



Biovision
Africa
Trust



2020 | Annual
Report

**BvAT would like to appreciate the editorial team of
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Ms. Annie Murimi and Mr. Joseph Nyamesegere.**



2020 | Annual Report

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASBPP	African Seed and Biotechnology Programme Platform
ASTGS	Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy
BMZ	German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
BvAT	Biovision Africa Trust
BVF	Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CLO	Country Lead Organization
COVID – 19	Coronavirus disease
CSC	Continental Steering Committee
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECHO	ECHO community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EOA-I	Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative
ESA	Ecological Sustainable Agriculture
DREA	Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture
FCP	Farmer Communication Programme
FFA	Farmer Field Assistant
FFO	Farmer Field Officer
FiBL	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
Icipe	International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology
KALRO	Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KCOA	Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa
KHEA	Knowledge Hub for Eastern Africa
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MOALFC	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives
MT	Master Trainers
NOAP	National Organic Agriculture Policy
NOGAMU	National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda
ROAM	Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement
PELUM	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
SAT	Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SFA	Smart Farmer Africa
SGL	Standard Group Limited
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SSNC	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
TBC	Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation
ToToF	Training of Teams of Facilitators
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNFSS	UN Food Systems Summit

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to express our gratitude to our development partners, especially the Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development (BVF) of Switzerland for supporting the Farmer Communication Programme (FCP), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) for supporting the African Union-led Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative and its Continental Steering Committee's Secretariat and the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for supporting the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa (KCOA) project through German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

We express our appreciation of the Board of Trustees who played a key role in providing guidance, support, and advice during our programmes' implementation throughout the year. We acknowledge the time and energy they put in.

Our sincere gratitude goes to our implementing partners, both in the public and private sector for their co-operation and support in the implementation of various programme and project activities. You have been instrumental in capacity building and the dissemination of information on ecological sustainable agriculture to smallholder farmers and other stakeholders.

We would like to recognise the invaluable contribution of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives in Kenya. We are indebted to other agriculture sector ministries at various levels for giving BvAT the enabling environment to carry out its activities around the continent.

Special thanks also go to our media partners, including Standard Group Limited, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, Emuria Community Radio station in Kenya and Farm Radio International, Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), Radio Safina and FADEKO Community Radio in Tanzania who have contributed immensely to expanding the reach of our information products across Kenya and beyond.

We recognise research institutions such as the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe), with which we enjoy a long-standing partnership, universities and other private and public research organisations that have contributed to the body of organic agriculture knowledge through research.

We would also like to acknowledge with great appreciation the crucial role of all BvAT staff. Project implementation would not have been possible without your commitment, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to you.

We appreciate the farmers all over the continent with whom we work to promote ecologically sustainable agriculture not only as consumers of the knowledge we share from research institutions, but also as sources of practical knowledge gained from their extensive experience in farming.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT), I am pleased to present the 2020 Annual Report. It has been a year of success despite the challenges brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic. We are grateful to our donors, implementing partners, and farmers for their collaboration as we readjusted our plans and strategies for implementing our programs. It is my pleasure to report that despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, we were able to implement most of our activities for the year. We attained several milestones including successful rolling out of the next phase of the EOA project (2019 – 2023) and a restructuring of the Outreach project under the Farmer Communication Project for greater efficiency.

As an organization that promotes agroecology-based innovations, technologies, and best practices within the African continent, BvAT continued to deepen its reach in the continent and specifically the 9 countries where we have partners namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, and Benin. We are happy that our work on influencing policy has gained traction.

The year 2020 also marked the end of the previous strategy and paved way for the development of the strategic plan for 2021 to 2024. The process was intense involving independent consultants, and we thank all the stakeholders for their contribution and expertise in the development of the four-year roadmap. In the coming year and beyond, the smallholder farmers will remain a key target group for our organization. We will also continue to work with other value chain actors such as input suppliers, processors, traders, and consumers to ensure that sustainable agriculture becomes the first option for rural farming communities. The young generation and women in particular, remain important to us, and we will seek to deepen our reach to them. Our focus on policymakers will continue so that they can contribute to providing an enabling environment for ecological sustainable agriculture (ESA) to thrive. There is more work that needs to be done towards achieving a sustainably food secure African continent.

As the world prepares for the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in September 2021, I urge everyone to remain steadfast because the proponents of conventional agriculture continue to stretch their influence. They are aggressively driving their agenda across the continent. We, therefore, need to be proactive as we deepen and expand our work with farmers and like-minded actors. Guarding our biodiversity and planetary resources while advancing EOA/ESA in the whole of Africa is critical. Climate change is here with us, and it is not relenting. Families across the globe, including Africa, are already experiencing climate-related challenges such as food insecurity, droughts, famine to pests and diseases, and biodiversity loss. But there is still hope, and together, we can achieve resilience through ESA and EOA best practices, innovations, and technologies.

Lastly, I wish to thank all our donors and supporters for their unwavering support throughout the year. We look forward to their continued support in the coming years. We also invite other funding partners to come on board and support us in the noble work we are doing. I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for their dedication to steering the organization and look forward to working with them in the coming year. I would also like to applaud the Executive Director for providing exemplary leadership to the organization. I also thank the senior management team and all the staff for their efforts and remarkably professional hard work. It is through your commitment that we were able to attain the results described in this report.

Mr. Andreas Schriber

Chair of the Board of Trustees

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Mr. Andreas Schriber
Board Chair and Founding Trustee



Prof. Christian Borgemeister
Trustee



Ms. Anne Onyango
Trustee



Prof. Onesmo K. ole-MoiYoi, M.D.
Trustee



Dr. David Amudavi
Executive Director, Ex-officio member



Prof. Judy Wakhungu
Trustee Emerita

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The year 2020 was the most challenging year in the history of our organization and the world at large and yet the most rewarding as well. So much happened that it sometimes seems hard to remember all the wonderful things that were going on before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, all was not gloom, and I am pleased to share some of the exciting achievements BvAT realized during this past year.

During the year we focused on creating partnerships for effective reach and to enhance scale of our interventions. BvAT created strong linkages with major media firms in Kenya through the TOF Radio project and in Tanzania through the Mkulima Mbunifu (MkM) project. The partnerships saw BvAT's Farmer Communication Programme expand its reach through the mainstream media in the two countries.

There were other major changes in the Farmer Communication Programme. Infonet-Biovision project, the main information repository driving the Farmer Communication Programme undertook a vital feasibility study whose findings and recommendations went into shaping future developments of the platform to transform it into having more user-friendly functionalities. On the other hand, the Outreach project underwent a major restructuring of its field staff set up which involved recruitment of new staff to enhance the capacity of the team. The process of equipping the centres so that they become one stop information hub for farmers and other stakeholders continued.

Through the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture (KCOA) and the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I) projects in Africa, BvAT also spread its wings to more African countries creating partnerships that saw farmers in those countries benefit from our different services provided by our closely supported partners. The EOA project transitioned successfully into the new phase from May 2020.

Another great highlight of this past year was developing our new 4-year strategic plan. Our Board of Trustees and management team developed a plan that is aspirational, future-focused and assured to be more responsive to the challenges that impact the smallholder farmers and the communities we serve at large. A great deal of consultation was done with all our stakeholders (farmers, community members, BvAT staff and partners) to ensure that our strategic plan represents current and emerging needs and trends. With this strategic document we look forward to making milestones and sharing our progress and impact with our stakeholders.

I am more grateful than ever for the incredible team of staff members who consistently provide exceptional service, and who have demonstrated outstanding commitment, flexibility, and perseverance in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Board of Trustees has done extraordinary work in providing governance and support to BvAT, particularly during the past year in developing our strategic plan, and then as we responded to the pandemic. I thank each and every staff member and Board member for their tireless efforts, now and always.

Finally, many thanks to you, our friends, donors, partners, and funders. You sustain the work we do and ensure that we can continue supporting the smallholder farmers who need us most. We hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and well, thereby invigorating our long-standing relationships and allowing us to continuously foster our common vision to further develop Biovision Africa Trust as a world class non-governmental organization.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. David Amudavi

PARTNER COMPLIMENTS



Erwin Kinsey, ECHO East Africa Vice President

I am keen to celebrate the good work of Mkulima Mbunifu (MkM) for the excellent collaboration we have experienced over the past years, which has increased since 2020. We receive, for our library and distribution to a few partners, all copies of Kiswahili publications which are of high quality, reliable standard with good text, excellent colour illustrations, and relevant themes for smallholder farmers and food processors. They are packaged in an informative, attractive newsletter and an assortment of manuals on livestock and crop husbandry.

ECHO has been allowed to upload these publications onto our website, www.ECHOcommunity.org and thus significantly expanding the available Kiswahili resources which we can avail to our more than 17,000 readership who access our site on a monthly basis.

We have become more actively engaged in smallholder farmers' advocacy forums as a result of the wider network, which we are a part of. We benefited from MkM's willingness to participate in ECHO's regional virtual symposium in September 2020. We were also happy to be invited to be a part of forums of mutual interest like the Arusha Conservation Agriculture Forum and from their willingness to share best practices and themes in their publications. In the past year, we MkM and ECHO also collaborated together in various farmer fairs and exhibitions.

It is my hope that this collaboration will be sustained long into the future.



Lise Chantal, Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement (ROAM)

Partnership with Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) in 2020 has been a great experience as it contributed towards ROAM's work for achieving its mission as umbrella organization in the organic sector in Rwanda. ROAM has improved its governance and management structure under the support and guidance of BvAT. Communication has also been enhanced which helped us to put in place strategies to comply with the project requirements particularly in M&E and Finance.

At regional level, synergies have been realized. Being part of the KHEA platform, ROAM got opportunities to interact with other countries, learn from them and share experiences in promoting organic agriculture (OA). At country level, ROAM engaged 3 associate partner organizations to support farmers organized into PGS to produce quality, healthy organic products and practically teach farmers good agricultural practices under established demonstration sites. The 187 multipliers already trained under the Training of Teams of Facilitators (ToToF) approach and among them 6 Master Trainers (MTs) are supporting ROAM to disseminate the knowledge & information on OA to many users, majority being women and youth. ROAM created synergy with other like-minded organizations in Rwanda to form a coalition in the process of advocating for the development of an organic policy/strategy.

