



# Ecological Organic Agriculture Policy

## Tanzania

Biovision Africa Trust  
Secretariat to African Union-led  
EOA Initiative

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**For**

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Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative

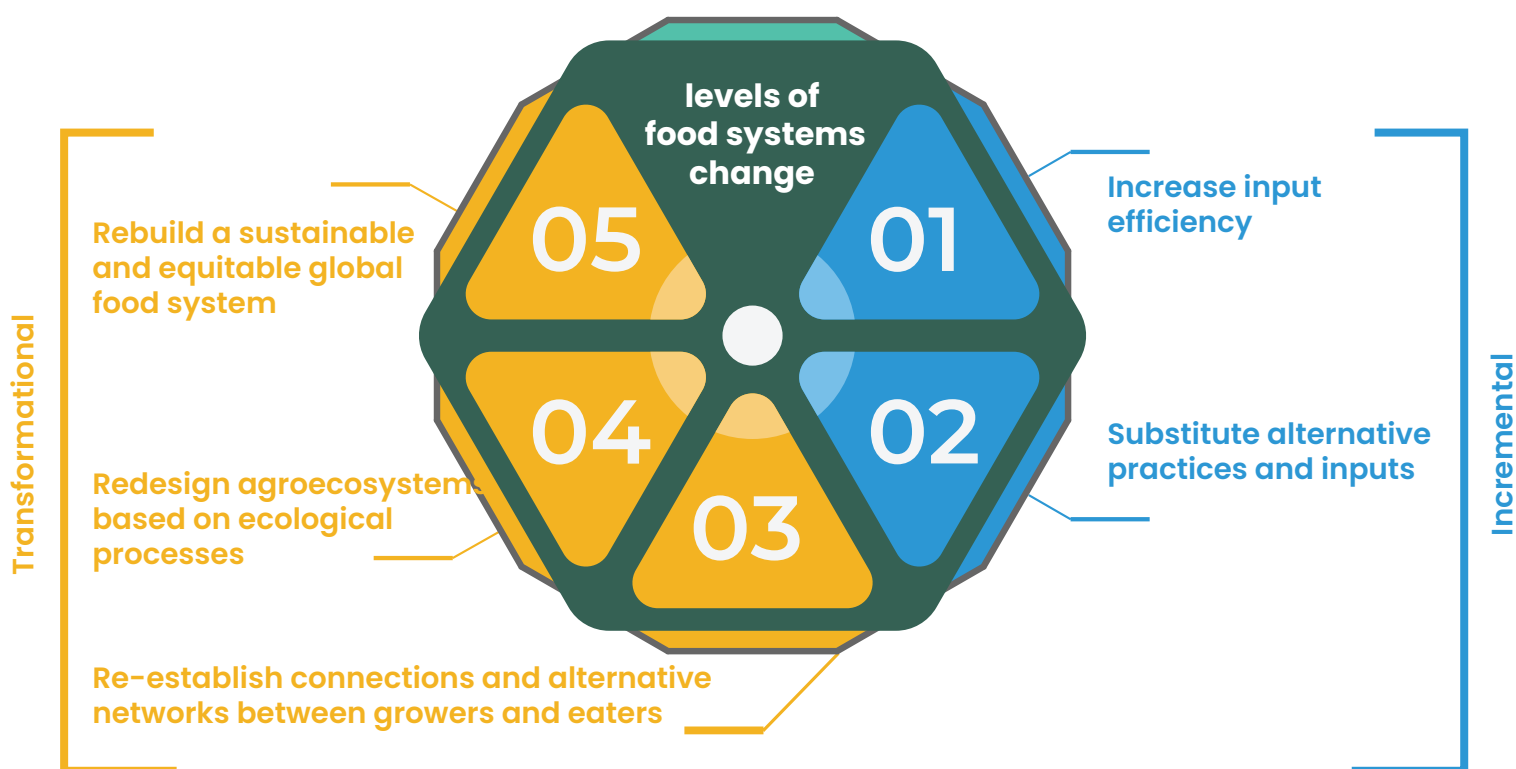
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# East Africa Agriculture Context: Why Ecological Organic Agriculture?

