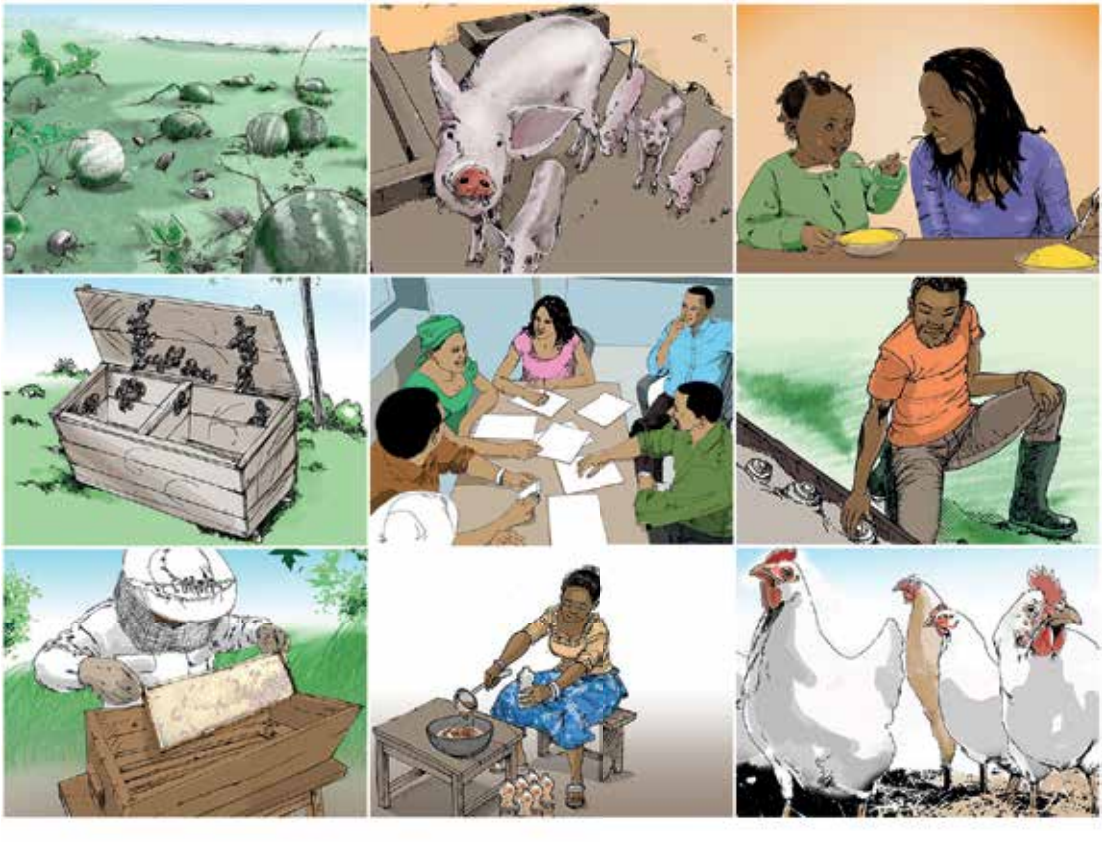
Jean Merlin ETOBE

PROFESSIONALISATION OF FAMILY FARMING

Tools for technical and organisational capacity-building of farmers' organisations in sub-Saharan Africa



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGRIDOC	Agricultural Documentary Support Network
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMR	Support for Rural Areas *(Appui au Monde Rural)*
CIG	Common Initiative Group
CNI	National Identity Card
CODAS CARITAS	Diocesan Committee for Social and Charitable Activities
EIG	Economic Interest Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEMEC	Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions in Cameroon
GA	General Assembly
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGA	Income Generating Activities
GPT	Group of Producers
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OHADA	Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa *(Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires)*
SCOOPS	Simplified Cooperative Society
SCOOP-CA	Cooperative Company with a Board of Directors
SMS	Short Message Service
UN	United Nations
WFP	World Food Programme



PROFESSIONALISING
FAMILY FARMING
IS A PRIORITY AND
A REAL CHALLENGE
AT NATIONAL LEVEL.



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First of all, I would like to thank Samuel Mbog, director of the integrated development project in Babimbi, Cameroon (FEMEC – Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions in Cameroon) who was the first person to introduce me to rural development issues and who guided my first steps. May he see this guide as a sign of my gratitude to him.

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Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributed directly or indirectly to the preparation of this guide; may the Almighty bless you with His gifts.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the global community of family farmers of which I am proud to be part. I hope that this work will help these farmers realise that they have one of the best jobs in the world despite the contempt that they regularly face. May this guide be an expression of my admiration for your important work.

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FOREWORD

Developing countries are currently facing new challenges in a completely different context from the ones they were facing at the end of the 1960s – disengagement of the States, trade globalisation, sustainable management of the environment, increased importance of civil society and extreme poverty. These changes have made it necessary for developing countries to radically alter their courses of action.

The upheaval within the institutional landscape and the disappointing results of the last two decades have led to an important change in the principles for intervention for development. Sustainable effects are more than ever the priority. Development actions do not only aim to deliver services but to also create institutions capable of building strategies offering long-term solutions to the populations' systemic problems.

The top-down approaches giving donors, governments and their experts a monopoly on designing and decision-making are now called into question. They are now tentatively being replaced by bottom-up approaches, which allow the population to integrate their initiatives into the measures taken by the decision-makers.

We need to give priority to the stakeholders' viewpoints and bottom-up approaches. But the smooth transition from an administered development to a concerted development requires conditions that are not always present. While various professions try to join together in order to better protect their interests and efficiently contribute to their country's development, agricultural producers seem to be lagging behind. Their weak organisational capacities might be the cause of this delay.

In order for farmers to be recognised as stakeholders in their own right and for them to meet the high expectation of feeding the world by producing more and better and with less means, we must form strong, representative and professional farmers' organisations.

This guide could not have come at a better time. It is with great pleasure that I congratulate its author, Jean Merlin Etobe, who has dedicated many years to supporting the farming world. I would like to believe that his work would contribute to the creation of proper farmers' organisations.

Jacques NDONG MPONDO
President
Réseau des Producteurs des Racines et Tubercules de la Sanaga Maritime (REPRAT)

INTRODUCTION

Context

According to the report *L'état d'insécurité alimentaire dans le monde* (2014), published jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), 805 million people in the world, that is one person out of 9, suffer from hunger; the vast majority of these people live in developing countries where 13.5% of the population is undernourished.

According to the WFP (**http://fr.wfp.org/faim/faits-et-chiffres**), hunger kills more people than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. This highlights why the fight against hunger must become a priority for humankind. Although progress has been made, the Millennium Development Goal that aims to reduce hunger by half by 2015 has not been achieved. FAO, which believes that it is necessary to go faster and further because hunger is avoidable, had predicted it during World Food Day 2014.

According to FAO, humanity has the means to put an end to hunger. But in order to do so, countries must invest more in family farming which is the key to increasing global food production and the only form of agriculture that can address the challenge of climate change. Small farmers have been left to their own devices for far too long to face hunger and poverty alone. Professionalising family farming is a necessity and requires the creation of strong, well-structured farmers' organisations that can represent and defend the interests of family farming. Those organisations will then be able to offer services to their members in view of an adapted and adequate professionalisation which will make it possible for them to address efficiently the challenges currently faced by society (food, socio-economic and environmental). Unfortunately, farmers' organisations are often unable to confront their new responsibilities and find it particularly difficult to:

- **develop a medium to long term strategic vision;**
- **manage their organisation efficiently;**
- **mobilise the expertise required to implement the appropriate development actions;**
- **access information tailored to their needs;**
- **obtain funding in a context of very limited resources.**

Given the diversity in backgrounds of the leaders of the farmers' organisations (illiterate, literate, holding degrees, a public more or less informed...) it is urgent to design tools that can improve the knowledge and skills of its leaders and members.

Goal

The goal of this guide is to promote the professionalisation of farmers' organisations through the implementation of technical and organisational capacity-building tools.

Target audience

This guide is mainly directed at the various stakeholders of rural development in sub-Saharan Africa. They are mainly:

- **members of producer organisations, cooperatives, village associations, economic interest groups, common interest groups, etc.**
- **executives and development workers in rural development projects and programmes**
- **leaders of the farming world**
- **farm schools students and pupils;**
- **anyone who wants to create a farmers' organisation within a rural community.**

A certain academic level is required to be able to use this guide properly. Nevertheless, for an audience with low literacy skills, this guide can be translated and used for a discussion in the local language.

Organisation of this guide

Chapter 1 provides a definition and information on the role played by family farming and farmers' organisations.

Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 represent the main parts of this guide, namely:

- **Chapter 2. Organisational levels to measure the management capacity of a farmers' organisation at any given time ;**
- **Chapter 3. The strengthening of the farmers' organisations' organisational capacities. Those include the tools of community and administrative life and relationships with the world outside of the farmers' organisation ;**
- **Chapter 4. The strengthening of technical capacities and accounting and financial management of the farmers' organisations ;**
- **Chapter 5. Support tools (audit, support plan, a plan to monitor the impact of the activities) for the umbrella organisations.**

CHAPTER 1

FAMILY FARMING AND FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS

Family farming is now the main form of agriculture in food production in developed and developing countries. It also plays a vital role in socio-economic, environmental and cultural development. But what is it exactly?

What is family farming?

It is more appropriate to refer to family farms in the plural given how different this type of agriculture is between one continent to another, between one country to another or even between regions. SOS FAIM (www.agriculturesfamiliales.org) has determined five main characteristics that differentiate family farms from other types of agriculture, namely:

The family structure

The family structure is an **agricultural practice that is centred on the family organisation**. It relies mainly on a family workforce, but it may also include distant family members or people from the community; it may even lead to some form of paid workforce through part-time or seasonal work. The activity is still considered family-based in the sense that it forges a strong link between economic activities and family structures.

Its main objective is also different from that of other forms of agriculture. The family farms are committed to the reproduction and well-being of the family group. They generally take care of land that was cultivated by their grandparents and in this sense contribute to the preservation of the family and its heritage.

The nourishing function

The family farms' main objective is **to meet the family's nutritional needs** by producing food and selling part of it. This role is still assigned to the majority of the family farms of the countries of the South.

The socio-economic function

Family farms try to **boost agricultural production via processing** (e.g. processing cassava into gari, starch...) **and/or better marketing** (e.g. by integrating a cooperative, by organising bundling, etc.) in order to maintain employment and ensure an adequate income for the family.

The environmental function

Family farms **maintain links with their territory**. They often have a historical and cultural attachment to the land. This is why they respect natural resources and biodiversity. Nevertheless, all family farms no longer carry out sustainable practices because the current reality on the ground does not always allow it.

The cultural and societal function

Family farms also represent a particular lifestyle and form of organisation of society that encompasses cultural, social and religious aspects. This lifestyle entails a degree of independence or management autonomy, flexibility and gives centre stage to human relations. In certain countries, family farming is part of the cultural identity of a group and represents a real heritage that needs to be preserved.

Contrary to common beliefs, family farms are not a specific agricultural model or a unique mode of production. They represent a socio-economic organisational system and a multifunctional approach to agricultural activity that go beyond simple food production.



The family farms' responsibilities

Our planet is currently facing a crisis affecting the production of the majority of essential food items due to a sudden price rise in indispensable agricultural raw materials. While this price increase has made the role of producers meaningful again, it is also the source of political and social instability. Based on current knowledge and techniques, the planet's resources are limited. Water is lacking in various parts of the world, arable land is shrinking and climatic hazards are increasing. Crop yields are not rising as fast as they were in the past, but in some regions, they are actually stagnating. Since resources are limited while needs continue to increase, a *"new agricultural revolution is necessary"* according to Parmentier (2014). He states that, "it is necessary to increase production capacities (...), learn to produce always more, but with less and better". Family farms are therefore facing three challenges:

(i) to increase production in order to cover the world's needs in terms of food and nutritional security;

(ii) to guarantee environmental sustainability in order to protect the planet and maintain their own productive capacity;

(iii) to improve productivity while diversifying their livelihoods to avoid hunger and poverty. However, the problems faced by family farms make it very difficult for them to meet those challenges.

Main problems faced by family farms

Our various field missions have allowed us to identify three main areas where problems for family farms are visible, namely:

The family farms' profitability

According to the report *L'état d'insécurité alimentaire dans le monde* (2014), produced jointly by FAO and WFP, small farms produce the largest proportion of food in relation to the total area of the land they use for agriculture globally. They generally have greater crop yields than larger farms located in the same countries who benefit from the same agro-ecological conditions. However, even if the per-hectare yields are higher, they produce less per worker. This perpetuates poverty and is an obstacle to development. A large portion of food production comes from unpaid labour made up of members of the same family. This report underlines the necessity of stimulating output per worker, especially in low-income countries, in order to improve farm incomes and spread economic well-being around the rural world.

In addition, it is vital that products from family farms are marketed at advantageous prices.

Funding activities of family farms

Family farms lack support from governments. Subsidies are non-existent in countries with the largest population of farmers and loans are expensive and usually inadequate. As for microfinance, it is slow to spread to rural areas and the rates charged are outrageously high and often badly suited to the seasonal aspect of farming activity. The saying, "*banks only lend to the rich*" is unfortunately applicable to the farming world. Without money, the family farms of the South cannot invest in their farms. In the North, it is not the lack of access to loans which strangles family farms, but the multiplication of loans (SOS FAIM).

Management of family farms

Despite this profession's lack of recognition, family farms must become sociologically viable, economically reliable and environmentally friendly rural businesses, and they must be administered as such. In addition, family-based governance must improve in order to boost the various family members' potential.

Farmers' organisations

What is a farmers' organisation?

A farmers' organisation is made up of a group of rural producers who structure, sequence and direct (material, human and financial) resources in order to achieve a common goal. Farmers' organisations are complex social actors integrated within a social, cultural and political context and subject to many influences (local, but also external through the disengagement from the States, globalisation). Various criteria can be used to classify farmers' organisations:

- **basic (Common Initiative Group) (CIG)...) or umbrella organisation (Union, Federation ...)**
- **legalised (Common Initiative Group, Economic Interest Group (EIG), Cooperative...) or non-legalised (Villagers' Support Group...)**
- **depending on the type of initiative taken during its creation: internal (CIG, EIG...) or external (certain cooperatives)**
- **depending on the type of activity (production, commercialisation...)**
- **depending on the gender of its members (women's organisation, mixed...).**

Pesche (2001) considers that there are various ways to define farmers' organisations, but most of them combine two types of functions:

- **A function to represent the interests of a particular social group – this function can sometimes take the form of a trade union. It consists in the mediation between the group of represented farmers and the other stakeholders surrounding the producers (administration, merchants, service providers);**
- **A function to provide services to members of the farmers' organisation – those services can be provided either by the farmers' organisation or by external institutions. The farmers' organisation will then strive to ensure the quality and relevance of those services to its members.**

Why do we need farmers' organisations?

Fongang (2012) noted that farmers' organisations play an important role; by creating sustainable rural jobs, they support small farmers, men or women, as well as marginalised groups. In addition, they offer small farmers market opportunities and improved training in natural resources management as well as better access to information, technologies, innovation and extension services. According to him, farmers' organisations are the best way of reducing poverty in rural areas.

What is the development of farmers' organisations?

Following their independence, various African countries have been leaning on cooperatives to modernise their agriculture by granting financial aid to farmers and providing them with technical guidance. Cooperatives were set up following a momentum based on the ideology of community development that was aimed at mobilising local structures. Each cooperative and each mission or development firm was given socio-economic and political development missions and was therefore, to some extent, an outgrowth of the State. Nevertheless, as Tchala Abina underlines in 1985 and Fongang mentions in 2012, these are not producers in the real sense of the term, but really workers because they generally have very little control over their activity and the distribution of the profits.

Following the political option of 'disengagement of the States', the liberalisation of the commercialisation of export goods and the mixed results from cooperatives and development agencies, the State directed private initiatives and the privatisation process towards creating a strategic framework in order to reduce waste and promote more efficient management. Producers' organisations (associations, cooperatives, CIGs, EIGs, NGOs, etc.) now have various types of constitutions and legalisation at their disposal. Unfortunately, farmers' organisations are usually set up based on the pursuit of funding and donations which results in a lack of activity from the majority of them. This is often referred to as 'empty shells'.

With the world affected by market instability, agriculture is now more and more seen as a source of new certainties – a way for people to renew with fundamental values. Farmers can respond to the various concerns of society by preserving the link to the land, local culture food security, nutrition, the fight against poverty, job creation, the revitalisation of the economy and rural development (FIPA, 2009). However, the fact that national laws are so different does not facilitate the development of farmers' organisations. The Ninth Uniform Act of the Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) impacts all sectors of the economy and was created in order to harmonise the law regarding cooperatives with a view to improving the legal environment and economic development. Although negotiations for its elaboration started in March 2001, it was only applicable in the seventeen States that are part of the OHADA treaty after 15 March 2011. Since 15 May 2013, the Ninth Uniform Act replaces national and statutory rules that are contrary to the OHADA requirements.

