

The effects of institutional and political changes on West African FOs and adaptation strategies

Lessons to be drawn from the experiences of the Faso Farmers' Federation (CPF) and the Federation of Producers' Unions of Benin (FUPRO)



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Glossary of acronyms

ABeC	Benin Rabbit Breeders' Association
Adeprina	French National Institute of Agronomy Paris-Grignon
AFD	French Development Agency
Afdi	French Farmers and International Development Association
AIC	Interprofessional Cotton Association
ANAB	Benin National Poultry Farmers Association
ANAF-FUPRO	National Association of Women in the FUPRO network
ANM	Benin National Association of Fish Traders and Related Products
ANPC	National Cotton Producers' Association
APEB	Professional Association of Ginners of Benin
ANEP	National Pig Breeders' Association
CCOF	Co-ordination Framework for Umbrella Organisations
CCR-B	Benin Rice Growers' Consultation Council
CCF	Small Farmer's Confederation
CICB	Burkina Faso Intersectoral Cereals Committee
CIDR	Centre for International Research and Development
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CIRB	Intersectoral Rice Committee of Burkina Faso
CNPA-B	National Council of Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso
CNPC	National Council of Cotton Producers
CNPOP	National Producers' Organisations Provisional Coordination group
CPF	Faso Farmers' Federation
CRR	Regional Rice Growers' Council
CRR-MC	Mono-Couffo Regional Rice growers' Council
CSRD	Dédougou Recommendations Monitoring Committee
DOPAIR	Directorate of Producers' Organisations and Rural Institution Support
FAPAHA	Food Facility through Hydro-agricultural Development
FAFA	Support Facility to Agricultural Production Systems
FEB	Federation of Livestock Producers of Burkina Faso
FENAFER-B	National Federation of Rural Women of Burkina Faso
FENAPAB	Benin National Federation of Cashew Nut Producers
FENOP	National Federation of Farmers' Organisations
FENUGGFB	National Federation of Unions of Forest Management Groups of Burkina
FEPA-B	Federation of Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso
FEPAB	Federation of Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso
FEPPASI	Provincial Federation of Agricultural Producers of Sissili.
FNGN	National Federation of Naam Groups
FNJPAB	National Federation of Young Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso
FNPBB	National Federation of Banana Producers of Burkina Faso
FUGN	National Federation of Naam Groups
FUPRO	Federation of Producers' Unions of Benin
EIG	Economic interest group
GEA	Agricultural Workers' group
GPDIA	Professional Group of Agricultural Input Distributors
GVPC	Cotton Producer Village Cooperatives
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IR	Inter-réseaux Rural Development forum
IRAM	French Institute for Research and the Application of Development Methods
OP	Small farming organisation
OSD	Strategic Development Guidelines
PAFASP	Agricultural Diversification and Market Development Programme
PAFIRIZ	Benin Rice Chain Support Project
PAHA	Hydro-agricultural development programme
PAIMAF	Institutional Support for Modernisation of Family Agriculture Programme
PAMRAD	Rural Support Programme in Atacora Donga
PA/OPA	Action plan to promote the development of professional agricultural organizations
PPAB	Benin Agriculture Professionalisation Programme
PPMAB	Benin Agricultural Professionalisation Project
PSRSA	Strategic Plan for Agricultural Sector Revival
ROPAHA	Bolstering producer organisations through hydro-agricultural developments
ROPPA	Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa
SDR	Rural Development Strategy Document
UCAM – B	Union of Agricultural and Market Gardening Cooperatives of Burkina Faso
UCOBAM	Union of Agricultural and Market Gardening Cooperatives of Burkina Faso
UCP	District-level Producers' Union
UCPA	District Cashew Nut Producers' Unions
UDP	Departmental Producers' Unions
UNC-B	National Union of Cereal Producers of Burkina Faso
UNJPAB	National Federation of Young Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso
UNPCB	National Union of Cotton Producers of Burkina Faso
UNPFL-B	National Union of Fruit and Vegetable Producers of Burkina Faso
UNPRB	National Union of Rice Producers of Burkina Faso
UNPSB	National Union of Seed Producers of Burkina Faso
UPC	Centre Region Producers' Union
UPS	Southern Producers Union
URPA	Atacora Donga Regional Cashew Nut Producers' Union
URP-AD	Atacora-Donga Regional Producers Union
URPA-AD	Atacora-Donga Regional Cashew Nut Producers' Union
URP-BA	Borgou-Alibori Regional Producers Union
URP-MC	Mono-Couffo Regional Rice growers Union
URP-OP	Ouémé-Plateau Regional Producers Union
USPP	Sub-prefectural level producers' unions
VG	Village-level group
6S	Use of the dry season in the savannah and the Sahel

Abstract

1. Context, objectives and how the study was organised

West African FOs (small farming organisations) play a fundamental social, economic, political and environmental role. They have to contend with institutional, economic and political changes brought about by governments, donors or by the market, which are impacting on their organisational structures, at the present time in particular by putting pressure on them to adopt a sector-based organisational structure. FOs have had to adjust accordingly and their institutional landscape is undergoing change. Such processes are underway in Benin and Burkina Faso. The Confédération Paysanne du Faso (Faso Farmers' Federation - CPF) and the Fédération des unions de producteurs agricoles (Federation of Producers' Unions - FUPRO) in Benin, along with Afdi (French Farmers and International Development Association) and IRAM (French Institute for Research and the Application of Development Methods) are proposing to analyse these changes, together with the adjustment strategies undertaken by FOs and the effects these changes are having on them; this will better equip them to comprehend their own internal debates and to exert an influence on debates at national level.

The knowledge building process began with an internal process of reflection on the part of the two umbrella organisations. Following this, two consultants from IRAM and Afdi spent a week with them, together with members from a number of structuring levels (national and provincial federations, unions and grassroots groups) and partners. The aim was to shed light on conclusions arising from FO discussions, clarify questions and provide an “external viewpoint” to aid these analyses.

2. Changes of context and their effects on the development of the two FOs

The study concentrated on an analysis of the major changes taking place over the past ten years, focusing in particular on sector-based structuring dynamics.

2.1. FUPRO in Benin

FUPRO was founded in 1994 and is regarded as the most extensive and most structured small farmers' group in Benin. Initially, it based itself around the cotton sector and when this was liberalised, producers found themselves tasked with major responsibilities (credit and input distribution and primary harvesting). For this, the FUPRO network received payment and became a main point of contact with the government. But the speed of the government's withdrawal from the sector and the growing numbers of private stakeholders have weakened FUPRO's economic and political position. With the cotton industry in crisis, FUPRO has also seen its financial resources vastly reduced over the past decade. Since then, FUPRO has sought to diversify its economic base and encourage producers to become organised in other sectors. This momentum began in the non-cotton producing regions of Benin, where local unions set up focus groups in these sectors (e.g. rice), which have gradually emerged as FOs in their own right. Development projects have played an important role in the development and consolidation of these sector-based

bodies. Moreover, since the cotton crisis, the government has been seeking to support the development of other commercial sectors and, therefore, to encourage producers to adopt sector-based structures. In order to avoid being marginalised, FOs are seeking to comply with this vision even though this is not in line with their actual practice. These forms of support have had varying results, as they have not taken sufficient account of the pre-existing forces at work in the landscape of small farming organisations. On the one hand, the services provided by these specialist FOs are better targeted and delivered more effectively to producers. But on the other, however, geographically-based FOs seeking to develop a cross-cutting approach to supporting family-run farms are getting virtually no support any more. Finally, this difference is generating competition over resource management and consequently is weakening solidarity and opportunities for collaboration on operations and policy between FOs within the same network. In some cases, the process of promoting autonomy, and even the growth in numbers of specialist FOs, has been too rapid, taking place in less favourable circumstances or involving groups that were not ready for it.

2.2.FOs in Burkina Faso

The context here is very different since in Burkina Faso, the small farmers' movement developed initially on a more community-based and multi-functional basis, before being faced with a move to become compartmentalized by sector.

The majority of local-level FOs, whose previous organisational structures and activities were highly diversified, joined forces in the mid 1990s to form a national level consultation body (which later became the Confédération Paysanne du Faso in 2002). Operational or ideological differences of opinion led to the creation of different umbrella organisations. Since 2000, however, the promotion of sector-based structuring has greatly altered the FO landscape. In particular, small farmers are strongly encouraged to adopt cooperative status (Law 14 of 1999) in line with the economic role conferred on them by agricultural policy, and organise themselves by sector if they wish to obtain support and gain recognition. Finally, the government and projects strongly promote the creation of interprofessional bodies as the preferred tools for managing sectors. Based on this rationale, members of interprofessional bodies must themselves be specialist sector-based organisations. In this way, general FOs now feel obliged to either reposition themselves within a single sector or to split up into a number of sectors, in order to secure a place within these interprofessional bodies, where they are up against other FOs created “artificially” for this purpose. On the other hand, in many cases the configuration of interprofessional bodies remains rather restricted, with one product per structure (e.g. mango, onion) and not per product type (e.g. fruit and vegetables).

In fact, this change of context appears to have had little impact on the activities of grassroots FOs, particularly as several interpretations of Law 14 are possible. On the other hand, these FOs must be divided up for official purposes; this results in wasted resources and energies and makes the task of replacing managers and building their skills more problematic. At national level, the organisational dynamic in place for the past ten years is being called into question. Certain umbrella groups (such as the National Federation of Farming Organisations - FENOP) no longer

have state recognition as they have opted for non-cooperative status. Umbrella organisations within the CPF (under Law 14) focus on their own sector-specific problems and this is a divisive factor for small farmers in relation to the way they are represented and consulted.

In the two contexts studied, there is a very real separation of service and union functions among FOs, and this is even truer in the case of cross-cutting versus product-specific specialist functions. Moreover, FOs focusing on product-specific economic problems are able to garner much more support than others. But the question also has a political dimension, one of how to defend the interests of small family farms. This requires a consensus and coherent political discourse to be built, supported by a majority of small farmers.

3. Strategies put forward by FOs aimed at coordinating their "sector-based" and "cross-cutting" functions more successfully

This de facto separation necessarily means that solutions must be found to improve coordination between FOs with different roles but that are part of the same small farmers' movement.

In Benin, confronted with the risk of the network breaking up due to the new configuration of the cotton sector, and the subsequent political marginalisation and economic weakening of FUPRO, the federation has been considering the need for a new network structure. At the end of this process, in 2006 the FUPRO adopted a new organisational structure to try to provide a better link between geographically-based and sector-based FOs and to retain the latter within the network. The new structure is geographically-based (region, district and potentially village-level), with a parallel sector-based structure at each level. The national level is more of a strategic consultation framework. However, the network is still up against centrifugal forces that threaten its cohesion: regional FOs need to build a shared vision and goal, develop genuinely complementary services between general and sector-based FOs and train new leaders.

In Burkina Faso, the organisational structure of FOs within the CPF is very different. Each (relatively specialised) national umbrella organisation has offshoots at various levels. But there are no geographically-based general FOs in the FUPRO sense of the term. At national level, the CPF is the federating body for all these specialist FOs and also deals with "cross-cutting" issues. To facilitate dialogue and debate on cross-cutting issues at regional level, the CPF has created informal consultation platforms where all those involved in agricultural and rural development can come together. At national level, the CPF has set up a prospective studies and policy analysis unit. But major difficulties have been encountered: there are no real frameworks for dialogue between the government and FOs and those that do exist are unlikely to consider the farmers' perspective; the CPF does not always have the necessary clout in terms of analysis and proposals (leader training and technical support). Finally, the issue of the provision of social, cross-cutting and economic services (training, farm funding, equipment, etc.) by FOs within the CPF remains unresolved.

4. Lessons learned from these developments

4.1. The sector concept involves a number of challenges, beyond the operational issues pertaining to marketing products:

- (i) the promotion of commercial farming backed by agro-entrepreneurs, to the detriment of rural farms (security of land tenure, recognition of status, funding);
- (ii) farm specialisation, which is being promoted by some partners as necessary to make them more professional, but is not suitable for the majority of family-run farms, for which diversification of activities is a major factor in managing risks;
- (iii) limits on the political clout of FOs, restricting their sphere of activity to the provision of services, namely economic, etc.

In each case there is a need to clarify the terms of the debates between stakeholders, perhaps even avoiding the term 'sector', which conceals many underlying notions, and to define the real issues on which the debate should focus.

4.2. Does sector-based structuring allow FOs to deliver the services producers are looking for?

Benefits of a sector-based approach: FOs supply better targeted and more effective economic services, meeting the marketing challenges that producers encounter at one time or another. Moreover, FOs frequently have to contend with a lack of resources and skills preventing them from implementing all the missions and activities they would like to assume on behalf of their members. This approach helps them to prioritise their initiatives and organise their workload.

Limitations: the movement to (re)structure FOs by sector has been accompanied by a marginalisation of the so-called general FOs with regard to support from partners. This has resulted in a failure to provide satisfactory cross-cutting services to family-run farms, and is particularly relevant as sector-based FOs are also finding it difficult to provide these in addition to their specialist services: they too are managing scarce resources and meeting greater challenges than previously (a liberalised market environment where they are up against more powerful and better organised stakeholders, increasingly segmented markets, with different quality standards, etc.) requiring greater powers of analysis and a greater ability to respond.

Moreover, this approach, the direction and pace of which are frequently imposed without sufficient account being taken of existing dynamics, is leading to fragmented resources and FOs in competition with each other, which damages their effectiveness, relevance and the possibility of political consultation.

4.3. Does sector-based structuring allow FOs to continue to defend the interests of family farming?

Over the past fifteen years, the small farmers' movement has been progressively established around the goals of building leader capacity, developing a shared and independent vision, etc. Sector-based restructuring is tending to undermine these efforts and resulting in a marginalisation of FOs in their efforts to defend diversified family farming, in the face of agricultural policies promoting a vision of farming based on 'agribusiness'.

The new sector configurations are weakening the position of producers. The liberalisation of "major sectors" (such as cotton) has altered power relationships: where the economic and union remits of FOs were closely linked, they were able to defend their positions. Today, these functions

are separate, with FOs finding themselves up against the sector's private stakeholders, with policy dialogue and social issues being referred back to "general" FOs that receive little support from donors. In other sectors, FOs currently have insufficient economic clout and lack the leverage to exert an influence on agricultural policy dialogue, in spite of the creation of interprofessional bodies (which are largely confined to the management of sporadic projects).

Consequently, the segmentation of these sector-based FOs contributes to them becoming marginalised in policy dialogue by compartmentalising their actions and dispersing their energies, which appears to be making consultation and joint action on major issues more complex, dilutes representation of the small farmers' movement and weakens the voice of small farmers.

4.4. Points for consideration by FOs and their partners

FOs need to develop (or redevelop) varied remits within their network and must not abandon their cross-cutting functions. These play an essential role in responding to the problems encountered by farms (farm funding, vocational training, land management, etc.). These FOs need the support both of technical and financial partners and of government, if they are to boost their viability and effectiveness. This is a necessary condition if they are to take on the farming and rural development role devolved to them by these partners. But to do this, they require new FO support strategies that will:

- Support them in their various remits – not just commercial, but also social and political – and in their day-to-day operations;
- Build their capacities and HR resource capacities over time.
- Encourage synergy between FOs (rather than placing them in competition with each other) to build diversified services tailored to the particular needs of family-run farms on the one hand and build shared visions and a stimulating project on the other. This requires a thorough understanding both of existing dynamics and of the political, economic and social context;
- Help them reflect on their needs and on how to coordinate specialist and cross-cutting services; including consideration of differentiated funding methods in line with remits, to enable them to build a coherent offer;
- Not impose pre-conceived modes of structuring and organisation but encourage experimentation and self-generated solutions;
- Support FOs in reflecting on the role of the various stakeholders (government departments, local authorities, private operators, etc.) in rural development, which FOs can never completely replace;
- Support innovative responses to sector-based problems that affect all producers at one time or another (ensure outlets, improve their bargaining power, position themselves better in a given market, etc.).

This knowledge building work has been conducted as part of the project to build the capacities of farming organisation networks in relation to agricultural, food and rural policies (Paar network) funded by the Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency - AFD) with contracting authority entrusted to ADEPRINA/Inter-réseaux Développement rural (a rural development discussion forum). The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the AFD or Adeprina/IR.

