

GRAIN DE SEL

Inter-réseaux Développement rural Magazine • 2021 # 2

Food systems

What impact are partnerships between farmers and businesses having?

- > Diverse range of actors and strategies
- > Negotiation and building trust
- > Support and empowerment



INTER-RÉSEAUX
Développement Rural

CONTENTS No. 81



Cover photo: Marie Joséphine Ouédraogo - Agroserv maize-processing facility - 2021

CONTEXT

- Editorial 3
- Lead-in: What impact do partnerships between farmers and businesses have on the sustainability of food systems? 4-5

ISSUES

- Food systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: overview and specific features 6-7
- Food systems don't exist! 8-9
- Debate: Should crop and livestock farmers be included in the definition of "private sector"? 10-11
- The concept of "private sector" covers a broad array of actors and businesses 12-13
- Local and international partnerships for local dairy value chains 14-15
- How is fair trade helping make local food systems in West Africa more sustainable? 16-17
- Promising partnerships in the infant-flour sector: the story of Misola 18-19
- Using digital tools to manage a milk shed of agropastoralists in West Africa 20-21
- Producing local improved seeds: the story of Nafaso 22-23
- Les Potagers du Bandama: a social enterprise in Ivory Coast 24-25

PERSPECTIVES

- Cameroon's poultry sector is counting on state support to reduce its dependence on key imported inputs 26-27
- Supranational regulation and liberalisation: frameworks disadvantageous to African agriculture? 28-29
- Partnership between farmers' organisations and joint local authority groups for the livestock-meat sector in northern Benin 30-31
- Agro-Industry Fund: facilitating the mobilisation of private funding by SMEs in Burkina Faso 32-33

OUTSIDE VIEW

- Sub-Saharan Africa: a battleground for Western brewing companies 34
- Partnership between CGA and EAML in Kenya: an example to follow? Outside view 35

CROSS PERSPECTIVE

- How are partnerships between farmers and businesses contributing to the sustainability of the food system in West Africa? 36-38
- Members' corner 39
- This issue of *Grain de Sel* was the fruit of a long-term group effort! 40

GRAIN DE SEL

The opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Inter-réseaux. All of the articles are free of copyright. If you would like to reuse them, please cite "© Grain de Sel" and send us a copy of the publication.

Partnerships between farmers and businesses are essential to food systems

The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the structural weaknesses of the global food system and has been an aggravating factor in existing food and nutritional crises. Roughly 690 million people were already suffering from hunger in 2019, and current projections indicate that the pandemic will push as many as 132 million more people into the same situation. Everyone agrees that food systems are unsustainable. Industrial farming practices have a huge environmental cost and put the food security of future generations at risk. Besides farming, food systems face many other challenges, both global and local: economic inequality, gender inequality, climate change and biodiversity loss, migrations, conflicts, and the list goes on.

Food systems were therefore the focus of the most recent United Nations summit in September 2021. The event brought together people from the fields of science, business, politics and health, as well as academics, farmers, members of indigenous communities, youth organisations, consumer groups and environmental activists. Those participants came together before, during and after the summit with four main objectives: (1) to take action to ensure that measurable progress is made towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; (2) to raise awareness and elevate public discussion about how reforming our food systems can help us all to achieve the SDGs; (3) to develop principles to guide governments and other stakeholders looking to leverage their food systems to support the SDGs; (4) to create a follow-up and review system to assess the Summit's impact.

But there were a number of controversies regarding the organisation of this international event, particularly with regard to its governance, which did not include certain key actors, such as farmers' organisations. Derided by a number of civil-society organisations as a farce, the Summit appears to have been a missed opportunity for the international community to tackle urgent global issues. Criticism was fuelled by the preponderant role given to private agribusiness entities and large companies in the agrifood sector.

But the "private sector" – in West Africa, as elsewhere – encompasses a wide range of companies, not just foreign multinationals. To better understand the power, influence and impact of this diverse ecosystem of actors, Inter-réseaux launched a thematic cycle in 2017 to spark discussion and debate on private-sector involvement in African agriculture, with a particular focus on agricultural policies, funding and the structuring of value chains. A wide range of projects were completed throughout the cycle. The most recent was an experience-assessment report on partnerships between producer organisations and enterprises (<https://bit.ly/3ldMDwP>), which was produced with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development and which largely echoes the theme of this issue of *Grain de Sel*.

The discussion was suited to the abovementioned context: Farmers and businesses (both upstream and downstream) all farmers have a role to play in transforming food systems. They help structure value chains and develop sectors, each at their own level and according to their own area of expertise, size, influence and resources. They are drivers of development in their respective local areas, countries and regions.

How do they team up with one another? What are the challenges and opportunities for farmers' organisations and their members when it comes to partnering with businesses? And conversely, what challenges do agrifood companies face? What are the best support mechanisms for promoting family farms and sustainability?

This jointly produced issue of *Grain de Sel* features shared experiences and real examples of partnerships. They illustrate issues such as trust-building, the importance of strengthening FOs, and the challenges posed by power asymmetry in negotiations between actors.

For more information about the thematic cycle and how this issue of the magazine was made, see the back cover.

Gifty Narh Guiella, President of Inter-réseaux Développement Rural
Alexandra Quet-Viéville, Director of *Grain de Sel*

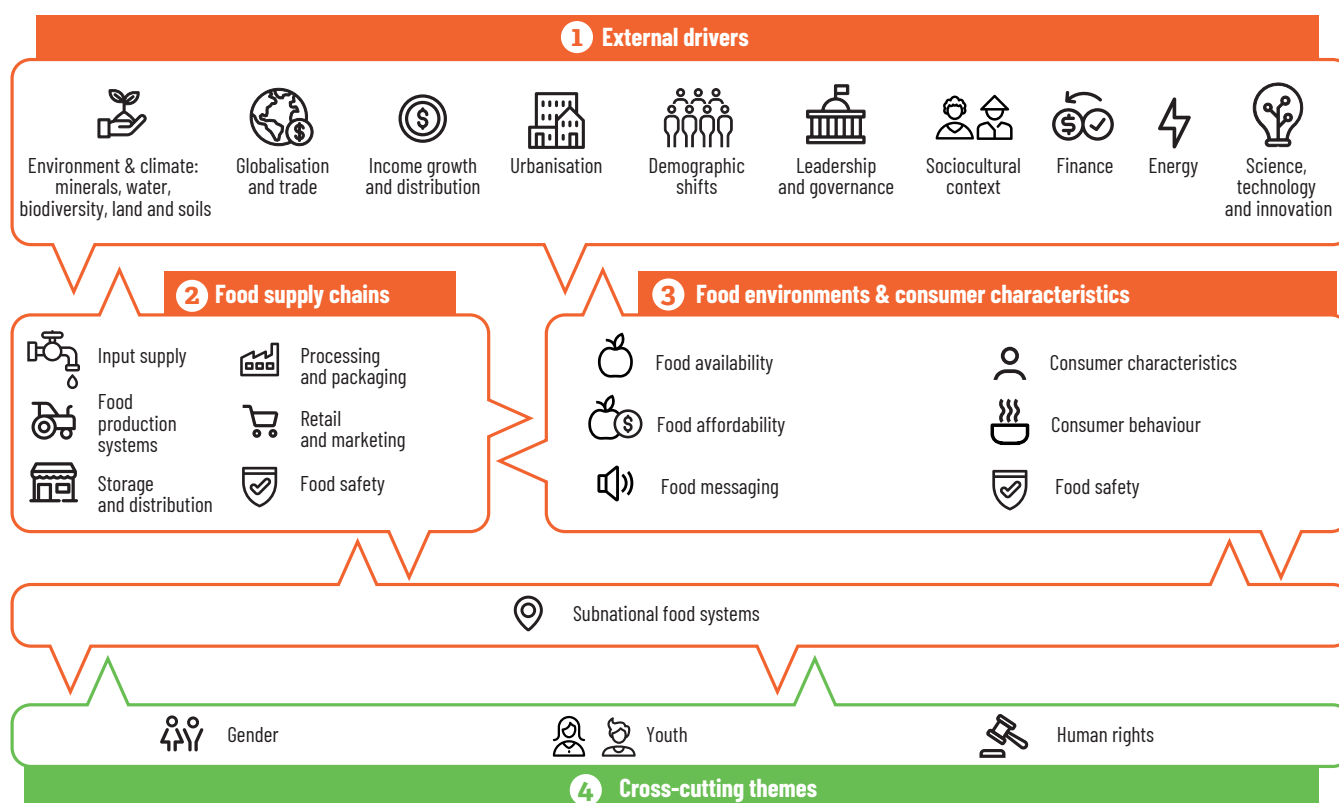
This issue of the magazine is the result of a group effort. Several individuals, members and partners were mobilised over a period of several months to produce this issue. We would like to thank the following people in particular for their contribution: Gifty Narh Guiella (CORADE), Liora Stuhrenberg (IRAM), Jean Luc François, Papa Assane Diop (SOS Faim Belgium in Senegal), Serge Aubague (CARE), Nedjma Bennegouch (SOS Faim Luxembourg), Cécile Broutin (Gret), Stéven Le Faou (Jokkoo Conseil), Gilles Mersadier (Afrique Verte), Mamadou Goita (IRPAD), Imma de Miguel, Patrick Delmas (Reca Niger). We would also like to sincerely thank François Doligez (IRAM), who passed the torch of the presidency to Gifty Narh Guiella during the preparation of this issue of the magazine, and who also contributed to the final product.

This issue was coordinated by Alexandra Quet-Viéville, senior officer and director of the *Grain de Sel* magazine.

LEAD-IN

What impact do partnerships between farmers and business

Food systems: many interdependent components



Source: Food Systems Dashboard, Food Systems Decision-Support Toolbox, HLPE, IFIS-TIP research

According to the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, a food system embraces all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes. This holistic approach makes it possible to examine each of the elements from production to consumption, as well as the causes of its dynamic and the strategies of the different actors. (p. 6-7-8)

The food economy from production to processing

KEY FIGURES



35%

of regional GDP is generated by the food economy



66%

of the population generates its income or produces its own food supplies through the food economy



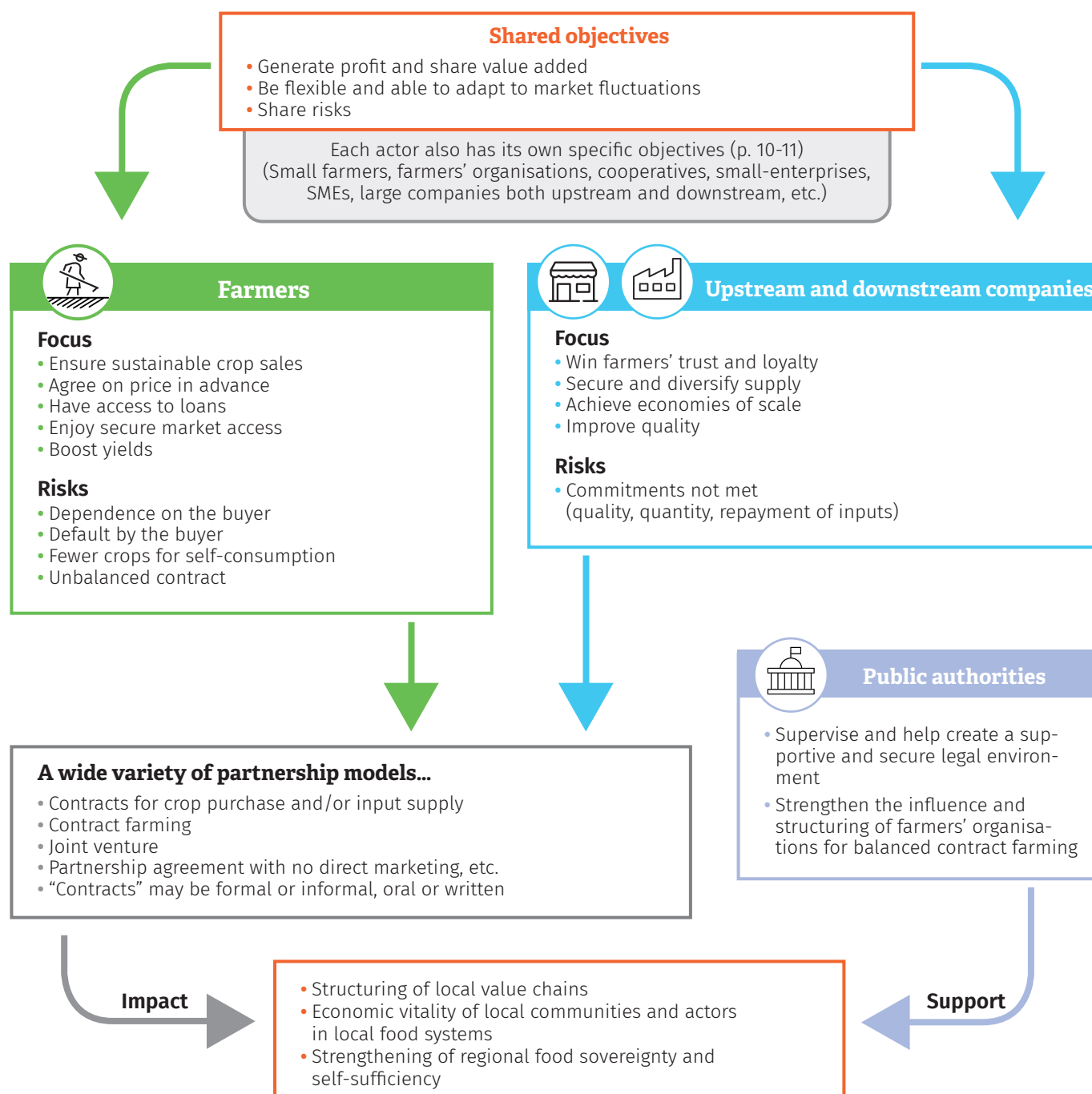
90%

of the calories consumed in West Africa are produced in the region, which presents an opportunity for the agricultural sector

(sources: Maps & Facts, no. 4, April 2021, SWAC/OECD; Bricias N., Tchamda C. and Mouton F. (Eds), 2016, L'Afrique à la conquête de son marché alimentaire intérieur. Enseignements de dix ans d'enquêtes auprès des ménages en Afrique de l'Ouest, au Cameroun et au Tchad. Paris, AFD, Coll. "Études de l'AFD" n°12)

Businesses have on the sustainability of food systems?

What do sustainable partnerships between farmers and agrifood companies seek to achieve?



In the early stages of the effort to establish partnerships between farmers and agrifood businesses, it was necessary to structure the different value chains in West Africa, the fast-growing regional private sector, farmers struggling to connect with the market, etc. The widely used traditional forms of oral partnership are not suitable for all value chains, nor are they secure. A number of difficulties are encountered when it comes to formalising those partnerships: mutual trust, balance of power in negotiations, etc. Public authorities have an important role to play, given their impact on the development of the agricultural sector and food system (p. 26-27; 36-38).

Food systems are complex, with a wide range of actors involved in production, processing and services in both the upstream and downstream parts of value chains.

Aerial view of a market in Cape Verde - Paolo Motta FAO

Food systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: overview and specific features

Food systems in Sub-Saharan Africa are highly diversified at all levels, from production and processing, to distribution. Despite an increase in imports for certain products, those systems satisfy the lion's share of internal demand and are one of the largest sources of jobs and income for a major part of the population. What are the specific features of these food systems?

Under what conditions can they help achieve more equitable and sustainable development?

Food systems (FS) are often broken down into “traditional” systems, “modern” systems, and “temporary” or “transitional” systems. Those different classifications arose from the observation that certain sectors bring together operators that have the same dominant approaches: family farmers sell their crops to artisans, who process them to sell at markets or in the street; industrial farms have their crops processed by large industrial firms and either sell their products at supermarkets and hypermarkets, or export them.

Traditional systems in theory

According to a 2018 report by SWAC/OECD, in West Africa 82 million people (two-thirds of the population) and two-thirds of employed women depend on food systems for their livelihood. Most of those jobs are in the primary sector (agriculture, livestock farming and fishing) and on family farms, 95% of which are less than 5 hectares. Post-harvest activities represent 20% of FS jobs (12 million in marketing, and 4 million in processing) and 68% of the GDP generated within those systems. Most of those jobs are informal, and 80% are done by women. As such, they are not very visible and receive little direct economic support.

It is also estimated that 90% of the calories

consumed in West Africa are produced in the region. The internal market is therefore the main outlet for the agricultural sector. Although food imports are relatively low (13% on average in Sub-Saharan Africa) and vary significantly from country to country, they are increasing for rice, wheat, sugar, meat, dairy products and oils, making consumers vulnerable to price fluctuations on international markets. Population growth, sustained urbanisation, export-focused strategies and an increase in the effects of climate change on African agriculture have raised fears that deficits could worsen.

Hybrid food systems in reality

The different classifications do not reflect the diversity of combinations within a given locality, over a given period of time, involving multiple actors (p. 9). Within FS, there are many different types of farms, production methods and strategies for organising work: family farms, entrepreneurial farms and capitalist farms of various sizes, some diversified and others practising monoculture. One thing they all have in common is that they are connected to the upstream part of the market through input suppliers, and to the downstream part of the market through marketing. Each link in the chain (transport, collection, processing, distribution, funding, training, etc.) plays an important role in the

structuring of value chains. Likewise, micro, small, mid-size and large companies all operate in the food-processing segment, depending on the product (p. 12-13). For example, artisanal processors position themselves in traditional grains, while canned goods tend to be produced by large companies. Markets, street vendors and neighbourhood shops have a dominant position in distribution channels alongside a handful of international supermarket chains. Companies that provide food-related services (restaurant, home delivery, online sales) are growing, driven by digitalisation. Long marketing channels (in terms of distance and number of intermediaries) also exist alongside short ones. Long channels involve products traded at regional or international level, such as Sahel livestock sold on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea and rice imported from Asia. Short channels include self-consumption, urban production and direct sales to consumers (p. 25).

