Biovision Africa Trust

eoa ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Growing Sustainably

PHASE II CONSOLIDATED REPORT

ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTIURE INITITATIVE

Mainstreaming Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) into Agricultural Systems in Africa for the Period 2019-2023

REPORT APPROVED AND SIGNED BY:

Reporting Period: January 2019 to December 2024

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Ms. Venancia Wambua		07/03/2025
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4. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Name
AFD	French Development Agency
AOPP	Association des Organisations Professionnelles Paysannes du Mali
ATPS	African Technology Policy Studies Network
BDS	Business Development Services
BvAT	Biovision Africa Trust
CLO	Country Lead Organisation
CNCR	Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux
CSC	Continental Steering Committee
DREA	Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture
EAC	East Africa Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EOA	Ecological Organic Agriculture
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FMSS	Farmer Managed Seed Systems
GIZ	The German Society for International Cooperation (or Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
ICIPE	International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology

IIABA	Institutional Innovations of Organic Agriculture in Africa
ISD	Institute for Sustainable Development
NOAN	The Association of Organic Agriculture Practitioners of Nigeria
NSC	National Steering Committee
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
PIP	Pillar Implementing Partner
PMU	Project Management Unit
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SSNC	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
TOAM	Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EOA Phase II came to an end in September 2024 after a successful implementation for four years since 2019. The initial phase covered 2019-2023 but was extended to 2024 to cover pending activities in the 9 countries of implementation. This report covers the milestones achieved in the entire phase II period with Biovision Africa Trust as the executing agency. The project supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) contributes to the initiative entitled: Mainstreaming Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) into National Policies, Strategies and Programmes in Africa. This is a continental effort implemented under the guidance and oversight of the African Union (AU) through the committee it chairs, the Continental Steering Committee (CSC). The initiative aims to establish an African organic platform, based on available best practices and to develop sustainable organic farming systems. The report provides consolidated key accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations following project implementation in 9 countries namely, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal, Nigeria, Benin, and Mali.

In its Phase II, the project continued with its pillar-based implementation strategy with a focus on key objectives, including mainstreaming EOA into national agricultural systems, boosting agricultural productivity, addressing food security challenges, enhancing market access, and fostering sustainable development across Africa. This approach led to significant accomplishments in each area.

The overall goal of the initiative is to mainstream EOA into national agricultural production systems by 2025 to improve agricultural productivity, food security, access to markets and sustainable development in Africa.

Objectives of the EOA Initiative

1) To increase documentation of information and knowledge on organic agricultural products along the complete value chain and support relevant actors to translate it into practices and wide application.

2) To systematically inform producers about the EOA approaches and good practices and motivate their uptake through strengthening access to advisory and support services.

3) To substantially increase the share of quality organic products at the local, national and regional markets; and

4) Strengthen inclusive stakeholder engagement in organic commodities value chain development by developing national, regional and continental multi-stakeholder platforms to advocate for changes in public policy, plans and practices.

5) This second phase, prepared in line with the EOA-Initiative (EOA-I) Action Plan and Strategic Plan, has five objectives which are:

This report will thus seek to present the milestones of EOA Phase II, its challenges and lessons learnt.

High-Level Pillar Results at Country-Level

The EOA initiative is implemented using a pillar-based strategy, where each pillar is strategically interconnected and harmonized to advance the project's overall objectives.

1. Pillar 1: Research and Applied Knowledge (R&AK)
2. Pillar 2: Information, Communication and Extension (IC&E)
3. Pillar 3: Value Chain and Market Development (VCMD)

4. Pillar 4: Supporting and Cementing: Steering, Coordination and Management

(Annex 1: EOA SDC funded Phase II Proposal)

The seven (7) countries implementing the EOA initiative demonstrated outstanding performance, significantly surpassing project targets based on the percentage averages of all pillar scores. Benin emerged as the top performer, with an impressive 628% average across the four pillars, while Kenya ranked lowest at 329%. Overall, the initiative achieved a remarkable 498% average success rate across all pillars for the nine countries. By the end of the phase II reporting period, the results exceeded expectations, as outlined below.

Table 1: Level of Performance per Pillar

Pillars of EOA-I	Level of Performance
Pillar 1: Research and applied knowledge	199%
Pillar 2: Information and communication	318%
Pillar 3: Value chain and market development	353%
Pillar 4: Management, coordination and governance	1088%

As outlined in Table 1, partners successfully implemented the pillar strategy, adhering closely to established guidelines and targets. Overall, all pillars surpassed their set targets, demonstrating outstanding performance. Pillar 4 achieved the highest success rate at 1088%, followed by Pillar 3 at 353%, then Pillar 2 at 318%, while Pillar 1 recorded the lowest performance at 199%. The results are further detailed by country, showcasing each nation's contribution to the overall achievements in each pillar.

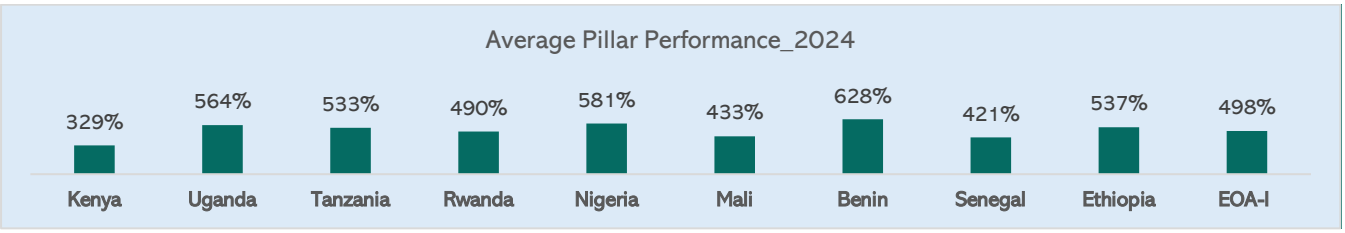

Figure 1: Overall Performance of Pillars 1

Pillar 1 Country Performance

The average performance for pillar 1 across the EOA-I implementing countries exceeded the set target, reaching 199%. Additionally, six out of the nine countries surpassed their individual targets. However, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Kenya lagged, achieving 50%, 75%, and 88%, respectively. The graph below illustrates the overall performance.

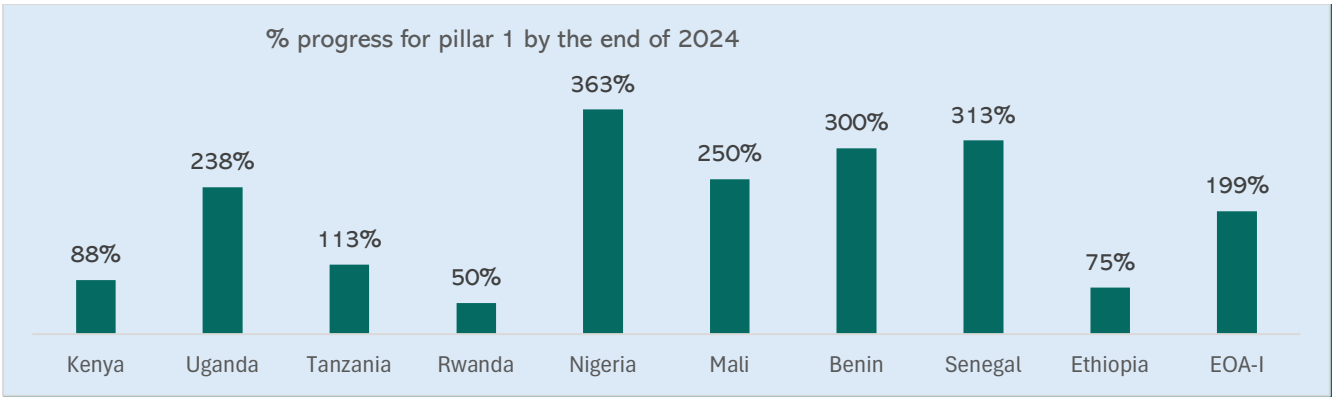

Figure 2: % Progress for pillar 1 by the end of 2024

Pillar 2 Country Performance

Like pillar 1, pillar 2 also demonstrated exceptional performance, surpassing the set targets in six EOA-I implanting countries. During the reporting period, Pillar 2 achieved an impressive average success rate of 318%. However, Rwanda, Senegal, and Nigeria lagged, with achievements of 66%, 73%, and 76%, respectively. The overall performance is illustrated in the graph below.

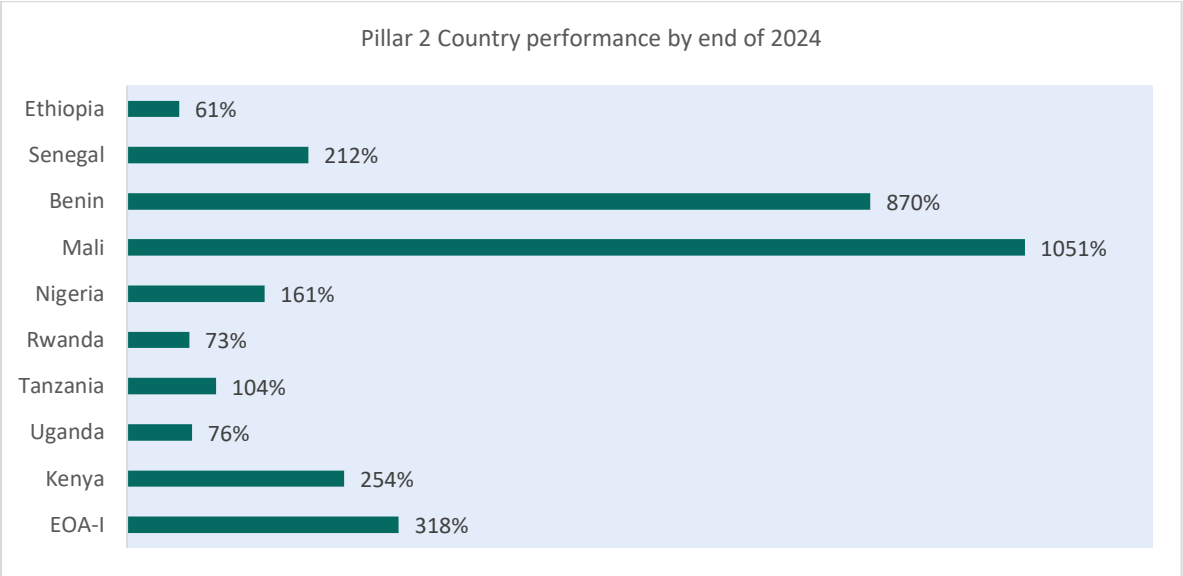

Figure 3: % progress for pillar 2 by the end of 2024.

Pillar 3 Country Performance

Figure 4 below illustrates the overall performance of pillar 3 across the EOA-I implementing countries. As of the end of 2024, all implementing partners had significantly surpassed the set targets, achieving an impressive overall performance of 229%.

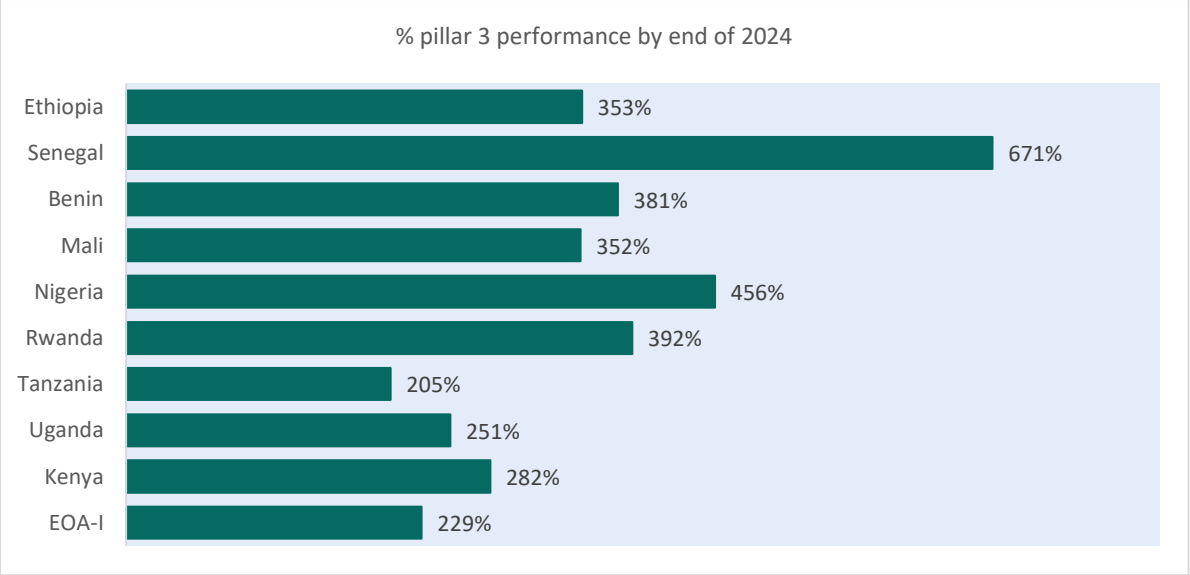

Figure 4: % progress for pillar 3 by the end of 2024.

Pillar 4 Country Performance

By the end of 2024, EOA-I had also exceeded the targets for Pillar 4. All participating countries surpassed their individual goals, resulting in an impressive overall performance of 1088%, as depicted in Figure 8 below.

(Annex 2: Summary of results matrix for EOA Phase II)

2. COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF EOA- I

Overall Oversight

The initiative is implemented under the oversight of the Continental Steering Committee (CSC) chaired by African Union, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE). Dr. Janet Edeme, acting Head of Division Agriculture and Food Security at Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture African Union Commission is the current Chair.

The main purpose of the CSC is to provide guidance, oversight, and decision-making regarding the operations and activities of EOA in Africa. The CSC is supported by a Secretariat hosted by Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) as mandated by AUC through an MOU that outlines the roles of both institutions.

Overall Project Coordination

BvAT is the Lead Agency responsible for coordinating the implementation of the EOA Initiative with SDC's contribution in five countries in Eastern Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia) and four in Western Africa (Benin, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal). The EOA Initiative is also supported by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC). PELUM Kenya, a member-based organization based in Kenya, is responsible for supporting SSNC in coordinating the implementation of the initiative among partners in three countries in Eastern Africa (Uganda, Kenya,

and Ethiopia).

The Africa EOA Continental Platform

The EOA continental platform provides the opportunity for networking and sharing among the stakeholders of the EOA-I. It's supported by the Continental Steering Committee (CSC) and AfrONet. The CSC is the apex in the governance structure of EOA in Africa. The CSC members are appointed to serve on behalf of their institutions and not as individuals and agree to represent the general interests of their sector. The Continental Secretariat with guidance of the Chair successfully held two meetings this year.

Regional Platforms

The project is coordinated by Regional Platforms steered by Regional Steering Committees (RSC) and their secretariats to facilitate sharing of country experiences and integrating EOA in regional policies and plans. The initiative currently has two active clusters, the Eastern Africa cluster, and West Africa cluster. The Southern Africa cluster is in place, but it's not very much actively involved due to lack of financial support. The role of the regional clusters is to coordinate regional actors to implement the EOA agenda, engage with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to integrate EOA in regional and national policy and programs, mobilize resources to support EOA activities and develop rules of procedures and operations in the cluster management.

The steering committee of the Eastern Africa cluster is currently chaired by the East Africa Community (EAC) with co-chairing provided by Mr. Innocent Bisangwa of MINAGRI, Rwanda. The Eastern Africa RSC meeting has representation by 20 members from partners in Ethiopia (ISD), Uganda (Pelum Uganda), Tanzania (TOAM) and Kenya (KOAN), BvAT and PELUM Kenya and IGAD Ethiopia and AfrONet. The West Africa Cluster is chaired by Mr. Ernest Aube of ECOWAS with co-chairing by Prof. Simplice Vodouhe of Organization Béninoise pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture Biologique (OBEPAB) while The Association of Organic Agriculture

Practitioners of Nigeria (NOAN) is the Regional Secretariat for West Africa. Members of West Africa cluster include but are not limited to Senegal, Benin, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Togo, Ghana and Mali and their National Platforms.

National Platforms

At the National level, the EOA initiative is coordinated by the Country Lead Organisations (CLOs) and supported by Pillar Implementing Partners (PIPs). The CLOs are responsible for coordination of pillar activity implementation by the PIPs and partners, disbursement of funds to the partners as per the proposal and signed work agreements, budgets and contracts, supervision and monitoring of pillar implementation, supporting building of networks and enabling experience sharing across pillars, catalysing the process of forming and strengthening National Platforms and reporting to National Platforms, Regional Steering Committee and Development partners.

The project currently has 9 consortia led by Country Lead Organisations (CLOs). The CLOs can be any organization supporting agroecology-based interventions and currently majority are national stakeholder movements and networks in the organic sector. The CLOs coordinate between 3 and 4 PIPs in each country bringing the total number of PIPs across the two Africa regions to 35-36.

3. PHASE II KEY HIGHLIGHTS

3.1 AGROECOLOGY CONFERENCES

During EOA Phase II, Biovision Africa Trust and its agroecology partners convened two agroecology conferences as follows:

3.1.1 The 1st International Conference on Agroecology Transforming Agriculture & Food Systems in Africa Held In 2019

The 1st International Conference on Agroecology Transforming Agriculture & Food Systems in Africa was held in Nairobi from 18th to 21st June 2019 with substantial and modest support from SDC and SSNC respectively. The conference theme was 'Reducing Synthetic Fertilizers and Pesticides by Scaling Up Agroecology and Promoting Ecological Organic Trade' and attracted 400 participants drawn from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Research Institutes, Universities, Government representatives, Media, Students, Farmers and Farmer Associations.

The conference was attended by keynote speakers from the organic and agroecology sector key among them being Dr. Hans Herren of Millennium Institute, Prof. Tyrone B. Hayes a Professor of Integrative Biology, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Endocrinology, Molecular Toxicology and the Energy and Resources Group, Prof. Gilles- Eric Seralini a French scientist who has been a professor of molecular biology at the University of Caen since 1991 and Dr. Judy Carman a PhD holder in Medicine in the field of nutritional biochemistry and metabolic regulation, and a Master of Public Health specializing in epidemiology and biostatistics among others.

The output of the conference was a call to action

All African Governments to comply with their commitments and in a coherent and coordinated manner align respective policies to the declarations and agreements including Agenda2063, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)and to implement the AU Heads of States and Governments' Decision on Ecological Organic Agriculture of 2011.2.The Conference APPLAUDS efforts being undertaken by individuals, civil society organizations, companies and government agencies to promote agroecological transformation that provides diverse, safe, healthy and nutritious food in the face of challenges including climate change, biodiversity crisis and growing demand, and that is inclusive of women, youth and men.

1. Action Towards Sustainable Health, Nutrition, Consumption and Trade3

2. The Conference REJECTS promotion of harmful practices especially the highly hazardous pesticides, banned harmful pesticides, GMOs and the channeling of rejected export food commodities to Africa.

