




Quick assessment of farmers' organizations and the agricultural sector in Benin

Exploratory mission for the
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



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Acronyms

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ADRAO = WARDA	West Africa Rice Development Association – Africa Rice Centre
AFD	French Development Agency
AFDI	French Farmers and International Development
AJAF	National Association of Young Farmers of FUPRO
ANAF	National Women’s Association
ANPC	National Association of Cotton Growers
ANPS	National Association of Specific Producers
BTC	Belgian Technical Cooperation
CAETS	Experimental socialistic agricultural cooperatives
CAR	Rural Development Cooperatives
CCR-B	Consultative council of Rice growers of Benin
CEDEAO = ECOWAS	Economic Community of West- African States
CeRPA	Regional Centre for the Promotion of Agriculture
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DGR	General Directorate of Agricultural Engineering (investment needs)
FUPRO-Benin	Federation of Unions of Producers of Benin
GEA	Grouping of Agricultural Producers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRVC	Revolutionary groups to become cooperatives
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Cooperation)
GV	Village Groups
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INRAB	National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin
LDPDR	Rural Development Policy Declaration Letter
MAEP	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Fisheries
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MISD	Ministry of the Interior, Security and Decentralization
OPA	Professional Agricultural Organisations
PNOPAPPA	National Platform of Farmers’ and Agricultural professionals’ Organisations
ROPFA	Network of Farmers’ and Agricultural Producers’ Organisations of West Africa
SIP	Indigenous Provident Society
SMPR	Mutual Rural Production Companies
SONADER	National Company for Rural Development
UEMOA	West Africa’s Economic and Monetary Union
UCP	Communal Union of Producers
UPS	Union of producers for the Southern region
UPC	Union of producers for the Central region
URP	Regional Union of Producers
VAP	Pilot Farmers’ Villages

Also see Annexe 4

Executive summary

This quick assessment was carried out in a broader framework of providing advice to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with a view to working out a support strategy for farmers' organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Other countries included in the sample are Mali, Malawi and Uganda.

Today, Benin is a country conducive to agricultural development, due to both her physical features (climate, relief/soils, hydrography, and geographical position) and the political will of her current government committed to turning Benin into an agricultural power.

Agriculture contributes 38% of GDP of the country and nearly 70% of the population lives on it. It is family farming with farm lands of 1.7 ha on average for a family of 7 persons.

Main export crops are cotton and shrimps (both of them going down) and pineapples and cashew nuts (rising), but market garden produce and cassava have also become export crops, notably to neighbouring countries. Rice, maize and palm oil tree are yet other farm products of great importance.

The political will to improve agriculture can also be counter-productive. Indeed, this move to get involved in agribusiness leads Government to resume some duties which used to be the responsibility of farmers' organisations and the private sector, which is unfair competition for the latter.

Major donors in agriculture are: AFD, BTC, DANIDA, IFAD, GTZ, Swiss Coop, the Netherlands.

Actions planned to increase farm production are, in addition to improved seeds, mechanization, hydro-agricultural development, land security, and agricultural financing.

For decades, restructuring of the Beninese farmers' movement has been carried out in accordance with cash crops, or improvement of production (socialist rule). It is only from the early 90ies that Farmers' Organisations (F.O) assumed their role as farmers' mouthpiece through lobbying and advocacy activities focusing on themes of interest for producers.

For many years, restructuring was carried out top-downwardly, resulting in strong national F.O at the beginning. As they were not supported by equally strong member organisations, but also following the establishment of parallel F.O in some areas by some politicians/ traders, these strong F.O (FUPRO network) eventually lost momentum.

Fortunately, in some fields (rice, market gardening), a new structuring of F.O took place from grassroots level and boosted the farmers' movement, just like the establishment of a national platform grouping all strong networks of F.O.

FO are desperately short of statistical data on their performances (members, activities achieved and their impact), and their ability to provide efficient services to their members leaves much to be desired.

Best intervention perspectives for Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation lie with rice-growing FO. Firstly because of the dynamism of recently established FO, the economic potentials in this field (development of shoals, high yield varieties, increasing and lucrative market, complementarity with other interventions of the Foundation in agriculture). Foundation interventions include support in terms of training, development of management, planning – monitoring and evaluation – tools, and information and communication. Similar supports may be provided to maize, market gardening and other crops.

1. Introduction

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Being aware that 750 million people around the world who live on less than one US dollar depend on agriculture for their survival, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation developed an important agricultural programme aimed at providing small farmers with instruments and opportunities likely to enable them increase their productivity and income and build a better future for themselves and their families.

The Foundation commends the efforts made by other development partners by focusing on farmers and seeks to understand them and learn from them. What role should the Foundation play to extend successful efforts further, and what should it surely not do? Are there any interesting experiences that could improve the living conditions of many small producers, or what should be done differently in order to impact on the lives of poor rural people in Sub-Saharan Africa?

Over the last fifteen years, small producers have been confronted by various challenges after most governments withdrew from agriculture and withheld their support to the agricultural sector. This was often done within the framework of structural adjustment programmes imposed by the World Bank/International Monetary Fund. The private sector and farmers' organizations were expected to take over a number of responsibilities formerly carried out by the State. In fact, these new actors were not yet ready to assume their new roles.

In order to better understand Farmers' Organisations in a number of countries¹, their expertise in various areas, their impact on producers, the various supports they already receive from donors and other development agencies, their level of financial viability and their major weaknesses, the Foundation requested AFAFO to carry out a quick inventory of the farmers' movement and of the agricultural sector in 5 countries: Benin and Mali in Western Africa, Uganda in Central Africa, and Zambia and Malawi in Southern Africa.

This report provides the outcome of the exercise carried out in Benin by two consultants – Frans van Hoof and Eustache Wankpo – who have been working as advisers to FO for many years.

On the basis of a preliminary documentary work, a limited number of F.O.'s and other actors in the agricultural sector were selected. This was done in accordance with promising commodities or with their strategic position in general: the Ministry of Agriculture (MAEP), its regional structure – CeRPA, research institutes, F.O.'s at different levels from local groups to the national-level platform. At sub-regional level, these interviews were completed with a long discussion with AFDI's regional representative, who has worked with Beninese F.O.'s for several years. Additional documents were received while conducting various interviews.

The assignment was carried out without any major problems except the almost permanent lack of reliable statistics at all levels which prevents researchers from measuring the actual importance of F.O.'s and different problems, actions, results, etc. This quick inventory enabled us to get a clear idea of agricultural development perspectives that could be supported by the Foundation through F.O.'s. However, in-depth studies will need to be conducted so as to evaluate each of these various perspectives at their true value.

¹ Through AGRA, the Foundation is operational in the following countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Rwanda. These countries were selected on the basis of 4 criteria: the number of poor people, importance of agriculture in the country, malnutrition rate, probability of success (political stability)

2. Background

2.1. Geographical situation

With a surface of 114,763 km², the Republic of Benin is limited to the North by the River Niger, natural border with the Republic of Niger, to the North-West by the Republic of Burkina-Faso, to the West by Togo, to the East by Nigeria and to the South by the Atlantic Ocean – Golf of Guinea, which it faces over 124 km, and extends from North to South on a distance of about 672 km. Maximum width of the country extending between the high mountains of the northern part of the City of Natitingou to Borgou reaches 324 km.

2.2. Administrative Situation



The Republic of Benin comprises twelve departments divided into 77 Communes (former sub-Prefectures), including three enjoying a special status (Cotonou, Porto-Novu and Parakou). These Communes are subdivided into 569 arrondissements composed of 5441 villages and districts of towns.

The commune is the only level of decentralisation. According to Law n°97-029 of 15 January 1999 determining the organisation of Communes in the Republic of Benin, the Commune enjoys large autonomy, legal personality and financial autonomy, but has also competences including local development, town and land use management, human settlement and town planning. The Commune is administered by a council elected at the universal suffrage headed by a Mayor.

2.3. Physical features

2.3.1 Climate

Benin has two distinct climatic areas: the subequatorial type of climate in the South and subtropical type of climate in the North.

South Benin, that is the coastal area, enjoys a long Dry Season from November to end of March, humid season from April to July, a small dry season in August and a small rainy season from September to October.

The North of the country is subjected to a purely tropical climate with a long dry season from November to May and a long rainy season from June to September.

2.3.2 Relief, soils et vegetation

- Benin enjoys a less uneven relief. The whole country is made of plains with some hills in the centre. The only high altitude area is Atacora in the North-East at 800 m
- The soils of Benin are characterized by a wide variability in terms of their nature, fertility and

geographical distribution. Total farm lands represent 62.5% of the surface of the country and only 20 % of farm lands are actually exploited, that is 12.24 % of the national territory

- As for vegetation, 65% of the national territory are covered with trees and shrubs and the vegetation is highly tainted and degraded. The flora of Benin is quite diversified. Unfortunately, forests are dwindling dangerously year by year.

2.3.3 Hydrography

The hydrographical network comprises 3.048 km of rivers/ streams and 333 km² of water surfaces (lakes and lagoons, mostly located in the South of the country). This network comprises three basins, namely: the Niger Basin which includes Mékrou, Alibori and Sota rivers, the Pendjari Basin and the coastal basin with its three rivers, namely Ouémé, Couffo and Mono. All these rivers, with the exception of Niger, enjoy a tropical regime with floods during the rainy season (July to October) and drop in water level at the end of April.

2.4 Situation land tenure Benin

Benin has been and is still characterised by the coexistence of a modern land scheme made of rules inherited from the colonial era, and the customary or traditional land system based on customs, practices and usages. Despite all these legal instruments, hardly 1% of the national territory has been registered and almost all rural lands are governed by customary law. This situation accounts for land insecurity currently noticeable in rural areas with its negative consequences, notably: impossibility for farmers to plant trees, invest in agribusiness, and use of land as collateral to access loans, and accumulation of lands in the hands of rich people (purchase of unexploited lands). Access to land therefore becomes more and more difficult for rural people.

In a bid to address these constraints, the Government of Benin has launched the Rural Land Plan (PFR) and in urban areas the operations consisting in changing the settlement permit (SP) into title deed (TD) and the Urban Land System.

The Rural Land Plan aimed at improving rural producer's land security, restricting abuse of the land capital while promoting agricultural investment at the same time consists in taking stock of rural lands and establishing its graphical documentation followed with literal documentation. The Law on Rural Land Plan has just been enacted and will be implemented in some villages with support from partners like GTZ, MCA and AFD

2.5. Socio-economic characteristics

The population of the Republic of Benin is estimated at 6,769,914 inhabitants with a density of 59 inhab/km² (INSAE/RGPH3, 2002) and strong demographic concentration in the South of the country. The rural population is estimated at 62%. The table of agricultural areas (chap. 3.6.1) gives the distribution of the population per agricultural zone and their density. Below are some key indicators for socio-economic development.

