



Coraf Initiative

Strengthening research-extension-
farmers' organisation linkages
in West and Central Africa

Overview paper

June 1999

A study prepared for CORAF, the UK Department for International Development, and
the French Ministère de la Coopération



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Team members:

Pierre-Marie Bosc, Cirad-Tera (France)
Christian Bourdel, Cirad-Tera (France)
Michel Dulcire, Cirad-Tera (France)
Jeannot Engola Oyep, Minrest (Cameroun)
Karim Hussein, Itad Ltd (pour Odi) (Grande Bretagne)
Nicole Sibelet, Cirad-Tera (France)
Jean Zoundi, Inera, Coraf (Burkina Faso)

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Executive summary

This report presents the overview and recommendations for ways forward drawn from a study conducted in five West and Central African countries, which resulted in the production of five country reports: Burkina Faso, Guinea, Cameroon, Ghana and The Gambia. This study was carried out within the framework of the CORAF Initiative, supported by French Cooperation, the UK Department for International development and the European Union. A sixth study was carried out by a local consultant in Nigeria using the same analytical framework, funded separately by UK DFID.

1. Core theme, definitions and objectives

This study examines the role of agricultural research in technology generation and dissemination processes and, more specifically, the role that farmers' organisations and other civil society actors play in these.

The main objective of the study is to highlight the technical, economic and institutional conditions that influence the development of collaborative linkages between research systems, farmers and farmers' organisations.

The study draws on concrete case studies of linkages between agricultural research and farmers' organisations or farmers' groups so as to identify factors which have influenced this collaboration and then to assess the results.

The term "linkages" here includes diverse forms of collaboration between research systems and farmers and, particularly, farmers' organisations in relation with other civil society organisations (NGO's, religious organisations etc.).

The farmers' organisations considered here are founded on the principle of free membership, they develop technical and economic activities to benefit their members and maintain relations with partners operating in their economic and institutional environment.

2. The cases studied

The first point to be made relates to the notion of a farmers' organisation and its real manifestation at the local level. The case studies provided by local partners include farmers' organisations in certain cases, but in others the focus is on more or less formalised groups of farmers resulting from external interventions.

The strong disparities observed between the different countries and within each country result, on the one hand, from the prevailing social, political and institutional conditions in a country, but

also from specific regional, economic and historical conditions...which create contexts that are more or less favourable to the emergence of farmers' organisations.

Generally speaking, the degree to which farmers' groups are formally structured conditions the nature of relationships they establish with research: direct or semi-direct in the case of the farmers' federations in Burkina Faso, and those in the process of being constructed (Cameroon) or of gaining autonomy (forest Guinea); indirect and very indirect, when the organisations are weakly constructed, poorly developed or without linkages (contact groups in Ghana and The Gambia).

Whatever the degree of structure, in the majority of cases farmers' organisations have not acquired sufficient autonomy to take on board the financing of research activities. A development project or an NGO usually plays this financing role.

3. Factors that favour the development of linkages between research, extension, farmers' organisations and farmers

The field studies led to the identification of a number of general factors linked to the environment, research and local actors, which are likely to promote the construction of partnerships.

The cases studied are situated within processes of structural adjustment and economic liberalisation which are disrupting social organisation. The retreat of the State and the withdrawal of public or parastatal structures (particularly in the sectors upstream and downstream of production chains) leave behind an economic "space" that needs to be filled. Farmers' organisations attempt to invest in and fill this space.

The desire States and other development partners to involve farmers' organisations is more obvious when supported by a legislative framework and a favourable overall political and economic context.

The scientific and technical potential of agricultural research constitutes a clear asset in this context. It is appropriate, therefore, to adapt and develop it so that it can respond better to requests for it to support development initiatives. In view of this, the current process of regionalisation of national agricultural research institutions is bringing researchers closer to real situations on the ground. However, while in certain contexts this leads to the establishment of linkages (e.g. forest Guinea), this reconciliation generally appears not to function if it is not accompanied by a specific initiative of research and if it is not linked to a framework for local-level dialogue.

The more frequent participation of farmers' representatives in research decision making bodies is a key marker demonstrating the advances made in establishing linkages. Nonetheless, its impact depends on the degree to which farmers are represented and on the role of the intermediary, as defined by research institutions for farmers' organisations.

Besides this, the achievement of true collaborative linkages depends on national research institutes integrating support to development into their scientific planning processes and implementing a policy of incentives which are sufficient to lead to researchers working closely with farmers' organisations. It is also necessary that farmers' organisations acquire greater intellectual, operational and financial autonomy.

4. Obstacles to the development of linkages

Linkages between agricultural research and farmers' organisations are influenced by the external environment, but also by the ways in which the latter function.

The dependence of farmers' organisations on the projects which brought them to life, which often have strategies that compete with the former, can impede possibilities for collective action and the development of federations of farmers' groups.

The strong disjunction that exists, at least in the early stages of linkages, between the farmer priorities, which generally tend to be of an economic nature, and research's conventional field of intervention, which tends to be more focused on the technical constraints to production, makes it difficult to establish dialogue as this is based on differing expectations and capacities.

Generally, the weakness of systemic approaches and the absence of a truly participatory approach limit the capacity of agricultural research to formulate speedy and relevant responses to farmer requests/needs that are also adapted to suit the general conditions within which agricultural production takes place and to farmer priorities.

In addition, the financial and institutional instability within which agricultural research institutes are located, as well as, in certain contexts, their isolation at the national and sub-regional levels, weaken their ability to mobilise themselves and capitalise on existing knowledge.

Issues relating to the representativity and legitimacy of coordination bodies, usually developed on the basis of external funding, inhibit them from playing their role fully, and limit the interest of the different actors concerned in participating in them.

The limited capacity of farmers' groups and some larger associations seems to be an obstacle to the development of more structured linkages with research.

5. Lessons

Among the various lessons that have been drawn from the case studies, the overall study highlights the following key points.

Aspects of the political, economic and institutional environment determine the ability of agricultural research and farmers' organisations to form partnerships, and the abilities of farmers' organisations to develop linkages with other actors.

Organisations take time to be built and they require the mobilisation of resources that support skills development at the various levels of organisational development.

Collaboration between research and farmers' organisations depends on a minimum number of conditions: research policies oriented towards development needs; means by which research can capitalise and learn from on experience; strengthening of sub-regional collaborative networks.

Building linkages between research and farmers' organisations implies a reciprocal recognition and a clear division of responsibilities.

6. Recommendations: actions required in order to promote improved linkages between research, farmers' organisations and extension in CORAF member countries

The recommendations proposed to CORAF and its member NARS aim to strengthen the processes of technology generation in which farmers' organisations, civil society organisations and NARS are engaged. These ways forward prioritise the following actions:

- support the emergence and the strengthening of farmers' organisations, with a particular emphasis on supporting the development of their technical and economic objectives;
- assist extension services and research organisations to take into account the requests, or "demand", of farmers' organisations;
- assist farmers' organisations and civil society actors in formulating requests to research and in participating in research processes, especially through the creation of catalytic funds that can be used on the demand of farmers' organisations;
- strengthen the capacities of the three actors to work together.

7. Ways forward

Based on the lessons drawn from this study, the research team suggests the following ways forward for CORAF and its members:

- establishment, in a certain CORAF member countries, of a joint NARS / farmers' organisation process, using two types of approach – one starting with farmers' organisations, the other working through research institutions;
- strengthen the emergence of CORAF network expertise on issues related to the development of research-extension-farmers' organisation linkages;
- disseminate the results of this study in CORAF member countries.

Preface

This document presents the overview of the research conducted as part of the CORAF Initiative on the theme of strengthening linkages between research, extension and farmers' organisations in West and Central Africa.

This overview was discussed at the Dakar workshop in January 1999 and enriched as a result of comments received: the country case studies and a draft of this report were presented there to CORAF officials, farmers' organisation and extension service representatives, and donor representatives.

This report has been translated from the original French version written by the team.



1. Introduction

This document sets out the summary overview and proposed ways forward resulting from a study carried out in five countries in West and Central Africa which led five country reports: Burkina Faso, Guinea, Cameroon, Ghana and The Gambia. This study was carried out within the framework of the CORAF initiative supported by Coopération Française, the UK Department for International Development and the European Union. The team comprised African researchers from Burkina Faso and Cameroon, respectively Jean Zoundi of INERA (also representing CORAF), and J. Engola Oyep from MINREST, UK researchers including Karim Hussein from ITAD, UK (with inputs from UK researchers from ODI: Charlotte Boyd, David Brown and John Farrington), and CIRAD researchers including Marie-Rose Mercoiret, Nicole Sibelet, Christian Bourdel, Michel Dulcire and Pierre-Marie Bosc.

A study was also carried out using the same analytical framework in Nigeria, financed separately by UK DFID. However, this overview does not refer to the Nigeria study because the document was not available when the team established the detailed structure and content of this document.

2. Central theme, definitions, objectives and analytical framework

2.1. Central theme, definitions and objectives of the study

This study deals with the role of agricultural research in technology generation and dissemination processes and, more particularly, the role which producers and civil society organisations play in these. Our concern has been to privilege the analysis of organised producers, while not excluding a number of other initiatives.

For producers, the aim of collaboration is to improve access to technical and economic information, and improve access to technical assistance and services that correspond to their strategies. From the standpoint of research, collaboration is important as it involves an opportunity to redefine methods for taking into account farmer needs, expressed collectively by farmers organisations, so that it can accompany the dynamics of technology generation processes and cease to be an external actor that prescribes "sound recommendations".

This contribution to the debate focuses on the methods and conditions for establishing linkages between agricultural research and farmers, whether well-organised or not, in the countries of

West and Central Africa that belong to the Conférence des Responsables de Recherche Agricole en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. The term "linkages" covers various types of collaboration between research systems and producers, and in particular farmers' organisations and other civil society organisations (NGO, Religious Organisations, etc.).

Linkages between agricultural research and farmers' organisations are therefore examined within the wider analytical framework of technology generating processes. The conditions within which producers and their organisations access technical information and means of production are also analysed. The role of farmers' organisations in providing support and advice to producers is also considered. These linkages do not constitute an end, but a joint means that producer organisations can call upon, if necessary, to improve their members' access to the components of technology generation processes (means of production, technical advice, etc.).

Farmers, their organisations and agricultural research are the central actors in the processes of collaboration. It is essential that they interact fully with other actors, playing an equally important role in the dynamics of the technology generation process. The other actors involved include traders (in marketing or supply of inputs), private or public extension services, projects, NGO's, donors, etc.

First, let us define what we mean by farmers' organisation and research system.

Farmers' organisations are here considered to be based on free membership. They develop technical and economic activities for their members and maintain linkages with partners operating in their economic and institutional environment.

We have also included in this study groups that are structured to a greater or lesser degree, those formed on the initiative of external operators (research, development projects or extension services) often in specific areas and with externally-defined objectives. These forms of collaboration have been included as they are often considered to play a role of representing the interests of farmers vis-à-vis research.

In the same way, we have integrated in this study collective organisations inherited from social history, even if they do not correspond to the definition of "organisation" presented above, particularly insofar as they are not based on free membership. The capacity of this type of organisation to establish partnership linkages with other actors within rural development is limited. However, such organisations inherited from social history can play a determining role in establishing other forms of organisation based on different principles.

The research system considered refers predominantly to national agricultural research institutions that were directly asked by the team to propose case studies through CORAF. However, depending on the context, the concept of "research system" permits the inclusion of other research institutes like Universities or International Research Centres when they are involved in research processes in collaboration with national institutions and farmers' organisations.

The main objective of this study is to show the technical, economic and institutional conditions which influence the development of linkages between research systems, producers and farmers' organisations.

The decision to devote particular attention to farmers' organisations as the main contact for research systems emerges from the emergence of several converging trends.

Firstly, CORAF and national research institutions find themselves ever increasingly confronted with the question of partnership between their bodies and these new actors i.e. farmers' organisations or other types of emerging association not linked to the State ("civil society organisations"). Researchers and research systems are unequally prepared for this new expression of research requirements coming from producers through their organisations. The latter also have limited capacities for integrating technical problems into their priorities. Recent studies also show that technical questions appear only rarely at the top of their priorities¹.

Secondly, donors and aid agencies are reflecting on issues related to the generation and dissemination of new technologies, as well as economic and organisational innovations. Whilst these questions are not new, they take on a new dimension due to the emergence and strengthening of farmers' organisations in several countries. The emergence of funds owned by rural societies, along with the structural reforms advocated by the World Bank and the IMF in favour of economic liberalisation, put farmers' organisations under immense pressure to take on responsibilities hitherto exercised by public or parastatal organisations. Some operators would even like farmers' organisations to play the role of pressure group on public research institutes and/or in relation to the frameworks for supporting agriculture.

Finally, for farmers' organisations access to technical and economic information, as well as the ability to master the process of technology generation, are of renewed interest in the light of economic liberalisation.

Linkages between the agricultural research system and recognised, formally constituted, farmers' organisations are a central focus but not the exclusive focus in our study. It is clear that collaboration between research and farmers' organisations falls into an economic and institutional environment made ever more complex by continuing institutional recompositions: development of NGO's and consultancy companies, strengthening of the private sector and farmers' organisations, re-organisation of frameworks for extension in the agricultural sector, decentralisation... Collaboration between agricultural research systems and farmers' organisations will therefore be understood broadly, taking account of other actors which intervene in the technology generation process, their respective roles and the articulation between them. We will also consider types of collaboration between research and loosely structured organisations, insofar as this situation results from specific historical contexts that did not lead to a structured farmers' movement or, at least, sufficiently structured farmers' organisations.

¹ Publications from ODI, CIRAD and ISNAR

2.2. Analytical framework²

This study focuses on the following question: what is the articulation between the agricultural research system, on the one hand, and producers on the other? Historically, tropical agricultural research has based its actions on a linear vision of technical progress based on a strict division of work between specialists or engineers responsible for introducing techniques called "improvements", extension services responsible for distributing information regarding these improvements and producers who were asked to conform with the provisions of research.

Even if these ideas are historically dated, it would be a misconception to believe that their influence on the ground was limited; the reference material used in this study shows the force and continuity of that vision. Our case studies also confirm this. Indeed, the idea is still deeply present in the world of development and research. However, changes in the practice of development and conceptual developments emerging over twenty years ago have questioned that linear vision of technical progress and technology generation.

Without trying to draw up here a exhaustive table of these changes³ and the multitude of current methodologies (Pretty and Chambers, 1993) to which they have given rise, the question which has been asked repeatedly of tropical agricultural research for several decades now is how it can take into consideration the actual needs of producers in technical, economic and organisational development. This same question is central to the various forms of collaboration we consider here.

The hypothesis presented here is that farmers' organisations can play the role of intermediary between farmers, research and extension more effectively and at a lower cost than other alternatives. In this study, we will use actual cases where research has worked with farmers' organisations, or with less formally organised producers, to identify factors that have influenced this collaboration and assess the results.