3. The Conference CALLS UPON all key stakeholders to allocate resources to scale up agroecology-based interventions to generate safe and innovative alternatives to improve soil regeneration and pest control while working with small scale women, youth and men farmers in promoting and safeguarding farm managed seed systems and indigenous knowledge.

4. The Conference URGES all stakeholders in agricultural value chains and related sectors (e.g. health, education, environment, trade and finance) to increase awareness and education on the adverse effects of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers and GMOs on health of humans, animals, plants and the environment and to promote ecological organic trade and consumption of safe, accessible, affordable and acceptable organic products by all.

5. The Conference CALLS UPON governments and their relevant institutions, farmers and farmer organizations, development partners and the private sector to avail resources to implement the agreed agroecology agenda and to convene platforms including a biannual African Agroecology Conference for experience sharing, learning

and collaboration and thereby build the basis for sustainable, long-term food and nutrition security and poverty reduction. An implementation plan on the call to action is in the process of being rolled out for implementation and monitoring. The conference served as an avenue for various stakeholders to jointly speak in one voice on spearheading the integration of agroecology and organic practices for the benefit of humans and biodiversity.

To access the resources of the conference (Conference report, Call to Action, Presentations and Media) please visit the conference website https://www.agroecologyconference.eoai-africa.org/

(Annex 3: 1st The 1st International Conference on Agroecology Transforming Agriculture & Food Systems in Africa conference report)

3.1.2 The 1st Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference Was Held In 2023

Table 2: Number of participants at the 1st Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference

Number of Participants	600
Honourable delegates	Hon. Fred Bwino Kyakulaga, the State Minister of Agriculture in Uganda
Participating countries	20
Name of countries	Belgium, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Switzerland, Germany, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Tanzania, United States, Rwanda, United Kingdom, Italy, Malawi, Netherlands, Sweden, Ghana, United Kingdom, and Liechtenstein.

With funding support from SDC as seed funds, BvAT and its strategic partners (Pelum Kenya, KOAN, BIBA, MOA, ICRAF) held the 1st eastern Africa Agroecology Conference.

The conference was attended by participants from over 20 countries around the globe. Participants hailed from parts of Africa, Europe, North and South America and Asia, to be part of this timely event themed *'Strengthening resilience and sustainability in food systems for environmental and social economic development'*. Speaking during the event, Dr David Amudavi, the Executive Director of Biovision Africa Trust, expressed gratitude over the overwhelming attendance of delegates from all parts of the world, which turned the regional conference into an international conference.

The conference had the following sub-themes:

1. Production, productivity, scaling up and sustainability of farming systems based on environmentally based

technologies and methodologies.

2. Best practices towards food security, nutrition, consumption, and health: Soil health, farmer managed seed systems.
3. Ecological organic trade, markets, and economy.
4. Institutional and policy drivers for agroecology transformations.
5. Women and youth in agroecology

In his speech, read by Mr. Leonard Kubok Director, Capacity Building and Knowledge Management in the State Department for Crop Development in Kenya, the Chief Guest Hon Mithika Linturi, Minister of Agriculture in Kenya underscored the pivotal role played by the women and youth in promotion and adoption of agroecology. "Women and youth among other marginalized groups play a key role in agroecology and therefore I commend the support given to these groups by players in the sector," he stated.

Passionate participants among them actors in the development sector, farmers, representatives from various national governments, the donor fraternity and researchers engaged in candid discussions on the opportunities that lie in agroecology, as a solution to the overbearing effects of climate change. The conference featured eye-opening presentations by researchers, exhibitors of agroecological technologies, and practices as well as farmers' whose efforts in adopting agroecology have borne evident results in improving livelihoods.

Hon. Fred Bwino Kyakulaga, the State Minister of Agriculture in Uganda applauded the attendees' for demonstrating their conviction in the potential of agroecology in transforming food systems in Africa. He remarked that the lively participation is proof of belief in what they advocate for. Among key presentations made was by Dr. Hans Herren, the president, at Biovision Foundation who gave a compelling analysis of the milestones achieved in adoption of agroecology in various countries and the opportunities of further advancement.

While launching the call to *action (Annex 1: 1st Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference Call to Action)* following the deliberations, Ms. Venancia Wambua, the Ecological Organic Agriculture – Initiative (EOA-I) project manager at Biovision Africa Trust said, "The Eastern Africa Agroecology conference has been a great success and shall be held every two years going forward." She reiterated that Biovision Africa Trust, the convener of the conference, will work with its partners, most of whom were key participants in the conference, to bring to life the ideas born from the deliberations as presented in the call to action.

Among the countries represented in the conference include Belgium, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Switzerland, Germany, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Tanzania, United States, Rwanda, United Kingdom, Italy, Malawi, Netherlands, Sweden, Ghana, United Kingdom, and Liechtenstein.

The conference culminated with visits to organic farms in Machakos and Nairobi counties.

The conference report with deliberations to fake forward to the next conference was produced

(Annex 4: 1st Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference report)

3.2 EHANCING STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS

During the Phase II implementation period, BvAT and its EOA partners enhanced their working relations with AUC, EAC, ECOWAS and other stakeholders within the continent. We will present to you the key strategic collaborations undertaken during this period:

3.2.1 Signing of the MOU between AUC and BVAT for EOA-I

BvAT Executive Director Dr. David Amudavi, Mr. Alex Mutungi of EOA Continental Secretariat and Ms. Venancia Wambua, EOA-I Project Manager were in Addis Ababa Ethiopia to sign MOU between BvAT and the Africa Union Commission on 20th July 2022.

BvAT delegation consisting of the Executive Director Dr. David Amudavi, Mr. Alex Mutungi of the EOA Continental Secretariat Coordinator and Ms. Venancia Wambua, EOA-I Project Manager was in Addis Ababa Ethiopia to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Biovision Africa Trust and the Africa Union Commission. The MOU formalizes the collaboration between the two organizations in managing and hosting of the EOA Initiative Continental Secretariat. The signing ceremony took place at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa on 20th July 2022 and was officiated by Amb. Josefa Sacko, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE).

The MoU is a formal mechanism of fostering strategic partnerships and alliances with BvAT as well as a gesture of commitment to mutual accountability to shared goals and interests towards the realization of aspirations of AU Agenda 2063 on inclusive growth and sustainable development. Hence, the MOU is a recognition of the catalytic, complementary, and empowering role that BvAT will continue to play in the implementation of 2014 Malabo Declaration through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) framework for action on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods and other related programmes.

In her remarks during the signing ceremony, H.E Amb. Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for ARBE applauded Biovision Africa Trust for spearheading the implementation of the Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) initiative, which she

said has a special niche in the production of healthy foods for the people and for protecting the environment. She further called for more advocacy on the promotion of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides that should result to industrial-scale production to enable the shift away from conventional fertilizers and pesticides.

Dr. David Amudavi, representing BvAT, expressed his gratitude and commitment that BvAT shall implement its functions in the MoU that include hosting of the EOA Initiative Continental Secretariat and ensuring its functioning. BvAT is currently the host to the Continental Secretariat of the AU led EOA Initiative which

provides guidance and oversight on the implementation and reporting of EOA in Africa as guided by the AU Decision on organic farming (Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII) through its AU chaired Continental Steering Committee (CSC). BvAT was endorsed by the AU to strengthen existing cooperation and collaboration of the parties in the implementation of decisions of the STC on ARDWE in Ecological Organic Agriculture in Africa and to spear head awareness of the EOA initiative in Africa among African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other AU organs.

Mr. Alex Mutungi, the EOA Initiative Continental Secretariat Coordinator briefed the Commissioner on the recent developments within the EOA sub sector noting that the Secretariat is undertaking a pilot study of EOA indicators in the five political regions of Africa for possible inclusion in the CAADP BR reporting framework. He further noted that a Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) cluster had been established within the AU led African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform (ASBPP) to champion for farmers' seeds in the seed sector.

While concluding the ceremony, H.E Amb. Josefa Sacko underscored the commitment of DARBE to working closely with Biovision Africa Trust to ensure resilience in Africa's agriculture sector to respond adequately to various shocks on African Food Systems. *"We need to align our work to the African Common Position that was presented at the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and to the existing African Union Agriculture transformation frameworks such as the CAADP, for us to be able to achieve agriculture transformation and growth for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods for our people,"* she stated.

(Annex 5: MOU between AUC and BvAT EOA Secretariat)

3.2.2 ECOWAS Engagement With EOA-I

During Phase II, BvAT had an instrumental engagement with ECOWAS to discuss its integration of EOA-I in their work. The visit came after ECOWAS nominated its officer Dr Koffi Emmanuel Gle as the EOA focal point. The visit took place on 13th `June 2024 at ECOWAS headquarters in Abuja.

In his opening remarks during the meeting, Dr David Amudavi, Executive Director, BvAT (AUC EOA-I Secretariat), delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the Chair of the Continental Steering Committee (CSC) of the AU EOA Initiative, Dr Janet Edeme. He underscored the support of the ECOWAS Commission to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) and Continental Steering Committee of the EOA-I through the former ECOWAS focal point, Mr. Ernest Aubee. He thanked the Commission for nominating a replacement in person of Dr Koffi Emmanuel Gle. Dr Amudavi also commended ECOWAS for being instrumental in recognizing and prioritizing Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) and Agroecology (AE) programmes in the region. He explained the purpose of the mission was to share experiences of the implementation of EOA and Agroecology work and to discuss how best to further collaborate to develop the sector in West Africa. He was grateful that the Commission had honoured our request to carry out the mission despite other engagements going on.

In her opening remarks, the AUC representative, Ms Wezi Chunga-Sambo expressed concern on the vulnerability of African food systems which have been made evident with the recent shocks experienced across the world through Covid 19, Russia-Ukraine war and climate change in general. She noted that these shocks have led to African leaders exploring sustainable agriculture production systems (such as EOA) which provide solutions in smallholder farmers' ability to adapt and mitigate climate change, rely less on expensive synthetic inputs and tap into a niche market of organic agriculture that is valued at USD 200 billion globally. She underscored the potential of EOA and AE in creating employment for the youth. Ms Chunga-Sambo thanked ECOWAS for the nomination of Dr Koffi Gle as Chair of the RSC of the EOA-I in West Africa and by extension a member of the CSC.

She highlighted that the purpose of the mission was to showcase to ECOWAS the status of implementation of the AU Decision on Organic Agriculture continentally and regionally. The visit was also to ensure a discussion and agreement on areas of collaboration between the EOA-I and ECOWAS. Ms Wezi-Sambo reiterated the importance of embracing the outcomes of the Nairobi Declaration on Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and urged ECOWAS to integrate the EOA-I within its AE programmes in the region. She also urged the two parties to explore trade opportunities offered within the framework of the AfCFTA and ensure that EOA is adequately captured in the Post-Malabo Agenda and its reporting tools.

Dr Alain Sy Traore - Director of Agriculture and Rural Development welcomed the delegation to the ECOWAS Commission Offices. Dr. Traore, in charge of both policy and technical initiatives, informed the meeting that there are 17 projects and programs worth over 450 million dollars within the Commission on various sectors including youth employment, livestock development related to EOA including the Agroecology Programme from its Adaptation Fund provided by the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development. He observed that agroecology and sustainable agriculture received significant funding. The current Agroecology and Sustainable Programme has been funded with 15 million Euros and is getting another support of 30 million Euros.

Dr. Traore commended the work of the Commission and the EOA-I Continental and Regional Secretariats spearheaded by BvAT and NOAN respectively. He specifically noted the work that was initiated by Mr. Aubee with the support of EOA-I in developing a draft Regulatory Framework for Ecological Organic Agriculture for West Africa. He recognized that the Framework still needs to go through 5-6 steps internally before presentation to the ECOWAS Parliament for enactment as a policy or directive for integration into ECOWAS Regulatory Framework. This will depend on the technical discussion with ECOWAS Member States who will validate the content and determine the nature of the regulation. A regulation is mandatory for implementation and for directive Member States have freedom to choose.

Ms. Venancia Wambua made a presentation on the status of implementation of EOA in Africa (Annex 1). The EOA Initiative in Africa was established in 2012 following the African Union Heads of States and Governments Decision EX.CL/Dec. 621 (XVIII) on Organic Farming. The goal is to mainstream Ecological Organic Agriculture into national agricultural production systems by 2025. This aims at scaling up ecologically and organically sound strategies and practices through institutional capacity development and other innovative approaches. The vision is to develop resilient and vibrant Ecological Organic Agricultural systems for enhanced food and nutrient security, and sustainable with national EOA Platforms operating in all the 55 African countries.

The initiative is implemented around six strategic areas: Research, Training and Extension; Information and Communication; Value Chain and Market Development; Networking and Partnerships; Policy and Program Development, and Institutional Capacity Development. It has institutional structures (steering committees and secretariats) at national, regional and continental levels for steering and governance. Biovision Africa Trust is the appointed institution by African Union to host its Continental Secretariat. Despite the progress made with implementation in nine countries (five in Eastern Africa – Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda and four in West Africa – Benin, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal), the EOA sector faces challenges, including inadequate support compared to conventional agriculture, limited knowledge, research, and innovation, and limited political will. These challenges are exacerbated by insufficient national budgets and the lack of enabling laws and regulations. To address these challenges, the initiative urges Regional Member States to allocate adequate national budgets to the EOA sector, enact laws and regulations to promote EOA development, and champion the EOA sector.

The EOA Initiative seeks to overcome these challenges and promote a vibrant EOA sector in Africa. By sensitizing Regional Member States about the existence and importance of the initiative, urging support for EOA development, and providing opportunities for progress reporting, the initiative aims to create a conducive environment for EOA to thrive. By working together, the initiative hopes to achieve its goal of mainstreaming EOA into national agricultural production systems, contributing to a more sustainable and food-secure Africa.

Mr. Gbadamosi, R. Oyewole, made a presentation on the status of implementation of EOA in West Africa (Annex 2). He reported that the Initiative supported a study on Operational Capacity Gap, mapping of the stakeholders, supported strategic participation/hosting of global, Continental and Regional events. He called for support for the forth coming 6th West African Conference on organic Agriculture tagged "Senegal 2024". The EOA Initiative continues to support development of a harmonized standard for Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) in West Africa.

The initiative implemented in the forementioned countries is faced with inadequate policies that gives corresponding attention to organic agricultural development particularly as it relates to organic inputs among other challenges. He concluded by calling on ECOWAS to collaborate with EOA-I on the following:

- Institutionalization of EOA and agroecology into ECOWAS programmes and projects.
- Integration of bio and organic fertilizer programmes (particularly as regards decisions on the soil health Initiative launched in May 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya) into EOA and Agroecology activities in the region.
- ECOWAS EOA representative to participate in the CSC and present updates on organic and Agroecology programmes during the meetings.
- Roll out the implementation of EOA-I to the remaining West African States
- Support in the development of Regional organic standards and certification for West Africa region.
- Coordinate regional sourcing and funding processes for the benefit of members States through Joint proposal

writing and other such activities.

- Linkage and collaboration of EOA-I with similar projects / programmes within ECOWAS.
- ECOWAS to formalise the hosting of EOA West Africa Secretariat by NOAN.

Summary of Key Discussions

- The meeting noted that the ongoing Post Malabo Agenda (PMA) discourse is very important and should put EOA/AE at the Centre of agricultural production practices and ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the gains EOA/AE can provide.
- Expressed the need to organize EOA/AE stakeholders and derive a master indicator that can be disaggregated across sectors and tracked at national, regional and continental levels. The ECOWAS Director for Agriculture and Rural Development urged such an indicator to be submitted as part of the views to the PMA to feature in the Kampala Declaration of 2025.
- Studies showing how EOA increases productivity should be made or availed to convince policy makers on this alternative farming system
- EOA/AE is not new – however, it just needs to be understood better to feed into discussions around how to enhance sustainable and integrated soil health frameworks in Africa. Therefore, there is more need for advocacy awareness and capacity building among stakeholders in Africa.
- Noted that AE should be embraced as a pathway to solving the issues on climate change. There are national climate change solutions within ECOWAS that highlight both adaptation and mitigation and AE has been highlighted as a solution to this. Therefore, there is an urgent need to mobilize even more resources to combat the negative effects of climate change. Projects funded by partners and Climate Funds continue to be implemented. Although the Agroecology Programme is coming to an end next year, DeSIRA Push is funding further work to the tune of 20 million Euros. A capacity building study with 15 research centres has been launched.
- There is a new phase of 5–6-year programme funded by the EU through and AFD of approximately Euro 20 million being implemented by the West African Alliance on Climate Smart Agriculture since 2015. This could be an avenue to allocate funds for priority interventions around EOA. Therefore, NOAN should submit their PNAS for 2025 to 2026 to explore areas that could tap into some of this funding.
- There is a forthcoming forum on Agroecology slated for Abuja in October this year. This can complement the 6th West Africa Organic Conference mentioned during the presentation on updates of EOA-I West Africa proposed for November 2024. In this regard, ECOWAS called for joint planning and participation at the two events such that climate financing can be introduced as a component to be discussed.
- The meeting underscored that collaboration between the EOA-I and ECOWAS is very vital and noted the importance of bringing on board the private sector as part of the partnership, especially getting private sector for organic inputs.
- ECOWAS has a digital training platform partnering with universities across the region and the EOA-I can be part of it and take advantage of this technology for large scale, easily accessible capacity building.
- The meeting noted that impactful interventions are a key priority for ECOWAS' work and therefore, during the upcoming RSC, members should develop key high impact priority areas for consideration and clear road map for implementation.
- Recommended that the EOA-I Regional Secretariat should consider seconding a Liaison Officer at ECOWAS. It was also recommended that ECOWAS should be reporting on activities being implemented outside the EOA projects.

- ECOWAS Commission hiring two experts under the Soil Health Initiative to develop a Regulatory Framework for Organic Fertilizers to address issues of quality, standards and certification. This is to avoid exploitation and ensure genuine organic fertilizer production and distribution. They are looking for a Member State that has a framework for adaptation and harmonization. The Commission is to collaborate with IFDC on this. This provides another area to explore for further collaboration.

- The meeting raised concerns on quality control and standards on organic inputs, particularly fertilizer. There is therefore need for the harmonization of the fertilizer regulatory framework for which the available framework in Nigeria can be adapted and harmonized across the region.

Key Agreements

- It was appreciated that the EOA-I currently has programs and interventions in 4 countries in the ECOWAS region. However, it was requested that for the Initiative to be fully embraced in the ECOWAS region, there is need to ensure the program reaches all the 15 ECOWAS Member States. It was therefore recommended that the current 4 countries are packaged as Pilot cases where lessons learnt will be drawn for scaling out to the remaining 11 Member States in the region.

