

Pilot Study of Indicators for Tracking Implementation of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) in Africa

Background

Focus on Ecological organic agriculture (EOA) is gaining momentum due to its potential to contribute to better production and productivity of smallholder farming in a sustainable manner, improved food security and nutrition, and improved economic and social development. The recognition and focus of EOA received impetus at the policy level in 2010 when the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture held in Malawi in 2010 resolved that African governments make a concerted effort to support the development of sustainable organic farming systems under the guidance of the African Union Commission. The resolutions were further endorsed in 2011 in a decision by the Executive Council of the African Union (AU), at its Eighteenth Ordinary Session reading as follows;

The Executive Council's decision on organic farming (EX.CL/Dec.621 XVII): DECISION ON ORGANIC FARMING Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII)

The Executive Council requested the AU Commission and its NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency 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 iv) upon the AUC to report regularly on the implementation of this Decision. The EOA-Initiative translates this landmark decision into action.

To implement this decision, the AUC-DREA (Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission), in partnership with African organic agriculture organizations and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), elaborated the concept of EOA leading to development of Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I). The action was piloted in 2012 in six countries - Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Zambia. The initiative was formally rolled out in 2013 with support from SSNC and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in 9 countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Rwanda in eastern Africa and Benin, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal in western Africa). Following the successful pilot a 5-year Action Plan (2015-2020) and 10-year Strategic plan (2015-2025) were developed under the guidance of AU led Continental Steering Committee (CSC) to drive the EOA agenda for transformation of the African agricultural sector in line with Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Strategic Focus and Implementation of the EOA Initiative

The EOA initiative envisions having vibrant systems for ecological organic agriculture that enhance food security and sustainable development in Africa. This is aligned with the continent's agricultural vision of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programme (CAADP) to achieve a self-reliant and productive Africa and deliver economic growth and sustainable development for its people. The aim is also consistent with the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.

The EOA initiative aims to promote ecologically sound strategies and practices among various stakeholders to safeguard the environment, alleviate poverty and guarantee food security through institutional capacity development, innovations, market participation, public policies and programmes, outreach and communication, and synergy creation.

Box 1: Strategic Focus of EOA

Goal: The overall goal is to mainstream Ecological Organic Agriculture into national agricultural production systems by 2025 in order to improve agricultural productivity, food security, access to markets and sustainable development in Africa.

Mission: To promote ecologically sound strategies and practices among diverse stakeholders in production, processing, marketing and policy making to safeguard the environment, improve livelihoods, alleviate poverty and guarantee food security.

Objectives: EOA-I's strategic objectives include:

- i. To carry out holistic demand driven, multi-disciplinary, gender sensitive and participatory research, training and extension in support of EOA.
- ii. To collate, package and disseminate research findings and other relevant information to various stakeholders using appropriate approaches and channels of communication.
- iii. To increase the share of quality EOA products at the national, regional and international markets through value chain analysis and market development.
- iv. To foster and strengthen synergies among stakeholders in Africa through building networks and partnerships.
- v. To lobby and advocate for the mainstreaming of EOA programmes, policies, plans in the agriculture sector as well as other related sectors.
- vi. To strengthen the governance, management and operations of EOA institutions in Africa for effective functioning and service delivery.

The implementation of the Initiative's five-year Action Plan (2015-2020) and ten-year Strategic Plan (2015-2025) is anchored on six complimentary pillars: (i) Research, training and extension, (ii) Information and communication, (iii) Value chain and market development, (iv) Networking and partnership, (v) Policy and programme development, and (vi) Institutional capacity development.

These pillars, guided by the four principles of Organic Agriculture (health, ecology, fairness and care) can form the basis for mainstreaming organic agriculture into all the agricultural work of the African Union and the NEPAD Planning Agency, within the framework of CAADP.

Proposed Indicators for Tracking Progress of EOA in Africa

Indicators enable policymakers, farmers, businesses, and civil society to better understand current conditions in a sector that may require policy responses, trends in performance across time and between countries, emerging "hot spots" or new challenges and guide in setting targets, monitoring progress, and comparing performance among regions and countries (World Resources Institute, 2014). In this context to monitor and track the implementation of the AU's Executive Council's *decision on organic farming (EX.CL/Dec.621 XVII): DECISION ON ORGANIC FARMING Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII)*, the following indicators are proposed for inclusion in the AUC's Biennial Review process for Implementation of the Malabo Declaration.

