

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

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two issues were raised:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Encourage the development of a market economy in the rural area
- Modernise agriculture and livestock
- Encourage the professionalisation of actors
- Ensure a sustainable management of natural resources
- Increase food security

¹ Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of animal resources, 1997, *Sustainable growth strategy of the agriculture and livestock sectors: Policy paper by 2010*, Ouagadougou, 22 pp and Ministry of Agriculture, 1999, *Sustainable growth strategy of the agriculture sector : Operational Strategic Plan (OSP)*, Ouagadougou, 72 pp

- Significantly improve the economic status of the rural woman
- The role of the State

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

In 1999, government strategy became more precise through the PP. At the time, PNDSA II had started its activities. The PP laid down five priority programmes (soil fertility, food security and nutrition, modernisation of agriculture, support to producers and to their organisations, institutional support) and two sector action plans (food crops and export crops). Each programme further led to the design of one or several action plans.² One of the basic concepts was to *place the "beneficiaries" at the centre of the new programmes*: it was clearly stated that a Policy Committee would be set up for some action plans "*comprising exclusively beneficiaries and shall be the key structure in the implementation of the action plans*"³. At the time, the World Bank was active in the process, with the other donor institutions. Faced with some slowness in the process⁴, the World Bank withdrew in 1998.

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

Lastly, only a few action plans seemed to have actually seen the light of day: three of them seemed to have particularly concentrated energies with varying results. The Action Plan for the Emergence of Agric Professionals' Organisations (AP/APOs, see appendix 2), the Action Plan for the Funding of the Rural World (AP/FRA) and the Action Plan for the Rice Sector (APRS). Other action plans were worked out but were not always translated into significant actions or changes: cereals, fruits and vegetables⁵, mechanisation, soil fertility, ... In addition, it was not always obvious to bring officials and workers of the agricultural administration to fully grasp the spirit and content of the action plans: the SP/CPSA⁶ played a central role here both in designing the action plans and in disseminating their content, as well as their appropriation.

To this process of definition and implementation of strategies for the rural sector is superimposed the wider exercise of elaborating a strategic poverty alleviation framework

² The « Support to producers/actors and their organisations» programme led to only one action plan, the AP/PAOs (see the rest of footnote) while the "modernisation of agriculture" programme gave rise to four action plans including that on funding of the rural area (AP/FRA).

³ Ministry of Agriculture, 1999, *Sustainable growth strategy of the agriculture sector: Operational Strategic Plan (OSP)*, Ouagadougou, 72 pp.

⁴ It would appear other factors like the splitting of the Ministry of Agriculture into two with the creation of the Ministry of Animal Resources as well as disrespect of commitments on monopolies to be ended in the hides and skin sector, forced the World Bank to make such a choice.

⁵ The World Bank expressed its interest in this sector.

⁶ The Permanent Secretariat for the coordination of agricultural sector policies, attached to the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Agriculture (former PASA Coordination Unit). Some people even referred to this structure as "*off-shore*", illustrating the ambiguities of its institutional attachment (expected to be inter-ministerial but attached to one ministry): it appears to be perceived by some components of the Burkinabe administration as a "donors' affair".

started in November 1999 and completed in 2000. The framework was thus built up *after* the start of PNDSA II and the links between the two were not immediate. Furthermore, in more general terms, one may question the influence of these overall strategic programming exercises on the practices of actors. A report to analyse the implementation of the Poverty Alleviation Strategic Framework (CSLP) revealed that: “*for some partners, the structure (priorities, thrust) of the CSLP had already laid the basis for the review of the assistance strategies (review that had been planned before the CSLP), while others were happy to note that their strategies and programmes were already focused on the same concerns and guidelines as those presented in the CSLP*”⁷. The analysis raised eyebrows on the possible incidence of such approaches on development practices, which in a nutshell is normal given that development projects and programmes often function according to a particular logic and that the exercise of the CSLP is so abstract and general in nature that it is not easily seen what the local actors may derive from it to change their practices.

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

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

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

At the time PNDSA II took off, what was the level of organisation of the FOs in Burkina Faso? It is worth mentioning some of the important stages in the setting-up of national FOs⁸.

