

**COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN ESFIM PHASE 2
(2010 AND 2011)**



**Final Report
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**Jean-Francois Le Coq
(Agrinatura - CIRAD - UMR ART-Dev)**

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1. The context

In Costa Rica, the focal NFO for ESFIM program is the Peasant Women Coordination (*Coordinadora Mujeres Campesinas* - CMC). This organization was conformed in 1995 as a committee of the National Peasant Platform (Mesa Nacional Campesina – MNC). Then, it was officially created as an autonomous association in 1999. This organization aims at supporting economic and social women initiatives in rural area. The CMC actually affiliates 42 active women's organizations in all the countries, representing around 700 women involved in productive projects. Nowadays, the CMC counts with 2 permanent employees (appointed as part-time). The activities of the CMC are distributed into three areas: 1) the support to organizative processes of their affiliates, 2) the support to productive and commercialization projects of their affiliates (through trainings, credit revolving funds exposition and fairs to promote affiliates' products,...), and 1) policy lobbying.

The Agrinatura partner in Costa Rica is the CIRAD, through a permanent researcher posted in Costa Rica in the National University of Costa Rica (UNA). This researcher has been involved in the support to platform of national producers' organization since 2007 in Costa Rica.

Regarding policy context, Costa Rica is characterized by a good democratic functioning of its institution, the power of the State and public institutions are still important, even if it has been reducing during the last 20 years. By the way, CMC, and more generally speaking small and medium producers' organization representatives are immerge in a somehow complex and difficult policy context to defend their interest since the 90s when Costa Rica adopted a liberal policies orientation. Since then, the orientation of the country regarding agriculture has been oriented toward the promotion of agro-export agriculture. Small scale agriculture has received residual support from agricultural institutions that experimented a dramatic reduction in term of civil servant and budget. Moreover, since the 90s, the Costa Rica realized an economic transition, with the development of service sector, and the reduction of the agricultural sector share of GDP to less than 10 %. Hence, Costa Rica agricultural sector is characterized by the coexistence of on one hand, highly intensive – generally large - farms, oriented to export, and small and medium family farms that experiments difficulties in accessing resources for investment and to access to markets in good conditions.

In term of the representation of interest of small and medium farmers, there has been an atomization of the small farmers' movement since the 90s, with the creation of diverse organizations, with different leaders, orientations and strategy. The quality and intensity of the dialogue between these organizations and the government has been very fluctuating during the last decade according to the orientation of the government. Nevertheless, small and medium farmers' position has been poorly taken into account during this last decade, although different mechanism of dialog has been developed by these representative organizations and by the ministry of agriculture.

2. The development challenge and the research agenda

2.1. Development challenge and research agenda construction process

The development challenge for the small and medium farmers to access market have been identified though different activities. First, a reflection on the small and medium farmer's problems was initiated in 2005 during a national congress with more than 50 representatives of farmers' organizations of all the country. Then, in 2007-2008, a platform of national farmers' organizations (NFOs) was

consolidated in the framework of BNPP – RUTA project. Based on this process, the identification of development challenges and research agenda to cope with small farmers issue to access market was further undergone during the first ESFIM phase, in 2009, and especially during the workshop that took place the 24-25 of March 2009. During this workshop, in which have participated representatives of different national organization and regional organizations of the country, the issue and the obstacle of small Farmers integration to market was defined, and 3 areas of action were identified (CMC, 2009): 1) organizational strengthening; 2) Negotiation capacity, 3) policy incidence.

In 2010, based on the results of this workshop and taking into account the current policy process, a reflection was conducted within the platform of NFOs. This NFOs platform is an open platform of farmers' organization of the countries. During the process of ESFIM, the more current members of the NFOs platform are representatives of national organizations such as CMC, ANAMAR (*Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Agro-industrial Rurales*), MNC (*Mesa Nacional Campesina*), JNFA (*Junta Nacional de Feria*), UPA National (*Union de Pequenos y Medianos productores agricolas*), Corfoga (*corporacion ganadera*), and grassroots organizations such as AFAR (*Asociación de Familias Agricultoras Ramonenses*), or ACOAGRO (*Asociacion Cotobrusena de agricultura*)¹. In October 2010, two first studies themes were identified as a consensus between the NFOs platform participants: 1) an assessment of information on market in Costa Rica, and 2) an assessment of small farmers' limits and constraints to access international markets. This two first research were launched in early 2010.

In the perspective of the second step of the ESFIM phase II (2011-2012), an actualization of the research thematic was realized in August – October 2011 period to take into account the evolution of the local necessity and the policy process. In particular, 4 elements were included: from grassroots' interactions a necessity to address the SENASA law was raising in the different regions, leading to the necessity of a study on the implementation of this new law in rural area, following the demand of local organization of the south region a reflection to reactivate regional market reflection was included, the importance of farmers fair (*Feria del agricultor*) as a canal for small farmers access to market, and the debate around JNFA management program, led to include a research on the farmer fair, and finally the opportunity to develop a lobbying process on food sovereignty jointly with national assembly depute, led to the election of a 4th theme of studies to support proposal creation on food sovereignty law process. The process of choice of thematic was discussed in the NFO platform meeting. The choices were transparent and consensual among the participants. The main criterions were the interest of grass root organization and the policy process opportunity.