This study relates essentially to the linkages between agricultural research and farmers' organisations (or groups of producers in less formalised cases) for technology generation and dissemination. Technical questions and research approaches to the development of collaboration with farmers' organisations (or producer groups) are therefore at the centre of this work. However, in order to analyse these linkages we will consider that agricultural research stands at the fore of an institutional landscape becoming increasingly complex, characterised by a higher number of actors functioning at the limits of their competence, undertaking more or less clearly defined activities. Furthermore, there are many forms of interaction between these various actors. This can have implications for conditions of access to new technologies.

² The analytical framework is presented in more detail in another document drawn up within the framework of this study (see methodology note).

³ In the French-speaking world, these changes are seen in the 1980s as the emergence of the research and development notion for which the publication "The Research & Development Books" served as distribution channel; whilst in the English-speaking world the Association for Farming System Research and Extension (AFSRE) served as the channel for disseminating research that aimed to take account of farmers' circumstances.

The economic and institutional environment as it exists today comprises the private sector (downstream), public and parastatal bodies and institutions, importantly including agricultural extension services, farmers' organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and the private sector (upstream). Each of these large groups is very diverse in itself and the role which each of these actors plays in establishing collaborative linkages with agricultural research depends strongly on the economic, political and institutional context of the country in question.

This economic and institutional environment is increasingly influenced by policies promoted by donors: economic reform, liberalisation etc. Economic reforms and the withdrawal of the State from direct economic functions in the agricultural sector has occurred in almost all countries, but the forms these changes take depend on pre-existing local context, economic structures and the extent of the reforms introduced by national governments.

3. Some general observations on the case studies

3.1. Introduction

The case studies examined in the five countries selected show a very wide diversity in situations. The choice of case studies and the actual situations throw an initial light on partnerships involved from the standpoint of the organised producer. Whilst local partners (NARS, farmers' organisations when identified, individual informants on site) should have identified innovative experiments involving farmers' organisations with agricultural research for study, the cases selected show a clear disparity between expectations of the team and realities on the ground.

A certain divergence appeared between the idea shared by the team regarding the notion of a farmers' organisation and the idea shared by our contacts on the ground. In six out of the sixteen studied (i.e. 40%), the forms of producer organisation encountered do not correspond to a farmers' organisation, but structures established by extension services (contact groups in Ghana and The Gambia) or more or less formalised local producer groups (Ghana, The Gambia and Burkina Faso [Diébougou]). In at least one case, there was effectively no producer group, but a civil society organisation dealing directly with research and having direct linkages only with individual producers. Table I. summarises this first point.

Table I. Different forms of organisation studied in the case studies.

Total no. cases	Producer groups	Farmers' organisations	Contact groups	Private undertaking	Informal group based around a single family
16	2	9	3	1	1

We will present below the points arising from the sixteen case studies using the following headings:

- type of collective structure involved in technology generation process;
- size of collective structure;
- origin of request made for research (if any);
- type of linkage;
- source of funds;
- modalities for research to respond to farmers.

The recapitulative table of this analysis is presented as an appendix to this document.

3.2. Type of collective structure

Examination of the size of collective structure involved and its internal organisation gives additional information permitting assessment of the degree to which farmers have structured representation. Thus it is possible to distinguish three main types of farmers' organisations:

- farmers' organisations having several organisational levels (at least three) from base groups (villages or districts) to Federation level; this can include one or several intermediate levels of representation (in the case of two Federations in Guinea and FUGN in Burkina Faso);
- farmers' organisations comprising more or less numerous structures operating solely at village level (the three cases in Cameroon and the case of Nyameng Kunda in The Gambia);
- forms of organisation similar to base groups at village level, with less defined contours and with no clearly defined structure (producer groups, contact groups) nor collectively defined aims (case of contact groups, the aim of which is defined by extension structures). The numerical size of the groups varies considerably (three producers involved in The Gambia; 58 groups in Ghana in the case of Asuoyeboa co-operative and about a dozen members in contact groups formed by extension structures). The common denominator among these forms of organisation continues to be atomisation, absence of knowledge-sharing frameworks between local grassroots groups, limited range of activities in functions defined by development intervention structures and, consequently, a very low capacity for collective action.

3.3 Origin of collaboration with research

In four cases out of the sixteen, requests came from a farmers' organisation, or in approximately a quarter of the organisations in our sample (Table II). In other cases that involved farmers' organisations, linkages with research lead to another actor being involved, playing the role of making contacts and expressing technical needs. That actor can be a project (Relance-café (RC'2) in Guinea, Développement Paysannal et Gestion de Terroir (DPGT) in Cameroon, Projet de Diversification des Exportations Agricoles (PDEA) in Cameroon, Lowland Agricultural Development Project (LADEP) in The Gambia) or a private company (Ghana Cotton Company (GCC) in Ghana). In the case of Nyameng Kunda Apex in The Gambia, the farmers' organisation is in contact with NGO's, but at present linkages with research are non-existent. In other cases,

diverse actors intervene in the linkages and these tend to call upon informal groups and contact groups: private firms (Ghana in two cases), religious organisations (Diébougou, Burkina Faso) or extension services (Ghana in two cases). The following table II summaries this.

Table II. Classification of types of actor maintaining linkages with research.

Total no. cases	Project	Farmers' organisations	NGO or other support structure	Private Company	Extension
16	3	4	3	3	3

3.4. Type of linkage between research and the key actors involved

The type of institutional arrangement in which linkages between research and producers are developed relates to the level of formalisation. The most significant organisational dynamics - even if in the process of being structured (Cameroon) or of gaining autonomy (Guinea forest zone) - are established through direct bilateral contractual linkages (FUGN⁴-INERA in Burkina Faso, FPDF⁵-IRAG in Guinea, FUGN-IBE in Burkina Faso) or involve a third partner, often a development project (RC² in Guinea in the case of FNPCG⁶, DPGT in Cameroon in the case of APROSTOC or PDEA in the other cases).

In other cases where organisational dynamics are less clear, these linkages are indirect: via the Diocese in Diébougou; through a development project, PDEA⁷, in the case of Tigné Co-operative in Cameroon. The linkages are actually very indirect in the case of the research, development and extension project LADEP in The Gambia, because in this case the contract is signed between research and extension in the "name of the farmers" who are, in any case, far too few in numbers for such a process to have impact.

In all the other cases studied there is no formalised linkage between research and farmers' organisations due to the weakness of the institutions concerned: severe weakness of organisational dynamics in Ghana; an approach to providing support to farmers that favours the development of "loose" structures of the "contact group" type in Ghana and The Gambia; a difficult institutional context for national agricultural research in Cameroon, which finds itself set against a strong mobilisation of farmers' organisations in the process of strengthening and structuring their movement.

3.5. Main source of funding

This criterion is justified only for linkages involving producer organisations; in other cases we find conventional intervention strategies, led by either projects or extension. Three very different situations can be noted:

⁴ FUGN: Fédération des Groupements Naam.

⁵ FPDF: Fédération des Paysans du Fouta Djallon.

⁶ FNPCG: Fédération Nationale des Producteurs de Café de Guinée.

⁷ This project intervenes to support the intervening parties of the whole system, we meet this again in the three cases studied in the Cameroon.

- the most frequent cases, where it is NGO's or projects which finance collaboration between research and farmers' organisations: a private foundation and development project in Burkina Faso in the case of the Diocese of Diébougou; an internationally funded development project (PDEA) in the three cases in Cameroon; development projects in Guinea (RC²) and in Cameroon (DPGT);
- one case - similar to previous cases, but which differs in that the organisation representing producers has acquired autonomy - where the farmers' organisation finances research activities from external funds allocated directly to the organisation by donors (Fédération des Paysans of Fouta Djallon);
- two cases where collaboration with research is financed partially by projects or NGO's as well as through the direct contribution of producers via their organisation (FUGN in Ouahigouya, Burkina Faso).

3.6. Modalities by which research responds

There are two principal types of collaboration between research and organised producers (cf. in Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Guinea):

- an institutional type, where research institutions explicitly take into account the requests of farmers' organisations in their actions and activity programming (Guinea and Burkina Faso);
- an individual type, more or less formalised, which is very dependent on personal parameters such as the personality and motivation of the researchers involved and of the leaders of farmers' organisations (this is particularly the case in Cameroon).

In the other case studies, it is difficult to speak of modalities of collaboration between agricultural research and farmers' organisations insofar as the latter are either virtually non-existent on the ground, and therefore in a weak position at the national level (Ghana), or in the process of emerging (The Gambia). Further, in these cases approaches to working in rural areas tend to correspond to very conventional arrangements, which would usually be described as "top-down".

In the majority of cases, demands for research (when the initiative comes from producers) often relate to relatively precise technical questions (case of drying fruit in Burkina Faso; wild rice with sorghum in Cameroon).

In certain situations, a technical inquiry is combined with a clear economic concern: in Burkina Faso, for women wanting to increase their income through producing better quality dried fruit; in North Cameroon, where groups want to increase their income by selling onions over the year; in Fouta Djallon, Guinea, where the farmers' organisations target their actions and demands from research as a function of the profitability of production; finally, in forest Guinea, where coffee producers demonstrate concern for the "cost-effectiveness" of the technical model proposed to them (a model that does not lie within the framework of their own strategies).

Table III. The dynamics of collaboration between research and farmers' organisations.

Burkina Faso	<p>Three case studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two cases in which the dynamics of linkages strongly enhance research with, however, a fundamental difference between the two situations: in one case, Diébougou, producers are organised in groups, co-ordination being carried out by a third organisation (the Diocese); in the second case, researchers have a structured partner farmers' organisation: the FUGN. • The third case shows the dynamics of a group forming part of a structured organisation, the FUGN, to which research responds positively.
Guinea	<p>Two case studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A situation presenting strong, structured farmers' organisation dynamics on a regional basis around several groups (Fédération des Paysans in Fouta Djallon). • A situation where linkages with research are strongly shaped by the institutional environment, a farmers' organisation structured around one sector, grappling with less well-adapted technical recommendations (FNPCG).
Cameroon	<p>Three case studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •/# Situations where technical enquiries from producers arise from organisations built around solving common problems connected with marketing produce. Research is situated in a difficult institutional context, hard-pushed to rise above simple individual initiatives of researchers. These can be described as informal, <i>ad hoc</i> linkages.
Ghana	<p>Six case studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Five cases correspond to conventional research processes connected with extension services; producer groups involved can be described either as contact groups, or as non-collective linkages (individualist ...); research is working with producers individually as a function of its own research questions and research protocols that arise from these. • Another case concerns an initiative of the privatised cotton company, which led to the formation of a group to take charge of certain economic functions before and after cotton production. However research is in no way involved with this group.
The Gambia	<p>Two case studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # A situation where research collaborates in a conventional way with extension and mobilises a very small number of "contact" farmers; no organisational dynamics exist beyond these actions (save for State inspired Village Development Committees). # Collaboration between a farmers' organisation in the process of formation and an NGO. # Another case is presented showing emerging organisational dynamics without, as yet, any direct intervention by agricultural research

Key: # no research/FO linkages; • FO/research linkages

However, in Guinea (Fouta Djallon) a significant overlap between technical and organisational issues is noted: production is not developed within the organisation unless a connected and coherent bundle of actions can be established (credit, input supply, technical information and marketing). In this case we can see an extension of actions at the institutional and policy levels into actions to defend producer interests, carried out to preserve access to the market (Conakry) when this can be supplied by local production, all while maintaining a concern for competitiveness in relation to external markets (FPFD).

4. Factors which contribute to the development of linkages between research, extension, farmers' organisations and producers

4.1. Factors connected with the external environment

Introductory note

The favourable conditions in which the five field studies were carried out in socio-political circumstances as varied as those of Cameroon, Guinea, Ghana, the Gambia and Burkina Faso could not hide the difficult conditions which certain countries encounter in the sub region.

In several situations, in fact, the safety of goods and people are not guaranteed.

Free movement of people and goods is not guaranteed in North Cameroon, where arbitrary roadside tax collection has become the norm.

Extreme situations exist, such as civil war, with its dramatic consequences on the populations involved and also on neighbouring countries (acceptance of refugees, as in Guinea forest zone with the people of Sierra Leone). These circumstances excluded Sierra Leone from selection as a study country in view of the socio-political conditions prevailing there; similarly, fieldwork in the Sudanese area of Chad was not possible in view of the immense instability dominating there.

Thus, we consider it appropriate to highlight the importance of safety of goods and people, and the establishment by States of laws to respect these, as the most important basic conditions for civil society participation.

On the other hand, and in relation to the first point, we also highlight the importance of minimum elementary public services like education (basic education and literacy) and health. In too many cases, conditionality related to structural adjustment has led Governments to limit these two services or pass them to the private sector.

This introductory note relates directly to the theme of the study as discussion of linkages between research and farmers' organisations assumes the development of local capacities at the level of local groups and at the level of wider federations. This can only be done effectively

if the actions aimed at building the capacities of such organisations are based on a decent level of health, education and political stability.

4.1.1. Results of structural adjustment

The cases studied here are situated in very varied circumstances. However, all have the common denominator of being situated in contexts of structural adjustment processes and economic liberalisation. This liberalisation process relates, firstly, to strictly economic issues, but also to defining the "rules of the game" in the national economy. Related policies for decentralisation, management of renewable natural resources, and accompanying legislation, specifically affect the organisational dynamics of the society. This special configuration has consequences for the forms of organisation that emerge and, above all, the objectives which farmers' organisations give themselves in trying to establish for themselves a place in new institutional settings.

Faced with this situation of the withdrawal of public and parastatal structures, farmers' organisations try to invest, with varying degrees of success, in the supply of inputs, technical advice, credit, and marketing of products - in a more or less co-ordinated manner according to the case. This is reflected in the marked degree of involvement of farmers' organisations in the agricultural sector. Here, they enter the sector either upstream, with the supply of inputs (with or without a credit mechanism) as in Guinea (potato, onion, coffee) and in The Gambia (sesame production and marketing), with a limited number of national or international networks, or downstream, through marketing, as in Cameroon (onion, sorghum, etc.).

This context of structural adjustment is also manifested in the transition process: the redefinition of roles between the public sector, collective actors and civil society organisations. This process assumes numerous adjustments in the respective roles of each actor. This is the case particularly in Guinea where farmers' organisations have redefined the contours of their field of activity with extension services as well as with traders - especially in Fouta Djallon and to a lesser extent in Guinea forest zone.

This context of a retreating State appears as a political and economic opportunity for farmers' organisations, which find themselves for the first time faced with a potential vacuum to be conquered and consolidated. Whilst the preoccupation with organising the rural world strongly influenced State policies following the end of the Colonial period, the present context appears more open. It has ceased to be engraved with the paternalism of Colonial times, and is less influenced by the ideologies which were evident in the policies of the 1960s and then the modernisation policies of the 1970s.

