

**French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE)**

Farmers' Organization tool kit:  
Review of Worldwide Case Studies

Cirad - Ciepac

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June 2006



## *Acknowledgements*

The authors are grateful to the following persons for information, comments and review of the case studies presented in this document:

- Vu Trong Binh
- Emmanuelle Bouquet
- Robin Bourgeois
- Nicolas Buyse
- Henry Hocde
- Elodie Maitre d'Hotel
- Nguyen Thi Kim Nguyet
- Sylvain Pambour
- Nadia Rodriguez
- Betty Wampfler

The authors are responsible for the information provided in this document.

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**INTRODUCTION**

## Foreword

This set of worldwide case studies was developed by a CIRAD -CIEPAC<sup>1</sup> team within the context of a training process implemented in Cambodia for Farmers' organizations support staffs.

In this country, most of the numerous farmers' organizations (FOs) are at an early stage, and although a specific policy exists to support cooperatives, many support staffs and decision-makers find it necessary to improve the support that they bring to FOs. In this context, the French MAE (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) supported the establishment of an FO Task Force in order to build capacities at the country level and to further contribute to designing consistent support activities to strengthen Cambodian FOs so as to better address the needs of mainly poor small-scale family farms.

Beside an assessment of the current situation of FOs in Cambodia, a training process was undertaken with the support of the CIRAD-CIEPAC team. The general pedagogical principle of this training process was to broaden Cambodian practitioners' scope of knowledge and references on FOs. This was done by providing an insight into a wide range selection of worldwide experiences of FOs in order to put the participant in a position to develop useful ideas on the possible ways of strengthening FOs in Cambodia.

Thus the process comprised several steps<sup>2</sup>:

- Validation and sharing of the assessment on FOs' situation in Cambodia;
- Presentation of selected worldwide case studies of FOs to give an idea of the diversity of farmers' organizations (regarding their structure and functioning), the ways they have chosen to address the needs of their members (their strategies and activities), and how they have been supported or have established partnerships with other stakeholders to develop their activities;
- Design and experimentation of comprehensive thematic and illustrated pedagogical materials tailored for Cambodia to be used by the members of Cambodian FO Task Force, in their capacity as trainers for other staffs of government services and NGOs.

This document is the outcome (and was the support material) of the second stage of the above mentioned process.

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<sup>1</sup> CIRAD : Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement ; 73, rue JF Breton ; 34398 Montpellier cedex 5.

CIEPAC : Appui au développement local, 930, Chemin des Mendrous 34170 Castelnau le Lez

<sup>2</sup> For more detail on the whole support process to farmers' organizations support staff in Cambodia, see appendix 1.

The cases presented in this document were chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

- the relevance of each experience to address the issues raised by Cambodian participants,
- the availability of direct, precise and updated information about the FOs (given the short time to produce this material), and the knowledge that the Cirad-Ciepac team had of the experience (as much as possible, FOs that are partners of CIRAD and/or CIEPAC)

The final choice also took into account the will to provide as far as possible a wide range of FO experiences regarding activities, scope, structure and functioning so that more general lessons could be learnt. It illustrates especially the diversity of institutional options, functions and activities that were chosen by farmers' organizations in space and time, according to their context and local farmers' needs.

We strived to develop a collection usable in contexts other than Cambodia by:

- getting examples from different parts of the world,
- presenting a comprehensive vision of each case and replacing it in its context (geographical, historical)

The information on FO experiences was used in Cambodia in two ways on two different occasions of the training process:

1) A comprehensive presentation of the cases during a four-day specific workshop. The case studies were presented to the members of the FO Task Force. The materials presented here were the background texts (written for the circumstance, and updated after use) on which the PowerPoint presentations used in Cambodia were based.

2) Insertions of "illustration boxes" to illustrate the Cambodian tailored thematic pedagogical materials developed for the training of trainers. Each of these boxes addresses a specific topic raised in the issues series of the pedagogical materials, thus the same case can be used several times in different series to illustrate different items.

This collection has to be considered more as a resource material to build specific tools and training than a "close" document. In most of the circumstances, it would be usefully completed by local examples; these examples can then constitute a basis for comparison or give ideas about the issues to be raised when considering an FO case study.

## Content

Eleven cases are presented in this document. They are of two main types:

- Eight cases are “individual FO case studies” which present for each case some key features and a short summary of the experience, then the history and evolution of the organization: (1) background and (2) circumstances of its establishment, (3) objectives and strategy, (4) activities, (5) current structure and functioning of the organization (framework, decision-making...), (6) FO support and partnerships established, (7) lastly, the main results of the organization and the lessons learnt from the case are briefly highlighted.
- Three other cases are “country case studies”; they present the general development process of FOs in different countries and socio-economic and institutional contexts. They present the diversity of existing FOs, performing a wide range of functions in three countries: France, Senegal and Costa Rica.

The last part is an illustration of the use of this set of FO experiences in a training process implemented in Cambodia.

In conclusion, several comments and recommendations, mainly based on this experience, are developed.

## List of the individual FO case studies

A total of 8 individual case studies are presented. They illustrate the possible functions FOs can perform and the various ways they can be used to achieve it. Those cases are the following:

- 1) Farmer group growing quality rice (Mekong delta - Vietnam)
- 2) High quality Pig grower cooperatives (Red River delta - Vietnam)
- 3) Producer Federation of Fouta Djallon – FPFJ (Guinea)
- 4) Union of cotton producers of Burkina – UNPCB (Burkina Faso)
- 5) CECAM Network (Madagascar)
- 6) Sexagon (Mali)
- 7) Ross Bethio case (Senegal)
- 8) Network of Integrated Pest Management Farmers – IP PHTI (Indonesia)

These cases cover a wide range of country context, scope of action, size (membership), age, and sectors (see table below).

N°	Name	Keys features				
		Country	Scope	membership	establishment	products
1	Rice producers' groups	Vietnam	Grassroots	17 farmers	2001-2002	Rice
2	High Quality Pig cooperative	Vietnam	Local (district)	200 producers	1997	Pig
3	Fédération des producteurs du Fouta Djallon	Guinea	Region	18,000 producers	1992	Potatoes, onion
4	UNPCB	Burkina Faso	National	230,000 members	1998	Cotton
5	CECAM Network	Madagascar	National (several provinces)	47,000 members	1993	All types
6	Ross Bethio	Senegal	Local (commune)	54,000 inhabitants	1992-	All types
7	Sexagon	Mali	Region	12,500 farmers	1997	Rice
8	IPHTI	Indonesia	National (several provinces)	Hundreds of thousands farmers	1999	Rice + others



This set of cases tends to cover a wide range of possible types of activities (functions) that FOs can carry out (see following table).

		Functions/activities							
N°	Name	Input supply	Marketing	Storage / processing	Credit	Technical advice	Equip-ment	Repre-sentation of interest	local develop-ment
1	Rice producers' groups		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>			
2	High Quality Pig cooperative	X	X	(X)	(X)	<b>X</b>		(X)	
3	Fédération des producteurs du Fouta Djallon	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		(X)	X		<b>X</b>	(X)
4	UNPCB	X	<b>X</b>		(X)				(X)
5	CECAM Network			(X)	<b>X</b>		(X)		
6	Ross Bethio								<b>X</b>
7	Sexagon							<b>X</b>	
8	IPHTI	X				<b>X</b>		X	

NB: **X** means key activities of the FO; X means involvement of FO in the activity; (X) indirect involvement of the FO in the activity,

As shown in the table above, the first cases illustrate mainly the possible ways for FOs to provide technical and economic services to farmers:

- the first four cases focus more on the marketing of produce and supply of agricultural inputs: group growing quality rice in Mekong Delta (Vietnam), High quality Pig grower cooperatives in Red River Delta (Vietnam), Federation of Fouta Djallon Producers (Guinea)
- the fifth case, the CECAM Network (Madagascar), focuses on the funding of rural and agricultural activities.

The other functions that FOs can perform such as the social function and the representation of farmers' interests, are illustrated especially through two cases: the Union of cotton producers of Burkina (Burkina Faso) and Sexagon (Mali). The former illustrates the representation of farmers' interests in a commodity chain (cotton), and the latter, the representation of farmers' interest in accessing resources (land and water).

The role of FOs in local development is illustrated by the seventh case, the Ross Bethio case (Senegal), showing how the local community and FOs were able to design and implement their own development plan.

The FO evolution dynamics is illustrated in the country case studies (see next part) and in the eighth case: The Network of Integrated Pest Management Farmers (Indonesia); this case illustrates, in particular, the evolution of an FO after project phasing out.

## List of the country case studies

Three countries case studies are developed in this document:

- French case
- Senegalese case
- Costa Rican case

They illustrate the evolution of FOs in different socio-economic contexts in terms of type of natural conditions, human characteristics, economic and agricultural features (see table below).

N°	Country	Climate	Keys features				
			Population		Economy	Agriculture	
			Total population	Density (inhab/km <sup>2</sup> )	GDP/Inhab.	Rural population (%)	% of total GDP*
1	France	Temperate	63	259	28,200 USD	23	2
2	Senegal	Tropical	9.5	46	550 USD	61	10
3	Costa Rica	Tropical	3.7	72	4,040 USD	48	8

NB: \* data for primary sector.

These case studies are aimed at illustrating the relationship between development policies and FOs evolution.

- The French case illustrates a system where FOs (of very different types) played a key role in agricultural development in close collaboration with the State.
- The Senegalese case illustrates more specifically the development of FOs' movement in the context of a poor country where the State has limited means.
- The Costa Rican case illustrates more specifically the development of FOs in a middle-income country and highlights the new challenges faced by agriculture and FOs to cope with liberalization.

**PART I:**  
**FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS CASE STUDIES**

## Rice Producer Farmers' Group (Vietnam)

- **Scope:** a commune (Loan My located in Tam Binh district of Vinh Long Province – Mekong Delta)
- **Membership:** 17 members
- **Date of establishment:** 2001-2002
- **Sector:** rice
- **Activities:** marketing, technical advice.
- **Support and Partnership:** a Belgian NGO: FOS (Fonds voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking - Socialistische Solidariteit”), the District Extension Station of Tam Binh, the Communal Peoples’ committee of Loan My

**The rice producer farmers’ group** is an example of a commodity oriented grassroots FO involved in a specific sector. This small FO illustrates a very early stage economic-oriented small-scale organization playing a role in the development of quality production by farmers’ through technical advice and basic marketing organization.

## ***I. Background***

In Vietnam, rice production increased dramatically after the liberalization policy. The Mekong Delta, the rice Bowl of Vietnam, developed its production and became the major rice exporting area of the country. Even though production and exports increased a lot thanks to a significant raise in productivity, the farmers' income from rice remained low due to the poor quality of the rice and low prices. Nevertheless, a demand for high quality rice (type developed for export, especially fragrant rice) rose on the domestic market, as a result of the overall improvement of living standards.

To develop this new type of rice production, farmers faced several problems:

- access to high quality rice seeds
- appropriate cropping techniques

Moreover, even though they grow high quality rice, farmers may not get a higher price as compared with the usual price they receive when they have small amounts to sell, since rice traders have to fill a full boat (which is at least 5 tons) to cover transportation costs. This amount is out of reach to a small-scale farmer due to low yield and small land area.

## ***II. Conditions of establishment***

In 2001, the group was established with the support of a project funded by a Belgian NGO named FOS and the acknowledgement of the Communal People's Committee.

The Tam Binh District Extension Station and the FOS project introduced some kind of high quality rice to the groups for experimentation. They provided technical training on rice cultivation. Moreover, the FOS project provided the Management Board of the groups and extension workers of the Tam Binh District Extension Station with training on group management.

The FOS project helped group members to assess their situation and raised their awareness about the causes of low profitability of rice production and marketing. Thus, after technical training and farm experiments proved that high quality rice production was possible, the FOS project support helped the farmers to identify the causes of their marketing problems and to seek collective solutions.

Remark: From the initial period up to now, the FOS project didn't provide any monetary incentive to farmers, but only for extension staff (per diem for the technical training).

## ***III. Objectives and strategy***

The overall objective of the group is to increase farmers' income.

The main strategy developed by the group is to produce high quality rice to replace the usual less profitable rice.

## **IV. Activities**

Even if the objectives and strategy were clearly set by the farmers when they created the group, the actions conducted by the group with the support of the project, evolved through *a learning process*.

At the beginning, the main issue was to be able to grow high quality rice and master high quality rice production techniques. As such, the group focused their activities on:

- training on farming techniques (participation in training organized by the staff of the Tam Binh Extension Station ),
- implementing of high quality rice production experiments to test different new rice seeds and production techniques; technical monitoring of the experiments was done by extension workers, and a selection of new rice seeds adapted to export demand was provided for testing by the Extension Station with the support of the project.

When a high quality rice production technique was mastered by members of the group, the issue of marketing was raised. The group then focused on marketing activities. To facilitate access to market, the group:

- assigned members to contact rice dealers in order to know the quality of rice they are ready to buy;
- organized mass production to meet the 5 tons of rice per boat needed at the required time;
- made plans for individual production crops to meet the delivery schedule.

Moreover, the group's members could buy materials following deferred payment methods since the Communal People's committee acts as a guarantee for input traders, through its official recognition of the group.

## **V. Structure and Functioning of the Organization**

The group comprises 17 members. The members are farmers from one commune (Loan My) who grow rice for sale.

The group elected a group leader and vice-leader. The leader chose a bookkeeper and a cashier with the agreement of members.

Some members are more precisely responsible for contacting rice traders to identify the varieties cultivated and negotiate the prices.

## **VI. Support and partnership**

The group received direct support through a project funded by a Belgian NGO named FOS (“*Fonds voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking - Socialistische Solidariteit*”)

The following stakeholders provided the group with the following support activities:

- District extension / NGO (FOS) which (1) introduced high quality rice for group’s experiments, (2) provided technical training on high quality rice cultivation
- FOS project provided training on Group managerial skills to the Board of Farmers Group and Extension Workers
- A staff of the NGO and member of the Communal People Committee helped in establishing relationships between the group and rice traders
- FOS project and District Extension Workers supervised the group operation process at the time of establishment in order to provide them timely support.

Moreover, the group received institutional support from the Loan My Communal People’s Committee. Thanks to the recognition of the group by the Loan My Communal People’s Committee, the group could buy input on credit. As such, the group’s members could pay their input suppliers after harvesting their produce.

## **VII. Results and Lessons learnt**

### **Results**

The group’s activities enabled farmers to reap several benefits:

- members came together to achieve their common goals: producing high quality rice and getting a better selling price
- members get higher incomes, since they receive an additional 200 Dong/kg of rice compared to the previous price (that is to say 10 % more than usual rice)

Other benefits were derived from this experience. These include:

- an increase in farmers’ awareness of the need to cooperate in order to increase their incomes from production activities. Farmers are aware of the additional benefit they can get when they operate in groups (especially for marketing)
- a recognition by the District Extension Station of the importance and efficiency of the Farmers Group to develop sustainable new production techniques
- the will of the Local Government (People’s Committee of the District) to develop the “group model” in other councils of the district so as to achieve high quality rice production

Even though good results were obtained, some shortcomings and difficulties can be pointed out:

- Limited skills of local cadres regarding Farmers’ Groups establishment methodology
- Local administration’s interest still limited (despite being invited by the FOS project to participate in activities on farmers’ group establishment such as methodological training)

## Lessons learnt

From the above example, several lessons can be drawn:

- support activity at an early stage should focus on both technical and organizational (“group managerial skill”) matters
- support activity should focus on getting the farmers aware of their problems and not providing them with the solution (for the issue of marketing, the support method consisted in helping them take stock of the situation, seek the solution by themselves and test it) – support farmers in their learning process
- involvement of authorities (to get official recognition) can be necessary to solve problems (for example, to act as a guarantee for farmers to get deferred payment for inputs)
- support may pay attention to farmers’ will, and “real” motivation; for example, if management board were offered to some farmers, only meal were offered (no per diem) for trainees
- awareness of local extension cadres is difficult to obtain due to problems of funding incentives
- need for training of local extension staff on group establishment and strengthening.



## Pig producers' groups and cooperatives (Vietnam)

- **Scope:** a district (Nam Sach in Hai Duong Province – Red River Delta)
- **Membership:** 200 pig producers in Nam Sach district in 2005
- **Sector :** Pig rearing
- **Date of establishment :** since 1997
- **Activities:** input supply, marketing, technical advice, quality control, credit, processing, policy dialogue
- **Support and partnership :** a national research institute named VASI<sup>1</sup> (Vietnam Agricultural Science Institute), a French NGO named GRET (Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques), French Research Institute named INRA (Institut National de Recherche Agronomique)

**The case of Pig producers groups and cooperative in Red River Delta** is an example of progressive structuring of a “medium-scale” economic and product-oriented organization specialized in one product (high quality pig). It illustrates the evolution and diversity of the types of activities implemented by such an organization, regarding technical advice, marketing, and input supply. Initiated with the support a project, a long-term partnership with national research institutions made it possible to cope with emerging problems and helped to strengthen and gradually upscale a cooperative movement.

<sup>1</sup> Since March 2006, this research team became the Vietnam Institute of Strategy and Policy for Agricultural and Rural Development.

## **I. Background**

In Vietnam, the liberalization policy initiated in the late 80s led to a sharp increase in the income of inhabitants, especially urban but also rural populations. With higher income, the food consumption pattern changed and the domestic demand for more diversified and higher quality food richer in animal protein soared. Thus, the demand in pig products shifted from the usual fat pigs to leaner pigs

Pig production in North Vietnam is still carried out by 3 types of producers: 1) family pig-raising based on the valorization of by-products, 2) market-oriented family pig raising and 3) industrial production (which remains limited).

Most of the family-based producers face difficulties to meet demand and effectively access new market opportunities since their production scale is still low (1-10 pigs), their resources such as land and capital are very limited, their access to good quality piglets remains uncertain, their technical capacity to raise new breeds is still limited, and thus they have difficulty to properly valorize their production...

After a collectivist period, farmers are reluctant to join groups or cooperatives and tend to solve their problems mainly on an individual basis.

## **II. Conditions of establishment**

The development of the organizations followed successive stages from the creation of the first groups (in 1998) to the set-up of a federation of cooperatives (ongoing).

### **First stage: creation of groups of producers**

In 1997, an assessment of the situation of stockbreeding in the Nam Sach District was conducted by a French NGO (GRET) and a National Agricultural Research Institute (VASI) within the framework of the PFR program ("*Program Fleuve Rouge*" – Red River Program). The study highlighted the gap between demand (mainly lean pig) and supply (mainly fat pigs). It also identified farmers who spontaneously changed their scale of production and tried to develop new production techniques to meet market demand, but encountered difficulties.

In 1998, based on the findings of this assessment, a dialogue between farmers and national researchers of VASI was initiated. Discussions raised the idea of setting up a pig producers' group to help individual farmers meet their objective: reduce the uncertainty of the technical and economic results when developing new types of pig production (larger scale lean pig production).

A first group of pig producers ("nhom") was formed in late 1998. With the success of the first group that became a reference, other groups (of 8 to 12 members) were formed to reach a total of 10 groups in 2001, and 12 groups in 2002.

An informal network of pig producers' groups ("lien nhom") was created in 2001 with the aim to help farmers manage their raising activity, select the piglets, jointly buy feed, access veterinary services, look for credit, inform members on market opportunities and find outlets for the production.

## Second stage: creation of Cooperatives

In 2002, the first specialized cooperative was set up in the Nam Sach district. It comprised 20 members coming from 3 communes of the district.

The network of pig producers' groups is operational and already provides valuable and recognized services to members (veterinary, market information, feed supply...). Leaders of the Pig producers' groups network then decided (with the VASI) to adopt the Cooperative statutes<sup>1</sup> as it appears as the most appropriate way to pool limited resources in order to develop services for their members, and to develop sustainable relationships with other stakeholders of the commodity chain.

Note: In a first attempt, 1 cooperative was created based on 4 existing pig producers' groups, i.e. 30 to 40 members per cooperative. Nevertheless, this organizational setting immediately exposed the difficulties in cohesion and management (due to the high heterogeneity of members in terms of technical level, financial capacities...). Based on this experience, the smaller size cooperative pattern was adopted: 1 cooperative for about 2 farmers' groups (that is to say cooperatives of about 20 members).

In 2005, 8 cooperatives of pig producers were operating (representing a total of about 200 producers) in the Hai Duong province<sup>2</sup>.

## Creation of a federation of cooperatives

In 2005, leaders of the cooperatives decided to set up a Network and later a Federation of cooperatives in order to develop their activities and strive to meet new goals such as the establishment of a recognized label for their pig production, the building of a small slaughterhouse and processing factory.

With this new structure, new organizational challenges emerged, concerning the operational and financial management of this type of larger structure.

Moreover, new challenges have to be faced with regards to access to land (for the establishment of a slaughterhouse and processing factory in a region where land is scarce and difficult to obtain since there is no land market) and financial resources (to cover new operational costs and activities)

Remark: From the onset, the support agency (VASI) clearly stated the principles of their support: no financial support will be provided directly to farmers but only technical and organizational support.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the law, three types of official statutes exist in Vietnam for organizations :

- "To hop tac" (group) is a statute recognised at village level by the Communal People's Committee; it is the simplest form of recognition and may facilitate access to credit but doesn't allow for the opening of a bank account;
- "Hop tac xa" (cooperative), it requires registration at district level; this statute allows for the opening of a bank account, and is dedicated to organizations that are more focussed on economic activities; it implies compliance with rigorous accountability rules that are controlled;
- "Hiep Hoi" (association), it requires registration at provincial level (president of the People Committee); it allows for the opening of a bank account, not for economic activities (no specific tax system).

<sup>2</sup> Based on this experience, 14 cooperatives (about 300 members) were developed with the methodological support from VASI in another province (Bac ninh province).

### **III. Objectives and strategy**

The **overall objective** of the Groups, then the Cooperatives and the Federation is to increase farmers' income.

The **main strategy** adopted by the organization is to develop high quality pig production (lean pigs) to better meet market demand.

This strategy relies on several pillars: scaling up production unit, improving raising techniques (breeding, feeding...), improving access to market outlets.

### **IV. Activities**

Although the overall objective and the strategy were clearly set from the beginning, **the activities** conducted by the groups and then the cooperatives have **evolved** with the emergence of new problems, and the experience gained by the organization.

At the beginning, the main issue for pig producers' groups was to be able to technically master high quality pig production techniques (securing the production, increasing productivity). As such, the focus of the activity of the groups was on:

- the implementation of on-farm experiments (with the support of research staff) to test and determine which production techniques (breed, feed) were the most efficient and suitable to meet market demand.
- Sharing of technical knowledge to improve their practices

When the groups (and their members) defined the specifications (i.e. a collective guideline on production techniques based on their experiments) and created a Cooperative, they developed new activities to better support farmers' production improvement. As such, the cooperative was involved in the following activities:

- input supply, through joint purchase of feed, control of feed quality...
- advising on production-related issues
- access to veterinary service. Initially, contractual agreements were signed between pig producers' groups and a private veterinarian to have a regular veterinary monitoring of the farms. But, as the animal health-related skills of the producers increased gradually and as the private veterinarian did not fulfill his commitments, the farmers organized their own veterinary products supplies and vaccination plan, and the cooperative focused its activity on grouped procurement and supply of veterinary products.
- processing the meat product (since December 2005)
- marketing support through provision of market information (regarding pig customers, prices at different market places...), negotiation of a reference price with selected assemblers, quality control of the product sold by the members of the cooperative...