Gning and Larue (2014) believe that this text is innovative in the African cooperative sector because it gives cooperative farmers the choice between two legal forms: a simplified cooperative company (SCOOPS) or a cooperative company with a Board of Directors (SCOOP-CA). In addition, it gives private sector operators a lot of freedom to set their own rules of operation. The first text which sets the legal framework of the cooperatives is the Uniform Act; the statutes of the cooperatives make up the second text and are separate from national laws. Hiez and Tadjudje (2012) underline that this innovation is much more important than the adoption of the Community policy in Europe. The Uniform Act does not introduce a type of new cooperative that would be added on to those already subject to national laws. The new regulation replaces those in existence, which will then disappear, or will be relegated to being simple complements to the Uniform Act (Art. 2). It is, in fact, specifically stated that the existing cooperatives adapt their status within 2 years from the moment the Uniform Act is implemented in order to conform to its new provisions (Art. 396), which means before 15 May 2013.

The uniform Act (Art. 4) gives this definition: "The cooperative is an autonomous group of people who voluntarily come together to fulfil their common, economic, social and cultural aspirations and needs through the common ownership and management of a company where power is exercised democratically and according to cooperative principles." Hiez and Tadjudje (2012) also add some clarifications: *"first, we note a distance between the cooperative and the society: although cooperatives are designated as cooperative societies, the uniform Act defines them as a 'group of people.". Second, they note that the cooperative's goal is to meet the members' needs – here, the definition is clear in that it includes not only their economic needs, but also social and cultural needs. Third, even though it is obvious, they feel that it is still worth noting that the cooperative is a company – it might be completely different from a capitalist company, but it does not mean that it is a social or philanthropic activity; it is not a NGO or an association, it is a company with all its constraints. Nevertheless, it is non-profit. Finally, we also learn how the cooperative is organised: it belongs collectively to its members who manage it democratically. This allows the Uniform Act to solve the thorny issue of the typology of the farmers' organisation"*.

CHAPTER 1

New challenges for farmers' organisations?

Mercoiret (2006) states that the sub-Saharan African producers have played an extremely limited role in designing the content and modalities of the economic and institutional reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. African farmers' organisations lacked structure and were often dependent on the development agencies that created them, and as a result, they were not informed of or involved in the political decisions that directly affected rural producers. In contrast, farmers' organisations have been given greater responsibility to manage the impact of the States' withdrawal from various agricultural support functions, which they had up to recently fulfilled. A transfer of responsibilities to the farmers' organisations has therefore taken place with respect to areas such as the supply of inputs, product marketing, the management of irrigated land, agricultural advice and training.

Increasingly, the reach of farmers' organisations' is constantly growing. They are facing two fundamental issues: the rebuilding of services in favour of agriculture; and how their members' interests can be represented and defended in relation to the other economic, institutional and political actors. Mercoiret (2006) says that they are facing three challenges, to:

- **meet their members' various and urgent needs**
- **make sure that the other stakeholders recognise and accept the set of rules that they establish**
- **consider and prepare the farmers' future by submitting medium - and long-term proposals and by creating favourable conditions for their negotiations.**

For many farmers' organisations, taking on these three inseparable challenges is not an easy task. Hence, there is an urgency to strengthen the farmers' organisations capacities in order to allow them to be able to meet the current expectations of society in the food, environmental and socio-economic sectors. This guide's goal is to some extent meet this requirement.


WE WILL ORGANISE TRAINING ON DOCUMENT MAINTENANCE FOR FAMILIES
SET UP BUNDLED SALES MECHANISMS FOR OUR PRODUCTS
PROVIDE OUR FAMILIES WITH GOOD QUALITY SEEDS
AND MEET UP THE MAYOR REGARDING ROAD MAINTENANCE

CHAPTER 2

THE ORGANISATIONAL STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A FARMERS' ORGANISATION

In the context of trade globalisation, the dispersal of productions across micro-entities constitutes a handicap. Therefore, one of the main challenges faced by the family farming model is to be organised enough to allow producers to set up strong representation structures which can develop a common vision and negotiating skills at both national and regional level. Five steps are necessary to build the basis for a farmers' organisation and direct the group towards emancipation (Table 1).

Table 1. The five organisational steps towards building a farmers' organisation

Step Phase	Characteristics	Expected results	Numerical importance	Sequences
1/ESTABLISHMENT	Existence of an obvious dynamic for the creation of a group	* Creation motivation and a vision of the future group	4	Participatory diagnosis Problem analysis Activity planning Activity budgeting
	Existence of members and definition of the area of action	* The group has committed members and the area of action is determined	4	Awareness Notion of group Team spirit Meetings held
	Definition of the name according to the vision of the group	The group identifies with a name which represents its vision	1	Identification and analysis of the suggestions for a name and adoption of a denomination
	Suggestion for managers of the group	The group has managers that can fulfil their obligations	2	Definition of position profiles in relation with the activity planning Appointment of managers and reminder of everyone's role
ESTABLISHMENT TOTAL			11	
2/STRUCTURING	Definition of the legal status, drawing up statutes and rules of procedure and legalisation of the group	*The group has its basic texts and is legalised	8	Analysis of the different existing legal statuses Drafting of the statutes Drafting of the rules of procedure Preparation of the legalisation file Submitting and keeping track of the file
	Constitutive General Assembly (GA) held	The group adopts its basic texts and elects its committee	1	Adoption of the statures and rules of procedure Election of the committee Drafting of the PV
	Document management	The group's documents exist and are completed in accordance	2	Members' register Contributions' register Secretary's register Bookkeeping Bookkeeping control
	Determination of work days and hours	*The group has a timetable for activities	2	Drafting of the implementation plan of the production activities Drafting of the common initiative program
STRUCTURING TOTAL			13	

Step Phase	Characteristics	Expected results	Numerical importance	Sequences
3/OWNERSHIP	Document management	*The group's documents exist and are completed in accordance	3	Production keeping / Production monitoring keeping Commercialisation and commercialisation monitoring keeping Keeping of the administrative monitoring of the group Register of the minutes Discipline keeping
	Meetings held regularly	The group respects how often the meetings are held	5	Challenges of a meeting within the group Participatory monitoring evaluation Technique to lead a meeting Drafting a calendar of meetings in accordance with the action plan Drafting of the report and minutes
	Respect of the basic texts	*The group implements the provisions of the basic texts	9	Lead meeting on the use of the basic texts Identification of the main distortions of the basic texts Reading with comments of the texts Participative management of conflicts Visualisation of disciplinary provisions within the group
	Drafting a development plan	*The group structures its short- and long-term development vision	6	Identification of problems of members of the group Prioritisation and choice of common problems which must be taken care of by the group Analysis of the problems chosen Definitions of the group's goals Identification of solutions Strategic planning Operational planning Budgeting of plans Drafting of the financial plan
	Creation of a bank account and a cash account	*Securing funds and giving credibility to the group	4	Lead meeting on the importance of bank accounts and cash accounts Typologies of accounts Administrative management and simplified accounting Presentation and characterisation of surrounding financial institutions Plan to mobilise funds Creation of a file to open an account Submitting and monitoring the file
OWNERSHIP TOTAL			27	

Step Phase	Characteristics	Expected results	Numerical importance	Sequences
4/PROFESSIONALISATION	Policy to recruit new members	*The group increases its membership and improves the quality of its services	4	Marketing of the group Governance of the group Make the group's results public
	Existence of a physical office	The group improves the security of its documents, creates a neutral space and increases its credit	1,5	Acquisition of workspace Office equipment Document filing Organisation of office presence
	Staff recruitment	The group makes the workforce available	4	Identify the profile of the required personnel Draft the terms of contract Identify potential providers Pit certain providers against each other Sign a contract
	Drafting a procedure manual	*The group implements administrative, financial and accounting procedures	4	Tender / Choosing the provider Validating the manual The provider's remuneration
	Management of the operating accounts	The group controls its financial flows	1,5	Tender Choosing the provider Validation of the manual The provider's remuneration
	Management of the documents	*The group's documents exist and are completed in accordance	7,5	Membership sheet / Membership card Sheets for the inventory of goods and equipment / Sheets for stocks Record of revenues and expenses Record of personnel management Payment stub / Register of inflows and outflows Management of archives
	Drawing up activity assessments	The group controls the financial results of its activities	1,5	Tender / Choosing the provider Validation of the manual The provider's remuneration
	Setting up an information and training system	*The group strengthens its members' capacities	4	Identification of training needs Identification of training opportunities Creation of a training calendar Gathering information Dissemination of information gathered
TOTAL PROFESSIONALISATION			28	

Step Phase	Characteristics	Expected results	Numerical importance	Sequences
5/EMPOWERMENT	Existence of a group's shop	*The group secures its members and its activities	4	Acquisition of the space Drafting rules of procedure for the shop Documents and equipment for the shop Management and control of the shop
	Social security and health insurance affiliation	The group registers its members for social security and health insurance	6,5	Meeting led on the necessity of social security and health insurance Presentation and characterisation of existing offers Members' contribution plan Organising the members' contributions Creation of files Monitoring the group's activity
	Economic partnerships	*The group is competitive	6,5	Project bank Search for partners Negotiation with partners Contractualisation of partnerships Monitoring partnerships
	Use of ICT	*The group opens up to the outside and improves the quality of its services	2,5	ICT and development of a group Computing equipment and accessories Introduction to computing Internet Energy challenges
	Certification of accounts	The group improves its credibility	1,5	Tender Choosing the provider Validation of the manual The provider's remuneration
EMPOWERMENT TOTAL			21	

*These results have to be reached in order to move on to the next step.