Nevertheless discussion with coordinator took place, since the first proposal of activities for this second step of ESFIM phase II was more oriented to facilitate workshop of broadcasting information than real research activities. By the way, discussion has been conducted between CMC coordination and Agrinatura representatives (WUR, CIRAD) to adjust the plan and term of references of the activities in order to strengthen their research nature.

The main difficulties in the process of definition of thematic and research agenda was 1) the difficulty to reduce the number of possible research activities, as the reflection of NFO lead to identify a large

¹ It worth notice that the active representative of national organization participating in the NFO platforms are also representatives of grassroots organizations of the different region of the countries (the northern region with representative of CMC, South region with representative of MNC, Guanacaste region with the representative of Corfoga, Central valley region with representative of Anamar and Jnfa),....

number of obstacle and theme for policy process, 2) to adopt a research agenda more than a diffusion – mobilization agenda

2.2. Structure and mechanisms during the process

During all the process of ESFIM phase II, the structure of the NFOs platform to monitor the process has been maintained. Regular meeting of the NFOs platform (with the frequency of once per month more or less during the 2010-2012 period) was done in order to share information on the current theme of policy process, monitor the advance of the works scheduled (studies, workshops), prepare the workshops, define and revise the plan of activities,...

The composition and participation of the NFOs platform was somehow stable during the whole process. If some organization and leaders had participated in punctual way according to their agenda and the specific theme, we can highlight the permanence and consolidation of involvement of some participants (6 members of national and local organizations),

2.3. Research assignment, their development and method

A total of 6 research evidence was identified during the process of ESFIM phase II (Table 1).

During the first step (2009-2010), two first assignments were more define in line with obstacle identified in the workshop of ESFIM Phase I:

- the Studies of the Market information in Costa Rica , was raised as the information was not very accessible to farmers and knowledge was not clear for NFOs platforms
- the assessment of Barrier of small farmers to access international market,

For the second step 2010-2012, 4 new assignments were defined, more in line with the evolution of policy agenda and identification of local demand:

- Operational assessment of the SENASA law in Costa Rica, was defined as a priority as it was affecting a large sector of small farmers (cattle raising in all the country), there was evidence of a unclear understanding of this new law by the farmers, and difficulty of implementation and small farmers compliance to this new regulation
- Study of the condition of establishment and strengthening of the regional markets (case of south market), was defined as a demand for the potential for the development of the southern region in particular, following the demand of NFOs platform representative
- Impact of the law of the Farmers' Fair (FF), is an important issue for the importance of FF as canal for farmers access to market (results of first study on information on market), and the policy windows of discussion around the five-year planning of the national board of the farmers' fair, as well as the demand of local actors (Heredia regional committee)
- Food sovereignty is considered as a possible flag theme for the different small and medium farmers organizations, an opportunity of alliance with national assemble depute led to address this theme.

The research studies were mainly assigned to CMC technician, (thus internally implemented) and consulting group or individual (Table 2). At the beginning of the process, the first two research assignments were given to CMC technicians, in order to strengthen the structure and capacity of CMC on these topics that were transversal. For the second set of assignments, the assignment has been enlarged to consulting groups or individual. For the revision of sovereignty law, due to activities load

and policy context, no researcher assignment has been done especially, but until now, the reflection is conducted in a collegial way in the NFOs platform.

This option to enlarge to non CMC technician was due to the evidence of over duty of the CMC technician that led to some delay in the two first assignments. Moreover, the specificity of the theme in the case of the Senasa law studies justified the use of an individual consultant. Finally, the assignment to CEDAR, a consulting groups of senior consultant was done following to the demand of local organization and was justified by the already involvement and accumulated knowledge of this consulting group on the topic.

Table 1: Assignment and methodology of research studies of ESFIM phase II

#	Studies title	assignment and responsible	Methodology
1	Studies of the Market information in Costa Rica	Shirlene Chaves Carballo (CMC)	Desk review + qualitative interviews
2	Assessment of the barriers of small farmers to access international market	Shirlene Chaves Carballo and Vilma Herrera Chavarria (CMC)	Desk review + qualitative interviews
3	Operational assessment of the SENASA law in Costa Rica	Adriana Flores Gonzales (young individual consultant)	Desk review + qualitative interview + 3 regional workshop (diffusion – discussion)
4	Study of the condition of establishment and strengthening of the regional markets (case of south market)	CEDAR (consulting group of senior consultant)	Desk review + 1 regional workshop
5	Impact of the law of the Farmers' Fair	Shirlene Chaves Carballo (CMC)	Desk review + direct interviews (200 farmers, + consumers, traders neighbors)
6	Study on the food sovereignty legislation	no assignment (made at platform level)	Desk review , NFOs meetings and Forum participation

Source: author

It worth notice, that 1) the NFOs platform were reluctant to appoint academic professor, or student from academy (also Costa Rica is counting with 4 university), that they consider too far from their preoccupation, 2) the concentration of the assignment on the personal of CMC led to over duty and delays, 3) the opening to some external consultant (especially senior consultant) led to tension and difficulties.

