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NEWSLETTER

TECHNOPOLICY AFRICA

The Official Newsletter of the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS)

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- **Insights from Innovators and Policymakers:** Read an interview on clean cooking and carbon management, alongside updates on key STI policy developments across the continent.

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ATPS Vision:

To use Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) as a means for achieving sustainable development in Africa

ATPS Mission:

To improve the quality of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) systems research, policy, and practice by strengthening the capacity for STI knowledge generation, dissemination, and use for sustainable development in Africa.

Overall Objective:

To build Africa's capability in Science, Technology, and Innovation for sustainable development

ATPS Motto:

Building Africa's capabilities in Science, Technology, and Innovation policy research, policymaking, and policy Implementation for sustainable development.

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Chairman's Message

Prof. Crispus Kiamba
Chair, ATPS Board of Directors

As we enter the third quarter of 2026, I am pleased to welcome you again to the 31st Edition of the ATPS Technopolicy Newsletter. While the earlier part of this year was defined by momentum and consolidation, this quarter calls on us to press forward with even greater purpose, improving our approach as we near the milestones that we set for the year.

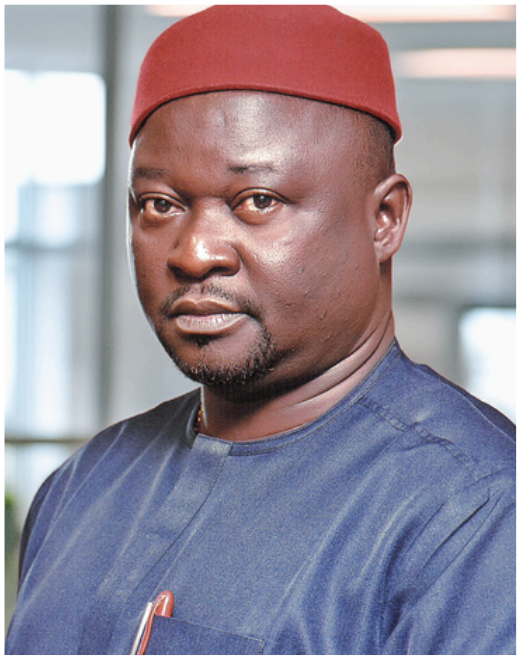
The pace of change across the global Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) environment shows no sign of slowing, and Africa's role within it continues to evolve in ways that call for both watchfulness and vision. The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) is dedicated to its founding purpose: ensuring policy is not a passive response to technological change, but a vigorous and deliberate force forming a future that is inclusive, equitable, and rooted in African priorities.

It continues to inspire me to see the depth of engagement across our network. Our chapters, researchers, and partners are demonstrating, quarter after quarter, that homegrown expertise and locally grounded solutions are the surest path to continual progress. Our attention remains on building resilient ecosystems, ones where decision-makers have access to sound evidence, where researchers are supported in dealing with the continent's most urgent challenges, and where young people and women continue to be recognised and empowered as central drivers of Africa's technological trajectory.

We can make this progress only because of the strength of the community around us. To our funders and institutional partners, your continued confidence and trust in our mission are both encouragement and a source of accountability. To our staff, researchers, and members across the network, your steady dedication remains the foundation on which our achievements rest.

As we move into the final stretch of the year, let us keep our sights fixed on the future we are working to build: an Africa where technology functions as a bridge rather than a barrier, and where thoughtful, inclusive policy lights the way to shared and lasting prosperity.

Executive Director's Message



Prof. Nicholas Ozor
Executive Director, ATPS

I am glad to share this update as we close out the third quarter of 2026, a period marked by significant progress across several of our flagship initiatives and an exciting new milestone for the network.

I am delighted to announce that the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) secured a new grant worth US$600,000 from the African Development Bank (AfDB) under the Climate Action Window. The project titled "Strengthening Inclusive Climate Governance and Locally-Led Action for NDC Implementation in Africa (SIGN)" aims to strengthen the enabling environment for climate action in Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, and Zambia by addressing systemic barriers and enhancing capacities in governance, finance, and stakeholder engagement. Its overarching development objective is to build resilient, low-carbon economies that align with Paris Agreement goals and national climate priorities. By tackling policy and regulatory gaps, institutional obstacles, and capacity limitations, the project enables the effective implementation of climate financing mechanisms, supports investment-ready climate initiatives, and strengthens monitoring and reporting systems.

This quarter also saw tremendous progress in the implementation of the project titled ***Advancing Responsible and Gender-Inclusive Artificial Intelligence Capacity in Africa's Higher Education Ecosystem (ARISE)***, which is funded by the Andrew Carnegie Foundation. This initiative strengthens African universities' capacity to teach, research, and govern artificial intelligence responsibly, with a deliberate focus on closing gender gaps in AI education and leadership. We have been able to support through the ARISE project six (6) postdoctoral fellows and 10 PhD scholars in the area of AI research and development across different disciplines, including agriculture and food systems, climate change and environment, health, energy, creative industries and entrepreneurship, education and technology, and digital economy. ARISE reflects the very heart of our mission: ensuring that as Africa embraces emerging technologies, it does so on terms that are inclusive, ethical, and locally driven. We are grateful to the Andrew Carnegie Foundation for its partnership and confidence in the ATPS, and we look forward to sharing more about this project's rollout in the coming months.

This quarter also saw active engagement across our ongoing projects. In July, I had the opportunity to represent the ATPS at the **International Science Council's workshop** on "Emerging Technologies in the Global South" in Paris, France, where global experts examined how artificial intelligence, data infrastructure, and connectivity technologies are reshaping science systems. The discussions reinforced the relevance of our ***Mapping Emerging Technologies to Advance Inclusive Sustainable Development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (META)*** Project. They offered valuable insights that will continue to inform our research and policy engagement.

In August, our project on ***Advancing Responsible Gender Equality and Inclusive Artificial Intelligence Innovations for Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa (AI4AFS +)*** convened a webinar focused on scaling AI-driven agricultural tools through Africa's extension systems. Anchored in lessons from work with the Nsukka Yellow Pepper value chain in Nigeria, the session highlighted the powerful role extension agents can play as trusted intermediaries, bringing AI diagnostics and advisory tools to smallholder farmers while keeping gender equality and social inclusion central to the approach.

We also travelled to Johannesburg, South Africa, under the ***Strengthening the Capacity of the Extension System to use Proven Knowledge and Technologies to Sustain Equitable Locally Led Adaptation Among Smallholder Farmers (SCALE)*** Project, where the ATPS, together with partners Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rural (IPAR) and West African Green Economic Development Institute (WAGEDI), led discussions on embedding locally led adaptation into public systems in Nigeria and Senegal. The visit underscored an important lesson that runs through much of our work: lasting impact depends on moving innovations beyond pilot projects and firmly into the institutions and systems that can sustain them.

