Developing private research and extension designs in Benin: Review of three cases

Ismail M. Mounouni and Friedhelm Streiffeler
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institute of Agricultural Economics and Social Sciences, Luisenstr 53, 10117 Berlin

Abstract
Since 1991, many steps have been undertaken to liberalise the agricultural services in Benin. However the privatisation is progressively going on, the private research and extension is hardly visible. Through reviewing three cases, this paper highlights the diversity of (i) actors involved in the process, (ii) services provided to farmers, (iii) service delivery systems, and (iv) approaches of involving farmers in the financing of the organisation of services. Generally, bunches of services to meet the needs of farmers are often provided. Partnerships to palliate technical weaknesses are sealed up and farmers are invited to share the costs of the direct implementation of the activities. However, invitation of the farmers is not intended to reinforce their position but mainly to solve financial problems and to insure what is a so-called sustainability. Hence, more effort should be made to better orient the privatisation of agricultural research and extension in order to develop efficient accountability mechanisms.

Keywords: Accountability, Benin, cost sharing, private research and extension, willingness to pay

1. Introduction
Deep transformations of a further liberalisation of agricultural services are going on since 1991. Thus, the government withdrew totally from the provision of private services like marketing, inputs and credit supply, and partially from research and advisory services. However until very recently, the agricultural extension and research were matter of exclusive intervention of public services. Semi-public and private institutions like development projects, farmer organisations and NGOs are increasingly involved in the delivery and the mobilisation of funds. This paper aims at highlighting the diversity of (i) actors involved in the process, (ii) services provided to farmers, (iii) service delivery systems and (iv) approaches of involving farmers in the agricultural research and extension financing.

2. Methodology
The methodology is based on (i) case study analysis, (ii) documents analysis, (iii) semi-structured interviews with institution leaders, extension workers and farmers, and (iv) observations during meetings and activities of the actors. First of all, an overview of existing private agricultural research and extension institutions is made. Three cases were selected to be representative of the existing (i) types of institutions, (ii) diversity of the functions or intervention sectors and diversity of focal points.

3. Results

- Some characteristics of the selected cases
Table 1 presents the sector of activities and particularities of the selected cases.
Table 1: Sector of activities and particularities of the cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Type of institution</th>
<th>Intervention sector</th>
<th>Focus point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Programme for Food Security (PSSA)</td>
<td>Development project</td>
<td>Experimentation, Adaptive research</td>
<td>Modern poultry breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of South Benin Producers (UPS)</td>
<td>Farmer organisation</td>
<td>Extension</td>
<td>Pineapple production and exportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Unit for Management Advises (CADG)</td>
<td>Non Government Organisation</td>
<td>Advisory services</td>
<td>Advice in farm and income management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 2, 3 and 4 illustrate agricultural services offered by PSSA, UPS and CADG respectively and their relative provision intensity. The table pattern has been conceived from Katz (2002). 5x represents the maximum intensity rate.

Table 2: Characteristics of the agricultural services offered by PSSA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providing information</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Assistance in problem solving</th>
<th>Facilitation Animation</th>
<th>Links to other actors</th>
<th>On-farm Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poultry Breeding</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm enterprise</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Characteristics of the agricultural services offered by UPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providing information</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Assistance in problem solving</th>
<th>Facilitation Animation</th>
<th>Links to other actors</th>
<th>Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm enterprise</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Characteristics of the agricultural services offered by CADG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providing information</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Assistance in problem solving</th>
<th>Facilitation Animation</th>
<th>Links to other actors</th>
<th>Database development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production &amp; Breeding</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm enterprise</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xxx</td>
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<tr>
<td>management</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1, 2 and 3 display respectively the intervention schemes of PSSA, UPS and CADG.

\[1\] The French abbreviations are kept
PSSA’s fieldwork team includes employees, foreign experts, private consultants and public extension agents. UPS assigned an engineer to carry out the whole intervention system and to
frequently train monitors who are also farmers. CADG’s field intervention team includes technicians, consultants trained farmers used as trainers.

- **Cost sharing between actors**
  Figures 4 and 5 display the cost sharing between actors for PSSA and CADG respectively.

The contribution of a breeder to the PSSA experimentation costs amounts to 30% of the total charge excluding the functioning costs. CADG supports all the functioning costs and up to 75% of the implementation costs. Farmer organisations and individual farmers support the remaining 25%. About 4.5% of UPS farmer incomes are deducted to finance the framing of the producers that is the allowance to monitors.

4. Analysis

- **Diversification of actors, services and systems**
  Liberalisation of the agricultural research and extension leads to a higher diversification of actors, services provided to farmers, service delivery systems, and approaches of farmers’ involvement in the financing of the delivery of services.

- **Bunches of services and partnerships as strategies**
  Generally, bunches of services to meet the needs of farmers are often provided; partnerships are sealed up to palliate technical weaknesses. Public institutions take part in the private extension due to their long experience by offering technical competences.

- **Financial contribution of the farmers and Accountability**
  Farmers are invited to share the costs of the direct implementation of the activities but it is not often with the intention of reinforcing their position. It is mainly for solving financial problems and for ensuring a so-called sustainability. Whether the confidence relationships between the partners take place remains a crucial issue.

- **Reasons for farmer financial participation**
  For different reasons, which are not always related to the agricultural production, farmers are willing to pay for services, even public services. The agricultural reasons are the market access facilities and the motivation to acquire management skill. Non-agricultural reasons are prestige and financial advantages like per-diem.

5. Conclusion

Liberalisation of the agricultural research and extension leads to a relative diversity of actors involved in the process, services provided to farmers, service delivery systems, and approaches of involving farmers in the financing of the organisation of services. Even where the farmers are not required to pay for the services, they contribute in taking into account the implementation costs. In this sense, there is a change in farmer role because the projects supported all the costs and paid per-diem to farmers in the past. More effort should be made to better orient the privatisation of agricultural research and extension in order to develop real accountability mechanisms.

**Key reference:** Katz, E. 2002. Innovative approaches to financing extension for agriculture and natural resource management. Eschikon: LBL