



31-8-2026

Terms of Reference

Embedding Organic Compost into Côte d'Ivoire's National Framework

1. Background and rationale

This assignment is commissioned by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) on behalf of the *Climate, Water and Food Security Facility* (CWF). CWF, a program commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by RVO, works with Dutch diplomatic missions in almost 40 countries to ensure a green and just transition. The goal is to increase greening and just ambitions and accelerate green actions of Dutch and local actors in these countries. CWF focuses on sectors where Dutch expertise adds value to climate-related challenges.

Why compost?

Compost plays a crucial role in building climate resilience and improving soil health. Compost improves soil structure, increasing its capacity to absorb and hold water. This makes soils more resilient to both droughts and heavy rainfall, reducing the risk of flooding and erosion. In addition, compost provides a slow-release source of nutrients for plants, reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers. It also enhances the soil's ability to retain these nutrients, minimizing runoff and pollution. Furthermore, compost enhances soil biodiversity by providing a habitat for beneficial microorganisms and other organisms that play vital roles in nutrient cycling and soil health. A healthy soil further translates into healthier crops and an improved ability of the ecosystem to suppress pest and diseases, reducing the need for chemical treatments.

In short, compost offers a path towards sustainable land management, income potential, food security, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and new business opportunities. RVO and the Embassy would like to stimulate the uptake of compost, however, the absence of a conducive (policy and business) environment hinders its widespread adoption.

To this end, a participatory Roadmap towards a more conducive environment for organic compost in Côte d'Ivoire has been developed. This Roadmap contains the following 3 key outcomes:

- First, it has produced a structured mapping of the compost value chain and clarified the roles, power dynamics, and interests of key stakeholders. This provides a foundation for coordinated policy and investment decisions.
- Second, it has facilitated dialogue across institutional boundaries, creating a space where regulatory authorities, researchers, producers, private companies, and development partners could collectively define priorities and align expectations.

- Third, it has translated complex systemic challenges into an actionable and phased strategic vision, grounded in field realities and validated by national actors.

The Roadmap confirms that the contribution of compost to soil regeneration, climate resilience, and long-term productivity is not in doubt. Yet adoption remains marginal, constrained by regulatory ambiguity, economic disincentives, logistical bottlenecks, and a persistent trust deficit. The findings also make clear that scaling compost is not solely a technical matter. It is a question of governance, coordination, incentives, and institutional commitment.

More specifically, the Roadmap revealed the following structural barriers:

- **Regulatory Voids:** an absence of a specific national legal framework for compost and thus a lack of official institutional recognition that treats organic compost as a strategic priority on par with mineral inputs, makes that there are no dedicated budget lines or subsidies available for organic compost; an absence of quality standards for organic amendments, leading to variable product quality and a lack of trust among users.
- **Logistical Challenges:** High costs associated with the transport and manual application of compost, which requires large volumes, up to three tons per hectare, compared to concentrated chemical fertilisers.
- **Knowledge Gaps:** A lack of technical training for farmers on optimal dosing, formulation, and long-term soil health benefits.

The combination of these challenges discourages farmers from using compost. The absence of a specific national legal framework and quality standards for organic amendments leads to variable product quality and a lack of trust among users. Financial constraints further exacerbate this issue: farmers often prefer subsidised mineral fertilisers because they offer immediate, visible results, whereas the benefits of compost are long-term and cumulative. Additionally, compost incurs high transportation costs.

This CWF assignment focusses on the regulatory voids. It aims to improve the governance structures that need to be in place to address the institutional recognition of organic compost. Furthermore, it seeks to establish quality standards for organic compost through pilot interventions, generate evidence of its benefits and build trust among farmers, thereby encouraging wider adoption.

