

Evaluation summary

Supporting the development of Fair Trade (FT) in West Africa

Country/Countries : Ivory Coast, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo

Topic: Land Degradation

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Assessment date: **November 2018**

Key FFEM support data

Project name: Equité

Project number: CZZ 1887

Amount financed by the FFEM: 1 000 000 EUR

Project grant date: 29/11/2013

Duration: 3 years (2015-2018)

Context

The challenge of fair trade is to modify the rules of international trade so that producers in countries of the South can benefit from the expansion of trade. Compared to other regions, West Africa is the area where certified volumes are the lowest and where fair trade channels have developed the most recently.

In the context of sustainable development, fair trade could be an effective tool for protecting biodiversity. Its effectiveness on this issue has not yet been demonstrated, but the evolution of environmental rules attached to fair trade is an opportunity to inform consumers, key players in FT.

Participants and operating methods

The Equité program was managed by Commerce équitable France (CEF). A consortium made up of agronomes et vétérinaires sans frontières, AVSF (lead partner, program coordination based in Abidjan) and Fairtrade Africa - West AfricaNetwork, FTA-WAN (based in Accra), was responsible for delegated project management.



Objectives

Main objective

Contribute to the sustainable economic development of low-income countries, fight poverty and strengthen family farming by supporting the development of fair and sustainable value chains in West Africa.

Specific objectives

- Facilitate support for fair trade and biodiversity protection value chains in West Africa to strengthen the capacities of producer organizations in production, quality management, market access and territorial management (biodiversity).
- Structuring and institutionally strengthening networks representing producer organizations and their national and regional platforms, involved in fair trade.
- Carry out specific activities to measure and monitor the environmental effects of projects, and studies on the development potential of South-South fair trade.

Performance appraisal

Relevance

The Equité program was particularly relevant, as it was part of a favorable FT dynamic at international level and in West Africa, while providing targeted support to address the main issues faced by the region's producer organizations (POs) and National Fair Trade Platforms (NFTPs). With a multi-label approach to FT, Equité has supported and accompanied the dynamics of the five main FT sectors identified. The program has also integrated the promotion of agroecology to support the sustainability of the sectors and adaptation to climate change.

Coherence

The internal and external coherence of the project was judged to be generally good. The project was well articulated with the main strategic objectives of the governments of the target countries in the fields of rural development, support for farmers' organizations (FOs), the sustainability and performance of value chains and the environment.

Effectiveness

The overall completion rate for planned activities was over 80%, reaching even 100% for most structuring activities. The implementation of the projects of POs and NCCPs took place over a limited period of time (18 to 24 months), but with a satisfactory average completion rate of between 70% and 100%, depending on the case. The majority of projects achieved satisfactory results in terms of strengthening the governance and technical and administrative capacities of beneficiary organizations, and introducing technical innovations and patents professionnels agricoles (BPA) geared towards agroecology and energy efficiency.

Efficiency

With a budget of €3.9 million over three years and activities in five West African countries, Equité was an ambitious program in terms of content, but relatively modest in view of the major challenges facing the targeted sectors and the current number of POs eligible for support (around 300). Although limited, the results achieved are very encouraging, and would justify scaling up over the next few years.

Impact

Evaluation of the program's impact was satisfactory. The impacts were judged to be particularly significant at the level of the POs and NCCPs supported within the framework of the "facility". In particular, the majority of beneficiary organizations have improved their governance, developed their institutional and management capacities, and their technical and commercial capabilities. In terms of environmental impact, we note the establishment of over 1,700 ha of shea collection areas under sustainable management, the recovery of several hundred tonnes of production residues into compost for organic fertilization of plantations, and significant reductions in wood consumption in the cashew, mango and craft industries.

Viability/Sustainability

The sustainability of the impacts and effects generated by Equité's actions was judged to be highly variable from one organization to another and according to the type of activity. Generally speaking, processing and energy efficiency equipment is economically profitable and should therefore be adopted on a long-term basis. The numerous technical training courses have helped to strengthen the capacities of elected representatives, staff and producer members of POs.

Added value of FFEM support

FFEM funding has clearly added "environmental" value to the Equité program, as evidenced by the fact that FGEF priorities were taken into account in the call for projects for the facility. As a result, the 19 PO projects supported under the facility all incorporate various activities related to agroecology, agro-biodiversity, reduction of wood consumption, sustainable management of natural resources, and so on.

Recommendations & learnings

The evaluation of the program found it to be successful and that its implementation was generally satisfactory. The Equité program responded in a relevant way to the difficulties and opportunities encountered by CE and PNCE certified POs in West Africa. It has also been implemented efficiently in a limited timeframe, with clear impacts on the organizations supported and encouraging results from field for the future.

To open up future prospects for a possible Equité 2 program, the evaluators made the following recommendations:

- Instruct an Equité 2 program to pursue the positive dynamics initiated and consider scaling up certain projects and activities.
- More ambitious and robust action-research systems to be set up to monitor the socio-economic and environmental performance of the proposed agroecological innovations (particularly for cocoa).
- An Equité 2 program that will continue the work initiated by continuing to foster synergies between CE and BIO at the level of POs and PNCE in West Africa. agro-ecological transition initiatives, which should in particular capitalize on the additional financing generated by these certifications.- An Equité 2 program to offer innovative, low-cost solutions to POs to access short- and medium-term financing.
- The development of new markets for West African CE-certified products. A new program designed to encourage buyers to develop their supplies of CE and organic products. These actions could target Europe in particular by relying in particular on CEF, the main CE labels and their networks.