Table 1: Some human development indicators for Benin

Life expectancy at birth (years)	55
Literacy rate (% of youth between 15-24)	45
Malnutrition rate, weight (% of under-five children)	23
Mortality rate, under-five children (per 1000)	152
Population increase (%)	3,2
Population living on less than one US\$/day (%)	31

Source : World Bank (WDI 2006)

2.6. Some characteristics of the agricultural sector

Agriculture is a very important sector in Benin's economy. Indeed, nearly 70% of the population lives of farming activities and agriculture contributes 38% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Average size of land is about 1.7 ha per average family of 7 persons. 34 % of farms extend over less than one hectare. The agricultural sector is still rich with opportunities at all levels but it has also to face up some important constraints. Only 5 % of farms in the South 20 % of farms in the North extend over more than 5 ha. Small farms are a common feature in Benin.

Unfortunately, agriculture is still very much subjected to climatic hazards. Agricultural income and productivity are low due to rudimentary production means. In addition to this, one should mention difficulties to access inputs for lack of adequate financial resources.

Mining activities in farming areas, agro-pastoral areas, fisheries and classified forests, accelerate the degradation of natural resources. Only cotton producers have easy access to fertilizers which they sometimes divert to subsistence crops. As for fishing, prohibited nets are mostly used despite applicable regulations.

Benin comprises eight agro-ecological areas where various plant, animal, fishing and timber production activities are carried out. The map and table below show different areas as well as the crops grown there.

Map of agro-ecological areas of Benin

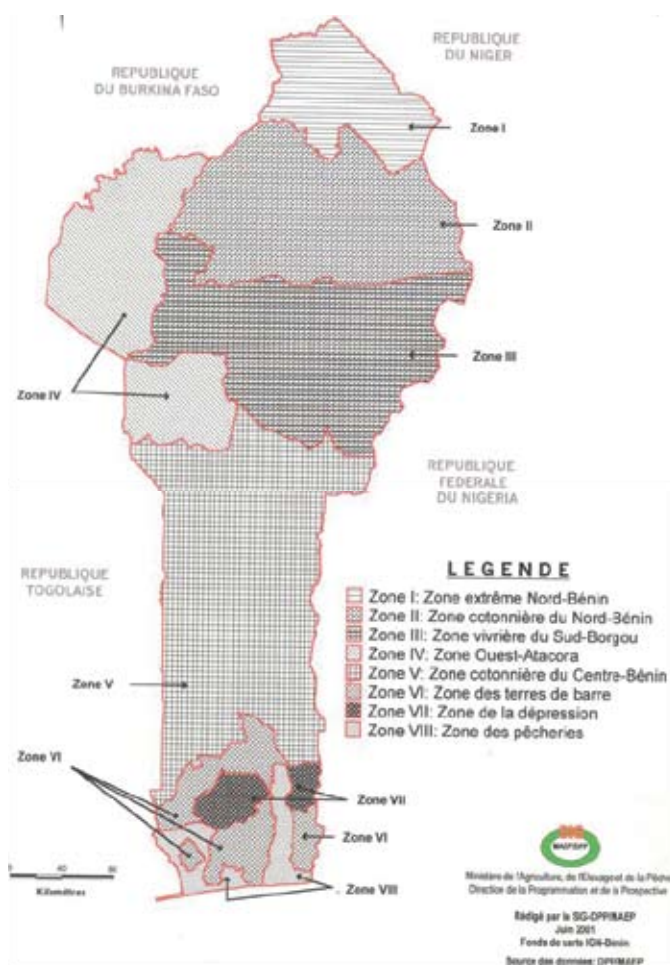


Table 2 : Basic characteristics of the agro-ecological zones of the Republic of Benin

Zone	Communes covered	Surface in km ²	Population in 2002	Number of rural households	Inhabitants per Km ²	Major economic activities of vulnerable persons
Zone I : Extreme North - Benin	Karimama and Malanville	9,057	141,207	9,843	16	Millet, sorghum, cotton, maize, rice, onion, Irish potato and market gardening along Niger river; cattle breeding and fishing
Zone II : Cotton growing area in North Benin	Sègbana, Gogounou, Banikoara, Kandi, Kérou	20,930	442,518	29,227	21	Sorghum, maize, yam, cotton
Zone III : subsistence crop area of South Borgou	N'Dali, Nikki, Kalalé, Sinendé, Pehunco, Bembèrèkè and Kouandé	23,442	602,843	36,229	28	Yam, cotton, maize and cashew nut
Zone IV : West Atacora Area	Cobly, Ouaké, Boukombé, Tanguiéta, Natitingou, Djougou, Toucountouna, Copargo	16,936	629,993	54,855	37	Major crops include cereals in the northern part of the Area, and yam in the southern part
Zone V : Cotton growing Area in the Centre of Benin	Bassila, Parakou, Tchaourou, Ouessè, Banting, Savè, Savalou, Glazoué, Kéita, Djidja, Dassa and Aplahoué	32,163	1,166,182	9,153	36	Cereals, tubers and leguminous plants and cotton are produced twice a year
Zone VI : Area of bar lands	Abomey-Calavi, Allada, Kpomassè, Tori-Bossito, Zè, Djakotomé, Dogbo, Toviklin Klouékanmey, Houéyogbé , , Adjarrá, Ifangni, Missérété, Avrankou, Porto-Novo, Sakété, Abomey, Bohicon, Covè Agbangnizoun, Zakpota and Zagnanado	6,391	1,960,136	144,715	307	Maize, cassava, niébé and pineapple are major crops. In that area, rain regime is often disturbed leading to changes in annual production cycles
Zone VII : Depression Area	Adja-Ouèrè, Pobè, Toffo, Lalo and Zogbodomey	2,564	391,147	2,564	153	Maize associated with cassava, niébé, tomato, capsicum, etc. are the basis of production system
Zone VIII : Zone of fisheries	Athiémé, de Grand- Popo, de Bop, Comé, Lokossa, Ouidah, So-Ava, Sèmè-Podji, Aguégués, Dandolo, Adjohoun, Bonou, Ouinhi and Cottonou	3,280	1,435,888	65,120	438	Mostly fishing, then maize, cassava, niébé and market garden produce. Scarcity of lands prevents any agricultural extension

2.6.1 Plant production

Cotton growing still comes first among cash crops even though cotton production has diminished drastically following the fall in cotton prices and mismanagement of inputs.. Cotton production has gone down from 440 00 tons in 2004 to 268 650 tons during the 2006-2007 season. Besides cotton, pineapple and cashew nut exports are on the increase and together with market gardening have become promising crops.

National pineapple production has increased from 110,000 tons during the 2004-2005 agricultural season to 135 911 tons in 2006-2007.

Cashew nut production was estimated to 85.000 tons during the 2007 season.

Thanks to improvement measures, palm oil planting is gathering momentum and its production is estimated at more than 80 000 tons /year

Food crops mainly include cereals grown on a surface of about 1,100,000 hectares of which 54% are used for maize growing. In 2007, subsistence crop production was evaluated at 931 599 tons

for maize and 72 960 tons for rice.

Maize has become a crucially important cereal as it is the basic foodstuff in South Benin and main raw material for making baby cereals and feeds.

Rice has become a strategic product due to increasing importance in the national diet and exchanges with some neighbouring countries (Niger, Nigeria, and Togo). Though rice production is increasing markedly (from 16,545 T in 1995 to 72 960T in 2007), we note massive importations (more than 450,000 T in 2004) for internal supplements and re-exportation motives.

As for tubers and roots, notably yam and cassava, their production has been on the increase again over the last decade, as a result of the joint effect of yield improvement and extension of cultivated surfaces. Cassava represents 54% of the national production of roots and tubers.

2.6.2 Animal production

Livestock farming remains traditional and contributes 6% of GDP. Livestock farming products include meat, milk, manure, traction, hides and skins, eggs, and honey. Livestock mostly comprises cattle, small ruminants (sheep and goats), pigs and poultry. As regards cattle, mostly found in Atacora and Borgou (90% of cattle), its number has been increasing steadily (1,760 million of head of cattle in 2005). Small ruminants, (sheep, goats) are more distributed across the national territory, with a concentration of sheep in the north (70%).

Poultry farming is still mostly done the traditional way (lack of health and hygiene cover) with low productivity. Modern poultry farming which has flourished in peri-urban areas for the production of eggs and table chicken, is faced with the competition of importations of frozen chickens and eggs sold at a giveaway price on the local market. Current level of importation of frozen meat (8,800 tons in 2005)

Also worth mentioning is the development of non conventional livestock farming, notably 'aulacode' and rabbit.

2.6.3 Fish production

The sub-sector of fisheries occupies directly 50,000 fishermen and 20,000 fish wholesalers and contributes 2% of GDP. In 2005, fish production was estimated at 40,000 tons and importations of frozen fish amounted to 45,000 tons.

Whereas fish imports are going up, exportation of shrimps is dropping, from more than 1000 tons to less than 700 tons during the period of 2001-2005. However, we should point out that efforts are being made towards lifting the self-suspension of the exportation of shrimps to the EU. This mostly implies the construction of control laboratories.

On the whole, fish production is falling year by year as a result of river getting silted (choked up), use of nets with small meshes leading to overexploitation. This explains the steady increase in importations of frozen fish in order to meet the demand.

Development of fish farming is still very much limited.

Table of productions from 2002 to 2007 and specific constraints for basic crops

Crops	Production (Tons)					Main constraints
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Cotton	332 446	426 251	190 867	240 491	268 650	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belated availability of inputs • Mismanagement of the joint surety • Inefficient supervision • Poor quality of inputs • Malfunctioning of the management system of the commodity chain • Climatic hazards
Maize	788 320	842 628	864 698	864 772	931 599	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low availability of improved seeds for producers; • Unavailability of specific inputs; • Insufficient knowledge of traceability and quality techniques
Pineapple	93 505	110 819	120 460	124 464	135 911	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unavailability of specific inputs and shoots for area extensions; • Insufficient knowledge of traceability and quality techniques; • Defective packaging storerooms at airport and lack of docks fitted out for fruits in the port of Cotonou; • Inexistence of high performance processing units; • Inexistence of pineapple and inputs quality control laboratory
Cassava	3 054 781	2 955 015	2 861 369	2 808 892	2 284 057	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biotic problems (diseases and destructive storage pests) • Inadequate supply of inputs and equipments to producers • Inadequate development of by-products • Very high export charges and taxes
Rice	54 183	64 699	78 329	61 818	72 960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequacy of equipment and other processing means enabling producers to get good yield and good quality rice; • Difficulties in the supply of machines and spare parts: shortage of absence of machine maintenance technicians; • Remoteness of some production areas and difficulties to access collection centres; • Lack of reliable information on business opportunities in terms of investment in the field.
Cashew nut					85,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depreciation of vegetal planting material; • Inexistence of seed orchards; • Marketing chain is too long and less favourable for small planters; • Quasi-inexistence and lack of promotion for the processing of apples and other cashew by-products; • Processing techniques for nuts are low performing; • Ignorance of traceability and standards.
Market gardening produce	265 886	250 932	264 968	253 917	Unavailability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong parasitic pressure; • Insufficient knowledge of technical itineraries (retention of water, conservation, etc.)
Palm oil tree			80.000			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient technical support to planters through INRAB, CeRPA and NGOs

