World Bank

Cirad-Tera

Building the capacity of rural producer organisations

Lessons of the World Bank experience

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INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to draw the first lessons of the World Bank experience in building the capacity of rural producer organisations (RPOs)[1].

From 1997, the World Bank and French co-operation provided support for the preparation and implementation, in developing countries, of new projects to support agricultural services and rural producer organisations aimed at promoting services driven by producers' demands. They also constituted institutional innovations for the following three main reasons:

- They are aimed at building institutionalised partnership between rural producer organisations and research and extension bodies. Such partnership should enable organised producers to (i) express collective demand for support to technical and economic innovation and (ii) influence the orientation of, and decision-making within, the service bodies concerned.

- The World Bank provides its support to (public and semi-public) institutions responsible for agricultural services and to rural producer organisations in order to build their capacity and to create conditions for equitable dialogue between the different partners.

- These projects are accompanied by institutional reforms, which each country implements at its pace but which are aimed at rendering research and extension institutions accountable to producers.

The first projects were carried out in Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso. Thereafter, the approach was gradually extended to other sub-Saharan African countries and to North Africa (Tunisia, Morocco), and demand for similar projects is growing in Asia (Indonesia, India).

1. Objectives of the Study

In 2003, the World Bank thought it necessary to take stock of the lessons that could already be drawn from the first projects implemented within the framework of the new approach to agricultural services. This study focuses on an analysis of the World Bank experience regarding the provision of support to rural producer organisation capacity building and is centred on three main issues:

- What has been done so far? What have been the results (successes, difficulties)?
- What prospects for the future? What are the next steps to be taken?
- In more general terms, and over and above experiences concerning the reform of agricultural services, do the other World Bank rural projects mainstream RPOs and seek to build their capacity?

[1] By Rural producer organisations (RPOs) we mean any organisation created by rural producers to provide services to members and non-members with a view to improving rural income or employment opportunities. They are different from service NGOs which also provide services to producers but are not membership organisations. They are also different from elected organisations that tend to organise the provision of multi-sector public type investment or services. RPOs are private sector collective enterprises that perform multiple functions: (a) advocacy or policy (syndicates or unions), (b) economic and technical (co-operative or associations) and (c) sometimes local development especially when local government does not exist or fails to do so.

2. Methodology

In order to assess the lessons learnt from these programmes and to contribute to the progress of the activities supported by the Bank, the study was conducted in four stages:

(1) **Literature Review**: A review of recent literature relating to enhancement of the capacities of farmers' organisations and other rural organisations, produced not only by the World Bank but also by other relevant institutions, stressing the main analysis carried out and the different approaches used.

(2) **World Bank Portfolio**: Review of RPOs empowerment-related components on Bank's portfolio (1997-2002), to analyse investments in support of rural organisations, capacity building and empowerment under Bank agricultural projects.

(3) **Country Studies**: Country case studies and in-depth analysis in four African countries (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Uganda). Country visits were carried out from May to June 2003, on the following projects or programmes:
- Senegal: ASPOP: Agricultural Services and Producer Organisations Programme
- Burkina Faso: PNDSA II: Second National Agricultural Services Development Project
- Ghana: AgSSIP: Agricultural Services Sub-sector Investment Programme
- Uganda: NAADS: National Agricultural Advisory Service.

The four programmes studied have several components that especially concern the restructuring and funding of agricultural research, reform of agricultural extension and counselling, provision of support for the reorganisation of the Ministries responsible for agriculture and support to rural producer organisations. The country case studies were specifically centred on the *RPO empowerment* components of these programmes. They focused on the role played by RPOs within the projects, how involved they were in the preparation, negotiation and subsequent implementation of these projects and which institutional arrangements and mechanisms were set up to enhance the capacities of these organisations. Information was gathered from literature review and interviews with different stakeholders.

An analytical pattern was designed for country case studies based on the following five points:

- **Evolution of public policies** in order to characterize the environment of agricultural activities and identify the main constraints and opportunities which promote/impede the process of technical and economic innovation in the rural areas.

- **Producer organisation dynamics** at local, regional and national levels in order to have a clear idea of the current situation (level of organisation, activities carried out, participation in decision-making, etc.), and identify factors that promote or impede initiatives and the ability of RPOs to carry out actions.

- **Practical modalities for designing the programmes** studied and the institutional mechanisms chosen. The analysis centred on the extent and characteristics of RPO commitment in programme design and the resources mobilised to enhance the bargaining power of RPOs.

- **Practical modalities for implementing** the "RPO support" component while bringing out (i) the ability of the relevant stakeholders to operate the consultation/contracting mechanisms set up, and (ii) the efficiency of such mechanisms in terms of seeking suitable solutions to producers' problems.

In the data collected, special attention was given to what the different stakeholders (RPOs, research, extension, administration, etc.) think about the role played by organisations in the mechanisms set up, the difficulties encountered and the solutions found or envisaged.

(4) **Summary**: A summary was done after a comparative analysis of the four case studies and a harmonization of the results of fieldwork with reflections carried out by the World Bank as well as other donors and institutions.

3. Report Outline

This report is structured as follows:

- Part one presents a brief analysis of the relationship between research and extension institutions and producers' organisations and the developments in this relationship over a long period of time. It lays emphasis on (i) factors that explain the growing importance of the role of RPOs in the innovation process and (ii) the activities sponsored by the various donors for RPO capacity building.

- Part two centres on the findings of the case studies carried out in four countries. After a brief description of the programmes supported by the World Bank, the main similarities and differences are highlighted.

- Part three of the report presents the main lessons that can be drawn from the World Bank experience with regard to RPO capacity building and makes recommendations.

- Part four puts together the four case studies carried out in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Uganda.

- Part five presents the findings of the analysis of the role of RPOs and of their capacity building in World Bank-sponsored agricultural projects.

I. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES AND RURAL PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS: SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENTS

1. The role of rural producer organisations

In Sub-Saharan Africa and, more generally, in most developing countries, producer organisation is a recurrent theme in agricultural policies. Since the 1960s, public agricultural services have undergone regular restructuring of varying magnitudes. In any case however, they have been structured around a close relationship between agricultural research and extension institutions (public or semi-public) on the one hand, and very diverse producer organisations with varying degrees of often limited and even non-existent autonomy on the other hand. In effect, profound changes have taken place and are still ongoing. These concern: (i) the context within which agricultural activities are carried out (State withdrawal, privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation); (ii) the emergence of RPOs which are gaining autonomy from their supervisory public authorities and are increasingly claiming the status of full-time rural development stakeholders; (iii) the position of donors which encourages private stakeholders and allows for decentralisation of initiatives and funds.

These general developments influence the relationship between RPOs and public institutions responsible for agricultural services. The actors concerned strive (and/or are motivated) to move from an essentially top-bottom approach in which the role of producer organisations was especially to facilitate the action of public agricultural services, to a partnership approach aimed at building contractual relations between research and extension institutions and the producers concerned.

1.1. Different conceptions of organisations

The pace of these developments varies greatly from country to country. Such developments are characterized by resistance of varying scope and by a number of ambiguities arising from two different conceptions of the role of rural producer organisations:

(a) **Organisations as instruments of agricultural services**[2]. Largely dominant between the 1960s and 1990s, this conception of organisations found expression in the promotion, by development institutions, of specific producer organisation models (co-operatives, groups, associations) where membership conditions, objectives and operational rules were sometimes determined on the basis of references quite foreign to the societies concerned.

Such producer organisations were designed, at least initially, to relay external stakeholders and as a means of attaining objectives often set from outside, sometimes without consulting the rural farmers concerned. Though they were sometimes just a medium of transmission of « messages » formulated by institutional stakeholders, such organisations could also have wider ambitions. They could be a means of easing the tension and contradictions arising from intervention in the activities of the social groups concerned. They could also become a forum for dialogue between representatives of the rural world and development bodies, though codified by the external partner.

[2] Mercoiret et al. Why support farmers' organisations? World Bank Workshop / FIPA, Washington, 1999.

In many cases, farmers' organisations of this kind were and are still very numerous. They can be classified under the kind of organisations described as "functional" or "instrumental". Here, the organisation is somewhat seen as an instrument that may orientate change within family farms, facilitate dissemination of messages formulated by development bodies and speed up their adoption by producers. Seen from another angle, it could be said that the interest of external partners in farmers' organisations depends on the comparative advantages of using such organisations to attain what they consider as priority objectives. These advantages may be assessed in terms of cost/efficiency ratio (recourse to farmers' organisations sometimes makes it possible to reduce "transaction costs") and in terms of equity and consolidation of the results obtained.

(b) **Organisations as rural development stakeholders.** Whatever their origin (whether an initiative of producers themselves or organisations promoted from without but which have secured autonomy from their supervisory bodies), farmers' organisations are considered in this case as a collective response of the rural people to the many challenges facing them. They point to the farmers' desire to "have a say", to take initiatives and to be recognized by other stakeholders as full-time development partners. Such conception of organisations is quite old. From the 70s, it was translated into reality through the emergence of non-State dependent associations (Burkina Faso, Senegal), which benefited from the support of some international NGOs, the Swiss co-operation, among others. For about a decade now, it has found expression in unprecedented practices, especially (i) the readiness of many of the organisations to establish partnership relations with the economic and institutional actors of their environment; (ii) their increasing ability to negotiate with public authorities; and (iii) their involvement in inter-stakeholder consultation in some sub-sectors.

1.2. Very diverse partnership practices

It is undeniable that recognition of RPOs as development partners is becoming pervasive in the discourse of institutional stakeholders. Such positive development must however not conceal the fact that in reality, partnership with RPOs covers very diverse practices and that in many projects, it is the "instrumental" conception of RPOs that prevails. The following two factors render the establishment of equitable partnership particularly difficult:

(a) On the one hand, relations between RPOs and the other stakeholders are characterized by profound asymmetries. Unequal access to information and expertise (ability to carry out analysis and to make proposals) are compounded by unequal access to material and financial resources and to decision-making centres.

(b) On the other hand, RPOs incarnate very diverse realities. They are often quite young and in their construction (or reconstruction) phase. They combine, in varying degrees, representation and economic functions. Besides, many of them have multi-sector economic and social objectives. They are often faced with problems of internal organisation, communication and management. Their strategic projects are defined and finalised in different ways and there are discrepancies between organisations leaders and grassroots members in terms of access to information and training, among other things.

These two kinds of factors are interwoven and explain the often unfavourable position of RPOs in their relations with their environment, the inequalities that characterize some partnerships between RPOs and institutional stakeholders, and the questioning by producers of some agreements considered inequitable. In this regard, the establishment of sustainable contractual relations between RPOs and other stakeholders presupposes that the capacity of

organisations should be enhanced and specific support programmes endowed with significant resources developed.

2. Marked and renewed donor interest in RPOs

Over the last ten years at least, and even more in some cases, bilateral and multilateral cooperation has shown undeniable interest in RPO capacity building. Such interest finds expression in diverse practices, of which the following brief review gives us an insight.

Bilateral cooperation: Many bilateral cooperation partners have provided support to rural producer organisations with some of them even making such support a priority.

This is, for instance, the case of the **Swiss Cooperation (DDC),** which has made significant efforts over many years to support initiatives of the Six S[3] association (in Burkina Faso and then in West Africa), FONGS[4] (Senegal), CFPC[5] (Cameroon) among others. The DDC is very critical about "projects" designed outside the local communities and without the participation of the players concerned, and lays emphasis on supporting initiatives designed by national actors. Such support is given as priority to "the initiators" who are identified by their mobilisation ability. The support is meant to enable them clearly define their strategies and programmes and to keep targeted objectives in focus as well as design "long-term development goals". The DDC provides long-term support. Assistance is often provided through training, exchanges of ideas, technical support and flexible funds that can be mobilised depending on needs. It is to be noted that the DDC attaches great importance to the role of the State in matters of security, arbitration, regulation and public services. The DDC believes that though public services are not to be the managers of local development support programmes, collaboration is necessary. The DDC was for long one of the few bilateral cooperation partners to entrust direct management of financial resources to the farmers' organisations it supports.

German Cooperation (GTZ) has intervened in recent years through "farmer self-promotion support programmes» or through programmes related to natural resources management but which generally mainstream components on support for, and the capacity building of, local stakeholders. Such programmes may establish relations with local or inter-village farmers' organisations.

Danish, Swedish, Belgian and Dutch Cooperation also provide support to farmers' organisations in several countries either indirectly as part of agricultural sector support programmes or directly through partnership with one or several farmers' organisations, or within the framework of an action plan for the emergence and enhancement of farmers' organisations.

For close to ten years now, **French Cooperation** has been providing increasing support to farmers' organisations through programmes and projects that adopt diverse approaches. **The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs** has for several years invested in agricultural professionalisation support programmes in an increasing number of countries. Sometimes implemented in collaboration with the AFDI[6], these programmes are aimed at strengthening farmers' organisations and have the following objectives:

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[3] Six S : How to use the dry season in the sahel (Savoir se servir de la saison sèche au Sahel).
[4] FONGS : Federation of Senegalese NGOs created in 1978 and which brings together RPOs associations.
[5] CFPC : Council of Producers Federations in Cameroon (Conseil des Fédérations des Producteurs du Cameroun).
[6] AFDI : French Farmers for International Development (Agriculteurs Français pour le Développement International).

- "Farmer empowerment" is the underlying goal of activities carried out. In the broadest and most accepted sense of the term, "professionalisation" may mean the emergence of an autonomous farmers' organisation having: (i) the resources and the expertise to assume farmer-support functions, and (ii) the legitimacy needed to represent and defend the interests of producers vis-à-vis other economic actors and the State.
- For farmers to get and exercise power, it is indispensable for them to organise themselves at relevant geographical levels (from local to national) to perform functions that help to structure the sub-sectors.
- Institutional support is a privileged tool of these programmes (access to information, training, financial and material as well as legal support, among others) with a key role to the sharing of experience within and between countries and continents. Generally, a support unit that has a fairly flexible budget initiates such actions.
- These programmes draw from the French experience of joint management of agricultural policy without however making the mistake of importing the model.

The **French Development Agency** (AFD) is increasingly including an "FO support" component in projects to support the sub-sectors it funds. In other cases, they may be projects aimed at creating agricultural production support services or original projects centred on one or several functions: support for the management of grassroots organisations, centre for the provision of services to groups (Mali). Recently, the AFD carried out some experiments of direct support to farmers' organisations (Guinea, Benin).

Multilateral cooperation is also more or less directly involved in supporting producer organisations.

The European Union has put in place many forms of interventions that largely benefit farmers' organisations even if these are not the only beneficiaries. This is, for instance, the case of the micro-projects programmes that provide financial support for economic initiatives whose promoters cannot easily access bank loans. Within the framework of decentralised cooperation, budget lines for co-funding with NGOs have been created to strengthen the support provided by other partners. In some countries like Burkina Faso for instance, the European Union is the leading sponsor of the Action Plan for the emergence of professional farmers' organisations.

The FAO also provides assistance to farmers' organisations, either directly in the form of expertise made available to national federations as in Senegal, or indirectly by entrusting the management of food security pilot projects to local farmers' organisations. It is also important to note the role the FAO has played and is still playing to promote the Chamber of Agriculture model in West Africa.

IFAD, for its part, sponsors the initiatives of some federative farmers' organisations at national and sometimes sub-regional levels. It recently provided support, for instance, for the creation of an inter-RPO consultation forum in Cameroon.

It is to be noted that more and more, and often in collaboration with national NGOs, many NGOs from the North support organisations, which they sometimes contributed to set up, or which they assisted in the 1970s and the 1980s.

★ **The following two remarks should be made here:**

- State withdrawal and structural adjustments ushered in a new era during which the discourse and practices of international cooperation about RPOs were gradually modified. The 1980s and early 1990s were marked by a search for "non-State" forms of cooperation aimed at involving and supporting the private sector and the civil

society in development actions. The ultimate goal was often to entrust as much responsibility as possible to non-State actors[7] in the hope that such involvement would render support action more efficient in a global context characterized by liberalisation and globalisation. We thus note some renewed interest in rural producer organisations, which appear to be new stakeholders worth investing in.

- Significant differences however exist in international cooperation practices. Some agencies or NGOs indicate their preference for support to grassroots organisations and even local organisations and are reserved towards umbrella organisations. Others consider that the consolidation of federative organisations is necessary to enhance the efficiency of action of grassroots organisations.

3. RPO mainstreaming in World Bank Projects

3.1. WB's growing interest in RPOs with yet limited mobilisation of resources destined for them.

A review of World Bank sponsored projects in the agricultural sector was carried out as part of this study. Its objective was to highlight the role of RPOs in the different projects as well as the amount of resources mobilised for their capacity building. Part five of the report presents the detailed results of the analysis[8]. The following main points are to be noted:

- For the period 1997-2002, World Bank "agricultural" commitments are estimated at US$ 9 billion. This represents 12 % of total IBRD/IDA non-adjustment (or "investment" type lending commitment for the same period of $76.3 billion). During the same period, the Bank committed US$ 5,566 million through 110 projects that have a CDD approach and an agricultural component. Fifty-one of these projects, for a total amount of US$ 3,006 million committed more than 50 % of the Bank loan for agriculture. Irrigation and drainage projects account for the largest share of investments in agriculture (30%) followed by investments in general agriculture (20%), agricultural institutions and land administration/reform (19%), and agricultural services (11%).

- Although the number of projects with "agricultural" investments is not increasing, it is interesting to note that the percentage of projects that involve RPOs as partners is increasing, from 20 percent in 1997 to more than 40 percent in 2002. This trend is confirmed with projects that are being presented to the Board in FY 03. It is estimated that 60 percent of projects with "agricultural" investments include RPO capacity building.

- But the amount of investment in RPOs remains low and varies widely from project to project. Support for the capacity building of rural producer organisations is very small if not marginal, some 8 percent of non-adjustment "agricultural" investment (see Table 1 in Part V). Commodity development and irrigation and drainage projects invest most in RPO capacity building. This is because under these projects, RPOs have access to resources not only for services, but also for productive equipment and infrastructure (on a matching grand basis).

★ **The following two remarks should be made here:**

(i) Rural producer organisations are increasingly being recognized as specific community groups that can contribute to improve agricultural and agriculture-related income, with the capacity to involve the poor in the development process and have

[7] It is this general terminology that is used by the European Union in the Cotonou Agreements.

[8] This Portfolio review was carried out by Pierre Rondot, Marie-Hélène Collion with a collaboration of Sanjiva Cooke and Marijn Noordman

them benefit from agricultural growth. 42 % of Bank agricultural projects consider RPOs as legitimate partners, but provide very limited resources to build their capacity (approximately 8% of total funding).

(ii) Investing in rural producer organisations is a challenge. Task managers and the entity in charge of project preparation and implementation find it difficult to work in partnership with RPOs because these organisations are very diverse in nature, status (co-operatives, associations, commodity groups, etc.) and scope. They exist at local, regional and national levels and sometimes have problems of legitimacy and ineffective governance. They cover a wide range of functions: advocacy, economic and social/local development functions. Channelling resources to or through them raises unusual challenges. Bank TTLs are not used to working with these private sector-type non-governmental organisations. Farmers' leaders have limited time to invest in administrative processes and to participate in meetings. When they do, their legitimacy as farmer representatives is often questioned. Finally, they are independent and very often critical of government support. Through CDD and social funds however, the Bank is increasingly targeting producer organisations to improve local agricultural income and job opportunities.

Investing in rural producer organisations will likely result in a change in power relationships. Government services have been used to speak in the name of rural producers and make decisions for them. Government services are often resisting change, which they perceived as a potential loss of power. They underline the weaknesses of RPOs and the risks attached to supporting them. For task managers it is easier and administratively less risky to keep investing in public institutions.

3.2. The special case of World Bank-sponsored agricultural services reform projects

It is undoubtedly through agricultural services support projects, the object of this study, that the World Bank most clearly tries to promote real partnership between RPOs and other actors. The readiness to promote demand-oriented services is clearly encouraged. This World Bank option has been developed gradually from the early 1990s and is based on the following main analyses:

a) The economic and institutional reforms initiated in the early 1980s after State withdrawal and the liberalisation of trade in the 1990s profoundly affected the context of agriculture which became:
   - more complex with the emergence of new private stakeholders both in the economic sector and in the provision of very different kinds of services;
   - more unstable with the suppression of mechanisms for regulating the prices of agricultural produce and inputs, privatisation of economic supply, loans and marketing functions; and
   - More competitive. The agricultural sectors in developing countries are currently competing on the export market and to supply domestic markets. As such, they have become very productive and some of them are benefiting from significant official development assistance.

Though these developments have opened up new opportunities for the rural people, they have also generated (or compounded) their difficulties and accentuated pre-existing tendencies as evidenced by the high incidence of poverty which mostly affects rural peoples, an aggravation of natural resource degradation processes, the great extent of rural-urban

migration in some areas, the precariousness of the food situation of the rural people, among others.

b) In the face of these numerous challenges to which the rural people are confronted, the reorganisation of agricultural research and extension will constitute an attendant **measure** for economic reforms and a **means** of correcting some of their effects. This explains why these programmes fall within the framework of poverty alleviation and aim to improve the competitiveness of the products. In this regard, two points need to be underscored:
   - Sustainable increase of production and improvement of the competitiveness of agricultural produce presuppose a significant change in the methods of production used by the majority of family farm owners, and especially regular access to inputs (and thus to appropriate funding mechanisms) and to profitable markets;
   - It also presupposes significant innovations in production techniques, which make it possible especially to improve productivity, promote environment-friendly practices and sustainable management of natural resources as well as minimize hard labour.

c) The experience of industrialized countries shows that users' involvement is crucial for the development and extension of relevant knowledge and technologies. Now, in spite of positive developments initiated by research and extension institutions to increase the participation of rural producers (participatory diagnosis, decentralisation of research, etc.) in many developing countries, agricultural research and extension institutions typically lack accountability to farmers. In addition, research and extension managers have not made partnership with producers an official policy of their institutions.

d) Rural producer organisations (RPOs) can play a key role in reforming agricultural services by, on the one hand, expressing collective and constructive demand to research and extension institutions and, on the other hand, influencing decision-making within the institutions concerned. As M.H. Collion and P. Rondot (1998) point out, RPOs in developing countries could, like RPOs in industrialised countries, carry out many key functions in the technology development and dissemination process:

   - providing an organisational base for analysing constraints, pooling knowledge and aggregating demand;
   - exerting pressure on the institutions to work within a commonly defined agenda through participation in programme planning, monitoring and evaluation ;
   - participating in and scaling up adaptive research as well as testing and evaluating technologies ;
   - providing feedback on technology adoption impacts ;
   - reaching an increased number of farmers with new information and technologies, and promoting an enabling environment for technology uptake (access to inputs, credit and support for marketing)."

e) "In developing countries, farmers' organisations cannot easily influence the research and extension agenda and act as lobbying groups, for reasons that have to deal either with producer organisations themselves or with the agricultural services institutions » (Collion and Rondot, 1998). Now, given that "no country in the world has been able to develop its agriculture significantly without organising its producers to be effective at demanding and mobilising the services they need to produce and access input-output markets", it seems necessary to build the capacity of rural producer organisations through specific actions and to transfer to them the material and

financial resources needed. However, investing in the capacity building of rural producer organisations is not to be done at the detriment of investment in public institutions that are needed for policy, monitoring and regulatory functions. It must be done at the same time that institutional reforms are being implemented to accompany the shift in power, helping public institutions to redefine their role and functions, investing in change agents" (See Part V).

It is on the basis of these analyses (very briefly presented here) that agricultural services support programmes (later analysed in this report) were designed.

II. PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES AND ELEMENTS OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Synoptic description of the programmes studied

Four case studies were carried out. Two of them were in French-speaking countries where the "RPO support" component of the agricultural services reform programmes are oldest (Senegal and Burkina Faso), and two in English-speaking countries with the most recent experience in RPO support (Ghana and Uganda). The table below groups, in summary form for each programme studied, information on:

- The type of financial instrument used
- Start-off and end of execution dates
- The total amount of funds allocated
- The overall objectives of the programme
- The components of the programme
- The specific objectives of the "RPO support" component
- The institutional framework for the implementation of the "RPO support" component
- The national structure responsible for managing funds
- The kind of activities funded by the "RPO support" component

A detailed study of the four programmes is presented in part four of this report.

Programme general information				
	Senegal (PSAOP)	**Burkina Faso (PNDSA II)**	**Uganda (NAADS)**	**Ghana (AgSSIP)**
Type of Instrument	Adaptable Programme Lending (APL)	Sector Investment Loan (SIL)	Adaptable Programme Loan (APL)	Adaptable Programme Loan (APL)
Date of launching and duration	June 2000. First phase: 4 years	July 1997. Second phase: 4 years, up to 12/31/2004	March 2002. First phase (out of five): 5 years	August 2000. First Phase (out of 3): 3 years
Funding	US$ 47.1 million	US$ 41.3 million	US$ 95 million	US$ 123.7 million
Overall Objective	Sustainable increase of smallholder agricultural productivity and income through technological change, while at the same time protecting the environment. (i) empowering producers and their organisations so as to enable them formulate their demands and (ii) Render public service institutions accountable to producers	- Support long-term agricultural production; - increase agricultural and livestock productivity and farmers' revenues; - improve natural resource management and promote sustainable production systems; - help the Government implement an improved animal health system, largely based on private veterinary services; - promote and empower, on a pilot basis, representative farmers' organisations	Ensure that farmers apply improved husbandry and management practices, and identify and solve their technical and marketing problems using appropriate and modern knowledge and technologies	Supporting and strengthening the development of multiple and demand-driven agricultural services for rapid agricultural growth and poverty reduction
Components	• Research Funding: the national agricultural research fund (NARF) (US$ 4.5 million) • Research institute development (US$ 8.7 million) • Agricultural Extension / ANCAR (US$ 10.9 million) • **Support to producer organisations (RPOs), implemented by ASPRODEB (US$ 4.9 million)** • -Strengthening public service functions of the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock.(US$ 18.1 million)	• Agricultural research. (US$ 18.8 million) • Agricultural extension (US$ 20.3 million) • Animal health and promotion of pastoral activities (US$ 2.5 million) • Pilot programmes consisting of: • **promotion of farmers' organisations; (b) a programme for small rural infrastructure to study the processes and feasibility of financing village-level operations intended for communal usage (US$ 4.3 million);** • Restructuring of agricultural services (US$ 1.4 million)	• **Contracting Agricultural Advisory Services (US$ 70 million)** • Technology Development and Linkages with Markets. (US$ 10 million) • Supporting Agricultural Advisory Service Providers (US$ 5 million) • Program Management and Monitoring (US$ 10 million)	• Technology Generation and Dissemination (US$ 77.9 million) • Reform and strengthening of MOFA and District Assemblies (US$ 29.5million) • **Development of Farmer-based Organisations (US$ 9.9 million)** • Strengthening Agricultural Education and Training (US$ 5.7 million)

RPO strengthening Component				
	Senegal (PSAOP)	**Burkina Faso (PNDSA II)**	**Uganda (NAADS)**	**Ghana (AgSSIP)**
Specific Objective	Build the capacity of producer organisations to (i) provide agricultural services to farmers, (ii) mobilise the resources to implement such services, (iii) influence rural development policies at local, regional and national levels.	Enhance producer organisations to become stronger and prove their ability to provide agricultural support services to farmers. Finance small infrastructure whose establishment is based on farmer groups.	Support initiatives by farmer groups working together with their Sub-county government, to contract agricultural advisory services	Enhance FBO capacities to participate in the design of agricultural policy and the delivery of goods and services to farmers
Institutional mechanisms put in place (implementing institution)	• Technical Implementing agency to put in place the institutional set-up (2 years). • Specific committee composed of farmer representatives at local level (CLCOP) to examine projects demanded and prepared by grass-roots producer organisations. • At regional level, a farmers' forum examines projects demanded by local and regional farmers' organisations and is responsible for project co-ordination.	• Private implementing agency to put in place the institutional set-up (2 years). • Specific committee composed of farmer representatives at local level – province - (CPCE/OP) to examine projects demanded and prepared by local RPOs.	• Farmer Groups at a local level. • Farmer Forums at a sub-county, district and national level. These forums are responsible for project definition and prioritisation.	• Specific committee composed of farmer representatives and other State institutions representative at local level – district - (DSC) to examine projects demanded and prepared by grass-roots farmers' organisations. • National Board examines projects demanded by local farmers' organisations and is responsible for fund management.
Financing structure (i.e. national, local)	National demand-driven rural services fund (DDRSF), managed by ASPRODEB, and recruited with the consent of local or regional forums (CLCOP, CRCR). Besides, there is a contract between ASPRODEB and the CNCR at national level.	National fund engaged locally by agreement of CPCE/OP and validation of the Management Unit of PNDSA II at national level.	National Account that transfers resources to local forums.	FBO fund – Farmer based organisation Fund. Funding activities not yet effective
Type of activities subject to financing	DDRSF provides resources for training, communication, technical and management advice and technical innovation adoption.	The national fund provides resources for training, communication, technical and management advice, and technical innovation adoption	Orientation and Mobilisation; Constitution of Farmer Groups and Forums; Participatory Planning; Contracting Advisory Services; Information and Communication	The Farmer-Based Organisation Funds provide resources for training, communication, technical and management advice, and technical innovation adoption

2. Analysis

The four programmes studied were drawn up within specific national contexts and at different times, which explains their diversity. They however have common principles and characteristics, which allow them to be classified under the same kind of interventions. These similarities are however marked by notable peculiarities in terms of programmes design and implementation.

2.1. Similarities

(a) Common specific goals and objectives

The programmes studied are obviously similar in terms of **their goals**. All of them fall within the context of the fight against poverty and seek to raise farmers' income through the improvement of productivity. Their **specific objectives** are also very similar. All four programmes studied aim to make agricultural research and extension demand-oriented in order to adapt services to farmers' needs and priorities and make public and private service providers aware of their responsibilities vis-à-vis the producers. To this regard, the programmes clearly aim to build the capacity of RPOs so that they may be able to formulate demands, programme, execute and monitor activities that they would have themselves determined. The overall coherence of these objectives is based on the central idea that it is in empowering RPOs that their capacity can be enhanced in a sustainable manner.

(b) Organisation of the programmes into relatively autonomous components

Structure of the PNDSA II (Burkina Faso)
The structure of the PNDSA II typifies the organisation of the different projects studied. This programme has 5 components: (1) An agricultural research support component; (2) An agricultural extension and livestock support component; (3) A component for the promotion of animal health and pastoral activities (this component is specific to Burkina Faso); (4) A pilot programme component comprising two sub-components namely, the promotion of RPOs and funding of small-scale rural infrastructure; (5) A component to support the restructuring of agricultural services.
The programmes studied are also similar by virtue of their organisation into several components. All four programmes are concerned with agricultural research, extension, and institutional support to Ministries of Agriculture (and livestock). Three of the programmes have a well-defined "RPO support" component, which constitutes an integral part of the programme. There are some variations that do not however undermine the similarity in the organisation of the programmes. These include a rural education and training component in Ghana for instance. The structure of these programmes points to a readiness to promote greater coherence of action and better coordination of the various stakeholders providing support to technical and economic innovation. It can thus be noted that in each programme, there are pilot committees that involve the relevant partners namely, extension/counselling, agricultural research, farmer representatives, the State and NGOs, among others.

(c) Long-term programme funding mechanisms

The four programmes studied are all long-lasting thanks to funding mechanisms that guarantee sustainable support of the reform processes initiated. Their implementation, which is to be in several phases, offers national stakeholders and by extension RPOs, long-term support opportunities that other co-operation bodies do not offer.

Funding mechanisms

Two types of funding mechanisms were designed to implement these projects and programmes. For Senegal, Uganda and Ghana, it was the Adaptable Programme Lending (APL) with duration of 3 x 4 years, 3 x 5 years and 3 x 3 years respectively. For Burkina Faso and Uganda, it was the Sector Investment Loan (SIL) in several 4-year phases for Burkina Faso.

(d) Implementation mechanisms governed by common principles

The set objective of RPO capacity building finds expression in operational measures and instruments underpinned by common principles including: (i) specific funds for RPOs that involve producers in their management; (ii) recourse to a private operator to implement the RPO support component, and (iii) the option to work with grassroots RPOs as a priority.

- *Creation of specific funds for RPOs*

With the exception of Uganda, specific funds for RPO capacity building were set up at local level. **Farmer representatives manage such funds:** these representatives are chosen by local RPOs. They study files, make decisions about funding and follow up activities funded. The structures set up to manage the funds (CLCOP in Senegal, CPCE/OP in Burkina Faso) are made up exclusively of farmers' representatives while in Ghana, they include other stakeholders. Thanks to these funds, local RPOs are able to finance training, exchange of ideas and counselling activities and to carry out innovative actions or, in the case of Burkina Faso, small rural investments.

- *Recourse to a private operator*

Support for the implementation of the "RPO support" component is provided by a private operator who helps organisations to: (i) set up an RPO consultation forum at local level (CLCOP, CPCE/PO) which is especially responsible for managing the fund, and (ii) train farmers' representatives and assist them with regard to participatory planning, setting priorities, programming of activities, management, among others. In some cases, the private operator is under the supervision of the State (as is the case in Burkina Faso). In other cases (as in Senegal), selection and supervision of a private operator is done by a private association managed by rural people (ASPRODEB). Recourse to a private operator is a means of (i) asserting and strengthening the autonomy of RPOs vis-à-vis other stakeholders and especially public authorities, (ii) promoting the strengthening of private service providers.

- *Marked determination to give priority to local communities*

The four programmes give priority to activities at local level. In Ghana, Uganda and Senegal, it was the lowest administrative units created as part of the decentralisation policy that were selected. In Burkina Faso, it was the province (highest administrative unit) that was selected. The decision to intervene at local level in all the cases is due to the following two concerns: (i) enable producers to easily express requests for support that correspond to their priorities, and (ii) promote mutual learning with regard to the management of funds and collaboration with support structures.

★ **Remarks**

The similarities noted in the structuring of the programmes studied highlight the following four common guidelines:

- The will to **create conditions suitable for contracting agricultural services.** Drawing lessons from previous programmes, new World Bank-supported mechanisms are aimed at building the capacity of organisations to formulate service requests and to negotiate contractual support with agricultural research and extension. Recourse to private operators tends to broaden service supply – which is no longer considered to be the exclusive preserve of public services - and is also done on a contract basis.

- The will to **decentralise services**. The will to promote service contracting is in a bid to decentralise their management in order to (i) bring decision-making closer to the grassroots and provide proximity services, and (ii) ensure better conformity to administrative decentralisation.

- The will to **experiment a new approach.** The relatively small amount of local funds earmarked for the funding of RPOs' activities testifies to the pilot nature of this approach. During this phase of learning and establishment of new relations for all stakeholders (RPOs, the Administration, NGOs, the World Bank), special attention is given to procedures and to monitoring of activities carried out as well as assessment of their impact.

- The will to **create conditions conducive to the sustainability of the mechanisms set up**. We can especially cite the support provided for the preparation of an RPO-friendly legal framework and the support provided for agricultural services reforms.

2.2 *Specificities*

The similarities identified should not however conceal the outstanding existence of differences between the programmes studied.

a) The varying importance of the role played by RPOs

The role effectively played by RPOs varies according to countries. It could be very significant in some cases (particularly Senegal) with the involvement of RPOs in the design, implementation and evaluation of the "RPO support" component and also the other components of the programme. In other cases, the involvement of RPOs is more restricted, as producers have a degree of autonomy over the management of mechanisms (and funds) for which they contributed very little to design. Such differences in the degree of effective empowerment of producers may be identified through certain indicators:

- RPO participation (or not) in working out and negotiating the programme and the concrete modalities for participation;
- The membership of local consultation and fund management forums: in some cases, they are made up exclusively of producers whereas in others, workers of the administration are equally involved;

The role of the CNCR in Senegal

The participation of producer organisations in Senegal goes beyond the component, which concerns them directly.

CNCR took part in the reflection on agricultural and rural counselling and in the various meetings that led to the setting-up of ANCAR. It was associated, at the national and local levels, in the recruitment of agricultural counsellors and belongs to ANCAR Board of Administration. It contributed in designing the National Agricultural Research Fund and chairs its management committee.

It chairs the research-development unit set up at national and regional levels and animated by ANCAR. Producer organisations are members of all the structures responsible for monitoring and coordinating the PSAOP Programme at the regional and national level.

- Means of choosing producer representatives who take part in consultation forums (selected/elected by grassroots RPOs or appointed by the administration);
- RPO participation (or not) in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms set up, as well as concrete modalities for such participation.

In the third part of this study, we shall come back on the various practices covered by the notion of "participation".

b) The degree of consideration of national federative organisations ("umbrella")

Although all programmes laid emphasis on grassroots RPO capacity building as earlier seen, in some cases, additional specific resources are devoted to enhancing the higher levels around which RPOs are structured (regional and national RPOs, RPO federations specialized in a given sector, etc.). This was especially the case in Senegal and also in Ghana, where the programme plans to pump in resources to rehabilitate national organisations relating to the cooperative movement.

Direct support to CNCR (Senegal)

At the national level, the CNCR succeeded in accessing project resources through "a consultancy contract" signed with ASPRODEB to monitor CLCOPs. This specific funding made it possible to enhance its technical support unit, to set up an important decentralised communication programme, to train FO officials and make agricultural policy proposals.

In 2003-2004, project resources shall equally be mobilised for the enhancement of four regional committees for rural consultation (CRCR) and two CNCR member federations.

c) A reform of agricultural support services with varying impacts

In some cases, the programme coincides with a profound restructuring of the various agricultural services whereas in others, RPO support complements pre-existing mechanisms that are partially restructured. It is clear that the simultaneity between significant institutional changes and the introduction of specific RPO support creates suitable conditions for re-balancing relations between organised producers and other actors. This was for instance the case with Senegal, where the setting-up of a new agency for agricultural and rural counselling, ANCAR, was considered by the World Bank as a pre-condition for the smooth running of the entire programme. It should however be noted that although RPO support falls under more restricted reforms, it may have a snow-ball effect; this was the case with Burkina Faso, where the innovative nature of the RPO component was retained by the administration, which tried to extend the mechanism to the entire country.

The creation of ANCAR in Senegal.

In Senegal, agricultural service reform was very profound. With the support of the PSAOP, it led to the creation of the Agence Nationale de Conseil Agricole et Rurale (ANCAR) (the National Agency for Agricultural and Rural Counselling). This new agency has a legal status of a company with majority State share and 28% FO funds. Its functioning is decentralised and its installation is accompanied by a profound renovation of methods to support innovation and transition from a technical extension approach to a global agricultural and rural counselling, participatory and multidisciplinary approach based on partnership with the actors concerned.

d) More or less advanced harmonisation with administrative decentralisation

We had earlier seen that RPO support mechanisms very often coincide with the grassroots administrative level set up as part of administrative decentralisation. Close relations are sometimes created between the RPO consultation forum at the local level and the decentralised local entity. As such, in Senegal for instance, some rural communities (managed by elected people) support the CLCOP and contribute financially to its running. There is no denying the fact that the diagnosis carried out as part of agricultural services support programme are very useful to the local councils to set their priorities and work out their action programmes. There are complementarities in some countries that may be reinforced in future. In Uganda, there are strong links with decentralization process: it is planed to mobilize local government funds to the benefit of RPOs projects.

e) Support to private service supply is exceptional

Private operators who are responsible for accompanying RPOs and building their internal technical and strategic capacity are recruited on the basis of their competence. But such competence turn out to vary according to the countries and operators concerned, which are unequally prepared to intervene in a complex and innovative institutional mechanism. Only the Ghana programme included the enhancement of **service supply from private service providers** in its objectives and programming. It should be noted that umbrella RPOs may equally be eligible to funds set aside for the capacity building of service providers which can be an indirect means of envisaging the funding of their operation

The Ghana Extension Development Fund.

Alongside the setting-up of a specific FO support fund (the FBOF) aimed at enabling the funding of their requests for services, a specific fund has been set up for private service providers. This fund, the Extension Development Fund, is aimed at funding the training and functioning of private service providers in order to increase their efficiency, the quality of services provided and hence local service supply.

2.3. Two remarks

A comparative analysis of the four programmes studied brings out their innovative nature as well as the impact of the context to which they belong.

a) Innovative programmes that open promising prospects

Even if these projects are currently in dissimilar levels of execution and development, it could be stated that all of them represent a **very positive institutional innovation**. They reflect, in a higher or lesser extent, the intentions from governments and donors to enhance the private sector in development-oriented actions. They are promoting and putting into practice a participatory environment where government shares with farmers some of its privileges in the design and implementation of public policies for the development of agricultural and rural sectors. They constitute a break with previous models of extension services adopted in these countries, which were basically oriented by the government and provided directly by public sector officials. They contribute to a profound change toward a demand-driven system of agricultural service provision.

At local level: these projects provide an enabling environment for farmers to discuss about their main concerns, assess their specific needs and orient the way services are provided to them. Funds are allocated for this purpose through the preparation and execution of projects identified by producers. Furthermore, these efforts have strengthened the ongoing decentralisation processes by furthering the devolution of responsibilities to local communities and rendering them more autonomous.

At national level: the initiatives carried out in these four countries have strengthened the recognition of producer organisations by the government, which in turn contributed to balance forces between public and private sectors (given the fact that RPOs emerge as a private-sector social process). RPOs have been given more concrete opportunities not only to make decisions regarding the execution of certain government programmes and projects but also to participate more actively in sector policy design and implementation. In addition, the initiative has strengthened the coordination between farmers' needs and priorities and research agendas.

b) The importance of context in programme design and implementation

Clearly, all these projects have been designed in a bid to ensure the active participation of farmers in the different stages through their representatives. However, it could be said that there was more concern to involve farmers in projects' execution and implementation than in the initial phases of preparation and negotiation. In addition, the presence of a number of factors such as the existing capacity of farmers to organise themselves, the prevalence of participatory mechanisms, the real willingness of policy-makers and cooperation partners to facilitate the participation of farmers and the prevailing democratic tradition in the country, determine how important and effective this participation has actually been.

This has two implications:

- on the one hand, in terms of analysis, agricultural services support programmes and particularly their "RPO support" component may not be studied outside the economic, social and institutional context in which they were designed and implemented. The different degrees of RPO involvement in the programmes studied can not be interpreted as the fact that some are more "advanced" than others; it reflects the game of actors present which itself is related to the itinerary of each of the countries concerned.

- On the other hand, in terms of action, the common orientation of the programmes cannot be translated into a "standard mechanism" that would be proposed (imposed) to different countries, regardless of the specificities of the general and local context. The principles, approach and spirit that influence the definition and implementation of the programmes should no doubt guide the actions undertaken but their translation into (highly evolutionary) operational mechanisms should always be specific.

III. FIRST LESSONS OF THE EXPERIENCE

Due to the current stage of execution of the different projects and programmes analysed, it has not always been possible to report conclusive findings. However, some lessons can be drawn from an analysis of these contrasting experiences.

1. The importance of real negotiation between the various stakeholders

The efficiency of the mechanisms set up to support RPOs is, for the most part, based on the quality of the negotiation process between the various stakeholders and on the effective position occupied by the organised producers in the negotiation.

The setting-up of demand-driven agricultural services presupposes the definition, **on a contractual basis**, of a new sharing of responsibilities and tasks between research, extension and RPOs, between the private sector (where RPOs belong) and the public sector. RPO capacity building is a means of reducing the asymmetries that characterize relations between rural producers and the other actors. It is aimed at creating conditions conducive to the definition and implementation of negotiated mechanisms, taking into consideration the interests of the various stakeholders considered to be legitimate by the actors concerned.

1.1. Three favourable factors

The experiences studied bring out the importance of three factors favourable to the construction of an efficient and sustainable partnership between RPOs and agricultural services:

a) **Create conditions to enable real RPO participation in programme design and negotiation.** For the World Bank teams responsible for studying the support programme, this presupposes a comprehensive and active attitude aimed at:

- Facilitating RPO access to independent expertise, at their request, by giving them especially direct access to project preparation funds;
- Taking into consideration, in the pace of programme preparation, the special RPO constraints; organisations often know WB procedures; their leaders (who are the only unpaid actors involved in project design) often have material constraints; they need time to organise consultations within organisations;
- Encouraging, while studying the programme, the experimentation of the envisaged tools and mechanisms, as was the case in Senegal before the official start of the PSAOP;
- Ensuring RPO participation at all stages of programme negotiation by defending before the government – if need be – the importance of this participation's symbolism (official recognition of the place of RPOs in the future project) and efficiency (develop, right from the study phase, contract relations that involve the various actors in project implementation).

a) **Continue negotiation during the implementation of the project.** This presupposes especially to:

- facilitate RPO participation in the consultation forums responsible for monitoring the programme (steering and coordination committees at the national and regional levels) and defining action programmes;

- involve RPOs in supervision and mid-term evaluation missions, as well as in the negotiation of possible adjustments or re-orientations that may occur in the course of the programme.

b) Facilitate the development of negotiated compromises between national actors. Partnership relationships are all the more efficient and lasting when they are based on negotiated agreements that **recognize the interests of each actor and in which they all consider themselves as "winners".** The establishment of new relationships is in fact facilitated when the actors concerned see that there are clear and real prospects. As such, for instance, the "resistance" of some workers (especially government workers) to the empowerment of RPOs is linked to the fact that they have the feeling of "losing their power" and their new roles are not clearly defined and valorised.

As far as negotiations are concerned at all stages, this presupposes the following for the WB teams studying the project:

- Contribute to clarifying the concrete complementarity of the roles of each actor;

- Propose, as is currently the case, the simultaneous and balanced enhancement of RPOs, service institutions and agricultural services. In effect, as much as there is no historical example of agricultural development without a strong producer organisation, there is also no an example of agricultural development without competent service institutions and without efficient State intervention;

- Take into consideration the economic, social and institutional context within which the programme belongs, which presupposes for the WB the non-imposition of a "standard mechanism" that could have proven its worth in another context but which, in a given country, at a given time, is not acceptable by some actors or may not be appropriated by the latter (see infra 2).

1.2. Very diverse conceptions of "participation"

The importance of the negotiation quality as an efficiency factor in the implementation of the "RPO support" component calls for a review of the notion of participation. In effect, the analysis of the various situations in the projects reveals **how divergent can be the expectations that both policy-makers and rural producer organisations have about participation**. This misperception points out the challenge to put into practice true participatory processes and also exposes the real willingness of the former to engage in this sort of processes. Participation and *a fortiori* negotiation go far beyond the design and carrying out of information events where farmers are invited to attend. Participation in essence and negotiation implies sharing of power in terms of access to functional decision-making. Indicators selected to carry out project evaluation and monitoring very often reflect the poor commitment in this sense: the number of workshops carried out, the amount of people who attended them, the quantity of surveys submitted, etc... They may show a high level of activity in using consultation and participatory tools but do not disclose the real impact of such consultation. It would therefore be useful to work out a pattern for the analysis of the dialogue between RPOs and the other actors in order to better grasp the nature and modalities of interactions that take place and that are often qualified by blanket and unclear terms such as "participation", "consultation", "dialogue", "involvement", etc. Some simple

criteria would make it possible to clarify the nature and content of such "participation" and its impact: the frequency of dialogues, the nature and content of dialogue with a gradation according to the degree of involvement in decision-making, the conditions of the dialogue and its scope, its impact (nature and number of decisions modified at the end of the dialogue).

