CANALLS
AGROECOLOGICAL PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION

D5.3 Report on enhancing demand and facilitating market access – initial version

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Executive Summary

This report presents Deliverable 5.3 of the CANALLS project, which focuses on enhancing demand and facilitating access to local, regional, and international markets for agroecological food products. The task is led by AATF in collaboration with regional partners including IITA, RIK, APDIK, CAMF, CAPAD, RAB, AFAAS, and NATUR. Its objective is to assess market needs and to develop and implement tailored support services that strengthen market access and stimulate demand for food products originating from the Agroecological Living Labs (ALLs). This task involves market research to identify, analyze, and provide intelligence on target markets. It also includes the design of marketing strategies such as branding and building on existing labelling schemes when applicable, advice on designing and implementing promotional campaigns that highlight agroecological benefits, and networking to foster collaboration with value chain actors and promotional multipliers to establish effective marketing channels. Where feasible, based on product characteristics (e.g., perishability, transport costs, and regulations), AATF, AFAAS, RIK, and NATUR will facilitate access to regional and international markets.

The methodology employed includes a structured literature review, a market survey, and a comparative analysis. The literature review aimed to characterize agroecological markets, assess marketing constraints, and identify proven models for demand enhancement and market access. The market survey, which is ongoing, involves structured interviews with producers, traders, and consumers in all eight ALLs. Comparative analysis will align findings from literature and field data to guide the development of context-specific support strategies.

Findings from the literature review reveal that agroecological markets are typically localized, diverse, and embedded in community values. However, market access remains a major constraint due to challenges such as logistical limitations, limited consumer awareness, certification hurdles, input access constraints, weak farmer negotiating power, and inadequate policy support. However, the literature also highlights proven models for market development, such as participatory guarantee systems (PGS), nested market networks, territorial branding, and integration into public procurement systems. Strengthening producer organizations and promoting direct marketing channels are also emphasized as impactful interventions.

Data collection has been completed in the Ntui Living Lab in Cameroon. In DRC, it is complete in the Kabare and Biega Living Labs, and partially underway in the Bunia and Uvira Living Labs. Activities in the Kamonyi Living Lab in Rwanda, as well as the Giheta and Bujumbura Living Labs in Burundi, are scheduled for July 2025. All data collection is expected to conclude by the end of the month. As per the work plan, the next steps include data analysis, drafting of the second report version, partner review, and co-design of marketing strategies, followed by promotional campaigns and networking efforts to facilitate access to regional markets. These actions are expected to take place between August 2025 and June 2026, leading to the final report on enhancing demand and market access for agroecological products.

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List of Terms and Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
ALL	Agroecology living lab
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
CANALLS	Driving Agroecological transitions in the humid tropics of Central and Eastern Africa through traNsdisciplinary Agroecology Living LabS
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
IRAD	Institute of Agricultural Research for Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PGS	Participatory Guarantee Systems
RAB	Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board
RIK	Rikolto International SON
APDIK	Association Paysanne pour le développement intégré au Sud-Kivu
CAMF	Cameroon Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (CAMFAAS)
CAPAD	Confederation des Associations Desproducteurs Agricoles pour le Develloppement
NATUR	Naturland - Verband Fur Okologischen Landbau EV
SCOOP	Societe Cooperative Avec Conseil d' Administration Pour Le Manioc
MAGGOT	Maggot Farm Production Ltd

1. Introduction

Climate change poses a significant threat to global food security, with Africa being one of the most adversely affected regions due to the continent's biophysical makeup and numerous socio-economic vulnerabilities such as a high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, limited alternative livelihoods, and weak adaptive capacity (African Union, 2022). This has contributed to declining agricultural productivity, exacerbating hunger and poverty, despite the pressing need to increase food production by approximately 50% by 2050 to meet the demands of the region's growing population (African Union, 2022). A key driver of global climate change is the continued reliance on unsustainable agricultural practices particularly the intensive use of external inputs and mechanization in the Global North which generate significant greenhouse gas emissions. Although Africa contributes relatively little to these emissions, the continent bears a disproportionate share of the impacts. Additionally, conventional agriculture in Africa exposes farmers and food systems to high levels of social, economic, and environmental risk (Rahmanian et al., 2016).

Agroecology presents a sustainable alternative by replacing the functions of external inputs with ecosystem services. It leverages the synergistic interactions among plants, animals, and microorganisms to enhance the resilience and sustainability of farming systems (Rahmanian et al., 2016). However, for agroecological practices to be widely adopted and impactful, they must be backed by strong market incentives and growing consumer demand. This study addresses that critical gap by supporting farmers and value chain actors to enhance demand and improve access to local, regional, and international markets for agroecological products. While the primary focus is on meeting the food and nutritional needs of African populations, enabling access to regional and international markets can create additional income streams for producers, enhance the visibility and credibility of agroecological products, and drive investments in sustainable value chains. This is particularly relevant for export-oriented crops such as coffee and cocoa, which are key economic drivers in the region.

The CANALLs project (Driving agroecological transitions in the humid tropics of Central and Eastern Africa through traNsdciplinary Agroecology Living LabS) is a four-year Horizon Europe initiative designed with the overall objective of driving agroecological transitions in the humid tropics of Central and Eastern Africa through a multi-actor collaboration approach. This approach brings together rural communities, advisory services, and governments to co-develop and implement agroecological practices tailored to the unique conditions of the humid tropics. These will be evaluated for socio-economic and environmental performance, fostering the sharing of best practices and the delivery of fair, inclusive, and sustainable business models which will facilitate market access and enhance demand for agroecological products. By promoting well-tested agroecological innovations and generating evidence on their performance, the project aims to support informed decision-making and policy development across the region. CANALLS is implemented across eight Agroecological Living Labs (ALLs) located in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Cameroon, and Rwanda, focusing on key crops vital for both subsistence and economic development: cocoa, coffee, cassava, rice, and maize as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: List of the Agroecology Products per Living labs for CANALLS Project

Country	Living Lab	Product	Product Category
Burundi	Giheta	Coffee (organic)	Agroforestry
Burundi	Bujumbura	Maize	Cash crop
DRC	Uvira	Rice/cassava	Food and cash crop
DRC	Bunia	Cocoa (Organic)	Agroforestry
DRC	Biega	Coffee (organic)	Agroforestry
DRC	Kabare	Coffee	Agroforestry
Rwanda	Kamonyi	Cassava	Food crops
Cameroon	Ntui	Cocoa	Agroforestry

One of the key objectives under the CANALLS project is to deliver hands-on support aimed at enhancing demand for agroecological food products, including organic products, and to facilitate access to local, regional, and international markets. Building on previously identified demand enhancement mechanisms across the various Agroecological Living Labs (ALLs), this objective seeks to explore current market structures and practices and align them with these mechanisms to create more robust and sustainable market linkages.

