



Promoting Farmer Experimentation and Innovation in Sahel

PROFEIS–Senegal annual summary report 2012

Background

PROFEIS–Senegal was founded in 2007. Members of PROFEIS–Senegal come from diverse organizational backgrounds: government research and extension agencies (Agence Nationale Conseil Agricole et Rural), non-governmental development organisations (Agrecol Afrique, Green Senegal), educational institutions (Ecole Nationale Supérieur d'Agriculture, Université Cheikh Anta Diop) and community-based/farmer organisations (FONGS: Fédération des Organisations Non Gouvernementale du Sénégal). They work together, share lessons and build on their experiences to support and promote the creativity and local innovation capacity of small-scale farmers in agricultural research and development.

Activities conducted

Meeting of PROFEIS National Steering Committee

Three meetings by the National Steering Committee (NSC) were held this year with the view to assessing the activities planned and identifying others to keep the program going and the platform. These meetings were held with the participation of all member organizations of the PROFEIS NSC. The innovation this year was that the meetings were organized in different areas, matching the different member organizations of the PROFEIS NSC. Accordingly, three meetings were held respectively at ANCAR, FONGS and GREEN Senegal. This option of rotating meetings while giving responsibility for their organization to the different member organizations was particularly welcomed by these organizations. It also helped to popularize the program and encourage its inclusion in coming activities. In the same line, many meetings were held for planning the organization of action days to bring new dynamism to the network and farmer innovation.

Joint experimentation

Joint experiments are considered some of the main activities by PROFEIS–Senegal and as such were conducted through mango tree planting in Keur Ndiogou Ndiaye (Thiès), reclamation of salinated land in the valley of Thionck Essyl and trying out the seedless and early variety of pawpaw in Thionck Essyl (Casamance).

1. □ Mango tree planting among Nguiguiss bushes

Joint experimentation with mango tree planting among *nguiguiss* (*Piliostigma reticulatum*) bushes consists in mixing mango trees with *nguiguiss* with a view to enhancing the growth of the mango tree without having to water it. As a reminder, this technique is a farmer innovation that was identified by PROFEIS. So, new *nguiguiss* nurseries were set up and seedlings were distributed to producers in and around Keur Ndiogou Ndiaye (Thiès Region) during the rainy season.

This activity is a response to questions relating to propagation of *nguiguiss* and dissemination of the approach in the area. So, a nursery with 4000 plants of *nguiguiss* was set up at Keur Ndiogou Ndiaye by farmer innovators in collaboration with PROFEIS–Senegal. Still as part of the joint experimentation on mixed planting of *Nguiguiss* and mango trees, another nursery was set up and, this time, the objective was to experiment with growing seedlings through use of cuttings, seeds and burst strains. For that purpose, 90 containers (30 for each experiment) were filled and are now under joint experimentation (all the steps of this experimentation: objectives, monitoring, etc. were conducted with the other actors of the PROFEIS platform) in order to test nursery techniques regarding the fastest-growing and most water-efficient varieties. It is a response to the different questions relating to nursery techniques as needed by producers.

2. Land reclamation in the valley of Thionck Essyl (South Senegal)

The joint experimentation on reclamation of salinated land is going on despite the tensions in the area. The joint experimentation is about setting up a main dam (105 meters) and a secondary dam (55m). After that, the dams are covered with shells to protect them against wind and water erosion. The final objective is to reclaim salinated land to be used for boosting rice production. Currently, producers report that 372 hectares of land have been reclaimed through this process. However, for a good assessment of the efficacy of the practice, one has to wait and see whether this will pass the test of the rainy season.

3. Early and seedless pawpaw in Thionck Essyl

After several unsuccessful experiments by farmer innovators on early and seedless papaw in 2011, the process was renewed with farmer participatory experimentation. A new research protocol was drawn up by the NSC with the farmer innovator. Pawpaw trees were grown at two sites (12 trees at each site) according to the new experimental protocol that was especially elaborated for the purpose. In addition, the joint experimentation was resumed in Thiès in order to facilitate monitoring. Three months into the process, the success rate was 95% and 90% in the two sites. The operations will be conducted as of 2013 with the farmer innovator. As a reminder, the farmer developed this innovation before the joint experiment started.

Backstopping of PROFEIS

In the course of the year 2012, PROFEIS received Jean Marie Diop in a backstopping mission. The mission's objective was to reinforce, review and improve the Participatory Innovation Development (PID) approach and the program's achievements. During the mission, Jean Marie Diop made courtesy visits to the NSC member organizations. Especially, the backstopping concerned multi-actor partnership within the PROFEIS program; on giving new impetus to farmer innovator networks; on the broadcasting process within the PROFEIS program; on joint experimentation; on the farmer innovation day; on communication within the PROFEIS program and, last but not least, on fundraising for the third phase 2013–2015 of the PROFEIS program.