The federation of Cooperatives set up by the farmers complements the activities of their members (cooperatives). It is involved in collective input supply, quality control of the production according to the specifications decided by the members. It is also in charge of developing a label for pork (quality certification) and related trading activities as well as a processing unit. Lastly, its activities also cover facilitation of members' access to credit and institutional and commercial negotiations with other stakeholders.

## V. Structure and Functioning of the Organization

The cooperatives have around 20 farmers, who for the most part previously worked in neighboring farmers' groups and are living in the same area (among 2 or 3 villages).

The cooperatives have their own internal rules, which are set in their statutes (bylaws). These internal rules are the results of collective discussion and decision of the founding members. They clearly lay down the mutual commitments between the members and the cooperative and the incentive and sanction system to enforce such commitments. It concerns specifically the level of financial contribution of the members, the principles of financial management, the profit sharing rules and the animal raising technical system.

The Cooperatives operate under volunteer principles, and democratic functioning. They have a board that is elected during the general assembly of all members. A smaller management team is generally appointed by the members to be in charge of day-to-day management of the cooperative's activities, their financial monitoring and accountability. An internal audit committee is also set up to verify compliance with the collectively defined bylaws.

The Network of cooperatives was first managed by a collegial management formed by the cooperative leaders (10). Later, farmers decided to create a management board (2 persons) to streamline the functioning of the Network. The newly created Federation of Cooperatives has its own board elected by the board of the constituent cooperatives. A small team is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the federation.

## VI. Support and partnership

Although the core support has always been mainly provided by VASI, the partnerships, methodology and contents of the support provided to farmers and their organizations evolved to follow the stage of development of the organizations according to a **continuous process of adaptation**.

The first stage of support to the producers' groups consisted of both technical and organizational support:

- Technical support was mainly devoted to help the farmers to design and implement their on-farm experiments on pig production, in order to determine the best type of genetics to produce and meet market demand, the best practices of animal raising (insemination, feeding, time to sell...) and to develop specifications (guidelines on production techniques);
- Organizational support was mainly devoted to group management (organization of meetings...) through day-to-day interaction, and facilitation to help the farmers obtain official recognition of their Farmers' groups ("To hop tac") by local authorities.

Even this first stage of the support evolved. As the technical aspects were handled (guidelines on production techniques), the support activity shifted towards helping the farmers to initiate and develop collective brainstorming on bottlenecks to the development of their production such as:

- Problems to access good and reliable veterinary services, which led to the setting-up of collective contract with a private veterinarian (see above, part III)
- Problems to get sufficient financial resources to expand the scale of production, which led to collective negotiations with the local agricultural bank and the increase of the maximum amount of credit for groups' members from 3 million to 12 million Dongs

- Problems of recognition and valorization of the quality of their pig production; which led to the conduct of promotion activities such as marketing operations (meeting with pig traders to exhibit the quality of their products, attendance to fairs...)

A second stage of support begun as the groups changed into a Cooperative. The focus and content of the support activities were adapted to face new issues. The focus was on building the capacities of the cooperatives (and their federation). The content of the support was then focused more on financial management, accountability (cooperative management), and negotiation with stakeholders (banks, traders and local institutions).

Based on the local experience to promote cooperative set up and support capacity building, the method adopted included the following two steps:

- creation of the cooperative :
  - o based on a local diagnosis of pig production, identification and selection of farmers willing to be involved in cooperatives
  - o definition of the content of cooperative activities and its statutes and production planning by a founding committee (encompassing the previously identified dynamics, volunteer farmers)
  - o finalization of the statutes and registration of the statutes to officially establish the cooperative
- strengthening of the cooperative (with the objective to strengthen and improve the quality offered to members), support and counseling activities are developed in the area of
  - o organization and management (on-the-job training, design of adapted management tools...)
  - o financial management method
  - o connecting with other actors (helping to understand the role and function of local actors especially administrative actors...)
  - o market links (price information collection and dissemination system, relationship with traders...)

Lastly, as the number of cooperatives increased to further strengthen and develop a local movement of cooperatives, the support agency intervened in:

- organizing information and exchange meetings with the local authorities to present the findings of the experience and to propose the introduction of the specialized commodity chain-oriented cooperative “model” in the local authorities development strategy
- organizing training on farmers’ cooperatives
- supporting and facilitating relationships between cooperatives (and their federations) and other stakeholders.

The specificities of the support approach were of two sorts:

- in terms of objectives: the support is guided by the outlets (markets needs)
- in terms of method: after technical issues, support focused on negotiation skills with all types of stakeholders (input suppliers - piglets, feed; Service providers - private veterinarian; customers - local traders, slaughter...; financial services - agricultural Bank ; Local Authorities and their services - People Committee, extension station...). Nevertheless, the support was always guided by a dual concern: technical (agricultural techniques...) and organizational (meetings, rules and by-laws, management...)

## **VII. Results and Lessons learnt**

### **Results**

Many positive results can be highlighted:

- the number of cooperatives raised rapidly and the number of members grew dramatically
- the scale of production of the members of pig producers cooperatives expanded
- the quality of the products improved while the unit selling price obtained by members increased
- the services provided to members are of good quality and reduce production costs (reduction of veterinary costs due to better vaccination system, feed cost through joint purchase...)

Thus, the cooperatives responded efficiently to the pig producers needs and objectives:

- better access to services (feed supply, veterinarian, technical advice, marketing)
- higher income through the reduction of production costs and transaction costs with other stakeholders.
- lower production and economic risks through better production techniques

Finally, the cooperative movement proposes a reliable alternative to the development of domestic quality pig production by small-scale breeders.

### **Lessons learnt**

From the above example, several lessons can be drawn:

- support activity at early stage should focus on both technical and organizational aspects
- clear rules between volunteer farmers and support agency regarding type of support provided have to be set clearly from the beginning of the support activities. Concerning financial support especially, the non-provision of direct financial support could be a way to avoid wrong expectations and opportunistic behavior and to emphasize the support in organizational skill, thus encouraging a necessary learning process in definition and implementation of more innovating, adapted, and somehow more lasting solutions.
- organization is a tool that has to be chosen and developed according to the challenges and objectives of the farmers (for example: “groups” were sufficient for technical exchange, but to deal with commercial issues of a significant level – for example for input supply – a “cooperative” was more adapted)
- homogeneity of the membership (in terms of means, and objectives) and step-by-step building of group cohesion is a factor of successful organizations
- definition of internal rules, statutes and bylaws by the farmers themselves is an important factor of success
- gradual adaptation of the support provided to the level of organizations is a factor of success

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**FPFD**  
**( « Fédération des Paysans du Fouta Djallon »)**  
**Federation of Fouta Djallon Farmers**  
**(Guinea)**

- **Scope:** a province (Fouta Djallon)
- **Membership:** 18,000 farmers (450 groups)
- **Date of establishment:** 1992
- **Sector:** potato, onion
- **Activities:** input supply, marketing, technical advice
- **Support and Partnership:** State, Research and extension institutions, French Cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, French Development Agency - AFD), Canadian Cooperation, NGOs...

**The Federation of Fouta Djallon Farmers** is an example of an economic-oriented local FO involved in a specific sector and chosen for its potential. The FO handles functions that are useful to the development of the sector (technical advice, marketing management, price negotiation). The activities are adapted as necessary to address the development of farmers' needs (diversification of production, new technical problems...).

## **I. Background**

The independent Guinea experienced a dictatorial regime until a recent past (1984), so much so that emergence of civil society organizations was not possible. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> republic (1984 onwards), a certain economic liberalization could be observed, even if the political regime is still authoritarian (dominated by the military).

A conference was held in 1992 where the scope of action assigned to FOs was defined: the option was clearly to promote “Farmers’ Organizations with an economic goal”.

For this reason, the Guinean conception of FOs has been geared towards commodity chain organization, in view of the development of one or several specific productions. This option has been confirmed by successive Agricultural Development Policy Letters.

The Fouta Djallon region is a high altitude area with quite a poor agricultural potential. For centuries, the local society has been operating on a theocratic (Islam) and feudal basis. Aristocrats’ families were land holders; they considered agriculture as a contemptible activity devoted to captives and women (compound lands), the noble activities being breeding and distance trade. That is to say that the social and cultural background was not favorable to farmer’s organizations.

## **II. Conditions of establishment**

An agricultural development project (PDA) in Timbi Madina (a small area of Fouta Djallon), funded by the French cooperation (1988-1992), laid the grounds for the organization.

After several attempts, potato was identified as a promising produce: it could be included in the intensive inland valley cropping systems. In these areas, water control allows 3 crops a year: rice, potato, groundnut-maize. As most crops remained traditional and grown for family consumption, potato production was quite new and its development was supposed to introduce technical innovations. Producers’ groups and the “*Union*” (the organization which brings together grassroots groups) of Timbi Madina were set up to promote this produce.

Very early, potato production faced marketing problems. The national market was quite narrow, and dominated by Lebanese importers, who were buying potatoes in Holland at very low prices (at that time, the imported potato was twice cheaper than the local one). Faced with such difficulties, the producers’ representatives staged a demonstration in the Capital (Conakry). They rallied public opinion with support from the media and they obtained the opening of inter-professional negotiations. Government got involved in the matter and the President himself took up the farmers’ cause and ordered the suspension of imports at the time when local productions were sold on the domestic market. Producers of Fouta Djallon managed to fulfill their commitments: to supply the Capital city with potatoes during the “protection period”.

This success had a considerable impact on the whole country, to the extent that the Union of Timbi Madina was in a position to organize, in November 1992, a national workshop bringing together representatives of all emerging Farmers’ Organizations of the country. On this occasion the Federation of Fouta Djallon Farmers was officially created.

### **III. Strategy and objectives**

Although the framework defined by the State policy on organizations is still incomplete, the FPFDD has managed to fit in and use the existing regulations.

Analyzing the causes of underdevelopment, the Federation criticized projects which relieve poverty without helping the people to “be self-reliant”. Thinking about the experience of farmers’ organizations in other African countries (often past experiences), the Federation points out that their weaknesses stem from money influx (from partners), poor management capacities, lack of achievements and income stagnation.

For this reason, the Federation of Fouta Djallon Farmers (FPFDD) chose a pragmatic stance that deviates from the dominating ideology in African farmers’ movement: wealth creation will improve living conditions (and not the opposite). That is why the Federation set as its only objective the improvement of its members’ incomes.

Later on, they decided to identify the areas where the local economy has chances to be competitive in the future and to concentrate all their strengths thereto in order to succeed; potato production and marketing was the first sector chosen.

After the members started obtaining significant results thanks to the support of FPFDD, they developed trust in the organization and were ready to invest in it. Then, the FO reinforced its basis and was in a position to become more democratic (proactive basic members), in opposition to the early stage when decision-making relied mainly on a few pioneer leaders.

In the same way, as the farmers developed more and more secure incomes, they tended to reinvest in their farms so as to improve their competitiveness. That is the expected closed equation of productive accumulation.

To implement this strategy, FPFDD exalted and valued some principles such as work, harshness, meeting commitments, competitiveness, productive accumulation, etc., at individual and collective levels.

The federation supports those who innovated, those who were “forward-looking”.

All are equal before these principles and regulations. There is no privilege or favor related to age, sex, social or ethnic origin.

So a new social relationship based on merit was put in place and changed the ancient order.

Obviously, all peoples, all areas do not progress at the same pace, but rather depending on each one’s assets and motivations. The organization’s philosophy may be summed up as follows: “rather an unequally shared wealth than an equally shared poverty”.

This vision which mainly comes from the historical leaders of the organization became a “corporate culture”, widely shared by all leaders and staffs working in the Federation.

Today, the Federation develops a systematic strategic brainstorming through multi-year strategic planning at its own level and at the level of “union” members.

### **IV. Activities**

The Federation works only on the organization of three sectors (potato, onion, tomato) and its interventions are mainly related to technical and economic issues.

#### ***Technical activities***

In inland valleys, technical activities are related especially to water control, rice fields land development, irrigation management, selection of varieties, fertilization, meeting the jointly established cropping calendar (in relation to demand), etc.

At the beginning, the Federation invested significantly in research, alone (with its technicians) or in collaboration with the public agricultural research system (contractual relationship, where the FO bore the direct cost of experiments).

Today, as results begin to peak and new diseases are appearing, the Federation has decided to renew its research and development efforts. This technology development process relies on farmers' groups; these groups benefit from management advice, which place them in a position to assess the efficiency and profitability of the new technologies they test (or develop).

The federation also ensures the dissemination of technologies through its own extension framework (about 20 technicians); this framework was reinforced sometimes in the past by State agricultural extension officers, but lack of means on the side of the government led to the suspension of this collaboration.

Technicians provide training and initial advice to groups' and local Unions' leaders; the latter are implementing recommendations at the collective level: land development and maintenance, irrigation management, meeting the planned cropping calendar, organization of harvest; and at the individual level: using selected varieties, fertilization, weeding, etc.

To set up these cropping systems, it was necessary to make upstream investments (infrastructures, land development, equipment, which were widely subsidized by financial partners – see VI)

### ***Economic activities***

To secure production, the FPFD manages input supply, i.e. potato seedlings, vegetable seeds and fertilizers. These are mainly imported from Europe because of the reliability of providers and the required quality of products. The FPFD has obtained import tax exonerations on these inputs.

**This function is essential to secure production and maintain members' loyalty.** Thus, being a strategic activity, it is managed at the higher level (Federation) and not locally.

To achieve this, the FPFD got significant working capital, initially provided by financial partners.

Because of the development of activities and needs, partners have chosen to constitute a guarantee to allow the Federation gain access (gradually increasing) to bank credits. The federation applies a marketing margin to pay for its services.

### ***Marketing***

Marketing activities are a way to secure reimbursement of crop credit, but the modalities have changed with time and productions.

The most interesting modality is probably the original system:

At the beginning, the Federation did not want to bear the cost of marketing activities but preferred to organize round tables between farmers' "*Unions*" (focused on one production) and traders. Because of the difficulties encountered with the traders of the Capital (Conakry), the Federation chose to work with traders of the region (better known and closer). The goal of round tables is mainly to agree on a basic price for the producer (depending on production costs), on rough volumes and on a selling (wholesale) price; the objective is to get a better price for the farmer but also to maintain a moderate price tailored at the level of the consumer in order to expand the market.

Practically, the "*Unions de zone*"<sup>1</sup>, organize the market (gathering of group or individual productions, packaging, storage in Union's store); when collecting the produce at a scheduled

<sup>1</sup> that are the intermediary levels of the organization, see § V

date, the traders pay an advance that makes it possible to pay the whole money due to the farmers. In fact, on the value of the delivered production (paid at the guaranteed price), two parts have to be deducted, the first to repay the inputs credits, (the Federation being responsible of it), and the second to finance the organization (this is a tax per kg, shared between the different levels of the organization and the various services).

The producer is not obliged to market all his production through the Federation, but he has a minimum commitment depending on the amount of inputs that he bought through the Federation (reimbursement of the inputs).

At the end of sales operations, the trader pays the balance (negotiated price minus the advance) to the organization.

This system is reliable because both producers and traders get advantages from it:

- for the producers, this is a guarantee of outlets at a stable price (higher than the current price in full season)
- for the traders, this is an assurance of supply (quality and quantity), as the produce is grouped in accessible places (reduction of collection costs)

This marketing system is not the only one; the Federation and several Unions develop direct marketing operations on markets at the Capital or with foreign markets (export to Dakar in Senegal, at favorable periods).

This supply and marketing system reached a break-even point as development partners accepted in the past to finance (subsidies) needed basic infrastructures (stores, tracks, bridges, etc.).

### ***Other functions***

Beside the support to production, FPFD has felt it necessary to be involved in building the capacities of its members (see V). Thus, training activities are implemented by FPFD, especially literacy courses.

Thanks to its results, the Federation of Fouta Djalon Farmers has gained wide notoriety among other farmers' organizations in Guinea and West Africa. This has made it to assume a leadership position in the farmers' movement in Guinea. Furthermore, the Federation of Fouta Djalon initiated the creation of the National Coordination of Farmers' Organizations (CNOP) of Guinea; FPFD has transferred many skills and methods to CNOP. Gradually, through CNOP, FPFD leaders are led to assume union functions – representation of farmers' interests in negotiations with State and development partners regarding the design of agricultural policy and major rural development projects or programs.

## ***V. Structure and functioning***

Today, the Federation of Fouta Djalon Farmers has about **18 000 members**, distributed into 450 producers' groups organized in 23 "Unions" (See the general framework of the organization in the appendix)

A producers' group is constituted by the farmers who are in the same land development unit, that is, who are using the same hydraulic infrastructure.

In irrigated lowlands for example, the production tools are jointly owned (water regulation infrastructure, main canals, sometimes equipment), but production activities are implemented on an individual basis (each farmer has at his disposal a plot of 500 to 1200 sq. m depending on the sites).

The producers' groups of one zone are grouped within a "Union" (the Federation has 23 unions). All the groups of one zone produce the same crop (within the organization framework), thus the Unions are specialized either in potato, onion or tomato. The "Union" devotes itself to promote this production in its area thanks to appropriate technical and economic support from the Federation (see IV).

There is coordination between unions which are producing the same crop, the "commodity chain committee" made up of 7 experienced farmers' leaders. The committee globally plans the operations (inputs ordering, markets monitoring...) and makes the assessment.

The upper level of organization is the Federation which gathers the different Unions (a Union is devoted to a specific commodity chain **and** linked to a geographical zone). A congress of the Federation is held every four years.

Several activities are managed at the Federation level:

- input supply operations;
- technical staff management.

The Federation employs about 40 salaried workers; half of them are field agricultural specialized advisers, the other half being trainers grouped in a training unit. This training unit plays a very important role in two main domains: 1) literacy: the region was suffering from a high illiteracy rate (95% of illiterates). Today, 250 literacy centers are operational, self-managed by the grassroots organizations; 2) training of leaders: a special effort was made to reinforce the Unions: training on accountability, inputs management, marketing organization, organization of annual general assembly, support to strategic planning...

This training concerns farmers' leaders, but also technicians (specialized advisers) who have to learn how to work within an organization, to provide advice with a collaborative attitude in respect for farmers and leaders.

Lastly, the Federation manages few common infrastructures:

- headquarters
- an accommodation and training centre
- a mechanic workshop

With regard to finances, the different levels of the organization are self-reliant.

The Federation manages a very heavy budget and strives to gradually enhance its autonomy. Its own resources come from membership contributions, marketing margins on inputs and taxes on marketed products. This income enables it to cover about 45 % of its operating costs.

## **VI. Support and partnership**

FPPD received a constant and multiform long-term support from the French Cooperation (about fifteen years). But the originality of this support is its partnership pattern, since the FPPD has remained, from its formal creation in 1992, the contracting authority<sup>1</sup> and manages the development process.

This partnership is based on two aspects:

- a) support to production (which depended on AFD from 1995 to 2002) through a direct loan of working capital (to pre-finance inputs), later supplemented by the deposit of a guarantee fund in the banks, and a capital fund making it possible to gradually develop essential infrastructure (tracks, water management infrastructure, stores...)
- b) support to leaders' and technical staff teams' capacity building (which depends on MAE / Ministry of Foreign Affairs), with a technical assistant posted in the FPPD from 1988 up to now and support to the FPPD training unit.

With the end of AFD support, the FPPD has been proactive to diversify its partnerships and has received support from Canadian cooperation and various NGOs.

The Federation has established trust-based and permanent relations with the business community (foreign traders, especially inputs suppliers, and national traders for marketing their products). The organization can not claim to fully replace the private actors in marketing their products. But it has developed sustainable partnerships on a mutual trust basis (contract system, regular meetings...).

## **VII. Results and lessons learnt from the experience**

### **Results**

The Federation of Fouta Djallon appears as a remarkable success on many respects. Remaining on classical criteria, one can highlight:

- A regular increase in potato and onion production which fully addresses the increasing national demand (no more imports) and makes significant openings on external markets (Senegal, Bissau Guinea, Sierra Leone).

The protection that the national productions received at the beginning is no more needed: nowadays, Federation producers have increased productivity such that their products can compete with imports from Europe, without any public support.

- The Federation has spurred a development momentum at the regional level which widely goes beyond its members. Its success has brought back recognition of agricultural activity in a region where social success came usually from outside.

Initiatives are multiplying in many areas of the region and beyond: potato cultivation is spreading spontaneously, other sectors are developing (coffee, fruits, etc.), emigrated young people and administrative staffs are redeploying in agriculture, services are diversifying, land value is increasing, etc.

This observable impact is far beyond the expectations of the Federation, which prides itself as having played a role of "locomotive", but does not want to control everything, considering competition as a factor of progress.

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<sup>1</sup> That is FPPD is the manager and takes decisions relating to support guidelines and the amount of money

### Lessons learnt

Some conditions of success of FPFD can be highlighted:

- The success stems from the quality of the leading teams.

A special tribute has to be paid to the leader of the organization (former administration staff, son of an aristocratic family): he has succeeded in sharing power, promoting a generation of skilled and committed leaders inside the organization (which counts hundreds of militants) and supporting a modernist project of individual promotion, based on rigor, hard work, respect for freely accepted regulations, opening to outside...

- This project was out of touch with the system of values supported by traditional authorities. Strong negotiation skills were needed to rally them progressively to the project and, today, the federation and its leader play a major role in socio-political issues, at the level of Fouta Djallon.

As such, as FPFD gave fresh impetus to rural development by using mainly a technical and economic entry, this has led after about 15 years to a profound transformation of the economic, social, cultural and political aspects of the society.

- FPFD received very strong and permanent support. On the financial stand point, one can say that almost all capital investments were subsidized by various forms of cooperation. In the same way, the equity capital of the organization, coming from its economic activities, covers only part of the operating costs.

That is not surprising, given that such an organization manages activities and services that are the responsibility of the State (literacy, training, advising, infrastructures...). Because the State of Guinea is failing and poor, international cooperation takes over.

This situation often occurs in countries that are undergoing a rural development process. A relevant analysis of the efficiency has to be based on comparison between the global wealth produced (for farmers, the business community, the State...) and the amounts invested in this organization.

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### Reference for further reading:

- FPFD website: <http://www.paysansdufouta.org/>



### Appendix: General framework of FPFD activities

Scope	Level of organization	Implemented activities	
Plot (500 to 1200 sq m)	Producer (18 000)	Individual production	
Land development unit	Producers' group (450)	Collective production tool (same crop for all members)	
Zone	Union (23)	Technical support Economic management (same crop for all groups)	
Sector	<i>Sector committee</i> (3)	<i>7 skilled farmers to plan and assess the sector</i>	
Province	Federation	Strategic planning congress/4 yrs Input supply management Resource management	

**UNPCB**

**(« Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton  
du Burkina »)**

**National Union of Burkina Cotton Producers  
(Burkina Faso)**

- **Scope:** the whole cotton area of Burkina Faso (36 provinces, South and West of the country)
- **Membership:** all the cotton growers (about 230,000 members)
- **Date of establishment:** 1998
- **Sector:** Cotton
- **Activities:** marketing, training and information, input supply, representation of interests
- **Support and partnership:** State, AFD (French Development Agency) and other donors (EU), Sofitex (cotton company)

**The National Union of Burkina Cotton Producers** is an example of a **multi-functional commodity chain-oriented organization**; it is structured from local to national level and plays successfully different roles within the cotton sector in Burkina and abroad:

- technical and economic functions for grassroots groups which are an interface between farmers and manufacturers for marketing and support to cotton production;

- advice and support services to groups (management advice, training...) and economic functions at the federation level

- representation of interests given that the National union is a stockholder in cotton companies and holds the majority within the inter-professional committee; it represents farmers in this framework which manages the commodity chain.