The role of NFO (here CMC) was central in the research process, as their CMC employees were directly and fully in charge of 3 studies over 6 studies. For the other one (especially Senasa law), they was strongly involved in the preparation of the regional workshop.

The role of the Agrinatura was important in the design and definition of the research studies (especially tending to refine the research question and the research dimension). But the role in the

methodological design and implementation was limited to punctual interaction with the CMC employee and consultant during the NFOs Platform meeting and the restitutions of research advance.

In term of methods, all the studies were mainly based on desk review and some direct qualitative interviews. For all the studies, and especially, for Senasa law analysis, a participatory process was developed to collect or discuss information of the studies.

2.4. Quality and outputs of the studies

The quality and outputs of the studies were globally satisfactory but is unequal (Table 2).

Table 2: Quality and output of the research studies of ESFIM phase II

#	Studies titles	quality	output
1	Studies of the Market information in Costa Rica	good revision process good final report	creation of a synthesis of information that are very scattered but poor outputs regarding farmers learning process or policy incidence process
2	Assessment of the barriers of small farmers to access international market	good revision process good final report	no output in term of farmers learning process and policy incidence
3	Operational assessment of the SENASA law in Costa Rica	good revision of the material and didactical product large process of consultation, and very good participation of farmers in regions good final report	very good generation of information for farmers learning process (creation of a room for consultation between farmer's and civil servants) lack of valorization for policy process
4	Study of the condition of establishment and strengthening of the regional markets (case of south market)	poor technical analysis (very general) good participation to workshop (due to implication of NFOs representative) Very poor final report	poor learning process (very large information) good output in regarding policy process with the reactivation of a local platform to address market
5	Impact of the law of the Farmers' Fair	Intensive data collecting innovative methods – easy to replicate In process	creation of innovative, easy to replicate method facilitating farmers, manager learning potential for inflection
6	Study on the food sovereignty legislation	In process	strong potential of policy process incidence

Source: author

The studies on market information (#1) and barriers for export (#2) were both of good quality creating a transversal synthesis and understand on two topics on which information is very scattered. In both case, they are potential for learning for farmers, which have been more or less valorized to date².

The study on the SENASA law (#3) provides a good, original insight of the perception of famers on the law and the difficulties they encountered. The process of data collection was linked with a process of diffusion of information. The analyses of the results are good.

The study on regional market (#4) has been very poor, the consultant have limited their analysis to a very general motivation speech presented during a specific workshop held in the region. The added value for learning process or policy process has been very limited. However, the main output is the reactivation of a local platform to promote the creation of a market place, which is mainly due to the previous work of one of the member of the NFOs platform and responsible of a grass root organization in the southern region³.

The two other studies (#5 and 6) were finalized lately in August-September 2012. The analysis of national farmers' fair has been creating new information and easy to replicate methodology to assess situation of one Fair, the fair of San Isidro, thus leading to a good learning potential for organization involved in Fair management. A final meeting was organized to present these results with a large participation from the local fair management organization and the national fair management representatives. The studies on the law of sovereignty is more a reflection, we cannot conclude on the quality but its helps some of the member of the national platform to get a better understanding of the scope of law around food sovereignty issue and to participate actively in lobbying activities at national level to put on the political agenda the food sovereignty issue.

3. Research to advocacy and outcome

3.1. Proposals from research studies

During the process, there has been no evidence to formulate formal feasible evidence based propositions for change of a specific policies and institutional arrangement in a specific form. However, the different study enables to identify some possible changes in policy or institutional environment but it has not yet been systematized.

3.2. National Platform and method of advocacy

A national platform of NFOs existed before the implementation of the collaborative research phase and was consolidated with the present ESFIM phase (see here over). The ESFIM phase II enables to strengthen initiative of lobbying of the platforms.

² Results were actually shared within the platform of national organizations, and during a specific restitution workshop in March 2012 (see annex 1).

³ The results of this studies have raised interest from national depute to reform the SENASA Law, (see annex 3). The process of information and consultation initiated with the ESFIM project has been finally follow up by the interprofesional body on animal husbandry (Corfoga) that is planning to implement information workshop following the demand of producers generated by workshop organized by ESFIM program.

During the ESFIM phase II, different methods of advocacy were used by the NFOs Platform. The main form of advocacy was the realization of forum in the national assembly to promote the theme of food sovereignty (2 forums were done in October 2011 and May 2012 – see annex 1). The other method was the participation to events organized by some members (see annex 1).

