CELEBRATING TEN YEARS

GLOBAL CONVENING 2026 REPORT









Sustainable food systems through BDS Market Transformation

*Agri-SMEs as the engine of **change***

6th & 7th October, 2026
Kampala, Uganda

amea

www.ameaglobal.org/globalconvening

info@ameaglobal.org



Over 60 members and partners came together in Kampala, Uganda, to consider the question: **How can Sustainable Food Systems be supported through BDS Market Transformation?** The sessions on Day 1 provided perspectives on this question from the viewpoints of government officials, DFIs, BDS providers, agri-SME leaders, agri-financiers and catalytic capital funders. On Day 2 we reflected on what this means for AMEA's work and validated a new theory of change which reflects the learning from our decade of work and learning agenda, which sets us up for the next decade of coordinated efforts to improve the BDS market ecosystem globally.

This led us to commit to the following collective action:

1. **Professionalize the BDS ecosystem:** support BDS Associations, such as UBSP, to roll out business models based on member value creation. This includes enabling provider certification and supporting peer learning.

2. **Enable better matchmaking between BDS and SMEs**
Advocate collectively for the development of BDS policy, frameworks and registries which connect specialized BDS supply to SME demand.

3. **Invest more in promoting segmentation at scale** by leveraging the drive for standardization and cost-effectiveness

4. **Strengthen local coordination** at district and sub-county level to avoid duplication and bring quality BDS beyond capital cities

5. **Advance the AMEA Learning into Action agenda** through the 3 existing Working Groups (Environment, Youth and BDS Market Systems), as well as case studies on relevant projects documenting BDS approaches, costs and impact on agri-SMEs, cooperatives and farmer organizations

6. **Build evidence on BDS return on investment** in coordinated Food System investments. ROI will be measured by outcome data on enterprise growth, jobs, food security and climate results. Assess how the S(ocial) component can be included in ROI calculations

7. **Document learning from new BDS business models,** including lender-embedded BDS and shared payment models linked to measurable results

8. **Focus on a few joint initiatives:** select one to three practical collaborations for members and partners to support together next year, perhaps focused on Youth, in conjunction with the newly launched multi-year, Pan-African programme on Supporting Youth and Women-led Agri-enterprises.

9. **Finalize the revised AMEA Strategy and Theory of Change to 2030.** Develop improved pitches to donors and governments clarifying AMEA's value added and menu of interventions



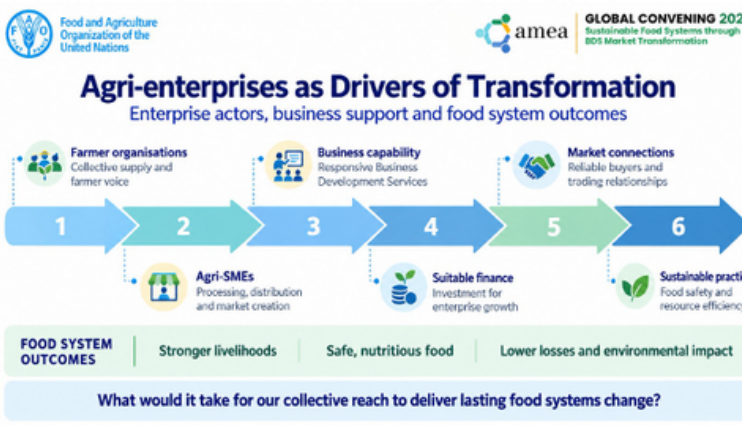
DAY 1 SESSIONS

Overview of food systems transformation



Stephen Waiswa, Digital Transformation and Innovation Consultant at FAO, presented an overview of how FAO sees agri-enterprises as the drivers of food systems transformation.

Digital agriculture and bundled enterprise support were considered essential for enabling food systems transformation.





Practical examples included the following:

- Farmer field schools can graduate into farmer business schools, bundling agronomy, collective enterprise, financial capability and market access.
- The Green Roots Women Farm Labs initiative was also presented as a bundled support model combining diagnostics, coaching, BDS and suitable green technologies.
- Digitised VSLA records, telecommunications data and credit reference information can support alternative or hybrid credit scoring. It was noted that an effective Digital Agriculture Strategy includes data standardisation and an agricultural data exchange framework. AMEA can play a role in supporting stakeholders to design and adopt new data frameworks.

