



# **Ghana National BDS Multi-Stakeholder Platform Conference**

## **West Africa Center of Crop Improvement (WACCI)**

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2026**



## **Report and Next Steps**



## Why Ghana Needs a Coordinated Multi-Stakeholder Platform for Agribusiness and Business Development Services (BDS)

Anthony Morrison, CEO of the Chamber of Agribusiness Ghana, welcomed the **45** participants. The group was a good balance of 16 women and 29 men from a diverse range of institutions (see Annex 1 for full list). Mr. Morrison highlighted the following concerns which affect the functioning of the BDS market:

- The absence of guidelines on BDS service fees, which leads to **overcharging for services**.
- **SMEs being defrauded** where consultants are paid but then do not deliver the work as promised. These issues can take years to resolve.
- **Conflicts of interest:** BDS providers taking central roles in implementing proposals they originally developed as advisors, without proper protocols.

These, and other, problems lead to **trust deficits** between service providers, government agencies, and development partners. There is therefore a need for a **national standard for BDS**, comparable to the standards being developed for farmer groups under the Ghana Standards Authority. This standard should aim to bring all ecosystem players under a coordinated, regulated umbrella.



## The MSP Model – Global Lessons and Ghana's Opportunity

Mark Blackett, the Global Network Director of AMEA, presented AMEA's understanding of BDS markets and AMEA's experience in developing global and national BDS multi-stakeholder platforms. The full presentation will be sent to participants with this report.

### Current State of BDS:

- High fragmentation of BDS delivery across short-term donor projects, leading to lost opportunities for coordinated delivery and synergies.
- Supply-driven BDS that does not meet SME needs, citing Kenya as an example, where a BDS provider was forced to deliver a business plan to a cooperative that already had one.
- 95% of BDS in African countries is delivered through subsidized projects. We should not expect SMEs to pay a full price for BDS but there should be a smarter way of using subsidies. For example a Uganda cost-share pilot proved that SMEs will pay a portion of BDS costs when the arrangement is set up correctly.
- Impact investors and agri-financiers uniformly distrust BDS providers; they cannot rely on a business plan from a BDS provider to make lending decisions.



- Many BDS providers are structured to acquire grants rather than operate as businesses. If A BDS provider does not understand how to run a business then how can it be expected to support other businesses to develop.
- Donor KPI metrics (e.g. number of farmers reached) do not incentivize BDS Providers to strive for high quality service delivery.

Recent ISF Advisors research had also identified “What a Mature BDS Ecosystem” should look like. It should be:

- Market-driven, demand-led services where SMEs contribute to costs.
- Informed by a shared data platform enabling better decisions by BDS providers, agri-financiers, and SMEs.
- Delivered through coordination mechanisms that reduce fragmentation across projects and initiatives.
- Supported by active government involvement, not as a controller, but as an enabler of coordination.
- Financed by sustainable, longer-term funding models beyond short three-year donor projects.

The AMEA Journey:

- Started in 2016 as an alliance of a few international members; AMEA evolved into a network of networks across eight African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Benin, Ivory Coast, and Ethiopia. These networks then evolved into much larger Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs)
- In Tanzania, the MSP led to the launch of a National BDS roadmap to 2030 and National BDS Guidelines which are being rolled out by the Office of the Prime Minister.
- In Uganda, the MSP was established through the development of a National BDS Strategic Framework led by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The latest initiative is the launch of a new BDS Association and BDS Standards, planned for 26<sup>th</sup> March.
- In Benin the Ministry of Agriculture has adopted a standardized tool for measuring Agricultural Cooperative performance and is developing BDS and Cooperative databases.
- In Ethiopia, AMEA handed over leadership of the MSP and Roadmap to the new BDS Association. The latest initiative is development of BDS Standards with Ministry of Trade.
- This work also includes the promotion of peer reviewed tools (the “[AMEA toolbox](#)”). These tools have reached over 2 million farmers with high quality BDS.

Overall AMEA’s experience is that MSPs are essential for working on complex system change however they do not always function well. The learning over the last 10 years was summarized to enable participants to consider whether the conditions were now right for Ghana.

#### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS



1. The problem is similar in all countries. We do not need more research on the problem.
2. The solution depends on the opportunity in each Country.
3. Progress can be significant accelerated by Government leadership.
4. Roadmaps and communication campaigns draw in new participants and new resources.
5. Perseverance often pays off.....but there needs to be some visible action to keep interest.