## **I. Background**

In Burkina Faso, cotton is a strategic sector as it constitutes almost 40 % of exports (and more than 50 % of foreign exchange revenue).

Cotton is a component of small-scale family farming systems including cereals and sometimes livestock. Capital level is quite low (low level of equipment, rain-fed systems); the quality of product is good (manually harvested cotton) but the yields hardly exceed 1t per ha on average.

In Burkina Faso and in many other sub-Saharan African countries, the cotton commodity chain is traditionally “integrated”: besides the production by farmers, all the functions related to production (input supply including credit, technical advice), processing and marketing (purchase of seed cotton for farmers, marketing of fiber and by-products) are fulfilled by the same actor: the “Cotton Company”. In Burkina, until 2002, there was only one Cotton company, SOFITEX<sup>1</sup>, which was managing all these functions in the whole country. SOFITEX has always worked with groups of producers organized at the village level or at a lower level.

Since 2002, a liberalization process was initiated and there are now three cotton companies, SOFITEX, SOCOMA and FASO COTON; the cotton production area has been shared between these three companies which, as such, are not directly in competition.

A regulatory structure has been maintained: this inter-professional framework groups the different actors of the commodity chain (farmers, cotton companies and the State); one of its main tasks is to determine the prices of cotton and inputs at the beginning of the season.

## **II. Conditions of establishment**

### **The beginning: creation of the specific grassroots groups**

After the State’s withdrawal in the mid 1990s, there was a crisis in the cotton sector in Burkina; the large and multi-activity village groups GVs - *Groupes Villageois*) were highly indebted and repayment level was low. In fact, cotton was the main cash crop and an easy way (often the only one) to get access to credit. Because marketing and credit were managed jointly at the level of the GVs, the better cotton growers were paying for the less efficient ones, thus the former began to drop cotton cultivation. It resulted in a collapse of the production from 150,000 T in the late 1980s to 110,000 T in 1993.

To address this problem, Sofitex and the State decided to reform the sector with the support of donors, mainly AFD (“*Agence Française de développement*” - French Development Agency). From 1996, debt cancellation was the counterpart for constitution of small-size cotton oriented groups referred to as GPCs (“*Groupes de Producteurs de Coton*” - Cotton Producers’ groups). There are generally several groups per village, each of them having 15 to 30 cotton growers; their membership is based on cooptation so that the mutual guarantee works well. The GPCs are the interface between Sofitex and individual farmers for technical advice, input supply, credit management and marketing of seed cotton.

At the same time, a support program was funded by AFD to build the capacities of these groups in accounting and book-keeping and to set the conditions for fair management.

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<sup>1</sup> SOFITEX is a company in which DAGRIS and the State of Burkina Faso have been shareholders with the Banks (minority shareholder) until 1999, then UNPCB joined in (see § II)

### Progressive Structuring

Grassroots organizations quickly felt the need to team up for two main reasons:

- they need services such as information, training, support in financial and organizational management, and it is difficult to efficiently organize these services without any coordination structure;
- the farmers have to be organized or represented at a convenient level to properly the relationship with Sofitex (marketing at the village level, delivery of inputs at village or departmental level, ginning factory at the provincial level...).

In 1997, the first GPC organizations were constituted: these are the UDPC (*“Union Départementale des Producteurs de Coton”* – organization grouping grassroots GPCs at departmental level, and the UPPC (*“Union Provinciale des Producteurs de Coton”*, grouping the UDPC at provincial level).<sup>1</sup>

In 1998, the Provincial Unions decided to constitute the National Union of Burkina Cotton Producers (UNPCB), in order to represent the farmers within the commodity chain at the national level.

In 1999, in order to reinforce the position of farmers’ organization, the State transferred to UNPCB part of the capital it held in Sofitex. Then, UNPCB became holder of up to 10 % of the capital of Sofitex. As a shareholder, UNPCB is informed and involved in the decision-making process about all the operations from production to fiber marketing.

### III. Objectives and strategy

The overall **objective** of UNPCB is to ensure the sustainable development of cotton-based family farming.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to identify and then address the needs of the cotton growers in order to raise the competitiveness of the sector.

The strategy of UNPCB is defined through a participatory process involving all the levels of the organization in meetings at departmental and then provincial level; this enables members to express their needs, discuss the different strategic options and choose their representatives at the different levels.

A three-year strategic plan was established, taking in account the expectations of the farmers towards the organization, by the General Assembly which is made up of representatives of the UPPCs.

The current **strategy** comprises three main domains of action:

- service provision to ensure conditions conducive to the development of production,
- farmers’ and grassroots organizations’ capacity building (technical and management skills),
- defense of farmers’ interests at local, regional, national and international levels.

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<sup>1</sup> In Burkina, the legal framework comprises two main types of possible statutes for farmers’ organizations: the association statute having existed for a while, and the cooperative type, which was developed in 1998, is adapted to economic-oriented organizations. All the member groups of UNPCB (grassroots and upper levels) are registered as cooperative-type FOs.

## IV. Activities

To carry out the above strategic domains, different **activities** are implemented and can be divided into the following 3 groups:

### 1) Services provided to members<sup>1</sup>

This is first support to production (interface with the cotton company) and marketing of cotton, and credit management. Input supply for cereals is also proposed in order to avoid the “siphoning” of cotton fertilizers for other crops, which has been a big problem in the past.

These services are provided to individual farmers through basic GPCs.

Member GPCs get management and book-keeping from their UDPC<sup>2</sup>.

Other services being considered for the future include farm management advice, marketing of crops than cotton, etc...

### 2) Training, information and representation

UNPCB’s action plan comprises several activities aimed at strengthening the position of its individual and collective members; these are related to training and information at the internal level, and defense of interests among external partners.

Thus, UNPCB:

- carries out training activities including basic training (literacy, basic accounting and book-keeping) for members and strategic training for leaders;
- produces and disseminates information: radio broadcasting, organization’s newspaper (“*Le Paysan*”), meetings...

UNPCB (and its local organizations) defends the interests of farmers at different levels:

- local level: disputes with cotton companies regarding weight and quality of cotton, credit amounts...
- national level: negotiation on cotton prices, marketing conditions within the inter-professional framework,
- international level: the president of UNPCB represented African farmers at the WTO Cancun meeting in 2003; at the sub-regional level, UNPCB is proactive within ROPPA (which is the sub-regional trade union organization) and APROCA (West African cotton producers association) to defend the position of West African cotton sectors.

### 3) Internal organization management

UNPCB brings together 230,000 cotton producers within about 8,000 GPCs and 160 Unions (departmental and provincial).

The organization has appointed salaried workers (in 2005, around 90 of them at departmental level, 11 at provincial level and 13 at national level). Thus, management of the organization’s financial and human resources represents a significant part of the activities.

The table in the appendix presents more precisely the main activities implemented at each level and their implementation modalities.

<sup>1</sup> “Members” are farmers at grassroots level and groups at the upper levels

<sup>2</sup> The framework to support GPCs’ management and training has been developed with the support of the PAP-OPC project (“*Projet d’appui à la professionnalisation des organisations de producteurs de coton*”), a project to support the professionalization of cotton producers’ organizations, funded by AFD

## V. Structure and Functioning

### Structure

The UNPCB is organized on a territorial basis (administrative areas) with four main levels (see table in appendix):

- The members of one **grassroot group** (GPC) are always from the same village, but in a village there are often several GPCs; the different GPCs of one village coordinate some of their activities such as cotton marketing...

- The **UDPC** (“*Union Départementale des Producteurs de Coton*” – Departmental Cotton Producers’ Union) brings together all the GPCs of the department (from a few to more than one hundred); management advisers (to GPCs) are appointed at this level.

- The **UPPC** (“*Union Provinciale des Producteurs de Coton*”- Provincial Cotton Producers’ Union) brings together the departmental unions at the provincial level. It employs at least one salaried staff, the Provincial inspector.

- The **UNPC-B** (“*Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Burkina*” – National Union of Burkina Cotton Producers) brings together the 36 Provincial Unions (the General Assembly is constituted of the representatives of UPPCs). Thirteen salaried workers (including six specialized technicians) support the board in its management and support tasks.

To face the new situation caused by the split of the national sector into three regions, each of the regions was attributed to a different operator (cotton company). The farmers’ organization has had to adapt, thereby calling for a supplementary **regional level** to be established between the provincial level and the national level.

### Human resources

The human resources of the UNPCB comprise farmers and salaried staffs:

- **Farmers’ leaders** at different levels are strongly involved and many of them devote much of their time to the organization (especially members of the National Board). They receive training to help them properly perform their duties. The capacities of many of them are recognized by their partners, but there is still a lot to do from local level to national level.
- **The salaried staff** is mainly technical or financial advisers; they are appointed either by the divisional, provincial or national organizations (see above). In any case, the recruitment process is managed at the national level but the contracts are signed with the employers (the local organizations). The FO’s leaders then to cope with several issues that they are not familiar with: the rules and regulations governing these persons (level of wages and other benefits, considering the financial means), human resource management and the sharing of responsibilities and tasks between elected members and staff (who decide what has to be done) and, sometimes, labor disputes.

### Governance and leadership

In the by-laws of UNPCB, democratic elections are regularly planned: each level elects its leaders, then these representatives constitute the basis of the upper level (for example: the General Assembly, composed of representatives of each Provincial Union elects the National Board). To work well, this process requires proper communication between the different levels (to base decision-making on the real needs, and to inform members about the decisions and the reasons for such decisions).

## Financial resources

Most of the financial resources of UNPCB come from the commodity chain in exchange for the services provided by the organization (especially local marketing organization and credit management). For each marketed ton, an allowance is paid by the cotton company according to the following scheme: 3500 CFA Francs per metric ton for the GPC, and 750 CFA F per ton to be equally shared between the national, provincial and departmental levels of the organization. The federations often get additional fees from their members (GPCs or “Unions”) related to the services that they provide.

This constitutes a huge amount of money (about 2.7 billion CFA francs which is about 4 million euros), but this is still not enough to meet all the needs of the organization (less than 20 euros per producer and per year). So the organization is seeking other ways to develop its own resources; the idea would be to provide user-fee services to its members (like input supply for example), but this presupposes that these services are profitable and competitive. Such equity capital is supplemented by subsidies and supports from donors (see below).

## VI. Support and partnership

The cotton sector is the prime mover of rural development in a large part of Burkina Faso, and cotton is the main source of foreign currency for the country. For these reasons, UNPCB has received regular support from different partners since its creation. This support has been both institutional and financial, through different projects:

- “Professionalization” projects (funded by AFD) to support the FO in: 1) hiring staff to provide good quality services (partial funding for wages at the beginning), 2) building the capacities of members, leaders and staff, 3) improving management (external support staff), and 4) funding logistics (computers, cars, etc...),

- EU subsidies the building of facilities (stores and offices of the UD and UP)...

Besides these donors and the national stakeholders of the cotton sector (the State, and Cotton companies), UNPCB has developed partnerships with others farmers’ organizations. At the national level, UNPCB is a member of the CPF (“*Confédération des Paysans du Faso*”, that is the Confederation of Burkina Faso Farmers, which is the national farmers’ trade union organization); UNPCB was also involved in the creation of APROCA (“*Association des Producteurs de Coton d’Afrique*” - Association of African cotton producers). The goal is always to represent the interests of farmers and to reinforce their position in national or international decision-making processes...

## VII. Results and Lessons learnt

### Results

UNPCB was built at the beginning to address the needs of the sector. It was later recognized and popularized thanks to the charisma of its leader. Currently, it is involved in a broad-based strategic planning process (with the support of the AFD), in order to gain mastery of its development, and to reinforce its autonomy.

The success of the cotton sector in Burkina Faso is undeniable: Burkina Faso cotton production experienced a dramatic increase from 115,000 T of seed cotton in 1996 to 630,000 T in 2004, due both to the increase in the number of cotton producers and the cotton

cultivation area by each farmer. This trend is relying on the image of cotton as a trustworthy and profitable crop (securing system of input supply and outlet, securitization of price). UNPCB has played a major role in the development of this image which is a result of two main points: 1) the prices (inputs and cotton) are known at the beginning of the campaign, and 2) these prices stayed at a “correct” (encouraging) level and the cotton sector is still concentrated, allowing farmers to get credit for inputs and equipment.

The involvement of UNPCB can be considered as a factor of success of the privatization of the cotton sector in Burkina Faso. This process was achieved without major difficulty in 2004, with the sharing out of the production area between 3 companies, each of them following the same regulations (integrated sector). This was a State decision but all the actors of the commodity chain have their share in this achievement: in particular, UNPCB has managed to adapt to the new institutional landscape.

### Lessons learnt

- The acknowledgement that UNPCB gets from its members is based on the quality of the services provided; this results from the efficiency of the organization as well as from the technical and the organizational and financial aspects. Most of the financial resources are directly linked to these services which thus have to remain satisfactory. UNPCB is not willing to handle all the functions needed by farmers in its area of intervention. For some of these functions, the organization prefers to be more of a facilitator or a mediator than a direct operator; nevertheless, the privatization process might lead UNPCB to be involved in more functions in the future (e.g. providing technical advice on farm management, which cotton companies might not handle anymore in certain zones).
- Although currently UNPCB appears as a strong and successful organization, the issue of financial resources remains crucial and sensitive; the ability of the organization to release equity capital and to develop diversified partnerships determines its autonomy and sustainability.
- One strong point of UNPCB is its capacity to adapt to the changing environment and needs of its members: an example is the creation of regional unions to attain a new relevant negotiation level according to the new structure of the commodity chain after privatization.
- The issue of governance and communication is essential as it determines the image of the organization and the trust that the partners are giving to it. François Traore, elected as the first president in 1998, is a charismatic leader who got renown at the national and international levels; this has strongly contributed to the good image of UNPCB. The future on this topic depends on the communication and governance issues which constitute a major stake in such a large organization:  
The organization has a pyramidal structure: each level leader is a grassroots member at the upper level. Because of the wide scope of the organization, there is a distance between the farmers and the national level with two main consequences:
  - the difficulty for the national representatives to take fast decisions (when negotiating, for example), but also to be sure to represent the will of the members. In fact, some members think that the decision-making process is not transparent enough and call for change or improvement;



- decision-making has to be transparent and democratic as much as possible (to take into account the opinion of the grassroots); at least, decisions have to be shared and explained to the grassroots level.

In fact, it appears that external communication is currently more satisfactory than internal communication, which therefore has to be improved to avoid a representation crisis.

- The issue of “leadership resources” is critical for democracy, in order to have a large panel of potential leaders needed to ensure a real reshuffle of responsibilities. It presupposes to identify enough people with required capacities, availability and motivation, which is not easy... In relation to this topic, the issue of compensation for time spent on duty for the organization also has to be addressed; for some of the current leaders, a balance has to be found between remaining a farmer and getting responsibilities within the organization...
- The partnership policy put in place by the State and Sofitex has been a way to avoid conflict situations; this type of conflicts led to a drop in production at the beginning of the liberalization process, which was very bad for all the actors of the commodity chain.

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#### Website:

abc Burkina : [www.abcburkina.net/unpcb](http://www.abcburkina.net/unpcb)

**Appendix: Activities and functioning of organizations per geographical level**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Modalities</b>
<b>Local GPC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support to production and inputs distribution</li> <li>- Cotton collection management</li> <li>- Credit management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the cotton company staff on technical issues</li> <li>Forward information to members</li> <li>Organize the “Cotton market” at the village level</li> <li>Aggregate the individual needs (inputs) and forward same (cotton inputs to the cotton company, cereal inputs to UPPC), discuss the feasibility of credit requests for members before forwarding them</li> </ul>
<b>Departmental UDPC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Services to GPC : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-technical services</li> <li>-Management support and training</li> <li>-Intermediation / cotton company</li> </ul> </li> <li>Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check and forward the needs of the GPC to the upper levels</li> <li>Support to GPCs on management issues (salaried staff : management advisers)</li> <li>Training for members (literacy), GPC and UD leaders</li> <li>Advocacy at the cotton company (in the event of a dispute)</li> <li>Interface between different levels</li> </ul>
<b>Provincial UPPC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Services to UDPC : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support and training to GPC advisers</li> <li>-Training for GPC leaders</li> <li>-Intermediation with cotton company</li> </ul> </li> <li>Services to GPC : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management of inputs (for cereals)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to departmental staffs (Provincial inspectors)</li> <li>Training for GPC and UD leaders</li> <li>Check and forward the needs sent by UD</li> <li>Manage the cereal input supply (especially distribution)</li> <li>Interface between different levels</li> </ul>
<b>National UNPCB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to all grassroots member organizations:</li> <li>Technical and economic services</li> <li>Information, Training on technical and institutional issues</li> <li>Management of the organization :</li> <li>Internal communication, strategic planning, financial and human resource management, relations with donors...</li> <li>Representation of farmers ( national and international) ;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic services to members (handling the cereals inputs market)</li> <li>Training and information to members</li> <li>Strategic planning</li> <li>Human and financial resource management</li> <li>Representing the farmers (cotton companies board meetings, inter-professional meetings especially to determine cotton and input prices, international meetings)</li> </ul>

**CECAM Network**  
**(« Réseau des Caisses d'Epargne et  
de Crédit Agricole Mutuel »)**  
**(Madagascar)**

- **Scope:** 8 regions (out of 28)
- **Membership:** 47,000 members (2002)
- **Sector :** all agricultural productions
- **Date of establishment :** since 1993
- **Activities:** Credit
- **Support and partnership:** French NGO (FERT - « Formation pour l'Epanouissement et le Renouveau de la Terre »), Caisse Régionale de Crédit Agricole de Reims, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), European cooperation...

**The CECAM Network** is an example of a large-scale network of specialized credit organizations run by farmers. Built under the impetus of a multifunctional FO (FIFATA), this FO helps to solve the crucial problem of credit supply in a poor country. It illustrates the diverse credit activities that this type of specialized FO can propose to help farmers and their organizations achieve agricultural and rural development. It also illustrates the difficulties and tension encountered to meet two somehow contradictory objectives: achieving financial autonomy and providing good services to poor farmers. It also illustrates the difficulties to articulate different types of services and the potential benefits and tension generated by the interrelation between organizations.

## **I. Background**

In Madagascar, small-scale family agriculture is dominant in staple food production (rice, maize). These farmers encounter many difficulties. The farm productivity level is still very low. Access of the small-scale family farmers to the formal financial sector is still poor, and the rural financial market is dominated by private moneylenders who practice high loan rate (120-400%/year).

## **II. Conditions of establishment**

The creation and development of the CECAM network went through several stages.

### **The creation of FIFATA**

In 1989, a farmers' organization referred to as FIFATA was set up by farmers of the Vakinankarata region (high plateau area of Madagascar). Its objective was to develop common services for the agricultural population of the region, especially through direct farm input supply, collection and trade of farm produce.

Rapidly, the high need for credit to develop farmers' economic activities was pointed out by the organization which initiated the creation of village mutual savings and loan banks.

### **The creation of CECAM**

In 1993, the existing village mutual savings and credit bank achieved autonomy from FIFATA and became CECAMs ("*Caisses d'Épargne et de Crédit Agricole Mutuel*" – mutual saving and credit cooperative).

In 1996, following the bank and credit institution law, the CECAMs brought together into 6 regional "*Unions*" and created URCECAM ("*Union Régionale des CECAM*" – CECAM Regional Union). These organizations were then legally recognized as financial institutions). In 1999, a strategic development plan (2000-2003) was drawn up to grant technical and financial autonomy to the network. This led to the setting up in 2000 of the UNICECAMs ("*Union inter-régionale des CECAMs*" – Inter- regional Union of CECAMs).

**Remark:** In 1998, economic and commercial activities of FIFATA became autonomous through the setting up of agricultural Cooperatives and since then, FIFATA has been focusing on representation of farmers' interest as a farmers' union

## **III. Objectives and strategy**

The overall objective of the CECAM Network is to help farmers to increase their income and improve their living conditions.

Its strategy is to provide adapted credit offer to farmers and their organizations.

## IV. Activities

The CECAM network is specialized in credit supply. To address the diversity of farmers' (and their organizations') needs, the CECAM network develops different types of credits:

- **Farm Credit:** This is a credit adapted to the production cycle, to finance input and stock-breeding expenses. Conditions, interest rates and repayment schedules vary according to commodity and region.
- **Cooperative Hire-Purchase (LVM):** This is a medium-term credit product suitable for low-value farm implements (also appropriate for rural artisan implements and domestic equipment). After approval by the local credit committee, borrowers pay the first installment on the selected equipment, which is purchased by CECAM and leased to the tenant (borrower) until it is paid off. Then implements become the property of the borrower. Payment schedule is flexible according to cropping cycle.
- **Storage credit in the Village Community Granaries (VCG):** This credit is aimed at maintaining community rice stocks, local market stability and food security. This 5 to 8 months duration loan (of an amount representing between 50 and 75% of the total value of the quantity of rice stored) helps the farmers to store their harvest at a common place (VCG).
- **Social Emergency Credit:** This is a short-term (2-4 months) credit providing small amounts (equivalent of \$15-60) at 3-4% monthly interest rate; it is granted very rapidly (within 48 hours of request), and is devoted to respond to urgent cash flow needs.
- **Commercial Credits to Farmers' Organizations:** These are commercial loans designed to finance bulk purchase of inputs negotiated by farmers' cooperatives. The rates are close to competitive bank rates and loan amounts range between \$1,600 and \$48,000.

**Remark:** All forms of credit require farmers to become members and pay dues as CECAM members, and applications require approval by elected farmer committee as well as additional contribution to the shared capital stock of the CECAM.

Other credit types are being developed for land purchase; stock breeding; storage, construction; fruit tree plantation; and other perennial crops, as well as insurance products.

## IV. Structure and Functioning of the Organization

The CECAM network is structured from local to national level (see following table).

Level	Unit	Roles
Local	CECAM	Selection of members, analysis of credit request, decision on granting
Region	URCECAM	Desk for CECAM Management of interregional fund for cooperative guarantee
Network (8 regions)	UNICECAM	Relationship with donors, financial banking system
All level	Intercam	Technical services to the network (starting from CECAM,)

The functioning of CECAM is based on cooperative principles: the members are farmers; one man (or woman) one vote. To become a member, farmers have to pay a membership fee, and contribute to the share capital.

Credit allocation and beneficiary screening are decided by farmers on the basis of their local knowledge of the beneficiary (honesty...).

The structuring principle followed a bottom-up approach. Thus, although the network expanded to get more funds to provide credit to farmers (access to banking system, pooling of financial resources within the network), the orientations and decisions within the network remain those of the farmers.

Nevertheless, as the network expanded, the relationship between the initial “mother” FO, FIFATA, and the CECAM network became less tight. With the increasing autonomy of the credit function and “professionalization” of the CECAM network, some tension arose between farmers’ representatives of the different organizations and the technicians of the networks. Nowadays, relationships between FOs (initially created under the impetus of FIFATA) and the CECAM network has become more strained.