2. The need to mainstream context and facilitate its evolution

The socio-economic and institutional contexts of the agricultural services support programmes are varyingly favourable to negotiated approaches between RPOs and the other actors. It is therefore necessary to take such specificities into consideration and design evolutionary mechanisms whose scope would extend as the context evolves.

The design and implementation of agricultural service restructuring programmes are not a mere technical issue: they presuppose institutional reorganisations that for the most part condition their success. Two factors influence such reorganisation and the conditions under which they may operate: (i) the degree of organisation of producers and the negotiation and action capacity of their organisations; (ii) the institutional context that may be varyingly favourable to RPO empowerment. The WB team responsible for studying and monitoring the programme may thus encourage the necessary changes.

2.1. Identification of partner RPOs to the programme at national level

The existence of well-organised and unified RPOs[9] is clearly an asset for the design and implementation of negotiated programmes. But this is not the case in all countries.

Where there is no structured organisation at the national level, it is not the place of the WB (nor of any other institutional actor) to set up an *ad hoc* organisation whose legitimacy would be a problem. Its job is instead to inform the existing federative organisations at the national level of the programme being designed, of the timeliness and the interest of RPOs to actively participate in it and the usefulness of working out a coordination mechanism between umbrella RPOs that may lead dialogue and negotiation. It seems important that in this information, the form of the consultation mechanism and its operating modalities should not be prejudged.

WB recognition of existing inter-RPO consultation forums (or those set up during the programme) may facilitate/accelerate their official recognition by national institutional players and especially State authorities. The case of Senegal brings out the fact that this recognition is compatible with the programme's concern to open up to all RPOs, irrespective of whether they are members of the consultation forum or not.

National RPOs cannot play an effective role in project design, monitoring and evaluation, if they do not have the necessary resources (human, material and financial) right from the project study phase. From the onset, such resources should especially be aimed at helping RPOs in three domains: training/reflection on the stakes of agricultural and rural development and on the role of services, information and communication between RPOs, expertise for drawing up proposals and preparing negotiations with other stakeholders. Such

[9] Unification does not imply the standardisation of RPOs or the fusion of distinct RPOs in a single organisation: different RPOs unite when they have a consultation forum with clearly defined attributions, without renouncing their specificities and their autonomy in the fields that do not fall under the consultation forum.

resources should be allocated to the inter-RPO consultation forum that would solicit the skills deemed necessary.

The definition of legislative and regulatory frameworks that guarantee RPO autonomy and the exercise of their functions may in some cases constitute a pre-condition for their enhancement and their recognition by the other stakeholders.

It is clear that gradual RPO enhancement and possible resultant changes in terms of producer organisation should be taken into consideration in the course of the project.

2.2. Facilitating the evolution of the general context

Agricultural services reform programmes fall under a larger economic reform movement (State withdrawal, privatisation, trade liberalisation) and institutional reforms (democratisation of public life, decentralisation, "good governance", etc.). Institutional changes have reached varying degrees depending on the countries (in Africa and in other continents) and they are seen differently depending on the category of actors. Such differences have repercussions on agricultural services support programmes and on the initiative capacity recognized in RPOs.

Field studies have brought out the importance of the role of WB teams responsible for designing and monitoring the programmes.

Two points can be underscored:

a) The re-balancing of relations between RPOs and agricultural services and the resulting specific actions for organised producers' capacity building are not expressed in terms of mere "technical" issues (which mechanisms / which tools shall be more efficient?) or financial issues (how much money is needed? How and by whom it shall be managed?). It raises complex issues linked especially to the redistribution of responsibilities, and hence of power between the actors, which is never openly expressed but weighs on technical negotiations. It is clear that the stability of the WB team responsible for the files, its knowledge of local institutional dynamics and its will to promote RPOs are factors that may greatly contribute to the creation of new partnership relations between national actors. This requires remaining steadfast to principles and exercising patience in daily affairs, setting deadlines and avoiding rushing institutional changes. This also presupposes real openness to dialogue with all stakeholders and ... time. But, as pointed out by the President of the WB, "... We should never forget that it is incumbent on countries and their people to set their priorities and we should never forget that we can never nor should ever force development with diktats from elsewhere[10]".

b) WB teams cannot efficiently do their job if they do not have the support of their institution and if there is not enough flexibility in the formulation and implementation of the programmes. Negotiation between actors is at the centre of agricultural services innovation programmes. It presupposes compromise and hence concessions on the part of all the actors, including of course the WB.

[10] JD Wolfenson – The other crisis – Address made before the Board of Governors of the WB group, Washington – 1998.

3. The need to grant autonomy to the "RPO support" component in the agricultural services support programmes

The inclusion of RPO support in multi-component programmes encourages the promotion of demand-oriented services; it runs the risk of "financial blockade" that may be reduced through increased autonomy of the component, with regard to disbursement modalities.

In the cases studied, the "RPO support" component is included in wider programmes comprising various components concerning other institutions engaged in the restructuring of agricultural services. This choice seems very relevant and coherent with the set objectives. In some cases, the non-respect by one component of one of the conditions or one of the provisions of the funding agreement may lead to freezing disbursements for the entire programme. This is especially prejudicial to RPOs, as any suspension of activities may have repercussions on the credibility of the process in the eyes of grassroots organisations. While maintaining the current mechanisms, it would no doubt be necessary to work out procedures that enable differential disbursements depending on the components in order to avoid having a whole range of blockages.

4. The importance of RPO-specific support funds and the need to gradually extend same

The specific funds set up at the local level within the context of RPO capacity building constitute a very relevant innovation and are very much appreciated by producers. The gradual extension of such funds and the decentralisation of their management constitute desirable avenues for change.

It is particularly interesting to note that RPO technical capacity building goes with the enhancement of their financial capacity through the setting-up of funds whose mobilisation is the total or partial responsibility of grassroots RPOs. In the first pilot phase, such funds are limited in volume and are restricted to few beneficiaries. They are very much appreciated by grassroots RPOs, which thus underscore the need for them to be extended.

Two changes may be envisaged:

a) Extending the volume of the funds and diversifying the actions eligible for funding
There is a strong demand to support productive investments that would logically increase rural loans. But very often, the loans system is non-existent and/or particularly ill-adapted to the envisaged investments (very small amounts, very high interests). As an experimental and transitory measure, it would be interesting to analyse the possibility of allocating part of the local funds to support economic activities (working capital, for instance) to compensate the obvious deficiencies of the financial services in many regions (see below). Such dual extension may intervene as soon as the local consultation forums have shown proof of their management abilities.

b) Increased and gradual decentralisation of local fund management
Fund management procedure gives great powers to local structures to carry out studies and make decisions on funding, which are however attached to a decision-making chain involving a national level. Although this is highly justified in the start-off phase, in order to ensure the relevance of procedures and their respect, one may subsequently envisage an increased decentralisation of fund management with an *a posteriori* audit. Apart from greater celerity in processing files of small projects, such decentralisation would enable total empowerment of

local RPOs. To accompany this advanced decentralisation, it would be useful, after having demonstrated management skills of existing mechanisms for one or two years, to set a maximum amount for commitments made at the local level.

5. The need to also support national and regional RPOs

The priority currently given to grassroots RPO enhancement seems very relevant. The extension of support to national and regional federative RPOs seems however indispensable to enable organised producers to influence the orientations of institutions responsible for services and contribute to the definition of agricultural policies.

Although the option to lay emphasis on the local level appears to be undisputable, it should be accompanied by support to the enhancement of organisations situated at higher geographical and decision-making levels, for two main reasons:

a) The promotion of demand-driven agricultural services presupposes contractual relations at the local level between support services and RPOs directly related to the production process. Meanwhile, the efficiency of the contracting services at the local level is enhanced if higher level RPOs are capable of influencing the orientation of institutions responsible for service provision. As exemplified by the cases of Senegal, collaboration between ANCAR and CNCR at the national level creates conditions conducive to efficient contracting at the local level. CNCR contributed to the definition of ANCAR and is represented in its Board of Administration; it participated in the recruitment of agricultural counsellors who work with local RPOs. The same applies for research, where CNCR plays a very active role in the orientation and running of the research fund set up within the context of the PSAOP.

b) One of the objectives of RPO enhancement is to enable them play a role in the definition of agricultural policies. This objective is also found in most official documents relating to national rural development strategies. It is obvious that this objective cannot be attained by acting only at the local level. It presupposes support to the enhancement of national RPO analysis, proposal and negotiation capacities and hence specific actions that concern, for instance, the improvement of internal communication, the recruitment of technical staff and recourse to independent experts, the improvement of working conditions, training of officials in designing agricultural policies, etc.

The enhancement of national RPOs should concern multi-sector organisations but also organisations structured around a sector/produce or a function (loan, for instance). It should be accompanied by RPO enhancement at the regional level; the region (in the agro-ecological, economic and administrative sense of the word) is indeed a particularly important level in terms of planning, programming and coordination among actors.

6. The quality and diversity of service supply is also a pre-requisite for the success of programmes implemented

RPO enhancement creates conditions for agricultural services to be demand-oriented; the efficiency of mechanisms set up, in terms of impact on production especially, however depends also on the quality and diversity of service supply.

RPO enhancement makes it possible to express demand in accordance with their needs and priorities. This approach can however be fruitful in terms of improvement of productivity and increase in revenue only if the content of responses made by services is really adapted to local production conditions.

Three remarks can be made:

a) The first actions undertaken after the start of the programme visibly have an essentially pedagogic value. They enable actors to learn to interact and to master the mechanisms set up. They are considered as a "test" by producers who verify the capacity of the mechanism to really take into consideration their demands. At this stage, the content of actions undertaken may be considered as secondary, though it sometimes appears to be stereotyped and different vis-à-vis the constraints highlighted by the participatory diagnosis.

b) It is however necessary to lay special emphasis, as soon as possible, on the technical and economic content of the actions undertaken. Three articulated elements may contribute to this end:
   - Valorisation of the innovation potential, which constitutes the experience accumulated by farmers (which should thus be identified);
   - Valorisation of research findings and continuation of research by including information from participatory diagnoses;
   - Institution of efficient research-development whose objective is to construct, in practical terms, suitable technical and economic references and in which RPOs must play a key role (without necessarily ensuring direct implementation).

   Initiatives have been taken to this end in some countries that should be closely followed up.

c) Demand-driven services should not be understood to mean a mere encounter between demand and supply; supply being perceived as a mere response that mechanically adjusts to demand. In effect, given the magnitude of challenges faced by the farmers and the complexity of problems to be solved, solutions may be sought only collectively and gradually, through dialogue between the various stakeholders centred on the analysis of the demand expressed and on the elaboration of the response. When confidence is established between RPOs and agricultural services, it becomes possible, from problems identified (and analysed collectively), to seek solutions that mainstream the know-how of the various stakeholders. The solutions thus found will no doubt be more sustainable than those sought through mere technology transfer.

7. The impact of an unfavourable economic context

The scope of reformed agricultural services may being undermined by significant shortcomings that characterize the economic environment of agricultural activity; the agricultural service reform should logically be accompanied by specific programmes aimed at creating a secured environment that encourages producers to innovate.

A demand-oriented agriculture backed by innovative research is an essential factor to support and speed up the technical and economic innovation process in the rural areas. It is however not the only one. The initiative capacity of rural producers is indeed limited by

environmental constraints: poor infrastructure, difficult access to individual and collective equipment, inadequacies of adapted funding mechanisms, heavy fluctuations in the prices of agricultural produce due to the absence of regulatory mechanisms, etc.

Two types of measures may increase the impact of agricultural services reform programmes:

- Support to structuring investments: communication means, hydro-agricultural developments, warehouses, etc.

- Support to facilitate the collective and individual acquisition by producers of productive equipment to start off some activities (working capital). This would presuppose funding mechanisms tailored to the conditions of producers (low-interest loans, partial subsidies, etc.) to correct the shortcomings of agricultural loan systems and complement/amplify micro-finance initiatives, etc.

Two items are worthy of being highlighted:

- **Encourage harmonisation of the different WB-supported programmes**. In most of the countries concerned with agricultural services support programmes, the WB also finances rural investment programmes (which are often implemented with decentralised local governments) and poverty reduction actions (social fund for development, for instance). The complementarity of such programmes with agricultural services reform is obvious; it however faces difficulties in being translated into clearly articulated practices even though efforts are being made to that end in some countries.

- Support efforts made to **define agricultural policies that create an environment more conducive** to rural initiatives; enhancement of RPO capacity to make argued proposals may contribute thereto.

8. RPO support programmes contribute to poverty alleviation

The mechanisms set up at the local level encourage access of the poorest farmers to funding and services. Some specific mechanisms would make it possible to consolidate such achievements.

The mechanisms set up to enhance local RPOs and ensure their access to funding make it possible to undertake actions that benefit the poor. A recent study conducted in Senegal and Burkina Faso[11] shows that most rural households are members of a farmers' organisation (70% in Senegal, 62% in Burkina Faso) and that many of them say they clearly benefit therefrom (60% in Senegal, 32% in Burkina Faso). Such RPOs therefore constitute a relevant channel to reach the most disadvantaged social categories, to combat poverty and inequalities. As such, it can be noted that the existence of an RPO consultation forum at the local level facilitates access of the most disadvantaged RPOs to information (technical, economic and funding-related) and introduces transparency in the attribution of funds. Three types of provisions may limit some of the difficulties currently encountered:

- Specific technical support to the most disadvantaged RPOs that can be mobilised upon request, in order to help them design projects;

- Differed payment of RPO contribution to their project, which would reduce the initial financial barrier that personal contribution may constitute;

[11] Study conducted in 2002-2004 by the Universities of Berkeley, Clermont Ferrand, Dakar (CREA), and Ouagadougou (CEDRES).

- Specific means allocated to far-off RPOs in order to limit the "distance" effect (reimbursement of travel expenses for instance);

- Flexibility in the implementation of statutory instruments that oblige local RPOs to have legal status to access funding. In effect, the acquisition of a legal status has a cost that some very poor RPOs may not be able to meet up with from the onset.

Such provisions may be discussed with partner RPOs so that measures that would eventually be taken would be negotiated and help avoid failures.

9. Support RPOs without exploiting them

Activities conducted to enhance the capacity of rural producer organisations unavoidably impacts pre-existing organisation dynamics. It is however essential that outside support should pay attention to the dynamics under construction and avoid exploiting them.

Partnership between RPOs and outside actors is characterized by profound asymmetries (in terms of access to information, decision-making power and access to financial resources) that RPO enhancement programmes contribute to reduce. Such asymmetries will not be easily reduced because they are also linked to power struggles between actors and to the room for manoeuvre of each and everyone of them, which is very diverse. In most countries, RPOs correspond only partially to the aspirations of outside actors, the reverse being likewise true. The temptation may thus be great for policy-makers or for donor institutions to strongly suggest, or even impose, the "restructuring" of organisations and to give preference to some levels of organisation. The favourable position they occupy in negotiation may encourage them to do so, but also the weakness of organisations in certain countries and their lack of resources. In addition, an RPO support project also constitutes a power stake within organisations, both for guiding the project and for controlling resources.

Two points may be underscored to this regard:

- The orientation and organisation of RPOs must be the exclusive responsibility of rural peoples. RPO support may not be "social engineering" in the hands of experts, no matter how competent they may be, because there would be a big risk of seeing the setting-up of *ad hoc* organisations, whose legitimacy would be linked more to project managers than to their recognition by producers and whose efficiency would not be sustainable.

- The capacity of RPOs to draw sustainable benefit from the achievements being proposed, without becoming mere instruments of outside intervention, depends first on the clearness of their own strategic project and secondly on the capacity/will of support organisations to negotiate with them the content and modalities of the support given them. This therefore implies that RPO support also concerns the enhancement of their analytic, strategic planning and negotiation skills.

10. The challenge of national education and rural training strategies

The impact of agricultural services restructuring would be amplified if, simultaneously, similarly considerable efforts were made to define and implement national education and rural training strategies geared towards the same goals.

This implies especially to:

- Increase the enrolment rate in the rural area;
- Promote training courses adapted to the rural people (men and women, young and the old) and that allow for the enhancement of their technical, economic and management skills;
- Lay emphasis on the training of RPO leaders (men and women) at different geographical levels. Some suitable training should be instituted to improve their access to information and to enhance their analysis, proposal, negotiation and action capacities in technical and economic sectors, and at different decision-making levels. Collaboration with other donors may facilitate the implementation of such training programmes at sub-regional levels that seem relevant for strengthening the links between existing RPOs and their coordination to have an impact in international negotiations;
- Adjusting the training of top-ranking and medium level officials who work in the agricultural sector.

This is a major project. Reflections to be carried out may be inspired from innovative experiences that exist in many countries.

11. The importance of coherence between interventions

RPO capacity building may encourage the harmonisation at the grassroots level of the various interventions in the rural area.

The programmes studied seem so far to have a limited multiplier effect on other donors. This, for the most part, is explained by the fact that most of the programmes are in their start-up phase. This is also explained by the recurrent difficulties encountered in the coordination of the various interventions in the rural area, even though considerable progress has been made.

RPO enhancement, at different geographical (local, regional and national) and decision-making (sector, for instance) levels constitutes a means for grassroots complementing of the "top-down" harmonisation efforts (among decision makers).

Two remarks seem to militate in favour of this:

- When local consultation forums among RPOs are taken over by the rural people, they facilitate real consultation between RPOs, State authorities and other local actors. They thus become decision-making circles that enable the mobilisation of means for the enhancement of local dynamics, and more generally grassroots harmonisation forums for sector-based interventions proposed by the various donors. The mechanisms set up to manage available funds may also serve to manage resources other than those of the World Bank (as it is beginning to be the case). This would extend the capacities of local

RPOs to manage their programmes without necessarily starting over the entire process of diagnosis, priority setting, etc.

- The enhancement of federative RPOs increases the capacity of organisations to work for the harmonisation of the various projects and programmes at the regional and national levels. The mechanisms set up to manage WB resources which belong to federative organisations may also be used to manage other funds.

Apart from harmonising interventions, such processes would diversify the RPO resources and thus enhance their autonomy.

ENHANCING THE CAPACITIES OF RURAL PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS

The case of the Agricultural Services and Producer Organisations Support Programme (PSAOP)

Senegal

Marie-Rose Mercoiret

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INTRODUCTION

This report attempts to identify the first lessons that can be learnt from the actions carried out in Senegal within the framework of the « Support to rural producer organisations » component of the « Agricultural Services and Producer Organisations Support Programme » (PSAOP).

Analysis of the Senegalese case lies within the scope of a broader study entrusted to CIRAD by the World Bank (WB) and whose objective is to take capitalise on the experience already acquired with regard to the design, negotiation and implementation of WB-sponsored rural producer organisations (RPOs) capacity building projects.

A. Background of study

Since 1997, the World Bank in collaboration with French Cooperation has embarked on many initiatives aimed at:

- Building the capacity of rural producer organisations;
- Promoting, through specific agricultural development projects, partnership relations between rural producer organisations and agricultural services so that the actions of the latter may be tailored to farmers' demands.

These new approaches were first tested in four West African countries (Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso) and later extended to North Africa (Tunisia and Morocco). Similar projects were also negotiated in English-speaking countries and demands are also emerging in Asia (Indonesia, India, etc).

In spite of the recent modification by the World Bank of its approach to agricultural services (as well as the innovation which the related support to capacity building of rural producer organisations constitutes), the Bank still deemed it necessary to take stock of the lessons that can already be drawn from ongoing actions.

The following two questions were formulated:

(i) What has been done? What has been achieved? What difficulties have been encountered?

(ii) What prospects for the future? In concrete terms, what are the next steps the World Bank needs to take?

In order to answer these questions, the following four activities were carried out within the context of the study:

(i) **Review of recent literature** produced by the World Bank and other institutions on the capacity building of rural producer organisations with a view to highlighting the main analyses carried out, the work orientations proposed, etc.

(ii) **Review of the World Bank portfolio** in order to:
- Identify projects financed by the World Bank and which include an "organisation enhancement" component;
- Describe the content of selected actions and the modalities of execution of such actions within the context of the different projects;
- Highlight the difficulties encountered by TTLs in implementing actions aimed at strengthening organisations.

(iii) **The carrying out of more detailed case studies in four African countries** (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Ghana) where there are ongoing World Bank financed projects which aim to develop demand-oriented agricultural services and

which include a component on "rural producer organisations (RPOs) capacity building ".

Country case studies focus on the following main themes:

- Did RPOs effectively participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project?
- How is the dialogue between the WB team and RPOs structured? Is it limited to the RPO support project or does it involve other WB projects?
- How is dialogue structured between RPOs on the one hand and between public services, decision-makers and the private sector on the other hand?
- Has the WB approach vis-à-vis RPOs changed? Has the WB's perception changed?
- Have new RPO consultation mechanisms been set up or are they envisaged?
- Does the legal framework of RPOs constitute a constraint (as concerns access to status for instance...)?
- What measures have been taken to avoid the risk of marginalizing the poorest groups?
- Is the capacity building of FOs being carried out at the same time with the institutional reform of the Ministry of Agriculture and its related services? Are agricultural services more efficient when the capacities of FOs are enhanced?
- How are RPO capacity building projects related to other WB sponsored projects?

(iv) After country case studies, a **summary report** that sets forth the main cross-cutting lessons was drafted.

B. Conduct of the case study carried out in Senegal

The study conducted in Senegal was done in three stages:

(i) **A bibliographical analysis** (centred especially on the following three points) :

- Agricultural policy developments and the situation of agriculture;
- The structuring of Senegalese farmers' organisations and description of their current activities;
- Brainstorming carried out in Senegal on the review of support to innovation methods, agricultural and rural counselling and RPO capacity building.

(ii) **A mission to Senegal** carried out from 18 to 29 May 2003 and which made it possible to achieve the following:

- Thorough study of the bibliography and historical background of the PSAOP through the analysis of various documents produced at each stage of the design, negotiation, experimentation and implementation of the project;
- Interviewing the different PSAOP stakeholders and especially those of them concerned with the « support to producer organisations » component. These included the Dakar WB Bureau officials responsible for monitoring the project, ASPRODEB and CNCR officials and technical staff, ANCAR and ISRA-BAME officials, etc. The Department of Analysis, forecasts and Statistics (DAPS) of the Ministry of Agriculture was also contacted;
- A visit to the Louga and Thiès regions made it possible to meet the officials of Regional Rural Consultation Centres (CRCR) and FONGS, officials of local consultation committees of farmers' organisations (CLOP), the regional team of the two Technical Implementation Agencies (AET) involved in the project at Thiès (CECI) and at Louga (USU), regional leaders of ANCAR and of the Department of Rural Development, etc.

(iii) Drafting of the Report.

This report is divided into four chapters:

- The first chapter presents a few characteristics of the political, economic and institutional background of the PSAOP. After a brief presentation of the main agricultural policy developments and the great challenges to which Senegalese farmers are confronted, the main stages of organisation of the rural world are discussed;
- The second chapter describes the conditions under which the PSAOP was prepared and presents its different components. This is followed by an analysis of the PSAOP design and negotiation modalities with special emphasis on the role played by farmers' organisations;
- The third chapter is devoted to an analysis of PSAOP implementation modalities and the first results of the « support to producer organisations » component of the programme;
- Lastly, the fourth chapter recaps the first lessons that can be learnt from the work already done and strives to situate the programme in relation to initiatives sponsored by other funding bodies.

1. Agricultural policy developments and the structuring of farmers' organisations

The Senegalese agricultural sector is confronted to a serious and lingering crisis characterised by stagnation in overall agricultural production, a precarious food situation for many households and widespread poverty in the rural areas. It should be noted that the agricultural policies implemented from the outset of the crisis in the late 1970s did not yield expected results. Public authorities adopted new policies between 1995 and 2001 and an Agricultural blueprint Law (LOA) is being prepared. In order to support the reforms undertaken, several programmes[12] including the PSAOP have been designed and are currently being implemented. Many of the programmes - depending on specific modalities - try to take advantage of two assets of the Senegalese rural world in order to tackle the serious challenges to which it is confronted. These include the achievements of a decentralisation policy initiated in 1972 and the long-standing will to organise rural farmers, which has for ten years now grown ever stronger.

1.1. Orientation and re-orientation of agricultural policies

Agricultural and rural development policies have for a long time undergone profound changes.

1.1.1. The « State-led development » era

At independence, Senegal's economy is based on the production and exportation of groundnuts. Agricultural policy components initially aimed to achieve the following three objectives: food self-sufficiency (through the development of food crops), technical modernisation, and diversification of production. Centred on two principles namely, "responsible participation" and "contractual development", the approaches used were underpinned by the following three-pronged operational mechanism:

- Rural animation whose aim (already) was to facilitate the "participation of the rural world in designing and implementing actions that concerned them";

[12] An important investment programme in the agricultural sector (PISA) was designed to support the enhancement of reforms resulting from the PASA (1995)

- The Multi-purpose Rural Expansion Centre (Centre d'Expansion Rural Polyvalent - CERP) which had a multidisciplinary technical team at local level;
- The cooperative, a multi-purpose and multi-sector economic organisation that especially had the monopoly to market groundnuts thus making it possible to quickly put an end to a century-old system controlled by intermediaries.

Besides, various agricultural policy instruments were put in place. These included the following:

- The "agricultural programme" which enabled farmers to acquire agricultural equipment and inputs on credit through the cooperative;
- A new land law which instituted the principle of "State property";
- The Stabilisation and Equalisation Fund which enabled the State to control the prices of agricultural produce;
- etc.

Except for rural animation, the mechanism survived until the early 80s. However, from 1964, it was gradually marginalized and replaced by progressive implementation of major regional projects, which in 1974 became Regional Rural Development Companies (sociétés régionales de développement rural - SRDR). These included SAED in the River Senegal delta and valley, SODEVA in the groundnuts-growing basin, SOMIVAC in Casamance, SODEFITEX in east Senegal, SODESP in the silvicultural and pastoral area, etc.

Focusing on the cultivation of one main crop (either groundnuts, cotton, irrigated rice, etc), the major regional projects equipped themselves with specific intervention mechanisms based on proximity guidance of farmers who were often organised into groups responsible for carrying out various technical and economic functions.

The results of Government intervention in the agricultural sector during the first two decades of independence are "very mixed". "The groundnut-based economy progressively slummed into crisis characterised by a fall in production, rapid degradation of the soil and deterioration of prices in real terms, thus impoverishing the farmers"[13]

During the first years, groundnut cultivation benefited much from modernisation efforts. Production reached one million tons in 1965 and during the period from 1960 to 1971, annual average production was 937,000 tons. However, between 1968 and 1974, groundnut production witnessed a first period of stagnation. The surface areas cultivated decreased and price deterioration was compounded by unfavourable climatic and ecological conditions. After a few more favourable years, a 25% drop in export prices would mark the late 1970s and "no other development of similar scope came to replace the groundnut-based economy" (Ch. Delgado and Jammeh, 1991)[14].

1.1.2. The era of "adjustments"

"By disrupting the world economic and financial system, the economic crisis of the 1970s laid bare all the structural weaknesses of the Senegalese economy... Senegal plunged into a serious crisis that made economic and financial adjustment inevitable"[15], and this of course affected agricultural policy.

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[13] Kasse Mustapha, Le Sénégal, laboratoire d'ajustement, Géopolitique africaine, n° 9, January 2003.

[14] Introduction: structural change in a hostile environment. In The political economy of Senegal under structural adjustment. New-York, Praeger, pp. 1 to 20.

[15] Kasse M., op. cit., p.128.

★ **The new agricultural policy (1984)**

From 1979/1980, Senegal initiated economic and institutional reforms that are still ongoing today. The reforms had an impact on the agricultural sector from the very beginning (suppression of the agricultural programme and dissolution of the National Marketing and Development Assistance Board (Office national de commercialisation et d'assistance pour le développement - ONCAD in 1979 and 1980 respectively). In 1984, a new agricultural policy (NPA) directly based on structural adjustment policies was drawn up.

Between 1984 and 1994, many measures were taken which profoundly affected the economic and institutional framework of agricultural production. Such measures included the reduction and subsequent suspension of subsidies for inputs in 1988/1989, privatisation of the agricultural credit establishment (crédit agricole) in 1985, liberalisation of trade in cereals and groundnuts, etc.

The results of the NPA were, doubtless for many reasons, disappointing. These include very ambitious objectives without an attendant incentive framework for rural farmers, over-evaluation of the CFA Franc, internal opposition to the restructuring of the various sub-sectors, etc. The complementary measures taken (for instance, the National Agricultural Extension Programme – PNVA - since 1990) have not succeeded to roll back the crisis that has rocked the Senegalese agricultural sector for many years now:

- "The average annual growth rate for overall agricultural production is very low (0.8 % in 1967-1996 and – 0.5 % in 1988-1996") [16]
- "Generally speaking... the real value of monetary agricultural income per rural inhabitant has fallen drastically... Since the early 1960s, the real value of marketed production per rural inhabitant has dropped from CFAF 40.000 (1990 value of the CFAF) to CFAF 12.000 in 1993-1996" [17];
- 40.4 % of rural households were living below the poverty line according to a study carried out by the WB in 1991/1992;
- According to CILSS/DIAPER sources, 61% of rural households earn an annual income below CFAF 600.000[18];
- The share of agricultural revenue in the income of rural households has dwindled (just 22 % of revenue in 1992) because of the strategy adopted by the rural people to increase cereal production for personal consumption and to seek non-agricultural monetary revenue[19].

★ **PASA and the new agricultural revival strategies**

After devaluation of the CFA Franc in 1994, and in the face of a greatly devastated agriculture, the Senegalese authorities in 1995 drew up new agricultural policy guidelines within the context of the Agricultural Structural Adjustment Programme (PASA).

Officially published in April 1995, the **Agricultural Development Policy Letter (LPDA) targets four objectives:** (i) improving the living standards of rural people especially through poverty alleviation, better food security, reduction of the income gap between rural and urban dwellers and the creation of non-agricultural jobs in the rural areas; (ii) improving national food security; (iii) improving the balance of trade by enhancing the domestic and external competitiveness of the agricultural sector ; (iv) improving the management of natural resources.

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[16] Belières Jean-François. Impact de l'ajustement structurel sur l'agriculture irriguée du delta du Sénégal, 1999, pp. 38-39.

[17] WB. Study on poverty, published in 1995.

[18] Cited by the Ministry of agriculture and Livestock, operational strategy and framework plan of action of the agricultural sector, December 2001.

[19] J.F. Belières, op. cit.,pp. 38-39.

The following five strategic guidelines were formulated: (i) liberalisation of trade, inputs and the prices of agricultural produce, amendment of legal instruments to allow for free competition between economic operators, implementation of WTO and WAEMU treaties relating to external trade; (ii) privatisation of commercial activities; (iii) State withdrawal and redefinition of public service duties: research, extension, agricultural policy, information, monitoring and evaluation, regulation, prevention and management of natural disasters; (iv) Land reform that allows for private transactions and reassures private investors.

The LPDA determines for each sector and sub-sector the measures to be taken to create a new institutional and legal framework attractive to economic operators. It defines the role of local governments, the role of farmers' organisations, etc.

Between 1995 and the year 2000, other guidelines were defined in order to supplement LPDA . These include among others:

- The Livestock Development Policy Letter (LPDE) in 1999;
- The Institutional Development Policy Letter (LPI) in October 1998 which underscores the vital role assigned to farmers' organisations with regard to the design and implementation of agricultural and rural development programmes;
- The Decentralised Rural Development Policy Letter in 1999[20];
- The Environment Sector Development Policy Letter (LPERN).

Concurrently, various initiatives were taken to transform these guidelines into operational strategies. These included:

- The preparation of a Strategic Policy Paper (DOS) presented in 1998 to the Donor Consultative Group for Senegal;
- The drawing up of **a medium-term framework plan of action** to render DOS guidelines operational (finalised in 2001);
- etc.

It should be noted that alongside these initiatives, the Senegalese authorities have, since 1995 undertaken various actions concerning the agricultural sector. These have to do with:

- Implementation since 1997 of an **agricultural revival programme** funded exclusively on national budget;
- An increase in the amount of internal resources allocated to the agricultural sector (an 80% increase between 1996 and 1999);
- Negotiation and implementation of various agricultural programmes sponsored by external donors (WB, FAO, EU, etc.). Besides, several partners are supporting investment programmes at local level as part of the decentralisation process;
- etc.

Many observers note that the initiatives undertaken by Government through the various 'letters' constitute significant progress. However, their compartmentalisation undoubtedly undermines the coherence and clarity of agricultural policy. As the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock noted in 2001, "there is need to prepare and validate one document... that will make it possible to establish the link between the national rural sector development policy and regional development policies by specifying their implementation modalities which should be consistent with ,and suited to, a really decentralised and participatory approach..."[21]. The decision by the authorities to enact an Agricultural Blueprint Law is testimony to the will to define medium- and long-term agricultural policy guidelines. A bill to this effect has been prepared and is currently the subject of consultations between the

[20]Ministry of agriculture and Livestock. Operational strategy Proposals and Agricultural sector framework plan. December2001.

[21] MAE, op. cit., P10.

different actors. It is also the subject of broad-based discussions within farmers' organisations.

1.2. Extent of the challenges facing the Senegalese agricultural sector

The rural sector is of very great importance in Senegal. In 1998, Senegal had 5.3 million rural inhabitants (57% of the total population) with a population growth rate of 2.2% a year. During the period from 1985 to 1998, the contribution of the primary sector (agriculture, livestock, fishing, forests) to GDP was 20.5% on average (18.5% in 2000). The agricultural sector accounts for up to 10% of total GDP but still employs more than 61% of rural inhabitants.

The devaluation of the CFAF in 1994 did little to promote agriculture and the measures taken within the framework of PASA did not yield expected results. Rural growth during the period from 1995 to 1998 was only 0.7%, the agricultural sector having witnessed a -2.6% drop in growth. In spite of the significant development of some sub-sectors (horticulture, maize, etc.), agriculture is in many respects still faced with "a production crisis" due to the combined effect of the following three factors:

- The socio-economic environment of agriculture is not motivating to many farmers with a very limited investment capacity;
- The degradation of natural resources and the decline of soil fertility are very preoccupying;
- An unsteady rainfall compounds the situation.

Senegal's membership to the WTO and its adoption within the framework of WAEMU of a common low external tariff adds to the challenges for which Senegalese agriculture is ill-prepared.

The following five stakes appear to be central to the rural sector:

- Rapid improvement of productivity
- Improvement of food security;
- Reduction of poverty and inequalities;
- Sustainable management of natural resources;
- Development of non-agricultural activities in the rural areas.

Faced with the lingering crisis affecting the rural sector, Senegalese authorities have drawn up an Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (PISA) which complements the economic and institutional reforms being carried out since 1995 within the framework of PASA.

PSAOP is an important component of PISA that also comprises other projects. These include the National Rural Infrastructure Programme (PNIR) also backed by the WB, the Food Security Programme (FAO), etc.

It should be noted that the preparation and negotiation of the PSAOP coincided with the preparation by the Senegalese Government of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which also envisages many actions to be carried out in the rural areas (especially the setting up of the WB financed Social Development Fund Agency–AFDS) where a majority of the poor are found.

Many other rural sector projects were initiated in 1995. These included European Union support to the groundnuts sub-sector, assistance to local governments born out of the administrative decentralisation and regionalisation decided in 1996, etc.

1.3. Diverse organisations growing in unity and strength

Diverse farmers' organisations that have existed in Senegal for a long time and which have greatly grown in strength over the past ten years constitute an important asset for tackling the numerous challenges facing the rural world and for implementing the PSAOP.

1.3.1. Diverse organisations

The current set-up of Senegalese farmers' organisations is the outcome of a process begun in the early 1960s and that has developed alongside the rural development strategies put in place.

a) During the « State-led development», phase which broadly corresponds to the first two decades after independence, the following three types of grassroots organisations were set up:

- **Cooperatives:** They were either village or inter-village bodies and the State invested much to set them up. Cooperatives remained for a long time the only official organisation model. Government's « agricultural programme » began in this form. Cooperatives also had the monopoly to market groundnuts. However, their autonomy was limited by the omnipresence of ONCAD.

- **Farmers' groups**: These sometimes sub-village bodies, which, until 1984, had no official legal status, can be classified into the following two categories: major regional project groups and local intervention groups.

  Thus, the advent of Regional Rural Development Companies in the 1970s was followed in some regions (Fleuve, East Senegal), especially in non- groundnut-growing areas, by implicit rejection of cooperatives by SRDRs that gave rise to new forms of organisation (Farmers' Group/GP in the SAED area, Farmers' Grassroots Association/ABP in the SODEFITEX area) though cooperatives continued to exist. The same situation applied to Projects: "PRS Groups" in Sédhiou, "PIDAC Groups" in Lower-Casamance, etc.

  The advent of NGOs seeking farmer partners also gave rise to the setting up of new groups (CARITAS and PIP groups, etc) which added to those set up by the administration namely, GOPEC, Women advancement groups, youth groups, livestock breeders and fishermen's groups, etc.).

- **Associations:** Associations began in the early 1970s in the peripheral regions (Fleuve, East Senegal, Casamance) and then spread to the groundnut-growing basin.

  Pioneer farmers' organisations became renown. These included the Walo Association (Amicale du Walo) in the Saint-Louis region, ALAC and Entente de Kabiline in Casamance, Entente de Bamba-Thialène in East Senegal among others. These organisations, which mainstreamed groups and households into "Village Development Associations" were quite educative. As local organisations grouping together varied grassroots organisations, these inter-village farmers' organisations were sometimes set up with the legal status of associations recognised by the Ministry of Internal affairs but never without difficulty. They always claimed their autonomy from the State and from official development interventions and benefited from the support of international NGOs.

Two remarks need to be made here:

- Cooperatives and farmers' organisations remained for a long time strongly polarised by the body that gave rise to them, and exchanges between grassroots organisations were limited. Conversely, associations were quick to see the need to unite at local level, establish relations with inter-village organisations (inter-Ententes for instance) and unite at national level thus leading to the creation of the Senegalese Federation of NGOs (FONGS) in 1976 [22].
- Cooperatives and producer groups linked to major regional projects and SRDRs most often performed economic functions (supplies, credit, primary marketing of products...) and focused on strategic products (groundnuts, cotton, irrigated rice, etc.). The other organisations laid emphasis on diversification activities and paid little attention to export sub-sectors.

b – Reforms, new agricultural policy and intensification of farmers' organisation (1980-1992)

From the early 1980s, suspension by the State of support to agriculture greatly influenced the setting up of farmers' organisations

There were two obvious trends:

(i) A « top-down » trend, upheld by official development stakeholders:

- The abrupt withdrawal of the State led to a disorganisation of the agricultural production environment and was also accompanied by the "transfer" to farmers of the functions (and responsibilities) public services were relinquishing. Foreign stakeholders increasingly manifested their interest in farmers' organisations and many actions were taken to secure autonomy for groups hitherto under supervision and to unite grassroots organisations[23].
- Reform of the legal framework made these developments possible:
  - ➔ The 1984 and 1985 laws to set up Economic Interest Groups (EIGs) gradually enabled groups to secure a legal status, become eligible for credit award, etc.
  - ➔ Reform of the cooperative movement in 1983 eventuated in the creation of village branches of cooperatives (SVC) whose role was to coordinate village initiatives. The aim of SVCs was to give renewed impetus to those cooperatives bedevilled by many problems and greatly discredited by the fact that they had served as instruments in the hands of the Government.
- The setting up of **federations** was backed by public services. In 1987, branches of the Federation of Women advancement Groups were set up at local (rural community), divisional, regional and national levels. The National Union of Livestock Breeder Cooperatives (UNCE) created in 1982 and the National Federation of Livestock Breeder EIGs (FNGIE-E) fell in line with two successive options of the livestock service namely, the creation of livestock breeder cooperatives and then from 1985, support to the creation of EIGs. In 1990, the National Federation of Fishing EIGs was set up.

These different organisations, which initially benefited from the support of development bodies quickly became autonomous.

(ii) A « bottom-up » trend upheld by FONGS.

State withdrawal and the opening up of the political spectrum widened the scope of action of local organisations related to the associative movement:

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[22] Officially recognised in 1978, FONGS was created on the initiative of 5 federative farmers' organisations related to the associative movement. Its appellation, which sometimes lends itself to ambiguity outside Senegal, is the outcome of negotiations with the State that wanted the federation to distinguish itself from cooperatives.

[23] It should be noted that the National Union of Senegalese cooperatives was set up in 1978.

- The number of local inter-village organisations rose significantly in the different regions of the country;
- There was fruitful collaboration between associations and public development bodies especially at local and regional levels.

FONGS membership rose significantly from 1985 (16 member organisations[24] in 1987) and it was able to undertake many initiatives:

- CFAF 100 million share in the capital of CNCAS during creation of the latter in 1984;
- Development of a training system in 1985;
- Exchange of cereals between associations with a surplus and those with a deficit;
- Institution of a savings and credit system that later became confronted to difficulties and led the federation into a "jam";
- etc.

The year 1991 marked a significant turning point for FONGS. Following a self-evaluation process initiated in 1989 and which lasted two years, the federation spelled out the following seven objectives[25] within a profoundly changing context. Such objectives had to do with the economic domain where transition towards a more market-oriented approach was necessary, ensuring access to land and protection of natural resources, the decision-making domain with both the internal leadership issue and the external issue of the federation's participation in the country's political life, safeguard of social and cultural values in the face of the changing times, development of new forms of solidarity between and within associations, reinforcement of partnership with foreign actors, and building the capacity of farmers' organisations to formulate and defend their own proposals. The need for national rural development programmes financed by bilateral and multilateral donors to accede to resources was underscored for the first time. This reflection laid the foundation for the creation of CNCR two years later and was instrumental in drawing up its plan of action.

c) Unification of the farmers' movement (1992-2003)

The withdrawal of the State, by homogenising the context of operation for all organisations as well as making it both restrictive to farmers and more open for initiatives undertaken by their organisations, paved the way for rapprochement between different organisations (different by virtue of their origin, status, functions, etc.) and awareness by owners of family farms of their common interests.

(i) FONGS played a key role in the unification process.

Though FONGS membership in 1992 included 2000 grassroots groups and 24 regional associations, the Government rejected the Federation's request to participate in PASA negotiations. With the support of FAO, FONGS carried out a nation-wide study on the impact of structural adjustment and the NPA. Thereafter, it organised a national forum under the theme "What prospects for the Senegalese Farmer?" (Quel avenir pour le paysan sénégalais?) to which all farmers' organisations as well as representatives of the State, NGOs and donors were invited. After the forum, farmers' leaders present agreed to set up a national consultation forum that would bring together all national farmers' federations.

(ii) In May 1993, **the national rural consultation committee (CNCR)**[26] was set up by seven national federations which were later joined by two other federations in 1995.

Ever since its creation, CNCR has, with very limited and uncertain resources, carried out many projects. These include among others:

[24] 73.623 members from 918 groups in 1987.

[25] Sometimes referred to as "challenges" within the federation.

[26] Cf. Nora Mc Keon, Organisations paysannes et développement national: l'expérience du Conseil national de concertation et de coopération des ruraux. FAO, Rome, April 2002.

- Participation in the drawing up and negotiation of PASA and the LPDA;
- Further development of the reflection on the theme "family farms, agricultural policies and international trade", formulation of proposals, training, etc.
- Creation in 1996 of the Senegalese Association for the Promotion of Grassroots Development (ASPRODEB) in collaboration with the Association of Rural Community Chairmen (APCR)[27];
- Negotiation with Government of the Agricultural Revival Programme in 1997 and implementation of one of its components;
- Negotiation of PISA and of its programmes (PNIR, PSAOP, PSSA);
- Organisation of a nation-wide reflection on land reform;
- etc.

Through its member federations, CNCR has also participated in the reform of such sub-sectors as groundnuts, rice, etc. In addition, it played a decisive role in the organisation of the Network of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers (ROPPA), which brings together umbrella organisations from ten West African countries.

(iii) During its **2001 congress**, CNCR adopted a **four-year plan of action** comprising the following five priority components: « providing support to revamp member federations by identifying their strengths and weaknesses and then backing corrective plans of action; continuing the promotion of Local Consultation Committees of farmers' organisations within the framework of the PSAOP and strengthening consultation and dialogue between FOs at regional level; encouraging the creation of a National Council and of a National Rural Development Fund; improving communication between the different levels of the farmers' movement and between federations member of CNCR; supporting the sub-regional farmers' movement"[28]

The congress also distinguished between the duties of **CNCR** and those of **ASPRODEB,** with the former handling policy matters and the latter dealing with the economic affairs of the farmers' movement.

It is worth noting that ten new national federations joined CNCR.

1.3.2. Strengths and weaknesses of farmers' organisations

a – Grassroots farmers' organisations

- Grassroots organisations are very different from each other in terms of size, type of members and the activities carried out. There are also significant differences between them depending on the area and the opportunities available both in the economic domain and in terms of the support received.
- Whereas some grassroots organisations are able to put up very positive technical and economic performances, the weak economic base of many groups is preoccupying and some of them carry out very few or even no activities at all. Some organisations have a relatively strong social base but are « inactive » for want of ideas, material and financial resources, information and training. In many cases, the life of the group is characterised by ups and downs corresponding to incentives or to successive support packages of varying duration.

[27] ASPRODEB was set up in 1996 and the State ceded to it the balance of the Fund set up by the WB within the framework of the "Small Rural Projects" programme interrupted in 1992. The aim of the Association is to promote the economic advancement of rural farmers, the development of family farms and their organisations by improving access to funding and markets. Since its creation, ASPRODEB has been assigned the execution of the PASA (FAO) and later of the PSAOP.

[28] Cf. Noa Mc Kéon, op-cit p.13, p.25.

- Some grassroots organisations directly mainstream the main agricultural activities of family farms whereas others focus on diversification activities.
- The frequent sector-based (or gender-based) approaches have the advantage of mobilising homogeneous groups around common interests. However, their disadvantage is that they render uncertain group reflection on the future of family, area or village farms including the necessary relations between sectors and between groups and integrating natural resource management.
- There can be significant disparities in competence between local leaders and members. There is also a tendency by some people to monopolise information.
- Rural producers are generally committed to their grassroots organisations. However, a long-lasting failure to attain set goals may prove demobilising in the long-term and cause defections. Conversely, even modest results strengthen the trust of farmers in their organisation.

b – Local federative farmers' organisations (LFFOs) related to the associative movement

Initiated in the 1970s, associations grew in strength in the 1980s. Though very diverse, ***LFFOs*** however have some common characteristics. These include the following:

- Desirous of asserting their autonomy from both foreign actors and the State, they started off very timidly and often with protracted collective reflection and self-criticism. The mainspring of the approach was the need to find solutions to economic and social problems, assert an identity and break free from development models proposed by the dominant institutional actors.
- They exist from the sub-village to the divisional and sometimes regional levels.
- They have scored many successes that are not only methodological (self-criticism, planning, programming, training and horizontal exchanges), but also economic and social. Their initial activities were often centred on the diversification of production. However, they progressively tackled more complex issues relating to agriculture (rain-fed and irrigated), livestock with notably the provision of agricultural production services, (production of seeds, supply, marketing, processing of produce, veterinary care, loans, consultancy, etc.). They thus brought in great innovations in the domain of service provision. Benefiting from the preferential support of NGOs, local federative associations have since the late 1980s succeeded to establish relations with public services and sometimes to carry out long-term joint actions with research and with some technical services under "privatisation", etc.
- It should be noted that many of these associations also carried out innovative natural resource management activities, which they sometimes mainstreamed into real local development strategies.

