

DeSIRA-LIFT Terms of Reference

Expert in agroecology and agricultural strategies in Africa

(NKE 3.20, Cat II)

Review of the EOA-I strategic plan of 2015-2025; Recommendations for the next 10 years

1. Context and background

The [DeSIRA Initiative](#), funded by the European Commission (DG INTPA) seeks to enhance an inclusive, sustainable and climate-relevant transformation of rural areas and agri-food systems, by linking agricultural innovation with research and education for developmental impacts at scale. It supports actions in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to strengthen agriculture and food systems resilience, the relevance of the national and regional innovation systems, and the coherence and efficiency of their agricultural public research and extension services related to climate change adaptation.

[DeSIRA-LIFT](#) is a service project (June 2021 – May 2025) to the European Commission (EC), Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) with the main objective to enhance the impact of the DeSIRA Initiative by providing (on-demand) services to DeSIRA project holders and partners. DeSIRA-LIFT includes three service areas aligned to the three DeSIRA Pillars: Service Area 1 supports country-led DeSIRA projects to enhance their impacts on climate-oriented innovation systems in line with more sustainable food system transitions. Service Area 2 supports the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) ex-pillar IV organizations in their Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) related roles. Service Area 3 supports policy makers on themes related to agricultural research for development (AR4D) and innovation policies and programming. DeSIRA-LIFT is implemented by member organisations of Agrinatura (CIRAD, ISA, NRI, SLU, WUR) and EFARD (COLEAD).

On request of DG INTPA, DeSIRA-LIFT can also provide support to the AUC and its partners where agendas align on themes such as agroecology (this assignment), farmer-managed seed systems or soil health. DG INTPA wishes to see that developments in agroecology are also used in policy orientation at national, regional or continental level. The AUC and the CAADP-XP4 organisations are therefore considered as important partners.

2. Rationale of the assignment

The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I) is a continental initiative that holds promise for increasing the productivity of Africa's smallholder farms, with consequent positive impacts on food security.

The EOA Initiative is aligned with the African Union (AU) Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) agenda, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) results framework, the Malabo Declaration and Agenda 2063. CAADP is one of the continental frameworks under Agenda 2063 and it aims to help African countries eliminate hunger and reduce poverty by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development as well as promoting increased national budget provision to the agriculture sector. The African Union Commission (AUC), which oversees CAADP, also set targets for reducing poverty and malnutrition, for increasing productivity and farm incomes, *and* for improvements in the sustainability of agricultural production and use of natural resources¹. In that light, the EU, through its Directorate General of International Partnerships (DG INTPA), Unit F3, and the AUC have been in contact to find entry points for cooperation on policy engagement to support the agroecological transition of food systems transformation in Africa.

The review as further explained needs to inform DG INTPA and the AUC on the development of the EOA-I and particularly how its strategic plan (2015-2025)² has been implemented, and to what extent it has

¹ [Agricultural Development | African Union \(au.int\)](#)

² [EOA StrategicPlan 2015-25Print.pdf \(eoai-africa.org\)](#)

contributed to resilient and vibrant Ecological Organic Agricultural (EOA) systems for enhanced food and nutrient security, and sustainable development in Africa.

3. Background to this assignment

The EOA Initiative (EOA-I) was launched in 2012 in Africa and established at the highest level by Heads of States. The goal of the initiative³ is to facilitate the mainstreaming of EOA into national agricultural production systems by 2025 in order to improve agricultural productivity, food security, access to markets and sustainable development in Africa. The outcomes are underpinned by the potential of agroecology and organic agriculture to contribute to poverty alleviation and food security among others, including: increasing yields in low-input farming; conserving biodiversity and natural resources; increasing net income and/or reducing costs of externally purchased inputs; producing safe and varied food; and being sustainable in the long term.

