

Bringing agroecology to scale in Eastern and Southern Africa

Update on countries' National Agroecology Strategies

There is a strong drive in Eastern and Southern Africa to scale up agroecology nationally through National Agroecology Strategies (NASs).

While countries such as Tanzania and Kenya launched their strategies in November 2023 and 2024 respectively and have since moved into early stages of implementation, others like Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe are currently in the process of finalizing or initiating their own strategies.

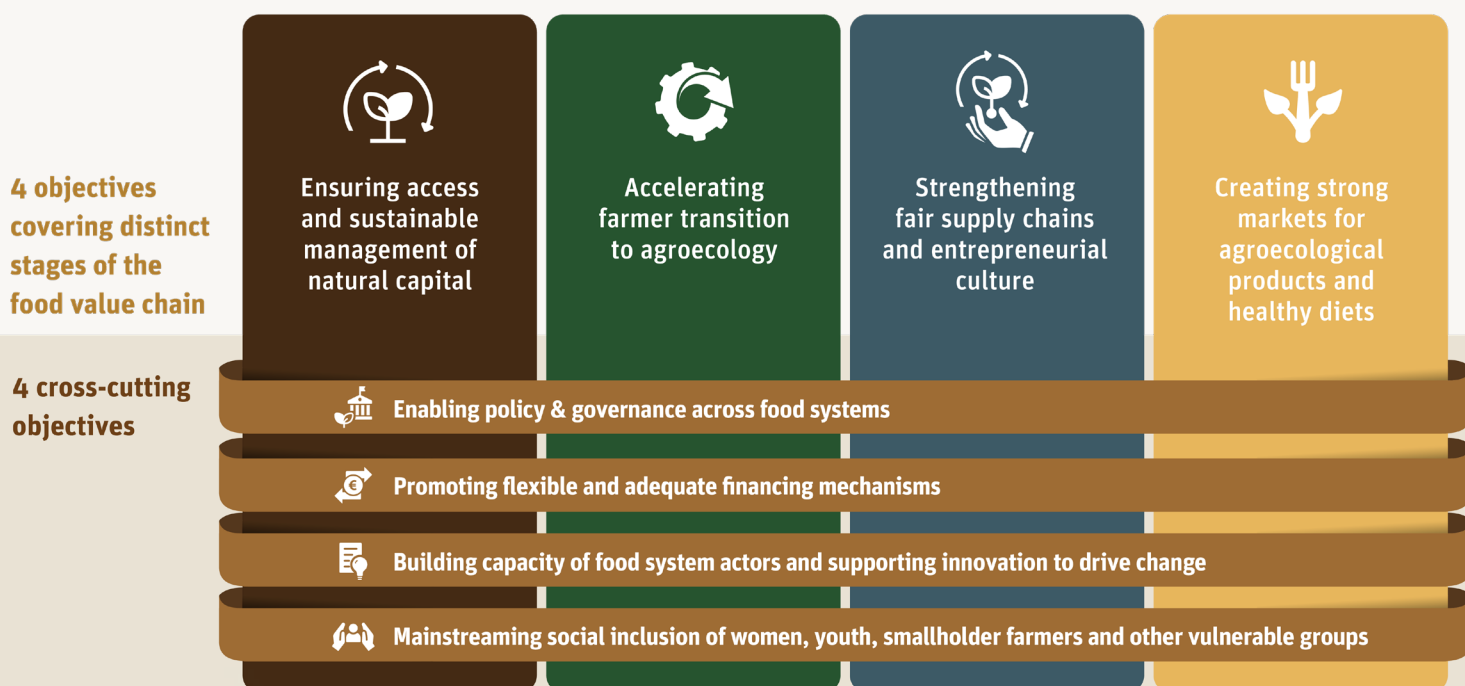
In October 2023, the Biovision Foundation initiated a Community of Practice with government representatives and civil society actors working on these strategies in Eastern and Southern Africa. This brief provides an overview of country progress and key lessons learned as of July 2025.

About: NASs are comprehensive, rooted in agroecological foundations, and respond to multiple societal needs

NASs are overarching frameworks that strengthen a country's policies related to food systems and outline specific policy interventions that accelerate food system transformation through agroecology. They drive improvements in food security, climate resilience, biodiversity, water usage, soil protection and farm incomes, among many others. NAS interventions are aligned with agroecological principles.¹ Those interventions target various parts of the food system, including agricultural production, access to natural resources, research and extension, education, value chain development, markets, consumption and food waste governance.

