

The Agriculture Option

The Agriculture Option seeks to make agriculture a viable and fulfilling economic option for young people. It supports an evolution of the average Nigerian agriculturist to become a young person, that cultivates on up to 50 hectares of land, or its equivalent in non-crop value chains areas; that deploys integrated infrastructure, equipment, and processing capacity, and able to earn at least 50 million Naira per annum.

This whitepaper outlines our framework for a new system that supports the profitable engagement of Nigeria's youth in agriculture.

AgroMall 2021

The Agriculture Option

At The Agriculture Option (TAO); Our purpose is to make agriculture a viable economic option for young people, by supporting an evolution of the average Nigerian agriculturist to become a young person, that cultivates on up to 50 hectares of land, or its equivalent in non-crop value chains or practice, with infrastructure, equipment, and processing capacity, in an integrated agriculture outlook, that earns at least 50 million Naira per annum.

This is a mission to deploy agriculture as strong economic and human development pillars for nation building in Nigeria. I will responsibly engage in promising businesses that combine strong models with technology and capacity development to provide accessible economic opportunities in agriculture to young Nigerian farmers, traders and general agricultural practitioners. It will not be a fleeting trend; it is the future of business using new systems and technology to meet with agriculture. The future of facilitating a system of strong value chain interactions. The future of standing with agriculture.

We have been keenly involved in the transformation of Nigeria's agriculture, we have supported value chain interactions using digital capabilities and innovative models. We have joined stakeholders in the agriculture value chains to look at reimagining ourselves in a technology-driven ecosystem, and to set forth on a transformation journey.

From the communique of the 2016 Youth Agribusiness, Leadership and Entrepreneur Summit on Innovation, which advocated for governments and organizations to "mainstream agribusiness" by promoting youth entrepreneurship in agriculture, to 2014 African Union Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, which binds member states to job creation for at least 30% of youth in agricultural value chains, and the 4th Principle for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems championing the engagement and empowerment of youth by advancing their access to extension, advisory, and financial services including innovation and new technologies; there is a consensus that agriculture has the potential to generate good income job opportunities to millions of youths. This resonates with the ¹Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s position which suggests that by harnessing youths' innovative potential, utilizing new technologies, and taking advantage of new opportunities in emerging value chains, young agri-entrepreneurs could create thriving businesses and tackle the challenge of feeding a growing population. The time is here to create the needed enablers for the youth to take advantage of the business opportunities in the agriculture sector. Therefore, we have centered our focus on the youth.

The youths of Nigeria can be rapidly equipped with finance, knowledge, and digital technology, that can be purposed to support homegrown supply to the increasing demand for food and agricultural raw materials in Nigeria. This has the potential of growing the economy, proving productive economic engagement and jobs; while returning hope to young people. For example, effective engagement of 2 million youths in agriculture in an integrated effort of land availability, financing and partnership platforms holds the potential to create about 30 million jobs, 80 million Metric Tons (MT) of export quality and global standard agricultural produce, with a potential for rapid annual growth.

1. Introduction

Indeed, agriculture has become knowledge intensive, therefore, attracting and retaining young people in agriculture is key to a green revolution that will also reduce unemployment. Extrapolating simply from the World Bank Group's projection on Africa's food market in the 10 years to 2030, Nigeria's food market will grow to about US\$250b in the same period, and if things remain as they are in Nigeria's agriculture, about 84% of the country's food requirement will be imported. To infer from an AfDB report on youth employment, 20 million young, educated Nigerians may not find jobs by 2030.

The FAO recognizes that the importance of engaging youths in agriculture has been increasingly underscored at national, regional, and global levels, so, there is urgent need for opportunities to empower the youth to carry out and benefit from responsible agricultural investments by giving launch-pads to those most concerned – young farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, and workers.

2. Are We Missing an Opportunity?

There has never been a paucity of efforts by government and other stakeholders in Nigeria to institute interventions that will deliver far-reaching agricultural transformation. Between 2015 and 2022, aggregate intervention efforts in agriculture disbursed over 1 trillion Naira that directly reached over 1 million farmers, providing thousands of jobs, and expanding business opportunities for agribusinesses across Nigeria. The overall objectives range from creating the condition for the emergence of new generation of farmers, agribusiness entrepreneurs and job opportunities, increasing access to credit financing to the agricultural sector, enabling lower importation of agricultural commodities, growing the external reserves, and boosting capacity utilization of agricultural firms.

However, the typical profile of the over 1 million farmers supported so far by these interventions is a 43-year-old man with primary education. By this, the average recipient of Nigeria's agricultural intervention may not be open to innovation and growth, has a shorter productive life, and represents only 4% of the population.

Even though agricultural intervention efforts are purportedly far reaching, the distribution of farmers and other value chain participants that are typically covered so far has been skewed against a major and potentially impactful demographic group - the youth. In an economy where 20 million educated youths may not find jobs by 2030, not focusing agricultural development efforts on young people-the productive heart of a nation, is a missed opportunity, with a potential to address the major pain points of youth unemployment and food security in Nigeria.

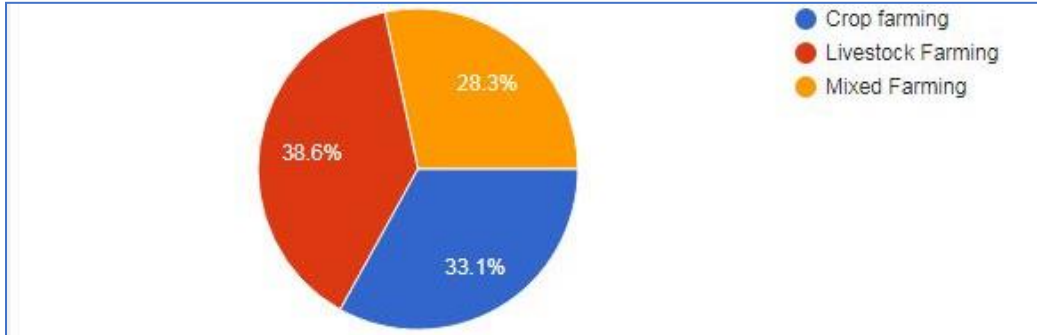
	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I am willing and ready to be an agriculture entrepreneur	15	15	19	15	14
2	My qualification has contributed positively towards my interest of starting an agricultural enterprise	3	18	24	8	8
3	I had a strong intention to start my own agriculture enterprise before I started with my qualification	22	27	23	18	15
4	I will make every effort to start and run my own agriculture enterprise	55	49	45	58	51
5	I am determined to create an agriculture enterprise in the future	68	54	52	64	75

Table 1 Agricultural Entrepreneurship Intent by 163 respondents. Source: AgroMall Youth Engagement Report

The average age in Nigeria is 17.5, and the youth—ages 18-35 make up 30% of the population. According to the National Bureau for Statistics' (NBC) Labour Force Statistics - Unemployment and Underemployment Report for Q3 2018, 68.7% of young people in the labour force, aged 15-24 years were either underemployed (engaged in work for less than 20 hours a week) or unemployed (willing and actively seeking to work), while the combined rate for the 25–34-year age group stood at 45.1%. From the NBS report, these age groups (15-24 years and 25-34 years) represent the youth population in Nigeria and have a combined unemployment and underemployment rate of 55.4% or 24.5 million (13.1 million unemployed and another 11.3 million underemployed). The report concluded that young people are more likely to face difficulties securing full time employment and are more likely to be completely idle.