## ***V. Support and partnership***

The FIFATA and CECAM network received different types of supports (financial and organizational) during their creation and development phase.

The French NGO FERT (« Formation pour l’Epanouissement et le Renouveau de la Terre ») and the “Caisse régionale de crédit agricole de Reims” through the ICAR association<sup>12</sup> support the “professionalization” of CECAM and its network with the financial support of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and funding from German cooperation. They provided specific support to help the members and their staff to improve financial management skills.

In the mid and late 1990s, the CECAM network also from technical and financial support from European credit union banks such as Rabobank and “Crédit Agricole Mutuel”. Later, for the extension of the network, it received financial support from the World Bank (extension to animal husbandry credit) and from the European Union, French cooperation (AFD) and German cooperation (GTZ).

## ***VI. Results and Lessons learnt***

### **Results**

The CECAM Network scored many positive results.

The wide extension of its network could be considered as an indicator of success. As such, in 2002, with 157 local banks, a total of 46,675 members (around 470 corporate bodies – cooperatives; 11,932 women), around 483 salaried staff and 48 billion Malagasy Francs (around 7.2 millions Euros) of credit distributed, it is the main farm credit operator in Madagascar.

It has been able also to develop different forms of credits adapted to the diverse needs of farmers and their organizations.

Moreover, the development and the results of this network have indirectly strengthened the credibility of its “mother” FO (FIFATA) that was at its origin.

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<sup>12</sup> Those 2 associations are led by leaders of French agricultural union.

Good results have been obtained by the CECAM network in terms of support to the development of agriculture and incomes by providing adapted credits to farmers (and the farmers' organizations); otherwise these farmers would have to rely on high-rate credit from private moneylenders. The CECAM network obtained good technical results (high reimbursement rate), but it is facing some pending issues (somehow usual for this type of rural credit providers).

The main issue is the diversification of credit activities. To achieve autonomy and raise more savings, and hence finally obtain better technical credit ratio, the Network has to strike a balance between different types of credit activities: credit to agriculture and farmers, which is more risky and involves high transaction costs, and credit to other activities (such as trading, handicrafts,...) and traders, entrepreneurs (even urban) that are less risky and easier to manage. Such balance is difficult to find since the initial objective is to help small farmers but other types of credits (and targets) are more able to help the network to get autonomy, economic efficiency and good technical credit indicators. This led to tension between the CECAM network (leaders, technicians) and Farmers' representatives (from FOs and especially from FIFATA). This also raised the issue of governance of the network (between technicians and farmers' leaders' visions) and its effect regarding strategic orientation and credit allocation rules.

### Lessons learnt

The success of this network made it possible to draw some lessons in terms of condition of success. The success of the CECAM is especially due to:

- potential profitability of agricultural activities (profitable rice production, potential for diversification);
- the early autonomy of the credit function under the responsibility of a specialized institution (CECAM); it is a condition for success given that: 1) it is difficult to handle multiple functions in a multifunctional organization; 2) there is need to develop specific skills to manage a fast developing credit system. In this case, early autonomy of the credit function has also been pushed by legal constraints (national law on credit institution) and donors' pressure;
- the quality of the financial management system (professional procedure and professional management tools) and the relevance of the control system (combination of elected people's control and salaried control service); to have such management quality, it is necessary to lay emphasis on the training of salaried people as well as elected people (farmers);
- a long-term partnership with Northern cooperation especially in terms of capacity building;
- linkage to financial market (refinancing, investment of resources);
- the relationship between specific credit FO and other FOs; at the first stage, this strong relationship between CECAM and FIFATA (through involvement of FIFATA in the CECAM decision-making system) made it possible to keep the strong orientation of credit activities toward agricultural production development and farmers' production needs; it also provided moral guarantee and ownership that mitigates financial and mismanagement risks. Nevertheless, this relationship tends to reduce and become more strained following the development and the "professionalization" of the specialized credit organization. This raises the issues of strategic orientation and institutional governance.

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**Sexagon**  
**(« Syndicat des Exploitants de l'Office du Niger »)**  
**Office du Niger Farmers' Union**  
**(Mali)**

- **Scope:** the “Office du Niger” area (55 000 ha)
- **Membership:** 12 500 farmers who crop rice in the developed plots
- **Date of establishment:** 1997
- **Sector:** Rice
- **Activities:** Representation of interests, training
- **Support and Partnership:** NGOs : CFSI (Comité Français pour la Solidarité Internationale), AFDI (Agriculteurs Français pour le Développement International), etc., Office du Niger, State, private sector (rice processors and traders, other FOs : CPS)

As indicated by its name, **Sexagon** is a trade union organization which works within the framework of the “*Office du Niger*”, a State structure which operates a large water management scheme of 55 000 hectares. Sexagon was established to defend farmers in a land tenure conflict context. Beside these special circumstances, it represents the farmers in ordinary management frameworks of the Office du Niger. The organization works to strengthen the capacities of its members and has initiated a brainstorming on the future of agriculture in the area...

## **I. Background**

The Office du Niger area is a green island in the middle of a savannah region which has been strongly damaged by droughts.

The River is the third largest river in Africa. Flowing through Mali, it constitutes a huge water potential for the agriculture of the country.

The site was identified in the thirties by the French colonial authorities who built the water management schemes that were necessary to develop the large plains that could be irrigated by a gravity system (using the flood). Land development has not yet been fully achieved. Thus, although the potential area of irrigable lands is estimated at 1 million ha, only 55 000 ha of the land are currently exploited by farmer families.

### **Historical evolution of Office du Niger**

The Office du Niger has a strong tradition of authoritarian monitoring of the farmers. It was settled during the colonial regime plots to develop an irrigation scheme. Hard labor was used to build the infrastructure. Then most of the workers who came from remote areas settled in the zone and were allotted land. Nowadays, most of the current users are descendants of such farmers.

Since then, the farmers are in a precarious land tenure position vis-à-vis the State, which remains the land owner, represented by the Office du Niger.

The farmer families can be taken back from their land by the Office du Niger if they do not fulfill their obligations: following recommended cultural techniques, paying the water fee, selling all their rice to the Office du Niger Office du Niger had exclusive rights over rice marketing - at a price established by the State – the farmers' sales being controlled).

This Colonial State management, which worked before independence (from 1945 to 1960), was maintained by Malian State from 1960 to 1985. It was based on village associations as intermediaries between the Office du Niger and the individual farmers. This system obtained poor results: yields around 1.5 T of paddy per ha, financial deficit of the Office du Niger, degraded state of water control devices.

### **Successes of liberalization (1985-2000)**

In the mid-eighties, the Malian State adopted a more liberal policy; the Office du Niger withdrew from economic functions (supply and marketing) to focus on its land development and management functions.

Getting support from donors, it rehabilitated water control infrastructure and introduced several new technologies (new varieties, transplanting in place of direct sowing ...) which lead to satisfying results (average yield of about 5 tons/ha). At the same time, rice trade was liberalized and the commodity chain could henceforth cover most of the rice demand of the capital. This development also led to the set up of village associations such that in the whole area, village associations are developing to play an interface role between farmers and other actors of the rice sector.

### **New difficulties and uncertainty for the future (2000- ...)**

#### **A weakening farming system**

The last years have shown diverse malfunctions, both on the part of the Office du Niger and on the market, and this resulted in an obvious degradation of the technical results (drop of the average yield to 3.5 T/ha) and the economic situation (lower incomes, indebtedness) of a large

part of the farms. At the same time, the population growth reduced the available area per worker as well as the marketable surplus. As many farmers became economically weaker, it became easier for non-farmer rich (upper-class administration staffs, traders...) to obtain land tenure rights without cultivating themselves. An un-official land market and indirect farm management (renting, sharecropping) were thus developing.

### **The threat of competition with agro-industrial companies**

As the rice needs of the country sharply increase due to urban extension, it becomes logical to develop the production potential of the Office du Niger area to avoid a higher dependency on imports.

To make up for public funding deficiency, the Malian State looks for private investors interested in developing large-scale rice companies. Although their interest is still low up to now, and the chances of technical and economic success of this system seem to be limited, this policy constitutes a threat for small-scale family farming.

## **II. Conditions of emergence**

Following the political democratization (1991) and the economic liberalization implemented in the eighties by the Office du Niger, the farmers were led to contest the rough behavior of the Office.

The Union was born in 1997 within a context of land tenure conflict with the Office du Niger: the latter attempted to expel many farmers who were not able to pay their water fee on time. Later, the farmers organized a protest; this protest was immediately repressed (although it was legal). Indeed, this type of action was unimaginable and inadmissible for the Office du Niger given the traditional top-down relationship established with farmers.

Sexagon quickly demonstrated its ability to pool farmers. As such, the creation of another Union was supported by the Office du Niger and the government in order to limit the influence of Sexagon. In this way, the representation of farmers was shared between two organizations from that moment.

## **III. Objectives and strategy**

The **trade union function** was justified in the Office du Niger since a co-management system between the Office du Niger and farmers representatives of the village associations was put in place with the reform of the eighties.

There is especially a planned contract which links the State, the Office du Niger and the farmers, represented by union representatives. This contract establishes the obligations and rights of each partner; it is reviewed on a quarterly basis and is mainly related to land tenure management, development scheme maintenance and water fee payment. Sexagon is now almost alone to represent the farmers within the Office du Niger since it obtained a large majority at the last election (2004).

A strategic brainstorming was led in 2001 by Sexagon with its support agencies. This made it possible to design a first three-year action plan. From this process, it appears that the role of the trade union organization is not only to defend farmers' interests in the Board but also to be a brainstorming and proposition forum. It would allow the development of initiatives to improve the family farms' environment.

Several functions which have been performed by the Office du Niger in the past were devoted to private operators. Then some functions have collapsed, like the development and extension

of innovations, farmers' training and inputs delivery. Other functions are dominated by private actors – produce marketing - which places the farmers in a disadvantageous economic position.

The union's role is therefore to support its members in:

- analyzing these constraints together,
- developing proposals for solutions,
- promoting or facilitating members' initiatives,
- negotiating partners' support to help implement these initiatives

#### ***IV. Implemented Activities***

The general function relating to Sexagon's position as a Union includes information, training and facilitation of internal collective brainstorming. Three types of actions are implemented:

- monthly meetings of the central board and of the five zone committees, and General Assembly meetings every other year,
- training sessions: basic training (literacy, written or oral expression) and specialized training (preparation to negotiation with the Office du Niger for example).
- specific radio spots and broadcasts to pool farmers around a given stake or sensitize them on a topic.

The second part of union action is representation and defense of farmers' interests; it can be done within ordinary institutional frameworks (joint management committees, planned contract monitoring committee...), or out of them in the event of conflict, protest, delegation to meet politicians (government, parliament members...) to air their points of view. In 2004 for example, Sexagon succeeded in getting an expulsion measure suspended and then cancelled by the government; this measure had been taken by the Office du Niger against 4,700 farmers of the area.

Sexagon is also involved in economic organization through two types of actions:

- contribution to regulation of the rice market; it often intercedes with the producers at harvest time; the purpose is to dissuade the farmers from selling off their rice just after the harvest (which induces a fall of the price), and to incite them to settle their debts in kind through their grassroots organization (AV, GIE,...). By so doing, Sexagon is trying to reduce the risk run by the AVs which provides guarantee for their members to the credit operators (campaign loans). If AV members sell off their produce too early, they are not in position to settle their debts. The risk is thus for the association to be itself in debt and suspended from access to credit.

To convince the farmers to avoid as much as possible to sell rice at low price during the harvest period, Sexagon also concerts with the AVs to agree on an advice price that is higher than the harvest period market price. Thus, the farmers have an incentive to limit their sales at harvest time; in this way, since the supply is then restricted, the fluctuation of the rice market price is controlled.

- promote the creation of cooperatives in order to weigh directly on the market. As enterprises, cooperatives would get access to credit, in opposition to AVs which cannot; thus, they would be able to give a cash advance to their members, and then should be in a position to intervene more directly to regulate the market.

The cooperatives which are emerging are legally distinct units from Sexagon, although their first leaders and facilitators are often union members.

## V. Organization functioning

Sexagon is organized from down to top, from village level to central level (i.e. whole Office du Niger region):

- Members of Sexagon are producers, grouped at the grassroots level in village committees.
- Each village committee sends representatives to the “zone section” (a “zone” is the land development unit of the Office du Niger which groups several villages); there are a total of five “zones” in the entire Office du Niger area.

A general assembly of all the representatives of each “zone” meets once a year to elect the “zone section” board (about 15 members). This “zone section” board meets at least once a month.

- Each “zone section” board chooses five of its members as representatives to the central board of Sexagon. This board of 25 members meets once a month. The Sexagon congress, which groups all the members of “zone sections”, is organized every two years.

Sexagon has headquarters and little equipment (motorbike, computer...). It has appointed a salaried staff working as a facilitator.

## VI. Support and partnership

The State and all the donors are interested in the Office du Niger, and they have contributed a lot to the restructuring and revival of its activities. The development partners want to provide institutional support to all the actors who have to play a role in the reformed system. The Office du Niger has been strongly restructured, going from 3,500 to about 300 salaried staffs. Many of its activities were outsourced to enterprises or consultants.

Many private operators have become professionals in trade, finance, advising, and public works. Development partners also support the farmers in implementing other functions that they consider as critical. Such is the case, for example, of the management advice provided to farmers’ organizations; indeed the village associations quickly debts problems with the credit framework since they were constituted in a rush. The French cooperation set a mechanism to support them (*see the additional case: CPS project case*).

Sexagon has limited technical and financial support from a few NGOs (CFSI, CIEPAC...). Such support is essential to ensure its basic work, as it has almost no equity capital, apart from the allowances (which cover at the best 5 to 10 % of the needs). Nevertheless, during the 2000-2005 period, Sexagon managed to reinforce its position (inducing a marginalization of the concurrent union) and later got acknowledgement from the main institutional actors (State, Office du Niger, donors). This enabled Sexagon to gain access to diverse public funding (for example, the agricultural extension and farmer organization support project – PASAOP- funded by the World Bank, the Office du Niger Agricultural Development Project - PADON- funded by the French Development Agency...) in order to finance certain actions.

## **VII. Results and Lessons learnt**

### **Results**

Sexagon obtained precious results in terms of advocacy for the farmers; it has especially reinforced their position to negotiate with the Office du Niger.

Through mobilization of farmers and demonstration, it avoided 4,700 farmers to be expelled from their land by the Office du Niger.

Moreover, it contributed to the emergence and development of farmers' organizations run by farmers and providing useful services to farmers such as cooperatives for trading activities or services centers for advice.

### **Lessons learnt**

Sexagon saw the light of day spontaneously thanks to a conflict between farmers and the Office du Niger, without any external intervention, which shows that there is a need for such an organization. It would have been logical to look for a reinforcement of organizations constituted by farmers themselves. But for external donors, it is not easy to finance a union in a country where the democratic habits are not yet strongly established and where the politicians are not ready to easily accept the check and balances from the civil society.

Sexagon has been led to take interest in all the functions which may improve the production environment. It does not limit its actions to claiming, but is in a position to negotiate with different partners on all the issues related to the family farms' environment. This has been an element of its legitimacy.

But, even though the union defends positions that are supposed to be relevant for all the farms of the area, there are different categories of farmers who would require specific solutions. The organization would need a stronger analysis of the social situation, to fully take these differences into account.

The specific context of the Office du Niger requires a union-type representation. But this representation function is not the only one developed by Sexagon. On a wider point of view, it is important for farmers to have at their disposal a "cross-cutting" institutional framework for overall brainstorming on the development of agriculture (and not only on a sector basis).

The cooperatives, management centers, training centers, mutual savings and loan banks, etc... are structures which are specialized in specific functions, and thus, cannot develop a global approach. This is the role that has been fully played by the French union movement (see French case), and the Sexagon experience is here to confirm it.

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## The case of the rural community of Ross Bethio (Senegal)

- **Scope:** A large rural area (2,385 km<sup>2</sup>, 15 x 15 km) in the Senegal River Delta, just besides Saint Louis, the 2nd town of the country (212 000 h)
- **Population:** 54 000 inhabitants (in 2000)
- **Date of establishment:** 1992
- **Activities in the area:** mainly agriculture (rice cultivation in irrigated schemes of the Senegal River Delta), one bird sanctuary, transit trade (Mauritanian border)
- **Support and Partnership:** State, NGOs

**The case of the Communauté rurale de Ross Bethio** (Ross Bethio rural community) is not exactly a farmers' organization case. It is an example of contribution of farmers' organizations to local development in the framework of decentralization. It is an experience which relies on common brainstorming, strategic planning and collaboration between farmers' organizations and local authorities. This example shows the interest of involving as much as possible the population in the definition and implementation of actions to manage the local development of a rural area in a sustainable way.

## **I. Background**

Senegal is a sub-Saharan African country characterized by a subtropical climate (drought, climatic risk...) and fragile natural resources.

It was the first in Africa to initiate a decentralization process in 1972.

This process was based on the creation of local governments: rural community councils, referred to as “*communautés rurales*”. These are democratic institutions (elected through direct suffrage, multiparty system). The law endows them with quite large powers relating to land tenure management<sup>13</sup> and development. Nevertheless, for a while, their actions have been limited and without real impact for want of means (limited budgets) and skills (lack of experience of the elected people).

Development activities have continued to be designed on a project basis (areas of action and targets chosen by the donor or partners), without taking into account these new local authorities.

Since the early eighties, endogenous farmers’ organizations were set up (in Senegal in general, and particularly in the region of the Senegal River Delta on which Ross Bethio depends). With support from foreign NGOs, these organizations have undertaken activities related to training and production. These actions, developed alongside the State programs, were small-sized and quite short-term programs.

State withdrawal at the end of eighties has strongly reinforced this emerging farmers’ movement. In the Ross Bethio area in particular, the State, which had built large hydraulic infrastructure and was used to supervising the farmers strictly, decided to hand over irrigation schemes to producers’ organizations. Thus, groups were created in a hurry to manage very large schemes (1,000 to 3,000 ha). These farmers’ organizations, whatever their origin, ignored local authorities, considering them as powerless.

## **II. Partnership emergence**

From 1987 to 1992, a rapid increase of the rice production was recorded. This was the result of several factors:

- availability of arable land and water, and laxity of the rural community council regarding disposition of lands;
- easy access to agricultural credit and technologies: in particular, access to mechanization is facilitated since it has been already spread in the area during the previous period, thanks to the support of the State (subsidized credits, technical advice...)
- availability of cheap labor (endogenous or migrant).

Such increase in production occurred in a context where technical and economic environment of agriculture had been disorganized with the State withdrawal from supporting production functions. Given the disastrous conditions of rice cultivation development, especially with regards to techniques and the environment (poor quality of inputs, delay in cultivation calendar, rough development infrastructures, soil acidification...), agriculture was unprofitable and outstanding repayments increased tremendously.

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<sup>13</sup> According to the law, the State is the owner of the land, management of which is being handed down to rural community councils. They may attribute unexploited lands to individuals or groups which request them for use in the general interest. Traditional land tenure rights remain, albeit illegal. A decision from the local authority is not sufficient to cultivate the land, the recipient also has to agree with the land owner; the latter asks generally for a financial counterpart.



Under such conditions, a major crisis was predictable on the short term, beyond the production “boom”.

At that time, elected people (involved in land tenure management) and farmers’ organizations, which were the main actors of this anarchical development at local level, decided to come together in order to carry out a comprehensive diagnosis of the situation and to design a recovery policy. They thus called for an NGO (CIEPAC) to facilitate a strategic planning process for local development: this process is described hereafter.

### **III. Strategy and objectives**

The collective brainstorming was initiated involving all the actors of the local society: elected officials, farmers’ organizations, associations, traditional authorities (village heads, land chiefs, religious authorities), etc. The goal was to agree on the diagnosis and to define the ways to control socio-economic changes, through negotiated relationship with upper levels authorities as the State and the regional institutions operating in the area (development companies, rural bank, NGOs...).

The objectives were: (1) to design a strategic action plan, (2) to define the roles of the different actors, (3) to estimate the financial needs, (4) to identify the authorities in charge of managing and monitoring the program.

### **IV. Structure and content of the action plan**

At the end of this collective brainstorming process, a development plan was defined. It included 3 types of actions, according to the actors involved:

1. Actions initiated by the State, but co-managed with the rural community council

This is mainly to correct the master development plan of the Senegal River Delta (which had been designed by government services) to take into account the recommendations and interests of actors living in these areas. It concerns communication facilities (tracks, bridges) and hydraulic infrastructures for agriculture.

2. Actions initiated and managed by the rural community council, corresponding to its official responsibility:

They include:

- actions of general interest: health, environmental protection, education and literacy
- land tenure management: development of a concerted plan for land use, definition of rules and regulations and setting of monitoring tools.

3. Actions managed by civil society actors, on the initiative of actors’ or the rural community council.

These are, for example, the development of markets, design and maintenance of cattle tracks, and management of village woods. These initiatives were to be acknowledged and validated by the rural council, but they were to be managed by producers’ organizations or village associations.

Another example is the support to farmers’ organizations that have projects related to production or services (training, experimentation...), but need the rural community councils to succeed in negotiating with potential partners.

## **V. Results**

This process of action plan design, which lasted 3 months, resulted in a dynamics of local development and dialogue between actors which was maintained and is sustained up to now by local initiative.

Significant actions were implemented on the land tenure issue: a land development and use plan (of the rural community) was established with the cooperation of the agricultural research institution. It comprised 4 stages:

1. Drawing of a map of current soil use;
2. Validation of this representation of the territory and assessment of the impact of the identified use on economic activities;
3. Laying down land use regulations on a compromise basis between users (farmers, breeders, urban users, natural parks)
4. Establishment of a local authority to implement this land tenure policy.

Practically, the territory was distributed into eight land development and management zones, according to their use: exclusively farming areas, exclusively breeding areas, mixed use (with clear regulations about cohabitation of activities), urban areas, Natural Park...

The rural community council set up a dialogue framework for community actors. This is a permanent framework for strategic brainstorming (to sustain the initial process) involving only local actors. Membership to this permanent framework is based mainly on territorial representation: there are 2 representatives per zone and a representation of federative organizations (socio-professional organizations) working at least in a part of the council. The chair position is held by an elected member of the rural council.

To maintain the high level of local actors' initiative, the rural council appointed 23 local facilitators to stimulate brainstorming and support people or groups carrying out projects.

This organization makes it possible to control and guide external interventions; for example, the activities of certain NGOs which are very proactive in basic education and health, now have to be implemented in conformity with the program designed by the rural council.

This organization also makes it possible to benefit from the support devices put in place by support agencies. Such is the case, for example, of the PNIR (National Program for Rural Investment). The rural council which has already designed a four-year investment plan based on dialogue is in a position to easier pool the PNIR resources to construct the needed infrastructures. In the same way, farmers' organizations' projects that are identified by local facilitators can easily get financial support from the PSAOP (Agricultural Services and Farmers' Organizations Support Program).

## **VI. Lessons learnt**

The structuring of farmers' organizations on a market sector basis (large or small) is consistent and logical, even critical. Nevertheless, the farmers' organizations must not forget that they are set up in a territory (that farmers have to share with other users) and a local society comprising other actors who also have an economic, social or political legitimacy.

In a developing country, which is liable to pressure from international market, donors and other more powerful countries..., farmers' organizations need to establish alliances with other actors at the local level and at upper levels (regional, national, supra-national). It is their only chance to be able to resist and to take advantage of the current globalization process.