¹ Either aligned with the 13 Agroecological Principles identified by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) or the 10 Elements of Agroecology developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

4x4 framework of strategic objectives. Each strategy typically includes interventions to achieve a set of common objectives. The figure below highlights the most frequent objectives (four covering the food value chain and four cross-cutting), while not presenting an exhaustive list.



**Ethiopia.** National Agroecology Strategy (NAES)

Status:

- November 2024:**
 - Kick-off of the NAES process.
 - Establishment of a dedicated, and multi-institutional taskforce driving drafting of the NAES.
- August 2025:** Write-shop held with over 40 experts from 25+ institutions to define six strategic objectives and outline actions, financial frameworks, and implementation plans.
- October 2025:** Broader stakeholder consultation to finalize the NAES.
- December 2025:** Validation workshop to present the final version of the NAES and submit it to parliament.

Key feature of Ethiopia's NAES:
Strategy development is led by the government, which highlights strong interest and ownership in NAS development.

**Uganda.** National Agroecology Strategy, 2023/24–2028/29

Status:

- 2023-2024:** Multiple rounds of consultations, stakeholder meetings, and revisions of the NAS draft led by the Inner Working Group, composed of key food system and government actors.
- October 2024:** First public presentation of the NAS draft during the National Agroecology Actors Symposium.
- January-February 2025:** Re-strategizing meeting with Minister of Agriculture on NAS approval.
- July 2025:** The NAS has been submitted to the Permanent Secretary for approval.


Key feature of Uganda's NAS:
The National Agroecology Strategy (NAS), prioritizes improving food production, protecting the environment, enhancing livelihoods, and promoting sustainable practices. It builds on existing National Organic Agriculture Policy, efforts by well-established organic sector and support by a strong food system actor ecosystem.

**Zambia.** National Agroecology Strategy

Status:

- 2024:** Drafting of the NAS with support from a multi-stakeholder Technical Working Group.
- May 2025:** Publication of Zero Draft.
- Since June 2025:** Regional multi-stakeholder consultations at province-level.

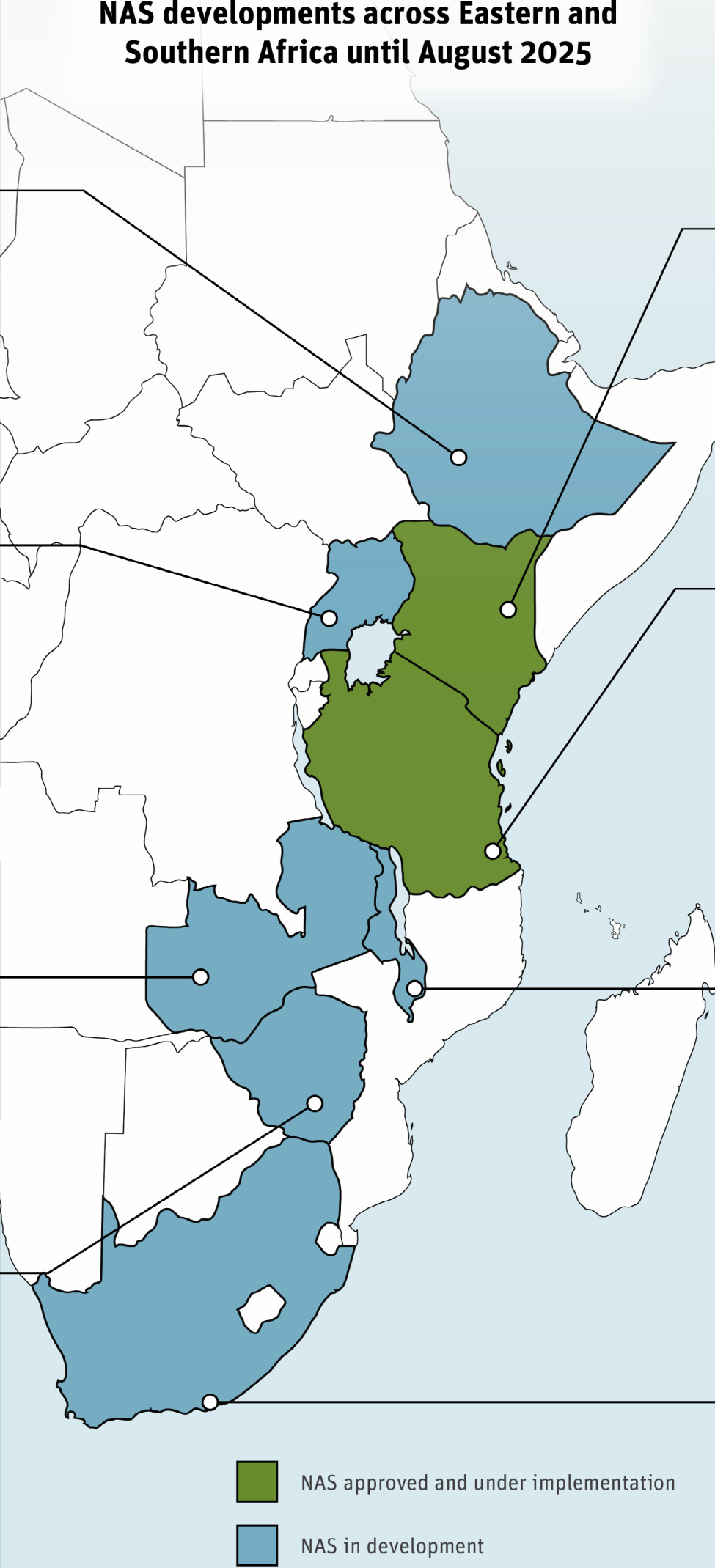
Key feature of Zambia's NAS:
High level of alignment between government and civil society on agroecology's definition and objectives; Strong emphasis on implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as resource mobilization.