This support in five steps makes it possible to define how a farmers' organisation is organised according to a grade out of 100. A farmers' organisation can carry out characteristics from various steps simultaneously. In order to move on to the next step, it is necessary to reach the mandatory results of the step (*) and have a minimum number of points as shown in **Table 2.**

Table 2. The three levels within the different steps towards building a farmers' organisation

Criteria	Minimum points required in order to move on to the next step
Establishment	9
Structuring	22
Ownership	46
Professionalisation	75
Empowerment	above 75

This grading must be carried out by the members of the farmers' organisation, but they can be helped by an assistant.

In order to be operational, a basic farmers' organisation is not required to implement all of the support characteristics mentioned above. We worked in Sanaga Maritime in Cameroon with a farmers' organisation of seven women who had completed the first cycle of secondary education. This organisation set up all the establishment and structuration characteristics in a total of 29 2-hour sessions. It set up a farm register (it had a community field of cassava and processed it as a group), a record of sale, a record of revenues and expenses and a record of minutes.

While working on the community plot (1 day a week), they would 'chat' about the farmers' organisation's problems. Statutes and rules of procedure exist and although they are informal and not in writing, they are always respected. Every month, the farmers' organisation held a meeting and did a monthly assessment. The same took place at the end of the year. These women's enthusiasm was well known in the village. This farmers' organisation is one of our biggest success stories. It faced a serious internal conflict that it managed to successfully overcome. It plans to become a simplified cooperative.

CHAPTER 3

STRENGTHENING THE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITIES OF FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS

TOOLS OF COMMUNITY LIFE

The statutes and rules of procedure of a farmers' organisation

The statutes and rules of procedure of the farmers' organisation should be drafted with the relevant laws in mind; the best option is to contact the relevant ministry and obtain a standard model which can then be adapted to the group.

NOTE : Avoid using copy/paste tool; take time to draw out the statutes, discuss them and adopt them. This is the first step towards the ownership of the farmers' organisation by its members. The rules of procedure will be adopted later on as the farmers' organisation is developing.

Membership application form to a farmers' organisation

The membership application form is addressed to the general meeting of the farmers' organisation (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Example of a membership application form

Common Initiative Group NGWEHA MAHOL

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name and First Names: *NGO TOUE Eléonore*

Adress: **telephone number** (if you have one)

Place of residence: *Sackbayeme*

Main activities: *cassava, macabo, vegetables*

Why do you want to join NGWEHA MAHOL?

I saw that the members of the CIG get along and work hard.
They have changed their life through their work. I also want to change mine.

Which member is sponsoring you? *NTONGO Stéphanie (secretary)*

I, the undersigned, NGO TOUE Eléonore declare respecting the rules of NGWEHA MAHOL and working for the good of all its members. .

Place and date: ... *Sackbayeme, 21 February 2015*

Signature *Ngo Toue Eléonore*

The membership card of a farmers' organisation

Every member who has paid the membership fee (in exchange for a receipt) is entitled to a membership card (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Example of a membership card



The farmers' organisation's register of members

The purpose of the members' register is to transcribe and report information about each member of the farmers' organisation.

Table 3. Example of a farmers' organisation's register of members

N°	Name(s) First Name(s)	Address/ contact member	Date of application	Date of membership	Fees		
					2013	2014	2015
08	MBOK Alain	Tel no	November 2012	January 2013	15 000	10 000	10 000
09	DIKOM Brunette	Tel no	April 2014	December 2014	-	15 000	10 000

Organisation of meetings of a farmers' organisation

A meeting consists of three main phases:

1 the preparation of the meeting,
2 the holding of the actual meeting,
3 the post-meeting.

Before the meeting, a notification is sent to all members. It gives them the date, place and time of the meeting, as well as the agenda. If the farmers' organisation has a stamp, then, the notification is stamped and signed by the head director. Before the meeting day, a room must be available and cleaned and there must be enough chairs for all the participants. The committee in charge of preparing the meeting must draw up a session sheet (Figure 3) and gather together the materials necessary for the meeting to take place.

A farmers' organisation in Nyong and Kellé in Cameroon uses mainly SMS to inform its members of its meetings. But the members of the committee of a neighbouring farmers' organisation usually visit people's houses to remind them of the meetings because all the members live in the same village.

Figure 3: Example of a session sheet of a farmers' organisation

SESSION SHEET OF GIC GARGANTUA
Date: 18 January 2015
Place: Song Mikugi
Goal of the meeting: Resolution of a conflict
Agenda

Task – What to do? (fill in chronological order)	How to do it? (describe different approaches)	What to use? (identify the tools and the equipment)	**Approximate duration of the session**
Prayer	Designate a senior member of the Church or a catechist to lead the prayer		**10 minutes**
Presentation of the conflict	Let the president who met with the different stakeholders prior to the meeting speak and provide the facts. Afterwards, let the parties involved speak in order to clarify the presentation.	Report from the meetings of the president with the stakeholders, notepads, pens.	**20 minutes**
Reading of the statutes and rules of procedure relevant to the conflict	Let the person responsible for discipline read the relevant parts of the statutes and rules of procedure	Statutes and rules of procedure	**10 minutes**
Collection of impressions	Let all the members of the GIC express their opinion according to the reading of the statutes and rules of procedure. The parties involved will be last.	Notepads and pens	**20 minutes**
Closing of meeting	The committee decides on a date to meet and work on what was agreed. The date of the next meeting is set. The meeting closes with a short prayer.	Notepads and pens	**10 minutes**

Control list of tools. It is recommended to fill out this part before going to the meeting so that all the tools and materials necessary are gathered.

A good meeting should not have more than four items on its agenda to make sure that the participants' contributions are efficient and not scattered. In addition, it should not last more than 2 hours. During the meeting, the session chairman must make sure that all the participants have a say while also respecting the agenda and the goals of the meeting. Once a subject is exhausted, the session chairman summarises the discussions and concludes on the matter. The recording secretary must systematically read the adopted resolution a second time in order to avoid any potential ambiguity. Every discussion item must lead to a resolution. The recording secretary's notes will be used to draw up the minutes/report of the meeting. Each member of the farmers' organisation is advised to have their own meeting booklet.

At the end of the meeting, everything is put back in its original place in the meeting room. The session committee and the farmers' organisation committee meet as early as possible, possibly the next day, to draw up the minutes of the meeting.

Minutes of the meetings of a farmers' organisation

An ordinary or extraordinary general assembly (GA) offers a special opportunity to assess the farmers' organisation. This is when the farmers' organisation defines its policy and broad guidelines. All the resolutions adopted must be recorded in the form of duly signed minutes. These minutes will act as 'law' within the farmers' organisation.

The information and training system of a farmers' organisation

The information system is the means by which communication is spread internally within the farmers' organisation. Its structure is made up of all the resources (individuals, equipment, software), which collect, store, process and communicate information. The information system makes it possible to coordinate the activities of the farmers' organisation and to monitor its position with regard to its projected goals.

The farmers' organisation must set up a reliable internal and external system of communication that is also adapted to the socio-cultural environment of the group. The main administrator and his team must ensure that all the members, with no exceptions, are aware of all the information regarding the farmers' organisation. In addition, all the information about the farmers' organisation which must be communicated must be carefully prepared.

A sequence must be planned during the meetings and work hours allocated to the farmers' organisation to pass on various information to its members. The organisation will also provide a notice board to display the main information targeted at producers. If the members' place of residence is within range of a cellular network, the organisation must set up a SMS system that includes all members in order to deliver urgent messages quickly to them.

The farmers' organisation must identify the training needs of its members and reach out to its partners or other training stakeholders (related to the areas initially identified) with the hope of potentially strengthening their capacities as well as training procedures (session of information-training for one day, training-action, on-site training, number of days training...). If financially possible, the farmers' organisation will plan a training session for all its members. If it is not the case, it will send two or three of its members to a training course; those members will then lead a session to pass on their training to all the other members of the farmers' organisation. Once each member of the organisation has photocopied the training material, the original copy will be filed in the organisation's archives. Each new member is updated by the training director.