Taken together, these activities reflect the breadth and depth of the ATPS's work this quarter, from shaping global technology policy conversations to advancing gender-responsive AI capacity building and strengthening climate adaptation systems on the ground. None of this would be possible without the continued dedication of our staff, researchers, national chapters, and the trust of our partners and funders.

I look forward to building on this momentum as we head into the final quarter of the year.

Pacing AI for Purpose: An African Response to the Global Safety Debate

By Dr Ruyobeza, an Implementation Scientist and Researcher at the University of Cape Town's Biomedical Engineering Research Centre (BMERC). He holds a PhD in Industrial Engineering and specialises in Health Systems Engineering and Innovation. His work focuses on reengineering clinical workflows by embedding technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum sensing to help shift healthcare systems from reactive, episodic service delivery models to proactive, preventive care. He has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications on sociotechnical frameworks designed to overcome systemic hurdles in digital health adoption and scaling.

Dr Ruyobeza Barimwotubiri

Recent weeks have brought major developments to the global conversation on AI safety. Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei has proposed a three-step plan for "pacing the frontier", building AI at a balanced rate that safeguards safety while still delivering its benefits and navigating the geopolitical stakes involved. The full article can be found at: https://darioamodei.com/post/we-must-pace-the-frontier

It is a thoughtful framework, but one built for a specific set of actors: the handful of nations, chiefly the United States and China, that develop frontier models. For Africa and other low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), which are overwhelmingly technology adopters rather than frontier developers, a uniform, capability-centric approach to pacing would do more harm than good. Here are five ways our policymakers and, for two of them, the global community as a whole, should adapt this thinking to fit both Africa's context and the wider world's shared priorities.

Regulate purpose, not just code

Amodei's framework centres on the capabilities of frontier models themselves; the risk of autonomous cyberattacks, bioterrorism, or runaway self-improvement lives in the model, regardless of application. That logic holds for frontier developers. But applying the same high-friction rules to every AI application in Africa would stall the socio-economic interventions the continent needs most.

African regulators should instead regulate the purpose and impact of deployment, not just the underlying code. AI used to diagnose disease in under-resourced clinics, forecast crop failure, or extend access to clean water addresses urgent human needs and should not wait behind the same approval timelines as algorithmic trading or entertainment tools. A three-tier system would help: a Priority Tier (healthcare, agriculture, education, poverty reduction) with accelerated approval and greater tolerance for non-catastrophic risk, provided baseline ethics and safety standards are met; a Standard Tier (commercial and fintech applications) governed by ordinary market and consumer-protection law; and a Restricted Tier (surveillance, social scoring, and applications threatening civil liberties) subject to intensive pre-market auditing.

Turn regulation into a catalyst, not just a brake

Amodei's policy recommendations include antitrust waivers, export controls, and capability checkpoints; assume markets are already driving AI deployment too fast, so government must act mainly as a brake. African markets face the opposite problem: commercial actors chronically under-invest in public goods such as rural poverty alleviation or indigenous-language technology.

Governments should correct this by pairing regulatory flexibility with state-backed incentives: compute subsidies, access to anonymised public datasets, and expedited licensing for ventures tackling Sustainable Development Goals, alongside standard compliance costs for non-priority commercial work. Concretely, this could mean developmental sandboxes that let priority-tier solutions test under real-world conditions with temporary waivers; sovereign resource incentives that fast-track access to public datasets, computing infrastructure, and tax relief; and conditional compliance relief that lowers fees and reporting burdens for developers solving SDG-linked problems. The aim is to actively reward innovators solving the continent's most pressing challenges, not merely restrain those who might cause harm.

The above two policy proposals need not stop at Africa's borders. While the tiered, purpose-driven approach to regulation and the shift from brake to catalyst are especially urgent for LMICs, applying them worldwide would make the world more equitable overall. The global community has, after all, already set out similar priorities in instruments such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For the United Nations, acting as representative of the global human community, a purely defensive posture – the kind implicit in Amodei's essay – would overlook both a profound moral imperative and a unique opportunity: carefully wielded AI has unprecedented potential to advance equity, reduce poverty, and build a world of shared abundance. To truly operationalise Amodei's vision of global coordination, his third step, the UN should complement frontier risk controls with a universal, application-tiered, purpose-driven governance roadmap. Such a framework would allow the UN to open accelerated regulatory "green lanes" for urgent human needs, such as food security, healthcare access, education, and climate resilience, once baseline safety standards are met, while maintaining strict scrutiny of non-essential or high-risk commercial AI tools. At the same time, by treating regulation as an active steering mechanism rather than only a brake, global institutions could offer compute subsidies, regulatory sandboxes, and compliance relief to direct capital toward the SDGs. This dual approach gives concrete substance to the global coordination Amodei calls for: high-income countries and LMICs would work together both to contain existential frontier risks and to maximise the pace at which life-saving technologies reach the people who need them most.

Now we turn to Africa's policy recommendations:

Domesticate imported models before they decide African lives

Amodei's essay is largely silent on a question that matters enormously here: how should recipient nations govern imported, black-box models they did not build? No foreign model should decide African citizens' health, creditworthiness, or legal status without first being tested against African realities.

This calls for mandatory contextual domestication and local auditing: imported models used in public infrastructure should be evaluated for local bias, language accuracy, and cultural alignment; automated updates pushed from foreign servers should be frozen from altering behaviour in critical sectors without local re-certification; and providers should be required to enable local fine-tuning on regional datasets to preserve data sovereignty. Left unchecked, dependence on foreign foundation models risks a form of algorithmic dependency, even data colonialism, as external systems trained on foreign data carry biases and blind spots domestic regulators cannot see. Providers should also disclose whether an exported model underwent unmonitored recursive self-improvement; restrict models with opaque capability jumps from critical public use until independently verified.

Build the compute and data commons that make this possible

Fast-tracked pathways and incentives for SDG-aligned applications count for little if developers in low- and middle-income countries cannot access the hardware to build on them. A fourth proposal follows: frontier developers should dedicate a small share of their compute infrastructure and foundation models to a UN-administered pool for public-benefit SDG research, while regional bodies such as the African Union aggregate sovereign compute clusters for local use. This infrastructure-equity measure would give African and other LMIC developers the physical compute and data infrastructure they need to build and fine-tune priority applications locally, turning regulatory permission into real capacity.

Make the exchange reciprocal

A fifth proposal addresses fairness in the other direction. Foreign AI developers who train models on regional or public datasets should be required to grant local research institutions open fine-tuning access and interpretability tools, and to contribute a modest fee to national AI funds that support local-language digitisation and independent safety-auditing boards. This follows naturally from the domestication proposal above: if imported models must be audited and adapted for local context before deployment, host nations need continuous funding, data rights, and technical access to do that work properly, and algorithmic reciprocity is what supplies them.

