

Research on supportive and hindering policies for the development of organic agriculture and agroecology within the project GIZ Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture & Food Sector (GIAE)

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Purpose

The Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector (GIAE) program forms a part of the special initiative "ONE WORLD – No Hunger".

The initiative was launched in 2014 by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) and addresses food and nutrition security challenges. Organic agriculture has the potential to contribute significantly to the goals of this initiative. Within the project, IFOAM - Organics International is initiating a study to research which government policies or programs have proven to be highly effective or hindering in supporting the development of organic agriculture and agroecology or sustainable food systems in general in the project countries. IFOAM – Organics International will then use this information to update our already existing Policy Toolkit, which provides comprehensive information and case studies of agricultural policies and measures that had the effect of supporting, or hindering, the development of more sustainable food systems.

Objective

Organic agriculture and the wider agroecological movement play an important role in the worldwide attempt to tackle the challenges of climate change, land degradation, and food security. With this grant agreement, the consortium aims to support the Green Innovation Centres in promoting organic agricultural practices in the target countries, with the overall goal to contribute to the SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition.

Through the coordination of the working group and the offered technical advice, the consortium follows the objectives to:

- Enhance technical capacities and the learning among the countries through co-creation and wide sharing of knowledge from North-South & South-South
- Link activities to existing structures and initiatives (e.g. national (NOAMs) and regional networks, knowledge hubs) to achieve sustainability of services
- Increase the visibility of the interventions
- Support countries to access international and local markets
- Strengthen national sector policies and strategies
- Support organic operators in the country to prepare for the implementation of the new EU regulation

To attain these objectives, it is crucial to analyze the current state of national regulations and policies related to organic agriculture and agroecology. This research presents the legislative and policy findings of selected countries under the project, contributing to the development of a comprehensive advocacy plan.

Methodology

The research method encompasses both qualitative interviews and desktop research.

The qualitative research phase was conducted through semi-structured interviews, featuring a comprehensive set of approximately 50 questions organized into three distinct blocks:

- I. An array of national regulations
- II. An array of possible support measures
- III. An array of agriculture and food policy measures might have a negative impact

This methodology incorporates a desktop research approach, encompassing a thorough review of the chosen country's regulatory framework, national action plans, and strategies. Additionally, relevant data and insights are gathered from news articles and academic journals, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the status of organic agriculture and agroecology within the country. Key search terms used during this process include, but are not limited to organic agriculture, agroecology, ecological organic agriculture, national regulation, action plan, strategy, and policy framework.

Findings

Africa

Benin

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

Benin's economic development is heavily reliant on its agricultural sector. In Benin, with a majority of small-scale farmers, ecological organic agriculture system ensures local food security, nutrition, and ecosystem services. In Benin, there is no currently policy specify organic agriculture but there are some related strategies relevant to it. There is a national long-term vision “Benin Alafia 2025”. This vision boosts the agriculture sector through the promotion of agricultural research and innovation. Prioritizing agricultural development is crucial for Benin to establish a robust and sustainable economy. Moreover, Benin has Government’s strategic development plan for the agricultural sector from 2017 to 2025. The plan places a strong emphasis on building the capacities of smallholder farmers to enhance local production, ensure food security, and alleviate poverty. The was National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2010-2020), and it advocated for enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem management, aiming to foster sustainable development and alleviate poverty in the country.¹

Hindering measures

The Benin government is actively working towards increasing agricultural production by expanding farming areas and improving yields for various crops. However, this goal sometimes disregards respect for the environment and the planet. While there are ongoing efforts to boost the economy through agriculture development, some provisions and strategy papers do not strongly support organic or environmentally friendly practices.²

Box 1.

Beninese Organization for the Promotion of Organic Agriculture (OBEPAB) has actively promoted Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative in Benin. OBEPAB led the EOA activities, particularly supporting cotton farmers. In the face of prevalent agrochemical use in cotton cultivation, OBEPAB provided training workshops to farmers for adopting organic cotton production practices. This includes areas such as biological pest and disease control,

¹ Ozor, N., & Nyambane, A. (2021). [Policy and Institutional Landscape for Ecological Organic Agriculture in Benin](#). ATPS TechnoPolicy Brief Series, 59. African Technology Policy Studies Network.

