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The Role of Rural Producers Organisations (RPOs) in the World Bank Rural Development Strategy

Background study

October 2001

Reaching the rural poor

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October 2001

This volume is the result of a commissioned background study prepared by a Cirad/ODI team for the process of updating the World Bank's Vision to Action rural development strategy: Reaching the rural poor.

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SUMMARY

This background paper is a contribution to the revision of the World Bank rural development strategy "Reaching then rural poor". It focuses on the role of Rural Producers Organisations (RPOs) in the context of globalisation.

This study draws from an empirical base of nine case studies of support programmes to RPOs all over the world. This material has been analysed through a common global framework whose implementation has been adjusted to the specific cases. These cases present in depth analysis of situations and ten other cases are briefly presented to bring additional perspectives. Lessons from experience and recommendations for donors are provided at the end of each set of cases studied respectively by CIRAD and ODI.

The global synthesis presents an up to date picture of :

- the nature of RPOs that are clearly part of the private sector but have specific characteristics and perform a wide range of functions ;
 - the diversity of the functions performed by RPOs and a typology of the support programmes ;
- highlights of the main results achieved through RPOs empowerment and development over the last twenty years;
- recommendations for donors and especially for the World Bank to enhance the role of RPOs as key actors of rural development processes.

Key words: *rural producers' organisations, globalisation, agricultural development, rural development, public policies and institutions, World Bank*

RESUME

Cette synthèse est une contribution à la révision du document de stratégie de développement rural de la Banque mondiale intitulé «*Reaching the Rural Poor* ». Elle met l'accent sur le rôle des organisations de producteurs ruraux dans le contexte actuel de mondialisation.

Cette étude se base sur un matériau empirique constitué de neuf études de cas de programmes d'appui à des organisations de producteurs ruraux. Ces études ont été analysées à l'aide d'une grille commune qui a été adaptée à chaque situation. Ces neuf études de cas ont fait l'objet d'une analyse détaillée et dix autres cas sont présentés de manière plus succincte pour apporter des éclairages complémentaires. Chaque ensemble d'études de cas réalisé respectivement par le Cirad et par l'Odi, permet de dégager des enseignements de l'expérience et des recommandations en direction des bailleurs de fonds.

La synthèse globale présente une vision actualisée :

- de la nature des organisations de producteurs ruraux qui font clairement partie du secteur privé mais ont des caractéristiques spécifiques et remplissent des fonctions diversifiées ;
- de la diversité des fonctions assurées par les organisations de producteurs ruraux et une typologie des programmes d'appui qui leur sont destinés ;
- des principaux acquis significatifs obtenus à travers le développement et le renforcement des capacités de ces organisations dans les pays en développement durant les vingt dernières années ;
- des recommandations opérationnelles pour les bailleurs de fonds et plus particulièrement pour la Banque mondiale afin que les organisations de producteurs ruraux soient réellement des acteurs des processus de développement.

Mots clés : *organisations de producteurs ruraux, mondialisation, développement agricole, développement rural, institutions et politiques publiques, Banque mondiale*

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PREFACE

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As an extension to the collaborative relationship that has developed over several years between the French Cooperation and the World Bank, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, MAE*) has been keen to respond to the World Bank's Rural Development Department's (RDV) request for a French contribution to the revision of the "From vision to action" strategy. The time has come for all donors to consult together to define common field intervention strategies, sharing their thoughts, their analyses and their experiences. The World Bank's strategic reflection has proved itself propitious to interesting exchanges between institutions for planning an action framework; it will probably serve as a reference for the donor community for years to come.

It is thus in this context that, in collaboration with the British Department for International Development (DfID), the MAE asked the CIRAD and the ODI to carry out a study on rural producers organisations. The aim was to show how the organisation of producers is key to agricultural development and, more precisely, how it contributes to increasing farmers' incomes, sustainable management of the natural resources, job creation and, through this, poverty alleviation in rural areas.

Through the analysis of several dozen cases, the study gives particular attention to the nature of the farmers' organisations, their diversity, but also to their specificities as fully active participants of the private sector. It highlights the different roles that these organisations can play in rural development, in many countries, as economic operators upstream and downstream of production, or as channels through which the farmers can express their demands. At the national level, they take part in the conception and enforcement of agricultural policies. At the same time, they strengthen their role in the identification and implementation of actions at various territorial levels (local, regional, national) while paying increased attention to the management of natural resources. Today, farmers' organisations are real economic and social actors in the fight against poverty.

Going beyond the analysis, the study leads on to a series of working recommendations for those participating in rural development, especially donors. Propositions are specifically developed to help the World Bank improve the way it takes into account farmers' organisations in its operations, and encourage their creation and growth.

The key issue is to put the main actors in rural development, that is to say farmers, back into the centre of both thought and action. Their organisations, whether of economic or representative vocation, allow them to get their voice heard better, while helping them to become independent and responsible for running and sustaining their own development activities.

Building up the capacities of these organisations is therefore an essential element to any strategy aimed at sustainable poverty reduction.

INTRODUCTION

Objectives

This background study is a contribution to the process of updating the World Bank's Vision to Action rural development strategy: Reaching the rural poor. Rural development obviously needs sector investments – regarding agricultural productivity, infrastructures, health, education, etc. Nevertheless sustainable successes are the result of the strategies implemented by rural actors. These actors are pursuing objectives in a wide range of economic, political and institutional contexts which are to be taken into account. Actors are therefore clearly at the centre of a rural development policy. They should be at the core of the process of policy and strategy formulation and action – an emphasis that is in line with the current orientations of the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) processes. Among these actors, rural people's own organisations are recognised as key players in development and poverty reduction – a point highlighted in the World Bank's recent "Voices of the Poor" study.

This study focuses specifically on the roles of Rural Producers' Organisations (RPOs) – a key cross-cutting theme that appears to varying degrees in a number of thematic, sectoral and regional papers commissioned for the Vision to Action Update process. It has three core objectives.

- To clarify the specific nature and the roles played by RPOs in rural development.
- To show the results obtained by RPOs regarding rural development.
- To help the Task Force in charge of the revision of Vision to Action:
 - to identify ways to incorporate RPOs in the World Bank's new rural development strategy, indeed, to go even further, and build the new strategy around the rural actors;
 - to suggest practical recommendations for the World Bank to include RPOs in their World Bank-funded interventions and how the World Bank might do this using existing and new instruments.

Methodology

The research undertaken to produce this document was carried out in several stages that have led the ODI and CIRAD teams to follow several complementary lines of approach concurrently, establishing a dialogue with the World Bank teams in charge of other thematic contributions.

In the first stage, the analysis of the context of globalisation in which the RPOs operate led to the identification of the principal constraints and the new opportunities offered to rural producers. This analysis gave rise to a document¹ discussed in March 2001 by the CIRAD - ODI team with several representatives working on a revision of the rural development strategy (see Annex 2) within the World Bank. These discussions aimed at understanding the role attributed to the RPOs by the principal thematic writers in the revision of the rural development strategy document. They highlighted the importance of specifying and formalising the available knowledge, making it possible to characterise the organisations and the functions carried out by them in the present context. The characterisation of the organisations and their functions in the new context of economic globalisation is based essentially on the work and observations available at the

1. The role of producer organisation in the context of globalisation, Cirad- ODI, January 2001, Position paper for discussion.

level of the ODI and CIRAD. These teams each have a recognised long-term experience in the subject and have collaborated before in the development of joint projects on certain specific themes².

At the same time, coordinated empirical work was begun based on case studies, starting with the establishment of an analytical framework (Annex 1) common to both research teams, who then applied it to the chosen cases. A first group of case studies was chosen in order to cover the range of situations in which the RPOs operate. Nine case studies were therefore the object of detailed analysis by one or other of the research teams (cases 1 to 5 and 12 to 15). In addition, the need to clarify certain points led to the inclusion of other, more concise, case studies (cases 6 to 11 and 16 to 19) contributing complementary matter for reflection. Case studies have been written drawing on from available materials. In most cases, experts with field experience in the projects were consulted to avoid misinterpretations and errors.

All the chosen case studies – 19 in total – fit the requirement that the greatest diversity of contexts in which the RPOs have to work be covered. Examples include:

- diversity in the political, economic and institutional contexts found in different countries or regions, which show specificities in terms of the history of development interventions (for example, zones of extensive irrigation in Africa);
- diversity in the types of support according to major theme (research/extension, credit, information/training, dialogue between actors within a sector, etc);
- diversity in the approaches, with more or less producer involvement in the definition and implementation of the support;
- diversity in the level of structural organisation of the RPOs;
- diversity in the functions exercised by the organisations: management of an agricultural infrastructure, implication at different levels in a sector, credit management, natural resource management, etc.;
- diversity in the aid agencies and in their methods of supporting the RPOs;
- diversity in the support operators (civil services, "project" type structures, private operators such as consultancies or NGOs...).

The study attempts, notably, to analyse:

- the functions exercised by the farmers' organisations and the difficulties they encounter;
- the supports they receive by reviewing a selected sample of projects: specific support projects to farmers' organisations or thematic projects (fertility, regional or sectorial development) including a close examination of strengthening of capacities;
- the capacities that the farmers' organisations should acquire in order to assume their new functions in the present context;
- the manner in which the farmers' organisations should be supported and, notably, the role the World Bank could play in this regard.

A tabular summary of the analysis presents (Tables I and II) the material available concerning the different study cases and make it possible to compare them.

A summary document³ was presented and discussed during the "Rural Week" in Washington the 23 and 24 April in the session entitled "Creating the economic and policy environment for the private sector to flourish".

In addition, both teams have kept a record of the literature used in this study. Wherever possible, these references are presented with a brief note or summary when these were available.

2. See the work carried out as part of the Franco-British Initiative (Hussein, Pesche and Slaymaker, 2001) which was particularly concerned with the relationships between the research systems, the producers' organisations and extension services (Bosc *et al.*, 1999).

3. The role of Rural Producers Organisations (RPOs) in the World Bank Rural Development Strategy, Reaching the rural poor, Cirad – ODI, April 2001.

Document contents

The document is presented as follows.

The first section presents the key issues of the time related to globalisation, highlighting the corresponding challenges for the RPOs.

The second section summarises what has been achieved to characterise the producers' organisations as well as the lessons learned from the examples studied and the recommendations that result from them for the donors, particularly the World Bank.

Parts three and four present, respectively, the case studies carried out by each team, from the CIRAD then from the ODI.

The case studies of the CIRAD are preceded by an analysis of the different functions and programmes of support to RPOs

The case studies of the ODI are introduced by an analysis of the changing context in which public aid for development is implemented.

Each of these sections concludes with a summary of the lessons learned from the case studies.

The fifth section presents the references to the literature used throughout the study.

Table I. List of case studies analysed by CIRAD.

| Project Name | Donor | Area | Time scale | Allocated funds | Brief Description of Project |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Case 1 Business centres support project BSCP | AFD | Mali Niono region | Two phases 1995-1999 1999-2002 | Phase 1 : 896 million FCfa Phase 2 : 978 million FCfa | Improvement of the economic situation of the producers' by setting a support system driven by themselves |
| Case 2 Rural development project for south west Madagascar | MAE et Madagascar government | Madagascar South West region | Two phases : 1994-1999 1999-2002 | Phase 1 : 25 million FCfa Phase 2 : 8 million FCfa | Technical, economical and institutional capacity-building of the rural development stakeholders to increase production and improve the incomes and resource management |
| Case 3 Small farm development project and land management in north Cameroon | AFD and MAE | Cameroon, Northern cotton zone | Two phases : 1994-1998 1999-2001 | Phase 1 : 16,5 million FF Phase 2 : 7,5 million FF | Support for a capacity-building programme for cotton producers' organisations with the aim to improve their relationships with the cotton company and the implementation of certain functions |
| Case 4 Programme of support to professional organisations and sectoral dialogue in agriculture (POPA-ACSA) Côte d'Ivoire | MAE | Côte d'Ivoire | Two phases : 1995-2000 2001-2003 | Phase I : 8 million FCFA Phase II : 10 million FCFA | Support to the creation and implementation of a national body representing producers' interests in Côte d'Ivoire |
| Case 5 Cotton monitor | APM, CIEPAC, UE, MAE et Foundation Charles Léopold Mayer | Africa, Cotton producing countries | 1997-2000 | 365 144 Euros | Comparative Information system on markets and sectors cotton producers' organisations in Africa |
| Case 6 Cooperative movement in developed countries | | United Kingdom, USA, France | 1880→ | n.a. | Control of economic services by producers' organisations on the long run |
| Case 7 Comité d'action pour le développement du Fogny | AFD | Senegal | 1989-1994 | 700 000 FF over 5 years | Research and development project supporting an organisation at district level in Casamance |
| Case 8 Producers' organisations in Costa Rica | Costa Rica Government | Costa Rica | 1990→ | n.a. | State support to small farmers specialised in food products |
| Case 9 Water users associations in Mexico and the Philippines | World Bank and governments | Mexico The Philippines | 1980→ | n.a. | Support project for the transfer of responsibilities to water users associations in large scale irrigation schemes |
| Case10 Small producers' associations in Chile | Government of Chile | Chile | 1990→ | 170 million US \$ par an | Support to family agriculture through their organisations : modernisation and diversification and development of high value products |
| Case11 Dairy development in India | World Bank and Indian government | India | 1980→ | | Support to dairy sector through cooperative development and empowerment |

Table II. List of case studies being analysed by ODI.

| | Donor | Area | Timescale | Allocated funds | Brief Description of Project |
|--|--|-------------|------------------|--|--|
| Case 12 Namibia Community-Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA) | LIFE; WWF/USAID; SIDA; DFID; EU | Namibia | 1995- | N\$4.6 (1995-2000) N\$14 million pledged from 2000-2005 | A community based tourism initiative that works with the relatively poor and functions at micro and macro levels |
| Case 13 Sesame Growers Associations (SGAs) and National Association of Women Farmers (NAWFA) | Catholic Relief Services/The Gambia | The Gambia | 1980s- | Average of between \$140,000 and \$150,000 per year <i>Total:</i> Approximately \$3 million over period of 12 years | Organisations of women farmers with strong financial and technical support from CRS/GM |
| Case 14 The Colombian Coffee Growers' Federation (CCGF) | Primarily Self funded, but have received grants from EC, DFID | Colombia | 1927- | From 1993-1996, £832,714 | Indigenous producer organisation based around coffee |
| Case 15 National Farmers' Platform, The Gambia | Initial support from CILSS and facilitation support by Club du Sahel. Small grant from CRS/GM 1998 | The Gambia | 1994- | - | A broad based farmers' organisation that has evolved through the dissolution of the sate covering the whole of The Gambia |
| Case 16 Forest User Groups (CFUG) | DFID/His Majesty's Government of Nepal | Nepal | - | - | Forest user groups are supported to help the management of natural resources and reduce poverty in the area |
| Case 17 The Quilon Fishermen Welfare Society | CEBEMO; Bread for The World; Intermediate Technology; SIFFS; Don Bosco | India | 1980s- | Between 1984-1994/5 £169,000 | A federal body that was largely an indigenous process of institutional development |
| Case 18 Traditional Self-Help Associations | GTZ | Cambodia | 1995- | - | These are self-help groups formed in a crisis situation, which has affected their effectiveness and sustainability |
| Case 19 El Ceibo | DED, SDC | Bolivia | 1977- | - | This organisation was established to co-ordinate member cooperatives' activities and improve the production and marketing possibilities for cocoa production. It is apolitical, and focuses on serving members' needs rather than general population |

GLOBALISATION AND CHALLENGES FOR THE RURAL PRODUCERS' ORGANISATIONS

The challenge of adapting to a more unstable and competitive environment

Since the 1980s, the farmers' organisations have been confronted with the consequences of the wide movement of liberalisation ongoing in the world economy. This new phase of liberalisation has arisen due to the decline of national growth models and the need for firms to conquer foreign markets. As governments and international organisations withdrew their support systems, the consequence of liberalisation was the disengagement of the State from the productive sector and many economic services and the growing recourse to private economic agents.

In developing economies, this disengagement was reinforced and accelerated by structural adjustment policies implemented by the international agencies in order to resolve the debt crisis. Motivated by the search for efficiency, it has taken the form of privatisation and the suppression of protective policies (tariffs and non tariffs), price controls, financial aid and subsidies.

In the agricultural and rural sector, producers are now directly confronted with international competition. The end of price stabilisation measures (reduction of international agreements for basic products and the liquidation of national marketing offices), the opening to imports, the suppression of subsidies for inputs and the dismantling of public and para-public support measures for the rural sector, have led to a more competitive and unstable environment.

In most countries, this economic liberalisation has been accompanied by a political liberalisation that offers new areas and new opportunities for action by economic agents on the local and national levels (roles granted to local authorities, professional organisations, to non-governmental organisations and, more widely, to «civil society»).

This radical change of economic and institutional environment presents a major challenge for rural producers and their organisations to adapt, but it also implies capacities for innovation and stronger means of action. This challenge is even greater due to the competition represented by the large international companies that currently intervene directly in domestic markets.

The need for new rules and new stakeholders

The withdrawal of the State and the radical character of the reforms have created vacuums on the institutional and organisational levels that constitute obstacles to the correct functioning of the market. This implies an environment protected by rules (property rights, free competition) and the correction of market failures (public goods, externalities). Government action in these two fields is indispensable for ensuring the efficiency of coordination by the market. It often implies a strengthening and improvement in conditions of governance.

The rapidity of the changes has also highlighted the existence of transaction costs that were previously hidden by the hierarchical (or administrative) coordination ensured by the State and public companies. These transaction costs, which are related to agents' limited rationality and to the risk of opportunist behaviour, can be reduced by creating contracts and organisations.

The emergence of new forms of coordination is related to the characteristics of the markets (state of the offer and demand), to the characteristics of products, services and their production processes. It also depends on the number and status of the economic operators present and the quality of the institutional environment.

In many domestic situations, particularly in rural areas, the difficulties of coordination related to the withdrawal of the State can be explained by the lack of private economic agents and by their limited means of action. Support for the emergence and strengthening of organisations appears as a major challenge for this period.

The imbalance in power between stakeholders is preventing new rules from emerging

The establishment of new rules and new modes of coordination is accomplished through negotiation between the different economic agents. With liberalisation, multiple «areas of consultation» between players appear on different geographic scales and on different themes such as management of natural resources, the organisation of sectors, services or agricultural policies. As guarantor of the general interest, the State can contribute its support, notably by creating legal conditions that encourage the recognition of these associative dynamics.

However, the emergence of new rules is rendered difficult by the huge imbalance of power between the poorly organised agricultural producers, with their limited means of action, on the one hand and, on the other the commercial operators whose power has been reinforced by the process of economic concentration that has occurred over the past decade (mergers and buy-outs between companies during privatisation).

The imbalance that handicaps the agricultural producers and their organisations weighs on access to information and its use, on their capacity to formulate their objectives and define their domain of intervention, and their low level of investment resources. The consequence of this is that their participation in public debates resulting from economic and political liberalisation - which constitute a tangible result of the reforms - most often remains symbolic and, in practice, decisions are most often made without them.

If collective action constitutes a means of making up for the individual agents' insufficiencies (weakness or absence), it must benefit from incentives and adapted supports.

The need to strengthen the capacities of rural producers' organisations

More and more partners of development support are conscious of the need for reinforcing the capacities of the farmers' organisations. Nonetheless, most work very locally, using the organisations as simple instruments for fulfilling their own objectives, and have a tendency to cut the reality of the agricultural and rural world into thematic approaches (poverty, natural resources, sectors, gender, etc.).

In order for the farmers' organisations to really play a role in new forms of coordination between players and to actually contribute to the definition of new emerging rules, specific actions must be taken to help strengthen them, mainly concerning:

- their internal structure on different levels in order to facilitate mechanisms of internal consultation and representation;
- their level of information so that they can express a well thought-out point of view on the questions that concern them and about which the government and international agencies solicit them;

- their management capacities so that they are capable of managing resources including public assistance they may receive;
- lastly, the capacity to negotiate through the constitution of a real base of proposals making it possible to create new contractual relations.

To achieve these objectives, a true change in perspective must take place in order to (i) change from an instrumental vision of the farmers' organisations (their roles are defined *a priori* from the exterior) to a concerted vision of their development; (ii) go beyond the segmented and thematic approaches which correspond primarily to the preoccupations of the international agencies.

This type of development implies a preliminary analysis of the situation of the farmers' organisations with an effort to highlight their activities - but also what they do not do or what they do badly - and the types of support from which they benefit. It means subsequently analysing the field of their possible actions on the basis of efficiency criteria of collective action, in order to propose adapted supports.

The reinforcement of the capacities of the farmers' organisations must be based on the development of training for their members and increased access to information which would make it possible to:

- improve their understanding of the changes and their determinants;
- define a strategic project taking into account the changes, based on clearly defined objectives;
- strengthen their negotiating capacities *vis-à-vis* the other players;
- strengthen the capacities in ownership and project management of actions concerning them;
- lastly, to strengthen their financial autonomy.

MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific nature and roles of rural producers' organisations

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RURAL AREAS

Rural development concerns geographical areas in which primary production takes place, and where populations are dispersed in varying densities. These areas are also characterised by activities related to processing, marketing and services that serve rural and urban populations. Rural areas include networks of small or medium sized towns. Therefore rural development concerns a wide range of agricultural and non-agricultural activities and by extent peri-urban agriculture.

There are two basic characteristics of the rural areas that need to be taken into account:

- everywhere, geographical spread of agents; and
- in developing countries, generally low incomes and lack of capital.

Rural activities also tends to be characterised by market imperfections, such as imperfect information reinforced by geographic spread of agents compounded by poor infrastructure and communications (insufficient quantity of public goods). This implies significant transaction costs for economic agents. The deficit of public action to improve the availability of public goods and the limited capacities of private agents are obstacles to rural development. Collective action by organisations is a way in which to address these obstacles and mitigate transaction costs. These characteristics are even more significant with the withdrawal of the State from productive and economic functions when the private sector is still under developed. In the context of globalisation, characterised by more instability and competition, rural actors are also confronted with the need to increase their competitiveness, productivity and ability to take advantage of economies of scale; organisation can enable them to do this. At the same time, decentralisation policies provide opportunities for local action and better coordination between local agents.

PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN THE RURAL AREAS

Rural development involves a variety of actors that differ according to context. However, principal actors in most settings include the following at local level:

- private economic agents including rural producers, firms and other economic organisations;
- formal / informal community based organisations: for example, de facto kinship, cultural and religious groups, or ad hoc political and social welfare oriented groups;
- NGOs;
- local government;
- local services of national government and ministries;
- donors (through their funding programmes).

There are two main categories of economic agents : public (with nowadays a decreasing limited role); and private (increasing role). There are at least three categories of private economic agents : family farmers and artisans; firms (individual or share based, and cooperatives) involved in production or service based activities, processing and marketing; and rural producer organisations (RPOs) – among which some will have the status of cooperatives. Firms and RPOs can both integrate a number of functions vertically (e.g. commodity sub-sectors) and horizontally (input or service provision in a number of sectors).

CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL PRODUCERS ORGANISATIONS (RPOs)

RPOs belong to the private sector

However, they are hybrid organisations and have a number of special characteristics: they have emerged in different ways; they aim to make profits but they perform multiple functions (of which some are not profit oriented); they produce and manage different types of goods; they can be multi-sectoral; they can be organised in different ways and have varying degrees of recognition ; they may operate at both micro and macro levels; and they evolve over time. These different characteristics are related to different economic, political, legislative and social contexts that result from specific historical circumstances. The context determines the needs that can be met through individual or collective action.

They have emerged in different ways

Sometimes RPOs have emerged autonomously in reaction to external shocks (natural resource degradation, severe price fluctuation , lack of public goods), out of local or traditional community structures. Others have been created by State interventions (according to the political, ideological and economic choices of governments), or NGO and donor-funded programmes (according to the development pathways promoted by donors at a point in time). State, NGO and donor-funded programmes have created cooperatives, extension groups (e.g. T&V), NRM groups (e.g. “*Gestion de Terroirs*” committees), input supply groups, micro-credit groups and institutions, village associations. RPOs may emerge from these structures and may be linked to existing social structures. Some of these become sustainable and autonomous. Others remain dependent and instrumental: their survival relies exclusively on external support.

They have multiple functions

RPOs may have five types of function: economic, social, representation (advocacy and voice), information sharing / capacity building, and coordination (see Table IV.)

- Economic functions include : supply, production, processing, and marketing of goods and services, management of factors of production, e.g. water, land, labour, agricultural equipment; these economic functions correspond to the following lines (i) Natural resource management, (ii) Supporting agricultural production, (iii) Marketing.
- Social functions, benefiting members and/or the local community, including : e.g. cultural, education, training, health, drinking water and mutual support.
- Representation, including: defence of group interests and advocacy at the local, and sometimes regional and national levels (before government, firms etc.).
- Information sharing, communication both internal and towards other actors and capacity-building either directly or through contractual arrangements.
- Coordination is a key function since RPOs are in a position to establish linkages both at local and global level and to integrate the functions cited above. It does not appear as a line in Table II since it is a result of the strategic position of RPOs.

They produce and manage different types of goods

RPOs provide services that contribute to the creation of private goods for their members (e.g. increased production and incomes due to access to technologies, inputs, and extension advice), collective goods for the organisation (e.g. small or medium scale processing machinery or plants, storage facilities and information / service centres) and others that have characteristics of public goods (e.g. basic health services, literacy, vocational training, improved natural resource

management practices, participation in development of improved public policies). RPO activities also produce externalities that can contribute to public goods (e.g. more sustainable management of common pool resources) and have multiplier and linkages effects.

Table III. Description of different types of goods.

| Characteristics | Individual use | Joint or Collective use |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Restricted access | Private goods (e.g. warehouse, tractor...) | Toll goods (e.g. phone, electric power...) |
| Open access | Collective goods (e.g. irrigation water...) | Public goods (e.g. roads, basic health and education services, peace, justice and law...) |

From Ostrom and Ostrom (1977).

They are often multipurpose

RPOs can be specialised, but they often also undertake activities in multiple agricultural commodity sub-sectors, in economic activities from production through to processing and marketing, and in activities in social sectors (health, education) alongside other community-based organisations and local governments. The multi-sectoral nature of RPOs is rooted in the complex livelihoods of their members.

They are organised in different ways and are recognised to varying degrees

RPOs have different membership conditions, different forms of governance (e.g. rules and regulations), different degrees of recognition by other actors. RPOs will all have accepted modes of conducting groups and affairs, but sometimes these are based on normative or customary practices and sanctions (e.g. a women's group that carries out market gardening on a common plot allocated to them by customary authorities). In other cases RPOs operate with formal regulations and sanctions, a written constitution and are legally registered.

They may operate at micro, meso and macro levels

RPOs are rooted at the local level. However, through the economic and representative functions they perform, they can integrate different geographical levels ranging from the village, through to local area, regional, national and in some cases international (see graph 1) . These micro-macro linkages can be achieved through integration of activities in a sub-sector (e.g. cotton) or through representative mechanisms (e.g. federations). Thus they build up linkages with economical, political and institutional actors at these different levels.

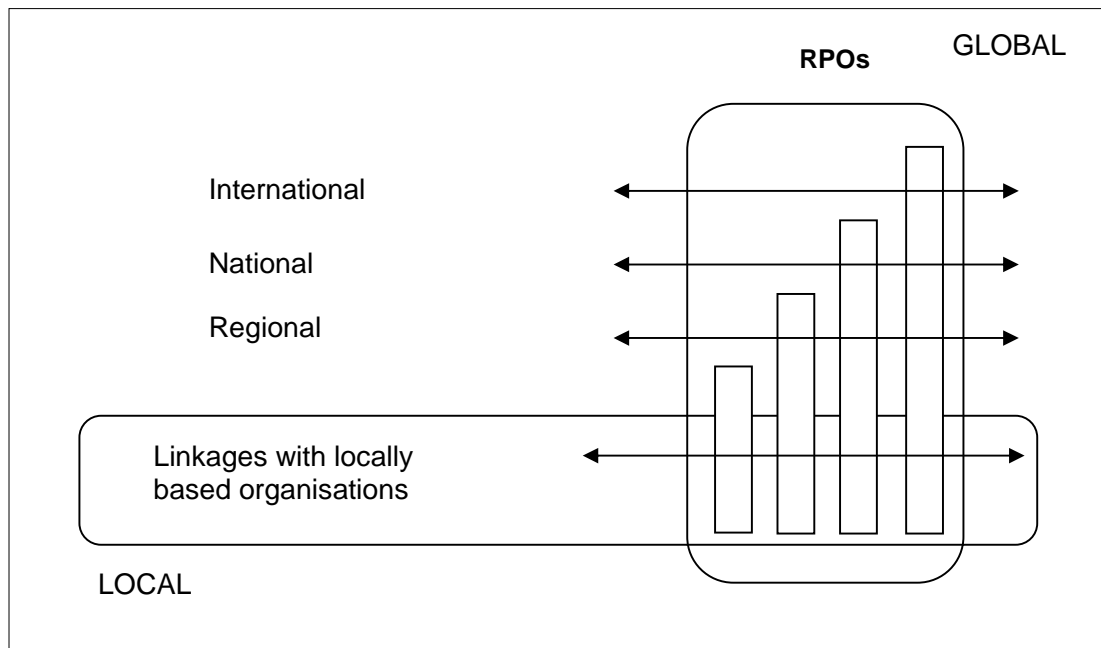
They encompass diverse social and economic categories of rural populations

In some countries different types of RPOs may correspond to contrasted types of agriculture (e.g. large scale agribusiness farms, small scale farms, and extensive "latifundia" types of farms) where such social and economic differentiation among agriculture take places. Among RPOs that represent "family agriculture"⁴, the members of RPOs can belong to both wealthier and poorer groups of people in rural areas. This social mix is not a problem in itself; it reflects the diversity of the society. While the richer members may at times gain more benefits from membership, poorer members also tend to increase the assets, resources and social capital they can mobilise through membership. The key point is that the efficiency of collective action allows members to draw benefits from being part of a group – as long as internal regulations prevent opportunistic, rent-

4. Family agriculture can be characterised by the special link between economic activities and the family structure. This relationship affects the decision-making process, in other words it influences the choice of activities, the organisation of family labour and the management of family wealth. This type of agriculture provides most of the world's agricultural production and is also concerned with poverty, since 70% of the poor live in rural areas.

seeking and exploitative behaviours. Regarding the leadership, the current situation is more diverse. Leaders are in general those who have the capability to articulate local and global (access to information, individual experiences outside their communities), who can afford to divert time from their productive activities and who are in a social position to have voice in rural and national forums: if they are not the poorest, they are neither the richest and their wealth cannot be restricted to its material dimension.

Graph 1. Scale of RPOs operations and vertical/horizontal linkages.



They evolve over time

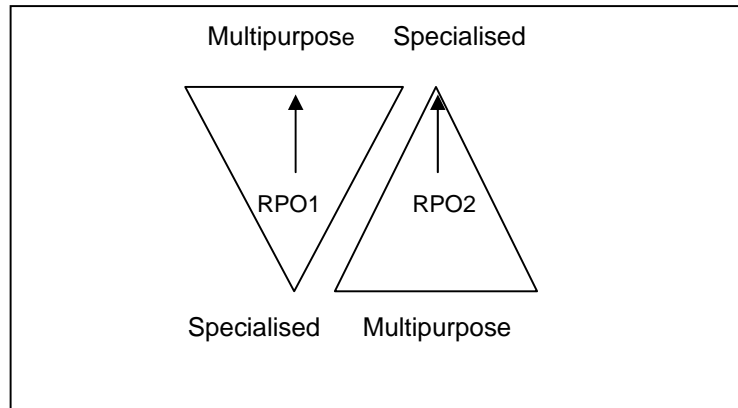
RPOs are dynamic organisations. Their relations with other actors and the range of their activities evolve over time. This evolution is directly related to wider changes in the social, institutional, political and economic context. There are no general patterns of RPO evolution (see graph 2): they sometimes start by undertaking a broad range of activities (aimed at filling the gap in availability of public goods) and narrow their field of activities gradually as the socio-economic and institutional environment improves; in other cases, they begin with a narrow focus and progressively take on other activities and functions that serve the interests of either members or the wider community (health centres, processing, transport, access to land).

Hence, the definition of rural producer organisations is broad but RPOs are clearly part of the private sector. Through their members or governing bodies, they are all directly connected with primary production (animal and plant). They include groups of:

- farmers, herders and fisherfolk and, among them, those responsible for the management of resources linked to or used in production systems (e.g. water, forests, pastures, soil fertility);
- rural artisans, agro-food processors and traders who are already grass-rooted and who have direct links with primary production.

We use the term rural POs to acknowledge this diversity of activities, functions and actors implemented in rural areas. Evidently, RPOs are not solely concerned with primary production, but with broader activities that make up rural livelihoods.

Graph 2. Focus and evolution of RPOs.



According to this definition and the previous arguments, RPOs at the local level have obvious links with CBOs and local governments because of their frequent involvement and their contribution to the local economy and the production of common and public goods.

Table IV shows the RPOs contribution in rural development regarding the functions they assume and it resumes their relations with the different:

- (a) thematic fields of interest;
- (b) linkages with other actors;
- (c) scales;
- (d) economic issues;
- (e) comparative advantages.

Table V presents the different activities linked to each function and illustrates this diversity of situations with examples of RPOs chosen in both industrialised and developing countries.

Table IV. RPOs role in rural development.

| Type of function | (a) Thematic field of interest | (b) Linkages with other actors | (c) Scale | (d) Economic Issues | (e) comparative advantages of RPOs |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| (1) Natural resource management | Property rights Infrastructure Access to and management control over natural resources | Customary institutions and other community based organisations Local government | Local | Creation of and ensuring access to common pool resources Management of externalities | Capacity to coordinate with customary, community based and local government bodies Lower cost for management of externalities |
| (2) Supporting agricultural production | Input supply Technical advice Financing | Private and public agents | Local, with national / global dimensions Ability to link primary production with processing and marketing opportunities | Provision of private goods Provision of a common good accessed and used by individuals / families Technology generation and dissemination | Ability to take evolving farming systems into account NRM and market-led activities Knowledge of local conditions, markets, resources and farmer needs / priorities : coordination |
| (3) Marketing | Agro-food system Financing | Agro-enterprises Credit institutions | Local, regional, national and international | Economies of scale Reduction of transaction costs | Local- global linkages Increased purchasing power Ability to achieve bargaining power with private sector |
| (4) Social functions | Social safety nets and poverty reduction Livelihood improvement | CBOs Local and national government | Local | Provision of common and public goods Improved efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and poverty orientation of producer support interventions | Combination of productive and social concerns. Social safety nets and mechanisms to support poor members and/or enable the poor to access assets |
| (5) Voice, advocacy, representation | Public policy for agriculture and rural development International negotiations Provision of public goods (infrastructure - roads, telecommunications, internet..., literacy, health) | Donors and NGOs Local and national government | Local, regional, national and international | Provision of a common good related to a specific rural profession (e.g. farming, herding...) | Coordination of different types of activities and key rural actors Allowing producers to influence policy-making |
| (6) Information sharing, communication and capacity building | All | Private and public funding agencies | Local, national and international | Provision of a private good that often generates common goods | More accurate assessment of needs of members Broader and timely availability of information at grassroots level |

Table V. Illustration of different RPOs regarding their main functions.

| Type of function | Activities | Developing countries e.g. | Developed countries e.g. |
|---|---|--|---|
| (1) Natural resource management | Negotiation, regulation and enforcement of rules for access to and use of NR Economic functions (not always) Advocacy | Water users associations Pastoral organisations (e.g. in the Sahel) Community forest user groups (CFUG, Nepal) NRM Village committees | Huertas, Valencia (Spain) Water users associations (Italy, France) |
| (2) Supporting agricultural production (3) Marketing | Input supply Marketing Linkages with international markets Technical change Advocacy Capacity building Policy making Financing | Colombia Coffee Growers Federation (CCGF) Sycov (Mali) URECOS-CI (Côte d'Ivoire) CCGF (Colombia) El Ceibo cocoa producers (Bolivia) Sesame Growers Associations (The Gambia) FECECAM Benin CRG Guinea | Cooperative movement : France, USA, Japan, Denmark, Spain Crédit agricole France Cooperatives for collective use of machinery (Germany, France) Mutual agriculture insurance |
| (4) Social functions | Capacity building Policy making regarding safety nets and social services | CONFUNASSC Ecuador FUGN Burkina Faso Many RPOs of different types also take on these general functions: SGAs. CCGF....) | MSA France |
| 5) Voice, advocacy, representation | Proposal building for policy making Provision of public goods in case of market or State failures Information Support to member organisations Capacity building | CNCR Senegal CONAIE Ecuador ANOPACI Côte d'Ivoire ZFU Zimbabwe CONTAG Brazil NATCOBTA Namibia NAWFA, The Gambia Uganda National Farmers' Association | NFU USA FNSEA France Farmers Unions in all industrialised countries (Germany, Denmark, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, etc..) |
| (6) Information sharing, communication and capacity building | Information Capacity building Support to member organisations | All RPOs are concerned | All RPOs are concerned |

* Many of the RPOs cited here have multiple activities and objectives ranging from production through to advocacy. The types listed here relate to the primary objectives of organisations – accepting that they may have other related objectives.

Lessons from experience

IMPORTANCE OF RPOs FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In industrialised countries, farmers' unions, cooperatives, farmers' associations, etc played a key role in the modernisation of agriculture. Their history began at the end of the XIXth century with locally based organisations and the birth of the cooperative movement. Even if history varies according to specific national contexts, the main features can be recalled here. Rooted in local solidarity networks, based on neighbourhood or kinship ties, local syndicates were at the heart of multipurpose collective action in the villages or communities dealing with input supply, collective bargaining with traders, social health insurance, credit... In most cases, given the increasing complexity of the tasks to perform and the changes in the environment, these multifunctional organisations were at the origin of more specialised ones, but closely monitored and controlled by the original ones, through governing bodies and men. Getting organised at national level they promoted the process of modernisation that took place after World War II and influenced policy making to get support from the implementation of the technical, economic and social change that went along with this process. The weight of these organisations can be assessed through their mobilisation capacity to influence policy making and through the economic dimension of the cooperative sector.

In developing countries, interest for RPOs varies widely according to periods and economic, institutional and political contexts. It is closely linked to the duration of Nation States as can be observed in Latin America. Many cooperative movements failed following Independence in Africa and in Indonesia for example. The reasons of these failures are complex issues that cannot be detailed here (top down approaches, excessive administrative control, political influence, loss of control by the producers...). Nevertheless, there were also successful experiences of RPOs some of which on a long-term basis (e.g. Colombian Coffee Growers Federation born in 1927, Comision National de Fomento Rural in Uruguay, already centennial, these concern mostly small-scale producers, even if especially in Colombia, wealthier producers are leading the organisation).

In the following section we will focus on the late 20 years when this issue took a new shape due mainly to withdrawal of state, economic liberalisation and democratic evolution in some countries. Donors support was also a key component of this period since many of them paid attention in different way to these emergent new players. We can very broadly distinguish two main types of donor support for RPOs.

TYPES OF DONOR SUPPORT FOR RPOs

Donors have engaged in a variety of initiatives to support RPOs, which operate at different levels. These can be categorised according to the nature of the programme and the place of support for RPOs in the programme. There are two broad distinctions, between:

- investment projects with RPO components and projects improving the technical capacities of RPOs which is the case of World Bank investment projects or '*Agence Française de Développement*' (AFD) productive operations in sector oriented interventions; and
- specific institutional capacity-building programmes that are currently at work through mainly bilateral aid like French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GTZ (German aid), DFID (UK aid), DDC (Swiss aid), USAID and international NGOs that provided a long-term support to these organisations at various levels.

REVIEW OF RESULTS OF BROADER DONOR PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING RPOs⁵

The analysis of a large set of case studies shows significant achievements in the main thematic stakes in rural development where RPOs were involved: poverty reduction and food security, sustainable resource management, agricultural growth and competitiveness, empowerment and policy making and the improvement of livelihoods.

Poverty reduction and food security

Collective action has with no doubt been efficient in poverty reduction and food security throughout a large number of diverse situations. According to the context, the approach may focus on women and production either for domestic consumption (Casamance, Senegal) with bottom valley rice rehabilitation or for producing and marketing sesame in The Gambia through RPOs external and internal mobilisation capacity. Illustrative examples can also be found in the case of '6S Association', in Africa, in Costa Rica in Brunca region, and in the case of Namibia with Natcobta.

Sustainable natural resource management

The World Bank gained world wide empirical experience in working with RPOs through the process of transferring water management from state agencies to irrigation associations formed by the beneficiaries of the irrigation schemes. These are farmers who manage water to achieve productive objectives as any other type of producers. Positive results were also achieved in pastoral projects where RPOs played a key role, and also in community forest management projects.

The World Bank gained much empirical experience in lending for pastoral activities and in these projects RPOs were defined as key actors in the process (World Bank, 1997). Natural resource management organisations or pastoral associations, or herders' groups are clearly producers. Like in the case of previous IA, these organisations whose members are producers (they produce meat, milk, or milk derived products or dried meat...) are interested in resource management as a key means of production and therefore are highly interested in improving it and keeping it under the control of the group. These organisations play a key coordination role since sustainable resource management – water and grazing – are closely linked to the customary rights and their enforcement depends on relations with customary authorities. On the other hand, improvement of these grazing systems requires access to public funding for investment and to market for animal health for instance.

In such cases like Community Forestry User Groups in Nepal, the high protection cost of individual forest use led users to decide to manage the resource in a group, thereby spreading the cost. Further, for natural resource management based organisations, there may be a trade off between ensuring environmental protection and managing resources so that they contribute effectively to poverty reduction. Where organisations choose to protect a resource, like a forest, this could harm the livelihoods of the poor in the short term while serving long term interests.

Agricultural growth and competitiveness

RPOs working in specific sub-sectors show very positive results both for internal and export markets. If cooperatives, being economic organisations, illustrate logically the role of RPOs in enhancing agricultural production and competitiveness, not only cooperatives can be efficient regarding this theme. Examples are diverse in scales, they range from the 9.000.000 million cooperative members in India during the famous Operation Flood – also called the white revolution – to the 350 members of El Ceibo cooperative in Bolivia, to the hundred thousands of members of

5. Data and information used in this section draw mainly on case studies presented or quoted (see bibliography) in this background study.

the cotton based '*Associations Villageoises*' in charge of collecting and grading cotton production and which form now the basis of the SYCOV movement in Mali. Next to Mali, in Guinea, the '*Fédération des paysans du Fouta Djallon*' chose to struggle on internal market supply for potato, onion and tomato. In Colombia for coffee with Colombian coffee growers federation - CCGF - with around 400 000 members sub sector based organisations show how they integrate efficiently research, extension and the representation and defence of the interests of their products. The Colombian Coffee Growers Federation sells coffee worth US \$1.5 - \$2 billion and shows annual income of US \$140 to 200 millions. Costa Rica shows a wide range of small scale organisations in the northern part of the country, Huetar Norte, that are highly export market oriented following the policy of diversification promoted since the 80's and prove to be led by specific demands they find ways to answer in a professional way through organic farming, raising butterflies, etc.

RPOs can therefore positively contribute to agricultural growth by facilitating knowledge transfer (upwards, downwards and sideways) and by investing in non-agricultural activities. Furthermore, case study examples indicate that:

- joint ventures can enable producers to achieve higher returns on their products (Farmer cooperatives in Nigeria);
- close links with research and extension can enhance agricultural growth over time through the development and adoption of improved technologies (CCGF, CORAF study in West and Central Africa).

Empowerment and policy making

Mostly in the 90's, federative movements grew up in many countries in order to bring to the agenda of policy making, issues that RPOs at local or regional level were not able to negotiate.

The case of CNCR in Senegal shows how groups structured at different levels with very different origins from national sub-sector former 'cooperative movement' or grass-root inter-village level associations grouped in the FONGS with seven national federations of herders, fishermen, vegetable growers, etc, came together to form the '*Comité national de concertation des ruraux*' (CNCR). CNCR is now a key speaker in the agricultural policy dialog and is invited to discuss with the government and donors issues of agricultural policies and project interventions. This movement of empowerment in order to have a voice in the policy dialog is now spreading in many countries of West Africa and is strongly supported by French aid and donors like the World Bank.

RPOs empowerment has grown following different time-frames. In fact, the differences among continents regarding political and economic context proved unequally supportive to RPOs development and empowerment according to periods and places.