Africa's food systems and agriculture face complex and interrelated challenges, requiring systemic solutions supported by an enabling policy environment for food systems transformation. Hunger and food insecurity are rising, and these issues are worsened by growing numbers of micronutrient deficiency and obesity-related health issues. Dwindling biodiversity and the impacts of climate change further threaten agricultural and food systems and require fundamental transformations. These transformations are essential in enhancing sustainability, resilience and increased production of quality and quantity of food under dramatically changing conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has painfully highlighted the poor resilience and equity in industrial food systems. Agroecology and organic farming increasingly take a whole food systems approach. [The FAO Agroecology Criteria Tool](#) distinguishes five levels of food systems change, the first two associated with incremental changes and the last three with transformational changes.

## The Agroecology Criteria Tool + 10 elements of Agroecology



Human & Social Value



Responsible Governance



Co-creation of Knowledge



Diversity



Synergies



Resilience



Circular Economy



Culture & food Transitions



Recycle



Regulations



Efficiency



Using a typology developed for the African Union based on five EOA types, there are four (4) advanced EOA countries, eleven (11) active EOA countries, ten (10) developing EOA countries, twelve (12) infant EOA countries and eighteen (18) countries awaiting inspiration regarding Ecological Organic Agriculture. In West Africa, Benin, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal have joined EOA Initiative. In Eastern Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda have also joined the EOA Initiative.

Organic agriculture and agroecology provide systemic and evidence-based solutions to these interrelated challenges, resulting in increased sustainability, equity and resilience of food systems. This, however, requires a major shift in funding and public policies. Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) will put carbon into the soil, not the atmosphere; it will reduce poison use, reduce pollution, improve food quality and increase water use efficiency. Since the 2010 decision on Organic Agriculture of the African Union (AU) Heads of State, the EOA Initiative has been implemented to support small-scale farmers and improve African food security and food sovereignty. Eastern Africa has more countries supporting Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) than any other region of Africa through the EOA Initiative, but there is still a long way to go.

Several issues need to be addressed in Tanzania's agricultural development, such as:

- Transport infrastructure for access to markets.
- Equitable land rights.
- Public procurement schemes for sustainably countries produced foods.
- Payment for ecosystem services to farmers.
- Communities and entrepreneurs.
- Elimination of subsidies for synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, and hybrid seeds.
- Integrated seed systems value traditional varieties and breeds and seed exchange systems.
- Promotion of agroforestry.
- Strengthening of agroecological research and development as well as participatory extension services.
- Integration of agroecology in the country's climate change adaptation plan.
- Organic waste strategies take principles of the circular economy into account.
- Formalised inclusive multi-stakeholder processes for policy development on food system change.

## The situation in Tanzania: Food system and agricultural production



Since independence in 1961, mainland Tanzania has remained an agrarian economy. Tanzania's economy heavily depends on agriculture, accounting for half of GDP, providing 85% of exports, and employing most of the workforce. The country is one of the world's largest producers of sisal and cloves. Chief exported crops include cashews, tobacco, cotton, coffee, tea and wheat.

Export spices such as vanilla and cloves are produced on the island of Zanzibar, and some of these are organically grown and produced, with a thriving agroecological tourism industry associated with them. However, the majority of agriculture is subsistence-oriented. Tanzania produces beef, cassava, maize, milk, rice, plantains, sorghum and sweet potatoes for domestic consumption. Agriculture is the backbone of the Tanzanian economy. Smallholder farms using traditional cultivation methods dominate the sector.

### The Five EOA types



According to FAO, the agriculture sector which contributes nearly one-third of Tanzania's GDP and employs 75% of the country's population, with women constituting the majority of agricultural workers has the potential to increase incomes and improve livelihoods, which would contribute to the economic growth of the country; currently, a large proportion of the agricultural budget is spent on input subsidies. The total agricultural area in Tanzania is 37.3 million ha, with 33 million people in rural areas.