1. Context and objectives of the knowledge building

1.1. Background

West African FOs play a fundamental social, economic, political and environmental role. West African small farmer organisations are often deeply rooted in society, which creates a desire to take on certain social responsibilities. They also have to contend with the challenges of producing and marketing farm produce whilst fulfilling technical and economic remits. Some of them have also entered the political arena, taking on advocacy and representation roles. Finally, they are becoming increasingly involved in environmental causes. These are, therefore, complex organisations trying to link up the various pillars of sustainable development with varying degrees of success: social, economic, environmental and even political. Over and above this overall assessment, the landscape of West African small farming organisations is also characterized by its diversity.

FOs are having to contend with institutional, economic and political changes brought about by governments, donors or the market, which are impacting on their structuring mechanisms, at the present time in particular by putting pressure on them to adopt a sector-based organisational structure. Such processes are underway in Benin and Burkina Faso. FOs have had to adjust accordingly, develop strategies and their institutional landscape is undergoing change.

1.2. Knowledge building objectives

For these reasons, the CPF and FUPRO, along with Afdi and IRAM, are proposing to analyse these changes, together with the adjustment strategies undertaken by FOs and the effects of these changes on them. In Benin and Burkina Faso (where these processes are well underway), the aim is to accompany the two umbrella organisations in performing a critical and historical analysis of their own experience. This will not only equip them more effectively to exert an influence on debates at national level (in dealings with the government) but also to have a better understanding of their own internal debates. What do the umbrella organisations have to say about the processes already underway?

With this in mind, the aim of this knowledge building process was to facilitate responses to the following questions:

- ☞ In what way have these changes of context influenced the way they are structured/organised? What part have the various external and internal factors played in the institutional development of FOs?
- ☞ What strategies have FOs put in place to provide a response? In what direction have they moved?
- ☞ As a result, what impact has this had on the capacities of FOs to defend the interests of and deliver services to family farmers?

1.3. How the knowledge building process was organised

The work undertaken comprised:

1. A critical and retrospective analysis of the institutional changes within each umbrella organisation and of two member FOs per organisation, seeking to identify explanatory factors arising from the context (political, institutional, economic and social) and examining internal forces at work. The aim was to identify changes of context which in principle appeared to be key together with the main factors likely to explain the institutional changes within each FO.
2. A further analysis, examining how the FOs responded to these changes of context. How did their mode of organisation and structuring change in response? How conversely, may they themselves have influenced the context?
3. An analysis of the effects of these changes on the capacities of each FO to defend the interests of its members and provide them with services, with reference to its mode of organisation and structuring. Has the FO strengthened its capacities to defend the interests of family farming or on the contrary, has it become weaker? Is its capacity to supply services to family-run farms now stronger or weaker?

At the start of the process, Afdi and IRAM offered the FOs a discussion guide which both used to run an internal workshop. In Benin and Burkina Faso, the umbrella organisations and two member FOs selected as “case studies” took part in these reflections. In Benin, the organisations involved were the Conseil Régional des Riziculteurs (Mono-Couffo Regional Rice growers Council - CRR-MC) and Union Régionales des Producteurs d’anacarde (Atacora-Donga Regional Cashew Nut Producers’ Union - URPA-AD); and in Burkina Faso, the Nationale des Producteurs de Fruits et Légumes (National Fruit and Vegetable Producers’ Union – UNPFL) and the Fédération Provinciale des Producteurs de la Sissili (Provincial Federation of Agricultural Producers of Sissili – FEPPASI).

Following this, two consultants from IRAM and Afdi spent a week with the two umbrella organisations, along with members from a number of structuring levels (national and provincial federations, unions and grassroots groups) and partners. The aim was to shed light on conclusions

arising from autonomous FO discussions, clarify questions and provide an “external viewpoint” to aid these analyses.

The results of this knowledge building exercise will be disseminated to partners in this report, but also via a PowerPoint presentation that can be shown by FOs to their members to stimulate reflection and debate.

Limitations of the exercise

This knowledge building takes the form of an initial process of reflection, to be carried on by FOs; it seeks to shed light on FO experience on this theme, to support current debates and stimulate their internal reflections and those of other West African FOs concerned.

However, it is difficult to draw conclusions on the long-term impact of these changes for family-run farms. But, as a ROPPA¹ leader whom we met points out, "this knowledge building process is an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns. We must look ahead and focus efforts already underway more effectively".

In Burkina Faso, UNPFL leaders took part in the CPF discussion workshop, but were not able to attend an in-depth working session with the mission. Only a short interview was possible. Moreover, the meeting with a grassroots UNPFL group had to be cancelled as the state of the road made it impossible for the mission to travel to the village. It was, however, able to meet the group's internal coordinator.

1.4. Acknowledgements

The authors wish to express their sincere thanks to all those who were willing to take part in this knowledge building process and share their experience and points of view, in highlighting the institutional changes within FOs and compiling the analysis presented in this report. Particular thanks go to Eric Ouedrago and Omar Ouedraogo who accompanied us throughout our stay in Burkina Faso, and to Assise Fiodendji in Benin for supporting this initiative. Thanks are also due to Souleymane Traoré and Cyrille Sotondji from the Afdi units in Burkina Faso and Benin for their invaluable help in organising the mission and facilitating the interviews.

¹ Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa

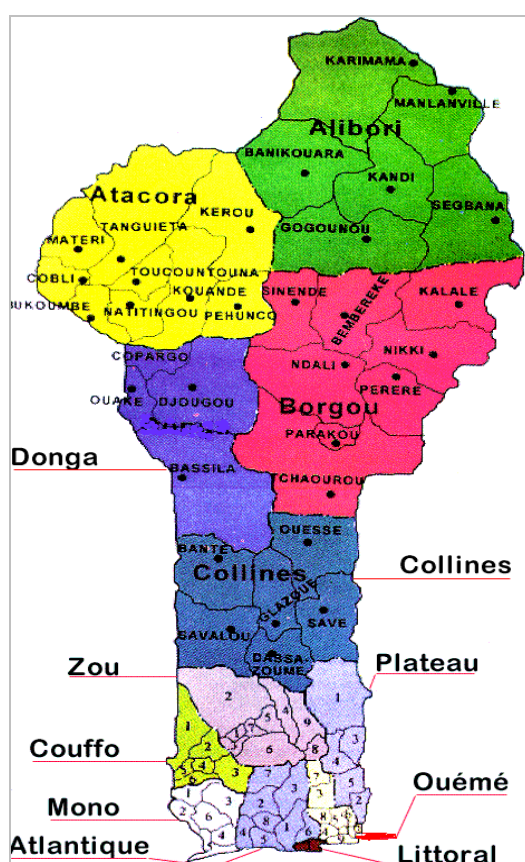
2. Analysis of changes within FOs

Complex dynamics have played a role in the structuring and restructuring of small farmers' organisations in Benin and Burkina Faso. External and internal change factors have converged (e.g. debates about leadership). The study has focused on an analysis of major developments over the past ten years. **Sector-based structuring** has been particularly prominent over this period². A more detailed examination will be required to identify more precisely how these approaches to sector-based agricultural development are taking shape in both countries and the mechanism involved.

2.1. The FUPRO network in Benin

2.1.1. FUPRO today

FUPRO is the largest agricultural producers' movement in Benin. It was founded in 1994 and is regarded as the most extensive and most structured small farmers' grouping in Benin.



² Minutes from the CPF workshop prior to the mission's arrival, presented in Appendix 4, mention other factors relevant to this context and the positioning issues they pose for the confederation.

The federation brings together six organisations representing geographical areas (see map below) and six organisations representing sectors or thematic areas:

1. Union Régionale des Producteurs du Mono-Couffo (Mono-Couffo Regional Rice Growers' Union - URP-MC)
2. Union Régionale des Producteurs de l'Ouémé et du Plateau (Ouémé-Plateau Regional Producers' Union - URP-OP)
3. Union des Producteurs du Centre (Centre Region Producers' Union - UPC) (Zou-Collines)
4. Union Producteurs du Sud (Southern Producers' Union - UPS)
5. Union Régionale des Producteurs du Borgou-Alibori (Borgou-Alibori Regional Producers' Union - URP-BA)
6. Union Régionale des Producteurs de l'Atacora-Donga (Atacora-Donga Regional Producers' Union - URP-AD)
7. Association Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Bénin (Benin National Association of Cotton Producers - ANPC)
8. Conseil de Concertation des Riziculteurs du Bénin (Benin Rice growers' Consultative Committee - CCR-B)
9. Association Nationale of Mareyeurs et Mareyeuses et Assimiles du Bénin (Benin National Association of Fish Traders and Related Products - ANM)
10. Association Nationale des Femmes du réseau FUPRO (National Association of Women in the FUPRO network - ANAF-FUPRO)
11. Association Nationale des Aviculteurs du Bénin (Benin National Poultry Farmers' Association - ANAB)
12. Association Béninoise des Cuniculteurs (Benin Rabbit Breeders' Association - ABcC)

Each regional union is structured in the form of district-level producers' unions (UCP), which in turn may be composed of village-level groups (VG). In total, the federation has 77 UCP and 2,500 VG groups

2.1.2. Major developments and main change factors

The first small farmers' organisations were set up in Benin during the 1960-70s, with the creation of pre-cooperative village groups (GV), under tight government control. In the Zou and Borgou regions, for example, rural development was focused on the promotion of cotton and GV were formed essentially for primary cotton harvesting and input distribution (Gentil, 1986). The early 1990s brought increased freedom to organise and associate for producers, with village groups and sub-prefectural level producers' unions (USPP) becoming more widespread.

Developments in the FUPRO network since its emergence in the early 1990s are closely linked to those taking place in the cotton sector, which provided a favourable environment in which FUPRO was able to consolidate, but which has also been responsible for the weakening of its position over the past decade. As FUPRO was heavily involved in managing the cotton sector, it was de facto a leading economic and political stakeholder. By virtue of its organisation, this sector supplied the network's main resources until the end of the 1990s.

Since the second half of the 1990s, the government's progressive withdrawal from the sector and the growing number of stakeholders have played a part in weakening FUPRO politically. At the same time, the government has sought to diversify sectors that generate currency, adopting a sector-based approach to stakeholder structuring, following the example of the cotton sector.

a. At the outset FUPRO's development was closely linked to the cotton sector

The creation of the FUPRO network was very closely linked to the policy of liberalising the cotton sector post 1991-1992, with the aim of transferring responsibility from the state to producers' organisations: GV were responsible for managing inputs and handling the primary marketing of cotton while the role of USPPs was to coordinate these operations and manage credit. Orchestrated at the outset by the government, this process gradually became more independent, resulting in the creation of the FUPRO network. The groupings, which criss-crossed the country and were structured around a single model, were perceived by some of the farmers as too closely linked to government departments. They then tried to organise themselves outside of this framework. In 1994-1995, USPP leaders launched a push for organisational autonomy by creating the Unions Départementales des producteurs (Departmental Producers Unions - UDP) followed by the Fédération des unions de producteurs du Bénin (FUPRO) (Pesche, Berthomé, 2003).

In order to fulfil the economic remit devolved to it, the network received a financial contribution from the sector, allowing it to make a contribution to local development (notably through the provision of social infrastructure). FUPRO, as the sole representative of cotton producers, found itself assuming more and more responsibilities defending the interests of producers vis-à-vis suppliers and ginneries, in negotiations with both government and donors.

The cotton sector's importance to the national economy turned the FUPRO network into a leading economic and political stakeholder encouraging small farmers' organisations to become more professional. "Cotton was a major issue which caught the attention of FUPRO. FUPRO was even mistaken for a national cotton union!" (FUPRO member). But this also forced FUPRO to concentrate its efforts on a sector from which it drew most of its resources at that time (part of the cotton sector's profits – in the order of 10-15 CFA francs/kg – was assigned to producers' organisations).

The liberalisation of the cotton sector weakened FUPRO

The policy of liberalisation also had an effect on the import and distribution of inputs and on the ginning sector. A consultation framework was established between these new private stakeholders

within the sector. It was in this context that FUPRO and the Association Professionnelle des Égreneurs du Bénin (Professional Association of Ginners of Benin - APEB) created the **Association Interprofessionnelle du Coton** (Interprofessional Cotton Association - AIC) in 1999. The Groupement Professionnel des Distributeurs d’Intrants Agricoles (Professional Group of Agricultural Input Distributors - GPDIA) became a member in 2002.

In 1999 a decree confirmed that responsibility for the supply of inputs was to be transferred to private operators (via import and distribution calls for tenders). Following conflicts between these operators, a number of them called for the creation of a large number of FO networks parallel to FUPRO³ (Saizonou, 2008). This new configuration resulted in serious failures in the management of inputs, with particularly poor management of the solidarity guarantee and producers ending up in excessive debt.

During this same period, tensions emerged within FUPRO itself: cotton producers, particularly those belonging to UDPs in the major cotton production regions (Borgou and Atacora) condemned the fact that FUPRO was the organisation representing cotton producers at interprofessional level. With the difficulties being experienced in the cotton sector, producers placed the blame on the leaders representing them. Gradually the idea emerged that a specialist cotton organisation would be better equipped to defend their interests. Moreover, they found it hard to accept that cotton resources were supporting the entire network whereas they could manage them just as easily on their own (Pesche, Berthomé, 2003). This led to the creation in 2006 by FUPRO of a cotton branch, the **Association Nationale des Producteurs de Coton** (National Association of Cotton Producers - ANPC).

Confronted with these developments, the interprofessional body turned to the government for solutions. Decree No 2006-234 of 18 May 2006 pertaining to the mode of representation of cotton producers within the AIC stipulated that from now on, it would be the Conseil National des producteurs de Coton (National Council of Cotton Producers - CNPC) and no longer FUPRO, that would be represented at interprofessional level. Nevertheless, FUPRO retained an important presence, through the ANPC. This body represented more than 90% of Benin’s cotton production⁴ and was therefore widely represented within the CNPC⁵ both at local (district and department) and at national level.

It should be emphasised that the 2006 decree also required cotton producers to be organised at district and departmental level⁶. Specific cotton FOs were therefore set up at every level, creating a **real risk that FUPRO**, which at the outset had federated all the producers, **might now break**

³ There was great controversy over the calls for tenders organised in October 2001, with the aim of selecting input importers and distributors for the 2002-2003 crop year. The GPDIA split into two with the creation of the Association of Agricultural Input Distributors of Benin – ADIAB). ADIAB members took with them producers who had left FUPRO to create, in the first instance, FENAPRA (Fédération Nationale des Producteurs Agricoles – National Federation of Agricultural Producers), followed in turn by a number of other groups bringing the number of networks to more than ten in 2006.

⁴ (For the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 crop years) (Saizonou, 2008)

⁵ Representation of each organisation was in proportion to its estimated share of national production.

⁶ District cotton producers’ councils and departmental cotton producers’ councils. In theory this decree required the organisation of all agricultural production sectors at a wider level into sector-specific councils at every structuring level.

up. In major cotton producing regions, GV now became de facto Groupements Villageois de Producteurs de Coton (cotton producer village cooperatives - GVPC). However, in the Zou-Collines and Mono-Couffo regions, GVPC were introduced alongside GV which remained "diversified".

With the creation of the AIC and CNPC, FUPRO now saw its **financial resources heavily depleted** (the AIC now received the tariffs of between 10 and 15 CFA francs/kg). But more importantly, it saw its **political role marginalised** by the reconfiguration of sector stakeholders.

For FUPRO, a "diversification" challenge began to emerge, on the one hand in order to build its resources and on the other to develop a new role within the agricultural and rural development of Benin.

b. A sector-based organisational structure for FUPRO over the past decade

Sector diversification is now part of agricultural policy

Since the cotton crisis, agricultural diversification has been included within agricultural policy documents (2000 Agricultural and Rural Development Plan, 2000 Strategic Operational Plan, 2001 Rural Development Policy Declaration).

The Strategic Plan for Agricultural Sector Revival (PSRSA) produced for the 2008—2015 period and the 2006—2011 Strategic Development Guidelines (OSD) reasserted this strategic plan to boost diversification of exports. There was a need to reduce the high dependence of the country's economy on cotton⁷, and therefore to **promote new growth sectors** that would have a knock-on effect on the various sectors within the economy (pineapples, cashew nuts, market garden produce, poultry, milk, etc.).

Following the example of cotton, these programmes planned the structuring of the various stakeholders within each sector into professional groupings and the development of major production zones. The government departments (CERPA and CECPA⁸) therefore supported the sector-based structuring of producers, but without necessarily having the methods and resources to support them in a manner that was relevant. For their part, those producers who wished to benefit from support and services were obliged to comply with this vision.

