

# Food Sovereignty in Africa: Scaling Agroecology and Ecological Organic Agriculture for Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa

28 July 2026 | 11:00 - 13:00 GMT+1 | Parallel Hall 2 (Hybrid)



## Climate-Resilient Agrifood Systems

Parallel Session under Sub-Theme 2

## CONCEPT NOTE

### High-Level Parallel Session under Sub-Theme 2

**Session Topic: Food Sovereignty in Africa: Scaling Agroecology and Ecological Organic Agriculture for Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa**

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Event               | 9 <sup>th</sup> Africa Agriculture Science Week (AASW9) and 10 <sup>th</sup> FARA General Assembly                                                                               |
| Date                | 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2026                                                                                                                                                       |
| Time                | 11:00 – 13:00 GMT+1 (Nigerian Time)                                                                                                                                              |
| Venue               | Parallel Session Hall 2 - Abuja Continental Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria (Hybrid)                                                                                                       |
| Virtual Link (ZOOM) | <a href="https://forafrica.zoom.us/join/https://forafrica.zoom.us/meeting/register/U7lvLqp15zyY1QQCIV-3QQ">https://forafrica.zoom.us/meeting/register/U7lvLqp15zyY1QQCIV-3QQ</a> |
| Conference Theme    | Innovations and Partnerships for Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa                                                                                            |
| Sub-Theme 2         | Climate Resilient Agrifood Systems: Improving Productivity, Resilience & Sustainability                                                                                          |
| Organizers          | FARA, RMRN, FiBL, KCOA, JRC, DeSIRA, RUFORUM, BvAT, NOARA, EOAI-Africa, AfrONet                                                                                                  |

### Context and Background

Africa's food systems are under increasing pressure from multiple, interconnected challenges, including climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss, soil fertility decline, and persistent food and nutrition insecurity. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events are undermining agricultural productivity and farmer livelihoods across the continent. At the same time, unsustainable land-use practices have contributed to declining soil fertility, which threatens the resilience of Africa's food systems. There is thus a growing recognition of the need for transformative approaches beyond incremental improvements in productivity to address the root causes of vulnerability and unsustainability. Agroecology has emerged as a transformative pathway that integrates ecological principles, scientific knowledge, and local practices to build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable agricultural systems.

The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOAI) since 2011, a continental initiative of the African Union, aims at promoting ecological and organic agriculture practices across Africa to enhance smallholder farm productivity and food security. The initiative focuses on integrating ecological practices into national agricultural systems and policies and is supported by the African Union Commission (AUC). Across the continent, agroecology and EOA are gaining momentum through farmer-led innovations, research initiatives, and supportive policy dialogues. However, scaling agroecology and EOA requires stronger alignment between science, policy, and practice, as well as enhanced collaboration among stakeholders.

Across Africa, diverse agroecological innovations are being developed and implemented by farmers, researchers, and development practitioners. These include integrated soil fertility management, agroforestry systems, diversified cropping and livestock keeping, community-based seed systems among many. Evidence from research and practice indicates that such approaches can improve soil and crop productivity, enhance resilience to climate shocks, reduce dependence on external inputs, and contribute to improved nutrition outcomes. However, despite these promising results, the adoption and scaling of agroecology remain limited. Key barriers include fragmented knowledge systems, insufficient investment, weak policy support, and limited coordination among stakeholders.

Addressing these challenges requires stronger partnerships and more effective integration of science, policy, and practice. Collaborative efforts are needed to generate robust evidence, develop context-site-specific innovations, and create enabling environments for agroecology to flourish. In this regard, continental and international organizations and Programmes such as Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), Ecological Organic

Agriculture Initiative (EOAI-Africa), Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT), Network of Organic Agriculture Researchers in Africa (NOARA), DeSIRA+ Initiative, the Regional Multi actor Research Networks in Africa on Agroecology (RMRN) and the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA), the EOA-I chaired by the African Union Commission, and the African Organic Agriculture Network (AfrONet) play a critical role in advancing research, fostering innovation, and facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement across scales.

The Africa Agricultural Science Week (AASW), under the theme *"Innovations and Partnerships for Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa"*, which is scheduled for 27th – 30th July 2026 in Abuja, Nigeria, offers a strategic platform to advance the agroecology agenda. The Parallel Session brings together key actors from research, policy, private sector, and relevant stakeholders to exchange knowledge, showcase innovations, and forge partnerships. Within this context, a dedicated parallel session on agroecology is both timely and necessary to highlight its contribution as a science-based, innovation-driven approach to agrifood systems transformation.

In this regard, the RMRNs—comprising of RMRN-EA in East Africa, RADIUS in West Africa, and RAENS in Southern Africa, FARA, FiBL and KCOA, the EC-JRC, RUFORUM, the DeSIRALift+ Initiative, NOARA, EOAI and AfrONet will co-organize a Parallel Session during the Africa Agriculture Science Week 2026. The Parallel Session is scheduled to take place on 28th July 2026. The proposed Parallel Session aligns with the Conference Theme: *"Innovations and Partnerships for Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa"* and sub-theme 2: *"Climate Resilient Agrifood Systems: Improving Productivity, Resilience and Sustainability"* of the Science Week. This session aims to bridge existing gaps by fostering dialogue among stakeholders, sharing cutting-edge research and field experiences, and identifying gaps and actionable pathways for scaling agroecological innovations across the continent. By emphasizing partnerships and co-creation, the session will contribute to strengthening the science-policy-practice interface and to advancing a shared vision for resilient, inclusive, and sustainable agrifood systems in Africa.