Stephen also reflected on how FAO, AMEA and ESOs could collaborate as shown. This potential strategic partnership will be explored in Uganda and with FAO Global Team.

Food Systems Transformation: Real or imaginary?



This thought provoking and animated panel was moderated by **Hayden Aaronson**, International Development Advisor and AMEA Supervisory Board Member, with panelists from the Food Rights Alliance, the Private Sector Foundation Uganda and Uganda Agribusiness Alliance, and the Mbale City Nutrition Coordination Committee.

Panellists recognised progress in policy and financing, but stressed that fragmented execution limits the benefits for agri-SMEs, farmers and communities. Agricultural financing has expanded, but banks and larger businesses have benefited more directly than many agri-SMEs and small-scale producers. National and local nutrition coordination frameworks exist, yet many local structures remain underfunded or not functional.

Food system success should be measured through availability, affordability, nutrition, safety and livelihood outcomes, not production alone. The panel therefore called for coordinated investment across the full value chain, from research and seed development through production, marketing and branding, rather than funding isolated components. Specific recommendations included:



- Product-oriented policy that moves from broad commodity lists to specific, marketable products around which research, extension, BDS, packaging and technology can be organised.
- Investment in strengthening farmer associations and cooperatives to improve collective production, savings, local finance and market access. This aligns well with Uganda's recent adoption of ISO 18716
- Funding and activating local food and nutrition coordination committees, and assessing local food access, affordability, nutrition and livelihood impacts.
- Expansion of practical agricultural training for farmers, retirees and young people.
- Expanding investment in school meal initiatives that provide safe, nutritious and affordable food for students.

BDS Market System Development



Moderated by **Harrison Kaziro**, CEO of the National Alliance of Agricultural Cooperatives in Uganda and AMEA Uganda Network Facilitator, with panelists from United Business Support Professionals (UBSP), Kilimo Trust, Aceli Africa, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, and SNV.

This session focused on converting Uganda's BDS market from fragmented, donor-led delivery into a professional, outcome-oriented and commercially sustainable system.



Three recurring gaps were identified:

1. Uneven service quality
2. Limited and unpredictable financing for BDS
3. An incomplete legal and policy framework.

Uganda has started work to strengthen its BDS market. A National BDS Framework is in place led by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and two BDS standards have been approved, one that measures the capacity of the BDS provider and one that measures service quality. UBSP will be the certifying body for BDS providers. BDS policy is also under development with regional consultations completed.

This development of the local BDS market will also aim to support local BDS providers to meet the following challenges (and opportunities):

- **BDS Provider Quality and Specialisation:** Uganda has too many generalist BDS providers. Providers need deeper specialisation in areas such as exports, ESG, climate, food systems, digital delivery, and regulatory and export compliance. Generic training should not replace enterprise-specific solutions. Needs diagnostics should come before service design.

- **Who Pays for BDS?** A shared BDS payment structure should be considered, where SMEs, donors, lenders, government and farmers contribute at different levels according to the value of the service and the ability to pay of each stakeholder. AMEA's pilot Cost Share Facility has lessons for BDS providers (https://ameaglobal.org/resource/uganda-cost-share-learning-brief/).

- **Outcome-Based BDS Delivery:** Success should be assessed through enterprise growth, income, resilience, continued demand and provider viability, rather than training counts alone. Local BDS ecosystems and digital delivery are needed to improve access outside the main cities, such as Kampala, Jinja and Mbarara.

Proposed next steps

1. Reform BDS procurement, payment and outcome measurement;
2. Embed BDS in lender customer propositions and local enterprise development ecosystems.
3. Consolidate a national BDS provider registry; encourage providers to join and use the national BDS association; and promote collaboration between providers with complementary expertise;
4. Finalise the BDS policy.

Food Systems Investments and SME Growth Opportunities



Moderated by **Edmond Joseph Ringo,** Managing Partner of Match Maker Associates and AMEA Board Member, this session featured agri-enterprise representatives with direct and practical examples of what BDS recipients need and see most value in.

Panelists highlighted how well-targeted BDS can improve strategy, financial systems, compliance, market access, leadership and investment readiness. Examples included:

1. **Mountain Harvest:** diagnostic support from Acumen helped the enterprise refine its sourcing, profitability, pricing, target markets and leadership succession.
2. **Afrikai:** IDH helped the enterprise to sharpen its business identity, analyse its' profit centres and improve its' product strategy, pricing and farmer sourcing model.
3. **Curated Holdings:** UNCDF helped the enterprise to enter export markets by improving processes that enabled certification that is required to access EU and UK markets.



