



Survey 2020/2021 to analyze the role of FOs and the gender component in the DeSIRA projects

This overview does not represent an official statement of the European Commission. It is the result of an informal consultation held in 2020-2021, between INTPA services and its partners.

Summary

In total we recorded 35 projects responses. The main conclusions regarding **FOs participation** which is key for a successful multi-stakeholder approach for innovation with support of research are the following:

- 29 projects develop partnerships with 131 FOs.
- The objectives of the participation depends of the project: access to data and resources for experimentations, sharing of knowledge to co-design innovations or carry out diagnosis, dissemination of results and scaling of innovations, ensuring the sustainability of the outcomes of the projects.
- 18 FOs participate in projects' planning and evaluations processes; a large number (18) are included in project steering committee.
- 6 FOs have direct access to funds (co-applicants or contractors) and 5 FOs have indirect access to funds (they do not manage the funds but are part of the decision regarding the budget).
- The participation takes place during meetings, workshops, innovation platform activities, implementation of trials, data collection (and a few data analysis with FOs), training.
- A large majority (24) of FOs are involved in trainings including 9 projects developing a "train the trainer approach" (farmers will train farmers)
- A large majority (24) of FOs are involved in communication and dissemination activities; some FOs manage specific tools : radio, Facebook, website, forums, etc.

In **conclusion** the FOs participation in DeSIRA projects seems important (even if a number of DeSIRA projects are still not involving FOs) and relevant (including to be a truly partner). However, further analysis is needed to provide more information on the quality of this participation and the outcomes of this participation

Concerning **women participation and gender dimension**, 27 projects (total 35) declared that women are involved in actions.

- Women are involved at different levels: in the project governance (3 projects), in leading farmers' groups or small enterprises playing a key role in the project (8 projects), as beneficiaries of project results (27 projects).
- Only one project declared to look for a balanced participation of women (50% men, 50% women).
- Three of the projects have planned to do a gender analysis.
- On the budget allocations, when the data is available the budget allocated to activities related to women ranks between 10% and 30%. One project has allocated 60% of the budget to actions that will benefit women.

In **conclusion** the women participation and more broadly gender dimension **seems to be far too limited in DeSIRA projects and this calls for a much stronger attention by the projects.**

Main report

1. Objective of the survey

The objective of the survey is to understand (i) the place of the Farmers' Organizations (FOs) in the DeSIRA projects in order to better monitor and design next DeSIRA projects and (ii) the place of gender in the projects.

2. Methodology

To achieve the objective of the survey, a questionnaire was sent out to the DeSIRA projects leaders on November 26, 2020. The questionnaire consists of two parts, one on the role of farmers' organizations and the second part on the place of gender in the projects. It contains a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions.

We analysed the data received in Excel. For the open-ended questions, similarity of the patterns was analyzed to identify the ideas/the words that are expressed and to group the answers. For some sections, the information provided appeared to be more related to other sections. Therefore, we took into account this problem in the data analysis. Relevant information is missing for some sections in some projects.

3. Results

3.1. FO participation in projects, link of FOs with the projects and access to funding

In total, we recorded 35 projects responses. Among them, 29 responded that FOs participate in their projects, but with various intensity. 131 FOs are participating in the projects as highlighted in the following table.

# FO implementer	# of FO co-implementer	# FO associated	#FO without formal link	Total
0	10	70	51	131

Table : Distribution of FO depending on the type of participation with DeSIRA projects

FOs mainly participate in the projects as associates. We only have two FO that are implementers.