In a 2019 Youth Engagement Survey conducted by AgroMall—a Nigerian agricultural company, which comprised of 163 respondents (age 18 – 35 years), and sample clusters reflecting the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, (96% having a tertiary educational qualification, 79.8% male and 20.2% female); 75% of the respondents expressed their determination to create an agricultural enterprise, whilst 79% indicated their willingness to be trained on ICT for digital agriculture. Considering the unharnessed interest of young people in Agriculture, Nigeria may be missing an opportunity to provide both sustainable food security and youth productivity with the same effort.

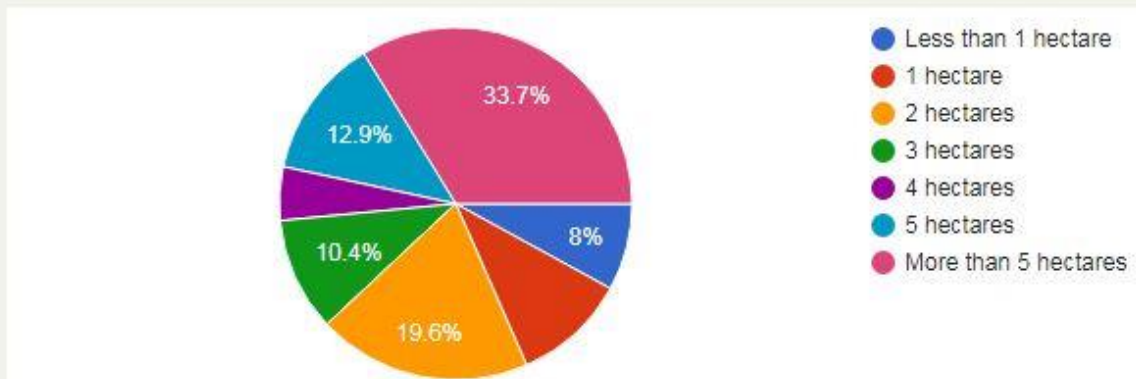
Figure 1 Respondents by Choice of Farming Practices



Source: AgroMall Youth Engagement Report

For example, of the over 1.1million hectares of farmland cultivated by about 1.05million farmers under Nigeria's Anchor Borrowers Programme (Nigeria's flagship agricultural intervention of the Buhari administration) up till 2019, If fifty percent (500 thousand hectares) had been cultivated by 250 thousand educated young farmers, up to 1 million jobs and 3 million metric tonnes of grains at N285 billion farmgate value could have been produced directly by young people. This is over 100% efficiency growth over Nigeria's current agricultural production levels.

What is the size of farmland you will like to own?163 responses



Source: AgroMall Youth Engagement Report

A deliberate focus of half of Nigeria's agricultural intervention effort on digital technology supported youth engagement in agriculture will address some clear and present socio-economic challenges facing Nigeria and create good outcomes and favorable perception of agriculture.

3. The Big Picture

Nigeria's population was put at 218 million people in 2022, characterized by widening youth bulge. Fueled by a population growth rate of 2.62%, absolute youth population is expected to continue to increase significantly. Targeting youth led farming and agribusinesses will give agricultural development efforts enhanced immediate outcomes, long-term economic impact, and positive perception in Nigeria, and can potentially become an agriculture and job creation transformation platform.

With this, Nigeria's policy makers and businesses are presented with an opportunity to provide both sustainable food security and youth productivity with the same effort, and an outlook that targets the Africa food market that is estimated to reach 1 trillion dollars in 2030 (World Bank). The prospect for Nigeria in this, is that it's agricultural production will compete with and potentially upturn 84% of supply to the African food market, which is currently imported from outside Africa. The newly signed African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) further creates twin opportunities for Nigeria to be a major player in this market, as it has an abundance of youth manpower, arable land, and the potential of digital technology to support exponential growth and scale in agricultural production for the African market, while solving the problem of the projected 24.5 million youth without jobs or underemployed.

Educated young farmers will adopt best agronomy and extension practices, farm, and digital technology. They can be supported by young farm hands and youth-led agribusiness owners in input supply, logistics, aggregation, and processing. Their digital technology supported operations will help to provide situational awareness across the value chains, generate real data for policy and plans, and create positive perception and reportage through new media.

We believe that if 2 million educated young farmers are engaged to cultivate 10 million hectares across crop and livestock value chains – focusing on 7 out of the 10 identified prime commodities - Rice, Maize, Cassava, Cocoa, Tomato, Cotton, and Oil Palm; 30 million jobs and up to 80m Metric Tons (MT) of grains at N4.2t farmgate value (105,000 Naira average price per ton) could be produced directly by young people per farming cycle. The youths are better positioned to achieve multiple farming cycle per annum as they will adopt technology, digital agriculture, and market access capabilities, so the annual production numbers can hit N8.4trn. At just 5 hectares per capita, these output levels translate to about 8 million Naira per capita, outperforming existing minimum wage jobs that most youths are currently jostling for. An outlook to take hectareage to 50 per capita, in addition to processing capacity will translate to over 50 million Naira per capita, and aggregated will create a prosperous youth and agriculture led economy.

4. The Agriculture Option

The Agriculture Option believes that agriculture is a viable economic option for young people, and that youth participation in agriculture is a veritable tool for nation building. Therefore, it is galvanizing a youth led effort to modernize and improve agricultural production towards food and economic security; and ultimately nation building in Nigeria.

The Agriculture Option is driving an evolution of the average Nigerian agriculturist to be a young person that cultivates on up to 50 hectares of land, or its equivalent in non-crop value chains, with infrastructure, equipment, and processing capacity, in an integrated agriculture outlook that earns at least 50 million Naira per annum.

It will leverage the integration of existing concepts, systems, and capabilities such community, digital technology and physical impressions of productivity and value on farms, processing mills and dining tables across Nigeria.

It will support enterprises that have capabilities that are anchored on strong models, that will combine with other stakeholders to create the conditions for the young people of Nigeria to thrive in agriculture.

In 5 years, The Agricultural Option's efforts targets to reach:

- 2 million young people in productive agriculture
- 50 thousand agribusiness to support producers
- 500 thousand agribusiness jobs,
- 30 million impacted lives
- 4.8 trillion Naira farm gate produce value and 24 trillion Naira total value chain productivity value.

Table 1: of unit economics of the agriculture option

Area	Enterprise Size	Annual Cost (N)	Annual Revenue (N)	Gross Profit (N)	Note
Crop Production	20ha 1 complete set of tractor and equipment	14m	50m	36m	Case of rice: 1. Land: 20ha 2. EoP: 350k/ha 3. Yield: 5ton/ha 4. Offtake: 250k/ton 5. Cycles/a: 2
Crop Production	greenhouse				Case of vegetable greenhouse
Produce Processing	5TPD	357m	546m	139m	Case of rice: 1. Days/Week: 5 2. Cost of paddy: 250k/ton 3. Conversion: 60% 4. Bag of Rice: 35k 5. Fixed Cost: 250m 6. Annual amortized fixed cost: 50m 7. Other expenses: 32m
Technical Service	200 Clients	9.6m	48m	38.4m	Case of Veterinarian 1. Unit price of service: 10k

					<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Unit cost of service: 2k 3. Monthly frequency: 200
Financial Service	200 Clients	4.8m	24m	14.4m	Case of community finance: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fee per unit credit support: 5k/m 2. Fee/markup per unit of other services: 5k/m 3. Cost per credit support: 2k/m
Commodity Trade	500TPA	102.5m	120m	17.5m	Case of trade in maize commodity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aggregation price: 200k/ton 2. Futures contract: 240k/ton 3. Spread: 40k/ton 4. Associated cost: 5k/ton Ma

Delivering on the Agriculture Option will be driven by an outlook to:

- Evolve the average Nigerian farmer to a young person that cultivates on up to 50 hectares of land or its equivalent in non-crop value chains, with infrastructure, equipment, and processing capacity in an integrated agriculture outlook, that earns at least 50 million Naira per annum.

