

## Territorial Entrepreneurship: A Driving Force for Sustainable Innovation

Yawo Esenam ABOFLAN<sup>1</sup>, Koffi KPOTCHOU<sup>2</sup>, Kossi KABO<sup>3</sup>, Alexandru Ionut PETRISOR<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

*Achieving sustainability goals in developing countries is crucial because of vulnerabilities related to climate change, capital scarcity and increased investment risks. Entrepreneurship is a means of overcoming the ecological, economic and social problems and challenges in terms of transport, consumption, production, development and food that the continent is facing as a result of the remarkable growth in its urban population. Innovative young companies are proposing solutions that take into account the cultural, social and economic realities of users. This potential for businesses to have an impact on sustainability is limited by the financial difficulties associated with the traditional business development model. Using an approach centred on life in the region, this article highlights the opportunities represented by innovative entrepreneurship in territories in need of sustainability. It aims to stimulate reflection on the need to rethink the economic model for innovative businesses with a sustainable impact, whose solutions need to be widely disseminated by considering other forms of investment. It is therefore suggested that local administrators, be they municipalities, cities or regions, should themselves become entrepreneurs by investing in impact businesses. This article invites to consider territorial entrepreneurship as consider entrepreneurship as a dynamic for anchoring sustainable innovations in regions.*

**Keywords:** *Urban Growth, Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Innovations, Territorial Competitiveness, Urban Design Thinking.*

### Introduction

Achieving the sustainable development goals set by United Nations (UN) member states under the 2030 Agenda in developing countries is of crucial importance due to vulnerabilities linked to climate change, capital shortages and increased investment risks (Li & Wu, 2025). Collaborative innovation events (CIE) organised by actors in entrepreneurial ecosystems are considered as frameworks for generating ideas that respond to a challenge previously identified in a sector, a domain or even in a given territory (Camille, 2022). With respect to the territorial context, these events are conceptualised as manifestations of territorial entrepreneurship (Djatcho Siefu et al., 2020), with a focus on the transformation of ideas into innovative solutions. Despite the paucity of research on the successful transformation of ideas into innovations and their diffusion (Camille, 2022), entrepreneurs, often identified through ecosystem emulations, are considered the only actors capable of addressing extreme poverty in an endogenous and autonomous manner, and of effectively tackling problems and challenges related to sustainability, such as global warming and the digital transition (Chapus et al., 2021). However, mobilising financial resources for the transformation of these ideas into genuine impact innovations is challenging (Jérémy Bompate, 2024). As posited by DIAMANE and KOUBAA (2017) on thorough examination of the various stages in the evolution of innovative enterprises and the array of financial options available to them, it is concluded that nascent companies encounter significant constraints in their capacity to prognosticate and appraise their prospective profitability and viability, particularly during the seed and start-up stages. Consequently, they are regarded as high-risk for investors. Their access to financing becomes difficult. Consequently, questions concerning entrepreneurial financing at the nascent stage persist, particularly when these present potential in terms of responses to certain challenges in territories aspiring towards sustainability. In response to the challenges associated with accessing financing, recent studies have identified green financing mechanisms

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Cities in Africa, University of Lomé, Togo, Email: yawo.aboflan@gmail.com, yawo.aboflan@cervida-togo.org,

<sup>2</sup> Regional Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Cities in Africa, University of Lomé, Togo, Email: kpotchou@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> Laboratory of Biological, Food and Environmental Health Sciences, University of Lomé, Togo, Email: fofokabo@gmail.com

<sup>4</sup> PhD (Ecology), PhD (Geography), Habil. (Urban Planning), (1) Professor and Director of the Doctoral School of Urban Planning, Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest, Romania; (2) Professor, Faculty of Urban Planning and Architecture, Technical University of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova; (3) Senior Researcher 1, National Institute for Research and Development in Constructions, Urbanism and Sustainable Spatial Development URBAN-INCERC, Bucharest, Romania., Email: alexandru\_petrisor@yahoo.com

and have asserted their paramount importance for projects pertaining to renewable energies, sustainable infrastructure, and environmental conservation (Bakry et al., 2023; Li & Wu, 2025). Green finance could therefore contribute to overcoming the investment risks presented by young companies and facilitate the implementation of ecologically sound projects by promoting economic growth, job creation and social inclusion (Ahmed Imran et al., 2023).

In Africa, green finance is in its infancy but is already proving to be a strategic tool. In the opinion of (Jakarasi, 2024), it is important to emphasise innovative financial instruments (climate funds, green bonds, patient capital) that can provide support for impact startups. These mechanisms enable us to transcend the limitations of conventional financing by incorporating environmental and social criteria into investment decisions. Consequently, it appears imperative to broaden the discourse on private sector financing to address the challenges posed by financial mobilisation. This is necessary to ensure the scaling of entrepreneurial solutions that have the potential to generate significant ecological, social and economic impact. The present article instigates the ensuing reflection by addressing the following question: The present paper sets out to explore the potential of territorial entrepreneurship to facilitate the scaling of sustainable innovations in regions where traditional financing mechanisms are not able to provide adequate support to companies in their start-up phase. The objective of this work is to explore the potential of territorial entrepreneurship as a means of facilitating the scaling of sustainable innovations in regions characterised by limited accessibility to traditional financial resources. This exploration will be undertaken through the mobilisation of endogenous resources, the analysis of local collaborative dynamics, and the examination of alternative support mechanisms for entrepreneurship.

