



Rural development

Agricultural research, innovations, education and extension

The challenge

Knowledge, information and management services are essential for sustainable rural development, covering not only training and advice on technical and business issues but also information on agricultural markets and research. All agricultural stakeholders have an important role to play in implementing these services. Farmers are thus crucial carriers of knowledge and expertise, both for identifying needs and for the production and marketing of agricultural goods.

In the face of new challenges such as climate change and its impacts, the expanding global population, rising food prices and the increasing role of biofuels, sustainable production systems are now being developed based on demand-driven agricultural research. Public and private providers of education and advisory services play a significant role in communicating knowledge and information. Their strengths must be harnessed in the interests of effective poverty reduction and food security.

Our approach

New pathways for providing rural services are opening up as governments devolve responsibility and private and civil society entities enter into partnerships with state institutions. GIZ is supporting and accompanying this process. We see the various private and state actors in the agricultural sector – farmers, research and educational institutions, public and private advisory services, non-governmental organisations and private sector companies – as elements in a system of innovation and knowledge, and we focus on the need to strengthen and optimise networking and coordination among these parts. In this way, we ensure that agricultural research is geared to development, promote the dissemination of proven good practices by a variety of service providers and networks, and support the practical implementation of theoretical approaches.

Our services

In order to promote agricultural research, we advise institutions on the formulation and implementation of a (research) policy aimed at increasing the production of foodstuffs, creating jobs and improving the availability of higher quality nutrition.

We advise research institutions on how to focus their work towards development issues, as well as how to build networks with one another and with development institutions. We support our partners in gaining competence in designing such processes and in translating them into practice with guidelines, instruments and support measures. We arrange the placement of young professionals and experts in agricultural research, and we develop and manage a competitive research fund.

In Kenya, we provide a platform for knowledge transfer. We analyse the need for innovation and technologies in Africa, and finance the practical implementation of activities based on research findings. We promote regular exchange through the linking of virtual knowledge platforms with real-life expert meetings.

We provide access to networks and specialist knowledge on agricultural education and advising, and provide organisational support for the convening of conferences, symposia and expert meetings. We foster the development of advisory strategies, the selection and application of advisory methods, and the development of curricula.

We provide advice to our partners on rural service provision at multiple levels:

Organisational advice: In coordination with the participating parties, we identify the services needed for commercial and professional development, as well as the roles and responsibilities within the respective organisations.



Economic advice: Using potential, product and customer analyses, experts and managers are trained to focus on the market and customers. In addition, business and financial plans are developed, and quality assurance systems are introduced.

Policy advice: We support the decentralisation and liberalisation of service systems, including the aspect of public-private dialogue.

The benefits

Our many years of experience implementing agricultural and economic development projects ensure that GIZ's advisory services are geared to practical application. We are also able to create linkages between thematically related projects within countries and across regions.

We provide donors engaged in international cooperation with advisory services that are goal-oriented and informed by the current research landscape. Service providers from the public and private sectors and civil society gain expertise in methodologies and management. They work in concert, enabling them to meet the needs and demands of the rural population economically and effectively. Agricultural enterprises draw on our knowledge, information and management services to support innovation. They improve their incomes, while at the same time generating long-term employment within rural areas.

An example from the field

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Advisory Service on Agricultural Research for Development (BEAF) previously promoted research on fungal contamination of cereals, which was leading to impaired growth in children, liver cancer and fatalities in Africa. Building on this research, BMZ is currently promoting a project on the monitoring of aflatoxins within the context of Innovation Transfer into Agriculture – Adaptation to Climate Change (ITAACC). The application of Aflasafe, a biological crop protection product, benefits non-poisonous fungi strains and represses toxic strains, which considerably reduces the contamination of soils and plants. Partners like USAID, ZARI and others have come together under the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), and support the local production and sale of Aflasafe through value chains in Africa.

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