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

In June 1996, the Committee examined the work done with delegates from the 30 provinces of the country. In October 1996, a second meeting in Dedougou made it possible to set up the *National Federation of Burkina FOs* (FENOP). Very rapidly, the Bam Cooperatives Union (UCOBAM) and the FNGN came together to form, outside this new national federation, the National Producers’ Provisional Coordination (CNPOP), which became the National Council of Burkina Agric Professionals (CNPA-B)⁹ in July 1997. Not long after, a third national organisation came to existence: the Union of Young Agricultural Producers of Burkina Faso

⁷ DANIDA, 2002, Review of the CSLP process in Burkina Faso: A contribution to the international review of the CSLP process.

⁸ This chapter brings additional information to existing analyses on the history of FOs in Burkina Faso: Faure A, Pesche D, 1993, *Situation et évolution des organisations paysannes : le Burkina Faso*, Réseau GAO, Paris, ARC, 1994, *Le mouvement paysan au Burkina Faso : ses composantes, ses forces et ses limites (première partie : rapport de synthèse)*, Association internationale Six-S, Ouagadougou, 28 pp. See also Janssens L, Totté M, Verhaegen E, (AIDEP), 1997, *Plan d’actions pour l’émergence d’Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles au Burkina Faso*, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MARA), Agricultural Sector Adjustment Programme (PASAPASA), Ouagadougou, 250 pp 35 à 47.

⁹ It was at the beginning of the same year that the survey on the identification of the future AP-OAP with the EU was launched, making fashionable the term agricultural professionals. Janssens L, Totté M, Verhaegen E, (AIDEP), 1997, *Plan d’actions pour l’émergence d’Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles au Burkina Faso*, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MARA), Agricultural Sector Adjustment Programme (PASA), Ouagadougou, 250 pp.

(UNJPA-B), which found it very difficult to survive, since it did not have any foreign assistance like the two other umbrella organisations¹⁰.

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

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

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

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

In the overall landscape of agricultural and rural policies, support to producers' organisations clearly stood out as a specific component in the PP as early as 1997 and later in the OSP in 1999. It was referred to at the time as priority programme for support to producers and their organisations and aimed at "*professionalising the sectors*" in order to "*ensure that in the long-term the main actors would take over the sustainable running and socio-economic development of the agricultural sector and render it cost-effective*"¹¹. This overall objective "*would be achieved only after the attainment of operational objectives: (1) support to the emergence and structuring of APOs, (2) support to APO enhancement and (3) support to the development of private initiative*". The strategy envisaged for the implementation of such priorities mainly depends on the following: the action plan for the emergence of agric professionals' organisations (AP/APOs) and the institution of a network of chambers of agriculture. One of the appendices of the OSP underscores that the cross-cutting theme of

¹⁰ At the time, the FENOP was receiving support from the Swiss cooperation and the CNPA-B from the Netherlands cooperation.

¹¹ Quotations in this paragraph are taken from: Ministry of Agriculture, 1999, *Stratégie de croissance durable du secteur de l'agriculture : Plan stratégique opérationnel (PSO)*, Ouagadougou, 72 pp 31 to 35. It will be noted that the responsibility to develop the agricultural sector and render it cost-effective is, according to the quotation, entirely assigned to actors, without any allusion to either the macro-economic or the commercial context (national and international).

professionalisation of rural actors requires “a clarification of the relation with PNDSA II, the land management approach (PNGT) and decentralisation”.

In 1997, the identification survey¹² of the action plan for the emergence of agric professionals’ organisations (AP/APOs) made an in-depth diagnosis of the situation of producers’ organisations and brought out highlights of the AP/APOs. The action plan unfortunately faced several difficulties (see appendix 2) while PNDSA II kicked off with its activities without delay.

2. Preparation of PNDSA II and its “FO component”

PNDSA II is a follow-up of two programmes sponsored by the World Bank in the 1980s and 90s: one concerning support to agricultural extension services (PRSAP¹³) and the other to agricultural research (PNRA¹⁴). The programme document¹⁵ clearly stated the overall objective of PNDSA II, which is «poverty alleviation by encouraging increased production of smallholders through the contribution of services and the strengthening of ties between agricultural research and extension”. The project had five specific objectives: (a) support long-term agricultural production by reorganising the agricultural research system in order to better tailor it to the needs of producers, (b) increase the productivity of agriculture and livestock through extension and especially support to women, (c) improve natural resource management and promote sustainable production systems, (d) help government to improve the animal health system by leaning mostly on private veterinarians and (e) promote and strengthen representative producers’ organisations on the basis of pilot actions.