Anchored on strong business areas and models

- Financial services that are tailored to support agriculture and youth participation
- Integration and inclusion of wholesale and retail trade in provision of production input, and offtake of produce that are linked to financing through value chain and community models
- Integrated primary production and processing that is linked to capacity building in mini and modular agricultural production and processing parks
- Alternative financing models to support capital intensive areas of agriculture such as land opening, mechanization, and irrigation

Supported with tools that deliver efficiency, transparency, and data

- Agricultural input and produce retail inclusion
- Digital technology to support technical best practice, and integration of adjoining value chain areas

- Democratization of knowledge and information to support new thinking and ways in agriculture
- Intentional advocacy to propagate agriculture using youth aggregating platforms such as the visual and performing arts, sports, and events to show the opportunities and benefits of participation in agriculture
- Creative financing to address the gaps of existing financing and how they affect young people

5. The Enabling Structures of The Agriculture Option

Delivering nation building through the Agriculture Option takes two approaches:

1. Commercial entities that deliver profitable and sustainable businesses through value creation, and;
2. Tools that optimizes perception and deliver industry scale gains in agriculture.

Both commercial entities and the enabling tools sit on structures that are managed with strong standards.

Finance

Community supported banking for agricultural growth. The banking model uses the trusted concept of community and interactions between people of common interests in agriculture to support access to finance and productivity. The banking model attracts and manage people that have the passion for agriculture and support them to turn same into productivity. The community banking model will use channels with both digital and physical impressions, combined with the tools set out for value delivery.

Integrated Trade

Commercial models for the distribution of quality production inputs, and easy access to produce offtake markets are necessary to optimize agricultural production and market systems. A trade universe that is integrated to finance and communities gets the opportunity to provide farmers, retailers and aggregators with models that simplifies their access to input, produce, and finance markets. The Agriculture Option's work in market optimization is supported by integrated pillars as follows:

- **Strong manufacturer partnerships**
- **Embedded finance**
- **Strong distribution networks**

Integrated Production

A system of thriving connected and integrated agricultural clusters, that approaches agricultural development within a framework which embraces the cardinal areas of a circular economy and centered around community. It has the following attributes:

- a. Commercial farming
- b. Processing
- c. Production of low complexity inputs
- d. Education and upskilling of young people, that translates to their economic engagement
- e. A beautiful, functional, and sustainable environment

Critical components for success include irrigation and mechanization supported primary production, financial inclusion, and skill development fellowship for young people.

To be spread across Nigeria, the focus areas of the integrated clusters are:

- Agriculture
- Infrastructure
- Processing
- Community Inclusion and Development
- Education
- Technology
- Financial Inclusion
- Youth and Gender Inclusion

6. The Tools That Will Support an Effective Delivery of The Agriculture Option

Changing the profile of Nigeria's average agriculturist requires changing behaviors and practices, and the Agriculture Option considers the need for tools to support its effective and sustainable delivery of these changes for required outcomes.

The Agriculture Option proposes a suite of tools ranging from those that support the improvement of productivity to those that increase the interest of young people in agriculture, and all that is required in-between.

The suite of tools includes:

- **Project Management and Resource Planning:** Improving productivity for good outcomes in undertakings that should be precise, and time bound as primary agricultural production requires project management and enterprise resource planning.
- **Capacity Development:** Stimulating New thinking and democratization of validated knowledge and information are some of the primary outlooks of The Agriculture Option, using the following vehicles:
 - **Education**
 - **Information**
- **Advocacy:** The behavioral change requirement of creating the desirable profile of the average Nigerian agriculturist requires intentional efforts and deliberate actions in reaching the hearts and minds of young people. This understanding underscores the advocacy effort of The Agriculture Option. In choosing key advocacy vehicles, The Agriculture Option identifies two key areas of interest in the recreational engagements of young people, and the Agriculture Option meets them there. Taking cue from some successful advocacy and campaign efforts, well produced agriculture enhancing narratives will be inserted and placed in

mainstream media productions to present agriculture as a viable economic and productivity option for young people.

- **Art**
- **Sport**
- **Story**

7. A Focus on Strong Youth Profiles for Participant Discovery

The Agriculture Option is designed around educated youths with the capacity to adopt best practices, and the exponential benefits and scale provided by technology. Therefore, participant discovery will focus on aggregating platforms for young people such as agriculture focused faculties of tertiary institutions, agricultural communities, and digital platforms. The agriculture focused faculties and tertiary institutions particularly presents good opportunities for populating The Agriculture Option as students are already introduced to agriculture and will likely understand the practices and appreciate the potentials.

8. Integrates Agricultural Interventions and Small Agribusinesses

The Agricultural Option is supporting the growth and optimal performance of small businesses to provide input retail, last mile logistics, financial services agency, and last mile aggregation that are linked to agriculturist engagements in both agriculture and the rural economy.

The Agricultural Option supports intentional work with agricultural interventions and development programmes to create channels for the inclusion of young agriculturists, their small businesses, in the delivery of such interventions. It is important that activities in the small businesses segments are catalyzed and supported by these interventions, as they have the potential of delivering sustainable results, especially after the interventions have ceased. The Agricultural Option, through the aggregate capacity of its partners and enablers will support the intersection and integration of small business and interventions to deliver sustainable results to targeted areas such as farming and processing, while building and growing strong SMEs for net positive aggregate impact on agriculture and the economy.

9. Market, Offtake and Economic Gains

The educated youths' participation in agriculture may be a veritable way to guarantee produce quality, optimal yield, and improved value addition in Nigeria's agriculture, as the youth constitute low barrier to adopting best practices and technology. Improvements across agriculture will give supply chain managers at export focused, off take and manufacturing entities the quality standards required for their supply chain;

which will lead to expansion of both export and local agriculture market fulfillment capacity.

Furthermore, market and offtake gains will leverage the recently signed AFCTA for benefits of agricultural exports to Africa through quality produce that is up to international standard as we work with quality standard partners and take the opportunity of an open Africa.

10. Overhauling Land Availability, Irrigation, and Mechanization

Nigeria's agricultural productivity situation is such that less than 30% of its cultivated land's production capacity is realized-because of annual single cycle rain fed farming, that is a result of inadequate well managed and accessible irrigation. To put this in context, Nigeria only irrigates about 290 thousand hectares, which is about 0.9% of its cultivated land. The result of which is that average annual productivity of cereal crops such as rice, per hectare of land is a dismal 1.2 tons compared to Vietnam's which stands at 16.5 tons per hectare. Note that Vietnam has similar socio-economic indices as Nigeria, has 20% of Nigeria's cultivated land, however, it irrigates over 66% of its cultivated land.

If irrigation and mechanization are improved, the future of Nigeria's agriculture holds promise of up to 15 times gains on current productivity. For example, 1 million hectares of irrigable land will produce about 17 million tons of rice paddy per annum, this is nearly double the 9 million tons produced in 2020 on more than 4 million hectares of land.

The Agricultural Option proposes a new thinking in a Public, Private and People Partnership (PPPP) that fosters collaboration for the funding and transformation of agricultural land availability, irrigation, mechanization, and ultimately agricultural production in Nigeria. This entails galvanizing both tested and new models, competencies, and capacity to create a holistic approach.

