

PROJECTS: REGIONAL

„iTOF“ – INFORMATION AND ORGANIC INPUT FOR FARMERS



Project

Farming remains the main source of income for the majority of the population in Africa. Many farmers have to combat problems such as **crop loss** due to plant pests and low soil fertility. The need for **information** on adapted and **sustainable agriculture** is great, although advisory services are largely unavailable.

The advisers of the **iTOF Centres** are orientated to the needs of farmers and deliver current and substantiated information and environmentally friendly answers to specific questions.

Farmers from remote rural regions are often less mobile and so cannot use traditional advice services. To improve access to training services, iTOF advisers travel to the villages and carry out the farmer group trainings on site. This service is particularly valued, as shown by the high demand.

Through cooperation between the Biovision projects “Infonet”, the farmers’ newspaper “TOF” and “TOF Radio”, synergies can be utilised and a wide target group can be reached.

Project number:
BV IS-02.B

Project running since:
August 2009

Project trial phase duration:
Phase I until December 2011

Budget for 2011:
50'000 USD

Project coordinator:
Peter Baumgartner, TOF/Nairobi

Program responsibility:
Dr. David Amudavi, Biovision

Relevance

Organic farming in Africa has a different significance than in Europe: Since conventional farming with pesticides and fertilisers is prohibitively expensive for most farmers, ‘organic’ presents an important alternative, enabling good yields with modest means. For poorer farmers it is vital to receive guidance and advice on increasing yields without large investments. The thirst for knowledge is enormous, as initial and further agricultural training only reaches a few farming communities in Africa. The iTOF Centres are breaching this gap by bringing relevant information directly to the people who urgently need it.



A farmer is receiving information about sustainable agriculture in an iTOF Centre. H

Beneficiaries

The iTOF advisers benefit from further training and access to relevant and trusted information on organic farming. Farmers’ groups and other self-help organisations (womens’ groups, schools) receive agricultural advice and training. Through the three existing iTOF centres, farmers groups and other self-help organisations receive agricultural advice and training.



The iTOF advisers are giving trainings in the villages for farmer groups interested in sustainable agriculture.

Development Goal

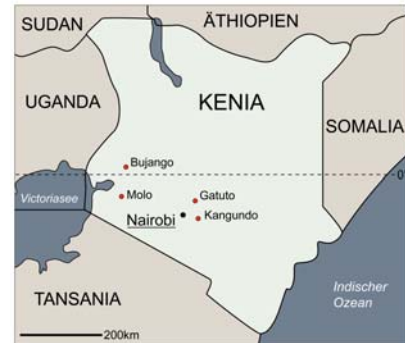
Sustainable improvement of the food and living situation of small farmers in East Africa by providing practice-oriented information on ecological agriculture, pest control and disease prevention.

Achieved so far

12 iTOF advisors have been successfully trained, who will visit farmers' groups on request and inform them on sustainable farming. 8 iTOF advisors are presently independently active in the Kenyan city of Molo. 3 iTOF centres were also established in Gatuto, Bujango and Kangundo, which make an important contribution to strengthening ecological farming and securing sources of income for farming families.

Goals

1. **Training of 4500 small-scale farmers** through training in organic agriculture in the three existing iTOF centres
2. **Establishment and development of an efficient telephone system in the iTOF centres**, so that farming families can reach advisors with their questions by telephone
3. **Strengthening of sustainable farming** as a practical alternative through availability of organic means in local shops (Agrovet shops).
4. Construction of a functioning **network of farmers' groups** that can call on agricultural advice and can exchange information.



The various iTOF Centres are located in West Kenya.

Partner organisations

International insect research institute *icipe* (implementing partner, www.icipe.org)

Local farmers' groups, Baraka Agricultural College.

TOF farmers' newspaper, TOF Radio, www.infonet-biovision.org

Sustainability

Sustainability calls for a holistic vision: healthy people, animals and plants in a healthy environment. (4x Health, 4-H Strategy). Every project supported by Biovision effects considerable improvements in at least one of the four health areas. The key to effectively replicating the success of the project is the availability of specific information on the methods applied and the results achieved. With this approach and its 'helix of effects', living conditions are improved and the poverty of the people is gradually overcome while the environment is protected.



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