² Ozor, N., & Nyambane, A. (2021). [Policy and Institutional Landscape for Ecological Organic Agriculture in Benin](#). ATPS TechnoPolicy Brief Series, 59. African Technology Policy Studies Network.

soil fertility and health management, intercropping with various food crops, and other organic farming techniques.³

Burkina Faso

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

In Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Agriculture, Hydro-Agricultural Development and Mechanisation is leading the development of a national strategy for agroecology and an accompanying action plan. The strategy has emerged from consultations with various actors of different sectors in the country. A commonly-defined objective is to support a consistent vision to make agroecology the engine of ecological, sustainable, competitive agro-sylvo-pastoral production, creating jobs and ensuring food security for all. A recent assessment led by FAO on agroecology in Burkina Faso identified three key strengths: the political will, the dynamism and commitment of civil society and the development of technologies and approaches by grassroots actors.

In parallel, a new version of the national programme for the rural sector (PNSR 3) is also in progress. This programme is planned to be the main federal strategy and action plan for sectoral policies, including agriculture, food security, value chains, land management and water management. Synergies between the national strategy for the development of agroecology and the PNSR 3 are to be explored. This will offer a unique opportunity to align the structural investment in the productive sectors with agroecological principles.

Hindering measures

In 2008, Burkina Faso initiated a fertilizer subsidy program aimed at boosting agricultural output, increasing income, and enhancing food availability. Although the subsidy is broadly applicable and not directed at any specific group of beneficiaries, its primary focus is on crops such as rice, maize, and cotton due to their significance in the agricultural economy. Farms eligible for the program, engaged in cultivating these target crops, can access subsidized fertilizer based on the anticipated hectares of land devoted to the specific crop. In addition to the fertilizer subsidy initiative, the Burkina Faso government introduced a seed subsidy program for cowpea in 2014. Beyond cereals, cowpea holds significance in Burkina Faso as it provides essential nutrients, fixes nitrogen, matures quickly, and contributes to cash generation in local markets.

Box 2.

³ EOA Initiative. (2019). The Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative in Benin. *Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative for Africa*. <https://eoai-africa.org/the-ecological-organic-agriculture-eoa-initiative-in-benin/>

The absence of a structured network for participants in agroecological and organic agriculture, and neither a national guideline for organic production and processing, led to the establishment of the National Council of Organic Agriculture (CNABio). CNABio introduced the Burkinabe organic agriculture standard and the implementation of the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS).

CNABio is an umbrella organization and it unites a diverse range of stakeholders, including producers, processors, traders, consumers, NGOs, and institutions along the food value chains. In 2021, CNABio had 28 certified production sites with 344 producers. Moreover, CNABio actively advocates for acknowledging organic agriculture and agroecology in national documents and legislation, the recognition of organic agriculture and agroecology in national texts and laws, and land accessibility to producers, particularly women farmers.⁴

Cameroon

Legislation and regulations

Presently, there is no established national legal framework for organic agriculture in Cameroon. Nevertheless, the country has crafted a draft law on organic agriculture in collaboration with the German Cooperation Agency GIZ. The purpose of this draft law is to formalize and encourage the practice of organic agriculture within the nation. However, its official adoption is still pending.⁵

Policies

Cameroon does not have any specific policy or national plan specifically addressing organic agriculture or agroecology. However, it does mention some actions and indicators related to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), including promoting sustainable agriculture and food security. Cameroon's National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (SND30) aims for improvement of food self-sufficiency and food security. Moreover, to address food insecurity and reduce the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cameroonian government initiated the Emergency Food Crisis Response Project (PULCCA). This initiative, funded by the World Bank, is designed to enhance food accessibility and diminish the vulnerability of specific households and family farming producers to climate-related threats.⁶

⁴ CNABio. (2021) Organic agriculture in Burkina Faso: a participatory guarantee system. Avaclim. Retrieved from https://avaclim.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CNABio_Factsheet_FR_VF.pdf

⁵ Voufo, M. P. (2022). Cameroon : Networking of African organic agriculture Hubs. La Voix Du Paysan. Retrieved from: <https://www.lavoixdupaysan.net/cameroon-networking-of-african-organic-agriculture-hubs/>

⁶ République du Cameroun. (2022). Examen national volontaire des ODD: Cameroun examen national volontaire 2022. Retrieved from <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/Rapport%20VNR%202022%20du%20Cameroun.pdf>

Hindering measures

There are no specific findings identified.