PNDSA II comprises five components:

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

¹² Janssens L, Totté M, Verhaegen E, (AIDEP), 1997, *Plan d’actions pour l’émergence d’Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles au Burkina Faso*, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MARA), Agricultural Sector Adjustment Programme (PASA), Ouagadougou., 250 pp.

¹³ To the tune of US\$ 42 million from January 1989 to December 1997.

¹⁴ To the tune of US\$ 17.9 million from 1988 to December 1999.

¹⁵ World Bank, 1997, *Second National Agriculture Services Development Project, Staff Appraisal Report*, 68 pp

in the programming and assessment of public services, (3) promote an environment conducive to the involvement of the private sector in agricultural development.

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

2.1. The main thrust of the “support to FO’s component”

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

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

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

The “small rural infrastructure” aspect was then designed as an experimental programme over two years, mostly centred on the funding of “boulis”¹⁶.

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

During implementation, the pilot programmes component shall in fact be sub-divided into two lines of action:

Support to the administration responsible for FOs (DPCLR, which became DOPAIR¹⁷ in 2002). Such support was reified at the beginning of the programme by support to the administration in its task of reviewing and disseminating the law on cooperatives.

Funding of micro-projects designed, implemented and monitored by FOs locally. It is this line of action dubbed “support to FO’s component” in the rest of the text that will be the main subject of the analysis.

¹⁶ Very small stretch of water of an artificial origin, very often temporary, aimed at securing village water supply.

¹⁷ Department of Producers Organisation and Rural Institutions Support.

2.2. Limited FO participation in designing PNDSA II

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

The PNDSA II programme document states that “Farmers’ opinions expressed in the evaluation study of 1991 and beneficiary assessment of 1995 will be addressed in this project, especially as they relate to more diversified extension messages, messages for livestock owners and water and natural resource management”¹⁸. It is the only area in the report that mentions ideas or proposals that are believed to have resulted from discussions and consultations with producers. One should however underscore the importance accorded to producers’ organisations in the definition and general philosophy of PNDSA II, as testified by the formulation of the objectives and five components of the programme. In a transversal manner, for research like for extension, the enhancement of producers’ organisations is necessary particularly as a means of ensuring better definition and implementation of agricultural services.

The effective involvement of umbrella farmers’ organisations (UFOs) and their representatives in programme design seemed to have been limited. As stated in the first part, these organisations were still young and partly absorbed at the time in their own build-up. The relative rapidity in the laying down of PNDSA II (three missions) within this context of institutional setting-up of farmers’ federations obviously did not facilitate significant involvement of farmers’ representatives in the designing of the programme. The testimony of a wage earner of one of the umbrella farmers’ organisations existing at the time states that they were duly invited to express their opinion but under conditions that could be improved: representatives of farmers’ organisations were asked to comment on the programme document¹⁹ but were given a very short time to analyse it.

Later on, the umbrella FOs, grouped under CCOF as from July 1998, could now be regularly consulted and associated with three representatives in the programme steering committee, as testified by a 1999 aide memoir: “*The mission appreciates the involvement of umbrella farmers’ organisations in PNDSA II and the implementation of the FO support component. It encourages CCOF to continue its effort of organising the representation of FOs at the national level in respect of their pluralism and strategies specific to each of the umbrella organisations*”²⁰. CCOF was thus regularly informed of the progress of the “support to FO’s component” and associated to PNDSA II workshops like the one organised in May 2000 on the issue of funding the functioning of farmers’ groups set up by the programme (CPCE/OP, see below). However, the CCOF, which represented an informal consultation forum between UFOs, had since disappeared and most umbrella FOs, with the exception of FENOP, joined the Faso Farmers’ Confederation (see appendix 3).

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

¹⁸ World Bank, 1997, *Second National Agriculture Services Development Project, Staff Appraisal Report* 68 pp point 4.3, page 13

¹⁹ On the technical aspects but not on the financial and budgetary aspects that remained unknown to UFOs of the time.

²⁰ World Bank, 1999, PNDSA II, Supervision Mission, 2 to 19 February (Aide memoir) 21 pp.

various levels in the implementation of activities of the “support to FO’s component” of PNDSA II.

