

# Alliance Sufosec

Alliance for Sustainable Food Systems  
and Empowered Communities



skat foundation



## Farmers' learning and understanding: An inventory of learning models and tools for Agroecology

Synthesis product of Phase 1 of the Agroecological Learning Journey by the Sufosec Alliance members and partners

Presented by Sarah Mader, Senior Advisor Agroecology, SWISSAID - SFRAS Meeting, 24 August 2022

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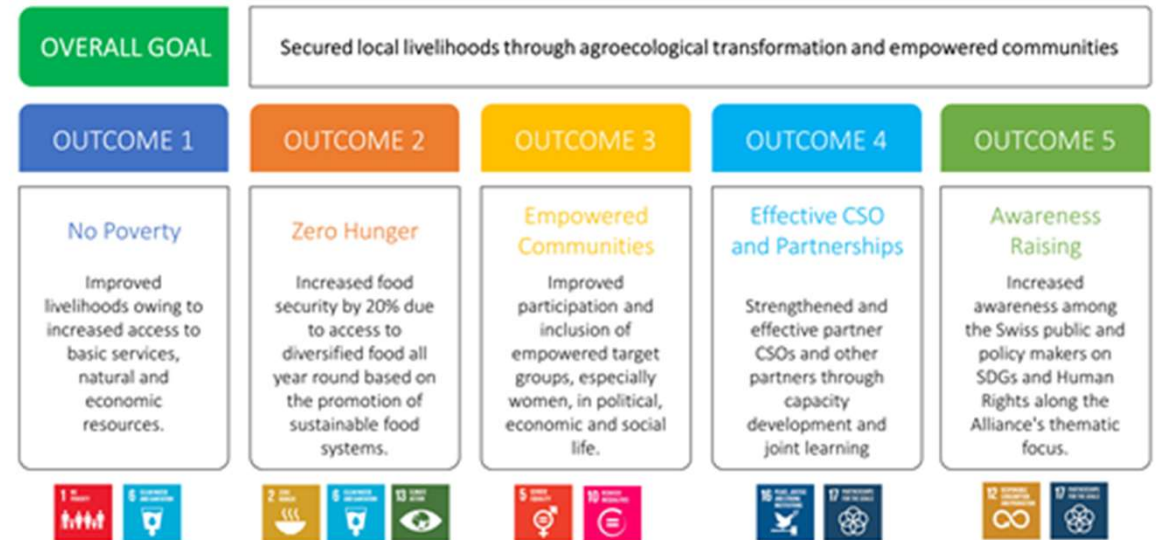
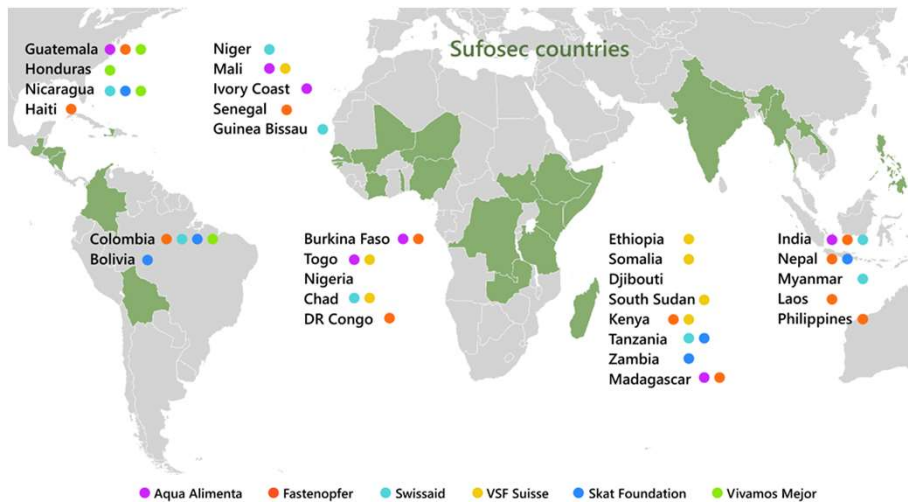
# 1. Introduction