It is worth to notice the limited use of media, policy brief and formal note during the process. This could have been further developed in the last phase of the project. However, due to time constraints it has not been feasible. However, a plan of valorization of the different research has been defined during the last ESFIM meeting of the farmers' organizations platform representative in august 2008 (see annex 3). This plan of valorization will be done according to last available human and financial resources of the CMC and platform.

During this process of advocacy, the different representative of the board of CMC was active according to their availabilities, in relation with the technical unit of CMC. It should be notice that as the process of ESFIM was managed within the NFO platform, the advocacy process was also supported by representative NFOs and in particular of ANAMAR and MNC in different local and international arena. Grassroots organization were also involved through participation of national NFO platform.

3.3. Constraining and driving factors

During the ESFIM phase II, and especially the 2nd step, the main constraining factors for the lobby activities was the limitation of the option in the national assembly with the concentration of the debate on the reform on the tax law (*plan fiscal*) (as well as the instability of the leading coalitions in the national assembly). The program was able to adapt to this constraining factor by rescheduling activities in the first semester of 2012. However, it has led to postpone the study on the food sovereignty legislation.

In term of constraining factor, we can mention the limit of available time of the Technical Unit of CMC. As the TU of CMC is 2 person in part time, was in charge of all CMC activities, and the monitoring of ESFIM activities, and the direct implementation of the research studies, there has been many over charge of their schedule, that led to some delay in research activities, and limited interaction with local Agrinatura researcher, and the use of research results in advocacy process.

Another constraining factor is the low interest of the administration to the activities proposed by the CMC during the project. For example, the participation of institutions civil servants during the workshops was minimum although the effort of convocation made by CMC.

Two main driving factors can be identified in the process. First, the willing of a depute from a fraction to develop the theme of food sovereignty in the national assembly was an important driving factors since it has created an opportunity for advocacy lobbying for NFO platform. It enables to realize the 2 main advocacy events, the two food sovereignty forum in the national assembly. Secondly, the support and mobilization from representatives of other organizations within the NFOs platform has been an important driving factor for the process of ESFIM and the advocacy process for the CMC. It helps CMC to handle the process. However, we can regret that some representatives that have more skill and strength in lobbying process were sometimes poorly participating to the NFOs platform.

3.3. Policy and institutional Advocacy outcomes

During the phase (6 month), we cannot define a specific policy or institutional change outcomes from the project since change in policy are multi-factorial. Nevertheless, we can mention different changes for which the existence of ESFIM phase II have help NFOs platform to influence.

Firstly, the ESFIM phase II has contributed to reinforce dialogue between Farmers' Organization and in particular to develop the importance and visibility of the Food sovereignty theme within the farmer's organizations. Indeed, this theme has been rising dramatically during the last month of ESFIM implementation (see annex 2) thanks to an important process of mobilization (large producers' demonstration) and an alliance with national deputy in the national assembly. This mobilization contributes to influence directly the policy since the project of law has been changed. Moreover, this mobilization led to the creation of a new specific platform, the farmer Platform for Agro-Food (*Mesa Agro-alimentaria*), where organizations of the platform supported by ESFIM are playing an important role thanks to their early positioning on the theme one year earlier (13 October 2011) with the organization of an event in the national assembly in the framework of ESFIM program. This specific platform appears as a good opportunity for ESFIM activities follow up, with alliances with some powerful organization that were not very present during the execution of the ESFIM program.

Secondly, at local level and regarding the regional market issue, the ESFIM phase II enables to create a platform of key local actors to reactivate the project of the regional market. Indeed, following the workshop organized in the southern region by ESFIM program a committee of implementation of the regional market (*Comision ejecutadora del mercado regional*) with the vice-minister of agriculture as president was created. Some financial resources were granted by the development fund of the south (Judesur) to further develop the feasibility studies process of the regional market. This commission has been working rapidly and regular meeting are scheduled to lead and monitor the process, through this platform, important actors such as the agro food market integration program (PIMA) was included.

The other outcomes have been obtained with this phase. The project enables to the CMC to reactivate the policy advocacy activities that they had dropped in 2006 following organizational crisis. It also helps CMC and their members affiliate to promote commercial activities though the fairs organized around the forum and the workshop. ESFIM enables to strengthen the existing NFOs platform giving it more contents and mean, contributing to the reactivate and strengthen the dialogue between small farmer's representative NFOs that have experimented during the last 20 years a process of segmentation, division and atomization. Finally, it helps to visualize the importance of the national board of fair (*Junta nacional de ferias*) as an important actors for small farmers markets access issue.

The main limits for the influence though the project is the time and mean constraints. The process of policy advocacy are long run activities, and the results can not been seen in one year delay in the context of the elected theme. The other limits is conceptual, the policy decision not only depends on the studies and technical evidence of better solution, but depends on many social factors, such as the policy interactions network of policy actors, the representatively of the farmers groups, abilities, that were not really address in the project design. I should be interesting to develop a real method to analyze the policy process, analyzing stakeholders and interest groups, arena and forum in each country according to the topic. This kind of policy science analysis could be a great support to complement the understanding of farmers' representatives on the policy process of their country.

