le débat sur les critères déterminant les interventions à évaluer, le moment choisi pour les évaluations et la façon dont elle sont conduites.

A Meta-evaluation of Sustainable Land Management Initiatives in Senegal.

DOCTORAL THESIS

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SUMMARY

Evaluation is the systematic determination of the merit, worth and significance of a programme, initiative or intervention. As a young discipline, its empirical study is still limited, especially in Francophone Africa. Building on both the theory and the practice of evaluation in Senegal for the past decades, this study aims to identify strategies to improve evaluation practice and its usefulness for development results. It is focused on the evaluation of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) that presents specific challenges associated with the difficulty of considering simultaneously the different time and space scales of the environment, the economy and the society; and of dealing with the uncertainty and the limited quantity and quality of context data, among others.

The study is based on an extensive review of the specialized literature on environment and development issues, the institutional and policy setting, complemented with semi-structured interviews with national authorities, donor representatives and evaluators. Participant observation also helped to ground the analysis and to access key grey literature and evaluation reports. Meta-evaluation (MEv) is proposed as the analytical framework to study the SLM evaluation practice in Senegal to improve evaluative knowledge. MEv is the evaluation of evaluations. The theoretical function of MEv has been developed to assess the role of evaluation in the SLM policy sector, including its adequacy and opportunity. A tailored MEv framework is applied to a set of 40 SLM project evaluation reports published since 2000, and complemented with 3 case studies. The study also analyses a parallel strand of evaluation practice in Senegal: capitalizations, conceived as participatory evaluative exercises focused on stakeholders' experiences, practices and learning.

Results show that evaluation practice in SLM in Senegal is very heterogeneous and far from "sound evaluation standards". This is explained by constraints in the enabling environment and the institutional framework and limited capacities of stakeholders at all levels. In spite of some timid advances towards country-led evaluation, serious blockages to national ownership and evaluation utilization still persist. Although the majority of interviewees perceived SLM evaluations to be participative, this study contests their understanding of participation in most cases. SLM capitalization exercises, although far from the ideal features of this learning-oriented approach are able to engage more meaningfully with local-level actors. The set of evaluations and capitalizations analysed does not offer a coherent response to the challenges of evaluating Natural Resources Management interventions identified in the literature. For instance, they do not solve the tensions among different time and space scales or encompass a wide variety of values and perspectives about those interventions. Finally, the findings suggest that SLM evaluation is still much dominated by donor agendas and aid effectiveness concerns (accountability), with very limited efforts to promote their use for improvement or learning, and hardly any to inform national policy making.

The study confirms the usefulness of MEv to guide critical reflection about real-world evaluations, surpassing the narrow conception of evaluation quality. It also allows the opening of a debate about evaluation capacities understood as the faculty to choose what, when and how interventions are evaluated. MEv could be used to promote a more active involvement of Senegalese research institutes, public administration and civil society in shaping a new public policy evaluation scenario. A broader national conception of evaluation should also encompass capitalizations and other similar approaches and foster learning organizations and institutions while promoting exchanges between applied research and project and policy-level evaluation.

RESUMEN

La evaluación es la investigación sistemática del mérito, valor e importancia de un programa, iniciativa o intervención. Siendo una disciplina nueva, su estudio empírico es todavía limitado, especialmente en el África francófona. En base a la teoría y la práctica de evaluación en Senegal durante las últimas décadas, este estudio pretende identificar estrategias para mejorar la evaluación y su utilidad para alcanzar resultados de desarrollo. Está focalizado en la evaluación de la Gestión Sostenible de la Tierra (GST) que presenta retos específicos asociados a la dificultad de considerar simultáneamente las diferentes escalas de tiempo y espacio del medio ambiente, la economía y la sociedad; de integrar la incertidumbre, así como la limitada cantidad y calidad de la información sobre el contexto, entre otros.

El estudio está basado en una revisión extensiva de la literatura especializada en medio ambiente y desarrollo, el contexto institucional y político, complementado con entrevistas semi-estructuras con autoridades nacionales, representantes de la comunidad de donantes y evaluadores. Cuatro años de participación observante también ayudaron a contextualizar el análisis y a acceder a literatura gris y a informes de evaluación claves. El enfoque de Meta-evaluación (MEv) es propuesto como marco analítico para estudiar la práctica de evaluación de GST en Senegal con el fin de mejorar el conocimiento evaluativo. La MEv es la evaluación de evaluaciones. La función teórica de MEv ha sido desarrollada para valorar el rol de la evaluación en el sector de política de la GST, inluyendo su idoneidad y oportunidad. Un marco de MEv adaptado es aplicado a un conjunto de 40 informes de evaluación de proyectos de GST publicados a partir del 2000 y complementados con tres estudios de caso. El estudio también analiza una práctica de evaluación paralela en Senegal: las capitalizaciones, concebidas como ejercicios evaluativos participativos focalizados en las experiencias, prácticas y aprendizaje de los actores.

Los resultados muestran que la práctica de evaluación de GST en Senegal es muy heterogénea y alejada de los standards de "evaluación de calidad". Esta situación se explica por las limitaciones en el entorno favorecedor a la evaluación y el marco institucional así como las limitadas capacidades de los actores a todos los niveles. A pesar de algunos tímidos avances hacia la evaluación gestionada por el país, todavía persisten serios bloqueos para promover la apropriación nacional y la utilización de las evaluaciones en Senegal. Pese a que la mayoría de entrevistados conciben la evaluación de GST como participativa, el estudio discrepa sobre su comprensión del concepto de participación, aparte de algunos ejemplos aislados de evaluaciones inclusivas. Las capitalizaciones de GST, aunque también distan de los rasgos ideales de este enfoque orientado al aprendizaje, son capaces de involucrar de manera más significativa a los actores a nivel local. Las evaluaciones de proyecto y capitalizaciones de GST no ofrecen una respuesta coherente a los retos inherentes a la evaluación de intervenciones de Gestión de Recursos Naturales identificados en la literatura. Por ejemplo, no son capaces de resolver las tensiones entre las diferentes escalas temporales y geográficas o de integrar la variedad de valores y perspectivas sobre dichas interventions. Finalmente, los resultados sugieren que la prática de evaluación de GST está todavía mayormente dominada por las agendas de los donantes y los objetivos de efectividad de la ayuda (rendición de cuentas), con esfuerzos muy limitados para promover su utilización para la mejora o el aprendizaje, y escasamente para la elaboración de políticas.

El estudio confirma la utilidad de la MEv para guiar la reflexión crítica sobre un conjunto de evaluaciones reales, más allá de la concepción restrictiva de la calidad en evaluación. También permite propiciar el debate sobre las capacidades de evaluación entendidas como la capacidad de elegir qué intervenciones son evaluadas, cuándo y cómo. La MEv podría ser utilizada para promover una implicación más activa de los institutos de investigación, las administraciones públicas y la sociedad civil senegaleses para dibujar un nuevo escenario de evaluación de políticas públicas. Una concepción amplia de la evaluación debería también incluir las capitalizaciones y otros enfoques similares y fomentar organizaciones e instituciones de conocimiento y el intercambio entre la investigación aplicada y la evaluación a nivel de proyectos, programas y políticas.

RÉSUMÉ

L´évaluation est la recherche systématique de la valeur, de la portée et de l'importance d'un programme, d'une initiative ou d'une intervention. Étant une discipline nouvelle, son étude empirique est encore limitée, particulièrement en Afrique francophone. S'appuyant sur la théorie et la pratique de l'évaluation au Sénégal au cours des dernières décennies, cette étude vise à identifier des stratégies pour améliorer l'évaluation et son utilité en vue d'atteindre des résultats de développement. Elle porte sur l'évaluation de la gestion durable des terres (GDT), qui présente des défis spécifiques en raison de la difficulté à considérer en simultané les différentes échelles temporelles et spatiales de l'environnement, de l'économie et de la société, et de prendre en compte, entre autres, l'incertitude ainsi que des informations limitées en quantité et qualité sur le contexte.

L'étude est basée sur une ample révision de la littérature spécialisée sur l'environnement et le développement, le contexte institutionnel et politique, complétée par des entretiens semi-structurés avec les autorités nationales et les représentants de la communauté de bailleurs et d'évaluateurs au Sénégal. Quatre années d'observation participante ont également aidé à contextualiser l'analyse et à consulter la littérature grise et les rapports d'évaluation. L'approche de méta-évaluation (MEv) est proposée en tant que cadre analytique pour étudier la pratique d'évaluation de la GDT au Sénégal afin d'améliorer les connaissances évaluatives. La MEv est l'évaluation des évaluations. La fonction théorique de MEv a été développée pour jauger le rôle de l'évaluation dans le secteur des politiques de GDT, y compris son adéquation et sa pertinence. Un cadre de MEv adapté est appliqué à un ensemble de 40 rapports d'évaluation de projets de GDT publiés à partir de l'année 2000 et complétés avec trois études de cas. L'étude analyse également la pratique de l'évaluation parallèle au Sénégal : les capitalisations, conçues comme exercices évaluatifs participatifs portant sur les expériences, les pratiques et les apprentissages des acteurs.

Les résultats montrent que la pratique d'évaluation de la GDT au Sénégal est très hétérogène et éloignée des standards d' "évaluation de qualité". Cette situation est expliquée par les limitations de l'environnement politique et du cadre institutionnel favorables à l'évaluation, ainsi que par les capacités limitées des acteurs à tous les niveaux. En dépit de quelques progrès timides vers l'évaluation menée par le pays, d'importants blocages persistent encore afin de promouvoir l'appropriation nationale et l'utilisation des évaluations au Sénégal. Même si la plupart des interviewés conçoivent l'évaluation de la GDT comme participative, l'étude met en cause leur compréhension du concept de participation, sauf dans quelques exemples isolés d'évaluations inclusives. Les capitalisations de GDT, bien qu'étant loin de reprendre les caractéristiques idéales de cette approche orientée vers l'apprentissage, permettent au moins d'engager de façon plus significative les acteurs au niveau local. Néanmoins, les évaluations de projet et les capitalisations de GDT n'offrent pas une réponse cohérente aux défis inhérents à l'évaluation d'initiatives de gestion durable de ressources naturelles identifiés dans la littérature. Par exemple, elles ne permettent pas de résoudre les tensions entre les différentes échelles temporelles et géographiques ou d'intégrer la diversité des valeurs et des perspectives liées à ces interventions. Finalement, les résultats indiquent que la pratique d'évaluation de la GDT est encore majoritairement dominée par les agendas des bailleurs et les objectifs d'efficacité de l'aide (redevabilité), avec des efforts très limités pour promouvoir leur utilisation orientée vers l´améliorations ou l'apprentissage, et virtuellement inexistants pour élaborer des politiques publiques.

L'étude confirme l'utilité de la MEv pour guider la réflexion critique sur un ensemble d'évaluations réelles, au-delà de la conception restrictive de qualité en évaluation. Elle permet aussi de favoriser le débat sur les capacités d'évaluation comprises comme le pouvoir de déterminer quelles interventions à évaluer, le moment choisi pour les évaluations et la façon dont elle sont conduites. La MEv pourrait être utilisée afin de promouvoir une implication plus active des instituts de recherche, des administrations publiques et de la société civile sénégalaise afin de concevoir un nouveau panorama de l'évaluation de politiques publiques. Une conception ample de l´évaluation devrait également inclure les capitalisations et d'autres approches similaires, tout en promouvant des organisations et des institutions productrices de savoir, et en favorisant l'échange entre recherche appliquée et évaluation de projets, programmes et politiques.

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ACRONYMS

AAC	Adaptation to Climate and Coastal Change in West Africa
AAP	African Adaptation Program
ABS	*Appui budgétaire sectoriel* (Sectorial Budgetary Support)
ACAB	*Arrangement Cadre pour les appuis budgétaires* (Arrangement Framework for Budget support)
ACCA	Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa Programme
AEA	American Evaluation Association
AEG	African Evaluation Guidelines
AfCOP	African Community of Practice
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFD	*Agence Française de Développement* (French Development Agency)
AfrEA	African Evaluation Association
AGRIDAPE	*Agriculture durable à faibles apports externs* (Sustainable Agriculture with Low External Inputs)
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
ANCAR	*Agence Nationale de Conseil Agricole et Rural* (National Agency of Agriculture and Rural Councils)
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASPRODEB	*Association Sénégalaise pour la Promotion du Développement par la Base* (Senegalese Grassroots Producers Association)
ATADEN	*Assistance Technique à l'Aménagement et au Développement Economique des Niayes* (Technical Assistance to Land Use and Economic Development of the Niayes Region)
AusAID	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
BOAD	*Banque Ouest-Africaine de Développement* (West African Development Bank)
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CAP	*Cellule d'Appui à la mise en œuvre des Projets/Programmes* (Project and Programme Support Unit)
CB	Capacity Building
CC	Climate Change
CCD	*Centre de Cooperació per al Desenvolupament* (Development Cooperation Centre)
CEA	Country Environmental Analysis
CEPOD	*Centre d'Etudes de Politiques pour le Développement* (Centre of Studies on Development Policies)
CEPS	*Cellule d'Etudes et de Planification Stratégique* (Planning and Monitoring Unit)
CES	Canadian Evaluation Society
CESAG	*Centre Africain d'Etudes Supérieures en Gestion* (African Cenre for Advanced Management Studies)
CFAA	Country Financial Accountability Assessment
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIA	US Central Intelligence Agency
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CILSS	*Commité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel* (Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
CIPP	Context, input, process, product
CLE	Country-led Evaluations
CLEAR	Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results
CNRA	*Centre National de la Recherche Agronomique* (National Centre of Agronomic Research)
CONGAD	*Conseil des ONG d'appui au développement* (Senegalese Development NGO Council)
CONSERE	*Conseil Supérieur des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement* (High Council of Natural Resources and Environment)
CPAR	Country Programme Assessment Review
CSE	*Centre de Suivi Ecologique* (Ecological Monitoring Centre)
CSO	Community Service Organization
CSPLP	*Cellule de Suivi du Programme de lute contre la Pauvreté* (Monitoring Unit of the Programme to fight against poverty)
CTL Nord	*Projet de Conservation des Terroirs du Littoral* Nord (Land Conservation Project in the North Coast, Louga)
CTL Sud	*Projet de Conservation des Terroirs du Littoral Sud* (Land Conservation Project in the Thies area)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DCEF	*Direction de la Coopération Economique et Financière* (Direction for the Economic and Finance Cooperation)
DEX	Direct execution implementation modality
DFECSS	*Direction des Eaux, Forêts, Chasses et de la Conservation des sols* (Water, Forest, Hunting and Soil Conservation Direction/Unit)
DFID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development

DGP	*Direction Générale de la Planification* (General Planning Unit)
DIME	Development Impact Evaluation
DLDD	Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought
DPES	*Document de Politique Economique et Sociale* (Economic and Social Policy Paper)
DPN	*Direction de la Planification Nationale* (National Planning Department, Ministry of Economy)
DPN	*Direction des Parcs* Nationaux (Natural Parks Unit, Ministry of Environment)
DREAT	*Délégation chargé de la Réforme de l'Etat et de l'Assistance Technique)* Unit in charge of state form and technical assistance
EASY ECO	European Conferences and Training Courses
ECB	Evaluation Capacity Building
ECD	Evaluation Capacity Development
EES	European Evaluation Society
ENRAP	Electronic Networking for Rural Asia and the Pacific
ERC	Evaluation Resource Centre
ESC	Evaluation Steering Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCFA	*Franc des Communtautés Financières* d'Afrique (Currency of the West African Monetary Union)
FIFE	*Forum International Francophone de l'Evaluation* (First Francophone Evaluation Forum)
FLCD-RPS	*Fonds de Lutte Contre la Désertification pour la Réduction de la Pauvreté au Sahel* (Fund to fight desertification and to reduce poverty)
FRAO	*Fondation Rurale de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (West African Rural Foundation)
FSSA	*Fonds de Soutien aux Strategiques d'Adaptation aux changements climatiques* (Support Fund for Local Adaptation Strategies)
F3E	*Fonds pour la promotion des Etudes préalables, des Etudes transversales et des Evaluations* (Fund for the promotion of exante studies, transversal studies and evaluations)
GBS	General Budget Support
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GIPD/CEP	*Gestion Intégrée de la Production et des Déprédateurs et champs école paysans* (integrated management of production - producers' school fields)
GIRE	*Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau* (water integrated management)
GLASOD	Global Assessment of Soil Degradation
GL-GDRN	*Governance Locale et Gestion Décentralisée des Ressources Naturelles* (Local Governance and decentralized management of Natural Resources)
GRET	*Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques* (Research group and technology exchange)
GTZ	German Aid Cooperation Agency (currently GIZ)
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IADB	Inter American Development Bank
IDE	International Development Evaluation
IDEAS	International Development Evaluation Association
IDRC	International Development Research Centre, Canada
IED Afrique	Innovations Environment Development Africa
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IIF	Integrated Investment Framework
ILEIA	Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INP	*Institut National de* Pédologie (National Pedology Institute)
INTAC	*Projet d'Intégration de l'Adaptation au Chagnement Climatique pour un développement durable au Sénégal* (Mainstreaming climate change adaptation in sustainable development)
IPDET	International Program for Development Evaluation Training
INFS	Integrated National Financing Strategies
IOCE	International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation
IRED	*Innovations et Réseaux pour le* Développement (Innovations and Networks for Development)
IREF	*Inspection Régionale des Eaux et* Forêts (Regional Water and Forest Inspection)
ISRA	*Institut Sénégalais de Recherches* Agricoles (Senegalese Agriculture Research Institute)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
J-PAL	Jameel Poverty Action Lab
JSE	*Journées Sénégalaises* d'Evaluation (Senegalese Evaluation Days)
KAEC	Key Aid Evaluation Checklist
KEC	Key Evaluation Checklist
KM4D	Knowledge Management for Development
LADA	Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands
LCCA	Local Climate Change Adaptation

LDC	Least Developed Country
Logframe	Logical Framework
LPS	*Lettre de Politique* Sectorielle (Sector Policy Letter)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Meta-evaluation checklist
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finances
MEPN	*Ministère de l'Environnement et de protection de la nature* (Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection)
MEv	Meta-evaluation
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTR	Mid-term Review
NAPA	National climate change Adaptation Program of Action (*Programme d'Action National d'Adaptation au Changement Climatique)*
NDVI	Normalized Difference Vegetation Index
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plans
NEC	National Evaluation Capacities
NECD	National Evaluation Capacities Development
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's development
NEX	National Execution implementation modality
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NONIE	Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation
NORAD	Norway's Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NRM	Natural Resources Management
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
OIF	Organization International of Francophonie
PADEN	*Programme d'Aménagement et de Développement Economique des* Niayes (Programme of management and economic development of the Niayes area)
PADF	Project of Support to Forestry Development
PADV	Project of community management and development
PAEP	Project of Support to farmers' entrepreneurship in Thies
PAFS	*Plan d'Action Forestier du* Sénégal (Forestry Action Plan of Senegal)
PAGEMAS	*Projet d'Appui à la Gestion de la Mangrove du Delta du Saloum)* Project to support the management of the Saloum Delta mangrove
PAGERNA	*Projet d'Autopromotion et de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles au Sine Saloum (*Autopromotion and management of natural resources in the Sine Saloum)
PAGF	*Projet Agroforestier de lute contre la desertification de* Diourbel (Agroforestry Project to combat desertification in Diourbel)
PAN/LCD	*Programme d'Action National de Lutte contre la Désertification* (National Action Plansto Combat Desertification)
PAPEL	*Projet d'Apui à* l'Elevage (Project of Support to promote livestock)
PAPF	*Projet d'Aménagement de pépinières* forestières (Management Project of forestry nurseries)
PAP Ferlo	*Projet d'Autopromotion Pastorale dans le* Ferlo (Pastoral autopromotion in Ferlo Project)
PAPIL	*Projet d'Appui à la Petit Irrigation* Loale (Project to support small-scale local irrigation)
PASEF	*Projet d'Amélioration et de Valorisation des Services des Ecosystèmes Forestiers du Sénéga) (*Project to improve and to promote forest ecosystems in Senegal)
PASYME	*Projet d'Appui au Système de Suivi-évaluation du Programme* FIDA (Project to support M&E system of FIDA program)
PBSM	*Projet Biodiversité Sénégal*-Mauritanie (Biodiversity Project Senegal-Mauritania)
PERACOD	*Programme pour la promotion des Energies Renouvelables, de l'électrification rurale et de l'Approvisionnement durable en Combustibles* Domestiques (Programme to promote renewable energies, rural electrification and sustainable fuel supply)
PE-MEC	Program Evaluation Meta-evaluation checklist
PES	Program Evaluation Standards
PGCRN	*Projet de Gestion Communautaire des Ressources* Naturelles (Natural Resources Community Management Project)
PGIES	*Projet de Gestion Intégreée des Ecosystèmes dans quatre paysages représentatifs du* Sénégal (Project of Integrated Management of ecosystems in four representative landscapes)
PIFED	*Programme International de Formation en Evaluation du développement* (International Training Programme in Evaluation of development)
PISA	*Programme Italien pour la Sécurité* Alimentaire (Italian Program for Food Security)
PNBG	*Programme National de Bonne Gouvernance* (National Program for Good Governance)
PODES	*Plan d'Orientation pour le Développement Economique et Social (*Orientation Plan for Economic and Social Development)
POGV	*Projet d'Organisation et de Gestion Villageoises*

	(Organization and management project at village level)
PPSA	*Programme Prioritaire de Sécurité Alimentaire* (Priority Programme of food security)
PRECABG	*Projet de Renforcement des Capacités de Bonne* Gouvrnance (Project of capacity building for Good Governance)
PREVINOBA	*Projet de Reboisement Villagois dans le Nord-Ouest du Bassin* Arachidier (Village reforestation project in the North-Western part of the peanut basin)
PRL	*Projet de Reforestation Litorale* (Reforestation Project in the Coastal area)
PRODAM	*Projet de Développement AGricole de Matam* (Project of agriculture development in Matam)
PRODDEL	*Programme d'Appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Economique* (Programme to support decentralization and local development)
PRODEFI	*Pojet communautaire de Développement Forestier* Intégré (Community Project of integrated forestry development)
PROFEIS	*Promouvoir 'expériomentation et l'innovation paysannes au* Sahel (Promoting farmers experimentation and innovation in the Sahel)
PROGEDE	*Projet de Gestion durable et participative des Energies traditionnelles et de* substitution (Sustainable and participatory management of traditional energy sources and substitution)
PROGERT	*Projet de Gestion et Restauration des Terres dégradées du Bassin Arachidier* (Groundnut Basin Soil Management and Regeneration)
PROMASC	*Projet Partenariat Multi-acteur pour l'Adapdation des populations vulnérables à la Salinisation des sols induite par les Chagngements Climatiques au Sénégal* (Multi-stakeholders Project for adaptation of vulnerable populations to soil salinization caused by climate change)
PROMER	*Projet de promotion des Microentreprises Rurales* (Project of promotion of rural micro-enterprises)
PRONASEF	*Programme Nationale de Semences Forestières* (Forest Seeds National Program)
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRV	*Programme de Reforestation* Villageoise (Village reforestation program)
PRVS	*Projet de Réhabilitation de la Vallée du Fleuve Sénégal* (Rehabilitation project of the valley of river Senegal)
PSAOP	*Projet de Services Agricoles et Organizations* Paysannes (Agricultural Services Producer Organizations Project)
PSI	Policy Support Instrument
PTIP	Triennial Public Investment Plan
RBM	Results-Based Management
RCT	Randomized Controlled Trial
ReNSE	*Réseau Nigérien de Suivi*-Evaluation (Niger Monitoring and Evaluation Network)
RNA	*Régénération Naturelle Assistée* (Natural Assisted Regeneration)
ROE	Research on evaluation
ROSELT	*Réseau d'Observatoires de Suivi Ecologique à Long*-Terme (Network of Observatories of long-term ecological monitoring)
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SBS	Sector Budget Support
SCA	*Stratégie Accélérée de* Croissance (Accelerated Growth Strategy)
SD	Sustainable Development
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SDC	Sub-Dimensions checklist
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SenEval	Senegalese Evaluation Network (currently Association)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIEF	*Système d'Information Ecologique, Forestier et* Pastoral (Ecological, Forest and Pastoral Information System)
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SNIF/SLM	Strategic National Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management
SNU	*Système des Nations Unies* (United Nations system)
SSA	Sub-Saharan African
SWA	Sector-Wide Approach
SWC	Soil and Water conservation
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
TIPA	Techno-Agriculture Innovation for Poverty Alleviation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCAD	University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar
UEMOA	*Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest*-africaine (West African Economic and Monetary Union)
UN	United Nations
UNCCC	United Nations Climate Change Convention
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UPC	University Polytechnic de Catalonia
USD	United States Dollars
USAID	United States Aid Agency
VOPE	Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluators
WB	World Bank
WDI	World Development Indicators
WOCAT	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies
Wula Nafaa	Agriculture -Natural Resources Management program (benefits of the forest in Mandinka language)
WWF	World Wild Fund

GLOSSARY

- **Accountability-oriented evaluation:** evaluation whose main purpose is informing citizens, tax payers or donors about the results of an intervention.
- **Attribution**: the ascription of a causal link between observed changes and a specific intervention.
- **Baseline**: analysis escribing the situation prior to an intervention, against which progress can be assessed of comparisons made.
- **Beneficiaries**: the individuals, groups or organizations that benefit directly or indirectly from the intervention.
- **Capitalization**: process by which implicit (or tacit) knowledge is made explicit and shared widely. It encompasses not only the assessment of experiences and lessons learned, but also the sharing and dissemination of good practices and their adoption, adaptation and application. Capitalization is the passage from experience to shareable knowledge.
- **Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) or Reference Group:** the group of key stakeholders to guide the evaluation process. Their main roles and responsiblities are to define the profile and competencies of the evaluation manager; to review the draft ToR; to assist in collecting required data; to oversee progress and conduct of the evaluation; and to review the draft evaluation report to ensure quality standards. Some donors called them "Joint Evaluation Partnership"
- **Desertification**: land degradation in arid, semiarid and dry sub-humid areas whose origin is not related to observed cyclic oscillations of vegetation productivity at desert fringes caused by climate fluctuations
- **Drylands**: areas with an aridity index value of less than 0.65 (ratio of mean annual precipitation to mean annual evaporative demand).
- **Evaluand**: the subject of an evaluation, typically a programme or a project in the context of aid development evaluation.
- **Evaluation**: the systematic determination of the merit, worth and/or significance of an evaluand, the programme, initiative or intervention that is being evaluated.
- **Evaluation Capacity Development**: process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain their evaluation capacity over time.
- **Evaluation practice**: the planned and actual evaluations, considering their institutional context, the main stakeholders involved and their capacities and the systems used to promote, conduct and use evaluations.
- ***Expost* evaluation**: the evaluation conducted at least five years after project completion.
- **Impact**: long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. For this study, impacts encompass both social and economic betterment of population and the improvement in the overall stae of ecosystems and natural resource base.
- **Land**: the physical environment, including climate, relief, soils, hydrology and vegetation, to the extent that these influence potential for land use. Land is a complex resource composed primarily of soil, water and biodiversity.
- **Land degradation**: reduction or loss of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of rain-fed cropland, irrigated cropland, or range, pasture, forest and woodlands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from land uses or from a process or combination of processes, including processes arising from human activities and habitation patterns.
- **Logical framework (logframe):** approach to improve the design of projects. It involves identifying inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts and their causal relationships, indicators and assumtpions and risks. It is related to Results-Based Management.
- **Meta-analysis:** statistical procedure for comparing findings of quantitative evaluations, to estimate the overall effect or effectiveness of similar programmes.
- **Meta-evaluation**: the evaluation of evaluations, the systematic review of evaluations to determine the quality of their processes and findings and the assessment of the role of evaluation.
- **Monitoring**: the set of activities involving internal checking and adjustment undertaken during the implementation of a project.
- **Narrative**: historically grounded and culturally constructed paradigm that describes a problem and prescribes its solution.
- **Natural Resources Management**: sustainable utilization of natural resources such as land, water, air, minerals, forests, fisheries and wild flora and fauna.
- **Outcome**: the short- and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs, capturing the utilization of goods and services of a project or programme.

