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Starting points on the local and regional level for realizing the transition towards Sustainable Agriculture



Background

Transition to Sustainable Agriculture

- Sustainable Development as general guiding principle since 1992
- Sector agriculture: more unsustainable than sustainable development

Implementation at local and regional level

- National and international level:
 - Very important
 - BUT fundamental changes are difficult to achieve and slow
- Local and regional level:
 - Closer to practical application
 - More homogenous conditions → easier to reach consensus
 - Change can be achieved much faster
 - Local and regional best-practice examples may motivate change on higher levels



Research Questions

1. What is Sustainable Agriculture?
2. Which factors on the local and regional level make the realization of a Sustainable Agriculture favor or impede it in general?
3. How can such enabling factors be identified as starting points for the transition towards Sustainable Agriculture in a specific region?



Approach

1. What is Sustainable Agriculture (SA)?

- No all-encompassing definition of SA possible
- Conflicting views about SA
- Alternative: framing/circumscribing SA
- Systematic literature review (scientific and non-scientific literature)
- Which concepts, values, and ideas are associated with SA?
- Temporal and geographical variation of the relevance of the different aspects associated with SA?



Approach

2. SA enabling or impeding factors on local and regional level?
 - Analysis of case studies of (partial) implementation of SA on the local or regional level

3. Regionally specific starting points for SA?
 - Case Study in the Inkubator region
 - Expert interviews
 - Focus group
 - Cooperation with companies in the region



Preliminary results for 1st research question

- 81 categories/aspects associated with Sustainable Agriculture, organized in 3 groups
 - Goals → **Vision**
 - Values & Principles → **Philosophy**
 - Actions → **Practices**



Goals

- Fulfillment of human needs
- Conservation of ecosystem functions
- Environmental conservation & improvement
- Healthy rural economy
- Quality of Life
- ...

Values & Principles

- Acceptability
- Adaptation, compatibility
- Communication & collaboration
- Decentralization
- Efficiency
- Equity
- Holistic
- ...

Actions

- Access
- Agricultural techniques and technologies
- Human capital
- Lifestyle & consumption
- General economic framework
- Production levels
- ...



Thank you!!



Image sources:

- Slide 1:

<http://t2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRbIK34mi5ULbAa270eA4O875OfKOsYLZNgTkIQk7FnrlavDEtt>