During the project, the development of direct links, participation and interest from policy makers and leading representative of administration and institutions (MAG, CNP, and PIMA) has been still very limited⁴.

⁴ It worth to notice that in the last phase and the follow up phase of the program, some links has been established, in particular with MAG authority and PIMA in the initiative of the regional market in the south, with the deputy of the national assembly in the initiative of the food sovereignty campaign, and with the civil servants of different institution (MAG) and donors (FAO) within the initiative around the national year of the familiar agriculture 2014.

4. The partnership

4.1. Nature of the relationship between partners

The nature of the relationship between the Agrinatura team and the NFO was very good. A horizontal relation of mutual trust and respect has been build though regular meeting since 2007 and the different events that were organized over time.

Between the Agrinatura and the national research partners and consultants, there have been 3 different situations: the case of the studies carry out by the personal of the CMC, the case of the studies carry out by a consultant associated with CMC, the case of Cedar. In the case of the personal of CMC, the relation was of confidence. Nevertheless, the lack of available time of the CMC employees led to limit the interaction on the methodology and the follow up by Agrinatura researcher.

In the case of the personal associated to CMC, the relation was of confidence, as the theme was not the specialty of the Agrinatura research (veterinary law), the relationship were limited to some orientation, with confidence. In the case of the consultant group appointed for regional market studies, the situation was more complicated. This group of senior consultant was involved in the south, and the theme of the regional market, and was proposed by a famer's representative of the platform. Nevertheless, even this group could have had the capacity; it was difficult to get a real accurate work from them. It has created tension with the Agrinatura and the leading NFO.

4.2. Change and learning during the process

During the process, the Agrinatura team learned the difficulties to manage a research program in a collaborative way. Since objective of the NFO leader and NFOs platform was more oriented toward information diffusion process toward grassroots organization than implementation of research for advocacy. At NFOs level, the difficulties to manage different tensions between research and advocacy objective, and concrete demand arising from their grassroots organization member of more pragmatic support.

Till date, there has been no clear evidence that the partners learned to enquire collectively in a new ways, or generate insights. Anyway, some collective actions were generated such as the organization of the two forums in the national assembly with the large participation of grassroots organization, or the participation of CMC to international project on food sovereignty.

4.3. Development of new partnership

There was not involvement of other partners in a specific way in the ESFIM activities. Nevertheless, all the activities were design with more or less support and participation of national or local institutions. Moreover, through the NFOs representative of the NFOs platform, there has been cross participation to other program such as Cedeco project on sustainable agriculture, or the participation of family farm agriculture annual year promotion (link with the rural world forum) and ultimately with other actors such as FAO and Fida. Finally, the ESFIM contributed also to the positioning of CMC on the food sovereignty theme, and the creation of new alliance, such as the one with national assembly deputy and the Swedish cooperation that supporting the food sovereignty campaign

respectively politically and financially, or the one with CDC from Salvador, with which CMC is actually contributing to a European call response at Centro American level about a project of capacity strengthening in food and nutritional sovereignty.

5. Lessons learnt

5.1. Lessons learnt on contextual factors

In late 2010, the NFO platform decided to orient activities toward advocacy for food sovereignty has been focused due to an opportunity windows in the national assembly, with the initiative of a depute to add in the nation constitution the right to food sovereignty and to develop a law of food security. Nevertheless, in 2011, the national assembly agenda and the recomposition were strong and the theme was delayed⁵.

The mobilization of the research to advocacy has been limited by the time constraints. The reports of the research were delivered lately (between May and august 2012). , Thus their use in advocacy process has not been really possible during the process. The process of using and adapting the research material to policy advocacy process is time consuming and it's necessary to plan it carefully. Moreover, it worth notice that advocacy process can be managed without the development of specific technical material, for example the important results in term of advocacy output in the southern region were not obtain with a high quality research inputs but with the mobilization of the important actors thanks to the mobilization of the social capital of one the farmers' representative of the platform.

5. 2.Suggestion of systemic or other issues to be addressed for strengthening NFO-led research to advocacy processes

To strengthen NFO-led research to advocacy process, there is different issue to be addressed. First, the interest of the NFO to conduct research and advocacy should be more carefully analyzed. In the case of CMC, even if there is an interest on market issue, there was any advocacy experience on this theme. Thus, a program of public policy analysis and advocacy training course should be necessary to develop. Second, an analysis of the actors system around policy decision should be developed in the project (linked with the process of capacity building mentioned here over). Thirdly, the availability of the NFO to participate to the program should be more clearly defined.

5.3. Institutional changes as the results of the experience

As the results of the experience, it is difficult to evidence precise institutional changes at NFOs, AGRINATURA or national researchers' level, since the program process is immersed in many activities of the different actors.

It's worth to notice that policy process and policy incidence are long term process that are affected by many variables and conditions, in which technical studies are only one component, that is most of the time not the key factors for new policy changes. A policy process analysis of some specific changes may be interesting to compare with a monitoring and evaluation approach of advocacy support program such as ESFIM program.