According to data from IFOAM Organics International, the organic sector in Tanzania is still relatively underdeveloped. About 55,867 ha of land is under certified organic cultivation, which accounts for less than one per cent (0.14 %) of the total agricultural area. Civil society organisations launched several sustainable farming initiatives based on EOA practices and principles. The Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM) is the umbrella organisation for organic agriculture in Tanzania. Kilimo Hai Tanzania (KIHATA) previously handled the organic sector, but it didn't have full participation from all stakeholders; therefore, TOAM was established. In 2005 TOAM developed a strategic plan with five pillars to guide its future activities. TOAM has recently been involved in media conferences and meetings with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives to create a common understanding of organic agriculture. Other institutions involved in organic agriculture include Sokoine University, Agricultural and Livestock Training Institutes, Neem Botanical Research Station and Tengeru.



55,867 ha

of land is under certified organic cultivation.



0.14 %

of Tanzania's total agricultural area is under cultivation

## Organic certification

Although many farmers farm organically without certification, the development of the sector and access to high-end markets with a price premium for organics requires attention to quality management, either through Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) or through organic certification. TanCert Organic Standard is used to certify organic production in Tanzania, allowing the produce to carry the “Kilimohai” logo for organic products. The TanCert Organic Standard takes into account the specific conditions for organic production in Tanzania and also the stage of development of organic production in the country. The TanCert Organic Standard follows a product through the whole production chain until it is packed and labelled as organic. In May 2007, the East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS) was launched after a consultative process, which started in 2005 by harmonising organic standards like TanCert that existed in the East African region. Other external certifiers such as International Maritime Organization (IMO), EcoCert, KRAV, Soil Association and Bio-Inspecta certify products, especially for export markets.

## Elements of policy required to transition to sustainable food systems in Tanzania

The African Union commissioned an assessment of policy interventions to mainstream EOA in Africa. This study developed a system of measuring progress in EOA based on whether the Country has an organic policy, a product standard, government support for the sector, well-organised farmers, private sector involvement and developed domestic and export markets for organic products. Based on these seven criteria, a typology ranging from Type 1 (Advanced EOA sector) to Type 5 (Awaiting Inspiration) has been developed. Tanzania has been evaluated as Type 3 (Infant EOA Sector).



Type 1  
(Advanced EOA sector)