Table: Opportunities and constraints of the agricultural sector in Benin

Areas	Opportunities/Assets	Constraints/Limitations
Political area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political will: Government decided to develop Benin into an agricultural power by 2015 Tax exemption on some agricultural inputs: importation, production and sale of agricultural inputs, tools and phytosanitary appliances and seeds are exempted from payment of import duties and taxes and VAT (18 %). Existence of a draft text on the cooperative sector within the framework of OHADA Existence of a programme to boost the agricultural sector Process of institutional analysis of the sub-sector of agriculture under way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdated texts on registration and approval of cooperatives Inadequate resources allocated to the agricultural sector (6% of national budget) No law on agricultural guidance No law to protect the territory and farmers Obsolescence of ruling 59 on cooperatives, which does not enable the cooperatives approving committee to take informed decisions on the files of cooperatives.
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A powerful neighbour, Nigeria, provides substantial market as well as Saharan countries. Establishment of external common tariff (ECT) within WAEMU creates conducive conditions providing moderate protection, from 5% to 20% in relation to WAEMU area member countries. Real possibilities of diversifying the sources of wealth and economic growth do exist with the creation of WAEMU and ECOWAS spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smallness of internal market EPA (Economic Partnership Agreements) which are going to expose agricultural production to the competition of imported goods, sometimes subsidized
Climate, soils and hydrography: retention of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two rainy seasons in the South providing the opportunity of two harvests per year Possibility of “fall crops” in the Niger Valley Various soils favourable for diversification of agricultural production Development of fishing activities in water surfaces 322,000 ha plains liable to flooding and shoals, Hydro-agricultural potential of Couffo and Pendjari still to be evaluated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers getting choked up Climatic disturbances
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduction of high yield varieties (rice, maize, niébé and yam); Production of technical data sheets by IN-RAB Existence of adapted technological packages (resistance of palm oil tree, oil extraction techniques, etc.) Launching of national farming mechanization programme Ongoing Ouémé, Couffo, and Niger valleys development project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low productivity: agriculture is characterized by the use of old-fashioned and rudimentary tools together with obsolete farming methods. Inadequate mechanization Lack of specific inputs with exception of cotton
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benin has important land resources for its agriculture. Only 1 million hectares are cultivated whereas 4.8 million ha are available. Adoption of a law on Rural Land Plan (RLP). RLP allows securing land in rural areas and promoting investments. Surety holders may use it to grant loans and bank credits. Farmers can sign long term land exploitation contracts with landowners on the basis of RLP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost all communes in the South, except Aplahoué and Kétou, of southern departments have exceeded the critical threshold of agro-demographic load of lands.
Funding of agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of the BRS which is more accessible to producers even if it is currently facing difficulties in terms of collection Experience of mutual agricultural insurance working with 12 communes at the rate of two (2) per department) Funding of projects and programme by bilateral and multilateral partners (BTC for rice, AFD for cotton, World Bank and Embassy of the Netherlands for cotton, GTZ, DANIDA, Swiss Cooperation, etc. Existence of a consultation framework of financial partners (SNV, DANIDA, IFAD, GTZ, BTC, AFDI, Embassy of the Netherlands Funding of the focal point for FO by Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexistence of national agricultural development bank Lack of interest of conventional banks for agricultural sector Private investments in agriculture are extremely rare, due to inadequate availability of sources of funding and unavailability existing sources to small farmers Poor contribution of MFI (Micro-Finance Institutions) to agriculture funding in Benin Lack of adequacy between financial services offered by MFI (short term credits and small amounts) and specific agricultural financing needs (investment and equipment)

Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Faculty of Agronomic Sciences of the University of Abomey-Calavi, and the Faculty of Agronomy of the University of Parakou train Agricultural Engineers (at the rate of 120 per year) These new engineers are mostly hired by private institutions and only recently by the State • Two departments of the Polytechnic School of Abomey-Calavi train engineers in environmental sciences and animal productions (at the rate of 60 per year) • The CETA (Agricultural Techniques Teaching Colleges), train 180 students per year. • The LAMS (Lycée Agricole Mèdji de Sékou) train about 400 agricultural technicians per year. They are mostly used by supervision projects, the State and a small percentage set up their own businesses. • Government will soon open two new centres (secondary schools) in Couffo and Borgou • Three Songhaï Centres initiated and run by a Dominican Friar (Nzamujo) who provided continuing vocational training • 22 RPC (Rural Promotion Centre) and RWPC (Rural Women Promotion Centre) of which only 13 are still operational. • The aim of these centres is to train out-of-school rural youths, willing to set up their own agricultural businesses and ensure their continuing vocational training. • curricula review process under way at LAMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of a real training policy developed on the basis of a development vision of the sector of agriculture as a whole. Agricultural and rural training policy applicable in Benin was based more on the development of some crops which represented an economic interest for the donor rather than on the comprehensive development of the agricultural sector. • The agricultural college receives three times its capacity because of the high rate of unemployment of the graduates of classical training institutions • The graduates of Lycée Agricole Mèdji de Sékou who had been trained to set up their own businesses failed to do so, and have been unemployed for quite a long time before being hired by Government last year.
Supervision of producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of more than 2000 supervisors by Government for CeRPA • Recruitment of animators by FO, NGOs and projects and programmes (PADFA, PRAMRAD, PAHA, PADFA) • Adoption of a blue book on management advice has become the national approach for extension services • Promotion of the public- private partnership, ex: Tundé for the promotion of Nerica rice • Establishment of consultation tables for pineapple and cashew • Launching of emergency food security support programme (EFSSP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficiency of material means due to administrative complexity • Low capacity (lack of adequate qualification /too theoretical training) of intervention of actors both from the public and non public stakeholders (shortage of skilled research and supervision staff, etc.); • Absence of legal framework to facilitate and coordinate in order to achieve greater synergy between the interventions of various stakeholders.
Infrastructure and stocking	<p>The North where most part of farm crops are produced evacuates its products without any major difficulties thanks to the network of asphalted roads linking it to the big cities of the country.</p>	<p>Agricultural areas are still enclosed, which is a handicap to sustainable development of production. Modern stocking and processing equipment is lacking, which causes important post harvest losses</p>

In this context and with regard to what has just been said, major challenges facing agriculture in Benin are:

- *Feeding the population of Benin: the agricultural sector has to meet the ever increasing food and nutritional needs of the population;*
- *Increasing farmers' income to enable them address their non food needs (health care, education, etc.);*
- *Assuming the role of economic growth vehicle in order to reach a satisfying level with regard to the contribution of agriculture to national economy.*

The programme developed in 2006 by Government to boost the agricultural sector is meant to address these challenges.

2.7. Agricultural rehabilitation programme

The broad outlines of this programme:

Vision: Benin, a dynamic agricultural power, competitive, environment-friendly, creating wealth to meet the economic and social development needs of the population

2.7.1 Strategic orientations and intervention areas

- Development of high performance sectors in the areas of vegetal (cotton, pineapple, cashew nut, maize, cassava, market gardening produce, rice, palm oil tree), animal (poultry, 'aulacode', milk, eggs) and fish (shrimp, fish) productions
- Reinforcement of food and nutritional security: improvement of competitiveness of consumer market crops; level of prices for foodstuffs appropriate for consumers; reduction of food bill;
- Capturing of markets, transparent transactions and respect of standards and traceability of products, on the basis of well shared commercial information.

2.7.2 Promotion of agricultural commodity chains: by 2011

2.7.2.1 Vegetal productions

- Increasing maize production from 841 000 tons in 2005 to 1,100,000 tons, in order to achieve food balance of at least 250,000 tons
- Trebling the current level of production of Beninese pineapple by increasing it from 110 000 tons to at least 400 000 tons while improving its quality and competitiveness at the same time.
- Increasing the national production of rice through improvement of yields (from 2 t. to 5 t. per hectare) in order to achieve a production of 150,000 tons
- Increasing grain-cotton production by up to 600 000 Tons and stabilize it
- Improving the competitiveness of nuts, almonds and other by-products of cashew nuts;
- Supplying local, regional and international markets in (4) main processed cassava products, namely: gari, manioc roots, cassava flour and starch including tapioca;
- Meeting 100% of local demand in market gardening produce

2.7.2.2 Animal productions

- Increasing the production of meat by 45 % in order to reduce the deficit of meat by 30%
- Increasing the production of chicken meat from 20,000 tons in 2005 to 30,000 tons in 2010 in order to reduce importations by 50%;
- Increasing productivity per laying hen from 220 to 250 eggs per year in order to considerably reduce and progressively put an end to importations.

2.7.2.3 Fish productions

- Reducing fish importations by 20% thanks to fish farming
- Increasing shrimp exportation level from 700 t. to 900 t.

2.7.3 Improvement of production system

2.7.3.1 Research, seeds and agricultural advice

- Making technological innovations, improved seeds and plants available and accessible;
- Improving farmers' supervision rate through reinforcement and revitalization of extension services.

2.7.3.2 Mechanization

- Increasing by at least 20% farmers' and other actors' access to modern production and processing equipment through adequate credits. South-South cooperation to be developed to this end;
- Backing the establishment and improvement of decentralized structures supporting agricultural mechanization (CEMA, CUMA);
- Putting in place a training plan for service providers and producers, adapted to each agro-ecological area.

2.7.3.3 Water management

- Carrying on with hydro-agricultural development programme in order to increase their surface from 1200 to 2 850 hectares;
- Building 200 small agro-pastoral dams in appropriate sites;
- Implementing the pilot phase of Agricultural Development Support Project of Ouémé Valley:
 - 6000 hectares of hydro-agricultural development,
 - 50 water retentions, 100 hectares of fish ponds,
 - 50 hectares of shrimp farming enclosures,
 - 550 km of rural tracks,
 - 100 hectares of feed crops.
- Implementing the private irrigation promotion programme covering 8,000 hectares

2.7.4 Accompanying actions

These are actions relating to institutional environment, financing, land security, information/communication, monitoring & evaluation, and gender and development.

For implementation of this programme, Government very much relies on stakeholders in this sector, notably bilateral partners such as AFD, GTZ, DANIDA, IFAD, BTC, Swiss Cooperation, SNV, Embassy of the Netherlands, etc. who already have a consultative framework. Multinational institutions will soon step in, followed later on by private investors. For greater efficiency, bilateral partners have recently chosen BTC as their leader for the agricultural sector. In addition to this development, we should mention the Terms of Reference (TOR) now being elaborated in order to conduct an institutional analysis of the agricultural sector.

Private investors include Mr. TUNDE who is promoting a variety of rice called NERICA and supporting vegetal research in various communes.

More specifically, Government has initiated a number of actions, including:

- Recruitment of 2000 staff for better supervision of producers
- Establishment of a transitional unit to regulate the agriculture sector of the mandate of the unit expired in Mai 2008. BTC plans however to appoint an assistant to that unit;
- Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme (AFDSP)
- Increased means for INRAB to develop high performance materials (seeds). Exceptionally, in 2008, State requested INRAB to train seed multipliers, in addition to producing basic seeds;
- Replacing the Directorate of Training and Agricultural Extension (DTAE) with the Directorate of Agricultural Advice and Operational Training
- Etc.....

