

CROSSROADS

Newsletter



Masalongsalong Association in Philippines: Record keepers and money counter © Isabel Corthier-AgriCord, 2020

Editorial

Across regions and contexts, evidence shows that well-functioning Farmers’ Organisations (FO) are among the most effective entry points to build resilient, inclusive, and market-oriented agrifood systems at scale. This edition of Crossroads illustrates these dynamics through concrete experiences from Africa and Asia.

In West and Central Africa, regional farmers’ organisations ROPPA and PROPAC leverage public procurement systems to link farmers to stable institutional markets. These mechanisms can shift public spending towards local sourcing, creating predictable demand for both economic and social returns.

In Tanzania, the Farmers’ Organisation-led Research and Innovation (FORI) program demonstrates how targeted investment in farmer-led innovation unlocks new economic opportunities. Agroecological sunflower production is increasing incomes and enhancing resilience and diversifying livelihoods in pastoralist communities.

In Indonesia, strengthening youth leadership within FO is essential to ensure generational renewal and the long-term viability of the sector. Across these cases, a pattern emerges: strong FOs become multipliers of impact delivering multiple policy objectives.

At alliance level, we continue to invest in shared learning and scalable approaches. Climate resilience remains a central priority. Our Building Resilience toolkit supports FO in designing and implementing long-term adaptation strategies.

As development cooperation evolves towards blended finance, local ownership, and systemic approaches, FOs offer a unique and underutilised platform to deliver impact efficiently and sustainably. AgriCord’s work is based on a recognition that strengthening FOs is a strategic investment for food security and win-win business opportunities across continents.

Katja Vuori,
CEO, AgriCord

In this issue

Leveraging public procurement to strengthen Farmers’ Organisations’ access to local markets

Saitabao: A farming pioneer among pastoralists

Adapting to climate change: Shared lessons from Africa, French Overseas territories, and mainland France

A new generation of farmers in Indonesia

Leveraging public procurement to strengthen Farmers' Organisations' access to local markets

By AgriCord

Across West and Central Africa, public procurement remains a largely untapped lever for driving local economic development and strengthening food systems. Every year, governments, schools, hospitals, and food assistance programs purchase significant volumes of food. Redirecting even a portion of this demand towards local sourcing could generate stable markets for family farmers, while delivering broader impacts on food security, rural incomes, and value chain development.¹

Complex tendering procedures, insufficient aggregation of supply, limited access to finance, and weak policy alignment continue to prevent farmers' organisations (FOs) from participating effectively in these markets.

Yet in practice, smallholder producers remain largely excluded. The Farmers' Organisations for Food Systems (FOFS) program project, funded by GIZ and implemented by ROPPA and PROPAC with the support of AgriCord's

member agri-agencies Asprodeb and CSA, addresses these constraints through a systemic approach. Its objective is to position FOs as credible, competitive suppliers to institutional markets, thereby unlocking the development potential of public procurement.

The first pillar of the programme focuses on generating evidence and improving market transparency. Through a comprehensive mapping of procurement systems, covering legal frameworks, tendering processes, and existing programs, the project has identified key entry points as well as structural bottlenecks, including administrative barriers, delayed payments, and limited access to working capital. This evidence base is critical to inform both capacity-building efforts and policy dialogue.

A second pillar focuses on strengthening the operational capacities of FOs. Exchange visits and peer learning have proven particularly effective in this regard. In Burundi, the national farmers' organisation CAPAD has demonstrated how cooperatives can successfully supply institutional markets through strong aggregation systems and long-term partnerships. In Senegal, FOs have explored how to better integrate local cereal and tuber value chains into food systems by linking with processors and other market actors. These experiences provide practical pathways for FOs to meet quality, volume, and contractual requirements.

Engagement with institutional buyers such as the World Food Programme (WFP) further strengthens this positioning. By clarifying procurement modalities and supplier criteria, these exchanges enable FOs to progressively align with market expectations and identify concrete collaboration opportunities.