However the panel also noted that some BDS support just aims to tick a box for the donor/commissioner, such as the development of a business plan. If an agri-SME does not have power in this process it can lead to ridiculous outcomes, such as one Cooperative which had 5 business plans……none of which were being used!

The panel agreed that enterprises will pay or co-finance services that create lasting value, such as certification, market access, revenue growth, cost reduction and quality improvement. However, they may reject finance or donor money if the institution is not a strategic fit for their business, has unsuitable repayment terms or unrealistic reporting requirements.

The panel called for stronger, independent local BDS providers who deliver specialised, practical support. Specific recommendations included:

- funders, governments and BDS stakeholders to invest in local BDS provider capacity;
- donors to align their KPIs with enterprise needs and meaningful business outcomes;
- BDS providers to design services around diagnosed bottlenecks.

Evolution of Food Systems Financing and Support for Agri-SMEs

Building on the perspectives of the Agri SMEs, the day continued with a panel featuring impact investors, exploring risk management and climate resilience moderated by **Casey Harrison**, Nuru's Chief Sustainability Officer and AMEA's Board Chair. Representatives of dfcu Bank, Root Capital, SHONA Capital, Aceli Africa and aBi Development dug into what it takes to get the right capital to the right businesses, in the agrifood sector.



Agricultural finance remains constrained by risk perception, weak data, informality and unsuitable products. Coordinated finance and technical assistance can improve bankability. Information asymmetry, limited collateral, informality, lender capability gaps and unclear sector definitions restrict finance to agri-SMEs and farmers.

Participants highlighted the following:

- **Credit assessment that fits:** value chain assessment should consider inputs, off-take, production quality, markets and climate resilience, not only collateral and repayment history.

- **Climate performance as a finance tool:** climate performance becomes financially relevant when adaptation reduces volatility and improves yields and cash flows / repayment capacity.
- **Blended finance and technical assistance:** coordinated technical assistance and transition finance (supported by guarantees) are important tools to improve lender capability and move SMEs towards commercial finance, often through formalization of their business.
- **Digital data and transaction visibility:** integrated payment systems and digital transaction records can improve visibility across value chains and strengthen credit assessment.



Follow-up priorities:

- Generate evidence connecting climate practices to commercial and credit outcomes;
- Enable use of integrated payment systems and transaction data across agricultural value chains; and
- Combine concessional finance with demand-led technical assistance and risk-sharing instruments.

INSIGHT

The Right Capital for the Right Business

One thing that stood out is how much diversity and segmentation exists across the agri-SME space. Different value chains, climate conditions, business models and stages of growth require different solutions. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Better segmentation can also help us build stronger pipelines of investment-ready agri-SMEs. Rather than repeatedly approaching the same businesses with capital that may not fit their needs, we can better match financing, risk appetite and BDS to the right businesses at the right time. There are real opportunities to work smarter, share learning and become more efficient through collaboration and cooperation.

Future Thinking Interactive Session

An interactive session with 4 breakout groups unpacked what participants had been hearing throughout the day, tried to develop consensus on what needs to change and how they can contribute to that change.



Participants clearly identified the current problem of working within silos and identified a number of potential collaborative actions, which ranged from policy to practice change. These are as follows:

- Use the opportunity of Uganda's Tenfold Growth Strategy roll-out to expand the adoption of best practices identified in this Convening and documented in Standards, AMEA papers, etc. The focus of the work could therefore be on dairy, sugar, coffee, vegetable oil, and fish product/market development.

- Use the opportunity provided by the recent creation of BDS standards and a BDS Association to segment the BDS market and enable agri-SMEs to connect with providers who can offer specialized services.
- Support further testing of BDS fee-sharing mechanism between the clients involved, such as government, SMEs, donors and smallholder farmers.
- Campaign for funding to enable the upskilling of local BDS providers, starting with national champions as role models, for more effective service delivery to their clients.



How Will Future Food Systems Work Be Financed?



The closing session on Day 1. The moderator, **Ramona Naqvi**, Strategic Learning Manager for AMEA, invited panelists to examine how public, private, climate, development and capital market resources can be combined to finance long-term food systems transformation and fill in the gap left by declining ODA. Sustainable food system transformation is estimated to require at least 680 billion USD/year. In Africa alone, the need is approximately 70 billion/year.

