



Finance for Agroecology

ABOUT AGROECOLOGY Agroecology is a scientific discipline, a set of agricultural practices, and a social movement¹. It aims to transform food systems by applying ecological principles to food production, while underscoring important aspects like equality, social justice and resilience, and also focusing on the need for socially equitable food systems.

The potential of agroecology is increasingly being recognised in public policy making. However, this potential currently remains untapped by public funding, with many opportunities to more strongly support agroecology as a means to achieve food systems transformation.

The 10 elements of agroecology

Developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the 10 elements of agroecology present a comprehensive framework to guide the transition towards sustainable food systems:



Diversity



Synergies



Resilience



Efficiency



Recycling



Human and Social Value



Responsible Governance



Co-creation of Knowledge



Culture and Food Traditions



Circular Economy

Many studies have been conducted in recent years to analyse financial support for agroecology from different funders. This factsheet aims to put their main findings together to paint a general picture of the support provided to agroecology.

Each study has used a slightly different methodology for analysing data. This factsheet is a simplified version meant to provide a general overview and comparison of some prominent funders, so as to have an indication of what the current public funding landscape for agroecology looks like.

LEGEND

The three simplified levels used in this factsheet are derived from 'FAO's 10 elements of agroecology', in combination with 'Gliessman's five levels of change towards sustainable food systems'², but depict a simplified version of the above.

■ No support for agroecology – covers conventional agriculture and sustainable intensification projects, with little integration of the elements.

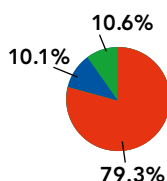
■ Partial support for agroecology – covers 2 or more elements and have the intention to prioritise agroecology, or provide the socially enabling conditions for it.

■ Support transformative agroecology – radically redesigns the agroecosystem and integrates 5 or more of the agroecological elements.

CURRENT FINANCIAL FLOWS TOWARDS AGROECOLOGY BY A SELECTION OF PUBLIC FUNDERS

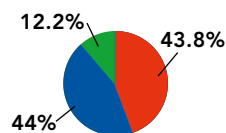
GREEN CLIMATE FUND (GCF)

58 projects with a budget of USD 5.68 billion analysed until 2019.³



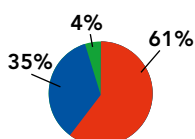
IFAD

207 projects with a budget of USD 6.67 billion were analysed completing in 2018-2023^{4,5}



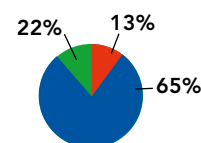
DUTCH OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT AID (ODA)

260 projects with a budget of €2.65 billion analysed between 2010-2020.⁶



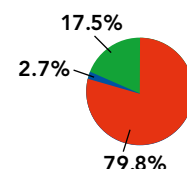
SWISS FUNDING TO COUNTRIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:

146 projects funded by SDC and Swiss National Science Foundation with a budget of USD 563.8 million were analysed between 2013-2018.⁷



EU ODA FUNDS

152 projects were analysed between 2016-2018^{3,8}



(SEE FRONT PAGE FOR LEGEND AND METHODOLOGY)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

As seen above, there is huge potential to channel substantial amounts of public agricultural funding towards agroecological initiatives. There are some promising trends which show that the support for agroecology is significantly growing, and an increasing number of projects are supporting food system transformation. To accelerate this shift, we recommend the following:



Redirect funding towards supporting community-led farming and their organisations such as cooperatives and local NGOs who collaborate with small-scale farmers, amongst which many are female.



Strengthen agroecology's strong potential to address gender inequalities and enhance women's autonomy, by explicitly supporting their leadership role and access to land.



Foster long-term collaborations between funders and recipients, since agroecological transformation can take several years to materialise.



Jointly develop financing terms by donors and recipients, so that decision making can be inclusive and participatory.



Conduct more research on how to direct more financing towards agroecological transformation, and making funding modalities easily accessible and responsive to needs of recipients.



Shift funding towards small grant funds, which focus on local context, are needs-based, and ensure that decisions about funding are made by recipients without too much bureaucracy.⁹

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Wezel et al, 2014. [Agroecological practices for sustainable agriculture. A review.](#)

2 Steve Gliessman (2016) [Transforming food systems with agroecology. Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems.](#)

3 Moeller, N.I. (2020) [Analysis of Funding Flows to Agroecology: the case of European Union monetary flows to the United Nations' Rome-based agencies and the case of the Green Climate Fund.](#) CIDSE & CAWR.

4 This includes Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding.

5 IFAD (2021) [Stock-take report on agroecology in IFAD operations: an integrated approach to sustainable food systems.](#) Rome: IFAD : this data represents a self-revision conducted by IFAD itself.

6 Achterberg, A., Quiroz, D. (2020, December), [Development aid funds for agroecology. Support for agroecology of Dutch ODA spending,](#) Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Profundo.

7 Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development & PES-Food (2020). [Money Flows: What is holding back investment in agroecological research for Africa?](#) Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development & International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems.

8 No budget was provided.

9 K. Kraan & A. Wensing, [Putting people first: the transformational impact of small grants funds, 2019.](#)