



Sustainability assessment at FiBL

FiBL, founded in 1973, is one of the world's leading research institutes for organic agriculture. It employs 135 people in Switzerland, 20 in Germany and 12 in Austria. One of FiBL's strengths is close cooperation between research, consultancy and education. For sustainability assessment we can call on our know-how in the following areas:

- > Soil sciences
- > Crop production
- > Crop protection and biodiversity
- > Animal health
- > Livestock management
- > Socioeconomics
- > Food quality and processing
- > Consultancy
- > Communication
- > Development and cooperation

For more than 10 years we have been advising the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the many issues surrounding organic agriculture.

Contact

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Sustainability assessment for the organic sector

– using our know-how to optimize your business





Continuously improving sustainability

The hallmarks of organic agriculture are:

- › a largely closed farming system
- › avoidance of mineral fertilizers, chemical/synthetic pesticides and genetic engineering
- › appropriate stocking levels
- › conservation and improvement of soil fertility
- › site-appropriate farming practices

These features mean that organic agriculture provides optimum conditions for sustainable development. Nonetheless, sustainability in production, processing and trade must be continuously analysed and improved.

FiBL has extensive scientific experience in the field of sustainability assessment. We offer this know-how to trading and processing businesses in the organic sector through tailor-made services.

FiBL's services

In-company process optimization: Do you want to optimize your business processes, reduce your energy consumption or your impact on the climate and thus use even fewer resources to produce your products? We use life cycle assessment (LCA) or carbon footprinting to draw up an individual analysis and highlight the specific areas of your business in which there is potential for improvement.

Optimizing the value chain: The majority of the environmental impacts of food arise in agricultural production. There are many points of leverage to make production more sustainable. We provide the tools and methods you need to assess the environmental impacts of your partner businesses and thus optimize environmental performance along the entire value chain.

Communicating sustainability performance: We devise communication strategies you can use to communicate the sustainability performance of your business in credible and customer-oriented ways.

Internal staff training: We train your staff in matters of sustainability as it relates to agriculture, processing and trade.

Our methods

The tools that we use to provide our services include:

Life cycle assessment: We assess your products in accordance with ISO 14040 and ISO 14044 using state-of-the-art software and databases.

Carbon footprinting: We assess greenhouse gas emissions on a business-specific or product-specific basis in accordance with PAS 2050 or ISO 14067.

Water footprinting: We assess a product's water consumption on a business-specific or product-specific basis using internationally recognized methods.

Biodiversity assessment: Our methods enable the biodiversity impacts of your products to be analysed and optimized.

Comprehensive sustainability assessment: Tried and tested tools such as RISE (Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation, developed by the Swiss College of Agriculture SHL) enable sustainability to be assessed comprehensively, taking ecological, social and economic aspects into account.

Fairness analysis, social analysis: Using qualitative and quantitative methods, we make the social aspects of your business activities transparent. This enables you to continuously improve your social performance.

Some of our projects

- › For a good 20 years, FiBL has been working on behalf of the Swiss retail chain COOP on sustainability aspects of organic agriculture (e.g. minimizing the use of concentrated feed in the management of dairy cattle, and achieving climate-neutral crop and vegetable production). One of our priorities is further development of life cycle assessment (LCA) methodology.
- › On behalf of Hofer Österreich we have calculated the carbon footprints, water footprints and biodiversity impacts of an entire range of organic products („Zurück zum Ursprung“) and developed appropriate analysis methods and communication strategies.

- › On behalf of Walmart, the Hewlett Foundation and Mars we are assessing the sustainability impacts of a number of standards in the food sector (organic, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance etc.).
- › On behalf of the international supplier of organic wine Delinat we have calculated the climate and energy balances of various organic wines (cultivation, storage, packaging, transport).

- › With funds from the German state of Hesse we are developing an analysis tool to identify critical areas of action for preventing or reducing greenhouse gas emissions throughout the production chain of a catering company.
- › For more than 10 years we have been advising the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the many issues surrounding organic agriculture.