This process will culminate in the design of practical marketing strategies and targeted support interventions to stimulate demand and expand market opportunities for agroecological products. These strategies will consider the unique characteristics of agroecological food products and the specific market dynamics in each country of implementation. In particular, efforts will focus on strengthening product branding by leveraging existing or potential labelling schemes that communicate the agroecological value to consumers. At the same time, tailored promotional campaigns will be developed to raise awareness of the multiple benefits of agroecological production systems, including environmental sustainability, improved nutrition, and enhanced livelihoods.

Furthermore, the objective emphasizes the importance of building strong networks and collaborations with key value chain actors and promotional multipliers to support the establishment of effective and resilient marketing channels. These efforts will be adapted to suit the distinct features of the agroecological products such as perishability, transport and storage requirements, and prevailing regulatory frameworks ensuring that the interventions are contextually appropriate and scalable. Ultimately, this objective is geared toward creating a more enabling environment that supports the visibility, accessibility, and competitiveness of agroecological products in diverse markets.

Achieving this will need a clear understanding of agroecology food products. One of the critical factors to consider in this definition is that agroecology fosters sustainable food systems by integrating ecological principles into farming practices, enhancing biodiversity, soil health, and food resilience for a healthier future. In this report, agroecology products are those that emanate from the agroecology systems in the ALLs.

2. Methodology

This task will be achieved through a structured approach comprising a literature review, a market survey, and a comparative analysis. The goal is to identify gaps and design practical support mechanisms to enhance demand and improve market access for agroecological food products.

2.1 Literature Review

A comprehensive review of existing literature was conducted to gather intelligence on the market of agroecological food products. The review focussed on characterizing the agroecological food products markets and then the barriers that hinder market access and demand enhancement. Additionally, the literature review examined the proven models that support demand enhancement, branding, labelling and promotional strategies in line with demand enhancement services identified in task 2.4.

2.2 Market Survey

A market survey was undertaken to gather empirical data on current market dynamics and the positioning of agroecological food products. The survey targeted Interviews with key actors across the value chain, including 30 producers, 15 consumers and 10 traders from each of the eight agro-ecological living labs. The survey tools (structured questionnaires) were coded in digital data collection tool (KoboCollect) in both English and French versions (see annex 1). Enumerators were trained on the questionnaires as well as on using KoboCollect to conduct interviews and collect quality data.

This survey focused on mapping how agroecological products are currently marketed and positioned, understanding the constraints and opportunities in market access, assessing consumer awareness and preferences across different segments and evaluate existing branding, labelling, and promotional efforts, if any. This survey aimed to identify how the current practices align with the demand enhancement services identified in task 2.4 for each of the ALL food products and then come up with support services needed to enhance demand and facilitate access to local, regional and international markets.

The data collection exercise was coordinated by project partners in each participating country. In Cameroon, IITA, SCOOPMAN, CAMFAAS, and IRAD shared the data collection responsibilities, under the coordination of AAFAS. AATF led an online training session on June 5th to guide the teams in Cameroon and DRC on how to use the KoboCollect tool and administer the questionnaire. Field data collection in Cameroon was conducted from June 16th to 18th in Ntui, and in Yaoundé for consumers and traders' surveys.

In the DRC, data collection was coordinated by APDIK, RIKOLTO, and IITA across the Biega, Kabare, Bunia, and Uvira Living Labs. The data collection took place between June 15th and 28th. However, in the Uvira Living Lab, the exercise is only partially completed due to prevailing security concerns in the area.

In Rwanda and Burundi, enumerator training is scheduled for the third week of July, with data collection planned for the week after. In Rwanda, activities will be conducted in Kamonyi and coordinated by ITA, RAB, COPED, and MAGGOT. In Burundi, CAPAD, NATUR, and IITA will coordinate the exercise, which will take place in Giheta and Bujumbura, where the agroecological Living Labs are located. The entire process is expected to be finalized by the end of July 2025.

2.3 Comparative Analysis

The finding from the market survey will be compared against the demand enhancement mechanisms identified in the literature review and task 2.4. This comparative analysis will assess the extent to which the current practices observed in each ALL align with evidence-based strategies drawn from literature. highlighting the gaps in support mechanisms that may be addressed through targeted support and proven models for demand enhancement as identified during the literature review.

2.4 Development of Tailored Support Mechanisms

Using insights from the comparative analysis, tailored interventions will be developed to strengthen demand and improve market access. These will include:

- Recommendations for branding strategies and labeling schemes (e.g., Participatory Guarantee Systems or third-party certification) to signal product value.
- Advisory services for designing and executing promotional campaigns based on agroecological benefits (e.g., climate resilience, health, biodiversity).
- Digital and offline networking strategies to connect producers with traders, processors, retailers, and promotional multipliers.
- Identification of specific market entry points, especially for exportable products (e.g., cocoa and coffee), and public procurement opportunities for staples (e.g., cassava and maize)

3. Literature Review Results

3.1 Characterizing Agroecological Food Products Markets

Food security paradigms have been mostly focussed to eradicating hunger mainly through increased calorie intake. However, this does not solve the whole issue of hunger and malnutrition as if mostly focussed on a single crop limiting access to diverse food crops necessary for achieving proper nutrition (FAO, 2016). Recently, there has been a growing interest among farmers' organizations, scientists and governments on the importance of agroecology production to enhance food security but also achieving a healthy nutrition for all (Rahmanian & Meybeck, 2016).

However, one of the barriers to the agroecological transition for farmers is market access. According to FAO (2016), the current system of agricultural subsidies in developed countries distorts global prices by encouraging overproduction. This results in the dumping of cheap food products in developing countries, undermining the competitiveness of local farmers. As a result, many farmers are unable to obtain fair prices for their agroecological products, limiting their ability to participate meaningfully in markets and to invest in sustainable practices.

According to Rahmanian & Meybeck , 2016, the marketing factors in food systems including food distribution, sales, marketing and market supply chain relationships influence the actors decisions and actions.

The markets for agroecological products are unique and do not easily fit in to the existing formal markets mainly due to the issues related to biodiversity such as the practise of cultivating different crops in mixtures which has been shown to be beneficial for eco-system services. However, the growing formal global markets have strict requirements such as standards that limit variability. This therefore calls for development of markets adapted to biodiverse products.

Features of agroecological markets

Diversity of market channels

Producers of agroecological products follow a diversified marketing strategy having more than 20 different market channels most of the producers sell directly to the consumers mainly due to benefits related to social relationships such as trust, proximity and a sense of conviviality, referring to the friendly and personal nature of exchanges that promote community building and mutual understanding. The most common marketing channels are direct/ on-farm sales, farmers' markets and ecofairs, and restaurants and hotels (FAO/INRA, 2018).

