

## Abstract

Organic Agriculture is perceived by many stakeholders as a promising approach to increase food security in developing countries. However, only few attempts have been made so far to assess agronomic and economic performance of Organic Agriculture in these regions in a systematic way. The Research Institute of Organic Farming (FiBL), together with its partners, is presently establishing long-term comparisons of farming systems in various agro-ecological and socio-economic contexts to study the different parameters that are essential for sustainable development. To date, three study areas have been selected: (a) a sub-humid area in Kenya where farming is subsistence-oriented; (b) a semi-arid area in India where cotton is produced for the export market; and (c) a humid area in Bolivia where cacao and other perennial products are produced for the export and domestic markets. The key elements are replicated long-term field trials. These are complemented by farm surveys and short-term trials under on-farm conditions. This network of comparison of farming systems in the tropics is expected to (1) put the discussion on the benefits and drawbacks of Organic Agriculture on a rational basis; (2) help to identify challenges for Organic Agriculture that can then be addressed systematically; (3) provide physical reference points for stakeholders in agricultural research and development and thus support agricultural policy dialogue at different levels.