The difficulties encountered are manifold and include the following:

- It is sometimes difficult to carry out, within time limits, certain (economic and social) projects whose profitability is uncertain and whose execution requires resources and skills that Local federative organisations do not always have.
- Funding possibilities determine the more or less intensive periods of activity. However, they generally resist periods of shortage in resources, which may sometimes lead to rescheduling of activities and even reorganisation.
- There are sometimes significant disparities of competence between officials and the masses. In many cases, however, new leaders emerge, handle technical duties and later assume decision-making responsibilities. Many Local federative organisations are members of FONGS and belong to the regional coordination structures set up by FONGS.

c – National federations

The tendency to group associations into unions and federations in Senegal is an old phenomenon[29] but it is in the 1990s that it became widespread and diversified.

Apart from FONGS and the Federation of Women Advancement Groups that are cross-cutting, the other national federations are either focused on a single sub-sector (fishing, livestock, horticulture, forest exploitation, cotton, etc), one kind of agriculture (such as irrigation in the case of the Federation of Self-managed Zones – Fédérations des Périmètres Autogérés), or on economic functions (as is the case of UNCAS for instance).

- Some federations seem to have difficulties transcending the administrative, social and political hurdles that they went through especially when their bases deteriorated and their economic strength greatly weakened. They can therefore have difficulties adapting to the new context and tailoring their activities to suit their economic strengths.
- The human and financial resources of the various federations are very different. Some of them have designed long-term work programmes (such as FONGS which has for ten years benefited from the support of a consortium of European institutions, the Federation of Fishing EIGs, etc.) whereas the resources of other federations are limited and sometimes uncertain.
- The internal functioning of some federations is characterised by some glaring weaknesses in terms of respect of legal instruments in force. This is manifested by the non-renewal of terms of office, lack of transparency in decision-making and management.
- Federations invited to participate in the restructuring of sub-sectors had very diverse negotiation, action and proposal capabilities.
- Often established at the different levels of the administrative set up (rural community, local and sometimes divisional and regional unions), most national federations are faced with internal communication problems.

d) CNCR

As Nora Mc Keon points out, all actors agree that the setting up of CNCR was the 'only option' open to the rural people and that 'whatever its limits, CNCR exists and is inevitable'. Without being exhaustive, we can cite the following **achievements** of CNCR:

- Its recognition by Government, national and external institutional actors as well as rural players;
- Its ability to influence agricultural policies and national rural development programmes depending on the interests of **family farms**;
- Its ability to participate as a real partner in consultation forums between actors (to whose promotion it has often contributed), etc.

The **legitimacy** of CNCR obviously derives from the fact that its membership includes the main national federations (19 at present) but also and especially because it has a clearly defined **objective** namely, representation of the interests of owners of **family farms** (who make up the majority of Senegalese farmers) in order to promote family farms.

The increasing recognition of the role of CNCR and its member organisations henceforth gives them greater responsibilities:

- towards their members and rural producers in general;
- towards economic and institutional actors;
- towards public authorities.

[29] The National Union of Senegalese Cooperatives (UNCAS) and FONGS were created in 1978.

Such recognition is accompanied by numerous solicitations which the organisations are endeavouring to face up to with often very limited human, material and financial resources. They must in addition anticipate issues of concern, formulate proposals, negotiate them and follow up implementation of decisions made.

Lastly, the strengthening of CNCR at local and regional levels constitutes a significant challenge. It presupposes the improvement of internal communication and the training of leaders at all levels.

In conclusion to this first chapter, the following two points are worth mentioning:

(i) The strategic guidelines defined by the Government for the agricultural sector lie within the more general scope of the **decentralisation policy** being carried out by the Government. Initiated in 1972 with the creation of rural communities, administrative decentralisation was pursued and strengthened in 1996 with the enactment of the law on regionalisation and the creation of a new decentralised unit namely, the region.

- The Rural Community retained its prerogatives especially with regard to:
  - ✓ The environment and management of new resources,
  - ✓ Planning of development at local level,
  - ✓ Execution of infrastructure and public utility projects, etc.
- The Region was especially responsible for planning development by preparing regional action schemes for the environment as well as integrated regional development and land management plans, and then ensuring their implementation and follow-up. It had the authority to initiate projects and to give an opinion on projects initiated by the State.

It is clear that the broadening and strengthening of the decentralisation policy calls for a new distribution of tasks between the institutional actors of agricultural and rural development support. In this regard, it constitutes an important action reference for farmers' organisations.

(ii) The PSAOP falls within the context of very important reforms undertaken in response to the serious crisis that has rocked the rural sector for several years. Its formulation and implementation take into account the economic, institutional and organisational characteristics of the rural world, its constraints and its assets. The PSAOP is an important response to the Senegalese agricultural crisis. Its efficiency is however conditioned by the implementation of complementary programmes that will make it possible to meet investment as well as agricultural and rural activity funding needs, etc.

2. Origin, preparation and negotiation of the PSAOP

This chapter briefly presents the main stages involved in the setting up of the PSAOP, underscoring the place of and role played by farmers' organisations through CNCR in defining the programme and especially in negotiating the "support to producer organisations" component.

2.1. From the emergence of an innovative idea to the creation of the PSAOP

In January 1995, the World Bank funded three agricultural sector projects including the Agricultural Research Project II implemented by the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research (ISRA), the Agricultural Services Project that provides support to the National Agricultural Extension Programme (PNVA), and the "small rural projects II" to fund micro-projects. During the mid-term review of the Agricultural Research Project, the need to strengthen relations between research, extension and producer organisations was

underscored. The WB began discussions with the three types of actors concerned. The negotiations first culminated in the idea to "harmonise a research/development function also useful for the three groups of partners"[30]. It had to improve the production, dissemination and appropriation of technologies suited to agriculture and meeting farmers' expectations.

In the following months, a research/development programme was designed and a unit based at CNCR was set up to implement it. At the same time, reflection went on and the objectives were broadened. An idea thus emerged to set up a '**real national system of support to innovation**' based on partnership between research, agricultural counselling and farmers' organisations, to which the WB would provide its contribution through a specific programme, namely the PSAOP. As the organisations concerned pointed out, the 'aim of the PSAOP from early 1996 within this new context was no longer to juxtapose already collaborating institutions but to set up a system whose anatomy (institutions) and physiology (common functions...) were to be reviewed'[31].

In the intervening period between the PSAOP's first identification mission in January 1996 and its evaluation ex-ante in 1998, the objectives of the programme, its institutional mechanism as well as the content of the different components and their relations were specified after a significant job carried out individually and collectively by the relevant institutions.

2.2. Objectives, content and institutional mechanism of the PSAOP

The April 1999 project assessment document, which was a follow-up to the World Bank evaluation mission of May 1998, constituted an important reference document on the PSAOP. The document provides for long-term (10 years) World Bank support through implementation of three phases, with pursuit to the second and the third phases subject to evaluation based on specific indicators.

2.2.1. Objectives of the PSAOP

"Poverty alleviation is at the centre of the programme. To attain this goal, the programme's overall objective is to sustainably raise productivity, production and the incomes of small farmers using, among other things, environment-friendly technologies..."

This calls for a new approach to agricultural sector development support. Technologies will only meet the needs of farmers if agricultural services are customer-oriented and governed by demand. In this regard, the Programme's strategy for attaining the overall objective consists in the following: (i) empower farmers and their organisations so as to equip them with technical and organisational capacities to formulate their demands and, enable them to exercise a certain degree of influence thanks to their financial resources so that their point of view may be taken into account; (ii) empower public institutions that provide services to farmers, in other words enhance the autonomy of these institutions and introduce institutional and organisational reforms to enable them step out of the public sector management framework"[32].

2.2.2. PSAOP components

The first phase of the PSAOP had the following five components:

- The National Fund for Agriculture and Agro-food Research (FNRAA).

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[30] ISRA-ITA-ANCAR-CNCR : Implementation of the research/development programme, p. 1-2.
[31] ISRA-ITA-ANCAR-CNCR, op. cit., p. 2.
[32] WB. Project evaluation Document, April 1999, p. 1.

Set up by decree and placed under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, the FNRAA aimed to "separate the funding of research activities from their implementation in order to guarantee the autonomy and performance of research teams". It was planned that before the end of the first phase, it would be endowed with a moral and legal personality. Its administration was entrusted to a sixteen-member management committee of "research users or stakeholders". It had a scientific and technical committee responsible for "the study and selection of research proposals on the basis of their scientific merit and their pertinence to development needs..."[33]. Invitations for research proposals were available at the National Agricultural Research System, which gave greater but not exclusive consideration to ISRA and ITA.

- Support to research institutions was the second component of the programme. This component aimed to improve the performances of the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research (ISRA) and the Food Technology Institute (ITA) by enhancing their scientific and management capacities, rehabilitating their infrastructure and providing them with new equipment. Emphasis was placed on the necessary decentralisation and regionalisation of ISRA and on the promotion of quality research focussing on national agricultural peculiarities.

- Agricultural Counselling/ ANCAR
by providing support to the National Agency for Rural Agricultural Counselling (ANCAR), the PSAOP sought to set up an "Agricultural Counselling service whose results would prove its worth to farmers and which would meet their needs through contractual arrangements". It was part of a progressive privatisation of agricultural counselling, whose cost was to be partly borne by farmers in the long-term through deductions from products. Such deductions were to be managed by a mechanism and in accordance with modalities defined in collaboration with the authorities.

The creation of ANCAR was a condition to be met before PSAOP evaluation. It became operational in 1997. ANCAR had the legal status of a company with State majority holding: 51% of the shares belonged to the State and 28% to farmers' organisations. It was provided that the "State would become a minority shareholder and that farmers' organisations, the private sector and the civil society would become the majority shareholders of ANCAR at the end of the first phase" [34].

ANCAR had a weak general management and a decentralised system of operations based on:

- Ten regional head offices;
- Agricultural counsellors sent to local communities (a counsellor per rural community) and assisted by specialised technicians and staff of regional teams.

The creation of ANCAR was accompanied by a change in the methods of providing support to innovation: Extension gave way to rural agricultural counselling characterised by "a global, participatory and multidisciplinary approach" based on partnership with the relevant actors and especially with farmers' organisations.

- **The fourth component of PSAOP** concerned the strengthening of the functions of the Ministry of the Public Service, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Livestock. The project aimed to help these Ministries do the following: (i) devolve the functions performed by central services to regional services; (ii) enhance policy formulation and follow-up/evaluation functions by providing support to the Department of Agricultural Policies and to the Analysis, Forecasts and Follow-up/evaluation Unit; (iii) enhance control and regulation functions; (iv)

[33] WB, op. cit., p. 47.
[34] WB, op. cit., p. 2.

carry on with the privatisation of veterinary and phytosanitary services and organise a certified seed production network based on farmers' organisations specialised in the domain.

- **Support to farmers' organisations** was the last component of the project and undoubtedly the most innovative in a WB-sponsored project. The actions of this component were to be geared towards "building the capacity of farmers' organisations to help their members secure access to inputs, credit and markets and to participate in the decision-making process"[35].

This component had the following three major aspects:

a) Building **the capacities of grassroots farmers' organisations** by supporting, in each rural community, the promotion of a Local Consultation Forum for Farmers' Organisations (CLCOP) and by setting up a Demand-Oriented Rural Services Fund (FSRRD). In concrete terms, a Technical Implementation Agency (AET) would provide assistance for the setting up of a CLCOP by the grassroots organisations present in the rural community. "CLCOP is therefore not a farmers' organisation but the local platform representing the FOs of the villages of each rural community...". FOs were to join it voluntarily regardless of their affiliation[36], be they members or not of federations affiliated to CNCR.

CLCOPs could mobilise FSRRD to finance "sub-projects" proposed by member-grassroots organisations and deemed eligible in accordance with a specific procedures manual. The following three types of projects could benefit from FSRRD resources after approval by CLCOP:

- **Training** in the broadest sense of the term: technical training, management training (in the management of family farms, FOs, small-scale businesses, etc.), training in the organisation of rural production activities both upstream and downstream, etc. Exchanges between farmers' groups that were strongly encouraged also fell under training;
- **Support for access to specific services** relating to agricultural counselling not covered by ANCAR or research. This may include recourse by FOs to expertise, organisation of field trips, prospection missions, etc. The FSRRD and the beneficiaries shared the cost of such services.
- **Support for the implementation of innovations at local level:** The FSRRD may be mobilised to « contribute to the funding of innovative and priority initiatives undertaken as pilot projects by FOs in the domains of production, processing, marketing of agricultural produce and management of natural resources » [37].

b) Building the capacity of CNCR was the second aspect of the component. According to the Project Assessment Document[38], the actions envisaged included:

- The constitution of a data base on the activities of FOs thus facilitating follow-up of their activities and of their institutional functioning;
- Support to the improvement of communication between members of organisations and their officials;
- Making a contribution to the CNCR technical support unit;
- Training of CNCR leaders (strategic training-reflection, leadership training, etc.);
- Carrying out, in collaboration with the authorities, a study on the creation of a national rural development funding mechanism, etc.

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[35] WB, op. cit., p. 4.
[36] PSAOP-CNCR. The support to rural farmers' organisations component, June 2001.
[37] PSAOP-CNCR, op . cit., p. 24.
[38] op cit. p .57.

c) Building the capacity of federative organisations

This was the third aspect of the "support to rural farmers' organisations" component. The 1999 Project Assessment Document[39] is very evasive on this point, which it only approaches indirectly:

- On the one hand, it talks about the creation of FO Regional Consultation Committees (CRCOPs) which "shall bring together representatives of regional FOs" having regional functions similar to those of CLCOPs at local level;
- On the other hand, the FSRRD is presented as accessible to local organisations...as well as regional organisations. Besides, it is specified that during the first phase of the PSAOP, modalities for including national federations will be examined..."

For its part, the 2001[40] PSAOP-CNCR document treats it as an independent "aspect" whose objective is to "professionalise local and regional unions and federations be they members of CNCR or not ...". The actions envisaged deal with the training of leaders, capacity building in the organisation of economic and support services to farmers, the management of sub-sectors, etc. It was also to finance annual external audits of accounts in order to improve transparency and resource management...".

Implementation of the « support to farmers' organisations » component was entrusted to ASPRODEB (Association for the Promotion of Grassroots Development), which already had some project execution experience. In addition to the balance of the "small rural projects" fund, it also managed the Special Food Security Project (FAO) through its implementation agency (AGEP), etc.

The component's **implementation mechanism** was as follows:

- ASPRODEB played the role of financial implementation agency and all the resources of the component came through it. PSAOP provided specific management support;
- The FSRRD was located at ASPRODEB: "sub-projects" prepared by grassroots FOs and approved by the CLCOP were forwarded to ASPRODEB which disbursed the resources needed directly to the beneficiary grassroots FO;
- A contract was signed between ASPRODEB and CNCR for the implementation of actions pertaining to the capacity building of CNCR, follow-up of CLCOPs under its responsibility, etc.

Given the innovative nature of the component, a pilot phase was first carried out. This phase began in February 1998. Though initially planned to last 18 months, it was extended until April 2000 thanks to additional resources mobilised. In 1997, CNCR requested funds from ASPRODEB to finance this pilot phase that was carried out in the Tambacounda and Kolda regions and FRAO was the technical implementation agency (AET).

2.3. General remarks on the preparation and negotiation of the PSAOP

The PSAOP constitutes a significant institutional innovation both for the World Bank and the Senegalese institutions concerned because of the following three main reasons:

- First of all, the new approach that aims at promoting demand-oriented agricultural services presupposes enhancement of the capacities of users to demand services. This led to the development of a specific component which aimed to build the (organisational, technical and bargaining) capacities of FOs regardless of the services themselves (research, extension);

[39] WB, op. cit., p. 56.
[40] PSAOP-CNCR, op. cit., p. 25.

- Then, and this is the second aspect of the innovation, the "FO Support" component was prepared and negotiated with FOs themselves considered as full partners and present throughout the preparation and negotiation;
- Lastly, the modalities for the implementation of the "FO Support" component constitute the third aspect of the innovation. In effect, the component is implemented by FOs themselves through ASPRODEB, with the State accepting to cede public funds to a non-governmental institution.

The following remarks attempt to highlight the concrete implications of these innovations.

2.3.1. The PSAOP, a collective endeavour which took time

More than four years elapsed from the first identification mission (January 1996) to the programme-launching workshop in April 2000. This time lapse, which may appear very long, was due to the following two factors:

- The programme, as we have earlier seen, was determinedly innovative in terms of its objectives, content and the mechanism put in place, etc. It was also innovative in terms of its preparation modalities which were based on negotiations between the World Bank and national actors and between national actors themselves;
- Evaluation of the programme and disbursement of the credit were delayed by the considerable institutional readjustments underpinning the project and the time the Senegalese Government needed to implement them. In effect, the objectives and complexity of the project gave rise to specific questions for each of the components. While some concerned decisions taken by the authorities (creation of ANCAR, liquidation of SODEVA, etc.), others related to the reform of the pre-existing accounting and management systems (ISAR for instance), etc. The relation between components gave rise to interdependence, with a delay in any component impeding the entire negotiation process.

All stakeholders agreed that **the final shape of the PSAOP was the outcome of collective reflection between the World Bank and each of the institutions concerned**, and between the different institutions and components. The different WB aide-memoires that punctuated the project preparation period and a study of the documents produced at each stage confirm the points of view expressed by the people met during the mission, namely that the PSAOP was built progressively, through successive adjustments and sometimes difficult negotiations.

The following three obvious conclusions can be drawn at this stage of the analysis:

- Even if the PSAOP design period had been shortened, notably between the project assessment and its kick-off, preparation of a project of this kind requires **considerable reflection and maturation time**. It is important for the institutions concerned to play an active role in defining the objectives, content, and institutional mechanism of the project. It is also important for them to learn to confront ideas and to collaborate, for it will be paradoxical to draw up a programme based on partnership using a top-down approach;
- Negotiation of the PSAOP was obviously facilitated by the following two factors: the members of the WB team that studied the project remained in the country throughout the period of preparation of the project and some of its experts already had good knowledge of Senegal and its institutions, etc. It should be noted that the WB team was very perseverant and tenacious for the institution's "management" kept urging them to either speed up the process or abandon the project. It is clear that the preparation of a PSAOP-type project cannot respect "standard" procedures and time limits;
- Negotiation of the PSAOP remained marked by the general asymmetry that characterises relations between the WB and national institutions, even if it is clear

that the WB team used its position of strength with moderation, thus allowing for real dialogue. The general asymmetry that characterises relations between the WB and its national partners may be stated in the following three ways: (a) the need for national institutions to benefit from WB support/possibility of acceptance or refusal by the WB; (b) unequal capacities to formulate and negotiate proposals; (c) varied adaptation of national action/credit absorption capacities to "the pace of the WB".

2.3.2. CNCR played a very active role in the formulation and negotiation of the PSAOP

Right from the start, CNCR contributed so much not only to the elaboration of the "FO Support" component but also to the preparation of other components of the PSAOP.

a) With regard to the "Rural producer organisation support " component, the following remarks can be made:

(i) CNCR started participating in the reflection from 1995 even before the effective start of the design process. At each stage of the process, WB aide-memoires gave a report of what had been discussed with CNCR that represented Senegalese farmers' organisations both vis-à-vis the WB and the other actors;

(ii) There were differences between the initial proposals of CNCR and the final form of the "FO Support" component. This was of course the outcome of discussions and of the pilot phase. The two parties however considered that such outcome was "balanced". An official of CNCR even argued that "the World Bank went as far as was possible". Without overstepping bounds, it can nevertheless be said that CNCR was permanently aware of the reticence/reservations that the innovative nature of the project could lead the WB and national institutions to express;

(iii) **Important points of consensus** on the content of the component quickly became obvious. These related for instance to the size of the direct support to provide to grassroots organisations and the selection of the rural community as the suitable local forum for the organisation of services, setting up of the CLCOP and the FSRRD, CNCR capacity building through an important communication and training programme, the strengthening of the technical support unit, the selection of ASPRODEB as implementation agency, etc. It should also be noted that the WB and CNCR quickly agreed on the need to support "all FOs" and not only CNCR member FOs;

(iv) **Discussion of some points was left open.** We can cite for instance the discussion on the form of organisations to be set up at the regional level and modalities of the support to be given them. In the final analysis, CNCR set up Regional rural consultation Committees (CRCR). In so doing, the CNCR executed a project it had already earmarked by 1994[41]. Though autonomous, CRCRs were yet and henceforth open to all regional organisations including organisations not affiliated to any CNCR member federation.

Another subject of discussion concerned the strengthening of national federations affiliated to CNCR within the framework of the PSAOP. The WB expressed reservations and doubts which can be explained by various factors such as the heterogeneity of federations, lack of transparency in the management of some of them, insufficient justification for federations to benefit from support that was pegged to certain conditions, etc. However, CNCR remains and rightly too committed to this course of action (see below) whose implementation will soon begin within the framework of the PSAOP.

[41] The setting up of local rural consultation committees (CLCR) in rural communities and of the CRCR at regional level was already the subject of a CNCR study in 1994, for which ANDA support was solicited.

(v) Throughout the project preparation process, CNCR demonstrated both its autonomy and openness which are two indispensable conditions in any real negotiation:

- Though very involved in the follow-up of the pilot phase financed by the World Bank PPF[42] between 1998 and 2000, it also simultaneously initiated the experimentation of the approach and mechanism in three rural communities in two other regions (Thiès and Djourbel) using other technical implementation agencies and thanks to funds provided by Swiss Cooperation. This experiment was carried out in a very transparent manner vis-à-vis the WB that accepted it.
- The concern of the WB to lay down "safeguards" as a result of the innovative nature of its partnership with FOs was understandable to CNCR. Such safeguards included the selection of ASPRODEB as the component's implementation agency because it had already managed WB and FAO funds, use of AETs in order to facilitate the emergence and follow-up of CLCOPs, auditing of CLCOPs, evaluation of the pilot phase before disbursement of funds for the FO support component, etc. In return, the WB was also very open to CNCR.

b) The participation of CNCR in the preparation of the PSAOP went far beyond the "support to farmers' organisations" component.

There are many aspects of the design of the other PSAOP components where CNCR played a key role.

- CNCR participated in the reflection on research/development (R/D) and the office of the R/D Unit was located in CNCR premises;
- It participated in the reflection on agricultural and rural counselling and in the ANCAR creation process. It also participated in the recruitment of agricultural and rural counsellors (CAR) using a procedure exemplary in many respects[43], and which cemented the relations of trust between ANCAR and farmers' organisations;
- It contributed enormously to the setting up of the FNRAA (which it chairs) and played an active role in laying down procedures;
- It participated in official meetings with the authorities that punctuated the preparation and negotiation of the PSAOP. It notably participated in the negotiation of the project in Washington with the Minister of Agriculture.

c) The following three factors explain the importance and efficiency of CNCR's participation:

(i) **The democratisation process in Senegal is long-standing**: After ten years of single party rule, "limited multi-party politics" was instituted in 1973 and in 1981, "total multiparty politics" was authorised. Consolidation of the process continued over the years and in 2000, allowed for a change at the helm of the State following uncontested elections. Such opening up of the political spectrum ushered in conditions favourable for the development of the civil society and especially the emergence and strengthening of autonomous farmers' organisations;

(ii) **The strong organisation of FOs at national level and their unification facilitated recognition of CNCR** by the authorities and economic and institutional actors as the sole representative of rural farmers. The criticisms (in various ways justified) sometimes levelled against CNCR have never questioned its legitimacy. It should be noted that this was an advantage for the WB that found a "ready-made partner " to experiment a new approach;

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[42] Project Preparation Fund.

[43] Candidates were sent for training in CLCOPs set up during the experimentation phase, the written opinion of CLCOP officials was taken into account during selection in which CNCR representatives participated

(iii) **One important factor was the determination of CNCR based on a clear vision of its objectives** and of "how far it could go". It is clear that CNCR very quickly realised how important the PSAOP project was to farmers' organisations and the contribution it could make in order to attain its objectives and implement the actions it envisaged. The experience of its leaders and the reflection carried out since 1992 on family agriculture and on the conditions necessary for promoting it were of great help to CNCR. In addition, its participation in past negotiations with the authorities, donors and others was also an advantage in the sense that CNCR was able to avoid "hastily accepting" proposals it thought could be "improved" upon.

Even if the assistance it could get from the WB far exceeded what it could expect from other donors (in terms of funds and external credibility), CNCR understood the importance of maintaining and diversifying its relations with other technical and financial partners, thus guaranteeing itself significant bargaining power. It is worth noting that the WB accepted this desire for autonomy and this deepened the reflection and gave pertinence to the project.

d) Constraints

The PSAOP preparation process highlighted the great efforts FOs must make in order to participate efficiently in the design and negotiation of any important programme:

- The WB poses many conditions to its partners in terms of the content of proposals, presentation, summary reports to be prepared, time limits to be respected, etc. As a result of insufficient human and material resources, CNCR had to use the services of consultants for more or less long periods. This has posed problems of continuity, adjustment to CNCR positions and sometimes to WB standards. CNCR has been able to minimise this drawback thanks to resource persons it has known for long, other relations, etc.
- Preparation of the PSAOP also involved other demands. These included long and heavy mobilisation of farmers' leaders (the only non-waged actors involved in the PSAOP), the need to organise consultations with member federations and regional and local FOs in order to secure their contribution and support. Workshops (partly funded by the WB) were organised and entailed costs in terms of money, time, energy, etc. It is clear that the current mechanism for the preparation of projects only partially takes into account the constraints of private actors namely, FOs.

3. Practical enhancement of the capacities of farmers' organisations

The operational support activities for rural producer organisations (RPOs) started with a **pilot phase** that went on, as earlier seen, from February 1998 to April 2000. The execution of the loan saw the organisation of a workshop for the launching of the PSAOP (June 2000) and the start of the first phase of the project that was to last for three years up to June 2003. During the mid-term review, it was decided that phase I of the project be extended to December 2004.

3.1. Actions undertaken

3.1.1. During the pilot phase, field activities were mainly carried out by the West African Rural Foundation (FRAO) that was recruited as a Technical Implementation Agency (AET) for the Tambacounda and Kolda regions. With the financial assistance of Swiss cooperation within the framework of the "producer training support programme", CNCR and ASPRODEB recruited three other AETs (FONGS, Rhodale International and ADIS) to

implement the process in three rural communities of the Thiès and Djourbel regions. ASPRODEB, through its project implementation agency (AGEP), was entrusted with the financial execution of the pilot phase while the CNCR technical support unit was responsible for its follow-up.

The main activities[33] undertaken were:

- CNCR carried out a communication campaign to sensitise rural populations and institutional actors on the PSAOP (workshops, media events, radio programmes, etc.)
- 10 CLOPs were set up in as many rural communities of the Kolda and Tambacouda regions; 3 CLOPs were also set up in the Djourbel and Thiès regions.
- 138 "sub-projects" that were proposed by CLCOP member FOs were endorsed and financed by the FSRRD;
- CNCR carried out numerous activities aimed at improving communication at the various levels where organised FOs existed;
- The institutional review of two CNCR member federations was done at the regional level but could not be extended to the national level.

It should be noted that for its part, the research and development programme faced a lot of difficulties and did not culminate in "totally operational processes" during the pilot phase (see. below).

3.1.2. An intermediate phase characterised by a slowdown in operational activities (June 2000 - December 2001)

When the pilot phase ended, it took some 18 months before field activities could begin again. In effect, upon the official start of execution of the WB loan, the start of operational activities earmarked for execution within the framework of the "FO support" component was pegged to numerous prior administrative, financial, technical, etc. conditions. Some of such conditions had to do with:

- the evaluation of the pilot phase, the final report of which was made available only in February 2001;
- the putting in place within ASPRODEB of an administrative and account management mechanism approved by the WB;
- signing of a "consultancy" contract between ASPRODEB and CNCR;
- the audit of CLCOPs and FO grassroots "sub-projects" executed in the year 2000 entrusted to the ERA firm;
- finalising the methodological guide;
- etc.

As a matter of fact, auditing of CLCOPs, the recruitment and training of AETs (which took some time), and the participation of FOs in the recruitment of ANCAR agricultural counsellors were the main activities undertaken in 2001 within the framework of this component. Only 17% of the budget allocated was executed in 2001 (CFAF 117 million of the 688 million allocated), with expenditure pertaining to the recruitment of AETs and an audit firm as well as support to CNCR.

It is worth noting that Swiss cooperation granted relay financial assistance to ASPRODEB/CNCR for the June 2001/June 2002 period, thereby making it possible for these two structures to carry out some key activities.

3.1.3. The operational activities of the "FO support" component

These activities started in late 2001 and were mainly concerned with support to grassroots organisations and building the capacity of CNCR at the national level.

[33] IRAM : Pilot project evaluation mission - February 2001.

The activities began simultaneously in 10 regions with the selection of 5 rural communities per region. In a nutshell, the procedure adopted in each region was as follows:

- adoption of a regional reference situation by the AET[34]
- the regional communication campaign coordinated by the *Regional Rural Consultation Council* – [Conseil Régional de Concertation des Ruraux (CRCR)] - with the support of CNCR and the AET. This campaign was organised at different levels (regional, local government areas, rural communities, etc.)
- handing in of the regional reference survey that led to the concerted choice of five rural communities in each region;
- participatory review which was sometimes made at the same time with the reference situation of the Rural Agricultural Council (CAR), but sometimes separately;
- promotion of a CLCOP in each rural community through decentralised information and reflection workshops which were organised in the various areas identified within the rural community;
- creation of the CLCOP (constituent General Assembly, by-laws, information on the procedures, etc.) ;
- operational support of the CLCOP which particularly concerns its accreditation by ASPRODEB, adoption of the recurrent budget (CFAF 1 million per year to which should be added the contribution of member FOs – 5 000 F upon taking membership and 5 000 F yearly thereon), drawing up of capacity building plans and their implementation, examining "sub-projects"[35] proposed by member FOs, management of sub-projects, more general reflections on rural development, etc.

It should be noted that support to CLCOPs that were created during the pilot phase started again in early 2002 and some sixty CLCOPs now exist. 80 new CLCOPs would soon be created within the framework of the extension provided by the PSAOP (eight new rural communities will be concerned in each region.)

Other activities were undertaken, and they mainly concern **CNCR enhancement**:

- continuation of the communication programme: regional and local information workshops, preparing the pilot communication project in the regions (referred to as "*CNCR pënc*", an information network intended to serve as a forum equipped with various tools for communication at the regional level, thereby facilitating information flow and exchange, etc.) In addition to these actions, a CNCR newsletter (*Canal rural*) shall be published and radio programmes produced;
- the functioning of the technical support unit;
- training and refresher courses were organised for leaders;
- etc.

It should be noted that the resources of the FO component were also solicited to finance reflection on the **CNCR strategy**:

- collective study and reflection on land issues;
- preparing the CNCR position on the reorganisation of the groundnut sub-sector;
- drawing up an "emergency plan" to respond to the 2002 crisis of the rural sector;
- etc.

The activities of the Research and Development Unit that is found in CNCR and brings together ANCAR, ISRA, ITA, were postponed during the June 2000 workshop to launch the PSAOP. These activities have now been re-launched within a new system wherein FOs are

[34] Six AETs were chosen by ASPRODEB and CNCR through a call for bids. They signed a two-year contract with ASPRODEB. They are CECI (Thiès), USU (Louga, Tambacounda, Kaolack), Rhodale (Fleuve Matam), ASEA (Djourbel, Dakar), Action Sud (Ziguinchor and Kolda) and Sall Consult (Fatick)

[35] As it was realised in the IRAM evaluation mission, the notion of « sub-projects » to refer to projects proposed by CLCOP member POs and eligible for the FSRRD is inappropriate

at the head of the structures put in place, with ANCAR as the management body of such structures. In the course of this study, no specific reflections were held with the partners concerned on the difficulties facing the Research and Development Unit. Undoubtedly, these difficulties stem from many factors, some of which are (i) the fact that research did not have a pilot phase, which undermined its response capacity; (ii) also the fact that, initially, farmers show more interest in concrete actions than in research and development with necessarily deferred results (iii) the ambition of the programme in relation to available resources (especially human); (iv) difficulty to implement a research and development programme prior to clearly identifying underlying constraints together with farmers.

3.2. Remarks on the implementation of the FO component

3.2.1. Importance of the pilot phase36

The pilot phase particularly made it possible to:

- confirm the viability of the planned support mechanism for grassroots FOs;
- finalise the content of the "FO component" and its enabling instruments.

This phase also showed the relative complexity of the issues raised by the support to national federative organisations and the setting up of a regional consultation framework.

The pilot phase also sustained CNCR reflection in the PSAOP formulation process (which took a long time) and helped to disseminate information and conduct reflection on the FO component among local organisations. The experience was however limited in scope due to the fact that the other PSAOP components (and notably ANCAR workers) which interact with the FO component were not yet present on the field.

3.2.2. Numerous pre-conditions for implementing operational activities

The official start of execution of the WB loan was followed by numerous pre-conditions that had to be met before operational activities could start. Taken separately, each of these conditions seems to be pertinent and justified but, together, they sometimes constitute veritable hurdles for FOs. Consequently, the FO component was behind schedule in 2001 whereas it was in time during the preparatory phase:

- unlike the other PSAOP implementation agencies, FOs are not particularly familiar with the administrative procedures concerning the execution of a World Bank-sponsored project. They therefore need to learn and this process takes time…
- During this transitional phase, FOs no longer benefited from PPF resources and did not yet have access to the resources allocated for the implementation of the FO component.

It is necessary for such projects to allocate specific resources for FOs in order to effectively follow the necessary procedures for raising funds. For instance, a fraction of the PPF could be set apart for this purpose. It is also worth noting that the execution of a World Bank-funded project calls for harmonisation between the various crop sectors. As seen in the PSAOP, such convergence is possible but requires a specific input of collective procedure development and mutual learning.

3.2.3. Remarks on support to grassroots FOs

a) CLCOP is apparently an adequate mechanism that is unanimously endorsed by the players concerned.

Four main observations can be advanced to buttress this point:

[36] see IRAM evaluation report (Feb. 2001), audit of the first thirteen CLCOPs undertaken in 2001 by ERA.

(i.) In Senegal, the rural community provides a special avenue for local development. That decentralisation has been effective in Senegal for a long time made it possible for the population to gradually identify with the grassroots unit of the administrative division. The interest shown by quite a good number of external actors in organising their activities at the level of the local community has strengthened this process. Local federative organisations have long since realised this and have for the most part included the rural community level in their internal organisation. It is therefore understandable that the rural community is chosen as the target for rural support services.

(ii.) **The aggregation of grassroots FOs** within the CLCOP has many advantages. As it was pointed out by FO leaders, this aggregation facilitates mutual learning and experience sharing among FOs, and consolidates solidarity. In addition, unity

- ✓ facilitates collective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the rural community, the formulation of concerted priorities, etc.
- ✓ helps grassroots FOs to learn how to design projects, expand and diversify their partnerships;
- ✓ also gives a greater visibility to grassroots farmers' organisations vis à vis the Rural Council, with CLCOP sometimes referred to as the *economic engine of the rural community (CR).*

(iii) **The mechanisms[37] set up are operational**: «sub-projects » are developed by grassroots FOs. They are examined by CLCOPs, which, with the assistance of technical implementation agencies, exercise rigour and transparency in applying selection criteria. Timeframes for the financing of the first FO sub-projects are relatively long: a minimum of one year from the start of the procedure in a local community to the execution of the first FSRRD-funded projects. However, the rhythm then picks up when the structures are put in place and the system is operational. On the whole, the interaction between CLCOP and CAR is smooth, with FOs and ANCAR workers that we met during the mission expressing their satisfaction: "initially, extension chose its own target farmers and themes but now ANCAR works on themes chosen by FOs and upon the request of FOs... We hope that this approach has come to stay..." This view by a CLCOP leader ties in with the impression expressed by an ANCAR worker that "we find things very easy; it is better to work with responsible people who know their rights..."

(iv) **The existence of the FSRRD** is obviously a strong motivation for the creation of the CLCOP by grassroots FOs. But this is not the only motivating factor as seen, for example, in some CLCOPs which are gradually expanding their initial functions: participation in local development initiatives organised within the rural community, discussion of the agricultural blueprint bill, etc. Note that some CLCOPs undertake very interesting initiatives such as the organisation of "forums" on technical and economic issues (animal feed, exploitation of old irrigated areas, water, financing rural development, etc.) to which ANCAR, research, NGOs, administrative services, etc are invited.

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[37] The mechanisms work following the procedure below:
After making a « participatory diagnosis » and the establishment of the CLCOP, grassroots FOs are requested to develop « sub-projects » to be eligible for the FSRRD. The proposals are examined by the CLCOP and have to be endorsed by the AET before their final approval. CLCOP then sends the sub-projects that are approved to ASPRODEB. Funds for a sub-project are sent by ASPRODEB directly to the beneficiary grassroots FO. After producing the reference situation of the agricultural and rural council, priority themes are defined by CLCOP. For each of the themes chosen, CLCOP selects a *promising FO* that will be ANCAR partner. A contract (of one year duration) is then signed between ANCAR and the FO concerned.

It is therefore obvious that CLCOP is held in high esteem by the FOs concerned and by their direct partners. Some external actors are beginning to show interest in CLCOPs while others are still reserved. They doubt how long a CLCOP would last since it is sometimes considered a "consultation forum which comes to add to many others", which have already been supported by different types of projects.

b) Questions on the support mechanism for grassroots FOs

(i) According to all of the actors concerned, **CLCOPs differ**. Their dynamism varies and primarily depends on the existence of efficient and experienced farmer leaders at the local level. In fact, the FO component depends on pre-existing organisational dynamics and particularly on the achievements of federative local organisations that it seeks to develop within the framework of the PSAOP. It takes time for local leaders to emerge and this cannot be possible simply by putting in place a consultation forum. But this forum contributes to the capacity building of farmers' leaders and facilitates the emergence and confirmation of new leaders. The existence of proven organisational dynamics logically constituted an important condition for the selection[38] of the first CRs concerned by the PSAOP. It is important to give thought to the specific approaches to be followed in future in rural communities where farmers' organisations are not very well organised. CLCOPs also differ depending on the extent of diversity of the resource persons and institutions present within the CR. This factor often combines with the preceding point of difference. Obviously, the capacity of grassroots FOs to develop « sub-projects » eligible for the FSRRD increases when they make use of technicians working at the local level in federative FOs, NGOs, etc. For some CRs, this approach is and will, in the future, be limited. It will therefore be wise to consider the role of CERs[39] and the training they are to receive.

(ii) **The position of local federative organisations (LFOs)** vis à vis the CLCOP varies. LFOs bring together a variable number of grassroots organisations situated in one or more rural communities as the case may be. The attitude of LFOs vis à vis the PSAOP is generally very positive but fears are sometimes expressed.

- ✓ in some cases, each grassroots association of LFOs is a member of the CLCOP «in its own right» and the LFOs are members of the Board of Directors. Leaders then tend to lay emphasis on the «complementarity» between LFO and CLCOP: « some associations of LFOs have specific interests which the LFO cannot satisfy. These associations may have access to the FSRRD and the LFO will help them develop their projects. Some sub-projects can also result from local umbrella organisations and concern all the grassroots associations that exist in the CR… »
- ✓ in other cases, it would appear the LFO that is a member of the CLCOP and « while representing many grassroots FOs, can find itself drowned in a plethora of economic initiative groups (EIG), some of which have only been created recently, have very few members and yet have the same rights… ». « Although this does not pose a problem at the moment, it may happen that LFOs are marginalized and thus lead to the break-up of their grassroots associations... ».

In future, it will be necessary for the role of LFOs to be clearly specified on the basis of experience acquired and making sure, on the one hand, that LFOs are recognised and consolidated and, on the other hand, putting into practice the principle that the CLCOP is open to all grassroots FOs. Various steps

[38] note that the presence of the PNIR was sometimes the key condition for the selection of the CR.

[39] CERs (Multi-purpose Rural Development Centres) are present in each local government area and have a multidisciplinary technical team which however is very small in some areas.

have been taken which are already contributing to this in some places and can contribute even more in the future:

- ✓ presence of LFO representatives in the board of directors of the CLCOP of which each grassroots FO is a member;
- ✓ eligibility of sub-projects presented by many grassroots FOs member of CLCOP for a FSRRD;
- ✓ eligibility of projects submitted by an LFO having member associations in two or more rural communities for a regional FSRRD;
- ✓ signing, as it is already being done, of contracts between LFOs and ANCAR ;
- ✓ etc.

(iii) The FSRRD is very small (CFAF 9 million per year for a CLCOP) whereas the financial needs are huge when it comes to training, counselling, supporting innovation, starting economic activities, etc. The absence of collaboration between the PSAOP and the PNIR and AFDS therefore constitutes a serious handicap (see below). Some NGOs are beginning to contribute to the implementation of the action programmes of the CLCOP but so far the latter has a limited ripple effect on the other sources of funding. Within the framework of the PSAOP, many initiatives are being undertaken at the local level:

- ✓ some CLCOPs are making the most of ANCAR to carry out their training and counselling activities, thereby making more FSRRD resources available to support the take-off of economic activities;
- ✓ sometimes the AET and often ANCAR play the role of go-betweens for FOs and lending houses (CNCAS) or funding bodies (NGOs, etc.)

This is a **very important point** because though fresh counselling and training are indispensable to put the Senegalese agricultural sector back on track, they will only be efficient if solutions are found to the problem of funding rural activities (see. below).

(iv) The work done shows **how important** and complex **the role of the AET** is. Three main observations can be made:

- ✓ the AET is a « facilitator » and not an « operator »[40]. As indicated by a CNCR leader, it particularly has to "help in the development of transparent, democratic and efficient local institutions. This takes time, and requires experience and ability…" for the implementation of the process and procedures.
- ✓ the duration of the AET mission shall be two years. It is advisable for it to be flexible so that it can be adjusted to meet the specific needs of each CLCOP, since the pace of their becoming autonomous could be very variable;
- ✓ it will be advisable to be very careful in sharing tasks between the AET and CNCR and in defining the relationship between the AET, CNCR support unit and CRCR. Beyond purely economic factors, the « misunderstandings » that occurred between FRAO and CNCR at the end of the pilot phase and some more recent incidents clearly show that it is necessary to have true cooperation and that it is difficult to sustain such cooperation when unavoidable disagreement crops up. The contracts signed between ASPRODEB and the AETs should spell out the role of CNCR and that of CRCRs.

(v) The observance of procedures should not be **reduced to excessive formalism**
The responsibilities and duties of ANCAR and the AET are clearly defined but it is obvious that their respective efficiency depends on the synergy they would develop between the various actions they undertake.

[40] AET does not give information on the PSAOP at the local level but should help FOs to prepare such information and act on it. It does not set up the CLCOP but has to promote its development, etc.

- ✓ In some cases the relationship between CLCOP/AET/FSRRD/ ANCAR/CRCR is smooth, to the satisfaction of all.
- ✓ In other cases, the strict application of principles could render the mechanism less efficient and negatively affect the capacity building of FOs. For example, although it is clear that "ANCAR does not have to influence FSRRD-funded sub-projects", nothing stops CAR from contributing to their execution and follow-up. It is true that the mission of the AET stops at the level of the CLCOP, but it is advisable for it to participate, upon the request of the CLCOP, in the training of grassroots FOs on project design. The technical implementation agency (AET) "has no mission in the CRCR", but on **the request of the latter**, it can come to its assistance (as it is being done in some places).

Of course, the procedures have to be followed. It would be wise for the procedures to be observed without excessive formalism by constantly referring to the objectives of the component and to the guiding principles of its execution, and with the ultimate aim of creating synergy between the actors and actions being undertaken.

3.2.4. Remarks on the capacity building of CNCR and its member organisations

a) at the national level, we saw that the capacity of CNCR has been strengthened both in the implementation of the PSAOP and in the draft agricultural policy formulation and negotiation. However, the central team is still "overwhelmed" by the high number of duties that stem from the daunting challenges facing the agricultural sector. The institutional support given by the PSAOP could be stepped up, for example, in the area of training of farmers' leaders (and their possible "specialisation" in some fields), increasing the technical workforce, etc.

b) importance of the regional level

Regional Rural Consultation Committees (CRCR) have been set up in the various regions and are often located in the regional coordination office of FONGS. So far, they have not benefited from any significant support within the framework of the PSAOP and now find themselves in a situation of acute lack of resources. We realised that discussions on this issue were still open at the beginning of the project. However, some progress has been made and four CRCRs would benefit from PSAOP support in the months ahead.

The law on CRCRs was revised in May 2002 and a " manual of CRCR procedures" has been prepared. Among many other things, it particularly spells out the conditions for eligibility of projects submitted by regional umbrella farmer organisations (RUFOs) to the FSRRD and the conditions for raising and managing funds.

Two obvious remarks can be made here:

- ✓ CRCR is a consultation body with status of a non-profit association. It is open to RUFOs which are members of CNCR or not, and cannot be considered as a mere arm of CNCR. However, statutes entrust CNCR with the role of mediating in conflict resolution within the CRCR and the « right to control the organisation and management of the CRCR. » These decisions shall uphold the respect of the autonomy of each CRCR while sustaining a relationship between CNCR and CRCR which is indispensable for strengthening FOs at the national level.
- ✓ The mission of CRCRs touches on many aspects: representing the farmers' movement at the regional level; managing the FSRRD; facilitating experience

sharing among RUFOs; participating in the coordination of the various components of the PSAOP and, globally, participating in the setting up of a regional consultation framework under the authority of the Regional Council, etc. In addition to this is the regionalisation of the CNCR communication programme with the planned creation of "pënces". In the future, it will be absolutely necessary to gradually devolve the follow-up of CLCOPs to the CRCR. This will go a long way to reduce the workload of the CNCR technical unit, which cannot possibly monitor the activities of an increasing number of CLCOPs right from Dakar.

c) Support to national umbrella organisations

CNCR is made up of national umbrella organisations (NUOs) which grew in number from 9 to 19 since the year 2001. CNCR has long been requesting support for NUOs and so far it has been very limited within the PSAOP. However, during the mid-term review, it was decided that **two NUOs** be given support.

The reservations expressed by the Word Bank (WB) concerning NUOs are based on the operating conditions of some of them. CNCR admitted the shortcomings that were highlighted during the 1998 institutional review and encouraged the federations to embark on reorganisation. Guidelines were spelt out during the 2001 CNCR congress and have to do with " giving new impetus to national federations and unions" by "providing support for restructuring, logistic assistance, human capacity building, and ensuring greater professional consciousness when rendering services to members". Planned institutional reviews were undertaken in 2002 and culminated in the drafting of plans of action for each of the NUOs.