A different frontier

None of this argues against AI safety. It advocates for a safety framework that reflects our realities and addresses the challenges we all share. Africa's frontier is not the race to build ever more capable models; it is the race to deploy the models that already exist wisely, equitably, and on our own terms. For us, getting the pacing right means moving fast where AI can save lives and livelihoods, and moving carefully wherever the risks to our citizens are real. For the global community, it means recognising that the same purpose-driven, incentive-based, and infrastructure-equitable approach that serves Africa well can also help the world meet commitments it has already set for itself, from the SDGs to a genuinely coordinated global frontier.

Realising this will take real institution-building, not just good intentions. African governments need the capacity to classify applications, run local audits, and hold imported models accountable, and policy networks like the ATPS are well placed to help build it. The question before our policymakers is not whether to regulate AI, but whether the rules we adopt are written for Africa's circumstances, or simply borrowed from someone else's.

Africa Cannot Outsource Its Science: It Is Time to Finance Our Own Research Future

Prof. Adesola O. Olaleye

By Prof. Adesola O. Olaleye, PhD, P.Ag., the Vice President & Director of Research and Innovation, Commonwealth Association for Agricultural Research and Development (CAARD), Canada & USA. He is an agricultural and natural-resources scientist with more than three decades of research, teaching and international research and development experience. His work spans soil and water management, regenerative agriculture, research and innovation systems, institutional development, science-policy interfaces and research impact across Africa and internationally.

Africa has no shortage of research problems worth solving. Our farmers need better ways to manage degraded soils, drought, floods and emerging pests. Our cities need solutions for waste, water and energy. Our health systems face persistent and emerging threats. Artificial intelligence is creating new opportunities, while climate change is making old development problems more difficult. Yet an uncomfortable question underlies much of the research undertaken to address these challenges: **Who pays for African science, and therefore, who helps determine what gets researched?**

For decades, international development partners have played an indispensable role in supporting African universities, research institutes and researchers. Many important advances would not have been possible without this support. The argument, therefore, is not that Africa should turn away from international research partnerships. It is that external funding should complement African investment rather than substitute for it. The numbers show why this matters. UNESCO's latest research and development statistics indicate that Sub-Saharan Africa invests only about **0.38% of GDP** in research and development, compared with 1.92% globally. The region also has only about **88 researchers per million people**, compared with 4,358 in Europe and North America.[1] These figures represent more than a financing gap. They point to a structural vulnerability in Africa's knowledge system.

The problem is not simply how much we spend

When research institutions depend heavily on short-term external projects, research agendas can become fragmented. A university department may move from one donor-funded project to another without developing a coherent ten-year research programme. Excellent scientists spend considerable time chasing calls for proposals instead of building sustained research programmes. Laboratories are equipped under projects but struggle with maintenance when the grants end. Promising young researchers are trained, yet their institutions may lack the resources to retain them. We should therefore stop treating research financing as synonymous with **winning grants**. Africa needs a financing architecture for science and innovation. The African Union has already provided the policy direction.

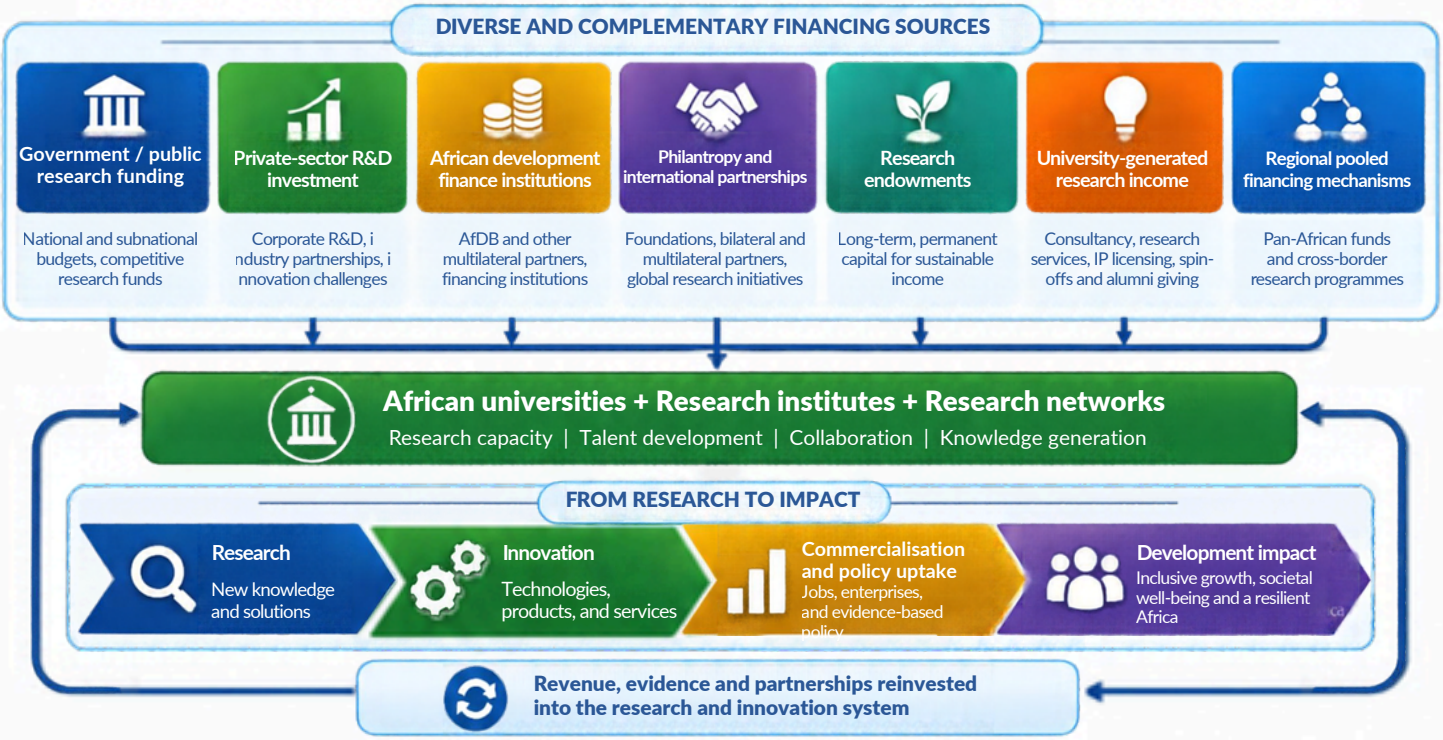
Its Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa recognises that STI must underpin development across agriculture, health, environment, energy, infrastructure and other sectors. It also calls for coordinated financing and for Member States and regional institutions to mobilise **public, private and donor resources.**? The challenge is converting that policy ambition into functioning institutions.

Build a portfolio, not another funding programme

Governments will remain central, but government budgets alone cannot carry the research system Africa needs. Neither can development assistance. A more resilient model would deliberately combine several sources of finance. National research and innovation funds could provide competitive, multi-year financing around nationally defined priorities (Fig. 1). Governments could create stronger incentives for businesses to co-invest with universities in research addressing commercially important problems. Development finance institutions could establish dedicated innovation windows for technologies emerging from African research.

