

Call for expression of interest for hosting the Secretariat of the Agroecology Coalition

1. What is the Agroecology Coalition?

The “[Coalition for Food System Transformation through Agroecology](#)” - or “Agroecology Coalition” for short - was created during the UN Food Systems Summit held in September 2021. The Coalition proposes agroecology as the way forward to accelerate food system transformation, addressing multiple challenges in the framework of the SDGs.

As a multi-stakeholder partnership, the Coalition calls for governments and all actors engaged in food system transformation to join forces and catalyze collaborative action to scale up agroecology on the ground.

The Coalition brings together different countries and various types of organizations (those of the United Nations, Farmer’s organizations, Research organizations, Indigenous People’s organizations, Civil Society organizations and Philanthropic Foundations). As of March 2022, 30 Countries and 52 organizations are members of the Coalition.

2. Why is the Agroecology Coalition timely for scaling up agroecology?

Current agricultural and food systems both contribute to, and are impacted by, major environmental, climate, social and human health challenges, while urgently needing to improve global food security and nutrition. Food systems increasingly need to adapt to climate change effects such as increasingly frequent and severe floods and droughts, at the same time as accounting for a third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Some agricultural practices contribute to the erosion of biodiversity, environmental pollution, land degradation and the scarcity of water resources. More than 800 million people still suffer from hunger, two billion have micronutrient deficiencies and two billion are overweight or obese, while a third of the food produced globally is lost or wasted. Many farmers and food system workers endure precarious livelihoods and social inequalities that exacerbate the difficulties in ensuring adequate nutrition for all. The interrelated challenges linking food systems with planetary health (Figure 1) require systemic responses rather than siloed attempts to address them one at a time.

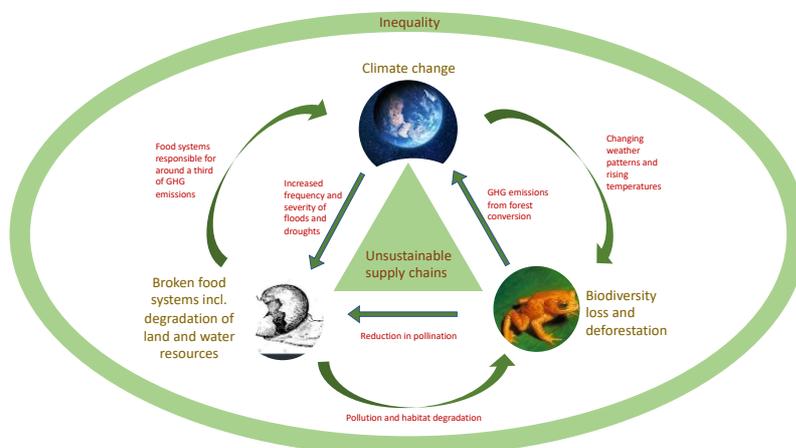


Figure 1. Interrelated global challenges.

Agroecology, including regenerative agriculture where it respects the 13 principles of agroecology defined by the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)¹, can be a powerful lever for systematically solving these major challenges and providing sustainable solutions to the issues of food security and nutrition, the fight against poverty and social inequalities, the adaptation to climate change, the preservation of biodiversity and natural resources, and the fight against zoonotic diseases – all the while working for a transformation of agricultural and food systems compatible with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Climate Agreement, the post-2020 objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and those of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Agroecological principles apply to all forms of sustainable agriculture and food production, including crop, livestock and pastoral systems, agroforestry, fisheries and aquaculture². The application of these principles also contributes to improving gender equality, making agriculture more attractive for young people, creating dignified income and living conditions, and contributing to healthy diets through sustainable food systems.

With the increasing recognition of the need for transformative changes to our food systems, this is the right time to build on various ongoing agroecology initiatives and policies to respond to the multiple challenges facing food systems. Initiatives such as “Scaling-up agroecology”, “4 per Thousand”, the “Accelerator of the Great Green Wall” in the Sahel, the “Alliance for agroecology in West Africa” supported by ECOWAS, the “Transformative Partnership Platform for Agroecological Transition” (TPP), “Community-managed Natural Farming” in Andhra Pradesh, and many programs implemented by governments, producer and civil society organizations or research institutions, provide a strong foundation for the Coalition to build on.

3. Seeking a permanent host for the Agroecology Coalition Secretariat.

An embryonic secretariat function has been established on an interim basis, hosted by the Transformative Partnership Platform on Agroecology (TPP) and supported by Biovision and UNEP. As a coordinating body, this has allowed Coalition members to share information and recruit new members to the Coalition. It has also provided a mechanism to circulate some initial proposals for the structure and function of the Coalition for discussion by the Coalition members during a first meeting that was held on 15 December 2021.

During this first meeting, it was decided to establish a Secretariat reporting to the Steering Group of the Coalition and a series of working groups on specific aspects (research, policy, investment, implementation and communication). It is foreseen that the Secretariat will be hosted by an existing organization, but should operate as an independent Secretariat, reporting only to the Steering Group of the Coalition. It is expected that the secretariat be slim and effective and should be able to act decisively and speedily.

¹ HLPE 2019. Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf>

² Wezel A, Gemmill Herren B, Bezner Kerr R, Barrios E, Gonçalves ALR and Sinclair F (2020). Agroecological principles and elements and their implications for transitioning to sustainable food systems. A review. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* **40**: 40 13pp. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-020-00646-z>

4. Functions of the Secretariat

It is expected that, initially, one senior coordinator and a junior support staff should be recruited as soon as possible by the agreed hosting organization to form the core of the Secretariat. Additional staff can also be seconded to the Secretariat by other organizations.

The functions of the Secretariat will be to:

- Support the implementation of the work of the Coalition
- Organize meetings of the Steering Committee and the Coalition membership
- Liaise with the group of the Friends of Agroecology
- Provide visibility to the Coalition through the development of the website and other means of communication, notably to increase membership
- Collate data about the work carried out by the Coalition members / working groups
- Prepare regular reports on the work of the coalition
- Liaise with the agroecology donor group and facilitate access to resources for the Coalition
- Developing adequate baselines and implementing mechanisms to evaluate the progress of an agroecological transformation
- Coordinate with the other Coalitions for opportunities of synergies, or lesson sharing
- Prepare annual work plans for the Secretariat to be approved by the Steering Committee

5. Invitation of proposals for hosting the Secretariat

Organizations that would be interested in hosting the secretariat of the agroecology coalition are invited to send a proposal to the interim secretariat at: secretariat@agroecology-coalition.org

Proposals should be received by **31 May 2022** and should include the motivation for hosting the secretariat and provide a detailed description of the conditions offered by the candidate host.

Proposals will be examined by the Steering Group of the coalition. The selection will be made using the following criteria:

- Recognition of the candidate host of the secretariat as active in the field of agroecology;
- Multistakeholder management experience
- Ability to allow for the secretariat to operate independently, reporting only to the Coalition
- Level of overhead charges
- Facilities, systems and experience of organizing similar functions commensurate with the role
- Location and quality of office facilities
- Quality of internet access and ease of communication