- **Output**: products, capital goods and services that result from a development internvention, including changes caused by the intervention which were relevant to the eachievement of outcomes.
- Participatory evaluation: evaluation where representatives of different types of stakeholders work together in designing, carrying out and interpreting an evaluation.
- **Sahel**: 200-400 km long zone, around 2 million km2, located 15° North Latitude in Sub-Saharan Africa, the broad strip of semi-arid, sparse savannah immediately South of the Sahara Desert, the area between the 200 and 600 mm isohyets stretching from Mauritania to Chad.
- **Stakeholders**: agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development interventions or its evaluation.
- **Sustainable Development**: development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Sustainable Land Management:** the use of land resources according to defined objectives in order to fulfil social and individual needs without depleting its productivity.
- **Systematic review:** use of rigorous peer review protocol to synthesize the results emerging from different high quality studies.
- **Systematization**: participatory evaluation process that fosters people' critical reflection on of development experiences, turning the lessons into new and explicit knowledge which in turn can inform a new round of practice and be communicated to others who may also benefit from it.
- **Terms of Reference:** document presenting the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the methods to be used, the resources and time allocated and reporting requirements.
- **VOPE (Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluators)**: regional or national-level civil society organizations, formal or informal societies, associations or networks of members from governments, academia, NGOs, consultancies with the common interest in promoting the production and utilization of evaluation.

Source: (OECD, 2002) and adapation of several sources included in the main text of this study.

0. Introduction

0.1. Needs for research and current state-of-the-art

Limited Research on Evaluation.

Evaluation is the systematic determination of the merit, worth and/or significance of an evaluand, the programme, initiative or intervention that is being evaluated (Scriven, 1991). For this research, evaluation was defined as any study commissioned to assess the worth and merit of an intervention (in this case a policy, a programme or a project) conducted by actors external to its design and implementation. Evaluating entails the collection, analysis and systematic assessment of information according to certain criteria and questions.

It is a rich discipline and practice and has frequently been related to "monitoring" in the Project Cycle Management associated with the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), and particularly most recently with Results-Based Management (RBM). The concept of "monitoring" is usually understood as the set of activities involving internal checking and adjustment undertaken during the implementation of a project, and it is related to programme management.

"Evaluation" is conceived many times as the external or internal assessment of the overall results and impacts after the completion of an intervention, although it can also encompass other focus beyond results. It always involves a critical reflection beyond management. Evaluation can also be conducted at mid-term and has evolved and diversified in order to adjust to the needs of different audiences. For the purposes of this research, "evaluation practice" has been defined as the planned and actual evaluations, considering their institutional context, the main stakeholders involved and their capacities and the systems used to promote, conduct and use evaluations.

The discipline of evaluation as it is conceived today, originated in the USA, Canada, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Although it is generally conceived as a mainly practical discipline, it has largely evolved and been professionalized (and in some contexts, institutionalized) over the last thirty years (IPDET, n.d.). Evaluation is a relatively young field with very diverse options and applications in which there is little consensus to constrain practice. However, various evaluation theorists have pled for more empirical knowledge of evaluation to explain the nature of evaluation practice ((G. T. Henry, 2001); (Christie, 2003)).

"Research on evaluation" (RoE) is the empirical research on the practice, methods and profession of programme evaluation. This includes case studies, reflective narratives, and studies of evaluation methods, literature reviews, oral histories, bibliometric studies, meta-evaluations, experiments, time-series studies, and simulations. There is a serious shortage of rigorous and systematic evidence that can guide evaluation or that evaluators can use for self-reflection (G. T. Henry & Mark, 2003). Others highlight the use of the empirical study of evaluation practice to refine it, develop alternative approaches to evaluation, and increased understanding of the influence of context on the nature of evaluation practice. Existing studies have investigated the link between theoretical issues and practice, with a strong focus on evaluation utilization. Few have attempted to encompass a broad array of evaluation practices (Christie, 2003).

There is a key difference between different synthesis methodologies related to evaluation. On one hand, meta-analysis, research synthesis or systematic reviews are focused on learning from the findings of evaluations. These three methodologies aim to synthesize what works, where, how and why, with consideration to the quality of the evidence provided (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011). On the other hand, Meta-evaluation (MEv) is focused on learning about evaluation itself in a systematic way. It aims to learn from evaluative processes to improve the quality of evaluation itself and/or of the evaluation function within the policy, programme or project cycle. There are

two main functions of MEv. The theoretical function is the methodological assessment of the role of evaluation, while the practical function is concerned within the evaluation of specific evaluative performances ((Scriven, 1969); (Wingate, 2009)).

It is possible to find an extensive literature and practice relating to synthesis methodologies focused on evaluation findings and about the practical function of MEv as a quality control process. In the present study, the theoretical function of MEv is used (Scriven, 1969) to assess the role of evaluation for management purposes within a concrete policy sector, its adequacy and opportunity (Bustelo, 2002). An ascriptive MEv (Scriven, 2012) is proposed for research purposes in order to enlarge the evaluative knowledge for benefit of the discipline and to improve the evaluation function.

Little research on evaluation in developing contexts, worse situation in Francophone Africa.

Evaluation practice in developing countries has been actively promoted within the development agenda in recent decades, with a focus that has followed the aid assistance trends over time. The emergence of "evidence-based" policy making and a growing pressure from civil society organizations has reinforced the need to better evaluate aid development. Debates concerning International Development Evaluation (IDE) have paralleled those concerning evaluation in general, with the additional challenges arising from developing environments, which are usually characterized by low institutional, technical and financial capacities (Segone, 2006). IDE mainly evolved from the practice of Technical and Financial Partners or donors, and with a certain degree of influence from the evaluation practices of colonial powers.

Responding to the Paris Declaration (2005), the Accra Agenda for Action (2009) and the Bussan Global Partnership for Effective Cooperation (2011), the evaluation policies and practices of donors and multilateral agencies have sought to evolve towards strengthening National Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems, sector-wide evaluations and Country-Led Evaluation (CLE). This new scenario is usually characterized by governments determining which evaluations will be carried out, managing and implementing them This is in line with the definition of evaluation capacities: the ability of people and organizations to define and achieve their evaluation objectives at individual and organizational levels enabled by a supportive environment to foster demand, supply and use of evaluation ((OECD, 2006); (OECD, 2011); (Segone, 2013)).

In recent decades, capacity building activities to improve the functioning of institutions, practices and competencies has centred the agenda of the majority of the development actors in Africa, with the aim of improving governance and the overall effectiveness of aid development (Lom, 2009). The initial focus on the short-term training of individuals especially in government positions has now been superseded, at least in the discourse, by the more comprehensive and contextually relevant concept of Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) which is related to national development processes (Tarsilla, 2012). ECD is the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain their evaluation capacity over time.

The debate around the challenge of integrating the evaluation needs of donors, partner countries and beneficiaries has been vigorous. In general, a recurrent critique of evaluation in Africa is that it has mainly been focused on the project-level and taken the form of donors-oriented accountability evaluations. The need to strengthen national evaluation systems and policies, and to integrate evaluation into the legislative framework has been recurrent.

Moreover, the main evaluation classifications oversaw the timid theoretical developments from the Global South (Carden & Alkin, 2012). It is acknowledged that the roots of most of the evaluation practice commonly used in developing contexts had been laid down by aid organizations from the North, but they also identified some as "indigenous methodologies" (developed in the Global South and evolved beyond the direct influence of the donor community).

Two of these are analysed in this research: the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM, proposed by the New Partnership for African Development) and "*sistematización*" (emerged in Latin America and related to the "capitalization" approaches used in Francophone Africa).

The need to develop an indigenous evaluation capacity and to promote the organic emergence of M&E models based on the experience of Africans using their values and contexts has also been recurrently included in recommendations of continental ECD events ((AfrEA, 1999); (Patel, 2002);(AfrEA, 2007b)). However, despite some notable efforts, credible indigenous ways of thinking and carrying out evaluation are still to emerge (Gariba & Hoop, 2012); (Traore & Wally, 2013)

The scant amount of peer-reviewed literature on evaluation is considerably greater when it comes to evaluating public policy evaluation in developed countries. The bulk of information about evaluation practice in developing contexts is grey literature, which is usually funded by donors or think tanks, and more focused on offering specific solutions for a concrete project or programme evaluation than developing theoretically evaluation practice. For instance, it was just not until recently that the first issue of the journal of the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) was published. This publication aimed to capture the large body of critical reflection, theoretical and practical knowledge relating to the field of evaluation in Africa and to develop a culture of peer-reviewed publication in African evaluation (Abrahams & Nkamleu, 2013).

The lack of research on evaluation is even more pronounced in Francophone Africa than in other developing contexts. In spite of its continental nature, the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) created in 1999 was mainly promoted by Anglophone African countries and the language barrier has been difficult to overcome. The relatively backward state of evaluation in Francophone African countries has been reiteratedly denounced in events to promote evaluation culture and evaluation capacities. Various Francophone ECD events have tried to address this problem, with noticeable examples being the PIFED (*Programme international de formation en évaluation du développement) evaluation course*, the creation of the Francophone Evaluation Network and the recent celebration of the First Francophone Evaluation Forum (FIFE), at the end of 2014.

Challenges of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) evaluation in the Sahel.

The development of conceptual and applied evaluation in Natural Resource Management (NRM) interventions has been more limited than in other sectors such as education or health (Rowe, 2012). The more technically sophisticated research on ecological functions has not been linked to NRM project interventions, and their evaluations. Important data gaps and scientific evidence related to NRM interventions are widely recognised. For instance, data on soil carbon flux and drylands' soil microbes, poverty-environment relationships and their effects on carbon mitigation strategies are still uncertain.

Approaches and measures for Sustainable Development (SD) evaluation are contested although it is gradually accepted the need to include a multi-level and multi-dimensional analysis encompassing social, economic and environmental systems and appropriate time horizon and geographical scope. This involves several challenges endorsed by research ((Pintér, Hardi, Martinuzzi, & Hall, 2012); (FAO, 2013a); (Swartzendruber, 2015)): the difficulties to encompass the inter- and transdisciplinary nature of NRM interventions; the trouble of setting agreed goals and definitions, incorporating inherent uncertainty (rethinking attribution/contribution); the epistemological dilemmas, including the practicality of methods and tools; the need to consider simultaneously and weight multiple systems (the environment, the economy and society); the urgency to include values of different stakeholders; the difficulties to deal with different time and space scales and the scant quality and quantity of data and information.

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) has been portrayed as a solution against desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) in the Sahel, the broad strip of semi-arid, sparse savannah immediately South of the Sahara Desert. Land degradation is the reduction of land capacity to provide ecosystem goods and services, especially in semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, while desertification is the long-term process of land degradation in drylands resulting from climatic variations and human activities. The dynamic connections between land, climate and biodiversity are widely recognised (UNCCD, 2013b). Initiatives associated to the promotion of land conservation and measures against desertification, climate change adaptation, organic farming and similar are labelled by donors as SLM, Local Climate Change Adaptation (LCCA) or Natural Resource Management (NRM). The study proposed to use SLM to encompass all these Sustainable Development initiatives.

The majority of the Sahelian countries have cumulated a good array of SLM experiences, some more isolated or localized, others covering more extensive areas, some endogenous, others exogenous and even mixed, but little is known about their effectiveness. Senegal is a Western Sahel country with a long coastline and most of its surface in a climatic zone prone to DLDD where lots of funding and SLM initiatives have been promoted from different strands. The evaluation of SLM in Senegal is studied to encompass the main Sustainable Development evaluation challenges.

The institutional administrative supervision of SLM in Senegal, as in many other countries, is not clear. Competencies are shared between the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment-Forestry, Livestock, and other public or private sector actors. This is exacerbated by a donor-led sector, dispersed in discrete short-term Project interventions with low level of coordination. This also entails threats for SLM public policy evaluation blockages of transdisciplinarity (Baslé, 2013) emerging from the fact of SLM being divided between different sector domains and disciplines, each of them using its own paradigms, evaluative approaches and measures of success. Moreover, it also makes difficult the complementarity and integration of evaluation results from projects to the policy-level ((MEPN, 1998); (Swartzendruber, 2015)).

Some scattered academic literature can be found about complementary and sometimes conflicting understanding around the science of ecological and social systems in the Sahel. The analysis of the concept and proposed solutions to DLDD in Sahel drylands, from the first debates during colonial times around the encroachment of Sahara's desert, until the most recent ones that propose targets of «land degradation neutrality», shed light about different schools of thought around this subject. A "narrative" is conceived as a historically grounded and culturally constructed frame that describes a problem and prescribes its solution (Reenberg, 2012). Some examples of "degradation narratives" are related to the links between poverty and population pressures and environmental degradation.

Some of the "received wisdom" about socioecological dynamics in this context is under revision. Counter-narratives ask for reviewing causes, measures of severity, consequences and solutions of DLDD. They propose more site-specific research on the interaction of biophysical dynamics and farming systems, focusing on the continuous evolution of livelihood strategies and local knowledge ((Blaikie, 1987); (Leach & Mearns, 1996); (Reij, 2001); (Sullivan & Rohde, 2002); (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003)).

These debates influenced the international proposals around DLDD and the national response in terms of governance and policy arrangements and the associated aid development interventions. The gaps in the evidence about long-term ecological and social trends and the uncertainty around climate change science also pose extra challenges in the determination of definitions and goals of DLDD betterment and around the attribution question. It is difficult to decouple climate change risks and impacts from those associated with other stress or drivers ((UNDP, 2007); (Bours, McGinn, & Pringle, 2013)).

Most of the M&E of SLM projects have been focused on financial indicators and the monitoring of timely delivery of outputs (e.g. "running kilometres" of conservation structures built; number of tree seedlings raised in nurseries). Output-focused and logframe-based evaluations are criticized from scientific strands as being insufficient to capture SLM objectives. The assessment of the ecological, social and economic impacts through methods for the valuation of ecosystem services is proposed, including visual coverage analysis (Liniger, 2007).

Other theorists and practitioners proposed the use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators with narrative information that can link projects to long term social or institutional processes ((UNDP, 2007); (Bours et al., 2013)). Similarly, the use of proxy measures or markers of progress toward vulnerability reduction and increased adaptive capacity has been recently discussed, combining historical experience, stakeholder engagement, consideration of implications of a range of climate change scenarios, and attention to the social, political, economic, environmental and cultural constraints. This is especially relevant when "adaptation baselines" are changing because climate hazards are evolving[1] (UNDP, 2007). The limits of methodologies developed from a single discipline in relation to the dynamics of nested or interacting systems which function at different scales of time and space are generally recognised in the literature (Swartzendruber, 2015).

Over these more technical debates of environmental evaluation, arguments about the legitimacy and credibility of evidence and knowledge in evaluation are more centred in epistemological stances. Positivist approaches are proposed by some to ensure evidence-based programme evaluation, calling for "counterfactual thinking" in environmental policy (Ferraro, 2009). Others disagree about the suitability of those approaches for the environmental sector, where is very difficult to "control" for some important external factors the complex environmental programmes ((Vanden-Berg, 2012); (Rodrik 2008, Ravallion 2009, Donaldson et al 2009) in (Swartzendruber, 2015)).

Other authors recommend participatory approaches because of their inclusiveness and capacity to capture complex social dynamics and raising alternative types of knowledge. NRM evaluation sails from efforts to harmonize and foster scientific rigor to more locally-relevant approaches trying to capture the complexities of development processes and their environment.

Sustainable development involves interaction between three different domains: the environment, the economy and the society (Vanden-Berg, 2012). Other authors have conceptualized this as a dual evaluand (Rowe, 2012): human and natural systems. This requires encompassing all of them during an evaluation and finding ways to weight their relative importance. Another challenge in Sustainable Development evaluation is related to the inclusion of different values from different stakeholders. The discourse at different strands calls for the need of involving land users in M&E of these interventions. This is also portrayed as an opportunity to raise key information about the effectiveness of local conservation practices, land management innovations and traditional land use systems over environmental and development benefits (Liniger, 2007).

Nevertheless, the current mainstream project evaluation practice finds difficulties to go beyond the scientific evidence and value local experience and knowledge. This is claimed by civil society organizations working with rural grassroots and farmers groups on NRM in West Africa and in Senegal. They propose learning-oriented evaluative approaches, like capitalization, to learn from experiences of field actors.

This evaluation practice has been poorly researched and shared beyond grassroots-level development practitioners. There is an interesting bulk of guides and practical examples, but very limited theoretical development. Capitalization is a recent practice (at least in a systematic way

1 For example, a project to improve crop yields that results in no increase in yield might actually have prevented a fall in yield that would otherwise have occurred due to changes in temperature, rainfall, or climatic variability.

and in Francophone contexts) used as a catch-all term promoted to document the learning emerging from actors' experiences, and sometimes their practices (Didier, 2010). The need to theoretically develop these approaches practised in West Africa is acknowledged by various experts and practitioners. This should promote a dialogue with the evaluation discipline and contribute to the bulk of evaluative knowledge.

One of the most commonly mentioned challenges in the literature when evaluating Sustainable Development interventions is related to the limited time period of those interventions in relation to environmental and socioeconomic dynamics ((UNDP, 2007); (Bours et al., 2013)). Project evaluations are usually bounded to the implementation period of those interventions and face real challenges to capture effects in the three SD dimensions over longer periods of time (Bours et al., 2013). Literature recommends to break out the typical three-year project cycle and commit to longer time frames, including a clear strategy to sustain results beyond the project.

A similar problem is found in relation to the geographical influence of discrete projects in relation to wider landscape dynamics. Partnership need to be developed between the various SLM interventions of different agencies to foster synergy of efforts and cost-effectiveness (Liniger, 2007). While economy and society operation in similar time and geographical scales; the environment has a longer time horizon and its geographical boundaries tend not to match jurisdictions, posing specific challenges (Vanden-Berg, 2012). Scientific endeavours try to foster the assessment of effects of SLM interventions both on-site and off- site (Liniger, 2007), while environmental applied research is identified as the potential technical platform for long-term monitoring of key NRM variables and to solve the scant availability and quality of data (Swartzendruber, 2015), and establish the causal linkages where appropriate, especially on the environmental side (Vanden-Berg, 2012).

Senegal, like other developing countries, has been part of global efforts to improve environmental monitoring, for instance the time series and remote sensing to assess land-cover change, deforestation and other key environmental indicators ((CSE, 2005); (CSE, 2010)). Some authors have also proposed research on long-term environmental change in the Sahel as part of the counter-narratives of "Regreening the Sahel")(Reij & Steeds, 2003); (C. Dieng et al., 2008); (Botoni & Reij, 2009)) and others are documenting local SLM initiatives worldwide ((Liniger, 2007); (WOCAT, 2011)).

Most SLM actions in Senegal have been conducted within the framework of discrete development programmes and actions promoted by the international donor community. This is identified as a challenge for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the investments because they are spread in different sectors (MEPN, 1998) and there are difficulties of coordination emerging from the reluctance of some international cooperation partners to report their work to national authorities (World Bank, 2008).

The absence of a strategic monitoring and evaluation framework and limited exchanges between aid project development evaluation and applied environmental research limits the ability of institutions and donors to measure the effectiveness of policies and programmes that aim to improve the state of the environment (CSE, 2005). Policy-level evaluations on SLM are inexistent in Senegal, and very heterogeneous and non-conclusive country-level evaluation is still too timid to inform policy making. Even long-term SLM endeavours have only been evaluated through discrete project-level evaluations according to donors' cycles. There is urgent need to study all these scattered streams of theoretical and applied research and practice related to SLM evaluation practice in Senegal, within the trends towards fostering national-led evaluation and the specific challenges of Sustainable Development evaluation in developing contexts.

0.2. Objectives and scope of the research

This research pretends to enlarge the body of evaluative knowledge and to reveal the main strengths and challenges of the real-world evaluation practice of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) initiatives in Senegal. Three research questions (and subquestions) guided the study. Chapter 2 further defines the hypothesis and assumptions for each research subquestion and the methodology proposed to tackle them.

Research question 1: To what extent the practice of SLM evaluation in Senegal satisfies the requirements of sound evaluation (question of "merit") and meets various audiences' needs (question of "worth")?

1.1. What is the current state of evaluation practice in Senegal, including its enabling environment, institutional framework and main stakeholders and their capacities, with special emphasis on SLM evaluation?
1.2. What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the designs and processes of real-world SLM evaluations in Senegal?
1.3. What are the types and levels of participation of different stakeholders involved in the evaluation of SLM interventions in Senegal? To what extent could evaluation practice become more inclusive in the future?

Research question 2: What are the proposals from different evaluation actors in Senegal to solve SLM evaluation challenges identified in the literature?

2.1. What is the influence of different narratives over the conceptualization of DLDD and over the policy-making and evaluation practice in Senegal?
2.2. What are the main proposals identified by SLM evaluations in Senegal in relation to the specific challenges of evaluating NRM (natural resources management) interventions of the literature?

Research question 3: To what extent and for what purposes have SLM evaluations in Senegal been utilized to inform public policy-making and aid development effectiveness?

3.1: Who are the main evaluation users of SLM evaluation practice and what types of utilization do they privilege?
3.2: What is the real current level of evaluation utilization and to what extent is it possible to identify a trend towards more country-led evaluation use in Senegal?

The study targeted evaluations of interventions entailing field SLM activities focused on the desertification-prone areas of Senegal, released after 2000 and conducted by external or mixed teams. Different types of evaluative exercises were found: 40 project-level evaluations, 9 capitalizations and 7 country-level evaluations. The evaluation of the evaluations (meta-evaluation, MEv) was proposed to shed light about the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation practice and function in the SLM sector in Senegal, to tailor evaluation capacity programmes and to identify creative approaches to evaluation improvement. MEv is in line with the research purpose of improving the quality of evaluative knowledge emerging from diverse commissioners and service providers contributing to the bulk of "Research on evaluation".

