

## **Proposed organizational design and coordination mechanism for post-summit implementation of the SIA through the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan (AFSH-AP)**

The Soil Initiative for Africa (SIA) Framework has been formulated to guide efforts to improve the health and productivity of African soil. The framework informs the development of a system to address all elements of the enabling environment as well as implementation on the ground. As such, the SIA Framework identifies the elements of the institutional, policy, programmatic, investment, partnership, and services-related landscape that will be needed at each level (farm, local, national, regional, continental) across Africa to ensure that farmers and communities will have the support that they need to utilize and sustain their soils for optimal agricultural production, positive environmental outcomes, and sustainable livelihoods. As a long-term Framework (situated within CAADP<sup>1</sup>), the SIA will be implemented in consecutive 10-year phases as structured in the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan (AFSH-AP 2023-2033).

Effective implementation of the AFSH-AP will be by multiple partners and organizations at multiple levels (i.e., continental, regional, national, and sub-national levels) and will require efficient coordination and facilitation to ensure optimal impact. The following considerations are essential to ensure successful coordination of implementation that would leverage the existing knowledge and understanding of multiple organizations involved in preparing for the AFSH Summit:

1. Emphasizing the overall leadership of the AUC, that post-summit coordination of implementation will be an African-owned and African-led process.
2. Recognizing that post-Summit implementation will be executed by a wide range of stakeholders and partners (i.e., a combination(s) of politicians, practitioners, scientists, donors, development partners, public and private entities, industry, civil society, consumers, and land users).
3. Recognizing the likelihood of diverse funding models and flows in support of post-summit implementation.
4. Recognizing and leveraging the valuable contributions and institutional memory of multiple organizations and donor partners in preparing for the Summit and in post-summit activities.

Considering the complexity, range of stakeholders involved in post-summit implementation, and potential range of funding models, a coordination mechanism is proposed as illustrated in Figure 1. Figure 2, below, illustrates the anticipated delegation of responsibilities from the SIA Secretariat to partnering technical agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> CAADP = the Africa Union's Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program