Figure 1. A diversified financing architecture for sustainable African research and innovation.

The proposed model combines domestic public investment with private sector participation, African financing institutions, international partnerships, institutional endowments, internally generated research income and regional financing mechanisms. International funding remains important, but becomes one component of a broader African-owned financing portfolio.



Note: This figure is a conceptual representation. It does not simply specific contribution levels from each source, as these will vary by country. **Source:** Author's conceptualisation sector and over time. The aim is to illustrate a balance and complementing/merging architecture for African research and innovation.

Universities themselves need to become more entrepreneurial without abandoning their public mission. Commissioned research, specialist laboratories, professional training, intellectual property, data services and technical advisory services can generate revenue that is reinvested in research. We should also explore endowed research chairs and research centres more seriously. Instead of consuming an entire endowment, the principal can be professionally invested, with part of the return used to sustain research teams, postgraduate students, and essential research operations. Such models require strong governance, transparency and professional financial management, but they can help institutions think beyond three-year project cycles. Regional approaches matter too. Not every African country needs to build every expensive research facility. Shared centres of excellence, regional laboratories, common data infrastructure and jointly financed research programmes could stretch limited resources much further.

African businesses must also come to the table

The private sector is often described as a beneficiary of innovation rather than a financier of it. That needs to change. Agribusinesses, banks, telecommunications companies, energy firms, mining companies and technology businesses all depend on knowledge and innovation. Governments can create incentives for these industries to invest in university and research-institute partnerships addressing real economic problems. But researchers must also change how we communicate. A technically excellent research proposal is not necessarily an attractive investment proposition. Researchers need to demonstrate the problem being solved, potential users, pathway to scale, economic and social value, risks and expected return on investment or development impact. That requires new capabilities inside African research institutions.

The real issue is ownership

Africa should continue collaborating with the best researchers and institutions in the world. Science thrives through openness and international cooperation. But partnerships are strongest when both sides bring resources, knowledge, and negotiating power to the table.

The next phase of African science policy should therefore focus less on asking, "Where is the next call for proposals?" and more on asking, "What knowledge does Africa need, and how will we sustainably finance its production?" Five actions could begin that transition: strengthen national competitive research funds; create incentives for private R&D investment; develop regional shared research infrastructure; establish professionally governed endowments and other long-term financing mechanisms; and build resource-mobilisation and research-commercialisation capabilities within universities and research institutes. Africa cannot build a knowledge economy while treating knowledge financing as somebody else's responsibility. International partnerships will remain valuable. But ultimately, the ability to finance our own questions is part of the ability to determine our own future.

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Can Systems Engineering Help Patients Manage Chronic Disease? A New Trial Puts Mobile Health Tools to the Test

By Mamadou Youssouf Thiam, an expert in the digital economy and the Founder and Managing Director of FASO KA NU BE NE LA GROUP, dedicated to achieving development through digital transformation and economic innovation.

Mamadou Youssouf Thiam

Chronic illness has become as much a systems challenge as a clinical one. In the United States, more than 100 million Americans live with at least one chronic condition, and chronic disease now accounts for over three-quarters of the country's $2.3 trillion annual healthcare bill (Marshall et al., 2014). Responding to this burden, the US President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology called in 2014 for healthcare delivery to move away from disconnected, provider-driven models and toward systems organised around the patient, with ordinary people taking on a bigger share of responsibility for managing their own health (Holdren et al., 2014).

That recommendation raises a practical question: which tools actually help people manage chronic illness day to day, and can systems engineering, the discipline of designing and optimising complex processes, make a measurable difference? A new study protocol from Mamadou Youssouf Thiam of the Faso Ka Nu Be Ne La Group sets out to test this directly, through a randomised trial of mobile-phone-supported diabetes care.

Building on a Growing Evidence Base

Systems engineering has already made inroads into healthcare delivery. Reviewing its application to patient-flow modelling, radiation therapy and hemodialysis, Kopach-Konrad et al. (2007) pointed to therapeutic optimisation, an approach that weighs clinical, social and environmental factors together as one of the most promising ways to tailor treatment to individual patients, and argued that health system leaders need to fully grasp what such tools can offer.

On the self-management side, Pearson et al. (2007) mapped the landscape of chronic-disease self-management programmes for the US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, drawing on expert interviews and a literature review. They found that these programmes reduce costly health crises and meaningfully improve outcomes for people managing heart failure, diabetes and asthma, with older adults in particular seeing statistically significant gains in blood pressure and blood glucose control.

Mobile technology adds a further layer of promise. In Costa Rica, Cercone et al. (2016) piloted a mobile-phone application for diabetic care, building on earlier evidence from South Korea, where patients with type II diabetes who transmitted blood sugar readings by phone and received weekly feedback saw a 1.15% drop in HbA1c over three months. Participants in the Costa Rican pilot also reported concrete practical gains: lower health-seeking costs and less reliance on family and friends to manage their condition.

Testing the Idea Directly

Building on this evidence, Thiam's protocol proposes a four-month randomised trial comparing two models of diabetes self-management support among 70 patients. An intervention group of 35 would measure their blood sugar twice a day with a glucose meter (the LifeScan OneTouch Delica) and upload the results through smartphone software to a diabetic nurse, who would review the data and respond with feedback each week. A control group of the same size would use the same meter once a day, record results on paper, and see a nurse only once every two weeks, with no feedback in between.

Eligible participants would be 16 to 35 years old, diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, in suboptimal glycaemic control (HbA1c between 8.0% and 11.0%), and able to use a smartphone. Alongside clinical indicators: blood glucose, cholesterol, weight, BMI, hypoglycaemic episodes and hospital visits, the protocol is designed to track empowerment and satisfaction, testing the hypothesis that faster feedback helps patients feel more in control of, and more engaged in, their own care (Cercone et al., 2016). The design also builds in ethical safeguards: independent ethics-board approval, randomised group allocation kept separate from the treating nurse, and informed consent anchored in an explicit agreement between each patient and their nurse on how and when data and feedback will be exchanged.

Why It Matters

What sets the proposal apart is less any single piece of technology than its framing: it applies systems engineering thinking across the full lifecycle of the intervention: planning, implementation, and evaluation, rather than treating a mobile app as an add-on to existing care. If the hypothesis holds, the trial would add contextualised, controlled evidence to the case for embedding systems engineering more deliberately into chronic disease care. For research networks focused on strengthening health systems under resource constraints, it also points to a practical template: pairing a widely available technology, the mobile phone, with a redesigned feedback loop, rather than costly new infrastructure, to make chronic care more patient-centred.