"At that time, the government was putting pressure on us to become organised in the same way as the cotton sector. There was even talk about abolishing FUPRO so as to create sector-based organisations only. We discussed it internally: If OPF (sector-based small farming organisations) were created, on what basis would this be? We studied a number of schemes and chose to reorganise" (URP leader in Mono Couffo)

⁷ Exports of cotton comprised 70% of official export revenue in 2008 (Saizonou, 2008)

⁸ Centre Régional pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture (Regional Centre for the Promotion of Agriculture), Centre Communal pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture (District Centre for the Promotion of Agriculture)

The internal diversification dynamics within FUPRO

On the one hand, in the south of the country where there is no cotton production, UDPs and USPPs had a much weaker social base and supply of resources, which for a long time constituted a source of inequality within the network.

On the other hand, since the early 1990s many organisational initiatives had been set up outside the FUPRO network, such as the Organisation des Eleveurs Transhumants du Nord (Northern Organisation of transhumant livestock farmers) EIG Federations in the Southern departments (which no longer exist), and GEA network organisations⁹, such as Uniriz in the Zou region and the ANEP¹⁰.

FUPRO did not want to be considered as an organisation focusing solely on cotton and fearing being overwhelmed in this domain¹¹, in 2000 it launched a diversification programme (cassava, pineapple, palm oil) in the Southern departments (Mono, Ouémé, Atlantic) with the support of Agriterre. This programme provided the Southern UDPs with a minimum number of resources (staff, equipment, operations, etc.) and allowed them to build their operational capacities (Pesche, Berthomé, 2003). At the same time, UDPs and USSPs in different regions launched grassroots initiatives with the support of projects such as the PPAB¹²: for example, implementing focus groups in certain sectors (including the cashew nut sector) in Atacora, organising rice growers and market gardeners in Mono, etc. In some cases, these groups became independent and even left the FUPRO network (see 2.1.1.d for a detailed analysis).

For example, in Mono-Couffo, which was a leader in this field, "general" USPPs from non-cotton producing areas did exist but were not very active. However, their operations benefited from shared cotton resources.

"It was only the cotton USSPs that were properly organised (North and Mono). All the same, the others were told to structure themselves, from village up to departmental level. Thanks to cotton, there was money to organise general meetings and staff UDPs, including non-cotton UDPs" (CRR-MC leader).

But with the cotton crisis, resources started to run out, threatening their UDP with closure. So the UDP reflected on how to support the other sectors, in particular by establishing focus groups (committees) for each product and developing action plans for these groups (with support from Agriterre and the PPAB programme/Afdi).

⁹ Groupement des exploitants agricoles du Bénin (Benin agricultural workers' group)

¹⁰ Association Nationale des Eleveurs de Porcs (National Pig Breeders' Association)

¹¹ The leaders of FUPRO agreed that it was a question of 'axing FUPRO and implementing organisations solely by network'.

¹² Le Programme de Professionnalisation de l'Agriculture au Bénin (Benin Agriculture Professionalisation Programme) was introduced between 1994 and 1999.

Case study: Grand Popo UCP (Mono-Couffo region): very early on, this UCP had had a role representing producers but found it difficult to offer services to its members. With the support of the PPAB programme and Afdi, it created six focus groups (rice, market gardening, etc.) with the aim of conducting a grassroots analysis. From this task, the need arose to regroup by crop and identify services to be offered to members on this basis. It therefore created internal sector-based associations, which produced an action programme. Afdi 64 supported them in recruiting a coordinator to perform field operations.

Case study: Comé UCP (Mono-Couffo region): "The UCP effectively covers all sectors. It created six committees (rice, livestock, market gardening, cassava, women and young people), to forge links at district level, disseminate information and build contacts with partners. Once again, they had to prioritise because there were too many committees: rice, market gardening and cassava were selected as they operated on a more regular basis. Projects and partnerships were developed"

FUPRO took these dynamics into account to support its own deliberations on the subject of diversifying the network. Two years of reflection (2005-2006) led to the proposal to reform, giving FUPRO a new outlook (see 3.1).

c. The role of donors and projects

Development projects have played and continue to play an important role in the development and consolidation of these sector-based bodies, particularly projects such as PPAB, and later PPMAB, PAIMAF13 and PAMRAD14 etc. Each project focused its support on one type of product only, in sectors with development potential for rural producers. These projects gave wide scope to certain FOs which received the resources to develop activities.

"At local level, the projects also gave inspiration to those who were tired of the "cotton system" and wanted to develop a different product or did not have access to services because they were not cotton producers" (CRR leader).

d. Two case studies illustrating these developments

The mission was able to meet with two regional unions, the URPA-AD and the CRR-MC. These are two contrasting examples which do not necessarily represent the whole of the FUPRO network but whose experiences illustrate these developments and the difficulties that were in some cases experienced with project and government intervention.

Example 1: Atacora Donga Regional Cashew Nut Producers' Union (URPA_AD)

Presentation of the URPA

Following the cotton crises, and in the context of the policy of diversifying and supporting the development of new sectors, cashew nuts emerged as an interesting alternative to cotton. Initially introduced to support reforestation, cashew nuts became a cash crop. The majority of plantations are small-scale and managed by small farmers but

¹³ Three French cooperation projects were undertaken: the Projet de Professionnalisation de l'Agriculture Béninoise (Benin Agriculture Professionalisation Programme - PPAB) from 1994 to 1999, the Projet de Professionnalisation du Monde Agricole Béninois (Benin Agricultural Professionalisation Project - PPMAB) from 2000 to 2003 and the Programme d'Appui Institutionnel à la Modernisation de l'Agriculture Familiale (Institutional Support for Modernisation of Family Agriculture Programme - PAIMAF) from 2004 to 2007.

¹⁴ The Programme d'Appui au Milieu Rural de l'Atacora Donga (Rural Support Programme in Atacora Donga) received Belgian backing between June 2003 and December 2007.

production is increasing every year. However, the product continued to be sold in the form of raw nuts to exporters, at unregulated prices, hence the necessity for producers to become organised (Sotondji, 2006).

The URPA-AD is an umbrella organisation uniting cashew nut producers in these two departments. It was formed in December 2004 and represents 13 district unions (UCPAs) federating 306 village cooperatives.

The area in which it operates has more than 35,000 producers, who produce between 5,000 and 6,000 tonnes per year.

It is a member of the Fédération Nationale des Producteurs d'Anacarde au Bénin (Benin National Federation of Cashew Nut Producers - FENAPAB) but not the URPA-AD, which is the geographically-based local FUPRO network entity, representing all types of producers.

Development and structuring of cashew nut producers

From 1999-2000 onwards, the 'general' Atacora-Donga URP, within the FUPRO network, set up internal focus groups for various products, including cashew nuts. Following an unfortunate marketing experiment, from 2003 onwards the group requested the help of the PPAB programme and of Afdi. The group then devised an annual action programme in association with its partners and continued its marketing experiments.

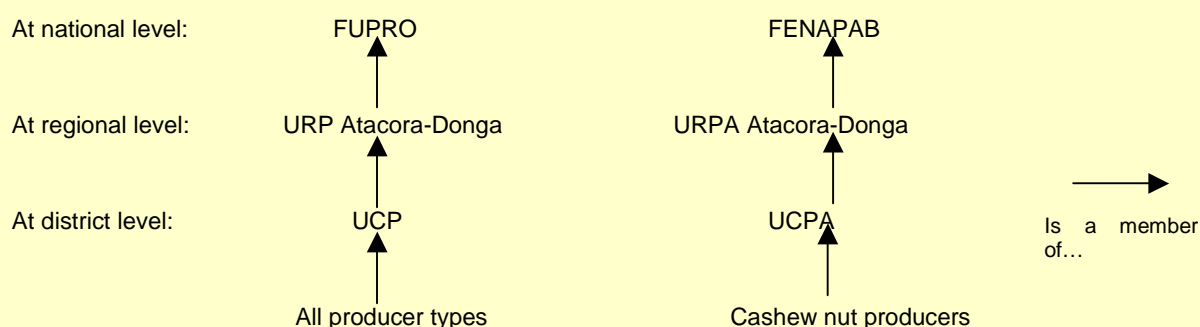
Alongside this initiative, the CeRPA government departments asked cashew nut producers who had taken part in the first batch sales, in Kouandé, to form a specialised cooperative.

A formal structure was then created, independent of the URP, initially made up of UCPAs, followed by the URPA in 2004 then the FENAPAB.

According to URP leaders, tensions with these government departments resulted in the government encouraging producers to adopt a structure outside the main network.

It was during this period that the PAMRAD project was launched. The PPAB and PAMRAD programmes worked in tandem to support the two producer initiatives. An initial two-year financing agreement, "Action Anacarde (Cashew Action)", involved both the general and specialist cashew nuts bodies. However from 2007, PAMRAD funding was given solely to the cashew body, with the aim of making it more independent. The URP focus group broke up, as it had been in receipt of PPAB funding which had come to an end. Afdi continued to support the cashew producers through the URPA, as the focus group had by now disbanded.

Currently, there are two parallel organisational structures:



The URPA is no longer a member of the URP Atacora-Donga. Some UCPAs, however, maintain close relations with the UCPs and feel that they belong to the same network; but in other districts, relations are more strained. For producers in Kouandé, the benefit of having a specific cashew body is linked to increased visibility and effective services: "As a cashew body, we are more visible to buyers; some approach us directly and others go through the URPA. The URPA provides us with services: training in batch sales and production; technical experts come to see us regularly." (UCPA Kouandé)

Example 2: Mono - Couffo Regional Rice Growers' Council (CRR-MC)

Presentation of the CRR MC

The CRR-MC was formed in November 2006. It is a regional sector-based organisation federating ten district unions, 154 producer groups (2010) and rice growers at grassroots level. The CRR-MC aims to improve living conditions for rice growers in the Mono and Couffo regions. In order to achieve this, its remit is to represent rice growers in the Mono and Couffo regions, defend their interests, encourage rice growers to become more professional and coordinate any activity relating to rice production. It is a member of the URP-Mono-Couffo and therefore fully signed up to the FUPRO network.

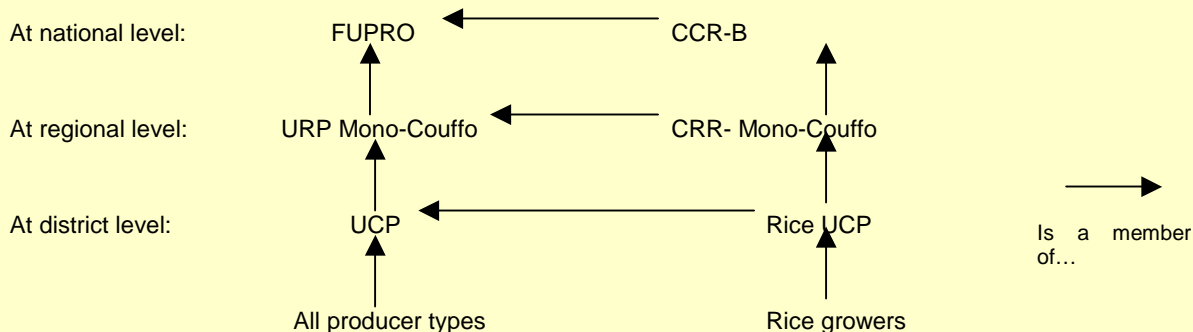
Development and structuring of rice producers:

Structuring the rice sector in Mono was completely in keeping with the FUPRO initiative to support the regional "non-cotton producing" unions from the early 2000s. Initial support from Agriterre for the Southern Unions provided them with a minimum number of resources with which to operate (staff, equipment, etc.) and build their operational capacities. Moreover, the regional union in Mono, and in particular a number of district unions (for example the Grand Popo UCP), supported notably by the PPAB programme, were the driving force behind the organisation of internal sector-based committees (including rice).

At the same time, rural farming leaders from various areas, all rice producers, met up to discuss rice production issues, thereby forming the very first informal Consultation Council. In 2005-2006, to formalise this framework, these leaders met up with all the general regional bodies throughout the country and in the FUPRO network, as they required an institutional basis. The Conseil de Concertation des Riziculteurs du Bénin (Benin Rice Producers' Consultation Council - CCR-B), was therefore created in 2006 at national level.

Therefore, the process of structuring the rice sector originated from grassroots initiatives combined with the desire of FUPRO, through its departmental unions, to become involved in developing diversified networks. An effective synergy has developed between these various initiatives. Coordination between sector-based and regional FOs, as demonstrated by the example of CRR-Mono Couffo, does not always run smoothly.

Current links between the CRR-MC and URP-MC:



Unlike the URPA, the rice growers' council is a member of the URP-Mono Couffo but relations are often strained, due to the assignment of roles and responsibilities.

The CRR manages several projects for a number of partners: for example, PROTOS, an NGO with funding from the Belgian Survival Fund and the EU, has implemented or is currently implementing the ROPAHA¹⁵ (closed),

¹⁵ ROPAHA: Bolstering producer organisations through hydro-agricultural developments

PAHA¹⁶ and FAPAHA projects¹⁷ (currently underway); other projects are FAFA¹⁸ (rice and market gardening) funded by the CTB (Belgian Development Agency), PAFIRIZ¹⁹ and ETD/CIDR²⁰ which have EU funding.

However, for most of these projects, "assignment conflicts" between the URP and CRR/MC have come to light. Some of these projects were piloted by the URP but certain responsibilities were delegated to the sector-based FO; others are managed directly by the sector-based FO. The URP feels it has a legitimate right to manage projects directly but in practice, the CRR, as the specialist body, is better able attract these projects which are generally focused on a number of sectors (rice and market gardening) and feels that the URP would do better to concentrate on cross-cutting issues. But the problem is that few partners are prepared to fund cross-cutting activities, deeming activities related to sector development more likely to reap tangible results in the short term.

2.1.3. Effects of sector-based structuring

a. Better targeted and more effective services to non-cotton producers

In the climate prevailing until this time, even though non-cotton producers were able to utilise cotton inputs and, indirectly, the infrastructure in place, their specific needs were not met.

"If you don't work in cotton, you don't have any right to services. Today, every sector can set the minds of its members at rest" (URPA).

Producers entitled to sector-based FO services highlight the fact that these services are better targeted and delivered more effectively by specialist FOs, as they are better able to focus on the needs expressed by producers.

This expression of specific needs has been at the root of local level innovations (such as the introduction of batch selling cashew nut operations, for example) and of a bottom-up dynamic. But project support has also been instrumental in consolidating these dynamics.

b. A structuring process carried out too early or driven artificially from the outside, creating division within the movement

In many cases, the initiative came from FOs themselves but external intervention (project-driven or state) has disrupted the process or aggravated differences of opinion between leaders.

External projects have accelerated the process of making sector-based FOs independent, quickly giving them the resources to run their own activities, often on the fringes of the FOs from which they emerged. Even though this has been quite well received by sector-based FOs, which are more effective, more visible and have professional skills, at the same time it generates tensions over resource management and creates imbalances. This is reinforced by the fact that geographically-based FOs sometimes find it difficult to formulate a complete vision of their own

¹⁶ PAHA: Hydro-agricultural development programme

¹⁷ FAPAHA: Food facility through hydro-agricultural development

¹⁸ FAFA: Support facility to agricultural production systems

¹⁹ PAFIRIZ: Benin rice chain support project

²⁰ CIDR: Centre for International Research and Development

missions, conceive the initiatives they might like to implement for the benefit of all producers and therefore find it hard to access external resources. This difficulty is accentuated by the fact that technical and financial partners are often reluctant to support initiatives they consider to be insufficiently 'targeted'.

In other cases, there was a wish to build on successful pilot schemes (like the one undertaken in Grand-Popo) but in less favourable circumstances, or to impose a structuring /independence process on producers' groups that were not ready for it.

"For two years the UCP had been interested in soya, and CeRPA told producers in the focus group that they could form their own FO. But the soya UCP did not fully understand its role. They were asked for example to evaluate input requirements, but then came back to us saying "You're the ones who know what to do!" (Comé UCP leader).

The government is asking CeRPA bodies to support sector-based structuring, but government workers do not necessarily have the resources or techniques to support this in a way that is relevant. Even so, FOs are trying to comply with this vision in order to maintain their visibility and not become marginalised. FOs had been defending the idea of informal focus groups within FOs but this was refused by government workers.

These interventions did not therefore take sufficient account of pre-existing forces at work within FOs. They exacerbated differences of opinion between or within FOs, and even helped to create "competitor" FOs or place in positions of responsibility FOs that did not yet have the capacity for this.

"Partners can cause disruption, for example in the Atacora region a focus group in receipt of substantial resources from a project became independent. But when external resources run out, how will that be sustainable?" (FUPRO member)

"The result is division, dispersal, conflicts that are detrimental to the small farmers' movement." (Mono-Couffo URP member).