**IP PHTI**

**(« *Ikatan Petani Pengendalian Hama Terpadu Indonesia* »)**

**Network of Integrated Pest Management Farmers**

**(Indonesia)**

- **Scope:** 13 provinces
- **Membership:** hundreds thousands farmers
- **Date of establishment:** 1999
- **Sector:** Rice and later all crops, organic fertilizers, botanical pesticides
- **Activities:** technical advice, input supply, representation of farmers, advocacy , networking
- **Support and Partnership:** World Bank, USAID grants and FAO

**The IP PHTI** is an example of a large-scale network of FOs created by farmers themselves after receiving a specific technical-oriented support on Integrated Pest Management. It illustrates the evolution of an FO that started from a technical issue and progressively extended to other functions - input supply and representation of farmers - and that progressively gained its autonomy.

## **I. Background**

Economically and politically, Indonesia follows a somehow usual pattern: after a period of strong State regulation of agriculture and State control over the rural society, Indonesia experienced a liberalization and decentralization policy. Although there is still a strong “traditional” control of the State on existing FOs (usually FOs are the “driving belt” for State orientation and programs), some new FOs developed more recently.

Indonesia is a large and diverse country characterized by a wide diversity of situations according the islands, in terms of demographic, cultural and economic features.

Indonesian agriculture is characterized by significant diversity. Rice is the major crop of the country. Although it benefited from the Green revolution, poverty is still rife. Nevertheless, many opportunities can still to be exploited regarding the improvement of resource use efficiency and the socio-economic situation of farmers.

## **II. Condition of establishment**

In 1989, to develop new cropping methods in order to improve efficiency of rice production, a National Integrated Pest Management Program was established as a follow-up to Presidential Decree No. 3/1986. This program, implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, was financially supported by the World Bank and USAID Grant until 1999, and technically supported by FAO. It used Farmer Field School Method to help farmers learn how to manage their rice production in a sounder technical and economical way.

The program achieved some practical, technical and economic results. The rice farmers improved their skill in pest management; they developed efficient use of pesticides and also, more efficient use of fertilizers and water. They became “experts” in local ecosystem management. Thanks to upgraded skills, they increased their productivity, and reduced their production costs.

Moreover, the program led to the improvement of the organizational skills of farmers. The members of IPM groups developed skills in organizing effective meetings, conducting collective assessment of situations, seeking and implementing solutions. They also got into the habit of meeting regularly. This developed confidence between them, and relationships between groups. An organization from local to provincial level was built to exchange experiences on IPM issue.

In 1999, the IPM program ended. A final workshop of the IPM program was organized. On this occasion, the former trainees of Farmer Field Schools, especially representatives of 13 provinces, decided to create, on their own initiative, a Network of integrated pest management farmers, the « *Ikatan Petani Pengendalian Hama Terpadu Indonesia* » (IP PHTI).

## **II. Objectives, and strategy**

The objectives of the IP PHTI are very wide. They include:

- Development of local and diversified initiatives to solve problems faced by producers;
- Representation of the interests of the producers.

To attain these objectives, more than a precise strategy, they set key principles of action: solve problems identified by farmers themselves through collective brainstorming and actions.

## **III. Activities of the IP PHTI**

Based on the existing IPM groups, specifically groups with a technical purpose, the Network (and its groups) progressively new problems. They extend their area of involvement and develop new functions without stopping their initial commitment, i.e. the technical management of agricultural production through exchange between members on techniques, organization of training and field experiments.

They developed economic functions such as selling pesticide-free produce, organic manures, and botanical pesticides.

They also developed two main sorts of social functions:

- Support to the poorest; they carry out actions to build local solidarity to help the poorest.
- Representation of farmers' interests – advocacy; they assume this function through two types of activities: 1) At local level, by participating in the local management board (derived from new institutional framework created by decentralization), 2) at national level, by editing and publishing a farmers newspaper called "PETANI" (farmer) to sensitize farmers on current issues and to spread out the farmers' point of view on the economic situation, policy...

## **IV. Structure and functioning**

The IP PHTI works as a network structure. It has representative organization units at different relevant geographic levels according to the decision-making administrative level of Indonesia:

- Representation at national, provincial and district levels takes the form of Conventions bringing together representatives of the field (IPM organizations)
- Representation at sub-district level is made by local organizations that organize inter-villages meetings.

If they are present at different geographical levels, the different constituent organizations are autonomous: each level, each area, each type of production has its own way of functioning and managing its meetings.

## **V support and partnership**

In a first phase before the creation of the IP PHTI, the farmers benefited from an initial support from the National Integrated Pest Management Program. This program consisted in farmers training on IPM techniques (using Farmer Field School methods).

At the end of this program, and when the IP PHTI was founded by IPM farmers, an FAO program called “Community IPM” was launched and lasted until 2001. In continued dialogue with IP PHTI, this program supports the Network in building organizational/management and technical capacities. Thus, this program helps to develop the local capabilities (farmers and field trainers), especially in order to improve the management of the IP PHTI network at the various levels (refining the organizational structure, mechanisms and programs at different levels in order to seize the opportunities of the decentralization process, promoting district level conventions to choose their representatives). It also provides training on farmers’ advocacy to strengthen the relative position of farmers in other institutions and to improve relationship between farmers and others (parliaments, local governments, companies, NGOs). This program also promotes farmer investigations / action research sites at village level and supports implementation of refresher workshops at provincial/district level to share and improve methodologies and techniques (regarding soils, ecology).

Moreover, this program helps to develop relationships between IP PHTI and other farmers’ organizations through seminars and meetings. It helps the network to develop external communication and documentation especially through support (at national level) to the editing and distribution of the bi-monthly newspaper “PETANI”, and at local level to the process of documentation on the community IPM experiences.

In terms of funding, according to a survey conducted in 2001 by IP PHTI, for all the activities of the network (including Farmer Field School, Farmers Training courses, Farmers studies, Farmers action research, Farmers Cooperatives, Farmer advocacy activities...), 40% of the activities were supported by local governments, 30% were self-sustained by farmers themselves, 20% funded by the National IPM Program (until 1999) and 10% by FAO community IPM program (until 2002).

The IPM network also benefits from various forms of support from other stakeholders at different levels:

- through specific projects of international and national NGOs, such as the community-based IPM/sustainable/organic programs organized by a network of NGOs including World education, OXFAM, CRS Indonesia, etc., or Farmer Field School training organized by ACDI-VOCA.
- through specific programs of local government and support from local administration.

## **VII. Results and lessons learnt**

### **Results**

The IP PHTI and their organization (farmers IPM groups) that was initially dependant on technical support have progressively gained autonomy of analysis and thinking. The IP PHTI has developed a capacity to produce original and well-argued position and proposals in a broad range of topics regarding agricultural development: for example, to defend an original and non-mainstream position on food security issues at the 2002 World Food Summit. This made it possible to consider this experience as the first step towards an original farmer movement in Indonesia, where FOs are often considered as the “driving belt” of the State.

Moreover, this Network helps farmers (their members) to increase their incomes through higher technical skills and better access to production means (such as inputs). It also helps them to better grasp their role in the ongoing economic (liberalization) and institutional and political changes (democratization, decentralization).

### Lessons learnt

This success story in terms of project phasing out is mainly due to:

- the stress on initial capacity building during the IPM project, especially the capacity of farmers to analyze a situation, raise a problem and implement the scientific investigation approach (more than just learning to apply new technical practices) and their organizational capacity (group management)
- the success obtained on the technical issue, that builds trust and confidence in the groups
- the broadening of the objective and scope of activities of the FOs beyond technical issues, that provide a new impetus to mobilization the members;

This example also shows that:

- Although the technical function is important, the representation of interests function appears as a necessity to improve the farmers' production and living environment, as it influences the decision-making process of institutions.
- Even though the goals of an organization can be wide and somehow diffuse, this organization can achieve such goals if they are proved to be useful through concrete actions (technical actions) and if it has strong shared key principles, especially regarding governance and the way to design and implement concrete solutions (democratic governance and collaborative approach).

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### Website

<http://www.communityipm.org/index.htm>

**PART II:**  
**COUNTRY CASE STUDIES**



## France: the role played by FOs in the development of agriculture

### Characteristics of France

- **Location** : Western Europe
- **Climate and environment**: temperate climate with wide diversity of natural conditions (mountainous, Mediterranean region...)
- **Human characteristics**: 63 millions inhabitants, a density of 259 inhabitants per sq km, an annual population growth rate of 0.6 %
- **Economic features**: 28 220 USD GDP/inhabitant
- **Characteristics of agricultural sector**: rural people represent 23 % of total population, farmers represent 4.8% of total active population, primary sector representing 2.1 % of GDP, a large majority of family farms
- **Main agricultural productions**: Wheat, Milk, meat, wine production...

**The French case** is interesting for two reasons:

- it shows clearly that farmers' organizations cannot achieve anything if there is not favorable context to agriculture: in France, the success of FOs from the sixties to the eighties was based on a co-management of the agricultural policy in order to support a common vision of the agriculture model.

- it is a "complete" set of different farmers' organizations that fulfill the diverse functions that farmers need to develop their economic activities, to raise their incomes and to get a better social position

## ***Importance of an agricultural policy: the French experience from 1958 to 1992***

In the post-war period, the policy-makers and the farmer movement got a common vision of what should be the future of agriculture: modern and technically efficient family farms able to feed French people at a fair cost and to provide producers with incomes and standards of living similar to those of urban peoples.

This consensus led to:

- the set-up and maintenance of a favorable institutional and legal framework for the development of agriculture;
- the development of a convenient agricultural policy (at European and national levels) to create the conditions for a successful agricultural development (secured market, support to modernization).

### **The French context in the post-World War II period**

#### ***Social situation: a rural country which expects changes***

In the early fifties, France was still a rural country with about half the population living on agriculture. Because of the heavy damages caused by the war to infrastructure and production facilities, and its social consequences, the country had to rebuild<sup>14</sup>.

The war and immediate post-war years were a period of food shortage, especially in the cities, and the population (mainly urban) was increasing rapidly. Thus, there was a strong demand for affordable good food.

Moreover, there was a strong will for social change, especially in the countryside.

#### ***A traditional agriculture and a will for social change***

At the end of World War II, agriculture was mainly small-scale subsistence farming. Most farming systems<sup>15</sup> were based on a combination of multi-cropping (cereals and other crops) and breeding (small-scale livestock: pigs, cows, poultry...). Capital level was generally low (animal traction) and productivity remained poor; only a little part of the produce was sold.

In the countryside, the social organization was still traditional: the father often remained the decision-maker up to death. Nevertheless, a strong youth movement (Christian Agricultural Youth - JAC) had been developing for 20 years (beginning in the 1930s); its members were aspiring for modernity and improvement of farmers' image and livelihood.

#### ***A moving institutional context: Increasing national political stability and the rise of the EU***

The political context evolved rapidly during this period: up to 1958, France had a parliamentary system (IVth Republic) which induced a quick rotation of governments. Afterwards, the Vth Republic system (strong presidential system) enabled the governments to put in place more stable and consistent policies. At the same time, the reconstruction of Europe was going on: the European Steel and Coal Community (CCA) was created in 1951, and later on, in 1957, the Rome Treaty set the basis for the European Community. From this date up to now, the supra-national level has progressively developed by expansion of the process (more and more countries) and increasing integration (larger scope of European skills).

<sup>14</sup> The "Marshall Plan", funded by USA, helped to do it; it especially contributed to spread mechanization.

<sup>15</sup> Except in a few regions specialized in cereals (mainly wheat) production.

The Agricultural policy represented a key dimension of European construction with the sharing of responsibilities: the States took care of developmental policies while Europe managed the market policies (see below).

### **A project for agriculture**

In the context described above, from the late fifties, the State and FOs of France shared a common vision of agriculture and wanted to develop the “modernized family farm” model. Most of agricultural youth, and especially leaders, who had been involved in JAC, shared a strong will for change. They were looking forward to modernization at the technical level, i.e. a mechanized medium-size farm with 2 workers - the farmer and spouse. They wanted social modernization too, with separate housing from their parents, emancipation for women, fair representation (one person, one vote)... Above all, they wanted “to be the main stakeholders of their own development”, they wanted to play a leading role in their development. This project fitted the will of the State to get a modern and competitive agriculture, to feed the cities and get export earnings. Even though rural migration was expected as a consequence of this process, it was not considered as a major problem since the demand for labor in the cities was high.

Thus, the State strongly supported FOs’ involvement in agricultural development through two mechanisms:

- enactment of adapted laws and regulations to reinforce local initiatives,
- adaptation of specific institutions as Chambers of Agriculture to organize dialogue between farmers and policy-makers, and manage agricultural development.

This joint project for agriculture set the basis for the agricultural policy which comprised three axes: the economic policy, the structural policy and the development policy. These depended on three “basic elements”: product (market regulation, commodity chains organization), space (rural territory development, land tenure management), and man (promotion of the farmer).

## **The agricultural policy**

### ***The Market policy***

The market policy was under the responsibility of European institutions. Its main goal was to limit the fluctuations of the agricultural markets that were an obstacle to farm development.

The joint agricultural policy was based on the following principles:

- Guaranteed prices

The Council of Ministers of EU countries was determining a “reference price” for each product. On this basis, a regulation mechanism was applied to buy and store produce when the prices were too low (a given percentage below the “reference price”), and later sell the stocks when the prices increased (a given percentage above the “reference price”). The withdrawal of commodity from the market was funded by EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) and implemented by authorized storage operators (among which cooperatives played an important role) after a decision by “products offices” (responsible for price monitoring and regulatory measures).

- Protection of the market (called “community preference”)

A threshold price was defined to avoid agricultural produce of the European Community to face competition from imports. EAGGF charged a tax on imports to compensate the difference between the world price and this threshold price (that was commonly higher than the world price).

- Subsidies to exports

Because regulated prices (combined with other measures described hereafter) provided a strong incentive for production increase, Europe quickly (at the end of sixties) got surpluses for many produce. To sell off the stocks, subsidies were paid to export traders to compensate the gap between the internal European Community price and the world market price.

Thus, the European Economic Community framework mainly played a market regulation by ensuring market opportunities and guaranteed prices to producers, i.e. a demand securing function.

Then, each country had to organize the supply through the development of agriculture. A national agricultural policy can be defined as a consistent set of measures (regulations, incentives ...) to create a favorable environment for farms' development, and more precisely for the development of certain type(s) of farms (according to the national project for agriculture).

In France, the 1960-62 agricultural framework laws referred to as LOA (“*Lois d'orientation agricole*”- Agricultural Framework Laws) were the translation into a legal framework of the agriculture proposed at that time by FOs and supported by the State. These agricultural framework laws developed 3 axes, so-called the structural policy, development policy and commodity chain policy.

### ***Structural policy***

Since 1949, a specific law has put the farmers in a quite strong position in front of landowners (control of rent trend, duration of lease contracts...)

The agricultural framework law added several mechanisms to promote the extension of family farms:

- Old farmers were encouraged to drop out of professional activity through the setting up of a pension system from which they could benefit when retiring from farming activities);
- Farms size tends to be determined using two mechanisms: 1) to favor the establishment of larger scale farms, financial measures were set to encourage young farmers to settle on medium or larger areas (favorable credit terms were conditioned to a minimum land size) and 2) to limit land concentration, a law sets the limits of land accumulation;
- a land market regulation tool was created: the *SAFER*<sup>16</sup> (local body where farmers' union is represented) that has a pre-emption right on land to settle young farmers or extend small farms;
- a system of “compensatory allowances for natural handicaps” was put in place to help farmers producing in difficult areas such as mountainous zones.

Moreover, land regrouping operations and removing of hedges were subsidized (at the village level) in order to facilitate the use of agricultural mechanized equipment.

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<sup>16</sup> : see below a more precise presentation of these FOs

### ***Development policy***

The development policy included three aspects: technology development and extension, farmers' capacity strengthening and information dissemination.

Up to 1966, technology development and extension were designed and implemented by State services. Besides these "agricultural services", small groups of modernist farmers developed local initiatives for technical change and modernization (*CETAs*<sup>16</sup>, GVAs, CIVAMs...). Since 1966, the law has reformed the Chambers of Agriculture<sup>1</sup>, which become specific structures, managed by the farmers. They are responsible for agricultural development, whereas the administration focuses on control and enforcement of the subsidies policy and European measures.

To finance the activities of these specific structures, incidental taxes were imposed on marketed produce. They contributed to a common fund used especially to finance technical research and part of development activities; so the more developed and profitable productions - especially cereals - helped indirectly the development of other productions in difficult areas, such as milk or meat for example.

An effort was made to strengthen farmers' capacities through the development of an initial education system and vocational permanent training. To promote these new training systems, incentives were instituted (professional certificates were required to get financial support, especially for young farmers who wanted to start off or develop their activity).

Moreover, information channels specifically dedicated to agricultural technical and economic issues were also developed: professional newspapers and rural radio stations.

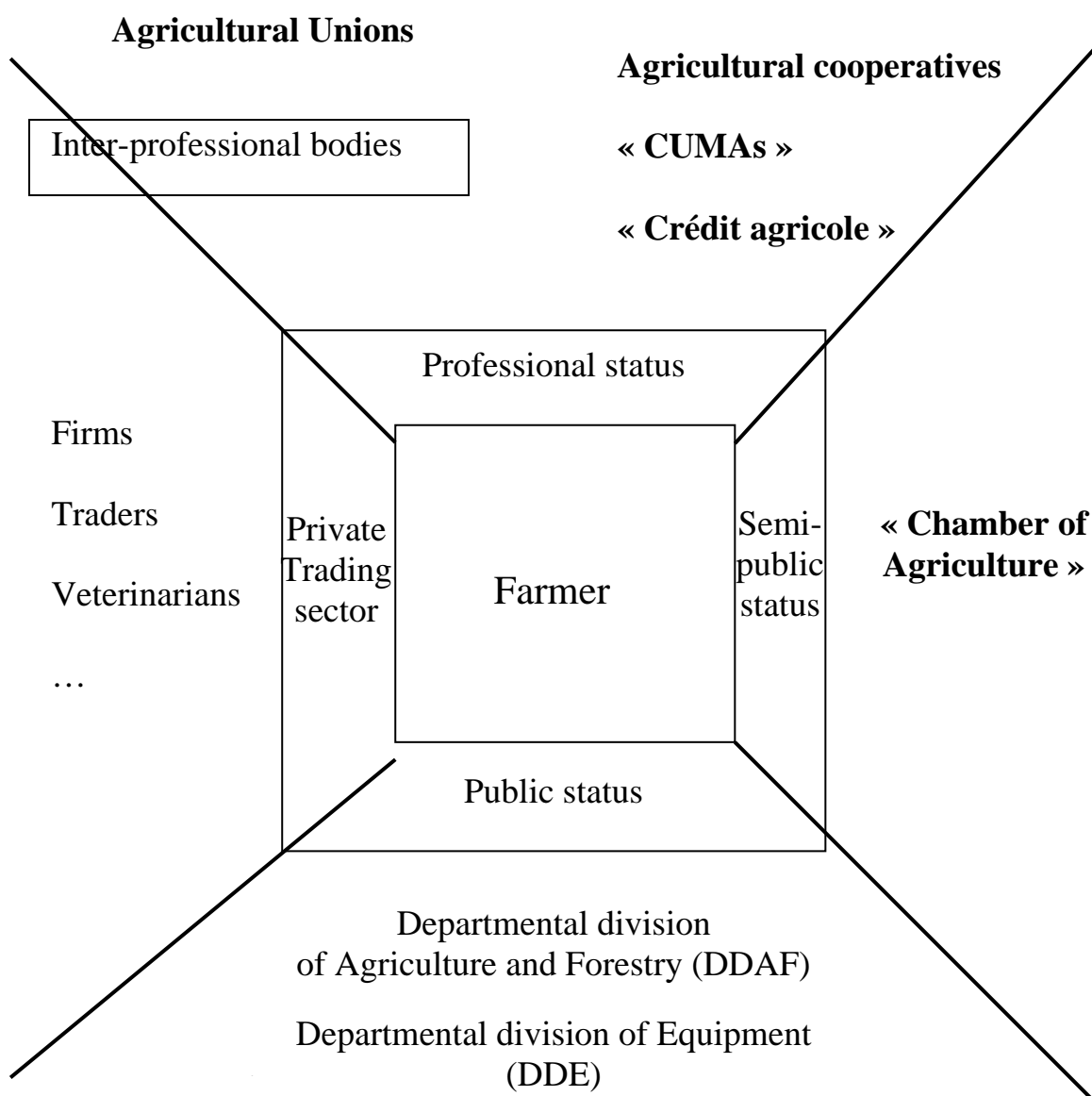
### ***Commodity chain policy***

In addition to the market policy implemented by the European authority, the national policy supported the involvement of farmers' organizations in the commodity chains: this was mainly through *cooperatives* and *producers' groups*. The goal of these organizations was to expand the supply of economic services to farmers in a region or for a given produce. Thanks to farmers' membership and involvement in decision-making, they were supposed to be in a good position to address precisely and effectively the farmers' needs.

Moreover, inter-professional frameworks were constituted on the initiative of the actors of commodity chains in order to adjust demand and supply, to collectively define facilitating market rules and to promote the produce.

## **The role played by FOs in the development of French agriculture**

In France, as a result of the policy described above, a **complete system of services** was put in place to support agricultural development. The farmer was at the centre of this system that is made up of different types of FOs which perform the different functions necessary for the development of agricultural production and living conditions. The different FOs constituting this system were sometimes in competition with other actors. The services provided can be either individual or collective. The whole system involved private or public operators, as summarized in the following diagram:



NB: This framework is the result of an evolution; it is not completely established. Yet, it has to be noted that agricultural trade unionism played a central role in this evolution; the agricultural unions' activities are now focused on the representation of farmers' interests but they had worked in the past to put in place specialized professional organizations in which they may still be represented.

In order to develop agriculture, these actors help farmers to address their different types of needs:

- technical needs: improved technologies must be available, and farmers need to acquire the capacities to implement these technologies;
- economic needs, that are mainly of three types: financing agriculture, marketing the produce and gaining access to equipment and inputs;
- “social needs”, which are related to the living standards and the image of farmers in the society.

### **French FOs and agricultural techniques development**

Technical development comprises three aspects:

- To develop adapted technologies (genetics, mechanization, fertilizers...)
- To make them available (extension, supply of goods and services) and affordable (funds for agriculture) for farmers
- To strengthen capacities for the successful implementation of these technologies: initial vocational training, permanent capacity building, information...

These functions are shared between different institutions:

- A specific National Research structure called INRA (National Institute for Agronomical Research,) was created in 1946; it is in charge of basic core research.
- Technical Institutes (per product) were set up to serve as interface between national research (INRA) and the extension systems; they are managed by farmers and their role is to develop adapted technologies based on research findings.
- Extension was implemented by government services up to 1996 (“*Agricultural Services*” at departmental level) then by *Chambers of Agriculture* and their “development services”.

Besides this system, since the early fifties, groups born from farmer’ initiatives have worked to develop their own technical solutions<sup>17</sup> and handle extension (CETAs and GVAs) as well as to improve financial management and profitability: the “*Management Centers*”. Later on, part of these groups joined the Chambers or Agriculture.

