

September 2010

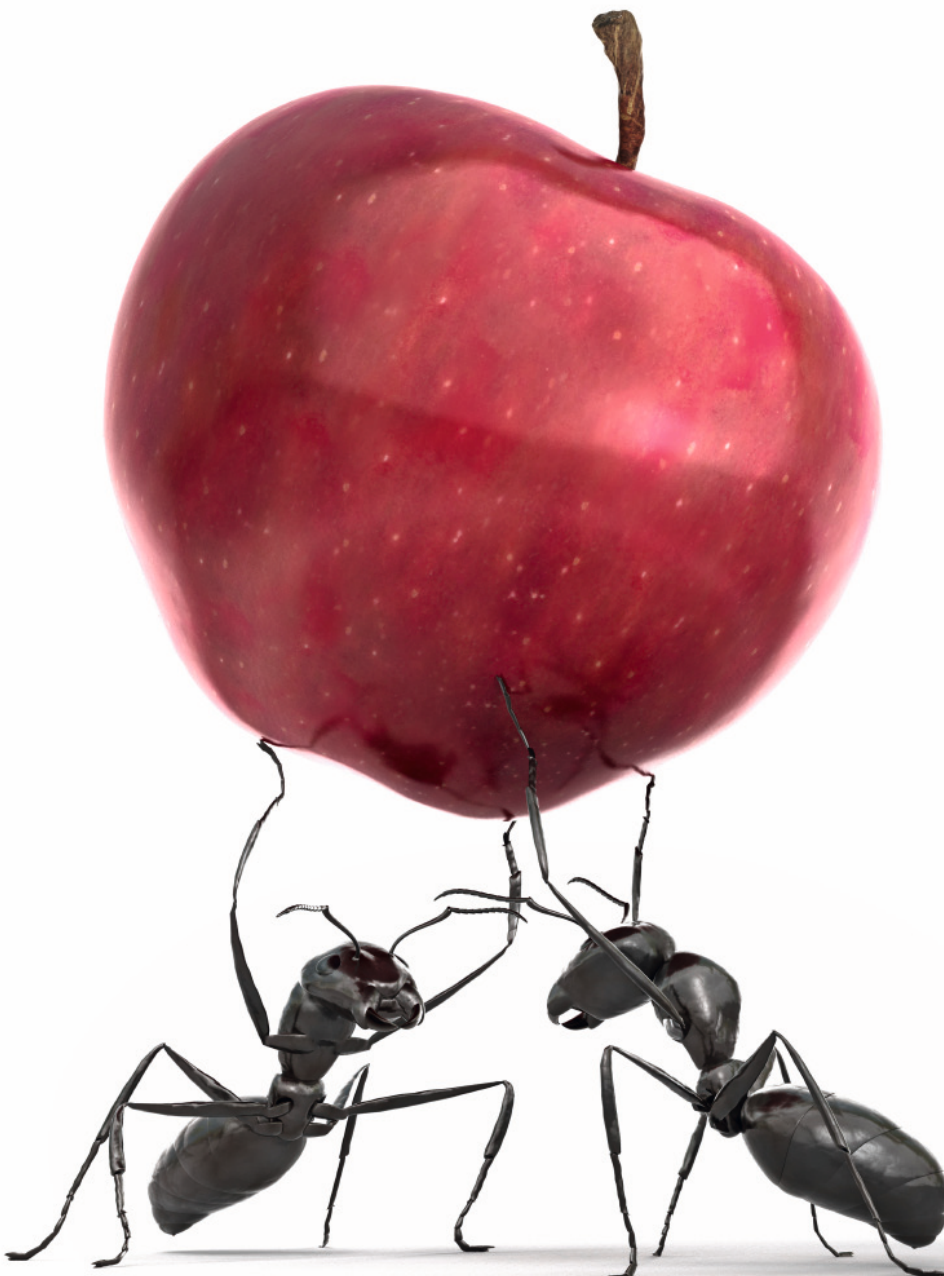
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Local entrepreneurship, agribusiness cluster formation and the development of competitive value chains

Evaluation of the Strategic Alliance for Agricultural Development
in Africa (SAADA program) 2006-2009





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*Bologòni tè dòlòmin, nka,
a bèse ka dòlò sòrò yòrò djina
— A finger does not drink
beer, but it can indicate
where to find it*

(Bambara proverb used by Malian farmer to typify the facilitating role of IFDC and business service providers in agribusiness cluster development, Koutiala, July 19th 2010)

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List of Acronyms

1000s+	From Thousands to Million program
AB(C)	Agri-Business (Cluster)
AFAN	All Farmers Association Nigeria
AISSA	Agricultural Intensification in Sub-Saharan Africa (network)
BSS	Business Support Service
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CASE	Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises
CATALIST	Catalyze Accelerated Agricultural Intensification for Social and Environmental Stability in Central Africa's Great Lakes Region
CB	Capacity-building
CNIEP / NAFEI	Conseiller National aux Initiatives Economiques Paysannes National Advisor for Farmers' Economic Initiatives
DERK	SNV programme for Rural Economic Development of the Koulikoro Region (Mali)
DGIS	General Directorate for Development Cooperation, part of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FO	Farmer Organisation
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICRA	International Centre for development oriented Research in Agriculture
IFDC	International Fertility Development Centre
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
KOA	Key Operational Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFI	Micro-Finance Institution
MIR+	Marketing Input Regionally
MISTOWA	Regional Market Information Systems and Traders' Organizations project
NCST	National Capacity Strengthening Team
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NSC	National Steering Committee
PO	Producer Organisation
RAC	Regional Advisory Committee
ROPPA	Reseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
SAADA	Strategic Alliance for Agricultural Development
SALIN	Strategic Alliances with International NGOs
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
ToR	Terms of Reference
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Executive summary

SAADA PROGRAM AND EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The Strategic Alliance for Agricultural Development in Africa (SAADA) program aims to improve the livelihoods of 1 million farm households through the large-scale implementation of the Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE) approach in West Africa. The program is executed by the International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC) in Burkina Faso, Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo.

The SAADA program has three components:

SAADA A (1000s+)	Aims to strengthen agribusiness clusters and to contribute to increased productivity and income, sustainably managed farm acreage and agricultural production as well as improved service delivery to farmers. Agriterra is a co-funder of the SAADA A program, as well as technical partner.
SAADA B	Focuses on expansion of lessons learned from SAADA A, to other parts of Africa, in particular the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region.
SAADA C	Aims at enabling IFDC and its partner organizations to support expansion of activities such as promoting the gender balance, addressing issues related to HIV/AIDS, contributing to soil fertility improvement and natural resources management, contributing to conflict mitigation and good governance.

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main donor of the program, has commissioned consultancy company Berenschot and the Agricultural University of Wageningen to conduct an evaluation over the period 2006-2009.

The purpose of the evaluation of SAADA A was to establish the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainable impact of the innovative project approach and to learn from processes, results and collaborative modalities, with the aim to consolidate and improve implementation modalities. The purpose of the evaluation of SAADA B and C was to assess whether and how proven and innovative IFDC approaches have been (can be) extended to other parts of Africa and whether and how IFDC has incorporated (can incorporate) important cross-cutting issues in its activity programs. The primary focus of the evaluation has been on SAADA A.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation took place in the period of 8 April to 30 September 2010. It was executed by a team of eight consultants: three from the Netherlands, two from Benin, and one from Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali each. The consultants worked in three teams: the team for Ghana and Nigeria was headed by Fons de Zeeuw, the team for Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger by Ted Schrader and the team for Togo and Benin by Moussiliou Alidou. They were supported by an international research team. The evaluation is based on desk study, quantitative analysis, surveys (assessment of statements) amongst key stakeholders, interviews with key stakeholders, seven case studies, workshops at sub-national level, workshops at national level and consultation of the Regional Advisory Committee.

In total, the evaluation team consulted 1142 persons, of which 937 unique persons:

- 312 persons bilaterally or in small groups in interviews
- 324 persons in case studies
- 164 participants in national level workshops
- 194 participants in sub-national level workshops
- 148 people completed the national-level survey

SAADA A: OVERALL FINDINGS FOR THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Relevance

The relevance of the SAADA A is considered very high. The CASE approach is an adequate instrument for value chain development, addressing the key issues at stake for sustainable agricultural development in Africa. It is appropriate to the physical and policy environment within which it operates. It develops entrepreneurial attitudes and links input and output markets.

The program set-up and intervention strategy is logical and coherent. The organizational set-up is essentially conducive to an effective implementation of the program.

Impact

As per formal program objectives, the impact of SAADA is considered fair. The objectives have been partially met. For SAADA A, the program has had significant effects for participating cluster actors at the local level, most prominently the farmers that are reached, and has provoked positive changes in institutional capacities and entrepreneurial attitudes.

When also considering the created dynamics, spin-off effects, attitude change and effects that will be produced after the evaluation period, the impact is considered good. Many benefits of the program are not captured in the formal reporting system. The spin-off of the program is substantial. Besides, it is also evident that many impact results will still be produced beyond the evaluation period because of the time-span required before effects of capacity improvement and attitude change translate into concrete activities leading to economic effects

Effectiveness

Per formal program objectives, the effectiveness of the program is considered fair. There is a clear effect of project activities on the knowledge, skills and attitude of the target groups, but the access for cluster actors to inputs, technology, finance, markets and market information has only increased to varying and limited degrees.

When considering the negative influence of external factors, the effectiveness of the program is considered good. The translation of outputs to outcome and impact is hampered by all sorts of intervening variables that are beyond the scope of both local entrepreneurs and the project. Furthermore, implementors have a constant drive towards learning and improving the program's implementation, which has made the programs interventions increasingly more effective.

Efficiency

Per formal project objectives, the efficiency of the program is good. The realized average costs per farmer for the program period (34 USD for reaching 373.000 households) are lower than in previous projects, as targeted. Inclusion of the 2010 expenditures may still influence these results. These costs could have been lower if more households had been reached, as originally planned. The cost-effectiveness of service delivery to clusters is improving. Costs per farmer are steady and costs per cluster per year are decreasing. Considering the realized additional production, income growth for farmers and reduced soil depletion, it is found that the benefits of the program outweigh its costs. This is considered quite an achievement considering the fact that 1000s+ is a regional program (covering 7 countries) with regional and national stakeholders working on a wide range of widely spread geographically commodities. In the context of West African agricultural development cooperation, the expenses of the program versus its achievements are considered low.

When considering other factors, however, the efficiency of the program is considered fair. High costs of data collection and training costs per farmer, financial intransparency, weak sharing of training modules through ICT and knowledge sharing within clusters, the absence of competition and quality checks between service providers and the choice to work with fixed service prices lead to higher costs than necessary. Various measures remain possible to further improve the efficiency of the program.

SAADA A: MAIN CONCLUSIONS

1. The CASE approach is widely considered as a relevant and effective instrument to promote commodity value chain development. There is a need to further extend the knowledge about the approach, which is still confined to those directly involved in project facilitated cluster development processes. There is great potential for out scaling within farmer unions and federations.
2. Business-oriented collaboration between different actors is a key condition for agribusiness development. The quantity of new links established and relations reinforced by 1000s+ is impressive. The quality of these relations however depends on a wide range of factors. Results regarding cluster actor collaboration range from unsuccessful to quite successful. Financial institutions are in most instances not well connected yet.
3. Regarding the program's funding arrangements, it is found that the SALIN co-funding requirement of 100% is not met. Depending on the definition of co-funding used, realization ranges between 20-75% of the target. The intention to levy €16 million of co-funding has been too ambitious and was not supported by a proper resource mobilization strategy.
4. Although it took time, a sufficient basis for fruitful collaboration between IFDC, Agriterra and ROPPA has been created. Co-funding requirements for the SAADA program and the dual roles of Agriterra and ROPPA have unnecessarily complicated matters.
5. The institutional set-up of the 1000s+ project is in essence good. The CASE approach requires working in different intervention domains, which requires complementary core capacities. Most relevant actors are connected and the structures are in place, even though it has taken time and energy before they started functioning and their effectiveness can still be improved in various regards. It is expected that many positive (side)effects of the institutional structure are yet to be attained, after a couple of years of implementation.
6. Regarding the strategy for service-delivery, IFDC has chosen a challenging way of working through BSSs rather than with own staff. This is a more sustainable way of working, which is found to be highly relevant. In the execution of the strategy, more could be done to develop instruments for BSS selection, methods for BSS strengthening, and tools for quality control and client satisfaction.
7. The procedures for cluster selection and cluster action plan formulation are transparent and largely effective. The fact that there are no strategic criteria for starting and ending cluster support (entry and exit strategy) is a point of serious attention. The current portfolio of agribusiness clusters allows for developing a typology of agribusiness clusters and defining evidence-based strategies for inception and cessation of support to clusters.
8. The system for monitoring and evaluation, despite all the efforts that have gone into it, does not really live up to expectations. While the 1000s+ project is aimed at practical grass-root solutions, the M&E system is mainly geared towards upward accountability. A large part of the information it renders is neither very useful for the donor nor for cluster actors, as a result of methodological concerns related to attribution, quality of data entry, indicator definitions, and inappropriate aggregation levels.
9. Female participation of around 35% in the West African context is considered good. Many female-led clusters are being supported. Low female participation in the NSCs is a point of attention.
10. The capacity-building services delivered by 1000s+ are good and relevant. Between 2006-2009, about 120.000-140.000 people (around 35.000 unique persons) were trained, of which 36% woman. Numerically, farmers were the main beneficiaries of the CB efforts (87%), but also processors and business service providers have profited. The capacity-building services have had significant direct

and indirect effects on these cluster actors and contributed to changing dynamics in agribusiness. Other cluster actors, such as financial service providers and research institutes have not been much targeted. Their capacity to fulfill the role of cluster actor should be further strengthened.

11. The capacity-strengthening services delivered by the 1000s+ project have contributed towards making producer organizations more effective. POs supported by the program are increasingly capable to represent and serve their members. The effectiveness of the capacity-strengthening services, in particular their reach and uptake, can be further improved in the field of didactics (relevance of training methods, trainers and training material), knowledge transfer (availability of modules and tools, restitution by participants) and orientation (financial/business aspects, institutional strengthening).
12. Farmers are increasingly served by private service providers. Many business links have been established and/or reinforced at cluster level. Around 1500 unique private service providers are involved. The foundations for increased business between chain operators and supporters have been laid and the number of business transactions and opportunities has significantly increased, although difficult to quantify. Notwithstanding these achievements, in most clusters robust collaboration between cluster actors (in terms of concrete transactions) is still lacking. They need more time and efforts to include relevant stakeholders, develop necessary levels of trust between actors and attain the size and viability that make them attractive business partners.
13. The program has probably contributed towards increasing or leveraging resources from other sources. Cluster actors have been able to mobilize 9 million Euro (of which 6 million in Togo) for their activities. A relation with 1000s+ is however hard to establish.
14. The knowledge of cluster actors - farmers most prominently- about agricultural inputs has strongly increased as a result of 1000s+ activities. This has resulted in, amongst others, increased use of organic fertilizers, higher quality products and safer procedures. The access to inputs however remains challenging, because of the high politicization of the input market and the high costs of seeds, fertilizers and land.
15. Many new technologies have been introduced by the program. The knowledge of new technologies for production and soil management has strongly increased. This increase can to a large extent be attributed to 1000s+. Cluster actors are eager to adopt the new technologies, having become convinced of their added value. Most easily adopted are those innovations that are supportive to the activities of producers or processors and bring about tangible advantages. Widespread adoption of new technologies is however hampered by lack of funds or other resources (such as land).
16. The influence of 1000s+ on market information provision has been limited. Reported improvements mainly result from increased interaction between the stakeholders (informal exchange of information).
17. The influence of 1000s+ on the policy environment has been modest. In the beginning of the program, the conditions for effective influencing of the policy environment were not yet in place. However, the project set-up and the current number of AB clusters now allow for a more prominent role in policy development.
18. Impact objective 1 to reach 50% average increases in agricultural productivity (production) and 30% average income growth for the farmers supported by 1000s+ is met, albeit for a lower number of farmers than targeted.
19. For impact objective 2, the target of 2 million hectares of farmland under environmentally sustainable production in 2010 will certainly not be achieved. The target for this objective is considered unrealistic and its indicator not properly measurable.

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20. For impact objective 3, it is concluded that the program has contributed to enhanced food production. With 1.718.619 tons, the reported increase in cereal equivalents production is nearly four times higher than planned. Livelihood conditions (not necessarily being food insecurity conditions) have increased as a result of enhanced production and income. Although the contribution of other factors to this increase is substantial, it is found that the target has been met.
 21. Impact objective 4 has been partially met. Private service provision to farmers has improved, but not to the expected extent. Over 4000 dealers, traders, processors and others (of which 1500 unique actors, 25% less than targeted) have been reached by the program. The foundations have been laid for increased business between chain operators and supporters. The number of business transactions and opportunities have significantly increased, but is difficult to quantify. Size and viability of many clusters has hampered commercial transactions.
 22. The 1000s+ project has brought about important spin-off effects and is likely to remain doing so as more and more cluster actors are included and lessons learned are disseminated within and beyond clusters. Impact distribution is skewed towards the more resource-endowed male producer, but also other actors have profited. Many impact results are expected to still render beyond the evaluation period.

SAADA B AND C: MAIN FINDINGS

A 'light evaluation' was conducted into the SAADA B and C components of the program. Evaluation methods comprised desk study, a questionnaire and a limited number of telephone interviews.

It proved not possible to determine whether the SAADA B and C components achieved satisfactory results. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that the objectives for SAADA B and C were very general. Furthermore, the objectives of SAADA B were replaced by others, two year after the start of the program. The new objectives of SAADA B were again very general. The absence of clear objectives, expected results or targets makes evaluation troublesome. Conclusions about impact, effectiveness, efficiency or relevance of the two components could hence not be drawn.

For SAADA B, some activities can be described as successful, like the organization of the Africa Fertilizer Summit or the overall knowledge increase of IFDC staff on cross-cutting issues. The evaluation team concluded that the ambition to introduce the CASE approach in other regions in Africa was too high. However, with the integration of CASE in the Catalyst program, a base has been created for implementation of the approach in Burundi, Rwanda and DRC.

SAADA C may be considered as a form of institutional support to IFDC, which makes the need for clear objectives arguably somewhat lower. Institutionally or programmatically, the SAADA C component and SAADA A were poorly connected, which - even though this was not aimed for - is considered a missed opportunity

CONTINUATION INTO SAADA 2012-2015

Given the positive results of the evaluation regarding relevance, effectiveness, sustainable impact and efficiency of the SAADA A/1000s+ program, the evaluators recommend the continuation of the program. It is advised to consider 2011 as a transition year during which a successive program 2012-2015 is formulated. To ensure continuity of agribusiness cluster development and staff retention, explicit decision-making is required on the shortest notice possible regarding the continuation of SAADA A activities in 2011, including the elaboration of a work plan 2011 and the continuation of contracts during 2011. It is recommended that remaining SAADA B and C funds, and some additional funding from DGIS, be utilized for the continuation of SAADA A in 2011 as well as investments

related to the formulation of SAADA 2012-2015. It is important to formulate realistic and feasible objectives for 2012-2015.

The SAADA 2012-2015 program, focusing on strengthening business-oriented collaboration between different actors in agribusiness clusters, remains to be coordinated by IFDC. SAADA 2012-2015 should include action research components and should give sufficient attention to cross-cutting issues, thus integrating former SAADA B and C elements. Whereas under SAADA A 2006-2010, about 80 to 90% of the capacity strengthening services was targeted at producer organizations, a more balanced attention towards all cluster actor groups is recommended for SAADA 2012-2015. Strategic partnerships should be concluded under the CASE framework program to ensure that the needs of all actors are taken into account. When the relatively heavy focus on producer organisations is replaced in the SAADA 2012-2015 program by a more balanced attention to all cluster actors, continued support to producer organisations – where and when required – could be provided under a separate Farmers Fighting Poverty II program. We suggest that the Farmers Fighting Poverty II program, to be coordinated by Agriterra, is aligned with the SAADA 2012-2015 program, under the CASE framework program.

More suggestions for improvement of the implementation modalities have been provided in the report.

Introduction

SAADA PROGRAM

The SAADA¹ program is mainly financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by the International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC) in seven countries in West Africa: Burkina Faso, Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo. The SAADA program has three components: SAADA A (or 1000s+), SAADA B and SAADA C.

The SAADA A program focuses on strengthening agribusiness clusters and aims to contribute to productivity increase, income improvement, increase in sustainably managed farm acreage, increased agricultural production and improved service delivery to farmers. Agriterra is a co-funder of the SAADA A program and acts as well as technical partner.

The SAADA B program focuses on expansion of lessons learned, from SAADA A, to other parts of Africa, in particular the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region.

The SAADA C program aims at enabling IFDC and its partner organisations to support expansion of activities such as promoting the gender balance, addressing issues related to HIV/AIDS, contributing to soil fertility improvement and natural resources management, contributing to conflict mitigation and good governance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation of SAADA A is to establish the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainable impact of the innovative project approach and to learn from processes, results and collaborative modalities, with the aim to consolidate and improve implementation modalities.

The purpose of the evaluation of SAADA-B and C is to assess whether and how proven and innovative IFDC approaches have been (can be) extended to other parts of Africa and whether and how IFDC has incorporated (can incorporate) important cross-cutting issues in its activity programs.

The report is structured around a significant number of evaluation questions, presented in the terms of reference. These questions have been regrouped into an evaluation matrix, which can be found in the inception report prepared by the evaluation team.

The evaluation's prime focus has been on SAADA A.

METHODOLOGY

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs granted the consortium of Berenschot and Wageningen University (Centre for Development Innovation) the assignment to conduct an evaluation of the SAADA program over the period 2006-2009. Faced with the challenge to evaluate a complex program, running in seven countries, in a few months' time, an evaluation team of seven experts has been composed. The evaluation team consisted of Dutch consultants and African consultants, supported by an international research team. The evaluation is based on desk study, quantitative analysis, surveys (assessment of statements) amongst key stakeholders of SAADA A, interviews with key stakeholders, seven case studies (1 per country), workshops at sub-national level, workshops at national level and consultation of the Regional Advisory Committee.

1 Strategic Alliance for Agricultural Development in Africa

The evaluation team consulted a total of 1142 persons, of which 937 unique person:

- 312 persons bilaterally in interviews
- 324 persons in case studies
- 164 participants in national level workshops
- 194 participants in sub-national level workshops

Details regarding the methodology can be found in the inception report.

PRESENTATION REPORT

In the report, we clearly marked the evaluation questions derived from the terms of reference. The report is structured as follows:

In chapter 1, we review the Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE) approach. This approach is leading for the SAADA program.

In chapter 2, we evaluate the program set-up of SAADA A. We zoom in on issues related to funding and implanting organisations and structures.

In chapter 3, we evaluate capacity strengthening services provided through the SAADA A program.

In chapter 4, we evaluate the access of agribusiness clusters to services / finance / technology / information. In fact, the access to these services is considered as results of cluster strengthening activities by SAADA A.

In chapter 5, the influence of SAADA A on the national and regional policy / business environment is evaluated.

In chapter 6, we systematically assess the achievements of the SAADA A program regarding the impacts targets.

In chapter 7, we investigate the efficiency of SAADA A.

In chapter 8, we evaluate the SAADA B and C components. This evaluation is a 'light' one, based only on a study of documents and a few interviews with program implementers.

In chapter 9, we present the conclusions following the structure of the result chain.

Finally, in chapter 10, we present future perspectives.

The annexes are presented separately. Amongst others, an executive summary and detailed case study reports have been included in the annexes.

1. Approach and intervention strategy

Is the CASE approach an effective instrument to promote commodity chain development?

1.1 CASE APPROACH

1.1.1 The concept

The Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE) approach was gradually conceived and developed during an IFDC Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) program in West-Africa (1998-2005). The CASE approach combines strategies for ISFM, such as the combined use of mineral fertilizers and locally available organic amendments to replenish soil nutrients and improve the efficiency of fertilizers and other inputs, with conditions for competitive commodity chain development.

Crucial in the CASE approach is the assertion that competitive commodity chains can only develop when the actors around the commodity collaborate. Collaborating will bring benefits to all. Aimed at the grassroots level, the CASE approach thus advocates agribusiness cluster coordination among various stakeholders, including small farmers, local entrepreneurs, business development services, traders, bankers, research and extension services and market information systems. It views chain operators, chain supporters and enablers as actors and economic agents rather than target groups or project beneficiaries.

The approach leaves room for local tailor-made implementation strategies. It does not stipulate a specific entry point. In fact, any value chain operator can be the driving force for cluster development, as depicted in figure 1.

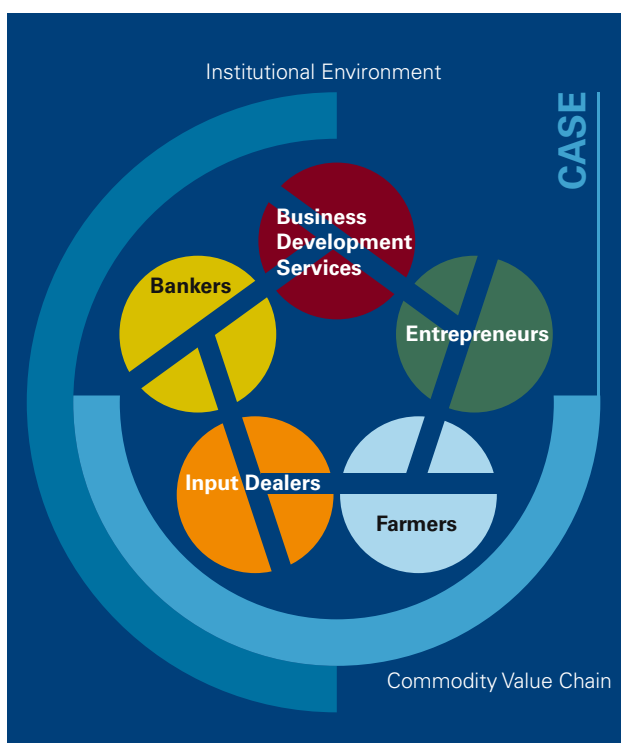


Figure 1 Case approach

1.1.2 Assessment of the CASE approach

Across stakeholders and countries, the CASE approach is highly appreciated as an innovative and relevant approach. Respondents strongly appreciate the attention for improving the effectiveness of farmer organizations in the value chain and the establishment of professional relations with other stakeholders. In the survey at national level, capturing the opinions of 148 respondents², the approach stands out as the best appreciated aspect of the 1000s+ project. The statements in this chapter were scored 23% above average. This appreciation has been further confirmed during interviews with national steering committees, during many interviews and during the sub-national and national workshops.

The evaluation team has found that the CASE approach and the 1000s+ project have definitely contributed to attitude change among those involved in the 218 clusters. Cluster actors increasingly recognize business opportunities and take collective action, slowly drifting away from passivity and donor dependency. The approach has created an important sense of ownership within farmers' organizations at different levels. Agribusiness cluster formation and development is a learning by doing process. Local entrepreneurs involved in AB clusters regularly affirmed that it is "their program".

Stakeholders in West-Africa are aware that there are also other approaches towards local economic development and value chain development, such as:

- Making markets work for the poor (M4P; Springfield Centre, www.springfieldcentre.com/currentprogrammes.php),
- Value Links (GTZ, www.value-links.de/manual/distributor.html)
- Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA; DFID),
- First Mile (IFAD, www.ifad.org/rural/firstmile/index.htm)
- Client Oriented Research Management Approach (KIT)
- DERK programme (SNV)

The evaluation team did not investigate these approaches other than – briefly – DERK:

BOX 1 CASE AND DERK. In Mali, SNV and IFDC collaborate in two programs for which they are respectively primary contractor. Both programs are funded by the Dutch development cooperation. DERK (Rural Economic Development of the Koulikoro Region), piloted by SNV, has developed a cautious and top-down approach, as compared to IFDCs CASE approach, which is more action-oriented and demand-driven. DERK has put a lot of emphasis on strategic site, commodity and PO selection, which has resulted in the selection of a limited number of commodities. These experiences may be useful for 1000s+' entry strategy in the coming years. Interesting for DERK is the fact that CASE does not provide financial gifts and does not interfere in the farmers' organizational structuring. Financial support to farmers cooperatives in Mali is channeled through the regional Chambres d'Agriculture, which insist on the existence of cooperative unions. Many cooperatives are thus opportunistically created. With its strong focus on economic viable agribusiness development, the CASE approach is better equipped to deal with this given than DERK.

Other approaches do not fundamentally challenge the CASE approach. Rather, the CASE approach is inspiring to others. The effectiveness of CASE can be further improved if the understanding of the approach would be broadened, which can be quite easily brought about: CASE training, sharing of AB cluster results and experiences, outscaling within farmers platforms and federations, feedback to and uptake by stakeholder groups represented in national steering committees, etc.

² For the methodology used for the survey, please refer to Annex 2

→ In conclusion, the CASE approach is widely considered as a relevant and effective instrument to promote commodity value chain development. There is no need to fundamentally alter the concept. Promoters of the approach can of course continue seeking inspiration from economic theories and development approaches and learn from other projects working in the realm of agribusiness development. There is a need to further extend the knowledge about the approach, which is still confined to those directly involved in project facilitated cluster development processes. There is great potential for out scaling within farmer unions and federations. Considering its relevance for addressing challenges for sustainable agricultural development in Africa, the real challenge lies in making the approach to work, in all its virtues, as explored in the rest of this report.