Here perhaps it should be noted that in these apparent divisions, precedents of poor management in former "cotton" UCPs played a part in fermenting a climate of mistrust or conflict towards leaders still working within the new UCPs and URPs.

"When cotton withdrew, there was a crisis. In the meantime, other producers adopted new structures within their sectors. FUPRO is now having to make approaches to them, but these producers bear a grudge or are suspicious" (URPA-AD members)

c. Geographically-based FOs seeking to forge mutual links and a weakening of coordination between FOs in the sector

In the two FOs encountered, structuring and independence processes have been accompanied by tensions over resource management, allocation of roles and leadership. And in some cases, the sector-based FOs are disassociating themselves from the geographically-based FOs. The URPA-AD has taken the decision not to be a member of the URP. The CRR-MC is a member but does not pay contributions and is rather critical of "the lack of services offered by the URP".

As they all have a fragile and uncertain financial basis, funding is a major issue for them. On the one hand, sector-based FOs, such as the URPA-AD and CRR-MC, are characterised by a strong dynamic: they have a vision, a well-defined strategy and action plans. They attract projects as their actions are well understood and clearly defined. They are developing their skills and action capacities. These actions earn recognition from producers who reap the benefits of useful and tangible services, boost their visibility and attract new projects. Those who manage resources are tending to break away from the geographically-based FOs.

"Rice and market gardening have gone their own way as they have their own resources. Producers of other products, such as cassava or palm products, have remained in the URP". (URP-MC member).

For their part, geographically-based FOs have played an important role in supporting the launch of sector-based FOs (drafting of statutory documents, financial support, information). They are able to implement more cross-cutting activities. For example, the URP-MC and FUPRO are currently considering the possibility of creating an agricultural health scheme; one project will support the creation of a family farm advice scheme; another has supported the setting up of a farm shop (which has been running for a year) etc.

But generally speaking they lack the resources to run this type of activity. They are competing with sector-based FOs (to position themselves as "sector-based" project managers) and this is focusing their efforts. They have not yet defined their own vision and identified clear action strategies, so that they can position themselves in tangible terms as development stakeholders.

As a result, even though the roles of all concerned have been clearly defined by FUPRO at national, regional and local level, as yet these have not necessarily been put into practice.

"The issue of defining roles is problematic. The way the sector-based FOs think is not going to appeal to us. The risk is that they will bypass us. What will become of the URP and FUPRO?" (URP -MC member).

At district level, some UCPs are seeking to forge mutual links as they do not know how to implement their new remits:

"The URP president came to see us to tell us to work together, But we don't know how to" (Kouandé UCP leader).

"It's difficult for the cooperatives to understand that this is a new scenario for FUPRO" (URPA-AD leader).

These disagreements and misunderstandings have led to political collaboration between the sector-based and geographically-based FOs encountered being reduced, depriving everyone of much needed energies.

"We met an IMF representative to negotiate a contract, but it was only for us, the rice growers. Other groups are going to do the same, as they share the same problems...too much energy is being wasted. The same is true of tax and rice issues; other groups need this too, but there is no coordination" (CRR-MC)

2.2. The Small Farmer's Confederation in Burkina Faso

2.2.1. The CPF today



Founded in 2002, the CPF is a producer organisation currently federating nine national umbrella organisations, with diverse membership according to regions. Based on a census performed in 2002 by the CPF, it has more than 30,000 groups and cooperative societies working in vegetable production, livestock, forestry, hunting, fishing and the processing and marketing of agricultural products.

1. Fédération des Professionnels Agricoles du Burkina (Federation of Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso - FEPAB),
2. Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Burkina (National Union of Cotton Producers of Burkina Faso - UNPCB),
3. Fédération des Jeunes Professionnels Agricoles du Burkina (National Federation of Young Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso - FEPAB),
4. Fédération Nationale des Femmes Rurales du Burkina (National Federation of Rural Women of Burkina Faso - FENAFERB),
5. Fédération des Eleveurs du Burkina (Federation of Livestock Producers of Burkina Faso - FEB),
6. Union Nationale de Producteurs Semenciers du Burkina (National Union of Seed Producers of Burkina Faso - UNPSB),

7. Union Nationale des Producteurs de Riz du Burkina (National Union of Rice Producers of Burkina Faso - UNPRB),
8. Fédération Nationale des Unions de Groupements de Gestion Forestière du Burkina (National Federation of Unions of Forest Management Groups of Burkina - FENUGGFB),
9. Fédération Nationale des Producteurs de Bananes du Burkina (National Federation of Banana Producers of Burkina Faso - FNPBB).

2.2.2. Major developments and main change factors

Here the context with regard to FO development is very different. In Benin, FUPRO built itself up and developed its economic and political clout based on the cotton sector, which it used to support the entire network. In Burkina Faso, the movement developed initially on a more community-based and multi-functional basis, before being faced with a move to become compartmentalized by sector.

a. A small farmers' movement initially built on a community-based and multi-functional basis

Historically, the first FO to bring together several hundred small farmers, based on an internal dynamic outside the government-supervised groupings, was founded in the Yatenga region in the 1970s. This was the Fédération nationale des groupements Naam (National Federation of Naam Groups - FNGN). Around it and in association with other FOs in Sahel countries, an NGO was created, the '6S' (Se Servir de la Saison Sèche en Savane et au Sahel – use of the dry season in the savannah and the Sahel). FNGN members were involved in multi-functional activities, with a strong social component and covering all rural development operations. In other areas, a more sector-based approach to structuring was adopted, centred on production – in the South West production was structured around cotton by means of village groups and in the Centre and Centre-Nord, around market gardening through the Union des coopératives agricoles et maraîchères du Burkina - Union of Agricultural and Market Gardening Cooperatives of Burkina Faso (Afdi, 2007).

In 1993, confronted with increasing numbers of small farmer organisations and needing to federate "6S" schemes on a national scale, a process of reflection was undertaken by a consultative group, comprising FOs, NGOs, and engineering firms. The conclusions were presented to the various FOs within the country at a **national meeting which took place in Dédougou in October 1994**, at which over 100 small farmers' organisations were present. They decided to organise themselves into an umbrella organisation, initially with a temporary mouthpiece (Comité de Suivi des Recommandations de Dédougou - Dédougou Recommendations Monitoring Committee - CSRD) then in October 1996 by the constitution of a national federation, the

Fédération nationale des organisations paysannes (National Federation of Farmers' Organisations - **FENOP**).

But leadership conflicts and differences of opinion on ideological or operational issues led to the creation of other umbrella groups, such as the Coordination nationale provisoire des organisations de producteurs²¹ (National Producers' Organisations Provisional Coordination group - CNPOP) – now the Fédération des professionnels agricoles du Burkina Faso (Federation of Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso - FEPA-B) and the Union Nationale des Jeunes Professionnel Agricoles du Burkina (National Federation of Young Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso - UNJPAB) in 1997, and the Union nationale des producteurs de coton du Burkina (National Union of Cotton Producers of Burkina Faso - UNPCB) in 1998.

This trend coincided with reflections, during the same period, by a number of development cooperation initiatives on "professionalising the rural world" and in particular on adopting a sector-based organisational structure. This was all the more significant as 1996 was marked by a major crisis in the cotton sector. The idea of structuring umbrella organisations by sector therefore gained the support of a number of cooperation agencies, notably French and European agencies, and the CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel).

Implementation of a consultation body, the CCOF (Co-ordination Framework for Umbrella Organisations) followed by the CPF (Faso Farmers' Confederation)

In July 1998, the main umbrella organisations (FENOP, FEPAB and UNJPAB) set up an informal consultation framework, the **Cadre de Concertation des Organisations Faïtières (CCOF)** which was formalised in November 2002 by the creation of the **Confédération Paysanne du Faso (CPF)**. The purpose of setting up an organisation of this kind was to meet the desire for a single framework representing organised small farmers.

b. The promotion of sector-based structuring has significantly changed the national FO landscape

Agricultural policy guidelines and the law on cooperatives form the framework of this sector-based structuring approach

The aim of the Strategic Operational Plan (PSO) produced in 1999 was to promote the development of a market economy in rural communities. It identified six vegetable production sectors (classed as growth sectors) which might benefit from public support. These were, on the one hand, crop sectors: cereals (millet, maize and sorghum), cowpea, potatoes, and on the other, commercial sectors: cotton, oil producing plants, fruit and vegetables.

²¹ By the Union des Coopératives agricoles et maraîchères du Burkina Faso (Union of Agricultural and Market Gardening Cooperatives of Burkina Faso - UCOBAM) and the Fédération des unions de groupements Naam (National Federation of Naam Groups)

There was clear support for FOs, for example a PSO programme²². Its aim was to "*make stakeholders more professional*" in order to "*ensure that the main players are able to ensure the long term handling of operations, socio-economic development and sustainable profitability of the agricultural sector.*"

Moreover, in Burkina Faso, there are two laws governing rural organisations: Law 14 on cooperatives (1999) and Law 10 on associations (1992). FOs are strongly encouraged to adopt Law 14 status, pertaining to the economic role conferred on FOs by agricultural policy documents.

Law 014/99/AN pertaining to cooperative societies and groups states: "*a grouping comprises any voluntary organisation of people of a social and above all economic nature with legal status and whose members share common interests*" (art. 71) and "*a cooperative comprises any autonomous association of people who have voluntarily come together on their own initiative to meet their economic, social and cultural requirements, managed democratically*" (art 8)

The decree of 2004 laying down procedures for the application of Law 14 defines areas of activity:

"*Cooperative societies, groups and their umbrella organisations can be constituted and carry out their activities in any branch of activity or in any sector throughout the country*" (art 3)".

Union between cooperatives and groups is possible on condition "*that they share the same purpose, belong to the same sector or carry out the same activities*" (art 3) and federation between unions is possible "*even if they carry out different activities*" (art 4)

Under Law 10/92/ADP of 15 December 1992, pertaining to freedom of association in Burkina Faso, "*an association constitutes any non-profit-making group of private individuals or legal entity [...] whose purpose is the fulfilment of shared objectives, notably in the cultural, [...] social, professional or socio-economic domains*"²³

Consequently, FOs must organise themselves based on sectors if they wish to gain visibility and recognition and obtain support:

"FENOP, which did not want to comply with the new context, soon became a victim of institutional change" (technical and financial partner)

"Those who complied with sector-based structuring have a greater voice than those who do it all" (technical and financial partner).

"The requirement of Law 14 is to strive for thematic precision and place a limit on general activities; we need strong professional organisations. They must be organised around a clearly defined sector so that it is clear what they do and so that support can be targeted. The CPF must play a cross-cutting role and members should focus on their activities. Law 14 makes it possible to have both professional (economic) and union status." (DOPAIR - Directorate of Producers' Organisations and Rural Institution Support)

Also implicit here is the notion of an integrated sector, such as cotton, which had been the real strength of some FOs. In fact, one argument in favour of groups and unions focusing on economic activities is the financial contribution they make to the network. From this perspective,

²² Though the Plan d'action pour l'émergence des organisations professionnelles agricoles (Action plan to promote the development of professional agricultural organizations - PA/OPA)

²³ They are required to pursue a common goal without personal enrichment and without seeking to make profits for the benefit of members. The absence of a profit-making motive does not necessarily imply the absence of profits. Profits generated by activities undertaken may be reinvested in the association.

some groups are seeking to replicate the cotton model, despite the difficulties encountered by this type of sector.

"It began with cotton, with the others feeling obliged to adopt a sector-based structure" (technical and financial partner).

"A strong sector-based FO, that makes resources available, makes for a strong CPF. As in the case of the UNPCB" (DOPAIR).

The institutional landscape of FOs has evolved in order to adapt to this new framework

When the CPF was created, differences of opinion about what legal status to adopt for the confederation gave rise to new division within the movement. FENOP, which was often critical of the Ministry of Agriculture, was opposed to the idea of cooperative status as it feared the Ministry might exert tighter control. It therefore opted for associative over cooperative status (Law 10). The other umbrella organisations, which viewed Law 14 more favourably because of its potential for recognition by the Ministry of Agriculture, therefore formed the CPF without the inclusion of FENOP. Other umbrella groups joined the movement: the UNPCB, Fédération des éleveurs du Burkina (FEB), the Fédération nationale des femmes rurales du Burkina (FENAFER-B) (with these last two created in 2001).

Furthermore, the umbrella organisations felt obliged to highlight the 'sector-specific' and economic facets of their missions in order to enhance their legitimacy in the eyes of the authorities. For example, the Fédération des Jeunes Professionnels Agricoles (FNJPAB) described cowpea production as its key activity while the Fédération Nationale des Femmes Rurales (FENAFERB) listed activities linked to agricultural product processing.

Case study: Federation of Agricultural Producers of Burkina Faso and the UNPFL

The FEPA/B is a small farmers' umbrella organisation established in July 1997 under the name of the Conseil des Professionnels Agricoles du Burkina (National Council of Agricultural Professionals of Burkina Faso - CNPA-B) following a long process that began in 1988. The Union des Coopératives Agricoles et Maraîchères du Burkina (Union of Agricultural and Market Gardening Cooperatives of Burkina Faso - UCOBAM) and the Fédération des Unions de Groupements Naam (National Federation of Naam Groups - FUGN) are its founder members. At that time, it counted among its members grassroots groups from a variety of agro-sylvo-pastoral domains.

Following the enactment of Law 014/99/AN and in order to secure its place within the new configurations targeted by this law, it underwent a profound change which led it to give up on sylvo-pastoral production in order to refocus its activities on purely agricultural activities.

In 2001, the process led to the establishment of the Fédération Nationale des Professionnels Agricoles of Burkina Faso (FEPA-B) in place of the CNPA-B. It was structured in groups ranging from village level up to (280) district level unions and (39) provincial unions.

It had around one hundred internal coordinators working to support the grassroots groups.

In 2001, the FEPA-B produced a five-year plan based on: training, information, support with marketing and supplying inputs, etc. The report subsequently produced by its leaders showed that this plan would be difficult to fulfil: too ambitious with too many goals set, an insufficiently focused statement of requirements and consequently

proving difficult to meet all these needs and keep abreast of the grassroots situation. After 2005, therefore, the FEPA-B decided to refocus its activities in order to meet needs more effectively.

In May 2006, the FEPA-B therefore adopted a dual sector structure: dried cereals and fruits/vegetables, which led to the setting up of two unions at national level: the Union Nationale des Producteurs de Céréales du Burkina Faso (National Union of Cereal Producers of Burkina Faso UNC-B) and the Union Nationale des Producteurs de Fruits et Légumes du Burkina (National Union of Fruit and Vegetable Producers of Burkina Faso - UNPFL-B).

"The FEPAB felt obliged to adopt a dual sector structure. They wanted to lead the way in the creation of other specialist FOs. But the two national unions exist in name only. On the ground, it's the FEPAB that runs things. However, at regional and local level, they were not forced to break up all the sectors" (a technical and financial partner).

Each National Union supports grassroots groups to plan their activities and identify their needs in terms of training, production issues, etc. Of the 39 provincial unions within FEPA-B, based on the potential of each area, 17 have opted to specialise in fruit and vegetables and 20 in cereals.

For the UNPFL, the benefit of forming a specialist body is to prioritise and organise activities more effectively, target specific services, and put members in touch with this specific market.

The UNPFL and UNPC work together on joint themes (e.g. technical training, credit). As regards credit, producers are supported by Afdi and Agriterra which provide guarantees by means of bank deposit schemes. When issues prove to be beyond the UNPFL and UNPC's capabilities in particular, and the FEPA-B more generally, the CPF intervenes. For example, the CPF takes on advocacy work using arguments prepared by the UNPFL.

The creation of interprofessional bodies reinforces this trend

The Rural Development Strategy Document (SDR), which is the reference framework for all public interventions to promote rural development until 2015, covers the six sectors referred to in the PSO, emphasising that "the government will lend its support to interprofessional organisations in growth sectors".

Following the example of other countries in the sub-region, interprofessional bodies are therefore presented as the preferred tool for managing sectors. They are put forward as a "framework allowing producers to consult with the other links of a supply chain with a view to jointly identifying promotional strategies" (DOPAIR).

Interprofessional bodies²⁴ have been established, notably the Comité Interprofessionnel du Riz (CIRB) created in 2001, and the Comité Interprofessionnel des Céréales (CICB) created in 2003. FOs have a statutory right to a place in the producers' body and these interprofessional bodies are chaired by small farmers. At the time when these interprofessional bodies were set up, there were no FOs structured specifically around these two sectors. The only option was therefore to take existing FOs into account. But today a national rice producers' union and a national cereal producers' union have emerged and are claiming their place within the interprofessional bodies.