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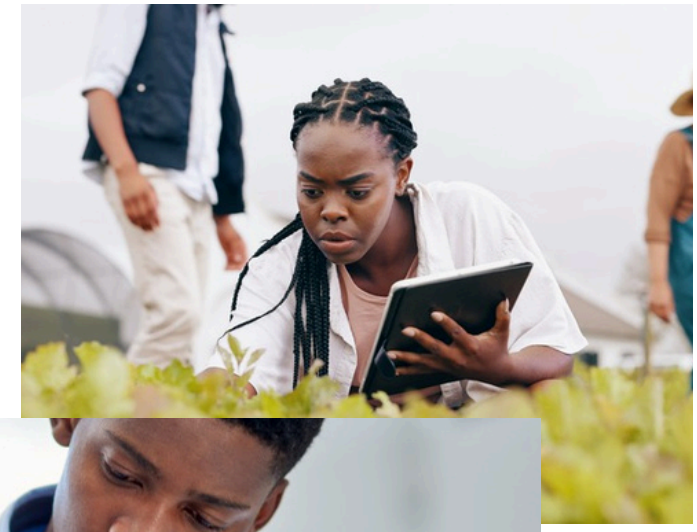

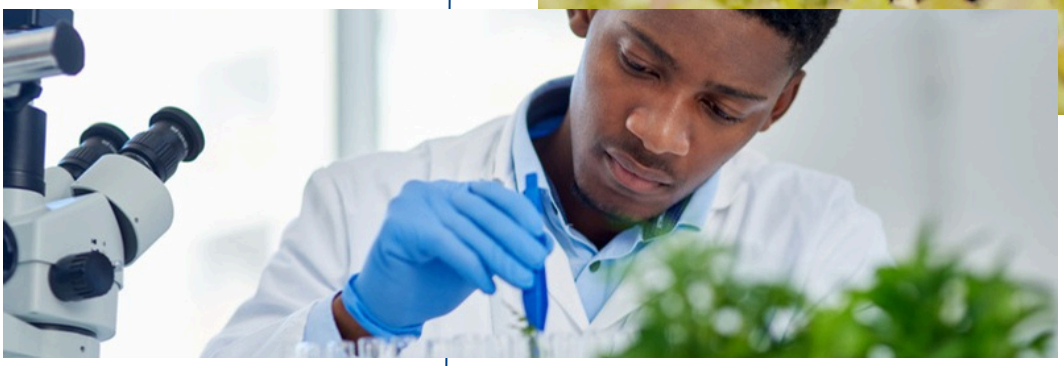

Cultivating Africa's Future: Bridging Agritech, Policy, and Sustainable Resilience

Dr Amara Okechukwu

By Dr Amara Okechukwu, an African agriculture and sustainable development expert specialising in the intersection of agritech, public policy, climate resilience and food systems transformation. She is passionate about leveraging technology, innovative financing and evidence-based policy to build more productive, inclusive and climate-resilient agricultural systems across Africa.

For decades, the global narrative surrounding African agriculture remained frozen in a paradigm of hand hoes, unpredictable rain cycles, and systemic underinvestment. Yet, as we navigate the mid-2020s, a quiet revolution is redefining the continent's food systems. Africa holds roughly 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land, positioning it not merely as a candidate for self-sufficiency, but as a potential global powerhouse for food security. Realising this vision, however, requires bridging the gap between homegrown technological innovation and enabling policy frameworks.

The 21st Century Paradigm Shift

The most noticeable transformation in contemporary African farming is the rapid integration of digital technology. Over the past decade, agritech innovation has migrated from small-scale pilot projects into scalable enterprise models. Mobile-based extension services, micro-insurance platforms, solar-powered cold storage, and satellite-driven soil health mapping are no longer novelties; they are becoming essential tools for smallholder farmers who produce over 80% of the continent's food supply.

A crucial demographic shift accompanies this growth. A new cohort of tech-savvy agripreneurs is viewing agriculture not as backbreaking labour of last resort, but as a high-potential commercial frontier. Coupled with the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), there is unprecedented momentum to boost intra-African trade in processed agricultural goods, reducing our multi-billion-dollar annual food import bill.

Structural Bottlenecks and Climate Realities

Despite these encouraging developments, the sector faces severe structural headwinds. Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it is an active disrupter. Prolonged droughts in the Horn of Africa, erratic rainfall across West Africa, and devastating cyclones in Southern Africa routinely erase years of agricultural gains.

Furthermore, key systemic barriers continue to impede widespread transformation:

- **Infrastructure Deficits:** Poor rural roads, inadequate storage facilities, and unreliable energy grids lead to post-harvest losses exceeding 30% in key staple crops.
- **Financing Gaps:** Traditional financial institutions continue to view agriculture as high-risk, allocating less than 5% of total commercial bank lending to a sector that employs over half the continent's workforce.
- **Policy Disconnects:** National agricultural policies often remain disconnected from ground realities. Subsidies are frequently misallocated toward chemical inputs rather than sustainable, bio-based alternatives or water-harvesting infrastructure.

A Blueprint for Sustainable Transformation

Unlocking the full potential of African agriculture requires a synchronised approach across policy, technology, and sustainable development.

First, we must prioritise climate-smart agriculture at scale. State policies must incentivise drought-tolerant crop varieties, regenerative soil management, and decentralised solar irrigation systems. Precision agriculture tools must be democratised through open-access digital platforms, making real-time weather data and market pricing accessible to smallholders in remote communities.

Second, financial engineering must match technical innovation. Governments and development finance institutions should expand blended finance mechanisms and risk-sharing facilities. Mobile money networks and digital credit scoring can bridge the information asymmetry that deters formal lenders from supporting rural farming cooperatives.

Finally, policy alignment is non-negotiable. Member states must accelerate the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) targets, dedicating at least 10% of national budgets to agricultural investment while synchronising regional phytosanitary standards under AfCFTA.

The Road Ahead

Africa's agricultural trajectory in the 21st century hinges on treating farming as a sophisticated, technology-driven business rooted in ecological stewardship. By combining homegrown technological innovation with visionary, evidence-based policy, Africa can transform its agrarian landscape from a vulnerable sector into the primary engine of sustainable development and shared economic prosperity.

Joy Kwamboka
Business Development Lead, EcoBora

Joy Kwamboka is a passionate, results-driven professional bridging the gap between sustainable technology and impactful financial strategies. As the Business Development Lead at EcoBora, Joy is at the forefront of advancing clean energy access by scaling solar-powered institutional cookstoves for schools, hospitals, and commercial kitchens. Her work is driven by a commitment to sustainable impact, focusing on market-oriented strategies, strategic partnerships, and product innovations like smart meters and digital Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (dMRV) systems.

With a strong foundation in finance, Joy also serves as the Business Lead at Emissionfy. In this role, she leverages data-driven platforms to help organizations track energy consumption, manage carbon credits, and actively reduce their carbon emissions. Her financial expertise enables her to build the scalable business models and secure the funding necessary to accelerate the clean energy transition.

Deeply committed to sustainability, Joy is continuously expanding her expertise in carbon management to align her career with global net-zero goals. She is a collaborative leader dedicated to working with like-minded professionals and organizations to build a more equitable and sustainable future.

