MSc topic announcement

September 07, 2017

Exploring perspectives and challenges across 14 research institutions: lessons from a large-scale participatory North – South action research (PAR) project

Trans-SEC - Innovating Strategies to Safeguard Food Security using Technology and Knowledge Transfer involves seven German research institutes, two CGIAR research centres from Kenya and USA, and five Tanzanian institutes. More than 100 scientists and non-governmental professionals, and 600+ smallholders in Tanzania, are collaborating to explore and enhance strategies to safeguard food security.

**Trans-SEC's** aim is to improve the food situation for the most-vulnerable rural population in Tanzania using successful food securing upgrading strategies (UPS) along local and regional food value chains. Four rural case study sites (CSS) were set up in semi-arid Dodoma and sub-humid Morogoro. In a participatory approach 10 UPS were determined. 1) rainwater harvesting using tie ridges & fertilizer micro-dosing, 2) usage of maize-cobs for energy and bio-char, 3) processing machines: Maize sheller, millet thresher, 4) wood supply (tree nursery, planting in fields), 5) improved cooking stoves, 6) sunflower oil processing, 7) profitable and market oriented storage, 8) poultry-crop integration system for food and income, 9) mobile phone based market information access system (m-IMAS), 10) nutritional education & kitchen gardening. These UPS are presently being tested in 24 farmer groups and adjusted to site-specific settings, and then tailored for outscaling to other stakeholders.

The Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (**ZALF**) is looking for Master students who are interested to complete their Masters’ thesis within the frame of the Trans-SEC project and who have already demonstrated excellent performance in their field of study in Africa or Germany.
We will give students the great opportunity to get insight into a multi-stakeholder and multi-institutional international research project. The student will research at the interface between interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. He/she will be encouraged to present the results of their Master’s thesis at an international conference and publish one peer-reviewed article.

Topic:

The selected MSc student will analyse how knowledge and money flow, power relations, and other factors can promote or hinder research collaboration. The MSc student will use the social mapping tool “Net-Map” to interview participating researchers and learn about and analyse the different types of relationships between 14 institutions in both Germany and Tanzania. He/she will collect and analyse narratives from the collaboration. The thesis deals with:

- Collecting and analysing Net-Map data and narratives
- determining project partner roles and activities during the PAR
- identifying key factors that influence the performance of collaboration

Selection criteria:

- Very good Bachelor degree in sociology, institutions, agriculture/horticulture, or related field
- Profound knowledge of qualitative and basic knowledge of quantitative research methods (statistics)
- Experience with working/being in rural areas of tropical countries
- Fluency in oral English and very good writing skills
- excellent MS Office skills, of advantage are skills in MAXQDA
- Applicants should demonstrate strong interest in collaboration with other cultures
- Of advantage are relevant publications, methods/experience for/in empirical social research, excellent organisation and communication skills.

Applicants are required to submit the following documents via e-mail:

- Motivation letter (0,5 page)
- Curriculum Vitae (including academic referees)
- Short summary of bachelor thesis (max. 1 pages)

The deadline for applying is October 30th 2017. Please send your application as one PDF file to fgraef@zalf.de