We will see that this opportunity does not just present advantages; it is marked with risks inherent to processes of transferring responsibility between State and farmers' organisations. In most cases, the transfer of means or resources that could enable organisations to fully assume their new responsibilities does not accompany these processes. Likewise, the market is not always able to completely and spontaneously take up its new role. Indeed, it seems that this

institutional recomposition risks not being as rapid as the promoters of "Institutional Development" would like it to be.

Donors and bilateral aid agencies play a fundamental role in strengthening organisational dynamics through regional initiatives relating to farmer's organisations – with very visible effects in certain countries (e.g. The Gambia). These dynamics have been promoted through regional assistance (CILSS), and directly by development partners (CRS, ActionAid, Coopération Française, Coopération Suisse, Club du Sahel, DFID etc.). This type of aid, when introduced over time and contributing to strengthening the autonomy of organisations, is determinate in building the capacities of organisations and their ability to enter into partnerships with research.

4.1.2. A legislative framework favourable to the emergence and development of farmers' organisations

These criteria depend very much on the prevailing socio-political circumstances (see Introductory Note) as confirmed in a large number of contexts. However, in given socio-political circumstances there are significant differences between situations where a legal framework facilitating organisational dynamics exists and those where there is no such framework. The present example from Cameroon is very instructive when compared with the period before the 1990 laws on freedom of association and 1992 laws relating to co-operative companies and common initiative groups. Further, recent laws on organising the rural world have resulted in a massive emergence of producer organisations. It is not by chance, in view of the political climate, that this country now has an farmers' organisation movement that is among the most dynamic in the region.

However, a constructive legislative framework is not in itself sufficient to lead to the development of a strong organisation of the rural world. Legal provisions have theoretically enabled the emergence of an associative dynamic in agriculture in Ghana, but it is necessary to recognise the chronic weakness of farmers' movements in this country. While other factors are relevant, related to general economic and political conditions, the institutional provisions for supporting producers, and the philosophies that lie behind them, are also important. Previous, and sometimes negative, experiences of attempts at organising farmers (e.g. the co-operative movement in Ghana) can severely limit the propensity of farmers to get involved in collective ventures.

In any case, it seems that a positive legislative framework has proved all the more indispensable as associative movements develop. Such movements tend to have aims that unite with those of groups and organisations which have been created by the State and which, due to its disengagement, will increase their room for manoeuvre (case of Burkina Faso, as well as Senegal, or more recently Cameroon). A legislative framework must be able to take into account, on the one hand various types of civil society organisations and, on the other

hand, modalities of collaboration between the State and farmers' organisations (as in the case of Burkina Faso). The most appropriate forms of organisation, which bring together flexibility and strength in operational activities, whilst enabling effective participation of the majority of social groups, have yet to be found in each country.

4.2. Agricultural research

Most of the research institutes studied here have a great scientific and technical potential, even if some of them (Cameroon) have serious difficulties connected, in particular, with funding problems. As agricultural research necessarily evolves and adapts to new institutional conditions, it is appropriate to preserve and make use of the existing store of knowledge and skills accumulated over numerous years.

That these bodies exist is in itself an achievement, as is the existence of national extension systems. The question of their obvious importance is not even raised here; what is at issue is their adaptation to new conditions and their capacity to move towards answering the demands of various actors, and even reorienting their own investments towards collaboration with these new partners.

4.2.1. Institutional position

Agricultural research institutes in the five countries involved present contrasting characteristics linked to their respective histories and the consequences of recent political choices regarding the role assigned to research in the process of agricultural development. Each institution seems to develop differently, despite similarities in approach. For example, where agricultural research sits within a ministerial institutional framework of "scientific research" there are very contrasting results in Cameroon, where structuring of the rural world is not yet operational, and Burkina Faso, where this approach confers a certain autonomy to research. Inversely in Guinea, it does not seem that the attachment of research to the Ministry of Agriculture poses obstacles to the development of local scientific capacities. Whilst there are stumbling blocks or insufficiencies, they tend to relate issues of institutional stability and funding, as well as to the quality of the scientific environment (in particular, in terms of exchanges and partnerships in the sub-region). The case of Ghana is different insofar as research has an independent structure, managed by CSIR (Council for Industrial and Scientific Research), with agricultural research being supported by a national project benefiting from international finance (National Agricultural Research Project). Here, agricultural research is organised around commodities; it develops a very technical approach and sets little store on systemic and participatory approaches. The Gambia has an independent structure with stronger institutional ties (to Ministries) and an independent research organisation that is very recent (1993). Here, the continuation of research initiatives (including linkages with civil society organisations) is

directly linked to the financial situation, at present precarious due to cessation of finance for the project that financed its implementation.

4.2.2. Regionalisation of research

Decentralisation and regionalisation of national agricultural research appears to be common to all the countries studied. On this point, it seems obvious that opinions would converge on the appreciation of the usefulness of linkages between research centres, researchers at the field or village level, and the various actors involved in rural areas. What is much less obvious is the impact these decisions have on the dynamics of collaboration between research and producers or other actors. The expected effects of involvement appear to be strongly connected with more general factors (see section on unfavourable factors below).

In Cameroon for example, even though it was decided on paper, the introduction of regionalisation seems to be dependent on the reinvigoration of the research unit as a whole. In other cases, such as Guinea, the process of regionalisation of research began with bringing together researchers and other actors in development and this proximity then led to direct collaboration with development structures (projects), then with farmers' organisations (Guinea forest zone and Fouta Djallon).

Methods for the regionalisation of research fall within the wider context of decentralisation policies, which redefine frameworks for action at the local level. Here, research plays a role and is encouraged to reorient its work to fit with the demands of producers and civil society organisations. In Ghana, the process aims at forming local groups at the district level within which Development Committees will be responsible for local development issues. Since the Ministry for Agriculture is also decentralised to the district level, this administrative mechanism should play a central role in establishing arrangements between civil society organisations and research and extension services. In The Gambia the decentralisation process is similar, but relates less to research than extension, which operates at regional level.

If we examine the situation at the sub-regional level, CORAF networks of researchers in West and Central Africa should be highlighted. These networks have contributed to strengthening scientific exchange and to the creation of a research community at sub-regional level.

4.2.3. Ways in which farmers' organisations are represented in research bodies

Organised producers are becoming increasingly associated with the direction of research organisations, having seats allocated to them on national research institute governing boards or at the level of the regional research centres. Farmers' organisations also form part of regional technical committees or regional committees for research in which extension, projects, etc. participate. This is the case in Guinea, as well as in numerous other countries in the region (Mali, Senegal, etc.).

This is a positive initiative and is clearly a form of institutional collaboration, although the efficiency of this collaboration depends on the way in which farmers' are represented in these bodies. Several issues can be raised concerning this complex question.

The representativity of organisations called upon to participate in these settings. Misunderstandings can arise when research institutions are concerned to achieve a level of representation that satisfies the needs of its planning processes and also have concerns about the capacity of existing organisations to act as intermediaries. This form of representation at an institutional level becomes meaningful, however, in the case of Guinea where research places a different on different regions depending on the relative significance or weight of local organisations. Strengthening of organisations' ability to deal with technical questions appears to be a determining factor for their participation in these bodies.

The geographical level at which this representation must be developed in order to be relevant is also under discussion (local, regional and national). However, it seems to be even more important that there exists an effective articulation and coherence of representation between these various levels. Here again we refer to FPFJ (Fouta Djallon), which demonstrates a system that makes intermediate levels of the organisation responsible for decisions (Prefecture unions) within the framework of dialogue and partnership with research. This represents a dual attempt by FPFJ to decentralise responsibilities and develop an improved understanding of micro-level production conditions by research.

4.2.4. Scientific policies of research bodies

The first point regards the existence or not of a strategic programming plan which gives a first indication of the state of national thinking on the big questions facing research and the capacity of the research institution to establish priorities. Methods for carrying out these strategic plans accord more or less importance to the formation of strong linkages with producers and their organisations.

Notable differences appear in the motivation and involvement of researchers with farmers' organisations, depending on the scientific policy of the institution concerning this type of collaboration. The behaviour of researchers depends, necessarily, on the position of their institution with regard to the following questions:

- does the development of collaboration with farmers' organisations form part of research institution's policy?
- are researchers rewarded in their careers for supporting development interventions?

Significant recent advances must be highlighted, in particular the clear wish of certain research policy decision-makers to create incentives to promote development-oriented research. In order to address this concern, an important initiative has been for certain national research institutes (e.g. INERA, Burkina Faso) to introduce CAMES evaluation criteria for researchers.

4.3. Specific factors related to local actors

4.3.1. Factors linked to organisations

- Farmers' organisations having a holistic project

Organisations which develop partnerships with agricultural research tend to be those which manage to address the apparent contradiction between "management" of a general project geared to meeting the diverse expectations of members (in the case of FUGN in Burkina Faso) and the capacity to flexibly define priorities so that effective responses to a limited number of these demands can be developed (case of the FPDF in Guinea and the FUGN in Burkina Faso).

The very imbalanced capacities between one organisation and another, sometimes in the same country (e.g. Guinea), are related to the specific history of each organisation and its inherent capacities to develop more or less "rich" partnerships to enable it to establish its own technical competencies.

In Ghana, the development policies being implemented do not favour the emergence of collaborative activities with farmers. Modes of intervention and underlying development philosophies reveal that a priority is placed on the private "individual" and "individual initiative" - each producer being seen as an entrepreneur. Multiple contact groups (e.g. set up by extension) or less formal "loose" groups arise from this. These are sometimes constituted on a family basis, with such groups exhibiting no significant collective dynamics. In fact, Ghana presents a paradoxical situation where extension services work with various local contact groups that are separate to the local groups of the national farmers' organisation GNAFF (Ghana National Association of Farmers and Fishermen).

It seems that size or level of organisation only constitutes an obstacle to the development of collaboration between farmers and research at the level of local groups constituted on a village basis, or even intra-village level in the case of district associations (*Kafo*) in The Gambia. This level of structuring appears to be insufficient, if no higher levels of organisation exist to represent their interests. The key issue here is the capacity of organisations to act as representatives of the rural world, to establish more equitable linkages with external actors so as to win acceptance for their views both on the content and form of interventions.

Regarding linkages with research, the presence of a federal organisation enables, when it operates satisfactorily (FUGN in Burkina Faso; FPDF and FNPCCG in Guinea), the development of internal competence, making it possible to make external interventions respond more closely to farmers' interests. The existence of an organisation that is structured up to the national level is not, however, in itself an indicator by which to assess the development of the internal capacities of a farmers' organisations, as illustrated in Ghana (i.e. GNAFF).

What appears to be more determinate is the capacity of organisations to develop a co-ordination structure which remains "light", but with acknowledged areas of competence, while also supporting the increased autonomy of more local levels of organisation. The case of FPDF

in Guinea illustrates the search for such a balance: on the basis of programmes being undertaken at the Bareng research centre, the Federation encourages the direct development of collaboration between Unions organised at the Prefecture level and research teams. To achieve this objective, the Federation encourages the development of Union officials' skills (technical, organisational and management) so as to increase their capacities to negotiate and take action.

It seems therefore that a balance must be found between the development of umbrella co-ordination bodies that are directly linked with other development actors and also the development of more local levels of organisation that remain relatively autonomous, and which can build their own capacities for action.

4.3.2. Factors connected with the history of farmers' organisations

Comparison of the cases of Burkina Faso and Guinea with the cases of Cameroon and The Gambia underlines the importance of the age of farmers' organisations as a significant (positive) factor enabling farmers' organisations to establish collaborative linkages with research. This factor is not sufficient in itself: it must be associated with an assessment of the development of an organisation's intrinsic capacities.

These capacities relate to internal issues such as the internal organisation and general operation of the organisation, decision-making mechanisms and degree of synergy between the activities of organisations and the expectations of its members. They also concern the quality of linkages which organisations can create with their external partners whilst developing what Gentil and Mercoiret (1991) call their intellectual "autonomy", as well as their financial autonomy, vis-à-vis donors or other key actors (projects, NGO, etc.)⁸.

The search for this financial autonomy can be demonstrated through a capacity to mobilise public funds when it is recognised that the activities of an organisation go beyond serving the interests of organisation members and rather relate to the general public interest. The mobilisation of these public funds can concern the secondment of public sector staff, as in the case of IRAG in Guinea, which chose to attach a researcher to the Farmers' Federation of Fouta Djallon. This is also demonstrated in the renegotiation of the modalities by which extension operates, so that, for example, the specificities of market garden production and the local context in which farmers are situated are taken into account (greater frequency of extension worker visits, redefinition of skills and capacities of different actors, relocation of extension agents according to the area in which certain types of production take place).

The capacity to establish and develop diversified partnerships enabling growth of the intellectual, financial and operational autonomy of organisations (FUGN in Burkina Faso, FPF in Guinea, etc.) is demonstrated by a greater aptitude to manage interactions, to co-

⁸ Gentil, D. and Mercoiret, M.R., 1991. Il y a-t-il un mouvement paysan en Afrique noire? *Tiers Monde*, 32 (128) : 867-886.

ordinate and govern partnerships by negotiation - whether these partnerships are located within a national framework or international actors are involved (NGO's, donors, development agencies, etc.). Vis-à-vis research, the importance that organisations attach to the development of collaboration with research can be demonstrated by an organisational link that evidenced in the organigramme of the research body (technical support at FPDF level in Guinea), which is based on carrying out a multitude of joint operations. This aptitude to develop their own capacities is also established by mobilising "verified" skills and expertise that are placed under the direct responsibility of the farmers' organisation. An example is again given by FPDF which brings under its Board's management the technical assistance provided French Cooperation and aid from the European Union (technical advisor with FPDF and European volunteers).

It is clear that organisations in Cameroon and The Gambia are not in a position to negotiate such support. Without succumbing to the temptation of interpreting the situation in a narrowly evolutionist way, these emerging dynamics could be seen to correspond to an initial step in their construction process – forming groups on what remains a small scale in order to resolve common problems. This makes all support for the development of internal capacities and organisational autonomy all the more indispensable.

In the case of Ghana, the situation is different due to factors connected with the type of economic policy and the nature of support offered to the agricultural sector. In Ghana, these encourage the atomisation and separation of actors in rural areas, and the formation of weakly structured groups which have been formed solely to meet the needs of external actors.

4.3.2. Predisposition of research to respond to producer demands

The ways in which research organises itself in order to establish new linkages with farmers' organisations seem to vary considerably from one situation to another.

In the case of Burkina Faso (research programme on proteaginous and grain legume) proves the willingness of researchers concerned with the social usefulness of their work, but unmistakable differences appear between the two cases studied, arising out of the different type of intermediary. The approach of the Diocese certainly plays a positive role in establishing linkages between research and producers constituted into groups as well as in the distribution of technical information. However, the sustainability of activities undertaken will depend essentially on the capacity of these groups to organise themselves to carry out their own activities upstream (supply of inputs) and downstream (marketing). The situation is different for the intervention of research on identical questions when producer groups form part of an organisation with several different levels of groups and representation: continuity of linkages and the ways in which this is appropriated by producers appear very much more guaranteed.