Being part of the EOA platform in the region created many opportunities for ROAM which contributed to its visibility, and this created trust within partners and stakeholders in Rwanda and beyond. For example:

1. ROAM is about to pilot the FiBL-Backmann Digitalization project: "Transforming farmer access to organic training materials and information through digitalisation". This is a big opportunity for the organization because as more farmers will be trained, they will embrace a sustainable way of production and safe, healthy, and nutritious food will be available not only for local market but also for export.
2. Attendance to the BIOFACH 2020 by Delegates from Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement has been a great opportunity for us. The main objective was to learn from the organic global market and networking with other stakeholders in the organic sector worldwide. ROAM delegation has been able to connect with new partners, and some of them visited Rwanda in March 2020. As an outcome of the visit, 11 cooperatives and companies will be supported by GIZ in the certification process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the onset of rolling out 2020 activities, the year began with a promise of building from a very successful annual staff meeting at the tail end of 2019. During the meeting, the staff discussed an array of administrative and programmatic matters underlining the collective intentions on the need for improvements on key fronts. It is during this meeting that the mantra, “deepening partnerships for increasing reach, impact and sustainability” was coined and all staff embraced it as our guiding theme for 2020.

In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic set in, significantly upsetting project implementation. The pandemic called for adjustments within the projects, as they responded to numerous regulations and advisories by governments to mitigate the spread of the disease. Despite this setback, BvAT proved its resilience and was able to carry out most of the planned activities for the year for its three main programmes.

The Farmer Communication Programme, which uses various pathways to disseminate information on sustainable agriculture undertook restructuring of its Outreach field set up and the web-based platform, Infonet carried out a feasibility study to inform improvements to make it more user friendly and attractive to its users.

The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative successfully rolled out the next phase of the project which had major changes in the structure and implementation. Through a series of virtual meetings, the BvAT team was able to guide and support the implementing partners in the nine countries implementing the project on the new set up.

Under the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture project, most of the activities of the first two-year phase were implemented successfully, the major activity being the training of Master Trainers (MT) whose mandate is to train multipliers who in turn train the farmers directly.

BvAT embarked on the development of its next Strategic Plan 2021-2024 with support from its stakeholders, which will guide project implementation and institutional growth in the coming years.

Through our programmes we are influencing farm practices to ensure they are more sustainable. We strive to empower farmers to understand their farming systems and make informed choices on the changes to make for sustainable food production that contributes to food security as well as environmental conservation.

COVID-19 - ENVISIONING A NEW FUTURE

In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic set in and has spared no country or segment of the society; it has gravely impacted on the lives of millions of people including the small and large businesses across the world, and the modern global economy as we know it. The fear and uncertainty caused by the pandemic crippled many activities that have greatly impacted livelihoods and food security.

The Government of Kenya imposed measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 such as curfews, confinement measures such as closure of open markets, slowdown at border points and limited movement of people. This resulted in many roles becoming redundant leading to job losses or unpaid leave. Breaks in the supply chain prevented food production in the first place, as well as hampering the delivery of food to the consumers.

For BvAT, the pandemic significantly affected how project activities were implemented and reaffirmed the need for flexibility, innovations and resilience in project planning and implementation. It called for adjustments within the projects whilst responding to numerous regulations and advisories on COVID-19 disease control and prevention. The adjustments included developing COVID-19 content integrated into BvAT programmes for awareness creation and changing the way we work, especially with farmers. Since our field staff could not carry out farmer group trainings, they focused on individual farm visits and sharing information via text and WhatsApp. Despite this, BvAT managed to achieve successful implementation of most of the 2020 plans, underlining its programmes' resilience to the major shock of the year.

As the world moves past the initial crisis response, it is faced with possibilities, opportunities, and choices that can set us all on a path toward transformation and growth. We need to make the right decisions and undertake the most promising and inclusive actions.

About Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT)

Vision 	Mission 	Overall goal 
<p>A food secure African continent with healthy people living in a healthy environment.</p>	<p>To alleviate poverty and improve the livelihoods of rural communities in Africa through disseminating relevant information and building the capacity of farmers and partners for the ecological transformation of African agriculture and food systems.</p>	<p>To sustainably improve the health and prosperity of people in Africa while conserving the environment with agroecology and ecological organic agriculture as a basis for all life.</p>


Core values

 **Environmental stewardship**

 **Accountability and transparency**

 **Gender inclusivity and Non-discrimination**

 **Efficiency and effectiveness**

 **Integrity**



Information & Communication

Generation and dissemination of knowledge and information on ecologically sound and useful innovations in human, animal, plant, and environmental health.



Research & Development

Support applied and social sciences research into special issues and challenges facing smallholder farmers in order to provide useful and practical solutions.



Capacity Development

Support educational and empowerment programs amongst small-holder communities in partnership with other players from the industry, public sector, and civil society.



Resource Mobilization

Seeking and provision of grants and technical assistance to public charitable trusts or organizations working with rural communities to promote ecologically sustainable agriculture and development.

PRIORITY AREAS

BvAT STAFF

During the year 2020, BvAT had a total of 44 staff, 17 staff based in the Nairobi office, 24 staff spread out in 13 resource centres in 11 out of the 47 counties in Kenya, 3 staff based in our Arusha Office, Tanzania, and two staff based in Kampala, Uganda. Additionally, 8 interns from various universities and colleges in Kenya benefited from the excellent experience and exposure provided by BvAT to their 2 – 3 months industrial attachment.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Governance at BvAT is at two levels:

- The Board of Trustees (BoT) composed of 5 trustees and the Executive Director as Ex-officio member and headed by the Chair. It is responsible for the governance of the organization.
- The Senior Management Team (SMT), composed of heads of programmes and departments and headed by the Executive Director, who reports to the Chair of the BoT. It is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organisation.

Alignment to national/continental/global goals

BvAT’s work through the programmes and projects it undertakes is aligned with various strategic documents that focus on increasing agricultural production and ensuring sustainable environmental resource management at national, regional and global levels. In Kenya, it is aligned with Kenya Vision 2030 and the Big Four Agenda on food security. It is aligned with continental and global frameworks and partnerships such as the African Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17) respectively.

National




Continental



Global

1 NO POVERTY



2 ZERO HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



5 GENDER EQUALITY



13 CLIMATE ACTION



15 LIFE ON LAND

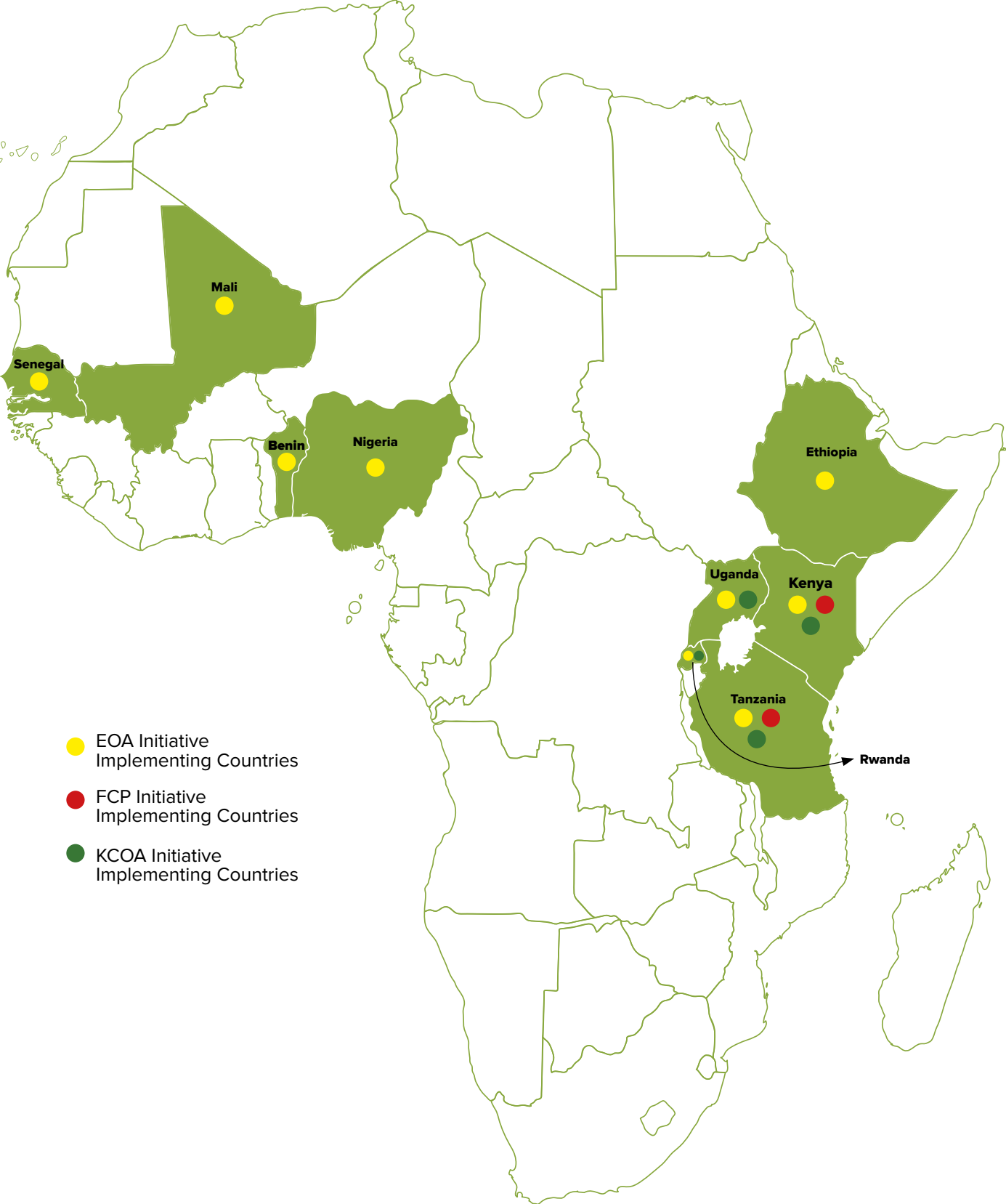


17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



WHERE WE WORK

BvAT's activities are implemented in 9 countries as shown on the map below:



PROGRAMMES OF BIOVISION AFRICA TRUST

1. Farmer Communication Programme (FCP)

The Farmer Communication Programme (FCP) has the objective to enhance economic, social, and environmental livelihoods of smallholder farmers in East Africa through increased adoption of Ecologically Sustainable Agriculture (ESA) practices. Specific objectives of the FCP are improved productivity, enhanced food resilience and increased incomes among smallholder farmers in the region. The FCP focus areas therefore aligns well with the country's Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS) priorities, Vision 2030 and the SDGs 1, 2 & 13. FCP activities are implemented through communication-based projects namely, the Infonet Biovision web-based platform, The Organic Farmer Radio, The Organic Farmer Magazine, Mkulima Mbunifu (implemented in Tanzania) and Farmer Communication Outreach. A range of knowledge products are developed in formats of print, audio, face-to-face, outreach, and digital and disseminated through integrated channels.

