

ENHANCING THE CAPACITIES OF RURAL PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS

*The case of the Agricultural Services and
Producer Organisations Support Programme
(PSAOP) - Senegal*

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INTRODUCTION

This report attempts to identify the first lessons that can be learnt from the actions carried out in Senegal within the framework of the « Support to rural producer organisations » component of the « Agricultural Services and Producer Organisations Support Programme » (PSAOP).

Analysis of the Senegalese case lies within the scope of a broader study entrusted to CIRAD by the World Bank (WB) and whose objective is to take capitalise on the experience already acquired with regard to the design, negotiation and implementation of WB-sponsored rural producer organisations (RPOs) capacity building projects.

A. Background of study

Since 1997, the World Bank in collaboration with French Cooperation has embarked on many initiatives aimed at:

- Building the capacity of rural producer organisations;
- Promoting, through specific agricultural development projects, partnership relations between rural producer organisations and agricultural services so that the actions of the latter may be tailored to farmers' demands.

These new approaches were first tested in four West African countries (Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso) and later extended to North Africa (Tunisia and Morocco). Similar projects were also negotiated in English-speaking countries and demands are also emerging in Asia (Indonesia, India, etc).

In spite of the recent modification by the World Bank of its approach to agricultural services (as well as the innovation which the related support to capacity building of rural producer organisations constitutes), the Bank still deemed it necessary to take stock of the lessons that can already be drawn from ongoing actions.

The following two questions were formulated:

- (i) What has been done? What has been achieved? What difficulties have been encountered?
- (ii) What prospects for the future? In concrete terms, what are the next steps the World Bank needs to take?

In order to answer these questions, the following four activities were carried out within the context of the study:

- (i) **Review of recent literature** produced by the World Bank and other institutions on the capacity building of rural producer organisations with a view to highlighting the main analyses carried out, the work orientations proposed, etc.
- (ii) **Review of the World Bank portfolio** in order to:
 - Identify projects financed by the World Bank and which include an “organisation enhancement” component;
 - Describe the content of selected actions and the modalities of execution of such actions within the context of the different projects;
 - Highlight the difficulties encountered by TTLs in implementing actions aimed at strengthening organisations.
- (iii) **The carrying out of more detailed case studies in four African countries** (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Ghana) where there are ongoing World Bank financed projects which aim to develop demand-oriented agricultural services and which include a component on “rural producer organisations (RPOs) capacity building”.

Country case studies focus on the following main themes:

- Did RPOs effectively participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project?
 - How is the dialogue between the WB team and RPOs structured? Is it limited to the RPO support project or does it involve other WB projects?
 - How is dialogue structured between RPOs on the one hand and between public services, decision-makers and the private sector on the other hand?
 - Has the WB approach vis-à-vis RPOs changed? Has the WB's perception changed?
 - Have new RPO consultation mechanisms been set up or are they envisaged?
 - Does the legal framework of RPOs constitute a constraint (as concerns access to status for instance...)?
 - What measures have been taken to avoid the risk of marginalizing the poorest groups?
 - Is the capacity building of FOs being carried out at the same time with the institutional reform of the Ministry of Agriculture and its related services? Are agricultural services more efficient when the capacities of FOs are enhanced?
 - How are RPO capacity building projects related to other WB sponsored projects?
- (iv) After country case studies, a **summary report** that sets forth the main cross-cutting lessons was drafted.

B. Conduct of the case study carried out in Senegal

The study conducted in Senegal was done in three stages:

- (i) **A bibliographical analysis** (centred especially on the following three points) :
 - Agricultural policy developments and the situation of agriculture;
 - The structuring of Senegalese farmers' organisations and description of their current activities;
 - Brainstorming carried out in Senegal on the review of support to innovation methods, agricultural and rural counselling and RPO capacity building.

- (ii) **A mission to Senegal** carried out from 18 to 29 May 2003 and which made it possible to achieve the following:
 - Thorough study of the bibliography and historical background of the PSAOP through the analysis of various documents produced at each stage of the design, negotiation, experimentation and implementation of the project;
 - Interviewing the different PSAOP stakeholders and especially those of them concerned with the « support to producer organisations » component. These included the Dakar WB Bureau officials responsible for monitoring the project, ASPRODEB and CNCR officials and technical staff, ANCAR and ISRA-BAME officials, etc. The Department of Analysis, forecasts and Statistics (DAPS) of the Ministry of Agriculture was also contacted;
 - A visit to the Louga and Thiès regions made it possible to meet the officials of Regional Rural Consultation Centres (CRCR) and FONGS, officials of local consultation committees of farmers' organisations (CLOP), the regional team of the two Technical Implementation Agencies (AET) involved in the project at Thiès (CECI) and at Louga (USU), regional leaders of ANCAR and of the Department of Rural Development, etc.

- (iii) **Drafting of the Report.**

This report is divided into four chapters:

- The first chapter presents a few characteristics of the political, economic and institutional background of the PSAOP. After a brief presentation of the main agricultural policy developments and the great challenges to which Senegalese

farmers are confronted, the main stages of organisation of the rural world are discussed;

- The second chapter describes the conditions under which the PSAOP was prepared and presents its different components. This is followed by an analysis of the PSAOP design and negotiation modalities with special emphasis on the role played by farmers' organisations;
- The third chapter is devoted to an analysis of PSAOP implementation modalities and the first results of the « support to producer organisations » component of the programme;
- Lastly, the fourth chapter recaps the first lessons that can be learnt from the work already done and strives to situate the programme in relation to initiatives sponsored by other funding bodies.

1. Agricultural policy developments and the structuring of farmers' organisations

The Senegalese agricultural sector is confronted to a serious and lingering crisis characterised by stagnation in overall agricultural production, a precarious food situation for many households and widespread poverty in the rural areas. It should be noted that the agricultural policies implemented from the outset of the crisis in the late 1970s did not yield expected results. Public authorities adopted new policies between 1995 and 2001 and an Agricultural blueprint Law (LOA) is being prepared. In order to support the reforms undertaken, several programmes¹ including the PSAOP have been designed and are currently being implemented. Many of the programmes - depending on specific modalities - try to take advantage of two assets of the Senegalese rural world in order to tackle the serious challenges to which it is confronted. These include the achievements of a decentralisation policy initiated in 1972 and the long-standing will to organise rural farmers, which has for ten years now grown ever stronger.

1.1. Orientation and re-orientation of agricultural policies

Agricultural and rural development policies have for a long time undergone profound changes.

1.1.1. The « State-led development » era

At independence, Senegal's economy is based on the production and exportation of groundnuts. Agricultural policy components initially aimed to achieve the following three objectives: food self-sufficiency (through the development of food crops), technical modernisation, and diversification of production. Centred on two principles namely, "responsible participation" and "contractual development", the approaches used were underpinned by the following three-pronged operational mechanism:

- Rural animation whose aim (already) was to facilitate the "participation of the rural world in designing and implementing actions that concerned them";
- The Multi-purpose Rural Expansion Centre (Centre d'Expansion Rural Polyvalent - CERP) which had a multidisciplinary technical team at local level;
- The cooperative, a multi-purpose and multi-sector economic organisation that especially had the monopoly to market groundnuts thus making it possible to quickly put an end to a century-old system controlled by intermediaries.

¹ An important investment programme in the agricultural sector (PISA) was designed to support the enhancement of reforms resulting from the PASA (1995)

Besides, various agricultural policy instruments were put in place. These included the following:

- The “agricultural programme” which enabled farmers to acquire agricultural equipment and inputs on credit through the cooperative;
- A new land law which instituted the principle of “State property”;
- The Stabilisation and Equalisation Fund which enabled the State to control the prices of agricultural produce;
- etc.

Except for rural animation, the mechanism survived until the early 80s. However, from 1964, it was gradually marginalized and replaced by progressive implementation of major regional projects, which in 1974 became Regional Rural Development Companies (sociétés régionales de développement rural - SRDR). These included SAED in the River Senegal delta and valley, SODEVA in the groundnuts-growing basin, SOMIVAC in Casamance, SODEFITEX in east Senegal, SODESP in the silvicultural and pastoral area, etc.

Focusing on the cultivation of one main crop (either groundnuts, cotton, irrigated rice, etc), the major regional projects equipped themselves with specific intervention mechanisms based on proximity guidance of farmers who were often organised into groups responsible for carrying out various technical and economic functions.

The results of Government intervention in the agricultural sector during the first two decades of independence are “very mixed”. “The groundnut-based economy progressively slumped into crisis characterised by a fall in production, rapid degradation of the soil and deterioration of prices in real terms, thus impoverishing the farmers”²

During the first years, groundnut cultivation benefited much from modernisation efforts. Production reached one million tons in 1965 and during the period from 1960 to 1971, annual average production was 937,000 tons. However, between 1968 and 1974, groundnut production witnessed a first period of stagnation. The surface areas cultivated decreased and price deterioration was compounded by unfavourable climatic and ecological conditions. After a few more favourable years, a 25% drop in export prices would mark the late 1970s and “no other development of similar scope came to replace the groundnut-based economy” (Ch. Delgado and Jammeh, 1991)³.

1.1.2. The era of “adjustments”

“By disrupting the world economic and financial system, the economic crisis of the 1970s laid bare all the structural weaknesses of the Senegalese economy... Senegal plunged into a serious crisis that made economic and financial adjustment inevitable”⁴, and this of course affected agricultural policy.

a – The new agricultural policy (1984)

From 1979/1980, Senegal initiated economic and institutional reforms that are still ongoing today. The reforms had an impact on the agricultural sector from the very beginning (suppression of the agricultural programme and dissolution of the National Marketing and Development Assistance Board (Office national de commercialisation et d’assistance pour le développement - ONCAD in 1979 and 1980 respectively). In 1984, a new agricultural policy (NPA) directly based on structural adjustment policies was drawn up.

² Kasse Mustapha, Le Sénégal, laboratoire d’ajustement, Géopolitique africaine, n° 9, January 2003.

³ Introduction: structural change in a hostile environment. In The political economy of Senegal under structural adjustment. New-York, Praeger, pp. 1 to 20.

⁴ Kasse M., op. cit., p.128.

Between 1984 and 1994, many measures were taken which profoundly affected the economic and institutional framework of agricultural production. Such measures included the reduction and subsequent suspension of subsidies for inputs in 1988/1989, privatisation of the agricultural credit establishment (crédit agricole) in 1985, liberalisation of trade in cereals and groundnuts, etc.

The results of the NPA were, doubtless for many reasons, disappointing. These include very ambitious objectives without an attendant incentive framework for rural farmers, over-evaluation of the CFA Franc, internal opposition to the restructuring of the various sub-sectors, etc. The complementary measures taken (for instance, the National Agricultural Extension Programme – PNVA - since 1990) have not succeeded to roll back the crisis that has rocked the Senegalese agricultural sector for many years now:

- “The average annual growth rate for overall agricultural production is very low (0.8 % in 1967-1996 and – 0.5 % in 1988-1996)”⁵
- “Generally speaking... the real value of monetary agricultural income per rural inhabitant has fallen drastically... Since the early 1960s, the real value of marketed production per rural inhabitant has dropped from CFAF 40.000 (1990 value of the CFAF) to CFAF 12.000 in 1993-1996”⁶;
- 40.4 % of rural households were living below the poverty line according to a study carried out by the WB in 1991/1992;
- According to CILSS/DIAPER sources, 61% of rural households earn an annual income below CFAF 600.000⁷;
- The share of agricultural revenue in the income of rural households has dwindled (just 22 % of revenue in 1992) because of the strategy adopted by the rural people to increase cereal production for personal consumption and to seek non-agricultural monetary revenue⁸.

b –PASA and the new agricultural revival strategies

After devaluation of the CFA Franc in 1994, and in the face of a greatly devastated agriculture, the Senegalese authorities in 1995 drew up new agricultural policy guidelines within the context of the Agricultural Structural Adjustment Programme (PASA).

Officially published in April 1995, the **Agricultural Development Policy Letter (LPDA) targets four objectives**: (i) improving the living standards of rural people especially through poverty alleviation, better food security, reduction of the income gap between rural and urban dwellers and the creation of non-agricultural jobs in the rural areas; (ii) improving national food security; (iii) improving the balance of trade by enhancing the domestic and external competitiveness of the agricultural sector ; (iv) improving the management of natural resources.