In addition, we have to underline that in this case, research in Burkina Faso has the capacity to respond to the requests made by civil society organisations, whether these are grassroots

organisations or federations like the FUGN. Here, there exists a "state of mind" or an openness of research to what have been considered hitherto as unconventional demands. This is also true in the Guinea case.

These two cases (Burkina Faso and Guinea) contrast with the institutional inability of the national research institution in Cameroon to respond to farmers' requests. This situation is alleviated by the isolated and individual initiatives of researchers wishing to collaborate with farmers' organisations. This "institutional" void is also inadequately filled by other operators (NGO's or projects), which substitute research in the identification and implementation of technical solutions in response to the expectations of emerging organisations of North Cameroon. These palliatives cannot in any way be a lasting solution, even if it appears that, from vast experience⁹, operators other than agricultural research can be associated with development-oriented research.

In the case of Ghana, the general philosophy of intervention does not seem to predispose research to this type of approach which, furthermore, would be difficult to introduce in view of the weaknesses in structured organisational dynamics in that country. Cases vary, however, considerably from one to another: farmers are effectively "stakeholders" in actions led by research in Ghana, often in partnership with extension services and private firms. However, this association with farmers is limited to establishment and performance of specific on-farm trials: they are always carried out on an individual basis, even if organisations are formally portrayed as partners in activities. This collaboration can be qualified as *formal* in the case of GNAFF, given its actual non-participation in the research process, and *functional* in cases of research led by CRI (no-till maize production) and SRI (acid soil management). Here, individual producers are involved in experimental plots and give their opinion in certain cases. Producers play a marginal role in the process, at the "end of the chain", without actually being directly associated as partners (they do so indirectly via private companies in the conduct of experiments). This functional collaboration can be too dispersed due to modalities of intervention that promote a division of tasks that can result in problems of ineffectiveness: for example, the case of seed production (Nyankpala), where extension activities relate to the supply of seeds and storage techniques, while producers are left without technical advice for the rest of the growing cycle.

The case of The Gambia is rather intermediary, similar in certain respects to the Ghanaian situation in terms of modalities of intervention in the agricultural sector, but with the emergence of organisational dynamics that bring it into line with other neighbouring countries (Senegal and Guinea for example). In the Gambian case, linkages between research and emerging farmers' organisations (in the sesame sector) are indirect and certain NGO's, such as Catholic Relief Services, play the role of interface between research and farmers' organisations.

⁹ See in particular the work of ODI (non-Governmental organisations and the State in Africa and reluctant partners: non-Governmental organisations, the State and sustainable agricultural development)

4.3.3. Predisposition of extension to respond to farmer requests

In general, the modalities by which national extension services intervene, following the Training and Visit approach, do not enable the specific demands of organisations to be met. This can occur (i) if organisations exist (ii) if they are sufficiently "strong" or structured to enter the negotiation process with the services involved (Guinea, Fouta Djallon) or, failing this, if the institutional environment (in particular the donors) lead them to do so (Guinea forest zone; Cameroon). This comment is also valid for linkages with research. However, in this transition period, it would seem important to place particular emphasis on the extension services, and on their officials and extension workers. Their role and their position in the institutional context have to be redefined so that they can adapt to fit in with current developments: the strengthening of farmers' organisations and the way in which they are taking on either full or partial responsibility for the extension function (some extension agents have become employees of farmers' organisations); change in the role of the extension agent, especially given the explicit acceptance of the family farm as the main framework for research and giving advice to farmers.

The available options for responding to the requirements of farmers' organisations also depend on other factors, such as: the readiness of extension service officials to increase collaboration with farmers' organisations; or initiatives of donors to support a stronger partnership with farmers' organisations, which is evident, in particular, in the case of Guinea or Burkina Faso.

The archetype of the classic extension role in the Ghanaian and Gambian arrangements is marked by uncoordinated actions and the limited nature of experiences. This is the generally true, even if other important economic players are involved, such as the private sector (Ghana).

4.3.4. What is the role of other actors?

The roles that other actors can play depend on a multitude of factors; this prevents us from understanding linkages as a function of types of behaviour linked to the nature of development actors. For example, even if NGO's and projects favour in general the emergence of organised intermediaries (PDEA-AGROCOM and DPGT in Cameroon, ActionAid The Gambia in The Gambia, etc.), their approach to development interventions does not systematically enable organisations to become more autonomous. In Cameroon, it seems that DPGT and PDEA-AGROCOM play a key role in strengthening the autonomy of the associations with which they collaborate.

The role of these civil society organisations seems essential to strengthening farmers' organisations. They play an even more essential role in facilitating the access of farmers to the means of production and technical information where farmers' organisations are less developed (the Gambia, Diocese of Diébougou, etc.).

Projects supported by bilateral donors (Canadian aid agency in Cameroon, French Co-operation in Guinea, Swiss Co-operation in Burkina Faso) often play a positive role in strengthening the capacities of organisations (PDA in Fouta Djallon), even if, development interventions supported by donors may not normally be of this nature (e.g. French Co-operation).

In the same way, State services can also undertake actions that support the development of the capacities of farmers' organisations to undertake development activities. Similarly, traders can be a positive force when the actions taken by farmers' organisations lead to a clear demarcation of the functions and responsibilities of each.

5. Factors which work against the development of linkages

5.1. Inadequate co-ordination

In certain situations, the multitude of projects with their corresponding organisational dynamics, lead to unhelpful competition between organisations instigated sometimes by the competing strategies of various donors, which aim to justify their intervention. Very often these forms of competition are unproductive for organisations, harming their ability to bring together farmers and their capacity for collective action at the federal level. This is particularly the case in Guinea forest zone where the multitude of actors in various sectors has led to a proliferation of groups whose capacities to bring farmers together are limited by their dependency on the projects created. It may be feared that a process of this nature could hinder a move towards federations in the case of North Cameroon, which shows promising, but hitherto uncoordinated and relatively isolated organisational dynamics.

In the absence of this strategic and concerted development framework, it seems difficult for research to actually have the means to carry out strategic programming in line with producers' strategies (e.g. plan to restructure research in Cameroon).

5.2. Changing upstream and downstream economic environments: specific research needs

Technology or technology generation do not represent - in the majority of cases - a sufficient mobilising force to inspire producers to group themselves into associations. In the majority of cases, it is upstream and downstream economic conditions that are the basis for joint actions. The cases of Cameroon and Guinea illustrate this.

All the same, when organisations or associations reach a certain capacity for action enabling them to remove essential obstacles, it then becomes possible for research to enter into dialogue and establish a partnership with these organisations (cases of the Farmers' Federation in Fouta Djallon). As long as problems of access to inputs, credit and guaranteed marketing are not resolved - at least partially - it is illusory to think that an organisation can devote a huge

amount of energy to questions which are not main priorities for their members. One of the Ghana case studies highlights the important effect of these economic factors on the continued adoption of a new technology and whether an organisation would participate or not in its introduction; the withdrawal of credit for the purchase of herbicides leads either to a return to previous practice, or a change to another technique financed by recourse to credit for soil preparation. In this case, as in many others, the obstacle lies more in lack of accessible funds at the time of preparing the ground than in the technology itself (case of the Jap Planter).

Whilst it seems therefore quite clear in the cases studied that the first key unfavourable factors lie in the economic sphere, it seems that agricultural research interventions have difficulty in grappling with this type of problem. In the cases of research and farmers' organisation linkages studied here, the issues examined arise essentially from classic technical approaches to agricultural production. It would certainly be desirable for collaboration to begin with economic matters (credit, marketing conditions for products, production economy) – focusing on collaboration between farmers' organisations and economics research teams (or agro-economists). This type of problem has been observed in many cases: supply of inputs in Diébougou, credit, also in Diébougou, but also in Guinea forest zone and in Ghana – even if in this last country such problems tend not to be expressed by collectivities.

5.3. Insufficient development of systemic approaches

The case studies lead us to question the methodologies used by research: research programmes are essentially thematic, with fairly limited influence from systemic approaches, in spite of advances made in this area since the start of the 80s. In the cases studied, we have seen a general absence of general agronomists, agro-economists or sociologists in research teams. Excluding the experiences directly involving farmers' organisations (Guinea and Burkina Faso), the case studies reveal the limits of experiments which are not linked to the realities of existing farming practice (e.g. on-farm trials in Ghana and The Gambia): these are effective in catalysing a process of innovation.

These experiments (e.g. on-farm trials, etc.) follow fundamentally top-down processes: they lack in most cases, a link with farmers' dynamics, which could give a direction to the multitude of experiments, which remain too time-bound. These experiments in themselves are not without interest, however, the way they are carried out shows that they are attached to a reality to which they remain exogenous. These experiments are often decided without discussion with producers; rapid surveys can raise legitimate suspicion regarding its intrinsic value, particularly if it is not subject to criticism from and the reflection of producers.

The cases of collaboration between research and farmers' organisations studied here relate to well-defined topics which are tied into research programmes that are already very well organised, and which only had to be adjusted to respond to a specific request (onion, potato and coffee in Guinea, cowpea in Burkina Faso, planting in Cameroon etc.). However, while

such research is perfectly justified, it seems to us that in certain cases, a more general understanding of production systems at the agronomic, socio-economic and economic levels would only be more effective in terms of the way funds allocated to research are used (for example, in Guinea forest zone where coffee is only one component of farming systems).

This comment on ways in which research should intervene in rural areas is related to the expectations of systems research¹⁰ and the involvement of producers in the various phases, from the identification of research topics through to experiments, and the strengthening of farmers' capacities through the involvement of their organisations in research processes.

Participatory approaches have shown their usefulness in improving coherence between research and requests from producers (FUGN at Burkina Faso, LADEP in the Gambia). Their use seems all the more successful as it is used with a view to strengthening the capacities of organisations (*empowerment*). Further, by using them, researchers and development agents find that their partners become more and more trained. Where this is not the perspective within which participatory approaches are used, they can become a disguised way of implementing top-down interventions and therefore expectations of participants in the process can be quickly disappointed.

These observations also relate to the social sciences, because sociological or socio-economic dimensions are insufficiently considered by agricultural research, even though their contribution to the reformulation of technical questions is often key. The knowledge of organisations and the tight links between farmers' organisations and social structures could clarify the potential of village level Gambian organisations (*Kafo*, *VDC*). Also referring to The Gambia, a deeper analysis of labour relations, ownership and use of the means of production in the rice fields could certainly make the positive step of including women in the research process more efficient (this has been done and constitutes a positive achievement). The literature consulted during this study refers to experienced of deeper participatory surveys, undertaken by agricultural research institutes in collaboration with universities (e.g. Tanzania, Central America...). This approach could be a way to make sometimes over-rapid surveys more accurate representations of reality.

5.4. Chronic instability of research institutions, often lacking the ability to rapidly mobilise research results to benefit organised producers

The institutional turbulence to which research bodies are subjected in certain countries strongly hinders the capacities of research to respond quickly to requests from producer organisations. The achievements of research are important in these regions of Africa, but numerous technologies proposed by research cannot be mobilised quickly for reasons directly

¹⁰ We refer to the anglophone approach of Farming Systems Research and related approaches, and research carried out in French-speaking countries regrouped under the heading "Recherche - Développement" or more recently "Recherche - Action" which were developed at the start of the 80s in reaction to the limitations of the classical disciplinary approaches which they criticised.

related to the very great institutional and financial instability of numerous NARS. Among the factors which we have raised are:

- variations and discontinuities in international and national funding for research (with the exception of Burkina Faso which has its own national policy on the matter), made worse sometimes by a marked lack of consistency on the part of donors with regard to the approaches and methodologies they promote;
- not very encouraging career prospects, which results in numerous researchers leaving and rapid turnover of staff, and consequently, a rapid loss of institutional and scientific memory, which all reduce the impact of research;
- the general weakness in documentation services and practical difficulties in accessing basic scientific information, making it very difficult to disseminate knowledge and the results of work carried out in the region; it is sometimes difficult to mobilise this information even within one country;
- insufficient capacity of research to mobilise results in a directly operational manner, which also relates to the relative weakness in general agronomist or socio-economist skills within research institutions; this can also affect choices made by institutions regarding approach and methodology (e.g. multi-disciplinary or thematic teams);
- the experiences and projects of numerous NGO's operating in the region offers researchers in social sciences and "technicians" an opportunity to produce empirical analyses which bring together technical, economic and organisational propositions, and, often, innovative social dynamics. Although agricultural research is sometimes asked to undertake such work, it does not generally lead to what are seen to be scientifically valid and rigorous studies. This remains an area in which there is an opportunity for research to increase its impact.

5.5. Funding constraints on research and local context

The question of funding constraints on research is complex. Generally the financial constraints on research appear unfavourable for establishing linkages between farmers' organisations and agricultural research.

However, if the private sector (industrial plantations in Cameroon, private companies in Ghana) is the main intermediary with research due to its capacity to finance it, this is normally the case in countries where the farmers' movement is not organised such as to be able to establish a similar type of dialogue (e.g. this has not been sufficient in North Cameroon until recently). Depending on the local circumstances and, in particular, on the dynamism of private companies, research will have to turn increasingly to the private sector to finance all or part of its research.

In a single case encountered in this study, financial constraints have apparently played a "positive" role: in Guinea (Bareng Station, Fouta Djallon). The delay in unblocking finance for implementing IRAG has led to early linkage of research with development demands, through development projects which have specific research needs or a need for diagnostic surveys.

Another case - Mali – shows, on the contrary, that mobilisation of funds by farmers' structures is not a simple exercise even if significant finance is available. Thus it appears that funds made available to representatives of farmers' organisations sitting at CRU level (Regional Research Users Committees) have not been mobilised to the degree expected. This has been the result of issues such as the degree of representativity of CRU's and difficulty in collectively agreeing specific areas in which research should invest.

5.6. Isolation of national research and weak synergy

In the case of Guinea, national research is relatively isolated from regional and international research. This handicaps the efficient use of funds invested in research¹¹. This isolation slows down the circulation of results of previous research, sometimes leading to repetition of costly experiments already carried out (Guinea forest zone, with questions relating to shading of coffee and extensive plantation methods...). This partitioning and isolation also hinders collaboration between research institutes in the region on topics of common interest which are also issues of particular economic interest to producers (tomato, onion, processing of food products, etc.).

5.7. Researchers poorly equipped to enter into dialogue with farmers' organisations

In certain cases, researchers appear to be destabilised by the emergence of new potential partners. The reasons for this are numerous:

- the academic and discipline-based nature of training;
- the importance accorded to, and the inertia of, dominant methodologies;
- the insufficient capacity to question ways of approaching a problem; and
- sometimes, a difficulty in imagining that farmers and their organisations can constitute useful or responsible partners (Cameroon, Ghana);

These obstacles then translate into insufficient knowledge of local environments, especially their social and economic dimensions, and by the inability of research to integrate farmers' knowledge and practices in a scientific and dynamic manner (e.g., The Gambia: participatory assessments without follow-up). This is linked to the insufficient use of social science and systems approaches in agricultural research.