### *Conceptual and Theoretical Framework*

#### *From Territorial Ecosystems To Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Towards An Inclusive Dynamic*

Research in regional economics (Crevoisier, 2006; Crevoisier, 2007; Crevoisier, 2010; Crevoisier & Jeannerat, 2009; Crevoisier et al., 2021; Djatcho Siefu et al., 2020; Proulx, 1994), has highlighted the importance of the influence of the interaction of territorial systems, including local companies, on the local economic performance of regions or territories (Alexandra et al., 2018). This influence stems from a dynamic that fosters the creation of conducive environments in which entrepreneurs and governments can function seamlessly, thereby contributing to innovation and economic growth (Andrea et al., 2023). However, recent research highlights the pivotal role of two key factors in shaping the evolution of entrepreneurial ecosystems (EE) within urban contexts. These factors, namely the regulatory environment and access to capital, have been identified as crucial determinants of innovation within these ecosystems (Damaris Chiericato et al., 2025). In Africa, entrepreneurial ecosystems are characterised by strong territorial heterogeneity, where the local dimension profoundly influences business models (Farah & Jean-Marc, 2024). In their study on local energy systems as indicators of territorial impact on business models, Farah and Jean-Marc (2024) showing the necessity for companies to integrate territorial resources, skills and values into their value proposition. In a similar vein, initiatives such as 'investment readiness programmes' for climate-focused start-ups, which were jointly proposed by VilCap and local ecosystem-building actors, serve to illustrate the importance of networks and targeted financing in strengthening local capacities, territorial anchoring and hybridisation of the business models of young companies. (Village, 2025).

The following hypothesis is put forward for consideration: the difficulty of accessing capital and the lack of structuring of ecosystems can explain the difficulty of diffusion and scaling of innovations, especially for a young company in Africa.

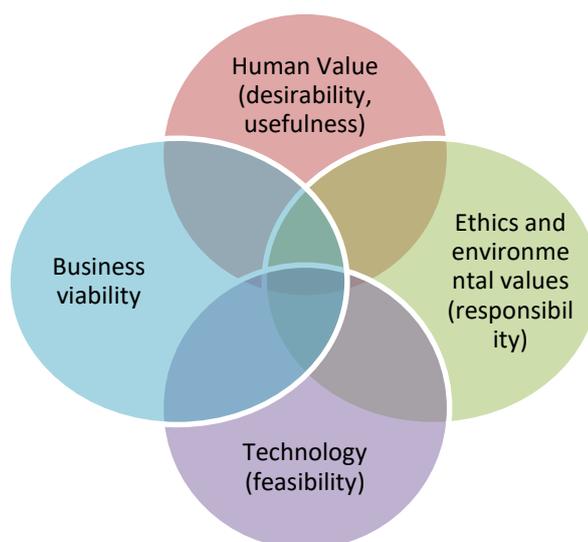
#### *From the Inclusive Dynamic of Ecosystems to the Diffusion of Agro-Food Innovations*

Diffusion is defined as the process by which an innovation, understood as a concept regarded as novel, disseminates through specific communication channels over time among constituents of a social system. It is evident that the involvement of local actors within an ecosystem has a significant impact on the potential for the diffusion or scaling of innovations. In this regard, the role of agricultural cooperatives or collective

organisations in the context of agricultural or agro-food innovations has been demonstrated to be positive (Anne & Damien, 2020). The work of the Alliance Bioversity and International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT, 2025) and the TAAT program of the African Development Bank Group emphasises that the scaling of agro-food innovations relies on mechanisms of collective action, multi-stakeholder partnerships and adaptation to local contexts. However, in view of the sustainability challenges from an environmental and social perspective, innovations are required that respond to environmental and social objectives. These objectives are designed to ensure healthy and nutritious diets and inclusive agro-food systems (Daum et al., 2025). Nonetheless, factors such as perceived usefulness or perceived ease of use by users have been demonstrated to exert a significant influence on user behaviour in terms of innovation (Yuen et al., 2021). This, in turn, would facilitate adoption and thus diffusion. As demonstrated by Luka Njau (2024), a number of factors act as impediments to the diffusion of innovations, including a paucity of resources and global competition. It has been demonstrated that the majority of Togolese entrepreneurs (79.3%) encounter significant challenges in accessing financial resources, which has been identified as a key obstacle to their growth (Baladjida Parfait et al., 2024). Furthermore, the process of innovation diffusion is such that if the prerequisites, including knowledge, prior use, felt needs or problems, creativity and social system norms, are not met, adoption is hindered.

*From The Inclusive Dynamic of Ecosystems to the Diffusion of Agro-Food Innovations: Towards Structuring a Sustainable Innovative Milieu*

The present work is founded upon the territorial approach (Livi et al., 2015) and the theory of innovative milieux (Crevoisier, 2010; Proulx, 1994), which itself derives from regional economics. The principle of regional economics is that of regarding the territory as an entity that evolves in a systemic way, relying on institutions and local actors who influence each other, thereby creating a territorial dynamic that links companies, institutions and the local population to its economic development (Crevoisier et al., 2021). Recent research has focused on the territory as a lever of competitiveness in a sustainable perspective by integrating social innovations for territorial attractiveness (Raphaële, 2021). It is evident that the territory provides considerable support to the emergence of innovations through networks of actors, competitiveness clusters and learning networks. This organisation could therefore be considered a sustainable structure for the region, based on local difficulties in all areas of social life and taking into account the needs of residents and users. This will enable the deployment of responsible innovations, combining technology, human values, business viability, and environmental and ethical values (Tomitsch & Borthwick, 2021).