The EOA-I has continental and regional steering committees, and national and regional stakeholder platforms. In 2019, the AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment officially endorsed the 'EOAI Secretariat' as its agency to oversee the implementation and reporting the progress of the implementation of its Decision on Organic Agriculture (EX.CL/Dec.621 XVII) and endorsed Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT), a not-for-profit organisation, to host it. The MoU was signed in Addis Ababa on 20 July 2022 between BvAT and the AUC.

The AUC urged its Member States to mainstream EOA into their National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) and allocate adequate resources for its growth and development. CAADP has currently mainstreamed EOA into its Biennial Review (BR) cycle, beginning with the 3rd BR Report⁴. The Secretariat conducted a pilot study on EOA Indicators, and the 4th Biennial Review tracked three indicators comprehensively, particularly to hold governments accountable on the implementation of the EAO Initiative. These indicators are: 1) Total arable land under organic fertilizers; 2) Proportion of EOA/Agroecology producers having access to advisory services; and 3) Share of agricultural land under EOA/Agroecology practices.

The EOA Initiative was first implemented on a pilot basis in six countries, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria and Zambia. The rollout has risen to nine (9) countries – five in Eastern Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) and four in West Africa (Mali, Nigeria, Benin, and Senegal), with an overall goal of mainstreaming ecological agriculture into the national agricultural production systems, plans and policies of all 54 countries of Africa.

4. Scope and results

The main objective of this assignment is to review the implementation of the strategic plan (2015-2025)² of the EOA Initiative and to inform AUC, BvAT and DG INTPA (EC) to what extent Member States have prioritised ecologically and organically sound strategies and practices. An additional objective is to formulate recommendations for the upcoming strategic plan (2025-2035).

In particular, the review should answer the following questions:

1. What are the current policy frameworks and strategies that have been developed in line with or to contribute to the EOA strategic plan (2015-2025) in African countries? To what extent are these a direct result of the EOA Initiative?
2. What interventions and/or activities have been conducted to foster awareness, provide technical support, and advocate for supportive policies for the adoption of agroecology to be scaled up at national levels?
3. What data types on EOA and its contribution to nutrition and food security and climate change, are currently being monitored?
4. What monitoring system(s) has or have been erected to evaluate progress against the three CAADP indicators on EOA (i.e., 1. Total arable land under organic fertilizers; 2. Status of Farmer Managed Seed Systems integration into policy instruments 3. Share of agricultural land under EOA/Agroecology practices).

³ [3rd CAADP Biennial Review Report, page 118](#)

⁴ [CAADP Toolkit | African Union \(au.int\)](#)

5. What is the continental, regional and national progress of the EOA-I against its strategic objectives⁵, i.e.,
 - a) To carry out holistic demand driven, multi-disciplinary, gender-sensitive and participatory research, training and extension in support of EOA by 2025.
 - b) To collate, package and disseminate research findings and other relevant information to various stakeholders using various approaches and channels of communication by 2025.
 - c) To increase the share of quality EOA products at national, regional and international markets through value chain analysis and market development by 2025.
 - d) To foster and strengthen synergies among stakeholders in Africa through building networks and partnerships by 2025.
 - e) To lobby and advocate for the mainstreaming of EOA programmes, policies, plans in the agriculture sector as well as other related sectors by 2025.
 - f) To strengthen the governance, management and operations of EOA institutions in Africa for effective functioning and service delivery by 2025.
6. Based on the assessment results (question 1 to 5 above), what is recommended for the new strategic plan (2025-2035) in terms of key priority areas, strategic objectives and strategic approaches?

5. Approach and methodology

The review involves a desk study complemented by key informant interviews (KIIs).

The review requires:

- A thorough understanding of the EOA strategic plan;
- The gathering of additional continental, regional or national agricultural policy documents and/or frameworks, national agricultural (investment) strategies and/or plans; and the analysis of their objectives and an assessment of the implementation of activities, both in pilot countries and two or three other countries. The study should therefore not only focus on the nine EOA pilot countries but preferably sample all five regions of Africa (Eastern, West, Central, North and Southern Africa);

The interviews with key informants are important to:

- Provide a wide perspective including EOA and agroecology stakeholders across all divides;
- Ensure the validation of results with key informants;

The results of the review are to be synthesised to ensure a comprehensive overview of findings. The AU Continental Steering Committee (CSC) and its Secretariat, play a pivotal role in the review process - from inception to delivery of results – including in the supervision of the expert/s. During the inception phase it will be jointly decided who is the custodian of the Strategic Review process and its reports findings.