- The meeting noted the need for developing long-term programmes that are more sustainable and impactful on the lives of farmers in West Africa than short-term projects. The ECOWAS Director urged the EOA-I Regional and Continental Secretariats to develop and submit a programme paper on EOA/AE for the entire West African States to ECOWAS to be considered in the Commission's programmes. The Commission will leverage the goodwill it has with the Donors Group and individual donors such as GIZ to finance the programme. The Donors' Group meets monthly, and Dr. Traore is a Co-Chair. This is an advantage to the EOA Initiative. *(ECOWAS to share its AE/EOA programmatic framework to help the EOA-I Secretariats develop the paper).*

- Dr. Traore mentioned that ECOWAS was willing to support the EOA-I West Africa Regional Secretariat to be listed as one of the secretariats it supports in West Africa. This will enable the secretariat to receive support of up to 80,000 USD per year to enhance capacity building in thematic areas of own competence particularly for women (at least 50 %) and youth (≤ 35 years). ECOWAS supports such a centre in Ibadan. Dr. Traore pronounced that ECOWAS recognizes NOAN as the EOA-I Regional Secretariat for West Africa. ECOWAS is willing to provide NOAN with space within the Commission for a focal person to facilitate the operation of the Secretariat if required.

- Work on strategies of encouraging youth people to be part of the EOA Initiative. They could be engaged in activities that provide employment for them. Nurture centres of excellence for youth in agroecology, like the Songhai Centre in Benin.

- Dr. Traore directed the EOA-I Regional Secretariat through Dr. Koffi Emmanuel Gle to liaise with Dr. Borgui Yerima, the Director of Programmes (who was not at the meeting) for mainstreaming of EOA-I into ECOWAS programmes and Prof Ndione Jacques Andre, Climate Change Coordinator, on climate change and particularly the planning, participation and support on the Agroecology and Organic conferences. Dr. Traore stated that the timely notification of ECOWAS on the planning of WAfrONet conference including dates is important.

- The Regional Secretariat requested to formalize its relationship with ECOWAS Commission, however, ECOWAS requested them to define what they meant by formalizing the Regional Secretariat. Dr. Traore then noted that the AU EOA-I Continental Secretariat (BvAT) has been endorsed by the AU and signed a MoU. He therefore recommended that for the RSC to be formalized, ECOWAS will sign an MoU with BvAT the purpose being to support NOAN as the Regional Secretariat. (ECOWAS and BvAT to draft the MoU and have it signed in Senegal in November 2024 on the margins of the 6th West Africa Organic Conference. Dr. Gle to share a sample MOU to assist in drafting the MOU).

- ECOWAS is a serious organization and needs to collaborate with serious partners. EOA Initiative partners should aim at being serious in doing business with ECOWAS in areas including engagement with policy makers to provide enabling conditions such as certification, market development, etc. The focus should be on activities that create

an impact on the population and demonstrate with appropriate indicators.

- EOA-I Regional Secretariat to serve the fulcrum of communication between Continental Secretariat / BvAT and ECOWAS.

Action Points:

1) EOA-I Regional Secretariat to second a Liaison Officer to ECOWAS.

2) ECOWAS to share a sample MoU to guide BvAT in drafting MoU which should be shared by 21 June 2024.

3) BvAT to share a copy of its MOU with AU with ECOWAS.

4) RSC Secretariat to share all strategic documents for the RSC meeting scheduled for 19th June 2024.

5) The Regional Secretariat to elaborate its Action Plan (2025-2026) with activities and budgets and share with ECOWAS.

(Annex 6: Report on ECOWAS, BVAT AND NOAN Meeting)

3.2.3 Hosting of East Africa Community Member States to Discuss Mainstreaming of EOA-I

During the Phase II period, the BvAT EOA Secretariat and Pelum Kenya the regional secretariat organized a 2-day regional stakeholder workshop on EOA in Nairobi to bring together key stakeholders from EAC respective partner States as one of the ways to bring the EOA agenda to EAC. The meeting was attended by a total of 45 delegates from the 7 EAC partner States: - Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, and DRC. The delegates included non-state actors, private sector, Farmer Associations, Academia, Regional Organizations, the African Union Commission and the EAC Secretariat. The overall objective of the workshop was to present on the status of organic farming in the EAC region and identify policy and institutional entry points to enhance organic agriculture development and intra-regional trade to address the regional food and nutrition insecurity.

The workshop was held from 27th to 28th February 2024 at the Sports view hotel in Nairobi. Observations and recommendations were made from the workshop for presentation to the Sectoral Council on Agriculture and Food

Security (SCAFS) of EAC.

The aim of the workshop was to: Introduce the EOA-I to east Africa member states, share status of EOA-I implementation, share experiences and lessons learn, discuss policy support and development with EAC.

Observations

- The EAC partner states are at different levels in the development and implementation of EOA Initiative
- Need for a regional platform and governance structure to promote and coordinate EOA in the region
- Limited funding of the organic agriculture sub sector in the Region

Recommendations

- EAC partner states to support EOA implementation
- EAC Secretariat and Partner states to mobilize resources to mainstream EOA into National & regional investment plans
- EAC Secretariat through the SCAFS to establish a regional platform to promote EOA implementation in the region
- EAC partner states to promote East African Organic products Standards (EAOPS) and Kilimo Hai trademark to enhance organic trade
- Designate regional centers of excellence in EOA for research and Innovations
- Mobilize resources for development and implementation of EOA regional policies and legal frameworks

The workshop was culminated by signing the report with its recommendations by all member states in attendance

(Annex 7: Report of EAC and EOA stakeholders' workshop to present EOA development milestones)

3.3 CONTINENTAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

3.3.1 Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme

EOA indicators were successfully introduced and published in the 3rd CAADP biennial review report and data was collected for the 4th BR biennial review report

The EOA indicators introduced are:

- Parameter 3.1i d: Organic fertilizer use
- Parameter 3.1viii: Seed Performance Index and Status of Farmer Managed Seed Systems in national seed policy instruments and institutional arrangements.
- Parameter 6.1ii: Agriculture area under Ecological Organic and Agroecological (EOA) practices in Ha

During the reporting period, BVAT provided backstopping the data collection and review processes both at national, regional and continental levels. The backstopping process ensured that EOA/Agroecology data was well understood and accepted by all stakeholders and especially stakeholders from the conventional sector. We successfully provided data backstopping at ECOWAS, EAC, SADC and AUC Continental levels. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), under the African Union is Africa's policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security and nutrition security and economic growth. BvAT- EOA-I Secretariat is committed to the June 2014, African Heads of State Malabo Declaration on Agriculture Growth and Transformation in Africa.

The goals of Malabo include reducing levels of poverty, ending hunger on the continent, and tripling intra-African trade in agricultural goods, among others by 2025. The EOA Initiative engagement in the CAADP process has been supported with funding from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and by African Union Commission. One of the CAADP Data processes that BvAT as the EOA-I Secretariat was involved in was providing backstopping services to countries in data collection and in validation at the regional and continental levels. The EOA Secretariat team of Dr. David Amudavi, Mr. Alex Mutungi and Ms. Venancia Wambua participated in the final CAADP Biennial Review Write-shop, in Lagos, Nigeria,18-22 September 2023. BvAT led in drafting the segment on Commitment 6.

Overall, 49 countries provided data on the seven commitments and several indicators towards the 4th BR. It was impressive to note that 65% of these reported on the 3 EOA indicators under Commitment 3 Ending Hunger by 2025 – Organic fertilizer use as part of total fertilizer consumption; and Status of Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) in national seed policy instruments and institutional arrangements and Commitment 6 (Enhancing Resilience to Climate Variability) – Agriculture area under EOA practices in ha. *(Annex 17: 4th CAADP BR Report).*

The 4th cycle of the AU Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) made the EOAI Secretariat busy throughout 2023 due to its tight road map. Major activities involved backstopping Member States (MS) in data collection, cleaning, validation and analysis. After submission of the data into the Electronic Biennial Review platform (EBR), the secretariat supported the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in another similar process of review, validation and analysis before submitting the final data to the AUC. Overall, 42 out of a possible 55 countries collected data on the three EOA and Agroecology indicators.

Parameter 3.1i d: Organic fertilizer use

Organic fertilizers are captured under the indicator 3.1i, under Total fertilizers use ($N+P_2O_5$, $N+P_2O_5+K_20$ and organic fertilizers) in Kg. The provided data are in "kg" of organic fertilizer used, and not disaggregated into microelements (N, P and K). Therefore, the organic fertilizer figures provided cannot be added to the inorganic fertilizer data in terms of nutrients but weight. It is relatively simple to track inorganic fertilizers, which are industry-made and clearly traded with known codes.

Overall, 47 Member States submitted data into the e-BR system. 21 countries submitted complete datasets and on total fertilizer use parameter for the first time. Compared to arable lands, six countries submitted various quantities of organic fertilizer used in 2022 and these included Rwanda (5,684 kg/ha), Togo (623 kg/ha) and Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (194 kg/ha), Egypt (98 kg/ha), Burundi (55 kg/ha), and Ethiopia (38 kg/ha). The remaining 15 countries reported lower volumes, ranging between 1 and 3 kg of organic fertilizer per ha. The other 26 countries either had no data on organic fertilizers, or reported zero kg of fertilizers, between 2015 and 2022.The figures suggest that there could be different ways of capturing or estimating quantities of "organic fertilizer". Some countries probably reported the estimates of composts produced and used at the farm level (e.g., Rwanda, Burundi), while others reported the commercialized, well packaged, and standardized organic fertilizers. Increasing focus on enhancing soil health through interventions that improve crop yield, crop quality, and environmental sustainability by mainstreaming use of organic fertilizers into the agriculture sector is paramount.

Developing and standardizing procedures of measuring nutrients in organic fertilizers and soil amendments and training farmers on how to use them will significantly contribute to improved and sustained soil health. Such

procedures can be used to authenticate organic fertilizer products and bring transparency to the organic fertilizer industry.

Parameter 3.1viii: Seed Performance Index and Status of Farmer Managed Seed Systems in national seed policy instruments and institutional arrangements

A total of 43 countries reported that in some way there is national discussion around Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS). A total of 18 countries recorded progress above 70% meaning they have presence of enabling conditions such as policy, strategy, proclamation, ordinance and investments or programs in place. Partial recognition of FMSS by governments in the rest of the countries was reported.

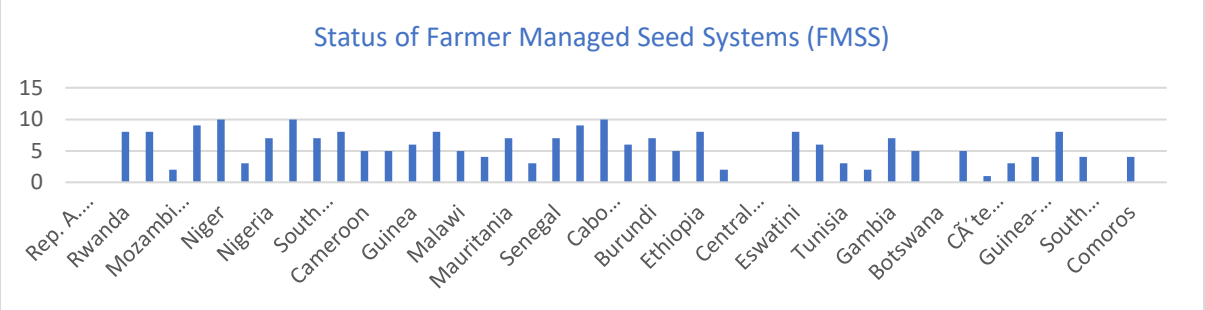

Figure 5: CAADP 4th BR Status of Farmer Managed Seed Systems

Parameter 6.1ii: Agriculture area under Ecological Organic and Agroecological (EOA) practices in Ha

A total of 33 countries, representing 60% of the total of 55, reported on share of agriculture land under EOA/ Agroecology. Overall, 17 countries are on track to having a targeted share of agricultural land under Sustainable Land and Water Management (SLWM). The country with the highest land under EOA was Botswana (25.6million hectares) and the smallest was Liberia reporting only 2 hectares. While this could be a data related issue, large discrepancies were recorded in the way countries reported on this indicator.

In the current EOA project countries (under SDC support), Mali emerged as the country with the highest land under EOA reporting 3.2 million hectares, followed by Benin (1.0 million hectares), Ethiopia (1.0 million hectares), Morocco (1.0 million hectares), Uganda (505,000 hectares), Tanzania (286,000 hectares), Kenya (123,000) and Nigeria (58,000 hectares). Other countries that had considerable land under EOA are Tunisia (325,000 hectares), Egypt (116,000 hectares) and South Africa (97,000 hectares). Countries with considerably smaller land on EOA include Equatorial Guinea (510 hectares), Mozambique (1404 hectares) and Cameroon (1969 hectares). The 60% reporting success rate for this indicator is clear indication that EOA data is available, and countries could aim at reporting at 100% in subsequent cycles.

These new developments are informative of the progress towards mainstreaming EOA into National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) and Regional Agricultural Investments Plans (RAIPs) by 2025 as stipulated in the EOA Initiative Strategic Plan (2015-2025). The EOA Initiative has already commenced the plan to review the current SP in preparation of developing strategy for the period 2025-2035.

It's worth noting that the EOA Initiative Strategic Plan coincides with the ongoing discussion on post Malabo and the future of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Biennial Review Report (BRR) planning which will also be for a period of ten years (2025-2035). This is an opportunity to align the EOAI with post

Malabo outcomes as will be projected in the next period of CAADP BRR.

Recommendations:

There is evidence that EOA/AE data is available and can be collected by countries. Therefore,

1) Disaggregate the parameters that differentiate between conventional and EOA/AE practices to inform countries more on how the different agricultural sub sectors are performing and to further inform policy and investment decisions. e.g. Access to Advisory services parameter, Investments in agriculture etc.

2) Strengthen national data collection and reporting on EOA indicators: Sensitization and training of countries on EOA practices and technologies, data collection for disaggregated parameters.

3) The African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) framework should closely collaborate with the EOAI and the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) to develop certification, standards, tariffs, and general trade protocols that offer opportunities for organic farmers and make organic products more attractive and competitive.

4) Develop and standardize protocols of measuring nutrients in organic fertilizers and soil amendments to document well quality and quantity of organic fertilizers.

5) The recently developed AU framework for harmonizing seed systems in Africa should be adapted along with the FMSS road map developed by the EOAI and endorsed by the ASBPP in Kampala in May 2022.

Annex 8: 3rd CAADP biennial review report

Annex 9: 4th CAADP biennial review report

3.3.2 Farmer Managed Seeds Systems

During the reporting period, the Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) cluster had been established within the AU led African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform (ASBPP) to champion for farmers' seeds in the seed sector., Further within the CAADP seeds index, the FMSS was introduced to track its implementation and policy development at the national level and indicator reads as follows:

Parameter 3.1viii: Seed Performance Index and Status of Farmer Managed Seed Systems in national seed policy instruments and institutional arrangements

With this development, the EOA secretariat officially joined the Africa Seeds and Biotechnology Platform where various seeds issues in the continent are usually discussed.

Group photo of 3rd Steering Group meeting of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform (ASBPP), held in Kampala, Uganda, from 23-25 May 2022.

The FMSS TWG of the AU Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I) under the aegis of the Secretariat of the Continental Steering Committee (CSC) participated in the 3rd Steering Group meeting of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform (ASBPP), held in Kampala, Uganda, from 23-25 May 2022.

During the meeting, a call to introduce the Seed Index into the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Biennial Review (BR) process was unanimously endorsed by the members. Prior, the 40th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held on 2-3 February 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and endorsed the decision for the establishment of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform and the accompanying Operational Guidelines for the coordination and implementation of the platform at the national, regional, and continental levels: the strategic framework for the development of the seed sector in Africa (Assembly/AU/Dec. 135(VIII). The ASBP is coordinated by the African Union Commission Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (AUC-DARBE) and supported by a Secretariat hosted by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

The 3rd Steering Group meeting was officially opened by Dr. Godfrey Bahiigwa, the Director of Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Development (AUC-DARBE) at the African Union Commission (AUC). In his opening remarks, Dr. Bahiigwa noted that seed sector development has been on the agenda of Heads of States and Government since 2005, emphasizing the need for farmers' access to quality seed in enhancing agricultural production and productivity. Hence, "the introduction of the Seed Index in the CAADP BR will allow us to report on progress made in seed sector development in Africa to the African Union Assembly", he added.

Dr. Bahiigwa further urged the workshop participants to expedite the implementation of the various instruments endorsed by the AU policy organs to advance seed sector development. He underlined the need for timely submission of all the reports and action plans from the various Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to facilitate tracking of the implementation of the 10 years' Action Plan of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform.

Dr Simplice Nouala, Head of Division of Agriculture and Food Security at the African Union Commission, informed the meeting that FARA will officially undertake the mandate of hosting the ASBPP Secretariat after signing of an MoU with African Union. The Secretariat will be expected to closely work with various TWGs to develop a ten-year Action Plan and ensure effective functioning of the Platform, promoting linkages among stakeholders and information sharing on seed system development initiatives in Africa. This entails providing administrative support to the Thematic Working Groups of the Platform including a) Seed Quality Assurance and Certification Systems, b) Animal Seed, c) Plant Genetic Resources Management, d) Research, Variety Development and Seed Production, e) Seed Policy and Regulations as well as the two clusters on the private sector and Farmer-Managed Seed Systems.

The ten-year action plan of the ASBP is hinged on ten (10) components, namely: (i) Enhance policy and regulatory framework for an efficient seed system; (ii) Improve strategies for the collection, conservation, utilization and exchange of plant and animal genetic resources, seed and planting materials; (iii) Develop better variety/breed improvement programmes and seed production technologies; (iv) Strengthen seed production systems; (v) Enhance development of quality assurance systems with improved stakeholder contributions; (vi) Improve seed storage, marketing and distribution channels; (vii) Develop improved disaster preparedness and response to seed insecurity; (viii) M&E, Knowledge management and communication; (ix) Enhance biotechnology uptake for an efficient seed system in Africa; (x) Cross cutting issues on environment, women and youth.

Dr. David Amudavi presented the FMSS action plan to the stakeholders during the meeting. He informed the meeting that the FMSS action plan has been aligned with the 'Guidelines on Harmonization of Seed Policies and Regulatory Frameworks and Use of Biotechnology in Food and Agriculture in Africa'. During the meeting, the FMSS action plan was approved by the ASBPP with recommendations given for its improvement.

The FMSS Cluster WG was represented by its Chairperson, Dr. Sarah Olembo, Dr. Daniel Maingi (A Seeds expert) and the EOA-I Continental Secretariat comprising of Dr. David Amudavi, Mr. Alex Mutungi and Ms. Venancia Wambua. FMSS entails a set of knowledge, practices and rules collectively developed by farmers, based on their customs and tradition, and applied to the selection, conservation, use, quality assurance and the circulation, in Smallholder networks, of seeds both plant and animal utilized by local communities. The EOA-I CSC recognizes the importance of FMSS in the implementation of the EOA decision (The EX.CL/Dec.621 XVII). **(Annex 10: FMSS Development Cluster - Approved Version)**

3.3.3 The BvAT EOA team attended the 14th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) Commemoration and the 19th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform

Executive Director Biovision Africa Trust, Dr David Amudavi Presents at the 14th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) Commemoration

Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) team consisting of Dr. David Amudavi, Ms. Venancia Wambua, and Mr. Alex Mutungi participated in the 14th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) Commemoration and the 19th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform held at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka Zambia from 30th October to the 2nd of November 2023. BvAT participated in the event to strengthen its role in the development of the Ecological Organic Agriculture within the CAADP Framework. Dr. Amudavi participated as a speaker and a panelist on sub-theme 2: - Harnessing science, innovation, and research to enhance food nutrition security where he presented on the 'Role of Agroecology in nutrition and food security informed by study conducted in Eastern Africa'. In his presentation, Dr. Amudavi emphasized the crucial role agroecology plays in enhancing nutrition and food security by promoting sustainable agricultural practices thereby ensuring the production of nutritious and diverse crops and safeguarding the environment.