The year 2020 marked the first year of three-year phase. A common area of focus by the five FCP projects was to deepen partnerships in content creation, dissemination, and resource development. This was done with a hindsight on sustainability needs of the Programme. As a result, significant achievements have been realised through the collaborative efforts. In addition, the team endeavoured to enhance project monitoring and tracking of results. This entailed development of FCP theory of change, designing monitoring and evaluation framework and refining of results indicators. Development of an online monitoring and evaluation system was commenced will be completed in 2021.

To match the new performance needs of the Programme, a restructuring of the team especially under the Farmer Communication Outreach Project was conducted. Restructuring enabled streamlining of field operations, aligning better the staff skills and experience with responsibility levels, matching remuneration with performance and further enhance accountability measures. As a result, new field-based positions; Farmer Field Officers (FFOs) and Farmer Field Assistants (FFAs) were created and roles redefined, effectively replacing the former positions of resource centre facilitators (RCF) and community information workers (CIWs) respectively.

TOF Radio project contracted The Standard Group (SG)'s Radio Maisha Station, a Kiswahili channel with a national reach. Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) was contracted to carryout regional vernacular broadcast programmes through Coro FM, Minto FM,

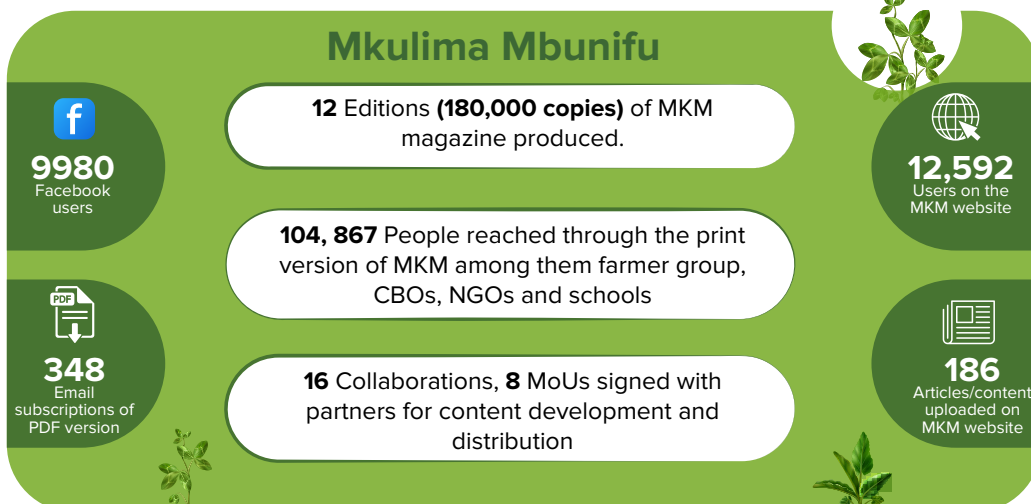
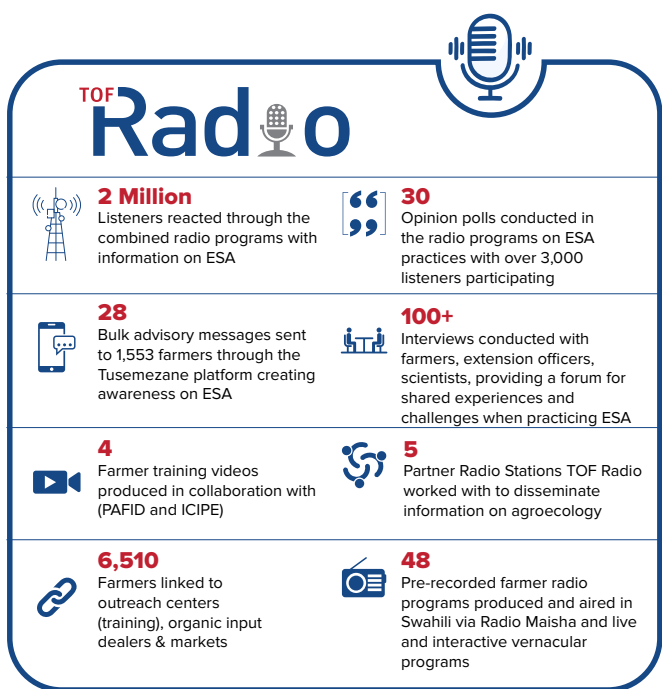
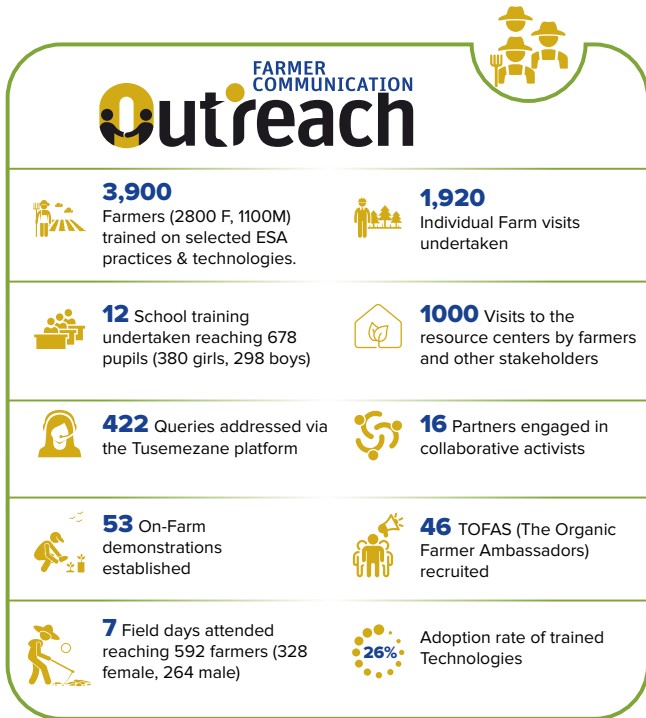
Ingo FM, and Mwatu FM. Even though the two media houses were competitively recruited, a partnership approach of engagement yielded on dissemination products giving FCP better reach and visibility. Partnership with STG gave BvAT space on Smart Harvest Magazine of The Saturday Standard where it published articles every two weeks. Under TOF Radio, BvAT grew its videography unit. The farmer videos have proved vital as a complementary channel of training farmers and creating awareness on agroecology. The farmer feedback unit was expanded in 2020 building on the Tusemezane online platform. The unit has been instrumental in coordinating and sharing feedback from farmers reached through FCP dissemination channels.

TOF Magazine adopted a co-creation approach to content development and throughout the year partnered with Smart Farmer Africa (SFA) to produce the monthly TOF magazine editions. Through this partnership, the magazine was rebranded and acquired a new look with the aim of making the magazine more appealing and reader friendly. The TOF contributors list was expanded to allow better content variety and meet diverse farmer needs. Content production processes were streamlined leading to notable improvements in quality of the articles.

Mkulima Mbunifu put tremendous efforts in partnership building while working very closely with the government's extension officers. This was critical given that FCP does not have an outreach component in Tanzania. The diverse partnerships ensured timely and quality production of magazines and dissemination to the reader audiences. Visibility of MkM hence has grown and been recognised by the government and other stakeholders as a leading, reliable and national farmer magazine.

A feasibility study was done with the objective of identifying possibilities for Infonet IT improvements in Tanzania. This entailed assessing the Infonet system, operating environment, and the possibility of exchange with existing Apps in the sector. An appropriate system upgrade was assessed as well. The recommendations from the assessment formed the basis of the upgrade of Infonet system which formed the main Infonet activity in 2020 in addition to the routines of system management. Infonet platform continued to provide synergy and complementarity with other FCP projects, offering trainers, students, extension workers and farmers a quick access to up-to-date and locally relevant agricultural information that contributes to sustainable agriculture and rural development.

FCP achievements in numbers



2. The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I) in Africa

BvAT implements the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative in Africa in two distinct ways:

1. As the Executing Agency, BvAT is in charge of coordinating and sub-granting the implementing partners in 9 countries of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Benin, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal under SDC grant.
2. As a secretariat it provides the Secretariat to the Initiative, on behalf of the Continental Steering Committee chaired by the African Union Commission, DREA.

I. Executing Agency

The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOAI) is an outcome of deliberations and support to implement the African Union Heads of State and Government Decision on Organic Farming adopted during the Eighteenth Ordinary Session, 24-28 January 2011 (EX.CL/Dec.621 (XVIII)). The initiative started in 2011 with support from the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and later expanded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The initiative has a mission to promote ecologically sound strategies and practices among diverse stakeholders involved in production, processing, marketing, and policy making to safeguard the environment, improve livelihoods, alleviate poverty, and guarantee food security. The Initiative's implementation strategy aiming to mainstream EOA in policies and practices adopts multi-stakeholder managed national platforms informed by scientific evidence and local experiential knowledge and supported by capacity development of the various stakeholder groups, information & communication efforts and strategic actions linked to regional and continental policy making bodies.