Two remarks:

- The effectiveness of actions undertaken to build the capacity of FOs increases when all the levels at which they are organised are taken into account; just like in a chain, the solidity of the cycle depends on the weakest link... Therefore, FO support in Senegal should combine territorial approaches (CLCOP, CRCR) with sector-specific approaches. Improving the functioning of the various sectors will impact on all NUOs since most of them are even organised around a particular product.
- The conditions imposed by the WB before it can commit itself to providing support to NUOs are understandable. Such pre-conditions should however take into account the fact that it will take a lot of time and negotiation to restructure some NUOs which were born and raised in a generalised context of unwieldiness.

It follows that, as the WB and CNCR have admitted, any excessive or unwarranted pressure on some NUOs may entail a danger of destabilising CNCR. It should however be noted that enhancing the capacity of FOs in the grassroots (CLCOP) and at the intermediate levels (CNCR) will have repercussions on the functioning of NUOs:

- incentives from the top will be consolidated by pressure from the bottom;
- the implementation of the FO component gives greater legitimacy to CNCR and should increase its action capacity vis à vis external actors and give its officials more internal leeway for action.

4. Lessons on farmers' organisation capacity building

At this juncture, seven lessons can be drawn from the « producer organisation support component » of the PSAOP, although it is clear that we cannot really consider them to be final.

4.1. The institutional mechanism put in place by the PSAOP to support FOs is quite innovative and is already producing significant and promising results. Its effectiveness mainly stems from the fact that it was born after frank negotiations between the various players concerned. Consequently, the mechanism put in place cannot be directly transposed to another situation in a different country. It is not a standard mechanism that could be used everywhere. But the method used to define and execute the project as well as its underpinning principles could be generalised and reproduced.

4.1.1. The validity of the institutional mechanism put in place lies in the fact it is a « win-win situation" for all the players involved.

The institutional mechanism put in place in Senegal is original ; the mechanisms defined ***to support grassroots FOs*** are operational and, in spite of their seeming complexity, they are easily understood and adopted by farmers.

The relevance of the mechanism, and its current and potential effectiveness, reside primarily in the fact that it is recognised as legitimate, since it is the fruit of a negotiation which the different players concerned consider "honest and fair". The mechanism put in place is therefore an agreement resulting from negotiations between partners (especially the WB and CNCR) which have different but compatible objectives.

The objectives, content and conditions for implementing the FO component are actually a compromise in which all the parties are and think of themselves as "winners" :

- The WB will achieve its set objectives: it will restore the balance between the private (to which the farmers' organisations belong) and public sectors; adapt services to customer needs; decentralise resources at the local level as a way of reaching out to the poorest segments, improve governance by strengthening the civil society, etc.
- The project has many advantages for CNCR: enhancing its legitimacy at the local level and with regard to institutional players and public authorities; improving its effectiveness by creating services tailored to the needs of farmers; ensuring significant long-term funding which will enable it to assert and implement its strategic project in the long term, etc.
- Grassroots FOs consider themselves as winners since " [they are] now at the centre of the process", since "[they can] take the floor and "express their opinion", "set [their] priorities and work towards achieving them", and "manage funds, however small they are…", etc.
- ANCAR workers "feel very comfortable" in the partnership with the CLCOP and member FOs because they have "clearly identified and motivated partners with whom they can dialogue, draw up contracts", etc.
- etc.

4.1.2. The concerted preparation and implementation of the FO component of the PSAOP were made possible by the favourable combination of four factors : the existence of a highly structured producer organisation, a favourable institutional context, the positive attitude of the WB team and its stability and a will to succeed shared by all the players…

- **the existence of CNCR** : the WB has found in CNCR a partner which can live up to the stakes of the PSAOP because of the way it is structured, its legitimacy, experience of its leaders and by the way it has understood its role. External players agree that despite the weaknesses (which it acknowledges itself), "CNCR is solid, free, independent...", "that it has clearly opted for dialogue and partnership...", "that it is indispensable..." "that it really deserves to exist...", etc. These leaders also stress the fact that CNCR has a long-term vision" which helps it to position itself in a negotiation.
- "**an open State**": the institutional and political context is considered favourable for dialogue with FOs. But this does not rule out misunderstandings and tensions... Consultations between the State and CNCR started before the preparation of the PSAOP, during the PASA and PISA negotiation; it was interrupted for a while during a changeover of political power and continued thereafter. The different legal statutes which FOs have and their generally easy access are an unquestionable asset.
- **The positive attitude of the WB team and its stability**: the different parties do not idealize their relations which have experienced "ups and downs", moments of tension, etc. However, CNCR commends "the listening quality of the WB team", continuity which was made possible by the fact that its composition remained unchanged for several years, that the current TTL took part in designing the project, and that the WB representatives "know Senegal well, etc". The project therefore enabled CNCR to "demystify the WB" whose image changed positively for farmers and their organisations.
- **A shared determination to reach an agreement**
  Despite differences in initial points of view, the length of the project design process, and the (short) discouragement phases, the quest for a fair compromise as regards the FO component was facilitated by the desire to reach an agreement which motivated the WB and CNCR. Two points are worth noting: the resort by the WB to a financial instrument (Lending) which allows for long-term commitment (10 years) and which was viewed very positively by CNCR; the existence of "mediators" trusted by the WB and CNCR and who facilitated the necessary coming together.

4.1.3. Negotiation among the players involved does not end with the execution of the loan ; it must continue during the project implementation.

According to most players, the "WB went as far as it could go..." before the start of the project ; however, it is important for dialogue to continue in a spirit of partnership during its execution and at the end of each of the three expected phases:

- firstly, because it would be paradoxical for the WB to support FO capacity building and partnership between FOs and national institutional players when it does not seek to broaden its own dialogue with FOs;
- secondly, because the execution of the project highlights the need for adjustments with respect to initial plans;
- finally, because capacity building of farmers' organisations, which comes about as a result of the project, enhance their proposal, negotiation, action and managerial capacities.

In this light, the WB follow-up missions, and especially the mid-term reviews and end of phase evaluations, are preferred opportunities for collective reflection and dialogue, and should particularly enable the WB to revise some of its instruments and procedures in order to adapt them to this unprecedented partnership.

4.2. The institutional mechanisms defined within the framework of the FO component place grassroots organisations and their members in a position of service "applicants" ; favourable conditions have thus been created to tailor services to the needs of producers and the diversity of agricultural situations. However, in terms of technical and economic innovation, the effectiveness of the mechanism also depends on the capacity of advisory organisations to make pertinent proposals and thus on the existence of an efficient agricultural research and development.

4.2.1. The functioning of the mechanism put in place to strengthen grassroots FOs is, first and foremost, of a pedagogic value

The evaluation of the pilot phase highlighted the fact that some "sub-projects" selected by the CLCOPs and funded by FSRRD appear out of line (by their objectives and content) with respect to the daunting challenges faced by the rural people and with respect to the priorities defined at the end of the "participatory reviews". However, they were of an unquestionable pedagogic value since they helped grassroots FOs to verify if they were really "at the heart of the process", and enabled them to develop new relations with support bodies.

In some cases, the "sub-projects" developed by grassroots FOs since the enforcement of the loan agreement also have a particularly pedagogic and learning function although they are not always key innovations.

4.2.2. Special attention should be given to the technical and economic content of actions undertaken in order to prevent, beyond the necessary learning phase, the mechanisms put in place from functioning "in a vacuum" or from producing stereotyped solutions whose limits have been noticed in the past.

On the field, various initiatives show that local players are concerned about the technical and economic effectiveness of the mechanism:

- In some CLCOPs, economic sustainability is a criterion for selecting "sub-projects";
- CLCOPs take the initiative to organise forums aimed at seeking innovative solutions to problems posed by cattle feed, water, funding, farming/grazing combination, etc;
- Contracts between ANCAR and FOs are centred on technical and economic problems which are very important for rural farmers.

These different initiatives highlight **two points**:

- collaboration between FOs and support bodies increases the capacity to provide adequate solutions to problems faced by rural people;
- this collaboration can only be fruitful, all along, if rural farmers continue to master it and if the innovation potential, which is the experience accumulated by farmers, is taken into consideration.

4.2.3. The scope of the technical and economic challenges faced by the rural people justifies the setting up of an efficient research and development mechanism in which FOs must play a vital role.

The failure, at least relative, of the research and development mechanism that was tried during the phase of project design is certainly explained by the fact that it came too early, while the conditions for its functioning had not been put together: it was functioning on loans from ISRA and PNVA which, obviously, did not consider it a priority. ANCAR was not yet operational; the official of the Research and Development Unit based in CNCR found himself isolated and was certainly attracted by the follow-up of the pilot phase in the Kolda and Tambacounda regions.

These structural difficulties will not, however, call into question the pivotal role played by research and development in developing technical and economic references concerning:

- technical networks per production, adapted to the environmental and economic conditions of the different regions;
- realistic solutions to problems posed by the supply of inputs, etc.; the content and conditions of diversifying production ; the development of food processing activities ; the improvement of farm productivity; the organisation of sub-sectors at the local and regional levels ; etc.

The recent decision to relaunch research and development, to entrust its activities to ANCAR while FOs preside over the units created, is an excellent initiative. **Two remarks** can be made:

- until now CLCOPs think their relationship with ANCAR is clearer than with the research mechanism (apart from visits to regional centres); it will therefore be appropriate to highlight the interest and concrete conditions of the relationship between FOs, ANCAR and research;
- in Senegal, some achievements have been made in research and development in collaboration with FOs, which preceded the PSAOP ; it will certainly be useful to develop them (FOs in the Delta, CADEF, ARAF, etc).

4.3. The little (and even lack of) collaboration of the PSAOP with other projects supported by the World Bank is a serious handicap to the PSAOP and has harmful repercussions on the different players involved

4.3.1. Theoretically complementary projects, but which hardly cooperate

Apart from the PSAOP, the World Bank is presently backing three other projects which concern the rural area: the PNIR, the Social Development Fund Agency (AFSD) which also works in urban areas and the Farm Export Support Project (PAEA). Theoretically, there is a strong complementarity between the PSAOP, on the one hand, and the PNIR and AFSD, on the other. The methods implemented by the PSAOP will only be technically and economically effective if they are accompanied by huge efforts to overcome the lack of rural infrastructure and collective productive equipment and solve the problem of low capacity to invest in family farms and small rural enterprises. It is evident that, the FSRRD is not cut out to carry out this duty and cannot claim to do so at the moment. The PNIR on its part and, at least partially, the AFSD (in regions in which it works) could therefore play a very important role in "tapping the human and social capital potential" which the PSAOP is trying to strengthen.

In practice, however, there is little collaboration (despite the improvement) with the PNIR and it is even non-existent with the AFSD:

- the PNIR preceded the PSAOP and the two projects work together only in a very small number of rural communities ; there does not seem to be any consultation between the PSAOP and the AFDS ;
- each project has its own approach and puts in place a specific mechanism by appealing to the same NGOs or consultancies which, in return for various payments, play the role of technical implementation agencies, operating agencies, etc. ;
- the result is a multitude of approaches, incoherence, confusion, "weariness of people" and spending which would certainly be more useful elsewhere. Consequently, the three projects make "participatory diagnosis", set "priorities", draw up "action plans" and finance small and sometimes similar projects (sheep feeding, dyeing, etc) from their respective innovation support funds.

4.3.2. Genuine coordination, at the top and bottom, would also be beneficial to the various projects.

It is not a question of denying the peculiarities of the different projects but that of creating partnerships that will likely enhance coherence in World Bank-supported activities, the effectiveness of each of these projects as well as their global effectiveness. Two measures could contribute to this:

- Consultation among players at the top organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and by the World Bank. This will lead to decisions concerning especially the criteria for selecting the CRs concerned, the synergies to develop with regard to diagnosis, the obligatory reciprocity of projects, etc. APCR and CNCR, which are already managing ASPRODEB together, may have a vital role to play here.
- An institutionalised consultation at the regional level, organised by the Regional Department of Rural Development, whose role will be to ensure the concrete harmonisation of activities.

4.3.3. The scope of the FSPRD could be broadened during the second phase of the project:

- by adding, for example, the collective funding of infrastructure or investments for productive purposes
- by increasing the amount of funds as the CLCOPs acquire increased managerial capacities.

4.4. The mechanism put in place by the FO component of the PSAOP is a relevant instrument for reducing poverty and inequalities in rural areas; some specific measures may improve the access of the poorest segments to services which are offered to them.

4.4.1. Farmers' organisations constitute an efficient way of reaching out to the poor

This can be seen in the two main points below:

- Local FOs mainly bring the poor together and their base is usually made up of women, young people, and men with limited access to land, low investment capacity at the individual and family levels. That is why there are thousands of grassroots groups in Senegal which express the wish of members to "do something" but have little or no activities because of lack of adequate ideas, resources and supports.
- The creation of the CLCOP is an opportunity for these grassroots FOs: it will help them break away from their isolation and gain access to external information as well as shared experiences with local FOs; it will also lead to transparency in the allocation of funds. As one local observer remarked, "when FOs come together, it prevents smarter organisations from taking all the funding and leaving others with absolutely nothing ..."

4.4.2. It could prove useful to make provision for specific tools suitable for the poorest categories of people in the approach adopted.

The following means could be of help:

- making an exhaustive inventory of grassroots FOs which exist within the CR even if they do not carry out any activity;
- providing special incentives to encourage people to join the weakest FOs by delaying the initial contribution for example, and by subjecting same to the execution of activities funded by the FSRRD ;
- providing specific support to help the poorest groups to acquire legal status and develop "sub-projects".

Another possible way is to work with CRs which have so far received little attention from external organisations: "the poorest groups are often found in the most remote CRs, where nobody goes to because they are far, hot and the roads are bad".

4.4.3. Some measures envisaged for the future might have a discriminating effect on the poorest FOs

For example:

- the obligation to have a bank account and thus legal status in order to be supported by the FSRRD can be an excluding factor for FOs without resources (you need CFAF 60,000 to acquire the status of an economic interest group – EIG -);
- "if one needs to pay to join the council, how will small FOs acquire membership?"

It is therefore necessary to ensure the harmonization of the poverty alleviation objective of the PSAOP with the concern of making farmers to defray council costs; adjustments will be necessary to prevent the two legitimate objectives from becoming contradictory.

4.5. The participation of the other donors in the FO component of the PSAOP is still limited; there is, however, some complementarity between the PSAOP and the programmes supported by various donors to build the capacity of farmers' organisations. Once the approaches adopted are coherent, this diversity becomes an asset for FOs which are themselves a source of further methodological development.

4.5.1. The other donor institutions participate in various but generally very restricted ways in the implementation of the FO component of the PSAOP.

FIDA took part in the first preparatory missions of the PSAOP but later withdrew; Swiss Cooperation, on its part, joined the process during its pilot phase, played a vital role during the start of the component and is participating in World Bank follow-up missions, etc. Other donors are more reserved; some invest little in the agricultural sector; others prefer to support local areas through local development projects or social sector support; and finally, others are interested in farmers' organisations either directly (such as the French Cooperation which is preparing a farmers' organisations institutional enhancement project based upon the PACEPA) or indirectly (like the European Union through its support to the reorganisation of the groundnut sector and the functioning of the industry). It is worth noting, however, that some CLCOPs have started receiving funding from bilateral co-operation bodies, NGOs etc; the role of intermediary played by the AET and ANCAR can be important in strengthening this trend.

4.5.2. The specific options of the various donors in FO support constitute an asset:

The diversity of funding is a source of autonomy for farmers' organisations; it helps to reduce the asymmetry which characterises their relations with the World Bank; moreover, the diversity of approaches seems necessary in order to take into account all the challenges faced by the Senegalese rural people and consequently, the FOs. These challenges do not all come under agricultural counselling, information and training and the PSAOP cannot claim to understand them all.

Reflections have to be organised around the major sub-sectors on issues such as land tenure, funding and loan, etc. which call for specific implementation initiatives and mechanisms.

4.6 The PSAOP highlights the need for a real strategy for farm and rural training oriented in a coherent and concerted manner towards owners of family farms and the leaders of their organisations and towards middle-grade and senior officials.

At the national level, the successive economic and institutional reforms have rendered the agricultural sector more complex, more unstable and more competitive; Senegal's joining of the WTO and the regional integration which is taking place within the framework of WAEMU, help to compound the challenges. Yet, the rural people are unequally (and generally poorly) equipped to understand the changes that are taking place, to meet the new ensuing constraints and to avail themselves of the opportunities that arise: the enrolment rate is still very low (37 %), more than 70% of adults are illiterate, etc. Adjustments are also needed in the training of middle-grade and senior executives for them to meet the expectations of their employers (which are diversifying), etc. Involved for a long time now in the training of rural people, the Swiss Cooperation has supported an in-depth related reflection which has led to ambitious but realistic proposals whose implementation remains limited.

Yet, it is worth recalling that the effectiveness of the response of rural dwellers to challenges also depends on improving their access to relevant information and training which will go a long way to help to enhance their capacity to analyse, propose, negotiate and act in the technical and economic sectors, and at the different decision-making levels.

Several working methods could be explored:

- a better collaboration of the PSAOP with educational projects supported by the World Bank in particular, as regards education and literacy, etc ;
- increasing the resources devoted to the training of farmers leaders at the local, regional and national levels as well as the possible specialisation of some of them ;
- the identification, in collaboration with the Swiss Cooperation and other donors, of one or more projects concerning rural training. Innovative practices exist (such as CIFA[41]) which could be developed and enhanced.

However, it is not a question of adding a new component to the PSAOP for that will make an already complex institutional mechanism more cumbersome, but of identifying the specific projects, in collaboration with the different players involved, and the rural people and their organisations in particular.

4.7. The activities carried out to build the capacity of farmers' organisations inevitably affect the dynamics of pre-existing organisations. However, it is important for external donors to pay attention to growing dynamics and make sure they do not take advantage of them

4.7.1. The dialogue between external actors and farmers' organisations is marked by many divergences.

In Senegal, and better still in other countries where rural organisations are less advanced, farmers' organisations only partially meet the expectations of foreign players, with the reverse also being true. Decision-makers or donors can therefore be highly tempted to strongly propose or even impose "restructuring" of organisations or give priority to certain levels of organisation, etc. The position of strength they occupy in the negotiation can force them to impose such restructuring, just as the frailty of organisations in certain countries and

[41] The Interprofessional Centre for Agricultural Training (CIFA) situated near Saint-Louis is an original structure which has already proven its effectiveness. The French Cooperation intends to maintain its support to CIFA and to help to make it go "regional".

their lack of resources. Moreover, a farmers' organisation support project is also a power broker within the organisations, both for guiding the project or controlling the resources.

4.7.2. However, as one CNCR member puts it, "no matter how big a project is, it should not decide on the orientation and structuring of the farmers' movement..."

which is the exclusive responsibility of the rural people. FO support cannot be "social engineering" in the hands of experts, no matter how competent they are, for there will be a big risk of having ad-hoc organisations whose legitimacy will be tied more to the project officials than to their recognition by producers. The words of the President of the World Bank concerning States perfectly applies to support to farmers' organisations: "... let us never forget that it is the duty of countries and their population to set their priorities and let us never forget that we cannot and must not force development as a diktat from abroad"[42]. The case of Senegal highlights the fact that the capacity of farmers' organisations to derive a lasting benefit from the support they are proposed, without becoming mere instruments for foreign backers depends:

- on the prior solid structuring of organisations from top to bottom, and on the clarity of their own projects, and
- on the capacity of support bodies to negotiate the content of the support, the conditions according to which it is offered and to accept the necessary changes in the course of the project.

[42] JD Wolfensohn – The Other Crisis – Speech delivered to the Board of Governors of the Work Bank group, Washington - 1998

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Capitalisation on support to farmers' organisations within the context of World Bank "agricultural services" programmes: the case of Burkina Faso (PNDSA II)

Denis Pesche

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Introduction

This report is an attempt at drawing lessons from the analysis of the implementation of the "producers' organisations support" component of the "National Agricultural Services Development Programme" (PNDSA II) in Burkina Faso.

This Burkinabe experience falls within a wider study assigned to CIRAD by the World Bank (WB) and is aimed at capitalising the achievements concerning the design, negotiation and implementation of WB-supported farmers' and rural organisations capacity building projects.

Since 1997, the World Bank, in collaboration with French Assistance, has taken several initiatives aimed at the following:

- building the capacity of rural producers' organisations;
- promoting, through specific agricultural development projects, partnership relationships between rural producers' organisations and agricultural services to enable the latter tailor their action to the demands of producers.

This new approach first concerned four West African countries (Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso) before being extended to North Africa (Tunisia and Morocco). Similar projects were equally negotiated in English-speaking African countries and today applications are being received from Asia (Indonesia, India, etc.).

Although the renovation of World Bank approaches on capacity building of rural producers' organisations is recent, it was deemed necessary to find out what lessons could already be drawn from on-going experiences.

Two issues were raised:

- What has been done? What are the results? What were the difficulties encountered?
- Any prospects for the future? Concretely, what should be the next stages for the World Bank?

To answer these questions, four types of activities were conducted as part of the study:

1. **A review of recent literature**, produced by the World Bank but also by other institutions, concerning the capacity building of farmers' and rural organisations; the idea was to highlight the major analyses carried out, the proposed working guidelines, etc.;
2. **A review of World Bank portfolio** in order to: (1) identify World Bank funded projects that include an "organisations enhancement" component; (2) identify the features of the actions retained and the conditions under which such actions are implemented in the various projects and (3) bring out the difficulties faced by the TTLs to carry out the process aimed at enhancing organisations;
3. **Carrying out more in-depth case studies in four African countries** (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Ghana) in which World bank funded projects are currently being executed with the aim of instituting demand-oriented agricultural services that include a "rural producers' organisations (RPO) capacity building" component.
4. At the end of country-based case studies, **a summary** shall present the major cross-cutting lessons to be learned and make proposals and recommendations.

The country-based case studies shall be conducted around the following questions:

- Was the participation of RPOs effective in the design, implementation and assessment of the project?
- How is dialogue between the World Bank team and the RPOs organised? Is it limited to RPO support or does it concern other WB projects?

- How is dialogue organised among RPOs on the one hand and between public services, policy-makers and the private sector on the other hand?
- Has the WB approach towards RPOs changed? Has the WB perception changed?
- Are there any new RPO consultation mechanisms or are they envisaged?
- Is the legal framework of RPOs a constraint? (with respect to accessing a statute for instance)
- What measures have been taken to prevent the risk of excluding the poorest groups?
- Is FOs capacity building done simultaneously with institutional reforms of the Ministry of Agriculture and its services? Are agricultural services more effective when FOs capacities are enhanced?
- How are RPO capacity building projects organised with other projects equally supported by the WB?

1. Background to the design of PNDSA II (1996-1998)

In this part, we shall first of all analyse the agricultural policy framework at the start of PNDSA II (11) then the more specific context of FOs at the time as well as the policy support concerning them (12).

1.1. Agricultural and rural policy framework at the start of PNDSA II

This chapter presents an overview of the formulation and implementation of policies targeting the agricultural sector and the rural world in Burkina Faso during the preparatory and implementation phases of PNDSA II, i.e. approximately between 1996 and 2000. This framework is somehow the institutional and political landscape within which the origin and start-off of PNDSA II will fall.

In 1995, a joint evaluation of the Agricultural Structural Adjustment Plan (PASA) by donor institutions revealed that the private sector had not satisfactorily taken over from the State after its withdrawal. It was thus decided that a strategy be worked out to enable private stakeholders enhance their capacity in order to assume their role: this saw the birth of the *Sustainable Growth Strategy of the Agriculture and Livestock Sectors.* A four-stage process was thus launched: (1) an overall diagnosis of agriculture in Burkina Faso, a kind of systematic description of the situation at a given moment, (2) a Policy Paper (PP, 1997), (3) an Operational Strategic Programme (OSP, 1999)[44] and (4) concerted Action Plans (AP) to be translated into investment programmes in the agricultural and livestock sectors (PISAE).

At the time PNDSA II was being designed, the PP was therefore not yet prepared since it officially came out in December 1997 while the PNDSA II project document is dated May 1997. However, the main thrust of the PP was known at the time. The paper presents the main objectives assigned by the government to the agricultural and livestock sectors as well as the seven guiding principles of its policy:

- Encourage the development of a market economy in the rural area
- Modernise agriculture and livestock
- Encourage the professionalisation of actors
- Ensure a sustainable management of natural resources
- Increase food security
- Significantly improve the economic status of the rural woman
- The role of the State

[44] Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of animal resources, 1997, *Sustainable growth strategy of the agriculture and livestock sectors: Policy paper by 2010*, Ouagadougou, 22 pp and Ministry of Agriculture, 1999, *Sustainable growth strategy of the agriculture sector : Operational Strategic Plan (OSP)*, Ouagadougou, 72 pp

PNDSA II is centred more particularly on the principle of modernising agriculture and livestock: the producers' organisations (POs) enhancement pilot programme, which is the main subject of this analysis, rather takes us to the principle of professionalisation of actors.

In 1999, government strategy became more precise through the PP. At the time, PNDSA II had started its activities. The PP laid down five priority programmes (soil fertility, food security and nutrition, modernisation of agriculture, support to producers and to their organisations, institutional support) and two sector action plans (food crops and export crops). Each programme further led to the design of one or several action plans.[45] One of the basic concepts was to *place the "beneficiaries" at the centre of the new programmes*: it was clearly stated that a Policy Committee would be set up for some action plans "*comprising exclusively beneficiaries and shall be the key structure in the implementation of the action plans*"[46]. At the time, the World Bank was active in the process, with the other donor institutions. Faced with some slowness in the process[47], the World Bank withdrew in 1998.

The European Union lent its support to the development of various action plans (APs) envisaged and several bilateral cooperation bodies got involved in one or another of the APs. The objective of the APs was to encourage the development of major principles to guide the action of the various actors of a given sector. Each action plan thus comprised: (1) a diagnosis, (2) the formulation of major principles and (3) concrete actions designed to start off the process with the idea that the action plans should contribute in guiding the practices of the actors in the field. The idea was thus to come up with guidelines capable of "giving a direction" to the various components of the agricultural policy, thereby limiting the changes that occurred as a result of the regular succession of ministers and changes of donors' modes and strategies.

Lastly, only a few action plans seemed to have actually seen the light of day: three of them seemed to have particularly concentrated energies with varying results. The Action Plan for the Emergence of Agric Professionals' Organisations (AP/APOs, see appendix 2), the Action Plan for the Funding of the Rural World (AP/FRA) and the Action Plan for the Rice Sector (APRS). Other action plans were worked out but were not always translated into significant actions or changes: cereals, fruits and vegetables[48], mechanisation, soil fertility, ... In addition, it was not always obvious to bring officials and workers of the agricultural administration to fully grasp the spirit and content of the action plans: the SP/CPSA[49] played a central role here both in designing the action plans and in disseminating their content, as well as their appropriation.

To this process of definition and implementation of strategies for the rural sector is superimposed the wider exercise of elaborating a strategic poverty alleviation framework started in November 1999 and completed in 2000. The framework was thus built up *after* the start of PNDSA II and the links between the two were not immediate. Furthermore, in more

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[45] The « Support to producers/actors and their organisations» programme led to only one action plan, the AP/PAOs (see the rest of footnote) while the "modernisation of agriculture" programme gave rise to four action plans including that on funding of the rural area (AP/FRA).

[46] Ministry of Agriculture, 1999, *Sustainable growth strategy of the agriculture sector: Operational Strategic Plan (OSP)*, Ouagadougou, 72 pp.

[47] It would appear other factors like the splitting of the Ministry of Agriculture into two with the creation of the Ministry of Animal Resources as well as disrespect of commitments on monopolies to be ended in the hides and skin sector, forced the World Bank to make such a choice.

[48] The World Bank expressed its interest in this sector.

[49] The Permanent Secretariat for the coordination of agricultural sector policies, attached to the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Agriculture (former PASA Coordination Unit). Some people even referred to this structure as "*off-shore*", illustrating the ambiguities of its institutional attachment (expected to be inter-ministerial but attached to one ministry): it appears to be perceived by some components of the Burkinabe administration as a "donors' affair".

general terms, one may question the influence of these overall strategic programming exercises on the practices of actors. A report to analyse the implementation of the Poverty Alleviation Strategic Framework (CSLP) revealed that: "*for some partners, the structure (priorities, thrust) of the* CSLP *had already laid the basis for the review of the assistance strategies (review that had been planned before the* CSLP*), while others were happy to note that their strategies and programmes were already focused on the same concerns and guidelines as those presented in the* CSLP"[50]. The analysis raised eyebrows on the possible incidence of such approaches on development practices, which in a nutshell is normal given that development projects and programmes often function according to a particular logic and that the exercise of the CSLP is so abstract and general in nature that it is not easily seen what the local actors may derive from it to change their practices.

1.2. Background to the organisation of FOs and related-support policies at the start of PNDSA II

This part analyses the context of support to FOs and the dynamics of FOs at the start of PNDSA II: the idea is therefore to outline the main aspects of the more specific context of FO support policies under which the "FO support" aspect of PNDSA II falls.

1.2.1. Recent emergence of national producers' organisations in Burkina Faso

At the time PNDSA II took off, what was the level of organisation of the FOs in Burkina Faso? It is worth mentioning some of the important stages in the setting-up of national FOs[51].

In 1993, at the behest of the National Federation of Naam Groups (FNGN) and the NGO 'Six S', a survey was conducted on the FOs of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The findings were presented during a first national meeting held in Dedougou in October 1994, bringing together more than 100 farmers' organisations from the entire country. A Dedougou Recommendations Follow-up Committee was set up, with the mandate to examine modalities for creating a national farmers' organisation.

In June 1996, the Committee examined the work done with delegates from the 30 provinces of the country. In October 1996, a second meeting in Dedougou made it possible to set up the *National Federation of Burkina FOs* (FENOP). Very rapidly, the Bam Cooperatives Union (UCOBAM) and the FNGN came together to form, outside this new national federation, the National Producers' Provisional Coordination (CNPOP), which became the National Council of Burkina Agric Professionals (CNPA-B)[52] in July 1997. Not long after, a third national organisation came to existence: the Union of Young Agricultural Producers of Burkina Faso (UNJPA-B), which found it very difficult to survive, since it did not have any foreign assistance like the two other umbrella organisations[53].

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[50] DANIDA, 2002, Review of the CSLP process in Burkina Faso: A contribution to the international review of the CSLP process.

[51] This chapter brings additional information to existing analyses on the history of FOs in Burkina Faso: Faure A, Pesche D, 1993, *Situation et évolution des organisations paysannes : le Burkina Faso*, Réseau GAO, Paris, ARC, 1994, *Le mouvement paysan au Burkina Faso : ses composantes, ses forces et ses limites (première partie : rapport de synthèse)*, Association internationale Six-S, Ouagadougou, 28 pp. See also Janssens L, Totté M, Verhaegen E, (AIDEP), 1997, *Plan d'actions pour l'émergence d'Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles au Burkina Faso*, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MARA), Agricultural Sector Adjustment Programme (PASAPASA), Ouagadougou, 250 pp 35 à 47.

[52] It was at the beginning of the same year that the survey on the identification of the future AP-OAP with the EU was launched, making fashionable the term agricultural professionals. Janssens L, Totté M, Verhaegen E, (AIDEP), 1997, *Plan d'actions pour l'émergence d'Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles au Burkina Faso*, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MARA), Agricultural Sector Adjustment Programme (PASA), Ouagadougou, 250 pp.

[53] At the time, the FENOP was receiving support from the Swiss cooperation and the CNPA-B from the Netherlands cooperation.

At this same period, the CILSS struggled to constitute FOs platforms in all the countries of the Sahel region. This option that came from a meeting organised with the Sahel club in Praia in 1994, sought to formalise the constitution of a farmers' representative in the inter-State organisation of CILSS. The approach adopted by CILSS was quite aggressive: articles of association were presented to FOs but they were reticent to the approach.

At the time of designing PNDSA II, there were thus two main umbrella farmers' organisations: the FENOP and the CNPA-B. Not long after the identification of PNDSA II, in April 1998, the National Union of Burkina Cotton Producers (UNPC-B) came into existence: it was based mostly in the cotton producing area, in the west of the country. This organisation was to participate actively in improving the functioning of the cotton sector and could benefit from support and funding that would gradually provide it considerable operating resources. It was backed mostly by French Cooperation (AFD) but also by SOFITEX in which it held 23% of the shares.

In July 1998, FENOP, CNPA-B and UNJPA-B teamed up and formed the *Burkina umbrella Organisations' Consultation Committee (CCOF)*. A one-year rotating chairmanship was to enable the organisation to get involved in the process of coordination and exchange, with the end objective of reinforcing the weight of FOs in negotiations with the authorities and donor institutions. The UNPC-B did not join it, mainly because of the divergent views on the issue of cotton between the organisation and some member organisations of the FENOP (especially UPPM) that at the time adopted a critical stance with respect to the management of the cotton sector. It would appear the creation of CCOF was partly linked to incentives from foreign partners (donor institutions) for the creation of a common platform for dialogue among FOs. Five years later, in November 2002, the Confederation of Faso Farmers was born after a lead time of more than three years (see appendix 3). What can be gathered from this part is that at the time of setting up PNDSA II, FOs had been constituted in national federations for some time and that dialogue among and between them, the government and donor institutions was not yet common practice.

1.2.2. How FO support is included in agricultural and rural policies

In the overall landscape of agricultural and rural policies, support to producers' organisations clearly stood out as a specific component in the PP as early as 1997 and later in the OSP in 1999. It was referred to at the time as priority programme for support to producers and their organisations and aimed at "*professionalising the sectors*" in order to *"ensure that in the long-term the main actors would take over the sustainable running and socio-economic development of the agricultural sector and render it cost-effective"*[54]. This overall objective "*would be achieved only after the attainment of operational objectives: (1) support to the emergence and structuring of APOs, (2) support to APO enhancement and (3) support to the development of private initiative*". The strategy envisaged for the implementation of such priorities mainly depends on the following: the action plan for the emergence of agric professionals' organisations (AP/APOs) and the institution of a network of chambers of agriculture. One of the appendices of the OSP underscores that the cross-cutting theme of professionalisation of rural actors requires "*a clarification of the relation with PNDSA II, the land management approach (PNGT) and decentralisation*".

[54] Quotations in this paragraph are taken from: Ministry of Agriculture, 1999, *Stratégie de croissance durable du secteur de l'agriculture : Plan stratégique opérationnel (PSO)*, Ouagadougou, 72 pp 31 to 35. It will be noted that the responsibility to develop the agricultural sector and render it cost-effective is, according to the quotation, entirely assigned to actors, without any allusion to either the macro-economic or the commercial context (national and international).

In 1997, the identification survey[55] of the action plan for the emergence of agric professionals' organisations (AP/APOs) made an in-depth diagnosis of the situation of producers' organisations and brought out highlights of the AP/APOs. The action plan unfortunately faced several difficulties (see appendix 2) while PNDSA II kicked off with its activities without delay.

2. Preparation of PNDSA II and its "FO component"

PNDSA II is a follow-up of two programmes sponsored by the World Bank in the 1980s and 90s: one concerning support to agricultural extension services (PRSAP[56]) and the other to agricultural research (PNRA[57]). The programme document[58] clearly stated the overall objective of PNDSA II, which is «poverty alleviation by encouraging increased production of smallholders through the contribution of services and the strengthening of ties between agricultural research and extension". The project had five specific objectives: (a) support long-term agricultural production by reorganising the agricultural research system in order to better tailor it to the needs of producers, (b) increase the productivity of agriculture and livestock through extension and especially support to women, (c) improve natural resource management and promote sustainable production systems, (d) help government to improve the animal health system by leaning mostly on private veterinarians and (e) promote and strengthen representative producers' organisations on the basis of pilot actions.

PNDSA II comprises five components:

1. **Agricultural research** (US$ 18.8 million). This component concerns two institutions (INERA and IRSAT) and lays special emphasis on the fruits and vegetable sectors while at the same time opening new research avenues in the domain of forestry, mechanisation of agriculture and post-harvest technologies. A core idea is to improve the relevance of research from the producers' viewpoint.
2. **Agricultural and livestock extension** (US$ 20.3 million). This component strives to consolidate the extension system by laying emphasis on producers' diagnosis capacity building, on the appropriation of technical messages and on the necessary involvement of producers in preparing the work of extension workers and the assessment thereof. Special attention is accorded to women.
3. **Promotion of animal health and pastoralism** (US$ 2.5 million). This component intends to intervene through (1) the improvement of the quality of animal health services and (2) the development of specialised information services for transhumance stockbreeders.
4. **Pilot programmes** (US$ 4.3 million). This component comprises (1) the promotion of producers' organisations and (2) the funding of small rural infrastructure.
5. **Reorganisation of agricultural services** (US$ 1.4 million). This component intends to assist in the reorganisation of agricultural services in order to (1) ensure better efficiency of the public sector, (2) increase the autonomy and improve the professionalism of economic producers' organisations and facilitate their involvement in the programming and assessment of public services, (3) promote an environment conducive to the involvement of the private sector in agricultural development.

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[55] Janssens L, Totté M, Verhaegen E, (AIDEP), 1997, *Plan d'actions pour l'émergence d'Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles au Burkina Faso*, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MARA), Agricultural Sector Adjustment Programme (PASA), Ouagadougou,, 250 pp.
[56] To the tune of US$ 42 million from January 1989 to December 1997.
[57] To the tune of US$ 17.9 million from 1988 to December 1999.
[58] World Bank, 1997, *Second National Agriculture Services Development Project, Staff Appraisal Report,* 68 pp

We shall now concentrate more particularly on the fourth component of PNDSA II (pilot programmes) and especially on FO support.

2.1. The main thrust of the "support to FO's component"

The fourth component of PNDSA II (pilot programmes) comprises two aspects: (1) FOs and (1) small rural infrastructure. This component may be considered as an innovation in the sense that, for the first time, there were elements targeting direct funding of farmers' organisations capacity building. The PNDSA II programme document summarises the objectives of the support to FO's component as follows: "(a) *Promotion of farmers' organisations: On a pilot basis, the project would help national, regional and local farmers' organisations gain professional and financial strength so that they can provide services to smallholders and take part in adaptive research, and, potentially, become able to transfer technologies and know-how to their members. Also, on pilot basis, the project would finance (b) a program for small rural infrastructures to study the processes and feasibility of financing village-level operations intended for communal usage*".

The document further states that the objective (a) on the *promotion of farmers' organisations* comprises support from the Ministry of Agriculture, particularly its Department of Cooperative Promotion and Rural Legislation (DPCLR), justifying this choice by the fact that existing farmers' organisations have a low level of development (item 4.16). The other envisaged supports were to be devoted to enhancing FOs professionalism and their capacity to render services to their members through:

- Improvement of FOs legal framework
- Support to FOs members through literacy and training programmes
- Training of farmers' representatives and FOs wage earners in management and accounting, and support to basic equipment needed for their functioning
- Training of FOs wage earners in participatory extension methods
- Technical and logistic support to local savings and loans bodies and their federations.

The "small rural infrastructure" aspect was then designed as an experimental programme over two years, mostly centred on the funding of "boulis"[59].

At the time there was provision that direct FO support would be designed on the basis of existing surveys and plans for savings and loans institutions and the farmers' organisations professionalisation programme prepared as part of PASA II (the future AP/APOs) (item 6.21).

During implementation, the pilot programmes component shall in fact be sub-divided into two lines of action:
Support to the administration responsible for FOs (DPCLR, which became DOPAIR[60] in 2002). Such support was reified at the beginning of the programme by support to the administration in its task of reviewing and disseminating the law on cooperatives.
Funding of micro-projects designed, implemented and monitored by FOs locally. It is this line of action dubbed "support to FO's component" in the rest of the text that will be the main subject of the analysis.

[59] Very small stretch of water of an artificial origin, very often temporary, an aimed at securing village water supply.
[60] Department of Producers Organisation and Rural Institutions Support.

2.2. Limited FO participation in designing PNDSA II

The preparation of PNDSA II was fast as compared to similar programmes in other countries, like PSAOP in Senegal for instance. It would appear that the preparation of the agricultural research aspect took longer, from the adoption in 1995 of an agricultural research strategic plan. Meanwhile, the extension aspect seemed to have been designed faster, between 1996 and 1997.

The PNDSA II programme document states that "Farmers' opinions expressed in the evaluation study of 1991 and beneficiary assessment of 1995 will be addressed in this project, especially as they relate to more diversified extension messages, messages for livestock owners and water and natural resource management"[61]. It is the only area in the report that mentions ideas or proposals that are believed to have resulted from discussions and consultations with producers. One should however underscore the importance accorded to producers' organisations in the definition and general philosophy of PNDSA II, as testified by the formulation of the objectives and five components of the programme. In a transversal manner, for research like for extension, the enhancement of producers' organisations is necessary particularly as a means of ensuring better definition and implementation of agricultural services.

The effective involvement of umbrella farmers' organisations (UFOs) and their representatives in programme design seemed to have been limited. As stated in the first part, these organisations were still young and partly absorbed at the time in their own build-up. The relative rapidity in the laying down of PNDSA II (three missions) within this context of institutional setting-up of farmers' federations obviously did not facilitate significant involvement of farmers' representatives in the designing of the programme. The testimony of a wage earner of one of the umbrella farmers' organisations existing at the time states that they were duly invited to express their opinion but under conditions that could be improved: representatives of farmers' organisations were asked to comment on the programme document[62] but were given a very short time to analyse it.

Later on, the umbrella FOs, grouped under CCOF as from July 1998, could now be regularly consulted and associated with three representatives in the programme steering committee, as testified by a 1999 aide memoir: "*The mission appreciates the involvement of umbrella farmers' organisations in PNDSA II and the implementation of the FO support component. It encourages CCOF to continue its effort of organising the representation of FOs at the national level in respect of their pluralism and strategies specific to each of the umbrella organisations*"[63]. CCOF was thus regularly informed of the progress of the "support to FO's component" and associated to PNDSA II workshops like the one organised in May 2000 on the issue of funding the functioning of farmers' groups set up by the programme (CPCE/OP, see below). However, the CCOF, which represented an informal consultation forum between UFOs, had since disappeared and most umbrella FOs, with the exception of FENOP, joined the Faso Farmers' Confederation (see appendix 3).

To conclude this part, it should be borne in mind that PNDSA II was designed in a local and international context that confers to it an overall innovative tone, placing producers and their organisations at the centre of the envisaged institutional developments. The relative fast pace in designing the programme and the youthful nature of umbrella farmers' organisations caused them to be often left out in the design process. Meanwhile, they were consulted at

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[61] World Bank, 1997, *Second National Agriculture Services Development Project, Staff Appraisal Report* 68 pp point 4.3, page 13

[62] On the technical aspects but not on the financial an budgetary aspects that remained unknown to UFOs of the time.

[63] World Bank, 1999, PNDSA II, Supervision Mission, 2 to 19 February (Aide memoir) 21 pp.

various levels in the implementation of activities of the "support to FO's component" of PNDSA II.

3. Implementation of the "support to FO's component" of PNDSA II

Identified in 1997 for a period of 5 years, PNDSA II effectively kicked off in mid 1998 after a launching workshop in June and the signing of the loan agreement in July. Its execution was extended a first time for 18 months, up to June 2003, then a second time up to December 2004.

Its implementation was assigned to an independent management unit, the Programme Management Unit (UGP), made up of State workers. The project manager of the "support to FO's component" was the Department in the Ministry of Agriculture responsible for producers' organisations (DPCLR and later DOPAIR as from 2002).

With regard to the "support to FO's component", there are two major periods:

- The setting-up of the intervention mechanism with role sharing between the administration, responsible for monitoring and supervision, and a private operator responsible for effective execution and accompanying the process (1998-2000).
- After a rather long transition phase, due to temporary freezing of the FOs micro-project funding mechanism, a currently on-going second phase characterised mostly by the exclusion of the private actor and the preponderant role of the State in a context of uncertainty over the outcome of the entire mechanism.

The "support to FO's component" of PNDSA corresponded to an innovation within World Bank sponsored agricultural services support programmes. For the first time, such programmes explicitly mainstreamed direct grassroots FO support actions, aimed at enhancing their capacities in view of increasing and improving the presentation of a counsel service request. Three hypotheses seemed to have constituted the basis of the adopted approach:

1. By fully assuming their role of project manager of funded actions (small investments, training, etc.), local FOs find themselves in a natural capacity building situation.
2. By assuming the examination, the funding decision and then the monitoring of FO micro-projects, farmers' representatives, elected in "Farmers' Organisations Provincial Consultation and Exchange Fora" (CPCE/OP), enhance their capacity and contribute in bringing forth and sustaining a forum for dialogue and consultation between FOs and the administration.
3. By involving a private actor in the implementation of the mechanism, the administration, responsible for monitoring an assigned project, enhances its capacity to monitor and guide private producer support mechanisms.

We shall now describe the implementation of this FO capacity building pilot action, make a few observations on the mechanism and its implementation and then analyse the recent developments of the mechanism.

3.1. Setting up the FO support mechanism

After the effective launching of PNDSA II, a private firm responsible for implementing the FO component was recruited: this was the Burkinabe branch of the Canadian organisation CECI[64] whose contract was to run from June 1999 to March 2002. This option was an

[64] http://www.ceci.ca/index.htm

essential element of the strategy adopted for the implementation of the "support to FO's component": it was not in the initial programme document but constituted an interesting experiment as we are going to see. PNDSA II design and implementation fall under a general environment of State withdrawal, it's refocusing on its traditional duties and the enhancement of local actors, and especially farmers' organisations. CECI's main duty was to set up "Farmers' Organisations Provincial Consultation and Exchange Fora" (CPCE/OP) in 9 provinces[65], ensure their training and follow-up in order to meet the objectives of the "support to FO's component". The CPCE/OPs were the core of the mechanism: they were to process the files built up by FOs and then monitor the achievements once action has been undertaken.

Sequentially, the implementation and functioning of the FO support component can be summarised according to the following stages:

1. The setting-up of Farmers' Organisations Provincial Consultation and Exchange Fora (CPCE/OPs). It should be recalled that Burkina Faso has 45 provinces each comprising some ten divisions. After a phase of identification of FOs per province, with the constitution of computer files, the setting-up mechanism consisted in organising sensitisation meetings in each province and electing two farmers' representatives per division (one main representative and one alternate member) to make up the CPCE/OP. Then CPCE/OPs members appointed a bureau from among them. In January 2000, all the CPCE/OPs were considered as having been set up[66]. Four training cycles were organised by CECI for CPCE/OPs farmers' representatives. The procedures manual mentions several training sessions of farmers' representatives and local drafters in 1999 and 2000.

2. Designing of FO project files. Faced with the likely difficulty for grassroots FOs to design applications for small projects in accordance with the PNDSA II procedures manual, CECI had included in its proposal the option of recruiting "local drafters" from among the literates in the villages, in order to accompany the FOs in this task. Such local drafters were trained by counsellors, one per province, who were previously sensitised on the use of the small projects procedures manual[67]. CPCE/OPs members also had a role to play to accompany FOs in the drafting of their projects;

3. Project examination was done by the CPCE/OPs during quarterly meetings. Files accepted by the CPCE/OPs were then forwarded to the capital, at the PNDSA II Coordination Unit, which expressed a final opinion for disbursement of funds.