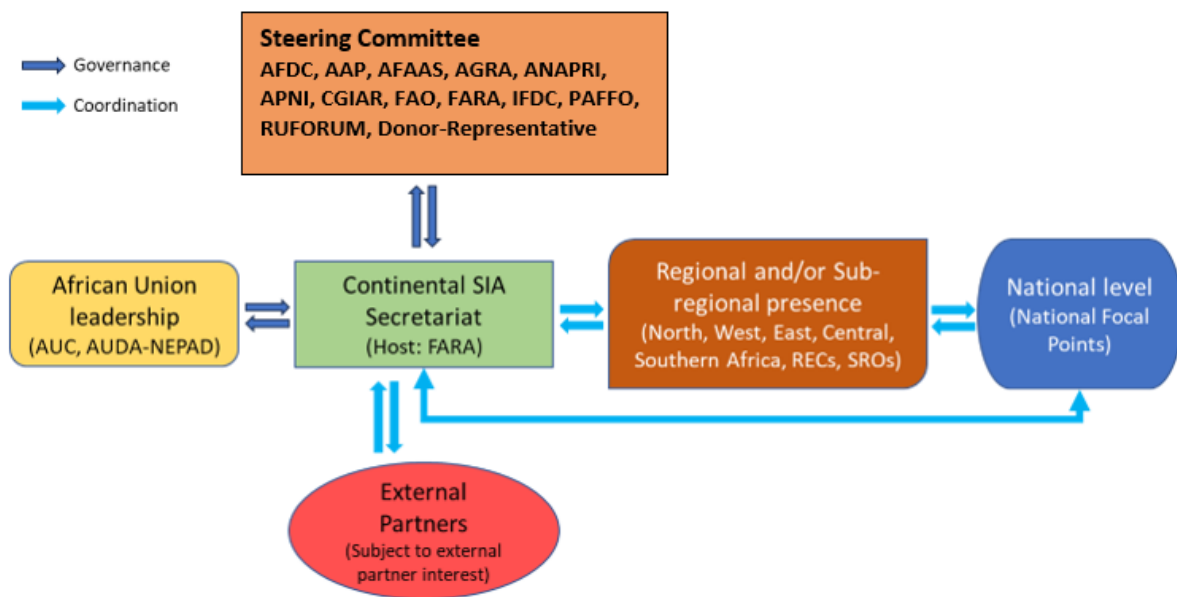
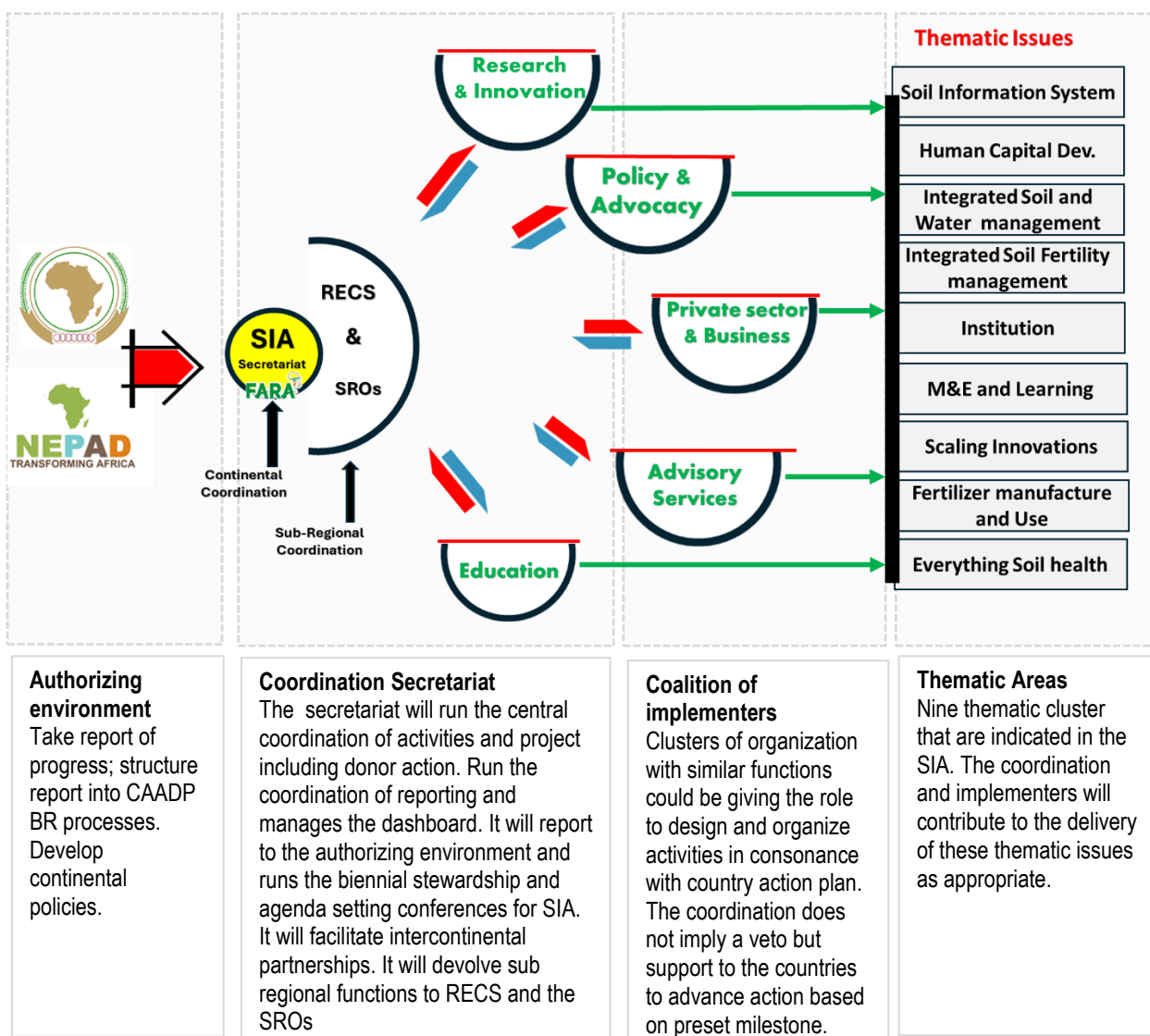


Figure 1. The SIA Secretariat's governance and coordination structure.



### **SIA and AFSH Action Plan ownership and leadership:**

As per the AFSH Action Plan, “the AUC will have ownership of the AFSH Action Plan and the SIA. The AUC and AUDA-NEPAD will coordinate the different stakeholder organizations within and outside Africa to ensure effective implementation of the AFSH Action Plan.”

### **SIA Secretariat:**

Considering the SIA as the long-term framework for managing soil action until 2063 (in alignment with Agenda 2063), it is recommended that a SIA Secretariat be established for long term coordination and facilitation of implementation.

FARA is recommended to host the SIA Secretariat based on its role as the technical arm of the AUC in matters related to agriculture science, technology, and innovation. While the SIA Secretariat would provide overall leadership and coordination for the SIA and the implementation of the Action Plan, the Secretariate may not have the expertise or capacity to provide technical leadership on, or to implement, some of the key technical components of the Action Plan (such technical components would include, for example, detailed technical guidance and support on issues related to a soil information system – and the actual provision of services related to Africa’s soil information system that are best located at the continental level). The SIA Secretariate would delegate responsibility for such technical components to other agencies possessing relevant capacity and expertise with which to fulfil these roles.

The following considerations are important:

1. A FARA-based SIA Secretariat may be established in one of two ways:
  - i. An AUC-established and mandated SIA Secretariat that is **hosted** by FARA, or
  - ii. AUC mandating FARA to perform the role of the SIA Secretariat.
2. For both options a. or b. above, a dedicated, full-time team of a number of additional FARA staff will be required to perform this function. Dedicated funding will be required to support the staff and their activities.
3. The role and functions of a SIA Secretariat are further elaborated in Annex 1, including a draft budget to initiate consideration of the estimated cost and composition of the Secretariat (note – the budget and staffing composition still need to be added).

