



Master's Thesis Topic Proposal

International Agricultural Trade and Development Group

Faculty of Life Sciences

Large-scale agricultural investment in Benin – The case of Africa Agri Tech and its impact on the local economy

Supervisor: Dr. Jonas Luckmann

Background: Large-scale agricultural investments potentially can lead to win-win situations when locally lacking capital is contributed by the investor and combined with local labor. In many cases, however, these mutual benefits are only realized to a limited extent as production is often highly mechanized, requiring little and qualified personnel. In addition, often problems arise such as conflicts with traditional users of land and other resources (e.g. forest, water). Therefore, benefits and potential drawbacks of such large-scale investments may vary substantially among different cases.

Case-Study: The aim of this master-thesis project is to investigate the case of Africa Agri Tech, a large scale vegetable producing enterprise situated close to Savè in Benin, mainly focusing on the production of fresh tomatoes to be marketed in the wider region. Focusing on labor-intensive crops the farm relies to a large extent on local labor. The ITAD research group has an established contact with the farm manager and national researchers in Benin for local co-supervision.

Objectives: The task of this thesis will be to identify benefits and drawbacks from this particular farm in terms of improving local economic activity and the livelihood of the local population. Research questions would revolve around the identification of success-factors as well as problems and failures.

Methods: In a first step, the student would study the literature on the economics of large scale investments to develop the theoretical background for the thesis. At the same time, the student would apply for a scholarship to finance a research stay at the farm, during which he/she would conduct interviews with local key-persons, such as farm managers, employees, local administration, etc.

Pre-requisites: Knowledge of French would be helpful.

Application procedure: Interested students are asked to send a motivation letter and the transcripts of records with the completed relevant modules and proof of any other relevant qualifications to luckmann@hu-berlin.de