3. Farmers' movement in Benin

3.1. Background of F.O.'s in Benin

The historical background of Beninese F.O.'s may be subdivided into three 3 eras:

- From colonial period up to 1972,
- From 1972 to National Conference: early 90ies,
- Early 90ies to present day.

From colonial period up to 1972: the history of cooperatives and other assimilated Organisations in Benin dates back to colonial period when they were established by colonizers and later on by successive governments to serve as an implementation instrument for their economic policies. Thus, different types and forms have characterized that period. We can mention the “Union Coopérative Dahoméenne”, collective fields, pilot agricultural villages (PAV), rural youth clubs called “4D Clubs » and rural development Cooperatives in South Benin.

These different forms of farmers' organisations have been governed by texts of which the most recent, Ruling n°59/PR/MDRC of 28 December 1966 is still the only legal and regulatory framework for establishment and functioning of Farmers' Organisations.

In short, up to 1972, F.O.'s would essentially produce, according to State instructions, crops like palm oil then cotton and pineapple. These F.O.'s had taken several forms and most of them were both restricting and interventionist.

From 1972 to 1990: during this period, farmers' organisations were strongly influenced by the political and ideological choices of the country, namely scientific socialism as a way to development. That is when, in addition to the above-mentioned GV and 4D clubs, cooperative-oriented revolutionary groups (GRVC) and socialist-type experimental agricultural cooperatives (CAETS) were created.

Early 90ies to present day (third period): This period is still marked with the Rural Development Policy Declaration Letter (LDPDR) which distinguished exclusive and non exclusive missions of the State. For this reason, it has been the starting point for endogenous dynamics of farmers' organisations to take on the new responsibilities given up by the State.

Thus, since 1991, territorial associations and other options with various fortunes were born. Vertical structuring efforts were also made with the creation of umbrella organisations (FUPRO, GEA, etc.).

Unfortunately, while discharging their duties in complement to the role of the State, farmers' organisations do not always achieve synergies of action essential to their effectiveness. They are often used by other actors in the same field. This is the case for instance within cotton industry.

Despite their yet being inadequate on organisational, institutional plan, farmers' organisations have become a reality on the agricultural socio-professional scene of Benin. They have become inescapable structures of the agricultural profession in its diversity. It is therefore quite aware of this situation that the Government, under the pressure of the World Bank, put in place and financed the functioning of a focal point for FO the mission of which is, among other things, to serve as project manager for putting in place an FO consultative framework, contribute to establishing a national F.O., representativeness, reorganization and management system. (TOR developed and the study is under way).

This is actually a good will gesture which hides government's intention to weaken, through some actions, the farmers' movement. This is the case for instance with the establishment by decree of the Cotton Producers' consultation Framework (CPCF) in parallel to ANPC.

Today, farmers' organisations and professional agricultural organisations (F.O.'s) are grouped in several nation-wide umbrella structures which are sometimes members of sub-regional and international structures, like ROPPA, FIPA, MAE, etc.

In a bid to harmonize and achieve higher performance at national level, these organisations set up, in March 2006, the National Platform of Farmers' and Professional Agricultural Organisations (PNOPAPPA). **Annex 3 shows the Organisational structure of F.O.'s in Benin.**

3.2. Current situation of FO's in Benin

Today, from typographic point of view, the Beninese farmers' movement is rich. **See list in Annex 4.** It comprises several networks of producers' organisations and other associative forms of variable scales according to their structuring level, nature and area of activities.

A big number of these farmers' organisations and other professional agricultural associations have their own regulatory texts (Articles of association and internal rules and regulations) and are registered either with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Fisheries (MAEP), or with the Ministry of Interior, Security and Decentralisation (MISD).

As for the typology, there are:

- a) "Geographical" type of organisations, namely:
 - Very many, GV (village groups), GP (production groups), GF (women's groups) are geographically confined to the village.
 - Rural Development Cooperatives (CAR) which are geographically defined around one type of production (palm oil tree ...)
 - Producers' Communal Unions (UCP) and Producers' Regional Unions (URP), departmental federations of GEA-Bénin, and Regional Unions of Rural Development Cooperatives (URCAR).
 - Umbrella organisations at national level involved in the defence of interests, representativeness and organisation of services
- b) "commodity" type organisations, i.e. nation-wide, regional and sometimes communal associations (see list in Annex 4)

3.3. Duties and responsibilities assumed by FO's

The Rural Development Policy Declaration Letter of 1991 has retained four stakeholders in the agricultural sector:

- farmers and their organisations;
- private sector (commercial and industrial);
- decentralised local communities;
- State and its institutions.

As for duties and responsibilities, the Letter retained two of them: exclusive missions and non exclusive missions

- a) Exclusive missions for the State
 - development of agricultural policy in collaboration with stakeholders in agricultural sector:

types of agriculture, types of exploitation to be promoted and priority industries/commodities;

- regulation and control of the functions of all stakeholders;
- monitoring & evaluation of the agricultural and rural sector.

b) Non exclusive missions

- research & development;
- training;
- agriculture extension;
- agricultural advice.

This means that other stakeholders, including F.O.'s, can assume these duties and responsibilities as well.

Farmers' organisations at different levels assume a wide range of various functions according to the needs of member producers or lower level F.O.'s. Below are two examples: F.O. involved in rice growing activities and the FUPRO network.

Example of a Farmers' commodity association: Consultative Council of Rice Growers in Benin (CCR-B)

Level	Functions assumed by FO
Producers/groups at village level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production • Multiplication of seeds • Inputs need assessment • Input management • Monitoring of training sessions • Carry out pre-extension tests
Commune (UCR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulking produces • Organising seed multiplication • Distribution of inputs • Transport • Equipment management (Sheller) • Training
Region (URR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising marketing • Contracting other stakeholders • Training • Agricultural advice
National (CCR-B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation • Advocacy • Training

Example of a network: FUPRO (the biggest network of producers)

F.O.	Description	Functions
FUPRO	This is a federation of which direct members are the regional unions of producers and national commodity associations. More precisely, there are 6 regional unions of producers (URP) and 6 national commodity associations : National Association of Cotton Producers (ANPC), Association of Rabbit Breeders of Benin (ABeC), National Association of Poultry Farmers of Benin (ANAB), National Council of Rice Growers (CCR-B), National Association of male and female fish traders (ANM), and two specific structures of female farmers (ANAF) and young farmers (AJAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation • defence of interests • information communication • support in form of services to member structures (according to their needs)

Obviously, FUPRO is composed of territorial-type structures but also commodity-type structures.

The table below shows the distribution of roles among the different types of member F.O's:

Table showing the distribution of roles at national level between FUPRO, NASP, ANAF and AJAF

F.O. AREAS	FUPRO	ANPS (National Association of specific producers)	ANAF (National Women's Association) and AJAF (National Association of Young Farmers of FUPRO)
Defence of interests			
Representation	General interest issues	Issues specific to industries/commodity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's and youth's specific issues • Positioning of ANAF and AJAF in decision-making bodies and commodity organisations
Negotiation	Land, credit, mechanization,	Issues specific to industries/commodity	Women's and youth's specific issues
Lobbying and advocacy	General interest issues	Issues specific to industries/commodity	Women's and youth's specific issues
Governance			
Internal governance	X	X	X
Support to governance of members	X	Towards ARFS	Towards ARFA
Governance requirement towards the hierarchy	To be addressed by internal commission appointed by G.A and accountable to it.	Towards FUPRO	Towards FUPRO
Promotion of commodities			
Supplying of inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying for tax exemptions • Negotiation of strategic partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralization of members' goods • Identification of suppliers of specific inputs • Negotiation of strategic partnership with suppliers of specific inputs 	Not applicable
Support to production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in the activities of the national agricultural extension and advice committee • Participation to National Research Committee and CRRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of national commodity related actions • Production monitoring and evaluation • Centralisation of data and information on the commodities 	
Support to processing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of quality aspect • Creation of certification label • Dissemination of standards • Collection and dissemination of information on specific equipments • Centralisation of specific equipment needs • Collaborations with equipment manufacturer 	
Lunching	PICA system central management Information on markets and orientation of customers	Centralisation of information on products and prices in PICA system Information of PICA Information on markets and orientation of customers Training in standardisation and approach Search for niche market	

Access to production factors			
Land			Lobbying for recognition of Women's and youth's specific issues in positions defended by FUPRO
Credit	X	In case opportunities exist in specific industry	For credits specific to women and the youth
Agricultural mechanization	X	In case opportunities exist in specific industry	
Services to FO members			
Mounting of project	X	Members' organisations	For specific files and first installation
Sponsorship	X	Members' organisations	ANAF and AJAF
Support & advice	X	Members' organisations	ANAF and AJAF
Social services			
Social mutuality	X		
Women' specific needs			X
Agricultural insurance	X		
Pandemic	X		
Training (see support to members' governance)	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of training plans • Implementation of training plans 	For training specifically targeting women and the youth
Partnership	X		
Information-Communication	X		Within ANAF and AJAF and to members of FUPRO
Project manager	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation of contracting owner for local projects • Implementation of activities 	

Various interviews with rural leaders and different stakeholders involved in the agricultural sector enabled us to collect some basic elements which were used to point out the strengths and weaknesses of Beninese F.O.'s as presented below:

Table: Strengths and Weaknesses of Beninese F.O.'s

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruction of farmers' movement underway • Leaders' awareness • Establishment of national platform • Setting up of focal point by the Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statistical data on members • inadequate unifying culture • Weak leadership • Incapacity to meet sovereignty expenses • Members' illiteracy • Conflicts of duties and responsibilities among leaders • Poor mastery of the distribution of roles between territorial structures and commodity associations • Conflicting relationships with some supervision structures • Inadequate technical efficiency • Low appropriation of basic texts in some places • Confusion between the roles of the Chamber of Agriculture and those of F.O.'s • Poor collaboration with other stakeholders • Malfunctioning of organs • Debt of cotton growing F.O.'s • Low return of basic F.O. activities • For the time being, most organisations are not very much operational
Way forward	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating of texts on cooperatives • Elaboration of agricultural code specifying each other's role • Large dissemination of new texts • Training of leaders at all levels • Developing collective control within F.O.'s • Strengthening internal controlling bodies: introducing overall functioning rules in networks • Resume the translation of basic text in local languages • Support to farmers' organisations in high performing commodities 	

