

Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Southern Africa (KHTA)

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

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

The challenge

The Southern African region has great potential for organic and agroecological agriculture development and production that, in turn, offers many benefits to a region facing significant ecological, social, and economic challenges. However, the sector still needs further development. This means, amongst other things, that there is a need to promote favourable policy environments, support better coordination between actors and increase strategic investments. Furthermore, at the 2012 African Organic Conference in Lusaka, regional stakeholders identified the need for further development of the knowledge and skill sets of practitioners in the sector in Southern Africa.

How does the KHTA work?

The Sustainability Institute leads on the regional implementation of the Knowledge Hub for Southern Africa (KHTA) from Zambia. Partner organisations, so-called Country Implementing Partners (CIPs), lead on implementation work in Zambia, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa. These CIPs are:

- › Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Zambia & Kasi Agricultural Training Centre (KATC) in Zambia
- › Kusamala Institute & Soil, Food and Healthy Communities (SFHC) in Malawi
- › Namibia Organic Association (NOA) & Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) in Namibia
- › South African Organic Sector Organisation & Participatory Guarantee System South Africa in South Africa (PGS SA)

KHTA aims to scale up the adoption of organic agriculture practices by finding, creating, and sharing knowledge with multipliers. Multipliers are persons and organisations that pass on knowledge in different networks, such as trainers, farmer and research organisations,

extension officers, media, and other stakeholders in the agri-food system. KHTA has a two-pronged approach focusing on both sector-wide and targeted programmes with multipliers – the latter is the Multiplier Support Programme (MSP).

Sector-wide Approach

KHTA strengthens relationships between a broad range of relevant stakeholders in and across project countries and provides them with the opportunity to share and disseminate needs-based information on organic/agroecological agriculture. CIPs (PELUM, NOA, and Kusamala) involve their networks and stakeholders with the most influence to assure the best multiplication effect.

Multipliers Support Programme (MSP)

This targeted intervention trains multipliers to convey information and to build the capacity of small-scale farmers more effectively. Each MSP is different as their structure is based on local assessments and needs. The MSP CIPs are KATC, SFHC, NNF and SAOSO/PGSSA.

Project name	Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Southern Africa (KHTA) – one of the hubs within the KCOA project
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Zambia (Hub base), Malawi, Namibia and South Africa
Implemented by	GIZ in cooperation with the Sustainability Institute and partner organisations (see list on the left and map below)
Duration	2019 – present

KHTA countries and organisations

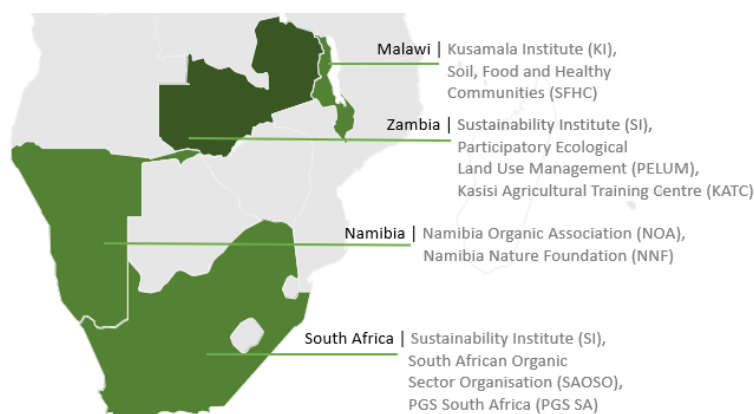


Photo: Organic Market in Zambia (GIZ/Agricomm)

Product quality via Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)

KHSA has a special focus on promoting the uptake of PGS as a vehicle for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. PGS are community-based “locally focused quality assurance systems” (definition of IFOAM – Organics International) that certify producers based on active stakeholder participation.

PGS can be considered an important innovative step for smallholders, as they are collaborative and an affordable form of certification. They facilitate market access for farmers and encourage community-level knowledge-sharing spaces. PGS supports shorter value chains and fair prices for farmers. It also is an innovative way of enabling farmers to mobilise for government support through local economic development. In South Africa, KHSA supports SAOSO and PGS SA in implementing their PGS Pollinator Programme. The programme trains multipliers and supports them to create new PGS groups.

The path to certification through PGS



Story from the field: Media Advocacy

PELUM regards media as a strategic stakeholder as it can reach diverse, mass audiences. It has conducted media training since 2018 and, with other organisations, hosted annual awards to recognise journalists that publish quality work on agroecology. PELUM, through KHSA, administered a needs assessment with journalists at the 2022 awards to determine their further knowledge needs. The findings shaped the training delivered to 33 journalists from 10 provinces working in mass media in April 2022. The three-day training focused on media advocacy, story-writing skills and agroecology.



Participants develop plans to publish stories and PELUM follows up on these and regularly provides journalists with information relevant to reporting on agri-food systems. Journalists also identified the need for their editors to understand the importance of the topic to support additional coverage. PELUM hosted a seminar with 22 editors in July 2022 who have requested follow-up sessions to strengthen their knowledge. KHSA presents an exciting platform for journalists to find and cover stories as it gives access to experts and farmers. A key outcome has been increased availability of journalists with a solid understanding of agroecology’s potential to boost food security and build resilience to climate change.

Expected KHSA outcomes



550 Knowledge Products

On organic agriculture uploaded in the Digital Knowledge Platform and accessible to the network



380 farmers and local businesses

supported in attaining certification via PGS



500 multipliers trained

From which at least 40% are women, sharing knowledge on organic agriculture and agroecology



More than 250,000 people reached

Through direct trainings, events, and communication material disseminated in different media platforms



Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

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Photo credits

GIZ/Agricomm, Rebecca Mwila

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GIZ & Sustainability Institute

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

German Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

In cooperation with



As of

December 2023