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Alliance Sufosec

- Partnership of 6 Swiss NGOs and CSOs in 27 countries
- Joint programme 2021-2024, co-funded by SDC
- Collaborating for secured livelihoods through agroecological transformation and empowered communities
- Different learning groups: incl. agroecology, local ownership, and the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus



# Agroecological Learning Group

- Collects and synthesises knowledge and experiences across different organisations and countries
- **Goal:** make (co-created ) knowledge available to Sufosec members, partners and external actors, and improve future programme interventions and performance on agroecology - > contributing to the up and outscaling of agroecology



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## 2. Learning for agroecology



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# Agroecological Learning Journey

## Start

### Theory of Change of learning group

Agroecology as a holistic approach towards Sustainable Food Systems

2022

### Phase 2: Farmers' application of promising practices

Exchange on critical factors for farmers sustainable adoption; successful, efficient models and tools of adoption  
→ Synthesis product 2

2024

### Synthesis and dissemination

Dissemination to external networks, partners  
→ Final synthesis document on overall outcomes of all phases

2021

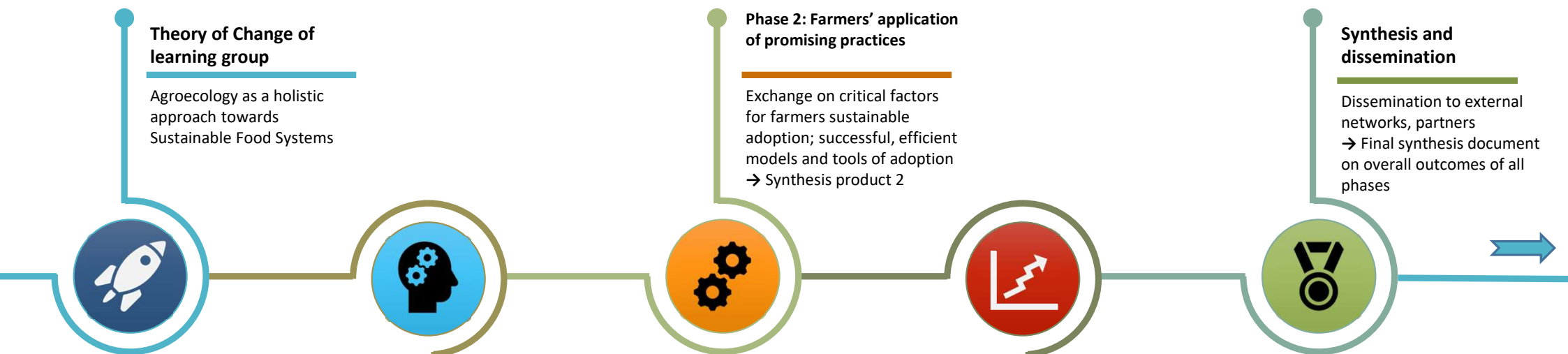
### Phase 1: Farmers' learning and understanding

Sufosec partners exchange on experiences, learning models and tools, successful design for adoption  
→ Synthesis product 1

2023

### Phase 3: Enabling environment

Exchange on supporting elements, mechanisms and institutions from stakeholders for sustainable adoption at scale  
→ Synthesis product 3



# Co-creation and sharing of knowledge: agricultural innovations respond better to local challenges when they are co-created through participatory processes

Co-creation and sharing of knowledge – one of the crucial element of agroecology!

Plays a central role in the process of developing and implementing innovations to address challenges.

- Brings together different stakeholders to learn and improve agroecological practices.
- Puts farmers' knowledge needs and knowledge in the centre and builds on them.
- Blends traditional and indigenous knowledge, producers' and traders' practical knowledge, and scientific knowledge.
- Can include both formal and non-formal learning, f2f-extension and e-extension.



Sources: Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (2022): Co-creation and sharing of knowledge: agricultural innovations respond better to local challenges when they are co-created through participatory processes. Available [here](#).

High Level Panel of Experts (2019): Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. Available [here](#).