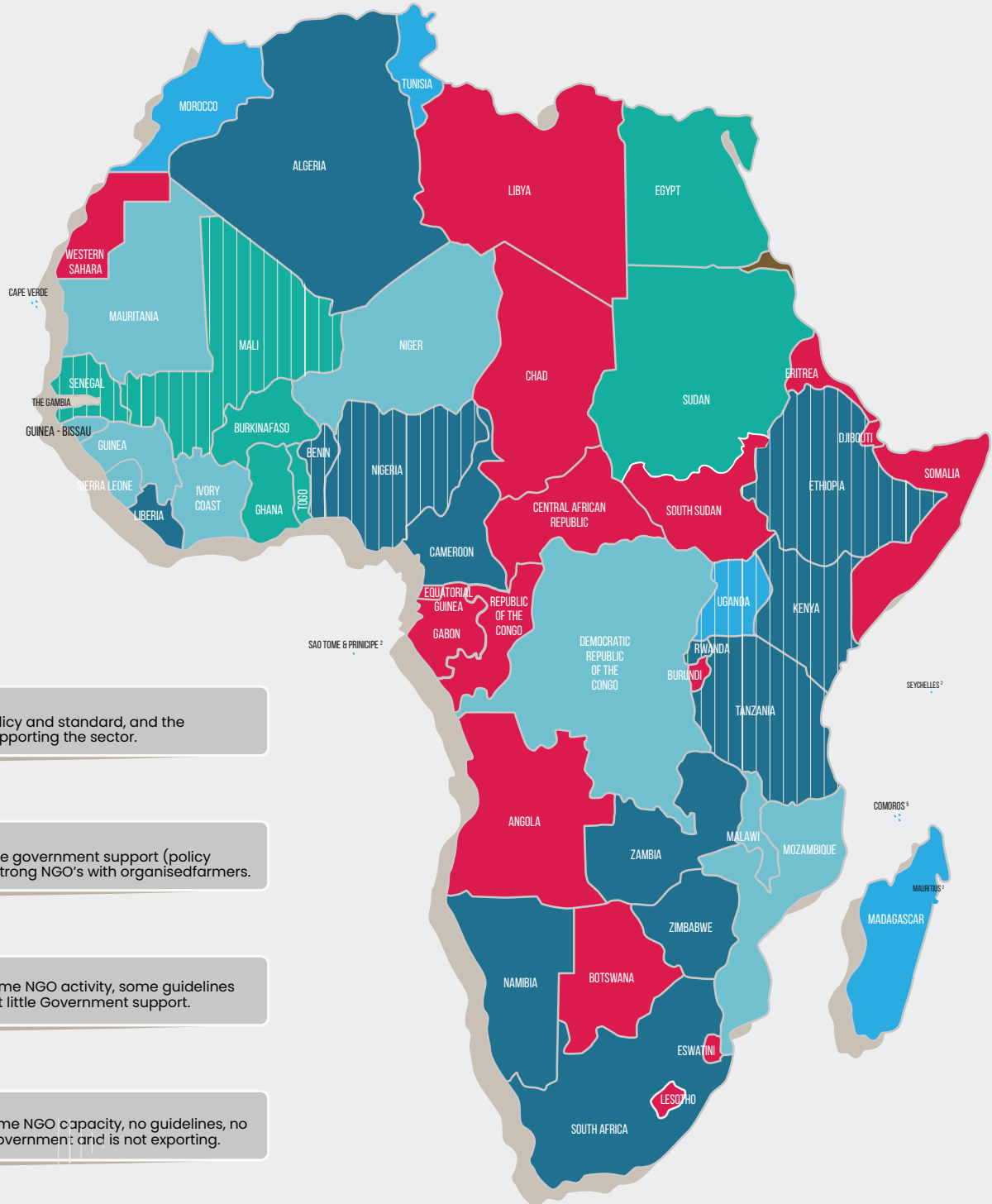
Type 2  
(Awaiting Inspiration)



Type 3  
(Infant EOA Sector)



Projection : Geographic. Datum Hartesbeeshoek 1994.  
 Source: Surveyor General.  
 Insert : ESRI Data & Maps.



**01**  
 Country has a policy and standard, and the government is supporting the sector.

**02**  
 Country has some government support (policy underway) and strong NGO's with organised farmers.

**03**  
 Country has some NGO activity, some guidelines and exports but little Government support.

**04**  
 Country has some NGO capacity, no guidelines, no support from government and is not exporting.

**05**  
 Country has very little institutional capacity, no government support and is not exporting.

**EOA-I member.**

Figure 1: Ecological Organic Agriculture Status of the 55 Countries of Africa  
 Source: Biological Systems Consulting & Research for the African Union Commission in 2020



## Preliminary EOA Type (Type 3)

Tanzania has a developing domestic and export market, some NGO activity, some guidelines and exports, but little government support.

The summary of evaluations for all 55 African countries is shown in Figure 1; only four African countries achieved the status of “Advanced EOA Sector” (Type 1). Countries will be re-evaluated regularly according to the seven criteria mentioned above, and the assessment gives key policy interventions which are needed at each stage of organic sector development.

### The elements of change identified for Tanzania are:



Nutrition education at school and for young mothers. (starting point for Type 5).



A school curriculum for healthy and sustainable food systems. (Types 5 & 4).



A training programme for agricultural extension officers. (Type 3).



Marketing and certification support for semi-commercial EOA farmers. (Type 1).



A support programme for EOA conversion, scaling up and quality management. (Type 2).



Support for quality management through training in participatory guarantee systems (PGS). (Type 2).

## Monitoring and evaluation of sustainable food systems in Tanzania

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is based on the five typologies developed for the assessment analysis study, using the following six criteria:



### National Policy

The extent to which a national policy is in place for EOA and supported by a budgetary allocation.



### Organic Regulations

The extent to which organic regulations have been promulgated and implemented.



### National Standards & Certification

The extent to which national standards and certification are in place.