1.2 CLUSTER ACTOR COLLABORATION

Stakeholder collaboration in so-called agribusiness clusters is the operational feature of the CASE approach. Therefore, we address this aspect in this section, before going into the modalities for implementation and the results achieved by the 1000s+ project in the following chapters.

Section 1.1 established that the CASE approach is a relevant and innovative approach. Stories of ABC actors indicate that the coaching of agribusiness cluster formation, for instance with the ‘cluster mapping tool’, has provided a lot of insights to local entrepreneurs. Producers realize that they cannot successfully operate in isolation; they need others to enhance their business. Local actors are increasingly aware of ‘missing actors’ in their local market system.

The following table shows a gradual increase in the involvement of farmer households and private enterprises in program activities over the period 2006 to 2009. ‘Households’ are the farmers and farmer families reached by the 1000s+ project. Although these farmers are also small entrepreneurs, private enterprises refer to input dealers, processors, traders etc. The table shows that during the 4 year implementation period, the number of entrepreneurs involved increased nearly eight times. The number of households reached increased a bit more than fivefold.

Note that in 2009, the number of households augmented far more compared to the number of entrepreneurs. This is explained by a change in definition of ‘number households reached’. In paragraph 2.4 we comment on these definitions, advancing that the actually number of households reached in 2009 is 372.627 rather than 606.408. This number is included in brackets.

The decreasing ratio households to private enterprises suggests a gradually stronger involvement of entrepreneurs in the supported agribusiness clusters.

Table 1. INVOLVEMENT OF HOUSEHOLDS AND ENTREPRENEURS OVER THE YEARS

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009
entrepreneurs ‘reached’	503	1.167	2.989	3.947
households ‘reached’	117.563	158.536	270.226	606.408 (372.627)
Ratio entrepreneurs to households	1 : 233	1 : 136	1 : 90	1 : 154 (1 : 94)

Source: 1000s+ project database

According to the project database, the producer organizations participating in the 218 supported clusters had 226.672 members in 2009. No baseline data are available. The following table however suggests a strong increase in membership for the POs participating in the seven case study clusters during the years of 1000s+ support:

	Benin, rice	Burkina Faso, maize	Ghana, fish	Mali, soya	Niger, milk	Nigeria, sorghum	Togo, groundnut
Start	6181	291	23	3569	98	5964	1500
End	8629	490	39	7911	170	9150	1894
Change	40%	68%	70%	20%	73%	53%	26%
Average growth: 64%							

Source: case studies

The growth in PO membership within the case study clusters cannot be solely attributed to the 1000s+ project. However, the overall project database and accounts from other agribusiness clusters suggest that the project activities generate interest in the communities to adhere to existing farmer groups and to create new farmer groups (outscaling effect). Apparently, the POs supported by IFDC were deemed attractive by new farmers to join. It is likely that 1000s+ financial support (and particularly the promising results achieved in many a cluster) has been a major incentive to take that decision.

Table 1 and 2 indicated a solid increase in the number of contacts at program and cluster level. But what has been the effect of these new relations?

The following table highlights cluster actor collaboration for the seven case studies.

Benin, rice	The cluster (supported since 2007) consists of a wide variety of actors: public input providers, transformation, traders, technical and financial assistance providers. Many of these actors are active. Contacts between actors are mostly informal. Relations with private input distributors are however absent and difficult. The relations with banks are weak.
Burkina Faso, maize	All groups of actors in the cluster (supported since 2006) have profited from the program, farmers most strongly. New POs are interested to join. Other donors are interested to take up the approach. Farmers, processors, traders and dealers are poorly connected to banks, these relations remain weak to date. Contacts between actors are mostly informal.
Ghana, fish	The most active members in the cluster (supported since 2007) are fish farmers. Traders, processors and financial institutions are not or hardly participating. Actors are dispersed across four districts and the BSS is based in the capital (200 km away), which makes it challenging for cluster actors to easily relate.
Mali, soya	The cluster (supported since 2006) is functioning well. All relevant actors are there, even though the effective use of these relations can be improved. Cluster actors are actively involved in cluster action plan formulation. They are well informed about the developments taking place in their cluster. The involvement of research institutions has been low. The commercial relations with the Société Malienne des Oléagineux (SMO) can be strengthened. Relations with banks and MFIs exist and individual farmers manage to obtain small loans. However, the POs involved have not yet been able to access a commercial loan for its activities.
Niger, milk	Cluster (supported since 2008) has grown from including 3 POs to 5. There are only two intermediaries (traditional leaders) involved. The role of intermediaries in the cluster is limited, since most sale goes directly from processors to consumers. Three (3) traders are officially involved but in practice only one is actively engaged. The latter buys cheese and declares having been exposed to the cheese production process thanks to the 1000s+ project. There are 26 processors involved (members of DEBBO, which is the cluster promoter). Women are well represented in the cheese cluster, since they tend to be responsible for processing milk into cheese. Processing milk into cheese has only been revived by 1000s+, it was introduced in the 1980's but abandoned later.

Nigeria, sorghum	Cluster (supported since 2008) is still young. Collaboration between actors for agribusiness development is still in its infancy. No apex farmer organization is yet established -10 PO's are expected to merger. The processors, input dealers, traders, financial institutions are not strongly involved. The cluster has difficulty attracting the interest of strong partners, such as large input dealers and financial institutions. Relation with micro-finance institution Nakoia is very weak.
Togo, groundnut	Development of the cluster (supported since 2008) is ongoing. A strong link exists with DRAEP (Direction de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche) – the official government structure for chemical fertilisers supply to producers. However, the expected benefits from their involvement have not yet materialised. Moreover, the cluster misses links with a) logical institutions such as ICAT (Institut de Conseil et Appui Technique and b) other clusters. Notable finally is the fact that the relation with the micro-finance institution established by the apex of supported FO's is very weak to date.

The case studies indicate that it takes time for the CASE approach to realize its potential. Clusters that have been supported longer (as from 2006/2007) tend to have developed stronger links between their actors. The youngest clusters (started in 2008) are often still struggling with the roles of their actors and trying to attract new ones. But also older clusters may still have missing links, as in the case of the fish cluster in Ghana which basically consists of just fish farmers and a BSS. Cluster development is a lengthy process, which evolves in different ways across time, sectors and countries.

From a more general point of view, it comes out clearly that many cluster support activities are essentially focusing on strengthening producer organizations, which are often not yet ready for assuming a role of cluster actor and/or cluster promoter. Cluster development is then a rather lengthy process. Another general observation is that cluster development evolves in different ways across time, sectors and countries. This observations suggests that it is useful to distinguish different types of AB clusters and that cluster formation and development goes through different phases.

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- ➔ In sum, business-oriented collaboration between different actors is a key condition for agribusiness development. This is what the CASE approach is about. The quantity of new links established and relations reinforced by 1000s+ is impressive. The quality of these relations however depends on a wide range of factors: duration of cluster development facilitation, the stakeholder configuration at the start of the process, the initial capacity and size of the producer organization(s) involved, type of product and the economic importance of production and trade. Also the capacities of a BSS or cluster leader are important factors influencing cluster actor collaboration. Results regarding cluster actor collaboration range from unsuccessful to quite successful. Financial institutions are in most instances not well connected yet. More stakeholder collaboration at national level, for instance in NSC's, could contribute to addressing these factors.



2. Programme set-up

Are the institutional arrangements conducive for effective implementation of the program?

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation question that underpins this chapter has mainly been addressed at the national level. That is to say that the main research methods used to answer this question concern desk study, interviews with IFDC staff (regional and national), members of national steering committees and apex farmer associations and the national-level survey and workshop. At cluster level, people tend to be little informed about the organizational implementation structure of the program, although they have their opinion about specific aspects such as cluster action plan formulation. Where relevant, we provide feedback from cluster actors about these issues.

The outcomes of the national-level survey for this chapter well represent the overall opinions encountered. The organizational set-up of 1000s+ is generally appreciated (average scores). What the survey shows is that according to respondents:

- IFDC is well capable to fulfill its tasks within the SAADA program;
- The 1000s+ project is very effective in supporting the development of cluster action plans;
- Cluster selection is being done on an objective basis;
- Funding sources for the SAADA program are considered not sufficient;
- The number of CASE trainers is not sufficient;
- Women participation in the clusters is sufficiently promoted by the SAADA/1000s+ project;
- Women participation in National Steering Committees is low;
- Lessons learnt are incorporated and contributing to an improving program set-up

In this chapter we explore the various aspects of the 1000s+ organization.

2.1 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

2.1.1 Funding and co-funding

In December 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) awarded a grant of €16 million to IFDC to implement SAADA A, B, C during a five year period from 2006 to end 2010. An amount of €10 million was reserved for SAADA A.

At the time of signing of the SAADA agreement, IFDC committed itself to mobilizing €15 million as co-funding for SAADA A and at least €1 million as co-funding for SAADA B & C to match the €16 million provided by DGIS. In the **grant proposal** submitted to DGIS in October 2005, IFDC lists AgriCord, USAID, MISTOWA and the International Fertilizer Association (IFA) as major donors expected to together contribute about €13 million. These envisaged co-funders were not involved in program formulation and approached after approval by DGIS of the SALIN grant proposal.

Further to the co-financing by other donors, an in-kind contribution of nearly €2 million was expected to be provided by producer organizations and other program beneficiaries to training events and cluster-building activities.

The program activity budget attached to the grant proposal concerned the €16 million DGIS contribution. Given the SALIN requirement of 100% co-funding, the evaluation team would have expected a program activity budget of

€32 million with a specification of its various funding sources. In its memorandum of appraisal (*bemo*), DGIS did not consider the own contribution of €16 million to be leveraged by IFDC as a risk. No agreements were made as to the frequency and form of reporting on the co-funding requirement.

The following table compares the plans stipulated in the grant proposal with the latest cost-share statement, submitted by IFDC to DGIS in 2010.

Table 4. CO-FUNDING SAADA A IN PERIOD 2006-2009: PLANNED AND REALIZED			
	Grant proposal (October 2005)	Statement of cost share (31 December 2009, revised)	
(1) Partners			Realization
Agricord/Agriterra (*)	7.000.000	2.434.871	35%
USAID	2.800.000	269.284	10%
MISTOWA Buy in Benin USAID	300.000	107.729	36%
Dutch Embassy Benin (*)	450.000	204.576	45%
Dutch Embassy Mali (DEB/PEA) (*)	200.000	14.500	7%
IFA	800.000	524.698	66%
IFAD	375.000	491.103	131%
MISTOWA and other regional and national projects	1.200.000	1.241.841	103%
Total partners	13.125.000	5.288.602	40%
(2) Stakeholder contributions:			
To training events (a)	1.500.000	2.419.550	
To cluster building activities (b)	375.000	2.330.416	
Credit mobilized by clusters (c)			
Total stakeholder contributions	1.875.000	4.749.966	253%
Total	15.000.000	10.038.568	67%

The SAADA program runs five year, until the end of 2010. The evaluation period covers the years 2006-2009. According to IFDC, the total amount of co-funding mobilized until the end of 2009 sums up to somewhat more than €10 million, meaning a 67% realization of the co-funding requirement at the end of the fourth year.

We have the following comments:

(1) Partner contributions are the most concrete and measurable contributions to the program. They were supposed to satisfy nearly 90% of the co-funding requirement and were presented as being largely ‘guaranteed’. The total of funds mobilized from donors at the end of 2009 is with €5,2 million much lower than the €13 million expected. Even though 2010 will see a further increase in co-funds leveraged, it is certain that this target will not be met by the end of the program period;

It is debatable whether these all partner contributions actually qualify for co-funding. 50% of the partner contributions (€3,6 million) is in fact DGIS-funding which reaches IFDC in a rather complex way through Agriterra and Dutch Embassies (*). Most donors maintain that funds stemming from the same lead donor are not eligible for co-funding;

(2) Stakeholder contributions are all resources contributed in-kind or in-cash by cluster actors, or mobilized by cluster actors for their activities. Unlike partner contributions, these are much more difficult to measure and relate to the SAADA program. The evaluation team was provided with different versions of co-funding statements with

widely varying amounts of realized co-funding. Particularly the height of reported stakeholder contributions varies largely, depending on the definition used.

(2a) ‘Stakeholder contributions to training events’ has been calculated by multiplying the number of training man-days in the period 2007-2009 (1.209.775) by two, following the assumption that participants contribute €2 in kind per day training. According to the evaluation team, this assumption cannot be substantiated:

Although occasionally some in-kind support is provided, such as free provision of the training location, individual participants do not contribute in cash. On the contrary, the costs for training – including meals, transport and accommodation – are fully covered by IFDC, both for participants and trainers. In Koubry (Burkina Faso), a maize cooperative is building its office, among others on the savings trainees realize on their per diems. According to most AB cluster advisors and cluster actors, it is not easy to have cluster actors participating in the cost of trainings; financial means are in most case limited and – more importantly – it is not the culture

(2b) ‘Stakeholder contribution to cluster building activities’ refers to donor funding mobilized by stakeholders in clusters. For this category it is difficult to establish whether it covers the funding of the cluster action plans (see chapter 4) which would imply indeed co-funding, or whether it includes additional / different activities by other donors in the same areas where IFDC is intervening;

(2c). ‘Credit mobilized by clusters’. IFDC monitors one other form of resource mobilization, namely resources leveraged by SAADA stakeholders at cluster level from rural banks and other financial institutions. Unlike 2b, which concern grants, these concern loans. The amount sums up to €8.692.072. Originally, IFDC included 50% of this amount in the cost share statement. Early 2010, DGIS however objected to this, claiming that credit mobilized at cluster level should be considered as spin-off for beneficiaries rather than funding available for program activities. Consequently, IFDC has removed ‘credit mobilized’ from the co-funding statement. Credit mobilized at cluster level is further discussed in section 4.2 below.

-
- Summarizing the findings regarding the program’s funding arrangements, it is found that the SALIN co-funding requirement of 100% will not be met. The extent to which this requirement is not satisfied depends on the definition of co-funding used:
- Following IFDC’s line of argumentation, we establish that 67% of the objective has been met with one more year of implementation to go. By the end of 2010, a realization of 70-75% of the objective may then be expected;
 - When adopting a formalistic view, it is found that funds indirectly coming from DGIS and contributions by stakeholders that cannot be substantiated should not be advanced as co-funding. A realization of 20% by the end of 2010 is more realistic; which would be a poor performance.

In any case, it is concluded that IFDCs intention to levy €16 million of co-funding has been too ambitious and was not supported by a proper resource mobilization strategy.

2.1.2 Agritererra and ROPPA

In 2006, IFDC and ROPPA approached Agritererra with the request to step in with co-financing of the SAADA program. The missions and orientations of the three parties were deemed complementary:

- agricultural intensification, smart fertilizer technology and use, input market development and market-oriented agricultural development (IFDC)

-
- advocating interests of small family farmers, influencing policies at regional and international level, representation at national level through national farmers' platforms (ROPPA)
 - involvement, capacity strengthening and funding of farmers' organizations (Agriterra)

Even though all parties were interested, discussions between IFDC, ROPPA and Agriterra proved difficult. When discussing financial contributions and budget use, the differences between the three parties were further accentuated. It took three years before the tripartite collaboration agreement was signed (Sept. 2008), according to which Agriterra would contribute €6,5 million to the program. The collaboration agreement indicated joint considerations, agreements on project innovations and priorities and stipulated various services to be delivered by Agriterra.

During implementation, we note that the financial objective (Agriterra as donor) overtook the co-execution objective (Agriterra as a provider of PO capacity strengthening services). While Agriterra and ROPPA achieved various results, such as the foundation of the national apex farmer platform in Ghana and positioning CNIEP's within national farmers' federations (mandated PO's), several activities foreseen in the tripartite agreement were not realized, such as making an inventory of business service providers, the mapping of producers' organizations and studying the feasibility of a support fund for agribusiness clusters. It appears that fund transfer and management and reporting required a lot of Agriterra's and ROPPA's energy and resources. The co-funding objective however proved difficult too. By the end of 2009, Agriterra was forced to withdraw its support, leaving IFDC with a budget deficit of €4 million. This gap limited the extension of AB clusters and limited the intensity of support the clusters. From DGIS funds, IFDC (to an important extent) managed to keep the recently recruited CNIEPs on board.

All problems notwithstanding, IFDC, Agriterra and ROPPA, together composing the Regional Advisory Committee, are coming closer. IFDC has adopted the farmer-led CASE approach and has made a lot of efforts to involve farmers' organizations (inclusive meetings, partial repair of Agriterra budget gap, training of PO staff and farmers,). As a result, IFDC knows the farmers' movements of the seven countries much better. The latter increasingly appreciate the work of IFDC (cf. survey results). Agriterra and ROPPA are increasingly interested in the economic services PO's can provide to their members, understand the CASE approach and have seen field level activities and results.

→ Although it took long, it can be asserted that a sufficient basis for fruitful collaboration between IFDC, Agriterra and ROPPA has been created. Co-funding requirements for the SAADA program and the dual roles of Agriterra and ROPPA have unnecessarily complicated matters. Collaboration could have been more fruitful if the budget mobilization question would have been addressed already in the formulation of the SAADA program. Agreements could then have been made about one reporting line and collaboration could have been focused more on the advisory role of Agriterra, and the information sharing and representative policy development role of ROPPA.

2.2 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTERS: CAPACITIES AND RELATIONS

2.2.1 IFDC

IFDC is the coordinator of the SAADA program. IFDC's competitive edge, especially through its innovative CASE approach, is in linking input and output markets. It is an 'American style' program implementer: good marketing of new program ideas, ambitious goals and hard-working staff. Stakeholders, as results from the survey and has been confirmed in interviews and workshops, perceive IFDC as a professional organization which they strongly appreciate. In the past years, IFDC has invested a lot in its relations with farmer organizations and other actors. It has produced detailed guidelines and manuals to facilitate implementation, while attempting to keep reporting lines and procedures short. Staff members are of high quality and motivated; internal reflections are at a high level. IFDC disposes of a regional team of professionals combined with AB cluster advisors in each program country.

One of the operational principles of the 1000s+ project is a 'limited staff' approach. In order to keep the project structure as lean as possible, IFDC has kept the recruitment of IFDC project staff to a minimum. The limited staff policy implies that most services to clusters are actually delivered by local Business Service Suppliers (BSS) thereto contracted by IFDC (cf. paragraph 2.2.8). Although this policy has no quantitative targets in terms of ratios, in practice it works out well. As the following table shows, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) more than doubled, but the number of FTE per cluster AB decreased from 0,5 to 0,1 during implementation.

IFDC staff	2006	2007	2008	2009
Technical staff FTE	6,4	12,9	14,6	15,2
Admin staff FTE	2,5	3,8	4,8	6,1
Support staff FTE	5,5	9	9	9,5
Total staff FTE	14,4	25,7	28,4	30,8
Clusters	30	65	129	218
Staff FTE / cluster	0,5	0,4	0,2	0,1

A downside of the limited staff policy is that IFDC staff tend to be highly occupied by administrative matters: while the number of staff per cluster strongly decreased, administrative requirements did not. The time that staff members devote to annual cluster planning and reporting, sub-contracting of BSS's (over 600 contracts in 2009) and M&E data collection goes at the expense of cluster coaching and innovation. In most countries, research assistants have recently been recruited to aid the AB cluster advisor with their tasks; this has somewhat eased their administrative burden.

The main complaint that AB cluster actors have about procedural matters concern delays in fund disbursements for cluster action plans, for which implementation generally starts in the second semester of the year (cf. survey, interviews and workshops).

Concerning financial administration and reporting, the evaluation mission observes that financial and administrative procedures are well-established but that the financial accounting and reporting system are not up to standard, and no longer in line with the complexity and risks of the 1000s+ project (and even the size of IFDC programs in West Africa):

- IFDC's financial administration, based on Excel, does not allow for sound analytical financial reporting;
- For all its projects, IFDC uses the same generic budget categories. Financial reporting to DGIS is done at a high aggregated level and is not linked to key operational areas (KOA's) and budget lines of 1000s+;
- Control of financial reports of BSSs, accounting for a significant part of project expenditures, is weak (cf. chapter 7);

2.2.2 Agriterra

Establishing the collaboration between IFDC and Agriterra / ROPPA required a considerable amount of time and efforts from all parties, as described in section 2.1.2. The core business of Agriterra is capacity strengthening of producers' organizations. Agriterra has experiences with facilitating international farmer-2-farmer exchanges and a growing record of proven practices and tools.

Since the start of talks with Agriterra and ROPPA in 2006, the 1000s+ implementation strategy has gradually become more oriented at farmers and their organizations, as exemplified by the procedure for identifying new agri-business clusters during which priority is given to business ideas of farmer groups (cf. 2.3.1). With the materialization of Agriterra support, the human resources of the 1000s+ project were extended with national PO advisors (CNIEP).

Agriterra has formulated three programs in support of 1000s+, of which two transit via IFDC. The third program is concluded with ROPPA. It supports the role of ROPPA and national farmers' platforms and pays for the costs of the PO advisors. Collaboration between cluster advisors of IFDC and PO Advisors has been working quite well, albeit there are different ways of doing so in the different countries. In operational terms, Agriterra has been strongly focusing on financial and administrative matters. As a 'donor', Agriterra was not able to realize the co-funding as foreseen in the tripartite agreement. The financial contribution of Agriterra was interrupted by the end of 2009 because of insufficient funding for its 2007-2010 Farmers Fighting Poverty Program. This unexpected shortage of agreed co-funding necessitated IFDC to take drastic measures in 2010, such as reducing the funds available for cluster action plans by 50% and finding ways to remain paying the CNIEPs from own means. The funds that Agriterra eventually contributed to SAADA A amounted to 2,4 million Euro, 65% less than the planned 7 million.

2.2.3 ROPPA

The network of Farmers' Organizations and Producers in West Africa (*Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* or ROPPA) was founded in 2000. In the context of the 1000s+ project, ROPPA is the lead partner of Agriterra. The reports of PO Advisors (CNIEPs) transit via ROPPA to Agriterra. ROPPA's membership is composed of national farmers' platforms.

ROPPA aims to create united National Farmers' Platforms in 16 West African Countries. The idea is that per country only one platform is ROPPA member, representing all farmers organizations in the country. The objectives of ROPPA are to defend farmers' interests in West Africa, to initiate and support the farmers' platforms at national level (member organizations), and to represent its members at regional and international level.

In six out of seven countries, the National Farmers' Platforms are members of ROPPA. Nigeria is an exception, see textbox.

BOX 2 THE ALL FARMERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (AFAN) is a large, federal organization representing the farmer organizations in all 36 states of Nigeria. AFAN is not a member of ROPPA. The Nigerian organization is larger than ROPPA and differently structured. It is organized on the basis of 26 commodity associations and it is member of various regional professional bodies other than ROPPA. AFAN is not willing to abide by the requirements that ROPPA poses to its members. Membership on short term is therefore not likely.

According to a recent evaluation study³, ROPPA has effectively contributed to the emergence of a stronger and more visible West-African farmers' movement and has effectively influenced regional policies in the interest of its members. At the same time, ROPPA is internally relatively weakly organized and not strong in providing and monitoring strategies support to its members. ROPPA recognizes these operational weaknesses, following an audit it had conducted.

ROPPA shows a profound understanding of the CASE approach and cluster activities on the ground. It has a track record in voicing small farmers' interests internationally. However, the evaluation team notes that ROPPA has assumed a role of primarily (critically) following the evolution of the SAADA/1000s+ program. It has not really made operational contributions to the realization of the program's goals and objectives, such as for instance capitalization and sharing of cluster experiences and the uptake of constraints for lobby and advocacy activities.

³ Rapport Final Mission d'Évaluation Externe 'Programme de Renforcement des Capacités et des Actions du Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles 2000-2008 (ROPPA) ', 2009.

2.2.4 Regional Advisory Committee

The Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) was established by the tripartite agreement between IFDC, ROPPA and Agriterra in September 2008. Originally called Regional Steering Committee, its name was shortly afterwards changed to emphasize the CASE and 1000s+ orientation at national and grass-root level. The RAC is chaired by ROPPA and has IFDC and Agriterra as participating members and DGIS as observing member. Since 2008, the RAC has met three times, during which mainly project implementation modalities and administrative matters were discussed, rather than strategic issues. The meetings have however contributed to increased mutual understanding.

2.2.5 National Steering Committees

The main tasks of the National Steering Committee (NSC) are to guide and monitor the 1000s+ project activities at national level. The National Steering Committee's objective is to promote the CASE approach within the institutions of its members, contribute to the mobilization of business ideas and the selection of new AB clusters, and the monitoring of activities. The NSC is supposed to reflect the stakeholder configurations that are necessary at the local level. Membership is in principle composed of representatives of the national farmers' platform, the mandated PO, the agri-input sector, the private sector (traders and processors), the Government (most often Ministry of Agriculture), NGO's and BSSs, and of research and higher education institutes.

The process leading to the establishment of the NSCs, the composition and functioning of the NSC's varies per country:

BOX 3 DYNAMICS IN NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEES. In Ghana, early 2009, conflicts occurred in the NSC on interests, leadership, financial issues. The situation was managed by the reinstatement of the Chairman and the replacement of the PO Advisor (NAFEI) in the mandated farmer organization. The steering committee is now structurally referred to as the "Farmer-led National Steering Committee".

In Mali, the NSC only became operational early 2009. For years, CNOP and AOPP could not come to an agreement on the division of tasks and responsibilities. Field visits and recent CASE training of NSC members have had an important positive effects.

In Burkina Faso, the NSC has been operational as from 2006-7. The IFDC agribusiness advisor has played an important facilitating role. At the farmers' side, FEPA-B (mandated PO) takes the lead. The role of the platform (CPF) is not very clear. There are no tensions like in Mali because the FEPA-B president is also the CPF president.

In Niger, the Farmers' Platform dominates the NSC. Some other groups actively participate as well, but the private sector (input dealers, traders, processors) is largely absent.

In Nigeria, the National Farmer Platform AFAN became a member of the NSC in 1998, upon request by Agriterra. AFAN is the only farmer organization in the NSC and provides the vice president. The commitment of the Nigerian NSC members to 1000s+ is reportedly very high.

In Togo, the NSC is effectively playing its role since 2007. In Benin, this is the case since 2008. In both countries, farmer organizations (members of the National Farmers' Platforms) are well represented as compared to other stakeholders. In Togo, a consumers' and a processing association is member of the NSC.

On the basis of interviews, survey and validation workshops, the evaluation team establishes that the role of NSC representatives is mainly limited to NSC meetings and the monitoring of AB clusters. In most countries, not all actor groups are represented and/or actively participating. There are several cases of NSC members that are called to other duties and are not replaced by their organization or stakeholder group. National farmers' platforms generally assume presidency well. The IFDC AB advisor and CNIEP generally participate as advisors in NSC team meetings and in NSC field visits. In the NSC, decisions are usually taken by consensus. The agenda follows the logic of the annual plan of SAADA A. The NSC mainly approves cluster action plans and monitors cluster activities (reports of cluster activities reach the NSC via the Cluster Advisor). Normally there are quarterly meetings of the NSCs

but in general not all members participate (sometimes only 50% of the members participate). NSC members are supposed to give feedback to the institutions and stakeholder groups they represent. This is however not organized systematically but left to the discretion of its members. In actual practice, feedback varies from non-existent to extensive briefings.

Women are underrepresented in the NSCs. Only 11% of the NSC members are female. In Benin, the NSC has no female members at all. Nigeria and Mali score relatively high with 18% female members. Stakeholders find this a matter of concern, according to the survey.

The functioning of the national steering committees could improve and that their roles could evolve. Attention to the policy and business environment is a major role of the NSC's that could be further strengthened.

2.2.6 CASE coaches and trainers

Looking back at the strategies for developing a critical mass for the promotion of the CASE approach, the evaluation team finds that these have been (too) many and parallel, which, taken individually, have not yet lived up to the expectations.

Initially, the project strategy focused on creating so-called National Capacity Strengthening Teams (NCST). The basic idea was to have a core of resource persons per country that were intensively trained in participatory multi-stakeholder processes towards agricultural development. These persons would spread the CASE approach not only in their respective organizations but also within their broader professional networks and amongst BSSs to be contracted for 1000s+ project implementation. The International Centre for development oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA) was contracted by IFDC to realize the trainings.

In 2006, a first team of 13 people from Benin and Mali, of which 3 women, was sent to the Netherlands to become trained by ICRA. A second team of 6 people, all men, visited ICRA in 2007. The members trained in 2006 had left to other jobs. A third team of 10 persons, of which 3 women, was then sent to ICRA in 2008. The idea was that by training members of IFDC partner organizations in CASE strategy and in CASE training, these persons would spread the CASE philosophy not only in their own organization but also within their broader professional networks and amongst BSS in SAADA. The trainings, which were quite costly, have resulted in 4 NCST teams (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali).

Because there were no specific selection criteria, the trained persons were not always effective in training and influencing. Some were too senior in the organization and therefore too busy to dedicate time to training while others were too young and did not have sufficient influence or the right skills or attitude to be a trainer. Quite some trained persons have left to other jobs and did not take up the envisaged transfer role.

Learning from the experiences, IFDC decided to train 35 resource persons (of which 8 women) in the CASE approach (Sagakope, Ghana, Sept. 2009). Additionally, ICRA organized courses in the Netherlands on CASE facilitation for 11 selected NSCT team members (often people attached to universities or other education-related organizations) and for 4 new members.

The people trained by ICRA Netherlands are referred to as *Agribusiness coaches* whereas the people trained by IFDC in Ghana are referred to as CASE trainers. There is some confusion on these qualifications and the roles that are to be assumed. Are CASE trainers to become members of the NCSTs or not? In most cases, the organizations of which the CASE coaches and trainers are part, are partnered with IFDC and provide training services to IFDC.