Experience capitalization (*capitalization d'expériences* in French) has also been used to evaluate SLM interventions in Senegal for the past decades. Capitalization, conceived as evaluative exercises focused on local stakeholders' experiences and linked to organizational learning, is not well known in evaluation literature and by evaluation practitioners. The different nature of capitalizations in relation to regular project evaluations required an additional research line. A complementary analytical framework for them was proposed from the review of the scattered bibliography and discussions with experts and practitioners (Delphi methodology).

The MEv analytical framework was applied to the 40 project evaluation reports and to 3 in-depth case studies where interviews with key stakeholders of those three project evaluation processes were analysed along with complementary documents. They were purposefully chosen to document three different evaluation arrangements in Senegal and to explore the advances towards national evaluation capacities' development. The first case study was evaluated by the donor with limited participation of national partners. The second evaluation was managed by the Ministry of Environment of Senegal with limited intervention of the donor and other national institutions. Finally, the third case studywas an evaluation whose management was delegated to the central Planning Unit of the Ministry of Economy who chaired an Evaluation Steering Committee, following national execution procedures.

0.3. Structure of the thesis

This dissertation consists of five chapters plus this introduction. After the description of the general ecological and geographical context of the research (Sahelian drylands) and the main theoretical debates around desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) as a solution, Chapter 1 discusses basic data about terrestrial ecosystems and socioeconomic data, as well as the main types and extent of land degradation in Senegal according to key documents, especially the National Action Programme to combat desertification. This allowed to frame the study within the broader theoretical and political debates in the international arena. The chapter continues with the analysis of the enabling environment, institutional framework and stakeholders' capacities for evaluation in Senegal based on the scattered practice promoted by donors, national authorities or civil society organizations, Evaluation Capacities Development (ECD) efforts and the recent trend towards national evaluation capacities' agenda. The chapter finishes presenting the specific developments in SLM evaluation practice promoted from aid development interventions and parallel endeavours to improve the knowledge base in this sector.

Chapter 2 presents the key research questions and hypotheses, the scope of the study and overall methodology (including sources of information, data collection and analysis methods). It firstly justifies the choice of the theoretical framework of the study: Meta-evaluation, and distinguish it from other evaluation synthesis methodologies. The original tailored proposal to meta-evaluate evaluations of SLM initiatives conducted in Senegal is presented, taking stock of theoretical definitions, standards and checklists and the actual practice of MEv in aid development evaluation. The distinctive nature of SLM capitalizations in Senegal is discussed in order to propose a complementary analytical framework to apprehend those evaluative exercises.

Chapter 3 presents the findings emerging from the use of the Meta-evaluation analytical framework to the reports of 40 SLM project evaluations and 9 capitalizations conducted in Senegal since 2000. The first section is focused on the analysis of the designs, processes, results and utilization of project evaluations using the MEv framework, followed by the results about the capitalizations. The chapter closes taking stock of those findings with a comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation practice of SLM in Senegal. Chapter 4 complements this analysis with stakeholders' perceptions and the analysis of additional documents for three case studies. This offered additional insights about the context and prompted the reflection about the main challenges of real-world evaluation practice of SLM interventions in Senegal.

Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions including the main knowledge gaps and the importance of the research. Empirical findings are presented in relation to the three main research questions and the theoretical and policy implications are discussed. Finally, future research work that will complement this study is described.

Chapter 1: Sustainable Land Management (SLM) evaluation in Senegal

1.1. Land degradation and desertification in the international arena.

1.1.1. Sahelian drylands: vulnerable ecosystems and vulnerable population

More than 2 billion people in nearly 100 countries live in drylands, which cover about 40 percent of the world's land surface. They encompass a wide variety of environments, including sandy deserts, temperate grasslands and savannah woodlands ((UNCCD, 2011); (INP, 2012)). Drylands are defined as areas with an aridity index value of less than 0.65, which is defined as the ratio of mean annual precipitation to mean annual evaporative demand. Scarcity of water constrains their major services: primary production and nutrient cycling (Safriel & Adeel, 2006 in (Zähringer, 2010).

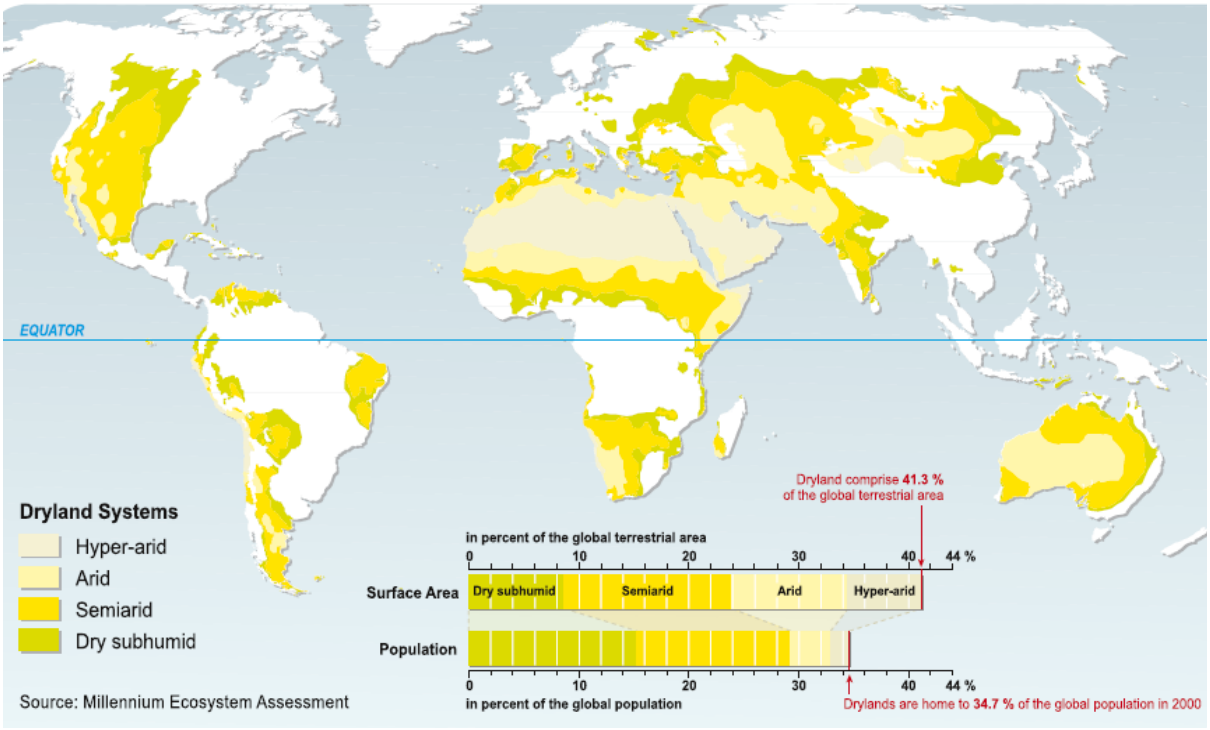


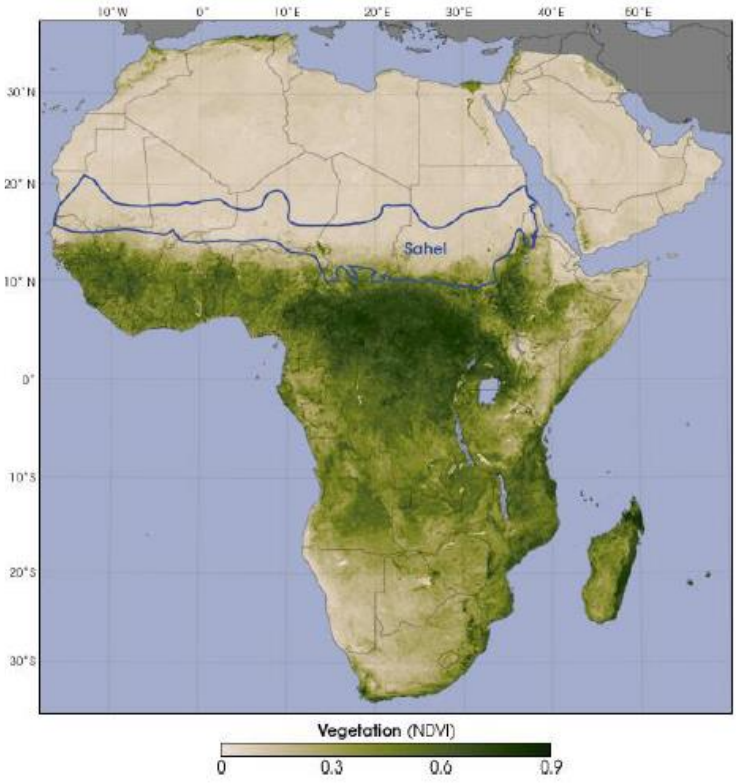
Figure 1. Distribution of world drylands. Source : (UNCCD, 2011)**(page 17).**

Drylands are usually classified into four categories: hyper arid, arid, semiarid and dry subhumid. They are found on every continent but are most extensive in Asia and Africa, with 34.36% and 24.15% respectively of the total world 53 million km^2 (Koohafkan, 2008).

Some 66% of the global dryland area is used for livestock production (pastoral communities), the rest are marginal rain-fed croplands (Kellner, Risoli, & Metz, 2011). It has been claimed that most of the global poverty occurs in drylands (Safriel & Adeel, 2008 in UNCCD, 2011), and that the population growth rates are high in these regions (Reenberg, 2012). Drylands are home to about one third of the world's human population. Drylands are fragile ecosystems and its people are extremely vulnerable to environmental and global change. Moreover, most of the rural poor live in areas where natural resources are overexploited and rapidly degrading (UNEP, 2004); (UNCCD, 2011).

Half of all drylands inhabitants are poor, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index and findings from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. For instance, higher figures of infant mortality rate are observed in drylands in relation to other ecosystems. They are called by the United Nations as the "forgotten billion" (UNCCD, 2011). The main discourse in the international arena considers the management of dryland environments as one of the most challenging and pressing development problems of today.

About 40% of Sub-Saharan Africa is covered by drylands, in which 206 million people or 36% of the total population lives. Poverty levels are extremely high—the average Human Development Index in Sub-Saharan African countries that have large dryland areas is as low as 0.35. Agriculture-poverty–environment linkages are particularly important in the semi-arid lowlands of West Africa, known as the Sahel, due to the sensitive environments and extreme poverty levels. The traditional parkland system (integrated crop-tree-livestock systems) is predominant to provide food, nutrition, income, and environmental services (UNEP, 2004).



In Arabic, "Sahel" means the shore, the edge, the fringe or the border. It is a 200-400 km long zone, around 2 million km^2, located 15° North Latitude in Sub-Saharan Africa (OCDE-CILSS, 1984). The Sahel is the "the broad strip of semi-arid, sparse savannah immediately South of the Sahara Desert" (NASA, n.d.). Climatically, it is the area between the 200 and 600 mm isohyets[2] stretching from Mauritania to Chad (ECOWAS & SWAC-OECD, 2006). It is an autonomous ecological and climatic"region with a herbaceous steppe zone to the North, the Sahel (forested steppe) and shrubby savannah to the South (OCDE-CILSS, 1984). The seasonal vegetation patterns have been studied using GIS satellite (Tappan, 2011), and the greenness or vegetation index (NDVI) and depicted in maps like the one opposite.

Figure 2. The Sahel. Source: (Riebeek, 2007)

Recent research on economics of land degradation propose to overcome the use of remotely sensed-global normalized differences in the vegetation index (NDVI) by other indicators encompassing spatial and economic analysis, like "degrading and improving agricultural land" comparing the net primary productivity from 1981 to 2000 (Barbier & Hochard, 2014).

The Sahel as an ecosystem and geographical unit has undergone tremendous fluctuations of rainfall throughout historical times ((UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003); (Olsson, Eklundh, & Ardo, 2005)). Documents from the colonial period (European trade posts by the West African coast and African chronicles) show dramatic droughts for the past centuries (Naudet, 1998). Today it is known that extreme and prolonged droughts are an inherent feature of this environment. For instance, data show that the mean rainfall decreased 25% to 40% in the Sahel between 1931 – 1960 and 1968 – 1997 (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003).

From the 1970's, the idea that fighting desertification requires trans-sectorial action and subregional synergies promoted the creation of subregional institutions, like the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) (MEPN, 1998). The CILSS was formed in 1973 to foster cooperation on Natural Resources Management (NRM) by nine countries: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal (Naudet, 1998). The OCDE also created the Club of Sahel for West Africa in 1976. It produced interesting documents and reflections

2 Isohyets are lines drawn through geographical points recording equal amounts of precipitation during a specific period.

about the aid to the Sahel and its socio-ecological evolution that have created powerful images of the Sahel which are still pervasive:

"In 1968, the Sahelian region of West Africa was severely hit by a serious drought. The entire world was touched about the tragedies caused by this: disease and starvation for 25 million people, and the disruption of economic and social order in the region. Despite ambitious assistance programmes, the mortality rate steadily worsened. The basic resources of the region were thus severely deteriorated"
(OCDE-CILSS, 1984)

The West African Sahel has experienced the most substantial decline in rainfall recorded in the world since measurements began in the late 1800s (30-40% over the last 3 decades). The period from 1972 to 1984 has been marked by a succession of very dry years (Nicholson, 2000 in (Zähringer, 2010). The effects of the severe drought in 1983–1984 were documented using satellite showing a marked southward shift on the edge of the desert. On top of this adverse climatic conditions, over-cultivation, overgrazing and excessive exploitation of wood fuel have repeatedly been invoked as the causes of vegetation change in Sahel ((UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003); (Ariori & Ozer, 2005)).

1.1.2. Land degradation and desertification: definitions and narratives.

"Land degradation" is usually defined in the mainstream fora as the reduction or loss of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of rain-fed cropland, irrigated cropland, or range, pasture, forest and woodlands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from land uses or from a process or combination of processes, including processes arising from human activities and habitation patterns (Article 1 of the UNCCD and (UNEP, 2007). Another definition is "the reduction in the capacity of the land to provide ecosystem goods and services and assure its functions over a period of time for its beneficiaries" (Kellner et al., 2011). Water and wind erosion, sedimentation, crusting and hardsetting of soils, salinization and alkalinisation, and reduction in the amount or diversity of natural vegetation are the processes contributing or inducing land degradation (Dregne, 2002 in (Zähringer, 2010)).

The word "desertification" was mentioned for the first time by the French researcher Louis Lavauden in 1927 and was made popular by Andre Aubreville in the 1940s in relation to land degradation in the American Great Plains (Matallo-Junior, 2009). Desertification is usually conceptualized as land degradation in arid, semiarid and dry sub-humid areas whose origin is not related to observed cyclic oscillations of vegetation productivity at desert fringes caused by climate fluctuations (World Bank, 2006). Therefore, desertification is the long-term process of land degradation in drylands[3].

In West Africa, the concept of desertification emerged during the colonial rule, when the interpretation of some data pinpointed a trend towards the desiccation of the Sahel and the encroaching of the Sahara desert. Already in 1917, Hubert noted a decline in forest formations and soil fertility (Herrman & Hutchinson, 2005). In 1975 Lamprey mapped the desert boundary through a combination of reconnaissance flights and ground based surveys comparing them with a vegetation map of Sudan in 1958. He concluded that the Sahara had advanced 100 km between 1958 and 1975 (Helldén, 1988). It was during the 1970's when severe droughts and hunger cycles stroke the Sahel region and were highly mediatized. This captured the attention of the scientific community on desertification. By that time, desertification became a key issue represented by concerns about whether and how fast the Sahara was expanding, as well as clarifying the root causes (biophysical or caused by humans) (Reenberg, 2012).

The most recent debates around desertification as a global environmental challenge propose the concept of areas affected by DLDD (desertification, land degradation and drought[4]) and land degradation neutrality. Land degradation neutrality was proposed at Rio+20 as the balance between managing land

3 Recently efforts have been made to distinguish "desertification" from "desert encroachment" which is linked with the idea of the desert *trespassing* irreversibly upon green areas. Different thresholds of land degradation have been used in relation to the idea of irreversibility as the ultimate stage of degradation (which is desertification on a 25 years basis) (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003).
4 Drought is usually defined as the natural phenomenon when rainfall is below the recorded level (Barbier & Hochard, 2014).

more sustainably (prevention and reduction in the rate of degradation) and increasing the rate of restoration of degraded land (rehabilitation and reclamation of desertified land) (UNCCD, 2013b). DLDD has been included in various Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. SDG-15 includes various targets to protect, restore, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, combat desertification and halt land degradation and loss of biodiversity.[5]

These concepts and debates have been analysed through different lenses and narratives. A "narrative" is usually conceived as a historically grounded and culturally constructed paradigm that describes a problem and prescribes its solution. "Degradation narratives" have dominated the environmental international arena for the past decades. They are persistent environmental myths caused by the repetition of the keywords that turns theories into blueprints for action. In the Sahel, a number of narratives have become established truths beyond need for further documentation (Reenberg, 2012).

The narratives on desertification, human-induced climate change and land degradation in drylands, and more specifically for the Sahel, have fuelled different debates around the approaches to explain its causes and consequences. On one hand, the non-equilibrium approach focuses on the role of external disturbances such as annual rainfall and its variability. Arid lands are far-from-equilibrium systems, not controlled by internal regulatory mechanisms such as density or competition. On the other hand, the equilibrium approach favours anthropogenic pressures as the cause of degradation. Therefore, for its proponents, the greatest difficulty to assess land degradation in drylands is to separate the effect of human influence from the effect of inter annual climatic fluctuations. Most of the authors recognise that a decline in rainfall and an increase in human population occurred simultaneously in the Sahel during the last century. Therefore both approaches are important to explain the degradation of the ecosystems of the Sahel (Vincke et al., 2010 in Zähringer, 2010).

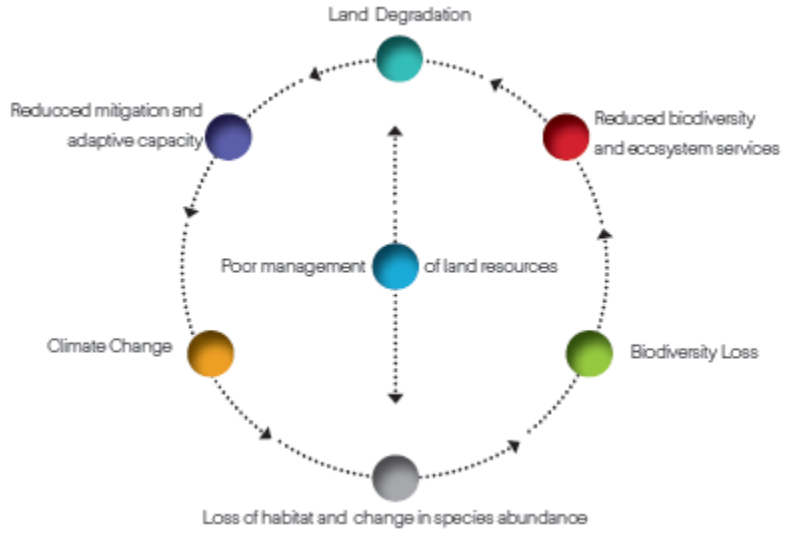
The most alarmist "degradation narratives" blame human misuse of the land as the root of the man-made deserts. They portray a hecatomb scenario where around 250 millions of people and 500 million hectares are affected by desertification and human-induced soil degradation in Africa, including 65% of the region's agricultural land.[6] Various efforts were made from the end of the 1980's to grasp the extent of soil degradation worldwide. The GLASOD (Global Assessment of Soil Degradation) map was produced based on 'expert opinion' and its objective was related to raise awareness about the scale of the problem. GLASOD supported the dominant environmental discourse about the widespread and pervasive spiral of land degradation, particularly in the developing world. According to these views, the major causes of land degradation in deserts were overgrazing, wood collection, deforestation and non-sustainable agricultural practices.

Another very popular narrative in the Sahel is related to the vicious circles of land degradation, population pressure and low rainfall which leads to excessive expansion of fields onto marginal lands, which in turn leads to irreversible degradation of the natural resource base, lower productivity, and need for larger areas to sustain the population (Reenberg, 2012), for instance :

"With an output rate of 1 ton/year, it would take Sahelian farmers in general, and Senegalese ones in particular, 100 years to produce 100 tons from a single hectare – unless they could extend their holdings to 100 ha by cutting down yet more trees". (Seck, Abou-Mamouda, & Wade, 2005)

A string of dry years and some ground studies had produced dramatic pictures of formerly productive lands reduced to apparent desert. Many people extrapolated from these local examples to propose that the whole Sahel was becoming a desert. According to this paradigm, desertification takes place mainly where agriculture and intensive grazing are the major source of local livelihoods. The loss of soil and vegetation cover leads to decline in the provision of ecosystem services and a rise in poverty. Additionally, the changes in land cover and soil are also linked to increased aridity as part of a negative feedback loop, a fact that makes desertification practically irreversible (UNEP, 2006).

5 http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1565 Accessed on November, 11, 1014.
6 (UNEP, 1991) and (UNCCD, 2003) in (Herrman & Hutchinson, 2005) and IFAD website accessed on May 12, 2014.



Recently, linkages between poverty and environmental degradation have been established: land degradation impairs food security, biodiversity and economic development, especially in lower income countries (SOW-VU, 2010). Land degradation is conceptualized both as a cause and as a consequence of climate change, through a feedback loop that relates land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change.

Figure 3. Feedback loops and the objectives of the Rio Conventions.
Source: (UNCCD, 2013b) **(page 9).**

At some strands, the official discourse on desertification seems to have shifted from blaming unsustainable local resources management to incapable resource stewards (Herrman & Hutchinson, 2005). Therefore, land degradation is conceived as the result of a carelessness or unavoidable struggle of vulnerable populations for survival needs in extremely fragile ecosystems (World Bank, 2006).

The desertification narrative defended by dominant views has been contested by scientific communities since the 1990s, with an emerging body of knowledge, the so-called "counter-paradigm" (Uriel & Adeel, 2005). A critical reflection on *received wisdom* has been proposed in order to avoid misinterpretation on the processes of change and their likely future directions ((Leach & Mearns, 1996); (Mortimore, 2005); (Mortimore et al., 2008)). The "counter-narratives" highlight the insufficient understanding about the climate, evolution of the environment and functioning of Sahel ecosystems and social systems ((OCDE-CILSS, 1984); (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003)). Therefore, causes, consequences and solutions of desertification and land degradation become more uncertain or even controversial. The conter-paradigm proponents argue that the evidence is not convincing and that there are serious difficulties in monitoring it by remote sensing. For them it is difficult to ascertain if apparent desertification trends are just short-term fluctuations in biomass production that will be later reversed by ecological resilience (Grainger, 2009).

More site-specific information on the interaction of biophysical dynamics (climate, soils, vegetation) and farming systems (production practices and risk management strategies) is needed in order to better understand land degradation processes in the Sahel (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003). Hence, it is imperative to unveil the complex relationships of people managing drylands ecosystems and the continuous evolution of livelihood strategies and local knowledge ((Blaikie, 1987); (Leach & Mearns, 1996); (Reij, 2001); (Sullivan & Rohde, 2002)). It is believed that the interaction of direct and indirect drivers combined with the local situation can create different outcomes and human response can counteract desertification (UNEP, 2006). This is exemplified below:

"*… Farmers and livestock producers possess the ability to manage their livelihoods under non-equilibrium conditions of variable rainfall, finite land resources and low bioproductivity, so they are less the helpless victims of environmental change than agents who try to make the best use of productive and investment opportunities"* (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003)

New conceptual ideas linking human adaptive capacity, vulnerability and resilience have emerged to understand change processes in human-environmental systems in marginal drylands (Reenberg, 2012)

and have to be incorporated into the desertification analysis (Bradley & Grainger, 2004). These authors define ecological resilience as the capability of an ecosystem or agro-ecosystem to tolerate and respond to biotic, abiotic and anthropogenic disturbances through adaptive responses. They also define social resilience as the ability of groups and individuals to tolerate and respond to environmental and socio-economic constraints through adaptive strategies. Improved understanding of how dryland ecosystems operate, including their variability as disequilibrium systems and the complex co-evolution of human and ecological systems in drylands are part of the most recent discourses (UNCCD, 2011).

One of the main communication tools of counter-narratives has been the concept of "Regreening the Sahel". It is related to recent findings showing a consistent trend of increasing vegetation "greenness" in much of the region during 1982-1999 and beyond (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003). This is echoed in several evaluations of environmental support in the region which attributed this to a combination of an overall increase in rainfall and the large scale adaptation of soil and water conservation techniques including the planting and protection of useful trees (Metameta-Management et al, 2008). The defenders of the counter-narratives think that this could challenge the narrative of Sahelian degradation, which has informed policy for the last few decades. The influence of past policies based on an equilibrium or recovery model may have done damage, and their influence in the recent greening and the earlier browning is questioned. For the proponents of these ideas, the solution to the environment and development challenges of the Sahel should be based in policies fostering participatory research and extension to harness local farmers' skills and innovation capacity (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003).

