

Terms of Reference

National State-of-the-Art Studies on Food Systems and Agroecology in Climate Policies and Programmes

Purpose: Produce 12 high-quality national “State of the Art” reports that analyze how agroecology and food systems are addressed in national climate policies and programs. This report will contribute to a broader global synthesis aimed at informing civil society advocacy and promoting the integration of agroecological approaches into climate strategies.

Start date: As soon as possible, to be agreed individually with each consultant. Expected to be April-May 2026

End date: Nine months from the agreed start date.

Exact dates subject to confirmation based on contract start date.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The IPA-Global initiative—IPA standing for Investigación Participativa en Agroecología or Participatory Research on Agroecology—aims to strengthen the capacity of farmer, fisher, Indigenous Peoples, and other civil society organizations to co-produce knowledge and engage in effective advocacy for climate-resilient food systems. Led by the Agroecology Fund (AEF) and with financial support of the Waverley Street Foundation, IPA-Global brings together multi-actor collaboratives—including farmer and fisher organizations, civil society networks, and researchers—to co-design and implement Participatory Action Research (PAR) that informs and advances agroecology-centered advocacy.

The national “State of the Art” reports are a complementary knowledge product within the IPA-Global initiative. These studies are designed to map the extent to which food systems and agroecology are integrated into climate policy frameworks, identify gaps and leverage points, and provide civil society with evidence to strengthen their advocacy. Each national report will feed into a global publication, offering a comparative and strategic synthesis of trends, opportunities, and challenges across countries.

To carry out this work, AEF is seeking national Researcher Consultants to produce 12 country-specific “State of the Art” reports. These reports will assess national climate agendas, examine coherence with agroecological principles and the fostering of food systems resilience, and document the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders including farmer, fisher, Indigenous Peoples and other civil society organisations. Where relevant and feasible, they may also take into account the alignment or interaction with current or emerging agricultural and broader food-systems policies and programmes.

Consultants will receive methodological and editorial support from Statistics for Sustainable Development (Stats4SD), which will oversee consistency, provide

review and approval at each milestone, and consolidate the national reports into a global synthesis.

1. Objectives

The initiative aims to produce 12 national studies with the working title “State of the Art of Food Systems and Agroecology in National Climate Policies and Programs” for the following target countries:¹ Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, United States, India, Indonesia, and France. The France report should include background information of EU policy context that frames national policies and programs.

The AEF has hired the services of Stats4SD to support researcher consultants hired by AEF in the production of these reports. The Stats4SD project team will prepare a unified report structure to ensure that national State-of-the-Art reports are harmonised across contexts. Stats4SD will provide methodological and editorial guidance to consultants and will formally review and approve consultant deliverables at defined milestones, which will be used to trigger payments.

The Stats4SD editor will coordinate the work outlined below (Sections 2–5), working closely with consultants preparing national State-of-the-Art reports, with the international expert preparing the introduction and conclusion of the global report, and with the AEF.

2. Expected Content of the State-of-the-Art Reports

The consultant will prepare a national State-of-the-Art report that addresses the following analytical elements, in line with the common report structure provided by Stats4SD:

1. Analysis of food systems and agroecology components in the national climate agenda, including existing and proposed policies, programmes and frameworks related to climate change mitigation and adaptation (CCM/CCA), including international commitments such as UNFCCC Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and relevant sub-national agendas. In the case of France, the national study will include discussion of the main frameworks at the EU level that influence national policies.
2. Assessment of coherence and alignment between national and some relevant sub-national climate agendas and policies and programmes oriented to agroecology and resilient food systems.
3. Assessment of the extent to which food systems are addressed and agroecological principles are integrated into climate agendas, including budgetary commitments where available.
4. Analysis of how climate agendas affect food systems transformation, particularly with respect to the rights of smallholder farmers, fishers, pastoralists and Indigenous peoples, including land and access to biodiversity.

¹ The current search for consultants is focusing on the highlighted countries, as consultants for the other countries have already been hired.

This includes implications of CCM/CCA strategies, budget allocations and international commitments for the evolution of food systems and the scaling of agroecology.

5. Identification of gaps, inconsistencies, opportunities and emerging trends in the alignment between climate policies and agroecology-based food systems transformation.
6. Inclusion of perspectives of key stakeholders, including IPA-Global partners, government agencies, civil society organisations, farmers' organisations, agroecology movements and research institutions.
7. Identification of insights that can inform engagement, partnerships and collaboration with key national actors to promote the inclusion of agroecology in climate action strategies.
8. Identification of policies and programmes that are detrimental to climate objectives, agroecology and rights.

Access the draft State of the Art Report Structure [here](#).

3. Scope of Work

At the outset of the assignment, the consultant will prepare a brief workplan including a schedule of activities aligned with the overall **Activity plan** (Annex 1). This workplan will be submitted at the start of the assignment and reviewed and approved by Stats4SD.