The following five strategic guidelines were formulated: (i) liberalisation of trade, inputs and the prices of agricultural produce, amendment of legal instruments to allow for free competition between economic operators, implementation of WTO and WAEMU treaties relating to external trade; (ii) privatisation of commercial activities; (iii) State withdrawal and redefinition of public service duties: research, extension, agricultural policy, information, monitoring and evaluation, regulation, prevention and management of natural disasters; (iv) Land reform that allows for private transactions and reassures private investors.

⁵ Belières Jean-François. Impact de l'ajustement structurel sur l'agriculture irriguée du delta du Sénégal, 1999, pp. 38-39.

⁶ WB. Study on poverty, published in 1995.

⁷ Cited by the Ministry of agriculture and Livestock, operational strategy and framework plan of action of the agricultural sector, December 2001.

⁸ J.F. Belières, op. cit.,pp. 38-39.

The LPDA determines for each sector and sub-sector the measures to be taken to create a new institutional and legal framework attractive to economic operators. It defines the role of local governments, the role of farmers' organisations, etc.

Between 1995 and the year 2000, other guidelines were defined in order to supplement LPDA . These include among others:

- The Livestock Development Policy Letter (LPDE) in 1999;
- The Institutional Development Policy Letter (LPI) in October 1998 which underscores the vital role assigned to farmers' organisations with regard to the design and implementation of agricultural and rural development programmes;
- The Decentralised Rural Development Policy Letter in 1999⁹;
- The Environment Sector Development Policy Letter (LPERN).

Concurrently, various initiatives were taken to transform these guidelines into operational strategies. These included:

- The preparation of a Strategic Policy Paper (DOS) presented in 1998 to the Donor Consultative Group for Senegal;
- The drawing up of **a medium-term framework plan of action** to render DOS guidelines operational (finalised in 2001);
- etc.

It should be noted that alongside these initiatives, the Senegalese authorities have, since 1995 undertaken various actions concerning the agricultural sector. These have to do with:

- Implementation since 1997 of an **agricultural revival programme** funded exclusively on national budget;
- An increase in the amount of internal resources allocated to the agricultural sector (an 80% increase between 1996 and 1999);
- Negotiation and implementation of various agricultural programmes sponsored by external donors (WB, FAO, EU, etc.). Besides, several partners are supporting investment programmes at local level as part of the decentralisation process;
- etc.

Many observers note that the initiatives undertaken by Government through the various 'letters' constitute significant progress. However, their compartmentalisation undoubtedly undermines the coherence and clarity of agricultural policy. As the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock noted in 2001, "there is need to prepare and validate one document... that will make it possible to establish the link between the national rural sector development policy and regional development policies by specifying their implementation modalities which should be consistent with ,and suited to, a really decentralised and participatory approach..."¹⁰. The decision by the authorities to enact an Agricultural Blueprint Law is testimony to the will to define medium- and long-term agricultural policy guidelines. A bill to this effect has been prepared and is currently the subject of consultations between the different actors. It is also the subject of broad-based discussions within farmers' organisations.

1.2. Extent of the challenges facing the Senegalese agricultural sector

The rural sector is of very great importance in Senegal. In 1998, Senegal had 5.3 million rural inhabitants (57% of the total population) with a population growth rate of 2.2% a year. During the period from 1985 to 1998, the contribution of the primary sector (agriculture, livestock,

⁹Ministry of agriculture and Livestock. Operational strategy Proposals and Agricultural sector framework plan. December 2001.

¹⁰ MAE, op. cit., P10.

fishing, forests) to GDP was 20.5% on average (18.5% in 2000). The agricultural sector accounts for up to 10% of total GDP but still employs more than 61% of rural inhabitants.

The devaluation of the CFAF in 1994 did little to promote agriculture and the measures taken within the framework of PASA did not yield expected results. Rural growth during the period from 1995 to 1998 was only 0.7%, the agricultural sector having witnessed a -2.6% drop in growth. In spite of the significant development of some sub-sectors (horticulture, maize, etc.), agriculture is in many respects still faced with “a production crisis” due to the combined effect of the following three factors:

- The socio-economic environment of agriculture is not motivating to many farmers with a very limited investment capacity;
- The degradation of natural resources and the decline of soil fertility are very preoccupying;
- An unsteady rainfall compounds the situation.

Senegal's membership to the WTO and its adoption within the framework of WAEMU of a common low external tariff adds to the challenges for which Senegalese agriculture is ill-prepared.

The following five stakes appear to be central to the rural sector:

- Rapid improvement of productivity
- Improvement of food security;
- Reduction of poverty and inequalities;
- Sustainable management of natural resources;
- Development of non-agricultural activities in the rural areas.

Faced with the lingering crisis affecting the rural sector, Senegalese authorities have drawn up an Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (PISA) which complements the economic and institutional reforms being carried out since 1995 within the framework of PASA.

PSAOP is an important component of PISA that also comprises other projects. These include the National Rural Infrastructure Programme (PNIR) also backed by the WB, the Food Security Programme (FAO), etc.

It should be noted that the preparation and negotiation of the PSAOP coincided with the preparation by the Senegalese Government of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which also envisages many actions to be carried out in the rural areas (especially the setting up of the WB financed Social Development Fund Agency–AFDS) where a majority of the poor are found.

Many other rural sector projects were initiated in 1995. These included European Union support to the groundnuts sub-sector, assistance to local governments born out of the administrative decentralisation and regionalisation decided in 1996, etc.

1.3. Diverse organisations growing in unity and strength

Diverse farmers' organisations that have existed in Senegal for a long time and which have greatly grown in strength over the past ten years constitute an important asset for tackling the numerous challenges facing the rural world and for implementing the PSAOP.

1.3.1. Diverse organisations

The current set-up of Senegalese farmers' organisations is the outcome of a process begun in the early 1960s and that has developed alongside the rural development strategies put in place.

a) ***During the « State-led development», phase which broadly corresponds to the first two decades after independence, the following three types of grassroots organisations were set up:***

- **Cooperatives:** They were either village or inter-village bodies and the State invested much to set them up. Cooperatives remained for a long time the only official organisation model. Government's « agricultural programme » began in this form. Cooperatives also had the monopoly to market groundnuts. However, their autonomy was limited by the omnipresence of ONCAD.
- **Farmers' groups:** These sometimes sub-village bodies, which, until 1984, had no official legal status, can be classified into the following two categories: major regional project groups and local intervention groups.

Thus, the advent of Regional Rural Development Companies in the 1970s was followed in some regions (Fleuve, East Senegal), especially in non- groundnut-growing areas, by implicit rejection of cooperatives by SRDRs that gave rise to new forms of organisation (Farmers' Group/GP in the SAED area, Farmers' Grassroots Association/ABP in the SODEFITEX area) though cooperatives continued to exist. The same situation applied to Projects: "PRS Groups" in Sédhiou, "PIDAC Groups" in Lower-Casamance, etc.

The advent of NGOs seeking farmer partners also gave rise to the setting up of new groups (CARITAS and PIP groups, etc) which added to those set up by the administration namely, GOPEC, Women advancement groups, youth groups, livestock breeders and fishermen's groups, etc.).

- **Associations:** Associations began in the early 1970s in the peripheral regions (Fleuve, East Senegal, Casamance) and then spread to the groundnut-growing basin.

Pioneer farmers' organisations became renown. These included the Walo Association (Amicale du Walo) in the Saint-Louis region, ALAC and Entente de Kabiline in Casamance, Entente de Bamba-Thialène in East Senegal among others. These organisations, which mainstreamed groups and households into "Village Development Associations" were quite educative. As local organisations grouping together varied grassroots organisations, these inter-village farmers' organisations were sometimes set up with the legal status of associations recognised by the Ministry of Internal affairs but never without difficulty. They always claimed their autonomy from the State and from official development interventions and benefited from the support of international NGOs.

Two remarks need to be made here:

- Cooperatives and farmers' organisations remained for a long time strongly polarised by the body that gave rise to them, and exchanges between grassroots organisations were limited. Conversely, associations were quick to see the need to unite at local level, establish relations with inter-village organisations (inter-Ententes for instance) and unite at national level thus leading to the creation of the Senegalese Federation of NGOs (FONGS) in 1976 ¹¹.
- Cooperatives and producer groups linked to major regional projects and SRDRs most often performed economic functions (supplies, credit, primary marketing of

¹¹ Officially recognised in 1978, FONGS was created on the initiative of 5 federative farmers' organisations related to the associative movement. Its appellation, which sometimes lends itself to ambiguity outside Senegal, is the outcome of negotiations with the State that wanted the federation to distinguish itself from cooperatives.

products...) and focused on strategic products (groundnuts, cotton, irrigated rice, etc.). The other organisations laid emphasis on diversification activities and paid little attention to export sub-sectors.

b – Reforms, new agricultural policy and intensification of farmers' organisation (1980-1992)

From the early 1980s, suspension by the State of support to agriculture greatly influenced the setting up of farmers' organisations

There were two obvious trends:

(i) A « top-down » trend, upheld by official development stakeholders:

- The abrupt withdrawal of the State led to a disorganisation of the agricultural production environment and was also accompanied by the "transfer" to farmers of the functions (and responsibilities) public services were relinquishing. Foreign stakeholders increasingly manifested their interest in farmers' organisations and many actions were taken to secure autonomy for groups hitherto under supervision and to unite grassroots organisations¹².
- Reform of the legal framework made these developments possible:
 - ➔ The 1984 and 1985 laws to set up Economic Interest Groups (EIGs) gradually enabled groups to secure a legal status, become eligible for credit award, etc.
 - ➔ Reform of the cooperative movement in 1983 eventuated in the creation of village branches of cooperatives (SVC) whose role was to coordinate village initiatives. The aim of SVCs was to give renewed impetus to those cooperatives bedevilled by many problems and greatly discredited by the fact that they had served as instruments in the hands of the Government.
- The setting up of **federations** was backed by public services. In 1987, branches of the Federation of Women advancement Groups were set up at local (rural community), divisional, regional and national levels. The National Union of Livestock Breeder Cooperatives (UNCE) created in 1982 and the National Federation of Livestock Breeder EIGs (FNGIE-E) fell in line with two successive options of the livestock service namely, the creation of livestock breeder cooperatives and then from 1985, support to the creation of EIGs. In 1990, the National Federation of Fishing EIGs was set up.

These different organisations, which initially benefited from the support of development bodies quickly became autonomous.

(ii) A « bottom-up » trend upheld by FONGS.

State withdrawal and the opening up of the political spectrum widened the scope of action of local organisations related to the associative movement:

- The number of local inter-village organisations rose significantly in the different regions of the country;
- There was fruitful collaboration between associations and public development bodies especially at local and regional levels.

FONGS membership rose significantly from 1985 (16 member organisations¹³ in 1987) and it was able to undertake many initiatives:

- CFAF 100 million share in the capital of CNCAS during creation of the latter in 1984;
- Development of a training system in 1985;
- Exchange of cereals between associations with a surplus and those with a deficit;

¹² It should be noted that the National Union of Senegalese cooperatives was set up in 1978.

¹³ 73.623 members from 918 groups in 1987.

- Institution of a savings and credit system that later became confronted to difficulties and led the federation into a “jam”;
- etc.

The year 1991 marked a significant turning point for FONGS. Following a self-evaluation process initiated in 1989 and which lasted two years, the federation spelled out the following seven objectives¹⁴ within a profoundly changing context. Such objectives had to do with the economic domain where transition towards a more market-oriented approach was necessary, ensuring access to land and protection of natural resources, the decision-making domain with both the internal leadership issue and the external issue of the federation’s participation in the country’s political life, safeguard of social and cultural values in the face of the changing times, development of new forms of solidarity between and within associations, reinforcement of partnership with foreign actors, and building the capacity of farmers’ organisations to formulate and defend their own proposals. The need for national rural development programmes financed by bilateral and multilateral donors to accede to resources was underscored for the first time. This reflection laid the foundation for the creation of CNCR two years later and was instrumental in drawing up its plan of action.

c) Unification of the farmers’ movement (1992-2003)

The withdrawal of the State, by homogenising the context of operation for all organisations as well as making it both restrictive to farmers and more open for initiatives undertaken by their organisations, paved the way for rapprochement between different organisations (different by virtue of their origin, status, functions, etc.) and awareness by owners of family farms of their common interests.