Panelists from AGRA, the Dutch Embassy and IFC noted that the challenge is not just the volume required but also how commitments can be translated into coordinated financing pipelines and investments that work in practice. Food systems finance must be accessible, patient, appropriately structured and aligned with African operating realities.

There are some grounds for optimism as the Dutch for instance, have maintained their commitment to lowering hunger and ensuring food security (SDG2). There are also increasing agrifood investments that are targeting job creation, climate resilience and trade development. However the need to demonstrate value for money and efficiency is even more acute. This was also highlighted in the call for all investments to show that they can deliver a healthy Return on Investment. This requires leveraging and collaboration, which is why funders want their investment to be “catalytic”. This means engaging the private sector and thus unlocking finance for food sector transformation as the way to mitigate for the declining ODA. Two strategic shifts were proposed to enable funding to become more catalytic and deliver higher ROIs.

1. Moving from fragmented financing to coalition-based financing.
2. Developing a shared understanding of success (ROI) which goes beyond how much capital is deployed and how many farmers are reached, and measures the impact on food system, enterprise and worker/farmer level outcomes.This includes measuring the impact on food/nutrition security and resilience of the system.

AMEA Network in each country have the potential to act as a catalyst in the following way:

- AMEA can generate and share evidence regarding the return on investment which can support future funding allocations and partnership development.The Ag Donor Working Groups in each Country would be a place to start this discussion and assess demand for this evidence.
- AMEA can support stakeholder dialogue to mobilize investment into the local BDS market development, based on a standards/data driven quality improvement approach.
- AMEA members and partners can highlight investable opportunities.
- AMEA can facilitate policy engagement which includes examining ways to improve local coordination.
- AMEA can support BDS Association development which will enable better coordination of BDS providers across the Country, and find ways to reduce duplication where it exists.











AMEA Strategic Review

Mark Blackett, AMEA Global Network Director, shared the strategic review process to date which has led to the following reflections. This session aimed to build on these reflections and obtain feedback on the draft Theory of Change which is presented below:

amea **REFLECTION ON AMEA 2030 STRATEGY**

1. The Mission and Vision remain valid
2. The Toolbox has evolved significantly and is in a much better position for scaling. *However AMEA members and partners have not changed their practices as much as we hoped they would. Assessment data is still not trusted by stakeholders, especially financial institutions*
3. We have formed strong Local Network cores in most Countries, which have influenced policies, strategies and practices. The MSP approach has been very cost - effective *However the potential for reaching 20 Local Networks appears unlikely.*
4. *The larger scale uptake of better practices has not yet happened* but there are institutionalization processes underway.
5. BDS providers are re - positioning themselves in response to these changes. *This is less true for Farmer Organizations.*
6. AMEA is very likely to maintain critical capacity until 2030.
7. We are seeing conditions which could lead to AMEA's exit.



Convening participants broke into groups who unpacked the revised ToC, discussed its appeal, gaps, underlying assumptions, alignment with their own priorities and the current environment. Feedback from the breakout groups showed the Theory of Change to be about 90% complete, with no material changes and a consensus that the framework is credible. The following input was taken into the Board meeting and the final ToC/strategy will address the following points:

- Keep the resilience terminology while strongly emphasising business growth, business impact and market access. It was noted that corporate sustainability and ESG frameworks already incorporate resilience.
- Use "agri-food" rather than "agriculture" to reflect the scope of our work beyond farmers.
- Emphasise market segmentation and pipeline development, and make supply and demand mechanisms explicit. It must be clear that we are promoting a demand-driven BDS market.
- Improve the explanation of cost-sharing and change the reference to fee-based transactions.
- Explain that planned exit refers to mature country markets, not the whole network.

Local Network Progress, Learning & Plans

AMEA's 7 Local Networks presented where they currently stand, a 2026 result and lesson, their idea for 2027 and one ask to the participants.

Ethiopia



A 2023 BDS roadmap led by EBASPA (Ethiopia BDS Association) and a BDS multi-stakeholder platform co-chaired with SNV is in place. Three national BDS standards were drafted and two provider tools benchmarked on ISO 18716. For 2027, the network plans to launch the national BDS standard, certify providers with EBASPA and promote ISO 18716 through the new cooperative law.

