PROLINNOVA–Mali annual report 2016 – summary[1]

The activities of PROLINNOVA–Mali in 2016 are directly linked to the actions planned for the third year of the third phase of the funding obtained from Misereor for PROFEIS (Promoting Farmer Experimentation and Innovation in the Sahel) activities, namely governance of the CP, continuation of joint experiments and mainstreaming of the PID approach.

In terms of governance, the NSC of 13 members held its annual meeting to discuss the CP's orientation and to validate the annual programme developed, as well as the budget used in 2016 and the budget for 2017. The multistakeholder innovation platform of 22 members from various local organisations held its fifth meeting in April, as part of its mandate to advise and provide technical support for the success of CP's activities. PROLINNOVA–Mali's technical or Coordination Team is currently composed of four structures: (i) a professional network of farmer organisations, (ii) an NGO, (iii) a public research institute and (iv) the national extension service. Throughout 2016, the Coordination Team has effectively assumed its responsibilities for planning, implementing, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the network activities, in collaboration with farmer innovators, local communities and various partners.

Four cases of farmer-led joint research are underway at various learning sites of the CP:

1) New farmer innovations for controlling striga have been identified, characterised and validated in the Segou and Mopti Regions. These innovations were added to those that were already known to the CP and were the subject of 12 treatments with 12 farmers on one of the most striga-infested sites in the Segou area.

2) The biopesticide based on the *potokolonimbo* plant was widely disseminated during 2016, which led to wider adoption by women vegetable farmers. An advisory support officer was involved with the farmers in analysing and comparing the effects of this biopesticide on agricultural production and yield. The results were very conclusive by revealing that the use of *potokolonimbo* significantly improved the income of women producing tomatoes, by generating an average income of 1383 CFA francs/m² (USD 2.77) per litre of the biopesticide. The success of this innovation has considerably strengthened the value chain from the producers to the retailers who sell tomatoes in the local market. The number of buyers of tomatoes treated with the *potokolonimbo* acqueous solution increased by 70%.

3) The innovation of the clay incubator has entered into an experimental phase in a research station. With the aim of accompanying poultry farmers in increasing the number of fertile guinea-fowl eggs (which can become guinea fowls), PROLINNOVA–Mali initiated an on-station trial in collaboration with the Department of Poultry Science of the National Research Institute. This joint experiment, which is currently underway, looks at different female/male ratios (e.g. 1 male/1 female, 1 male/2 female, 1 male/3 female and 1 male/4 female) in order to find the best ratio to reduce the number of infertile guinea-fowl eggs in local farms.

4) The initiatives of the women's cooperative of Djela also benefit from the support of PROLINNOVA–Mali. To take advantage of the clay incubator, the women of this cooperative decided to contribute 18,000 CFA francs (USD 36) each to buy eggs of the hybrid chicken breed called

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"Yassa", from which they can harvest fertile eggs throughout the year. In support of these committed and dynamic women, the project decided to experiment with a solar clay incubator at village level to see if it improves the yield in terms of fertile poultry eggs. Two experiments were carried out with 100 eggs. Successful results to date have enabled the Djela women to sell chicken eggs at the price of 500 CFA francs (USD 1) and even 100 CFA francs (USD 0.2) for the particular case of eggs from the *Yassa* hybrid hens breed provided by the project as part of the experiment. This has had a positive impact on the entire value chain of the local poultry sector. New players, such as retailers, are emerging in the sector, and demand for poultry products is also on the rise. Some members of the cooperative have built their own clay incubator to benefit more from this emerging market. The women's cooperative of Djela has also built a new headquarters and is in the process of expanding their poultry-breeding business. Five farmers outside the village of Djela, including two in Sikasso Region, and a local farmer association have requested information and training on the clay incubator to take advantage of the new economic dynamics in the poultry sector. These impacts noted at the local level are communicated beyond the borders of Mali, where requests are sent to Prolinnova–Mali, either by email or by telephone, about the clay incubator from countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Conakry, Nigeria and Togo.

All of these initiatives of Prolinnova–Mali were documented and shared through four bulletins, two of which were translated into local languages (*Bamanankan* and *Fulfé*). Two more bulletins are being edited and funds are lacking to complete the process. The CP produced a new catalogue of 50 farmer innovations, 38 of which come from the Segou Region and 12 from the Mopti Region. The CP in Mali has also carried out several other activities in networking, training and other forms of capacity building. A round table was organised on 18 February and was attended by 80 people from various national and international organisations, including the FAO. A workshop also held on 6 May, in which 15 people (13 elderly men and 2 elderly women) debated on local knowledge as part of a better understanding of community rights on local innovations. On 7–19 July, 27 farmers from Djela village were trained in the use of the solar clay incubator and poultry healthcare. Prolinnova–Mali benefited from backstopping by Bara Gueye on M&E tools oriented towards institutionalising the PID approach.