

Coalition for food systems transformation through agroecology

1. Background

Current agricultural and food systems face major environmental, climate and health challenges, while responding to the challenges of food security and nutrition. Food systems are increasingly impacted by climate change. At the same time, they contribute a third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and certain 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 is lost or wasted globally. The precarious livelihoods and social inequalities, faced by many farmers and food system workers, exacerbate the difficulties in ensuring adequate nutrition for all.

Agroecology, including regenerative agriculture that respects the 13 principles of agroecology defined by the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), can be a powerful lever for 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; this by 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). The agroecology principles apply to all forms of sustainable agriculture and food production, including crop, livestock and pastoral systems, agroforestry, fisheries, aquaculture etc. The application of these principles also contributes to improving gender equality, making agriculture more attractive for youth, creating dignified income and living conditions and contributing to healthy diets through sustainable food systems.

Various ongoing initiatives and policies attest to the potential of agroecological approaches to respond to the multiple challenges facing food systems. This is the case, for example, of the global initiatives “Scaling-up agroecology”, or “4 per Thousand”, or of 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 on all continents.

2. Membership

As of April 2022, coalition members include 32 countries and 59 organizations, including farmers' organizations; Research organizations; indigenous peoples' organizations; United Nations organizations; Philanthropic organizations; Civil society organizations (see list in appendix).

3. Purpose and functions

The purpose of the Coalition is to **accelerate the transformation of food systems through agroecology, guided by the 13 principles of agroecology** defined by the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) that are aligned with the 10 Elements of Agroecology¹ adopted by the 197 FAO Members in December 2019.

The functions and added value of the Agroecology Coalition:

The Coalition will support the implementation of country pathways for food system transformation through agroecology in three areas:

a) Co-creation and exchange of knowledge

- Engaging in participatory research, inter-cultural innovation and co-design with stakeholders
- Facilitating capacity building, including peer-to-peer learning between countries (e.g., on agroecological policies) and between organizations.
- Showcasing best-practice in agroecology as well as holistic monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Documenting cost-benefit analyses of agroecology
- Contributing to co-learning between scientists, policy makers and civil society actors
- Contributing to gender transformation and promoting gender inclusive opportunities

b) Seeking increased investments in agroecology

- Catalyzing coordinated investments for collective action
- Contributing to providing support for agroecology initiatives (expert guidance, match-making, facilitating access to funding, etc.)
- Ensuring adequate support for agroecology movements and networks, including small farmers'-, women-, youth-, indigenous peoples- and local communities' organizations to advance agroecology

c) Seeking political engagement and increased commitment to the agroecological transformation

- Mobilizing political will for food system transformation through agroecology
- Mainstreaming of agroecology in international organizations and other international fora
- Collating commitments by members of the Coalition and increasing the visibility of agroecology and of the commitments by members
- Promoting the adoption of agroecology through large-scale landscape initiatives
- Partnering with biodiversity, climate, water, sustainable landscape actors to promote the agroecological transformation

¹ 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://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs13593-020-00646-z>

4. Principles of governance and structure

- The Coalition is a “**coalition of the willing**”. The Coalition is open to members that commit to implementing food system transformation through agroecology in harmony with the 13 principles of agroecology by signing the Declaration of engagement. This may include members that do not yet implement all of the 13 principles when they join the Coalition, but that commit to move towards this goal.
- The governance of the Coalition should reflect the 13 principles of agroecology. It should be inclusive, participatory and involve all types of actors.
- The Coalition will aim to disseminate and implement the CFS policy recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches.
- Decision making will be by seeking a “broad consensus”, i.e., that a large majority of members are either in agreement or can “live with” the proposals.
- The Coalition will make voluntary reports on progress to the Committee on World Food Security and other bodies as appropriate.
- The Group of Friends of Agroecology will continue to play an important role in promoting agroecology in the Rome-based agencies and in highlighting the work of the Coalition; There should be regular interactions between the Coalition, and in particular the policy working group (see below), and the Group of Friends of Agroecology.
- The scaling-up of agroecology initiative hosted by FAO will be an important part of the Coalition.