Ethiopia

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

A roadmap guidance for the implementation of the Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) policy in Ethiopia was formulated in 2018. This document draws upon the insights and knowledge gained from various EOA activities carried out by different implementing partners.⁷

Hindering measures

The Ethiopian government introduced the New Cotton Development Strategy (NCDS), outlining a 15-year plan (2017–2032) to position Ethiopia as one of the world's leading cotton producers, aiming for an annual lint production of 1.1 million metric tons. The proposed strategy includes the establishment of the Ethiopian Cotton Development Authority to supervise and execute plans, ensuring the development of a competitive sector as envisioned. As per the recent strategy outlined by the Ethiopian Textile Industry Development Institute (ETIDI), the country aims to cultivate cotton on one million hectares by 2032, constituting a third of the identified highly suitable area for cotton production. The projected outcomes include 1.1 million tons of lint and 1.4 million tons of cotton oilseed. According to the new strategy, annual cotton production has the potential to reach 2.6 million tons of seed cotton.

As part of the strategy in 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MoA&L) and the Ethiopia Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) concluded the second round of confined field trials (CFTs) for Bt - cotton in six locations within the cotton growing belt. These trials were conducted under the supervision of the Biosafety Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC), as well as the newly restructured Environment Forest and Climate Change Commission, with input from a biosafety technical working team comprised of members from various institutions.

The final report submitted by the applicant EIAR underwent evaluation by the relevant authorities. Subsequently, in 2018, the Government of Ethiopia granted official approvals for the environmental release of cotton cultivation. The country is now prepared to initiate the cultivation of two Bt cotton hybrids, namely JKCH1050 and JKCH1947, both sourced from India.

In 2018, the Environment Forest and Climate Change Commission, along with the biosafety technical working team, granted authorization for Confined Field Trials (CFTs) on Genetically

⁷ Auerbach, R. (2021). [Ecological organic agriculture policy: Ethiopia](https://www.biovisionafricatrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Ethiopia-Policy-Brief.pdf). Biovision Africa Trust. Retrieved from <https://www.biovisionafricatrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Ethiopia-Policy-Brief.pdf>

Engineered (GE) maize under the WEMA project, to be conducted over the next five years. The initial trial of GE WEMA maize took place at the EIAR Melkassa Agricultural Research Center, commencing on October 10, 2018. Maize holds significant agricultural importance in Ethiopia, being one of the country's primary cereals in terms of both production and cultivated area coverage. It is a staple crop planted by over 8 million small-scale farmers. The expected results of the trial are still to be published, however there is a high risk that after the approval of GMO Cotton, the commercialization of GMO Maize will also move forward.⁸

Ghana

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

The Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy I and II (FASDEP II) has been the overarching policy in the Ghanaian agricultural sector. For the past two years, the National Medium-Term Development Plan for the implementation of the FASDEP II has been the Investing for Food and Jobs (IFJ). The IFJ is an agenda by the Government of Ghana to transform agriculture through a private sector driven approach to improve self-sufficiency in food production as well as food and nutritional security. This is done through generating jobs, value addition to agricultural products, export enhancement and import substitution and increased incomes for all actors along commodity value chains. The IFJ has been reviewed and a draft sector plan for the next medium-term has been prepared, this is called IFJ II.

The principles of IFJ II embrace the advancement in organic agriculture growth, where the Public Sector Support Systems ostensibly support the guaranteed principles of organic soil fertility management and practices as well as environmentally acceptable pest and disease control management, more importantly on fruits and vegetable production.

Even though the Government's position on production in the agriculture sector does not discriminate between organic and inorganic agriculture, the theory of change behind the IFJ II generates keen interest and opportunities associated with the growth of organic agriculture in Ghana. In 2021-22, government officials have been encouraging farmers to adopt and intensify the use of organic manure such as poultry dropping to enrich their soil fertility and also improve the economics of production. Some actions the Government will focus on in the medium to long term include promoting increased use of organic fertilizers by: 1) support to the private sector to establish organic fertilizer processing plants and improve the quality of organic fertilizers in general; 2) establishing a secured raw material base suitable for organic fertilizer production; 3) exploring incentives for domestic organic fertilizer producers; 4)

⁸ FAS. (2018). Agricultural biotechnology annual: Ethiopia. USDA Foreign Agricultural Service.

Retrieved from

https://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Agricultural%20Biotechnology%20Annual_Addis%20Ababa_Ethiopia_12-28-2018.pdf

reviewing and enforcing the regulatory framework for the production and trading of organic fertilizers; and 5) promoting the adoption of organic agricultural inputs by farmers across the country.