4. Project execution and monitoring. Once credited with money in its bank account, the FO goes ahead with the execution of its project by fully assuming its position of project manager. CPCE/OPs members are responsible for monitoring the execution of FO achievements, under the supervision of the PNDSA II Management Unit (UGP) and the administration. In effect, following modifications introduced in July 2000, it was provided in the procedures manual that CPCE/OPs would have an upstream role of studying, selecting and correcting projects eligible for funding and a downstream role of monitoring, assessing, controlling and ensuring the proper management of equipment and funds made available to the project, drafting periodical progress reports per project to be forwarded to the decentralised and central bodies of the Ministry of Agriculture (at the time the DPCLR, the DPA and the DPRA).

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[65] Six provinces at the beginning (June 1999) and later on 3 others rapidly (October 1999): Oubritenga, Sanmatenga, Namentenga, Nahouri, Boulkiemde, Ioba, Comoe, Tapoa and Oudalan.

[66] Ouedraogo GJ, 2002, *Evaluation finale du projet "appui aux OP", composante : création et accompagnement des CPCE/OP*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 46 pp. 13.

[67] With visibly a few difficulties because « the micro project presentation documents were relatively complicated and not easy to understand by the vast majority of producers » (World Bank, 2001b, Draft aide memoire, Mid-term review of PNDSA II, report of the "FO support" group, 7 pp).

Before commenting on the installation phase of this "support to FO's component", let us have a look at the nature of projects presented by FOs. The standard internal rules and regulations of CPCE/OPs, appended to the procedures manual, mentions two types of actions eligible for funding:

- **FO capacity building** actions such as training, organisation of dialogue among FOs or study visits, implementation of innovations of general interest for the group that so requests and acquisition of office equipment and stationery for the FO.
- **Small rural infrastructure** like the refilling of low grounds, small anti-erosion dykes, regeneration of grazing lands, development or improvement of water points or small arrangements for access to water for cattle or agriculture.

An assessment report[68] states that as at 31 March 2002, 398 projects had been funded. The majority of the projects were small infrastructure (311 projects as against 87 for capacity building): infrastructure represents more than 80% of the total amount of funding. Capacity building activities concern mostly literacy projects (39 projects) and technical training in management (48 projects).

For rural infrastructure, there were mostly three categories of actions funded: the construction of buildings (cereals bank, training centre, etc.), support to production (small-scale production plants, market gardening, nurseries, etc.) and development infrastructure (anti-erosion sites, manure pits, refilling of low grounds).

For all the 9 provinces, the projects most frequently executed were manure pits, water and soil conservation works and training and literacy centres. The average amount for capacity building projects was CFAF 562 000 and that for infrastructure projects practically CFAF 1 000 000. The analysis of the nature of FO actions funded by PNDSA II should not mask the fact that in the minds of the designers of the mechanism, the very objective of the projects funded finally had less significance than the fact of placing FOs in position of project manager, estimating that this would naturally contribute in their capacity building. In the next part on lessons learnt we shall suggest some relevant conditions of this hypothesis.

3.2. Some remarks on the installation phase

During the launching phase, the private actor, CECI-BF, responsible for the implementation of the "FO support" component, drafted quarterly progress reports and regularly produced analysis and capitalisation notes on the process engaged. In a mid-term capitalisation document, CECI-BF brought out some lessons, some of which were still valid two years after[69]. We are naming them to refresh our memories in order to show that the mechanism put in place had a self-evaluation capacity thanks to the seriousness and professionalism of the private actor involved in its implementation. CECI brought out several lessons we are hereby grouping under two major headings that will be treated again in more details in the next part on lessons learnt:

- New roles for actors
- An efficient but fragile funding mechanism

[68] Ouedraogo GJ, 2002, *Evaluation finale du projet "appui aux OP", composante : création et accompagnement des CPCE/OP*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 46 pp

[69] CECI-BF, 2001, *Projet de création et de suivi des comités provinciaux de concertation et d'échange des OP (CPCE/OP) : capitalisation, leçons à tirer, document n°3*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 20 pp

3.2.1. New roles for actors

CECI underscored several items concerning the new roles played (or not) by local actors: many tasks carried out by the CPCE/OPs, relations with technical services, the role of local drafters and the ambiguities experienced by the various local partners during monitoring and evaluation.

Being a core structure of the mechanism, were the **CPCE/OPs** too highly solicited? Were they provided with the means needed for the execution of the tasks expected of them? CECI progress and capitalisation reports highlight the contrast between the number and importance of tasks expected of the CPCE/OPs and the difficulty of the mechanism to provide them with the material and financial support needed for the execution of such tasks. Some CPCE/OPs at time had to pre-finance their activity for more than one year. Following a workshop bringing together PNDSA II, CECI, UFOs and DPCLR, it was agreed that as from January 2001, CPCE/OPs should be able to be self-funded from a "CPCE/OP functioning" aspect equivalent to 5% of the cost of projects designed by grassroots FOs. An assessment carried out in 2002 estimated that "there is still a problem with CPCE/OP funding; the 5% deducted at source from FO projects do not cover the running needs of CPCE/OPs; furthermore, CPCE/OPs could not install their own mechanisms to fund their activities"[70]. Beyond this issue of providing a running budget is also the issue of the dependence of CPCE/OPs with respect to the definition of their responsibility (largely dictated by the procedures manual) and their close links with local administrations (which, in some cases, cover the travel expenses of their officials on monitoring missions, host meetings, etc.).

Concerning **local technical services**, CECI assessment pointed out that the initial option did not quite clearly specify the potential role of the local technical agricultural administration which, having the feeling of being left aside, was not comfortable with the brutal change, when many recognised the useful role it could have played (and that it in fact played in many provinces) to install the mechanism. In the majority of situations, the option of delegating the powers of project manager to a private actor was a guarantee of efficiency and rapidity in attaining the objectives. In some cases, this option was not well understood by the local administration, thereby causing delays in activities (e.g. the case of the Tapoa province).

One of the areas of disagreement between local actors (local administration, private actor) was the **monitoring and evaluation role**. The initial arrangements were very clear: implementation was entrusted to a private actor (CECI) and supervision to the administration. One can postulate that this plan, which was rather coherent and relevant in its overall design, was difficult to be implemented locally. As underscored by CECI, the procedures manual clearly stated that DPAs (Provincial Directors of Agriculture) "are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of sub-projects on the basis of audit reports submitted to them by CPCE/OPs and minutes of CPCE/OP meetings (...). Technical service departments and their workers have an undeniable role to play in the monitoring and evaluation of projects, but this exercise is possible only when their institutional and operational responsibility is clarified, especially with regard to bearing the costs linked to their work." We shall develop this aspect of the role played by local technical services in the general lessons (part IV).

The option proposed by the private actor to recruit **local drafters** to accompany FOs in the drafting of their projects met with contrasted views. Although the overall plan was interesting with regard to the productivity imperatives in the designing of small projects, its implementation was less so because of the sometimes not rigorous recruitment process and due to the lack of local capacities: an official of the national administration even said that "*it is with local drafters that we had the most poorly done work*". An accounting audit conducted in

[70] Ouedraogo GJ, 2002, *Evaluation finale du projet "appui aux OP", composante : création et accompagnement des CPCE/OP*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 46 pp. 35.

2002 also underscored that "local drafters set themselves up as local expertise in the build-up of files, which contradict the aim of the project, that was to assist FOs to be able to take care of themselves. In addition, local drafters did not always grasp their role well and took the place of FOs to draft projects" (ACECA International Ltd. 2000). The above remarks clearly point out the difficulty in valorising and building local capacity outside FOs for the purpose of service provision, while at the same time building the capacity of beneficiary organisations in contracting with local skills.

3.2.2. An efficient but often fragile funding mechanism

Not long after its installation, the small projects funding mechanism suffered considerable delays that need detailed analysis. The joint action of three independent factors contributed to block the mechanism for more than a year, between late 2000 and late 2001.

- **Budgetary estimates underestimating the real demand and the capacity of FOs to design projects.** The first element that contributed in jamming the disbursement process is the fact that the special account allocated to the funding of FO micro-projects was CFAF 100 million. In December 2000, 208 projects were funded for a total of CFAF 175 million. In September 2001, out of the 573 projects awaiting funding from PNDSA II, 458 were finally accepted but were still pending funding, for an expected total of more than CFAF 590 million. This budgetary issue was resolved following a mid-term evaluation mission of June 2001 by the disbursement of an additional CFAF 500 million by the World Bank.
- **Strong involvement of the central level of PNDSA II in the examination of grassroots FO files.** In October 2000, almost a year after the start of the programme in the field (the first CPCE/OPs were constituted in late 1999), out of the 164 FO files processed, 34 applications were rejected, representing 22.56% of the total projects received and examined. This was explained by CECI as being due to the persistence of some FOs that insist on the funding of their agro-pastoral, silvicultural or handicraft production activities that were not eligible under the "support to FO's component" of PNDSA II[71]. It is but normal to point out such rejects and they can be considered as an indicator of the on-going learning process of the actors of the mechanism. However, the compulsory validation at the national level rapidly led to an obstruction in the processing of files. Between January 2000 and march 2001, the total number of files prepared by grassroots FOs, received and processed by CPCEs was 1 480. The number of files accepted and forwarded by CPCEs to PNDSA II was 908, giving an average reject rate of close to 40%. Out of the 908 files, 201 led to the signing of a protocol between PNDSA II and CPCE/OPs. In July 2001, during a mid-term evaluation, 638 files were still awaiting validation by PNDSA II, some for more than 10 months. The mid-term evaluation underscored *"a very high involvement at PNDSA II central level in the selection of projects, which, among others, contributed to slowing down the processing of micro-project files".*
- **A freezing of payment by the World Bank for reasons of non-respect of commitments in other domains.** The multiple cause internal difficulties were compounded by an element foreign to the "support to FO's component". Disbursements for the research component of PNDSA II had been suspended since November 2000. The difficulties are believed to be due to the freezing of payments by the IDA, the freezing itself due to delays in commitments of the national counterpart.

In the final analysis, this unfortunate coincidence of factors that are unfavourable to the smooth running of the "support to FO's component" left a mark in the minds of actors involved in the implementation of PNDSA II (UGP and CECI) and in those of farmers. An

[71] CECI/PNDSA II, *Quarterly Report N°5*, october 2000

internal memo drafted by CECI in autumn 2001 underscored the atmosphere induced by the malfunctions: "The situation of freezing of payment for more than 16 months had severe consequences on FOs: i) the loss of credibility of CPCE/OPs before grassroots FOs; ii) the loss of confidence of FOs and CPCE/OPs in PNDSA II and the World Bank; iii) the interruption of the learning process for CPCE/OPs and FOs; iv) the lack of means for the CPCEs to monitor the execution of sub-projects in the field. This was a double warning signal: that of CECI, which saw such a promising experience plunged into jeopardy and that of CPCEs, which had the feeling that nothing had really changed; the facts are adamant; this is seen in the gap between speeches and actions."

3.3. Partial reorientation of the programme

In June 2001, a mid-term evaluation mission[72], conducted by the new TTL[73], noted the malfunctions rapidly pointed out in the foregoing part and, while confirming certain choices, proposed changes in the conduct of the "support to FO's component". The mission proposed as follows:

- Keep the FO support mechanism by renewing the CECI contract for two more years
- Re-examine the procedures manual
- Completely take over the processing of files at the local level (by CPCEs)
- Insist on the monitoring role of DPAs
- Concert with UFO officials on articulations between CPCEs and UFOs
- Improve synergies between FO structuring and decentralisation
- Undertake a more systematic project monitoring and impact assessment process [74].

In spite of the recommendations made, the first two-year contract of CECI-BF was not renewed. It is difficult to really appreciate what went on in the decision: one can only be surprised given the quality of the progress reports on CECI's work and the capitalisation effected by the same body. Could it have been criticised for having supported the idea of making CPCE/OPs self-dependent, or for having envisaged that they should team up and gradually become a new national organisation? Or was it simply estimated that the added value of this body was not justified and that the administration could assume the responsibility entrusted to the private actor? Worthy of note is the high quality of the work done by CECI and especially its reporting quality and capitalisations, which highlights the progress and clearly acknowledges the numerous difficulties encountered and errors committed.

As from 2002, the administration took over command, with the PNDSA II team, of the monitoring, training and control of the local CPCE/OP mechanism. A reading of a few supervision reports of the central administration provides a clear illustration of the fact that capacity building that was the end result of the mechanism was instead designed as a means at the service of the objective of funding micro-projects[75].

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[72] World Bank, 2001a, PNDSA II: Mid-term review mission, Aide memoire 18 pp.

[73] The PNDSA II Task Team Leader (TTL) changed in November 2000. Without prejudging the causality of the change, and the reorientations of the programme, one can however postulate that the change of persons in the monitoring of a World Bank programme plays a role on its orientation. This is no doubt linked to the fact that for close to one year up to the mid-term review mission, PNDSA II supervision rested on the staff of World Bank bureau in Burkina Faso.

[74] Recommendation that led to the installation of impact assessment protocols with the support of the University of Berkeley and Clermont-Ferrand.

[75] Discussing CPCE/OP organisational capacity building, a supervision report states: "Through the training received from counselling trainers by members of CPCE/OPs, the idea here is to appreciate their level of organisation for the conduct of activities and equally understand how each plays his role, does his work and performs his duties. In practice, management committees were set up in each FO that received funding, but roles, and tasks were confused. There were times when a single person monopolised management. *Concerning CPCE/OP members themselves, there was poor mastery of the tasks of examining, monitoring, evaluating and*

It would appear that the dominant vision in the mind of the administration was to consider CPCE/OPs as an element in the more global mechanism aimed at designing and funding micro-projects. This perception somehow differs from the spirit that prevailed before the designing of the new programmes. Also worthy of note is the sense of duty and rigour of DOPAIR officials who accompanied the mission: they surely viewed their activity as part of a global perspective and a working culture that valorises much more the respect for rules, obedience and conformity with set objectives and standards than creativity, monitoring of initiatives and flexibility needed in a work of accompanying FO capacity building in the long-term.

It should also be pointed out that the overall atmosphere of PNDSA II was undoubtedly partly polluted because of the uncertainty over its future. PNDSA II was extended the first time up to late June 2003. Since late 2002, it was agreed to embark on an exercise of capitalising the experience of FO support but also the extension component. The idea was to *"(i) cross the two CPCE and extension experiments which have similarities (FO support, producer demand-oriented intervention, (more or less) decentralised decision-making process, giving a sense of responsibility to the decentralised levels of the administration…); (ii) broaden the analysis and debate to other actors involved in the innovative experiences often targeting the same objectives"*[76]. At the time of the mission, the capitalisation exercise had not yet started. It was deemed necessary to once more place the analysis of this experience of CPCEs within the broader context of extension activities and above all to open the exercise to other actors. In effect, since the departure of CECI, there was this visibly pronounced tendency of monitoring the "FO support" component mostly focussing on the capacity of the mechanism to fund small projects. Putting the "FO support" component in perspective with other similar operations can only be profitable.

PNDSA II was just recently extended once more to late December 2004 with a significant inflection for the "FO component": take into account the new context linked to the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and consider repatriated persons as a criterion for FO small project funding. Contrary to previous rules, such projects may also be rapidly profitable investment projects. On the one hand, this evolution is proof of the capacity to tailor the programme to the context, e.g. as dictated by an emergency situation. On the other hand, it deviates a little more from the original idea of capacity building to seek to meet immediate material needs: we are not doubting herein the obvious merits of such a change, but it seems necessary to question the role of this type of action on "capacity building".

Beyond such changes, we noticed that the successive extensions placed the PNDSA II team in an almost permanent end-of-programme atmosphere, which is neither motivating nor conducive for innovations. The uncertainty over the end of the programme, compounded by the uncertainty of possible continuations, visibly had a demobilising effect on the entire staff and had unavoidable repercussions on officials of farmers' organisations associated to the process through CPCEs. This lack of visibility in time was an essential factor that was hardly compatible with the duration and perseverance that capacity building approaches must necessarily have.

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designing projects" (CPCE/OP technical audit report on the "FO support" component of PNDSA II, DPCLR, June 2002, underscored by us).

[76] World Bank, 2002, PNDSA II, Supervision Mission, 25 November to 15 December (Aide memoire) 13pp

4. General lessons for FO capacity building

Although it started in 1998, and in spite of several extensions, the support to FO's component of PNDSA II is too recent in its concrete implementation for one to talk of lasting achievements in terms of capacity building. Four main lessons can be drawn from this experience, each with the possibility of being subdivided into more specific lessons.

4.1. New roles for the various actors

The support to FO's component of PNDSA II made it possible to experiment a new division of labour among the actors (local technical services, the central administration, FOs, etc.). It brought to the fore the fact that the exercise of new roles requires specific training and the definition of new rules between actors. This division of labour sometimes met with difficulties due to (1) an inconsistent preparation of actors in assuming their role, (2) the burden of a heritage where the administration played a central role in development operations.

Despite the difficulties related to implementation, the FO support mechanism, in the wider context of PNDSA II, made it possible to experiment new forms of collaboration between local technical services and producers.

Initially left out of the process by recruiting a private actor, the decentralised services of the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock (DPA, DPRA) became involved after the "CECI phase", under the supervision of the DPCLR. Such involvement in the monitoring and accompaniment of micro projects was not always well accepted by these services, which felt that they had been ignored at the time of installing the mechanism. Their mission was also rendered difficult by the very rapid rotation of local officials and also by the numerous instructions they received from the central services.

One can postulate that the decentralised services of agriculture and livestock are in a state of serious lack of motivation not only because of inadequate working means, the most frequent argument, but also because of a vertical and top-down management that cannot render them accountable for their activity or give any sense to it. Below is an example to illustrate the hypothesis. In one of the provinces where the FO component was being implemented, a group requested the services of a technician from the DPA to set up a project and paid him for the services. PNDSA II came in to put an end to such a practice by arguing that DPA workers were already paid by the project and that, as such, they were not supposed to have any further remuneration. Without prejudging the real nature of the retribution (voluntary or "forced" payment), it would be opportune to imagine a more flexible functioning of the administration that encourages the commitment of these workers in collaborations with FOs against fair retribution. In effect, we noticed the existence of local workers that were visibly competent, motivated, but largely discouraged by the lack of visibility and recognition of their job. It would also appear that some workers earned the confidence of farmers and that such farmers sought their opinion and counsel: there are many testimonies to that effect[77]: "*We solicit local technicians but their directors are not always aware*", said one producer. On his part, a livestock technician testified: "*stockbreeders came to see me to prepare files, but I had travelled. They usually solicit the technical services of the State because services are more expensive in the private sector (...). When NGOs go directly to villages, producers come to see us to discuss the proposals of the NGOs*". One of the stakes of future support

[77] The same question asked to many producers confirmed the assertion: the only variation being on the degree of the confidence and the number of workers concerned, who generally constituted a minority.

would be, through actions that facilitate collaborative processes between producers and local technical services, to gradually move from a "training and follow-up" culture to a culture of accompaniment and services rendered. The pilot experience of counsel support started in 2002 is *a priori* in this perspective even though its precipitated implementation (projects had to be designed and started before the rainy season) and the finally reduced offer in counsel support seemed to have limited its scope vis-à-vis the original idea. It would be necessary to delve into this issue and find out to what extent the "demand" for counselling support is not in the most part determined by the proposed supply and the modalities of identification and designing of the operation (procedures manual) whose complexity renders the appropriation of the process difficult for the beneficiaries.

By involving a private actor under the control of the administration, the original design was not enough to generate a real learning process within the central administration and among national actors.

The first phase of implementation of the "support to FO's component" of PNDSA II directly concerns three actors at the national level: CECI, UGP and DPLCR. Added to these three actors are representatives of UFOs that are called upon to express their opinion during regular consultation meetings (workshops, supervision missions). Although both are from the public services, the UGP and DPCLR have distinct roles: the DPCLR, which is the project manager, supervises every thing while the UGP is responsible for implementation and can delegate part of it to CECI in the first phase. Once a decision is made to institutionalise a CPCE/OP, people take sides and form various alliances. In July 2000, during an annual PNDSA II workshop, not long after the creation of CPCEs, the issue of institutionalisation of such consultation fora was raised. Beyond the simple issue of adopting a legal status, there are more complex issues around the legalisation of these fora and their relations of collaboration/competition with UFOs. On this issue:

- The DPCLR refuses any institutionalisation of CPCE/OPs, judging that they are nothing but ad-hoc structures for the management of the support to FO's component of PNDSA II. This option was on the same wavelength with UFOs, which were surely afraid of competition from CPCE/OPs and asked that the CPCE/OPs render account to them.
- The UGP, through the person in charge of the "support to FO's component", adopted a similar position but regretted the position of the DPCLR to renew all the CPCE/OPs without distinction in 2002: it would have preferred that operational CPCE/OPs be maintained (thereby confirming the feeling that they are parts of a larger mechanism).
- The CECI, partly at the request of certain CPCE/OP officials, but also considering convictions on the need to stimulate existing FOs, was instead in favour of the institutionalisation of CPCE/OPs.

In the final analysis, and from the example of the issue raised by all stakeholders shortly after the start of activities, one could easily see the difficulty of institutional reorganisation that opens up to private actors confronted with an administration concerned with its prerogatives. This, all the more as the private sector does not play the role it was assigned in the overall strategy documents.

Concerning the central and also provincial administration, one can point out two "capacities" that a more sustained learning process could have enhanced: (1) the capacity to make do and (2) the capacity to experiment rather than reproduce the same thing.

- On the capacity to "make do", the previous part showed the difficulty faced both by the central administration and the provincial departments in being placed out of the action, in a position of monitoring and control of operations executed by a private actor. During the first phase, the duties of accompanying the CPCE/OPs performed by CECI, and monitoring, performed by DPCLR and UGP were dissociated. By

reuniting the two functions after 2002, the administration was placed in a position of monitoring the work it gave to itself. More precisely, the central administration, through a specific department (DOPAIR), placed itself at a position of monitoring the activities it assigned to decentralised services of the same administration, which are not under its hierarchical supervision. This results to a tendency to attribute the responsibility of failures observed to many factors, top of which is the poor training of farmers, rather than to the malfunctions of the administration itself.

- On the capacity to experiment, one can question the choice of *systematically and uniformly installing* CPCE/OPs, without taking into account the local organisation effort made by UFOs: some provinces had Provincial Producers' Unions, affiliated to one UFO or the other, and it would no doubt have been necessary to try and build their capacities. Without rejecting the CPCE/OP approach that contributed to the emergence of local farmers' representatives[78], and without falling into the trap of blindly supporting the positions defended by UFOs, it would have been more appropriate to experiment several formulas per province in order to assess the relevance of each, since it was a pilot project. In like manner, the decision taken as early as 1999 to adopt the CPCE/OP plan in all the provinces of the country within the PAOPA (see appendix 2) is largely questionable for the same reasons of taking into consideration what already exists.

4.2. FO capacity building

The PNDSA II "support to FO's component" mechanism has undeniably made it possible to better meet the needs of grassroots FOs. Its contribution to producers' capacity building in both grassroots FOs and CPCE/OPs is less obvious and no doubt efficient but under certain conditions.

The mechanism seems to have more impact in areas with a high literacy rate and relatively many FOs. Limited skills are a handicap for the real exercise of enhanced capacities in grassroots FOs.

For members of grassroots FOs, one of the original hypotheses was to think that by fully assuming the role of project manager of funded activities, no matter their nature (small investments or training), local FOs find themselves in a situation to build their capacities. Analysing the issue of endogenous capacity building, CECI points out that "farmers' literacy level is the most convincing indicator of endogenous capacities. As such, the greatest number of files was produced by regions with a high literacy rate"[79]. CECI also underscores the lack of local technical skills for the implementation of certain activities. Without being able to buttress the subject on a significant number of testimonies, which would require more in-depth field survey, we can however suggest that the original hypothesis be reformulated as follows: *pending certain conditions* (literacy, presence of local technical skills, articulation with a close-by savings and loans mechanism (see part IV) ...), FOs may see their capacities enhanced because they are placed in a situation of project manager of their projects.

Assuming the responsibility of examining and then monitoring grassroots FO projects contributes no doubt in building the capacity of farmers' representatives elected in CPCE/OPs. A better articulation between these CPCE/OPs and grassroots FO Unions

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[78] It is necessary to carry out a more systematic assessment of the origin of representatives of the first CPCE/OPs and particularly bureau members of such organisations: they seem to be, for some of them, either from Unions that belong to one of the UFOs, or correspond to "model farmers", rural entrepreneurs, often former civil servants and living in town.

[79] CECI-BF, 2001, *Projet de création et de suivi des comités provinciaux de concertation et d'échange des OP (CPCE/OP) : capitalisation, leçons à tirer, document n°3*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 20 pp

and Federations is a prerequisite for the trained officials to contribute with time in the enhancement of FOs.

The PNDSA II support to FO's component approach counted on the capacity building of members of CPCE/OPs because of their involvement in the examination, decision-making and monitoring of FO micro-project files. The challenge was also to gradually set up a consultation forum that goes beyond this simple function in the chain of micro-projects and could encourage dialogue among FOs and also between FOs and partners (administrations, service providers, etc.). This latter item is difficult to prove and, from CPCE/OP mission reports, it would appear that the accompaniment bodies laid more emphasis on the performance of CPCE/OPs in their file management role than in the perspective of dialogue framework, all the more as other larger political dialogue frameworks under the influence of the PNGT exist in provinces.

4.3. An efficient funding mechanism to reach the grassroots but fragile and perfectible in its implementation

The idea of combining a mechanism for the funding of activities designed by grassroots FOs with a learning process for the capacity building of the very FOs is a significant innovation. It however implies a fluidity of the funding mechanism and certain conditions (decentralisation, articulation with savings and loans institutions, etc.) that are not always met.

Considering the numerous projects and programmes often criticised in assessments for the low share of means actually allocated to the funding of field activities, the results of this "FO support" component are encouraging. In March 2003, and since the beginning of the operation, 859 projects have been funded for a total of CFAF 934.8 million, i.e. 1.42 million euros (representing an average of 1 563 euros per project). Although the total amount is significant, it should not mask the limited impact of such investments at the local level, partly linked to the idea of placing a ceiling to projects funded and their focalisation on activities of often very deferred profit. All producers consulted acknowledge the interest and usefulness of funds received, even though they regret the fact that the range of eligible projects is too restricted.

The choice of placing grassroots FOs at the centre of the process turned out to be relevant in terms of efficiency of the mechanism.

Apart from the obvious impact in terms of achievements, it is worthy to point out the efficiency of the mechanism and especially the idea to assign management to grassroots FOs. In effect, a recent accounting audit of funded FO projects identified only 5% of cases of embezzlement of funds, most of which were cases of use of funds for un-programmed activities rather than real embezzlement. Such results would leave many a development assistance project jealous! Direct funding of projects designed by FOs seems to have a success rate higher than traditional projects (source: ACECA International Ltd 2002).

The existence of a network of proximity savings and loans institutions offering appropriate financial products is an important asset for the success of such a structure.

One of the factors of success for a mechanism like the "support to FO's component" of PNDSA II is undoubtedly the existence of a network of proximity savings and loans institutions that will: (i) facilitate the provision of funds for FO projects and (ii) offer suitable financial products that meet applications not eligible under PNDSA II. Here is an example to illustrate the first point.

An FO situated 25 km away from the savings and loans institution managing its account undertook an anti-erosion project that involved several stages. At each stage, someone had to be sent to the bank to withdraw money and pay suppliers. This gave rise to some expenses. Consequently, the officials of the FO decided to withdraw all their money from the account and keep it themselves. The PNDSA II team intervened against the decision of the FO and yet this decision was an initiative aimed at improving implementation of operations and reducing costs for the FO.

Nearly all CPCE/OP officials interviewed talked of difficult access to rural credit either physically (because there is no proximity credit establishment) or otherwise because of the conditions to be met (security, very high rates...). This altogether unsurprising observation however points to the need to design policies governing small-scale rural investments, FO capacity building and funding of farming and pastoral activities so as to enable officials and producers with enhanced capacities use them.

4.4. Participation of FOs and setting up of the Farmers' Movement

The fledgling nature of umbrella farmers' organisations (UFOs) did not ease their involvement in the definition of PNDSA II. When later they were partially involved in its implementation, representatives of UFOs took part in decision-making. We should however point out that a mechanism like the "support to FO's component" inevitably influences the manner in which farmers' organisations are structured.

Effective participation of FOs requires some pre-conditions and respect of some criteria and modalities that need to be explained here. These include the right to independent expertise, a right to the time needed to carry out internal consultations on opinions requested ...

Considered very young and having divergent views, umbrella farmers' organisations (UFOs) would not be significantly involved in the conception of PNDSA II. Conversely, it is worth noting that the PNDSA II project document initially provided for support to farmers' organisations at regional and national levels though nothing was done in this regard throughout the duration of the programme.

From the start, representatives of UFOs were integrated into the managing organs of PNDSA II (steering committee and national supervisory committee), a significant breakthrough compared with previous practices. Yet, it was difficult to assess the impact of these efforts in order to involve producers in the preparation and implementation of development programmes.

It will be necessary to design an instrument for assessing the dialogue[37] between farmers and those who prepare and execute programmes so that with some simple criteria, there can be better understanding of real situations which blanket terms as participation, consultation, dialogue, involvement, ... do not describe precisely. Below are proposals of what such criteria may be:

- Frequency of dialogue opportunities (a meeting every six months or once every year is largely insufficient to really get farmers' representatives involved in the management of a programme as complex as PNDSA II).

[37] We will use the term dialogue, which is most neutral and banal, for it seems to be the sine qua non for any other advanced form of power sharing between stakeholders (beyond crude forms of power sharing such as exclusion, use of force, pressure...).

- Content and nature of dialogue opportunities (seeking an opinion, joint decision-making...) with a more or less high level of gradation depending on the degree of involvement in decision-making;
- Conditions of dialogue (deadline for examining preparatory documents, quality of preparatory documents[38]);
- Scope of dialogue (number of people actually involved, first and second circles);
- Impact of dialogue (number and nature of the decisions modified after such dialogue).

Depending on the intensity and impact of dialogue, we can variously describe (as orientation, execution, control) the process of involvement of different stakeholders in decision-making and the exercise of power.

The setting-up of a new structure that has grassroots FOs as its main focus is a significant breakthrough, which may however weaken existing farmers' federations if its objectives are not carefully thought out.

With regard to the involvement of producers in the study of files prepared by FOs through the CPCE mechanism, we need to underscore the fact that as compared to former practices, the initiative is a breakthrough. However, it should also be noted that we must not mark time here but envisage, for the future, real mechanisms of delegation of project management where follow-up and support would be carried out by farmers' organisations and not by the administration. In effect, project management support may be a strategic function of umbrella farmers' organisations (UFOs) vis-à-vis their local members (FOs, provincial or divisional unions). Sidelining UFOs and giving them only a few seats in steering committees with debatable impacts, limits their opportunities to be in a real position to support the capacity building of their member organisations.

We also note the structural ambiguity of external intervention which sometimes tends to forge organisations and, in doing so, accord them representative status by entrusting to them the management of bodies they did not contribute to set up. Here, we are not questioning the laudable and important idea of entrusting the management of development projects to farmers' organisations (or in more general terms "beneficiaries"). Rather, we want to find out to what extent such delegation of project management responsibilities, often under control and within the narrow limits set forth in complex procedures manuals, does not limit the ability of farmers to organise themselves into autonomous and lasting bodies. In other words, under what conditions does this delegation of project management responsibilities contribute to build the capacities of both farmers and their organisations? Already, we can say that real sharing of the monitoring, steering and control functions between UFOs and the administration is undoubtedly an avenue to explore seriously in order to transcend the finicky manner in which the administration currently carries out such monitoring. New farmers' organisations like the CPCE/OPs that have been set up have, above all else, an execution duty (studying files, supervising micro-projects) that will, in time, better enhance the technical capacities of their managers but not their strategic capacities[39]. It is risky here to set up farmers' organisations before any implementing instruments because they may sometimes be a duplication of local development activities[40].

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[38] A study of the preparatory documents of the PNDSA II steering committee shows that these documents give a very general overview of the actions carried out and presented in the form of a logical frame. It is very likely that even if these documents are circulated well in advance, they may not truly enlighten participants in the steering committee who are not familiar with the day to day running of the programme.

[39] Technical capacity refers to the ability to carry out concrete activities, and strategic capacity refers to the ability to have a future vision for one's organisation, define a strategy that will be translated through activities centred on clearly defined objectives and ends.

[40] Does the construction of stone belts constitute priority actions to strengthen the capacities of agric professionals' organisations or of local development actions and regional development?

The two situations experienced in the Kaya and Oubritenga provinces bring out the following two attitudes of the local CPCE/OP officials vis-à-vis UFOs:

- An attitude of **defiance** that seeks to evade UFO supervision of the functioning of CPCE/OPs. In effect, following a consultation workshop between PNDSA II and UFOs, it was decided that CPCE/OPs would be accountable to UFOs. This measure seems never to have been favourably perceived by farmers' representatives elected into CPCE/OPs. This defiance, in the case under observation, is perhaps not totally unconnected with the great collaboration between CPCE/OP officials and the administration, which we know has difficulties recognising the legitimacy of UFOs as they operate today in Burkina Faso, and more generally, the independence of farmers' representatives. Undoubtedly, the situation is changing as testified by the support of the Ministry of Agriculture towards the setting up of the Faso Farmers' Confederation and chambers of agriculture.
- An attitude of **recognition coupled with great expectations.** Some CPCE/OP officials are members of FOs that are themselves members of UFOs. They know and recognise these UFOs, underscoring their usefulness in terms of information provision. However, they consider that this is not sufficient and so expect technical and financial support as well as information from these UFOs. In reality, UFOs are not capable of meeting these great and multifaceted expectations. For the same officials, it is thanks to PNDSA II that *"FOs have had their initiatives funded for the first time"*. They are aware of their legitimacy because of their election into a CPCE/OP. "*CPCEs are farmers' representatives and can thus defend farmers' interests"*. This potential seems to be stifled because of: (1) the many tasks and solicitations of CPCE/OPs; (2) the questioning by UFOs of the new legitimacy that may overshadow them and (3) the over dependence of CPCE/OPs on the devolved services of the Ministry of Agriculture especially in terms of logistics.

Persons belonging to several entities sometimes make the relationship between CPCEs and UFOs concrete. In February 2001, representatives of women's organisations from the 45 provinces of Burkina Faso met in a constituent assembly to set up the Federation of Rural Women. Three key positions (Vice-president, Secretary General, Deputy-Secretary General) were given to women's leaders who were actually members of CPCEs (CECI quarterly report No. 7). Closer observation and an analysis of the background of officials would lead to better understanding of the building of the Burkinabe farmers' movement and of mechanisms like the one set up by PNDSA II.

The delicate question of the role of umbrella farmers' organisations, *as they operate today,* must not overshadow the more general issue of the great influence that new mechanisms like CPCE/OPs may have and their role in PNDSA II-type programmes. Such influence could be both positive and negative. It is positive because it allows for the strengthening of the project management capacities of "beneficiary" FOs and of officials involved in the study and follow-up of files. It is negative when leaders become committed to annihilating farmers' organisations that contributed to mould them, so as to occupy the enviable position of provider of small-scale financing of local projects. CPCEs are not anti-establishment forces to UFOs that already have difficulties earning the recognition of their members: they simply constitute *new power entities*, which are more attractive because they allow for the distribution of finances in villages. Though CPCE/OPs are not conceived as sustainable and representative farmers' organisations but as adhoc mechanisms for the management of a special component of PNDSA II, their extension to all the provinces of Burkina Faso within the context of PA/APOs cannot but heighten the already largely existing feeling of competition between CPCEs and UFOs. This competition is fuelled by what still appears today to be the essential stake of establishing the legitimacy of farmers' organisations: their ability to attract external funding for their grassroots members.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Brief description of other FO support interventions

In paragraph 1.2, we saw the general FO support landscape. To make this landscape complete, we need to cite a few support interventions which often existed before PA/APOs, and which are outstanding. The following list is not exhaustive but corresponds to the information we gathered during this time-limited mission:

- The French ministry of foreign affairs (MAE), which placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Agriculture a technical assistant to facilitate preparation of agricultural professionalisation policies. With regard to our area of FO support, the MAE is mobilising aspect 3 ("rural professional organisation") of component 1 ("economic security") of the project to support sustainable development and rural poverty alleviation (PAMIR[41]). Implementation of this aspect is not yet effective.

- The AFD which has for several years now provided assistance for the reorganisation of the UNPCB within the context of its more global intervention in the cotton sector in the west of the country.

- Swiss Cooperation which has for many years now provided support as partner to several farmers' organisations such as FNGN and FENOP. The DDC has played an important role in the emergence of the Burkinabe farmers' movement as briefly presented in chapter 13.

- A few European NGOs (the Belgian OXFAM for instance). They are often "last resort supports" in the face of the versatility of financial donors who are more institutional, though they themselves sometimes make spectacular U-turns in their commitments vis-à-vis FOs.

- Associations born from European Farmers' professional organisations (AFDI, AGRITERRA). By diversifying local partnerships (AFDI) or focusing on a single umbrella organisation (FPAB for AGRITERRA), these associations have given a new and original dimension to FO support namely, support by European professional farmers, whose ambiguous nature (aid and the search for partnership within the context of international negotiations) must not conceal the important role of catalyst of real and better oriented dialogue between farmers and the State which these associations can play in collaboration with others.

[41] 2 300 000 Euros over a period of 3 years from July 2002. The professional organisation aspect has a budget estimate of 245 000 Euros, 75% of which will be used to finance training and studies.

Appendix 2: The recent context of agricultural and rural policies

We have seen that for close to 10 years, there have been global efforts to design strategies and draw up action plans and programmes. This gives the impression of an attempt to superimpose a process whose coherence rests more on generalisation and the broad-range of objectives than on explicit choices in terms of an agricultural policy option. Apart from efforts towards designing strategies and action plans whose real impact on field practices and activities we may question, it is important to point out the creation of the Agricultural Sectors Promotion Company (SOPROFA) in July 2001. This joint stock company intervenes in production both upstream (provision of inputs) and downstream (marketing contracts), partially mobilising the staff and technicians of the Ministry of Agriculture in the field. In this regard, the initiative may have an influence on the impact of activities developed by PNDSA II, because it takes part of the time of agricultural extension workers.

Generally, given the recent discussions (November 2002) within the Board of Directors of the Ministerial sector (CASEM)[42] and the advent of a new financial year, does the elaboration of a **Sustainable Agricultural Development Framework** (CDAD), which seeks to mainstream fresh developments into a new global strategy elaboration exercise, not undermine the entire edifice that has been so painstakingly built?

All of these elements affect the rural world because the agricultural and livestock sectors are involved. In addition to sector-based approaches, a good number of interventions in the rural sector are centred on principles stated in the *decentralised rural development policy document* (LPDRC) adopted by a December 2002 presidential decree. This intervention framework covers all operations usually described within the local decentralisation and development register. We should however note that, as we will see later, some PNDSA II funded projects fall within this category of interventions by their very nature.

Current FO support landscape

Implementation of the action plan for the emergence of agric professionals' organisations (PA/APOs) met with a lot of difficulties. It is not until July 2000 that the programme operator, namely the National Executive Bureau (BEN), was set up. In 2001, possible partners of the PA/APOs throughout the country were contacted and five NGOs were selected to set up structures to represent farmers responsible for piloting the PA/APOs. This had to do with putting in place a management structure for the action plan, Regional Supervisory Committees (CRS) and the National Supervisory Committee (CNS), comprising farmers' representatives and supposed to be the managers of the PA/APOs. After difficult trials (creation of provisional bodies), these structures were finally set up in 2002 and the national committee became operational in March 2003. It however seems as though the future of the PA/APOs is greatly compromised by the reticence of many financial donors to continue providing support for the project, which during its several years of existence has performed the spectacular feat of never disbursing any funds directly to the benefit of FOs!

It is to be noted that the CPCE plan initiated by PNDSA II within the framework of the "FO support" component has been continued and generalised by the PA/APOs because, in 2002, CPCEs were set up in all the 45 provinces that make up the country. It should also be pointed out that this extension is accompanied by a change of nature: within the purview of

[42] The following web site has an article that talks about the meeting: http://allafrica.com/stories/200211250458.html Apparently, this is the main body responsible for co-ordination within the Ministry of Agriculture in Burkina Faso.

PNDSA II, CPCEs are structures that bring together divisional delegates responsible for studying and providing support for the execution of micro-projects proposed by grassroots FOs. Within the context of PA/APOs, CPCEs constitute the basic rung of a pyramid of representation of producers (at provincial, regional and national levels). It will also be noted that such extension of the CPCE/OP model unfortunately did not draw from the PNDSA II experience. CECI capitalisation reports, in which the methods and difficulties of setting up CPCEs are presented, were never circulated (or at least used) by the PA/APOs during the extension of these structures to all the provinces of the country.

Appendix 3: Recent Developments in FOs landscape

The difficulty of setting up a farmers' movement in Burkina Faso

The absence of a legal status for the CCOF obviously poses a problem. Some financial donors are ready to support the CCOF or to get it involved in projects provided it has a legal status. A study to determine prospects in this regard was carried out in 2001. In April 2001, the process culminated in the organisation of a general meeting in Banfora with the aim of dissolving CCOF and replacing it with a new *Confederation of farmers' organisations*. It would appear the organisation of the meeting was marred by irregularities and this caused FENOP to officially dissociate itself from the process. The new confederation did not gain legal recognition. Invited by the Minister on the eve of Farmers' Day, representatives of umbrella FOs were asked to pursue the process and to involve all stakeholders. This meant preparing, in collaboration with FENOP, the constitution of the Confederation (second version). During a meeting of the committee that was eventually set up with FENOP, there was a divergence of views between FENOP and the other organisations: should they for instance engage in the marketing and distribution of fertilisers? Was that the role of a confederation? Were decisions to be reached through voting by show of hands or by consensus? Could the confederation tackle the issue of cotton? Could the confederation criticise government policy when the need arises?

Ever since the enactment of the new law No.14/99/AN (in 1999) on cooperative societies and groups, the authorities have encouraged FOs to conform to it. The end of June 2002[43] was even announced as the deadline for conforming to the new law. There was thus heated internal debate within FENOP that was so hesitant about adopting a legal status, which it considered will be restrictive and will limit its autonomy. At last, after serious debate, its Board of Directors adopted the status of an association (law No. 10) and its partners were informed about the status in August 2002. This was translated by its withdrawal from the process of setting up a Farmers' Confederation.

In the meantime, two other national organisations were set up. These were the National Federation of Burkina Rural Women (FENAFER-B) set up in 2001 at the initiative of Françoise Bangré, very active in women's NGOs in Congo. During the same year, the Federation of Livestock Breeders in Burkina Faso (FEB) saw the light of day. These two very young organisations received minimal logistics support from the administration.

The Confederation of Faso Farmers finally saw the light of day in November 2002. It brought together the following five umbrella organisations:

- *The federation of Burkina professional Farmers (FEPA-B)*[44]
- *The National Union of Burkina Young Farmers (UNJPA-B)*
- *The National Union of Burkina Cotton Farmers (UNPC-B)*
- *The National Federation of Burkina Rural Women (FENAFER-B)*
- *The Federation of Livestock Breeders in Burkina Faso (FEB).*

Until now, the Confederation has no independent premises. It is lodged in an office placed at its disposal by the Ministry of Agriculture (DOPAIR).

Discussion on farmers' organisations in Burkina is very often centred on the current weak national structures and on the fact that these national organisations are said to be non-"representative" and cut off from their base... It is not possible, in this document, to go into

[43] Yet, in November 2002, a World Bank aide-memoir estimates that "less than 10 to 15% of FOs are currently registered under the new law".
[44] New appellation of the CNPA-B, adopted after the organisation was made to conform to law No. 14.

the details of such a debate. However, it can be said that this simplistic vision points to the fact that apart from a few exceptions, these national organisations receive very little external support and are generally distrusted by their partners. Besides, their member organisations at the local level, especially Divisional Unions, which seem to be the most "consistent", expect so much from them, much more than they can offer. This situation is compounded by the fact that the few national farmers' representatives and the handful of wage-earners that support them are very much solicited to participate in studies and meetings but rarely under proper working and listening conditions that are mutually beneficial. "Rendered extremely mobile" by such numerous and quite irresistible solicitations, they only have very few opportunities left to effectively engage in the arduous responsibility of networking and maintaining relations with the rest of the 45 provinces of the country as and when means permit.

In short, we can say that rather than stigmatise national FOs, it would be more appropriate to find ways of making them contribute to the development of agriculture and the rural world in Burkina Faso and to provide them with the support they need. In spite of its initial intentions, PNDSA II provided support neither to these organisations nor to their members at divisional and provincial levels, thereby contributing to their long-term incapacity to respond significantly to the expectations of their members.

The creation of chambers of agriculture

The idea of setting up chambers of agriculture is not a novelty in Burkina Faso. Like in the other countries of the sub-region, they were set up in the late 1990s against the backdrop of State withdrawal. Through these chambers of agriculture, political authorities sought to endow the rural world with representative and consultative institutions (and not only agricultural institutions). In the sub-region, it is especially the FAO that promoted this form of representation of rural interests[45].

In Burkina Faso, creation of chambers of agriculture was first described in the 1997 PP and later in the 1999 OSP where they are presented as complementary to PA/APOs. Two decrees signed in December 2001 laid down the nature, role and mode of operation of these chambers that were going to be regional structures (grouping several provinces). The election of colleges representing rural people began in June 2003 in two regions and had to continue till the end of the year. Unlike Mali, Burkina first embarked on the creation of regions in order to set up chambers of agriculture: the national level was to be a level for mere consultation and exchange between the different regional chambers of agriculture (CRA).
The issue of distinguishing between the duties of these future chambers and devolved services of Agriculture and Livestock will compound the inevitable competition between FOs and CRA with regard to farmers' representation. Are we moving towards a "French scenario" (with near disappearance of the decentralised services of agriculture and with chambers of agriculture taking care of agricultural development since 1966) or will it be possible for new and original institutions to develop, to coordinate the many existing consultation fora and other ad-hoc bodies set up with external aid? At this stage, we can only ask questions. The future will undoubtedly be more complex than the two options discussed above.

