



Investing in the Agroecological Business Case:

Building a Healthy Future for All

Policy & Advocacy
Biovision



Overall Goal of the Programme

This programme is designed and implemented by Biovision Foundation in strong collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

The overall goal of the programme is to:

Catalyse the scaling of agroecology to transform food systems through increased availability of suitable capital for agroecological enterprises in East Africa and ideally beyond.

We address this goal by tackling the main barriers identified on funding level (outcome 1) and enterprise level (outcome 2) and by that, unlocking a positive feedback loop. We thereby shift perceptions of decision makers in finance and politics through proving the AE business case and inspire its replication.

Why?

The economic viability of agroecology

Agroecological enterprises (AEEs) such as entrepreneurial farms and cooperatives, food processing companies, input providers and marketing initiatives are key in supporting the agroecological transformation towards strengthened availability and access to healthy nutrition, resilience, local value generation and sustainability. However, these agroecological enterprises are chronically underfunded, as most financial vehicles, investors and donors predominantly finance enterprises following a conventional agricultural model, and traditionally focus on increasing productivity and income as only success indicators. For agroecological enterprises to be able to thrive, they need access to additional, more suitable sources of finance and knowledge, as well as a more enabling environment.





Advancing social justice and inclusion

Women and youth have the most to gain in participating in agroecological entrepreneurship, as women are more often involved in agriculture and agro-processing and agroecology can contribute to women's autonomy and help to reduce (income) inequality between women and men. Agroecological enterprises also offer an opportunity to address multidimensional poverty, which disproportionately affects women, and provides employment opportunities for the youth. Despite this huge potential that agroecological entrepreneurship offers, systematic barriers, such as discrimination and lack of access to land and capital, must be directly addressed and the voices of women and the youth have to be strengthened. In our project we are committed to strengthen the engagement of women and youth.

Building on previous experiences

This programme builds on our experience, research and the network established in the precursor project Money Flows for agroecological research, where we identified the need for more investments, a more enabling environment and corresponding tools that facilitate such decisions. To achieve this, donors and investors need to understand agroecology and have strategies and tools available to measure the benefits of their investments for people, planet and communities.

What?

The programme outcomes employ different levers to catalyse the scaling up and out of agroecology through increased capital availability for agroecological enterprises in East Africa and beyond:

Outcome 1:

Donors and investors have increased suitable finance for agroecological enterprises.

Outcome 2:

Agroecological enterprises are brought to scale through increased availability of suitable capital and capacity building

How?

Information and Evidence

Knowledge Product

To achieve both outcomes, we synthesize information and evidence on the subject into a knowledge product for donors and investors, including various communication products derived therefrom.

Business Tools

The Business Agroecological Criteria Tool (B-ACT) aims to identify and assess inspiring and promising agroecological enterprises that contribute to sustainable food systems. The tool shall inform and sensitize interested donors and investors on how to identify agroecological enterprises and their benefits as well as to inform and support entrepreneurs with an analysis of how agroecological their businesses are. Additionally, we will collaborate with TIFS¹ aiming at integrating their newly developed and complementary “System Investing Assessment” tool together with the B ACT into a single framework.

Champion successful showcases

We use the evidence developed and the B-ACT tool to champion identified showcases. In turn, this is used to sensitize, influence and inspire decision makers to create a more enabling environment for agroecological enterprises.

Agroecological business success factors

As the most long-term output, the findings from this programme and the agroecological enterprises champions, will be distilled into replicable success factors to create an agroecology business toolkit.

Convening and Matchmaking

Matchmaking

We facilitate exchanges between agroecological enterprises and donors and investors in East Africa and beyond. We envision several types of matchmaking: from virtual marketplaces for funders and enterprises, innovative match-making events as well as an Agroecology Accelerator.

¹ *The Transformational Investing in Food Systems (TIFS) Initiative is working to increase transformational investing in global food systems. TIFS is an Allied Initiative of the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, and partners with the Agroecology Fund and other aligned initiatives to advance the work in food systems transformation.*

Trigger Action

Agroecology Accelerator (AA)

The AA will be established in collaboration with a local partner from East Africa to provide business support with an agroecological perspective along with suitable finance (loan based) for agroecological enterprises, focusing on strengthening women and youth.

Improved enabling environment

We aim to advocate and contribute to improved policy and finance environments for agroecological enterprises by collaborating with Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) in selected countries such as Kenya and Uganda.

Existing funding vehicles become more agroecological

We identify and assess existing funding vehicles and advocate decision makers to integrate agroecological principles into their ESG criteria, respectively funding decisions.

With Whom?

We are convinced that the transformation of our food system can only happen if key actors come together and create synergies and implement coordinated actions. Biovision is thus eager to exchange and collaborate with relevant actors in the design and implementation of activities. We are collaborating with the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), TIFS, Agroecology Fund, the Agroecological Coalition, UNEP, Global Shona, and many more.

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The future of agriculture is not input intensive, but knowledge intensive. We need the integrated approach that agroecology can offer.

FAO Director General
José Graziano da Silva



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Timeline

2022

B-ACT development

- Test and refine the tool (synergies with other tools)
- Apply the B-ACT to identify showcases

Agroecology Accelerator

- Setting up pilot in Uganda

Knowledge Product for investors

- Synthesize a convincing knowledge product
- Agroecology Coalition
- Engage in the coalition and sensitize relevant stakeholders

2023

Agroecology Accelerator

- Run first cohort of AEEs

Disseminate the B-ACT amongst relevant actors

- Sensitize and support actors in the use of the tool

Influence funding vehicles

- Advocate to integrate agroecological principles

Enabling policy environment

- Engage with relevant stakeholders such as multi-stakeholder platforms (MSP)

2024

Award for successful agroecological enterprises

- Organize event to showcase successful champions

Develop agroecological success factors

- The learnings will be used and distilled into replicable agroecology toolkit elements

Matchmaking activities

- Support implementation of long-lasting match-making formats

Building on achievements and opportunities from 2022/23

The Biovision Team



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Knowledge product for investors, Award for inspiring
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