

International policy review on agroecology



In these uncertain times, many of the Avacim activities that had been planned have been impacted by the global health situation. Nevertheless, the common vision of Avacim's stakeholders is to generate positive results from the project so as to advance agroecology in the long term. The communities of practice that have engaged in AVACLIM will continue beyond the project and we believe that the results of the scientific component and advocacy actions will have a long-term influence on public policies, be they local, national or international

1. Avacim's ambitions

In all of Avacim partner countries we will be looking to the relevant authorities to promote agroecological initiatives and integrate them into management plans and development policies. At the national level, it will be important to disseminate positive regional experiences to create the right conditions for them to be adapted on a larger scale. At the international level, we must ensure that agroecology is reaffirmed

as an effective dryland development path, and that the necessary frameworks and capacities are in place to facilitate its deployment.

In all context and at all levels, we must identify the actors who have the potential to promote change in favor of agroecology, and its deployment in drylands. Drawing on its expertise in promoting the socio-economic interests of farmers and of civil society organizations, the Dutch NGO Both ENDS has analyzed the main international actors with a strong influence

on agriculture and shared their findings in a comprehensive inventory of international policies relating to agroecology¹. This analysis is available to all of Avaclim's partners to help them to jointly develop international advocacy strategies.

The review undertaken by Both ENDS provides an overview of the most relevant policy frameworks, financial instruments and actors that, at the international level, facilitate or hinder the deployment of agroecology in drylands. Both ENDS also proposes some levers to be used to dialogue with these actors and proposes ideas for advocacy strategies.

Please note that this review is not exhaustive: with the contributions of Avaclim's partners and others, we will ensure that it evolves over the coming years.

2. An analysis grid based on the 10 FAO elements

The International Review on Agroecology has been designed to enable the development of the international advocacy strategy carried by the Avaclim project partners. It is therefore not an academic study nor an in-depth analysis of the impact of each of the entities mentioned. These entities are diverse, and a distinction is made between conventions, treaties and protocols, agreements that may have legally binding elements, decisions taken at COPs, voluntary guidelines, and finally, the various funding agencies and mechanisms that may or may not be part of international institutions. These entities and mechanisms are often intertwined, and dynamic relationships exist between them and between the different political levels of implementation.

Based on this understanding, the Review provides an overview of existing actors, initiatives, international agreements, reports and funding mechanisms and shows how the inclination and attitude of each towards agroecology can be used in the development of an international advocacy strategy for agroecology. From a list of about 100 entities and instruments relevant to agroecology that had been drawn up beforehand (including international agreements, treaties, actors, initiatives and funding mechanisms), CARI and Both ENDS carried focused on the thirty-five that are most relevant in terms of their influence on

agricultural issues. These include UN bodies (UNEP, FAO, etc.), some public development banks (AFD, GIZ, etc.) and important regional initiatives. Also included are allied networks (AFSA, 3AO, etc.) and, above all, powerful entities that some may see as significant opponents of the deployment of agroecology, including the World Trade Organization, the World Economic Forum, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.



To carry out their analysis, the authors used in part the ACT (Agroecology Criteria Tool) methodology developed by Biovision² and the ten FAO elements of agroecology³: diversity, co-creation and sharing of knowledge, synergies, efficiency, recycling, resilience, human and social values, food culture and traditions, responsible governance, circular and solidarity economy. The rating of each of the ten elements for each entity is based on a qualitative analysis of public information available on the web and on interviews with seventeen experts. Graphs are associated with them in the form of spider's webs to more easily visualize the qualitative representation of the accessible information as to whether or not these entities support agroecology.

Methodically, for each entity, its legal status, mandate and responsibilities are explained. Finally, in addition to the analysis based on the ten elements of the FAO, the entity's orientation to agroecology is indicated along with some issues and themes towards which Avaclim's advocacy actions can be focused.

¹ Both ENDS & CARI, *Examen des politiques internationales en matière d'agroécologie*, document interne au projet Avaclim, 2020

² Biovision, *Agroecology Criteria Tool*: www.agroecology-pool.org/methodology

³ FAO, *The 10 Elements of Agroecology*: www.fao.org/agroecology/knowledge/10-elements/en/

3. Alliances and opportunities

Of the thirty-five entities that were the subject of this review, two have their action specifically dedicated to arid zones and drylands. These are the UNCCD and the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel. The others have a broader scope of action that is not limited to agriculture in the global drylands. However, collectively all influence the implementation of sustainable agricultural policies, including in arid zones, and many of their interventions have major consequences.