(i) FONGS played a key role in the unification process.

Though FONGS membership in 1992 included 2000 grassroots groups and 24 regional associations, the Government rejected the Federation’s request to participate in PASA negotiations. With the support of FAO, FONGS carried out a nation-wide study on the impact of structural adjustment and the NPA. Thereafter, it organised a national forum under the theme “What prospects for the Senegalese Farmer?” (Quel avenir pour le paysan sénégalais?) to which all farmers’ organisations as well as representatives of the State, NGOs and donors were invited. After the forum, farmers’ leaders present agreed to set up a national consultation forum that would bring together all national farmers’ federations.

(ii) In May 1993, the national rural consultation committee (CNCR)¹⁵ was set up by seven national federations which were later joined by two other federations in 1995.

Ever since its creation, CNCR has, with very limited and uncertain resources, carried out many projects. These include among others:

- Participation in the drawing up and negotiation of PASA and the LPDA;
- Further development of the reflection on the theme “family farms, agricultural policies and international trade”, formulation of proposals, training, etc.
- Creation in 1996 of the Senegalese Association for the Promotion of Grassroots Development (ASPRODEB) in collaboration with the Association of Rural Community Chairmen (APCR)¹⁶;

¹⁴ Sometimes referred to as “challenges” within the federation.

¹⁵ Cf. Nora Mc Keon, Organisations paysannes et développement national: l’expérience du Conseil national de concertation et de coopération des ruraux. FAO, Rome, April 2002.

¹⁶ ASPRODEB was set up in 1996 and the State ceded to it the balance of the Fund set up by the WB within the framework of the “Small Rural Projects” programme interrupted in 1992. The aim of the Association is to promote the economic advancement of rural farmers, the development of family farms and their organisations by improving access to funding and markets. Since its creation, ASPRODEB has been assigned the execution of the PASA (FAO) and later of the PSAOP.

- Negotiation with Government of the Agricultural Revival Programme in 1997 and implementation of one of its components;
- Negotiation of PISA and of its programmes (PNIR, PSAOP, PSSA);
- Organisation of a nation-wide reflection on land reform;
- etc.

Through its member federations, CNCR has also participated in the reform of such sub-sectors as groundnuts, rice, etc. In addition, it played a decisive role in the organisation of the Network of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers (ROPPA), which brings together umbrella organisations from ten West African countries.

- (iii) During its **2001 congress**, CNCR adopted a **four-year plan of action** comprising the following five priority components: « providing support to revamp member federations by identifying their strengths and weaknesses and then backing corrective plans of action; continuing the promotion of Local Consultation Committees of farmers' organisations within the framework of the PSAOP and strengthening consultation and dialogue between FOs at regional level; encouraging the creation of a National Council and of a National Rural Development Fund; improving communication between the different levels of the farmers' movement and between federations member of CNCR; supporting the sub-regional farmers' movement"¹⁷

The congress also distinguished between the duties of **CNCR** and those of **ASPRODEB**, with the former handling policy matters and the latter dealing with the economic affairs of the farmers' movement.

It is worth noting that ten new national federations joined CNCR.

1.3.2. Strengths and weaknesses of farmers' organisations

a – Grassroots farmers' organisations

- Grassroots organisations are very different from each other in terms of size, type of members and the activities carried out. There are also significant differences between them depending on the area and the opportunities available both in the economic domain and in terms of the support received.
- Whereas some grassroots organisations are able to put up very positive technical and economic performances, the weak economic base of many groups is preoccupying and some of them carry out very few or even no activities at all. Some organisations have a relatively strong social base but are « inactive » for want of ideas, material and financial resources, information and training. In many cases, the life of the group is characterised by ups and downs corresponding to incentives or to successive support packages of varying duration.
- Some grassroots organisations directly mainstream the main agricultural activities of family farms whereas others focus on diversification activities.
- The frequent sector-based (or gender-based) approaches have the advantage of mobilising homogeneous groups around common interests. However, their disadvantage is that they render uncertain group reflection on the future of family, area or village farms including the necessary relations between sectors and between groups and integrating natural resource management.
- There can be significant disparities in competence between local leaders and members. There is also a tendency by some people to monopolise information.
- Rural producers are generally committed to their grassroots organisations. However, a long-lasting failure to attain set goals may prove demobilising in the

¹⁷ Cf. Noa Mc Kéon, op-cit p.13, p.25.

long-term and cause defections. Conversely, even modest results strengthen the trust of farmers in their organisation.

b – Local federative farmers’ organisations (LFFOs) related to the associative movement

Initiated in the 1970s, associations grew in strength in the 1980s. Though very diverse, **LFFOs** however have some common characteristics. These include the following:

- Desirous of asserting their autonomy from both foreign actors and the State, they started off very timidly and often with protracted collective reflection and self-criticism. The mainspring of the approach was the need to find solutions to economic and social problems, assert an identity and break free from development models proposed by the dominant institutional actors.
- They exist from the sub-village to the divisional and sometimes regional levels.
- They have scored many successes that are not only methodological (self-criticism, planning, programming, training and horizontal exchanges), but also economic and social. Their initial activities were often centred on the diversification of production. However, they progressively tackled more complex issues relating to agriculture (rain-fed and irrigated), livestock with notably the provision of agricultural production services, (production of seeds, supply, marketing, processing of produce, veterinary care, loans, consultancy, etc.). They thus brought in great innovations in the domain of service provision. Benefiting from the preferential support of NGOs, local federative associations have since the late 1980s succeeded to establish relations with public services and sometimes to carry out long-term joint actions with research and with some technical services under “privatisation”, etc.
- It should be noted that many of these associations also carried out innovative natural resource management activities, which they sometimes mainstreamed into real local development strategies.

The difficulties encountered are manifold and include the following:

- It is sometimes difficult to carry out, within time limits, certain (economic and social) projects whose profitability is uncertain and whose execution requires resources and skills that Local federative organisations do not always have.
- Funding possibilities determine the more or less intensive periods of activity. However, they generally resist periods of shortage in resources, which may sometimes lead to rescheduling of activities and even reorganisation.
- There are sometimes significant disparities of competence between officials and the masses. In many cases, however, new leaders emerge, handle technical duties and later assume decision-making responsibilities. Many Local federative organisations are members of FONGS and belong to the regional coordination structures set up by FONGS.

c – National federations

The tendency to group associations into unions and federations in Senegal is an old phenomenon¹⁸ but it is in the 1990s that it became widespread and diversified.

Apart from FONGS and the Federation of Women Advancement Groups that are cross-cutting, the other national federations are either focused on a single sub-sector (fishing, livestock, horticulture, forest exploitation, cotton, etc), one kind of agriculture (such as irrigation in the case of the Federation of Self-managed Zones – Fédérations des Périmètres Autogérés), or on economic functions (as is the case of UNCAS for instance).

- Some federations seem to have difficulties transcending the administrative, social and political hurdles that they went through especially when their bases deteriorated and their economic strength greatly weakened. They can therefore have difficulties

¹⁸ The National Union of Senegalese Cooperatives (UNCAS) and FONGS were created in 1978.

adapting to the new context and tailoring their activities to suit their economic strengths.

- The human and financial resources of the various federations are very different. Some of them have designed long-term work programmes (such as FONGS which has for ten years benefited from the support of a consortium of European institutions, the Federation of Fishing EIGs, etc.) whereas the resources of other federations are limited and sometimes uncertain.
- The internal functioning of some federations is characterised by some glaring weaknesses in terms of respect of legal instruments in force. This is manifested by the non-renewal of terms of office, lack of transparency in decision-making and management.
- Federations invited to participate in the restructuring of sub-sectors had very diverse negotiation, action and proposal capabilities.
- Often established at the different levels of the administrative set up (rural community, local and sometimes divisional and regional unions), most national federations are faced with internal communication problems.

d) CNCR

As Nora Mc Keon points out, all actors agree that the setting up of CNCR was the 'only option' open to the rural people and that 'whatever its limits, CNCR exists and is inevitable'.

Without being exhaustive, we can cite the following **achievements** of CNCR:

- Its recognition by Government, national and external institutional actors as well as rural players;
- Its ability to influence agricultural policies and national rural development programmes depending on the interests of **family farms**;
- Its ability to participate as a real partner in consultation forums between actors (to whose promotion it has often contributed), etc.

The **legitimacy** of CNCR obviously derives from the fact that its membership includes the main national federations (19 at present) but also and especially because it has a clearly defined **objective** namely, representation of the interests of owners of **family farms** (who make up the majority of Senegalese farmers) in order to promote family farms.

The increasing recognition of the role of CNCR and its member organisations henceforth gives them greater responsibilities:

- towards their members and rural producers in general;
- towards economic and institutional actors;
- towards public authorities.

Such recognition is accompanied by numerous solicitations which the organisations are endeavouring to face up to with often very limited human, material and financial resources. They must in addition anticipate issues of concern, formulate proposals, negotiate them and follow up implementation of decisions made.

Lastly, the strengthening of CNCR at local and regional levels constitutes a significant challenge. It presupposes the improvement of internal communication and the training of leaders at all levels.

In conclusion to this first chapter, the following two points are worth mentioning:

- (i) The strategic guidelines defined by the Government for the agricultural sector lie within the more general scope of the **decentralisation policy** being carried out by the Government. Initiated in 1972 with the creation of rural communities, administrative decentralisation was pursued and strengthened in 1996 with the enactment of the law on regionalisation and the creation of a new decentralised unit namely, the region.

- The Rural Community retained its prerogatives especially with regard to:
 - ✓ The environment and management of new resources,
 - ✓ Planning of development at local level,
 - ✓ Execution of infrastructure and public utility projects, etc.
- The Region was especially responsible for planning development by preparing regional action schemes for the environment as well as integrated regional development and land management plans, and then ensuring their implementation and follow-up. It had the authority to initiate projects and to give an opinion on projects initiated by the State.

It is clear that the broadening and strengthening of the decentralisation policy calls for a new distribution of tasks between the institutional actors of agricultural and rural development support. In this regard, it constitutes an important action reference for farmers' organisations.

- (ii) The PSAOP falls within the context of very important reforms undertaken in response to the serious crisis that has rocked the rural sector for several years. Its formulation and implementation take into account the economic, institutional and organisational characteristics of the rural world, its constraints and its assets. The PSAOP is an important response to the Senegalese agricultural crisis. Its efficiency is however conditioned by the implementation of complementary programmes that will make it possible to meet investment as well as agricultural and rural activity funding needs, etc.

2. Origin, preparation and negotiation of the PSAOP

This chapter briefly presents the main stages involved in the setting up of the PSAOP, underscoring the place of and role played by farmers' organisations through CNCR in defining the programme and especially in negotiating the "support to producer organisations" component.

2.1. From the emergence of an innovative idea to the creation of the PSAOP

In January 1995, the World Bank funded three agricultural sector projects including the Agricultural Research Project II implemented by the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research (ISRA), the Agricultural Services Project that provides support to the National Agricultural Extension Programme (PNVA), and the "small rural projects II" to fund micro-projects. During the mid-term review of the Agricultural Research Project, the need to strengthen relations between research, extension and producer organisations was underscored. The WB began discussions with the three types of actors concerned. The negotiations first culminated in the idea to "harmonise a research/development function also useful for the three groups of partners"¹⁹. It had to improve the production, dissemination and appropriation of technologies suited to agriculture and meeting farmers' expectations.

In the following months, a research/development programme was designed and a unit based at CNCR was set up to implement it. At the same time, reflection went on and the objectives were broadened. An idea thus emerged to set up a '**real national system of support to innovation**' based on partnership between research, agricultural counselling and farmers' organisations, to which the WB would provide its contribution through a specific programme, namely the PSAOP. As the organisations concerned pointed out, the 'aim of the PSAOP from early 1996 within this new context was no longer to juxtapose already collaborating

¹⁹ ISRA-ITA-ANCAR-CNCR : Implementation of the research/development programme, p. 1-2.

institutions but to set up a system whose anatomy (institutions) and physiology (common functions...) were to be reviewed²⁰.