Asymmetric combinations

Some sectors bring together operators that have very different approaches: family groundnut and palm farms sell to industrial oil factories; micro or small companies may seek distant funding from the diaspora, mobilise multinational resources for packaging, energy or communication, or export to industrialised countries through Asian intermediaries, as is the case with red palm oil; multinationals may have their products (sodas, aromatic cubes, powdered milk, biscuits) distributed by street vendors or other distributors in the informal sector.

The participation of all those private-sector actors is essential to building local food systems that are sustainable. But the objectives, values and functions of those actors must be examined, as well as the nature and balance of their relationships in terms of sharing information and risks. After all, they do not all have the same powers or the same abilities when it comes to negotiation, risk management and funding. In Sub-Saharan Africa, actors and circuits are often atomised and coordinate with one another through changes in market prices and informal loyalties based on trust. Formal contractual arrangements were encouraged by agribusiness, small companies, NGOs, research-action projects and apex farmers' organisations. Those partnerships between businesses and farmers could help make FS more sustainable by boosting productivity (e.g. when companies prefinance inputs and provide agricultural advisory services), improving logistics and reducing transaction costs, providing stable and lucrative outlets for farms, securing decent working conditions, and making products healthier and more nutritious.

AFRICA HAS A VAST DIVERSITY OF FOOD SYSTEMS

Promoting food systems that are sustainable and inclusive

To do so, it is necessary to include young people and vulnerable actors, promote equity between the different actors, make sure the public sector and local authorities are proactive, and ensure that models are flexible and adapted to the local context. The right conditions must be found for establishing attractive partnerships that are able to guarantee the quantity and quality of the

products traded while limiting the risk of excluding the weakest and youngest stakeholders. It is therefore important to consider, for each type of partnership, the principles of equity which must be guaranteed between the different segments of the value chains and between localities (urban and rural). Sharing value added, maintaining a balance of power, ensuring consistency between social and environmental values—these are all issues that can be improved through dialogue and the creation of a shared set of rules. The public sector plays a role here at different levels. FS can be a first step towards operationalising decentralisation and ensuring consistency between sectoral policies (agriculture, jobs, environment, health, etc.). In Africa, as elsewhere, towns and localities are taking on agricultural and food-related challenges, as evidenced by the 33 cities that signed the Milan Pact. These new actors in the governance of agricultural and food systems, working alongside the national authorities (p. 26-27), will help drive transformation and will encourage and supervise private

sector involvement in building FS that are more sustainable. The diversity of national and subnational situations calls for solutions and partnerships based on collaboration at local level, as the demographic, socio-economic, political and environmental factors that speed up or slow down transformation within Sub-Saharan FS are unique to each locality. ■

Socio-demographic changes and new challenges for food systems

In just 25 years, from 1993 to 2018, Africa's population increased by a factor of 1.9, and the urban population by a factor of 2.4. Demand for food is therefore increasing, especially in urban areas, which is creating major challenges when it comes to centralising the region's fragmented supply and transporting it from production zones to cities. In places where poor road infrastructure is an obstacle to trade, the concentration of demand in large cities may further marginalise certain areas that are unable to access those new markets. Urban lifestyles and higher income levels are changing the way people eat, and new nutritional problems are emerging as a result of higher consumption of processed, animal, fatty and sugary products. Sub-Saharan Africa – and its cities in particular – is seeing a rapid increase in overweight and obesity levels and related conditions, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The growing use of chemical products and plastics in agriculture and food processing is creating new health risks linked to poisoning. The industrialisation of the food system with the development of supermarkets and highly mechanised processing industries also calls into question whether food systems can preserve and create decent jobs for women and young people. Between now and 2050, 730 million people will join the workforce. What decent jobs will food systems be able to offer?

Climate change and natural-resource degradation are also creating risks. In addition to the region's structural constraints, Africa, and particularly the Sahel, will bear the brunt of the direct and indirect consequences of these phenomena (increase in the frequency and magnitude of shocks, expansion of arid zones), all of which pose a threat to national production. Down the road, there could be a higher risk of supply shocks and therefore greater volatility in agricultural prices. Migration, insecurity and conflict over the use of resources are also major factors that are causing undernourishment in the region to increase.

Lastly, the digitalisation of agriculture is another important trend that should be taken into account when transforming food systems. It creates a number of opportunities, such as precision agriculture, online sales, nutritional advice, aggregation of supply, delivery, etc.

Ninon Sirdey



David Richard

*ninon.sirdey@cirad.fr,
Economist and specialist
in assessing food systems at Cirad*

Nicolas Bricas



*nicolas.bricas@cirad.fr,
Researcher in socio-economics applied
to food at Cirad, director of the Unesco Chair
in World Food Systems*

Astou Diao Camara



*astoudiaocamara@gmail.com,
PhD in sociology and director of the Macro-
Economic Analysis Bureau at the Senegalese
Institute for Agricultural Research (ISRA), specialist
in pastoralism, family farming and forms
of support and agricultural advisory services
for farmers.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Bricas N., Tchamda C. and Mouton F. (Eds), 2016, *L'Afrique à la conquête de son marché alimentaire intérieur. Enseignements de dix ans d'enquêtes auprès des ménages en Afrique de l'Ouest, au Cameroun et au Tchad.* Paris, AFD, Coll "Études de l'AFD" n°12

Food systems don't exist!

The term “food system” is a convenient way of referring to all the actors and processes directly or indirectly related to feeding people – which could potentially include all of society! While the term is useful in that it reminds us of what these systems are trying to achieve, it must not lead us to believe that their driving forces are internal.

Food systems (FS) don't exist! They are only intellectual constructions, representations of reality. The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition defines FS as referring to all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes. But why do all of the different elements interactively involved in feeding people need to be grouped together in a single expression?

Where to start? Where to draw the line?

In addition to the farmers, fishermen, processors, traders, restaurateurs, consumers, etc. who are directly involved in feeding people, should the term also cover all the activities that make it possible for those actors to operate: input producers and suppliers (seeds, fertiliser, machines, packaging, etc.), transporters, researchers, advisors, training instructors, insurers, bankers, politicians, etc.? After all, they also contribute more or less directly to providing food for people, and they too are in turn affected by other actors not directly involved in agriculture or food.

If the term did encompass all those other activities, then a “food system” would include virtually all of society! Where, then, are the boundaries? Where should we draw the line? To answer that question, we first need to understand what we mean when we use this term.

Expanding for greater legitimacy

The expression first of all responds to the need of an entire economic sector to legitimise and defend itself. The primary sector – or agriculture – tends to be overshadowed by the secondary sector (manufacturing) and the tertiary sector (services), and is therefore neglected in public policies and cooperation policies. The sector wants to defend the importance of its role in terms of providing jobs and income, and achieving environmental and health objectives. But many of those objectives also concern food processing, marketing and consumption. That expanded whole, grouped together within FS, now needs to draw society's attention back to the importance of its contributions. We could refer to it as the agricultural and food sector! Why, then, do we prefer the term “food system”? Because all of those activities interact with one another, and we can't change one of them without affecting the others. The idea of a system reflects the interrelations between the different elements. But such a represen-

tation risks suggesting that the entire dynamic of the FS derives from its own activities. To be sure, some transformations are specific to the system itself: the integration of crop and livestock farming, or the concentration of companies. But the drivers that have truly changed the system are external: the price of fossil energy and labour, progress in chemistry, engineering, and now electronics, IT and cognitive science, trade globalisation, financialisation; lifestyle changes spurred by urbanisation, monetarisation, individualisation, etc.

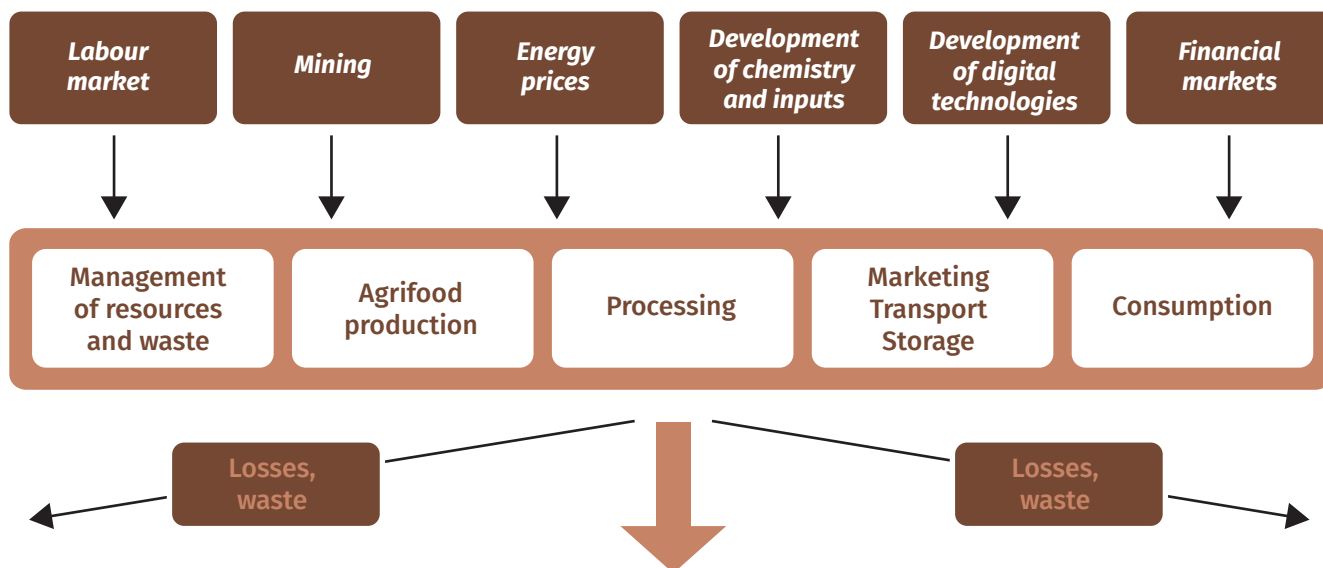
A complex and changing reality

When using this term, we need to remember two things. The first is that FS drivers are not all internal. FS are affected to a large degree by external factors. The concept should not become an intellectual fortress making it impossible to conceive of FS interactions with the rest of the economy and society. The second thing to keep in mind is that FS performance should not be assessed solely based on their ability to provide a certain quantity and quality of food for people. FS are also a source of jobs and income for a large part of the population. Farmers, processors and food traders alone represent two-thirds of all jobs in West Africa, and women hold most of the jobs in food services, processing and marketing (88%, 83% and 72%, respectively). FS therefore contribute more broadly to economic development. They are also essential to the health of humans and ecosystems. And lastly, they are central to social interactions, vectors of culture and a source of pleasure, and therefore play an essential role in society. These aspects must also be taken into account when assessing FS and adapting them for the future. ■

**FOOD SYSTEMS ARE AFFECTED BY EXTERNAL FACTORS,
AND THEIR PERFORMANCE SHOULD NOT BE ASSESSED SOLELY
BASED ON THEIR ABILITY TO PROVIDE FOOD**

Food systems are influenced by other sectors and contribute to many of the Sustainable Development Goals

Sectors that influence food systems



Sustainable Development Goals contributing to food and nutritional security, socio-economic development and environmental sustainability



Nicolas Bricas



nicolas.bricas@cirad.fr

Ninon Sirdey



ninon.sirdey@cirad.fr

Benoit Daviron



benoit.daviron@cirad.fr

The authors are socio-economists and economists, all of whom are Cirad researchers at the Montpellier Interdisciplinary Center on Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (UMR MoISA).

Should crop and livestock farmers be included in the definition of “private sector”?

According to the FAO (2021), the definition of “private sector” includes a broad array of people engaged in agriculture, fishing and livestock farming, as well as their organisations, cooperatives, businesses (from micro-enterprises to multinationals) and philanthropic foundations. Professional and inter-professional associations are also sometimes considered as belonging to the private sector, as are certain NGOs serving as investors. This all-embracing term has been the source of much debate. Some people say farmers should be recognised as full-fledged economic operators, while others propose distinguishing farmers from other types of private actors. So should crop and livestock farmers be included in the definition of “private sector”? That question was addressed several times during the thematic cycle on the “private sector” coordinated by Inter-réseaux. Here are a few of the arguments taken from those discussions.

Their decisions follow an economic approach and are based on market opportunities or profit-focused strategies.

The OHADA Uniform Act, which requires farmers’ organisations and their members to take the form of cooperative, seeks to recognise them as private operators.

The “private sector” category is disparate and obscures power relations.

BUT...

Private actors have different objectives and interests that are sometimes in competition or at odds with one another (on the market or for access to natural resources, land, capital).

Their involvement in development plans cannot be uniform.

Governance bodies need to recognise distinctions between roles, differences of interest and asymmetries in influence.

In the “private sector”, farmers are often in a position of weakness because they are small in size, large in number, widely scattered and vulnerable to asymmetries in training and information.

Which legitimises the provision of special support to their organisations, and public regulations governing their relations with businesses.

Although the criteria for public procurement contracts, for instance, do not exclude FOs, they are tailored more to other types of operators (ability to present financial statements or prove that a similar operation was performed in the past).

This asymmetry is not always recognised by the public authorities and development partners, who should be targeting and providing special support to the weakest economic actors.

They are the most important drivers of change for food security and agriculture.

Agropastoral family farms are full-fledged economic operators.

They are leaders when it comes to investing in agriculture, producing food products and providing jobs, particularly for women (in processing and marketing).

They should not be considered solely as the beneficiaries or targets of development policies and projects.

YES!

There is also strong heterogeneity within agropastoral farms.

On the one hand, there are agropastoral entrepreneurs that hire employees and invest in capital. On the other hand, there are family farms that optimise multi-objective functions including the sustainability of their locality.

NOT SO FAST!

This dichotomy is not always real. The former group may also include family farmers, and family farms may combine both approaches (growing cash crops and subsistence crops).

The former group should be considered private actors (farms are managed by maximising financial indicators to achieve private objectives). But the latter group should not necessarily be considered private actors (their objectives contribute to common goods and to global public goods: transmission of culture and know-how, joint management of water and natural resources, contribution to family and community governance mechanisms, etc.).

By defining specific categories of private operators – “family farmers”, “cooperatives”, “companies”, “financial institutions” –, it is possible to focus on each one’s role in agrifood systems and how they interact with one another, and therefore observe any conflicts and interdependences.

What do you think?

Should crop and livestock farmers be included in the definition of “private sector”?
On what conditions?

Keep the debate going!

Share your thoughts by writing to inter-reseaux@inter-reseaux.org

The concept of “private sector” covers a broad array of actors and businesses

Large company

PLANÈTE DISTRIBUTION

Provision of inputs and agricultural equipment, and sale of white rice



Ali Mohamed

Financial intermediary

Background:

Development of agricultural value chains

MARKET / MARKETING

- Processing of paddy rice supplied by farmers.
- Sale to wholesalers and semi-wholesalers across all regions in Mali.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Provision of inputs in conflict zones.
- Funding of inputs on credit for rice farmers.
- Close relationships with small farmers.

MAIN CHALLENGES

- Being able to serve all farmers in the Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao regions.
- Having access to long-term funding from banks.
- Industrialising the company by purchasing more efficient processing facilities (to husk rice and sort it by size according to the consumer's needs).

- **Contribution to improving food systems:** Through access to agricultural inputs and equipment, as banks and MFIs no longer exist in certain conflict zones. Planète Distribution's role is to supply inputs, buy paddy rice and serve as a bank.
- **Contribution to local development:** The company makes it possible to produce and process good-quality rice that is tailored to consumers' needs.
- **Types of partnership:** Each cooperative signs a loan agreement with Planète Distribution for the inputs and equipment, mainly groups of motor pumps to be repaid over several years each crop season. Repayment may be made in cash or in paddy rice at market price.
- **Services and/or support provided to farmers:** In addition to providing loans for inputs and agricultural equipment, the company also buys paddy rice, offering the cooperatives a decent price. It also helps them express their needs at general assemblies.

Mopti region,
Mali



Founded
2008



Revenue
14 to 18 billion FCFA



Partner cooperatives
18,711



People affected
41,580



620 employees, incl.
270 full-time

Cooperative

COOPÉRATIVE FAHO – FARMERS HOPE

Production, collection and marketing of cocoa beans and shade-tree seedlings, and sale of inputs to members only



Eugène

Kouame Kouakou

President
of the cooperative

Background:

Cocoa farmer

MARKET / MARKETING

- 670 farmers across six different localities in Ivory Coast: Niablé, Affalikro, Djangobo, Brindoukro, Abromamoué, Padiégnan

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- The cooperative form's status and solidarity make it more resilient to crises: complementary and indivisible economic and social dimension.
- Named best cooperative in the Indénié-Djuablin region by the Coffee-Cocoa Board of Ivory Coast in October 2020; solid support from the Quebec-based NGO SOCODEVI and from the trading and processing company Ecom Agroindustrial.

MAIN CHALLENGES

- The Covid-19 crisis has made access to high-quality inputs (phytosanitary products and seeds) difficult.
- Evacuating phytosanitary products with short shelf life.
- Integrating more female members within the cooperative (women rarely own land for production).
- Opening a processing facility to process 50% of the cooperative's cocoa by 2023.

- **Contribution to improving food systems:** Its activities help members maintain their level of income and help family farming become more resilient (by promoting sustainability). The cooperative promotes the diversification of activities (food crops, small-scale livestock farming) and the use of compost.
- **Contribution to local development:** The cooperative has created many jobs (for women and young people), particularly at shade-tree nurseries. It offers products and services that take into account the environment and gender equality (training in leadership and management for female members). It invests in community projects (schools) in partnership with local civil-society organisations, and places resilience at the heart of its efforts.
- **Types of partnership:** With, by and for members, who are simultaneously decision-makers (as members of the general assembly and elected members of the board of directors), owners (as investors) and users (of the cooperative's products and services). They are therefore involved in the cooperative's vision and management.
- **Services/support provided to farmers:** The cooperative collects and markets its members' cocoa beans at a better price (through negotiation). Shade-tree seedlings are produced and sold to members at an attractive negotiated price. Members have access to inputs, which are transported to them, and the cooperative then makes regular deductions on those members' deliveries in order to pay off their loans.