3. Implementation of the “support to FO’s component” of PNDSA II

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

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

With regard to the “support to FO’s component”, there are two major periods:

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

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

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

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

3.1. Setting up the FO support mechanism

After the effective launching of PNDSA II, a private firm responsible for implementing the FO component was recruited: this was the Burkinabe branch of the Canadian organisation CECI²¹ whose contract was to run from June 1999 to March 2002. This option was an essential element of the strategy adopted for the implementation of the “support to FO’s component”: it was not in the initial programme document but constituted an interesting

²¹ <http://www.ceci.ca/index.htm>

experiment as we are going to see. PNDSA II design and implementation fall under a general environment of State withdrawal, it's refocusing on its traditional duties and the enhancement of local actors, and especially farmers' organisations. CECI's main duty was to set up "Farmers' Organisations Provincial Consultation and Exchange Fora" (CPCE/OP) in 9 provinces²², ensure their training and follow-up in order to meet the objectives of the "support to FO's component". The CPCE/OPs were the core of the mechanism: they were to process the files built up by FOs and then monitor the achievements once action has been undertaken.

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

1. The setting-up of Farmers' Organisations Provincial Consultation and Exchange Fora (CPCE/OPs). It should be recalled that Burkina Faso has 45 provinces each comprising some ten divisions. After a phase of identification of FOs per province, with the constitution of computer files, the setting-up mechanism consisted in organising sensitisation meetings in each province and electing two farmers' representatives per division (one main representative and one alternate member) to make up the CPCE/OP. Then CPCE/OPs members appointed a bureau from among them. In January 2000, all the CPCE/OPs were considered as having been set up²³. Four training cycles were organised by CECI for CPCE/OPs farmers' representatives. The procedures manual mentions several training sessions of farmers' representatives and local drafters in 1999 and 2000.

2. Designing of FO project files. Faced with the likely difficulty for grassroots FOs to design applications for small projects in accordance with the PNDSA II procedures manual, CECI had included in its proposal the option of recruiting "local drafters" from among the literates in the villages, in order to accompany the FOs in this task. Such local drafters were trained by counsellors, one per province, who were previously sensitised on the use of the small projects procedures manual²⁴. CPCE/OPs members also had a role to play to accompany FOs in the drafting of their projects;

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

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

²² Six provinces at the beginning (June 1999) and later on 3 others rapidly (October 1999): Oubritenga, Sanmatenga, Namentenga, Nahouri, Boulkiemde, Ioba, Comoe, Tapoa and Oudalan.

²³ Ouedraogo GJ, 2002, *Evaluation finale du projet "appui aux OP", composante : création et accompagnement des CPCE/OP*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 46 pp. 13.

²⁴ With visibly a few difficulties because « the micro project presentation documents were relatively complicated and not easy to understand by the vast majority of producers » (World Bank, 2001b, Draft aide memoire, Mid-term review of PNDSA II, report of the "FO support" group, 7 pp).

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

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

An assessment report²⁵ states that as at 31 March 2002, 398 projects had been funded. The majority of the projects were small infrastructure (311 projects as against 87 for capacity building): infrastructure represents more than 80% of the total amount of funding. Capacity building activities concern mostly literacy projects (39 projects) and technical training in management (48 projects).

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

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

3.2. Some remarks on the installation phase

During the launching phase, the private actor, CECI-BF, responsible for the implementation of the “FO support” component, drafted quarterly progress reports and regularly produced analysis and capitalisation notes on the process engaged. In a mid-term capitalisation document, CECI-BF brought out some lessons, some of which were still valid two years after²⁶. We are naming them to refresh our memories in order to show that the mechanism put in place had a self-evaluation capacity thanks to the seriousness and professionalism of the private actor involved in its implementation. CECI brought out several lessons we are hereby grouping under two major headings that will be treated again in more details in the next part on lessons learnt:

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

²⁵ Ouedraogo GJ, 2002, *Evaluation finale du projet "appui aux OP", composante : création et accompagnement des CPCE/OP*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 46 pp

²⁶ CECI-BF, 2001, *Projet de création et de suivi des comités provinciaux de concertation et d'échange des OP (CPCE/OP) : capitalisation, leçons à tirer, document n°3*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 20 pp

