



**Bern University of Applied Sciences**  
School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences

## **Consulting services**

**Economically viable – ecologically sound – socially inclusive**



# Close to the Action



**The consulting services of the Bern University of Applied Sciences – School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences cover a wide range of development and innovation work in agriculture, forestry, food science and natural resource management which has proven effective for many private companies, government institutions, development agencies and for civil society.**

**Our services draw on the skills of about forty professional staff with combined national and international track records in research and development. Their knowledge and experience are embedded in a lean institutional structure which cultivates interdisciplinary exchange with the aim of elaborating holistic and sustainable solutions. These services combine applied scientific approaches with adult education techniques, enhancing a client-oriented, needs-based service provision.**

The international services of the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL) also benefit from synergies with the International Agriculture major offered in the BSc in Agriculture programme and students' work placements with private, governmental and non-governmental organisations, primarily in developing and transitional countries.

#### **Areas of expertise with examples of intervention**

##### **→ Sustainable agricultural and forestry production systems, food processing and safety**

- Developing sustainable production systems and processing techniques in crops, livestock and forestry
- Assessing and enhancing the sustainability of agricultural production systems, e.g. through Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation (RISE), an indicator-based assessment tool at farm level developed by the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences
- Assessing and improving quality assurance in agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry production
- Increasing the productivity of basic food crops and animal husbandry through improved crop and animal management techniques
- Developing appropriate strategies and approaches for the sustainable management of common property resources, such as pastures, forests, water
- Fostering pro-poor income generation through community-based management of natural resources, e.g. forests (wood and non-timber forest products)
- Supporting pluralistic rural advisory services in agriculture and forestry, adapted to the needs of stakeholders and nearby markets
- Developing adapted, low-cost irrigation techniques to save water
- Supporting the production of food for healthy nutrition
- Developing strategies and mechanisms to raise food processing efficiency
- Assuring food quality and supporting food safety certification processes, e.g. national and international standards, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)
- Sensory evaluation of food, e.g. discrimination testing, descriptive analysis and preference, and acceptance testing

##### **→ Rural societies in transition**

- Rural development – livelihood approach: developing strategies and conducting socio-economic analyses
- Transition processes in rural societies: analysing the interaction between natural resources and human systems (poverty reduction strategies, multi-stakeholder and sector-wide approaches)
- Policies and institutions: identifying drivers for development and applied innovation
- Resource governance in agriculture and forestry: assessing central – local relationships (participation and accountability to increase ownership)

##### **→ Markets, value chain development and management**

- Analysing value and market chains to identify opportunities for innovation in production, processing and marketing (agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and food processing and distribution)
- Developing marketing concepts and business plans, facilitating decision-making
- Developing and applying cost-efficient and rapid market research tools
- Supporting improved contractual linkages between producers and buyers
- Introducing and improving organic or fair trade production and processing schemes
- Valorising agro-biodiversity products
- Supporting certification systems and processes for agricultural and forestry goods and safe edibles



**Sustainable agricultural and forestry production systems, food processing and safety**



**Rural societies in transition**



**Markets, value chain development and management**



**Climate change – Natural resources management**



**Education, training, knowledge management**



**Project cycle management, facilitation and coaching**

### → **Climate change – Natural resources management**

- Adaptation to climate change: elaborating applied and needs-based responses to increase resilience
- Mitigation: REDD+ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of carbon sinks; Forest restoration and tropical forestry
- Analysing the carbon balance of agricultural and forestry production and food processing systems
- Adapting forest ecosystems in the context of climate change (natural hazards – protection forest systems)
- Elaborating compensation mechanisms in agriculture and forestry in the context of climate change emission trading
- Supporting rural development processes related to land and water issues (planning, allocation, use)
- Providing expertise in soil and water conservation, watershed management, compensation for environmental services
- Fostering agro-biodiversity management with short-term benefits for rural societies (intercropping, agro-forestry techniques, habitat management)
- Supporting plant and animal breeding processes to preserve and enhance genetic diversity

### → **Education, training, knowledge management**

- Supporting institutional reform processes in tertiary and vocational education
- Improving didactics and methods in ongoing educational programmes
- Facilitating participatory, demand-based curriculum development
- Introducing and coaching progressive, learner-centred methods, e.g. problem-based learning
- Combining traditional knowledge with research-based findings at the interfaces of agriculture – food science – natural resources – health
- Applying a variety of participatory methods to foster innovative technology development among farmers and rural processors

- Shaping the interface between research – extension – education/training to more effectively serve farmers' needs
- Setting up information and knowledge networks and cooperation tools to help local agents acquire knowledge and design appropriate solutions
- Contributing to the international exchange of information and knowledge on rural development and sustainable agriculture through various HAFL networks
- Conceptualising and coaching modern, learner-centred information and knowledge systems

### → **Project cycle management, facilitation and coaching**

- Setting up easy-to-apply project cycle management systems, such as outcome-based planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluations
- Coaching processes
- Implementing technical backstopping
- Facilitating workshops
- Organising conferences and exhibitions
- Conducting project feasibility studies, planning and impact evaluations in the areas of expertise mentioned above

**Our staff have long- and short-term country experience from 100 low- to middle-income countries. References on services provided and curricula of the staff from the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences are available upon request.**

## Always close to the Action



The School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL) is a department of Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH). It offers Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, conducts research and provides services in the fields of agriculture, forestry and food science.

At the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, an interdisciplinary team of experienced academic staff conducts applied research and development, provides comprehensive consulting services and offers continuing education. It complements the educational function and maintains manifold contacts with clients and partners around the world and in Switzerland. The solutions offered are all science-based, practical and user-friendly.

### Further information and contacts:

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