This tool provides a list of specific levers that may be used to challenge certain entities and more general levers for a common advocacy strategy at the international level. In particular, it suggests closer cooperation at all levels with farmers' networks and movements and with other civil society organizations that support farmers, both in the development of our messages and in bringing them to the general public and in international decision-making forums on agriculture and food (summits, COPs, UN decades, etc.). The involvement of agroecological actors in training institutions, academia and research is also one of the levers that advocacy activities can seek to further activate.

The Review concludes that links must be forged between the actors of ecological agriculture and the actors in the struggle for decent work, in particular trades unions. Agroecological practices can strongly contribute to the improvement of agricultural working conditions and this can be better demonstrated. Likewise, cooperation should be envisaged with movements defending indigenous peoples and promoting other forms of relationship with nature, especially the degrowth movements, or with movements radically opposed to current international trade agreements. Furthermore, certain organizations and networks have specific expertise relating to specific institutions and can be valuable resources and allies to help us bring about the necessary changes. Several initiatives are in this respect inspiring in terms of multi-actor synergy in favor of agroecology, such as those of the Dynamique pour une Transition Agroécologique in Senegal (DyTAES)⁴ and the Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia (ANA) in Brazil⁵.

The review also points out the limits of the implementation of certain instruments that could be beneficial to agroecology, whether sectoral, geographical, political or economic. These include the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Land Tenure Governance, the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Specific events also provide opportunities such as the UN Decade of Action for Nutrition (2016-2025)⁶ and the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)⁷.

The Review suggests that the term "agroecology" should be used advisedly in some contexts. Where negative prejudice may be problematic, substituting it with terms such as 'sustainable agriculture' may more easily convey specific messages in favour of agroecological practices and policies. Above all, the Review advises that Avaclim's partners should be as precise as possible in their recommendations on technical and practical issues. This is so as not to limit themselves to ideological debates, to enhance their credibility with decision-makers and thus to facilitate tangible changes in the field.

Finally, a list of international events is proposed that can provide opportunities to deliver messages from Avaclim's experience, for example at the upcoming IUCN Congress, the UNCCD negotiations, the Conference of the Parties of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development, the High Level Policy Forum on Sustainable Development, the Food Systems Summit and the various COPs of the CBD and UNFCCC.

4. A tool to be appropriated

This adaptive tool is now available to all Avaclim partners to be used to facilitate the definition of a global advocacy strategy and a strategy for Avaclim in each country: making explicit recommendations, identifying targets for these recommendations and planning actions to convince these targeted institutions and individuals. Several states have already made some commitments to agroecology, and they can be a source of inspiration for partner countries.

⁴ ENDA Pronat, DyTAES: www.endapronat.org/dytaes

⁵ Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia : www.agroecologia.org.br

⁶ United Nations, Decade of Action on Nutrition: www.un.org/nutrition

⁷ UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration: www.decadeonrestoration.org

The implementation of public policies must enable the deployment of agroecology in drylands. The sensitization and mobilization of all the relevant government ministries should ensure that they act in concert in relation to agricultural issues, and not pull in opposite directions. Indeed, while some institutions are making strong commitments to the ecological transition of agriculture, as is the case in Senegal or France, it must be noted that large-scale, field level operational implementation is rare. It is thus crucial to identify the factors blocking this implementation so that these institutions act concretely in favor of agroecology. We suggest that you use and adapt the analysis grid in your own context.



In conclusion

We would like to invite all Avaclim partners to seize the opportunities provided by the project to address new audiences in innovative ways, for example by mobilizing artistic skills to illustrate the radical transformations of our food systems that are needed to make them more sustainable and more equitable. This is an invitation in the same spirit as this beautiful poem by Caio Meneses, recited during a Brazilian Avaclim workshop:

*Agroecologia é ciência e movimento...
É a luta da mulher que não se cansa um momento.
A semente preservada, natureza respeitada é
gente reconhecida, num cabe dentro de um verso
preciso de um universo que é o onde acontece a vida.*

*Vamos então para o debate cada um numa janela
Chamar para gente o combate de tornar a vida bela,
Como diz a teoria fazer agroecologia
dá trabalho e dá prazer. A sustentabilidade precisa
de liberdade para poder acontecer.*

*Agroecology is science and movement ...
It is the struggle of the woman who does not get
tired for a moment.
The preserved seed, the respected nature, the
recognized people, they don't fit inside a verse
I need a universe, that is where life happens.*

*So let's each go to the debate in a window
Calling people to fight to make life beautiful,
As the theory says of agroecology:
it gives work and gives pleasure. Sustainability needs
freedom to happen.*

For this new news note, Agrisud International and the Norsys Foundation shared the following contribution:

Agroecology... a transition towards efficient and sustainable agricultural systems: what is the situation in the Kingdom of Morocco?