The study conducted in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal contributed to the "regreening" arguments (Botoni & Reij, 2009). It departed from the hypothesis that in spite of the pervasive perception of the Sahel as a zone in perpetual degradation, important investments in NRM and desertification fighting have been underestimated. It encompassed both public (governments, technical and financial partners) and private investments (NGOs and individual farmers). This study found that land restoration in the region contributed to increase agriculture yields, to improve food security, to recharge local phreatic water layers, to increase the number and productivity of trees and to slow down migration. The document highlighted the experience of natural assisted regeneration and agroforestry promoted by small farmers in Niger from 1985 in 5 million hectares. The study proposed to build on those successes in order to scale them up (Botoni & Reij, 2009). Similarly, long-term data sets (1960-2000) collected in three Sahelian countries[7], together with village-level field enquiries were used to construct profiles of change (UNEP/FAO/UNCCD, 2003). A simple theory of 'desertification' was found inadequate for understanding the complexity, diversity and flexibility of farmers' responses to change.

All this information has highly influenced the United Nations Conference to combat Desertification (UNCCD) and its further implementation at national and local levels (Kellner et al., 2011). The convention aimed to mitigate the effects of drought and desertification, particularly in Africa, framing poverty alleviation as a precondition[8]. The UNCCD entered into force at the end of 1996, having today 195 signatories (January 8, 2015). The Global Environment Facility (GEF)[9] and the Global Mechanism ensured the funds needed to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition for the implementation process. A number of environment related policy documents have been developed in order to adapt these global goals into national realities. Three of the main ones are National Environmental Action Plans (NEAP), National Action Programmes to Combat Desertification (PAN/LCD in French[10]), and National Climate Change Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA).

NEAPs aimed at conducting national environmental assessments to inform policy making and projects choice to solve environmental problems. PAN/LCD were derived from NEAPS as the main instrument for the implementation of the UNCCD at national level (UNCCD, 2007). Most African countries

7 Diourbel Region, Senegal; Maradi Department, Niger; and the Kano region, northern Nigeria.
8 www.unccd.int/en/pages/default.aspx (Accessed on May, 27, 2014).
9 Established in 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) unites 182 member governments and has partnership with 10 executing international institutions (for instance, the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP), and other nongovernmental and private sector actors.
10 Programme d'Action National de lutte contre la désertification, PAN/LCD, in French.

developed PAN/LCD in the 1980's and 1990's with support from international partners. According to (Reenberg, 2012), despite the ambitious point of departure, many of the plans boiled down to shopping lists of projects. Moreover the new theories of the counter paradigms were not fully taken into account. On the contrary, mainstream ideas were included: the equilibrium notion, the crisis narrative, the population-environment nexus and the shortage of land resources. More recently, Integrated National Financing Strategies (INFS) and Integrated Investment Frameworks (IIF) accompanied the PAN/LCD.[11]

In the 2000s, adaptation to climate change became the headline in many research efforts. Simplistic notions of human-environment interactions remain a persistent feature in climate-change policy documents: NAPAs. Their elaboration entailed a participatory assessment of vulnerability to current climate variability and extreme events, identification of key adaptation measures as well as the criteria for prioritizing activities, with special care of grassroots communities. A limited dialogue with scientists advocating 'counter narratives' is also denounced (Adger et al., 2003 in (Reenberg, 2012).

A timid change can be identified from top-down managerial approaches, based in agronomic and technical measures to solve biophysical processes, to bottom-up and participatory integrated solutions, based on local and indigenous practices. Nevertheless, the effective implementation of these solutions has been more elusive. UNCDD recognises limitations of the implementation of the Convention one decade after their entry into force due to the insufficient financing, weak scientific basis and institutional coherence, insufficient advocacy and awareness about DLDD ((UNCCD, 2007); (UNCCD, 2013a)). UNCCD asked countries to report on 11 impact indicators,[12] being only the first two mandatory: population living in poverty in DLDD affected areas and land cover status. Most of the countries encountered serious challenges to report on those indicators (WCMC & UNEP, 2012).

1.1.3. Sustainable Land Management (SLM) as a solution to DLDD.

Inappropriate land management can lead to land degradation and a significant reduction in the productive and service functions of watersheds and landscapes (biodiversity niches, hydrology, carbon sequestration) (World Bank, 2006). Conventional land management is usually related to extractive and hyper-intensive productive systems (Zähringer, 2010). Main bibliographic sources explain the general failure of past conservation practices because they overlooked their adaptation and appropriateness to local social and ecological conditions. For example, strategies focused on fighting soil erosion did not consider the underlying socioeconomic causes of low soil productivity or were implemented in a top-down manner without any local participation (World Bank, 2006).

Three types of production systems have been distinguished in relation to land management options (Seck et al., 2005). The "first generation production systems" are the traditional ones, the "second-generation" are intensive agriculture systems that do not consider environmental externalities and "third-generation" are those that include an environmental production aspect (combining technical, environmental, economic and social factors, not only considering higher yields, but also biodiversity benefits). SLM is proposed as a solution for the shortcomings of second-generation production systems.

Some of the most common definitions of SLM in the literature are:

- A knowledge-based procedure that helps integrate land, water, biodiversity and environmental management (including input and output externalities) to meet rising food and fibber demands while sustaining ecosystem services and livelihoods (World Bank, 2006).
- The use of land resources (soils, water, animals and plants) for the production of goods to meet changing human needs, while simultaneously ensuring their long term productive potential and the maintenance of their environmental functions (WOCAT, 2007).
- The prevention, mitigation and restoration of the effects of land degradation to ensure the protection

11 The equivalent of SNIF/SLM (Strategic National Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management).
12 Proportion of the population in affected areas living above the poverty line, land cover status, water availability per capita, change in land use, food consumption per capita, capacity of soils to sustain agro-pastoral use, degree of land degradation, plant and animal biodiversity, drought index, carbon stocks above and below ground, and land under SLM.

of terrestrial ecosystems while sustaining ecosystem services and livelihoods. It is also conceived as the process that seeks to achieve a balance among agricultural, economic, environmental, and social benefits. It seeks to integrate production (crop production, breeding, and forest products) and environmental management so that the combined social and economic benefits exceed the sole benefits arising from production (World Bank, 2008).

- The use of land resources according to defined objectives in order to fulfill social and individual needs without depleting its productivity. This is the usual definition in the UNCCD framework according to (Matallo-Junior, 2009).

Different efforts have been made to compile experiences and lessons learned from SLM interventions in the Sahel and elsewhere. For instance, the CILSS compilation of 21 experiences of desertification fighting in the Sahel promoted by governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, national and international NGOs, and local populations (Rochette, 1989). More recently, others also focused their attention on the SLM successes in African drylands, especially in relation to indigenous knowledge about soil and water conservation with a special focus in the Sahel ((Reij & Steeds, 2003) in World Bank, 2006). A similar endeavour is undertaken by the WOCAT (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies), a global network of soil and water conservation (SWC) specialists that aims at documenting local SLM knowledge to spread the positive messages on how land can be sustainably managed ((Liniger, 2007); (Zähringer, 2010)).

WOCAT has documented more than 470 SLM technologies and 235 SLM approaches across the world, including 42 SLM case studies in the Sub Saharan Africa (WOCAT, 2011). All those documents try to put on value the local innovation as well as the traditional or indigenous systems, rather than focusing solely on project-based SLM implementation of standard technologies. SLM technologies are defined as agronomic, vegetative, and structural and/or management measures that prevent, mitigate and rehabilitate the land, enhance productivity and restore ecosystems services (See Figure below).[13]

The World Bank Sourcebook on SLM does not follow the WOCAT classification about SLM technologies, approaches and measures. It offers a summary of SLM strategies promoted by its projects over the time and from different sectors[14]. Some examples of SLM approaches mentioned are: watershed management, terracing, irrigation or drainage system, soil fertility and soil erosion management, moisture conservation, crop diversification, alternatives to slash and burn, improved access to land, deforestation control, silviculture intensification (World Bank, 2006). Annex A briefly compiled some selected SLM technologies and approaches, along with their main benefits.

13 Measures are components of SWC technologies. For instance, a terracing system is a technology comprised by different structural measures : the terrace riser, bed and a drainage ditch combined with grass for stabilisation and fodder, or contour ploughing (Zähringer, 2010).
14 Irrigation and drainage, crops, forestry, agriculture research and extension, flood protection, general agriculture, natural resource management, animal production, environment.

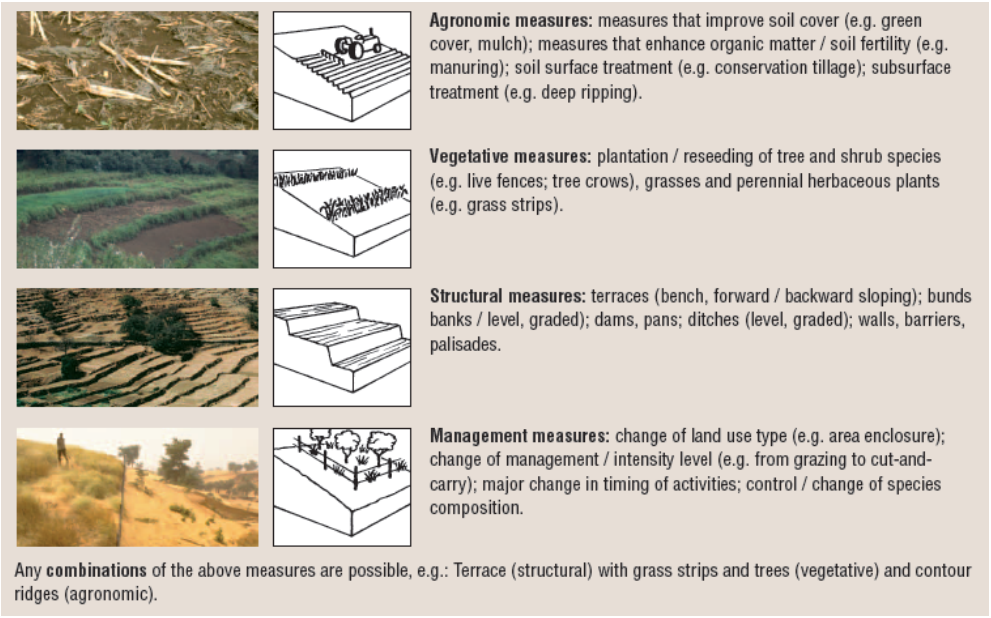


Figure 4. Categories of SLM measures according to WOCAT. Source: (WOCAT, 2011) **page 36.**

1.2. Senegal context in relation to Sustainable Land Management.

1.2.1. Senegal's environmental and socioeconomic context

Location

Senegal is situated in the Western part of the Sahelo-Sudanese zone of Africa. It is not landlocked as the majority of Sahelian countries. With almost 200,000 square kilometres of surface, its Atlantic coast line is 700 km long. Mauritania (and the Senegal River) borders Senegal on the North, Mali on the East and Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry on the South. Gambia is enclosed in Senegalese territory. It is a very flat country, with altitudes lower than 50m in 75% of the territory (IFAD, 2004a). Senegal is divided in 14 regions with main capitals: Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaffrine, Kédougou, Kaolack, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint Louis, Sédhiou, Tambacounda, Thiès, Ziguinchor, as can be seen in the following map that also shows its location in the African continent (See Figure 5).

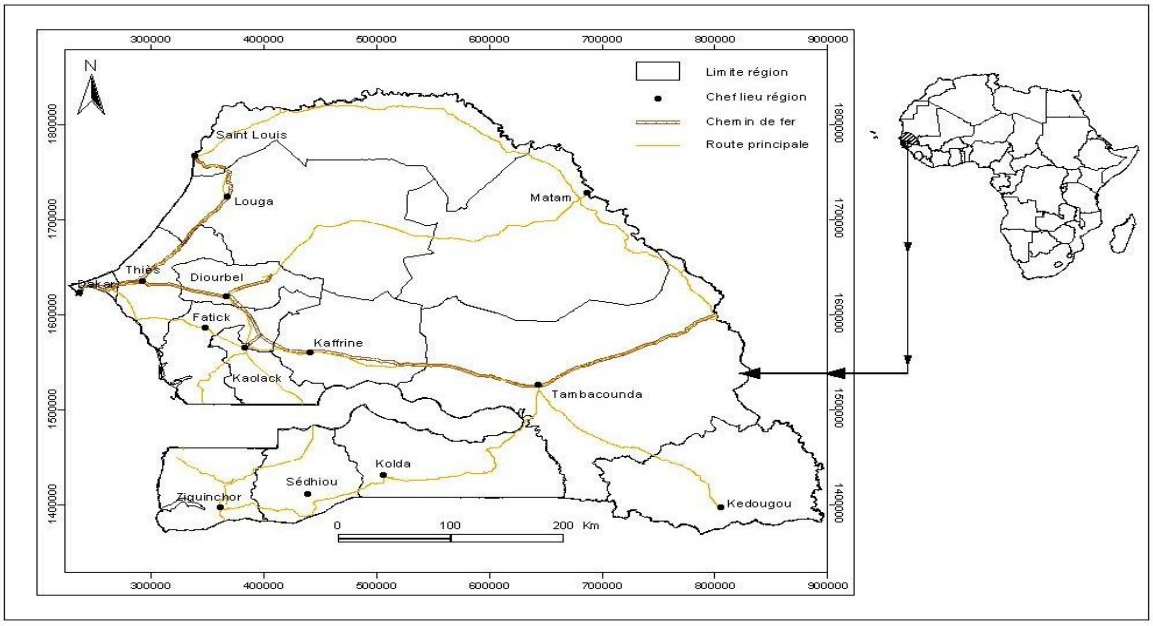
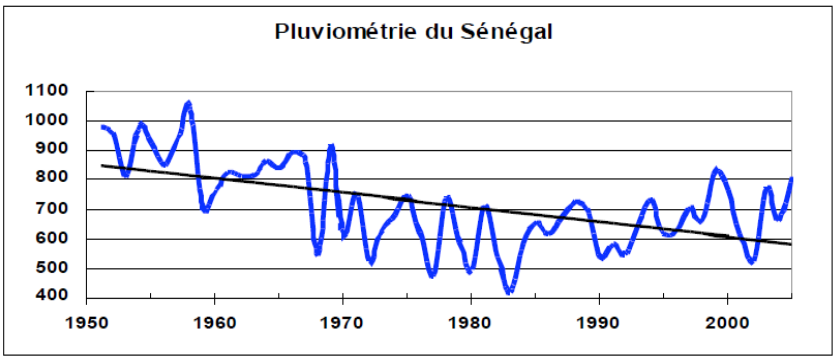


Figure 5. Map of capital regions of Senegal. Source : (INP, 2012)**: page 20**

Climate

Senegal is located in the crossroads of the four West African climatic zones (Saharan, Sahelian, Sudanese and Guinean), with a non-significant temperature range. There are two main seasons: one hot and rainy (called *hivernage* in French), when the monsoon circulates, and another dry season when the continental North/Northwest winds dominate. The rainy season has rarely exceeded four months (MEPN, 1998) . The rain gradient changes from North (300 mm) to South (700-1000 mm). Rain defines the type of vegetation, along with the presence of surface water and soils types: from Sahelo-Sudanese steppe in the Northern part (Ferlo) to Sudanese forest in the South (Casamance) (IFAD, 2004a).



Rainfall has dropped by 30–40% over the last three decades and isohyets have shifted significantly to the South. The first big drought hit the country in 1972, starting a declining rainfall cycle with 1984 as the record low (Seck et al., 2005).

Figure 6. Evolution of the rainfall in Senegal during the past
Source: (MEPN, 2006)**: page14**

Soils

The total arable surface in Senegal is not clear according to different sources[15]. While FAO online statistics use decade means for 1990-2000 (3 million ha) and for 2000-2009 (3,19 million ha), the Ecological Monitoring Centre (CSE) and the World Bank offered a different figure in 2005 and 2008: 3,8 million ha (20% of Senegal's surface). Forest, savannah, and protected zones cover 32%, and the rest is shared between desert and unclassified brush and urban lands. About 65% of the arable land is used for rain-fed crops, nearly 3% for floodplain and irrigated crops (100,000 hectares), and the rest is uncultivated soil mainly used for herding (World Bank, 2008).

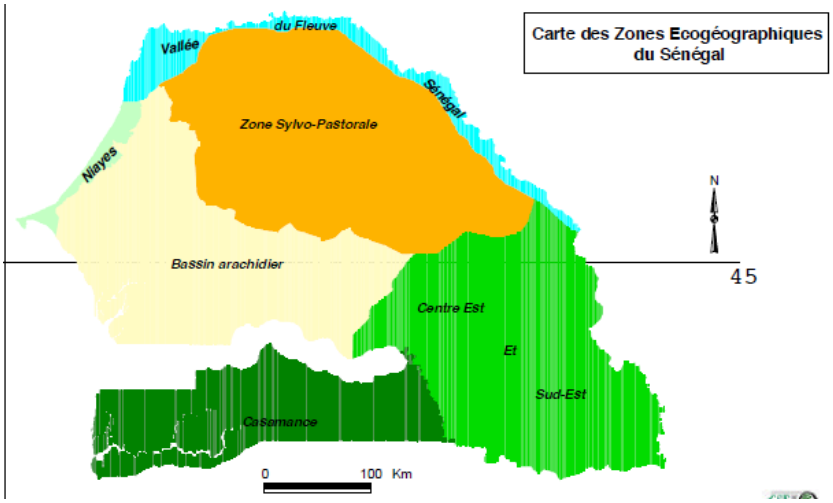
When comparing the soil resources in Senegal with its population, there is a ratio of 385 ha/1000 hab, much higher than the African average of 86 and the world average of 23 ha/1000 hab. Nevertheless, 11% of this surface is in an area with rainfall below 500 mm, posing serious challenges for production systems (MEPN, 2006). In 1996 there were only 69,000 hectares of irrigated land in the Senegal River valley that grew up to about 100,000 hectares in 2008, still concentrated in the Senegal River valley, Casamance and the Niayes. This irrigation surface is considered as "very limited in relation to the potential (240.000 ha)" ((IFAD, 2004a); (World Bank, 2008)).

All diagnostics consider that soils in Senegal have low to moderate fertility, with low organic matter contents, low native phosphorus concentration and low cation exchange capacity (Bernatchez et al., 2008 in (Zähringer, 2010)). A study carried out in 1984 as part of national land management planning found that 47% of soils were of poor quality or totally unsuitable for agriculture, while a further 36% was subject to desertification-related factors that restrict their productivity. In 1997, degraded soils were estimated to cover 45% of the arable lands and 8,7% of the total country surface (MEPN, 1998).

Ecogeographical zones

15 (CSE, 2005); WB 2008; (CSE, 2010), Senegal FAO Stat: http://senegal.opendataforafrica.org/mtcatnd/senegal-fao-stat-land-use-and-agricultural-inputs and http://senegal.opendataforafrica.org/leafacb/senegal-fao-stat-water-resources-agriculture-production-and-trade (Accessed on June 14, 2013).

A stretch of fertile interdunal depressions runs along the northern coast from St Louis to Dakar; this area is known as Niayes and it is the most important region for vegetable cultivation ((Gueye, 2000); (Zähringer, 2010)). The coast to the south of the Cap Verde peninsula (Dakar) is split by some cliffs and then by the Saloum mangrove. Further to the south, after the Gambia, the subtropical zone of Casamance has very dense vegetation and rice fields and fruit and palm trees. Meanwhile, the country's inland area features a semi-desert plain dominated by pastoral farming (Seck et al., 2005). Senegal has diverse water systems: the Senegal river on the North, the Gambia river, the Casamance river, and two small fluvial basins (Sine and Saloum) which create a complex estuary of salty waters (MEPN, 1998).



Main environmental policy documents distinguish six eco-geographical zones according to soils types and agriculture vocation: 1. Centre-East and East Senegal (light green), 2. West-central peanut/groundnut basin (light yellow), 3.North-East sylvopastoral zone (orange), 4. Senegal Valley River (blue), 5. North coastal area or Niayes (lightest green), 6. Casamance (dark green).

Figure 7. Map of ecogeographical zones of Senegal.
Source (N. Dieng & Ndiaye, 2011)**: page 19**

Forest cover

A similar problem of data coherence among different sources and indicators is found for the forest sector. Some use "forest, savannahh, and protected zones" in millions of hectares (WB, 2008 and the World Development Indicators WDI), while others prefer the average percentage of "forest and wooded areas" in realtion to the total country's surface in a decade (FAO Stat).

Table 1. Evolution of the forested lands in Senegal

	1990	2000
Forest, savannahs and protected areas	**9,300**	6,240
Forest and wooded areas (FAO Stat)	6,318	6,279
Vegetated cover (1993), PAFS	**12,725**	NA
Forest cover (PAFS)	**7,500**	6,300
Forest cover (Japan)	6,700	6,200

Source : World Bank, 2008 and WDI

Data for 1990 and 2000 is available for these two indicators, and they are not totally coinciding. In 1990, while the first one was situated in 9,3 million ha, this figure was much lower according to FAO Stat (6,318 million). In 2000 data for those two indicators was closer (6,24 million ha and 6,279 million hab).

A key policy document, the Forestry Action Plan of Senegal was more optimistic in the 1990's in relation to another similar indicator: "vegetated area cover" estimated in 1993 as of 12,7 million ha of which nearly half was located in classified areas. The document continued using a slightly different indicator ("forest cover") which decreased from 62% to 34% between 1970 and 1983 in the South of the country, although it was said that similar trends occurred in the rest of the country. Forest resources were estimated to cover a total area of 8.1 million ha in 1980, a total area of 7.5 million ha in 1990 and a total area 6.3 million ha in 2000. This last figure is in accordance with the one mentioned before, using two other indicators (D. Diouf, Neyra, Sougoufara, & Lesueur, 2001). Other sources do not coincide with the forest cover data for 1999, which is lower than th rest sources 6,7 million ha but converges in

2000 around 6,2 million hectares (JICA, 2004a) (see the table below).

The figures about yearly deforestation rates are more consistent ((IMF, 2004); (CSE, 2005); (World Bank, 2008)). The change in surface of "forest lands" outside the national park system was estimated in -80,000 ha/yr in 1995 and in -50,000 ha/yr in 1998. While the PAN/LCD situated the yearly effort of reforestation around 17,667 hectares for the period 1981-1990 (MEPN, 1998), the Japanese document offered a lower figure of 14,500 ha between 1990-1999. Other yearly figures are 12,100 ha in 2000 and 14,800 hectares in 2011, according to different sources mentioned in (JICA, 2004a).[16] The evaluation of the Forest Seeds National Programme starts with a similar diagnostic: "the estimates of the destruction of vegetal cover is situation in more than 50 000 ha/year and the reforestation rhythm is insufficient despite the efforts, the reforestation effort of around 20000 ha/year leaves a deficit of 30000 ha of vegetal cover per year" (Kamga, Lette, Mbengue, & Sougoufara, 2000). According to (MEPN, 2013), reforestation efforts (including natural regeneration, sustainable forest management and protective measures) situated the reforestation/deforestation ratio to 0,78 (data from FAO 2005), bering insufficient to counteract the overall tendency towards deforestation (WOCAT, 2011).

Diagnostics show a steep decrease in the ligneous potential of Senegal during the past three decades, estimated in 18 million m^3 and 641.000 hectares of vegetal cover between 1981 and 1990. Other ecosystems like mangroves and alluvial forests also suffered great losses (around 60% from 1970 to the end of the 1990's) (MEPN, 1998). An analysis of land use changes in Senegal over 35 years showed that the country is still dominated by a great diversity of land cover types, although warned about the loss of the country's forests (Tappan, Sallb, Wooda, & Cushinga, 2005). Satellite images of soil indicate that the dense forests, which occupied 4.4% of soils in 1965 dropped to 2.6% in 2000. Other sources situate forest degradation in Senegal around 2% of the country's wood resources (Zähringer, 2010).