4. The agricultural sector in Benin

4.1. Roles of different actors in the agricultural sector

Different actors in the agricultural sector

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Actors	Attributions
MAEP/STATE (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Fisheries)	<p>Today, the Government progressively focuses on its conducting and controlling functions of policy formulation, programming and coordination, functions of support and accompaniment, facilitator of other actors' role. More precisely Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets up and pilots the sector's development strategy, which it defines jointly with other actors of the sector. This implies especially follow up and monitoring of policy implementation, and the capitalization and dissemination of information, • Creates an incentive framework to implement the strategy (adapted legislation, tax system, ...), • Coordinates external assistance, • Pilots the management of public property and natural resources (including legislation and regulation), • Follows the progress of food and nutritional situation in different departments and develops security nets to protect vulnerable groups, • Ensures the respect of law, rules and regulations. • Among its numerous non exclusive missions, we can mention: • Support to different types of actors and especially to Rural Organisations and Professional Agricultural Organizations (F.O.'s). • Training and capacity building for these actors through programs and actions, • Agricultural research and extension
DPP: Directorate of Planning and Programming	<p>The DPP is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection, treatment, circulation, and dissemination of information (statistics, data bank, documentation, activity and program follow up, etc.) in a view to following the progress of the rural farming sector, • Analysis of forecasts about the agricultural rural sector, • Development of farming strategies, policies and projects, • Preparation, negotiation, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs, • Planning and programming investments in the sector, • Writing periodical reports and the annual report of Ministry's activities.
DIACOT: Directorate of Agricultural Council and Operational Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of the Government's policy regarding farming advice and operational training, • The greater part of the work is done through CeRPA which have, to this end, a Directorate of Information, Training and Support to Professional Organizations (DIFAOP).
DAGRI: Directorate of Agriculture	<p>Its mission is to define Government's policy as regards plant production and ensure its implementation. Specifically, it is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining technological and economic conditions of the development of plant productions and follow up their implementation, • Phytosanitary control, • Organization and follow-up of phytosanitary protection activities, • contribution to the development of the agricultural policy and objectives to be achieved in the area of plant productions, • definition and contribution to the organization of national promotional farming activities, • Follow-up of the implementation of plant production means and implementation of agricultural policy measures provided for the achievement of plant production objectives, • Follow-up of plant production progress, determining factors and mechanisms which influence this progress, • Recourse to the definition of the national policy as regards basic seed production from varieties finalized by INRAB, coordination of actions and technical support to structures and persons involved in certified seed production,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of the World Food Day, trade fairs and agricultural competitions in connection with other structures involved, • Organisation of health control of plants and plant products and the health control of plants and plant products and quality control of agricultural inputs, • Participation, in connection with relevant structures, to the conception, production and dissemination of written documents, films or sound documents related to agricultural extension and farming advice.
CeRPA and / CeCPA <i>MAEP's Decentralized Structures at regional and commune levels</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To coordinate the development, dissemination and implementation of regulatory texts linked to CeRPAs • Coordination and implementation by the Government in every region, • Interface between MAEP and producers/growers, • Technical support to producers/growers.
INRAB <i>(National Farming Research Institute of Benin)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce technologies for the rural areas in harmony with the preservation of natural resources and thus contribute to scientific progress, • To design, implement either from its own initiative or upon request of the Government, public or private, national or international institutions, research programs of particular or general interest in the field of interest for agricultural sector, • To contribute to ensuring the transfer of research findings towards users, • To coordinate all activities regarding agricultural research at national level, • To contribute to training of senior staff in agricultural research and development, • To carry out studies and expertise regarding agricultural research, • To publish and disseminate research findings thus contributing to technical and scientific development.
The Network of Chambers of Agriculture of Benin	<p>The mission¹ of the National Chamber of Agriculture is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide public authorities and other support institutions with views and information requested from them on issues of agricultural interest; • To put forward their positions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • means of ensuring the promotion of agriculture; • improvements to introduce in all the branches of legislation on agriculture, such as regulation on production prices, customs tariffs, acquisition of production factors, land reform and agricultural policy in general; • To submit proposals to public authorities about the means of developing farm activities and ensuring food self-sufficiency; • To support the formation of professional farming associations (cooperatives, groups, trade unions, etc.); • To lead, inform, train and advise in the fields of which goal is to contribute to promoting agriculture and farm entrepreneurship; • To get involved and ensure the emergency, achievement and evaluation of all rural development projects. • In the end, Chambers of agriculture must become: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting and consultation place for different agricultural stakeholders, • The privileged instrument to organize services for the rural world, whether on own financial means (para-fiscal) or by delegation of public credits. Training sessions are services for which the chambers may ensure responsibility by their own or by delegation to private services.
Local and international NGOs	<p>Today local and international NGOs are more particularly present in non exclusive missions of the Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to processing and marketing activities. • Advisory services and in particular agricultural advisory services. • Capacity building. • The involvement of the private sector is slow and progressive, particularly in the sectors of Farming Advice and Training, services for which farmers' organisations shall assume responsibility by themselves or by private service providers.
Private operators	<p>These are non exclusive missions of the Government especially</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input supply for agricultural production and providing services; • supervision for better utilization of inputs; • marketing of farm products; • processing of some farm products.

¹ The new statutes were approved by Government in February 2001 and are included in Decree n° 2001-097 of 20 February 2001 governing "Approval of statutes and creation of the Network of the Chambers of Agriculture of Benin"

4.2. Farmers' Organisations' Partners

4.2.1 Institutions providing support to or working with F.O.'s in Benin

Organisation/Project	Support offered to F.O.'s of Benin
PDRT: Root and Tuber Development Programme and PDFM: Manioc Sector Development Programme (financed by IFAD)	
AFDI: French Farmers for International Development	
VECO	
OXFAM-Québec	
Agriterra	
DANIDA	
BTC: Belgian Technical Cooperation	
BRS	
Embassy of the Netherlands	
SNV	
STATE: PUSA (Food Security Emergency Program)	
STATE: PADFA (Agricultural Industry Development Programme)	
PADPPA: (Traditional Fishing Development Support Project)	
INRAB	

PAPLGA: Prevention and Control Bird Flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitization • Slaughtering of sick animals
PROTOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydro-farming development for rice production, • Technical training • Support to marketing • Financial support and technical assistance
GTZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to cashew nut sector development in value chain approach (Organization of workshops, training, financing of studies, etc.)
SDI, DEFIS, PAGOGE, SAMAC, SOGICOM, SOTICO, DFA, CSI, Fruitex, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Private companies) Importation et distribution of agricultural inputs
World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing the cotton sector reform support programme • Final evaluation carried out in May 2008
IFAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing the root and tuber crop development programme • PADER: Rural Development support Project • PADRO: Rural Development Support Project of Ouémé • PAMF: Forest Massif Development Project • In addition to capacity building and realisation of socio community infrastructures, PADER and PADRO projects establish credit lines for target groups
MFI's: FECECAM/CLCAM,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLCAMs offer seasonal credits to producers but the rate (18 -24% per year) and repayment modalities are not well adapted to agriculture. No investment credit.
IFDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of projects like MIR, MISTOWA, WACIPE, 1000+ in Benin • These programmes are aimed at increasing access to production factors, better access to market information and improvement of marketing, agricultural extension, capitalization and value chain analysis, i.e. cost structures. Collaboration with umbrella F.O still remains timid.
ADEX (Association for export development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finances market studies • Finances study tours and training <p>This is a structure of exports promotion through capacity building and competitiveness improvement activities. It is composed of producers' representatives, State, employers, the Chamber of commerce and industry, etc.</p>

4.2.2 *Some lessons learnt from past experiences in the support to F.O.'s*

- Big development projects have not produced expected results because producers were unable to take ownership of the technologies put in place
- Mismanagement of the joint security (solidarity in repaying loans) at the level of the cotton sector by F.O. has brought discredit on the rural movement in general and served as a pretext for Government to interfere in their organization
- Efficiency of farmers' organizations in the framework of consultation, inter-professional (multi-stakeholder) cooperation, etc. remains very limited due to their low capacity (of analysis, proposal formulation and negotiation)
- Lack of reliable statistics on farmers' organizations does not enable Government to discuss with one/several reliable interlocutors of the farmers' movement.
- Support to umbrella organizations is important but its impact on local producers is still very low, because
 - This support was not sufficiently translated into concrete services to producers or to lower level F.O.'s
 - Training of leaders is limited to managers of umbrella organizations and systems of sharing information with their colleagues of other levels of F.O.'s were not realized.
 - Role confusion between the network of Chambers of Agriculture and F.O.'s at all levels
 - Umbrella F.O.'s are more involved in representation functions than in those of a real trade union. They take little stand in comparison with Government choices and agricultural sector events.

4.3. Summary of key actors in rice sector

Level of intervention	Stakeholders	Strengths	Weaknesses
Agricultural policies	F.O.'s: 1) CCR-B, 2) FUPRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular contacts with the Ministry (sometimes with the President) Support of Oxfam – Québec for advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacts are occasional and not yet formal/periodical Support of FUPRO not visible Permanent lack of money from CCR-B weighs heavily on leaders
	Other stakeholder: MAEP	Political will to develop agricultural production, including rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of local rice promotion policy Rice importations remain very important Benin receives a lot of rice donations
Agricultural research	F.O.'s: CCR- B and some local F.O.'s	Participation to tests	Low influence on the choices of research themes
	Other stakeholders: INRAB ADRAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-performance NERICA seed Extensive advertisement for rice 	Little effort on local varieties INRAB is very dominant and considers F.O. as beneficiaries not as key stakeholders
Agricultural extension	F.O.'s: CCR-B, URP	Exchange among villagers on better practices.	Very limited means to ensure agricultural extension
	Other stakeholders: INRAB, CeRPA / CeCPA TUNDE OLOFINDJI Razack	Availability of resources	No tangible interventions for rice Intervention strategy not yet clear
Agricultural Education/training	F.O.'s: CCR-B – URR – UCR	With financial means from sponsors, training by INRAB experts	Financial means limited to few areas
	Other stakeholders: INRAB	Great expertise in the field and readiness to supply training	Very limited means, must be hired by FO
Supply of agricultural inputs	F.O.'s: UCR	Organisation of seed multiplication Consolidated purchase of fertilizers	Financial difficulties to access fertilizers (cotton)
	Other stakeholders: not specifically for rice		Lack of specific input for rice
Agricultural Financing	F.O.'s: UCR	Some rare UCR's have means thanks to aid or credits	Difficult access to bank/IMF loans
	Other stakeholders: BRS / MFI's		Financing not adapted to rice growers
Crop processing	F.O.'s: URR (Ouémé, Mono)	Thanks to aid, 2 URR's have purchased a sheller machine	Quality of white rice is very poor (tiny pieces and impurities)
	Other stakeholders: Private shopkeepers, CIDR	CIDR Project enables FO to participate in a joint venture with a private entrepreneur	CIDR approach does not provide for equitable role for growers in the joint venture
Marketing	F.O.'s: (URP)	Organisation of consolidated marketing	
	Other stakeholders: private shopkeepers, CIDR, VECCO	The joint venture (CIDR) has developed its own certification label with well appreciated perfumed rice. URP Mono also has its label.	New experience (too early to appreciate)
Information/Advice	F.O.'s : URP MONO supervisors (PROTOS Project)		
Infrastructure: developing irrigated rice fields	F.O.: UDP Mono/ Couffo	Expertise in the role of project manager in programs of hydro farming development	Performance in the sites planned still needs improving
	Other stakeholders: State, PROTOS	Availability of resources (Photos) Direct collaboration PROTOS-URP	Few planned sites in comparison with potentialities of the country

5. Conclusions

With regard to the context

- A comparison with the other 52 African countries ² shows that on the political level, Benin comes sixth, twenty-sixth on economic level (moved up by one position)³, twenty-sixth on social plan (moved up by eleven positions), which gives Benin the 15th position in the general classification (progress of 5 places). Despite this good position, the reality remains that 31 % of the population lives on less than \$ 1/day and 23% of under-five year children suffer from malnutrition.
- Geographic characteristics (access to sea, neighbour of the big and populated Nigeria) and physical characteristics (temperate climate, considerable hydrographic network, large areas of lands suitable for cultivation that are not yet exploited) are development assets for agricultural development in Benin, in terms of production and marketing.
- Problems linked to land tenure ship (access to land, lack of property title hence weak access to credit and low motivation to invest in fertility) especially in the southern region which is more populated, are obstacles to the development of farms. The Rural Land Plan is aimed at working out solutions but its implementation will be limited to 300 villages at the beginning.