BvAT's presentation was informed by a study commissioned under the US Mission to the African Union (USAU) funded project titled Agroecology for Increased Nutrition and Food Security in Eastern Africa (ANFEA Project) under the auspices of EOA-I SDC funded project. The project is aligned to the African Union's declaration of 2022 as the Year of Nutrition under the theme: ***Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: Strengthening Agro-food systems, health, and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social and economic capital development.*** The study was co-implemented by BvAT, and the Washington based Millenium Institute across several Eastern African countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. The study employed the systems thinking approach that focuses on Causal Loop Diagrams (CLDs) that shows interrelationships between systems.

The study focused on three areas that emphasize; knowledge generation and dissemination (south-south learning through food security research; advocacy for increased commitment and nutrition investment) and partnerships and mutual accountability platforms for harmonized action and transparency. The focus areas are consistent with the goal of the project, which is to create awareness and better understanding among policymakers (and practitioners, technocrats, and development partners) on how Agroecology is contributing to nutrition and food security and hence, stimulate discussion and debate among them about the benefits and promotion of Agroecology.

Dr. Amudavi underscored how the CLD approach had helped to identify critical data needs for the assessment, including production cost comparisons, labor requirements, yield comparisons, projections for yield improvement over time, and the potential for agroecological products to command premium prices. Collecting and analyzing these types of data will provide essential insights into the economic and agricultural implications of agroecology, aiding informed decision-making and policy development.

Further, the CLD approach was noted to have guided the identification of critical research needs for a comprehensive assessment of agroecology. These needs include quantifying the effects of agrochemicals on soil, biodiversity, and natural capital over time, exploring innovative policies to support farmers during the transition to agroecology, investigating policies to subsidize agroecology, potentially through taxation on agrochemical inputs, understanding the time lags associated with realizing agroecological benefits, and identifying the factors that influence farmers' adoption of agroecology. Addressing these research needs is vital for a more thorough evaluation of agroecology's potential and for informing policies and practices that promote its successful implementation.

Therefore, the resurgence of interest in agroecology underscores its vital role in enhancing food nutrition and security. Dr. Amudavi emphasized that Agroecology provides a route towards genuine sustainability and resilience within our agricultural systems. However, the transition to agroecology necessitates the development of supportive policies, programs, and investments that support nutrition-sensitive food systems.

Furthermore, comprehensive data is essential to assess and compare agroecology with conventional systems, enabling evidence-based decision-making for investments. Research efforts should be directed towards informing decisions regarding the value of agroecology, its contributions, and the factors influencing its adoption by farmers. Thus, action is required to establish certification and standards for agroecological products and markets to further promote its adoption and marketability.

The presentation by BvAT comes at the backdrop of loss of productivity in agriculture across African countries despite huge public investments in the sector. It also comes ahead of the continental discourse on soil health that will culminate in an Africa Fertilizer Soil Health Summit (AFSHS) planned for early 2024. The participants, while commenting on BvAT for her work, acknowledged Agroecological and Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) practices and technologies as alternative practices to restore soil health.

Dr Amudavi urged African countries to embrace agroecological and EOA practices as they are the only truly sustainable ways to ensure nutrition and food security. He also called for more public investments into agroecology and EOA, more research and development and underscored the need for data to inform policy development.

(Annex 11: Presentation on the role of agroecology in nutrition and food security)

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1JfD_ZFoy88dqQEvF3WI-G5fgw9WAD2nE/edit#slide=id.p1

3.4 Documentation of EOA Success stories for EOA-I Phase I & II

During the reporting period, BvAT, with its EOA implementing partners in the 9 countries successfully documented success stories and lessons learnt using the Pillar based approach. This involved both physical and online workshops undertaking to steer the process. The following topics of success stories were finally published and available online on the EOA-I website: https://eoai-africa.org/eoa-i-success-stories-for-phases-i-ii-phase-ii/

- ✓ *Rwanda EOA success stories: https://eoai-africa.org/eoa-initiative-success-stories-rwanda/*
- ✓ *Kenya EOA success stories: https://eoai-africa.org/eoa-initiative-success-stories-kenya/*
- ✓ *Ethiopia EOA success stories: https://eoai-africa.org/eoa-initiative-success-stories-ethiopia/*
- ✓ *Benin EOA success stories: https://eoai-africa.org/eoa-initiative-success-stories-benin/*
- ✓ *Uganda EOA success stories: https://eoai-africa.org/eoa-initiative-success-stories-uganda/*
- ✓ *Tanzania EOA Success stories: https://eoai-africa.org/eoa-initiative-success-stories-tanzania/*

The stories were documented alongside the Pillar-based approach focusing on the expected results of the project as follows:

Pillar 1: Research and Applied Knowledge

a. Ethiopia: I Want Vermicomposting to Expand – Reaching More Farmers

b. Rwanda: Scaling Up of Organic Technologies for Pineapple and Strawberry

c. Tanzania: Mechanization of Biopesticide Extraction for Rural Farmers in Tanzania

d. Uganda: Borrowing From Indigenous Knowledge for Practical Solutions: Sustainable Household Ash-Based Storage of Fresh Tomatoes

Pillar 2: Information, Communication and Extension

a. Ethiopia: Evidence-Based Farmer-Led Knowledge and Practices Dissemination

b. Benin: Training And Promotion of Organic Plantain Farming Changing Lives of Local Farmers in Benin

c. Rwanda: Heap Composting for Increased Pineapple Production and Decreased Costs in Rwanda

d. Uganda: Adoption Of the Ecological Organic Agriculture Curriculum by Tertiary Institutions of Learning in Uganda

Pillar 3: Value chain and Market systems development

a. Kenya: Building Organic Chia into Busia Oil Crops Cooperative

b. Rwanda: Rwandan Farmers Enhance Their Skills in Value Addition to Access Better Markets

c. Tanzania: Influencing Change for an EOA-Friendly Environment

d. Uganda: From Laborer to Farm Owner: Organic Tomato Farming Changes the Fortunes of a Ugandan Man

Pillar 4: Management, Coordination and Governance

a. Ethiopia: Improved Inter Pillar Synergies to Deliver Project Results

b. Rwanda: The Voice of Organic Stakeholders in Rwanda

c. Benin: EOA-I Partners Catalyze Mainstreaming of Organic Agriculture in Benin's National Agriculture Strategy

(Annex 12: EOA-I success stories for Phases I & Phase II)

3.5 EOA EXTERNAL EVALUATION BY FIBL IN 2022

During the reporting period, FIBL was engaged by SDC to undertake an external evaluation of EOA from 2019-2022. The evaluation would support the development of future SDC programmes in Africa.

The evaluation Information was from various SDC/BVAT discussions, 2 hybrid stakeholder workshops in English (70 participants) and French (20 participants), 35 project documents, from 101 respondents in a stakeholder survey, 55 respondents in face-to-face (individual and group) interviews and 17 respondents in online interviews.

The evaluation found the following ratings (from 1 highly satisfactory to 4 highly unsatisfactory according to the SDC evaluation grid):

1) Relevance 1-2: Was rated very high with the score of 1 for mainstreaming EOA, 1 for the overall holistic approach at the time of design and continental scope, 3 for detail project concepts at the time of evaluation since project successes have changed the situation.

2) Coherence 1: Coherence with GPFS, AU and many upcoming AE/EOA projects was rated very high with a score of 1. However, there is little coherence with the widespread conventional agriculture government policies that favor industrial agriculture and in the those that allow the use of genetically modified organisms. Coherence with governmental policies is growing with every policy success of EOA-I

3) Effectiveness 3: Was rated as satisfactory. Targets are in some cases achieved, in others on track and again others are uncertain. While the SCs are of high relevance for the AU and in ECOWAS, the national sectors and the East Africa region do not use them effectively.

4) Efficiency 2: Was rated as good even though there are many shortcomings and delays in daily operations. Was critically assessed over attention to efficiency over other aims such as effectiveness, impact or sustainability.

5) Impact, 2: Was rated the project's impact as satisfactory, with the potential that it will grow further in the future since 'developments' are there, just much slower than anticipated.

6) Sustainability 3-4: It is certain that many partners continue their actions for EOA/AE. However, they don't have alternative business plan than to apply to new donor projects, with uncertain sector service priorities. Progress in terms of policy is uncertain, since not only developing and approving, but also implementing policies requires effective advocacy.

Overall, the external evaluation concluded that the project responds to an expressed need of the African Union and of the EOA sector. A strong commitment goes hand in hand with high project ownership.

Considering the situation when the project started in 2014, the very broad project set up is retrospectively understandable. In the meantime, however, the situation has changed thanks also to the project's positive impact. Now, a strategy process to focus project efforts and to improve effectiveness is needed.

While the study highly appreciated the project and concluded overall that it was more than worthwhile, the following critical points were highlighted to be considered for the planning of future support.

- Project complexity and operational workload have been very high.
- Project resources have been too widely spread.
- Too high sector dependency on the project.
- Too optimistic planning hampering project performance.
- Effectiveness and sustainability are insufficiently addressed.
- Capacity building for sustainable institutional development is lacking attention.
- Mainstreaming EOA hasn't sufficient strategic focus.

The evaluation team had the eight following recommendations:

1) *# Accelerate the demand and supply of healthy AEO/AE food with an MSD approach emphasizing capacity building of sector stakeholders.*

2) *# Secure impacts and sustainability of project phase 1 and 2 achievements.*

3) *# Prioritize sustainability in new support.*

4) *# Maintain AU and sector ownership and benefit from African legitimacy.*

5) *# Functionally consolidate the present pillar work and focus in the future on market development and policy facilitation.*

6) *# Focus on continental level with 5 regional clusters and one focus country each to showcase EOA/AE development.*

7) *# Act inclusive to AE, EOA and others, prioritizing SDG contributions.*

8) *# Continue using the competence and commitment of BVAT.*

(Annex 13: SDC External Evaluation report)

3.6 MAIN EOA-I STUDIES UNDERTAKEN DURING PHASE II

During the Phase II period, BvAT coordinated various main studies that were instrumental in shaping the future of EOA-I. The studies undertaken were as follows:

- Organic Versus Conventional Farmer Crisis Responses: Implications under Covid and Russia-Ukraine War
- Mapping study on EOA/ AE related initiatives in the continent
- Assessment of the role and position of youth in Agroecology

3.6.1 Organic Versus Conventional Farmer Crisis Responses: Implications under Covid and Russia-Ukraine War

This study was undertaken in 2022 after the Covid 19 impact and during the Russian-Ukraine war. The study on "Organic Versus Conventional Farmer Crisis Responses: Implications under Covid and Russia-Ukraine War', was commissioned by Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) on behalf of the Continental Steering Committee of the African Union-led Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I) in October 2021, to establish the impact of the pandemic on agriculture and food systems in Africa. The study assessed how farmers practicing organic and conventional agriculture were affected by the pandemic, and how they were responding to it (adaptation). The study covered the five regions of Africa, with three countries in Eastern Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia), two in West Africa (Mali and Senegal), two in Southern Africa (Zimbabwe and Zambia), two in Central Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon) and two in Northern Africa (Morocco and Egypt).

The study presented the following results:

The impact of Covid-19 on farmers' daily lives and their activities connecting to the common food value chains (farm to fork), shifts in consumer demand and incomes. The study revealed that the majority (86%) of the producers, both organic and conventional were significantly negatively affected by the pandemic and the inevitable subsequent government restrictions and public health measures. The impact was significantly ($p<0.05$), felt by 95% conventional producers than organic producers (83%). Whereas everyone was affected, more women (90%) than men (85%) were more vulnerable to the pandemic, though this difference was not statistically significantly different ($p>0.05$).

Impact of pandemic on access to farming support services: The assessment noted that 81% conventional and 77% organic producing households were not able to access important farming support services ($p<0.05$). Only 61%

were able to access extension services, with 58% conventional compared to 60% organic facing the challenge, though this difference was not significant (p>0.05). More women (66%), compared to 59% of men reported having challenges accessing extension services. The most affected were households producing crops as reported by 40%, compared to 31% livestock producers. Further, 60% of the producers faced challenges accessing inputs, with less organic producers, 54% compared to 63% of conventional producers being affected.

While organic producers have adopted Agroecological production practices that rely less on fossil energy (synthetic fertilizers), their conventional counterparts depend on these inputs, whose access was greatly affected due to disruption of the distribution systems. Increase in input prices was a deterrent to 70% of the producers' ability to access inputs, while 31% were not able to access their preferred inputs due to closure of agro-dealer shops. Nearly half, 48% producers had restricted access to their nearest Agro-dealer shops due to implementation of social distancing and lockdown. Over a half, 57% of the producers were not able to access fertilizer, 40% could not access pesticides and 34% could not access seed. The impact of poor access to input was observed in loss of income and production, as reported by 66% and 42% of the respondents respectively (p<0.05). Post- harvest losses were also accelerated by the impact of COVID19 as reported by 58% of the producers. These were mainly due to pest infestation and loss of market quality value (loss in color). More conventional producers, 58% experienced the challenge compared to organic producers (53%). Access to markets was a challenge among overall 61% of the producers, and specifically with 90% of the conventional producers and 59% organic producers. Organic producers had a specific niche of customers who they supplied produce, compared to conventional producers. Social distancing and closure of fresh food markets reduced access to organic products.

Impact of COVID19 on trade: The pandemic affected 90% of the traders dealing in both organic and conventional products. The 79% traders reduced operating hours due to curfews while 18% closed their businesses as they were not able to pay rent and other services. A smaller proportion reporting a 33% reduction in income compared to 32% among the organic producers (p>0.05). Producers who have invested in livestock production reported 47% reduction in income, compared to crop producing households who reported a 41% income reduction (p>0.05).

Impact of COVID19 on access to food: The findings revealed that about half (49%) of the respondents were food insecure and were not able to meet their monthly food needs between January 2020 and August 2021. Reduction in food access mainly affected slightly more (59%) of the conventional producers, compared to 57% of organic producers (p>0.05). Poor access to food affected both sexes in equal measure, with slightly more (69%) women headed households faced food access challenges compared to 57% men headed households. Poor access to food was due to loss of products through post-harvest losses, inability to access markets, poor access to inputs and reduction in household disposable income. Generally, 87% of the producers reported reduction or loss of income by 40% due to the pandemic. The loss in income was due to loss in jobs as reported by 56% of the respondents, inability to sell goods and services that affected 46% of the producers. There was no notable significant difference on income loss when organic and conventional producers were compared, with conventional reporting a 33% reduction in income compared to 32% among the organic producers (p>0.05). Producers who have invested in livestock production reported 47% reduction in income, compared to crop producing households who reported a 41% income reduction (p>0.05).

Impact of Russia-Ukraine war on livelihoods: The advent of COVID19 pandemic in 2020 reversed decades of hard-won macroeconomic, socioeconomic and governance gains in Africa, leading to loss of human life, livelihoods, and incomes. The situation has worsened by Russia invading Ukraine in an unprovoked act of aggression on February 24. This has led to suspension of commercial shipping at its ports by Ukraine military, leading to supply disruption from the largest grain and oilseeds exporters. The prices of wheat have increased by 42% in Egypt, 31% in Tunisia, 25% in Nigeria, 24% in Tanzania, and 17% in Kenya. The World Bank estimates that "every percentage point increase in food prices will push 10 million people into extreme poverty." A supply disruption has already led to increase in cost of living in most African countries.

(Annex 14: Organic Versus Conventional Farmer Crisis Responses: Implications under Covid and Russia-Ukraine War study report)

3.6.2 Assessment Of the Landscape of Agroecology and The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative in Africa

The main objective of the assessment was to provide the status of landscape of AE (including EOA) interventions (projects, programs, and initiatives) implemented in both EOA-I and non-EOA-I countries across the 5 typologies (Advanced EOA sector, Active EOA Sector, Infant EOA sector, Nascent EOA sector and Awaiting Inspiration EOA sector) identified in the AU EOA policy reports. This assessment deepened the understanding of the trend of AE (including EOA) development in Africa.

The specific objectives of the assignment were:

1) Assessment of previous (at least last 10 years) and ongoing interventions (initiatives, programs, and projects) related to AE and including EOA, providing an overview of the distribution of the interventions against the prevailing policy and legislation environment and establish key donors/funders of such interventions.

2) Assessment of status from the baseline to ascertain level of investment, impact areas, spatial coverage, longevity and focus on the value chain and target beneficiaries and establish the organizations implementing the interventions.

3) Identification and documentation of successful interventions in each country, at least the last ten years (and much longer where possible to gauge the trends), the drivers of success and key lessons learnt.

4) Ranking of countries according to their "agroecologicalness" based on policies and interventions formulation and implementation.

5) Identification of constraints and opportunities in the context of development priorities and how far the selected countries have progressed with supporting AE related initiatives.

6) Provide a road map for priority setting for AE related initiatives at national, regional, and continental levels.

7) Preparation of regional and continental policy briefs resulting from this assignment.

The following are key priorities for driving AE-related initiatives in Africa, identified in the study:

1) Policy Alignment: It evident that across regions there are number of policies that promote agroecology by addressing its diverse challenges and opportunity. These policies are, however, multiple unaligned and may exhibit overlapping mandates. A priority road map is to align them in a way that there is coherence from national, regional, and continental levels.

2) Build on proven AE practices: Sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, conservation agriculture, biointensive agriculture, regenerative agriculture and family farming are practices that are most practiced in Africa. Future investments in AE should therefore be towards these already entrenched practices and build a knowledge base among farmers.

3) Value chain targeting: Several value chains from agroforestry to sorghum dot the AE landscape in Africa at

4) different scales. Priority development of value chains should be aimed at those that exhibit relatively higher productivity, have higher contribution to building resilience (such as drought resistant crop varieties), protecting soil fertility, contributing to nutrition and food security and scalable at relatively lower costs. Top in this agenda are value chains that are inclusive (including meeting interests of vulnerable populations) and provide livelihood benefits to many beneficiaries across significant geographical scope.

5) Targeting private resources: The current funding structure of AE in Africa is dominated by multilateral organizations. There is however a growing interest in private sector funding through embedded finance, technology or other mechanisms that unlock/ streamline the route to the market. It is high time that the technical and financial resources of the private are brought to bear via mutually beneficia partnerships with smallholder farming communities.

6) Drivers for success: In line with the findings of the assessment, the development of AE in Africa should prioritize

the interventions whose design considers the importance of value for money, local participation and ownership, multistakeholder platforms and alignment with national development policies.

