

# MultiTrust

## A cross-disciplinary approach to multicriteria assessment and communication of the effects of organic food systems

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## Overview

- Presentation of the MultiTrust project
- What can the project be used for?
- What we have planned to do
- Three key challenges of multicriteria assessment
- Invitation for cooperation

## Presentation of the MultiTrust project: Multicriteria assessment and communication of the effects of organic food systems

- An Organic RDD project, 2011-2013, ~ 2 million \$
  - more information on Organic RDD at ICROFS booth
- Background and goal
- Partners and international partners
- A transdisciplinary challenge!



## Project background

The possibilities for growth of organic agriculture depends on it being a credible and attractive alternative, that continues to develop in a careful and considerate way.

However, it can be very difficult to determine whether a specific development is positive or negative, overall.

Comparisons between organic and conventional agriculture are often made on single or few criteria, that are chosen from a mainstream point of view.

There is no tailored framework for making overall assessments of the effects of agriculture and food systems from the organic point of view.



## Project goal

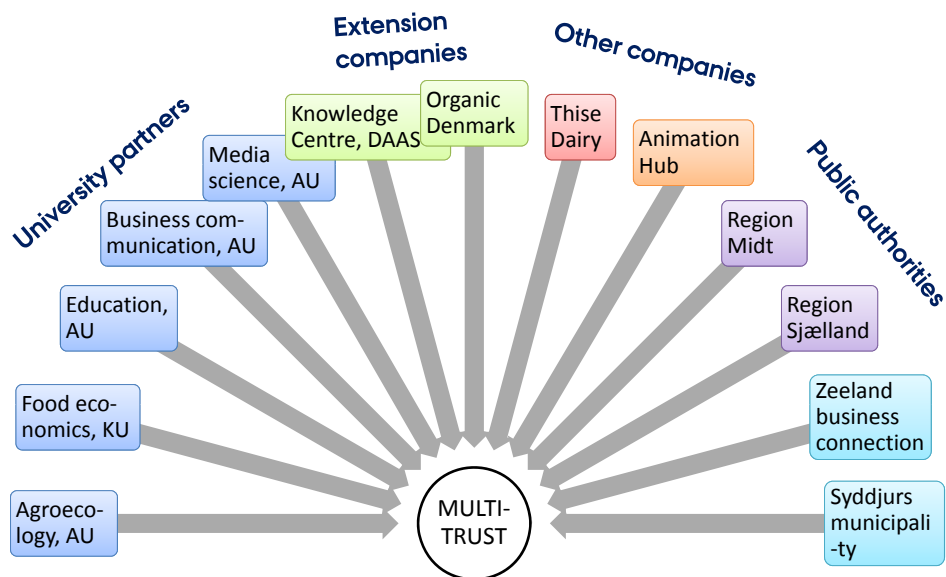
The goal is to develop tools for overall, multicriteria assessments that can support an integrated development of organic production in relation to the organic principles and societal goals.

We expect such tools can:

- help organic actors document and communicate the effects of organic agriculture on society and nature,
- contribute to an open and credible communication,
- and thereby underpin the long term growth of organic agriculture



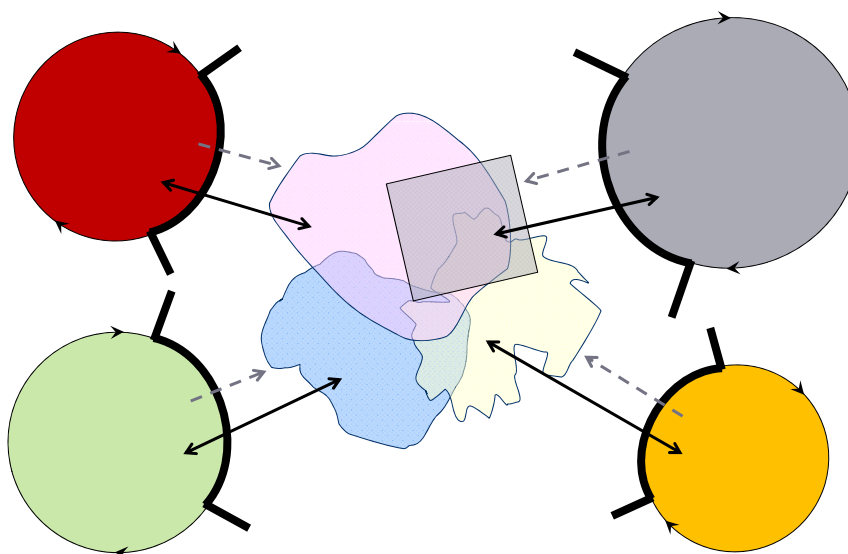
## Project partners



## International partners

| Institution   | Contact person             |
|---|----------------------------|
| Forschungsinstitut für Biologischen Landbau (FiBL), Switzerland   | Christian Schader          |
| Bioland Beratung, Germany   | Jan Plagge                 |
| IFOAM Head Office   | Markus Arbenz              |
| Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute (NILF)  | Karen Refsgaard            |
| Department of Sustainable Agricultural Systems, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU), Austria | Bernhard Freyer            |
| Centre for the Study of Agriculture, Food and Environment (CSAFE), University of Otago, New Zealand                       | Henrik Moller              |
| Centre for Agriculture and Environment, CLM research and advice Plc, The Netherlands                                      | Emiel Elferink             |
| International Centre for Integrated assessment and Sustainable development (ICIS), Maastricht University, The Netherlands | Annemarie van Zeijl-Rozema |
| College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, Univ. of Glasgow  | Jacqui Reilly              |