From the farmers' point of view, and that of their organisations, there is not yet a clear understanding of the potential benefits of collaborating with agricultural research. The history of research certainly counts for much, but misunderstandings could be reduced significantly by better dissemination of practical information resulting from research work. This necessarily depends on the development of farmers' organisations' technical competence; or on establishing negotiated agreements for the supply of services with other parties, provided that

¹¹ In the case where national research cooperates little with civil society organisations, social isolation tends to be added to scientific isolation

the farmers' organisation has the internal capacities to control the nature and form of such collaboration. The establishment of contractual linkages is already envisaged and promoted in certain agricultural projects supported by the World Bank (case of PNDSA II in Burkina Faso).

The difficulty of communication between researchers and farmers is also a real source of further obstacles (glossaries of terms used, capacity to present the results in an attractive and accessible way to a wider audience). However, it is also certain that these questions of communication techniques will be more easily overcome if researchers and their institutions have a real desire to establish a dialogue with organised producers. It seems to us that: (i) producers and their organisations are conscious of these difficulties; and (ii) they seek to remedy this by participating in training activities in this area (Cameroon).

Another issue relates to the time-scale in which problems arise. Producers want — and rightly so — fast responses linked to their agricultural calendar. Research sometimes finds it very difficult to abandon the quest for scientific perfection and find a less rigorous approach than a strictly scientific one, but one which would be richer in terms of interaction with farmers and development structures. In fact, it seems that the very tasks given to research institutes tend to make them turn in on themselves. For research institutes there is one - very legitimate - worry: acceptance by qualified and recognised academics in the specific topics involved. There is also a great expectation that research will find solutions to producers' problems. The difficulty for a large number of NARS consists in trying to reconcile these two requirements, given that as a general rule it is the first that tends to absorb most of a researchers' energy.

However, being pragmatic, it seems to us that farmers would understand better the time required to undertake certain types of research if research institutions knew how to provide precise responses to less complicated questions posed by farmers within short time scales. This would also contribute to creating a climate of confidence and dialogue (which seems difficult to re-establish in the case of Cameroon for example). Several examples exist where research has been capable of mobilising farmers, using participatory approaches that involve both researchers and organised producers.¹²

5.8. Ineffectiveness of fora for coordination between research and other development actors

These fora often depend on external finance, which poses several problems:

- participation of representatives from various institutions depends on the availability of external finance, without this finance there is no participation! This directly raises the question of the real or formal existence (connected with external finance) of these coordination bodies, their sustainability, and the willingness of actors (including the State) to maintain them (e.g. Guinea, Cameroon, Ghana, The Gambia);

¹¹ Here we can cite the case of URDOC, within the context of the Office du Niger in Mali.

- the question of financial dependency becomes even more important given that the very high number of participants in these coordination bodies can make them unoperational (Ghana, Cameroon) and handicaps their possible "institutionalisation" in a national framework independent of external financing;
- the reticent involvement or absence of certain actors from these fora, along with a lack of trust between actors involved (Ghana, Cameroon) severely limits the usefulness and attraction of such arrangements. This lack of trust sometimes results from past experience, which translates into a crisis of confidence in the capacities of research (Cameroon).

In such an uncertain institutional setting, possessing little legitimacy, farmers' organisations often do not see any interest in participating in these coordination structures whose potential achievements seem quite intangible.

These coordination structures could, however, become very fruitful structures for sharing knowledge, bringing different viewpoints closer together, and building research programmes that are better adapted to the expectations of organised farmers. However, currently, with a few exceptions, these coordination bodies seem to function as very formal meeting places (e.g. the RELCs in Ghana); transforming them into a tool for serious research programming will depend on a fundamental reconciliation between the viewpoints of research and farmers' organisations.

5.9. Farmers insufficiently prepared to fill the gap left by State services and to maintain partnerships with research and extension

The still poor capacities of farmer groups and some associations seems in many cases to be an obstacle to the development of more structured linkages with agricultural research:

- inadequacy of the capacities of farmers' organisations to manage and organise activities (programming, management, training...) in Cameroon, The Gambia, and Diébougou (Burkina Faso); the Ghana case remains separate due to the absence of structured farmers' organisations;
- inadequacy of State support in the context of policies related to the disengagement of the State, which aim, in theory, to support the strengthening of farmers' organisation capacities and their autonomy while not providing them with the necessary means / resources. Such resources are made available by donors and NGO's in Ghana and Burkina Faso, but not by the State, while in Cameroon access to such resources is not easy.

5.10. Research management policies that work against the establishment of partnerships between research and farmers' organisations

The policy of orienting research towards marketing its technical skills (sometime the dominant approach, even the sole strategy pursued) seems to present serious limitations and create a number of problems (see the case of Ghana).

Some private actors can, without too much difficulty, call upon research by paying for these services: this is certainly the case for large plantations aimed at exportation. Such a policy can not be followed without care and judgement as to what is most appropriate for industrial agriculture, export-oriented agriculture (vegetables...), or subsistence agriculture. This also explains in part why, for example, in Ghana the tendency is for research to establish contractual linkages with private companies acting "on behalf of farmers". It is clear that the current level of development of farmers' organisations does not allow them to finance all the costs of research where subsistence agriculture is concerned, or even where cash crops are concerned, as long as the existing institutional and financial mechanisms do not allow farmers' organisations to gain financing through levies on the tonnage of produce.

6. Lessons

From the analysis of the case studies, a certain number of lessons can be drawn. This study reveals the existence of linkages between agricultural research, extension and farmers' organisations resulting in increased effectiveness of research organisations in contributing to processes of technology generation and dissemination. However, for such positive linkages to exist, the partners engaged in such a process must be sufficiently organised and structured so as to enable them to engage in relationship of equals.

6.1. Factors related to the political, economic and institutional environment

These factors have a determinant influence on the capacities of research and farmer's organisations to establish partnerships and on the possibilities for farmers' organisations to develop linkages - sometimes contractual - with other actors like traders (upstream and downstream), extension services, projects and NGO's.

These environments have important consequences for strengthening farmer's organisations:

- laws on rural associations offer a legal framework that encourages dynamic organisations;
- support to farmers' organisations, negotiated in the context of economic liberalisation, enable capacity building (i.e. ability to undertake collective action);
- support given donors over time to these regional and national organisational processes is essential to their development (e.g. that provided by: CILSS to farmers' platforms; CRS, Coopération Française, Swiss Cooperation, Club du Sahel, DFID etc.).

The reformulation of frameworks for supporting farmers has two important consequences for farmers' organisations:

- responsibilities functions and competence of various public and private actors are in the course of renegotiation and redefinition; research, farmers' organisations, support services to

agriculture (input supplies, extension etc.) and marketing networks are directly affected by these adjustments;

– in this changing context, strongly marked by uncertainty, articulation of the various support functions and services to agriculture become crucial following abandonment of integration of these functions by public or parastatal structures (regional development organisations or integrated development projects, etc.).

In these circumstances, it is difficult to build up partnerships and evaluate all the different dimensions from outside.

6.2. Capacity-building of farmers' organisations

The dynamics of organisations are established over time and require mobilisation of resources enabling the development of competence at various levels of the organisation. The choice of skills required can then be dictated by the priority requirements of members.

More often than not, the priority concerns of organisations are not strictly technical questions: the majority of farmers' organisations encountered during this study are organised around production systems; those with a further multi-functional inclination (like the FUGN in Burkina Faso) maintain linkages with research structured around questions relating to marketing of products, supply of inputs or processing of products.

Technical, organisational and economic conditions for marketing represent, therefore, a preferential entry point for strengthening collaboration between agricultural research and farmers' organisations.

The economic pragmatism of certain organisations should inspire future actions; improvement of a link in the sector or production chain must translate immediately into an increase in income for the producers involved. This type of action strengthens members' commitment, contributes to extending areas of action and constitutes the key to the sustainability of organisations. It also defines the type of requests that these organisations are likely to make from research.

Strengthening organisations depends on their capacity to unite their efforts in spite of their different respective histories in order to create apex structures that have a certain weight with regard to other actors. The atomisation of organisations constitutes a real obstacle to strengthening their capacity for action.

External assistance must seek an overall strengthening of farmers' organisations at various levels (local, regional, national...), whilst avoiding strengthening superstructures that are cut off from their roots or to providing support to too many local organisations without back up apex organisations.

Without external support, constructive linkages cannot be established spontaneously and lastingly between unequally structured farmers' organisations and agricultural research bodies, which have varying predispositions to develop linkages with them.

The external support, that is therefore indispensable, must be carefully thought out so that it strengthens the capacities of organisations, taking account of issues that are of key concern to their members:

- improvement of conditions of access to means of production, including via improvements in access to credit;
- improvement of the marketing of products; and
- technical inputs concerning general infrastructure, not necessarily connected with agricultural production.

One possibility for mobilising farmers' organisations and their partners would be to create services for organised farmers structured around sectors which provide a significant economic contribution to household incomes and around which the establishment of services to producers could be sustainable.

6.3. Research

There can be no question of developing linkages with farmers' organisations if research does not have the minimum resources / conditions for performing its functions:

- clear policies that orient research towards specific development priorities;
- resources which allow research to build on experience and gain easier access to information;
- strengthening regional collaboration and networks;
- wider availability of more research results, which assumes a serious effort to improve communication.

Collaboration between NARS and civil society organisations (in particular farmers' organisations) will be much easier to establish:

- when NARS have carried out strategic programming and these programming documents set out the objectives of the institution on this (collaboration with civil society actors), and provide a framework which encourages the establishment these partnerships;
- when concrete measures are taken regarding researchers' careers and the criteria for their evaluation which encourage researchers to consider the problems faced by farmers' organisations and other development actors;

– when, at the same time, a process for making researchers accountable to farmers is introduced, while collaboration mechanisms are strengthened.

The establishment of co-ordination bodies between agricultural research and end-users of research results is an extremely positive development. The sometimes formal nature of these frameworks must gradually disappear as the capacities of organisations are strengthened.

Generally, the resources that can be rapidly mobilised by research meet farmers' organisations' requests are very limited, except in the case of support provided to organisations by donors.

The spread of the use of participatory methodologies is a positive development, as long as it does not stay limited to achieving a simple stamp of approval from farmers for research programmes.

Generally, it seems that so-called 'top-down' approaches to agricultural research are enduring.

6.4. Linkages with research and extension

In the case of countries without a strong dynamic of producer organisations, it is worrying that the articulation between research and farmer demands are considered in an individualistic way by the research and extension systems.

Even if the capacity of organisations to handle requests for research is unequal, it already exists; it can be strengthened, but this assumes that a positive and "open" attitude exists on the side of research and extension.

Organisations appear to be badly informed on the potential assistance that can come from research to resolve the constraints faced by farmers.

It seems that issues relating to specific agricultural sectors tend to contribute to the successful mobilisation of producers and such sector-based issues are at the root of numerous requests from farmers. Research should seize such opportunities for collaboration, where the economic dimension is certainly dominant, but where technical questions immediately follow. This entry point to starting a dialogue with farmers' organisations can be a key point of departure, and it can serve to create or recreate trust between partners. In terms of organising research teams, it would be useful to include economic and systemic skills so that requests related to agriculture can be treated.

The issue of the clear division of roles between research and farmers' organisations arises, particularly in terms of responsibility for carrying out operations. The following division can be proposed where the context makes it possible:

- joint identification of constraints and aims sought (shared responsibility);
- translation into research topics (responsibility of research);
- joint validation of research themes. Relevance compared with the real problems/objectives of farmers (shared responsibility);
- conduct of research (responsibility of research);
- presentation and validation of results (shared responsibility).

In countries where successful partnerships have been built (and where farmers were the true source of demand, and had already succeeded in mastering the upstream and downstream aspects of production) research and extension have seen their effectiveness increase; this has often been evidenced in a shorter time required to adapt technologies, and more rapid impact of technologies in terms of wide-scale dissemination.

The conduct of partnerships has revealed the ability of State extension services to adapt their approaches and intervention methodologies in order to take account of new demands emerging from farmers' organisations. This constitutes a positive element to be taken into account in decision-making processes of agricultural services in the new context of the retreat of the State, decentralisation etc.

6.5. Other bodies (projects, NGO's, civil society organisations, etc.)

External actors provide support to farmers' organisations and play a central role in creating local capacities for collaborative reflection and action. Their role is determinant in facilitating farmer access to technical, economic, and organisational advice, and even access to "policy" information in areas relating to choice of economic and agricultural policies. This is even more the case in the current period of transition in the modalities of providing support to farmers' organisations. When research is deficient, these bodies partially assume certain functions, usually depending on their particular competencies.

In certain regions, however, the multiplicity of development actors, each with their own intervention strategies and support for specific technologies (e.g. forest Guinea), tends to reinforce the opportunistic behaviour of farmers. It also slows down the process of formation of farmers' federations.

This situation often results in poor coordination between these interventions and an absence of organised farmer groups in the regional coordination bodies that define regional development strategies.

7. Recommendations: action necessary to promote improved research-farmers' organisation-extension linkages in Coraf member countries

These recommendations are proposals aimed at CORAF and NARS members. Their aim is directed towards strengthening processes of technology generation and dissemination, which may jointly support farmers' organisations, civil society organisations and NARS. These proposals are presented in a succinct manner around the following complementary headings. They could also, eventually, feed into the current process of reflection among CORAF members on the development of a strategic plan for CORAF.

7.1. How can the emergence and strengthening of farmer's organisations be supported?

This question is a prerequisite to establishing real collaboration with research, but the question goes beyond the strict framework of this study, which only throws partial light on it.

State and aid agencies have a decisive role to play in this process

The State can act at the following levels: providing an appropriate and flexible legal framework; the definition and guarantee of respect for the rules of the game in the economy; skills transfer through training; and the allocation of resources, even resources from the national budget, provided that organisations are effectively meeting the needs of the wider public interest.

Multilateral and bilateral aid agencies offer key assistance to the emergence and strengthening of organisational dynamics (CILSS platform, CRS, Coopération Française, Coopération Suisse, Club du Sahel, etc.). In programmes for supporting farmers' organisations, certain NGO's, projects and various civil society organisations play a key role in strengthening these dynamics.

The process of strengthening farmers' organisations has to specifically address the division of tasks and responsibilities between the different partners: research, extension and farmers' organisations. Depending on context and on the capacities of farmers' organisations, their involvement in taking on responsibilities will be stronger or weaker. It is important that research funds are accessible to farmers' organisations to allow them to effectively "demand" research from the research system. These funds could complement funds generated by farmers'

organisations themselves – as is the case, for example, in certain structured sectors (e.g. coffee and cocoa production and marketing in Cameroon).