To sum up, we find that by the end of 2009 a core group of people knowing the CASE approach has been created, both through formal training of CASE coaches and CASE trainers and informal training at cluster level and within

NSC's. A critical mass for CASE promotion has been created. For the coming years, it is important to double efforts and to better define the role of different categories of CASE facilitators.

2.2.7 AISSA network

During the final years of the ISFM project that preceded the 1000s+ project, IFDC prepared the AISSA platform and invested in the elaboration of training modules. AISSA stands for Agricultural Intensification in Sub-Saharan Africa and was envisaged as a pan-African platform of practitioners involved in IFDC related activities.

In 2004, a website was launched as leading AISSA instrument to stimulate exchange between BSSs involved in the IFDC program. Initially, the website was mainly visited by scientists and extension specialists for exchanging ideas. After a promising start, the site served a decreasing number of visitors and IFDC was too occupied with the formulation and the start-up of the 1000s+ project to stimulate actively the exchange between the AISSA network members. In relation to CASE and 1000s+, AISSA was supposed to become a learning platform for BSSs involved in applying the CASE approach. The initiative to produce 'Faces of AISSA' (testimonies of cluster actors) was not pursued.

BOX 4. The Ghanaian BSS **GAABIC** visits the AISSA site "from time to time" to read news and articles posted. The information is perceived as "refreshment on CASE, rather than something new". No articles have been uploaded by GAABIC as this was not yet possible until the end of 2009. In addition to the website, GAABIC exchanges with other BSSs in Ghana during workshops, several times per year organized by IFDC. There is no structured exchange between GAABIC and BSSs outside Ghana.

In the years after the launch of the website and the 1000s+ project, scientists and extension specialists became less active and organizations involved group dynamics and marketing became relatively more active. In 2008, the website was hacked and closed. A web-blog, with limited possibilities for exchange other than chats, continued until the launch of a new website in 2010. Although many training-related activities can be presented under the heading of AISSA, the website / blog has been the only instrument through which direct exchange between BSSs from different countries has been promoted. Analyzing the information exchange reveals an obvious divergence in exchange between francophone BSSs and Anglophone BSSs. There is very limited exchange between Francophone and Anglophone BSSs. In principle, every BSS is invited to become an AISSA member although until now mainly IFDC partners are involved. No quality criteria are applied for AISSA membership. As a result, in the eyes of the evaluation team, there is a risk that the network becomes a loose collection of heterogeneous organizations.

Thus far, the AISSA website appears to be the primary instrument to reinforce coherence and tying together the BSS organizations across the program countries. According to the evaluation team, more efforts are needed to facilitate knowledge development and exchange across clusters and country borders. There is a strong need to make training modules, options for agribusiness development, facilitation tools, case studies and cluster actor testimonies available, by harnessing the potential of ICT.

2.2.8 Business Support Services (BSS)

Sub-contracting. For the large part of the capacity building services delivered by 1000s+, IFDC has chosen to work through business support service providers (BSS). In most cases, BSSs are NGOs, but in some cases they are small enterprises or state agencies. As from 2007, (apex) farmers' organizations are part of the contracted organizations. They represent approximately 20% of the BSSs. BSSs are often not specialized in specific areas but provide training and support on all elements of CASE: from group formation to ISFM.

Number of BSS contracted

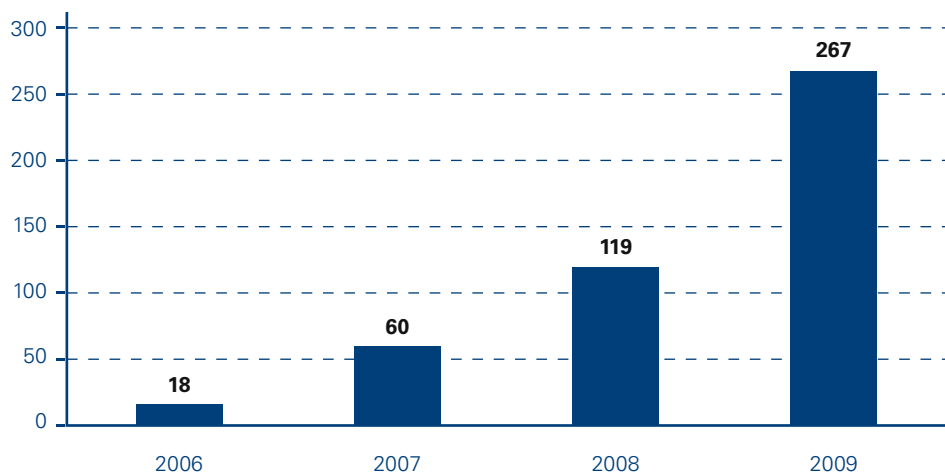


Figure 2

As figure 2 shows, the number of clusters supported by IFDC increased from 30 in 2006 to 216 in 2009, and the number of BSSs contracted increased from 18 in 2006 to 227 in 2009. Over 600 contracts have been concluded.

With the growing number of clusters, IFDC has to spend an increasing amount of time on management of contracts and payments, drawing attention away from reflection and innovation. Subcontracting has become a large part of the core business.

BSS selection. The selection of BSSs is done in an informal way. The BSS is often proposed and selected by the producer organization or suggested by the AB Cluster Advisor based on earlier collaborations. No (standard) use is made of selection criteria or a Terms of Reference. Appointing BSSs according to their region of intervention contributes to efficiency and effectiveness. But not in all cases, selection has been done on the basis of vicinity. In some cases, BSSs have been contracted to serve clusters at distances from 100 to 500 km of their home base. BSSs discuss cluster requirements with the Cluster Advisor and present proposals with budget. If the proposal is approved, a MoU is signed. Integrated in the BSS proposal is a capacity strengthening component for the BSS (training, study, etc.).

Typically, each cluster has one BSS which is in the lead for the development and coordination of the cluster action plan. In the implementation of the cluster plan, which often implies the organization of training sessions, other BSSs may be contracted, often directly by the lead BSS. Some BSSs have been contracted by IFDC for several agribusiness clusters, in rare cases up to 8 or 9 clusters (for example APGR Niger, AMEDD Mali). The BSS GAABIC in Ghana is responsible for M&E for all 15 clusters. In Togo, two BSS act as M&E facilitator for all 37 AB clusters.

Capacity strengthening effects on BSS. The strategic choice to deliver services to AB clusters mainly via business support services, has had vast positive effects on the institutional capacity of the BSS themselves. As a result of their involvement in 1000s+, particularly the trainings they themselves received, they could develop, both in volume and in quality. Frequently, they develop commercial activities as a result of the strong position they build up in the cluster. Several BSSs acquired new assignments from other organizations or became successful as input suppliers. BSS report to have reached over 230.000 households via these spun-off assignments. These (side)effects confirms the attractiveness of the CASE approach.

BSS quality. BSSs are ready to provide all kinds of services, but quality and client orientation are not always assured. In various countries, such as Togo, the availability of BSS qualified in the field of agribusiness is very lim-

ited. A sample of BSS reports suggests highly divergent quality of reports, ranging from very weak to detailed and well-structured. The reports we looked at in Mali and Niger most often showed descriptive, non-analytical reports. Reporting is oriented at IFDC. 'Cut and paste' was frequently encountered for BSS's having multiple clusters.

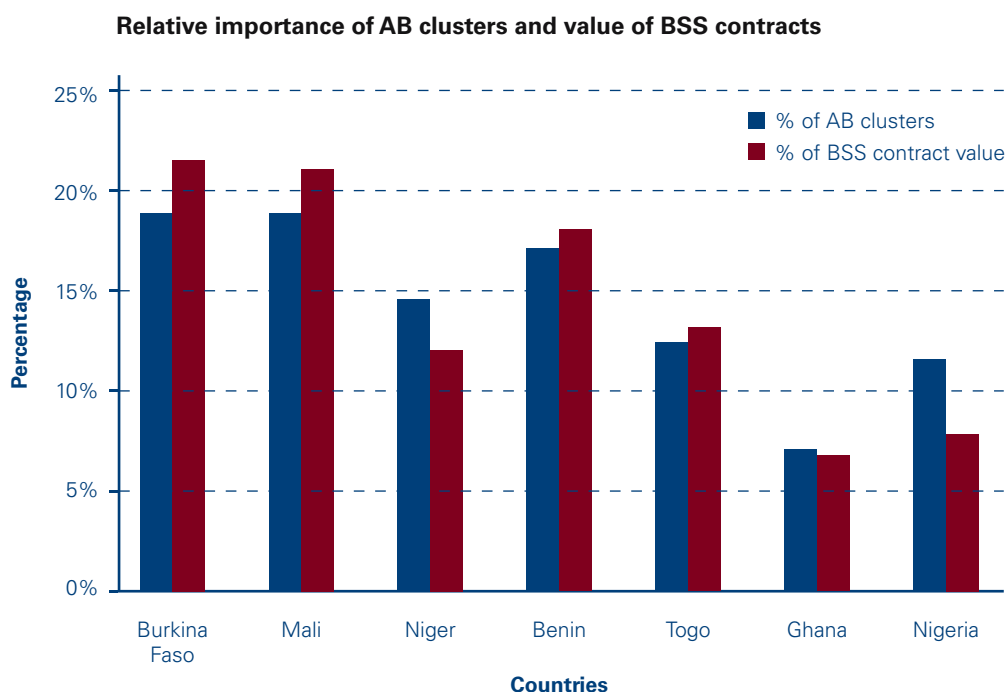


Figure 3

Costs. In 2009, the total contract value of the BSSs amounted to €3,8 million, about half of the total project expenses. Comparing the distribution of clusters over the countries with the distribution of BSS contract value over the countries (figure 3), we observe relatively high BSS costs per cluster in Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin and Togo, and relatively low BSS costs per cluster in Niger, Ghana and Nigeria.

BSSs operate on a donor market, represented by IFDC. On that market the fees paid by IFDC are acceptable, even on the low side. It is observed that cost-consciousness at cluster level is limited. Cluster actors are not always informed about the costs of identified service providers and are not formally involved in deciding on contract payment.

IFDC critically assesses the costs advanced in cluster action plan budgets, using standard price ranges for activities and maximum fee rates for BSS per country. After these plans are approved, monitoring of BSS expenditures is relatively 'light'. Analysis of financial reports shows that declared expenditures are often the same as budgeted expenditures. By taking the approach of strict appraisal beforehand, close monitoring of activities during and modest verification of expenses afterwards, costs are kept at bay. The result is a calculated risk that (small amounts of) disbursed money may be used differently than intended.

2.2.9 Collaborative arrangements

In every country, there are convincing examples of effective collaboration (with input suppliers, banks, MFIs, research institutes, and other donor organizations) established by IFDC, which are contributing to the objectives of SAADA. For example in Benin, IFDC is involved in the Non-Cotton program that aims to increase the production and productivity of high-value food crops by 40% and to increase the incomes of 30.000 smallholder farmers by 20%. The program is funded by the Dutch Embassy and is implemented by IFDC in partnership with the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV). As an element of the program, micro-financing is provided by *Fédération des caisses d'épargne et de crédit agricole mutuel* (FECECAM) of Benin and the Banque Regionale de Solidarité (BRS) and many other microfinance institutions in Togo. In Ghana, IFDC established collaboration with GTZ (joint support to a cluster in chili pepper), the Ghana School Feeding Program (supply of products by SAADA supported clusters), and the Research Institute CSIR-SARI (field testing and promotion of new technologies). In Burkina Faso, many collaborative arrangements have been established in the banking sector, with private enterprises active in input and output markets and with universities and training centers. In Niger, good relations are established with Ministries and governmental services, but collaboration with the private sector is less developed. The case of Mali reflects the general finding that collaborative arrangements reflect the active participation of different stakeholder groups in the national steering committees.

Examples in all 7 countries indicate that IFDC is keen on establishing collaboration agreements with local and international organizations contributing to the objectives of SAADA. Alignment of initiatives in a region where so many governments, donors and NGOs are running programs with comparable objectives, this is a useful and necessary strategy. The downside of this – at least for evaluation purposes – is the increased difficulty to establish causal relations between SAADA interventions and outcomes and impacts realized. This is further discussed in chapter 6.

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- Summarizing the main points addressed in this paragraph, it is found that the institutional set-up of the 1000s+ project is in essence good. The CASE approach requires working in different intervention domains, which requires complementary core capacities. Most relevant actors are connected and the structures are in place, even though it has taken time and energy before they started functioning and their effectiveness can still be improved in various regards. It is expected that many positive (side)effects of the institutional structure are yet to be attained, after a couple of years of implementation.
- As regards the strategy for service-delivery, the evaluation team takes the view that IFDC has chosen a challenging way of working through BSSs rather than with own staff. Using BSSs is a more sustainable and efficient way of working compared to using own staff. The chosen strategy is considered highly relevant. In the execution of the strategy, more could be done to develop instruments for BSS selection, methods for BSS strengthening, and tools for quality control and client satisfaction. The price-quality ratio and sustainability of BSS services can be improved by promoting internal service delivery within clusters, supporting PO staff recruitment, using local (sometime free) government extension staff and harnessing services of existing programs and projects.

2.3 SELECTION OF AGRIBUSINESS CLUSTERS

2.3.1 New clusters

In this report, we differentiate between 'business ideas', 'cluster action plans' and 'business plans':

- Business ideas are advanced by clusters to IFDC/NSC to test whether a cluster is eligible for 1000s+ support. Generally one of the cluster actors acts as cluster promoter;
- Cluster action plans are formulated by a cluster upon the invitation of IFDC on an annual basis. They focus on capacity strengthening and are meant to be (mainly) funded by IFDC;

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- Business plans are plans of specific enterprises focusing on achieving their economic goals, indicating investments, priority activities and/or capacity strengthening needs. Business plans need sound economic data, can be submitted to banks and FMI's and/or to external donors for commercial or non-commercial funding.

Thirty out of 218 clusters have been selected during the previous ISFM program. The other clusters have been selected on the basis of promising business ideas. A cluster aiming to be part of SAADA will submit a business idea to the IFDC AB cluster advisor in their country. The notification that business ideas may be submitted, is done by word of mouth within the networks of NSC members, Cluster Advisors, BSSs, producer groups, etc. Although this may seem to be a selective and restrictive way of information dissemination, hardly any complaints were heard about the procedures for selecting agribusiness clusters.

The national-level survey confirms that in all 7 countries, procedures for AB cluster selection are considered to be transparent. There is a widespread feeling that all kinds of commodities and different geographical areas are eligible. The forms and templates that are currently used for describing a business idea, provide a lot of information on the initiators (notably farmers, producers) and on indicators that are part of the SAADA M&E system. The evaluation team however is surprised that the forms do not invite the initiators to clearly indicate the economic results they pursue.

The final selection of cluster business ideas is done by the Steering Committee, upon the advice of the AB Cluster and PO Advisor. Consequently, the selected cluster is asked to prepare a cluster action plan (paragraph 2.3.2).

IFDC does not have a clear entry strategy for support to new clusters. Although there are checklists, cluster selection is in practice done on the basis of professional assessments of NSC members at national level. No strategic criteria exist at program level exist, related to for instance type of intervention area, type of chain/product, minimum or maximum cluster size, composition, history, level of organization within the cluster etc. In some countries, not all, there is a preference for a certain concentration of clusters in order to facilitate exchange and for the sake of efficiency. Market potential is often mentioned as a condition for cluster selection. Gender is sometimes mentioned as a consideration for cluster selection.

In terms of commodities, there seems to be a preference for diversification rather than focus. After 3 years of selecting new additional clusters, the number of commodities went up from 13 in 2006 to 47 in 2009. In contrast to many other value chain development projects, SAADA/1000s+ does not preselect certain sub-sectors or certain value chains. The large number of commodities illustrates that SAADA/1000s+ is a program that first of all seeks to implement the CASE approach, which can be applied to all kinds of agro-sylvo-pastoral products.

2.3.2 Cluster action plans

Annually, cluster action plans are elaborated at cluster level. This process is typically driven by BSSs, who bring together producers and other cluster actors for 2 or 3 day-planning workshops. These workshops are usually moderated by IFDC (cluster advisor or CNIEP) or the BSS. When a cluster is more developed, cluster leaders tend to become more steering in cluster action plan formulation.

A typical cluster action plan contains 2-3 training activities, a study tour, and data collection to be funded by 1000s+/SAADA. Within given budget ceilings per cluster, the NSC 'decides' positively or negatively on the cluster action plan and the Cluster Advisor takes the 'final decision'. Criteria for evaluation of cluster proposals include: gender, empowerment local groups, spreading CASE experiences across the country, geographic concentration, cluster size, potential economic viability, etc. The interpretation of these criteria has been different in the 7 countries, leading to quite different portfolios.

The support by the SAADA program for developing the cluster action plans is very positively perceived in the survey. The evaluators studied cluster action plans and noticed that, overall, the action plans are of good quality: they have

a sufficient level of detail; include market descriptions; relate planned activities with past activities; link activities to targets, planning and budget. Regarding market opportunities, the action plans sometimes present overoptimistic expectations.

The annual exercise requires considerable investments for meetings and documentation. The format of the cluster action plans is extensive which makes the approval procedure by NSC and IFDC time consuming. A late submission by clusters and a long process of appraisal causes delays in action plan implementation. An action plan must first be approved before funds can be disbursed. As a result, the implementation period for the annual cluster action plan is relatively short: August-February (well after the start of the rainy season). IFDC has decentralized some of the checks and balances to speed up action plan assessment in the past 2 years.

Although action plan formulation is a time-consuming process, the planning meetings are far more than an administrative endeavor. They provide excellent opportunities for cluster actors to exchange information and debate on joint challenges. The planning cycle includes the evaluation of results obtained and the identification of most important capacity strengthening needs. Meetings that bring together different ABC's have a capacity strengthening effect and have the potential to establish relations.

While business ideas and cluster action plans are numerous, business plans are more limited. The evaluation team has identified 15 business plans which have been made by cluster actors and were provided to IFDC. These plans have been developed by cluster actors in four countries: 5 from Mali, 5 from Togo, 4 from Benin and 1 from Nigeria. Most (12) of these have been developed by cooperatives of producers, 2 by private companies and 1 by a public actor. All concern significant investments, which are supposed to benefit many farmers or processors. It is unknown whether this list of business plans is complete. Neither is it known whether these plans have been commercially financed, except for the 5 plans in Togo, out of which just 2 were submitted to the Banque Régional de Solidarité to be financed. The others were withheld due to a lack of guaranty funds (2 plans) and an envisaged donor investment (1 plan).

2.3.3 Exit strategy

IFDC has not developed an exit strategy for phasing out the support to clusters. This is consistent with the fact that there is no entry strategy. According to the evaluation team, the lack of an exit strategy entails two major risks: (1) clusters become dependent on IFDC support, and (2) resources are not efficiently used (more impact from the same resources can be expected in new clusters as compared to clusters that are already mature).

There are certainly some mature clusters that could be phased out; cluster representatives in all researched countries confirm this. But, as one cluster representative stated: "rivers are always eager to get more water". There are also clusters that did not make a lot of progress, which may as well be a justification for phasing out. There is quite some agreement that the program needs to formulate an exit strategy (or better: exit strategies for different types of AB clusters). Participants to workshops indicate however the need for a medium-term perspective on ABC development. This translates the idea that any entry strategy already requires an exit strategy. Although 'beneficiaries' are reluctant, there is also acceptance of the idea that local actors, pursuing their economic objectives and benefits, should – progressively - contribute to the costs of training. This is currently not the case.

→ In short, it is found that the procedures for cluster selection and cluster action plan formulation are transparent and largely effective. The fact that there are no strategic criteria for starting and ending cluster support (entry and exit strategy) is a point of attention. The current portfolio of agribusiness clusters allows for developing a typology of agribusiness clusters and defining evidence-based strategies for inception and cessation of support to clusters.

2.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

SAADA's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is meant to provide the stakeholders of the program with relevant information on an annual basis to support decision making towards the achievement of the program objectives:

1. 50% average increase in agricultural productivity and 30% average income growth for 1 million rural farm households;
2. Measurable increase in environmentally sustainable production on an additional 2 million hectares;
3. Improved food security through an increase in aggregated agricultural production of 500.000 tons cereal equivalents;
4. At least 2000 program beneficiary input dealers, traders, processors and others are expected to increase their business by 50% and to expand the number of stores, warehouses, agencies, other processing units and employees, by another 50%;
5. Increased institutional capacities of producer organizations, agro-entrepreneurs, credit and business service providers, trade associations, and National Research and Extension Services (NARES).

Currently, IFDC is building an on-line monitoring database to make data collection easier and information more regularly and widely available. The evaluators positively appreciate the on-going improvements made by IFDC on the monitoring system as this indicates that IFDC applies lessons learned continuously. However, we note that outcome indicators lack coherence: there are important differences between the working packages in the project proposal, the key operational areas (KOAs) that lie at the basis of the work plans and the 10 intermediate results of the M&E system (see also Annex 2. Methodology). Comparison over time is difficult when indicators are changing.

In 2009, the monitoring system was adjusted by removing and replacing certain indicators and by reducing the number of data collection sheets from 9 to 5. The monitoring system included indicators that were not well understood by the BSS enumerators, such as: “% change in local entrepreneurs’ business volume” and “number of cluster actors that confirmed having changed attitude and behavior towards HIV/AIDS and improved nutrition” and “number of learning groups experimenting with new farming, breeding, processing, storing technologies and marketing strategies”. BSSs confirm that these type of indicators resulted in unreliable data. The indicators mentioned as examples have been replaced in 2009 by more specific ones. However, confusion remains about some indicators, as exemplified by the following:

Example indicator: “number of households reached”. To determine the value of this indicator, POs are asked by the BSS enumerators to quantify their members, but also to add additional households – being members of other POs – that are reached by the program activities. At this point, it is undefined what ‘reaching’ means. Reaching can mean taking notice of information (by radio emissions or by information sessions or by the word of mouth). Reaching can also mean using information or being trained. Depending on the interpretation of the BSS, the value of the indicator may vary roughly from 50 households being ‘reached’ by one study tour to 5000 households being ‘reached’ by one radio emission.

IFDC has added a third element, next to PO household members and non-members reached, which is ‘*households reached through other agribusiness value chain programs owned by IFDC partner institutions (BSS) as a result of capacity development through the CASE approach*’.

In practice, this means that BSSs, involved in SAADA, may add households being served in the context of another program as SAADA beneficiaries as well. By adjusting this indicator for ‘households reached’ in 2009 in this

respect, IFDC reported a remarkable increase in ‘number of households reached’ in 2009 as shown in figure 4. This third interpretation may be insightful to show spin-off effects of the program, but does not qualify – in the eyes of the evaluation team - as direct impact.

Number of households reached 2006-2009 (source: M&E database)

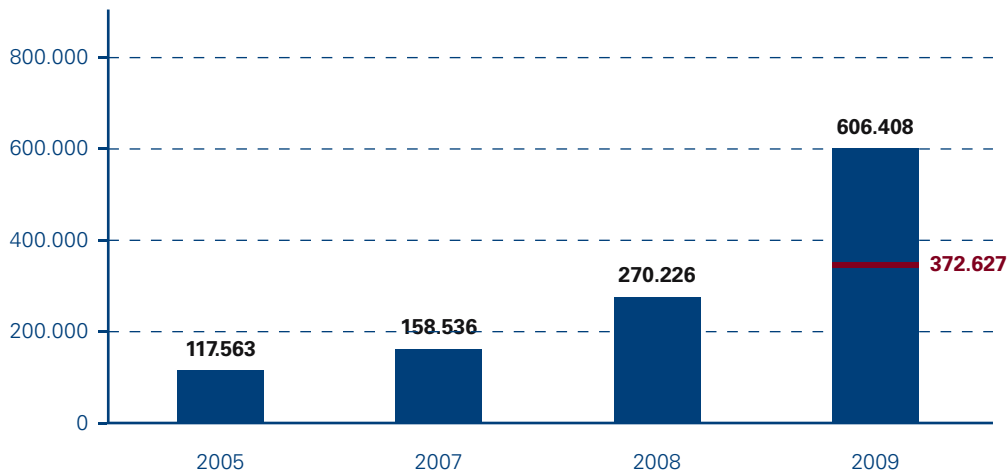


Figure 4

Considering PO members and non-members reached by the 1000s+ project only, the evaluation team concludes that 372.627 households have been directly reached in 2009 and not 606.408 as reported by IFDC. It is unclear how many of these households are unique. Since many cluster actors are ‘reached’ more than once across the years, the number of unique households is probably quite somewhat lower.

The current monitoring system includes more indicators resulting in unreliable reporting data. Another example is ‘area under sustainable production’. Here both the interpretations of the BSS as well as the limited samples per cluster contribute to erratic data.

Next to confusion about indicators, the reliability of data entry is hampered by limited capacity of the persons responsible for data collection and entry. This is done by ‘enumerators’ on the basis of data collection sheets. These often are the same BSS providing CB-services to cluster actors. Generally, BSS select 25 producers involved in the cluster for monitor purposes. These producers are supposed to be representative for the cluster.

Another point of concern is that the M&E system does not capture qualitative effects. Direct and indirect effects are crucially important for understanding dynamics and results created by cluster facilitation according to CASE approach.

Finally, we observe that the monitoring system is mainly an instrument for upward accountability. Many of the indicators are traced in order to being able to report on the program’s overall objectives. Lot of efforts are undertaken to bring up information from the grass-root level. A large amount of thinking, time and resources has gone into getting this structure operational. A rich database is the result. Ironically, we must conclude that for upward accountability purposes, the data suffer from too many reliability concerns. For many indicators, one worries: what has been aggregated, what is understood by this indicator, what data has been entered and what does it tell us about actual dynamics? At the same time, the data are not very useful for local entrepreneurs: the collected information is not geared to operational and strategic decision making at the level of cluster actors (producers, processors, input dealers or other entrepreneurs). Data collection on production and productivity, cost-benefit analysis

and cost price calculation are (highly appreciated) exceptions. These data are needed to underpin business planning and thus have a direct relevance to their users.

The observations of our local experts about the M&E system in the case studies reflect the above points:

Table 6. OBSERVATIONS OF THE CASE STUDIES OF THE SYSTEM OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)	
Benin, rice	Two staff members of the NGO supporting the cluster are responsible for training agents and producers in the collection and analysis of data. Producers are involved in the collection of data, which increases their ownership of the project. But the sustainability of the process remains limited because at the moment, producers collect data about the performance of other actors. These actors should also be included in M&E. The information registered in the 1000s+ database is not available in understandable form at the level of UNIRIZ (cluster leader).
Burkina Faso, maize	In the beginning of the project in 2006, it was IFDC together with the two main BSSs that took care of M&E activities (collecting, entry and analysis of data) and reported to producers. Today, it is the POs themselves who, having followed training in this regard, are involved in these activities. They collect the requested data for IFDC and derive at keeping their own operating accounts.
Ghana, fish	The IFDC impact figures reflect the results of the highest performing farmers. The measurement of fish productivity includes at least two parameters – weight gain and length of production cycle. The individual interviews showed that all farmers are improving the weight gain of fish. However, the rate of gain is very variable and the growing period also varies from 8 months to a year. The productivity data do not carry this qualification on production period which has significant implication on costs and therefore gross margin and net income. So although productivity has increased, the average impact data do not reflect the gains made by the typical farmer.
Mali, soya	The farmers consulted for the case study analysis confirm that they contribute to the collection of agricultural statistics. In fact, the trainings provided in that respect have helped them to get a better understanding of the costs of production, to the extent that after 4 years of 1000s+ support they can now themselves make cost-benefit analyses.
Niger, milk	M&E data suggest that 460 persons are reached in the cheese agribusiness cluster in Central Niger, while in reality this is 170. Instead of 56 women, only 26 are actually engaged in cheese production and sale. With the completion of 1000s+ program set-up in Niger (cluster advisor, NSC, CNIEP) the monitoring of cluster activities has significantly improved: cluster action planning, reporting, capitalizing experiences.
Nigeria, sorghum	Cluster actors (BSS in particular) regret that there is no feedback on M&E although they know that the information they give is used to assess their performance.
Togo, groundnut	Involving producers in the collection of M&E data facilitates the internal development of competences to continue compiling relevant information after the project. Two enumerators from the leading BSS are responsible. They have been selected by IFDC on the basis of a ToR. On a critical side, it is noted that the monitoring of the project's progress by the CNIEP and IFDC is insufficient and that the M&E formats are too complex and change often.

→ In short, it is found that the system for monitoring and evaluation, despite all the efforts that have gone into it, does not really live up to expectations. While the 1000s+ project is aimed at practical grass-root solutions, the M&E system is mainly geared towards upward accountability. A large part of the information it renders is neither very useful for the donor nor for cluster actors, as a result of methodological concerns related to attribution, quality of data entry, indicator definitions, and inappropriate aggregation levels. During project implementation, most attention has gone out to data collection; data analysis has been limited.

2.5 SOCIAL INCLUSION

Is participation and representation of women adequate?

2.5.1 Gender ratios

According to the grant proposal, SAADA aims to incorporate gender issues, mainly by involving women in training programs, organizations, networks, etc. In addition, SAADA wants to focus on crops and first-level sorting and processing in which women benefit. Examples are mentioned such as shea nut, cashew and cassava commodity chains. Without having specified ratios, a certain balance is aimed for.

In practice, female participation in cluster building activities, is around 35% (with an exception in 2006 when this was 50%). Women associations represent close to 25% of the total number of POs that are involved. Out of 35 CASE trainers, 8 are women (29%). Women are underrepresented in the NSCs. Only 11% of the NSC members are female. In Benin, the NSC has no female members at all. Nigeria and Mali score relatively high with 18% female members.