The farmers' organisation's flyer

A flyer is usually designed once the organisation reaches a certain level of organisation and production making it necessary to advertise their activities to the outside. This flyer can easily be created with a computer. It should include information that is necessary for the organisation's external communication (number of members, production types, commercialisation, localisation, services provided...).

Not all the tools of community life described above are necessary for all the different types of farmers' organisations. Nevertheless, the statutes and rules of procedure, the membership application form, the members' register, meetings and minutes of meetings are all vital for any farmers' organisation to function.

TOOLS OF ADMINISTRATIVE LIFE

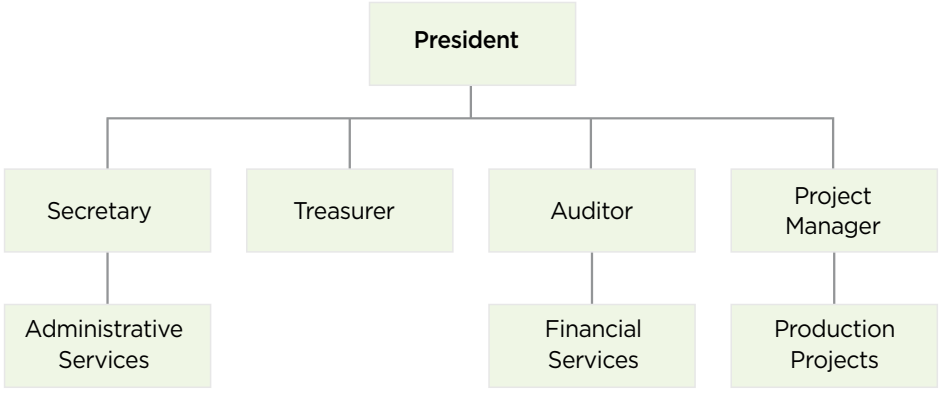
Procedures manual of a farmers' organisation

The farmers' organisation must set up administrative and financial procedures in order to clearly identify everyone's roles and make all the procedures known to everyone. The procedures manual is in accordance with the organisation's statutes which establish the major operational guidelines. The organisation can reach out to governmental services in charge of rural development to assist in drawing up an administrative procedures manual.

The organisational chart of a farmers' organisation

It is important for each organisation to define its own organisational chart at the first level of financial and administrative procedures. The organisational chart in Figure 4 below can be adapted to any farmers' organisation. It is worth noting the role of each manager, his function within the organisation, his level of commitment and his status.

Figure 4. Example of an organisational chart



Development plan of a farmers' organisation

The members of the organisation must structure their vision in time and space in order to avoid adopting a day-to-day attitude and to allow the organisation to set up development goals over many years. A development plan is vital to the professionalisation of the farmers' organisation. The recommended duration of this development plan is between 3 and 5 years.

Activity report of a farmers' organisation

At the end of every year, the farmers' organisation must produce an activity report that was initially approved at the GA. A copy of this report will be stored in the archives and other copies will be filed with the other partners of the farmers' organisation (government services, support NGOs, umbrella associations...). This report must include three parts:

- **an administrative part (number of meetings, decisions endorsed during the meetings);**
- **a technical part (activities carried out, area under cultivation, quantities consumed, commercialised and processed);**
- **a financial part (revenues, expenditure, balances and inventories).**

How to join a farmers' organisation

According to the law, farmers' organisations are open to everyone, regardless of religion, language, race or political affiliation. However, the GA must check that the member exercises activities that are similar to that of the organisation, that he does not belong to another farmers' organisation with the same activities in the same geographical zone, that he has good moral values and that he can work as part of a team.

A farmers' organisation's work contract with its employees

Although keeping one's word is very important within the rural community, the farmers' organisation must draw up work contracts with its employees (when it hires them) or with other service providers, even in the case of a one-off hire.

Work hours of a farmers' organisation

The work days and hours allocated to the farmers' organisation must be registered in the rules of procedure. A change in hours (in order to meet a one-off increase in activity for instance) must be recorded and brought to everyone's attention.

Social security affiliation

A farmer is like any other employee and is entitled to social security benefits that include access to a number of institutions whose goal is to protect individuals from the consequences of various events or situations generally considered to be social risks.

The concept of social security comprises two aspects, functional and institutional:

• From a *functional* point of view, the goal of social security is to financially assist its beneficiaries when they are facing costly life events. Four types can be identified (known as risks) within the four branches of social security:

1. **the health insurance branch (sickness, maternity, invalidity, death);**
2. **the branch for accidents at work and occupational diseases;**
3. **the old age pension and widowhood branch;**
4. **the family branch (disability, housing).**

• From an *institutional* point of view, social security is made up of various bodies that are often governed by private law and contribute to the implementation of this financial assistance. The social security bodies have the status of private law bodies in charge of a public service mission.

Every farmers' organisation must reach out to the institutions in charge of social security in their country in order to work out how to implement this.
In various sub-Saharan African countries, it is not easy for family farmers to get access to social security. The farmers' organisation can set up small social security systems inspired by traditional tontines. For instance, it can set up an emergency fund to help its members in case of unfortunate events (e.g. death, sickness) or an educational fund to help pay for back-to-school expenses.

Health insurance affiliation

The agricultural sector, more than any other sector of the economy, requires its producers to be constantly in excellent health. The slightest episode of bad health will indeed have an immediate negative impact on productivity and production. This will then lead to a cycle of impoverishment, stigmatisation, social exclusion and family conflict which will cause the inevitable deterioration of a prominently social system (family farming) which is based on the group rather than the individual.

Due to the elevated health care costs and the low saving capacity of family farmers, it is necessary, if not essential, for them to set up a collective management system for all expenses related to sickness.

Various systems, formal or informal, exist. The most common is the mutual health insurance that consists in a non-profit association of individuals which functions on the basis of solidarity and mutual assistance. Membership fees and collective decisions allow the mutual health insurance association to take action to prevent health risks for its members and their families.

In order to obtain information on health insurance, producers must reach out to health services, associations and NGOs working in this area.

A farmers' organisation's archives

Archives must be filed in chronological order for each category. They are safely stored at the farmers' organisation's headquarters in a cabinet protected from humidity and pests. Any member duly registered is entitled to look at the archives. Any member who wishes to look at a document must do so on-site or ask for a photocopy. The farmers' organisation must not, under any circumstances, take out the documents from the archives.

Filing a farmers' organisation's mail and documents

The filing plan below can serve as a framework for filing documents within the farmers' organisation:

- **Binder 1: Administration**
  - 1st folder: files for each member (management guide of members)
  - 2nd folder: equipment and inventory
  - 3rd folder: premises/ office equipment / secretariat
  - 4th folder: various supplies
- **Binder 2: Statutory bodies**
  - 1st folder: statutes and rules of procedure
  - 2nd folder: list of members
  - 3rd folder: reports from meetings and GA
  - 4th folder: external audit report
  - 5th folder: activity report
- **Binder 3: Accounting and finances**
  - 1st folder: budgets
  - 2nd folder: financial reports and yearly accounts
  - 3rd folder: control of finances (reports from the auditors)
- **Binder 4: Donations and partnerships**
  - 1st folder: documents related to projects and search for funding
  - 2nd folder: external support

- **Binder 5: Activities**
- 1st folder: development plan
- 2nd folder: implementation plan for crop production
- 3rd folder: implementation plan for various types of livestock
- 4th folder: training modules held
- 5th folder: training modules provided

A farmers' organisation's external relations

Professionalisation implies that the farmers' organisation controls its external relations. It must create partnerships with the organisations that work in the same areas of activities. A farmers' organisation must create economic partnerships as much as possible for:

- **the supply of agricultural inputs;**
- **obtaining an additional workforce, through support groups or service providers for farm mechanisation (e.g. animal traction, motorisation), preparing the land, maintenance work on cultivated plots, when the farmers' organisation is not doing so efficiently;**
- **the commercialisation of the crops. The partner will take the crops on the edge of the field in order to solve the problem of transport;**
- **the update of the accounting system. If the local extension service is not operational, the farmers' organisation can resort to the services of an agricultural advisor or financial advisor as a one-off.**

Any partnership with the outside must be subject to a partnership agreement duly written and signed by the different parties.

Not all tools of administrative life are required for all farmers' organisations. Nevertheless, the organisational chart, the development plan or a simple annual action plan, activity reports, work hours, archives and filing of documents (basic) must be set up by all farmers' organisations.



CHAPTER 4

STRENGTHENING THE TECHNICAL CAPACITIES OF FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS

TECHNICAL PRODUCTION

In order to strengthen the capacities efficiently, the process must be adapted to the needs of the farmers' organisation. It must also consider, while taking stock of the preceding year, the baseline condition of the fledgling farmers' organisation in order to identify its training needs.