**Zimbabwe.** National Agroecology Policy and Strategy

Status:

- March 2024:** NAS adopted by government as one of the principal policy frameworks of reference for the Agriculture Food Systems and Rural Transformation Strategy (AFSRTS).
- 2024:**
 - Coordination platform established for lessons-sharing and key updates on agroecological research and promotional activities.
 - Beginning of implementation through 'quick-win' interventions (e.g. agroecological curriculum for extension service training).
- Q3/4 2025:** Official launch and operationalisation planned as part of the Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation element within the National Development Strategy II (2026–2030).

Key feature of Zimbabwe's NAS:
Research and Development; Capacity building and awareness raising; Marketing and market development.



**Kenya.** National Agroecology Strategy for Food System Transformation 2024-2033 (NAS-FST)

Status:

- July 2024:** Stakeholder validation (CSOs, research institutions, farmers, academia, and private sector), followed by government approval.
- November 2024:** Official launch of the NAS-FST.
- Since January 2025:** Development of a monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework; Development of extension and training manual on agroecology at national level; Elaboration of a guide for policy development and implementation at county-level aligned with NAS-FST.
- August 2025:** Inception of the National Technical Committee on Agroecology to coordinate implementation.

Key feature of Kenya's NAS:
Emphasis on policy coherence with existing frameworks. Implementation is foreseen with strong support from subnational (county) authorities and actors.

**Tanzania.** National Ecological Organic Agriculture Strategy (NEOAS)

Status:

- November 2023:** Launch of the NEOAS.
- Q1/2 2024:**
 - Formation of the NEOAS Implementation Task Force (ITF), as the coordination body of the NEOAS
 - 6 priority areas identified, including initial costing: (1) Bioinputs; (2) Smallholder farmer training; (3) Market access for agroecological products; (4) Land-use planning; (5) Investments into agroecological value chains; and (6) Coordination of involved food system actors.
- Since January 2025:** Discussions on pilot implementation in 3 landscapes (Central, Northern and Lake zone region), including set-up of Bihawana Farmers Training Centre (BFTC), as a Centre of Excellence for Ecological Organic Agriculture.

Key feature of Tanzania's NEOAS:
Emphasis on smallholder farmer knowledge co-creation, access to bioinputs, agroecological extension services and markets.

**Malawi.** National Agroecology Strategy

Status:

- 2024:**
 - A policy gap analysis highlighted the lack of policy support for agroecology and the usefulness of a NAS.
 - As a result, strong intra-government support to initiate a NAS process.
- Q2 2025:**
 - Dialogue with multiple stakeholders during the National Agroecology Conference, including a presentation assessing the alignment of relevant national policies with agroecology.
 - Beginning of NAS development.