Indénié-Djuablin region,
Ivory Coast



Founded
2014



Revenue (2019/2020)
2,265,488,735 FCFA
for production of
1,642,570 kg of beans



Partners
Quebec government
and SOCODEVI (NGO);
ECOM (trading company)



People affected
670
farmers belonging
to the cooperative



Staff
Board of directors with
11 members, 6 of whom
are **women**. 10 permanent jobs

The companies operating within food systems come in a variety of forms and sizes, and specialise in a number of different areas. They operate within different sectors and seek to address local needs. Here are a few examples.

More profiles are available online (in French): <https://bit.ly/3z7FJhP>

SME

AGRO EXPRESS

Processing of tomatoes and various fresh spices into puree



Euphrasie Dassoundo Assogba Modukpe
Managing director

Background:

Marketing and commercial negotiation

MARKET / MARKETING

- Processing and packaging of tomato purees and spice-based marinades (chillies, garlic puree, ginger puree, mixes - garlic, bay leaf, parsley, celery, garlic, cumin, rosemary, thyme) produced by the farmers themselves.
- Sale to supermarkets and 50 shops in Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, French Guiana

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- The market for ready-made products is growing fast in Benin and in the sub-region.
- Demand is rising sharply for all-natural products, and consumers are becoming more aware of health issues linked to foods.

MAIN CHALLENGES

- Strong competition from ground spices because it is difficult for households to preserve the processed products (refrigerators).
- The market already has many companies in Benin and elsewhere in the region, availability of canned products that are lower quality but attractively priced.

- Contribution to improving food systems:** Each year the company stores roughly 10,000 jars of tomato from July to September (period of abundance) in order to ensure that the product is accessible during the periods when not much fruit is cultivated and when people sometimes have no choice but to put their health at risk by making dubious mixtures to prepare the sauces that are part of their daily diet. The company is helping reduce post-harvest tomato losses by 20% in the municipality.
- Contribution to local development:** The company contributes to local development by paying its taxes. It is active in food-safety initiatives and guarantees a fair and stable income for the forty-odd tomato farmers partnered with the company. Most of its employees are women.
- Types of partnership:** Partnerships are oral and regular. The company buys 80% of their tomato production. A set purchase price per kg was to be negotiated, but it didn't work out because the farmers lacked experience. The market price (which is variable) is therefore used. When prices are very low, the company pays above the market price (to keep the farmers loyal and ensure that they receive a fair income).
- Services/support provided to farmers:** The company provides its farmers with local varieties of seeds (at a very low price), phytosanitary products (through advances, with no interest), financial resources and training organised by agents from the local agency for agricultural development (who are specially solicited for the occasion).

Kpomasse,
Benin



Founded
2013



Revenue (2020)
13,000,000 FCFA
(Benin and in the sub-region)



Partners
40 tomato farmers in the municipality of Kpomasse, and five spice farmers



Production
Ability to process 1 tonne of tomatoes/day



Staff
15 part-time employees,
and three permanent positions;
90% women

Micro company

SALMA

Production and sale of fortified and blended livestock feed made from ground crop residues



Nafissa Hamidou Abdoulaye
Managing director

Parcours :

Project management and coordination, gender studies, agribusiness and social inclusion

MARKET / MARKETING

- Processing of crop residues provided by farmers, and sale throughout Niger: 70% private customers; 30% institutional customers. Sales made in the vicinity of the facility, and by delivery.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Livestock farming is an important sector for food security, and there is a livestock-feed production deficit in Niger.
- Supported by the public authorities and the Nigerien National Institute of Agronomy in promoting this line of business.
- The only Nigerien company to utilise farmers' crop residues.

MAIN CHALLENGES

- Meeting demand, which currently exceeds production capacity. Degraded road infrastructure and unstable access to energy.
- Funding for large investments (new production facility and equipment; creation of a storehouse and offices; acquisition of trucks, a generator and land for building the facility).
- Weak support for female entrepreneurs in Niger.

- Contribution to improving food systems:** Livestock farming is practised by over 80% of the population in Niger, and contributes, on average, 15% to household income and 25% to meeting food needs. The company's activity helps limit large-scale imports of livestock feed by the state. It uses different local products to make livestock feed, such as tree-grown fruit (gao), millet and sorghum straw for fodder, cottonseed cake, wheat bran and minerals.
- Contribution to local development:** The use of crop residues generates significant additional financial gains for farmers and helps promote agricultural value chains. By expanding its activities, the company could help ensure that highly nutritious livestock feed is available year-round at a low price, in order to improve the nutritional state of livestock and achieve greater livestock productivity.
- Types of partnership:** The company works simultaneously with crop farmers, who provide the raw materials (crop residues: millet, sorghum and cowpea stalks) for the production of livestock feed, and livestock farmers, who are the end users of the company's products.

Niamey,
Niger



Founded
2014



Revenue (2019)
221,709,031 FCFA



Production
1,000 tonnes/years



Partners
Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, United Nations bodies (FAO, etc.), non-governmental organisations (national and international), professional livestock-farmer organisations, livestock-farmer cooperatives in Niger



People affected
Network of livestock farmers,
3 distributors



Staff
10 permanent employees,
5 of whom are women; temporary employees depending on productivity level

Local and international partnerships for local dairy value chains

During a webinar organised by Inter-réseaux on 10 September 2021, three dairies talked about their experiences partnering with dairy farmers: the Banfora mini-dairy in Burkina Faso; the industrial dairy TIVISKI in Mauritania; and the Senegalese group Kirène, which is a franchise of the French cooperative Sodiaal. While they all face common challenges and share common values, each dairy has set up unique solutions that are specifically tailored to their environment. Here are three complementary initiatives that have sparked innovation for the development of the value chain at regional level.

Milk is a symbol of the region's food dependency as well as the paradox on which that dependency is based. With over 460 million head of livestock in the region, the production potential (for dairy and meat) is enormous. And yet over a fifteen-year period, the region's dairy imports have risen from 1.2 to 2.5 billion litres of milk equivalent a year, which represents over 500 billion FCFA (or 760 million euros) a year. Maryam Abeiderrahmane says that the decision to create TIVISKI was based on the following observation: *"In a country where there are more livestock than people, importing milk is an aberration, and local milk is delicious. We wanted to make that milk accessible without needing to venture into the countryside."*

**MASSIVE IMPORTS
OF MILK ARE
THE COMMON ENEMY**

Structural constraints

The Banfora mini-dairy, TIVISKI in Mauritania and Kirène in Senegal all have the same common enemy: massive imports of milk and powdered milk, particularly from Europe, owing to low customs duties. Meanwhile, local value chains are struggling to meet the growing national demand for dairy products because of structural constraints faced by the three companies: milk supply difficulties because livestock farmers are reluctant to sell their milk and

because accessibility issues have made collection difficult; strong seasonality of production; difficulty guaranteeing the hygienic quality of milk because of deficiencies in transport and the cold chain; low level of professional skills among actors in the chain (livestock farmers, collectors, processors); reduced access to livestock feed, veterinary services and technical advice; and lack of consumer trust in local milk.

Distinct and complementary partnership models

Each company has developed specific organisations and partnerships to overcome these constraints: for the Banfora mini-dairy this involved taking on the cooperative form and creating a framework for dialogue through the dairy innovation platform; for TIVISKI it involved first developing a network of loyal farmers and organising collection, and then testing a company with jointly held capital; for Kirène it involved creating a franchise with the brand Candia of the French cooperative Sodiaal. Each company was therefore able, at different scales, to secure the loyalty of a network of dairy farmers, boost their income and improve milk quality. Complementing one another at regional level, they provide solutions that are adapted to each dairy production zone. Mini-dairies offer interesting opportunities in isolated rural areas. They stimulate the local economy by preserving, processing and marketing milk locally, while enjoying strong potential for growth. Intermediate models, such as TIVISKI and Kirène/Sodiaal, target a denser urban market. TIVISKI also has its eyes on the local market far from the capital, with the creation of a company with jointly held capital.


Local roots and endogenous development

Something else all three companies have in common: local roots and a deep understanding of the cultural context with regard to

both production and consumption. TIVISKI faced resistance from farmers in Mauritania, where selling milk was considered taboo and was thought to bring calamity. The company made a point of ensuring collection without regard to family loyalties in order to guarantee the quality of the product. Downstream, distributors and consumers needed to be taught how to keep milk fresh and why local production is important. Kirène is currently developing the collection of milk in the western and central-western regions of Senegal, where there is extensive livestock farming but no dairy-farming culture. Since local packaged and/or processed dairy products are relatively new in the region, an understanding of endogenous dynamics is an essential key to success when it comes to securing the trust and arousing the interest of farmers and consumers. Djakarija Sirima (of the Banfora mini-dairy) says: *"It is essential to promote endogenous development so as not to undermine the cultural and local contributions."* Sodiaal also believes that *"it is the local establishments that create development."* Lastly, local roots go hand in hand with dialogue, collaboration and human relationships (that sometimes go beyond business). The three companies have found ways to manage the differences of interest that are expressed every now and then, sometimes with vehemence.




What support is available for scaling up?


"The goal of the Banfora mini-dairy is not to die mini," says Mr Sirima, and Maryam Abeiderrahmane recalls that TIVISKI was once just a small processing facility. The evolution of the dairy sector depends in large part on the development of professional skills among local actors. But to scale up, companies and value chains need to be supported by coordinated public and regional policies, which must take into account the sometimes competing interests of the different actors in the value



Mini-dairy Banfora

SIMPLIFIED COOPERATIVE

-  **12 employees**, 5 of whom are women
-  **180,000 litres of milk** collected each year
-  **48 million FCFA** (73 425 euros) a year





178 herders, 146 of whom are women


Collectors

Are part of

The dairy innovation platform (APESS)




- A framework allowing herders, collectors and processors to work together
- Supported by researchers and by technical and financial partners
- Training, equipment, provision of inputs on credit

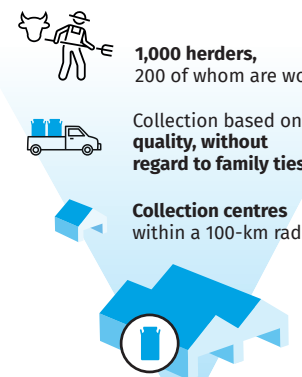
 Farmer loyalty, higher production and year-round collection, minimum price, local approach with small herders, sharing equipment.
  Quality of milk, access to livestock feed, trust and conciliation of different interests, investment in collection equipment, masculinisation of the sector, profitability.



Local industrial dairy Tiviski

PRIVATE COMPANY

-  **150 employees**, 10 of whom are women
-  **4.5 million litres of milk** collected each year
-  **2.9 million euros** a year



1,000 herders, 200 of whom are women

Collection based on **quality, without regard to family ties**



Collection centres within a 100-km radius


Clean containers provided

Located near the capital **Nouakchott**
access to electricity and water for Tiviski

Testing a company with jointly held capital with livestock farmers

- For the farmers: profit-sharing
- For the company: securing farmer loyalty, and reducing the seasonality effect
- The company's priority: to guarantee quality
- Possibility of supplying the local market farther from the capital


 Facilitation of the sale of milk despite the cultural taboo, emergence of local demand thanks to the product's recognised quality, deep understanding of the context (production and consumption), growth of the company and job creation, additional income for livestock-farming families, better livestock-farming conditions.
  Seasonality of production, distribution of the wealth produced and conciliation of divergent interests between businesses and farmers, cold chain and energy, competition from imported milk.



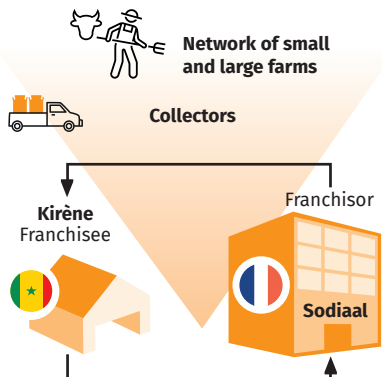
Industrial group Kirène

PRIVATE COMPANY

Group brands:
Eau Kirène, Pepsico, Candia, Présséa

-  **4 to 5 million litres of milk** produced each year

Central-western region, an extensive livestock-farming system



Network of small and large farms



Collectors

Kirène Franchisee

Franchisor
Sodiaal

International franchise of Sodiaal

- Franchise for the Candia brand
- Transfer of skills (industrial, research & development, marketing)
- Inputs on credit
- Royalties negotiated on the basis of a market study

 No milk exported by Sodiaal but benefit of using the image of Candia, which is used in Senegal solely by the franchisee, quality in line with French standards, transfer of skills, sharing of collection costs, good financial results (position of leader or challenger), competitive prices for consumers, increase in the proportion of local milk in Kirène's production (currently 20%).
  Investment by Sodiaal in collection, negotiation of royalties based on the franchise's added value (constant justification), distribution of profits and prices for farmers, risk of dependence on the brand and adoption of an intensive livestock-farming model, increase in the proportion of local milk so that as much value as possible is created locally.

chain. This concerns, in particular, the creation of collection centres in production zones, the infrastructure needed to ensure proper hygiene and preservation (roads, cold chain, energy), and the facilitation of access to veterinary services and livestock feed for farmers. Tariff measures at the borders and internal tax measures also need to be more favourable to local production. The ECOWAS local milk offensive is a step in this direction. It aims to unite, coordinate and assist all initiatives for the development of value chains for local milk. Bio Goura Soulé of the ECOWAS Department of Agriculture and Rural Development says: "The three

types of company are neither exclusive nor exhaustive, as multinational investment in large production facilities integrated within local value chains may also present an opportunity for development." And Mr Soulé adds: "Promoting just one model would be like putting all your eggs in one basket." ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Hear what the Banfora mini-dairy, TIVISKI, Sodiaal and Kirène had to say during the webinar on IR's website: <https://bit.ly/3FvZZMt>

Read the special edition of the Bulletin de Veille newsletter on local milk entitled "Développement des filières lait local en Afrique de l'Ouest : quels rôles pour les organisations de producteurs et les entreprises ?": <https://bit.ly/3hn8GPS>

The webinar this article is based on was made possible thanks to the support of Oxfam Belgium and AVSF.

How is fair trade helping make local food systems in West Africa more sustainable?

Against a backdrop of social and economic inequality and environmental imbalances exacerbated by globalised trade, fair trade has positioned itself as a particularly well-developed model for contract farming. What are the requirements for certification and what dynamics does it create?

Fair Trade (FT) is generally defined as a trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It offers better trading conditions and helps secure the rights of farmers in the Global South. Demand for FT on the international market has been growing steadily since the early 2000s. For example, Euromonitor International estimates that FT cocoa bean sales tripled between 2009 and 2015. While it is difficult to characterise FT shea sales trends, many farmers' organisations (FO) in the Sahel became certified during that period. In Burkina Faso, Union de Léo was able to double the average annual income of its farmers, from 26,000 FCFA (2005) to 52,000 FCFA (2006), after it became certified in 2006. That trend can be seen in markets in the Global North. In France, for instance, sales of FT products rose 450% between 2010 and 2020.

In West Africa, demand for FT products – which is relatively low – previously concerned only cotton and cocoa. It then gradually expanded to include a wide array of products, mainly for export: cashew, shea, sesame, mango, citrus, banana, coconut, hibiscus, etc. The main labels for those products are Fairtrade, Fair For Life (Ecocert), WFTO (World Fair Trade Organisation) and SPP (Symbole des Producteurs Paysans).

A tool for promoting the ecological transition and fair prices

Agronomically speaking, most family farms grow FT crops in association (on the same farm or in the same field) with crops for their own consumption or to be sold at local markets. Through guaranteed minimum prices calculated based on production costs, and

multi-year commitments (in terms of price and volume) from buyers, FT helps farming families secure and increase their income. As their investment capacity increases over time, they are able to adopt agroecological practices and increase their production of food crops (soil fertility management, more food crops grown as companion crops or in other cultivated fields). In the cocoa sector, for instance, agroforestry techniques involve growing plantains, manioc and vegetables as companion crops. When the trees start creating too much shade, fruit trees are planted as a companion crop. In Mali and Burkina Faso, sesame and moringa are found in the areas where shea is collected.

As demand from consumers in the Global

Strengthening the economic fabric of communities and local value chains

The many strict requirements of the FT market in terms of collective organisations and agronomic practices mean that certified FOs have a lot to learn and need to strengthen their management capacities in a broad sense: collective planning of crop years; organisation of product collection; accounting and financial management; management of product quality; management of processing procedures; management of packaging and storage; compliance with certification specifications, product marketing, etc. From a commercial standpoint, the FOs that are involved also develop their skills in prospecting, negotiating and contractual arrangements. Often those organisations are not able to sell their entire supply on the FT markets. The marketing skills they acquire on those markets allow them to position their certified products on domestic markets too (from villages to the capital), as well as other products from among their members' companion crops, particularly food crops.

Moreover, the production, collection, processing, marketing and transport activities of the organisations involved in FT mean that it is necessary to develop related services, which are also essential for local sectors. Those services are a source of income for the people who provide them, causing their purchasing power as consumers who buy their goods locally to increase: many shea, cashew and dried-mango processors in Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana are seasonal employees who, thanks to their work, are better able to provide for their family's food needs.

THE REQUIREMENTS
OF FAIR TRADE MEAN
THAT CERTIFIED FARMERS'
ORGANISATIONS HAVE
A LOT TO LEARN

North becomes increasingly oriented towards products having both FT and organic certification, practices are changing within the sectors in question. Those practices are starting to focus more on the sustainable management of resources (soil, water), which is helping maintain, and even increase, the production of food crops.



Agroforestry system for cocoa farming, fully set up in 2017 by the fair-trade cooperative CAMAYE (Ivory Coast)

Lastly, the strengthening of FOs – which is strongly facilitated by FT – leads them to take on a socio-political role in which they represent the interests of farming families and rural communities in the many different forums and frameworks for discussing and developing public policies. They also help make sure that those policies are more favourable to family farming and to consumers, by making high-quality family-farming products more accessible. With support from the Équité project, Nununa – a Burkinabe federation of female shea processors in the provinces of Sissili and Ziro – organised activities in conjunction with the traditional chieftdom, local municipalities and forestry services to secure six shea parks located within areas where forestry amenities are being developed. All of those actors have together defined specifications and have drawn up and signed agreements for the exploitation of shea and other non-wood forestry products. The production of high-quality honey in those protected zones has allowed communities to procure goods more easily on local markets.

