



Biovision

Founded: 1998 | Vision: a world with enough healthy food for all, produced by healthy people in a healthy environment |
 Priority countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Senegal, Switzerland | Number of projects: 29 | Project partners in Africa: 21 |
 Project investment in 2018: 8.1 million Swiss francs | Staff in Switzerland: 39 | Staff in Africa: about 300 | Private donors: 24,000

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A future for all, naturally



«More yield, healthier soils and feed for livestock – Push-Pull works!»

Good for farmers, good for the environment: This is how Push-Pull works
5 questions, 5 answers by Dr Stefan Diener, Biovision.

The Push-Pull cultivation method for maize and millet is a great example of bringing Biovision's approach to the field: it provides higher crop yields, conserves the soil and offers additional income opportunities. The graphic illustrates how Push-Pull works and our expert at Biovision, Dr Stefan Diener, explains where the method came from and whom it can help.

1. Who developed Push-Pull?

Our partner institute icipe in Nairobi, under the direction of Professor Zeyaur Khan, developed this method around the year 2000. When we heard about it at Biovision, it was clear to us that this method aligns perfectly with our vision: healthy food produced by healthy people in a healthy environment.

2. The lack of nutrients, not just a lack of food, is a major problem in sub-Saharan Africa. Can Push-Pull help?

Push-Pull offers maize farmers the opportunity to significantly increase their harvest yield, while also freeing up cropland. Consultants encourage the farmers to cultivate their maize together with various other beneficial crops. This promotes food diversity while increasing food security by minimizing the risk of a farmer losing everything to a drought or storm.

3. Is Push-Pull a method that every farmer in sub-Saharan Africa can and should practice?

Not necessarily. Every smallholder household is its own universe, with its own strengths and weaknesses. Some have an affinity for chickens, others

for cattle, others for cabbage. One family has good land, but not enough helping hands, another lacks the money for seeds, another needs fodder for livestock. But if a farming family believes that it can rely on maize or millet, Push-Pull can be beneficial in many ways.

4. Push-Pull is already used in East African countries, but in many places the method is still unknown. What is the potential of the method?

Push-Pull still has a lot of potential, as the method covers different needs. It is useful in places where pest infestation is a problem, where witchweed overgrows entire areas, and where soil is depleted. Where pastures are scarce, it is attractive for producing fodder.

5. What is Biovision doing to exploit this potential?

We are working to bring knowledge about the method to small farmers. Together with our local partner organisation, we work with small farmers to adapt the method to local conditions. Since there is a bottleneck in seed production for the auxiliary plants Desmodium and Napier grass, we are working with local producers to ensure that everyone who can use the method gets the seeds they need.



Dr Stefan Diener, Biovision – Programme Officer