Figure 2.6 Evolution of soil use and plant coverage in Senegal, 1965 to 2000 (percent of land area and percent change)

Land type	1965 (%)	2000 (%)	Change (%), 1965 to 2000
Crop areas	17.0	21.4	+ 25.9
Bare soils	0.7	1.7	+ 142.9
Forests	4.4	2.6	- 40.9
Mangroves	0.6	0.4	- 33.3
Savannahs	73.7	69.6	- 5.6
Habitations	0.2	0.3	+ 50.0
Steppes	1.8	2.2	+ 22.2
Water bodies	1.0	1.1	+ 10.0
Meadow swamps – inundated valleys	0.5	0.6	+ 20.0

Source: Tappan et al., .2004

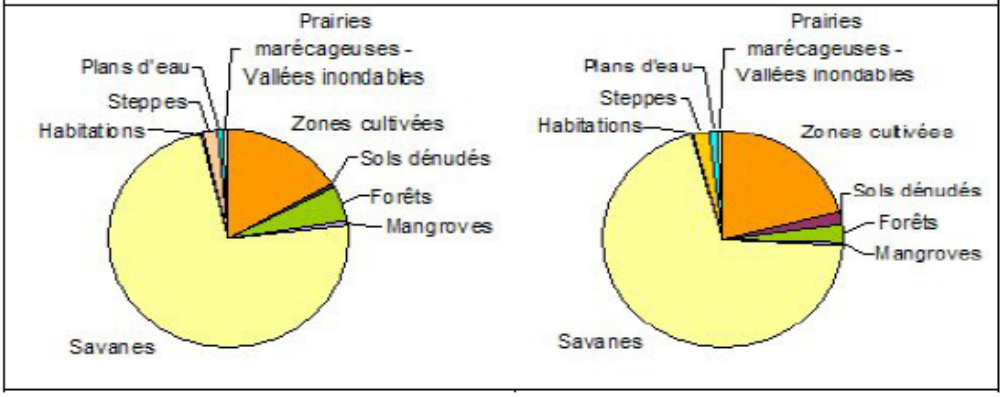
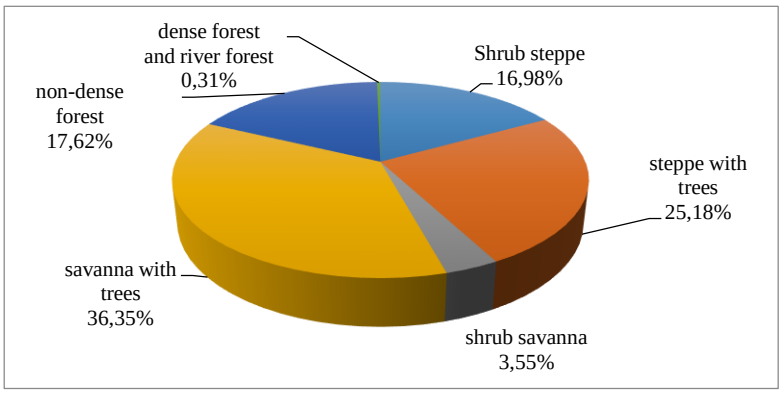


Figure 8. Evolution of land use and plant cover in Senegal. Source : (World Bank, 2008)**, page 121**

This Figure summarizes the change of land cover in Senegal where the sharp decrease in forest and mangrove seems to be related to the increase in habitations, crop areas, steppes, meadow swamps and

16 WB Data Book 2001, WB Atlas 2002, Little Green Data Book 2002, PNUD Rapport sur Developpement Humain au Senegal.

bare soils. Although divergent figures, in 2000 approximately 6,3 million ha were covered of forest and wooded areas. They are distributed in 5,9 million ha of natural forests and 0,3 million ha of plantations, according to (FAO, 2003 in World Bank, 2008). Natural forests are distinguished among "dense" type of forests (with 80% canopy cover), that occupy less than 3% of the country's area (Sudanese-Guinean type forests, the fringing forests of lower Casamance and the riparian forests along the Senegal River delta and valley (Tappan et al., 2004 in (World Bank, 2008)). A recent diagnostic offers the following picture of types of vegetation using data from the CSE in 2005.



As seen in this graph, the majority of the "vegetated area" in Senegal is covered by savannah and trees, with different levels of tree density, followed by different types of steppe.

Figure 9. Types of vegetation in Senegal. Source: CSE, 2005 in (INP, 2012)**:page 21**

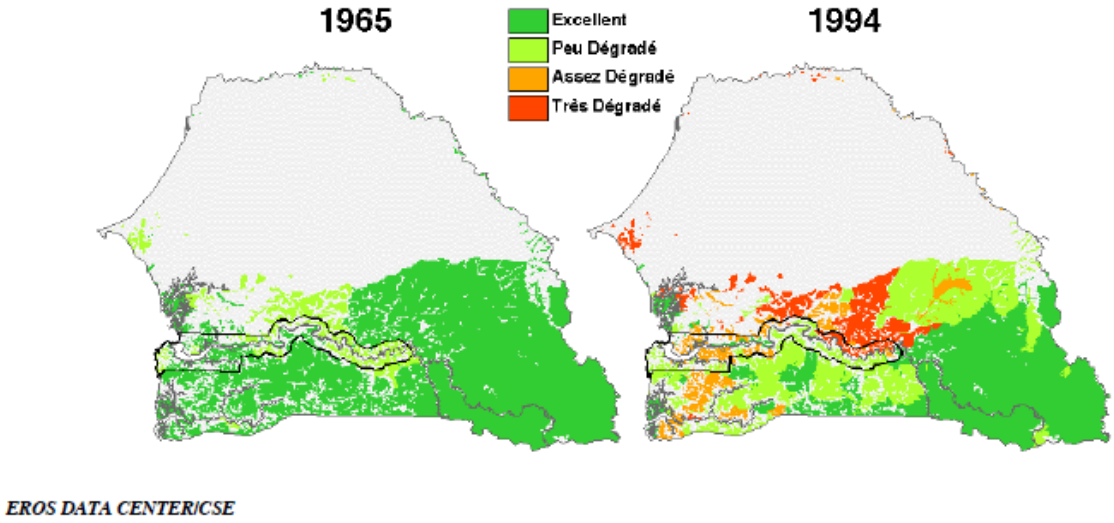


Figure 10. Evolution of forest state in Senegal. Source : (MEPN, 1998)**: page 42**

The map above shows the evolution of land uses from 1965 to 1994. A clear degradation pattern of forests (in green showing excellent state and orange and red quite and very degraded) can be identified (MEPN, 1998).

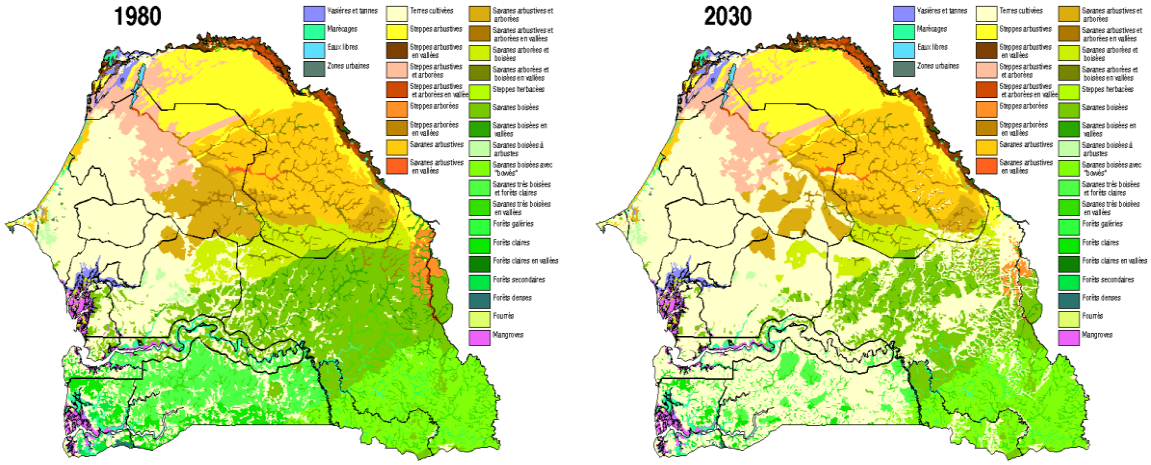


Figure 11. Projection of land use change in Senegal. Source :(USAID, 1999b)**, page 10**

As seen in the figure above, the projections at the end of the 1990's offered a similar alarming projection of the land use change in Senegal until 2030 (deforestation is highlighted in light yellow). Special attention is given to the deforestation pattern in the Southern part of the country (Casamance) (USAID, 1999a) (USAID, 1999b) (USAID, 1999c) .

Demographics and economic activity

The population of the CILSS countries has grown from less than 20 million people in 1960 to around 50 million people in 2000. The Sahel's vulnerable zone is currently estimated to be home to 8 million people Estimations of 100 million people in the region by 2020 and 200 million by 2050 are accepted (ECOWAS & SWAC-OECD, 2006). The population of Senegal is 13,512 million (CIA, 2009 in (Zähringer, 2010). It has tripled since 1950 (doubled in the case of rural population), with a demographic growth of 2.7% per year (World Bank, 2008). Population is not equally distributed throughout the country, having very high densities in some regions like the peanut basin (200 hab/km^2 in Diourbel) (IFAD, 2004a).

In spite of a certain trend of improvement since 1980, Senegal is still one of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) in the world, with a Human Development Index (HDI) for 2012 of 0,470 (154 of 187 countries and territories). LDCs are the poorest and weakest segment of the international community, 34 out of the 48 are in Africa. The HDI value of Senegal was 0,322 in 1980, an increase of 46% or average annual increase of about 1.2% (UNDP, 2013a). Persisting economic crises facilitated Senegal's admission to the benefits of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and allowed for the formulation of policies addressing these problems in a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). The PRS, which was validated and funded by development partners, has become the reference for short-term growth and poverty mitigation. Poverty nevertheless remains very high, reaching a rate of 64% according to consumption surveys conducted in 2001 (GEF, 2004b).

Although there is a certain tendency to diversification, agriculture is still the key economic sector in Senegal. One of the main characteristics of the agricultural geography is the predominance of peanut (groundnut) that has dominated its economy, heritage of the French colonial period. The rural-based economy has depended on the export of peanut products for a long time. This monoculture production created huge damage to its soil resources ((Ndiaye, 2001 in (Zähringer, 2010); (Seck et al., 2005)). World peanut demand has seriously decreased, especially for peanut oil.

There is a certain transition to break this monopoly, with declining peanut production since the 1960s

and a less important position in exports. Some diversification has been pushed: millet, sorghum, maize, rice, cotton and cowpeas (MEPN, 1998). Nevertheless, the agriculture space is still dominated by peanut and millet in the peanut basin, followed by extensive livestock rearing in the sylvopastoral zone. Other important economic activities are food-producing agriculture and forest exploitation in the South East, crops in the Senegal River valley zone, cotton in the Eastern part of the Gambia and rice cultivation in Casamance. Some irrigated agriculture can be found in the Senegal River delta, the South Anambé, and the Niayes zones (MEPN, 2006), see map below.

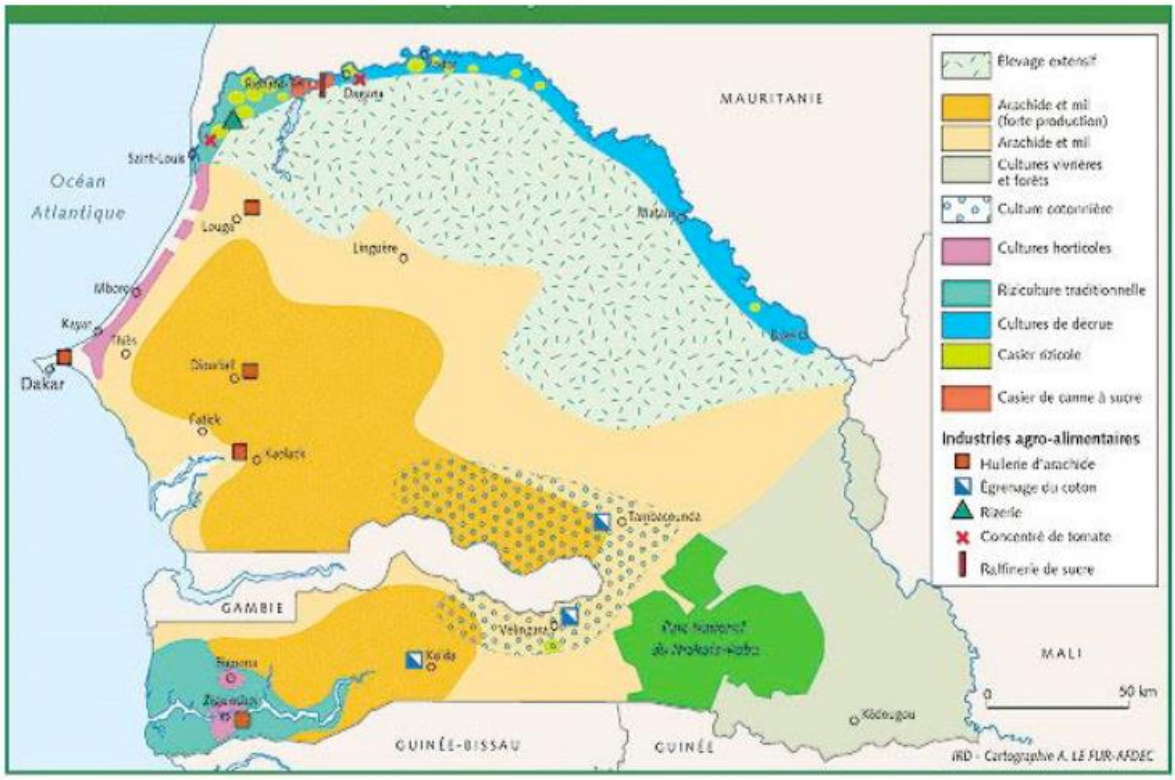


Figure 12. Map of agriculture space in Senegal. Source : (MEPN, 2006) **: page 19**
Note: orange: peanut and millet (high production); lighter orange: peanut and millet; light green (South East): subsistence crops and forest; doted green (North East): extensive livestock rearing; blue: "flood crops"; pink: vegetables; green (North West): traditional rice fields; dots around the Gambia: cotton fields.

Around 3 million people live out of livestock rearing in Senegal, while fishing is another economic and social paramount activity. Forest exploitation supplies energetic needs of rural populations and employs around 20,000 people (ANDS, 2008 in (INP, 2012). By the end of the 1990s, the diagnostics considered agriculture as the main activity sector of Senegalese population (70%) although its contribution to GDP was only of 20% (MEPN, 1998). In 2001, 60% of Senegal's population was still working in agriculture but the contribution of this activity to GDP dropped to 10.2%. Other sources situate at 15.4% the agriculture share in the GDP, still dominated by groundnut production (followed by millet, corn, sorghum and others) (CIA, n.d.). As mentioned previously, this decrease is the result of economic diversification, but poor land management coupled with strong climate fluctuations have also contributed to the drop in income from the farming sector (World Bank, 2008). This source situates agriculture at a 9% contribution to Senegal's GDP.

Agricultural production has been and is still today mainly a family business in Senegal. The only big land concentration until recently is by Islamic leaders, the *marabous* who own about 120 agricultural production units, each with a surface of up to 10,000 ha. The performance of the primary sector (agriculture, livestock, fishery, forestry) for the past decades is assessed in all diangnostics as having bad technical level of farming systems and quality of seeds, less use of inputs (fertilizers, phytosanitary products) and rusty machinery with decreasing yields. Traditional farming production systems evolved in a context with no land scarcity, but the population boom entailed the use of all the available agriculture

space continuously, without fallow periods. Nevertheless, some documents acknowledged that more population could also mean more people to work and to promote sustainable Natural Resources Management options. For instance, farmers in Senegal increased horticulture and fruit trees cultivation during the dry season ((IFAD, 2004a);(Reenberg, 2012)).

In general, agriculture production declined during the 1990's because of slow modernization, climate change, decreasing soil fertility and indirectly by political factors (Boye, 2001; Ndiaye, 2001 in (Zähringer, 2010). A similar picture could be drawn for the cattle rearing sector, where the main constraints are related to overgrazing and bushfires (MEPN, 1998). Most of the rural Senegalese population continue to rely on wood charcoal as the main energy source (MEPN, 1998).

1.2.2. Extent, types and causes of land degradation in Senegal.

There is a key distinction between "land" and "soil" which is key for this study. "Land" represents a broader concept than simply "soil". Land comprises the physical environment, including climate, relief, soils, hydrology and vegetation, to the extent that these influence potential for land use (George, 2000). Land is a complex resource composed primarily of soil, water and biodiversity (UNCCD, 2013b).

A similar distinction can be found in French, and it is widely used in most of the project evaluation reports and other key policy documents. This is the concept of "*terroir*" which is sometimes translated as land or territory. According to different sources, "terroir"is not only the geographical place but also the interface between rural societies and their natural environment (Lazarev, 2009). *Terroir* is commonly associated to "the set of special characteristics that the geography, geology and climate of a certain place, interacting with plant genetics, express in agricultural products such as wine, coffee, chocolate, hops, tomatoes, heritage wheat, and tea"[17]. A Senegalese decree from 1964 defines *terroir* as "the set of homogenous land needed for the development of a population of some villages with common rural interests. It comprises the cultivated and fallow lands, pastureland, livestock paths, forest land used by villagers as well the wilderness considered needed for future extension" (Boye, 1978).

The evidence about the state of land resources in Senegal is scarce, although collectively recognised as alarming in relation to the impoverishment of plant cover and the limited quantity of arable lands. On a social level, land degradation has the effect of lowering the income of rural people and hence increasing poverty, immigration, marginalization of women and young people, as well as sharpening conflicts" (World Bank, 2008). This diagnostic highlights the wide scale of land degradation in the country estimated in 34% of Senegalese territory. When considering the proportion of degraded land in relation to the total arable surface in Senegal, this percentage increases to 65% ((CSE, 2005); (World Bank, 2008); (CSE, 2010); (MEPN, 2013)). The dominating degree of degradation is "moderate", except for flood plains, rain fed and transhumant areas where relatively large areas are "severely" affected (SOW-VU, 2010). There is no clear pattern of geographical distribution of land degradation related to spatial variability of biophysical and socioeconomic conditions, although this study recognises that this is maybe caused by the limits of its resolution (SOW-VU, 2010). Various maps have been developed to depict the level and types of land degradation in Senegal, like the one below.

17 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terroir accessed on August, 17, 2014.

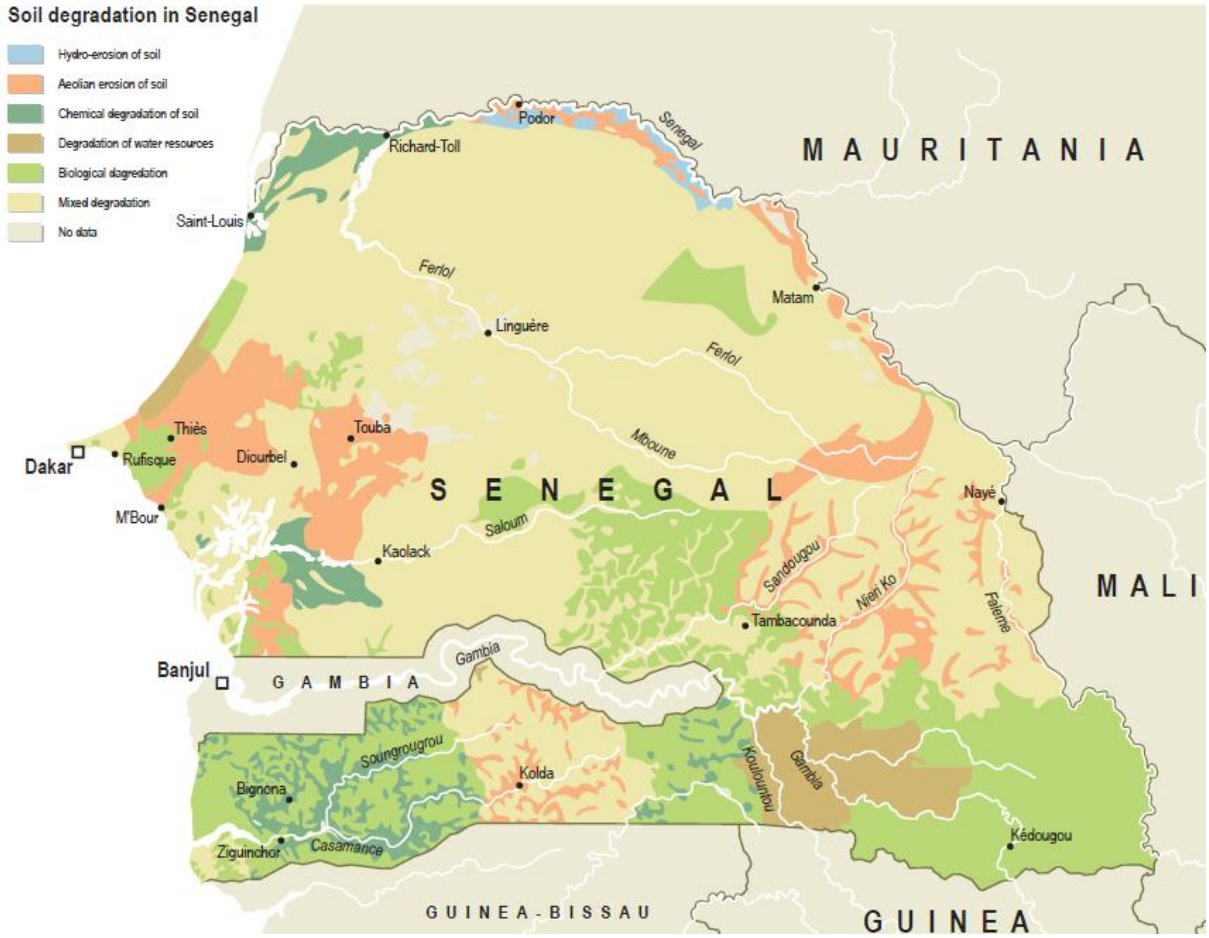
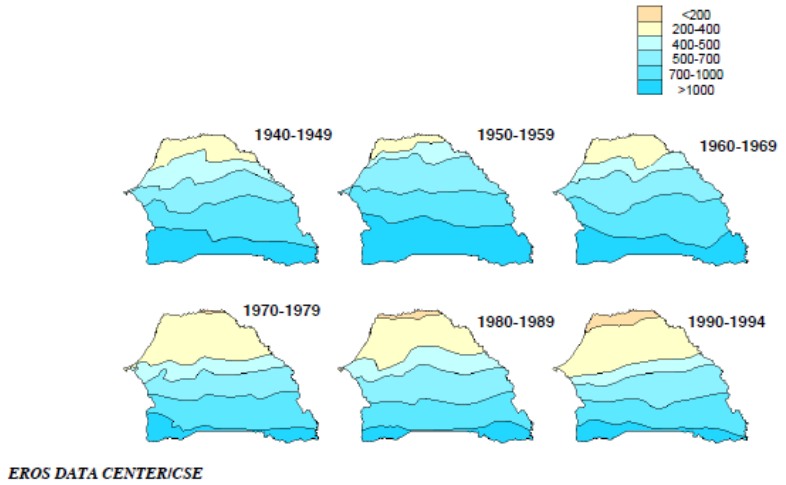


Figure 13. Map of soil degradation types in Senegal. Source: (UNCCD, 2012)**: page 15**
Note: yellow: mixed caused; green: biological; dark green: chemical; blue: water erosion; orange: wind erosion.

Humans are considered by the majority of diagnostics as the most important agent of land change in Senegal, responsible not only for agricultural transformation but also for great modifications in wooded savannahs. The demand for fuel, particularly in the form of charcoal, is the driver of logging in all regions with woody resources (Tappan et al., 2004 in (Zähringer, 2010)). The most recent Country Evaluation Assessment (World Bank, 2008) situated the spending in land degradation fight in Senegal around 28 USD million in 1995, and USD 72 million in 2005. On an economic level, land degradation in Senegal has a high cost, probably equal to 1% of its agricultural GDP (Gueye & Ndiaye, 2012). The value of the lost production in comparison to its potential in the primary sector caused by the land fertility loss between 1990 and 2000 corresponds to 4,5% of the GDP for 2000" (INP, 2012). The direct annual cost of soil erosion is about USD 10 to 100 million. The cost of deforestation is unknown, but the value of forest products (besides timber) harvested annually is about USD 6 million (World Bank, 2008).

Various policy documents and research identify the main types of causes and consequences of land degradation in Senegal ((MEPN, 1998); (Tappan et al., 2005); (World Bank, 2008)): physical, chemical and human-related. Among the physical causes of land degradation, the literature emphasizes rainfall and wind and water erosion. Salinization and acidification are identified as the main causes of chemical degradation, while the demographic pressure and unsustainable practices are highlighted as the human land degradation causes.



Among the physical factors, rainfall decrease caused a Southward movement of isohyets, with less rainfall volume and more irregular spatial distribution of rains, as can be seen in the opposite figure of rainfall decennial average and the movement of isohyets.

Figure 14. Decade average rainfall (in mm). Source : (MEPN, 1998)**, page 35.**

Another physical factor is the wind activity, in special the continental Alize or Harmatan, a dry wind from the Saharan desert which has reinforced the Saharan climatic conditions. This has entailed the movement of the littoral dunes and more suspended dust, as well as soil wind erosion. This type of erosion represents 3% of degraded soils concentrated in the Senegal River Valley, Centre-north, and the northern Peanut Basin. Moreover, water erosion in East Senegal, Southern part of the peanut basin and Casamance, affecting 9 million hectares represents 77% of the total degraded soils.