7) Measuring agroecologicalness: Several frameworks have been used to measure ecologicalness of interventions, such as farming as an ecotone, whole earth conservation, land sparing and land sharing and others. Though they offer unique insights into the performance of agroecological systems, they are rather fragmented and inexhaustive. The FOA TAPE tool is multi-faceted, simple and analytical. It is participatory and uses a stepwise framework from community participation and validation, lending itself a versatile tool and process. Comparative results from this assessment yielded key insights into the performance of agroecology at different levels. The application of the tool is still at a nascent stage and should be prioritized so to enable policy makers to understand and account for the contribution of agroecology to food systems.

(Annex 15: Assessment of the Landscape of Agroecology and The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative in Africa)

3.6.3 Assessment of the role and position of youth in Agroecology

Biovision Africa Trust commissioned an assessment of the role and position of youth in Agroecology (AE)/Ecological Organic agriculture (EOA) In Africa. The assessment was carried out in fifteen countries, Burkina Faso, Central Africa Republic (CAR), Chad, Congo DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tunisia and Zimbabwe were reached individual survey, key informant and focused group discussions interviews. 1,367 youths between 15 to 35 years were reached through individual survey, 60 FGDs and 135 Key informant interviews done. The definition of youths was based on the African Youth Charter, namely people between the ages of 15 and 35. The assessment took an assets-based approach to youth participation in agroecology by recognizing youth as an asset, adopting a fully participatory, mixed method research design, using quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

Demographic characteristics

The study noted that 36% of the 1,367 youths interviewed were female while 64% were male. 41% of the youth were in Urban, 23% were in college while 36% were in rural areas. The study noted that 4% of them were divorced or separated, 29% married, 67% single and 2% widowed. A higher proportion of youth who couldn't read and write were in the rural areas, with majority being in the 15-19 age cohort. Youth who didn't attend school, were found in rural areas, while those who completed primary and above level of education are in the urban. 32% of youth in urban had attended university level of education, compared to 13% in rural areas. Youths are migrating from their current locations as confirmed by 66% of them in the past 3 years, with more young men (43%) migrating compared to young women (26%). More migrants are coming from rural (72%), towards the urban or other rural areas compared to 68% migrating from urban to either rural or other urban areas. Fewer women/girls, represented by 7% have migrated in the past 3 years, with 10% from the rural compared to 5% from Urban. The reason for migration was related to search for work opportunities (25%) migration to abroad (24%) in search for better lives, while 12% migrated in search for education opportunities, 4% got married while another 4% escaped from conflict and violence.

Observation, conclusions and recommendations

The study noted several areas where youth can become an Asset in Agroecology and

intervention areas.

1) Farm level production and related services: Youth are currently engaged at farm level production, trade, processing, and input service provision. To be successful, youth will need sustainable linkage to financial institutions.

2) Policy advocacy and influencing: Youth participation is in promotion and uptake of technologies, promote access to credit, inputs and extension, improved marketing and collective action, conflict management and peace building and gender and youth participation in agroecology. Increased awareness improved capacity and mentorship will enhance their participation.

3) Technology in agroecology: Youth, especially those in urban areas and those in college, have a high awareness level of existing technologies. Exposing the youths to more technologies, improving access to finance, improving skills will be important.

4) Extension service provision: Youth currently in college are providing extension service by nature of their trainings. Investment in training, access to information and application of technologies will be key.

5) Marketing and agro- processing: Resale of agroecology products were seen to be the major source of income for youth in both rural and urban areas, especially among women.

6) Access to finance, capacity development in financial management and record keeping will be relevant.

(Annex 16: Assessment of the role and position of youth in Agroecology)

3.7 EOA STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

BVAT EOA Secretariat was privileged to be supported by DG INTPA (EC) for the review of the EOA-I Strategic Plan. The process kicked off in 2024 with the development of a TOR to recruit consulting firm to undertake the exercise. Agile consulting was recruited to undertake the exercise.

The need to review the strategic plan was for the following reasons:

According to the TOR, the main objective of this assignment is to review the implementation of the strategic plan (2015-2025)[2] of the EOA Initiative and to inform AUC, BvAT and DG INTPA (EC) to what extent AU Member States have prioritized ecologically and organically sound strategies and practices. An additional objective is to formulate recommendations for the upcoming strategic plan (2025-2035). In particular, the review answered the following questions:

1. What are the current policy frameworks and strategies have been developed in line with or to contribute to the EOA strategic plan (2015-2025) in African countries? To what extent are these a direct result of the EOA Initiative?

2. What interventions and/or activities have been conducted to foster awareness, provide technical support, and advocate for supportive policies for adoption of Agroecology to be scaled up at national levels?

3. What data types on EOA and its contribution to nutrition, food security, and climate change are currently being monitored?

4. What monitoring system(s) has or have been erected to evaluate progress against the three CAADP indicators on EOA (i.e., 1. Total arable land under organic fertilizers; 2. Status of Farmer Managed Seed Systems integration into policy instruments 3. Share of agricultural land under EOA/Agroecology practices).

5. What is the continental, regional and national progress of the EOA-I against its strategic objectives i.e.,

a) *To carry out holistic demand-driven, multi-disciplinary, gender-sensitive and participatory research, training and extension in support of EOA by 2025.*

b) *To collate, package and disseminate research findings and other relevant information to various stakeholders using various approaches and channels of communication by 2025.*

c) *To increase the share of quality EOA products at national, regional and international markets through*

d) *value chain analysis and market development by 2025.*

e) *To foster and strengthen synergies among stakeholders in Africa through building networks and partnerships by 2025.*

f) *To lobby and advocate for the mainstreaming of EOA programmes, policies, plans in the agriculture sector as well as other related sectors by 2025.*

g) *To strengthen the governance, management and operations of EOA institutions in Africa for effective functioning and service delivery by 2025.*

By the time of reporting, the draft 3 of this report was ready with plans to undertake its validation in February 2025 by the AU CSC Continental Steering Committee (CSC) Members and EOA partners.

The preliminary findings have revealed the following key findings and recommendations:

- **Geographical coverage:** EOA-I was instrumental in promoting Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) and Agroecology (AE) in Africa. However, its implementation has been limited to nine countries: Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda as well as influencing organic agriculture development in other countries such as Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where organic movements have emerged due to its influence. While these countries represent different regions of Africa, the overall coverage remains inadequate when considering the continent's 54 nations and diverse agricultural landscapes. Many regions, particularly in Central and North Africa, lack direct EOA-I engagement, limiting the initiative's ability to drive policy change and sector development across the continent.

- **Funding and sustainability:** The initiative relied on donor funding, with minimal direct AU financial backing. Despite growing donor interest in agroecology and organic farming, funding remains fragmented and uncoordinated, reducing the potential for large-scale impact. This is a major setback to scale up activities beyond the donor-funded period. Recent trends indicate a shift towards diversified funding sources, including bilateral agencies (such as BMZ/GIZ), multilateral institutions (AfDB, World Bank, IFAD), and private sector investments, signaling a growing recognition of agroecology's role in food security, climate resilience, and economic development[1]. However, government contributions remain inconsistent across African countries, with few states showing stronger support (Benin, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Tunisia)

- **Implementation and coordination:** The execution was structured across continental, regional, and national levels, each playing a distinct role in implementation and oversight. AU played a critical role in establishing high level policy direction and providing legitimacy for EOA-I. This structure provided a strong top-down policy coherence mechanism aligning AU directives with RECs and national-level implementation. The Continental Steering Committee (CSC) provided strategic oversight, Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) ensured financial and technical management while the Country Lead Organizations (CLOs) and Pillar Implementing Partners (PIPs) carried out policy engagement, research, farmer training, and value chain development at the national level. While the multi-level implementation structure was designed to facilitate broad coordination and drive top-down policy

[1] Assessment of the landscape of agroecology and the ecological organic agriculture initiative in Africa study report, 2023

coherence, there was challenge of weak coordination across the levels and among the CLOs and PIPs as well as uneven efforts in engagement and implementation, risking the initiative's overall effectiveness.

Pillar specific conclusions

The pillars' structure ensured that multiple aspects of EOA are addressed, including research, information dissemination, value chain development and market access, policy and program development and institutional capacity building. This was achieved through the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including research institutions, farmer organizations, civil society, and policymakers. While notable achievements across the six pillars were achieved, the pillars presented a complex and broad approach spreading efforts across too many areas and wide coverage i.e. national (nine countries), regional and continental levels. This had diverse implications on resources allocation across focus areas and countries to drive meaningful, long-term impact.

Pillar 1: Research, Training and Extension

EOA-I successfully advanced research, training, and extension services. Between 2019 and 2021, over 304,721 farmers and 905 extension officers were trained on sustainable practices such as organic soil amendments, bio-pesticide formulation and efficient irrigation methods. Technologies like fortified organic compost in Kenya, as well as mulching and biochar techniques in Uganda, have been successfully adopted, showcasing the impact of these interventions. Additionally, collaborative initiatives like the KCOA established digital platforms and five regional hubs, enabling the distribution of both scientific and local experiential knowledge to stakeholders across Africa; through different channels, over 15 million people were reached between 2019 and 2022. Learning institutions have also embraced EOA, with seven universities, including Egerton University in Kenya and Mekelle University in Ethiopia, integrating EOA curricula into their programs. This has facilitated undergraduate, master's, and Ph.D.-level training in sustainable agriculture, further strengthening the EOA knowledge base. Dissemination of knowledge through over 108 indigenous knowledge materials and scholarly publications, alongside platforms like the Africa Organic Network (AFRONET), has enabled sharing of both scientific and local expertise.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Limited institutional capacity, insufficient funding, and slow adoption in some regions, such as Rwanda, have hindered broader implementation. To address these gaps, strategic priorities include scaling EOA training programs to scale-up adoption of validated technologies, expanding EOA integration in universities, and establishing robust data monitoring frameworks to monitor and report on progress. These measures will ensure the continued promotion of EOA, contributing to improved food security and environmental resilience across Africa.

Pillar 2: Information and Communication

EOA-I significantly advanced the dissemination of ecological organic agriculture knowledge and practices. This was achieved through targeted information and communication strategies aimed at stakeholders, including farmers, extension officers, and value chain actors. Training efforts focused on ecological organic practices, market access, and certification processes, equipping participants with essential knowledge to adopt and promote EOA principles- all contributing to raising awareness and increasing adoption rates of EOA practices.

Between 2019 and 2023, a total of 106 EOA-specific materials (including brochures, manuals, and reports) were produced, validated, and disseminated to educate, extension officers, value chain actors and policymakers. Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal were particularly successful in generating and distributing these materials, ensuring that critical knowledge reached a wide audience. However, some countries, such as Ethiopia and Rwanda, lagged in this area, highlighting the need for more concerted efforts in these regions. Digital platforms have been utilized to enhance knowledge dissemination and fostered more dynamic engagement with farmers and value chain actors.

However, disparities in information dissemination exist among countries, with some, such as Benin and Rwanda, experiencing limited outreach. These gaps suggest a need for tailored interventions to address country-specific barriers and strengthen regional communication networks. There is a need to scale up ICT integration to expand its reach and improve efficiency in delivering extension services. Increasing investment in developing and disseminating targeted EOA materials in underperforming regions like Rwanda and Ethiopia will help bridge knowledge gaps.

Pillar 3: Value Chain and Market Development

The current emerging trends in EOA at the continental, regional, and national levels present an interest from governments and the development sector, opportunity for diversified funding, strengthened knowledge bases, and socio-economic conditions that favour the adoption of organic practices. Development agencies and NGOs are collaborating more with governments to promote EOA initiatives through capacity-building programs, technical assistance, and advocacy for policy reforms. This collaboration is supported by a growing trend of complementary public-private funding models from governments, private sector investments and grants from international donor organizations, which together enhance the sustainability of EOA programs.

The collaborative efforts between actors from government, NGOs, private sector and farmer organizations have enhanced resource sharing and knowledge exchange, fostering a collective approach to EOA. Training and capacity building for farmers, extension workers, and value chain actors has also been effective in promoting the adoption of EOA practices highlighting the importance of continuous education and skill development in sustaining engagement and improving agricultural practices. Increasing awareness of EOA practices among consumers and producers is vital to drive demand and encourage more farmers to adopt EOA practices. These lessons point to the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to future strategic planning in efforts to enhance EOA's contribution to improved food security and environmental sustainability across Africa. Additionally, the involvement of youth in agriculture is a critical demographic trend that is essential for ensuring the sustainability of agricultural practices and addressing labour shortages in the sector. The youth agenda has a potential for more elevation across the EOA countries.

Pillar 4: Networking and Partnerships

The anchoring of the EOA-I at the AU which provides oversight for the integration of EOA into agricultural policies is a good practice that could be replicated for other programs. This framework has facilitated collaboration among various stakeholders, including Regional Economic Communities (RECs), civil society, and farmers' organizations. At the regional level, some RECs have been integrated into the governance of the EOA-I to support the development of EOA through mainstreaming EOA policies and programs. By creating platforms for dialogue, the initiative has raised awareness for EOA policies and garnered political goodwill and support, which is essential for scaling up EOA initiatives across different regions.

There exists an opportunity for the RECs to work with governments and other stakeholders to advance EOA. The East African Community (EAC) for example has developed the East Africa Organic Products Standard (EAOPS) which harmonizes trade of EOA products and is the framework upon which the national governments are developing their EOA policies and strategies. The RECs provide an important structure for cascading policy frameworks and trade. Its integration into the governance of EOA-I provides a great platform for the delivery of EOA at the country level through political goodwill from the RECs.

Pillar 5: Policy and Program Development

The EOA-I has made significant strides in supporting countries to integrate ecological organic agriculture into national policies. While there has been progress in mainstreaming EOA into national agricultural frameworks, many countries still lack comprehensive policies supporting organic agriculture. For instance, the EOA-I Secretariat's policy mapping across 54 African countries revealed varied levels of commitment and implementation, with some countries classified as having minimal or no existing policies for EOA.

Some countries have made significant progress in mainstreaming EOA principles into their agricultural development agendas. For instance, Uganda and Madagascar have achieved type 1 status (Countries that have a National Organic Agriculture Movement, a policy and standards, and government is supporting the vibrant sector) with their NOAMS leading and supporting the development of standards, regulations and mainstreaming relevant government policies, as well as the development of both the domestic and export market for EOA products.

Most African countries are not on track concerning the CAADP Commitment of 10% of Countries' GDP budgetary allocation to agriculture. This calls for more engagement of stakeholders involved in EOA on the importance of the indicators and their role in monitoring them. Advocacy with relevant ministries, departments, and agencies will hasten the development of requisite policies, strategies and priorities which will in turn be backed by appropriate budgetary

allocation for EOA and agriculture in general. Monitoring CAADP could be enhanced at the country level using ICT and having programs that respond to the different CAADP indicators.

The regions_where the EOA Initiative has active projects (Eastern and West Africa) have performed better on EOA indicators than regions without focus on the EOA Initiative. A more continental approach by the EOA Initiative is more desirable to foster regional balance and facilitate continent-wide data collection. Increased government support for EOA will likely improve many of the institutional barriers that limit EOA policy formulation processes.

Pillar 6: Institutional Capacity Building

At both regional and country levels, the EOA-I secretariat has effectively built synergies and fostered partnerships to support EOA implementation, policy advocacy, capacity building, and market access. These initiatives include the establishment of partnership frameworks and the facilitation of cross-border trade through standards like the East African Organic Standard (EAOS).

Collaborative efforts have been promoted by organizations such as AFRONET and the East African Community (EAC), leading to a unified approach in developing regional policies and resource sharing for organic certification. Despite these efforts, there is a noticeable disparity in regional participation, with West Africa having more organizations involved in national forums compared to East Africa. Specifically, West Africa has 119 organizations actively participating, while East Africa has only 61 organizations involved.

The secretariat has also built the capacity of CLOs and pillar implementing partners by identifying gaps in critical areas such as resource mobilization, human resources, and financial management. This has resulted in stronger institutional support for the implementation of EOA, contributing to improved policy advocacy, enhanced capacity building, and better market access.

Recommendations for the Next Strategic Plan Period 2025-2035

Overall Recommendations

EOA-I has achieved significant milestones, however critical areas of improvement are discussed in the table below:

Table 3: Overall recommendations

Critical areas of improvement	*Recommendation*
Geographical coverage and regional balance	• Leveraging on the existing regional structures, e.g. KCOA Hub in five regions to reach underserved regions and bridge gaps in Central and North Africa, where EOA-I engagement is minimal. • Collaborate with RECs in new regions to integrate EOA into regional agendas, using the ECOWAS and EAC frameworks as success cases. • Apply lessons from countries like Uganda (Type 1 EOA) and Madagascar to guide policy development in policy-lagging countries.

Diversify funding and enhance sustainability	• Advocate for the AU to allocate dedicated funding to EOA-I through mechanisms like the CAADP Biennial Review • Lobby member states to allocate a percentage of agricultural budgets to EOA, mirroring Rwanda's CAADP compliance (10% target). • Expand donor base by engaging new donors to complement existing partners (SDC, SSNC, and BMZ/GIZ) • Adopt Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to co-fund value chain development. • Prioritize funding of the high-potential areas for deeper investment.
Streamlining implementation and coordination	• Decentralize decision making through National Steering Committees (NSCs) to oversee country-level implementation, reducing bottlenecks from the Continental Secretariat. • Limit the number of project components to focus on only the most impactful ones. E.g. market development, policy advocacy, and institutional capacity building)
EOA data reliability	• Develop harmonized data collection protocols and integrate EOA indicators into national agricultural reporting systems. • Enhance institutional and technical capacity of government s and partners on data accuracy and usability

Pillar specific recommendations

To enhance long-term impact of EOA-I, efforts should focus on high-impact areas such as market development, policy advocacy, and institutional capacity building, while reducing fragmentation across multiple pillars. The broad scope of the initiative, covering multiple countries, regional bodies, and thematic areas, has led to resource dilution and inefficiencies in implementation. By strategically prioritizing interventions that yield measurable and scalable outcomes will ensure that resources are used efficiently to drive meaningful change.

Pillar 1: Research, Training and Extension

Intensify research, training, and extension activities

Under this pillar, the EOA I initiative has focussed on research, knowledge gathering, training, and workshops. The next strategy, while these can be scaled up, there is an opportunity to extend this work to the publication and dissemination of EOA and AE materials and increase investments in research on emerging and topical issues, such as GMOs, EOA seeds, pesticides, and weed control, and FMSS; and capacity for the adoption of resilience and productivity-enhancing technologies.

This recommendation aligns with AU Agenda 63' Aspiration 1 on research, capacity building, and organic agricultural practices as key drivers for sustainable agriculture and food security; and the Nairobi Declaration on Soil Health and CAADP Post Malabo Declaration Strategy/ Action Plan that both emphasize capacity building for the adoption of soil-friendly practices and increasing productivity and resilience through investments in cost-effective technologies.

Pillar 2: Information and Communication

Promote large-scale dissemination of EOA and AE knowledge and practices

In the new strategy, the promotion and dissemination of large-scale ecological organic agriculture and AE knowledge and practices is recommended to augment the gains so far. The EOA I should integrate with the KCOA platform that has a presence in more countries in Africa, beyond those where EOA I is currently active. Further, there is an opportunity to scale technology transfer by building knowledge hubs beyond the current five regions in Africa to increase the availability of EOA and AE information and build a critical mass of EOA experts across the region(s).

