



Research for **AGROECOLOGY** Network | Southern Africa

RESEARCH FOR AGROECOLOGY NETWORK SOUTHERN AFRICA

(2025-2028)

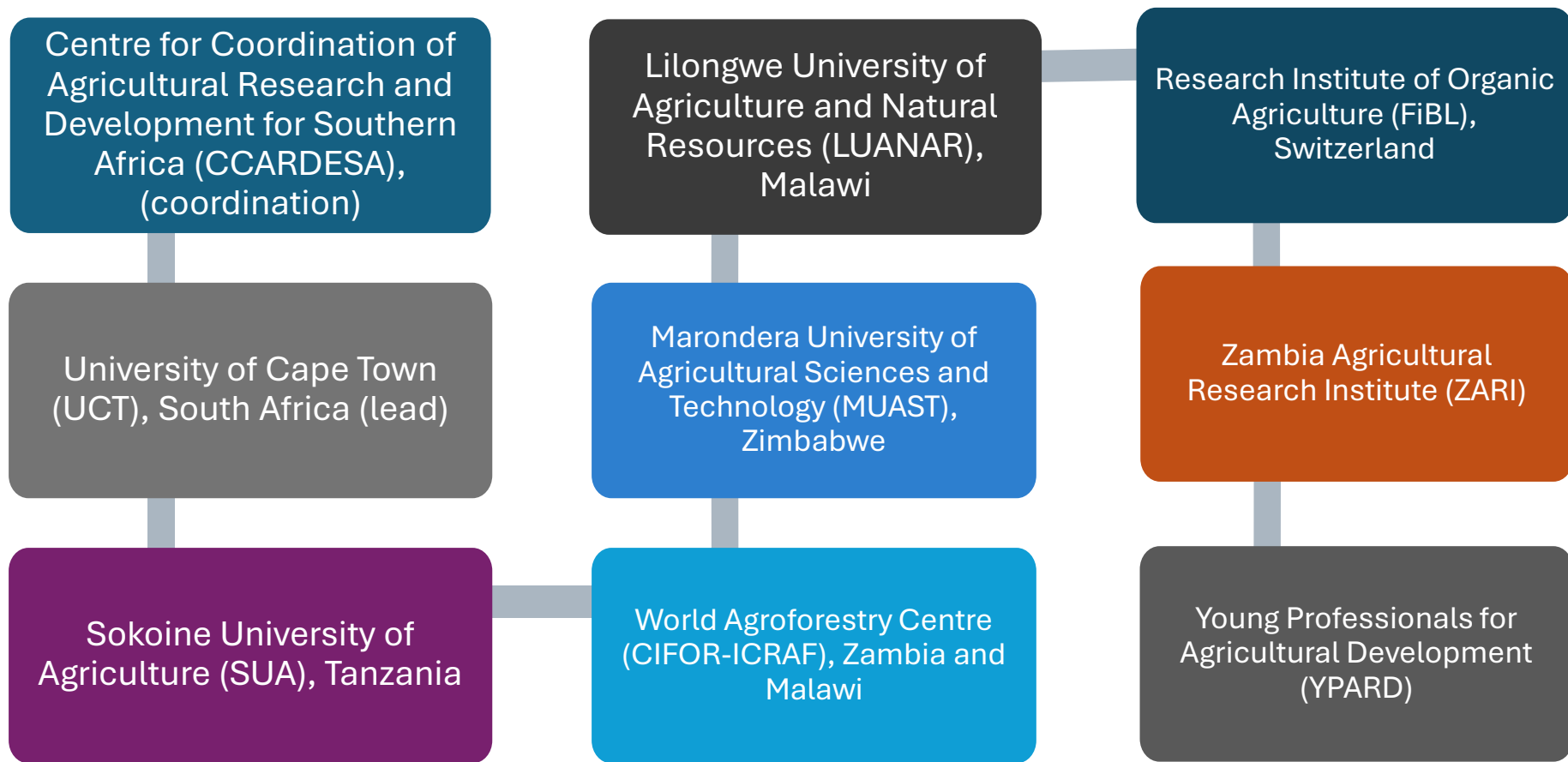
Overview — ArcX Regional Programme

7 July 2026

Norotiana RASAMBO



RAENS partners



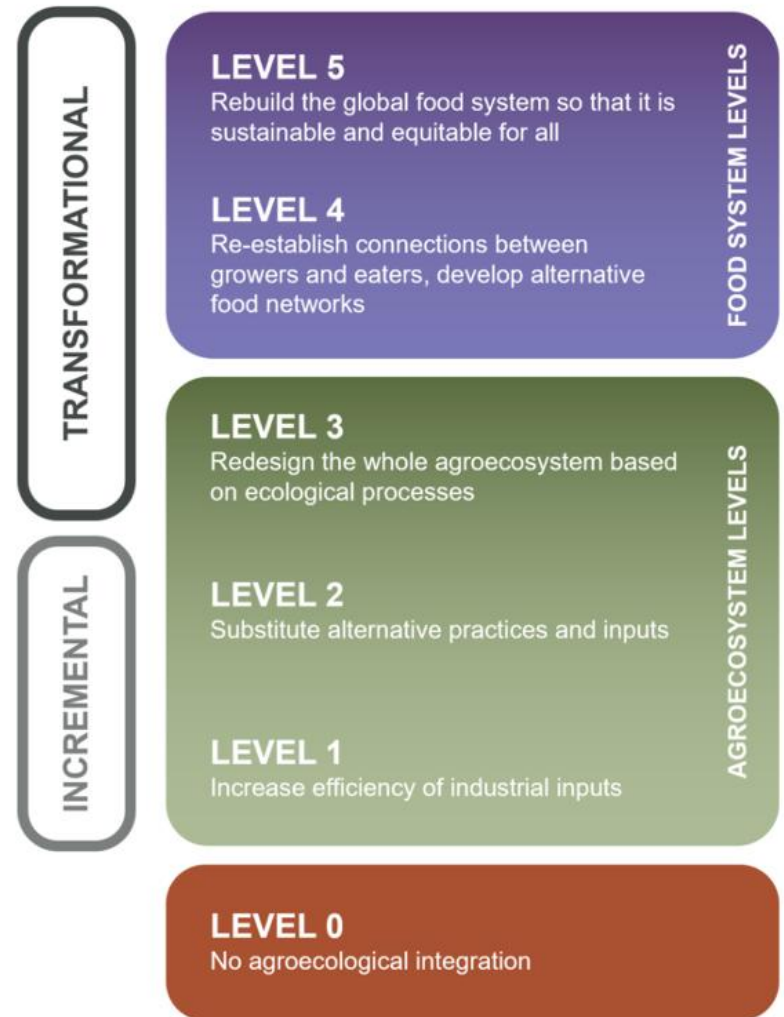
- **EU-Sponsored Regional Centre of Excellence (ArcX Program)**
- Continental coordination and support from **FARA** and **RUFORUM**

Conceptual Framing

FAO, HLPE & Gliessman Alignment

- Going beyond production to focus on broader socio-economic aspects
- Re-establishing direct connections between growers and eaters :
- Promoting responsible governance and sustainable livelihoods
- Structuring according to the Five Levels of Food Transition (Gliessman, 2007)

5 LEVELS OF FOOD TRANSITION



RAENS goal

To establish a robust, innovative, and sustainable multi-actor transdisciplinary AE Research and Knowledge network in Southern Africa to:

**Strengthen
existing AE
initiatives**

**Showcase the
potential and
scalability of
AE**

**Facilitate shifts
in agricultural
training and
research
towards
Agroecological
Food Systems**

**Inform policy,
thereby leading
to an enabling
landscape for
AE uptake,
research and
training**

RAENS components



1. Establish a research network

2. Develop a learning network

3. Knowledge management and dissemination

4. Evidence-based policy analysis and advice

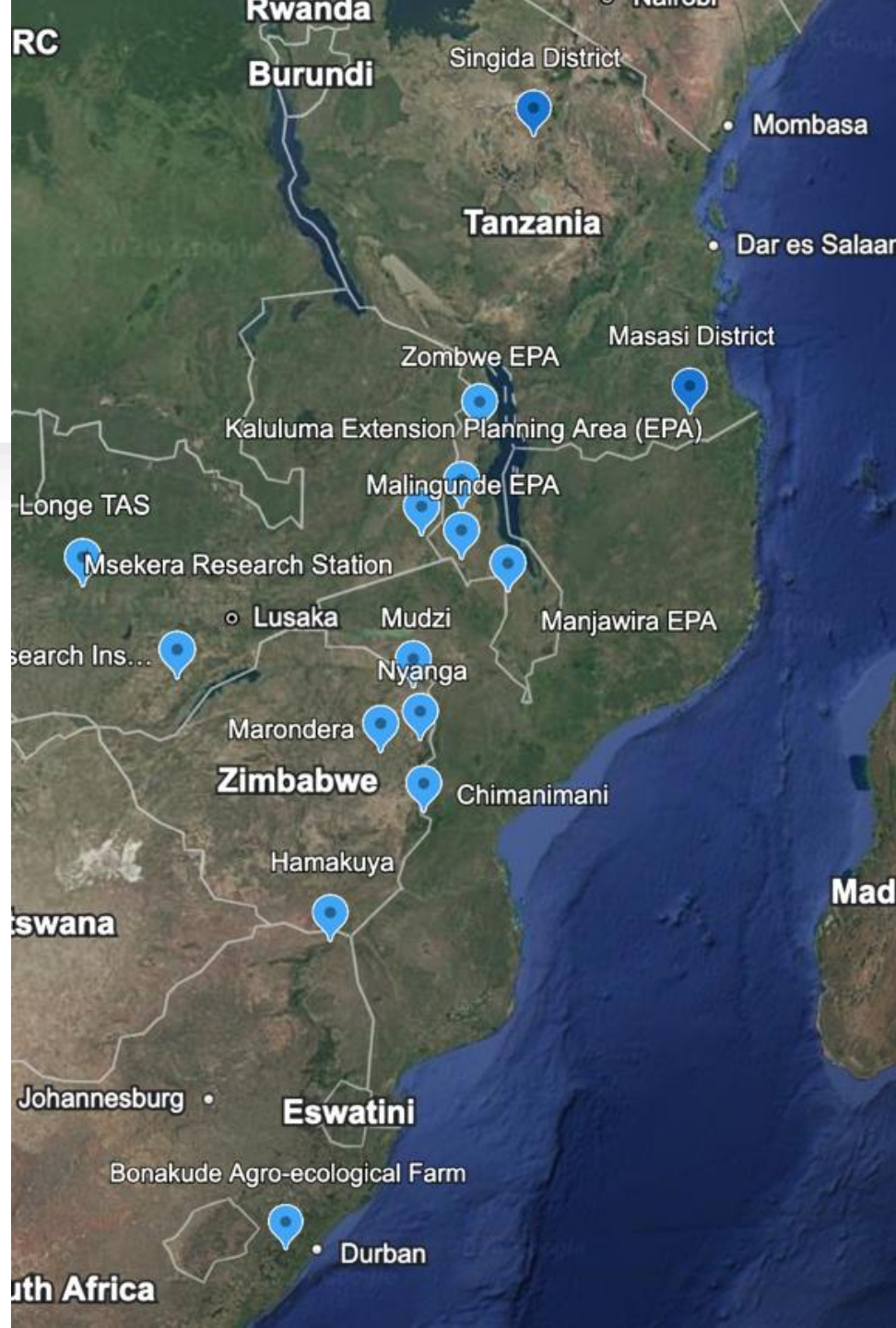
1. Improve the coordination of AE research and strengthen farmer-led research

- Project inception meeting
- Monthly implementation meetings
- Established transdisciplinary network of AE researchers for Southern Africa.
- Developed and adopted:
 - AE position paper
 - Network (internal) principles of engagement
 - Community engagement principles
 - RAENS environmental policy
- 2 national AE research networks strengthened (South Africa & Zimbabwe, with co-funding)
- Some preliminary research conducted



Pilot sites

- Pilot sites identified in all 5 implementing countries (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania)
- Collected 2 rounds of background information on pilot sites
- Agreed 4 key themes for pilot sites:
 - AE markets & livelihoods
 - Social cohesion
 - Nutrition & indigenous foods
 - Soil health & mixed livestock-crop systems



8 communities of Practice (CoPs)

1-Biodiversity
and landscapes (led by UCT)

2-Soil health
(LUANAR)

3-Nutrition-
sensitive AE
(FiBL)

4-AE Markets
(FiBL)

5-Seed and
participatory
breeding (ZARI)

6-Integrated pest
management
(ICRAF)

7-Indigenous
crops (MUASt)

8-Mixed livestock
and crop
systems (SUA)

4 Cross-cutting Themes

Youth Leadership
(YPARD)

Gender Equality
(ICRAF),

Climate & Water
Governance
(MUASt)

Traditional
Knowledge
Integration (UCT)

- ❖ Concept note finalized
- ❖ Initial list of potential members developed
- ❖ Membership guide validated