Efforts will be made to reach out to more members from all regions (see function of Secretariat in section 5).

5. Steering group

An inclusive Steering Group will be selected from among the members and report to the full membership, with rotating co-chairs, including 1 country representative and 1 from another group of actors. The different regions and stakeholder categories will be invited to select who will represent them in the Steering Group. This process will start in February 2022 and the steering group membership will be approved during the second meeting of the members of the Coalition in March 2022.

In the meantime, an interim Steering Group has been approved by the first meeting of the Coalition members on 15 December 2021. It is composed of 4 member countries (one per continent) and one member per group of actors (Farmers’ organizations; Research organizations; Indigenous peoples’ organizations; UN Organizations; Philanthropic organizations; Civil society organizations) to facilitate the initial functioning of the Coalition.

The following people constitute interim steering group:

- Africa: Marie Bassene, Senegal
- Asia: Leocadia Sebastian, Philippines
- Europe: Madeleine Kaufmann, Switzerland
- Latin America: Santiago Argüello Campos, Mexico
- Farmers’ organizations: Esther Penunia, Asian Farmers Association
- Indigenous peoples’ organizations: Monicah Yator, Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative
- UN Organizations: Ronnie Brathwaite, FAO
- Research organizations: Philippe Vaast, Co-lead Agroecology Participatory Partnership Platform (TPP)
- Philanthropic organizations: Lauren Baker, Global Alliance for the Future of Food (GA)

- CSO's or NGO's: Stephanie Pondini, Biovision Foundation

6. Working groups

In order to start operationalizing the Coalition and driving forward its work, 4 initial working groups have been formed and Coalition members have been asked to join the working group(s) they want to contribute to. These are:

1. Research, co-innovation and capacity development
2. Policies
3. Investment/Funding
4. Communication and advocacy
5. Implementation of agroecology programmes

The working groups will determine their own way of functioning and regularly report back to the steering group. Additional working groups (e.g., a working group on the engagement of the private sector) may be formed as appropriate.

7. Secretarial support

The members of the Coalition will decide on the establishment of a Secretariat reporting to the steering group. The Secretariat will be hosted by an existing organization, but should operate as an independent Secretariat, reporting only to the steering group. Proposals for hosting the Secretariat will be invited and selection criteria will be developed by the interim steering group and approved by the members of the Coalition.

An embryonic secretariat function has been established on an interim basis, hosted by the Agroecology TPP and supported by Biovision and UNEP. After the second meeting of the Coalition, a call for expression of interest to host the Coalition Secretariat will be disseminated. Proposals will be evaluated according to selection criteria decided by the steering group.

The functions of the Secretariat will be to:

- Support the implementation of the work of the Coalition and the working groups
- Organize meetings of the Steering Committee and the Coalition membership
- Provide visibility to the Coalition through the creation of a website and other means of communication
- Collate data about the work carried out by the Coalition members/working groups
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning among countries and other stakeholders
- Support Coalition members and partners in knowledge management and dissemination
- Act as an ambassador to recruit more members
- Monitor the work of the Coalition and prepare regular reports on its achievements
- Facilitate access to resources for the Coalition
- Prepare annual workplans for the Secretariat to be approved by the Steering Committee
- Liaise with other Coalition secretariats / focal points to identify possible synergies and common actions (e.g., Coalition on Family Farming, advancing Nature Positive Innovations)

8. Draft workplan for 2022

The draft workplan will be further refined and approved at the second meeting of the Coalition.