In the intervening period between the PSAOP's first identification mission in January 1996 and its evaluation ex-ante in 1998, the objectives of the programme, its institutional mechanism as well as the content of the different components and their relations were specified after a significant job carried out individually and collectively by the relevant institutions.

2.2. Objectives, content and institutional mechanism of the PSAOP

The April 1999 project assessment document, which was a follow-up to the World Bank evaluation mission of May 1998, constituted an important reference document on the PSAOP. The document provides for long-term (10 years) World Bank support through implementation of three phases, with pursuit to the second and the third phases subject to evaluation based on specific indicators.

2.2.1. Objectives of the PSAOP

"Poverty alleviation is at the centre of the programme. To attain this goal, the programme's overall objective is to sustainably raise productivity, production and the incomes of small farmers using, among other things, environment-friendly technologies..."

This calls for a new approach to agricultural sector development support. Technologies will only meet the needs of farmers if agricultural services are customer-oriented and governed by demand. In this regard, the Programme's strategy for attaining the overall objective consists in the following: (i) empower farmers and their organisations so as to equip them with technical and organisational capacities to formulate their demands and, enable them to exercise a certain degree of influence thanks to their financial resources so that their point of view may be taken into account; (ii) empower public institutions that provide services to farmers, in other words enhance the autonomy of these institutions and introduce institutional and organisational reforms to enable them step out of the public sector management framework²¹.

2.2.2. PSAOP components

The first phase of the PSAOP had the following five components:

- The National Fund for Agriculture and Agro-food Research (FNRAA).

Set up by decree and placed under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, the FNRAA aimed to "separate the funding of research activities from their implementation in order to guarantee the autonomy and performance of research teams". It was planned that before the end of the first phase, it would be endowed with a moral and legal personality. Its administration was entrusted to a sixteen-member management committee of "research users or stakeholders". It had a scientific and technical committee responsible for "the study and selection of research proposals on the basis of their scientific merit and their pertinence to development needs..."²². Invitations for research proposals were available at the National Agricultural Research System, which gave greater but not exclusive consideration to ISRA and ITA.

- Support to research institutions was the second component of the programme. This component aimed to improve the performances of the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research (ISRA) and the Food Technology Institute (ITA) by enhancing their scientific and

²⁰ ISRA-ITA-ANCAR-CNCR, op. cit., p. 2.

²¹ WB. Project evaluation Document, April 1999, p. 1.

²² WB, op. cit., p. 47.

management capacities, rehabilitating their infrastructure and providing them with new equipment. Emphasis was placed on the necessary decentralisation and regionalisation of ISRA and on the promotion of quality research focussing on national agricultural peculiarities.

- Agricultural Counselling/ ANCAR

by providing support to the National Agency for Rural Agricultural Counselling (ANCAR), the PSAOP sought to set up an “Agricultural Counselling service whose results would prove its worth to farmers and which would meet their needs through contractual arrangements”. It was part of a progressive privatisation of agricultural counselling, whose cost was to be partly borne by farmers in the long-term through deductions from products. Such deductions were to be managed by a mechanism and in accordance with modalities defined in collaboration with the authorities.

The creation of ANCAR was a condition to be met before PSAOP evaluation. It became operational in 1997. ANCAR had the legal status of a company with State majority holding: 51% of the shares belonged to the State and 28% to farmers’ organisations. It was provided that the “State would become a minority shareholder and that farmers’ organisations, the private sector and the civil society would become the majority shareholders of ANCAR at the end of the first phase”²³.

ANCAR had a weak general management and a decentralised system of operations based on:

- Ten regional head offices;
- Agricultural counsellors sent to local communities (a counsellor per rural community) and assisted by specialised technicians and staff of regional teams.

The creation of ANCAR was accompanied by a change in the methods of providing support to innovation: Extension gave way to rural agricultural counselling characterised by “a global, participatory and multidisciplinary approach” based on partnership with the relevant actors and especially with farmers’ organisations.

- **The fourth component of PSAOP** concerned the strengthening of the functions of the Ministry of the Public Service, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Livestock. The project aimed to help these Ministries do the following: (i) devolve the functions performed by central services to regional services; (ii) enhance policy formulation and follow-up/evaluation functions by providing support to the Department of Agricultural Policies and to the Analysis, Forecasts and Follow-up/evaluation Unit; (iii) enhance control and regulation functions; (iv) carry on with the privatisation of veterinary and phytosanitary services and organise a certified seed production network based on farmers’ organisations specialised in the domain.

- **Support to farmers’ organisations** was the last component of the project and undoubtedly the most innovative in a WB-sponsored project. The actions of this component were to be geared towards “building the capacity of farmers’ organisations to help their members secure access to inputs, credit and markets and to participate in the decision-making process”²⁴.

This component had the following three major aspects:

a) Building the capacities of grassroots farmers’ organisations by supporting, in each rural community, the promotion of a Local Consultation Forum for Farmers’ Organisations (CLCOP) and by setting up a Demand-Oriented Rural Services Fund (FSRRD). In concrete terms, a Technical Implementation Agency (AET) would provide assistance for the setting up of a CLCOP by the grassroots organisations present in the

²³ WB, op. cit., p. 2.

²⁴ WB, op. cit., p. 4.

rural community. “CLCOP is therefore not a farmers’ organisation but the local platform representing the FOs of the villages of each rural community...”. FOs were to join it voluntarily regardless of their affiliation²⁵, be they members or not of federations affiliated to CNCR.

CLCOPs could mobilise FSRRD to finance “sub-projects” proposed by member-grassroots organisations and deemed eligible in accordance with a specific procedures manual. The following three types of projects could benefit from FSRRD resources after approval by CLCOP:

- **Training** in the broadest sense of the term: technical training, management training (in the management of family farms, FOs, small-scale businesses, etc.), training in the organisation of rural production activities both upstream and downstream, etc. Exchanges between farmers’ groups that were strongly encouraged also fell under training;
- **Support for access to specific services** relating to agricultural counselling not covered by ANCAR or research. This may include recourse by FOs to expertise, organisation of field trips, prospection missions, etc. The FSRRD and the beneficiaries shared the cost of such services.
- **Support for the implementation of innovations at local level:** The FSRRD may be mobilised to « contribute to the funding of innovative and priority initiatives undertaken as pilot projects by FOs in the domains of production, processing, marketing of agricultural produce and management of natural resources »²⁶.

b) Building the capacity of CNCR was the second aspect of the component. According to the Project Assessment Document²⁷, the actions envisaged included:

- The constitution of a data base on the activities of FOs thus facilitating follow-up of their activities and of their institutional functioning;
- Support to the improvement of communication between members of organisations and their officials;
- Making a contribution to the CNCR technical support unit;
- Training of CNCR leaders (strategic training-reflection, leadership training, etc.);
- Carrying out, in collaboration with the authorities, a study on the creation of a national rural development funding mechanism, etc.

c) Building the capacity of federative organisations

This was the third aspect of the “support to rural farmers’ organisations” component. The 1999 Project Assessment Document²⁸ is very evasive on this point, which it only approaches indirectly:

- On the one hand, it talks about the creation of FO Regional Consultation Committees (CRCOPs) which “shall bring together representatives of regional FOs” having regional functions similar to those of CLCOPs at local level;
- On the other hand, the FSRRD is presented as accessible to local organisations...as well as regional organisations. Besides, it is specified that during the first phase of the PSAOP, modalities for including national federations will be examined...”

For its part, the 2001²⁹ PSAOP-CNCR document treats it as an independent “aspect” whose objective is to “professionalise local and regional unions and federations be they members of CNCR or not ...”. The actions envisaged deal with the training of leaders, capacity building in the organisation of economic and support services to farmers, the management of sub-

²⁵ PSAOP-CNCR. The support to rural farmers’ organisations component, June 2001.

²⁶ PSAOP-CNCR, op . cit., p. 24.

²⁷ op cit. p .57.

²⁸ WB, op. cit., p. 56.

²⁹ PSAOP-CNCR, op. cit., p. 25.

sectors, etc. It was also to finance annual external audits of accounts in order to improve transparency and resource management...”.

Implementation of the « support to farmers’ organisations » component was entrusted to ASPRODEB (Association for the Promotion of Grassroots Development), which already had some project execution experience. In addition to the balance of the “small rural projects” fund, it also managed the Special Food Security Project (FAO) through its implementation agency (AGEP), etc.

The component’s **implementation mechanism** was as follows:

- ASPRODEB played the role of financial implementation agency and all the resources of the component came through it. PSAOP provided specific management support;
- The FSRRD was located at ASPRODEB: “sub-projects” prepared by grassroots FOs and approved by the CLCOP were forwarded to ASPRODEB which disbursed the resources needed directly to the beneficiary grassroots FO;
- A contract was signed between ASPRODEB and CNCR for the implementation of actions pertaining to the capacity building of CNCR, follow-up of CLCOPs under its responsibility, etc.

Given the innovative nature of the component, a pilot phase was first carried out. This phase began in February 1998. Though initially planned to last 18 months, it was extended until April 2000 thanks to additional resources mobilised. In 1997, CNCR requested funds from ASPRODEB to finance this pilot phase that was carried out in the Tambacounda and Kolda regions and FRAO was the technical implementation agency (AET).

2.3. General remarks on the preparation and negotiation of the PSAOP

The PSAOP constitutes a significant institutional innovation both for the World Bank and the Senegalese institutions concerned because of the following three main reasons:

- First of all, the new approach that aims at promoting demand-oriented agricultural services presupposes enhancement of the capacities of users to demand services. This led to the development of a specific component which aimed to build the (organisational, technical and bargaining) capacities of FOs regardless of the services themselves (research, extension);
- Then, and this is the second aspect of the innovation, the “FO Support” component was prepared and negotiated with FOs themselves considered as full partners and present throughout the preparation and negotiation;
- Lastly, the modalities for the implementation of the “FO Support” component constitute the third aspect of the innovation. In effect, the component is implemented by FOs themselves through ASPRODEB, with the State accepting to cede public funds to a non-governmental institution.

The following remarks attempt to highlight the concrete implications of these innovations.

2.3.1. The PSAOP, a collective endeavour which took time

More than four years elapsed from the first identification mission (January 1996) to the programme-launching workshop in April 2000. This time lapse, which may appear very long, was due to the following two factors:

- The programme, as we have earlier seen, was determinedly innovative in terms of its objectives, content and the mechanism put in place, etc. It was also innovative in terms of its preparation modalities which were based on negotiations between the World Bank and national actors and between national actors themselves;
- Evaluation of the programme and disbursement of the credit were delayed by the considerable institutional readjustments underpinning the project and the time the

Senegalese Government needed to implement them. In effect, the objectives and complexity of the project gave rise to specific questions for each of the components. While some concerned decisions taken by the authorities (creation of ANCAR, liquidation of SODEVA, etc.), others related to the reform of the pre-existing accounting and management systems (ISAR for instance), etc. The relation between components gave rise to interdependence, with a delay in any component impeding the entire negotiation process.

All stakeholders agreed that **the final shape of the PSAOP was the outcome of collective reflection between the World Bank and each of the institutions concerned**, and between the different institutions and components. The different WB aide-memoires that punctuated the project preparation period and a study of the documents produced at each stage confirm the points of view expressed by the people met during the mission, namely that the PSAOP was built progressively, through successive adjustments and sometimes difficult negotiations.

The following three obvious conclusions can be drawn at this stage of the analysis:

- Even if the PSAOP design period had been shortened, notably between the project assessment and its kick-off, preparation of a project of this kind requires **considerable reflection and maturation time**. It is important for the institutions concerned to play an active role in defining the objectives, content, and institutional mechanism of the project. It is also important for them to learn to confront ideas and to collaborate, for it will be paradoxical to draw up a programme based on partnership using a top-down approach;
- Negotiation of the PSAOP was obviously facilitated by the following two factors: the members of the WB team that studied the project remained in the country throughout the period of preparation of the project and some of its experts already had good knowledge of Senegal and its institutions, etc. It should be noted that the WB team was very perseverant and tenacious for the institution's "management" kept urging them to either speed up the process or abandon the project. It is clear that the preparation of a PSAOP-type project cannot respect "standard" procedures and time limits;
- Negotiation of the PSAOP remained marked by the general asymmetry that characterises relations between the WB and national institutions, even if it is clear that the WB team used its position of strength with moderation, thus allowing for real dialogue. The general asymmetry that characterises relations between the WB and its national partners may be stated in the following three ways: (a) the need for national institutions to benefit from WB support/possibility of acceptance or refusal by the WB; (b) unequal capacities to formulate and negotiate proposals; (c) varied adaptation of national action/credit absorption capacities to "the pace of the WB".

