

Eine Zukunft für alle, natürlich  
Un avenir pour tous, naturellement  
A future for all, naturally



## Farmer Communication Programme

### Profile

The Farmer Communication Programme (FCP) is based on 15 years of experience in the transmission of practical information on ecological farming. It supplements and enhances Biovision's basic projects in East Africa. With its multimedia transmission of information via magazines, radio, Internet, mobile phones and personal consultation, the FCP ensures a continual exchange of knowledge and experience between scientific research and small-scale farmers, tailored to the needs of the latter.

## Facts and Figures

Programme number:	BV IS - FCP
Programme start date:	2005
Programme phase:	2012 to 2015
Budget for 2013:	CHF 1'235'740
Programme coordinator:	Dr. David M. Amudavi



## Content of the FCP

- Farmers' magazine
- Farmers' radio
- Information centres
- Farmers' consultants
- Internet platform

## Beneficiaries

Up to 4 million small-scale farmers in Kenya and neighbouring countries in East Africa receive TOF radio.

248,000 farmers read the TOF magazine each month, and 75,000 read the Mkulima Mbunifu magazine.

30,000 users from 53 African countries and 194 states worldwide visit the [infonet-biovision.org](http://infonet-biovision.org) website every month.

85,000 farmers benefit from local information centres and the training and advice on offer there.

## Background

In Africa, agriculture remains the main source of income for 80% of the rural population. However, agricultural production, and thus also food security, is compromised by a variety of factors. Pests alone are responsible for up to 80% of harvest losses. In developing countries, the demand for food is set to increase strongly until 2025 because of population growth. Using organic farming methods, small-scale farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa can increase their yields by simple, cost-effective means.

To achieve this, farmers need access to locally relevant, basic agricultural information as well as training. In many African regions, this specific knowledge is very difficult to access or is not available at all.

Transmitting practical advice enables African farmers to increase their yields without having recourse to expensive artificial fertilizers or chemical pesticides. Moreover, ecological methods sustainably improve soil fertility and help to decrease the negative effects of climate change. The Biovision Farmer Communication Programme is unique in East Africa.

## The Organic Farmer (TOF) and Mkulima Mbunifu

“The Organic Farmer” (TOF) is a magazine for small-scale Kenyan farmers who have previously had only very limited access to information on ecological farming. 21,000 copies of TOF are sent to farmers’ groups in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda every month. It is the only magazine in East Africa of its kind. Mkulima Mbunifu (English: The smart farmer) is the Swahili version of TOF (Swahili is the official language of Tanzania and one of the official languages of Kenya). Every two months, 10,000 copies are sent to farmers’ groups in Tanzania and Kenya.

## TOF radio

TOF radio is a radio programme for small-scale farmers in East Africa. Every week, two seven-minute editions of the programme are broadcast on organic farming issues. The programme is produced in Swahili and broadcast on KBC (Kenya Broadcasting Corporation), Kenya’s biggest radio station, and on two local radio stations.

## Outreach – the information centres and their expert consultants

In order to give farmers in rural areas of Kenya access to expert advice and training in ecological farming, Biovision has set up ten information centres across the country. The 16 experts employed also visit farmers in their remote home villages to give advice in the field and support the networking of farmers’ groups. This enables important information on the improvement of yields and the health of people, animals, plants and the environment to be progressively disseminated across the whole country. In addition to practical advice, the consultants also show programme participants examples of successful small-scale farmers and the ways in which they boost their income.