**Figure 1:** Sustainable Land-Use Planning Via Life-Centered Approach in the Territory

*Source: (Tomitsch & Borthwick, 2021), modified by us.*

Figure 1 is a schematization of the territory that takes into account human, ethical and environmental values in its planning, with the aim of driving and developing companies that propose sustainable solutions.

## Context and Physical Framework of the Research

The United Nations has reported that the majority of cities in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are undergoing significant levels of urbanisation. It is estimated that by 2050, the urban population of this zone will account for approximately 60% of the total population (Tabutin & Schoumaker, 2020), with an annual growth rate of nearly 4%. This rapid urbanisation is predicted to engender a plethora of ecological, economic and social challenges, particularly with regard to transport, consumption, production, development and food security. The primary concern is that these challenges will not be addressed if urban development is not made sustainable and secure.

Sustainable development is defined as a mode of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own (Bonnin-De Toffoli & Lazaric, 2013). Following the introduction of the concept in the Brundtland Report (1987), stakeholders have been particularly focused on achieving a balance between economic development and environmental preservation. This development approach is intended to meet the needs of the entire global population whilst respecting environmental limits. Furthermore, sustainability has evolved into a multifaceted concept, comprising four pillars (economic, social, environmental and cultural) and additional dimensions, including a territorial dimension (Petrisor, 2014). Additionally, it encompasses an entrepreneurial dimension, driven by young entrepreneurs who propose innovative solutions (Aboflan et al., 2024). The pivotal function of urban areas in this process was emphasised in 1994 in the Aalborg Charter, wherein over 200 European cities committed to the promotion of sustainable development within their respective territories (Verhage & Leroy, 2014). However, the sustainable construction of urban territory now calls on local actors to innovate more, or at least to show more creativity by breaking free of administrative and sectoral dependence.

According to the 2023 report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), billions of people do not have access to sufficient and secure nutritious food. Currently, 58% of Africans are in a situation of food insecurity, or double the global average (World Bank Group, 2025). Consequently, the world, or at least the African continent, is not on a favourable trajectory in terms of achieving the objectives inscribed in point 2 of the United Nations agenda, namely: The elimination of hunger, the assurance of food security, the improvement of nutrition and the promotion of sustainable agriculture are of paramount importance. This report reveals that the continued increase in the population of sub-Saharan Africa requires a strategic deployment of innovations with the potential to fundamentally transform food systems and, more particularly, food consumption (FAO, 2023). Furthermore, the transition of African cities has been shown to generate increasingly concentrated consumption needs (Cirad, 2025). This has been demonstrated to result in increased and poorly regulated use of chemicals in food production and processing, raising additional concerns. In order to achieve this objective, it is imperative to identify novel sources of growth that will assist the global community in pursuing a trajectory of robust, equitable and sustainable development in the face of numerous ecological, social and economic challenges. In order to address the contemporary crises of inclusivity and sustainability that the continent is experiencing, entrepreneurial innovation must be recognised as the fundamental element of the solution (Chapus et al., 2021).

Innovation is defined as encompassing technological, technical novelties, new forms of organisation, products and/or services, or social practices, representing a new way or an improved way of creating value for customers, users, the entity at the origin of the innovation, or society (ISO, 2020). Innovation is defined as a new situation or object, characterised by the rupture it represents compared to the previous state'. According to the sociologist Gaglio (2011), innovation can be defined as a new invention or a novel product that has been positively validated by the market. A group of designers contemplated the issue, occasionally with the assistance of pioneering users, and submitted it to other groups, with some of these groups adopting it. It has been adopted, at least, by and in a social milieu. In the domain of food production, innovation can be defined as the process of production, diffusion and adoption of new solutions (in the

form of organisational practices, products and services) related to food. Innovation is not equivalent to the adoption of a universal solution that functions in every instance, nor is it an end in itself. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, 2024) defines the term as follows: 'It is much more the ability to transform ideas into economic, social or environmental value by mobilizing human, technological and institutional resources'. However, if it is targeted in an appropriate manner, it can contribute to development and allow farmers in Africa to adapt to contemporary changes (Triomphe et al., 2016). The objective of these novel solutions is to address the needs and expectations of consumers, customers, or society at large. Consequently, we adopt the concept of innovation as outlined by Jeannerat (2024), conceptualising it as a co-constructed social process involving multiple actors and levels of evaluation. Furthermore, in order to achieve food security, it is necessary for territories to respond to the various dimensions involved in this matter. These dimensions include food availability, economic and physical access to food, and the use of food. In addition, the stability of food security must be considered, as it is in interaction with the first three dimensions by ensuring availability, access, and use. The utilisation of food and the stability of food security are in interaction with the first three dimensions, as outlined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2023). This interaction is defined by the need to ensure that availability, access and use remain consistent and reliable.