In some clusters women are in the lead role, in other men are. Women are leading in the clusters such as soya beans and peanuts. Men are in the lead in the cereal clusters such as sorghum and maize. In many cases, women and men play a role in different components of the same cluster. In rice for example, the production is dominated by men and the processing (parboiling) and trade is dominated by women. In the cluster selection, an issue of female or male 'led' is sometimes taken into consideration. Currently, 23% of the clusters is characterized as female-led (figure 5).

Male vs female 'led' clusters

- Clusters dominated by men (rice, wheat/cereal, animal/fish, maize)
- Clusters dominated by women (nuts, groundnuts, tomato, cassave, fruit)
- Other

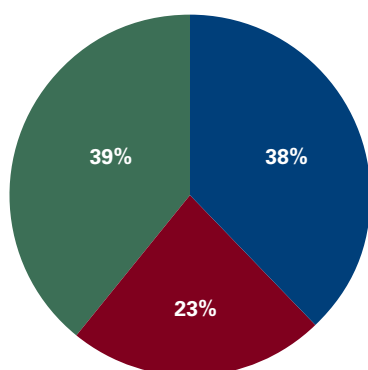


Figure 5

BOX 5 CULTURAL CONTEXT OF FEMALE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES: CHEESE MAKING IN THE NIGER CASE STUDY

In Niger, cheese production used to be limited, mainly being practiced by women for the conservation of excess milk during the rainy season for home consumption. Men need to authorize their wives to transform the milk into cheese, which is beyond traditional Fulani cultural rules on milk processing. DEBBO, the PO promoting the cheese cluster, seeks to develop cheese production as a cooperative economic venture, but the socio-cultural environment is not very favorable. However, the high net benefits and the good sales on the local market are helping to convince village chiefs and traditional leaders to authorize women to engage in cheese production, as has been the case for two villages where women are now having a profitable processing activity.

2.5.2 Pro-poor objectives

SAADA aims to contribute to increased production and income, without specifically focusing on poor people in the selected countries. The 1000s+ project addresses the first four pillars of the Netherlands' agricultural development cooperation policy (DGIS-LNV). The CASE approach is oriented at the development of entrepreneurial capacities. The evaluators are aware that this is – by definition – only possible for people, households and small enterprises that have a minimum resource endowment and have the possibility to create surplus, to take certain risks and/or to specialize on certain commodities. In practice, the 1000s+ project thus works on commodities, in geographical areas and with actors that have potential.

Furthermore, working through organized farmers creates a bias, as the poorest farmers tend not to be member of a producer organization. With a business-oriented approach, working with local farmer groups is however probably as close as you can get to the traditional target groups of development cooperation.

-
- In short, female participation of around 35% in the West African context is considered good. Many female-led clusters are being supported. Low female participation in the NSCs is a point of attention. Having a business orientation, 1000s+ does not specifically target poor people. Nevertheless, poor people certainly benefit from the project as outlined in section 6.7.



3. Capacity strengthening services

3.1 TRAINING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Have the activities to strengthen the capacities of different actors contributed towards making commodity chains more effective?

Introduction

The capacity strengthening services delivered by 1000s+ are highly appreciated by the stakeholders of the program. This is a finding that has unambiguously resulted from the interviews, the national-level survey and the cluster-level studies, and was confirmed in the validation workshops. In the survey, representing the opinions of 148 stakeholders, the 1000s+ services are scored 5% higher than average. This is second after the CASE approach, which is scored 23% higher than average. This implies that capacity strengthening services are one of the best appreciated aspects of the program.

3.1.1 Planned and realized training activities

Capacity-building (CB) is at the core of the 1000s+ approach. As the grant proposal⁴ set out:

“The current project will build or strengthen the capacities of other organizations, enabling them to gradually take over IFDC’s role during the project. [...]. Capacity building activities involve all the stakeholders and focus on the following activities:

1. Raising awareness on the **importance of agricultural intensification and agribusiness linkages** through activities oriented towards both private and public sector stakeholders (e.g. study tours, round table meetings, participation of stakeholders in agribusiness trade fairs and meetings)
2. Strengthening of **‘individual’ competencies** of farmers, local entrepreneurs, and business development and financial services. This covers both **managerial** (e.g. business planning, financial analysis and management, customer relationships) and **technical** (e.g. product and process knowledge) issues
3. Strengthening of **‘collective’ competencies** of farmers, local entrepreneurs, and business development and financial services. This covers **leadership**, as well as **organizational** and **institutional** (e.g. networking, dialogue and lobbying) issues
4. Facilitation of **networking and dialogue** among stakeholders. This includes dialogue on effective private and public sector roles to create enabling environments for competitive cluster formation”

The CB activities thus foreseen would comprise a wide range of topics and stakeholders. Other than the listing of ‘training, facilitation of platforms, round table meetings, study tours’ and some others, not much information was provided as to the envisaged form and approach of these CB services.

In the course of implementation, a large number of people have been trained in one way or another by the 1000s+ project. In 2009 only, 47.631 people participated in capacity-building activities, as the following table shows⁵:

⁴ Grant proposal (Part A) for submission to DGIS by IFDC, October 2005, p. 16-17 (emphasis added)

⁵ M&E database 2009 (version 10, first semester SAADA report 2010)

Table 7. CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMS (TRAINING, EXCHANGE VISITS, WORKSHOPS, ETC.) ORGANIZED IN 2009		
For producers and their professional organizations:	991	
• # of participants		41.232
• % female		37%
For local entrepreneurs (input dealers, traders, processors, MFI, transporters...)	903	
• # of participants		5.596
• % female		46%
Programs towards the development of the capacities of the BSS	774	
• # of BSS staff members		803
• % female		26%
Total	2668	
• # of participants		47.631
• % female		36%
<i>Other activities</i>		
CB programs organized for input wholesalers and importers	96	
CB programs organized for value processors and traders	23	
Experiences exchange programs (workshops, open days, study trip...)	140	
	2927	

Source: M&E database, 2010

For the years 2006-2008, the number of participants in CB-activities was not registered centrally – these indicators were only introduced in 2009. The annual progress reports for the first years provide limited information: the 2006 progress report provides information on workshops and trainings but not on participants (apart from mentioning 25 participants in CASE related trainings). The 2007 progress report mentions that 6.500 people participated in capacity building programs and 570 participants on BBS gender sensitive approach program, but this seems not to be a complete overview. The 2008 report mentions 31.000 participants on capacity building programs.

For the total project period, we estimate that capacity strengthening activities delivered by 1000s+ were attended by some 120.000 – 140.000 persons. Since many cluster actors participate in more trainings across the years, the number of unique persons is probably much (>70%) lower.

In the country progress reports, submitted twice a year to IFDC Bamako, agribusiness cluster (ABC) advisors report on the type of training that was given. For instance, in 2008 a groundnut cluster in Nigeria received a training on a) entrepreneurship, b) gross margin analysis, c) nutrition, gender and HIV/AIDS and d) modern groundnut oil extraction. The 2009 report for the 1st semester Mali details that about 50% of training in the first six months had concerned production techniques and the other half issues of financial management, marketing and organizational strengthening.

There is no standardized way of reporting on which type of CB service was delivered (no systematic listing of the training subjects covered in the training programs), so no overview can be provided as to the division of realized activities across the four planned categories outlined in the SAADA proposal.

The case studies however provide more insight into the realized capacity-building activities. For an overview, see next page.

Table 8. TYPE OF CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING SERVICES DELIVERED BY 1000S+ FOR CASE STUDY CLUSTERS

YEAR OF SUPPORT	BENIN RICE	BURKINA FASO MAIZE	GHANA FISH	MALI SOYA	NIGER MILK	NIGERIA SORGHUM	TOGO ARACHIDE
1	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production techniques • Post-harvest recollection • Budgeting and M&E • Lobby & advocacy 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business management • Cooperative life • Planning of future harvests 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pond construction • Feeding practices • Pond management • Processing: smoking <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums with Rural banks • Field visit to FRI • Fish Mini Fair • Study tour 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market research (marketing and sales) • Processing techniques for female processors • Other: • Linkages with soya and cowpea (visit to research institute) • Installation of 20 demonstration plots • Support with concluding a contract • Exchange visit to agronomic research centre • Multi-stakeholder workshops • Market fair • 15 communication posters 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk to cheese processing • Hygiene • Packaging • Quality improvement • Marketing and sales • Other: • Multi-stakeholder workshop 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISFM technologies • Gross margin analysis • Other: • Establishment of 6 demonstration plots • Multi-stakeholder workshop 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISFM • Principles of working in a cooperation • Production of arachide • Seed production • Data collection
2	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby • Marketing • Production techniques for seed multiplication • Collective bargaining • Rice processing • Financial and administrative management <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of seed plots 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning • Water and soil conservation techniques <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of organic fertilizers • Use of Burkina phosphate 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pond Construction • Feeding practices • Pond management • Economics of Aquaculture • All male fingerling production • M&E / data collection • Association Building <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster Actor For a 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about soya and cowpea inputs • Phyto-sanitary techniques for cowpea production • Cooperative management of maize, soya and cowpea • Stocking of maize and soya • Collective procurement <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil fertility tests • Exchange visits and contractualization of maize, soya and cowpea • Setting up support system for financial institutions 	Same as for year 1	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe handling and use of agrochemicals • Compost making • Advocacy and cooperatives • Nutrition, gender and HIV/Aids 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISFM • Principles of working in a cooperation • Data collection • Management tools • CASE approach • Conflict management <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-stakeholder workshop
3	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshing earlier trainings on production techniques • Monitoring and data collection • Business plan development • CASE approach 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation techniques • M&E • Intensification of maize production techniques • Zai technique (rational use of fertilizers) • Water and soil conservation techniques 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hatchery and pond construction • Feeding practices • Hatchery and pond management • Association Building • Fish processing • M&E/ data collection 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-strengthening of agents at NGOs and MFIs to elaborate and assess business plans • Management of a cooperation: roles and responsibilities <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to four associations in business plan elaboration and liaising with banks • Research for a female association into improved transformation techniques of soya • Study visit to various industrial soya processors 			
4		<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation • M&E • Zai technique • Water and soil conservation techniques <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange workshop with MFIs • Study tours on warehouse receipt systems 		<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-strengthening of PO leaders in business management • Negotiation techniques <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning workshop for soya producers, processors and traders • Workshop for soya producers of different community unions to debate on new orientation on soya distribution/sale • Facilitate access to credit 			

On the basis of the data in table 9 and the case studies, we establish that:

- Capacity-building activities have been mostly delivered in the form of training;
- Producers have been the main beneficiaries of CB-activities (87% of all participants). Most attention has gone to the strengthening of their ‘individual’ and ‘collective’ competencies;
- Processors and business service providers have benefited of many capacity-building activities (50% of all activities);
- Less attention has gone to the strengthening of knowledge and competencies of other cluster actors such as financial service providers, research institutes and policy makers;
- Training subjects covered both **technological aspects** (product and process knowledge, ISFM, conservation techniques etc.) and **entrepreneurial aspects** (business planning, financial analysis, customer relationships, marketing and sales);
- Technological aspects have been demanded most by the cluster actors. Technical training figure most prominently in the cluster action plans;

Furthermore, we observe that technical trainings on commodities are very well appreciated by beneficiaries since they help improve the quality of products and address their needs. The higher the practical applicability of the training content, the higher the appreciation by trainees. For this reason, study visits to demonstration plots, research institutions and successful farmers are highly appreciated as well. Training on the CASE approach has been provided rather late to many clusters, despite being the central innovation of the project. Just some briefings had been done to BSS. For a long time, clusters had been promoted without them knowing or being able to explain to stakeholders what the approach is about. Positive effects are found from 2009 onwards. See also section 2.2.6.

The prevalence of technical training vis-à-vis entrepreneurial training is explained as follows:

The level of organization, capacities and knowledge within the supported clusters as well as the orientation of most BSS have necessitated an initial focus on technical aspects. Now that increases in income and production have been or are being realized and cluster actors have seen the (potential) benefits of collaboration, the interest and need for training on business aspects is becoming more relevant and pressing.

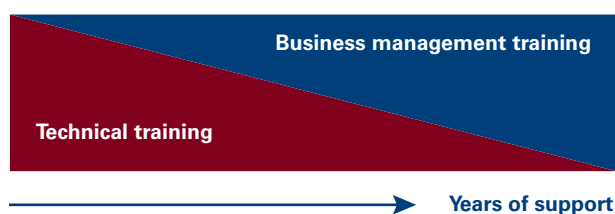


Figure 6 Phasing of capacity-building service subjects

3.1.2 Effect of training and learning

We started this chapter with the observation that there is a high appreciation across stakeholders, and amongst farmers most strongly, for the capacity-strengthening services provided by 1000s+. The services match their concerns and needs. Training for other actors within the cluster has been provided to a lower extent and is also lower appreciated (cf. survey and workshops), as these trainings tend to be less tailored to the needs of participants.

The trainings undoubtedly had their effect on the participants. The evaluation team has observed the following (spin-off) effects of training activities:

- Actors without exception speak with passion and affection about the program and plead for its continuation;
- Actors speak the ‘language’ of the program;

- Actors have grown used to looking at opportunities, rather than focus on problems, although the influence of country dynamics are considerable. As a result of being ‘into business’, opportunities are translated in new capacity strengthening needs: mechanization, conservation and storage, processing, contract farming, elaboration of business plans and requests for bank loans, enterprise management (processors), linkages and collaboration with agro-industry and prospection of new markets.
- Farmers and processors cite with enthusiasm what they have seen at demonstration plots and during excursions. Many of these visits have created breakthroughs, opening their eyes for the improvements that are possible. The importance of these trips should not be underestimated.

BOX 6. SOME QUOTES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EFFECTS OF 1000S+ CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING SERVICES

A Togolese farmer in an interview: “We just spent 2 years with the project, and farmers are already developing the reflex to find buyers before producing. “Let’s find the market first”; “let’s contract”; “let’s sell it together”; etc. Before, they just produced and waited for hypothetic buyers. So we can conclude that we are now moving progressively towards value chains”

A Beninese farmer in an interview: “Today illiterate farmers are behaving as specialists because we’ve been trained on new production and management methods. And we learnt that it’s better to produce less and being able to look after/ to take care of it, instead of increasing and not being able to care. We learnt how to negotiate with partners.”

A Nigerian farmer in the sub-national workshop: “I have learnt to keep records. It was not easy to structurally register my expenditures and revenues, but the BSS helped me to do so by coming by every week. After a while I had insight in my business. While I had thought that I was getting a good price for my rice, it turned out that I was producing at a loss. This was the actual gain of the training. Now I am doing things differently”

From the above, it is obvious that the various trainings are contributing to changing dynamics in agribusiness clusters. In general, trained farmers have mastered technical itineraries. Many are able to develop economic capacities (e.g. cash flow analysis) when they are engaged in AB-clusters. Collective selling is also an acquired asset of various FOs, particularly amid the ones that have been supported longer. Some are able to negotiate good prices with traders/merchants. 1000s+ contributed to making farmers use mineral fertilizers; and demonstrations and trials undertaken on different combinations convinced them about combining fertilizers (mineral with organic) and choosing dosage according to the potential of their soil.

Three issues have been identified which have negatively influenced the effectiveness of the 1000s+ capacity-strengthening services:

- **Lack of resources.** This is a problem encountered in all countries. Without means, producers are not able to apply the knowledge or new techniques learnt. Capacity building in the area of relations building and resource mobilization has received too little attention, as discussed in chapter 4.
- **Availability of the trainer.** Contracted trainers often come from far and return after a training session. This negatively affects after-training monitoring, advise and follow-up.
- **Quality of training modules and materials.** Various stakeholders have pointed out in interviews and workshops that the quality and/or availability of training modules is often not sufficient. This is also – and more strongly - the case for training materials left with trainees. Especially the lack of documents in local languages is regretted. Trainings are often organized in an ad-hoc manner with insufficient use of attractive and adapted training didactics.

- **Training didactics.** Various stakeholders have pointed out in interviews and workshops that the practical application of the training topic was limited. Most trainings within the program are attended by 30 people, often more. The following figure shows the four levels of learning (Kolb).

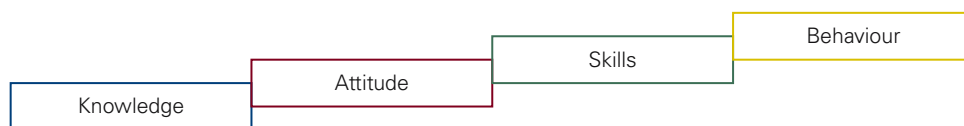


Figure 7 Kolb levels of learning

In a typical class-room setting (1 trainer, 30 participants), it may be possible to transfer knowledge and perhaps work on attitude change. But this setting is not conducive when the goal is to learn people new skills, as this requires intensive coaching, practicing, repetition and feedback in a much lower trainer to pupil ratio (2 trainers, 10 participants). The ability of a trainer to design a training which befits the learning needs of the participants and has the right combination of working forms determines to a great extent whether learning objectives are met. Most trainings tend to address the first two learning levels only, even if they intend to go beyond.

3.1.3 Social inclusion in capacity-strengthening services

When discussing inclusivity and representativeness of the CB services provided, two things are important, namely the extent to which:

- selected trainees are representative for all actors
- selected trainees are able to transfer knowledge to other actors

Table 8 in section 3.1.1 showed that, according to M&E statistics, women made up 36% of the participants in training and learning exercises in 2009. The case studies provide more insight into the dynamics of social inclusion at cluster level.

Table 9. SOCIAL INCLUSION ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES	
Benin, rice	Women have benefited less than men of capacity-building services despite their majority amongst poor and average farmers
Burkina Faso, maize	Producers were the prime beneficiaries of the 1000s+ services, then input traders, then collectors/distributors
Ghana, fish	Fish farming is quite capital and skill intensive. All farmers can benefit from all trainings if only they participate or show interest. However, the more well-to-do farmers have benefitted most from the trainings because they have the resources and means to apply the new technologies. Furthermore, the trainings focused mainly on fish farmers. Most women are however involved in processing and (to a lesser extent) in trading.
Mali, soya	Win-win situation for all actors involved, even though stakeholders testify that producers have benefitted most from the project. This is not surprising, given the fact that the PO was positioned at the centre of the cluster.
Niger, milk	Women were the main beneficiaries, given the strong focus on the processing of milk into cheese, which is typically their work. The trainings on processing, hygiene and quality and value chain strengthening were attended by a majority of women in 2008 and by women only in 2009.
Nigeria, sorghum	Services were open to all. However, richer farmers tend to represent the rest and benefit more from e.g. input distribution. The bigger they are, the more advantage they have of the new techniques. Women have not benefited much from technical training, as they are mainly into processing. They have benefited from nutrition and HIV/AIDS education, but their participation levels do not reflect the importance of the topics to them as mothers and caregivers.
Togo, groundnut	Women have greatly benefited (many being farmers) from ISFM, production and record keeping training, being most numerous. Processing women have benefited from a mill provided by the project (1-30 ton 2007-2009).

On the basis of the M&E data and the case studies, we conclude that women have benefited from the capacity-strengthening services, albeit to a lower extent than men. For many products, women are involved in processing rather than production. Since the 1000s+ focus for capacity-building has been strongest on improving production techniques, they have benefited less of the introduced technologies. More attention is needed for the training needs of women in 'mixed' clusters, e.g. clusters that are not dominated by women, and to processors. Because women tend to be more confronted with social and economic constraints which hinder them, for instance, to attend a training far away, innovative approaches are needed to involve women more. More conclusions regarding social inclusion are presented in section 6.7 - 'impact distribution'.

3.1.4 Transfer of knowledge

M&E data stipulate that over 600.000 households have been reached in four year's time. In section 2.4 we established that this figure rather lies around 372.000, because households indirectly reached (through BSSs in other programs) should in our view not be counted.

Assuming that some 35.000 unique actors have participated in trainings (cf. section 3.1.3), about 10% of actors have directly benefited from capacity-strengthening services. Realizing that - as with training participants - not all households counted may effectively be unique households, the reach of the program is probably somewhat lower. Nonetheless, the large majority of cluster actors is not directly reached by CB-services, which explains the importance of internal transfer of knowledge and skills within farmers' organizations and the agribusiness clusters at large.

The survey shows that learning within clusters needs to be further improved. This is the case for both farmers and other cluster actors. Farmer organizations appear to have better mechanisms to assure dissemination of knowledge and information than other actors, but neither are deemed sufficient.

Firstly, the numbers of people per PO involved in training are too limited to effectively disseminate learning to all others. Just a limited number of people attend trainings. Surely, training provides comparative advantages to those who participate. Restitution of training knowledge depends on the willingness to share information with others, the leadership and the arrangements made within each PO. Problems encountered in this regard are:

- Participants are selected on other grounds than their ability and willingness to report back to their group;
- Restitution is often delayed because it is organized during periodical meetings (because POs do not have means to organize ad hoc ones) at the end of these meetings in a hurry when members are already tired and inclined to go back;
- Finally there's also a problem of resources (for transport, mobilization of participants, lodging and per diem) to go to each group for restitution;
- Lack of adequate arrangements to ensure that training will be effectively transferred (selection of participants' logistics, organization of debriefing, vicinity of trainers for follow-up monitoring, training materials in local language, ...)

The AISSA network is unknown to most actors and has not been able to live up to its potential to function as a tool for knowledge and information sharing to date. It is striking that also experienced BSSs, the first target/membership group of AISSA, do not spontaneously speak about the network.

At the same time, we have encountered various examples of how effective cluster learning has been institutionalized:

BOX 7. IN THE SORGHUM CASE STUDY CLUSTER IN NIGERIA, consisting of 9.000 farmers, less than 0.5% of PO membership had a chance to participate in the training activities. Those trained proved well aware of the responsibility to transfer the knowledge to their base. Upon returning home, each participant would be required to report back to their respective producer organization. Learning within this cluster is happening because both trainers and the farmers have seen positive impacts in terms of adoption of technologies and results achieved. In Benin and Togo, less than 50% of people interviewed reported not to transfer the knowledge gained in training to others. However, in some FOs, people applied what they learnt and shared this systematically within their groups such as in Benin, where 30 women trained on rice stewing debriefed 35 other women.

→ This paragraph has established that 1000s+ has delivered effective and relevant capacity-building services. Between 2006-2009, about 120.000-140.000 people (around 35.000 unique persons) have been trained, of which 36% woman. Numerically, farmers were the main beneficiaries of the CB efforts (87%), but also processors and business service providers have profited. The capacity-building services have had significant direct and indirect effects on these cluster actors and contributed to changing dynamics in agribusiness. Other cluster actors, such as financial service providers and research institutes have not been much targeted. Their capacity to fulfill the role of cluster actor should be further strengthened. When it comes to the effectiveness of the training services, the reach and uptake of training activities can be further enhanced. Improvements are possible in the field of didactics (relevance of training methods, trainers and training material), knowledge transfer (availability of modules and tools, restitution by participants) and orientation (financial/business aspects, institutional strengthening).

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF FARMER ORGANIZATIONS

Has the program contributed towards making farmers' organizations (FOs) more effective?

3.2.1 Strengthening of PO capacities

In the previous section, it has been outlined that the majority of the capacity strengthening services delivered by 1000s+ were directly targeted at producer(s) (organizations). These services were to a large extent focused at the 2nd component of the 4 services mentioned in the 1000s+ project proposal: the '*individual*' competencies. With the entry of Agriterra to the program and the appointment of PO advisors (CNIÉPs) in each country (2008 or 2009), there came more attention for the 3rd component: strengthening of '*collective*' competencies – leadership, organizational and institutional issues.

Stakeholders are unanimously of the opinion that the services delivered to producer organizations have strengthened their capacities. POs benefitted of training on many subjects from 1000s+ such as cooperative life, management of activities, contracting, collective marketing, importance of M&E, strategic planning, negotiation, advocacy and lobbying, etc. Reported effects include:

- The appointment of the PO Advisor, delegated to the mandated producer organization at national level, appears to function well in reinforcing the institutional capacity of POs. For instance, in Togo and Benin, the assistance of the PO Advisor allowed POs to control how BSS are managing resources and cooperating with POs. Platforms are now capable to collect information from grassroots POs. There's more visibility and POs stand together;
- POs consistently worked on the improvement of the project (clusters ideas selection and assessment, monitoring through field visits, etc...). All this contributed to a better understanding by POs of the 1000s+ project and their role. Consequently this impacted (positively) on relationships between BSS and POs who became partners instead of receivers. As a result, PO's are now more in the 'drivers' seat'.
- At organizational level, the various trainings have contributed to new dynamics within POs. They are developing new reflexes (budget management, monitoring the work done by BSSs, collective marketing, standing together, voicing their concerns and opinions, partnering; awareness of their importance and potential to influence, presence in forum on agriculture and lobbying and advocacy;

Challenges remain:

- There is a strong need for consolidation and outscaling within the farmer groups: informing and training of other farmers is recurrently mentioned as a priority. This requires internal PO training and coaching capacities and training materials that are suited for adult learning in rural contexts and that allow for information sharing;
- An inventory of national farmers' movements is lacking. There is no overview of the performance/quality of producer organizations and what support they have received in the past. This was an activity foreseen in the tripartite agreement with Agriterria and ROPPA. Agriterria already has relations with quite a number of national and sub-national PO's.

3.2.2 PO service provision to farmers

Strengthened capacity of producer organizations should logically result in a more effective service delivery to their members. If farmers are convinced that being member of a PO brings them benefits which offset the cost of membership, an increase in the membership of cooperatives would be expected. As table 2 indicated, during the years of 1000s+ support, membership in the supported clusters increased with over 60%. This increase is not fully attributable to 1000s+, but at least it indicates the allure of these POs to ungrouped farmers.

The case studies report the following improvements in service delivery by POs to their members:

- In the fish cluster in Ghana, a PO successfully lobbied to obtain permission to dig holes for fish ponds in a mining area where this was previously not allowed. Whether this is the result of 1000s+ training on lobby and advocacy, is difficult to establish;
- In the sorghum cluster in Nigeria, funds generated from membership dues are being used to support the poorer farmers to buy inputs (albeit marginally);
- For the rice cluster in Benin, since 2007, the links of producer organization UNIRIZ-C with its local structures (UCR) have become stronger because of more frequent contact within the cluster, with a more regular payment of membership fees as one of its positive consequences;
- In Niger, the PO promoter of the cheese cluster (DEBBO) could be instrumental to scale out the positive effects of cheese production and marketing which is now only reaching 26 women, whereas the PO reports a potential reach of 75000 farmers;

-
- In the maize cluster in Burkina Faso, organized (group) sale has become a practice after 4 years of 1000s+ support. POs are now capable to facilitate collective bargaining and provide their members with useful information about production techniques, prices and availability of inputs etc;

Generally speaking, improvements in service delivery reported by stakeholders include a strengthened collective purchase of inputs, group sale, the availability of more market information and knowledge about ISFM, production techniques, demonstration sites, stronger lobby etc. In some cases, POs directly function as service providers to the supported cluster, as in the case of Togo where producer organization ANPAT has been sub-contracted to sensitize its members on yellow maize and the organization UAR to support farmers in elaboration of action plans. This unlike e.g. Benin where all POs are required to contract an external BSS.

It is noted that the longer the clusters have been supported by 1000s+, the more positive its members are about their services. For the case study clusters that started in 2008 (Niger, Nigeria and Togo), 1000s+ support has been too short to observe substantial service improvements, although it is remarkable that farmers of recent clusters have started talking business and perceiving opportunities.

Finally, well-structured, commodity-based organizations have the potential to generate internal resources, which could, among others, be used for hiring own staff and service providers (such as trainers). Just a few of the POs in the selected case studies reported having a collective bank account.

-
- Summarizing the findings in this section, we maintain that the capacity-strengthening services delivered by the 1000s+ project are likely to have contributed towards making producer organizations more effective. POs supported by the program are increasingly capable to represent and serve their members. The exact contribution of 1000s+ is hard to quantify, since many POs are supported by other donors too, or have been so prior to the start of 1000s+ support.

4. AB-cluster access to services, finance, technology and information

Introduction

While the survey conducted in all countries showed high appreciation by stakeholders for the capacity strengthening services delivered by 1000s+ (chapter 3), the statements regarding increased access to services, finance and information were scored significantly (8%) lower, indicating less appreciation for the results attained in this regard.

Indeed, as we will see in this chapter, results in the fields of improved access for cluster actors to services, resources, technologies and information have been mixed. While impressive results have been attained for access to inputs and technology, achievements in the field of increased access to private services, information and markets have been modest. Access to finance remains challenging for most cluster actors.

4.1 PRIVATE SERVICE PROVISION

To what extent has the program achieved that farmers are more effectively served by private service providers?

4.1.1 Farmers' access to private services

The question to be answered in this section is whether farmers as a result of the program have increased access to private services such as processing, trade and marketing and veterinary care. Both our general (interviews, survey, desk study) and in-depth (case studies) research point at two conclusions in this light:

1. Many new relations have been created in clusters, both within and between groups of actors.
The contacts are there and actors increasingly know how to make use of them;
2. However, few of these relations have thus far resulted in stable economic transactions among cluster actors.
And, stakeholder collaboration is not inducing the elaboration of bankable business plans. Many of the expected benefits from bringing actors together in a cluster appear not to have (yet) materialized. It must however be acknowledged that there is an inevitable delay between capacity strengthening and actual change in behavior.

The former is described in this section, the latter in section 4.2 below.

