



**MEETING WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES
(REC) ON MAINSTREAMIN THE ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC
AGRICULTURE (EOA) IN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL
AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT PLANS**



CONCEPT NOTE

2021

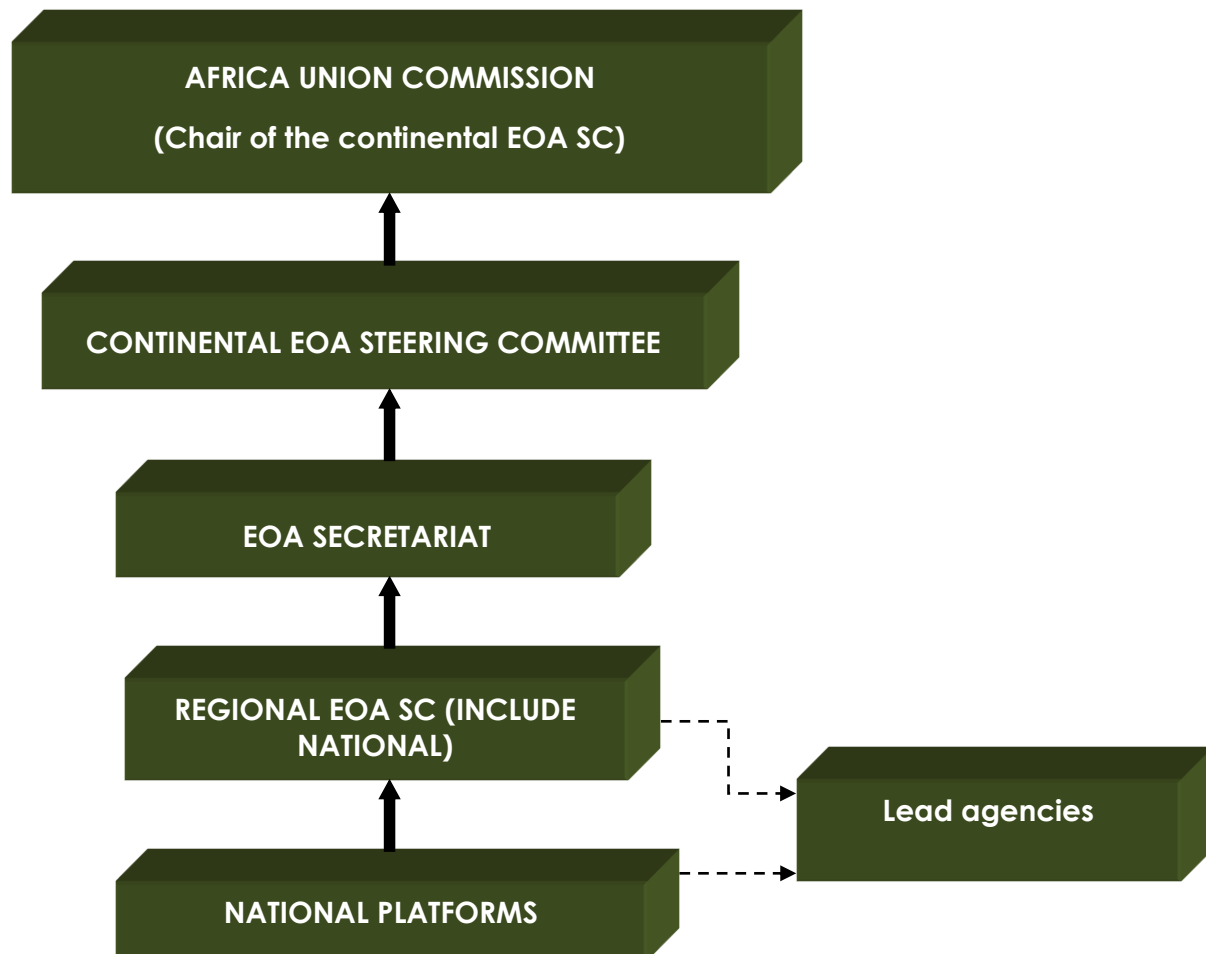
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The benefits of organic agriculture as a contributor in tackling climate change, prevention of biodiversity loss, promotion of sustainable consumption, wealth generation and curbing poverty as well as ensuring food and nutrition security in Africa are being increasingly recognized. Organic products also attract premium prices on the international market. Furthermore, organic agriculture reduces the application of external inputs, which favors resource-poor farmers in Africa. It is for these reasons that the Executive Council of the African Union adopted a decision on organic farming in 2011 (EX.CL/631 (XVIII)). This decision requested the AU Commission and NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (now known as African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)) to (i) initiate and provide guidance for an AU-led coalition of international partners on the establishment of an African organic farming platform based on available best practices; and to (ii) provide guidance in support of the development of sustainable organic farming systems and improve seed quality. The decision also called (iii) upon development partners to provide the relevant technical and financial support for the implementation of this decision. Further, it called upon the AU Commission to report regularly on the implementation of this Decision. Following the adoption of this decision, the Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative in Africa was established in 2012 to grow the Ecological Organic Agriculture sector in Africa. From a paltry figure of 51,000 hectares of land under organic agriculture, the sector has grown to over 2.1 million hectares by 2021. There are also about 815,000 registered organic farmers in Africa. If farmers who practice organic agriculture by default are added, this figure could even be higher. To sustain the interest and facilitate a planned and coordinated development of the organic sector, various governance structures have been established in Africa. These structures include the Continental EOA Steering Committee, which is chaired by the African Union Commission and draws its membership from Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in