Developing fair trade between actors in the Global South

There are situations where FT does not have a big enough impact to significantly increase the income of farmers or transform food systems: sometimes because

the minimum price is not high enough with respect to actual production costs, and other times because there is not enough exploitable agricultural land or because the proportion of sales by organisations is low. Moreover, although many farmers have limited access to chemical inputs and are focused on diversifying their production, FT label standards need to be more ambitious in order to ensure that farmers belonging to certified FOs adopt farming methods – particularly agroecology – that are environmentally friendly and systematically diversified.

Care must also be taken to ensure that, by making certain cash crops more economically attractive, the system does not result in excessive specialisation within production systems, with more land on family farms being reserved for growing cash crops than subsistence crops. Such a scenario would make it harder for those families to produce food for their own consumption and for local markets.

Lastly, low local consumption of these products, which are intended for export and are generally more expensive than lower-quality imported products, is an obstacle for certified FOs when it comes to procuring these products.

FT therefore needs to expand its market, as well as the number of actors and types of products involved. It is a tool for transforming agricultural value chains and food systems by transforming their social and commercial relations, and their production practices. The main objective is therefore to develop FT between actors in the Global South, which would undoubtedly make local food systems even more sustainable by promoting high-quality local products for consumers and guaranteeing a decent income for farmers. Initial initiatives in West Africa to date have been timid. They are certainly suffering from the lack of any large-scale study to identify farmers and sectors where such trading partnerships between FOs and consumers could thrive. ■

Christophe Boscher



c.boscher@avsf.org
Head of the Équité Programme, AVSF.
Romain Valleur, Programme Officer at AVSF,
also contributed to this article.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The Équité programme seeks to promote sustainable economic development in low-income countries, combat poverty and strengthen family farming by supporting the development of fair and sustainable value chains in West Africa. It supports projects led by certified FOs that aim to support their own structuring and the structuring of their respective value chains, strengthen their role in the governance of international labels and improve the visibility of FT as a tool for sustainable development.

<http://www.programme-equite.org/>



Réseau Misola

Misola's flours combine grains, oil-rich legumes, vitamins and trace elements, and are designed to prevent and combat child malnutrition.

Many companies in the Sahel are marketing locally produced infant flours in order to make food supplements for young children accessible. These flours are produced by small and mid-size companies, or very small facilities managed by women's groups. They face a number of challenges when it comes to traceability, quality and procuring raw materials. One potential solution is to strengthen partnerships with farmers' organisations.

Promising partnerships in the infant-flour sector: the story of Misola

The sector for local infant flours is promising. According to a FILAO study entitled *The sector for locally produced infant flours in six Sahel countries*, conducted jointly by Gret, IRAM and IRD, global demand for infant flours on the commercial market could reach 10,000 tonnes a year by 2025, which is five times higher than now. Providing the raw materials needed to produce infant flours is therefore a real opportunity for farmers' organisations (FO), particularly in terms of volume and security of outlets for certain agricultural products. To seize this opportunity, they need to overcome two challenges: guaranteeing the hygienic and organoleptic quality of the products they deliver to companies, and guaranteeing traceability from field to factory. Quality must also be managed and traceability ensured within the companies producing infant flours from local raw materials.

IN ORDER FOR THIS
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOs
AND PRODUCTION FACILITIES
TO BE SUCCESSFUL, THEY
BOTH NEED TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE

Ensuring quality and traceability

Controlling product quality at production-facility level is still a major obstacle for the sector. Conducting quality analyses on a regular basis through local or sub-regional laboratories is very expensive, and production facilities have very limited capacity to perform quality controls internally. Because

of their limited financial resources and low storage capacity, they tend to purchase their supplies through traders. Purchases are made as needed, and the traceability and quality of the raw materials cannot be certified. Getting FOs and production facilities to team up would not only provide companies with a stable supply of high-quality raw materials, it would also give FOs access to a secure and lucrative market.

Difficult contractual arrangements

Currently, raw materials are rarely sourced directly from FOs because the contracts are difficult to comply with in terms of deadlines, quality, quantity and traceability. FOs also propose prices that are higher than market prices and want to be paid in cash promptly after delivery of the order, whereas many production facilities are not in a financial position to do so. FOs are still hesitant to get involved in lending systems, which they see as risky and dangerous.

FOs and production facilities also face major difficulties in terms of coordination, and an unorganised, improvised and temporary system for procuring supplies on the market. In order for this relationship between FOs and production facilities to be successful, they both need technical assistance: FOs need help gaining access to high-quality inputs and improving current post-harvest practices, which leave impurities in the raw materials; and production facilities need help structuring themselves more effectively, anticipating their needs, strengthening their method of distribution and developing the promotion of their products. Contractual arrangements need to be set up that are precise and flexible, and that include frameworks for dialogue to ensure that all actors in the chain are remunerated fairly.

Supporting the development of a local value chain through labelling

Although the commercial market is promising, local infant flours are still not available enough, visible enough or attractive enough at country level. There is a considerable lack of awareness about local infant flours, and they face competition from cheap imported products. Demand for local flours is still very low and largely dependent on institutional markets. Communication initiatives encouraging the incorporation of infant flours into eating habits should be initiated in order to help promote the longevity of the sector. States and private companies



In order to incorporate the flour into the preparation, it must be sifted. The Misola Mali network currently employs more than 600 women.

Réseau Misola

SOURCING RAW MATERIALS FROM FOS WOULD CREATE A SHORT SUPPLY CHAIN AND WOULD HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO JOBS

both have a role to play in this regard. Legislative and regulatory frameworks at national level for the infant-flours sector are not very clear, and are sometimes non-existent. State bodies therefore need to draft legislation to help ensure the longevity of locally produced infant flours, for instance by encouraging farmers to move towards labelling. Promoting high-quality labels could be a solution if farmers sought and obtained a certificate of conformity.

How Misola Mali has responded

Production facilities for infant flours can be isolated or organised into distribution networks, such as the “Misola” network of production facilities for fortified infant flours in Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin and Mali. That network is managed by the Misola association with support from Gret, Afrique Verte and various technical entities in the countries where Misola operates. The network’s production facilities in Mali generally acquire raw materials on the conventional market as needed. It is therefore impossible to know their origin or the conditions in which they were produced or stored. To improve raw-material traceability, Misola is currently working on an innovative encoding system. Upon completion, it will no longer be necessary to indicate the name of the production facility on the packaging. The code will contain the location, facility, manufacturing company and raw-material suppliers for a given final product, the entry number in the Misola country network, and the entry number in the Misola Africa network. This work is currently in progress and will likely be adopted by the entire network to ensure traceability. Sourcing raw materials from FOs would create a short supply chain and would have a positive impact on the local economy, particularly with respect to jobs, as the network currently employs more than 600 women. But local quality has a cost. Misola often had to buy cleaned pearl millet

at a higher price thanks to the partnership between Sasakawa Global 2000, Misola, and local farmers in the Ségou region. The funds raised by the network through decentralised cooperation were used to purchase raw materials from those local farmers. The creation of Fédérations d’Unités Misola also allowed them to focus more on marketing through contractual arrangements with farmers. The production facilities do not have sufficient guarantees to access institutional contracts for large quantities of flour. In such cases, Misola coordinates group supply with farmers. Farmers also have an interest in grouping together, so that they can gain access to larger contracts through better decision-making and stronger influence. ■

Christiane Rakotomalala



*rakotomalala@gret.org
Head of Nutrition projects,
agrifood expert at Gret*

Abdoulaye Sangho



*misolamali@orangemali.net
Misola Mali and Africa coordinator*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

IRD, Gret, Iram, Unicef, La filière des farines infantiles produites localement dans 6 pays sahéliens : Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger, Sénégal, Tchad, 2020, 164 pages.

<https://bit.ly/3oPKIE7>

Thanks to support from Misola’s head office, French administrative bodies such as the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, the Hauts-de-France Region, the Pas-de-Calais Department, the town of Bron, the city of Lyon, the town of Weingarten and the district of Ravensburg, the African components of the Misola network received funding to purchase raw materials from farmers.

For videos visit: <https://bit.ly/3oPr2f0>

Using digital tools to manage a milk shed of agropastoralists in West Africa

The Laiterie du Berger dairy in Senegal sources its milk from 1,200 farmers and has developed digital solutions for greater efficiency in collecting milk and paying farmers. What challenges come with the wider use of these tools? What synergies do they help generate? How do they contribute to local development and help coordinate the different actors in the value chain?

LDB's idea is to offer livestock farmers around the town of Richard Toll secured and guaranteed year-round access to the milk market in exchange for a year-round supply of milk. Milk is naturally abundant in this region during the wet season, but becomes scarce during the dry season because of transhumance and fewer pastoral resources. Livestock farmers therefore adopt different feeding and reproduction strategies to maintain, and in some cases increase, production during the dry season. This approach has paid off, as collection during the dry season now exceeds collection during overwintering. But the challenge is now to maintain those levels of collection in unfavourable climatic conditions. Since its founding, LDB has also supplied livestock feed (rice bran, groundnut cake, industrial feed concentrate) for its farmers at preferential prices with limited seasonal fluctuation. The dairy sells roughly 1,000 tonnes of feed a year at its shops within its milk shed.

Digital tools for managing the production zone

After the purchase price of local milk was revised in 2018, local livestock farmers took a strong interest in LDB. LDB expects to increase from 500 tonnes of milk a year to over 3,000 in less than five years. Likewise, it wants to triple the number of its suppliers. To achieve such a quantum leap, it will need to globally revise its practices in the field and its administrative-management procedures in order to be both thorough and swift when dealing with the product and farmers. Through its subsidiary Kossam Société de Développement de l'Élevage (KSDE), LDB has developed an enterprise-resource-planning system dedicated to supplier-customer relations and configured based on the organisation of the company and its interactions with its production zone.

KSDE has developed two mobile applications for milk collection and the sale of livestock feed. The company has also set up a digital SMS payment solution for farmers. Data is

entered on forms, and data tables are then generated with lists of references, such as the identification of the farmers (see table opposite).

These three digital solutions will likely be complemented in the coming year by an advisory application for monitoring farms. KSDE supports farmers through an advisory scheme with about fifteen people divided across different sectors within the milk shed. The advisors monitor, as a priority, farms that have invested in stabling for their core milking cows (four cows in production). There are currently 65 of these "mini-farms", and that number will likely reach one hundred by 2022. The advisors will have to monitor a growing number of farms. Monitoring is currently performed with notebooks, and the data is then transferred to an Excel table. In the future, the same form-based system will be used to synchronise data directly, but designing digital tools for monitoring livestock farming is still more complex than managing supplier-customer relations.

Challenges and synergies of digital solutions in local dairy value chains

The increase in digital tools has been a particularly interesting subject of study, especially with regard to its phases of development and dissemination in the field. The changes these tools bring about show how actors in the different value chains are able to adapt and keep up with technological developments, even in isolated rural areas. As part of the transition to digital management of the milk shed, there needs to be an experimentation and learning phase before the use of digital tools becomes routine and fully integrated in normal operations between companies and suppliers.

All involved actors must therefore receive prior training in the use of digital tools, accounting, equipment management and cus-



Delivery of milk at an LDB collection point. The mobile application for collectors and unloaders has simplified data management, product monitoring and payment.

Jean-Daniel Cesaro 2019

toomer relations. Illiteracy in rural areas is an obstacle to the development of these technologies. But with the younger generation, and thanks to LDB's support for the training of young women in particular, there are relays in the field who can take charge of part of the customer relationship between the dairy and the farmers.

The consolidation phase is particularly delicate, as the KSDE operator must utilise the information system and its tools, and maintain its solutions while adapting them to improve relations with suppliers. For most livestock farmers, all of these changes seem imperceptible. But they are vital to the organisation of the general system and to making

the dairy more efficient. Maintaining training programmes is essential, but comes with additional costs. The development of digital tools gives the dairy greater control over the production zone, allowing it to quickly target issues regarding the quality of the milk. Monitoring indicators allow department heads and advisors to control production. Predictive analysis based on data collected by the dairy offers new services for farmers while securing the dairy in terms of its repayments. The main interest in digitalising relations between companies and suppliers is certainly the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) as a new tool in commercial relations and in negotiations between the dairy and farmers. AI facilitates the circulation and transparency

of information, speeds up the flow of money, strongly limits fraud and provides a new framework for exchanges between actors in the value chain. Time will tell if this digital solution for the dairy value chain is viable, particularly during pastoral crises. ■

Jean-Daniel Cesaro



cesaro@cirad.fr

Geographer-cartographer, CIRAD, UMR SELMET, dP PPZS, ISRA CRA Saint-Louis, Senegal

Anna-Prisca Sow



Geographer, CIRAD, UMR SELMET, dP PPZS, Montpellier, France

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Read the full interview (in French)
<https://bit.ly/3D8UtOz>

DATABASE

• Unique QR code to identify livestock farmers • Support tool for all transactions with the dairy and all applications

Mobile application for data collection:

For collectors and unloaders working for KDSE

BEFORE	AFTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwritten note indicating volume of milk collected for each farmer number and deferred entry • Emptying of tanks at the dairy, and handwritten note of quantities of milk refused (quality problem) • Comparison of both lists to determine the quantity delivered per farmer • Long and tedious process, requiring a lot of human resources and giving rise to errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collector version: quantities of milk recorded directly on the form (farmer number + tank number) • After weighing the milk and testing its quality, the dairy validates receipt of the milk in the application (unloader version) • The farmers supplying the milk are credited, in the KDSE information system, an amount in proportion to how much milk they supplied • Simplified data management, product monitoring and payment

Mobile application for food storehouses

For storehouse managers

BEFORE	AFTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralisation of the sale of feed to the dairy • Time-consuming distribution of feed • Farmers have to prove the existence and amount of their milk or feed credit, or pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in 13 warehouses for storing the dairy's products • Recruitment and training of farmers to manage inventory • Centralisation of data (feed credit and milk credit) using a QR code • Quicker payment

Digital payment solution

BEFORE	AFTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record for each farmer (between income from milk and expenses for feed) • Farmers must collect the amounts owed in-person at the start of each month • Difficulties for the dairy in the event of non-payment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated payment thanks to the enterprise-resource-planning system • Flexible system: funds transferred to bank account, via SMS or via NFC card (contactless) through the Wizzal service • Greater security, more flexibility • Average monthly payment: 20,000 FCFA, as most of the milk income is invested in livestock feed for other herds

“90% of the milk consumed in Senegal is imported in powder form, while 30% of the population are livestock farmers by tradition and are capable of producing milk.”

Bagoré Bathily addressed the situation by founding the social enterprise La Laiterie du Berger (LDB) in 2006, as a way to make use of local milk production (see pp. 14-15). LDB collects milk from Fula livestock farmers in the Richard Toll area of northern Senegal, and uses it to develop dairy products. LDB has become the second-largest player in Senegal's yoghurt market, and the biggest processor of local milk in the country. The number of farmers providing milk rose from 450 in 2018 to 1,200 in 2021. Of those 1,200 farmers, 47% are women.

¹ Professional software to help companies manage all of their processes (human resources, finances, distribution, supplies, etc.)

Producing local improved seeds: the story of Nafaso

Nafaso is a Burkinabe company that produces and markets seeds, and is experiencing strong growth throughout the region. Mr Abdoulaye Sawadogo, founder and managing director, spoke to us about the history of his company, how it is organised, and how it partners with and supports the small farmers in its network.

Grain de Sel (GDS): Could you tell us about the history of your company?

Abdoulaye Sawadogo (AS): In the 1980s, I was working for an African tyre company. It was a very difficult period economically, and I had to change careers. Without any secondary education, I was looking for a line of business that was meaningful and that would allow me to be my own boss. I began producing bananas and watermelon. It quickly became profitable, but I ran into many difficulties. In 2008, I founded Neema Agricole du Faso (Nafaso), a company specialising in the production, marketing and distribution of improved seeds in the sub-region. Today, we are diversifying our activities with the production and marketing of rice. I am very proud of what we have achieved. We produce roughly 6,500 tonnes/year, with 80 permanent employees and 300 tempo-

rary employees, and our revenue fluctuates between 2 and over 3 billion FCFA depending on the year. We work with a vast network of individual suppliers and cooperatives, whom we support in various ways in order to ensure that they are able to carry out their work in the best possible conditions. Having been a producer myself gives me a better understanding of what other producers are going through and the difficulties they face. Nafaso is also partnered with several organisations: the Burkina Faso Environmental Institute for Agricultural Research (INERA), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/ WECARD), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and West Africa Food Markets, with whom we are working on programmes to improve varieties and boost the production and marketing of improved seeds. We are therefore recognised in the sector.

GDS: Your seed-production system is based on a network of seed producers. How does it work, and in what ways is it supported?

AS: We produce and market mainly improved varieties of rice and maize, as well as cowpea, groundnut, sesame, soy, sorghum and millet. These crops are part of the Burkinabe diet and, more broadly, the diet of West and Central Africa, where we also now have operations. We are organised as follows: we have a network of individual farmers and cooperatives (currently 75), mainly in Burkina Faso (in 11 of the country's 13 regions), as well as in Ivory Coast, Ghana and Togo. The production contracts specify the variety and price of the basic seeds provided. For fertilisers and pesticides, our advisors refer them directly to suppliers with whom prices have been negotiated. When we launched our first season of paddy-rice production in 2021, the number of farmers increased. There are currently about 3,600.

We support the farmers in our network, helping them strengthen their capacities and offering them services such as technical training in production, with supervisors assigned to work with them in the field in partnership with the Regional Directorate of Agriculture. Farmers are oriented towards crops for which there is a market and demand. We enter into contractual arrangements to buy from them directly. Lastly, we engage in intermediation with financial institutions, assisting farmers in their interactions with those institutions. Currently, financial institutions need guarantees that companies are solvent and credible, and that they honour their commitments. We therefore act as guarantor when farmers take out loans, for instance through Coris Bank International or Réseau des Caisses Populaires du Burkina, with whom we have a partnership. It is by creating these types of synergies that everything



Nafaso has a large network of seed producers in Burkina Faso and throughout the region. Here is a cowpea farmer in his field.

