



Announcement of topics for theses at dep 430A

(November 2024)

General

We welcome you developing your own topic. It is beneficial for both sides if you use a research question or build on a concept that you have encountered in a module offered by our research group. Please also refer to the information in our guidelines for theses.

Occasionally, we also offer topics for theses, usually in connection with current research projects or requests from practice partners. These are briefly described below. If you are interested in one of these topics, please contact the person in charge with a short letter of motivation.

Masterthesis: Good advisory practices to support interactive innovation

Across the EU member states (MS), agricultural advisors offer services to farmers to support the development, testing and implementation of innovations with collaborative network approaches. Within the European project i2connect (www.i2connect-horizon2020.eu), many examples of such interactive innovation cases were studied with an innovative methodological approach: a peer review that included a heterogeneous team of reviewer, e.g. a farmer, an advisor and someone with a research perspective which were outsiders to the respective case. From these approx. 55 peer reviews of interactive innovation cases, study reports are available (<https://i2connect-h2020.eu/practical-interactive-innovation-cases/>).

The master thesis shall be developed so as to systematically examine and analyse the material in order to identify promising features and approaches that support and advise towards successful interactive innovation. The analysis will be based on concepts from advisory and innovation services studies discussing the findings against the background of the current state of knowledge, and how they might be presented to the community of innovation support actors. The methodological approach of peer review used shall also be presented and reflected upon. The result of the thesis has the potential to contribute to scholarly debates on effective farm advisory and innovation support practices.

Contact person: Andrea Knierim (andrea.knierim@uni-hohenheim.de)



MSc Thesis Opportunity – COINS Project

Title: Mapping, characterising and analysing the role of Advisory and innovation support services for Enhancing selected sustainable innovation processes in Ghana and Senegal

We offer an MSc thesis within the **COINS project** (CO-developing INnovations for Sustainable Land Management in West African Smallholder Farming Systems): <https://sustainable-landmanagement-africa.net/project/coins/>

The research will examine the role of advisory and innovation support services in enhancing sustainable intensification (SI) innovation processes in **Northern Ghana and Northern Senegal**.

Key Objectives:

- Identify and assess the most effective innovation support services for SI processes.
- Map and characterise key actors and their roles in supporting SI and land management innovations.
- Analyse how service providers respond to beneficiaries' needs across innovation phases.

Methodology:

The study follows a case study approach, focusing on **six prioritised SI and land management practices** (three per region). Data collection will involve **key informant interviews** and **participatory multi-stakeholder focus group discussions (FGDs)** with advisers, intermediaries, innovation support managers, field technicians, and farmers.

Ideal for students interested in **innovation systems, agricultural development, and sustainable land management**.

Candidate's profile

- Bachelor's Degree or equivalent in rural development, innovation studies, sociology, ethnography, development economics, Human geography, natural resource management, or related fields
- Profound experience in qualitative empirical research methods, and familiarity with the following topics: innovation systems, advisory and or extension services, innovation support services,
- Interest and aptitude to work in a developing country setting.
- Ability to work on an inter- and transdisciplinary research project.
- Fluency in spoken and written English is required (being bilingual i.e., fluent in both English and French will be a plus)

Application documents

- Your CV
- Letter of Motivation
- Latest transcript of results

Forward your file as 1 single pdf to: h.ndah@uni-hohenheim.de

Dateline: 15.01.2025

NB: We expect the student to apply for a scholarship (Fiat Panis, ATSAF, ...); extra expenses (e.g., translation costs etc.) will be supported by the project