²⁴ In particular the Conseil des Oléagineux du Burkina (Burkina Faso Seeds and Edible Oils Council) in 2000, the Comité Interprofessionnel du Riz (Burkina Faso Interprofessional Rice Committee - C.I.R-B) in 2001, the Comité Interprofessionnel des Céréales (Burkina Faso Interprofessional Cereals Committee (C.I.C-B) in 2003, the shea (2000) and banana (2001) "tables filière" initiatives

Today the government and partners wish to create product-specific interprofessional bodies within which member professional organisations are product specialised as well. "General" FOs therefore feel obliged to either reposition themselves within a single sector for which an interprofessional body has been created or to split up into a number of sectors, in order to raise their profile and secure a place within these bodies (as illustrated by the case of FEPAB in the boxed text) and not allow themselves to be overtaken by other FOs created artificially for the purpose.

A draft law has been produced which is yet to be adopted by the National Assembly and enacted by the President. Preparation of this law sparked debate with FOs. The government wished to promote interprofessional bodies in the narrowest sense of the term (one interprofessional body per product). FOs feared that this law would disrupt their current mode of organisation to the detriment of production diversification. They successfully demanded that the definition should remain fairly broad, by group of products rather than by single product (particularly as some sectors such as cereals (maize, sorghum and millet) already have an interprofessional organisation).

"They wanted to force us to break up the major sectors by imposing one sector = one product, but after a workshop was held, it was accepted that an interprofessional body may be linked to a group of products" (CPF)

In spite of this, policies and projects continue to focus on their own vision. For example, the PAFASP (Agricultural Diversification and Market Development) programme is currently supporting an interprofessional mango body in the Haut Bassin and Cascades regions and an interprofessional onion body, despite the disapproval emanating from the main umbrella organisations (this would require the creation of umbrella groups for "onion" and "mango" producers, whereas a fruit and vegetables umbrella group already exists). The CPF takes the view that these initiatives promote the development of new parallel organisations meeting the requirements of the new context but in reality these are FOs bent on "acquiring funds". This is all the more significant as most of the existing interprofessional bodies have not yet begun to function as a consultation and decision-making framework, but are operating as development bodies, managing sporadic support from donors.

The role of donors and projects

As in Benin, projects exert a major influence on the directions that FOs can take, in particular at regional and local level:

"Donors have a renewed interest in agriculture and are imposing their vision. For example, the PAFASP programme is asking us to organise ourselves around the onion, tomato, mango and poultry sectors...and this is leading opportunist groups to set up and others to become specialised (a fruit and vegetable group that is intending to specialise in onions for example" (CPF leader).

"If for example a "rice" programme is launched, it wants to have its own specific contact people, so producers organise themselves into 'rice' groups especially for this purpose, even though basically they are the same grassroots producers" (FEPPASI leader).

Over and above the decision to adopt sector-based structuring, which in the view of FOs can be a real advantage, where there is a difference of opinion between FOs and projects is on the criteria for choosing sectors to support and structure. For example, for the PAFASP programme in Burkina Faso, the choice of priority sectors is guided in particular by the export market in order to "generate currency". These priority sectors are those with development potential because there is global market demand. For FOs, meanwhile, priority sectors are those that are linked to food security or that are currently making an impact on farms. For example, in their view cereal, cowpea and sesame sectors appeared to be priority sectors but were rejected by the PAFASP programme. For a project such as PAFASP, issues of diversification, environment and risk have not really been addressed.

"Yes to strong sectors that have a real impact, such as rice or milk, but no to those which are said to be growth sectors but whose impact remains to be seen" (CPF leader).

Nevertheless, FOs have succeeded in getting the project to take into consideration the local market, where, at the outset the project gave preference to sub-regional and international markets.

2.2.3. The effect on FO capacities and missions

Differing interpretations of Law 14...

It should firstly be stated that Law 14 has given rise to different interpretations and even misunderstandings among the grassroots groups and unions. The government workers tasked with issuing accreditation have an equally poor grasp of the law.

'In the past, it was all about cereals, fruit and vegetables, but now the focus is on maize and mangoes...we don't know what to do...' (CPF leader).

'The law says that farmers can structure themselves by sector or business area. However, often the government workers help to draft the statutes of groupings, so they use the standard model' (FEPPASI leader)

'The lawmaker did not raise awareness about Law 14, so there was a sudden change. The decentralised government department workers don't understand it either.' (Union de Bieha).

DOPAIR (the Producer and Support for Rural Institutions Organisation Directorate) said that 'the groupings do not have to be organised into sectors, the aim is not to achieve specialisation but rather efficiency, i.e. to rationalise resources while having a definite link to sectors. Law 14 is flexible and even goes as far as authorising consumers to group together to lobby about product quality.' Nevertheless, the common interpretation by the FOs and government workers is that Law 14 not only limits groupings and unions to economic activities but also forces them to structure themselves in line with the 'one FO = one product format.

'Theoretically, Law 14 is for economic and not trade union activities.'

'Should the existing bodies be disbanded in order to create new ones so as to move further into the sectors? For example, should the baobab fruit sector be structured?' (CRA - regional chamber of agriculture - leader).

In fact, depending on the region in question, the FOs have varying amounts of leeway when setting objectives and organising their activities. For example, the Bieha district grouping (Sissili Province) has received a very broad 'vegetable production' accreditation. The grouping now wants to create a 'cooperative society' drawing on eight sectors.

And vagueness about criteria for choosing a legal status

There seems to be a lot of confusion among grassroots groups about the criteria that guide their decision to adopt a legal status. For example, 'an association of rice producers will only be recognised under Law 10, as Law 14 does not recognise the term 'association', while the producers in fact have economic and sector-specialised activities'(FENOP leader). Other examples among the Naam groupings include groups under Law 10 and groups under Law 14 and local FOs under Law 14 that belong to Law 10 umbrella organisations.

However, at national level it was a clear-cut choice for the CPF, which seeks to act as the representative for organised small farmers to the Ministry of Agriculture and other development stakeholders.

a. Little reorientation of activities at grassroots level

At the grassroots, the local authorities take decisions on groupings and they interpret the law in different ways. Law 14 has on paper at least created a vast number of specialised groupings from existing multi-activity groupings that are involved in village development. However, in practice, the same groups and same types of activities have survived.

'At the grassroots, people continue doing what they did before; they do everything, economic, social initiatives etc.' (FENOP leader).

'The law is elastic and can be stretched whichever way you want' (Union de Boura).

'On paper they are asked to choose a sector to comply with the law. In practice, they will maintain their diversified activities' (CPF leader).

'Grassroots groupings can do whatever they like, they don't bother the State, it's more of a high level thing' (FENOP leader).

Formal structuring primarily helps them to obtain support, if available.

'Many people regroup themselves based on funding opportunities and not really based on the law (of which they are unaware)' (FENOP leader).

'People play with Law 14; it's a way of getting funding' (technical and financial partner).

b. Weakening of grassroots organisations

On the other hand, this artificial division leads to resources and energy being wasted (drafting statutes, proliferation of committees etc). However, in the first place, for grassroots groupings and

unions, the change of legal framework imposed on them by the law affects the issue of internal governance and has an indirect impact on the capacities of the elected leaders. 'Law 14 requires leadership of the FOs to rotate (a three-year term of office) which is not the case with Law 10.' In areas with very high illiteracy rates, it is difficult to quickly train new leaders, with groupings stating that re-electing the committee every three years does not enable them to organise themselves in the long term.

'Law 14 came into force in 2006 meaning that all the groupings had to switch from ZATU 35 to Law 14. In 2009, they reworked their founding texts (pre-cooperative groupings). However, the snag is that a new committee was required because experienced people had to be let go' (Union de Bieha member).

c. And somewhat of an obstacle to their local work

The law is somewhat of an obstacle to local initiatives as it divides up development activities between the different stakeholders (with this being more of an issue in some areas due to the very variable implementation of the law).

'In fragile areas where the FOs want to do development work and are seeking funding for that work, they are told that it does not fall within their remit' (technical and financial partner).

'In village groupings (pre-Law 14) the social aspects held sway over the economic aspects (e.g. shared fields for training or social gatherings). Following the advent of Law 14, the groupings are no longer supposed to do this kind of work' (CPF leader).

d. A divisive factor in the small farmers' movement at national level

The CPF is currently acting as the spokesperson for the small farmers' organisations that are officially recognised under the 'cooperative' law 14. Its nine umbrella organisations²⁵ specialise to varying degrees depending on the sector in question, even if some are still experiencing some cross-cutting issues (although the FNJPAB wants to focus on cowpea and the FENAFERB on agricultural product processing).

Under the Law 10 FOs are not recognised as 'professional organisations' by the State and are therefore excluded from the agricultural policy dialogue. This means that FENOP, which is considered to be an NGO by the authorities, is not recognised as a State partner and is automatically excluded from national support programmes for FOs. It has gradually lost its leading policy analysis and advocacy role. However, the majority of its organisation's members are governed by Law 14²⁶. And according to its leaders, its status 'does not prevent it from expressing its views.' The links with the CPF remain and the two umbrella organisations consult each other about all the major agricultural policy issues. However, the fact remains that a vast swathe of the small farmers' movement is not officially recognised.

²⁵ See 2.2.1

²⁶ FEPPASI, presented in 3.2.3detail in , is an example.

Furthermore, sector-based restructuring (including via the interprofessional bodies as promoted by the State and projects) and support being targeted on economic issues call into question the organisational dynamic developed over the past decade. The CPF umbrella organisations concentrate on their sector-specific issues. This is a divisive factor in how the small farmers' movement is represented (even if it was welcomed in the short term by some). Although it enables sector FOs to focus on certain issues and be more specialised, the risk of dissipation and therefore their voices being weakened is all too real.

'The programmes tell us 'structure yourself to receive our support' instead of supporting the existing organisations. There has been a real dynamic for the past 10 years with political progress being made, the FOs being involved in policymaking and successful pilot schemes that need to be further developed, but they are upsetting the whole dynamic' (ROPFA leader).

'The role played by the State has not helped make the sector-based FOs coherent in Burkina Faso: the State has supported the creation of chambers of agriculture just at the time when the sector-based FOs were seeking to consolidate themselves and implementation of the 'cooperative' law for all the FOs (if they wish to be officially recognised by the Ministry of Agriculture and at national level through the CPF)' (technical and financial partner).

2.3. Conclusion

In both of the contexts that we have studied, the division of the FO service and trade union remits is a reality, with this being even more the case for cross-cutting and product-specific remits. Furthermore, the FOs that focus on product-specific economic issues garner a lot more support than the others.

This split is a reality for the services that the FOs deliver to their members. However, there is also the issue of policy work and of defending small-scale farming, which requires a consensus and coherent political discourse, backed by the majority of small farmers, to be built up.

This de facto separation requires ways of coordinating FOs with different remits but belonging to the same small farmers' movement to be sought. What strategies have been put in place to adapt to or overcome these political and institutional constraints, which are likely to lead to a loss of cohesion and therefore weakening? In other words, what has been done to strengthen the links between the members and ensure the cooperation needed for more political work? How have they linked up 'the horizontal and the vertical'?

3. The strategies put forward by the FOs to link up their ‘sector’ and ‘cross-cutting’ remits

As a starting point, we should define the notion of a ‘cross-cutting’ remit: in this case, it refers to both economic and social services (credit, supplying inputs and equipment, training, funding) and defending producers' interests (agricultural policy, the role of family farming, farmers' status etc).

3.1. In Benin

3.1.1. A new structuring process to more effectively link up geographical areas and sectors

Confronted with the risk of the network breaking up as a result of the new configuration of the cotton sector and with the resulting political marginalisation of FUPRO and its economic weakening, FUPRO had reached a turning point and needed to promote diversification with new ‘growth sectors’. The organisation also needed to find a fresh impetus and keep the network together in order to maintain its role as a key agricultural policy partner.

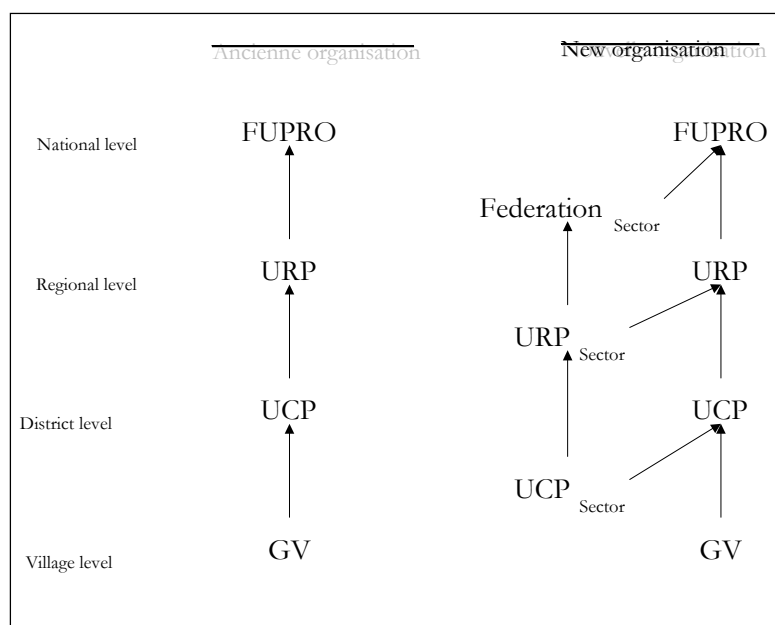
FUPRO considered the need for a new network configuration based on the experiences of some USPP (which became UCP (district unions of producers) in 2005²⁷) particularly in the Mono department, which supported the structuring of other sectors within their organisations. It also learned lessons from the way the cotton producers became relatively independent.

Following this process of reflection, in August 2006 at a national workshop FUPRO adopted a **new structure in an attempt to more successfully link up geographically-based and sector-based FOs** and to keep the sector FOs within the network. The new structure is geographically based (region, district and potentially village level) with sector-based structuring at each of these geographical levels. To ensure the success of this new system, different roles were allocated to each type of FO by FUPRO with geographically-based organisations being tasked with cross-cutting activities and sector structures being responsible for specialised activities.

Since January 2007, the refounded FUPRO has therefore incorporated ‘general’ organisations representing geographical areas and organisations representing sectors (see also 2.1.1). The different levels remain the same: GV (village-level group), UCP (district-level producers’ union) and URP (regional-level producers’ union) to which sector-based UCP, URP and national federations are added. The sector UCPs are members of the UCP, the sector URPs are members of the URP and the national federations are members of the FUPRO. This means that the sector

²⁷ Following the latest administrative restructuring process, the former *départements* became regions with each region being subdivided into two *départements*.

FOs belong to two entities at each level: to the higher level sector body and to the geographically-based body. The following diagram gives a simplified overview of FUPRO's new structure.



Based on the FUPRO strategic plan 2008-2012

In 2008, FUPRO equipped itself with a five-year strategic plan to implement this new vision and bring alive the new organisational structure on the ground. It is now seeking to be a **forum for consultation and strategic thinking**, so as to 'defend sustainable family farming.' FUPRO seeks to address its members' economic (promoting emerging sectors and access to productive resources), social and political issues (supporting member governance, defending the interests of the member FOs, social services, training and providing information). For example, FUPRO is currently considering the possibility of setting up an agricultural insurance scheme.

3.1.2. Current challenges faced by FUPRO

FUPRO's strategy is clear and relevant and effectively responds to ongoing developments. It is endeavouring to keep the network united while allowing producers to structure themselves by sector if they so wish. However, as can be seen in the case studies, the FOs in question are subjected to centrifugal forces which are threatening the cohesion of the movement and the ability to maintain a shared vision and a common project.

'Some of the sector-based FOs that were promoted have demanded total independence. This wasn't what was expected and what we said to each other about role sharing. It has resulted in disputes which are sometimes made more complex by leadership conflicts.' (URP-MC)

'FUPRO carried out a reform to develop the other sectors. However, this move came too late, as they had already split up' (members of the URPA-AD).

‘The sector-based FOs could come together to create a general FO but for the moment there are confrontations. They should be more united. For the moment, people link it to individuals, so there are problems. It’s a long-term job.’ (CeRPA)

The mission therefore believes that FUPRO is faced with the following challenges:

a. Rebuild a shared vision and project from grassroots level

At local level, the sharing out of roles, even if well defined at national level, has not seemingly been ‘taken on board’ by the members, in the sense that each regional FO (those we met) has not defined them via consultation with their grassroots members. As a result, the role sharing proposal made by FUPRO has provoked more tension between the sector-based and the geographically-based FOs (how will each be recognised and what will be their prerogatives?).

