

Terms of Reference for Expert group proposals 2023



Objectives

SIANI Expert Groups are cross-sector working groups established around SIANI's vision and mission.

- SIANI's overall vision is a future where *"Food systems are more sustainable, rights-based and inclusive of smallholder farmers and marginalised groups."*
- SIANI's mission is to *"support and promote multisector dialogue and action around sustainable food systems"*, in Sweden and globally.

Expert groups involve participants from diverse sectors and disciplines whose purpose is to support dialogues that capture, develop, consolidate and communicate knowledge, proven practices and innovations on emerging issues contributing to sustainable, inclusive and rights-based food systems in low-income contexts.

Expert groups have proved an important tool in facilitating cross-sector collaboration and communication on ignored or under-prioritised topics and have thus made a large contribution to SIANI's impact. The work of the Expert groups feeds into SIANI's theory of change and contributes to changed agendas and practices, capacity building, joint action and strengthened connections across sectors in low-income contexts.

Who can apply?

Application is open to everyone across the world who shares SIANI's vision. The final selected Expert groups must become individual members of SIANI. Membership is free and open to all. See more here: <https://www.siani.se/register/>

Impact and themes

Expert groups should relate their work to an ignored or underprioritized theme in line with SIANI's vision and mission. Expert groups are encouraged to describe how their work relates to one or more of the following themes:

Long term sustainability: Systems, innovations and practices conserving and enhancing biodiversity and the natural resource base – e.g., agroecological/regenerative/nature-based/landscape approaches.

Resilience to crises: Systems, innovations and practices strengthening food security in times of conflict/economic downturn/pandemics/climate change

One Health: Systems, innovations and practices enhancing human, animal and ecosystem health (One Health approach).

These themes have been developed for this call based on SIANI's vision, members' input and the current global context. **However, proposals with a focus beyond these themes are also possible.** If so, please describe in which way your proposed theme is ignored or underprioritized.

Expert groups should also define how their work within the selected theme contributes towards one or more of SIANI's sub-impact areas:

- Recognition of rural youths' agency and rights
- Recognition of smallholders' and SMEs' prosperity in value chains in local production systems
- Recognition of livelihoods and rights of forest communities, Indigenous peoples and natural resource-dependent poor

Activities and outputs

Activities and outputs should be clearly aligned with the Expert group's aim and desired outcomes. SIANI's secretariat may be able to support the Expert group on specific tasks, however primarily all outputs from the group should be delivered from the resources within the group.

Examples of past outputs are policy briefs, book chapters, a funded project, newspaper op-eds, videos, podcasts, infographics, public seminars or conferences, series of blogs, webinars, events or mini campaigns combining several of the outputs. In some cases, small-scale research projects may be funded as a part of the work plan with contributions from other funders. Previous groups and their work can be found on [SIANI's website](#), with some examples summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of some previous Expert groups and selected activities and outputs.

| Group name | Location | Activity | Output |
|---|--------------------|---|---|
| AGRIPRENEURSHIP ALLIANCE | East Africa | Development and implementation of the online 'Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness' course and supported by in-person support via Universities in East Africa. | Young entrepreneurs gain business skills and develop plans to launch new agri-businesses and develop already existing enterprises. |
| SMALL-SCALE FARMERS AND BIODIVERSITY IN NEPAL | Nepal | Production of ten videos of traditional food recipes from Sudurpashchim Province and a draft document of a traditional recipe book. | Awareness of the importance of agrobiodiversity and their potential contribution to the food system. |
| AFRICAN BIOCHAR | Sub-Saharan Africa | Collect and review the research literature on biochar of relevance for Africa and initiate an information repository. | Coordinate, communicate and build capacity of research and development on pyrolysis and biochar as technologies for optimized biomass use for improved resource management, energy efficiency and soil fertility in Africa. |
| AGROFORESTRY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY, SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND LANDSCAPE RESTORATION | Southeast Asia | Convened and informed governments, civil society, private sector actors and researchers in Southeast Asia and Sweden about the importance of agroforestry for nutrition and food security for women and the rural poor. | Input to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Guidelines for Agroforestry Development. |

Human rights-based approach

The work of the Expert groups should be informed by the human rights-based approach. In order to capture the extent to which human rights principles have been incorporated into the planning, please reflect on the areas below in your application:

- **Participation:** Is there active and meaningful participation of those involved - including opportunities for them to influence the formulation of problems, planning, implementation and follow-up?
- **Non-discrimination:** Who are the rights holders? Have they been taken into account? Are people in vulnerable situations considered?
- **Empowerment:** What capacity do duty bearers have to fulfil their obligations and rights holders to claim their human rights? Can their capacity be strengthened?
- **Transparency:** Is information available in an accessible way to duty bearers and rights holders? Are they able to attend and observe meetings and processes where issues that affect them are discussed?