3.2.1. New roles for actors

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

Being a core structure of the mechanism, were the **CPCE/OPs** too highly solicited? Were they provided with the means needed for the execution of the tasks expected of them? CECI progress and capitalisation reports highlight the contrast between the number and importance of tasks expected of the CPCE/OPs and the difficulty of the mechanism to provide them with the material and financial support needed for the execution of such tasks. Some CPCE/OPs at time had to pre-finance their activity for more than one year. Following a workshop bringing together PNDSA II, CECI, UFOs and DPCLR, it was agreed that as from January 2001, CPCE/OPs should be able to be self-funded from a "CPCE/OP functioning" aspect equivalent to 5% of the cost of projects designed by grassroots FOs. An assessment carried out in 2002 estimated that "there is still a problem with CPCE/OP funding; the 5% deducted at source from FO projects do not cover the running needs of CPCE/OPs; furthermore, CPCE/OPs could not install their own mechanisms to fund their activities"²⁷. Beyond this issue of providing a running budget is also the issue of the dependence of CPCE/OPs with respect to the definition of their responsibility (largely dictated by the procedures manual) and their close links with local administrations (which, in some cases, cover the travel expenses of their officials on monitoring missions, host meetings, etc.).

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

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

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

²⁷ Ouedraogo GJ, 2002, *Evaluation finale du projet "appui aux OP", composante : création et accompagnement des CPCE/OP*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 46 pp. 35.

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

3.2.2. An efficient but often fragile funding mechanism

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

- **Budgetary estimates underestimating the real demand and the capacity of FOs to design projects.** The first element that contributed in jamming the disbursement process is the fact that the special account allocated to the funding of FO micro-projects was CFAF 100 million. In December 2000, 208 projects were funded for a total of CFAF 175 million. In September 2001, out of the 573 projects awaiting funding from PNDSA II, 458 were finally accepted but were still pending funding, for an expected total of more than CFAF 590 million. This budgetary issue was resolved following a mid-term evaluation mission of June 2001 by the disbursement of an additional CFAF 500 million by the World Bank.
- **Strong involvement of the central level of PNDSA II in the examination of grassroots FO files.** In October 2000, almost a year after the start of the programme in the field (the first CPCE/OPs were constituted in late 1999), out of the 164 FO files processed, 34 applications were rejected, representing 22.56% of the total projects received and examined. This was explained by CECI as being due to the persistence of some FOs that insist on the funding of their agro-pastoral, silvicultural or handicraft production activities that were not eligible under the “support to FO’s component” of PNDSA II²⁸. It is but normal to point out such rejects and they can be considered as an indicator of the on-going learning process of the actors of the mechanism. However, the compulsory validation at the national level rapidly led to an obstruction in the processing of files. Between January 2000 and march 2001, the total number of files prepared by grassroots FOs, received and processed by CPCEs was 1 480. The number of files accepted and forwarded by CPCEs to PNDSA II was 908, giving an average reject rate of close to 40%. Out of the 908 files, 201 led to the signing of a protocol between PNDSA II and CPCE/OPs. In July 2001, during a mid-term evaluation, 638 files were still awaiting validation by PNDSA II, some for more than 10 months. The mid-term evaluation underscored “*a very high involvement at PNDSA II central level in the selection of projects, which, among others, contributed to slowing down the processing of micro-project files*”.
- **A freezing of payment by the World Bank for reasons of non-respect of commitments in other domains.** The multiple cause internal difficulties were compounded by an element foreign to the “support to FO’s component”. Disbursements for the research component of PNDSA II had been suspended since November 2000. The difficulties are believed to be due to the freezing of payments by the IDA, the freezing itself due to delays in commitments of the national counterpart.

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

²⁸ CECI/PNDSA II, *Quarterly Report N°5*, october 2000

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

3.3. Partial reorientation of the programme

In June 2001, a mid-term evaluation mission²⁹, conducted by the new TTL³⁰, noted the malfunctions rapidly pointed out in the foregoing part and, while confirming certain choices, proposed changes in the conduct of the “support to FO’s component”. The mission proposed as follows:

- Keep the FO support mechanism by renewing the CECI contract for two more years
- Re-examine the procedures manual
- Completely take over the processing of files at the local level (by CPCEs)
- Insist on the monitoring role of DPAs
- Concert with UFO officials on articulations between CPCEs and UFOs
- Improve synergies between FO structuring and decentralisation
- Undertake a more systematic project monitoring and impact assessment process³¹.

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

As from 2002, the administration took over command, with the PNDSA II team, of the monitoring, training and control of the local CPCE/OP mechanism. A reading of a few supervision reports of the central administration provides a clear illustration of the fact that capacity building that was the end result of the mechanism was instead designed as a means at the service of the objective of funding micro-projects³². It would appear that the

²⁹ World Bank, 2001a, PNDSA II: Mid-term review mission, Aide memoire 18 pp.