Hindering measures

There are no specific findings identified.

Box 3.

Crop production and food prices are significantly influenced by the increasing cost of synthetic fertilizer and other agricultural inputs, resulting from the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine and trade restrictions imposed by China. In order to reduce the negative impact of rising fertilizer expenses on food system stability, specialists recently progressed initiatives aimed at boosting the production of organic fertilizer.

Under the Joint SDG Fund Development Emergency Modality project supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme, a National Technical Team was formed aiming to identify the opportunities and gaps of establishing a national organic fertilizer supply chain in Ghana. The team has to ensure the availability and accessibility of organic farming inputs that contribute to enhanced crop yields.⁹

Ivory Coast

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

In Ivory Coast, the second phase of National Programme for Agricultural Investment (PNIA II, 2017-2025) officially indicates integrating the concept of agroecology and organic agriculture. This includes the techniques of composting and biological pest and disease control. Apart from the promotion of organic farming practices, developing marketing channels and strategies for organic produce is also emphasized.¹⁰

Hindering measures

The organic market in Ivory Coast is substantially driven by the export demand, however, there is no national organic movement in the country. While PNIA II (2017-2025) includes relevant sustainable provisions, there is no direct support related to agroecological and organic agriculture. Government-funded programmes typically include chemical fertilizer and pesticide assistance as part of the original framework.

⁹ FAO. (2023, April 14). *FAO and WFP support Ghana to promote organic fertilizer production and use*. <http://www.fao.org/ghana/news/detail-events/en/c/1399009/>

¹⁰ Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural. (2017). Programme national d'investissement agricole de deuxième génération (2017-2025): Rapport final. Retrieved from <https://www.resakss.org/sites/default/files/PNIA%20II%20Cote%20d%27Ivoire.pdf>

Kenya

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

In 2021, Kenya introduced a national agriculture strategy¹¹ incorporating a policy statement supporting agroecology. The recognition and endorsement of agroecology have motivated the government to commence the formulation of a dedicated national strategy for this agricultural approach.

The Kenyan Health Policy for the period 2012-2030¹² aims to influence population consumption patterns of natural resources in a manner that minimizes adverse impact on health. Particularly, one of its purposes is to Strengthen collaboration with other sectors that have an impact on health.

Hindering measures

Chapter 326 of the Seeds and Plant Varieties Act of 1991¹³ imposes penalties on farmers who share indigenous seeds without certification or registration. According to this provision, offenders may face a jail term of up to two years or a fine of 1 million shillings (approximately 6800 USD).

This poses severe consequences for smallholder farmers who intend to sell or exchange indigenous seeds, as they may face imprisonment. Consequently, different civil society organizations are advocating for the amendment of this chapter. ☐

Since the approval of the National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security in 2011¹⁴, Kenya has enforced a prohibition on the importation of genetically modified organisms. Nevertheless, the distribution of genetically modified seeds, including varieties like cotton seeds, is currently ongoing (M. Irungu. 2023).¹⁵

¹¹ Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and cooperatives. (2021) '*Agricultural Policy: Food: our health, wealth and security*'.

¹² Ministry of Medical Services and Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation (2012). '*Health Policy 2012-2030*'.

¹³ Seeds and Plant Varieties Act of 1991. Chapter 326 Revised Edition 2012 [1991]

Available at:

<http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/SeedsandPlantVarietiesActCap326.pdf>

¹⁴ Government of Kenya. (2011). National food and nutrition security policy. Agricultural Sector Coordination Unit. Retrieved from <https://www.ascu.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/National-Food-and-Nutrition-Security-Policy.pdf>

¹⁵ Interview with Mary Irungu (PELUM Kenya).

