**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)** **TO UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON AGROECOLOGICAL PRODUCE CROSS BORDER TRADE IN THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC)**

**Introduction:**

The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), is scheduled to commission a consultancy to conduct a Comprehensive Study on Agroecological Produce Cross Border Trade in the East African Community (EAC). The project aims facilitate cross border trading in agroecologically produced and healthy and nutritious food among the countries in Eastern Africa.

**Request for Proposals:**

AFSA invites sealed proposals/bids from suitable individual or firm to facilitate this study. In response to this request, the bidder must submit by email**:**

1. A letter of bid duly signed.
2. A technical proposal (maximum 4/6 pages) that details:
3. A general profile of the firm/individual.
4. The applicant’s understanding of the TOR (technical understanding of the assignment, methodology, timeline, and budget).
5. Suggested detailed methodology.
6. Work plan
7. Experience with similar previous assignments indicating field of specialization and references.
8. In annex: at least two sample reports of similar assignment which will be treated confidentially.
9. In annex: CV of all members of the study team and possible track record

**Tendering Procedure:**

Eligible consultants (Firm/Individual) are invited to submit technical and financial proposals to undertake this work. Technical and financial tender documents should be sent by email to afsa@afsafrica.org by 5:00 pm (East Africa Time) on (**23rd September 2024**). The email should indicate **‘AFSA- Comprehensive study on agroecological produce cross border trade in the EAC’** in the subject line.

Applicants will be advised of the results of the tender process within one month of the application deadline.

**For a detailed Scope of work, please refer to the ToR below.**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORS)**

**FOR**

**CONDUCTING A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON AGROECOLOGICAL PRODUCE CROSS BORDER TRADE IN THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC)**

# **INTRODUCTION**

# The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), established in 2011, is a broad alliance of civil society actors advocating for food sovereignty and agroecology in Africa. These actors include African food producer networks, African CSO networks, indigenous people’s organizations, faith-based groups, women and youth organizations, consumer movements, and international organizations that support the stance of AFSA. It is a network of networks, currently with 40 active members in 50 African countries.

# **BACKGROUND**

Cross-border trade, both formal and informal, plays a significant role in regional economies and international commerce. Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) contributes to Africa’s economy, though it faces challenges such as non-tariff barriers [(Bwana, 2018).](http://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/5c5109eb722a9.pdf) The concept of informality in trade has evolved since its introduction in the 1970s, with researchers grappling with its definition and implications for state control and economic governance [(Cantens et al., 2015).](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/15124cc0-a3f9-5e2e-b684-04a155654db1/content) A study on trade between South Africa and Mozambique suggests that the term "informal" may be misleading, as it obscures the complex linkages between formal and informal sectors and implies illegality where it may not exist [(Peberdy, 2000).](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Border-Crossings%3A-Small-Enterpreneurs-and-Trade-and-Peberdy/8351c6d83a14283291a8797b1e11c63bd99275b0) These studies highlight the need for policymakers to consider the economic, political, and social dimensions of cross-border trade when developing regulatory frameworks, particularly for small and medium enterprises engaged in this activity.

Agroecology is an approach to agriculture that integrates ecological principles with farming practices, emphasizing sustainability, biodiversity, and ecosystem health [(Brym & Reeve, 2016; Wezel et al., 2020)](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-26777-7_5). It promotes methods that enhance soil fertility, reduce chemical inputs, and foster resilient food systems [(Hatt et al., 2016).](https://popups.uliege.be/1780-4507/index.php?id=16757&file=1&pid=12997) Agroecology encompasses three dimensions: a scientific discipline, a set of practices, and a social movement [(Wezel et al., 2020).](https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s13593-020-00646-z.pdf) Key principles include recycling, input reduction, soil and animal health, biodiversity, and co-creation of knowledge [(Wezel et al., 2020](https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s13593-020-00646-z.pdf)). The concept extends beyond farm-level practices to consider the entire food system, including social, economic, and environmental aspects [(Francis et al., 2003)](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Agroecology%3A-The-Ecology-of-Food-Systems-Francis-Lieblein/1830243ce1f15cc64f2bf4b2c2a36a816b72a37d). Implementing agroecological approaches requires interdisciplinary collaboration and the involvement of various stakeholders throughout the food chain [(Hatt et al., 2016).](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Towards-sustainable-food-systems%3A-the-concept-of-it-Hatt-Artru/7d043b19e59d1572d6c8b5eb9868b6131c8d42ca) This holistic perspective challenges current research practices and education paradigms, calling for more integrated and systems-based approaches [(Francis et al., 2003;](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Agroecology%3A-The-Ecology-of-Food-Systems-Francis-Lieblein/1830243ce1f15cc64f2bf4b2c2a36a816b72a37d) [Hatt et al., 2016).](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Towards-sustainable-food-systems%3A-the-concept-of-it-Hatt-Artru/7d043b19e59d1572d6c8b5eb9868b6131c8d42ca)

Cross-border trade of agroecological produce within the East African Community (EAC) is steadily growing but faces several challenges. The current situation is characterized by a lack of uniform standards and inconsistent recognition of agroecological certifications across member states, making it difficult for farmers to export their produce smoothly (FAO, 2023). While there is increasing demand for sustainably produced goods, many smallholder farmers struggle with barriers such as complex customs procedures and high transportation costs, which limit their access to regional markets (World Bank, 2023). Moreover, the absence of harmonized trade policies specific to agroecological produce leads to discrepancies in how these products are treated at different borders (EAC, 2023). Despite these challenges, some progress has been made in establishing regional networks and market linkages that support the trade of agroecological goods, although much work remains to fully integrate agroecology into the EAC's trade framework (UNEP, 2023).