# How did the co-creation process work?

## Steps of the co-creation process:

### 1. 3 Workshop with partners:

- a. 3 online workshops in 3 languages with the partners in different regions in November 2021, incl. 3 case studies from Alliance members/ partner organisations, active roles assigned to partners:

- Total of 122 registrants from 24 countries
- 98 participants in three webinars:
  - French: 36 participants
  - English: 33 participants
  - Spanish: 29 participants

### 1. Draft inventory by core group

### 2. Consulting process with Sufosec partners and participants

### 3. Final editing by core group

### 4. Sharing of final product with partners and networks



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### 3. Inventory of learning models and tools by Sufosec Alliance partners



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# Why this inventory?

## Objective

Generating insights for Alliance partners to improve learning/extension approaches for agroecological transition.

## Key questions

- Which learning approaches, models and tools have been working for the Sufosec partners? What are the hindering and success factors for successful learning?

## Expected output of workshop and phase 1:

- **Creating an inventory of selected learning models and approaches for agroecology practised by the Sufosec Alliance members and partners**

# Content of inventory



Alliance for Sustainable Food Systems and Empowered Communities

Aqua Alimentaria  
Markus of Trosser Let it grow

Federación Acción de Caribina  
Acción Suramericana

VIVAVAS mejor  
How long does it take to get there?

Farmers' learning and understanding:

An inventory of selected Sufosec learning models and tools for Agroecology



Synthesis product of Phase 1 of the Agroecological Learning Journey

by the Sufosec Alliance members and partners

April 2022

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Why this inventory?
- 1.2. An overview of the Sufosec Alliance
- 1.3. The Agroecology Learning Group and Learning Journey of the Sufosec Alliance
- 1.4. How did the co-creation process work?
- 1.5. Who is this inventory for?

## 2. Learning for agroecology

- 2.1. Co-creation of knowledge and learning for agroecology
- 2.2. Challenges in learning for Agroecology

## 3. Inventory of applied Agroecology learning models and tools by Sufosec Alliance partners

- 3.1. Overview of discussed learning models
- 3.2. Selected learning models and tools by Alliance partners

### 3.2.1. Learning by observing Demonstration Plots

### 3.2.2. Learning by doing

- Farmer Field Schools (FFS)
- Solidarity Groups / Farmer Family Learning Groups (FFLG)

### 3.2.3. Learning by researching

- Participatory Research

### 3.2.4. Learning from other farmers

- Farmer-to-Farmer Approach

### 3.2.5. Mass learning tools

- ICT Platforms for Agroecology
- Community Radio Stations
- Theatres

## 3.3. Synthesis of successful and hindering factors for farmer's learning and understanding

## 4. Concluding remarks

## 5. Annex:

- 5.1. Contact and links to slides of collaborative workshops
- 5.2. Acknowledgments of contributors and participants

# Challenges in learning for Agroecology: In ONE word, what is the most urgent challenge in learning for agroecology? (between 17-22 participants per language)

Some of the common challenges identified:

- Lack of access to knowledge and evidence
- Need of examples and successful demonstration of agroecological practices



# Selected learning models and tools by Alliance partners

The models were divided into five categories:

1. Learning by observing
2. Learning by doing
3. Learning by researching
4. Learning from other farmers
5. Mass learning tools



## Models

- should be combined and adapted to fit into the local context and needs of the farmers/ communities
- are often interrelated

# Most promising approaches, models and tools for farmers' learning and understanding at the field level (output of collective intelligence exercise)

## Learning by doing

Solidarity group approach / Farmer family learning group (FFLG)

Farmer field schools (FFS)

Participatory action

Rural Initiatives for Participatory Agricultural Transformation (RIPAT) (type of FFS)

Working on own plots and orchards

## Learning by observing

Permanent observation

Demonstration plots

Model farms

## Learning from other farmers

Farmer to farmer learning

Lead farmer approach

Farmer networks

## Learning by researching

Knowledge spiral

Farmer-led research

Participatory research

## School/University-based approaches

Schools of volunteer promoters

Extension through educational institutions (e.g., schools, agricultural colleges)

Farmer university approach

# Most promising approaches, models and tools for farmers' learning and understanding at the field level (output of collective intelligence exercise)

## Participatory approaches

- Participatory guarantee systems (PGS)
- Cooperative approach (OHADA)
- Construction of simple farming strategies with farmer families
- Participatory rangelands management

