



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

FLID workshop Drops for Crops Benin

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FLID workshop Drops for Crops Benin

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FLID Workshop Drops for Crops Benin

The Drops for crops Benin project is funded by RVO, with Woord en Daad as lead partner. The project aims to improve the efficiency of water use of 1442 members of the cooperative of vegetable producers. RVO approached the Water Resources Management group of Wageningen University to provide a training on Farmer Led Irrigation Development to selected projects. In this context, an online workshop took place on February 3 2025, focused on introducing the FLID methodology to the project partners. The FLID methodology was applied to the project itself in order to identify enabling and constraining elements for farmer led irrigation development within the project. All project partners attended the workshop, and the participation was very active. A list of participants present is included in Annex 1. This document describes the contents of the workshop and its main outcomes.

Before the break

In the first part of the workshop all participants were given the opportunity to introduce themselves, after which the goals of the workshop were presented. Important to highlight is that the workshop is not meant as a project evaluation, but a training and a facilitated reflection, in order to gain insight into best practices and lessons learned regarding FLID. An introduction to FLID and its methodology was provided by Gert Jan Veldwisch (presentation is available as Annex). The presentation explains how the FLID approach was developed, based on observed cases of farmer led irrigation development. It highlighted the use of a spider diagram to assess the potential for FLID, by looking into the aspects of resource potential and farmer benefits. The constraining factors can be analysed by looking into the domains of Policy & legal, knowledge, finance, markets and technology. By scoring these domains in the spider diagram, constraining elements can be identified, and project interventions can be assessed.

After the presentation the floor was opened for questions. The questions and remarks included the following points:

- Interesting that the FLID guide raises all these 7 elements of irrigation development. Many projects have a strong focus on the technology aspect, but focus less on the other domains.
- D4C Benin is also investing a lot in making water available on the field, which takes a lot of effort. The project is investing in communal water infrastructure, so that farmers can connect to it (related to resource potential in the FLID approach).
- Another remarks was made about the cost to make water available, if this is included in the scoring for resources potential. This is indeed the case in the FLID approach.
- The point was raised that the project already made a resource potential and a farmer benefit analysis. The scores on both elements is high, as the agricultural productivity is high, as well as the potential for groundwater development.
- The FLID approach would have been nice to have at the start of the project, in order to guide the project design. Now the project is touching on all the five constraining factors, and the FLID approach can be used to assess some of the elements that might be overlooked.
- The approach was appreciated and the applicability was highlighted. It can be used to identify lessons learned. It is also useful for the NGO's in the project to use the approach in future proposals.

After the break

In the second part of the workshop two breakout groups were created in which participants discussed enabling and constraining elements across two different domains, technology and access to finance, and attempted to score the project's impact on the spider diagram. It was impossible to cover all five constraining elements in this workshop, therefore the two elements were chosen that were most applicable to the project. After the breakout sessions, the two breakout groups reported back in the main channel on their discussions.

Technology

The presence of CSF as a supplier of irrigation materials and pumps was considered a significant asset, facilitating production and saving time for producers. However, the physical access to irrigation materials is limited and not well-known among all farmers. The quality of materials varies widely, making it hard to distinguish between good and bad quality. Costs are not standardized, leading to significant price variations across cities. Many farmers are not aware of the availability of irrigation equipment, where to buy it, or they lack the funds to purchase it. Solar equipment is dependent on the sun, which is not always available during peak irrigation demand, and maintenance can be difficult.

The team scored current access to technology as 2, with an expected increase to 4 after the project. Current quality was also scored as 2, with a similar expected increase. However, the cost of irrigation technology remains uncertain due to changes in national policy. Therefore, the score on cost would move from 3 to 2. This is not as a result of the project activities, but a development that happened in parallel. There are opportunities to improve access to finance for technology, train farmers in the adoption and maintenance of technologies, develop partnerships with suppliers like CSF, and bring renewable energy to the market.

Access to finance

The finance group started with defining the target group of the project, which focuses on small and medium-sized producers.

The cooperative FLT aims to help farmers access services, including finance for irrigation. Before the project, a microfinance institution was available, but farmers struggled to obtain loans due to requirements like guarantees and administrative procedures. Additionally, existing financial products were not specifically designed for horticulture. The project introduced microfinance for farmers, and a pay-as-you-go systems exists for the irrigation equipment supplied by CSF. However, most new systems are not yet operational for farmers. Before the project the score on finance was a 2, the current score is 3, with a planned increase to 4 by the end of the project.

