

**Project of Quebo's Centre for Experimentation
and Promotion of Fruit-growing and Horticulture
in Guinea-bissau, for the Period 2001-2004**



COOPERAÇÃO
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1. Introduction

- > The Evaluation was performed by KPMG to IPAD, the Portuguese Institute for Development Assistance. The Project began in 1988, having been suspended from 1997 to 2002, period in which a major fire affected the Centre's premises and cultures. The Evaluation refers to the resumption of the Project's execution after March 2002, which was based on a new Project's Dossier, for the period 2001-2004.
- > The Project is managed on the field jointly by the Centre and Project's Directors, respectively appointed by the Guinean and Portuguese parties. A Pairing Commission supervises the Project, being composed by representatives of the Portuguese (IPAD and GPPAA, the Agriculture and Food Policy and Planning Cabinet) and Guinean parties (INPA, the National Institute for Agriculture Research, who owns the Centre and the Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry).
- > The Evaluation was performed at a time when the Project had investments and technical assistance suspended since the first half of 2004, by decision of the Portuguese side. In addition, the Project's Director had quit for about one year and the Centre's Director had passed away about the same time.

2. Findings

2.1. Coherence, Coordination and Complementarity

- > The Project is coherent with the Portuguese Cooperation and European Union's priorities for Guinea-Bissau, in spite that the Portuguese Integrated Plan for Cooperation 2002-2005 has not included Agriculture under its main focus areas. The Project's Dossier does not contextualize it towards the International Organizations directives for Agriculture research and at conception time no documentation on a national policy for it was available. However, subsequent documentation allows concluding on coherence at both levels.
- > Most of our Guinean interlocutors negatively point out the coordination between the parties, by considering that the decision power was on the Portuguese's side. This is recognized as a fact by some Portuguese

interlocutors, who explain it through Guinean institutions' weaknesses. Within this scope, the absence of consultation with the Guinean side for the decisions on suspending investments and technical assistance and to go for the evaluation remains a significant issue, furthermore due to the fact that those decisions were not taken by the Project's chambers of decision.

- > The need to direct the efforts for recovering the Centre's operational capability until the end of 2003 and the immediately subsequent decisions, which were not the Project's responsibility, have restrained the possibilities for coordination and complementarity towards other players within the Guinean and sub-regional agriculture sector and with Portuguese institutions. However, some actions were undertaken, showing an open attitude in this domain.

2.2. Project areas:

- > The Project has tried to partially amend the Dossier's failures. These were mostly evident in addressing the departure point of this phase, in documenting the participation of the Guinean side and other local players, in the priorities and management model definition and in addressing the current Guinean context in institutional terms. Other omissions refer to technical and institutional sustainability. The Project's Dossier was prepared for a four-year period (which was reduced to two years), without clearly pointing out to a long-term vision, essential to a research project in fruit-growing. Basic assumptions have not been in place regarding Guinea's political stability and institutional normalization.
- > The Project has tried to get research focused on relevant areas, the most successful example of which is the organization, in December 2003, of a Workshop on Viable Options for Guinea's Fruit-growing Activity. It is possible to argue that a more proactive attitude should have been taken from the beginning of this phase. However, the reduction of its period by a half does not allow to fully conclude on the availability of real chances in this area. In addition, it should be noted that, during this

period, the Guinean supporting institutions were almost inactive, particularly the results vulgarization services.

- > Regarding Nursery and Fruit-growing activities, considerable results have been obtained in recovering the Centre's germplasm collections. In Horticulture, no visible progresses have been made. This is charged to poor natural conditions, difficulties in access to adequate production resources and to the lack of time to develop the activities in this area. The Project's activity also suffered with the lack of external supporting services, namely from Soils, Water, Vegetal Protection and Seeds Laboratories.
- > Training activities were limited by the need to recover the Center's operational capability, by difficulties in hiring someone responsible for this area and due to the suspension decision in early 2004. However, some emblematical actions were undertaken, namely the training of certified nursery technicians coming from several areas of the country. The Centre technicians' training was initiated on an "on-the-job" perspective. The Portuguese University alumni traineeship program was only partially accomplished.
- > The lack of results' vulgarization capability has been generally criticized since the Project's beginning. From our stand, for this phase, this has to be oversight by taking into consideration the need to recover operational capability and the fact that Guinea's services in this area were inactive. Despite some isolated efforts which aimed to find alternative results' spreading vehicles, the main effort in results' vulgarization was scheduled to 2004.
- > The management model presented weaknesses. Guinean interlocutors frequently refer to issues related to duties and responsibilities' imbalances, presenting a generic dissatisfaction towards the model and/or the manner it has been implemented.
- > Both sides clearly diverge in evaluating Guinea's institutional weaknesses impact, aggravated by the country's lack of involvement in decisions that have gone beyond and inclusively opposed to decisions taken by the Project's instances. Portuguese Embassy's role was described

as relating to a sporadic follow-up of the Project from outside.