It is therefore against this background that AFSA seeks to conduct a comprehensive study on agroecological produce cross-border trade within the East African Community (EAC). This study aims to address the existing challenges and opportunities identified, such as the lack of harmonized standards, inconsistent recognition of agroecological certifications, and the barriers faced by smallholder farmers in accessing regional markets. Additionally, the study will aim to fill the critical information gap regarding the volume, types, and pathways of agroecological produce being traded across borders. By focusing on these issues, the study will provide essential insights to inform the development of policies and frameworks that support and enhance the trade of agroecological produce in the EAC. This will not only strengthen the integration of agroecology into the regional trade framework but also promote sustainable and resilient food systems across the region.Top of Form

# **OBJECTIVES**

* 1. **General Objective/Purpose**

To enhance cross-border trade in agroecological products within the East African Community by generating comprehensive and actionable data. This data will support the development and implementation of harmonized trade policies and practices, thereby facilitating the growth and sustainability of agroecological trade in the region.

* 1. **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**
		1. Identify and document the key types, volumes, and pathways of agroecological produce being traded across borders within the EAC.
		2. Perform a comparative analysis of agroecological and non-agroecological products traded along the borders.
		3. Analyse existing trade policies, regulations, practices, and infrastructures affecting agroecological produce in the EAC member states, keeping in mind the duality of the trade process i.e., the supply-side of the issue with regard governments and systems, as well as the demand-side which in this case would be the traders.
		4. In-depth analysis of the value chain and market system, Tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers/opportunities and the role of AFCFTA and other trade agreements in promoting cross border trade of for agroecological produce.
		5. Investigate the socio-economic impact of agroecological produce trade on different demographic groups, including smallholder farmers, women, and youth.
		6. Propose specific recommendations for harmonizing trade policies, infrastructure, and practices across the EAC.
1. **THE STUDY TEAM**
	1. The comprehensive study will be carried out by a firm or an independent consultant.
	2. The firm/independent consultant will put together a small study team consisting of a team leader who will be assisted by professionals on specific thematic areas of the study.
	3. The study team will be supported by the focal person at the AFSA secretariat, in the technical preparation and conduct of the study.
	4. It is envisaged that the study will be conducted involving all stakeholders in the region as far as possible.
	5. The findings, analysis and recommendations of the study will be used to inform AFSA, its partners, and stakeholders to better understand the landscape (legal, policy and practice) for the trade of agroecological produce in the Eastern Africa region, document lessons, and shape the design of future interventions.
	6. The findings and recommendations of the study will be disseminated through the organization of internal meetings to be attended by General Coordinator, Program Coordinator, monitoring and evaluation Officer, Program officers and key working group leaders) and sharing of the draft, policy briefs, and final study report with EAC member states, Sida, AFSA members, and other actors (stakeholders).
2. **PROFILE OF THE TEAM LEADER AND OFFER SUBMISSION PROCIDURE**

The team leader is responsible for conducting the study. As such, he/she is responsible for meeting the deadlines and producing the results of the mission. He/she must organize the team and prepare the details, coordinate the mission, set the timetable and is responsible for the finalization of the reports (draft report and final report). The team leader must demonstrate experience and skills in participatory research methodology and techniques (interviews, questionnaires, methodological selections, etc.) and have competencies linked to the objectives of the study, namely:

# **Educational Background and Specialized Training**

* + 1. Advanced degree (master’s or PhD) in Agricultural Economics, International Trade, Development Studies, Environmental Science, or a related field.
		2. Specialized training or certification in agroecology, sustainable agriculture, or trade policy analysis is highly desirable.
		3. Experience in data analysis

# **Professional Experience**

* + 1. At least 10 years of experience in conducting high-level research and analysis in the fields of agriculture, trade, and sustainable development.
		2. Proven track record of working with international organizations, governmental bodies, or NGOs on projects related to agricultural trade and policy in the East African region.
		3. Extensive experience in agroecological practices and their impact on trade and sustainability.
		4. Having already conducted a similar assignment (references required).

# **Research and Analytical Skills**

* + 1. Experience in conducting socio-economic impact assessments, with a focus on smallholder farmers, women, and youth.
		2. Expertise in market analysis, including understanding price dynamics, demand-supply trends, and best practices in trade initiatives.
		3. Proficiency in using statistical software (e.g., SPSS, Stata) for quantitative data analysis and qualitative analysis tools (e.g., NVivo) for qualitative data.

