

1ST EASTERN AFRICA AGROECOLOGY CONFERENCE  
TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS FOR RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION,  
CONSUMPTION AND SOCIAL WELLBEING

March



2023

*Strengthening Resilience and Sustainability in  
Food Systems for Environmental and Socioeconomic Development*

[www.Infonet-Biovision.org](http://www.Infonet-Biovision.org)

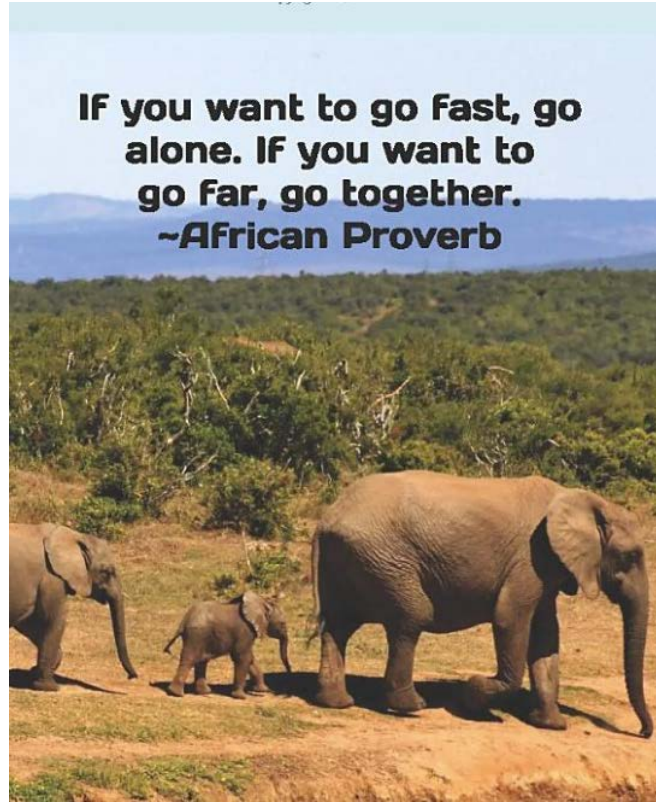
An Online Farmer Information  
Platform for Promoting  
Sustainable Development and  
Organic Agriculture in Africa



Implemented by

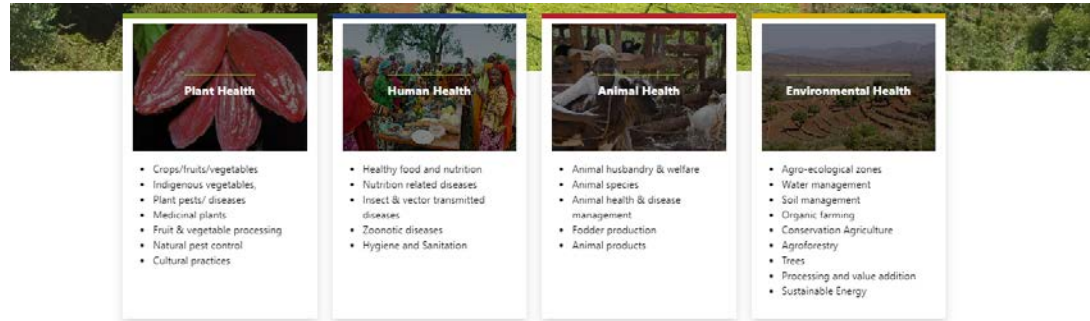


**If you want to go fast, go  
alone. If you want to  
go far, go together.**  
*~African Proverb*



# Infonet-Biovision

A web-based information platform with up-to-date information to improve human, animal, plant and environmental health



## ABOUT US

### What is Infonet?

Infonet, a channel of the Biovision Farmer Communication Programme (FCP), provides scientific and practical validated information and knowledge related to plant (crop), animal, human and environmental health.

The resource gives farmers, trainers, students, and extension workers quick access to up-to-date and locally relevant agricultural information and related topics. Infonet-Biovision's aim is to increase human and animal welfare and health; improve regional and local food security and at the same time conserve the environment and biodiversity.

[Learn More](#)



# Unique features

- Free access to information on sustainable and organic agriculture and related topics.
- Promotes exclusively agro-ecological and organic methods, that can be used in organic farming, reviewed scientifically
- Covers a broad range of topics that go beyond agriculture, we call it an extended 4H approach - we cover a relevant range of local species, varieties and topics (East-Africa focused, and now extended to continental African regions)
- Has an offline version (free for download and available on USB Flashdisk)
- Copyright and ownership of content is under a creative commons license - content can be shared for non-commercial uses

# Milestones

- Biovision Foundation developed Infonet as a result of request by farmers and a survey in farmer groups (2005)
- 2009 implementation in cooperation with BvAT's FCP programme (Regional coordination) – complementary channels...TOF, MkM, Radio, Outreach
- 2021 KCOA collaboration and continental outreach, CMS upgrade, content review and develop new contents

# Work areas

- 1. Content review with experts and development of new contents
- 2. IT development, CMS upgrade, add new functionalities
- 3. Develop partnerships and integrate interfaces for wider outreach to the African continent in Southern, West, North, Eastern and Central Africa.