⁵ It took place finally since July 2012, at the end of the project (see annex 2).

5.4. Main challenges to the future

The main challenges for the future of research based evidence to policy in the context of Costa Rica, depends on the main objective of the future program. If the main objective is to get better research and advocacy results, the challenge is the development of stronger NFOs platform that support the initiative, this platform may involved the corporation, or the cooperative movement, that have more advocacy power, and more technical resources to define solution⁶. If the objective is the strengthening of capacity, the main challenge is to strengthen the existing platform in advocacy and research aspects. This challenge seems difficult since it's not the main priority of the NFOs. More over a change in the vision of the academic researcher should be developed; there is mainly reluctance from the NFO and platform to contract consultants and national academic researchers.

To face theses challenges, the NFO need to develop a critical analysis to address whether they may continue or not to participate in such program according to the main objective of the organization and also to balance its contribution and resource allocation in term of employee.

Additional lessons learned and reflexion for replication in other country contexts.

One key is the creation of trust in the NFO platform. But the other key is the selection of the member of the platform (regarding genuine motivation and objective, capacity and experience) and the theme to be developed⁷.

The choice of the execution of investigation by the NFO technician should be carefully analyzed since it may lead to over duty and delay. Moreover, it doesn't contribute to create information that may be considered by other actors as neutral.

The issue of farmers' access to markets led to many topics; there should be a careful attention to avoid a dilution of the energy in many thematic. There may be more effective to focus human and economic resources on a smaller set of policy theme.

6. Summary – key messages

The ESFIM phase II process of collaborative research has been an interesting process that enables to consolidate the existing NFOs Platform and the advocacy capacity of CMC. If it has not enables drastic policy changes, it contributes to strengthen the policy agenda setting of food sovereignty theme, and some positive incremental changes in FOs networks. Nevertheless, the impact is still limited du to time and means constraints, some policy agenda contextual elements as well as a certain dispersion of the research and advocacy processes. The direct link between research outputs and advocacy process and outputs are difficult to construct and to evidence. Although a good dialogue condition between the different partners of the project (researchers, NFOs), the mobilization of

⁶ During the latest phase of the project and its follow up to date, this problem seems to have been partially solved with the creation of the national Agro-Food Platform (*Mesa Agro-Alimentaria*). Nevertheless, as the experience is very recent, we may be caution on the sustainability of this platform.

⁷ An important human factor is also to be considered. Organization platform success not only depends on organization interest but also human relationship between their representatives. Hence, the actual members of the platform have developed since the beginning of the functioning of the platform a level of cross confidence that enable to overcome the conflict and difference of view in a mutual respect atmosphere, which is one of the key for a sustainable functioning.

research by NFOs is still a difficult issue since they still have difficulty to grasp the added value of research for their current practices of advocacy process that still relying mainly on human mobilization more than pure technical evidences.

7. Project management (not for inclusion on the open report)

The internal management of the project was clear and effective. The guideline issued by the coordination of the project was clear. However, the project has been lacking of cross workshops and information between research sites. Although there has been many effort through internet, there has been few (almost any) information flows across participating countries (at NFOs and researcher level) in the management of the project. Moreover, there has been somehow limited direct interaction between Agrinatura consortium team members to really create a project team spirit that could have facilitated the network functioning.

Annex 1: Timeline of key moments

Date	Events
25-26 march 2009	National workshop of ESFIM (Edificio cooperativo, San Jose)
5 August 2010	Acceptation of the II phase of ESFIM project (First stage Fund reception of ESFIM phase 2)
7 October 2010	NFOs platform meeting : Planning of activities of ESFIM phase II (<u>step 1 : October 2010 to June 2011</u>) ➔ Identification of 2 first studies : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessment of market information in Costa Rica, - assessment of limits and constraints to small farmers to access international market
14 and 28 February 2011	NFOs Platforms meetings to discuss the term of reference of the two research studies (consultancy of Shirlene Chaves) and actualization of thematic
11 march 2011	Participation discussion between CMC and NFOs platform representatives with local government (municipalidades) in Bribri ➔ idea of the integration of the work on the SENASA law
14 march 2011 5 and 26 April 2011 3 may 2011	NFOs platforms meeting to monitor the advance of the consultancy (studies), exchange of information on policy process (<i>Ley bienes y inmuebles, reforma Ley fiscal</i>) and to prepare the Workshop of the first restitution of the research studies
10 may 2011	National Workshop of ESFIM (Afob, San Jose) Presentation and discussion of results of studies on market information and information on reform of fiscal law
24 mayo 2011	NFOs platform meeting : evaluation of the national workshop
11 June 2011	NFOs platform meeting : monitoring of studies, and meeting with the assistant of depute Jorge Gamboa on the agenda on food sovereignty
August 2011	Meeting of NFOs representatives with the technical officer of the depute Jorge Gamboa in order to set in the policy agenda the topic of food sovereignty ➔ decision of supporting the realization of a forum in the national assembly to promote the topic of food sovereignty in the policy agenda and the farmers organization agenda
September 2011	Technical Meeting with technical officers of the depute Jorge Gamboa to prepare the national forum in the national assembly
27 September 2011	NFOs platform meeting: Planning of activities of ESFIM phase II (<u>step 2 : July 2011 to July 2012</u>)
30 September 2011	Discussion with the ESFIM General Coordinator (Giel Ton) signaling problems in the proposed planning of activities for the second step of ESFIM phase II
13 October 2011	Forum on the food sovereignty during the Celebration of the Day of the Women (día de la mujer) in the National Assembly and fair of presentation of women organizations products
26 October 2011	FOs representative meeting on the exoneration of tax for equipment, inputs and agricultural tools (with the initiative of the MAG agency and the confederation of agricultural Center (CAC) of Heredia : presentation of a decree proposal to facilitate tax exoneration