‘FUPRO told us to share out the roles equally. It is still a learning process for us’ (URP-MC leader).

‘The URP president came to see us to tell us to work together, but we don’t know how to’ (UCP leader).

‘People don’t know where the rallying cry to organise ourselves based on sectors actually came from’ (UCPA Kouandé).

‘It’s difficult for the cooperatives to understand that this is a new scenario for FUPRO. Furthermore (at URP level), it’s the same team’ (URPA-AD leader).

FUPRO therefore has an important role to play in helping its members at all levels to redefine a shared vision and project which would be rooted in each local or regional context. Common objectives, with missions and initiatives that fit with the two types of structure, would ensue in a more concerted way from this shared vision and project.

A FUPRO leader even suggested that the organisation ‘maybe should change its name and become a platform instead of FUPRO so as to change its image’, which demonstrates the need for an ‘overhaul’ of the common project in which the grassroots would play a more active role.

b. Develop complementary services

The sector-based FOs have floated the idea of setting up complementary sector-based FO and geographically-based FO services in order to encourage togetherness. In particular, the geographically-based FOs should develop tangible services that differ from what the sector-based FOs already offer their members. This proves that the organisation is in a common project redevelopment scenario with the aim of redefining the mission and activities of each party.

There is no shortage of possible initiatives and some have already been put in place (URP-MC): for example, considering whether to create a health and agricultural insurance scheme, putting together credit applications, advice for family farms, farm shop, radio programmes on technical subjects.

'We want to set up a farm shop in each district, but the sector-based FOs want to set them up by themselves because they have their own source of funding. We could make economies of scale but they don't want the URP to manage the project' (URP-MC).

The URP that we visited emphasized their fundraising role for member sector-based FOs ('acting as a technical and financial partner intermediary in order to channel funding' and 'seeking partnerships'). This would indeed be worthwhile for sector-based FOs which are not yet well-known but not for those that are already well-structured. In the long term, the sector-based FOs that forge partnerships end up no longer 'needing' the geographically-based FOs for this. Consequently, it would be worthwhile for the URP to develop other services with a more long-term vision.

c. Develop resources in order to be more independent

Evidently, the issue of resources that can be harnessed in order to deliver this type of service is important. FUPRO benefited from cotton funding and saw these resources dwindle when it stopped being directly involved in sector management. The idea that other sectors could make a significant financial contribution to the running of the network seems unlikely as no other sector has this kind of economic clout (or the FO funding and contributions system). Other sources of funding therefore need to be conceived (see also 4.4.4). The partners have an important role to play in supporting the network in a global and coherent way, based on a strategic vision of the network, without excessively compartmentalising the business areas or artificially dividing the producers.

d. Replacing / training leaders

Leader replacement and training at all the structural levels is a key issue, as is providing grassroots members with information. The law on cooperatives requires governing bodies to be re-elected every three years and it is sometimes 'difficult to find people to take over' as many FOs emphasize it. Furthermore, the proliferation of bodies has a negative impact on stability and rapidly scatters experienced leaders. The new challenges and the change to the context require major ongoing efforts to be made to train leaders and members. Building leader capacity should therefore be a major work area for an umbrella organisation such as FUPRO.

3.2. In Burkina Faso

The FOs within the CPF are structured very differently. Each national relatively specialised umbrella organisation has provincial, district and village level offshoots. However, there are no geographically-based general FOs in the FUPRO sense of the term. Instead, the CPF at national level acts as an umbrella organisation for these specialised FOs and to date has dealt with 'cross-cutting' issues. The majority of the specialised FOs, whatever the level in question (national,

regional or provincial), would find it difficult to deliver cross-cutting services or deal with cross-cutting political issues, as they focus on sector-specific problems.

3.2.1. Regional level: the creation of consultation platforms

The CPF designed **informal consultation platforms** for all a region's agricultural and rural development stakeholders in order to facilitate discussions and debate on general issues at regional level.

In 2007, the CPF received European Union funding for the implementation of seven CCROP (producer organisation regional consultation frameworks) in seven of the country's 13 regions. Consultation frameworks are local forums for discussion and for informing the main agricultural development stakeholders, the umbrella FOs, regional chambers of agriculture and other producer associations and individual producers. The frameworks should enable them to develop common stances, which if necessary are championed up to national level, and in the case of the FOs are taken up by the CPF to fuel its political discourse.

Each framework functions independently. Members have been given training on a range of subjects: FO legal environment, farm management, rural land and EPA. Issues discussed within a consultation framework may result from concerns expressed by the FOs from the region in question.

The members of the CPF board have a coordination role conveying information to these consultation frameworks and passing on grassroots members' concerns to the national level. A communications officer was appointed at national level to run these consultation frameworks.

It should be stated that these platforms are forums for discussion, debate and consultation on development policy issues. They do not provide general services to producers or people from rural areas.

3.2.2. National level: a policy analysis unit and technical committees

The members rely on the CPF to focus on general issues as they themselves are absorbed by sector-specific issues and activities.

At national level, in June 2008 the CPF set up a **prospective studies and policy analysis unit**, made up of the presidents of the member federations. The elected representatives also meet in ad hoc technical committees relating to current issues (Framework Agricultural Law, Law on Security of Land Tenure, EPA).

The CPF has therefore lobbied the country's authorities on different issues, including EPA, security of land tenure, sovereignty and the cost of living. The organisation used meetings and audiences, marches (protesting against the EPA), National Small Farmer's Day etc.

The CPF is also seeking to develop synergy with the other umbrella organisations and particularly with FENOP in order to carry out joint political advocacy work. For example, they are reflecting together and informing small farmers at the grassroots about the security of land tenure law²⁸ (recognition of the legal status of farms).

3.2.3. The incorporation of varied remits within a single FO: the example of FEPPASI

FEPPASI (Provincial Federation of Agricultural Producers of Sissili) constitutes an interesting example of a provincial level FO with a resolutely economic market-guided approach, without actually specialising in a single sector, and which also has a trade union and social remit defending family farming.

‘There is a wide range of activities at grouping level. However, the cooperative also has a social remit. For example, we are currently raising awareness about the security of land tenure law and also about AIDS.’ (Union de Boura)

FEPPASI is a provincial small farmers’ umbrella organisation and was formed in 1998. It brings together producers specialising in vegetable growing from Sissili. Six district producer unions and eight produce marketing cooperatives are affiliated to the federation. It therefore brings together 837 groupings with 12,555 member producers. It is a Law 14 organisation (legal recognition obtained in 2003) and is a member of FENOP.

It defines itself as a ‘**professional organisation for commercial agriculture**’ with the goal of ‘transforming family farms into real agricultural production businesses.’ FEPPASI has a trade union and representative remit and also supports its members by delivering services and training and providing information.

Its trade union work **focuses on defending family farming as a way of life**, in particular seeking to obtain official recognition for the status of small farmers, security for small farmers, preserving communities’ land, environmental conservation and producer access to basic social services (health insurance) and protection (climate insurance). The federation therefore represents producers in local, national and international consultation frameworks.

FEPPASI has set up a **three-year programme to improve producer market access** with the main focus being on organising stakeholders and supporting groupings and cooperatives, financial management of family farms, developing producers’ skills and offering them more comprehensive support and advice.

In particular, the federation has identified seven ‘sectors’ (which could even be classed as major sectors) which it wishes to emphasize: cereals (maize), oil producing plants (sesame), potatoes (yams), rice, fibres and roselles, fruit and vegetables, and livestock farming.

It focuses on **providing family farms with advice**, with the help of six paid agricultural advisers supported by internal coordinators, **producer training** (soil fertility, techniques used, agricultural entrepreneurship, storing harvests, gender awareness, property issues, and how to have a balanced diet); **literacy work** via literacy centres, and finally the use of new **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**. Since 2003 and a roundtable on ICT in farming, the federation has been resolutely committed to making use of ICT to access information in order to facilitate extension services. Cameras, computers and the internet are used to facilitate producer understanding of extension advice.

²⁸ The law was published in 2009 but the implementing regulations are pending.

3.2.4. Current challenges faced by CPF

a. Building CPF's advocacy capacity

At central level the CPF has a small team of technical experts and its policy analysis unit is run by the presidents of the member umbrella organisations. However, major difficulties have been encountered.

Firstly, there is no real State / FO framework for dialogue. The FOs are invited to numerous workshops but are mixed in with many other stakeholders, which significantly dilutes their contributions and weakens their message. The dialogue and negotiation frameworks in existence are insufficient and / or not conducive to taking into consideration the views of small farmers.

'There has been a series of national workshops on funding for agriculture: at the first, the State was absent. The State, the IMF and NGOs were invited to the second workshop but the FOs were not. The third was only attended by the donors and IMF' (technical and financial partner).

'There is also a need for a FO-State discussion forum. We do have a National Small Farmers' Day but it is not enough in itself' (CP leader).

Furthermore, the CPF does not always have the necessary analysis and proposal-making capacity. There are too few technical experts to provide tailored technical support and the elected representatives are very frequently asked to run workshops but often at the last minute, which leaves little time to work together to properly prepare subjects.

'We make proposals, but are they taken into account? We could develop more convincing arguments with technical support' (CPF elected representative).

However, the CPF does have the attributes to speak up for itself more effectively, as it is the sole representative framework with State recognition. It should take the initiative and negotiate a specific forum for dialogue.

The CPF has identified several challenges, including 'FO leaders getting to grips with national and international issues and building their capacity to analyse and make proposals' (CPF, 2009). Leader training and technical support are therefore key work areas, both for putting together arguments and for advocacy methods. The aim is to ensure that the leaders of the CPF and of the member federations have the ability to effectively analyse and monitor agricultural policies in order to better defend the interests of small farms.

Crucial themes include the framework agricultural law drafting process, which is the next key issue, to 'prevent sudden changes of policy when there are reshuffles in the ministries' (a CPF leader) and security of land tenure, recognition of small farmers' status, agricultural funding etc.

b. Strengthen existing regional platforms and create new ones

The CPF does not currently have the financial resources to set up platforms in the country's other regions (six additional platforms). Furthermore, the existing frameworks are experiencing

operating difficulties and the CPF also lacks the resources needed to strengthen coordination, participant training and information dissemination. The various umbrella organisations do not generate enough resources to run these consultation platforms which are therefore going to largely depend on external sources of funding.

c. The issue of cross-cutting services

The issue of FO members of the CPF providing cross-cutting and economic (training, farm funding, equipment, etc.) and social services remains unresolved. Each member umbrella organisation focuses on specialised services (supplying inputs for market gardening, marketing credit for a specific sector etc). It is left to the CPF to provide cross-cutting services and the organisation is in fact seeking to position itself as a 'services cooperative'. To date, the CPF has primarily focused on political advocacy, meaning that these services need to be developed from scratch, taking into account the previously mentioned constraints affecting its lobbying work, and without major financial resources for the present time.

4. Lessons learned from these changes

In this last section, we will discuss the lessons that can be learned from these institutional changes and in particular the benefits and risks of sector-based structuring for FOs. We will discuss the benefits / limitations of the sector-based approach in relation to the service offering for producers. Finally, we will offer some discussion ideas on the links between a sector-based approach and family farming, and the threats and action areas for FOs.

4.1. Issues involved in the 'sector-based approach'

When talking to the various stakeholders, it becomes clear that the sector concept involves many issues and different registers. Indeed, at the outset and maybe for some donors and projects, promoting a sector-based approach is primarily about focusing on product marketing issues and not solely on production (as was often the case in the past in development projects), which has an obvious economic interest. However, in practice, this concept is used by the different stakeholders in different ways and the implications of these different usages have important political dimensions.

- Promotion of commercial agriculture backed by agro-entrepreneurs: Particularly in Burkina Faso, the FOs' State contact people clearly voice their vision of a form of agriculture primarily directed by the market and their desire to promote 'agribusiness' (mainly championed by non-rural inhabitants), constituting a real threat for small-scale farms (security of land tenure,

recognition of farmers' status, funding). For these stakeholders, the idea of commercial agriculture backed by entrepreneurs and at odds with family farming underlies the sector concept.

- A corollary, farm specialisation: For some, the sector concept is synonymous with FO level and / or farm specialisation, a measure needed to 'professionalise' and 'improve farm performance', which therefore presents a very obvious risk, as it is not suited to the majority of family farms, which have a range of farming activities that are adapted to an uncertain climatic, economic etc environment.
- Limit FO political capacity: From an essentially legal perspective (the status of FOs and their definition), in Burkina Faso, for example, we have seen that debates and fears have been aroused by the law on cooperatives, specifically about the marking out of the grassroots FOs' remit (economic versus social), but also in a wider sense about the possibility for the FOs, and notably the national umbrella organisation, of carrying out social and even societal advocacy work. At the grassroots, the State is not hostile to the FOs carrying on 'as before' with economic and social initiatives of a limited scope, because it means that these organisations are carrying out 'free' social investment that the State should have made. However, the situation differs for the higher level FOs and those that tackle key issues. For example, in order to be politically legitimate, the CPF endeavours to present itself as a 'service cooperative' in which the political dimension is less evident, even if it is important for the organisation itself.
- The integrated sector model: For many, the sector concept primarily refers to the model that they know, i.e. a sector that is integrated and administered like the cotton sector, with the important economic and political role that the FOs have / used to have in these sectors, but also with the capacity that the State had to control the sector and deduct revenue from it.

It is clear to see that the concept is multifaceted and complex and is put forward differently depending on the context and stakeholders in question. In each case there is a need to **clarify the terms of the debates between stakeholders**, perhaps even avoiding the term 'sector', which conceals many underlying notions, and to define the real issues on which the debate should focus. For the umbrella FOs and the technical and financial partners, there is certainly scope for informing and training grassroots organisations about the basic sector concept (going beyond context-related ideas but obviously taking them into account).

4.2. Does sector-based structuring allow FOs to deliver the services that producers are looking for?

4.2.1. The benefits of better targeted and more effective economic services

The benefits of specialised FOs are primarily perceived by FOs that are close to the grassroots and by producers. The members of these FOs expect practical and relevant services that address their day-to-day difficulties. The quest for effectiveness inevitably leads to FOs specialising.

- Economic services to increase producer income

The Union de Boura leaders made the following comment, 'Before the Union was formed there were different groupings but little motivation on the part of the members. We thought that turning into a cooperative would enable us to do business, enjoy (economic) benefits and improve our living conditions. We released shares in order to generate capital. We used the capital as a guarantee fund to obtain bank loans.' The FO used these funds to organise batch selling and credit warrantage etc.

'Social initiatives do not arouse people's interests, but economic benefits are definitely attractive' (member of the Behia grouping).

- Marketing issues match the problems that producers are indeed encountering

State withdrawal, the emergence of private sector players, who sometimes control overall strategic sectors, and market segmentation have marked a sea change in the role of FOs within the sectors. The FOs are faced with the new challenge of organising marketing, searching for outlets and negotiating with downstream players. Many FOs have therefore undertaken joint marketing initiatives (primary harvesting, batch selling, contract negotiation).

'Increasing yield is a good idea but you need to sell the crops, hence the market access problems: cooperatives need to be set up so that we can sell as a group' (Union de Boura leader).

- Better targeted services based on more in-depth needs assessment

The identification and analysis of the main difficulties encountered for a crop or specific type of activity enables 'small farmers to have a better grasp of their objectives and needs' (CPF leader). Therefore, in the opinion of sector FO leaders, the adoption of the product-based approach has really acted as a 'decision support tool' (UNPFL).

As a rule, this approach obviously works better for 'market-orientated sectors, such as market gardening and rice'. However, they believe that 'on a family farm, there is always a dominant crop for which the producer endeavours to be professional (improve yield, increase crop areas, mechanize)' (PNOPPA).

For example, cashew nut producers are supported by their own UCP. However, 'there is producer diversification. Those (from among the cashew nut producers) who grow rice also benefit from

support from the rice union through a programme that has provided seeds and fertilisers.’ (Kouandé cashew nut UCP).

In the eyes of the producers, this justifies their FO endeavouring to better separate out their support and organise their work by product type. However, it could be assumed that this does not necessarily require *FO structuring* but at least a specific internal structure.