# 1. Content development

- 325 Datasheets in 4H areas
- 135 Datasheets in review, 40 New datasheets – Plant Health-Crops, Indigenous vegetables, Medicinal plants ,Trees, Agroforestry
- 10 Datasheets on Sustainable Energy for rural areas
- 26 New Datasheets in development with KCOA Hubs
- 1000+ pest modules (Crop specific info on p/diseases - exclusive for Infonet)
- New chapters planned -One health, Urban farming, Biodiversity and Conservation, Dryland management)
- TOF/MKM publications

## 2. IT development, access and outreach

- Infonet is accessed online and offline
- Dynamic system- Desktop, Tablet, Mobile responsive version
- Offline version (>1GB) as download or USB flash
- > 1700 visitors per day (50% from African countries, 25% from Kenya)
- 2020 - 2022: 1'200'000 visitors



### 3. Partnerships, collaboration and Apps

- Infonet is supported as an international partner of the KCOA Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa putting together continental information
- Datasheets are being adapted for region specific needs of the continental KCOA Hubs
- App collaboration with existing apps: iCow, Arifu, Yielder, Plantwise, Echo (6 others in discussion)
- FCP. Next slide

# Bridging the gap between scientific research and it's implementation through multiple channels

## Research



## Application



- Practical, ecologically sustainable
- Locally adapted & relevant
- Scientifically verified & current
- Based on farmer needs & feedback

**The Organic**  
FARMER MAGAZINE

A magazine for sustainable agriculture in East Africa  
<http://www.theorganicmagazine.org>

**Mkulima Mbunifu**

Kenya. 35,000 copies printed monthly. Each copy shared by 6 – 8 farmers.

Tanzania. 15,000 copies printed monthly. Each copy shared by 5 – 6 farmers.

**TOF Radío**

Kenya. 2 programmes broadcasted weekly, with a potential reach of over 3 million listeners.

**Infonet**  
biovision

Over 350,000 online visits annually globally. Offline version for download

**FARMER COMMUNICATION Outreach**

Kenya. 55,000 farmers trained annually on ecologically sustainable farming practices

# Complementing FCP projects

## 1. Magazines



- A) *The Organic Farmer* (TOF) Magazine, Kenya (English)
- B) *Mkulima Mbunifu* (MkM), Tanzania (Swahili)

## 3. Infonet platform



- 1,500 visits daily, 50% of visits are from African countries

## 2. Radio



- Radio programme in Swahili and Local language

## 4. Outreach

Practical training



## 5. Digitized content



## 4. Future outlook

- Upscale dissemination through national, regional and Pan-African partnerships.
- Develop new chapters on key topics for the coming years.
- Extend partnerships and collaboration with experts to review selected datasheets.
- Improve Infonet backend and website



[www.infonet-biovision.org](http://www.infonet-biovision.org)

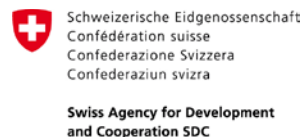
# Thanks!

ANY QUESTIONS?

You can find us at  
[www.infonet-biovision.org](http://www.infonet-biovision.org)

🔑 [m.hunziker@biovision.ch](mailto:m.hunziker@biovision.ch)

🔑 [cmunene@biovisionafrica.org](mailto:cmunene@biovisionafrica.org)



# FCP has built expertise in communicating with farmers and demonstrated success on several fronts



- More than doubled print volume since its inception in 2005
- Reaches 41 of 47 Counties, pdf's accessed through ifonet (English)
- Strong links with scientific research and like-minded institutions. E.g, ICIPE, KOAN
- Links to ifonet for complementary reading, takes up Q&A from Radio Program



- Started in 2011 and is a premier source of sustainable farming information in Tanzania (language Kiswahili)
- Over 90% of readers share the magazine with others, attesting to its value
- Over 5,000 fans on Facebook with high levels of engagement



- Potential reach of over 3 million listeners
- Enables interaction through SMS services for Q&As
- Tailored to audience based on priority value chains for Counties



- Started in 2005 with Plant Health Section, now also AH, EH and HH chapters
- Strong links and use by government in Ministry of Agriculture and extension officers
- Accessed worldwide, new CMS (smartphone), available for download/ CD/USB card
- Scientifically validated information, provided by an international network of experts, locally adapted based on priority areas for farmers



- Demonstrable impact on soil fertility. E.g., 80% influenced to adopt compost making
- Fills a gap in public extension services, with 11 resource centers and 23 outreach staff
- Proven cost-effective collaborative approach which we can strengthen and learn from!
- Several Partners interested in copying the approach