2.3.2. CNCR played a very active role in the formulation and negotiation of the PSAOP

Right from the start, CNCR contributed so much not only to the elaboration of the "FO Support" component but also to the preparation of other components of the PSAOP.

a) With regard to the "Rural producer organisation support " component, the following remarks can be made:

- (i) CNCR started participating in the reflection from 1995 even before the effective start of the design process. At each stage of the process, WB aide-memoires gave a report of what had been discussed with CNCR that represented Senegalese farmers' organisations both vis-à-vis the WB and the other actors;
- (ii) There were differences between the initial proposals of CNCR and the final form of the "FO Support" component. This was of course the outcome of discussions and of the pilot phase. The two parties however considered that such outcome

was “balanced”. An official of CNCR even argued that “the World Bank went as far as was possible”. Without overstepping bounds, it can nevertheless be said that CNCR was permanently aware of the reticence/reservations that the innovative nature of the project could lead the WB and national institutions to express;

- (iii) **Important points of consensus** on the content of the component quickly became obvious. These related for instance to the size of the direct support to provide to grassroots organisations and the selection of the rural community as the suitable local forum for the organisation of services, setting up of the CLCOP and the FSRRD, CNCR capacity building through an important communication and training programme, the strengthening of the technical support unit, the selection of ASPRODEB as implementation agency, etc. It should also be noted that the WB and CNCR quickly agreed on the need to support “all FOs” and not only CNCR member FOs;
- (iv) **Discussion of some points was left open.** We can cite for instance the discussion on the form of organisations to be set up at the regional level and modalities of the support to be given them. In the final analysis, CNCR set up Regional rural consultation Committees (CRCR). In so doing, the CNCR executed a project it had already earmarked by 1994³⁰. Though autonomous, CRCRs were yet and henceforth open to all regional organisations including organisations not affiliated to any CNCR member federation.

Another subject of discussion concerned the strengthening of national federations affiliated to CNCR within the framework of the PSAOP. The WB expressed reservations and doubts which can be explained by various factors such as the heterogeneity of federations, lack of transparency in the management of some of them, insufficient justification for federations to benefit from support that was pegged to certain conditions, etc. However, CNCR remains and rightly too committed to this course of action (see below) whose implementation will soon begin within the framework of the PSAOP.

- (v) Throughout the project preparation process, CNCR demonstrated both its autonomy and openness which are two indispensable conditions in any real negotiation:
- Though very involved in the follow-up of the pilot phase financed by the World Bank PPF³¹ between 1998 and 2000, it also simultaneously initiated the experimentation of the approach and mechanism in three rural communities in two other regions (Thiès and Djourbel) using other technical implementation agencies and thanks to funds provided by Swiss Cooperation. This experiment was carried out in a very transparent manner vis-à-vis the WB that accepted it.
 - The concern of the WB to lay down “safeguards” as a result of the innovative nature of its partnership with FOs was understandable to CNCR. Such safeguards included the selection of ASPRODEB as the component’s implementation agency because it had already managed WB and FAO funds, use of AETs in order to facilitate the emergence and follow-up of CLCOPs, auditing of CLCOPs, evaluation of the pilot phase before disbursement of funds for the FO support component, etc. In return, the WB was also very open to CNCR.

³⁰ The setting up of local rural consultation committees (CLCR) in rural communities and of the CRCR at regional level was already the subject of a CNCR study in 1994, for which ANDA support was solicited.

³¹ Project Preparation Fund.

b) The participation of CNCR in the preparation of the PSAOP went far beyond the “support to farmers’ organisations” component.

There are many aspects of the design of the other PSAOP components where CNCR played a key role.

- CNCR participated in the reflection on research/development (R/D) and the office of the R/D Unit was located in CNCR premises;
- It participated in the reflection on agricultural and rural counselling and in the ANCAR creation process. It also participated in the recruitment of agricultural and rural counsellors (CAR) using a procedure exemplary in many respects³², and which cemented the relations of trust between ANCAR and farmers’ organisations;
- It contributed enormously to the setting up of the FNRAA (which it chairs) and played an active role in laying down procedures;
- It participated in official meetings with the authorities that punctuated the preparation and negotiation of the PSAOP. It notably participated in the negotiation of the project in Washington with the Minister of Agriculture.

c) The following three factors explain the importance and efficiency of CNCR’s participation:

- (i) **The democratisation process in Senegal is long-standing:** After ten years of single party rule, “limited multi-party politics” was instituted in 1973 and in 1981, “total multiparty politics” was authorised. Consolidation of the process continued over the years and in 2000, allowed for a change at the helm of the State following uncontested elections. Such opening up of the political spectrum ushered in conditions favourable for the development of the civil society and especially the emergence and strengthening of autonomous farmers’ organisations;
- (ii) **The strong organisation of FOs at national level and their unification facilitated recognition of CNCR** by the authorities and economic and institutional actors as the sole representative of rural farmers. The criticisms (in various ways justified) sometimes levelled against CNCR have never questioned its legitimacy. It should be noted that this was an advantage for the WB that found a “ready-made partner “ to experiment a new approach;
- (iii) **One important factor was the determination of CNCR based on a clear vision of its objectives** and of “how far it could go”. It is clear that CNCR very quickly realised how important the PSAOP project was to farmers’ organisations and the contribution it could make in order to attain its objectives and implement the actions it envisaged. The experience of its leaders and the reflection carried out since 1992 on family agriculture and on the conditions necessary for promoting it were of great help to CNCR. In addition, its participation in past negotiations with the authorities, donors and others was also an advantage in the sense that CNCR was able to avoid “hastily accepting” proposals it thought could be “improved” upon.

Even if the assistance it could get from the WB far exceeded what it could expect from other donors (in terms of funds and external credibility), CNCR understood the importance of maintaining and diversifying its relations with other technical and financial partners, thus guaranteeing itself significant bargaining power. It is worth noting that the WB accepted this desire for autonomy and this deepened the reflection and gave pertinence to the project.

d) Constraints

The PSAOP preparation process highlighted the great efforts FOs must make in order to participate efficiently in the design and negotiation of any important programme:

³² Candidates were sent for training in CLCOPs set up during the experimentation phase, the written opinion of CLCOP officials was taken into account during selection in which CNCR representatives participated

- The WB poses many conditions to its partners in terms of the content of proposals, presentation, summary reports to be prepared, time limits to be respected, etc. As a result of insufficient human and material resources, CNCR had to use the services of consultants for more or less long periods. This has posed problems of continuity, adjustment to CNCR positions and sometimes to WB standards. CNCR has been able to minimise this drawback thanks to resource persons it has known for long, other relations, etc.
- Preparation of the PSAOP also involved other demands. These included long and heavy mobilisation of farmers' leaders (the only non-waged actors involved in the PSAOP), the need to organise consultations with member federations and regional and local FOs in order to secure their contribution and support. Workshops (partly funded by the WB) were organised and entailed costs in terms of money, time, energy, etc. It is clear that the current mechanism for the preparation of projects only partially takes into account the constraints of private actors namely, FOs.

3. Practical enhancement of the capacities of farmers' organisations

The operational support activities for rural producer organisations (RPOs) started with a **pilot phase** that went on, as earlier seen, from February 1998 to April 2000. The execution of the loan saw the organisation of a workshop for the launching of the PSAOP (June 2000) and the start of the first phase of the project that was to last for three years up to June 2003. During the mid-term review, it was decided that phase I of the project be extended to December 2004.

3.1. Actions undertaken

3.1.1. During the pilot phase, field activities were mainly carried out by the West African Rural Foundation (FRAO) that was recruited as a Technical Implementation Agency (AET) for the Tambacounda and Kolda regions. With the financial assistance of Swiss cooperation within the framework of the "producer training support programme", CNCR and ASPRODEB recruited three other AETs (FONGS, Rhodale International and ADIS) to implement the process in three rural communities of the Thiès and Djourbel regions. ASPRODEB, through its project implementation agency (AGEP), was entrusted with the financial execution of the pilot phase while the CNCR technical support unit was responsible for its follow-up.

The main activities³³ undertaken were:

- CNCR carried out a communication campaign to sensitise rural populations and institutional actors on the PSAOP (workshops, media events, radio programmes, etc.)
- 10 CLOPs were set up in as many rural communities of the Kolda and Tambacouda regions; 3 CLOPs were also set up in the Djourbel and Thiès regions.
- 138 "sub-projects" that were proposed by CLCOP member FOs were endorsed and financed by the FSRRD;
- CNCR carried out numerous activities aimed at improving communication at the various levels where organised FOs existed;
- The institutional review of two CNCR member federations was done at the regional level but could not be extended to the national level.

It should be noted that for its part, the research and development programme faced a lot of difficulties and did not culminate in "totally operational processes" during the pilot phase (see below).

³³ IRAM : Pilot project evaluation mission - February 2001.

3.1.2. An intermediate phase characterised by a slowdown in operational activities (June 2000 - December 2001)

When the pilot phase ended, it took some 18 months before field activities could begin again. In effect, upon the official start of execution of the WB loan, the start of operational activities earmarked for execution within the framework of the “FO support” component was pegged to numerous prior administrative, financial, technical, etc. conditions. Some of such conditions had to do with:

- the evaluation of the pilot phase, the final report of which was made available only in February 2001;
- the putting in place within ASPRODEB of an administrative and account management mechanism approved by the WB;
- signing of a “consultancy” contract between ASPRODEB and CNCR;
- the audit of CLCOPs and FO grassroots “sub-projects” executed in the year 2000 entrusted to the ERA firm;
- finalising the methodological guide;
- etc.

As a matter of fact, auditing of CLCOPs, the recruitment and training of AETs (which took some time), and the participation of FOs in the recruitment of ANCAR agricultural counsellors were the main activities undertaken in 2001 within the framework of this component. Only 17% of the budget allocated was executed in 2001 (CFAF 117 million of the 688 million allocated), with expenditure pertaining to the recruitment of AETs and an audit firm as well as support to CNCR.

It is worth noting that Swiss cooperation granted relay financial assistance to ASPRODEB/CNCR for the June 2001/June 2002 period, thereby making it possible for these two structures to carry out some key activities.

3.1.3. The operational activities of the “FO support” component

These activities started in late 2001 and were mainly concerned with support to grassroots organisations and building the capacity of CNCR at the national level.

The activities began simultaneously in 10 regions with the selection of 5 rural communities per region. In a nutshell, the procedure adopted in each region was as follows:

- adoption of a regional reference situation by the AET³⁴
- the regional communication campaign coordinated by the *Regional Rural Consultation Council* – [Conseil Régional de Concertation des Ruraux (CRCR)] - with the support of CNCR and the AET. This campaign was organised at different levels (regional, local government areas, rural communities, etc.)
- handing in of the regional reference survey that led to the concerted choice of five rural communities in each region;
- participatory review which was sometimes made at the same time with the reference situation of the Rural Agricultural Council (CAR), but sometimes separately;
- promotion of a CLCOP in each rural community through decentralised information and reflection workshops which were organised in the various areas identified within the rural community;
- creation of the CLCOP (constituent General Assembly, by-laws, information on the procedures, etc.) ;

³⁴ Six AETs were chosen by ASPRODEB and CNCR through a call for bids. They signed a two-year contract with ASPRODEB. They are CECI (Thiès), USU (Louga, Tambacounda, Kaolack), Rhodale (Fleuve Matam), ASEA (Djourbel, Dakar), Action Sud (Ziguinchor and Kolda) and Sall Consult (Fatick)

- operational support of the CLCOP which particularly concerns its accreditation by ASPRODEB, adoption of the recurrent budget (CFAF 1 million per year to which should be added the contribution of member FOs – 5 000 F upon taking membership and 5 000 F yearly thereon), drawing up of capacity building plans and their implementation, examining “sub-projects”³⁵ proposed by member FOs, management of sub-projects, more general reflections on rural development, etc.