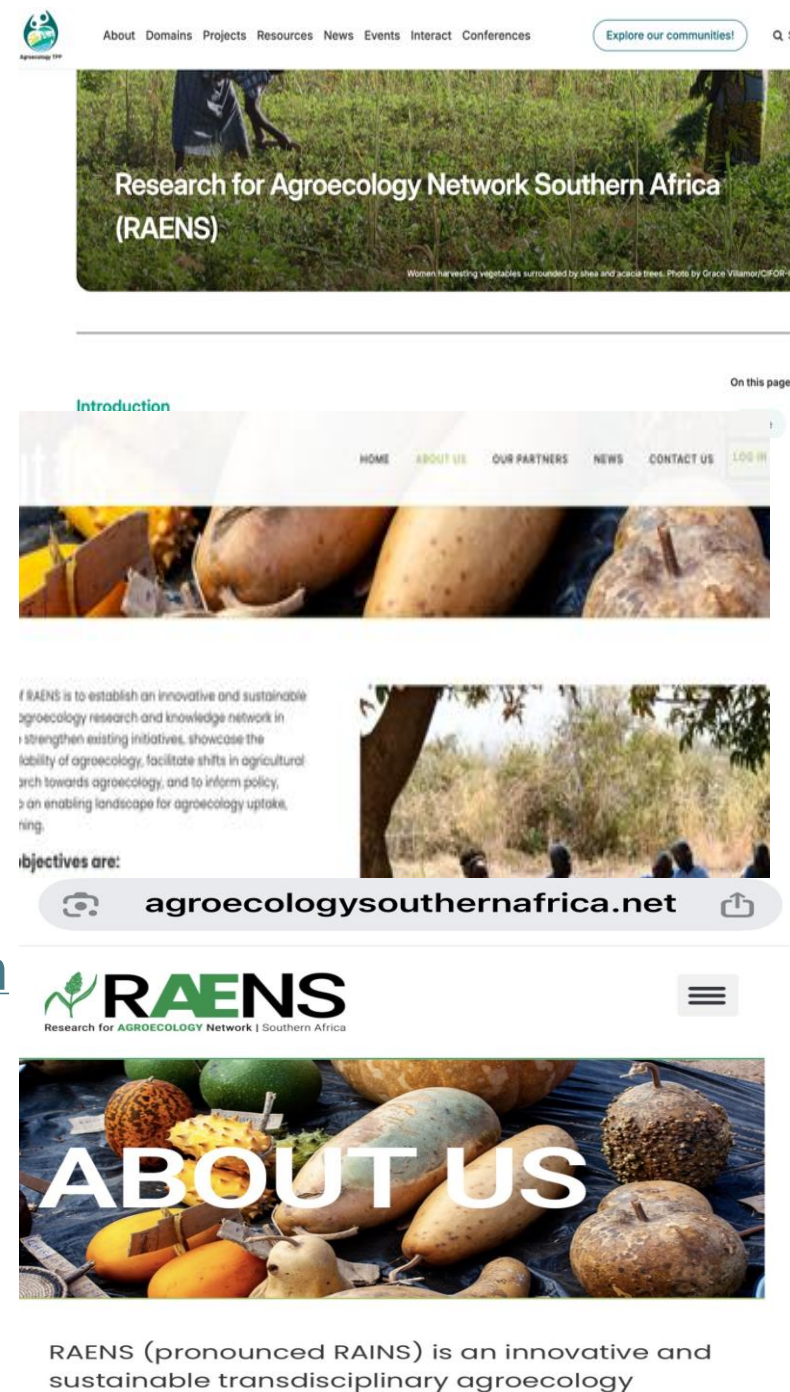
2. Equip scholars and practitioners with skills, knowledge and tools (Y1)

- Postgraduate student recruitment:
 - SA: 1 of 2 Masters
 - Zambia: 1 of 2 Masters
 - Zimbabwe: 3 of 3 (2 Masters, 1 PhD)
 - Malawi: 2 of 4 Masters
 - Tanzania: Finalising recruitment (12 Masters)
- Developed ToR for national level curriculum scoping studies
- National scoping studies actively launched; remaining studies currently being commissioned.



3. Increase the availability and awareness of AE knowledge, methods and tools

- AE-TPP RAENS page established, database/hub being built
- AE-TPP RAENS group established
- Several infographics developed
- Network Website Launched and Operational
<https://agroecologysouthernafrica.net>
- Plan : Launched a social theatre partnership with the Empatheatre collective to broaden public engagement



4. Improve the policy environment for agroecology transitions at various levels

- Developed ToR for 5 national policy scoping studies
- Started policy scoping studies
- Introduced RAENS at many events
- Participated in several policy events (national, international)
- Developed linkages with other AE initiatives on the continent and beyond



4. Improve the policy environment for agroecology transitions at various levels

- Finalising 5 country-level policy scoping studies
- Developing country-level policy briefs
- Beginning regional policy scoping study
- Engaging with the other RMRNs
- Strengthening linkages with other AE networks



THANK YOU



Group photo taken at the RAENS Annual Reflection & Planning Meeting in Lusaka, February 2026