## Purpose of the Parallel Session

The proposed Parallel Session is to create a focused, interactive platform that positions agroecology as an excellent option and advance it as a key pathway for resilient and sustainable agrifood systems in Africa.

## Objectives

The specific objectives of the Parallel Session are to:

- Highlight the role of agroecology in transforming African food systems.
- Share scientific evidence and practical knowledge and experiences from past and ongoing initiatives.
- Facilitate dialogue between researchers, academics, policymakers, farmers, agroecology multipliers, and development partners from African and global networks while identifying research needs, knowledge and evidence gaps, and opportunities for agroecology in Africa.
- Identify key barriers and levers, including pathways, for further scaling agroecological practices across diverse African contexts.

## Conveners

The Parallel Session will be jointly convened by:

- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
- Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) in partnership with the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA)
- European Commission's Joint-Research Centre (JRC)

- DeSIRALift+ Initiative
- Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)
- The African Union Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOAI)
- Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT)
- Network of Organic Agriculture Researchers in Africa (NOARA)
- Regional Multi-Actor Research Networks (RMRNs) on agroecology from East (RMRN-EA), Southern (RAENS) and West/Central Africa (RADUIS)
- African Organic Agriculture Network (AfrONet)

## Logistical Requirements, Date and Venue

The Parallel Session will be held in Parallel Hall 2 at the Abuja Continental Hotel, 28th July 2026 at 11:00 GMT+1 (podium and seating for approximately 50-80 participants).

## Expected Participants and Speakers

Approximately 50-80 participants are expected, including:

1. Researchers and academics
2. Representatives of regional and continental organizations
3. Development partners and donors
4. Policy makers
5. NGOs and private sector actors
6. Farmers

## Expected Outputs

- Consolidated key messages, including needs/gaps, opportunities and recommendations for advancing agroecology in Africa.
- Partnerships among stakeholders.
- Increased visibility/awareness of agroecology initiatives and networks.
- Contribution to AASW outcomes and policy discussions.
- Parallel Session Synthesis of Key Messages
- A Policy Brief synthesized from the Parallel Session Outcomes and highlighting the key benefits and impacts of agroecology and ecological organic agriculture in Africa and key recommendations for scaling.

## Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of agroecology's potential in Africa.
- Identification of actionable strategies for scaling agroecology.
- Strengthened science-policy-practice interface.
- Increased collaboration across networks and regions.



## Programme Agenda

Title: [Food Sovereignty in Africa: Scaling Agroecology and Ecological Organic Agriculture for Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa](#)

Date: 28th July 2026

Time: 11:00 – 13:00 GMT+1 (Nigerian Time)

| Time          | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Responsibility                                                                                                                        |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:00 – 11:05 | Welcome Statement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Dr. Florence Nakayiwa</b> , Deputy Executive Secretary, RUFORUM                                                                    |
| 11:05 – 11:10 | Introductory Remarks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Dr. Francois Kayitakire</b> , EC-Joint Research Centre, Head of Unit Food Security                                                 |
| 11:10 – 11:20 | Keynote presentation:<br><i>The Concept and Benefits of Agroecology: From Evidence to Action - Scaling Agroecology in Africa</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Dr. Emmanuel Njukwe</b> , Director of Research and Innovation, CORAF                                                               |
| 11:20 – 11:35 | Case Study Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kenya: Production of Organic fertilizers in Africa - Opportunities and challenges.</li> <li>West Africa: DeSIRA Programme - Agroecology Research and Innovation at Scale by Farmer Organisations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Ms. Joyce W. Kamande</b> , Safari Organics Ltd<br><b>Ms. Katja Vuori</b> , CEO, AgriCord                                           |
| 11:35 – 12:25 | Panel discussion:<br><i>Agroecology and Ecological Organic Agriculture at Scale: Levers and Inhibitors for Sustainable Food Systems</i><br>(5-6 Member Panel Fishbowl)<br>Research/Academia & Capacity Strengthening: CGIAR Multifunctional Landscape Science Programme — <b>Dr. Lulseged Tamene Desta</b><br>Policy: African Union Commission (AUC) Rural Economy Department — <b>Dr. Janet Edeme</b><br>Practice: Sylvia's Basket — <b>Dr. Sylvia Kuria</b><br>Private sector and investments: BIOPROTECT, Burkina Faso — <b>Mr. Wendwaoga Claude Arsène Savadongo</b><br>Knowledge Management: KCOA Project-Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) — <b>Mrs. Mareike Voigts</b><br>Youth in Agroecology: Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) — <b>Mr. Kofi Acquaye</b> | Moderator: <b>Mr. Markus Arbenz</b> , FiBL, KCOA & RAENS                                                                              |
| 12:25 – 12:45 | Discussion and key messages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Moderator: <b>Mr. Markus Arbenz</b> , FiBL, KCOA & RAENS<br>Synthesis of key messages from the Discussion: <b>NOARA &amp; AfrONet</b> |
| 12:45 – 12:55 | From Insight to Implementation:<br>A Policy Perspective on Agroecology and Ecological Organic Agriculture in Africa                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Mr. Alex Mutungi</b> , African Union's EOA-I (BVAT)                                                                                |
| 12:55 – 13:00 | Closing Remarks: A Shared Commitment to Agroecological Transitions in Africa                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Dr. Chau Dang Van</b> , DeSIRA Lift+                                                                                               |

## **Session Chair**

Markus Arbenz

## **Session Rapporteur**

Dr. Mohammed Ssemwanga

## Organisers, Partners & Sponsors



**“Innovations and Partnerships for Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa”**