He also dealt with joint experimentation, networking and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E), which is not being implemented yet. Lastly, he discussed fundraising and the finalization of the project document for the third phase of PROFEIS. This helped not only to make an overall monitoring of all the program's activities while having a critical look on the program's objectives, but also to give relevant orientation and recommendations for achieving the objectives in this phase.

Networking

On 30 May 2012, a national workshop was held in order to reinvigorate local networks set up by the PROFEIS NSC in Senegal. The workshop brought together representatives of local networks along with the PROFEIS NSC with the following objectives: diagnose the networks' functioning, establish

consensual criteria for the good functioning of an innovators' network and propose an appropriate organizational model for the network. The objective of the workshop was not only to find, along with producers, the main constraints to the networks' functionality, but and above all, to elaborate criteria of good network functioning. The workshop has also helped to elaborate, among other things, a network model to serve as a base.

Farmer innovation day

A farmer innovation day was organized at Keur Ndiogou Ndiaye on 31 May 2012 with the participation of over 150 people including farmer innovators, other farmers, development agents and decision makers. The overall objectives of the innovation day were sharing with farmers, technical agents and partners the innovations identified, characterized and experimented as part of the PROFEIS program.

Especially, the day helped PROFEIS to present its program as well as the PID approach to decision makers, government technical services, producers and the media. It helped for innovators to share their experience with local and national people; it was also an opportunity to ask questions or put forth contributions for better valorizing the PROFEIS approach and achievements.

The innovation day consisted in an exchange forum between farmer innovators and a space for consultation with rural development actors. The focus was on sharing experiences through the innovations identified, characterized, experimented and disseminated.

Presentations of the program, the approach, field and stand visits were made along with meetings and in-depth debates with other farmers engaged in farmer innovation dynamics. Innovative farmers presented their innovations as well as their methodology.

Participation in the International Partners Workshop in Mali

On 12–14 March 2012, Djibril Thiam, PROFEIS program officer, participated in the international meeting of partner organizations in the PROLINNOVA network. The workshop was held in Mali, West Africa. The objective of the workshop was to help various regional platforms in Africa and Asia to share their experience on the promotion of farmer innovation and PID as an alternative solution to the crisis prevailing in agriculture and the degradation of natural resources. Communication aids such as flyers and posters as well as PROFEIS reports were used to help participants at the “marketplace” on the opening day to understand the job undertaken by PROFEIS–Senegal.

External evaluation of PROFEIS

In addition to regular monitoring of the program's activities, an overall evaluation of the PROFEIS program was commissioned by Misereor and carried out by external evaluators (Roch Mongbo and Iris Paulus). The evaluation of the two PROFEIS phases (2007-2009 and 2010-2012) was conducted on 4–18 June 2012. The aim was to analyze the organization, the approach, the achievements, the effects/impacts as well as the prospects for PROFEIS–Senegal. The evaluation helped the NSC to draw lessons and overall conclusions and formulate recommendations for the future of the project. The main recommendations are:

- ⇒ Enhance the implementation of the program through a full-time coordinator
- ⇒ Further examine the impacts of innovations already identified
- ⇒ Develop methodological tools such as guides, manuals, training of trainers, etc

Disseminating information on the innovations

Five radio broadcasts were made during the year 2012. A live and interactive broadcast was made with a local community radio station in September 2012; and in October, a joint broadcast was recorded on the premises of AGRECOL Afrique with four community radio stations in Thiès Region. The decision

makers of the member organizations of the NSC as well as the members of the PROFEIS NSC participated in the joint broadcast. The objective of these broadcasts was to share the approach and the achievements of the program with the local people in order to make them aware of the approach.

Still as part of the dissemination activity, translation into local languages (Wolof, Serer and Toucouleur) of the flyers and posters regarding the innovations and the program is ongoing. This was agreed during the last meeting of the PROFEIS NSC in 2012 to allow producers to understand the program's approach and its various activities.

Difficulties being encountered

The main difficulty the program faced during 2012 was non-regular monitoring in the area of Thionck Essyl due to tensions prevailing there. For this reason, the only information available from the area was through the telephone.

Perspectives

In perspective, the program's activities should move on through PID training workshops for the benefit of researchers and farmers, and through dissemination of the innovations and the PID approach among the public and policymakers. There will also be a dissemination and advocacy campaign towards decision makers, development agents and farmers for them to embrace the PID approach.