

# THE BIOVISION AFRICA TRUST

## THE EOA INCEPTION WORKSHOP REPORT FOR BENIN

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### Establishment of the National Structures

Hudson Werek Shiraku



Some of the Participants of the Inception workshop in Benin

## **INTRODUCTION**

The EOA Initiative was first implemented in 2012 on pilot basis in six African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia and Nigeria) and baseline studies conducted in three other West African Countries (Benin, Mali and Senegal). The pilot activities were supported by SSNC and SDC for the baseline studies. Between the years 2014 and 2018, the Initiative is going to roll out in eight African countries under the support of the two organizations – SSNC and SCD. It is in the context of SDC’s support that emphasis is being given to the creation of support structures – continental, regional and national platforms for supporting the initiative. This report is therefore a compilation of what happened in Benin during the inception workshop for creating national support structures.

## **WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS DAY ONE**

Under the leadership of OBEPUB, Benin’s EOA inception workshop was held between the 21 and 22 of February. The event brought together 31 organizations working in the organic agriculture sector. *(See Annex I for the list of participants)*

### **Opening Session**

The opening session was marked by the introductions from all the participants, opening remarks from the host organization - The not-for-profit Organization for the Promotion of Organic Agriculture in Benin (OBEPAB), the Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) representative and from the assistant minister who graced the occasion.

The OBEPAB coordinator started the conference by welcoming all the participants and taking them through the event’s programme. He also explained to the participants the objectives of the event and asked them to participate fully to ensure that they are met.

The BvAT representative was then given a chance to introduce himself and say a few words before the Assistant Minister. The BvAT representative explained to the participants the journey of the initiative from how it started to the present status and the role BvAT has played. He also explained why he was present at the function - Biovision Africa Trust was only there to oversee the Initiative’s implementation in the country but it will not be involved in the actual

activities in the country. He concluded by reiterating the importance of getting it right from the beginning as that was the what will determine the initiative's success.

VIGAN Olivier, le directeur de la Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche (MAEP) officially opened the conférence. In his opening remarks, he encouraged people to practice farming practices that don't interfere with the environment and that such practices can only be found in ecological organic farming. He said that his ministry is keen on promoting organic farming and farmers at large to ensure that they can meet their daily needs from farming. With these few remarks, he declared the workshop officially open.

Representatives from different organizations presents were given a chance to introduce themselves stating which organization they work with, their positions and their involvement in organic agriculture. Thirty one organizations from different sectors – the government sector, research institutions, Universities, the private sector, and civil society introduced themselves.

### **Organization Presentations**

The opening session was followed by a session whereby all the organization represented were given a chance to talk about themselves in detail focusing on what they do in relation to the Ecological Organic Agriculture, their areas of coverage

There was representation from the government sector, civil society organizations, universities, farmer organizations and private companies. OBEPAB, the current CLO which coordinated the baseline studies in the capacity of acting CLO was among the organizations which made presentations. It is a not-for-profit Organisation for the Promotion of Organic Agriculture in Benin that was founded in 1996. The main purpose it was founded was to contribute to the reduction of pesticide use in agriculture as much of the annual ill health and fatalities in rural areas in Benin were a result of using pesticides.

He main objectives of OBEPAB are:

- Promote organic agriculture and develop capacity in environment-friendly farming systems

- Build self-sufficient and sustainable organic supply chains, which are profitable and socially just
- Promote action research in environmental health, food safety and farm family health;
- Train and inform extension agents, consumers, farmers, processors, researchers, students and decision makers on pesticide hazard issues
- Contribute to improving farmers confidence and capacity
- Facilitate access to information for various stakeholders on pesticides and alternatives

OBEPAB employs a participatory approach whereby it seeks to put people at the centre. It builds farmers' capacities to enable them to help themselves through valuing local knowledge and innovations.

Other organizations also made their presentations and their full details will be compiled into a database by the organizing organization – OBEPAB.

### **Presentation of the Baseline Study Results**

Having gone through an introduction process where all the organizations present talked about what they are doing and how they relate to the EOA Initiative, results of the baseline study that was conducted in Benin was made. The study was carried out on the following thematic areas of the EOAI as under the pilot;

1. Research, Training and Extension
2. Information and Communication
3. Value Chain and Market Development
4. Networking and Partnership
5. Policy and Program Development
6. Institutional Capacity Development]

After the presentations participants were given a chance to react and ask questions on the issues presented which were then addressed. The full study reports were availed to BvAT after the studies.

