



ABBC
2025



THE AFRICA BIENNIAL BIOSCIENCES COMMUNICATION SYMPOSIUM (ABBC 2025)

***Date:* August 26-28, 2025 | *Location:* Lusaka, Zambia**

CONCEPT NOTE

Theme:

The War on Science:
*How Can We Overcome the Burden of
Misinformation and Disinformation?*

About ABBC:

The Africa Biennial Biosciences Communication (ABBC) symposium is a multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary platform that explores best-practice science communication practices for unlocking the potential of advancements in science, technology, and innovation. The 6th edition (ABBC 2025) addresses a critical challenge hindering Africa's adoption of innovative biosciences, some of which play a fundamental role in the delivery of One Health (OH) solutions and building sustainable food systems. While bio-innovations offer transformative potential in improving planetary health, mitigating climate change effects and advancing health and socio-economic outcomes, disinformation remains a formidable barrier. In fact, the World Economic Forum has declared disinformation the second biggest global risk after extreme weather.

Africa faces a convergence of food insecurity, disease burden, and environmental challenges, creating a complex crisis that threatens health and development. The continent bears the highest per capita prevalence of foodborne and zoonotic diseases, both problems originating from dysfunctional food systems. Three-quarters of newly emerging human diseases originate from animals, and Africa remains a hotspot for these spillover events, as seen with Ebola and Rift Valley Fever. The intensification of agriculture, deforestation, urban expansion, and climate change further weaken ecological and epidemiological regulatory processes, worsening the spread of infectious diseases and degrading natural resources essential for food production. A holistic OH approach is therefore essential in transforming food systems, reducing disease burdens, and fostering sustainable development.

Further, "integrated approaches such as OH often use a social-ecological system (SES) framework that explicitly links health and ecosystem management with resilience, and the adaptive capacity of the actors and agents within SES, to prevent and cope with emerging health and environmental risks." However, in an era where social media influencers and Artificial Intelligence have been used to generate manipulative disinformation, the need to build resilience against disinformation for key actors within this framework, and identify practical ways of proactively addressing the spread of fallacies at the community level is key. ABBC2025 aims to formulate actionable strategies and a toolkit to combat misinformation and disinformation. This will ultimately build a community of champions in defense of science and promote informed decision-making among actors and agents within the SES framework through effective communication.



Science communication is important because it is about the knowledge that is transferred from scientists to communities. This directly speaks to food security, it is about nutrition, it's about transformative agriculture, improved health and environmental protection."

Hon. Francoise Uwumukiza, Chairperson, Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources at the East African Legislative Assembly, during ABBC2023.



The symposium will feature keynote addresses, thematic presentations, panel discussions, case studies, and exhibitions, and share fairs, focusing on the following thematic areas:



1.

Drivers of misinformation and disinformation their impact, with emphasis on communities, the youth and decision makers.



2.

Socio-economic impacts of underutilizing advanced innovative technologies in agriculture, health and for environmental protection and sustainability.



3.

Practical interventions to combat misinformation and disinformation in science.



Effective communication is as crucial as innovation—public awareness drives acceptance and adoption of genetic tools.

Prof. Appolinaire Djikeng, Director General, International Livestock Research Institute during ABBC2023

Driving Change: The Transformative Impact of Your Support for ABBC 2025

ABBC is renowned for its inclusive approach, bringing together researchers, policymakers, private sector representatives, communication experts, and community leaders. The collaborations forged and the dialogue enabled across diverse stakeholders through the symposium aims to accelerate Africa's agricultural and socio-economic development amidst climate change challenges and low productivity. Here's how your contribution will shape ABBC 2025's success:

- **Combating Disinformation for Informed Decision-Making:** By supporting ABBC 2025, you will be contributing towards making disinformation an ineffective strategy. The symposium will equip key stakeholders and decision-makers with a deep understanding of how disinformation spreads and actionable strategies to counter it, fostering a more informed and resilient policy environment.
- **Empowering a New Generation of Influencers:** Funding ABBC 2025 will help expand a community of practice by empowering early-career researchers to become proactive communicators and positive influencers. These young leaders will be trained to engage effectively with the public on social media using diverse formats, championing evidence-based narratives and combating disinformation.
- **Strengthening Media Literacy and Decision-Maker Resilience:** Your support will aid in disseminating critical media literacy skills, ensuring that policymakers and regulators are well-prepared to navigate and resist the impacts of disinformation. This investment builds long-term resilience among decision-makers, contributing to more robust and evidence-based governance.

Strategic Priorities

Several critical areas have been identified as priorities. They align closely with, and will help us achieve, the objectives of ABBC2025:

1. **Celebrating Gains** - We acknowledge that Africa has made significant strides in the adoption of bio-innovations and in raising awareness of their potential. ABBC2025 will provide a platform to showcase progress, celebrate wins, and leverage lessons learned to drive momentum for continued success.
2. **Diverse Voices** - Misleading narratives are being perpetuated by policymakers, religious leaders, and select social media influencers. There is a need to shift the narrative by highlighting the role and voices of communities. Addressing this challenge requires diverse perspectives and lessons from sectors that have successfully countered misinformation. ABBC2025 will bring together actors from fields such as human health, where misinformation management strategies have proven effective.
3. **Youth Engagement** - Youth, particularly the Gen Z and digital influencers, play a crucial role in shaping public perception. ABBC2025 will amplify youth-driven narratives in combating misinformation and disinformation.
4. **The role of AI** - There is a lack of clarity on AI's potential in addressing misinformation in Africa. ABBC2025 will explore AI's role in shaping narratives, detecting misinformation, and strengthening bioscience communication strategies.
5. **Communication, Policy & Innovation** - Sustainable impact requires an integrated approach. Communication, policy, and innovation must work hand in hand. ABBC2025 will provide a platform for interdisciplinary discussions, ensuring that scientific advancements are supported by strong policy frameworks and effective public engagement strategies.

