



# AFRICA BIENNIAL BIOSCIENCES COMMUNICATION (ABBC2027) SYMPOSIUM



**Date:** June 22-24, 2027  
**Venue:** Dakar, Senegal

## ***Theme:***

**From Evidence to Trust: Strengthening Communication  
Ecosystems for Bioscience Innovation in Africa**

## **CONCEPT NOTE**



# 1.0 Background and Rationale

The Africa Biennial Biosciences Communication (ABBC) Symposium has, since 2015, served as a leading continental platform for advancing science communication in Africa. Building on editions held in Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and hybrid formats, ABBC 2027 will focus on the strategic transition “from evidence to trust,” strengthening the systems, actors and practices needed to build public trust and maximize the societal impact of bioscience innovations.

Africa is witnessing rapid growth in bioscience research and innovation amid persistent challenges including food insecurity, infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, climate change, biodiversity loss, invasive pests and environmental degradation. Advances in biotechnology, diagnostics, precision breeding, digital agriculture and One Health are increasingly offering solutions.

Yet public understanding remains uneven, while misinformation and disinformation continue to undermine trust. Effective science communication is therefore essential to translate evidence into informed dialogue, responsible governance, stakeholder engagement and evidence-informed decision-making across agriculture, health and environmental sustainability.



## 2.0 Goal and Objectives

### 2.1 Goal

To strengthen communication ecosystems that enable responsible development, governance, adoption, and societal trust of bioscience innovations across Africa.

### 2.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To examine how communication, governance, and institutional systems shape public trust and evidence-informed decision-making in bioscience innovation and application.
- ii. To explore communication pathways that facilitate the responsible translation, adoption, and societal impact of bioscience innovations across agriculture, health, and environmental systems.
- iii. To foster multi-sectoral collaboration among scientists, policymakers, regulators, media, industry, development partners, and research funders to advance responsible innovation.
- iv. To promote inclusive, multilingual, and context-responsive communication approaches that enhance public engagement and address misinformation and disinformation across diverse African settings, hence build a Community-of-Practice in Science Communication.

## 3.0 Thematic Scope

The ABBC 2027 will address interconnected thematic areas that reflect the continuum from evidence generation to societal trust, with a focus on strengthening communication ecosystems that support responsible bioscience innovation across Africa. The symposium will explore:

**3.1 Governance, public trust, and evidence-informed decision-making** – including science-policy-society interfaces, regulatory communication, institutional credibility, public engagement, and responsible governance of bioscience innovations.

**3.2 Communication for responsible bioscience innovation** – including biotechnology, genome editing, vaccines, crop and animal health, synthetic biology, other emerging biosciences, and integrated One Health approaches that contribute to sustainable agriculture, public health, and environmental resilience.

**3.3 Research translation, innovation, and commercialization** – including communication strategies that facilitate technology adoption, responsible innovation, entrepreneurship, public-private partnerships, and research-to-impact pathways.

**3.4 Digital communication, media, and information integrity** – including science journalism, social and digital media, artificial intelligence (AI), biosafety communication, and approaches for addressing misinformation and disinformation surrounding emerging bioscience innovations.

**3.5 Stakeholder engagement and inclusive communication** – including community engagement, participatory dialogue, multilingual communication, behavior change, indigenous and local knowledge systems, and communication approaches that promote equitable access to scientific information.

**3.6 Strengthening the science of science communication ecosystems** – including institutional capacity development, interdisciplinary partnerships, professional networks, policy integration, and strategies for mainstreaming science communication within research and innovation governance.



## 4.0 Programme Overview

### 4.1 **Day 1** | *From evidence to trust: strengthening confidence in bioscience*

The opening day will establish the governance and institutional foundations of public trust in bioscience. The opening keynote will be delivered by the ABBC 2027 co-host, Executive Director of the National Biosafety Authority of Senegal, followed by high-level contributions from leaders/champions in science policy, science communication, and bioscience governance. Sessions will examine the science-policy-society interface, regulatory communication, institutional credibility, responsible governance of bioscience innovations and integrated One Health approaches, and the role of research investment ecosystems in strengthening public trust and evidence-informed decision-making.

### 4.2 **Day 2** | *Communicating bioscience innovation for societal impact*

The second day will focus on communication as an enabler of responsible innovation, research translation, technology adoption, and public trust. Sessions will showcase communication experiences and lessons from biotechnology, genome editing, vaccines, modern crop and animal health innovations, research commercialization, and, One Health institutionalization and operationalization across Africa. A flagship panel discussion will explore “communicating emerging technologies in the digital age,” highlighting practical approaches for addressing misinformation and disinformation through the example of gene drive research, while drawing broader lessons applicable to the responsible communication of emerging bioscience innovations and integrated approaches that foster human, animal, and ecosystem health. The programme will integrate perspectives from academia, industry, policymakers, regulators, development partners, and communication practitioners.

