

## **Abstract**

Voluntary pre-farm certification schemes especially GlobalGAP are increasingly defining market access for smallholders in developing countries. Their strict demand for financial and technical competencies and concerns for producer welfare and environmental conservation imply that transition to certified production could spell smallholders' exit or shift to alternative markets for no-compliance. But what factors motivate successful transition to certification and does alternative market access exist for the unsuccessful transition? Multinomial logit estimates reveal training and higher farm assets base as key indicators of successful certification and organized production. However, a large cultivated land resource favours certification but disfavours transition to organized production. The results point to sensitivity of certification schemes to expertise on technical information and assets that enhance cultivation of quality, reliable and hygienic produce and economies of scale in farming. The transition to organized production seems efficient if technical knowledge and assets that enhance cultivation of quality, reliable and hygienic produce are present. The results imply that farmer expertise, farm assets and land resource are critical barriers for farmers transiting to certification schemes. This calls for concerted mitigation if smallholders in developing countries are to benefit from the lucrative premium markets in Western Europe.