- A means of professionalization for the FOs

FOs frequently have to contend with a lack of resources and skills, preventing them from implementing all the missions or activities they would like to take on for the benefit of their members. In addition, some FOs and their partners believe that concentrating on a few activities or a small number of sectors enables them to concentrate their scarce resources and therefore to be better able to harness them and achieve concrete results for their members:

‘A single leader cannot grasp all the difficulties involved in growing all crops. We want contact people who have a good grasp of their area.’ (CeRPA)

Moreover, in the specific context of the cotton sector in Benin and following the management problems which have existed in some FOs, the producers have come to think that a clearer separation of the ‘sectors’ could improve management:

‘In the past, in the village groupings all the producers came together. but support was connected to cotton. All the producers (rice growers and market gardeners) used to take the cotton input but only the cotton producer used to repay it’ (leader of the Mono-Couffo URP).

4.2.2. Limitations: cross-cutting services are neglected and FOs are dispersed

As was clearly stated by a ROPPA leader, ‘the problem occurs when the rationale is taken to an extreme, when it becomes a prerequisite for having a legal existence’, i.e. when the FOs are forced to have a formal sector-based structure in order to gain official recognition.

a. The FOs are not in a context conducive to delivering cross-cutting services

The move to (re)structure FOs by sector has been accompanied by a marginalisation of the so-called general FOs. In the CPF network, all the umbrella organisations are specialised to a greater or lesser extent. In the FUPRO network, the ‘general’ regional FOs have very few resources and are seeking a remit. When FUPRO gained its resources from cotton, it made a significant contribution to local development by building infrastructure (schools, roads and community clinics) but nowadays it no longer has the resources.

In both cases, this has meant that cross-cutting services cannot be provided in a satisfactory manner. The focus is therefore switching to the sector-based FOs, which are now the most active organisations. Can they deliver all the types of services that the producers rightfully expect?

The sector-based FOs also have to cope with a scarcity of resources (financial and human resources), while being faced with bigger challenges than in the past. Sector issues have become

more complex for the FOs: markets are increasingly segmented at international, national and sub-regional level, with different quality standards (which can come in the form of specifications, labels etc); and in a liberalised environment they are competing and faced with players that are significantly more powerful and organised than they are. These new challenges absorb all the energy of the sector-based FOs because they require greater organisational, strategic analysis of the environment and response capacity to deal with market changes etc.

It could be thought that FOs could generate resources in their specialist sectors in order to be able to offer cross-cutting services to their members, but there are still major challenges to be overcome before this can be achieved.

Therefore, if they ultimately have to focus their specific activities on one sector, their limitations in terms of supporting the development of family farms are clear to see:

- More difficult to grasp the complexity of family farming: Product-based support for producers tends to compartmentalise the activities of small-scale farms, whereas crop growing, livestock farming and extra-agricultural activities are very much a part of the farm. A producer does not make decisions based on just one crop, even if it is sometimes true that one crop dominates. The sector-based approach targets a specific problem (the production and marketing of a product) and is not easy to combine with, for example, the issue of 'soil fertility management', which must be farm-wide.
- Sector-based support can cause farms to specialise: Given the fact that producers only receive support for one sector; the danger is that they will be encouraged to invest resources and effort into a single activity, with all the risks involved in specialisation in an uncertain production and market environment.

'Wanting to specialise means ultimately excluding some diversified grassroots farms. Not all farms are able to take on board the rationale' (Technical and financial partner).

b. Policies and a pace are imposed and are not always relevant

- Fragmentation of resources and making FOs compete with each other, both of which reduce their effectiveness

In a context in which the FOs must manage scarce human and financial resources, splitting the FOs into several sectors wastes resources and energy and leads to competition between the FOs in the quest to secure resources, as the interviews in Atacora and Mono demonstrated.

In this situation, some will be capable of securing funds because they move in the right circles, without necessarily being legitimate in the eyes of the small farmers, and to the detriment of the FOs which are more representative of small farmers' interests but less effective at making themselves known or gaining recognition.

- Criteria for choosing priority sectors for support

Likewise, one of the problems is the ‘unilateral’ choice made by some projects to support a given sector, without consulting producer representatives, or ignoring differences of opinion with the FOs. In a context in which project resources are scarce, these decisions will have a major impact and will lead to major imbalances between FOs, between regions and between producers.

For example, for the PAFASP in Burkina Faso, the choice of priority sectors was guided in particular by the export market (mangoes and onions). The priority sectors are those with development potential because there is a major market demand. For the FOs, meanwhile, priority sectors would be those that are connected with food security or that are already important at farm level in order to support existing dynamics.

- Steps taken by the FO support partners

Likewise, the approach adopted by these projects does not always sufficiently take into account the existing dynamics, or instead they want to forge ahead very quickly, without giving producers time to take on board the approach or build their capacities. This leads to very top-down schemes, which run out of steam once the project withdraws, or even worse, are disruptive factors in the FO social dynamic.

‘The ‘sectors’ are a good thing but there are difficulties due to donors and some leaders wanting to deploy a top-down approach’ (Comé UCP leader).

‘A sector cannot be built with projects, i.e. without a long-term funding mechanism.’ (ROPFA)

Therefore, the context is unfavourable, with projects which may exacerbate tensions between the sector-based and geographically-based FOs when competing to secure funding (Benin), and which impose their priorities, meaning that the FOs may find it hard to maintain their own vision, and drag them into multiple and sometimes unconnected activities. Although this may encourage a certain brand of opportunism in response to a changing environment, in the long term it is particularly negative for the FOs. While some manage to forge new cooperation relations, on the other hand many find themselves unable to cope with the proliferation of partners and unconnected projects.

4.3. Does sector-based structuring allow FOs to continue to defend the interests of family farming?

The sector-based structuring or restructuring of FOs has resulted in the division of the FOs and the stress being placed on economic remits. This in turn gives rise to fears and leads to debates about their capacity to continue defending small farmers in all of their dimensions.

4.3.1. The marginalisation of family farming in agricultural policy

As we clearly saw in Burkina Faso, the current agricultural policy trend is to promote commercial agriculture and farmer professionalization. This leads to cash crops (primarily for export) being

promoted to the detriment of sectors that are important for food security, and even to agribusiness being promoted at the expense of family farming. Consequently, producers who subsistence farm, whose production is not market-orientated or who are located in areas with little agricultural potential, are not eligible to benefit from agricultural support measures.

In Burkina Faso, decision-makers have expressed their desire to create a national federation of agricultural businesspeople, meaning that there is a risk of increased marginalisation of family producers in the political dialogue.

However, as a rule, small farmers' movements should be concerned with ensuring that all farmers can receive support, hence the benefits of geographically-based organisation, which should enable all the regions, even peripheral ones, and all types of farmers, to be represented.

That being the case, the FOs need to have sufficient political clout to change these views, but they are currently in a position that prevents them from influencing negotiations.

4.3.2. The new sector-based configurations are weakening the position of producers

a. The liberalisation of "major sectors" is altering power relationships

The economic and political remits of the FOs were closely linked in the major administered export sectors. In the cotton sector in particular, where the stakes were high for the State, as the main economic partner the FOs had the opportunity to influence the political dialogue and to defend their stances. They were also able to contribute to local development as a result of being in a sector that was of great importance to the State.

However, the liberalisation of the cotton sector has meant that producers no longer deal with the State and find themselves faced with private-sector players, which weakens their advocacy work, as the State no longer has a direct interest in the sector.

Nowadays, economic and social, services and trade union remits have been well and truly split for these FOs. The sector-based FOs deliver economic services (which is a specialised task), whereas policy dialogue and social issues are referred back to "general" FOs that receive little support from donors. Due to the prevailing largely liberalised context, there will probably be no cotton-like sectors in the future incorporating the diversified remits of the FOs.

b. The FOs from other sectors do not have the economic clout needed to have political influence

In the other sectors, the FOs do not currently have the necessary economic clout and the State is not a dominant player and has largely withdrawn from agricultural development initiatives. Consequently, the FOs lack the leverage to influence the agricultural policy dialogue.

The interprofessional bodies constitute a sector consultation and producer interest protection framework. However, many interprofessional bodies are largely confined to the management of sporadic projects, or instead work as intermediaries, passing on ‘modernisation’ messages.

The FOs have made their views heard on a number of points, such as in Burkina Faso, and have managed to prevent interprofessional bodies from having a very targeted focus (product-based). However, in the main the dominant mode of political dialogue based on sector issues has been imposed on them, largely excluding a wider dialogue, which would look at the agricultural model to promote and the role of family farming in agricultural and rural policy.

4.3.3. Sector segmentation is contributing to the political marginalisation of FOs

a. A loss of coherence in FO initiatives and a waste of energy

Agricultural development is not just the sum of different sector approaches but also a coordinated initiative which includes global investment in infrastructure, training, security of land tenure, natural resource access and management, market regulation etc.

When umbrella FOs compartmentalise their initiatives and each focus on their own sector specific issues, it becomes more difficult for them to reflect and conduct more global joint initiatives, which require FO consultation forums and suitable consultation forums with the State and other development stakeholders (donors and local authorities, for example).

Increasing the number of sector bodies increases the need to train competent leaders and additional resources are needed to run these bodies, which have a cost.

‘In Burkina Faso, we are seeing a fragmentation of resources, meaning that the resources needed to support all of this are not available; as promoting family farming requires support in terms of market regulation, security of land tenure, protection, guarantees, label schemes’ (ROPFA leader).

b. The risk of small farmers’ movements being politically diluted / divided

This dispersal reduces the scope of discourse and initiatives. The FOs can see that this sector-based approach is a divisive factor (even a strategy), as it weakens their policy consultation capacity on major issues. If the FOs are not united, they cannot establish a power relationship.

For the past 15 years, the small farmers’ movement had progressively developed on the basis of building leader capacity, developing a shared independent vision etc. Sector-based restructuring is undermining these efforts and is helping to marginalise the FOs in their quest to defend diversified family farming.

In ROPFA, these risks have been the subject of discussions on whether sectors should be incorporated into the FO sub-regional representative body. Following several years of discussions (see box), ROPFA opted for an institutional solution enabling sector issues to be more effectively taken into consideration in its work.

ROPPA and the sector-based approach

The 3rd ROPPA Convention held in Lomé in February 2004 launched a discussion and consultation process on the agricultural sectors that play a major role in terms of food sovereignty and security in the sub-region and are subject to (sometimes unfair) competition on the regional market. A number of sectors were chosen with rice being particularly targeted.

In 2005, ROPPA and FUPRO discussed cotton because there was a need for a specific decision-making and discussion forum on cotton growing on family farms.

In 2006, ROPPA discussed market access and competitiveness for a certain number of products. The 2006 Convention observed changes to the structure of national platforms and the approaches and control exercised by the authorities and their partners which were segmenting activities. The need for further reflection on how to structure ROPPA became clear. The risk of these sector-based approaches is fragmentation and division of their organisational and work methods and therefore a risk of their capacity to influence and take action being reduced. The Convention therefore asked the Executive Committee to undertake a wide-ranging and in-depth evaluation to define 'the most suitable ways and methods to guarantee that sector interests are taken into account and defended within the global and coherent framework of our vision of multifunctional small-scale farming.'

The 2010 Convention recognised and accepted the importance of sectors and that they should be taken into consideration by ROPPA, given its ambition to achieve food security and sovereignty. The Convention asked the ROPPA Board to create a sector-specific space within its organisational framework. This space will enable consultations to be organised between the OPPIA from the selected priority sectors. The consultation group for each sector will have a consultative status. The members of the consultation group representing each country will be appointed by the National Platform. Source: <http://www.roppa.info/> and interview.

4.4. Points for consideration by FOs and their partners

The interviews with the FOs clearly highlighted that their need to develop (or redevelop) diversified remits within their networks, and particularly not to abandon cross-cutting remits, requires reaffirming. These play an essential role in responding to the problems encountered by farms (farm funding, vocational training, land management, etc.). Changes to the context have meant that these are now clearly separate remits, with the focus being on product remits, to the detriment of an integrated farm approach.

The following table gives a summary of possible FO remits, with a few examples, which would also have to be matched up with each structural level. In many FOs it would be worthwhile carrying out a discussion process in order to review member requirements and the way in which the FOs can meet them in this new context.

Theoretical FO remits and sample initiatives

	Economic services	Social services	Trade unionism / representation	Local development
Product specific	Supplying specific inputs Marketing	-	Defending members' interests in the interprofessional bodies and sector policies.	Taxation (sector contribution to local investment). Job creation (processing and marketing).
General	Credit Training Supplying inputs and equipment	Literacy Healthcare Insurance	Defending members' interests in agricultural policies (framework agricultural law, land, farmers' status).	Involvement in regions' economic development (role of FOs in local authorities).

Using the table as a basis (or adapting it to the realities of the different FOs), practical ideas could focus on:

- ☞ Building FO and their human resources' capacities.
- ☞ Coordination required between FOs with different remits.
- ☞ How to fund these remits.
- ☞ The role of the State.
- ☞ Lobbying in favour of family farming needs to be stepped up.
- ☞ In spite of everything, interesting sector organisation innovations.

The partners should also commit to this overhaul if they wish to continue supporting the FOs in a relevant and effective way.

4.4.1. Building FO and their human resources' capacities

The FOs, especially those that support the development of family farms in all their diversity (general FOs), need support from technical and financial partners and States in order to reinforce their viability and effectiveness. This is a necessary condition if they are to take on the farming and rural development role devolved to them by these partners.

A major issue and one that is more relevant than ever before is training for human resources in the FOs (technical skills, strategic analysis, internal governance etc). Training is a long process requiring stability, both in terms of support and in the bodies themselves.

However, sector-based structuring or restructuring means that instability is widespread with bodies being split, leaders being scattered in different bodies, promotion of new leaders, changes in financial backer priorities and resources being spread too thinly.

HR (technical experts and elected leaders) capacity building programmes therefore need to be put in place (or re-established) in the long term.

4.4.2. Facilitate coordination between sector and general FOs

As the global focus of services on products is a reality, a single FO cannot address all the ensuing needs. The challenge for sector FOs is to redevelop these services at a time when they too have fewer resources. It would be worthwhile for them to combine this sector-based service approach with other approaches that take into account the farm and its environment, possibly internally, but most probably working with other FOs or development stakeholders.

The Beninese and Burkina Faso FOs that we met offer examples of institutional solutions that they are trying out in order to deal with cross-cutting remits, in contexts in which the trend is towards compartmentalisation and specialisation.

a. Redevelop a stimulating project

FUPRO, for example, is seeking to bring together and pool the sector-based FOs' resources in a geographically based FO at each organisational level. However, a prerequisite for the success of the scheme is having a 'common vision', which is what makes small farmers' movements unique (see the box below).

A small farmers' movement is an organisation...

Demande and created by the small farmers themselves. It has a regional or national profile and:

- Sets itself objectives that consciously and explicitly fit with a vision for small farmers in a developing society.
- Is capable of formulating demands that express the aspirations of the small-farming community.
- Is able to involve small farmers in tangible initiatives to ensure that their demands are met.
- Is recognised by the authorities as a partner for negotiating small farmer issues in social programmes.
- Enjoys legitimacy in local bodies holding a dominant or majority position.
- Operates democratically with elected leaders having mandates, being accountable and accepting that they will be replaced by a secret ballot of members.

Source: les organisations paysannes et rurales. GAO network, 1995

Despite the unfavourable context (4.2.2.b), a network of FOs must take responsibility for developing (or redeveloping) this common vision and translating it into concrete action plans. However, partners must also play their part, ensuring that developing dynamics are not jeopardised and that they support the FOs in their own discussion processes, without imposing their ideas on them.

The technical and financial partners need to carefully analyse the dynamics of the existing FOs and of the social, economic and political context. They also need to have a good grasp of the mutual enhancement and competitive links between the FOs and encourage synergy and consultation between the FOs, where possible, and between the various development stakeholders. Starting off from an approach based on supporting a FO, the aim is to switch to more global agricultural and rural farm development support programmes, including the FOs and the other development stakeholders.

b. Support the review of service organisation and coordination

It is important that the FOs do not allow themselves to be boxed into imposed structures that do not fit with the missions and visions that they have set themselves. There is no stock answer to the question of whether FOs need to formally *structure* themselves, with reviews needing to be carried out on a case-by-case basis, depending on the context and requirements.

There are many possible organisational structures suited to working in a targeted or general manner and to the planned remits. In the FUPRO network, the geographically-based FOs incorporate specialised producer organisations. The CPF has created informal consultation forums for FOs.

Others organise internal themed committees or working groups in order to have an organisational structure that meets the need to concentrate on one or several important issues. Others, such as FEPPASI, remain diversified, while having a mainly economic slant to their work.

Others have floated the idea of 'pooling resources' with 'small farmer centre' type bodies, offering diversified services in a one-stop shop, in order to 'put an end to the proliferation of bodies.'

