

Panel Title:

**Large-scale agro-business meets smallholder farmers - how can they enter happy marriages?**

Panel Short Abstract:

The panel invites papers which empirically examine the relations between smallholder farmers and the growing number of large scale agro-businesses which enter the agricultural sector in particular in developing African economic spaces.

Panel Long Abstract:

Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing a large wave of investors both foreign and local looking for deals in agriculture and related branches. All levels of agricultural value chains are concerned: input, machinery and service delivery, land, agro-processing and marketing. The motivations for this rush are manifold: SSA rich and seemingly underexploited natural resources, higher prices for agricultural products, new and more wealthy consumers (middle class) in rapidly growing urban centres, technical advances in production, processing and communication, new value chain organizations, concerns for food security, biofuels demand, search for new investment opportunities, etc. Most have something in common: They get mainly confronted with smallholders who own or use most of the land, but also as clients, as business partners, as workers or as competitors. This is a meeting of antagonistic actors - here formal enterprises, having a global perspective and good access to capital, technology, markets and information, there informal, often illiterate, unorganized, poor, vulnerable, and highly diversified livelihoods.

The panel wants to find answers about how these two partners can co-exist, cooperate or even do business together. It welcomes contributions which empirically look at areas of interaction, particularly where smallholders are not dispossessed ("land grabbing") but where other relations such as contract farming, cooperations for technology development, private-sector-conducted technical training, private credit or credit guarantees, local competition / co-existence on agricultural output markets exist. What lessons can be drawn from these experiences?