A key lesson emerging from the program is that FO act as multipliers of impact. While individual farmers cannot meet institutional demand, organized structures can aggregate production, ensure consistency, reduce transaction costs, and negotiate contracts, making them effective counterparts for public and institutional buyers.

At the same time, FOFS invests in strengthening the advocacy capacities of FOs to address systemic barriers. Through targeted training and regional dialogue, FO leaders are increasingly able to engage with public authorities and promote more inclusive procurement systems, advocating for simplified procedures, adapted tender requirements, and policies that prioritize local sourcing.



Testing cake receipt with local cereals in Senegal © Asprodeb

¹ <https://www.agricord.org/en/publications/achats-institutionnels-en-afrique-etude-juridique>



Various cereals in a market in Benin © Chamsyatou Mama Gao

The project also tackles one of the most critical constraints to market participation: access to finance. Given the sometimes-slow payment cycles of institutional buyers, FOs require adapted financial solutions to operate effectively.

FOFS promotes instruments such as warehouse receipt systems, contract-based financing, and partnerships with financial institutions, approaches that are essential to de-risk engagement in these markets.

Encouragingly, policy momentum is growing. In countries such as Benin, Togo, and Burkina Faso, school feeding programs and public procurement initiatives are increasingly oriented towards local sourcing, with similar dynamics emerging in Senegal.

By strengthening FO capacities, improving market readiness, and supporting enabling policy environments, FOFS contributes to scaling these trends and enhancing the development impact of public spending.

In this context, investing in FO offers a high return: it enables public procurement systems to function not only as purchasing mechanisms, but as strategic tools for inclusive economic growth, resilience, and food system transformation.



Saitabao: A farming pioneer among pastoralists

By Catherine Waking'a, We Effect Tanzania

Mr. Daniel Saitabao in his sunflower farm © Imani Hezron - We Effect

At the age of 50, Mr. Daniel Saitabao, a father of six, shares his life with his beloved wife in a journey defined by patience and an unwavering commitment to farming.

He calls a one-acre farm his home. This modest plot has long been the foundation of his livelihood, where livestock, maize, and beans coexist in a carefully balanced system. Like many farmers in the region, Mr. Saitabao has traditionally relied on local techniques to cultivate these crops. Yet, despite his efforts, the returns have often fallen short of expectations.

It is within this context that a transformative initiative emerged. The Farmers Organization Research-Led Innovation (FORI) program, funded by the European Union and the OACPS, allowed MVIWAARUSHA to set out to unlock the potential of sunflower cultivation. In a region largely dominated by tobacco as a cash crop, the introduction of sunflower farming brought a new and unexpected opportunity, sparking both curiosity and hope.

As a member of MVIWAARUSHA, Mr. Saitabao seized this opportunity, joining ten pioneering farmers in testing and promoting sunflower production with the support of FO extensionist and research partners. His efforts quickly yielded remarkable results. From a small research demonstration plot, he harvested 120 kilograms of sunflowers, which were then processed into 20 liters of oil, clear evidence of the crop's potential. This success did not go unnoticed. It inspired his neighbours and reignited ambition across the community.

This progress has been made possible through strong collaboration. Local network leaders, lead farmer researchers, and village authorities have worked closely together to support the process, ensuring that farmers are actively involved at every stage.

The installation of three processing units further strengthened this dynamic. Notably, farmers themselves contributed to building the necessary housing structures, providing land, materials, and labour, demonstrating strong local ownership.

Today, Mr. Saitabao stands as a source of inspiration in Losikito village. His journey reflects the tangible benefits of innovation rooted in farmers' realities. "I am elated to have achieved this," he shares. "I have come to realize that producing one's own cooking oil is not only possible, but also a source of immense pride. Today, I can claim ownership of the oil I cultivate and process, and this is nothing short of amazing."

He also highlights another important shift.

"The operations of this farm have largely been managed by my wife," thanks to the inclusivity training and gender-transformative approach we received from We Effect."

This change reflects a broader transformation taking place within the community.

