

# Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Eastern Africa (KHEA)

## KHEA is part of the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA)

KCOA is a collaborative country-led partnership that aims to scale up the adoption of organic and agroecological farming practices through a network of five Knowledge Hubs in Africa. Within KCOA, the implementing organisations have four main objectives: to improve access to knowledge on organic agriculture and agroecology; to strengthen the technical and professional capacity of multipliers; to foster networking and to strengthen relationships in the sector; and to strengthen actors in their advocacy activities.

### The challenge

For a long time, highly intensified conventional agricultural systems in Eastern Africa have led to deterioration of ecosystems, impacted on biodiversity, and have shown a lack of resilience when it comes to climate change impacts. These systems have also failed in properly advancing livelihood indicators, especially for smallholders that contribute to over 75% of agricultural production in East Africa.<sup>1</sup> In this scenario, organic agriculture presents itself as a way of improving farmers returns, their lives, while building systems capable of preserving biodiversity and restoring deteriorated land. Although the number of farmers involved in organic agriculture in Eastern Africa is increasing and accounts for one million hectares and 650 certified organic farms, accelerating this transition with strong support to smallholders is a pressing need.<sup>2</sup> Farmers across the region face challenges in accessing high-return markets, lack training and knowledge to implement available and appropriate organic practices and technologies, face limited credit opportunities and costly certification systems, and many other barriers.

1, 2: FiBL, 2018

### KHEA approach

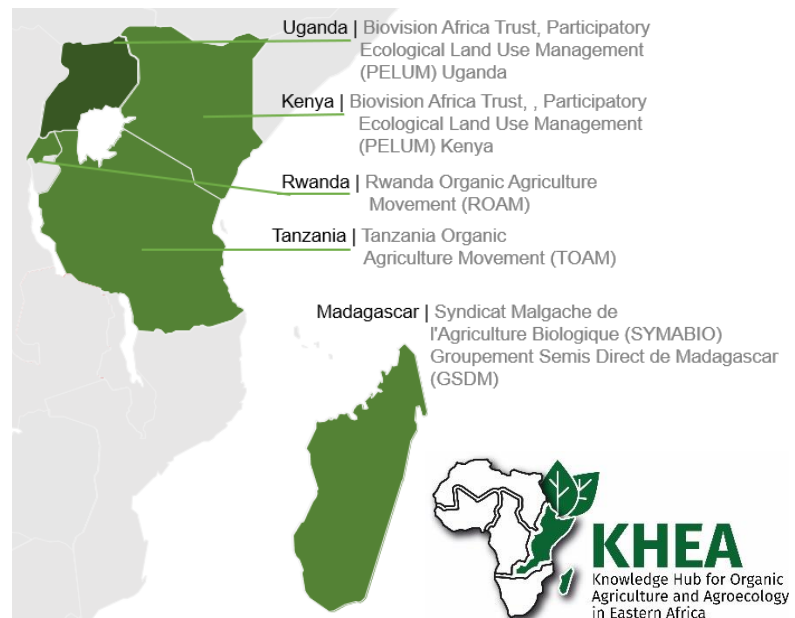
KHEA believes in the power of sharing knowledge and strengthening a collective set of actions capable of addressing some of the above challenges through:

- › Producing and sharing authenticated knowledge on organic farming practices and technologies, with various actors along the value chain (farmers, input suppliers, processors, marketers, transporters and traders, consumers);

- › Providing a collection of tools and approaches of disseminating information and knowledge for use by various intermediaries (multipliers);
- › Disseminate the knowledge to farmers, farmer associations and processors through multipliers including community change agents and Rural Service Providers (RSPs);
- › Strengthening local markets to boost business support services;
- › Promoting affordable alternative certification processes particularly Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) and Internal Control Systems (ICS).

### KHEA reach

Project name	Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Eastern Africa (KHEA) – one of the five hubs within KCOA project
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Uganda (hub base), Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, and Madagascar
Implemented by	GIZ in cooperation with Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT), PELUM Uganda and partner organisations (see map below)
Duration	2019 – Present



## Transformation through Organic Agriculture

During the last ten years, organic agricultural land in Africa has increased by almost 119,000 hectares or 7%.<sup>3</sup> Organic agriculture growth projections show a substantial increase in organic production in Eastern Africa, with thousands of smallholder farmers and their families being capable of moving out of poverty, gaining food security, and enjoying better quality of life. Such transformations are driven by lucrative organic products (coffee, cocoa, macadamia nuts, processed foods and vegetable oil, honey etc.); abundance of arable land in Africa); consumer awareness and education; increased local and global demand for healthy products.

3: FiBL, 2022







## KHEA expected outcomes

## Story from the field: Farmers Trainings

Since the implementation of the hub, KHEA has trained over 1,760 farmers (654 men, 1,106 women) on principles and practical skills of organic agriculture across the region. One of the most important aspects in these trainings is to change the mindsets of today's farmers so that they use fewer external inputs, avoid synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. The trainings also focus on extending this concern to different communities.

Asimwe Onesmus, a farmer and KHEA trained multiplier of Rukiga district in Western Uganda, now specializes in producing organic beans, tomatoes, leafy vegetables, and coffee. Because of the KHEA trainings he has incorporated organic farming practices such as crop rotation, compost manure, spraying with organic pesticides using biochar, ash mixed with water, and local herbs. "This has greatly improved production," he says. "I manage a small farm of 2 acres, and I now harvest 2 tons of beans, something I never achieved while I used conventional methods of farming," Onesmus adds. This also had economic benefits for him and his community. "Because of the produce, I get an income, deploy people, and educate them to the farming needs of bean production required to increase yields."

The Knowledge Hub in Eastern Africa's overall goal is to ensure that ecological organic agriculture and agroecology are integrated into the various countries' agricultural systems. These trainings are aimed at disseminating knowledge, strategies, and good practices to small- and large-scale farmers in the field of organic agriculture among the local communities across the region. The results of enhancing farmers with the necessary knowledge increases efficiency and can also lead to better environmental protection and food quality.

 <p><b>550 Knowledge Products</b> On organic agriculture uploaded in the Digital Knowledge Platform and accessible to the network</p>	 <p><b>170 connections and collaborations</b> between different stakeholders that work together on a regular basis to strengthen organic agriculture</p>
 <p><b>1,500 multipliers trained</b> From which at least 40% are women, sharing knowledge on organic agriculture and agroecology</p>	 <p><b>More than 3 million people reached</b> Through direct trainings, events, and communication material disseminated in different media platforms</p>

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