The market networks are embedded in communities

This is because most agroecological initiatives respond to local needs, such as providing healthy food for urban consumers and supporting indigenous and traditional food systems. These business models promote social and economic interdependencies and involve producers, consumers, and intermediaries in a participatory decision-making process (FAO/INRA, 2018).

Efficiency is multidimensional

The efficiency of these markets does not only entail the economic aspect of business but also in their ability to address broader social, cultural, and environmental goals. They create hybrid missions that integrate these objectives, reflecting the holistic vision of agroecology, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and economic components (FAO/INRA, 2018).

The consumers are relatively price insensitive

They are primarily from the middle-income bracket and are generally aware of the higher production costs associated with agroecological products. As a result, they are willing to pay a premium to ensure fair compensation for producers. Pricing is often negotiated, with producers using feedback from consumers and intermediaries to adjust prices in line with local market trends. Additionally, loyal customers are frequently offered discounts as a gesture of appreciation (FAO/INRA, 2018). Arnot *et al*. 2006 collaborates these results as the study suggested that ethical consumers who are the main consumers of agroecological products are less price sensitive as compared to others.

Nested Markets

These markets are nested, operating through very short supply chains, with products typically changing hands only twice within the networks. On average, there are four to five different actors involved, who maintain their own organizational independence while collectively contributing to the functioning of the market system. There are generally four types of nested market networks: information-rich, interactive, sociocultural, and diversified. Information-rich networks focus on the sharing of market and production information, while interactive networks are characterized by active

engagement between producers, consumers, and intermediaries. Sociocultural networks are rooted in shared values, cultural identity, and community traditions. Diversified networks, on the other hand, incorporate a mix of intermediaries and strategies to serve varied consumer segments and market needs (FAO/INRA, 2018).

Value of the agroecological products

The value of agroecological products in these markets is determined by their intrinsic characteristics, notably being organic, healthy, natural, and safe food often produced with minimal or no use of synthetic agrochemicals. These attributes resonate strongly with an increasingly informed consumer base that prioritizes food safety, environmental sustainability, and ethical production practices. Over the years, consumers have become more conscious of the ecological and social implications of their food choices. This shift has been driven by growing awareness of the adverse effects of conventional agriculture on human health, biodiversity, soil fertility, and climate change hence agroecological products offer a compelling alternative (FAO/INRA, 2018).

Emerging input markets

Agroecological markets encompass both input supply systems and the downstream markets for the produce. A key feature distinguishing agroecological production system is their limited reliance on synthetic inputs such as chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified seeds. Instead, these systems promote the use of locally available, renewable, and biologically based resources. Inputs in agroecology are often sourced through non-conventional channels. Farmers may rely on self-produced inputs such as compost, botanical pesticides, and saved seeds or obtain them through local exchange systems. These include informal farmer-to-farmer networks, barter systems, and community seed banks, as well as purchases from local agroecological supplier shops or cooperatives. This decentralized and community-based nature of input sourcing not only reduces dependency on external actors but also fosters resilience and knowledge sharing within farming communities (Altieri et al., 2015).

Moreover, agroecological input markets tend to be more embedded in local contexts, emphasizing circular economies and closed-loop systems. This contrasts sharply with the linear, input-intensive models of conventional agriculture. According to Gliessman (2016), such input systems are critical for supporting diversified farming systems that align with ecological principles.

3.2 Challenges in Agroecological Food Products Market

Under Deliverable 5.1 of the CANALLS project, which focused on identifying consumer segments for agroecological food products, a survey was conducted with value chain actors and subject-matter experts. The findings highlighted several key challenges affecting the marketing and uptake of agroecological food products.

Logistical Limitations

Inconsistent production, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and the absence of postharvest and processing facilities near production areas hinder the effective distribution and timely availability of agroecological products in the market (Argyropoulou et al., 2023). These findings echo those of Loconto et al. (2018), who identified logistics as a primary barrier to market access.

Limited Consumer Awareness

Many consumers and intermediaries lack knowledge about what agroecological products are, where to find them, and the potential benefits they offer. Misconceptions often shaped by comparisons with certified organic products undermine consumer trust and limit market demand (Loconto et al., 2018). Similarly, Argyropoulou et al. (2023) noted that limited awareness of the benefits of organic and agroecological farming methods can hinder both consumer uptake and producer adoption.

Perceived High Prices

While core agroecological consumers often from middle-income segments are generally willing to pay a premium to support sustainable practices and fair producer compensation, the broader market still perceives agroecological products as expensive. This perception discourages potential new consumers and limits wider market uptake, Loconto et al. (2018). It is closely tied to limited consumer awareness about the unique value of agroecological products, including their environmental and health benefits. One proposed solution is to clearly communicate this value proposition, emphasizing long-term benefits, while also developing strategic pricing models that enhance affordability without compromising farmer incomes. Argyropoulou et al. (2023) further noted that buyers often exert control over prices, leading to unfair pricing practices. These dynamics not only impact the economic viability of producers but can also discourage transitions to more sustainable consumption and production systems.

Limited Availability

Many farmers have not yet transitioned to agroecological practices, resulting in low supply and unmet market demand. There is a need to raise awareness among producers and establish partnerships to scale up production sustainably (Loconto et al., 2018). Additionally, findings from the CANALLS study by Argyropoulou et al. (2023) highlight that limited availability of arable land poses a significant barrier to the expansion of agroecological and organic practices. In some contexts, competition for land restricts the area available for organic cultivation, further constraining supply growth.

Certification Challenges

The certification process for agroecological products is often complex, time-consuming, and costly. These challenges discourage many producers from pursuing certification, which in turn limits their access to formal markets and undermines consumer confidence. Findings from the CANALLS project by Argyropoulou et al. (2023) support this, noting that certification remains a significant barrier to the wider adoption and recognition of agroecological practices.

Difficulties Accessing Inputs

Despite the emergence of input systems in agroecological markets, such as community seed banks, farmer exchanges, and self-produced bio-inputs, producers still face significant challenges in accessing essential inputs at scale. Organic seeds, compost materials, and other biologically based inputs are not always readily available, especially for farmers newly transitioning to agroecology. Moreover, the lack of formalized distribution systems and quality assurance mechanisms can limit affordability, consistency, and trust. FAO/INRA. 2018 stated that agroecological producers prefer a wide diversity of varieties but in small quantities but sometimes, there's just not enough variety available in the market. These barriers hinder the broader scaling of agroecological production despite the promising foundations of decentralized input supply systems.

Limited Negotiating Power

Smallholder farmers often have limited bargaining power, which results in low prices for their products. This challenge is particularly pronounced when farmers are not organized into groups or cooperatives and lack essential skills in pricing and marketing (FAO/INRA, 2018). Argyropoulou et al. (2023), in the CANALLS project, further noted that many farmers lack entrepreneurial competence, making it difficult for them to develop viable business models and strategies. Together, these limitations weaken farmers' positions in the market and hinder their ability to negotiate fair returns.

