JLIFAD

– International Fund for Agricultural Development –
– Identifying and sharing innovation in Western and Central Africa –

– Information and communication centres –

I. Context

1. Name of the innovation
Information and communication centres

2. Country – Region
Senegal

3. Organization
Agricultural Development Project in Matam (PRODAM)

4. Who is the innovator ?
PRODAM

5. Actors involved
Local community
Project team
Community organizations
Producers

6. Starting date
March 2007

7. Type of innovation
Institutional

II. Key concepts

8. Summary
The PRODAM launched this innovation in an effort to bridge the information gap and set up a platform for the exchange and sharing of knowledge and experience among the various actors involved in the local development process (associations, community and professional organizations, producers/entrepreneurs, local communities, support structures). The initiative has the overall aim of helping to improve rural inhabitants' living conditions through:

- Development of local information and knowledge management capacities (generation, access, use)
- Promotion and strengthening of local information systems, allowing information and knowledge to be shared within grass-roots communities and organizations
- Strengthening of the implementation framework and conditions for local development processes

The challenge is to promote a holistic approach and development strategies facilitated by access to information, and to use information technologies as implementation tools at the various levels. The centre will act as the framework for a number of initiatives and programmes meeting the communities' needs, particularly as regards farming, health, formal and informal education, entrepreneurship, market knowledge and monitoring, and local governance.

9. What problems does this innovation seek to solve?
Grass-roots community organizations, professional groups and individual farmers have great difficulty in gaining access to useful, appropriate information. The information available from support and research structures is also hard to access because of distance, format, presentation and often unsuitable dissemination methods.

10. Factors for successful replication
- The involvement and participation of beneficiaries (design, finance, implementation)
- The modest size of the basic investment
- The modest size of users' access costs
- The stress laid on local languages (post-literacy training documents, audio-visual material etc.) and local content

11. Main results
- 4 information centres established
- 8 village facilitators (both men and women) trained in information management
- Basic computer courses under way at two centres

12. Target group(s)
Local communities, farmers' organizations

13. Difficulties encountered
- Fairly long awareness, facilitation and training phase – although this is essential if the local people are to assume full responsibility
- Operationalization of the management committees, some of whose members live a long way off

14. Financial aspects
The contribution of the PRODAM focused on the purchase of basic furniture and equipment (tables, chairs, shelves, notice boards, five computers, printer, scanner, digital camera, LAN network). The cost of equipping one centre in this way is about CFAF 10 million. The other expenditure concerns implementation of the programme (awareness-building, base-line studies, establishment process, training sessions for facilitators and members of management committees). The modest size of the basic investment is a major criterion for replicability of the model, especially since it can be reduced still further for branches (less equipment).

III. Technical aspects

15. The following principles were observed in implementing the intervention in order to optimize its chances of success:
- Basic priority given to participation of all the actors involved in all stages
- Boosting of existing information systems and improvement in access to basic services
- Production of local content and stress on the local assumption of responsibility for the programme
- Inclusion of women in the phase of defining communication needs and strategies
- Combination of new and old technologies and incorporation of traditional knowledge

IV. Further information

16. Key contacts

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17. Internet link
http://www.prodam2.org
(pages to be developed)

18. Key documents (document title + link or contact or address)
Le Centre d'information et de communication, un outil au service du développement local (= The information and communication centre, a tool at the service of local development) (document not yet placed online)