Malawi

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

According to Malawi's National Agriculture and Natural Sciences Research Agenda (2017-2022), Malawi showed the country's research priorities for crop production on soil and aimed to improve soil health and fertility. Moreover, it included enhancing soil capabilities as carbon and nitrogen sinks to mitigate CO₂ emissions. Although soil is the core of organic agriculture, there is no solid provision advocating agroecology or organic farming concepts.¹⁶

Hindering measures

In Malawi as well as in previously mentioned Kenya, two seed systems, namely formal and informal, coexist. The formal seed system is predominantly composed of multinational companies, whereas the informal seed system is traditionally overseen by farmers, with some assistance from Farmer Organizations and NGOs. Since 2010, African governments, through COMESA and SADC, have been working towards regional integration of the seed industry by implementing harmonized policies and regulatory systems. However, the recent policies developed with regional integration in mind have not acknowledged the informal seed sector, providing it with minimal attention and lacking regulation. The Seed ACT adopted in 2018 prevents a person selling uncertified seeds and distributing seeds without obtained seed sellers' license.¹⁷ The seed policy in Malawi has predominantly emphasized the adoption of hybrid seeds, especially for staple crops like maize, with the expectation of substantial yield enhancements. Nevertheless, this approach neglects the substantial need for non-organic inputs, contributes to biodiversity depletion, and heightens susceptibility to climate change. In sharp contrast, numerous small-scale farmers in Malawi opt for the reuse of locally adapted seeds. This practice not only safeguards agro-biodiversity but also enhances farmer resilience.

Mali

Legislation and regulations

There is currently no specific regulation, act, or legislation about organic agriculture or agroecology in Mali. However, it is worthy to mention a significant development of the enactment of the Agricultural Land Law (LFA, loi foncière agricole) in 2017. This legislation not only ensures land protection for farmers in Mali but also strengthens their traditional land rights. Additionally, the LFA plays a role in enhancing governance, empowering women's

¹⁶ National Commission for Science and Technology. (2017). National agriculture and natural sciences research agenda (2017-2022). <https://www.ncst.mw/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/NANSRA-2017-2022.pdf>

¹⁷ Malawi. Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. (2018). Seed regulations, 2018. The Malawi Gazette Supplement, 3A, 17-36.

rights, and simplifying legal procedures for rural communities. As per the new regulations, 15% of public lands must be allocated to women's associations as well as other vulnerable groups including youth.¹⁸

Policies

There are no significant findings identified.

Hindering measures

Mali offers temporary tax exemptions for rice, oil crops, and sugar during periods of abnormally high prices for these essential commodities.¹⁹ However, to address immediate short-term issues is acceptable, but these measures are detrimental to long-term development, particularly impeding the drive for domestic agricultural advancement. Low crop productivity is influenced by several factors, such as the risks associated with climate change, poor soil fertility, and the widespread degradation of natural resources. Organic agriculture stands out as a key solution to improve this situation.²⁰

Box 4.

Established in 2004, the Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes (CNOP) has been advocating for the advancement of family farming within the context of food sovereignty, aiming to foster sustainable agricultural development in the Republic of Mali. In 2021, CNOP collaborates with various civil society organizations, jointly coordinating a "National Platform for Peasant Agroecology." This platform engages in advocacy initiatives to promote policies supportive of agroecology, as well as fostering collective actions, and delivering comprehensive training.²¹

Mozambique

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

¹⁸ Diarra, M. (2017). Mali's new law: A big step for farmer seed systems. *IISD*. <https://www.iisd.org/blog/malis-new-law-big-step-farmer-seed-systems>

¹⁹ U.S. Department of State. (2023). 2023 Investment Climate Statements: Mali. Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-investment-climate-statements/mali/>

²⁰ Tossou, H. S., Sisoko, M., Kabore, J. P., & Woldeyes, A. (2021). L'avenir de l'agriculture au Mali: 2030-2063. Étude de cas: Défis et Opportunités pour les projets financés par le FIDA. Fonds International pour le Développement Agricole. <https://sites.google.com/view/fidafrique-ifadafrika/project-management/atelier-r%C3%A9gional-2020/jour-2>

²¹ La Via Campesina. (2022). Annual report 2021. <https://viacampesina.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/01/LVC-Annual-Report-2021.pdf>

Policies

There are no relevant findings identified.

Hindering measures

The Ministerial Decree on seeds primarily emphasizes the regulation of commercial crops, overlooking the informal seed sector, which represents over 80% of the seed supply in Mozambique. This policy's excessive focus on commercial varieties may lead to the loss of traditional indigenous varieties and deprive smallholder farmers of their rights to access seeds.²²

Nigeria

Legislation and regulations

There is a national standard for organic products. It was developed through the Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) project.

Policies

Ranked as the sixth most populous country globally, Nigeria has a demographic landscape where three-quarters of its population is under 25 years of age. Despite ongoing efforts, population growth outstrips attempts to alleviate poverty, and it is anticipated that the number of Nigerians living in extreme poverty will reach 7.7 million by 2024.²³ In this context, ensuring food security has become a priority.