Q. What inspired your transition from finance to clean energy and carbon management, and how has that unique blend of expertise shaped your approach at Eco Bora and Emissionfy?

A. Being recognized as an Innovation Award Winner at the Africa Queen of Energy Awards 2024 was a great honor. I believe what resonated most with the judges was our integrated approach to solving clean cooking challenges at scale.

At Ecobora, we are not only manufacturing solar-powered institutional cookstoves but also integrating smart meters and digital Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (dMRV) platform that track energy consumption and emissions reductions in real time.

This combination of hardware innovation and digital carbon monitoring allows institutions to transition away from biomass while generating reliable data for carbon markets and climate financing. The innovation lies in bridging clean cooking technology with carbon accountability and financial sustainability.

Q. You were recognised as an Innovation Award Winner at the Africa Queen of Energy Awards 2024. What specific aspect of your work, whether with solar-powered institutional cookstoves or carbon monitoring, do you believe resonated most with the judges?

A. Being recognized as an Innovation Award Winner at the Africa Queen of Energy Awards 2024 was a great honor. I believe what resonated most with the judges was our integrated approach to solving clean cooking challenges at scale.

At Ecobora, we are not only manufacturing solar-powered institutional cookstoves but also integrating smart meters and digital Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (dMRV) platform that track energy consumption and emissions reductions in real time. This combination of hardware innovation and digital carbon monitoring allows institutions to transition away from biomass while generating reliable data for carbon markets and climate financing. The innovation lies in bridging clean cooking technology with carbon accountability and financial sustainability.

Q. Eco Bora's solar-powered cookstoves target institutions like schools and hospitals. Can you share a brief story of how this technology has transformed energy access, costs, or operations for one of these institutions?

A. One example that stands out is a rural school that previously relied entirely on firewood to cook meals for hundreds of students daily. The school faced rising firewood costs and frequent shortages, which often disrupted meal preparation.

After installing Ecobora's electric cookstoves, the school significantly reduced its dependence on firewood and improved kitchen efficiency. Cooking times became more predictable, and the
kitchen environment became much cleaner and safer for staff. Beyond the operational benefits, the school is now able to track its energy use and emissions reductions, demonstrating how clean cooking solutions can simultaneously improve **health, operational efficiency, and climate outcomes.**

Q. You've pioneered product innovations like smart meters and digital MRV systems. How do these tools enhance the impact, transparency, or scalability of clean energy solutions in the African context?

A. Technology plays a critical role in making clean energy solutions scalable and credible. Ecobora smart meters and digital MRV platform allow us to monitor how energy is used in real time and quantify the emissions reductions achieved when institutions switch from biomass to electric and solar cooking.

This data has three key benefits. First, it improves transparency and accountability, which is critical for climate finance and carbon credit generation. Second, it helps institutions optimize energy use and reduce costs. Third, it provides the evidence needed for policymakers, investors, and development partners to confidently support the scale-up of clean cooking solutions across Africa.

By combining hardware innovation with digital monitoring, we create solutions that are not only impactful but also measurable and bankable.

Q. What has been the most significant challenge you've faced in scaling sustainable energy or carbon solutions across African markets, and how have you navigated it?

A. One of the biggest challenges in scaling sustainable energy solutions in Africa is financing and affordability, especially for institutions that operate under tight budgets. Even when the long-term savings are clear, the upfront investment can be a barrier.

We have navigated this challenge by exploring innovative financing models, including energy as a service approach and carbon financing. By demonstrating the economic savings from reduced firewood use and the environmental value of emissions reductions, we can structure projects that make the transition to clean cooking more accessible.

Partnerships with development organizations, governments, and climate finance institutions have also been critical in bridging these gaps.

Q. From your perspective, what policy, financing, or partnership shifts are most needed to accelerate the adoption of clean cooking and carbon management technologies across Africa?

A. To accelerate the adoption of clean cooking and carbon management technologies across Africa, three shifts are particularly important.

First, stronger policy support for solar cooking and productive use of renewable energy can create the right incentives for institutions to transition away from biomass.

Second, improved access to climate finance and carbon markets will help make clean energy technologies more affordable and scalable.

Third, cross-sector partnerships between technology companies, governments, utilities, and development partners are essential for building the infrastructure and financing mechanisms required to reach millions of users.

Together, these ecosystem changes can significantly accelerate Africa's clean energy transition.

Q. As you pursue advanced knowledge in carbon management and finance, what role do you see for African innovators in shaping the global net-zero agenda—and how can ATPS's network support that leadership?

A. African innovators have a critical role to play in shaping the global net-zero agenda. The continent faces unique energy challenges, but it also offers an opportunity to leapfrog to cleaner, more efficient technologies.

By developing solutions that address local realities such as institutional cooking needs, unreliable grids, and affordability constraints African innovators can create models that are not only relevant locally but also valuable globally.

Networks like ATPS play an important role by connecting innovators, researchers, and policymakers, enabling collaboration and knowledge sharing that strengthens Africa's voice in global climate and energy discussions.

Q. What advice would you give to young African professionals or entrepreneurs looking to enter the clean energy or carbon finance space? How can they connect with or learn from your work?

A. My advice to young African professionals interested in clean energy or carbon finance is to focus on solving real problems with practical solutions. The clean energy transition requires not only technical innovation but also strong business models and partnerships.

I would encourage them to build multidisciplinary skills understanding technology, finance, and policy and to actively engage with ecosystems that support climate innovation. For those interested in our work, they can follow the progress of Ecobora and Emissionfy, engage with clean energy networks, and collaborate on projects that demonstrate how African-led innovations can deliver both climate impact and economic opportunity.

Remembering Our Nigeria National Chapter Co-coordinator

In Loving Memory of

Prof. Adefemi Olatunde Olokesusi

February 6, 1957 – September 15, 2026

Always in Our Hearts

The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) mourns the passing of Professor Adefemi Olatunde Olokesusi, our Nigeria National Chapter Co-coordinator and a 2020 ATPS Champion in Promoting Technology and Innovation in Africa.

We honour his outstanding contributions to research, education, environmental management and technology policy. His dedication to scholarship, mentorship and sustainable development leaves a lasting legacy within ATPS and across Africa.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, children, grandchildren, colleagues and friends. May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may his legacy continue to inspire generations to come.

ATPS Appoints Dr. Louis Sibomana as Rwanda National Chapter Coordinator

Dr. Louis Sibomana

The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Louis Sibomana as the ATPS National Chapter Coordinator for Rwanda, following his nomination by the Executive Secretary of the **National Council for Science and Technology** (NCST), Dr Eugene Mutimura.

Dr. Sibomana currently serves as Head of the Science, Technology Development and Outreach (STDO) Department at NCST. In his new role, he will coordinate, report on, and follow up on ATPS activities in Rwanda, strengthening collaboration between the Network and national stakeholders in science, technology and innovation (STI).