However, it was the Embassy's decision to ask IPAD in October 2003 for the Project's evaluation, given its own perception that it had arrived to a deadlock.

- > It has been difficult to form and maintain a stable team at the Center. The absence of accommodation and social premises for the technicians has been a recurrent matter from the Project's beginning, and was pointed out as a non-attraction factor, given the Centre's isolated location. Equipments that could contribute to minor the isolation remain unavailable and the lack of adequate transportation equipments is a fact. The Project's budget included financial resources for most of this facilities and equipments, which were not used. However, it has to be noted that we have found a motivated team, and fully aware of its own urgent needs in specialized training.
- > The operational equipment is old and partially inoperative. This obstructs the performance of some types of fieldwork and demands for manual work, also causing environmental effects.
- > The level of financial resources made available is considered to be adequate to the Project's demand. However, the funds flow has been classified as sometimes erratic, mostly due to the Portuguese side's co-financing scheme. The Guinean side considers that it has not been adequately involved both in financial decisions and in the global financial follow-up of the Project.
- > Local insertion was prejudiced by recurrently mentioned problems on the relationship with local traditional authorities and the population, by the lack of communication of restrictions introduced in population activities inside the Centre and by the absence of community-appropriate results.

3. Conclusions

3.1. On the Evaluation Criteria:

- > The Project's **relevance** is fully assumed by all parties involved. The conception-level weaknesses have been partially overcome, mainly by a

progressively-more-open-to-the-exterior attitude.

- > Taking into account all adverse conditions, **effectiveness** is considerable, given 2002-2003 positive results mainly in recovering de Centre's operational capability, being this almost concluded, and on recovering the vegetable collections and also concerning the steps taken in looking forward for alternative ways to spread the results obtained.
- > On the domain of **efficiency**, the Project has taken a positive approach, by progressively adapting its actions to existing needs. However, from its very beginning, a higher level of concern could have been directed to the search of alternative ways of assuring results vulgarization, both for cultivars and techniques, by bearing in mind the diversity of players and skills currently available. Given the short period analyzed, poor results in Horticulture have to be duly contextualized.
- > A diversity of issues must be addressed in **sustainability** analysis. On human resources, basic conditions are raised, should and adequate training plan be followed. The management model gives raise to some concerns, since significant management duties are an expatriate technician's responsibility and segregation of duties is a clear dissatisfaction factor. On the economic plan, the assertion that this type of research constitutes a public-shared asset eliminates the income-generating capability as the main resource to pay for expenses. Not withstanding the need to generate some level of internal income, it must be mostly valued the indirect economic benefits that may arise from agricultural research.
- > Given the short period and the focus placed on recovering operational capability, **impact** analysis is premature and irrelevant as regards the phase evaluated so far. However, some actions have already produced limited impacts, extensible to several areas of the country.

3.2. Project areas:

- > Regarding conception, the Project's Dossier fails to supply a clear characterization of the departure point and contributes to the wrong idea that we are facing a 15-years-old Project and not a new phase,

initiated under a brand new context, where the previous results almost do not exist. Newly in place external conditions are also not fully addressed. Despite the concern regarding coherence between the sector characterization and the Project's objectives, it is not clearly defined how to face the changes occurred in governmental structures and even in the emerging capacities and different players in Guinean agriculture sector. The Dossier also fails on establishing objective targets, objectives and follow-up landmarks and does not give a clear picture of Guinea's side participation on conception issues.

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- > A vertical approach to the whole sector was only initiated by the end of 2003. The absence of base information demanded the Project to sustain right from its beginning a more open attitude, by promotion of an extensive dialogue with all sector players, despite all the above-referred adverse conditions.
- > Except for accommodation premises, the Centre maintains all other conditions required for organizing enlarged training sessions. Nursery technicians' training was a significant contributor to the Project and the Centre's recognition constitutes a results' spreading vehicle.
- > Guinea's agriculture context has been subject to important changes, namely through growing rural associative movements, the emerging of private investors and of NGO's action. As a consequence, a set of capacities has been developed that must be considered in terms of assessing the possibility of creating a results' vulgarization network.
- > The management model requires corrective actions. The main difficulties rely on the non-clarification of the status-quo differences between the Centre, as a permanent institution of the State of Guinea-Bissau, and the Project, as a temporary cooperation instrument. The decisions taken outside the Project's scope have generated internal instability and negative impacts on its functioning and external image. Relationship issues, sometimes arising from institutional instability, are aggravated by communication issues.
- > Lack of qualified staff is a real problem. However, internal solutions are yet to be further explored, should training lacks be overcome and

isolation conditions minored, including the construction of accommodation premises and other social infrastructures. Current equipment conditions pose constraints to the Project and Centre's operations and this is also valid for the attractiveness for qualified and motivated staff to demand the Centre as a permanent place to work and live.

