



Announcement of MSc thesis fieldwork funding on the topic of

“Inter-group learning for critical reflection on innovation processes with smallholder farmer groups in Tanzania”

in the frame of the project

[Trans-SEC - Innovating Strategies to Safeguard Food Security using Technology and Knowledge Transfer: a people-centered approach](#)

Project aims and approach:

Within Trans-SEC (<http://www.trans-sec.org>), DITSL specializes in transdisciplinary approaches for participatory action research within low external input farming systems in Tanzania. The emphasis here is on farmer group capacity development, enhancement of participatory innovation processes, and support for the sustainability and social inclusiveness of innovation processes through collaborative learning (<http://www.ditsl.org> >

Research>Trans-SEC).

Topic:

In the four rural case study sites (CSS) of Trans-SEC, (situated in Dodoma and Morogoro regions), there are three collaborative learning (CL) groups that have implemented different innovation projects with the support of DITSL, as well as around 30 additional project innovation groups. The selected Masters student will collaborate with the 3 CL groups and up to 6 additional farmer groups, to facilitate critical reflection and exchange on farmer experiences of innovation processes.

The thesis will identify *farmer learning outcomes* resulting from: (a) their diverse experiences of innovation processes, and in particular, (b) their experience of coming together to reflect, share insights and build new knowledge in the arena of an inter-group learning exchange.



Farmers in Changarawe, Morogoro, working on their group farm project (Source: Thapa 2015)



CL group farmers in Idifu, Dodoma, making soap for extra off-season income (Source: Thapa, 2015)

Inter-group meetings will foster the sharing of experience and aim for critical reflection about (both successful and unsuccessful) *processes* of innovation. Local exchanges will result in the production of a collaborative video to

both document and scale out the main

learning points to other farmers, groups and organizations. Based on the results of initial facilitated video screenings, the thesis will assess the tandem of group exchange and video documentation as a tool for enhancing *knowledge sharing* and *critical reflection on farmers' experience of innovation processes*.

Key Action Research tasks and field work will include:

- Group mapping for identification of innovation groups in 3 CSS
- Facilitation of an inter-group learning exchange including ca.3 groups from each CSS
- Supporting farmers to share diverse experiences and enhance critical learning about innovation processes
- Production of a video to document key lessons from innovation process experiences
- Conduct video screenings and exchange with other groups at the local and regional level, including secondary stakeholders.

This thesis topic involves exciting opportunities for the development of practical field skills.

Time frame:

Three months of fieldwork should preferably be scheduled from January to March 2017.

Guided preparation of the topic should start two-three months before field work.



Student facilitates video screening with CL group in Idifu, Dodoma (Source: Thapa 2015)

Prerequisites:

Strong interest in active collaboration with smallholder farmers; familiarity with social science methodologies; familiarity with tropical smallholder farming systems; fluency in English; permission from (Dev.Studies/Agriculture/related) MSc program for first supervisor to come from DITSL. Video production experience is an advantage.

Funding:

Fieldwork and travel costs are covered by the project, excluding the cost of village-

based accommodation and food.

Supervision:

To be jointly supervised by DITSL (apl. Prof. Dr. Brigitte Kaufmann, Dr. Pamela Ngwenya).

Please send your application documents (incl. CV, transcript of records, motivation letter) as a single PDF to p.ngwenya@ditssl.org, or ask for further information.

Application by: 16.09.16

To start thesis preparation by: 17.10.16

Participation in Socio-ecology Module A08 recommended (26.09.16- 14.10.16)

Funded through the [Research for the Global Food Supply \(GlobE\) initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\)](#)