## Community-based approaches

- Model of resilient families
- Agroecology villages
- Seed houses and conservation banks

## Communication channels and events

- Mass communication approaches
- Fairs (farmer innovation and exchange fairs, creole seed fairs etc.)
- Theatres
- Community radio

## Other

- SMART technologies approach
- Model couple campaigner approach

## Electronic and print resources

- Virtual libraries
- Videos and Youtube
- E-learning
- Electronic and print media

# Overview of selected learning models and tools by Alliance partners

## Learning by observing

Demonstration plots, model farms

## Learning by doing

Farmer Field Schools

Solidarity Groups / Farmer Family Learning Groups

## Learning by researching

Participatory Research, Farmer-led research

## Learning from other farmers

Farmer-to-Farmer Approach

## Mass learning tools

ICT Platforms e-learning for Agroecology

Community Radio Stations

Theatres

Learning model	Community Radio Stations
Description	Promotion of agroecological practices through community radio stations.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High coverage radius and audience reach</li> <li>• Favourable audience timing</li> <li>• Low-cost (radios are usually inexpensive)</li> <li>• Accessible language and qualified communicators</li> <li>• Message formats (spots, radio campaigns)</li> <li>• Jingle (short music to introduce the message)</li> <li>• Interactive programmes</li> </ul>
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radio is influenced by access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), like phones or radio stations</li> <li>• Audience may be limited for younger age groups (listening to the radio is more common among older people)</li> <li>• Practices cannot be communicated visually, which can limit the in-depth understanding</li> </ul>
Critical success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of resource persons</li> <li>• Coverage / reach of radio</li> <li>• Language of broadcast</li> <li>• Possibility of rebroadcasting</li> <li>• Combining radio with ICT</li> <li>• Cost</li> </ul>
Hindering factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some communities, financial resources may be limited to acquire a radio device</li> </ul>
Group verdict on appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radio communication is established in the rural environment</li> </ul>



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## Successful and hindering factors for farmer's learning and understanding



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# Synthesis of successful and hindering factors for farmers' learning and understanding

## Success factors

- Contextualisation to farmers' needs and local realities (incl. analyses of cultural, social and economic contexts before implementation)
- Building on ancestral and local knowledge while innovating/co-creating new knowledge
- Concrete examples and evidence of success
- Ownership by the farmers and/or community
- Replicability (practices are easily replicable / adaptable with local resources available)
- Accessibility (distance from home, time demands, materials required, literacy limitations etc.)
- Acceptability (trust-based approach that is accepted by farmers)
- Clear definition of roles (e.g. facilitators / animators, members, etc.)
- Engaged participants (willing to learn and to share knowledge and experiences)
- Inclusiveness (farmers / families are engaged in all steps of the process)
- Accompaniment and long-term vision
- Informing governmental policies and/or regulations
- Coaching, monitoring & evaluation throughout the process (to enable adaptation to specific contexts in a timely manner)

# Synthesis of successful and hindering factors for farmers' learning and understanding

## Hindering factors

- Conventional / traditional farmer practices that stand in the way of agroecology
- Risks that farmers face by adapting or testing new techniques / practices
- Lack of conceptual understanding, e.g. reading and working with agroecosystem
- Land tenure problems, e.g. demonstration plots
- Availability of resources, e.g. funds, equipment, tools, biomass
- Time limitations
- Limited (e-)literacy
- Financial sustainability
- Lack of governmental support
- Motivating people for agroecology and for assuming animator / facilitator / leader roles

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## 4. Concluding remarks and Outlook