Strengthening production capacities will allow the farmers' organisation to set up sustainable and efficient agricultural techniques and to prepare it to predict as best as possible how it will adapt its practices to address climate change. The first task is an assessment of activities.

Assessment of the activities of the members of the farmers' organisation

The assessment can be done with the help of the members' farm registers. The analysis can be done at two levels: crops and farms. Every member will have its own assessment and the sum of everyone's assessment will constitute the farmers' organisation's assessment. The assessment must be split into three tables to simplify the process (Tables 4, 5 and 6). The first table will identify the costs, the second one, the revenues and the third one, the difficulties and problems.

Table 4. Technical assessment of a member of a farmers' organisation: the costs

Crops	Crop system	Surface area	Quantity sown	Various costs			
				Expenditure item	Expenditure item	Expenditure item	Expenditure item
Cassava	Association	1 ha	6 000	Field preparation	1 ha	25 000	25 000
				Cuttings (*)	12 000	10	120 000
				Workforce (**)	12 hj	2 500	30 000
				Agricultural council	1	50 000	50 000
				Communication	1	10 000	10 000
				Others	1	20 000	20 000
				Sheets for products		25 000	25 000
				Palm oil and condiments		15 000	15 000
				Total costs cassava			**270 000**

(*) Cuttings come from old fields and have not generated any outflow of money;

(**) The workforce comes from the group and has not generated any outflow of money.

The producer prepares his balance sheet and the farmers' organisation adds up all the members' balances in order to come up with its own. If the farmers' organisation only works on one particular crop, then only that one crop will be mentioned in the balance

N.B : Be careful while calculating the expenses in systems of combined crops because generally the costs of preparing the land (clearing, swathing) are allocated to the main crop. During our assistance, the association is considered a speculation (this is the case for all the farming families that we assist) For instance, we will have the association plantain-macabo-peanut.

Table 5. Technical evaluation of a member of a farmers' organisation: recipes

Crop	Quantity harvested	Losses post harvest	Quantity consumed	Use of the sold quantity			
				Products	Products	Products	Recettes
cassava	30 bags of 100 kg	4 bags	6 bags	Tubers	10 sacs	18 000	180 000
				Mitoumba (5 bags)	1000	100	100 000
				Bâtons (3 bags)	1050	30	31 500
				Miondo (2 bags)	60 packets	300	18 000
				Total revenues manioc			**329 500**

Table 6. Technical assessment of a member of a farmers' organisation: difficulties

Crop	Difficulties faced	Solutions implemented
Manioc	Difficult to obtain good quality cuttings	Ask neighbours for help and use of some diseased cuttings
	High rate of rots on the field	We don't know what to do
	The manual processing of cassava requires a lot of work	A women's support group to process cassava has been created
	Difficult commercialisation of the crops	Nothing is being done

This table is very important for the farmers' organisation because it can be a starting point for the development of a yearly action plan.

It is essential while preparing for the year to clearly identify the farmers' organisation's production goals. The organisation's production goal is the sum of all of its members' production goals. If the organisation also has a communal plot, the goal of that plot is added on to the other goals.

Note : The aim is not to collect statements from the producers but to determine with them what will be necessary to reach the stated goal. This definition of means makes it possible to review the stated goals and convert them into achievable goals.

Production goals of the members of the farmers' organisation

Table 7 below provides an example of how the production goals of the members of the farmers' organisation can be capitalised.

Table 7. Capitalisation of the production goals of the members of the farmers' organisation

Name of member	Crop	Crop system	Area declared per person in ha	Needs						
				Equipment	Seeds	Fertilisers	Pesticides	Training	Work time necessary in hours	Workforce necessary per number of individuals per day (a day is equal to 6 hours)
IBOM Jean	Cassava	in association with peanuts and corn at the end of the rotation	1,5	4 machetes 5 hoes	30 000 cuttings of about 30 cm each			Selection of the finest cuttings Obtaining healthy cuttings	200 hours	33
	Corn				20 kg	150 kg			75 hours	13
	Peanuts				50 kg			Rational sowing of peanuts	100 hours	17

In order to estimate the necessary work time, the different stages of preparation of the land (from clearing to commercialisation) must be taken into account.

The producer must estimate the time it might take him to complete every stage. By adding up all those times, he will have an approximate work time to dedicate to the crop. This approach will also allow the producer to review his technical itinerary.

Knowing what its members' goals are allows the farmers' association to have an idea of the amount of work ahead for the following agricultural year. The farmers' organisation can then set up a forecasting plan for the implementation of the members' activities to make sure that no member is left behind during the year. In addition, if the farmers' organisation has created a support system between its members, this plan will allow them to better plan the work ahead.

Implementation plan of the farmers' organisation's activities

The implementation plan of the programme's activities allows the organisation to plan out its work and the members' work more efficiently (Table 8). It also assesses and quantifies the organisation's needs in terms of workforce, etc. and therefore allows the organisation to allocate the necessary means and resources to those needs.

Table 8. Example of an implementation plan of farming activities

Activities	Tasks	Expected results	Implementation period	Cost of the action
Clearing the members' plots	Setting up a rotational work schedule*	A work programme is set up so that each member has cleared at least 1 ha by January 2015 at the latest	At the latest by end of October 2014	
	Gathering the equipment necessary for clearing of the plots	Each member must obtain two machetes and two limes by the latest end of October 2014	October 2014	Each member will put the expense in their farm register.
	Implementation of the calendar	In January 2015, each member has cleared at least 1 ha.	November 2014 to January 2015	Each member who receives the work prepares 10 litres of palm wine.
Crop burning				
Clean up				

* Rotational work is a system according to which all members of the farmers' organisation will work on one of the members' farms until all farms are dealt with. Once the rotation is over, the cycle starts once again. It should be noted that the same activity must be planned in the same cycle. This is a good solution to the workforce problem.

We worked with a group of eight farmers in the region of Sanaga Maritime in Cameroon to help them set up a rotational work system to prepare the plots (clearing, harvesting, burning, clean up) and for sowing (pitting and planting). The rotational work took place from November to May and as a result, each of the eight farmers set up 1 ha of plantain, a difficult task to achieve up to then. Since then, their group has maintained the rotational work system.

The farmers' organisation must ensure that each member implements the planned activities within the agreed time frame. The monthly meetings of the farmers' organisation will offer a good opportunity for the participatory monitoring of the level of implementation of activities.

Participatory monitoring of the farmers' organisation's activities

During the agricultural year, the farmers' organisation can use Table 9 shown below.

Table 9. Tool for participatory monitoring of the farmers' organisation's activities

Activities	Tasks	Expected results	Results achieved	Period		Period				Corrective actions to take
				Expected	Achieved	Expected	Achieved	Gaps observed	Explanation for the gaps	
Clearing of the plots	Creation of the calendar for the rotational work	A work programme is set up so that each member has cleared at least 1 ha by January 2015 at the latest	No programme achieved	October 2014		1	0	A 1-week delay	The task leader is sick	The president and the secretary have one week to undertake the programme

Each member, during the meeting on participatory monitoring, fills out this table in his farm register. The farmers' organisation must then draw up a summary in order to have a global idea of how much work has been achieved. The corrective actions to take will be an opportunity for members of the organisation to exchange experiences.

In a farmers' organisation in Sanaga Maritime in Cameroon, the members appointed a task leader to be in charge amongst other things of assessing the level of achievement of activities of its members (area cleared, area sown etc.). Given that he was dedicating a day per month to this, the members decided during a month of rotational work to do an extra day of work at his house.

Contrary to the tools of community and administrative life, the production tools must all be implemented within the farmers' organisation.

FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The main management tools of a farmers' organisation are: the projected operating account, the management record of members, the farm register and the accounting documents.

The projected operating account of a farmers' organisation

Thanks to the project implementation plan, the farmers' organisation drafts its projected operating account. (Table 10).

