

Project properties (see for complete formats: tip.wur.nl)	
Title	Diagnosing land dynamics in Africa; bio-physics, institutions and socio-economic conditions
Group	Public Administration and Policy (PAP)
Project type	Internship / MSc thesis research at PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Credits	Variable, depending on wishes student. Minimum of 12 ECTS
Supervisor(s)	Jeroen Candel (PAP) Martijn Vink (PBL, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency) Martha van Eerd (PBL)
Examiner(s)	Prof dr. Katrien Termeer
Contact info	Jeroen.candel@wur.nl
Begin date	T.b.d. project will take 3-6 months
End date	T.b.d.
Description	<p>On average Africa is still among the least densely populated continents in the world. Nevertheless population is growing extremely fast and where other continents show population growth slacking, in Africa population growth is not expected to slow down soon. Growth in African agricultural production has not unconditionally followed this steep increase in population, and many African countries depend on food imports to feeds its growing populations. The looming image of a food-insecure continent has sparked debate on the need for various types of 'revolutions' in food production, but has also questioned our understanding what is happening in African agricultural production. Production figures vary largely across Africa and across time. In some African countries agricultural production seems able to keep up with population growth due to intensification of production or expansion of agricultural area. In some countries agricultural production even exceeds population growth. In other countries however, agricultural production stagnates; in some cases despite -or maybe due to- fast <i>economic</i> growth.</p> <p>The central question in this thesis research is how to understand these differences in production growth and their relation to trends in population growth and economic growth, and their relation to trends in intensification versus trends in expansion. Boserup proposed that population growth would lead to innovation and intensification. Others nuanced this picture. A recent PBL case study of agricultural production in Uganda indicated that traditionally determined socio-economic context set the institutional preconditions for intensification, which might contrast ideas about advantages of specific cropping systems and bio-physical conditions. The thesis research aims to map these dynamics in two or three other strategically chosen African countries. The case studies will act as illustrations in a larger PBL framework for diagnosing institutional opportunities for sustainable intensification.</p> <p>Location: PBL Bilthoven.</p> <p>Allowance 550,- gross per month (full-time)</p>
Used skills	Research activities: literature survey of country specific research on bio-physics, institutions and socio-economic conditions, and quantitative analysis of spatial data and country specific FAO and World Bank data.
Requirements	<p>Profile of the candidate:</p> <p>Ambitious and accurate MSc candidate in the field of agriculture, international development, public administration or a related field. Candidates with proven interdisciplinary skills have an advantage. The candidate should be able to conduct quantitative analysis, and should have a basic understanding of agriculture in Africa. In addition the candidate should have an understanding of the role of institutions at a local as well as at a national African level. The candidate should be able to work with large data sets and should be able to speak and write proper English.</p>
For which group of students should this be visible? (e.g. MME, BEB etc.)	MIL, MID, MME