With regard to the agricultural sector

- This is mostly family agriculture with farms with average size of 1.7 ha and of which fertility decreases rapidly due to lack of fallow and financial means to purchase chemical fertilizers, which employs 70 % of the population.
- For many years, agriculture was dominated by cotton which generated certain income to producers but which is in crisis due to unfair international competition and mismanagement of the sector by actors especially the management of inputs. Other income generating crops like cashew nuts and palm oil have also been developed and are presently more promising than cotton.
- More recently other crops were developed as their market becomes more and more important and profitable: pineapple, rice, cassava, maize and market gardening. Specifically, rice, maize and cassava are products grown almost nationwide, pineapple and market gardening being linked to specific areas. The advantage of the former crops is that they largely contribute to ensuring food security.
- These crops are also part of the list of twelve priority sectors which the Government of Benin wishes to promote in the framework of its ambitious programme of turning the country into a dynamic and competitive farming power that is capable of feeding the population.
- For each of the three food crops, research has developed varieties and techniques likely to increase their yield per hectare significantly.

² Jeune Afrique – L'état de l'Afrique 2008

³ This position in the middle of the list is due to low debt in comparison with GDP (6th).

With regard to the farmers' movement

- At different phases of its development, Benin has experienced various types of rural organisations, most often dictated, or else oriented by the ruling power, and with the objective of achieving better production and sale of cash crops generating foreign currencies to the country. The cotton sector is the striking example.
- For some years, some decentralization and specialization have been introduced in the farmers' movement. Following the cotton crisis, but also following the creation of specialised F.O.'s (cashew nut, pineapple, and palm oil tree) aimed at promoting the specific interests related to a particular crop, the FUPRO network which is the main rural structure in Benin, has carried out some restructuring meant to help specialized F.O.'s to enjoy some autonomy without abandoning solidarity with other producers for cross-cutting interests.
- With the implementation of the Rural Development Policy Declaration Letter: LDPDR by the State but also with the support of sponsors (Agriterria and AFDI especially)) to regional and communal F.O.'s, the latter have developed capacities enabling to provide better services to members and play a significant role in local development projects.
- As a result of lack of training and information, capacities of local and communal F.O.'s are still very low, with the exception of some of them which could set examples for others. Till now, umbrella organizations have attracted most of the attention of the organizations providing support to F.O.'s, with little impact on local producers.
- For two years, there is a national platform of F.O.'s (PNOPPA-Benin) created under the influence of ROPPA and groups former rival networks. But so far, few common actions have been undertaken. A common project GEA-FUPRO promoted by UPADI also aims at bringing the two networks together.
- With regard to new sectors, only rice F.O.'s have real national coverage and have built their network from the grassroots. Activities are undertaken and managed at the lowest possible level to enable direct control by rice producers.

With regard to other agricultural stakeholders

- The Government of Benin has set up an ambitious plan for the revival of agriculture aimed at improving its performance, feeding the population and being competitive at international level. Even if Government has hired new staff after 15 years of status quo (= decline), the means to implement that revival are still missing.
- In order to get round the requirement of the World Bank of implying F.O.'s in negotiations, a focal point of F.O.'s and a support project to F.O.'s have been set up, thus dominating the endogenous structure set up by the F.O.'s themselves. On the whole, the Ministry is regaining control of operational Initiatives/Activities, which is contrary to its mandate. In the framework of implementing the new sector approach, employees even encourage the creation of new F.O.'s in the same sector in addition to existing ones instead of reinforcing the latter.
- In the cotton sector, the world crisis has worsened for Beninese producers following the domination of the cotton industry by manufacturers linked to the political world, and the split of the farmers' movement by these alliances.
- The Chamber of Agriculture, though it was finally accepted by F.O.'s, does not play a key role in the development of new sectors, or in the debates on cross-cutting issues. There is a conflict of mandate between the Chamber of Agriculture and F.O.'s.

- Private entrepreneurs and/or NGOs have taken interest in most new sector industries in order to take on some responsibility; this is especially the case with rice, pineapple, cashew nut and market gardening. Indeed, so far, there is no structure (sector wide multi-stakeholder cooperation) that groups different stakeholders for these sectors as is the case for cotton. Benin Government has set up tables (for consultation) for the cashew nut and pineapple comprising its own representatives in addition to inter-profession stakeholders.

With regard to potential support by the Foundation

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- On basis of available data (farm advantages, reliable markets, organized markets), the rice sector offers better possibilities for intervention according to the objectives and principles of the Foundation
- There is crucial shortage of statistical data at the level of the rural movement, which would constitute a potential intervention area for the Foundation.
- At the level of local F.O.'s, capacity building needs to enable them deliver quality services to members remain considerable.
- Support to the process of drawing up a law on agricultural orientation would be yet another possibility for the Foundation to reinforce the producers' involvement in the agricultural sector.
- Development of seed producers' network and easy access to fertilizers are also indispensable for sector's progress.

6. Perspectives

The quick inventory of F.O.'s and the agricultural sector of Benin have enabled us to point out a number of perspectives. Development perspectives for F.O.'s and intervention perspectives for the Foundation.

6.1 Reinforcement of F.O.'s in specific sectors

With regard to sectors currently promoted by the Government of Benin that enable to reach a big number of small producers both in terms of food security and income generation, the following three sectors offer better perspectives. Other promising sectors include soya bean and groundnut which, once processed could easily be sold on the local/national market; also the sector of tubers (yam and cassava) whose yield might have increased thanks to research deserves to be studied further.

a. Rice

With the current food crisis which is structural and which had caused rice prices to rise, with the development of varieties more efficient for low grounds, irrigated areas and plateaus, with the structuring of rice F.O.'s under way for some years and with the experience of these F.O.'s, already at several levels of the sector, rice could constitute the priority for an intervention by the Foundation's F.O. Support Programme. As for identified bottlenecks, collaboration exists or is to be developed between F.O.'s and other stakeholders:

- Seed production: with INRAB and WARDA – African Rice Centre (can be self-financing)
- Development of irrigated rice sites: with PROTOS, DRE (Directorate of Rural Engineering) (investment needed)
- Processing and marketing: CIDR through the ESOP model (investment needed), Tundé (to be developed)
- Technical training: to be more developed with INRAB through the systems of farmers-trainers (after financing at the beginning to be supported progressively by the sector)
- Supply of inputs to be more developed by the F.O.'s with micro finance institutions, the private sector in safe marketing circuits:

While trying to discharge these various functions at producer's nearest possible level (village and commune), it is important that the CCR-B ensures the coordination of the major priorities and as well as the coherence between different operations and serves as interlocutor for the Foundation. However, the Council does not yet have management capacity to enable it execute such a big project and this is not part of its duties anyway (consultation and coordination, protection of interests, promotion).

It is therefore necessary for CCR-B in collaboration with the Foundation to identify another structure with these management capacities. Potential possibilities would be: FUPRO-Benin (a network which CCR-B belongs to) which already plays this role for other projects, or one of its present partners: AFDI, PROTOS, CIDR, OXFAM, and VECO.

Over the coming months, CCR-B wishes to conduct a process of strategic planning including an inventory of its members and their production data, an institutional diagnosis at different levels of the network and participatory planning of actions to be undertaking in the next 5 years. As its current partner (Oxfam-Québec) has limited means, the Foundation might consider financing the process.

b. Maize

As maize is a big consumer product in Benin, thanks to the development of varieties that better resist to drought, with pluvial rice, it constitutes an alternative to cotton, especially in the North where it can be produced at larger scale. Beside human consumption, maize is an important component of food for cattle whose needs keep increasing. Nevertheless, its marketing must be well organized to ensure repayment of input credit. As the current mission did not have time to examine this sector in a specific way, it will be necessary to gather more data on different aspects of the sector and on the role of F.O.'s at different levels in the chain in order to better understand the advantages of Benin in comparison with neighbouring countries.

c. Market gardening

With increasing urbanization in Benin and neighbouring Nigeria, this sector offers great possibilities for the coming years. As the mission very quickly visited only two sites, (Cotonou and the Grand Popo) whereas Malanville Commune (in the far North-East on the bank of the Niger River) and the Ouémé Valley also constitute important zones of production (onion, Irish potato), it is necessary to study this sector further. Such work may be done by F.O.'s advisors, national or from neighbouring countries, experienced in this sector. Particularly since current weaknesses of market gardeners seem to be located at organizational level (planning and management of production sites, supply of specific inputs, marketing organization). Even improvement of farming techniques is a matter of organizing technique/advice, training in the farm management, because expertise is often available at the level of farmers' groups (farmer-trainer).

6.2 Reinforcement of F.O.'s at the level of transversal weaknesses and their institutional framework

With regard to weaknesses found in all F.O.s, whatever the sector considered, overall solutions should be worked out to benefit the entire farmers' movement.

a. Creation of data banks

Lack of reliable data constitutes a serious weakness not only for judicious planning of actions to be undertaken by F.O.'s, and for their monitoring and evaluation, but also for any other stakeholder starting from the Government. It is therefore urgent to develop data collection systems. However, they must be simple/easy systems that are built from the level of individual producer and whose interest is obvious for the latter. They must therefore be developed in a participatory process by persons with appropriate skills in this field, and under authority of a national platform of F.O.'s. The possibility to involve institutes for research and higher education in Benin for the management and exploitation of such a data bank of and about F.O.'s is still to be examined.

b. Improvement of information/communication systems

Circulation of quality information (exact, useful and on time) is crucial both for the management of farms and F.O.'s; and this is big weakness within the F.O.'s. In rural world, oral communication remains dominant and the most efficient. Surely, the leaders and agents of national F.O.'s have no physical time to correctly transmit at lower levels all useful information received. It would be advisable to develop an information/communication system at national/regional level that supplies the communal level very regularly (weekly) with short quality information. For precise themes of interest to a great number of producers or leaders, technical specifications sheets could be designed, when necessary, in different (local) languages. In the past, PPAB (former project of the French cooperation and AFDI) used to play this role in Benin. This role should be played by umbrella F.O.'s but they have no financial and human capacities to do so. At the level of ROPPA, this

function exists but is not well fulfilled for the same reasons. Putting a highly experienced person at their disposal by AFDI⁴ is not yet finalised due to institutional problems. Meanwhile, the person in question has started working at the level of the sub-regional office of AFDI but at small scale. In order to make this initiative sustainable and accessible for different countries of the sub-region, it would be advisable to design an information / communication system for the whole network of ROPPA using the experience of the past. In collaboration with ROPPA, the Foundation may request AFDI⁵ to design a project to this end, following the Terms of reference to be formulated by ROPPA and the Foundation.

c. Training of leaders

Although training sessions that benefit leaders have been organised in the past and are part of most projects implemented in favour of F.O.'s, they seldom benefit several leaders of regional and communal F.O.'s. The result is that the latter do not question about the current management practices of umbrella F.O.'s which are not transparent. The UPAFA initiative (Farmers Academy) promoted by CIRAD/CIEPAC and APM-Afrique has significantly contributed to building the capacities of rural leaders in the sub-region. Indeed, the number of beneficiaries per country was very limited and the initiative was interrupted due to lack of funds. Also, UPADI and AFDI (agri-agencies very active in West Africa) organise training sessions for their partner F.O.'s.

