



ACAT2025 highlights for day three

Dear delegates,

Today's theme, "Last Mile Delivery: Commercialization and Scaling of Ag-Tech Solutions," addresses one of the most critical challenges in agricultural transformation—ensuring that innovations do not remain in research labs or boardrooms but reach the hands of the farmers who need them most. This theme was unpacked through a series of panel discussions and a Technical Interactive Panel. Below is a synopsis of today's discussions.

Empowering young agri-innovators: mentorship, pitches, and partnerships

The third day of ACAT 2025 continued with the mentorship programme for young agri-innovators from the previous day. It began with a session focused on empowering them through mentorship, branding, and partnerships. Speaking in the morning session, the Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Hon. Dr. Mark Bagabe, urged the youth to work smart in their endeavors to effectively address food and nutrition security, emphasizing that platforms like ACAT provide opportunities to connect, share ideas, create partnerships, and build market linkages—where open-minded interaction among youth and investors fosters synergy and bridges the employment gap. Speaking at the same session, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, Executive Director, AATF, noted that Africa is endowed with abundant opportunities—including land, a youthful workforce, and growing political will—which we must harness to transform agriculture into a vibrant sector and achieve food and nutrition security; for young people to fully tap into available financial resources, they must also develop complementary skills like effective communication to strengthen their pitches to donors and play a central role in feeding the continent.



One of the youth agri-innovators pitching her business to the participants during the morning youth dialogue session

Last Mile Delivery: Commercialization and Scaling of Ag-tech Solutions

The plenary session “Last Mile Delivery: Commercialization and Scaling of Ag-Tech Solutions” tackled key challenges in delivering agricultural technologies to rural farmers. Panelists emphasized the importance of inclusive, farmer-centered approaches, stronger public-private partnerships, and the use of data-driven innovations. One highlight was the Climate Smart Remote Sensing Project in the Rice Value Chain, presented by Dr. Kayode Sanni, Project Manager and Director of the Alliance for Hybrid Rice in Africa at AATF. He showcased AI-powered soil sensors designed for precision agriculture—helping farmers adapt to climate change by improving irrigation efficiency in areas with significantly reduced soil moisture. The session also explored advancements in agricultural biotechnology, such as pest-resistant biotech cowpea, which can prevent up to 90% of crop losses for farmers growing this vital staple. Panelists stressed the importance of responsible commercialization of such technologies. Overall, the session called for multi-sector collaboration to enhance the accessibility, scalability, and impact of ag-tech innovations across Africa’s agricultural value chains.



*Dr. Kayode Sanni, Rice Project Manager and Director of the Alliance for Hybrid Rice in Africa at AATF, presented the **Climate-Smart Remote Sensing Project in the Rice Value Chain** during the project showcase.*

Leveraging Ag-Tech for Sustainable Agriculture

The day also featured a panel session focusing on "Leveraging Ag-Tech for Sustainable Agriculture". The speakers shared diverse yet interconnected views on how to make agriculture more appealing to Africa's youth, whom they acknowledged as increasingly knowledgeable, including in agricultural matters.

Panelists emphasized that the integration of technology into agriculture has opened numerous opportunities, but young people can only seize them by building adaptable and relevant skill sets. They highlighted that funding is available for youth-led innovations in agriculture, but also urged funders to develop a greater tolerance for the inevitable failures that can occur with agribusiness start-ups.

The session concluded with a call for stronger mentorship networks and the sharing of success stories to inspire and encourage more young people to pursue agriculture as a viable and rewarding career path.



Beyond the Pilot, Scaling Ag-Tech Solutions

Another panel discussion of the day focusing on "Beyond the Pilot, Scaling Ag-Tech Solutions" noted that scaling successful pilot projects in agriculture requires strategic expansion to reach broader territories and diverse user profiles, a holistic vision of agriculture as an interconnected ecosystem, and the development of digital applications that integrate the entire agricultural value chain.

The panelists included Teleshore Ndabamenye, Director-General of the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board; Mel Oluoch, Director of Partnership Strategy at Sasakawa; Amath Sene, Executive Director of the African Food Systems Forum (AFSF); and Zoë Karl-Waithaka, Managing Director and Partner at the Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

Licensing and IP: access to proprietary traits and germplasm

The future of innovation, research, and production in Africa depends largely on the continent's ability to protect intellectual assets. Intellectual property rights, licenses, and patents are essential tools in this effort.

To achieve this, it is critical to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders in the agricultural innovation ecosystem. Researchers, in particular, should be incentivized, through rewards or bonuses, to develop scalable innovations that can reach farmers and markets. This call to action emanated from the panel discussion focusing on "Licensing and IP: access to proprietary traits and germplasm."

The delegates heard that research institutions are already collaborating with the private sector to expand their engagement to include producers, ensuring that research is aligned with farmers' needs.

In the context of climate resilience and food security, it is vital to build the capacity of research institutions to equip them with the skills needed to negotiate patents and safeguard the rights of producers.



*Panelists who participated in the discussion on **Licensing and IP: access to proprietary traits and germplasm***

Announcement: visit to the GenFarm Project – the Electric Tractor Home

We're excited to invite you to a special visit to the GenFarm Project – the Electric Tractor Home in Gashora, happening tomorrow, Thursday!



Departure: 1:00 PM from the KCC main parking



Transport: Fully arranged and covered



Travel time: Just 1 hour from KCC

This is a great opportunity to experience sustainable farming innovation up close.



Register now at the GIZ & VW booth or online via: <https://shorturl.at/4Kt7i>

Thank you, and we hope to see you there!

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