Limited Policy and Legal Support

There is inadequate policy and legislative support for agroecological and organic farming in many contexts. National policies often favour conventional agriculture through subsidies for chemical fertilizers and hybrid seeds, placing agroecological products at a competitive disadvantage. Moreover, the absence of clear guidelines, regulatory frameworks, and administrative structures further hinders the adoption and scaling of sustainable farming practices. Findings from the CANALLS project by Argyropoulou et al. (2023) reinforce this, highlighting the need for supportive institutional and policy environments to enable agroecological transitions.

3.3 Support for Demand Enhancement and market access for agroecological food products

Marketing channels are the pathways through which agroecological food products reach consumers. These channels determine the accessibility, affordability, and visibility of products, directly influencing demand. As discussed earlier, agroecological markets possess unique characteristics, and therefore, any support aimed at enhancing demand and improving market access must be tailored to these specific features. Institutional and organizational mechanisms play a critical role in shaping both demand and market access for agroecological products. These mechanisms have been identified as effective models for promoting demand and expanding markets for agroecological food products, as outlined by Rahmanian et al. (2016).

Producer Organizations

They play a pivotal role in developing markets for agroecological products by promoting initiatives that enhance farmers' incomes and market participation. These organizations often establish aggregation hubs and collective marketing structures, which enable smallholder producers to access resources and services they would otherwise struggle to obtain individually. These organizations foster connections and enhance partnerships with both public and private actors, creating avenues for collaboration and growth.

Through producer groups, farmers collectively access training opportunities and acquire new skills such as market negotiation skills that help them leverage markets to generate income and enhance their livelihoods. For example, one of the strategies for demand enhancement for cocoa products from the Agroecological Living Labs in the DRC and Cameroon was collective action and capacity strengthening. This can be effectively achieved by supporting the setting up of new producer groups and strengthening existing ones through mechanisms such as targeted capacity building, market linkage facilitation, organizational development support, and improved access to finance and inputs.

Such support ensures that farmers are trained on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), meet certification requirements, and consistently produce the quality and quantity demanded by clients. In doing so, they can meet consumer needs while maintaining consistency in both quantity and quality, thereby enhancing demand and improving market access for agroecological products.

Strengthening of local collectors

In addition to farmer groups, local collectors play a pivotal role as trusted intermediaries in agroecological value chains. These actors maintain close relationships with smallholder farmers, offering crucial services such as aggregation, transportation to local and regional markets, and bulk sales to district and provincial buyers. They also provide farmers with timely market and price information, as well as informal guidance on agroecological practices.

By facilitating both logistical and informational linkages, local collectors significantly contribute to improving market access and creating demand for agroecological products. For example, one of the demand enhancement strategies for maize in ALLs in Bujumbura and Burundi was Innovative distribution using digital platforms or mobile apps for product ordering and delivery to enhance convenience and accessibility.

Therefore, Strengthening the capacity of these actors through business development services such as digital tools for aggregation and sales tracking can amplify their impact without the need for direct financial support. Other support for business development would be training in entrepreneurship and financial literacy, market linkage support, mentorship, and advisory services. Supporting these actors can therefore serve as a strategic, cost-effective approach to scaling agroecological markets and ensuring more inclusive and resilient food systems.

Foster a multitier organizational structure for the producers

This refers to a layered system of actors operating at different level, starting with individual producers and their organizations at the local level, who are then connected to county or regional clusters organized around specific lead products (e.g., maize in one ALL, coffee in another). These regional clusters are further linked to national platforms or federations.

This multitier approach allows for better specialization, targeted support for specific value chains, and stronger advocacy for enabling policies and investment. National representation ensures that local voices are heard in policymaking spaces, while county-level clusters can focus on developing value chains around regionally significant crops. This structure also facilitates more effective branding, marketing, and access to larger markets.

Support to achieve this can focus on providing technical assistance to map and organize actors within value chains by region. It may also include seed funding for organizational development, such as offering small grants or in-kind support (e.g., meeting venues, logistics) to help groups form and operate initially, and funding the development of operational guidelines, constitutions, or strategic plans. Additionally, support should go towards creating coordination platforms or forums for dialogue, planning, and joint marketing; providing ICT tools for communication and coordination across organizational levels; and developing databases or directories of producer groups, clusters, and value chains to enhance visibility and collaboration.

Support territorial branding to differentiate agroecological products based on origin, cultural value, and biodiversity.

Most of the demand enhancement strategies proposed across Agroecological Living Labs (ALLs) have focused on brand development that highlights the unique identity, cultural heritage, and ecological diversity of agroecological products in each location.

Examples include brand development for maize in Burundi, lifestyle branding for organic coffee in DRC and Burundi, branding and promotion for cocoa in ALLs in DRC and Cameroon, and branding and certification for rice products in the DRC. These branding efforts enhance trust in product quality and origin while increasing brand visibility.

Support mechanisms for brand development may include organizing value proposition workshops to co-create compelling brand narratives around specific agroecological products and tailored brand messaging as well as design and packaging support to enhance visual identity and appeal of products.

Integrating the agroecological food production systems in to public food procurement initiatives

Local markets for agroecological products can be created through public procurement programs such as School feeding programmes, food banks, community kitchens and charities. These initiatives enable governments to achieve multiple objectives, including food system regulation (such as price stabilization), improving food access, and promoting nutritious food programmes and interventions. Agroecological production also contributes to environmental protection and social justice, offering added value beyond food supply.

On the other hand, such initiatives reduce market uncertainty for small-scale farmers, improving their income security and lower the risks associated with agroecological production. In addition, short marketing circuits are achieved creating proximity markets for the dispersed production of smallholder farmers, reducing transportation and transaction costs for both buyers and sellers and ultimately contributing to lower food prices. For instance, one of the proposed demand enhancement mechanisms for rice in Uvira ALL in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), was Affordable Options for Price-Sensitive Consumers while ensuring acceptable quality which can be effectively achieved through public procurement initiatives.

Project partners can collaborate with local governments and institutions to develop a National Plan for Agroecology Production, clearly outlining mechanisms to enhance the trade and consumption of local agroecological products. This collaboration can play a key role in advocating for and facilitating the integration of agroecological products into public procurement programmes, such as school feeding and food aid initiatives.

Support and strengthen Participatory Guarantee System

Participatory Guarantee Systems are voluntary, locally based and low-cost quality assurance systems built on trust, social networks, and knowledge exchange. They involve the direct participation of producers, consumers, and other local stakeholders in both the development and verification of certification schemes. Producers are certified through active engagement in localized groups in a way that reflects their specific contexts, constraints, and opportunities. PGS have proven particularly effective in enabling agroecological and other sustainable producers to access markets by recognizing the unique nature of their production systems. Unlike formal certification standards, which often fail to accommodate the context-specific and adaptive features of agroecology, PGS offer a more inclusive and practical alternative.