### 4.3 **Day 3** | *Building resilient communication ecosystems*

The final day will emphasize practical actions, collaboration, and institutional strategies for strengthening science communication and misinformation sensing approaches across Africa. A keynote on trust in digital information ecosystems will be followed by interactive sessions, including a fireside chat on scientists as public communicators, reflections from regulators and policymakers, a media-science dialogue on responsible bioscience reporting, and discussions on strengthening institutional capacity, professional networks, and multi-sector partnerships that strengthen communication ecosystems, support responsible innovation, and sustain public trust in bioscience.

### 4.4 Special features

To enhance knowledge exchange and foster strategic partnerships, ABBC 2027 will feature two high-level dialogue platforms:

**4.4.1 ABBC distinguished leadership dialogue** – A high-level conversation among leaders from science, policy, industry, and development organizations on strengthening public trust and advancing responsible bioscience innovation across Africa.

**4.4.2 ABBC innovation dialogue** – A flagship panel bringing together experts in biotechnology, One Health, vaccines R&D, gene drive research, crop and animal health innovations, and science communication to share experiences and practical strategies for communicating emerging bioscience innovations and addressing misinformation and disinformation.

### 4.5 Poster and early-career professionals' engagement

Dedicated poster sessions will be held on Days 1 and 2 (60 minutes each), complemented by lightning presentations and moderated discussions. These sessions will provide a platform for early-career researchers, science communicators, journalists, and students to showcase innovations and research on bioscience communication, public and community engagement, research translation, responsible innovation, and implementation of One Health approaches while fostering mentorship, networking, and interdisciplinary collaboration.



## 5.0 Participants and Reach

The symposium is expected to convene approximately 120 – 150 participants from across Africa and beyond, representing the diverse ecosystem of bioscience research, innovation, communication, and governance. Participants will include researchers, science communicators, journalists, policymakers, regulators, industry representatives, research and development organizations, universities, development partners, farmer and producer organizations, and regional and international institutions working across agriculture, health, environment, and One Health.

Participation will be pan-African, with representation from over 20 countries, complemented by international experts and strategic partner organizations. The symposium will promote interdisciplinary dialogue by bringing together stakeholders working in biotechnology, genome editing, vaccine R&D, crop and animal health, and other emerging bioscience fields, One Health, and science communication.

Approximately 15 – 20 early-career professionals – including researchers, science communicators, journalists, and postgraduate students – will be supported to participate, with emphasis on geographical balance, gender equity, disciplinary diversity, and regional representation.



## 6.0 Partnerships and International Collaboration

ABBC 2027 will build on longstanding collaborations with international and regional research institutions, universities, science academies, development partners, professional associations, science communication networks, and private-sector organizations committed to advancing responsible bioscience innovation in Africa. The symposium will provide a collaborative platform for knowledge exchange, partnership building, and multi-sector dialogue, fostering new alliances that strengthen science communication, support evidence-informed decision-making, and accelerate the responsible development and adoption of bioscience innovations across agriculture, health, and environmental systems.



## 7.0 Implementation and Hosting

ABBC 2027 is organized by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) AfriCenter, based in Nairobi, Kenya, in partnership with the National Biosafety Authority of Senegal as the co-host institution in Dakar. The symposium will leverage ISAAA AfriCenter's extensive experience in convening continental science communication platforms, including previous ABBC symposia, and its broad network of collaborators across research, policy, industry, media, and development sectors. Implementation will be undertaken in close collaboration with regional and international partners to ensure a high-quality, multidisciplinary programme that reflects Africa's evolving bioscience landscape. The venue in Dakar will provide modern conference facilities, including a plenary auditorium (120 – 150 participants), dedicated poster exhibition space (Marketplace), and audio-visual infrastructure to support both in-person and hybrid participation.



## 8.0 Expected Outcomes and Impact

ABBC 2027 is expected to deliver both immediate and longer-term outcomes, including:

- i. Strengthened capacity among researchers, science communicators, journalists, policymakers, and other stakeholders to effectively communicate bioscience innovations across agriculture, health, and environmental systems.
- ii. Enhanced public trust, informed dialogue, and evidence-informed decision-making on biotechnology and emerging bioscience innovations (e.g., genetic engineering, genome editing, gene drive, synthetic biology), and One Health approaches.
- iii. Strengthened institutional and multi-sectoral partnerships that advance responsible innovation, research translation, and communication across Africa through a community-of-practice model.
- iv. Development and dissemination of practical, context-responsive strategies for addressing misinformation and disinformation, strengthening biosafety communication, and fostering public confidence in emerging bioscience innovations.
- v. Increased adoption and institutionalization of science communication strategies and best practices within African research, innovation, and policy institutions.
- vi. Strengthened regional and international networks that promote collaboration, knowledge exchange, and sustainable communication ecosystems for bioscience innovation in Africa.