In the current development phase of Beninese F.O.'s, establishment of a training cycle for grass-roots F.O.'s leaders and development of pedagogic tools/specifications sheets for different aspects crucial for democratic and sound functioning of F.O.'s is deemed indispensable.

Modules to be developed: lobbying and advocacy strategies, human resource management, marketing... Classical training according to precise modules is not always the most recommended to support new initiatives of rural leaders. These initiatives are born following contextual opportunities or situations as they arise. In this case, in order to help leaders better understand and check these opportunities, it would be advisable to envisage the possibility of accompanied self-training. A process which enables to design, case by case, a course of learning by experience: situation analysis – exchange/study tour to useful experiences – design of a road map to come up with a plan of action – training in specific aspects considered as crucial – joint elaboration of a plan of action. A fund should be established to facilitate the realization of such self-training experiences by leaders' groups.

On basis of the Terms of Reference to be developed in collaboration with the national platform of F.O.'s⁶, the Foundation would propose that CIRAD and agri-agencies design a (semi) permanent training programme for F.O.'s leaders and staff at different levels, and development of appropriate modules (supported by images/video) based on priority needs of local F.O.'s. The programme should put available capacities to good use in the country like ISPEC⁷ or other training institutions. Training modules would be developed by different work groups composed of persons working in the area under consideration. There will be no intellectual property of modules and tools designed; they shall be accessible to everybody. Although the financial contribution of the F.O.'s beneficiary of the training should be planned, the big part of financing should be generated by the Foundation, because financial means of producers and F.O.'s must first be invested in productive activities. This programme should have a semi-autonomous management status, in comparison with umbrella F.O.'s to ensure quality of training and targeting of beneficiaries.

4 M. Patrick Delmas, after having coordinated the Inter-networks at Paris for some years, presently represents AFDI in the sub-region, where he has started to play again this role at small scale.

5 In collaboration with ROPPA, concerned national platforms and Inter-networks

6 And with ROPPA

7 Training Institution for Cooperatives

d. Reflection on and negotiation of laws in favour of well performing family agriculture

With the current trend of the Ministry to re-assume some operational functions that had been given up to the private sector and F.O's, and the dominance of the Ministry on F.O's, the latter are calling for the elaboration of a law on agricultural orientation that should specify the role and prerogatives of each sector/actor. A joint reflection by different components of the farmers' movement (on this topic) may contribute to achieving increased mutual comprehension and cohesion between different F.O's as well. F.O's in Senegal and Mali that have already participated actively in such a process might serve as examples. As a first step, the Foundation could support the national platform (extended to F.O's that are not part of it, where necessary) in certain capitalization of the Senegalese and Malian experiences by a team of Beninese leaders, specific reflection/training for good grasp of the problem, elaboration of a proposal of a participatory elaboration of the law on agricultural orientation, and advocacy with Government to reach concrete agreement with regard to its elaboration, as well as the cost of coaching by technicians.

Annexes

1. Terms of Reference

Introduction

One of the guiding principles of the Foundation is that all lives are equal no matter where they are found and for that reason the Foundation seeks to improve the livelihoods of those who are neglected and are locked in poverty. In recognition that three quarters of a billion people who live on less than \$1 a day rely on agriculture for their food and livelihoods, the foundation has a major Agricultural development program which aims to provide small farmers “with the tools and opportunities to boost their productivity, increase their incomes and build better lives for them and their families.” This has led to a deliberate effort to focus on the smallholder farmers in an effort to help them lift themselves out of poverty.

The Foundation recognizes the efforts made by other development partners to focus on the farmers and seeks to understand and learn from them. What role the Foundation could play to leverage on some of the successful efforts and what the Foundation should not do. Are there best practices which could be brought to scale to improve the livelihoods of large numbers of small holders and what is the room for innovation or what could be done differently to impact on the lives of the rural poor in Sub-Saharan Africa?

In the last decade, small holder farmers have faced different kinds of challenges after most governments, especially in SSA moved away from Agriculture and withdrew their support to the sector. They did this to allow the private sector to take up some of the roles of service to the farmers but the reality was that there were no private sector actors in this sector yet. This led to change of roles of existing farmer organizations and an emergence of new farmer organizations in attempt to solve some of the challenges they faced in the sector from access to information, inputs, credit, access to market and even lobby government for policy change.

To better understand the Farmers’ Movement in some of the targeted-countries⁸, its key organizations and the specific expertise they have developed in various fields of intervention, the type and number of farmers that are reached by some of their successful operations, the support they get from donors and other development agencies, their level of (financial) sustainability and also their remaining weaknesses, the Foundation and AFAFO agreed upon a series of field visits in seven countries: Mali and Bénin in West-Africa, and Uganda, Malawi and Zambia in Eastern and Southern Africa.

In each of these countries the AFAFO consultants will carry out a preliminary mapping of the major F.O.’s as well as of the other key stakeholders in the different fields of intervention: agricultural policy development, agricultural research, agricultural extension, input supply, rural finance, agro-processing, marketing of agricultural products, management aspects (both at farm and F.O. level),

⁸ Currently these countries are: Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, Mali, Bénin, Burkina Faso, Rwanda based on 3 criteria: number of poor people, importance of agriculture in the country, likelihood of success (not high risk situations)

and training of leaders, staff and farmers in general.

In addition the consultants will harvest success stories of F.O.'s in various fields of intervention to witness the crucial role of F.O.'s in agricultural development and poverty alleviation.

Goals of the visits

General: A good understanding of the agricultural sector in each of the concerned countries.

Specific:

1. A rough picture of all the major Farmers' Organizations in a country, understand their key roles/functions within the different (sub)sectors of agriculture and identify their strengths and weaknesses with regards to these roles, by gathering clear evidence of their successes and other lessons learned.
2. An overview of other key players in the different sub-sectors or chains of the agricultural sector and their way of operating, their current cooperation with F.O.'s and the level of satisfaction.
3. A reader (white book) with stories showing evidence of the added value of Farmers Organizations in poverty alleviation.

Methodology

- Prior to the visits, the consultant will make a desk study resulting in a first overview of the different F.O.'s and other key players in the agricultural sector.
- The Consultant will contact the national F.O.'s, directly and/or through the regional platforms: ROPPA, EAFF, SACAU and inform them about the aim of the visit and the people and the institutions to be visited.
- Where possible and necessary the consultant will identify and hire local advisors of F.O.'s in order to gather the specific data needed, as well as the success stories.
- During his visit the consultant will meet with leaders and staff of relevant F.O.'s, as well as officials of concerned ministries, international development agencies and public and private institutions involved in the agricultural sector.
- The outcome of the overall assessment, clearly showing the strengths and weaknesses of each player, as well as the most important gaps to be filled and the opportunities to scale up some of the successes, will be shared with the national platforms of F.O.'s

Deliverables

- An assessment report for the following countries: Mali, Bénin, Uganda, and Malawi
- At least ten success stories of F.O.'s at various levels in different countries (not limited to the five countries) and fields of intervention).

Timetable

- The field visits in Western Africa will take place in May 2008 and those in Eastern and Southern Africa in June 2008

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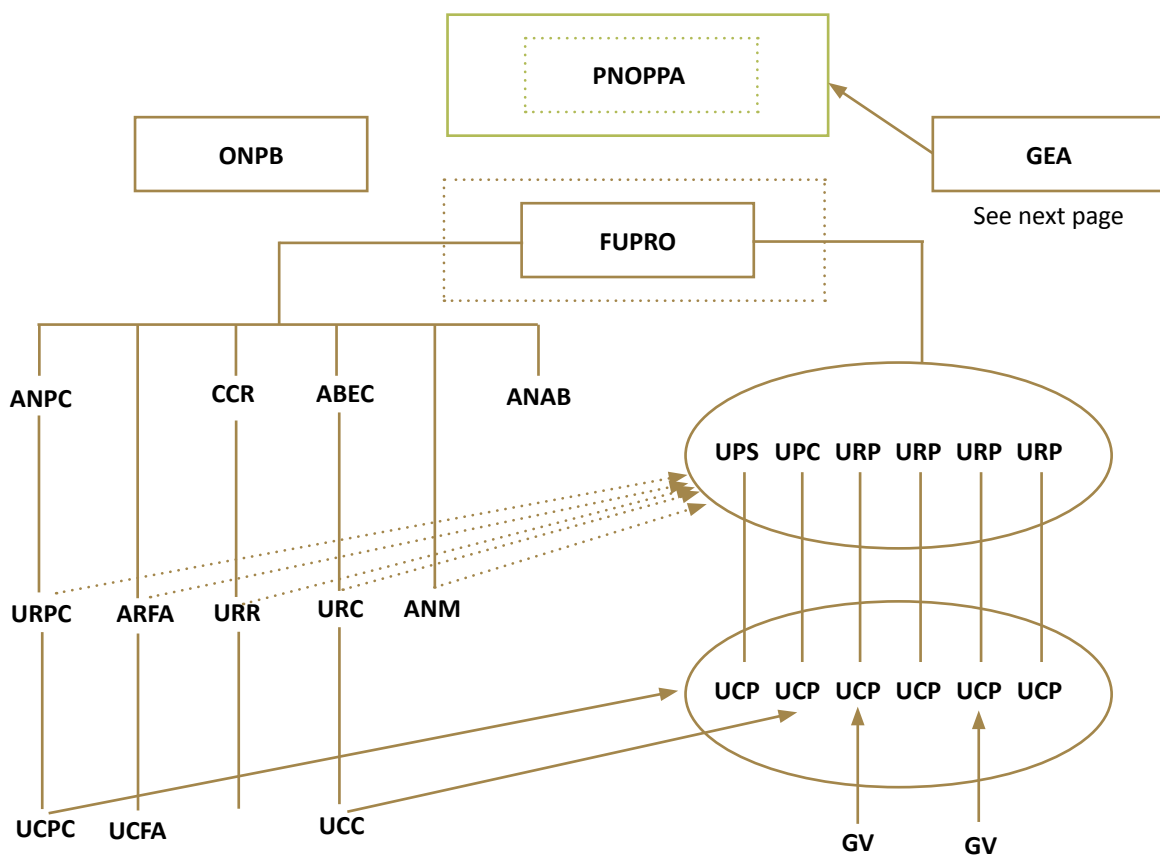
2. Program of the mission