Certification came out as a strong point for demand enhancement for ALLs products like rice in in Uvira DRC and organic coffee in Burundi and DRC. With this type of certification, producers can expand beyond local markets to reach national and even international markets. Project partners can support this by investing in the development of local PGS frameworks through technical assistance to design the certification process, stakeholder engagement, capacity building on how to implement

and manage PGS and policy advocacy to ensure recognition, credibility, and wider market access for certified agroecological products.

Initiatives that increase direct communication and contact between producers and consumers.

The value of agroecological products is best communicated through direct interaction between producers and consumers. Activities that bring these two groups together can serve as effective channels for creating awareness about the unique nature of agroecological products, while also providing opportunities to receive direct feedback that can inform improvements in product quality and pricing. One effective approach is adapting the Slow Food model, which uses an agroecological lens to guide market creation and food supply systems. This model is grounded in principles that support small-scale agroecological producers, strengthen direct farmer–consumer relationships, and uphold traditional food consumption habits. It prioritizes short distribution channels, value addition, high-quality food, and the local movement of goods (FAO/INRA**,** 2018).

Such a model can be applied in initiatives like farmers' markets, where producers bring their goods directly to consumers. These markets offer opportunities for producers to communicate the value of their products through interactive learning experiences, including tasting sessions, which help consumers appreciate quality and build trust in local food systems. Other engaging approaches include consumer clubs, trade fairs, and exhibitions, where agroecological products can be promoted and their differences from conventional products highlighted.

With such interactive platforms, the demand enhancement mechanisms proposed for agroecological products in Agroecological Living Labs (ALLs) such as consumer awareness campaigns, quality assurance, and advertising can be effectively achieved, thereby boosting both demand and market access for agroecological producers.

Supporting the emergence of digital market platforms

Digital market platforms provide a powerful tool for connecting agroecological producers directly with consumers, particularly in urban areas where demand for healthy, traceable, and sustainably produced food is growing (*Agroecology Coalition. (2020)*). These platforms ranging from dedicated e-commerce websites to social media-based marketplaces enable smallholder agroecological farmers to showcase their products, tell their stories, and receive orders without the need for intermediaries. In addition to serving as sales channels, social media platforms, coupled with traditional media such as television and radio, can also be used for advertising and awareness campaigns.

Supporting the development of such platforms involves investing in digital infrastructure, building the capacity of producers to use digital tools, and promoting the platforms to consumers through awareness campaigns. This support facilitates the achievement of key demand enhancement mechanisms proposed for agroecological products in ALLs, such as ensuring availability across diverse retail channels, expanding into international markets, and implementing strategic advertising.

This approach enhances visibility and accessibility of agroecological products, expands market reach beyond local areas to regional and even international buyers, and helps build trust through transparent communication. By making it easier for consumers to discover and purchase agroecological products, digital platforms directly contribute to increased demand and improved market access.

Supporting packaging innovations to attract diverse consumer segments

Packaging plays a critical role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, particularly in urban and regional markets where products compete for attention on retail shelves or online. For agroecological products, supportive interventions can focus on promoting packaging solutions that are affordable, attractive, practical, and informative especially for price-sensitive consumers. Ensuring that packaging clearly communicates the value proposition of agroecological goods such as health benefits, natural production methods, or traceability can build trust and justify premium pricing. Innovations may also include reusable or biodegradable materials aligned with ecological values, as well as small-sized, lower-cost options tailored for budget-conscious buyers.

Supporting producers with packaging design, materials access, and marketing training can boost their competitiveness and facilitate access to wider markets, from local informal outlets to formal regional and international retailers. By making agroecological products more visible, understandable, and appealing across various consumer groups, packaging becomes a strategic tool to enhance demand and improve market penetration.

Policies and Institutional Frameworks Supporting Agroecological Markets

Agroecological market development is often influenced by national and subnational policy environments that either facilitate or hinder access to markets. Supportive frameworks may include public procurement policies favoring local or sustainably produced food (e.g., in school feeding programs), subsidies for agroecological inputs, or legal recognition and support for farmers' cooperatives. In some countries, decentralization has enabled county or municipal governments to support alternative markets such as farmers' markets and digital platforms. However, gaps remain in policy coherence, investment priorities, and enforcement of standards that recognize and differentiate agroecological products. Institutional support from agricultural ministries, research institutions, and consumer protection agencies is also key in creating enabling environments for marketing agroecological goods.

4. Conclusions

This initial report under Deliverable 5.3 of the CANALLS project provides a foundational understanding of the demand and market access landscape for agroecological food products. Through an extensive literature review and the early stages of a multi-country market survey, the findings highlight both the potential and challenges of advancing agroecological markets. The diversity, embeddedness, and value-based nature of agroecological markets are clear strengths, yet barriers such as limited consumer awareness, certification complexity, logistical constraints, and policy gaps persist.

Despite these challenges, there is a growing momentum toward integrating agroecological products into both formal and informal markets, supported by proven mechanisms such as participatory guarantee systems, public procurement, digital platforms, territorial branding, and strengthened producer and collector networks. These emerging models offer promising entry points for enhancing visibility, building trust, and stimulating demand.

The next phase of this task will focus on completing data collection across all eight Agroecological Living Labs and conducting a comprehensive analysis of the findings. Insights generated will be used to co-develop context-specific market support strategies with project partners. AATF and its partners will offer advisory support in designing and rolling out promotional campaigns that emphasize agroecological benefits. Additionally, stakeholder engagement and networking activities will be undertaken to strengthen collaboration with value chain actors and promotional multipliers. Where feasible, AATF and partners will support access to regional and international markets, considering factors such as product perishability, transport costs, and regulatory requirements. These efforts will contribute to building more inclusive, informed, and resilient agroecological market systems.

Table 2: Timeline and Responsibilities for upcoming Activities under Deliverable 5.3

		2025							2026	
Activity	**Responsible**	**June**	**July**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan-May**	**June**
Data collection	All Partners in the four countries									
Data analysis	AATF									
2nd draft report	AATF									
Review by partners	Q-PLAN, AFAAS									
Discussions with partners on designing of marketing strategies	AFAAS, APDIK, AATF									
Design and advice on running of promotional campaigns	RIK, RAB, IITA, NATUR, AATF									
Networking to create collaborations with value chain actors and promotional multipliers	RIK, RAB, IITA, NATUR, AFAAS, APDIK, AATF									
Facilitating access to regional markets	AFAAS, APDIK, AATF									
Running of the above activities (promotional campaigns, networking,	RIK, RAB, IITA, NATUR, AFAAS, APDIK, AATF									

		2025							2026	
facilitating access to regional markets)										
Deliverable 5.5- Report on enhancing demand and facilitating market access.	AATF									

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Annex 1

Driving agroecological transitions in the humid tropics of Central and Eastern Africa through traNsdisciplinary Agroecology Living LabS (CANNALS)

Survey Tool for the Market Survey

for

Task 5.4: Support to enhance demand and facilitate access to local, regional and international markets

Farmers Questionnaire

Introduction Script

Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I am working with [Your Organization Name] on a research study under the CANALLS project. We are conducting a survey to better understand consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors for agroecological products. The information you share will help us identify ways to support producers like you, improve market access, and enhance the overall functioning of the agroecological value chain. This includes strengthening connections between producers, traders, and consumers to create more sustainable and inclusive markets.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may skip any question or stop the interview at any time. The survey will take approximately 40 minutes. All the information you share will be kept confidential and used only for research and analysis. Your responses will be combined with others and will not be used to identify you personally.

