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Challenges for Agricultural Research”

How to Scale-up Sustainable Agricultural Practices?

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Abstract

Recent research work approached the topic of sustainable agriculture in the developing world and indicated its contribution to reducing poverty (Pretty and Hine 2001). Examples from the field reveal that a larger number of sustainable agricultural practices which can be easily adapted to different environmental settings are at hand. These practices that often combine traditionally and scientifically generated knowledge are regarded to provide excellent opportunities to improve the livelihoods of small and poor farmers. Since such “good practices” are available their wider dissemination is considered a major tool to contribute to the alleviation of poverty. However, scaling-up of such low-cost and input-saving agricultural practices lags behind time. Until now only little systematic analysis of why scaling-up of sustainable agriculture shows only poor results as well as recommendations on what could be done to speed up the diffusion of good practices to more farmers is very general. There are some macroeconomic factors identified to be conducive to scaling-up as well as there is a theory which explains the driving forces that determine the adoption of innovations but an applicable framework for practitioners and decision-makers to assess scaling-up potentials of particular practices as well as to provide guidance for planning scaling-up activities to foster dissemination of those practices is still missing. Addressing these issues, the Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) in cooperation with GTZ-Sustainet and FAO on behalf of BMELV carried out an analysis of a number of case studies on good practices from Africa and Asia to more systematically examine determinants of scaling-up of good practices. As a result, the research team developed a generalisable framework to analytically approach scaling-up activities at the project level. Taking into account the resource requirements of the innovation, the potential of the local community as well as the qualities of the implementing organisations it enables planners to more systematically assess and design scaling-up activities.

Keywords: Good Practices, scaling-up, Sustainable Agriculture