Such federative movements take place in Côte d'Ivoire through the establishment of ANOPACI a nation wide organisation that brings together ten federations either on a sub-sector or regional basis. The core objective of ANOPACI is to represent the member organisations on cross cutting themes in order to influence the agricultural policy agenda. ANOPACI also provides support in organisational management to its members RPOs and was part of the process leading to set up the National fund for agricultural development through proposal elaborated by internal Commissions. This is also the case of organisations like ZFU in Zimbabwe with less emphasis on sub sector since history and agriculture are dramatically different from West Africa but the policy dialog activity remains a major component of ZFU as well as service provision to the members.

In Africa, the movement of empowerment through RPOs has now started and the democratisation pace should allow more space for collective action from policy negotiation to implementation of these policies. Obviously, as many cases demonstrate, being invited to negotiate is for sure a key step to gain recognition, but it will remain insufficient till capacity-building and resource mobilisation will not provide more knowledgeable leadership with in depth skills to manage at the same time local and global issues. In 2000, the creation of 'ROPPA' as '*Réseau des organisations paysannes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*' – a network structured at regional level in West Africa – demonstrates the strength of this movement since it was created by RPOs and platforms from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. This initiative to strengthen the

RPOs movement at regional level has the objective of mobilise resources from donors on the basis of negotiated objectives for capacity-building in the member organisations. The key objectives of this network are: (i) to promote and strengthen the values of competitive and sustainable family farming; (ii) collect and share information on success stories involving RPOs; (iii) support RPOs' capacity to deal with policy making; (iv) promote solidarity links between RPOs; (v) representation at regional and international levels and (vi) promote discussions among key stakeholders in Rural Development.

This type of initiative is in line with others which also aim to develop collaborative research and training for RPO leaders to help them in the process of defining strategic projects for their organisations.

Specific capacity-building programmes built at the request of RPOs in Africa and Latin America are promising emerging initiatives like Foundation Charles Leopold Meyer and French MAE funded programmes: 'Action research and training programme; Indigenous and farmers organisations facing globalisation challenges' (Mercoiret *et al.*, 2000b) and in Africa with the start in 2001 of specific training programmes for young RPOs African leaders: African Farmers Academy which aims to bring capacity-building for strategic planning among the organisations (see Annex 3).

In Latin America, claims for land or for the recognition of 'natives' or indigenous rights is a strong concern and a high ranking priority for a vast majority of small and even landless producers since inequality in land distribution or recognition of rights appears to impede both agricultural growth and obviously poverty reduction. In this continent, the picture of organisations and especially of RPOs is quite different since political history has led to specific institutional settings.

Collective decision making through RPOs makes it easier for previously disparate groups to influence policy. The benefits of this are twofold. Firstly it may result in greater political empowerment of rural groups, and secondly, policy makers can become more aware of their needs and priorities. Associations have played a role in empowering local communities to preserve their traditional ways of life in the face of external forces. Greater federation strengthens the cohesion and bargaining power of RPOs.

CONAIE [*Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indigenas del Ecuador*] created in 1986 or FENOCIN [*Federacion Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indigenas y Negras*], created in 1968 in Ecuador are key cases in Latin America since in this region voice and representation of RPOs are closely linked with identity issues and claims for indigenous land rights recognition. This pattern concerns countries in the Andes that count with strong native people representation. They do not limit their claims to identity- related subjects but question broader issues related to agricultural policies: pricing, linkages between internal food security and access to external markets, preservation of the environment, support to private sector controlled by producers, inequalities in land distribution, etc. These organisations gained influence in policy decision making through successful participation in local governments as well as in the national Assembly.

Improvement of livelihoods

Increasing agricultural productivity, reducing food insecurity, etc, all these objectives lead obviously to the improvement of livelihood through collective action. Some organisations developed specialised activities concerning this objective. The '*Confederation Unica Nacional de Afiliados al Seguro Social Campesino*' and the '*Coordinadora Nacional Campesina*' – CONFEUNASSC – CNC in Ecuador represent one type of these organisations dealing with the provision of social security to rural people. These organisations are wide spread on the territory and CONFEUNASSC brings together 563 rural health care centres with 3500 local organisations whereas CNC is represented in 13 out 22 provinces of the country. About 650.000 members of local based organisations get social security safety nets from CONFEUNASSC. Aside from this main activity, the organisation is engaged in capacity building, specific leaders training, formation of health auxiliaries, implementation of rural health centre and promotion for basic health care prevention.

Other organisations aiming at improving livelihoods are credit institutions or micro-finance institutions like 'Crédit rural de Guinée' in Guinea which is now in the process of institutionalisation as a private company after a three phase project since 1989. In 2000, the amount of outstanding loans was around US \$ 3 million for US \$ 5,2 million attributions in 2000. Half of the credit is for short term credit for agriculture, 20% goes to commercial activities, 5% for the mid-term credit and 25% for rural activities, mainly handicrafts and credit to civil servants. There are around 80.000 out of which 70.000 are active members and women represent nearly half of the membership (47%). The specificity of this experience lies in decentralised governance and members control of the local 'Caisse'. It concerns all rural activities among which agriculture is one out of the activities that can be financed, the responsibility of the decision-making being controlled by the associates at local level. If CRG has not an objective to target the poorest among the poor, attention paid to the first amount lent and the amounts credit in general, allow to fit with the needs of the poor population.

WORLD BANK COLLABORATION WITH IFAP

The World Bank has been able to talk with and give a space for an international RPO to express itself in several WB forums. This process has helped develop the World Bank's capacity to listen to producer representatives and began a process of change regarding RPOs as emerging collective actors. However, the World Bank's collaboration with RPOs should not be restricted to one organisation but several so that more interest groups are represented as long as the World Bank consider them as representative of different conceptions that deserve being heard since they also represent many poor people in the rural areas.

This WB / IFAP collaboration led to the organisation in June 1999 (with support of Netherlands and French funds) of an international Workshop in Washington whose title was self-explanatory: "Building rural capacity, A workshop on the empowerment of producers' organisations". One of the outcomes of the workshop was the target to include an RPO partnership component in every World Bank funded agricultural services project by 2001 (see Rondot and Collion, 2001).

KEY LESSONS LEARNED FROM EXPERIENCE: WHY DOES IT WORK ?

The analysis of the different case studies shows that if an organisation can successfully address one specific key issue of the period (poverty and food security, agricultural growth, sustainable resource management, empowerment, livelihood improvement) improvements go along with it regarding other issues, since the organisation shows comparative advantage in coordination and integration. Table VI shows the linkages and improvements gained throughout the improvement of one main issue (XXXX) for a given organisation.

When things work positively and show results, a number of inter-related factors can be found to explain the successes observed. From case study analysis we are in a position to identify the following:

- (i) a political context that favours RPOs or that is neutral towards associations in rural development. This concerns the freedom to organise and to express opinions, a legal framework for organisation to take collective action in economic or advocacy issues and most of all recognition from governments be it legal, explicit in agricultural policy documents or implicit;
- (ii) the possibility for RPOs to access resources and mobilise skills for capacity-building and collective action. These resources are material, intellectual and financial support. The quality of these resources is often crucial, along with confidence between RPOs and support agency staff;
- (iii) the long-term commitment of donors, support agencies and RPOs appears to be a crucial issue in many cases. Success stories show partnerships established and implemented in the long run, negotiated - but not imposed from outside - on a medium-term basis; early interruption of a support program may ruin investment in capacity-building (as in the case of Cadef in Senegal);

Table VI. Cross-cutting results stemming from coordination function of RPOs.

| Objective of rural development | Poverty reduction and food security | Agricultural growth and competitiveness | Sustainable resource management | Empowerment and policy making | Livelihood Improvement |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Case studies | | | | | |
| Cadef Senegal | XXXX | X | XX | X | X |
| Sesame Growers The Gambia | XXXX | XX | X | XX | XX |
| NATCOBTA Namibia | XXXX | X | X | XX | XX |
| Operation Flood India | XXX | XXXX | X | XX | XX |
| CCGF Colombia | X | XXXX | X | XXX | XXX |
| CNCR Senegal | XX | X | X | XXXX | XX |
| CONFEUNASSC Ecuador | | | | XXX | XXXX |
| CRG Guinea | XX | XX | X | X | XXXX |

Positive results concerning one specific objective rely on a more global improvement due to coordination and integration functions performed by RPOs

- (iv) the availability or the joint construction of technical, economical or organisational solutions adapted to the problems faced by the members; RPOs are in fact more efficient when they can have access to technical proposals (through research and extension) which they can then improve, adapt and diffuse;
- (v) the existence of a strong leadership and its ability to build up and defend a project for the organisation, and to present a future in which the members can identify themselves;
- (vi) internal management capacity and accountability procedures towards the membership.

The combination of all these factors appears to be necessary to ensure success conditions. Obviously, while it is possible to define objective external conditions that will more probably lead to success, the same exercise is not valid for internal conditions since the partnership with an organisation – if carefully developed – can bring positive changes in the organisation structure, governance and achievements.

Though it is not possible in this paper to go in detail about RPOs' histories, we must emphasise that their building process is anything but a linear and smooth process. Conflicts and crises are embedded in the nature of organisations and most of the organisations we mention as relevant examples for success stories successively enjoy periods of growth in activities and partnership and suffer crisis that can undermine cohesion and the development of the activities. The criterion is not therefore for an organisation to be in either one of the two states but to be able to get through crisis periods without losing mobilisation capacity.

It is really impossible to find any direct and univocal relationship between the contextual characteristics or the type of situation dealt by the RPO and the results obtained⁶. Given the

6. Of course, as stated above, some contexts do not allow RPOs to exist.

nature of the organisations and the complex set of conditions influencing collective action, the facts show that a combination of factors (of which some may be related) usually can explain the reasons behind a successful intervention of an organisation. Two cases can illustrate the institutional complexity of such conditions, one from India and another one from Guinea.

- In India, the main factors explaining the success story of Operation Flood in India can be summarised as follows:
 - the involvement of RPO from the design stage of the project and the long term support from donors together with capacity-building programmes;
 - a strong and recognised leadership that promoted a dualistic and pragmatic approach combining sophisticated and intermediate technology;
 - the integration of the sub-sector from production to processing and marketing through cooperatives;
 - a long-term commitment from the donors' side (over 15 years);
 - favourable political context for RPO development;
 - availability of administrative skills.
- The Government in Guinea decided in 1984 to support the formation of RPOs as technical and economic actors to take over after a long period of heavy state intervention in agricultural production. Sub-sector development projects funded by AFD have been closely combined with institutional capacity-building for RPOs funded by French MAE and World Bank funded Agricultural Services Project [with a specific commitment of French aid on research capacity-building]. This specific institutional context was based on improved coordination between donors and the Government of Guinea, better institutional coherence and the whole framework enhanced efficiency in delivering services to RPOs and producers (relations with research and extension were far more responsive to farmers needs since RPOs were progressively becoming partners in the negotiation of the agenda) ; see Berthomé *et al.*, 1999.

Recommendations

Increasing the role of RPOs in rural development fits with central concerns of the World Bank's World Development Report strategy and its Rural development strategy to reach the poor that is being revised. Not only are RPOs key economic actors of the private sector, but they are a vehicle for empowerment and policy dialogue with rural people. As recognised by the World Bank, partnership with rural development actors and the private sector – including RPOs - is necessary, but is a fledgling process that requires support. This support may be indirect (e.g. creating a legal framework for RPOs, providing forums for negotiation) or direct (e.g. capacity-building funds, training etc). Specific details on the implementation of the following recommendations for the World Bank to enhance the role of RPOs in rural development will need further elaboration in discussion with World Bank staff and key developing country actors. However, broad recommendations for action include the following.

PREAMBLE: CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR MEANINGFUL RPO PARTICIPATION

For RPOs to be able to fully participate in rural development processes, the existence of peace, observation of the rule of law and security guaranteed by the State are required.

Governments should also recognise the freedom of expression and the right for rural people to organise themselves in associations, cooperatives, unions and other forms of collective action that are needed to foster sustainable rural development processes.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Promoting/financing institutional reforms to develop a national environment conducive for the development of RPOs initiatives

- Encourage a state of law where private initiatives (collective and individual) are supported by appropriate legislation (statute of organisation etc.) and complaints can be filed against those who are denied this right of collective or individual initiative (e.g. commercial legislation enforcement allowing RPOs to go to justice when commercial partners do not fulfil the contracts).
- Invite RPOs to participate in rural development policy making at local, regional and national level.
- Develop new institutional mechanisms or forums where all actors can meet to discuss and negotiate implementation plans and programs of rural development policy.
- Focusing public intervention in the economy on the production of public goods that enhance the development of private initiatives, be they individual or collective.
- State enforcement of accepted economic rules of the game and regulation of competition between economic actors, and legal guarantee of respect for property and tenure rights.

Promoting rural public policy that will favor the development of economic actors

To be in a position to promote such policies, the following questions need answers to orient the public choices for investments in each country:

– what type of agriculture is targeted?

– what should be the place and role of agriculture and of the rural areas in the society and in national economy?

- According to the evolution of the civil society in many countries, and regarding the way the World Bank wishes to act (see CDF papers and PRSP which clearly show interest for broad consultations of the actors) these answers can only be approached through in-depth consultative processes, involving the key stakeholders. Such consultations would lead to coherent priority setting and improved coherence across sectors and among programs within sectors, which should produce sound national rural development strategies.
- Of course recognition of RPOs as partners and their involvement in rural development policy formulation, project/programs preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are key steps to be taken by governments and the World Bank should promote such orientations.

Financing RPOs capacity-building programs

These programs cannot be defined without the participation of RPOs and should be negotiated with them.

- What capacities to strengthen? (a) analysis of RPOs socio-economic environment (micro, meso and macro), (b) RPOs capacity to develop a strategic vision, effective propositions and programs, (c) negotiation skills to engage in dialogue with public and private actors, (d) implementation of programs/project and organisational management (governance, accounting, internal problems solving etc.).
- How? (a) include a “support to RPOs component” in each sector program/project related to the development of agricultural production, including programs to support production, input supply, processing, marketing, improvement of the quality of agricultural output and competitiveness in local markets and for export etc., (b) development of national RPOs capacity-building programs/projects.

A new approach

Two important points.

- A continued shift to a process approach. The extreme diversity of both the RPOs and the economic and institutional context in which they evolve clearly exclude any standard blueprint but requires in each case a specific tailored program adapted to the pace of RPOs and based on the availability of new mechanisms and funds for capacity building. A process approach to engaging with RPOs among other rural actors and developing World Bank-supported interventions at the national level is necessary. This can build on lessons learned through the consultative processes initiated through the PRS process, matching funds, flexible APL funds, local level development initiatives promoted by CDD and participatory approaches being developed by SDD. A key factor in a process approach will be the need to engage in relationships with RPOs and have the capacity to adapt interventions and objectives in the face of changes over time.
- Programming and developing partnerships over the long term. To move to a real partnership with development actors, it is essential to avoid the dead ends of both exclusive top-down and bottom-up approaches. This implies building opportunities and ongoing forums for exchange and discussion between the different stakeholders in rural development. A step by step approach to identifying rural development actors and developing partnerships with RPOs on the basis of mutually defined and agreed objectives should be combined with a long term commitment to any program involving RPOs. This should be accompanied by a concern to gradually build capacities over time.

METHODOLOGY

Gradual involvement of RPOs in all aspects of the project cycle at country level. Ways should be found to involve potential partners among RPOs and other country level rural development actors in every aspect of the World Bank's project cycle, from identification, preparation and appraisal, through to negotiation, joint approval of Project Appraisal Documents, implementation, supervision, monitoring and evaluation. RPOs should be put progressively in a position to define the nature, objectives and support scheme of any program and increase their responsibility and accountability in the implementation through contractual arrangements with different types of stakeholders according to the assignment to be executed. Drawing on methodologies and lessons from practical experiences of participatory monitoring and evaluation will help identify methodologies for doing this.

Establishing long term negotiation processes between the WB, government and rural development stakeholders including RPOs. Discussion and negotiation cannot be reduced to formal participation where actors have no room to manoeuvre for expressing themselves and developing their own proposals. On the contrary, it requires: time; the capacity to negotiate effectively; flexibility and iterative processes; establishing negotiating forums involving a wide range of actors; identifying and planning debates and interventions, and providing funding over longer periods of time so that more concrete results can be achieved. To be able to negotiate, RPOs need to develop their own objectives and strategy, and their capacities to analyse their environment (e.g. economic and policy context). This assumes they can access relevant information and that it is available in an appropriate format and they can apply it to building a strategy within the organisation and use it to inform negotiations with other actors.

In this respect, there seem to be a need to link in with efforts involving all stakeholders in national development processes and to have a high degree of transparency in these processes, with openness and information-sharing as major objectives. This could be achieved through producing 'improved guidelines' for best practices in establishing these processes (especially in relation to PRSP processes), highlighting how the role of RPOs could be developed and disseminated within the WB and among partner countries...

WORLD BANK TOOLS TO BE DEVELOPED

These changes will take time and are unlikely to occur as a result of senior level policy directives alone. They require on-going support processes provided to World Bank staff at various levels, increased knowledge of the key actors in rural development in specific contexts, changes in project cycle management and incentives, and the establishment of effective consultative negotiating processes in partner countries. To embark on this process, the following actions could be undertaken by the World Bank immediately.

- 1 – Enhancing country level identification of actors – or institutional mapping. A detailed review and analysis of the different actors in the rural sector should be done regularly in countries where the World Bank has an intervention. This can be, for example, integrated with and serve to deepen the civil society consultation processes that are central to PRSP design. Each economic sector review should present a review of rural development actors with their strengths and weaknesses and propose rural capacity-building programmes to complement sector investment programs that remain essential. This process would have to be carried out in close collaboration with TTL, Technical Manager, Country Director and SD and environment department specialists carrying out social, beneficiary and environment assessments in relation to each project intervention to avoid duplication and enhance synergies.
- 2 – A World Bank internal RPO Resource Unit to support TTL and country managers. The contribution of RPOs at the level of World Bank programming and at every stage of the project will only happen if key WB staff are equipped with the tools and both human and financial resources and are aware of practical experience of doing this elsewhere. This will require a process, not only policy documents. A RPO Resource Unit could perform this role of providing on-going specialist support to TTL and country managers by drawing on human and financial resources made available by a pool of donors ready to accompany the World Bank in this process. It could be staffed by a limited number of RPO specialists who could provide the following services on demand :
 - advice and practical support in drafting program/project documents to include RPOs/development actors;
 - empirical evidence of RPOs as key stakeholders in rural development processes and lessons from experiences of partnership around the world through case studies and documentation databases;
 - workshops on lessons from partnerships with RPOs, including awareness workshops at the WB on working with and involving RPOs both proactively and responsively - on request for different departments and managers;
 - advice on establishing negotiating processes and forums at the national level;
 - collating lessons from regional consultation processes and suggesting ways to increasingly involve RPOs in these processes;
 - establish an interactive web-based information service on RPO issues

This RPO Resource Unit may sit well within the existing World Bank initiatives like its support private sector development. Multi-donor funding could be sought for the Unit over an initial period of 3 years. It would be supervised with the RPO Task Force.

- 3 – Establish flexible and responsive RPO capacity-building support funds alongside rural programmes and projects.

Effective empowerment and dialogue will entail reinforcing the capacities of RPOs to participate in development projects and processes. These capacities range from internal management to technical capacities and leadership training to enable representatives to effectively advance their members' interests at all levels This has already been recognised in a wide range of World Bank-funded projects which include RPO capacity-building components (e.g. agricultural service projects in West Africa, the recent Madagascar Rural Development Support Project appraisal). A number of existing instruments can be used to support this (APL, local government/CDD funds, matching funds...). However, these may not always be flexible enough to respond to capacity-building needs quickly as they arise during the life of a project. It is therefore suggested that a

flexible and responsive capacity–building fund be established alongside each rural development project to respond to *ad hoc* needs and requests for capacity-building by rural organisations as they arise. This should be managed and disbursed by a steering committee comprising RPOs, civil society, project managers and government, and be released according to terms of reference agreed by these actors in advance. Contractual arrangements could draw on the experience of community based contracting

- 4 – Identifying and applying existing Bank instruments. In addition to creating new, flexible instruments for supporting RPO capacity building, there is a need to actively investigate how existing instruments can be used to increase RPO participation in rural development initiatives. This should include RPOs participation at multiple levels:

- (i) financing demand - via investments made at the grassroots level (CBOs, local authorities and local RPOs via mechanisms available through CBRD);
- (ii) financing supply - via investments made for budget support in PRS credits.

These will include:

- apl funds;
- matching funds;
- revolving funds;
- social funds;
- building up multiple-purpose endowment funds (drawing resources from donors, national and international companies etc.);
- HIPC funds;
- special multi-donor RPOs support funds (e.g. PSAOP for WARF, Senegal);
- support to RPOs building their own endowment funds (though recognised to be difficult in Africa);
- project-related grants for specific activities;
- seed money to try RPOs support initiatives via donor trust funds.

First, though, it will be necessary to draw up a comprehensive list of these instruments and how they may function – which can be circulated to managers. This could be an early activity for an RPO Resource Unit. Second, it will be necessary to increase the use of participatory methods and build partner capacities to participate (see 3 above).

While these tools can prove very useful from different types of projects (Ag. Services, irrigation or productive projects), they are specifically recommended to improve the participation of RPOs in the PRS processes.

- 5 – PO Task Force given mandate to develop and monitor progress in work with RPOs and potential eventual special programme on RPOs.

In order to realise the changes and recommendations made above, progress will need to be monitored over time and the remit and activities of the proposed RPO resource unit will need continuous assessment. We propose that the existing World Bank Producer Organisations Task Force be given the mandate to take on a more active role in moving these issues forward and in the actual monitoring of progress against agreed benchmarks. This could be done at 3- or 6-monthly intervals. Without this it may prove difficult to achieve measurable and consistent improvement in World Bank practice with regard to working with RPOs

CASE STUDIES ON CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY FRENCH AID (COORDINATED BY CIRAD)

This section is introduced by a synthesis of the diversity of rural producers' organisations and a characterisation of the main types of support programme.

In this section, we mainly present in-depth case studies of capacity-building projects supported by French aid (cases 1 to 5). We also present short insights of other projects funded by either French aid or other donors according to their interest for the subjects. More information on these can be found through the bibliography provided in this volume.

Diversity of rural producers' organisations and typology of support programmes

THE MANY FORMS OF RURAL PRODUCERS' ORGANISATIONS

Much has been said and written to describe the extreme diversity in the form of rural people's organisations in the countries of the South, and several typologies have been proposed to classify them. These typologies rely on different criteria, such as the origin of the organisation (groups set up by a State company or a project, spontaneous groups), their status (formal or informal, grassroots groups or federations, etc.), the nature of their activities (economic, social and/or trades union activities), etc.

One of these typologies distinguishes two main types of organisation that are fundamentally different (Mercoiret *et al.*, 2001):

- "traditional" organisations whose function is above all to regulate the internal relations of the group;
- "new" organisations whose function is rather to organise the external relations of the group and which therefore appear at the interface between producers and the public and private actors in their environment (State bodies: administrations, technical services and para-public agencies; local authorities; development support operators; public and private operators up and downstream of production; etc)

This second type of organisation, which we will call by the generic term "rural producers' organisations" (RPOs), responds well to today's challenges, which for the producers can be summed up as controlling their environment better, and we will therefore limit our analysis to this group.

It should be noted that there is another rather particular group of producers' organisations, which has the function of supplying specialised services to the RPOs. This group includes, for example, the mutual savings and credit funds that are springing up almost everywhere, and the centres supplying management support. Although these bodies are run by the producers jointly with other stakeholders, for simplicity we will class them along with the service providers.

The RPOs may also be classified according to two criteria, which appear well adapted to our area analysis.

- The degree of integration into the market allows two types of RPO to be distinguished. Firstly, those which are engaged in the integrated sectors of export products on which the national economy depends (cotton, peanuts, coffee, cocoa, etc.) or in food crops that are of strategic importance for food security or supplying the cities (rice, maize or tubers in West Africa for

example); and secondly, those which work in less strategically important or fragmented sectors (animal husbandry, market gardening, rain-fed crops, etc.).

- The degree of structuring distinguishes three types of RPO: grassroots RPOs, regional federations, and the national associations, which may bring together several federations.

THE DIVERSE AND CHANGING FUNCTIONS OF THE RURAL PRODUCERS' ORGANISATIONS

The activities led by the RPOs are numerous and can be grouped according to their domain or main function

Three main types of function can be distinguished:

- technico-economic functions which consist above all in helping their members get access to agricultural inputs and market their products;
- representation, with the objective of defending the producers' interests against public or private structures upstream and downstream of the sector on the local or national scale, or to represent the producers in consultation bodies;
- social functions which consist of providing, to varying degrees, a certain number of social services (health, education, supplying essential goods etc.). In this case, these services concern all the people living in the activity zone of the RPO and not only its members.

Technico-economic functions

Under this general title, several types of function can be distinguished, including input supply, credit, marketing, or even product processing.

Input supply

Due to the modernisation of agriculture, producers are using more and more inputs (mainly fertilisers, but also seed) and are confronted with various types of supply problems, such as variability in input availability, quality and price (this latter generally in steady progression) etc.

Input supply is a typical case in which collective action by the producers is justified from an economic standpoint. In order to make scale economies and assure this supply, the organisations most often seek to make grouped orders and stock the inputs, then distribute them to their members (generally on credit) at the start of the season.

In the integrated sectors (for example cotton in West Africa), the role of producer organisations used to be relatively simple. It consisted of distributing the inputs supplied by the relevant society (public or private), with the latter recouping its advance when the product was sold. Privatisation policies have put this organisation in question and the potential role of the RPOs has suddenly become more complex without them being sufficiently prepared for this change.

In the non-integrated sectors, especially those that were previously State administered and have been recently liberalised, such as the "irrigated rice" sector in West Africa, the responsibility of the RPOs for input supply is more important. This is because they have to operate on an open and more or less developed competitive market (variable number and proximity of suppliers), but, in contrast to the cotton sectors, they do not control the product, which is sold on the open market with a greater number of potential buyers.

Credit

The RPOs have always played a part in this field, especially by supplying inputs on credit but also by granting "social" credit even if these generally remain confidential, infrequent and informal.

However, very few organisations exercise this function autonomously, disbursing credit to their members from their own resources. Concerning "input" credit, the RPOs used to share this job with the State agencies (cf supra). After these agencies were dismantled, the RPOs saw their prerogatives in this field increase, entering into contact with the banking system, paying the

supplier and getting reimbursed by the producers. The rapid transfer to the RPOs of the function of supplying inputs on credit without any guidance on matters of organisation and management has led the RPOs into excessive debt and in many cases to their demise (reduction of activities, or even closure).

The boom in decentralised credit systems is doing little to change this situation and should not lead to a disengagement of the grassroots credit organisations for the following reasons:

- in the absence of local suppliers for the producers, linking credit and input supply by granting credit in kind makes it easier for both functions to be undertaken correctly;
- banking systems (commercial banks or networks of savings and loans banks) always pass on the function of joint guarantor to the organisations. This function is essential because it guarantees the recovery of credit granted whilst decreasing its administration costs (the function of joint guarantor is not remunerated by the credit organisations);
- at the local level, RPOs also favour the good working of the credit systems by allowing their members to repay their debts in kind at the settlement date (link with the commercial function);
- finally, the rate of cover of the decentralised credit systems is progressing very slowly. Many rural areas, especially the poorest ones, will not have access to these systems for a long time yet. This denies the producers in these areas the possibility of obtaining credit by small joint guarantor groups, excepting through their organisations.

Marketing

A large number of organisations attempt, to varying degrees, to promote the marketing of their members' products.

For this, they intervene in different ways:

- either directly by engaging in collection, storage and wholesale trading;
- or indirectly by negotiating with the State for customs protection against competing products, or for a reduction in export taxes (for example, the potato sector in Fouta Djallon, Guinea, or cotton in Cameroon). In the new context of liberal exchange that has led to market deregulation, this function of defending the interests of the producers at the national level is essential. It typically falls to the top level RPOs (federations). This function alone is justification for the RPOs getting themselves coordinated at the national level.

The importance of the commercial function undertaken by the RPOs varies considerably, according to how the sectors are organised, and notably to what extent they are integrated.

- In the case of integrated sectors (cotton in West Africa for example), the RPOs systematically play a role in marketing the products. This role used to consist of pre-collection operations and product grading, and the organisations were paid for doing this by the companies that supervised the sector. The situation has partly changed now for the privatised sectors, but the RPOs have to deal, in certain cases, with competition between several private operators. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, but here again preparation for taking over these new functions and responsibilities was made very approximately.
- In the other recently liberalised sectors, the commercial function of the RPOs is much less developed and is generally limited to the sale of products from the repayments in kind for input credits granted by the RPOs to their members (e.g. in Niono, Mali, with the commercialisation of rice). In Côte d'Ivoire, the cooperatives operating in the coffee sectors find themselves competing with 'traitants' (licensed buying agents) in a totally liberalised context; controlling product supplies is of strategic importance to their survival. However, only a short time has elapsed since the RPOs were liberated from the yoke of State agencies (which hardly sought to increase their autonomy). They have yet to acquire the organisational, administrative or negotiating capacities that would enable them to collectively manage the marketing of large quantities of products within a context that has suddenly become competitive and uncertain. This goes much of the way to explaining why they play a relatively small part in marketing.

- Within the non-strategic product sectors, the situation is similar to the preceding case, for the same reasons. Only a few organisations that are strongly assisted are involved in marketing (as in the Farmers' Federation in Fouta Djallon in Guinea for example)

These examples suggest that changes are taking place compared with the many failures registered in the past, when organisations tried to totally replace other types of specialised operators, such as traders. Ideas change, and decisions on whether or not to get involved in marketing can be made according to the economic environment, the specificity of the assets required for the basic operations, and whether there is a possibility of contracting them with other operators guaranteeing a certain degree of quality for the service.

Supply, credit and marketing are functions that are in fact very interrelated and therefore difficult to separate.

Indeed, without having their own working capital (which is generally the case) and with suppliers refusing payment in anything but cash, the RPOs must contract loans from the banking system in order to make bulk orders of inputs. Without credit structures which are accessible to the producers at the start of the season, the RPOs are at the same time held responsible for supplying inputs on credit. This credit is very often reimbursed in kind at harvest, and so the RPOs are obliged to enter into marketing operations in order to resell these products.

On the other hand, if the RPOs wish to enter into trade to obtain revenue for financing functions that are not immediately profitable (research – extension work, sector surveys, etc.) they must in return supply other services to their members. This is why in certain cases inputs are supplied to members on condition that they deliver at least part of their production in return.

Having realised the importance and inter-dependence of these functions, certain RPOs wish to master all of them and conserve in other forms an integrated sector, so as to reduce transaction costs if possible (as is the case for the cotton producers of North Cameroon).

Representation

Because of the democratisation of public debates, dialogue between producers and others stakeholders, especially those of the public sector, begins in different ways and at various intensities from country to country. Producers are increasingly invited to give their point of view in different consultation bodies arranged at local and national level to deal with the broad issues of agricultural and rural development policy. The function of representing and defending producers' interests therefore falls naturally to the rapidly growing professional agricultural organisations. It is also a function that receives little external support.

In South West Madagascar for instance, a Regional Committee has been set up, bringing all the stakeholders of the region together, including the producers. Its functions are to follow and orientate the actions of an agricultural development project (PSO), but it also aims to define the regional agricultural development policies. In Senegal, within the framework of a national project to reorganise the research and extension services, there is a plan to set up a committee to manage research funds in which the producers will be represented.

In order to get their voice heard within consultation and coordination bodies, producers are trying to get organised at regional and national levels by designating representatives and by setting up consultation mechanisms. In Madagascar for example, the RPOs are brought together in the *Maison des Paysans* where different thematic commissions (by sector or cross-disciplinary themes) have been set up. Elsewhere, structures of a similar type have appeared at a national level with the same aims, for example the ANOPACI in Côte d'Ivoire and the AOPP in Mali.

This structuring of the organisations on a national scale is relatively recent in West Africa. Before this they were organised around the important sectors (regional and national federations) or in some cases around the organisation of an association when it could benefit from favourable conditions, such as in Senegal with the FONGS. Its objective is to strengthen the position of the producers' representatives in these coordinating bodies.

In practice however, they are still too new to be truly representative of the vast majority of producers⁷. Indeed, in certain sectors the organisations control only a small part of the volume marketed. For example, the cooperatives of coffee/cocoa producers in Côte d'Ivoire represented through the ANAPROCI only represent between 10 and 15% of the market. Also lacking are the mechanisms for internal consultation that would really permit the representatives to get of the producers' voice heard. In the long run however, whatever their present mode of operation, these forms of RPO on regional and national scales are strategically important. The results already obtained by certain federations inspire much hope for the future, especially in terms of negotiation with the State and other actors of the sectors. For example, they have obtained increases in the sale price of their members products (the case of URESCOS-CI in Côte d'Ivoire) and customs protection or export tax reductions from the State (the case of FPF in Guinea). In addition to this work by sector, great efforts must be made so that the national RPOs play a major part in defining agricultural policies, either in general, or more specifically on questions of land tenure, research and extension.

Innovation management

Producers are always looking for innovations that will enable them to adapt to the requirements of keeping competitive and responsive to new commercial opportunities.

In most cases, the State has run national research and extension services which managed innovation, often working through "collaborative research" components of regional projects, or focused on a given sector. In the past, these set ups have only very rarely associated producer organisations in the process. Whether for the identification and implementation of research projects or for the publication of results, these structures have generally by-passed the RPOs and have spoken directly with the producers. In the classical national agricultural extension systems (training and visit systems), small non-formalised "contact groups" are the interlocutors.

In a few rare cases however, the RPOs have attempted to play an active role. This is the case for the Farmers' Federation of Fouta Djallon which integrated into its staff a researcher (put at its disposal by the Institute of research) and technicians (partly paid for by the federation) for carrying out experiments aimed at improving the production of its members (Berthomé *et al.*, 1999). It is also the case in Burkina Faso (see Bourdel *et al.*, 1999) and to a lesser extent in Cameroon (see Dulcire *et al.*, 1999)

The RPOs contribution of the to the creation and transmission of technical innovations is set to gain in importance in the future. This is due to a general realisation that the national research and extension systems are often non-productive and inefficient regarding farmers' needs r, and because on-going reforms in these institutions are gradually giving increased responsibility to the farmers on the subject (Bosc *et al.*, 1999). For example, in the case of Senegal, a research fund is envisaged which would be managed independently from the national research institutions and which would have a majority of producers' representatives in the management committee.

Natural resource management

In Africa, the management of natural resources (water, land, forest, pastureland, etc.) is the responsibility of the customary authorities and the State, with coexistence, superposition and interweaving of customary law, modern law and hybrid forms resulting from arrangements between stakeholders based on various forms of legitimacy.

Natural resources are most often used on an individual basis, even though certain communal, more or less strict, rules are followed (as for pasture or fishing resources).

The RPOs have greater possibilities of playing a role in the management of resources if the content of it has been the object of large-scale collective consultation and elaboration(Ostrom, 1996). This is particularly the case for areas developed for irrigation for which the producers are

7. Apart from a few rare exceptions such as the case of the CNCR in Senegal.

obliged to manage in common the water resources (especially when this is pumped). However, their function is generally limited to partial management of the tool put at their disposal (organisation concerning the rota for water use or maintenance of the distribution network). It is rarer to see them involved in the conception and implementation of larger scale works which remain the reserve of the State services that manage these investments (as is the case of the Niger Office in Mali).

On the subject of land management, certain RPOs have made land claims a central theme for their collective actions (particularly some RPOs in Latin America). However, this function generally falls into the jurisdiction of the customary structures, of devolved State services, or to territorial government where there is effective decentralisation.

Social functions

Most, if not all, the RPOs take on social functions. Neglecting to take this into consideration would be to ignore an important part of the reality of their practical activities. These functions are often assumed when the economic environment is weak. The organisations thus initiate investment, in particular engaging their capital base (with or without external support) in the infrastructure of education, health or supply (shops, cereal banks etc.) to compensate for the lack of services in these areas.

The size of these investments is of course a function of the financial capacity of the RPOs, but can, in certain cases, be considerable. For example, in the zone of cotton production in Mali, the value of these investments is equivalent to the amount of their bank arrears.

The impacts of the RPOs actions

A figure has rarely been put on the impact of the services supplied by the organisations. This is because it is difficult in practice to evaluate the impact of the actions conducted by the RPOs separately from those of operators which assist them and form the strengths or weaknesses of the economic environment in which they operate. Be that as it may, the impact appears to be considerable, as much for the members as for the community as a whole.

Direct impacts on members' incomes

The first clear impact of the services supplied by the RPOs is to considerably increase the income of their members. No large-scale quantification of this type of impact exists yet, but examples in West Africa give an indication of the scale. Indeed, the role played by the grassroots RPOs in input supply is especially important, particularly following State withdrawal and the dismantling of State administered sectors. Paradoxically, the impact can be evaluated at its true value when the RPOs are no longer able to assume this function.

In Mali for example, cleaning up the management and debt rescheduling of about thirty organisations of rice producers in the Niger Office zone has permitted them to resupply their members in fertilisers. In so doing, production has increased and the net incomes of their members have grown by a total of nearly 700 million FCfa in 3 years.

At another level, the federations of RPOs, by representing and defending the interests of the farmers have also had considerable impact on farmers' incomes. For example, in October 2000, the URECOS-CI in Côte d'Ivoire, which brings together a large proportion of the local cotton producers' organisations of the country, succeeded in negotiating with the other operators in the sector an increase in the price of cotton (210 FCfa the kilo against 175 FCfa the previous season). This was done by questioning the basic calculations used for fixing the farm-gate price. The impact of the RPOs at this level depends on their negotiating power, which itself depends on how well they represent the producers in the sector concerned. In the case cited above the representation was very strong.

Indirect impacts on the community at large

By helping their members to increase productivity, the RPOs have an indirect positive impact on the incomes of the economic stakeholders upstream and downstream of the various sectors in which they are involved, enabling them to increase their turnover.

By participating in the development of the sectors, they also lead to the growth of the fiscal resources of the State through export taxes on the products.

Finally, by taking responsibility for certain public service functions (education, health, agricultural statistics, research/extension etc.), they reduce the burden of State spending, without the State giving any return in terms of human or financial resources, even though their actions are in the general interest.

To conclude, the functions carried out by the RPOs are closely inter-related, especially the economic and representation functions. They are also variable in time and space depending on how representative and efficient they are. Following the withdrawal of State control, they have a tendency in the first instance to assume many functions, then eventually to specialise (see Graph 2), along with the progressive implication of other actors (other private operators, local government, decentralised credit operators etc.).

Whatever economic functions these organisations from countries of the South wish to assume in the sectors, alongside or in place of other private operators, as they have in the industrialised countries⁸, it seems clear that the function of representing and defending farmers' interests against public authorities or private operators is of paramount importance in the liberalised context of economic globalisation and democratic advance. It appears to be even more effectively undertaken when the organisation, through its technico-economic actions, is also directly involved in the economic issues that motivate its members.

DIVERSITY OF THE SUPPORT PROGRAMMES: CHARACTERISTICS AND OUTLINE OF A TYPOLOGY

The nature of the support given to the RPOs

Whatever their type (specific programme or single component of a more general programme, support to grassroots RPOs or higher level RPOs, specialised or not, etc.) the support programmes to RPOs conduct activities which may be described as follows.

Assisting the internal organisation of the RPOs

All the programmes try to build up the organisational capacities of the RPOs. The actions carried out in this field appear however very standardised and even prescriptive (support to setting up an office, a management committee, internal regulations etc.) and the recommended models of organisation are not necessarily adapted to the social reality. The impression is given that the RPOs submit to them as a condition of receiving the external aid.

The entry point can sometimes be more unusual and unrelated to the attribution of a subsidy. For example, in Cameroon, taking advantage of the legislative reforms in the organisation of the rural community, the support to the internal organisation of the RPOs took the form of collaborative elaboration of new statutes.

Support for accounts and finance management

Management training is a classic theme that is found in most RPO support programmes. Bookkeeping tools are brought to the RPOs and the leaders are trained to use them. Here again, these tools appear very normative and programmes are rare in which the RPOs are drawn in to

⁸ See case study No 6: through their cooperatives, French farmers control the processing of 40% of their products.

their construction (Case 1 of the BSCP in Niono, Mali) to ensure that they are well grounded and appropriate for resolving the real problems being faced by the organisation.

Experience shows that the RPOs rarely have the capacity to master this function (problem related to the level of training of the leaders but also to the complexity of the tools developed) and the trend at the moment is to set up sustainable services for the RPOs in the form of accounting and management centres (case of the cotton producing zone in Mali).

Management support is very often accompanied by returning the accounts at the general assembly. This improves transparency and protects the leaders from suspicion.

Subsidies

Many programmes contribute directly to the finances of the RPOs, either by subsidising collective investments (equipment), or by assuming a part of their working costs.

The modes of financing are generally conceived with a financial participation of the RPOs (partial subsidy) and a subsidy on a sliding scale with a view to the RPOs becoming financially autonomous in the more or less short term.

Support to exchanges and to structuring the grassroots RPOs at different levels

Many programmes seek to encourage experience sharing between RPOs. Some even make this a major part of their activities (case of the AFDI in Mali for example). This is the case for one European Union project that was initially aimed at building up the research and extension capacities on staple grains in Central America. It reoriented its activities around experience sharing, getting farmers involved in the experimentation to talk together about how to master the new technology (Hocdé and Miranda, 2000).

The aim of these changes is to transmit information (sharing experiences) while at the same time inciting the grassroots RPOs to associate together to form a structure at the regional or national level (PAOPA in Mali for example).

The structuring of the RPOs at a national level can need more or less time depending on the degree of top down initiative. This structuring is generally started by sector at a regional level then continued at a national level with all the representatives from the different sectors.

Support to the representation of farmers in different consultation bodies

Most of the programmes working at the regional level set up and support the running costs of consultation bodies in which the representatives can consult with other public and private actors.

These bodies are more or less specifically related to a project (for example CLCOP in Senegal, CROS in Madagascar) but they all have the long-term aim of playing a more general role in coordinating the actions and the actors of the region concerning development.

If the RPO leaders can build up their knowledge of the other stakeholders and their capacity to dialogue and negotiate within these consultation bodies, then this type of action constitutes an indirect support to the RPOs. However, due mainly to the tight position of the producers' representatives, squeezed by the strengths of proposition and decision-making of the other actors (especially the representatives of the State and projects), it has been difficult to get these bodies to work well. Because of this, a few programmes also support the setting up of RPO coordination structures (such as the PSO in Madagascar with the Maison des Paysans) to prepare them to hold their own in debates.

Training and information for RPO leaders

Many programmes have training and information components aimed at the RPO leaders. These differ in importance and are more or less formalised, and their content varies considerably from one situation to another.

Most of the information used by the grassroots RPO support programmes is still of a rather technical nature and is directly related to the other actions carried out (agricultural methods, accounts management, etc).

Fewer programmes deliver information to RPOs in order to improve the knowledge of their leaders on their environment (information about prices, how the commodity channels operate, etc.). They are principally the programmes supporting the organisations at regional or national levels.

Even fewer programmes try to train the RPOs so that they can build up their strategic capacities (define their objectives and make reasoned choices about the actions to take). The programmes of the APM network are in this respect exceptional and exemplary.

In general though, the information transmitted and the training offered are addressed almost exclusively to the leaders of the organisations and the knowledge gained is unfortunately only rarely passed down to the other members of the RPOs. This is due in particular to a lack of guidance on how to go about it and finance for this is often lacking.

Training the grassroots members of the RPOs is generally restricted to the implementation of the basic or working literacy plan and all the programmes supporting the grassroots organisations run fairly large-scale activities in this direction. However, agreements are sometimes reached to make an effort to spread all kinds of information to a wider audience using the mass media, especially the local radio stations.

Creating a favourable institutional framework

Besides (or within) the programmes supporting the RPOs, actions are also carried out aimed at improving their working environment. These cover support for legislative reforms of the organisation of the rural community or of the research and extension services.

While these programmes are both important and necessary, they are indirect support to building up the capacities of the RPOs. The direct way of supporting them would be to help them develop an opinion on these themes so that they could themselves participate in the definition of reforms envisaged in these fields.

Failing this, it should be noted that the acquisition of new statutes by the RPOs is very formative and represents a very good starting point for building up their organisational capacities. This is on condition that the RPO does not simply get an outside service to write up the required administrative documents but uses the occasion to take a close look at itself (as in North Cameroon).

The diversity of programmes supporting RPOs

Criteria differentiating the support programmes

While many reports have enabled the RPOs to be characterised and grouped according to type, the same cannot be said of the support programmes, to which, curiously, far less effort has been put into drawing information together into a general synthesis.

Several criteria may be used for classifying these programmes.