Chemical aspects of land degradation were included in recent diagnostics (World Bank, 2008) but not in the main DLDD policy document, the PAN/LCD (MEPN, 1998). Capillary upwelling causes salinization from salty superficial water tables. It affects 1 million hectares, representing 9% of degraded soils. It occurs in the Senegal River delta, in Casamance, in the Saloum River delta, and in the Gambia River. This phenomenon has increased because of the frequent droughts observed over the last few decades. Other more recent sources offer a catastrophic ecologic scenario in relation to the phenomenon of salinization in Senegal: "serious extension of bare spaces, oversalty, hiperacified and unsuitable for agriculture, drastical decadence of mangrove and palm groves in Casamance and south of Sine Saloum" (IDRC, 2012). Acidification of soils is particularly present in the Peanut Basin, the Senegal River valley and in Casamance. According to 1987 estimates, acid soils or soils undergoing acidification cover about 1,6 million hectares, among which are 925,000 hectares of submerged land and 675,000 hectares of non-submerged lands (World Bank, 2008).

One of the most commonly human aspects of land degradation mentioned in Senegalese policy documents is demographic pressure. Although population has tripled since 1950 to 1998, it is recognised that most of the population is concentrated in Dakar, following the urbanisation trend of most African countries. Nevertheless, cultivated lands continued to extend towards the East and South-East direction due to impoverishment of soils in the West area of the country. The use of wood and charcoal, and brush fires linked to human activity (mainly slash and burn agriculture and hunting, honey collection) have caused severe land degradation ((GEF, 2004a); (World Bank, 2008)). Human pressure is at the source of 11% of degraded soils. Herds have also continually grown as a result of improved livestock health through control of contagious diseases. This has increased livestock pressure on the land and led to the degradation of livestock corridors, especially in the forest- pastoral zone.

Table 2. Extent of soil degradation in Senegal according to the cause

Causes of degradation	Hectares	% of total
Water-related erosion	9.808.100	50,4%
Wind erosion	377.500	1,9%
Chemical degradation	1.131.000	5,8%
Man-made erosion	1.393.600	7,2%
Non-degraded soils	6.745.300	34,7%
TOTAL	19.455.500	

Source : (World Bank, 2008) **page 18**

The summary of the land degradation causes and their weight can be found in the opposite Table based on data from 1985 which according to the source most likely underestimates the 2008 conditions.

1.2.3. Institutional and policy schemes to address DLDD in Senegal.

During the colonial period some authors started warning about the dangerous desertification occurring as a result of the trade economy based on groundnut monocropping (Pelissier, 1951 in (GEF, 2004b). Narratives about the encroachment of the Sahara Desert were pervasive in the colonial policy-making circles. Examples of policies and interventions during those years were related to the fixation of the dunes along the coast from Dakar to Saint Louis, the plantation of *Faidherbia albida* to regenerate soils in the peanut basin, afforestation campaigns to enrich areas with species useful for human use and forest conservation (*forêts classés*) (Bodian, 2006).

The afforestation and dune fixation of the Northern Coast of Senegal has been the longest SLM endeavour in the country and the most often mentioned as a "SLM success story". This big-scale intervention started around 1919. The reforestation with *Casuarina equisetifolia* (commonly known in Senegal as "filao") was promoted by the colonial agricultural services. It failed due to the high mortality of *filao* (Mailly et al., 1994 in (Zähringer, 2010)). Another intervention led by the forestry service in 1948 managed to reforest an area of 513 ha with *filao*, allowing the production of vegetable crops in this area (CSE, 2009b in (Zähringer, 2010)). The afforestation efforts continued during the 1970s and 1980's, with stronger involvement from donors (Zähringer, 2010) [18].

During the Republican period (after Senegal's independence in 1960), there was continuation of those policy options, mainly focused on forestry solutions and with the state as the main regulator and decision centre. The use of exotic tree varieties was promoted (*Eucalyptus, Acacia australiens, Casuarina equisetifolia, Prosopis juliflora*) for massive plantations controlled by the state and using local populations as labour force (*plantation en régie*). Overall, these SLM interventions were not considered successful to attenuate or halt the degradation process ((MEPN, 1998); (Bodian, 2006)). During this time, the livestock sector was neglected and for agriculture, only some irrigation programmes were promoted in the Senegal River Delta area. As lessons learned, the main key policy document directly dealing with land degradation and desertification challenges in Senegal (the Action Programme to Fight Desertification) mentioned the limits of this vision, especially in relation to the difficulties of sustainability of actions due to weak participation of local population (MEPN, 1998).

The multi-sector nature of land degradation and desertification took some time to be acknowledged and reflected in the institutional set-up in most countries, and Senegal was not an exception. During the 1980s, participative approaches influenced forestry projects in Senegal, and the approach to fight desertification in general (Bodian, 2006). In this case, "beneficiaries" were deeply involved in the identification, implementation and evaluation of management of natural resources. Village forests and community plantations were promoted throughout the country, as well as the concept of rural or village forestry. In the livestock sector, herders were also held responsible. Agreement protocols (*conventions locales* in French) were signed between local populations and projects. Another change in reforestation was the use of local species (MEPN, 1998).

18 Firstly, UNDP supported the "Project of dunes fixation in Kébémer", afterwards the Canadian cooperation (CIDA) cofounded the "Autonomous Project of dunes fixation of Gandiolais, Northern part" and USAID the "Project of dunes fixation of Kayar, Southern part". CIDA merged later its work in a new combined project ("Conservation Project of coastal lands").

Some mainstreaming and cross-sector efforts started after the UN Rio Conventions in the 1990's. Senegal created the Ministry of Environment and the High Council of Natural Resources and Environment (CONSERE) in 1993. The Ministry of Environment included four departments: Water, Forest, Hunting and Soil Conservation Direction or DEFCCS[19], Direction of Environment and Classified Installations; National Parks Direction and Direction of retention basins and artificial lakes. Senegal was one of the first countries to ratify the United Nations Conventions to Combat Desertificatino (UNCCD) in 1995 (MEPN, 1998). Decentralization texts in 1996 established the transfer of some competences related to "environment and management of natural resources" to the regions, communes, and the 320 rural communities (World Bank, 2008).

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP)[20] was approved in 1997, as the Strategic Framework for managing the environment and natural resources with the perspective of Sustainable Development (SD), encompassing biodiversity preservation and desertification challenges (Seck et al., 2005). That year the "General Plan for Land Management" was also approved. The National Action Programme to combat desertification (PAN/LCD) was approved in 1998 as a component of the NEAP, after regional consultations with key stakeholders (MEPN, 1998). These documents acknowledged the transversal and multisector character of desertification and land degradation, and proposed an articulation with other plans like the one on Livestock, Forest and Land Management. The Senegal PAN/LCD starts with a section about the current state and evolution of natural resources. The degradation situation of natural resources is denounced and the causes are identified: the combined effect of climatic deterioration and anthropic pressures. This crisis narrative is portrayed with powerful examples:

"*During 1970 and 1990, the country has experienced one of the most severe droughts of its history. After some years, thousands of hectares of woody populations have dried turning into a real cemetery of wood in the Senegal River valley. At the same time, almost all remaining formations such as oil palm trees in Niayes areas have disappeared*". (MEPN, 1998), page 30

Nevertheless, some insights of counter-narratives can be also found in the PAN/LCD when local population's production techniques and practices are praised as having reconciled their needs with the preservation of ecological equilibrium (MEPN, 1998). This is the case of the promotion of *Acacia Albida* and live fences of *Euphorbia balsamifera* in the IFAD-funded Agroforestry Project in Diourbel, PAGF during the 1990's and 2000's in the peanut basin (IFAD, 2004a). Other SLM approaches praised in policy documents are the Natural Assisted Regeneration of "*kadd*" (*Acacia albida*), as an improved old practice. In order to fight salinization, mechanical actions like embankments against salt (especially in Casamance) based on local knowledge for rice culture are also highlighted. In spite of this wink to counter-narratives ideas, the overall discourse of the PAN/LCD is based on the degradation narratives.

In 1998, Ecological Monitoring Centre (*Centre de Suivi Ecologique,* CSE) was appointed to contribute to the participatory management of resources and the environment through the collect, treatment, analysis and diffusion of data and information about the territory and resources. This is one of the main institutions generating time series data about key environmental indicators, although their use for project evaluation has been elusive. During the 2000's the schema of national institutions supporting environmental management in Senegal was enlarged. Not only the Ministry of Environment was in charge of this function, but also the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Water and Food Security; Ministry of Interior and Local Collectivities; Ministry of Land Management and Urbanism; Ministry of Maritime Economy and Transport; Ministry of prevention, public health and sanitation and urban water; Ministry of Health and medical prevention; and Ministry of Economy and Finances (MEF). Although annual public expenditures to combat land degradation increased, efforts have had limited success. The identified causes of this failure were still the same: over-reliance on technical fixes, top-down, centralized approaches; and fragmented policies, sectors, institutions, and knowledge related to land

19 *Direction des Eaux et Forêts, Chasses et Conservation des Sols*, DEFCCS). The DEFCCS is today decentralized in 11 regional inspections in each one of the administrative regions (*Inspections Régionales des Eaux, Forêts et de la Chasse,* IREF) and 35 Forest Sectors across the country.

20 Programme National d'Action pour l'Environnement, PNAE, in French.

management (World Bank, 2008). Therefore, although the discourse changed some decades before, the implementation problems remain.

A special unit in charge of Planning and Monitoring was created within the Ministry of Environment (*Cellule d'Étude de Planning et de Suivi*, CEPS) in 2003 thanks to, among others, the Sector Budget Support (SBS) of the Netherlands. It aimed to develop a planning and operational monitoring system to address broad national strategic guidelines and local environmental issues. It should also prepare and evaluate the implementation of the MTSEF (Medium-term Sector Expenditure Framework).

Following the efforts to tackle environmental issues in a more cross-sector manner, Senegal presented its first Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) to the International Community in 2002. It also approved the Agro-sylvo-pastoral Law in 2004 as the basis for the National Agriculture Development Programme, the national Livestock Programme and the Forest Action Plan. Similarly, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development along with a new Forestry Policy was adopted in 2005 by all players in the management of natural resources and environment (World Bank, 2008). During these years, Senegal also adhered to some regional endeavours like the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) that includes several Action Plans by themes, such as Agriculture and Food Security and Climate Change and Natural Resource Management. They are considered by the Senegalese government as guidance for their own policy frameworks.

Senegal ratified the United Nations Climate Change Convention (UNCCC) in 1994 and the Kyoto Protocol in 2001. The National Climate Change Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) of Senegal was approved in 2006 and articulated with the programmes to fight drought and desertification (MEPN, 2006). The first National Communication under the UNCCC highlighted the vulnerability of water resources, agriculture and coastal zones and put forward strategies for coping with the effects of climate change (MEPN, 2006). According to the NAPA diagnostic, the vulnerability of Senegalese agriculture sector is related to biophysical causes, especially its dependence on rainfall which is becoming rarer and more variable interannually. It is also associated to the greater human pressure over already climate-fragilised natural resources because of the decline of soil productivity and the growth of energetic needs. Most of the adaptation measures recommended in the NAPA are aligned with the SLM measures listed in Annex A: agroforestry techniques, crop diversification, use of short-cycle and salt-tolerant varieties, water conservation, fighting water erosion, anti-salt works, windbreaks, community forests, wild fires prevention, management of livestock systems, institutional and capacity building of policy makers.

One of the most recent diagnoses of the environmental sector in Senegal is the Country Environmental Analysis (CEA) (World Bank, 2008), being the previous one from 1994. Sustainable management of terrestrial ecosystems (including SLM) was identified among the main environmental issues in the country. It also repeated the problems impeding the effectiveness of policies, programmes and projects to fight desertification and identified ten years earlier in (MEPN, 1998):

- At the legal level, a myriad of sector legislations, sometimes contradictory, difficuling their real implementation.
- At the institutional level, multiple ministries in charge of the coordination and monitoring of actions to fight desertification, with overlapping roles and functions with a difficult integration of their strategies. Even within the same ministry, different units have problems to work together on this sense. There is no clear leadership but absence of appropriation and will by national institutions and difficulties for the local and regional level to actively participate since budgets are prepared centrally and respond mainly to donors' agendas.
- At the financing level, lack of adequacy financing, strong dependency on international assistance and poor coordination of approaches and interventions among development partners and absence of clear orientation and incentive measures.

In spite of the commitments of the donor community emerging from the Paris Declaration, only 5% of all aid received by Senegal in 2004 was channelled through budget support or Sector-wide approaches (SWA) (Metameta-Management et al, 2008). The Netherlands decided to change from project-approach

to budget support in the sector of environment in Senegal in 2003. The budget support was related to certain governance and environmental performance indicators (macroeconomic framework and the satisfactory execution of Action Plans related to financial reforms and technical and financial execution of the Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) (MEPN, 2013). In 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 the sector-budget support targeted 14 activities and projects of the Ministry of Environment for a total of USD 8 million. This was considered as "earmarked budget support". In 2005, an evaluation denounced a weak disbursement rate due to weaknesses in terms of organization and financial monitoring both at Ministry of Environment and central Ministry of Economy and Finances and weak performance in relation to the performance matrix. Only some promising results were found in components related to forest protection and soils conservation (Metameta-Management et al, 2008).

From 2004, it was decided to offer a 36 million euro through global budget support to the Ministry of Environment including environmental performance indicators (non-earmarked budget support). This also included NGO-implemented activities and capacity building (Vanderlinde, 2005). Several studies saluted the efforts done in Senegal to increase the buget allocations for the environmental sector but also warned about the limits of absorptive capacity of instiutions. In this regard, it was recommended to increase the capacities at national and decentralized level, as well as to update the PAN/LCD to guide decentralized investment opportunities in SLM (Trux, 2007).

The Ministry of Environment prioritized three strategic orientations and eight programmes. Each programme had one or more components or projects and associated indicators. "Deforestation and land degradation fighting" was identified as one of the key interventions with a number of priority programmes and projects with the following indicators: ratio afforestation/deforestation, surface of land under restoration, surface of land with Natural Assisted Regeneration, number of forests with a management plan under implementation, surface of reforested area with more than 60% of survival, surface of salted lands restored (MEPN, 2013).

In parallel to these efforts to go beyond project-based interventions, past ideas and ambitious plans to halt the Saharan desert" have come back to the African policy debates. The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative proposes the idea of bulding a green belt to halt the desert encroachment, an ecological buffer zone to help shield productive land from the degradation. Firstly launched in the 1980s, it was revived and finally approved by the African Union in 2006. The vision was to employ a mosaic of approaches to manage natural resources over a 15-km wide and 7,775 km long stretch from Senegal to Djibouti (2 million hectares). The concept is presented not as 'all-out tree planting drive', but rather as a mosaic of land management and agroforestry approaches. Nevertheless, there has been some local opposition claiming that it has been poorly conceived in terms of both ecological and socio-economic considerations, and may even cause harm to the environment or disturb migration patterns of pastoral communities (Reenberg, 2012). This Initiative has not been yet evaluated.

Senegal started in 2011 the process of reflection about the alignment of its PAN/LCD of 1998 to the 2007-Strategy to enhance the implementation of UNCCD (André, Ndiaye, & Ndiaye, 2011). Nevertheless, it has not yet produced a new policy document. Regional endeavours to recognise the cross-sectorial nature of land degradation and its prevention and solutions have influenced recent developments in Senegal. Initiatives such as TerrAfrica propose to realign and coordinate the financing of SLM in order to upscale SLM approaches (World Bank, 2008). TerrAfrica and the Country Environmental Analysis of Senegal recommended formulating a Country SLM Strategic National Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management (SNIF/SLM) to promote coherence of policies, capacity building strengthening and improve coordination of interventions. This should surpass the business-as-usual approach of working through unisectorial and time-bound projects.

From a draft of the Senegal SNIF/SLM in February 2012, it was finally adopted in October 2014[21]. The development of the SNIF/SLM in Senegal entailed a multidimensional diagnostic using the TerrAfrica

21 *Cadre National d'Investissement Stratégique en Gestion Durable des Terres* (CNIS/GDT), the equivalent of the Integrated Investment Frameworks recommended by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD.

methodology (looking at ecosystem, technical, economic/financial, political/juridic, and institutional). The document warned that in spite of all the measures implemented, they have not achieved to reverse the land degradation trend. The analysis of responses promoted by different actors (state, donors, etc) showed that appart from some isolated successes, a wider-scale intervention was still limited by the sectorial approach in fighting land degradation (INP, 2012). The same document listed the types of SLM technologies used in Senegal by agroecological zones (See Annex A).

1.3. Evaluation practice in Senegal

1.3.1. Taking stock of the evaluation practice in Senegal

From Independence until the 1990's

Senegal started a formal National Planning System after Independence in 1960. The evaluation function was not strong during those early years. At the end of the 1970's the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) brought significant changes in planning (and evaluation) systems. During that period, evaluation was focused on macroeconomic performance using mainly indicators such as the debt levels, budget expenditures, the monetary situation and external exchanges (consistent with donor *conditionalities*). Some Monitoring Units were created in different Ministries, such as the Agriculture Policy Unit. However, this opportunity did not entail the promotion of M&E of the overall performance of sector policy from a systemic and global perspective, favouring instead a short- or medium-term programme and project approach ((Lom, 2008); (Diallo, 2009) and Diallo pers.comm. October 2012)).

A new National Planning System was then promoted in 1987 to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of public investments (See figure below, from the left to the right). The Plan for the Orientation of Economic and Social Development (PODES) required every technical Ministry to elaborate its Sector Policy Letter, which provided the basis for an Action Plan with a list of projects and programmes. A first level of project and programme ex-ante evaluation was done by the ministry in charge, and the Ministry of Planning ensured afterwards their coherence with the PODES and the Sector Policy Letter. For the economically profitable projects, the software EVA was meant to calculate the economic impact of the project. For the social sector (called "nonproductive public projects"), only a mainly descriptive template calculated recurrent costs (Diallo, 2009). Afterwards the Economic and Financial Cooperation Unit (DCEF) conducted an ex-ante evaluation.

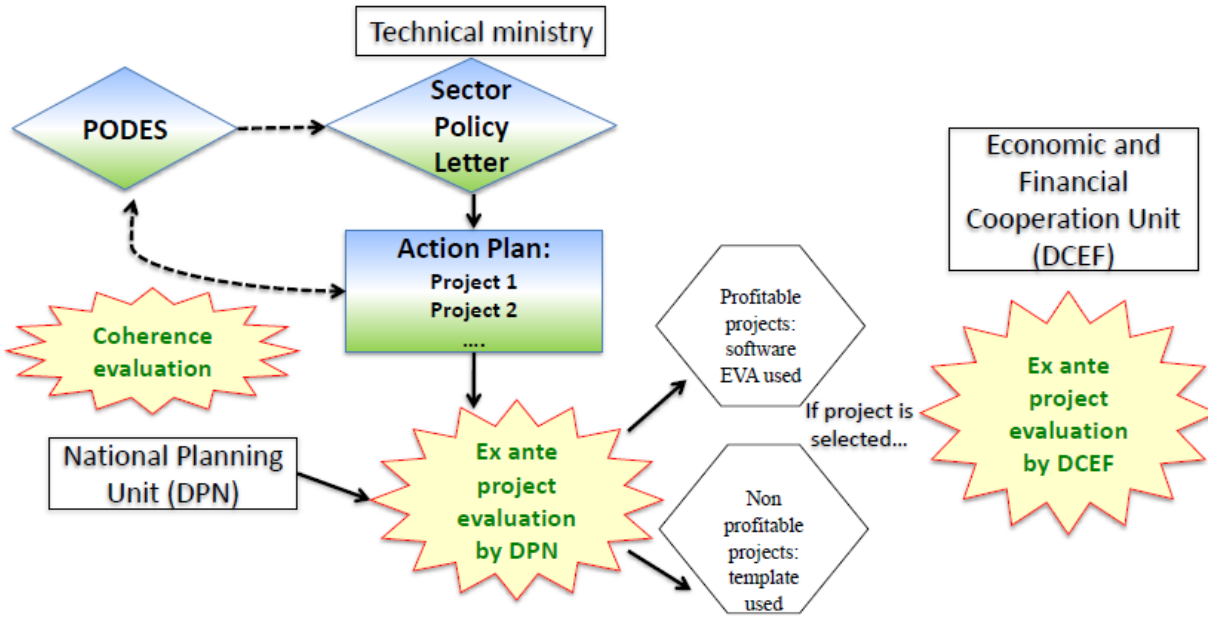


Figure 15. Planning and ex-ante evaluation system proposed in 1987. Source: author.

Once the project was approved, DCEF was in charge of monitoring using "project annual execution bulletins" in relation to the Triennial Public Investment Plan (PTIP) (See figure below). In practice only a small sample of projects was physically monitored (using private consultants) with a focus on financial monitoring. Technical reviews were undertaken when the Technical and Financial Partners (TFP), or donors, required so. The National Planning Department (DPN) was in charge of ex-post evaluation of projects, but resources were too limited to extend this practice.

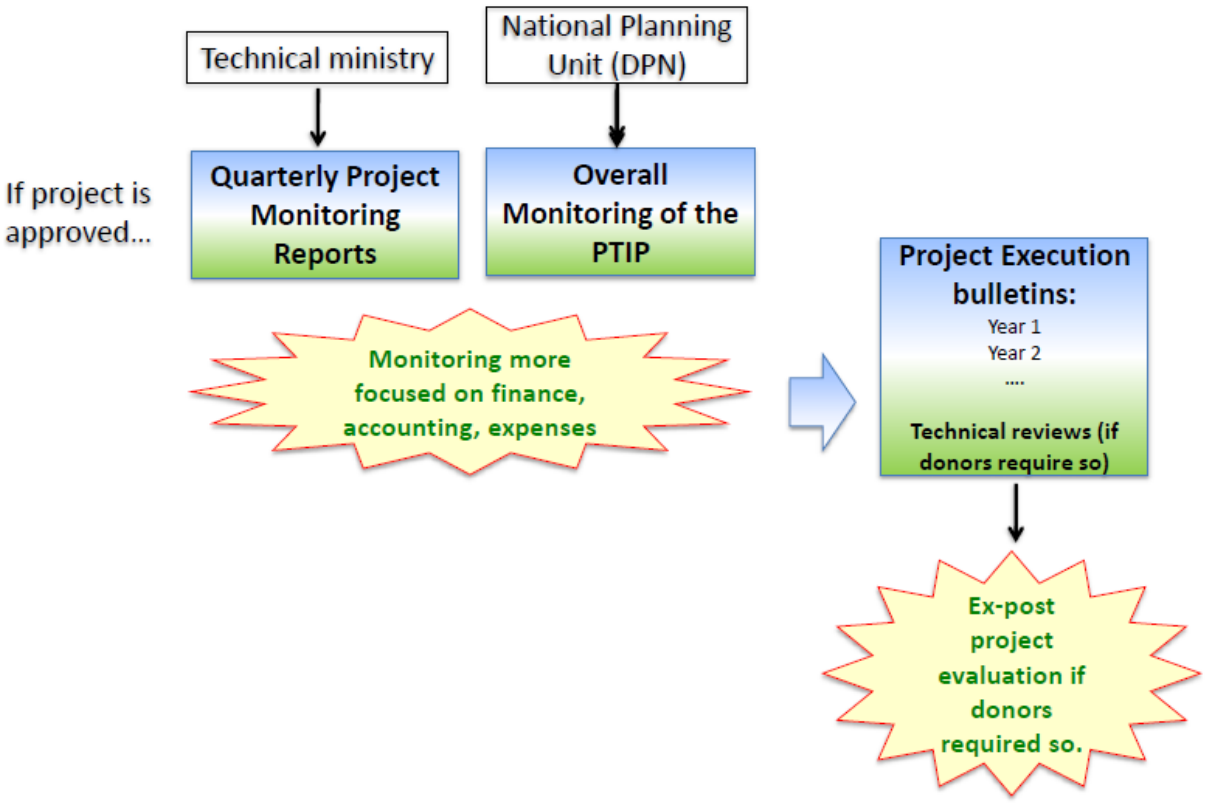


Figure 16. Monitoring and ex-post evaluation system proposed in 1987. Source: author.

According to the main stakeholders interviewed for this study, this New Planning System did not function correctly during that period because of lack of respect of the procedures, tools and institutional frameworks. The selection committee and the methodological guide that should have reinforced this system were never operational, lots of projects were approved directly by the DCEF or at inter-ministerial councils (Lom, 2008). In addition, means did not follow ambitious objectives, and it only served to build the basis for the *evaluability*[22] of productive projects (Sow, 2014).

From the 2000's onwards

The introduction of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) in aid development architecture from the 2000's had an impact on the planning and evaluation practice in Senegal. PRSs are considered as the reference document in terms of economic and social policy in many African countries[23]. In Senegal, there have been three PRS since 2003. The most recent is called DPES (*Document de Politique Economique et Sociale*, 2011-2015) and it is articulated with the MDGs and guidelines from the African Union.