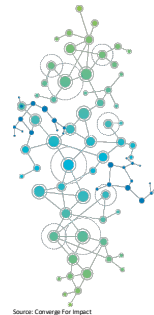




### Ghana's Opportunity

Ghana's Opportunity was framed in terms of Network Theory, which equally applies to MSP development. The aim of this meeting is to determine whether we have a common purpose, the right people in the room and we are able to identify some activities that can inspire us to collaborate.

#### The Five C's Network Formation Process



- Clarify Purpose
- Convene the People
- Cultivate Trust
- Coordinate Activities
- Collaborate for Systems Impact

Ghana's process started in 2023 but stalled; attributing this partly to insufficient government involvement, the absence of local BDS providers and reliance on too few members to drive the work forward. Mark noted that AMEA is not required to invest in Ghana and will only invest if there is a core of committed individuals wanting to work together within the broad framework of improving Business Development Services to Agri-Enterprises. Participants were urged to use this meeting to decide whether we should invest our time in an MSP.

### Open Plenary Discussion

The group provided the following substantive inputs following these presentations.

#### ➤ Role of Ghana Enterprise Agency (GEA)

GEA (formerly NBSSI) confirmed that the Business Resource Centres remain operational across all districts. She noted that GEA was increasingly focusing on identifying key service delivery players, strengthening them, and working in collaboration with other institutions. GEA's expanding mandate to include agribusiness under the Trade and Industry portfolio was cited as an enabling factor. The Rural Enterprise Programme (REP) was identified as a key link between GEA and the agricultural sector. The moderator affirmed that GEA had been a key partner in the platform discussions over the preceding months and that the relationship would be deepened going forward.

#### ➤ Over-politicization of Government Agencies

A concern was raised about the recurring politicization of government support agencies, observing that with each change of government, agencies transition from one identity to another (citing NBSSI, BAC and the current Ghana Enterprise Agency). He noted that this disrupts programme continuity, undermines donor investments, and sets back national development. He called for deliberate measures to insulate these institutions from political interference.

#### ➤ Financial Sector Engagement

A participant from the financial sector noted that BDS policy discussions tend to be demand-side focused, whereas supply-side financial policy, particularly macro-prudential and micro-prudential policies of the Bank of Ghana, directly determines whether financial institutions can support BDS-related activities. He called for financial regulators, including the Bank of Ghana, to be formally engaged in subsequent sessions. He also referenced a Swiss company called Nature Finance and indicated willingness to make relevant climate-related financial risk software freely available to the platform.



### ➤ **Role of Cooperatives in BDS Delivery**

A participant emphasized that cooperatives should be enabled to provide BDS services directly to their members. This was seen as a cost-effective and scalable model for extending quality BDS to agribusinesses at the grassroots level.

### ➤ **Stakeholder Mapping and Coordination**

Multiple participants identified duplication of effort and silo working as critical barriers. A proposal was made to undertake comprehensive stakeholder mapping to identify all BDS ecosystem players, convene them under a common platform and objective, and streamline processes. This was flagged as a first concrete action item.

## **Breakout Group Sessions**

Participants broke into four thematic groups to deepen discussion. The four themes were:

1. BDS Standardization and Accreditation
2. Community of Practice and National Dialogues
3. Scalable BDS Approaches
4. Integration of BDS and Access to Finance

Group Secretaries presented summaries. Key outcomes included:

- Strong consensus on the need for better coordination within the ecosystem, driven by a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities across ministries, agencies, and private sector actors.
- Recognition that silos persist across institutions working on similar BDS-related activities without awareness of each other's work.
- Agreement that leveraging cooperatives as BDS delivery channels could significantly scale up impact.
- A sense of urgency was expressed across all groups; participants called for immediate, concrete action within a one-month timeline.
- Government stakeholders were seen as essential, not just as endorsers but as active participants. Mr. Morrison (CEO) was identified as the key person to facilitate appropriate government engagement considering the Chambers role on key governmental agency advisory boards. (MOFA and Ministry of trade and Agribusiness).