11. Future that Centered for Growth and Sustainability

The Agriculture Option proposes to start young agriculturist from cultivating 1- 5 hectare of land, or its equivalent in other non-crop agricultural practice areas, and progressively grow their holding to 50 hectares or its equivalent, per agriculturist, within five years. This growth model will be available to all those that are interested and have shown capacity to grow. Where growth will require additional funding, such funding will be sourced from investment funds-riding on the available production and activity data of agriculturists.

Capacity development such as business management and accounting services will be added to the growth plan of the participants to ensure sustainability of the effort.

12. Intentional Linkages for Multiplier Benefits

The Agricultural Option holds the promise of creating multiplier benefits around its implementation and its linkage to the broader agricultural and economic policies and interventions in Nigeria.

- a. SME Intervention: Operating the Agriculture Option will coordinate and integrate with SME development interventions for funding of the small agricultural businesses in input retail, logistics and small mill areas. Efforts of The Agriculture Option in primary production such as farming will create guaranteed anchor clients for the SMEs and increase the probability for their success all from integrated efforts.
- b. Financial inclusion: The Agricultural Option drives financial inclusion, especially in the rural economy that supports agriculture in the smallholder segment. Financial inclusion through The Agricultural Option includes:
 - I. Trade banking deployment, that partners with the agriculture and food trade universe to deliver financial services tailored to them, and that extends to agriculturist through their platforms
 - II. Digital payment will be layered on all interactions between participants
 - III. Improved repayment of credit: Youths understand the stakes and consequences of default as their identity are captured in collateral registry, and their access to other financial services, especially credit may be restricted on default
 - IV. Taxation can be effectively implemented
 - V. Consumer finance can layer on productivity finance

13. An Embedded Social Safety Net, So That No One Is Left Behind-Especially in Bad Times

The Agriculture Option advocates inclusion of social safety nets for productive participants by bundling insurance and pension packages to credit and revenue respectively.

The following social safety net programmes are advocated by The Agriculture Option:

1. Health insurance to support the health of agriculturists so they can remain productive.
2. Life Insurance to sustain family unit if the primary benefactor passes
3. Pension contribution and micro pension to support living during nonproductive times

Social safety nets will help participants to focus on agricultural production with the confidence that their health and future are secure.

14. Getting the Word Out Through Media and Publicity

The Agriculture Option seeks to project agriculture as a viable option for productive and economic engagement of young people as a path to nation building. It will engage the media to lend a voice to its outlook and to make public its impact, so that young people can see and appreciate the opportunities Agriculture.

The media and publicity effort will further stimulate interest of other stakeholder categories such as financial institutions, partners, and collaborators.

The core roles of media efforts of The Agriculture Option are:

- a. Educating the youth on the opportunities available in agriculture, how to unlock them and how to engage profitably
- b. Generating positive perception of Nigeria's agricultural in local, regional, and international markets

Publicity of the Agriculture Option will employ multiple platforms and channels with keen focus on high impact short films, discussions and dialogues, presented on social media platforms and experiential engagements.

It will also receive publicity on the platforms of the local and international partners working with it in several agricultural categories and dimensions.

15. The Leverage of Youth for Innovation

The intersection of youth and technology holds the promise of unlocking exponential innovation in several areas of agriculture as seen in tech and youth driven innovative participation in other sectors of Nigeria's economy such as music, retail, mobility, and logistics. Utilizing Agriculture's aggregate activity, financial and location data will support increased innovation in profitably solving problems such as sub optimal yield, post-harvest loss, logistics and financial exclusion in agriculture and the rural economy.

The Agriculture Option facilitates opening of AgriTech solutions and platforms to 3rd party developers to create further innovative solutions that can link to the millions of participants on these platforms, and stretch the delivery of increased value, efficiency, and productivity.

16. Hallmark Continuous Improvement Through Research and Development

Research and development are crucial for continuous improvement of outcomes in both agricultural production and economic participation of young people in Agriculture. From its extension and management outlook, The Agriculture Option advocates the development of a network of world class labs located across Nigeria. These labs should be resourced by faculties of affiliate tertiary institutions to transform data collected from field operations into

ways of improving youth participation, and better outcomes for using creative financial models, community concepts and digital technology in agriculture.

17. A Premium on Assured Good Quality

For maximum economic benefits, The Agriculture Option advocates production that targets both local and international markets. It proposes digital platforms for agriculture project management and reporting, supports effective quality assurance and transparency; thereby giving local and international off takers the confidence to deal in Nigeria's produce, and the data required to plan their supply chain effectively.

The agriculture Option proposes a quality council that creates and manages certification criteria and parameters that will be employed and mainstreamed in agriculture production to certify agricultural produce, and practices of agriculturists to international standards.

18. Inclusive Agriculture Finance

The Agriculture Option supports the sustainable participation of financial services providers in agriculture. The profile of the young agriculturist, technology, operations situational awareness and data are all capabilities that The Agriculture Option Advocates. We believe these capabilities will enable financial services providers to plan, engage, monitor, and recover investments better in agriculture, which should then increase their participation in youth focused agriculture finance, and creation of products that suits the profile and participation of young people in agriculture.

19. Partnerships Will Amplify Individual Efforts for Outsized Industry Gains

Partnerships supports The Agriculture Option in four categories for the rapid development and deployment of capabilities and capacities. The Agriculture Option will continuously advocate engagement with partners in required categories for innovation and growth.

Table 1. Partnerships and value

Category	Subcategory	Value
Technical	Capability	Technical knowledge and competence
	Capacity	Tools
Agriculture Value Chain	Input and produce	Route to market development for input and produce
	Quality assurance	Quality standards to match international levels
	Weather and climate impact management	Weather and climate based digitized advisory
	Produce off take	System to guarantee and ensure commitment to off take after contracting
Financial	Financial institutions	Finance

Services	Payment	Payment
Adjacent Value Areas	Advocacy	Messaging and stakeholder advocacy
	Land	Land, irrigation, and mechanization
	Academic and research	Validation, agronomy, and extension practices

Beyond the listed partnership areas, the Agriculture Option holds the potential to aggregate several value adding local and global partners that identify with a programme that seeks to create economic and social opportunities and inclusion for the youth and the financially excluded.

20. Governance

The Agricultural Option needs an industry wide effort to realize youth led agriculture as viable option for productive economic engagement. Therefore, it requires an industry association of members with common interests and focus, new thinking for areas such as financing, and a focus on young people. There are champions of the creation of this Association, that will be the custodian of standards, a think tank, and an aggregating platform for policy engagement with government and other industry stakeholders.

21. Diversity is Core to Operationalizing the Agricultural Option

The Agricultural Option seeks to engage millions of youths in several areas of agricultural value chains in Nigeria. Distribution of participants will spread across all states with consideration for socio-economic and demographic elements such as population, agricultural production, value chain, and competitive advantage. Operations will be organized along structures that combine governance, technology, and physical operations in an integrated loop.

Table 2 The Agriculture Option: Operations model

Area	Constituent	Activities	Frequency	Output
Governance	Association Council	To drive forward the strategic direction of The Agriculture Option, setting corporate and business priorities, ensuring performance, managing risk and accountability	Quarterly meetings	Strategy alignment, planning, risk management and performance review
Management	Corporate Management	Will drive planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling the activities of the corporate responsibilities of The Agriculture Option	Daily	Strategy implementation and performance management

Technology	Technology function and service providers	Integrated digital platform for community, member support and engagement	Daily	Always up technology infrastructure to support
Delivery	National, state, and local government delivery structure	Support field operations, back-end enterprise operations	Daily	Effective and efficient operational deployment

22. What’s in the Future for the Agriculture Option

We will continue stakeholder engagement and publish literature and documents that outline our goals for The Agriculture Option through www.tao.com, as a home for the Agriculture Option and all things about The Agriculture Option. It will continue to be updated dynamically.