Nafaso

THE STARTING POINT FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IS THE SAME: SEEDS.

works. Although loans are open to all of our member farmers, we have noticed that it is the weakest ones who are actually taking out loans. This year, for instance, the total amount of guarantees provided by Nafaso was 100,000 FCFA.

GDS: How is your distribution and marketing system organised? What are your targets?

AS: Being from the class of small farmers allowed us to identify the main issues with precision. To acquire inputs, farmers need to leave the countryside and travel sometimes hundreds of kilometres to the city, which not only takes a long time but also costs a lot in terms of transport and fuel. Our desire is therefore to bring seeds and their users closer together, with prices that are aligned but that become attractive if there is no longer any need to travel. We have therefore set up more than fifty points of sale at village shops throughout Burkina Faso. The local network needs to be developed in order to overcome these challenges relating to access.

GDS: How do you see the evolution of farmers' organisations (FO) for seed producers? Is it possible and desirable for those FOs to become actual seed cooperatives?

AS: Under the OHADA Act (pp. 28-29), FOs are required to evolve towards the cooperative model. But most of them are focusing only on state markets or NGOs. This will not lead anywhere: The day NGOs or the state no longer have the means to pay for their seeds, they will run into huge problems. So, it is up to everyone to see how they can position themselves for the future. It would be great if those cooperatives grouped together as actual companies in order to have greater influence and blossom.

GDS: What kind of relations do you have with large seed and input multinationals? Do you see them as partners or competitors who are

threatening your development?

AS: We do not have any relations with them, strictly speaking. But we are attentive to developments in the seed world. Those multinationals have developed varieties that are nearly ten times more productive than what we can currently do. We must remain modest. We are a small company in comparison, but we do not work in the same segments. We target small farmers, whereas they target large industrial farms with purchase prices much higher than ours. We do, however, have a few projects in common with AGRA: setting up demonstration fields and investing in demonstration kits for farmers or in training on crop-management techniques. The West African market is still dominated by traditional seeds, and we want to offer seeds that are truly adapted to local agroecological conditions and that produce high yields. Farmers need to be able to choose quality. Demographic changes and food demand are telling us that it is time to develop an offer of African seeds that are accessible and that produce high yields. The starting point for self-sufficiency and food sovereignty is the same: seeds. We therefore want to expand our activities and our presence within the Economic Community of West African States, and encourage young people to engage in agriculture, because that is how Africa will be able to feed itself.

GDS: How would you assess your first season of paddy-rice production?

AS: Our first season of rice production was a success overall. The objective was to produce high-quality rice from high-yielding varieties that are nutritious and popular with consumers so that it is truly profitable for the farmers. We took a simple approach, paying them directly upon delivery of the paddy after weighing it and testing its quality. This year, we will be able to expand the network thanks to word of mouth between the farmers themselves. They lend us real credibility, and they trust us, which is very encouraging for us. There have been a few difficulties as well, but that's normal. We

had a provisional budget of 500 million FCFA, which we did not fully use because not enough quantity was delivered. Some farmers lacked information and sowed other varieties than the three that we had selected. ■

Abdoulaye Sawadogo



Founder and Managing Director
of Nafaso

Jeune Afrique

Interview by Marie-Joséphine Ouedraogo,
Communications Officer, and Alexandra Quet,
Coordinator of Grain de Sel

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Experience-assessment report by Inter-réseaux with support from IFAD on the partnership between Nafaso and the rice-farmers' cooperative Barakadi in western Burkina Faso:
<https://bit.ly/3DBsiZc>

Les Potagers du Bandama: a social enterprise in Ivory Coast

Les Potagers du Bandama is a social enterprise founded by an NGO called the European Institute for Cooperation and Development (Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement, or "IECD"). The enterprise sells the production of its network of market gardeners through direct sales, and through large and mid-size distributors.

Quentin de Villechabrolle discusses the history of the project and the challenges faced.



Quentin Villechabrolle

Selling directly to consumers requires sophisticated organisation, a lot of product handling and high indirect costs.

GDS: Can you tell us a little about your business?

Les Potagers du Bandama is an Ivorian social enterprise founded as part of the TAMCI project, which helps market gardeners in Ivory Coast transition to agroecology. The aim of this pilot project is to create a sector dedicated to agroecology in Ivory Coast. Our action can be broken down into three successive stages.

First, TAMCI conducts experiments with a control group of farmers to develop sound farming practices and select the best inputs or the best crop-management techniques. Next, the project trains farmers in the region (target: 450), teaches them the previously identified agroecological practices and help them put what they learned into practice. Lastly, Les Potagers du Bandama, whose leading shareholder is IECD, covers all sales-related activities (collection, packaging, marketing) and introduces the products into the formal market. We mainly sell food baskets delivered weekly to retail customers, but we also sell to wholesalers and supermarkets. We have about one hundred regular customers, which means we are selling 50 to 60 baskets a week.

GDS: In what ways is your model innovative?

To bring about the emergence of this practically nonexistent sector, we had to cover all activities. The farmers follow a comprehensive pathway: Once trained and prepared to meet the requirements of the formal market, they are exposed little by little through the company to contract farming. We train them to work on many products simultaneously, because diversification helps preserve the soil and minimise risk. But doing so requires sound planning and management, which are essential to maintaining regularity of production.

About 30 of the 250 farmers trained supply the company on a regular basis and therefore enjoy stable and guaranteed income. They comply with best practices in agroecology, produce year-round, have accessible land... There is still just a small number of them who meet all of the conditions. Supply also needs to grow in pace with demand so that production is not devalued. The number of farmer-suppliers is therefore controlled.

GDS: Are organic sectors just a niche market?

We conducted a market study in Abidjan and noticed two trends: a preference for local production and production without pesticides! There is demand in urban areas among the upper and middle classes. In my opinion, the challenge is on the production side. The climate in Ivory Coast is far from ideal for market gardening, so we need to be much more creative. I dream of the day when people will be eating organic strawberries from Yamoussoukro and Ivorian heirloom tomatoes! Such innovative and healthy products would help reduce imports of expensive fruits and vegetables and boost farmers' income.

Agroecology has several significant assets for farmers: preservation of soil quality and health, better sale price if they can access formal markets, products that store better and that are therefore preferred by wholesalers, steady income and – for those who work with us – guaranteed income! Les Potagers du Bandama therefore adds value in four ways: health, social impact, ecology and diversity of products!

GDS: What are the main challenges encountered?

Covering the entire value chain is an important challenge. When it comes to the provision of inputs, our company is helping make

up for the lack of effective cooperatives and the hesitancy of microfinance institutions. We put market gardeners in contact with private suppliers of inputs, irrigation equipment and crop-protection services, but we also need to prefinance seeds, nurseries, compost, scales, containers, etc. at zero interest to facilitate the implementation of best farming practices.

There are also obstacles linked to the fact that, for decades, the sector has been underfunded and unorganised: no organised logistics, no accessible wholesale/semi-wholesale market. Farmers' investment capacity is extremely limited, and microfinance institutions are hesitant when it comes to market-gardening activities, which they are not very familiar with. It is now important to find political support to help the market-gardening sector, whether organic or conventional. Provision of inputs, competition from imports and logistics are major obstacles for small farmers and lead to market price volatility, which is difficult to manage.

We are also trying to identify farmers who want to band together as a group, because playing the role of cooperatives is not our long-term objective. Banding together into unions and committed cooperatives will help farmers obtain political support for the sector and more effectively promote their production. Institutions must imperatively support them.

We are constantly torn between the desire to control everything in order to provide supplies and succeed in our sales, and the need to help farmers take ownership of the production side. Downstream, the direct sale of ultra-fresh products requires sophisticated organisation, a lot of handling and high indirect costs: packing, cleaning, packaging,

delivery, billing, payment collection, advertising, etc. Customers chose us solely based on trust, because certification is practically nonexistent in Ivory Coast.

That's why we are participating in a project for a fully Ivorian participatory guarantee system. This quality assurance system self-managed by the sector helps cut costs while ensuring compliance with specifications that are strict, realistic and adapted to the realities faced by farmers. Those who participate take great care to make sure that everyone is in compliance, so as not to dis-

LARGE AND MID-SIZE DISTRIBUTORS ARE VERY ATTRACTIVE OUTLETS FOR AGROECOLOGY

credit the system. Certified farmers are much more autonomous when it comes to marketing. They don't need to advertise their products, because their label speaks for itself. Just like customers who are wary of misleading branding, large distributors have much greater trust for certified fruits and vegetables. It frees them from responsibility for the quality of the products on their shelves. Let's hope that someday those local labelled products will replace the huge quantity of expensive imported products sold in the country's shops!

GDS: But what is the advantage of entering into a contract with a large supermarket chain?

It may be counter-intuitive, but large and mid-size distributors are very attractive outlets for agroecology. Their customers have strong purchasing power, and they buy large quantities and help reduce per-unit logistics costs, which makes up for the lower sale price. CFAO/Carrefour already market roughly 30% of our volume at two shops in Abidjan, accepting the constraints that go hand in hand with working with a very small supplier like us. We need to be able to meet their demand in terms of volume and regularity of supply. CFAO/Carrefour are helping us in that regard. They have a marketing strike force that is much greater than a small entity could ever hope for.

This is essential because market-gardening products – especially organic ones – are not promoted institutionally and are invisible compared with consumer goods such as beer, which are ubiquitous in advertising displays (pp. 34-35). The risk, of course, would be to have 80% of sales in the hands of one or two decision-makers imposing their conditions... ■



Farmers first receive training in agroecological practices, and the social enterprise takes over in terms of marketing aspects. The farmers gradually become better prepared to meet the requirements of the formal market and contract farming.

Quentin Villechabrolle



quentin.devillechabrolle@iecd.org
Head of the TAMCI project for IECD. He is in charge of experiments, training and marketing. He is also manager of the company Les Potagers du Bandama.



Rosalie Zara, poultry farmer in the far north of Cameroon

Cameroon's poultry sector owes its survival to the country's ban on imported poultry cuts, decided by public authorities in 2005. But a resurgence of bird-flu outbreaks since 2016 has weakened and disorganised the sector, which is still dependent on imported chicks and hatching eggs.

Cameroon's poultry sector is counting on state support to reduce its dependence on key imported inputs

The most recent bird-flu crisis to hit Cameroon's poultry sector was a few months ago. It originated not locally, but in Europe, which supplies premix feeds, vaccines, medicine, day-old chicks and hatching eggs to Cameroon. In November 2020, the H5N1 strain of bird flu broke out on livestock farms in several supplier countries in central Europe, including France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Cameroon's Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries, and Animal Industries (MINEPIA) promptly banned imports of day-old chicks and hatching eggs from countries affected by the virus. That decision came at a time when commercial flights between Europe and Africa were down 80% because of the Covid-19 crisis.

The resilient poultry sector began to resist inflation in input prices. Hatcheries were barely able to cover 60% of local demand for day-old chicks. After the closing of the borders in March, the average price of a day-old

chick supplied to farmers by local hatcheries rose from 400 FCFA to 700 FCFA. On the market in 2021, households were spending 4,500 FCFA – and in some cases 5,000 FCFA – to buy a live 2kg chicken, which cost between 2,700 FCFA and 3,000 FCFA the previous year. Rising chicken prices and scarcity became unbearable in a country where poultry meat accounts for over 40% of the animal proteins consumed by people. The sector employs 320,000 people (140,000 direct jobs, and 180,000 indirect jobs).

The public authorities started to take action. Cameroon's minister of livestock, Dr Taïga, wrote a letter to Brazil's ambassador to Cameroon requesting measures to facilitate the export of day-old chicks and hatching eggs to Cameroon from Brazil, which was free of bird flu in 2021. As fate would have it, the letter from MINEPIA was dated 22 March 2021, just two days after the funeral of Bernard Njonga, politician and head of the Citizens'

Association for the Defence of Collective Interests (ACDIC), who worked tirelessly in support of Cameroon's food sovereignty. The polemic caused by this coincidence drove MINEPIA to deny any desire to import chicken to Cameroon. François Djonou, president of the Cameroon Poultry Interprofessional Organisation (IPAVIC), regretted the incident and admitted that IPAVIC had been consulted about the Brazilian option.

A strong voice

Since its creation in 2006, after Cameroon's 2005 ban on imported poultry cuts, IPAVIC has been a strong interlocutor, respected and even feared by the public authorities. It is the most structured and influential farmers' organisation in Cameroon after the cocoa and coffee interprofessional organisation, which has long received state support.

IPAVIC was born from the ashes of the Cameroon Interprofessional Union for the

Poultry Sector (SIFAC), founded in 1996 by industrial firms in the sector. Not open to small farmers, the union withered and fell into decline. When it was founded in 2006, IPAVIC was able to bring together all trades in the sector, including both small and large operators, to build a strong value chain. IPAVIC is divided into four groups of actors. The first group comprises industrial hatcheries, provender producers and abattoirs, and has 45% of the votes at IPAVIC's general assembly. The second group comprises producers and sellers of table eggs, and has 25% of the votes. The third group comprises breeders and sellers of broilers, and has 20% of the votes. And the fourth group comprises animal-health technicians, and has 10% of the votes.

The year it was founded, IPAVIC faced a bird-flu crisis. The carcass of an infected migratory bird was found in the northern part of the country, leading to harsh criticism of chicken meat and causing panic among consumers, who stopped buying poultry products for months. The crisis was made worse when neighbouring countries – which absorb roughly 60% of the eggs produced in Cameroon – decided to stop importing poultry products from Cameroon.

The period from March to May 2006 was a very bleak time for the country's farms. Downstream on livestock farms, broilers were stuck on farms and fed beyond 45 days, and then sold for practically nothing. Orders for chicks were cancelled, and mountains of table eggs were incinerated. Upstream at hatcheries, the only options were to destroy hatching eggs, suffocate chicks and slaughter parents for meat. Provender-production activities were practically at a standstill, and the small pluckers who slaughtered chickens at the chicken markets lost their jobs.

In an attempt to save the damaged sector, Ahmadou Moussa, director of the Mvog-Betsi Poultry Complex in Yaoundé and IPAVIC's first president, organised local-chicken tastings with actors from civil society in order to show Cameroonians that chicken could still be eaten. This desperate measure helped in part to restore consumer trust, and, naturally, people began eating chicken again. What's strange about the 2006 bird-flu crisis is that aside from the migratory-bird carcass, not a single chicken died from H5N1 on any of the country's farms. Total losses were 3 billion FCFA.

Accused by civil society of complicit silence with the intention of breaking up the local poultry sector in order to bring back imported frozen chicken, which would benefit a num-

ber of government officials financially, the government announced unprecedented support measures. A recovery plan for the sector was established with over half a billion FCFA in funding provided by the state, and with IPAVIC serving as interlocutor. In 2008, a budget of 350 million FCFA was mobilised to subsidise the restocking of parent stock on farms in order to resume production of day-old chicks. An additional 231 million FCFA was mobilised to import hatching eggs for chick production while waiting for the new parents to lay.

**THE 2005 BAN
ON IMPORTED FROZEN
CHICKEN LED PEOPLE
TO BELIEVE THAT
THE NATIONAL SECTOR
WOULD QUICKLY GROW**

Support from the public authorities

The state's support was seen differently by the IPAVIC groups. Small family livestock farmers (who make up over 90% of local livestock farmers) felt that they had been wronged by the allocation of subsidies to industrial firms. IPAVIC nearly imploded. Another union of poultry farmers was founded in 2008, drawing a number of people who were dissatisfied with the system. But lacking resources and much-needed support from the public authorities, the new union collapsed.

The second major bird-flu crisis was more brutal, and broke out at the Mvog-Betsi Poultry Complex (Complexe Avicole de Mvog-Betsi, or "CAM") in Yaoundé in May 2016. With losses estimated at 10 billion FCFA, the crisis severely harmed the sector, which was enjoying sound growth at the time. This time, it was a real H5N1 flu epidemic. In just one day, the virus killed 15,000 of CAM's parent birds. The remaining 33,000 parent birds were culled. Farms in the West, South and Adamawa regions were also affected. CAM, which supplied 20% of the local production of day-old chicks in Cameroon, never resumed operations, and its 100 employees lost their jobs.

IPAVIC relentlessly demanded compensation for its members who were affected by the bird flu. But in the absence of direct subsidies for the interprofessional body in 2016, the state officially suspended payment of the value added tax (VAT) on food, medicine, hatching eggs, day-old chicks and imported livestock-farming equipment. In Cameroon, VAT is 19.25%. This support from the public authorities is helping the poultry sector become more resilient to crises.

But there is still a weak link in Cameroon's poultry value chain. The development of abattoirs and facilities for packaging local ready-to-cook chicken is still lacking. Slaughtering is still performed mainly by small artisanal pluckers working around the markets where live chickens are sold. The 2005 ban on imported frozen chicken led people to believe that the national sector would quickly grow, supplying cuts of local chicken for the local market. And that the sector would expand to other markets in central Africa. We're not there yet. But that is the dream inspired by the industrial firms belonging to IPAVIC, several of whom are already delivering eggs to neighbouring countries. ■

Marie Pauline Voufo



Rural Communicator,
Managing Editor of *La Voix Du Paysan*

Supranational regulation and liberalisation: frameworks disadvantageous to African agriculture?

It appears to be widely accepted that the private sector has made positive contributions to agricultural development. But Alhousseini Diabaté and Ibrahim Diori, lecturer/researcher and human-rights activist, respectively, denounce the consequences of the predatory neoliberal framework imposed by international and regional regulatory frameworks.

GDS: Why has the private sector been given a central role in agricultural development?

Alhousseini Diabaté (AD): It dates back to the 1980s, when the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund imposed a neoliberal economic paradigm on developing countries, relegating the state to the sidelines. Private investors were placed at the forefront of development. The objective gradually shifted from food self-sufficiency to market-oriented food security with greater participation from the private sector, particularly foreign actors. Since the private sector has the financial resources and technology needed to develop agricultural potential, it was supposed to be capable of guaranteeing the availability of food in African markets. But the model did not live up to its promise.