In Togo, and indeed throughout the African continent, bread is among the most widely consumed foods, a position shared by other food products derived from wheat flour, such as fritters and croquettes, which are staple foods for the population of Lomé. These foods are present in several meal menus, either in association or not with sauces, stews or any other vegetable-based dish, for their nutritional value (Kpotchou & Assinou, 2024). In the context of bread production, significant quantities of sugar and yeast are utilised in the creation of fritters or croquettes. The latter contains potassium bromate (KBrO<sub>3</sub>), an oxidising agent that is regarded as one of the most effective and economical inputs in the baking industry due to its impact on food biomolecules such as starch and proteins by affecting the degree of gelatinisation, viscosity, and swelling of the dough (Shanmugavel et al., 2020). However, research on the presence of bromate in bread reveals a negative impact on human health and would be classified among carcinogenic products that some countries have banned in their territory. Nigeria would be, to date, the only African country to have taken the same initiative since 1993. Furthermore, in light of the deleterious effects of bromate, analogous measures have been adopted by other public health and environmental institutions. The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA, 2001), of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of California has issued a notice stating that potassium bromate should be listed as a carcinogenic chemical substance <sup>[45]</sup>. In light of the recognised harmful properties of potassium bromate (KBrO<sub>3</sub>), this study explores entrepreneurial proposals that respond to this issue, with a view to ensuring food safety and sustainability in the territory.

## Methodology

The research is mainly based on a qualitative method and has as its specificity, varied analyses starting from an approach centered on the territory, documentary analysis of secondary sources and semi-direct interviews.

The approach centered on the need of the territory allowed identifying a sector that presents a problem: here the food sector especially the consumption of essential products including bread, then identify a solution, a company that is focused on it in order to analyze its proposition. This globally translates that the design thinking approach did not analyze the project itself but focused on the territory and its needs in order to identify a local solution.

Being in the field of territorial planning, which moreover of the public domain, the technique consisted of listing the events of emulation and dynamization of the Togolese entrepreneurial ecosystem: the competitions of projects under the term 'innovation or entrepreneurship' resulting from the territorial dynamic (interaction of ecosystems and the entrepreneurial process in Togo (Fig.2.) carried by the fund for support of youth economic initiatives (FAIEJ), a para-public structure in charge of supporting youth in entrepreneurship, which has the largest database of entrepreneurs in Togo.

Due to the chosen theme 'Entrepreneurship and innovations', we selected two major collaborative innovation events carried by the Togolese Facility for Youth Economic Initiatives such as the Togolese Facility for Acceleration and Innovation (FTAI) launched in 2022 and the 228Innov competition organized during the first edition of youth innovation week in Togo in 2023.

Note that for these two events, respectively 22 and 30 projects were definitively taken into account. Among the total of 52 projects, a choice is made according to the need identified in terms of bread or bakery products consumption. Beyond thematic relevance, selection is made based on projects having obtained grants for effective implementation. Thus a company called 'Togo yeast' is selected for the study. It is the only one to propose a solution against the risk of consuming bread made from imported baker's yeast, therefore risky. It also benefited from a significant grant for project realization. Togo yeast is a young company specialized in the production of local yeast and sugar whose production material is sugar beet. Beet is deemed simple to produce everywhere in Togo following experiments that were carried out in various localities in the Plateaux region including in Atoeta in Atakpame, in Anie, in Elavagnon and in East Mono.

#### *Data Collection, Analysis And Validation*

##### *Data Collection*

For data collection from the company 'Togo yeast', three (03) interviews of ninety (90) minutes in total were conducted with the promoter of local yeast transformation. He also made available to the research team, his business plan and other documents. Some proofs including photos were requested. This allowed conducting an overall project analysis. The analysis is performed on 3 levels to understand the solution especially on the axis of potential in terms of innovation of the proposition, on the axis of sustainability and food security in the territory.

#### *Focus Of Analysis And Data Validation*

##### *Innovation Focus*

The analysis took into account the need to propose a new product. Innovation being, for the most part, a solution driven by market need, it was necessary to understand if the proposition brings a reduction of food risk linked to the use of conventional yeast in baking and pastry. Basing ourselves further on the approach of analysis of agro-food innovation and entrepreneurship, which proposes to take much more into account the positive impact of the project on society, respect for resources and the environment and economic viability (Sauzet, 2021). Moreover, the analysis of the innovative project and its implementation led us to the use of photography in our approach. According to research, 'the use of image in a research approach involves an interesting occasion to decode turnkey methodologies, to go beyond a mechanical mode of use of survey techniques and to grasp the potentials it presents without however failing to do reflexive analysis of the conditions of image production (Meyer & Papinot, 2017). Photo selection is performed following the major links of the Togo yeast value chain: the phase of beet production, the phase of transformation into yeast and commercialization. Thus, some photos are included in the results section of this article.

##### *Sustainability Focus*

To analyze the sustainability of yeast production in Togo, the analysis took into account the 3 dimensions: social, economic and environmental, and the sustainable business model approach (Angus & Nancy, 2018) which integrates circular, social and inclusive logics.

**From the social point of view**, the number of jobs created, consideration of gender equity, territorial anchoring thus favoring sustainability by strengthening local resilience, social cohesion and the valorization of endogenous resources both material and immaterial (Carrière & Lacour, 2021).

**From the economic point of view**, the analysis based on comparison of product prices on the market in relation to Togo yeast.

**From the environmental point of view**, research took into account the contribution of sugar beet production and its environmental impact.

#### *Food Security Focus*

According to some work, food security is physical and economic access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food that satisfies dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Burchi et al., 2011). To do this, the analysis grid took into account the dimensions of food security namely:

**Product availability:** the effective and sufficient quantity presence of locally produced yeast in Togo analyzed.

**Economic and physical access:** a comparison of the price of the new product and those existing on the market performed taking into account zones including large cities.

