

Long-term farming systems comparisons in the tropics

Participatory technology development

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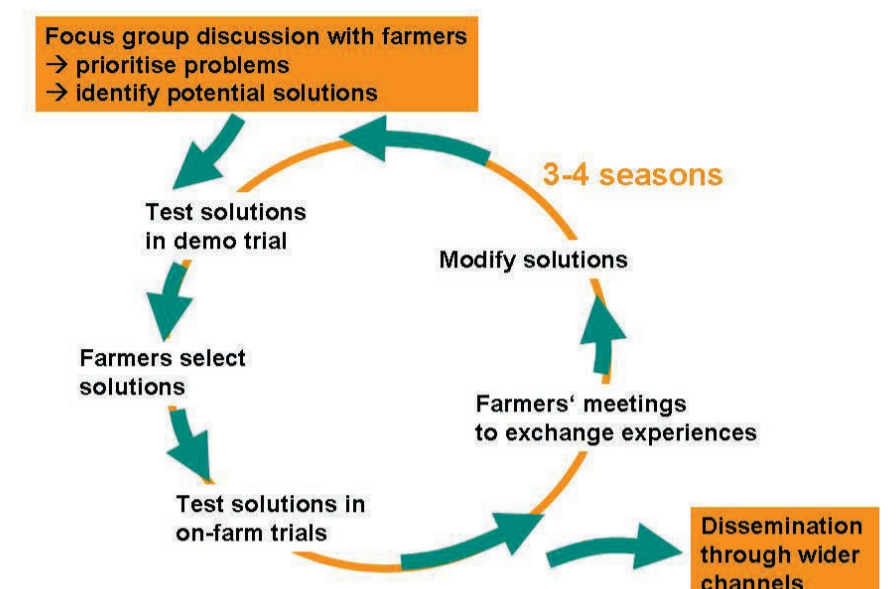
Overview

Overall objective: Enhanced know-how on advantages and limitations of different agricultural production systems in three tropical countries contributes to sustainable agriculture.

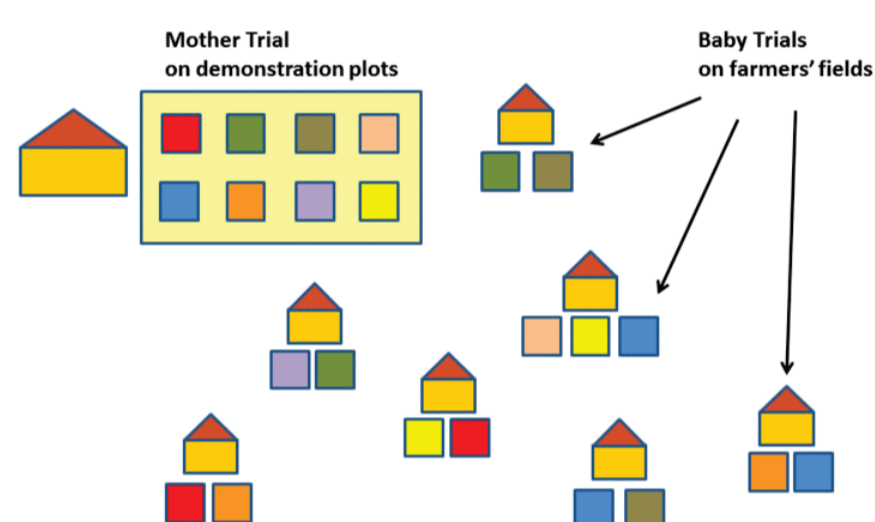
Project component “Participatory technology development (PTD)”:

Research new locally-adapted technology innovations for major organic production systems and provide them for dissemination

Innovation cycle - our approach in PTD :



Mother - Baby Trials Concept



Approaches and Results

1. Participatory identification of current practices, local knowledge and associated problems (focus group discussions, surveys)
2. On-station (mother) trial, smaller on-farm (baby) trials
3. After identification of most promising technologies:
 - Increase number of on-farm trials
 - Dissemination of information → leaflets, newsletters

Methodological Questions

How to:

- overcome obstacles related to cultural diversity (e.g. avoid smallholders thinking of us as saviors)?
- integrate knowledge from different disciplines?
- publish results for impact on different levels (farmers, policy, NGOs)?
- find realistic options for implementation by farmers?



Discussion

How do we work in this field:

- How to identify problems, what are appropriate questions and methods?
- Where and in which form to publish in order to have impact?
- How do we deal with cultural barriers?

References

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Forster, D., Schneider, M., Cobo, J.G., Zundel, C. (2011). What is the contribution of organic agriculture to sustainable development? Long-term farming systems comparisons in the tropics. Project document, FiBL, Frick, Switzerland.