M&E data indicate that:

- an average cluster is composed of 4-5 different actor groups
- about 4.000 local entrepreneurs were involved in the supported clusters at the end of 2009

Case studies, combined with validation workshops, confirm that these figures are realistic. The number of unique private service providers is estimated around 1.500, given that various entrepreneurs are involved in more than one cluster.

Quantitatively, we find that the objective to involve at least 2.000 input dealers, traders, processors and other private service providers has not been achieved. Qualitatively, it is apparent that many existing business relationships have been reinforced and many new relationships between actors have been created across the 218 supported clusters in all 7 countries. The M&E system attempts to register the number of formal and informal business arrangements being concluded between producers and private sector actors (not necessarily those in their cluster):

Table 10. BUSINESS CONT(R)ACTS BETWEEN PRODUCERS AND PRIVATE ACTORS IN 2009 (M&E DATA)	
Number of business contracts signed between the cluster actors in 2009	556
Total number of business contracts fulfilled until the end of 2009	937
Number of informal (verbal) business agreements between the cluster actors	1.757
Number of informal business agreements fulfilled	1.063

The accuracy and relevance of these figures can be questioned: it appears that most day-to-day, old and new, business contacts are not captured by the M&E enumerators, implying that the actual figures of business transactions between cluster actors are much higher.

Furthermore, our research shows that most contracts between cluster actors are informal (cf. case studies). Contracts that are formally concluded suffer from a lack of observance. Farmers as well as buyers have difficulty respecting contractual agreements, not adhering to the agreed quality, volume or price. The signing of a contract between POs and buyers doesn't guarantee durable linkages, as illustrated by the following:

BOX 8. PRIVATE SERVICE PROVISION BY THE SAVANNA FARMER MARKETING COMPANY

The Savanna Farmer Marketing Company in Ghana buys on contractual basis sorghum, soya beans and peanuts from farmer organizations. After cleaning and packaging, Savanna sells the commodities to traders and processors, again on contractual basis. The contracts are essential to be able to guarantee supply, enabling a favorable price. Although an increasing number of farmers use the services of Savanna (in 2005 there were 2800 farmers selling to Savanna and in 2009 there were 8000 farmers), the problems are:

- delivery contracts are frequently not respected by the farmers
- only up to 30% of the production of the contracted farmers is sold to Savanna
- farmers tend to sell to Savanna in the peak of the harvest season (when the contractual price provided by Savanna is up to 10% higher than the traders offer) but not in the early or late periods of the harvest season (when the contractual price provided by Savanna is lower than the traders offer).

→ In short, the project has achieved that farmers are increasingly served by private service providers. Many business links have been established and/or reinforced at cluster level. Around 1500 unique private service providers are involved. The foundations for increased business between chain operators and supporters have been laid and the number of business transactions and opportunities has significantly increased, although difficult to quantify. Notwithstanding these achievements, in most clusters robust collaboration between cluster actors (in terms of concrete transactions) is still lacking. They need more time and efforts to include relevant stakeholders, develop necessary levels of trust between actors and attain the size and viability that make them attractive business partners.

4.2 RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Has the program contributed towards increasing or leveraging resources from other sources?

Support to resource mobilization

In chapter 3, we asserted that the large part of capacity-building services delivered by 1000s+ has concerned the more ‘technical aspects’ of value chain development: training in the CASE approach, production and processing techniques, integrated soil fertility management, etc. As the overview of CB-services for the 7 case studies (table 9, section 3.1.1) showed, business-oriented training comprised perhaps 20% of total training received. With more clusters maturing, the focus is gradually shifting to more business-oriented training. To support resource mobilization at cluster level, the following services were delivered:

- Training to farmers on record-keeping
- Cost-benefit /gross margin analysis
- Business plan development
- Financial management
- Marketing

The extent to which clusters have included these issues in their action plans greatly differs. Training farmers in record-keeping appears to be a standard (and very important) activity found across clusters. Whether the other items were addressed is determined by aspects as: number of years support to the cluster, level of organization and professionalism of cluster actors; success of introduction of improved production, harvesting and processing techniques and the business-orientation of the BSS and AB cluster advisor. In general, actors note that training on financial aspects, in particular writing a business plan, has been limited.

In addition to capacity-building on financial and business aspects, 1000s+ has undertaken various efforts to support resource mobilization at cluster level, mainly through National Steering Committees (NSCs), AB cluster advisors, PO advisors and BSSs. For instance:

- NSC members in various countries, while visiting clusters for monitoring purposes, were able to establish high-level links with interesting actors in the region;
- In Benin, the BSS ‘DEDRAS’, supporting the cashew value chain, managed to attract funds from the Millennium Challenge Account. At the local level, the BSS (together with the AB cluster advisor) assisted producer organizations to enter into partnerships with parties as VECO, PAFIRIZ, MCA, GTZ, AFDI, DED, etc.
- In Togo, international cooperation did not fully restart. Now that donors are progressively coming back, IFDC Togo is watching out for opportunities. For instance, the SAADA staff member in charge of rural finance organized an excursion and sharing visit between staff members of the Banque Regionale de Solidarite (BRS) from Benin, Togo and Burkina Faso to the Banque Nationale pour le Développement Agricole (BNDA) in Mali. In Togo, BRS has subsequently provided credit to some cluster actors.
- The AB Cluster Advisor in Nigeria makes a point of actively linking the clusters in his country to donors and negotiating in-kind contributions from the governments of the 5 states in which SAADA is operating for free use of transport, agricultural inputs etc. Owing to his efforts, other donors now providing kind and cash include the UNDP Millennium Village (groundnuts cluster Kaduna) and the World Bank BDS project (catfish cluster Kaduna). For 2010, guaranteed cash contributions to the program comprise 200.000 USD by DFID and 20.00 USD by BiD Network;

In short, in all countries efforts are undertaken to assist cluster actors to mobilize funds for the implementation of action plan activities or investments. The intensity and mode of these efforts vary, depending amongst others on the drive, competencies and network of supporting actors such as IFDC staff, PO Advisors, NSCs, BSS etc. These efforts were not driven by shared 1000s+ goals such as a phasing-out strategy.

4.2.2 Mobilization of resources at cluster level

As outlined in section 2.1.1., IFDC monitors four aspects of resource mobilization: 1) Contribution of stakeholders in 1000s+ events; 2) Co-funding by other projects of IFDC and partner institutions; 3) Credit mobilized for cluster activities and 4) Financial contributions of cluster stakeholders to cluster building activities. Table 12 shows the reported achievements for the third aspect, looking at the mobilized credits that have been reported by clusters per country:

Country	Total amount mobilized through credits	# of MFI/banks involved	Clusters involved in credit mobilization	Total # of clusters	Data available for	Average per year (approximation)*
Benin	187.644	5	5 (14%)	35	2006 and 2009	93.822
Burkina Faso	901.631	4	15 (37%)	41	2006-2009	225.408
Mali	1.307.728	9	18 (44%)	41	2006-2009	326.932
Ghana	360.257	NA	NA	15	2009	360.257
Niger	184.732	7	5(16%)	32	2006-2008	61.577
Nigeria	193.192	2	1 (4%)	25	2007	193.192
Togo	5.917.144	16-19	18 (67%)	27	2006-2009	1.479.286
Total	€ 9.052.329					€ 391.496

* Averages per year calculated by Berenschot on basis of M&E data: not for each country information was available per year (some for 1 or 2 years only, other for 4 years)

According to this data, about 9 million Euro has been mobilized by actors in the supported clusters in the years 2006-2009. Unfortunately it is unknown who has applied for these funds (a cooperative, an individual farmer or processor...), what activities are undertaken with these credits, and whether there is any relation with the 1000s+ project at all. For this reason, IFDC does no(t longer) include these amounts in their co-funding account. Nonetheless, the data indicate that, apparently, cluster actors have been able to generate funding for their activities.

Togolese cluster actors are by far most successful in obtaining credits, accounting for 65% of the funds mobilized. Nearly 20 institutions are reported to be involved, which is a much higher number than in the other countries. Also the percentage of clusters that are involved in resource mobilization is significantly higher. Explaining these differences is the fact that in Togo, in the absence of donor funds/grants for the country, the government of Togo (especially the Ministry of Local Development) made a provision for a guarantee fund for banks. Many actors profited from that construction. The repayment rate is reportedly very low though (20%).

BOX 9. FISH FARMER IN KADE, GHANA: “I had received training on fish farming, had learnt how to grow fish and how and when to feed them. Through the 1000s+ project, I had been able to obtain 6.000 fingerlings. Unfortunately at some point, I had not enough resources to buy the feed. Instead of feeding the fish 7 bags per week, I fed them 3 every two weeks. After a month, all fish had perished.”

Our analysis of the business plans developed by cluster actors known to IFDC showed that most were developed by cooperatives (section 2.3.2). Individual farmers report to have difficulty obtaining credits, as a result of:

- Lack of capacity to develop bankable business plans

The case studies, survey and interviews show that many cluster actors, farmers most strongly, lack the knowledge, skills and network to develop a business case for their livelihood and present that case convincingly to a banks or micro-finance institution. In fact, good ideas appear more scarce than money.

- Lack of trust and mutual understanding between farmers and banks

Banks/MFIs consider the agricultural sector as high-risk because of the vulnerability of the sector to external conditions and the volatility of the produce. Furthermore, banks/MFIs fear the loan management practices of borrowers, having had bad experiences with low repayment rates and contract infringements. At the same time, local entrepreneurs have had bad experiences because of mismanagement and fraud of banks/FMI's, as indicated during workshops in Niger and Mali. As a result, few adequate credit arrangements exist. The involvement of financial service providers in AB clusters is weak.

➔ In short, the question whether the program contributed towards increasing or leveraging resources from other sources is answered with: probably yes. Cluster actors have been able to mobilize 9 million Euro (of which 6 million in Togo) for their activities. A relation with 1000s+ is however hard to establish. Capacity-building services in the field of financial competences have been few. The weak connection of financial institutions to the AB-clusters and the lack of resources that individual actors encounter indicate that there is still a lot of room for improvement. Priority should be given to the practical involvement of financial institutions and the development of financial agricultural products and modalities for risk management. While the program should not have a credit facility or investment fund (as this would distort its market-orientation), the provision of limited financial support for testing new technologies or for kick-starting activities of local entrepreneurs not yet eligible for credit could be explored.

4.3 ACCESS TO INPUT

Has access to and efficient use of agricultural inputs in the clusters improved as a result of program activities?

Stakeholders at national and cluster level agree that the program has contributed to increased knowledge about inputs. From all statements in the survey, those related to inputs are most positively appraised. Through the trainings, producers have learned how to efficiently use agricultural inputs.

The case study analysis shows that 1000s+ has been quite effective in facilitating farmers' access to inputs, especially seeds and fertilizers:

Table 12. ACCESS TO INPUTS ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES

Benin, rice	Owing to its intense collaboration with the National Research Institute, UNIRIZ-C now has a sufficient quantity of improved seed which it has been able to multiply with the financial support of IFDC for its producers. The PUASA program has supplied producers with seeds and fertilizers. This has contributed to the respecting of recommended doses and trajectories.
Ghana, fish	Inputs needed by fish farmers are: certified fingerlings, feed, credit for pond construction, labor and harvesting nets. All of these, except credit are readily available: before the project, fingerlings were not certified, now they are. Before, fish feed was of bad quality. Now, high protein feed is used. Before, credit was not available. Now it is. Finally, before the project farmers had difficulty finding land. Now, their access to land is improved as a result of advocacy by the cluster. For input dealers, the low levels of use limits scale economies. Costs of distribution remain high because of the dispersed nature of farmers, who have just one or two ponds.
Mali, soya	Before the project, farmers used few fertilizers and no insecticides. Today they report to use the prescribed inputs, having adopted the mixed use of organic and chemical fertilizers. Producers generally buy soya seeds on the market. Costs for inputs have increased a lot in the past years, with record prices at the moment. The government has stepped in to provide subsidized inputs to producers.
Nigeria, sorghum	Inputs that are now used: improved seed, seed dressing, herbicide, manure, fertilizer, pesticide for stem borers and storage pesticides. Manure is the only input farmers used before they became members of the cluster. Farmers also apply all the technologies taught them. However they are unable to apply ISFM technologies to the all farm land because of difficulties of accessing manure and the materials for producing compost.
Togo, groundnut	1000s+ has reached 90 seed producers and facilitated the access to improved seeds to nearly 9000 producers.

Our research findings further indicate that while knowledge and use of proper inputs have strongly increased, access to inputs remains problematic. Producers are experiencing serious challenges and difficulties in purchasing inputs. The market for inputs is in most countries distorted, with governments providing subsidies and prohibiting imports. This has its effects on price (unpredictable), quality (often insufficient) and availability (distribution of inputs is politicized, importance of strategic connections). Many farmers lack the resources to buy the quality and variety they would need, provided that they are available. Experiences with collective procurement suggest however that farmer collective action can improve the situation. Input dealers also experience difficulty in supplying the market with inputs. They face many bustles: getting official recognition as input dealer by government agricultural services; getting scientific recommendations on fertilizer formulas, tendering for input supply contracts, getting bank loans to purchase inputs, etc.

Access to inputs, especially to seeds and fertilizers is at stake and on the agenda in most countries. Development actors, platforms and Apex POs are lobbying and advocating for change/improvement of relevant policies. 1000s+ supports these activities.

→ In short, the knowledge of cluster actors - farmers most prominently but input dealers as well – about agricultural inputs has strongly increased as a result of 1000s+ activities. This has resulted in, amongst others, increased use of organic fertilizers, higher quality products and safer procedures. The access to inputs however remains challenging, because of the high politicization of the input market and the high costs of seeds, fertilizers and land. Findings related to the application of ISFM techniques are presented in chapter 6 (impact).

4.4 NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Are farmers and agri-business operators more effective as a result of the introduction of new technologies?

4.4.1 Technological innovations

For this section, three sources of information are used: M&E database, survey and case study.

Firstly, the M&E database renders impressive outcomes as regards the numbers of technological innovations that have been realized by the program. Cluster members confirm to have increasingly adopted the technologies advocated by 1000s+. The evaluation team deems these figures reliable. It is noted that many of these technological innovations have not been documented well, as a result of the AISSA network not being operational for a long time.

Table 13. TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

Indicators	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of new agricultural technologies validated by farmers (for men/women)	42	117	146	359
Number of new livestock farming technologies validated by breeders(men/women)	3	8	24	55
Number of new storage, processing and handling technologies validated by local entrepreneurs (men/women)	48	109	227	368

Source M&E data

Respondents in the national-level survey were positive about the technological innovations brought about by the 1000s+ project. They confirm that new technologies are being used, although farmers are somewhat less positive about these gains than IFDC staff and other actors. An explanation may be that less resource-endowed farmers feel hampered in the adoption of the techniques, because they cannot make the necessary investments.

Lastly, looking at cluster level, we find the following changes:

Table 14. TECHNOLOGY ACCESS ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES

Case	Assessment local consultants
Benin, rice	1000s+ has contributed to the adoption of new practices by a) financial assistance to training activities; b) extension of practices to 427 producers; c) making available inputs for the production of certified seeds and d) facilitating relations between UNIRIZ and other actors.
Burkina Faso, maize	Prior to the project, farmers did not use chemical fertilizers. It is because of the intensification of maize advocated by the project that natural fertilization techniques combined with chemical inputs has become the present-day reality. 1000s+ provides regularly information about new technologies. However, the collaboration with research institutes remains limited to study tours.
Ghana, fish	The innovations that farmers have been taught and are using are following good agricultural practices in aquaculture: site selection, soil suitability testing, preservation of fish to reduce post-harvest losses, pond management to ensure high productivity, water management, proper pond construction, appropriate methods of applying manure. In addition, farmers have shifted from the old practice of stocking ponds with fingerlings from the wild to stocking with all male fingerlings. Depending on the type of technology, farmers estimate that 70-90% of them are using the new technologies. The Directorate of Fisheries/Ministry of Food and agriculture is the source of most of the technologies. Input dealers also provide advice on how to use their inputs. Finally farmers share information gained from experience. 1000s+ supported the Ministry to provide this technical innovation to partners. The technology transfer activities are included in action plans and 100% financed by 1000s+.
Mali, soya	Production increases are due primarily to the impact of innovations rather than an increase in area under production. The new techniques on fertilization, production, conservation and marketing have brought about economic gains. The technologies are positively appraised.
Niger, milk	Newly introduced technologies: modern transformation techniques for milk into cheese; hygiene practices and use of lactoserum.

Nigeria, sorghum	Farmers apply new methods of growing sorghum and seem to have shifted largely away from traditional methods. Old ways of treating seed, protection crops in store have been abandoned and farmers now use herbicide for weeding, use fertilizers in combination with manure. They also follow a specific method and regime of fertilizer application. Planting is also by dibbling with treated seed. The ideas for the technologies are from IFDC (in particular the ISFM technologies) and the Kaduna State Research and Extension system.
Togo, groundnut	1000s+ in fact relaunched the intensive cultivation of groundnut. Years ago, another project promoted the farming of groundnut with specific fertilizers, which are no longer available on the market. Hence, the use of fertilizers is not new. One notes a reluctance of many farmers to use them, preferring (the cheaper) crop rotation technique (maize, vegetables). The small group that uses fertilizers is hampered because the product is controlled by one party: DRAEP.

→ From the above, we can conclude that many new technologies have been introduced by the program. The knowledge of new technologies for production and soil management has strongly increased. This increase can to a large extent be attributed to 1000s+. Cluster actors are eager to adopt the new technologies, having become convinced of their added value. Most easily adopted are those innovations that are supportive to the activities of producers or processors and bring about tangible advantages. Widespread adoption of new technologies is hampered by lack of funds or other resources (such as land). Improvements are further possible in the documentation and exchange of knowledge about technologies, as well as in further including demonstrations and practical assignments in training on technologies.

4.5 MARKET INFORMATION

Do farmers and agri-business operators have better access to market information as a result of the program?

Exchange of market information is key for competitive cluster development. However, the national-level survey renders relatively low scores on the item of access to market information. Interviews and workshops confirm the impression that the influence of 1000s+ on the availability or quality of market information has been limited. Attempts to link 1000s+ to market information systems such as MIR+ and MISTOWA have had limited success.

The case studies confirm that interventions to improve market information systems have not been very visible to cluster actors or have not gotten much attention.

Table 15. ACCESS TO MARKET INFORMATION ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES	
Benin, rice	The contribution of 1000s+ to improve market information is limited to the organization of a workshop in 2009 for cluster actors about price, export opportunities and monitoring (traceability) systems. Indirectly, actors have benefited from a better position of UNIRIZ-C vis-à-vis wholesale dealers and public extension services.
Burkina Faso, maize	Radio, television and discussions with input dealers are the main sources for information about the prices of production factors. Information about product prices stems from own data collection by producers. The consolidation the lead OP has made the sharing of information much easier – there is a specialized committee responsible for information collection and exchange. The exact contribution of 1000s+ is difficult to establish. Activities have not been directly aimed at facilitating market information.

Ghana, fish	<p>Sources of information for farmers are the Apex Farmers Organisation of Ghana, (APFOG), MoFA and input dealers. The information is delivered through one-on-one contact with extension officers, and flyers from input dealers on how to apply inputs they supply.</p> <p>Farmers get price information through peers and input dealers, and through their interaction with traders. According to them, there has not been improvement in their access to market information. The little they have learnt about marketing is the weighing of fish rather than selling by numbers of fish. Information is informally shared during stakeholder meetings, training sessions and study tours. Information is however not readily available. There have been no interventions to establish a market information system for the fish cluster. Farmers search for information individually and not as a group which does not yield much result.</p>
Mali, soya	<p>Through the training within 1000s+, producers report to better understand the role of market information. Sources however remain informal and their reliability questionable.</p>
Niger, milk	<p>There is hardly any formal market information that is useful for marketing milk and cheese. Prices are established at the local level. It is to the advantage of the cheese producers that the offer does not meet market demand. Direct sale to bus travelers at policy checkpoint in Yeya and at local markets (Lamamé and Malbaza) is easy. Some marketing intelligence is coming up: favorable price of large cheese tablets as compared to small ones, aim to extend cheese production period beyond rainy season (higher prices), petty trading (cutting cheese tablets in smaller pieces leading to a higher price per tablet). Contacts are established with a local trader which may open doors to further away markets, where demand is reportedly high.</p>
Nigeria, sorghum	<p>The sources of market information for farmers are input dealers, trades and the State Agricultural Research institute in Zaria, which publishes market prices weekly. These have always been the sources. Cluster actors have not developed a strategy to improve access to market information.</p>
Togo, groundnut	<p>The main contribution of 1000s+ comes from the increased intensity of working sessions between CAP and various actors, in particular processors and dealers about the market price for groundnut.</p>

- In short, it is found that the influence of 1000s+ on market information provision has been limited. Reported improvements mainly result from increased interaction between the stakeholders (informal exchange of information). Although 1000s+ is not a market information systems (MIS) project, more could be done to make existing information better available to local entrepreneurs. Input dealers, traders, processors and other buyers can be more effectively encouraged to provide market information to producers.



5. Enabling environment

- What have program implementers at regional and national level done to effectively improve the enabling environment?
 - What have local stakeholders done to effectively improve the enabling environment?
-

Introduction

The influence of the program on the policy environment is one of the most difficult things to establish, because it is one of the most difficult things to achieve. In the previous chapter we saw that the large-scale uptake of innovations is hampered because of 'access' problems. Many of these tend to have political components. In the CASE approach, a conducive institutional environment is a key condition for the effective functioning of commodity value chains. In the program set-up, it was hence foreseen that difficulties encountered by stakeholders at cluster level would be aggregated and taken up by different project actors, such as ROPPA and National Steering Committees, to be addressed through advocacy.

In the national-level survey, the low score given to the program's impact on the surrounding environment (13% lower than average) suggests that respondents are sceptical about the impact of the 1000s+ project on the policy and business environment although they perceive IFDC as an institution that has the position and capacity to do so. They are more positive about effects at cluster and national level than at regional level, but assign high importance to the influence of other factors.

5.1 REGIONAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Interviews with ROPPA staff revealed that amongst the RAC members there is a predominant sentiment that advocacy at regional level is not a task of a grassroots program such as SAADA/1000s+. Active support to regional (West-African) policy development by SAADA is therefore exceptional. In 2006, IFDC supported the preparation and implementation of a regional fertilizer summit and its follow-up. Only in the 2009 work plan, it was foreseen that at least one advocacy/lobbying activity would be undertaken (for example on free movement of people and goods). However, the 2009 report indicates on this activity: *Not yet started. This activity is still to be further developed and should be based upon constraints identified at the cluster and commodity chain levels.*

- Beyond the framework of SAADA, ROPPA has undertaken advocacy and lobbying activities at regional level towards ECOWAS and WAEMU, alone or in cooperation with West African network of agriculture chambers and international NGOs. A few examples:
- Advocacy towards ECOWAS and WAEMU to take into account and to mention family farming in ECOWAP and WAEMU policy, and not to promote large scale farms at the expense of small farmers;
- Contribution to implementation of ECOWAP (ECOWAS agriculture policy) and WAEMU policy in countries through elaboration of PRIA and PNIA (Regional/National Agriculture Investment Plans) in the frame of implementation of CAADP plans;
- ROPPA has advocated together with other actors to make ECOWAS and WAEMU create Regional Funds for Agriculture Development;

- ROPPA is partnering with research institutes (CORAF, CILSS, FARA, etc.) to persuade ECOWAS and WAEMU to fund these institutes so research can be focused on the regional specific relevant issues and not on northern donors interest.
- Lessons and experiences from 1000s+ led ROPPA to adopt a new structure with two dimensions: political dimension (with advocacy and facilitation role) and economic dimension (with support and promotion of value chains).

Finally, it can be said that SAADA contributes to the region’s leading regional agricultural policy plan:

BOX 10. ECOWAP/CAADP. In 2005, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), jointly with the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEDAP), developed an action plan for the period 2005-2010 for the development of the agricultural sector: the ECOWAP/CAADP action plan. The action plan provides the framework for formulation and implementation of concrete investment programs at national and regional level. The ECOWAP/CAADP action plan aims to contribute to improvements in terms of agricultural policies, agriculture commodity markets, income from agriculture, sustainable environment, enterprise development related to the agricultural sector, and natural resource management. Member States have developed national action plans on the basis of the framework. Without directly developing or improving regional policies, it is obvious that SAADA contributes to the implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP action plan, in particular to the sections on agriculture commodity markets, income from agriculture, sustainable environment, enterprise development related to the agricultural sector, and natural resource management.

5.2 NATIONAL-LEVEL POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Within the organizational set-up of the program, there are sufficient opportunities for influencing the policy environment (think about the role of ROPPA, the NSCs, the PO advisors etc.). Whether this effectively works in practice depends to a great extent on the specific actor constellations in the cluster and the country. It is remarkable that the respondents in the survey for Nigeria are considerably more positive about the impact of the 1000s+ project on the policy environment than the respondents in other countries. It appears that in this country, more has been achieved in terms of influencing the environment. One explanation may be that governmental agencies in Nigeria are quite closely connected to the supported clusters, as in the example of the Kaduna Agricultural Development Program (KADP) in the case study.

The SAADA monitoring data indicate an increase in lobbying events from 2006 to 2009:

Table 16. LOBBY EVENTS				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of successful lobbying events towards a better business environment at local level	7	30	92	53
Number of successful lobbying events towards a better business environment at national or international level	2	21	31	23

These figures however, do not correspond with the totals from the country reports and are therefore considered unreliable. In addition, the relevance of the indicator ‘successful lobbying event’ is debatable. The M&E database

does not capture qualitative achievements. Efforts are currently undertaken to collect success stories in the field of policy influence, but these were not available yet. The evaluation team collected some examples of advocacy activities at national level:

BOX 11. ADVOCACY AT NATIONAL LEVEL. On the promotion of smart use of fertilizers in Ghana. Several IFDC programs (amongst which Mistowa and SAADA) supported the Ghanaian government in:

- registration and training of input dealers (2007)
- the start of the Ghana Agro-dealers Development Project (2007)
- the elaboration by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture of a whitepaper on agro-input use (2008)

In Nigeria, subsidized fertilizer is distributed via governmental organizations, politicians, and the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN, the National Farmers Platform). AFAN received last year about 25% of the available subsidized fertilizer. The subsidy percentages may vary from state to state and range from 25 to 50%. The volume of the subsidized fertilizer is limited and part of it actually does not reach the Nigerian farmers (due to illegal export). Subsidized fertilizer is often used as ‘reward’ for loyalty and its distribution is politicized. Farmers thus cannot count on provision of subsidized fertilizer, and in addition distribution is often delayed. Meanwhile, the private market for fertilizers is distorted, although buying more expensive from input dealers is often a better guarantee for timely provision of sufficient quality fertilizer than waiting for uncertain provision of subsidized fertilizer. IFDC, through SAADA, contributes to more transparency in subsidized fertilizer distribution by informing producers on distribution procedures and by reinforcing producer organizations that may claim their rights.

Other examples were on road harassment (Togo) and access to loans for small farmers (Nigeria), contributions to the ECOWAP/CAADP action plan (Benin).

5.3 CLUSTER-LEVEL POLICY ENVIRONMENT

At cluster level, some positive effects of policy interventions have been reported:

Table 17. **INFLUENCE ON THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT – EXAMPLES FROM THE CASE STUDIES**

Benin, rice	The environment for rice cultivation is favorable. Political support is high and many support structures exist. With 1000s+ support, UNIRIZ has undertaken several lobby & advocacy actions. The main challenge remains rice donations and imports. Work on this topic is not very successful to date.
Burkina Faso, maize	The policy environment for the maize cluster in Koubri is favorable. National Steering Committee members participate in national workshops, permitting them to align the project with governmental programs.
Ghana, fish	There are positive aspects of the policy environment, including prioritization of fish farming in the food and agriculture policy, free extension services for farmers, and ban on importation of cultured fish. The high interest rates and generally low funding for agriculture has negatively affected the cluster activities. No successful lobby attempts have yet been reported (weak level of organization within the cluster).
Mali, soya	The producer organization Union Communale is increasingly taking up a role to advocate on behalf of its members. For instance when Ourekila was flooded during the harvesting season, Union Communale intervention resulted in the involvement of Yorosso officials.
Niger, milk	The major (informal) lobby activities were efforts of women and their organization DEBBO to convince local leaders to accept cheese production and marketing as a income generating activity for women. This was successful in 3 of the 5 sites. Economic performance, exemplified by higher daily income and contributions to household economy, contribute to the recognition that cheese production is good. Issues related to animal feeding and health have not been addressed. The national policies recognize that milk production has important potential to reduce poverty in rural areas. This recognition could be harnessed.

Table 17. **INFLUENCE ON THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT – EXAMPLES FROM THE CASE STUDIES**

Nigeria, sorghum	The Kaduna Agricultural Development Program (KADP) is the BSS for the sorghum cluster. KADP is well connected to other governmental agencies and research institutions. The environment is quite conducive: key government policies that affect sorghum are free extension services, fertilizer subsidy and restriction on the importation of barley for the breweries.
Togo, groundnut	The policy environment for groundnut is not very positive, given the situation of the country. The project has provided CAP Tamonga (apex organization for 47 grassroots POs, cluster leader) with the opportunity to promote groundnut. The 1000s+ project has contributed as follows: IFDC has conducted a national survey about road blocks (tracasserie routières). The results are being shared with border guards, gendarme, police men, ministry, POs and others. The recommendations yet have to be implemented. Advocacy is being undertaken for the liberalization of the input market. The project is assisting to develop a proper lobby strategy for CAP. In short, efforts are undertaken to improve the political environment for the cluster.