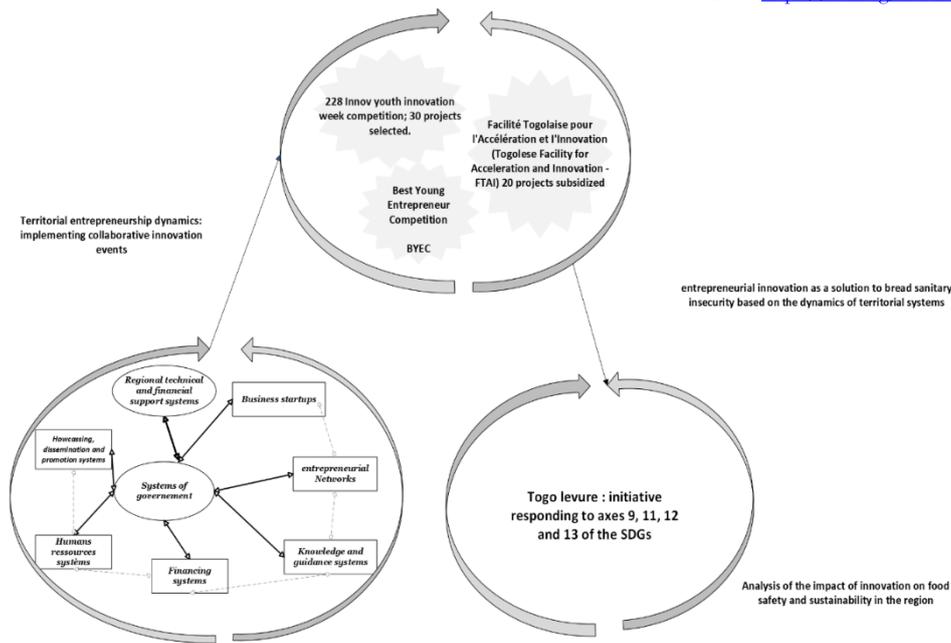
**Use of food or product:** secured practice around production including pollution of the environment, water and other waste.

**Stability of food security:** food security having to be stable, it would be objective to identify threats that local yeast production in Togo may face.

**Table 1: Methodological Summary and Field of Application in Research**

Methodology/approach	Source	Scope of application
Territorial approach Design thinking applied to the territory	(Proulx, 1994), (Tomitsch & Borthwick, 2021)	Identification of the problem, Identification of the ECIs, Identification of a local solution
Project analysis	Company due diligence document (documentary analysis).	Price comparison Analysis of the number of jobs created.
Innovation analysis Proof of achievement	(Sauzet, 2021) (Meyer & Papinot, 2017) (ISO, 2020)	Need to offer a local yeast, Choice of stakeholders
Food sustainability analysis	(Burchi et al., 2011) (FAO, 2023) (Carrière & Lacour, 2021)	Product availability Economic and physical access Use of food or product

Our research having crossed diversified analysis models, this table summarizes the theories or the approach adopted, the source of these and their fields of application.



**Figure 2. From The Dynamics Of The Territorial Entrepreneurship Ecosystem To The Dynamics Of Innovation For Food Security And Sustainability. Source: (Aboflan Et Al., 2024) Modified By Us.**

This figure illustrates the way in which the dynamics of actors of a territorial ecosystem produce collaborative events that are likely to produce solutions that can enter into responses to the axes of sustainable development goals in the Togolese context.

## Results

### *Sugar Beet Cultivation In Togo: Agricultural Innovation And CO2 Reduction*



**Figure 3. Beet Cultivation (Sowing) In The Plateau Region.**

Source: Togo Levure, 2025

Figure 3 of the sugar beet field shows that the Togolese climate and soil are favorable to sugar beet cultivation. According to the entrepreneur, and with verification in empirical sources, it emerged that with favorable climatic conditions, yields can exceed 80 tons per hectare. That is an average yield of 12 tons of sugar per hectare or 17.14%, with records that can reach 20 tons of sugar per hectare or 28.6%.



Figure 4. Beetroot Harvested In The Plateau Region During The Experiment.

Source : Togo Levure, 2025

This image presents the first harvests carried out by the company. During interviews with the entrepreneur, we understood that experiments were carried out without irrigation in Aného, Atoéta and Atakpamé; which allowed him to obtain for one hectare, 70 tons of beets. These small results reinforce the reproducibility of sugar beet in Togo.

*Production And Transformation of Local Yeast: A Contribution to Food Security and Price Dynamics?*



Figure 5. Yeast Produced in Togo From Sugar Beet.

Source: Togo Yeast, 2025



Figure 6 : Yeast Packaging Ready To Enter The Market After Testing.

Source: Togo Levure, 2025.

Figure 5 is an illustration of the first yeasts transformed locally in Togo by the entrepreneur from sugar beet also produced for the first time in the Togolese context. The packaging of yeast made in Togo (fig.6) comes to compete with conventional yeasts on the market whose value proposition is uniquely the health security of consumption of wheat-derived products such as bread and pastries.