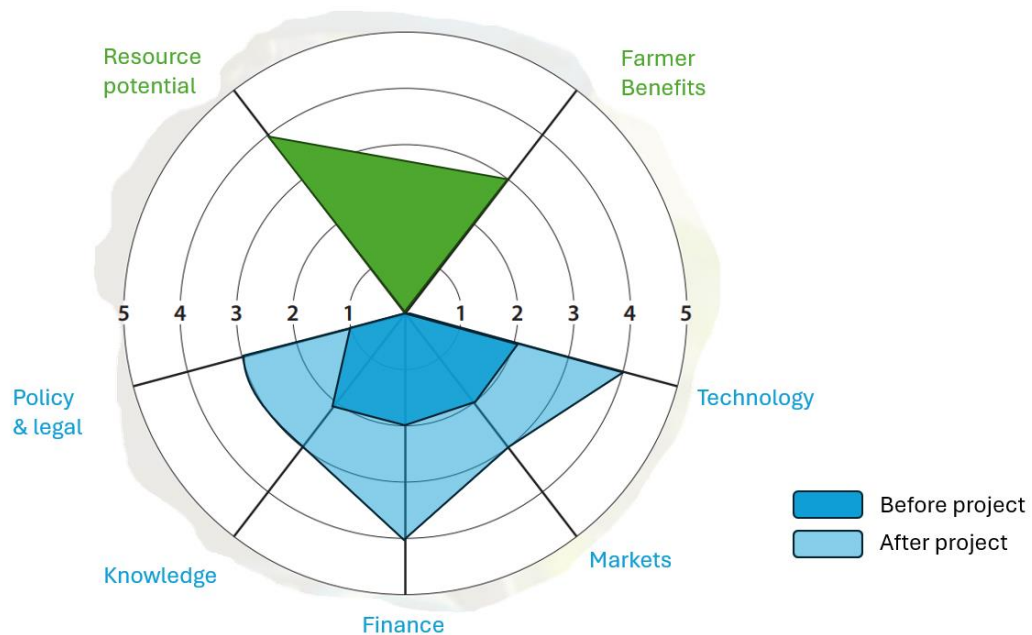


Figure 1 Scoring during the workshop, before and after the project (note that scoring only took place for the Technology and Finance axis, the others are indicative values).

Observations

After the presentation of the results from the breakout groups, some observations were made by Gert Jan:

- There is an interdependence between different domains such as the availability of technology, national policies, and finance.
- The project works with farmer typologies, which helps to understand the needs of different farmer types.
- Some elements fall outside the scope of project influence: changes in policy and climate can impact outcomes of the project.

Lessons learned / best practices

The workshop concluded with room for reflection and identifying best practices / lessons learned.

Through the workshop it became apparent that the project approach aligns very well with the FLID approach. The workshop has provided a framework and language to better explain project activities and provided a basis for follow up work.

However, the workshop also raised the question of whether project efforts are focused on the correct domains. For instance, policy & legal and technology were mentioned as elements that were not significantly taken into account. Better insight into these elements could have led to a different composition of the project team. Taxes and local food security were also mentioned as elements that would need further attention.

The point was raised that the FLID approach is missing the domain of production (from an agronomic perspective) so including elements like pest management and productivity. The environment is also not included in the approach, while climate change (and crop selection) can have a significant outcome on the FLID spider.

Annex 1

Name	Organisation
NATA Samuel	DEDRAS-ONG
GOUROUBERA Luc	DEDRAS-ONG
KOUSSAGOU Samuel	DEDRAS-ONG
TCHAN HADIOU	Commune Ouaké
KASSA Clément	Commune Tanguiéta
CHABI BOUM Odette	Cooperative Fruits et Legumes pour Tous (FLT)
N'TCHA Blaise	Cooperative Fruits et Legumes pour Tous (FLT)
KABRE Paulicame	CSF-Benin
SONGRE Honoré	CSF-Benin
André YANOGO	Woord en Daad
Peter Voortman	Woord en Daad
Ernst Prosman	Woord en Daad
Jan van Saane	RVO

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