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CoS-SIS Convergence of Sciences
Strengthening Agricultural Innovation Systems
Programme

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Workshop
June 24-29, 2012

Editors
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15 October 2012



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Presentations by Research Associates

BENIN

Institutional experiment on the rice value chain in southern Benin

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Recall of the Institutional Constraints

In the inland valley at Covè and Zagnanado districts in the South Benin, poor maintenance of the irrigation canals and farm equipment (collectively used), market outlet for local rice (unbalanced power relation between farmers and traders), access to specific inputs for rice cultivation and access to credit at preferential rate and term were the institutional constraints cited by smallholder farmers as influencing the production of rice and adoption of new technologies. In order to manage these constraints, a CIG was established. From June to October, the CIG addressed the issue of market outlet by establishing a linkage between rice producers and SONAPRA which is responsible for buying rice for the processing factories in the area.

Composition of the CIG

We organized a group of 6 actors involved in the CIG activities with 5 other actors that we considered important to be invited in the CIG meeting due to their contribution in the rice marketing in Benin. Participants in the CIG meeting were as follows: 7 representatives from the following: (i) extension (TS-PV of CeCPA Covè and Zagnanado), (ii) representative of rice producers' organization at district level, (iii) representative of rice producers' organization at national level (CCR-B) and department level (UNIRIZ), (iv) representative of local rice traders, the representative of town council, (v) representative of CLCAM (credit provider), (vi) the SONAPRA. Representative of SONAPRA, town council and (vii) CLCAM. However, representatives of INRAB (national research institute), DGR (agric-engineer at national level) & DAGRN (agric-engineer at department level) and representative of Chinese Cooperant have not been invited to join the CIG. Vegetable producers' organization and vegetable traders' had withdrawn from the group because rice topic is now discussed instead of water management issues.

It is observed with the CIG activities, strong interactions had been established between actors especially between the CLCAM and rice producers' representatives.

In terms of power relationship, it was observed that, during the period, cooperation among the actors was the most dominant power relationship in the rice value chain. However, we observed antagonistic power relationship between input dealers and SONAPRA because both are involved in input supply business with farmers and their organizations. Types of power relationships observed were between input dealers and the town council and between town council and rice traders because the town council collects taxes from these actors.

Institutional experiment the CIG is carrying out

The issue of post-harvest has also been discussed. This was raised by SONAPRA which requires high quality rice for the rice processing factory installed by the government. Activities carried out are related to information brokerage and management of opportunities that exist. SONAPRA is seeking for well dried rice, no stones content, no mixed varieties and stored in good conditions in order to prevent further processing damage in the factory. These issues will be part of the contract to be negotiated between SONAPRA and rice producers' organization through the CIG and the guidance of the municipality and the extension service. The town council and the extension service agreed to be involved in farmers' training process and to organize the collection of rice from the individual farmers. The CLCAM then could provide short term credit to facilitate the process. This new situation will change the actual market and credit system structures.

The type of experiment conducted is an in-depth case study. The initial situation was documented during the exploratory and diagnostic study, and any changes that happened could be documented including, terms of power relationships, market structure for local rice, diversification of rice product according to the consumers demand, and champions taking the lead in this process. Such organization of rice producers was well appreciated by the *premier adjoint* of the Mayor who was identified in the process as a kind of local dynamic in the area. Emails have been sent to the research associate in other to have the full activities planned by the CIG to be involved in the council development plan. In the process of negotiation of a partnership between SONAPRA and Rice producers, we consider *the premier adjoint* of the mayor as a Network Champion. While the RCPA (*Responsible du Centre Communal de Production Agricole*) of the extension service as process champion.

Key events that may affect CIG activities

The main event observed in the area was government decision of selling rice to consumer at FCFA 200 the kilogram. Such situation will negatively affect the rice

market structure to the disadvantage of rice growers Rice market diversification is achieved by providing added value to the rice produced locally: parboiled rice. The government through the ONASA office in charge of food security has been charged to buy from the SONAPRA's factory for the food security programme. The rice was bought at FCFA 400/kg and sold later during the period of food shortage (during the dry season, May to June).

As additional CIGs' activities, a phone call to remind the RA about contact with the Chinese Embassy by the PMT, and training on parboiling rice process, and exchange visit that have been agreed upon to be partially funded with the CIG fund at the CoS-SIS programme.

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