**Table 2 : Comparative Prices of Conventional Yeasts and Togo Yeast**

Products	LOME	KARA
NEVADA	1300	1100
ROYAL	1500	1300
PANTHERE	1300	100
YEAST TOGO	800	800

The Togolese market today abounds with several elaborated yeasts (Nevada, royal, elites, Pakmaya, Black Panther, etc.). These products, deemed harmful, do not ensure food security for bread consumers. Thus, facing this problem, the transformation and placing on the local market of yeast derived from sugar beet cultivation not only ensures security against risks linked to local consumption but creates competition between existing ones. This difference is justified by the quality and competitive price for a 500g packet of yeast.

*Togo Yeast: A Local Production Chain with Strong Social Impact*

**Table 3 : Distribution of Jobs Created By Togo Levure.**

Jobs created	Total workforce
Tractor driver	2
Agronomist	1
Agro-industrial engineer	1
Biologist	1
Silage maker	1
Plant manager	1
Pakager	1
Accountant	1
Plant operator	1
Warehouse clerk	1
Driver	1
Housekeeper	1
Security guard	1
Agricultural engineer	1
Graphic designer	1
Mechanical engineer	1
IT maintenance technician	1
Occupational physician	1
Total jobs created	19

Source: data collection, January 2025.

The table provides a detailed breakdown of the types and number of jobs created by the start-up. It illustrates the establishment of a value chain. A total of 19 jobs were created, including one for a housewife.

## Discussion

### *Togo Yeast, An Agri-Food Innovation In A Competitive Environment*

The introduction of a new yeast strain in agricultural practices has been proposed as a solution to the health concerns associated with bread consumption. This initiative represents a novel combination that has emerged from the entrepreneurial process. Indeed, innovation is noted in the entrepreneur's ability to introduce into the economic circuit a new combination, a new technique or the new process [51], which will be able, among other things, to revitalize the social and economic system. The cultivation of sugar beets, which are tuber plants that were first sown in Togo, has been found to be a lucrative economic venture. This could have far-reaching consequences for the yeast market. The advent of Togo yeast (Fig. 5) gave rise to a competitive environment among yeast importing companies and local production companies, as evidenced by the fluctuations in product prices in the market (Table 2). The success of multiple sowings in various locations has been demonstrated, thereby indicating the adaptability of production to the local climate. As stated by Pénin (Pénin, 2016), Schumpeter's conception of innovation involves the adaptation of a culture, technique or practice to its local context, even if said adaptation has been developed in a foreign setting. This approach would serve to reduce the overexploitation of natural resources, a key factor in the present climate challenges. As demonstrated in Figure 3, the photograph of the inaugural sugar beet field in Togo, cultivated by the company, serves to substantiate the claim that the project is authentic and possesses the capacity to generate novel combinations, thereby facilitating the integration of new production into the agro-food chain. This assertion is intended to instil confidence in potential funders and consumers. Indeed, the experiments carried out in the Plateaux region have yielded encouraging results, particularly with regard to the innovative process of secure yeast production via the fermentation of pastes and beet-based sugar.

### *Togo Yeast : Inclusivity Of An Agri-Food Innovation*

In accordance with its social contribution, Togo yeast established a value chain, incorporating producers at the base and bakers downstream. This entrepreneurial initiative has been shown to engender social benefits in terms of job creation and its impact on the community. The establishment of an agro-food value chain has the potential to generate nineteen jobs, including six direct roles, as outlined in Table 3. The proposed solution would address the issues of food self-sufficiency, local production, efficient soil fertilisation, small ruminant breeding, nutritional qualities and quantities of foods. In this manner, it has the potential to assist in the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals 2, 8 and 9, which stipulate, respectively, the elimination of hunger, the promotion of decent work and economic growth, and the advancement of industry, innovation and infrastructure. However, given the challenges associated with anchoring, including financial constraints, job security and sustainability remain unconfirmed. Furthermore, the capacity for job creation demonstrates social inclusion through the role of housekeepers, although this is minimal in terms of female representation within the company. This corroborates the findings of Baladjida Parfait et al. (2024), which demonstrate that women constitute a mere 21% of green entrepreneurs in Togo. In addition, the data presented in Table 1 offers a comprehensive representation of the diverse range of occupations and sectors represented by the workforce. This provides substantial evidence that validates the existence of a value chain, thereby offering insight into the interconnected nature of the various processes and activities within the system.

### *Togo Yeast And Environmental Impact*

As mentioned by some previously cited research, to guarantee sustainable agro-food systems, innovations are needed that not only emphasize productivity, but also respond to environmental and social objectives to guarantee healthy and nutritious diets and inclusive agro-food systems. In terms of climate change, sugar beet cultivation has a significant impact due to its participation in the reduction of greenhouse gas, less than 40% over twenty-five years (Wang et al., 2024). Analyzing the project justification, beet would reduce environmental pollution by fixing more than 40 tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per year and per hectare of cultivated land according to the 2015 report of the General Confederation of Beet Planteurs (2015). This

corroborates the affirmations of certain sources including those of the main professional organizations of farmers, Agridemain (2019), the first movement of the agricultural sector around a common vision of agriculture. Moreover, according to the entrepreneur, co-products entering into agropastoral reduce the risk of environmental pollution through recycling of wastewater, from the beet sugar industry. The integration of sugar beet cultivation in Togo therefore contributes to building resilient infrastructure responding to axis 13 of the SDGs in particular 'Strengthen, in all countries, resilience and adaptation capacities to climate hazards and natural disasters linked to climate'. Entrepreneurship demonstrates thereby that it is likely to promote sustainable industrialization that benefits all and that encourages innovation and allows moreover, to promote sustained, shared and sustainable economic growth, full productive employment and decent work for all. Finally, by responding to the problem of Potassium Bromate and the strong importation of food products, entrepreneurship contributes to improving nutrition systems and promoting sustainable and profitable agriculture.

