



Photo: K. Elsässer

RURAL ECONOMY

The Rural Economy team provides advisory services to HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation programmes and external clients. Our thematic fields focus on sustainable agriculture, food security, value chain facilitation, private sector development and rural finance. We offer particular competence in designing sustainable production systems (including water management) and innovative rural advisory services.

In value chain facilitation we cover both local market development and certified agricultural commodity chains. We support our clients in designing internal control and quality management systems as per the requirements of the market. Our Organic & Fairtrade Competence Centre has long-standing experience in linking producers with markets of certified produce and in facilitating knowledge exchange.

Our competence in private sector development is closely linked to promoting small businesses which create employment, and to making markets work for the poor. We are used to closely collaborate with the private sector and to set up public private development partnerships. We have a long standing experience in rural finance, in particular the strengthening of self help credit and saving schemes, the institutional development of rural microfinance institutions and value chain finance.

We believe that sustainable agriculture and a thriving rural economy are crucial for improving rural livelihoods.

THE RURAL ECONOMY TEAM

The team consists of experienced advisors with a wide range of complementary knowledge, skills and regional experiences in rural economy. Services are offered in English, French and Spanish. Some advisors are also engaged in other thematic and geographic departments of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

WHAT WE OFFER

Design & Planning

Project and programme planning; strategic planning; feasibility studies; market and sector assessments

Capacity Development and Backstopping

Project and programme backstopping; development of training manuals and material; development of innovative tools; facilitation of thematic workshops; coaching; trainings; capitalisation of experiences; knowledge management tools and platforms

Technical support

Expert advice in technical fields, such as water management, internal control systems, quality management and business planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring systems; mid-term reviews; end-evaluations; impact assessments



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THEMATIC COMPETENCES

- Sustainable agriculture systems
- Water for Food and food security
- Agricultural Extension
- Organic farming and fair trade
- Internal control systems and certification
- Value chain facilitation
- Income and employment generation
- Market access and marketing capacities
- Private sector development
- Quality management and business planning
- Corporate social responsibility
- Business development services
- Rural finance and value chain finance
- Saving and credit and micro insurance

EXAMPLES OF SERVICES RENDERED

SDC: Thematic backstopping on water for food

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation: Backstopping of the Sustainable Soil Management Programme in Nepal

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation: Planning and thematic support of a livelihood programme in Afghanistan

SECO: Advice to organic and fairtrade cotton projects in West-Africa and Central Asia

ICCO/SECO: Development and facilitation of the Global Organic Cotton Community Platform

Coop Switzerland: Support to organic cocoa value chain in Honduras

Rabobank Foundation: Feasibility study on sustainable cocoa value chains in Indonesia

SECO: Implementation of ECOMERCADOS project in Central America

SDC: Thematic backstopping of the Employment & Income network

EFSE: Development Impact Study 2009 on Agricultural Finance

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND TOOLS

- Strategic papers:** Empower Farmers – Build Capacity of Service Providers. Helvetas' experience with agricultural extension on three continents.
Water Use Master Plan (WUMP). A concept to equitably share water resources within and amongst rural communities
- Guides:** The Organic Business Guide. Developing sustainable value chains with smallholders
Organic and fairtrade cotton production guide (French)
- Project impact:** Impact assessments of organic cotton projects in Burkina Faso and Kyrgyzstan.
Impact assessment of push-pull technology developed and promoted by ICIPE and partners in eastern Africa

The publications are available at www.helvetas.org or from contact mail.