Table 10. Example of a projected operating account from a farmers' association (in CFA)

Designation	Nov	Dec	Jan	...	...	...	Oct	Total
Charges								
Clearing of the plots	100 000							100 000
Felling trees on the plots		100 000	150 000					250 000
Acquisition of the seeds			250 000					250 000
Monitoring of production plots				10 000	10 000	10 000		30 000
Members' technical training				25 000				25 000
Market research			5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	25 000
Total charges (1)								**680 000**
Revenue								
Cash	375 000							375 000
Members' contributions			100 000					100 000
Commercialisation deductions			35 000	30 000	40 000	38 000	32 000	175 000
Provision of services		100 000						100 000
Total revenue (2)								**750 000**
Management surpluses: (2)–(1)								**70 000**

If the farmers' organisation has reached a certain organisational level, the depreciation costs of the equipment can be incorporated in the projected operating account. If that is not the case, it is important to remind the organisation to regularly withdraw from the management surpluses a sum of money, which will allow it to replace the equipment that was in poor working order

The management record of members of the farmers' organisation

This record is divided in as many parts as the number of members in a farmers' organisation. For each member, there must be:

- **the individual production goals – at the beginning of the year (Table 4) ;**
- **the results achieved as the monthly comments on the member's participation in the organisation's activities – during the year;**
- **everyone's individual assessment – at the end of the year (Table 3).**

This record is the main tool to assess whether each member follows the organisation's texts (statutes and rules of procedure). Each member can eventually be asked for a record of 50 pages in order to have a larger management record.

The farm register of the community production unit of the farmers' organisation

The farm register charts the activities carried out on a daily basis in the community production unit. If the farmers' organisation does not have a community production unit, there will not be a register of the farmers' organisation but each member will have one on his farm.

Example of a farm register filled out by a farmers' organisation that has set up a community nursery for oil palm and cocoa in Edéa in Cameroon.

6 January 2015

Activities carried out

1 Given the task of bagging 910 plastic packets filled with compost for the nursery of oil palm and 97 small plastic packets; work achieved by M. XXX at 25F the medium packet and 10F the small packet.

2 Watering by the members of the prepared packets and seeding of 858 medium packets with pre-sprouted seeds of oil palm received from YYY on 22 December 2014

Observations

- Out of 1050 expected pre-sprouted seeds, 993 seeds were delivered, among those, 135 were bad seeds.
- Out of 1050 expected medium packets, only 910 were delivered.

Recommendations

- Ask the supplier of pre-sprouted seeds to complete his delivery of pre-sprouted seeds by sending 192 good quality seeds.
- Ask the supplier of packets to complete his delivery by sending 140 medium plastic packets.

The accounting records of the farmers' organisation

Accounting records make it possible to trace funds and improve transparency within the farmers' organisation. They consist, amongst other things, of:

- **the register of annual contributions;**
- **the sheet of inventory, goods and equipment;**
- **the record of stocks;**
- **the record of revenue and expenses (cash book);**
- **annual projected budget;**
- **accounts on annual results;**
- **audit reports.**

In order to ensure fast and efficient control, the supporting documents related to inputs and outputs of all goods must be stored and filed in a book in chronological order.

Every supporting document must be photocopied. The organisation's members can check these documents with the auditors and treasurer.

To support the transactions carried out, the following documents are acceptable: receipts, invoices, cash documents, input and output slips.

Receipts

The main elements appearing on the receipts are as follows:

- **name of the farmers' organisation;**
- **receipt number;**
- **date;**
- **amount in figures (preceded and followed by two lines) and also written in full, if possible;**
- **name of the person receiving the money;**
- **purpose of the expenditure;**
- **signature of the recipient and the organisation's stamp if it has one.**

Invoices

The farmers' organisation always requires an invoice from its suppliers and sellers. It must also ensure that the following elements appear on the invoice:

- **name of the structure where the purchase took place;**
- **date;**
- **name of the farmers' organisation;**
- **designation and the cost of the purchase;**
- **manager's signature (the person who received the money) and the stamp of the structure.**

Cash documents of a farmers' organisation

Figure 5. Example of a cash document of a farmers' organisation

NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE FARMERS' ORGANISATION

Cash document number _____

Collection/Payment

Designation	Amount	
	Revenue	Expenditure

Payer/Recipient (1) Date and signature of treasurer

(1) Delete as appropriate

A 'goods and equipment book' must be set up in order to show the following:

- **the name of the recipient (the one taking the equipment out);**
- **the date;**
- **the equipment and the quantity taken out;**
- **the date the equipment needs to be returned;**
- **...**

Inventory sheet of goods and equipment of a farmers' organisation

The inventory sheet gives information about the equipment and goods available within the farmers' organisation at any particular time. (Table 11). It is kept by the treasurer and checked by the auditor.

Table 11. Example of an inventory sheet of goods and equipment of a farmers' organisation

N°	Designation	Quantity	Registration number	Allocation of equipment	State
01	Wheelbarrow	1	02DAP2008	Pig farm	2 years of poor condition, not solid
05	Nematicide	5 l	031DAP2010	Vegetable production	Tightly closed
06	Compost 28.08.14	50 kg	032DAP2010	Production of tubers	Bag tightly closed

Management record of stocks and goods of a farmers' organisation

The management record of stocks and goods improves the efficiency of management. It is kept by the project manager and checked by the auditor (Table 12).

Table 12. Example of a management record of stocks and goods of a farmers' organisation

Name of the farmers' organisation:
Localisation :

Date	Label	Input	Output	Balance
4 october 2010	Compost 28.08.14		20 kg	30 kg
10 october 2010	Insecticide		0,25 L	4,75 L

The record of revenue and expenditure of a farmers' organisation

The record of revenue and expenditure tells us how much money is available within the farmers' organisation at any particular time. It is kept by the treasurer.

Table 13. Example of a record of revenue and expenditure of a farmers' organisation

Name of the farmers' organisation:
Localisation:
Month/Year: February 2010

Date	Label	Input unit (CFA)	Output unit (CFA)	Balance unit (CFA)
1 February 2010	Carry-over from the month of January	15 000		15 000
1 February 2010	Purchase of fungicide		1 000	14 000
4 February 2010	Contribution from Mbog	500		14 500
4 February 2010	Food purchase following planting		1 000	13 500
28 February 2010	Closing of the month of February			13 500

At the beginning of each month, it is important to write the balance of revenue and expenditure on a new page.

Annual projected budget

The projected budget makes it possible to estimate the costs and identify the sources of revenue of the farmers' organisation (Table 14). It is drafted by the committee and submitted to the GA.

Table 14. Example of the annual projected budget of a farmers' organisation in CFA

N°	REVENUE	Quantity	Unit price/unit	Total cost unit
01	Cash contribution	1	275 000 (a planned cash fund of CFA 100 000)	275 000
02	Member contributions	10	10 000	100 000
03	Commercialisation deductions	1 750 bags of 50 kg	100	175 000
04	Provision of services	1	100 000	100 000
05	Credit with micro finance			498 000
TOTAL REVENUE				**1 148 000**
N°	**EXPENDITURE**	**Quantity**	**Unit price / unit**	**Total cost unit**
Production activities				
01	Clearing of plots	10 ha	10 000 (the farmers' organisation only strengthens its workforce)	100 000
02	Felling on the members' plots	10 ha	25 000 (the organisation has a power saw and only buys petrol and oil)	250 000
03	Acquisition of seeds	5 000	50 (the organisation wants to create a log yard for the cuttings of cassava)	250 000
04	Monitoring of production plots	5 (once a month)	10 000 (by the local head of the agricultural position)	50 000
05	Technical training of the members	1	25 000 (by an executive of the NGO there)	25 000
06	Purchase of a cassava pulp mill	1	350 000	350 000
07	Market research	Flat rate	1	35 000
Production activities subtotal				**1 065 000**
Administrative activities				
01	Preparation of membership cards	10	500	5 000
02	Reception of various authorities	Flat rate	1	55 000
Administrative activities subtotal				**60 000**
Unexpected items				
01		Percentage	2.5%	28 000
Unexpected items subtotal				**28 000**
TOTAL EXPENDITURE				**1 148 000**

Statements of annual results of a farmers' organisation

The statement of results assesses the level of implementation of the projected budget and calculates the surplus of gross management achieved by the farmers' organisation (Table 15). It is drafted by the auditor with the help of other members of the committee.

Table 15. Example of a statement of annual results of a farmers' organisation in CFA

Tasks	Cost (CFA)	Products	Cost (CFA)
Clearing of the plots	100 000	Cash	300 000
Felling on the members' plots	200 000	Member contributions	80 000
Acquisition of seeds	350 000	Commercialisation deductions	165 000
Monitoring of production plots	10 000	Provision of services	50 000
Technical training of members	50 000	Credit with a microfinance	350 000
Market research	100 000	Credit given to an individual	215 000
Purchase of a mill	350 000		
Total charges (A):	**1 160 000**	**Total products (B):**	**1 160 000**
SURPLUS OF GROSS MANAGEMENT (B-A)		**0**	

Audit report of a farmers' organisation

It is very similar to the record of revenue and expenditure of the treasurer except that it shows the details of the inputs and outputs (Table 16).