[45] The FAO itself draws very much from the French model because the first chambers of agriculture that were created in Mali benefited from the support of the official in charge of the legal service of the APCA. Also read the article found at the following site: ftp://ftp.fao.org/ssd/sda/sdaa/LR99/X3720T07.pdf You will also find at the following address under the heading "farmers' organisations", two forms on chambers of agriculture (in France and in West Africa): http://www.agridoc.com/fichestechniques_gret/fiches.htm

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Farmers' and rural organisations capacity building

The case of the « Agricultural Services Sub-sector Investment Project » (AgSSIP) and its producer organisation support component

Ghana

JF Le Coq

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Acronyms

AAGDS: Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy
ADP: Agricultural Diversification Project
AGSSIP: Agricultural Sector Services Investment Program
AgSSIP: Agricultural Services Subsector Investment Project
APL: Adaptable Program Lending
APRC: Agricultural Research Policy Committee
ASIP: Agricultural Sector Investment Project
CARGS: Competitive Agricultural Research Grant Scheme
CAS: Country Assistance Strategy
CC: Cooperative College
COCOBOD: Cocoa Board
CSIR: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DAES: Department of Agricultural Extension Services (MOFA)
DOC: Department of Cooperative (MESW)
DSC: District Steering Committee
EDF: Extension Development Fund
ERP: Economic Recovery Program
FBOF: Farmer-Based Organizations Fund
FBOs: Farmer-Based Organizations
FI: Focal Institution
FO : Farmers' Organisation
GCC: Ghana Cooperative Council
GOG: Government of Ghana
GTZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit – German Technical Cooperation Agency
ILO: International Labour Organisation
MAE : Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Français - French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MESW: Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare
MLGRD: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMED: Ministry of Manpower and Employment Development
MOFA: Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MTADP: Medium Term Agricultural Development Program
MTADS: Medium Term Agricultural Development Strategy
MTEF: Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAEP: National Agricultural Extension Project
NARP: National Agricultural Research Project
NGO : Non Governmental Organisation
NLSP: National Livestock Services Project
NRSP: National Road Sector Project
PAD: Project Appraisal Document
PCC: Policy Coordinating Committees
PPMED: Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Department (MOFA)
RELC: Research/Extension Liaison Committees
RFSP: Rural Financial Service Project
RWSS: Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
TF : Task Force
VIP : Village Infrastructure Project

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1. Introduction

This report was prepared as part of a study to capitalise on support to Farmers' Organisations (FOs) within the framework of World Bank-support programmes for the reorganisation of "agricultural services". It contains the major findings of an analysis conducted in May 2003 in Ghana on the Agricultural Services Sub-Sector Investment Project (AgSSIP) and more specifically its FO support component[80].

1.1. Scope of study

Since 1997, the World Bank has taken various initiatives aimed at building FO capacity and promoting, through agricultural development projects, partnership relationships between producer organisations and agricultural services in order that the latter tailor their actions to the demand of producers.

In 2003, while several agricultural development and producer organisation support projects and programmes were initiated and being executed, the World Bank commissioned Cirad to undertake a study to capitalise on ongoing experiences in order to draw early lessons and propose avenues for reflection to improve the design and implementation of projects.

Two questions were raised:

- What has been done? What are the results? What were the difficulties encountered?
- Any prospects for the future? Concretely, what should be the next stages for the World Bank?

To answer the above questions, four types of activities were carried out as part of the study:

- **A review of recent literature**, produced within the World Bank but also by other institutions, concerning FO capacity building;
- **A review of World Bank portfolio in order to identify World Bank** funded projects that include an "organisations enhancement" component and identify the features of the actions retained and the conditions under which such actions are implemented;
- **Carrying out more in-depth case studies in four African countries** (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Ghana) in which World Bank funded projects are currently being executed with the aim of instituting demand-oriented agricultural services that include an "FO capacity building" component.
- **Drafting a summary** presenting the major cross-cutting lessons to be learned and making proposals and recommendations.

1.2. Conduct of study and methodology

The study was conducted in Ghana and in two stages.

The first stage was a bibliographical analysis aimed at tracking the developments of agricultural policies and the state of Ghana's agriculture.

The second was a mission undertaken from 6 to 17 May 2003. Based on available documents and additional interviews, it was aimed at tracking the various stages from design to implementation of the project and its FO support component as well as stating the achievements of the projects. It was also aimed at meeting the various actors concerned in designing and implementing the project at the national, regional and local levels. At the

[80] The name used in Ghana to designate FOs within the context of the AgSSIP project is « Farmer Based Organisation » (FBO).

national level, the mission made it possible to hold talks with the Head of Agriculture at the Accra World Bank bureau, senior officials in Departments of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) responsible for executing the programme (Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Department - PPMED and Department of Agricultural Extension - DAES), senior officials of the Department of Cooperative (DOC) of the Ministry of Manpower and Employment Development (MMED), officials of the Ghana Cooperative council (GCC) and the Ghana Cooperative College (CC), officials of farmers' organisations, as well as other donor institutions... Furthermore, at the regional and local levels, field trips were conducted in three districts: Mfantiman and Assin Fossu in the Central Region and Sene in the Sunyani Region, the last two being districts retained for the pilot phase of the implementation of FO support actions. The field trips made it possible to meet with local agricultural officials and workers at the district and regional levels as well as FO officials and members.

1.3. Preamble: Overall situation of the AgSSIP in May 2003

The AgSSIP project is an Agricultural Sub-Sector Investment Programme funded by the World Bank in the form of an Adaptable Programme Loan (APL). The AgSSIP Programme was accepted by the World Bank Board in August 2000 on the basis of the June 2000 Project Appraisal Document (PAD). The programme experienced many delays in its implementation. One year of lateness was especially due to delay in signing the Development Credit Agreement because of presidential elections and change of government in January 2001.

Although the effective closing date of the first phase was officially set for October 2003, by February 2003, total commitments and disbursements for all the components put together was barely 14% of the credit granted[81]. In such a context, the second Implementation Support Mission of February 2003 painted a gloomy picture of the possibility to carry through all the activities planned before the official end of the first phase. This mission had as objective to suggest ways of reorganising the AgSSIP in order to use the credit granted and provide more direct support to farmers and the agri-business and thus promote the development of production, processing and marketing of agricultural produce (WB, 2003a).

Finally, it should be made clear that in May 2003, while this study was underway, no project had been funded by the Farmer Based Organisation Fund (FBOF), the main FO capacity-building instrument provided for in the FO support component of the AgSSIP.

1.4. Report outline

After a recap of the evolution of agricultural policies and the situation of FOs in Ghana, this report describes and analyses the process of designing the AgSSIP and its FO support component. It further presents and comments on the objectives and components of the AgSSIP project. The implementation of the project and particularly its FO support component is then described and analysed. Lastly, the report presents the main results of the project as at now in terms of support to FO enhancement and bring out the early achievements, some risks detected and questions at the current stage of implementation of the programme. The report also includes early lessons drawn from the analysis of this case and specific and general recommendations for designing and implementing FO support projects.

2. Evolution of agricultural policies and organisation of FOs in Ghana

[81] For the component managed by CSIR, commitments and disbursements were 23% of the amount earmarked. For the components managed by MOFA, comprising the FO support component, the situation was even more problematic with total commitments and disbursements barely reaching 11% of the amount set aside (author's calculations based on data got from the "Executive summary of the aide memoire, February 2003 – WB, 2003).

This first part presents the evolution of economic and agricultural policies in Ghana as well as some aspects of the dynamics and organisation of FOs in Ghana. It is aimed at stating the background to the design of the AgSSIP in the late 1990s.

2.1. Evolution of agricultural policies in Ghana

At independence in 1957 and thanks to a strong cocoa sector, Ghana was a relatively rich country as compared to other West African countries, with a high per capita income and a developed middle class. In 1961, in trying to monitor the production and distribution of resources, the State instituted a planned centralised economy. With the slump of cocoa prices in the world market between 1959 and 1965, the country's macro-economic situation declined, giving rise to a huge fiscal deficit, a negative balance of payment and overall economic recession (Tsitaka, 2001).

2.1.1. The Economic Recovery Programme :(ERP)

In 1983, Ghana, with the assistance of donor institutions and principally the World Bank, instituted a stabilisation and structural adjustment programme: the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP). The aim of the programme was to streamline government spending and liberalise the economy. It was translated by the liberalisation of the marketing and input supply sectors (reduction of tariffs and privatisation of State-owned enterprises). Although such reforms first led to heavy inflation and serious difficulties in the supply of inputs to producers, the economic recovery policy finally bore fruits a decade after its institution. The country recorded a significant GDP growth of 5% per annum. In the agricultural sector, liberalisation led to renewed growth. Agricultural growth that was negative in the 1970s became positive, reaching an average annual rate of 2.4% between 1983 and 1988. The good results of this policy were attributed to a strong financial contribution of donors and good coordination among donors with the World Bank playing a leading role. Ghana was thus an example of success in matters of structural adjustment (Tsitaka, 2001).

2.1.2. MTADP and sector programmes

In order to consolidate results obtained by the ERP, a new strategic document was drafted in the late 1990s, the Medium-Term Agricultural Development Strategy (MTADS). The aim of the strategy was to enhance the role of the private sector in economic development and to prescribe, in the logic of the ERP, the liberalisation of inputs importation and the internal market, the phaseout of State-owned companies, the improvement of coordination of government spending, refocusing on poverty reduction in rural areas, the improvement of the rural financial system, the improvement of public investments in transport infrastructure and providing market information, and the improvement of the research and extension system.

The implementation of the strategy was carried out as part of a five-year revolving development programme, the Medium-Term Agricultural Development Programme (MTADP), which was a framework for allocating public and private resources to the agricultural sector.

Within the context of this programme, many specific projects were designed by the World Bank to support the development of the agricultural sector:

- A research support project: the National Agricultural Research Project (NARP);
- An extension services support project: the National Agricultural Extension Project (NAEP);
- A livestock development support project: the National Livestock Services Project (NLSP);

- A crop diversification support project: the Agricultural Diversification Project (ADP) and;
- A small rural infrastructure funding project: the Agricultural Sector Investment Project (ASIP).

Although agricultural growth continued, the micro-economic situation declined as from 1992 following the elections and poor budgetary management. The renewed inflation and the rapid depreciation of exchange rates led to a slowdown of growth.

2.1.3. The Ghana Vision 2020

In 1995, in a bid to revive growth, Ghana adopted a new policy framework laying down long-term growth objectives for the country and the strategic components of the national policy: the "Ghana Vision 2020". According to the document, the central objective of the Government was to alleviate poverty through an acceleration of GDP growth to a level of 8% per year. For the agricultural sector, the objectives were as follows: ensure food security, supply produce to other sectors of the economy, contribute to the improvement of the balance of payment and provide producers with revenue similar to those of other sectors. To attain such objectives, the following strategic principles were set forth:

- Reforming the role of the State in order to set up an environment conducive to private sector development;
- Enhancing decentralisation;
- Enhancing the participation of the private sector in the grassroots;
- Enhancing export-oriented agriculture.

2.1.4. The Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy (AAGDS)

To attain the objectives set out in the "Ghana Vision 2020", the necessary agricultural growth rate initially set at 4% per year had been raised to 6% per year. To attain the new objective, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture was commissioned to prepare a new strategic paper for agriculture based on the principles laid down in the "Ghana Vision 2020" to accelerate agricultural growth: the Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy (AAGDS).

To achieve this, a consultation process was launched. A series of consultations took place in 1995 throughout the country. It led to the holding of a Stakeholders Workshop in Cape Coast in September 1995, which enabled the various development actors to make recommendations to the Government. Then, in August 1996, a new two-day workshop on "Agricultural Strategic Planning and Implementation" was held in Akosombo with farmers, private sector representatives, donor institutions, local and international experts, and representatives of the Government and its various ministries. In April 1997, a "Brainstorming Workshop" was organised in Sagakope to lay down and adjust the various points of view of development actors. This latter workshop led to the drafting of a preparatory document that was presented to the different actors (farmers, industrialists and donors) in Accra in November 1997.

According to the final document, accelerated growth should depend **on rapid technological changes, private sector development and export-oriented agriculture.** To this end, five strategic areas were identified (MOFA, 2001, p iii):

1. the promotion of some products based on improved market access (export);
2. the development and improvement of access to technologies for sustainable management of natural resources;
3. the improvement of access to agricultural financial services;
4. the improvement of infrastructure;

5. human resources and institutional capacity building.

It was within the context of the implementation of the strategy worked out by AAGDS that the first activities aimed at designing an AgSSIP programme were initiated in 1998.

2.2. FOs and their structuring in Ghana

The structuring of FOs in Ghana is multi-faceted. We shall distinguish two types of FOs and movements: Cooperatives and other forms of FOs.

2.2.1. A deep-rooted cooperative movement faced with difficulties

The evolution of the cooperative movement in Ghana was strongly influenced by frequent changes in government policies on the issue.

Historically, the cooperative movement began in the 1920s when cocoa producers' groups were organised to improve drying and fermentation of cocoa beans and thus raise the quality of Ghana's cocoa. The cooperatives obtained legal status in 1931 (Cooperative Societies Ordinance). In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a first national organisation was set up, the Alliance of Ghana Cooperatives[82]. During this period, the cooperative movement acquired real economic power built around a strong movement of cocoa cooperatives (Porvali, 1993).

In 1959, a few years after independence, the Government decided to organise the cooperative movement that was becoming not only an economic force but also a political force in rural areas. The reorganisation culminated in 1961 in the dissolution of all cooperatives and the transfer of their assets to new forms of cooperatives strongly controlled by the State. The assets of cocoa cooperatives were thus confiscated by the Government and their economic functions transferred to the Cocoa Board (COCOBOD). The Ghana Cooperative Bank was equally dissolved and its assets seized.

In 1968, the Cooperative Societies Decree was voted. To implement the decree, the Government set up the Department of Cooperative (DOC) within the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (MESW), which recently became the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE). This ministry was statutorily responsible for regulating (registration of cooperatives, financial audits, inspection, conflict management and liquidation) and promoting cooperatives (sensitisation, training ...). Cooperatives were as such strongly monitored by the State, which granted them prerogatives to ensure supply of inputs to producers. Farmers' adherence to the cooperatives was then relatively strong and the cooperative movement was a strong government policy instrument.

With the implementation of the ERP and the liberalisation of the trade of inputs and products, many cooperatives could no longer uphold their functions especially that of input supply due to competition and thus became inactive.

In the early 1990s, the cooperative sector became very much afflicted. In effect, in 1991, although 10,000 cooperative societies were still registered at the DOC, half of which were of the agricultural sector[83], only 10% of cooperatives of all the sectors put together and 4% of agricultural cooperatives were active. Agricultural service cooperatives that were founders of the cooperative movement almost disappeared. In the cocoa sector, the maintenance of the

[82] The Alliance of Ghana Cooperatives later became the Ghana Cooperative Council (GCC).

[83] Besides agricultural cooperatives, there were industrial cooperatives consisting mostly of distillation companies and bakeries whose development resulted from the setting-up of a specific State-controlled sector as part of an input rationing policy and within the context of distillation monopoly. There were equally non-agricultural service provision cooperatives (transport, consumer cooperatives, fuel stations, pharmacies...). Finally, there were financial cooperatives constituted by credit unions (Porvali, 1993).

COCOBOD limited the development of cooperatives. In other agricultural sectors, a few cooperatives remained: the Ghana Cooperative Poultry Farmers Association, the Ghana Cooperative Marketing Association, etc. (Porvali, 1993).

The need for the emergence of a new cooperative movement free from State control and the development of other forms of rural producer organisations was expressed in the early 1990s within the context of a private sector development strategy.

However, even though it had an umbrella organisation, GCC that counted 13 associations grouping regional or district unions, the new cooperative movement remained very weak. This umbrella organisation was unable to mobilise resources from the cooperative movement to train and support the unions and survived only thanks to the assistance of the State that provided 90% of its funds. In addition, the remaining cooperatives were very small and had a limited commercial potential. They suffered from financial difficulties and lack of support (training, etc.) as well as limited autonomy with regard to the State.

Besides, some new forms of service cooperatives in the agricultural sector were set up generally with the support of foreign projects[84].

2.2.2. A proliferation of Non-cooperative Organisations

Alongside cooperatives, many other forms of organisations existed throughout the country. Such organisations were of very varied forms. These were associations and commercial companies with various statuses (registered society, partnership, companies, etc.[85]). These organisations are generally more recent than cooperatives, and their structure at the regional or national levels is weak.

At the local level (village, district), Ghana also has a multitude of small organisations. They perform various duties. Some are specialised in economic functions (marketing, processing, etc.) often at the grassroots, with the support of NGOs or development projects, others are set up to access technical information (contact groups in relation with extension workers of DAES or with NGOs), while some others team up to obtain loans (the Agriculture Development Bank credit groups). Many organisations exist locally and have a social call (construction of small social inftrastructure). Lastly, many interest groups are set up and dissolved to benefit from opportunities offered by foreign aid projects. Although all the organisations are known to local development services (DAES, DOC) or to local NGOs, many of them do not have a recognised cooperative status due to past experience and the strict State control in the structures.

Beyond this multitude of small local organisations, larger organisations had been set up around certain sectors especially for the promotion of production and exportation of produce (Horticulturalist Association of Ghana, Vegetables Producers and Exporters Association of Ghana, Yam Farmers & Exporters Association, Cotton Growers Association, Citrus Growers Association of Ghana, etc.). Such associations have no link with the cooperative movement and the institutions responsible for the development of cooperatives. Their aim is to facilitate relations between producers and the market (upstream and downstream negotiation, marketing and input supply, transportation, processing).

There is no unified representation or national umbrella for such organisations. In 1992, in order to set up a representative for producers' organisations (cooperative and non-cooperative), government instituted the Ghana National Association of Farmers and

[84] Portali (1993) quotes the example of cooperatives set up to cater for Farm Service Centres instituted by the Farmer's Agricultural Services Company (FASCOM).
[85] For more details on the forms of FOs, see the recent study by Technoserve (Technoserve, 2003).

Fishermen)[86]. Nonetheless, although the organisation was set up and supported by the Government with a top-down approach, it had no links with the exiting local organisations.

In the final analysis, in 1998, when the AgSSIP project was being worked out, the panorama of farmers' organisations was complex. Very many small organisations existed locally but none were organised at levels compatible with national project negotiation. There was:

- a cooperative movement, organised at a national level (though non-operational) through GCC, based on an impressive number of small fragmented cooperatives that were moribund for the most part. The movement that was largely controlled by the State (through DOC) and that had experienced considerable setbacks in the course of its chaotic history (confiscation of assets), is suffering because of bad reputation among the local people;
- sector-based associations representing generally only part of the profession but without a national cross-cutting representation;
- an umbrella organisation instituted by the State and highly politicised (GNAFF).

3. Design of the AgSSIP and its FO support component

The process of designing the AgSSIP programme lasted two years (1998-2000), as a follow-up to a strategic reflection process undertaken by the Government of Ghana (GOG) for the rehabilitation of the AAGDS and aimed at attaining the objectives set as part of the Ghana Vision 2020.

After describing the various stages of the programme design, we shall make a few remarks on the participation of those who took part in its definition.

3.1. Description of the AgSSIP design process

3.1.1. Background of the AgSSIP: the concept of a sector programme based on the AAGDS

After several specific agricultural support programmes, the AgSSIP was first designed as an Agricultural Sector Investment Programme. It was a result of the will to establish a consistent support mechanism within the framework of a sector-based and coordinated approach. This type of programme aims to solve problems identified during the implementation of agricultural development support mechanisms in many countries and especially in Ghana. Such problems include: poor coordination and little impacts, lack of flexibility and coherence in allocating resources from donors and the government for the entire sector, absence of hierachy of expenditure thereby causing losses, heavy dependence on technical assistance, significant delays in implementation, low participation of the Government (MOFA, 1999, P. 4). The aim was therefore to draw up a sector-based investment programme in which the various donors involved in rural development in Ghana may jointly invest.

In Ghana, in line with the objectives set in Ghana Vision 2020 and repeated in the AAGDS, the end objective of the programme was to contribute to poverty alleviation and the improvement of food security.

3.1.2. From the AAGDS[87] to the AgSSIP

[86] This organisation was created from the Ghana Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (GHANACOOPS) promoted by the MOFA in 1983 (FCC, 1999). It should be made clear that this organisation that was strongly used by the Government, lost all support after the 2001 change of government. Today the organisation is almost moribund.

In agreement with the above principles and in order to clearly state the various activities to be carried out to implement the actions identified in the AAGDS, a 30-man Task Force (TF) was commissioned by MOFA and five sub-committees corresponding to each of the themes defined within the framework of the AAGDS were set up to pilot and coordinate the preparation of proposals for the AgSSIP programme.

Although the secretariat of the TF was entrusted to the Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Department (PPMED) of MOFA, the preparation principle here was innovative because this TF and its sub-committees comprised not only civil servants but also a powerful representation from the private sector and FOs: the chair of the TF was entrusted to a private actor, some national FOs such as GNAFF, the Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters (FAGE), Ghana Agricultural Products Traders Association (GAPTO) and the Horticulturalist Association of Ghana (HAG) all took part in it. Of a total of 30 members, the TF comprises 14 representatives of the private sector and 2 NGOs. In each sub-commission there was a series of consultations to identify the constraints and work out strategies for the various themes retained; participating FOs were called upon to make project proposals.

At the end of the process, an AgSSIP programme document summarising the work of the various sub-commissions was prepared by MOFA (MOFA, 1999). The document contained a list of project proposals for each aspect identified in the AAGDS without really stating how they could be implemented and without harmonising all the projects. At this level, the document proved to be of no use for the institution of the programme.

It should be noted that at this stage, the FO support component to be designed in PAD is not clear but that some targeted proposals had been made by stakeholder FOs, especially GNAFF and FAGE. It should also be noted that at this stage, the involvement of GCC and existing non-cooperative and non export-oriented FOs is low and that they do not feature (and are not mentioned anywhere) in the summary document of the AgSSIP programme proposals.

3.1.3 From the AgSSIP programme to the World Bank AgSSIP project

Alongside the study and consultation process presented above for the design of the programme and while new consultations were planned to validate the final summary document, pre-evaluation missions entrusted to State departments were organised in the second half of 1999 to lay down the content of the AgSSIP programme and its components.

Preparation of the FO support component was thus entrusted to the Department of Cooperative (DOC) and the Department of Agricultural Extension Service (DAES) with the support of a consultancy mission carried out in June-July 1999. The mission had to work out strategies and programmes aimed at developing FOs, including cooperatives, so as to improve the efficiency of services rendered to farmers - men and women - in terms of extension, inputs supply and credit, but also eventual storage and marketing (FFC, 1999).

After a series of consultations with FOs in the entire country, the mission proposed some of the elements to be included in the FO support component (FCC, 1999):

- the development of a policy and legal framework (review of the cooperative law, amendment of the 1968 Cooperative Societies Decree, development of a policy and a law on NGOs)
- institutional enhancement and reorganisation (DOC enhancement and reorganisation, integration of an FO promotion and development function in MOFA, development of training for FOs, ...)

[87] It should be pointed out that after the January 2001 change of Government, Ghana's agricultural sector strategy was reviewed and the Food and Agriculture Sector Programme (FASDEP) replaced the AAGDS. This situation posed some problems of coherence for the AgSSIP that was initiated on the basis of the AAGDS.

Although the mission recommended the setting-up of a Development and Investment Fund for FO support, this was yet a mere budget head within the AgSSIP programme whose use remains devoted to State departments responsible for FO support.

Although many FOs were consulted during the mission to support the design of this component, it would appear they were consulted more in order to understand their situation (strengths, weaknesses, difficulties) than to actually associate them in the support programme design process that was dedicated to them.

3.2. Remarks on the programme design process and FO participation

3.2.1. An unsuccessful attempt at involving private actors

The initial programme design approach was original and ambitious. It laid emphasis on private sector partners and a few FOs by granting them a pride of place in the steering and coordination of the programme design process. However, it would appear that entrusting the study of such a project to private actors and FOs raises many problems:

- The FOs and private actors involved did not have the expertise needed to coordinate and pilot the preparation of such a programme;
- They may not have had adequate specific support to efficiently carry out their duty;
- It would also appear they did not have in mind a vision of society but rather their own interests and they were not really representative of farmers.

Furthermore, even though FOs and private actors were involved in the process, the influence of State institutions remained strong as, on the one hand, the negotiated programme remained a State-owned programme (agreement signed with the government) and, on the other hand, such institutions had more staff that were used to negotiating this type of programmes.

Lastly, it would appear the support provided by local expertise assigned by the Ghanaian government to assist the TF, did not have refined knowledge of the standards sought by the World Bank. In addition, it would appear it did not provide adequate quality support to really enable the FOs concerned to pilot the process.

3.2.2. Discontinuity in the participation of FOs in studying the programme

Faced with time constraints and the concern of both the World Bank and the Government to support research and extension services while specific services dedicated to FOs within the context of MTADP (see 0) where ending in 1999, the study process was accelerated and preparation of the final programme document laying down the activities and budgets was finally done fast by State agencies. Although a long study process was implemented in collaboration with State and private actors, the final negotiation was conducted between the World Bank and Ghanaian ministries, MOFA and MELSW (DOC), without consulting the other actors.

3.2.3. Change in Programme content and frustrations

The final project as laid down in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) - WB, 2000a - was finally not a follow-up of past documents. In effect, while in its final formulation the AgSSIP programme was a complete sector programme aimed at implementing all the strategic areas defined in the AAGDS, the AgSSIP project is designed in its final version, as stipulated in PAD, in response to only 3 elements of the AAGDS, namely: the promotion of some products through improved access to the market, the development and improvement of access to

technologies for sustainable development of natural resources, the improvement of human resources and institutional capacities[88].

Lastly, the AgSSIP project in its final version appears to be a broad-based project for research and extension support and reforms rather than a sector programme for the revival of agriculture.

It should be pointed out that the main tools for FO support such as the Farmer-Based Organisation Fund (FBOF) or the Extension Development Fund (EDF) were not provided for in previous documents. It should also be pointed out that a search for priority actions to be executed or actors for their execution was conducted within the framework of preliminary consultations (list of projects) and that the final document does not include them but provides a more general framework and automatically leaves many elements in abeyance such as the effective responsibility of each project stakeholder, the mode of implementation, etc.

This change after a long consultation process generated misunderstanding and frustrations on the part of donor institutions and private actors involved in the consultation process initiated during the design of the programme.

Concerning donor institutions especially, it seems they were expecting a more broad-based consultation in the implementation phase, a sharing of tasks around a framework document. Finally, there was a feeling of shared frustration in view of this state of affairs as, on the one hand, the other donors had the impression of not being part of the final World Bank project and, on the other hand, the withdrawal of other donors led to the disappointment of the World Bank given that the other donors turned off after the long consultation and reflection process.

For the private actors, the disappointment was elsewhere. They thought they would be able to directly benefit from the programme for their capacity building (from an organisational point of view but also in terms of investments). Their disappointment was great in the sense that the final mechanism did not provide for any direct assistance to FOs that participated in the initial consultation.

4. The AgSSIP project

The June 2000 AgSSIP Project Appraisal Document is the core document of the programme since it lays down the objectives, components and implementation modalities.

The document enlists World Bank support in the long run in the form of a 9-year Adaptable Programme Loan (APL) divided into three phases. It details out the content of the first phase (2001-2003) and states the evaluation criteria (triggers) for the kick-off of subsequent phases.

4.1. AgSSIP objectives

The overall objective of the AgSSIP is to enhance growth in productivity and agricultural income in order to reduce rural poverty, improve food security and contribute to the acceleration of sustainable growth for the entire economy.

[88] The other elements of this strategy shall be the subject of other specific projects : targeted projects devoted to the improvement and development of rural infrastructure: the Village Infrastructure Project (VIP), the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS), the National Road Sector Project (NRSP) and a rural funding project: the Rural Financial Service Project (RFSP).

The specific objectives of the first phase of the AgSSIP are as follows (WB, 2000q, p. 4):

- *"Initiating and/or accelerating policy and institutional reforms for the strengthening of Government's capacity to carry out its core functions*
- *Promoting decentralisation of the planning and implementation of agricultural development programmes to the regions and districts by strengthening the capacities of (a) regional and district governments in planning and implementing agricultural development programmes; and (b) central ministries and agencies to focus on policy-making, planning, evaluation, technical backstopping and regulatory services;*
- *Promoting cost-effective demand-driven agricultural and extension systems that would generate and disseminate technologies on a contracting and/or cost sharing basis; and*
- *Strengthening the capacity of Farmer-based organisations (FBO) to play an enhanced role in priority setting and decision-making in agricultural and community development programmes and facilitate input distribution, credit, processing and output marketing services".*

4.2. Programme components

The AgSSIP programme is sub-divided into four articulated components (WB, 2000, p. 11):

- Reform and enhancement for the creation and dissemination of farming technologies
- Institutional reform and MOFA enhancement
- FO development
- Enhancement of farm training.

4.2.1. The Reform and enhancement for the creation and dissemination of farming technologies component (US$ 78 million)

This component represents 63% of the total cost of the programme and aims to enhance the national research and extension system and reform same so it can be demand-oriented. The component is sub-divided into two sub-components (WB, 2000a):

- **The research support component**, implemented by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and whose specific activities include:
  - improvement of steering, management and "liability" of research services;
  - institution of a competitive research funding system with the participation of users;
  - funding of priority research programmes;
  - enhancement and rationalisation of scientific information, human resource management and research infrastructure systems.

- **The extension support component**, implemented by MOFA, Assemblies of Districts, FOs, NGOs and the private sector, with MOFA being responsible for working out the monitoring and extension policy and the Assemblies of Districts being in charge of planning and implementing extension in collaboration with FOs, NGOs and private service providers mobilised on a contract basis.

The specific activities of this sub-component include:

- support to decentralisation of extension services at the level of ADs;
- enhanced participation of beneficiaries in guiding the research and extension programme;
- reinforced links with research;
- setting-up of an extension services Development Fund;
- mainstreaming gender and environmental protection issues in extension services.

4.2.2. The Institutional reform and MOFA enhancement component (US$ 29.5 million)

This component is implemented by MOFA and ADs. It is aimed at assisting MOFA in the decentralisation process already undertaken as part of the Public Service Reform Programme, which consists in devolving the functions of extension and development to ADs. The activities of this component aim therefore to adapt MOFA capacities to the new functions by strenghtening the central departments of MOFA and building the capacity of its workers to enable them:

- perform their central duty: policy development, planning and coordination, monitoring and evaluation of information and regulation services;
- support and train regional development workers, Subject Matter Specialists and extension workers at the district level.

4.2.3. The FO development component (US$ 9.9 million)

The FO development component aims to enable FOs play a vital role in designing agricultural policies and providing services to farmers. This component has to be implemented by DOC, GCC and the Board of Trustees of the Farmer Based Organisation Development Fund (FBOF).

The component provides for 5 sub-components:

- **Development of a political and legal framework conducive to the creation of FOs led by farmers and NGOs**

The idea here is more specifically to review the Cooperative Policy document and the 1968 Decree on cooperatives to allow for an autonomous, independent and sustainable development of cooperatives and FBOs (WB, 2000a, appendix 2). The programme aims to institute dialogue for a review of this law that is consonent with the aspirations of FOs. Review of the law has a pride of place in the AgSSIP programme since the adoption of the new law on FOs is one of the triggers for transition to the second phase of programme funding.

- **FO promotion and development**

The programme provides for enhancement of the official umbrella cooperative, GCC, to enable it carry through its duties effectively, by providing it with support in terms of training for its members. The idea is more particularly to provide it with logistics support and training for its officials and members to handle especially the functions of auditing cooperatives that statutorily was hitherto done by DOC.

- **Building the capacity of agencies responsible for FO promotion and development**

Here the programme provides for specific technical support to two State departments: DOC and the NGO unit of MESW turned MMED.

For DOC, the support shall entail assistance in its transfer of skills for the cooperative audit function to GCC, to provide same with logistics to facilitate the movement and operations of its officials at the regional and district levels in order to perform central and statutory duties (registration of cooperatives) and non-statutory duties (counselling, training, sensitisation), to finance the training of officials in marketing and financial management and support same in preparing and finalising cooperative policy documents and reviewing their relevant legislative framework.

For the NGO unit of MESW (today MMED), the support entails capacity building in policy formulation and enabling it to perform its regulatory duties. Support within the context of the programme shall entail setting up an NGO database in Ghana, training teams on NGO activities and the political scope of their intervention as well as the realisation of impact and efficiency assessments of NGOs in Ghana.

- **Enhancing FO training and education system**

Here the programme plans to provide specific support to the Ghana Cooperative College (CC) to enable it broaden its scope of activities to non-cooperative organisations and become a private, autonomous and sustainable training institute. It should be granted specific support as part of the programme to carry out a strategic plan, reframe its training curriculum and improve training infrastructure and equipment.

- **Setting up an FBO Fund**

According to the project document (WB, 2000, appendix 2, pp. 74-76), this entails setting up an FO-managed fund to finance small projects such as innovative projects for FO economic activities, projects for the rehabilitation of old equipment, projects to facilitate FO vertical integration, the development of services adapted to grassroots FOs needs, capacity building of FOs that are not concerned with the GCC and DOC training programmes.

Administration of the Fund should be entrusted to a National Board of Trustee. An NGO chosen through a competitive bid should be responsible for the secretariat of the FBOF Board of Trustee, for processing applications and preparing them for the approval of the Board, and for the execution of Board decisions. The initial amount of the Fund as provided for by the AgSSIP is US$ 5 million. The implementation of sub-projects should be under the responsibility of FOs which, as much as possible, shall sign a contract with an NGO or a consultant for their implementation. GCC and DOC shall be responsible for the dissemination of information to potential beneficiaries on the conditions for accessing and the functioning of the Fund.

4.2.4. The Enhancement of farm training component (US$ 5.7 million)

The aim of this component is to enhance the farm training system to refocus the curricula of agric colleges and universities in order to better adapt them to the demand of the private sector. This component that is implemented by the Department of Human Resources (DHR) of MOFA in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the faculties of agriculture of universities provides for the following:

- Profound review of the training strategy to target the private sector;
- The participation of FOs, NGOs and the private sector in training guidance;
- The recruitment of new teaching staff and capacity building of existing staff in schools and universities;
- The rehabilitation of education facilities;
- The enhancement of the DHR and MOFA, responsible for the formulation of farm training policies and continuous training for career development within MOFA.

4.3. Reflections on the organisation of the AgSSIP and FO participation

4.3.1. From a general point of view

**** A breach in the continuity of initial projects...***

After serious consultation and theme-based discussions on areas identified in the AAGDS, the final components of the programme as defined in the PAD present a breach in the continuity of specific World Bank projects in the domain of research and extension: NARP and NAEP (see 0).

**** A search for FO participation in non-specific components***

Though the project provides for a specific component devoted to FO support, the research and extension support components also provide for increasing the participation of producers in formulating the research and extension aspects by setting up committees that would constitute an interface between farmers and agricultural services and research (see infra 0 and 0).

But poor FO participation in the steering of the project

While the participation of private actors was encouraged during the initial phase of programme design, its steering and implementation was entrusted mostly to State agencies because of their greater experience in managing World Bank assistance and procedures (WB, 2000a). As such, the PAD stipulates that the Director of PPMED (MOFA) should be the national coordinator of the programme and the secretary of the National Programme Advisory Committee. For the implementation of the project, the two main implementing agencies selected are CSIR for the research component and MOFA for the other components.

4.3.2. Concerning the FO support component

A novelty in national research/extension systems support and reform programmes

The presence of a specific FO support component in the research and extension service reform programme is like a **real positive innovation** as compared to previous research and extension systems support projects.

Real complementarity within the FO component

The component design translates a real will to implement an integrated approach for FO enhancement and development. In effect, this component provides for a combination of activities at different levels:

- at the level of national legislation (review of the cooperative law, enacting of a law on NGOs);
- at the level of institutions responsible for their development through direct initial support to State (DOC, DAES) and "non-State" (GCC) agencies in charge of FO promotion;
- at the level of grassroots FOs thanks to the setting-up of a specific FBO support Fund that would enable FOs access resources for the funding of training and small demonstrative and/or innovative investments. The FBOF is the main tool for direct support to FOs and represents a little more than half of the funding earmarked for this component (US$ 5 million on US$ 9 million).

But a modest component in financial terms...

Although the FO support component is a new element, from a financial point of view, this component constitutes a very small share of commitments for the entire programme since it represents barely US$ 9.93 million, being 8% of the total amount of the programme. Lastly, although the total amount set aside for direct FO support is US$ 5 million, such funds represent barely 4% of the total amount of the project.

And difficult sharing of responsibilities

Although for components that originated from previous projects, the project management was clearly spelt out and responsibilities relatively easy to define (CSIR for the research component, MOFA and its various services for the other components), for the implementation of the FO support component which is an original component with regard to previous World Bank projects in Ghana, the sharing of responsibilities is more complex. It brings in MOFA (PPMED and DAES), MMED (DOC), GCC and CC[89]. The multiplicity of implementing agencies right from project design and without prior consultation contributes to rendering coordination difficult, limits its ownership and makes difficult the clear definition of responsibilities (see 0).

[89] In addition to these actors, an NGO (Focal Institution) should be recruited to handle the secretariat of the FBOF. In May 2003, it was not yet recruited, as such recruitment was to be negotiated between the World Bank and MOFA (see 0).

5. Implementation of the AgSSIP and its FO component

The objective of this study is not to assess the entire programme, its relevance and its results, but to strive to draw lessons from the design and implementation of FO support mechanisms. In addition, as pointed out in the preamble, there was little fund for the entire programme at this stage and no project was funded by the FBOF. Emphasis shall therefore be on describing more particularly the FO support mechanisms provided for in the FO support component and in the other components of the projects. How are such mechanisms set up this far? What role have FOs played in the process so far? What roles are FOs called upon to play in the mechanisms designed for the rest of the programme?

5.1. The setting-up of mechanisms to enhance FO participation in research and extension

Apart from the specific FO support component, numerous mechanisms were set up or initiated to strengthen links between the research and extension system and farmers.

5.1.1. Towards research that is more farmer demand-oriented

In order to involve the private sector and FOs in piloting research, the programme enabled the creation of three new structures for piloting research at the national level in which FO representatives participate in various degrees:

- The Agricultural Research Policy Committee (ARPC) that meets twice a year is responsible for laying down guidelines for the research policy. The committee comprises 12 members and is chaired by the Chief officer of MOFA. Participation of private actors here is reduced to a Best Farmer[90], one representative of the agri-business sector and one FO representative.
- The 14 Policy Coordinating Committees (PCC) meeting thrice a year constitute research steering committees for each of the main agricultural productions of the country. Committee meetings are attended by a representative of a national FO per sector.
- The Board of Trustee, responsible for selecting research projects within the context of the Competitive Agricultural Research Grant Scheme (CARGS). This Board comprises representatives of research (CSIR), MOFA, farmers' representatives and representatives of the agri-business.

Such committees are interesting exchange forums for a greater participation of professionals (farmers, processing firms) in piloting research. Although at the level of NARP the influence of FOs seems to be weak, it would appear that the participation of FOs in the other structures was more effective. In effect, the participation of the Ghana Cotton Grower Association in the cotton PCC is believed to have made it possible to initiate collaborations between research and this FO which is believed to have co-financed equipment as part of a research programme on the improvement of the quality of cotton. Furthermore, an unfavourable opinion expressed by farmers' representatives within the Board of Trustees of CARGS is believed to have caused the rejection of a research project that they deemed economically unprofitable.

[90] Each year, in collaboration with the departments of MOFA, a Best Farmer is elected. The selection process follows a bottom-up process from villages, districts, regions and the country. Nomination of candidates generally begins at the level of villages from extension workers. These are farmers recognised for their good farming practices and rarely FO leaders.

5.1.2. Towards the strengthening of relations between research/extension and farmers

At the local level, the programme provides for the creation of Research/Extension Liaison Committees (RELC). Such committees were set up during previous projects, especially NARP and NAEP. Initially 5 in number, one for each of the country's major agri-ecological zone, the committees were made up of researchers, MOFA workers (extension service) and producers. They aim to facilitate dialogue and lead to better guidance of local research and extension by producers. The initiative generated much interest in the various actors (researchers, extension workers, farmers). The objective, in the AgSSIP programme, was to develop the concept by setting up committees at levels closer to the field.

Since the start of the programme, many consultation meetings involving stakeholders were held at the national and regional levels in order to define responsibilities and modalities for the operation of these future RELCs[91].

Discussions were centred on the level at which the RELCs will be placed. Because they were too heavy and especially too costly to be implemented at the level of each district, the provincial level was finally retained. The composition and number of representatives of the rural area were also discussed. At the end of the consultation process, a final procedures manual was published by MOFA in early 2002. It provided for 10 regional RELCs each comprising 15 members including 2 FO representatives, one representative of an NGO and one representative of the agri-business.

Yet, in May 2003, these committees were not yet set up. The main difficulty remained the sharing of responsibility for funding the committees between research (CSIR) and MOFA.

5.1.3. Setting-up of the Extension Development Fund (EDF)

To promote the development of an extension system granting more space to non-State actors such as private service providers, FOs and NGOs, there was provision for the setting up of a US$ 5 million EDF as part of the extension support component of the AgSSIP programme.

The implementation of this project was entrusted to DAES of MOFA and an executive secretariat was set up to handle such dutiy at the DAES. The main activities carried out since the beginning of the programme consisted in preparing the Fund's procedures manual. On the basis of a draft manual prepared by DAES, a series of regional consultations with rural development actors (Services, FOs, etc.) was carried out to include the remarks of the different actors. A final document was published in March 2003.

According to the manual, the objective of the Fund would be to enhance the capacity of the private actors involved in extension activities and in the training of FOs. Although the end beneficiaries are FOs recognised by MOFA and DOC, private service providers may be FOs, NGOs, or assume other forms. The Fund shall finance the running costs for extension activities (salaries, extension equipment, training costs, costs linked to the use of the mass media, costs for accessing research findings and costs for drafting reports).

To manage the Fund, a National Board of Governors was set up. It comprises 11 members including 3 farmers' representatives and one private sector representative. It is assisted by a secretariat operated by the DAES. At the local level, for the 12 districts retained for the pilot phase, District Steering Committees (DSC) were set up. The DSCs comprised 7 persons, including 2 farmers' representatives (a man and a woman) and one local trader. The DSCs

[91] In April 2000, a preliminary draft manual was presented by a team comprising research and extension workers. The document was discussed in July and October 2002 during workshops held at Cape Town, Tamale, Kumasi and Bunso with the participation of researchers, officials responsible for extension and farmers.

are responsible for project technical and financial appraisal, for the submission of local projects for approval to the National Board of Governors and for monitoring their execution.

Worthy of note is the great resemblance in the governance structure retained for the EDF and the FBOF. In effect, both have National Boards and DSCs. In order to encourage synergies at the local level, the same districts were retained in the pilot phase for both funds. Similarly, in order to limit the number of governance structures, at the district level, DSCs shall be responsible for studying projects eligible for both funds.

5.2. FO enhancement through the FO support component

5.2.1. Review of the Decree on cooperatives

An information and consultation process around the new cooperatives law was launched by GCC in collaboration with DOC, with a view to replacing the current 1968 decree and granting more autonomy to FOs. With the support of the Cooperative League of the United States of America (CLUSA) and British cooperation (DFID), many regional workshops and a national workshop were organised to amend the new cooperative law and a lobby was set up to see to it that the draft was tabled at the National Assembly.

5.2.2. Direct producer organisation capacity building

**** GCC support***

With the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), GCC prepared a business plan that was submitted to the AgSSIP programme secretariat for funding at the end of 2002. GCC is at the moment still waiting for a formal response from the secretariat. But it would appear the plan poses a problem because it does not enable long-term financial autonomy.

GCC is however believed to have already carried out pilot training sessions but not yet assessed such training sessions, due to lack of funds obtained within the framework of the AgSSIP programme.

**** Cooperative College support***

Like for GCC, the objective is to set up a structure capable of operating in an autonomous manner. But like for GCC, in the absence of a guarantee on the capacity to become self-supporting, the CC has not received any funding from the AgSSIP programme at this stage. Furthermore, a lack of information is believed to have led to misunderstandings and delays since the CC is said to have been informed of its duty in the project only in the course of the first implementation follow-up mission of May 2002.

In the final analysis, at this stage, the two institutions have henceforth turned to other forms of financial support, the USAID for the CC and CLUSA for GCC, which have more flexible financial mechanisms and provide them with targeted support in a partnership approach.

5.3. Setting up the FO support fund – the FBOF

As a central element of the FO support mechanism, the setting-up of the FBOF was mostly studied during this mission. It is worth noting here that in May 2002, no FO project had been financed and that the Fund management structure had just been installed: in effect, even though the National Board of the FBOF had been inaugurated in October 2002, the District Steering Committees were installed only in March 2003 and meetings with the various DSCs organised in the field during the mission showed that the DSCs were in fact not yet operational.

Within this backdrop, in the absence of a real analysis of the contribution of this Fund to FO support, we shall revisit its set-up stages, detail out the bones of contention and the structure and procedures put in place so far.

5.3.1. Stages in the setting-up of the FBOF

Although an operational manual mentioned in the PAD (WB, 2000) had been prepared since 2000 by DOC, the workshop for its validation was organised in Accra only in July 2001. Funded by DFID (DOC, 2001) and with the participation of representatives of cooperatives, funding agencies and State agencies, the workshop brought out several points of disagreements and unresolved issues. A series of regional consultation workshops was therefore organised for FOs and State workers in the entire country in October 2001 with the financial assistance of DFID. The consultation made it possible to increase the number of stakeholders in the manual preparation process. Based on this, a new draft manual was thus prepared (MOFA – DOC, 2001).The final version of the operational manual was reviewed by a technical committee in December 2001 and published in August 2002.

5.3.2. Bones of contention and structures put in place

During the workshop many issues were discussed. Concerning the main aspects of the establishment of the fund, we shall discuss the bones of contention, the amendments made to the initial version and the procedures and final structures set up at this stage of the programme.

- **Fund steering structure**

The Fund steering structure was highly debated. In effect, drawing from the experience of other projects such as the VIP[92], actors highlighted the danger of delays between the submission of a project by grassroots FOs at the level of districts and the effective disbursement of funds. In order to significantly reduce such delays, it was agreed during deliberations that the management structure be reduced from three (District-Regional-National) to two levels (District-National).

- **Representation of FOs and farmers in the management structures**

The membership of the management organs was also heavily debated. Although the principle of farmers participation was retained right from the first document (3 of the 9 members at the level of the Board and 3 of the 7 members at the level of DSCs), the presence of another representative of the private sector (representative of agri-business sector) was added for the National Board and DSCs. Furthermore, the mode of selection of farmers' representatives was also highly debated (elections, appointment, etc.). Lastly, while the final version of the procedures manual provides for the holding of elections, in order to hasten the procedure, farmers' representatives were appointed, and not by the farmers themselves, but by MOFA[93].

- **The level of intervention: some pilot districts**

Although initially planned to cover all the 110 districts of the country, it was finally decided that a test be conducted in 12 districts distributed over the entire country and believed to have been chosen from among the most disadvantaged in terms of support (which does not always appear to be the case for the surveys conducted).

It is worth pointing out that sensitisation and identification of FOs potentially interested in funding was carried out in all the districts by DAES and DOC and that the announcement of

[92] Within the context of this project, delays between the submission of a project request and the effective disbursement of funds was generally more than 6 months and could be extended to up to 10 months, thereby causing the discouragement of project bearers (communities).

[93] For the National Board, a representative for each of the major regions of the country (north, centre and south) was appointed.

the limitation of intervention to a few pilot districts contributed to creating a feeling of misunderstanding and frustration for workers of government services and FOs of districts initially involved but left out at last.

- **Modalities for accessing the fund**

Modalities for accessing the fund in terms of the organisation of eligible FOs were tightened. In effect, although the choice of grassroots FOs was clear right from the first version of the manual, conditions to be met by the latter were clarified and tightened during the consultation process in order to prevent the constitution of groups with the sole aim of receiving a grant. Though right from the earliest documents, eligible FOs were supposed to have been known by DOC or DAES, the final version included conditions like having more than 20 members, a bank account, providing many documents to prove they were operational (minutes of meetings, operating rules, ...) and prior payment of registration fees to DSCs, and their time of existence before expecting any funding was increased from 6 to 12 months minimum.