## 4. Learnings and concluding remarks

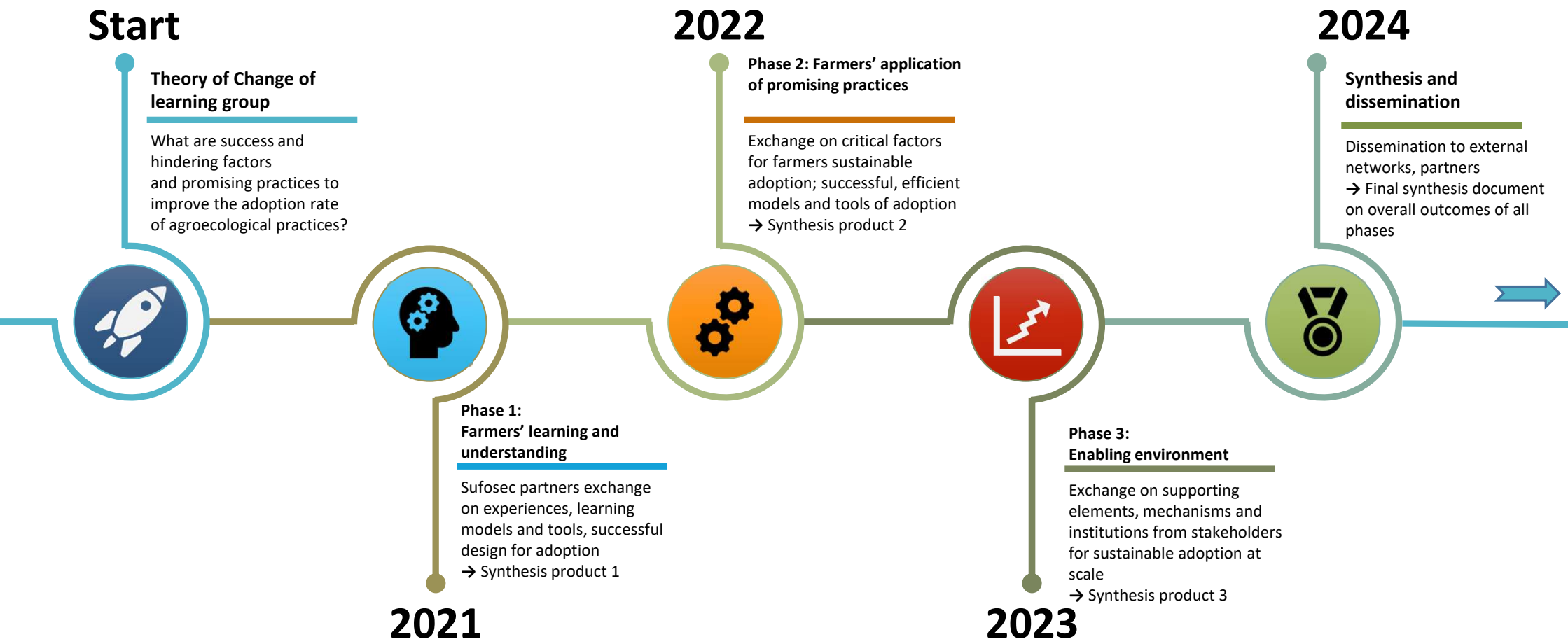
- A variety of approaches are used by Sufosec members and partners to foster farmers' learning on agroecological practices.
- No one-size fits all approach for successful learning.
- Impactful learning approaches do put farmers' needs and existing knowledge in the centre of attention and build up from there.
- Most effective is a mix of approaches and tools that allow farmers to experiment by seeing and testing, by analysing, exchanging with other farmers and knowledge carriers.
- Good facilitation is key for co-creation of knowledge and learning on agroecology!

# Inventory in English, French and Spanish

Inventories in all languages are available [here](#)

- [Farmers' learning and understanding: An inventory of selected Sufosec learning models and tools for Agroecology](#)
- [L'apprentissage et la compréhension des agriculteurs : Un inventaire des modèles et outils d'apprentissage de l'agroécologie sélectionnés par Sufosec](#)
- [Aprendizaje y comprensión de los agricultores: Inventario de modelos y herramientas de aprendizaje para la Agroecología seleccionados por Sufosec](#)