However, applying the analytical framework of food sustainability according to (Burchi et al., 2011), taken up by FAO (2023), questions concerning availability and accessibility not validated. Regarding food security, it is crucial that food be available and accessible to all. The company being young, despite its innovation potential and its eventual contribution to value creation, does not yet guarantee accessibility and availability of locally produced yeast. This translates the fact that despite the ability of entrepreneurship to contribute to creating inclusive jobs in territories and reducing carbon dioxide consumption, there are still gaps to fill. This one because of the risk they represent facing existing conventional financing mechanisms. It thus confirms the conclusions of research that mentioned the young age of innovative companies as a risk factor distancing them from currently available financing mechanisms (Jérémie Bompate, 2024). The example of Togo yeast constitutes proof of this situation, which could be sharing by most entrepreneurs with high innovation potential but in embryonic stage. This also returns to questioning the business model of companies with high innovation potential including start-ups in Africa. The success of the company depends on one hand, on its ability to mobilize funds to go to scale; on the other hand, it also depends on the offer proposed to customers and especially to the consumer without however neglecting key partnerships. However, some companies proposing waste management solutions interviewed about their relations with territorial administrators. Their responses confirm the absence of a fiscal or investment policy for promotion.

Regarding the offer, adopting a user-centered or consumer-centered approach could keep it valid as the project or proposition evolves, pivot it or even abandon it as soon as the market changes direction. This being so, it is appropriate to confirm that successful innovation, from a company's point of view, is more than the new technique put into practice or even its potential for value creation. Local production of sugar beet, an experiment repeated in several zones, by transformation into yeast and sugar, the effective packaging and conditioning it has shown, is only at the stage of experimentation, testing and research. The transformation of these various successes into real financial tractors requires a stronger dynamic in economic terms. Innovation is one of the conditions of economic renewal from entrepreneurial projects and a productive recombination of resources. However, financial resource is in small quantity for start-up companies. For company support structures like the youth initiatives support fund, financing, although important for the start of companies, it is much more the growth potential that strengthens the confidence of financing structures to inject funds into them. Following investigations, the solution facing financing difficulties, is proposed by German Cooperation, the European Union and Luxembourg aid and development that support Togo in the conceptualization of alternative financing approaches - including the financing fund, the innovation fund and the research and innovation fund, which address innovative and young companies. Moreover, the partnership between the Kawisafi Fund and the African Development Bank (AfDB) constitutes an alternative financing offer to support African startups that develop solutions for sustainable agriculture, energy transition, waste management and renewable energies (AITN, 2024).

#### *Territorial Entrepreneurship: A New Business Model For Young Companies And Territories*

Financial mobilization of a company must no longer be limited to business angels, venture capital. The involvement of territorial systems is paramount. The lack of financing for young companies can represent an opportunity for territories or cities concerned by the solution. Indeed, innovation is a source of economic

prosperity of territories through the companies that are established there (Raphaële, 2021). This affirmation is corroborated by the New Swiss Policy (NSP) which has the vocation to help regions promote development by granting them lost fund financing, or by establishing original financing practices for innovative companies in the territory perimeters (Regiosuisse.ch). In this policy, the encouragement of industries in cantons is highlighted. The reflection that could emerge from this example is that this regional policy towards industries, SMEs and startups, can contribute to rethinking the business model of territories. Tax collection is, until now, the most widespread financing mechanism for cities and public infrastructure of cities. The model of financing urban projects will be even more effective if cities diversified financial resources. They would position themselves as investors, providers of financing. By transforming into providers of financial resources to companies with strong sustainable impact, the territory becomes a key actor of its own sustainability including economic value creation and respect for environmental and social issues (Farah & Jean-Marc, 2024). It will therefore be able to recover and duplicate the potential that companies in its territorial perimeter contain. We call territorial perimeter, the zone of political influence of administrators in charge of planning in the territory. The challenge for these territories is to promote sustainability within them by investing massively in companies with strong sustainable added value (social, economic and environmental). This would increase their competitiveness and value creation at regional scale like Swiss regions propelled by regional innovation systems. It is therefore up to actors, governors of regions, mayors of municipalities to invest massively in innovative companies with strong sustainable impact. Thus, it would diversify their financial resources and pivot their classic economic model. Also, innovative solutions in any territory increase the competitiveness of the latter and make better promotion of it. This would increase the attraction of investors and several companies could engage on the same path. It is therefore crucial for territorial systems to engage in this area. Geographical proximity will be an advantage in improving sustainability conditions. To do this, the territory will therefore have a sustainability laboratory in charge of thinking, investigating and identifying entrepreneurial projects with strong sustainable potential in order to get involved in its management and support them in establishment and local anchoring to thus guarantee inhabitants and locals to enjoy the axes that sustainability touches. Also, will it carry out their promotions outside the limits of the territory and thus increase its competitiveness. In this, we give an improved meaning to territorial entrepreneurship. This concept then goes beyond the capacity of the territory to not only energize actors and territorial systems to drive new ideas or new projects by bringing them together (Raphaële, 2021), but also to integrate into public policy the possibility and capacity to provide financing to companies with strong sustainable impact in the geographical perimeters of the territory by initiating innovation funds, support funds for young companies, original and exceptional tax systems. Also, territorial competitiveness would much more concern the development of sustainable companies and would position territories favoring sustainability in the foreground.