Ask: Ideas for building broad support for a mandatory national BDS standard in Ethiopia.

Ghana



The network is hosted by the Chamber of Agribusiness Ghana, with 34 multi-stakeholder platform members. A tiered draft national BDS standard is near-final and 5 to 8 providers are onboarding for a pilot. 2027 plans include gazetting ISO 18716, validating the national standard, supporting development of a BDS policy for Cabinet in 2027 and a first Ghana BDS Day.

Ask: Ideas for which agency in Ghana would be best placed to take the role of certifying BDS providers?

Uganda



The network is hosted by NAAC, the farmer-owned apex of agricultural cooperatives. UBSP was constituted as the national BDS platform, a BDS Cost Share Facility was piloted with 6 BDS providers and 52 agri-SMEs and a provider certification mechanism was designed with the Ministry of Trade. In 2027 the network wants UBSP to become a functioning certification body.

Ask: Who will help make provider certification work?

Tanzania



The network is hosted by ANSAF, with MoUs signed with the BDS Society and Agricultural Development Bank. Results include launch of the National BDS Guideline and NEMIS, a national system to register and monitor BDS providers. In 2027 the network will support development of a national BDS accreditation system.

Ask: Who will help make provider certification work?

Benin



The network was founded in 2023 with 30 members and partners. Results include a National Cooperative Assessment system, a BDS Platform, two case studies, an annual learning dialogue and three tools benchmarked. Plans include an ISO 18716-compliant technical reference and a BDS quality assurance and accreditation system.

Ask: Technical and financial partners as funding shrinks.

Kenya



The network is hosted by Africa Turnaround Ltd. The Kenya BDS Vision and roadmap were adopted in January 2026, feeding the government-led standards and certification architecture, and a Strategic Partners Forum is planned to attract investment in the BDS Vision. Plans include formalising the Kenya BDS Vision, supporting the roll-out of BDS standards and development of an active Community of Practice.

Ask: Co-investment and collaboration

Rwanda

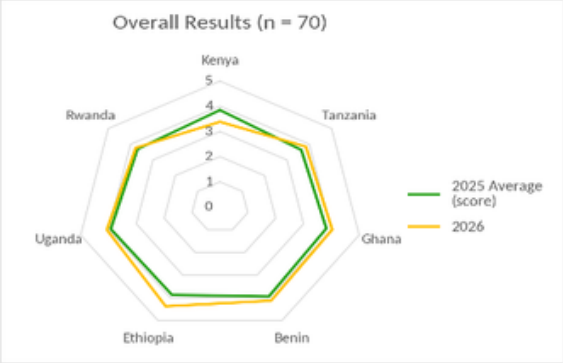


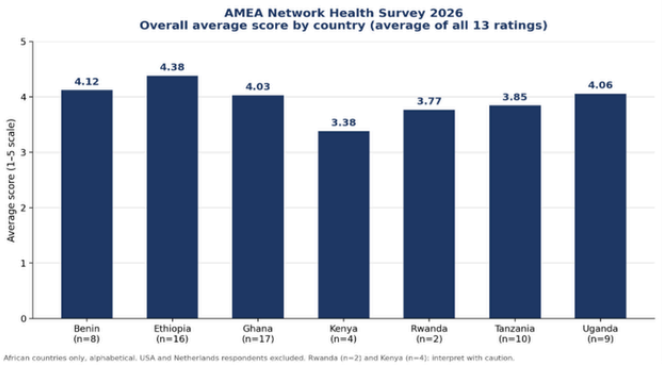
The network is hosted by the Rwanda Institute of Cooperatives, Entrepreneurship and Microfinance. The 2025 roadmap identified five BDS ecosystem gaps, and MINICOM and AFR aim to kickstart a national BDS standards process. A case study was finalised and a provider toolkit showed 87.5% alignment with ISO 18716. Plans include supporting the BDS standards process, benchmarking more BDS providers and developing two case studies on youth and environment.

Ask: Share experience on BDS standards and accreditation.

Network Health Survey 2026

This was followed by presentation of the 2026 Network Health Survey which collated 70 valid responses (72 in 2025) from members and partners in 9 countries. Respondents rated 13 statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and suggested how AMEA can deliver more value. Overall, members rate the health of the network positively. The overall network health score is 4.1 out of 5, slightly below the 4.2 recorded in 2025.