## **Presentation — Ghana Agribusiness Directory Platform**

The CEO of the chamber of Agribusiness Ghana went on to introduce the Ghana Agribusiness Directory, an existing digital platform developed with USAID support under the Ghana Credit Investments project. Key features described included:

- A comprehensive database for BDS service providers, entrepreneurs, and agribusinesses.
- Registration, pricing, and contract management modules.
- A validation process requiring all registrants to have their documents verified and registration numbers confirmed before listings go live.
- Sector categorization covering agriculture and related industries.



The platform was proposed as the operational backbone for the BDS Multi-Stakeholder Platform, enabling the listing, validation, and profiling of BDS providers and clients. Participants were invited to identify missing sector categories for inclusion.

### Way Forward and Next Steps

The following next steps were agreed upon:

1. **Formation of Steering Committee (SC).** The following people nominated themselves for the Platform SC.

- Prof Francis Atsu, Institute of Management & Public Administration (GIMPA) University
- Dr Josephine Wapakabulo, Downforce Technologies
- William Esuman, Ghana Chamber of Young Entrepreneurs (GCYE)
- Osah Thompson-Mensah, Inclusive Business Center IBC)
- Yasre A Musah, Ministry of Food & Agriculture (MoFA)
- Edna Baffoe-Bonnie, Ministry of Finance (MoF)
- Dr. Gilbert Osei, CSIR -Institute of Industrial Research (CSIR-IIR)
- Amma-Sika Adomako, WARC

We will also be following up with Ghana Enterprises Agency and MoTAI to confirm participants in the SC. We also expect Josephine Eklun (Rikolto) and Rosemary Addico (Solidaridad) to join.

The SC will **meet before 30<sup>th</sup> April** to establish its' ways of working, conduct an initial stakeholder mapping and set-up the two Working Groups with co-leads (see actions below). The Chamber of Agribusiness will provide the Secretariat role and immediately set up a WhatsApp group for platform members.

2. **Stakeholder Mapping:** A mapping will be undertaken to identify BDS ecosystem players and propose how to engage them. It is expected that the SC should be able to do most of this work as they understand well how the ecosystem functions. The initial mapping from the SC meeting will be shared with members with the aim of **finalizing by 31<sup>st</sup> May**.
3. **BDS Guidelines / Standards:** A Working Group will develop a BDS definition and BDS guidelines document, with the aspiration of elevating this to a national standard through the Ghana Standards Authority, following the precedent set by [ISO 18716](#) already in progress. It was noted that Morrisson's support would be needed to engage senior staff in MoTAI. **The first drafts of the documents are expected by 30<sup>th</sup> June.**
4. **Agri-MSME Finance:** A Working Group will also be set up. It appears there is strong interest in better co-ordination, training for Financial Institutions and exploring opportunities provided by climate finance. This Working Group will develop a specific agenda, which is likely to require engagement with the Financial Sector and Regulators. Initial contact with some Financial Institutions has already been made by CAG and this can be taken forward. **A specific plan will be developed by 30<sup>th</sup> June.**
5. **Creating Opportunities for Youth in Agribusiness:** The Secretariat will engage with interested MSP members on developing a **proposition for a Working Group by 30<sup>th</sup> June.**





At the close of the conference, participants signed a Commitment Board as a symbolic pledge of their engagement with the BDS Multi-Stakeholder Platform process.

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THURS. 12TH MAR. 2026

COMMITMENT BOARD

THURS. 12TH MAR. 2026

NATIONAL BDS  
MULTI - STAKEHOLDER  
PLATFORM CONFERENCE

THURS. 12TH MAR. 2026

A collage of 15 photographs capturing various moments from the National BDS Multi-Stakeholder Platform Conference. The images show participants engaged in discussions, presentations, and group activities. Key elements include:

- Participants seated at long tables, some in small groups and others in larger sessions.
- Individuals standing and presenting or speaking into microphones.
- Background banners for the "NATIONAL BDS MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM CONFERENCE" and "BDS 2024" are visible in several photos.
- Participants are dressed in a mix of formal business attire and traditional African clothing.
- The setting appears to be a modern conference room or hall with large windows and professional lighting.