- The importance of support to the RPOs in the programme distinguishes those programmes that specifically support the RPOs from those for which this aspect is only a part of a more general development programme. The second type is by far the most frequent with, however, the "RPO support" component tending to develop and gain greater autonomy (as is the case in North Cameroon and the Niono zone in Mali).
- The level of intervention distinguishes between those programmes supporting grassroots RPOs from those supporting the set up and operation of higher level RPOs (bringing together RPOs at the regional and national level). The first are far more numerous than the second, but more and more programmes are now supporting the structuring of the grassroots RPOs at different scales (such as the "professionalisation" programmes of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MAE).

- The type of RPO concerned distinguishes those programmes supporting RPOs working in the major sectors of strategic commodities (export products or staple food products important for the food security of the urban centres), from those supporting producers in more fragmented sectors (animal husbandry, market gardening, etc.) and those of more local importance. Support to "major sector" RPOs is by far the most important in financial terms. Support to RPOs in minor sectors remains the territory of the local and international NGOs and decentralised cooperation, and does not generally benefit from large budgets (this applies in particular to women's market gardening groups) of and may sometimes suffer from a lack of professionalism.
- The degree of specialisation of the support programme distinguishes those that offer several types of support to the RPOs from those that are more specialised. Programmes offering support to RPOs grouped at regional or national levels tend to be more specific, putting more emphasis on training and informing the leaders. Programmes supporting grassroots RPOs generally have more varied activities, but these are rather standardised.
- The type of operator distinguishes those programmes implemented by public structures (State technical services or para-public societies with direct technical assistance) from those set up by private structures such as NGOs or independent consultancies.
- The approach taken by the intervention shows the degree to which the control of the support is given over to the RPOs, that is, their degree of responsibility in defining what type of support is needed and in managing the corresponding funds. This compares with the situation where the RPOs implement ideas coming from outside and are not involved in the financial management. While an increasing number of programmes are making an effort to give the RPOs more responsibility at every level concerning the support received by them, they are still a small minority (cf Fouta Djallon Farmers' Federation).

It should also be noted that certain programmes are particularly concerned with supporting the establishment of an economic and political environment that encourages the development of RPOs: support to drawing up new laws on associations, establishing bodies for consultation between public authorities and producers, reforms of the research and extension services, etc. This type of programme supporting institutional reform constitutes indirect support to the RPOs and cannot, strictly speaking, be counted as being support for capacity building.

In practice, a programme can of course have several of the characteristics cited above. However, a clear distinction can be made between the programmes supporting grassroots RPOs and those working at the national level, in terms of content but also in terms of what is at stake. The most appropriate typology should therefore be based on the level of intervention.

The "professionalisation" programmes financed by the French MAE for example, intervene by supporting the bodies representing the RPOs at a national level and also support more local organisations and institutional reforms aimed at improving the economical and political environment of the RPOs. They seek to decentralise their actions by also supporting local organisations, but this, more often than not, means coordinating the actions of their programmes at the national level with the other programmes working more locally, rather than directly supporting the grassroots RPOs. This is the case in Guinea for example, where strong coordination between the AFD and the MAE through the projects to strengthen the regional federations is coordinated with the intervention projects centred around specific commodities (coffee, cotton,...)

Moreover, even though some national programmes seek to work with diverse groups, trying to include the RPOs of the less strategic sectors (for example the PAOPA in Mali and the PSAOP in Senegal), it must be recognised that the larger programmes generally work with the RPOs in the major sectors. This can be explained by the low level of grassroots organisation in the other RPOs. This in turn can be explained by the fact that the RPOs of the major sectors have had the benefit of previous support programmes. To reverse this tendency and get the producers in the non-integrated zones in these major sectors (especially in zones of extensive herding, and also in zones of very diversified family farming) well organised at the grassroots level would need considerable effort.

Donor expectations

The objectives of the donors who support the RPOs can be resumed as follows.

- For the large international aid agencies, the main objective of programmes bringing support to RPOs appears to be to reduce public spending while at the same time improving the effectiveness of the services offered by the State. This is done according to the formula "less but better" referring to State activity, and to make sure that the major sectors of export products (main sources of State income) are secure. In this case, the programmes work alongside structural adjustment plans imposed on the States and the RPOs are, above all, considered as agents of substitution to the intervention of the State.
- Other donors, such as the aid agencies of Northern European countries, see the programmes of support to RPOs principally as a means for the producers to get their voice heard better and so assure their incomes. Thus their main aim is to bolster the democratisation of public debates.
- Lastly, others, notably the French aid system, attempt to reconcile both these objectives.

Diverse support systems

In consultation with the States, the donors have devised diverse systems for operating support programmes for RPOs. Some donors use several systems of operation. The following differentiating criteria can be identified.

- The degree of participation of the State structures in the operation of the projects distinguishes those operated by private structures (BSCP in Niono) from those set up by the State structures (in the case of Guinea⁹ for example) with intermediate situations involving cooperation (such as the "professionalisation" programme set up jointly by the ADFI and the DCPM in Burkina Faso).
- The extent to which the support is operated by the project structure itself distinguishes those projects calling on specialised services from the outside which they attempt at making professional (such as the BSCP and the PGR in Mali) from those operating their support actions directly using their own staff (such as case 2 in North Cameroon). The first category is still exceptional but the present trend seems to be for this way of working to be generalised, with a gradual withdrawal of the project structures in the implementation of their actions. The idea behind this is to encourage the RPOs to acquire the skills of the local services and so make the support service sustainable. However, it is more often a case of subcontracting rather than a direct contact between the RPO and service provider (the service provider enters into a contract with the project, rather than with the RPO).
- The modes of financing distinguish the projects for which the management of the funds necessary for the support operations is carried out by the RPOs from those whose funds are managed by the project structure (case 2 in North Cameroon), with intermediate situations involving co-management (support to the ANOPACI in Côte d'Ivoire). The first situation is still an exception even though most experts now agree that this set up helps the RPOs to assume responsibility better, and are trying to extend its practice.

Different systems are sometimes operated in different programmes run by a single aid agency in different countries, or even in the same country (such as programme of the French MAE). This can be interpreted as being due to:

- concern to adapt the programmes to the diversity of the contexts in which they operate;
- the experimental nature of these programmes (test phase) ;
- or again to the freedom given to the different operators in charge of these programmes.

9. See Berthomé *et al.*, 1999. Etude de capitalisation sur les dynamiques d'organisation paysanne en Guinée.

Case Studies

CASE 1: BUSINESS SERVICE CENTRE PROJECT (BSCP) MALI (Niono)¹⁰

Location : Niger Office Zone - Ségou Region

Scale of operation : 190 villages involving 15.000 families, working over 50.000 ha irrigated land

Beneficiaries : Village associations (VA) and other types of rural producers' organisations (RPOs)

General Aim : To improve the organisation and economic situation of the RPOs

Specific aim : To set up a sustainable support /advice system for the RPOs, delivering quality services to address the needs of the RPOs

Project activities : Development of management and training tools, training executives and advisors for the service centres, equipment for the centres, etc

Supervision (governing body) : *Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d'Agricultures du Mali (APCAM)*

Donor : *Agence Française de Développement (AFD)*

Budget : duration : Phase 1(1995-99) : 896 million FCfa ; Phase 2 (1999-2002) : 978 million FCfa

Operator : IRAM

Present State of progress : 5 service centres established, bringing together about a hundred RPOs (i.e. about 1/3 of the farmers of the Niger Office zone)

Context

The intervention zone of the project BSCP is characterised by the predominance of rice cropping on over 50.000 ha (52 000 ha latest figures) of land equipped for irrigation.

Rice production has increased spectacularly over the last few years, from about 60.000 tonnes of paddy at the start of the 1980s, to about 250 000 tonnes at the end of the 1990s.

This development in production levels results from a combination of several factors, in particular:

- the repair of more than half the irrigation installations (nearly 30 000 ha) leading to better water control;
- the intensification of rice cropping, notably the generalisation of transplanting ;
- the liberalisation of the rice sector with the abandon of the prerogatives of the Niger Office for input supplies, sales and processing;
- the devaluation of the Cfa franc in 1994 which led to a rise in the national price for rice and so encouraged production, despite of the concomitant price increase for fertilisers.

However, this success appears relative and perhaps fragile in the light of the heavy debts that the producers and their organisations have incurred, with outstanding payments of over 2 billion FCfa (i. e. 50 % of the running debt) in 1999. In spite of these problems, production figures are relatively stable however.

The zone is also characterised by the presence of many (nearly 700 according to some estimates) rural producers' organisations (RPOs) which differ as much in function (women's groups for vegetable growing or transplanting rice, village associations for rice threshing, savings and investment banks, etc.) as by their level of structural organisation (different federations of

10. We thank Raphaële DUCROT (CIRAD) and Jean-Bernard SPINAT (IRAM) for the useful comments and accurate elements provided on a previous draft of this case study.

farmers' organisations, of which two agricultural trade unions, a livestock farmers' cooperative, etc.) and their status (more or less formal groups, economic interest groups, village associations). It should be noted however that some of the different groups, or recently created pseudo-economic interest groups (*Groupe d'intérêt économique, GIE*), are not operational. Of the 700 counted, only 20% of them seem to be functioning. This rapid increase ensues from: the fact that many village associations have split up after going into debt; the conditions of access to credit (the necessity of a joint guarantee or of recognition by the local administration); the freedom to associate declared by the State; the large number of contributors who have encouraged their creation, and new needs of emerging organisations.

Background

The BSCP is assisting in the third phase of the project for the rehabilitation and exploitation of the irrigated areas of the Niger Office zone. It follows on from the actions taken since 1986 by the "small farmer promotion and organisation" (*Promotion et Organisation Paysanne, POP*) teams during the first two phases of the RETAIL project (RETAIL I and II).

The BSCP began in January 1995 with an experimental phase of 3 years, situated in one of the production zones (Niono – 10.000 ha, involving 25 villages). A second phase of 4 years is still running, during which the project is extending its activities to the whole of the Niger Office zone.

Institutional Setting

During phase one of the project, it was governed by the *Cellule d'Appui à la Mise en Œuvre du Plan d'Action (CAMOPA)* of the Ministry of Rural Development and Water (MDRE). After this (phase 2), it was governed by the *Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d'Agriculture* of Mali (APCAM). In contrast to the earlier period (Retail 1 and 2), support to the RPOs is now seen as being independent of the Niger Office.

The project is financed by the). Its budget amounted to 8,96 million French Francs for the period 1995-99, and the provisional budget for the second phase in progress (1999-2002) is of 9,77 million FF.

The implementation of the programme has been given to a French consulting agency, the *Institut de Recherche et d'Applications des Méthodes de développement (IRAM)*. The project team is small: initially (phase 1) composed of four people including a French expatriate project leader, it was later (phase 2) modified because the expatriate left, returning only for regular short term support missions, handing over the direction to a Malian.

Besides the temporary project, and at the core of the support programme, there is a network of 5 business service centres, managed by the RPOs themselves. These centres mainly call upon the skills of management and legal consultants. The latter have brought support on questions concerning the formalisation of commercial contracts and as well as on the understanding and explanation of current legislative and administrative texts, particularly with reference to land tenure.

Justification of objectives

The insolvency of the producers and of their organisation is the most obvious manifestation of the difficulties encountered by the RPOs during the liberalisation process, and it also blocks all access to new loans.

The result for the producers is that a decline in income (a drop in yield due to low input use in particular) can sometimes lead them to lose their means of production (renting out plots of land or the threat of exclusion by the Niger Office).

As for the VA, they find it impossible to continue or develop their activities of common interest to the membership (especially supply of inputs and rice threshing) and to the wider community (socio-educational investment in the villages). The effects of this relative inactivity are that many of these VA have split up and the social climate in the villages of the zone has degenerated.

The indebtedness of the RPOs is not only the result of the poor condition of the equipment, (which justified, and still justifies today, an important programme for the repair of irrigation installations), but from the transfer of the functions of input supply and rice marketing from the Niger Office to the farmers' associations. These responsibilities were transferred without the technical accompaniment that would have allowed the parallel transfer of the skills required for carrying out these functions (skills relating to organisation, management, negotiation etc.).

It is this situation that has been the motivation behind the project, the main objective being to help the RPOs and the farmers themselves to develop skills in organisation, management and negotiation. One of the lines of work is especially concerned with how outstanding payments may be absorbed and access to credit regained.

The project beneficiaries

The BSCP brings indirect support to the RPOs: it acts via a network of business service centres which were created by the BSCP and which are run with its support.

In order to understand the role of these centres, and thus the role of the project which backs them, it is necessary first to describe the grass roots farmers' organisations, especially the VA which are the main clients and at the same time the managers of these centres.

The VA were set up in 1984. At the time, it was a political move to liberalise the Malian economy, and in particular the cereal and cotton sectors. The VA were instituted in all the main zones of production in Mali, whether for rice, cotton, or turned towards the production of rain-fed cereals. The Niger Office put them in charge of credit (supplying inputs on credit), threshing, (made possible by the development of small threshing machines – ARPON project), and marketing, so that they could take charge of some of the upstream and downstream parts of the rice sector, since the withdrawal of the Niger Office was in perspective. They bring together the rice producers of the same village. There are about 160 VA over the whole zone of the Niger Office, but only about a third of them did not present major operational difficulties in 2000.

Mechanical rice threshing is the primary activity of the VA, undertaken since 1986. Today, because of their insolvency, many of the VA can no longer obtain loans for renewing their equipment, or even simply to keep it operational. This is because the income from threshing goes towards funding other activities considered important by the VA. In fact, for threshing alone they should not need credit in order to operate. However, while this activity, which is very profitable for the RPOs, is experiencing difficulties and is being increasingly taken over by other private actors such as individual entrepreneurs, the RPOs' threshing machines still deal with about 60 to 70% of the rice produced in the Niger Office zone today.

The VA supply inputs on credit to their members. Nonetheless, in contrast to the earlier period during which the VA directly managed the loans accorded by the banking system, most input financing now goes through the savings and loans banking network and their direct responsibility in the matter is tending to decrease. They have, however, kept a non-negligible role as joint guarantor. Only fifteen or so VA are still responsible for the entire circuit of input supply on credit based on BNDA funding. For all that, the role of RPOs in the matter of credit is not limited to acting as joint guarantor: they still intervene in storage, the distribution of inputs and recovering in kind the loans contracted by their members. They also manage conflicts relating to farmers' debts and claims.

The VA conducts marketing activities, but only of the products arising from the repayment of credit in kind and the products from threshing also paid in kind by the producers. This commercial activity can be significant since it can represent over 10% of the rice produced by any one village. It should be noted that an GIE exists that is specialised in rice marketing, involving ten or so villages.

The VA do not represent the producers directly in the round table committees which were set up by the Niger Office for water management (charges, repair work) or land tenure (attribution of plots), for which the Niger Office is still responsible. This role should rather be attributed to the recently created farmers' union, but it is not recognised by the Niger Office as being representative of the farmers. The Office has not accepted the principle of representation,

because the representatives elected to the water board are at present elected officially on a personal basis, not on the basis of trades union, since only one of the two unions is recognised. As for the land committee, it is not really operational.

Finally, the VA which have the means to do so invest in public works by participating for example in the construction and running of community schools, the creation of drinking water supply points, or again the electrification of villages. If certain RPOs have benefited from aid given occasionally by certain NGOs (CARE in the Macina for example), most RPOs have truly made serious efforts using their own financial resources.

Activities and approach of the project

Although the BSCP and the business service centres are two separate entities, the aim of the project (to provide operational support to the centres) and its mode of action (highly participatory approach and on the job support/training) mean that some confusion still persists between the images of the BSCP (temporary structure) and the centres (permanent structure).

We present below the services offered by the centres, then describe what the project does to support them.

Business service centres

At present, there are 5 business service centres in operation, one in each of the 5 main zones covered by the Niger Office.

The principal characteristics of these centres are that they are managed by the RPOs and charge for the services they provide to these organisations. In order to benefit from the service, the RPOs must pay a subscription (fixed sum or calculated according to the area of land cultivated), contribution that confers the statute of member to the organisation. Each service centre is managed by farmers' executives designated by the general assembly of member RPOs.

The centres offer services in the fields of organisation, management, or law. They carry out the following tasks in particular:

- elaborate an appraisal of the RPO's situation (economic, social and organisational);
- assistance to the RPOs for finding ways in which to repay their debts to the banking system: analysis of the level of insolvency and assistance in drawing up rescheduled debt repayment plans;
- help in recovering RPOs internal and external debts: establishing debt recognition, applying legal procedures ;
- assistance in negotiations with financial institutions for renewed access to credit;
- make available the tools for recording accounts and train the executives of the RPOs in their use;
- work out the financial statements of the farmers' organisations at the end of the campaign (threshing account, incomes account, balance, etc.) and assist in the presentation of RPOs' accounts returns in the General Assembly;
- management consultancy (investment studies with the calculation of production costs; job allocation within the RPOs; etc.);
- assistance in drawing up the rules and regulations of the organisations;
- assistance in entering into contracts (supplies, sales, services) with actors of the sector, etc.

In order to operate these services the centres call upon management consultants and legal advisers. These advisers are grouped in an GIE (Delta Conseils) which, through a contract with the RPOs, makes the expertise of its members available to the organisations. In this way, the experts are not employed directly by the centres, but are contracted to provide a service. The centres also call upon other external expertise (lawyers, literacy trainers), according to their needs, and these are paid by the job.

Created at different times, it is obvious that all the centres have not attained the same level of operation. Although extension started at virtually the same time for all the zones, different dynamics quickly became apparent in different zones: strong mobilisation and many subscribers in Molodo; rigour and prudence in N'débougou, more difficult beginnings in the Macina...

The BSCP

The role of the project is to accompany the setting up and the running of the business service centres.

In practice, this means:

- the development of a method for setting up the centres;
- the conception of tools for use in training and management;
- training the executive staff and the advisers ;
- contributing to the running costs of the centres (partial subsidy).

The BSCP has taken a very gradual approach to the setting up of the business service centres. During the whole of the first phase (3 years), the project supported just one centre, the objective being to test the method of how to set up a centre, to develop the management tools (for centres and RPOs) and to train the executive staff and advisers in their respective jobs. It was only during the third year that the process of extension was begun in the other zones.

The time schedule for the installation of the first centre is a good illustration of the method used by the project and at the same time of its approach.

- The first stage consisted of the classical presentation of the projects' objectives (the creation of a business service centre) to the RPOs and of recording their support needs. This was done at a general assembly of the RPOs in each of the villages in the zone of Niono.
- Next, the first general assembly of representatives from those RPOs which were interested (9 out of 25 in the zone) defined the first intervention priorities of the centre and set up a temporary management committee of four members.
- In parallel, the first advisers for doing the support/advice work were recruited. Recruitment procedures and selection criteria were defined in agreement with the farmers' leaders. It was decided that candidates should have a good level of education (3 years tertiary education minimum) and a specialisation (in accounting / management, law) and that recruitment would be nation-wide, using a specialised agency (private employment agency). The executive officers of the centres participated in the selection by interviewing the pre-selected candidates in order to judge their language fluency, their motivation, their capacity of working in the countryside (experience) and their personality.

The tools developed with the help of the project differ according to their intended users (RPOs, directors of business service centres, and advisers) and the tasks they are intended to perform.

Two main types of tool may be distinguished: managerial tools, and supports for training or coordination of activities.

The managerial tools include:

- for the centres: the statutes, the rules of the establishment, the different contracts (between the project and the centres, the centres and the RPOs, the centres and the advisers), the follow-up cards of the member RPOs, etc.;
- for the RPOs: the account book, the manual of accounting procedures, the general or particular (threshing) trading account, and various documents for recording data (treasury, loans, storage, threshing, supplies, marketing, etc.);
- for the advisers, the project has developed support materials for training and activities, especially:
 - activity support materials dealing with the RPOs' statutes and establishment rules;
 - a guide about RPOs accounts returns in general assemblies;
 - training cards for the executives of RPOs (presidents, treasurers, stock keepers, etc.).

All these tools were designed in collaboration with their users (centres' executives, advisers and RPOs) and so do not appear as exogenous creations which the users then find hard to master, as is generally the case. In particular, the RPOs' accounts/management documents were produced by the advisers and the people responsible for the VA (producer cards, follow-up cards for keeping track of credit, summary card for threshing).

The training of advisers and centre executives takes place for the most part on the job with close accompaniment by the project team at every phase. The advisers have, however, received training in the local language for the transcription of different management documents which are bilingual (French – Bamanan).

Project Impact

In December 2000, the project reached about a hundred RPOs through the business service centres. This represents a small proportion of the existing RPOs but about 50% of those which are active, which is non-negligible when the number of producers that these RPOs represent is taken into account : 5000 farming units, or about a third of the farmers in the Niger Office zone.

The most visible impact of the project for the farmers is that a certain number (30) of the RPOs that are members of a centre have regained access to loans. This has permitted them to restock with fertilisers, to the benefit of their membership (to a total value of 260 million FCfa from the start of the project) and to reinvest in their activities, especially threshing (purchase of equipment on credit). In the villages where they are represented, the savings and lending banks have also started up important operations along similar lines, following the example shown by the BSCP. While the synergy has been able to produce interesting results, in some villages there have been conflicts between the respective domains of the different advisers (Delta conseil, advisers from mutual savings companies etc...).

When the importance of fertilisers in rice cropping is appreciated, this renewed access to credit has considerable knock-on effects on the farmers' incomes. The added value induced by yield increase has been estimated at almost 700 million FCfa over three years, a figure which should be considered in relation to the project's budget (about 900 million FCfa over the same period), demonstrating the short-term payoff of the operation.

The insolvency of the RPOs is partly due to the outstanding payments of unscrupulous tradesmen who have not paid for the rice delivered to them by the RPOs. If the centres have in some cases permitted the RPOs to recover their money (by starting legal procedures), the impact of the project in this matter has been limited, due mainly to the absence of reliable legal documents that would permit legal action. The project has therefore concentrated its efforts on prevention (training the executives of the RPOs to draw up formal sales contracts).

The initial exposition of the RPOs' situation and the systematic return of accounts to the general assembly have also led to the re-establishment of confidence between the membership and the executive, an essential condition for the healthy operation of the organisations and the renewal of certain management committees. Moreover, it has brought new energy to the internal control mechanisms.

Problems encountered and prospects

The many successes of the project should not mask the difficulties encountered and the discernible problems for the future.

Initial difficulties related to the institutional set-up

The project's desire to be independent from the Niger Office led to frustrations in the latter structure, which is still struggling against being totally dismantled (staff dismissal) and to conserve as many prerogatives as possible. Because of this, relations were strained between the BSCP and the Niger Office, characterised by the Niger Office exerting various pressures on the RPOs of the zone to stop them from joining the business service centres that the project was trying to set up.

While this resistance from the Niger Office hindered the operation of the project at first, it is tending to wane faced with the positive results produced by the project, and thanks to the constant efforts in communication (regular reports, invitations to various meetings, etc.) made by the centre's and the project's executives.

This shows that much attention needs to be paid to the institutional set-up. For a project supporting RPOs, to demand autonomy from State structures leads to greater operational freedom and greater confidence from the producers, but entails running the risk of entering into conflict with State structures. It also prevents working towards the reform of the methods used by the State structure to support producers. However, in the present case, this opposition clearly demonstrated the independence of the project and obliged farmers' leaders and advisers to put a lot of effort into it!

Partial financial autonomy of the centres

The business service centres recover at best only 30% of the costs of the services delivered. The sustainability of the services rendered to the RPOs by the centres is therefore still dependent on subsidies given by the project. This does not put into doubt the capacity of the centres to cover their needs, because subscriptions are increasing in absolute value. On the other hand, when the growth of their activities and the investments effected are taken into account, the relative part of subscriptions in the total funding stagnates, or even regresses for certain centres. The cost of one or two advisers can be covered, but large development costs will need to be subsidised.

The strength of the project lies in the fact that it did not make financial autonomy of the centres, on the sole basis of their earnings, a principle of the durability of the support structure. A clear distinction was made between financial autonomy and balanced budget, in that the centres were not required to balance their charges (costs of services) exclusively with their financial resources (members' subscriptions).

In fact, the centres indirectly help actors other than the RPOs and their members. In particular, they contribute towards the development of the whole of the rice sector, and they guarantee the viability and growth in turnover of the financial institutions. External contributions should justifiably participate towards balancing their budget. Negotiations with the BNDA are under way, but have not yet led to the bank committing itself to a financial participation in the centres.

Confident in this fact and aware of its importance for the sustainability of the centres, the project is supporting negotiations with the credit operators so that they pay the centres for the indirect services they render by assisting debt repayment. In fact the RPOs which act as joint guarantor (for the members who accumulate outstanding payments) could make similar claims and ask for the costs incurred to be taken over by the credit operators.

The precise identification of each actor's role, particularly of those in the RPOs, and the charges related to them, is a fundamental task that must be systematised. In particular, those services rendered which correspond to public services and which must therefore be subject to transfers of funds from the State to the centres (for example literacy classes for the executives of RPOs) should be clearly defined.

However, the centres are still looking for greater financial autonomy. This must be worked out prudently. In the present case especially, it is not at all certain that if the centres increased turnover by diversifying or by increasing the number of clients (more RPOs or even individuals) they would attain this objective. In fact, it seems that no economy of scale can be expected since charges increase in parallel with activities, and even more so since new subscribers demand heavy investment on the part of the advisers at first (appraisal of the RPO's situation and training its leaders). Once the situation of the member RPOs has been redressed, the workload of the advisers decreases, but a progressive withdrawal of healthy RPOs is to be feared. This has not yet happened, but it would lead to a reduction in personal resources for the centre if the services delivered by the centres do not evolve along with the needs of the RPOs. If the objective of the centres is indeed that the services rendered benefit the greatest number and not only the VA (women's' associations, livestock farmers', etc.), it must not be looked upon as a means of improving the balance of costs and earnings in the short term.

Develop and stabilise the local human resources

In as much as a project brings not only funds but also expertise via its personnel, the sustainability of the actions must also be worked out in terms of human resources.

One of the strengths of the project is that it has worked in this direction right from the start, by developing local skills so that they can work independently of the project.

At this level, it is fundamental for the sustainability of the support set up that a small project team is chosen and which does not support the RPOs personally but trains local actors (advisers and centre executives) in this work.

Of course, the level of skill acquired by the centre executives and the advisers does not yet allow them to work alone without the assistance of the project personnel. The responsibilities that they are taking up demand much knowledge that their short experience has not yet permitted them to acquire in totality, especially for those centres most recently set up (new executives and new advisers).

However, the problem of the stability of human resources has already been posed. There is a risk related to the renewal of the advisers, the centre executives and the leaders of the RPOs. These renewals are inevitable, or even desirable within limits, and demand continual investment for training the newcomers without real accumulation of knowledge in any given action. For the moment, renewal has been limited and the situation of the advisers is settling down (they are building and getting married within the zone)

The stability of the human resources is in fact greatly influenced by how much can be earned from the service delivered. The pursuit of financial autonomy for the centres by an excessive reduction in personnel charges and running costs incites the best elements to resign. This in turn leads to a decline in the quality of the service, so undermining the central tenet of the project: quality service. A good balance has been achieved and must be carefully preserved.

The project has greatly assisted the working literacy of the members of associations. The low level of literacy in the zone is in fact an important handicap to running the associations democratically. Agreements have been made with the specialised NGO Yeredon, firstly with the project, then with the centres that negotiate their support in this field.

The role of GIE Delta – Advice in the system

At present, GIE Delta – Conseil (Economic Interest Group Delta – Advice) are making their advisers available to the centres on a contractual basis. The possibility also exists however, for these advisers to be paid a salary by the centres.

The project is directing its efforts towards developing the first option. The motive behind this is to rupture the isolation of the advisers, so that, from within the same structure, they can help each other and in particular replace each other in case of vacations or illness. Unfortunately, this solution is not a money saver for the centres.

With such a set up, it could be asked why in the future the RPOs shouldn't enter individually into contracts with the GIE, and in which case, what would happen to the role of the business service centres. The idea at this level is apparently to run the service as a mutual, with those RPOs with the least needs paying for those whose assistance is more costly, as is the case at the moment. Working through the centres would also guarantee the quality of the services rendered to the RPOs (the centres would evaluate/control the work done by the service providers).

Finally, the centres are situated at the interface between the RPOs and the various providers of specialised services, with the aim of helping the RPOs to define their support needs and to centralise the management of the related funds (RPOs own funds and subsidies from outside).

The possibility of diversifying the operations of the advisers has been looked into, either in order to improve their payment directly, or to increase the incomes of the centres. Individual counselling seemed like a good option to try, especially since the individual demands of certain producers (big farmers in particular, members of the Niono executive) were very precise. At present, the interaction between management advice to farmers and advice to RPOs is moving towards a system of "advice to groups of farmers" by means of a joint arrangement in association with Urdoc-Cpc-Advisers.

A formal participatory approach

To sum up, the project is characterised by a highly participatory approach, in which the RPOs have been fully associated at all stages of setting up the centres, from the identification of the services which would be offered to them, to the selection of the advisers, through the determination of the management system of the centres, and notably the setting of membership subscription rates and the financial management.

Everyone agrees that this approach is a necessary condition to efficiently obtaining the desired result from the support brought to the RPOs (assistance corresponding to needs of which the costs are controlled) but it is not always enough.

Whether or not such an approach is respected is strongly related to the personalities of the project leaders. In the case of the BSCP, they gave themselves the role of guides for the centres, not directors, but another team in similar conditions may not necessarily have acted in the same way, and therefore would not have achieved the same results.

The problem is thus to know how to proceed so that a participatory approach to RPOs' support projects is no longer dependant on the goodwill of the personnel, but respected as an obligation.

In order for this to come about, the only solution is that the RPOs, the business service centres in this case, supervise the whole of the support programme. This means that they manage the funds, the project team intervening only as guides/advisers (support to elaborating a budget programme, to the organisation of tasks, to the management of funds, to the evaluation of the actions etc.) without any power to make decisions about how the actions are orientated. The farmers' organisations do not have the capacities at the start but the aim is exactly to lead them to acquire the capacities in action, by putting them on the job and working alongside them.

This way of working, which amounts to letting the RPOs take charge of the operational budgets of the support projects, does not, understandably, exclude controls, but these must be carried out *posteriori* and not *a priori*. This obviously has consequences in the matter of financial procedures for the sponsors: simplification of payment procedures, clear separation of the transactions budgets and the working budget of the project structure, and open end funds which do not predetermine the nature of the actions to put into place.

Conclusions

The BSCP is building a system for supporting RPOs, the contents of which can be controlled by the latter. To do this, it has set up a network of business service centres and entrusted their administration to the farmers' organisations. It has thus put the RPOs into the position of supervising the support directed towards to them. In this way, the project guarantees the efficacy of the actions undertaken (support corresponding to the needs of the farmers' organisations).

Contrary to what is usually done, the project does not itself carry out the support identified as priority by the farmers' organisations, but endeavours to develop the local skills that the farmers' organisations need. In this way it is training a new body of management consultants (in a broad sense) and legal advisers, and also endeavouring to support its internal organisation. In this manner, the project guarantees the sustainability if the actions undertaken (the local human resources are in place to bring the necessary support to the farmers' organisations).

The stakes for the near future reside in the stabilisation of the human resources which are in the process of acquiring skills (through a realistic policy of controlling responsibilities), in the consolidation of these skills (setting up a system of adult training on a day-release, or other mixed work/study basis), and in the establishment of sustainable mechanisms of fund transfers to farmers' organisations (and adapted procedures). In combination, these factors can allow the support being given to the farmers' organisations of the zone at present to be sustained and developed.

CASE 2: SMALL FARM DEVELOPMENT AND LAND MANAGEMENT - NORTH CAMEROON¹¹ ***[DÉVELOPPEMENT PAYSANNAL ET GESTION DES TERROIRS (DPGT)]***

Localisation: North Cameroon

Scale of operation: Regional (about 1600 Village Associations of Cotton Producers)

Beneficiaries : groups of cotton producers (plus several groups of onion producers and livestock farmers)

General Objective: build up the capacities of farmers' organisations in order to improve their relations with the cotton company, and to facilitate the transfer of certain functions to the farmers' organisations.

Specific Objective: improve the internal working procedures of the farmers' organisations and to develop their regional organisation.

Project Activities: basic literacy, information and training, support in management, assistance in obtaining new statutes.

Supervised by: French Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI), and managed by SODECOTON

Donor: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) and AFD

Budget: 16.5 (1994-1998) and 7.5 million FF (1999-2001)

Context

The small farm development and land management *project* (*Projet de Développement Paysannal et Gestion des Terroirs, DPGT*) operates in the cotton zone of North Cameroon.

This zone of many contrasts has the following particular characteristics:

- chronically unstable food supplies principally due to unfavourable ecological conditions, especially in the extreme north;
- strong contrasts, as much in agro-climatology (soils, rainfall, choice of crop...) as in population (diversity in groups of people and population density)
- the importance of cross-border exchange;
- insecurity;
- a strong migration flux between the provinces of the Extreme North and those of the North,
- vigorous development of cotton cultivation (the surface cultivated doubled between 1993 and 1996, from 100 to 200,000 ha) bringing significant revenue to the producers;
- the increase in the number of types of grassroots farmers' organisations following the legal framework set up in the 1990s authorising freedom of association (nearly 2000 associations were registered in 1997 in the provinces of the North and Extreme North);
- the implementation of a structural adjustment plan at the same time with the aim of privatisation of the SODECOTON (planned since 1992-1993), which is a para-public company responsible for the supervision of cotton growing and for supporting regional development in general.

Institutional set up and project background

The DPGT project began in 1994. Its contracting authority is the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) and managed by the SODECOTON. The project is organised in four sections: «professionalisation of rural communities»; «fertility»; «animal technology»; and «land management», each part having its own director and personnel.

The «professionalisation» part of the project which is the subject of this case study is very important, and has about sixty people attributed to it. It is organised along the same lines as the

11. We thank André TEYSSIER (CIRAD) for his comments and useful suggestions on a previous draft of this case study.

SODECOTON, with, in addition to the project leader, a regional leader for each 'SODECOTON' region (a total of 8 regions), and 2 sector leaders per sector (for 3 to 5 sectors per region), each sector leader being responsible for 20 to 25 groups of producers.

Although the «professionalisation» section of the project is well integrated into the organisation of the SODECOTON, it also has a certain amount of autonomy. This is very relative however, since its orientation is subjected to the steering committee, of which the general management of the SODECOTON is a member. This section is the most sensitive part of the project, and all its actions are discussed beforehand with the general management, as much for the choice of activities as for managing its financial resources. While the other sections of the project are financed by the AFD, the "professionalisation" part has specific funding from the MAE. This has no practical implications for the autonomy of the section. It should be noted however, that the section's personnel is mostly made up of people who were previously employed by the SODECOTON in other services.

This "professionalisation" section is part of a much wider project (at a national scale) called "Assistance to the Strategies of Producers and to the Professionalisation of Agriculture" (ASPPA) of which it is the component No.1. The two other components of the ASPPA project are concerned with strengthening the rural producers' organisations (RPOs) in the 7 southern provinces where cocoa and coffee are produced (component No 2) and with the institutional reinforcement of the Agricultural Projects Division of the MINAGRI (component No. 3).

Objectives of the "professionalisation" section of the DPGT project

The general objective of the "professionalisation" section of the DPGT project is to build up the capacities of RPOs so that relations between them and the cotton company can be improved, and to facilitate the transfer of certain functions to the RPOs.

The specific objectives are stated in the project documents as being:

- to improve the internal working of the village groups, and to help them to take on more responsibilities and become more independent;
- to encourage the creation of other forms of associations, which would make it easier to distinguish between those of agricultural interest and those of a social or cultural nature;
- to incite the creation of a professional organisation for the management of farms and groups;
- to incite the creation of an independent organisation for representing the producers and promoting their interests.

The beneficiaries of the project

The main beneficiaries of the project are 1600 Village Associations of Producers (VAP) which were set up by the SODECOTON.

However, the project also supports other types of specialised organisation which are not related to cotton production. For example:

- Common Interest Groups (GIC) concerning onion production;
- groups concerned with collective cereal storage (cereal bank); this support is provided in the land management part of the project ;
- an association which unites many different water users (vegetable growers, fisherfolk and livestock farmers) within an agricultural water development plan concerning 54 villages (LM sub-section).

While those actions of the DPGT project aimed at the professionalisation of agriculture are mostly concerned with offering support to grassroots groups, support has also been given to a structure which represents producers, the Committee of Cameroonian Cotton Producers (*Comité des Producteurs de Coton du Cameroun, CPCC*), which has now become the Organisation of Cameroonian Cotton Producers (*Organisation des Producteurs de Coton du Cameroun, OPCC*).

The VAP

The functions of these producer groups are classical of RPOs related to a State managed main market sector. They share the work with SODECOTON by taking responsibility for managing inputs and credit, farm-gate cotton collection and monitoring agricultural production.

Farm-gate collection of cotton

A large part of the resources of the groups (20 à 25 %) comes from sales of cotton, paid by the SODECOTON. In 1996-1997, the total receipts of the groups related to this activity were over 700 million FCfa, with a profit of about 420.000 FCfa, or an average result of about 345.000 FCfa per group.

Monitoring agricultural production

Some of the groups (about 50%) called "Self-managed Groups" exercise technical responsibilities in the place of SODECOTON. In particular, they are in charge of managing agricultural inputs, monitoring statistics (cotton and intensive staple foods) and calculating the sums due to the farmers.

These functions generate important income for the groups (a total of 300 million FCfa, or about 200.000 FCfa per group) which represents on average nearly 30% of the total receipts.

Investment in local development

The functions of the VAP in the sub-region are not limited to technico-economic activities related to cotton production however. The collective resources generated through cotton (in 1997, the value of the groups' assets was 1.6 billion FCfa, or an average of 1.1 million FCfa per group) serve in financing economic activities in other sectors (food storage, digging watering places for livestock, etc) and activities of general interest (creation of social infrastructures such as schools and health clinics, and covering their running costs). This diversification of function is typical of situations where there is a shortage of public and private services. The SODECOTON finds this regrettable, and encourages the groups to direct their investments uniquely towards productive schemes.

The Committee of Cameroonian Cotton Producers

For several years, two producers have had seats on the executive board of SODECOTON. Elections were organised by the project to improve the legitimacy of this representation of producers (indirect voting at several levels from the zone up to the regional level) and a Cameroonian Cotton Producers' Committee (*Comité des Producteurs de Coton du Cameroun, CPCC*) was created, but it still had a relatively informal status. To remedy this situation, the CPCC was replaced in June 2000 by the Organisation of Cameroonian Cotton Producers (*Organisation des producteurs de coton du Cameroun, OPCC*), which has the legally recognised status of an Economic Interest Group (GIE).

This committee had up till then carried out the following functions:

- participation in fixing the sale price of cotton, and the prices of inputs;
- participation in preparing the agricultural season;
- preparation to enter into the capital of the SODECOTON (creation of a savings fund and paying for a study to determine the modalities of this investment);
- participation in the steering committee of the project.

Its function was therefore essentially one of representing the producers in SODECOTON, and the producers' representatives participated in many meetings with this company.

It should be noted however that the CPCC took the initiative to negotiate directly with the State to ask for a reduction of the State export tax and achieved gain of cause (taxes reduced by 10 to 13%), so permitting a rise in the price paid to the producer. The committee also planned to play a role in training and informing producers.

The OPCC is directed by a national board, elected for three years. Since its creation in June 2000, 1552 cotton producer groups have applied for membership of the secondary level organisation. New applications are sent directly to the OPCC.

The functions of the OPCC are considerably broader than those of the earlier organisation. These functions cover:

- managing input orders,
- managing cattle-cake sales;
- an attempt to pay for the village activity coordinator
- representation and defending the interests of producers, through helping in elections and assisting organisation at different levels,
- supporting activities at various levels,
- supporting RPOs in management control.

The representatives of the OPCC are elected according to a regional grid laid out by the cotton development company. As from the third trimester of 2000, they have benefited from training in: the cotton sector, legislation concerning producer associations, the organisation of SODECOTON, and reflection on how the groups operate.

Recent evaluations and opposition of the financial donor (AFD) to the implication of the OPCC in certain functions (management control, which ought to be attributed to private structures whose relations to the OPCC are not yet defined) have set in motion a process of internal debate which should lead to refocusing the functions on information, communication and representation.

Project Activities

Two types of activity are carried out through the section "professionalisation" of the DPGT project:

- assistance to grassroots groups;
- support to their organisation at higher levels (CPCC).

Assistance to grassroots groups

Support to grassroots groups is given along four main themes:

- group organisation
- literacy
- information
- accounts management

Support to group organisation

Three types of action have been undertaken:

- assistance to the VAP (and a few other groups unrelated to the SODECOTON) in acquiring new legal statutes; this assistance consisted of informing the groups about the advantages associated with the statute of GIC, and of helping them to draw up their statutes during the General Assembly (production of a guide in the form of questions and answers, and leading meetings);
- assistance in the election of a committee director for the GIC by helping to define the skills profiles of the executive, and in the organisation of transparent elections;
- support to setting up and running an enlarged board for the management of credit. This concerned helping to set up a system of joint guarantees (initiated by the SODECOTON) on two levels, calling on circles of joint guarantors with an average of about 15 people, in addition to the RPO; the enlarged board was made up of the executives of each circle and the RPO committee director.

Literacy

Intensive Fulfulde literacy courses (45 days) are organised each year. The system used is classical: the village centres (makeshift shelters put up by the villagers) are opened (269 in 1997) according to demand; the training of village literacy trainers is undertaken and partly paid for (75%) by the project; and those attending the courses are given an allowance (500 FCfa per day).

In 1997, more than 8,000 people, that is one in a hundred producers, thus received an essential base in reading, writing an arithmetic.

Since then these efforts have been continued and the results in terms of impact and sustainability being felt. The participation of the leaders and the circle leaders is very high (between 10-15% of those attending in different years) and it is remarkable among young people and women (about 55% of those following the course in 1999 were less than 25 years old, and between 1999 and 2000 the number of women participating tripled). The literacy campaigns of the short Fulfulde course aimed at a public literate in French have also been successful, with 85 centres in operation between 1996 and 2000 for more than 2700 participants and a pass rate of 62%.

The literacy activity has reached about 10% of the cotton farmers who are members of GIC, a figure influenced by the fact that not many adults of over 30 years old become members. In most situations, literacy is a factor of emancipation and assertion, and the payment of the salaries of the trainers by the groups and the inscription charge of 500FCfa per member have not been a problem. These are good signs that the system is sustainable.

In addition, during the campaign of 2000-2001, 683 out of 1,013 farmer candidates were accepted as literacy monitors in the 28 training centres, and almost 11,000 people followed the literacy courses in 446 centres, with a pass rate of 45% for those people who completed the course.

The role of the project was to design a system and to adapt the course materials. The project also supervises the literacy centres.

Information and training

The project regularly publishes two rural newspapers, one in French, the other in the local language. They provide information on a wide variety of technical (e.g. manure, soil conservation) and economic (e.g. savings and loans banks) subjects, as well as more general news (privatisation of the SODECOTON for instance).

The head of the "professionalisation" section of the project is also responsible for the production of the newspaper, and this person writes all the articles. Note that the producer groups subscribe automatically to the French edition through a deduction made by the SODECOTON from the groups' capital resources. The accessibility of this newspaper to the greatest number is controlled by panels of readers.

The project has also used the radio as a medium of communication (market prices for onions for example), but has ceased to do so for several cropping seasons following a resolution of the Steering Committee to refocus the professionalisation section on the cotton producers' groups.

Concerning training in the strict sense, literacy apart, the project has achieved little apart from training teams of buyers and the agents for monitoring the groups.

Support to accounting and finance management

The movement of money on the groups' accounts concerns large sums, due to the diversity of the economic and social activities undertaken. Good accounting of purchases and sales is therefore primordial if the groups are to survive and develop.

At the beginning of the project, the SODECOTON had a central and directive role in the management of the groups. Its role as safe deposit for the financial liquidity of the groups is still justified because there are no banks in the region (recent savings and loans banks, with small geographical cover). The regional coordinators check the solvency of the group account and the manner in which the decision to make an outlay has been taken. This situation confers significant autonomy of management to the groups, since before 1994, even the permission of the *sous-préfet*¹² was necessary for the groups to be allowed to engage in expenditure.

¹² *Sous-préfet*: government official responsible for the administration of a sous-préfecture, usually including many villages and several medium sized towns.

The "professionalisation" section seeks to make the groups more autonomous and responsible for management, but in a very partial way. Its action is in fact limited at present to the following points:

- returning and commenting on the monthly bank statements at the level of the enlarged board of each group;
- modification of the procedures used by the groups to mobilise their own funds, with the suppression in particular of the prior agreement of the SODECOTON when the group account is in credit and the procedure is conform (validity of the signatures);
- and introduction of petty cash for each group in order to make the management of routine running costs more flexible.