The large-scale dissemination of EOA and AE aligns with Agenda 2063's goals for modern, resilient, and knowledge-driven agriculture systems and contributes to the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBPP) under Farmer Managed Seed Systems by accelerating increasing access to EOA and AE information; and also aligns to the CAADP Post Malabo Strategy's focus on technology transfer, capacity building, and inclusive partnerships to accelerate agricultural transformation.

Pillar 3: Value Chain and Market Development

Implement a two-way certification protocol for EOA and AE products

A two-way certification process of exports (EOA products) and imports (EOA inputs) is recommended as a strategy to develop value chains and promote trade in the next strategy. Further, the EOA trademark requires upgrading to a continental mark to promote awareness of the standardization mark as a key mechanism to increase the uptake of EOA products by consumers.

Diversifying/broadening the value chain base for EOA to increase farmer participation

The success of EOA and AE value chain development calls for increased and consistent farmer adoption. The next strategy should adopt strategies that promote access to labour-saving technologies to farmers. Mainstreaming the participation of the youth in the EOA and AE, given their numerical strength, energy, and tech savviness, is now of a higher priority than before. Strategies that prioritize the digitalization of the value chains and promote the use of e-commerce and other digital platforms are recommended.

EOA I should be intentional to deliberate effort to build on the current traction by increasing the engagement of farmers, input suppliers, and consumers, providing critical information, and enhancing capacity building to raise consumer awareness of EOA and AE benefits. The critical role played by the private sector should be exploited to crowd in market-facing actors to invest in EOA and AE value chains. Avenues to achieve this include but are not limited to designing a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework for strategic engagement with private-sector (such as chambers of commerce, banks, processing companies, distributors etc.).

Finally, strategies to promote market development for EOA and AE products are recommended. Accelerating the rollout of quality schemes such as PGS, combined with local-level standards, sharing of good practices, and success for improvement of certification and compliance processes, are poised as key actions to increase the uptake of EOA and AE products into local, regional, and international markets. The supply chain could be beefed up by promoting strategically- selected value chains per country from a food systems perspective starting from the development of more resilient seeds and technologies, empowering the seed sector, promoting awareness of the health benefits of consuming EOA and AE products and developing innovative products that can be locally produced.

The recommendation to develop and implement a two-way certification protocol for EOA and AE products and diversifying value chains directly contribute to CAADP Post Malabo Strategy, ASBPP (Farmer Managed Seed Systems), the Nairobi Declaration on Soil Health, and AfCFTA AU Agenda 2063 as they promote product quality and traceability through certification protocols and regional standards; enhance sustainability, market access, and inclusivity in agriculture, and facilitate intra-African trade under AfCFTA while incentivizing the adoption of sustainable practices aligned with soil health goals. These actions strengthen farmer-managed seed systems, improve food security, and empower rural communities, advancing Africa's agricultural transformation and resilience.

Pillar 4: Networking and Partnerships

Scale up EOA and AE initiatives beyond the 9 countries of focus.

In the next strategy, the EOA-I initiative could be scaled up to more than the current 9 countries, incorporating more principles of AE. EOA I should leverage existing partnerships and programs such as the KCOA that are being implemented in more than the 9 EOA countries. Learning between countries at different levels of the implementation of EOA and policies should be encouraged to enhance best practices and ultimately increase EOA coverage by moving countries from their current EOA typologies to the next. Policymakers exhibit low levels of awareness regarding EOA and AE, as does the public, highlighting the need for stronger advocacy and awareness campaigns to drive the development and enforcement of more supportive EOA policies at the national level in the next strategy.

This recommendation aligns with AU Agenda 2063's vision for sustainable and inclusive agricultural transformation across Africa. Incorporation of AE contributes to CAADP's focus on climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable intensification, while peer learning and partnerships will in some way strengthen institutions in seed systems (advancing ASBPP strategies). EOA and AE policy awareness and related work align with the Nairobi Declaration's goals of prioritizing soil health and sustainability; and finally, policy alignment will facilitate trade in certified organic and AE products, contributing to AfCFTA.

Pillar 5: Policy and Program Development

Prioritizing the development of comprehensive EOA and AE policies to drive the agroecological transition in Africa

The African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and AU Member States should prioritize the development of comprehensive policies that explicitly support EOA. This includes creating legal frameworks that facilitate organic certification, promote research and development in organic practices, and provide incentives for farmers transitioning to EOA and AE. Secondly, the implementation of EOA and AE strategies faces challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of technical expertise, and insufficient infrastructure to support farming practices. Indeed, while training initiatives have reached a significant number of farmers, the sustainability of these practices may not be guaranteed, given limited access to markets and resources. In the next strategy, the development of policies should inter alia pivot increased public funding through the AU framework, including reallocating conventional input subsidies towards supporting EOA and AE, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the initiative. Further, the current continental EOA framework provides leverage to the Heads of State and respective ministries for the allocation of adequate public funding to EOA and AE. Advocacy efforts to redirect some of the funds (including grants, subsidies, and credit) allocated for conventional input subsidies at the national level to EOA could be avenues to address the current 60% funding gap.

These recommendations align with aligns closely with the aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063, CAADP Post Malabo Strategy, ASBPP, the Nairobi Declaration on Soil Health, and AfCFTA of advocating for comprehensive EOA and AE-supportive policies (including stronger national and regional policy harmonization) and funding realignment.

Pillar 6: Institutional Capacity Building

A robust M&E framework that aligns with the CAADP EOA and AE indicators should be established for use by the CLOs and pillar implementing partners. This will provide clear metrics and indicators, to better assess progress, identify challenges, and make informed decisions to enhance the implementation of EOA. Further, there is a need to train CLOs and pillar implementing partners on standardized data collection as well as strengthen national data reporting on EOA and AE indicators. This will contribute to CAADP's emphasis on the importance of evidence-based decision-making, which relies on comprehensive and accurate data collection and analysis.

The EOA-I secretariat can further strengthen capacity of CLOs and pillar implementing partners by promoting knowledge exchange between to learn from each other's successes and challenges, ultimately enhancing participation and engagement in EOA initiatives across the continent.

(Annex 17: Draft report 3 of review of EOA Strategic Plan 2015-2025)

3.8 DEVELOPMENT AND LAUNCH OF AGROECOLOGY PROMOTION PROGRAMME (APP) BY SDC

During the reporting period, BvAT and other strategic agroecology partners participated in the development of the APP spearheaded by SDC. The development of the APP was done to support in the continued work of SDC in the Africa continent with EOA and Agroecology stakeholders. The APP was launched under the leadership of AUC-CSC in August 2024 in Botswana.

The APP will be implemented for 4 years from May 2024 to 2028.Total Grant is 4,620,000 CHF which is 57.6% of the contribution from SDC. The APP partners are expected to contribute the remaining percentage of 42.4%. BvAT has been funded with a total funding of 1,720,000 CHF which is 57.6% contribution from SDC allocated as follows:

a) *Biennial continental conferences (2025, 2027) - 200,000 CHF*

b) *BvAT/Agroecology Market pull- 500,000 CHF*

c) *Continental Policy/ EOA Secretariat- 600,000 CHF*

d) *BvAT Management of Africa Component- 420,000 CHF*

BvAT signed its contract with SDC and with APP Partners in 2024 who are as follows:

a) *AFRONET- 650,000 CHF*

b) *Agroecology fund-1,000,000 CHF*

c) *Pelum Association-400,000 CHF*

d) *Pelum Kenya- 350,000CHF*

e) *SHONA-500,000 CHF*

The APP goal and strategy

The overall goal is ***Agroecology*** - inclusive to like-minded approaches - is ***broadly promoted as a pathway for food systems transformation*** to truly sustainable, resilient and dynamic food and farming systems, worldwide and particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

And the outcomes are:

- ***Outcome 1: Civil society stimulates,*** *as organisations, rural populations, women, youth, smallholder farmers, are empowered to act upon, demand, and implement improved food systems through agroecology.*
- ***Outcome 2: Policies progress,*** *as policymakers and governmental officials recognise the value of agroecology and adopt it as a means / compass to transform their national and regional food systems.*
- ***Outcome 3: Markets develop,*** *as market actors (consumers, producers, small and medium enterprises) gain further knowledge, networking and financial resources to align with agroecological principles and generate appealing and economically sound localised and healthy markets.*

The strategy of the APP involves partnering with key stakeholders in the focus regions, providing financial support, facilitating collaboration, and fostering learning and exchange. The program emphasizes building on previous and own engagement and achievements of partners, promoting local ownership and sustainability, and focusing on global, regional and to a lower extent on national levels.

The theory of change of the APP revolves around creating impact through capacity building, youth and women empowerment, policy dialogue, and financial mechanisms. The program aims to influence through capacitated partners and their targets global and regional governmental policies, markets including finance sector, and civil society to adopt agroecological principles and practices, leading to improved economic, social, and environmental conditions.

To address barriers to change, the program focuses on capacity building, gender and youth empowerment, policy facilitation, and financial institutions awareness. The ultimate vision is for partners to continue promoting agroecology independently, with strengthened capacity and collaboration, contributing to truly sustainable agriculture and food systems.

In conclusion, the APP seeks to accelerate agroecology development of key actors in the target areas for civil society, government and private sector development align with agroecological principles and generate appealing and economically sound localised and healthy markets.

Overall Goal and Scope

The overall goal of the Agroecology Promotion Programme is that:

Agroecology is broadly promoted as a pathway for food systems transformation to truly sustainable, resilient, localised and healthy food systems, worldwide and in Sub-Sahara Africa and South-East Asia. With this overall goal, the APP wants to contribute to the efforts of the countries to reach their SDGs, using agroecology as an implementation compass. It addresses the following for improved livelihoods, & health of people and the environment:

- improved food security/safety & nutrition.
- increased resilience of farming systems, institutions and communities.
- improved health and wellbeing of soils and ecosystems, including their plants and animals.
- reducing the use of external inputs, emission of green-house gases and increasing the sequestration of carbon

thereby impacting positively climate change.

- reducing the dependence of farmers on external inputs (e.g.: synthetic fertilizers) towards the optimization of the costs of production and fair food prices.
- reconnecting producers and consumers through shorter food chains and strengthened realization of the Right to Food.
- promoting local diversified production, for healthier diets, climate resilience, and improved income.
- prioritizing food justice, equity

Specific Objectives and Outcomes

The APP strives to achieves the following outcomes:

a) ***1) Civil society stimulates:*** An engaged civil society (civil society organisations, rural populations, women, youth, smallholder farmers) is empowered to build leverage, call for accountability and transparency, and work towards and request improved food systems outcomes (food security & nutrition, economic livelihoods, environmental sustainability) through agroecology.

b) ***2) Policies progress:*** Policy makers and governmental officials increasingly embed agroecology as a means / compass for food systems transformation on regional and national levels, contributing to global developments and building on or impacting local level developments.

c) ***3) Markets develop:*** Market actors (including MSMEs, consumers, and financing mechanisms) create growth for agroecology / ecological organic products through increased demand and supply, by gaining access to different financial resources, and through the development of economically sustainable localised healthy markets and growing trust.

(Annex 18: APP Project document)

4 IMPACT RESULTS

4.1 Improved Quality of Life among EOA-Implementing Households

One of the main goals of the EOA-I Phase II was to enhance quality of life amongst the EOA households through enhancing consumption of different food groups like fruits, vegetables, proteins and starch. Additionally, by increasing the number of households consuming balanced diets frequently and increasing their incomes through increased enterprises managed by the households. The following were the targets:

- 30 % increase in number of EOA households consuming different food groups resulting from EOA-based enterprise for their nutritional requirements for productive lives disaggregated by gender.
- 20% increase in the number of EOA households having balanced diet as reflected by the household dietary diversity score (HHDD) disaggregated by gender and age.
- 20% increase in incomes realized by each household practicing EOA-based enterprises

4.2 EOA-Implementing Households in upper National Quintiles

By the end of EOA-I Phase II, assessments revealed that 76.5% of sampled farmers belonged to the upper national quintiles (Quintile 4 and 5). This outcome highlights the significant impact of EOA-I interventions in empowering smallholder farmers through enterprising value chains, resulting in improved livelihoods. The project's success was driven by increased returns from organic farming, strengthened market linkages, and an

enabling policy environment, all of which contributed to the farmers' economic advancement. Ethiopia (100%), Uganda (84.05%), Nigeria (50%), and Mali (49.84%) are among the countries whose beneficiary were ranked in the 5th National Quintile using the Equity tool. The EquityTool is a simple and easy-to-use tool to measure relative wealth. Using a short survey, the Equity Tool allows you to compare the wealth of your respondents to the national or urban population in over 60 countries.

An income quintile is a measure of neighbourhood socioeconomic status that divides the population into 5 income groups. Each group represents 20% of all families, with the first quintile comprising the poorest families and the last quintile including the richest. Income inequality can be measured by comparing what share of the total income is earned by each quintile. Income quintile groups are computed based on the total equivalised disposable income attributed to each member of the household.

Below is the distribution of wealth quintile distribution of countries by the end of phase II.

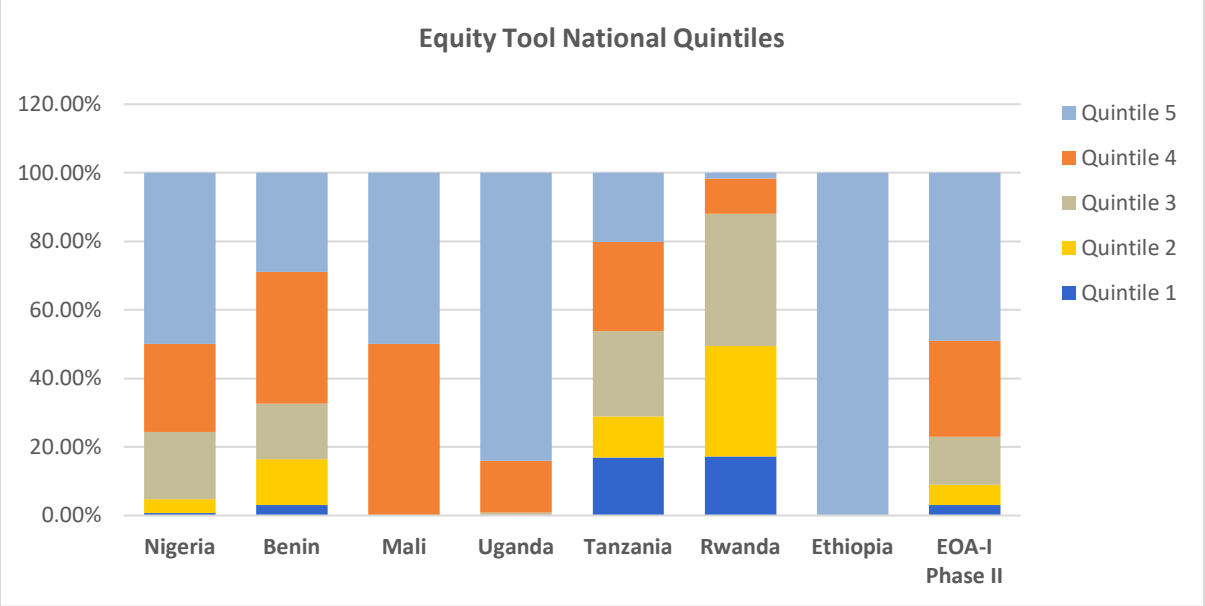

Figure 6: Graphically distribution of Wealth Distribution across EOA-I households by End-of-Phase II

Table 4: Tabular distribution of Equity Tool Analysis End-of-Phase II

	Equity Tool National Quintiles					
Country Disaggregates	Country	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
	Nigeria	0.74%	4.07%	19.63%	25.56%	50.00%
	Benin	3.05%	13.41%	16.16%	38.41%	28.96%
	Mali	0	0	0	50.13%	49.84%
	Uganda	0	0	0.92%	15.03%	84.05%
	Tanzania	16.85%	12.09%	24.91%	26.01%	20.15%
	Rwanda	17.28%	32.23%	38.54%	10.30%	1.66%
	Ethiopia	0	0	0	0	100%
	EOA-I Phase II	3%	6%	14%	28%	49%

4.3 EOA-I Implementing Households having balanced diet from Household

Dietary Diversity (HDD-Score).

The implementation of EOA-I Phase II was aligned with the objectives of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) Global Programme Food Security (GPFS), which seeks to drive the transformation of the global food system. This initiative focused on enhancing the sustainable production and productivity of

smallholder farmers, improving access to food, promoting diverse and nutritious diets, and strengthening food security, particularly for low-income, food-deficit populations, including women and other vulnerable groups.

By the end of Phase II, the impact of the program was evident, with 63.3% of the sampled respondents reporting that they consistently consumed at least three meals per day over the past six months. Additionally, the Household Dietary Diversity (HDD) Score demonstrated significant improvements in dietary diversity, with 75.7% of households engaged in EOA interventions consuming more than eight (8) different food groups on average during the same period. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), households consuming at least eight (8) food groups are considered to adequate dietary diversity, which is a proxy for household food security and nutrient adequacy.[2]

These positive outcomes highlight the contribution of EOA-I interventions in enhancing household food security and nutrition. Through targeted support for sustainable agricultural practices, diversified food production through different value chains, and improved market access, the program played a critical role in ensuring better food availability and dietary diversity among participating households. The table below shows the distribution of household dietary diversity score in the EOA-I implementing countries.

Table 5: HDD Score in EOA-I implementing countries Phase II

	Household Dietary Diversity Score			
County Disaggregates	Country	1-4 Food Groups	5-7 Food Groups	8 Food Groups and Above
	Benin	64 (3.15%)	5 (0.25%)	259 (16.17%)
	Ethiopia	12 (0.59%)	47 (2.32%)	159 (10.74%)
	Mali	51(2.51%)	19 (0.94%)	243(15.43%)
	Nigeria	21(1.03%)	65 (3.2%)	184(13.31%)
	Rwanda	45 (2.22%)	71 (3.5%)	185(14.83%)
	Tanzania	8 (0.39%)	47 (2.32%)	218 (13.45%)
	Uganda	10 (0.49%)	28 (1.38%)	288(16.07%)

[2] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2011). *Guidelines for measuring household and individual dietary diversity*. FAO. https://www.fao.org/3/i1983e/i1983e00.pdf

	EOA-I Phase II	211 (10.4%)	282 (13.9%)	1536 (75.5%)

4.4 Increase in Household Incomes from EOA-I based Enterprises

Besides promoting various EOA-based value chains, EOA-I phase II also promoted income diversification for smallholder farmers through multiple strategies that enhance productivity and market access. EOA-I empowered smallholder farmers to adopt agroecological practices that integrated diverse crops, livestock, and agroforestry. By cultivating a variety of food and cash crops, keeping small livestock (such as poultry, rabbits, and dairy goats), and engaging in beekeeping, farmers generate multiple income streams.