It should be noted that support to CLCOPs that were created during the pilot phase started again in early 2002 and some sixty CLCOPs now exist. 80 new CLCOPs would soon be created within the framework of the extension provided by the PSAOP (eight new rural communities will be concerned in each region.)

Other activities were undertaken, and they mainly concern **CNCR enhancement**:

- continuation of the communication programme: regional and local information workshops, preparing the pilot communication project in the regions (referred to as “*CNCR pënc*”, an information network intended to serve as a forum equipped with various tools for communication at the regional level, thereby facilitating information flow and exchange, etc.) In addition to these actions, a CNCR newsletter (*Canal rural*) shall be published and radio programmes produced;
- the functioning of the technical support unit;
- training and refresher courses were organised for leaders;
- etc.

It should be noted that the resources of the FO component were also solicited to finance reflection on the **CNCR strategy**:

- collective study and reflection on land issues;
- preparing the CNCR position on the reorganisation of the groundnut sub-sector;
- drawing up an “emergency plan” to respond to the 2002 crisis of the rural sector;
- etc.

The activities of the Research and Development Unit that is found in CNCR and brings together ANCAR, ISRA, ITA, were postponed during the June 2000 workshop to launch the PSAOP. These activities have now been re-launched within a new system wherein FOs are at the head of the structures put in place, with ANCAR as the management body of such structures. In the course of this study, no specific reflections were held with the partners concerned on the difficulties facing the Research and Development Unit. Undoubtedly, these difficulties stem from many factors, some of which are (i) the fact that research did not have a pilot phase, which undermined its response capacity; (ii) also the fact that, initially, farmers show more interest in concrete actions than in research and development with necessarily deferred results (iii) the ambition of the programme in relation to available resources (especially human); (iv) difficulty to implement a research and development programme prior to clearly identifying underlying constraints together with farmers.

3.2. Remarks on the implementation of the FO component

3.2.1. Importance of the pilot phase³⁶

The pilot phase particularly made it possible to:

- confirm the viability of the planned support mechanism for grassroots FOs;
- finalise the content of the “FO component” and its enabling instruments.

³⁵ As it was realised in the IRAM evaluation mission, the notion of « sub-projects » to refer to projects proposed by CLCOP member POs and eligible for the FSRRD is inappropriate

³⁶ see IRAM evaluation report (Feb. 2001), audit of the first thirteen CLCOPs undertaken in 2001 by ERA.

This phase also showed the relative complexity of the issues raised by the support to national federative organisations and the setting up of a regional consultation framework.

The pilot phase also sustained CNCR reflection in the PSAOP formulation process (which took a long time) and helped to disseminate information and conduct reflection on the FO component among local organisations. The experience was however limited in scope due to the fact that the other PSAOP components (and notably ANCAR workers) which interact with the FO component were not yet present on the field.

3.2.2. Numerous pre-conditions for implementing operational activities

The official start of execution of the WB loan was followed by numerous pre-conditions that had to be met before operational activities could start. Taken separately, each of these conditions seems to be pertinent and justified but, together, they sometimes constitute veritable hurdles for FOs. Consequently, the FO component was behind schedule in 2001 whereas it was in time during the preparatory phase:

- unlike the other PSAOP implementation agencies, FOs are not particularly familiar with the administrative procedures concerning the execution of a World Bank-sponsored project. They therefore need to learn and this process takes time...
- During this transitional phase, FOs no longer benefited from PPF resources and did not yet have access to the resources allocated for the implementation of the FO component.

It is necessary for such projects to allocate specific resources for FOs in order to effectively follow the necessary procedures for raising funds. For instance, a fraction of the PPF could be set apart for this purpose. It is also worth noting that the execution of a World Bank-funded project calls for harmonisation between the various crop sectors. As seen in the PSAOP, such convergence is possible but requires a specific input of collective procedure development and mutual learning.

3.2.3. Remarks on support to grassroots FOs

a) CLCOP is apparently an adequate mechanism that is unanimously endorsed by the players concerned.

Four main observations can be advanced to buttress this point:

- (i.) In Senegal, the rural community provides a special avenue for local development. That decentralisation has been effective in Senegal for a long time made it possible for the population to gradually identify with the grassroots unit of the administrative division. The interest shown by quite a good number of external actors in organising their activities at the level of the local community has strengthened this process. Local federative organisations have long since realised this and have for the most part included the rural community level in their internal organisation. It is therefore understandable that the rural community is chosen as the target for rural support services.
- (ii.) **The aggregation of grassroots FOs** within the CLCOP has many advantages. As it was pointed out by FO leaders, this aggregation facilitates mutual learning and experience sharing among FOs, and consolidates solidarity. In addition, unity
 - ✓ facilitates collective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the rural community, the formulation of concerted priorities, etc.
 - ✓ helps grassroots FOs to learn how to design projects, expand and diversify their partnerships;
 - ✓ also gives a greater visibility to grassroots farmers' organisations vis à vis the Rural Council, with CLCOP sometimes referred to as the *economic engine of the rural community (CR)*.

- (iii) **The mechanisms³⁷ set up are operational:** «sub-projects » are developed by grassroots FOs. They are examined by CLCOPs, which, with the assistance of technical implementation agencies, exercise rigour and transparency in applying selection criteria. Timeframes for the financing of the first FO sub-projects are relatively long: a minimum of one year from the start of the procedure in a local community to the execution of the first FSRRD-funded projects. However, the rhythm then picks up when the structures are put in place and the system is operational. On the whole, the interaction between CLCOP and CAR is smooth, with FOs and ANCAR workers that we met during the mission expressing their satisfaction: “initially, extension chose its own target farmers and themes but now ANCAR works on themes chosen by FOs and upon the request of FOs... We hope that this approach has come to stay...” This view by a CLCOP leader ties in with the impression expressed by an ANCAR worker that “we find things very easy; it is better to work with responsible people who know their rights...”
- (iv) **The existence of the FSRRD** is obviously a strong motivation for the creation of the CLCOP by grassroots FOs. But this is not the only motivating factor as seen, for example, in some CLCOPs which are gradually expanding their initial functions: participation in local development initiatives organised within the rural community, discussion of the agricultural blueprint bill, etc. Note that some CLCOPs undertake very interesting initiatives such as the organisation of “forums” on technical and economic issues (animal feed, exploitation of old irrigated areas, water, financing rural development, etc.) to which ANCAR, research, NGOs, administrative services, etc are invited.

It is therefore obvious that CLCOP is held in high esteem by the FOs concerned and by their direct partners. Some external actors are beginning to show interest in CLCOPs while others are still reserved. They doubt how long a CLCOP would last since it is sometimes considered a “consultation forum which comes to add to many others”, which have already been supported by different types of projects.

b) Questions on the support mechanism for grassroots FOs

- (i) According to all of the actors concerned, **CLCOPs differ**. Their dynamism varies and primarily depends on the existence of efficient and experienced farmer leaders at the local level. In fact, the FO component depends on pre-existing organisational dynamics and particularly on the achievements of federative local organisations that it seeks to develop within the framework of the PSAOP. It takes time for local leaders to emerge and this cannot be possible simply by putting in place a consultation forum. But this forum contributes to the capacity building of farmers’ leaders and facilitates the emergence and confirmation of new leaders. The existence of proven organisational dynamics logically constituted an important condition for the selection³⁸ of the first CRs concerned by the PSAOP. It is important to give thought to the specific approaches to be followed in future in rural communities where farmers’ organisations are not very well organised. CLCOPs also differ depending on the extent of diversity of the resource persons and institutions present within the CR. This factor often combines with the

³⁷ The mechanisms work following the procedure below:

After making a « participatory diagnosis » and the establishment of the CLCOP, grassroots FOs are requested to develop « sub-projects » to be eligible for the FSRRD. The proposals are examined by the CLCOP and have to be endorsed by the AET before their final approval. CLCOP then sends the sub-projects that are approved to ASPRODEB. Funds for a sub-project are sent by ASPRODEB directly to the beneficiary grassroots FO. After producing the reference situation of the agricultural and rural council, priority themes are defined by CLCOP. For each of the themes chosen, CLCOP selects a *promising FO* that will be ANCAR partner. A contract (of one year duration) is then signed between ANCAR and the FO concerned.

³⁸ note that the presence of the PNIR was sometimes the key condition for the selection of the CR.

preceding point of difference. Obviously, the capacity of grassroots FOs to develop « sub-projects » eligible for the FSRRD increases when they make use of technicians working at the local level in federative FOs, NGOs, etc. For some CRs, this approach is and will, in the future, be limited. It will therefore be wise to consider the role of CERs³⁹ and the training they are to receive.

(ii) **The position of local federative organisations (LFOs) vis à vis the CLCOP varies.** LFOs bring together a variable number of grassroots organisations situated in one or more rural communities as the case may be. The attitude of LFOs vis à vis the PSAOP is generally very positive but fears are sometimes expressed.

- ✓ in some cases, each grassroots association of LFOs is a member of the CLCOP «in its own right» and the LFOs are members of the Board of Directors. Leaders then tend to lay emphasis on the «complementarity» between LFO and CLCOP: « some associations of LFOs have specific interests which the LFO cannot satisfy. These associations may have access to the FSRRD and the LFO will help them develop their projects. Some sub-projects can also result from local umbrella organisations and concern all the grassroots associations that exist in the CR... »
- ✓ in other cases, it would appear the LFO that is a member of the CLCOP and « while representing many grassroots FOs, can find itself drowned in a plethora of economic initiative groups (EIG), some of which have only been created recently, have very few members and yet have the same rights... ». « Although this does not pose a problem at the moment, it may happen that LFOs are marginalized and thus lead to the break-up of their grassroots associations... ».

In future, it will be necessary for the role of LFOs to be clearly specified on the basis of experience acquired and making sure, on the one hand, that LFOs are recognised and consolidated and, on the other hand, putting into practice the principle that the CLCOP is open to all grassroots FOs. Various steps have been taken which are already contributing to this in some places and can contribute even more in the future:

- ✓ presence of LFO representatives in the board of directors of the CLCOP of which each grassroots FO is a member;
- ✓ eligibility of sub-projects presented by many grassroots FOs member of CLCOP for a FSRRD;
- ✓ eligibility of projects submitted by an LFO having member associations in two or more rural communities for a regional FSRRD;
- ✓ signing, as it is already being done, of contracts between LFOs and ANCAR ;
- ✓ etc.

(iii) The FSRRD is very small (CFAF 9 million per year for a CLCOP) whereas the financial needs are huge when it comes to training, counselling, supporting innovation, starting economic activities, etc. The absence of collaboration between the PSAOP and the PNIR and AFDS therefore constitutes a serious handicap (see below). Some NGOs are beginning to contribute to the implementation of the action programmes of the CLCOP but so far the latter has a limited ripple effect on the other sources of funding. Within the framework of the PSAOP, many initiatives are being undertaken at the local level:

³⁹ CERs (Multi-purpose Rural Development Centres) are present in each local government area and have a multidisciplinary technical team which however is very small in some areas.

- ✓ some CLCOPs are making the most of ANCAR to carry out their training and counselling activities, thereby making more FSRRD resources available to support the take-off of economic activities;
- ✓ sometimes the AET and often ANCAR play the role of go-betweens for FOs and lending houses (CNCAS) or funding bodies (NGOs, etc.)

This is a **very important point** because though fresh counselling and training are indispensable to put the Senegalese agricultural sector back on track, they will only be efficient if solutions are found to the problem of funding rural activities (see. below).

(iv) The work done shows **how important** and complex **the role of the AET** is. Three main observations can be made:

- ✓ the AET is a « facilitator » and not an « operator »⁴⁰. As indicated by a CNCR leader, it particularly has to “help in the development of transparent, democratic and efficient local institutions. This takes time, and requires experience and ability...” for the implementation of the process and procedures.
- ✓ the duration of the AET mission shall be two years. It is advisable for it to be flexible so that it can be adjusted to meet the specific needs of each CLCOP, since the pace of their becoming autonomous could be very variable;
- ✓ it will be advisable to be very careful in sharing tasks between the AET and CNCR and in defining the relationship between the AET, CNCR support unit and CRCR. Beyond purely economic factors, the « misunderstandings » that occurred between FRAO and CNCR at the end of the pilot phase and some more recent incidents clearly show that it is necessary to have true cooperation and that it is difficult to sustain such cooperation when unavoidable disagreement crops up. The contracts signed between ASPRODEB and the AETs should spell out the role of CNCR and that of CRCRs.