The overall goal of the initiative 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.

Specific objectives to which the partner activities are supposed to contribute:

1. To avail information and knowledge needed by EOA value chain actors through demand-driven, multi-disciplinary, gender sensitive, participatory research, and repositories.
2. To enhance adoption of EOA technologies and practices through systematic dissemination of research and experience-based information, knowledge, and training of value chain actors.
3. To substantially increase share of quality organic products at local, national, regional, and international markets through value chain development and market strengthening; and
4. To enhance structured management and governance of EOA through coordination, networking, advocacy, multi stakeholder platforms and capacity building leading to positive changes in agricultural systems in Africa.

The initiative embraces holistic production systems that sustain the health of soils, ecosystems, and people, and relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions rather than reliance on the use of external inputs which create adverse effects on people's total health (human, animal, plant and environmental).

The Initiative under SDC support is anchored on four separate but interrelated pillars, namely:

Pillar 1: Research and Applied Knowledge (R&AK)

Pillar 2: Information, Communication and Extension (IC&E)

Pillar 3: Value Chain and Market Development (VCMD)

Pillar 4: Supporting and Cementing: Steering, Coordination and Management (MC&G)

In 2020, the SDC funded component worked on supporting implementing partners in implementing the new operating procedures of Phase II of the project (2019 – 2023).

EOA-I achievements in numbers



27 EOA Knowledge products (success stories, applying practices) disseminated through various pathways



1,720,255 Stakeholders reached with AE/EOA informational material



32 Percent of farmers meeting the organic market standards



100,000 Farmers trained on AE/EOA principles



9 Countries establishes networks with partners in Africa and globally



272 Extension officers, Trainer of Trainers trained on benefits of EOA practices and standards



12,453 EOA Farmers participating in markets at different levels (domestic) and export



21,000 Farmers linked to organic markets



300 Stakeholders were engaged in platform meetings, workshops, and conferences across the different EOA-I structures to discuss successes, best practices and challenges of the EOA-I



35,519 Value Chain actors farmers, input suppliers, processors, transporters etc, trained on the various EOA practices and standards



1 National Policy Launched: National Organic Agriculture Policy for Uganda (NOAP) officially launched

II. Continental Secretariat

1. Endorsement of BvAT as Host Secretariat to the EOA Continental Steering Committee by AU and a Memorandum of Understanding between BvAT and the AUC formulated.
2. EOA Indicators to be considered for integration into the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) framework via the Biennial Review Reporting.

3. CSC Technical Working Group on seeds continued engaging the AU led African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) through meetings held in 2020.
4. The GIZ Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture (KCOA) in Africa: GIZ has joined the coalition of international partners supporting EOA in Africa through the CSC platform.
5. Discussions on hosting the KCOA Continental Knowledge Digital Platform under AUC continued taking shape.
6. The integration of Regional Economic Committees (RECs) and AU agencies into EOA continued to be strategically undertaken: the AU successfully linked the Secretariat with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) that officially joined the CSC membership in 2020.

3. Knowledge Centre For Organic Agriculture in Africa (KCOA)

The Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Eastern Africa (KHEA) is part of the Global Project Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa (KCOA), implemented by GIZ with funding support from BMZ Special Initiative One-World-No-Hunger. The project is implemented in the regions of Eastern, Western, Southern, Northern and Central Africa. The goal is to ensure Knowledge Hubs are successfully introduced as an innovative strategy for promoting organic agriculture with actors in the five regions of Africa. The first phase covers a period of two (2) years starting from August 2019 and ending in July 2021.

The overall goal of the Eastern Africa Knowledge Hub is to ensure that Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) is integrated into the Eastern Africa agricultural systems in 4 countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda. The Eastern Knowledge Hub is expected to be scaled up to include 3 additional countries of Madagascar, Burundi, and Ethiopia.

The goal of the KCOA project will be achieved through 3 focus areas:

1. Collecting/preparing of organic agricultural knowledge: Validated technical and methodological knowledge for the promotion of organic agriculture, including processing, is prepared, and packaged for application in the context of the participating countries and stakeholder groups.
2. Dissemination of organic agricultural knowledge and capacity building: Validated knowledge, strategies, and good practices in the field of organic agriculture, adapted to the contexts of the countries participating in the regional knowledge hubs, have been disseminated.
3. Networking in organic agriculture value chains: Key actors in the organic agriculture value chains of the participating countries in the four countries have been networked in an exemplary manner.

Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture



550+

AE/EOA multiplier practitioners from the Knowledge Hub in East Africa trained



Organic sector analysis for Burundi, Madagascar & Ethiopia undertaken



1 Implementing partners inception meeting held



137 Farmer Videos

translated into 7 different languages in four countries



1 Capacity building session held

33 Master trainers trained

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Kitchen garden technologies
established by field staff in Kisii County



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION DISSEMINATION

Makueni farmer discovers gold in his farm (Kenya)

An article in the TOF Magazine was Patrick Muli's eye opener to the wealth creation opportunities he had been sitting on.

Patrick Muli, a member of Mutulani Poultry Co-operative Group in Makueni County, knew no better life than farming for household consumption. He kept a few chickens and goats and grew just enough food crops to feed his family. This continued until when he met one Mr. Joseph Mbithi a field officer under BvAT's Outreach Programme. Mr Mbithi introduced him to the idea of farming with an aim to make profit and improving his living standard and that of his family.

Through Mbithi, Patrick discovered the TOF Magazine, and his life has never been the same. "I used to be an average farmer and felt limited by lack of capital to make any investment to expand my farming activities into income generating ventures," says Patrick. But this changed when he came across an article in TOF, elaborating on how farmers can make use of locally available materials to construct poultry houses without having to invest a lot of money. "I learnt from The Organic Farmer Magazine about making a chicken house using the available material within my homestead. Thereafter,

Mr Mbithi visited our group and trained us on how to do it using poles from tree branches to construct a portable chicken house, that is of good size," recalls Patrick. While training the farmers, Mr. Mbithi, emphasized that there is market for chicken if only the farmers are interested in expanding their poultry houses to keep more chicks and venture into small-scale poultry business.

Patrick took interest in this idea. Through the training he received from Mr. Mbithi, he constructed a poultry housing and bought improved kienyeji (local) chicken with a plan to multiply them for the market. Today, Patrick sells over 80 chicken a day. "Chicks aged between one and one and a half months sell at KES 300 each, a hen at KES 800 and a cock at KES 1,200. Patrick is excited about the changes that his small poultry business has brought in his homestead. "We no longer lack money to cater for our household expenses," he firmly states. His wife is happy about the change the small business has created in their home, backs up her husband giving an example of how they were able to fully pay the school fees for their two grandchildren.

Once the mind sights one opportunity, several others become visible. As the couple kept on the journey to



Patrick Muli, reads TOF Magazine alongside his wife



Patrick, with BvAT field staff, attending to his chicken beside the poultry house

learn more from TOF Magazine, with training from Mbithi, they discovered many other ideas, they could employ on their farm to earn money while saving costs. One such idea was the use of compost manure in place of synthetic fertilizer. Just outside their kitchen is a well layered compost pit, where they throw organic waste and cover with ash as guided by Mbithi. Free range chicken going about the home fish out worms from the compost for their feed. The couple uses waste from chickens and goats in the farm to make manure. “If only farmers knew how rich in nutrients chicken manure is, they would invest more in them, not only for their meat and eggs, but also for their manure,” says Patrick. He further explains that every season, yields from the organic section of their farm are higher than those harvested from the crops grown conventionally.

To keep pests away in their organic farm, Patrick has learnt from TOF Magazine, and through training by Mbithi, how to make the plant extract, from medicinal plants such as the African Marigold and mix with water to spray on the crops. “Applying the extract on the crops regularly repels pests, and the crops blossom”, he says.

MkM enabled us practise organic farming (Tanzania)

“We live in steep, arid, and rocky hills. For many years, we have not produced much, but with information from Mkulima Mbunifu magazine, we are now able to produce vegetables”, says Julius Kivuyo, a member of Mkukute group in Morombo, Arusha. “Our group was established in 2007 with eleven (11) members with the aim of saving and lending money to group members to support themselves in various family matters, including educating children, building houses, establishing, or developing small businesses”.



A members reading MKM magazine

Another member of the group Mr. Amos Mollel says that they started receiving MkM magazine in 2011. Since then, they have never missed the monthly farmers’ paper. They read and diligently discuss articles on vegetable production, weighing options that work for them. Their area is hilly and therefore prone to soil erosion.

As days went by group members were attracted to the idea of producing healthy vegetables using organic means so that their families can be healthy and avoid the possible effects of pesticide residues. Farmers who practice conventional farming use a lot of chemical inputs to control pests and diseases, and do not wait for the required number of days before harvesting. They endanger their families and consumers.

“We decided to try out the methods written in MkM magazine, and we found out that they actually work”, says Ms. Dorcas Japhet, a group member.

Julius explains that they produce green-leafy vegetables using organic methods, something they picked from reading MkM magazine. They produce for home use and also target the market as a means to generate income to benefit group members. “Many of us, after learning how to produce organic vegetables using small area or bags, we started growing vegetables for home needs and market and to date, all group members still produce a variety of vegetables in their homes’, he said. “Group members like the magazine because it contains useful tips that we apply to revive our soils. Members also have other projects on cattle rearing, sheep, goats, and poultry. They find the magazine useful in these enterprises”, he added.

Through MkM they have learnt how to use locally available resource to boost the productivity of their lands and produce in natural ways in order to protect their health from various effects of industrial chemicals. Mr. Julius Kivuyo advises farmers to look for the magazine to build their knowledge of good crop and animal husbandry. If this is not possible he advises them to reach out to fellow farmers who have access to the magazine.

Mr. Amos says that as more farmers receive the magazine and put into practice the methods they learn from it, Mkulima Mbunifu officers should make regular visits to update farmers on newer and environmentally friendly technologies so that farmers can continue producing healthy foods. The visits would also provide more farmer stories and experiences from different parts of Tanzania.

