

# MOQUAS – Markets, Organisations, QUALity and Services in developing country agricultural systems

## Coursework Objectives

The economic, social and policy environment of smallholder farming systems in developing countries has undergone extensive changes in recent decades. After the independences, economic policies of Keynesian or Marxist inspiration gave a preponderant role to the State to drive economic growth, leading to strong State supervision of agricultural systems. In the 1980s, the exhaustion of these policies, the slowing of growth, and the debt crisis called into question these orientations and led to the establishment of liberal economic policies, the results of which have been mixed, especially for smallholder farming: private enterprises are emerging and some sectors are growing by optimising comparative advantages, but overall growth is unequal and gaps in competitiveness are decreasing little or not at all; market instability, the deregulation of support services, and the splintering of decision centres have increased uncertainty in production conditions; poverty, inequality and imbalances are on the rise; and the degradation of natural resources and the amplification of migratory processes are calling into question the sustainability of the processes underway...

These observations now fuel the debate on the need to rethink development policy and modes of coordination among markets, public action and collective action (Stiglitz, 2002; UNDP, 2005). Faced with markets – which are increasingly recognised as being “imperfect”, as not systematically generating economic growth, and as not allowing equitable distribution of the fruits of this growth – the potential of collective action and the role of the State are once again being questioned.

Smallholder agricultural systems are at the heart of these reconfigurations. If they are not to disappear, they must improve their integration into markets that are becoming more complex and more global, but that also offer new opportunities: market segmentation, product and territory qualification, fair value chains, etc. To improve mastery of these processes, smallholder farmers must contribute to the elaboration of new production support systems and systems to showcase products, and must help build appropriate service systems. They must become stronger and structure themselves to become credible interlocutors, both in the elaboration of private partnerships and in territorial insertion and public policy negotiation. Through these functions, agronomists who intervene in support of these processes are placed in the position of interface and intermediation between smallholder farms and their surroundings. MOQUAS prepares students for these intermediation functions; it focuses on the support functions fulfilled by agronomists active in the field of development in developing countries:

- support to strengthen professional organisations in the field of smallholder farming: structuring, strategic reflection, partnerships, contributions to public policy;
- support to integrate agricultural systems into markets and agricultural and agrifood value chains: within agricultural organisations, agrifood companies in contractual relationships with farmers, value chains, inter-branch organisations;
- support to develop sustainable farmer support services and for their organisations: agricultural advice, financial services, training, animal health, market information services, etc.;
- support to include smallholder farms in territorial development: processes by which to optimise and certify products linked to territories;
- elaboration, implementation and assessment of development support systems (development aid programmes and projects).

These functions require two important crosscutting skills:

- The capacity to conduct systemic analysis of development situations, covering technical, socioeconomic and institutional dimensions, and examining the links between various scales of analysis (local, national, international); and
- The capacity to operate in the position of interface between farmers, their organisations and their surroundings (markets, companies, value chains, territories, public authorities), based on mastery of organisation, communication and negotiation tools so as to be able to co-elaborate solutions, act in inter-cultural situations, and train and support project implementers.

Module	ECTS
Understanding smallholders farms (UE M1)	6
Supporting smallholders' farming systems involvement in development policies (UE M2)	4
Analysing territorial projects, supporting collective action (UE M3)	4
Integration of Agricultural Systems into markets (UE M4)	4
Managing development projects (UE M5)	3
Understanding and working with agricultural and rural organisations (UE M6)	3
Co construction of support services with for small holders farms (Ue M7)	4
Professional practice / group internship (UE M8)	2
Master thesis	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>