- **The Agriculture Community**

Together we will build a strong community of users and collaborators, that support social, enterprise and economic interactions. We will continue to develop capabilities and capacity to avail the community incremental value and resolve the challenges on the path to implementing the ecosystem so that we can meet the objective we have set for the near and far future.

- **The Association**

We will work to grow the partnerships required to deliver The Agriculture Option to around 200 geographically distributed and diverse members, all serving as delivery partners.

The association will develop and adopt a comprehensive charter and set of policy outlooks. It will develop bylaws for the association based on agreed governance structure.

Talents to support rapid implementation of The Agriculture Option will be intentionally identified, onboarded, and managed for effective delivery while finding fulfillment.

Social impact partners that are aligned with our joint mission will be engaged to establish a social impact program.

- **Delivery**

The strategy and plans in of the Agriculture Option will be executed within proposed timelines using strong execution principles and frameworks.

Accountability will be a hallmark for delivery, where the operators submit themselves to scrutiny and are accountable to the whole community of users, partners, and stakeholders.

Reports will be published within defined timelines, to shed light on the whole progress of The Agriculture Option. Further reporting will be made available by defined parameters such as critical areas of focus-for example, youth and gender participation, and ESG.

23. How to Get Involved

The Agriculture Option envisions a vibrant ecosystem of youths engaging and innovating in agricultural production, and agribusiness services to spur Nigeria’s economic development and nation building. Our success will be defined as enabling any young person interested in agricultural production or agribusiness in Nigeria to have the opportunity and access to finance, production support and markets. For example, we will consider ourselves successful when the average 25-year-old person can start a farm or an input retail business, has a fast and simple way to get funding, and a simple and fast way to sell their product.

The Agriculture Option is setting in motion a revolutionary mission and we are asking the stakeholders to help. If you believe in what The Agriculture Option could do for millions of young people in Nigeria, please join in. Your participation and feedback is needed to make sure economic opportunity, food security and financial inclusion are realities for young people everywhere in Nigeria.

The Agriculture Option will work with the stakeholder community and continue to partner with policy makers to further the mission.

24. Conclusion

Our hope is to make agriculture a viable economic engagement option for young people of Nigeria, by creating better access to cheaper and easier funding, agricultural production support, financial service, and markets in Nigeria and globally. Delivering this will be challenging and no one can do it alone — it will take collaboration and galvanizing efforts for this intervention. We hope you’ll join us and help turn this dream into a reality for millions of young people in Nigeria.

POLICIES AND RESOLUTIONS

This document was drafted for the consideration of The Agriculture Option Association Council.

Policies and Resolutions Committee

1. The Agriculture Option

Policy

The Agriculture Option (TAO) provides Nigeria's young farmers and agriculturists with an opportunity to create market influence, improve productivity, improve returns, and rightly position to compete in a national and international marketplace. TAO supports the cooperative system and its ability to provide training for members and employees, encourage diverse participation in agricultural production and agribusiness, and educate consumers on agriculture. We strongly believe cooperation in agriculture and the rural economy should continue to receive economic support from the government and financial sector.

The Agriculture Option encourages diverse membership participation. Effective member communication, education and leadership development are critical for the future. We provide agricultural and business leadership development training and provide opportunities for members to actively participate in TAO's governance.

We support educational and research programs focused on TAO's areas of engagement, and general agriculture development, with a focus on enabling technology and digital capabilities as a means of engendering effectiveness of youth agricultural production.

TAO provides continuous professional improvement to its staff, members and collaborates with universities, research institutions and business, to integrate youth focused agricultural research to their curriculum and outreach respectively.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Policies and interventions that are consistent with agricultural development and youth empowerment in agriculture and the general economy.
- Government and policy makers serving as leaders and advocates on behalf of young people in agriculture to encourage financial services providers and industry to support agricultural ventures and cooperatives promoted by young people.
- Effective support for young people focused agricultural cooperative programs within ministries, rural areas development initiatives, cooperative services, industry, including research, technical assistance, education, and grant programs.

2. The Cooperatives System

The Agriculture Option supports the cooperative system and its ability to provide opportunities for members and growth for the entire agricultural ecosystem, while encouraging diverse participation in agricultural production and agribusiness. We strongly believe that cooperatives in agriculture and the rural economy should continue to receive economic support from the government and all stakeholders.

The Agriculture Option encourages the support of a far-reaching deployment of cooperatives, with diverse membership participation, to enrich the cross fertilization of knowledge and leverage of networked capacities. Effective agricultural cooperative member identification, communication, education, and leadership development are critical for the future.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Policies and interventions that are consistent with the development of agricultural cooperatives that are centered around youth empowerment in agriculture, and the general economy.
- Concessionary credit for youth led and youth focused agricultural cooperatives and its members.
- Making business easier for cooperatives and its members in areas such as registration and engagement.
- Developing and applying incentives such as tax rebates for cooperatives and its members.

3. Agricultural Economic Safety Net

Policy

Market-oriented agricultural programs that are focused on young people are essential to providing a reliable economic safety net to help young farmers and agricultural value chain participants withstand inherent volatility in agriculture production, which also promotes food security. A combination of youth empowerment and agricultural production enhancement policies and interventions will be useful in implementing rural and agricultural development that are beneficial to young people in Nigeria's agriculture.

Resolutions

The Agricultural option supports:

- Maintaining strong youth focused agricultural policies that are deployed through finance and market access development programmes.
- Effective commodity offtake programs with reasonable program eligibility requirements.
- Insurance and social safety net programmes to manage risk exposure, participant health insurance, housing, and pension.
- Timely and efficient operation of a firm offtake programme from young farmers and other agricultural value chain participants to guarantee off take of produce.
- The Federal Government to play the role of market stabilizer to purchase produce from young people for strategic food reserve programs in times of low production margins.

4. Sustainability

Policy

The Agriculture Option is committed to protecting the environment through responsible farming and processing; and business practices that maintain the economic viability of young farmers, agricultural value chain participants, local cooperatives, and rural businesses.

We believe that meaningful sustainability is farmer and agriculturist owned, driven, and supports their continued use and adoption of on-farm practices to increase productivity, while making efficient use of natural resources to demonstrate continuous improvement. We believe in the application of science and data to address environmental challenges while increasing agricultural and food system productivity.

We believe that the participation of young people in agriculture holds the promise of improving the adoption and mainstreaming of sustainable practices in Nigeria's Agriculture.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Market-based, measurable, and practical approaches to address climate change and other weather-related challenges.
- Risk management tools to mitigate the challenge weather plays in agricultural production.
- The supplies and development of new, cost-effective energy sources. We support the continued development and implementation of sound energy policies including robust renewable energy production in Nigeria.

5. Plant, Livestock and Animal Well-being

Policy

Plant and animal health are of utmost importance. The Agriculture Option promotes good practices to produce plants and animals including those for livestock and dairy production. We will support any industry efforts to develop sound national plant and animal care guidelines and to urge producers within TAO ecosystem to adopt these guidelines to ensure right treatment of plants and animals by all segments of the agricultural industry. We specifically support and encourage education of farmers, livestock handlers and other agricultural value chain participants through our education and advocacy programmes.