## **WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS DAY TWO**

### **Discussion of the EOA Work Plan for Pillars I, II and III**

Having gone through the background information of the EOA initiative and presentations of the baseline studies, participants were now requested to go through the EOA work plan and activities for each pillar. The discussions were based on the extracts from the 2014 – 2018 EOA proposal. During this process, the participants analyzed the current situation in Benin for the baseline information, the timing as to when the activities can be accomplished and by whom – organization responsible.

### **Presentation by Biovision Representative**

For the purpose of the Inception workshops in all the participating countries, a generic presentation was prepared with room for customization to fit each country. The presentation had the following main parts;

- Action Plan for Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative (Vision, Mission and goal)
- The Main Intervention Areas
- Pilot and Rolling Out of EOA in Africa
- EOAI Structure
- Role of Biovision Africa Trust
- Mandate , Objectives and Membership of the National Platforms
- National EOA Steering committee (NESC)
- The Country Lead Organizations (CLOs)
- Project/Pillar Implementing Partners (PIP)
- Objectives of National Platforms as Supported by CLOs and PIPs
- Monitoring & Evaluation

See appendix IV for the full presentation.

## **Representation in the National EOA Steering Committee**

After the presentation by the Biovision Africa Trust representative the process for filling the national platform positions started. The acclamation was used to express agreement or otherwise with the choice put proposed. With discussions and few arguments the following final list was arrived at;

### **THE BENIN STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Chair** OBEPAB

**Vice Chair** HELVETAS

**Secretary** DAGRI/MAEP

**Research and Training** FSA - UAC

**Private Sector** AMAP

**Government (e.g. MOA)** WEHU

**Civil Society Organization** PASCIB

**Farmers Organization** FUPRO

**Development Partners who may wish to join** SNV, GIZ

### **Pillar Implementing Partners for different**

- 1. Research, Training and Extension** – OBEPAB (OBEPAB is also the CLO for )
- 2. Information and Communication** - HELVETAS
- 3. Value Chain and Market Development** - PASCIB

### **Conclusion**

The whole process was a success both for BvAT and the Beninese people themselves. For the Beninese because they agreed among themselves and selected people they believed will push the EOA agenda for the country and for BvAT because it was a success. Such events are usually marred with politics and end up not achieving their objectives so the fact that this did not happen it was a success for BvAT too. The elected CLO OBEPAP was also happy with the choices made and was optimistic that they will all work together.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Story in Pictures



Figure 1: One of the presenters for the baseline study results made his presentation on VCs



Figure 2: The workshop in session



Figure 3: Organic Products by one of the participating organization



Figure 4: Participants follow the workshop proceedings



## Appendix II: Workshop Programme

<b>Journée du Vendredi 21 Février 2014</b>			
<b>Heure</b>	<b>Activité</b>	<b>Responsable</b>	<b>Méthode</b>
9h 00 – 9h 30	Arrivée et installation	Tout participant	-
9h 30 – 10h 00	Ouverture	Prof Vodouhê Représ. Biovision Représ. MAEP	Plénière
10h 00 – 10h 15	Présentation des objectifs et du programme de l'atelier	Organisateurs	Plénière
10h 15 – 11h 00	Présentation des participants et leurs structures en lien avec EOA	Participants par structure représentée	2-3 mn par structure en plénière
11h 00 – 11h 15	Pause café	-	-
11h 15 – 12h 00	Présentation de la synthèse des travaux antérieurs et historique du projet	Prof Vodouhê Equipe préparatoire du projet au Bénin	Introduction et présentation par pilier
12h 00 – 13h 00	Présentation du projet	Représentant Biovision	Plénière
13h 00 – 14h 00	Pause déjeuner	-	
14h 00 – 14h 30	Présentation des modalités de mise en œuvre du projet	Prof Vodouhê	Plénière
14h 30 – 15h 30	Travaux de groupe pour l'élaboration d'un plan opérationnel de mise en œuvre au Bénin par pilier	Désignation d'un Président et un rapporteur par groupe	En travaux de groupe par pilier
15h 30 – 16h 30	Présentation des résultats des travaux de groupe	Rapporteur de chaque groupe	Plénière
16h 30 – 16h45	Pause café		
	Clôture de la journée et départ des participants	Représentant MAEP	Plénière
<b>Journée du Samedi 22 Février 2014</b>			
9h 00 – 10h 30	Consolidation des travaux du 21/02/2014 et élaboration d'une feuille de route de mise en œuvre du projet	Prof Vodouhê	Plénière
10h 30 – 10h 45	Pause café		
10h 45 – 11h 30	Définition des tâches des responsables de pilier et de la structure de coordination du projet	Prof Vodouhê	Plénière
11h 30 – 12h 00	Approbation des propositions de responsables de pilier et de la structure de coordination du projet	Prof Vodouhê	Plénière
12h 00 – 12h 30	Clôture	Prof Vodouhê Représentant Biovision Représentant MAEP	Plénière
12h 30 – 13h 30	Déjeuner et départ des participants	-	-