Ibrahim Diori (ID): Structural adjustment plans combined with the liberalisation of agricultural trade shattered mechanisms for supervision and rural subsidies, creating a favourable environment for foreign direct investment (FDI). During the first World Food Summit in 1996, civil-society organisations advocated for "food security". They called for a stop to unfair competition from imports and demanded that states have the right to protect themselves from such competition. With the Maputo Protocol in 2003, member states of the African Union (AU) made a commitment to invest 10% of their annual GDP in the agricultural sector – a small reversal, even though it was only applied in a very limited and disparate manner. But since the 2008 crisis (see GDS no. 76), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

MECHANISMS FOR EXERTING
PRESSURE AND SETTling
DISPUTES ARE NOT
PROPORTIONAL BETWEEN
INTERNATIONAL TRADE
LAW AND INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS

and the AU have once again started to speak favourably of the private sector and FDI. Which is confirmed by the orientation of the second phase of the ECOWAS 2016-2025 agricultural policy.

GDS: What type of agricultural model has been favoured by the shift towards liberalisation in Africa?

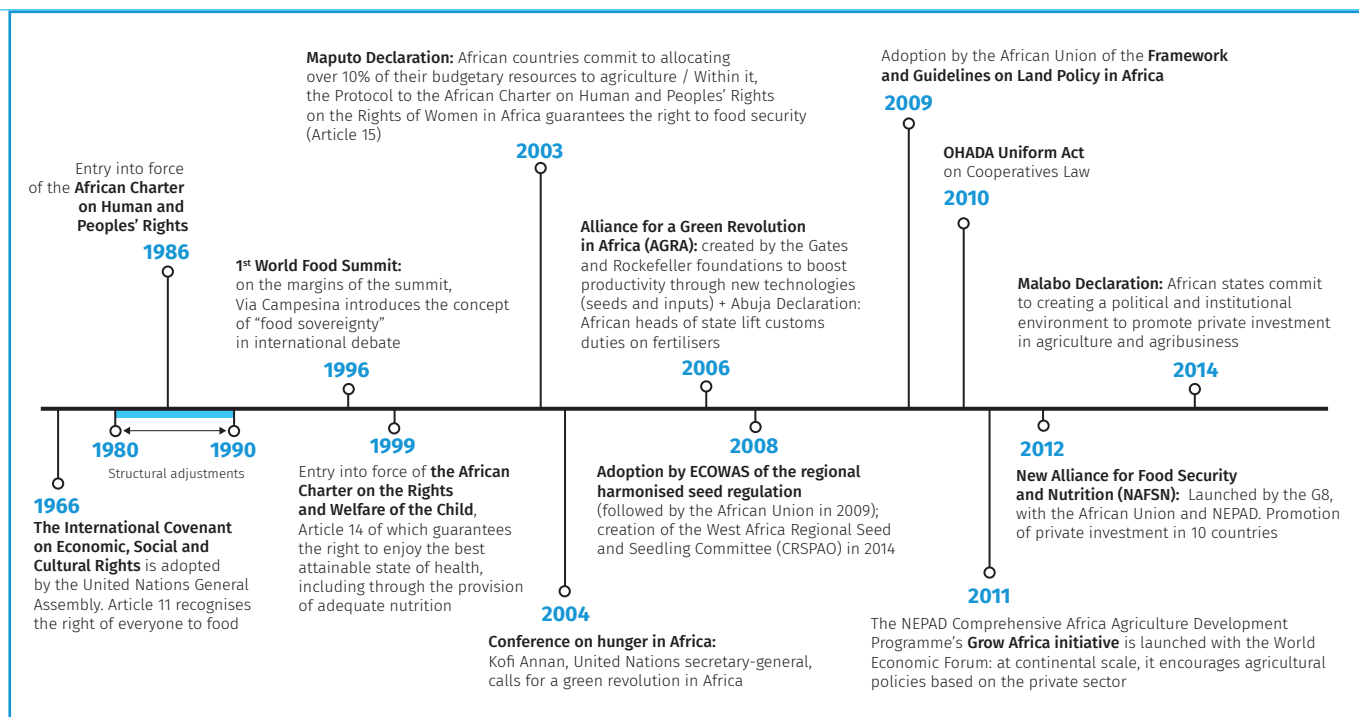
AD: The prevailing trend has been a shift towards a globalised food system based on free trade, increasingly long supply chains, externally dependent agricultural production, and globalised and volatile prices. This model offers no protection against serious food crises. It puts the environment, our health and our collective quality of life in danger. It is therefore necessary to revert to shorter national supply chains, and to an agricultural model that is sustainable and fair for local farmers.

ID: A liberal model is not capable of redistributing food and making it accessible in an equitable manner. The recommendations of the different United Nations rapporteurs on the right to food in recent years have all made this point. Most people in Africa depend on peasant farming, which doesn't have the means to compete with the agro-industrial private sector.

GDS: So in your opinion the current regulatory frameworks are not favourable for sustainable food systems or farmers?

ID: There is no normative framework specifically dedicated to conditions for partnerships between the private sector and farmers. In my view, the farmer is marginalised. Take seeds, for example (pp. 22-23). In 2014, ECOWAS, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) set up a Regional Seed Committee to help states implement the regional harmonised seed regulation. This involved two legal instruments: a regulation with immediate force of law governing quality control, certification and marketing, and the regional catalogue of varieties. To be included in the catalogue, seeds must be distinct, homogeneous and stable. Those are commercial quality criteria that peasant-farmer seeds cannot meet. They are not certified. In Niger, certain articles of the seed law have been interpreted in a highly questionable and dangerous manner. If taken literally, the law criminalises farmers who exercise their right to produce, exchange or sell their seeds, with penalties including prison and heavy fines. There is a risk of fragmentation, limiting farmers to production only. The law should reflect practices and set guidelines for them, but should not dismantle them.

AD: Farmland has become a source of supply and profitability for FDI driven by multinationals, investment funds, and even the governments of certain developed countries. Local farmers and traders find themselves competing with highly competitive international commercial operators that enjoy favourable administrative and tax treatment. Regulating economic activities linked to agriculture does not help us move towards better protection for farmers or a sustainable food system in Africa. When it comes to ensuring protection, balance between market and non-market values, and sustainability, human rights may be an interesting pathway to explore. Another pathway is that of the Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). Currently made up of 17 African countries, OHADA seeks to set up a stable legal framework to allow for



Progression of international and regional frameworks

There has been a notable increase in the number of initiatives promoting food and nutritional security driven by the private sector, particularly foreign actors. This non-exhaustive timeline shows certain key moments in the progression of international and regional frameworks, including human-rights commitments reminding states that they have a responsibility when it comes to guaranteeing the right to food.

the emergence of the private sector and create a vast integrated market. The Uniform Act, which was adopted in 2010, requires all peasant-farmer and rural organisations to take the form of cooperatives, and emphasises their economic function. There was little dialogue or pedagogy with respect to its implementation, and the representatives of peasant-farmer and rural organisations were included only to a minor extent. Ten years later, did that transition help them gain greater financial and political independence? Did it give them greater influence vis-à-vis the private sector by strengthening their negotiating power?

ID: In my opinion, the transformation linked to the OHADA framework has hurt peasant-farmer and rural organisations because it has forced them to change their nature. They have been pushed to conform to a codified business model instead of being offered a framework that would directly address their needs.

GDS: Can human rights help create fairer partnerships between farmers and the private sector?

ID: In theory, all states recognise the right to food and the role that family farming plays in food sovereignty. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11 of which recognises the right of everyone to food) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants outline the responsibility of states and their duty to support agriculture. Only the former is legally binding. In

practice, states are more committed to the vision of "food security", which legitimises the opening of markets, imports, FDI, etc. There is therefore a conflictual adherence to two sets of standards. What can be done to resolve this conflict? The influence of the actors who oversee the law must be taken into account, as well as mechanisms for exerting pressure and settling disputes. These are not necessarily proportional, if we take international trade law and international human rights. A legal framework that is favourable to family farming has yet to be created.

AD: At regional level, African law is not indifferent to these issues. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women contain many instruments that can be used to help improve those rights. Securing land rights and improving productivity and people's living conditions were also addressed in a document serving as a reference framework, adopted by the AU in 2009.

ID: The process for choosing a suitable agricultural model needs to be democratised by giving a voice to peasant farmers, consumers and entrepreneurs from the different sectors. Protecting family farming is absolutely vital for both people and states, including when it comes to peace. These in-depth discussions should not be left to technicians. ■

Dr. Alhousseini Diabaté



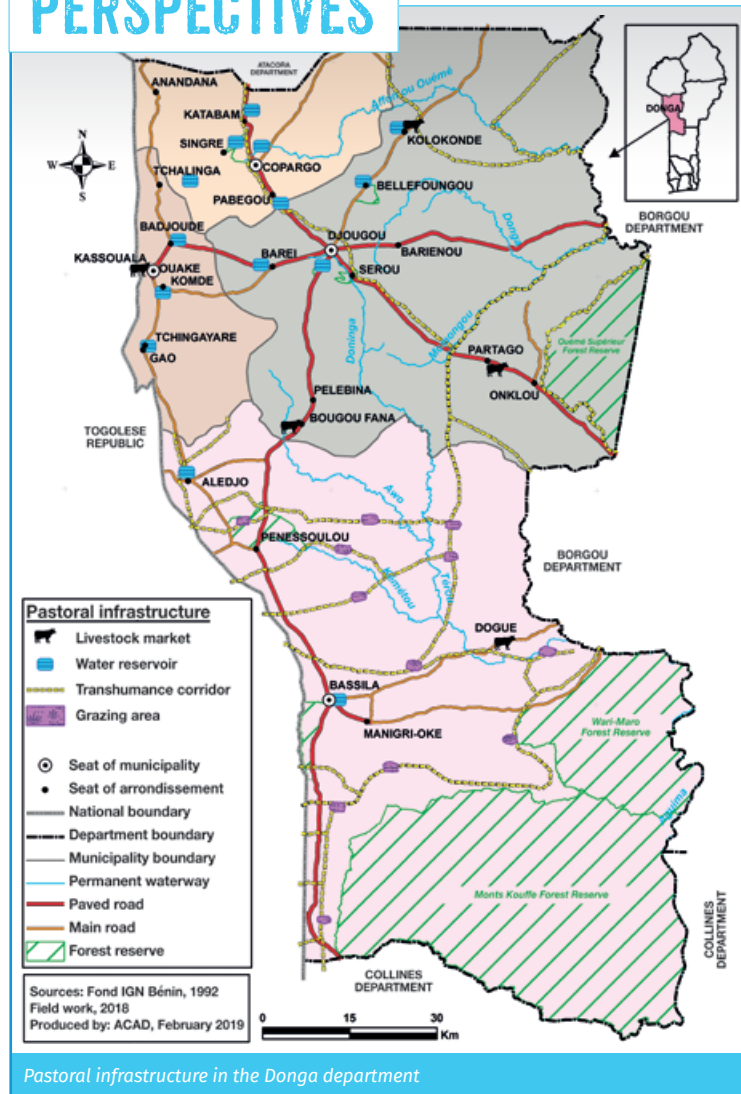
Lecturer and researcher at the University of Law and Political Science of Bamako-Mali, associate researcher at the Law and Social Change laboratory at the University of Nantes-France, and fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) in the Netherlands

Ibrahim Diori



Activist and member of the Nigerien association Alternative Citoyen, specialising in issues relating to human, social and cultural rights. His thesis project focuses on the right to food in West Africa.

Interview by Alexandra Quet, coordinator of Grain de Sel



Partnership between farmers' organisations and joint local authority groups for the livestock-meat sector in northern Benin

The work performed by Acting For Life and its partners in West Africa to develop the agropastoral sector at local level involves the structuring of a public-private partnership between local authorities and civil-society organisations (CSO). The mechanism is funded in part through an increase in tax revenue on agropastoral market infrastructure, with the CSO overseeing coordination and monitoring activities.

Livestock farming in West Africa is based on an extensive production system. Mobility is an optimal strategy for gaining access to the water and grazing resources scattered here and there depending on rainfall. It helps ensure herd survival and results in greater productivity. It also plays a central role in commercial channels and brings many economic benefits to the areas through which the herds are moved. A 2014-2015 study of 386 transhumant families, conducted by AFL, showed that those families spent half a billion FCFA in the areas they moved through, and sold an equivalent amount of animals. The purchase and sale of animals at livestock markets can also be an important source of tax revenue for municipalities in the countries through which transhumant families move. The sector also creates many direct and indirect jobs: traders, brokers, herdsman, butchers, rope-makers, crook-makers, truck-transport assistants, not to mention all the jobs at the livestock markets. The sector also provides access to animal proteins for rural communities and large urban centres. The degradation of the security context has made mobility more challenging, causing the

price of boneless red meat to increase by an average of 500 FCFA throughout the region.

Support from three types of institutional actors

Mobility requires an integrated approach to pastoral investments in the area through which herds move. Marketing infrastructure (livestock markets, loading platforms) and infrastructure needed for production (grazing areas, water points, livestock tracks, vaccination stations, etc.) are totally interdependent. A market must therefore be connected to livestock tracks, including the transhumance tracks used during the return journey to the north. The development of the sector must therefore be considered on a local scale with the participation, in most cases, of several municipalities.

Ensuring the longevity of the different amenities therefore requires collaboration between three groups of actors: local authorities (municipalities), farmers' organisations (FO) and the decentralised technical services of the ministries in charge of livestock farming. The latter ensure the continuity and consistency

of the national policy and share their expertise with the joint local authority group. FOs, for their part, share their knowledge of the practices and strategies of livestock farmers, crop farmers and traders to overcome the challenges faced. They help secure pastoral land (grazing and rest areas) in order to ensure that there are no difficulties accessing water. When FOs intervene to help settle conflicts, whether in relation to market infrastructure or agropastoral amenities, their role needs to be subject to a contract with the joint local authority group. The tax revenue generated by the market infrastructure in the area of the joint local authority group is used to pay the FOs for their monitoring work.

Experience assessment of the livestock-meat sector in northern Benin

In northern Benin in December 2017, the municipal authorities of Matéri, Coby and Tanguéta, which are members of the Pendjari Public Body of Intermunicipal Cooperation (EPCI-Pendjari) signed a one-year test agreement with the Departmental Union of Professional Organisations

for Ruminant Farmers in Atacora/Donga (UDOPER AD), with a financial commitment of 1.8 million FCFA. The EPCI municipalities used that funding to mandate UDOPER AD to coordinate the sector within their territory. The agreement was renewed in 2018 for two years. Each year, UDOPER AD presents an analysis of the sector for the previous year, and makes recommendations to the EPCI members.

A number of lessons can be drawn after nearly two years of this contractual arrangement between a joint local authority group and a FO. The main difficulty is that newly elected officials need to be brought up to speed after each election, which is sometimes a long and tedious process. But despite that difficulty, the arrangement has many positive aspects.

Better monitoring of agropastoral infrastructure

Elected officials say this agreement has improved monitoring and their understanding of the agropastoral dynamic in their territory. UDOPER AD presents its annual report at a workshop which brings together some fifty participants (elected officials, decentralised authorities, traditional authorities, members of civil society). This detailed report gives an overview of the sector as a whole, while noting changes to each market infrastructure.

Increasing tax revenue for certain market infrastructures

Statistical monitoring shows the work UDOPER is doing to coordinate and raise awareness among actors at livestock markets. For the livestock market in Matéri, there has been a significant increase in tax revenue over the past three years, from just over 7 million FCFA in 2017 to 8,601,600 in 2019. The increase in tax revenue for these municipalities allows them to participate financially within the EPCI, and is helping strengthen cohesion between communities. The municipalities are likewise increasing their social and community investments for the benefit of the entire population.

In-depth understanding of the dynamic of the sector

The dynamic of the agropastoral sector cannot be understood by limiting it to just the EPCI Pendjari territory. That dynamic depends largely on the situation in neighbouring countries: upstream in the Sahel

THE MAIN DIFFICULTY IS THAT NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS NEED TO BE BROUGHT UP TO SPEED AFTER EACH ELECTION, WHICH IS SOMETIMES A LONG AND TEDIOUS PROCESS

countries, which supply the livestock markets during transhumance; or downstream in Nigeria, which is the main terminal market for the animals. At the loading area in Tangiéta, animals are sent mainly to the town of Savé in the Collines department of Benin. The animals are then unloaded in Savé and transported on foot to Nigeria. Since December 2015, devaluation has made the Nigerian market much less attractive. Some of the animals are transported to Ghana via Togo. Things bounced back in 2019.

Fewer conflicts

The lack of delimited pastoral land often leads to tensions between crop and livestock farmers regarding the use of resources. To limit those tensions, the land should be secured, but more importantly there needs to be organisations that can intervene quickly to help find joint solutions to avoid crises.

Of course, the decline in conflicts is not exclusively linked to the work UDOPER is doing

to coordinate the sector. On the one hand other actors and programmes are at work in the area and are helping reduce tensions, and on the other hand the conflict dynamics are often highly complex with multiple causal factors. It is also certain, however, that the existence of functional agropastoral amenities facilitating livestock mobility and the efforts of UDOPER/ANOPER to pacify tensions are helping to significantly reduce conflicts.

Strengthening the FO's positioning and capacities

The data produced by UDOPER are also helping FOs gain greater recognition among elected officials and the general public. They complement the expertise of the technical state services. The FO is using the funding it received from EPCI to improve the services it offers its members.