→ In short, we conclude that the evaluation questions in this chapter cannot be answered quantitatively. The M&E database does not capture qualitative achievements. Efforts are currently undertaken to collect success stories in the field of policy influence. But our findings on the basis of multiple research methods indicate that the achievements in terms of improvement of the enabling environment thus far have been modest.

In the beginning of the program, the conditions for effective influencing of the policy environment were not yet in place. However, the project set-up and the current number of AB clusters now allow for a more prominent role in policy development. Where multi-stakeholder structures have been put in place, at cluster and at national level, 1000s+ is well-gearred to influence stakeholders. For each commodity there are concrete issues at stake which can be taken up by commodity-oriented federations. Cross-cutting issues that concern farmers in general should be taken up by national farmers' platforms.

6. Sustainable impact

- To what extent has the program had a verifiable and measurable impact in terms of stated objectives in the target countries for SAADA A?
 - What are the perceptions of stakeholders on the role of the program in the realization of the results?
 - Is there additional evidence that supports conclusions about the possible impact of the program?
-

Introduction

The purpose of the evaluation is, amongst others, to verify whether the reported impact gains have indeed been realized. To establish this, we have conducted primary research at grass-root level: the case studies. The main quantitative source of information in this chapter therefore are the case studies. The national-level survey and the interviews conducted provided us with the more qualitative insights of 1000s+ impact. We start with the main findings of the survey and zoom in at different aspects of impact achieved in the seven selected clusters. For a note on the representativeness of the selected clusters, we refer to annex 2 on methodology.

Survey findings

In the survey, the chapter with statements about the sustainable impact of the 1000s+ project has received relatively low scores (9% lower than average).

The survey reveals that according to respondents:

- 1000s+ has contributed strongly to increased agricultural productivity and income and (less strongly) to improvement of food security;
- The program has contributed to some degree to increase in farm land under sustainable cultivation, and to enhanced business for input dealers, traders, processors;
- These impact results cannot be entirely attributed to the interventions of 1000s+ - other factors play an important role in the achievement of the impact objectives;
- The replication of the CASE approach is quite weak. It seems that the realised impacts are limited to the involved clusters.

These findings are explored in the following.

6.1 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

In the perception of the stakeholders consulted for this research, agricultural productivity strongly increased as a result of SAADA. This perception is confirmed by the monitoring data: it is reported that an average of 99% change in agricultural productivity has been achieved by 2009. The evaluation team makes the following comments:

- As was remarked by a regional IFDC staff member, the term 'productivity' is often confused with 'production'. It appears that the data discussed in this section indeed relate to production increases rather than productivity;

- The target of 30% productivity change in 2010 refers to 1 million households, whereas actually 372.627 households have been reached in 2009, representing 37% of the volume targeted;
- The reported actual is based on selected samples in clusters. The evaluators noticed several cases in which the samples represented less than 1% of the total number of producers in the cluster and included mainly more well-to-do farmers;
- The reported actual is influenced by considerable variations in accuracy and reliability of information collected by different BSSs;
- The average percentage includes great variations in achievements between the clusters. Sometimes, spectacular increases have been reported, for example 500% productivity increase in a pork cluster in Togo;

Table 18. IMPACT ON PRODUCTIVITY ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES		
	M&E data IFDC	Assessment local consultants
Benin, rice	Yield (kg/ha) increase of 35% from 2006 to 2008 (2009 saw heavy rains destroying harvest)	Yield increases are around national averages (38%) except for 2009, when national yield was much higher. The influence of the PUASA project of the government, which was initiated following the food crisis and which eases access to productive factors, on these reported yield increases is significant, as well as the efforts taken by UNIRIZ-C and other donors, such as VECO, outside of the project scope.
Burkina Faso, maize	From 2147 kg/ha in 2006 to 3222 kg/ha in 2009. Increase in production of 50%.	According to interviewed producers, their maize production did not exceed 1 tons/ha before the project. Now, their fields render more than 3 tons/ha. This is in line with the M&E data.
Ghana, fish	Productivity of ponds have increased from about 580Kg /Ha to 5700Kg/Ha from 2007 to 2009. A near 10-fold increase in 3 years.	Productivity of fish farming has increased. This is measured both in terms of weight gain and quality of fish. With the application of full complement of technology and cultural practices, tilapia can reach a weight of 300 – 500g (2-3 fishes per kilogram) in 6-8 months. Few farmers are however making this maximum because of limitations of funds for feeding especially. Estimates with individual farmers suggest current yields of about 2000Kg/Ha (5000 fishes in standard size pond of 20x30 meters at about 4 fishes per Kg). This is still a phenomenal gain in productivity, albeit much less than what the M&E data suggest.
Mali, soya	Average return of soya has increased from 600 kg/ha in 2006 to 1211 kg/ha	Productivity gains realized by the project are substantial. The M&E data appear realistic, although 600 kg/ha is rather low: various farmers indicated they had a production of 800-900 kg/ha before the project. Production increases are the result of technical innovations rather than the extension of the soya practice.
Niger, milk	Baseline data not available	At the start, cheese production existed at the level of some households, but no data were available. The 1000s+ intervention revitalized the dormant activity and led to the processing of around 20,000 liters of milk. For processing, the number of cheeses (of different sizes) per liter is an indicator for processing efficiency. These data are roughly available. More indirectly, animal productivity in terms of liters per day is an important indicator. This productivity depends on the quality of feeding, an issue not (yet) addressed in the cluster activities.
Nigeria, sorghum	1050 kg/ha in 2008 2000 kg/ha in 2009 (100% increase)	The estimates of productivity changes are reliable based on reports by farmers in different interactions (individually, executives of farmer groups and in the workshop forum). Productivity in sorghum farming has improved over the last two years from less than 1 ton/ha before the cluster began to about 2 tons or more. The productivity increase is due to the adoption of improved farming practices and use of new inputs. The increases are sustainable because although farmers complain about costs, the real problem is lack of liquidity and not that the inputs are not profitable. However yield increments are likely to taper off in a two or three years as farmers attain the expected potential of the technologies.
Togo, ground-nut	Average revenues at demonstration plots are 75% higher than in the usual farmer's practice. Production (kg/ha) varied from 320 in 2008, 1708 in 2009 and 700 in 2009.	The M&E data for 2008 are reasonable because the reported revenues by interviewed producers vary from 800 to 1600 kg/ha. 2009 was a catastrophic year because of floods, which explains the drop in production. The revenue increases for all 47 POs making up CAP are more than twice as high as the national average. This increase in production and revenue can be attributed to 1000s+. Explaining the differences are 1) a higher application of organic inputs and 2) better application of the ISFM practices, in particular cereal rotation.

The case study analysis shows that M&E data about production increases, despite methodological concerns mentioned earlier in this report, are rather reliable. There is some overestimation, but underestimation as well. All together, the outcomes reported by IFDC are deemed quite realistic.

- ➔ On the basis of empirical research in 7 case study clusters, combined with a critical assessment of M&E data, and validation in interviews and workshops, it is concluded that the impact objective to reach 50% average increases in agricultural productivity (production) for the farmers supported by 1000s+ is met, albeit for a lower number of farmers than targeted.

6.2 INCOME GROWTH

In the perception of the respondents in the survey, income for producers involved in SAADA increased considerably. This perception is confirmed by the monitoring data: it is reported that an average of 149% change in farm income has been achieved by 2009. In interviews and workshops, the following activities reportedly have had very positive impact on income growth: cost price calculation, collective procurement, collective marketing, price negotiations, market prospection, product development, processing, storage and warehouse receipt systems. They explain why income growth is quite strongly attributed to 1000s+ interventions.

At the same time, it is important to realize that farm income is influenced not only by SAADA but by external factors as well. The graphs below show the world market prices of maize (upper graph) and of soybeans (lower graph). It is remarkable that world market prices for most commodities such as maize, soybeans, palm oil, rice show the same pattern as income increases for SAADA producers: from 2006 to 2008 prices increased spectacular, sometimes with a factor 2 or 3. Prices for most commodities set records in 2008 and maintained very high levels despite the decreases in 2009 as compared to 2008. Market prices obviously contributed positively to the increase of farm income in the SAADA clusters. It must however be recognized that farmers also faced higher costs of fertilizer. Labor costs may also have increased as a reaction to higher food prices.

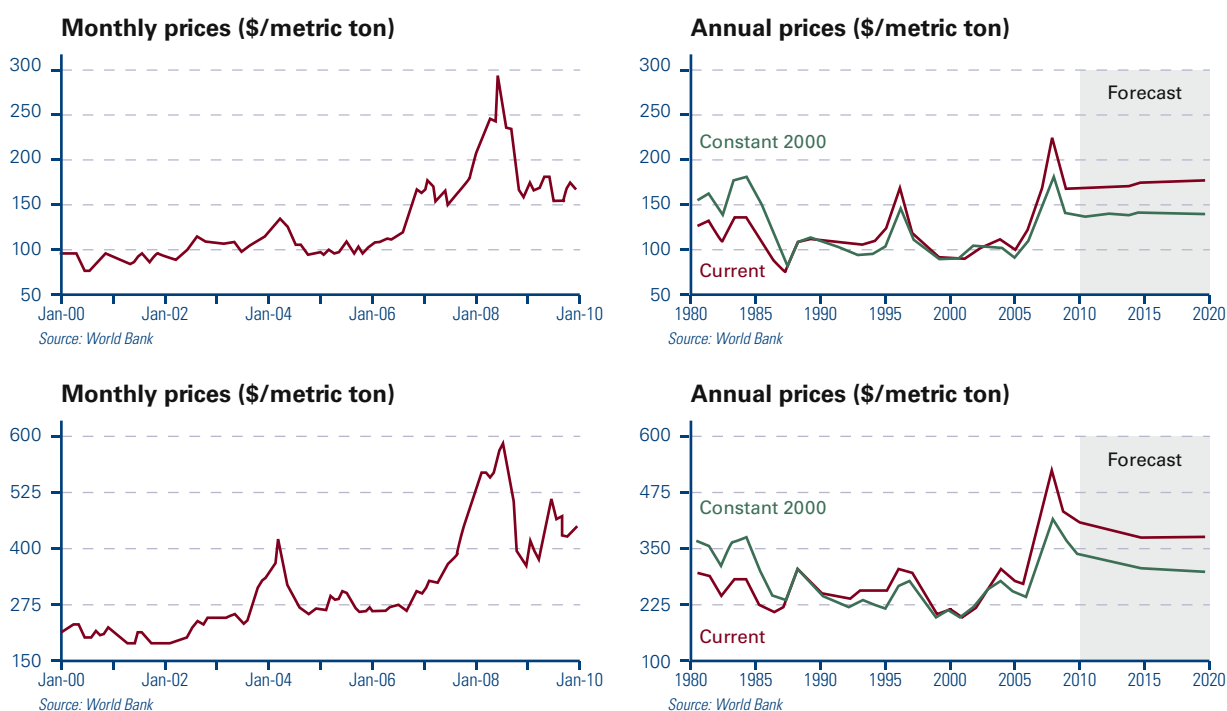


Figure 8. World market prices

The case studies indicate that substantial income gains have been achieved during the years of 1000s+ support, as a result of higher productivity, improvement of the quality of products and good prices. A significant part of these changes can be attributed to 1000s+:

Table 19. IMPACT ON INCOME GROWTH ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES		
	M&E data IFDC	Assessment of local consultants
Benin, rice	Average income increase of 43% from 2006-2009.	In the period 2006-2009, rice prices increased with 45%. Gross margin more than tripled. These factors explain major income growths particularly in 2008. Increase in income is significantly higher than reported by IFDC, although the influence from SAADA on this increase is probably limited.
Burkina Faso, maize	30% more revenue	Before the project, the price for a bag of maize varied between 9.000-9.500 fcfa per bag of 100 kg. Now, this price stands at 17.000 fcfa in the dry season and 12.000 fcfa in the harvesting season. Income increases of more than 30% are hence very realistic. One can wonder when this is result of 1000s+ interventions. The project has surely benefited from positive impacts attained by earlier projects too. However, the fact that producers now know how to keep records and negotiate about the price of their products (an achievement of the project), makes it plausible that 1000s+ has strongly contributed to the reported income increases.
Ghana, fish	In 2007, income per pound was GHC800 (or GHC1300/ Ha); in 2009 the income estimate is GHC7585. More than 10-fold increase.	Like production, incomes have also increased. The same caution applies about the gains made by the average farmer. 10-fold income increases reported by the M&E system are not attainable for most farmers. The average fish farmer is likely to receive lower prices because of the smaller size of their fish. Also they tend to feed the fish longer and may end up spending just as much on feed as they would have by feeding higher quality feed only.
Mali, soya	8-fold increase for the entire cluster	Estimations of the costs of production for 1 kg soya according to individuals and groups interviewed at village-level (Ourikela) indicated a price of 80 fcfa/kg, which is the same as maintained by the M&E system. With an average price of one kg soya of 175 fcfa, a gross unit margin of 95 fcfa and an average production increase from 130 to 500 tonnes, a significant income increase for the cluster seems realistic. This is just the income increase resulting from soya production. Many soya farmers also produce cotton on the same land. Fertilisers used for the one crop benefit the other. The income of an average cluster farmer increased from 84.000 in 2005 to 143.000 fcfa in 2009, being 170% .
Niger, milk		The sale of cheese (fetching 750 FCFA per liter of milk) is much more profitable than the sale of raw milk (fetching 300 FCFA or less in rainy season). The added value created for 20,000 liters processed milk comes close to 14,000 Euro. Daily sales per woman, especially during the rainy season, are between 1-5 Euro approximately, which allow them to make an much improved contribution to livelihood improvement. Income improvement could have been higher if transformation techniques and cheese sizes were better respected and if marketing would be better organized. Women affirm that milk is an important source of revenue if processed into cheese. An additional gain is the time saved, because women do no longer roam around to sell raw milk. This has an indirect, non yet measured, income effect.
Nigeria, sorghum	30% income growth	An average cluster member makes about 80% more gross margin than a non-member. The actual net gain income will depend on the differences in fixed costs between the two farmer types. Many member farmers are reporting a 100% increase in income. Hence, the 30% estimate of income growth is reasonable (if not underestimated).
Togo, ground-nut	Revenue increase of 58% for the cluster (from 23.800.000 to 37.728.000 fcfa)	A considerable income growth for cluster farmers is likely because of 1) increased production (see above); 2) increased margin (21% higher in 2009 than in 2007) and 3) higher market price (20% in the period 2007-2009). In fact, an average income increase of 300% seems realistic. However, one should also take into account the effects of interventions of the FAO on women groups in the region, which provided free seeds and insecticides to groups not included in the cluster. These groups also report significant income increases.

- On the basis of empirical research in 7 case study clusters, combined with a critical assessment of M&E data, and validation in interviews and workshops, it is concluded that the impact objective to reach 30% average income growth for the farmers supported by 1000s+ is met, albeit for a lower number of farmers than targeted.

6.3 SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

In the perception of respondents in the national-level survey, SAADA contributed to some degree to increase in farm land under sustainable cultivation. This perception is confirmed by the monitoring data: it is reported that 167.637 additional hectares farm land is cultivated applying Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) techniques. This is far from the objective to bring 2 million hectares of farmland under sustainable production practices.

The evaluation team makes the following comments:

- The target of 2 hectares per household is very ambitious. It does not sufficiently reflect the fact that several products do not require large surfaces under sustainable production (vegetable production; representing 16% of the clusters) or do not require surfaces under production at all (livestock, fish, milk; representing 12% of the clusters);
- Often ISFM is interpreted as combining mineral and organic fertilizers. This is in fact a narrow interpretation as one could argue that crop rotation (for example maize followed by beans or ground nuts) is an equally sustainable technique not requiring fertilizers. Nevertheless, land under crop rotation will mostly not be reported as land under ISFM;
- In several cases, it has been reported that ISFM was not practiced due to limited availability of fertilizers. As the interventions of the SAADA program are focused on cluster level, availability of fertilizer is only partially influenced by program activities;
- The reported actual is influenced by considerable variations in accuracy and reliability of information collected by different BSSs.

The case studies confirm the impression that there have been achievements in the introduction of sustainable land use, but that there are financial and practical constraints to adopt it widely, as well as methodological concerns in the registration of land under ISFM practices:

Table 20. **IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES**

	M&E data IFDC	Assessment local consultants
Benin, rice	119% increase (from 3100 in 2007 to 6800 in 2009)	Environmentally sustainable practice is counted when people bury straw/ harvest residuals in the soil and/or cultivate a vegetable before producing rice on the same land. Training to 30 producers has increased their awareness of sustainable land use and spilled over to many other producers. However, the effectiveness of the approach heavily depends on the weather: if the rains come too late, cowpea cannot be planted before rice. The reliability of the figure for 2009 (6800) is seriously questioned: this is the total of land sown in 2009 according to UNIRIZ spokesmen, while it is certain that some producers don't apply ISFM.

Burkina Faso, maize	2500 ha in 2006. No data for later years	The following practices have been adopted by many producers: anti-erosive sites, manure holes, mineral inputs, utilization of good seeds, stone walls, natural (live) fencing. Travelling by road from Koubri to Sinsinguènè shows the extent of adoption of these practices: each and every field has its own stone wall and/or natural fence.
Ghana, fish	No data. ISFM indicators don't apply to fish farming.	In fish farming, the main conservation and soil management issues are controlling water flow and preventing pollution of water sources. Farmers are trained on how to select site for fish farming. Fish farming itself uses marshy water-logged areas. The source of water is usually a river or stream and pond construction is designed in such a way as to channel water into the ponds and create a recycling system without polluting the water source. No chemical fertilizers are used and the feed is organic.
Mali, soya	Quantities of organic fertilizer have increased with 132% from 2005 to 2009. Surface of land for the targeted crop (soya) under ISFM increased with 68% among members and non-members of POs. For other crops in the area this figure is 104%.	The individual testimonies at village level, particularly in Ourikela, confirm the validity of these statistics.
Niger, milk	ISFM indicators do not apply to cheese production	The sustainability of the cheese business depends on sustainable milk production, which is highly variable during the year. Women are milk producers, processors and cheese sellers on the local market. Income from cheese may be reinvested in more intensive milk production.
Nigeria, sorghum	IFDC data shows that cumulatively, about 760 ha have been put under sustainable production methods.	Farmers are practicing the ISFM technologies although not to their whole farm land. Given the number of farmers (9100) in the cluster, 760 ha is not much. The low achievement in this regard is attributed to limited access to manure and land.
Togo, ground-nut	From 1 ha in 2007 to 50 ha in 2009, being 12% of the total cultivated surface in Tamonga.	ISFM training has led to application of the taught techniques in two seasons, increasing the area of land environmentally sustainably used substantially. This goes beyond the 72 producers which have followed ISFM training: many others (non-members) use farmyard manure and crop rotation too, without having heard of 1000s+.

→ On the basis of empirical research in 7 case study clusters, combined with a critical assessment of M&E data, and validation in interviews and workshops, it is concluded that the target of 2 million hectares of farmland under environmentally sustainable production in 2010 will certainly not be achieved. Although many farmers have adopted environmentally sustainable production techniques, the registered increase in acreage farmed according to ISFM practices is quite modest - actual performance is at 22% of the adjusted target. Given the 372.627 households reached in 2009, the adjusted target for 2009 would be around 745.000 hectares or 37% of the objective. However, these data should be read with care: it most strongly reveals that the target for this objective was unrealistic and its indicator not properly measurable.

6.4 FOOD SECURITY

In the perception of the respondents, SAADA strongly contributed to the increase of agricultural production. The monitoring data indicate an increase in aggregated agricultural production of 1.718.619 tons cereal equivalent. The evaluation team makes the following comments:

- Food security has been monitored as being related to production only. Arguably, food security is just as much an issue of access to consumption. The indicator used to measure this objective is considered not very relevant;
- A sharp increase in number of tons cereal equivalent is noticed in 2009. We did not find a plausible explanation for this sudden increase;

- The replacement of one crop by another is sometimes mistakenly reported as an increase in agricultural production. We noticed for example in a maize cluster in Burkina Faso, that the increase in production of maize was reported but the decrease in production of sorghum and millet was not;
- The monitoring data do not specify the contributions by (1) increased productivity and (2) increased surface under production to the increased production. Expanding the land under production is not per definition a contribution to sustainable production. The additional surface might be vulnerable land that should not be used for agricultural production (slopes or forest land), land that is been in fallow for too short, pasture land, etc.;
- The reported amount of tons is influenced by considerable variations in accuracy and reliability of information collected by different BSSs.

While higher production does not necessarily lead to food security, it is possible to improve food security ‘via the market’: increased income is transformed into purchases of food and other necessities. The case studies clearly indicate that the supported households have experienced positive effects on their livelihoods:

Table 21. **IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES**

Benin, rice	About 1/3 of production is reserved for domestic consumption. The strong production increase had led to a large availability of food in the homes of rice farmers. This has brought about new eating habits: while rice used to be eaten on holidays only, today farmers considered it like any other basic food.
Burkina Faso, maize	Owing to the project, which has put in place the maize culture, the difficult periods between harvest do not longer exist. The producers report to be able to secure food for their families throughout the year and even to sell the surplus. Today, they can manage their social problems, such health and schooling of their children.
Ghana, fish	Fish production has increased overall. Farmers interviewed had harvested first and second ponds and had restocked. All farmers reported that their families now eat more fish and so they have improved nutrition.
Mali, soya	Many farmers have replaced cowpea by soya, even though the kg price for soya is lower. Cowpea is much more vulnerable and can easily negatively impact a farmer’s revenue base. Soya makes it possible for farmers to minimise income fluctuations and hence better secure food.
Niger, milk	Income from milk is very important in Fulani communities. Higher income from milk processed in to cheese (750 FCFA per liter) instead of 300 FCFA for raw milk, is a large income increase, as processing costs and marketing risks are quite low. Without doubt, the higher income is used for household needs, contributing to livelihood improvement. The equivalent additional benefit of 450 FCFA is equivalent to 2.5 kg of cereals. The additional value created of close to 10 million FCFA is equivalent to 6,5 ton of cereals (average of 250 kg per woman involved).
Nigeria, sorghum	Production of sorghum has increased just by virtue of the phenomenal increase in yields. Besides, farmers claim they are expanding their sorghum lands. According to IFDC data, the total production of the cluster was 3000 metric tons in 2008, increasing to 3500 tons in 2009. There is no data for 2007 to serve as baseline. The increased yields have had a positive effect on food security.
Togo, groundnut	As indicated, 1000s+ has led to an increase of production and returns on groundnut. The interviews learnt that 12-18% of production is destined for self-consumption. The quantities for domestic consumption have increased with 39% from 2007 to 2009. Groundnut is however not much consumed in households. It is sold for money (rather than maize and sorghum). The interviewed households report having had less trouble to endure the pre-harvesting period in 2009. In short, groundnut contributes to increased food security but its contribution is mainly indirect. The free supply of seed and fertilizers by FAO has also contributed.

➔ On the basis of empirical research in 7 case study clusters, combined with a critical assessment of M&E data, and validation in interviews and workshops, it is concluded that the program has contributed to enhanced food production. With 1.718.619 tons, the reported increase in cereal equivalents production is nearly four times higher than planned. Livelihood conditions (not necessarily being food insecurity conditions) have increased as a result of enhanced production and income. Although the contribution of other factors to this increase is substantial, it is found that the target has been met.

6.5 PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS

In the perception of survey respondents, the program has contributed to some degree to enhanced business for input dealers, traders, processors. The monitoring data indicate that by end 2009, a total of 3875 local entrepreneurs (input dealers, traders, processors) were involved in the SAADA agribusiness clusters. This figure surpasses the target of (at least) 2000 entrepreneurs. The number of unique entrepreneurs is however around 1.500.

Next, the monitoring data indicate 87% change in local entrepreneurs' business volume in 2008, which surpasses the target of 50% in 2010. Finally, the monitoring data indicate an increase in number of enterprises, stores, warehouses of local entrepreneurs involved from 363 (baseline) to 2.915 (in 2009) and an increase in employees of local entrepreneurs from 1.475 (baseline) to 11.236 (in 2009). In both cases, the target of 50% increase has been surpassed. The evaluation team makes the following comments:

- The reported increase in number of local entrepreneurs involved in agribusiness clusters follows consistently the increase in number of clusters covered by SAADA. In 2006, SAADA was active in 29 clusters involving 503 local entrepreneurs: 17 entrepreneurs per cluster. In 2009, SAADA was active in 216 clusters involving 3875 local entrepreneurs: 18 entrepreneurs per cluster. The figure of 3875 is considered reliable;
- The reported 87% change in local entrepreneurs' business volume in 2008 is considered unreliable. This indicator has been removed from the monitoring system in 2009 because unreliable data were collected. This explains why the 2009 figure has not been reported;
- The reported number of enterprises, stores, warehouses of local entrepreneurs involved in 2009 (2.915) and number of employees of local entrepreneurs in 2009 (11.236) might be correct but the baseline data are probably linked to the clusters that were covered by SAADA in 2005/06. Besides, this indicator was redefined in 2009, which makes comparison between 2006 and 2009 hazardous. The 50% expansion in number of stores, warehouses, agencies, processing units is not convincingly demonstrated by the monitoring system. Neither is the 50% expansion in employees of the local entrepreneurs;

The case studies confirm without hesitation – on the basis of concrete examples – that business volumes have increased in the clusters, but also that these effects are difficult to quantify:

Table 22. **IMPACT ON PRIVATE SERVICE PROVISION ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES**

Benin, rice	According to the M&E data, all actors have seen a rapid boost of business as a result of the increase in volume produced. In the field of processing, it is noted that VECO has made a large contribution by having donated 60 steaming machines.
Burkina Faso, maize	Increased quality of maize and selling in groups have led to increased economic activity and a replacement of other commodities by maize. Links between actors has been reinforced and the cluster is functioning quite professionally now. Higher production and stronger relations have led to increased business.
Ghana, fish	The impact on business activity has been very limited because of the weak links between input dealers, financial institutions on the one hand, and farmers on the other.
Mali, soya	Business opportunities are numerous. The M&E data report an increase in the number of female processing businesses from 1 to 3, a volume increase of fertilizers with 130%, sale volume increase of 68%, increase in local transformation of 34%. These figures are coherent with the situation on the ground. Still added could be the expression of interest from FAMB-SMI to procure 30.000 ton of soya for transformation into oil.
Niger, milk	The impact on business relations between private actors have been limited. Several private veterinary services operate in neighboring towns; with one of them relations have been established somewhat more intensively. A Government veterinary provides services to the dairy farmers in the Yeya area. Some 50 sellers of livestock sector inputs are present on local markets. Like before, producers may buy some animal feed or other products from them. For the sale of cheese, relations have been established with one trader in Konni.

Nigeria, sorghum	IFDC data suggests that service providers increased from 19 in 2008 to 25 in 2009. It is difficult to verify this number. However interaction with input dealers revealed that they are doing more business (higher turn-over) and this is good. E.g. a fertilizer dealer reported that a trailer of fertilizer (30 tons) of fertilizer he used to sell in a season, he now sells in three weeks. Even the local porridge sellers are producing more because sorghum is available. Demand for the food is also increasing and this could be because of more money in people's hands.
Togo, groundnut	All actors – producers, processors, traders, transporters, micro-finance institutions– have experienced positive effects on their business. The M&E data report an increase of 50%. It is difficult to verify this figure, but there are sufficient indications for the prosperity of enterprises: MFI CMEC reported to have increased its number of agents from 2 in 2007 to 4 in 2009 and its outstanding credit with 13%. For DRAEP (input provider), the increased demand for inputs led to higher turnover.

➔ Impact objective 4 has been partially met. Private service provision to farmers has improved, but not to the expected extent. Over 4000 dealers, traders, processors and others (of which 1500 unique actors, 25% less than targeted) have been reached by the program. The foundations have been laid for increased business between chain operators and supporters. The number of business transactions and opportunities have significantly increased, but is difficult to quantify. Size and viability of many clusters has hampered commercial transactions.

6.6 IMPACT DISTRIBUTION AND SPIN-OFF

The program has brought about many spin-off effects, as mentioned in case studies, testimonies and during workshops. The case studies provide most insight into these effects of the SAADA program:

Table 23. SPIN OFF EFFECTS ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES	
Case	Assessment local consultants
Benin, rice	Reported spin-off effects include: financing the education of their children, sending food and money to children who study elsewhere, better passing the periods of hardship, some producers having purchased a mode of transportation (car, motor bike), easier access to health care, many women have bought kitchen utensils, various producers have opened bank accounts etc.
Burkina Faso, maize	The NGO Oxfam is interested in the CASE approach and wants to integrate it in her future interventions. A poultry cluster has expressed interest to develop links with the maize cluster. Soil fertility techniques are replicated by non-cluster members.
Ghana, fish	Although processors have not directly participated in the cluster activities, they have benefitted from the availability of fish. Similarly, traders have more fish to sell all season, there is less seasonal price variation even though prices are trending upwards. Spin off effects have been quite limited to date.
Mali, soya	Non-PO or cluster members have benefitted from the project, in particular restaurant owners, oil producers and other processors and vendors of soumbala (soya cubes)
Niger, milk	There are various spin-off effects: acceptance of cheese production by 2 village chiefs and a traditional chief; more time for other activities; increased entrepreneurship, e.g. ideas to develop other income generating activities, relations with veterinary services, more attention for animal health and nutrition, group formation process, mobilization of internal resources within the farmer groups (weekly contributions).
Nigeria, sorghum	Other farmers are copying the practices of cluster members. Some consult individual farmers on how to get assistance to improve their yields. More groups are being formed and communal self-help activities are on the rise.
Togo, groundnut	31 households not member of a group association with CAP have benefitted indirectly. Cluster actors report being able to: finance the education of their children, send food and money to children who study elsewhere, access health care, renewed interest in cooperatives / increase in memberships, manage their crops and work more entrepreneurially (mainly women).

