

30 September 2021

## Innovations Session N°6

Promoting sustainable  
agriculture and agroecological  
practices: the key role of MSMEs  
and farmers organisations



INNOVATIONS  
SERIES



# Supporting African Agroecological Entrepreneurs

Results of Phase One  
Joint Action Research Project by  
The Agroecology Fund &  
Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa

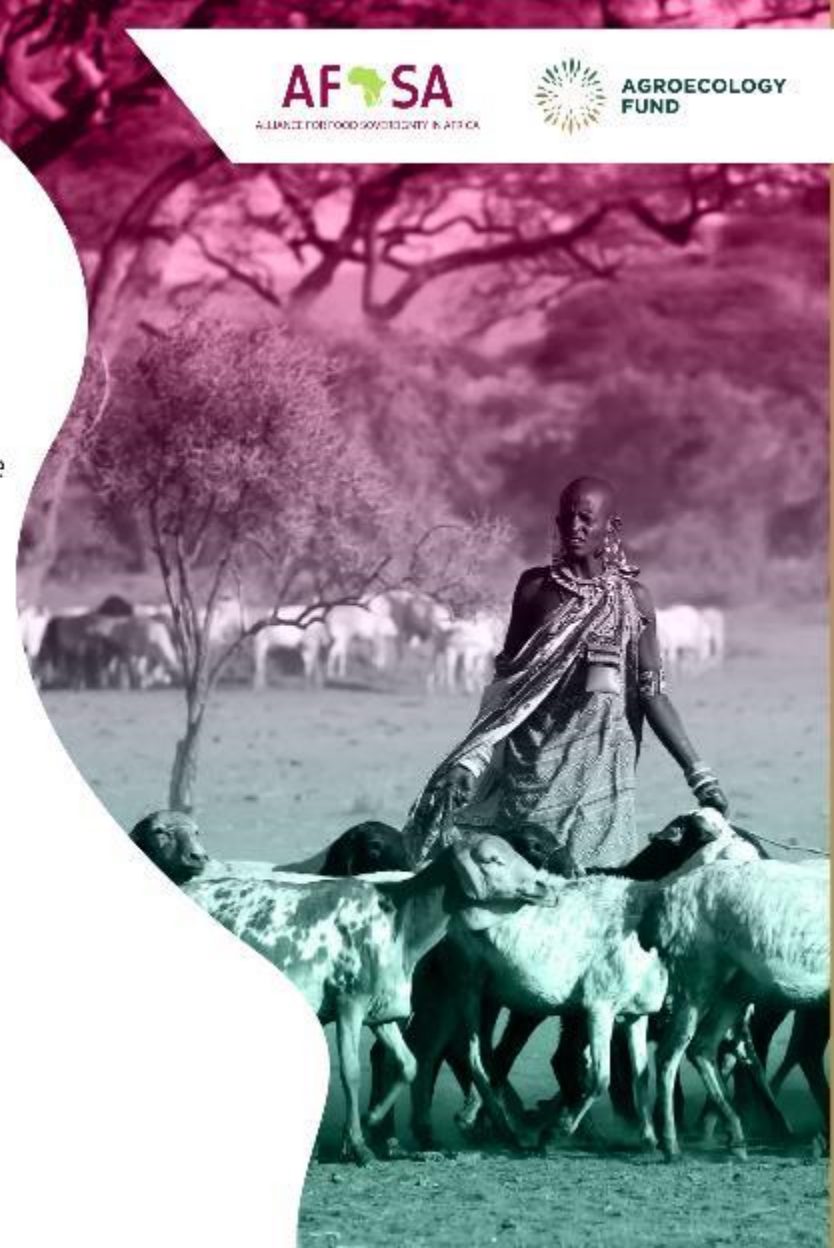
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Sept 30, 2021



# Purpose

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To research and analyze existing African Agroecological Entrepreneurs (AEEs) and service providers (e.g. non-profits, public funds, investors, banks, and technical assistance entities) to understand their role and relationship to agroecology movements and markets.