Consent

- Do you consent to participate in this survey?
  ☐ Yes
  ☐ No

Thank you for your time. Because you did not consent, the interview ends here.

- Name of Enumerator: _____
- Contact of Enumerator: _____
- Name of Respondent: _____

1. Gender:
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female
2. Age Range:
   ☐ Under 25
   ☐ 25–34
   ☐ 35–44
   ☐ 45–54
   ☐ 55+
3. Education Level:
   ☐ No formal education

☐ Primary education
☐ Secondary education
☐ Certificate/Diploma
☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ Postgraduate degree (Master's/PhD)

4. What is your primary source of income?
☐ Farming (crop and/or livestock)
☐ Agribusiness (e.g. input supply, processing)
☐ Salaried employment
☐ Business (non-agricultural)
☐ Remittances
☐ Casual labor
☐ Pension/social assistance
☐ Other (specify): _____

5. Country:
☐ Burundi ☐ DRC ☐ Cameroon ☐ Rwanda
6. Agroecological Lab:
☐ Giheta ☐ Bujumbura ☐ Uvira ☐ Kamonyi
☐ Ntui ☐ Bunia ☐ Biega ☐ Kabare
7. Primary agroecological product:
☐ Organic Coffee ☐ Coffee ☐ Cassava ☐ Rice
☐ Cocoa ☐ Organic Cocoa ☐ Maize
8. Years of production:
☐ <1 year
☐ 1–3 years
☐ 4–6 years
☐ 7+ years

9. Where do you mostly sell your products?
☐ Local open-air market
☐ Farmers market
☐ Cooperatives/groups
☐ Direct to consumers (home delivery)
☐ Online platform
☐ Retailers/shops
☐ Schools/hospitals
☐ Export markets
☐ Other (specify): _____
10. Preferred market:
☐ Local ☐ Urban ☐ Regional ☐ Export
11. Distance to main market:
☐ <5 km ☐ 5–10 km ☐ 11–20 km ☐ >20 km
12. How is price determined?
☐ Buyer sets price
☐ Negotiation
☐ Group sets price
☐ Market forces
13. Price difference in preferred vs current market:
☐ Much higher
☐ Slightly higher
☐ Same
☐ Slightly lower
☐ Much lower
14. Challenges in current market (select all that apply):
☐ Low/unstable prices
☐ Poor infrastructure
☐ No certification recognition
☐ Lack of storage
☐ Low consumer awareness
☐ Competition
☐ Limited demand
☐ Other: _____
15. Challenges selling to preferred market:
☐ High transport cost
☐ Long distance

☐ Lack of information
☐ Quality/certification requirements
☐ Packaging/branding issues
☐ Low production volume
☐ Other: _____

16. Are you in a group/cooperative?
☐ Yes ☐ No
17. If yes, what services do you receive?
☐ Joint marketing
☐ Training
☐ Finance access
☐ Packaging support
☐ Certification support
☐ Other: _____
18. If no, why not?
☐ Not aware
☐ Not interested
☐ Joining cost
☐ No group nearby
☐ Other: _____

19. Do you use online platforms for marketing?
☐ Yes ☐ No
20. If no, why?
☐ No internet
☐ No skills
☐ Not aware
☐ Customers prefer offline
☐ Other: _____
21. Form of product sold:
☐ Raw ☐ Semi-processed ☐ Fully processed ☐ Packaged
22. Challenges in processing/packaging:
(Select all that apply)
☐ Lack of equipment
☐ High cost
☐ Low skills
☐ Inadequate storage
☐ Standards compliance
☐ No certification access
☐ Low demand
☐ No market access
☐ Lack of finance
☐ Other: _____

23. Are products certified?
☐ Yes ☐ No
24. If yes, what type?
☐ Organic
☐ PGS
☐ Geographic Indication
☐ Eco-label (e.g. Fair Trade)
☐ Local/Community-based
☐ Other: _____
25. If no, what challenges?
☐ Cost
☐ No information
☐ Complex process
☐ No certifying body access
☐ Not required
☐ Other: _____
26. Have you received training on pesticide use or alternatives?
☐ Yes, formal
☐ Yes, informal

☐ Aware only
☐ Not at all

27. What do you use on your farm? (select all that apply)
☐ Synthetic pesticides
☐ Organic pesticides
☐ Biological control
☐ Compost/manure
☐ Synthetic fertilizer
☐ Bio-pesticides
☐ None
☐ Other: _____

28. Which pesticides have you used in past 12 months?
☐ Chlorpyrifos ☐ Endosulfan ☐ Terbufos
☐ Chlorothalonil ☐ Cyproconazole
☐ None
☐ Don't know names
☐ Other: _____

29. Why do you use those pesticides?
☐ Effective
☐ Affordable
☐ Available
☐ Advised
☐ Not aware they are banned
☐ Other: _____

30. Product branding:
☐ None
☐ Own farm
☐ Group label
☐ Certified brand

31. Product packaging:
☐ None
☐ Basic
☐ Branded
☐ Informative

32. Promotion methods:
☐ Word of mouth
☐ Market stalls
☐ Social media
☐ Radio/TV
☐ Posters/flyers
☐ Exhibitions/fairs
☐ No promotion
☐ Other: _____

33. Do you offer incentives to consumers?
☐ Yes, regularly
☐ Yes, occasionally
☐ No
☐ Not sure

34. Types of incentives:
☐ Discounts
☐ Free samples
☐ Loyalty cards
☐ Bundles
☐ Seasonal offers
☐ Other: _____

35. Do you collect consumer feedback?
☐ Yes, regularly
☐ Yes, occasionally
☐ No

36. Feedback methods:
☐ Face-to-face
☐ Phone/SMS
☐ Intermediaries
☐ Social media/WhatsApp
☐ Suggestion box

☐ Consumer survey
☐ Other: _____

37. Are there promotional events in your area?
☐ Yes ☐ No
38. If yes, have you participated?
☐ Yes ☐ No
39. Benefits of participation:
☐ Increased visibility
☐ New customers
☐ Sales growth
☐ Networking
☐ Learning
☐ Other: _____
40. Effectiveness of events:
☐ Very effective
☐ Effective
☐ Neutral
☐ Ineffective
☐ Very ineffective
41. Challenges in attending events:
☐ High cost
☐ Lack of information
☐ Poor setup
☐ Low turnout
☐ Poor organization
☐ Other: _____