### Appendix III: Liste Des Invites

N°	STRUCTURES	PERSONNES	observations
1	MAEP/SGM	VIGAN Olivier	gouvernement
2	MAEP/DICAF	ZAKARI	Gouvernement
3	INRAB	TOSSOU Christophe	Institution de recherche
4	FSA/WANOART	Kindomihou Valentin	Faculté de formation et d'éducation
5	Biophyto	ABIDJI Max	Secteur privé
6	AMAP	DEGUENON Edgar	Secteur privé
7	REDAD	SEWADE Patrice	ONG
8	CRASTEDA	TOKANNOU René	ONG
9	CIEVRA	ADANMAGNI	ONG/privé
10	SONGHAI	(Nom du représentant attendu)	ONG/privé
11	OBEPAB	VODOUHE D. Simplicie	ONG
12	OBEPAB	BODJRENOU Delphine	ONG
13	OBEPAB	Abel	ONG
14	PNOPPA	TOTO Bernadin	Farmers organisations
15	DPQC	Tyamiou	Quality control institute
16	ABENOR	Ahouissi	Certification and norms institute
17	BETHESDA	GBEDO Victor ??	NGO
18	Textile Exchange	TOVIGNAN Silvère	International NGO
19	FUPRO	GUEZODJE Léonel ??	Farmers organisation
20	HELVETAS	SISSINTO Evelyne	International NGO
21	SNV	PADONOU Eugène	International NGO
22	PASCIB	Pédro	Civil society
23	ORTB	Madafimè Hubert	Journalist at the national television
24	Comité d'organisation	ASSOGBA Gervais	NGO
25	MAEP : direction de l'agriculture	Adanvè	Government
26	Comité d'organisation	Kouévi Augustin	NGO
27	UCooP Bio	Démo BIO	Farmers organisation
28	Comité d'organisation	Mahougnon Fabrice	NGO
29	Comité d'organisation	Noudehouenou Raoul	NGO
30	MEHU	Adjovi Carolle	Ministry in charge of environment
31	PNOPPA	Deguenon Ange	Farmers organisation

# Appendix IV

### The Ecological Organic Agriculture in Africa: SDC Support Contribution and Role of Division Africa Trust

Hudson Werah Shiraku  
Biovision Africa Trust

Presentation at the EOA Inception Workshop in, 22<sup>nd</sup> of Feb, 2014, Place, Country

### Summary

- Action Plan for Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative (Vision, Mission and goal)
- The Main Intervention Areas
- Pilot and Rolling Out of EOA in Africa
- EOA Structure
- Role of Biovision Africa Trust
- Mandate, Objectives and Membership of the National Platforms
- National EOA Steering committees (NESCs)
- The Country Lead Organizations (CLOs)
- Project/Pillar implementing Partners (PIPs)
- Objectives of National Platforms as Supported by CLOs and PIPs
- Monitoring & Evaluation

### Action Plan for Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative

- Overall goal: To mainstream EOA into national agricultural production systems, policies, and practices by 2025 in order to improve agricultural productivity, food security, access to markets and sustainable development in Africa.
- Vision: Vibrant Ecological Organic Systems for enhanced Food Security and Sustainable Development in Africa.
- Mission: To promote ecologically sound strategies and practices among diverse stakeholders in production, processing, and marketing through strategic actions and policy making to alleviate poverty, guarantee adequate and healthy food security, improve livelihoods and safeguard the environment.