In fact, the project's approach can be qualified as participatory in the sense that their agents on the ground avoid imposing their solutions on the producers, which is the sign of an important break with the supervision practised by SODECOTON, which is undeniably directive. To go from a statute of 'supervisor' to one of 'activity leader' has needed a praiseworthy effort of conversion on the part of the projects agents, about 50% of whom came from the SODECOTON.

At the same time, the approach of the project can be described as 'classic' in that the work themes are defined and implemented by the project section itself, without drawing in the 'beneficiary' RPOs or the other organisations working in the zone.

Support to the organisation representing producers

The DPGT project has contributed to the creation of the CCPC and continues to support it. The project has organised several study trips to the Centre and South of the country and West Africa (Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal) for the CCPC delegates and has contributed to workshops organised by the SODECOTON after the elections of representatives. This support remains very unfocused however.

Project Impacts

Greater control of the organisations by the membership

The most significant impact of the section "professionalisation" of the DPGT project is to have allowed the members to take greater control of the grassroots organisations.

By supporting over 450 village associations in obtaining new statutes (about a hundred more have deposited applications with the State authorities and are waiting for registration), the project has played a strong organisational role. It has stimulated much collective discussion in each group with the aim of redefining their objectives, ways of operating, the choice of leaders, ways in which decisions are taken, etc. This examination of the RPOs in General Assemblies has permitted, in a large number of cases, the RPO to be reconstituted (splitting from the VAP and creation of smaller CIGs) with the members gaining greater control of the RPOs. In particular, by ensuring that all paid up members figure on the list of members, the executive boards have been rejuvenated and educated people have appeared in the decision-making positions, and not only in sub-ordinate posts (secretariat). In fact, far from being a simple administrative formality permitting the VAP to align themselves with the new legislation, the process of acquiring new legal statutes has been an excellent tool for reorganising the RPOs, and has been skilfully used as such by the project.

In addition, returning the accounts of the groups in the general assembly means that the accounts are now much better known and understood by a greater number of people in the groups. It follows that there is greater transparency in the management of the RPOs and certain taboo subjects such as embezzlement or excessive withdrawals on the part of the director or agents of the SODECOTON are now discussed openly in public meetings.

Finally, the system set up for managing loans (board enlarged to include the representatives of joint guarantors) has improved the circulation of information within the grassroots organisations and allowed a greater number of members to access the decision-making bodies.

More information about the SODECOTON available to the producers

By using the newspapers, the project has helped circulate information of a technical and economic nature, which had been greatly appreciated by the producers. It has also contributed to revealing lifting the "secrets of the SODECOTON". In particular, the main problems surrounding the privatisation of the company are now well understood by many of the producers. Since understanding the other side is an indispensable prerequisite to balanced dialogue, the project has contributed to establishing a healthy base on which a future partnership may be built.

Difficulties encountered and lessons learned

A support to producers which has not yet prepared its departure.

While the results of the project are indisputable, there is no guarantee that the support given by the project will be sustained when the project ends. The project must now prepare for its withdrawal, so that those of its functions that are apparently necessary on a permanent basis may be continued.

For the moment, only the "literacy" function is apparently run with the concern that the service be maintained after the project's departure. This is at least the case in terms of human resources (training village literacy workers) but not in financial terms (the literacy training is paid for in a large part by the project).

In contrast, the essential working operations, which have a permanent nature, such as management support and information to the producers, are not at all being run in a way that would ensure their continuity even in terms of human resources. In fact, it is the project activity leaders who do everything. In particular, they distribute the monthly accounts' statements to the groups, and it is hard to see how this could be continued in their absence. The durability of the accounting is therefore not guaranteed. The same is true for the diffusion of information via the newspaper "the small farmer", which is written by the head of the "professionalisation" component.

In order to ensure that these actions will be continued the project is counting on the second phase – which ends in less than a year – in which the human resources of the project are redeployed to different independent services. In practice however, the redeployment of personnel is always difficult because salary levels (and means) are likely to be lower in the public or private support organisations (managed by an RPO or fully private). It is undeniably one of the weak points of the "professionalisation" component of the project.

Devoting efforts at the start of a project to assisting the establishment of independent organisations that support RPOs certainly slows down the appearance of impacts in the short term (the impacts of the present project are undeniable), but it offers a better guarantee of durability. This was not a priority at the time the project was designed (1992) nor was it part of the SODECOTON's way of working. It remains to be seen whether the system that has been set up in the southern provinces within the framework of the other part of the ASPPA project, and elsewhere in the sub-region (for example in the Niger Office zone, Mali), could have been envisaged in the context of North Cameroon, which is characterised by a strong presence of the SODECOTON.

An institutional base which permitted the project to move ahead quickly, even though improvements are desirable. The fact that the project is rooted within the SODECOTON presents several advantages. Apart from a rapid start to activities and access to the farmers' groups, it has been especially useful in weakening the resistance of the agents and the institution as such concerning the project. It has also allowed it to make important changes to the SODECOTON's methods of supporting RPOs. This would not have been possible if the project had been working outside the institutional framework of the SODECOTON.

Against this, there are a number of inconveniences to being part of the institution. The project has in particular an ambiguous image, in the eyes of the producers and the other organisations which are active in the zone. This is not helped by the fact that most of the project's activity coordinators are ex-SODECOTON supervisors and are still labelled as such. This situation can bring problems to the activity coordinators, all the more so since the work falling to the them goes a long way

beyond their initial abilities (the work of an "activity coordinator" is fundamentally different from that of the monitoring done by a "supervisor", as much in content as in the methods employed).

The identity problem is the same for the organisation representing the cotton producers, which has its office in the SODECOTON buildings. While this location makes communication easier, it also brings problems in that it does not send out the message that it is in fact independent of the SODECOTON.

Conclusion

The support to the RPOs presented here is a component of a more general project to support regional development, with the accent on the cotton sector. It is also part of a national project to promote the professionalisation of the RPOs (ASPPA project) which intervenes in other provinces of the country and as an institutional support to the State, while its implementation is independent and in close liaison with the DPGT project.

The project is thus an interesting attempt at making an RPO support programme more independent in a zone that is highly structured by a State company. It is also significant in its attempts to co-ordinate support actions to RPOs at different levels (regional and national). It brings to light the difficulties associated with converting human public resources (agents of the State services) to new functions to build up the capacities of the RPOs so that they control their environment better and become more autonomous and aware of their responsibilities. It also reveals the difficulties inherent in setting up a support system which will produce these results, whilst seeking to manage a smooth transition in the context of a very partial and slow withdrawal of the State.

CASE 3: RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR SOUTH-WEST MADAGASCAR (SWP)¹³

Location : Tulear Region of Madagascar

Scale of operation: Regional (320.000 inhabitants with about 1.500 formal farmers' organisations)

Farmers' organisations supported : *Maison des Paysans (MdP)* in South-West Madagascar

Project objectives:

- build up the technical, economical and institutional capacities of all the stakeholders in the agricultural sector in order to increase production, improve incomes and better manage the resources of the area;
- improve coordination, collaboration and synergy between the farmers and the other actors (public and private) in development.

Project activities: The development and distribution of technical innovations, information on prices, market, sectors, literacy, support in running the structures representing producers and in running a centre to coordinate the work of different stakeholders.

Supervised by: *Comité Régional d'Orientation et de Suivi (CROS)* as Regional Guidance and Monitoring Committee

Donor: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) and the Madagascar Government:

Budget: Phase 1 : 25 million FF (1994-1999) ; phase 2 : 8 million FF (1999-2002)

Operators: CIRAD and AFDI and direct technical assistance from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

13. We thank Dominique Rollin (CIRAD) and Olivier Parat for the comments and complements provided to a previous draft of this case study.

Context

South-west Madagascar, the zone in which the SWP operates, is considered to be the most difficult region in Madagascar. Its drawbacks include:

- isolation from the capital, more than 1000km away;
- lack of social infrastructure, especially in education, with 70 to 95% illiteracy according to age group;
- a limiting physical environment (high climatic risks and soils prone to erosion);
- a population composed of an ethnic mosaic, following large population migration from other regions;
- extremely low private investment;
- a weak presence of the State technical services (for example, only one researcher at the start of the project);
- a degree of organisation among the producers considered low despite the presence of over 1,500 rural producers' organisations (RPOs, of which 1,000 cotton producers' organisations).

The South-West has never been a priority development zone and has been neglected for a long time. From this point of view, nothing much has changed with the disengagement of the government agencies, except that the decentralisation which accompanies it ought to permit producers to make themselves heard better. The *PADR (Plan d'Action pour le Développement Rural)* process, supported by the main international donors and the installation of the *GTDR (Groupe de travail pour le développement rural)* on the regional level, presents an institutional framework that should permit the definition of a concerted development strategy. The GTDR is made up of 5 colleges (administration, territorial organisations, economic operators, producers' organisations and NGO / projects).

Institutional set up and project objectives

The SWP was set up in 1994 for an initial phase of 4 years. A second phase is still running. It is financed by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The project has two components, one agronomic, and the other directed to the organisation of the rural community. These express the twofold objective of the SWP, which is:

- to protect the natural resources and promote crop diversification;
- to improve organisation and professionalism in the rural community.

The project is implemented by two expatriate technical assistants of the MAE, with the collaboration of two operators, the CIRAD for the first component, and the AFDI for the second.

The "beneficiaries" of the project

The SWP supports the operation of two structures:

- one, the "*Maison des Paysans*" (*MdP*, "Farmers' House") is a structure which represents the producers;
- the other, the *Comité Régional d'Orientation et de Suivi (CROS, Regional Guidance and Monitoring Committee)* is a structure for dialogue between different actors.

The "*Maison des Paysans*"

The *Maison des Paysans* is a small farmers' organisation (with the statute of an association) which came into being in 1998. It followed the implantation of the CROS, in which the producers' representatives (6) who participated in it felt cramped next to the other actors in development (administrations, economic operators, projects, local communities, etc.) and felt the need to establish their own legitimacy through a broader based representation.

The MdP has fixed set itself two broad groups of objectives:

- to encourage producers to talk together to share their experiences and to present a common opinion on decisions concerning agricultural development in the region;
- to respond to the needs of the producers (activities, advice/information, on-farm experimentation, etc.).

It has therefore two simultaneous profiles: an organisation of representing the producers, and an organisation offering services to them.

To reach these objectives, the MdP is organised at several levels. The regional level is composed of: a general assembly of 34 members divided into 7 colleges according to the main sectors (rice, cotton, peanuts, etc.), 7 commissions which work on cross-disciplinary problems (training/information, land tenure, protection from petty criminality, funding, etc.), a board of governors (11 people) and an executive committee (4 people). Local (municipal) representatives have also been put in place.

Today, the MdP and its local representatives constitute a network of 250 elected small farmers, representing 29 districts. Its membership on the ground is either individuals or groups of producers (290 groups were paid up members on the 31/12/2001)

Two levels of organisation exist between the group members and the regional MdP. These are the MdP of the 5 zones (inter-communal¹⁴ groups at the level of the sous-prefecture¹⁵) and the progressive structuring of the communal MdP (6 have been formalised). These entities adopt statutes and operate with a general assembly and a board of governors.

Its budget is constituted of membership subscriptions and financial support coming mainly from the SWP (which manages the funds). Since 2000, the MdP has had a separate account and a budget calculated by the director and the board, which is voted at the general assembly. The director and the board make sure that the budget is adhered to, aided by expatriate technical support.

In order to carry out its programme, the MdP acts, either through its team of 15 agents (mostly ex-agents of the SWP engaged as salaried employees of the MdP in Novembre 1999), or by entering into a contract with service centres for actions such as literacy, socio-economic or agro-economic studies, information management or seed production. Several service centres have been created with the assistance from the SWP.

The CROS and the GTDR

The CROS was set up in 1994 by the SWP in order to supervise the project. Its creation thus preceded that of the MdP. The CROS, presided by a farmer, is composed of 5 colleges representing the different types of actors in the zone.

Conceived in the first instance for steering the project, it set in motion a dynamic of regional dialogue within the colleges that has served as a reference for setting up GTDRs in all regions of Madagascar.

The CROS is maintained for its primary function of steering the SWP. The initiatives taken through the MdP or directly by the project work towards the consolidation of the GTDR. This development has permitted closer relationships with the programmes envisaged by other donors (PSDR World bank, 9th FED, AFD rural paths and agro-ecology...). The MdP has several seats in the college of producer organisations of the GTDR.

Project activities

Half way through its second phase, the SWP no longer has its own activities within the project. The project has taken the role of provider of financial support and technical assistance to the structures it helped set up. The means to act are now concentrated at the level of the MdP.

Among the actions initiated within the framework of the PSO, it is possible to distinguish the following.

14 The commune is the smallest administrative unit in the French administration system, consisting of at least one village and having its own elected mayor and town council.

15 The sous-prefecture is a unit of territory made up of several villages or small towns, administered by a sous-prefect, a position attributed directly by the government.

Technico-economic experiments and follow-up for a network of farmers

Many experiments (about 100 per year) have been conducted on various themes: development of cropping systems using direct drilling and permanent cover, development of a system of producing Cape pea seeds, development of a system of supplying inputs, etc. A network of small farmers is also followed (notably for keeping a cash book) with the aim of stimulating the socio-economic debates.

Training / Information

A system of providing information on prices (SIP) has been set up (prices on the local and international markets, and to exporters) and the results are sent out in different forms (posters on billboards, and radio programmes). A newsletter is also produced (300 copies).

Training programmes have also been organised at the level of the rural producers' organisations (RPOs) on provisional marketing management and on the analysis of the commodity channels. These activities have been regrouped and developed by a regional service of the MdP called the Sectors' Monitor of South-West Madagascar (L'observatoire des filières du Sud Ouest Malgache, OFISOM)

Finally, fifty working literacy centres have been created and a network of 90 village literacy teachers, trained by the APEL company, is now operational.

Organisation of communication between small farmers, and between small farmers and other stakeholders

Many discussions between small farmers have been organised, as well as many meetings for dialogue between stakeholders within the framework of the CROS and the GTDR today.

Analysis of project impacts

Since the project has not been evaluated with the aim of determining its impact in terms of increasing the incomes of the producers or natural resources management, we can only attempt to assess how the farmers have taken up responsibilities and how the actions started can be sustained.

Implicating the producers in the control of the project

Through the CROS, where they are represented (and preside the meetings), the producers endeavour to participate in the supervision of the project. Within the many commissions that have been set up, they are gradually forming a more concrete vision of their problems, and on this basis are learning to formulate solutions and to dialogue with the other actors within the framework of the GTDR.

However, this does not change the fact that they still have little power to alter the course of the project. In fact, on the sole basis of the written record, it is not possible to clearly distinguish between those decisions taken by the CROS which were prompted by an initiative of the project, of the farmers themselves, or of the other actors. However, it is clear that certain actions undertaken correspond to external choices. This is typically the case of the study of farm management or of the experimentation on cover plants for example.

The creation of the MdP ought to allow the producers to strengthen their position within the CROS GTDR, an organisation which envisages taking on the function of a regional development committee, on condition that the people who run this organisation of farmer representation are not judge and defendant, and that, on the contrary, they are independent of the SWP (which is not the case at the moment) and of all other development projects in the region. This is obviously also on condition that the CROS is consulted by the donors at the conception stage of projects or that the projects implemented are more open-ended (without predetermined actions). The stakes today are no longer situated at the level of the CROS but rather at the level of the GTDR.

The MdP must also gain its independence by managing its own budget (own financial resources and subsidies) and by recruiting the expertise that it is lacking at present in order to carry out the functions it has given itself. In using its own personnel to carry out the secretariat and to manage the funds (which it alone makes available to the MdP), the SWP is not working towards the autonomy of this organisation. The initiatives taken since 2000 are moving in this direction. The SWP attributes an annual subsidy towards a budget that is defined in meetings between the director and the board, and voted in the general assembly.

Sub-contracting certain tasks to specialised services

One of the strengths of the project is to have encouraged the implantation of specialised services (public or private), and assisted their becoming professional (skills acquisition). They did this by entrusting certain actions to them, especially working literacy (APEL), on-farm experimentation (creation of a sub-branch of the NGO TAFA in the southwest) and the production of improved seed (Tahirisoa). This way of working is a guarantee for the sustainability of the actions started, providing that the economic survival of these service suppliers is not too closely tied to that of the project. This does not seem to be the case, since they have contracts with other partners in development working in the region also.

Encouraging the establishment of contracts between farmers and private operators

The other strength of the project is that of having encouraged the installation of private operators for certain central functions such as the supply of bought inputs. Several shops selling farm inputs have opened with the aid of subsidies from the project in the form of working capital so that the RPOs – while handing over this function - still keep a certain control over it (through the prior agreement as to the location of the shop and the choice of manager).

This support to the development of a private sector in the strict sense offers to producers an alternative to collectively taking over certain functions themselves. It was in fact the producers who expressed their preference for a private shop rather than a village cooperative shop, as was planned in the initial feasibility study.

Difficulties encountered: lessons and perspectives

Difficult collaboration between two operators with different cultures

The SWP has attempted to make the technical and organisational actions convergent. However, the distribution of tasks within the project between technical (agronomy and natural resources management) and organisational (organising the farmers and co-ordinating the different actors) and their implementation by two different operators (CIRAD and AFDI) did not facilitate the integration of these two components.

In the first phase, it seems that the two operators had difficulty co-ordinating their actions. These difficulties are due essentially to differences in approach. The approach of CIRAD was based on the production of information, essentially of a technical nature, via the agricultural experiments and the farm management study. The AFDI on the other hand bases its operations exclusively on the sharing of experiences between RPOs. The collaboration progressed favourably after the mid-course evaluation in 1997, and the expatriate technical assistance of the MAE was able, while respecting the identity of each actor, to steer a team towards common objectives.

Confusion between concepts

The analysis of different documents related to the project shows that neither the project initiators, nor the operators, nor the local structures put into place (*Maison des Paysans et CROS*) have a clear perception of the following roles: overall responsibility for the projects, coordination of rural development and producer representation. This confusion between the different role persists, although it is tending to diminish in time.

While a steering committee must concern itself with the coordination of the project actions and those of other operators in its zone, it seems illusory to wish it play a larger role in the orientation of rural development, as had been evoked in the financial convention.

Such a role can be played by a structure that is independent of all projects in the sector and over a limited area. If the SWP wishes assist such a structure (initially CROS and now the regional development committee), it must, so as not to be both judge and party, abandon its other functions in order to consecrate itself entirely to this task. The institutional choices made by the Madagascar government in the framework of the PADR with the creation of the GTDR clarify the situation.

So that the producers keep control of the process of dialogue, it appears desirable that the MdP retain the initiative to invite the other actors to come to talk with them about specific or cross-sector subjects. In other words, the MdP should create a 'development' commission within its own organisation, bringing together all the actors. Compared with a specific coordination structure, this set up would have the advantage of allowing producers to prepare themselves for discussion (by analysing the subject to be treated, and formulating proposals prior to the commission meeting), to alter the balance of power between actors, and to protect the producers from being silenced by the strength of the actors' propositions. The MdP has prepared for this by instituting biannual sessions, two of which have been programmed so far. Increased solicitation to dialogue and the many meetings related to setting up the GTDR mean that participants have had about as much as they can take of formal discussions. The MdP has therefore preferred bilateral contacts with different actors in regional development in order to strengthen its partnerships.

A project supporting individual producers and RPOs

The project works at different levels above and below the RPOs. It brings assistance to:

- individual producers (working literacy, information);
- grass-roots RPOs and their representation, MdP;
- and the environment of the RPOs and the producers (operators further up and further down the sector, specialised service providers, organisation of the coordination between actors)

This action at different levels is based on the principle that agricultural development can only take place if the capacities of all the actors are strengthened, not only those of the RPOs.

At first, the actions led by the project towards the RPOs for strengthening their capacities were relatively ill defined and indirect. The project placed an RPO, *la Maison des Paysans*, at the core of its operations. However, when one looks at the actions undertaken, the impression is given that the MdP, and through it the SWP, has given greater importance to leading actions to strengthen the capacities of other actors, than on those directed towards the grass-roots RPOs.

This was especially true while the implantation of the MdP was relatively undefined, particularly at the level of the local sub-branches. With the system of membership and subscriptions that has been in place since 2000, the position of the MdP obliges it to take account of the concrete expectations of the member groups.

In other respects, it seems that the SWP gives greater priority to the improvement of the technical performance of the producers than to their organisational abilities. In other words, the MdP appears more as a tool for agricultural extension work (intermediary for distributing technical information) than as a tool for organising the producers. One of the action priorities which was restated during the two last general assemblies concerns the will to improve the marketing of produce. Important human and financial means have been mobilised (even outside the SWP) to accompany the groups and unions of groups in their collective experiments aimed at improving marketing: storage depot, assistance to formalising the cooperative (new statutes, entering into contracts with the economic operators...

Partial sustainability of the organisations

During the first phase, the autonomy of the structures was doubtful, particularly in relation to the sustainability of the set up.

Indeed, both the structure for producer representation (*Maison des Paysans*) and that for dialogue between actors (CROS) put into place by the project appeared to lack the degree of autonomy which would guarantee their sustainability. The personnel of the SWP are too strongly implicated in the workings of both structures (secretariat, management and activities) for them to be able to continue their functions after the project ends. With the GTDR, the CROS no longer has any reason to seek sustainability after the SWP is closed.

Besides, the autonomy of these structures (particularly that of the *Maison des Paysans*) depends on training their executives and if necessary, integrating complementary skills (salaried employment or occasional service) for which it pays and thus control the work done. It also depends on becoming autonomous for financial management, rather than having the financial aid co-managed, which most often leads to the producers being unable to control the actions undertaken.

Action has been taken to remedy this dependence and to put the actors firmly on the road to autonomy and sustainability. The MdP is now relatively autonomous for managing its finances. Through its system of operation (15 agents) it also has a supervisory capacity and experience of contractual arrangements with specialised services in the fields of expertise corresponding to the needs of the member groups. The capacity to mobilise its own funds to cover its running costs remains a weak point. For the moment, its durability depends on the diversification of its financial partners. In this respect, serious prospects permit the vision that the MdP has made for itself to be consolidated over the next three years. It will be able to continue after the close of the SWP planned for the end of 2002. The most promising application is that which has been made to the European Commission for co-funding MdP/AFDI food security. It will also be necessary to make good use of the opportunities offered through the programmes of the 9th FED (Tulear is part of the focus zone), the national extension project on agro-ecological methods AFD-CIRAD-GSDM, the FAO / PNUD programme to reduce poverty and to promote sustainable livelihoods, and of course the PSDR of the World Bank.

Conclusions

Initially conceived as a classical agricultural development project (adaptation of innovations, training, distribution of information, etc.), the SWP is seeking to gradually place a organisation for representing producers at the core of its operation system.

This case study shows up the difficulties encountered in rebuilding a project of this type so that the farmers can take more control of agricultural development in the region. The solution depends on the implementation of a specific programme, independent of the SWP, with the sole objective to support the operation of the *Maison des Paysans* (setting up sustainable mechanisms for financing, management training, assistance for drawing up and implementing a plan of action, etc.). A national project already exists, the *Programme de Professionnalisation de l'Agriculture (PPdA)*, which also financed by the MAE, which could take over from the SWP at this level.

CASE 4: PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT TO PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND SECTORAL DIALOGUE IN AGRICULTURE (POPA- ACSA)¹⁶ - COTE D'IVOIRE

Localisation: Côte d'Ivoire

Scale of intervention: National

Beneficiaries : The National Association of Professional Agricultural Organisations (*Association Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire, ANOPACI*) bringing together 12 RPOs; with a combined membership of about 200,000 farmers, growers and livestock farmers.

General objective: (i) Strengthen the RPOs capacities of intervention and strategic planning (ii) stimulate a process of balanced and institutionalised negotiation and dialogue that will permit the producers and public authorities to jointly draft and steer national agricultural policy.

Specific target: promote the emergence of an independent national structure and of regional federations of the professional RPOs capable of defending the interests of Ivorian farmers.

Project activities: (i) facilitate contacts between the RPOs, (ii) training – information for the leaders, (iii) foster strategic planning within the RPOs, (iv) build up the capacities of the ANOPACI to make decisions and to run itself independently (subsidies for running costs, investment and local strategic advice).

Supervisor: Ivorian Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRA)

Donor: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministère Français des Affaires Etrangères, MAE*)

Budget: 8 million FF for the RPO support programme (1995-2000) and 10 million FF for the programme supporting the agricultural sectorial dialogue (2001-2003).

Operators: Direct technical assistance from the MAE in partnership with the French Agricultural Profession and the AFDI - *Association des Agriculteurs français pour le Développement international* (Association of French Farmers for International Development) – which supports grassroots producer groups.

Context

After an accelerated growth period in the 15 years following independence (7% per year), and a recession in the 1980s, Côte d'Ivoire has been in a profound economic and social crisis since the 1990s. This crisis has been aggravated by the price slumps in export products, especially for coffee-cocoa, which represented 60% of the export revenues and 30% of the gross domestic product.

The search for a solution to this crisis has led the Ivorian government, under pressure from its main donors, to take the following measures:

- disengagement of the state from its functions in production, handing over to private operators, and liberalisation of all the sectors (privatisation, removal of the marketing boards - "*caisses de stabilisation*", price freedom, dismantling the extension services);
- acceleration of the process of decentralisation and devolution of state-run services;
- and opening up the markets (WTO and WAEMU agreements)

These measures have had different consequences according to sector (rising or falling price trends for the products on the international market), and according to the degree of organisation of the producers:

- the drop in domestic prices after Ivorian products were put into the context of international market competition compromised the viability of certain sectors. For example, pork imports from Europe pushed down the price per kilo from 800-900 FCfa to 500-600 FCfa in 1999 when the pig farmers had just suffered (1996-1997) the effects of an important epidemic of swine fever ;

16. We thank Philippe Rémy (MAE), Christian Huet (MAE), Bruno Losch (CIRAD) and Olivier Durand (MAE) for their comments and suggestions on previous drafts.

– the privatisation of the sectors has had different consequences according to the degree to which the producers were organised and according to their position in the market. The cotton producers' organisations, for example, are highly structured (a single blanket organisation) and supply 85% of the national production. They have kept strong negotiating power against the ginners for fixing the price of cotton/seed. It is another story entirely for the organisations of coffee-cocoa producers which market only 20% of the production, or the organisations of sheep farmers that control only 5% of the production, and therefore are lightweights against the exporters.

The project beneficiaries

The RPO associations programme (POPA) supports a national body representing the producers, the Association Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire (ANOPACI, National Association of Professional Agricultural Organisations), which it helped to create in 1994 by bringing together 17 existing organisations.

Officially recognised in 1998, the ANOPACI now unites 12 producers' organisations from different sectors (livestock rearing, coffee-cocoa, pineapple-banana, oil palm, cotton, rubber etc.) and a national federation of savings and loans cooperatives (FENACOPEC).

These organisations are of various sizes: the Regional Union of Cooperative Enterprises in the Savannah zone (*Union Régionale des Entreprises Coopératives de la zone des Savanes, URECOS-CI*), for example, has 128,000 members and covers the whole of the cotton-producing zone, whereas the Ivorian Poultry Farmers' Union (*Union des Aviculteurs de Côte d'Ivoire, UACI*) has only 800 individual members.

The functions of the ANOPACI include representation, training-information and defending the interests of the producers:

- it represents their interests on cross-cutting issues and has put thematic working committees into place (training – advice – information, agricultural taxation system, animal husbandry, etc.). It has for example been called upon by the MINAGRA to participate in the discussions on the creation of a system for financing agricultural research and extension work;
- it distributes a newsletter entitled 'Le Professionnel agricole', printed in 5,000 copies, and has organised several study trips for the leaders of the member RPOs.

The ANOPACI is however confronted with various difficulties that the project intends to resolve, including:

- insufficient manpower for managing the cross-cutting technical issues;
- inadequate implantation of certain member RPOs in their sector, which results in a feeble capacity of intervention (the case of food crops and coffee-cocoa);
- a lack of communication between the ANOPACI and its members about its effective role, which results in the leaders of certain RPOs often taking little part in it;
- a weak organisational structure of certain member RPOs.

Project activities

Supporting the creation and the running of a national body for representing producers and for supplying services to the RPOs

The first activity of the project was to put the main RPOs of the country into contact with each other (regional federations or RPOs at a more local level), intervening in different production sectors, in order to help them organise themselves at a national level. This work gave rise to the creation of the ANOPACI.

The project then assisted this body in acquiring a 'strategic platform' and a development plan fixing the targets for the period (1999-2000).

It was accorded a total subsidy of nearly 170 million FCfa for putting this plan into action, attributed as a complement to the association's own funds (members' subscriptions and fees for services). These are modest - about 12 million FCfa in 1999.

These subsidies go towards financing:

- investment in the structure and its running costs;
- the publication of the 'Le professionnel agricole' newsletter;
- the actions undertaken for training the leaders of the ANOPACI (on how to organise and run a RPO);
- training the RPO members (organising a general assembly, information seminar);
- diverse studies (on financing livestock farmers RPOs, on setting up a databank on services providing training-advice to RPOs, etc.). A specialist consultant on agricultural financing has been put at the disposal of the ANOPACI to carry out a study intended as support material for reflection on the theme of agricultural financing.

Reinforcing the organisation of the grassroots RPOs

The POPA has begun supporting the grassroots RPOs that are in the gestation or consolidation phase and which are tied to the ANOPACI. This activity has led to the appearance of new RPO associations and the consolidation of local RPOs. For example, the creation of a collective of livestock farmers at the regional level (COLOPEC) bringing together 7 specialised associations (pigs, sheep, poultry, cattle, etc.).

Establishing a space for dialogue between the RPOs and other actors (thematic committees with equal representation)

Like any development programme, a steering committee has been set up for the POPA. It is, however, original in that it has enabled the various partners in development (especially donors of bilateral and multilateral funds, the RPOs and the civil services) to be strategically drawn together in regular discussions. It has led to the establishment of real spaces for dialogue and negotiation between the State and the Agricultural Profession.

Mediation between the support operators working in the agricultural sector

The programme has played the role of intermediary between the various actors in the agricultural sector who are implied in the process of 'professionalisation' (training centres, ANADER...). These exchanges have enabled bridges to be built and shown concretely the implications of this approach.

Development of the tools and training in management advice for farmers

The POPA has set up a training programme on farm management advice aimed at producers and adapted to the Ivorian situation; it has called upon various different bodies (NGOs, consulting firms and ANADER) to participate. The initial results from this initiative are arousing the interest of the producers because they provide them with an effective tool to help them to make decisions, while at the same time giving the RPO associations valuable technico-economic references for negotiating with the other actors in the agricultural sector. Adding to this, the few farmers who have received a real training in economics and who use the management instruments are quality professional resources within the RPOs.

Lessons and perspectives

The direct subsidies to ANOPACI have enabled the professional leaders to take on responsibilities in drafting and implementing the action programmes

The direct subsidy to ANOPACI from the French MAE has enabled action implementation to be kept flexible and more reactive. It has also provided the occasion for this national body representing producers to learn about management. Strategic reflection and action planning require a significant amount of time and active involvement. The methods and practices used are now tried and known to be appropriate.

However, the subsidies accorded to the ANOPACI are sometimes under-exploited. This is the case for the 'training', 'exchanges and visits' and 'studies' sections due to the fact that the capacity to draft propositions is still low. However, this experience has shown that, coupled with making funds available to the RPOs (whether at the local, regional or national level), their capacities to translate their needs into concrete actions must be built up. Part-time training schemes (study trips and thematic training - information) of the ANOPACI leaders is useful from this point of view but not sufficient: their capacities must be strengthened on the job by having assistance at every stage of implementing an action, from conception to implementation (drawing up terms of reference, choosing a service provider and contracting, or direct implementation) and finally monitoring and assessment.

Helping grassroots RPOs to develop

Initially orientated to supporting the ANOPACI, the POPA has sought to decentralise its activities of support to grassroots RPOs and Agricultural Councils by creating two agencies, one in Bouaké and the other in Abengourou.

This experience shows that the installation of a national body for representing producers must be accompanied by a considerable amount of support to grassroots RPOs if the whole system is to function efficiently. Working simultaneously at the base and the summit of the system requires coordination between the operators in development support so that the actions undertaken by each of them work together in harmony.

A new phase

In the second phase, which starts in 2001, the programme will change its name to the Programme of Support to Sectorial Dialogue in Agriculture (*Appui à la Concertation Sectorielle Agricole; ACSA*).

The general aim of this new programme is to encourage dialogue between the agricultural profession and the public authorities, with the concern that national agricultural policy be drafted and steered jointly by these parties.

In response to this challenge, the programme has fixed itself two specific targets:

- to build up the capacities of the actors, both the RPOs and the services of the Ministry of Agriculture;
- to develop the framework and tools necessary for dialogue.

Three lines of action are envisaged for reaching these targets:

- support to the RPOs, especially the continuation of the support to the ANOPACI, but being careful to decentralise power, with concurrent support to the emergence of regional RPO associations, strengthening the regional Agricultural Councils and assistance to some grassroots groups.
- assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture and to its devolved services, to help them elaborate agricultural policy in a spirit of dialogue with its principal partners.
- develop the tools necessary for dialogue, especially installing a framework for dialogue within the agricultural sector in two pilot regions (leading mixed committees and collecting information)

In as much as the National Fund for Agricultural Development (*Fonds National de Développement Agricole, FNDA*) being set up will have most of its management delegated to representatives of the agricultural profession and its financing will be sustained by debits from the different sub-sectors, the reasoning behind the ACSA programme is to bring short term support during the transition period and then to contribute financially to the FNDA.

CASE 5: INFORMATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR AFRICAN FARMERS' LEADERS: COTTON MONITOR (AFRICA)¹⁷

Programme description

The programme was started at the end of 1996, for a duration of three years. Its aim is to set up a system of informing and training African farmers' leaders in agricultural markets and policies. Four main strategic sectors have been retained: cotton, coffee, cocoa and rice.

The general aim of this plan is to equip rural producers' organisations (RPOs) with the tools which will permit them to:

- understand their economical environment ;
- define strategies of action;
- increase their capacity of making pertinent propositions concerning agricultural policies

The programme is set up and run by the APM Africa Network (*Agriculture Paysanne et Modernisation*; Peasant Agriculture and Modernisation). This network was created in 1993 and draws together people who hold positions of responsibility in African RPOs or in structures supporting these organisations.

The APM Network has entrusted the responsibility of coordinating the implementation of the programme to CIEPAC, associated with IRAM and Solagral.

The programme was begun using APM and CIEPAC's own resources, then backed by the European Union, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation to the sum of about 365,144 Euros.

The programme is run in two stages:

- the first stage consisted in establishing a global appraisal of the sector, from the world market down to the farm, through all the actors (public or private) who intervene at each stage of the network, and on this base to formulate propositions which would be likely to improve the competitiveness and the development of the crops concerned;
- the second stage consists in setting up a monitor that will allow the appraisal to be permanently up-dated and new intervention strategies defined.

The RPO leaders, backed up by a few independent experts, supply the information and stimulate the discussion. Original information, taking into account the RPO's point of view on current changes, can be produced, in this way.

The whole procedure, from the initial appraisal to the establishment of a monitor, has been developed for the cotton sector. For the other sectors, it has only been possible to complete the first stage.

The cotton monitor is based on a network of national correspondents who are members of RPOs specialised in cotton, and a central unit based in Benin at the central office of *FUPRO (Fédération des Unions de Producteurs)* and coordinated by the director of a local NGO (the GERAM). The teams of correspondents are made up of one or more professional leaders and of one or more representatives of supporting services (NGO or project representatives).

Today cotton producers' organisations from 10 countries are involved in the process: the *FNPC, Fédération Nationale des Producteurs de Coton* (Senegal) ; the *SYCOV, Syndicat des Cotonniers et Vivriers* (Mali) ; the *FENOP, Fédération Nationale des Organisations Paysannes* and the *UNPCB, Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Burkina* (Burkina Faso) ; the *URESCOS-CI, Union régionale des entreprises coopératives de la zone de savanes de Côte d'Ivoire* and the *'UCOOPAG-SCI (Union des cooperatives agricoles de la zone des savane de Côte d'Ivoire)*; the *FUPRO-Benin, Fédération des unions de producteurs (Bénin)*; the *CPCC, Conseil des producteurs de coton du Cameroun* (Cameroon) ; the *MPZS, Mouvement paysan de la zone*

17. We thank Jean-Jacques Dello (CIEPAC) for his comments on a previous draft of this case study.

soudanienne (Chad) ; the ZFU, Zimbabwe Farmers Union (Zimbabwe) ; and the *MdP, Maison des paysans du sud-ouest malgache* (Madagascar).

This network is especially representative in that, taken together, the members of the organisations concerned (regional or national federations or unions) supply a large proportion of the cotton sold in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in Burkina Faso, the UNPCB has 6600 groups, bringing together 90% of the country's cotton producers; in Côte d'Ivoire, the URESCOS-CI has 128,000 members who supply 85% of the cotton sold, etc.

Since the programme started, the cotton monitor has had the following activities.

- Training/Informing the RPO leaders for getting the monitoring system running.
- The analysis of the cotton sector was in fact carried out prior to the present programme, starting in 1993 within the framework of the APM network's activities. The representatives of several cotton producers' organisations had assembled for an international seminar in Mali, and the network already had a relatively acute understanding of the interplay of the actors and of how the markets operated. It was therefore possible to start setting up the monitor immediately. In order to do this, three meetings were organised:
 - the first in Mali to define the project of a newsletter and set up the monitoring system (Nov. 1997) with representatives of Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Benin;
 - the second in Senegal to make a mid-course assessment, and to make improvements to the monitor based on this assessment. The network was enlarged by the addition of four other countries at this time: Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Zimbabwe and Madagascar;
 - the third in Benin, two and a half years after the start of the experiment, to evaluate the work achieved and to study how the platform's secretariat might be transferred from its initial base in CIEPAC, Montpellier, to Africa.
- Edition of a newsletter
 - A newsletter entitled « *L'Echo des cotonniers* » (The cotton producer's echo) is published, with French and English editions. The first issue appeared at the end of November 1997 and there have been 10 more since. About a hundred copies of this newsletter are distributed in each country. The leaders of the cotton producers' organisations who have responsibilities at the local and national level are the main recipients, as well as a few other actors (experts, projects, administration, etc). Each newsletter contains information on the agricultural campaign, the economy of the sectors, and news concerning the RPOs, etc.
- Support missions

Apart from the periodical publication of the "*Echo des cotonniers*", the cotton monitor has undertaken several support missions, either for the improvement of the organisation and the functioning of the teams of correspondents (Senegal, Mali, Burkina and Côte d'Ivoire), or to give support to the cotton producers' organisations (Chad, Mali and Zimbabwe).

Results and lessons

Original information is made available to the farmers' leaders

The justification of the present programme is that, in order to work efficiently at a local level (within an agricultural sector), the professional leaders must have a thorough knowledge of the stakes in play, understand the strategy of the dominant actors at national and international levels. In this it differs from the position of many actors who consider that, in order to manage equipment, inputs, or loans, RPOs only need a functional type of training. At a time when the foundations of agriculture (land tenure, loans, agricultural services, the legal status of agro-industrial firms, the import-export system...) are being seriously questioned, to limit the farmers' leader's training to basic knowledge is to leave them ill-equipped to participate in consultation. In consequence, when they are formally invited to participate in consultation forums, the farmers risk being discredited in the debates.

The African APM network is exceptional in being composed mainly of farmers' leaders – but also technicians from within public and private support structures - which constitute the main entrance for most of the significant farmer movements. To our knowledge, no other structure is working in an analogous way on a significant scale, that is, the entire African continent.

Information which is not fully exploited by RPOs

Initially, two main lines of work had been envisaged:

- the sharing of information with an internal analysis for the different national RPOs (during committee meetings for example);
- going on from the newsletter, the development of specific products (radio programmes, articles in the press) aimed at reaching a wider audience, especially the small farmer.

With the exception of Benin and Guinea, these two types of valorisation have been rarely achieved because the RPOs lacked the means and the necessary skills, and because they had insufficient support at the national level.

Farmers' organisations must have access to independent expertise

The participation of farmers' leaders in seminars, colloquiums and various workshops is a well-rooted habit, but it often leads to a certain passivity and intellectual conformism among those leaders who are the most in demand.

The programme has sought to free itself from this context by allowing the RPO leaders to:

- meet among themselves in a context of mutual trust, without the obligation of taking a position on outside opinions, and with the possibility of speaking freely about their perception of the situation and to reformulate their requests towards contributors or trainers;
- acquire the means of taking action by making available to them the necessary tools (economic simulation tools) and methods which permit them to make reasoned choices about strategic priorities.

The international dimension brings advantages

The information and training programme has taken on an international dimension from the outset.

From their past experience and their relations with other actors in the sector, the farmers' leaders find it difficult to extract themselves from their national situation and to admit that there could be modes of organisation other than those with which they are familiar. It is therefore primordial to give an international dimension to a project of this type.

The annual meetings that have been organised within the framework of the cotton monitor have led to the constitution of a relatively stable group of farmer correspondents. Among this group, dialogue and debate around the diverse national experiences has been instituted progressively. Little by little, each delegate has thus been able to build up concrete references on current issues in his/her country and use them in negotiations with his/her partners.

In the long term, it is possible that common positions may be adopted by the RPOs, in response to those questions which affect them all (the reorganisation of agricultural services, new technologies in cotton production, the dismantling of state stabilisation systems, the massive influx of private capital into the sector, etc.). These similarities reflect the advance of globalisation as the national states become relatively weaker. Increasingly, development strategies in Africa are formulated at the regional, or even continental, level, and the specialised professional organisations must not lag behind in this.

A programme of three years is clearly too short

In order to set in motion a sustainable dynamic for the conception and establishment of shared services which will be taken up and run by the farmers' organisations a long term commitment is necessary, as the work achieved in the cotton sector (since 1993) demonstrates.

In fact, it is only when the farmers' leaders themselves realise that the themes approached offer precise answers to their problems that significant developments begin to take place and that the will to share the knowledge gained manifests itself. This is what has been observed in those countries where the dynamic is the most advanced.

The system must respond to the diversity of needs felt by the RPOs.

As its definition indicates, the programme concentrates on information and training. However, the cotton monitor has exceptionally gone venturing outside initial field of operation. It has occasionally given support in the form of advice in response to a request from a RPO, or financial assistance towards the execution of an urgent action.

There is no reason to limit the fields of expertise of a shared service for specialised farmers' organisations, and as RPOs gain power within the system, they will undoubtedly push towards expansion into new areas.

Arising from the discussions prompted by the transfer of the cotton monitor to Africa, the following needs were expressed.

- Information remains indispensable, in particular in order to be able to adapt rapidly to the risks related to the state of the economy, data concerning prices (world prices, price of the product to the producer, input prices, credit costs...) are especially sought after.
- Training: most of the farmers' leaders are self-taught men who, through experience, have acquired a certain degree of general expertise, a certain operational capacity, but they often lack the theoretical basis necessary to back up their positions: for example, the calculation of production costs or of cost price of the national production compared to that of world prices are often marred by gross errors. In order to raise the general level of skill of these leaders, means of systematic training must be devised.
- Exchanges: the written word is often too abstract a medium for leading the farmers to an understanding of the substance of a foreign experience. The organisation of direct exchanges between farmers' leaders appears to be a much more fruitful method. These exchanges can be more or less targeted and detailed, they can take the form of study trips and training courses. They must be initiated by the RPOs themselves, with the support structure limiting its actions to the facilitation of contacts and financial assistance of the action.
- Advice: RPOs are engaged in the process of strategic planning, of the conception of projects, and of negotiation with partners. They must be able to call upon trustworthy experts to help them in these operations. It is clear that the farmers' organisations have been lacking this type of support up till now and this is explained, for the most part, by the fact that in the debates, the dominant actors seek only to convince the RPOs that their position is well founded.
- Representation: whatever the place accorded to the RPOs, they still suffer from a certain deficit in recognition and image. Organisations from different countries that unite around shared services become aware that they represent a large body of people, and that this gives them a degree of power. They can hope to build up an image for themselves by the means of their central office, their products (video publications, web site, etc.) which present their approach, their philosophy, and their achievements. They can also intervene in the public debate concerning their sector of activity in order to defend their positions, and to question the authorities or their development partners, on changes or choices that threaten the interests of the family agriculture that they represent.

Removing the constraints that hinder the RPOs getting involved

The production of the cotton newsletter was based on the communication of information between the central monitoring unit and the correspondents in the countries, and between these and the recipient RPOs. It is thus a rather decentralised system, relying on many operators. The life of the newsletter has therefore been marked by dysfunction that has often led to delays, mediocrity of the centralised information or poor distribution.

These difficulties appear to stem from four types of constraint.

