

**MOAAS SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE GENERAL UNION OF PINEAPPLES' PRODUCERS OF TOFFO IN BENIN– (UGPAT)<sup>1</sup>**

**Family farming advice (FFA) for better market access to small holders farmers**

**Country:** Benin

**Institutions involved:**

- French cooperation project involved in Family farming advice (FFA)
- NGOs
- UGPAT: General union of pineapples' producers of Toffo (farmers organisation).

**Brief summary:**

Producers from UGPAT organisation in Benin had to face production and commercialisation problems with their pineapple. A specific advisory service, Family Farm Management advice, provided by private local services providers (local NGOs supported by French cooperation) helped for better market insertion for producers, at both local and international level. The farmer organisation UGPAT provides itself many different services to its members for better market insertion.

**Question 1: What are the general settings and arrangements for MOAAS?**

**1.1 What does Agencie hope to achieve by contributing to agricultural advisory services and how does this relate to Agency's overall goals?**

French cooperation with family farming advice is looking for:

- rethinking farming advice function : classic agricultural extension didn't answer any more to new needs of farmers;
- improving and assessment of technical and economics results of organisation's members;
- produce technical and economics references for leaders, staff and farmers (especially for collective action : price's negotiation).

**1.2 What is the context of the intervention in terms of policy, economic and framework conditions etc.?**

**1.3 What are the general constraints for farmers to connect to markets?**

UGPAT was created in 1997.

2500 T of pineapple are sold to local industry; 640 Tons are exported.

UGPAT face various problems with pineapple:

- quality (technics, inputs supply, financial management), and
- production planification (to have labour force and inputs, at the right time) to access to international market.

Specificities: pineapple has 2 years cycle and needs high level of investments/ha.

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<sup>1</sup> Mieux négocier les prix pour nos produits Grain de sel n°20, - 2001 p 19-20 (<http://ancien.inter-reseaux.org/publications/graindesel/gds20/GDS20couv.htm>)

#### **1.4 Who provides the agricultural advisory services and how do they operate?**

##### **1.5 Which services are provided?**

Private provider (NGO), supported first by French cooperation, with different activities (3 years program) about **Family farming management advices** (Family farming advice is an overall approach based on learning methods and decision aids):

- trainings to held documents and tools for farm management;
- visits-exchanges, field tours;
- common discussions in groups to analyse farms results.

##### **Farmer provider (UGPAT):**

Farmers organisation UGPAT organises fields tours and provides many services (directly or with external trainers) to its members:

- **family farming management advices:** some farmers using farm management documents/tools for themselves and in groups train other farmers (farmers-advisers);
- technical advices;
- inputs supply services;
- production organisation (calendar)
- organisation for commercialisation: export, agro-processing (fruit juice, dried fruit), local market.

#### **1.7 Which insights and lessons can be learnt from the framework conditions, e.g., good practices, obstacles, pitfalls?**

Access to international market means the producer has to master his production system and makes him receptive to the family Farm management advice.

High level of investment justifies a specific advice on farm management.

### **Question 2: Who are the clients of MOAAS?**

#### **2.1 How many and what types of farmers use the services?**

Today 136 producers (60 % are literate) are concerned by the service.

The Family farm producers concerned have a certain level of capital.

#### **2.2 Do the actual clients correspond with the types of farmers the service intends to work with?**

Yes

#### **2.3 How are the clients involved in markets?**

There are 3 destinations for pineapples:

- international market (export): several occasion/former projects permitted farmers to reinforces leaders and take contacts with buyers in France;
- agro-processing (fruit juice, dried fruit);
- local market.

#### **2.4 What motivates farmers to use agricultural advisory services?**

Exportation is more profitable but needs a high quality product, with a perfect technical practice.

To minimize risk.

#### **2.6 How are the clients formulating their demand for services?**

Family farm management helps farmers to better understanding of their production unite. Little by little farmers are able to ask more specific advices.

With NOG help, farmers oriented their demand to specialised providers (e.g. training on insecticide, motorized ploughing).

## **2.7 How are the clients organised?**

For production: Groups of producers located in same geographical areas.