42. What support would improve demand for your products? (select all that apply)
☐ Advertising/promotion
☐ Digital platform access
☐ Packaging and branding
☐ Pricing and value addition
☐ Market strategy training
☐ Certification/labeling
☐ New market linkages
☐ Other: _____

Traders Questionnaire

Introduction:
Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I am working with [Your Organization Name] on a research study under the CANNALS project. We are conducting a survey to better understand consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors for agroecological products. The information you provide will help us identify ways to enhance market access, improve the trading environment, and strengthen linkages across the agroecological value chain. This will contribute to a better overall experience for all actors from producers, traders and consumers. Your participation is voluntary, and you may skip any question or stop the interview at any time. The survey will take approximately 40 to complete. All the information you share will be kept confidential and used only for research and analysis. Your responses will be combined with others and will not be used to identify you personally.

Consent
Do you consent to participate in this survey?

- o Yes
- o No

Thank you for your time. Because you did not consent, the interview ends here.

Name of the Enumerator

Contact of the enumerator

Name of the respondent

Gender

- o Male
- o Female

Age range

- o Under 25
- o 25–34
- o 35–44
- o 45–54
- o 55+

Education level

- No formal education
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Certificate/diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate degree (Master's/PhD)

Country

- Burundi
- DRC
- Rwanda
- Cameroon

Administrative region

What type of trader are you?

- Retailer
- Wholesaler
- Exporter
- Aggregator
- Distributer
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

How do you define or understand agroecological products?

- Grown using ecological practices that conserve biodiversity and improve soil and water health
- Produced without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers
- Food that is officially certified as organic or sustainable
- Healthier and safer for consumption
- More expensive than conventional products
- Locally or traditionally produced by small-scale farmers
- Grown using genetically modified seeds to reduce chemical use
- Grown with minimal use of agrochemicals and fertilizers
- I'm not sure / I don't know

What is your primary agroecological product that you deal with?

- Coffee (organic)
- Coffee
- Cassava
- Rice
- Cocoa
- Cocoa (organic)
- Maize

How many years have you been trading these agroecological products?

- Less than 1 year
- 1–3 years
- 4–6 years
- 7+ years

In which markets do you sell your products?

- Local (village/town)
- Urban (major towns/cities within the country)
- Regional
- International

Where do you primarily source your agroecological products?

- Directly from farmers
- Farmer cooperatives
- Wholesalers
- Local markets
- Own production
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

What form of assurance or documentation do you request from suppliers?

- Organic/agroecological certification from a recognized body
- Self-declaration by the producer/farmer
- Site visit or personal knowledge of production practices
- Membership in a known agroecological cooperative or network
- No documentation requested – I trust the supplier
- I don't request any form of assurance
- Other (specify)

Other (specify)

What challenges do you face when sourcing agroecological products?

- Limited availability
- High cost
- Inconsistent quality
- Lack of certification
- Seasonal supply
- Poor transport infrastructure
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Have you ever received any training about agroecological standards?

- Yes
- No

If yes, when was your most recent training?

If yes, who provided the training?

- Government extension service
- NGO or development project
- Cooperative or farmers' group
- Buyer or exporter
- Private agro-input company
- Self-study (e.g., online, books)
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Which topics were covered?

- Banned/hazardous pesticides
- Testing for residues
- National/international agroecological standards
- Certification/traceability procedures
- Record-keeping and documentation
- Marketing and labelling requirements
- Access to finance / business skills
- Appropriate packaging
- Value addition techniques (e.g., drying, milling)
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Which additional areas would you like training/support in?

- Banned/hazardous pesticide awareness
- Product residue testing
- Agroecological standards and practices
- Certification/verification processes

- Record-keeping
- Marketing and labelling
- Access to finance
- Value addition
- Quality assurance and traceability
- Others (specify)

Others (specify)

Preferred channels for receiving training/information:

- In-person training/workshops
- Printed guides or brochures
- Online courses
- SMS or WhatsApp updates
- Radio programs
- Others (specify)

Others (specify)

Who are your main consumers of agroecological products?

- Individual consumers
- Restaurants/hotels
- Retailers
- Institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals)
- Export markets
- Online platforms
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

How do you determine the prices of agroecological products?

- Based on production/sourcing costs
- Market demand
- Competitor pricing
- Product uniqueness
- Negotiation with customers
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

How would you describe the current demand for agroecological products in your main market?

- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very low

What are the main factors influence consumer demand in your experience?

- Price
- Health and nutrition benefits
- Environmental concerns
- Taste and freshness
- Product certification (e.g., organic)
- Branding and packaging
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

How do you differentiate your agroecological products from conventional ones?

- Emphasis on product quality (e.g., organic, fresh)
- Certification or labels
- Unique flavors or varieties
- Attractive packaging
- Clear communication of health/environmental benefits
- Further processing (e.g., drying, milling)
- No specific differentiation
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Are your consumers aware of the unique characteristics of agroecological products?

- Yes, very aware
- Somewhat aware
- Not aware
- Not sure

How willing are your customers to pay a premium for agroecological products?

- Very willing
- Somewhat willing
- Not willing
- Don't know

How do you promote agroecological products to your customers?

- In-store displays
- social media
- Word of mouth
- Community events/fairs
- Certification labels
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

What challenges do you face when marketing/promoting agroecological products?

- Low consumer awareness
- Lack of branding materials
- Price sensitivity
- Limited promotional channels
- Competition from conventional products
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Do you offer any rewards or incentives to your consumers (e.g., discounts, free samples, loyalty benefits)?

- Yes, regularly
- Yes, occasionally
- No
- Not sure

What type(s) of rewards or incentives do you offer to your consumers?

- Discounts on repeat purchases
- Free samples
- Loyalty points or cards
- Bundled offers (e.g., buy 2 get 1 free)
- Seasonal promotions
- None
- Other (specify)

Other (specify)

Do you collect feedback from consumers about your products?

- Yes, regularly
- Yes, occasionally
- Rarely
- No

How do you collect consumer feedback?

- Face-to-face conversations
- Phone/SMS
- Through traders or intermediaries
- social media or WhatsApp
- Suggestion box or written feedback
- Consumer surveys
- I do not collect feedback
- Other (specify)

Other (specify)

Are there any promotional events such as farmers markets, exhibitions, or trade fairs for agroecological products in this region?

- Yes
- No

If yes, have you ever participated in any of these promotional events?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what benefits did you gain from participating?

- Increased visibility of my products
- New customers acquisition
- Higher product sales during or after the event
- Networking with other producers or buyers
- Learning opportunities (e.g. consumer preferences, pricing)
- Other (specify)

Other (specify)

In your opinion, how effective are these events in creating demand for agroecological products?