Key features:
The NAS will streamline and monitor government efforts to support key agroecology principles and practices in Malawi, particularly those related to input reduction, recycling, animal health, connectivity, soil health and co-creation of knowledge.

**South Africa.** National Agroecology Framework for South Africa (NAFSA)
Related agroecology policy: Protected Areas and Designated Agricultural Land Act (PDALA)

Status:

- Early 2023:** Civil society organisations met with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land and Rural Development, calling for a National Agroecology Strategy.
 - Development of the NAFSA by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and the Department of Agriculture, building on previous efforts under the PDALA.
- January 2025:** Legislation incorporating some agroecological elements (e.g. indigenous crops, land degradation, and soil health) under the PDALA passed by the President.
 - Civil society is actively participating in Food Systems Transformation pathways, linked to the development of National Food and Nutrition Security Plan (NFNSP) 2024-29.
- Q2 2025:** Department of Agriculture granted ARC funding for a 5-year project to begin implementing the NAFSA, including awareness raising, training, practical demonstration and research on economic benefits of agroecology.
- Q4 2025:** Public consultation foreseen for the NAFSA and NFNSP.

Key features:
Adoption of HLPE's 13 principles of agroecology as the framing for the NAFSA; Government funding committed for 5-year project to start implementation of NAFSA and institutionalise agroecology in the South African government.

Key take-aways across countries

Progress Across Countries

- Significant advancement in NAS development, with countries progressing at different stages.
- Beyond NASs, agroecology principles can be embedded into broader agricultural or food systems policies, while priority issues can be addressed through targeted policies (e.g., protection of indigenous seeds and crops).

Government Engagement & Ownership

- Continuous government involvement in NAS working groups, at the highest level possible from start to finish, strengthens process continuity and implementation.
- Agroecology champions within government can play a decisive role in defending NAS processes, identifying resources and fast-tracking approvals.
- Local governments can serve as key drivers of agroecological policies, helping leverage resources and accelerate transition.

Alignment with National Priorities

- Linking agroecology to broader government goals and related public policies fosters stronger buy-in and funding.
- Building agroecology literacy and capacity within ministries strengthens institutional ownership.
- Integrating relevant agroecology interventions from NAS into broader policy plans (e.g., NDCs, NBSAPs) can support financing and implementation.

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

- Inclusive platforms bringing together broad societal interests - government, civil society organizations, farmers, research institutions, private sector, and development partners- are central for strategy development, coordination, alignment and trust. Institutionalizing these platforms and making them more sustainable can support implementation and monitoring.
- External financing and cost-sharing among involved actors eases financial constraints of the NAS development process.
- Collaborative identification of top- priority measures can focus resource mobilization and strengthen critical mass for implementation of key measures.

Addressing Resource & Funding Needs

- Early budget advocacy and diversifying financing options can help secure needed resources for agroecological interventions.
- Political windows, such as pre-election phases, can accelerate approval and commitments.
- Partnering with philanthropies, technical and development actors can fill funding gaps and create linkages with additional donors and financial actors.

Awareness, Advocacy & Capacity-Building

- Continual attention to securing political will for the NAS and agroecology is essential for NAS completion and implementation, and requires constant focus on benefits for farmers, food security and resilience.
- Limited knowledge on agroecology and specific intervention areas in government and among food system actors can be effectively addressed through targeted training, awareness programmes, and communication platforms.

Interventions

- Market development interventions and balanced focus on goals and actions for both production (push) and market (pull) can accelerate scaling of agroecology at national level.
- Investments in capacity building in farmer-led and civil society organizations creates needed catalysts for NAS implementation in markets, advocacy and farmer transition.
- Focus on actionable, high-impact measures answering both “how” and “who”: “It is better with 10 clear interventions than 100 good intentions.”
- Cross cutting measures for social inclusivity and capacity building of frontline organisations can be integrated across interventions in the value chain, from soil to farmers, supply chain and market development.

Monitoring

- Some form of institutionalized multi-stakeholder platform or implementation task force, recognized and empowered by government, is needed to drive, coordinate and monitor implementation.
- Integrating agroecological indicators into national agricultural databases enables tracking and informed policymaking.

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Find out more information on NAS developments:

<https://www.biovision.ch/infopool/national-agroecology-strategies/>