As of now, there is no dedicated action plan in place. However, the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (2022–2027)²⁴ includes objectives centered around promoting Organic Agriculture and implementing effective water management.

Despite having a comprehensive agricultural research infrastructure, this country inadequately allocates resources to the realms of organic agriculture and agroecology (Auerbach et al. 2019).

Hindering measures

In Nigeria, the regulation of land tenure is governed by the Land Use Act of 1978²⁵. Presently, there exists a substantial degree of state oversight in matters of land ownership, utilization,

²² Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. (2022). Policy-Regulatory Reforms and Institutional Support for enhanced Productivity of Smallholder Agriculture in Mozambique. Retrieved from <https://agra.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Policy-Regulatory-Reforms-and-Institutional-Support-for-enhanced-Productivity-of-Smallholder-Agriculture-in-Mozambique.pdf>

²³ World Food Program. "Annual country report" (2022). Available at: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000148007/download/?_ga=2.229564380.1136845492.1702641713-1896850677.1701170668)

²⁴ Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2022). 'National Agricultural Technology and Policy 2022- 2027'. Available at: <https://fmard.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/National-Agricultural-Technology-and-Innovation-Policy-2022-2027-e-copy.pdf>

²⁵ Land Use Act of 1978. Available at: <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/nig67625.pdf>

and development. This framework contributes to a heightened level of bureaucracy in the documentation of transactions, land registration, and ownership processes. Consequently, farmers encounter challenges in gaining access to land.

Togo

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

The Government of Togo published their National Development Plan in 2018 (2018-2022 with a vision to 2030), which includes provisions for the development of the organic sector in the country. In 2019, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Production and Fisheries (MAPAH) published a '*concept note for the national conversion of the agricultural sector to organic*' outlining the programme's key elements. Within this context, in 2020, MAPAH published the national strategy for developing organic and ecological agriculture for the period 2020-2030. These documents indicate a political will to support organic agriculture with the primary objective of exporting but also building the domestic market.

Hindering measures

There are no significant findings identified.

Tunisia

Legislation and regulations

Tunisia has been a proactive advocate for organic farming. The organic sector operates within the legal framework defined by the 1999 Law, which is supervised by the National Commission of Agroecology. Furthermore, the Regulations, put into effect in 2001.

Policies

World Food Programme's country strategic plan in Tunisia (2022-2025) aims to bolster the government's capacity to enhance the quality and sustainability of the National School Meal Programme (NSMP) through empowering smallholder farmer organizations to supply schools, facilitating connections between farmers and institutional markets through training, digitalization, and advocacy. Additionally, the program aims to promote agroecology and organic farming, enhance self-financing capabilities by directing financial resources and establishing partnerships with local financial institutions. Furthermore, the CSP aims to provide educational materials fostering best practices in sustainable farming, nutrition, and consumption through social and behavior change communication.²⁶

²⁶ World Food Programme. (2021). Tunisia country strategic plan (2022–2025). WFP Executive Board. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000128909/download/>

Hindering measures

The Tunisian government lacks specific financial incentives, such as conversion area payments, to promote the adoption of organic farming practices. This absence of targeted financial support poses challenges for farmers seeking to transition to organic methods, highlighting the need for policy adjustments and potential financial mechanisms to facilitate this shift.

Zambia

Legislation and regulations

There is an absence of regulatory frameworks specifically addressing organic agriculture in the country.

Policies

In the absence of a dedicated Action Plan for organic agriculture or agroecology, various stakeholders are coming together to collaborate on its formulation.

Hindering measures

In Zambia, small holders account for 80% of the country's agricultural production. The process for registration of land title is regulated in the Lands and Deeds Registry Act²⁷. The complexity of this process hinders their access to land.

The Farmer Income Support Program (FISP) has contributed to the development of smallholder agriculture and has been fundamental in the fight against poverty and hunger. (Kaoma, O. N., & Mpundu, M. 2023)²⁸. However, this program has focused only on conventional agriculture, offering subsidies for chemical inputs. Therefore, this measure has been an obstacle to the expansion of organic agriculture and agroecology.

