Background
Resource-poor farmers in South India are confronted with multiple challenges such as climate change, soil nutrient depletion, nutritional security issues and economic constraints. The BIOFI Package is a technological innovation developed in the frame of the Indo-Swiss Collaboration in Biotechnology (ISCB) that aims to tackle these challenges by improving the production of finger millet (Eleusine coracana) and pigeon pea (Cajanus cajan), two major crops in rainfed regions of South India.

Objective
To better understand the adoption potential of the BIOFI Package based on the analysis of the innovation’s attributes, local people’s livelihoods and farming practices and the farming context in two research sites in South India.

Methodology
Research sites:
- Kolli Hills, Tamil Nadu (hilly region, high genetic diversity of millets)
- Mandya district, Karnataka (plains, major finger millet production region)

Data collection:
- Literature review
- Field observations
- Survey with 400 finger millet growing farmers
- Focus-group discussions
- Expert interviews

Results
Multiple potentially hindering and conducive factors for the adoption of the BIOFI Package were identified (see Table 1).

From an ex-ante perspective the adoption potential appears limited in both sites yet to different extents and for different reasons. Major potentially hindering factors for the adoption are:
- The attributes of the innovation itself
- The limited importance of the two target crops in local livelihoods
- Big differences between existing and proposed practices (see Fig. 3, 4)
- Additional labour and cash requirements
- Limited availability, awareness and use of biofertilizers
- Limited availability of output markets at local level

Conclusions and Recommendations
- **Complementary research**, especially testing and evaluating the technology together with farmers, is needed in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the adoption potential of the BIOFI Package.
- It may be meaningful to **reconsider the «package approach»** and to explore the potential of individual components of the BIOFI Package.
- In research for development a carefully designed, facilitated and monitored **innovation development process is key** and needs to be considered a goal in itself. Site-specific needs assessments, a genuinely collaborative or collegial participation of farmers throughout the process, the involvement of multiple disciplines and stakeholders, capacity building in interdisciplinary research and a systemic, innovation-driven approach are all meaningful elements towards the development of innovations offering a relative advantage to resource-poor farmers.