The institutionalization of the monitoring of public policies through the PRS-II is considered as a major innovation, especially interesting in education, water and sanitation and health sectors (République du

[22] Assessment of information requirements and available knowledge in order to determine whetheher reliable and credible answers can be given to the questions asked.
23 PRS are national programmes for poverty reduction for lending programmes of the IMF and the World Bank and for debt relief for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs). http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org Accessed on December, 11, 2011.

Sénégal, 2011). The creation of Ministry-level Steering Committees and a Unit to Fight Poverty helped to position evaluation in the discourse, although there was a certain confusion between monitoring and evaluation (Sow, 2014). This is also identified as a trend in the 70% of African countries: progress in terms of evaluation has been more timid while monitoring systems seem to be still designed to meet donor reporting requirements (Segone, 2013). In the case of Senegal, key stakeholders raised their voice about the M&E of PRS: the practice seems to have been focused on the monitoring of indicators at the project level (input-output), not considering outcome or impact indicators, losing the perspective of the sector policy (Lom, 2009). A brief summary of the situation during the 2000s is summarized below:

Table 3. Summary of the planning and evaluation situation from 2001.

The planning and budgeting functions do not have a documented and rigorous system in order to select projects, as well as to class them according to priorities and monitor their execution;
There are serious difficulties on the collection of statistical information needed to measure sectors performance and data collection methodologies are not harmonized;
The focal points at the ministries are not functional (due to the lack of means and authority) to be involved in the financing requests and they suffer from a high mobility and institutional instability;
There is a weak articulation between sector indicators and PRS indicators and a deficit of training of ministries' staff in order to contribute to the M&E of the PRS (except for the ministries under Mid-term Expenses Frameworks).

Source: author based on (Lom, 2009)

There has also some pilot experiences in the monitoring of the PRS at the regional level managed by civil society organizations, although very limited documentation has been produced about this. The last policy documents approved (DPES and the "Plan Emerging Senegal" until 2035) seem to continue emphasizing on the use of performance indicators and review meetings, with a very limited evaluative dimension. From 2002 some Results-based Management (RBM) pilot experiences in 26 Ministries around the Mid-Term Expenses Frameworks (MTEF) were launched, reinforcing the technical exigency of evaluation ((M. A. Ndiaye & Aw, 2012); (Sow, 2014)).

Senegal joined African initiatives to assess national performance, notably the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), established by the African Union within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The APRM is a voluntary instrument acceded to by member states of the African Union as an African self-monitoring mechanism. It sets objectives, standards, criteria and indicators in four areas: democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance, and socio-economic development (NEPAD, 2003). It is praised as administered, managed and implemented by Africans and entailing comprehensive national dialogue and institutionalizing a culture of continental accountability to replace externally imposed conditionality by the international donor community (UNECA, 2011). From 2004, Senegal is a member of the APRM, but the review has not been done yet, although it is scheduled to be done in 2015 (pers.comm. October 2014 from SenEval's Vicepresident).

The National Evaluation Capacity (NEC) agenda is conceived as part of good governance efforts (Segone, 2013). In Senegal the National Programme of Good Governance (PNBG) has comprised three phases since 2003. This has been piloted by DREAT (*Délégation Chargée de la Réforme de l'Etat et l'Assistance Technique*), a management reform agency attached to the Presidency which advises all branches of government on improving M&E and Results-based Management (RBM) policy and practice in the framework of the governance reform programme (M. A. Ndiaye & Aw, 2012). The institutionalization of evaluation is a priority along with the creation of an organ for public policy and strategies evaluation and capacity-building of the technical ministries ((République du Sénégal, 2002); (DREAT, 2010)). DREAT's work helped to position evaluation on the political agenda, although the institutional design of a coherent M&E system is still in its early stages (M. A. Ndiaye & Aw, 2012).The weaknesses of national planning and evaluation have been identified by different authors and institutions in terms of capacities of governmental institutions in charge of planning and evaluation ((Diallo 2009); (GTZ, 2010)). The National Planning Department (DPN in French) obtained the lowest score, followed by technical ministries and the DCEF.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assigned the responsibility of management of decentralized evaluations to their country offices. This pretended to foster ownership of evaluation processes and results by programme stakeholders, opposite to evaluations managed by the central unit of evaluation at headquarters, more focused on accountability and organizational learning. UNDP has endorsed the agenda of National Evaluation Capacities Development (NECD). Therefore, in those countries where UNDP programmes are implemented through a National Execution modality (NEX), the evaluation exercise is delegated to the corresponding national authority. In Senegal, the National Planning Department (DPN) holds the mandate to conduct the evaluations of development projects and programmes. Since 2008, DPN has managed around 20 evaluations (from the drafting of the ToR to the acceptance of the evaluation report, chairing Evaluation Steering Committees). DPN also summarizes the reports and issues a note to Ministry of Economy and Finances, who usually follow up with the sector Ministry.

As part of their Policy Support Instruments (PSI), the International Monetary Fund recommended reinforcing the responsibility for the evaluation of projects and programmes from the General Planning Director, through the DPN ((IMF, 2007); (IMF, 2011)). At the same time, it highlighted the responsibility of the technical ministries in order to ensure their planning, monitoring and evaluation function. Planning (and evaluation) structures were created in four pilot ministries (education, health, environment and agriculture). Overall, the IMF acknowledged some modest progress by mid-2011 in regard to the planning, evaluation and selection of public investment projects, notably the drafting of a "Project Preparation Guide", the elaboration of an evaluation guide using the cost-advantage method, and the ex-post analysis of two completed projects. This document did not include the analysis of evaluation promoted by other actors. In spite of some advances, the verification and control culture continues to be predominant in evaluation practice in Senegal (Sow, 2014).

Influence of Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) efforts in evaluation practice

Capacity building has centred the agenda of the majority of development actors in Africa[24]. A simple definition is the improvement of the functioning of institutions, practices and competencies of people allowing them to achieve development objectives. Evaluation Capacity Building was conceived as a unilateral donor-led endeavour mainly based in short-term training of individuals to promote capacities in "recipient countries", usually ignoring the existing practices in that context (Tarsilla, 2012). Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) seems to have superseded this limited conception and proposes a more comprehensive and contextually relevant process to national development priorities. ECD is the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain evaluation capacity over time (OECD, 2006). ECD has been declared a priority as a condition to reach aid development effectiveness, to improve governance, and to strengthen the ownership of strategies and the coherence of planning and programming exercises (including the reforms of public finance, M&E and reporting).

Before 1995, only five regional or national evaluation organizations existed in the world (Russon, 2000) 2000). Between 1995 and 2000, the emergence of new evaluation organizations attested the rapid growth and recognition of the practice of evaluation. According to the database of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation, IOCE, by 2013 there were 100 national, 12 regional and 11 internationals VOPEs, of which 30 national and 2 regional African VOPEs. Some of them are evaluation societies or associations, while others are M&E or even evaluators' associations. The Francophone Evaluation Network (*Réseau francophone d'évaluation*, RFE) has recently been an active player to promote evaluation practice in Francophone African countries. For instance, organizing the last ECD event analysed by this research, the First Francophone Evaluation Forum (FIFE) in Dakar, at the end of 2014.

There have been many initiatives to strengthen the evaluation work since the 1990s through ECD programmes (Tarsilla, 2012). Annex B summarizes the objectives and content of 16 of the main ECD

24 Creation of the *Fondation pour le Renforcement des Capacités* in 1996, Forum of Heads of States about the African development in 1998 and creation of the *Nouveau Partenariat pour le Développement de l'Afrique* (NEPAD) in 2001 (Lom, 2009).

events (most of them in the form of multinational evaluation conferences) that were held in Africa and could have influenced evaluation practice in Senegal. Several themes and calls have been recurrent in these venues:

- The need to strengthen national evaluation systems and policies, to integrate evaluation in the legislative framework (legal obligation of evaluating public policy),
- The need to advance towards evaluating national public policies, not just aid development projects and programmes, through country-led evaluations (CLE) promoting national ownership of evaluation processes,
- The need to acknowledge links between political dimensions of evaluation as part of country's national governance arrangements while promoting evaluation culture among decision-makers and other key national actors,
- The need to strengthen the role of VOPEs as professional formal or informal evaluation communities,
- The need to develop indigenous evaluation capacity, to promote the organic emergence of M&E models from the experience of Africans. Evaluation should become African-led and African-owned. The use of African values and contexts in evaluation is portrayed as a good strategy to foster evaluation ownership.

The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) was founded in 1999 as an umbrella organization for national M&E associations and networks in Africa, and a resource for individuals in countries where national bodies did not exist. Seven AfrEA Conferences has been held until 2014, including pre-conference professional trainings. The African Evaluation Guidelines (AEG) were promoted by AfrEA, although their use does not seem to be very widespread yet. An AfrEA journal was in discussion since the 2004 and finally released its inaugural number in 2013. Although it was conceived as a continental association, AfrEA was mainly promoted by general the Anglophone African countries and the language divide is still very important, with a high risk that Francophone evaluators are left behind the ECD initiatives. Various Francophone ECD events have tried to address the relatively backward state of evaluation in African Francophone countries and the slow diffusion of the discipline in the Francophone world. Some ECD seminars and workshops have been held in Francophone Africa, mainly promoted by the UN (UNDP, 2004) and the Francophonie International Organization (OIF, 2004). The 4th AfrEA Conference was held in Niger in 2007 and some efforts to include specific strands in French in the AfrEA Conferences have been noted. This is still timid; the number of Francophone presenters is still very low (pers. Comm. from AfrEA Chair for the Conference in 2012). The celebration of the course PIFED (*Programme international de formation en évaluation du développement)* since 2011 has also been a great venue to improve evaluation capacities of Francophone Africans. For some years, an interesting website promoted by the Intergovernmental Agency of the *Francophonie* shared evaluators' experiences (http://evaluation.francophonie.org, no longer working in January 2015).

Several conferences have been focused on National Evaluation Capacities (NEC) ((UNDP, 2009a); (UNDP, 2011a); (UNDP, 2014)). Presentations have been focused on National Evaluation Systems (including a description of the institutional set-up and main challenges) across regions, emphasizing South-South cooperation. Representatives from Benin and Morocco have been the most active West African presenters about their advances in NEC in those venues. The last Conference included a pre-conference Community of Practice with online discussions about independence, credibility and use of evaluations (UNDP, 2013c).

Some donors have been especially active in ECD. For instance the World Bank (bi-annual conference at headquarters, Series on Evaluation and Development, promotion of the International Programme for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET, n.d.)), UNICEF and (conceptual framework for "national evaluation capacity development" and publications about ECD, exchange M&E website www.mymande.org and high-level open webinars), as well as the overall open-access evaluation guidelines through UNEG (United Nations Evaluation Group), www.uneval.org.

The irruption of the civil society and the VOPE in Senegal

From the civil society side, Senegal was also part of the rapid growth in Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs) around the world (Russon, 2000). The Senegalese evaluation network (SenEval) was established in 2003. According to its charter, SenEval aims at promoting the sensitization of actors to foster a critical reflection about challenges of evaluation and its relationship to governance, disseminating evaluation norms and standards, promoting the institutionalization of evaluation, supporting the training of key actors, and providing methodological support and exchange of practices in the M&E domain (SenEval, 2003). SenEval's membership has grown steadily (more than 500 people received the bimonthly bulletins in 2013). Members are staff from Senegalese ministries and other governmental structures, universities and training and research institutions, think tanks and consulting companies, UN agencies, donors and NGOs, as well as individual practitioners.

Two important activities supported by SenEval were the study on evaluation capacities ((SenEval, 2008a, 2008b)) and the Senegalese Evaluation Days in 2008. The study of evaluative capacities analysed evaluation "declared practice", identified the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluative capacities following a metaevaluation approach, and defined different scenarios for the institutionalization of the evaluation function. It focused on the actors and structures involved in the management of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS). The study was conducted simultaneously in two other pilot countries, Niger and the Republic of Congo[25]. The following table summarizes the stages, tools and main results in each one of them.

Table 4. Summary of the study of evaluative capacities in Senegal.

Stage	Tools	Results of the study
Analysis of declared evaluation practice	Documents review, survey and semi-directive interviews. About one hundred questionnaires were sent; only 37 filled questionnaires were received. The majority of responses were from public administration services (16 out of 37), and about 7 for each category of consultancy firms, donors and NGOs.	The evaluation practice in Senegal is considered "mature"; more than 90 evaluations were reported in the last years. Other dimensions studied were the frequency and characteristics of the evaluations conducted, the methodology used, the appreciation of their effects, the perspectives of evaluation in Senegal, among others.

25 The full reports could be found in: http://evaluation.francophonie.org; accessed on June, 6, 2014.

Metaevaluation	Use of the AfrEA evaluation quality standards, applied to evaluation reports, complemented with interviews to the commissioner, the evaluator and the evaluated.	Out of the four expected metaevaluations, only two were done (Evaluation of the Decennial Education and Training Programme 2000-2004 and the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project to Support of Livestock in 2005). This part is considered very weak in the synthesis report (Varone, 2007). Certain insufficiencies were detected within the management of evaluations (when applying international norms and standards), evaluations were more focused on control and financial responsibility than on the promotion of learning.
Scenarios of institutionalization of evaluation and ECD Plan	Analysis grids of the existing institutional environment (based on the information from the two previous stages); semi-directive interviews with key actors in evaluation (around 20 institution representatives from the pool of the 100 previously identified); definition of scenarios where a ECD Plan could be developed.	The difficulties to establish a clear institutional framework to promote evaluation culture made the authors to lower their objectives, and they only posed some recommendations for different actors. Among them: The need to organize a high-level workshop about evaluation of public policies; to develop the local training offer; to create or to strengthen the planning, M&E of the ministries; to identify the administration structure to lodge the evaluation function; to support the initiatives to promote the evaluation culture (among them, the network); to elaborate a National Evaluation Policy/Strategy comprising three objectives: the institutionalization of the evaluation function, the improvement of the quality and scope of evaluation practice, and the promotion of evaluation culture.

Source: author based on ((SenEval, 2008a, 2008b)**)**

The main findings of the study were presented at the AfrEA Conference in Niamey in 2007. The authors acknowledged several limitations of the study in Senegal: (a) regarding the survey, low response rate and overrepresentation of the public administration evaluation practice and institutions which are those already doing evaluation; (b) regarding the interviews, also problems of representation of the responses, with a very small sample. It was also evident from the responses that a common understanding of the concept of "evaluation" was not shared by interviewees, who were mixing monitoring with evaluation, and still other concepts related to Results-based Management (RBM); (c) regarding the metaevaluation, the results were very weak in the three countries, but especially partial and non-concluding in the case of Senegal. Regarding the ECD Plan, only some general work lines were identified.

In October 2008, the First Senegalese Evaluation Days (*Journées Sénégalaises de l'Evaluation*, JSE) were held in Dakar, organized by a Committee chaired by DREAT with the participation of SenEval. There were twenty-eight communications and four round tables. The event endorsed a draft Action Plan based largely on the recommendations of the diagnostic study on the institutionalization of evaluation of public policy in Senegal[26]. There was also an exhibition of the evaluation work from 14 institutions, and a total of 267 participants attended. The JSE considered that the national context was increasingly favourable to the emergence of an evaluation culture, but that it was necessary to strengthen the political will, as well as the capacities of the different stakeholders, the mobilization of resources, citizens' participation and the effective utilization of the evaluations. The Action Plan was based on four axes: strengthening the demand for the evaluation of public policies; strengthening the supply of evaluation; institutionalizing the evaluation of public policies; and the strengthening of SenEval (SenEval, 2008b). The Action Plan did not become operational and there was little follow up.

From 2011 SenEval relaunched its activities and organized several meetings and trainings that have been more or less regular until the end of 2014. Bimonthly e-newsletters are sent regularly and a website is functional (http://www.seneval.org). SenEval continues to function through the volunteer spirit and

26 All presentations were available on http://evaluation.francophonie.org/spip.php?article664 (Accessed on July, 13rd 2014).

good will of a small core of people, with no budget and no staff. SenEval held a General Assembly in October 2012 to formally establish an Evaluation Association, in the place of the network, and to elect officers and members of the Coordination Committee. The draft Strategic Plan 2013-2015 has three main axes: strengthening the enabling environment (conferences high-level seminars, and advocacy with media); professionalization and capacity building of evaluation actors (training seminars, information sharing, harmonization of professional norms and standards); and research promotion (partnerships with universities and research centres, publications, support to publishing in academic journals). EvalPartners is also supporting the development a peer-to-peer initiative between SenEval and the Quebec Programme Evaluation Society (SQEP). By the end of 2014, almost 150 people adhered to the newly born Association through the payment of a fee.

SenEval, through some of its most prominent members with key functions in the evaluation scene in Senegal, has advocated for the institutionalization of evaluation targeting principally the Presidency of the Republic, DREAT, the General Directorate of Planning of the Ministry of Economy and Finances, and the Government Inspection Office. This has contributed to the government's decision in March 2012 to establish in the President's Office a Commission for the Evaluation and Monitoring of Public Policies and Programmes (Diop et al., 2013). According to interviews conducted with key actors, the structuring of the mandate and the membership of the Commission remains to be defined more than two years after its creation, and this is more considered as an emblematic act about the reforms necessary to improve the consideration of evaluation within the government agenda (Sow, 2014).

The importance of participatory evaluative approaches

Finally, the poorly documented bulk of evaluation practice promoted by civil society organizations had interesting features. For instance, "experience capitalization" (similar to the Latin America *sistematización* as it is discussed in Section 2.3) has been practiced in Senegal for the past decades. In general, the scattered literature on experience capitalization in French is more related to final products of this approach and procedural guidelines and synthesis (Didier, 2010). From the situation where the African region was weakly contributing to sharing knowledge on the ongoing innovative initiatives, some organizations were advocating to upscale capitalization to document practices in development projects in Africa ((IED Afrique; ILEIA, 2007); (Niand & Fall, 2010)).

The origins of the practice of capitalization are generally contested, but according to the interviewees, ILEIA and IED Afrique were the main promoters in West Africa. The approach of capitalization evolved through dialogue and exchange and no one considers necessary to attribute any "paternity". Although its inclusion within the evaluation discipline is not accepted by all capitalization stakeholders (some class it within knowledge management), it could be considered as an "evaluation adapted methodology": it was developed in large measure by evaluators and theorists in the global North, but with explicit adaptation to different socio-cultural, political, economic, and ecological settings (Carden & Alkin, 2012). It was influenced by endogenous evaluation approaches (like systematization in Latin America) through a direct or indirect South-South transmission.

According to the Senegalese capitalization practitioners interviewed for this research, capitalization processes entail indirect political changes. While better capturing what is done at the field level, it is possible to build political arguments to transform policies. Moreover, capitalization can empower grassroots' level stakeholders since their knowledge (knowledge from experience) is valorized and enhanced. Farmers, local leaders and other community members are no longer passive consumers of knowledge coming from researchers, civil servants or practitioners. Although there are some nuances, they also highlighted that capitalization as it is practised in West Africa can also build a system that could be integrated in policy, like it is usually claimed by systematizators in Latin America.

Capitalization approaches have been related to different initiatives in order to document and share experiences and practices from rural development in Africa[27]. Senegal joined the global initiative ILEIA

27 DIMITRA is a participatory information and communication project to improve the visibility of rural populations and women; Project capitalization of good practices to support agricultural production and food security in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal, AfricAdapt in

where small-scale agriculture experiences are shared regionally. The West African journal AGRIDAPE has been promoting the capitalization and knowledge sharing of initiatives of sustainable agriculture with low external inputs in French, led by the Senegalese NGO *IED Afrique*.[28] AGRIDAPE has published 43 electronic journals from 2003, some of them focusing on desertification or climate change adaptation issues, including some examples from Senegal.[29] This is another format to disseminate the result of capitalization exercises, the publication of short articles in open access journals. When IED Afrique's staff was interviewed, they recalled the long semantic discussions around the concept among regions (especially Latin America – West Africa). Although they were aware of the specificities in each region, they agreed they were using a similar approach.

"Capitalization and enhancement of experiences" are meant to build up capital from information or knowledge available in an organization, in order to make them available to other institutions or actors. This is related to the concept of "learning institution or organization", the one which is capable of paying attention to different forms of change in its environment and has the ability to anticipate these changes and modify its behaviour accordingly. The NGO FRAO (West African Rural Foundation) developed a manual firstly in English (Fall & Ndiaye, 2005) and then updated it in French (Fall et al., 2009)[30]. They offered knowledge sharing methods at different levels: within projects, in the villages and intervention areas and at national and international levels. Nevertheless, the real practice of capitalization seems to be still far from this ideal function of promoting learning within organizations and sharing knowledge from experience. A survey about experience capitalization to thirty agriculture development projects, NGOs, associations and experts from West and Central Africa in 2009 showed that 23% conducted capitalizations to document practices and 15% to the usual objectives of project evaluations[31], 15% to improve practices and process. Only 7,7% answered to have used capitalization to foster institutional changes and to influence public or institutional policies (Niand & Fall, 2010).

IED Afrique (*Innovations Environnement Développement)*, a Senegalese NGO, has also been working in developing tools to ease participatory development processes since 2004. They conceived capitalization as a retrospective critical analysis of a development process going beyond accountability requirements from donors. Focusing on lessons, they have adapted concepts arriving from other regions to the West African context. The core of the capitalization approach according to IED Afrique staff is to reconstitute the experience with its main stakeholders, analysing the experience and extracting lessons in a participatory way. They have developed a rich experience capitalizing field experiences[32].

From a methodological standpoint, the first manual of *IED Afrique* is a reference for capitalization in West and Central Africa (IED Afrique; ILEIA, 2007). This is a French adaptation of the ILEIA manual (Chavez-Tafur, Hampson, Ingevall, & Thijssen, 2007). The IED Afrique manual hints that capitalization could be more appropriate to the traditional systems of knowledge sharing in West and Central Africa (than usual evaluation), using more diversified supports, including oral dissemination. It is defended by lots of development practitioners, both Africans and non-Africans, that traditional decision making in West Africa usually encompasses a similar process to capitalization: discussing about what happened in the past, even what happened in other villages or communities in relation to a similar action, in order to take stock of it and decide how to improve it for the future. Images like "l'arbre à palabres" (people sitting around a tree to discuss and decide collectively) are still very powerful images about African rural dynamics.

Others have aso heavily contested this as a naïve idealization of rural Africa. Some authors warned about the challenges and limits of the approach. (Didier, 2010) highlighted the difficulty to organize the collective memory of a project once the exchange among actors on the field is done. Other experts

Senegal, Ghana, Kenya (University of Sussex, United Kingdom), Capitalization of the Regional Initiative World Environment and Combat of desertification (Zoungrana, Reysset, & Ndiaye, 2010).

28 http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/ and http://www.iedafrique.org/AGRIDAPE.html (Accessed on April 19th, 2014).

29 December 2012 (Desertification and farmers' responses), June 2011 (Agroforestry), February 2009 (climate change, between resilience and resistance)

30 The concept of "enhancement approach" in English was translated as "*valorisation*" in French, with a connotation of increasing the value.

31 To analyse results, effects, changes, success factors, difficulties and failures, to draw learning about the process, impact and sustainability.

32 Some examples can be found at http://www.iedafrique.org/-Les-films-de-IED-Afrique-.html (Accessed on August 22, 2014).

interviewed for this research contested the real usefulness of capitalization in West Africa, usually only focused on fetching stakeholders' opinion, without any political appropriation or use to change the fundamentals of development. For instance, Mersadier made an interesting reflection (personal communication, May 2014): "On one hand, Latin American systematization involves a deeper process, including appropriation of the process by stakeholders and impacting their future behaviour, but neglecting the outputs and the quality of supports to communicate or involve peripheral actors. On the other hand, Francophone capitalization usually generates very good supports arising from interesting introspection processes, but the ulterior appropriation is usually neglected or very weakly considered". This is contested by the West African capitalization practitioners interviewed for the research.

1.3.2. Current state of evaluation in Senegal

The systemic and integrated approach to National Evaluation Capacities Development (NECD) (Segone, 2013) was used to critically review the current state of evaluation in Senegal. This model proposes to focus on three complementary levels: the enabling environment, the institutional framework and the individual level. The study on the evaluative capacities endorsed a similar approach ((SenEval, 2008a, 2008b)): the macro level was conceived as the "institutional approach" (agency to frame and promote evaluation practice at the national level), while the meso level was the "organizational approach" (integration of evaluation practice in the administration, including both central ministries, and local collectivities) and the micro level was the "technical approach" (which should facilitate quality evaluation practice through standards and methodologies).

The following scheme portrays the institutional and legal framework for M&E in Senegal. Main actors are the Ministry of Economy and Finances (MEF), the General Accounting Office (*Cours de Comptes*),[33] the National Assembly and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, and DREAT (Office attached to the Presidency). (M. A. Ndiaye & Aw, 2012) recognised weak M&E capacities within the technical ministries. Only the Ministry of Education, Environment, Agriculture, Health and Justice have specific units in charge of issues related to planning and M&E.