For family farm management advice: Groups of volunteers of 10-20 producers

## **2.8 Which insights and lessons can be learnt from the client involvement e.g. good practices, obstacles, pitfalls?**

- good level of general education of the farmers;
- farmers work on different kind of markets which are complementary: farmers take less risk and do better valorise their all production;
- farm management is a real necessity when farmers make high level investment.

## **Question 3: What approaches and methods are used for agricultural advisory services?**

### **3.1 What kind of services do agricultural advisory services deliver?**

Slow training on how to observe, measure, and analyse farms data (production, costs, yields,...).

Helping farmers to improve their practices and management of their family production units, by :

- definition of their needs according to their objectives;
- better appreciation of their real situation ( results, opportunities and constraints);
- looking ahead to evaluate consequences of different possibilities and after by adjusting previous choices.

System, methods and tools

- very small experiment with one group of 20 farmers -included leaders of UGPAT- the first year (50 now in several groups);
- methods and tools are not definitely achieved : many changes took place to make it easier to understand and to use for farmers.

### **3.2 How are the services financed?**

Small participation from farmers (monthly fees) and external funds (projects):

- farmers do not have access to credit, and their all funds are invested in production;
- local provider had to be trained itself by the project to this new kind of service that didn't exist before in Benin (project decided here to support private provider).

### **3.4 How do the agricultural advisory services providers and the clients relate to each other?**

UGPAT was already quite organised and the projects contacted them.

Now, UGPAT farmers demand directly to private providers supported by external funds.

### **3.5 How are innovations in agricultural advisory services being upscaled?**

Now, 2800 farmers get this kind of Family services : about 10 private providers, funded by external funds.

Conditions for upscaling:

- to have more providers on farm management advice, there is a need of investment on training providers;
- farmers can participate to the cost, but not to the global cost: indeed, the impact of this investment on there income needs several years;
- extended literacy campains;
- To be upscaled, this kind of advice must be integrated in national policies.

## **Question 4: What are the outcomes and impacts of agricultural advisory services?**

### **4.1 How are agricultural advisory services helping farmers to deal with market constraints?**

Better farming system: quality, regularity on very exigent market.

#### **4.2 What are the outcomes/impacts of agricultural advisory services?**

##### **For farmers individually :**

- quantity, quality and regularity of production improve;
- incomes increase (also because of reducing costs).

##### **For organisation :**

- price per kilo increase from 65 F to 75 (at the field) and 85 (to the factory)
- access to export market
- registered fair trade (Max Havelaar)
- negotiation for organic production

#### **4.3 Are there side-effects or unexpected outcomes of agricultural advisory services?**

- farmer's participation to chain commodity;
- strengthening of farmer's organisation: the farmers who have been trained individually in farm management used their abilities also in the Farmers organisation: this became profitable for the all members.

#### **4.4. Which insights and lessons can be learnt from the impact, e.g., good practices, obstacles, pitfalls?**

Farmers understood farm management through pineapple example. But if this crop declines, farmers can move/change to another crop.

We can not provide this kind of advice to all the farmer (high cost). So it is necessary to go on reflection on different form of practice/advice adapted to different group/kind of farmers.

#### **Question 5: What is the role of development cooperation and other key stakeholders?**

##### **5.1 What are the roles and functions of development agencies in agricultural advisory services?**

Initiating, financing role.

Extension to NGO and public services

##### **5.2 What are the roles and functions of the government (local and national)?**

National government:

- thinking on how to develop offices to capitalise and guarantee validity / quality of service;
- thinking about advisor training: new role of advisors / FFA: advisors do not any more deliver a solution/technology top down; they help farmers to auto-analyse their farm, problems, and they look for solutions together (there is no previous solution: problem has to be co-analysed with farmer: farmers and advisors look for solutions together).

##### **5.4 What are the implications of these roles and functions?**

##### **5.5 Which insights and lessons can be learnt from the arrangement of roles, e.g., good practices, obstacles, pitfalls?**

Training of providers must be charged on public or external funds.

To reach more farmers, initial training of farmers (alphabetisation, initiation to farm management) must be developed.

#### **Question 6: What linkages exist between agricultural advisory services and other types of services?**

Credit: the FFA didn't facilitate access to credit.