Phase II of EOA-I also focused on Business Development Services (BDS), encompassing non-financial and support services provided to agribusiness entrepreneurs to help them improve their performance, access markets, and grow sustainably. 573 (113%) out of the targeted 500 BDS suppliers were engaged along the EOA-supported value chains. Through such capacity and skill development, the programme ensured that farmers are not solely dependent on a single income source, making them more resilient to economic shocks while improving their livelihood. Additionally, EOA also integrates income generating activities (IGAs) such as tree nurseries, compost production, and organic input sales, enabling farmers to earn additional revenues.

During the end-of-phase II evaluation, 88.6% of the sampled farmers reported an increased income from EOA-I based enterprises. While 85.7% agreed to undertake agricultural ventures, including crop and livestock production, participation of the project beneficiary in IGAs was also significantly represented by 12.8%. An analysis of enterprise engagement across different countries showed that, apart from Uganda, crop value chains were the most dominant income-generating ventures. However, mixed value chains—combining both crop and livestock enterprises—also emerged as a preferred strategy, offering farmers a more sustainable and profitable approach to agribusiness.

Table 6: Participation of EOA-I implementing households in diverse income sources

Country Disaggregates	Agricultural Value Chains			
		Crop Value Chains	Crop & Livestock	Livestock
	Benin	326 (22.8%)	6(0.89%)	0
	Ethiopia	184 (12.9%)	35(5.2%)	0
	Mali	286(20.08%)	71(10.5%)	26(41.2%)
	Nigeria	218 (15.3%)	54(8.02%)	5(7.9%)
	Rwanda	216(15.1%)	88(13.07%)	27(42.8%)
	Tanzania	142(9.92%)	136 (20.2%)	4(6.3%)

	Uganda	52(3.6%)	283 (42.05%)	1(1.58%)
	EOA-I Phase II	1424(70.1%)	673(26.8%)	63(3.1%)

The household income assessment revealed that while many households experienced an increase in income, the majority, 49.3%, reported a change of less than 10% in their income levels (see Table 4). This indicates that while income growth was observed, the magnitude of change remained relatively modest for most households.

Among the 1,798 households that reported increased income, various factors contributed to this improvement. The primary driver increased agricultural productivity, cited by 87.3% (1,570 households) as the key reason for their improved earnings. This highlights the impact of enhanced farming practices, improved seed varieties, and better resource management in boosting farm output and, consequently, income levels.

Enhanced market access was another significant factor, with 54.6% (982 households) attributing their income growth to improved linkages with buyers, better pricing, and expanded sales opportunities. This underscores the role of structured markets and value chain development in increasing farmers' profitability. Additionally, 66.7% (1,198 households) credited capacity-building initiatives, including agroecology training and financial literacy programs, as instrumental in helping them adopt improved farming and financial management practices, leading to increased earnings.

Policy supports also played a role in driving income growth, with 20.4% (366 households) indicating that favorable policies contributed to their improved financial status. This suggests that interventions such as regulatory support, subsidies, or institutional frameworks positively influenced household earnings.

Overall, these findings demonstrate the interconnected nature of agricultural productivity, market access, capacity development, and policy support in enhancing household incomes. The trends are further illustrated in Figure 7 below.

Table 7: Percentage increase in household income

Number of households with Increased Income due to EOA-I Enterprises											
% Increase	0-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	51-60%	61-70%	71-80%	81-90%	91-100%	100%+
Benin	51	116	71	37	12	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ethiopia	62	39	26	7	20	4	6	6	1	7	1
Mali	261	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nigeria	61	49	24	11	12	1	14	59	33	5	
Rwanda	282	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tanzania	101	55	18	9	13	5	4	7	2	0	0

Uganda	65	43	50	38	54	22	17	11	2	2	1
EOA-I Phase II	883 (49.1 %)	302 (16.7%)	189(10.5 %)	102 (5.6 %)	111(6.1 %)	32(1.7 %)	41(2.2 %)	83(4.6%)	38(2.1 %)	15(0.8%)	2(0.1%)

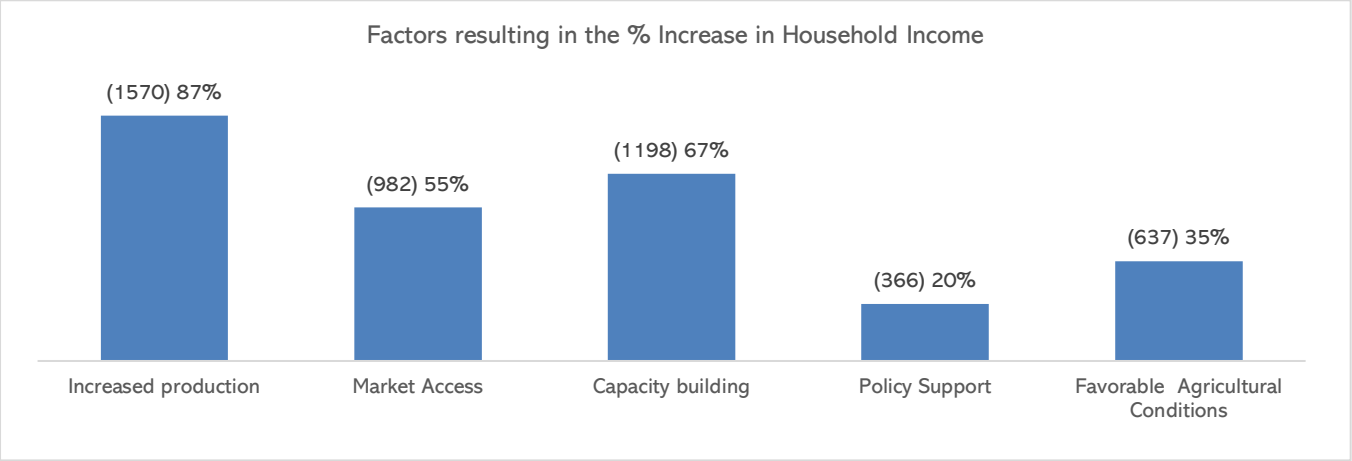

Figure 7: Attributable causal links to increased household income

5 OUTCOME-LEVEL RESULTS FROM EOA-I IMPLEMENTING COUNTRIES

At the outcome level, EOA Phase II sought to achieve the following results:

1) Outcome 1: Knowledge needed by EOA actors in various value chains availed
2) Outcome 2: Adoption of EOA practices by value chain actors enhanced
3) Outcome 3: Share of EOA products increased at the local, national and regional markets
4) Outcome 4: Structured management of EOA enhanced through coordination, networking, advocacy, multi-stakeholder platforms and capacity building

5.1 Knowledge needed by EOA actors in various value chains availed

One of the key challenges faced by farmers in adopting Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) and agroecological farming practices has been the lack of access to relevant and practical information. This gap extends beyond farmers to other value chain actors, including input producers and suppliers, processors, transporters, and marketers, who also require knowledge to effectively integrate EOA principles into their operations.

Policymakers have similarly highlighted the need for evidence demonstrating that EOA and agroecology can sustainably feed Africa and the world. In response to these gaps, Phase II of the initiative prioritized the development and dissemination of information and knowledge resources on EOA for farmers, policymakers, and key value chain stakeholders.

To achieve this, EOA Phase II developed and disseminated 108 EOA technologies through website repositories reaching various value chain actors (See Annex 1). These efforts aim to enhance knowledge accessibility, facilitate informed decision-making, and promote the widespread adoption of agroecological and EOA practices across agricultural value chains.

Through the Research and Applied Knowledge pillar, the project generated context-specific knowledge to ensure that Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) practices are practical, effective, and tailored to the needs of smallholder farmers. Additionally, this pillar provided a scientific foundation demonstrating the benefits of EOA practices, such as higher yields and enhanced climate resilience.

By addressing gaps in knowledge availability and accessibility for EOA/Agroecological (AE) practices, the project played a crucial role in making this information more accessible. It focused on generating knowledge and transforming it into user-friendly formats for dissemination through Pillar 2 (Information, Communication, and Extension Services). This approach ensured that smallholder farmers and other stakeholders had access to the information needed to adopt and implement effective EOA/AE practices.

During Phase II of the EOA Initiative (EOA-I), an additional 108 (300%) types of information on various EOA technologies and practices were developed and validated across nine countries (see Table 8 below). These practices covered key areas such as soil nutrient improvement, pest and disease control, crop quality management, and post-harvest handling.

Table 8: Information and knowledge generated along the value chain

Country Disaggregates	Pillar 1: Research and Applied Knowledge							
	Information and knowledge on at least 36 types (new or existing) of EOA technologies, practices and others generated along the various value chains.							
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Phase II
	Kenya	1	2	1	0	0	0	4
	Uganda	0	6	2	0	3	0	11
	Tanzania	0	0	0	3	3	0	6
	Rwanda	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
	Nigeria	4	2	2	13	0	0	21
	Mali	0	2	2	5	3	1	13
	Benin	1	2	3	5	1	2	14
	Senegal	0	1	0	15	0	0	16
	Ethiopia	0	0	0	3	1	17	21
	Yearly Totals	6	15	10	46	11	20	108

5.2 Adoption of EOA practices by value chain actors enhanced

During Phase II, one of the notable outcomes was the scaled adoption of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) practices, driven by the synergies established between Pillar 1: Research and Applied Knowledge and Pillar 2: Information, Communication, and Extension. These pillars played a crucial role in promoting knowledge dissemination, farmer training, and the practical application of agroecological practices.

By the end of Phase II (FY23/24), a total of 7,378 additional smallholder farmers had adopted EOA practices, representing 56% of the targeted farmers. This growth reflects the effectiveness of research-backed innovations, farmer-led extension services, and targeted communication strategies in scaling sustainable agricultural practices. The summarized adoption trends across EOA-implementing countries in Africa are presented in the graph below.

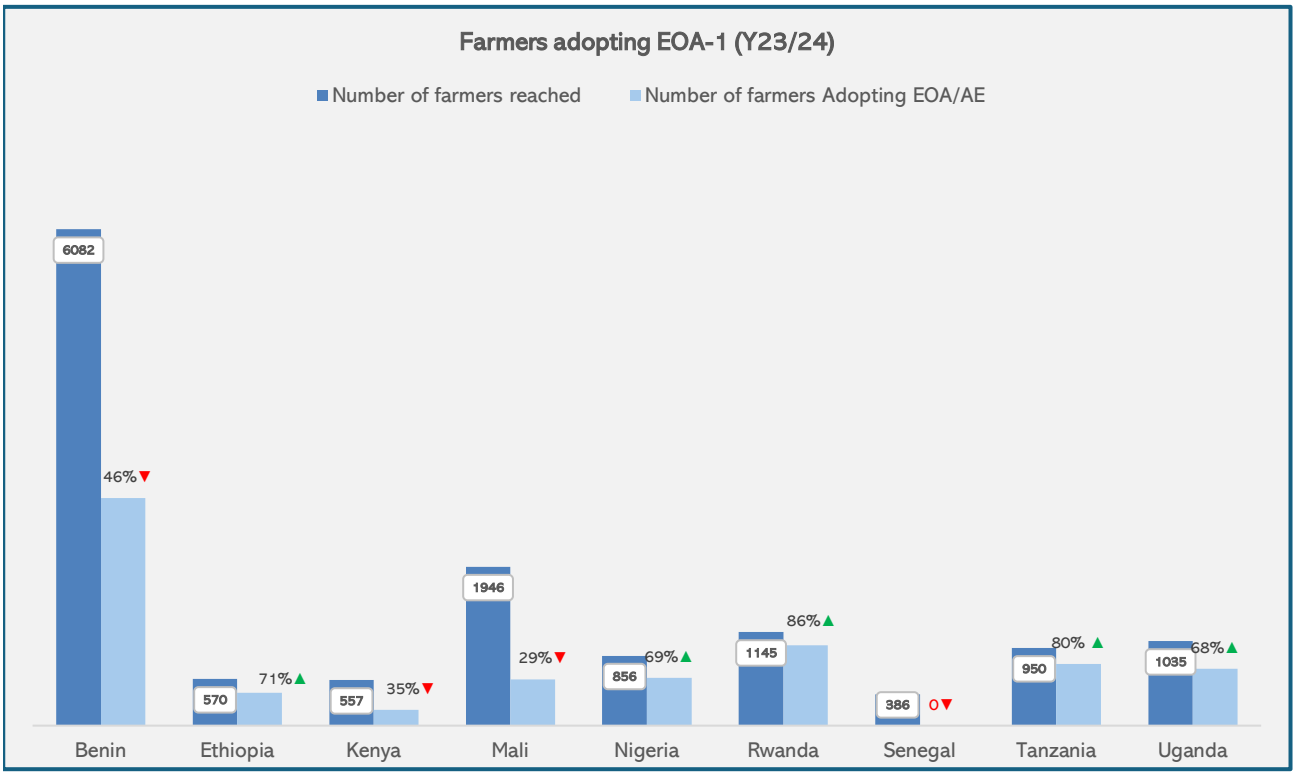

Table 9: Proportion of land under organic agriculture

	Proportion of land under organic agriculture										
Country Disaggregates	Country	Proportion of agricultural land under EOA production in 2019	Proportion of agricultural land under EOA production in 2020	Proportion of agricultural land under EOA production in 2021	Proportion of agricultural land under EOA production in 2022	Proportion of agricultural land under EOA production in 2023	%Increase in 2020	%Increase in 2021	%Increase in 2022	%Increase in 2023	%Increase in 2024
	Benin	51%	71%	92%	92%	93%	20%	40%	41%	41%	-13%
	Ethiopia	20%	23%	24%	25%	60%	3%	4%	5%	40%	35%
	Kenya	31%	31%	34%	35%	36%	0%	3%	4%	5%	-31%
	Mali	32%	34%	34%	34%	37%	1%	2%	2%	4%	-10%
	Nigeria	67%	67%	68%	74%	74%	0%	1%	7%	7%	2%

	Rwanda		72%	94%	94%	96%	-	22%	22%	24%	74%
	Senegal	65%	75%	70%	-	-	11%	5%	5%	5%	-65%
	Tanzania	62%	64%	64%	65%	65%	1%	1%	2%	3%	-54%
	Uganda	79%	80%	81%	81%	81%	1%	1%	2%	1%	-2%
	Totals	50%	56%	61%	86%	87%	6%	11%	36%	37%	-1%

5.4 Volume of crop production from EOA-I supported value chains

During Phase II, significant progress was made in increasing production volumes through the widespread adoption of EOA practices across implementing countries. By emphasizing sustainable methods such as soil health enhancement and biodiversity conservation, the project achieved an overall average production volume of 1,627.32 kg in 2023, representing a 39% increase compared to previous years.

Among the notable achievements, Nigeria recorded an impressive 64% growth by the end of the 2024 No-Cost Extension (NCE) period, driven by high adoption rates of organic practices. Similarly, Tanzania saw a 60% increase in production during the same period, while Ethiopia maintained steady progress with a 59% growth.

Other implementing countries also reported significant improvements, with Benin and Mali achieving 50% and 29% growth, respectively, while Uganda recorded a 48% increase in production volumes. Despite these gains, minor declines were observed in certain years due to variations in reporting timelines and data collection processes.

Overall, these results underscore the effectiveness of EOA practices in enhancing agricultural productivity, strengthening food security, and improving farmer livelihoods across the region. (*See Table 10 below*).

Table 10: Volumes of agricultural production per country

Volumes/Quantities of Agricultural production per country

Country	Average of 2019 Total volumes/ quantities (in kgs) for EOA value chain product	Average of 2020 Total volumes/quantities (in kgs) for EOA value chain product	Average of 2021 Total volumes/quantities (in kgs) for EOA value chain product	Average of 2022 Total volumes/quantities (in kgs) for EOA value chain product	Average of 2023 Total volumes/quantities (in kgs) for EOA value chain product	% Increase in 2020	% Increase in 2021	% Increase in 2022	% Increase in 2023	% Increase in 2024.
Benin	2487.58	2487.23	2610.13	2636.3	2701.44	0%	5%	6%	9%	50%
Ethiopia	251.67	396.53	396.76	414.03	439.35	58%	58%	65%	75%	59%
Kenya	182.33	190.64	209.28	233.74	269.71	5%	15%	28%	48%	
Mali	1123.62	1231.79	1358.43	1401.32	1452.69	10%	21%	25%	29%	-1%
Nigeria	2503.89	3038.97	3466.93	3544.08	3559.48	21%	38%	42%	42%	64%
Rwanda		2638.33	2620.37	2797.8	2812.49		-1%	6%	7%	9%
Senegal	862.5	884.51	904.23	904.23	904.23	3%	5%	5%	5%	
Tanzania	692.15	702.4	728.21	762.98	763.01	1%	5%	10%	10%	60%
Uganda	272.6	305.13	392.15	280	288.68	12%	44%	3%	6%	48%
Grand Total	1173.89	1688.57	1770.8	1598.64	1627.32	44%	51%	36%	39%	41%

5.5 Household Consumption Expenditure on EOA products

During phase II period, EOA-I recorded an increased expenditure on consumption of organic products. However, the trend declined by the end of the non-cost extension period as compared to other previous periods. The partial-year data led to an overall 3% reduction in expenditure compared to the base-year average. The decline was further influenced by the absence of Senegal and Kenya from implementation during the No-Cost Extension (NCE) period. Additionally, Rwanda's base year began in 2020, as its implementation started a year later than other participating countries.

While expenditure trends showed positive growth in previous years, notable increases were recorded during the NCE period, including an 18% rise in Nigeria and a 42% increase in Tanzania. However, the shorter reporting timeframe limited the ability to fully capture and analyze expenditure trends.

Despite these constraints, the data highlights the continued consumption of EOA products, demonstrating the resilience of key countries in maintaining organic agriculture expenditures. These findings emphasize the importance of sustained implementation efforts to ensure more comprehensive, full-year reporting in future cycles.

Table 11: Household consumption on EOA products in Phase II

Household Consumption of EOA products

Country Disaggregates

Country	Average Expenditure on the EOA products (food) in USD in 2020	Average Expenditure on EOA products (food) in USD in 2021	Average Expenditure on the EOA products (food) in USD in 2022	Average Expenditure on the EOA products (food) in USD in 2023	Average Expenditure on the EOA products (food) in USD in 2024-NCE Period	% Increase in 2020	% Increase in 2021	% Increase in 2022	% Increase in 2023	% Increase in 2024
Benin	140.62	155.65	199.58	206.76	22.49	3%	14%	46%	51%	-84%
Ethiopia	144.34	163.16	197.94	246.92	1.1	2%	16%	40%	75%	-99%
Kenya	138.9	189.36	192.84	196.71	-	7%	46%	49%	52%	-92%
Mali	33.94	45.56	47.75	53	9.78	11%	49%	57%	74%	-92%
Nigeria	525.97	604.51	620.34	631.26	36.01	13%	30%	33%	36%	18%
Rwanda	239.58	269.01	270.48	275.44	18.13		12%	13%	15%	8%
Senegal	274.52	296.7	296.7	296.7	-	8%	17%	17%	17%	-
Tanzania	60.97	72.89	72.2	73.77	42.55	17%	40%	39%	42%	-18%
Uganda	234.3	249.96	250.42	258.98	43.2	10%	17%	17%	21%	-80%

	Average expenditure	200.59	222.89	227.15	237.6	173.26	12%	25%	27%	33%	-3%

5.6 Farmer Participatory Guarantee Systems Formed and Supported

Significant progress was made in strengthening organic market access and certification through the establishment of Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) groups. PGS provides a cost-effective and participatory approach to organic quality assurance, enabling farmers to engage in peer evaluations, self-assessment, and learning exchanges. This system eliminates the high costs associated with third-party certification, making organic certification more accessible to smallholder farmers.

