

Media release

Farming in times of climate change – a FiBL project in search of sustainable systems

(Frick, 22 April 2014) The combined effects of climate change, advancing resource scarcity and population growth are placing huge pressure on global food production. Regions such as sub-Saharan Africa are affected particularly by such developments. Here, aridity, degraded soils, high population growth and poverty all present serious challenges to agricultural production. In a recently launched project, FiBL's scientists are devising ways to make land uses water-efficient and nutrient-efficient, thus enhancing productivity and food security in arid zones.

Global change in general and climate change in particular count among the greatest challenges faced by farmers and food producers. These pressures are compounded by mounting resource scarcity and growing populations in particularly vulnerable regions, putting agricultural productivity and food security at risk there.

FiBL's scientists are now working to identify agricultural practices and cultivation systems that are both resource-efficient and well suited to smallholder production in arid zones. There is a substantial body of knowledge about this and diverse hypotheses – all of which, however, has never been compiled systematically and studied comprehensively with a scientific approach. The recently launched project titled "Potential of Sustainable Land-Use Systems to Promote Adaptation to Climate Change", funded by the Mercator Foundation Switzerland, is seeking to close that gap.

Above and beyond the scientific study, the project will also transpose the knowledge gained into practice. The project therefore has two phases. Phase I involves producing the requisite knowledge base and analytical tools. Phase II will apply and validate the outcomes of Phase I in a pilot region. The project takes a step-wise, trans-disciplinary approach. This combines findings gained by applying the natural sciences at field and activity level with findings derived by the methods of the social sciences and economics at farm and regional level. By collaborating with renowned agricultural scientists and involving international development organisations, FiBL ensures that the solutions found are suited to the problems on the ground, and can also be trialled and implemented in the long term in the target regions.

EXCELLENCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Das FiBL hat Standorte in der Schweiz, Deutschland und Österreich
 FiBL offices located in Switzerland, Germany and Austria
 Le FiBL est basé en Suisse, en Allemagne et en Autriche

FiBL Schweiz / Suisse
 Ackerstrasse, CH-5070 Frick
 Tel. +41 (0)62 865 72 72
info.suisse@fibl.org, www.fibl.org

The project broadens the knowledge base with regard to the capacity of farming systems to adapt to climate change, and improves the efficiency of their water and nutrient utilisation. It enhances the conditions of agricultural production in the pilot region, and seeks to ensure that such improvements are emulated elsewhere.

Contacts at FiBL

- > Andreas Gattinger, Soil Sciences Division, FiBL,
Tel. +41 62 865 04 18, andreas.gattinger@fibl.org
- > Adrian Müller, Socio-Economics Division, FiBL,
Tel. +41 62 865 7252, adrian.mueller@fibl.org
- > Adrian Krebs, media contact person, FiBL,
Tel. +41 62 865 72 80, adrian.krebs@fibl.org

Links

Project page:

<http://www.fibl.org/en/themes/climate-change/fibl-projects/land-use-system.html>

Website of the project funder, Mercator Foundation Switzerland (in German only):

<http://www.stiftung-mercator.ch/>

This media release online

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