	Alejandro Ortega-Beltran (FS4Africa), Benjamin Emmanuel (INCiTiS-FOOD), Miezah Kwofie (FCI4Africa)	Showcase examples of FCI applications in Africa
13h05 – 13h30	Panel discussion	Jean-Pierre Senghor, Rose Omari, Aline Mugisho, Habib Thiam, Emmanuel Kyengo, Adama Neya <i>Moderator: Fadel Ndiame</i>	Focus on youth, women, entrepreneurs, policy makers
13h30 – 13h50	Q & A	Fadel Ndiame and Tahirou Abdoulaye	Interaction with audience
13h50 – 14h00	Closing Remarks & Next Steps	Tahirou Abdoulaye	Inviting further engagement, booth visit

Rapporteur: Tracy Muwanga

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Session 2: Monday 1st September

Theme: Food Safety in the African Food System – Innovations & Impact at Scale

Meeting room: Knowledge Hub – Classroom

Time	Activity	Speaker/ Facilitator	Notes
12h30 – 12h35	Welcome & Context Setting	Moderators: Fadel Ndiame and Olumodupe Banwo	Brief introduction, objectives of session
12h35 – 12h45	Keynote: Food safety, Fairness and the linkage with Youth and Women's Empowerment	Lawrence Haddad John Ulimwengu	Address on the nexus among food safety, youth and women in the African context
12h45 – 13h05	Showcasing Food Safety Innovations	Adja Fatou Diop, Sini Samba, Adama Neya, Rose Omari, Goule Gueye:	Practical examples from across Africa
13h05 – 13h30	Panel Discussion	Titilayo Falade, Triza Mbali, Inder Kumar, Lamine Senghor, Nimna Diayte, Tracy Muwanga, <i>Moderators: Fadel Ndiame and Olumodupe Banwo</i>	Including youth, women, entrepreneurs, researchers
13h30 – 13h50	Q & A	Fadel Ndiame and Olumodupe Banwo	Interactive audience engagement
13h50 – 14h00	Closing & Call to Action	Tahirou Abdoulaye	Connect to booth activities

Rapporteur: Alejandro Ortega-Beltran