### Government Support

The extent of government support to the organic sector.



### Civil Society Involvement

The degree to which civil society is involved in the development of the EOA sector in the Country.



### Domestic & Export Markets

The involvement of the private sector and the performance of the domestic and export EOA markets.

**The African Union Heads of State agreed in 2010 that EOA should be supported, and each country should monitor progress and report to the AU through CAADP Programme every three years using the M & E Framework.**

The research required to support EOA in Tanzania should be based on best practices in other countries; long-term study has been carried out for over thirty years in Switzerland, Denmark and the United States of America (Auerbach, 2020). An extract from the abstract of Chapter 3 of this work follows:

While Uganda has now adopted an EOA Policy, and the East African Organic Product Standard is available for the whole East Africa Community (EAC), other countries could learn from Uganda and move ahead more swiftly with National EOA policies. All EAC countries need to integrate EOA into the training of their farmers and extension officers. The current FISP approach should largely be abandoned, except that EAC farmers can be helped to produce compost, and, where needed, basal dressings of rock phosphate should be made available at subsidised prices in order to rectify those soils which are deficient in available phosphate.

## Food system targets and a monitoring and evaluation system to meet them

The indicator framework is built based on the five typologies developed for this study, utilising the six criteria given:

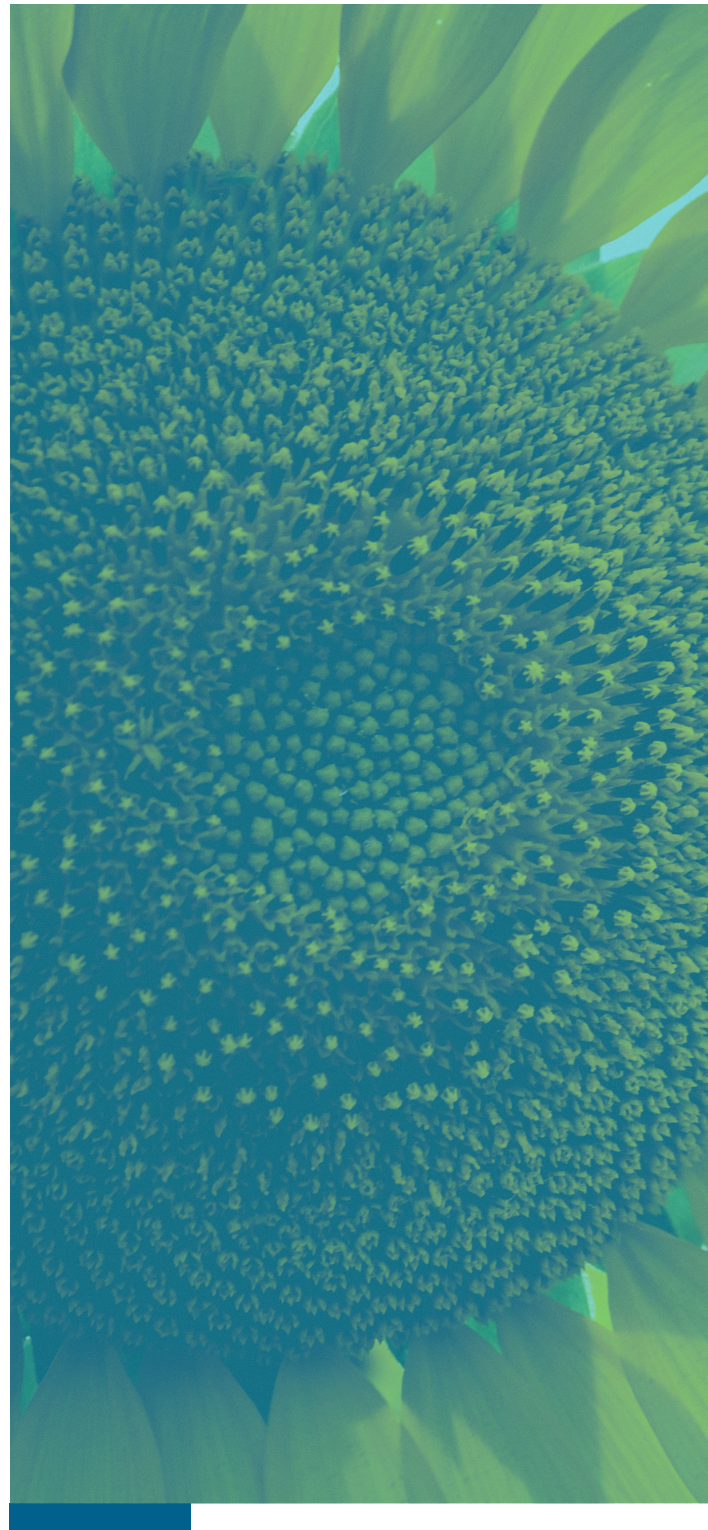
**Regarding the first criterion, the assessment requires the following process:**