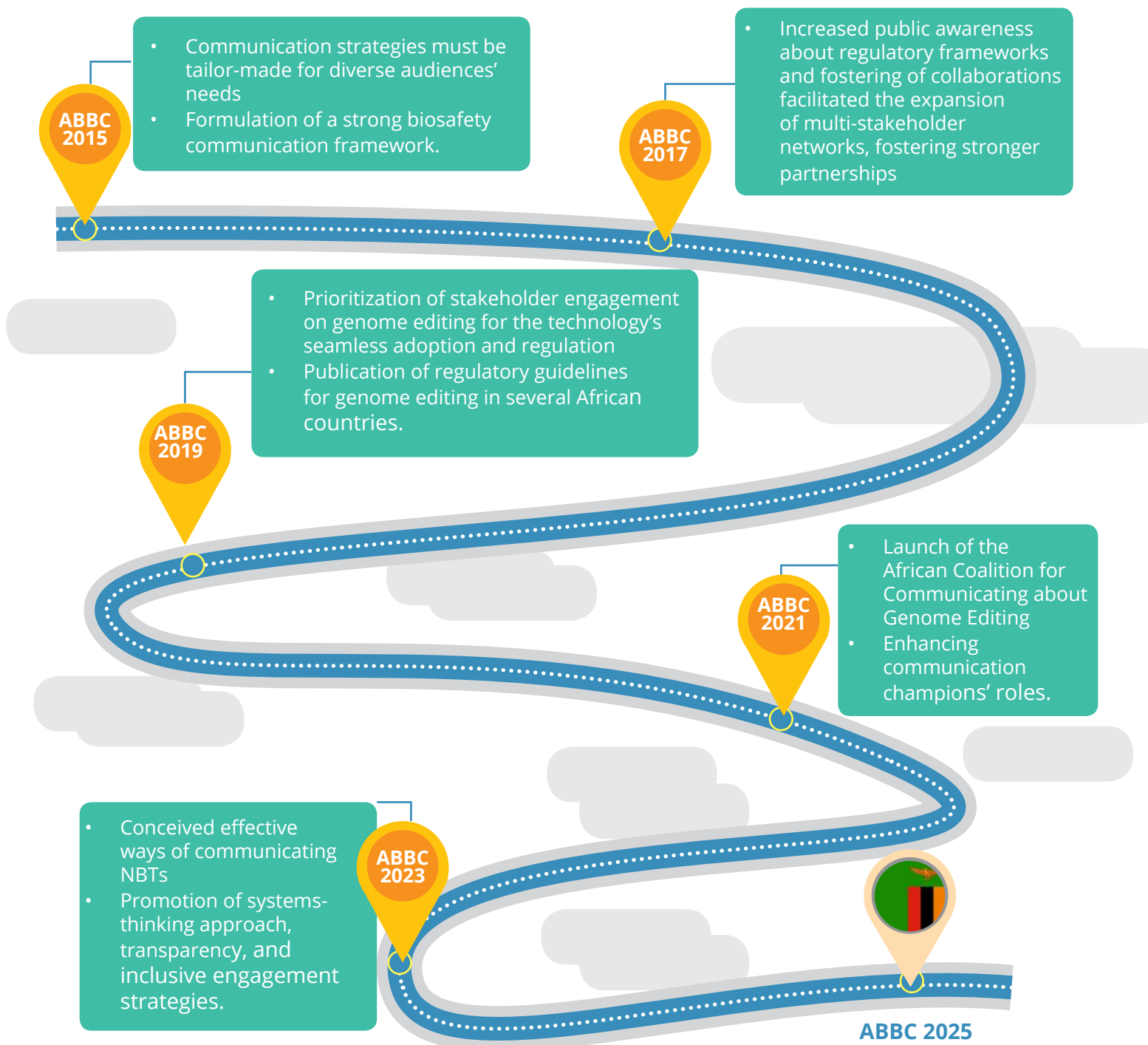
The ABBC Journey:

Since its inception in 2015, the ABBC symposium has served as a premier platform for advancing biosciences communication, with a strong focus on agricultural biotechnology in Africa. Held biennially, its most recent edition took place in 2023.

So many lessons have been learnt in the past five symposia, with each successive ABBC building on the progress made in the previous edition, gradually expanding its scope to incorporate new technologies, address emerging communication challenges, and engaging a broad range of multidisciplinary stakeholders.

Charting the Future of Biosciences Communication

Key Achievements and Lessons



Partner with Us!

The ABBC Secretariat welcomes partnerships to co-create customized packages that support special interest groups at the symposium.

Interested? Reach out to Dr. Margaret Karembu at mkarembu@isaaa.org or Bibiana Iraki at biraki@isaaa.org.

ABBC is renowned for its inclusive approach, bringing together researchers, policymakers, private sector representatives, communication experts, special interest groups and community leaders for a shared purpose. The collaborations forged and the dialogue enabled across diverse stakeholders through the symposium aims to accelerate Africa's agricultural and socio-economic development amidst climate challenges and social inclusion imperatives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

Website : www.abbcsymposium.org