Mr. Saitabao's story illustrates the lasting impact of the FORI programme in Losikito village. Beyond increased production, it has fostered new skills, stronger collaboration, and a renewed vision for the future. Inspired by his example, many farmers are now embracing sunflower cultivation and exploring its commercial potential, laying the foundations for a more resilient and prosperous local economy.

To go further read here the capitalisation document of FORI Program: <https://www.agricord.org/en/publications/capitalisation-farmer-led-research-innovation-program>

Adapting to Climate Change: Shared Lessons from Africa, French Overseas Territories, and Mainland France

By Afdi – Agriculteurs français et développement international

Farmers across Africa, French overseas territories, mainland France, and beyond are increasingly exposed to the accelerating impacts of climate change, including prolonged droughts, extreme rainfall events, and growing pressure on water resources. These shocks are directly undermining agricultural productivity, farm incomes, and rural stability.

In this context, Afdi and Chambres d'Agriculture France organised a webinar on 20 January 2026 with farmers' organizations, advisors, and sector stakeholders. The objective was to shift the discussion from short-term crisis management towards structured, long-term adaptation pathways. Despite diverse geographical contexts, a strong convergence emerged around three priorities: anchoring solutions in local realities, reinforcing the role of farmers' organizations, and improving the governance of natural resources, particularly water.

From climate risk to structured adaptation responses

Agriculture is among the most climate-exposed sectors globally. According to the IPCC (2023),¹ the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events is already reshaping production systems and increasing risks for family farms, including yield volatility and income insecurity.

While many responses have focused on short-term coping strategies, these are increasingly insufficient. The central challenge now is to scale structured adaptation approaches that enable anticipation of risks, informed decision-making, and alignment between technical solutions and institutional frameworks.

Strengthening collective and system-based approaches

The webinar highlighted two complementary, scalable methodologies already being implemented across different contexts.

The first is the Building Resilience toolkit, developed within the AgriCord alliance and implemented by Afdi with farmers' organizations in West Africa, including UAR-P (Togo) and Réseau SOA (Madagascar).

This approach is based on participatory processes where farmers identify climate risks affecting their production systems, while their organizations assess impacts on services and co-develop adaptation action plans. This strengthens both operational resilience and the institutional capacity of farmers' organizations.



Climate workshop in Togo with the UROPC-M farmers' organization © Afdi

The second approach, ClimaTerra, led by Chambres d'Agriculture France, supports farms through structured vulnerability assessments, identification of adaptation levers, and development of long-term transition pathways. Since 2023, more than 500 farms have engaged in this pilot approach, demonstrating its relevance for scaling climate-adapted advisory services.

Evidence of impact: water as a strategic entry point

Across all contexts, water management emerged as a critical leverage point for climate adaptation. Case studies presented included low-pressure gravity irrigation systems in France, rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure in Madagascar, and collective water governance mechanisms in West Africa. These interventions have contributed to reduced water losses, improved resource access, and reduced conflict between users.

¹ https://climat.be/changements-climatiques/changements-observees/rapports-du-giec/2023-rapport-de-synthese?utm_source=chatgpt.com

As highlighted by Rony Etsé, coordinator of the Union des Agriculteurs de la région des Plateaux au Togo (UAR-P): *“The shared diagnosis enabled us to move from individual difficulties to a collective strategy recognized by the authorities.”*

This illustrates the added value of structured, collective approaches in strengthening both resilience and policy engagement capacity.

Key lessons for scaling and policy integration

Three key lessons emerge with direct relevance for development cooperation and climate finance actors:

1. Effective climate adaptation requires the direct and sustained involvement of farmers in diagnosis and planning processes

2. Farmers' organizations are essential intermediaries for scaling solutions and ensuring institutional anchoring

3. Technical solutions only generate impact when combined with appropriate governance frameworks and public policy alignment

The key challenge moving forward is to consolidate these approaches and integrate them into national agricultural advisory systems and public policy frameworks. This is critical to move from project-based experimentation to systemic, long-term transformation of climate resilience in agriculture.