1(a) An in-depth integrated assessment of **general agriculture policies, programmes and plans should be performed to understand how they affect the competitiveness and** production of the organic sector.

1(b) Objectives for government involvement in developing the EOA sector **must be clarified and formulated**, and all relevant stakeholders should be involved in the development of policy, plans and programmes. Objectives can include: increased income, environmental protection, biodiversity enhancement, increasing climate change resilience, smallholder competitiveness, human health, increased exports, and domestic growth.

1(c) **One government ministry or agency should be assigned a leading role in sector development**, and organic desks should be established in other relevant ministries and agencies.

1(d) **A national organic action plan or strategy must be formulated and implemented.** The Plan typically would include aspects of standards, regulations, market development, production issues, capacity building and research. The plan should be correctly sequenced (logic) and should state measurable targets for the organic sector to help agencies and stakeholders focus their efforts.







1(e) **A Country must formulate a national EOA policy based on participatory policy development with close interaction between the government and the sector.** Government should actively support the sector's organisation and its participation in the policy formulation process.

1(f) A Country has formulated and promulgated some EOA regulations.

1(g) A country should formulate implementation decrees and action plans for the EOA Policy's action.

1(h) **EOA should be recognised and integrated into the main policies of the country,** e.g. agricultural policy, food, health, education policies, environmental, and poverty eradication policies.

The development of mandatory regulations is considered to be the right policy response to develop the organic sector:

- They give organic agriculture a more respectable and credible image.
- Improved access to export markets.
- Development of the local market.

**Regarding the second criterion (national certification and standards), the following is needed:**

2(a) Standards are available.

2(b) A Participatory Guarantee System exists but needs further development.

2(c) Governments should **facilitate access to certification services.** The government could consider establishing a governmental certification service.



**Regarding the third criterion (government support), the following is needed:**

3(a) The existing strategy from TOAM should be used to develop a budget for EOA support.

3(b) Research and extension need to be strengthened in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

**Regarding the fourth criterion (organic sector strength), the following is needed:**

4(a) Mapping of civil society organisations must be performed & assessment of their capacity undertaken.

4(b) Government should support the development of a well-organized sector through TOAM.

**Regarding the fifth and sixth criteria (civil society involvement & markets), the following is needed:**

5(a) Annual growth in an organic agricultural area (ha) must be measured and evaluated against the strategy.

5(b) Measure the change in the number of EOA producers (no.) and set targets for the next three years.

5(c) Determine annual growth in EOA earnings through export and domestically (currency).

5(d) Assess changes in private sector involvement in the organic sector.





## The Regions of Africa

Like many country borders in Africa, the regions of Africa are subject to discussion, and several countries are involved with more than one region. In developing regional policies for EOA in Africa, the **Eastern Africa** region countries include Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as Somalia. In the **Northern Africa** region the ten countries are Mauritania, Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Sudan, as well as Eritrea and Djibouti.

The fifteen **West African** countries of ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. As several Central African countries are also in the East African Community (EAC), we include only the following eight countries in the **Central African** EOA Policy: Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the island state, Sao Tome & Principe. Under the **Southern African** regional policy, we include Angola, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini, South Africa, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius and the Comoros Islands. In this way, each of the 55 countries of Africa is only included in one region for the purposes of this policy.



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