6. Deliverables

Deliverables of the study include:

1. A short methodological concept note;
2. A final report;
3. A policy brief on scaling of agroecological strategies and policies;
4. Presentation (PowerPoint) to be used to share results.

7. Reporting

The expert will report to the Service Area 3 Leaders and the DeSIRA-LIFT Project Director on progress and on validation of timesheets.

⁵ See chapter 7 of the [EOA StrategicPlan 2015-2025](#)

The expert is expected to submit the draft deliverables for validation to the AU Continental Steering Committee of the EOA Initiative and its Secretariat (BvAT), to the DeSIRA-LIFT team and DG INTPA.

8. Duration of the assignment

The assignment for the Non Key Expert (Cat II) includes 60 working days in the period March – August 2024.

The tentative workplan is as follows:

Activity	Days
EOA Strategic Plan assessment (incl interview with BvAT)	3
Gathering, assessing, analysing additional policy documents, frameworks, (investment) strategies	5
Develop a methodological concept note, including country selection for the review	2
Provide a synthesis per country	30
Develop a comprehensive overview on the impact of the EOA-I and its strategic plan (2015-2025)	5
Draft report and integrating feedback	5
Recommendations EOA strategy 2025-2035	2
Final Report	5
Presentation to be used to share results	1
Draft Policy brief	2
TOTAL DAYS	60

9. Timeline

Activity	Deadline	Who
Inception concept note	25 March 2024	Expert
Advisory group meeting: methodology	05 April 2024	DeSIRA-LIFT
Draft report	27 May 2024	Expert
Feedback on draft report by DeSIRA-LIFT / BvAT / INTPA	Before (or on) 7 June 2024	DeSIRA-LIFT
Advisory group meeting: results	Before (or on) 14 June 2024	DeSIRA-LIFT
Revised report	24 June 2024	Expert
Presentation to stakeholders (validation of findings and recommendations)	Before (or on) 5 July 2024	Expert/BvAT/DeSIRA-LIFT
Final report	15 July 2024	Expert and BvAT/DeSIRA-LIFT
Draft policy brief	12 August 2024	Expert
Final policy brief	19 August 2024	BvAT/DeSIRA-LIFT

10. Location of the assignment

The assignment will be predominately home-based. Travel may be required to present findings to stakeholders; travel costs will be reimbursed by DeSIRA-LIFT.

11. Required qualifications and experience.

The expert will have:

Qualifications and skills

At least MSc/MA-level in a discipline related to Agriculture, Rural Development, International Development, or, in its absence, equivalent professional experience.

General professional experience

At least 6 years' professional experience in areas directly relevant to international development, innovation with a social science perspective, knowledge and innovation systems, or likewise.

Specific professional experience

- Professional experience in areas directly relevant to agricultural policies in Africa, preferably with a focus on ecological organic agriculture and/or agroecology
- A research track record in the following fields is appreciated: agricultural or social sciences, agricultural policy, development economics.
- Understanding and/or experience with regional and continental policies and investment strategies related to agricultural development in Africa, in particular ecological organic agriculture, and agroecology.
- Knowledge of main discourses on agricultural transition pathways in Africa (e.g. sustainable intensification, agroecology, ecological organic agriculture, climate-smart agriculture)
- An existing network among regional bodies in Africa is an advantage, related to (ecological) organic agriculture.

Soft skills

- Methodological rigour, priority management and organisational skills
- Motivation, self-direction and proactiveness

Language skills

- Excellent writing and oral presentation skills in English
- Working knowledge in French is an advantage.