29 October 2011	New version of the operational plan for ESFIM phase II (step 2)
09 November 2011	NFO platform meeting : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revision of the planning proposal for ESFIM phase II (step 2) - revision and negotiation of the consultancy of the Cedar on regional market assessment (south region) ➔ final adjustment of planning of ESFIM phase 2 (step 2)
mid November 2011	CMC Discussion with the ESFIM general Coordinator (Giel Ton) ➔ acceptance of the revised version of planning proposal of ESFIM phase II (step 2)
November 2011	Participation of NFOs platforms representative to a workshop in the agronomist college (in Moravia) (organized by UPA national and municipalities authorities): lobbying for the approval of the law proposal on bienes y inmuebles
22 November 2011	Reception de funds phase 2 of the ESFIM II
3 and 29 February 2012	NFOs platforms meetings: coordination of the field activities (workshops on SENASA law, and regional market)
February 2012	<i>concentration of the national assemble on the tax planning reform</i> ➔ <i>stand by of lobbying activities regarding food sovereignty in the national assembly</i>
07 and 16 February 2012	Regional Workshops on SENASA Law respectively in San Ramon (centre of Costa Rica) and Los Chiles (northern region of Costa Rica)
March 2012	Evaluation of ESFIM process by CoopeSoliDar (individual direct interviews to members of the NFOs platform and a workshop)
8-9 march 2012	Workshops in the South region : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on Regional market perspective (8th of March in Rio Claro), - on Senasa (the 9th of mach in Coto Brus)
14 march 2012	<i>Approbation of the tax planning in the national assembly</i> ➔ <i>reactivation of initiative on food sovereignty</i>
29 march 2012	National Workshop (los Cibeles Hotel, Heredia): Presentation of the research studies
03 de mayo de 2012	NFO platform meeting : monitoring and coordination of activities
15 mayo de 2012	Forum during the Celebration of the Day of the farmers (“dia del agricultor(as)”) in the national assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presentation of the solicitation of referendum to change de constitution integrating Food Sovereignty in the National Assembly - presentation of the initiative on a food sovereignty law
may 2012	Field Visit with Olga van der Valk (WUR)
June 2012	informal meeting between platform members and the national assemblee deputy Miguel Gamboa and their assessors ➔ <i>reactivation of initiative on food sovereignty</i>
25 July 2012	Workshop of presentation of the research results on Farmer Fair (in the Cibeles Hotel – Heredia)
31 July 2012	participation of the national organization to a large mobilization for the demonstration in San Jose to change the law project on <i>bienes y inmuebles</i> ➔ Reception of farmers’ representative in the national assembly and

	creation of the farmers Agri-Food platform (<i>Mesa Agro-Alimentaria</i>) involving ESFIM National Organizations platform and other national organizations (UPA, UNAG, JNFA, CAC,...)
24 august 2012	final meeting of the national platform of organization to evaluate the ESFIM process ➔ official end of the ESFIM project
follow up agenda	
9 November 2012	Creation of the “National Committee for the International Year of Family Agriculture 2014” with active participation of the member of ESFIM organizations platform, and links with the “intersectorial family agriculture committee” regrouping main national and regional institutions.
13 November 2012	Workshop of the farmers Agri-Food Platform (Mesa Agro-Alimentaria) with the support of Swedish cooperation to develop a lobbying campaign for food sovereignty
22 November 2012	Workshop of official presentation and launch of the food sovereignty campaign (150 participants)
....	

NB: - **bold** character = key events realized with the support of ESFIM program according to NFOs platform representatives,

- *Italic* character: external events that have influenced the evolution of the program (obstacles)

Annex 2: Key documents of the ESFIM phase II

Project documents (planning, monitoring and evaluation documents)

CoopeSoliDar (2012) Implementación de una Línea de Base y Monitoreo de Evaluación de las Actividades de ESFIM. Report ESFIM, San José, Costa Rica, 28 p.