# **Policy Analysis and Communication**

* + 1. Competence in policy analysis and formulation, with a focus on harmonizing trade policies.
		2. Excellent written and verbal communication skills, capable of producing clear, concise, and comprehensive reports and policy briefs.
		3. Knowledge of Kiswahili will be an added advantage.

# **TASKS OF THE CONSULTANT/TEAM LEADER**

The consultant/team leader should perform the following tasks:

* 1. Develop a comprehensive inception report that includes a detailed project plan outlining the timeline, milestones, and deliverables.
	2. Conduct an extensive literature review, design surveys and interview guides, and facilitate primary data collection through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.
	3. Identify and engage key stakeholders, organize focus groups, and interviews, and ensure inclusive participation from various demographic groups.
	4. Collect and analyse market data on agroecological produce prices, demand, and supply trends, conduct field visits, and document trade pathways.
	5. Prepare a comprehensive report with findings, analysis, and recommendations, develop policy briefs, and provide actionable recommendations for harmonizing trade policies.
	6. Organize presentation to disseminate findings.

# **KEY OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES**

* 1. The team leader is fully responsible to keep AFSA regularly updated and for the development and submission of the following outputs/deliverables:

Deliverable 1: A comprehensive inception report with detailed and refined timetable of the intervention (for approval) and a document detailing the study methodology i.e., the methods and tools for data collection and analysis to be submitted to AFSA no later than **25th October, 2024**

Deliverable 2: The draft report to be submitted to AFSA no later than **25th February, 2025** for comments.

Deliverable 3: Presentation of findings and initial conclusions and recommendations (debriefing with a PowerPoint presentation) to AFSA on **21st March, 2025**

Deliverable 4: One policy brief with actionable recommendations and presentation materials to disseminate the findings to stakeholders.

Deliverable 5: A comprehensive final report with findings, analysis, and recommendations (not exceeding 50 pages with an executive summary of 4 pages, excluding annexes) should be submitted to AFSA no later than 11th April, 2025.

* 1. The team leader will be responsible for drafting the study report, which should include inputs from the study team, commentary on the stakeholders’ meetings and a set of recommendations.
	2. The draft report will be circulated by the AFSA secretariat for comments.
	3. The comments will be sent to the team leader by **14th March, 2025.**
	4. The study team will have 27 Days till **11th April, 2025** to improve the final report.
	5. The comprehensive study report should follow the standard structure and will be produced in MS Word format.
	6. The draft and final reports will be delivered in English by the team leader.

# **TIME FRAME**

# The consultancy services are scheduled to begin immediately upon the signing of the contract. The entire project is expected to be completed within **189 days** from the commencement date. The study team’s timetable will at least include the following activities:

* Meeting with the AFSA staff to discuss the approach and research methodology.
* Development of the research design matrix, refining of the study methodology, sampling tools and strategy
* Development of research instruments/tools (questionnaires, interview guidelines, etc.).
* Site visits, observations and meetings/focus groups and interviews with the stakeholders (according to the sample strategy)
* Data collection and analysis
* Presentation of findings
* Preparation of the draft report; policy briefs and presentation materials
* Incorporation of comments and finalization of the report
1. **PERSUAL AND EVALUATION OF OFFERS**

The offers will be sorted at the AFSA secretariat based in Uganda Kampala. An evaluation committee will be tasked to assess the eligible offers. The choice will be based on technical capacity. The final choice will be made considering the budget available for this exercise.

1. **RESERVE ON CANCELLING THE BID**

 The present invitation to bid can be cancelled due to the conditions below:

* 1. There has not been enough competition.
	2. No offer meeting the requirements of the invitation to bid has been received.
	3. The offers accepted at the time of the perusal by far exceeded the available budget.
1. **CONDITIONS FOR CARRYING OUT MANDATE**
	1. The service will be subject to a contract and will be added as an appendix to the present ToR and the offer shall be validated.
	2. The study team leader will take up all the tax obligations related to its status of consultancy.
	3. The study team will comply with AFSA’s management procedures while performing the services, subject to this offer of consultancy.

# **11. OFFERS FROM THE CONSULTANT/TEAM LEADER**

* 1. A letter of bid duly signed.
	2. A technical proposal (maximum 4/6 pages) that details:
		1. A general profile of the firm/individual.
		2. The applicant’s understanding of the TOR (technical understanding of the assignment, methodology, timeline, and budget).
		3. Suggested detailed methodology.
		4. Work plan
		5. Experience with similar previous assignments indicating field of specialization and references.
		6. In annex: at least two sample reports of similar assignment which will be treated confidentially.
		7. In annex: CV of all members of the study team and possible track record
	3. A financial proposal showing the total cost (in USD), professional fees and reimbursable expenses (e.g., travel costs, field work, materials, etc.). The financial proposal must cover all costs associated with this study. Costs incurred outside the terms agreed in the financial proposal and final contract will not be reimbursed. The offer will also state the details of the amount not including taxes and including all taxes. Any special exemption should be clearly stated.
	4. Submit by email to afsa@afsafrica.org by 5:00 pm (East Africa Time) on **23rd September, 2024**.

The email should indicate ‘**AFSA- Comprehensive study on agroecological produce cross border trade in the EAC’** in the subject line.