Rallying around a shared interest

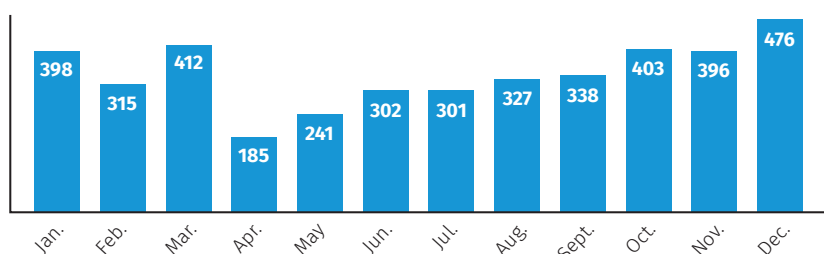
The main objective of this collaboration is to develop the agropastoral sector in a way that is consistent and long-lasting. This is crucial for the socio-economic development of the communities in question. This approach makes it possible to bring together not just elected officials and FOs but a diverse range of actors around a shared interest. This information is available to anyone who attends the annual assessment-workshops, and is also disseminated through radio broadcasts presenting important information about the agropastoral sector. ■

Cédric Touquet



ctouquet@acting-for-life.org
Agropastoral programme director,
Acting For Life

Animals sold at the Matéri livestock market in 2019



Source : AFL

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Video presenting the local approach that was put in place:
<https://bit.ly/3x1RGEY>

AFL experience-assessment report on livestock mobility:
<https://bit.ly/3oj8ywl>

Agro-Industry Fund: facilitating the mobilisation of private funding by SMEs in Burkina Faso

Gaining access to funding is a major challenge that small and mid-size enterprises (SME) face, especially in rural areas. The Agro-Industry Fund (Fonds Agro-Industrie, or “FAI”) was created in Burkina Faso in 2013 under the Programme for Economic Growth in the Agricultural Sector (PCESA) and seeks to address those challenges and stimulate agricultural value chains by facilitating access to funding for economic operators. An in-depth look at a solution with an original operational approach.

To understand the issue of funding SMEs, one must consider the business relations between financial institutions (FI) and businesses. But those relations are complex and are most often based on imperfect and incomplete information, whether on the projects carried out by the SMEs, the certification of their financial statements, or the methods used by FIs to process loan applications.

Reducing information asymmetry and risk perception

To address those constraints, the FAI developed an original mechanism to support agrifood SMEs in order to facilitate the mobilisation of private funding, allow for dialogue between stakeholders and create an

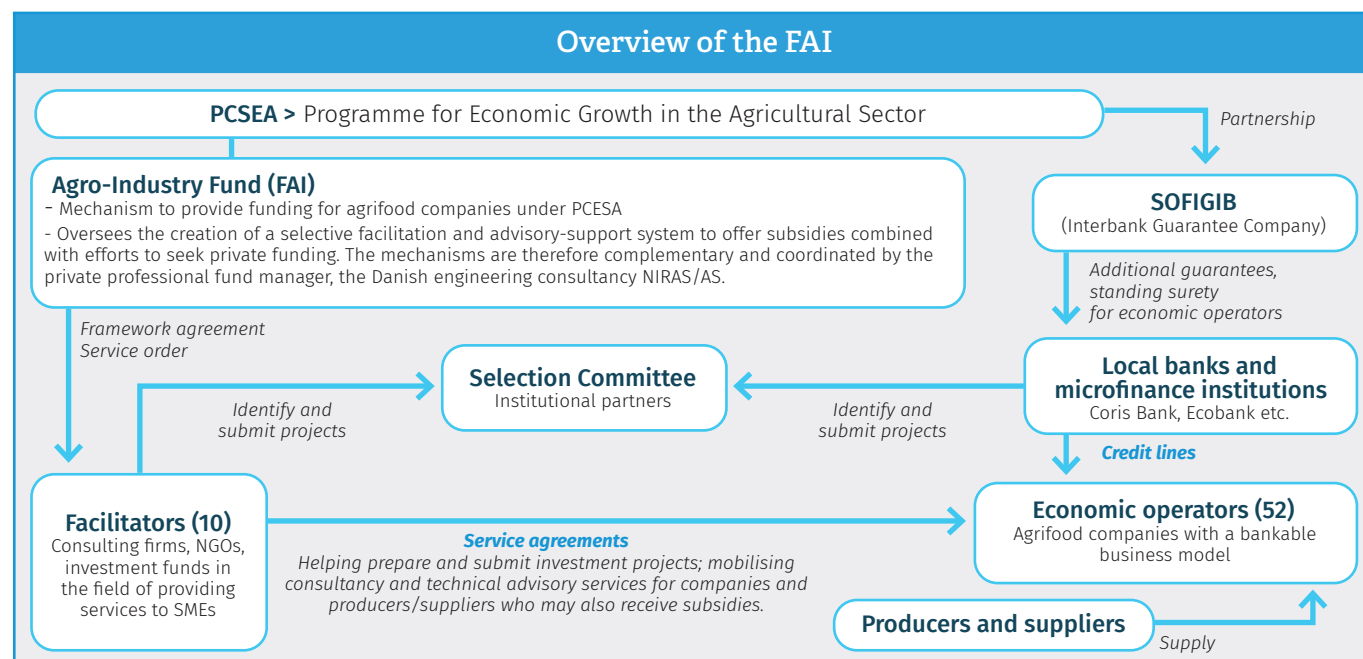
environment of reciprocal trust.

From 2013 to 2017, the PCESA project focused on funding very small businesses and inter-professional bodies by developing business plans to submit to financial institutions. Only five sectors were targeted (livestock meat, shea, maize, cowpea and gum arabic), and the project zone covered five regions. The project was managed by Maison de l'Entreprise du Burkina Faso, an association that provides support, advisory services and business-creation assistance. The financial arrangement allowed for the provision of direct support to projects with credit lines worth a total of 5 billion FCFA through two banks: CORIS BANK International and ECO-BANK Burkina.

A change in approach in 2017

An assessment conducted in 2016 revealed the programme's limitations in terms of impact and funding accessibility, as very few companies were able to mobilise funding from institutions, who themselves had not necessarily adapted their risk-analysis method to the specificities of the agricultural world. The programme changed its approach and scale, and expanded its scope. On the one hand, the targeting of funding was reoriented from all small companies to mid-size companies, with a focus on bankable projects involving networks of producers and suppliers. The size of the companies receiving support (annual revenue over 30 million FCFA) and the critical number of suppliers and producers invol-

Overview of the FAI



ved in the project are considered conditions that will allow for a greater ripple effect over the entire value chain. To expand its reach, the project has been opened up to all sectors (except for cotton production) and to all 13 regions of Burkina Faso.

On the other hand, facilitation entities, private companies, NGOs specialising in the intermediation of banking operations and investment funds were introduced. All local banks and microfinance institutions were included. Facilitators enter into contracts with the FAI for their advisory support as intermediaries already working in the market. They work with the promoter to implement the budget and mobilise private funding. They therefore play a central role in the system. All of these different pillars allowed the FAI to develop a selective system for facilitation and advisory support where subsidies are offered in combination with efforts to seek private funding in order to stimulate their development capacities. The systems are therefore complementary and work together in synergy. They are entirely under the responsibility of the private professional manager of the FAI, the Danish engineering consultancy NIRAS. The state is involved in the FAI's institutional anchoring.

Ultimately, three types of subsidy and a guarantee fund

Projects approved by the selection committee receive three types of subsidy: one for putting together a loan application; one for strengthening the company's supply networks; and one for funding green projects through a cost-sharing subsidy (50% with the operator, capped at 75 million FCFA).

Moreover, in addition to the FAI, PCESA also developed a partnership with the Burkina Faso Interbank Guarantee Company (SOFIGIB). Its involvement consists in providing additional guarantees by standing surety for economic operators receiving support through the FAI, particularly companies struggling to mobilise them. Applications approved by SOFIGIB are sent to the bank with a pre-approved guarantee for requesting the funding. When an application is approved by the bank, SOFIGIB submits a formal notification of guarantee, and a surety agreement is signed with the bank. An amortisation schedule for the loan and periodic reports allow SOFIGIB to monitor the repayment of the loan, any incidents that may arise with regard to the account, and actions undertaken to collect payment. In all, 71.43% of facilitators received a guarantee through SOFIGIB, which proves the usefulness of this additional system.

Better-than-expected results

The implementation of the FAI allowed 46 of the 50 companies receiving support to mobilise private funding. A total of 11.8 billion FCFA was mobilised by the companies and their suppliers. Given that the end-of-project target was 7.740 billion FCFA, the completion rate was 152.5%. These results are attributable to the dynamism of companies in certain sectors, who had considerable investment and working-capital needs. By the end of the project, the shea sector mobilised 29.4% of the funding, cashew 22.3%, maize 19.0% and rice 7.9%. In the shea sector, for instance, one project to set up an industrial facility in Bobo-Dioulasso for processing shea mobilised nearly 3 billion in funding.

Impact on local agrifood systems and farmers

One of the programme's main objectives is to stimulate the purchase of local products and strengthen the capacities of economic operators and their supply networks in order to have a positive impact on the food system. It has been observed that 59% of the companies receiving support started with product marketing, but continue their development through processing. We are therefore seeing a significant return on investment because by improving product quality, processing creates added value, satisfies a demand and generates a diversification of needs, which, over time, may stimulate growth in sales of local products. This is where strengthening supply networks through the FAI plays an essential role. In Burkina Faso, demand for local agricultural products increased 23% between 2018 and 2019, and SMEs receiving support through the FAI helped drive up that demand. The amount of money those companies spent on Burkinabe agricultural products rose from 10.6 billion to 13.06 billion FCFA over the same period.

A total of 31,205 farmers were affected by the project (provision of inputs, equipment, training, etc.). The maize, rice and shea sectors account for over 75% of the producers and suppliers in the supported projects. In the cashew sector, support for the implementation of digital tools in the collection zones of the cooperatives receiving support helped improve contractual relations with the customer.

A system that should be replicated, taking into account the lessons learned

PCESA officially ended on 30 June 2021. The FAI was revived for a second five-year phase, still under the supervision of the Ministry

of Agriculture. The innovative mechanism will continue with a few improvements, namely the creation of a project pre-selection committee and a reduction in the promoter's contribution in order to have access to the green fund. Also, several facilitators and projects supported through the FAI were selected by the PACTE project (on contract farming and ecological transition), which is funded by the AFD, KfW, the EU and the Burkinabe government. The model was also a source of inspiration for the Sahel Finance for Resilience (Sahel F4R) project, promoted by USAID.

Several specific challenges should be taken into account for the future: the degradation of the security situation is making it difficult to monitor operators in certain regions, and the Covid-19 pandemic has also complicated the implementation of projects. With regard to the arrangement, there is also room for improvement for the facilitators, who are sometimes slow in order to justify the amounts made available to them, and for the beneficiaries, who sometimes have trouble understanding the loan terms. ■

Wothuan Benjamin Bicaba



bbicaba75@gmail.com
Expert in monitoring/evaluating the FAI

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.fai.bf/>
Inter-réseaux's case study
on the private sector in agrifood sectors
in Burkina Faso is available here:
<https://bit.ly/30bExxe>

¹ PCESA is funded by the kingdom of Denmark, the European Union (EU) and the Burkinabe government in the amount of 33.3 billion FCFA, 3.6 billion FCFA and 8.325 billion FCFA, respectively. It aims to boost productivity, added value and agricultural income, in order to stimulate economic growth and reduce poverty.

Sub-Saharan Africa: a battleground for Western brewing companies

Sub-Saharan Africa is a long-standing and fast-growing market for large Western brewing companies to develop their business. Provision of local raw materials is key to the future of the sector and its impact on farmers. What are the implications? What are the challenges? We take a closer look.

Four brewing companies currently control 95% of the market in Sub-Saharan Africa: Heineken (Netherlands), Castel (France), Diageo (UK) and AB Inbev (Belgium/Brazil). Most of their production is concentrated in four countries: South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Angola. The African market is constantly growing and, according to Deutsche Bank, could represent 40% of global production by 2025.

Almost all of the beer produced in the region by large Western brewing companies is made from malted barley imported from Europe, particularly France and Belgium. There are currently very few malt houses capable of supplying malted barley to large multinational companies (with the exception of

Ethiopia), because countries in the region do not yet have the capacity to guarantee a constant and sufficient supply. Because of the critical size of local malt houses, we mainly find monopoly situations within the beer sector.

To overcome this hurdle, some brewing companies have adopted social and environmental responsibility policies, and are trying to use those policies to develop local supply chains. Those initiatives address not only sustainable development goals but also economic goals, as they would reduce production costs over the long term. As part of the social and environmental responsibility strategies of large brewing companies, they may be seen as positive, because the

development of local supply chains creates outlets for local farmers, and they are significantly more advanced than in other sectors, such as dairy. These observations support holistic visions of agricultural development. But there are several risks linked to the development of these local value chains, one of which is that land and water resources are allocated to less-essential production in competition with food production, despite the fact that these countries are not able to ensure their own food security. On the other hand, this model helps farmers strengthen their capacities by incorporating them into the value chain and using agronomic technology and digital services to ensure sufficient supply for malt houses and brewing companies. But this approach strengthens the development of intensive and unsustainable industrial production for brewing companies and makes farmers dependent: They are contractually bound and therefore have a weaker position in the balance of power with poor negotiating power. The “Africanisation” of the value chain is therefore a challenge faced at continent level. ■

The social and environmental responsibility strategies of large brewing companies

Heineken has put in place a strategy to develop local supply chains. Roughly 40% of the raw materials the company uses are sourced locally, with an objective of 60% by 2030 in Africa. The company has invested 18 million euros since 2009 in public-private partnerships to train farmers, improve local agricultural practices and develop local value chains. Source: <https://bit.ly/3C9Y9j1>

Diageo says it employs 80,000 farmers and sources 70% of the raw materials used in its African production on the local market. That figure is mainly due to the brewing of Guinness, which can be done using manioc and sorghum. The company helps farmers “improve their yields, livelihoods, and environmental and labour standards” Source: Diageo - Sustainability & Responsibility Performance Addendum 2019.

The French company **Castel BGI**, which currently controls roughly a quarter of beer production in Africa, is in a near-monopoly situation in some fifteen countries. The Castel group has been strongly criticised for the opaque organisation of its 240 African subsidiaries, and for its tax-evasion practices. It has not yet shown any desire to improve its sustainability or its local sourcing. Only the “Fonds Pierre Castel-Agir avec l’Afrique” foundation aims to support the development of entrepreneurship in agriculture and agri-food.

AB Inbev has developed a “smart agriculture” goal, which aims to ensure that all of the company’s farmers are skilled, connected and financially empowered by 2025. The group says it supports the livelihoods of agricultural communities around the world, and bases its approach on developing value chains, precision agriculture, crop resistance to climate change, and technology. Source: <https://bit.ly/2ZiLX1g>

Eloïse De Keyser



Responsable Plaidoyer
Head of advocacy at SOS Faim Belgium,
until September 2021

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Steven Le Faou, “Présence des grands brasseurs européens en Afrique subsaharienne: quelles implications pour les agricultures locales?”, February 2020

Partnership between CGA and EAML in Kenya: an example to follow?

Partnerships between farmers and brewing companies create challenges, risks and opportunities for both parties, from competition with food crops and impact on food security and sustainability, to empowering farmers and developing local value chains and models of governance. An example from Kenya.

In 2018, East African Breweries Limited (EABL) – a Kenyan company in which the multinational Diageo holds a 50% stake – set up a malting facility in Kisumu, in western Kenya, with the objective of sourcing white sorghum locally. In order to optimise the supply chain, EABL's subsidiary East Africa Malting Limited (EAML) called on an experienced farmers' organisation (FO) called Cereal Growers Association (GGA). Back in 2013, when the government imposed a 50% tax on the sale of sorghum beer, EAML and CGA organised a joint lobbying campaign, which was ultimately successful. The government announced an amendment allowing for a 90% discount on excise duty for sorghum beer, which helped revive demand. EAML then announced that it would renew its contracts with small-scale sorghum farmers. This initial collaboration created a strong bond between the two entities, which led to a partnership agreement.

An economic opportunity for farmers

Under the partnership arrangement, CGA is in charge of mobilising farmers within groups to facilitate sales to the company, and offering them training in best agricultural practices to boost their productivity. CGA is not paid by EAML for its work supervising farmers. Rather, the organisation simply fulfils its mission to help its members gain access to the market, secure outlets, inputs and financial services (particularly loans for inputs). By developing the local supply chain, this partnership has helped farmers boost their income and improve their living conditions. In the past, sorghum was not considered an income-generating crop. Farmers used to depend mainly on maize for their food and income, but maize needs a lot of water to grow and is therefore poorly adapted to semi-arid zones.

Food security and sustainability

Partially replacing maize with commercial sorghum presents the advantage of ensuring a more secure harvest and a guaranteed market, and enabling households to buy wheat flour, cornflour and bean flour. What's more, through the agricultural advisory services that CGA offers farmers on crop-management techniques, the adoption of sorghum creates a virtuous circle. Promoted as part of a crop rotation with legumes, which build soil fertility (such as common beans and mung beans), sorghum is better adapted to the local climate and allows farmers to diversify their diet and income.

Risk of dependency

CGA is not directly under contract with EAML. It plays an intermediary role, strengthening the negotiating power of farmers vis-à-vis the company. It also acts as a trusted third party, providing reassurance to both parties. EAML's monopoly situation in Kenya's sorghum market for beer production places farmers in a situation where they become dependent. This is a common scenario in beer value chains at international level, given the critical size of malt houses. And yet, EAML is totally dependent on CGA's farmers to supply its facility (the national sorghum supply is still well below the company's needs). CGA is also working to diversify outlets for sorghum farmers. It supports the Kenyan government's food-fortification policy – the "Flour Blending Policy" –, which includes sorghum and will thus provide an alternative market for farmers.

Financial model and governance: risks for the continuation of the partnership

There are questions regarding the financial sustainability of the current arrangement: EAML does not provide funding for the tech-

More and more beers are being produced from local raw materials in Africa, particularly sorghum and manioc. Those beers are helping address challenges such as relocating the value chain, providing economic opportunities for African farmers, and promoting environmental sustainability, such as in the case of sorghum.

Augustin Douillet - FEERT

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

This article is a summary of Inter-réseaux's experience-assessment report on the partnership between CGA and EAML, which is available here (in French): <https://bit.ly/3vymxG>

How are partnerships between farmers and businesses contributing to the sustainability of the food system in West Africa?