As for the access to funding, only eleven projects gave a positive response that their FOs have been allocated a part of the budget directly or indirectly as follows:

- Direct financial support (6 projects) for capacity building of existing FOs, conducting demand and institutional assessments, setting up and monitoring farmer field schools, joint stakeholders' analysis, field missions, and forest enrichment with native species. For example in the project *TAERA-Benin*, "FOs are supposed to use the project budget to: (i) strengthen the capacity of its technical team as training, provision of equipment, (ii) set up and monitor farmer field schools, and (iii) organize training and restitution to farmers, members of FO to disseminate innovations".
- Indirect financial support (5 projects): these projects support FOs through equipment supply, innovation fund mechanism, service contracts for the implementation of some activities: trials and participatory evaluation, implementation of demonstration plots, seed production of improved varieties, trainings. In the project *ABEE-Senegal*, "FOs have subcontracted with the co-applicants to receive funds for their activities. The funds they receive are intended to cover the expenses related to the trials they are responsible for".

Indirect financial support is the main method used by projects to support FOs. Of the 29 projects working with FOs, the other eighteen projects that mentioned that they don't allocate budget to FOs actually provide support to them when they participate in the projects' activities. As noted in the project *Anticiper et gérer les risques biologiques pour renforcer la résilience des agriculteurs au changement climatique en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre*, FOs are provided with tools : "FOs have not been allocated a part of the budget. However, they will be equipped with smartphones for and/or after trainings that will be organized for them to learn usage of the participatory surveillance application and run participatory surveillance protocol." In the project *Zambia for Agroforestry, Biodiversity and Climate (Z4ABC)*, "Farmers Organizations may obtain funding through the set-up of a small-scale co-financing scheme".

3.2. Objectives and strategy when working with farmers' organizations

Projects have various objectives when working with FOs:

- To create impact, sustainability and ownership of innovations/technologies (9 projects)
- To empower smallholder dairy farmers (1 project)
- To have farmers leading the gathering and synthetization of traditional knowledge, the identification of gaps and the development of innovations (1 project)
- To promote a research-action-participation model (1 project)
- To understand the farmers' perception on disease and vaccine (1 project)
- To facilitate development of technologies that meet the farmers needs and to facilitate adoption (1 project)
- To involve farmers and seed multipliers in cassava disease surveillance (1 project)
- To scale up of best agroforestry practices and appropriate grazing and feeding innovations (2 projects)
- To gather data/information on the farmers' knowledge about the dairy sector and the concrete challenges they have been facing and are facing currently and why the sector is not moving forward (1 project)

Farmers' organizations are mainly seen in projects as main drivers of the sustainability of the projects' outcomes, since they have the potential to pursue the implementation of activities beyond the project implementation timeframe. For example, the project *Land, Soil and Crop Information Services to support Climate Smart Agriculture (LSC-IS)* as follows: " mentions : "The project considers Farmers organizations (FOs) as critical partners in the development and use of land- soil- crop information systems and as essential partners between farmers and knowledge providers in the national Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS 2.0) to create impact and sustainability of the project effort".

The strategies developed when working with FOs include:

- Contract with FOs to implement some project activities such as tree seedlings and establish demonstration plots (3 projects)
- FOs are involved in projects activities, including preparatory activities, trainings, drafting of the project proposal, planning, monitoring and evaluation process, research protocol design, field activities, policy dialogue, capacity building, knowledge sharing (15 projects)
- Formalize the dairy value chain and seek to improve value addition, based on the use of the anticipated increases in milk production (1 project)
- FOs participate in multi-stakeholder platforms (2 projects)
- Set up a small-scale co-financing scheme (matching grants) to support the uptake of sustainable business approaches in improved value chains (1 project)

For example as a strategy, "The FO will be part of multi-stakeholders platform and involve in participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation" in the project *Supporting sustainable coffee production and conservation of forest ecosystems through climate –relevant and integrated landscape management of the Yaya Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve*.

3.3. Participation in steering committee

16 projects mentioned that FO are part of steering committee or other strategic committees through their representatives. They participate in this committee to advice on the implementation of the projects. As stated in the project *Introducing Circularity through Climate-Smart Aquaculture in Bangladesh [Artemia4Bangladesh]*, "The FO's are members of project steering committee, e.g. cluster leaders of salt farmers, representatives of SHAB and BATiP".