# Findings

## 1. Agroecological Entrepreneurs are Many & Diverse

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Farmer-growers

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Cooperatives

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Aggregators & Processors

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Urban backyard gardeners

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Private companies

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NGOs / non-profits



# Findings

## Varied Activities

Production and Aggregation

Processing

Farm Inputs

Farm Infrastructure

Foraging

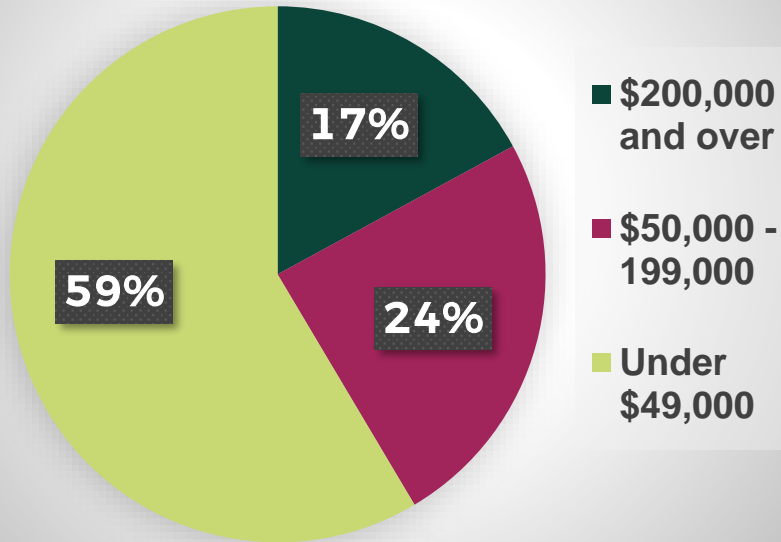
Cooking

Specialty Foods

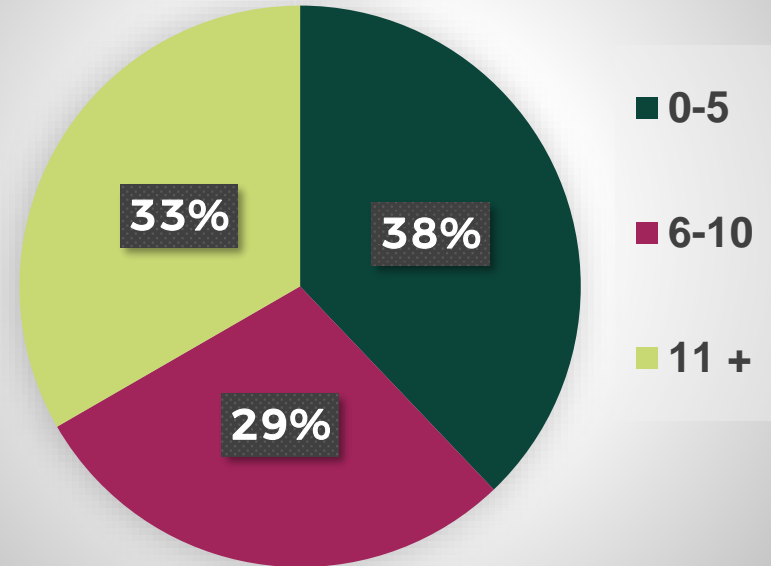


# Revenue & Years In Business

**Revenue**  
(reported by 41 of 68)



**Years in Business**



# Findings

## 2. Service Providers include: investors, accelerators, banks, technical assistance providers, NGOs...

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Challenge - Investors focus on increasing productivity & income as success metrics.

Opportunity - Innovative Service Providers are funding many businesses under \$200,000.

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Challenge - Investors do not differentiate between agribusinesses that are agroecological or not.

Opportunity - Innovative Service Providers that are successful work with multiple partners.

# Findings

## 3. Innovator Gap

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Lack of finance between \$5,000 - \$200,000

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80% of AAEs self-finance from personal & group savings, 38% grants, 21% bank loans

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Barriers – bank interest rates of 30%, difficult loan requirements, perception of agriculture & food loans as high-risk

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Donors launch pilots but do not support the growth stage of businesses



# Findings

## 4. Territorial Markets are Key

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AEs provide fresh fruits and vegetables, grains, meat, eggs and milk through territorial markets

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Territorial markets are resilient, local and relationship-based

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Territorial markets are an underappreciated source of knowledge and expertise

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Territorial markets don't differentiate agroecological production and we lack data on their demand

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COVID has refocused attention on these "informal" markets where producers and consumers are connecting

## Findings

# 5. Agroecological Entrepreneurship is Multidimensional

### Definition

Linkage of sustainable alternatives to industrial production systems and holistic land management

AND

Closer connection between growers and eaters through territorial markets with the participation of farmers & communities in systems of governance, fair share of profits and co-creation of knowledge and benefits.



## Findings

# 6. Women and Youth are Central in Agroecological Enterprises

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Women and youth have the most to gain from their success and participate strongly

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Youth are seizing these opportunities and innovating in markets

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More intentionality to bringing in women's & youth voices critical

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Proactive measures - quota-based programming, extra support due to caregiving activities, attention to land tenure issues

# Findings

## 7. Unsupportive Policy Environment

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Challenges - Organic certification, regulations, business registration, lack of infrastructure

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Challenges - Subsidies for industrial fertilizers, high taxes on imported equipment

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Challenges - Corporate support and influence over industrial agriculture & export policies

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Many policies are linked to historical approaches in colonial period focused on exports and monocropping

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Emerging positive policies by governments cited in studies

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# Summary of Support Needs

**Reliable Markets:** **Procurement Programs to** stimulate local markets, health, biodiversity and entrepreneurship

**Loans:** Provide small loans and support for smallholder farmers to produce, process, and market their production and to create value-added businesses for local consumption in local & regional markets.

**Good Inputs, Quality & Diversity of Production**

**Mutual Aid and Support**

**Good Networks**

**Enabling legal & institutional frameworks**



# Thank You for Listening

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## Supporters



## Research Team:

- Charles Olweny
- Jen Astone, Co-Coordinator of Research
- Team members
- Simon Bukenya
- Famara Djediou
- Abbot, Cheikh





*This series of events is organised by PAFO and COLEACP. COLEACP operates within the framework of development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the European Union (European Development Fund – EDF), with the support of the French Development Agency (AFD).*

# Thank you

