



<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Policies and Institutions as Drivers for Development and Innovation</b>
<b>Module Code</b>	MSLS_AF-32
<b>Degree Programme</b>	Master of Science in Life Sciences (MSLS)
<b>ECTS Credits</b>	5
<b>Workload</b>	150 h: Contact 55 h; Group Exercise 20 h; Self-study 75 h
<b>Module Coordinator</b>	<p><b>Name</b> Dr. Dominic Blaettler</p> <p><b>Phone</b> +41 31 910 22 50</p> <p><b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:dominic.blaettler@bfh.ch">dominic.blaettler@bfh.ch</a></p> <p><b>Address</b> Bern University of Applied Sciences, School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, Laenggasse 85, 3052 Zollikofen</p>
<b>Lecturers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Dominic Blaettler</li> <li>• Dr. Ingrid Fromm</li> <li>• Further BFH-HAFL lecturers</li> <li>• Invited guest speakers (tbd)</li> </ul>
<b>Entry Requirements</b>	Basic understanding of development issues, policies and institutions as well as innovation.
<b>Learning Outcomes and Competencies</b>	<p>After completing the module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss development strategies, analyse the conditions under which development and innovation in agriculture and forestry can be achieved, and identify policies and institutions that support these processes;</li> <li>• anticipate conflicts between the various stakeholders in development as well as constraints to policy making and development process;</li> <li>• apply methodological skills in social network design, interview technique and moderation.</li> </ul>
<b>Module Content</b>	<p>Development policies and programmes are formed by a wide range of actors with diverging interests, including farmers, forest users, community organisations, private companies, local development agencies and public organisations. Policy makers in national and local governments are expected to act as facilitators who – following the rules of good governance – consult those actors that are affected by these policies (the stakeholders) and involve them in the formulation of policies and development programmes. Policy makers use instruments such as funding mechanisms, programmes and projects as well as taxation and subsidy policies to bring actors together and involve them in development processes. Development is often guided towards the application of new knowledge and technologies (innovations) to achieve improvements in economic and social practices, but also need to consider criteria of equitable and pro-poor development as well as environmental sustainability. The success of development and innovation policies, however, not only depends on its appropriate formulation and implementation, but also on the socio-economic, cultural and environmental framework conditions, the general structures and rules that guide people’s behaviour and the social networks in which people are embedded. The module will introduce up-to-date economic, sociological and policy approaches that allow an in-depth understanding of the processes that foster and inhibit development and innovation in the agricultural and forestry sector.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development strategies: from import substitution, through structural adjustment to integrated development, livelihoods and collective action.</li> <li>2. Stakeholders in development and innovation: the relationship between state, market and civil society in agricultural and forestry transition processes.</li> <li>3. Development policies and programmes: rationale and criteria for policy making,</li> </ol>

	<p>approaches to policy analysis and formulation, steps in the policy formulation process, programme planning and priority setting, and funding mechanisms.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Governance: principles of good governance, governance indicators, dealing with diverging interests, decentralisation, interface humanitarian aid and development.</li> <li>5. Institutional analysis: basics of the institutional approach, institutional economics, choice between market and collaborative arrangements, transaction costs and property rights.</li> <li>6. Innovation in agriculture and forestry: the study of diffusion, the research-extension-farmer continuum, knowledge systems, national agricultural innovation systems, the international research and development community.</li> <li>7. Innovation networks: collective action and social networks, social network analysis, innovation behaviour among farmers, co-innovation, learning and knowledge management.</li> </ol>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>	Lectures, seminars in which students present and discuss a) basic concepts and b) learning elements elaborated from lecture inputs, guest lectures, workshop (social network analysis), case studies, and self-study.
<b>Assessment of Learning Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Interview assignment:</b> carry out an interview <i>on the role of different stakeholders in rural development and innovation</i>; the interview is video-taped &amp; discussed in class (31%)</li> <li>2) <b>Discussion summary:</b> moderation of expert input leading to a written summary of the session, with own conclusion (20%)</li> <li>3) <b>Exam (oral):</b> assessed are quality of information (technical terms, keywords, concepts, etc), creative contribution to discussion (linking issues, different views, pros/cons, own opinion/experience etc), structuring/facilitating discussion (49%)</li> </ol>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core reading: Todaro M, Smith S, 2020. Economic Development, 13th Edition. Pearson.</li> <li>• FAO's work on agricultural innovation (2018)</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Comments</b>	The following sequences are compulsory for students: interview, presentation of videos; civil society & innovation; networks & innovation, plus workshop; innovation & extension; innovation & agriculture; innovation & forestry. For details on compulsory sequences, please refer to the detailed schedule of the module, which will be uploaded on Moodle before the start of the module.
<b>Last Update</b>	January 2026