Africa, Regional EOA Steering Committees, Civil Society Organizations, Women's groups, Organic Certification bodies, Research and Academic Institutions, Development Partners, the Private Sector, the African Organic Network (AfroNet), and Regional EOA Clusters.

Regional EOA Steering Committees for each of the five sub-regions of Africa to be chaired by a Representative of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Currently, it is only ECOWAS and ECCAS that have nominated representatives for the chairing of the Western Africa and Central Africa Regional EOA Steering Committees. The RECs in the remaining regions, namely Northern, Eastern, and Southern Regions are yet to nominate a representative for their respective regions.

National EOA Steering Committees or Platforms in each of the 55 Member States of the African Union would also have to be established. The chairperson in each of the 55 AU member states is to come from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in that country. Below is the organogram of the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative in Africa.



With the exception of perhaps the Continental EOA Steering Committee and a few of the Regional EOA Steering Committees and some National EOA platforms, the rest of the governance structures are yet to be set up.

Lack of financial resources has been a challenge to many organic farmers in Africa. Recognizing this deficiency, the 3rd Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) Meeting held in 2019 urged African Union Member States to mainstream EOA into their national agricultural production systems and allocate adequate resources to the sector. The RECs could also play a key role in ensuring that adequate financial and material resources are mobilized for the EOA sector in Africa.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The overall purpose of this meeting is to brainstorm on the mainstreaming of EOA into NAIPS and RAIPs.

The specific objectives are:

1. Update RECs on the implementation of the EOAI
2. Discuss the establishment of Regional EOA Steering Committees
3. Discuss strategies for mainstreaming EOA into NAIPS and RAIPs
4. Discuss strategies to strengthen EOA on the continent

3.0 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

At the end of this meeting, the RECs would have been updated on the implementation of the EOA Initiative in Africa. Also, the establishment of Regional EOA Steering Committees would have been discussed and if possible, nominees received from RECs for the chairing of the Regional EOA Steering Committee in their respective regions. Furthermore, strategies would be found for mainstreaming EOA seamlessly into NAIPS and RAIPs. Lastly, strategies would be discussed and crafted for the strengthening of EOA on the African continent.

4.0 MEETING METHODOLOGY

The meeting with RECs on strengthening the governance structures of the EOA initiative in Africa would be held virtually on 23rd July, 2021 from 11:00am to 3:00pm EAT. The meeting would comprise of presentations followed by discussion.

5.0 PARTICIPANTS

Participants from the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Biovision Africa Trust, GIZ and the institutions hosting the Regional Knowledge Hubs would be invited to participate in this meeting.

DRAFT AGENDA

TIME	ITEM	RESPONSIBLE
5mn	Opening remarks	AUC DARBE
10mn	Presentation of the background and objective of the meeting	AUC DARBE
30mn	Presentation of the Governance of the EOAI and discussions on the establishment and operationalization of Regional Steering Committee	AUC DARBE
25mn	Presentation on update in the implementation of the EOA and discussions	AUC DARBE
20mn	Presentation on the Knowledge Hubs and discussions	GIZ /Biovision Trust
15mn	Presentation of FAO Agro ecology initiative	FAO Representative
30mn	Presentation of EOA regional initiative	RECs
20mn	Discussions on strategies to Mainstream EOA into NAIPs and RAIPs	All Participants

20mn	Discussions on strengthening EOA in Africa	All Participants
10mn	Summary of Discussions and way forward	AUC DARBE
5mn	Closing	AUC DARBE