

Media Release

Frick, January 27, 2021

Organic agriculture is a sustainable alternative for developing economies

Results from long-term comparative farming systems research of FiBL and its partners in Kenya, India, and Bolivia – which were presented today – reveal that profitability and productivity of organic agriculture can equal other production systems. Furthermore, the results of this long-term research show that well-managed organic farming systems can increase soil fertility, reduce pesticide residues and enhance biodiversity.

Today the report “What is the contribution of organic agriculture to sustainable development? A synthesis of twelve years (2007-2019) of the long-term farming systems comparisons in the tropics (SysCom)” has been launched at the External Cooperation InfoPoint conference of the European Commission on International Partnerships. “The study provides important information to understand whether and how organic agriculture can contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end hunger, poverty and other deprivations”, explained Christina Blank from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

In his presentation, [Dr. Gurbir Bhullar](#), country coordinator of SysCom India, explained: “We learned from the research in Kenya, India and Bolivia that organic yields can match those of conventional systems yet varies depending on the crop and management practices. Thus, organic systems could be managed successfully and profitably.”

[Dr. Noah Adamtey](#), country coordinator SysCom Kenya adds: “We also found that organic systems can build up soil fertility over the long-term if managed well – that is especially for Africa key to increase productivity and enable food security.” [Monika Schneider](#), coordinator of the project in Bolivia further elaborates: “It was fascinating to see that the biodiversity in the organic agroforestry system was enhanced because the system offers suitable habitats and food sources for different bird species.”

[Beate Huber](#), program leader of SysCom and President of FiBL Europe, concluded: “Organic farming has proven to have the potential to contribute to the transformation of the food system also in low-income economies. Yet, to exploit this huge opportunity, we have to invest in research and capacity building to close knowledge gaps as well as acknowledge with fair remuneration and a supportive policy and business environment the vital contribution of farmers to sustain public goods.”

Regarding yield comparisons, Bernard Lehmann, Vice-Chairperson of the HLPE Steering Committee pointed out: “Yield comparisons between organic and

conventional have a long tradition. Looking into the future, the question arises what picture the yield comparisons will give in the future, in view of climate adaptation and lowering paths for plant protection products.”

About SysCom

FiBL launched the program "Long-term farming systems comparisons in the tropics" (SysCom) together with partner institutions in 2007 to explore how organic agriculture can also produce profitably in tropical areas and what contribution it can make to sustainable development. While cotton, soybean and wheat cultivation are being studied in India, the focus in Kenya is on vegetable and maize cultivation. In Bolivia, cocoa production in monoculture and agroforestry systems are compared. Agronomic, economic and ecological parameters will be observed at all locations over several years. At the same time, research is conducted together with the farmers on locally adapted technologies.

Download the Synthesis Report here:

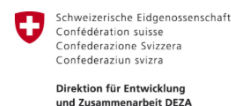
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Sponsors and Patrons

- The Liechtenstein Development Service (LED)
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- Coop Fonds for sustainability
- Biovision



This project is supported by the
Coop Sustainability Fund.



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Media Release online

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About FiBL

The Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) is one of the world's leading research institutions in the field of organic agriculture. FiBL's strengths are interdisciplinary research, joint innovations with farmers and the food industry, as well as rapid knowledge transfer. The FiBL Group currently includes FiBL Switzerland (founded in 1973), FiBL Germany (2001), FiBL Austria (2004), OEMKI (Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, 2011), FiBL France (2017) and FiBL Europe (2017), which is jointly supported by the five national institutes. Around 280 employees work at the various locations.

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