- **Material difficulties in communication:** in many regions of Africa it is very difficult to travel and to send and receive messages. The most sensitive cases are Chad, North Cameroon and eastern Senegal (where a message can take more than a month to reach its destination).
- **The availability of resource people:** The monitor of system relies on the goodwill of people who have volunteered from within RPOs or close to them, to carry out a certain number of tasks. These same people take on many other responsibilities, which limits the time they can spend in the service of the network.
- **The goodwill of the support structures:** Quite often, the support structures (NGOs, projects) have served as relays between the central unit of the monitor and the farmers' organisations. In certain number of cases (particularly in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire) they have encouraged the RPOs to participate in the monitors' activities, in other cases (such as in Chad or in the Central African Republic, RCA), they have sometimes interposed, considering that it was up to them and not the RPOs to judge whether the participation was opportune.
- **The organisation of work within the RPO:** Too few of the organisations have the required capacities for making the most of the knowledge gained from their participation in the Network. In general, they have no technical personnel, and activity planning is often very approximate. If a member of the organisation is indeed responsible for planning, the integration of this activity in the life of the organisation is generally not specified.

Perspectives

In spite of all these constraints, the cotton monitor has maintained a satisfactory rhythm of production. This calls for continued perseverance along this path, and confirmation of the principle that RPOs should be implicated in the production of original information that expresses their point of view.

Establishment of international business service centres for the main agricultural sectors

Over the last few years, the interest aroused by the RPOs has been expressed by a mobilisation of all sorts of aid favouring the emergence of a multifaceted and variously motivated expertise. RPOs have virtually no authority in this new "market". For the most part, the nature of the support offered and the choice of experts is left in the hands of the financial donors. There is always the risk in this type of intervention that a more or less serious difference will exist between the supply and the demand, between the actions effected and the anticipations of the organisations.

To get round these difficulties, the plan is to create an alternative to the public/private sector in the field of support to farmers' organisations by setting up business service cooperatives. These business service centres would be managed by the member organisations, direct users of the services (which means having an approach by sector, with as many specialised centres as products). They would define the orientations and priorities, they would be responsible for the financial management and they would recruit the necessary technical personnel, over whom they would have authority for all aspects of the work exercised.

In the cotton sector, the process of transferring the monitor into the hands of the cotton organisations is well under way (transfer of the central unit to Africa and the establishment of a steering committee stemming from the member organisations) with the aim of setting up this type of structure.

Self-financing of the centres but also external financial support over the long term

It is clear that these professional structures will have to benefit from subsidies over the long term, partly so that the system can get initial problems sorted out and start running satisfactorily, and partly because the very nature of the services (information, training, advice, exchanges...) gives them the characteristics of a public service. This latter character will become important once the RPOs are recognised as having a role to play in the construction of society.

However, it is just as important that the RPOs contribute to the funding of their own services. Since the reasoning behind the monitor is that the RPOs benefiting from the services will be better able to situate themselves and respond in the interest of the small producers, the RPOs should be able to contribute in different ways (subscriptions, taxes on their products...) in order to finance their business service centres. This is the principle of finance that has been chosen for the cotton monitor.

Complementary short case studies

CASE 6. COOPERATIVES IN INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES

In UK

The National Farmers' Union relies on its strong membership, which currently runs to over 150,000 members. It includes over 75% of full-time farmers and growers in England and Wales, making it the largest farming and countryside organisation in the UK. NFU Corporate is the membership category for farmer controlled businesses. There are currently over 70 Corporate members, whose interests are represented by the NFU in areas such as finance and taxation, competition law, marketing and farm insurance. Other country people can also join the NFU, even if they do not rely on farming for their main income. There are currently around 70,000 'Countryside members', mainly people in other professions with more than a garden, but less than a farm; or smallholders with a small number of livestock or a few acres of cropping land.

In Denmark

The membership of the two main farmers associations (*Danish small scale farmers Association and Danish Farmers*) bring together respectively 300 local associations with 20,000 members and 111 local associations representing 69,000 members among a total number of farmers around 100,000 in 1980, and 20 cooperative societies. Today Danish farmers are around 70,000 and constitute only 4% of the Danish population of 5million, but they account for the annual production food for 15 million people. By far the largest portion of the production is delivered to the farmer owned cooperative enterprises which refine and sell the products. In the dairy and slaughterhouse sectors, cooperatives are completely dominant with market shares of 93% and 97% respectively. In the farm supply sector the cooperative share is about 55%. In the other sectors, cooperatives also play an important part.

In France

90% of 680,000 farmers are members of a cooperative and their global economic weight in agri-business is paramount with 3,700 industrial and commercial enterprises and 13,300 cooperatives delivering services, mostly through joint mechanisation to reduce costs. Their global turn over is around 56 billion US \$ and they employ more than 120,000 permanent workers. Upstream, they manage 60% of the input supply and food industrial process accounts for more than 40% of the turn over. Estimates show that farmers control through their organisations half of the food processing industries that compete with other private firms in the sector.

In the USA

Today there are approximately 4,100 agricultural cooperatives with a total of 3.9 million members. This number has been slowly decreasing since the 1970s due in part to mergers, acquisitions and consolidations reflecting similar activity in many industries during a period of economic tightening. Cooperatives had record net income of US \$1.96 billion in 1994 and employed 175,000 people. Net business volume of agricultural cooperatives amounted to US \$105.5 billion in 1994.

CASE 7: CADEF IN CASAMANCE, SENEGAL

Building a new pattern for rice cultivation under high physical and social constraints in Senegal

In Casamance, a research-development programme funded for five years by the AFD (1989-94) and followed by the Special programme for Food security in Africa from the FAO (1995-1997), was implemented by a local based association CADEF in partnership with both NGOs and public organisations (research and training). Actively supported by women, the organisation induced the building up of an innovative organisational and technical pattern for bottom valley rice cultivation where drought and salt had made it impossible. They succeeded by linking natural resource management, collective dam building and water management, and tuning individual technology according to flooding pattern. Within a five year pilot programme with a significant RPO capacity-building component, 800 ha were recovered for rice cultivation reducing buying rice for consumption from more than nine months to three to four months.

CASE 8: RPOs IN COSTA RICA

RPOs, technical innovation, food security and fighting against poverty in Costa Rica

In the 90's the government of Costa Rica promoted RPOs and oriented its officials to serve the needs of producers to build up their organisations. Around Pejivaye – small family farmers area in Brunca region, south of Costa Rica - producing cereals and beans - four associations were created out of which 3 had survived in 1999, they bring together 250 members, one tenth of the families in the area. Coming from nowhere, they are now handling drying units, warehouses for maize and red bean. Their cash flow is now over 1million US \$. The leaders are now in a position to negotiate marketing conditions, input supply, access to credit and social infrastructure for the communities with a small part of the output of their business activities. As they market 25% of the regional production, their initiative forces intermediaries to come to their price for the rest of the producers. Regarding technology, they have developed with state official an internal technical unit that has become quickly a partner for research; their collaboration has reduced the time to orient research and set up new varieties of red beans increasing efficiency of public funding in research activities.

The area of Brunca in the south east of the country illustrates this movement: the capacity of RPOs at local level allows leaders to manage yearly more than US \$ 1 million for 25% of the regional production which tend to regulate traders / producers relations in favour of the latter.

CASE 9: WATER USERS ASSOCIATIONS (MEXICO AND THE PHILIPPINES)

Improving water management in The Philippines and Mexico... but they are also farmers urging for other services

In the Philippines, water users associations are clearly successful in this transition process from state management to negotiated arrangements between national irrigation administration (NIA) and irrigation associations (IA) at community level. Benefits were twofold: (i) improved efficiency in the cost of management of water delivery and irrigation system maintenance [indicators: reduction of half in NIA staff, efficiency in fee collection from 40% to 60%, repair and maintenance cost down from 540 to 380 pesos/ha, personnel costs from 450 to 340 pesos/ha, and dry season area under irrigation over 40% against over 20% only without IA. As IA members are rice producers, accumulated social capital, monetary assets and organisational know how in

these associations led many of them as associations to diversify in rural enterprises for service provision for agriculture [tractor for land cultivation, rice mills establishment, involvement in rice marketing...]. Since this type of economic option was not clearly foreseen in the legal and even conceptual framework of the WUA, it can cause problems for those that would engage in such activities.

As the Mexico case study illustrates, it is sometimes difficult to assess the real impact of the transfer of water management from state agencies to Irrigation Associations in terms of production and productivity improvement. In fact these programmes are part of larger liberalisation of the agricultural economy the changes that occurred are more likely due to the transformation in upstream and downstream economics of production conditions. But in many cases in Mexico, these Irrigation associations enter the market to provide services to their members and considerably extend their activities far beyond water management.

CASE 10: CHILE, SMALL FARMERS' ECONOMIC ORGANISATIONS

Co-operating to compete: Small farmers' economic organisations in Chile

Since 1990, the Chilean government has supported some 100.000 peasant households in farm modernisation, diversification and developing high value commodities via support to farmers' organisations. This support has been significant in financial terms, reaching up to \$170 million per year recently. A central element of the new policy was support to the formation and development of new small farmers' economic organisations - believing these to be necessary for small-scale agriculture to be able to achieve economies of scale, reduce transaction costs, and access sophisticated and dynamic markets. Around 1000 organisations were created; 50% of these focus exclusively on creating new market opportunities for small-scale farmers (these 500 or so organisations have about 30.000 members). An extensive sustainability study of the organisations between 1997-2001, including interviews of hundreds of farmers and production surveys of 600 farms, examined the external and internal reasons for the success or failure of these organisations. Key conclusions included:

- these organisations have a significant and positive impact on the incomes of participating households and on technological and managerial innovation; but
- only 30% of these organisations (at best) are economically sustainable (despite the injection of millions of dollars). While, these organisations produce significant benefits and opportunities for their members the investment costs have been high.

CASE 11: OPERATION FLOOD IN INDIA

Dairy cooperative development in India began in Gujarat with the establishment of the milk company AMUL in 1946 in response to limited opportunities for traditional milk producers. Operation Flood built on this experience when cooperative dairy development became a priority for agricultural development in the 1970s. Beginning with support for three projects in Karnataka, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh from 1974, and moving to support two National Dairy projects up to the late 1980s, the World Bank has lent over \$500 million to develop the milk industry via cooperatives (comprising district unions combined into state federations). The national federation comprises 70.000 village milk cooperatives which has some 9 million members drawn from over a third of India's 500 districts, most of whom are small and marginal farmers, or even landless farmers. The federation is responsible for producing some 13 million litres of milk daily, creating an annual additional income for each family of \$90. The projects have focused on capacity-building (strengthening cooperative institutional structures and training) and support for activities and infrastructure related to production and marketing. The overall objective was to promote viable cooperative businesses owned and managed by producers for collecting and marketing milk products in order to expand rural incomes and improve milk productivity.

Investment has been heavy, and some observers have been concerned about the cooperative being over protective and monopolistic, and the occasional inappropriate use of its political power. However, these problems seem to be heavily outweighed by impressive results, arising from committed membership, sound management, an enigmatic and influential leader and strong accounting systems. Results include the following:

- strengthening farmer control and autonomy in the milk sector, at stages of production, collection, processing and marketing;
- creating a positive economic rate of return for the project;
- enabling poor, small-scale women producers and poor landless or smallholder farmers to benefit by being able to market their milk through the federation;
- increasing smallholder access to intermediate and sophisticated technologies;
- some cooperatives have established rural roads, rural health services for their members and a range of other social and economic services for members.

Lessons and recommendations concerning support to RPOs

REVIEW OF THE KEY ISSUES RELATED TO THE CONTEXT

Producers in the agricultural sector are at present directly confronted with international competition. The end of price stabilisation systems, the opening up of national markets to importation, the removal of subsidies and the dismantling of public and para-public supports to the rural sector have led to much more instability and competition.

This radical change challenges rural producers and their organisations to adapt, and it requires stronger capacities to innovate and greater means of action. This challenge is increased by competition from the global companies who are now intervening directly in national economies.

The working of the market has been greatly handicapped by the institutional and organisational vacuums created subsequent to the withdrawal of State support. A stable environment is needed, made secure by rules (property rights, free competition) and the correction of certain failures inherent to its operation (public goods, externalities). State action in both these areas is indispensable to ensure that coordination by the market is effective. It must also permit the development of contracts and organisations through which the risks and uncertainties can be reduced.

The establishment of new rules of play and new modes of coordination cannot happen without negotiation between the various economic agents. With liberalisation, many bodies for consultation between the actors have come into being at different geographical scales and on different themes. These themes include natural resource management, organisation of the sectors, services and agricultural policy. In most countries, communication difficulties related to the withdrawal of State support can be explained by a shortage of private economic agents and by the weakness of their means of action. Helping the rural producers' organisations to emerge and build up their strength thus appears as a key issue of the present period.

However, these new rules are having difficulty taking shape due to the huge imbalance of power between the agricultural producers, poorly organised and with very limited means of action, and the trade operators whose power has been reinforced by the process of economic concentration over the past 10 years (mergers and take-overs between companies accompanying privatisation).

The asymmetry that handicaps the agricultural producers and their organisations has to do with access to and use of information, their capacity to formulate their aims and to define their area of intervention and the weakness of their resources for investment. In consequence, their participation in public discussions, which is a tangible result of liberalisation, remains symbolic more often as not, and in practice the decisions are generally taken without their effective cooperation.

For the producers' organisations to really play a role in the new links that are shaping up between actors and effectively contribute to the definition of new rules of the game, specific support must be implemented.

The object of this section is to suggest a few recommendations on the nature of the support brought to these organisations and on how they should be implemented. These recommendations are based on the case studies presented in this document as well as on certain experiences cited in the literature.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUPPORT TO RPOs

The case studies highlight a certain number of main lines of orientation that the programmes supporting RPOs should take into consideration. These avenues are explored in this section, but, to resume, it seems essential that efforts should be made on:

- building up the strategic capacities of the organisations, not just the tactical or technical ones, especially through giving the leaders training and information on the key issues of the moment;
- structuring the local organisations to corporate levels (regional, national, or even international federations) to enable them to get the point of view of the producers heard;
- taking into account the diversity of organisations so as to avoid the marginalisation of certain producers outside the major sectors;
- encouraging the producers' organisations to take greater responsibility for the support programmes concerning them so that they are able to influence and define the content;
- reconsidering the duration of the programmes in periods in the order of 10 to 15 years, rather than 3 to 5 years, so as to limit opportunistic behaviours regarding the varied support programmes offered to the organisations which do not necessarily correspond to their priorities;
- setting up sustainable support systems by assisting in the installation and reinforcement of local services; set up durable mechanisms of financing the organisations.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Technical capacities, strategic capacities, and information control

Whatever the activities carried out by the RPOs, certain capacities are often lacking. In order to improve the quality of the services rendered to their members and in many cases to the wider community also, the RPOs must improve their technical skills.

- Financial management in order to put the available resources (own funds and subsidies) to better use and to face the many diverse functions assumed. Many support programmes are interested in this to varying degrees and some make it a specialisation by setting up accounting and management support centres.
- The mechanisms for consultation and for the circulation of information within the organisations must receive more attention in order to prevent a gulf opening up between the leaders and the membership: by allowing the expectations of the members to be taken into consideration and protecting the leaders from suspicion. This point relating to making the RPOs work more democratically, which is of major interest to most of the programmes supporting local organisations, does not seem to have such a high priority for organisations at higher levels (regional and national). Democratic working – like democracy itself – has a cost, and this cost should be included into the programme budget from the outset.
- Their capacities to negotiate with the many public and private actors in the environment permitting the elaboration of contracts which correctly take their expectations into account. More and more support programmes play an essential role at this level, particularly by installing financing mechanisms that put the RPOs into the position of decision-makers and financial managers, moving them on from being "beneficiaries" to "clients".

- Their corporate integration at regional and national levels to make scale economies by sharing services, and to defend the interests and the views of the producers in the consultation bodies open to them. The appearance of specific programmes to help local RPOs get organised on a regional, and more importantly national, scale, is a distinctive feature of the second half of the 1990s¹⁸.

Finally, in the present era in which changes are characteristically quick and profound, it is urgent to help the RPOs build up their strategic capacities in the same way that businesses work out their medium and long-term strategies and make periodical readjustments. By strategic capacities we mean their ability to devise action plans based on an in-depth appraisal of: their situation (strengths and limits), changes in their environment (challenges and opportunities), their position within this environment and the necessity of adapting in time. This type of support to key issues of the moment appears paradoxically to be the weakest link in the RPOs support programmes. In consequence they are not always able to make the best use of the opportunities offered to them by the new context.

It should be noted however, that in general these different capacities are closely inter-related. The negotiating power of the organisations, whether matched against an economic operator within a sector, a support structure or public institution, is very dependent on their level of corporate integration (representativeness), their economic power (management capacities) and their capacity to draw up constructive propositions (strategic capacities).

Better informed RPOs

Prerequisite to building up the capacities of the RPOs, especially their strategic capacities, is that they understand the key issues of the moment and that they have more complete information on:

- the operation of the trading channels (price setting of inputs and products throughout the sector from the global down to the local level); the various training seminars organised within the framework of the APM Network are exemplary in this respect: they not only present valuable information, but they also bring together the leaders of organisations from different countries and lead onto the to comparative analyses that the leaders generally lack;
- the texts being prepared on agricultural policies at a national or even international level (for example the information sent out about the privatisation of the SODECOTON in North Cameroon);
- the identity, strategies, scope of activities and modes of operation of different donors, and various operators likely to support RPOs (projects, consultancies, NGOs, public and private services, etc.); regarding this subject, the data bank set up in ANOPACI in Côte d'Ivoire on potential service providers for RPOs is particularly interesting;
- the experiences of other comparable organisations in the country, in neighbouring countries or even in industrialised countries. On this point, the different exchanges between RPOs organised as part of most of the support programmes, especially those implemented by AFDI, have strong potential.

However, the RPOs should not only use information, they should also produce it.

They can do this directly (by collecting data) or indirectly (by calling upon outside services), as in the APM network programme for the monitor of the cotton sector. The command of information, including how to produce it, could enable the producers to negotiate better deals when pitted against other actors who call upon highly experienced specialised experts. The present asymmetry must be redressed.

The collection of agricultural statistics by the organisations, as they do in North Cameroon and for which they are paid by the SODECOTON, enables them to handle information at its source and at the same time reduces the costs to the State. At present, use is not being made of this opportunity, even within the organisations producing the information, because they are not receiving specific support in this direction.

¹⁸ In certain contexts, this process started even before due to specific historical background, i.e. the case of Zimbabwe or Senegal for completely opposite political situations.

In addition, the external appraisals (production costs, farm operations, functions assumed and technico-economical performance etc) of the organisations must systematically be returned to them so that they can conduct a critical analysis themselves and in so doing develop skills at handling information.

Finally, the RPOs should take greater control of moulding their own image, setting up their own information systems and choosing what information about themselves they should release to other stakeholders so that they are better known. Collaboration between stakeholders needs a minimum of reciprocal confidence, based on mutual knowledge of the partners. For example, the distribution of the accounts of the Village Associations in the zone of Niono in Mali has benefited them by raising the confidence level with financial institutions and the other stakeholders.

The implementation by the RPOs of a policy of communication to the outside is typically a function of their representation bodies at regional or national levels, and the support programmes ought to assist them to carry out this function correctly.

Training the RPOs' leaders in strategic analysis

The leaders of the organisations must of course be trained if new skills are to be acquired by the organisations.

In the present context, the strategic training/information of the RPO leaders is of critical importance, especially if they are to be able to make reasoned choices and to fully participate in negotiations concerning them.

However, it is evident that most support programmes give greater priority to building up technical capacities to the neglect of the strategic capacities. While the short-term technical view is still indispensable, the organisations must shift from it in order to fix their objectives in the medium and long term, taking into account the rapid turns in their environment.

In this respect, the various training programmes under way in the APM network (international workshops, sector monitors and more recently the African Farmers Academy, see Annex 3) which seek to widen the vision of the leaders of African organisations and to give them the tools for economic analysis are particularly pertinent. There should be more donor support to programmes such as these set up by AMP, thus greatly increasing the investment made in training.

Encourage the spread of information to all levels by widening the training schemes to include grassroots members

The training/information of the members logically falls to their leaders. However, experience shows that the leaders find it difficult to pass down the knowledge they acquire during the various training sessions of which they benefit (various workshops, study trips, courses, etc.). Whatever the reasons are for this, support to the leaders for transmitting their new knowledge (preparation of reports and assistance in how to lead return meetings) should be an integral part of their training programmes. It would also permit to get an estimate of their impact by evaluating what the leaders of the RPOs have been able to retain.

The training/information of the leaders also depends on using the mass media such as local radio stations and specific support should be given to the RPOs for this. The experience in North Cameroon with radio shows that complex issues such as the privatisation of the SODECOTON and the RPOs' entering into the capital of the company can be rendered palatable to the public at large and discussion is encouraged, stimulating broad internal debates.

Finally, the training/information of the producers depends on the maintenance and development of large literacy programmes so that the written words can be used profitably. This is a medium and long-term objective which justifies the systematic use of public funding, going beyond the financial capacities of the RPOs support programmes alone.

**TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DIVERSITY OF RPOs:
DIVERSITY OF FUNCTION, SECTOR AND LEVEL OF ORGANISATION**

*Build up the organisation of producers
who are not integrated into the main sectors of strategic products*

It is evident that important support programmes often concentrate on organisations that are structured about the main sectors of strategic products. This near exclusivity may be explained in different ways:

- by the importance of the investment already made in the major sectors, from which it is legitimate to seek a return;
- by the economic importance of these sectors, as much for the producers and the economic stakeholders up- and downstream, as for the State which draws its resources from them;
- and by the low level of grassroots organisation of the producers in the "secondary" sectors, a fact which is itself explained by the predominance of earlier support programmes in favour RPOs in the major sectors.

To reverse this trend demands that efforts should not only be made to build up the capacities of the existing RPOs, but also to assist the organisation of producers at grassroots levels in zones that are not integrated into the major strategic product sectors (extensive livestock zones especially, and very diversified family farming).

Support organisations however efficiently they work

Support programmes cannot merely work with the "good students". Whatever the causes behind the dysfunction found within the "imperfect" organisations they can only be helped to progress if programmes accept to work with them.

It is perhaps useful to remember this when faced with the desire of certain operators to be selective in their choice of RPO to support, even to the point of ignoring the existing structures and creating new ones. From this point of view, the work achieved by the AFDI in Mali to support the creation of the AOPP, a national body representing the range of diversity of the organisations, is promising, even if the bottom-upwards approach is slow and results in very heterogeneous representation. On the other hand, it can be hoped that this will make it more cohesive.

Take into account the diversity of the RPOs' functions

While it is true that having multiple functions does not always make the job of the RPOs easy, it is not for the support structures to tell them what they ought or ought not to be doing, or to incite them to specialise.

In fact, in the absence of minimum public services, it seems legitimate that the organisations should take part in supplying social services. The problem is not so much whether or not the organisations intervene at this level, but rather that the levies drawn from other activities for so doing do not compromise their development. Besides, even with the appearance of local authorities in the context of decentralisation, the RPOs will continue to play a role in this, if only through local taxation. The role of the support programmes is to help the RPOs tackle the management of all their activities, particularly by helping them to install analytical accounting enabling them to separate the costs and returns related to each of their functions and in so doing to better manage the balances.

A similar problem is encountered with the function of defending the producers' interests, which typically falls to the second level organisations (particularly federations of RPOs by sector), and which many outside observers would like to see separated from the economic functions. However, experience shows that isolating this trade union function amounts to taking away their negotiating power by putting its financial base in jeopardy. Indeed, when this function is carried out by a RPO which has economic activities, its cost can easily be covered by a transfer of a part

of the resources produced through its other activities. Once this function is isolated however, other mechanisms of finance (members' subscriptions) must be put into place. Given the producers' present degree of organisation and level of appreciation of the importance of this trade union function, such financing mechanisms are risky. Moreover, it is important that the organisations keep total independence over this type of highly sensitive function.

ASSOCIATE THE RPOs IN THE DEFINITION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

The contents of most support programmes are not controlled by the "beneficiary" organisations. These latter are in fact associated very little in the definition of the programme contents, the design of the way the support will be carried out, and the implementation of the actual support.

Design "open" programmes

Despite the pious promises made by the aid agencies, support programmes whose contents have truly been defined by the RPOs are rare. The contents are generally defined from the outside during feasibility studies which, even if the people leading them try to take the views of the organisations into account, give insufficient time for these to really express their support needs. The limits of the feasibility exercise are reached, even when the donor's wish is to make it "participatory" – the donor remains in the position of "commander".

A radical change in the initial conception of support programmes is necessary if the organisations are to make a significant contribution to deciding their content and making them their own. They will need to be drafted in an open manner, with the first and most important stage of the programme being the definition of orientations (and even precise actions) with assistance from the organisations over the precise content.

Along the same line of thought, the programmes should be designed progressively so that the organisations can redefine their content in function with the results obtained, changes in the context, and improvements in their own capacity to define strategic projects.

Associate the organisations in the process of designing the support system

Concerning the organisations taking greater responsibility for decisions about the support set-up, the situation appears even less favourable than for defining the programme contents. Indeed, while they are very varied, these set-ups have the common characteristic of being almost always designed from the outside without the involvement of producers' organisations at the conception stage.

Who should have the overall responsibility for the programme (choice of administrative body and steering committee)? Who should be in charge of the general implementation of the programme (choice of operator)? Who should carry out the support actions (project team / specialised services / the RPOs)? How should the funds be managed (choice of activities and authorisation of disbursements) ? etc. So many fundamental questions in which the RPOs must have a voice.

Certain operators for example are sufficiently well known by the organisations (such as local NGOs or engineering departments in particular) that the latter do not wish to work them or on the contrary, seek to strengthen the existing links. From this point of view, getting the organisations involved in sorting through the competitive bids (but also in drafting the selection criteria) for choosing the operators appears indispensable.

The way in which the funds are managed determines to a large extent the degree of responsibility the RPOs have in controlling the programme. Thus, it appears important that they should be able to voice their opinion on the subject, especially for the management of transaction funds (that ought to be clearly distinguished from the current budget of the team in charge of implementing the support programme).

Participation of the organisations in directing the support actions

Finally, the organisations should take a greater role in making decisions about the actual support actions. This participation could be indirect, such as by participating in the selection of the service providers (in the case where the programme does not itself directly implement the support actions), in the definition of the exact contents of the actions (training modules for example) and in their evaluation (quality, impact, etc.).

Participating in the decision-making process of the support may also be direct. This is typically the case in second level organisations (federations of RPOs), one of whose functions is in fact to support the local RPOs by managing a certain number of shared services (management support, dissemination of information, etc.).

Rethink the modes of financing the support

Make the funds for support available to the organisations: a necessary but insufficient condition

Up until very recently, the funds for supporting RPOs were managed exclusively by structures such as projects or civil services. At present, more and more donors prefer to play with the mechanisms of financing so as to guarantee the RPOs a greater control over the support concerning them.

The principle is simple, but the change in perspective is total: the flow of money is reversed by making the money and the services circulate in opposite directions. Put in practical terms, the support funds are entrusted to the RPOs and the old support structures (public or private) are put into the position of service providers and, most often now, in competition. Thus, the organisations go from the status of "beneficiary" to that of "client", or even "potential client" in the case of a competitive situation.

This status as "client" which permits it to control a given service, the organisation has from the fact of being financially independent, that is, when it pays for a service from its own resources (members' subscriptions or profits from economic activities). The idea is to conserve this classical mode of relationship between actors even when the service is subsidised.

In practice, the organisations still have only partial control of the support programmes concerning them. There are several reasons for this:

- the funds in question are not generally managed by the RPOs independently, but co-managed (at least with the support operator). In this case, the dialogue between the RPOs and the co-manager(s) is still unbalanced, with the frequent risk of the organisations simply ratifying the external choices, without the possibility of asserting their own views;
- the support funds are not, in general, open, that is to say that the objectives to be financed are pre-defined and the organisations still have little room to manoeuvre. It will stay like this so long as the RPOs are not associated in defining the objectives to be financed by the support funds made available to them;
- finally, and above all, the organisations receive insufficient guidance to be able to carry out this function of supervisor, and their demands therefore appear stereotyped and very dependent on the available supply (example of the PSAOP funds in Senegal).

In conclusion, for this radical change in the modes of financing to be fruitful, it is indispensable that the strategic capacities of the RPOs be built up. Nonetheless, making funds available to the organisations remains a first step, permitting them to learn by experience.

Give priority to a *posteriori* control procedures

Putting heavy financial procedures into place is always a source of dysfunction, or even failure, in the general support programmes for development and in the specific programmes of support to RPOs.

A priori control of fund use is the main cause. However, experience shows that the ratification of a programme budget and regular audits of the accounts and finances (*a posteriori* control) are sufficient to safeguard the funds made available to the operators by the donors.

Programmes of support to organisations would profit from taking example from the experiences of support to development implemented by the AFD over several years, in particular in Mali and Burkina Faso (ratification of a budget/provisional programme with revolving funds to the operators renewable upon proof of expenditure).

This principle is also valid for the whole of the support programme's budget (budget managed by the programme supervisor), as well as for the funds given to the RPOs by these programmes for carrying out actions (operation funds). The payment procedures adopted by the PSAOP in Senegal seem to be appropriate from this aspect, since the budgets for the micro-projects programmed by the RPOs are made available to them within 15 days of their finance demand being received.

It is understandable that the setting up of *a posteriori* control procedures requires that the financial management capabilities of the support operators and the organisations themselves be built up. These capabilities can only be acquired in action and here again, confiding to the RPOs the entire responsibility of managing the operation funds is a prerequisite. This option is not exclusive of a progressive approach for the amounts allocated to the organisations.

Promote the installation sustainable financing mechanisms for the RPOs

The subsidies of most RPO support programmes are on a sliding scale, with the aim that in the long-term the RPOs will finance all their activities themselves.

This way of doing things, in which the financial support is considered as temporary, tends not to recognise that the actions led by the RPOs benefit not only their members but also the whole of the community. By contributing to the maintenance or the growth of agricultural production levels, the organisations participate in the development of the various sectors and in this way have an effect upstream and downstream in these sectors. They also contribute to the financial balance of the governments, which often draw a significant part of their resources from the levies made on these sectors. In consequence, it would appear legitimate that the RPOs should benefit from permanent outside funding for successfully running their activities.

Moreover, some actions, such as training/information for leaders and members, are typical functions of the civil service, and this justifies stabilised mechanisms of financing being put into place by the governments to pay for them, at least in part.

On this basis, studies are underway in several countries on the possibility of setting up sustainable funds for supporting RPOs. In Côte d'Ivoire for example a plan for a National Agricultural Development Fund (*Fonds National de Développement Agricole, FNDA*) takes over from the "project" financing implemented with French aid (August 2001). The different aid agencies concerned with building up the RPOs should contribute to such funds while at the same time providing assistance in their use.

Encourage the installation and the "professionalisation" of service providers

Perpetuate supports to organisations by strengthening local service providers

The sustainability of the support given to organisations depends on the people (human resources) who deliver them. At this level, the general trend for many programme activities to be sub-contracted out to private or civil services, is promising.

Its main advantage is to favour the installation and the "professionalisation" of the local specialised people whilst preparing the withdrawal of the temporary team charged with the programme implementation.

The sustainability of a support system by means of local service providers depends on another bridge being crossed, namely that the services are contracted between the organisation and the

service provider, rather than between the programme and the provider. The role of the programme team in this case is limited to assisting the organisation to define its support needs, foster the relationship between the organisation and the service providers (work out the contracts with detailed specifications), subsidise the service to a greater or lesser extent according to type (via the organisation and not the service provider directly), and to help the service providers operate professionally so that the quality of their work is satisfactory in the long term.

Keep an up to date index of potential service providers

From the point of view of the organisations directly contracting the support they esteem necessary, the availability of an index of potential service providers is primordial. The organisations need information about the competence and experience of the service providers in order to be able to choose which to call upon. Some programmes are already preparing such indexes (for example in Côte d'Ivoire for the ANOPACI or in Senegal in the PSAOP).

As the organisations gradually get to know the services better, an approval system could be put into place on a local and national scale, and regularly updated, as is done with public works enterprises in the support for local development.

For this, a system of monitoring and assessment of the quality of work carried out by the service providers must of course be put in place. This assessment should not be external only (evaluation by the operator), but the organisations should be able to share their experiences (successes and disappointments) with different partners and so express their point of view at this level. The secondary and tertiary level organisations (regional and national federations) ought to be able to play an important part in this (having the function of coordinating and advising the local organisations).

Long-term support to the organisations given at an appropriate cadence

Building up the capacities of the RPOs is a long and exacting job because the great delays have been accumulating due to:

- the fact that they have not been held responsible during several decades of contrasting historical, political and economic contexts,
- rapid and important changes in their environment force them to exercise new functions,
- and finally, the low basic level of information of the producers and their representatives.

In consequence, faced with such a huge task, the programmes bringing assistance to building up the capacities of the RPOs must be planned for the long-term, that is for 10 to 15 years, rather than over a time period of 3 to 5 years. This is independent of the fact that certain functions undertaken by the organisations ought to be at least partially or totally paid for by the community through durable financing mechanisms.

The short duration of the programmes, allied to their unrealistic objectives (which poses the question of the initial planning of the feasibility studies), also tends to make the implementers start working too hastily. Most of the time it induces bending the methodologies so that, even when initially planned as being more or less participatory, they appear very top-down in practice. These operators promote their own propositions whilst their job should be to help the organisations form theirs. They are also tempted to undertake the support actions directly using their own personnel (as in North Cameroon for example) instead of encouraging the installation and "professionalisation" of local sustainable support structures.

In a word, under pressure from the donors and thus put into a position of insecurity, the operators charged with building up the capacities of the organisations are working in haste. In so doing, they often push the organisations and do not respect their rhythm. Whilst particularly regretting the gulf between the leaders and the members, they are very often the first to apply strong pressure to the leaders, so denying them the possibility of putting the consultation mechanisms into operation. These mechanisms are however, indispensable.

DOCUMENTED STUDIES IN NON FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES (COORDINATED BY ODI)

Donor's orientations in the new context

ECONOMIC AND POLICY CONTEXT OVERVIEW

Economic liberation, structural adjustment and decentralisation have been factors contributing to a reduced and reformed role of the state, where the state increasingly focuses on enabling and regulatory functions rather than productive or market-related activities. At the same time, the process of globalisation (especially in information and international markets) has dramatically changed the development context. These processes have affected the livelihoods of people in even remote rural areas, changing both opportunities and constraints in rural development.

In this context, and in recognition that at least 70% of the world's poor live and work in rural areas, international and bilateral aid agencies have adopted the goal of poverty reduction as the overarching aim of development assistance. While there has been a reduced emphasis on agriculture, there is some recognition that rural development must remain a central part of poverty reduction strategies. Although, it should be noted that international development assistance for agriculture and rural development has steadily been decreasing over this period. A number of international agencies are therefore placing increased emphasis on developing appropriate approaches to supporting poverty-oriented rural development in this changing context.

There are at least four major trends in current approaches to, and policies concerning, rural development that can be taken into account in the current discussion of RPOs:

- An increasing number of donors are adopting multi-sectoral, livelihoods oriented approaches to understanding constraints and opportunities related to rural development, and for developing appropriate interventions (UNDP, World Bank, EC, UK DFID etc). These approaches imply that interventions should be people-centred, working in partnership with local people and their institutions, and building on opportunities presented by the assets and resources they possess. They are based on the recognition that rural people are heterogeneous with diverse interests and livelihood strategies; that they undertake both agricultural and non-agricultural activities; and that they have differential access to a range of resources. The approaches also explicitly recognise the key importance of institutions and organisations to rural people for accessing assets and achieving positive livelihood outcomes: for example, increased livelihood security, levels of production and income, wealth, influence and power.
- There is a move towards supporting sector-wide approaches to development. These approaches tend to focus on providing development assistance through budgetary support measures and influencing national government development policies – moving away from the project approach and direct interaction with grassroots organisations.
- There is a broad acceptance of the important role of civil society in all stages of development, including policy formulation at the national level.
- There is recognition of the important role that the private sector plays in development processes, and the need to harness private sector resources for poverty reduction.

DONORS AND THE RURAL PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS

From the anglophone experience, it was found that policy, project and research documents are often unclear on the way rural organisations are defined. They tend to pass fairly freely between concepts of civil society, loose village groups, community-based organisations, farmers' groups, farmers' organisations, cooperatives, the private sector and decentralised government institutions. Let us recall that RPOs clearly belong to the private sector and that they are hybrid organisations and may have a number of special characteristics. These are analysed in detail elsewhere where we provide a clarification regarding the definition of RPOs (see p. 20)

Nonetheless, a number of donors have highlighted the important role of RPOs in development policy and processes in recent years (DFID, World Bank and IFAD among others). USAID and the Club du Sahel have actively supported the emergence of RPOs and RPO networks in the Sahel, seeing RPOs and other farmer groups as being of increasing importance, becoming active partners at the national level. CILSS, also promoted national farmers platforms in nine Sahelian countries to enable farmers' groups to more effectively negotiate the design of national policies in the region, and contribute to their implementation. Further, both the IFAD Rural Poverty report and the World Bank publication, *Voices of the Poor*, highlight the imperative for development actors to engage with, and build on, the poor's existing institutions and organisations, thus building existing social capital and increasing the voice of the poor in development processes (Narayan *et al.*, 2000). The 2000/2001 World Development Report "Attacking poverty" explicitly deals with the empowerment issue as a means for improving the livelihoods of rural poor. Since the 1999 IFAP / World Bank workshop "Building rural capacity" (a workshop on the empowerment of producers' organisations), the World Bank has agreed to get an RPO component in each world Bank funded project from 2001 (see Rondot and Collion, 2001).

However, it must be noted that whilst most donors make broad reference to the importance of participation, institutions, rural organisations and civil society in rural development, emerging rural development policies do not seem to have prioritised the development of practical and systematic strategies to engage these actors and build their capacities. While RPOs may have been consulted at the national level, there has been less consultation at the local level. It must be recognised that the French MAE has stressed the importance of RPOs and many of the programmes funded are explicitly oriented to RPOs capacity-building both at grassroots and national levels (See CIRAD coordinated case studies).

In the context of globalisation, international standards and an increasingly active unfettered private sector, the need to increase capacities to advance the interests of RPO members becomes more evident. Market imperfections, unbalanced information among stakeholders, high transaction costs and a deficit of public goods all contribute to the need for collective action to deal with a rapidly changing context.

A number of themes in emerging approaches to rural development indicate the continued relevance of RPOs:

- the recognition of local diversity (interests of different groups, local livelihood strategies etc.) and the importance of livelihood diversification to rural producers (Urey, 2001);
- the importance of understanding context and local institutions and their functions;
- the need to promote empowerment and participation of civil society at all levels;
- the need to develop the capacities of rural populations to take advantage of opportunities arising from the changing political and economic context;
- the importance of broad partnerships between donors, state, decentralised authorities, civil society and the private sector.

RPOs IN POVERTY REDUCTION AND STRATEGIES

RPOs are diverse, have been in existence for decades and continue to constitute a key form of rural 'social capital'. Practical development experience has demonstrated that they can be key in shaping livelihood opportunities and outcomes, as well as having the potential to create local wealth. Their role as intermediaries between rural people and other actors and defending the interests of their members in the context of broader political and economic processes is particularly important. As are

the potential positive multiplier effects in local economies and the potential to increase the efficiency of small farms. In this vein, Rondot and Collion (2000) have argued that RPOs have a central role in poverty reduction because organisation is a key strategy that has been employed by poor producers over time, to effectively manage their own assets; gain access to services, inputs, credit, market outlets; and have a more effective input in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

However, RPOs may have limited capacities and resources which could prevent them from producing the benefits outlined above. Nor have they always clearly matched genuinely participatory and inclusive development strategies (IFAD, 2001). Further, it is not always evident that they represent the interests of the poorest or that they ensure the equitable distribution of benefits. They therefore may require institutional capacity strengthening and financial support to become effective in pursuing development objectives and also to maximise their potential role in development processes. Interventions to support them should be formulated in the context of these potentially problematic areas as well.

RPOs AND THE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

As outlined above, DFID, UNDP and other donors have adopted sustainable livelihoods (SL) approaches to inform rural development policy and practice. Livelihood strategies are conditioned by the context vulnerability in which people live and by policies, institutions and processes. Central to the approach are the capital assets that the poor draw upon as part of their livelihoods strategy including physical, natural, social, financial and human components.

Support to RPOs is coherent with sustainable livelihoods approaches to rural development, as they explicitly recognise the key importance of 'social capital', civil society and institutions to rural people for achieving positive livelihood outcomes. The livelihoods' framework also explicitly recognises the importance of social relationships and social capital to well-being (Pretty and Ward, 2001). Furthermore, both approaches emphasise that rural populations are active participants in development initiatives and acknowledge the importance of understanding and building on existing production systems. They both advocate the need to contextualise policies, which leads to an improved understanding of livelihood systems and strategies and the development of more appropriate policies and institutions. Finally, both also emphasise that micro-level institutions can, and may, influence the development of macro policies. Critically, rural organisations can also bridge the micro-macro divide, assuring both vertical and horizontal integration.

RPO ROLES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION

In the light of the new global economy where cereal prices are likely to decline and agricultural economies are exposed to new, predatory international actors and markets, farmers increasingly need to be able to compete and defend their economic interests. One way of doing this is by gathering together to increase economic muscle through the medium of an RPO, which can act as a key intermediary to protect member producers from the negative aspects of globalisation and help them to participate effectively in the global economy.

RPO links with international markets will become increasingly important to members' livelihoods as the globalisation process continues. These links can be facilitated by donors but their economic sustainability without donor support is crucial to achieve and should receive a high priority in the agendas.

It must be noted however, that there is a risk that increased donor enthusiasm for globalisation, free trade and increasing emphasis on the role of the private sector may divert their attention away from supporting participatory processes and increasing the role of RPOs among other stakeholders within the private sector in development processes¹⁹. This trend needs to be highlighted, and the role of civil society firmly placed in the centre of debates on globalisation if the advances of recent years and the lessons drawn from participatory approaches to development are to be capitalised upon.

19. For example, DFID's December 2000 White Paper on Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor placed more emphasis on trade, the private sector and private finance while participation, empowerment and the role of civil society are rarely alluded to.

Case studies

CASE 12: THE NAMIBIA COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM ASSOCIATION (NACOBTA)

Geographical Area: Namibia

Scale of Intervention: A range of around 45 member organisations from all of Namibia are represented; NACOBTA is managed by a management committee and has over 160 staff

Beneficiaries: Relatively poor groups

Specific Objectives: To increase income and employment from tourism (“pro-poor tourism”) with the objective of improving living standards in communal areas.

Project Activities: It acts as a network for members and is involved in grant and loan provision. It lobbies, helps with marketing members’ services both nationally and internationally and facilitates partnerships with the private sector.

Donors: LIFE, WWF/USAID, SIDA, DFID, EU

Budget: N\$4.6 million (1995-2000). N\$14million pledged from 2000-2005

Context

Over 700,000 foreign visitors went to Namibia in 1999, and as such the Namibian government regards tourism as a crucial part of the economy. The economic policy context is shaped by the Namibian government’s pro-poor strategies and the First National Development Plan (NDP). The main objectives of the NDP are: to enhance sustainable economic development and growth; to create employment opportunities; to reduce economic imbalances; to promote small scale enterprises and the informal sector and to support women’s participation. As one of the fastest growing industries in the country, tourism is considered key to achieving the goals of the NDP as well as to contributing to poverty reduction.

Project History

NACOBTA was established in 1995, following a workshop of representatives from various communities and NGOs in response to the recognised constraint to the successful development of community based tourism in Namibia. Participants found that the disparity and lack of network was hindering the successful development of community based tourism enterprises. In response to this and with a heavy input from international donors, the Association was formed.

NACOBTA is managed by a committee. The management committee has ten members consisting of seven elected members, the programme manager and two members appointed from the private sector. The Association has a secretariat in the capital city staffed with a programme manager, training co-ordinator, business advisors, administrator and a donor to assist with developing staff skills.

Donor Support

Donor support for NACOBTA comes in the form of financial grants and providing training. They pay for salaries, marketing, support to CBTEs, running costs and equipment. This support enables the project to combine development objectives with developing the tourism industry in a more distributive way.

However, it has been observed that NACOBTA is heavily dependent on donor funding, and that the sustainability of the association following the withdrawal of donor funds is questionable. Furthermore, despite the structure put in place, NACOBTA is driven primarily by its employed staff, donors and management rather than by its members. Despite this, the Association is still relatively young, and by developing capacities, this dependence may be reduced in the future.