### ***CETAs experience***

The agricultural techniques studies centers, abbreviated CETAs (“Centre d’Etudes des Techniques Agricoles”) are groups of farmers (10-20) who decide to seek solutions themselves to their problems by working (thinking) together.

It is quite a flexible structure (similar to a “club”, with the status of an association), with a democratically elected president. The significant dues paid by the members enable the group to appoint a technician (full or part time). The latter plays a role of facilitator in the quest for information.

The strategy is based on the establishment of a work-plan where the work priorities are identified among the main problems faced by the farmers.

The activities are then based on:

- regular meetings and discussion on experiments and surveys implemented by members in their farms;
- visits and study tours in France and abroad;
- training sessions (organized within the group or for the elected leaders and the technicians of different groups).

To facilitate resource sharing and pooling, a national federation named FNCETA was created.

<sup>17</sup> By strengthening dialogue among researchers and technicians, and/or developing their own experiments

## **GVAs**

GVAs are larger and less demanding groups than CETAs (50-150 farmers per group). They are generally formed from the technical section of local unions and are focused on technical extension (at a large scale) and training. They generally join the Chamber of Agriculture after their creation.

## **Chamber of Agriculture**

The new Chambers of Agriculture constitute the keystone of the development system jointly designed by the State and the farmers, following the LOA. The “organic” law dates back to 1966 and lays down their role and regulations.

They have a consultative duty vis-à-vis the authorities at the departmental level, and are the main intervention and coordination structures in the agricultural sector, especially regarding development issues.

They are semi-public structures representing all the farmers and are funded on public resources through a specific additional tax (on the basis of undeveloped land) paid by the farmers. The board of the Chambers of Agriculture brings together 45 to 48 members elected for 6 years by 11 electoral colleges (farmers, former farmers, landowners, forest land owners, farm salaried workers, FOs salaried staff and 5 professional groups i.e. credit, production cooperatives, other cooperatives and mutual insurance, unions).

The activities of the Chambers of Agriculture are mainly focused on technical support to production, i.e. provision of technical and economic advice to farmers, training, support on land development and natural resource management. To carry out these activities, technical advisers are appointed either at the departmental or local level<sup>18</sup>. Besides these technical staff, different services are devoted to the management of technical, human and financial resources (accounting, human resource management, data-processing) and information (studies, legal advice).

Because they play an interface with the State, the Chambers of Agriculture framework matches with the administrative units. As such, Chambers of Agriculture were set up at the departmental level. The creation of Regional Chambers of Agriculture followed the establishment of Regions in the early seventies.

A national structure, referred to as APCA (*Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d’Agriculture*”, Chambers of Agriculture Permanent Assembly) provides services and support to divisional and regional Chambers of Agriculture through economic and technical studies, legal support and advice, training, communication...

## **Management accounting service center (Centres de gestion)**

The development of agriculture does not rely only on technology improvement, but also on the profitability of the agricultural activity. The French farmers’ quest for modernity included better livelihoods and especially higher incomes. As such, on the initiative of CETAs, with support from the research and education system, Management Accounting Service Centers were created to assess the economic impact of technologies tested by the members and to improve the financial management of the farms.

These were mainly autonomous professional structures (with simple association status). Part of them joined the Chambers of Agriculture or linked with the agricultural unions.

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<sup>18</sup> The Chambers of Agriculture have generally set up sub-departmental offices (often called rural development centres) to be closer to the “customers” and to better adapt technical advice to the diversity of local natural environment and farming systems.



The Centers provide services to their members on accounting (data collection and/or processing), and economic management advice.

Incentive measures have contributed to increase the number of members of Management Accounting Service Centers (200,000 farmers are members). For a farm to have its accounts validated by a certified Management Accounting Service Center, it has to reduce the taxable income by 20%.

### **FOs and economic functions**

The development of agriculture and especially the increasing share of trade has generated strong needs for economic services:

- to facilitate access to inputs (seeds, fertilizers) for crops and livestock, to make them easily available, and to provide the farmers with the means to finance them (incomes),
- to improve labor productivity through access to equipment (mechanization and buildings), and extension of structures,
- to get more stable and profitable markets in order to stimulate the production, increase incomes, and encourage farmers to market a greater part of their produce.

To insure the provision of these services to all the farmers and/or to balance the relations between producers and private economic operators, farmers' organizations were led to engage in economic functions, either trading, marketing and processing functions (cooperatives, producers' groups, inter-professional bodies), access to equipment and running capital ("*Crédit agricole*", CUMAs).

### **Cooperatives**

The origin of cooperatives in France can be traced back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century when a lot of experiences in collective management of economic functions were implemented:

- buying of inputs
- joint marketing of agricultural produce (generally to face crises)
- and/or processing of agricultural produce (marketing and processing groups called cooperatives or not).

These experiences remained mainly local, some of them failed, and the war destabilized the economic framework; then, in the post-World War II period, the farmer production was atomized whereas the processing and marketing private sector was more organized.

At the time, the trend was to increase the part of marketed produce from the produce reserved for self-consumption and to look for higher cash income.

The disorganization of the market in addition to the weak bargaining power of farmers (both for purchasing inputs and for marketing their produce to traders and/or processors) then generated strong crises for different produce (potato for example).

In this context, many types of cooperatives were created in order to improve the position of farmers within the commodity chains. Activities were geared toward purchasing (inputs and/or equipment supply), processing (especially milk processing) or marketing...

This movement was encouraged by the State in order to regulate the production. The 1946 and 1972 laws gave the cooperatives a quite flexible legal framework (see below) and granted economic benefits such as exemption from the profit tax and access to low rate credit...

In fact, the goal was not to have the cooperatives replacing the private sector, but to get a regulation through a fair competition between private operators and cooperatives. Moreover,

the cooperatives had an important role in promoting the development of agriculture in less profitable sectors where private firms were reluctant to invest.

The cooperatives are considered first as companies (economic sense). They follow the Rochdale pioneers » and their main common regulations are the following:

- Members are exclusively farmers and services are provided only to members; membership is voluntary and based on cooptation;
- The capital of the cooperative is constituted by the contributions of members through a partner share mechanism; the financial benefits are ploughed back as investments, while the rest is shared between members according to the volume traded through the cooperative
- The functioning is democratic and egalitarian (one man or woman has one vote in elections); the General Assembly elects a board which is in charge of preparing strategic choices and defining the action plan ; the board chooses a director in charge of implementing the activities;
- The cooperative has a duty to educate and train its members.

The result of this dynamics was the strong position of the cooperatives in agricultural economics. At the end of the eighties, 80% of farmers were members of at least one cooperative. The latter provided 60% of input supply for agriculture, 70% of cereal collection and storage, 30% of meat trade and about 50% of the processing of French agricultural produce (70% of wine making, 50% of milk processing and trade, 40% of slaughtering activities, 30% of canning and trade of fruits and vegetables...). They were managing 130,000 jobs at this period.

The cooperatives came together and formed the French confederation of agricultural cooperatives (CFCA). The role of the confederation is mainly related to information and communication services and legal support.

Since 1970, a concentration process has taken place: many cooperatives have come together (through buy-out or mergers) on a territorial or sector basis in order to get an industrial-size enterprise, to compete with ever bigger private firms and to be strong enough to bargain with the highly concentrated distribution sector.

The regional and national federations of cooperatives created through this process (15 national or international cooperatives, 300 regional cooperatives, 3700 local or departmental cooperatives) have to face new challenges:

- growing larger, and working on larger territories, the links with members tend to crumble (and some farmers are complaining about the cooperatives which have only the name and no more the spirit of a cooperative (solidarity...),
- the firms they are competing with are very big, which does not allow much space for a farming development policy,
- thus, the trend is often to reduce help to small farmers, in the name of competitiveness, which is far from the original principles.

### ***CUMAs: agricultural equipment use cooperatives***

CUMAs (“Coopératives d’Utilisation de Matériel Agricole”) are a special type of cooperatives whose goal can be summarized in better access to equipment. Their purpose is similar to the former labor banks (Banques de travail) and mutual assistance groups (groupes

d'entraide) which have been a way to solve peaks of labor issues or to manage the use of big machines such as threshing machines.

CUMAs' goal is not to support individual investment but to use jointly equipment bought in common. As a consequence, they are generally not considered as convenient for daily use equipments (or only on a transitory stage); they are better adapted for bigger equipment (combine harvesters...), and/or occasionally used equipment (concrete mixers for example).

The law defines CUMAs as cooperatives but with a flexible status which is very simple to implement. The minimum number of members is 4 and the functioning is similar to that of a non-profit-making association. The members of the group decide the type of equipment that they need, buy it (CUMAs are eligible to subsidized credit) and then rent it out to the members according to a jointly established convenient planning.

CUMAs make it possible to reduce the cost of mechanization. This facilitates access to state-of-art equipment for farmers. They have helped young farmers to settle especially in poor small farming regions.

They contribute to reduce the price of the services provided by other stakeholders who rent out equipment.

At the end of the nineties, there were about 13,000 CUMAs , covering a wide range of sizes (from 4 to several hundreds of members), equipment and organizations. Some CUMAs have been led to appoint salaried staff to run specialized machines, or to alleviate the labor burden of their members. CUMAs are local organizations grouped in a federation that provides services to members such as information, legal advice...

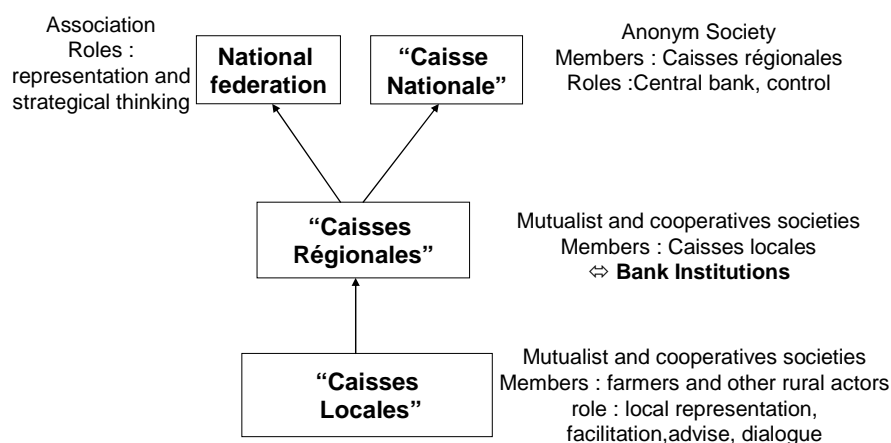
### ***“Credit Agricole”: farmer run agricultural credit system***

Funding of agriculture has been the common concern of the State and farmers for a long time: the first mutual assistance groups were created at the end of 19th century on a mutual savings and loan basis. Later on, local Agricultural Credit Unions developed on the same principle but at a higher scale. They operated on a cooperative basis: farmers are members of their local agricultural credit union, but the money saved by farmers was not enough to meet the needs of developing agriculture. This has led to the creation of regional credit unions and later on the “national agricultural credit fund” to provide capital to local credit funds. This device was supported by the State which let out money to the national credit union from the 1920s to the 1960s.

To encourage the modernization of agriculture, the agricultural policy comprised different ways of subsidizing credit. From the 1960's to the 1990's, the “Credit Agricole” was the only bank allowed to provide such subsidized credits to farmers (with support from the State which paid the balance between the subsidized loan rate and the market rate). This made the “Credit Agricole” the agriculture and rural development bank.

Gradually, in order to get enough money to address the needs of agricultural development, as well as to get profitable customers, the “Credit Agricole” opened its services to other rural and then urban customers. At the same time, several departmental and regional credit unions merged to constitute larger groups. The “Credit Agricole” is now almost an “ordinary” bank, and one of the most prominent bank establishments in France.

### The “Credit Agricole” framework



### FOs and social functions

Farmers’ organizations are involved in two main areas: mutual insurance and initial training.

#### *Mutual insurance*

As an agricultural credit union, the system of mutual insurance which was put in place in the sixties is the result of a long story of local initiatives of mutual assistance and insurance. The goal has been first to cover risks related to goods (especially to face the risk of fire). Then, just after World War II, mutual personal insurance (old age pension, health, accidents) was created on a voluntary basis (Farmers’ Mutual Plan); subscription became compulsory in the early sixties.

#### *Initial training*

Initial vocational training can be considered as a social function too.

Besides traditional public and confessional educational schemes, the “*Maisons Familiales Rurales*” framework, created in the early fifties, proposed a training scheme adapted to rural life. It is organized as alternating vocational – professional training courses. The goal was to propose specific operational training without severing the link with the family farm (and, accessorily, without totally depriving the farm from useful labor force).

The “*Maisons Familiales Rurales*” are managed by farmers’ associations (parents of trainees or not). The association’s board manages and takes strategic decisions, and recruits skilled persons as trainers and facilitators (trainees are monitored during their stay on the farm).

### Representation of farmers' interests

The role of the Farmers' Union is mainly to work to get satisfactory answers to the expectations of its members, either at the local, national and international level. To attain this goal (which is never fully achieved, as new expectations emerge when one is satisfied), it can implement three categories of activities:

- claims, demonstrations, negotiations with land owners, administration, trading... to improve farming conditions, support the farmers in the enforcement of their rights, and obtain more favorable regulations;
- lobbying, information and other actions (training, promotion...) in order to create a favorable balance of power,
- elaboration of proposals to develop a consistent project for the future; it may appear as relevant for a farmers' union to get involved in the implementation of activities to create the proper conditions for the execution of this project. This explains why, since the end of the nineteenth century, farmers' unions have been stakeholders in the creation of cooperatives, credit systems, farmers groups for extension...

The strength of the farmers' unions in France resulted from the relative unity which existed from 1945 to 1980. This was reinforced by the State recognition of FNSEA ("*Federation Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles*"- National Federation of Farmers' Trade Unions) and the CNJA ("*Centre National des Jeunes Agriculteurs*"- Young Farmers' National Center) as legitimate contacts in agricultural policy design. Since the 1980s, union pluralism has been recognized and minority unions (especially the "*Confederation Paysanne*"- Farmers' Confederation) are gradually gaining in strength.

Technically, the unions represent farmers in the "co-management" structures and especially at the local level in the Chambers of Agriculture and the SAFERs (land tenure regulation framework).

### The results of the French model

Looking at the technical results briefly illustrated in the following table, the French model (supported by the European common agricultural policy) can be considered as a success:

	1960	1990
<b>Structures</b>		
Number of Farms	2 082 000	939 000
Farm size (average)	14 ha	30 ha
Number of tractors	680 000	1 476 000
<b>Performance</b>		
Wheat production (tons)	10 600 000	31 400 000
Milk production 1000 l	10 800 000	23 000 000
Wheat: average yield t/ha	2.5	6

French agriculture has modernized very quickly and experienced a strong increase of its production. Most of the farming systems became intensive and technically efficient. The quality of produce increased and farmers' living conditions improved significantly, even though certain gaps still exist on average between farmers' and urban families.

However, the success had some shortcomings: the development relied on intensification, and since the 1970s, production largely surpassed domestic (European) needs. At the same time, the world market was gradually supplied with lower cost produce, to the point that Europe had to spend a lot of money to allow its farmers (and especially French farmers) sell off their production especially on international market.

Farmers are currently faced with new problems, including:

- environmental issues, mainly caused by urban dwellers and worsened by the recent sanitary and food crises (mad cow...) and various obvious problems of pollution (nitrate water pollution...).
- the competitiveness issue: will the highly subsidized European (French in particular) agriculture be able to adapt to WTO regulations and to compete with others.

### **Lessons learnt**

As a conclusion, it should be recalled that three main conditions contributed to the success of the “French model of agricultural development”:

- FOs alone can not solve all the farmers’ problems: an adapted **agricultural policy** is essential to set good conditions for agricultural development.
- The success is the result of a **consistent long-term agricultural policy** (30 years).
- Modernization of French agriculture took place within a somehow specific **context of rapid industrial development**: people coming out of agriculture found jobs in the cities.

The French case illustrates a typical case of management of the agricultural sector referred to as the co-management model between policy-makers and Farmers. This model operates through different structures from the grassroots to the national level.

The various FOs are autonomous, and there is a degree of specialization of FOs. Nevertheless, the consistency of the whole system is ensured through the common “culture” and the history of FOs, in which French trade unionism played an important role.

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## Senegal: Development of FOs' movement and FOs' diversity

### Characteristic of Senegal

- **Location:** Sub-Saharan African country
- **Climate and environment :** subtropical climate (drought, climatic risk...), fragile natural resources
- **Human characteristics :** 9.5 million inhabitants, density of 46 inhabitants per sq km, annual population growth rate of 2.2%
- **Economic features:** 550 USD GDP/inhabitant
- **Characteristics of agricultural sector:** 61% of rural people, 57% of total population, a sector representing 10% of GDP (primary sector 20%), a large majority of family farms
- **Main agricultural production:** groundnut, millet, rice, breeding

**The Senegalese case** is an illustration of a success story of FO development in the context of a “poor” country characterized by a significant rural sector, low comparative advantage, rural poverty, increasing differentiation. It is considered as a “reference” in terms of construction of FOs' movement and FO strengthening in Sub-Saharan countries for the following reasons: the Senegalese FOs developed throughout the past 20 years; they became a leading actor in agricultural development (rendering services to farmers, and assuming economic roles); they developed national structures that enabled farmers to discuss and negotiate agricultural policy with the State and Donors; and they contributed to building supra-national farmers' organizations in West Africa.

*NB: This case is derived from the following reference:*

*Mercoiret M.R., 2004- Enhancing Capacities of Rural Producers Organizations. The Case of Agricultural Services and Producer Organization Support Program (PSAOP) Senegal - CIRAD, WB, 41 p.*

## Phases of FO development

At independence in 1960, the Senegalese economy was mainly based on production and exportation of groundnuts. Most of the farming systems associated crops and breeding in small-scale family farms. The traditional social organization remained strong and the collective management of natural resources ensured some amount of sustainability.

The evolution of the FO situation can be divided into 3 phases:

- from 1960 to 1980, the “State-led development” era and the set-up of numerous grassroots organizations,
- from 1980 to 1993, the era of “adjustments”, the new agricultural policy, and the “intensification” and early structuring of FO movements
- from 1994, the PASA, the new agricultural revival strategies and the “unification” and consolidation of FOs’ movement.

### The “State-led development” era

The agricultural policy objectives at the independence of the country were: (1) food self-sufficiency (through the development of food crops), (2) technical modernization of agriculture and (3) diversification of production.

To implement this strategy, the policy operational mechanisms consisted in the 3 following devices:

- Rural animation aimed at facilitating “participation of the rural world in designing and implementing actions that concerned them”;
- Multipurpose rural extension centers referred to as CERP (“*Centre d’Expansion Rural Polyvalent*”), which consist of multidisciplinary technical teams at local level;
- Cooperatives, multipurpose and multi-sector economic organizations that enjoyed the monopoly to market groundnuts.

Gradually, the agricultural development interventions were implemented through **major regional projects** under the responsibility of State-run regional rural development “companies” referred to as SRDR (“*Société Régionale de Développement rural*”). These companies focused their activities on strategic productions with specific intervention mechanisms. As such, numerous companies were created: SAED (“*Société Nationale d’Aménagement et d’Exploitation des Terres du Delta du Fleuve Sénégal et des Vallées du Fleuve Sénégal et de la Falème*”) specialised in the development of irrigated rice production in the Senegal river delta and valleys, SODEVA (“*Société de Développement et de Vulgarization Agricole*”) specialised in the development of the groundnut-growing basin...

In order to develop agriculture, the State adopted a strong interventionist approach. It implemented the “agricultural program” to enable farmers acquire farm equipment and inputs on credit through cooperatives. To control access to land, a new land law was promulgated that set land as “State property” (although still managed by traditional authorities). To control the prices of agricultural produce, a State-managed stabilization and equalization fund was set up.



During this period, the farmers' organizations were only grassroots organizations. They were of 3 types:

- Cooperatives: they were village or inter-village bodies and were the only official organizations recognized at that time and thus supported by the State. They were given the monopoly of trading (on groundnuts for example). These organizations were State instruments and had low autonomy (financial, operational and strategic).
- Farmers' Groups: they were sub-village bodies and had no official legal status (until 1984). They were basically of two sorts: major regional projects' groups and local intervention groups.
- Associations: they emerged in the early 1970s in peripheral regions in reaction to strong economic and ecological crises. They were mainly "Village development associations" and sometimes gradually "inter-village FOs" with legal status of association recognized by the Ministry of Internal affairs.

In terms of scope of activities, the Cooperatives and producers' groups linked to regional projects and SRDR were performing economic functions (supplies, credit, primary marketing...) and were focusing on strategic products (groundnuts, cotton, irrigated rice...). The other organizations laid emphasis on diversification of activities, and paid little attention to export sub-sectors.

In terms of relationships, the cooperatives, and FOs in general, were strongly polarized around the support actors who created them. There were few exchanges between grassroots organizations. Nevertheless, some organizations (mainly associations) quickly saw the need to unite at local level, and established relationships at inter-village level ("inter-ententes"), and sometimes at national level. This led to the creation of the FONGS in 1976 (Senegalese federation of NGOs<sup>19</sup>).

### **The era of "adjustments"**

In the 1970s, Senegal faced a strong economic and financial crisis. This led to the suppression of the "agricultural program", the dissolution of the National Marketing and Development Assistance Board (ONCAD).

In 1984, a "new agricultural policy" (NAP) was designed directly in accordance with the structural adjustment policies.

In 1994, just like other West African countries using the CFA Franc as their currency, Senegal experienced the devaluation of its currency.

This suspension of State support influenced the setting-up of FOs. Two trends appeared influencing the structuring of FOs: a top-down trend, upheld by official development stakeholders, a bottom-up trend upheld by the FONGS.

#### ***A top-down trend***

With the abrupt withdrawal of the State, the functions (and responsibilities) of relinquished public services were transferred to FOs. To play these roles, foreign stakeholders provided support to secure the autonomy of groups and to unite grassroots organizations. A new legislative framework was set up in order to help this evolution. Thus, in 1984-1985, new laws were promulgated to set up Economic Interest Groups (EIGs). The law gradually enabled groups to secure a legal status and to become eligible for credit allocation. In 1983, a

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<sup>19</sup> The choice of this « strange » name, NGOs, in place of FOs is due to the will of the first 5 constituent federative farmers' organizations that were associations to be distinguished from the cooperatives that were strongly linked to the State.

reform of the cooperative movement was undertaken; it led to the creation of village branches of cooperatives with the objective to federate the village initiatives. Finally, public services supported the set-up of federations of local FOs.

### ***A bottom-up trend***

With the State withdrawal and the opening up of political spectrum, the scope of action of local associative organizations widened. The number of local inter-village organizations increased significantly and fruitful collaboration between associations and public development bodies started at local and regional levels. As a result of this, FONGS membership rose significantly and in 1987, it had 16 member organizations, 918 groups, representing around 73,000 members.

In the 1980s, FONGS undertook many initiatives. It invested 100 million CFAF share in the capital of CNCAS (“*Caisse Nationale de Crédit Agricole du Sénégal*” - Senegal National Agricultural Credit Bank). It developed a training system, organized the trade of cereals between associations and set up a savings and loan system.

