



**- International Fund for Agricultural Development –
– Scouting and Sharing Innovation in Western and Central Africa –**

– Mechanism to build collective capacities for innovation –

I. Background

1. Name of innovation

Mechanism to build collective capacities for innovation

2. Country – Region

Senegal

3. Organization

- International Centre for Development Oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA)
- Institute of Environmental Sciences (ISE) of the Cheick Anta Diop University
- International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)

4. Who is the innovator?

ICRA, ISE and CIAT

5. Actors involved

- Civil-society organizations
- Private-sector organizations
- Government officials and producers involved in innovation processes, particularly within value chains and natural resource management

6. Implementation date

2007

7. Type of innovation

Institutional

II. Key concepts

8. Summary

The programme to boost collective capacities for innovation is intended to make the actors who are to collaborate in setting up value chains or managing natural resources more capable of jointly formulating solutions by sharing their various points of view and pooling their creativity. The programme also seeks to boost the knowledge, skills and attitudes of rural development professionals and their partners in the sphere of social, organizational, technical, policy and economic innovation. It therefore starts by identifying and assembling groups of actors, including: (i) locally elected officials from rural and urban zones and salaried professionals (for example technicians from local communities); (ii) users of natural resources and economic actors (for example farmers, livestock producers, tree growers, water users); and (iii) representatives of the public administration (particularly the Ministries of Agriculture, Water and the Environment) and investment project agents. Actors in the field select promising situations, each presenting a problem that has to be solved collectively; then, in the context of this situation, they identify appropriate training topics that can boost their capacity for joint action. The following topics have so far been identified: (i) analysis of complex systems – ecosystems, production systems, legal systems and regulatory mechanism; (ii) management of conflicts between different development views and aims; and (iii) management of groups and organizations with a view to formulating inter-institutional strategies. The programme assists in this process by facilitating the engagement of inter-actor and inter-institutional dialogue, providing methodological support and developing teaching tools. The methodology developed is based on a research-action-training approach entailing learning through action, while the teaching tools developed consist of a theoretical part and a practical part (theory of innovation, knowledge systems, scientific knowledge, local knowledge, participatory research methods etc.). The close involvement of the university ensures that the training mechanism will be institutionalized for future generations of agricultural experts.

9. What issues does the innovation address?

- Weakness of processes of joint knowledge generation (local knowledge and formal knowledge) and multi-actor innovation, especially the actors' negotiating capacities to reconcile different interests and concerns with a view to collective action
- Lack of support (professional or university training) for multi-actor innovation processes
- Poor capacities of universities (inadequate human resources and curricula) to innovate in their teaching and research in order to keep pace with the changing needs of those involved in rural development

10. Key success factors for replication

- Development of a training method that can be systematized in terms of stages and teaching materials
- Boosting of actors' capacities for joint innovation, use of research experts' knowledge in value chains and natural resource management, and identification of human resources (trainers)
- Creation of multi-actor groups for joint identification of promising situations and the construction of ongoing dialogue between training demand and supply that could be expanded
- Inclusion of training in university curricula

11. Main results

- Mechanism to boost tested and available collective capacities for innovation
- Development of teaching tools
- Training in joint action, particularly through workshops and other teaching tools
- Institutionalization of the training approach in the universities

12. Target groups

All categories of actor taking part in research and investment programmes (see question 8)

13. Difficulties encountered

- Difficulties in assembling all the local actors
- Difficulties in inter-institutional coordination

14. Financial aspects

III. Technical summary

15.

The following three training modules have been treated:

- Systems analysis
- Conflict management
- Management of organizations

IV. Follow-up

16. Key contacts

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17. Internet link

18. Key documents

ENDA GRAF Sahel, 2007, Gestion Collaborative de l'innovation: Rapport provisoire atelier de Thiès [Collaborative management of innovation: Draft report on the Thiès Workshop].