

Terms of reference

Expert groups 2024–2025



Objectives

SIANI expert groups are cross-sector working groups whose knowledge and activities contribute to 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.

The purpose of the expert groups is to carry out activities that lead to meaningful change and to share insights and experiences with the SIANI network and other stakeholders. The groups should work across sectors with the purpose to raise awareness and support dialogues that capture, develop, consolidate, and communicate knowledge, proven practices and innovations on topics contributing to sustainable, inclusive, and rights-based food systems in low-income contexts.

What does it mean to be an Expert group?

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.

When applying to become an expert group, the applicants should present their project as described below and present a budget. Successful candidates will have the SIANI secretariat as a sounding board when developing different activities and will have access to knowledge from other groups and the network at large.

Who can apply?

Application is open to all kinds of organisations 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.

Impact and themes

Expert group activities must be in line with 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 should describe how their work contributes to 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

Expert groups should also relate their work to one or more of the following themes:

- **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 and preparedness:** 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).

However, proposals with a focus beyond these themes are also eligible. If so, please describe in which way the proposed theme is important and ignored or under-prioritised in the context in which the project is to be carried out.

Expert groups are encouraged to include relevant innovative approaches, technologies, or methods to foster innovative ideas, when developing their proposals as innovation in its broad sense can make important contributions to more sustainable and inclusive food systems.

A Human rights-based approach

The work of the expert groups should be informed by a [human rights-based approach](#). The areas below should be taken into consideration during all stages of the project, from planning to implementation and follow-up.

- **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 to support expert groups' capacity to adopt a human rights-based approach.

Communication

Communication should form an integral part of the groups' efforts to make an impact.

The SIANI secretariat will offer training and support as the groups develop their plans and strategies for communication and impact so that the communication activities will

be as effective and relevant as possible. Discussions about communication will start immediately after the expert groups are selected to ensure a common understanding.

Expert groups are expected to share their knowledge and insights with the SIANI network and the public, which can be done through SIANI's website and social media channels, but also through other relevant platforms and media. Information about the groups will be available on the SIANI website. The secretariat will provide editorial and conceptual support.

Expert group members and Advisory committee

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. Participation in an expert group can be either via organizational affiliation or on an individual basis.

Expert groups must:

- have a balance of gender.
- include members from a diverse range of actors e.g. academia, government and/or public sector, private sector, civil society, and international organisations.
- Include 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.

Expert groups should have a diverse and representative group composition and ensure inclusion and representation in activity engagement. Including youth and other groups that may be underrepresented, marginalised, or vulnerable as members of the expert group is strongly encouraged.

The expert group could have an advisory committee of some sort to allow for dialogue and networking with a broader range of actors other than the members of the expert group.

Geographic location and language

Expert group activities must be focused to low-income contexts. Members of the group can be situated anywhere and plan activities in any language that is appropriate to the context. However, groups should be connected the local context through its members and partnerships.

The submitted proposal, 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, previous experience is 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.

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](#). See also examples in the end of this document.

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 in accordance with international audit standards, ISRS4400.

Budget and duration

The proposal must contain a budget divided into budget items. The budget will be assessed against activities and contributions from the group members.

The budget should be developed considering the following:

- Indicated budget is 500 000 SEK per expert group.
- Costs for audit must be included in the budget.
- Travel costs and funded time for individuals should be a limited proportion of the budget.
- Coordination of an Expert group is compensated on a time-limited basis.
- Co-funding is encouraged and should be clearly indicated in the budget.
- The implementation period for expert groups is 15 months.

Judging applications

All applications will be screened and scored according to standardised criteria (see Scoring matrix below). Final candidates will be selected by the SIANI Steering Committee. Successful candidates will be invited to develop a full work plan, including communication and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (with activities, outputs, and outcomes) with support from the SIANI secretariat. The final selection will be made upon approval of these plans.

Timeline

Deadline for application submission is 23:59 CET on 19th May 2024. Successful proposals will be announced in September 2024.

For questions please contact: Jonna.wiklund@sei.org

Scoring matrix

Exclusion criteria/Minimum requirements		Yes/No
	The theme is relevant and aligned with SIANI's vision and mission and scope of the call	
	The expert group involves more than one sector	
	The expert group has an evenly distributed gender composition	
	The expert group has a link to Sweden or Swedish institutions/organisations	
	Activities are focused to low-income contexts	
Scoring criteria		Points
Multi-stakeholder and gender balance	To what extent does the expert group involve multiple sectors and representatives? (6 points) Does the expert group involve underrepresented, vulnerable, or marginalised groups? (2 points)	8
Geographical reach & focus	How strong are the links to partners/organisations in low-income contexts (6 points)	6
Vision & impact	Potential for, or degree of, innovation (6 points) How well does the expert group align with SIANI's vision, mission and contribute to sub-impact areas? (10 points) How well does the expert group's aim contribute to contextual policy processes and poverty alleviation? (6 points)	22
Targeted communications	How well will the expert group reach its target groups, including through communication? (10 points)	10
Mainstreaming of HRBA	How well does the expert group integrate HRBA aspects in their activities? (6 points)	6
Total maximum score		52
Budget assessment		Yes/No
Guiding questions	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?	

	Is it value for money?	
	Does the budget include an audit?	

Examples from previous Expert Groups – 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.