The studies carried out here demonstrate that certain principles need to be respected in interventions aimed at strengthening farmers' organisations:

- the existence of concrete reasons that motivate producers to join together;
- concerted definition of modalities of assistance, built around concrete activities that contribute to improving members' incomes;
- joint reflection within the organisation on defining the priority functions to be guaranteed by the organisation and its relationship with other actors.

These questions can only be tackled through the use of participatory approaches.

Concerted co-ordination seems indispensable: co-ordination between donors, the State, farmers' organisations and civil society organisations is required to define coherent modalities of intervention in step with producers' expectations. The dissipation of the collective strength of organisations and opportunistic behaviour would certainly be reduced.

7.2. How can extension services and research organisations be assisted to take account of farmers' organisations' needs and requests

7.2.1. A global incentive framework

This refers to the need for strategic programming for research, where the need to support to farmers' and civil society organisations is explicitly taken into account. Further, it is necessary to institute career incentives for researchers (such as the recent CAMES), but also for extension services, which should have a similar incentive framework encouraging collaboration with farmers' organisations.

It is also necessary to relate interventions to the level of organisation of farmers in specific contexts.

Where farmers' organisations can address the economic conditions of farm level production (both upstream and downstream), it will be possible for the actors to undertake joint identification of research and extension themes. If these minimum conditions are not met, it seems more sensible as a first step to target interventions at building capacities for collective action around sectors, starting with the establishment of producer services. Other areas of general interest (social, infrastructure, etc.) also constitute opportunities for strengthening the capacities of organisations to meet the demands of members.

7.2.2. A clear division of tasks

The division of tasks between farmers' organisations, research and extension must be carefully defined:

- joint identification of constraints and core objectives (shared responsibility);
- translation into research topics (responsibility of research);
- joint validation of research topics. Relevance compared with actual problems/the aims of farmers (shared responsibility);
- carrying out research (responsibility of research);
- presentation and validation of results (shared responsibility).

7.2.3. Specific directions for research

Agricultural research institutions should take care to:

- develop training of, and exchanges between, researchers on these topics - based on concrete case study analysis;
- use of existing networks to favour the circulation of information on these topics;
- participation of research in the processes of jointly defining regional development priorities which set out a negotiated framework for future interventions;
- ranking research in collaboration and consultation with farmers' organisations.

7.3. How can farmers' organisations and civil society actors be assisted in formulating requests and participating in research processes?

In order to realise this objective, actions will be needed that:

- generally strengthen the dynamics of farmers' organisations key interests which have direct economic consequences for family farms;
- support initiatives favouring the dissemination of knowledge on successful collaboration between research and farmers' organisations;
- restore the sometimes reduced confidence between actors (research and farmers' organisations, but also farmers' lack of confidence in collective action);
- promote participatory methodologies, that strengthen farmers' organisations and increase their autonomy;
- establish specific funds for research as part of development projects, which support capacity-building activities aimed at farmers' organisations and the development of contractual relations with research and extension.

Research organisations need to have access to funds earmarked for the development of deeper collaboration with farmers' organisations so that they can elaborate specific programmes or activities that are adapted to serve farmers' organisation needs. In addition, farmers' organisations need access to funds that allow them to commission research on themes that are identified jointly with researchers.

7.4. How can the capacity of the three actors working together be strengthened?

The challenge of establishing effective collaboration between the three actors will be facilitated by:

- the joint definition of regional development priorities and the demand of key stakeholders on which matters relating to specific research activities can be based;
- the implementation of effective frameworks for collaboration between research and extension which include structured farmers' organisations at least two geographic levels (the village and small region);
- the ability of farmers' organisations to mobilise funds to provide incentives to research;
- the development and implementation of training modules on: the benefits of partnerships; improving communication and dialogue between the different actors; and increasing the awareness of researchers and extension agents regarding the demands of farmers' organisations;
- the implementation of effective communication systems between research, extension, and farmers' organisations, so as to inform the organisations on the services that research and extension can offer, and, especially, with a view to encouraging the joint construction of farmers' organisation requests;
- the ability of extension services to redefine their approach so that it is more responsive to the specific needs of farmers' organisations;
- strengthening the ability of research to form multidisciplinary research teams using proven participatory methodologies, and improving capitalisation on the skills of systemic agronomists and social scientists;
- the creation of appropriate mechanisms that provide incentives construct the rules of the game (measures that ease farmers' organisation access to public sector funds within the framework of development projects) for development interventions, in synergy and partnership with public sector services and farmers' organisations - based on their respective competencies, complemen-

tarities and comparative advantage (i.e. development of contractual relations with specific organisations capable of providing particular services).

The participation of farmers' organisations in coordination bodies with research and extension certainly represents progress, but this remains insufficient if not linked with a process of training and capacity building for farmers' organisations so that these can address technical and economic issues effectively.

Similarly, research and extension should be able to benefit from support to enable them to better understand the dynamics of farmers' organisations and increase their articulation with farmers' organisations. This can be done through jointly formulating research requests and participation in a joint reflection on how agricultural services can promote processes of technology generation and dissemination.

It is clear that CORAF could play an active role in the creation of conditions that favour such linkages.

8. Perspectives

The study has shown that partnerships between research, extension and farmers' organisations present certain advantages for enhancing the impact of research and agricultural services in general. Further, the synergy in "research-extension-farmers' organisations" can be promoted in the various contexts studied here using flexible instruments relevant to the potential of each local context (key interests that bring farmers to join together, levels of organisation) and complementarities between the various actors.

Following this study, it may be interesting for certain CORAF member countries to implement a joint process between NARS and farmers' organisations aiming to construct linkages over time. This goes beyond developing farmers' organisation capacities to formulate requests for research. It also goes beyond establishing action plans at the level of NARS. In order to benefit from synergies, it would be beneficial to combine two approaches in each country: one "through farmers' organisations", the other "through research".

8.1. Working through organisations

Distribution of results of this study to farmers' organisations. This action could be carried out within the framework of capacity-building support from the Club du Sahel and could take the

form of a workshop with representatives of farmers' organisations from West and Central Africa. The core objectives of such a workshop would be:

- informing officials of organisations of the results of this study;
- disseminating these methodologies among other organisations using existing networks;
- gathering reactions from farmers' organisation representatives;
- contribution by farmers' organisation representatives to programming activities for a second phase of this initiative, placing an emphasis on strengthening the competencies of farmers' organisations on these issues;
- opening a forum for discussion between farmers and aid agencies on these topics;
- the joint development of a "request" to research involving a limited number of farmers' organisations (and in collaboration with the corresponding NARS): establishing approaches and tools enabling organisations to strengthen their autonomy in communicating with research.

8.2. Working through NARS

An approach through the NARS could include the following:

- Dissemination of the results of this study to NARS members of CORAF.
- drawing up action plans with a limited number of NARS to implement a process aiming to elaborate mechanisms for coordination with farmers' organisations and other actors.

NARS action plans would be set up around the following themes:

- appreciation of the nature of effective linkages between research and farmers' organisations;
- comparative analysis of problems encountered in partnerships and the conditions for success of such partnerships where they exist;
- socio-economic evaluation of the social and institutional effects of partnerships.
- Assessment of the conditions that favour the establishment of partnerships.

The objective would be to define the modalities of changes necessary to achieve a better consideration of organised producers' demands by NARS.

8.3. Strengthening the expertise of CORAF

8.3.1. Support for the emergence of network expertise on farmers' organisations within CORAF

If CORAF considers this topic important, it would certainly be useful to strengthen the emergence of network expertise within CORAF on questions relating to the development of

linkages between research and farmers' organisations. Approaches "through farmers' organisations" on the one hand, and through NARS on the other, could provide the basis on which such expertise can be formed.

8.3.2. Capitalising on the results of this study in CORAF countries

Beyond actor-specific approaches (farmers' organisations and research/extension), it is also appropriate to analyse the opportunities to and channels possible for strengthening partnerships between research, extension and farmers' organisations. Further, the institutional contribution of CORAF in capitalising on the results of the study may lie in:

- strengthening the capacity of actors (research, farmers' organisations and extension) to work in partnership by supporting the development and implementation of training modules adapted to different audiences (decision-makers and operators); this will depend on the institutional circumstances in each country. Such a process will improve the disposition of the research and extension systems to pay attention to "requests" from organisations. It will also improve the overall impact of agricultural services in the different countries;
- provision, by CORAF, of information that can guide the strategic choices of decision-makers in its member countries. The study revealed that well-organised and successful partnerships had very positive consequences in terms of impact on research and extension services. The evaluation of these impacts, in relation to an assessment of the ways in which research and extension services engaged in partnerships with farmers' organisations are organised, should provide CORAF with a range of elements that assist decision-making. The resulting framework should enable agricultural policy decision-makers in CORAF member countries to make appropriate choices regarding organisational frameworks that effectively promote the generation and dissemination of technologies.

APPENDICES

ANNEXES I. Méthodologie

APPENDIX II. Report plan/guide for information needed in country studies

APPENDIX III. Summary of workshop proceedings and conclusions
Coraf Workshop in Dakar, 27-29 January 1999

APPENDIX IV. Table: summary of case studies in five countries

APPENDIX V. Participants list

ANNEXE I

Méthodologie

L'équipe a travaillé autour d'une méthodologie élaborée collectivement.

On peut distinguer plusieurs étapes présentées séquentiellement, mais qui dans la pratique se sont sensiblement chevauchées.

Dans une première étape, une proposition d'étude a été soumise à la Coraf, lors de son assemblée plénière de 1997, à Ndjaména sur la base des termes de référence qu'elle avait proposés.

Une seconde étape a consisté à amorcer une recherche bibliographique tout en élaborant un cadre d'analyse qui a été soumis à discussion lors de la séance plénière d'Accra en 1998. Le choix des pays s'est fait sur la base de plusieurs critères objectifs : les réponses des Snra (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Gambie) à la proposition faite par la Coraf de participer à l'étude, les connaissances de l'équipe de certaines situations (Guinée et Cameroun), les conditions de sécurité (la Sierra Leone n'a pas été retenue malgré son intention de collaborer), la répartition entre les pays anglophones et francophones.

Un atelier s'est ensuite tenu à Montpellier en juin 1998. Il a permis de réaliser la programmation des études de terrain, des ajustements sur le cadre d'analyse et de préparer un canevas commun pour l'analyse et la rédaction des études de cas (voir ci-après).

La première mission au Burkina Faso a permis de confronter le cadre d'analyse retenu au terrain et de procéder à des modifications dans la conduite des travaux d'enquêtes. Cette première étude de cas a également consolidé l'équipe en termes de construction d'une approche collective et d'une vision commune des questions abordées. Les autres terrains ont renforcé cette dimension d'équipe.

Un atelier de synthèse s'est ensuite déroulé à Montpellier fin novembre 1998. Il a permis la mise en commun des différentes études de cas et a abouti à l'élaboration du plan détaillé de la synthèse qui a été rédigée par la suite. L'atelier de Dakar de fin janvier 1999 a pour objectif de présenter et valider ces travaux et d'en dégager des pistes d'action pour la phase II de ce projet.

APPENDIX II

Report plan/guide for information needed in country studies

1. Overall economic and institutional context at the national level and at the regional level (regions where case studies are being undertaken)

1.1 General conditions at the national level

- Macro-economic evolution of the food and agriculture sectors of the economy
- Agricultural policies and their consequences for producers in terms of the upstream and downstream environment for production (access to credit and to the means of production; access to markets; levels of remuneration for different types of production...)
- Decentralisation policy: the role of decentralised, territorial communities/collectivities
- Evolution of civil society; freedom of association

1.2 Historical insights on the institutional organisation of research and on development compared to the current context

- Agricultural research.
- Development organisations (projects; State services; or public plantations etc.).
- Private actors in development (private companies upstream and downstream; private plantations etc.).

1.3 Historical insight on farmers organisations at the national level

- Origin and succinct history of the different categories of organisation (incited by an external interventions or created on the basis of an autonomous process of reflection, self-help movements, federative movements at different geographical levels/scales...).
- Dominant activities and linkages developed by the different categories of organisation with other development organisations.
- Level at which the public authorities, public bodies, para statal organisations and the private sector take associative farmers’ movements into account.

2. Case Studies: Relations between research and farmers’ organisations

Choice of favouring linkages between national research systems and farmers’ organisations while explicitly taking into account the other economic and institutional actors that intervene in the process. Several case studies will be undertaken in each country

Outline plan for each case study

2.1. The environment/context

2.1.1. Characteristics of the physical environment: challenges and potential

2.1.2. Institutional conditions of development

2.1.3. Organisational dynamics

Farmers' organisations but also other forms of organisation that are able to play a role in the dissemination of information and/or socio-professional organisations structured around activities related to production (eg women's associations for processing agricultural products...)

2.2. Relations between research and farmers' organisations

2.2.1. Defining and describing linkages: definition of research priorities; type of problem studied; nature/shape of the linkage; duration; objectives; means and modalities of financial support; respective roles of partners; actions undertaken

2.2.2. Specific conditions for establishing linkages: historical elements on the origins of linkages; identification of catalyst/driving force behind the establishment of linkages; the process by which linkages are constructed

2.2.3. Conditions for the ways in which linkages unfold/develop: identification of specific events that occurred during the linkage which have been able to positively or negatively influence the results of the action or actions undertaken (for example: change in price of a factor of production that is of central importance to the favourable or unfavourable change in the price of the product being studied)

2.2.4. The role of organisations in the process: defining and describing the specific role of the organisation in the research process: what type and degree of participation by the organisation; what shape does this participation take?; what means exist for monitoring and checking this participation? what kind of programme is in place for the training of the members of the organisation participating in this process, and how does it function?

2.3 Results

- Achievements and limits of this framework for cooperation: critical analysis of the successes and difficulties encountered
- Results obtained: extent to which results are valid; ways in which the results have been disseminated; evaluation of the impact of these results; quantitative analysis of the results obtained
- Do the activities undertaken in partnership with research institutions contribute to the strengthening of the intrinsic abilities of the organisation to reflect and act? In what way? How can this be assessed and according to what criteria?
- The effects of the linkage: by starting with a research activity on a specific technical issue

relating to a specific type of production, is the overall research problematic enlarged to cover other elements of the farming system? Concerning this specific type of production, has there been a broadening of research questions that focus on: the downstream aspects of production (conservation, processing, marketing...); the external environment within which production takes place (agricultural policy or regional policies)? If so, why? What mechanisms have allowed such a broadening of research questions to take place? What are the main actors involved in this process?

Qualitative assessment of arguments that can explain these results:

- - based on aspects of the context
- - based on the specific conditions of the partnership.

2.4 Lessons

Putting the results into perspective:

- according to the specific agricultural contexts (type of farming system, organisational dynamics, economic and institutional context)
- according to questions resulting from the analysis of the collaboration between research and farmers' organisations:- identification of requests for research and formulation of research questions;
- articulation between the different types of research (systems approach; thematic approach);
- strengthening farmers' organisations and effective participation in the research process.