Table 16. Example of an audit report of a farmers' organisation

Name of the farmers' organisation:

Localisation:

Month/Year: February 2010

Date	Label	Input	Output	Balance
1 February 2010	Carry-over from January	15 000		15 000
1 February 2010	Cost of transport by motorcycle Cost of *fungicide*		200 800	14 000
4 February 2010	Contribution from Mbog	500		14 500
4 February 2010	Cost of cassava sticks Cost of *nouga loba* Cost of palm wine		200 600 200	13 500
28 February 2010	Closing of February			13 500

At the beginning of every month, it is important to write the balance of revenue and expenditure on a new page.

NOTE : When the record of revenue and expenditure is being checked, a difference between the balance of the record and the cash on hand does not necessarily mean that there has been any theft of money from the treasurer: review in this case the record of revenue and expenditure. If the difference is still there after double-checking, it must be reported and the committee must organise a work session in order to identify its cause.

A farmers' organisation in Sanaga Maritime in Cameroon, during its financial assessment, had a difference of FCA8,750 between the audit report and the record of revenue and expenditure. A work session with the members of the committee did not discover the source of the difference. The committee had to submit the issue to the GA. During the debates, a member admitted having received this money. During one of the visits from the partners, the president had called him in order to ask the treasurer to make money available for the purchase of wine. In the rush of the moment, neither of them remembered to write down the expense. Fortunately, the internal cohesion of the organisation was good and the source of the expense was found thanks to the members' feeling of belonging to the farmers' organisation.

The register of annual contributions of a farmers' organisation

Every page of the register of annual contributions is dedicated to a member of the organisation. The register of the members' contributions is maintained by the treasurer (Table 17).

***NOTE:** The members' savings are not mandatory. Nevertheless, the farmers' organisation can set up an individual savings system which would allow the members to focus subsequently on a specific personal or family project (back-to-school, wedding, etc.) or deal with unexpected expenses (accident or illness, death, natural disaster, etc.).

Regarding the financial and accounting management tools, a basic farmers' organisation will give priority to the following tools:

- **the estimated operating account;**
- **the management record of the members;**
- **the operating record;**
- **the accounting documents;**
- **the record of revenue and expenditure;**
- **the annual estimated budget;**
- **the audit report.**

Table 17. Example of a register of annual contributions of a farmers' organisation

Name of the farmers' organisation: **Localisation:** **Name (s) and First name (s) of the member:**															
YEAR: **Contribution sections**	**Amount owed**	**Member's contribution**												**Total**	**Observations**
		J	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**		
Annual contribution (operation)															
Development account (projects of the organisation)															
Savings of the organisation (members' fees)															
Members' savings*															
Social security															
Health insurance															
YEAR: **Contribution sections**	**Amount owed**	**Member's contribution**												**Total**	**Observations**
		J	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**		
Annual contribution (operation)															
Development account (projects of the organisation)															
Savings of the organisation (members' fees)															
Members' savings*															
Social security															
Health insurance															



SUPPORT TOOLS FOR THE UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS

These tools are offered to the umbrella organisations; they must provide a support service to their members and this activity requires training. Thus, the umbrella organisation can make sure the monitoring managers are trained so that they set up this service for their members. This is possible once the farmers' organisation has reached a very high level of organisation. It can actually hire a professional to do this.

Three main support tools are implemented by the farmers' organisation:

- the audit,
- the support plan,
- the monitoring plan of the impact of activities.

AUDITING A FARMERS' ORGANISATION

The audit consists in identifying in a given time the level of professionalisation of the organisation (Table 18).

Table 18. Auditing the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational capacities of a farmers' organisation

Area	Parameters to be audited	Strengths to develop	Weaknesses to reduce
Community life	Statutes and rules of procedure		
	Presentation leaflet		
	Membership application form		
	Membership card		
	Register of members		
	Meetings held		
	Minutes of meetings		
	Information and training system		
Administrative life	Procedure manual		
	Activity report		
	Assessment of the year		
	Organisational chart		
	Recruitment method		
	Work contract		
	Work schedule		
	Archives		
	Access to archives		
	Development plan		
	Filing of mail and documents		
	Office equipment		
	Communication system		
	Social security affiliation		
	Health insurance of members (if possible)		

Area	Parameters to be audited	Strengths to develop	Weaknesses to reduce
Financial management	Inventory sheet on goods and equipment		
	Record of stock management		
	Record of revenue and expenditure		
	Record of staff management		
	Payment slips		
	Purchase slips		
	Sale slips		
	Invoices		
	Entry register		
	Withdrawal register		
	Annual estimated budget		
	Annual operating account		
	Record of the annual contributions		
	Certification of accounts		
	Bank account		
	Cash account		
	Audit report		
Relationships with the outside	Cooperation agreements		
	Agreement protocols		

Depending on the results obtained and in the light of the assessment and implementation plans carried out, it is possible to draw up the institutional, organisational and technical support for each organisation in a participatory manner.

SUPPORT PLAN OF A FARMERS' ORGANISATION

This plan organises the organisation's support through external assistance; it relies on the internal potential of the organisation, with the ultimate goal for the organisation to be autonomous. It would therefore be wise to not take the producers' place but to assist them only when necessary. This is why the plan is different from one organisation to another. The producers' participation is required to set it up efficiently. It will also be necessary to rely on the assessment of activities, the implementation plan and the audit. Two monthly meetings are recommended and they should be planned on the days that the members of the organisation usually meet and if possible on a regular basis.

In the area of production, priority will be given to solving the difficulties faced during the preceding year. The goal is to increase the strengths and reduce the weaknesses of the farmers' organisation (Table 19).

Table 19. Proposition of a support plan of a farmers' organisation

Name of the farmers' organisation:
Main type of crop:
Number of members: (Total) = (men) + (women)
Work days: **Schedule:**
Name of the support structure:
Year:

Month	Problems of the organisation	Planned activities	Expected results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Managers	Partners	Results achieved	Observations
January								
...								
December								

PLAN FOR MONITORING THE IMPACT OF A FARMERS' ORGANISATION'S ACTIVITIES

The plan for monitoring the activities makes it possible to measure the medium- and long-term impact of the activities of the farmers' organisation (Table 20). If the farmers' organisation belongs to a union of organisations, the union is advised to participate in the monitoring. If the farmers' organisation is supported by a civil society organisation or by government services, then they should also participate in the monitoring of the impact of the activities.

Table 20. Plan for monitoring the impact of the farmers' organisations' activities

Prioritisation of expected changes	Indicators	Means of verification							Circulation (expected users of the information)
		Information sources	Necessary basic data	Method and tools to be used for collection	Key questions	Activity type to be carried out (monitoring or assessment)	Frequency	Sample (percentage)	
Global goal									
Specific goal 1									
...									
Specific goal n.									

CONCLUSION

One out of nine people currently suffer from the effects of hunger. This scourge kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. The best credible option to fight and end hunger in the world is to improve the production and the sustainability of family farms. This requires the professionalisation of family farms while taking into account their nourishing, economic, social, environmental, cultural and societal functions. These farms have a low rate of production per worker; they do not have easy access to funds to finance their activities and they lack organisation. This is why the professionalisation of family farms requires strong, well-structured farmers' organisations that CFAn represent and defend the family farmers' interests. In addition, the farmers' organisations face three main challenges:
i) in the short-term, to meet their members' demands;
ii) to be recognised by the other stakeholders and
iii) to think about and prepare for the future of agricultures.
In order to meet those challenges, the farmers' organisations' capacities must be strengthened. This guide suggests various tools to strengthen their capacities in the areas of community life, administrative life, production techniques and financial and accounting management techniques for all types of farmers' organisations. Support tools are suitable for umbrella organisations that have already reached a certain level of organisation. They can then either hire a professional to provide support for their farmers' organisations or train their members so that they can provide this service themselves.

It is necessary to have a certain level of literacy to be able to use the tools presented in this guide and a good educational level to use the more complicated tools. If the members of a farmers' organisation all have a low level of literacy, then the organisation can ask an advisor to lead sessions in the local language to explain the organisation's statutes, operation and management even if the members will not be able to take notes. The tools and their contents can be used by various types of farmers' organisations as a basis for adaption to their specific context according to the activities to be carried out, the competence and knowledge of the managers and members of each farmers' organisation.

We are aware that we will not have fully covered the issue of how to strengthen the capacities of the farmers' organisations since the tools we suggest are not enough to solve the problem of the professionalisation of family farms.

If the OHADA Uniform Act related to cooperative societies provides an appropriate framework for the emancipation of farmers' organisations, those organisations can only play an efficient role if the family farms are professionalised; creating the type of support needed to professionalise family farms in sub-Saharan Africa remains the current challenge.


THE APPROACH ADVOCATED FOR THIS PROJECT IS NOT SUITABLE FOR THE PRODUCERS.
THE FUNDING THAT YOU ARE SUGGESTING COULD BE HARMFUL TO OUR FARMS.

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