Organisation's functions and objectives

The organisation combines two functions – that of promoting community tourism and that of mainstreaming community members' involvement in the national industry by promoting links with the private sector. These linkages are crucial to the development of community based tourism. It has a specific objective to distribute the benefits of tourism in Namibia more widely.

Project beneficiaries

Although open to diverse initiatives, there are certain criteria that determine membership in order to ensure that the CBTEs benefit poorer groups. Amongst others, these include initiatives that can be seen to benefit disadvantaged communities with clear evidence of a community benefit fund from the initiative; those whose members have limited access to financial resources and skills necessary to develop their enterprises; and those with a viable initiative.

NACOBTA members are predominantly poor and operate in the informal sector. This pro-poor focus is demonstrated by the criteria to become a member outlined above. Those that are directly involved with NACOBTA are the poor, and have skills, some social standing and basic schooling, but are unemployed. However, this tends not to be the very poor, who benefit from the project through externalities of the industry, such as informal sector and casual labour.

Membership has no gender bias at vertical and horizontal levels.

Activities and impact of the project

Support at the community level

In the past, the ability of poorer communities to participate in the tourism industry has been constrained by a lack of funds and capital available. NACOBTA offers financial assistance to help members get off the ground, and in 1999, six grants were awarded to CBTEs as well as five in 2000.

These grants provide opportunities that otherwise would not be available and are used for activities such as upgrading accommodation and developing campsites. They help to bring the facilities up to basic minimum standards which encourages private sector interest.

The organisation also offers training. There are three business advisors who give on-site assistance to member CBTEs, for example in developing management and organisational structures, training and developing business plans. Courses are also provided, such as the "Local Tour Guide Course" which was offered in 1999-2000.

NACOBTA staff members work with the CBTEs to help them to improve and add value to their product. They also provide training on bookkeeping and offer basic support packages (with calculators, visitors book etc) as well as assisting members to raise funds from donors and other organisations.

NACOBTA helps members with marketing activities, and produces and distributes a bi-monthly newsletter, brochure and CBTE Information Booklet, highlighting all operating member enterprises, exhibitions and trade fairs. This enables CBTEs to target local, regional and international tourist markets that they may otherwise be unable to. However, the effectiveness of this advertising so far has been questionable, as it has been observed that it is conducted in an unprofessional way. Nevertheless, the emphasis on capacity-building within the association is high, which has enabled communities to continuously improve marketing and services.

Facilitating joint ventures and partnerships with the private sector

One of NACOBTA's priorities is to liaise with the private sector to nurture a healthy relationship that will eventually lead to joint ventures, information sharing and an exchange of knowledge and skills. It has also been involved in activities to help combat scepticism about CBTEs in the private sector.

An example of how NACOBTA works with the private sector is that it has included two private sector members in the management committee. This helps other private sector companies build up relationships of trust with the community-based enterprises, and perceive them as partners. NACOBTA also distributes information in the private sector about the organisation and its members.

Working with the Government

One of the organisation's main functions is to act as a united voice to increase the bargaining power of previously disparate individuals. It represents its members' interests in a variety of forms, and lobbies governments to ensure that the needs and interests of the CBTEs are being met and incorporated into policy making, planning, implementation and monitoring processes of government.

Some examples of where NACOBTA has lobbied for the communities are outlined below:

NACOBTA has lobbied for communities to gain access to use of land and natural resources.

It has lobbied for the training of Ministry of Environment and Tourism staff to ensure that they understand the policies that will enable them to assist the communities.

It has lobbied the government to make the application processes for conservancies²⁰ and concessions simpler and shorter. In this case, communities were involved in, and contributed to the process with the aim of making applications more community friendly.

It has lobbied for the creation of infrastructure in poorer areas that have a potential for developing tourism.

From these actions, structures have been developed which bring cohesion into communities. There is evidence of outsiders now using these structures to reach the communities. NACOBTA is proving to have a long-term effect on standards of leadership and accountability in Namibia by facilitating a more democratic style of communication and consultation.

Poverty reduction

One of the main strengths of NACOBTA is its poverty focus. Most of its members are based on the communal lands where the majority of people are poor, dependent on subsistence farming and where unemployment is high. The organisation tackles poverty with a multifaceted approach at the micro, private, institutional and macro levels. Some of its contributions to poverty reduction are:

- Nacobta members provided full time employment for 163 previously unemployed poor people;
- rural groups such as local gemstone miners, shop owners, neighbouring communities, fire wood suppliers benefit indirectly from the increased volume of tourists.
- in one CBTE, casual labourers were found to earn enough money to support themselves and relatives at home in the village;
- at another CBTE each worker was found to support 30-50 people through remittances;
- from three CBTE case studies, it was felt that the direct and indirect impact on the poor is growing each year
- from the same three studies, it was found that CBTEs led to a reduction in vulnerability of households in those communities;
- Nacobta encourages the CBTEs to contribute to a social security fund. For example one association, pays N\$600 a month to the community fund which is distributed in the area.

Exogenous factors affecting the project

The external environment affected the progress made by NACOBTA at macro-level in both positive and negative ways. For example, the promulgation of the Nature Conservation

²⁰ A conservancy is a registered body of local residents to which the Government devolves conditional rights to use wildlife, so long as it is done in a sustainable way.

Amendment Act 1996 of parliament made provision for the establishment of conservancies in communal areas thus giving limited non-consumptive and consumptive rights to communities. This gave a boost to community tourism.

However, since then, the absence of a national tourism policy and lack of pro-activeness and commitment from the government to develop community-based initiatives has constrained the progress of NACOBTA. The lack of coordination within and between government ministries hinders the development of community-based tourism. For example, the Ministry for Environment and Tourism provide little marketing support for NACOBTA. Furthermore, there is a lack of a co-ordinating policy to give a policy framework for the tourism industry as a whole.

Monitoring and evaluation

The association recognises the importance of accountability. However this area is still underdeveloped, and there is a focus on upwards accountability, rather than to its membership base. Furthermore, due to the number of donors involved with the organisation, NACOBTA has found that it spends a disproportionate amount of time writing reports for each donor when it could be focusing on its project activities.

Sustainability

NACOBTA continues to be heavily dependent on donor funding which makes chances of sustainability questionable. However, at the level of CBTEs, this is not the case. Some no longer require funding, and are still able to contribute to the community in a positive way. As capacities are developed, this will increasingly become the case. However, the CBTEs need to be encouraged to pay their membership fees in a more systematic way for the NACOBTA to be able to continue working for the groups.

Concrete support that could be provided to improve the RPO's performance

Due to the multi-faceted nature of the groups NACOBTA has to work with, they need to develop skills to work with different people at community, private sector and national levels.

They also need to develop multi-level strategies at macro, and micro levels in order to facilitate the development of community based tourism.

Developing capacity at the community level is an area that continually needs to be developed if the membership organisations are to be effectively integrated into the private sector. The challenge to NACOBTA is to meet the standards expected by the private sector.

The macro-level strategy of NACOBTA was hindered by the lack of active government engagement, which implies a greater need for governments to work with the association.

Although the united voice of NACOBTA is beneficial, the individual CBTEs must be recognised in their own right. For example, the first page of the advertising brochures is about NACOBTA rather than explaining about CBTEs. Along the same lines, NACOBTA rather than the CBTEs themselves usually arrange meetings. This could have a negative impact on ownership and sustainability of the producer organisation.

A weakness that has been noted with NACOBTA is the lack of business, tourism and financial know-how in the institution and of individual members. In order to make inroads into the private sector, and ensure that CBTEs are viable, these skills will have to be developed. It is suggested, for example, that communities need assistance and guidance as to how to deal with their money efficiently and distribute it fairly.

NACOBTA must also reconcile the three cultures within which it works: the traditional/community culture; the corporate culture; the NGO culture.

NACOBTA has failed to develop a system of distributing community funds to benefit the very poor, and relies on the trickle-down effect. Encouraging payment into a community fund could ensure that indirect benefits would reach groups that were otherwise unable to benefit.

Donor over-dependency should be avoided. Currently few of its members are paying membership fees which means that it gives an impression that NACOBTA is primarily donor driven. This might lead to the disengagement of some stakeholders

Practical lessons for rural development policy and strategy

From this case study, it is clear that mainstreaming community-based organisations with the private sector is crucial to their survival and profitability. NACOBTA needs the private sector to use its facilities, and invest in its initiatives. It needs to develop the skills to deal with the private sector so that the organisation can be run as a professional business. The Bank could therefore work closely with the private sector and have the integration of the community based POs as high on their agenda.

Government policy has an impact on the success of any producer organisation and its links with markets and the private sector. Therefore, working with governments to facilitate and encourage national policies that are conducive to rural groups being able to access markets and commodities will improve its impact.

The high financial inputs into this project enabled it to combine development objectives with building up the tourism sector. This is key where there is a recognition that investing in human capital will benefit the area in the long term, even if there are few returns in the short term.

The most significant lessons from the experience, however, are as follows.

In a non-agricultural economic sector such as tourism there are often numerous but weak attempts at small enterprise development by the poor. Here the key lesson is the great value of a producer organisation in bringing the enterprises of the poor together.

Without the establishment of the organisation, many of the lobbying activities that it has performed would not have been done. CBTEs would not have had a united voice to air their complaints, nor would they have been able to access opportunities for skills development, technical support and funds.

Because it is a PO operating at the inter-association level, this organisation can combine two key functions: provision of direct technical assistance to members; and representation of member interests in liaison with government and the private sector.

A strategy of flexible but targeted membership ensures that the benefits of the producer organisation are not diverted to better off income groups.

Direct action can have indirect positive outcomes. This was seen with the increasing recognition of CBTEs by the government as an active group following successful government lobbying. These indirect outcomes should be considered in the monitoring and evaluation process.

The organisation required skills to work with very different groups of people – the poor, the private sector and decision-makers. This implies monitoring the organisational development of the management committees as well as the impact of its actions.

CBTEs' link with the private sector was made easier by having NACOBTA as a central point of contact. This partnership should provide a win-win situation for both, however, to make it worthwhile

Institution-building processes can be slow and need substantial commitment of funds and resources at the start to be successful. Benefits will increase and multiply over time. It can sometimes be an expensive and long process. This should be considered in donor evaluation policies.

CASE 13: THE NATIONAL FARMERS' PLATFORM IN THE GAMBIA

Geographical Area: The Gambia

Beneficiaries: Actual active membership is hard to ascertain, however, the Platform claimed to represent all male and female farmers in all areas of The Gambia.

Specific Objectives: To give farmers a voice in national agricultural policy issues, assist with input provision and output marketing

Donors: Initial support from CILSS and facilitation supported by Club du Sahel. Small grant from CRS/GM 1999

Project History

The origins of the National Farmers Platform in The Gambia can be traced back to 1994. Its origins lie in an effort to create farmers' platforms at the local, sub-regional and national levels. It was created to give farmers a voice in national agriculture policy issues. It also aims to assist farmers with input provision and output marketing. It is an example of a generically based organisation where members undertake multiple farming activities.

The Platform is also a key example of an organisation that has evolved through the dissolution of state organisations and in particular The Gambia's Cooperative Union in 1998 whose departure left a void in the rural sector. It has a very broad base of RPSs. Theoretically the organisation covers all of The Gambia's 1,500 villages and is made up of two Platform members selected from every village in the country. There is in principle no gender bias at village level. However, in practice there are very weak links between village level farmers and national representatives and limited common interests among members.

In 1994, CILSS (Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel) agreed to help its member states facilitate the creation of farmers' platforms at the local, national and sub-regional levels. In The Gambia, meetings were held with farmers nation-wide to enable the progressive selection of platform representatives at the village, district, divisional and national levels.

In 1996, a National Level Executive Committee was elected and its first full national meeting was in February 1997. District representatives elected Divisional Platform representative and a national-level Executive Committee which includes a President and a Vice President. The organisation is constituted from representatives (one male and one female) drawn from each village in The Gambia.

The organisation did not emerge from a grassroots movement, nor is it based on a traditional organisation. It was instigated on the initiative of the Gambian Government and CILSS.

Activities and impact of the project

In 1998, The Department of State for Agriculture explicitly sought the opinions of farmers via the Platform when it was drafting a medium term policy statement. They almost unanimously identified three key problem areas: soil fertility; low quality groundnut seeds and lack of farming machinery.

However there is little evidence that any of these have been dealt with. Indeed the Platform has had little overall impact on farmers' livelihoods. Some explanations for this have been listed below.

The RPO was unable to provide effective material support or services to members due to lack of funds from both members and external sources. This meant that ownership and interest in the Platform dwindled. Nor was there a common interest in production of a commodity or specific economic activity.

The Platform lacked training and capacity to establish effective links with local farmer members

There is little evidence that farmers have confidence in the organisation owing to the fact that it has had few tangible accomplishments.

The organisation is perceived by the farmers to exist to enable them to gain access to material inputs at a reasonable price rather than to influence in policy matters.

The organisation did not emerge naturally in response to local people's felt needs.

The Platform lacks issues or objectives that bind the members together at the grassroots to support the national platform. It is not based around a common productive force or commodity, but rather attempts to represent all farmers with their naturally diverse interests.

To sum up, the failure of the Platform to have a significant impact on rural farmers in The Gambia, was primarily due to its lack of financial base, lack of membership fees, limited access to external funds and weak grassroots support.

Concrete support that could be provided to improve the RPO's performance

Guidelines could be clearly defined and developed as a consultative process to enable all Platform members to have a clear understanding of what the association is trying to achieve

The organisation would benefit from strong leadership to act quickly and decisively. This may require providing funds for a full time leader.

Feedback to members about actions and accomplishments of the organisation will help to sustain interest in it.

The organisation would benefit from heavier external financial inputs and capacity-building which would give it the boost needed to gain farmers' interest and loyalty. At the same time it needs its own remunerative productive activities and capacity to draw funds from members. Its failure to gain these so far has left the platform in effect unable to act.

Creating stronger links with grassroots members is necessary to ensure greater knowledge and action on the part of the farmers. It would also ensure that the Platform has more say in acting as a pressure group.

Practical lessons for rural development policy and strategy

The National Farmers' Platform in The Gambia is a clear example of a RPO that has underachieved due to its lack of clear objectives, and focus on one commodity or issue of common interest. Indeed village representatives and Platform leaders seemed largely inspired to work with the Platform as a way to access external resources. This has affected interest, cohesion and effectiveness of the organisation. It is therefore recommended that producer organisations are built around one particular issue or commodity with clear guidelines as to its aims and objectives.

Strong trained leadership is crucial to the success of the producers' organisations, and donors could incorporate the cost of building leadership capacities into PO support budgets.

The lack of financial and technical support were aspects that hindered organisational capacity. A high level of investment early on in the development of the Platform could have helped to overcome these problems.

Facilitating upwards and downwards flows of information within an organisation will have positive impacts on the appropriateness of policy as well as stimulating farmers' interest in the organisation.

An externally induced organisation, totally dependent on external funds, and where there are no existing ties between members is unlikely to succeed in the long term.

CASE 14: THE COLOMBIAN COFFEE GROWERS' FEDERATION (CCGF)

Geographical Area: Columbia's Central Range

Beneficiaries: Coffee growers and their families in Columbia's Central Range – approximately 250,000 farms

Specific Objectives: To serve the welfare of the country and promote the economic and social well-being of Colombian coffee growers

Project Activities: The Federation engages in activities such as transport, coffee storage, agricultural research and public works programmes

Donors: Primarily self funded, but have received grants from EC, DFID. From 1993-1996 DFID provided support to Cenicafé

Context

Colombia's Central Range of the Andes was ideal for coffee due to its extremely steep slopes, fertile soil and high altitude. In the 1990s, the coffee-growing area of this Region was organised into six departments with a population of about 12 million people and 250,000 coffee farms. It is this area that benefits the most from the Colombian Coffee growers' Federation (CCGF).

Project History

Established in 1927 the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation is an example of a smallholder organisation that is both run and funded primarily by the farmers themselves. Based in Colombia's Central Range, it covers an area that produces over 60% of the national coffee production.

Nearly all of the main founders grew coffee and came from the elite classes. No donors were involved. The Federation originally grew with the objective to protect and defend coffee production for the welfare of the country and to promote the social and economic well-being of the growers. By establishing a Federation it was hoped that private exporters would not be able to collude to drive down prices paid to farmers. It engages in activities such as transport, coffee storage, agricultural research, and public works programmes.

The Federation has a democratic hierarchy based on Municipal Committees which are democratically elected at grassroots level. The managers are accountable to the democratically elected Coffee Congress.

The Federation's coffee sales are worth between \$1.5 to \$2 billion per year. Its success has been attributed to the organisation's high level of professionalism in its activities, its stability and financial security. The large volumes of coffee produced means that producers can achieve economies of scale and have effective negotiating power.

Donor support

Most external donor support for the Federation has been in the form of financial grants. It was therefore up to the organisation itself to build on its capacities and grow to become increasingly effective.

Project beneficiaries

The population of Colombia's Central Range, where over 60% of Colombia's coffee is produced, is about 12 million people with about quarter a million farms.

The Federation claims to have strong connections with its grassroots membership which can be demonstrated in a number of its actions. For example, in the 1930s, the Federation supported breaking up large estates and lobbied for the creation of a mortgage bank to allow smallholders to buy land.

However, at the same time, the organisation is managed by land owning elite families and there are economic, educational and class differences between them and their grassroots members. On the national executive, 85% of the representatives own farms that are over three hectares. This has sometimes led to communication problems between the organisation's grassroots and its leaders.

Coffee is an ideal crop for smallholders in Colombia in that it can grow all year around. The Federation pays all of the growers the same price regardless of distance from the market. It also acts as a buffer to protect farmers from international price fluctuations by buying more coffee when prices are low. However farmers in marginal areas may not reap as many benefits as those closer to the centre and they may accept a lower price for their produce rather than carry it the long distance to the market.

The majority of members are male, and there is currently no clear strategy to target women.

Activities and impact of the project

The role of the Federation

It is in control of its own budgets, and expenditure allocation and works directly with the government to, for example, fix taxes on coffee exports.

It funds public works in the Central Coffee Belt and continuously funds a coffee research institute: The National Coffee Research Centre (Cenicafé).

The Federation core aims are to support farmers by raising productivity and ensure good prices for their produce.

The breadth of internal management capacities (raising productivity through developing new technologies, ensuring extension messages reach the farmers) and external management capacities (fixing prices, investing in education, public works etc, and fighting for more secure rights to land tenure) has enabled the organisation to work and defend its members' interests effectively.

Agricultural growth

The association funds a research centre: The National Coffee Research Centre (Cenicafé) which was established in 1938, and is the scientific branch of the Federation. The high yields achieved in the area have been partly attributed to the research carried out by Cenicafé. For example, the development of the improved variety "Caturra" contributed to the increased yield from 42kg per hectare in the 1960s to 84kg in the 1990s.

Poverty alleviation

Whilst few of the Federation's members are from the poorest groups, they do benefit in a number of indirect ways. In 1927 the Federation and Colombian Government fixed a tax on government exports which would be returned to the Federation to be spent on public goods for coffee-growing communities (building roads, clinics, water systems and schools), and research. Over half of the income generated from this source is distributed to Departmental Committees based on the proportion of coffee they produce. This is then disbursed to Municipal Committees. Some tangible benefits of the Federation tax for local communities are:

- 16,923 schools have been built;
- 12,882km of roads have been constructed;
- 50,672km of roads have been improved.

However, in areas where less coffee is grown, the material benefits are less evident and there is a significant income differential as can be seen as below:

| Department | Percentage of rural, coffee-producing households living in misery ²¹ |
|-------------------------|---|
| Central Coffee Belt | 14.7 |
| Rest of the Coffee Belt | 46.8 |

Political empowerment

Whilst the Federation considers itself apolitical, it has demonstrated considerable political influence. The Coffee Fund, from membership fees and coffee tax, is large enough to influence Colombia's macro-economy. As a result, the Federation works in consultation with the Government of Colombia to decide on general issues relating to this fund. Furthermore, in some Municipal Committees they have successfully negotiated with local government to put up 30% matching funds.

Management of natural resources in a sustainable manner

The research branch of the Federation (Cenicafé) works towards blending advanced agronomic techniques with a strong environmental emphasis. This approach has produced a number of innovative results including developing:

- coffee berry borer control;
- pollution-free coffee processing;
- a rust-resistant coffee variety;
- water saving methods for removing coffee pulp.

Links between research, extension and farmers

Cenicafé researchers have an ethos of working directly with farmers, although using standard survey techniques and widely accepted consultative mechanisms. Through extension agents, the Federation administers questionnaires to farmers each year, and every five years departmental committees are asked to describe their research needs. However, farmers play a role in setting the research agenda as Cenicafé maintains links with Federation extension agents and holds annual meetings to discuss research findings with them. Extension workers also maintain direct linkages with the farmers through half-hour weekly television programmes which are estimated to have about 5 million viewers.

Cenicafé's funding is dependent on the coffee growers themselves, as the Coffee Congress has the authority to increase or decrease research funds. However, farmers are not involved in either conducting or validating the research.

The effective dissemination of relevant research information may be one reason why the region has had a history of relatively high adoption rates (75% in some instances).

Sustainability

The Federation has many of the ingredients required for sustainability: financial security; stability (having had only eight general managers since 1927); and political independence. However, the recent dramatic fall in coffee prices has meant that the CCGF has had to cut the domestic price of coffee paid to growers by 9%, to reduce escalating production costs in order to prevent the association from running into a deficit of \$300m by the end of 2001. It is unclear what will happen in the future, and it could be that they need to be supported financially to cope with global markets.

21. *Misery* in this case is defined as having two or more of the following: poverty, crowding, inadequate housing, access to drinking water, children do not attend school.

Concrete support that could be provided to improve the RPO's performance

The CCGF is a key example of a RPO has been developed by a local initiative. This directly contributes to the sustainability of the Federation. The broad vision of action coupled with a narrow focus on one commodity of the Federation (securing land tenure, ensuring coffee prices, providing services) has ensured farmer co-operation. The organisation should continue to work in this way.

Strong grassroots connections are crucial to the effectiveness and appropriateness of the Federation's policies. However, where there is a clear correlation between economic status and class with leadership, efforts could be made to redress the balance.

The steady flow of income has given the Federation financial power which allows them to conduct research, invest in storage and shipping and protect farms from erratic price changes. However, the organisation is vulnerable to world markets. Donors should continue to support the organisation until coffee prices improve.

Practical lessons for rural development policy and strategy

Part of the success of the Federation can be traced to the experience and competence of both its managers and members. The breadth of internal management capacities seems to have developed without the direct intervention of a donor, although this was facilitated by the availability of funds. Therefore, donors should be careful not to undermine the initiatives of indigenous organisations and their managers to develop their own capacities.

Where a producer organisation is based on a single commodity, exclusionary measures, based on that particular commodity, are inevitable. This must be recognised and, if considered necessary, measures to include other groups implemented (such as non-coffee growers in this case).

External markets can have an impact on the success of a producer organisation, and therefore should be taken into consideration in planning, and monitored in the period during which the organisation receives support. Donors could work with the RPO to ensure that they have a maximum steady flow of income, which will help buffer farmers from erratic price fluctuations. Otherwise, they could help promote additional functions in the producer organisation that would spread risk.

CASE 15: THE NATIONAL FARMERS' PLATFORM IN THE GAMBIA

Geographical Area: The Gambia

Beneficiaries: Actual active membership is hard to ascertain, however, the Platform claimed to represent all male and female farmers in all areas of The Gambia.

Specific Objectives: To give farmers a voice in national agricultural policy issues, assist with input provision and output marketing

Donors: Initial support from CILSS and facilitation supported by Club du Sahel. Small grant from CRS/GM 1999

Project History

The origins of the National Farmers Platform in The Gambia can be traced back to 1994. Its origins lie in an effort to create farmers' platforms at the local, sub-regional and national levels. It was created to give farmers a voice in national agriculture policy issues. It also aims to assist farmers with input provision and output marketing. It is an example of a generically based organisation where members undertake multiple farming activities.

The Platform is also a key example of an organisation that has evolved through the dissolution of state organisations and in particular The Gambia's Cooperative Union in 1998 whose departure left a void in the rural sector. It has a very broad base of RPSs. Theoretically the organisation covers all of The Gambia's 1,500 villages and is made up of two Platform members selected from every village in the country. There is in principle no gender bias at village level. However, in practice there are very weak links between village level farmers and national representatives and limited common interests among members.

In 1994, CILSS (Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel) agreed to help its member states facilitate the creation of farmers' platforms at the local, national and sub-regional levels. In The Gambia, meetings were held with farmers nation-wide to enable the progressive selection of platform representatives at the village, district, divisional and national levels.

In 1996, a National Level Executive Committee was elected and its first full national meeting was in February 1997. District representatives elected Divisional Platform representative and a national-level Executive Committee which includes a President and a Vice President. The organisation is constituted from representatives (one male and one female) drawn from each village in The Gambia.

The organisation did not emerge from a grassroots movement, nor is it based on a traditional organisation. It was instigated on the initiative of the Gambian Government and CILSS.

Activities and impact of the project

In 1998, The Department of State for Agriculture explicitly sought the opinions of farmers via the Platform when it was drafting a medium term policy statement. They almost unanimously identified three key problem areas: soil fertility; low quality groundnut seeds and lack of farming machinery.

However there is little evidence that any of these have been dealt with. Indeed the Platform has had little overall impact on farmers' livelihoods. Some explanations for this have been listed below.

The RPO was unable to provide effective material support or services to members due to lack of funds from both members and external sources. This meant that ownership and interest in the Platform dwindled. Nor was there a common interest in production of a commodity or specific economic activity.

The Platform lacked training and capacity to establish effective links with local farmer members

There is little evidence that farmers have confidence in the organisation owing to the fact that it has had few tangible accomplishments.

The organisation is perceived by the farmers to exist to enable them to gain access to material inputs at a reasonable price rather than to influence in policy matters.

The organisation did not emerge naturally in response to local people's felt needs.

The Platform lacks issues or objectives that bind the members together at the grassroots to support the national platform. It is not based around a common productive force or commodity, but rather attempts to represent all farmers with their naturally diverse interests.

To sum up, the failure of the Platform to have a significant impact on rural farmers in The Gambia, was primarily due to its lack of financial base, lack of membership fees, limited access to external funds and weak grassroots support.

Concrete support that could be provided to improve the RPO's performance

Guidelines could be clearly defined and developed as a consultative process to enable all Platform members to have a clear understanding of what the association is trying to achieve

The organisation would benefit from strong leadership to act quickly and decisively. This may require providing funds for a full time leader

Feedback to members about actions and accomplishments of the organisation will help to sustain interest in it

The organisation would benefit from heavier external financial inputs and capacity-building which would give it the boost needed to gain farmers' interest and loyalty. At the same time it needs its own remunerative productive activities and capacity to draw funds from members. Its failure to gain these so far has left the platform in effect unable to act.

Creating stronger links with grassroots members is necessary to ensure greater knowledge and action on the part of the farmers. It would also ensure that the Platform has more say in acting as a pressure group.

Practical lessons for rural development policy and strategy

The National Farmers' Platform in The Gambia is a clear example of a RPO that has underachieved due to its lack of clear objectives, and focus on one commodity or issue of common interest. Indeed village representatives and Platform leaders seemed largely inspired to work with the Platform as a way to access external resources. This has affected interest, cohesion and effectiveness of the organisation. It is therefore recommended that producer organisations are built around one particular issue or commodity with clear guidelines as to its aims and objectives.

Strong trained leadership is crucial to the success of the producers' organisations, and donors could incorporate the cost of building leadership capacities into PO support budgets.

The lack of financial and technical support were aspects that hindered organisational capacity. A high level of investment early on in the development of the Platform could have helped to overcome these problems.

Facilitating upwards and downwards flows of information within an organisation will have positive impacts on the appropriateness of policy as well as stimulating farmers' interest in the organisation.

An externally induced organisation, totally dependent on external funds, and where there are no existing ties between members is unlikely to succeed in the long term.

Complementary short case studies

CASE 16: FOREST USER GROUPS (CFUG) - NEPAL

Context

In the past, Nepal relied on a traditional management system based on community protection of forest resources. The system began breaking down in the late 1950s following the nationalisation of forestlands. Since then, almost 50% of Nepal's original forests have disappeared. Over the past 20 years, the Nepalese government has continued to provide legal support for the community control of forest resources, with the Forest Regulations of 1995 providing a strong legislative framework for handing over control of the country's forests to communities.

DFID work with His Majesty's Government of Nepal in the promotion of forest user groups. In the context of diverse income sources in the area, the project builds on rural livelihood strategies as a key orientation to reduce poverty and promote more sustainable use of forestry.

Role in the Management of Natural Resources

The CFUG have been found to contribute to forest protection and regeneration. The high protection cost of individual forest use means that it makes more sense to manage the resources in a group thereby spreading the costs.

Role in Poverty Alleviation

Evidence of the impact of CFUG on the poor is mixed. On the one hand, there is a recognised trade-off between environmental protection and poverty reduction, as the rights of the poor can be threatened, as access is limited in the recuperation phase. Furthermore, as the value of the resource increases, powerful groups may start questioning access by marginalised groups.

For these reasons, it is recognised that the poor must be differentiated. The landless poor, and the poor who have some access to land have very different uses for the forest as do those who live in remote areas compared to those who live in more accessible areas.

However, although there is a concern that the better off benefit more than the poor, CFUGs have the potential to reduce poverty by providing access to capital. The project provides access to small loans and consumption loans. They also promote the formation of clusters.

Furthermore, the poorest and most disadvantaged are especially dependent on the forest for access to financial capital in the shape of saleable products and raw materials. Regeneration of the forest is therefore crucial to their livelihoods.

Role in Empowerment

There is evidence that the project has empowered some previously disadvantaged groups. For example, women have become office bearers in the CFUG, and some have even risen to chair of the VDC.

The External Environment

The project recognises the importance of the external environment, and DFID's modus operandi should take account of changes in national policies and as the economy develops. Particularly in forestry, the state has a powerful role to play as one of the key areas for intervention

An example of how the external environment is crucial to the efficacy of the project and user groups, was with the political empowerment of some of the members. This was in the context of the adoption of the Forest Sector Master Plan, which coincided with the culmination of the country's democracy movement.

The project also recognises the importance of the cultural context of the user group area. For example, when project activities moved to Tarai, the perception of the economic value of the forest and the identification of the community were different to previous areas worked in.

Exit Strategies

DFID as the main funding body have very clear exit strategies, one of which is to build the CFUGs' capacities.

Practical lessons for rural development policy and strategy

The distribution of the RPO's assets should be to be monitored to ensure the poor benefit as well as the better off groups.

In the context of the inevitable process of commercialisation, the project should work with the poor to ensure that they are not being marginalised . To do this, the project should realise that the commercial goals of the poorer groups and the better off groups will be different. Commercial ventures that self-target the poor could be sought.

In this case, the linkages between sectoral and political decentralisation are an important part of ensuring sustained institutional change from the grassroots. The external environment should be considered when working with RPOs.

A clear exit strategy from the inception of the RPO will enhance its chances of sustainability.

Donor: DFID

CASE 17: THE QUILON FISHERMEN WELFARE SOCIETY, KERALA – INDIA

The Quilon Fishermen Welfare Society in Kerala (FWS) grew up in the context of the 1960s when fishing was becoming an increasingly hazardous and unpredictable occupation. The original association was founded by an Indian Priest and funded by the Dutch NGO, CEBEMO in 1979. More recently it has received support from SIFFS and Intermediate Technology. The society is a federal body that has been largely an indigenous process of institutional development.

The communities are among the poorest in the state, and have been vulnerable to exploitation by the buyers of their produce and moneylenders.

The RPO was an attempt to help develop new technologies to counteract the threat and deal with the introduction of mechanised trawling and to help fishermen organise themselves in response to technical change. Much of its success can be attributed to the strong indigenous NGO presence, which provided continuity and enabled international NGOs to confine themselves to the financial and technical functions that they are best able to discharge.

Key Beneficiaries

1,200 men. There are also programmes designed for women, but male concerns have tended to dominate the agenda of the organisation and no attempt has been made to develop new technologies, which might benefit women. Nevertheless, a large part of the range of benefits arising from the FWS extends to well beyond its own membership. These benefits are primarily in preserving the fabric of a community, in strengthening its capacity to deal effectively with external agencies, and in all that potentially follows from this in terms of its quality of life and capacity to preserve the environment upon which it depends. Furthermore, almost everybody, irrespective of whether they belong to the FWS or not, has gained from the union-inspired legislation of the early 1980.

Role in Poverty Alleviation

It is suggested that few people are actually better off in material terms as a result of the FWS.

Role in Empowerment

The association has played a role in empowering the community to enable members to preserve their traditional way of life in the face of external forces

Sustainability

The organisation is becoming less dependent upon external funding. However, whether it can become self funded depends on a number of factors. One of these is the market that is currently favourable. However, the organisation is vulnerable to cyclical variations in fish availability and adverse movements in market forces which may affect inputs of prices of their produce. This is set against the liberalisation process in India, which throws into question the continuing availability of the subsidised loans on which the fishermen depend.

Practical lessons for rural development policy and strategy

The development of this producer organisation was highly dependent upon the wider political and policy context. This will continue to affect it in the future, and should be monitored so that buffers can be put in place to try and counteract any adverse trends

The existence of a strong indigenous body allowed international NGOs to confine themselves to providing the kind of support for which they are best equipped. For example ITDG did not seek to control the course of events, but responded where their contributions were needed.

The clear focus around a particular core interest enabled the organisation to have the inclination and muscle power to overthrow existing exploitative relationships.

Donors:

CEBEMO; Bread for The World; Intermediate Technology; SIFFS; Don Bosco

CASE 18: TRADITIONAL SELF-HELP ASSOCIATIONS – CAMBODIA

Context

The Self-Help (SFH) project began in 1995 amidst a famine that had persisted in the province for three years. In order to make the collective organisation more sustainable, GTZ suggested establishing rice banks in 64 villages based on the Grameen Bank model in Bangladesh. The villagers, however found the organisational principles alien, and there was a lack of clarity as to whom the rice actually belonged. Thus the structure of the bank was donor led, and there were few attempts to identify existing organisational forms.

In response to this, the SFH group attempted to build on indigenous self-help groups. Aschmoneit (1998) found that part of the problem with identifying traditional associations was the donors who instigated the creation of village development committees to the detriment of the old self-help organisations. The rapid emergence of the "Rice Bank" in response to a famine mitigated against identifying traditional groups due to time issues.

Beneficiaries

The Pagoda Coordinating Committee looked at 40 associations. They found that in fact medium-income families were the usual clients of the cash associations. However, project intervention ensured that a certain percentage of poor families were involved.

Indigenous/Donor Led

The authors point out that the disparity between western organisational forms and traditional Asian self-help associations is huge. Furthermore, whilst they identify the benefits (they are more flexible and capable of learning than donor initiated groups) of self-help groups, they also recognise some of their weaknesses (they are often dominated by men, their modus operandi is not particularly participatory, the unwritten mode of communication can give rise to disputes).

Practical lessons for rural development policy and strategy

Organisations that are created and supported under emergency situations may undermine pre-existing initiatives

Top down, donor implemented RPOs can be detrimental to indigenous self-help organisations. Before encouraging the development of a producers' organisation, special care should be taken to ensure that they are not undermined

The efficacy of the RPOs will be affected if it is donor led, as villagers may find principles alien, and therefore, when support is withdrawn, interest will dwindle. Cultural concepts of co-operation and organisational development should be considered.

This is an example of an producers' organisations that can overcome existing structures to a certain extent, and where due to intervention, poorer families can reap the benefits as well as better off families

Donor: GTZ

CASE 19: EL CEIBO – BOLIVIA

Context

El Ceibo is a federation of 36 cocoa-producing cooperatives in the Alto Beni of the northern department of La Paz. It was established in 1977 to co-ordinate member cooperatives' activities and improve the production and marketing possibilities for cocoa producers. The organisation has moved from product marketing into processing, market development and technology generation. It is an apolitical organisation and focuses on serving its members' needs.

El Ceibo is described as a successful producer organisation that has facilitated technology generation, product transformation and marketing in the Andes. It has increased the returns to cocoa production – currently the principal cash crop in the area.

Representativity

There are equity and distributive implications of working with an economic organisation that has selective entry criteria. Representativity is poor. To become a member, you have to have lived in the area for 5 years, own over 1 hectare, and pay a fee. This excludes just over half the community and in particular - new comers, and poorer families

Sustainability

It has heavy dependence on donors (German Development Service – DED and Swiss Development Cooperation - DCC) which makes long term sustainability questionable following withdrawal.

Links with European Market

The organisation's links have helped it access fair trade markets in Europe which it would have otherwise not had.

The long-term relationship between donor and organisation (up to 16 years) has enabled both the organisation and the donor to understand each other in a way that more newly funded organisation might not.

Practical lessons for rural development policy and strategy

In a strict commodity membership based organisation as this, selective entry criteria may mean exclusion of some community members. To widen its outreach organisations could eliminate membership criteria

The organisation would have benefited from having a clear exit strategy

In the context of globalisation, the links with European markets as a direct result of the organisation's relationship with DED and SDC have helped it to access markets it otherwise would not have been able to. Efforts like this should be replicated.

Donors: DED, SDC.

The role of rural producers' organisations in development : lessons learned

Some of the key issues that emerged from the review of RPOs experiences are outlined below.

REPRESENTATIVENESS

Supporting RPOs may lead to the exclusion of poorer groups, which can result in greater inequalities, e.g. when RPOs demand a membership fee (that poorer groups may be unable to pay); by operating in a restricted geographical area, or by maintaining cultural or ethnic divisions (Case 7) and specific barriers to entry criteria (Case 19). In each of these cases, the core RPO membership could not be counted as the poorest.

The leadership of an RPO may also be taken by elite groups (Case 14). However, it must be said that this does not necessarily imply that elites will not defend the interests of poorer groups alongside those of the powerful.

From the case studies, several attempts by RPOs and development agencies to deal with uneven representation included:

- introducing membership criteria that ensure that the RPO is not constituted of better off groups alone (Case 12);
- donor intervention, e.g. to ensure that poor families who would have otherwise been excluded are included (Case 19);
- ensuring local participation at all stages of the project's activities and taking account of existing production systems, the interests of the local people, economic, political and ecological structures (c.f. the Olafo project in Central America – although in this case local leaders were involved in the process and Ammour (1994) warns that they did not necessarily represent all people);
- the use of safety nets (such as food for work), or redistribution of the membership fee (Case 14) to poorer groups, to ensure that the poor benefit.

GENDER

Mixed gender organisations may be dominated by male voices and leaders. Producer organisations where only women are permitted to be members can sometimes address entrenched gender inequalities more effectively (Case 13) by:

- giving them stronger economic and political status (Case 16);
- providing training and education, e.g. numeracy, literacy, leadership, accounting, management (Case 13);
- providing a sense of esteem, empowerment and ability to influence development processes.

Where a producer organisation works primarily with women (Case 13) or primarily with men (Case 17), there is some evidence that the benefits arising from the organisation can extend beyond the gender groups.

While planning support for RPOs should be formulated within a gender framework, it may be counter-productive to attempt to exclude either men or women from benefiting from interventions. For example, while an intervention may support women's organisations it should not prevent men from gaining secondary benefits from women's membership, as that could undermine the existence of the RPO in a male dominated society. However, it should also be understood that in certain contexts women dominate influential groups that may work against the interests of the poorest: e.g. market traders.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

The structure and aims of RPOs can be key to their potential to be effectively involved in the development process. Some general observations from the review are that:

organisations that started slowly and then scaled up moving towards a federated structure had a greater chance of achieving their goals (Cases 12 and 13).

where the RPOs were bound together by a common interest in a remunerative economic activity or production of a commodity they stood greater chance of cohesion due to common material interests (Cases 13, 14 and 19).

Organisations that were able to access diverse sources of funding – including access to funds from wide base of donors, effective collection of membership fees, profits from productive activities stood greater chance of sustainability (Cases 14 and 17).

Organisations with layered and clearly linked structures from grassroots to national and international levels, with effective internal systems for representation and communicating wishes from the grassroots, demonstrated a greater development impact.

If membership fees do not flow steadily, it may signify poor interest in and ownership of the organisation, and a consequence may be that the RPO may be unable to carry out its activities, leading to a cycle of disinterest in the organisation (Case 15).

However, where an RPO takes on too many types of function without maintaining a clear focus or core set of objectives, it may be weakened (Case 15), and may suffer from dwindling membership interest and ultimately failure to achieve change or economic objectives.

POVERTY REDUCTION

Poor people tend to be locked into low productivity occupations, lacking entitlement to assets, technology and access to markets to allow them to increase that productivity. It has been outlined above that RPOs can create opportunities for the poor to engage in more productive and profitable activities that have a poverty reducing impact. Further, investment in human capital through RPOs correlates positively with poverty reduction, social and political empowerment. Evidence from case studies suggests the following:

- even where the poorest were not direct members of a producers' organisation to support it as the multiplier effects may reach the poor (Case 12);
- carefully designed capacity-building measures were found to ensure that poverty reduction was included in the RPO's agenda and that the poor have increased voice ;
- RPOs that perform diverse tasks can, in certain contexts, effectively benefit the poor as they tackle more than one aspect of poverty at the same time (Howe, 1999) ;
- RPOs can use taxes or membership fees as safety nets for poorer groups (case 14).
- however, trickle down effects did always occur and hence donors and RPOs should continue to collaborate to develop strategies to ensure that the poorest benefit equally;
- trade-offs were found to exist:
- between poverty reduction and community empowerment (Case 17) ;
- between environmental protection and helping the very poor. As the value of the resource around which the PO is constructed increases, access by marginalised groups can become questioned by powerful groups (Case 16);
- between commercialisation and increasing incomes of the very poor;
- some financial investments may have high costs in relation to benefits in the short term and they may not directly contribute to the sustainability of the organisation. However, if they contribute to reducing poverty at the community level, their long-term return should be considered enough to justify the spending (Case 12).

AGRICULTURAL SERVICE PROVISION

As public research and extension services have been downsizing in the face of reduced public funding, the potential role that RPOs can play in agricultural services has become increasingly important. Partnerships between service providers and RPOs have generally had a positive impact on the development of appropriate technology, as RPOs and their members have deep knowledge of local conditions, markets, resources and farmer demands (Hussein, 2000). They also have a vested interest in reconciling village/market interests (Collion; Parthasarey *et al.*, 2000).

RPOs are also often effective in providing their members with better access to agricultural research, extension, inputs and marketing (Farrington and Hussein, 2000). Indeed, Arnaiz (1995) found that RPOs enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural technology systems. However, relationships between RPOs and agricultural service organisations are not mainstreamed across all contexts and are sometimes problematic (Hussein, 2000). The most successful relationships are usually formalised and contractual, though where the policy environment is unfavourable *ad hoc* and personal relationships can be equally effective (Bosc *et al.*, 1998).

Where RPOs represent farmers' own interests and where they have emerged as a result of their own, real expressed needs – not as an imposition of the state – they can be effective channels of communication between producers, who otherwise easily remain isolated and lacking power to influence the behaviour of agricultural service providers. Key examples from the case studies are listed below.

The Lahauli Potato Society (Nepal) plays a pivotal role in facilitating the interface between formal research institutions and members, acting as a pressure group for farmers' demands, implementing, disseminating and regulating technology (Baumann *et al.*, 1996).

Where the RPO has federated tiers and has access to a platform for negotiation, it can bring peasants into national policy-making arenas and professionalise rural representation in the agricultural sector (Bosc *et al.*, 1999). A rural producer organisation with a hierarchy of multiple and representative tiers can also influence decision-making and policy at multiple levels. This also helps to facilitate upward and downward flows of information (Case 13).

Where some research funding depends on RPO membership fees, close and accountable links can be forged between researchers and RPOs, helping to ensure that the research agenda responds to producer priorities (Case 14).

However, it should be recognised that research may not necessarily be the main priority for the RPO (Bratton *et al.*, 1994 ; Muchagata *et al.*, 1994 ; Bosc *et al.*, 1999):

- a farmer group in Amazonia, organised around land tenure issues, did not see a need for research services as they wanted more immediate technical solutions to current problems ;
- from a study of RPOs in five African countries, (Bratton *et al.*, 1994) found economic factors tended to be their primary motivation for collective action and that they were more likely to discuss economic reforms than institutional and technology policies.

AGRICULTURAL GROWTH

RPOs can positively contribute to agricultural growth by facilitating knowledge transfers (upwards, downwards and sideways). RPOs can also reduce transaction costs and lead to economies of scale, even though relevant and systematic information is lacking on these issues.

Furthermore, case study examples indicate that:

- contractual arrangements with traders can enable producers to achieve higher returns on their products (Bosc *and al.*, 1999);
- close links with research and extension can enhance agricultural growth over time through development and adoption of improved technologies (Case 14).