The Roadmap aims to progressively transform organic compost and other related products, such as biochar and potentially black soldier fly larvae excrements (frass), from a "technical option" into a "viable economic solution" for all stakeholders in the sector. It distinguishes four phases:

1. **Phase 1: Preparation, Start-up, and Experimentation (Years 1–2)**
This phase focuses on overcoming technical scepticism of compost usage through consolidation of legal bases and "scientific proof". The emphasis is on research-action to guarantee that compost is no longer perceived as mere waste but as a standardised quality product that is eligible to government schemes and contributes to improved soil health, resilient yields and eventually income of farmers.
2. **Phase 2: Scaling Up: Monitoring, Structuring, and Expansion (Years 3–4)**
Once the evidence is established, the Roadmap plans for a change in scale, moving from experimentation to decentralised production.
3. **Phase 3: Institutionalization and Generalization (Year 5)**
The final stage supports the transition toward a self-sustaining sector, fully integrated into the national economy.
4. **Phase 4: Adapted Extension:** The design of training kits and multilingual visual supports, validated by CNRA and ANADER, will support standardising technical advice in the field.

2. Purpose of the assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to advance the development and scaling of organic compost in Côte d'Ivoire. It will operationalise selected elements of Phase 1 with an emphasis on establishing governance structures and preparing pilot-based experimentation. It will also include some activities of Phase 2, especially regarding monitoring and decentralised production (scaling).

Please note that this assignment will not cover all phases mentioned above.

3. Assignment description and activities

Methodology

The design of the Roadmap followed the ADDIS methodology, a decision-thinking framework developed by the Innovation for Policy Foundation. The ADDIS process consists of five phases that guide participatory approaches across different contexts and support collective intelligence across key moments of a policy cycle, namely agenda setting, drafting, decision-making, implementation and sense-making. The development of the Roadmap focused on the Agenda Setting Phase, which involved the systematic identification and prioritisation of key issues, the definition of strategic opportunities, and the formulation of a clear pathway to support the development of Côte d'Ivoire's organic compost sector. Through documentary research (including a review of existing legislation and practices), Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and a Validation Workshop, the main barriers to compost adoption were identified and a five-year Roadmap with clear priorities for action was defined.

For this CWF assignment, the consultant is requested to continue to apply the ADDIS methodology or a methodology that is largely the same. It should be used to bring together key public and private actors to translate the Roadmap into a concrete and operational plan. This way, solutions remain context-specific, inclusive, and responsive to the evolving needs of the cocoa and compost ecosystems in Côte d'Ivoire.

Within Phase 1: Preparation, Start-up, and Experimentation of the Roadmap, the following activities have been identified:

1. **Governance and Institutional Framework:** The creation of a multiparty Steering Committee, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Coffee-Cocoa Council (CCC). This committee will include key regulatory (DSEPA, DPVCQ, LANADA, CODINORM) and technical actors (CNRA, ANADER, IFDC, CIFOR-ICRAF) to validate a governance charter and work plan.
2. **Reference Farms and Carbon Credits:** The identification of pilot sites, termed "Reference Farms", in major production zones that will generate initial technical data for scientific proof. These sites will also serve as a base for testing the carbon credit process for the benefit of farmers.
3. **Standardisation and Quality:** A crucial milestone will be developing a "Quality Label for compost in the cocoa sector". This technical reference system will allow farmers and research teams to identify high-performing products and facilitate certification procedures with international standards like Rainforest Alliance.
4. **Adapted Extension:** The design of training kits and multilingual visual supports, validated by CNRA and ANADER amongst others, will support standardising technical advice in the field.

This CWF assignment focusses on the establishment of a multiparty Steering Committee (activity 1) and the selection of pilot sites for generating scientific evidence and developing a standardised quality of compost (activity 2 & 3). In addition, to capture progress and scientific data, a comprehensive MEL framework will be developed. Overall, this assignment will lay the groundwork for coordinated implementation and future scaling of compost solutions in Côte d'Ivoire with the final aim of feeding these implementation results of the roadmap into national policies.

Activities

The activities can be summarised into three main activities: The set-up of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (SC), the selection and operationalisation of pilot sites, and development of a comprehensive MEL framework.