TAO programmes provide capacity to educate the young people and the public on modern farming and animal agriculture practices. In addition, TAO will encourage agricultural groups and producers to educate the public about modern farming and livestock production and promote the benefits of good farming and livestock management practices.

The Agriculture Option will consistently encourage Federal, State, and Local Governments; and their agencies to develop and implement programmes to stimulate the growth of farming, livestock, and dairy production in the best conditions. We will urge community development agencies to recognize that farming and livestock production is an important component of rural economies and to promote expanded youth focused farming and livestock production as a sound strategy for creating jobs and keeping wealth in the community.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Sound farming and animal management practices, including mandatory participation and adherence to farming and animal care standards for TAO members and suppliers.
- Common-sense and practical rules for regulation of farming and livestock facilities that allow producers to safely farm and raise livestock without additional burdensome, costly, and unnecessary practices.
- We encourage regulatory bodies to engage TAO members in policy discussions as regulations and rules are developed.
- To promote initiatives that encourages more educated young people to engage in agriculture and more students to study agriculture in higher institutions while tuning their curriculum towards supporting effective and sustainable agricultural production in Nigeria.

6. Animal and Plant Health Protection and Disease Control

Policy

Timely prevention, identification, control and, where appropriate, eradication of animal and plant health diseases and pests are essential for Nigeria's agricultural production, food security, public health, animal welfare, and international market access. TAO supports enhanced federal-state collaboration and cooperation in program delivery to facilitate timely prevention, identification, control, and where appropriate, eradication of injurious plant or animal health diseases and pests impacting Nigeria's agricultural production, food security, environmental and public health, and international trade.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Adequate funding and resources needed to maintain a robust state and federal animal plant and health infrastructure necessary to facilitate early detection, surveillance, response, and control activities to prevent and mitigate both domestic and foreign plant and animal diseases.
- Recognizing the robust collaborative effort among federal, state, industry and academia in the prevention, containment, and eradication, where appropriate, of domestic and foreign plant or animal diseases or pests.
- Enhanced coordination between state and federal government agencies to improve the nation's integrated plant and animal health response network through an integrated approach to prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Establishing risk-based containment zones in the event of a reportable plant or animal disease or pest incident, and the expedited normalization of trade, once appropriate, to maintain commerce in unaffected zones and minimize the overall effect on producers and agricultural businesses while regional disease or pest issues are resolved.

7. Ownership of Landed Property by Young Farmers and Agriculturists

Policy

In recognition of the critical role served by agricultural land property in producing food and raw materials for an ever-increasing population, coupled with the pressure exerted against agricultural property by private developers, state governments should deliberately provide agricultural land for young farmers and agriculturists. Public acquisition of agricultural property should only occur in rare instances, demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence that no reasonable alternative exists. In the event of a public acquisition of agricultural property, the calculation of just compensation to the agricultural property owner should consider the fair market value of the property and any future increase in operational costs that will reasonably be incurred by the agricultural property owner because of such acquisition.

Resolutions

The Agricultural Option supports:

- Creating easy access for young farmers and agriculturist to agricultural landed property and protecting the property rights of young farmers.
- TAO opposes efforts by federal, state, and local governments and government agencies that unduly restrict access to agricultural land, farm practices or result in a taking of farmland.

8. Agricultural Credit

Policy

The agriculture industry is highly dependent on a continuing supply of competitively priced and accessible credit. The Agriculture Option advocates for policies that supports collaboration between lenders, and youth led agricultural cooperatives and arrangements to provide credit products that are dedicated to meeting the needs of agriculture and rural economies in Nigeria. Access to a permanent, safe and sound source of credit that is owned and controlled by our partners and patrons is a prime focus of our efforts and activities.

Resolutions

- The Agriculture Option supports maintaining private and public sector intervention in providing funding for farming and the agricultural value chain participants.
- Agriculture credit system must be a reliable and competitive source of credit to farmers, ranchers, input and produce participants, agricultural cooperatives, and rural infrastructure providers.

9. Research and Education

Policy

The Agriculture Option supports adequate funding and other supports for agriculture research and teaching programs, that seeks to encourage youth participation in agriculture. We participate in university research and education using data from farms and activities generated through TAO ecosystem, and we are involved in other cooperative research projects. TAO further understands that extension service plays an important continuing role in delivering the results of agriculture research and education to farmers and agricultural producers.

Resolutions

- The Agriculture Option supports funding for public agricultural research and funding for extension programs for sharing research.

- We will collaborate with secondary and tertiary educational institutions to educate younger agriculturists on the opportunities and knowledge inherent in The Agriculture Option

10. Water Availability

Policy

Given that good water is critical to plant, animal, and human health, The Agriculture Option supports policy that provides security to food and agriculture production by encouraging beneficial water use and support for the provision of irrigation where it required. When faced with making supplies of water available, policymakers should defer to beneficial need basis principles, sound science and technology during consideration for water availability interventions.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Federal, state, and local actions to help farmers cope with drought conditions that impact agricultural productivity. Long term investment into irrigation, storage, and other water infrastructure to mitigate future droughts.
- The involvement of private sector players in new PPP models to provide large scale and modular irrigation schemes.
- The development of water security in all areas for the viability of our producers, facilities, and communities.

11. Transportation

Policy

The effective marketing of agricultural products and reduction of post-harvest loss requires an efficient, modern transportation system. Government and private efforts should facilitate the efficient and economical movement of farm supplies, commodities, and food products on our waterways, highways, railways, airways, and the open seas.

In the immediate, effective transportation of agricultural goods requires improved availability of end of tarmac logistics providers plying motorable rural roads and aided by digital technology for improved efficiency in rural areas.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Funding for rural transportation infrastructure such as feeder roads and provision of incentives on funding for rural agricultural transportation businesses.
- State and federal programs that address rural truck driver shortages through recruitment and training, technological advancements, and additional efforts.
- Removal of barriers constituted by local authorities in the provision of transportation.

12. Rural Development

Policy

The Agriculture Option is committed to supporting programs that promote a strong rural economy. We favor development of programs that promote economic diversity in rural communities, create new jobs, preserve, and modernize the rural infrastructure (including transportation systems, power, communication infrastructure, and waste disposal), and establish human services, (including education, health care, childcare, and social services). We recommend using the cooperative model to implement rural development programs effectively and efficiently.

We believe in expanding health care options for our member producers and cooperatives, individual farmers, their employees, and families. We continue to work to help our members obtain affordable, comprehensive health care.

A challenging farm economy can bring uncertainty and stress for everyone involved. TAO believes in leveraging our collective structure to provide services like pension to support farmers in retirement, insurance when in challenging economic situations and health assistance to our members. The Members Assistance Programme offers resources to assist our members dealing with difficult circumstances.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Funding for rural development programs.
- Expansion of adequate telecommunication and broadband access to all areas and especially farming clusters for the improvement of digitized and precision agriculture.
- Vibrant public schools in rural areas including access to quality agricultural education.
- Affordable, comprehensive health insurance options for our member-owners and those who work and support The Agriculture Option.
- Funding and coordination by federal and state governments, as well as industry partners, to establish stress assistance programs for farmers and ranchers dealing with difficult circumstances.