Following the implementation of Zambia's climate-smart agriculture investment plan from 2014 to 2018²⁹, sustainable intensification has become more prominent in the country. Nevertheless, the preferable approach (in terms of protecting the environment) would be to

²⁷ The Lands and Deeds Registry Act. Chapter 185 of the laws of Zambia. Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/documents/acts/Lands%20and%20Deeds%20Registry%20Act.pdf>

²⁸ Kaoma, O. N., & Mpundu, M. (2023). "The Farmer Input Support Program and Poverty Alleviation in Zambia: The Smallholder Farmer's Perspective Using Intervention and Sustainability Theories." Graduate School of Business (GSB), University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia. School of Economics, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa. Available at: <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=127246>

²⁹ World Bank. (2019, May 12). "Zambia Agriculture Investment Plan Supports Climate-Smart Agricultural Development.". Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/zambia/publication/zambia-agriculture-investment-plan-supports-climate-smart-agricultural-development#:~:text=The%20Zambia%20Climate%2DSmart%20Agriculture,the%20'triple%20win'%20of%20productivity>

advocate for extensive farming over crop intensification. Presently, a new climate-smart agriculture investment plan is in the process of being formulated.

Asia

India

Legislation and regulations

The National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) was launched in 2001 to provide standards and certification for organic products.

Policies

Government of India has been encouraging/ promoting organic farming under two dedicated schemes, namely, Mission Organic Value Chain Development for Northeastern Region (MOVCDNER) and Parampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) since 2015.

The Parampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)³⁰, is a scheme to promote organic agriculture and the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for India, tackling the opportunity by offering an alternative PGS system that is government-facilitated and benefits from important and stable resources enabling rapid uptake of PGS in the country. The National Center for Organic and Natural Farming built an online system to facilitate farmers' groups to register the PGS for both Organic and Natural Farming. The PGS recognition is done by NGO accredited as regional councils, working on a voluntary basis. This scheme allowed a huge increase in the both PGS. Nowadays, in 2023, according to the governmental PGS India website³¹ there are more than 60.000 groups and 1,5 million farmers (certified organic or in conversion) involved in PGS-India with a cumulative area of around 1 million hectares.

The Mission Organic Value Chain Development for Northeastern Region (MOVCDNER)³² is that the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched this Central Sector Scheme for implementation in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

The scheme aims at development of certified organic production in a value chain mode to link growers with consumers and to support the development of entire value chain starting from inputs, seeds, certification and creation of facilities for collection, aggregation, processing, marketing and brand building initiative.

³⁰ Parampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) Manual for District- Level Functionaries, 2017 <https://darpg.gov.in/sites/default/files/Parampragat%20Krishi%20Vikas%20Yojana.pdf>

³¹ National Center for Organic and Natural Farming website <https://pgsindia-ncof.gov.in/>

³² [Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. \(2018\). Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Regions \(MOVCDNER\): Operational Guidelines](#). Retrieved from https://nmsa.dac.gov.in/PDF/MOVCDNER_Operational_Guidelines.pdf

The assistance is provided for cluster development, on/off farm input production, supply of seeds/planting materials, setting up of functional infrastructure, establishment of integrated processing unit, refrigerated transportation, pre-cooling/ cold stores chamber, branding, labelling and packaging, hiring of space, hand holdings, organic certification through third party, mobilization of farmers/processors etc.

Organic Farming has also been supported under other Schemes viz Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), Network Project on Organic Farming under ICAR. Third party certification of organic farming is promoted by Agriculture Processed Food and Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce.

Some states in India have their own organic policies and have adopted the PGS India system or the Third-party system or a combination of both based on their roadmaps.

Hindering measures

Fertilizer subsidy is one of the hindering measures for organic agriculture. India has a complex and costly system of subsidizing fertilizers to farmers. The subsidy system also does not adequately incentivize farmers to use fertilizers efficiently or to adopt organic or agroecological practices.

Vietnam

Legislation and regulations

The government implemented Decree 109/2018/ND-CP in 2018 to regulate organic farming and develop the industry from 2020 to 2030.³³

Policies

In recent years, the Vietnamese Government has shown a dedicated commitment to drive the transformation of the country's food systems. This commitment is aimed at fostering sustainability and resilience to climate change, promoting environmental conservation, increasing the value of agricultural products, and enhancing the livelihoods of farmers. The determination to reshape Vietnam's food system is clearly outlined in the 2021-2025 socio-economic plan, which articulates a resolution to cultivate agriculture that is green, clean, ecological, organic, hi-tech, and smart—capable of adapting to climate change. Moreover, the National Strategy for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (2021-2030), projecting a vision until 2050, explicitly underscores the importance of agroecological solutions in achieving these goals.³⁴