However, the relationship of producer organisations and agricultural growth can be complex; believing it to be more productive, producers prefer to carry out some agricultural activities on an individual basis (production) and others on a group basis: marketing, processing, transport etc (Howe, 1999). But this needs also would need more quantitative assessment.

NON-AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES, NON-FARM INCOME AND ACCESS TO CREDIT

There is increasing recognition of the important role of non-farm income and non-agricultural activities to rural livelihoods, and that activities such a processing and transportation are as important as agricultural production to the rural sector. RPOs provide vital non-agricultural opportunities to their members.

RPOs can work in the non-agricultural sector, and still have a positive impact on all aspects of rural livelihoods such as the informal sector; tourism (Case 12); forestry (Case 16); and aquaculture (Case 17).

Where RPOs invest in activities such as transport, storage (Case 14) and processing (Case 13) producers acting collectively tend to gain a higher return on their produce than they would acting alone (Bosc *and al*, 1998).

Producer organisations can be key in facilitating poor rural individuals' access to credit (Case 16). However, disputes over unpaid loans can lead to the exclusion of the poor, their divestment of productive assets and even dissolution of organisations.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RPOs have the potential to contribute positively to the management of natural resources:

- the high protection cost of individual forest use led CFUG members in Nepal to decide to manage the resource in a group thereby spreading the cost (Case 16);
- however, for natural resource management-based organisations, there may be a trade-off between ensuring environmental protection and managing resources so that they contribute effectively to poverty reduction (Case 16). Where organisations choose to protect a resource, this could better the livelihoods of the poor in the short term, while serving long term interests (Case 7). The linkage between short and long term is not always this positive for poor people as shown in case 16.

LINKAGES WITH MARKET AND PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS.

The complex and uncontrollable way in which market forces operate can be crucial to the success of an organisation (Case 17).

An enabling political and policy context is crucial for RPOs to be successful (Cases 16 and 17).

Macro policies (such as currency devaluation and liberalisation) can dramatically effect the chances of success of RPOs and the viability of the economic activities they are engaged in.

Linkages within the private sector between RPOs and other private stakeholders are sometimes difficult for RPOs to manage alone. They may need help from a more powerful partner (e.g. external international NGO) to avoid these becoming exploitative. However, such links are often necessary for RPOs to survive, be profitable and grow in the long term (Cases 12 and 13).

Furthermore, links with European markets as a result of an organisation's relationship with an international NGO or donor will help it to access markets otherwise unavailable (Case 19).

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT, NATIONAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Collective decision making through RPOs makes it easier for previously disparate groups to influence policy at local, regional, national and at times, international levels. The benefits of this are twofold. Firstly, it may result in greater political empowerment of rural groups, and secondly, policy makers can become more aware of their needs and priorities.

RPOs with a solid membership base and a coherent set of objectives, derived from members core interests have a greater chance of increasing the voice of farmers and their influence on public and private sector organisations:

- associations may play a role in empowering local communities to preserve their traditional ways of life in the face of external forces (Mercoiret *and al.*, 2001);
- a number of RPOs have used their weight as leverage to take a stand against governments (cf. Bosc *et al.* (1998), for the *Federation des paysans du Fouta Djallon* in Guinea that threatened to demonstrate in the capital to stop government importing potatoes). The success of these movements can encourage other powerless and marginal to voice their demands;

Greater federation can strengthen the cohesion and bargaining power of RPOs (Case 13). However, there are a number of potentially problematic areas:

- there can be a danger that policies reflect the preferences of individual actors. (e.g. Zimbabwe Farmers Union where, according to Bratton (1994), political power is vested in big men who gain political support from middle-level administrators in return for material rewards
- diversity of membership may make it difficult to maintain representativeness and viability if they form large units;
- a high number of decision-making points can increase the transaction costs for some operations (Carney, 1997);
- small, locally based unorganised groups that are involved in small-scale activities will have little impact on national issues as it is the case of many small groups without affiliation to a federation in West Africa e.g.; and
- organisations that are created specifically to influence policy, but have little institutional base (such as a commodity focus or through strong local community linkages) have been found to have less influence (Case 15). Furthermore, when farmers see few tangible accomplishments, they lose confidence in the associations.

Attaining financial sustainability is crucial to the future impact of the organisation. From the case studies it was found that:

where donors have a clear, staged exit strategy, transparent from the start, this tends to enhance the likelihood of the organisation being sustainable (Case 16);

building the capacities of individual RPO members, as well as those of their organisations and leaders, has a direct influence on a RPO's chances of sustainability (Case 13).

But if financial sustainability is crucial, the global sustainability of RPOs also depends on strategic choices and careful planning of activities, avoiding opportunistic behaviours the environment tends to create.

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AGGARWAL, R.M., 2000. Possibilities and Limitations to Co-operation in Small Groups: The Case of Group-Owned Wells in Southern India. in *World Development* :.28.(8) : 1481-1498.

The author looks at group-owned wells in Southern India and found that group members preferred to undertake large-scale investments individually in spite of advantages of pooling capital and sharing risks. The transaction costs associated with the activities are also examined, and an insight into the workings of informal mechanisms of co-operation is given.

AGOUA F., MERCOIRET M.-R., GABA-AFOUDA L., OUIKOUN M., 2000. Le renforcement des capacités des organisations paysannes du Zou : bilan et propositions concernant la formation et l'alphabétisation. Montpellier, Cirad-Tera, 150 p.

Le rapport rend compte des résultats de la mission effectuée à la demande de l'Union départementale des producteurs (UIDP) du ZOU (Bénin). Il présente tout d'abord : une évaluation des actions d'alphabétisation et d'action coopérative réalisées au cours de la première phase du projet de consolidation des coopératives (PROCOCA) financé par l'AFD; sont ensuite formulées des recommandations concernant la méthodologie et l'organisation de l'alphabétisation et de la formation des producteurs pour la deuxième phase du projet. Le rapport propose également des appuis spécifiques pour les groupements féminins.

AGRITERRA, 1999. The PIPGA Case and implications for the Strengthening of Producers' Organisations, Input for the IFAP – World Bank workshop, 1999, Washington.

This paper which was presented to workshop participants at a World Bank workshop on Washington, looks at some lessons from prior experience of working with POs. Broadly speaking, these are: the importance of a layered structure; the necessity of scholarly assistance in constructing a negotiable package of policies; the importance of relinquishing sectarianism; and the need to explore possibilities for business initiatives with producers. The authors then proceed to make some recommendations for a follow up.

AMMOUR T., 1994. The sustainable use of natural resources by community organisations in Central America: The experience of the Olafo Project. AgREN Paper 50a London: ODI.

This paper gives an outline of the Olafo Project which aims to ensure local participation at all stages of the projects' activities e.g., takes account of existing production systems, the interests of the local people, economic, political and ecological structures. From the case study, the author advocates the reinforcement of capacity-building of CBOs as an objective. However she warns against the possibility of local leaders not representing all individuals.

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ARNAIZ M., 1995. Farmers' organisations in the technology change process. AgREN Paper, 53, London: ODI.

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This study looks at the potential roles of farmers' organisations in the development process and transfer of technology. It looks at the history of farmers' organisations in Zimbabwe and outlines the importance of structures and methods of the organisation.

ASCHMONEIT W., 1998. Traditional Self-Help Associations in Cambodia – How to identify and cooperate with them, GTZ.

Describing self-help associations in Cambodia, this appraisal demonstrates how building on indigenous groups is more likely to lead to success than using donor led concepts and groups. It also finds that village development committees that had been developed by GTZ were to the detriment of the traditional groups.

ASHLEY, C. HUSSEIN, K. 2000. Developing Methodologies for Livelihood Impact Assessment: Experience of the African Wildlife Foundation in East Africa. ODI Working Paper 129. London: ODI.

AYER, H. W., 1997. Grass Roots Collective Action: Agricultural Opportunities in Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics, 22 (1): 1-11.

Environmental problems often involve goods and activities with public goods attributes. The author proposes that grassroots collective action provides one alternative of helping resolve these problems. He also discusses how expected private benefits, communication and information, joint products, group size and heterogeneity, transaction costs, and rules and enforcement determine the success or failure of grassroots collective action.

BANQUE MONDIALE, 1999. Programme de services agricoles et appui aux organisations de producteurs, PSAOP, Sénégal. Rapport n° 18554-SE, 93 p.

Document d'évaluation de projet relatif à un crédit proposé dans le cadre du programme de prêt adaptable d'un montant de 27,4 millions de dollars EU à la République du Sénégal.

BANQUE MONDIALE, FIPA, 1999. Construire les capacités rurales. Les organisations paysannes : acteurs principaux de la recherche, de la vulgarisation et de l'éducation. Recueil des documents présentés lors de l'atelier sur le renforcement du pouvoir des organisations paysannes du 28-30 juin 1999 à Washington.

BARRO I., BEAUDOUX E., DEYGOUT P., OUATTARA S., 2000. Mission d'évaluation du projet expérimental de la composante « organisation des producteurs » du Programme de services agricoles et organisations de producteurs (PSAOP), Sénégal. IRAM, Paris, 110 p.

BARRY A. B., 2000. Analyse de l'expérience de collaboration entre la vulgarisation, les organisations professionnelles et la recherche pour la mise en œuvre d'un conseil de gestion (cas du Fouta-Djallon - Rép. de Guinée. Mémoire de stage CNEARC, Montpellier, 94 p.

BAUMANN P., SINGH B., CARNEY D., 1996. The Lahaul Potato Society. London: ODI.

The Society was formed in 1966 to strengthen the position of the Lahauli farmers in seed potato marketing. Its evolution can be attributed to the socio-economic structure of the population, e.g. absence of class cleavages, tradition of co-operation and experimentation with agriculture. The society plays a pivotal role in facilitating an interface between formal research institutions and members, acting as a pressure group for farmers' demands, implementing, disseminating and regulating technology. It has actively lobbied for the dissemination of research. This case study is a positive example of the power of POs, which is evident in the universal adoption by members of the new technology and in the equitable distribution of the benefits of research.

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BEAUVALL V. *et al.*, 2001. Besoins de formation des responsables paysans des zones cotonnières maliennes, Mali, 28 p.

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BEBBINGTON A. J., CARRASCO H., PERALBO L., RAMON G., TORRES V.H., TRUJILLO J., 1993. Rural peoples knowledge, farmers' organisations and regional development. Implications for agricultural research and extension. AgREN Paper 41 London: ODI.

The authors emphasise that the context within which rural people in Latin America farm is changing rapidly (increasingly competitive markets, input price rises and environmental degradation). Many families can not support themselves by agriculture alone, which implies that concentrating resources on agricultural technology development may not be the most effective response to the needs of the rural people whose livelihoods are more affected by other parts of the foods system, or other economic activities. The author suggests investing in assisting rural people in developing skills to deal with problems the currently can not deal with as being more useful than agricultural technology training.

BEBBINGTON, A., 1991. Farmer Organisations in Ecuador: Contributions to Farmer first Research and Development. London: IIED. Gatekeeper Series, (26).

The author gives a case study of a farmers' organisation in Chimborazo Province, Ecuador which is a positive example of farmer to farmer research and extension programme. Information is disseminated through training courses, meetings and radio programmes, and village extension agents trained by agronomists and guest lectures hired by the organisation. The organisations have influenced research and extension policies at the national level through their lobbying activities and at the local level using informal relationships with research and extension personnel. The organisation also provides subsidised input distribution programmes, small loan programmes and marketing projects.

BEBBINGTON A., FARRINGTON J., 1994. Local organisations and national research services: Restructuring the relationship. Rural Poverty and Resources Research Programme. Working paper (8), London: ODI.

In the context of the downsizing of national research and extension services, this paper looks at the role farmers and local organisations can fill in performing tasks in technology development. It examines the constraints farmers' organisations may come up against (such as access to funds, management, and the current structure of national research and extension services).

BEBBINGTON A., QUISBERT J., TRUJILLO G., 1996. Technology and rural development strategies in a small farmer organisation: Lessons from Bolivia for rural policy and practice. Public Administration and Development, 16 : 195-213.

This article analyses a regional economic organisation called El Ceibo in Bolivia. It looks at factors favouring the PO's success which included long-term financial and technical support from external agencies, isolated location and a cash/export crop specialisation.

BEBBINGTON A., THIELE G., DAVIES P., PRAGER M., RIVEROS H., 1993. Non-Governmental Organisations and the State in Latin America: Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development London: Routledge.

This paper examines how effective NGOs are at strengthening grassroots/local organisations.

BEBBINGTON A.J., MERRILL-SANDS D., FARRINGTON J., 1994. Farmer and community organisations in agricultural research and extension: Functions, impacts and questions" AgREN Paper No. 47, London: ODI.

This paper identifies different types of farmers' organisations and the roles they play in research priority setting and planning, technology development, processing and input supply in relation to the public sector and NGOs. It reviews the main strengths and weaknesses of POs in performing these role in the context of the social, political and economic environment and in the organisational and managerial structure of the organisations.

BEDU L., 1998. Programme de developpement institutionnel du secteur rural (PDISR) / Mali. Rapport de présentation. Draft . MCAC - Mali, 27 p.

BENTLEY J.W., BAKER P.S., 2000. The Colombian Coffee Growers' Federation: Organised, successful smallholder farmers for 70 years. AgREN Paper No. 100, London ODI.

The Colombian Coffee Growers' Federation is a powerful and successful PO that is funded by farmers. This article describes the history and present activities of the Federation and the factors that have contributed to its many achievements. Its success is traced to the experience and competence of its managers and members, the stability of its leadership, its financial security and its political independence.

BERTHOME J., MERCOIRET M.R., 1993. La rencontre de M'Balmayo. Réunion préparatoire au lancement du réseau Agriculture paysannes et modernisation Afrique. APM, Cameroun, 71 p.

BERTHOME J., 2000. Mise en place d'un dispositif d'information et de formation des responsables paysans africains sur les marchés et les politiques agricoles. Rapport final, CIEPAC, Montpellier, 25 p.

BERTHOME J., MERCOIRET M.R., 2001. Projet fédérateur de recherche - action - formation. Les organisations paysannes face aux défis de la mondialisation. Atelier international du 21 au 31 octobre 1998, Capetown, Afrique du Sud ; Tome 1 : Compte rendu et principaux résultats, 72 p. Tome 2 : Etudes de cas nationales, Montpellier, CIEPAC - CIRAD – RIAD.

BERTHOME J., BOSCH P.-M., DARDÉ C., MERCOIRET J., 1999. Etude de capitalisation sur les dynamiques d'organisation paysanne en Guinée. Volume 1 : rapport général. Volume 2 : annexes. Volume 3 : support pédagogique. Montpellier, CIRAD-TERA, 3 vol., (250 p.).

Cette étude fait le point des dynamiques d'organisation en cours et de l'évolution des dispositifs d'appui aux organisations paysannes. Pour ce faire, la mission a réalisé sur le terrain six études de cas dans les différentes régions naturelles de la Guinée : Moyenne Guinée (2), Guinée forestière (1), Guinée maritime (2) et Haute-Guinée (1). Les acquis enregistrés en matière de construction d'organisations à location technique et économique militent pour que ces expériences soient poursuivies et menées à leur terme en favorisant notamment, de manière concertée avec les organisations paysannes existantes, l'émergence de nouvelles organisations structurées autour d'autres filières. Cette orientation dominante ne doit cependant pas demeurer exclusive et d'autres types d'organisation ayant des fonctions différentes doivent être explorés par les organisations paysannes en relation avec d'autres acteurs. Il semble en effet important et nécessaire que les organisations paysannes puissent aborder les questions de l'amélioration globale des systèmes de production, définir et négocier leur rôle dans les dynamiques de développement local ou dans l'évolution des modalités collectives et individuelles de gestion des ressources naturelles. Cependant, les acquis enregistrés ne signifient pas que l'on puisse se passer de dispositif d'appui ; bien au contraire, celui-ci doit être renforcé, évoluer en terme de contenu pour être en mesure d'accompagner de façon pertinente les évolutions des organisations paysannes. Il doit aussi permettre d'aborder les autres questions. La Daop et le programme professionnalisation de la coopération française ont joué un rôle déterminant durant cette phase d'émergence de groupements et de création d'unions et de fédérations. Ils devront accompagner les évolutions en conservant le pragmatisme et l'efficacité des étapes antérieures [...].

BINGEN R, J., 1994. Agricultural Development Policy and Grassroots Democracy in Mali: the emergence of Mali's Farmer Movement. *African Rural and Urban Studies*, 1 (1): 57-72.

Bingen discusses political and institutional factors contributing to establishing cotton Producers' Associations, SYCOV of Mali. – Formation of village association by Compagnie malienne de développement des textiles (a parastatal responsible for collection and marketing of cotton). The transfer of operational and accounting activities related cotton production to village associations and they were supported by providing numeric and literacy programmes.

BINGEN R, J., CARNEY D., DEMBELE E., 1995. The Malian Union of Cotton and Food Crop Producers: Its current and potential role in technology development and transfer. AgREN London: ODI

BINGEN R.J., 1999. Producer Organisations and Development Partnerships: Illustrations from Mali and Rwanda, Discussion Paper prepared for the Workshop on Empowering Producer Organisations – Draft.

Bingen identifies three types of organisationally related interests among producers: Customary interest (found at village or community level) – tends to depend on pre-existing and past social relationships. Contract interest (found where economic criteria can be used to assess relationships between members) - this type of group defines itself in terms of its relationship to some part of the market economy. Managerial bourgeois – this group is similar to the ones based on customary interest, but they usually speak for the members. The author also outlines the legal constraints in some developing countries which mitigate against POs and points out that governments are not usually neutral and may reflect economic and political interests that back some groups but not others.

BORDERON A., 1998. Evaluation de la 2^e phase du projet d'appui à la fédération des paysans du Fouta Djallon. Rapport d'évaluation, CFD, Paris, 27 p.

BORDERON A., 1999. Mise en valeur des périmètres irrigués de l'Office du Niger : Projet de centres de prestations de services (PCPS) et d'Unité de recherche-développement - Observatoire du changement (URD-OC). Rapport d'évaluation, AFD, Paris, 48 p.

BOSC P.-M., ENGOLA OYEP J., ZOUNDI J., 1998. Initiative CORAF : renforcer la collaboration entre la recherche, la vulgarisation et les organisations paysannes en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Etude de terrain : Guinée. CORAF, 64 p.

Cette étude de terrain s'inscrit dans le cadre de l'initiative entre la Coraf et les Coopération anglaises et françaises, visant à renforcer la liaison entre la recherche, la vulgarisation, les organisations paysannes et la société civile pour une meilleure génération et diffusion des innovations agricoles en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Avec l'objectif de caractériser cette liaison, l'équipe de chercheurs en charge du projet a choisi de mener des études de cas dans cinq pays d'Afrique (Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Gambie, Ghana et Guinée). Les analyses et conclusions correspondantes sont faites dans les cinq rapports pays dont celui-ci, complétés par une bibliographie et une synthèse. Deux études de cas ont été analysées en Guinée : - l'expérience de partenariat entre la Fédération Nationale des Planteurs de Café de Guinée (FNPCG), le Service Nationale de Promotion Rurale et de Vulgarisation (SNPRV) et le Centre de Sérédou dans l'adaptation et la diffusion de techniques relatives au café, - l'expérience de collaboration entre la Fédération des Paysans du Fouta Djallon (FPFD), le SNPRV et le Centre de Bareng dans l'adaptation et la diffusion de technologies relatives à l'oignon.

BOSC P.-M., BOURDEL C., DULCIRE M., ENGOLA OYEP J., HUSSEIN K., SIBELET N., ZOUNDI J., 1999. Initiative CORAF : renforcer la collaboration entre la recherche, la vulgarisation et les organisations paysannes en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Synthèse et propositions. CORAF, 50 p.

Ce document présente la synthèse de la recherche collective conduite, dans le cadre de l'initiative Coraf, sur le thème du renforcement de la collaboration entre la recherche, la vulgarisation et les organisations paysannes en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. L'objectif principal de cette étude était de mettre en évidence les conditions techniques, économiques et institutionnelles qui influent sur le développement de relations de collaboration entre les systèmes de recherche, les producteurs et leurs organisations paysannes. La synthèse s'appuie sur des études de cas concrets dans lesquels la recherche a travaillé avec des organisations paysannes ou avec des producteurs organisés. Parmi les facteurs susceptibles de favoriser la construction de partenariats on peut relever : l'existence d'un cadre juridique favorable à l'émergence des organisations paysannes; le processus de décentralisation de la recherche; l'appui au développement et l'engagement de la recherche dans une démarche spécifique auprès des organisations paysannes; la création de dispositifs de concertation locale... Cependant, un certain nombre d'obstacles demeurent à la réalisation de réels partenariats : les capacités encore réduites des organisations paysannes et leur dépendance vis-à-vis des projets qui les ont suscitées; le faible développement des approches systémiques et l'absence de démarche participative de la recherche, son instabilité institutionnelle et financière ainsi que son cloisonnement et son isolement au niveau national et international... L'existence de collaboration entre la recherche, la vulgarisation et les organisations paysannes supposent que les partenaires engagés soient suffisamment structuré et organisés afin d'engager une relation sur des bases équilibrées. Dans cette perspective, il apparaît souhaitable que des actions soient engagées autour d'axes complémentaires.

BOURDEL, C., ENGOLA OYEP, J., HUSSEIN, K., ZOUNDI, J., 1999. Initiative CORAF : renforcer la collaboration entre la recherche, la vulgarisation et les organisations paysannes en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Etude de terrain : Burkina Faso

L'objectif de cette étude était d'analyser, au Burkina-Faso, des cas intéressants de partenariats entre institutions de recherche agricole, organismes de vulgarisation, organisations de producteurs, et d'autres acteurs de la société civile. Deux actions de promotion de nouvelles variétés de niébé sont présentées, ainsi que le partenariat noué par un groupement de femmes pour valoriser des fruits et légumes par séchage. Parmi les facteurs favorisant une dynamique d'adoption d'innovations, il a été relevé l'existence de leader convaincus, la volonté des chercheurs et de leur institution, une créativité dans l'utilisation d'approches participatives et de multiples canaux d'information mais surtout l'existence d'organisations de producteurs puissantes, qui favorisent la pérennité des actions engagées. L'existence, au niveau national, d'organisations faitières, et de plate-formes paysannes inter-Etats renforce la prise en considération des besoins des paysans. Certains obstacles au développement de partenariats ont aussi été identifiés, et quelques recommandations ont pu être faites.

BRATTON M., 1985. *A Share of the Plough: Small Farmer Organisations and Food Production in Zimbabwe*. East Lansing, USA: Michigan State University. Occasional Paper, (7).

BRATTON M., 1994. "Micro Democracy? The Merger of Farmer Unions in Zimbabwe" in *African Studies Review*, 37 (1): 9-37.

The author argues that political power is vested in big men who gain political support from middle-level administrators and politicians in return for material rewards. In other words, mechanisms for leaderships are weak and policies may reflect the preferences of individual actors. He uses the Zimbabwe Farmers Union as an example. -

BRATTON M., BINGEN R. J., 1994. *Farmers Organisations and the Agricultural Policy: Introduction*. *African Rural and Urban Studies*, 1 (1): 7-29.

The authors look at the role of POs in the development of agricultural policies in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mali, Senegal and Kenya. They find that in Africa there are myriads of organisational types of farmers groups and that the primary motivation for collective action is economic. Furthermore, farmers groups are more likely to discuss economic reforms rather than institutional and technology policies. However, Federated organisations of farmers unions are more likely to adopt advocacy.

BRUNET M.P., 1999. *Programme d'appui aux OPA du Mali. Rapport d'activité (février 1998 - février 1999)*, AFDI, Paris, 29 p.

BURGESS S. F., 1994. A "Bottom up" Perspective on Rural Organisations in Africa: the Case of Small-Scale Communal Farmers in Zimbabwe. *African Rural and Urban Studies*, 1 (1): 141-169.

BYRNES K.J., 1993. *The Little Farmer Organisation That Could: A Call for Research on a Potential Engine for Rural Economic Growth in Developing Countries*. Arlington, USA: USAID.

The report looks at the potential role for farmers' organisations to function as catalysts or engines for rural economic growth by helping their members to more cost-effectively access, manage, and use agri-support factors essential for increasing farm productivity and income. They will reduce the high transaction costs that farmers incur in trying to access agri-support factors such as technology, credit, production inputs, and markets. The report reviews what is already known about farmer organisations, and reviews a scheme for classifying types of farmers' organisations.

CARNEY D., 1996. *Formal farmers' organisations in the agricultural technology system: current roles and future challenges*. Natural Resource Perspective Number 14, London: ODI.

This article looks at factors that determine whether POs are likely to become successfully involved in agricultural technology development and transfer. The author finds that POs with relatively homogenous membership and with close links to the market are generally better able to get involved in technology than their larger, more political counterparts. Other critical factors are the attitude of the technology suppliers and the support of donors on capacity-building and financial sides.

CARNEY D., 1996. *Farmers organisations: Meeting the needs of resource-poor farmers?* LAPC Briefing Paper. Johannesburg: Land and Agriculture Policy Centre, Johannesburg.

CARNEY D., 1997. *The Capacity of Farmers' Organisations to set and implement extension and research priorities*. Conference on Maximising the Influence of the User: Alternatives to the Training and Visit System, Denmark.

CARNEY D., FARRINGTON J., 1998. *Natural Resource Management and Institutional Change*. London: Routledge Research/ODI Development Policy Studies.

CARNEY D., DRINKWATER M., RUSINOW T., NEEFJES K., WANMALI S., SINGH N., 1999. *Livelihoods approaches compared: a brief comparison of the livelihoods approaches of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), CARE, Oxfam and the UNDP* Produced by Sustainable Livelihoods Learning Platform, DFID.

This paper provides a brief review of the fundamental principles behind the sustainable livelihood approach of donor agencies. The authors find similarity in focus, but differences in operationalisation of approaches.

CHARLESTON R., 1999. *Child Survival Project, Sesame Growers Association Project, FY 1998-2000, USAID Project PL480 Title II: Mid Term Evaluation*.

This project review analyses some of the successes and failures of the Sesame Growers Association in The Gambia.

CHARTIER P., 1999. Rapport de présentation du Projet d'appui à la concertation Etat - profession agricole au Sénégal (PACEPA), MAE, Paris, 36 p.

CLUB DU SAHEL 2000. Support from developed countries to producers' organisations in developing countries: Policy and practice. Contribution to the Seminar Building Rural Capacity Washington DC (World Bank) 28-30 June 1999.

This paper provides a rapid overview of the Club Sahel Secretariat's experience of working with POs in West Africa. It emphasises the importance of providing POs with opportunities to build their capacities, without cornering them to take on responsibility at all costs. Agencies should use restraint and patience when working with POs and not see it as a "fashion" that will eventually die out.

COLL J., 1998. Programme de recherche-action « Organisations paysannes et décentralisation au Mali ». Rapport final, AFVP / INA P-G, Paris, 72 p.

COLLION M. H., RONDOT P., 1997. Partenariat entre institutions de recherche et organisations de producteurs. Mythe ou réalité ? *In* : Le partenariat entre la recherche et les organisations de producteurs : Compte-rendu de l'atelier de travail, Dakar, 24-25 avril 1997. - Montpellier : CIRAD-SAR, 1997, p. 9-24.

Au Mali, au Sénégal, au Burkina Faso et en Guinée, un partenariat entre les institutions de recherche et les organisations de producteurs (Op) avec, dans certains cas, la participation des services de vulgarisation est en train de voir le jour. Selon le contexte, ce partenariat revêt des formes diverses. L'expérience de ces pays n'est pas unique : dans bon nombre de pays en développement, des institutions de recherche et de vulgarisation ont entrepris de mettre en place des mécanismes de partenariat avec les organisations de producteurs (Op). Le présent document s'attache à faire le point sur les expériences de ces quatre pays tout en se référant également à d'autres expériences documentées, en particulier, par l'Odi, l'Isnar et le Cirad-Sar. Nous examinerons ci-après : i) les raisons d'être du partenariat ; ii) l'approche adoptée dans chacun des quatre pays; iii) les difficultés rencontrées pour l'établissement de ce partenariat, soit du côté des organisations de producteurs, soit du côté des institutions de recherche. Il est encore trop tôt pour déterminer dans quelle mesure les Op ont pu amener les instituts de recherche à mieux répondre aux besoins de leurs clients, mais il est d'ores et déjà possible de tirer de cette expérience des leçons valables pour les Op, les instituts de recherche, ainsi que les bailleurs de fonds et les organismes extérieurs désireux de contribuer à l'établissement d'un partenariat productif.

COLLION M-H. Combined harvesters: Partnerships between agricultural technology institutions and producers' organisations", RPEG, ODI.

The author argues that a partnership between research and producer organisations is beneficial for rural areas. POs are becoming involved due to public sector financial constraints and efficacy in testing and spreading results. However, he points out that it is an opportunity but not a panacea. Indeed, from the case studies examined, it was found that few POs are actually involved all the way through the process. The paper examines policy considerations.

COLLION M-H., RONDOT P., 1998. Partnership between agricultural services institutions and producers' organisations: Myth or reality?" AgREN Paper, No. 80,

This paper examines lessons that have emerged from partnerships between researchers and POs in Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Guinea. Some of the difficulties that have been experienced in this relationship are identified as: The linear paradigm under which researchers still work; the fact that the partnership is not adopted as an official policy of the research institutes; the unconvincing incentive systems in these institutes; researchers' lack of communication skills; and the fact that scientists tend not to deal with the farmers' main concerns. The authors propose that in order to establish an effective partnership between research extension and POs, donors need to encourage institutional changes in research institutions and to strengthen POs.

COULTER J., GOODLAND A., TALLONTIRE A., STRINGELLOW R., 1999. Marrying farmer co-operation and contract farming for service provision in a liberalising sub-Saharan Africa. AgREN Paper, No. 48, London: ODI.

The authors argue that co-operation and contract farming are good for smallholders as they enable intensification of production and diversification. They discuss initiatives supporting the development of co-operation and the importance of linkage-dependent groups liaising with agri-business (e.g. improved bargaining power). This implies efforts to increase the business and technical skills of groups and develop good working relationships between groups and agri-business.

CUZON J.R., 1997. L'appui à l'organisation du monde agricole. Bilan interne de la coopération française, Secrétariat d'Etat à la coopération - Caisse française de développement, 75 p.

DAVIRON B., LOSCH B., VERGRIETTE B., MINLA MFOU'OU J., 1998. Atelier régional. Marchés et filières café/cacao : les organisations paysannes dans le contexte de la libéralisation. Yaoundé, APM, 85 p.

L'atelier régional sur " les marchés et filières café/cacao et la place des organisations paysannes dans le contexte de la libéralisation " qui s'est tenu du 12 au 17 décembre 1998 à l'IPD (Institut Panafricain de Développement) de Buéa au Cameroun fait partie du programme du réseau APM Afrique portant sur la mise en place d'un dispositif de formation et d'information des responsables paysans africains sur les marchés et politiques agricoles. Ce programme comporte deux autres volets. Le premier consiste en un observatoire des filières coton en Afrique de l'Ouest et du centre : à partir des informations fournies par un réseau de correspondants locaux, un bulletin trimestriel est réalisé et diffusé auprès des organisations paysannes des zones cotonnières concernées. Le second a porté sur l'organisation en mai 1997 d'un atelier de formation des responsables paysans des filières rizicoles.

DE NORAY S., GOÏTA M., FAURE G., 1999. Etude de faisabilité de la deuxième phase du projet d'appui aux organisations professionnelles agricoles. Paris, IRAM, 86-[75] p.

De NORAY S., PESCHE D., 2000. Etude sur le financement de la vulgarisation agricole : 1/ Eléments de débats et propositions pour des mécanismes de financement durables dans les pays du Sud. Fiches débats (52p) ; 2/ Quelques exemples sénégalais (36 p.) ; 3/ Costa Rica (43 p.). MAE - Initiative de Neuchâtel, IRAM / Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural, Paris.

DeCOSSE P., 1998. Strengthening of The National Farmers' Platform – Issues Emerging from June 1998 Consultations, unpublished.

This study provides background on The National Farmers Platform in The Gambia. It examines the origins of the organisation and describes its achievements to date. It finds that the Platform has had limited success in influencing policy. The authors then outline some key lessons and issues that have emerged. They recommend that for The Platform to have a positive impact, it should clarify its objectives, principles and strategy; strengthen its leadership; build farmers' market strength through group-based farming; and aim to achieve something tangible as soon as possible to sustain farmers' interest.

DEL POZO E., 1997. Organisations paysannes et indigènes en Amérique latine : mutations et recompositions vers le troisième millénaire. Lausanne, FPH, 171 p.

Depuis le début du siècle, les questions paysannes et indigènes et celles de l'organisation sociale en milieu rural en Amérique latine ont fait couler beaucoup d'encre et... beaucoup de sang. Eglises, Etats, ONG, bailleurs de fonds et bien d'autres ont tenté de peser sur les données du problème. Autant d'acteurs dont ce dossier analyse les attitudes et les comportements, en même temps qu'il dresse un tableau général des processus d'organisation de la paysannerie, de ses mutations et de ses recompositions.

DELION J., 2000. Producer Organisation – Donor Partnerships in Project Implementation in Africa. Risks and Precautions from a Social Perspective, AKIS Discussion Paper.

The author outlines some problematic areas with working with POs: Partnerships may increase dependency and actually reduce capacity to become self-sufficient; short term benefits may outweigh possible long term impact on sustainability; and the groups will only be sustainable if they are backed by social values and norms of the majority group. Donors can take some precautionary steps to overcome these however: They should appraise PO capacity and strategies in sector strategy analysis; they should look at long term capacity building; and they should look at transfers of powers and capacity building. Furthermore, mixing too many kinds of functions (such as inputs/marketing, commodities, public services and financial intermediation) can effect the efficacy of the organisations. Rather different types of organisations should deal with each of these.

DEMARET O., 1997. Le programme d'appui aux organisations professionnelles agricoles en moyenne Guinée (PAOPAG/MG). Rapport annuel d'activités 1996, MAE, 57 p.

DFID 2000. Eliminating world poverty: making globalisation work for the poor, DFID.

DIAGNE D., 1999. L'évaluation des processus d'accompagnement des OP. Synthèse d'étape du groupe de travail « Appui aux organisations paysannes et rurales ». Document de travail, Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural, Paris, 44 p.

DIAGNE D., HUET C., 1997. Mission d'évaluation du programme d'appui aux organisations professionnelles agricoles (Burkina Faso). IRAM, Paris, 78 p.

DIAGNE D., JOLIET B., 1999. La formation des responsables paysans. Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural, Paris, 99 p.

DIAGNE D., PESCHE D., 1995. Les organisations paysannes et rurales : des acteurs du développement en Afrique subsaharienne. Rapports d'étude - Ministère de la coopération. Paris, 165 p.

Dans tous les pays, les organisations paysannes et rurales sont à la fois le lieu d'expression des intérêts de paysans et un moyen d'atteindre les objectifs qu'ils se fixent. Au-delà de leurs multiples finalités, évoquées tout au long de ce document, les OPR devraient s'orienter vers la construction d'un pouvoir paysan, certes multiforme, capable à la fois de peser sur la définition et la mise en oeuvre des politiques concernant le monde rural, et de préciser la place des agriculteurs dans des sociétés en construction. Chacun, depuis le paysan jusqu'à l'homme politique en passant par le chercheur, le technicien, le représentant d'un organisme de coopération, possède une vision de ce que sont les organisations paysannes et de ce qu'elles devraient être. C'est un peu l'objet de ce document que de contribuer à faire s'exprimer ces visions différentes, à les confronter pour, au bout du compte, donner aux principaux acteurs, les paysans et ceux qui les accompagnent, des moyens pour mieux exprimer leur vision des choses

DORWARD A., KYDD J., 2000. Sustainable Livelihoods and New Institutional Economics" Paper available on DFID's Livelihoods Connect web-site www.livelihoods.org (search under SLRG activities; Policy Institutions and Processes sub-group papers).

DUCROT R., 1999. Efficacité du marché et organisation dans l'agriculture et l'agro-alimentaire en Afrique. La filière riz à Niono, CIRAD AMIS, 49 p.

DULCIRE, M., HUSSEIN, K., ENGOLA OYEP, J., ZOUNDI, J., 1999. Initiative CORAF : renforcer la collaboration entre la recherche, la vulgarisation et les organisations paysannes en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Etude de terrain : Cameroun.

Cette étude s'inscrit dans étude générale conduite dans six pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre afin de caractériser les liaisons entre institutions de recherche agricole, organismes de vulgarisation et organisations de producteurs. Au Cameroun, l'étude a privilégié l'analyse des processus de construction des nouvelles organisations paysannes et d'établissement de relation avec la recherche. Les trois principales organisations paysannes étudiées : une association de producteurs stockeurs de céréales, une fédération et une coopérative de producteurs d'oignons, se caractérisent par un fort dynamisme et des résultats prometteurs. L'important mouvement de structuration en cours, dont elles témoignent, doit pouvoir, pour se maintenir et se consolider, bénéficier pleinement de la mobilisation et de l'appui des institutions de recherche et de vulgarisation.

EDWARDS M., HULME D., WALLACE T., 2001. Conference Background Paper NGOs in a Global Future: Marrying Local Delivery to Worldwide Leverage.
<http://www.bond.org.uk/advocacy.conference2.html>

The authors discuss rural groups or cooperatives as both an empowerment strategy, and exclusionary systems of power.

ESMAN M.J., UPHOFF N.T., 1984. Local Organisations: Intermediaries in Rural Development, Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press.

This is a presentation of the results from a study of more than 150 cases on rural membership organisations globally. The authors point out that organisations represent a 3rd sector that has the ability to enhance the effectiveness of the public and private sectors. However, there are key environmental and organisational conditions that were found not to contribute to organisational effectiveness. These are subject to vulnerabilities that impede their foundations and development. For example, the organisation may face active and passive resistance from multiple sources (local and regional elite), and it may be vulnerable to external co-option or internal conflict between rival groups. Furthermore, the authors find that the larger the organisation the greater the problems are. Characteristics that correlate with positive outcomes are the capacity to: deal with conflict; plan; mobilise resources; and execute resource management tasks.

FARRINGTON J., 1990. Bolivia: strength in diversity. Research extension and local organisations in the Amazon lowlands. University of Reading – Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department (AERDD) Bulletin, (30): 38-40.

Using a case study from the Amazon lowlands of Bolivia, the article explains how producers' organisations are interacting with public agendas in research and development.

FARRINGTON J., HUSSEIN K., 2000. Partnerships between research and service providing NGOs. Paper prepared for the DFID, FGRP-3, ARP Workshop held in Hanoi on "Practical strategies for poverty-targeted research", November 2000.

This paper discusses why research has been encouraged to develop partnerships with service providing NGOs (international and national non-governmental organisations and producer organisations) and the private sector. It also provides some examples, of the positive role partnerships with the private sector can play in the process of developing and disseminating new technologies. The paper begins by presenting some conceptual issues relating to different types of partnership. It presents the characteristics of different types of partners, some strengths and weaknesses of different partners and some preconditions for partnerships to work effectively. It then provides concrete examples from experience in agricultural research of how such partnerships have worked in practice. Finally, it highlights the fact that different partners have strengths and weaknesses and identifies some key lessons which researchers need to consider.

FAURE G., FOK AH CHUEN M., ROLLIN D., DIAKITE C.H., KONÉ M., BEAUVAL V., DE NORAY S., DAOUDA D., 2000. Etude de faisabilité d'un programme d'amélioration des systèmes d'exploitation en zone cotonnière : Rapport final mai 2000. Montpellier, CIRAD-TERA, 100 p.

Suite à l'étude de faisabilité conduite du 24 janvier au 21 février 2000, un rapport provisoire a été rédigé (mars 2000). Un atelier de restitution de la mission s'est tenu le 3 et 4 mai à Bamako avec l'ensemble des partenaires concernés (CMDT, IER, IPR, APCAM, Chambre régionale d'Agriculture, SYCOV, OP spécialisées...). Il a permis de mieux expliciter certains points du rapport et d'engager un dialogue entre partenaires sur les propositions techniques et institutionnelles du présent programme. Un Compte rendu de cet atelier a été rédigé. Il reprend les contributions des différents partenaires et les conclusions des groupes de travail et de la commission de synthèse. Le rapport final de l'étude est une reprise du rapport provisoire incluant cependant, à la lumière des conclusions de l'atelier, des approfondissements sur certaines questions. Notamment, le rapport final détaille de manière plus approfondie - le rôle des cellules régionales et locales de concertation, - l'intérêt de développer une approche de la gestion de l'espace en concertation avec les communes pour aborder l'amélioration des systèmes de culture, - la proposition N° 3 du montage institutionnel qui confère à la CMDT la maîtrise d'ouvrage du programme. Le rapport final et le compte rendu de l'atelier sont les matériaux qui serviront de base de discussion aux différents acteurs et aux bailleurs de fonds pour élaborer un programme d'amélioration des systèmes de production en zone cotonnière.

FAYE J., NDIAYE O., 1998. Formulation d'un projet d'appui institutionnel aux organisations paysannes du Sénégal. Rapport provisoire. Cncr / Cirad-Tera, 62 p.

FOX J., 1992. Democratic Rural Development: Leadership Accountability in Regional Peasant Organisations. *Development and Change*, 23 (2): 1-36.

This paper examines the processes of internal democracy within a PO. The findings are that different kinds of organisational structures encourage or discourage membership action. However, moments of direct action will shape the ways in which the structures actually distribute power.

GIRI J., PESCHE D., 1999. Les appuis français à l'organisation du monde rural en Afrique. Livre blanc, Groupe de travail "Accompagnement de l'organisations du monde rural (AOMR), France, 43 p.

GROOTAERT C., 1998. Social Capital: The Missing Link?

The author argues the importance of social capital and gives reasons and examples why it is good. However, he concludes by saying that it lacks a framework for assessment.

GTZ 1997. Programme for Rural Action: Decentralization and the Institutionalisation of Participation, Accra, GTZ. GTZ The NARMAP Project Review

GUBBELS P., 1993. Peasant farmer organisation in farmer-first agricultural development in West Africa: new opportunities and continuing constraints. *AgREN Paper*, 40, London: ODI.

This paper provides a critical assessment of the potentials and constraints for strengthening the capacity of peasant farmer organisations to undertake self-development. The author emphasises the need for POs for effective agricultural research and extensions in complex, diverse and risk-prone environments. He outlines some characteristics of self-supporting "demand-side" POs and examines two case studies of programmes that work with POs.

HESSE C., 2000. Pastoral Organisations in West Africa – Final Report 1998-2000 International Institute for Environment and Development.

This paper examines phases one, two and three of a project entitled "Pastoral organisations in West Africa" which was to examine why there seemed to be no discernible pastoral civil society movement operating at any level beyond the village or district levels. Most pastoralist organisations appeared to consist of small, locally based groups, unorganised groups, involved in specific small-scale activities. There did not appear to be an effective pastoral lobby. The study found that problems with pastoralist organisations were due to: Unfavourable macro policies; weak management skills within the organisations; contradictions between the state and herders; unrealistic expectations of their roles; weak financial capacity of the organisations and insufficient communication and institutional rivalry between the organisations.

HOBLEY M., SHAH K., 1996. What makes a local organisation robust? Evidence from India and Nepal Natural Resource Perspective, (11) ODI.

The authors outline a local forest management case study in India and Nepal and discuss conditions and appropriate institutional arrangements for joint action between government and POs.

HOBLEY M., SHAH, K., What makes a local organisation robust? Evidence from India and Nepal, London, ODI.

HOCDE H., MIRANDA B., (eds.), 2000. Los intercambios campesinos : más allá de las fronteras...seamos futuristas. Inter Cambios, San Salvador, IICA-GTZ-CIRAD, 294 p.

HOWES M., 1999. NGOs and the Institutional Development of Membership Organisations, IDS.

This paper examines the promotion of membership organisations by NGOs as a way to increase outreach. It identifies factors that help strong membership organisations to emerge. The author finds that successful associations have occurred: Where there is a sound understanding of existing institutions. Where NGOs start slowly and then scale up. Where there is flexibility to evolve with external circumstances. When primary groups are established should move towards a federal body. Where these bodies move at a pace compatible with members' capacity. On the other hand, failed associations occur where there is an attempt to introduce collective ownership in the production processes that have conventionally been organised along individualistic lines. The author also finds that a PO that performs a diversity of tasks is more likely to benefit poor groups, as it will attack more than one aspect of poverty.

HOWES M., BALAKRISHNAN S., 1999. NGOs and the Institutional Development of Membership Organisations: The Case of The Quilon Fishermen Welfare Society. IDS Discussion Paper 371.