### ***Toward the unification of the farmers’ movement***

In 1991, FONGS was at a turning point. It decided to launch a self-evaluation process. After an extensive work of 2 years, several issues (or challenges) were identified. They were:

- in the economic domain: the transition toward a market-oriented approach, the issue of securing farmers access to land, the issue of natural resources protection
- in the decision-making domain: the issue of internal leadership and of participation of the federation in country political life
- the safeguard of cultural values in front of changing times
- the development of new forms of solidarity between and within associations
- the reinforcement of partnership with foreign actors
- rural people capacity building to make and defend their own proposals

During the self-evaluation, the need for a national rural development program financed by donors to access resources was highlighted for the first time.

In 1992, the negotiation process in order to design PASA started; although FONGS’ membership included 2000 grassroots’ groups and 24 regional associations, the government rejected FONGS’ request to participate in PASA negotiations with the World Bank. Then, to take part in the debate, FONGS carried out a nation-wide study with the support of the FAO, on the impact of structural adjustment and NPA. A national forum was organized on the theme “what prospects for the Senegalese farmers” with participation of representatives of the State, NGOs and donors. During this forum, farmers’ leaders agreed to set up a national consultation forum that would bring together all national farmers’ federations. In 1993, the National Council for Consultation and Cooperation of the Rural Peoples, CNCR (“*Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux*”) was created by 7 national federations, joined by 2 others in 1995.

## **Unification and strengthening of FO movements (1993 - 2003)**

The newly created CNCR quickly evolved in the reflection on the agricultural situation and future. It organized further reflections on the theme “family farms, agricultural policies and international trade”. It formulated proposals, organized training sessions, etc. and also organized a nation-wide reflection on the land tenure reform.

Progressively, CNCR became recognized as contact association by other stakeholders, and it was involved in agricultural policy negotiation. It participated in the drawing up and negotiation of ASAP (Agricultural Structural Adjustment Program) and LPDA (Agricultural Development Policy Letter) published in 1995; it negotiated with government the Agricultural Revival Program and implemented one of its components; it negotiated the PISA (Agricultural Sector Investment Program) and its specific programs (PNIR, PSAOP...<sup>20</sup>); it also participated in the reform of sub-sectors such as groundnuts, rice, etc. through its member federations.

Apart from advocacy and negotiation of agricultural policy and support program, CNCR contributed to the creation and development of new organizations to promote FO development both at national and sub-regional level.

As such, in 1996, in collaboration with APCR (Association of Presidents of Rural Community Councils), it led to the creation of ASPRODEB (Senegalese Association for the Promotion of Grassroots Development) in order to promote advancement of rural farmers and the development of family farms and their organization through the improvement of their access to funding and markets. ASPRODEB was entrusted the responsibility to execute national programs negotiated by CNCR, such as ASAP and PSAOP.

At sub-regional level, CNCR played a decisive role in the creation and organization of ROPPA (Farmers Organizations and Agricultural Producers Network) which is the umbrella organization for FOs of 10 West African countries.

## **Results and lessons learnt**

### **Results**

#### ***The diversity of the FO situations in Senegal***

Nowadays, most of rural production is in the hands of FOs. Nevertheless, the situation of FOs in Senegal is very diverse:

- Grassroots organizations; characterized by a strong heterogeneity in terms of size, type of members, and activities. Some are active with very positive technical and economic performances, while others have a strong social base but are still inactive for want of ideas, material and financial resources, information and training. In many cases, the life of this group of FOs is characterized by ups and downs corresponding to incentives or to successive support packages of varying durations. Finally, most of them also lack a reflection on the future of the family, area or village by local leaders and members.
- Local federative FOs related to the associative movement; structured sometimes up to the regional level, they wish to assert their autonomy from both foreign actors and the State and are engaged in a collective reflection and self-criticism process to seek adapted socio-economic solutions to farmers' problems. They developed innovative agricultural production services (production of seeds, input supply, marketing, processing, veterinary care, loans...)
- National federation; most of them, except FONGS, are focused either on a single sub-sector, or one kind of agriculture or economic function. They are in very diverse positions regarding strategic programs, resources, etc. Some of them were invited to

<sup>20</sup> PNIR: National Rural Infrastructure Program; PSAOP: Agricultural Services and Producers Organization Support Program.

participate in the restructuring of the sub-sector and developed diverse negotiation, action and proposal activities. Nevertheless, they currently face problems of internal communication between levels and adaptation to the rapid evolution of the overall agricultural context (globalization).

### ***Achievements of CNCR***

In terms of results, CNCR made some achievements. Firstly, it gained the recognition of government and national rural development players as a really credible and powerful medium for the negotiation of agricultural policies and development programs. Secondly, it developed the ability to influence agricultural policies and national rural development programs depending on the interests of family farms. Thirdly, it also developed the ability to participate as a real partner in consultation forums between actors of agricultural and rural development sector.

### ***New issues***

Even though a strong impetus for the development of FOs can be observed and an impressive structuring process took place, some new issues emerged for nationwide FOs (such as CNCR). Although they have more and more responsibilities, they still rely on very limited human, material and financial resources. Because they have more and more responsibilities, they have to anticipate the policy agenda in order to be able to formulate proposals and properly negotiate them. As they are involved in more and more decisions, the issue of their ability to properly follow up the implementation of these decisions has also been raised.

### **Lessons learnt**

The study of the Senegalese FOs' movement structuring gave rise to several remarks:

- The structuring and strengthening of FOs is a long and progressive process imbedded in economic and political evolution;
- The structuring of FOs is the result of different trends in which the State has a role to play;
- Support to FOs is a long run process requiring long-term involvement of partners;
- The legitimacy of nationwide FOs (such as CNCR) derived from the fact that its membership includes the major existing FOs (here the main national federations - 19 at present) and also, and especially, from the fact that it has clearly defined its objective: here, the representation of the interest of family farmers – that are the large majority of Senegalese farmers - in order to promote the development of a family agriculture model.

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### **Reference for further reading**

- CNCR website : <http://www.cncr.org/>
- ASPRODEB website : <http://www.asprodeb.org/>

## Costa Rica: Development policies and evolution of FOs

### Characteristics of Costa Rica

- **Location** : Central American country
- **Climate and environment**: tropical country with diverse ecosystems (hill, coastal plain, plateau) and climatic conditions (rainfall regime, temperature)
- **Human characteristics**: 3.7 million inhabitants, a density of 72 inhabitants per sq km, an annual population growth rate of 1.48 %
- **Economic features**: 4,040 USD GDP/inhabitant
- **Characteristics of agricultural sector**: 48 % of rural people, an active agricultural population representing 19.4 % of active population, an agricultural sector representing 7.7 % of GDP (primary sector 20%), a majority of family farms (self sufficiency + local and export-oriented) but also large capitalistic farms (export-oriented)
- **Main agricultural productions**: coffee, banana, orange (export), milk, maize, bean...

**The Costa Rican case** is an illustration of an intermediate income country and a Central American country with a strong and ancient FO history including different forms (cooperatives, associations...) whose strength differs according to the agricultural sub-sector (coffee, milk, food crop...). It illustrates the important role that the State and cooperative movement can play for the development of agriculture and social welfare. Costa Rica is known as one of the most successful countries of the area in terms of agricultural development and relatively well-shared wealth. Nevertheless, it illustrates also the common new issues faced by small-size countries' agriculture in view of the liberalization and globalization processes.

*NB: This case presentation is basically derived from:*

*- Rodriguez N., Maitre d'Hotel E. and Bosc P.M., 2005 – Les organisations paysannes face à l'évolution des politiques publiques au Costa Rica : une relecture historique par le cas de la région Huerta Norte – Cirad Tera.*

*- Rodriguez N., Maitre d'Hotel E. 2006 - Las organizaciones frente a la evolución de las políticas públicas en Costa Rica : una relectura histórica de las estrategias de las organizaciones de productores agrícolas de la región Huerta Norte- in Revista Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos. Vol. 30*

## ***I. The phase of agricultural development and evolution of FOs***

Since independence of the country in 1848, Costa Rican economy relied strongly on the coffee sector that has always been the driving force of development for the whole country. Coffee production is the main agricultural sector. This production was developed by a broad base of small-scale family farmers with the support of the political elite who manages coffee processing and export. The success in production led to the strengthening of the democratic State which developed regulatory policies for the coffee sector as early as the 19th century. In the late 40s, the State extended its concerns and involvement to other agricultural productions. The Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) was set up (1948) and a direct support policy to agricultural production was put in place rapidly, supporting cooperative movement.

Since the 1950s, Costa Rica has gone through 3 major development phases:

- from 1950s-1980s: a comprehensive agricultural policy conducted by an interventionist State, FOs as a tool for the State to provide support to farmers
- from 1984 to 1996 : liberalization, “institutional vacuum” and “consolidation” of FOs
- since 1996: splitting up of policies and new issues for FOs

### **The agricultural policy in the 50s, FOs as providers of State support to agriculture**

In the 1950s, the State extended its involvement in agricultural development beyond the coffee sector in order to satisfy national demand. The agricultural policy has then been based on 2 pillars:

- land distribution, that was managed by **ITCO** (Land and Colonization Institute), which was also in charge of land tenure regulation and rural development actions.
- modernization of agriculture, that was under the responsibility of **MAG** (Ministry of Agriculture) in charge of research, extension, credit supply and **CNP** (National Production Council) in charge of price setting, processing and trading of agricultural produce.

As such, a conducive environment for the development of agriculture was created by the State with the financial support of US cooperation. This conducive environment was characterized by important direct support to individual farmers and by the reduction (or smoothing) of most of the uncertainties of agricultural activity (price especially).

Within this political context, the development of FOs was strongly influenced by the State and its development institutions. The FO dynamics of the 1950s-1970s was characterized by 2 movements:

- **A strong cooperatives movement**, that benefited from a cooperative support policy designed in 1943 and from US Cooperation support in the 1950s. The cooperatives initially concentrated on the coffee and sugarcane sectors, then spread to other sectors (as milk sector). Moreover they progressively developed processing and trading activities.
- **A farmers’ movement around land access issue:** In the 1960s started the promotion of organization in new communities created by ITCO and in the 1970s, with the intensification of migrations (from Nicaragua), land access problems emerged and led to the development of new organizations addressing this specific issue.

In the 1970s, the State developed new FOs to provide technical, financial and social services. Hence, in each “canton” (*district*), Agricultural Service Agencies (ASA) and Cantonal Agricultural Centers (CAC) under the supervision of the ASA were created.

In the 1980s, as conflicts broke out in other Central American countries, the international cooperation agencies focused their support on Costa Rica, which was still the sole politically stable country, in order to prevent the extension of conflicts. With this important financial support opportunity, many FOs developed to support poor farmers, especially in the newly created communities. These FOs were mainly involved in management of infrastructures and provision of services (such as water, electricity, etc.).

Thus, in late 1980s, there was a wide diversity and strong empowerment of FOs. Most of the FOs and their activities were mainly linked to State interventions and competition among FOs was developing to capture the State’s and International Cooperation’s supports.

### **Liberalization and FO consolidation**

In the 1990s, the high cost of State policies led to a high State indebtedness level. Structural adjustment programs were then implemented. This led to a reduction of the State intervention means and a liberalization process. Although the State put in place many specific policies in order to protect some agricultural sectors (such as coffee or milk) and limit the effect of liberalization, the structural adjustment policy finally had a negative effect on most local producers (especially on the production of food crops such as beans...).

This period was marked by a consolidation of FOs following 2 different trends corresponding to two sets of dynamics:

- FO dynamics developed to handle productive functions. Such dynamics was encouraged by MAG; most of the FOs involved in this dynamics were technically and financially dependant on the State. Nevertheless, this dynamics also came from some farmers’ own initiatives. This led to an atomization of FOs which were in a situation of competition regarding the dwindling external support opportunities (from the State and from donors).
- A protest movement structuring dynamics against the liberalization policy. Existing local organizations (especially those specialized in land conflict resolution) decided to coordinate their activities in order to protest against the liberalization policy. This led to a national coordination and the establishment of national unions assuming a trade union function: “Upanacional” and “Mesa Nacional Campesina”.

Thus, the changes in policy direction and commercial structure led to stakeholders difficulty (both State institution and FOs) to design new relationships after years of “paternalistic/customer” relationships.

Most FOs are still strongly linked and dependant on public institutions or resources of international cooperation. The highly atomistic situation of FOs and their low autonomy (except for the coffee sector), is an impediment to their efficiency and limits their negotiation power.

On the other hand, an FO movement structuring process began with the establishment of new national organizations (with strained relationships with the State) in reaction to the economic crisis and “unclear” position of the State (very diverse ways of assuming liberalization according to sectors).

## **Splitting up agricultural policy and new issues for FOs**

### ***A new policy context***

Following the overall liberalization policy, the national agricultural policies split up.

First, MAG designed a “national agricultural program” with three components: economic growth, social equity and natural resource management.

To foster economic growth, it tended to promote higher competitiveness. Thus, it organized support and training programs aiming to increase the added value of agricultural products through integration of processing and trading functions. It also put in place a “Production Rehabilitation and Development Program” (1997) managed by CNP. This program is intended to support projects aimed at developing processing and trading activities. As a condition to benefit from the financial means of the program, the project should be collective (thus presented by or through FOs).

For social equity, it set up numerous specific projects targeting particular groups (women, the youth and ethnic groups).

For natural resources management, subsidy mechanisms were instituted in order to help farmers maintain biodiversity, and adopt environmental friendly practices.

Thus, the period is also marked by the refocusing of support interventions, from production activity support to support to “positive externality” and services provided by farmers (environment protection, employment, tourism, landscape maintenance).

Secondly, agricultural development became a multi-sector issue (rural development) involving several ministries and not only MAG as in the former period. Thus, the situation is now characterized by increasing interventions of new stakeholders (ministries and foreign aid projects) in rural area; they set up new decision-making institutions and there was a multiplication of decision-making circles (ex: local regional environmental council)

Lastly, the new conditions were marked by the various patterns of liberalization according to agricultural sub-sectors. For the staple food (as beans), there was a rapid state withdrawal from production, processing and trade, and there is still very little domestic market protection. In this sector, no support from the State is provided to help farmers face problems of competition with imported produce. In the pineapple sub-sector, the State developed direct interventions to promote export. In the milk and coffee sub-sectors, the State maintained support interventions: for coffee, price stabilization mechanism is still functioning; for milk, the price-setting system and imports control remained in place up to 2002.

### ***New issues for FOs***

In this new economical and institutional context, the Costa Rican FOs landscape is evolving. Although there are still FOs linked to State institutions and depending on projects support, most of the FOs have to face new challenges related to liberalization, the effects of globalization and evolution of agricultural policy features. Three current trends can be observed for FOs:

- Supporting new agricultural productions (export)
- Developing new activities (environment, tourism)
- Developing new partnerships.

After the withdrawal of the State and the strong reaction of some FOs, national FOs entered into policy negotiation activities and began dialogue with the State, for example through commissions to discuss specific agricultural problems, agriculture Forums...



## **II. Results and lessons learnt**

### **Results**

The Costa Rican situation is now characterized by two types of FOs: 1) local economic-oriented FOs and 2) national farmers' interests-oriented FOs.

Although State withdrawal was problematic for many FOs, it forced the FOs into embarking on a learning-by-doing process. Even though many face problems and a process of selection is actually in place among FOs according to their capacities, most of the FOs are becoming more autonomous in strategic planning and partnership establishment.

A new relationship between the State and national FOs is developing due to changes on both sides: more readiness to dialogue on the part of the State which is losing power through budget restriction and the liberalization policy, more dialogue/negotiation attitude on the part of initial protesting national organizations, which tend to renew collaboration with the agricultural sectors' public institutions in order to face the common problems of globalization and reduction of public means<sup>21</sup>.

Nevertheless, some pending issues can be highlighted:

- for the State and FOs, the main issue is the consolidation of the position of Costa Rica agricultural products on the international market (especially for new productions); facing the challenges of competitiveness, quality, compliance to international norms and standards.
- for the FOs, 2 issues emerge: 1) the issue of strengthening their negotiation capacities with diversified stakeholders (institutional, private...) and 2) the issue of linkages and relationships between National FOs and their grassroots, between economic and interests representation FOs.

### **Lessons learnt**

The example of the evolution of FOs in Costa Rica leads to some more general lessons regarding the development of FOs.

- the structuring is a long process, linked to economic and political evolution and policy;
- Structuring may largely differ in form and content depending on the sector due to the strength of FO and State decisions. For example, in the Coffee and Milk sectors where strong FOs existed before the liberalization process took place, the liberalization measures were more discussed with them, and applied more smoothly than in other sectors (as food crop) where FOs were smaller and weaker.
- The relationships between FOs and the State are evolving; this type of relations between FOs and the State can evolve over time according to context and perception of mutual and self interests of both parties. For example, in Costa Rican history, the nature of the relationship between the State and FOs was first "paternalistic" when the State had means and later interventionist, then "conflicting" when the State withdrew and left the farmers in a difficult position, and finally one of "negotiation" when both

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<sup>21</sup> The public institutions also face problems and are threatened by the reduction of human and financial means.

parties identified mutual interests in working together to face common difficulties (globalization issue).

- FOs as key actors in a fragmented political landscape. In Costa Rica, the most dynamic agricultural areas are those where there is a dense and dynamic social network, since organizations are a way for rural producers to access public support mechanisms (agricultural, environmental and social too) and private commercial mechanisms (negotiations with private firms for examples).

**PART III:**  
**ILLUSTRATION OF THE APPLICATION OF THIS  
MATERIAL AND CONCLUSION**

## Using the case studies document: example of the capacity building process implemented in Cambodia

The case studies document was designed and developed as a support for a specific capacity building process<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, the cases are presented in a comprehensive way and following a single general framework in order to facilitate their use in other circumstances.

This chapter includes: 1) a general proposal of guidelines on the use of the document, and 2) an example of what has been done precisely with one of the case studies.

### ***I. General method***

Two uses have been tested in the Cambodian FOs task force support process:

#### 1) Overall presentation of the FO cases;

This presentation was aimed at:

- constituting a common knowledge on FOs' experiences and initiating exchanges and debates on FOs;
- figuring out what can be done by an FO (activities, functions, results) for trainees who wouldn't have precise ideas about it;
- giving examples of organization, structuring and decision-making in different situations;
- drawing lessons from experiences about 1) the conditions of success of FOs, 2) the main challenges and difficulties according to their context, and 3) the activities that can be implemented to support FOs;
- “priming the pump” to identify and report on local examples to illustrate the same principles.

The case studies document has been used as a basis to design PowerPoint format presentations.

To draw lessons from the selected case studies, the pedagogical approach consisted in working group brainstorming based on a proposed guideline of questions (see following section).

#### 2) Using the cases to get illustrations for pedagogical thematic documents

The pedagogical documents were built on a problematic analysis basis: what is the problem faced by the FO? How to analyze the problem to identify issues that can be addressed by the FO in terms of “what activities to choose”, “how to implement these activities”, “what are the means needed (human, financial)”, “how and where to look for these means”?

To illustrate these pedagogical documents, specific pieces of information were selected and taken from the comprehensive Case studies to build “illustrative boxes”.

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<sup>22</sup> For more details on the whole support process implemented in Cambodia, see appendix 1.

These two uses of the set of FOs and country case studies are complementary. In particular, the second use (to take parts of each case to illustrate some specific points) worked well because participants at the training workshops received minimal knowledge on the illustrative cases through the comprehensive presentations done in previous workshops.

When presenting these cases, **the idea is not to give models to be reproduced**, but to analyze the logic and the process that have been followed by different FOs to address their members' expectations in a given context. Then, the trainees have elements to develop their **own reflection**, to compare with situations that they knew and to adapt lessons learnt to their specific context.

The key features and the summary given at the beginning of each case are supposed to help the users to choose the cases that are useful for their specific purpose.

In the same way, the lessons learnt, drawn as a conclusion of each case, are an interpretation of the history of the FO. They are not exclusive and/or restrictive. Any user can develop his own analysis according to his own objectives and questions. To make it easier, complementary references are proposed for further specific analysis.

## **II. Example: use of the FPFJ case in the support process in Cambodia**

This part shows how the case studies have been presented and used during the FO task force support process in Cambodia<sup>23</sup> through the example of the “Federation of Fouta Djallon Farmers” (FPFJ) case study.

### **Comprehensive presentation of the case study**

The first use of this FO case study was its comprehensive presentation<sup>24</sup> in order to broaden their references and get information about FOs in other countries. This presentation was made using PowerPoint format<sup>25</sup>.

Several methods were used to help participants to better understand the content of the presentation, assimilate the information and draw lessons from the presentation.

- Time was given to participants to ask specific questions after each case presentation.
- Working groups (using focus groups method) were organized after each set of case studies presentations (for example, after the presentation of 3 cases of FOs implementing economic functions).

As an example, the terms of reference proposed to the working groups in Cambodia are given hereafter. They comprise general and more specific issues (see box 1).

<sup>23</sup> For more details on the whole support process implemented in Cambodia, see appendix 1.

<sup>24</sup> During a 4-day workshop held in Cambodia in November 2005 (Le Coq JF and Dugue MJ, 2005b):

- 3 days were dedicated to the comprehensive presentation of the 8 FO case studies (including FPFJ) and 3 country case studies as well as working group activities to draw lessons from the presentations
- 1 day was dedicated more specifically to brainstorming on FO support process and programs.

<sup>25</sup> See the PowerPoint presentation of the FPFJ case in appendix 2.

**Box 1: Type of issues addressed with participants  
to support their appropriation of the cases**

Two group activities were developed during the workshop to present Case studies in Cambodia; 1) a first group raised more general issues and focused on functions performed by FOs, 2) a second focused on organization and functioning (Le Coq JF and Dugue MJ, 2005b)

**Issues addressed during the first group activity:**

- What ideas did you retain on farmers' organizations from the case studies?
- What are the lessons you can draw from the case studies that can be useful for your practice in Cambodia?
- What are the different ways used by FOs to perform technical and economic functions to their members?
- How can FOs organize services for their members?

**Issues addressed during the second group activity:**

- What are the lessons learnt and your experiences from case studies about FO organization and functioning (to be sustainable)?

This type of questioning leads participants to discuss the meaning of each case and to share visions and references. Moreover, some lessons were drawn that can be discussed between participants (Le Coq JF and Dugue MJ, 2005b).

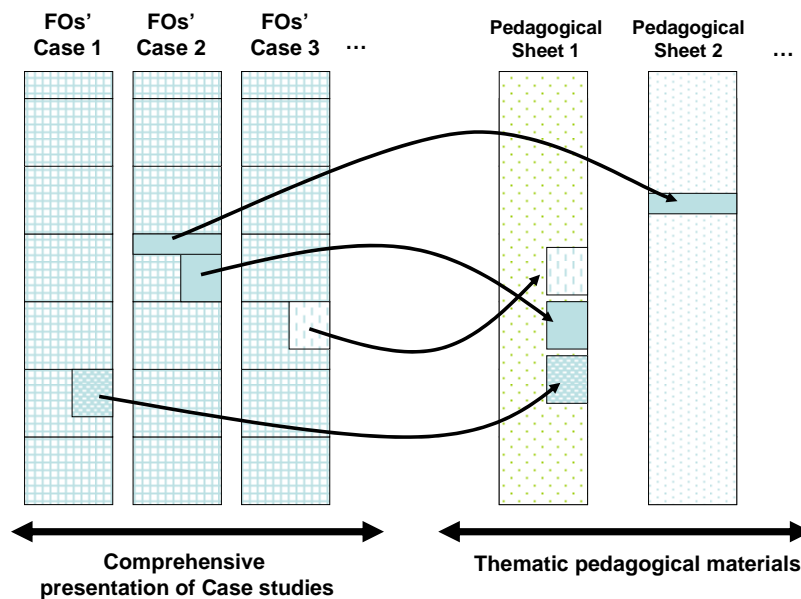
### **Using the case study to illustrate adapted thematic pedagogical materials**

The second use of the FPF case was to illustrate adapted thematic pedagogical materials. These draft thematic pedagogical materials<sup>26</sup> have been built to address the issues collectively identified during the first workshop<sup>27</sup>.