APPENDIX III

Summary of workshop proceedings and conclusions CORAF Workshop in Dakar, 27-29 January 1999

1. Background

On 27-29 January 1999 a workshop on the theme of AStrengthening research-extension-farmers' organisation linkages in West and Central Africa was organised by CORAF in Dakar. This workshop was part of a research project being undertaken for CORAF, also funded by UK DFID, the French Ministère de la Coopération and the European Commission. This project was started at the initiative of CORAF.

The study was organised as follows.

An international team was constituted. It was asked to implement a research programme guided by CORAF and in close collaboration with the NARS of the countries concerned.

Case studies were analysed in 6 countries of West and Central Africa: Burkina Faso; Cameroon; The Gambia; Ghana; Guinea and Nigeria. The team experienced an excellent level of collaboration and co-operation at every level during the field studies.

An overview paper was written based on the case studies. This highlighted observations drawn from the diversity and quality of the experiences studied. Lessons and recommendations were formulated.

2. Objectives of the Dakar Workshop

2.1. Overall goal of the Workshop

The Dakar Workshop constituted one of the essential stages of the study, and its overall objective was to feed back the preliminary results of the study to the main stakeholders concerned.

2.2. Specific objectives of the Workshop

The Workshop brought together the CORAF Secretariat and the Executive Committee, Directors of national agricultural research institutes (NARI's), representatives of farmers' organisations in the countries studied, as well as partner institutions and donor representatives.

The Workshop had three specific objectives:

- to inform Workshop participants of the results of the study and to validate the conclusions drawn from the case studies;
- to formulate recommendations that would facilitate further development of linkages between research, extension, farmers' organisations and other concerned elements of civil society and to make these relationships as productive as possible;
- to analyse possible follow-up activities with the different parties concerned.

3. Organisation of the Workshop

The workshop was organised as follows:

(i) Plenary sessions devoted to the presentation and discussion of the different reports produced by the study:

- Country reports on the case studies in each country;
- Overview paper;
- Suggestions for follow-up activities.

(ii) Working Groups, the aim of which were to analyse the different country reports in depth.

The debates in the Working Groups as well as in the plenary sessions were lively and rich.

4. Conclusions on the country studies

The case studies presented were analysed in detail and were validated by the NARI directors, representatives of extension services, and farmers' organisations present at the Workshop. Clarifications, corrections and additional information were offered by participants, and these enabled the team to refine the analyses presented. These will be incorporated into the final versions of the reports.

The debates on the country case studies focused on three areas:

the position of research, extension and farmers' organisations is different in each country. However, it was noted that in all cases there were important institutional changes linked to the disengagement of the State, economic liberalisation and decentralisation. These have the effect of encouraging a re-think of the division of responsibilities between public sector research and extension bodies, farmers' organisations whose capacities are growing or who are gaining more autonomy, and other economic and institutional stakeholders;

a strong relationship between research and farmers' organisations seems to be an important means by which technology generation can be encouraged and assisted in rural areas. This is the case both for the development of appropriate technologies and in their dissemination among farmers;

numerous current projects show that strong relationships between research and farmers' organisations are possible and fruitful. They also raise issues that need to be studied further, using lessons from existing practice.

Four key issues arose out of the debates.

The need to strengthen farmers' organisations so that their ability to adapt to the economic and institutional changes taking place in their countries, and the resulting relationships with research and extension, are improved.

The need to strengthen linkages and the apparatus for dialogue between research, extension and farmers' organisations. This will involve establishing co-ordination and co-operation bodies. The ways in which farmers' organisations are represented in these structures must be clarified and changes have to be made in the way in which research and extension are practised. The resources to enable this to happen must also be identified.

The need for farmers' organisations to finance research is recognised as centrally important. How can the resources required by farmers' organisations to do this be mobilised? What mechanisms must be established so that farmers' organisations are able to pay for research in practice?

Issues related to external interference in the functioning of farmers' organisations. In practice, some States attempt to use farmers' organisations to achieve their own political objectives; furthermore, the exclusive application of top-down approaches to development constitutes a form of interference.

5. General recommendations

Broadly speaking, the Workshop validated the recommendations presented in the overview paper. The debates enabled the team to develop these recommendations, particularly with regard to the following points.

5.1 Strengthening farmers' organisations

The strengthening of the capacities of farmers' organisations is a pre-requisite for balanced and productive partnerships between research and farmers' organisations. Particular attention needs to be paid to the following points.

Institutional support for farmers' organisations (information, training, use of participatory methodologies, equipment and financeY.) is required so that they will have the capacity to ensure that the requests of their members rise from the grassroots to the top of the organisation, and that they will possess the ability to formalise these requests and disseminate the results obtained. This support could strengthen internal communication and the links between farmers' representatives and the grassroots, thus improving the representativity, legitimacy, and hence effectiveness of farmers' organisations.

Financing mechanisms should be established which allow farmers' organisations to commission research programmes. Such funding could not come solely from farmers/members of farmers' organisations. It could include, for example, State resources made available to farmers' organisations and used by them as a function of their needs.

Initiatives to strengthen farmers' organisations must be based on a secure socio-political and legal context.

The establishment of frameworks for collaboration and co-ordination (at the local, regional and national levels) should strengthen the capacities of farmers' organisations to make propositions and to negotiate with, for example, research and extension services.

Donors should be prepared to consider proposals aiming to facilitate the access of farmers' organisations to funds reserved for capacity building.

5.2 Research

Research institutions have to create conditions that encourage dialogue with other actors. The ability to do this depends on:

the regionalisation of agricultural research so as to improve its orientation towards operational

research;
the development of systems approaches to agricultural research (e.g. FSR);
strengthening capacities for socio-economic analysis;
participation in a collaborative definition of regional development priorities;
implementation of participatory methodologies and approaches which results in the establishment of a real and continuous dialogue with farmers;
(C) the creation of conditions and incentives (career and remuneration packages) which encourage researchers to collaborate with farmers' organisations (e.g. CAMES).

5.3 Extension

Extension services have to be involved in this process, in a flexible way, with linkages defined according to specific contexts, but taking into account:

the reorganisation of agricultural support services that is currently taking place in most countries in the region;
the technical advisory and support role for farmers that has been taken up by some farmers' organisations.

5.4 Establishing fora for co-ordination and co-operation

Co-ordination and collaboration bodies that link representatives of agricultural research, extension and farmers' organisations seem to be indispensable. The following points were made.

Such fora can be constructed at the regional and/or national level.
They require specific support geared to strengthening their internal capacities and their effectiveness. Donors can provide support for such measures. For example, the World Bank supports these structures through its national level agricultural support programmes (ASP).
The sustainability of fora for collaboration must be sought through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for national/endogenous funding.

5.5 The role of NGO's

NGO's have played, and continue to play, an important role in the strengthening of farmers' organisations. However, while their role as intermediaries is useful and sometimes indispensable, it is important to avoid their intervention acting as an obstacle to the establishment of direct relations between organised producers and other economic and institutional stakeholders. It is also necessary to address the problem of the sustainability of farmers' organisations after NGO's cease to provide financial support.

6. Ways forward

The discussions on possible ways forward were organised around the following three questions:

How can the results of this study be disseminated to all stakeholders and made full use of by farmers' organisations, research institutions, extension services and other key actors?

Is there an interest in developing action plans for collaboration, adapted to specific national contexts?

How can CORAF's capacity to promote Research-Extension-Farmers' Organisation partnerships be strengthened?

With regard to the first point, it was agreed that it was necessary to make full use of the results of this study: using them to encourage reflection on these issues at a national and regional level. At the national level, it was suggested that feedback workshops be organised, bringing together all the stakeholders involved in this process (research, extension services, farmers' organisation, NGO's, private sector organisationsY.).

The proposition to organise a workshop with farmers' organisation representatives (with the support of the Club du Sahel) was positively received.

On the second point, national action plans could, if required, be elaborated following these different workshops. CORAF could support the drawing up and implementation of these action plans.

On the third point, CORAF re-affirmed its interest in the theme central to this study, and its desire to take forward and operationalise the results of this work. Hence:

the recommendations agreed at the Workshop will be presented at the CORAF Plenary in July 1999 for approval;

the core principles of collaboration between the different stakeholders B principles at the heart of this study B will constitute an essential element in the current development of the Strategic Plan

CORAF is very keen to see that, following the finalisation of reports (taking account of the comments made at the Workshop), full use is made of the results of this study in all its member countries

CORAF will develop other practical proposals to encourage collaboration between research, extension services and farmers' organisations for the CORAF Plenary meeting to be held in Bangui in July 1999.

7. Practical recommendations and ways forward

(as agreed with the CORAF Executive Committee on 29 January, 1999)

Preparation of brief summaries of each country study and of the overview paper for use in the process of elaborating the CORAF Strategic Plan (end March).

Holding national-level workshops in countries interested in the theme of research-extension-farmers' organisation linkages. These workshops would be organised by the national agricultural research institutes. Leaders of farmers' organisations and representatives from extension services would be invited to participate. These workshops would aim to: (i) disseminate the results of this study; (ii) make researchers aware of the need to take farmers' organisations into account; and (iii) begin moving towards collaborating with certain farmers' organisations. Some consultants from the study team could participate in these workshops if desired. The national agricultural research institutes would take on the responsibility for preparing these workshops and raising the funds necessary to hold them, with the support of

CORAF if necessary (dates to be fixed in each country according to the convenience of NARI's)

Preparation of the finalised and edited reports for the presentation of the whole study to the CORAF Plenary in July 1999.

Dissemination of the study reports after the CORAF Plenary has approved them. A plan for disseminating the reports in the CORAF region and a budget for this need to be drawn up and presented to the CORAF Plenary in July 1999.

Preparation of a short, accessible and illustrated overview paper to be distributed widely in the region. A budget should be prepared for this (preparation and distribution costs) and submitted to the 1999 CORAF Plenary for consideration.

Preparation of sets of transparencies for the feedback of the study's results by interested farmers' organisations, by NARI's during the national level workshop and for the proposed Club du Sahel-supported workshop. These transparencies could be quickly prepared using those presented at the Dakar Workshop. CORAF would have to mobilise the resources necessary to do this in the near future.

Preparation of the workshop organised in collaboration with the Club du Sahel. The participants would largely be farmers' organisation leaders. However, it would certainly be advisable to include a limited number of NARI researchers (3, for example) who have already displayed an interest in collaborating with farmers' organisations and other civil society organisations, and have been given a mandate to represent CORAF and their NARI's. This will help to ensure that NARI's develop their awareness of the importance of the theme of partnerships and it should contribute to building expertise within CORAF. CORAF could identify funds that would support the participation of these 3 researchers.

Preparation of a CORAF regional workshop on the theme of strengthening linkages between research, extension services and farmers' organisations. A technical proposal and a budget will be prepared for discussion at the CORAF Plenary, 1999.

Carrying out a study on the theme of strengthening linkages between research, extension services and farmers' organisations in Cape Verde. The study team could undertake such a study on the request of INIA, which would be responsible for finding funds (with the support of CORAF).

Translated from the original French. KH, ITAD Ltd, 3/2/99

APPENDIX IV

Table: summary of case studies in five countries

Country	Case	Type of collective structure involved with research	Size of collective structure	Origin of the request	Type of linkage between research and actors involved	Main source of funding for partnership	Response of research
BURKINA FASO	1	Niébé (cowpea) producer groups via the diocese of Diebougou	Producer groups of varying size (10-20 members), more than 1600 farmers involved. Diocese, Catholic organisation covering 4 administrative provinces with nearly 672,000 inhabitants	Diocese expressed request on behalf of farmers in region	Indirect contract. Research/producers (diocese signed contract with research on behalf of producers)	NGO support (Jean-Paul II Foundation for Sahel) Project (PRSAP)	Institutional response: establishment of a support team comprising researchers and research technician
	2	Farmers' organisation (FUGN)	Farmers' organisation covering 26 administrative provinces and having approx. 500,000 members	Farmers' organisation: FUGN expressed request directly	Direct contract between farmers' organisation and research: FUGN signed contract directly with INERA	Project (USAID) Producers via their subsequent organisations	Institutional response: support team put in place comprising researchers and research technicians
	3	Farmers' organisation: FUGN (Basnere women's centre)	Farmers' organisation covering 26 administrative provinces and having approx. 500,000 members	Farmer's organisation: FUGN expressed request directly	Direct contract between farmers' organisation and research (Institut Burkinabe de l'Energie)	Producers via their organisations – NGO (CEAS ATESTA)	Institutional response: support team established; one researcher given responsibility for linkages
GUINEA	1	Farmer's organisation (FNPCG)	Farmers' organisation comprising 5 Prefectorial Unions and having 10,000 members	Development project (RC2 project); farmers' organisation has played secondary role	Direct contract signed between research (IRAG), project (RC2) and farmers' organisation (FNPCG)	Development project (RC2)	Institutional response. Organisation of a research team from Centre de Recherche Agronomique de Seredou (CRAS)
	2	Farmers' organisation (FPFD)	Farmers' organisation comprising 16 area unions at the zonal level with 11,000 members .	Farmers' organisation: FPFD expressed request directly	Direct contract with farmers' organisation (FPFD) and research (IRAG-Bareng Centre) on the one part and between FO and extension (SNPRV) on the other part.	Farmers' organisation through external funding (Coopération Française)	Institutional response. Detachment of a researcher to a farmers' organisation

Country	Case	Type of collective structure involved with research	Size of collective structure	Origin of the request	Type of linkage between research and actors involved	Main source of funding for partnership	Response of research
CAMEROON	1	Farmers' organisation: (APROSTOC)	Farmers' organisation: (APROSTOC)	Farmers' organisation: request came from the group of producers	Direct three-party contract: Research (IRAD)/Project (DPGT)/ Farmers' Organisation (APROSTOC)	Development project (DPGT)	individual response: Researcher directly involved from the centre (Yaoundé)
	2	Farmers' organisation (FEPRODEX)	Farmers' organisation with more than 160 Common Initiative Groups (CIG's) concerned with onion production, with approximately 1600 members	FEPRODEX does not yet have capacity to express requests; the few requests expressed were made through DPGT	No linkage; the few requests made had no response from research	N/A	No response from research: failure of research faced with request from OP
	3	Farmers' organisation (Coopérative Tigné)	Farmers' organisation with 84 individual members plus 20 CIG (8-10 persons per CIG)	Request expressed through a Canadian NGO (PDEA)	Indirect contract between IRAD researcher and farmers' organisation (through an NGO); contract signed between NGO (PDEA) and research (IRAD)	Support NGO (PDEA)	Individual response: one isolated, motivated researcher worked to answer requests from FO (lack of engagement of research at the institutional level)
THE GAMBIA	1	Contact groups	Contact groups formed for extension and research-development purposes: 3 contact producers are involved at Ndembanjola	Request made by extension (LADEP Project) on behalf of producers	Contract signed between research (NARI) and extension (LADEP) on behalf of producers	Extension (LADEP Project)	Institutional response: introduction of support team comprising one researcher and research engineers
	2	Farmers' organisation	Farmers' organisation (Nyameng Kunda Apex) covering 48 villages with approx. 4,000 members	No request made to research as such	No contract; FO works above all with ActionAid The Gambia (AATG)	NGO's (AATG and Catholic Relief Service - CRS) support FO	No direct connection with research