A. Set-up of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (SC)

The Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (SC) brings together key public institutions, research bodies, private sector actors, and producer organisations to guide the design of this phase. It serves as the main working group responsible for aligning on key implementation choices, including pilot site selection and experimentation design. However, some sites have already been identified by RVO/the Embassy, such as the pilot sites of Larive/Cadesa in Sassandra, LONO/Beyond

Beans/P4I/TNO in Abengourou, and the Moya Centre of Excellence in Yamoussoukro. Hence, the SC should rather function as an advisory board than a decision-making board.

The following activities should be included:

Institutional preparation:

- Steering Committee Set up: identification and selection of potential Steering Committee members, building on the stakeholder mapping conducted during the previous assignment. The Committee will include representatives from across the compost and cocoa value chains, with a strong emphasis on participation from key national institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Conseil Café-Cacao.
- Stakeholder Re-engagement and Information Sessions:
 - Building on existing relationships, conducting one-on-one consultations with identified stakeholders both from the private and public sector as well as Civil Society Organisations and farmers, to re-establish contact, to assess their level of interest, and secure their commitment to participate in the Committee;
 - Designing, organising, and facilitating a collective online information session bringing together all prospective Steering Committee members. It will serve to present the overall process, align stakeholders on expectations, clarify roles and responsibilities, and outline next steps toward formal engagement.
- Formalisation of Partnerships and Governance Framework:
 - Drafting and coordination of Memorandums of Agreement (MoAs) between EKN, RVO, and Steering Committee members.
 - Designing and implementing an initial communication strategy to announce the establishment of the Steering Committee.

Multi-stakeholder session to:

- officially launch the Steering Committee and validate initial workplan
- validate pre-selected pilot sites
- organise a kick-off meeting in cooperation with RVO and the previously interviewed private sector and community-based organisations, as well as other interested parties (stakeholders in the compost and cocoa industry), to investigate whether there is interest in jointly developing a project plan that is eligible for an SPVO subsidy to stimulate the production and usage of compost by cocoa farmers on village level. This to encourage scaling and decentralised production of compost. This kick-off meeting could also be planned separately.

B. Selection and operationalisation of pilot sites

The design and selection of pilot sites constitute an important step in translating the Roadmap into concrete, field-level interventions. In this phase it is important to set up the pilot objectives and answer questions such as: what do we want to test and prove? How does this translate into a workable design, which is replicable in various locations? The findings of these pilot sites should lead to improved evidence on the benefits of compost with a view to develop a quality standard that meets the needs of smallholder farmers in Côte d'Ivoire.

- Pre-selection:
 - Alignment with existing pilot sites: some sites have already been identified by RVO and EKN such as the sites of Larive/CADESA in Sassandra and LONO/Beyond Beans in Abengourou, and the Moya Centre in Yamoussoukro. The respective stakeholders have been engaged in compost production and distribution activities and are involved in various RVO programmes (Combi-tracks and Orange Corners amongst others). These pre-existing sites will need to be aligned with the ambitions of the Roadmap, and their monitoring needs to be embedded in the overall MEL framework. In addition, it's important that piloting takes place both in the cocoa and horticultural sectors.
 - Identification of additional pilot sites: in addition, and to cover a larger geographical scope of Côte d'Ivoire, (at least) two additional sites should be identified, preferably in Daloa and Soubre. Here the role of the (yet to be established) Steering Committee is crucial, since their mandate also includes shaping and aligning the pilot

interventions so that they will contribute to the same shared goal. i.e. overcoming scepticism by developing a standard quality compost based on scientific evidence. For this, they should develop a set of selection criteria regarding the agronomic application, composition, availability of biomass for compost production and logistics amongst others.

- Field visits: for further learning and refinement of the selection criteria, field scoping visits to existing sites should be conducted. This also to strengthen relationships with local implementing partners.