### The Main Intervention Areas

Research, Training and Extension (RTE)

- This pillar will be responsible for understanding gaps and implementing activities geared towards enhancing state of ecological organic agriculture practices along the entire commodity value chains.
- Information and Communication (IC)
- This pillar is complementary to the RTE through creation of increased awareness and knowledge of value and practices of EOA and strengthening extension support systems.
- Value Chain and Market Development (VOMD)
- Agriculture being a socially and economically crosscutting enterprise, this pillar aims to promote interventions based on a holistic approach along the organic value chains to stimulate development of sustainable markets and to increase yields in traditional and high value agricultural products and products at domestic and export levels.

Supporting and Crosscutting Pillars: Steering, Coordination and Management

- This pillar brings together components of the pillars aimed at developing capacities of implementing partners and institutions.

### Pilot and Rolling Out of EOA in Africa

Pilot phase in 2012 supported by Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC/SIDA) in 6 countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia and Nigeria).

Baseline studies conducted in Mali, Senegal and Benin with SDC Support (with SDC support).

SSNC currently supporting roll-out in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia (2015 – 2015).

SDC will be supporting EOA in 8 countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia in Eastern Africa and Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Benin in West Africa (2014 – 2018)).

### Role of Biovision Africa Trust

- Management and coordination of the EOA Initiative and the SDC support towards the initiative will be undertaken by the Biovision Africa Trust in Kenya.
- As the lead agency of the initiative, BiVAT acts on behalf of and is accountable to the Continental EOA Steering Committee and to AFD/UEAT.
- BiVAT will closely work with the organizations and structures put in place to support implementation of EOA projects on the continent – the Continental EOA Steering Committee, Regional EOA Steering Committees, National EOA Platforms and the country lead organizations (CLOs).
- BiVAT will facilitate the establishment of National Platforms and the selection of Country Lead Organizations (CLOs) & Pillar/project implementing partners (PIPs) and will be responsible for management, accountability and general oversight of all partner activities.
- BiVAT will receive reports from CLOs for submission to SDC and other partners.

### Mandate of the National EOA Platforms

- The mandate of the National EOA Platforms will include:
- Streamlining EOA's operations at country level.
- Rallying of partners/actors in EOA at country and continental level.
- Facilitating the sharing of achievements, lessons and experiences.
- Supporting/lobbying of policy change, investment plans, etc.
- Shaping the national research and development EOA agenda.
- Facilitating selection of and providing support to Country Lead Organizations (CLOs) and project implementing partners.

### Objectives of the National Platforms

- On the basis of the above mandate, three main objectives will be undertaken by the national forums:
- Catalyze integration of ecological organic agriculture (EOA) in government policies, strategies, plans and programmes.
- Link and coordinate EOA activities at country level including sharing of information and experiences among stakeholders.
- Create awareness and increase the critical mass and voice of proponents of EOA.

### Membership of the National Platforms

- The membership of the country National Platforms will include:
- Agriculture and other relevant sector ministries
- Research and Educational Institutions
- Private sector
- Civil Society Organizations
- Farmer Organizations
- Policy research and development institutions
- Certification and regulatory agencies
- Development Partners which will be open to who may wish to join

### National EOA Steering committee (NESC)

Stakeholders should democratically designate a National EOA Steering Committee (NESC) to provide leadership and overall supervision of EOA at the country level. Representation in the NESC will be based on institutions rather than individuals.

The NESC will be responsible for:

- Providing leadership, guidance and overall supervision of EOA at the country level
- Exploring ways of integrating EOA within national plans, strategies and investment plans
- Developing national structures for implementing the initiative
- Developing a country's national platform's long term goals and strategies
- Reviewing national progress reports on a regular basis
- Including high-level coordination of EOA activities
- Establishing and implementing partnerships and resource mobilization for EOA at national level
- Coordinating linkages of country level EOA activities with regional and continental activities

### Representation in the National EOA Steering Committee

The proposed NESC would include the following:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary

Other Representations from:

- Research and Training
- Private Sector
- Government (e.g. MOA)
- Civil Society Organization
- Farmers Organization
- Development Partners who may wish to join

### The Country Lead Organizations (CLOs)

The CLOs, with the endorsement and support of the National Platforms will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Coordinate project activity implementation at country level
- Disburse funds to project implementing partners as per the proposal and signed work agreements and contracts
- Supervise and monitor implementation of project activities
- Support building of networks and experience sharing across pillars
- Catalyze and support the process of forming National Platforms
- Provide secretariat facilities for the NESC
- Report to NIPs, AFD/UEAT and development partners
- Report to BiVAT (operational/narrative and financial reports)
- Provide all financial support documents as explained in the contracts