- Agree on the purpose, function and roles of the Coalition
- Set up and operationalize the working groups and initiate activities of the working groups
- Agree on a set of priority actions in support of countries and organizations that are members of the Coalition
- Finalizing the governance rules and structure and principles of engagement in the Coalition
- Identify national pathways focusing on agroecology and create linkage for peer-to-peer learning
- Establishment of a selected Steering Group and a permanent Secretariat
- Outline a resource mobilization strategy in support of the workplan
- Identify ways of collective support for the prioritized actions
- Engage in advocacy efforts in different international groups such as the UNCCD COP, the CBD COP, the UNFCCC COP etc., and encourage the development of a UNEA resolution on agroecology

9. Agroecology Coalition contact details

Email address: secretariat@agroecology-coalition.org

Website: www.agroecology-coalition.org

Figure 1: The 13 principles of agroecology (Biovision, n.d.)



Figure 2: Links of the Agroecology coalition



Annex: List of Members of the Coalition

Countries and regional organisations:

African Union Commission	Islamic Republic of Iran
Burkina Faso	Madagascar
Cambodia	Mali
Congo	Mauritania
Costa Rica	Mexico
Côte d'Ivoire	Morocco
Cuba	Netherlands
Democratic Republic of Congo	Philippines
Denmark	Senegal
Dominican Republic	Spain
Estonia	Sri Lanka
Ethiopia	Switzerland
European Commission	Tanzania
France	Thailand
Guinea	Uganda
Hungary	Vietnam
Ireland	Islamic Republic of Iran

Organisations:

"4 per 1000" Initiative / FRANCE	International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) / global
Académie d'agriculture de France / FRANCE	International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) / global
Access Agriculture / global	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) / global
Africa Rice Centre (Africa Rice) / Africa	Intersectoral Forum on Agrobiodiversity and Agroecology (ISFAA) / KENYA
Agroecology Europe (AEEU) / BELGIUM	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) / ITALY
AgroEcology Fund (AEF) / global	MetaMeta / NETHERLANDS
Alliance for Agroecology in West Africa (3AO) / West Africa	Montpellier Agricultural Sciences and Sustainable Development (Agropolis Fondation) / FRANCE
Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) / Asia	Montpellier SupAgro / FRANCE
Bern University of Applied Sciences / SWITZERLAND	Nature-Positive Farming and Wholesome Foods Foundation (N+3F) / INDIA
Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) / KENYA	Offinso Partners in Sustainable Development / GHANA
Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development / SWITZERLAND	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association Regional Secretariat / ZIMBABWE
Cambodian Farmer Association Federation of Agricultural Producers (CFAP) / CAMBODIA	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Kenya / KENYA
CARE USA / USA	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Uganda / UGANDA

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) / UK	Red Nacional de Municipios y Comunidades que fomentan la Agroecología (RENAMA) / ARGENTINA
Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry Centre (CIFOR-ICRAF) / global	Regeneration International (RI) / USA
Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche - (CIRAD) / FRANCE	Sociedad Mexicana de Agroecología (SOMEXA) / MEXICO
Centre of Agriculture & Bioscience International (CABI) / global	SWISSAID / SWITZERLAND
Christian Aid / UK	Syndicat Malgache de l'Agriculture Biologique Organic (SYMABIO) / MADAGASCAR
Community and Family Aid Foundation-Ghana (CAFAF) / GHANA	The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT / global
EAT Foundation (EAT) / NORWAY	Transformational Investing in Food Systems Initiative (TIFS) / USA
EcoAgriculture Partners / USA	Transformative Partnership Platform on Agroecology (Agroecology TPP) / global
Farmer's Pride International / global	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) / global
Global Alliance for the Future of Food / global	United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) / global
Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty Unit (TIP) / ITALY	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) / global
Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative (IWGI), Kenya	United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) / global
Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) / FRANCE	United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) / global
Institut National De La Recherche Agronomique (INRAE) / FRANCE	Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) / global
Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE) / KENYA	West African Network of Peasants and Agricultural Producers (ROPPA) / West Africa
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM-Organics International) / GERMANY	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Germany / GERMANY
International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) / global	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International / SWITZERLAND