By the end of Phase II, an additional 39 PGS groups had been formed across EOA countries, surpassing the initial target of 18 groups and achieving 216% of the set goal. These groups consist of 585 farmers (253 women, 292 men, and 65 youth) and support a diverse range of organic products, including vegetables, fruits, spices, tomatoes, soybeans, bananas, and pineapples. Notably, one group was established in Kenya, three in Ethiopia, two each in Tanzania and Senegal, and five each in Uganda and Mali, among others.

This progress has significantly contributed to the growth of the organic sector in EOA countries, fostering sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing farmers' access to premium organic markets.

Table 12: PGS groups formed/ strengthened

	18 PGS groups established and fully certified						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024-NCE-Period	Phase II Totals
Kenya	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ethiopia	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Rwanda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tanzania	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Mali	1	1	1	1	0	1	4
Senegal	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Uganda	0	0	1	1	0	6	8
Nigeria	4	2	1	2	3	0	12

Benin	0	2	1	2	3	0	8
EOA-I	5	6	4	9	8	6	39

Table 13: List of the PGS Groups established and supported by EOA-I

Country	Number of PGS Groups	Name of the PGS Group	Value Chain
Nigeria	12	✓ Ire Akari Organic Farmers Group ✓ Amaeti Imama Group ✓ Ikot Ekpene Women Group ✓ Ajibode organic PGS group ✓ Elekuru organic PGS group ✓ Sakoro organic PGS group ✓ Ajoro organic PGS group ✓ Eko-farm group ✓ Ifelodun Temidire Alafe ✓ Ireakari Ile-Ona ✓ Asejere Orisunmibare ✓ Agbelere Surulere Odeyemi	✓ Vegetable, fruit, and spices
Benin	8	✓ CP Soja Bio de Kandi ✓ CP Soja Bio de Aklampa ✓ CP Soja Bio de Djidja ✓ CP Soja Bio de Aklampa ✓ Organic plantain control group ✓ LINGBAHOUN of GAKPE ✓ cooperative MIDOKPO of Zebe ✓ Organic tomato producer group of Sèmè	✓ Soja ✓ Soybean ✓ Tomatoes ✓ Banana

Mali	4	✓ N'Djimbougou ✓ Déni ✓ Woro ✓ Bougounina	✓ Sesame
Senegal	2	✓ NAT BI SESSENE ✓ NAT BI THIES	✓ ML ✓ NIEBE
Tanzania	2	✓ Uwamabo ✓ Jumbo	✓ Fruits and Vegetables
Uganda	8	✓ Masaka Organic Farmers Association ✓ Bukunda PGS ✓ Suluma Food LTD ✓ Sambwe Organic Farmers PGS Group ✓ Buteke Organic Farmers' PGS Group ✓ Butuntumula Organic Farmers' PGS Group ✓ Katikamu Organic Farmers' PGS Group ✓ Kayijja Produce Dealers	✓ Pineapples ✓ Tomatoes
Ethiopia	2	✓ Tehuldere Organic Production & Marketing primary Cooperative Society ✓ Abdi Boru Organic Production & Marketing primary Cooperative Society	✓ Potatoes
Kenya	1 PGS Group	✓ Kabare Organic Farmers	✓ Tomatoes
Rwanda	No PGS group reported	✓	✓

5.7 EOA-related aspects integrated into national policy frameworks

Aligned with efforts to integrate EOA into National Policies, Strategies, and Programs across Africa, the Country Lead Organizations (CLOs) overseeing Pillar 4 have made significant progress in advancing EOA policy and advocacy

within their respective countries. As illustrated in the graph below, 19 (237%) out of the targeted 8 EOA related aspects, including policies, ordinances, legislations, plans, and strategies have been integrated into national policy across the nine (9) EOA-I implementing countries. Further, 18 EOA-related programs have been implemented.

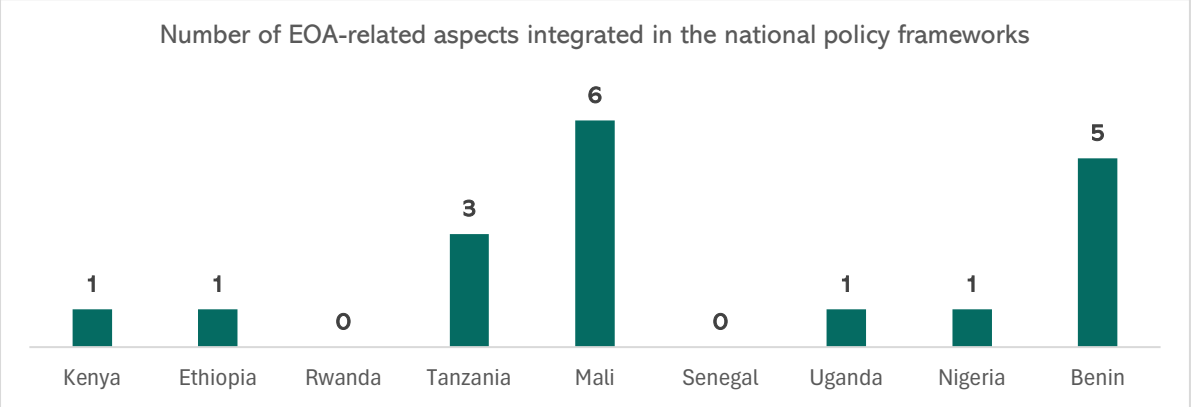

Figure 8: Number of EOA-I related aspects integrated into national policy frameworks

6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Phase II implementation was strengthened by a comprehensive and well-structured Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach designed to facilitate project-level decision-making and drive continuous project improvements. This approach leveraged data-driven insights from routine data collections at output, income, and impact-level.

A key aspect of the M&E strategy was the routine collection of field data through mobile data collection tools (KoboCollect), a move that underscored the project's commitment to harnessing digital innovations for more efficient reporting and analysis. By integrating technology into data collection processes, the project improved the timeliness, accuracy, and consistency of data capture, minimizing errors associated with manual entry and enhancing the overall reliability of the monitoring framework.

To ensure seamless data management and safeguard data integrity, the M&E system was anchored on a centralized data management framework. This framework, which strictly adhered to data protection requirements, ensured that data collected from different project sites was securely stored, analyzed, and utilized for informed decision-making. While the central database was housed at Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT), it was designed to be decentralized in terms of access control. Each Country Implementing Partner had restricted access, ensuring that data sovereignty was maintained, and that partners could only retrieve and manage data relevant to their respective countries. This structure not only safeguarded confidentiality but also facilitated a streamlined and structured data-sharing mechanism across the implementing countries.

A critical component of the M&E approach was continuous support supervision, which was operationalized through biweekly virtual meetings. These meetings provided a dynamic platform for interactive learning and experience sharing among country teams, fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange. The virtual engagements enabled real-time troubleshooting of data collection challenges, reinforced adherence to indicator reporting requirements, and built the capacity of project teams in utilizing M&E tools effectively.

Beyond the virtual engagements, the project also conducted periodic field monitoring missions with each partner being visited 1-2 times a year. These on-the-ground assessments were instrumental in evaluating the effectiveness of project interventions, validating reported data, and identifying areas requiring further support. By combining remote monitoring with physical site visits, the project was able to maintain a robust oversight mechanism, ensuring that implementation remained aligned with the overarching objectives and expected outcomes.

Whereas the M&E function proved effective in supporting project implementation, there was an identified need to offer further support for other CIPs. Different partners had unmatching capacity development needs especially data documentation, data cleaning and record keeping in Monitoring and Evaluation, as a result most efforts were dedicated in striving to bring all the partners at per. These capacity gaps resulted in delayed reporting and on some occasions low quality data prompting adjustments to the project's data management frameworks.

Overall, the Phase II implementation was characterized by an adaptive and evidence-based M&E system that not only enhanced project accountability and transparency but also strengthened learning and decision-making processes. The integration of digital tools, a secure data management framework, and a structured support supervision system contributed significantly to the effective delivery of project interventions across multiple countries.

7 CHALLENGES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Challenges

Phase II of EOA has major milestones as reported. However, it was faced with various challenges, especially the following:

1. ***Effective integration of EOA and Agroecology within Agricultural policy frameworks at Regional level.*** The major huddles were experienced at the regional level, especially at the EAC. The EAC embraced EOA-I in 2024 through a member state workshop that was held in Nairobi, Kenya. The workshop was to introduce EOA-I and share milestone and successes of EOA-I and request the 7 EAC member states to support EOA-I. These efforts started in Phase I in 2014 over 10 years ago but only seemed to make progress towards end of EOA-I Phae II.

2. ***Effective integration of EOA and Agroecology within Agricultural policy frameworks at National level.*** During the implementation period, Uganda, Tanzania, Benin and Kenya were instrumental in the development and approval of EOA policy documents. In Uganda, the National Organic Policy was developed in 2019 while in Tanzania and Benin they documents were approved in 2023. In 2024, Kenya approved its National Agroecology strategy due to concerted efforts of various EOA and Agroecology stakeholders. While this was instrumental, the rest of the EOA countries lagged behind due to political changes, power dynamics and influence from multinational chemical-based companies heavily funding African countries. By the time of Phase II closure, Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Nigeria and Senegal were in drafting process of various policy documents some of which started in early 204 during Phase I.

3. ***Limited funding of EOA-I:*** Despite the great milestones made by EOA-I in its Phase II and building from Phase I, we experienced limited funding from donors and development partners. During this period, EOA only attracted funding from two mainstream donors of SDC and SSNC, while GIZ came on board through the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture an initiative that reports within the EOA- AUC reporting structures. The need to reduce overreliance on donors and institutionalize EOA within government structures was not attained effectively.

4. ***Partners implementation capacity gaps-*** during the Phase II implementation period, the geographical scope was expended to Rwanda as the 9th country. Despite of the geographical expansion, partners in Senegal and Kenya experienced capacity gaps to effectively implement the project without any capacity interruptions. The capacity gaps in the 2 countries were prominent with their personnel, both technical and financial. The two CLOs in the two countries experienced major challenges implementing the project with major delays in project delivery. Due to the autonomy of implementing partners, the executing agency, BvAT, could not mitigate the CLOs to employ competent personnel and had therefore to suspend the project in the two countries from 2023.

5. ***Limited motivation to implement the project by partners:*** despite the need to stay on course and deliver as per the EOA Strategic plan road map of 10 years, majority of partners were limited with human and financial resources to support the finance 100% of their time.

6. ***Limited geographical expansion of EOA-I:*** during the Phase II, EOA was implemented in 9 countries out of the 54 African countries. This was only 16% of the expected coverage as per the AUC Organic decision to have EOA cover the entire continent. The limitation was caused by limited donor funding and limited institutionalization of EOA by government institutions especially at the REC level.

7. The EOA Sector is not adequately supported compared to conventional Agriculture. Most of the support to the EOA Sector comes from donor-funded projects.

8. There is little knowledge, research and development as well as innovation on EOA in Africa and this deficiency

adversely affects the growth and development of the EOA sector. This weakness is also exploited by proponents of conventional agriculture much to the detriment of the EOA sector.

9. Despite the increasing focus on agroecology-based food systems, adoption levels for agroecological practices are still low. The current agricultural food systems need to undergo transition from the heavily chemical based practices as shown by the UNFSS and reinforced by the African Common Position on UNFSS.

7.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

1 Geographical expansion of EOA can be effectively realized by institutionalisation of EOA within government institutions. We are happy to note that EOA Regional platforms were formed in East Africa, West Africa, North Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa. This move will strategically catalyse the growth of EOA in the continent.

2 We recommend continuous capacity building of EOA implementing partners in fundraising, resource mobilisation and advocacy to enhance their sustainability and policy development in the countries

3 Enhance awareness creation and data generation on the benefits and contribution of Agroecology to food security and nutrition.

4 Current food systems are unsustainable and business as usual won't work.

5 Re-establish farming systems that operate within planetary boundaries and produce food in harmony with nature.

6 **Agroecology (and EOA) -** Pathway to increased productivity, socioeconomic benefits, biodiversity, sustainability and resilience of food systems.

7 **Build on proven AE practices -** Sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, conservation agriculture, biointensive agriculture, regenerative agriculture, family farming, etc.

8 **Value chain targeting -** Higher productivity, enhanced resilience (such as drought resistant crop varieties), protecting soil fertility, contributing to nutrition and food security and scalable at relatively lower costs.

9 Diversify funding and investments of AE and EOA - Include private sources, long-term.

10 **Leverage on drivers for success -** Prioritize interventions underscoring value for money, local participation and ownership, multistakeholder platforms and alignment with national development policies & strategies.

11 **Empirical work -** Needed to generate data for assessments of agroecology and conventional systems to inform decisions on various aspects of agroecology.

12 **Policy & strategy alignment -** Coherence in policy and strategy to calvinize various actors and agencies for more inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT 2024

The EOA Phase II project was originally scheduled to conclude on 31st December 2023. However, due to unspent balances amounting to **USD 736,067** as of the end of the 2023 financial period, the donor, SDC, approved a no-cost extension until 30th September 2024.

8.1 Funding Received

No additional funding was received during this period, as all project activities were implemented using the unspent balance of USD 736,067.

Donor Commitment	(15,362)
Receivable Balances	
Association of Organic Agriculture Practitioners of Nigeria (NOAN)	(8,531)
Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM)	(5,690)
Institute For Sustainable Development (ISD)	(3,932)
PELUM Uganda	(6,638)
NOGAMU	17,571
Organisation Béninoise Pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture Biolo□gique (OBEPAB)	(6,632)
PELUM Kenya	(1,892)
Conseil National De Concertation Et De Cooperation Des Ruraux (CNCR)	9,604
Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement (ROAM)	(5,796)
Bank Balance as at 30th September 2024	23,092
Fund Balance	**(4,205)**

Figure 9: Breakdown of funds balance

8.2 Interest Income

The project maintains an interest-bearing current account for managing its funds. During the financial period, the account generated an additional income of USD 1,006, net of withholding taxes.

8.3 Surplus Funds breakdown

The surplus funds of **USD (4205)** relate to:

- ✓ Funds already disbursed to partners which had not been utilized as of 31st September 2024 amounting **to USD 27,175**
- ✓ Prefinanced 10% of **USD 39,111**
- ✓ Funds held by BvAT in the project Bank account amounting to **USD 23,092.**
- ✓ Expenses not paid as of 30th September 2024 **USD 15,362**

8.4 Fund utilization

1) Personnel Costs

The personnel budget line for the Project Management Unit was fully utilized due to a 9% annual cost-of-living adjustment and the impact of increased taxes and levies imposed by the government.

2) Travels

The international travel budget for 2024 was fully utilized as planned, driven by the necessity of frequent project-related engagements, including strategic meetings, training sessions, and on-site monitoring and evaluation visits to partner countries.

3) General Investment/Equipment's

During the reporting period, two laptops were procured for the accountant and communication personnel, along with three ergonomic chairs for the project manager, finance manager, and accountant. These acquisitions were aimed at enhancing efficiency and facilitating optimal work performance.

4) Partner utilization of project Funds

The updated partner utilization of fixed and Innovation disbursed as of 30th September 2024 is presented in Figure 11 below

Code	Organization	Opening Balances	Returns	Balance
111001	Association of Organic Agriculture Practitioners of Nigeria	27,587.55	(34,225.55)	(6,638.00)
111001	West Africa Cluster	23,530.81	(25,423.81)	(1,893.00)
111002	Tanzania organic Agriculture	24,130.23	(29,820.69)	(5,690.46)
111003	Institute for Sustainable Development	10,342.84	(14,274.56)	(3,931.72)
111004	PELUM- Uganda	6,365.80	(13,003.80)	(6,638.00)
111009	Beninoise Pour La Promotion De l'Agriculture Biologique	29,129.44	(35,761.45)	(6,632.01)
111011	PELUM- Kenya	6,986.93	(8,878.55)	(1,891.62)
111029	Conseil National De Concertation Et De Cooperation Des Ru	9,604.40	-	9,604.40
111030	Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement	45,429.17	(51,224.94)	(5,795.77)
		183,107.17	**(212,613.35)**	**(29,506.18)**

Figure 10: The updated partner utilization of fixed and Innovation disbursed as of 30th September 2024

- At the beginning of the year 2024, our implementing partners collectively held a total of USD 183,107.17 designated for NCE (No-Cost Extension) activities. These funds were earmarked to support the continuation of planned initiatives, ensuring the seamless execution of project activities beyond the initial grant period without requiring additional funding. The financial oversight and monitoring of these resources remained a key focus to guarantee alignment with project objectives and donor compliance requirements.

- All implementing partners, except Conseil National De Concertation Et De Cooperation des Ruraux, actively participated in NCE activities and submitted their expenditure reports. The total reported expenditure amounted to USD 212,613.35, reflecting a prefinancing of USD 39,110.58.

- By the end of the reporting period, Conseil National De Concertation Et De Cooperation des Ruraux had an unutilized balance of USD 9,604.40. According to our records, this amount is due for refund to the executing agency, Biovision Africa Trust.

Annex 19: EOA Audited financial report-NCE 2024

Annex 20: EOA Management letter

Annex 21: EOA Consolidated financial report (2019-2024)

9. ANNEXES

1) Annex 1: EOA SDC funded Phase II Proposal
2) Annex 2: Summary of results matrix for EOA Phase II
3) Annex 3: 1st The 1st International Conference on Agroecology Transforming Agriculture & Food Systems in Africa conference report
4) Annex 4: 1st Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference report)
5) (Annex 5: News article of the signing ceremony)
6) Annex 6: Report of ECOWAS, BVAT AND NOAN Meeting)
7) Annex 7: Report of EAC and EOA stakeholders' workshop to present EOA development milestones)
8) Annex 8: 3rd CAADP biennial review report
9) Annex 9: 4th CAADP biennial review report
10) Annex 10: FMSS Development Cluster - Approved Version)
11) Annex 11: Presentation on the role of agroecology in nutrition and food security
12) Annex 12: EOA-I success stories for Phases I & Phase II)
13) Annex 13: SDC External Evaluation report)
14) Annex 14: Organic Versus Conventional Farmer Crisis Responses: Implications under Covid and Russia-Ukraine War study report)
15) Annex 15: Assessment Of the Landscape of Agroecology and The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative in Africa)
16) Annex 16: Assessment of the role and position of youth in Agroecology)
17) Annex 17: Draft report 3 of review of EOA Strategic Plan 2015-2025)
18) Annex 18: APP Project document
19) Annex 19: EOA Audited financial report-NCE 2024
20) Annex 20: EOA Management letter
21) Annex 21: EOA Consolidated financial reports (2019-2024).

ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Growing Sustainably

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