For successful applicants, SIANI will organise a workshop in the start-up period to support Expert groups' capacity to adopt a human rights-based approach.

Communication

Outreach and effective communication are at the core of the Expert groups' work. Expert groups are expected to share information about their activities and their outputs on SIANI's website and social media channels, as well as through relevant international, national and local media outlets.

The secretariat will provide editorial and conceptual support to the communicational activities of the groups, but a communications plan should be integrated into the general work plan to allocate time to the production of news stories, interviews and blogs about the groups' activities. Expert groups kick off their work by presenting and discussing their communications plan with the SIANI secretariat, ensuring common understanding and further refining the activities together.

Expert group members and Steering group

Expert groups should be comprised of a balance of gender and age actors from a diverse range of sectors, e.g., the private sector, civil society, government and/or public sector, international NGOs and academia/research. Participation in an Expert group can be either via organizational affiliation or on an individual basis. Expert groups should have at least one member from an institution/company with a connection to Sweden, or links to Swedish organizations or actors benefitting from Swedish development aid.

Please consider proposing a steering group of some sort as it allows for more dialogue and networking with a broader range of actors other than the core organisations of the Expert group.

Location of members and language

Expert groups can be situated anywhere and plan activities in any language that is appropriate to the context. Please note that the proposal application, all communication material to SIANI as well as the communication with SIANI's secretariat must be in English.

The Expert groups' work may be carried out online, and teams can be spread across the globe. However, we have seen that if an Expert group is spread too wide, it can lead to reduced impact in the local area, slow communications and lack of clear leadership in the work tasks.

Gender and equity

SIANI is fully committed to respect and provide fair treatment for everyone, eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equity of opportunity and delivering fairness to all. Group leaders must demonstrate how group composition and activity engagement is representative and inclusive.

Budget and duration

The budget should be broken down in the proposal and will be assessed against activities and contributions from the group members. The budget is therefore individual for each group, but indicative around 400 000 SEK. In general, funded time for individuals and travel costs should only be a limited proportion of the budget. Coordination of an Expert group will be compensated on a time-limited basis. The costs for audit should be included in the budget.

Co-funding is encouraged and should be described in the application.

The initial funding period for Expert groups is 12 months. Upon satisfactory completion of the work plan it is possible to re-apply for further funds in the second-phase competitive process.

Implementation and reporting

Expert groups independently implement activities according to their work plan. Expert groups are required to update the secretariat about their on-going work for monitoring and reciprocal learning purposes. It is recommended to have monthly meetings with the SIANI secretariat integrated into the work plan. Monitoring and evaluation should be carried out for every activity.

Reporting obligations:

- A mid-term report.
- A final narrative report, focusing on outputs and outcomes.
- A financial report of all spending and clarifications.
- An audit.

It is recommended to use a results matrix for planning and reporting outputs and outcomes of the groups' activities.

Strategic Multi-Year Results Matrix – Example

Impact:

| # | Result Level | Indicators | Base-lines | Targets | Means of Verification | Risks and assumptions |
|-----|-----------------|------------|------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Outcome: | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Output: | | | | | |
| 1.2 | Output: | | | | | |
| 1.3 | Output: | | | | | |
| 2 | Outcome: | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Output: | | | | | |
| 2.2 | Output: | | | | | |
| 3 | Outcome: | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Output: | | | | | |

Judging applications

All applications will be screened and scored according to standardised criteria. Those scoring highest will be invited to develop a full work plan, a communication plan and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plan including activities, outputs and outcomes. The development of these plans will be supported by the secretariat. The work plan will be reviewed by the SIANI steering committee and those to receive funding will be selected.

Scoring matrix

| Criteria | Guiding questions | Points |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------|
| Theme | The theme is relevant according to the call. | Yes/No |
| Multi-stakeholder and gender balanced | Does the Expert group involve multiple sectors and representatives and is it balanced in terms of gender and age? | 15 |
| Geographical reach & focus | What are the reciprocal partnerships with organizations in low-income contexts? What are the links to Sweden and/or Swedish institutions/organizations? What are the links to partners/organizations in low-income contexts? | 10 |
| Vision & impact | How does the Expert group relate to SIANI's vision, mission and sub-impact areas? How does the Expert group's aim contribute to contextual policy processes and poverty alleviation? | 15 |
| Targeted communications | How does the communication objectives align with the desired outputs and outcomes? How will the Expert group reach its target audiences? | 25 |
| Mainstreaming of HRBA | How does the Expert group consider HRBA aspects in its activities? | 15 |
| Value for money | Is the budget and duration of activities reasonable for the scope and aim of the group? Is compensation for individuals and travel costs only a limited proportion of the budget? Does the budget include an audit? | 20 |
| | | 100/100 |

Timeline

Deadline for application submission is 23:59 CET on 14 May.

Successful proposals will be announced in September 2023.

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