³³ Government of Vietnam. (2018). Decree on organic agriculture. Retrieved from <https://www.mard.gov.vn/Decree-109-2018-ND-CP-on-organic-agriculture.pdf>

³⁴ PM Vietnam (2022) DECISION approving sustainable agriculture and rural development strategy for the 2021 – 2030 period, with a vision to 2050. Available at: <https://icrafCIFOR->

Complementing this commitment is the recently sanctioned Vietnam National Action Plan on Food System Transformation (NAP-FST), aligning with principles of Transparency, Responsibility, and Sustainability in Vietnam by 2030. The NAP-FST was approved by the Vietnamese Prime Minister on March 28, 2023. This action plan aims to guide and coordinate the efforts of domestic and foreign organizations, steering them towards the development of a responsible, transparent, and sustainable food system in Vietnam by 2030. It serves as a foundational framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, in Decision 300/QĐ-TTg (2023) on the NAP-FST, Vietnam sets a target of achieving a minimum of 2.5% agricultural land for organic production and doubling the use of organic fertilizers compared to 2020.²

Hindering measures

There are no significant findings identified.

Conclusions

Many governments are increasingly recognizing the importance of agroecology and organic agriculture. Efforts are being made globally to integrate agroecology and organic farming into agricultural policies. However, the transition often requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach, involving multiple stakeholders and addressing various economic, social, and environmental aspects.

An opportunity for such a shift is presented by the recent increase in fertilizer prices. Due to the war and subsequent sanctions related to Russia and Belarus, which are top exporters of nitrogen as well as potash fertilisers, the availability of these fertilisers worldwide has been significantly diminished. Particularly in Africa, a region already grappling with economic hardships, the heavy dependence on fertilizer imports from Russia is posing significant challenges in finding alternative sources for the upcoming 2022-2023 farming season. The impact is particularly pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa, where agricultural output has been significantly impeded due to restricted access to fertilizers, worsening an already precarious situation. In addition to their high cost, chemical fertilizers have been associated with environmental degradation, runoff pollution, and the release of greenhouse gases, all contributing to the worsening effects of climate change.

A logical step to get the countries out of the fertilizer trap would be for policymakers to subsidize alternative agroecological technologies based on practices like crop rotation, natural fertilizers, and pesticides, which could help reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers while maintaining high yields. This approach would not only reduce costs for farmers, but also mitigate the environmental damage caused by nitrogen fertilizers. As our research shows, although viable, these remain to be the Cinderellas of agricultural policy, waiting for their immense potential to be recognized. Some of the reasons are probably the following:

- Governments may prioritize short-term economic gains and productivity over long-term sustainability. In some cases, conventional agriculture with synthetic inputs may appear to provide quicker and more predictable yields, which can be compelling for policymakers focused on immediate economic outcomes.
- There may be a lack of awareness and understanding about the benefits of agroecology and organic farming among policymakers, farmers, and the public. Education and awareness campaigns are crucial to highlight the long-term advantages, such as improved soil health, biodiversity, and resilience.

- Existing agricultural infrastructure, including supply chains and distribution networks, may be geared towards conventional farming practices. Shifting to agroecology may require significant changes in these systems, which can be challenging and costly.
- The availability of research and extension services promoting agroecological practices may vary. Governments may need to invest in research and extension programs to provide farmers with the necessary knowledge and resources to transition successfully.
- Access to organic markets and certification processes can be barriers for farmers transitioning to organic agriculture. Governments may need to support farmers in navigating certification requirements and creating market opportunities for organic produce.
- Conventional agriculture often receives subsidies and policy support that may not be extended to agroecological and organic practices. Governments may need to reassess and reallocate subsidies to encourage more sustainable farming methods.
- The global trade system and international agreements can sometimes favor conventional agricultural practices. Governments may be hesitant to adopt practices that could be perceived as divergent from global trade norms.
- Change can also be met with resistance, both from farmers accustomed to traditional practices and from stakeholders with vested interests in the conventional agriculture sector.

Governments in these countries should redirect food systems towards a more sustainable and equitable trajectory. This entails overhauling various aspects of food production, especially the concentrated markets for agricultural inputs and crops. Shifting away from heavy dependence on chemical fertilizers has the potential to transform the existing food crisis into a meaningful opportunity.