(v) The observance of procedures should not be **reduced to excessive formalism**

The responsibilities and duties of ANCAR and the AET are clearly defined but it is obvious that their respective efficiency depends on the synergy they would develop between the various actions they undertake.

- ✓ In some cases the relationship between CLCOP/AET/FSRRD/ ANCAR/CRCR is smooth, to the satisfaction of all.
- ✓ In other cases, the strict application of principles could render the mechanism less efficient and negatively affect the capacity building of FOs. For example, although it is clear that “ANCAR does not have to influence FSRRD-funded sub-projects”, nothing stops CAR from contributing to their execution and follow-up. It is true that the mission of the AET stops at the level of the CLCOP, but it is advisable for it to participate, upon the request of the CLCOP, in the training of grassroots FOs on project design. The technical implementation agency (AET) “has no mission in the CRCR”, but on **the request of the latter**, it can come to its assistance (as it is being done in some places).

Of course, the procedures have to be followed. It would be wise for the procedures to be observed without excessive formalism by constantly referring to the objectives of the component and to the guiding principles of its execution, and with the ultimate aim of creating synergy between the actors and actions being undertaken.

⁴⁰ AET does not give information on the PSAOP at the local level but should help FOs to prepare such information and act on it. It does not set up the CLCOP but has to promote its development, etc.

3.2.4. Remarks on the capacity building of CNCR and its member organisations

a) at the national level, we saw that the capacity of CNCR has been strengthened both in the implementation of the PSAOP and in the draft agricultural policy formulation and negotiation. However, the central team is still “overwhelmed” by the high number of duties that stem from the daunting challenges facing the agricultural sector. The institutional support given by the PSAOP could be stepped up, for example, in the area of training of farmers’ leaders (and their possible “specialisation” in some fields), increasing the technical workforce, etc.

b) importance of the regional level

Regional Rural Consultation Committees (CRCR) have been set up in the various regions and are often located in the regional coordination office of FONGS. So far, they have not benefited from any significant support within the framework of the PSAOP and now find themselves in a situation of acute lack of resources. We realised that discussions on this issue were still open at the beginning of the project. However, some progress has been made and four CRCRs would benefit from PSAOP support in the months ahead.

The law on CRCRs was revised in May 2002 and a “manual of CRCR procedures” has been prepared. Among many other things, it particularly spells out the conditions for eligibility of projects submitted by regional umbrella farmer organisations (RUFOS) to the FSRRD and the conditions for raising and managing funds.

Two obvious remarks can be made here:

- ✓ CRCR is a consultation body with status of a non-profit association. It is open to RUFOS which are members of CNCR or not, and cannot be considered as a mere arm of CNCR. However, statutes entrust CNCR with the role of mediating in conflict resolution within the CRCR and the « right to control the organisation and management of the CRCR. » These decisions shall uphold the respect of the autonomy of each CRCR while sustaining a relationship between CNCR and CRCR which is indispensable for strengthening FOs at the national level.
- ✓ The mission of CRCRs touches on many aspects: representing the farmers’ movement at the regional level; managing the FSRRD; facilitating experience sharing among RUFOS; participating in the coordination of the various components of the PSAOP and, globally, participating in the setting up of a regional consultation framework under the authority of the Regional Council, etc. In addition to this is the regionalisation of the CNCR communication programme with the planned creation of “pënces”. In the future, it will be absolutely necessary to gradually devolve the follow-up of CLCOPs to the CRCR. This will go a long way to reduce the workload of the CNCR technical unit, which cannot possibly monitor the activities of an increasing number of CLCOPs right from Dakar.

c) Support to national umbrella organisations

CNCR is made up of national umbrella organisations (NUOs) which grew in number from 9 to 19 since the year 2001. CNCR has long been requesting support for NUOs and so far it has been very limited within the PSAOP. However, during the mid-term review, it was decided that **two NUOs** be given support.

The reservations expressed by the World Bank (WB) concerning NUOs are based on the operating conditions of some of them. CNCR admitted the shortcomings that were

highlighted during the 1998 institutional review and encouraged the federations to embark on reorganisation. Guidelines were spelt out during the 2001 CNCR congress and have to do with “giving new impetus to national federations and unions” by “providing support for restructuring, logistic assistance, human capacity building, and ensuring greater professional consciousness when rendering services to members”. Planned institutional reviews were undertaken in 2002 and culminated in the drafting of plans of action for each of the NUOs.

Two remarks:

- The effectiveness of actions undertaken to build the capacity of FOs increases when all the levels at which they are organised are taken into account; just like in a chain, the solidity of the cycle depends on the weakest link... Therefore, FO support in Senegal should combine territorial approaches (CLCOP, CRCR) with sector-specific approaches. Improving the functioning of the various sectors will impact on all NUOs since most of them are even organised around a particular product.
- The conditions imposed by the WB before it can commit itself to providing support to NUOs are understandable. Such pre-conditions should however take into account the fact that it will take a lot of time and negotiation to restructure some NUOs which were born and raised in a generalised context of unwieldiness.

It follows that, as the WB and CNCR have admitted, any excessive or unwarranted pressure on some NUOs may entail a danger of destabilising CNCR. It should however be noted that enhancing the capacity of FOs in the grassroots (CLCOP) and at the intermediate levels (CNCR) will have repercussions on the functioning of NUOs:

- incentives from the top will be consolidated by pressure from the bottom;
- the implementation of the FO component gives greater legitimacy to CNCR and should increase its action capacity vis à vis external actors and give its officials more internal leeway for action.

4. Lessons on farmers’ organisation capacity building

At this juncture, seven lessons can be drawn from the « producer organisation support component » of the PSAOP, although it is clear that we cannot really consider them to be final.

4.1. The institutional mechanism put in place by the PSAOP to support FOs is quite innovative and is already producing significant and promising results. Its effectiveness mainly stems from the fact that it was born after frank negotiations between the various players concerned. Consequently, the mechanism put in place cannot be directly transposed to another situation in a different country. It is not a standard mechanism that could be used everywhere. But the method used to define and execute the project as well as its underpinning principles could be generalised and reproduced.

4.1.1. The validity of the institutional mechanism put in place lies in the fact it is a « win-win situation” for all the players involved.

The institutional mechanism put in place in Senegal is original ; the mechanisms defined **to support grassroots FOs** are operational and, in spite of their seeming complexity, they are easily understood and adopted by farmers.

The relevance of the mechanism, and its current and potential effectiveness, reside primarily in the fact that it is recognised as legitimate, since it is the fruit of a negotiation which the different players concerned consider “honest and fair”. The mechanism put in place is therefore an agreement resulting from negotiations between partners (especially the WB and CNCR) which have different but compatible objectives.

The objectives, content and conditions for implementing the FO component are actually a compromise in which all the parties are and think of themselves as “winners” :

- The WB will achieve its set objectives: it will restore the balance between the private (to which the farmers’ organisations belong) and public sectors; adapt services to customer needs; decentralise resources at the local level as a way of reaching out to the poorest segments, improve governance by strengthening the civil society, etc.
- The project has many advantages for CNCR: enhancing its legitimacy at the local level and with regard to institutional players and public authorities; improving its effectiveness by creating services tailored to the needs of farmers; ensuring significant long-term funding which will enable it to assert and implement its strategic project in the long term, etc.
- Grassroots FOs consider themselves as winners since “ [they are] now at the centre of the process”, since “[they can] take the floor and “express their opinion”, “set [their] priorities and work towards achieving them”, and “manage funds, however small they are...”, etc.
- ANCAR workers “feel very comfortable” in the partnership with the CLCOP and member FOs because they have “clearly identified and motivated partners with whom they can dialogue, draw up contracts”, etc.
- etc.

4.1.2. The concerted preparation and implementation of the FO component of the PSAOP were made possible by the favourable combination of four factors : the existence of a highly structured producer organisation, a favourable institutional context, the positive attitude of the WB team and its stability and a will to succeed shared by all the players...

- **the existence of CNCR** : the WB has found in CNCR a partner which can live up to the stakes of the PSAOP because of the way it is structured, its legitimacy, experience of its leaders and by the way it has understood its role. External players agree that despite the weaknesses (which it acknowledges itself), “CNCR is solid, free, independent...”, “that it has clearly opted for dialogue and partnership...”, “that it is indispensable...” “that it really deserves to exist...”, etc. These leaders also stress the fact that CNCR has a long-term vision” which helps it to position itself in a negotiation.
- **“an open State”**: the institutional and political context is considered favourable for dialogue with FOs. But this does not rule out misunderstandings and tensions... Consultations between the State and CNCR started before the preparation of the PSAOP, during the PASA and PISA negotiation; it was interrupted for a while during a changeover of political power and continued thereafter. The different legal statutes which FOs have and their generally easy access are an unquestionable asset.
- **The positive attitude of the WB team and its stability**: the different parties do not idealize their relations which have experienced “ups and downs”, moments of tension, etc. However, CNCR commends “the listening quality of the WB team“, continuity which was made possible by the fact that its composition remained unchanged for several years, that the current TTL took part in designing the project, and that the WB representatives “know Senegal well, etc”. The project therefore enabled CNCR to “demystify the WB” whose image changed positively for farmers and their organisations.
- **A shared determination to reach an agreement**
Despite differences in initial points of view, the length of the project design process, and the (short) discouragement phases, the quest for a fair compromise as regards the FO component was facilitated by the desire to reach an agreement which motivated the WB and CNCR. Two points are worth noting: the resort by the WB to a financial instrument (Lending) which allows for long-term commitment (10 years)

and which was viewed very positively by CNCR; the existence of “mediators” trusted by the WB and CNCR and who facilitated the necessary coming together.

4.1.3. Negotiation among the players involved does not end with the execution of the loan ; it must continue during the project implementation.

According to most players, the “WB went as far as it could go...” before the start of the project ; however, it is important for dialogue to continue in a spirit of partnership during its execution and at the end of each of the three expected phases:

- firstly, because it would be paradoxical for the WB to support FO capacity building and partnership between FOs and national institutional players when it does not seek to broaden its own dialogue with FOs;
- secondly, because the execution of the project highlights the need for adjustments with respect to initial plans;
- finally, because capacity building of farmers’ organisations, which comes about as a result of the project, enhance their proposal, negotiation, action and managerial capacities.

In this light, the WB follow-up missions, and especially the mid-term reviews and end of phase evaluations, are preferred opportunities for collective reflection and dialogue, and should particularly enable the WB to revise some of its instruments and procedures in order to adapt them to this unprecedented partnership.

4.2. The institutional mechanisms defined within the framework of the FO component place grassroots organisations and their members in a position of service “applicants” ; favourable conditions have thus been created to tailor services to the needs of producers and the diversity of agricultural situations. However, in terms of technical and economic innovation, the effectiveness of the mechanism also depends on the capacity of advisory organisations to make pertinent proposals and thus on the existence of an efficient agricultural research and development.

4.2.1. The functioning of the mechanism put in place to strengthen grassroots FOs is, first and foremost, of a pedagogic value

The evaluation of the pilot phase highlighted the fact that some “sub-projects” selected by the CLCOPs and funded by FSRRD appear out of line (by their objectives and content) with respect to the daunting challenges faced by the rural people and with respect to the priorities defined at the end of the “participatory reviews”. However, they were of an unquestionable pedagogic value since they helped grassroots FOs to verify if they were really “at the heart of the process”, and enabled them to develop new relations with support bodies.

In some cases, the “sub-projects” developed by grassroots FOs since the enforcement of the loan agreement also have a particularly pedagogic and learning function although they are not always key innovations.

4.2.2. Special attention should be given to the technical and economic content of actions undertaken in order to prevent, beyond the necessary learning phase, the mechanisms put in place from functioning “in a vacuum” or from producing stereotyped solutions whose limits have been noticed in the past.

On the field, various initiatives show that local players are concerned about the technical and economic effectiveness of the mechanism:

- In some CLCOPs, economic sustainability is a criterion for selecting “sub-projects”;
- CLCOPs take the initiative to organise forums aimed at seeking innovative solutions to problems posed by cattle feed, water, funding, farming/grazing combination, etc;
- Contracts between ANCAR and FOs are centred on technical and economic problems which are very important for rural farmers.