Respondents are most positive about what the network does for them and their organisations. The purpose of the network is clear to them, it benefits them personally and professionally, it is integrated into their organisation's priorities, and the relationships it creates increase their organisation's impact. The weakest areas are whether organisations have developed new collaborative projects with other members (only 58.6% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement), whether participants honour their commitments to the network (60.0%), and whether participants address controversial issues (60.0%). Respondents suggest that there is a need, in some local networks, for more regular engagement and networking, better digital communication channels and concrete business and collaboration opportunities such as matchmaking between members and partners.

Group Discussions

Participants then joined four groups: quality assurance and professionalising BDS providers; demand-driven BDS and finance; policy and institutionalisation; and network sustainability. Each group discussed what is working across countries, which 2027 network ideas fit their topic, what two or more networks could do together, and who is willing to help. This resulted in the following ideas:



- Corus Tanzania can explore how to leverage the TADB partnership
- Goldstone and IDH can both support development of partnerships with sector associations .
- Food Rights Alliance can support engagement with local government
- Support UBSP to develop digital profiles of BDS providers and develop Continuous Professional Development for BDSPs, including regional learning webinars

There were also a number of participants who offered to contribute to the learning agenda and to strengthening communication and advocacy. This was the focus of the next session.

What Are We Learning, and What Do We Still Need to Learn?

Ramona Angelescu Naqvi, AMEA Strategic Learning Manager shared insights from AMEA's latest case studies and from the 2026 Annual Learning Event. The BDS Market Systems, Environment and Youth Working Groups then presented their work and gathered inputs for a connected Learning Agenda.

What The Case Studies Show

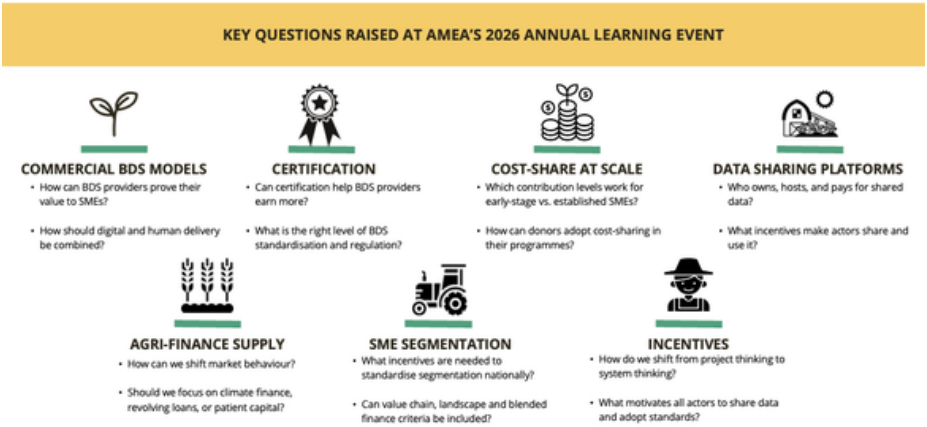
- **Integrated support delivers results:** BDS performs best when combined with finance or investment, market access or equipment. Coaching alone, or capital alone, delivers weaker outcomes.
- **BDS strengthens management and governance:** enterprises improve their financial management, record-keeping and planning, and become more bankable.
- **Local actors are taking ownership:** local providers are getting certified or benchmarking their tools, and some farmer organisations deliver BDS and generate revenue through member fees and sales levies.
- **Segmentation is essential but still at an early stage:** enterprises are assessed but rarely grouped into tiers. Reports recommend adapting support intensity and cost-share to enterprise maturity.
- **Financing BDS:** enterprises will co-finance services when value is visible, terms are affordable and payment is simple. Financial institutions were sometimes engaged too late, so finance and BDS should be aligned from the design stage.

What we heard at the 2026 Annual Learning Event

Access to finance remains the biggest perceived challenge (60% of surveyed participants). Lenders lack incentives and products tailored to agri-SMEs, and BDS providers remain dependent on donor funding cycles. Priorities include BDS models less dependent on donor funding, testing whether certification builds trust and raises provider income, scaling cost-sharing (grants for the weakest, rising contributions and full pricing for established firms), and making data shared infrastructure.

Proposed Future Learning Agenda

Ramona presented the key issues which will be at the core of the AMEA Learning into Action work in the coming year. These resonate well with the Convening sessions, on which compelling evidence would be beneficial for all types of stakeholders and for multiple purposes, from funding to programming and advocacy.