13. Beginner Farmers, Ranchers, and Agriculturists

Policy

Keeping farming communities and farms vibrant is vital to the future of agriculture, which includes involving the next generation of farmers and ranchers. There are several challenges that new, beginning as well as transitioning farm operations between generations farmers and agriculturists face.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Intentional transition of agricultural graduates of tertiary institutions from theoretical agriculturalist to practical and applied commercial agriculturists.
- Improving access to land, credit, tax benefits and other tools to address financial obstacles for new farmers.
- Engaging digital technology, digital learning platforms and digital monitoring, evaluation, and prediction platforms to support the acceleration of new farmer knowledge through production and business cycles.
- State and federal programs that assist family farms in transitioning farm operations.
- Efforts to ensure that farmland remains available, accessible, and affordable to farmers.

14. Pricing and Marketing

Policy

Efforts should be made to improve standardization of prices of commodities at farm gate and along the aggregation chain with considerations for regions where production occurred and external factors such as logistics. In periods of glut and possible negative price movement, the Federal Government and its agencies should prioritize sourcing produce from youth led agricultural enterprises, as it purchases food for its feeding interventions and the strategic food reserve. This will support the stabilization of prices and encourage the young people to continue agricultural production. We support implementation of daily electronic reporting of agricultural produce prices to provide producers with reliable information for market and price risk management.

We support any government effort to improve the international marketing of Nigeria's agricultural produce and the implementation of policies that will improve the ease of export of Nigeria's agricultural produce overseas.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Effective implementation, operation, and regulation of commodity exchanges.

- The establishment of state agricultural produce marketing and offtake boards to encourage the off take of produce of agricultural enterprises promoted by the young people.
- The strengthening of strategic food reserves and their patronage of agricultural enterprises led by young people.
- The prioritization of off take of youth led agricultural produce by federal, state and Non-Governmental Organizations(s) food and feeding initiatives.
- Government's support of the international marketing of Nigeria's agricultural produce and the implementation of policies that will improve the ease of export of Nigeria's agricultural produce overseas.

15. Technology

Policy

The Agriculture Option believes that the application of science and technology offers great potential for improving agricultural production and a sustainable environment. New technologies using both digitization and production technology to support such elements as data usage, mechanization, storage and logistics has shown significant promise in improving Nigeria's agricultural production.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports

- The use of technology to support precision agriculture. The federal government and relevant agencies should support the provision of optimal connectivity and communication capabilities and capacity in farm clusters that has over 100 hectares. We believe that using the Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) for the deployment of connectivity capacity will support the use of sensors and technology capabilities that will improve remote support, monitoring and evaluation and will ultimately improve yield and quality.
- Improved coordination between federal agencies and private business to promote consistency with regulation and policy on using technology to improve agricultural financing, production, transparency, and traceability.
- Minimize unnecessary barriers to finance and trade caused by regulation.
- Intensified government efforts that provide a framework for investments, planning, and better certainty of technology development and research.
- The support for mechanization, irrigation, and precision support technologies.

16. Nutrition and Food Safety

Policy

The Agriculture Option is dedicated to supporting young farmers and agriculturists to deliver quality, fresh, tasteful, safe, wholesome, and healthful agricultural products to their customers. TAO believes that our member producers have the right to make their own decision on how to best produce safe, high-quality agricultural produce using laws, regulations and standards from TAO and any accurate, scientifically based information regarding approved technology.

We urge for vigorous scrutiny by standards organizations and regulatory authorities on marketing claims for agricultural produce and vigorous enforcement against false and misleading claims.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- Working with federal and state agencies to establish a clear direction for food livestock, plants, and farms to assure the safety of our food system.
- Reasonable, science-based regulations on how to help prevent the introduction of plant and animal disease or health hazard.
- As different government agencies develop programs and regulations for food safety and biosecurity, we urge coordination of efforts. We urge special attention be paid to avoid duplicate levels of regulatory authority, regulatory inspections, and procedures.
- Equipping NAFDAC and other authorities with the resources they need to help strengthen our nation's food safety system by making prevention from farm to fork the focus of our food safety strategies.

17. Promotion of Agricultural Products

Policy

The Agriculture Option will continuously support generic promotion and market research programs conducted by state and national promotion boards and industry groups. These programs are a valuable support strategy to TAO's own market development, advertising, market research, and promotion. In addition, we favor programs to promote increased exports of farming and other agricultural products.

The Agriculture Option urges all segments of the food and agriculture industry to work together on consumer education to properly convey that Nigeria's food supply is of good quality and safe, and to help consumers understand that modern crop and livestock production practices are safe, humane, and environmentally sound. We also support reputation management initiatives whenever they are conducted by stakeholder groups in the agricultural value chains. We urge producers to actively participate in advocacy and reputation management programs and urge other commodity organizations to implement similar programs.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports:

- A coordinated and effective producer, federal and state funded, and administered programs that enhance young farmers' viability.
- Minimize non-participants from benefiting from any such program without contributing to the financial funding required to cover operating costs associated with any such program.
- TAO supports and will coordinate producer-funded and administered programs to promote research, marketing and trade for youth led agricultural enterprises.

18. Development

Policy

The Agriculture Option believes that leveraging on national and international development must be a priority for its engagement of funding and markets. We are particularly supportive of market-driven agricultural and food systems development efforts that generate economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance food security, and improve health and nutrition around Nigeria.

We support a balanced approach to support that promotes agricultural market development and provides economic growth opportunities for young farmers, input and service providers, processors, and small and growing businesses, while remaining sufficiently nimble to address natural and man-made emergencies that arise. We support the increased use and promotion of public-private partnerships, especially with cooperatives and Nigerian agribusinesses, to increase resource mobilization and efficiency, impact, and sustainability of Nigeria's development effort.

We strive for better coordination among local and international support institutions working in Nigeria's agriculture, especially those that support access to better funding and technical support for young people in Nigeria's agriculture and access to regional and international markets for Nigeria's produce.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports

- Nigeria's efforts in agriculture focused national development.
- The important and meaningful work of International Development Agencies in the development of agricultural capabilities and funding of youth led agricultural enterprises in Nigeria.
- Engagement of International Development Agencies to facilitate our access to regional and international markets.

- Provision of data and on ground capacity through our members and partners to support developmental initiatives and interventions in Nigeria.

19. Trade

Policy

The Agriculture Option believes it is the obligation of the Nigerian government to be a vigorous advocate for young Nigerian farmers and agribusiness, and to develop mutual strategies for new trade agreements that will assure success of Nigeria's agriculture in world trade and expanded markets for agricultural products.

We support continued Nigeria membership of regional and global organizations and arrangements that will open new, profitable markets for Nigerian food and agricultural exports by ensuring that countries allow greater access for Nigeria's produce.

We urge that Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) Agreement negotiators and implementers to establish trade agreements that increase agricultural product exports and do not adversely affect the overall market for Nigeria's agricultural products or hinder the ability to provide an effective safety net for producers; minimize any disruptive impacts that additional agricultural product and animal imports could have on producers, consumers and the domestic market; aggressively implement trade rules in ways that benefit youth led Nigerian agricultural producers and food companies.

We support using bilateral and multilateral trade talks to remove barriers to agricultural product trade for existing markets and to allow expansion into new markets.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports

- Improved import substitution and local trade for agricultural produce in Nigeria.
- Ratification of trade agreements if they support Nigeria's agriculture and dairy exports.
- Voluntary, farmer-funded programs that increase international sales of agricultural products.
- Maintaining or improving existing trade agreements.
- Utilizing the ACFTA to help develop permanent commercial markets.