Agroecological practices with Réseau SOA in Madagascar © Afdi



A new generation of farmers in Indonesia

By Hanna Dekerk, Trias

In the rice fields of Karanganyar, Central Java, 29-year-old Muhammad Bayu Wijayanto has been cultivating the land of his family for more than a decade already. As the eldest of four siblings, Bayu stepped into a leadership role at his parents' farm when he was 19 years old. While helping his parents grow rice, he rented a hectare of land to grow cassava, peanuts, and corn. But like many smallholder farmers in Indonesia, Bayu faced many challenges: erratic weather, prolonged droughts, and pest outbreaks that threatened his income.

"I had to find ways to protect our harvest that wouldn't cost much. But I wanted to protect the crops without harming the environment. That is why I was using rabbit urine as a natural pest repellent and building scarecrows to defend the fields."

Muhammad Bayu Wijayanto

Bayu's turning point came when he connected with Himpunan Tani Ngudi Makmur (HTNM), a local farmers' organization supported by Trias through the Farmers' Organizations for Asia (FO4A) programme of AgriCord – funded by EU. HTNM benefited from Trias' organizational strengthening tool, SPIDER, helping improve its internal systems, governance, and ability to serve its members more effectively.

Through the programme Bayu gained access to support that transformed his farming journey. With Trias' guidance, Bayu joined trainings in climate-smart agriculture, financial literacy, and marketing strategies, tailored to the realities of small-scale farmers. He also participated in LEATRA, Trias' leadership trajectory, and engaged in workshops on gender and inclusion, where he learned how inclusive leadership can strengthen rural communities.

"The trainings that I got from HTNM and Trias gave me a better knowledge and helped me boost my harvest and sell at better prices," says Bayu. "Before, prices dropped every harvest season. Now, I have options, and a voice in negotiations."



Muhammad Bayu Wijayanto in his farm © Trias Southeast Asia

Youth Leadership in Action

With the confidence and skills that he gained, Bayu emerged as a youth leader within HTNM. He now represents young farmers in the organization, leads peer trainings, and participates in farmer exchange visits across Java.

"I dream of a future where young farmers lead the way, where our voices matter. Where we're seen not as the last option, but as innovators of our time."

By helping young farmers like Bayu find their voice and place in the agricultural sector, Trias and FO4A are laying the foundation for more inclusive, resilient, and future-proof rural communities.

The Broader Impact of the FO4A programme

Bayu is one of 3,924 smallholder farmers across Indonesia and the Philippines who have been supported by Trias through the FO4A programme that ran from 2021-2024. Working with five local partner organizations, the programme has:

- Enabled the marketing of more than 70,000 tons of agricultural products, including rice, pineapple, coconut oil, cassava, and banana
- Contributed to a total market value of nearly €2 million for smallholder produce
- Supported youth and women's leadership within farming communities
- Helped drive 13 policy windows that directly benefit smallholder farmers.

Savoir-Faire & Links

- FO4ACP Impact stories: [Impact Stories: Strengthening Farmers' Organizations Across Africa through FO4ACP | agricord](#)
- AgriCord Gender vision document: [AgriCord Gender Vision in Agriculture and Forestry | agricord](#)
- Fiche méthode Fert : Comment organiser un dispositif de paysans relais ? [trans-paysan-relais-fiche-methodev2-2025-1.pdf](#)

Connect with us:

AgriCord   

www.agricord.org

Coordination & Layout: Chamsyatou Mama Gao,
Program & Partnership Officer AgriCord

Review: Katja Vuori, CEO AgriCord
April 2026

AgriCord financial partners include the EU, OACPS, FAO,
AECID, AFD, DGD, and GiZ. The views expressed herein
do not reflect the official opinion of the EU, OACPS,
FAO, AECID, AFD, DGD, and GiZ.

AgriCord, Rue de Trèves 61,
1040 Brussels, Belgium
+32 (0)2 239 23 30



Muhammad Bayu Wijayanto in his farm © Trias Southeast Asia