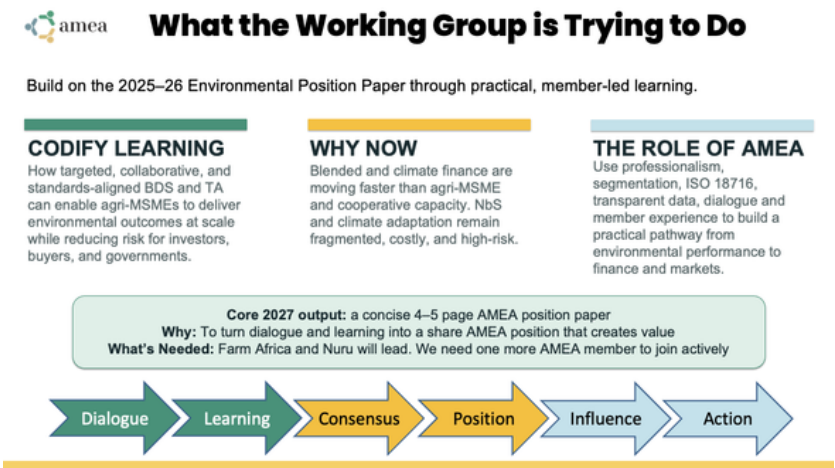


Global Working Groups

The 3 current AMEA Global Working Groups outlined their progress in 2026, current plans and asks from the network members and partners.

Environmental Working Group

Casey Harrison, who leads this Working Group, highlighted the Environmental Dialogue Series webinars as the 2026 output. The break-out group discussed future plans and agreed to convene a meeting before the end of 2026. Casey Harrison, who leads this Working Group presented the Environmental Dialogue Series webinars, with a next webinar planned with the Climateshot Investor Coalition (CLIC). He also introduced the core 2027 expected output: a 4-5 page AMEA position paper, led by Farm Africa and Nuru, with one more member needed.



This paper will establish a shared, member-led perspective on how professionalized agri-MSMEs, cooperatives, and standards-aligned business development services and technical assistance can translate environmental performance into scalable market opportunities and access to climate finance. The WG webinars will continue in 2026-27.

Business Market Systems Working Group

Peter Nduati (Africa Turnaround Ltd, AMEA Kenya) presented the KPI framework covering BDS provider practice (qualifications, methods aligned with standards, client-outcome tracking, satisfaction, commercial viability) and enterprise change (business capacity, revenue and margin, access to capital) developed by the BDS Working Group in the last year.



The key takeaway is that we **now need to shift from developing the KPIs to deliberately building understanding, testing their practicality and creating pathways for adoption.** The framework represents a significant shift in how BDS performance is measured. We are asking the ecosystem to move beyond activities and outputs towards enterprise-level performance and value. Participants highlighted the challenges in making this shift, especially if the KPIs are not already embedded in organization strategies and MEL frameworks.

The KPIs also raise an important input–outcome question. Stronger enterprise outcomes require programme designs, intervention periods and resources capable of producing them. If we want commissioners and donors to define success using these indicators, we may also need a conversation about whether programmes are adequately designed and resourced to deliver against them. The adoption pathway for BDS providers is different from that of commissioners. Providers were interested in using the KPIs to demonstrate the value of their services. However, providers often operate within programmes designed by somebody else and are required to measure what their client has commissioned. Their ability to deliver and report against enterprise-level KPIs will therefore depend considerably on programme design, scope, duration and the resources available to them.

Suggestions for the next phase of work were as follows:

After digesting this feedback Peter Nduati has suggested we should disseminate the framework more widely and enable commissioners, providers, funders and other stakeholders to interrogate it, improve it and identify opportunities for integrating into programme design, M&E frameworks, commissioning and provider performance measurement.