³⁰ The PNDSA II Task Team Leader (TTL) changed in November 2000. Without prejudging the causality of the change, and the reorientations of the programme, one can however postulate that the change of persons in the monitoring of a World Bank programme plays a role on its orientation. This is no doubt linked to the fact that for close to one year up to the mid-term review mission, PNDSA II supervision rested on the staff of World Bank bureau in Burkina Faso.

³¹ Recommendation that led to the installation of impact assessment protocols with the support of the University of Berkeley and Clermont-Ferrand.

³² Discussing CPCE/OP organisational capacity building, a supervision report states: “Through the training received from counselling trainers by members of CPCE/OPs, the idea here is to appreciate their level of organisation for the conduct of activities and equally understand how each plays his role, does his work and performs his duties. In practice, management committees were set up in each FO that received funding, but roles, and tasks were confused. There were times when a single person monopolised management. *Concerning CPCE/OP members themselves, there was poor mastery of the tasks of examining, monitoring, evaluating and*

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

It should also be pointed out that the overall atmosphere of PNDSA II was undoubtedly partly polluted because of the uncertainty over its future. PNDSA II was extended the first time up to late June 2003. Since late 2002, it was agreed to embark on an exercise of capitalising the experience of FO support but also the extension component. The idea was to *“(i) cross the two CPCE and extension experiments which have similarities (FO support, producer demand-oriented intervention, (more or less) decentralised decision-making process, giving a sense of responsibility to the decentralised levels of the administration...); (ii) broaden the analysis and debate to other actors involved in the innovative experiences often targeting the same objectives”*³³. At the time of the mission, the capitalisation exercise had not yet started. It was deemed necessary to once more place the analysis of this experience of CPCEs within the broader context of extension activities and above all to open the exercise to other actors. In effect, since the departure of CECI, there was this visibly pronounced tendency of monitoring the “FO support” component mostly focussing on the capacity of the mechanism to fund small projects. Putting the “FO support” component in perspective with other similar operations can only be profitable.

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

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

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

³³ World Bank, 2002, PNDSA II, Supervision Mission, 25 November to 15 December (Aide memoire) 13pp

4. General lessons for FO capacity building

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

4.1. New roles for the various actors

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

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

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

One can postulate that the decentralised services of agriculture and livestock are in a state of serious lack of motivation not only because of inadequate working means, the most frequent argument, but also because of a vertical and top-down management that cannot render them accountable for their activity or give any sense to it. Below is an example to illustrate the hypothesis. In one of the provinces where the FO component was being implemented, a group requested the services of a technician from the DPA to set up a project and paid him for the services. PNDSA II came in to put an end to such a practice by arguing that DPA workers were already paid by the project and that, as such, they were not supposed to have any further remuneration. Without prejudging the real nature of the retribution (voluntary or "forced" payment), it would be opportune to imagine a more flexible functioning of the administration that encourages the commitment of these workers in collaborations with FOs against fair retribution. In effect, we noticed the existence of local workers that were visibly competent, motivated, but largely discouraged by the lack of visibility and recognition of their job. It would also appear that some workers earned the confidence of farmers and that such farmers sought their opinion and counsel: there are many testimonies to that effect³⁴. "*We solicit local technicians but their directors are not always aware*", said one producer. On his part, a livestock technician testified: "*stockbreeders came to see me to prepare files, but I had travelled. They usually solicit the technical services of the State because services are more expensive in the private sector (...). When NGOs go directly to villages, producers come to see us to discuss the proposals of the NGOs*". One of the stakes of future support would be, through actions that facilitate collaborative processes between producers and local technical services, to gradually move from a "training and follow-up" culture to a culture of

³⁴ The same question asked to many producers confirmed the assertion: the only variation being on the degree of the confidence and the number of workers concerned, who generally constituted a minority.

accompaniment and services rendered. The pilot experience of counsel support started in 2002 is *a priori* in this perspective even though its precipitated implementation (projects had to be designed and started before the rainy season) and the finally reduced offer in counsel support seemed to have limited its scope vis-à-vis the original idea. It would be necessary to delve into this issue and find out to what extent the “demand” for counselling support is not in the most part determined by the proposed supply and the modalities of identification and designing of the operation (procedures manual) whose complexity renders the appropriation of the process difficult for the beneficiaries.