### Selection of Country Lead Organizations (CLOs)

Stakeholders are required to carefully choose a reputable organization to be the CLO. This is a crucially important position that should not just be given to any organization without scrutiny. Many national, regional and continental projects and programmes fail because of not having competent and transparent organizations as their lead organizations. In selecting a CLO, a potential organization for this responsibility must meet the following requirements:

- They should have a national appeal
- They should be proponents of ecological organic agriculture
- They should have established structures/systems of management
- They should have the ability to mobilize and rally other actors from different sectors and institutions
- Ability to network and grow the EOA initiative
- Ability to monitor and hold project implementing partners accountable
- They should be mandated by the National Actors for enhancing a broad-based buy-in.

### Project/Pillar Implementing Partners (PIP)

Country activities will be undertaken by reputable partners selected and approved by the stakeholders through the national platforms.

The PIPs, with the endorsement and support of the National Platforms will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Implement in partnership with other partners assigned project activities in the country.
- Support building of networks and experience sharing with other stakeholders.
- Report progress and results of project implementation to NIPs and development partners

### Considerations in Selecting PIPs

- Identify potential partners and assess their capacity to contribute effectively to project objectives and impact pathway as described by the needs of the project.
- The partners should have at least three years of proven experience working on success projects targeting farmers and rural communities.
- Check partners' track record of capacity to deliver on obligations and commitments, and if it has experience in the geographic areas where the projects will be implemented.
- Check the partners' capacity for administrative requirements in terms of procurement and financial management and their track record in managing organizations and project funds.
- Assess potential partners' capacity to integrate collaboration in the setting of the project: understanding of the partners' reputation for getting things done, partner's own networks of influence etc. and whether they have experience working through community-based organizations to deliver services and/or carry out other project activities at the village level.
- Cross-check with the project donors about their previous experiences with the partners.
- Assess the PIPs' ethical values and commitment to development and enhancement of the target outputs.

### Objectives of National Platforms as Supported by CLOs and PIPs

Objective 1: To integrate EOA in government policies, strategies, plans and programmes

- Undertake policy gap analysis on the current country policies and evaluate the extent to which they support EOA development.
- Align EOA initiative with national policies, based on the recommendations of the policy gap analysis.
- Work closely with County Agriculture Directors or equivalent to integrate EOA in country policies, strategies and investment plans.

### Objective 2: To link and coordinate EOA activities at country level including sharing of information and experiences among stakeholders.

- Link EOA with other relevant ongoing activities
- Undertake programmatic information sharing through:
  - Developing a national platform website
  - Establishing national clusters around thematic areas such as research, training, production, trade, among others
  - Organize social forums for the clusters to meet, share information and discuss issues and plan for pertinent issues affecting the cluster
- Undertake programmatic monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- Organize regular programmatic review meetings for the National Platforms Steering Committees and implementing partners
- Organize stakeholders' forums to review and decide on the way forward on EOA initiative
- Follow up on implementation of the way forward ideas from stakeholders meeting in consultation with project coordinators.

### Objective 3: To create awareness and increase the critical mass and voice of proponents of EOA

- Recruit stakeholders to join the country national platform.
- Establish county/district/zonal contact points. These are organizations at county/district/zonal level who will be responsible for coordinating activities at the unit level. They will be useful links to disseminate EOA information at country level down to the grass root and provide feedback from these levels to the national level.
- Appoint a regional platform representative who will be the link between national and regional steering committees and regularly report to the national level and to the regional level.

### Monitoring & Evaluation

The five-year plan will be implemented in an annual cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting by the National Platforms.

- In developing the M&E, particular attention will be given to participatory monitoring and training of the field practitioners on how to use results to improve service delivery and encourage learning by the beneficiaries.
- A database will be developed and maintained of a) ecological-based technologies and practices, b) best-practice methodologies and approaches (processes) from which African implementing countries can take lessons, and c) EOA actors interested to share their experience.
- Country annual plans and budgets be prepared by CLOs and PIPs, and submitted to the EOA Project Manager. In BiVAT for approval by the Continental EOA Steering Committee (Chaired by the African Union Commission)

*Thank you*

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