ADOPTION OF ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGIES

Farmer reaps big in bean farming in Machakos County

It's towards the rainy season and Anthony Mwangangi can't hide the happiness on his face. This was evident when he was visited by the BvAT field officer working in his region to assess his progress in implementing bean farming practices he had been trained on. Anthony is a retired police officer who engaged in farming after his retirement, with no regrets. Though he earlier joined the transport sector for a brief spell after leaving his job, the venture was not promising, only turning to be a mere desperation. Consequently, this compelled him to seek for an alternative income generating activity, which for him, the new undertaking was farming as a business.

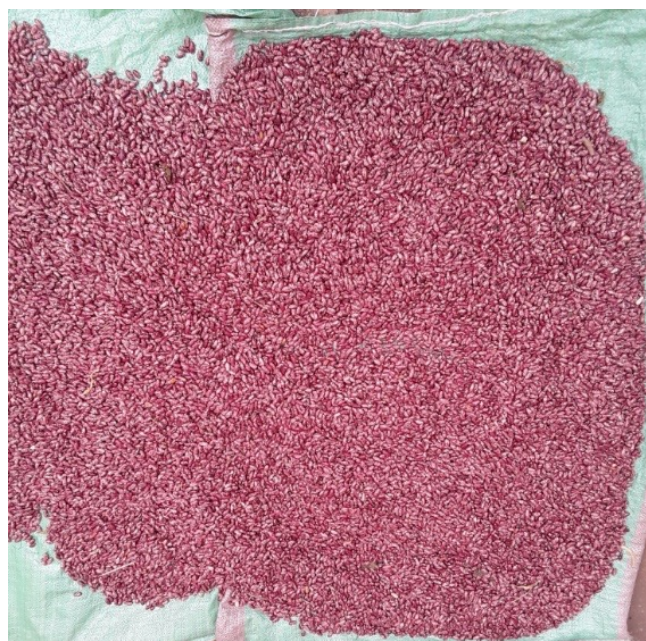
Anthony started his farming after joining a group called Mbilini Self-help Group some 5 years ago, which was visited by Extension officers from Biovision Africa Trust in Machakos County to train the farmers on different aspects of organic agriculture and share with them The Organic Farmer magazine (TOF). Anthony got interested in the farmers' magazine and would even come to the office to collect a TOF issue for himself. Anthony had been trying dairy goat keeping, indigenous chicken keeping and two years back he ventured in bean production both as a domestic and commercial undertaking.

Being an ardent reader of TOF magazine, he gets a copy every month from KALRO Katumani BvAT Resource Centre. In 2018, an issue of the magazine he had collected highlighted an article on new bean varieties produced by KALRO Katumani which could do well in the semi-arid areas of Ukambani. After consulting with the extension officers at the resource centre, he was linked with the bean legume unit where he bought a 2kg packet of the new Nyota variety.

"I sowed the seeds on a small portion of land with guidance from the BvAT team who trained me on proper land preparation, application of organic fertilizer, and organic pest and disease control methods. From the 2kg of seeds I had planted, I harvested 50 kilograms of beans," says Anthony.

One of the attributes of the Nyota bean variety is its tastefulness especially when served with chapati, pancakes or rice and as Anthony attests, his family have since enjoyed these meals.

This encouraged Anthony to plan and allocate a larger portion of land for the next season for bean production (a 1-acre piece of land). During the Oct-Dec 2019 short rainy season he planted 20kgs of beans from his harvest and while following all the guidelines as directed by BvAT staff, he managed to harvest 540 kilograms of Nyota bean variety



Nyota beans in the field.

Nyota bean variety has been performing well with little rainfall and matures early enough to beat harsh challenges which come along with poor rains. Its nutritional value is very high and is a delicacy when blended with other meals. It can be cooked as stew, mixed with maize to cook 'githeri' or ground into flour and added to foods to increase protein content. Its monetary value is very high in comparison to maize among other cereals. Beans is among the value chains promoted through the BvAT supported Machakos Resource Centre.

“I could not hide the joy and went back to Katumani and shared my experience with both the Biovision Africa Trust officers and the Bean Department Unit at KALRO”, Anthony continues to share his story. His bumper harvest triggered interest among his neighbours who sought to buy the seeds for planting. Seizing this business opportunity, Anthony sold a kilogram of the Nyota bean variety at KES. 150. “From these sales, I earned KES 67,500 a descent income which I used to expand my cattle and chicken keeping enterprises.

I feel very energized and ready to continue with this venture given that through it, my livelihood has significantly improved. Thanks to Biovision Africa Trust and its staff for introducing me to this new variety of beans”.

Farming organic way changes Mrs Salama Hussein story (Tanzania)

Mrs. Salama Hussein Makame is a member of Tindini Farmer Group Unguja Kuu (ward) in Zanzibar, Tanzania. She has been engaged in fruits and vegetable farming since early 1990s. She used to farm the conventional way i.e., using chemical fertilizer and pesticides for disease and insect control/management before receiving trainings and support through Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture (KHEA) project. She says that farming the conventional way had many disadvantages and disastrous outcomes, which include spending money to buy expensive synthetic farm inputs which not only lead to soil degradation, but also make food unsafe for consumption.

As a result of the introduction of KHEA project in Tanzania and around her area of residence, Mrs. Salama together with her group members received trainings, coaching, mentorship and all the support from the project field representative on organic farming. The trainings enabled them to acquire organic agriculture

knowledge on seed source, soil and plant health management, Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) and marketing which she believed would transform her agriculture practice through reducing cost of production (inputs), enabling easy access to inputs, and producing vegetables which are healthier and attract potential customers and markets.

Mrs. Salama now prepares BOKASHI biofertilizer and applies it on her 0.5-acre farm, where she practices vegetable farming. She decided to use BOKASHI fertilizer among other biofertilizers due to its effectiveness compared to inorganic fertilizers and also because it takes only 12-13 days to be ready for use. As a result of using BOKASHI and farming using organic agriculture practices, her vegetable production and quality have improved, and the cost of production significantly reduced. Community members and other agricultural stakeholders visit her farm for benchmarking.

Mrs Salama offers training to individual farmers and groups on different organic farming practices including the process of making and proper use of BOKASHI.

Mrs. Salama also shares that she applies drip irrigation which she acquired as a result of the income earned from selling organic vegetables at Zanzibar organic open market. By using drip irrigation, she is able to scale her production, hence earning more income.

She strongly believes that putting the organic agriculture knowledge learnt into use, will not only transform her livelihood but also the livelihoods of rural women of Zanzibar who adopt them.



VALUE CHAIN AND MARKET LINKAGES

Increased income from growing organic tomatoes in Wakiso District (Uganda)

Sentamu Frank of Buwanuka Village, Kakiri S/county and Wakiso District, Uganda, had never grown tomatoes before (neither organic nor conventional). This is because, initially, Sentamu lacked awareness about EOA practices and their benefits to farmers and consumers. His family was used to buying conventionally grown tomatoes.

Sentamu was identified as one of the farmers to be supported in growing tomatoes organically through the EOA-I project. His tomato growing cluster was reached through Kulika Uganda. Kulika organised a joint one-day organic tomato training for key members of organic tomato growing clusters which Sentamu attended. After the training, they purchased SAFA F 1 and Nouvella F1 tomato seeds, an assortment of organic pesticides, biomedicines and biofertilizers and distributed these to the key members of organic tomato growing clusters. Sentamu was one of the beneficiaries.

Sentamu was in turn able to mobilize five members of his family to work with him on the farm to grow the organic tomatoes and offered them hands on training.

The tomato seed varieties provided to the trainees are tolerant to bacterial wilt. In planting, Sentamu applied the technologies learnt from EOA-I training to construct double dug and well manured bed on which he planted 150 tomato plants and controlled weeds as guided. He adopted correct use of organic pesticides and medicines to manage tomato pests and diseases, especially during the first part of the harvest.

From 150 tomato plants, Sentamu harvested 12 (twelve) buckets of quality tomatoes and sold each at USh. 40,000/=. He was thus able to earn Ush. 480,000/= (USD 135) from sale of tomatoes over a period 3.5 months. Given that he was using family labour at no monetary cost, and only grew few (150) tomato plants, he did not incur other expenses. He regards all the money he got as profit. With it he bought iron sheets for roofing his house which was still under construction. This is a key achievement for him because currently he lives in an ancestral home, but his relatives want to repossess it. Prior to the tomato farming venture, Sentamu was finding it difficult to get a lumpsum of money to buy iron sheets to complete construction of his house. In addition, his family can now enjoy organically grown tomatoes.

Turning a farm into a market for organic fruits and vegetables in Walmera District (Ethiopia)

Fekadu Kebede is a smallholder farmer living in Medagudina village of Walmera District in Oromia region, Ethiopia. Farming is the mainstay for his family. He grows vegetables, cereal crops, fruits, and medicinal herbs in his farm which is close to one hectare. He inherited the farm from his parents who have been farming conventionally for several years using synthetic agrochemicals for plant protection and soil fertility enhancement purposes.

Mr Fekadu grew crops conventionally until he attended, for the first time, a training on Ecological Organic Agriculture which was organised by the Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) in the year 2015 with support from SDC and SSNC.

After he took part in the training, he became formally involved in the practical and field-based training sessions organised for farmers in his village. He was receiving regular follow up visits and support by ISD's field officer based in Holeta. Initially, Mr Fekadu started vegetables production with the use of organic inputs in his 300m² plot – on the side of his bigger farm to make sure that the production system works before implementing it on a wider area. Once he found out that it was effective in terms of yield and managed to cut the use of toxic and costly agrochemicals; he expanded it to a 1000 square metre plot where he grows various crop types.

As you walk through his organic plot, you will see fruit trees, vegetables, medicinal herbs, and other crops planted in rows and mixed intercropping systems where

some of the crops are planted as trap crops. Crop rotation is also one of the practices which helps him in maintaining soil health and managing pests and diseases. Mr Fekadu mentioned that he learned the systems of crop intensification from the trainings given via ISD. His farm is an example of a properly maintained agroecosystem which mimics the natural forest systems where trees, shrubs, herbs, grasses, and other plants coexist. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_Nhf3O4cx0&t=13s). Farmers in his village are learning these practices to improve agricultural production, food and nutrition security and resilience to climate change.