Conversely, the financial prerequisites were reduced: initially FO participation to the funding was to be 10% of the value of the project to be financed; the final version authorises FOs to have such amount in cash or in kind, which facilitates eligibility to funds given the difficulties encountered by many grassroots FOs to raise funds from their members.

- **Nature of eligible projects**

The nature of eligible projects did not change during the consultations. Although FOs pointed out the financial difficulties and amounts of campaign credits needed for adopting innovations, such action was not eligible to the Fund. However, the Fund had been designed from the onset to enable the funding of training projects in the broad sense of the word, but also structure rehabilitation projects and equipment for innovative projects. With an eligible maximum project amount of US$ 20,000, this automatically opens the possibility of funding joint equipment, which constitutes a strong request from grassroots FOs as we came to verify during interviews conducted with the latter.

- **Powerful negation around the Focal Institution ... still underway**

The major item of negotiation and disagreement between the Bank and local actors, mostly MOFA, is recourse to a Focal Institution (FI) – an NGO responsible for the secretariat of the National Board as well implementing and managing the Fund daily. While the Bank wished that such function be entrusted to an NGO selected through a call for bids, MOFA sought to assume the function, postulating the high incidental cost and the unsustainable nature of the structure once the project would end.

The problem was finally resolved partially with the decision to set up a dual system: 6 districts would be managed with an FI and 6 with a secretariat handled by the Desk Officer of the FO support component, an official of PPMED. Though the intermediary solution seemed to complicate the situation from an operational and coherence point of view, it could have the advantage of testing many types of institutional arrangements. Nonetheless, the solution also seemed unsustainable in the sense that the secretary comes from PPMED whose duty was not to manage a Fund but to coordinate the project.

- **Project funding and disbursement**

Disbursement procedures changed with the various drafts of the procedures manual. Though in the initial version, funds were to be served directly to FOs to finance services through contracts signed with the private service provider, the final document pointed out that where possible, funds should be transferred directly to the private service provider. Though it could not be foreseen what would obtain in practice, this would constitute a risk of FOs not benefiting from any direct funding from the Fund. This is testimony of a great mistrust on the part of State services in the managing capacity of the FOs. In addition, this practice of direct funding to private service providers tends to greatly reduce the potential pedagogic and

teaching role in terms of financial management for the FOs that may be implied in the direct management of funds granted them. Lastly, this may equally reduce their feeling of responsibility vis-à-vis the management of such funds.

6. Preliminary lessons for FO capacity building

As underscored in the preamble, direct FO support activities funded within the context of the AgSSIP programme are still inexistent at this stage. In addition, it should be recalled that the objective of this study is not to evaluate the project but to draw lessons at this stage of the project in matters relating to FO support. This last part shall therefore be devoted to the role played by FOs in the design and implementation of the project at this stage. We shall then draw preliminary lessons and present some avenues for recommendations for the improvement of the design and implementation of FO support programmes.

6.1. FO participation and role in the AgSSIP

6.1.1. The participation of FOs in the design of the AgSSIP

There are two phases and two types of participation in AgSSIP design.

In the first phase, some FO officials, especially export-oriented FOs and/or those that are strongly attached to the government (GNAFF), were, as representatives of the private sector, put at the centre of the project design process by participating in the steering and coordination of preparatory studies.

Nonetheless, this form of ambitious participation that deviates from common practices was difficult and did not produce the expected results. Though FOs had a national structure, their representativeness was limited to that of farmers belonging to a rather well-to-do group of farmers and/or with a loose link with the grassroots. In fact, even though their participation was powerful, they could not really represent the farmers' movement and the interests of all farmers (especially the poorest). In addition, these actors did not seem to have been sufficiently supported in the execution of this new task to enable them build up a real coherent and articulated programme proposal for FO enhancement nationwide.

In the second phase, FO participation as seen during an expert mission was weaker in the sense that, although more grassroots FOs were consulted, they did not take part in the steering of the design process. They also seemed to have been consulted swiftly, without really having the means to interact at length with the teams responsible for studying the project, nor make real proposals.

6.1.2. FO participation in AgSSIP implementation

The participation of actors in laying down project implementation modes occurred during the drafting of the procedures manual. In a whole, it entails consultations to amend documents drafted by State services. It is difficult to assess to what extent the participation of these actors in consultation workshops really led to the consideration of the interests of producers. Based on the testimonies of participants, it could be considered that conditions were not favourable for FOs to make proposals: documents to which they were to react were presented to them only during the workshops, participants invited to the workshops were very little informed about the content of the documents and the stakes of the discussions and made their points of view "spontaneously", thereby limiting their capacity to react and the representativeness of their stance. Also, the documents presented were generally technical and not always easy to grasp.

6.1.3. Place and role of FOs in the implementation of the AgSSIP

The programme contributed to setting up many structures within which farmers or FO representatives are represented. This no doubt leads to granting farmers a voice in designing research topics, guiding extension subject matters and managing funds granted them. This participation seemed to have been appreciated and acknowledged by other State research and extension actors and brought about some concrete results (case of research, see supra 0).

Nonetheless, **farmers and FOs are still a minority in all the structures set up.** As such, even in the management of funds devoted to them (FBOF) at the local level, their representation remained weak as compared to other case studies (Senegal, Burkina Faso and Uganda) since in Ghana, they represent barely 3 out 7 members while in the other programmes or projects such committees are made up exclusively of FO representatives. It should however be pointed out that the grassroots FOs interviewed on this (low) representation said they were satisfied because the participation represented a breakthrough with regard to previous systems and because they consider that the presence of State workers was a means to moderate conflicts of interests between the grassroots groups.

Furthermore, **farmers' representatives within the structures did not have any legitimacy founded on the farmers' movement.** In effect, in the structures (National Board of the FBOF, District Steering Committees of the FBOF ...), the choice of representatives was made by MOFA through its agricultural extension department.

6.2. Preliminary lessons

An analysis of the AgSSIP design and implementation process makes it possible to draw a few preliminary lessons for the execution of FO support projects.

6.2.1. The integration of an FO support component is an innovation in agricultural service support projects

⇨ **The integration of an FO support component within agricultural service support projects is an innovation that opens up discussions on the role of FOs, furthers the perception of other institutional actors on the role of such collective actors and creates new opportunities for grassroots FOs.**

Though none of the FO support activities provided for in the programme was implemented, many achievements may be pointed out at this stage of the project:

*** An innovative principle highly appreciated by institutional development actors**

The FO support theme within the context of this agricultural services support sector programme is **an innovative theme that seems to attract the interest of other institutional development actors** (State services - research and extension, farmers' banks, donors, etc.). Including this theme in an agricultural service support project made it possible to open up debate on the role of FOs in defining research subject matters, in determining extension aspects and more generally in the country's agricultural development. Surveys conducted show that the different actors are more and more aware of the importance of organising the rural world and the emergence of new forms of farmers' organisations.

*** Early change in field workers behaviours**

The start of project implementation reinforced links between DOC and DAES field workers in taking FO movements into consideration. Though workers complain of the lack of means (often real), misunderstanding of options taken by the project and have sometimes limited knowledge of FOs, they seem motivated by the search for solutions to boost their development. However, they still consider farmers as people to be trained rather than real partners.

*** New opportunities for enhancing grassroots FOs**

Whether through the FBOF or the EDF, the AgSSIP constitutes a real opportunity for existing grassroots FOs to obtain means needed for their capacity building.

Furthermore, although both Funds have different duties, the first targeting FO support and the second private service providers, their institution in the same districts is an interesting experience as it offers a dual opportunity for the FOs either to solicit external support (contract financed by the FBOF) or directly enhance their capacity to provide services (funding by the EDF).

On this latter point, though it is not possible to perceive the effects of the major instrument (FBOF) provided for FO enhancement, some issues may be raised on the capacity of grassroots FOs to benefit from the mechanism and on the quality, relevance and level of innovation of projects to be proposed by FOs.

In effect, with the FO eligibility criteria and the formalisation requirements in terms of project design entered in the FBOF procedures manual, one may worry about the number of grassroots FOs that would actually be capable of submitting projects that meet the requirements. Just like in the case of the VIP, difficulties in designing projects may lead to a low number of final proposals and under conditions of the strong will to disburse funds, lead to accepting projects based on the eligibility criteria only rather than their real interest for FOs.

Furthermore, though we should not question the basic principle that the FBOF must meet the needs expressed by FOs, one may also worry over the capacity of FOs to assess their situation and find relevant and creative solutions to their problems. Interviews conducted during the mission show that grassroots FOs do not always have a clear vision of the strategy to be adopted and possible solutions to be implemented due to lack of information, or that they are tempted to reproduce preconceived models without prior analysis and without reflecting on the conditions of adapting them to their situation and/or all their implications, or that they are tempted to propose what they deem acceptable with regard to other projects they had known instead of expressing their real needs. There is also a risk of implementing projects designed without a prospective vision, that are not innovative and/or ill-adapted and unable to bring a sustainable solution to farmers' problems. This risk is particularly real as at this stage, FOs informed of the forthcoming establishment of a Fund devoted to them did not often have any relations other than DOC and DAES, which, although showing a real will to perform their duty of facilitators in the emergence of the project, seemed generally to be proposing relatively stereotyped solutions in terms of type of enhancement (audit, accounting, ...) and intervention modality (training).

In order to reduce such risks, special emphasis should be laid on **support to such FOs in project design** (training, designing of a strategic project), on attendant approaches used by facilitators as well as on the creation of a forum for the exchange of information to keep them better informed on the activities of other institutions, their functioning, their agendas and to enable them exchange with other organisations.

Furthermore, apart from risks noted in the setting up of the Fund, many avenues for the improvement of the FO support mechanism by the FBOF need to be developed.

It would be necessary to **enhance the coordination of the FO support component with rural funding and infrastructure development projects.** In effect, as observed during field trips, many grassroots FOs and many of their members face problems of accessing short-term funding and suffer from a lack of local infrastructure (communication means, development, etc.). It would be necessary to better coordinate Rural Financial Service Projects (RFSP) and Village Infrastructure Projects (VIP) with the FO support component (procedure, calendar, support area) in order to provide overall and coordinated support services to FOs and avoid the multiplication of ad hoc groups that are being set up because of funding opportunities offered by the different projects and hindering the construction of solid FOs.

Furthermore, though the procedures laid down for the creation and management of the FBOF are specifically aimed at enhancing grassroots FOs, it would however be necessary to **adapt the mechanism to support FOs having intermediary organisation levels.** In effect, though grassroots FOs are a relevant "target", there are also many organisations that have developed intermediary levels of organisation – regional or national. Such organisations that are generally organised around a sector, such as the Cotton growers Association, the Citrus Growers Association, etc. play a major role in improving the production conditions of their members, and may be of key importance in the structuring of FO movements in Ghana. But although one can believe (or hope) that such organisations may benefit from the EDF to build their capacity to render services to their members, the organisations have specific needs in terms of capacity building (network management, more consistent investments, etc.) and their structuring that should be supported.

6.2.2 The significance of a successful consultation and negotiation process during the preparatory phase of the project

⇨ **The absence of successful consultation and a consensus on the role of the various actors involved in the preparatory phase of the project leads to delays in the implementation phase, and a lack of accountability and ownership of the stakeholders.**

The design of the AgSSIP and its FO support component is a long and difficult conciliation process between different visions on the objectives and especially the means for providing FO support. The quality of the consensus reached at the time of project design between the various parties on the prerogatives, role and activities of each is a key factor for the success of the implementation of the project.

*** The absence of solid and independent FOs recognised by the State and donor institutions likely to negotiate a programme of that magnitude and the difficulty to reach a consensus**

The absence of a structured umbrella organisation representing its grassroots and having a proposal capacity and a strategy constitutes a real difficulty for Ghana for the actual institution of consultation between FOs, public services and donor institutions in programme design and implementation. This "low" level of initial organisation brings to the fore the difficulty to make strategic choices: who to support and how to go about it. In effect, this state of affairs exacerbated the strong divergences in viewpoints between the two main stakeholders in the negotiation around the project design, the government and its agencies on the one hand, and the World Bank on the other hand, concerning the type of approach to be adopted (target support to existing organisations or open support to grassroots FOs to

initiate a new movement), the type of actors to be supported (GNAFF that is strongly controlled by the government and politicised or GCC that appears to have a "more" solid foundation at the grassroots), the type of actors to set up the component (private actor: Focal Institution or State agency: DAES), etc. In such a context, designing a programme requires a long negotiation process to arrive at a compromise.

**** Difficult conciliation between the calendar of donors and the necessary consultation time, risks of a non-negotiated FO support project replication***

Although the multiplicity of FOs, their lack of prior coordination and know-how in terms of participation in project design render more difficult the instauration of real negotiation in designing projects devoted to them, the imperatives of the calendar of the donor project cycle also constitute an impediment or at least a limiting factor to the promotion of effective co-construction of the programme with FOs. In effect, the will of donors and States to accelerate the process of programme set up led to short-circuiting the reflection and negotiation time and to the many impediments observed in the design process. In the final analysis, the will to accelerate the process seems to have led the teams responsible for the final design of the AgSSIP to draw a lot from the FO support component worked out in other projects (especially that of the PSAOP of Senegal) designed in other institutional contexts. Although the use of reference to guide the reflection on the design of an FO support programme seems to be useful, it appears indispensable to work out a process of adaptation, consultation and negotiation aimed at reaching a consensus or at least a compromise in the national context.

The absence of such a phase before the start of the project led to strong misunderstandings (all the more as a participation process, though perfectible, had been initiated with FOs and public institutions). In addition, the absence of initial consensus and clarification of the roles of each actor led to an absence of accountability: each of the various actors (PPMED, DAES, DOC, GCC, CC, etc.) refusing to take responsibility of implementing the project. This lack of ownership led to the slowness and even the hitches observed in the execution phase.

It is therefore worth pointing out the need to **take off the time necessary and sufficient for negotiating and defining the roles of each actor before implementation and avoid discontinuity in the project design process.** In effect, real consultation with FOs is a learning process that demands time and outright commitment. It is therefore necessary to take time off for such consultation before starting off the project. In addition, although the lessons and principles learned from the FO support projects executed in other countries (such as the PSAOP of Senegal that served as a reference in designing the AgSSIP FO support component) may be used for reflection, the adaptation of action principles and modalities should be negotiated locally among the partners.

Against this backdrop, it appears necessary **to design preparatory programmes of smaller magnitudes for FOs**, at least in the preparatory phase of major projects like the AgSSIP. In effect, faced with the difficulties encountered and especially related to the multiplicity of FOs and their lack of organisation, it would be necessary to implement prior targeted and specific FO projects. To this end, many operational openings could be envisaged. On the one hand, like in the case of the AgSSIP, the first phase of APL could have been devoted to testing the approach. In the final analysis, this is where the project is currently driving at two years after it was launched. After wanting to set up a mechanism to cover the whole country, the project finally concentrated on a few districts (12 in the entire country). Nonetheless, it would have been preferable to plan this from the onset in order to avoid contradictory announcements that further the frustrations and lead to the weariness of

local workers responsible for informing the local people. On the other hand, other types of World Bank funding such as Learning Innovation Credits (LIC), with smaller amounts and lesser study modalities, may be sought to test an FO support approach, to test its tools and effects upstream and irrespective of the design of a major sector programme. Lastly, collaboration with other donors (bilateral cooperation) with more flexible funding mechanisms (subvention possibility, lighter study modalities, etc.), may be sought to implement test programmes or preparatory programmes targeting the prior development of the organisations of the country or, at least, initiate a reflection to lay down a shared vision of existing FOs in the country on the type and modalities of support needed for their enhancement.

Furthermore, no matter the preparatory form retained, before designing an FO support project, it is necessary to carry out **a complete assessment of the initial situation of FOs** with the aim of better appraising their strategic project and their difficulties and couple such analysis with an institutional analysis of all the actors concerned (their expectations and their will to act). The assessment should in addition strive to verify the capacities and will of the FOs to actively participate in the study, in view of real participation of the FOs in designing the support project concerning them.

Lastly, when initial consultation is conducted and FOs are associated in same, it is necessary to equally improve support to private actors and FOs during the preparatory and negotiation phase of project design. As such, when studying a project and its negotiation with donors and other institutional actors needing specific skills, it is necessary to **provide specific support to FOs that are stakeholders in the project design** so as to help them make proposals and hold a strategic reflection with their grassroots. To this end, recourse to support from other donors with more adapted funding and intervention modalities (technical assistance) seems necessary.

Faced with the difficulties encountered in project design and implementation due to the absence of an umbrella organisation, it would be necessary to wonder about the need to encourage **the emergence of a new umbrella organisation**. In effect, although GCC seems to have been chosen by the project as umbrella structure to be enhanced because of its residual roots in grassroots cooperative movements, GCC seems to be a structure unknown to grassroots FOs, with very few members, does not organically represent non-cooperative organisations that currently constitute the greater part of FOs and has in addition a negative reputation vis-à-vis these FOs. It would indeed be more appropriate to conduct a reflection among existing FOs on the constitution of new apexes and/or a platform of representation for the various types of existing FOs (and not cooperatives alone).

6.2.3. The importance of information exchange and coordination among project managers

⇨ **Exchange of information and coordination among the various project managers is crucial for accountability purposes and implementing an FO support project. Project implementation (production of procedures manuals, installation of management structure) is a process that allows for initial dialogue between FOs and State services.**

Apart from the discontinuity in the study process and the absence of a mutually accepted pattern for the distribution of each one's tasks and responsibilities prior to project implementation, project execution suffered from **a lack of communication among the**

actors and information on the role expected of each in the project right from the beginning of the implementation phase. In effect, the major project management bodies (GCC, CC, DAES and DOC) of the component deplore the lack of information from the start of the project on the effective role they were called upon to play and the activities incumbent upon them. As such, they had difficulties in designing their project: the CC and GCC thus defined identical items in each of their respective programmes of activities. Apart from these problems of redundancy, the absence of regular meetings on the progress of the project[94] and the expectations reduce these actors' feeling of responsibility and belonging to the process.

Though the project suffered from a lack of consultation and negotiation during programme design, **the production of procedures manuals enabled the institution of initial dialogue between FOs and State services**. As such, definition of the procedures manual for the setting-up of the FBOF provided the opportunity, through working sessions and consultations, to continue negotiations on the objectives and the approach to be adopted and that was not done beforehand (type of FO to be supported, type of governance, role of support institutions, etc.) and start off discussions with new FOs not involved in the initial consultation conducted during project design.

However, though tentative dialogue may be restarted around the concrete aspect of implementation, it would be necessary to **resolve the problem of clarification of responsibilities to enable better ownership of the FO support component.** In effect, though right from the start of the project implementation of the FO support component suffers from a lack of clear-cut and consensual distribution of responsibilities between the stakeholders (PPMED, DAES, DOC, and GCC), it would appear the confusion on the responsibilities of these different institutions for the implementation of the project was compounded by the appointment of an FBO desk officer at PPMED responsible for setting up the FBOF. It appears necessary that a specific consultation on this issue be carried out by a worker co-opted by the different partners in order to organise mediation. Such mediation should be aimed at working out a concerted decision that would be validated by the general project coordinator.

In addition, it would be necessary at this juncture to **resolve the problem of coordination, to better inform the various stakeholders and encourage exchange of information between them.** Though this is an aside to the current exercise of capitalisation on FO support programmes, the problems of coordinating activities and information have been highly discussed by the stakeholders of the programme, especially those involved in the FO support component, during interviews conducted in the course of the mission. This problem, which was highlighted during the final restitution meeting at the end of the mission, calls for rapid response from the project steering unit, as participants were against the holding of more regular information meetings between PPMED, the project steering unit, and the various project management structures.

Finally, it would be necessary to provide farmers' representatives in the structures set up by the project with means to directly inform other members of the farmers' movement. In order to enhance the role of farmers assigned to various FBOF steering units, it would be necessary to provide them with means and support to enable them inform and consult the representatives of other farmers' organisations. This would make it possible to guarantee the quality and representativeness of their intervention, and may contribute to reinforcing (initiate the start of) a feeling of FO ownership of this component.

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[94] It should especially be underscored that the AgSSIP steering committee, the National Programme Advisory

6.2.4. The complexity and magnitude of the project and actors' ownership difficulties

⇨ **The complexity and magnitude of programmes like the ASIP are not favourable to the rapid realisation and strong ownership by actors.**

To the eyes of the stakeholders of the project, it is clear that the size of the project renders difficult a feeling of belonging to the programme on the part of FOs. Furthermore, adding of the FO component to such a programme, if one can recognise the need to propose a global vision, is equally a source of slowness. In its design and implementation, the FO component is tributary to the overall project design and implementation pace. In effect, while the programme was to be implemented, the January 2001 change of government and Ghana's integration to the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Programme that led to the formulation of the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Programme (FASDEP) brought about a delay in execution (delay in signing the loan agreement, freezing of the programme during the review of strategic frameworks by the government). Such delays point to the difficulty in conducting targeted projects on FO support within the context of such large projects where many stakes may come to slow the implementation of targeted activities. Furthermore, the number of components for which the same actors are involved within the context of such a project (e.g. the DAES involved in institutional reform, the FO component, DAES reorganisation, the setting-up of the FBO F and EDF) renders more complex the understanding of activities and specific expectations of the FO support component. In the final analysis, recourse to targeted FO enhancement projects coordinated with agricultural services reorganisation projects would help preserve the interest of global approaches while at the same time avoiding the complexity and difficulties inherent in the design and implementation of large projects.

6.2.5. The interest of involving many donors

⇨ **The involvement of many different donors makes it possible to improve FO participation in the design and implementation of support programmes that concern them.**

Through the plurality of approach and their complementarity in terms of modes of funding and tools, the involvement of several donors in FO support programmes is a factor conducive to better FO participation in the processes and in the implementation of FO support projects. In effect, they may contribute to enhancing FO participation (e.g. consultations funded by DFID to promote discussion around FBO procedures manuals), contribute to methodological support (e.g. GTZ for the holding of workshops), provide counselling and play the role of moderator (the role of CIDA in the Board of Trustee of the FBOF), or complement the support of some actors (CLUSA and USAID with GCC and CC).

The emergence of a consultation platform among donors for reflection on FO support would be an avenue for the enhancement of possible synergies.

Committee, has never met since the start of the project.

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Empowering Rural Producer Organisations within the framework of World Bank Initiatives:

A Capitalisation Study

Uganda Country Case Study

Jorge M. Diaz

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Introduction

Most of the agricultural sectors in least developed countries have undergone a series of reforms aimed at making the market play a leading role in the promotion of optimal resource allocation among the various economic activities. This has eventually resulted in the private sector taking over some of the functions formerly performed by governments. Under these reforms, producer organisations as well as other rural sector institutions have been called upon to assume new responsibilities and play an active role in development-oriented processes. However, most of these organisations are not properly trained and prepared to be efficiently involved as key players in policy- and decision-making or in more specific activities as in demand-driven agricultural service provision. In addition, the current institutional setting does not provide for an enabling environment where POs can actually participate and effectively engage in such processes.

In 1997, the World Bank and French Co-operation, with support from CIRAD, started a collaborative effort to: (a) build the capacity of rural producer organisations and (b) promote partnership between demand-responsive agricultural services and rural producer organisations within the context of Bank funded agricultural development projects.

In order to assess the lessons learnt from this initiative and to contribute to identify a way forward, a study was conducted at two levels:

1. Review of PO empowerment-related components on Bank's portfolio (1997-2003)
2. Country case studies and in-depth analysis in four African countries (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Ghana)

A country visit to Uganda was carried out from 13 to 23 May 2003, centred on the analysis of what is currently one of the most important agriculture-related initiatives undertaken by the World Bank (jointly with the donor community) in this country, namely the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS). This analysis was focused on the role played by POs within this programme, stating in particular how involved they were in the preparation and further implementation of NAADS and which instruments and mechanisms were put in place to enhance the capacity of POs to perform their tasks. Data for this study was gathered from literature review and interviews with different stakeholders. A field visit was made to the districts of Mukono and Iganga.

1. Background

In order to provide a context for the analysis of the National Agricultural Advisory Service in Uganda, this chapter presents some of the most relevant trends and initiatives that influenced the way NAADS have been designed and implemented.

Since the early 1980s, Sub-Saharan Africa has been subjected to structural adjustment programmes promoted by multilateral institutions, meant to reorientate African economies towards market economies. Uganda has not been an exception and since the mid-80s, the Government of Uganda has engaged in an economic recovery process, embracing such structural adjustment policies and promoting market liberalisation. These reforms have been the response to a previous period of political and economic mismanagement that resulted in social and institutional collapse. The main objective of these measures was to improve resource allocation and reduce the role of the government in production and commercial activities while promoting a more active and greater involvement of the private sector. These reforms were also accompanied by a gradual decentralisation process that has transferred responsibilities from the central government to local councils (districts and sub-counties),

with the goal of improving civil society participation, empowering local people in decision-making and optimising service provision.

As far as agriculture is concerned, the reforms were geared towards the liberalisation of factor markets, the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers (particularly those for inputs) and the elimination of export taxes. In addition, institutional adjustments have been and are currently being implemented, mainly in terms of privatisation of government enterprises and handing over of responsibilities to the private sector. One of the major initiatives undertaken within the sector has been to dissolve the Extension Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and transfer the duty of advisory services provision to local governments.

a) Poverty Eradication Action Plan, PEAP

During the last decade, encouraging results have been achieved in terms of stabilisation of macro-economic indicators and overall economic growth. Nevertheless, and despite the overall good performance, poverty continues to be a key issue and the main challenge that political, economic and social stability is facing. In order to tackle this problem, the government has drawn up the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), a long-term and overarching strategy that establishes poverty eradication as the fundamental goal of the government and provides a comprehensive framework for national planning and multi-sector engagement[95]. By the time the Plan was launched (1997), about 45% of the population lived in poverty. PEAP set itself the objective of reducing the headcount of income poverty to 10 percent of the population by 2017[96]. The PEAP is established on the following four pillars (MFPED, 2000):

1. Creating a framework for economic growth and transformation
2. Ensuring good governance and security
3. Directly enhancing the ability of the poor to raise their incomes
4. Directly improving living standards for the poor

Through these pillars the PEAP provides the guiding framework for drawing up medium-term plans and strategies as well as investment programmes for specific sectors[97]. In turn, and under the decentralised system adopted by the Government of Uganda, both PEAP and sector plans provide the framework for district planning.

In order to achieve the set goal of reducing poverty to 10% by the year 2017, Government projections are based on the assumption that more targeted interventions - directed to increase the incomes of the poorest - are required. In other words, overall economic growth would not be enough to fulfil these expectations. Regarding agriculture, pillar 3 of the PEAP underlines the fact that most Ugandans are self-employed, mainly in agriculture, and points to the need for both higher agricultural growth rates and non-farm employment in rural areas to attain sustainable poverty reduction. It assigns a key role to rural transport and energy infrastructure, land rights, research and extension, access to markets, and education and employment.

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[95] The initial PEAP was prepared in 1997. A revised version was finalized in the spring of 2000. The 1997 PEAP drew particular attention to the need for increased expenditure on the delivery of those services that directly benefit the poor. The Poverty Action Fund was created to support resource allocation to specific services outlined in the PEAP. This fund is supported through debt relief from the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative HIPC and additional resources from donor communities.

[96] Percentage of the population below national poverty line.

[97] That is the case for the long-term plans prepared for the health, road, education and agricultural sectors.

b) Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture, PMA

Given the conceptual approach adopted by the PEAP and the agricultural and rural development priorities contained therein, the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture, PMA, was prepared in 2000 as a multi-sector strategy that aimed to *"eradicate poverty through a profitable, competitive, sustainable and dynamic agricultural and agro-industrial sector"* (MAAIF, 2000b). This vision is centred on the necessary transformation of subsistence farmers into commercial entrepreneurs.

In order to contribute to the achievement of the comprehensive goals of poverty eradication, the PMA has set itself the following objectives:

- Increase incomes and improve the living standards of poor subsistence farmers through increased productivity and increased share of marketed production;
- Improve household food security through the market rather than emphasising self-sufficiency;
- Provide lucrative employment through the secondary benefits of PMA implementation such as agro-processing factories and services;
- Promote sustainable use and management of natural resources by developing an appropriate land use and management policy and promoting environment friendly technologies.

The PMA identifies the key areas in which specific policies for the agricultural sector should be developed and implemented. As far as research is concerned, the PMA specifically states that agricultural research will be farmer-oriented and farmer-driven and that private sector participation and funding need to be increased. Regarding agricultural advisory services, the PMA affirms that: *"Government will formulate an extension policy that will promote an efficient extension service primarily based on private sector delivery. Given that in the foreseeable future, the provision of this kind of services to smallholder resource-poor farmers will continue to be regarded as public property , Government will increase its overall annual spending on provision of extension services to poor farmers".*

The PMA devotes an important component to the new roles (and the required institutional adjustments) that agricultural stakeholders (both public and private) must play in the new setting that government reforms are promoting. This is the case for farmers and commodity associations whose possibility to participate more actively in policy-making, programme implementation, contracting and service provision is explicitly addressed within the PMA. Consequently, **the Plan stresses the need for the government to facilitate the process of capacity building and empowerment of the private sector**.

Following a series of consultations with local people in a number of selected districts, with emphasis on fields where there is greater demand[98] for government initiative, the PMA identified six core areas for public action in agriculture:

- Research and technology development
- National agricultural advisory service
- Education for agriculture
- Improving access to rural finance
- Improving access to markets
- Sustainable natural resource use and management

Although all of these areas are related in one way or another to the specific topic of producer organisation empowerment (the central point of this study), only issues connected to the way such organisations participate in the definition of research agendas and the further provision of agricultural extension services, are considered in this analysis.

[98] The main source of consultation was the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project (UPPAP, 1999), a project that consulted poor farmers through field surveys, carried out in nine pilot districts.

c) Agricultural Research and Extension within the PMA

The consultation process shows how farmers recognise the lack of skills, information and knowledge as some of the constraints to increase productivity (a key goal of the PMA) and attribute these deficiencies to poor quality extension services, mainly due to low coverage and pertinence of services provided and lack of motivation and qualification of extension officers[99]. To overcome these limitations, farmers proposed ***increased involvement of the private sector*** *(NGOs and farmers' organisations), an effective extension system delivering appropriate information, group training (especially women) to pool resources to improve farming collectively, the re-employment of retrenched extension officers, deployment of more, better-trained, adequately remunerated and facilitated officers, and* ***empowerment of communities to demand services*** (MAAIF, 2000b).

As a response to these findings, the PMA states that if the agricultural research system is to benefit the poor and contribute to food security, *it has to operate with the participation of farmers, have the capacity to perceive and interpret poor peoples' needs, constraints and resources, and generate practical options to improve them.* Complementarily, the PMA asserts that a National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS) is to be put in place, where *"the farmers are empowered as partners and have a role to play. Farmers themselves will determine the work programmes and activities of these advisors. The advisors will therefore effectively become de facto employees to farmers, rendering advisory services to help farmers make better decisions about their farms".*

An advisory service as such, implies a change in paradigm that at least takes the following guiding principles into account:

- Decentralisation of the service to improve accuracy of needs assessment and pertinence of service delivery
- Increasing participation of farmers and shifting their role from beneficiaries of the extension process to users of high-quality advice on a demand-driven market
- Enhancing private sector capacity to provide advice in a market-oriented service delivery
- Changing the role of the government from direct provider of technical advice to facilitator of a private market for extension

This in turn obviously needs to be accompanied by an efficient mechanism that ensures real and effective farmer participation, which itself requires strong capacity building and empowerment of farmers' organisations. As it will be discussed later, NAADS has privileged

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[99] The World Bank had funded an Agricultural Extension Project (1992) one of the main objectives of which was to build public sector capacity to deliver and support effective extension services. One of the outcomes was the so-called Unified Extension Service, which resulted from the merging of the different extension duties comprised within several ministries into a sole system under the responsibility of the MAAIF. In addition, a management methodology of T&V was also instituted, initially in some pilot districts and later spread over the participating districts. Different stakeholders expressed increasing concerns regarding the heavy bureaucratic set-up and the inappropriate conceptual approach of the new service. Eventually, discussions began to converge about the need to orientate extension services towards the empowerment of communities and farmers, enhancing their capacities to assess and identify their own needs and solutions with the support of outside facilitators. This project was rated unsatisfactory (see World Bank, 2000b Implementation Completion Report for Agricultural Extension Project - Report No. 20591.
For additional references regarding the perception on the former extension model, see also:
NAADS Secretariat, 2001b. Quarterly Progress Report, July-September 2001, Appendix 3: Experiences of Extension Services in Latin America).
Parliament of the Republic of Uganda: Report of the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries on the Ministerial Budget Policy Statement for the MAAIF for the fiscal year 2001/2002: *"The lack of an explicit extension policy is yet another major challenge. The Committee hopes that NAADS implementation will not be like the Agricultural Extension Programme, which expired in 1999 with little or no visible impact".*
World Bank, 1999b. AKIS Discussion Paper No. 22305

the enhancement of organisational and participatory capacities at local level, giving a lesser priority to national-coverage producer organisations, on grounds that their links with grassroots communities are rather weak and therefore their capacity to mobilise grassroots organisations (and eventually to reach the poorest) could be quite uncertain.

2. Farmers' Organisations in Uganda

The purpose of this section is to provide a general overview of the institutional set-up of farmers' organisations that currently prevails in Uganda. It does not intend to be an in-depth analysis of the evolution and causes that have shaped the way farmers are organised today, but to facilitate an understanding of the linkages they have at present with the NAADS proposed institutional set-up.

The Cooperative movement has played a significant role in the way farmers' organisations have evolved in Uganda. During the seventies and early eighties, the role and activities of cooperatives were mostly controlled and supervised by the Government. Consequently, cooperatives acted as an extension of the respective ministries (World Bank, 1994). Following the economic, social and institutional turmoil of that period, the current government has since 1987 carried out an amendment of the law on Cooperatives and substantial changes were introduced through a new legal framework designed after participatory consultation that included grassroots organisations. The resulting new Law of 1991 brought in more rigorous financial requirements and owner responsibilities as well as better co-ordination between the government and the umbrella organisation, namely the Uganda Cooperative Alliance.

By the same time, the Ministry of Agriculture with the support of the donor community, promoted the setting up of an association bringing together farmers and existing organisations and providing them with an institutional framework to strengthen coordination among them and improve dialogue with the government. The Uganda National Farmers Association (UNFA) was thus set up in 1992 with the support of Danish Co-operation (Danida). UNFA - sometimes in collaboration with the Cooperative Alliance and other agriculture-related organisations - provided services to its members such as agricultural counselling, training and capacity building. Given its decentralised structure, with branches in most of the Ugandan districts, UNFA adopted a federative form of organisation thus becoming the Uganda National Farmers Federation(UNFF).

According to some of the PO leaders interviewed, a series of discussions took place on the capacity and legal possibilities of this new federation to embrace other organisations. As a result of this process, the Agricultural Council of Uganda was created in 2000 as an umbrella organisation that currently comprises most agricultural producers (particularly commodity-oriented), agro-processing industries, service providers and NGOs. UNFF is a member of the ACU.

3. National Agricultural Advisory Service, NAADS

Within this conceptual framework, a Government Task Force with the participation of the donor community formulated the National Agricultural Advisory Service, NAADS as a Ugandan Government programme to raise the efficiency and quality of the agricultural extension services, through a decentralised, demand-driven and private sector-oriented approach, as a response to the poor performance and low stakeholder support of the existing Unified Extension Service (MAAIF, 2000a; World Bank, 2001b).

a. Objectives

The general objective of NAADS is *to ensure that farmers apply improved husbandry and management practices, and identify and solve their technical and marketing problems using appropriate and modern knowledge and technologies.*

The specific objectives are to:

- Increase the availability of appropriate advice and information to all the farmer types in an equitable and cost-effective manner;
- Provide appropriate technologies in sufficient quantities to meet identified farmer needs;
- ensure the quality of advice and information provided to farmers by service providers;
- Enhance the capacity of private sector service providers to meet farmer advice and information needs;
- Develop appropriate farmer-controlled institutional structures and processes for managing the NAADS at all levels.

b. Principles

To achieve the set objectives, NAADS will be guided by the following principles:

- **Empowering the farmers** in agricultural advisory processes and building demand for both research and agricultural advisory services
- Targeting agricultural services to poor farmers who are in the majority
- Mainstreaming gender issues
- Deepening decentralisation to bring control of the services, research and advisory services nearer to the farmers
- Marketing – including stepping-up productivity and specialisation
- **Participatory processes** in planning, contracting, monitoring and evaluation
- Managing natural resource productivity
- Increasing institutional efficiency through contracting out services, better linkages between research, advisors and farmers
- Harmonisation of donor-supported projects with PMA principles

A detailed study of these principles, particularly those aspects closely related to farmers' capacity building, shows that some of the main concerns addressed by NAADS are the weak **farmer organisational capacity** and the inability of existing institutions to act collectively. These shortcomings not only prevent them from having efficient and sustainable access to those resources required to carry out their agricultural activities, but also prevent them from making their voice heard in spheres where decisions that affect their lives are taken.

In addition, given the impact that ***decentralisation*** has on empowering local communities, NAADS is furthering the decentralisation process by devolving more planning, implementing and monitoring of agricultural extension responsibilities from the districts to lower levels of local governments. This would facilitate greater participation of grassroots organisations in NAADS activities and in decision-making processes with their governments. However, even

when these processes are conducted in a decentralised manner, the actual ***participation*** of farmers' organisations is not as effective and successful as is desirable. NAADS acknowledges that a lack of free and fruitful communication between these organisations and development workers is the main constraint to effective participation of grassroots organisations in the different phases of the development process. Therefore, the Programme envisages *"to act as a framework for the development of appropriate participatory approaches for the unique and diverse farmers' conditions that prevail in Uganda"* (MAAIF, 2000a).

c. Components

NAADS has been conceived as a long lasting programme, with a 25-year time frame. Its first phase (out of five) will run for seven years and has an estimated cost of US$ 108 million. During these first seven years, NAADS will be funded by a pool of donors, central and local governments and producer organisations. The World Bank will provide roughly 42% of this funding, through a Specific Investment Loan (SIL) amounting to US$ 45 million. The Programme was officially launched in March 2002 and the first two years have been a trail-blazing stage. Its activities were carried out initially in six districts (12 sub-counties) and have been expanded to 10 more.

NAADS is expected to achieve its objectives through a number of activities that will be part of the following five components:

Advisory and Information Services to Farmers. (US$ 76.4 million). This component will support initiatives by farmers working together in groups with their Sub-county government to contract agricultural advisors to deliver identified priority services. In general, this is the component through which most producer empowerment will be carried out. Support will be provided through the following set of activities:

Orientation and Mobilisation: these activities are meant to enable farmers acquire new attitudes and skills to effectively control the NAADS. Farmers will be provided support to organise themselves to demand agricultural advisory and other services, and to monitor and evaluate their own performance and that of the service providers. Organisation and participation will be carried out through a hierarchy of farmer institutions based on village farmer groups. At Sub-county level, village groups unite to form Farmer Forums that are eventually extended to District and National levels. Forums are new institutional structures that are proposed to interface with government particularly within the decision-making processes in the management of NAADS. A legal framework has been created to enable them operate.

Participatory Planning: The planning processes in the NAADS are intended to be participatory facilitating (mostly with the support of NGOs) group discussions, consensus building, collaborative learning approaches and other participatory methodologies. The primary plans originate from Farmers' Groups and their aggregation is to be undertaken at sub-county, district and national levels.

Contracting Advisory Services: Advisors are contracted at the sub-county level. In the contracting arrangements, the poor and female farmers will be specifically targeted through support for the development of gender sensitive procedures and guidelines for accessing contract services.

Information and Communication: These activities are meant to serve as tools in the marketing process, and specifically to provide market information and identify market opportunities and as a backup to advisory services to increase farmer access to useful data, knowledge and technology. Information and communication needs and the appropriate

strategy to be implemented in this field will be assessed at sub-county, district and national levels.

Technology Development and Linkages with Markets. (US$ 7.0 million). This component is designed to enable farmers to be pro-active in the technology generation and development processes by putting at their disposal funds to contract researchers to work with them in their fields in developing and adapting technologies directly relevant to their specific needs. It supports the multiplication of technologies at sub-county and district levels and promotes the creation of linkages among farmers, advisers and researchers.
Quality Assurance – Regulations and Technical Auditing of Service Providers. (US$ 1.5 million). This component supports the establishment of a regulatory framework for service providers by setting and enforcing standards for qualification and performance.
Private Sector Institutional Development. (US$ 4.8 million). This component assists private service providers to retrain and up-grade their skills and supports training of leaders of farmers' organisations in management and leadership.
Programme Management and Monitoring. (US$ 18.3 million). This component establishes and supports public institutions at both national and local government levels, enabling them to play their statutory roles with respect to the NAADS. This includes monitoring and evaluation of programme activities and establishment of Management Information Systems.

d. Role of farmers in the implementation of NAADS interventions

The proposed mechanism for carrying out all the activities of NAADS is based on the decentralised institutional arrangement that prevails in Uganda. This means that local governments have an important share of responsibility and autonomy in decision-making and resource allocation. The programme is speeding up the transfer of responsibilities for agricultural extension from districts to sub-counties, on the basis of increased coordination of local governments and farmers' organisations.

In this sense, NAADS has designed a scheme through which it promotes farmer participation at the grassroots level through the constitution of farmers' groups. These groups are responsible for Programme implementation at parish and village levels and constitute a forum for identifying members' priorities for advisory services. These priorities, in turn, constitute the basis for the preparation of the NAADS Sub-county Plan (NAADS, 2001a). They must register with local authorities in order to be officially recognised by the programme and therefore to be eligible to participate in the different components. Existing groups are also considered and they must get through the registration procedure as well and comply with the set of requirements defined by NAADS.

The groups are conceived as the building blocks for farmer participation within the Programme and they elect a hierarchy of representative bodies called the farmer forums at sub-county, district and national levels[100]. These forums allow for the participation of government and NAADS representatives and therefore provide the interface between farmers and government institutions for collective decision-making. For instance, at sub-county level, farmer forums decide on planning and contracting of advisory services and are also responsible for the approval of sub-county work plans and budgets. Funds are made available to each sub-county to contract the services they require under the guidelines of the mentioned work plans.

[100] A legal amendment was required to provide official existence to farmer groups and forums and to entitle them to make decisions on resource allocation. According to the Quarterly Progress Report of Jan-Mar 2003, more than 5.500 farmer groups have been identified in the ongoing 15 NAADS districts. 2.412 of them have been registered. (NAADS, 2003).

At district level, the functions of the farmer forums encompass approval of plans and budgets and monitoring and counselling to NAADS on implementation of the programme at this level.

The creation of a national farmer forum has also been envisaged. Such forum will in principle comprise the chairpersons of district farmer forums and two additional farmers from each district, as well as other stakeholders identified by the MAAIF. Its objective will be to participate in the evaluation and monitoring of NAADS, provide guidance on agricultural policy and nominate farmers' representatives on the NAADS board, among others.

The NAADS board of directors is currently composed of 15 members of whom 11 are farmers' representatives. Some of them are also members of the Agricultural Council of Uganda. The remaining 4 members are representatives from public institutions and the academic sphere (Prime Minister's Office, MAAIF, NAADS, Faculty of Agriculture).

The other key stakeholders in the implementation of NAADS are service providers, who under the approach promoted by the PMA, can be individuals or institutions from the private sector and whose main function is to carry out the advisory service demanded by farmers (through their respective forums) and under the guidance of NAADS secretariat, sub-county and district governments. appendix 1 depicts the way NAADS operates and the linkages between the different stakeholders.

4. Methodological Issues

As earlier mentioned, this country case study is part of a comprehensive initiative whose objective is to analyse how the effort of the World Bank to invest in the Empowerment of Rural Producer Organisations has evolved, and particularly, how World Bank-funded projects have enhanced and optimised the participation of these organisations as key development stakeholders. Therefore, country case studies were not conceived to evaluate the ongoing projects financed by the Bank nor to attempt an assessment of the way agricultural services are being provided within the framework of these projects.

The analysis conducted in Uganda was centred on the NAADS programme and particularly on the role that farmers' organisations are playing in its different stages and components. Attention should be drawn to the fact that this programme has been in place for a little more than a year (official launch in March 2002) and its current stage, in some aspects, does not allow for conclusive evaluation.

A wide range of information sources were consulted to complete the report, including:

- World Bank relevant documents (CAS, PADs, Aide Memoires, Completion Reports, Workshop proceedings, etc)
- Documents prepared by the NAADS Secretariat
- Interview of the various stakeholders of NAADS (MAAIF, NAADS and World Bank officials, farmers, leaders of producer organisations, members of NAADS board of directors, Research Centres, Service Providers, NGOs, Women Associations, other donors)
- Literature review of other relevant sources

Interviewing of officers and representatives at national level was carried out in Kampala. Farmer groups and forums at district and sub-county levels as well as NAADS officers and other stakeholders at these levels were contacted during field visits to the districts of Mukono and Iganga.

5. Results and Recommendations

As it was stated at the beginning of this report, this study is not an evaluation of NAADS and therefore it does not pretend to appraise its general structure and its overall performance. It strictly focuses on the analysis of POs from the standpoint of their participation and enhancement within the Programme. Furthermore, the presentation and discussion of these findings does not pretend to question the validity of NAADS as an innovative mechanism to deliver agricultural advice to poor farmers. Instead, it seeks to highlight the main constraints that have been identified and which, in our view, need to be dealt with in order to consolidate the programme and to strengthen its impact and sustainability. The main findings focus on (i) a summary of the main contributions and innovations of this new approach; (ii) a breakdown of the role and real involvement of POs in the different phases of NAADS and (iii) an analysis of the institutional framework implemented by the Programme, particularly in those aspects directly concerning POs.

a) Main innovations provided by NAADS

As discussed above, the government of Uganda has expressed in most of its sector policy documents its intentions to move away from some of its former tasks and transfer greater responsibilities to the civil society. NAADS has succeeded in reflecting and making operational this intentions, by supporting and putting in place a participatory approach where government shares with farmers some of its privileges in the design and implementation of public policies for the development of agricultural and rural sectors. This initiative has even resulted in the adjustment of the legal framework to enable POs decide on resource and budget allocation; which is particularly important, since one of the critical issues when empowering POs is the commitment of governments and public institutions.

In addition, NAADS is contributing to further the ongoing decentralisation process in Uganda by transferring more responsibilities to lower levels of administration. This obviously complements the purpose of enhancing people's participation at local level. Even if some adjustments need to be adopted, there is general consensus that the leading approach used by NAADS will contribute to meet the need of adapting research and extension services to farmers' needs.