Deliverable (Milestone 1): Consultant workplan including schedule of activities aligned with the overall activity plan.

3.1 Document Review

The consultant will conduct a comprehensive review of the climate agenda in the relevant country (and in the EU, for the case of France), including but not limited to:

- UNFCCC, NDCs and NAPs.
- National (and relevant EU) climate strategies, plans, resilience strategies and long-term development visions.
- Recent climate-related budget allocations, investment frameworks and public expenditure reviews.

The review will analyse how these plans, policies and strategies incorporate:

- The relationships between food systems transformation and climate mitigation, adaptation, and risk-reduction strategies.
- Investments to promote food systems resilience for rural and urban communities.
- Agroecological principles.

- The interaction of existing agroecology-specific policies, programmes or strategies with the climate agenda.

Deliverable (Milestone 2): A short written analytical summary of the document review, structured to align with the final report outline and intended to feed directly into report drafting.

3.2 Stakeholder Consultation

The consultant will conduct consultations with a sample of key stakeholders, such as:

- IPA-Global partners
- Ministries responsible for agriculture, environment, climate, food systems and rural development
- Local government institutions
- Research institutes and universities
- Civil society organizations
- Farmer and fisher organizations and networks
- Representatives of national climate observatory platforms

Stakeholder consultations will overlap with the document review period, as reflected in the activity plan. The consultant will document perspectives on policy implementation, gaps, constraints and opportunities for alignment, including divergences between policy intent and practice.

Deliverable (Milestone 3): A short written synthesis of stakeholder consultation findings, structured to inform the analytical sections of the State-of-the-Art report.

3.3 Analysis

The consultant will discuss and agree an analysis strategy with the Stats4SD project team to ensure alignment with the common report structure used across countries. Drawing on findings from both the document review and stakeholder consultations, the analysis should prioritise interpretation over description. Its purpose is not to catalogue policies but to provide practical policy intelligence that grassroots organisations, civil society actors and IPA-Global partners can use to engage more effectively with national climate agendas.

The detailed analytical areas are captured in the national report structure and guide, which consultants should refer to when developing their analysis.

Deliverable (Milestone 4): A short written summary of key analytical points and feedback emerging from the workshop.

3.4 Drafting the Report

Consultants will prepare their national State-of-the-Art report using the common structure provided by Stats4SD. The drafting process will comprise: i) preparation of the first full draft for review by the editor; ii) preparation of second draft for AEF and external review and for presentation to key stakeholders in each country; iii) finalisation of the report incorporating all feedback and final editorial suggestions.

Early in the process, Stats4SD will convene consultants in an online meeting to discuss and agree the structure of the reports, including interpretation and use.

Prior to drafting a full report, consultants will prepare an annotated skeleton State-of-the-Art report outlining the proposed content, key messages and evidence sources for each section. Drafting of the full report will commence only after the annotated skeleton has been reviewed and approved by the Stats4SD editor.

4. Deliverables and Milestones (Consultant-led)

Please note that the timetable presented will be shifted to reflect the agreed contract start date.

- Milestone 1 (as agreed with Stats4SD at the start of the work): Consultant workplan including schedule of activities aligned with the overall activity plan (triggering payment 1: 25% of total).
- Milestone 2 (Milestone 1 + 1 month): Short written summary of document review.
- Milestone 3 (Milestone 1 + 2 months): Short written summary of stakeholder consultations.
- Milestone 4 (Milestone 1 + 3 months): Workshop and short written summary of key points and feedback.
- Milestone 5 (Milestone 1 + 3 months): Skeleton State-of-the-Art report, subject to editorial approval before drafting.
- Milestone 6 (Milestone 1 + 5 months): First full draft of the State-of-the-Art report for initial editorial feedback (triggering payment 2: 35% of total).
- Milestone 7 (Milestone 1 + 7 months): Second draft incorporating editorial feedback, submitted for AEF and external expert review.
- Milestone 8 (Milestone 1 + 7 months): Presentation of second draft results to key stakeholders in each country.
- Milestone 9 (Milestone 1 + 8 months): Final national State-of-the-Art report (8,000-9,000 words) incorporating all feedback and final editorial suggestions (triggering payment 3: 40% of total).

Approval of deliverables at each milestone by Stats4SD will be used to trigger payments, according to contractual arrangements.

5. Schedule

The work will be carried out over a 9-month period, with the start date agreed individually with each consultant. Consultants are expected to deliver their final national State-of-the-Art report no later than 9 months after their agreed start date, following the activity plan provided.

Consultants will prepare their own detailed schedules, aligned with the milestones and review points set out above and illustrated in the **Table of activities and milestones** below and in **Annex 1: Activity plan**. These include both consultant-led tasks and coordination tasks led by Stats4SD and AEF.