Mr Fekadu said that his small organic plot is a source of food and cash for his family. "I harvest surplus fruits and vegetables and part of my harvest goes to my customers", says Mr Fekadu when asked about consumption and his surplus produce. He does not have a challenge getting market for his produce as his customers come to his farm to collect vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Mr Fekadu attests that his small, organically managed plot is satisfactorily profitable.

With technical support from ISD, organised farmers in his village are processing organic certification via locally based participatory guarantee system. As has been proven in different parts of the world, PGS is an easy and effective certification scheme for smallholder farmers. Mr Fekadu and his fellow farmers are working towards PGS based certification.

Intercropping is a cropping technique in which farmers grow two or more crops simultaneously in the same piece of land in row patterns with the objective to maximize crop productivity in a given space. Smallholder farmers who have small plots use such practices as part of their production systems.

Crop rotation is the practice of planting different crops sequentially on the same plot of land. Crop rotation is done to help enhance soil fertility and optimize nutrients in the soil. It is also used as a cultural practice to combat pest, disease and weed pressure.

Crops grown in Mr Fekadu's small organic plot include Enset, Ocimum, Ethiopian aroma hops (Gesho), maize, Swiss chard, Kale, tomato, rue, peach, rosemary, Koseret (Lippia abyssinica).

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORK BUILDING

Millions of Kenyan farmers benefit from BvAT media partnerships (Kenya)

To improve awareness and knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices and technologies through enhanced access to information, BvAT formalized partnership with two power media houses in 2020. These were Standard Group Limited (SGL) and Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). The partnerships were intended to reach various communities in Kenya through TOF Radio programs as well as continue the trend and commitment of BvAT in deepening its partnership for increasing reach, impact, and sustainability.

Additionally, the partnerships will help support dissemination and access of information on Ecological Sustainable Agriculture farming systems thus increase its uptake to ensure improved agricultural production and incomes for millions of farmers in Kenya. This will also certainly contribute to Kenyan Government's Big 4 Agenda. The Government targets to achieve 100% national food and nutrition security on safe and healthy food for all.

Standard Group's Radio Maisha is one of Kenya's leading radio stations. Under the partnership, weekly radio broadcasts on inspiring sustainable agriculture topics and success stories aired on Radio Maisha station will reach over 1 million listeners. Nearly 500,000 young people will be able to see tips and advice on

Agri-entrepreneurship via The Standard Groups' well-established social media channels. Over 200,000 readers of print media will benefit from regular coverage on motivating topics related to ecological agriculture in a leading newspaper that is circulated nationwide. These channels complement BvAT's efforts to serve farmers with locally relevant information on plant, animal, human, and environmental health.

TOF Radio's collaboration with KBC comes amidst increase in pest attacks such as the locust invasion and problems of soil fertility.

Even though the partnership with KBC has been ongoing since August 2008, this new collaboration marks a new dawn for the dissemination of live and interactive vernacular programs on ecological sustainable agriculture innovations, practices, and technologies mainly to be achieved via 4 KBC regional stations, namely, Coro (targeting central region), Ingo (targeting Western region), Minto (targeting Southern Nyanza) and Mwatu targeting the lower Eastern region).

These new media partnerships have also resulted in more engaging and well-curated farming and consumer information in Kenya.



Dr. David Amudavi (BvAT ED) making remarks after signing a partnership agreement with Standard Group Limited. Looking on are Prof. Onesmo K. ole-MoiYoi (BvAT Board Trustee) and Mr. Tom Janani (Head of Radio Maisha)



Dr. David Amudavi leads BvAT team of Fredrick Ochieng and Musdalafa Lyaga in meeting KBC MD Dr. Naim Bilal

ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE POLICY MAINSTREAMING

The journey to having the Uganda National Organic Agriculture Policy (NOAP)

It all started in 2004, initiated by a group of Organic exporters and Civil Society Organisations under the National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU) umbrella. Motivated by the need to have a national guiding policy and a framework to govern the progressively growing organic sector, NOGAMU convened a series of brainstorming and strategizing meetings which resulted in lobby engagements with officials within the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). The first concept note which became ready in 2008 was presented to Top Management MAAIF (TPM) which approved it for the next policy development process. Lack of financial resources limited subsequent steps towards move the concept note to next steps.

In 2009 funding from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) supported stakeholder consultative meetings in the four (4) regions of Uganda bringing together representatives from a number of Ministries, Departments and Agencies from the agriculture sector, farmers, Local Government, media, academia among others. In 2011, TPM endorsed the policy draft for subsequent presentation to Cabinet for approval. Again, due to inadequate financial resources the process stalled for another three years.

In 2012, the document underwent further revisions to update policy statistics. Polishing of the justification for the NOAP was also recommended. As this was happening, the Cabinet introduced the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) before the NOAP policy approval. Plan International offered funding towards the development of the RIA. From 2013 to mid-2015, the process got funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) which facilitated updating of the Policy and implementation strategy, updating of statistics, addition of the RIA, a costed Implementation Strategy and Investment Plan and the Certificate of Financial Implications (CFI), from the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED).

Between 2016 and 2017, NOGAMU, PELUM Uganda and the Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable agriculture (ACSA) together with MAAIF comprised a working committee to further engage on the policy's next steps. The funding partners for these processes included Trocaire, Bread for the World, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and Biovision Africa Trust through the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOAI) that is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). A roadmap was launched, which entailed; a validation meeting of the policy documents,

lobby meetings with the line Ministers, meetings with Cabinet Secretariat staff, field exposure visits for policy makers to organic practitioners, updating statistics in the policy and continuous advocacy in different meetings to have the NOAP approved. It was during the Joint Agriculture Sector Review of 2018 that the prerequisite of having the policy was presented and included among MAAIF's 2019 priorities. This led to the cabinet approval of the NOAP in July 2019.

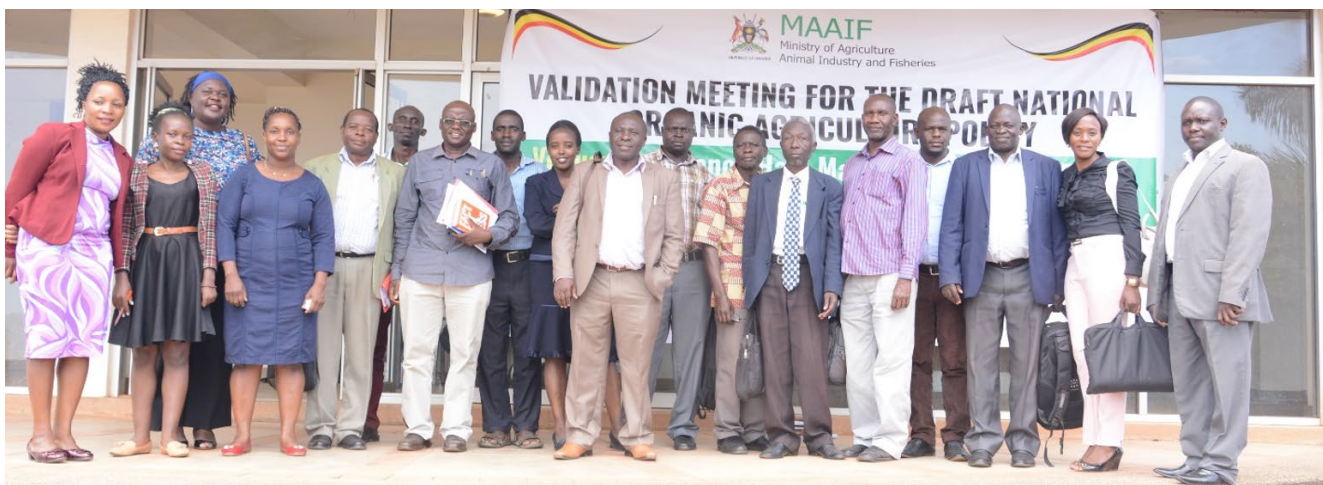
On 29th September 2020, the NOAP working committee held a successful National launch of the NOAP at the MAAIF headquarters in Entebbe in which the NOAP and its implementation plan were launched, plans for national wide dissemination kick started and the need for the development of the National Organic Agriculture Bill initiated.

The National Organic Agriculture policy (2019) that seeks to regulate the organic sub sector development in Uganda was on the shelf for over fifteen years and

the organic fraternity in Uganda that started this journey was exultant that finally the policy was launched. As mentioned by Hon. Vincent Ssempijja, Minister for the MAAIF during the launch, the NOAP was one of the best written policies Uganda has developed.

Biovision Africa Trust and partners in Uganda have supported production and dissemination of 2,000 copies of the NOAP and its strategy to inform the National Organic Agriculture Bill development process.

There is hope that these and the glitches faced by sector will be addressed once the policy is operationalized. Therefore, a bill needs to be enacted to trigger regulated implementation of the policy. The approval and launch of the Uganda National Organic Agriculture Policy, is such a success that the organic fraternity immensely celebrates. Without the determination, financial and technical support of various individuals, organizations, and other stakeholders, perhaps this success would still be a dream.



Commissioner Byantwale (in the middle with a notebook) of MAAIF during one of the learning visits at AFIRD on organic agriculture

Some of the participants who attended the national launch of the policy, including the Minister for Agriculture Hon. Ssempijja Bamunanika Vincent in a yellow shirt who launched the policy.

Benin on the way to its National Strategic Plan for Organic and Ecological Production

After mainstreaming ecological and organic agriculture into the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agricultural Sector, Benin Government decided to work on a national strategic plan for organic and ecological production in which the value chains selected under the initiative EOA are expected to benefit from public sector support

Benin situation

Benin agriculture sector is dominated by the conventional agriculture. A few civil society organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) have been carrying out activities relating to the promotion of ecological and organic agriculture. Policy measures to encourage (directly or indirectly) eco-organic farming practices have been virtually non-existent until lately when the government started to show interest due to concerted awareness creation on the benefits of ecological organic agriculture by OBEPAB and its partners.