West Africa mission Programme

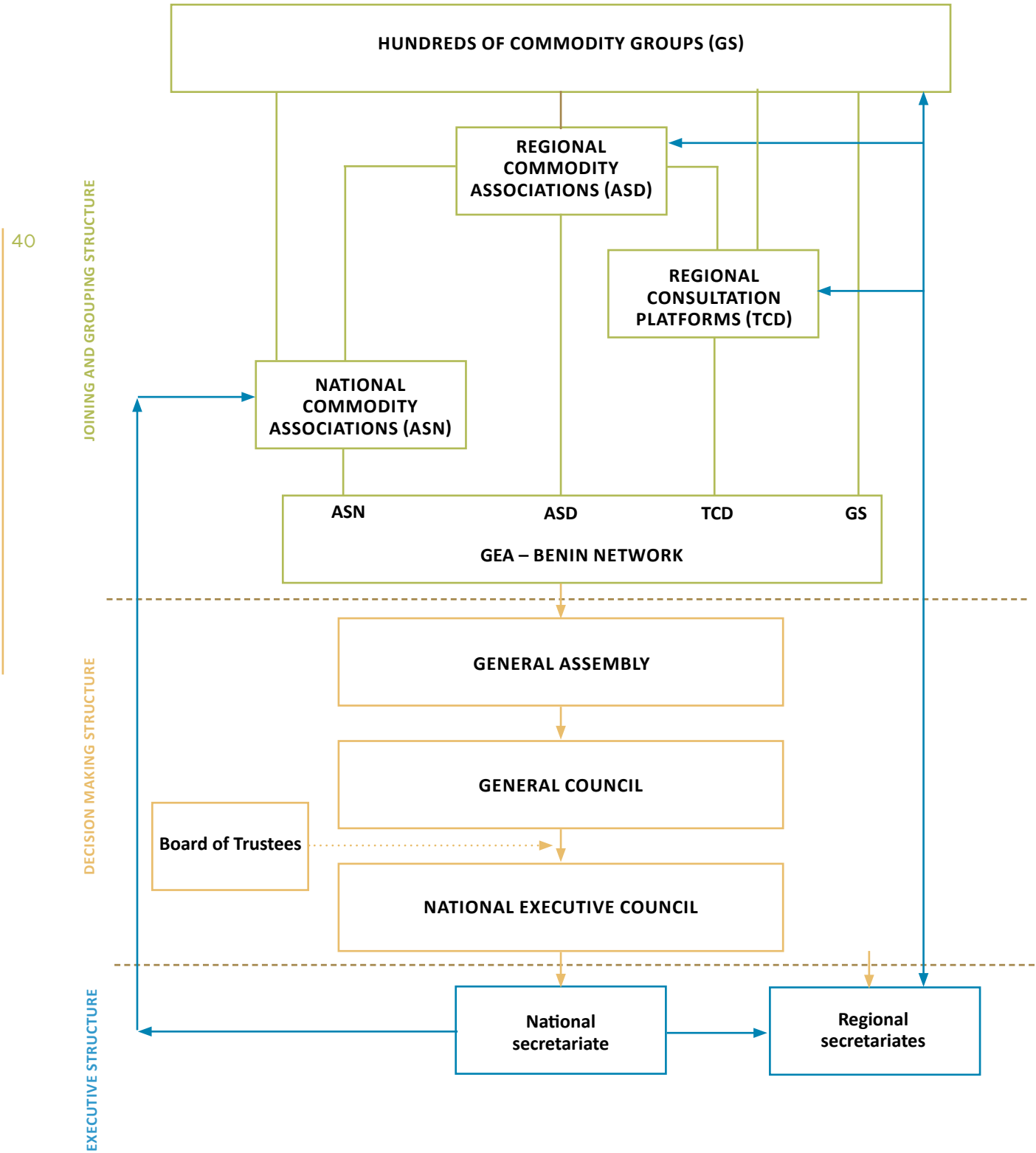
Day	Date	Activity
Wed	14/05	Travelling from Middelbeers – Best - Amsterdam – Paris – to Cotonou
Thu	15/05	Meetings in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Fisheries (MAEP): DICAF and CTROP Meeting at INRAB (Akonkanmé) Meeting with FO's National Platform Meeting with Belgian Technical Cooperation Meeting with Market Gardeners of Cotonou at Houeyiho Site
Fri	16/05	Exchange among consultants on information gathered the first day Meeting with Dutch Cooperation Meeting with DG of CeRPA of the Atlantic (Calavi) Meeting with the Consultative Council of Rice Growers of Benin (CCR-B)
Sat	17/05	Travelling from Cotonou – Lokossa – Grand Popo Meeting with UPC of Grand Popo at (Grand Popo) Visit to market gardeners' site at Grand Popo Visit to the warehouse of CCR-Mono/Couffo at Manonkpo Visit to rice growing site at Gbédravo Travelling from Gbédravo - Bohicon
Sun	18/05	Meeting with officials of the national rice research programme (Bohicon)
	18/05	Meeting with the Permanent Secretary of FUPRO (Bohicon) Travelling to Bohicon – Cotonou
Mon	19/05	Visit to the Chamber of Agriculture Meeting with PLR Management (MAEP) Meeting with WARDA African Rice Centre (Akonkanmé) Meeting with the Focal Point of PAOPA / National Platform of F.O.'s Travelling from Cotonou – Ouagadougou
Tue	20/05	Meeting with Sub-regional Representative of AFDI Meeting with FEPAB officials (AGM of this Burkina national F.O.)
Wed	21/05	Meeting with Agriterra's public relations officer Drafting conclusions and perspectives for Benin Meeting with Sub-regional Representative of AFDI Travelling from Ouagadougou – Bamako Review of the programme with Advisor in Mali
Thu	22/05	Meeting with Director for Planning in the Ministry of Agriculture Meeting with the Advisor to Permanent Assembly of Chamber of Agriculture in Mali Telephone conversation with the Embassy of the Netherlands
Fri	23/05	Meeting with AOPP Executive Secretary, continued Meeting with Director General, APEJ Meeting with Programme Manager, Swiss Cooperation Meeting with Adviser to AOPP's Commission of Cereals
Sat	24/05	Travelling from Bamako – Ségou Meeting with the farmers of Banangorouni, including seed producers Exchange of ideas with AOPP's official in charge of Oxfam Project - Solidarity Perusing AOPP documents Informal visit to the Chairperson of CNOP
Sun	25/05	Travelling from Ségou – Niono Meeting with the Secretary General of Sexagon at Niono Meeting with rice seeds producers

		Informal discussions with the Secretary General of Sexagon and Rice Platform, continued Journey back to Ségou Drafting report
Mon	26/05	Travelling from Ségou – Cinzana Meeting with the Director of Cinzana Agricultural Research Centre First contact with PRECAD (Capacity Building Project for Sustainable Agriculture) Journey back to Ségou Short meeting with the Board of Regional AOPP of Ségou Meeting with the Executive Secretary of Faso Jigi Journey back to Bamako
Tue	27/05	Recap of data / information Meeting with advisers to SNV – Mali Meeting with officials of the Programme called ‘Economies Filières’ at IER Meeting with the Executive Secretary of AOPP
Wed	28/05	Travelling from Bamako – Abidjan – Cotonou Writing note on rice growers’ participation in WARDA - FAO planning workshop Meeting at WARDA focusing on the coming planning workshop for rice initiative Lunch meeting with the Chairperson of FUPRO-Benin Feedback to CCR-B officials and AFDI’s representative
Thu	29/05	Travelling from Cotonou – Paris Travelling on Paris – Amsterdam – Best – Middelbeers

3. Organizational structure of F.O.'s in Benin



Organization chart of the GEA-Benin network



4. List of some F.O.'s in Benin

Federation of the Unions of Farmers' Organisations of Benin (FUPRO-Benin)
Group of Agricultural Producers of Benin (GEA-Benin)
National Association of Pig Breeders of the Benin (ANEP-Benin)
National Organisation of the Farmers of Benin (ONPB)
National Union of self-employed and assimilated Sea-Fishermen of Benin (UNAPEMAB)
National Union of continental and Assimilated Fishermen of Benin (UNAPECAB)
Association of Palm Oil Producers at Ouémé (APPH-O)
National Federation of Rural Development Cooperatives Unions (FENUCAR)
National Federation of Palm Oil producers on Benin (FNPPH-BENIN)
National Federation of Agricultural Producers of Benin (FENAPRA)
National Federation of the Farmers' Organisations of Benin (FENAGROPA)
Association of Producers and Economic Operators (AGROPAE)
Association of Producers' Organisations (AGROPA) formed by some AGROPAE dissidents
Beninese Association of Rabbit Breeders (ABEC)
Beninese Association of "Aulacodiculteurs" (ABEA)
National Union Cashew nut Producers of Benin (UNAPAB)
Association of Fruit and Vegetable Producers of Benin (APFB)
Association of Authorized Nurserymen of Benin (APAB)
Farmers' Association for Mutual Aid and Training (APEIF)
Songhai Farmers' Movement (MPFS)
National Union of Pineapple Producers (UNAPRONA)
National Association of Poultry Farmers of Benin (ANAB)
Union of the Rice Growers of Zou (UNIRIZ)
Cooperative of Fishermen of Mono (COPAROHAM)
Union of the Cooperatives of Beekeepers and Planters in North Benin (UCAP)
Cooperative of Market Garners of Kouhounou (COMAKO)
National Federation of Pineapple Producers of Benin (FENOPAAB)
Federation of Common interest Groups of the Atlantic (FGIEA)
Federation of Mutual Agricultural Savings and Credits Funds (FECECAM)
National Federation of Rural Savings and Credit Funds (FENACREP)
Union of Mushroom Professionals (UPC)
Poultry keepers' Association for Sustainable Promotion (GAPD)
Union of Cooperatives of Young Farmers, Artisans and Processing Women in South -Borgou (UGJAAFT)
Farmers' Homologous Group for Sustainable Agriculture (GHP)
National Association of Cotton Producers of Benin (on the way to establishment)
Beninese branch of the Network of West Africa Economic Operators of the Agro food sector (ROESAO-BENIN)
Beninese branch of the Network of Agro food Professionals of Africa (INTERFACE-BENIN)
Beninese branch of the Network of Female Farmers' Organisations and Farm Producers of West Africa (ROPAPA)
Beninese branch of the International Union of Breeders' professional Organisations (UIOPAE-Benin)
Beninese branch of the Movement for Equitable Agriculture (MAE-MAE),
National Council of Cotton Producers of Benin (CNPC) etc.