What connections, rivalries or synergies unite farmers, farmers' organisations and formal companies within food systems? What types of support already exist or should exist in West Africa in order to promote synergies in partnerships between these different actors?

Grain de Sel (GDS): *How do you define the "private sector" when discussing food and nutritional security*

Bio Goura Soule (BGS): In my view, the private sector refers to any enterprise that is established in a given area of activity, producing goods and/or services. As micro-enterprises, family farms (FF) are a key component of the private sector in terms of jobs, production volume, etc. When thinking about the role of FFs in the global food system, the most important thing is to consider how the different actors enter into partnerships, closely examine the balance of power, and make sure contracts do not demean farmers' organisations (FO). It has been observed that the best valued contracts are those negotiated in groups, within cooperatives or inter-professional bodies, as this has an influence on the attitude of industrial firms, which tend to minimise their own exposure to risks.

Jean Phillippe Audinet (JPA): I think we need to be careful with respect to the systematically ambiguous and often improper use of the term "private sector" which has permeated the discourse of public actors (governments and development partners). The term "Public-Private Partnership (PPP)", for instance, is used almost exclusively to imply agreements between public investors and large industrial, commercial or financial companies, while FFs play a fundamental role in food systems (FS). This misuse of language reflects the economic, political and cultural power that multinational agri-food, tech and finance companies have, which allows them to position themselves as "providers of solutions" vis-à-vis public decision-makers. This simultaneously generic and exclusive usage of the term "private sector" also tends to neglect the nature of the rivalries and conflicts of interests that usually exist between pri-

vate actors and between private interests and public interests in market economies.

THE BEST VALUED
CONTRACTS ARE THOSE
NEGOTIATED IN GROUPS (...) AS THIS HAS AN INFLUENCE
ON THE ATTITUDE OF
INDUSTRIAL FIRMS,
WHICH TEND TO MINIMISE
THEIR OWN EXPOSURE
TO RISKS

Sidy Ba (SB): FFs pool together knowledge, know-how and plans for the future, as well as financial and material resources, in order to ensure food security, maintain their family-centred social fabric, and save the land and the values attached to the land. Agribusiness companies are fundamentally different. The link between members is often capital (financial resources in the form of contributions and shares, or the individual promoter's capital), and the companies themselves focus exclusively on achieving growth and profit.

GDS: *Do African states support formal private companies differently than farmers and farmers' organisations?*

SB: In most of our countries, unequal access to public resources has been observed between family farms and other more capitalistic types of farms. In terms of access to loans and land, for instance, the latter are systematically given priority. FFs can help address the challenges of sustainable development, provided that a few conditions are met: access to resources, access to capital, access to the market, access to technical assistance, access to the results of relevant research, etc. Food sovereignty is within reach if the public authorities support us more.

BGS: State support varies from one country to another, and comes in a variety of forms. It may be implicit (setting prices for products) or explicit (subsidising inputs), or it may come in the form of guarantee funds, lower interest rates, insurance systems, etc. But the best place for the state to intervene is in managing insurance, guarantees and, most importantly, funding. If there is no funding mechanism for coordinating or regulating the operations and the product and financial flows between farmers and other actors – whether industrial processors, traders or distributors –, there will always be a pretty strong bias against farmers and FOs, particularly when it comes to price negotiation and trade diversion.

JPA: Over the past several years, states and their financial partners have tended (through development projects) to fund PPPs in the agricultural sector, where public funds are channelled towards models of "productive partnerships", which consist of business alliances between primary producers and companies positioned in the downstream (and sometimes upstream) part of their respective sectors. In this model, large companies and financial investors are given a boost, and their business environ-

ment is facilitated by the state through land concessions, construction of infrastructure, access to water and energy, etc. States often appear to be more focused on attracting large private investors than on strengthening the negotiating positions of small farmers vis-à-vis those actors.

GDS: *Do agricultural cooperatives complement the other types of private companies when it comes to processing and marketing? Or do they present an alternative?*

SB: Given their intrinsic values (solidarity, personal and social responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, ethical standards based on honesty, transparency, and the primacy of the common interest over the individual interest), cooperatives do present a credible alternative for FOs. But they need greater public support in order to be able to fully complement agrifood companies.

JPA: I think the cooperative model is also essential when it comes to establishing or strengthening the autonomy and economic power of farmers vis-à-vis other actors in the

value chain and vis-à-vis consumers. It certainly has its place within the landscape of adding value to and marketing products. The same goes for companies in the social and solidarity-based economy, and joint-venture models where farmers hold a stake in the entity and benefit directly from the financial success of the enterprise. Public support should give priority to helping these types of entity, which promote autonomy, participation, and social and environmental values.

BGS: On the contrary, I think that in the current context, this model has shown its limits. Under the OHADA Act, which applies to the Francophone zone (pp. 28-29), we currently have cooperatives that are either very large (with over 100 members) or very small, more closely resembling economic interest groups (EIG). Cooperatives are too cumbersome, and their governance is sometimes deficient and undemocratic. They are still promoted in some countries, but success rates are truly minimal. EIGs, on the other hand, are becoming increasingly widespread. They allow operators from a given sector with proven affinities to band together, with very flexible management procedures that empower

their members. EIG members enjoy greater independence, and the groups themselves are easier to set up and join.

GDS: *Do you think that actors in agricultural sectors should reorient their activities towards local, national or sub-regional markets rather than international export markets?*

JPA: Yes, because the goal should be food security, inclusiveness and sustainability. Only local food systems can be governed and regulated by local public bodies. Just like the 2008 crisis, the COVID-19 crisis revealed many inconsistencies in production and international-trade models, and highlighted the risk of becoming overly dependent on imported products. Progress must be made in terms of regional integration, real enforcement of laws on the free circulation of goods, and common regulations on quality and traceability, but also – and perhaps more importantly – common enforcement of measures to help protect this integrated sub-regional market. These measures, however, will only be successful if they are accompanied by major investments in the infrastructure of a



true intermediate-urbanisation policy.

BGS: Local and regional markets, in my view, present a learning opportunity where product quality, traceability, normalisation and standardisation can be improved before moving on to the more demanding regional and international market. Depending on their development, FFs and agricultural companies must initially target the market that is suited to their offer, and not get ahead of themselves. There is a local market offering opportunities to introduce products that are in line with consumers' expectations and habits. To convert those consumers into loyal customers in the future, it is important to focus on quality.

SB: Because of their flexibility and their abi-

ONLY LOCAL
FOOD SYSTEMS
CAN BE GOVERNED
AND REGULATED BY
LOCAL PUBLIC BODIES

lity to combine subsistence crops and commercial crops, FFs are capable of supplying sub-regional and international markets. They can adapt from year to year depending on prices and marketing capacities. To do so, they need reliable economic information and adequate resources. In West Africa, it was observed that after attempts to entrust cotton, groundnut and cocoa cultivation to large companies or private plantations, the colonial power turned to small farmers. As countries started to gain independence, the decision was made to confirm family farmers in their role as suppliers of export markets through programmes to stabilise prices and fund investments.

GDS: *Could you give an example of a successful partnership between companies and farmers? What about a partnership that failed, or that had shortcomings?*

SB: One good example is the partnership in the groundnut sector between the Senegalese Association for Grassroots-Level Development (ASPRODEB) and the Senegalese Company for the Exploitation of Oils

(COPEOL). Under their partnership, COPEOL prefinances inputs (seeds and fertiliser) for farmers, ASPRODEB supervises and evaluates, inputs are delivered to apex FOs belonging to the Senegalese National Council of Rural Dialogue and Cooperation (CNCR), prices paid to farmers are aligned with the national market price set by the National Groundnut Interprofessional Committee (CNIA), and farmers undertake to fully repay the loan in kind and to sell at least an additional quantity defined in advance at the time of marketing. This public-private partnership between a FO and an industrial firm benefits both parties.

BGS: There have been some true examples of success in the rice sector. Structuring value chains requires flexible forms of intervention and regulation where small farmers are not roped in against their will. I can think of one example in the Nigerian state of Nasarawa, where a large company set up an industrial facility for processing rice. The company entered into contracts with groups of farmers whom the company supplies with inputs, and who in return provide the company with paddy at previously negotiated prices. The facility is operating at full speed, and production continues to increase. It is important to secure ties between actors who have different interests and different means.

GDS: *Do you think that international technical and financial partners (TFP) have consistent approaches when it comes to supporting the private sector?*

BGS: Approaches differ from one donor to another. As recipients of aid, states rarely have a consistent form of intervention – even within individual countries – when it comes to orienting the support they receive. Greater support is provided to large companies, which enter into contracts with small entrepreneurs and FFs. Everyone today is counting on a sort of innovation platform, and I think states are throwing in the towel. They just negotiate loans but leave implementation to international NGOs, to entities which, even though they are established within the ministry, are not controlled by the state because they behave like miniature empires within the state. Partners, for their part, are primarily concerned with the rate of loan consumption and the implementation of what is planned, even if it does not produce the expected results.

JPA: It is not up to TFPs to define approaches for supporting private actors. Ensuring the food security of the people is mainly the responsibility of the states and their

regional and sub-regional organisations. And what support are we referring to? If the objectives are those of the SDGs, then public support should first be focused on small family farms. And there should be clarification as to what conditions must be met in order for public funds to be provided to large upstream or downstream companies that want to partner with small farmers. ■

Sidy Ba



sidyba2002@yahoo.fr
Secretary-General of the Framework for Dialogue between Groundnut Farmers (CCPA); President of the Kaolack Regional Framework for Rural Dialogue; Spokesperson and Head of Communications at the Senegalese National Council of Rural Dialogue and Cooperation (CNCR)

Dr Bio Goura Soule



soule.bio.ecowas@gmail.com
Technical assistant /livestock farming and pastoralism at the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), ECOWAS Commission

Jean Philippe Audinet



j.audinet@ifad.org
Lead technical specialist of rural institutions, and coordinator of the Farmers' Forum at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of his organisation.

MEMBERS' CORNER

We worked closely with our members to produce this issue of the magazine. Some of those members have direct experience in areas such as food systems and partnerships between farmers and businesses. For instance, AVSF (pp. 16-17), Fert (p. 35), Gret (pp. 18-19) and Saild (pp. 26-27) all made contributions to different articles in this issue.



Through its five member organisations, AVI works with farmers in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Guinea to help them ensure their own food security, defend their food sovereignty and deal with the consequences of climate change. More than 1,000 organisations are supported in sectors such as grains, fruits/vegetables, legumes and oils. The objective is to help them improve their professional skills and become autonomous: <http://www.afriqueverte.org/>

AVI organises exchanges for agricultural products at local, national and regional level, where actors from different sectors and private operators come together to buy and sell raw and processed agricultural products and seeds. The initiative is supplemented by a system for managing information on agricultural-product markets, which includes the publication of regular bulletins and maintenance of platforms (web/SMS/mobile app) (www.simagri.net).



The two NGOs are legally independent. Their actions seek to strengthen civil-society actors working to promote social change in agriculture and food through the provision of funding and support.

<https://www.sosfaim.be/>

<https://www.sosfaim.lu/>

SOS Faim Belgium supports various initiatives concerning FO marketing (in Senegal's cowpea and rice value chains), inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurship (in Burkina Faso), and partnerships in Mali between FOs and businesses (the organic-fertiliser supplier Éléphant Vert, the agricultural-insurance company OKO, and the construction NGO La Voûte Nubienne).

SOS Faim Luxembourg contributed to an experience-assessment report on a partnership between a network of pineapple farmers in Benin (RêPAB) and a local processing company (Les Jus Tillous), available here:

<https://bit.ly/3wSh3sd>

Agriculteurs Français et Développement International (French Farmers and International Development) is an association that was founded by four French organisations. AFDI builds partnerships between actors in French agriculture and those in the agricultural systems of developing countries, particularly in Africa.



<https://www.afdi-opa.org/>

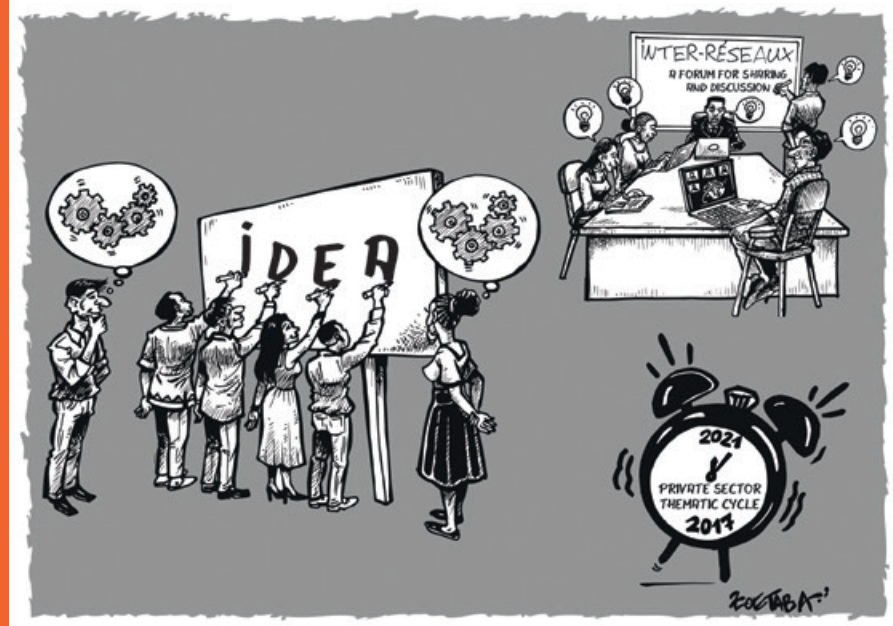
"Responsible Economic Partnerships" is one of the pillars of AFDI's 2025 strategic orientation. Such partnerships bring together farmers' organisations, businesses, and cooperatives or French subsidiaries to develop value chains between the Global North and South that are fair, inclusive and sustainable, and that offer economic benefits for family farmers. This approach, which combines solidarity and economic action, is pursued in particular by AFDI Nouvelle Aquitaine in Benin for pineapple and groundnut, and by AFDI Pays de la Loire in Burkina Faso for organic soy and in Tunisia for medicinal plants.

This issue of *Grain de Sel* was the fruit of a long-term group effort!

Issue no. 81 of *Grain de Sel* is part of the thematic cycle on the “private sector”, coordinated by Inter-réseaux since 2017. The team effort that went into producing this issue of the magazine made it possible to showcase work and ideas that have been developed over the long term, and to mobilise a diverse range of actors involved in the thematic cycle on the “private sector”.

What is Inter-réseaux's private-sector cycle?

In what ways is the private sector involved in developing agricultural policies, funding African farms and structuring value chains?



What challenges are faced by family farms, farmers' organisations and the partners who support them?

The objective of the thematic cycle is to mobilise the network's members and partners in order to spark a collective discussion on these issues, produce information, and use that information within the community of development actors. Some of the main accomplishments of the thematic cycle include: a publication entitled *The growing role of the private sector in agricultural and food policy in Africa*, and an experience-assessment report on partnerships between farmers' organisations and businesses. All work produced as part of the “private sector” cycle, plus regularly updated monitoring resources, are available online: <https://bit.ly/3z7FJhP>

How was this issue of *Grain de Sel* produced?

Work on this issue began in July 2020 and involved the participation, proposals and mobilisation of the participants of the thematic group. Designed as a tool to help facilitate the cycle, this issue allowed us to take the discussions and collaborative content even further through surveys, work sessions open to the entire group, a debate drawing on discussions from the cycle about the definition of the term “private sector”, and the organisation of the first-ever Inter-réseaux webinar on the different dairy models in West Africa, which was also the subject of an article.

The day-to-day editorial process, with the constraints inherent in producing the magazine, required the creation of a smaller editorial board. Other lessons may be drawn from this learning process to strengthen large-scale participation in Inter-réseaux's publications. ■

Who are the participants in the private-sector cycle?

The private-sector cycle brings together fifty people from different backgrounds (practitioners, researchers, etc.), just like the composition of Inter-réseaux's organisations: AFD, AFDI, Afrique Verte, Alternative Espaces Citoyens Niger, AVSF, CARE, CFSI, CIRAD, COLEACP, Confédération Paysanne du Faso, FARM, FERT, GRET, IFAD, IPAR, IRAM, SOS Faim Belgium, SOS Faim Luxembourg, Terra Nueva, Catholic University of Leuven, University of Ouaga II, University of Parakou, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. Collaborative monitoring, experience-sharing, discussions, contribution to the network's work... The number of ways to participate are many and diverse – just like the participants themselves!

Cycle financially supported by:



GRAIN DE SEL Get involved!

The *Grain de Sel* magazine has been published since 1996 and is central to Inter-réseaux Développement Rural's mission to circulate information, encourage debate and promote experience-sharing. Its purpose is to help readers understand the issues around agricultural and rural development in Africa, and to report on the different topics debated within the sector. Like Inter-réseaux, which is made up of African and European actors from different backgrounds working together on these questions, each half-yearly issue of the magazine is created through a team effort. *Grain de Sel* seeks to give a voice to a diverse range of actors in the field (FOs, NGOs, researchers, leaders, etc.) and encourage the expression of different points of view. We are always interested in new contributions. Don't hesitate to write to us at inter-reseaux@inter-reseaux.org!



Publication director: Gifty Narh Guiella

Head of this issue: Alexandra Quet

Editorial board: Gifty Narh Guiella, Nedjma Bennegouch, Cécile Broutin, Éloïse de Keyser, Liora Stuhrenberg, Serge Aubague, Papa Assane Diop, Jean-Luc François, Gilles Mersadier, Steven Le Faou, Jean René Cuzon, Marc Mees, Marie-Pauline Voufo, Souleymane Ouattara, Patrick Delmas, Sébastien Subsol, Roger Blein

Design & production: Agence Appaloosa

Printing: Chat Noir Impressions

Publisher: Inter-réseaux Développement Rural
Nogent-sur-Marne Phone: +33 (0)1 43 94 73 28
www.inter-reseaux.org

Legal deposit: 4th quarter 2021 - ISSN: 1253-0166