The FOs are therefore faced at the different structuring levels with the challenge of understanding the laws concerning their statuses and agricultural and rural policies, giving their members comprehensive information and then asserting their vision.

c. Review specialised and general service needs

The aim is to raise issues such as which services can be general (for example, input supply via farm shops) and which require a sector-specific approach (specifically product marketing). This review process can open the door to multi-sector service cooperatives, which may focus on one or two flagship activities, but are manageable by them (for example, input supply or product marketing).

FOs can also be economic / service based without necessarily being sector-based and instead being diversified and focused on the running of family farms. The 'family farm advice' services set up by some FOs (for example, FEPPASI) strive to combine these different approaches. The FOs can draw on the results of this type of initiative and show the State and partners how professionalization and family farming can be linked up in practice.

4.4.3. Put general issues back at the heart of the debate on the State's role in rural development

The FOs cannot assume responsibility for all the aspects of agricultural and even rural development, whether they are specialised or general bodies. They were able to contribute to it as part of the 'major sectors' because these were of major national importance for the State. Some have also tried to alleviate the lack of State investment in 'neglected' or 'peripheral' zones but they are unable to do so to any significant extent. There is therefore a real need to re-examine the role of the State and the local authorities, which the FOs can never completely replace.

Political support for general issues can no longer really be achieved through the 'large sector' model but could instead be attained through the development of a mass small farmer movement in which the opinions of all the different types of FO could be heard: sector-based, geographically-based, including 'peripheral' regions with less agricultural potential and for which economic solutions are just as necessary as social solutions (into which they have been compartmentalised to date).

FO partners must therefore officially recognise this division of remits and acknowledge that the FOs cannot do it all and support the FOs' trade union remit in this area. They must also include other development stakeholders (such as local authorities, state departments and private sector

operators), who have an important role to play, in the review process. ROPPA obviously has a major role to play in supporting this review process.

4.4.4. Different funding strategies for the different remits

The ideas raised obviously require in-depth consideration of funding methods for the various FO remits. Funding strategies could be more clearly differentiated and thought-out based on activity and remit type:

- Public budget (State and local authorities).
- External resources (projects and partnerships), notably basket funds.
- Membership dues.
- Contributions deducted from member economic activities.
- Reinvestment (of a part) of the FO's profits (from commercial activity and service provision, for example).

The partners have a role to play in supporting the FOs in this process in order to identify realistic and sustainable sources of funding. For which services do the FOs have sole responsibility? And for which services should they share responsibility with the State? How much can members be realistically asked to contribute? How much of the producers' margin can acceptably be deducted and so on.

4.4.5. Advocacy topics: Demonstrate that family farming can be successful in developing a country's agriculture

FUPRO and CPF have set themselves the goal of defending family farming and are aware that they must work to change decision-makers' view of it.

‘There is a hot debate on whether small-scale producers are capable of developing our agriculture. We need to demonstrate that they can be professional and work in the market. Family farming is not the exact opposite of the value chain. Family farming was perceived as being an obstacle to agricultural development because it was classed as subsistence farming. However, family farming generates an income’ (PNOPPA leader in Benin).

Therefore, there is a need to constantly demonstrate the dynamism, performance and sheer adaptability of family farming to decision-makers using substantiated and rigorous arguments. Family farmers can rise to this challenge if production and marketing conditions are more favourable than they are at the present time. They are capable of significantly increasing their productivity using technical innovations if they are given support in this area. A significant amount of research work and knowledge building studies are in existence which could be useful to the FOs as they work to develop their ‘pitch’.

ROPFA also has an important role to play in this process. The national FOs should also forge alliances with other civil society stakeholders.

Arguments in favour of family farms

Despite the various obstacles faced (agro-ecological conditions, international trade, socio-cultural development, structural adjustments etc), family farms are still very dynamic in a range of aspects:

Big employment providers Family farms are the only alternative to the rural exodus which is often synonymous with social exclusion and an increase in poverty, as they provide food and an economic activity to millions of people.

A portfolio of diversified activities Family farm strategies are based on diversification, bringing together agricultural and non-agricultural activities. This sort of strategy enables them to anticipate the consequences of changing climatic conditions, cope with the seasonal nature of agricultural income and limit market risks by opting for a balanced combination of commercial and subsistence crops.

Highly flexible and adaptable Family farms are particularly skilled at adapting to severe disruptions. Unlike agro-industrial technology driven farms and agricultural funding systems, family farms have managed to implement organisational methods that enable them to adjust their produce mix in order to cope with unexpected situations and even to seize opportunities offered by the market.

High productivity Family farms maximise the whole family workforce on the little land they often have available. The per capita income is often low, but productivity per hectare is high due to the use of intensive techniques and the choice of better adapted crops. Moreover, rural economists have shown the diseconomies of scale created by structures that are too large. For a given area (a plot or region), family farms therefore produce more wealth than agribusiness.

Connected to the market Family farms are often depicted as being uncompetitive and unconnected to the market, and therefore tend to be reduced to subsistence farming. However, many examples go to show that family farmers are indeed connected to the local, regional or international market.

A major contribution to a country's food security Family farmers have the potential (production, quality, competitiveness etc) to meet not only their own food needs but also those of the whole population. In West Africa, the increase in agricultural production, primarily on family farms, has been remarkable and has managed to keep pace with extremely strong demographic growth. Persisting food insecurity problems are not caused by a production shortage but primarily by income and food access problems. Demographic growth forecasts in the region remain high.

Sustainable management of natural resources Family farms are conducive to conserving natural resources and the environment when they coincide with a small-farming way of life or sign up to a set of community resource and land management rules.

Strong community involvement Family farms make use of a complex system of social transactions which involve mutual rights and obligations between each family member and the rest of the group.

Source: Coordination SUD, In defence of family farms, 2008

4.4.6. Innovate to solve the sector problems that are a real issue for producers

The sector-based approach (in the basic sense of the term) is valid because it more effectively addresses the issues of product marketing. In this framework, the end goal of the sector-based approach for the FOs is to secure outlets, improve their bargaining power, position themselves better in a given market, raise purchaser awareness and ensure a fair income for producers etc. However, nowadays many FOs do not know how to position themselves in a sector and in a market (there are often preconceived ideas about the role of FOs in product marketing). They

have a poor understanding of the sector environment, its stakeholders, target markets and product features, which could help them to more successfully devise their strategies.

Joint marketing schemes and local market regulation initiatives are experiences that need to be further pursued and built up. The FOs would be advised to take the initiative, innovate and disseminate information about these new issues, particularly because 'government workers are still supporting the FOs as they did in the past. They have nothing to offer on marketing issues, for example, and are unaware of value chains' (PNOPPA leader).

Appendices

Appendix 1 : Mission schedule and interviews

Date	Activity	Persons interviewed
23/05/10	Arrival Seydou KEITA	
24/05/10	Arrival Célia CORONEL	
25/05/10	Work session with CPF	Eric Ouedraogo, member of board of directors Omar Ouedraogo, communication manager
26/05/10	Meeting PAFASP Meeting CISV Meeting OXFAM	Sylvain Dardel, technical assistant Andrea Ghione, national Coordinator Dominique Bassolé, food sovereignty project manager ; Issaka Ouandaogo, advocacy project manager
27/05/10	Meeting Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture du Centre Meeting Coopération Suisse Meeting l'UNPFL et la FEPA-B Meeting AGRITERRA	Alfred Dien Diéré, general secretary; Amadou Ouedraogo, president Pascal Rouamba, project manager Windimpoui Ouedraogo, Sanou Traoré, Mariam Savadogo, Marc Gansoré, Moumini Zongo, Siané Anne Marie Geke APPELDOORN
28/05/10	Meeting FENOP Meeting DOPAIR	Sanou Issouf, coordinator of programmes Etienne Kaboré, Director
29/05/10	Meeting Zitinga, member of UNPFL	Joseph Sawadogo, advisor
30/05/10	Travelling from Ouagadougou to Léo	
	Meeting the Union of Bieha (member of Feppasi) et Bwala, Pareogaon et Bieha groups	Issouf Nacro, advisor (liste de présence)
31/05/10	Meeting the Union of Boura and cooperative of Boura	Ousame Nave, advisor Nadié Razak, Kalaoulé Abel, Kazia Abiba, Nadié Afissatou, Bassindia Sayouba, Ouedraogo Boukary, Molarié Seïbou
	Work session with FEPPASI	Joseph Dagano, president, Minata Coulibaly communication manager Diasso Hamidou Coordinator
1 ^{er} /06/10	Travelling from Léo to Ouagadougou	
	Work session with CPF	Seydou Ouedraogo, member of board of directors, Jules Zongo, membre du CA, Eric Ouedraogo, member of board of directors, Omar Ouedraogo, communication manager
02/06/10	Meeting ROPPA	Ousseini Ouedraogo, coordinator Saliou N'Diaye, monitoring and evaluation

	Travelling from Ouagadougou to Cotonou	
03/06/10	Travelling from Cotonou to Bohicon Work session with FUPRO	Lionel Guezodje, general secretary, Jacques Bonou, member of board of directors, Tiburce Kouton, permanent secretary
04/06/10	Travelling from Bohicon to Natitingou	
05/06/10	Meeting URPA-Atacora Donga	GARBA Zachiri, SALIFOU Moumouni, BECOUROU Brisso, ALI Y. Yaya, BATHIEMA Gaudens, BARANON Mohamed, YOMBO B. Joseph
	Meeting UCP Kouandé	Gibril Yaya, Yacoubou Toinon, Imorou Amina
	Meeting UCP Kouandé	Ali B. Abou, Tossoumou Zina, Issa Salifou
06/06/10	Meeting CeRPA	Karim Issaou, director of the promotion of value chains and food security
	Meeting the URP-AD	WALI Imorou, BOUEGUI Bouko
07/06/10	Travelling from Natitingou to Lokossa	
	Meeting CRR- Mono Couffo	SOLAGNI Martin, AZONSI Toussaint, ANAGO CODJO Emmanuel, FIODENDJI Komi
08/06/10	Meeting URP-Mono Couffo	KOMAGBE Maurice, TOGBE Thomas, GBESSI Wilfried
	Meeting UCP Comé	Athanase Aguya, Charles Agbo
	Meeting CRR	Assise Fiodendji, président
09/06/10	Work session with FUPRO	Lionel Guezodje, Tiburce Kouton, ANAGO CODJO Emmanuel, AHOUANDJINO Séraphine, SAKA KOTO Orou Ganni, LOKOSSOU Léopold
	Travelling from Bohicon to Cotonou	
10/06/10	Meeting DPLR	Florent Aguessi, land legislation
	Meeting PNOPPA	Léopold Lokossou, président, Bernard Toto, permanent secretary, Augustin Ahouanvoedo, assistant general secretary, Athanase Akpoe, general secretary
	Departure Célia Coronel and Seydou Keita	

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Appendix 3: CPF internal workshop report

Change factors	Impact on the FOs	Ways to anticipate and adapt
State and governmental initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proliferation of political and institutional reforms. • Dam building. • Lack of a unifying policy • Proliferation of projects and programmes • Poor policy monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge the State and decision-makers about the negative effects of integrated rural development projects. <p>Permanent dialogue with the State and technical and financial partners.</p>
State withdrawal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of producers (cooperatives and groupings of producers and processors). • Emergence of sector FOs (CPF, FEPPASI, UNPFL etc) • Lack of support measures • Gaps to be filled (support / advice services, input supply). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structuring based on growth sectors. • Have a vision for agriculture (Agricultural Framework Law). • Some FOs turn into associations.
Stakeholders taking on responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergence of small-scale farmer leaders • Setting-up of input supply, advice / support, capacity building, product marketing and processing schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop bargaining capacity. • Advocacy and lobbying work.
Democratic involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of stakeholders in law and policy drafting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOs create policy analysis units • Introduction of preparatory meetings.
Adoption of policies and strategies (Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework (CSLP), Decentralised Rural Development Strategy (SDR), Decentralised Rural Development Policy Letter (LPDRD) etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising and clarifying development sectors. • Increasing agro-sylvo-pastoral production. • Little producer involvement in policy development and implementation. • Policy content is out of sync with reality and policies are not accompanied by effective implementation instruments (SDR claims to link the market to agriculture but does not provide a mechanism to actually do this in practice). • Lack of coherence between laws and policies. • Proliferation of sectoral policies. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer to review laws to make them more coherent. • Producer awareness raising and information initiatives.
Technical and financial partners (World Bank, IMF, EU, MCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed financial backer interest in agriculture • Confusion and imposition of agricultural development visions on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear vision and strategic directions. • Promote and defend shared agriculture interests.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the country. FO economic dependence. Influencing the choices made by FOs. Ineffective aid (does not reach stakeholders directly) Technical and financial support for FOs. Support for FO restructuring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct FO – technical and financial partner consultation (e.g. CPF and Danish cooperation agency (2008-2009) and Swedish cooperation agency (2010) consultation).
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in yields. Financial losses. FOs finding it difficult to adapt. Crop farmer – livestock farmer conflict about natural resource management. Damage to natural resources. Land conflict between locals and migrants in areas that are still fertile. External / internal migration of producer communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of adapted varieties of seeds. Usage of improved seeds. Forging closer links with agricultural research Compost production Law on security of rural land tenure
Foodstuff price increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for FOs to sell products Possibility of FOs having a margin Decreased producer purchasing power Increased producer income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of technical - economic reference frameworks (regional and crop based farmers' operating account). Sustainable management of income.
Sharp drop in the price of raw materials (cotton etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop in production quantities Producers and organisations become disorganised and discouraged. Difficult to galvanise members. FO level tensions Members prefer to change crops. FO bargaining power reduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production diversification. Intensification of agricultural production.
ECOWAP/PAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of intra-regional trade of agricultural products. Family farming and food sovereignty taken into consideration. Market-level distortion (PAU). Lack of continuity between UEMOA and the States. Boosting and increasing of investment in agriculture. PAU /ECOWAP incoherence. Delay in implementing policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual implementation of ECOWAP recommendations Know about and grasp regional agricultural policies.
CET and integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop in sales of FO agricultural products. Market flooded by imported agricultural products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of a fifth price band at 35% at the least. Local produce promotional campaigns. Establish a tax on agricultural product imports.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An obstacle to the free movement of agricultural products in the UEMOA and CEDEAO space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote intra-regional trade. • Raise awareness about the chicanery faced by road hauliers.
Liberalisation (EPA and WTO agreements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processed agricultural products are uncompetitive (price, packaging, product quality). • Unfair competition (imported products subsidised whereas local products are not). • Purchase prices obtained by producers drop significantly. • Protectionism of American and European markets (difficult for FOs to meet criteria). • FOs being dismantled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy campaign on the EPA (CPF stance and proposals). • Involvement in the drawing-up of the list of sensitive products.
Formation of networks in West Africa (ROPPA, APPROCA, RBM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FO get to know each other. • More active lobbying. • Increased FO involvement in regional policy-making. • Dependable partner in the eyes of the technical and financial partners and African and inter-African institutions. • Reinforcement of the FOs' role and place in the institutional fabric. • Lack of communication between the networks and grassroots FOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be involved in these networks. • Offer our small farming expertise to the networks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FO viewpoints not taken into account in the running of the different frameworks. • Token FO participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOs create policy analysis units • Introduction of preparatory meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional chambers of agriculture (CRA and RECAO). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion surrounding regional chamber of agriculture roles and responsibilities leading to a conflict about remits and leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of institutional roles and responsibilities (chambers and sector-based FOs).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with the sector-based FOs. Services not being provided to producers and FOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the profile and make operational the chambers at provincial level.
Decentralisation (CVD, districts, regional councils)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralisation has ignored the existence of the FOs. Widening of the tax base detrimental to the FOs (set amount payable by each FO). Local authorities have an erroneous view of the FOs (seen as development projects). Creation of departments tasked with rural land issues in the districts. Opportunities to control the decision-making bodies at local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to position themselves at district level. Raise district authority awareness about the status of FOs.
Policy orientations and choices (agribusiness, GMO, sector-based approach)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignorance of family farming. Producers and their representative organisations depend on seed firms. Transformation of the ecosystem. Loss of biodiversity. FOs being destabilised (ignorance of the grassroots reality and stakeholder capacities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be wary of hazardous technologies (GMO and agro-fuels) and baseless visions (agribusiness and agricultural entrepreneurship).
Market access (certification, standards, traceability, labelling schemes).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromises the FO's product sales Reduces FO capacity to enter markets. Fair Trade (opportunity to access niche markets). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train producers about certification, standards, traceability and labelling schemes.