## Annex – List of Participants

| S/N | Name                      | Organization                                       | Role / Designation                             |
|-----|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | John Kennedy Apegyah      | AMEA                                               | Moderator / Host                               |
| 2   | Anthony S. K Morrison     | Chamber of Agribusiness Ghana                      | CEO                                            |
| 3   | Mark Blackett             | AMEA (Agribusiness Market Ecosystem Alliance)      | Network / Technical Director                   |
| 4   | Robert Donfro             | Fulbright Farms Marketplace                        | Managing Director                              |
| 5   | Brit van der Meijden      | Agriterra                                          | Regional Business Developer                    |
| 6   | Dr. Josephine Wapakalailo | Downforce Technologies                             | Board Member                                   |
| 7   | Saffiyah Coker            | WARC Africa                                        | Project Manager Fellow                         |
| 8   | Amma-Sika Adomako         | WARC Africa                                        | Business Development                           |
| 9   | Michael Sakyama           | EIS Risk Management / Fulbright Farms Marketplace  | Chairman                                       |
| 10  | Prof. Francis Atsu        | GIMPA                                              | Lecturer/Risk Management/Carbon Finance Expert |
| 11  | Dr. Rose Omari            | CSIR-STEPRI                                        | Researcher                                     |
| 12  | Dr. Edmund Akoto-Danso    | IFAD                                               | Consultant: Environment & CC                   |
| 13  | Theophilus Otchere Larbi  | IFAD                                               | Country Program Coordinator                    |
| 14  | Mildred Ohene Darko       | KPMG                                               | Assistant Director                             |
| 15  | Maame Ama Arthur          | KPMG                                               | Senior Manager                                 |
| 16  | Richard Doku              | Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG)        | Representative                                 |
| 17  | Edina Baffour-Bonnie      | Ministry of Finance – Agric & Economic Growth Unit | Head of Unit                                   |
| 18  | Charles Tetteh            | PFAG                                               | Representative                                 |
| 19  | Emmanuella Kuukua Hanson  | Ghana Enterprise Agency (GEA)                      | Representative                                 |
| 20  | Ernestine Awudoo Angmler  | GEA                                                | Admin Assistant                                |
| 21  | Vera Hawkins              | Tru Seed Africa                                    | Representative                                 |





| S/N | Name                  | Organization                         | Role / Designation             |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 22  | William Essuman       | Ghana Chamber of young Agripreneurs  |                                |
| 23  | Dr. Daniel Dzidzienyo | WACCI-UG-Scientist                   |                                |
| 24  | Koevi S Baffoe        | Thirdwell IBC                        | Co-founder                     |
| 25  | Iris Sandelle Baffoe  | Thirdwe IBC                          | Operations director            |
| 26  | Abubakar Hamidu       | Thirdwell IBC                        | Business Services Officer      |
| 27  | Robert Donkor         | FRUVEG Farms Ltd. Co                 | MD                             |
| 28  | Dr. Gilbert Osei      | CSRI- IIR                            | Researcher                     |
| 29  | Osah Thompson-Mensah  | IBC                                  | Chairman                       |
| 30  | Nayra Amegbletor      | IBC                                  | Chief Governance Officer       |
| 31  | Christopher Dapaah    | Resource Link Consults               | CEO                            |
| 32  | Dr. Wanida Lewis      | Crescendo Foods                      | Executive Director             |
| 33  | Awaitey Obed          | Third Force Consult                  | Business Development           |
| 34  | Peter Mensah          | Media General/TV3                    | Media                          |
| 35  | Cocraine Melchisedec  | CAG                                  | IT                             |
| 36  | Elorm R. Agbosuo      | AFA                                  | Tech Director                  |
| 37  | Kofi Nageyey          | GSI Ghana                            | CEO                            |
| 38  | Yasir Musah           | MoFA                                 | SAO                            |
| 39  | Dr. John Eleblu       | Biotech Centre                       | Director                       |
| 40  | Tawiah Narh           | PFAG                                 | Representative                 |
| 41  | Dr. Betty E Adjei     | KAC ICINOP                           | Lecturer                       |
| 42  | Nicholina Bruce       | EIS Risk Management                  | Admin Officer                  |
| 43  | Whittney Joy Tetteh   | Tradeline Consult                    | Business Development Associate |
| 44  | Charles Boame         | Agroforce Global Ltd                 | Manager                        |
| 45  | Godwin Wanya          | Matrix Innovation & Plantation Dev't | IT Director                    |