### **The Role of a SIA Secretariat:**

The role of a SIA Secretariat will, *inter alia*, be to:

- a. Provide leadership in advocating for scaling up investments and programs, and associated policies in a manner consistent with the SIA Framework and the AFSH Action Plan.
- b. Coordinate the efforts of African institutions at every level in the development and implementation of the SIA and AFSH Action Plan – not as a manager of all of these

actors and activities, but rather as a facilitator of awareness and collaboration among these actors;

- c. Coordinate consultation between external partners and African stakeholders to help them direct their resources toward African priorities, and to help them reduce the possibility of multiple similar, overlapping (or even partially contradictory) investments, programs, and approaches.
- d. Play a leadership role in reviewing, and offering guidance on, potential investments, programs, policies, implementation approaches, and opportunities for scaling – improving synergies and alignment with the SIA Framework and the AFSH Action Plan.
- e. Convene discussions about the SIA Framework and the AFSH Action Plan and their implementation.
- f. Develop, curate, and serve as a source of access to materials for stakeholders with regard to the guidance of Africa’s (and the global) community of practice on sustainable soil management.
- g. Provide support to soil-related strategic planning processes at continental, regional and country levels.
- h. Serve as a point of contact and a representative of Africa for external partners as they plan support for SIA-related institutions and activities.
- i. Monitor, analyze, and report on progress in the implementation of the 10-year Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan (to be launched at the May 2024 Summit);
- j. Serve as a technical exchange platform, recognizing the need for technical assistance for the implementation of activities under the SIA Framework and the AFSH Action Plan, and helping to mobilize such technical assistance.
- k. Serve as a platform for learning from experience and exchange of experiences through the course of the implementation of the SIA Framework and the AFSH Action Plan.
- l. Facilitate continuous partnership development and allocation of functions to mapped-out partners.
- m. Perform communication and outreach activities to garner awareness and support for the SIA Framework and AFSH Action Plan implementation.
- n. Engage in continuous development of action on emerging issues on soil management and complementary areas;
- o. Facilitate policy and advocacy actions at different governance levels; and
- p. Provide opportunity information via an investment dashboard to disseminate information on investable projects, programs, or opportunities in Africa’s soil health sector; and

- q. Facilitate the definition of key metrics and their regular collection for the SIA and AFSH Action Plan at the continental level and below, leveraging the CAADP biennial review process.

### **Steering Committee:**

A Steering Committee is proposed to support and guide the SIA Secretariat in its coordination functions. The purpose of this Committee would be to:

- Ensure representation of a wide range of key organizations covering all important topics or themes to be implemented post-Summit.
- Ensure continued collaboration with organizations that supported the Summit preparation and hosting.
- Provide strategic guidance on the implementation of the Soil Initiative for Africa Framework and the AFSH Action Plan.

It is recommended that the Steering Committee be composed of:

- Organizations involved in Summit preparation to harness the institutional memory and understanding of the Summit and its outcomes (alphabetically): AFDC, AAP, AFAP, AGRA, ANAPRI, APNI, CGIAR, FAO's Global Soil Partnership (and/or its African Soil Partnership for Sub-Saharan Africa and its Near East and North Africa Soil Partnership), FARA, IFDC.
- Additional important organizations and partners to broaden the scope of thematic support: e.g., AFAAS, PAFO, RUFORUM, CSOs, External Partner/Donor representative, Private Sector representative, others?

The Steering Committee could function as follows:

1. Election of a rotating Chair (every 3 years) from an African Institution and a Secretary to guide activities and decisions.
2. Bi-annual Committee meetings – one in-person and one virtual meeting per year.
3. Members from key organizations may be included as observers as required.

A full Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee would be required.

### **External Partners**

External development partners have expressed interest to coordinate their own efforts to support the implementation of the SIA and AFSH Action Plan. Should these partners establish a mechanism to coordinate their efforts, such a coordination mechanism might link with the SIA Secretariat through representation in the Steering Committee.

### **Regional level: Champions/chairs at regional and/or sub-regional level**

Coordination and facilitation functions will be required at the regional or sub-regional level to address region-specific priorities, needs, and progress. This requires regional champions,

chairs, or focal points that would directly interact with the SIA Secretariat at the Continental level, as well as with national counterparts within each region.

### **Role of RECs and SROs**

Elaboration of this function would require input from the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other regional bodies (including the Sub-Regional Organizations [SROs]). Among the roles of the RECs, in collaboration with their respective SROs, would likely be the following: lead and facilitate cooperation and coordination for soil health and fertility initiatives in their respective regions in accordance with the SIA; (ii) facilitate and contribute to the discussion, the development and the implementation of regional policies and regulations related to fertilizer, quality control, and soil management in accordance with the SIA; and (iii) facilitate and support plans the development and implementation of plans to strengthen capacities at regional and country levels of all the institutions and programs related to management of soil health.

### **National level: National focal points**

Successful implementation of the Summit outcomes will require domestication of the SIA Framework and AFSH Action Plan, and effective coordination of related national activities. National focal points would be critical as central contact point with both regional and continental coordination functions.