Spin-off is quantified by IFDC by referring to about additional 225.000 households being reached through other value chain development projects, not being funded by IFDC, and being implemented by BSSs involved in SAADA. The idea is that the BSSs, by being involved in SAADA, are enabled to implement this project. The 225.000 households reached are thus spin-off, linked to capacity strengthening of BSSs. Although these figures could not be objectively verified, there are sufficient indications that the project has had many positive side-effects.

As demonstrated in chapter 3, producers have benefited relatively more from training than other cluster actors. One would therefore expect that producers share more in the impact than input dealers, traders, processors, banks, MFIs. Given the difficulties for many farmers to mobilize resources, one would expect that farmers who are relatively well-off have profited most, as they are best able to apply the knowledge from the SAADA trainings.

This is indeed the picture that arises from the case studies:

Table 24. IMPACT DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES	
Benin, rice	All actors have profited from the 1000s+ interventions, combined with the PUASA program. Only banks and MFIs have largely remained outside the process. 1000s+ interventions have reached producers more than other actors. Men have disproportionately benefitted: despite the overwhelming majority of women in processing, only 24% of beneficiaries in training was female. This is explained by the fact that women tend to be less available for training.
Burkina Faso, maize	Producers have benefited most, which is logical as the project focused primarily on them. The wealthiest farmers have profited the most, because they cannot only intensify production but also extend their acreage. But the project has also improved the lives of marginal groups (poor producers, women, non-cluster members, poultry breeders, etc.).
Ghana, fish	Farmers who have resources have benefitted the most because they are the ones who can apply the technologies. Also they participate more in demonstrations and training activities. Possibly, fish farming is too capital and skill intensive for the small resource poor farmer. Women have not benefited much because there are very few women fish farmers while the program targets farmers as the entry point. From the 'other actors', fingerling producers have profited most. Other input dealers have not increased business much. They do not target small farmers and fish inputs are only a small proportion of their business.
Mali, soya	Medium-scale farmers have benefitted most from the project. For large-scale farmers, cotton remains their main attention. Small-scale farmers do not have the means to effectively protect their crops
Niger, milk	The first beneficiaries are the cheese producers, who actually have been able to develop their activities. Many women, even those that have been trained, were not able to make cheese because of cultural barriers / male resistance. To some extent, it may be argued that cheese making women socially exclude themselves from dominant cultural prescription related to milk production, processing and marketing. Capacity development beyond the initially trained women is observable but limited. Cheese making women have more time for other activities, because they do no longer need to spend their day selling raw milk.
Nigeria, sorghum	All actors have substantially benefitted from the cluster activities. Farmers have learned good practices in sorghum production leading to more than doubling of their yields. Larger farmers obviously benefit more because they have larger fields; but all farmers have access to advice and help for inputs. Female farmers have additionally benefited as they have obtained information on nutrition, health and sanitation. Input dealers, processors, traders, small micro-finance providers, formal MFIs and KADP all report to be better off as a result of the project.
Togo, groundnut	Interventions have mostly benefitted producers who saw their revenues triple. In this category, women are most numerous. They are also the main beneficiaries of the trainings, particularly those about ISFM, production techniques and record-keeping. But also other actors have profited: Female processors from Nagbémi have benefitted of a mill provided by 1000s+ (instead of equipment which was foreseen in the 2009 action plan but wasn't available). Groundnut processing has enormously (30x) increased in the project period. Dealers and MFI CMEC have seen an increase in business. The M&E system reports an increase in the number of shops and boutiques and their employees.

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- In short, the 1000s+ project has brought about important spin-off effects and is likely to remain doing so as more and more cluster actors are included and lessons learned are disseminated within and beyond clusters. Impact distribution is skewed towards the more resource-endowed male producer, but also other actors have profited. Many impact results will still be produced beyond the evaluation period because of the time-span required before effects of capacity improvement and attitude change translate into concrete activities leading to economic effects.



7. Efficiency

- Is the program cost-effective?
- Could more have been achieved with the same investments or could the same have been realized with less investments?

Introduction

In this chapter, we look at efficiency both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative aspect concerns calculations of costs per farmer and per cluster and estimations of overhead. These are fed both by data at program level (M&E) and by case study findings. For the qualitative aspect, we look into the perceptions of stakeholders, as best summarized by the survey outcomes. Stakeholders consider 1000s+ to provide value for money. They expect that the upscaling of the CASE approach contributes to a some decrease in costs per beneficiary.

7.1 COSTS PER FARMER

IFDC expects decreasing costs per farmer as the program is scaling up. The grant proposal⁶ sets out:

“The costs of the CASE approach are low compared to many other approaches, and have been estimated at about 50 USD in total per target farmer in the previous project (...). When scaling up, the anticipated costs per farmer are estimated to decrease considerably...”

In the 1000s+ project, expenses were are follows:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Annual expenses (DGIS + Agriterra)	€ 1.322.340	€ 1.253.689	€ 2.912.690	€ 4.137.031	€ 9.625.750
Farmers (households)	117.563	158.536	270.226	372.627	

The costs per farmer were hence 26 Euro, or 34 USD for the project period.

Whereas the costs per farmer per year are relatively stable (between 8 and 11 Euro per year), the costs per cluster per year decrease over the years, with an exception in 2008:

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Annual expenses (DGIS + Agriterra)	€ 1.322.340	€ 1.253.689	€ 2.912.690	€ 4.137.031
Clusters	29	62	131	216
Costs / cluster / year	€ 45.598	€ 20.221	€ 22.234	€ 19.153

6 Grant proposal (Part A) for submission to DGIS by IFDC, October 2005, p. 16-17 (emphasis added)

Steady costs per farmer in combination with decreasing costs per cluster indicates an increase in membership in the clusters. This observation is confirmed by the analysis of the case studies in paragraph 3.2. In terms of serving clusters, SAADA is thus becoming more and more cost effective.

The case studies provide further proof for the assertion that SAADA is an efficient program. As the local consultants note in their reports:

Table 27. EFFICIENCY ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES	
Case	Assessment local consultants
Benin, rice	Cost per beneficiary is about 3400 FCFA. Revenue increases are on average 136.000 FCFA. Comparing costs and benefits, it is clear that the results have been achieved in an efficient manner. The investments by 1000s+ combined with the contributions of UNIRIZ-C render a highly positive effect, even when challenges remain such as access to inputs and capacity to mobilize commercial funds.
Burkina Faso, maize	Benefits far surpass the costs of the project. The fact that producers can calculate their own costs of production and their business results will have lasting impact.
Ghana, fish	The cost per beneficiary ranged from 14 USD in 2007 to 91 USD in 2008 and 62 USD in 2009. Although it is difficult to assess the estimated costs per farmer in the absence of a benchmark for such training activities, the potential benefits to be derived from the knowledge transferred, as estimated in productivity and income increases at the farmer level, are enormous. The only problem is the limitations from finance to apply the information and realize the potential, and the continued weak link between farmers and the market. In the view of the actors, the benefits from the 1000s+ project outweigh the costs.
Nigeria, sorghum	Benefits are absolutely higher than costs. The costs per participant in all the activities in 2009 would have been USD 190. These costs are reasonable considering that the benefits include direct benefits to the selected participants and benefits transmitted to other farmers through cluster level learning.
Togo, groundnut	In absence of insight in coordination costs, it is not possible to calculate the cost per beneficiary. But it is found that the IFDC team is lean and equipped with professional staff. The program has a high reach of farmers in training (358 producers) and producers with demonstration plots (9). Women groups within and outside the cluster alike benefit from the installed mill. These aspects, combined with the low fees paid to BSSs lead to the conclusion: the program's efficiency is good.

→ In short, the program is considered efficient. The realized average costs per farmer for the program period (34 USD for reaching 373.000 households) are lower than in previous projects, as targeted. Inclusion of the 2010 expenditures may still influence these results. These costs could have been lower if more households had been reached, as originally planned. In any case, the cost-effectiveness of service delivery to clusters is improving. Costs per farmer are steady and costs per cluster per year are decreasing. Considering the realized additional production, income growth for farmers and reduced soil depletion, it is found that the benefits of the program outweigh its costs.

7.2 EFFICIENCY OF IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The table below demonstrates that the overhead percentages of SAADA range from 63% in 2007 to 32% in 2009. In this calculation, a strict definition of overhead is applied (HR, travel, assets, office). If the exceptional year 2007 would not be taken into consideration, IFDC operates more and more efficiently, decreasing its overhead from 48% in 2006 to 32% in 2009.

Table 28. EXPENDITURES SAADA A

Funded by DGIS + Agriterra	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Indirect (euro)					
Human resources	324.919	444.349	707.733	752.440	2.229.441
Travel and transport	86.489	159.676	225.532	239.793	711.490
Assets	107.775	26.923	8.718	34.153	177.569
Office operations	121.116	163.429	223.234	289.649	797.428
Subtotal indirect (overhead)	640.299	794.377	1.165.217	1.316.035	3.915.928
Direct (euro)					
Workshops and meetings (IFDC)	62.543	119.663	253.202	313.394	748.802
Workshops and meetings (Agriterra)				405.389	405.389
Subtotal (training)	62.543	119.663	253.202	718.783	1.154.191
Collaborators / subcontracts (IFDC)	619.498	339.649	1.076.342	701.002	2.736.491
Collaborators / subcontracts (Agriterra)			417.929	1.401.193	1.819.122
Subtotal (support to ABC's)	619.498	339.649	1.494.271	2.102.195	4.555.613
Subtotal direct	682.041	459.312	1.747.473	2.820.978	5.709.804
TOTAL (euro)	1.322.340	1.253.689	2.912.690	4.137.013	9.625.732

The indirect costs are determined mainly by the salary costs. Here, the evaluation team notices that, given the expansion of the program, the staff increase has been limited. From 2006 to 2009, the country based technical staff increased from 3,4 to 8,6 FTE (increase with a factor 2,5). Compared to the increase in number of clusters from 29 to 216 (increase with a factor 7,4), the staff increase is relatively low, indicating increasing efficiency. Regional technical staff (regional specialists serving all 7 countries) has increased from in the period 2006 to 2008 from 3,0 to 7,1 FTE. In 2009, the number was reduced to 6,6. IFDC managed to keep the percentage of regional technical staff around 20% of the total staff (with an exception for 2008). We consider office operations, in general, cost-effective.

BOX 12. EXAMPLE OF EFFICIENCY. The SAADA office in Nigeria, which is located in Kaduna to be near to most clusters, is situated in a building of Kaduna State Secretary. This a basic office building hosted many state agencies. Due to the relation network of the Cluster Advisor, the office space is provided free of cost. In addition, the staff of IFDC maintains and develops useful relations with relevant state actors.

The SAADA office in Ghana is located in Tamale to be near to most clusters. It consists of basic office space in a building of the Farming System Research Institute SARI. Hardly any costs have to be paid by IFDC to SARI for using the space. In addition, the staff of IFDC SAADA and the agricultural research center SARI meet in the canteen and have informal exchanges contributing positively to the collaboration of IFDC and SARI.

The direct costs are determined mainly by BSS subcontracting for cluster support. Daily fees ('allowances') for BSSs amount to €30 to €110 plus transport and accommodation, for implementing activities such as training and M&E data collection. M&E counts for more or less 10% of the costs for BSSs. Whether or not the daily fees are high

depends on the quality of the services provided for the money. Monitoring on the quality of the sub-contractors by IFDC is not yet systematically done. We notice that the fee range of BSSs is below the local commercial consultancy fees.

The evaluators noticed some incidents such as:

- Indications that services by BSSs are actually not provided according to action plans (sub-sub contracting leading to juniors providing the services, shorter duration of trainings, less participants, activities that may not have been conducted at all);
- Costs for hiring a film camera, amounting 97.500 FCFA (€150) per day;
- Costs for group training amounting 40.000 FCFA (€60) per person per day.

Despite these types of incidents, the evaluators consider the sub-contracting of the BSSs both cost-effective as well as instrumental in achieving sustainability of program interventions.

→ In short, the implementation modalities chosen by 1000s+ are considered generally efficient. Various measures remain possible to further improve the efficiency of the program, such as reduced costs of data collection and training costs per farmer, quality checks between service providers, increased cost consciousness of cluster actors by requiring own contributions and giving financial transparency, involving the clusters more actively in budgeting and by stimulating transparent competency between BSSs.

7.3 LESS IS MORE

One additional question asked in the Terms of Reference is whether the decision to maintain the number of clusters in 2009 at 218 rather than further extend to 300 for quality reasons was right.

The situation per 2009 is that SAADA is active in 216 clusters covering more than 7.000 villages. SAADA contributes to capacity strengthening of 6700 producer organizations, of which 25% are women groups. About 375.000 households are reached and almost 4.000 entrepreneurs. The expansion of the SAADA program is less than expected. In consultation with DGIS, IFDC decided to limit the expansion of clusters in 2009 to 85 which implied that the 300 clusters in 2010 would not be realized as foreseen. The idea behind this decision was that quality and impact should prevail over quantity and coverage. The evaluation team appreciates this decision, but has no objective arguments to justify this decision. Given the current implementing capacity for SAADA, we assume that expanding towards new clusters requires freeing up capacity elsewhere. There is no exit strategy and there are no hard criteria to decide upon decreasing the intensity of support to older, more mature clusters (or phasing out).

8. SAADA B and C

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The grant proposal submitted to DGIS for SALIN funding in October 2005 for SAADA A was complemented with a proposal for financial support to two additional programs: SAADA B and SAADA C. Where the B-component related to the introduction of the CASE approach in other parts of Africa (mainly Horn of Africa and the Great Lake regions), the C-component concerned the strengthening of IFDC's knowledge on certain cross-cutting issues.

This chapter presents the main evaluation findings with regard to SAADA B and C. These findings are based upon desk research, a questionnaire (only for SAADA B with a response of 6 out of 10) and 2 telephone interviews. In the selection of evaluation methods for SAADA B and C, we followed the instructions provided in the Terms of Reference⁷. The evaluation study covers the period 2006-2009.

8.2 IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT IFDC - DGIS

The implementation agreement concluded between DGIS and IFDC on 22 March 2006 (Act. No. 13434/DDE0067083) lists the following objectives, results and indicators for SAADA B and C:

Table 29. OBJECTIVES, RESULTS AND INDICATORS SAADA B AND C

	SAADA B	SAADA C
Objectives	Introducing systems for agricultural intensification in other parts of Africa, among others Horn and Great Lakes regions	Deepening IFDC's knowledge base on interactions between agricultural intensification and issues like HIV/Aids, gender, biodiversity and nature conservation and conflict.
Results	The CASE approach is known as an effective tool for agricultural intensification in at least 8 countries in other parts of Africa Agribusiness models and a package of concepts, approaches and management systems have been introduced for scaling up the CASE model in at least 4 of these countries	IFDC is capable to engage with more knowledge, in a wider debate on the role, and modalities, of agricultural intensification, taking into account issues like conflict, HIV/Aids, gender, biodiversity and nature conservation.
Indicators	Number of places where the CASE model is demonstrated Number of countries in which strategies for agricultural intensification has been elaborated, including market information systems, regulatory systems and markets for agro-inputs, etc. Number of organizations engaged in agricultural intensification supported by IFDC	Number of publications and policy notes treating the interrelationship of agricultural development and issues conflict, HIV/Aids, biodiversity, etc. issued by IFDC Number of events aimed at policy making concerning these issues at which IFDC is associated Number of woman involved in agricultural intensification, in trainings, and in CASE pilots.
Financial contribution DGIS	5 million Euro	1 million Euro

IFDCs grant proposal to DGIS contained a summarised budget division per type of activity within SAADA B and

⁷ The Terms of Reference envisaged a limited research into the two additional SAADA components SAADA B and SAADA C: "SAADA B and C will be evaluated on the basis of interviews and documentation"

C. In the implementation agreement, no specific arrangements were additionally made regarding the division of budget per result area. The original IFDC budget has not further been used /updated in the progress reports and financial reports.

For the period 2006-2010, the Ministry agreed to allocate a total budget of 6 million euro for SAADA B and C. Cost shares were not yet determined, although IFDC has indicated in its grant proposal that they were confident that over 1 million Euro co-funding would be realised for SAADA B on top of the 15 million Euro co-funding expected for SAADA A.

Figure 9. Total budget SAADA program according to grant proposal (December 2005)

	DGIS	Cost-share estimation
SAADA A	10 million Euro	15 million Euro
SAADA B	5 million Euro	To be determined
SAADA C	1 million Euro	To be determined

In the course of the program, during the Midterm Review, the objectives of SAADA B were revised. After 2 years of implementation, IFDC concluded that the conditions for a successful implementation of the CASE approach in other regions were not in place. Especially the limited availability of staff experienced in CASE made it difficult to both upscale the approach in West Africa and at the same time introduce it in other parts of Africa. IFDC and DGIS agreed to revise the scope of SAADA B:

Table 30. ADJUSTED OBJECTIVES SAADA B (JANUARY 2008)

The main objective of SAADA B is not longer to transfer lessons learned in SAADA A to other African regions, but rather to facilitate strategic investments by IFDC

Via SAADA B, IFDC will explore ways to address leading constraints to agri-business development and develop innovative strategies to encourage input supply and demand

The above was agreed upon via in a memo. We note that no formal amendments were made to the implementation agreement. Neither was the change in objectives further detailed with specific results or SMART indicators. The term ‘strategic investments’ was left undefined.

Nowadays, IFDC distinguishes 4 major components within the SAADA B program. Activities undertaken from 2008 until present mostly focus on these areas:

1. Market Information systems
2. UDP (Urea Deep Placement) methodologies
3. Fertilizer recommendations
4. Human-urban waste

Since this change, the specific regional focus of SAADA B has been replaced by a focus on research and development and innovative agricultural approaches (applicable continent-wide). From the 2006 and 2007 progress reports, we concluded that also before the change of scope in 2008 certain activities within SAADA B were undertaken in West Africa.

8.3 BUDGET VERSUS ACTUAL EXPENSES

The following table presents the budgeted and realized expenditures for SAADA B and C for the period 2006-2010. We notice that the budget reserved for SAADA B and C is far from depleted yet. Mid 2010, less than 45% of the budget has been spent.

Year	Budget SAADA B (€)*	Budget SAADA C (€)*	Budget SAADA B&C (€)	Actual expenses SAADA B&C (€)**
2006	325,000	175,000	500,000	475,047
2007	325,000	175,000	500,000	480,919
2008	1,200,000	200,000	1,400,000	733,223
2009	1,375,000	225,000	1,600,000	866,207
2010	1,775,000	225,000	2,000,000	Not available
Total	5,000,000	1,000,000	6,000,000	2,555,396

* Source: IFDC Grant Proposal for the Strategic Alliance with International NGO's (PART D, Activities and Budget Summary)

** Source: Financial progress report IFDC Jan. 2006 – Dec. 2009

The half yearly progress reports on the SAADA program do not include financial accounts. Financial reporting is done separately in the form of a one page overview of expenditures for SAADA A and SAADA B / C combined, divided per type of costs (e.g. staff, transport, etc.). IFDC does not present activity based financial reports to DGIS.

Upon our request, IFDC has made an estimation of the expenses per activity in SAADA B and C. Relatively significant activities in terms of expenses are indicated in bold. In paragraph 1.5, the nature of these activities is further described.

SAADA B	Budget
Market Information systems	10%
Urea Deep Placement Methodologies	40%
Fertilizer recommendations	10%
Human-urban waste	10%
Other activities	30%

Source: IFDC

SAADA C	Budget
Gender	20%
HIV/Aids	15%
Natural resource management (methodology development)	20%
Conflict mitigation and governance	15%
School feeding (not included as focus area in agreement)	15%
Other activities	15%

Source: IFDC

8.4 ORGANISATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING

Within IFDC one program coordinator is responsible for SAADA B and C. Next to the coordinator, around 10 other IFDC staff members work on the SAADA B and C program. It includes people with different backgrounds (gender, HIV/Aids, training, etc.) spending parts of their time on activities reported under SAADA B and C. Respondents indicated that at strategic level there is some interaction with SAADA-A (annual action plans) although the collaboration at operational level is limited.

Overall the evaluation team has the impression that there is very limited synergy between SAADA A and SAADA B/C. The annual work plans and progress reports include separate chapters for SAADA A, B and C. There is no joint perspective on the general implementation of SAADA in the yearly reports. Coordination is complicated by the fact that the program coordinator of SAADA A is situated in Mali whereas the coordinator for SAADA B and C is situated in Ghana. With regard to the organisation of the SAADA B and C components we further notice that the annual work plans and progress reports contain limited information on organisational and management issues. For example, we haven't identified a specific mechanism for the allocation of budget to activities. Since the activities and results for SAADA B and C haven't been strictly outlined, we consider the supervision to decision-making processes important. It is remarkable for example that almost 30% of the budget for SAADA B has been spent on non-specified 'other activities'.

Respondents indicate that for SAADA B and C specific and measurable outputs and results are lacking. Indeed, the evaluation team notices that the progress reports of SAADA B and C have a narrative character and are very detailed. However, they contain limited quantitative data and progress mostly concerns achievements at output level. Results at outcome and impact level are not provided.

8.5 ACHIEVEMENTS OF SAADA B

In this paragraph, we review SAADA B on the basis of the evaluation questions derived from the Terms of Reference. We notice that these questions mostly refer to the originally presented SAADA B program. The change in focus of SAADA B and the lack of specific indicators related to the (revised) objectives, make it difficult to evaluate the program.

Has the CASE approach been successfully introduced in other regions in Africa?

The introduction of CASE in other regions did not really materialize until 2008/2009, the period in which the CASE approach was integrated in the Catalyst program. This program which IFDC started managing in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC from October 2006 can be considered the only vehicle through which CASE is currently being introduced in other parts of Africa. IFDC staff from West Africa has been assisting in elaborating a strategy to incorporate CASE within Catalyst from 2008 onwards. Between 2006 and 2008 a few CASE trainings have been organized for producer organizations, NGO's and staff of Catalyst.

Apart from the contributions to the Catalyst program, there are no examples of successful introduction of CASE in other regions in Africa. Apparently IFDC also felt that ambitions of SAADA B as laid down in the agreement with DGIS were difficult to reach as halfway the program it was decided to change the objectives of the program. Considering the constraints IFDC was confronted with at the beginning of implementation of SAADA B (limited staff with CASE experience, no office in the region, intensity required for 1000s+, and diverging agricultural settings) the evaluation team concludes that the objective to replicate the CASE approach in other regions was not realistic in the first place. However, the consciousness that targets could not be reached came rather late: 2 years after the start.

What actions have been undertaken to expand the capacities for commodity chain development in other regions / countries in Africa (especially Horn of Africa and Great Lakes) and were these actions successful in strengthening capacities?

The main actions undertaken in this area include:

- Deployment of IFDC staff at NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development), a program of the African Union offering an integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa. IFDC staff mostly contributed to the CAADP (the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program) of NEPAD and the organisation of the Africa Fertilizer Summit.
- A revision by the SAADA team of its strategy to assist in building associations. This resulted in the development of training kits for association management and training of trainers.
- The establishment of the AISSA (Agricultural Intensification in Sub-Saharan Africa) Network. This network for individuals and organisation aims to provide an exchange platform and to stimulation joint actions between members.
- The organisation of 2 management trainings for members of associations (36 participants) in Burundi and Rwanda
- The organisation of 4 train-the-trainer trainings for private partners in Burundi, Rwanda and DRC to enable them to provide training to inputs dealers in the future.

The progress reports don't mention how the training to associations and private entities have received follow-up, which makes it hard to judge whether these trainings contributed to the strengthening of capacities. With regard to the AISSA network, we note that it was launched end 2009 and that it cannot be assessed who benefited of the available information and which linkages between members have been established via the platform (no targets in this regard have been listed in the progress reports). The organisation of the Africa Fertilizer Summit is considered very successful by respondents. Particularly the fertilizer strategies and action plans that have been developed as a result of the summit are being considered valuable. The Summit almost certainly has resulted in relevant changes in policies, although we cannot specify these effects on the basis of the information available. We conclude that activities related to commodity chain development have been rather scattered. There is no information on the effects and the impact of these activities.

What actions have been taken to improve the functioning of input markets in other parts of Africa and have these actions been successful?

Two types of actions can be distinguished here: actions related to policy dialogue and lobby and advocacy and actions aimed at the introduction of Market Information Systems (MIS). The first range of actions includes the organisation of the Africa Fertilizer Summit which resulted in 30 country action plans and 4 regional action plans for the improvement of input markets and the use of fertilizers. The major results in the area of Market Information Systems include the start of AMITSA, a database with market information. The full public launch took place in 2010. Further, IFDC supported the establishment of AfricaFertilizer.org, a web-based portal with information and data on fertilizers. By sharing information, IFDC aims to influence supporting policies and to create equal market opportunities. AMITSA focuses on Eastern Africa whereas AfricaFertilizer.org is designed to serve the entire continent. Through SAADA B, IFDC contributed around 10% of the costs for establishing AMITSA and AfricaFertilizer.org. So far, the interest in the systems is high and it is expected this will further increase. It seems that IFDC has no

problem to involve private partners in input market related activities. The evaluation team considers the establishment of the two systems as innovative and as tangible results of the SAADA B program which have the potential to create impact at a large scale. Proper monitoring will be key to measure the true impact achieved through these systems and will require another form of reporting by IFDC as done so far (better use of SMART indicators).

What actions have been taken in other parts of Africa to transfer technologies to POs and other cluster operators with the aim using inputs efficiently?

The major achievement in terms of technological innovation is the elaboration of the Urea Deep Placement (UDP) / Urea Super Granules (UGS) methodologies in West Africa. This methodology originates from Bangladesh where it has been proven to be successful. In 2008, the UDP methodology has been introduced in 6 countries in West Africa and Madagascar. UDP has been tested in 20 irrigation schemes with 1500 farmers participating. Participatory demonstration, trainings and field days were organised and reached around 15,000 farmers. Via the Catalyst program efforts have been undertaken to introduce UDP methodologies in Eastern Africa. In conclusion, the achievements, mostly realized in West Africa, can be considered successful and it was because of SAADA B that the introduction of the innovative UDP technology was possible. The recently introduced MIS systems (AMITSA and AfricaFertilizer.org) include some interesting technical features such as the distribution of information (e.g. on prices) by cell phone but the effects cannot yet be assessed.

Which other skills and knowledge have been transferred in other parts of Africa to POs, traders and other cluster operators with the aim of getting access to inputs or using them more efficiently?

The larger part of skills and knowledge transferred to Eastern Africa took place via the Catalyst program. The various agro-inputs trainings and other initiatives such as the support to the Rural Outreach Program in Kenya have been organised in collaboration with the Catalyst program. Respondents acknowledge that the available funds within SAADA B contributed greatly the set-up of the Catalyst program, making it possible to transfer all type of knowledge and experience available within the West African region.

8.6 ACHIEVEMENTS OF SAADA C

In this paragraph, we review SAADA C on the basis of the evaluation questions derived from the Terms of Reference.

To what extent have gender issues been effectively introduced within the program?

SAADA C funded the development of methodologies, strategies and trainings to integrate gender aspects in SAADA A. This resulted for example in a tool to improve gender inclusion in value chains via the SAADA A program. In this sense gender has been successfully introduced in SAADA A and other IFDC programs. Furthermore, the overall knowledge of IFDC staff on gender issues has most probably increased.

To what extent have HIV/AIDS issues been effectively introduced within the program?

The issue of HIV/Aids has become an integral part of the SAADA A program. In the progress reports many trainings have been listed that focused on the subject and which have been organised through SAADA A. Furthermore, IFDC

developed via SAADA C strategies and action plans to address HIV/Aids issues and raise awareness among IFDC staff in entire region.

However, Malaria rather than HIV/Aids is being considered by IFDC a priority area in West Africa. Nonetheless, it seems that IFDC has been able to link the issue of HIV/Aids with its own core business as activities focuses mostly on the nutrition conditions of HIV affected people. The overall knowledge of IFDC staff on HIV/Aids has most probably increased.

To what extent have NRM issues been effectively introduced within the program?

The first years of the program has been used to develop a conceptual framework for IFDC's work in the field of natural resource management with the idea to disseminate this knowledge to partners. Thereupon, time has been invested in exploring possible linkages with partners and platforms. Pilot projects on NRM have been organised (e.g. community forestry project in Benin) and strategies and action plans have been developed in collaboration with partners (NGO's, research institutes and universities). An actual implementation of NRM methodologies only took place in Northern Ghana. It is not clear to which extent NRM was really embedded within SAADA at a more aggregate regional level. The overall knowledge of IFDC staff on NRM has most probably increased.

To what extent have conflict mitigation and governance issues been effectively introduced within the program?

Until 2008 progress reports of SAADA C made no reference to activities on the terrain of conflict mitigation and governance. In fact, the only actions undertaken in this field include exploratory studies in Sierra Leone and Liberia to see how input markets could be improved there. The concrete follow-up of these initiatives is unclear. Partnerships have been explored but have not been closed. In our view, the actions undertaken cannot be considered as structural ways to integrate the subject within the SAADA program.

What other activities have been taken under the title SAADA C, that have not been mentioned in the ToR?