These different initiatives highlight **two points**:

- collaboration between FOs and support bodies increases the capacity to provide adequate solutions to problems faced by rural people;
- this collaboration can only be fruitful, all along, if rural farmers continue to master it and if the innovation potential, which is the experience accumulated by farmers, is taken into consideration.

4.2.3. The scope of the technical and economic challenges faced by the rural people justifies the setting up of an efficient research and development mechanism in which FOs must play a vital role.

The failure, at least relative, of the research and development mechanism that was tried during the phase of project design is certainly explained by the fact that it came too early, while the conditions for its functioning had not been put together: it was functioning on loans from ISRA and PNVA which, obviously, did not consider it a priority. ANCAR was not yet operational; the official of the Research and Development Unit based in CNCR found himself isolated and was certainly attracted by the follow-up of the pilot phase in the Kolda and Tambacounda regions.

These structural difficulties will not, however, call into question the pivotal role played by research and development in developing technical and economic references concerning:

- technical networks per production, adapted to the environmental and economic conditions of the different regions;
- realistic solutions to problems posed by the supply of inputs, etc.; the content and conditions of diversifying production ; the development of food processing activities ; the improvement of farm productivity; the organisation of sub-sectors at the local and regional levels ; etc.

The recent decision to relaunch research and development, to entrust its activities to ANCAR while FOs preside over the units created, is an excellent initiative. **Two remarks** can be made:

- until now CLCOPs think their relationship with ANCAR is clearer than with the research mechanism (apart from visits to regional centres); it will therefore be appropriate to highlight the interest and concrete conditions of the relationship between FOs, ANCAR and research;
- in Senegal, some achievements have been made in research and development in collaboration with FOs, which preceded the PSAOP ; it will certainly be useful to develop them (FOs in the Delta, CADEF, ARAF, etc).

4.3. The little (and even lack of) collaboration of the PSAOP with other projects supported by the World Bank is a serious handicap to the PSAOP and has harmful repercussions on the different players involved

4.3.1. Theoretically complementary projects, but which hardly cooperate

Apart from the PSAOP, the World Bank is presently backing three other projects which concern the rural area: the PNIR, the Social Development Fund Agency (AFSD) which also works in urban areas and the Farm Export Support Project (PAEA). Theoretically, there is a strong complementarity between the PSAOP, on the one hand, and the PNIR and AFSD, on the other. The methods implemented by the PSAOP will only be technically and economically effective if they are accompanied by huge efforts to overcome the lack of rural infrastructure and collective productive equipment and solve the problem of low capacity to invest in family farms and small rural enterprises. It is evident that, the FSRRD is not cut out to carry out this duty and cannot claim to do so at the moment. The PNIR on its part and, at least partially, the AFSD (in regions in which it works) could therefore play a very important role in "tapping the human and social capital potential" which the PSAOP is trying to strengthen.

In practice, however, there is little collaboration (despite the improvement) with the PNIR and it is even non-existent with the AFSD:

- the PNIR preceded the PSAOP and the two projects work together only in a very small number of rural communities ; there does not seem to be any consultation between the PSAOP and the AFSD ;
- each project has its own approach and puts in place a specific mechanism by appealing to the same NGOs or consultancies which, in return for various payments, play the role of technical implementation agencies, operating agencies, etc. ;
- the result is a multitude of approaches, incoherence, confusion, “weariness of people” and spending which would certainly be more useful elsewhere. Consequently, the three projects make “participatory diagnosis”, set “priorities”, draw up “action plans” and finance small and sometimes similar projects (sheep feeding, dyeing, etc) from their respective innovation support funds.

4.3.2. Genuine coordination, at the top and bottom, would also be beneficial to the various projects.

It is not a question of denying the peculiarities of the different projects but that of creating partnerships that will likely enhance coherence in World Bank-supported activities, the effectiveness of each of these projects as well as their global effectiveness. Two measures could contribute to this:

- Consultation among players at the top organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and by the World Bank. This will lead to decisions concerning especially the criteria for selecting the CRs concerned, the synergies to develop with regard to diagnosis, the obligatory reciprocity of projects, etc. APCR and CNCR, which are already managing ASPRODEB together, may have a vital role to play here.
- An institutionalised consultation at the regional level, organised by the Regional Department of Rural Development, whose role will be to ensure the concrete harmonisation of activities.

The scope of the FSPRD could be broadened during the second phase of the project:

- by adding, for example, the collective funding of infrastructure or investments for productive purposes
- by increasing the amount of funds as the CLCOPs acquire increased managerial capacities.

4.4. The mechanism put in place by the FO component of the PSAOP is a relevant instrument for reducing poverty and inequalities in rural areas; some specific measures may improve the access of the poorest segments to services which are offered to them.

4.4.1. Farmers’ organisations constitute an efficient way of reaching out to the poor

This can be seen in the two main points below:

- Local FOs mainly bring the poor together and their base is usually made up of women, young people, and men with limited access to land, low investment capacity at the individual and family levels. That is why there are thousands of grassroots groups in Senegal which express the wish of members to “do something” but have little or no activities because of lack of adequate ideas, resources and supports.
- The creation of the CLCOP is an opportunity for these grassroots FOs: it will help them break away from their isolation and gain access to external information as well as shared experiences with local FOs; it will also lead to transparency in the

allocation of funds. As one local observer remarked, “when FOs come together, it prevents smarter organisations from taking all the funding and leaving others with absolutely nothing ...”

4.4.2. It could prove useful to make provision for specific tools suitable for the poorest categories of people in the approach adopted. The following means could be of help:

- making an exhaustive inventory of grassroots FOs which exist within the CR even if they do not carry out any activity;
- providing special incentives to encourage people to join the weakest FOs by delaying the initial contribution for example, and by subjecting same to the execution of activities funded by the FSRRD ;
- providing specific support to help the poorest groups to acquire legal status and develop “sub-projects”.

Another possible way is to work with CRs which have so far received little attention from external organisations: “the poorest groups are often found in the most remote CRs, where nobody goes to because they are far, hot and the roads are bad”.

4.4.3. Some measures envisaged for the future might have a discriminating effect on the poorest FOs

For example:

- the obligation to have a bank account and thus legal status in order to be supported by the FSRRD can be an excluding factor for FOs without resources (you need CFAF 60,000 to acquire the status of an economic interest group – EIG -);
- “if one needs to pay to join the council, how will small FOs acquire membership?”

It is therefore necessary to ensure the harmonization of the poverty alleviation objective of the PSAOP with the concern of making farmers to defray council costs; adjustments will be necessary to prevent the two legitimate objectives from becoming contradictory.

4.5. The participation of the other donors in the FO component of the PSAOP is still limited; there is, however, some complementarity between the PSAOP and the programmes supported by various donors to build the capacity of farmers’ organisations. Once the approaches adopted are coherent, this diversity becomes an asset for FOs which are themselves a source of further methodological development.

4.5.1. The other donor institutions participate in various but generally very restricted ways in the implementation of the FO component of the PSAOP.

FIDA took part in the first preparatory missions of the PSAOP but later withdrew; Swiss Cooperation, on its part, joined the process during its pilot phase, played a vital role during the start of the component and is participating in World Bank follow-up missions, etc. Other donors are more reserved; some invest little in the agricultural sector; others prefer to support local areas through local development projects or social sector support; and finally, others are interested in farmers’ organisations either directly (such as the French Cooperation which is preparing a farmers’ organisations institutional enhancement project based upon the PACEPA) or indirectly (like the European Union through its support to the reorganisation of the groundnut sector and the functioning of the industry). It is worth noting, however, that some CLCOPs have started receiving funding from bilateral co-operation bodies, NGOs etc; the role of intermediary played by the AET and ANCAR can be important in strengthening this trend.

4.5.2. The specific options of the various donors in FO support constitute an asset:

The diversity of funding is a source of autonomy for farmers’ organisations; it helps to reduce the asymmetry which characterises their relations with the World Bank; moreover, the

diversity of approaches seems necessary in order to take into account all the challenges faced by the Senegalese rural people and consequently, the FOs. These challenges do not all come under agricultural counselling, information and training and the PSAOP cannot claim to understand them all.

Reflections have to be organised around the major sub-sectors on issues such as land tenure, funding and loan, etc. which call for specific implementation initiatives and mechanisms.

4.6 The PSAOP highlights the need for a real strategy for farm and rural training oriented in a coherent and concerted manner towards owners of family farms and the leaders of their organisations and towards middle-grade and senior officials.

At the national level, the successive economic and institutional reforms have rendered the agricultural sector more complex, more unstable and more competitive; Senegal's joining of the WTO and the regional integration which is taking place within the framework of WAEMU, help to compound the challenges. Yet, the rural people are unequally (and generally poorly) equipped to understand the changes that are taking place, to meet the new ensuing constraints and to avail themselves of the opportunities that arise: the enrolment rate is still very low (37 %), more than 70% of adults are illiterate, etc. Adjustments are also needed in the training of middle-grade and senior executives for them to meet the expectations of their employers (which are diversifying), etc. Involved for a long time now in the training of rural people, the Swiss Cooperation has supported an in-depth related reflection which has led to ambitious but realistic proposals whose implementation remains limited.

Yet, it is worth recalling that the effectiveness of the response of rural dwellers to challenges also depends on improving their access to relevant information and training which will go a long way to help to enhance their capacity to analyse, propose, negotiate and act in the technical and economic sectors, and at the different decision-making levels.

Several working methods could be explored:

- a better collaboration of the PSAOP with educational projects supported by the World Bank in particular, as regards education and literacy, etc ;
- increasing the resources devoted to the training of farmers leaders at the local, regional and national levels as well as the possible specialisation of some of them ;
- the identification, in collaboration with the Swiss Cooperation and other donors, of one or more projects concerning rural training. Innovative practices exist (such as CIFA⁴¹) which could be developed and enhanced.

However, it is not a question of adding a new component to the PSAOP for that will make an already complex institutional mechanism more cumbersome, but of identifying the specific projects, in collaboration with the different players involved, and the rural people and their organisations in particular.

4.7. The activities carried out to build the capacity of farmers' organisations inevitably affect the dynamics of pre-existing organisations. However, it is important for external donors to pay attention to growing dynamics and make sure they do not take advantage of them

⁴¹ The Interprofessional Centre for Agricultural Training (CIFA) situated near Saint-Louis is an original structure which has already proven its effectiveness. The French Cooperation intends to maintain its support to CIFA and to help to make it go "regional".

4.7.1. The dialogue between external actors and farmers' organisations is marked by many divergences.

In Senegal, and better still in other countries where rural organisations are less advanced, farmers' organisations only partially meet the expectations of foreign players, with the reverse also being true. Decision-makers or donors can therefore be highly tempted to strongly propose or even impose "restructuring" of organisations or give priority to certain levels of organisation, etc. The position of strength they occupy in the negotiation can force them to impose such restructuring, just as the frailty of organisations in certain countries and their lack of resources. Moreover, a farmers' organisation support project is also a power broker within the organisations, both for guiding the project or controlling the resources.

4.7.2. However, as one CNCR member puts it, "no matter how big a project is, it should not decide on the orientation and structuring of the farmers' movement..."

which is the exclusive responsibility of the rural people. FO support cannot be "social engineering" in the hands of experts, no matter how competent they are, for there will be a big risk of having ad-hoc organisations whose legitimacy will be tied more to the project officials than to their recognition by producers. The words of the President of the World Bank concerning States perfectly applies to support to farmers' organisations: "... let us never forget that it is the duty of countries and their population to set their priorities and let us never forget that we cannot and must not force development as a diktat from abroad"⁴². The case of Senegal highlights the fact that the capacity of farmers' organisations to derive a lasting benefit from the support they are proposed, without becoming mere instruments for foreign backers depends:

- on the prior solid structuring of organisations from top to bottom, and on the clarity of their own projects, and
- on the capacity of support bodies to negotiate the content of the support, the conditions according to which it is offered and to accept the necessary changes in the course of the project.

⁴² JD Wolfensohn – The Other Crisis – Speech delivered to the Board of Governors of the World Bank group, Washington - 1998

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