The weak commitment of political decision-makers constituted limits and did not promote the development of ecological and organic agriculture.

Specific activities relating to EOA

With the activities of the EOA initiative, several advocacy and lobbying actions have been implemented. These include: The participation of political decision-makers, in particular the ministries of agriculture and the environment, to the various workshops organized by organisations implementing Ecological Organic Agriculture in Benin (Pillar 2 and 4); The development and distribution of policy briefs in favor of EOA; Awareness creation through mainstream media stations including radio and television debates; Awareness creation through advertising spots and consumer awareness campaigns on the consumption of organic products carried out by pillar 3; Qualifying training organized by Pillars 1 and 2 in the 2 public universities for entrepreneurs and extension agents.

Recently with the 2011 decision by the Heads of State of the African Union to give a chance to organic agriculture, the implementation of this decision, the involvement of the ECOWAS, the lobbying and advocacy work by EOA actors in alliance with other CSO and projects, the policy makers and key decision makers have started to pay attention and have paved way for the development of policies Beninese agriculture.

1. Organic and ecological agriculture is taken into account in the Benin Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agricultural Sector: Strategic orientations 2025. This can be seen in the PSDSA, Action 3.1.3., Page 35.

• Development of a national strategic plan for organic and ecological production
Benin government made the decision to get a national strategic plan for organic and ecological production. For this, a committee of experts was formed, and funds given to do research and to write the strategic plan. The committee comprises officials from the ministries of agriculture; planning; environment; health and ministry of finance. OBEPAB, the Country Lead Organisation in the coordination of mainstreaming EOA-I in Benin CLO oversees this process. The first draft has been discussed at a national level and complementary research is done. This process is at the last phase. The priority areas considered are among others:

gender, employment, and climate change. The strategic plan integrates the following axes:

- Axis 1:** Access to quality productive resources
- Axis 2:** Market development and facilitation of market access
- Axis 3:** Research-development and training
- Axis 4:** Improvement of skill levels (training)
- Axis 5:** Communication and information
- Axis 6:** Governance of the EOA sub-sector

The Presidency of Benin Republic strongly supports and hopes that this organic strategic plan will be quickly finalized for its implementation.

IMPACT OF DIGITAL EXTENSION SERVICES ON OUR WORK

Increasing productivity and incomes through digital information pathways

Sustainable Agriculture Development Initiatives (SADI) Kenya, a community-based organization from Bumula Sub- County, Bungoma County is one of the groups in Western Kenya, which has immensely benefited from Infonet Biovision, a web-based information hub on organic agriculture. Having devised an innovative approach to disseminate information through offline USB drive, Infonet has reached many farmers especially in the rural areas with practical information on ecologically sustainable agriculture.

In total SADI works with 26 farmer groups with a total of 761 farmers from both Bumula and Khasoko wards. They work with small scale farmers and pupils in primary schools and local polytechnics. Their main farming challenge was that their soils were highly acidic due to intense use of synthetic fertilizers as the area used to be one of the sugar belts of Mumias Sugar Company. Now, the company is no longer in operation and the farmers are trying to change to planting of other crops in the area with so many challenges aligned to acidic soils. This explains the reason why they were in quest for information on organic farming practices. SADI first started as a self-help group and due to increased number of farmers, decided to form different groups and registered a community-based organization to serve all the groups. Their key activities are organic farming, promotion of agroforestry, nutrition, environmental conservation, and livestock production.

The farmers are now selling vegetables and make sales of between KES 5000 – 10000 per month which they use to cater for other family expenses like buying food, paying schools and construction of their houses.

One of the members whose livelihood has immensely improved is Bernard Wanjala Makina, the chairperson of SADI who grows and sells different vegetables, mainly African leafy vegetables; nightshade, spider plant, crotalaria, jute mallow, nderema, pumpkin leaves, cowpeas, spring onions, sweet potatoes, and beans, making between KES.3000 to 6000 per month from the sales of the produce from his farm. He also has compost manure piles which he makes between KES 5000 – 10000 from sales per month.

Other group members, Linet Oese, Silas Oluoch, Christine Nangila and Edmond Fwamba; are now all entrepreneurs from the sale of compost manure, sweet potatoes, and vegetables from their farms. The group also uses the information from the offline discs to teach Ecological Organic Agriculture to 4K club pupils in the schools that they work with.

“Through the Infonet flash discs we have access to all the information that we needed to transform the degraded soil and grow diverse crops using ecologically sustainable farming methods. Usually, we have lead farmers who search for the required information and then train their groups on adopting it in their farms. The flash discs come in handy whenever a reference or pictorial is required during training. The discs have been the library for our farmers especially information on livestock and animals’ health and identification of pests and diseases.”

ADAPTATION TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Tackling the enemy; resilience in the face of COVID-19.

“If we continue to behave normally, this disease will treat us abnormally. Behaving normal under these circumstances is akin to having a death wish.....”

These were the heart-wrenching words of the Kenyan Health Cabinet Secretary Hon. Mutahi Kagwe to a highly apprehensive nation in the wake of COVID 19 outbreak, first reported in Kenya in March 2020.

With the first case reported in December 2019 in Wuhan China, Corona Virus has exponentially spread with almost every country of the world recording infections. Global statistics are pointing to a pandemic of catastrophic levels with massive consequences to our health and livelihoods. As a country, we are facing an unprecedented health challenge due to the pandemic and with the virus having no specific treatment or vaccine, the only way out is to institute measures that would curb its spread. Measures that would change our normal way of doing things in the words of the minister.

As a country, measures instituted to curb spread of the virus include cessation of movement into and out of worst hit towns; dusk-to-dawn curfew; closure of our international borders; and closure of open-air markets. Measures that will impact in every sector of our economy but the biggest casualty being the agricultural sector which is key to our economy - with the measures, a much lethal killer has cropped up - hunger. The measures

on cessation of movement into and out of towns and closure of markets have broken the agricultural value chains making it difficult for people to access food and essential services.

However, my fellow countrymen and women are very creative. Farmers have come up with ways of beating the challenges brought about by their compliance to measures put in place. In dealing with closure of markets, they have come up with ingenious ways of selling their produce. They have converted their cars into mobile markets. It is now a common sight in Nairobi seeing cars full of farm produce parked by the roadsides where people can buy from.

In the wake of COVID-19, a lot of resources have been channelled to the health ministry depriving the ministry of agriculture resources for extension services. Coupled with movement restrictions, on-farm visits and one-on-one advisory services are inaccessible to many farmers. Farmers have however turned to use mobile phones and online information platforms for information exchange. We have seen emergence of many Facebook groups for different farm enterprises and whose membership has increased exponentially. Here, farmers ask questions and get answers from fellow farmers – farmer to farmer exchange as they call it.

E-commerce has also come in to bridge the production and market gaps caused by cessation of movement. With 80% of customers having access to the internet, online markets are the new thing. Farmers are now using Facebook and WhatsApp groups and one only has to order, and the produce is delivered at the doorstep.



A mobile market along a major highway in Nairobi

Curtailed movement and the curfew have disrupted supply chains. Farmers can't travel to cities to sell their produce without breaking the curfew hour restrictions. They are now putting their produce together and one of their own takes it to the city for them. This way, not everybody has to go and those going are well resourced to comply with government measures. This has alleviated worry to many farmers since they don't have to leave their homes.

Farmers are also producing and sharing seedlings among themselves to avoid going to the shops. This has helped in reducing movement and the risk of interacting with people who may be infected. And seeing farmers interact, you'd be forgiven for thinking they are doctors if you only looked at their faces. They are wearing surgical masks and are strictly adhering to the simple measures of social distancing, washing hands, and avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth among others.

With COVID-19, behaving normally is no option – farmers have stayed true to this by innovating ways of farming and feeding the nation. When the going gets tough, the tough will keep going and among them, will be farmers.



Farmers wearing face masks carry their farm produce

Challenges

1. COVID-19. At the close of 2019 and beginning of 2020, there was an outbreak of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) through China. On March 11, 2020, the outbreak was declared a global pandemic and by end of March 2020 several countries around the world were under lockdown and quarantine measures. Project implementation plans in BvAT had to be changed as the effects of the pandemic continued to ravage and worry everyone. The world was adversely impacted and as an alternative, during the year, several virtual meetings organized and held with implementing partners to ensure that implementation of some project activities continued.
2. Climate change. Most farmers rely on rainfed agriculture and their production was greatly affected by weather changes – excessive rain leading to flooding or drought.
3. The Organic certification process is lengthy and the cost is beyond the reach of many smallholder farmers. In addition, there is limited awareness of group certification, commonly referred to as Participatory Guarantee System (PGS).

Opportunities

1. Increase focus on advocacy for Organic Agriculture policies in the countries BvAT is working in.
2. With Agriculture being a devolved function in Kenya, BvAT is looking to increase engagement and strengthen collaboration with county governments to increase support to ecological sustainable agriculture.
3. Creating consumer awareness is key in helping drive the demand for production of organic food.
4. Diversifying and scaling up of interactive radio programmes to include community and vernacular radio channels.
5. Engaging The Organic Farmer Ambassadors (TOFAS) to enhance outreach capacity. As farmer needs continue to rise and more farmers seeking for extension advisory support, BvAT personnel establishment and capacity remain overstretched and farmer trainers can support information dissemination.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

BvAT's theme during the reporting year 2020 was about “deepening partnerships for increasing reach, impact and sustainability” - see executive summary pg 11. Over the last two strategic periods (2010 – 2016) and (2017 – 2020) BvAT experienced remarkable growth on many fronts of programme scope, institutionally and funding level. As expected, this invited considered strategies that aimed on building on the past achievements while taking advantage of emerging strategic opportunities within the sector and the ever-evolving conditions for promoting agroecology and organic agriculture. For this reason, BvAT embarked on institutional strengthening and 2021 – 2024 Strategic planning processes.

