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“Technological and Institutional Innovations
for Sustainable Rural Development”

Research on Tools for Sustainable, Far-Sighted Management of Natural Resources

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Abstract

It is not unusual when living conditions are changing, but there is some evidence that for future generations especially in less developed countries the susceptibility to natural and man-made changes in the earth habitat will increase. Important factors are the growth of population and the increasing use of natural resources inevitably associated with it, the globalization of economic systems and global environmental changes which are, at least partly, caused by this development. By signing several international conventions (e.g. CSD, CBD or FCC) Germany agreed to support efforts aiming at the development of measures towards more sustainability.

Research is playing an important role in this context, because strategies towards more sustainability should rely on comprehensive knowledge of the functioning and dynamics of both, natural systems and systems of civilizations. However, the complexity of the processes involved means a great challenge to science, as interactions go beyond the traditional borders of disciplines, sectors and also environmental media. More inter- and transdisciplinarity is needed. This new general research strategy is embedded in a broad international Global Change Research Network.

BMBF is now setting a special focus on projects aiming at the development of tools for sustainable, far-sighted management of natural resources, like for example water and biodiversity. The bi- and multilateral projects are selected via thematically focused open calls. In the independent review process not only scientific quality and feasibility of the proposals, but also the involvement of researchers and stakeholders of the host countries are assessed. Capacity building is becoming a crucial issue for this kind of research.

Examples for currently running BMBF funding activities:

- GLOWA (Impacts of Change in the Global Hydrological Cycle) www.glowa.org
- BIOLOG (Biodiversity and Global Change) www.biolog-online.info, esp. www.biota-africa.org