

A handbook of tropical soil biology: Sampling and characterization of below-ground biodiversity

by Fatima M.S. Moreira, E. Jeroen Huising and David E. Bignall, 2008. ISBN 978-1-84407-593-5. Earthscan, Dunstan House, 14a St. Cross Street, London EC1N 8XA, U.K.

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This practical manual describes the most up-to-date methods for assessing soil biodiversity. It is an outcome of a project implemented in seven countries, with the objective of generating information and knowledge to better manage and conserve below-ground biodiversity in tropical agricultural landscapes. It describes various sampling and laboratory assessment methods for the biodiversity of soil organisms, from invertebrates to bacteria. It is intended, in the long term, to help identify opportunities for improved sustainable land management. It will be a useful reference and teaching guide for soil scientists, research institutions, students and soil conservation practitioners.

Protected landscapes and agrobiodiversity values by Thora Amend,

Jessica Broan, Ashish Kothari, Adrian Phillips and Sue Stolton (eds.), 2008. ISBN 978-3-92506448-7. IUCN – The World Conservation Union, Rue Mauverny 28, Gland 1196, Switzerland, and GTZ, Postfach 5180, 65726 Eschborn, Germany.

As a collaborative effort between IUCN and GTZ, this is the first volume in a new series entitled “Values of protected landscapes and seascapes”. The series will document the environmental, economic, social and cultural values of landscapes where communities thrive. This volume addresses agrobiodiversity through twelve case studies from around the world. It also provides a thorough overview of landscapes and biodiversity: their significance, current trends and threats, and actions which are now emerging to conserve diversity. Case studies focus on how protected landscapes contribute to conserving agrobiodiversity and related knowledge and practices. It is practical and easy-to-read. By presenting and discussing cases from different continents and contexts it shows the principles and variety of efforts in this field.

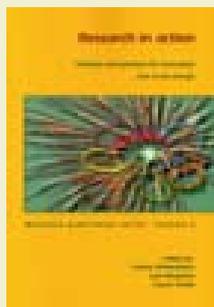
Farmers, seeds and varieties: Supporting informal seed supply in Ethiopia by Marja H. Thijssen, Zewdie Bishaw, Abdurahman Beshir and Walter S. de Boef (eds.), 2008. ISBN 978-90-8585-215-5. Wageningen International, Programme for Capacity Development and Institutional Change, P.O. Box 88, 6700 AA Wageningen, the Netherlands. Downloadable from: <http://www.cdic.wur.nl/UK/publications>

While this book was developed in response to issues identified within Ethiopia, the variety of topics and experiences presented in it are also relevant for other regions of the world. It is therefore of interest to people working in the seed sector, development agents and NGOs working to develop farmer-based seed production within and beyond Ethiopia. The papers were written by the trainers, resource persons and participants of a training programme on the improvement of farmer-based seed production and revitalisation of the informal seed supply of local crops and varieties in Ethiopia. As such it is a thorough and practical reference and resource book.

Research in action: Theories and practices for innovation and social change by Connie Almekinders, Leni Beukema and Coyan Tromp (eds.), 2009. ISBN 978-90-8686-087-6. Mansholt publication series, vol. 6. Wageningen Academic Publishers, P.O. Box 220, 6700 AE Wageningen, the Netherlands.

Does research only contribute to scientific knowledge? Or does it contribute to innovation and social change? Aimed at scholars, this book addresses the issues which determine the impact of research, and thus effectively contribute to change.

With chapters describing and analysing practical cases from the Netherlands, South Africa and Mexico, the authors look at the possibilities and difficulties researchers face when trying to perform *research in action*. Put together, these cases show that *research in action* is both a dynamic research strategy and a scientific paradigm.



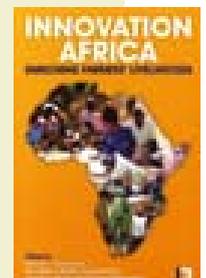
Responding to the global food crisis: Three perspectives by Joachim von Braun, Josette Sheeran and Namanga Ngongi, 2008. IFPRI 2007-2008 Annual Report Essays, International Food Policy Research Institute, 2033 K Street, NW Washington, DC 20006-1002, U.S.A. Downloadable from http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/books/ar2007/ar2007_essay.asp

These three essays, published as a collection in late 2008, provide different perspectives on the causes, as well as potential responses to the food crisis. Together they give a good overview of the recent global situation and are of interest to readers wanting a fuller and balanced picture of the food crisis. Full of examples from around the world, they discuss the effects of the crisis, how the situation has been tackled, and what more needs to be done in the future.

Innovation Africa: Enriching farmers' livelihoods by Pascal C. Sanginga, Ann Waters-Bayer, Susan Kaaria, Jemimah Njuki and Chesha Wettasinha (eds.), 2008. ISBN 978-1-84407-672-7. Earthscan, Dunstan House, 14a St. Cross Street, London EC1N 8XA, U.K.

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This long-awaited book is an outcome of the Innovation Africa Symposium, held in Uganda in 2006, where researchers and development practitioners gathered to present and discuss current thinking, experiences and lessons in innovation systems in agriculture. The chapters explore concepts of innovation and innovation systems, market-led innovation, and also social capital. Written by field practitioners, the different chapters show how such approaches provide opportunities for a more interactive style of research and extension in development. This book is aimed at researchers, practitioners and policymakers, and will also be useful reading for students.



Revolutions in development inquiry by Robert Chambers, 2008, ISBN 978-184407-6-253, Earthscan, Dunstan House, 14a St. Cross Street, London EC1N 8XA, U.K. E-mail: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk ; <http://www.earthscan.co.uk>

Robert Chambers brings together some previously published texts with new material, which as a whole form a comprehensive review of development inquiry, spanning nearly 40 years. It is a look back over the changes in the approaches and methods used to find out about field conditions and community realities, while also looking forward at ideas such as participatory mapping and GIS, and the potential they have. Written in an informal style, it is also quite a personal account of experiencing these developments, focusing on the family of approaches including agroecosystem analysis, RRA, PRA and PLA. It is useful to have much of this material in one place, and will be an important reference for all categories of development practitioners.