When the comprehensive presentation of a case provides quite complete information about a given FO (background, condition of establishment, strategy and objective, activities, support and partnership and results) in the thematic pedagogical materials, only some relevant pieces of information are selected and highlighted in order to illustrate a specific point, for example, the means developed by the FO to perform a function. Such selected pieces of information were inserted as illustration boxes in thematic pedagogical sheets as indicated in the following figure.

<sup>26</sup> For more detail, see the list of contents of the pedagogical thematic materials developed in Cambodia in appendix 4.

<sup>27</sup> The main issues identified during the first workshop on the support process in Cambodia were the following: 1) How the FOs can help the farmers to cope with marketing problems 2) How the FOs can cope with their funding problems, 3) How can FOs build strategic capacities, 4) How to deal with the problems of relationship between FOs and support agencies (autonomy/dependence), 5) How can FOs be organized, structured, evolve to become sustainable? 6) What should be the role of each stakeholder (especially the State and NGOs)? 7) How to design an FO support strategy (institutional set-up, capacity of support agency)? (Dugue MJ, Le Coq JF, 2005b)



Therefore, the information provided in the FPFDD case study was used to design specific boxes to illustrate 4 pedagogical sheets:

- “Functions of FOs: Technical advice and support”
- “Functions of FOs: Representation of interest”
- “Functions of FOs: Marketing”,
- “Functions of FOs: Input supply”.

Thus, for instance, in the pedagogical sheet “Technical advice and support: the example of FPFDD” was used to illustrate one specific way for an FO to implement the advising function i.e. by appointing its own salaried staff as technical adviser (see box 2).

In the pedagogical sheet “Representation of interest”, the FPFDD case was used to illustrate how an FO can defend its interest by lobbying policy-makers to make the trade regulation evolve favorably for national producers (see box 3).

In the “Marketing” sheet, the case of FPFDD was used to illustrate possible activities of an FO especially in terms of lobbying to have transport infrastructure built (but also in organizing produce collection and storage) when farmers cannot sell their produce because it is not accessible to traders (see box 4), etc.

**Box 2 : Excerpts from the pedagogical sheet “Technical advice and support”**

.... / What are the possible ways for FOs to implement technical advising?

FOs can organize the following activities for its members, which can be combined:

- Training courses
- Field tours + focus groups discussions
- Farmer field schools
- Demonstrations and visits of experiments (Training and visit,...)
- Own experimentation (CETAs)

*Note: Technical advising doesn't regard only cropping or breeding but also post harvest, processing, storage, and management too.*

FOs can implement the technical advising activities through diverse modalities

- relying only on its own human resources
- contracting with service provider (private, NGO, public)
- appointing its own salaried staff (as technical advisor) → **FPFD**
- designing collaborative research-extension programs with existing stakeholders
- create or co-manage a Service Center (for technical advising, economic and financial advising, farm management advising,...)

**Case of the Fédération du Fouta Djalou (Guinea)**

In Guinea, Fouta Djalou is a very isolated and poor region, and the means of the State to support agriculture development are low. So, to support the farmers in increasing their incomes, the FPFD decided to invest in technical support to develop robust, sustainable and effective farming systems (technologies have been developed for water control and land development, irrigation, varieties, fertilization, cropping calendar). This work has been mostly achieved by the salaried technicians appointed by the organization. It has been done in interaction with members and in collaboration with research and extension systems. The costs of the experiments have been taken in charge by FPFD.

.../...

**Source : Dugue MJ, Le Coq JF, 2006**

**Box 3 : Excerpts from the pedagogical sheet “Representation of interest”**

.../ What is the context?

FOs are often led to involve in representation of interests as a logical following or complement of other actions:

- to push away the limits they encounter in achieving the objectives of other actions, especially technical ones: for example, difficulties to sell their products

→ **Fouta Djalou**

- to support their members in getting fair conditions to produce, or to insure sustainability of farms (land tenure issues → **Sexagon**, natural resources management). This can be at the local level or at an upper level (national or international)

**Lobbying of FOs to create conducive regulations for farmers' production development:  
the case of FPFD in Guinea**

In Guinea, Fouta Djalou potato growers were not able to sell their potatoes because of strong competition with imports coming from Europe. Demonstrations and lobbying actions were undertaken by FPFD. This finally led to a temporary protection of the domestic market : no imports were allowed during the period of local production. This measure has been maintained several years – a few months each year - , giving time to local farmers to become more competitive by improving the technical results and getting their products appreciated by urban people and traders.

.../...

**Source : Dugue MJ, Le Coq JF, 2006**



#### Box 4 : Excerpts from the pedagogical sheet “Marketing”

##### ..../ Identification of possible actions for FOs

For each situation identified above (1 to 4) , there are different possible reasons that have to be assessed and considered to design solutions and identify possible scope of action for FOs (marked hereafter by ⇔)

##### 1- Farmers cannot sell their production

- **Farmers’ production is not accessible** to a trader (a buyer):
  - Nobody can come to the production area (remoteness, distance):
    - problem of access due to lack of infrastructures of communication such as roads, bridges...
      - ⇔ FOs may develop local infrastructure → *see sheet “Local development”*
      - ⇔ FOs may ask to other stakeholders (especially the State, local authorities) to develop new or to improve existing infrastructures → **FPFD case**

##### FPFD case (Guinea)

FPFD in Guinea is involved in the improvement of the potato market through several actions:

- it organizes coordination meetings between producers unions and potato traders to fix a basic buying price, rough volumes and selling price (objective: to moderate the prices in order to enlarge the market demand)
- its “local unions” are in charge of gathering and storing the potato production of the members. When the traders pick up the production, they pay cash the products at a basic price (which enables to pay the producers very rapidly); they pay the remaining – final price – after having sold the products to consumers. This remaining payment is used then used to reimburse the credit taken by the farmer with FPFD, and to cover the “tax” shared between the different levels of the FO).
- besides working with traders, FPFD is managing some direct marketing activities in Conakry (the Capital city) and on the export market (to neighbour countries as Senegal and Sierra Leone); it’s a way to improve bargaining power through better information.

Highlights:

- 1) Farmers must sell to FPFD at least a part of their production to reimburse the inputs they got in advance. They are then free to sell the remaining to whoever they want.
- 2) The efficiency of these activities is underlaid by existing minimal infrastructures (bridges, tracks, storage buildings...) which have been funded by development partners.

.../ ....

**Source : Dugue MJ, Le Coq JF, 2006**

## Conclusion

The use of the worldwide case studies in the capacity building process implemented in Cambodia has confirmed its interest. In this specific experience, the main objectives were attained: the foreign case studies constituted a convenient material “to put flesh” around the skeleton of “FO support principles and methods” which was the basis of the process. At the end of the process, a common set of references was shared by the participants. This is a basic step towards mutual understanding and dialogue among staffs from different institutions (State and NGOs) in order to be able to design coherent interventions to strengthen FOs.

Using case studies has been useful to initiate and enrich discussions and debates about the functions of FOs, the way to perform them, the support that can be proposed, etc. As on certain issues, participants had no (or very little) idea that the presentation of worldwide experiences was necessary to spur debates and base it on reality.

Using foreign case studies is useful in countries where the experience of FOs is still at an early stage and where it would be difficult to find in local examples a wide range of situations<sup>28</sup>. It is also a way to get a positive involvement of all the participants on sensitive topics. Given that a review of external case studies constitutes a “neutral” material, it renders acceptable certain issues and debates: for example, on the role of the different stakeholders... Thus, it facilitates the development of constructive dialogue among stakeholders involved in FO support but having different points of view and sometimes divergences, or even contradictory interests.

Nevertheless, the use of this type of materials raises specific difficulties, as encountered in Cambodia.

When English is not the common working language, translation has to be considered. In any case, it constitutes a hard work and the definition of a convenient time schedule (including enough time for translation activities) has to be taken in account. Moreover, the translation of terms and concepts is often difficult. To be useful, the translation requires discussions with the translator (who should be as much as possible be a person knowledgeable about FO issues) to be sure that the meaning and the “essence” of the ideas developed are clear and not only the words translated. In Cambodia, it appeared that, for many cases, several terms were difficult to grasp by the participants; some terms were even impossible to translate in Cambodian language<sup>29</sup>.

Presenting foreign cases needs time. Indeed, the more the case is “exotic” and remote from current local knowledge and experience, the more time is needed to properly present and explain the case. To allow the use of one case, certain points have to be tidily addressed; it is sometimes difficult to anticipate on the obstacles in understanding. As such, time is needed to enable participants to ask questions and to provide useful clarifications. In Cambodia, we encountered this type of difficulties and the second workshop (presentation of worldwide case studies) was felt as too short by participants and facilitators. Even though comprehensive presentation and effort were used to facilitate the comprehension of the cases, the complete

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<sup>28</sup> In any case, there are always local experiences; although they are of great interest, they currently cover a limited range of situations. For example, in Cambodia, a wide range of grassroots organizations can be found, but there are very few experiences and references on federative FOs.

<sup>29</sup> In fact, even the translation of certain concepts from French into English was also not easy.

assimilation and ownership of the foreign cases are difficult to obtain since they represent a large amount of new information.

Another difficulty faced when using foreign case studies is the difficulty for the participants to detach themselves from the specific context of the cases and to transpose the ideas. Some remarks show the opposition of some participants in considering the worldwide cases as useful experiences for them, since “their situation is different from those of the others... so this or that experience cannot work in their situation”.

As a consequence of these remarks, some key points may be highlighted for an efficient use of case studies; these are related to 1) the choice of the specific cases to be used, 2) the information provided about each case, and 3) the way of using the information.

The **choice of cases** has to be based on a preliminary identification of the relevant issues and questions to address. This preliminary identification makes it possible to adapt the selection of the cases to be presented according to the specific objectives of the support process to the expectations of the participants (that is the main purpose of the index of FOs provided in the first page of the document).

In Cambodia, the presentation of the case studies came as part of a process of building a common set of references, including the analysis of the current situation of FOs’ in the country. This appears as the best way to identify the main relevant issues to be addressed; it has to be done before presentation of the case studies, to draw the attention of the people on these issues, and put them in a position to analyze the relevance of the cases presented. Thus, as the main issue identified by participants in Cambodia was the economic function of FOs, the selection of worldwide cases laid emphasis on this specific topic.

To limit the risk of considering the examples as “models” to follow, it was deemed useful to present a set of several cases. Moreover, to reduce the risk of rejection of the heuristic content of the foreign experiences, it was also useful to keep in mind the part on “lessons learnt” added at the end of each case study<sup>30</sup>.

To build the ownership of foreign case studies by participants, the development of local case studies could be very useful since they constitute common references and can be considered as a “knowledge bridge” to introduce international cases. Moreover, the development of local case studies by participants is an interesting way to valorize their knowledge and to boost their reflection on their own situation.

The **information to be provided** for each case study presentation has to be properly selected. What is most important is to base the presentation on the specific issue(s) that has motivated the choice of the case; the second point is to bear in mind that the objective of presenting a case is to encourage thinking and not to provide “ready-made” solutions. Then, a balance has to be found between the meaning and main lessons to be learnt from the cases on the one hand, and the volume of information itself, necessary to properly understand the context of the presented case experience, on the other hand.

The case studies presented in this document were developed for the specific context of support in Cambodia according to the above principles. Nevertheless, as the questioning of the participants covered a quite large spectrum, the information provided tends to be useful for a wide range of issues regarding FOs. In other circumstances, the available information

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<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, these “lessons learnt” may not be presented directly to participants in order to avoid the limitation of their reflection.

may be insufficient to address some more specific issues; That is why complementary sources of information have been proposed as much as possible (FPFD: website for example) in order to allow users to further develop these materials.

The **practical process to make use** of the case studies is also important to be considered. As highlighted above, when needed, the difficulty of translation must not be underestimated. Whether translated or not, because of the “knowledge or cultural gap” (which implies the replacement of a lot of “evidences” in their context), the case studies presentation is highly time consuming. It especially has to be taken into account if the presentation of case studies is not coming after general explanation of some guiding principles on FOs that have underpinned the development of the cases (related to functions of FOs, typology...). If these general principles (or a minimum common “culture”) are shared by the participants, it may then be useful to provide the material in advance to help the participants to become more confident with the content. Anyway, to develop ownership of the foreign cases, complementary study tours can be organized. The study tours can then be focused on selected sound experiences after an initial reflection on a wide set of cases. For example, after the presentation of the Vietnamese case studies, the Cambodian participants raised the idea of organizing a specific study tour in Vietnam to get more thorough explanation on FO development processes presented during the workshop.

*Designed to meet a specific demand for FO support staff capacity building in Cambodia, this document tends to offer for other users some materials for capacity building on FOs in other situations. Nevertheless, it has to be considered as a building block for a wider “living tool kit” including other materials such as “pedagogical sheets” for example. It therefore has to be adapted and enriched according to the local situation and the specific capacity building process in which it may be used.*

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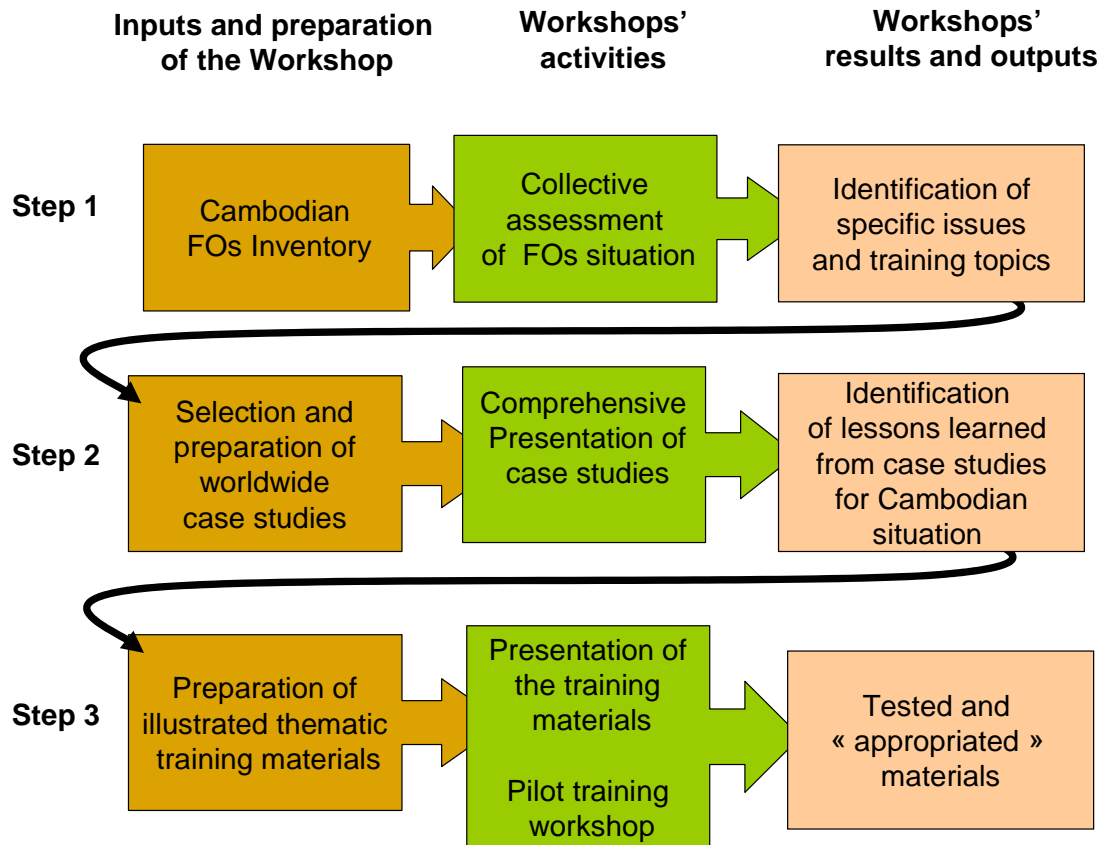
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# Appendices

## **Appendix 1: Framework of the whole support process in Cambodia**






## Appendix 2: Comprehensive presentation of FPDF case



Fédération des Paysans du  
Fouta Djallon  
FPFD

Case study


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### FO's main characteristics


- Scope : a province (Fouta Djallon)
- Establishment :1992
- Members : 18 000 farmers (450 groups)
- Partnership : State, Research and extension institutions, French Cooperation (Foreign Affairs Ministry, AFD), Canadian Coop, NGOs.....

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### General Background

Guinea Conakry  
7.8 million people  
(29 h/km<sup>2</sup>)



One or two rainy seasons  
From 1200 to 4000 mm / year


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### General background

- History : authoritarian regime until 84  
→ no organization of civil society
- Scope of action officially assigned to FOs : mainly economics
- Fouta Djallon: poor mountainous region; Traditional feudal Muslim power, not considering agriculture (slaves and women activity) / livestock and far trade → not favorable to FOs


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### Context of establishment

- Agricultural development project → development of Potato production in inland valleys with water control  
→ establishment of producers' groups and Medina "union" (association of groups)
- good technical results but concurrence with imports → problems of marketing
- → demonstrations, lobbying → political decision (with support of president) to suspend imports during the season of local potato
- national workshop in 1992 → Establishment of Fouta Djallon Farmers' Federation

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### Strategy

To hold and valorize the framework defined by State (economical focus of FOs)

- Strategy based on an analysis of underdevelopment causes : foreign aid pushes a living on hand outs mind: necessity to create wealth first to improve livelihood
- **unique objective of FPDF : to enhance the incomes of its members**
- to concentrate efforts on the sectors where local economy can succeed (Potato) ⇔ if success → investments in farms → increase of productivity ... = a virtuous cycle
- Valorized values: work, harshness, meeting commitments, competitiveness at individual and collective level
- Support to innovative, enterprising people: all equal in front of these principles (no ethnic, sexual, age, social privilege)

Basic philosophy of the FO : "an unequally shared wealth is better than equally shared poverty"

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## Activities : technical act.

Activities focused on 3 sectors : potato, onion, tomato

- Technical activities
  - To develop trustable farming systems, *technologies have been developed* for water control and land development, irrigation, varieties, fertilization, cropping calendar ...  
 FPFd technicians made most of the work, in collaboration with research and extension systems. (direct costs taken in charge by FPFd)  
 Currently, new problems are emerging and motivate revival of research development efforts through farmers groups
  - Internal *innovations extension framework* : 20 technicians involved in a training to trainers (local leaders) process
  - Most of these innovations need *upstream investments* (infrastructures, installations, equipments) ; most of these have been grant-aided by financial partners

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## Activities : Economical act.

### Economical activities

- Inputs supply : potato seedlings, vegetable seeds, fertilizers, most of them imported from Europe (quality, trustability),
  - Managed by the Federation at central level (cash flow initially donor funded then donors guarantee to allow FPFd to get credit )
  - Commercial margin applied by FPFd

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## Economical activities cont.

- Marketing
 

At the beginning, FPFd organized coordination meetings between producers unions and traders to fix a basic buying price, rough volumes and selling price (objective : to moderate the prices in order to enlarge the market)

Zone unions manage practically the market (grouping, storage...), traders pay an advance (to pay farmers); the remaining (reimbursement of credit taken by the farmer with FPFd, tax shared between the different levels of FO) is paid at the end of the selling process

Farmers are not obliged to market all their products with FPFd, only a part linked to the quantity of inputs they got.

In parallel, some direct marketing is existing to Conakry (the Guinea Capital) market or export (Dakar...), either by local "Unions" or the FPFd

The efficiency of these activities is underlaid by existing minimal infrastructures (bridges, tracks, storage buildings...) which have been funded by development partners

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## Activities : others

- Efficiency and experience ⇔ responsibility of taking the leadership of FOs national movement
  - FPFd initiated the National Coordination of Farmers' organizations (CNOP) and forwards to it its knowledge and experience

→ Through CNOP, FPFd leaders are assuming "union type" functions, related to definition of agricultural policies and discussion of the main rural development projects

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## Functioning general framework

Plot (500 to 1200 m <sup>2</sup> )	Producer (18 000)	Individual production	
Land development unit	Producers' group (450)	Collective production tool (same crop for all members)	
Zone	"Union" (23)	Technical support Economical management (same crop for all groups)	
Sector	Sector committee (3)	7 skilled farmers : to plan and assess the sector	
Province	Federation	Strategic planning congress/4 yrs Inputs supply management Resources management	

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## Functioning cont

### Sharing of tasks

- Technical team : about 40 salaried staff, ½ specialized agricultural advisors, on field ½ trainers, grouped in a training unit :
  - Literacy (250 centers, self managed by grassroots organizations) to address the 95 % illiteracy issue
  - Training of leaders (and technical staffs), especially at the Union level (accountability, inputs management, marketing, institutional management, book-keeping, strategic planning...)
- Management of common installations : headquarters, reception and training center, a repair and maintenance workshop (for tractors, motor pump)

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## Functioning *cont* financial management

- Each level is autonomous
- The Federation manages a very high budget and attempts to get more and more autonomy
- Self-generated financial resources (about 45 % of the needs) come from :
  - Members' dues
  - Commercial margins on inputs
  - Taxes on marketed products
- Not full self-funding is "logical" as the FPFD fulfills public service functions which would be taken in charge by State (but State is too poor to assume this role which is played by donors)

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## Partnership and support

- Long term and multipurpose support from French government: FPFD has been project manager and implementing authority of the development process (the donor is only at the service of the organization's project of development) with 2 axes:
  - Support to production (cash flow, guarantee fund, investment fund for infrastructure): AFD from 1995 to 2002. Other partners (Canadian cooperation, NGOs) on going
  - Support to capacity strengthening of leaders and staffs through technical assistance (from 1988 until now)
- Public authorities' support :
  - Protection of market when useful at the beginning
  - Collaboration of research and extension services
- Economical operators (national and foreign)

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## Conclusions

- The indicators of success :
  - Competitive production of potatoes and onions facing increasing national demand, and successful experiences of sub-regional exports
  - Revival of regional development dynamic : a lot of initiatives on diverse crops and services involving young farmers, former government staff, emigrants .... ; the FPFD have played a driving engine role
- This success is mainly due to the quality of the leaders : not only the charismatic historical leader but also a large group of younger people able and motivated to defend the project of the organization.

This team has managed to get the support of traditional authorities, initially reluctant to the project.

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End

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### Appendix 3: List of pedagogical sheets

Part	Sheet
Introduction	Introduction
Functions of FOs	Introduction to the sheets on “functions of FOs”
	Input supply
	Marketing
	Processing and storage
	Financing agriculture : credit issue
	Technical advice and support
	Equipment and labor
	Representation of interests
	Local development and Natural Resource Management
Supports to FOs	Process to support FOs
	Functional diagnosis
	Organizational diagnosis
	Strategic planning
	Funding FOs
	FOs' capacity building
FO environment	
	Practical notice for support staff
Conclusion	The issue of FO sustainability
	Actors' roles
Additional Reference	Commodity chain concept
	PLAR IRM