Dr. Sibomana holds a PhD in Telecommunication Systems and brings extensive experience in research, academic leadership and training. Before joining NCST, he was a Senior Lecturer at the School of Engineering, College of Science and Technology, University of Rwanda, where he also served as Head of the Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department.

His research interests include wireless communication systems, radio access technologies, wireless communications security, and information and communication technology applications such as e-Government and e-Health. He also works on emerging technologies, including the Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI). His contributions include research projects and publications in international conferences and peer-reviewed journals.

ATPS looks forward to working with Dr. Sibomana and NCST to deepen stakeholder engagement, promote research and policy dialogue, and support the development and implementation of STI policies in Rwanda.

ATPS Secures a Grant to Strengthen Inclusive Climate Governance and Locally-Led Action for NDC Implementation in Africa (SIGN)

The ATPS is delighted to announce that it has secured a new grant worth **US$600,000** from the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** under its **Climate Action Window (CAW)**. The **SIGN** project aims to strengthen the enabling environment and capacity for climate action through stronger, inclusive, locally led governance frameworks, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement, aligning national priorities with the Paris Agreement objectives in Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, and Zambia. The project will also support collecting NDC-relevant data to generate annual indexes in other ADF-supported African countries already supported by the Bank. The specific objectives of this project include:

1. Identify and address policy and regulatory gaps, institutional barriers, and capacity deficits to strengthen inclusive locally-led climate governance frameworks, ensuring alignment with the Paris Agreement and national climate action priorities;

2. Enhance institutional and technical capacities for mobilising climate finance, enabling the development of investment-ready projects and operationalising climate financing mechanisms in target countries;

3. Foster inclusive stakeholder engagement by promoting awareness, multi-sectoral dialogues, and equitable participation in climate decision-making and implementation processes; and

4. Establish robust systems for monitoring, reporting, and verifying climate action progress, including the development of annual online NDC implementation indexes and regional knowledge-sharing platforms.

The ATPS is implementing this project in partnership with the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) and the West African Green Economics Development Institute (WAGEDI).

July 2-3, 2026: ATPS Represents African Perspectives at Global Emerging Technologies Workshop.

Prof. Nicholas Ozor, Executive Director of the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS), represented the organisation at the ***"Emerging Technologies in the Global South"*** workshop in Paris, France, on July 2-3, 2026. Convened by the International Science Council (ISC), the event explored how artificial intelligence, robotics, and advanced connectivity are transforming global science systems. Discussions emphasised that countries in the Global South must secure just access to digital infrastructure and skills to prevent these technologies from worsening existing inequalities. The workshop provided a strategic platform for the ATPS to present insights from its ***Mapping Emerging Technologies to Advance Inclusive Sustainable Development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (META)*** project, which maps emerging technologies to promote fair and sustainable development across regions.

August 17-19, 2026: AfDB Hosts Climate Action Window Inception Workshop in Nairobi

The African Development Bank (AfDB) hosted a Technical Assistance Inception Workshop through its **Climate Action Window (CAW)** at the Pullman Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, from August 17 to 19, 2026. The ATPS attended as the lead implementing institution for the ***Strengthening Inclusive Climate Governance and Locally-Led Action for NDC Implementation in Africa (SIGN)*** project, alongside partners from the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) and the West African Green Economics Development Institute (WAGEDI). The sessions guided project teams on the fiduciary, financial management, and procurement requirements needed to move proposals into active implementation. Following the workshop, the ATPS will strengthen its Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework and rationalise its budget to fully align with AfDB operational standards.

August 20, 2026: AI4AFS+ Webinar Explores Scaling AI in African Agriculture

The ***Advancing Responsible Gender Equality and Inclusive Artificial Intelligence Innovations for Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa (AI4AFS +)*** project webinar examined strategies to scale AI innovations in African agriculture by strengthening public and private extension networks. The event showcased a successful pilot involving the Nsukka Yellow Pepper in Nigeria, where AI-powered early pest detection reduced pest damage by 30% and expanded cultivated fields by up to 50%. To replicate these results across Sub-Saharan Africa, experts advocated equipping agricultural extension officers with smartphone-based AI pest-identification kits and developing offline-capable AI tools with native-language voice interfaces in Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba.

August 31 - September 3, 2026: SCALE Project Partners Convene in Cape Town, South Africa, to Strengthen Public Systems.

Stakeholders convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, for a knowledge-sharing and learning workshop under the ***Strengthening the Capacity of the Extension System to use Proven Knowledge and Technologies to Sustain Equitable Locally Led Adaptation Among Smallholder Farmers (SCALE)*** Project. Led by the ATPS in collaboration with Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rural (IPAR) and West African Green Economic Development Institute (WAGEDI), the session centred on transitioning project innovations into sustainable public systems, with a specific focus on embedding locally led adaptation (LLA) in Nigeria and Senegal. Participants highlighted that translating successful project interventions into lasting public impact requires deep collaboration with government entities and strong institutional ownership.

September 16, 2026: Nigerian Stakeholders Push for National Research and Innovation Development Fund (NRIDF) and Council Bill

Science and technology stakeholders gathered in Abuja, Nigeria, for a sensitisation workshop regarding a draft executive bill to establish the **National Research and Innovation Development Fund (NRIDF)** and a **National Research and Innovation Counci**l. Organised by the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology, the workshop allowed experts from across key sectors to examine the bill's legal, governance, policy, funding, and commercialisation frameworks. During the event, ATPS Executive Director Prof. Nicholas Ozor said the Federal Executive Council recently approved the fund and council, along with an annual allocation of about $500 million. With the workshop's conclusion, stakeholders expect the finalised draft bill to proceed directly to the National Assembly for legislative approval.

The meeting received widespread media coverage across Nigeria, including a prominent national broadcast on ARISE News. This extensive media visibility adds strategic value to the work ATPS is leading by elevating science, technology, and innovation policy into the public spotlight, fostering institutional alignment, and building crucial political momentum to support the bill's successful passage into law.