A. Consultant-led tasks

Consultants are responsible for activities explicitly described in Sections 3 and 4 of these Terms of Reference. These include:

- Preparation of a workplan
- Document review
- Stakeholder consultations
- Analysis
- Organisation of stakeholder workshop
- Drafting, revision and finalisation of State-of-the-Art report, including presentation of second draft to key stakeholders in each country and incorporation of all feedback

B. Coordination and synthesis tasks

Tasks led by Stats4SD or AEF include:

- Development of the unified report structure
- Identification, coordination and support of consultants
- Consolidation and publication of the global report

These tasks provide the enabling framework for the consultants' work but are not the responsibility of individual consultants.

C. Review points and milestones

Red markers in the **Activity plan** (Annex 1) indicate formal review points. These correspond to the milestones listed in Section 4 and represent decision points where deliverables are reviewed and approved before the next phase of work proceeds.

D. Overlap of activities

Several activities intentionally overlap in time (for example, document review and stakeholder consultations). Consultants are expected to work iteratively, using emerging findings to refine analysis and drafting rather than treating tasks as strictly sequential.

The **Table of activities and milestones** and **Annex 1: Activity plan** should therefore be read as a guide to sequencing and coordination, complemented by the explicit milestones and deliverables defined in these Terms of Reference.

Table of activities and milestones:

Please note that the timetable presented will be shifted to reflect the agreed contract start date.

All dates are expressed relative to the agreed start of work. Activities intentionally overlap. Consultants are expected to work iteratively rather than sequentially.

Activity/Milestone	Time / Date	Responsibility	Milestone (*)
Identify national consultants	From 3 weeks before start of work	AEF / Stats4SD	
Deadline for consultant applications	3 weeks before start of work	Consultant	
Develop unified structure for national State-of-the-Art reports	From 2 weeks before start of work to start of work	Stats4SD	
Online meeting of Stats4SD and consultants to discuss and agree the report structure	At start of work	Consultant / Stats4SD	
Prepare consultant workplan and schedule	Start of work to 2 weeks after start of work	Consultant	
Submit consultant workplan and schedule (short document)	2 weeks after start of work (M1)	Consultant	*
Document review	2 weeks to 1 month after start of work	Consultant	
Submit document review summary (short document)	1 month after start of work (M2)	Consultant	*
Stakeholder consultations	3 weeks to 2 months after start of work	Consultant	
Submit stakeholder consultation summary (short document)	2 months after start of work (M3)	Consultant	*
Analysis integrating document review and consultations	6 weeks to 2.5 months after start of work	Consultant	
Discussion of analysis with Stats4SD in preparation for online workshop	2.5 to 3 months after start of work	Consultant / Stats4SD	

Present analysis results to key stakeholders at online workshop and summarise key points and recommendations from participants	3 months after start of work (M4)	Consultant	*
Submit skeleton State-of-the-Art report outline	3.5 months after start of work (M5)	Consultant	*
Develop first draft of State-of-the-Art report	4 to 5 months after start of work	Consultant	
Submit first draft for initial editorial feedback	5 months after start of work (M6)	Consultant	*
Develop second draft of State-of-the-Art report	5.5 to 6.5 months after start of work	Consultant	
Submit second draft for AEF and external review	6.5 months after start of work (M7)	Consultant	*
External review of second draft	7 to 7.5 months after start of work	AEF / reviewers	
Presentation of second draft results to key stakeholders in each country	7.5 months after start of work (M8)	Consultant	*
Develop final draft of State-of-the-Art report	8 to 9 months after start of work	Consultant	
Submit final State-of-the-Art report	9 months after start of work (M9)	Consultant	*
Finalise global publication	To be confirmed by Stats4SD / AEF	Stats4SD / AEF	

A Gantt chart with this information is presented at the end of this document.

6. Selection Criteria

Selected Researcher Consultants will possess the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated experience in climate policy and knowledge of agroecology/food systems in the relevant country.
- Ability to analyze policy, consult stakeholders in person and online, and write analytical reports.
- Strong knowledge of the local institutional ecosystem and networks with social movements and civil society organizations.
- Excellent writing skills (ideally in English but Spanish, French or Portuguese will also be considered) and solid handling of references/documentation.
- For the international expert who will prepare the comparative introduction and conclusion for the global synthesis: comparative track record and strong synthesis skills.
- Reside in the country of study.

7. Contact

Please write to Andrea Sosa (andrea@agroecologyfund.org) for any questions or recommendations.

Activity plan (including milestones)

Rows follow the activity list. Bars show responsibility. Red markers are formal review points requiring approval to proceed.
All timings expressed in months relative to the agreed start of work.

