



Tropentag, September 10-12, 2025, hybrid conference

“Reconcile land system changes
with planetary health”

Scaling, adoption and dissemination of good agricultural practices and innovations for food systems in Africa

MARCUS GIESE¹, MARIA OGUCHE¹, KATRIN WINKLER¹, ALEJANDRO PIETERS¹, FERDINAND
ADU-BAFFOUR¹, SIMON EHJEIJ¹, SINTAYEHU YIGREM MERSHA², TESFAYE ABEBE AMDIE³

¹*University of Hohenheim, Inst. of Agric. Sci. in the Tropics (Hans-Ruthenberg-Institute), Germany*

²*Hawassa University, School of Animal and Range Sciences, Ethiopia*

³*Hawassa University, School of Plant and Horticultural Sci., Ethiopia*

Abstract

With the African continent's rapid population growth and the resulting increased demand for food, feed and energy, agriculture needs to improve production and productivity more than ever. One of the challenges is not only the lack of sufficient agricultural innovations and technologies, but also the need to accelerate the adoption and dissemination of existing technologies and good agricultural practices (GAPs). A better understanding of the dynamics and principles of successful system transformation is key. To explore this, the DAAD Agriculture Alumni Network organised a travelling workshop in Ethiopia: SScaling - Dissemination and Adoption of Good Agricultural Practices in Africa”.

It was observed that scaling up of GAPs is often supported by community engagement, functioning markets, institutions and the integration of innovations by individual farmers or other value chain actors. Increasing agricultural performance may require product diversification and the development of different value-added processes. However, transforming subsistence smallholder farming often requires lead farmers who can gradually commercialise their products and become entrepreneurs, initiating start-ups and transforming them into functioning enterprises. Successful entrepreneurship, which is almost ignored in African agricultural systems, is usually carried out without a strong educational background. Individuals struggle as they try to apply limited skills in production technologies, value addition, processing, information gathering, networking and marketing. This is particularly the case when agricultural products and commodities new to food systems are introduced, as it is challenging to find solutions at multiple points in the value chain, including to cope with investment costs, stimulating consumer demand, managing transport and processing, as well as operating production facilities. For example, it was crucial to first stimulate consumer demand by activating social networks and local communication structures to promote the benefits and opportunities. Following this 'investment', cassava was successfully (re)established as a climate-resilient starch alternative to maize. Farmers are now switching to cassava, and a new flour mill is operating profitably, with long market chains, even in the capital.

In conclusion, scaling up successful agricultural practices requires a comprehensive approach that integrates individual skills, innovation and motivation, but also demands an institutional and regulatory framework that embraces the principles of sustainability.

Keywords: Empowerment, entrepreneurship, good agricultural practices, institutions, knowledge dissemination, sub-Saharan Africa