

The Economic Development Pole (EDP) approach in Niger: the case of the Niger-IFAD Programme

Abstract

Since 2012, the Niger-IFAD Programme uses a new non-administrative geographical intervention unit, the Economic Development Pole (EDP). The EDP is described as a space concentrating economic activities linked to the production and commercialization of the main agro-pastoral products of the neighbouring production basins. This poster aims to describe and analyze the concept of EDP, to show its first results when put into practice and to analyze its risks.

Key Words: Economic Development Pole, Niger, IFAD

Research question

Is the EDP approach innovative? What are the first results of its implementation? What are its risks?

Methods

This poster is based on a literature review (of both scientific and programme documents) and on interviews with the key actors (Niger-IFAD Programme, its partners, its beneficiaries).

Data

The data are mainly qualitative; some quantitative data on the economic results of secondary markets (collection points) have also been employed.

Results

Until 2012, the geographical targeting of the intervention area of IFAD-funded projects in Niger was based on administrative units: *départements* and, following the 2004 reform, *communes*. In 2012, this approach had already showed its limits for fostering development, since it did not take into account commercial flows of agro-pastoral products.

Since 2012, the Niger-IFAD Programme's intervention zone is made up by several Economic Development Poles (EDP). Each EDP is a part of a larger watershed; its key elements are: (i) a semi-wholesale market, fed by (ii) production basins, which are linked to each other by (iii)

feeder and/or tarmac roads. In the production basins, there are produce collection points based in village markets and connected to the semi-wholesale market by a feeder or tarmac road.

The EDP approach is an innovative integrated territorial development approach, different from both value chain approaches and from choosing an intervention zone based on administrative units. It is based on commercial flows and on working with all economic actors of the rural economy, from big traders to vulnerable farmers, who should all profit from a more dynamic local economy. It is innovative from a conceptual point of view too, even if since about 10 years similar development models have been thought in different places (Collignon 2006; Wiggins 2017). The first economic results of this approach are encouraging: during their first year and a half, the renovated collection points had +15,3% transactions and a good net margin. The risk or challenge of this model is equity: do all economic actors benefit the same way of an enhanced local economy?

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