This paper uses the example of the largely successful NGO attempts to help South Indian fishermen organise in response to technical change. A clear core of mutually supporting activities were identified around which people were able to organise. However, it is recognised that institutional development is a long process that depends partly on chance, and in which difficult trade-offs may have to be made between equity and sustainability.

HULME D., 2000. Protecting and Strengthening Social Capital in Order to Produce Desirable Development Outcomes. DFID Social Development Department Scope Paper, No. 4 in Journal of International Development, 9Hulme outlines DFID's social capital policy and practice.

HUSSEIN K., 1999. Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Technology: Institutions That Give Farmers a Voice – available at www.livelihoods.org search under SLRG activities; PIP sub-group; papers.

Based on a number of studies, this paper outlines some key factors which will enable farmers' organisations to be more effective. These include: Capacity-building support in technical areas relating to agricultural production; internal management and organisation; some successful economic activities; access to funds from diverse sources; and a commonly accepted ethic for group interaction.

HUSSEIN K., 2001. Case Study: Sesame Growers Associations and NAWFA – supported by CRS/The Gambia. Research report commissioned by UK DFID as part of a broader review of participatory approaches to rural development in The Gambia. ODI.

From field work carried out in The Gambia, this study gives a close examination of a PO: The SGA and its federation NAWFA.

HUSSEIN K., OYEP J.E., SIBELET N., ZOUNDI J., 1999. CORAF Initiative: Strengthening research-extension-farmers' organisation linkages in West and Central Africa. Field Study – The Gambia. ODI, ITAD, CIRAD.

This study conducted by an international team of researchers looks at research-extension-farmers' organisation linkages in West and Central Africa. It was found that the case studies examined did not reveal strong direct relations between POs and agricultural research in The Gambia. However, that there is some potential for them to work with research and extension in the future. The study draws up some key lessons that have been learnt and ways to strengthen the linkages.

HUSSEIN K., PESCHE, D., STAYMAKER, T., 2001. Franco-British-West African research and policy initiatives in West Africa. Relevance to rural development policies ODI, Inter-réseaux, 84 p.

HUSSI P *et al.* - 1994 - Le développement des coopératives et autres organisations : le rôle de la Banque Mondiale. Document technique de la Banque mondiale n° 199 F, Washington, 125 p.

HUSSI, P., MURPHY, J., LINDBERG, O. BRENNEMAN, L, 1993. The Dependence of Cooperatives and Other Rural Organisations.: The Role of the World Bank. World Bank Technical Paper 1999, Africa Technical Department Series. Washington DC.

This paper discusses the collapse of many of the organisations which were implemented in the 1970s with a heavy dependence on parastatals.

IDS, 1998. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Learning from change. IDS Policy Briefing Issue 12. Brighton: IDS.

IFAD, 2001. Rural Poverty Report 2001: The Challenge of Ending Rural Poverty. IFAD. OUP, Oxford.

ISNARD J.C., RANDRIATAVY A., 1997. Mission d'évaluation à mi-parcours du projet de développement rural du Sud-Ouest à Madagascar, BDPA –SCETAGRI, France, 28 p.

JAFRY, T., 2000. Women, human capital and livelihoods: an ergonomics perspective, produced by the ODI.

The author emphasises importance of state regulation and legislation, gender.

JMN Consultants - IMCS, 1999. Appui aux stratégies paysannes et à la professionnalisation de l'agriculture (ASPPA). Bilan des opérations réalisées au cours de la première phase du projet. Rapport final, Cameroun, 198 p.

KONE F., *et al.*, 1998. Rapport de la mission d'évaluation de la première phase du projet PCPS et de faisabilité de la deuxième phase. Rapport final, BAC+, Bamako, 56 p.

KREBS, P., VOGEL, J., 1994. Birth of a small farmers' group in Guinea. AgREN Paper, 50c, London: ODI.

The authors describe the process by which the Timbi-Madina Farmers' Union in Guinea was formed. The paper outlines the philosophy of a French volunteer programme, and how the project workers and farmers worked together to create a process by which the local economy was transformed and an ethos of partnership evolved. They describe how the PO has helped farmers to take control of potato production and marketing with a turnover of several million French Francs. They look at factors such as implementation of market-oriented government policies. They find that due to the collaboration of the organisation, farmers had some influence on government policy. For example they threatened to demonstrate in the capital to stop the government from importing potatoes. They also describe a successful replication programme where farmers in Fouta-Djallon have followed the Timbi-Madina and formed their own organisation.

LECOINTRE J., NEU D., 1997. Evaluation de la fédération des paysans du Fouta Djallon. Version provisoire soumise au commanditaire, GRET, Paris, 42 p.

LUNDBORG G., 1999. "Completing the Chain: Research-Extension-Farmer-Cooperatives – A Nigerian Experience. Journal of Rural Co-operation, 27 (2) : 107-115.

This is a case study of small cooperatives in rural Nigeria, and their impact on agricultural growth and spreading the technology message.

MERCOIRET M.-R., 1998. Lomaco-Montepuez. Projet de relance des productions agricoles dans la région Sud de Cabo Delgado. Appui aux associations de producteurs. Compte-rendu de la mission effectuée à Montepuez (Cabo Delgado - Mozambique) 4 au 12 mars 1998. Montpellier, Cirad-Tera, 46 p.

Le présent rapport rend compte d'une mission d'appui effectuée auprès de la LOMACO dans le cadre du Projet de relance des productions agricoles de la région Sud de Cabo Delgado au Mozambique (financement CFD). Sont présentés successivement : le travail effectué par le Projet en matière d'appui à l'organisation des producteurs ; des éléments d'analyse relatifs aux associations récemment créées. Des propositions méthodologiques sont ensuite formulées, elles concernent : l'analyse des conditions d'émergence des associations de producteurs et de leur fonctionnement ; l'appui à l'identification par les organisations de leurs projets ; le lancement d'une opération-test de commercialisation primaire du coton graine par quelques associations.

MERCOIRET M.R., 1997. Projet de développement paysannal et gestion des terroirs (DPGT). Animation et appui aux organisations de producteurs. Evaluation à mi-parcours, IRAM, Paris, 131 p.

MERCOIRET M.-R., BERTHOMÉ J., BOSC P.-M., GUILLAUME J. 1997. Les relations organisations paysannes et recherche agricole. Montpellier, CIRAD-SAR, 221 p.

La question des relations entre les systèmes nationaux de recherche agricole et les organisations paysannes se trouve au coeur des réflexions de nombreux opérateurs de développement. L'établissement d'un dialogue qui aboutisse à des modifications significatives des contenus et des modalités d'intervention de la recherche agricole est un processus d'apprentissage réciproque long et complexe entre des partenaires aux logiques différentes et qui suppose que soient éclaircies de nombreuses ambiguïtés sur les attentes, parfois fausses, suscitées par ce partenariat. Cette étude est une contribution au débat en cours; elle se fonde sur l'étude d'un cas concret, le Mali, à travers trois situations agricoles régionales : la région de Mopti, Niono dans le cadre de l'Office du Niger et le Mali-Sud. Cette étude propose à partir d'une analyse de ces trois situations, un éclairage argumenté par les observations de terrain sur les modalités de relations entre recherche et organisations de producteurs. Cette réflexion est ainsi replacée dans un cadre plus large situé par rapport aux travaux de la recherche anglophone sur ces questions qui fait l'objet d'une présentation analytique et de synthèse en annexe au présent document.

MERCOIRET M.-R., VUARIN P., BERTHOMÉ J., GENTIL D., BOSC P.-M., 1997. Etats désengagés, paysans engagés. Perspectives et nouveaux rôles des organisations paysannes en Afrique et en Amérique Latine. Dossier pour un débat. Paris, FPH, 189 p.

Au moment où les Etats se désengagent de l'appui au secteur agricole, les espoirs se portent vers les producteurs organisés pour qu'ils assument des responsabilités croissantes, dans un contexte difficile de libération des échanges et de concurrence exacerbée. Quels rôles les organisations paysannes vont elles jouer dans cette situation, économique et politique, nouvelle? Comment adaptent-elles leurs modes d'organisation interne? En quoi les relations avec leur environnement (Etat, pouvoirs politiques locaux, commerçants...) ont elles évolué? Autant de questions auxquelles ont tenté de répondre les participants de l'atelier international qui s'est déroulé à Mèze (Hérault) en mars 1995, dont ce dossier constitue le compte-rendu. (Cet atelier clôture une recherche-action conduite entre 1991 et 1995 par le CIRAD dans le cadre d'une action thématique programmée en partenariat avec le CIEPAC et l'IRAM). Responsable paysans, chercheurs, universitaires ou acteurs engagés dans des ONG, ils présentent ici leurs réflexions sur les mutations en cours en Afrique et en Amérique latine. Ils s'expriment sur l'émergence et l'histoire des organisations, leurs activités, l'organisation interne et le fonctionnement, les relations avec l'extérieur, et enfin s'interrogent sur les liens entre organisations paysannes, mouvement paysan et indigène et mouvement social.

MERCOIRET M.R., 2000a. Les organisations paysannes et rurales. CIRAD-TERA, note dactylographiée, Montpellier, 38 p.

MERCOIRET M.R., MUNOZ J.P., MINLA M'FOU'OU J., BERTHOME J., BOSC P.M., 2000b. Les organisations paysannes et indigènes face aux défis de la mondialisation. Tome 1. Mise en oeuvre et résultats de la première phase (novembre 1999 - novembre 2000). CIRAD – FPH, 94 p.

MERCOIRET M.R., GOUDIABY B., MARZAROLI S., FALL D., GUEDE S., COULIBALY J., 2001. Des enjeux, des objectifs et des ambiguïtés. *In* Rondot P., Collion M.H., 2001. Organisations paysannes. Leur contribution au renforcement des capacités rurales et à la réduction de la pauvreté. Compte rendu des travaux, Washington DC, 28-30 juin 1999. Washington DC, USA, Banque mondiale, Département développement rural.

MERRILL-SANDS, D., ARNAIZ, M.E., BINGEN, R.J., FARRINGTON, J., CARNEY, D., BEBBINGTON, A.J., 1995. The Role of Farmers' Organisations in Technology Change: Current Situation and Future Prospects ISNAR/ODI Study on Research and Farmers Organisation: Prospect for Partnerships, Draft.

The paper provides a conceptual framework for guiding research on farmers' organisations and their potential role in technology development and transfer. It outlines a typology of farmers' organisations, an elaboration of the objectives of POs involvement in technology and development and transfer, their current and potential roles and their domains of involvement. POs can play a role in holding public sector organisations accountable. However, they tend to move into technology issues only after addressing more pressing concerns to their livelihood (land reform, credit, marketing, rural, literacy). Changing market conditions appear to be a crucial factor in influencing POs' decisions to become involved in technology development.

MERRILL-SANDS, D., KAIMOWITZ, D., 1991. The technology triangle: Linking farmers, technology transfer agents and agricultural researchers. The Hague: ISNAR.

MINISTERE DE L'AGRICULTURE, 1998. Programme de services agricoles et d'appui aux organisations de producteurs (PSAOP). Composante « Appui aux organisations de producteurs ruraux ». Dakar, Sénégal, 73 p.

MOINEAU J., 1996. Rapport de mission AFDI Saône et Loire / PSO Madagascar. AFDI, France, 26 p.

MUCHAGATA V., de RAYNAL V., VEIGA Jr I., 1994. "Building a dialogue between researchers and small farmers: the Tocantis Agro-Ecology Centre (CAT) in Brazil". AgREN Paper 50d, London: ODI.

This case studies highlights the difficulties faced by projects looking to link farmers' organisations and researchers in technology and transfer. The authors discuss POs in Amazonia which had been formed by church groups (with financial, technical assistance and training in management) and are organised around land tenure issues. The groups later coalesced into unions to strengthen their political position regarding land rights issues. However, when CAT tried to work with them, they had problems as there was a lack of demand for research services by the farmers' unions (the farmers' first priority was to find current technical solutions) and there was ineffective communication between the researchers and farmers.

MUKHERJI R., 1990. "Socio-economic perspective of farmers' organisation in India" in Indian journal of agricultural economics/Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, 45, no.3 pp.221-225. This article examines the role of POs in Agricultural economy and political movements.

Ng'ETHE N., ODERO K.K., 1994. Farmers' Organisations in Kenya: state agents or civil institutions? African Rural and Urban Studies, 1 (1): 31-35.

NICANOR N., 2001. Practical Strategies for Pro-Poor Tourism – NACOBTA: The Namibia Case Study – Work in Progress for ODI-IIED-CRT project on Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies: Practical Experience.

This study outlines the successes and failures of a pro-poor tourism initiative – NACOBTA in Namibia.

OBINNE C., 1994. A strategy for Agricultural Progress and socio-economic Upliftment: Federation of farmers associations in Nigeria. Community Development Journal, 29 (1): 40-46.

This is a review and analysis of the nature, status and objectives of farmers' associations in Nigeria.

OSTROM, E., 1992. Crafting institutions for self-governing irrigation systems. San Francisco, USA, Institute for Contemporary Studies, 111 p.

OSTROM, E., OSTROM, V., 1977. A theory for institutional analysis of common pool problems. In G., Hardin and J., Baden (Eds.), Managing the commons. San Francisco, USA, W.H. Freeman, p. 157-172.

PARAT O. *et al.* La Maison des Paysans du Sud-Ouest malgache, PSO, Madagascar, 6 p.

PARTHASARATHY D., CHOPDE V.K., 2000. Building social capital: collective action adoption of agricultural innovations, and poverty reduction in the Indian semi-arid tropics, produced by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT).

The authors argue that ability to co-operate (using for example kinship, community or farmers' cooperatives) for achieving common goals and develop norms and networks for collective action is crucial for successful uptake, diffusion and impact of technology innovations.

PESCHE D., FRANCOIS J.L., 1998. Vers une vision conjointe de l'appui à la vulgarisation agricole en Afrique au sud du Sahara. Compte rendu de l'atelier de Ségou (23-28 nov. 1998). Initiative de Neuchâtel, document bilingue (français/anglais), 80 et 76 p.

PRETTY J., WARD H., 2001. Social Capital and the Environment. *World Development*. 29 (2) : 209-227.

PSO, 1998. Compte-rendu de la première session de la Maison des Paysans de la région de Tuléar à Madagascar, Madagascar, 9 p.

RANDRIAMAMPITA G., 1997. Le projet Sud-Ouest et l'ajustement structurel à Madagascar. Document provisoire, PSO, Madagascar, 22 p.

REMUZAT C., 1999. Principaux résultats de la professionnalisation des organisations paysannes par fonction économique. Document de capitalisation des résultats du projet ASPPA - 1995/1999, CFD/DEPA, Cameroun, 72 p.

REMY P., 1994. Appui aux organisations professionnelles agricoles Mali / Burkina Faso. Rapport de présentation, Ministère Français de la Coopération, Paris, 25 p.

REMY P., DURAND O., 2000. Note de présentation du projet d'Appui à la Concertation Sectorielle Agricole ASCA) en Côte d'Ivoire. MAE, Paris, 26 p.

Réseau GAO, 1995. Les organisations paysannes et rurales – Des acteurs du développement en Afrique sub-saharienne (réédition du document GAO datant de 1995). Groupe de travail « Organisations paysannes et rurales ». Dossier de l'Inter-Réseaux n° 3, 90 p.

Ce document rassemble des informations, des réflexions et des questionnements issus du groupe de travail "État et organisations rurales" du Réseau GAO mais aussi de personnes qui, d'une manière ou d'une autre, accompagnent des organisations paysannes et rurales dans les pays du sud, en particulier en Afrique sub-saharienne. Il représente la version définitive d'un document élaboré et mis en forme durant l'année 1994, conçu comme un support pour des débats et proposant un certain nombre de pistes de réflexion. Le lecteur est donc fortement convié à réagir, critiquer, faire des propositions en vue d'enrichir les questions abordées par des exemples concrets. Ce document devrait faire l'objet d'une édition revue et augmentée dans le courant de l'année 1999.

RESTREPO, J. I., OCHOA, L., MUNOZ, M. E., 1995. Case Study: Farmer Leadership on Rural Development Programs: Beyond the Paraprofessional. Cali, Colombia: Carvajal Foundation.

The Carvajal Foundation seeks to enable small farmers to lead local rural development institutions through a development model called CORPOS. The model promotes interaction among farmers, NGOs and the state enhancing community participation and inter-institutional linkages. The paper examines difficulties that have been encountered.

RONDOT P., COLLION M.H., 1999. Strengthening agricultural producers' organizations: a contribution to rural capacity building. Report of a workshop, World Bank/IFAP, Washington, 24 p.

RONDOT P., COLLION M.H., 2000. Investing in producer organisations for sustainable agricultural production. A framework for World Bank action, draft, World Bank, Washington, 6 p.

RONDOT P., COLLION M.H., 2001. Organisations paysannes. Leur contribution au renforcement des capacités rurales et à la réduction de la pauvreté. Compte rendu des travaux, Washington DC, 28-30 juin 1999. Washington DC, USA, Banque mondiale, Département développement rural.

ROUSE, J., 1998. Introductory note to the conference of Small Farmers Groups Associations. FAO. Rome.

ROUVIERE M.C., 1989. Les organisations paysannes en Afrique Noire francophone. Approche bibliographique. CIRAD - DSA, Montpellier, 166 p.

SADEEQUE Dr Z., 1999. Social Institutions, Local Governance, and Social Capital: Foundations of Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Produced by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

The author advocates adopting a social capital approach to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

SAEC, 2000. Perception par les paysans burkinabés et maliens des échanges organisés dans le cadre d'AFDI. Rapport provisoire, Ouagadougou, 58 p.

SAUTIER D., BONNAL P., 1998. Projet de relance de la production agricole dans la région de Cabo Delgado. Analyse de la mise en place des associations de producteurs dans la zone du projet Locamo-Montepuez. Rapport de mission à Montepuez, Mozambique (23 juillet-9 août 1998), Cirad-Tera N°81/98, 18 P.

SCHNEIDER H., 1999. Participatory Governance: The Missing Link for Poverty Reduction: OECD Development Centre, Policy Brief No.17.

SHEPHERD G., GILL G., 1999. Community Forestry and Rural Livelihoods in Nepal – Issues and Options for the Future of the Nepal – UK Community Forest Project London: ODI.

This paper looks at the DFID, Nepal Community Forest Project. It outlines some areas that need to be strengthened, and ways forward, and project exit strategies.

SHEPHERD G., GILL G., 1999. Community Forestry and Rural Livelihoods in Nepal – Issues and Options for the Future of the Nepal – UK Community Forest Project London: ODI.

SHERIEF A. K., 1991. Kerala, India: Group farming. How farmer production groups have made possible the use of productivity-increasing technology and opened the way to more effective extension. University of Reading – Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department (AERDD) Bulletin (32): 14-17.

The paper examines the role of POs to enable small farmers to adopt productivity-increasing technologies, including power cultivation on very small plots.

SNARD J.C., RANDRIATAVY A., 1997. Mission d'évaluation à mi-parcours du projet de développement rural du Sud-Ouest à Madagascar, BDPA –SCETAGRI, France, 28 p.

SOFRECO, 2000. Evaluation du programme d'appui à l'organisation du monde rural en Côte d'Ivoire. Rapport définitif, Paris, 69 p.

SPINAT J.B., 2000. Du projet centre de prestations de services aux centres Faranfasi So. D'un projet externe vers un dispositif d'appui-conseil paysan autonome et pérenne. IRAM, Paris, 24 p.

STEWART F. 1996. "Groups for good or ill" in Oxford Development Studies, Vol. 24. No. 1. pp.9-25.

The author argues the importance of working with groups in economic and social activities and provides empirical cases exploring why some groups help improve outcomes (trust/reciprocity) and others don't.

STRINGFELLOW R., COULTER J., LUCEY T., McKONE C., HUSSAIN A., 1997. "Improving the Access of Smallholders to Agricultural Services in Sub-Saharan Africa: Farmer Co-operation and The Role of the Donor Community" Natural Resource Perspective No. 20, ODI.

This paper highlights the characteristics of successful farmer co-operation as well as some of the common mistakes made in trying to promote farmer groups. The paper finds that successful co-operation among smallholders is often built on previous cooperative experience. However, the authors warn that farmer co-operation should neither be viewed as a panacea for the development of rural areas, nor does it provide an easy institutional response to the new pressures facing smallholders in a liberalised economy.

TOURE O., 1998. Audit institutionnel des organisations socio-professionnelles d'élevage du Sahel. Synthèse des principales conclusions. International Institute for Environment and Development.

TOURE O., 1998. Note introductive aux débats sur l'émergence des organisations pastorales au Sahel. Club du Sahel.

TRIPP R. 2001. Seed Provision and Agricultural Development. The Institutions of Rural Change. James Currey, Oxford.

The authors provides case studies of successful and unsuccessful seed cooperatives, analysing why top down, donor-led cooperatives tend to fail.

TUSHAAR S. 1995. Liberalisation and Indian agriculture: a new relevance of farmer cooperatives. Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics, 50 : 488-509.

UPHOFF N., WIJAYARATNA C.M., 2000. Demonstrated benefits from social capital: the productivity of Farmer Organizations in Gal Oya, Sri Lanka. *World Development* 28 (11) : 1875-1890.

The authors present an analytical construct of social capital, followed by a case study of a PO in the Gal Oya irrigation scheme in Sri Lanka. It is shown that mutually beneficial collective action produced measurable improvements in the system performance and efficiency.

UREY I. 2001. *Emerging Issues in Rural Development: Background Papers*. ODI, London, January.

USAID 1984. *Local Organisations in Development*. www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/pps/localorg/

USAID 1985. *Cooperative Development (1985)*. www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/pps/coopdev

VAN DEN BREEMER, J.P.M., DRIJVER, C.A., VENEMA, L.B., 1995. *Local Resource Management in Africa* Wiley.

VENEMA L.B., 1995. "Collaborating with Indigenous Farmers' Associations in Agricultural Development and Resource Management". *In Local Resource Management in Africa*, van den Breemer, J. P. M., Drijver, C. A. and Venema, L. B. Wiley.

This article examines the different types of associations that donors should cooperate with in the management of natural resources. The author asks whether it is possible for donor communities to work with indigenous associations, as they tend to be complex. He finds that most local groups have been created by outside intervention, but this does not necessarily mean that they will always perform badly. The author then points out some of the accepted benefits of donors working with POs opposed to with individual farmers. These are: opportunities of scale; it helps the community to learn how to organise itself; and it can help the community to protect itself from policies originating from the capital.

VILLARD S., RAHARIVOLOLONA M., DIA M., 2000. *Evaluation du programme de professionnalisation de l'agriculture à Madagascar*. Tome 1, IRAM.

VINDEL B., ROJAT D., 1999. *Rapport de présentation du projet d'appui à la professionnalisation des organisations paysannes au Cameroun*, MAE, Paris, 21 p.

WHYTE C., CAMPBELL JACKSON D., 2000. *Sustainable African Agricultural Organisations Development Workshop – Synthesis of proceedings, strategy recommendations, lessons learned and best practices*. USAID – Office of Sustainable Development Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Enterprises.

This is a summary of the proceedings from a workshop on producer organisation. The paper examines some USAID experiences, lessons learned and makes some recommendations for future practice.

WIBBERLEY, 1991. *Farmer dominant study groups: a review of farmers forming and joining groups and reports of two groups with similar objectives in two very different contexts*. University of Reading, Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department (AERDD) Bulletin, 32: 8-13.

The author presents 7 reasons why farmers form groups: technical, environmental, social, political, economic, educational and administrative reasons. He also shows that groups can play a role in developing countries in a wide range of political and environmental contexts.

WORLD BANK 1997. *Rural Development: From Vision to Action*. Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Studies and Monographs Series No.12.

WORLD BANK 1998. *Building Rural Capacity – Producer organisations as leading actors in research, extension and education*, Announcement at the IFAD/WB's workshop on producer organisations.

This paper outlines the increasing role of POs in the light of decentralisation and growth of the private sector.

WORLD BANK 1998. *World Development Report 1998*.

WORLD BANK 2000. *World Bank Development Report 2000*.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Analytical framework for the case studies

IDENTIFICATION OF THE SUPPORT PROGRAMME: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND THE PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION.

The first section is a sort of identity card for the support programme. It is an introduction and must include:

- localisation (country, region);
- level of intervention (local, regional or national);
- type of support (diversified/specialised, technical/institutional, etc.);
- type of organisation concerned (grassroots RPO or regional/national federation, export sector or local market, etc.);
- duration of the programme, its budget, its donor and its operator.

CONTEXT: ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The objective of this chapter is to put the actions into their context, since this not only influences how the operations are oriented by the organisations concerned but also how successful the actions are and what external aid is given.

The description should include:

- the institutional environment (state of public intervention in relation to a given sector or region; abundance or scarcity of external support, etc.);
- the economical environment (absence or weakness of credit structures, main export crop, large or small numbers of stakeholders in the sector, etc.);
- the degree of market liberalisation (whether imports are regulated or not) and price developments in – the sector concerned (wide variations, general trend to decrease);
- the degree of democratisation of the public debate (notably decentralisation and its consequences on the rural development and agricultural policies);
- the physical and human environment (strict climatic limits, high or low population density, degree of population organisation etc.);
- the policy towards support to producers' organisations (of the State and of the donor financing the project).

For clarity, the analysis of the changing context may be summarised in a chronological table with the dates of different key changes in the political, economical, institutional and social environment and a short development for each stage.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANISATION CONCERNED BY THE SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The object of this chapter is to present the supported organisation by listing the functions it carries out. These functions may include:

- the technical function: management of production infrastructures, natural resource management, etc. ;
- the economic function: season or input supply credit, product marketing, etc. ;
- the function of representation: defending the interests of the producers at the local or national level in different bodies;
- the social function: investment into local developments such as schools, supplies of drinking water, etc.

Each function or activity of the producers must be precisely described, with particular emphasis on:

- changes: new activities, the abandonment or development of an activity, changes in the ways of working, and the different explanatory factors in relation to the preceding chapter on the context,
- the difficulties encountered and their causes ;
- the impacts or results obtained ;
- and the relationships between the RPO and the other actors for the concerned function.

In conclusion, and as a summary, it must be possible to characterise the organisation generally and succinctly according to the following criteria:

- scale of intervention (grassroots organisation or regional / national federation);
- type (specialised or multifunctional);
- size (number of members);
- dynamic state (development, stagnation, regression) ;
- function (financial management, communication between the base and the officers, etc.);
- relationships with other stakeholders (collaboration, contractual relationships,) etc.

ANALYSE OF THE SUPPORT PROGRAMME

This section is the core of the study and must therefore be as complete as possible.

Background to the intervention

The programme should be placed into an historic dimension by answering the following questions in particular:

- what were the earlier interventions that enabled the organisation to come into being or to build up its capacities? (cf context)
- is it the first phase of a project or part of an old project with different phases?

Institutional set up

Who is the donor?

What body is supervising the support project and how does it exert this function (composition and function of the pilot committee in particular)

What body/bodies are implementing the project? Is it a technical service of the State, or a private operator such as an NGO or consultancy? Where there are several, how do they share the work?

How big is the project team?

What is the ratio of the current budget of the project compared to the operations budget?

Is there any collaboration/synergy with other support programmes to the organisations?

Logical framework of the project (objectives, expected results and activities)

What are the general/specific objectives of the project?

Is support to the RPOs the central aim of the project, or just one component of a more general project?

How is the support justified (results of the initial appraisal as presented in the identification)?

What results are expected and what are the activities planned in order to achieve them?

The simplest and clearest way of presenting the nature of the project is the same form as in the initial feasibility study.

Approach and methods of implementation

In this section, the analysis should follow the different stages in the life of the project, from the identification of the actions (types of support) through to their evaluation, via their implementation. At each stage, the procedures should be explained. It should be possible to give answers to the following questions.

Is the support given subject to certain conditions (adoption of a legal status by the organisation, transparent management, withdrawal of State support, etc.)?

Is the support given directly by the project team or by intermediate service suppliers?

Is it an "open" programme (nature of the support undefined at the start of the project) or on the contrary a "closed" project with the actions predetermined during the identification phase with a more or less participatory appraisal?

Does the organisation participate in financing the support actions? What are the modalities of this participation? Is financial autonomy sought after (the organisation taking on the totality of the functions)?

Does the organisation participate at every implementation stage of the actions? How?

To conclude, it must be possible to say how much the programme is supervised by the organisation.

Activities and impacts

The aim here is to describe precisely the support activities conducted by the project according to type (information/training for the officers and/or members, support to activity planning, support to management, support to organisation, support to consultation and to the establishing relationships with other stakeholders founded on contracts, support to investment, etc.). For programmes with a single component of support to RPOs, their other components should be mentioned but not described in detail.

For each activity, the following should be described and analysed:

- the modalities of implementation;
- the difficulties encountered and their causes;
- the impacts;
- and the perspectives for the future (medium and long-term objectives).

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS

As a conclusion, this chapter should judge the support programme, emphasising the internal factors (approach to and modalities of implementation) and external factors (context) which have enabled or prevented it reaching its objectives, i.e. to build up the capacities of the organisation(s) concerned.

What are the specific characteristics of the operation?

Which methods used in the implementation of the actions have enabled (or not) the project to build up the capacities of the RPOs?

What in the context of the project has impeded or favoured its impact?

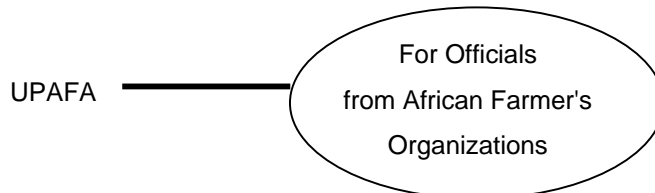
What guarantees are there that the action engaged is sustainable?

On what conditions could such a programme be extended or reproduced elsewhere?

Annex 2. List of World Bank staff met in Washington

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Binswanger, Hans | Director for Agriculture, Africa |
| Bruce, John | Senior Counsel Land reform and legal specialist, RDV |
| De Haan, Cornelis | Livestock adviser, Senior Rural Development Specialist (RDV) |
| Coirolo, Luis | Lead specialist Latin America and Caribbean Region (LAC) |
| Collion, Marie H el ene | Senior Agricultural Services Specialist, Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA), Agricultural Knowledge and Information System network (AKIS) Chair Person |
| Csaki, Csaba | Senior officer, Responsible for the revision of Vision to Action, RDV |
| Dongier, Philippe | Social Development Department, Community Driven Development (CDD) coordinator |
| Farah, Jumana | Consultant, East Africa, Africa Region |
| Ganguly, Sushma | Deputy Director, Rural Development Department (RDV) |
| Groenfeldt, David | Rural water specialist, RDV |
| Hopkin, Jane | Senior Agricultural Economist, Africa Region, Burkina Faso |
| Labaste, Patrick | Senior Agricultural Economist, Africa region (Mali), Chair person of the private sector thematic group |
| Le Gall, Fran ois | Senior livestock specialist, Africa Region, Chair person of the Livestock Thematic group |
| Nwanze, Okidegbe | Senior adviser, policy specialist, RDV |
| Ribe, Helena | Sector Leader, Latin America and Caribbean region (LAC) |
| Stone Andrew | Senior Private Sector Development specialist. Business Environment & Foreign Investment (FPSI) network |
| Thompson, Robert | Director, Rural Development Department (RDV) |
| Van Der Meer, Cornelis | Senior Consultant, RDV |
| Webster Leila | Senior program officer, Small and medium enterprises department (FPSI) |
| Williams, Melissa | Operation analyst, Community Based Rural Development anchor (CBRD), RDV |

Annex 3. The african farmer's academy (upafa) International alternating training cycle



The African Farmer's Academy is an initiative of the Agriculture Peasant and Modernization Network (APM - Afrique)

It proposes an alternating training designed for officials from African Farmer's Organizations

WHY ?

Peasant Agriculture has for several years been confronted to many economic and institutional changes: structural adjustment programmes, disengagement by the State, liberalization of commercial exchanges, reorganization of agricultural services, administrative decentralization etc.

Changes were rapid and officials in many Farmers' Organizations felt the need of strengthening their capacities:

- in order to understand the developments that occurred;
- in order to build up strategies that match with the expectations and interests of their members;
- in order to negotiate with other operators.

The African Farmer's Academy is an instrument at the service of Farmers' Organizations and struggles to supplement the training demand existing elsewhere.

FOR WHOM?

The African Farmer's Academy proposes an alternating training designed for officials from national or regional, local federative Organizations in various countries, be they organizations that are structured around a Sub-Sector (Cotton, Coffee, Cocoa, Rice, market gardening, cattle breeding etc.) or multisector-based organizations.

All officials from various organizations are most welcome, be they men and women, young and less young people.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE ?

The African Farmer's Academy proposes an international two years cycle with six (6) modules (or sessions). Such modules follow a graduation and thus form a whole .

MODULE ONE

Evolution of local societies and developments in the national and international contexts

This module will be focussed on two questions:

- from where do we come?
- at what stage are we?

Emphasis will be laid on:

- the role played by the State and the major characteristics of agricultural policies implemented, in particular since the years of independence;
- the evolution of forms of organisation set up by the rural people?
- the development of relationships between rural producers and other operators.

MODULE TWO

The Changes of the economic environment of Agriculture

This module will be focussed on the analysis of economic changes at the international level and on the study of their effects in various countries: what has happened for 10-15 years? The following three points will be discussed successively:

- the liberalization of world markets. and its effects on the marketing of agricultural products;
- structural adjustment programmes and their consequences in the agricultural sector;
- new challenges and stakes for Peasant agriculture.

MODULE THREE

Institutional reorganizations

This module will be focussed on the analysis of institutional changes which move together with economic liberalization.

The following points will be discussed:

- the reorganization of agricultural services and new distributions of duties between the public sector, the private sector and agricultural professional organizations;
- restructuring Sub-Sectors;
- public policies in matters of land and credits etc.;
- the administrative decentralization and the setting up of local communities;
- the role devolved on the State in the discharge of its " kindly duties",
- the opinions of major money lenders and Cooperation Agencies.

MODULE FOUR

The positioning of Farmers' Organizations in a changing World

The objectives of this module are:

- first of all to give prominence to the diversity of strategies for adapting family (or individual) production units to economic and institutional changes;
- then to analyse the answers given by Farmer's organisations to the new challenges facing Peasant agriculture;
- lastly to underscore the interest for Farmers' organizations to build up a strategic project.

MODULE FIVE

The objectives and approaches of strategic planning

This module will first of all underscore:

the interest for Farmer's organizations to draw up a strategic project which gives structure to the activities carried out and serves as basis for negotiation with other operators;

the need of building up that project at the various levels of these organizations: local regional, national and international levels.

Then the issue of methods and tools will be tackled in order to:

- set up a diagnosis that would enable to identify the current advantages and constraints of a given organisation;
- define clear ends and realistic objectives;
- identify working channels.

Particular attention will be focussed on:

- the democratic drawing up of the project;
- the building up of partnerships and alliance

MODULE SIX

Strategic programming and negotiation

The following points will be discussed:

Methods and instruments for programming: How to convert working channels into programmes of action?

Drawing up operational plans of action in order to implement such programmes;

Negotiating with the economic and institutional operators concerned;

Setting up follow up and evaluation mechanisms.

Particular emphasis will be laid on the contribution of projects and programmes of local and regional organizations to the drafting at the national level of proposals of agricultural policy negotiated with the State.

HOW?

The issue is that of alternating training.

Every training module (session) will last for fifteen days; this period may vary depending on the topics under discussion.

Officials from Farmers' Organizations who are registered for the international cycle take the commitment of participating in these six modules whose completion will last for two years.

The training will be focussed on and will give value to the participants' experience and will stimulate prospective reflection.

Prior to every module, the participants will make their contributions ready in their respective organizations, from a guideline that will be proposed to them.

At the close of every module, the participants will prepare themselves to return the achievements to their organizations.

Each participant will draw-up a professional project all along his training and in relation to his organisation.

THE FUNCTIONING OF THE AFRICAN FARMER'S ACADEMY

The African Farmer's Academy is itinerant; in order to foster exchanges, training modules making up the international cycle will be implemented in Senegal, in Cameroon and if possible in an English-speaking country of Africa.

An international pedagogic committee of eight members was appointed by the APM-Afrique Network; it meets once a year to draw up the programme, examine candidatures, choose pedagogic officials for various modules and define the major guidelines of the planned trainings.

A permanent unit was set up in Dakar (Senegal) and is responsible for ensuring the administrative and pedagogic coordination of Upafa's activities.

REGISTRATION CONDITIONS

The officials concerned must be backed up by the Farmers' Organizations to which they belong.

The registered officials should take the commitment of participating in the six modules which make up the international cycle as well as in the preparation and restitution activities that are planned.

The training modules will be implemented in French and English; it is therefore necessary for the participants to fluently speak one of the two languages.

Since the number of places per country is limited (25 persons for each batch depending on the international cycle), the pedagogic committee is responsible for examining the candidatures which will be sent to it.

The Upafa's international training cycle will be permanent; a person whose candidature is not selected may file another application for registration.

HOW THE TRAINING IS FUNDED

The expenditures related to participation in the Upafa international training will be borne:

- either directly by Upafa;
- or through scholarships awards that may be obtained by Farmers' Organizations from their partners.

The expenditures borne by Upafa are related to international trips (from the capital city of the country of residence to the training place), accommodation and food during the period fixed for the six modules, training fees, travelling throughout the modules, etc.

Upafa is not capable of paying allowances or grants to the participants.

HOW TO APPLY FOR REGISTRATION?

Officials from the Farmers' Organisation concerned are requested to send an application for registration through the following address:

UPAFA
APM-Afrique Network
P.o. Box 1.0008
Yaounde
Cameroon
Tel: 00 (237) 21.53.89
Fax: 00 (237) 20 55 20
e-mail: apm@camnet.cm

Applications for registration comprise two parts (cf following pages):

- an application to be filed by the Farmers' Organisation;
- an application to be filed by the farmer's representative wishing to undergo training.

Nota Bene: The APM Afrique Network and Upafa reserve themselves the right to modify, in case of pedagogic necessity or financial constraints, the provisions contained in this document; they take the commitment of keeping informed the persons, organizations and institutions concerned of such possible modifications.

UPAFA: APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

Officials from African Farmers' Organizations wishing to participate in the UPAFA international cycle are requested to apply for registration according to the following schedule:

1- Information to be furnished by the Farmer's Organisation concerned

- Name of Organisation (Full names/Acronym).
- Address (postal address, Fax, telephone number, electronic address if possible)
- Brief presentation (2-3 pages) of the organisation: date of foundation, number of members objectives, principal activities etc.
- Justification of the application for training

UPAFA: APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

2- Information to be furnished by the person who applies for registration.

- Full names
- Age; sex
- Address

Trainings undergone (school or professional training or training undergone within the framework of the organisation).

Professional activities (eventually state the various activities carried out by the applicant in the past and those presently being carried out).

Duties performed in the organisation (state the successive duties carried out by the applicant (s) in the organisation and those presently carried out.

Examples: I have been a member since..... a grouping animator a regional official a marketing official etc)

Justification of the application for training.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

APM - AFRIQUE NETWORK
Permanent Secretariat
P.O. Box 10008
Yaounde
Cameroon
Tel: 00 (237) 21-53-89
Fax: 00 (237) 20-55-20
e-mail:apm@camnet.cm

Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|---|
| ACSA | Appui à la Concertation Sectorielle Agricole |
| AFD | Agence Française de Développement |
| AFDI | Association des Agriculteurs Français pour le Développement International |
| ANADER | Agence Nationale de Développement Rural (Côte d'Ivoire) |
| ANAPROCI | Association Nationale des Producteurs de Café-Cacao de Côte d'Ivoire |
| AOPP | Association des Organisations Paysannes et Professionnelles (Mali) |
| ANOPACI | Association Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire |
| APCAM | Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d'Agricultures du Mali |
| APL | Adaptative Programme Lending |
| APM | Agriculture Paysanne et Modernisation |
| ASSPA | Assistance aux Stratégies des Producteurs et à la Professionalisation de l'Agriculture (Cameroon) |
| BCSP | Business Centres Support Project |
| BNDA | Banque Nationale de Développement Agricole |
| BSCP | Business Service Centre Project (Mali) |
| CADEF | Comité d'Action pour le Développement du Fogny (Senegal) |
| CAMOPA | Cellule d'Appui à la Mise en Œuvre du Plan d'Action (Mali) |
| CBO | Community Based Organisations |
| CCGF | Colombian Coffee Growers Federation |
| CDF | Comprehensive Development Framework |
| CDD | Community Driven Development |
| CFUG | Community Forest User Groups (Nepal) |
| CIEPAC | Centre International pour l'Education Permanente de l'Aménagement Concerté (France) |
| CIRAD | Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (France) |
| CNC | Coordinadora Nacional Campesina (Ecuador) |
| CNCR | Comité National de Concertation des Ruraux (Senegal) |
| CNFRU | Comision National de Fomento Rural in Uruguay |
| CONAIE | Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indigenas del Ecuador |
| CONFEUNASSC | Confederation Unica Nacional de Afiliados al Seguro Social Campesino (Ecuador) |
| CPCC | Comité des Producteurs de Coton du Cameroun |
| CRG | Crédit Rural de Guinée |
| CROS | Comité Régional d'Orientation et de Suivi |
| DDC | Direction du Développement et de la Coopération (Switzerland) |
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| DPGT | Développement Paysannal et Gestion des Terroirs (Cameroon) |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| FECECAM | Fédération des Caisses d'Epargne et de Crédit Agricole Mutuel (Benin) |
| FUGN | Fédération des Unions de Groupements Naam (Burkina Faso) |
| FENOCIN | Federacion Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indigenas y Negras (Ecuador) |
| FENOP | Fédération Nationale des Organisations Paysannes (Burkina Faso) |
| FNDA | Fonds National de Développement Agricole |
| FONGS | Fédération des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales du Sénégal |
| FNPC | Fédération Nationale des Producteurs de Coton (Senegal) |
| FNSEA | Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles (France) |
| FPFD | Fédération des Paysans du Fouta Djallon (Guinea) |
| FPH | Fondation Charles Léopold Meyer pour le Progrès de l'Homme |
| FUPRO | Fédération des Unions de Producteurs (Benin) |
| GIC | Groupe d'Intérêt Collectif (Common Interest Group) |
| GIE | Groupe d'Intérêt Economique (Economic Interest Group) |
| GTDR | Groupe de Travail pour le Développement Rural (Madagascar) |
| GTZ | Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (German aid) |
| IFAP | International Federation of Agricultural Producers |
| IRAM | Institut de Recherche et d'Applications des Méthodes de développement (France) |
| LM | Land Management |
| MAE | Ministère Français des Affaires Etrangères |
| MdP | Maison des Paysans (Madagascar) |
| MINAGRA | Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Ressources Animales (Côte d'Ivoire) |
| MPZS | Mouvement Paysan de la Zone Soudanienne (Chad) |
| MSA | Mutualité Sociale Agricole (France) |
| NACOBTA | Namibia Community-Based Tourism Association (Namibia) |
| NIA | National Irrigation Administration (The Philippines) |
| NFU | National Farmers Union (UK) |
| NGO | Non-Gouvernemental Organisation |
| NRM | National Resource Management |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| OFISOM | Observatoire des filières du Sud Ouest Malgache |
| OPCC | Organisation des Producteurs de Coton du Cameroun |
| PADR | Plan d'Action pour le Développement Rural (Madagascar) |
| PAOPA | Projet d'Appui aux Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles |
| PGR | Projet Gestion Rurale (Mali) |
| POP | Promotion et Organisation Paysanne |
| PPdA | Programme de Professionnalisation de l'Agriculture |
| PRS | Poverty Strategy Reduction |
| ROPPA | Réseau des Organisations Paysannes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest |
| RPOs | Rural Producers' Organisations |
| SODECOTON | Société pour le Développement de la Culture Cotonnière au Cameroun |
| SDD | Social Development Department (World Bank) |
| SOLAGRAL | Solidarité Agro-Alimentaire (France) |
| SWP | South West Project (Madagascar) |
| SYCOV | Syndicat des Cotonniers et Vivriers (Mali) |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| T & V | Training and Visit |
| TTL | Task Team Leader |
| UACI | Union des Aviculteurs de Côte d'Ivoire |
| UCOOPAG-SCI | Union des Coopératives Agricoles de la Zone des Savane de Côte d'Ivoire |
| UNDP | United Nation Development Program |
| UNPCB | Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Burkina (Burkina Faso) |
| URESCOS-CI | Union Régionale des Entreprises Coopératives de la zone de Savanes de Cote d'Ivoire |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development (USA) |
| VA | Village Association |
| WAEMU | West Africa Economic and Monetary Union |
| WARF | West African Rural Foundation |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |
| ZFU | Zimbabwe Farmers Union (Zimbabwe) |

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