The proposed indicators are aligned with the seven (7) Malabo commitments and the associated performance categories. They complement the forty three (43) indicators in use so far. They are also selected and connected to the "causal chain" of action that indicators can represent or seek to influence, namely Public Policy, Farmer Practice and Biophysical Performance:

Thematic Area	Sub-Theme	Proposed Indicators to be included in the Biennial Review Report of the AUC on the Implementation of the Malabo Declaration
<p>PC 1.3 CAADP based Policy & Institutional Review/ Setting/ Support</p>	<p>CAADP based Policy & Institutional Review/Setting/Support</p>	<p>Existence of enabling policies promoting agricultural development interventions (programmes, initiatives, projects) leading to low greenhouse gas (GHG), safe production, land regeneration, biodiversity preservation, soil and water conservation, soil health, adaptiveness and resilience (Yes/No).</p> <p><u>Parameters:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existence of evidence-based policies, plans and strategies in support of low greenhouse gas (GHG), safe production, land regeneration, biodiversity preservation, soil conservation, soil health, adaptiveness and resilience (Y/N). 2. Number of policies and strategies that are evidence-based in support of low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, safe production, land regeneration, biodiversity preservation, soil and water conservation, and soil health.
<p>PC 2.1ii Public Expenditures to Agriculture</p>	<p>Public Expenditures to Agriculture</p>	<p>Organic agriculture expenditure as percent of Public agriculture expenditure.</p> <p><u>Parameters:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government Organic Agriculture Expenditure in local currency units 2. Percentage of overseas development assistance to national agricultural programmes that is allocated to or spent on ecologically sensitive practices.
<p>PC 4.2 Inclusive PPPs for commodity value chains</p>	<p>Inclusive PPPs for commodity value chains</p>	<p>a) Add Parameter: Number of priority ecosystem-based managed value chains for which PPPs including certification are established with strong linkage to smallholder agriculture and markets.</p>
<p>PC 6.1i Resilience to climate related risks</p>	<p>Resilience to climate related risks</p>	<p>Percentage of farm households that are resilient to economic and climate/weather related shocks as a result of adopting EOA interventions.</p> <p><u>Parameters:</u></p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of farm households that are practicing various EOA practices. 2. Types of EOA practices creating household resilience to economic and climate/weather related shocks. 3. Farmland area under (certified) organic agricultural management.
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Problem statement

One of the major challenges in tracking and monitoring progress in agricultural performance is lack of coordinated collection of quality data. This is partly due to unclear protocols and procedures to guide collection of quality data, lack of quality data itself and lack of qualified capacity to collect the data. Implementation of EOA in Africa and its outcomes can be monitored by using quality indicators. Thus the proposed indicators will be checked against data collected against the criteria of availability, accuracy, consistency, proximity to reality, relevance, and ability of the data to differentiate EOA implementation progress among countries.

Objectives of the study

1. To pilot a list of proposed indicators of EOA across a range of Malabo Declaration dimensions with influence on public policy, farmer practice and biophysical performance. For each indicator to determine what is achieved in current practice, to facilitate the setting of standards and calculation of appropriate sample targets for assessment.
2. To classify the indicators into three groups according to the study results: indicators ready and recommended for implementation, those ready but not feasible for immediate implementation, and those desirable though requiring further developmental work.

Pilot study design

The EOA-I Secretariat (BvAT) commissions this study to test the proposed EOA indicators for tracking implementation of EOA in all five political regions of the AU (West, Eastern, Central, Southern and North Africa). Following a survey of the indicators, the findings will confirm the best indicator(s) to include into the BR process. The survey team will be provided with the BR country reporting template to avoid duplication of indicators and or parameters. The sampling frame will consider the distribution of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member states, and available data collection mechanisms. The study will be administered physically in one country per REC and remotely in the Member States (MS) that will be sampled.

The study will apply mixed methods to derive qualitative and quantitative data to test the relevance and appropriateness of the indicators. It will indicate data sources, data collection methods, and how to calculate the indicator(s) for consistency across all Member States. The quantitative and qualitative analyses shall show which indicators are measurable, have good preliminary face validity and discriminative power, and are considered to be useful in terms of quality monitoring the implementation of EOA at country level.

The report will also include a list of EOA experts (names, emails, telephone numbers and places of work) who will train MS teams and others on EOA data collection procedures and analysis of the indicators finally selected. The list will be provided to the AUC CAADP BR Task Force Team

Leaders and the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE).

Validation of study findings

For validity, ownership and buy-in of the findings, the process shall involve AUC DARBE team in all important stages of the study and the validation at RECs / country level. Country dialogues on BR findings which takes place early in the year in the MS can also help to consolidate and validate the findings of the study.

The preliminary results of the study will be presented to the MS, RECs, AUDA NEPAD, the CSC of the EOAI and AUC DARBE for validation and comments before presentation to the critical analysis stage. Particularly, presentation of the findings at the REC level and within the MS will provide a critical analysis of the indicator(s) and validation of the study findings.

Inclusion of EOA Indicators into the 4th BR

Upon presentation of the validated indicators to the BR Task Force Team Leaders, the indicators will be included into the MS country reporting template for measurement and reported within the 4th BR. The 4th BR Report will then be presented to the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment for endorsement.

Budget

The pilot study will be funded by the EOA-I Continental Secretariat.

Timeline

The assignment will take place between February and March 2022 so that the findings are ready for discussion during the critical analysis dialogues that will be held on the 3rd BR Report findings in May-June 2022. The findings shall be presented in a summary report or concept note and presented to the BR Task Force Team Leaders before the Critical Analysis of the 3rd BR.

The study is being backstopped by two monitoring and evaluation experts from the AUC DARBE from inception and will continue to do so until end of the process.

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