Country	Case	Type of collective structure involved with research	Size of collective structure	Origin of the request	Type of linkage between research and actors involved	Main source of funding for partnership	Response of research
GHANA	1	Contact groups	Contact groups formed for extension purposes: 10-20 individual producers per contact group	Request (Metal Jap Planter) identified and formulated by extension services	No contract: direct relations through daily work of extension	Extension	Team of researchers working directly with producers and extension workers
	2	Contact groups	Contact groups formed for extension purposes: 10-20 individual producers per contact group	Request (use of Roundup dry for no-till maize) made by private firm (MONSANTO)	No contract: direct work linkage between researchers, extension and producers	Private firm (MONSANTO) Extension NGO (SG 2000)	Team of researchers working directly with producers and extension workers
	3	Private company	Private company (Seed Company, Barbex Technical Services Ltd)	Request (acid soils management) expressed by through a private company	Contract between company (Seed Company, Barbex Technical Services Ltd) and research (Soil Research Institute)	Private company (Seed company, Barbex Technical Services Ltd)	Institutional response of research to request from company: team of researchers working directly with private company and producers in the area
	4	Farmers' organisation	Farmers' organisation (Asuoyeboa co-operative Society, Ashanti region), 20 members	No request expressed as such; FO works with extension and research (CRI)	No contract: simple day-to-day contacts through work	Project Support NGO (SG 2000)	Not organised: research collaborates with extension and FO for demonstration and dissemination of technologies
	5	Informal producers Group (Sugria) (community seed production group)	Small informal group with 10 members from the same family; there were 58 similar groups in 8 districts in the region in 1998, but no connection between them	No request made as such: FO works with extension and research on cowpea seed production and soya for resale in surrounding areas (SARI)	No contract with research; linkages with National Seed Services only. Role of research (SARI) limited to supply of improved seeds. Informal linkages with extension for reimbursement of credit for inputs	Extension (National Seed Service/MOFA)	Not organised: research (SARI) supplies mainly basic seed
	6	Cotton producers' groups and farmers' organisation	No research organisation involved; GCC supplies inputs and buys the cotton produced which it then markets	Farmers' organisation encouraged by extension agents of Ghana Cotton Company. No requests to research; extension workers of GCC answer technical questions. Members of groups are in process of formulating request to GCC to increase cotton purchase prices	No linkages with research	GCC	No research organisation involved; GCC supplies inputs and buys the cotton produced which it then markets

APPENDIX V

Participants list, Coraf workshop 27-29 January 1999

Jean Sibiri ZOUNDI
Chargé de Recherches
GRNSP, INERA
04 BP. 8645 Ouagadougou 04
Tel. 226 34 40 12 / 34 02 70
Fax. 226 34 02 71
E-mail. zoundi@hotmail.com
Zoundi@fasonet.bf
B. FASO

José Gabriel LEVY
Président INIDA
CP. 84, Praia
Tel. 238 71 11 47 / 27
Fax. 238 71 11 33
E-mail. lnida@mail.cvtelecom.cv
Jozulevy@mail.cvtelecom.cv
CAP VERT

Karim HUSSEIN
Senior Consultant ITAD Ltd
Lion House, Ditchling Common Industrial Estate,
Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8SL,
Tel. 44 1444 248088
Fax. 44 1444 248763
E-mail. k.hussein@itad.com
Website : www.itad.com
ENGLAND

Jacob AYUK-TAKEM
DG IRAD
BP. 2123, Yaoundé
Tel. 237 23 35 38
Fax. 237 23 35 38
E-mail. lradhq@sdnecmr.undp.org
CAMEROUN

Boubacar D. CISSE
Directeur CNERV
BP. 167, Nouakchott
Tel. 222 25 28 03
Fax. 222 25 28 03
E-mail. cnerv@calvapro.fr
MAURITANIE

J.C. NORMAN
Deputy Director General CSIR
PO Box. M32
Tel. 233 21 76 01 66
Fax. 233 21 77 98 09
E-mail. norman@ucs.gh.com
GHANA

Nicole SIBELET
CIRAD-TERA
BP. 5035 34032 Montpellier Cedex 1
Tel. 04 67 61 59 08
Fax. 04 67 61 12 23
E-mail. sibele@cirad.fr
FRANCE

James Adewuyi AKINWUMI
Researcher
Geomatics Nigeria Limited
Dept. Of Agric. Econs Univ. Of Ibadan
Tel. 234 02 24 11 977 : 02 810 34 61
Fax. 234 02 2413786 / 2412723
E-mail. geoniger98@hotmail.com
NIGERIA

Lang KINTEH
President National Farmers Platform
C/o NARI
Tel. 72 01 30 Njawara N.B.O
GAMBIA

Samuel BRUCE-OLIVER
Director General NARI
PMB 526, Serekunda
Tel. 220 48 49 25
Fax. 220 48 49 21
E-mail. sbo@qanet.gm
THE GAMBIA

Prosper OUEDRAOGO
Agriculteur
01 BP. 5226 Ouagadougou 01
Tel. 226 30 65 27 / 35 60 17
Fax. 226 30 60 28
BURKINA FASO

Jean Sibiri ZOUNDI
Chargé de Recherches
GRNSP, INERA
04 BP. 8645 Ouagadougou 04
Tel. 226 34 40 12 / 34 02 70
Fax. 226 34 02 71
E-mail. zoundi@hotmail.com
Zoundi@fasonet.bf
B. FASO

José Gabriel LEVY
Président INIDA
CP. 84, Praia
Tel. 238 71 11 47 / 27
Fax. 238 71 11 33
E-mail. lnida@mail.cvtelecom.cv
Jozulevy@mail.cvtelecom.cv
CAP VERT

Karim HUSSEIN
Senior Consultant ITAD Ltd
Lion House, Ditchling Common Industrial Estate,
Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8SL,
Tel. 44 1444 248088
Fax. 44 1444 248763
E-mail. k.hussein@itad.com
Website : www.itad.com
ENGLAND

Jacob AYUK-TAKEM
DG IRAD
BP. 2123, Yaoundé
Tel. 237 23 35 38
Fax. 237 23 35 38
E-mail. iradhq@sdncomr.undp.org
CAMEROUN

Boubacar D. CISSE
Directeur CNERV
BP. 167, Nouakchott
Tel. 222 25 28 03
Fax. 222 25 28 03
E-mail. cnerv@calvapro.fr
MAURITANIE

J.C. NORMAN
Deputy Director General CSIR
PO Box. M32
Tel. 233 21 76 01 66
Fax. 233 21 77 98 09
E-mail. naipecsi@ucs.gh.com
GHANA

Nicole SIBELET
CIRAD-TERA
BP. 5035 34032 Montpellier Cedex 1
Tel. 04 67 61 59 08
Fax. 04 67 61 12 23
E-mail. sibeler@cirad.fr
FRANCE

James Adewuyi AKINWUMI
Researcher
Geomatics Nigeria Limited
Dept. Of Agric. Econs Univ. Of Ibadan
Tel. 234 02 24 11 977 : 02 810 34 61
Fax. 234 02 2413786 / 2412723
E-mail. geoniger98@hotmail.com
NIGERIA

Lang KINTEH
President National Farmers Platform
C/o NARI
Tel. 72 01 30 Njawara N.B.O
GAMBIA

Samuel BRUCE-OLIVER
Director General NARI
PMB 526, Serekunda
Tel. 220 48 49 25
Fax. 220 48 49 21
E-mail. sbo@qanet.gm
THE GAMBIA

Prosper OUEDRAOGO
Agriculteur
01 BP. 5226 Ouagadougou 01
Tel. 226 30 65 27 / 35 60 17
Fax. 226 30 60 28
BURKINA FASO

Georges Ebelle KELLE
Secrétaire Exécutif AGROCOM
281 BD de la Liberté
BP. 3118, Douala
Tel. 237 42 20 76 / 42 28 55 / 42 61 39 (direct)
Fax. 237 42 20 35 : 42 61 39
E-mail. pdeagrocom@camnet.cm
CAMEROUN

Nehru ESSOMBA Bengono
Chef Centre IRAD Nkolbisson
POBox. 2067, Yaoundé
Tel. 237 23 88 22 / 23 31 05
Fax. 237 23 35 38
E-mail. iradhq@sdncmr.undp.org
CAMEROUN

Franklin DONKOH
Deputy Director (field Services)
Dept of Agric. Extension
POBox M37, Accra
Tel. 233 21 665287
Fax. 233 21 665282
GHANA

David BROWN
Chercheur ODI
Portland House Stag Place, London, SW1E 5DP
Tel. 44 171 393-1600
Fax. 44 171 393-1699
E-mail. d.brown@odi.org.uk
GRANDE BRETAGNE

Jeremy STICKINGS
Executive Secretary
ECART
Natural Resources international Central Avenue,
Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4TB
Tel. 44 1634 883084
Fax. 44 1634 88 39 37
E-mail. jeremy.stickings@nri.org
ROYAUMES-UNIS

Jeannot ENGOLA OYEP
MINREST Consultant ODI
DP 6323, Yaoundé
Tel. 237 22 52 02
Fax. 237 22 62 62
E-mail. engola@iccnet.cm
CAMEROUN

Sékou BEAVOGUI
Directeur Adjoint IRAG
BP. 1523, Conakry
Tel. 224 41 10 62 / 45 42 62
Fax. 224 41 57 58
E-mail. irag@mirinet.net.gn
GUINEE

Michel DULCIRE
CIRAD-TERA
73 AVEUNE J.F.Breton (Bat 15)
BP. 5035-34032 Montpellier Cedex 1
Tel. 04 67 61 71 17
Fax. 04 67 61 58 1223
E-mail. dulcire@cirad.fr
FRANCE

Marie Rose MERCOIRET
CIRAD-TERA
73, Avenue Jean-François Breton (Bât 15)
BP. 5035-34032 Montpellier Cedex 1
Tel. 04 67 61 59 07 / 04 67 61 56 23
Fax. 04 67 61 12 23
E-mail. mercoiret@cirad.fr
FRANCE

Mamady KOUROUMA
Trésorier de la Fédération des Planteurs de café de Guinée
BP. 3648, Conakry
Tel. / Fax. 41 23 92 ou 91 06 31
GUINEE

Théodore MIANZE
DG ICRA
BP. 122 Lakouanga - Bangui
Tel. 236 61 62 75 / 50 33 12
Fax. 236 50 33 15
E-mail. theodore_mianze@hotmail.com
REP. CENTRAFRICAINE

Marie Hélène COLLION
The World Bank, Africa Region
1818 H Street N.W.
Washington DC 20433
Tel. 1 202 473 49 94
Fax. 1 202 473 82 29
E-mail. mcollion@worldbank.org
USA

Mamadou SYLLA
Technicien maraîcher
Fédération des paysans du Fouta Djallon
Tel. 224 52 62 22 / 52 62 16
Fax. 224 51 01 90
Email. pdelmas@eti-bull.net
GUINEE

Paco SEREME
Directeur INERA
BP 7192, Ouaga
Tel. 226 34 02 70 / 34 40 12
Fax. 34 02 71 : 43 01 74
E-mail. p.sereme@fasonet.bf
B. FASO

Pierre Marie BOSCH
CIRAD-SAR
BP. 5035-34032 Montpellier Cedex 1
Tel. 33 4 67 61 56 2333 4 67 61 56 23
Fax. 33 4 67 61 12 23
E-mail. bosc@cirad.fr
FRANCE

Christian BOURDEL
CIRAD-TERA
73, Avenue Jean François Breton (Bât 15)
BP. 5035-34032 Montpellier Cedex 1
Tel. 04 67 6171 70 / 04 67 61 65 30
Fax. 04 67 61 12 23
E-mail. bourdel@cirad.fr
Telex. 490294 F
FRANCE

Moïse HOUSSOU
INRAB
BP. 884, Cotonou
Tel. 229 30 07 23
Fax. 229 30 37 70
E-mail. inrabdgl@bow.intnet.bi
BENIN

Mamadou Lamine SONKO
Secrétaire Exécutif Cadre de Concertation pour le R&D
CNCR
Avenue Bourguiba x Route du Front de Terre, Lot 63
BP 249, Dakar RP
Tel. 221 827 60 88
Fax. 221 827 41 01
E-mail. cncr@telecomplus.sn
cncr@metissacana.sn
laminesonko@montcity.com
SENEGAL

Ndiaga MBAYE
Secrétaire Exécutif CORAF
BP. 8237 - Dakar Yoff
Tel. 825 96 18
Fax. 825 55 69
E-mail. ndiaga@sonatel.senel.net
SENEGAL

Marcel NWALOZIE
Coordonnateur Scientifique CORAF
BP. 8237 - Dakar Yoff
Tel. 825 96 18 / 825 48 23
Fax. 825 55 69
E-mail. nwalozie@sonatel.senel.net
SENEGAL

Strengthening Research – Extension – Farmers' organisation linkages in West and Central Africa

Overview paper

Summary — This paper presents an overview of the research study conducted as part of the CORAF Initiative on strengthening linkages between agricultural research, extension and farmers' organisations in West and Central Africa (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Cameroon, Ghana and The Gambia). The main objective of the study was to establish the technical, economic and institutional conditions which influence the development of collaborative linkages between agricultural research systems, extension, farmers and their organisations. This overview is based on concrete case studies of agricultural research working with farmers' organisations or organised producers. Among factors which tend to favour the construction of partnerships, we can cite: the existence of a legislative framework favouring the emergence of farmers' organisations; the process of regionalising agricultural research, which helps to bring researchers closer to field level realities; agricultural research having a positive disposition to supporting agricultural development and taking a proactive role in developing ways of linking with farmers' organisations; and the creation of local coordination bodies. However, a certain number of obstacles remain in the way of creating real partnerships: the still limited capacities of farmers' organisations, and their dependence on the development projects that brought them into being; poor development of systems approaches and/or absence of participatory approaches to research; financial and institutional instability, as well as national and sub-regional isolation of national agricultural research institutes. The existence of collaboration between research, extension services and farmers' organisations depends on the partners involved being sufficiently organised, or « structured », so that they can enter into and maintain linkages on equal terms. As a result of this analysis, the study makes a number of propositions for ways forward to Coraf. These are organised according to the following complementary, but distinct, approaches: support for the emergence of farmers' organisations and capacity building measures; assistance to extension services and research organisations in ways of taking the requests or demands of farmers' organisations into account; assistance to farmers' organisations and civil society actors in formulating requests for technical assistance and in how to effectively participate in research processes; and strengthening the abilities of the three actors to work together.