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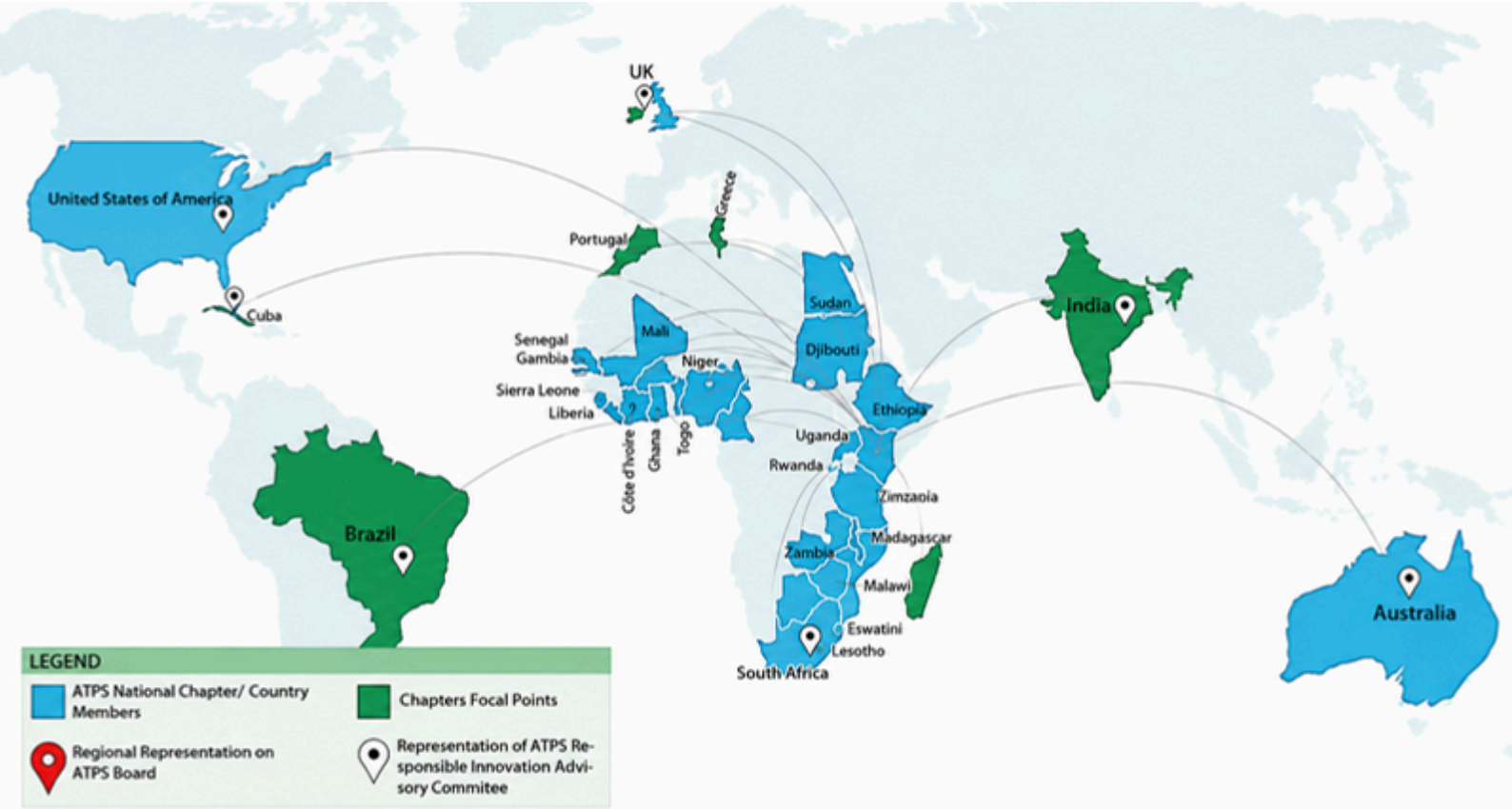

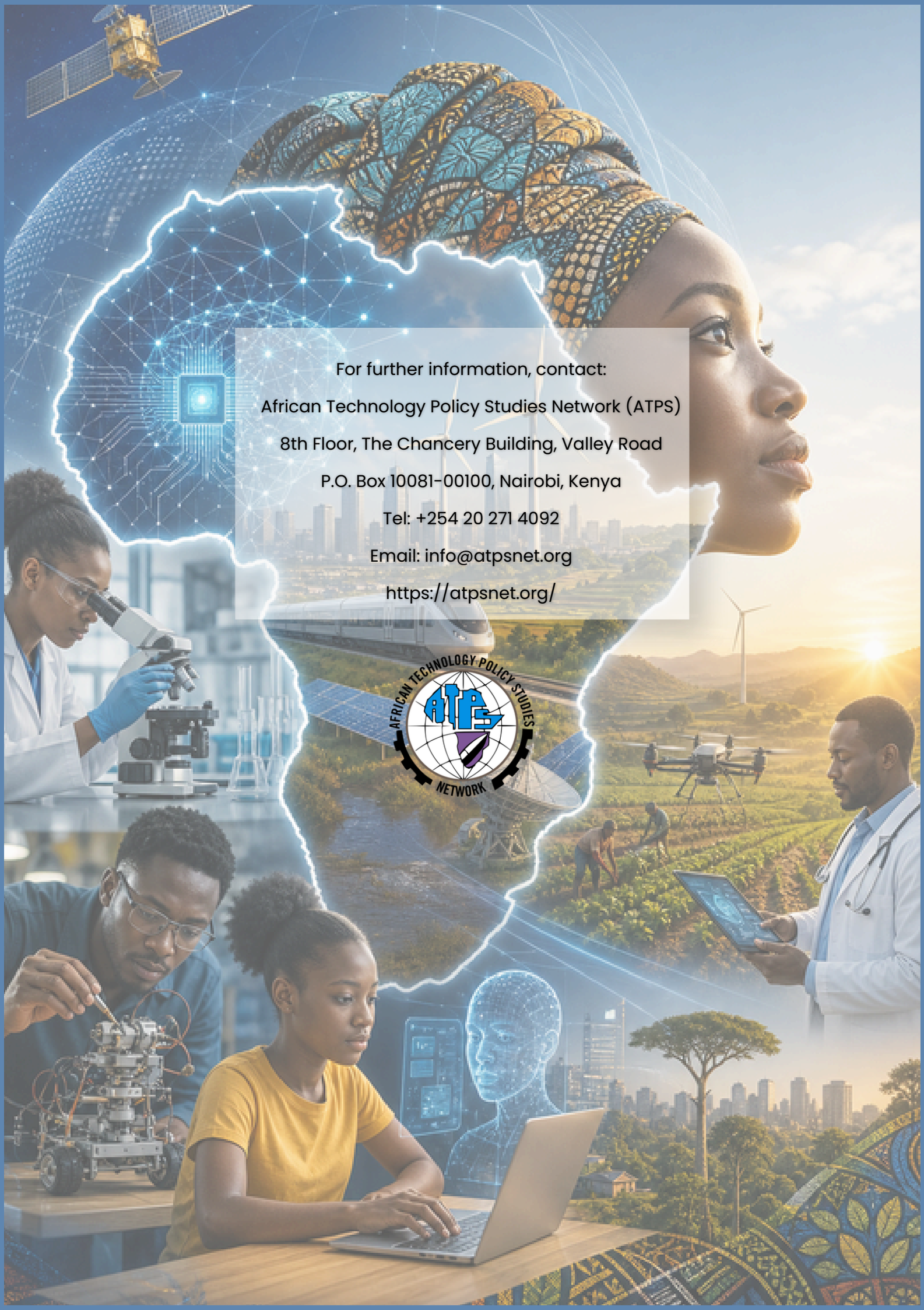

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