- > There is a lack of financial information presented to Guinea's side and this reflects on the parties' relationship. The decision on concepts and models for the future financial sustainability of the Centre remain within the scope of Guinean political decisions. However, from our research on similar experiences in Africa, we conclude that it is incontestable that this type of research constitutes a public-shared asset, normally producing indirect results, which are immeasurable. As a consequence, the existence of dual economical-research models may bring to light effective risks that demand for deep consideration.
- > Local insertion brings to light the request for balancing the needs of Project and Centre on one side, and population expectations, on the other. Hereby, we also conclude on the need of not to downplay the importance of adequate communication.

4. Main Recommendations

- > Effective involvement of the counterpart in the conception phase is highly recommended, through a conscious negotiation of the most problematic issues.
- > The consideration of a long-term framework on this type of project is unavoidable. This can be enforced through a "Declaration of Principles" that goes beyond the borders of financial commitments limited in nature and form and allows for a stability basis that is able to prevent external interferences or changes that are not negotiated between the parties. Institutional capability reinforcement must be called to discussion and by no means can conception avoid defining targets and indicators, these also subject to negotiation.
- > The Project's acting must incorporate a permanent promotion of local

institutions' participation logics, as well as of the different players currently in place and also of the users/beneficiaries. This may make room for previous validation of the options chosen and to overcome Guinea's difficulties in setting up a long-term policy in this area.

- > The difficulty in hiring a local responsible for training activities can be solved by the Project's own resources, jointly with the creation of a country-wide Trainers' network. A joint reflection must be undertaken with INPA, in order to take the most benefit of differenced types of training activities and to clarify the adequate specialization levels.
- > A strategy that adequately combines research and results' vulgarization and takes into account the changes occurred in the country, within its agriculture and on its players is desirable. Open training sessions and the promotion of "peasant research" initiatives can play a relevant role in this area. We suggest the organization of periodic encounters with a wide range of assistants, such as on a "Biannual Journeys" scheme. The power of media has also to be considered. There is space to produce radio shows to be distributed by the extensive community radios network, or even to create the "Fruit-growing and Horticulture Radio". The chances of the other INPA research centers being reactivated have to be assessed. The position of the Centre as a national and even sub-regional reference implies that all vegetal material, seeds and techniques vulgarized must be of certified quality and any situation that may trigger this must be avoided.
- > We strongly recommend a transparent dialogue between the Portuguese and Guinean parties regarding the Centre-Project articulation, on segregation of duties' definition and on basic rules for expectation management at the Pairing Commission level. Already tested models can be adapted, namely by replacing the Project Director figure (expatriate) by a Technical Advisor figure, or by creating a permanent instance that includes a wide range of players in the field and acts as an advisory and participation board. This can also be useful in partially solving institutional weaknesses. After the clarification of institutional relationship, duties and responsibilities issues, a clear definition of

communication channels and decisions' validation instances must be put in place.

- > If short-term internal conditions of the country do not allow capturing of human resources adequate to the Project's objectives, we recommend re-addressing these, in order not to generate excessive reliance on expatriate technicians, which can compromise future sustainability.
- > The isolation issue must be addressed by creating accommodation, mobility and other conditions, allowing for the reduction of the non-attractiveness of the Centre, using the financial resources allocated in the Project's budget.
- > Guinea's side must be involved deeper in the budgeting and approval processes, as well as in the Project's financial reporting preparation, presentation and approval. Guinean financial contribution must be included under the Project's accounts. One may consider using a yearly audit mechanism as a condition to release subsequent year's budget, avoiding delays in funds release.
- > Continuous and effective communication with population is encouraged. There are unexploited possibilities, as may be the creation of demonstrative crop fields in local farmers' lands, which would function as a Project and Centre's "showroom" and as a vulgarization vehicle.

5. Lessons learned

The Evaluation process has allowed KPMG's team to infer some lessons, mainly about: the idea of strategic projects and its demands for institutional stability; the conditions for effective participation of resources, both from the State and from the Society, namely in situations of institutional weakness and changing environments; sharing of competences; dual management models inherent risks (namely in situations of financial dependence); shared advantages; and, finally, regarding transparency rules in all domains and respect for the decision and communication channels and instances that were previously negotiated between the engaging parties.

6. Global conclusion

As the Evaluation's global result, we consider that the Project represents a potential that can not be neglected by both parties, on a clear prospective of its continuation, once the issues mentioned before are solved. To Guinea, the Project can constitute a strategic economic advantage, by allowing for the development of a commercial activity in fruit-breeding and of the horticulture sector, as a guarantee of family income-generating activities and of alimental safety reinforcement. For the Portuguese party, it may become a reference in international cooperation and may constitute a privileged source of know-how in agriculture developed in tropical environments.