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

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

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

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

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

- On the capacity to “make do”, the previous part showed the difficulty faced both by the central administration and the provincial departments in being placed out of the action, in a position of monitoring and control of operations executed by a private actor. During the first phase, the duties of accompanying the CPCE/OPs performed by CECI, and monitoring, performed by DPCLR and UGP were dissociated. By reuniting the two functions after 2002, the administration was placed in a position of monitoring the work it gave to itself. More precisely, the central administration,

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

- On the capacity to experiment, one can question the choice of *systematically and uniformly installing* CPCE/OPs, without taking into account the local organisation effort made by UFOs: some provinces had Provincial Producers' Unions, affiliated to one UFO or the other, and it would no doubt have been necessary to try and build their capacities. Without rejecting the CPCE/OP approach that contributed to the emergence of local farmers' representatives³⁵, and without falling into the trap of blindly supporting the positions defended by UFOs, it would have been more appropriate to experiment several formulas per province in order to assess the relevance of each, since it was a pilot project. In like manner, the decision taken as early as 1999 to adopt the CPCE/OP plan in all the provinces of the country within the PAOPA (see appendix 2) is largely questionable for the same reasons of taking into consideration what already exists.

4.2. FO capacity building

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

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

For members of grassroots FOs, one of the original hypotheses was to think that by fully assuming the role of project manager of funded activities, no matter their nature (small investments or training), local FOs find themselves in a situation to build their capacities. Analysing the issue of endogenous capacity building, CECI points out that “farmers’ literacy level is the most convincing indicator of endogenous capacities. As such, the greatest number of files was produced by regions with a high literacy rate”³⁶. CECI also underscores the lack of local technical skills for the implementation of certain activities. Without being able to buttress the subject on a significant number of testimonies, which would require more in-depth field survey, we can however suggest that the original hypothesis be reformulated as follows: *pending certain conditions* (literacy, presence of local technical skills, articulation with a close-by savings and loans mechanism (see part IV) ...), FOs may see their capacities enhanced because they are placed in a situation of project manager of their projects.

Assuming the responsibility of examining and then monitoring grassroots FO projects contributes no doubt in building the capacity of farmers’ representatives elected in CPCE/OPs. A better articulation between these CPCE/OPs and grassroots FO Unions and Federations is a prerequisite for the trained officials to contribute with time in the enhancement of FOs.

³⁵ It is necessary to carry out a more systematic assessment of the origin of representatives of the first CPCE/OPs and particularly bureau members of such organisations: they seem to be, for some of them, either from Unions that belong to one of the UFOs, or correspond to “model farmers”, rural entrepreneurs, often former civil servants and living in town.

³⁶ CECI-BF, 2001, *Projet de création et de suivi des comités provinciaux de concertation et d’échange des OP (CPCE/OP) : capitalisation, leçons à tirer, document n°3*, CECI-BF, Ouagadougou, 20 pp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It will be necessary to design an instrument for assessing the dialogue³⁷ between farmers and those who prepare and execute programmes so that with some simple criteria, there can be better understanding of real situations which blanket terms as participation, consultation, dialogue, involvement, ... do not describe precisely. Below are proposals of what such criteria may be:

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

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

- Content and nature of dialogue opportunities (seeking an opinion, joint decision-making...) with a more or less high level of gradation depending on the degree of involvement in decision-making;
- Conditions of dialogue (deadline for examining preparatory documents, quality of preparatory documents³⁸);
- Scope of dialogue (number of people actually involved, first and second circles);
- Impact of dialogue (number and nature of the decisions modified after such dialogue).

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

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

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

We also note the structural ambiguity of external intervention which sometimes tends to forge organisations and, in doing so, accord them representative status by entrusting to them the management of bodies they did not contribute to set up. Here, we are not questioning the laudable and important idea of entrusting the management of development projects to farmers' organisations (or in more general terms "beneficiaries"). Rather, we want to find out to what extent such delegation of project management responsibilities, often under control and within the narrow limits set forth in complex procedures manuals, does not limit the ability of farmers to organise themselves into autonomous and lasting bodies. In other words, under what conditions does this delegation of project management responsibilities contribute to build the capacities of both farmers and their organisations? Already, we can say that real sharing of the monitoring, steering and control functions between UFOs and the administration is undoubtedly an avenue to explore seriously in order to transcend the finicky manner in which the administration currently carries out such monitoring. New farmers' organisations like the CPCE/OPs that have been set up have, above all else, an execution duty (studying files, supervising micro-projects) that will, in time, better enhance the technical capacities of their managers but not their strategic capacities³⁹. It is risky here to set up farmers' organisations before any implementing instruments because they may sometimes be a duplication of local development activities⁴⁰.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendices

Appendix 1: Brief description of other FO support interventions

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

- The French ministry of foreign affairs (MAE), which placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Agriculture a technical assistant to facilitate preparation of agricultural professionalisation policies. With regard to our area of FO support, the MAE is mobilising aspect 3 (“rural professional organisation”) of component 1 (“economic security”) of the project to support sustainable development and rural poverty alleviation (PAMIR⁴¹). Implementation of this aspect is not yet effective.
- The AFD which has for several years now provided assistance for the reorganisation of the UNPCB within the context of its more global intervention in the cotton sector in the west of the country.
- Swiss Cooperation which has for many years now provided support as partner to several farmers’ organisations such as FNGN and FENOP. The DDC has played an important role in the emergence of the Burkinabe farmers’ movement as briefly presented in chapter 13.
- A few European NGOs (the Belgian OXFAM for instance). They are often “last resort supports” in the face of the versatility of financial donors who are more institutional, though they themselves sometimes make spectacular U-turns in their commitments vis-à-vis FOs.
- Associations born from European Farmers’ professional organisations (AFDI, AGRITERRA). By diversifying local partnerships (AFDI) or focusing on a single umbrella organisation (FPAB for AGRITERRA), these associations have given a new and original dimension to FO support namely, support by European professional farmers, whose ambiguous nature (aid and the search for partnership within the context of international negotiations) must not conceal the important role of catalyst of real and better oriented dialogue between farmers and the State which these associations can play in collaboration with others.

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

Appendix 2: The recent context of agricultural and rural policies

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

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

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

Current FO support landscape

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

It is to be noted that the CPCE plan initiated by PNDSA II within the framework of the "FO support" component has been continued and generalised by the PA/APOs because, in 2002, CPCEs were set up in all the 45 provinces that make up the country. It should also be pointed out that this extension is accompanied by a change of nature: within the purview of PNDSA II, CPCEs are structures that bring together divisional delegates responsible for studying and providing support for the execution of micro-projects proposed by grassroots FOs. Within the context of PA/APOs, CPCEs constitute the basic rung of a pyramid of representation of producers (at provincial, regional and national levels). It will also be noted

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

that such extension of the CPCE/OP model unfortunately did not draw from the PNDSA II experience. CECI capitalisation reports, in which the methods and difficulties of setting up CPCEs are presented, were never circulated (or at least used) by the PA/APOs during the extension of these structures to all the provinces of the country.

Appendix 3: Recent Developments in FOs landscape

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

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

Ever since the enactment of the new law No.14/99/AN (in 1999) on cooperative societies and groups, the authorities have encouraged FOs to conform to it. The end of June 2002⁴³ was even announced as the deadline for conforming to the new law. There was thus heated internal debate within FENOP that was so hesitant about adopting a legal status, which it considered will be restrictive and will limit its autonomy. At last, after serious debate, its Board of Directors adopted the status of an association (law No. 10) and its partners were informed about the status in August 2002. This was translated by its withdrawal from the process of setting up a Farmers' Confederation.

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

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

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

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

Discussion on farmers' organisations in Burkina is very often centred on the current weak national structures and on the fact that these national organisations are said to be non-"representative" and cut off from their base... It is not possible, in this document, to go into the details of such a debate. However, it can be said that this simplistic vision points to the

⁴³ Yet, in November 2002, a World Bank aide-memoir estimates that "less than 10 to 15% of FOs are currently registered under the new law".

⁴⁴ New appellation of the CNPA-B, adopted after the organisation was made to conform to law No. 14.

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

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

The creation of chambers of agriculture

The idea of setting up chambers of agriculture is not a novelty in Burkina Faso. Like in the other countries of the sub-region, they were set up in the late 1990s against the backdrop of State withdrawal. Through these chambers of agriculture, political authorities sought to endow the rural world with representative and consultative institutions (and not only agricultural institutions). In the sub-region, it is especially the FAO that promoted this form of representation of rural interests⁴⁵.

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

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

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