



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

– Delegation of power to community organizations –

I. Context

1. Name of the innovation

Delegation of power to grass-roots community organizations for the implementation of microprojects

2. Country – Region

Mauritania

3. Organization

Maghama Improved Flood Recession Farming Project, Phase II (PACDM II)

4. Who is the innovator?

PACDM II

5. Actors involved

Village development committees (VDCs), the Government, NGOs

6. Starting date

2005

7. Type of innovation

Institutional

II. Key concepts

8. Summary

This new approach empowers target groups by delegating to them full responsibility for microprojects and building up their planning and management capacities in conditions of transparency regarding both markets and the management of funds intended for the communities.

9. What problems does this innovation seek to solve?

- The marginalization of target groups in the execution of their programme, thereby hampering the emergence of local private promoters
- The lack of transparency in the financing of community works
- The exclusion of target groups from the management of funds intended for them
- The weakness of small local entrepreneurs

10. Factors for successful replication

- Simplicity of tools and transparency in implementation
- Mobilization and incentivization of target groups
- Real withdrawal of project management units from day-to-day management of small, time-consuming community contracts
- Reduction in the cost of carrying out microprojects

11. Target group(s)

Village development committees (VDCs)

12. Difficulties encountered

- Low level of training of VDC presidents so that they are often unable to read or take advantage of contracts
- Reluctance of the immediate environment (local offices of the ministries concerned, communes, local government etc.), whose actors want to remain in charge of everything

13. Costs and benefits of the innovation (financial, social, political etc.)

The financial costs are more favourable to the project and target groups: submissions for a Government project are much greater than those proposed to the VDC by the PACDM II. While not denying the importance of financial advantages, we feel that by far the greatest advantages are (i) the building of target groups' capacities, (ii) transparency in the implementation of community investments, (iii) the decision-making power exercised by target groups over the use of funds intended for them and (iv) the establishment of a learning process for target groups so that they can manage their own affairs.

The practice of delegating community works to local enterprises can have a significant impact in terms of job generation. Under the neighbouring Poverty-Reduction Project in Aftout South and Karakoro (PASK), the salaries paid to local labour by the enterprises to whom work has been entrusted – wells, schools, classrooms, health centres, latrines, administrative buildings, slaughter houses, markets etc. – come to about UM 107.6 million, or US\$398,000. These salaries have been paid locally to bricklayers, concrete workers, painters, sealers, carpenters, metal workers, plumbers, tilers etc.

III. Technical aspects

14. The success of the approach depends on taking the following technical aspects into account:

- Extensive explanation and dissemination of the draft delegation agreement among target groups to prevent any hijacking of the process
- The introduction of simple but effective tools to ensure the quality of work and the security of finances: records of calls to tender and bids, contracts, records of processing and allocation, certificates of receipt
- Ongoing and on-the-job training

IV. Further information

15. Key contacts

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|-----------------------------|--------------|--|
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16. Internet link

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17. Key documents

- Document Convention de délégation de pouvoir CVD (= Agreement on the delegation of power to VDCs), 2005.
- Rapports d'activité du projet (= Reports on project activities), 2005.
- Projet de dossier d'appels d'offre (= Draft file of calls to tender)
- Contrats de prestataire (= Service providers' contracts)