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## Challenges and Constraints for the Adoption of Organic Farming Methods by Smallholder Farmers in Ethiopia

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### Abstract

Organic farming methods are not widespread neither well-known among a majority of smallholder farmers in Ethiopia; however, they bear great potential to improve productivity and efficiency while at the same time accomplishing sustainability goals such as protecting the soil and increasing resilience against drought - among many others. This study examines challenges and constraints for the adoption of organic farming methods among small scale farmers in Ethiopia. With the findings generated during a field visit in Ethiopia these were elaborated and compared to findings from scholarly literature. Results show a variety of constraints, one being the deficit in knowledge about (the existence of) organic farming methods, as well as the perception of these techniques. Furthermore, a deficit in public support for research as well as effective and holistic support for smallholders poses a challenge for greater adoption. The availability of seeds and P-fertiliser as utilised in organic farming can be considered a further challenge. In addition, the strong increase in population leads to decreasing farm sizes which in return leaves less scope for the farmer to let land regenerate through e.g. fallows and growth of legumes. The consequences are non-sustainable land use with stagnating or decreasing yields. The widespread insecurity of land tenure is a further constraint that hinders investment into land. With the commitment of especially state actors many of the elaborated constraints might be properly addressed and eradicated. Strong support of research institutions, capacity building among extension services as well as farmers, farmer field schools and demonstration farms may be path-breaking.

**Keywords:** Capacity building, demonstration farms, Ethiopia, farmer field schools, organic farming, smallholder farming