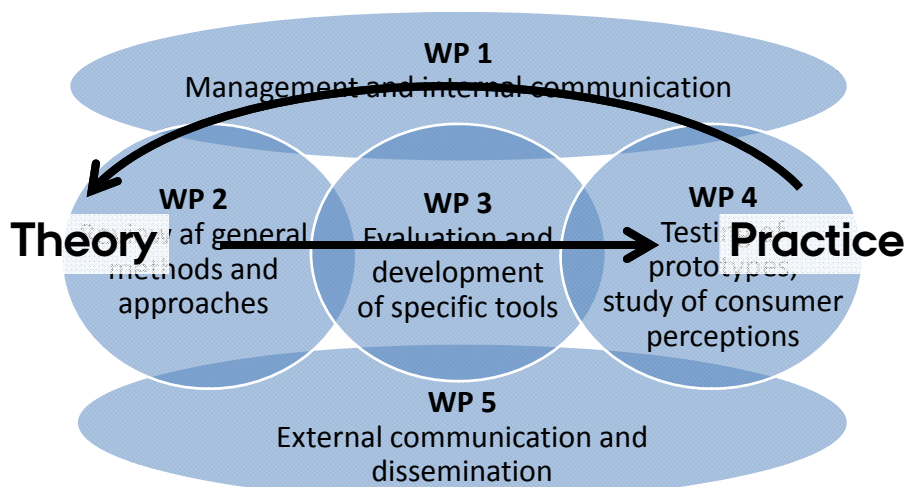
## A transdisciplinary challenge ! → a multiperspectivist approach



## Who can use the project results, and how?

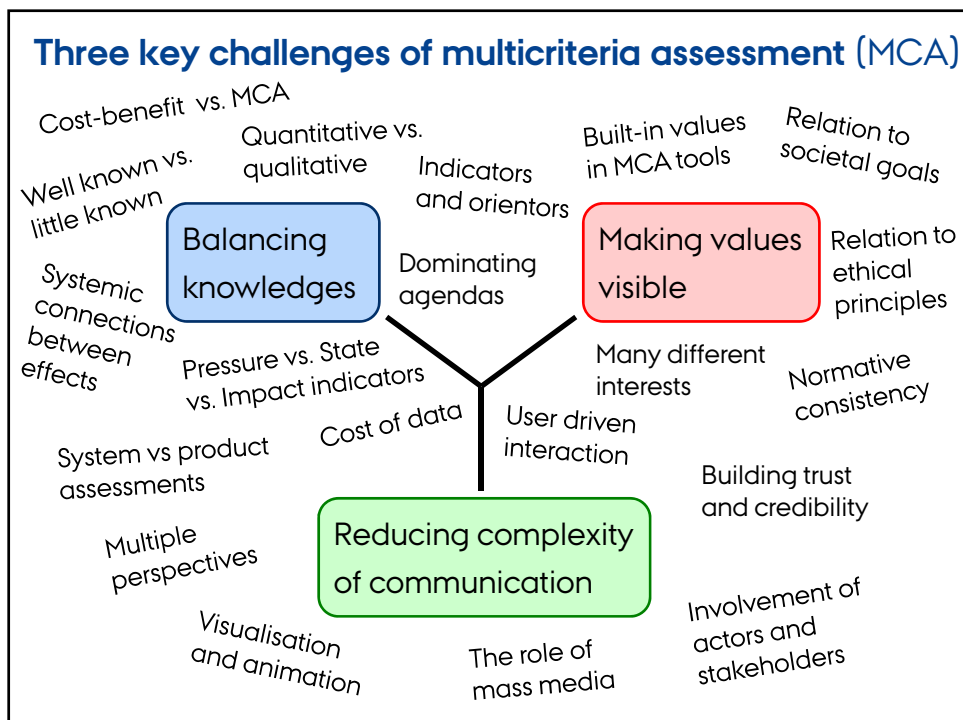
1. Organic actors developing their systems in relation to:
  - principles, societal goals, and own goals
  - new technologies and practices
  - supply and market chains
2. Public authorities planning for:
  - environmental protection and renewal of resources
  - rural development, jobs, value creation
  - public health and diet
3. Politicians and other decision makers in:
  - deciding the role of organic agriculture in policy and business
  - prioritising research, education and other support functions
4. Consumers in their buying choices?
  - (this is disputed – one brand vs. more informed choices)

## Overview of activities in MultiTrust



## What we have planned to do

- Work in a cross-disciplinary and participatory way, and handling the many different perspectives explicitly
- Review the theoretical basis for multicriteria assessment and communication
- Collect international experiences with concrete tools for multicriteria assessment on agriculture and food
- Establish a framework for using these on organic agriculture
- Develop and test methods for visualisation and animation to help communicate complex assessments
- Test prototypes in cooperation with organic actors and stakeholders
- Investigate consumer perceptions of assessment tools and criteria



## Invitation for cooperation

- With the organic principles, a “multicriteria” course has been set
  - but we need tools to follow such a course
- There are many initiatives and ideas that are relevant to this work
  - but no consensus on how to approach the task of ‘overall assessments’
- Therefore we seek further international cooperation:
  - to discuss with others who have worked on similar issues
  - to learn from other perspectives and contexts
  - to establish an international network on multicriteria assessment of organic agriculture
- We will organize a workshop on the IFSA 2012 conference
  - please join us if you are interested in these issues!

