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INNSULA is a research project of the Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) e.V. in Müncheberg, Germany. Participants are researchers from the institute of socio-economics and the institute of land use systems. Their different backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives form the basis for the interdisciplinary approach of INNSULA.

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INNSULA Innovation Analysis of Urban Agriculture



The research project INNSULA - Innovation Analysis of Urban Agriculture examines the relevance of innovations in urban agriculture, mainly in Germany, and their contribution to sustainable development.

www.innsula.org



Background and Research Objectives of INNSULA

The up-to-dateness and public appreciation for urban agriculture as well as for its actors is high. Whether Community gardens, intercultural gardens, roof-top farms, grow-your-own projects or else: The media attributes urban agriculture projects as innovative contributions towards sustainable (town-) development. Still, there is a deficit of related scientific studies and evaluation concepts in Germany. Accordingly it is essential to improve knowledge about conceptual definitions and impacts of such projects, particularly in order to derive requirements and potentials of urban agriculture for planning strategies.



As a research project INNSULA aims at identifying: Which innovation approaches do exist within urban agriculture and its community? In how far do specific activities contribute to sustainable development of urban areas?



The Analytical Approach

The analytical framework of INNSULA is based on a multidimensional typology of urban agriculture in Germany. Beyond its relevance as a scientific instrument for conceptual definition, the typology is developed and will be tested as a profiling tool for initiatives and a policy support tool for municipalities. Thus, the awareness regarding policy and funding opportunities and requirements can be raised.

INNSULA deals with three main research issues:

- Urban agriculture and innovation
- Urban agriculture and sustainability
- Urban agriculture and policy

Primarily qualitative research methods are applied. In addition to literature survey, expert interviews are conducted in Germany, the USA, Canada, UK and Switzerland. Main primary data source will be an empirical survey based on in-depth interviews of urban agriculture initiative and their actors within 10 German cities.



Cooperation with the Active Community

Cornerstone of INNSULA is the cooperation with the different actors of urban agriculture: practitioners, activists, administration, and research. Thus, knowledge is crucial for effective collaboration: what are the activities of urban agriculture in different towns, who are the initiatives and active gardeners, who the persons who trigger innovation, who are contact persons and decision makers within the local administration? Also constructive exchange between researchers in this field is aimed at.



Therefore, and beyond providing only the database for INNSULA research, a comprehensive online knowledge collection on urban agriculture is developed. It is accessible to the interested public and is a common activity of an editorial team of stakeholders of urban agriculture in Germany, providing the opportunity for internal networking, cooperation and exchange.