The process of developing the 2021 – 2024 BvAT Strategic Plan took advantage of two consultants. Staff teams were engaged and participated in the discussions on identifying strategic needs and objectives and strategies of achieving the milestones of the plan. The consultants guided the process, working closely with the staff, the Executive Director, the Board Chair and additional support from Biovision Foundation. The Strategic Plan outlines five strategic choices that will contribute to the attainment of the overall goal. These are:

-
- Facilitating adoption of agroecology (AE)/ ecological organic agriculture (EOA) practices among smallholder farmers, with a special focus on women and youth.
 - Supporting EOA value chain diversification and development for markets and trade at local, domestic, and international levels.
 - Supporting policy and institutional framework conditions for AE/EOA sector development in Africa through influencing and enacting ecological agriculture policies/strategies.
 - Strengthening BvAT's operational and financial sustainability with a functional and sustainable business model that is based on realistic market assumptions.
 - Supporting innovations and socioeconomic research to provide useful and practical solutions facing smallholder farmers especially women and youth.
 - It is anticipated that the new Strategic Plan will be unique in such a way that an institutional team (BvAT Strategy Steering Committee – BSSC) track and report on the operationalization of the plan. The BSSC will specifically plan, support in implementation, track progress and report to the management on a quarterly basis.

We pledge our continued support to our farming communities by providing information to help them adopt resilient farming systems so that they can continue to feed us during these trying times of the pandemic.

Donors and Development Partners



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Swedish Society
for Nature Conservation



Implemented by



Implementing Partners



Financial Report

Consolidated statement of income and expenditure for period ended 31st December 2020

	2020	2019
	USD	USD
Income		
Restricted income		
Grant income	2,871,546	2,528,720
Interest income	2,821	503
Unrestricted income		
Overhead recoveries & Other incomes	158,533	359,101
Total income	3,032,900	2,888,324
Expenditure		
Research and project activities	1,590,836	1,302,052
Personnel expenses	891,759	955,175
Travel cost	35,169	105,532
Project administration costs	95,146	122,901
General expenses	230,239	360,543
Audit & consultancy	155,211	55,710
Finance cost	3,407	3,471
Total expenditure	3,001,767	2,905,384
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	31,133	17,060

Donor funding for the years 2020 and 2019

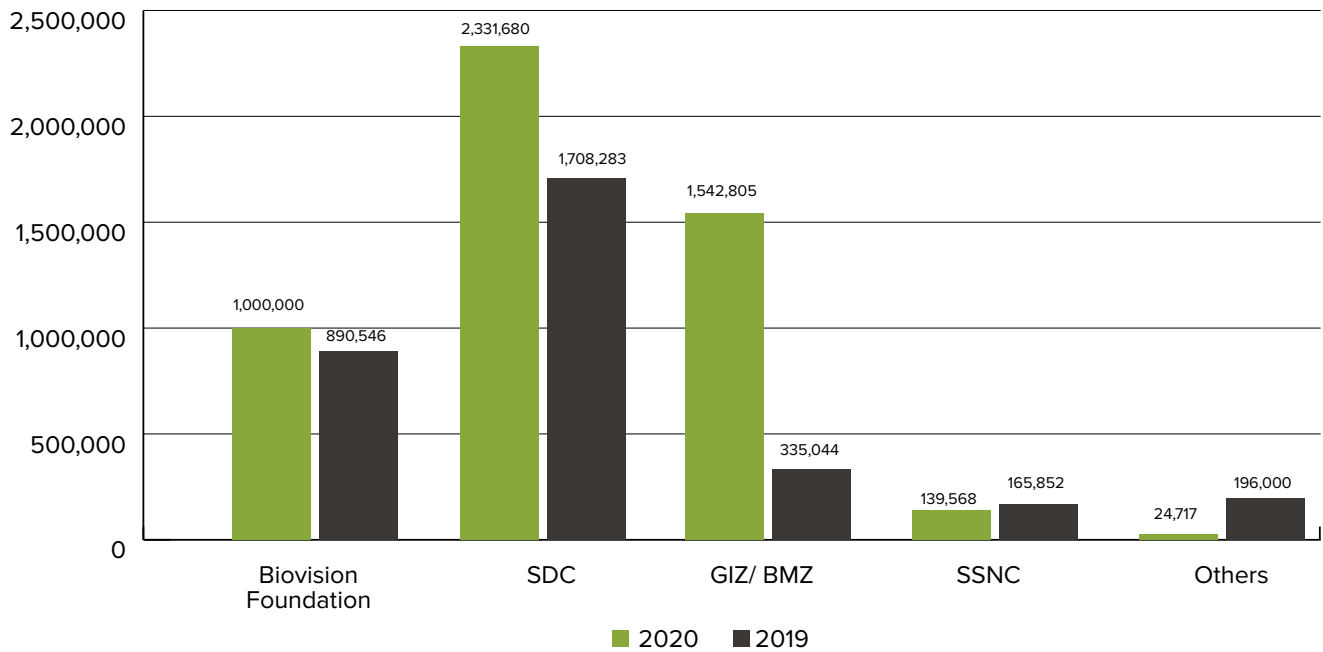


Figure 1: The funding received in 2020 and 2019. The detailed funding breakdown is provided below.

Breakdown of donor funding for 2020 and 2019

Donor	Year 2020		Year 2019	
	US\$	Percentage	US\$	Percentage
Biovision Foundation	1,015,000	20.08%	890,546	27.02%
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	2,331,680	46.14%	1,708,283	51.83%
Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)	139,568	30.53%	165,852	5.03%
GIZ/BMZ	1,542,805	2.76%	335,044	10.17%
Others	24,717	0.49%	196,000	5.95%
Total Expenditure	5,053,770	100%	3,295,725	100%

BvAT expenditure 2020 and 2019 comparison

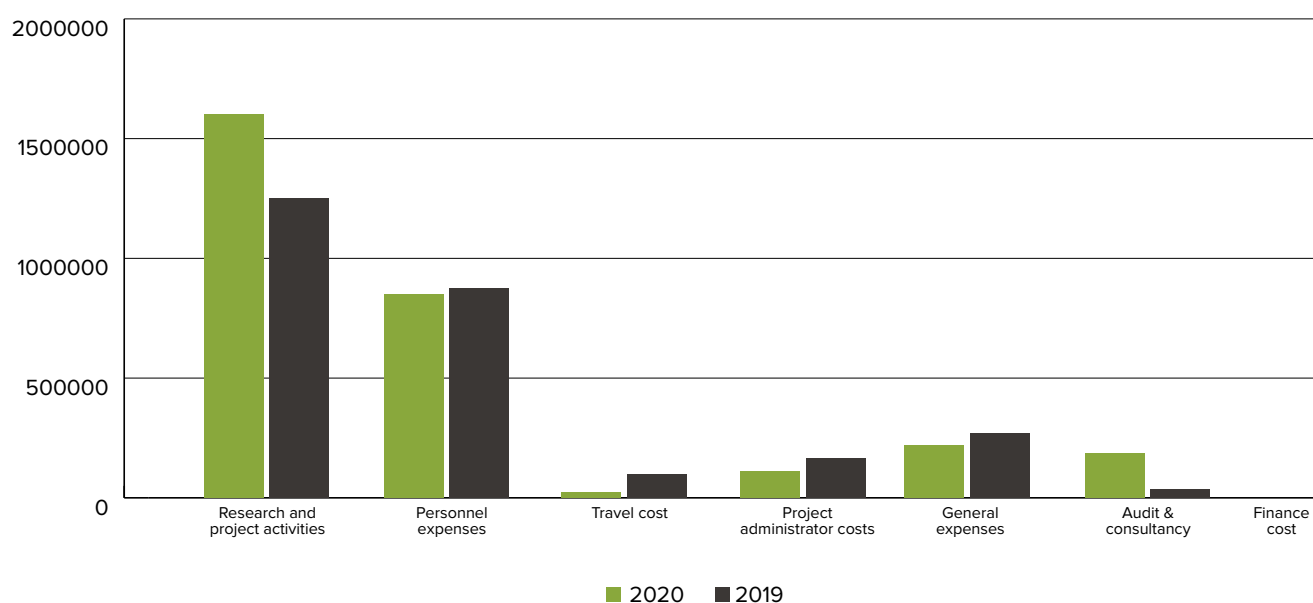


Figure 2: The expenditure movement between 2020 and 2019.

The expenditures are tabulated below.

Biovision Africa Trust Expenditures				
Expenditure Areas	Year 2020		Year 2019	
	US\$	Percentage	US\$	Percentage
Research and project activities	1,590,836	53.00%	1,302,052	44.82%
Personnel expenses	891,759	29.71%	955,175	32.88%
Travel cost	35,169	1.17%	105,532	3.63%
Project administration costs	95,146	3.17%	122,901	4.23%
General expenses	230,239	7.67%	360,543	12.41%
Audit & consultancy	155,211	5.17%	55,710	1.92%
Finance cost	3,407	0.11%	3,471	0.11%
Total	3,001,767	100%	2,905,384	100%

NB: USD 3,001,767 is actual expenditure as per audited accounts. The expenditure analysis is demonstrated by the graph based on the categories and percentage of the total expenditure.

Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2020

	2020	2019
Assets	USD	USD
Non-current Assets		
Property and Equipment	6,450	8,324
Total non-current assets	6,450	8,324
Current Assets		
Receivables from implementing partners	1,148,220	312,314
Receivable from Biovision Foundation	24,712	80,804
Other receivables and Prepayments	35,372	67,396
Cash and cash equivalents	1,499,079	1,340,620
Total Current Assets	2,707,383	1,801,134
Total Assets	2,713,833	1,809,458
Fund Balance		
Fund reserves	261,429	230,296
Current Liabilities		
Payables	113,043	153,079
Deferred income	2,321,952	1,404,729
Fundraising	17,409	21,354
Total Liabilities	2,713,833	1,809,458

Biovision Africa Trust financials statement for period ending 31st December 2020 were audited by Ernst & Young Certified Public Accountants Kenya. We received unqualified opinion on the financial statements. The detailed audited report can be provided upon request.



Biovision
Africa
Trust