Youth Working Group

Cathy Phiri (Corus International) highlighted the work done in 2026 to build from the Position Paper presented at the 2025 Convening by conducting deep dives on AGRA and SNV approaches. This deep dive was presented at the Annual Learning Event. 2027 plans will be supported by a new AGRA-funded project. The objectives are:

1. **Best practices and learning on Agri-SME/BDS database development** are developed and promoted, with specific attention to how data and segmentation can improve identification and targeting of financially disadvantaged youth, women and underserved Agri-SMEs
2. **Best practices and learning on Agri-SME initiatives** are developed and promoted, with specific focus on effective BDS approaches for financially disadvantaged youth and young women

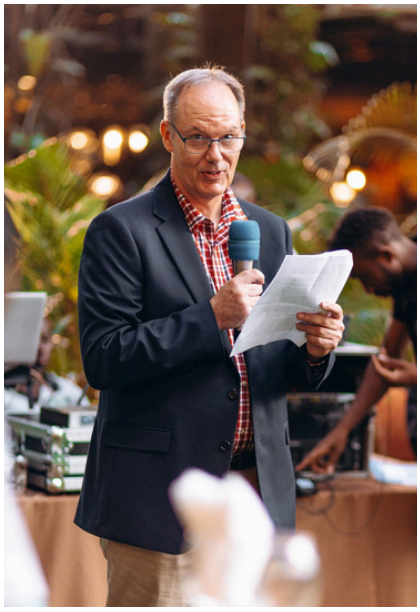
Youth Working Group members will act as technical advisors to identify strategic projects to draw out learning on BDS approaches. In this session eight participants volunteered to either participate in the Working Group, act as a case study reviewer and/or propose projects for case studies.

Ten Years of AMEA: Looking Ahead

The Global Convening was also an opportunity to celebrate how far we have come in the last 10 years and an opportunity to look ahead. The anniversary was celebrated with a cocktail reception and a chance to engage with government officials and the media, increasing the visibility of our work in Uganda and beyond.







Representatives from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, described a shift from "an unregulated promise" in Uganda to "an institution taking shape" and commended AMEA for building the business support ecosystem through collaborative action. The pledge to action was equally inspiring for the AMEA network: to complete and operationalise the certification framework with AMEA and partners; to see BDS standards and certification reflected in how public enterprise-support programmes buy and deliver services, so that public money buys quality and not merely activity; and to invite investors and development partners to use the institutional foundations Uganda is building.

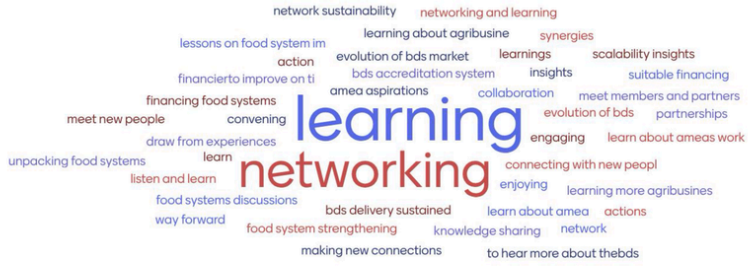
The Uganda story is part of a wider one. AMEA began by assembling a peer-reviewed Toolbox of approaches with a track record and the potential to scale. It includes the IFC Agribusiness Leadership Programme, which has supported more than 1.7 million farmers to grow their businesses and is expected to widen its reach through the new AgriConnect partnership. AMEA also spent more than six years supporting the development of ISO 18716, an international standard to help farmer organisations operate as professional businesses, backed by countries representing over one third of the world's population.

The next decade must be about putting these foundations to work at greater scale: improving the quality and sustainability of BDS, strengthening local networks and ensuring that agri-SMEs and farmer organisations can access the support they need to grow, compete and create value for farmers.

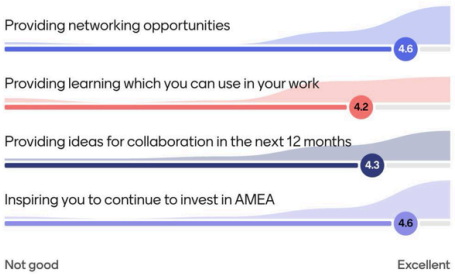
How Did We Do?

At the start of our Convening we asked what people expected from the following two days. Learning and networking clearly remain at the heart of the value proposition of AMEA, however it is also clear that a number of participants want to understand how to contribute to system change initiatives. This is also a sign of the evolution of our Network. At the end of our two days we assessed how well we had delivered against these expectations and the objectives we had also set ourselves. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

What are your expectations for this Convening?



How did we do?



Thank you to our Ugandan hosts, AMEA members, partners, speakers, Board members and the wider AMEA community, many of whom travelled far and long, for being part of this journey. Next year we expect to be gathering in West Africa and we highly value your feedback on how to make these two days even better.











