



SAHARA GROUP'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS- SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FUNDS (SDG-F)

In 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Fund was tasked with coming up with a solution that would prevent some of the challenges faced in the implementation of the MDG's especially in the role of implementing programs that were scalable and sustainable. The SDG-F looked to the private sector as a possible contributor to the success of sustainable goals mainly because they had observed in multiple countries across the world, many private companies had carried out very successful and thriving CSR projects with little or no involvement of the host governments.

In a bid to better understand how this was achieved and how best to build on these successes in attaining the SDG's, a Private Sector Advisory Group (PASG) Committee was set up in April 2015. This was achieved through a rigorous process of selecting privately owned and publicly quoted companies with the best practices, innovative approaches and successful track records in sustainability projects. From an initial list of 100 shortlisted global multinational companies, 13 were eventually selected and inaugurated in Madrid. Within the African continent, two companies **SAB Miller** and **Sahara Group** made the final select group.

The first year was spent bringing together two very different approaches to project implementation, one very traditionally Government and Multilateral agency focused while the other, very independent private sector driven, to form a common framework that all stakeholders can operate comfortably within. This led to the launch of the 'Working Together Towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Framework for Action' report during the UN General Assembly in New York in August 2015.

As Nigeria embraces a challenging economic diversification process, Sahara Group and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Fund (SDG-F) are working in Kaduna to pilot an innovative approach aimed at revamping the food sector to create new jobs for young people, increase farmers' revenues, improve productivity, promote food security, enhance nutrition and reduce food loss through more sustainable production practices. This will be achieved through what we have called the Food Africa project.

SUMMARY OF FOOD AFRICA PROJECT

The Food Africa Project is a collaborative initiative between **Sahara Group, United Nation- Sustainable Development Goals-Fund (SDG-F), Roca Brothers and the Kaduna State Government**, directed at empowering the people and alleviating poverty through food security.

The project is an Agro-base initiative envisaged to integrate the entire food value chain – the farmer, wholesaler, retailer and consumer- providing a sustainable source of food security, poverty alleviation and eradication, skill acquisition and social inclusiveness.

The primary objectives of the project are to:

- Provide employment, eradicate poverty and empower the people - It is estimated that about 500,000 people will be impacted both directly and indirectly by the project.
- Reduce food wastage through the recycling of food produce that do not meet the proposed standards for offtake– local and international standards.



- Assess the feasibility of improving and increasing production substantially to encourage the development of sustainable food infrastructure in Kaduna State, with initial investment in vegetables.

The project strategy seeks to identify potential areas for improvement in the conventional food value chain, hence the initiation of a backward and forward integration model as illustrated below;



The driving force of the project will be the empowerment of capable young women and men from local communities in the Kaduna State region. All project activities will thus be carried by a core team of locally selected young **community facilitators**, who will benefit from a two-year full-time vocational **traineeship, comprising training in technical skills, business management and a mentoring programme**. They will in turn train **at least 1,500 beneficiaries** throughout the duration of the project, under the supervision of a Master Facilitator/ Chief Technical Advisor and the Project Management Team.

A hub/ marketplace will be established alongside the food processing center. It will allow smallholder farmers to sell their produce directly to customers. The **increased availability and greater variety/diversity of food** would be to the immediate benefit of local people and directly contribute to improved food security and nutrition. The hub will allow for the creation of further **opportunities for petty trade in other local goods and services**. The project will take an active approach to promote entrepreneurship and new start-ups, by providing technical support to at least 500 local young women and men and **nominal grants awarded on a competitive basis** to those showing the most promise throughout the course of training activities.

The proposed project timelines are as follows:

Year 1: Deployment of structures for the commencement of the proposed project.

Year 2-3: The implementation phase will involve full commencement of operations, deployment of equipment's and machineries, capacity building and the data gathering.

Year 4-5: Monitoring and evaluation of the project thus far in preparation for transfer of ownership to key beneficiaries



Roles of Stakeholders

The SDG Fund and Sahara Group- responsible for project design and will together provide the bulk of the co-financing, mobilize matching fund contributions and oversee the preparation of the work plan in agreement with all partners. They will jointly chair the biannual trustees committee, assume overall oversight of the project implementation, provide guidance to the project management office and oversee the appointment and development of the capacities of the processing facility management.

UN specialized agencies - assume responsibility for technical assistance in their core areas of expertise and implementing those activities agreed upon in the work plan, including the feasibility, baseline and market studies, training of farmers, cooperatives and farmer-based organizations, occupational and safety and health.

The Roca Brothers- contribute to overall technical oversight to the project. They provide their technical expertise, including the sharing of best practices in resource efficiency, recycling and recovering of waste as secondary resources to help optimize the operations of the processing facility. They will play a key role in establishing the Centre of Excellence, through “training-of-trainers” modality to build the capacity of a team of local trainers. The Rocas’ team will also contribute to the communications and advocacy campaign.

Kaduna State Government- provide the land upon which the facility will be constructed and other arable land within the identified Local Government Areas in addition to access to utilities and all-year round armed security for the facility. The state government will collaborate with other state-level stakeholders to improve local infrastructure and including rural roads to allow access to the facility and farmland and will share relevant policy information, databases, etc. at its disposal. They would also play a vital role in assisting in the identification of potential farmers that would take part in the out-grower’s scheme.