- Very effective
- effective
- Neutral
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

What challenges, if any, do you face in participating in such promotional events?

- High cost of participation (e.g., booth fee, transport)
- Lack of information or invitation to participate
- Inadequate space or set up for product display
- Low turnout of relevant buyers/consumers
- Poor organization or limited promotion of the event
- Other (specify)

Other (specify)

What type of support would help you improve demand for your products?

- Advertising or promotion support
- Access to digital market platforms
- Better packaging and branding
- Support in pricing and value addition
- Certification/labeling
- Training on market strategies
- Access to new market linkages (e.g. schools, export)
- Other (specify)

Other (specify)

Are you a member of any group/organization promoting agroecological products?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, how do you benefit from this membership?

- Market access
- Training
- Networking
- Access to information
- Certification support
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

If No, why are you not a member?

- Not aware of any groups
- Membership fees are high
- No perceived benefit
- Not eligible
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

What are the main challenges that you face in accessing wider markets (regional/international)?

- High logistics/transportation costs
- Lack of market information
- Lack of buyer connections
- Trade or export regulations
- Quality or certification requirements
- Inconsistent supply
- Limited digital marketing skills
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify):

Which of the following would help improve your market access?

- Training in digital marketing and e-commerce
- Linkages with buyers
- Support to meet certification standards
- Branding and promotional materials
- Logistics and cold chain support
- Participation in trade fairs or exhibitions
- Market intelligence reports
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify):

Consumers Questionnaire

Introduction:
Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I am working with [Your Organization Name] on a research study under the CANNALS project. We are conducting a survey to better understand consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors for agroecological products. The information you provide will help us improve not only support for farmers but also enhance the overall experience of all actors in the agroecological value chain from producers and traders to consumers like you. Your participation is voluntary, and you may skip any question or stop the interview at any time. The survey will take approximately 40 to complete. All the information you share will be kept confidential and used only for research and analysis. Your responses will be combined with others and will not be used to identify you personally.

Do you consent to participate in this survey?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your time. Because you did not consent, the interview ends here.
Name of the enumerator
Contact of the enumerator
Name of the respondent
Gender

- Male
- Female

Age range

- Under 25
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55+

Main Occupation

- Farmer / Producer
- Business (e.g., Trader, Retailer, Processor)
- Student
- Employed (public sector)
- Employed (private sector)
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)
Education level

- No formal education

- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Certificate/diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate degree (Master's/PhD)

Country

- Burundi
- DRC
- Rwanda
- Cameroon

Administrative region

Have you heard of agroecological products before?

- Yes
- No

How did you first hear about agroecological products?

- Word of mouth
- Online/social media
- TV/radio/newspaper
- Events/farmers' markets
- Health or nutrition expert
- Product label or in-store info
- Other (please specify):

Other (please specify)

How would you describe your understanding of agroecological products?

- Very clear understanding
- Somewhat clear
- Only heard the term
- Never heard of it

Which of the following do you associate with agroecological products?

- Organically produced
- Environmentally friendly
- Locally produced
- Free from synthetic chemicals
- Expensive
- Healthier
- Not sure
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

What is your primary agroecological product(s) that you consume?

- Coffee(organic)
- Coffee
- Cocoa
- Cocoa (organic)
- Cassava
- Rice
- Maize

How do you distinguish agroecological products from conventional ones?

- Packaging and labeling
- Vendor information or recommendations
- Certification/organic labels
- Visual appearance (e.g., shape, color)
- Taste/texture
- Price
- I cannot distinguish them
- Other (please specify):

Other (please specify):

Do you currently buy agroecological products?

- Yes, regularly

- Occasionally
- Rarely
- No, but I am interested
- No, and I am not interested

Where do you usually buy agroecological products?

- Supermarkets
- Open-air markets
- Directly from farmers
- Online platforms
- Health food stores
- Farmer cooperatives
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

How do you perceive the price of agroecological products compared to conventional ones?

- Much higher
- Slightly higher
- About the same
- Lower
- Not sure

Would you be willing to pay a higher price for agroecological products?

- Yes, definitely
- Maybe, depending on the product
- No
- Not sure

What are your main reasons for choosing agroecological products?

- To improve my health and nutrition
- To reduce harm to the environment
- To support local or smallholder farmers
- To avoid harmful chemicals or unsafe food
- Because they taste better or are of higher quality
- Because they are certified or labeled
- I don't buy agroecological products
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Which of the following product features influence your purchase decision for agroecological products?

- Taste
- Freshness
- Organic/chemical-free label
- Nutritional information
- Packaging design
- Price
- Locally produced origin
- Certification/compliance seal
- Well-known brand or supplier
- Positive environmental impact
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

What challenges do you face when sourcing agroecological products?

- Limited availability
- High price
- Inconsistent supply
- Difficulty identifying authentic products
- Lack of awareness/information
- Limited sales outlets
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify):

Which of the following would encourage you to buy more agroecological products?

- Discounts or price promotions
- Better availability in shops
- Clear labeling/certification

- More public awareness campaigns
- Testimonials or influencer endorsements
- More appealing packaging
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

What channel would motivate you or be most convenient for providing feedback to a seller or producer of agroecological products?

- In-person at the point of sale
- Phone call or SMS
- WhatsApp or other messaging apps
- Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram)
- Online feedback forms or surveys
- Through a cooperative or community group
- I am not interested in providing feedback
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Are you a member of any consumer group that promotes agroecological or sustainable consumption?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how do you benefit from being a member?

- Access to verified products
- Shared knowledge and awareness
- Discounts/bulk buying
- Events or community support
- Other (please specify):

Other (please specify):

If no, Why are you not a member?

- I'm not aware of any
- No time to engage
- No added value perceived
- Other (please specify):

Other (please specify):

What would encourage you to join or participate in such a group?

- Access to better product information
- Discounts or benefits for members
- Opportunities to meet like-minded consumers
- Participation in community/environmental initiatives
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

When purchasing agroecological products, which types of information/messages on the packaging influence your decision?

- "Organic" or "Certified" labels
- Nutritional information
- Traceability to the farm/producer
- Eco-friendly or compostable packaging
- Health benefit claims
- Production method (e.g., pesticide-free, traditional)
- Other (please specify):

Other (please specify):

What type of packaging is most appealing to you for agroecological products?

- Reusable containers
- Biodegradable packaging
- Minimalist/plain packaging
- Branded eco-friendly packaging
- Transparent packaging (to see the product)
- Other (please specify):

Other (please specify):

Which channels would you prefer to learn more about agroecological products from?

- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Television or radio
- In-store promotions
- SMS or WhatsApp messages

- Posters or flyers in markets
- Word of mouth
- Community events
- School or workplace campaigns
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)