CMC (2009) Taller Nacional Costa Rica “Memoria del Evento”, San Jose , Costa Rica

CMC (2011) Informe II Fase ESFIM Costa Rica y Taller Nacional “Incidencia para el acceso al Mercado” del 01 de noviembre al 30 de agosto de 2011, San José, Costa Rica, 17 p.

CMC (2012) Empoderamiento de los Pequeños Agricultores en los Mercados”. Taller Nacional Costa Rica. “II Etapa”. Octubre a Diciembre 2010. San Jose, Costa Rica,

Le Coq J.F. (2010) Narrative report ESFIM Costa Rica, San Jose, Costa Rica, December 2010, 1 p.

Le Coq J.F. (2011) Report of ESFIM activities in Costa Rica (December 2010 – May 2011), San Jose, Costa Rica, May 2011, 6 p.

Workshop and forum reports

Le Coq J.F. (2012) Informe del Foro Mujeres Campesinas y Soberanía Alimentaria del Jueves 13 de Octubre de 2011. ESFIM CIRAD CMC AGRINATURA, San Jose, Costa Rica. 11 p.

CEDAR (2012) informe final del taller “situacion y perspectivas del mercado regional del Sur “, San Jose , Costa Rica.

Platform meeting reports

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 10 de febrero de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica, 2 p.

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 28 de febrero de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 14 de marzo de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 05 de abril de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 26 de abril de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

Taller CMC PoryE (2011) Taller ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 24 de mayo de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 11 de junio de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 27 de septiembre de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2011) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 09 de noviembre de 2011. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2012) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 3 febrero de 2012. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2012) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 29 de febrero de 2012. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2012) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 03 de mayo de 2012. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

PoryE (2012) Reunión de Plataforma de Organizaciones Rurales y Empresariales del 24 de agosto de 2012. Tema ESFIM II Fase. San Jose, Costa Rica

Training material

Cedar (2012). Mercado regional del Sur, presentacion el 8 de marzo de 2012 en el taller de Rio Claro, Golfito, Costa rica (pwp)

Calvo B (2012) programa de reastrabilidad presentacion el 9 de marzo en cotobrus, Senasa, (pwp)

Van der Lucht Leal A. (2012) ley Servicio Nacional de Salud Animal, Senasa (pwp)

Research products

Chaves Carballo S. (2011) Información de Mercados en Costa Rica. Mayo 2011, ESFIM CMC, San Jose, Costa Rica, 54 p.

Chaves Carballo S, Herrera Chavarría V. (2012) Acceso de los pequeños productores a los mercados internacionales, marzo 2012 ESFIM, CMC, San Jose, Costa Rica, 17 p.

Flores Gonzalez A. (2012) Diagnostico operativo del impacto de la ley senasa en el medio rural costarricense. San jose, Costa Rica

Chaves Carballo S. (2011) analysis de la feria del agricultor de San Isidro. july 2011, ESFIM CMC, San Jose, Costa Rica,.

Annex 3: Valorization agenda of ESFIM studies (beyond ESFIM)

#	Studies titles	Specific Products for advocacy and follow up
1	Studies of the Market information in Costa Rica	A short article with key information for the farmers regarding: 1) the decree on <i>desabastecimiento clausula</i> , 2) the decree on <i>contigencia</i> . This article will be broadcast through mass media (Radio Santa Clara) or Information brief of the agricultural ministry (<i>bolletin informacion del MAG</i>) to producers ⁸ .
2	Assessment of the barriers of small farmers to access international market	A short article of 1 page to be propose to mass media and brief for producers
3	Operational assessment of the SENASA law in Costa Rica	An policy brief (2 pages) to introduce a reform to the SENASA law in the national assembly (there is a demand for this product from a deputy assessor and an important national cooperative national) A short technical report (3 -4 pages) presenting the methodology, the main results (how is perceived the law, what are the obstacle that are facing the producers to compel with the law, what are the main problems, and the main proposal that can be derived from the study. This report could be used to inform Corfoga and the ministry of agriculture that is developing new activities ⁹ .
4	Study of the condition of establishment and strengthening of the regional markets (case of south market)	A short article to monitor the process of follow- up of the workshop and the results of the commission of implementation of regional market (<i>Comision ejecutadora del mercado regional</i>)
5	Impact of the law of the Farmers' Fair	Diffusion of the report to authority of the market and the JNFA and discussion with them of the sounded diffusion material for advocacy especially regarding the internal debate on the modernization of the Farmers Fairs in Costa Rica.
6	Study on the food sovereignty legislation	Short article to the representative of the platform (and Agro-Food Platform) and to broadcast during the food sovereignty campaign.

Source: National organization platform (August 2012).

⁸ The idea of broadcasting information on price by SMS (as the Uruguayan system) was also planned but is already developed by CENADA.

⁹ Corfoga wants to implement information and debate workshops replicating the ESFIM workshop on the SENASA Law. The Ministry of Agriculture is actually formulating a plan for sustainable herding, implementing a national census of herding, and reactivating the system of prevention of brucellosis and other disease.