Overall, tests on compost quality, soil quality, fertility and yields should be carried out on the pilot sites to increase the scientific evidence on the benefits of compost. Furthermore, as the implementation of the pilot sites will be covered by separate assignments, and these pilot sites should be fully aligned with each other and the Roadmap, support is requested in drafting the respective terms of references and ensuring their integration into the Roadmap's overall MEL framework.

To ensure inclusivity and broader validation, the pilot sites will be presented during a multi-stakeholder session, where additional inputs will be gathered from a wider group of actors, including representatives from targeted cooperatives, women and youth groups and other local ecosystems.

C. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

To ensure the roadmap transitions effectively from theory to practice, a comprehensive MEL Framework should be established at project inception. This framework is not merely for internal tracking; it serves as the evidence-based bridge between this initial phase and the large-scale institutionalization of compost in Côte d'Ivoire. The MEL framework is crucial in capturing the evidence-based data. It is designed to generate robust scientific evidence whilst facilitating continuous learning and adaptation. It will harmonise data collection across all pilot partners via standardised tools and a unified database.

- Framework objectives and alignment: the MEL framework should include performance quantification, third party synchronisation for data aggregation from the various sites, learning and continuous adaptation, and policy integration.
- Structured learning and adaptation: including iterative learning in liaison with the Steering Committee and evidence-based decision making.
- Core Indicator domains: the MEL framework should also track the governance efficacy of the Steering Committee, operational viability of the pilot sites and scalability readiness i.e. the potential for decentralised compost production.

Besides the more technical data, capturing data on female and youth engagement is stimulated where applicable. RVO encourages the creation of job opportunities for women and youth in compost-related activities.

4. Deliverables and Timelines

In line with the purpose of this assignment, the following deliverables (in bold), and their associated activities, are to be produced. The inception meeting will be used to finalise activities and associated responsibilities throughout the project life cycle.

Strategic framing:

- Inception Meeting
- **Updated strategy and work plan**
- **Framing and inception meeting summary**

Governance and Institutional Framework: institutional preparation:

- One-on-one meetings with potential members
- Special meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and Conseil du Café-Cacao
- Information Session with Members
- Initial communication strategy

- **Memorandas of agreement with Steering Committee members**
- **Governance framework**

Selection of pilot sites:

- Alignment with third parties for (3) existing and (2) additional pilot sites including support in drafting the respective terms of references
- Two field scoping visits
- **5 pilot sites validated by the Steering Committee**

M&E:

- Conduct bilateral consultations with existing pilot operators (e.g., Larive, LONO, BioSave) to align on a shared set of indicators and data collection methods.
- Lead field visits to existing and newly selected pilot sites to gather qualitative and quantitative baseline insights on operational constraints, waste streams, and labour availability.
- **A comprehensive MEL framework that defines specific impact, outcome, and output indicators to quantify the success of the roadmap's implementation**
- **A data collection system and learning mechanism**

Scaling up:

- Multi-stakeholder session
- Kick-off meeting for scaling and decentralised production of compost under the SPVO framework in collaboration with RVO
- **Kick-off meeting summary with a first outline for an SPVO subsidy**

The total duration of the assignment is set at 20 weeks from the date of signing the contract. Hereby the kick-off meeting for scaling and decentralised production should take place as early as possible.

5. Method of working and communication

There should be check-in meetings at least every three weeks between RVO / Embassy / the contractor throughout the entire process, unless parties mutually agree on less. The contractor will likely need to work closely with EKN-Abidjan to approach higher-level government officials (in case deemed necessary).

6. Contractor profile

- Work experience in the country
- Knowledge of and working of participatory policy processes
- Knowledge of the Ivorian entrepreneurial ecosystems and innovation
- Knowledge of compost, sustainability, and development, with a focus on West African/Ivorian context
- Able to work closely together with the Dutch embassy and RVO, under tight timelines
- Experience working with stakeholders in the agricultural sector in Côte d'Ivoire
- Have already led/facilitated co-creation workshops in Côte d'Ivoire

7. Applicant and Contact

The Applicant for this assignment is RVO in cooperation with the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Abidjan.