20. Taxes

Policy

The Agriculture Option urges the Federal, State and Local Governments to continue to allow tax incentives to remain in agricultural operations and inclusion of agriculture categories in the

Pioneer Status Incentives. We also support corporate tax provisions that help our business, member producers and member cooperatives to grow.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports

- Tax policy that recognizes the unique relationship between agricultural cooperatives and their farmer owners but does not create an unintended imbalance and multiple taxation.
- Sustaining agricultural tax incentives and to ensure no tax increase for farmers, cooperatives, or their members.
- The choice of cash-based accounting for agriculture.

21. Workplace

Policy

The Agriculture Option supports the inclusion of organized agriculture in national social security arrangements especially for pension, health insurance and housing. TAO will actively participate in developing templates for healthy and vibrant work environments that follow labour laws and provisions in its member farms and workplaces and will actively participate in consideration for workforce-related pieces of legislation. Our goal is to achieve policies and regulations that allow our companies, the cooperative system, and farmer members to grow and provide the most value for our members, customers, and employees in great places of work.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports

- The participation of TAO members and their workers in pension schemes
- Access to health insurance by TAO members and their workers
- Inclusion of organized agriculture in national social security arranged especially for pension, health insurance and housing.

22. Political Activity

Policy

The Agriculture Option is committed to legislative action to support the economic interests of the farmer-owners of the cooperative system, agribusinesses, and other participants in the agricultural sector. In pursuing these legislative goals, we urge the members of TAO to actively participate in grassroots programs that support effective, cooperative efforts. We continually work to form positive relationships with policymakers at every level of government.

Resolutions

- The Agriculture Option supports member and employee efforts to educate and build relationships with elected and appointed government officials.

23. Commodity Associations

Policy

The Agriculture Option believes that collaboration with Commodity Associations is important to take a common ground on the development of commodities and their value chains in Nigeria. The Agriculture Option will seek to have representation in all Commodity Associations representing the value chains that its members participate in.

Resolutions

The Agriculture Option supports

- The important and meaningful work of Commodity Associations in the improvement of farmers, and its potential to support young farmers and agriculturists for better outcomes.
- Engagement of Commodity Associations to add to the conversations for a robust outlook of the development of commodities in Nigeria.
- Alignment with the operations of Commodity Associations wherever there are common goals.

The Agriculture Option-Governance, Structure, Delivery

1. How is The Agriculture Option Organized?

The Agriculture Option's governance & structure comprises of diverse stakeholders and independent members with clear accountabilities in the effective management of TAO's operations and activities.

These stakeholders include:

2. The Agriculture Option Association:

This an independent, non-profit membership organization. The association is designed to facilitate the operation of TAO, to coordinate other stakeholders in their pursuit to promote, develop and manage the delivery of objectives of The Agriculture Option.

TAO Association, which is at the top of the hierarchy and managed by a Board of Trustees, will carry out oversight functions. These oversight functions will include:

- Developing, reviewing, and approving the programmes mission, goals, and objectives.
- Establishing policies related to TAO's programme and services.
- Overseeing strategic organizational planning.
- Reviewing the performance of the National Governing Council and Sub National Structures.
- Overseeing resource allocation (funds etc.).
- Approving products, services, and programmes.
- Reviewing the quality of services and programs.
- Promoting TAO's public image.
- Oversee budgeting and approve the annual budget.
- Ensure accountability and standard financial reporting.
- Assess its own performance in line with set goals.

3. The Agriculture Option Association Council:

This is the TAO's management organ. Providing recommendations and reporting to the TAO Association in all issues within its purview. It is constituted by Head of Sub National structures, representatives of value chains, and support areas. Together, they will extend the reach of TAO and TAO objectives to businesses; nonprofit organizations; multilateral organizations, academic institutions etc. All recommendations on strategy, policy and technical issues will require the consent of two-thirds of the votes of the Council.

The roles of the Association Council include:

- Ensuring that the necessary business of TAO and the council is carried out efficiently, effectively and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of public interest business.
- Make rational and constructive contributions to debate and to make knowledge and expertise available to TAO and the Association as the need arises.
- Ensure that the council acts in accordance with the charter and statutes of TAO Association and with the role of functions of council.
- Accept collective responsibility for decisions reached by the council, bearing in mind the interests of their constituency or group but should always act in the best interests of the association, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.
- Responsible for ensuring that the council exercise efficient and effective use of TAO association's resources for the furtherance of its purposes.
- Promoting TAO initiatives and public image.
- Jointly carrying out TAO legislative functions with TAO Association.
- Assisting in the implementation of TAO strategy and its operational management.
- Adhering to the TAO Association Byelaws.

4. The Agriculture Option State Chapter:

This is an association of youths and other interested partners participating in The Agriculture Option in an assigned territory-usually a state, to be chaired by a Chief with representation from Local Governments Areas (LGA) within the territory. This Chapter will integrate and galvanize the interests of the youths who are independents or members of cooperatives and present a unified position on matters that affect them and their agricultural ventures.

5. The Agriculture Option Local Government Area (LGA) Chapter:

This is an association of youths and other interested partners participating in The Agriculture Option in an assigned territory-usually an LGA, to be chaired by a Coordinator with representation from members (LGA) within the territory. This Chapter will integrate and galvanize the interests of the youths who are independents or members of cooperatives and present a unified position on matters that affect them and their agricultural ventures.

6. The Agriculture Option Members:

These are members of The Agriculture Option-essentially, young People in agriculture, that have subscribed to pursuing the outlook presented by The Agriculture option.

7. The Agriculture Option Partners

Who is a TAO Partner?

A TAO partner is a non-human stakeholder in the agriculture value chain operating within TAO areas of interest, Partner operations will be reviewed annually for conformity with the TAO guidelines and provisions. Businesses, associations, institutions, and other entities within these profiles qualify as partners in TAO framework.

8. The Agriculture Option Chiefs

Who is a TAO Chief?

The Agriculture Option Chief is responsible for the coordination of TAO activities and interests in an assigned territory or value chain. Typically, TAO Chief is saddled with the responsibility of planning, organizing, and coordinating the participation of young people. TAO Chief also coordinates the participation of other direct stakeholders in TAO programmes, while engaging indirect stakeholders to ensure positive outcomes for planned and unplanned activities and positive perception of TAO in their assigned territories or value chains.

9. Engagement and Advocacy

What role does engagement & advocacy play in TAO?

To create awareness, build reputation and deliver impact and visibility of TAO's outlook and in its areas of interest, TAO will engage in series of activities to ensure these objectives are achieved.

These activities are categorized into:

Use of Media

As mechanisms to create awareness and foster engagements in Tao chapters and impressions, activities such as media engagements, and press conferences will be held with relevant stakeholders such as participating youths, state representatives and TAO partners.

Advocacy and Engagements-:

Advocacy activities across the states will include:

- **Consultative meetings:** Meeting tools such as workshops and community forums are used by TAO, aimed at encouraging interaction around its resolution, policies, its activities, and its objectives.
- **Sensitization programmes:** These programmes are organized to foster better understanding and clarify benefits of TAO propositions with current and prospective participants and stakeholders.
- **Focus group discussions:** This will aid in facilitating participants to discuss specific subject topics or interest areas-especially along the lines of TAO resolutions.
- **Communiqués:** Communiqués are issued to communicate TAO positions on policy, events and other happenings that impacts on its resolutions and areas of interest
- **Reporting:** Periodic reports are issued on the state of play in the areas of TAO's interest, with advice to stakeholders and policy makers on efforts and actions to be taken to foster the interests of TAO
- **Events:** Themed events are held periodically to foster industry engagement, recognize and reward actions and build the TAO brand recognition.