3.4. Participation in technical meetings

25 projects reported that their FOs participate in technical meetings the same way as the other project members:

- Meeting of identification of research themes, technology selection and site identification for on-farm trials (2 projects)
- Workshops, including participatory evaluation of on-farm trials and validation of technologies/innovations/results, results presentation including field visits (19 projects)
- Innovation platforms: farmers' organizations will participate in innovation platforms (3 projects)

FOs technical expertise is well recognized by the projects. They are mainly invited in technical workshops so that they can provide input for the achievement of the objectives of the projects. They are involved in these meetings right from the design as mentioned by the project TAERA-Benin: "FOs participate to the meeting of identification of research themes with the high degree of participation".

3.5. Participation in planning and evaluation

Projects include as much as possible FOs in the planning and evaluation process so that they can share experiences, learn best practices, discuss the challenges and opportunities with experts and extension officers, and express their needs. In total, 18 projects include FOs in planning, monitoring and evaluation of activities. As recognized by the project *Adoption and scaling up of improved livestock production systems in Zimbabwe* : "At local level members of ZFU (FO) participate in the selection of sites, identification of key issues and prioritization of activities and interventions".

Some projects mentioned a limited participation. The project LSC-IS stated : "Although direct involvement in planning will be limited, it is expected that FOs play a role as FOs will be requested to provide feedback on the project implementation and progress". The project *Climate intelligent agriculture and value chains* " also stated "the focus of FOs' participation will be on the implementation of specific activities rather than on the planning process".

3.6. Participation in trials

FOs play an important role in field trials and therefore, they are well involved as evidenced by the figures below. In total, FOs participate in field experiment/trial in 25 projects as follows:

- Trials related to climate change adaptation practices, such as climate smart agriculture, agro ecological approach, agroforestry practices (9 projects)
- Demonstration plots for improved varieties, apiaries, processing technologies, practices for aquaculture, agro-ecological innovations (12 projects)
- Animal feed trials, e.g. in situ experiment and adoption of Marafalfa forage plant in N'Djamena sub-urban farms and in districts in the Sahelian and Sudanese zones of Chad (4 projects)

Trials are mainly related to climate adaptation practices, improved varieties and innovative animal feed. For a successful completion of these trials, researchers and local technicians assist FOs. For example, TAERA-Benin mentioned that "the FO are responsible for the conduct of demonstration fields on agro-ecological innovations. They choose producers, fields and install, and replicate the demonstrations with the support of researchers".

3.7. Participation in data collection and analysis

21 projects reported that FOs participate in data collection. Specifically, they participate in the collection of farm-level data through Interviews and field trials as follows:

- For 2 projects FOs are the main actors for data collection. For example, in 1 project, FOs collect images of cassava viral diseases.
- In many cases FOs actively participate in agronomic and socio-economic data collection regarding the performances and effects of technologies tested on demonstration plots and on livelihoods (structure, activities, diversification options, etc.). (11 projects)
- In other projects the participation in data collection is limited (8 projects)

FOs participation in data analysis is rather limited. Only three projects mentioned that farmers are involved in data analysis. Researchers prefer to take control of this task as mentioned by the project *Earth observation and environmental sensing for climate-smart sustainable agropastoral ecosystem transformation in East Africa – ESSA* "Data analysis (scientific) will be done by the researchers in the project. Results will be communicated back to the FOs for societal impact."

3.8. Participation in training

24 projects reported that their FOs participate in training activities in various ways.