An aspect that needs to be underlined is the intention to harmonise NAADS activities and goals with those of other initiatives. For instance, an important effort is being made to well-match the Outreach, Extension and Technology Dissemination component of the current Second Agricultural Research and Training Project ARTPII with NAADS activities (World Bank, 1999a and 2003).

b) Place and Role of producer organisations in NAADS

It is evident that NAADS has set itself the goal to improve advisory delivery based on the need to enhance farmers' capacity to actively participate in the appraisal of their own needs and in deciding on the type of solutions they require from an extension service programme. These objectives are reflected not only in the conceptual approach that led to NAADS development, but also in the organisational scheme – centred on the role played by farmer groups – that has been proposed to achieve the Programme goals. The rationale behind the creation of these groups at all levels as pillars for decision-making and planning is testimony of the will to strengthen farmers' institutions, even if – as it will be discussed later – the way this process has been implemented sometimes raises concerns regarding its sustainability and pertinence.

c) Participation of POs in NAADS formulation

The participatory approach adopted in the preparation of the PEAP and particularly the PMA, provided valuable information on the opinion of farmers and other stakeholders about existing extension services, principally on the following topics: (i) the need for a more pertinent and highly-qualified advisory delivery system; (ii) the importance they attach to extension as a key factor for the improvement of productivity and in-farm income generation and (iii) the low level of farmer involvement in agricultural extension-related decision-making. As a result, these previous consultation processes as well as other workshops focused more on the specific issue of advisory services thus justifying the formulation of NAADS.

However, and despite the participatory spirit that motivated these first initiatives, the perception of stakeholders is quite contrastive. Some argue that most of the events organised to facilitate the consultation (workshops, seminars, etc.) were instead information meetings to explain to producers and other actors the purpose and scope of the Programme, and that in this context, they were not intended to reach the farmers to determine their needs or to discuss more plausible mechanisms for implementing an innovative extension service.

This criticism highlights the usual discrepancy between what policy-makers and/or donors think about **participation** and what communities and other stakeholders actually expect from it. This misperception points to the need to put into place true participatory processes but also sometimes reveals the real willingness of the farmers to engage in this sort of processes. Indicators selected to perform projects evaluation and monitoring very often reflect the poor commitment in this regard: the number of workshops organised, the number of people who attended them, the number of reports submitted among others may show a high level of activity in using consultation tools but does not disclose the real impact of such consultation. It is therefore critical to design indicators that actually reflect the impact of the said participatory process as well as the true involvement of those stakeholders called upon to engage in them.

NAADS will have to pay special attention to this aspect. An effort like this one to bring up a new paradigm in service provision, needs to be built on the trust of all stakeholders. An illusive participatory process will erode NAADS image and eventually jeopardise its ability to implement an innovative mechanism to provide counselling services to farmers.

In addition, several allusions were made to the May 2000 workshop organised in Kampala by the World Bank with the objective of bringing together POs to exchange experiences regarding their access to inputs and their better involvement in Bank-funded projects (World Bank, 2000c). Some PO leaders pointed out that despite the consensus achieved in this meeting about the importance of enhancing PO participation and empowerment through specific and explicit components within World Bank projects, the real involvement they had subsequently in the formulation of NAADS was rather disappointing, and therefore, some of the aspects and elements of the programme are considered unsatisfactory to them.

In short, although most of the stakeholders widely acknowledge the increasingly participatory approach of the World Bank and its attempt to expand its dialogue with civil society, concern has been overtly expressed for improved assessment of farmers' needs by better listening to them.

d) Participation of POs in NAADS implementation

As has been reiterated, the pillars for the implementation of NAADS are the farmer groups (formalised at local level) and the farmer forums built upon them. However, the true capability of these institutions to play a key role in the implementation of the programme (and therefore, a major factor for success) is based on their capacity to effectively organise themselves and

to assume the responsibilities they have been assigned (see description of their functions in section IV.d.). In order to facilitate this process and given the current stage of development of POs at local level, a capacity building mechanism has been designed, founded on the actions of NGOs which are responsible for empowering POs. Obviously, these NGOs must be prepared to be the ultimate performers of this task, by addressing the relevant issues and applying the appropriate methodology to accomplish this process. Another factor of success lies in the willingness and actual capabilities of local governments to engage in the institutional adjustment required to put in place a service delivery system as the one proposed by NAADS[101].

In other words, the responsibility for structuring a whole demand-oriented farmer-driven extension system lies almost entirely (at least at the initial stages) in the hands of external agents (the capacities of NGOs, commitment and capabilities of local governments and NAADS officials, qualification of service providers). Obviously, this situation renders the system vulnerable and hinders its development and further consolidation. However, a plausible way to attenuate this difficulty could be by giving to National POs the responsibility to closely accompany the process and play a leading role in ensuring that group formation is pertinent and the training they receive is suitable.

Those directly responsible for the formulation of NAADS considered that national producer organisations were not strongly rooted at village and district levels and that their capacity to represent poor and less endowed farmers (the target group of NAADS) was therefore quite uncertain. As a result, such organisations were not invited to play a key role in the implementation of the programme. We do not disregard this argument; obviously POs have different levels of organisation, often lack appropriate representative and participatory mechanisms and sometimes have particular agendas that do not necessarily reflect the interest of the poorest. However, during the last decade in Uganda, there has been a new attempt to establish an institutional framework for producer organisations (see section III of this report), namely the Agricultural Council of Uganda, which is the most recent effort to consolidate an umbrella farmers' organisation. For this reason, it seems natural to incorporate these organisations in the implementation of the programme and assign them clear responsibilities as well as demand from them specific contributions in the execution of NAADS. Obviously, the necessary instruments must be put in place to assist them overcome their limitations, in the same way that capacity building for the other actors has been considered[102].

In other words, the limited coordination between federative-type producer organisations and their bases should not be treated as a shortcoming to be discarded but must be fully addressed by NAADS as an opportunity to effectively work on comprehensive empowerment of these organisations. Accordingly, NAADS should encourage both umbrella and national POs to get truly involved in the process of organising local and community- based farmer groups to pave the way for their consolidation as pillars of the system. By so doing, NAADS would support not only the empowerment of local farmer groups, as originally intended, but also the strengthening of POs through the reinforcement of their linkages with their constituencies, which in turn, enhances their legitimacy. This comprehensive effort will eventually contribute to underpin the process of institutional capacity building in the

[101] As stated in the Quarterly Progress Report of January-March 2003, some councillors opposed the idea of transferring budget allocation and contracting decisions to the sub-county farmer forums, and have insisted on giving this power to local councils (NAADS, 2003).

[102] Although the fourth component of NAADS, namely Private Sector Institutional Development, incorporates the support to National Representative Organisations, it does not leave much room for the reinforcement of POs. This component is mostly oriented towards the development of service providers.

agricultural and rural sectors of Uganda, which will, as a consequence, provide an enabling environment for the appropriate realisation of NAADS objectives[103].

Furthermore, the process of identification of priorities within an agricultural extension service should not only be based on the outcomes of local participatory processes. In other words, local consultation and participation is certainly necessary, but not always sufficient for a high-quality decision-making process. In fact, variables such as world trends, national strategic commodity priorities, regional and national land management policies, among others, must be incorporated by local actors in order to make well-informed decisions. And the responsibility for providing this sort of information must not be limited to NAADS officials and NGOs. National and umbrella organisations, which have a broader view of the sector and detailed information on respective commodities, will certainly play an important role in this process. This argument reinforces our conviction about the pertinence of involving national producer organisations more actively.

It could be argued that POs are very well represented in the NAADS' Board of Directors, and therefore, that they have the means to influence general decisions and defend their collective interests. This is partially true, as currently more than 50% of the members of this body come from the farmer's community. However, some PO leaders (members of the board) have expressed scepticism about any real possibility for them to induce changes or influence decisions. It is not within the scope of this analysis to judge the validity of these perceptions, but even if they are not well founded, they reveal a discontent and perhaps a malfunctioning of the decision-making process at national level that NAADS must address with care. If stakeholders perceive their role and responsibilities as merely ornamental, they will eventually lack the necessary sense of ownership required to become promoters and advocates of the new paradigm of advisory service delivery.

e) Organisational structures put in place by NAADS

Under the rationale of a demand-oriented programme based on farmers' capacities to directly generate the extension services they require and which they feel are the most appropriate for their specific conditions, the most obvious critical element to ensure its success is the existence of a community of farmers capable of identifying their needs and priorities and forwarding them to upper levels of decision to institutionalise their demand and generate the offer of the services required.

This means that two conditions are to be met for a programme such as this to be put into practice: (i) farmers need to be actively involved in decision-making regarding the needs for agricultural services, thus contributing to the pertinence of the deliverables and ownership of the system; and (ii) farmers need to be organised to guarantee, through collective action, the legitimacy of their decisions and actions and therefore the setting-up of a sustainable system.

Since these two conditions were not clearly present in Uganda, it was necessary that the programme to be implemented adopt a mechanism to respond to the prevailing institutional weakness. In this regard, the setting up of farmer groups at local level seemed an appropriate solution in the right direction.

In other words, the weak institutional framework of producer organisations that existed (and still does) in Uganda was interpreted by the Programme designers as a valid justification to promote additional forms of organisation in order to achieve the goals established by NAADS.

[103] These findings coincide with the conclusions of a study on the evolution of the institutional framework in the rural sector in Uganda, which argues that restructuring the linkages between farmer groups and existing POs is a precondition for the establishment of a competitive agriculture. (See POUSSE. E. 2002).

A number of remarks may be made with regard to this aspect. Agricultural and rural sectors in least developed countries are characterised by their weak institutional frameworks. Consequently, one of the main goals of both general and sector-based development-oriented actions must be to strengthen institutions. However, for the sake of this goal, policy makers, donors and/or project designers usually come up with institutional arrangements that may be optimal only for the purpose of carrying out the project or, even in the short-run, may appear as good ways of tackling institutional deficiencies, but which actually disturb ongoing processes (though incipient and imperfect) of organisational building and jeopardise more structural medium- and long-run efforts. Capacity building of farmers' organisations is a slow process shaped by social, economic and political conditions. Pushing its development may result in artificial and unsustainable results with poor legitimacy and pertinence (Rondot, P. and Collion, M.H. 2001).

Moreover, the set of incentives put in place to boost the process of institutional building and that can only be accessed by the new organisations (demand-led funds for contracting advisory services, resources for training and capacity building, participation in decision-making, etc.), can eventually increase the risk and vulnerability of the existing organisations and/or initiatives. These incentives must be used in such a way as to promote synergic reactions between new and existing forms of organisations.

A final comment regarding NAADS structure has to do with the expected representative mechanism envisaged through farmer forums. As explained in section IV.d., farmers will scale up their representation from parishes through the creation of forums in the upper sub-county, district and national levels. Although national organisations are in general not deeply rooted at parish levels – as mentioned above - they are more institutionalised and have greater visibility and participation at national level, and therefore, an emerging institution such as the national farmers' forum will certainly be a source of conflict[104]. This situation per se is not negative, since it may provide for checks and balances in existing and new organisations that could eventually reinforce the institutional framework. However, NAADS secretariat must be careful to avoid unnecessary rivalry and rather encourage complementary efforts among them.

f) Other considerations

Integration and overall consistency: A good number of NAADS stakeholders are unanimous that for the Programme to have a high and positive impact, most of the other components of the PMA must be secured and put in place simultaneously[105]. In particular, concerns were expressed on the need to effectively implement the micro-finance component, given that through this mechanism farmers could access the additional funding required to invest in agricultural projects. NAADS must pay particular attention to this, as the successful adoption of efficient technologies is usually impeded by the scarcity of resources. In fact, while visiting a demonstration site where the impact of adopting a new technology was evident in terms of better yields and higher profits, some of the farmers acknowledged that budget constraints for initial investment will prevent them from putting it into practice in their own farms.

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[104] In fact, this same type of procedure has been proposed by other World Bank Agricultural Service Projects in Africa but opposition from POs has forced them to be modified .

[105] In the same vain, a Country Assistance Evaluation performed by the World Bank Operation Evaluation Department - OED - concluded that: *"The Bank's approach to agriculture has been fragmented. Once the spate of market liberalization reforms in agriculture was over, the Bank seems to have lost sight of agriculture's key role in reducing poverty and promoting the regeneration of the private sector. Agricultural modernization requires an integrated approach, focusing on research and technology, extension, marketing, and the commercialisation of cash crop production, but the Bank's interventions in the sector have been fragmented. Moreover, the Bank needs to listen to farmers when assessing farming needs".* See World Bank, 2001c. Uganda: Policy, Participation, People. Country Assistance Evaluation, OED. 220p.

PO empowerment as an overarching objective: With the overall objective of improving its dialogue with development actors, it is evident that the World Bank is increasingly recognising the importance of enhancing the organisational capacities of local communities in general, and POs in particular. Consequently, stakeholders acknowledge today that even if some adjustment and fine-tuning is required to improve this dialogue, decisions made are gradually being tailored to farmers' needs.

However, this objective has often been subordinated to other goals within specific projects; PO empowerment hence becomes part of a complex structure, which results in the actual strengthening of these organisations through a series of sometimes heavy and unsustainable mechanisms.

Given the strategic role that POs play in rural development, their strengthening and support should generate, per se, a single initiative capable of mainstreaming and coordinating individual and isolated projects. This could eventually give greater coherence to the promotion of institutional building and facilitate its linkages with general development initiatives.

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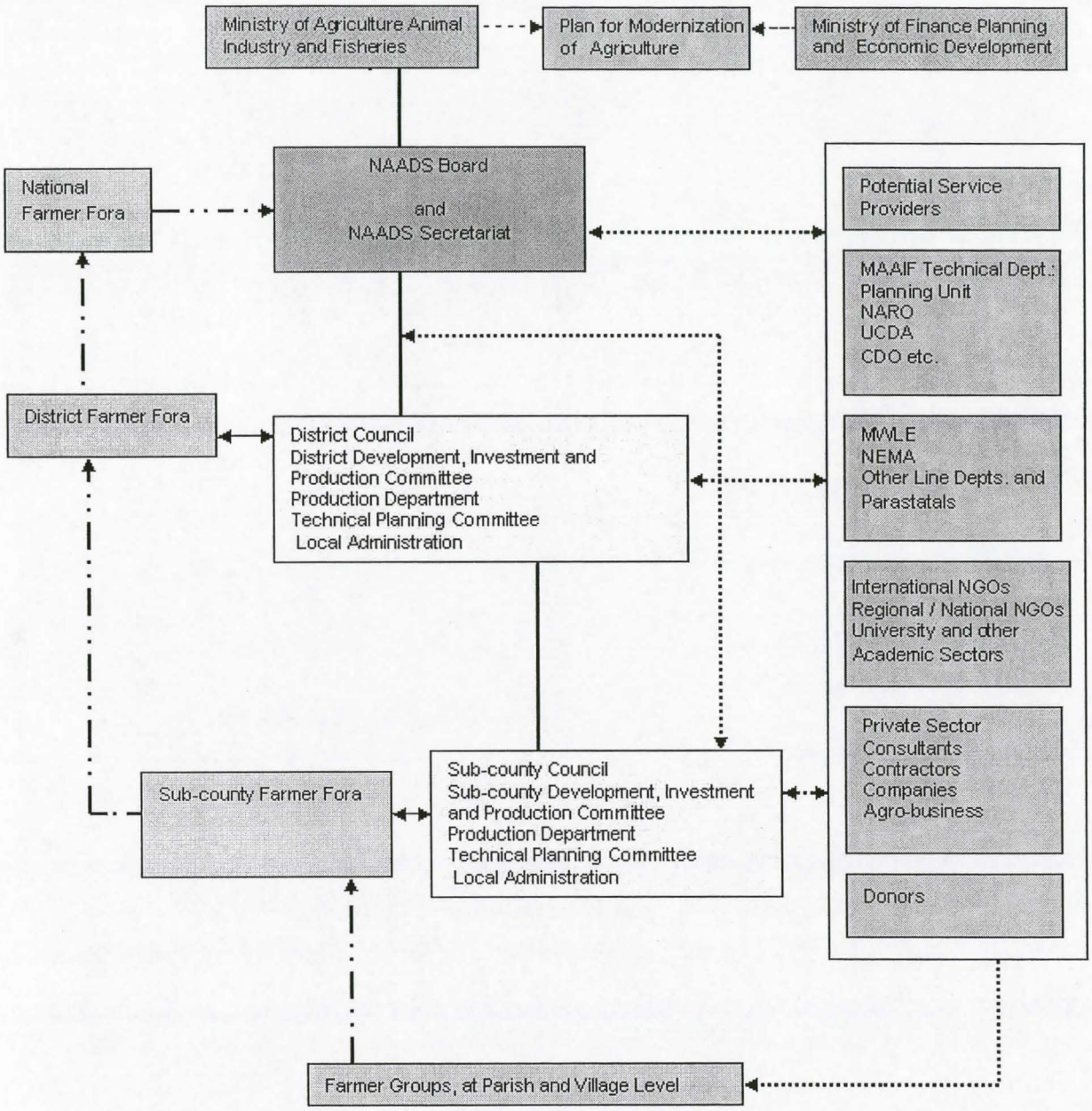
Appendix 1 - National Agricultural Advisory Services Programme – Oganisation Chart



Key

- Indicates members of the Programme Executives
- Lines of authority / accountability for NAADS operations
- Lines of technical communication and service contract facilitation / liaison
- Lines of representation

Source: NAADS web page. www.naads.or.ug

Rural organizations and capacity-building in Bank investments in Agriculture

A portfolio review : 1997- 2002

Pierre Rondot

2003

Rural organizations and capacity-building in Bank investments in Agriculture : A portfolio review[106] - 1997- 2002

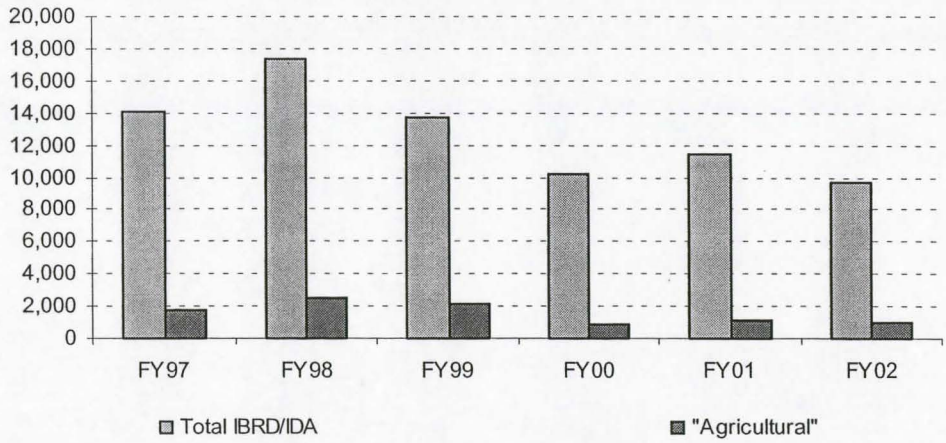
1. The framework of the review

The purpose of the present review is to analyze the investments in support of rural organizations, capacity-building and empowerment under Bank *"agricultural"* projects. "Agricultural[107]" projects, under this review, are those aimed directly at improving agricultural productivity and production, and at raising agricultural or agriculture-related incomes, and were estimated using data in the Bank's Business Warehouse(BW) using the criteria presented in Annex 1. In this context, "agricultural" investments cover a larger group of investment areas than reported as the "Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry Sector" in the Bank's Annual Report. Projects with support to rural organization were identified by the relevant thematic groups as delivering investments through a CDD approach.

The analysis did not include: (i) investments related to agricultural structural adjustments; (ii) investments in rural social infrastructure and services (typically under health and education projects or most of social funds) and; (iii) roads (other than small farm-to-market roads that are typically financed under rural infrastructure projects or agricultural CDD which are included).

For the period 1997-2002, the World Bank "agricultural" commitments, defined as above, is estimated as US$ 9 billion. This represents 12 % of total IBRD/IDA non-adjustment (or "investment" type lending commitment for the same period of $76.3 billion (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Non-adjustment IBRD/IDA Commitments: Total vs "Agricultural"; FY97-02; $ million



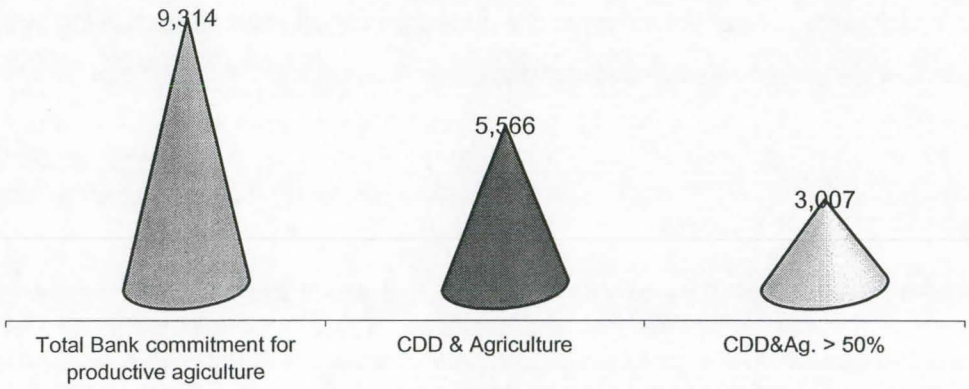
[106] The portfolio review was prepared by Pierre Rondot with inputs from Marie-Hélène Collion, and support from Sanjiva Cooke and Marijn Noordman

[107] Specifically "Agricultural" refers to the following investment areas: Irrigation, drainage; Agricultural services ; Commodity specific projects such as livestock, fisheries, silk and crops; Agricultural marketing or processing and export promotion; Forestry; General agriculture; Rural finance; and, Agriculture institutions and land reform;

Agriculture and CDD approach. During the same period the Bank committed 5,566 millions US $ through 110 projects that have a CDD approach and an agricultural component. Fifty one of these projects, for a total amount of 3,006 millions US $ committed more than 50 % of the Bank loan for agriculture.

Chart 2: Bank commttment to productive agriculture and CDD approach

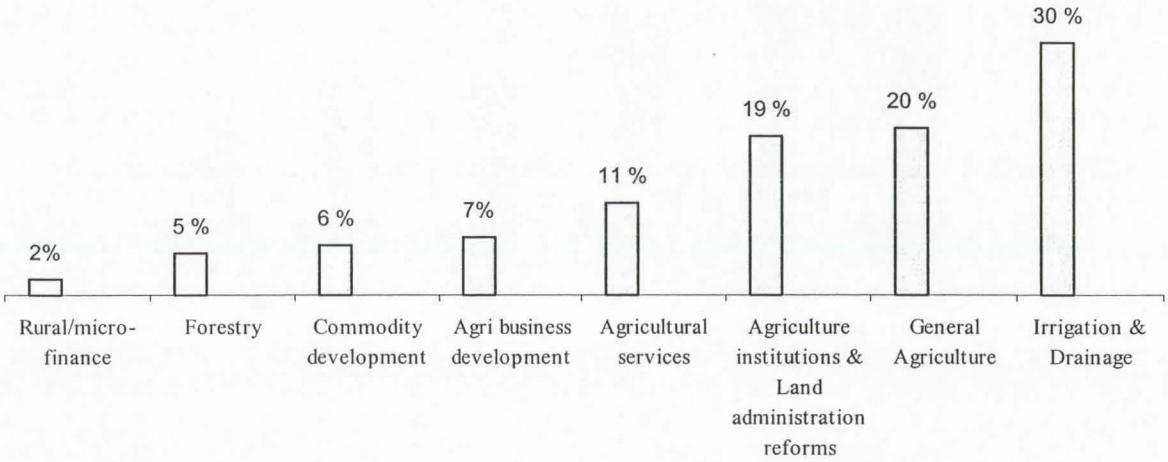
FY97-02 (in million US$)



Repartition of Bank productive investment in agriculture. Irrigation and drainage projects account for the largest share of investments in agriculture (30%), followed by investments in general agriculture (20%), agriculture institutions and land administration/reform (19%), and agricultural services (11%), (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Distribution of non-adjustment IBRD/IDA "agricultural" commitment among investment areas.

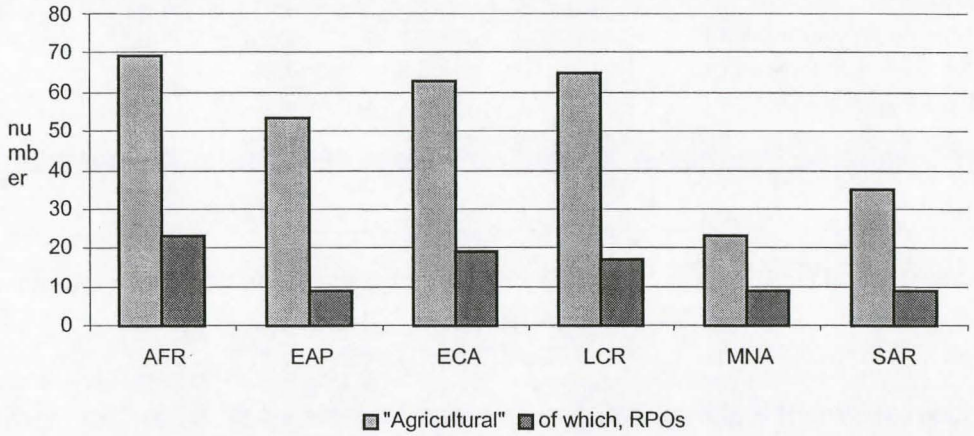
FY 97-03. Estimated percentage of total



Rural producer organization capacity-building in non-adjustment "agricultural" projects

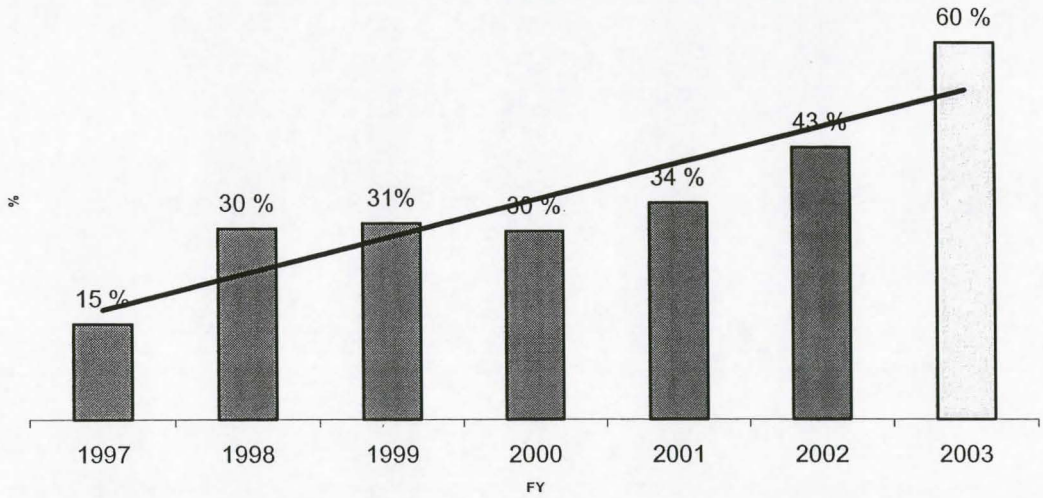
Trends in Projects with RPO capacity-building. The percentage of projects with "agricultural" investment that include RPO capacity-building varies across regions (Chart 4) ranging from 17 percent in EAP to 39 percent in MNA. One-third of the projects in AFR and ECA, with "agricultural" components supported RPO capacity-building versus, while only a quarter of similar projects in SAR and LCR did so.

Chart 4. Number of projects with any "agricultural" investment by region: Approved FY97-02



Although the number of projects with "agricultural" investments are not increasing, it is interesting to note that the percentage of projects that involve RPOs as partners is increasing, from 20 percent in 1997 to more than 40 percent in 2002 (Chart 5). This trend is confirmed with projects that are being presented to the Board in FY 03. It is expected 60 percent of projects with "agricultural" investments include RPO capacity building.

Chart 5: Per cent of non-adjustment projects with "agricultural" investments that support RPOs: FY 97-02, percent



Financial resources allocated to RPOs capacity building. Table 1 below, analyzes the resources allocated to RPO capacity-building for the period 1997-2002 by the type "agricultural" investment area that the RPOs relate to.

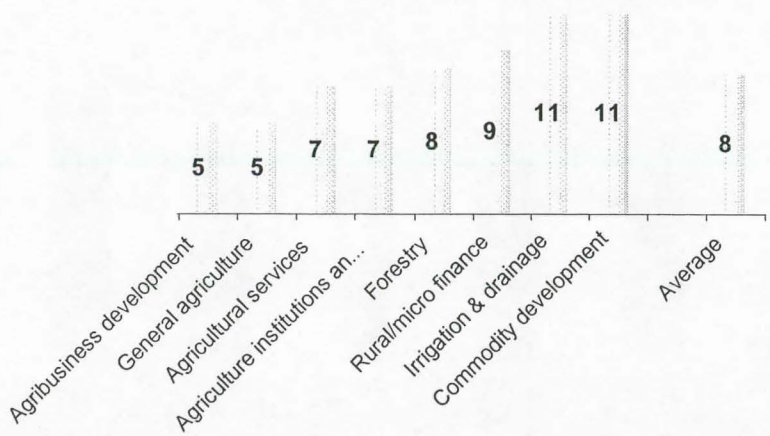
Investment area	*Total $m*	*Of which, RPOs, $m*	*Percent RPO*
Agricultural services	1,022	73	*7*
Irrigation & drainage	2,725	286	*11*
Forestry	501	42	*8*
Commodity development	558	62	*11*
Agribusiness development	681	34	*5*
Rural/micro finance	191	18	*9*
Agriculture institutions and land administration/reform	1,769	125	*7*
General agriculture	1,867	84	*5*
Total	9,314	725	*8*

b. Table 1: Investments in RPO capacity building in non-adjustment "agricultural" projects: FY 97 - 02

Commodity development and irrigation and drainage projects invest by far the most in RPOs capacity-building. This is because under these projects, RPOs have access to resources not only for services, but for productive equipments and infrastructure (on a matching grant basis). The other types of projects do not finance equipment and infrastructure but provide funds for RPOs to access services, which explains why the average amount per project as well as total amounts are much lower.

Graph 6 below shows that support to the capacity building of rural producer organizations is very small if not marginal, some 8 percent of non-adjustment "agricultural" investment.

Graph 6: Percent of non adjustment "agricultural" investment allocated for RPOs capacity building FY 97-02



Twenty six percent of projects mention RPOs capacity building but do not allocate resources for that whereas twelve percent of them have more than 80 % of the total project loan/credit amount channeled through RPOs, thus contributing to their capacity building (Table 2).

Table 2. Projects supporting RPOs, FY97-02: percent of loan/credit amount channeled through RPOs

Percent of loan/credit delivered through RPOs (range)	***Number of Project***	***Percent of total***
0%	23	26
1-20%	35	39
21-40%	7	8
41-60%	5	6
61-80%	8	9
81-100%	11	12
Total	89	100

Concluding remarks

Investing in rural producer organization is a challenge. Task managers and the entity in charge of project preparation and implementation find it difficult to partner with RPOs because these organizations are very diverse in nature, status (cooperatives, associations, commodity groups etc.) and scope. They exist at local, regional and national level with sometime problem of legitimacy and ineffective governance; they cover a wide range of functions: advocacy, economic and social/local development functions.

Channeling resources to or through them poses unusual challenges. Bank TTLs are not used to working with these private sector type non governmental organizations. Farmer leaders have limited time to invest in administrative processes and participate in meetings. When they do, their legitimacy as farmer representatives, is often questioned. Finally, they are independent and very often critical of government support. Through CDD and social funds however, the Bank is increasingly targeting producer organizations to improve local agricultural income and labor opportunities.

Investing in rural producer organizations will likely result in a change in power relationships. Government services have been used to speak in the name of rural producers and make decisions for them. Government services often resist the change as it is perceived as a potential loss of power. They underline the weaknesses of RPOs and the risks attached to supporting them. For task managers it is easier and administratively less risky to keep investing in public institutions.

Taking up the challenge. Rural producer organizations are increasingly being recognized as specific community groups that can contribute to improve agricultural and agriculture-related income, with the capacity to pull the poor in the development process and have them benefit from agricultural growth. 42 % of Bank agricultural projects consider RPOs as legitimate partners, but much less provide resources for building their capacity (approximately 8 % of total funding).

As long as the disproportion between investment in public institutions and rural producer organization remains as wide as it is at the moment, some of the opportunities to promote farmers' capacities to take on their development through their organizations are being lost. Indeed no country in the world has been able to develop its agriculture significantly without

having its producers organized and effective at demanding and mobilizing the services they need to produce and access input-output markets.

However, investing in rural producer organization capacity building is not to be done at the detriment of investing in public institutions that are needed for policy, monitoring and regulatory functions. It must be done at the same time that institutional reforms are being implemented to accompany the shift in power, helping public institutions to redefine their role and functions, investing in change agents, This is a difficult endeavor for which task managers need support and the appropriate incentives and supportive environment.

Annex

Annex 1

b.1 Criteria used to estimate "agricultural" investment areas

c. Agricultural investment area	d. Search Criteria
Irrigation, drainage	Sector code : irrigation and drainage
Agricultural services	Sector code : Agriculture extension and research
Commodity specific projects such as livestock, fisheries, silk and crops	Sector codes: Animal production, OR; Crops
Agribusiness development, including Agricultural marketing or processing and export promotion	Sector codes: Agro-industry, OR; Agriculture markets and trade
Forestry	Sector code: Forestry
General agriculture	Sector code: General agriculture fishing and forestry
Rural/Micro finance	Sector code Micro and SME finance AND Agriculture and Rural sector board (ARSB) responsibility
Agriculture institutions and land reform	Sector code, Central and local government administration AND ARSB responsibility

Annex 2

Methodology and hypothesis

For the purpose of this analysis, we consider as "rural producer organization" any grouping of rural people for the purpose of improving their agricultural production and the marketing and/or processing of their products, thus including upstream and downstream activities, related to agricultural production[108].

Capacity-building can take one of the two following aspects (or both):

(i) Public or private institutions involved in rural/agricultural development recognize RPOs as partners and legitimate interlocutors. RPO capacity building begins when they are involved in policy decision-making processes, project preparation, implementation and monitoring,

(ii) have access to resources to implement activities that will improve their capacity to provide services to their members and/or to dialogue with

[108] Rural producer organizations can deal with a wide range of activities including (a) access to technology, rural finance, input or output markets, (b) management of collective productive assets (such as irrigation, machinery, or forestry), (c) agro-processing, (d) advocacy and (e) sometime by default, management of collective social assets when local government are not in place or effective. RPOs may have various legal status such as cooperatives, associations, large or small economical interest groups or others depending on the legal context.

government and other rural development stakeholders. Projects finance infrastructure, equipment, services and training, sometimes even operating costs on a cost-sharing basis.

The Project Appraisal Documents (1997-2002)[109] were reviewed to identify projects that either: (i) involve RPOs as partners for project preparation and implementation and monitoring, and (ii) have a component, sub-component or provide budget lines allocated to strengthen the capacity of these organizations. In the case of demand driven funds or CDD type projects, any demand driven fund targeted to farmer organization or association has been accounted for as investing in rural organization capacity building.

In the projects reviewed, these activities are elaborated with RPOs using participatory approaches. However, the extent to which RPOs are in the driver seat for the design of these activities varies, depending on the willingness and ability of the entity in charge of project implementation, to transfer these responsibilities to RPOs. In addition, in some projects, such as under many CDD projects, RPOs may manage the funds themselves. In that case, the capacity building process includes preparing, selecting and implementing sub-projects related to improving agricultural or agricultural related activities as much as the outcome of the sub-project itself. In others, RPOs identify their priorities, and the entity in charge of project implementation manages the resources for RPOs' activities, on their behalf. The portfolio analysis includes all these activities as RPO capacity-building, whatever the degree of transfer of responsibilities to RPOs. 89 projects were identified with some mention of support to RPOs, of which 66 projects had identifiable resource allocations worth approximately $725 million.

[109] This period (1997 – 2002) corresponds to that of the collaboration between the World Bank & French Cooperation with contribution from Cirad, on promoting partnership and support to rural producer organizations, which started in 1997.

Annex 3

Specificities by type of projects

1. Forestry

The organizations involved are mainly forestry community groups, herder associations (rangeland management) and community associations created within the framework of project implementation, with the objective to promote sustainable resource management. Support is always channeled through government institutions. They are firmly involved in decision making mechanisms, leaving little to RPOs' decision. Capacity building is mainly for training with few investments.

Box 1. Example of Natural Resource Management Project with Capacity-building

Peru. (1997). Sierra NRM and Poverty Alleviation Project.

The NRM and land use planning activities are designed though participatory planning with rural communities (comunidades campesinas : public interest organizations with a legal status). The project has four components, three of them aimed at capacity-building : (i) participatory planning; (ii) rural investments: soil conservation, small-scale irrigation, reforestation and agroforestry, improved production technology, community seed storages; (iii) institutional strengthening of "comunidades campesinas". The communities receive project funds corresponding to the community plan and carry out the procurement for civil-works

Mauritania. 1997. Rainfed Natural Resource Management Project

The project supports the implementation of community--based natural resource management plans. To this end, the project strengthens the capacity of community associations to improve their planning and organizational and implementation skills. Community investments include land and water conservation investments, small infrastructure and equipment, support to micro-enterprises (cooperatives or small producer groups)

2 RPO capacity-building and agricultural services projects

Rural producer organizations are increasingly recognized as the logical partners of research and extension. Indeed, the idea of a partnership between agricultural services (the supply) and organized producers (the demand) emerged as a realization that past investments in research and extension had lead to disappointing results because: (i) public agricultural services lacked client-orientation; and, (ii) attempting to reform these institutions from within was not effective. Therefore, there was a recognition that to be effective, these institutions required strong partners, i.e. organized farmers that could express a demand for agricultural technologies and information. In addition, it has been increasingly acknowledged that producer access to input-output markets represented a major constraint for technology uptake, and that RPOs could play a significant role to alleviate it.

However, resources earmarked to strengthen RPO capacity remain limited. In a number of projects, RPOs are mentioned: research and extension work with RPOs at the grassroot level, using participatory techniques, to define the extension and research agenda. Projects do not earmark funding for RPO capacity building and vary rarely envisage resources for

RPO capacity building, especially at the national level. When such resources are available, it is through a budget line, within a component, usually managed by the entity in charge of implementing the Project or the extension component, a government institution. There are some exceptions, however, when support to RPOs is carried out through a special training program, or demand driven "*access to services fund*" that allows RPOs to mobilize the service provider of their choice (see Box 2, below). Under some of these demand-driven service funds, RPOs can access resources for collective productive infrastructure, but these cases are few.

Box 2: RPO capacity building under Agricultural Services Projects

Senegal (1999) Agricultural Services and Producer Organizations
This project has four components : research, advisory services, support to Ministry services, and support to Rural Producer Organizations. The latter component is implemented through an NGO that has been created by the 19 Federations of Senegalese RPOs for the purpose of providing support to their grass root RPOs. There is a project agreement between the Bank and the RPO-created NGO and a memorandum of understanding between the GOS and the NGO, for the transfer of project funds to the NGO to implement the RPO component on behalf of the Government. RPOs have access to funds at the grass root level (rural commune level) and the regional level based upon a sub-project proposal for capacity-strengthening related to organizational, management or communication skills, or technical skill related to agricultural production, marketing or processing. At each level (local, regional) a committee, made up of RPO representatives decides on fund allocations on the basis of RPO proposals, i.e a proposal from a grass root RPO is reviewed by a RPO-committee at the level of the rural commune to which the RPO belongs, etc. A proposal from a regional RPO is reviewed by a RPO-committee at the regional level, made up of regional level RPO representatives. At national level, support to RPOs national forum includes: (a) support to operational cost of a technical unit, (b) strategic training of RPOs leaders and (c) a communication program. Facilitating NGOs are providing initial support to these farmers committees, regarding the reviewing procedures and criteria. Once a proposal is approved, a contract is signed between the RPO and the NGO managing the component; funds are then released in the RPO account. The RPO can select a service provider from a list of accredited service providers. A random sample of sub-projects are systematically audited for technical and financial performances.

***Burkina Faso (1997) Agricultural Services Support Project**. The project has similar features as the above, except that the Ministry of Agriculture Directorate in charge of Cooperatives manages the fund for the RPO component because there was no umbrella RPO federation at the time of project design and GOB reluctance to have a non government entity managing public funds. In addition to services as in the Senegal Project, RPO can propose investments in productive infrastructure (such development of small watersheds)*

3 RPO Capacity-building and Irrigation

Irrigation and drainage projects began to invest in Water User Associations(WUAs) as early as the beginning of 1990's to reduce government financial burden with regard to the maintenance of irrigation infrastructure. The development of irrigation schemes was transferred partially to the WUAs, particularly the tertiary canals. Indeed, WAUs have demonstrated their effectiveness over government services to improve the management of irrigation systems and reduce the cost of water per ha. Therefore almost half of the irrigation and water-management projects are investing in WUA capacity-building (training, equipment and investment in infrastructure through WUA on a cost-sharing basis). However, in spite of

the potential, the amount of financial resources allocated for WUAs capacity building remains limited: it is less than 5 % of project investments made in irrigation, drainage and watershed management.

Box 3. Cases of WUA capacity building in irrigation and water management projects

Turkey. (1998) Participatory privatization of Irrigation Management.

The project supports 750 Water User Organizations (WUO, 160 of them are created by the project. The major objective is to transfer management responsibilities for maintenance and some investments to WUOs, hence the need for strengthening their capacity (technical and managerial, including accounting). To this end, consultants in community-organization and capacity building have been hired as part of the project teams.

Schemes for subsurface and surface drains and for irrigation development are selected based on WUOs demand and commitment to pay a major share of investment costs (70%). WUOs have complete responsibility for maintaining and operating the equipment and pilot schemes.

Peru. (1997) Irrigation sub sector project

One out of five components is dedicated for WUOs strengthening (6 millions, 4% of project costs). Training program includes: planning, management and distribution of water resources; maintenance of infrastructure and equipment; sustainable profitable agriculture, including environmental conservation; cost recovery and water charges; financial management ; construction and contract management.

4 *RPO capacity-building and land administration/reform*

There are very few land reform projects, but half of them are investing in producer organization capacity building as they are crucial actors for successful implementation of these projects.

Box 4. Case of RPO capacity-building under Land reform projects

Philippines. 1997. Agrarian Reform Community Development Project

The objective of the Project is to strengthen farmer organizations in Agrarian Reform Communities to plan and undertake development activities. There are three components that correspond to this objective: (i) Community development and technical support; (ii) community-based rural infrastructure as part of community development plan; (iii) agriculture and enterprise development.

Project activities are implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Local Government Unit and the National Irrigation Administration on behalf of the Agrarian Reform Communities and farmer organizations

5 *RPO capacity building under Agricultural CDD*

Community-driven development projects emerged out of the dissatisfaction with centrally, public service managed projects in a context where reaching the poorest has become a World Bank priority: they are rather ineffective at reaching the poorest, a large share of the funds remain in the capital city or is captured for public services operating costs. Above all the approach no longer corresponds to the evolution of the political and socio-economic context, characterized by the emergence of strong civil society, democratization and decentralization.

The earliest CDD-type projects were social funds, investing in local community capacity building through demand driven funding mechanisms, managed by local government, public or private institutions or project management units, with a variable degree of responsibility transferred to local community representatives. The decision making mechanisms vary, from local communities being entirely responsible, from identification, selection and implementation of sub-projects, to local community being asked to propose or influence decision making processes. Historically, CDD-type projects have invested almost exclusively in social infrastructures. They are now shifting toward investing in agriculture and in agriculture-related collective and productive investments or services, as requested by farmers groups or associations. However, the majority of CDD types projects or social funds continues to fund mostly public or social infrastructure or services. CDD are often linked to the objective of poverty alleviation in difficult or marginal areas.

Box 5. Capacity-building under agricultural CDD projects

Brazil. 1997. Northeast Rural Poverty alleviation.

The focus is on municipalities where poverty is most severe. The project stresses local self-help and community empowerment.

Project objectives are as follows: (i) Provide basic social and economic infrastructure, employment and income-generating activities for the poor; (ii) decentralize resource allocation and decision-making through supporting municipal councils and beneficiary associations (legally constituted civil associations in order to receive public funds) in investment planning and implementation; (iii) provide safety nets; (iv) leverage resources mobilized at community or municipal levels.

The project provides matching grants to finance small-scale sub-projects that can be: infrastructure (local road improvements, bridges electrification, water supply); (ii) social and productive investments (small scale agro processing, communal agricultural equipment, minor irrigation schemes)

Approving responsibility: the State Project Coordination Unit (9% of project funds); (ii) the municipal councils composed of representatives of civil society and communities (80% of the representation), municipal authorities and publicly-elected representatives (67% of project funds). The rest of the budget is allocated to the municipalities who make the decision. This represents an increased gradient of decentralization responsibilities.

The institutional development component (5% of project funds) finances technical assistance and training for each group to acquire the capabilities needed to carry out its responsibilities. Technical assistance for community associations is contracted at the municipal level by municipalities. Information campaigns are included under the institutional development component.

Community associations implement the sub-projects and manage the funds.

Colombia. 2002. Second Magdalena Medio Regional Development Project.(***)

Beneficiaries are community organizations and municipal governments to target the poor in the rural and urban areas. The project intends to promote an increased influence of citizens in local and regional development planning and decision making.

Three out of four components address capacity-building : Strengthening of local and regional institutions: support to municipal governments, develop the capacity of nucleos to influence policies etc...(advocacy functions); (ii) Productive subprojects: small holder agriculture, small agro-industrial projects; small town businesses, linking them to economic activities in rural areas; (iii) Social subprojects in vulnerable communities (basic education, primary health care, food security) The part (ii) of the latter is what we called "agricultural CDD".

6 Market led-investments.

Under this title are regrouped two types of projects: (i) rural micro-finance that support the creation of self-help groups that may become savings and loans associations; (ii) agricultural export promotion projects that tend to support associations of exporters or supply commodity chain associations;

7 Specific commodity projects These projects tend to promote the development of a specific commodity or sub-sector, such as livestock. Though not from the same period, the best example of a livestock program that supported RPO capacity-building is the Operation Flood in India that supported the development of 70,000 small dairy cooperatives.

Box 6. Dairy Cooperatives. Operation Flood in India

Beginning in 1974, and following with two national dairy projects in the late 1980s, the World Bank lent over $500 million to develop the milk industry through co-operatives comprising district unions combined into state federations. Projects focused on capacity building to strengthen co-operative structures, training, and activities and infrastructure related to production and marketing. The objective was to promote viable co-operative businesses owned and managed by producers for collecting and marketing milk products as a means of expanding rural incomes and improving dairy productivity.

The national federation comprises 70,000 village milk co-operatives with some nine million members, sixty per cent of whom are landless, small or marginal farmers. The federation and its members produce some 13 million litters of milk daily, creating an annual additional income for each family of $90. Per capita milk consumption has almost doubled and the milk-cooperative business has created an estimated 250,000 off-farm jobs, most in rural areas.

Investment has been heavy. Some observers are concerned about co-operatives being over protected and monopolistic, but performance is impressive, due to: (a) committed membership and farmer-control at the local level, (b) sound management, (c) influential and charismatic leader, (d) strong accounting systems, (e) effective and profitable services provided to members.

***Source**: India, Second National Dairy Project, ICR #16218 and "Operation flood the cooperatives role" a presentation by Wilfred Candler, Consultant to OED, on Bank Animal Resources web site.*