1. Context

Like most countries in the South, Morocco is affected by climate changes. Despite its small footprint in terms of global greenhouse gas emissions (0.18%)⁸,

the kingdom has put in place a very advanced legal and institutional arsenal to ensure the preservation, restoration and sustainable use of dryland ecosystems. This interest in the fundamental principles of sustainable development has resulted in successive reforms aimed at building solid foundations for economic development, improving social conditions and accelerating the pace of

⁸ Climate Action Tracker, Morocco:

www.climateactiontracker.org/countries/morocco

environmental achievements through both preventive and corrective measures.

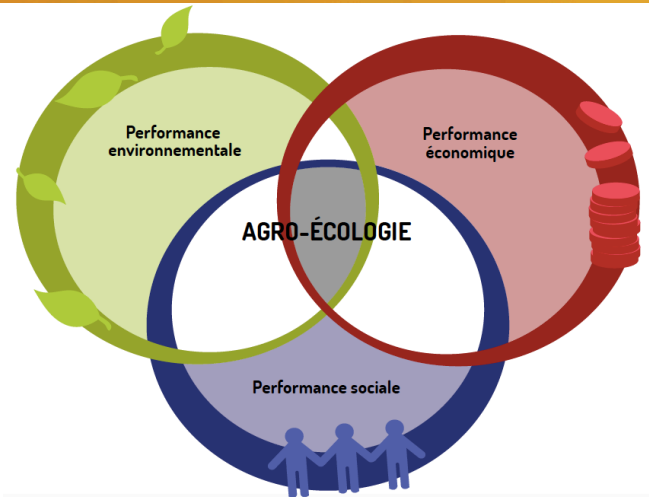
However, civil society is demanding that efforts be directed towards adapting the agricultural sector to climatic risks in order to strengthen its resilience. Agriculture, a pillar of the Moroccan economy, is a vector of development that not only employs 38%⁹ of the working population, but can, through good governance, ensure food and nutritional security for the population.

2. Agroecology: much more than just practices that preserve the environment!

While worldwide, agroecology is at the center of reflections and debates of multiple actors from various fields (agronomists, university researchers, sociologists, geographers, historians, anthropologists, politicians, etc.), in Morocco agroecology is today essentially the concern of civil society, sometimes supported by the private sector in support of family farms in urban and peri-urban areas.

Globally, agroecology is perceived as a model respectful of natural resources but not very productive, hence the need to highlight the economic performance of agroecological production systems, in the most objective way possible.

Indeed, in such a context, agroecology is an area to explore in order to respond to different challenges: environmental (preservation of natural resources), social (improvement of living conditions of vulnerable populations and consumer health), but also economic (productivity and improvement of profits, yield and regularity of yields, enhancement of the value of products on the markets, etc.). This perception reflects the positioning of Agrisud International and its Moroccan partner, the Norsys Foundation, with regard to the promotion of agroecology.



This economic component should be highlighted to advocate for an agroecological transition of production systems to decision-makers, support services, territorial authorities, farmers and other stakeholders in the sector. Some experiences of civil society organizations (in this case Agrisud-Fondation Norsys) have demonstrated the relevance of initiating the agroecological transition on Moroccan territories with few resources (soil, water and labor). Several hundreds of family farms have joined the project, seeing their profits improve.

3. Prospects for the future

In terms of public policies, the Generation Green 2020-2030 program is a new strategic framework for sustainable production and consumption patterns, in which agroecology can have an important place if we continue on the path together!

Follow the news of the Avaclim project and its partners on the website:

www.avaclim.org

⁹ Ministère marocain de l'économie et des finances, *Le secteur agricole marocain : Tendances structurelles, enjeux et perspectives de développement*, 2019

* Crédits photos : www.avaclim.org/credits-medias - Schéma : Agrisud International