The major additional activity which was funded via the SAADA C program is the support to the Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP). IFDC provided support to the GSFP Secretariat and regional actors in linking agricultural clusters to the feeding program. Gradually IFDC focussed more on a selection of specific areas and provided several trainings. We miss data on the local production used for GSFP as a result of IFDC's interventions which would be an indicator to measure impact. Furthermore, SAADA C funds have been used for the preparation and organisation of the Africa Fertilizer Summit although achievements in this field have mostly been reported under SAADA B. Since activity based financial accounts are not available it is difficult to trace down exactly which funds of SAADA C have been used for which type of activities.

8.7 CONCLUSIONS ON SAADA B AND C

On the basis of the available material it is not possible to determine if the SAADA B and C programs achieved satisfactory results. First of all, no targets have been specified for SAADA B and C. Secondly, even if targets would have been specified, the reported results do not allow any conclusions at impact or effect level. Some activities can be described as successful, like the organisation of the Africa Fertilizer Summit or the overall knowledge of IFDC

staff on cross-cutting issues. However, nothing can be said about impact, effectiveness, efficiency or relevance of the programs.

More specifically, we note:

- *Too high ambition to introduce CASE in other regions*

The conditions to successfully introduce the CASE approach in other regions in Africa were not in place at the beginning of the SAADA B program:

1. IFDC did not have an office in the region;
2. Staff with experience in CASE was limited and besides was situated in West Africa;
3. The intensity of 1000s+ made it difficult to make available staff for activities in other regions;
4. Diverging agricultural conditions required the approach and the skills of people to be adopted first.

In fact, a solid approach for the replication of the CASE approach in other African regions was missing and in this perspective the formulated ambitions within SAADA B can be considered unrealistic. With the integration of CASE in the Catalyst program a base have been created for implementation of the approach in Burundi, Rwanda and DRC. The support that has been provided to the Catalyst program is much appreciated and contributed greatly to the existence which would not have been possible without SAADA B.

- *A lack of clear results and SMART indicators*

The challenges encountered in the first years of SAADA B gave reason to change its directions. From 2008 DGIS and IFDC decided that SAADA B funds could be used for developing innovative agricultural models and for all type of strategic investments, not necessarily focusing on other parts of Africa. This revised focus has not been translated into clear targets and indicators which in our view is a missed chance in guaranteeing the effectiveness of the program. This gave IFDC much liberty to allocate funds as they wanted which is not per se bad. It enabled IFDC for example to work on innovative methodologies (such as UDP).

For SAADA C we also come to the conclusion that specific targets have been lacking, making it very difficult to determine whether the program was effective. SAADA C funds can be considered as a form of institutional support to IFDC. The expectation of DGIS towards IFDC was to increase the knowledge on certain cross cutting issue and to implement these subjects within their programs. It seems that funds have been spent quite randomly focussing a bit more on certain issues than others. It is not possible to assess the impact reached via SAADA C without looking to the SAADA A program which served as major vehicle to implement the cross cutting issues and to reach the target group. This requires close collaboration between the programs which brings us to our next point.

- *Weak interaction with SAADA A program*

SAADA B and C are organized more or less independently from SAADA A. Where SAADA A has very specific targets to be reached, there is extreme flexibility in B and C. Some of the actions organised under B and C have been linked to SAADA A or served to strengthen the CASE approach. It is not clear why there are separate programs. In terms of planning and monitoring, it would have been more effective and efficient to closely collaborate. At this moment, the responsibility of the programs lies with two different coordinators. Reporting is done at the same moment to DGIS in one document but in fact, the chapters on SAADA A, B and C can be considered separate reports.

9. Conclusions evaluation SAADA program 2006-2009

A result chain is used to show the logical relation between interventions and outcomes and to draw conclusions about the SAADA program. First we present the evaluators' assessment per element of the result chain and then our judgment about the impact, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the program. Here, we distinguish between judgment on the basis of formal program requirements and a qualified opinion of the program, which takes into account elements and effects not captured by the result chain.

A) RESULT CHAIN

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 50% average increase in agricultural productivity and a 30% average income growth for 1 million rural households in seven countries in West Africa 2. Measurable increase in environmentally sustainable production on an additional 2 million hectares of farmland 3. Improved food security through an increase in agricultural production of 500,000 cereal equivalents 4. Farmers are more effectively served by private service providers. At least 2000 project beneficiary input dealers, traders, processors and others have increased their business by 50% and expanded the number of stores, warehouses, agencies and other processing units and employees by another 50% 5. Increased institutional capacities of producer organizations, agro-entrepreneurs, credit and business service providers, trade associations and National Research and Extension Services (NARES) 	OBJECTIVES
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The objective has been partially met. The program has realized average production increases of more than 50% and income increases of more than 30%. It has not done so for 1 million households, but for 373.000 households in seven countries in West Africa, reaching 37% of the targeted volume. Although the influence of other factors such as the increasing world market prices for the supported commodities and support by other donors is substantial, it is found that the production and income increases can to a large extent be attributed to 1000s+; 2. This target has not been met. Actual realization stands at about 20% of the target. Although many farmers have adopted environmentally sustainable production techniques, the increase in acreage farmed according to ISFM practices is quite modest; 3. The program has contributed to enhanced food production. The reported increase in cereal equivalents production is nearly four times higher than planned. Livelihood conditions (not necessarily being food insecurity conditions) have increased both by enhanced production and income. Although the contribution of other factors to this increase is substantial, it is found that the target has been met; 4. This target has been partially met. Private service provision to farmers has improved, but not to the expected extent. Over 4000 dealers, traders, processors and others (of which 1500 unique actors) have been reached by the program. The foundations have been laid for increased business between chain operators and supporters. The number of business transactions and opportunities have significantly increased, but is difficult to quantify. Size and viability of many clusters hamper realization of transactions. 5. The capacities of actors involved in the 218 supported agribusiness clusters have increased as a result of program interventions. Actors have become aware of the fact that agricultural development requires a business attitude and cooperation between stakeholders. They have grown used to looking at opportunities. The organizational and institutional capacities of farmers and farmer organizations have most strongly increased. Varying per country, the capacities of input dealers, trade associations, research institutions and financial service providers have more or less increased and their attitudes changed. 	EVALUATION



Strengthened capacities

- 6. Producer organisations involved in the programme are capable of representing and serving their members
- 7. Cluster actors are able to leverage additional funding from other sources (outside the program) for implementation of business plans

Improved service and access

- 8. Increased access to and efficiency in the use of agricultural inputs
- 9. Increased access to and use of improved technology
- 10. Improved production and processing of agricultural products
- 11. Improved access to local, regional or global markets
- 12. Improved availability of market information for farmers and agribusiness operators

Improved business environment

- 13. Adoption and implementation of harmonized agricultural trade and regulatory policies by governments in West Africa
- 14. The business environment has improved through adoption of favourable policies and organizational capacity building

OBJECTIVES

OUTCOME

Agricultural cluster formation

- 6. Producer organizations supported by the program are increasingly capable to represent and serve their members. Improved services concern the collective purchase of inputs and price bargaining, organized sale, collecting and disseminating market information, and joint lobby and advocacy. The membership of the supported POs has strongly increased in the period 2006-2009. The positive effects in service delivery by POs cannot be solely attributed to 1000s+: many POs are also supported by other donors, or have been prior to the program.
- 7. Cluster actors have mobilized external credits for investments, up to a reported amount of 9 million euro. Togolese cluster actors are by far most successful in mobilizing credits for their activities (6 million euro). Furthermore, in the program period, 11 business plans have been developed by cluster actors. It is not known to what extent these plans have been financed by external parties. Cluster action plans are mainly elaborated for harnessing support and are nearly all fully financed by 1000s+.

Improvement of agricultural commodity chains

- 8. The knowledge of cluster actors (farmers most prominently) about agricultural inputs has strongly increased as a result of 1000s+. The use of appropriate inputs has also increased. The access to inputs however remains challenging, because of the high politicization of the input market and the high costs of seeds, fertilizers and land;
- 9. The knowledge and use of new technologies for production and soil management has strongly increased as a result of 1000s+. The program has introduced many innovative production technologies. Producers are eager to adopt the technologies, having become convinced (through training and demonstration plots in particular) of their added value. However, their actual adoption is limited by lack of funds or other resources (such as own land) of a farmer and insufficient documentation and sharing of the technologies.
- 10. Production and productivity have strongly increased as a result of 1000s+. The gains realized by targeted farmers, mainly resulting from improved farming practices, production innovations and improved input use, are substantial. All producers directly reached by the program (by training, demonstration plot, exchange visit etc.) report to be using different production techniques than before;
- 11. Access to local markets has improved. Access to regional markets has somewhat improved for some supported commodities. The influence of the program on access to the global market has been very limited as a result of the choice to focus on domestic markets (80% of clusters).
- 12. The program has not brought about a significant increase in the availability or usage of market information for cluster actors. 1000s+ does not aim to directly set up market information systems, but rather facilitates the usage of existing market information. Through SAADA B, IFDC has contributed to establishing AMITSA and Africafertilizer.org.

Lobbying and advocacy

- 13. The program's achievements in terms of improvement of the regulatory environment at national or regional level have been limited.
- 14. The program's achievements in terms of improvement of the business environment at national level have been limited. However, there are specific examples that clusters actors have effectively influenced policy and business conditions at local level.

EVALUATION



OUTPUT

17. 300 clusters function as support to farmers and agribusiness operators to improve performance of commodity chains
18. Capacity-building of both the principal stakeholders involved, i.e. farmers, farmer groups and local entrepreneurs, as well as other actors involved, such as business development, financial services and local policy makers.
19. New technology for agricultural production is tested and introduced (a.o. Urea Deep Placement)
20. AISSA (Network Agricultural Intensification in Sub-Saharan Africa) is operational and provides useful market information to farmers and agri-business operators.
21. Cluster business plans are developed and are being implemented
22. CASE trainers are trained to support farmers and other stakeholders
23. IFDC engages in dialogue with governments and provides technical assistance to improve agricultural policies with a special focus on input supplies
24. Capacities of IFDC staff and partner organisations are strengthened in key areas such as gender, HIV/AIDS and trade
25. The programme has successfully introduced the CASE approach in other parts of Africa

OBJECTIVES

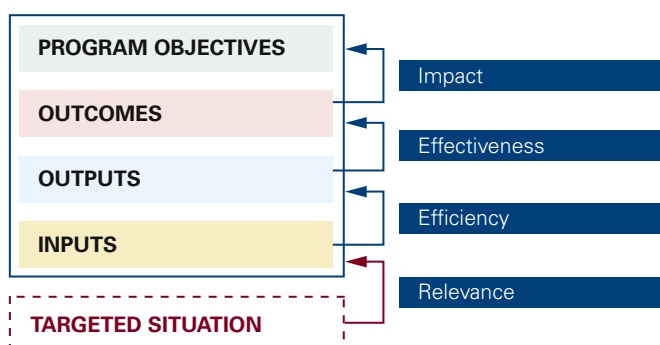
17. By the end of 2009, 218 clusters are established (41 in Mali and Burkina Faso, 37 in Benin, 32 in Niger, 27 in Togo, 25 in Nigeria, 15 in Ghana). These comprise over 6.701 producer organizations, of which 1737 female groups, from 7.000 villages.
18. Between 120.000 and 140.000 people were involved in capacity-building activities (trainings, exchange visits, workshops, study tours etc.) in the program period, of which 36% women. This corresponds with around 35.000 unique persons. In 2009 alone, nearly 3.000 capacity-building activities were undertaken. Within the group of principal stakeholders and in terms of absolute numbers, farmers were the main beneficiaries of capacity-building efforts (87% of all participants). With about half of the capacity-building activities in 2009 aimed towards them, processors and business service providers have also profited. Local entrepreneurs and business service providers have received more training than financial service providers, research institutes and policy makers.
19. The introduction of technological innovations for agricultural production has been manifold. The major achievements in the field of technological innovation have been the introduction of Urea Deep Placement (UDP) and Urea Super Granules (USG) methodologies in West Africa, after adaptation of the originally Bangladeshi technique. UDP and USG have been tested in 20 irrigation schemes; participatory demonstrations have reached around 15.000 farmers in West Africa.
20. The AISSA network is only to a limited extent operational and known among potential users. The network principally consists of the AISSA website, which has only been (re)launched in 2010 after having been closed since 2008. The website is not much used yet to obtain and share market information.
21. By the end of 2009, 11 business plans have been developed by cluster actors (five in Mali, five in Togo, one in Nigeria), mostly being producer organizations or associations of POs. This represents about 5% of the clusters. It is not known to what extent these plans have been effectively implemented.
22. 1000s+ has educated 35 persons to become CASE trainers. In qualitative terms, it is questionable whether these persons are indeed full-fledged trainers or coaches. In four out of the seven countries, National Capacity Strengthening Teams (NCST) exist. CASE trainers are supposed to become part of the NCSTs, but are not so yet.
23. IFDC has not much engaged directly into dialogue with policy-makers. Few initiatives have thus far been taken by IFDC staff to capitalize on cluster experiences for improving agricultural policies. Most attention has gone out to establishing the 218 agribusiness clusters and the organizational structure needed to effectively implement the program, including the support structure for lobby and advocacy. There are specific examples of ROPPA effectively influencing regional agricultural policies, but often not directly related to SAADA. IFDC policy engagement in the input sector is essentially through the MIR+ project.
24. Methodologies, strategies and trainings have been developed to improve gender inclusion in community-based action programming and in value chain development. The overall knowledge of IFDC staff on gender issues has increased. Women participation in the SAADA program is high given the West African context, except for representation in the National Steering Committee. The issue of HIV/AIDS has been occasionally addressed in the context of the 1000s+ program. HIV/AIDS is considered less of a priority in Western Africa than e.g. malaria. IFDC has made some efforts to link HIV/AIDS with its core business by focusing on the nutrition conditions of HIV-affected people. Capacities in the field of Natural Resource Management (NRM), conflict mitigation, governance issues and trade have not been demonstrably strengthened. Other cross-cutting issues such as value chain financing, land tenure, climate change adaptation are considered more relevant.
25. The introduction of the CASE approach in other regions in Africa has not been very successful. The conditions to do so were not in place at the beginning of the program: no office, no staff trained in CASE available in the region, no specific plan and high demand upon resources by 1000s+ in West-Africa. The introduction of the CASE approach in other parts of Africa did not materialize until 2008/2009, when it was integrated in IFDCs Catalyst program. Catalyst is the only program which thus far includes the CASE approach.

EVALUATION



INPUT	Planned Investment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Financial<ul style="list-style-type: none">16 million Euro DGIS funding for 2006-2010<ul style="list-style-type: none">SAADA A – 10 millionSAADA B – 5 millionSAADA C – 1 millionMatched by additional 16 million Euro by co-fundersOrganizational<ul style="list-style-type: none">Uniquely qualified IFDC team: solid regional network, extensive ties with donors and experience to implement large and complex projects	PLANNED INVESTMENT
	Realized Investment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Financial<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 million Euro of DGIS funding invested in SAADA AAbout 9 million Euro of co-funding invested in SAADA A by other donors (estimation for 2010)About 3 million of DGIS funding invested in SAADA B and C (estimation for 2010)Total estimated investment in the program for 2006-2010: 22 million EuroOrganizational<ul style="list-style-type: none">30,8 full-time equivalent IFDC staff227 business service providers (BSS)	REALIZED INVESTMENT

B) QUALIFIED JUDGMENT OF THE 1000S+ PROJECT ON THE BASIS OF THE RESULT CHAIN



<p>Relevance</p> <p>The relevance of the SAADA A is considered very high. The CASE approach is an adequate instrument for value chain development, addressing the key issues at stake for sustainable agricultural development in Africa. It is appropriate to the physical and policy environment within which it operates. It develops entrepreneurial attitudes and links input and output markets.</p> <p>The program set-up and intervention strategy is logical and coherent. The organizational set-up is essentially conducive to an effective implementation of the program.</p>	<p>9</p>
<p>Impact</p> <p>As per formal program objectives, the impact of SAADA is considered fair. The objectives have been partially met. For SAADA A, the program has had significant effects for participating cluster actors at the local level, most prominently the farmers that are reached, and has provoked positive changes in institutional capacities and entrepreneurial attitudes.</p> <p><i>When also considering the created dynamics, spin-off effects, attitude change and effects that will be produced after the evaluation period, the impact is considered good. Many benefits of the program are not captured in the formal reporting system. The spin-off of the program is substantial. Besides, it is also evident that many impact results will still be produced beyond the evaluation period because of the time-span required before effects of capacity improvement and attitude change translate into concrete activities leading to economic effects</i></p>	<p>7</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>Per formal program objectives, the effectiveness of the program is considered fair. There is a clear effect of project activities on the knowledge, skills and attitude of the target groups, but the access for cluster actors to inputs, technology, finance, markets and market information has only increased to varying and limited degrees.</p> <p><i>When considering the negative influence of external factors, the effectiveness of the program is considered good. The translation of outputs to outcome and impact is hampered by all sorts of intervening variables that are beyond the scope of both local entrepreneurs and the project. Furthermore, implementors have a constant drive towards learning and improving the program's implementation, which has made the programs interventions increasingly more effective.</i></p>	<p>7</p>
<p>Efficiency</p> <p>Per formal project objectives, the efficiency of the program is good. The realized average costs per farmer for the program period (34 USD for reaching 373.000 households) are lower than in previous projects, as targeted. Inclusion of the 2010 expenditures may still influence these results. These costs could have been lower if more households had been reached, as originally planned. The cost-effectiveness of service delivery to clusters is improving. Costs per farmer are steady and costs per cluster per year are decreasing. Considering the realized additional production, income growth for farmers and reduced soil depletion, it is found that the benefits of the program outweigh its costs. This is considered quite an achievement considering the fact that 1000s+ is a regional program (covering 7 countries) with regional and national stakeholders working on a wide range of widely spread geographically commodities. In the context of West African agricultural development cooperation, the expenses of the program versus its achievements are considered low.</p> <p><i>When considering other factors, however, the efficiency of the program is considered fair. High costs of data collection and training costs per farmer, financial intransparency, weak sharing of training modules through ICT and knowledge sharing within clusters, the absence of competition and quality checks between service providers and the choice to work with fixed service prices lead to higher costs than necessary. Various measures remain possible to further improve the efficiency of the program.</i></p>	<p>7</p>
<p>Total evaluation score on scale of 1-10</p>	<p>7,5</p>



10. Future perspectives

Continuation of the SAADA program ...

Given the positive results of the evaluation regarding relevance, effectiveness, sustainable impact and efficiency of the SAADA A/1000s+ program, the evaluation team recommends the continuation of the program. We suggest considering 2011 as a transition year during which a successive program 2012-2015 is formulated. To ensure continuity of agribusiness cluster development and staff retention, explicit decision-making is required on the shortest notice possible regarding the continuation of SAADA A activities in 2011, including the elaboration of a work plan 2011 and the continuation of contracts during 2011. It is recommended that remaining SAADA B and C funds, and some additional funding from DGIS, be utilized for the continuation of SAADA A in 2011 as well as investments related to the formulation of SAADA 2012-2015. It is important to formulate realistic and feasible objectives for 2012-2015.

... embedded in a CASE framework program ...

The essence of SAADA 2012-2015 is recommended to remain unchanged: the CASE approach focusing on stakeholder collaboration for building competitive agricultural systems and enterprises. While the approach is solid, it may be enriched by introducing conditions and strategies for successful implementation. To broaden the critical mass of organizations and people understanding the CASE approach, relevant partners should be involved in the formulation of SAADA 2012-2015. The program should have a logical intervention strategy, with clearly identified key operational areas and budget categories. The SAADA 2012-2015 program would form the basis of a CASE framework program. Additional funding is handled either as direct contribution to the CASE framework program (i.e. included in the program set-up and reporting logic), or as projects overtly related to the framework program (i.e. with distinct objectives, implementation and reporting modalities, but contributing to the same impact goals).

... with IFDC leading SAADA ...

The SAADA 2012-2015 program, focusing on strengthening business-oriented collaboration between different actors in agribusiness clusters, remains to be coordinated by IFDC. SAADA 2012-2015 should include action research components and should give sufficient attention to cross-cutting issues, thus integrating former SAADA B and C elements. For SAADA 2012-2015, we propose to limit the interventions to the seven countries in West Africa (not expanding to other parts of Africa) in order to keep the program manageable and in order to avoid effects and impact becoming diluted. Whereas under SAADA A 2006-2010, about 80 to 90% of the capacity strengthening services was targeted at producer organizations, a more balanced attention towards all cluster actor groups is recommended for SAADA 2012-2015. Strategic partnerships shall be concluded under the CASE framework program to ensure that the needs of all actors are taken into account. We plea for not installing a credit facility or investment fund in the CASE framework program as this is in contradiction with market driven approach.

... Agriterra providing additional support to producer organisations ...

When the relatively heavy focus on producer organisations is replaced in the SAADA 2012-2015 program by more equal attention to all cluster actors, continued support to producer organisations – where and when required – could be provided under a separate Farmers Fighting Poverty II program. We suggest that the Farmers Fighting Poverty II program, to be coordinated by Agriterra, is aligned with the SAADA 2012-2015 program, under the CASE framework program. This implies for example that specific producer groups, in need of additional capacity strengthening support, are identified by the SAADA Cluster Advisors and served by the Agriterra program. Coordination and monitoring of alignment could be done at national level by the National Steering Committees. It is recommended that Agriterra assumes an expert role under the CASE framework program, rather than a role as donor of the SAADA program.

... the Ministry promoting alignment under the CASE framework program ...

Other programs may be aligned under the CASE framework program, depending on needs and opportunities at national level. We suggest to minimally seek alignment with programs focussing on strengthening financial service provision in rural areas, and with organizations strengthening BSSs (or so-called 'local capacity builders'). As far as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through DGIS and Embassies) is involved in funding these complementary programs and organisations, an active role of the Ministry is recommended in promoting alignment under the CASE framework program. In addition, programs by (multinational) companies aiming at sourcing production, may be integrated in the CASE framework program as well.

... and ROPPA as 'spokesperson' of producers.

We propose a more articulated contribution of ROPPA as 'spokesperson' of rural producers at (national and) regional level. A specific procedure should be developed to translate burning issues at cluster level into subjects for advocacy and lobbying at national and regional level. We suggest that Agriterro supports producer organisations and ROPPA, in developing and implementing lobby and advocacy agendas based on cluster inputs. Particular attention is paid to out-scaling: promotion of CASE experiences within national farmer federations.

Clusters are selected on the basis of explicit criteria ...

On the basis of experiences with SAADA 2006-2010, we suggest that a typology of agribusiness clusters be developed with different pathways and key success factors for AB cluster formation and development. In the SAADA 2011-2015 program, it is recommended that clusters be selected on the basis of country-specific entry strategies. These strategies make clear what balance between social considerations (empowerment of local groups, gender balance, CASE experiences across the country) and economic considerations (geographic concentration, cluster size, cluster networking, economic viability,...) is aimed for.

For instance:

- preferences for certain commodities could be elaborated (for example in order to benefit from economies of scale, or in order to ensure a minimum number of female-led clusters);
- choices could be made for a certain geographical concentration (in order to increase effects and impact by collaboration between neighbouring cluster, and in order to reduce costs);
- priority could be given to clusters where complementary collaboration can be established with programs and partners;

AB cluster development is eligible for SAADA support only when the cluster is comprised of all CASE actors. Business ideas will continue to be submitted by producer organisations, but other actor groups are actively encouraged to submit business ideas too.

... supported on the basis of multi-annual cluster plans ...

Rather than developing cluster action plans on an annual basis, we suggest to introduce cluster action plans with a 3 to 5 years' horizon. These plans should contain both SMART economic objectives for the cluster as a whole and for respective cluster actors, as well as capacity strengthening objectives of all actors. Additionally, they should contain yearly increasing own contributions and a phasing out strategy. Finally, cluster action plans should specify required services of CASE coaches and business service providers, as well as their costs. CASE coaches should have a gradually larger role in cluster action planning and evaluation. Annually, the results of the multi-annual cluster plan should be evaluated and the plan may be updated or specified for the coming year while planned activities remain to be financed without interruption.

... trained on the basis of proven didactics ...

In SAADA 2011-2015, it is recommended that more attention be paid to the effectiveness of trainings. Training of trainers is required to ensure that training didactics are relevant to participants' needs and to ensure more effective use of training material. The business management component of training should be intensified: more attention to

issues as production and productivity figures, cost-benefit analysis, business plan development, financial management, opportunities for product and market development. Other capacity-building instruments, such as audio-visual support for sharing information about new technologies, demonstration plots, farmer field schools and study tours, could be more actively promoted. The effects of training are to be monitored in quantitative and qualitative terms.

...by capable business support services ...

The delivery of capacity strengthening services at cluster level should remain to be provided by BSSs, under guidance of IFDCs AB Cluster Advisor. Contracts with BSSs should stipulate clear results (milestones) to be achieved as a basis for monitoring and control by IFDC. In order to enhance the focus of BSS on results and to reduce financial administration at IFDC, it is recommended that BSSs be paid lump sum amounts on the basis of performance agreements. For more mature clusters, the responsibilities for contracting BSS may be transferred to the cluster actors themselves.

... supported by a proper institutional structure ...

Given the growing number of actors, it is important that the roles and required qualifications of different types of CASE facilitators be further defined. The proposed categories comprise: IFDC staff, NSCs, CASE trainers (certified), CASE coaches, business services providers to clusters and own staff of cluster actors. IFDCs limited staff policy should be maintained, although additional strategic capacity at national level is required to catalyze multi-stakeholder cluster formation and out-scaling.

We recommend that the AISSA network be turned into a 'training shop' or 'boutique de formation', providing training modules, case studies, a toolbox for cluster facilitation, and cluster actor testimonies. The training modules should include a trainers' guide, hand-outs for trainees and audio-visual support when appropriate, contributing to improved training didactics. BSSs can use existing training modules without developing each of these independently. It is suggested that AISSA define criteria for membership. IFDC staff, NSC representatives, CASE coaches and trainers may comprise the core membership of AISSA and have preferential access to resources. Development practitioners and others may source materials in the public section of the AISSA platform. The network should be actively moderated to ensure high quality.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of National Steering Committees should be further enhanced in a second phase of SAADA, becoming a real national-level multi-stakeholder action forum. NSC members actively represent their organizations, pro-actively establish linkages between relevant actors at national level and develop lobby and advocacy trajectories for improved access to credit and inputs, agricultural investment funds and measures to reduce risks for investing in agricultural sector. A division of tasks amongst members (advocacy, partnerships, service provision to grass-root actors etc.) may be thereto required.

... phased out if maturity is reached ...

The above-mentioned typology of agribusiness clusters with different pathways and key success factors for AB cluster formation and development is used to determine exit strategies. Support to clusters should be phased and time-bound. Per phase, clusters receive different support. Limited financial support for testing new technologies and/or kick-start economic activities should be considered for 'young' clusters with a high number of poor inexperienced local entrepreneurs not yet eligible for credit. More mature clusters should receive relatively more business management training and less technical training. They increasingly finance cluster activities from own means. Support to insufficiently motivated or insufficiently performing clusters should be discontinued. Mature clusters supported by SAADA 2006-2010 should be gradually phased out, but cluster development remains to be monitored.

... and involved in their own monitoring system.

Finally, it is recommended to distinguish two separate M&E systems: (1) program M&E to support management decisions for upward accountability, and (2) entrepreneurial M&E for learning at cluster level and downward accountability.

Program M&E system should concentrate on the monitoring of inputs, outputs and outcomes, which are largely within the scope of influence of the program. Current indicators should be reduced in number, be made more specific and operational and differentiated for direct and indirect reach. Since spin-off effects are crucially important for understanding the dynamics and results created by cluster facilitation according to the CASE approach, more capacity should be generated for qualitative monitoring and evaluation of effects. This could be supplemented with external studies to evaluate (monitor) impact at cluster level. As baseline studies are required for impact evaluation, external evaluators are to be contracted before the start of the next phase.

	PROGRAM M&E		ENTREPRENEURAL M&E	
	What	How	What	How
Impact		External evaluation Case studies	Socio-economic objectives cluster	BSS
			Socio-economic objectives cluster actor	Cluster actor
Outcome	Behavioural change	IFDC / BSS		
Output	Capacity-strengthening services			
Input	Financial and human resources			
	For all clusters, based on limited number of general indicators pertaining to clear program objectives		Per cluster, based on set of specific indicators pertaining to clear objectives outlined in multi-annual cluster plan	

Entrepreneurial M&E should focus on achievements of the economic objectives of cluster actors defined in the multi-annual cluster plan. Since the objective of entrepreneurial M&E is to allow cluster actors to better navigate their businesses, data collection should be done by cluster actors themselves. Indicators are to be tailored to their situation. They should capture income and production changes for different farmer categories: cost-benefit, gross/net benefit analyses take into account different production, storage, processing and marketing practices, as well as production costs and (substitution) losses.

For an overview of the above recommendations and some other specific suggestions, please refer to Annex 14.

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference SAADA evaluation 2006-2009

Annex 2. Evaluation methodology

Annex 3. Overview of stakeholders consulted

Annex 4. Resultats de l'enquête

Annex 5. Country analysis SWOT

Annex 6. Case study report Benin

Annex 7. Case study report Burkina Faso

Annex 8. Case study report Ghana

Annex 9. Case study report Mali

Annex 10. Case study report Niger

Annex 11. Case study report Nigeria

Annex 12. Case study report Togo

Annex 13. Summary discussions Regional Advisory Committee meeting 6-7 September 2010

Annex 14. List of specific recommendations