Some projects use the "Train-the-trainer approach": FOs are capacitated to train their peers for results and knowledge dissemination on various topics: climate smart and gender sensitive practices, good agronomic practices, resilient and sustainable value chains, market-oriented extension approaches including agroforestry field schools, on-farm experimental set up and data collection, fodder/forage production, beekeeping activities, plant-based product development, pastoral resources-based conflicts prevention and resolution (9 projects)

Some projects directly train farmers regarding different topics:

- Management of collective areas and community use of groundwater (1 project)
- Seed production, tree management, pests and diseases management for fruit trees, nursery establishment and management, grafting techniques (3 project)
- Assessment of the environmental impact of livestock systems for the establishment of agro-pastoral field schools and training of (agro)pastoralists (1 project)
- Food waste /loss reduction and recovery (1 project)
- Other without mention of topics (9 projects)

In conclusion, FOs are well involved in training activities, especially through the train-the-trainer approach as highlighted in the project ESSA: “Selected voluntary members of the community-based groups will be engaged in Training of Trainers (ToT) so that they will have the capacity to further train a large number of other community members in e.g. beekeeping and plant-based product development which is important for the sustainability and up-scaling of project outputs and technologies.”

3.9. Participation in communication activities

25 projects reported that their FO participate in communication/dissemination activities as follows:

- Disseminate knowledge and research outputs through demonstration plots, field days, field visits, district innovation platform. The topics are diversified such as agro-ecological practices, forest coffee management and business, importance of family planning and reproductive health, etc. (11 projects)
- Participatory Agricultural Radio Series on targeted commodities and participatory video to stimulate learning (4 projects)
- Dissemination of knowledge, technologies and innovations through activities managed by FOs: grassroots forums, webinars, newsletters, and social media like Facebook (5 projects)
- Dissemination of knowledge through the “train the trainers approach” (see above)

FOs networks are likely to quickly spread knowledge and innovations through their members. Therefore, involving them in these communication/dissemination activities is key for the success and the sustainability of the projects. For example, the project « *Anticiper et gérer les risques biologiques pour renforcer la résilience des agriculteurs au changement climatique en Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre* » mentioned that FOs “disseminate the information first by raising awareness within their members. Secondly, FOs used to meet at a platform level. There is therefore a possibility of information exchange between FOs”.

3.10. Gender component

It is well recognised that women contribute to a considerable amount of labor in the agricultural production system and youth is a huge part of the population especially in Africa. The concern that women and other vulnerable groups like young people may not benefit from DeSIRA Projects must be addressed.

Women can be involved in DeSIRA projects as:

- actors: project staff, researchers, scientists, stakeholders, trainers, extension agents, agri-business actors, team leaders/members.
- beneficiaries: through training, participation in projects activities, access to information, innovation devoted to women audience, etc.

Overall, all projects declared having the women's empowerment as a target. Even if only few projects also have a specific gender component, most of them have gender related actions (20/35 projects).

Concerning women participation, 27 projects (total 35) declared that women are involved in actions at different levels:

- in the project governance mechanisms (3 projects). For example, good governance practices (women in leadership) is present in the project of AGROINNOVA.
- in leading farmers' groups or small enterprises playing a key role in the project (8 projects)
- as beneficiaries of project results (27 projects)

Only one project declared to look for a balanced participation of women (50% men, 50% women)

Three of the projects have planned to do a gender analysis :

- Ethiopia: Supporting sustainable coffee production and conservation of forest ecosystems through climate –relevant and integrated landscape management of the Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve;
- Kenya : Land, Soil and Crop Information Services to support Climate Smart Agriculture (LSC-IS);
- Global : Developing capacities in agricultural innovation systems: scaling up the Tropical Agriculture Platform Framework).

On the budget allocations, for most of the projects it is not possible to have a realistic estimate at this stage (pre-implementation) of the budget to support gender oriented actions. When the data is available the budget ranks between 10% and 30%. One project - Africa Rice Liberia – has allocated 60% of the budget to actions that will benefit women.

In conclusion, not all the projects take into account the gender even if a majority do. A few projects have clear actions to address gender issues (governance, budget). Some projects seem to be really engaged : to the two from Ethiopia, the one from Eritrea, and the one from the Livestock Research Institute. CORAF has a very engaged Gender Adviser that is checking their projects.