# Outlook of two next phases: Agroecological Learning Journey



Invitation to join the Agroecological Learning Journey

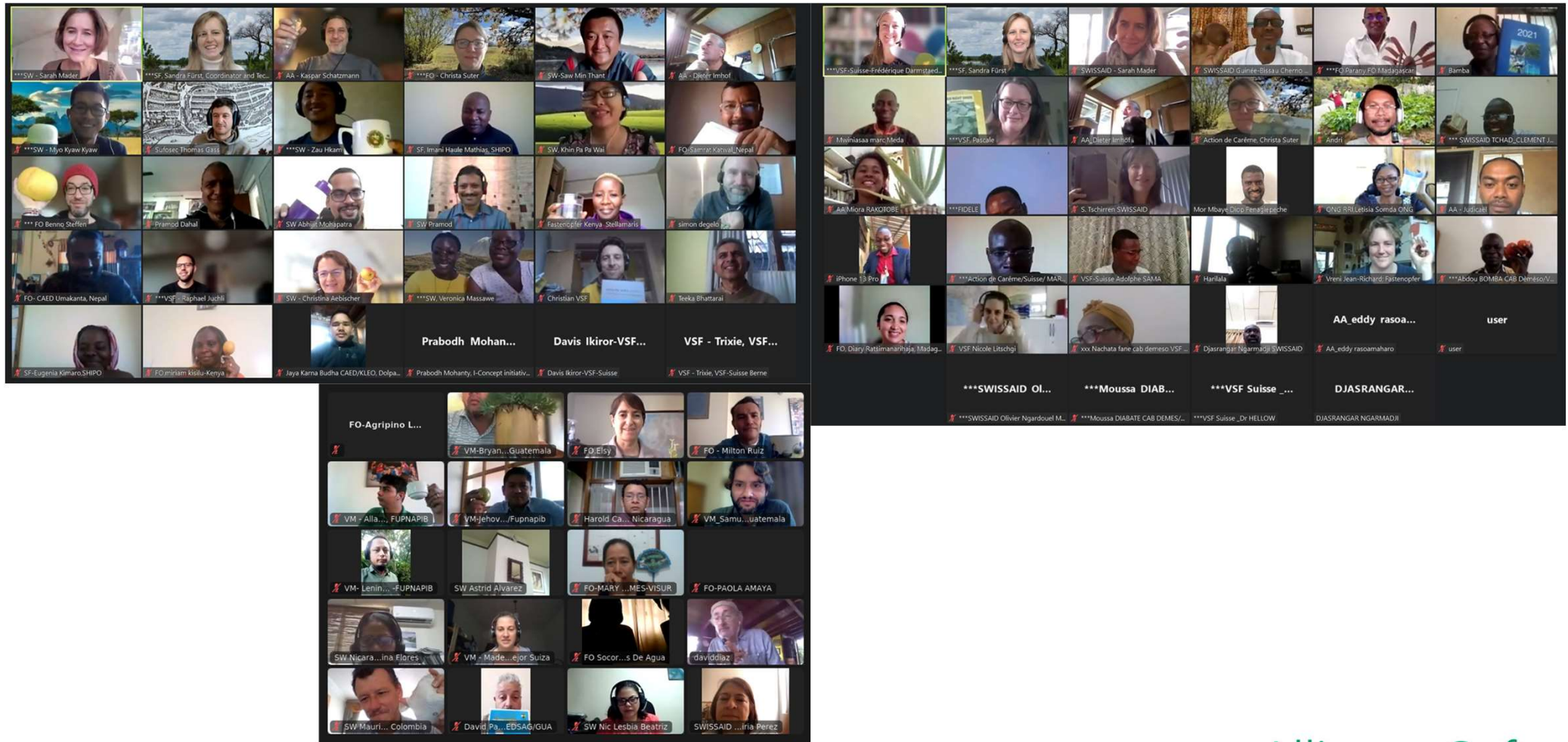
## **Phase 2: Farmers' application of promising agroecological practices in the global South**

**What are critical factors and reasons for farmers to apply agroecological practices during the early phase of the agroecological transition?** Sufosec invites agroecological practitioners in the global South to exchange on how to shape the agroecological transition. The identified co-created results will feed into a synthesis of promising practices and will be distributed in key professional networks and the wider public.

- 18 October 2022 - 9:00 – 11:00 Bern (GMT+2)  
[Register here for English](#)
- 4 octobre 2022 - 13h00 – 15h00 Berne (GMT+2)  
[Inscrivez-vous ici pour l'atelier en français](#)
- 11 de octubre de 2022 - 15:00 – 17:00 Bern (GMT+2)  
[Inscríbese aquí para el taller en español](#)



# This learning journey is a collaborative effort!



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## Contact

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