## Infonet-biovision

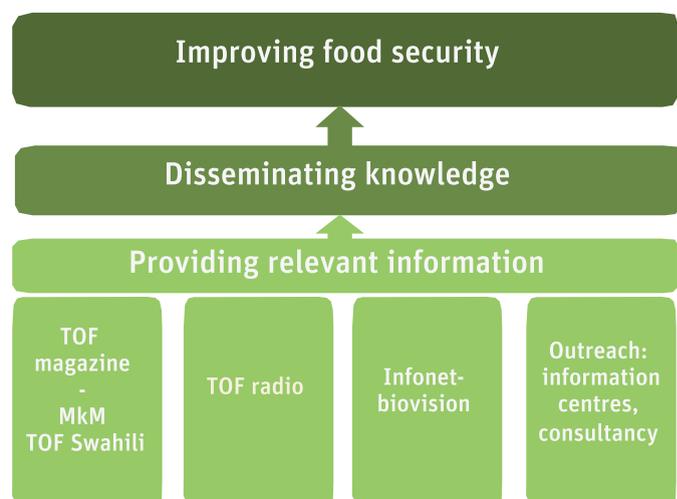
Infonet-biovision is a website for small-scale African farmers ([www.infonet-biovision.org](http://www.infonet-biovision.org)). It provides relevant, locally adapted and tried-and-tested information on topics such as ecological farming, health, animal husbandry, environmental issues and income generation.



Thanks to the TOF magazine (circulation: 21,000 copies) and Mkulima Mbunifu (10,000 copies) Biovision is able to reach more than 323,000 farmers. Since the magazine is mainly sent to farmers’ groups of about 8-12 members, the readership is considerably larger than the number of copies.



TOF radio presenter John Cheburet interviews a farmer for the weekly TOF radio show.



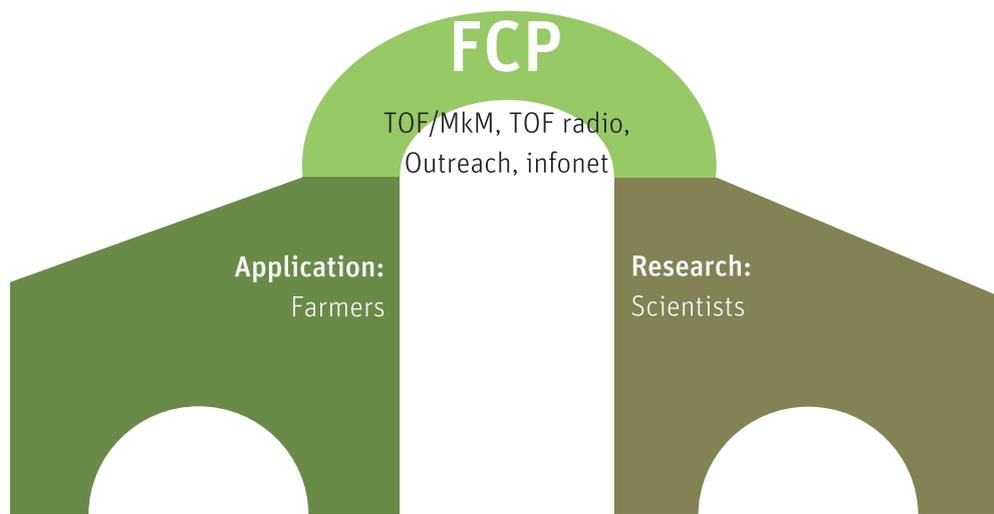
With its four project pillars, FCP makes knowledge available. It is disseminated, also by integrating partnerships (see outreach), and used to guarantee the food security of small-scale farmers in East Africa and protect natural resources.

## Goal

The development goal is to sustainably improve food security and the livelihood of small-scale farmers in East Africa. The core competence of the FCP is the editing and dissemination of knowledge on organic farming. The health of the beneficiaries, environmental protection and thus the protection of natural resources and, whenever possible, also income generation are integrated into all FCP projects.

## Partner organisation

icipe, International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology ([www.icipe.org](http://www.icipe.org))



The FCP builds a bridge between research and its application, thereby helping to advance the development of ecological farming.

## Biovision - Foundation for ecological development

Biovision was founded in 1998 by the Swiss World Food Prize laureate Hans Rudolf Herren. It aims to sustainably improve the livelihood of people in Africa and preserve nature as the basis of all life. The Swiss foundation with its headquarters in Zurich and a regional office in Kenya employs around 25 staff. Another 200 people work on Biovision projects. They are recruited locally, for the local project partners. Thanks to around 25 projects, Biovision is helping people in five countries, encouraging them to think and act in an environmental manner.



A future for all, naturally

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