#### *Conceptual And Theoretical Overview Of The Research*

**Table 4 : A Presentation of the Conceptual and Theoretical Framework Underpinning the Research.**

Concept	Sources consulted	contributions to the research question
Innovation	(OMPI, 2024) (Sauzet, 2021) (Jeannerat, 2024)	Innovation is driven by local needs. In consideration of the local resources available and the beneficial impact of the project on society, respect for resources and the environment, and economic sustainability, it is recommended that the project proceed. In order to be both relevant and sustainable, local roots must be established. The adoption of innovations by entrepreneurial entities operating within specific geographical areas, often referred to as 'territorial entrepreneurship', facilitates the adaptation of such innovations to the prevailing socio-economic circumstances of the respective regions.

Diffusion	(Farah & Jean-Marc, 2024) (Anne & Damien, 2020) (CIAT, 2025)	The dissemination of information is contingent upon the concerted efforts of collective action mechanisms, the presence of local networks, and the existence of regional platforms. The phenomenon of regional entrepreneurship functions as a catalyst for the dissemination of innovations, mobilising local actors and facilitating the adoption of novel concepts.
Sustainability	(Angus & Nancy, 2018) (Carrière & Lacour, 2021)	Sustainable business models incorporate circular, social, and inclusive approaches. Local roots promote sustainability by strengthening local resilience, social cohesion, and the use of endogenous resources.
Food safety	(FAO, 2023) (Twahirwa, 2024) (Mondiale, 2025)	A significant challenge in the sub-Saharan region of Africa, the issue is being addressed by companies that are integrating logistical, digital, and social innovations. These companies, which are often rooted in the local community, demonstrate the capacity of territorial entrepreneurship to address fundamental needs.
The financing of regional entrepreneurship	(AITN, 2024) (Village, 2025)	It is frequently observed that traditional financing mechanisms are not well-suited to the needs of nascent small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The capacity for regional entrepreneurship to mobilise alternative resources (e.g. local funds, green finance, innovation funds) and to establish inclusive governance structures to support innovation is an area of particular interest.

This table exposes the explicit link between literature and concepts addressed in this research. It is about innovation, innovation diffusion, sustainability, food security and health and entrepreneurship or territorial financing. Innovation is necessary facing food insecurities and health but remains insufficient without territorial diffusion. Scaling depends on the capacity of actors to insert themselves into local networks. This scaling hence diffusion which is facilitated by territorial entrepreneurship which is a form of mechanism of mobilization of alternative resources (local funds, green finance, innovation funds,) and structuring of inclusive governance to support innovation.

## Conclusion

This article primarily aims to highlight the ability of entrepreneurship to address sustainability issues at a local level. It also addresses the financial difficulties innovative and young companies face when trying to access financing to scale up. The traditional economic model hinders the development of young, innovative companies with a strong sustainable impact, as they are considered high-risk and do not fit into traditional investment mechanisms. This research highlights the importance of developing a local innovation system that creates partnerships with public entities responsible for sustainable regional planning. These entities would draw on entrepreneurial talent to identify innovative projects to be integrated into sustainable regional planning. Additionally, public authorities would implement a mechanism or policy to diversify the economic model of territories, which has previously focused on collecting taxes to finance public projects. The territory would become a provider of financial resources to entrepreneurs with a strong sustainable impact within its geographical perimeter, gaining a return on investment. The research combined a territorial approach with innovation management and analyses based on design thinking. While the text addressed the concept of innovation management, it did not delve into the financial analysis of the project

to ascertain its profitability. The integration of images into the process serves to confirm the implementation of the innovation, thereby providing a tangible representation of the solution that has been devised and implemented. This serves as a criterion for evaluating innovations. In terms of methodological limitations, the potential of entrepreneurial breeding grounds in the face of sustainability challenges in the territories was explored, based on a solution in the agri-food sector in order to assess its innovation potential and its possible contribution to sustainability. It is important to note that the findings of this single case study cannot be extrapolated to other companies operating within different sectors. However, a number of companies offering waste management solutions were asked about their relationships with regional administrators. Their responses confirm the absence of a fiscal or investment policy for promotion. The analyses, being case-specific, exclusively considered factors that could exclude other innovative companies operating in sectors other than food. In the context of sustainable urban planning, it is recommended that particular attention be paid to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This will allow for the identification of promising projects, the provision of technical support, and the appropriate financing of these projects. This will ensure their scaling up, thereby ensuring sustainability for residents and improving the competitiveness of the region. The present study explores the notion of regional entrepreneurship, a concept that forms the foundation for the subsequent analysis. Consequently, it paves the way for new thinking to explore the conditions for implementing the financial participation of territorial entities in entrepreneurial projects and the possibility of rethinking the economic model of territories that is compartmentalized in tax collection.

### Author Contributions

**Appendix A.** Mr. Yawo Esenam ABOFLAN drafted and edited the entire manuscript, from the proposal, obtaining funding, research and data collection to analysis. Koffi KPOTCHOU read and provided important comments on the manuscript. Mr. Kossi Kabo participated in data collection and analysis. Mr. Alexandru-Ionut PETRISOR read and provided important comments on the manuscript.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results”.

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