33 It is in charge to assess effectiveness and efficiency in relation to costs of goods and services and financial results.

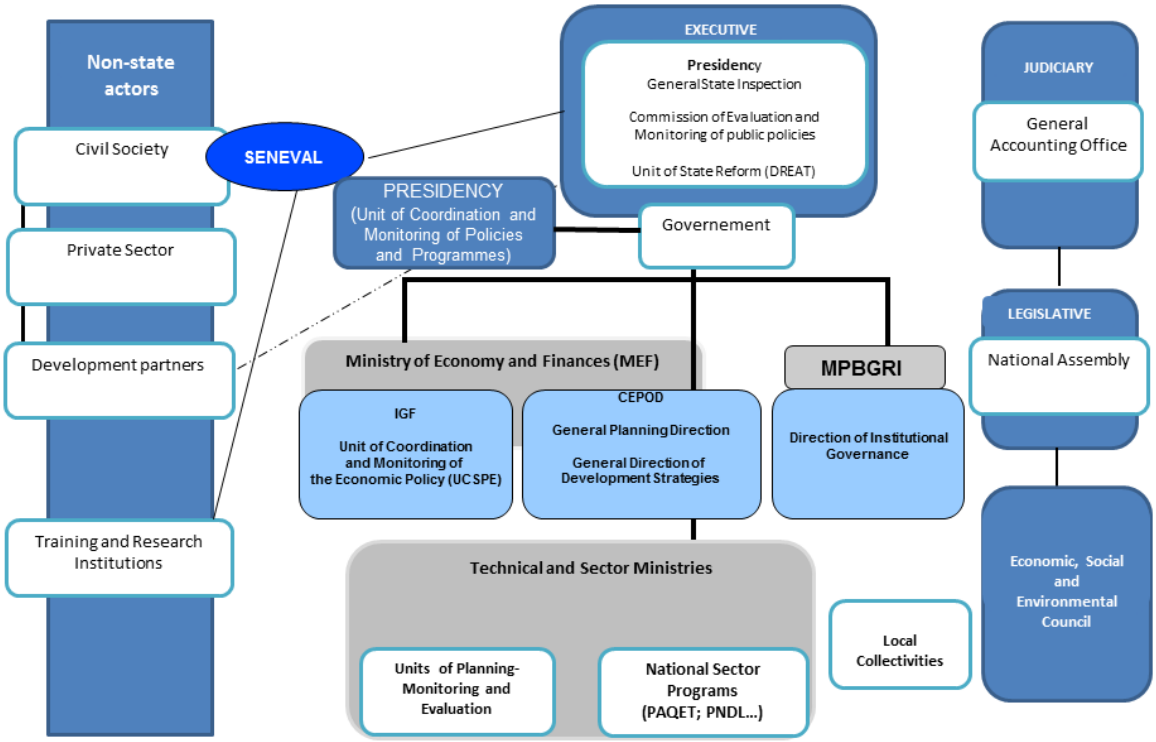


Figure 17. Actors interacting in M&E in Senegal.
Source: Adapted from (M. A. Ndiaye & Aw, 2012)**: page 113 and** (Sow, 2014)

In relation to the enabling environment for evaluation that provides a context that fosters (or hinders) the performance and results of individuals and organizations, some encouraging signs are:

- the establishment of a Commission for the E&M of public policies and programmes (2012),
- the experience regarding the reform of public finance management and procurement systems, in relation to Results-Based Management,
- a strengthened National Office for Statistics and Demography to ensure better quality available data for the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and other monitoring.

There are signs of a growing evaluation culture, although more focused on monitoring, and emphasizing evaluation more for accountability or control than for learning (M. A. Ndiaye & Aw, 2012). The government demand for evaluation is increasingly evident in official discourse if not yet in practice. By the end of 2014 there was no formal evaluation policy in Senegal, nor national evaluation standards or norms. This led to heterogeneous practice using a variety of guidelines and practices from donors. The multiplicity of institutions commissioning and conducting evaluations reflects the lack of clearly assigned roles and responsibilities, hindering attempts to find synergies and complementarities, and frustrating national appropriation of evaluation results. The governance of evaluation is almost inexistent in terms of coordination, transparence, responsibility, rationality and utilization of evaluations (Sow, 2014). Some governmental institutions are cumulating substantive evaluation experience, like the National Planning Department (DPN), as mentioned in 1.3.1. Moreover, the monitoring experience gained through the progress reports on the Poverty Reduction Strategies and sectorial programmes could be consolidated and strengthened from the evaluation point of view. More should be done to empower other stakeholders in demanding evaluation of public policies (citizens, civil society organizations, etc.).

The second aspect of the NECD approach deals with the institutional framework, the system and structures needed to perform and attain results individually as well as collectively as an organization. There is no formal centralized evaluation function, as it is dispersed among different structures (M. A. Ndiaye & Aw, 2012), with no clear quality assurance system of evaluations (apart from the limited experience of DPN with the evaluation of UNDP-supported national execution projects).

The numbers and the expertise in evaluation of staff from the Ministries and the DPN seem to be insufficient, despite some recent training. The evaluation function is almost absent at decentralized level in spite of some initiatives that were deployed with decentralization efforts at the end of 1990's (Sow, 2014). There is no system to report on evaluation findings or to follow evaluation recommendations. Evaluation reports are not kept by line ministries or any other central unit. In response to requests, representatives of government departments tend to suggest contacting the donor who funded the evaluation in order to get the final report, suggesting limited evaluation utilization. This confirms the diagnostics of main evaluation stakeholders in Senegal who denounced the persistence of an evaluation practice addressed to the development aid based on project evaluations, with little public policy evaluation (Sow, 2014).

Finally, at the individual level (knowledge, skills and competencies to perform tasks and manage processes and relationships), capacities to manage evaluations independently and credibly at a senior level in Ministries still need to be reinforced in order to ensure a nationally-led processes. The only advance in this regard is the limited DPN experience as evaluation manager, and the less consistent participation of line ministries in some evaluations. National evaluators are routinely engaged in teams of evaluations usually commissioned by donors[34], although there is no consolidated database of consultants apart from a roster used by the DPN (with about 50 consultants in 2013). There are no overall assessments of the quality of their evaluation deliverables. There are no studies assessing the types of ECD activities that have reached different Senegalese evaluation stakeholders. While some trainings have been offered by DREAT to government officials to strengthen in-country evaluation capacities, some private consultants have acquired some capacities in the local or international evaluation training offer, sometimes helped by bursaries from universities, donors or evaluation associations.

The analysis of the influence of 16 ECD venues from 1990 to 2014 (see Annex B) and the support from regional, continental and global initiatives in the evaluation practice in and from Senegal is difficult to ascertain. The information about the African-promoted conferences is quite scattered. Programmes and general statements can be found, but little information is available about the presentations and final documents after the conference. In general, there has not been a steady Senegalese representation in these ECD events over the years. Mainly representatives from donor's agencies, research institutions and consultants, as well as some staff from the Ministry of Education and the DPN participated to some of those ECD events. In lots of cases they did not deliver a presentation about the advances of evaluation practice from Senegal. Moreover, restitutions about the main debates do not seem to follow once institutional actors are back in Senegal[35].

The supply of local evaluation training (7 Senegal-based institutions) was analyzed by (Traoré, 2008). M&E training was usually integrated in broader academic training programmes (usually Bachelors or Masters), there was no specific certified training programme on public policy, programme and project evaluation. Different short-courses (less than 90 hours) on programme and project M&E were available. The usual curricula comprised: evaluation process, indicators, data collection and analysis methods, economic evaluation, and impact evaluation. Weak internal capacities in the interviewed training institutions (number of in-house trainers in evaluation) were found, with external expertise not always available, especially in public policy evaluation. The current situation does not seem to have significantly changed. Nevertheless, the establishment of the CLEAR-CESAG Centre has offered an interesting opportunity for enhancing evaluation practice in Senegal and the sub-region. The Dakar-

34 Results in Chapter 3 showed that national evaluators participated in 72% of evaluations of SLM interventions, although in 40% of cases his or her role was not clear within a mixt evaluation team led by an international consultant.
35 There was just an experience in 2012 when SenEval organized a restitution seminar after the 6th AfrEA Conference in Ghana.

based *Centre Africain d'Etudes Supérieures en Gestion (*CESAG) and the CLEAR Initiative[36] aim at creating a critical mass of professionals and trainers in evaluation, as well as offering support to evaluation national systems (and national evaluation networks or associations) and promoting applied research. They have organized formal trainings about Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation and exploring ways to launch a Masters' programme in 2015.

SenEval has also organized various half-day or one day professional exchanges and ad hoc trainings since 2011.[37] Although not quantified, SenEval's newsletter has also fostered the participation of members in different online evaluation trainings and their participation in formal courses. For the past years, 13 Senegalese have attended the PIFED evaluation professional training (6 women and 7 men) and 16 have joined the French spoken course in Burkina Faso co-organized by the University of Wageningen. SenEval's "core members" have also accompanied and mentored other members for their participation in international conferences and for publishing in specialized evaluation journals.

In relation to the training about capitalization and participatory evaluation approaches in Senegal, according to interviews, FRAO and *IED Afrique* have organized several trainings in capitalization for the past years, depending on the demand. Some of them were more theoretical and based on their own experience on capitalization, while others were part of an overall technical assistance support and accompany a capitalization exercise with an organization. IED Afrique trained several agriculture research institutions, NGOs, community organizations and local cities in Senegal and Mali to support farmers' experimentation and innovations on Natural Resources Management. This programme pretended, among others, to accelerate the dissemination of those innovations and to promote political and institutional arrangements recognising the relevance of farmers' knowledge and their innovative capacities. Other organizations active in training of these approaches (ex. F3E) declared a similar practice. Some Belgian and Swiss NGOs were also mentioned during interviews as having promoted some key training on self-evaluation that highly influenced the current practice of capitalization in West Africa. For instance, the Senegalese NGO Federation (FONGS) received extensive support to conduct these types of exercises with producers' organizations.

1.3.3. Evaluation of SLM in Senegal; strengths and challenges

The majority of the Sahelian countries have cumulated a good array of SLM experiences, some more isolated and localized, others covering more extensive areas. These endogenous and exogenous development processes are mostly to be systematized and shared. They often remains a local resource, unavailable to others who work in the same area (Zâhringer, 2010). After some decades of initiatives to overcome the poverty-land degradation trap in developing countries, little is known about the effectiveness of SLM initiatives on the ground. Few studies on the theory and practice of the M&E of SLM have been conducted in Senegal (pers.comm. André Sacko, Focal Point of the UNCCD in Senegal, May 2012). According to the discussions at the Subregional Workshop on SLM and climate change held in April 2010 and some literature review, it is easier to find pieces of research in other neighbor countries like Niger or Burkina Faso than in Senegal ((Reij & Steeds, 2003); (Botoni & Reij, 2009)).

36 CLEAR (Regional Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results) is a multiregional initiative to strengthen national M&E and performance management capacity in order to achieve development outcomes. See http://www.theclearinitiative.org/index.html (CLEAR, 2010).
37 Principles and methods on evaluation by Prof J Bradley Cousins, University of Ottawa (April 2011), Progress and challenges on Impact Evaluation by Duflo and Watine, Innovations for Poverty Action (July 2011), Public policy evaluation by Fred Carden from Canadian Coperation (October 2011), Various trainings on different evaluation roles and stages by Prof Marie Gervais (January 2012, June and July 2013, January 2014), Real World Evaluatoin by Jim Rugh, Oumou Tall and Monica Lomena (May 2012), NGO and capacity building on M&E for the NGO sector by SenEval (July 2014), Challenges and perspectives for young evaluators by SenEval/CLEAR (September 2014), Media and evaluation by Seneval/CLEAR (Octobre 2014).

The consideration of SLM as a multidisciplinary sector[38] was only acknowledged in Senegalese policy documents at the end of the 1990's, with the National Action Plan against desertification (PAN/LCD) and following the international debates around the UNCDD. Therefore the evaluation practice of those interventions was mainly done from uni-sectorial approaches until those years. For instance, the Forest Unit (DEFCSS) of the Ministry of Environment conducted a compendium of 30 forest development projects implemented between 1975 and 1992 (estimated investment of around USD 100 million). The document recognised the impossibility to assess their impact on combatting desertification due to lack of data and M&E schemes. In general terms it was acknowledged that the evaluation of forest projects of this period showed a clear gap between stated objectives and results on the ground (MEPN, 1998).

Most of the actions against desertification in Senegal have been conducted within the framework of development programmes or projects**.** According to the PAN/LCD (MEPN, 1998), this hinders the evaluation of their effectiveness because of difficulties to separate them from global investments of the sectors where they intervene (agriculture, livestock, water, etc). Moreover, it is denounced that some international cooperation partners do not report their work to forestry services, which does not enable any national appropriation of evaluation results for policy making (World Bank, 2008). Reforestation and natural forests management have been mostly led by forest services of the Ministry of Environment of Senegal. Nevertheless, the evaluations of those endeavours neither fulfil the requirements of sound evaluation according to international standards nor the recommendations of Sustainable Development (SD) evaluation. They do not encompass broader socioeconomic and ecological objectives and effects, but only deal with technical indicators of plant survival.

One of the SLM success stories in Senegal is related to the dunes fixation in the Northern coastline (*bande de filao*). This long-term intervention was conceived by main Senegalese environment stakeholders as a "national endeavour" with some donor support. There have only been assessments of this intervention from the scientific and technical forest sector side (FAO, 2011), and has been included in the WOCAT SLM documentation efforts ((D. S. Ndiaye & Touré, 2010); (Zähringer, 2010)). This research did not find any evidence of the use of these studies in the evaluation of the separate donor-funded projects. The Senegalese part of the "Sahel Study" also analysed the SLM success story of the coastal dunes fixation in Senegal, along with other SLM-related projects that started in the 1980's[39]. It offered some qualitative assessment of their contribution to the betterment of ecological and socioeconomic indicators in their intervention zones (Dieng et al., 2008).

The absence of a strategic monitoring framework and applied environmental research was identified as the main limit for institutions and donors to measure the effectiveness of policies and programmes that aim to improve the state of the environment (CSE, 2005). This was already observed in the Country Environmental Analysis in 1994. The creation of the Unit of Studies, Planning and Monitoring (CEPS) within the Ministry of Environment in 2003 and the support to the CSE since the 2000 tried to change this situation (Vanderlinde, 2005). The advances in relation to the CEPS are still considered very incipient (World Bank, 2008). Apart from the elaboration of Annual Performance reports and the Mid-term Sector Environment Framework, consolidating programmes and assigning indicators by CEPS, a coherent evaluation has yet to be done. All these efforts seem to mirror the practice of Poverty Reduction Papers since 2002, where environment is still considered as a transversal dimension, and performing monitoring is privileged over evaluation.

[38] Literature distinguishes between multidisciplinarity (the juxtaposition of the contribution of different disciplines where each one remains with its definitions and methods), interdisciplinarity (the coordination and integration of different disciplines for a shared goal), and transdisciplinarity (the combination of the contribution of different disciplines to generate a more comprehensive level of understanding, combining concepts and knowledge, not only from research, but also from civil society, the private sector, public administrators and the public). The origins of these debates are placed in the 19th century when "disciplinarity" was promoted through the specialization and fragmentation of academic disciplines (Lawrence, 2010).

39 PREVINOBA (Village reforestation project in the Northern part of the peanut basin) with Natural Assisted Regeneration, dykes, organic manuring; PAGERNA (Autopromotion and management of natural resources in the Sine Saloum) with salted lands restoration including anti-salt dikes; and PROGEDE (Sustainable and participatory management of traditional energy sources and substitution) with management of natural forest in the Southern and South Eastern part of the country.

The Ecological Monitoring Centre (CSE) has been doing significant endeavours to overcome data limitations of M&E of SLM in Senegal. For instance, generating time series about the Ecological, Forest and Pastoral Information System from 1993 and the Network of Observatories of long-term ecological monitoring from 2000 (André et al., 2011). Moreover, applied environmental research projects like the Land Degradation Assessment (LADA) project funded by GEF, FAO and UNEP developed methodologies to assess the impact of land degradation on productivity and ecosystem services in dryland areas, both at national and local scales (D. S. Ndiaye & Touré, 2010). The combination of remote sensing, field level assessments and local experts' judgments has been tested in Senegal as one of six pilot countries. These methodologies were not used in any of the most recent project evaluations analysed in this study. This demonstrates the weak links between these strands of work.

From the scientific and knowledge management perspective, WOCAT has also promoted the documentation of SLM experiences in Senegal since 1998. A quick survey conducted by the CSE documented 20 SLM techniques inherited by Senegalese farmers. Only some of them were promoted by NGOs or national technical services, most of them are traditional practices or a combination with modern techniques[40] (D. S. Ndiaye & Touré, 2010). The document included, among others, an overall description of the measure, approach and techniques according to the WOCAT methodology, including their socioeconomic, sociocultural, ecological impacts. When searching in the WOCAT Database, 29 SLM technologies are recorded in Senegal, three of them were chosen in the compilation of SLM best practices in Sub-Saharan Africa (the sand dune fixation and two other experiences of smallholders' irrigation management to improve the efficiency of water use) (WOCAT, 2011).

From a broader environmental perspective, several donors have tried to help evidence-based policy-making in the environmental sector in Senegal through the financing of major diagnosis or overall programme evaluations. For instance, the German cooperation commissioned a study about the evolution of the environmental policy in Senegal since 1960 (Ngaido, 2002), FAO promoted a 30-year country-level evaluation about their cooperation with Senegal in terms of forestry (Tapsoba, E.K., 2003) and a study about the forest management options (Bodian, 2006). In 2008, the World Bank published the Country Environmental Analysis (CEA) of Senegal. A previous one was published in 1994 (World Bank, 2008).

Moreover, some donors conducted evaluations of their overall partnership in environment with Senegal. This is the case of the 10-year assessment of the Canadian cooperation that concluded that better planning was necessary to go beyond a weak transversal consideration of environment in their programme (CIDA, 2011). The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)'s Country Programme Evaluations offered 4-year retrospective assessment of several projects, most of them entailing significant SLM components. Interesting policy-level directions are jointly proposed and a dialogue with national authorities seem to be established through their agreed recommendations ((IFAD, 2004a); (IFAD, 2014)). Other donors intervening in different sectors conducted thematic evaluations related to SLM. Some are insufficient for policy-making purposes, like the German cooperation overview of 6 of their projects with objectives related to environmental protection and poverty alleviation, mainly focused on a synthetic information form by project (GTZ, 2004). The option explored by the JICA's programme evaluation of environmental sector put together the evaluation of 4 projects, but replicating the strict focus on their logframes and with very little data about results beyond direct outputs from activities (International, 2004). Following the Paris Declaration commitments, the Dutch cooperation promoted the programme support and later budget support in the environment sector in Senegal from 2003 (Metameta-Management et al, 2008)). The subsequent evaluations of this aid modality have been focused on indicators of governance and financial reforms and technical and financial execution following national procedures in relation to an agreed performance matrix.

40 Stone contour and lived hedges, the combination of fallow, biannual rotation and mulching with millet waste, the Natural Assisted Regeneration and afforestation of *rônier* (*Borassus aethiopum*), used for handicrafts, fuelwood and palm wine, microwatering (drop by drop system) for vegetables cultivation, forest management in Casamance, and the regeneration of the mangrove. The cross-border Great Green Wall Project is also included among the SLM success stories.

In spite of lack of data and difficulties to apprehend all SLM-related interventions, the Senegalese government has been submitting reports to show its progress towards the international commitments of the UN Conventions ratified. For instance, the national report about the progress of the UNCCD ((MEPN, 2002); (B. Ba, 2014)), of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (MEPN, 2010), of the UN Sustainable Development Conference ((MEF, 2008); (MEPN, 2012)). Nevertheless, all these reports are more focused on listing the projects completed and those under formulation than sharing an overview of the progress of environmental key indicators. Only the national policy document about climate change, National Climate Change Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) (MEPN, 2006), was evaluated beyond this type of performance reporting (UNEP, 2008). The evaluation praised the creation of CEPS in charge of linking the ministries initiatives with the MTEF and PRS initiatives. Nevertheless, it warned about the weak implementation of the NAPA due to delays in resources mobilization. Some authors are very critical about this policy document because they consider that it does not offer details in terms of identification of the basic problems to be addressed and it provides very limited sources of information about potential pathways, with very general information about types of adaptation solutions (Reenberg, 2012).

Since its approval in 1998, the National Programme for Desertification Fighting (MEPN, 1998) has not been updated. According to interviewees, this process started in 2011, but it is still to be accomplished by the end of 2014. Senegal was one of the countries that tried to report on impact indicators under the UNCCD finding the same challenges as other countries. For instance, difficulties to class and make comparable across countries indicators such as land cover and measures of land productivity, necessary to calculate the percentage of people living under the poverty line in DLDD (drought, land desertification and desertification) affected areas. The work to refine the impact indicators of the Convention recommends to include “storylines” which could allow including key findings of project-level evaluations of SLM interventions (UNCCD, 2013a). Therefore, international definitions of indicators and measures related to DLDD are still under debate.

In spite of the collective recognition of the absence of systematic assessment of the worth and merit of SLM interventions in Senegal for the past decades, some documents venture to make some generalizations: "*the analysis of interventions to fight desertification indicates that all planned desertification control activities were implemented but with limited success*" (World Bank, 2008). It considered that only the small-scale activities of NGOs (reforestation and corrective measures) produced good results, thanks to their proximity to reality and their direct contact with local people" (World Bank, 2008). Not further evidence is offered to back up this conclusion. This was also reflected in some of the project-level evaluations analysed in this study that attributed environmental and socioeconomic changes to the intervention with very little evidence.

There is urgent need to study all these scattered streams of theoretical and applied research and practice related to SLM evaluation in Senegal, within the trends towards fostering national-led evaluation and the specific challenges of Sustainable Development evaluation in developing contexts. The following chapter presents the methodology and theoretical framework proposed to respond to the objectives of this study to enlarge the body of evaluative knowledge about the main strengths and challenges associated to the real-world evaluation practice of SLM initiatives.

Chapter 2: Research methodology and theoretical framework

2.1. Research objectives and methodology

2.1.1. Research objectives and hypotheses

This research pretends to enlarge the body of evaluative knowledge and to reveal the main strengths and challenges of the real-world evaluation practice of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) initiatives in Senegal. The research questions, hypotheses and assumptions used were the following:

Table 5. Research questions, subquestions and hypotheses.

Research question 1: To what extent the practice of SLM evaluation in Senegal satisfies the requirements of sound evaluation (question of "merit") and meets various audiences' needs (question of "worth")?	
Subquestions	Hypotheses and assumptions
1.1: What is the current state of evaluation practice in Senegal, including its enabling environment, institutional framework and main actors and their capacities, with special emphasis on SLM evaluation?	Evaluation practice mainly dominated by donors, but some changes in the last years towards national-led evaluation and countrywide evaluation system. Clear political commitments are expected to be found as a sign of the endorsement of the Senegalese government to the international trends, to strengthen national evaluation systems and policies and to integrate evaluation in the legislative framework. Some pilot public policy evaluations or the approval of legislative frameworks and national funds should be, at least, on discussion to show the prospects to move beyond the accountability-oriented evaluations of aid development projects and programmes. Being one of the aid development hub in West Africa, it is expected that institutional and civil society actors have extensively benefited from Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) opportunities in the region over the last decades, especially trainings and participation in other ECD events The hypothesis of this study is that SLM evaluation in Senegal is less formalized than other sectors and very heterogeneous and scattered across different actors and levels.
1.2: What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the designs and processes of real-world SLM evaluations in Senegal?	It is assumed that the information about the conception of evaluations is limited and there is no evidence that ToR are crafted for each evaluation as a result of the dialogue to clarify purposes and uses of evaluation by different stakeholders, but mostly responding to donors' requirements. Moreover, reports do not include detailed discussion about the main challenges during the evaluation process and the limitations of the methodology used. It is expected to find a variety of evaluation arrangements, but donors still mainly dominate most evaluation processes and designs tend to be overambitious and not revisited during evaluation process.
1.3: What are the types and levels of participation of different stakeholders involved in the evaluation of SLM interventions? To what extent could evaluation practice become more inclusive in the future?	It is assumed that the understanding of the concept of participation and its operationalization in project-level evaluations is very limited, mostly controlled by institutional stakeholders, with very restricted participation of civil society and local actors. Most evaluations only entail just information and consultation with stakeholders. Little reflection about trade-offs and value added of participation in evaluation. As analysed in Section 2.3, capitalization involves a wider and deeper participation process with special emphasis on local-level stakeholders and the enhancement of their knowledge and practices.
Research question 2: What are the proposals from different evaluation actors in Senegal to solve SLM evaluation challenges identified in the literature?	
Subquestions	Hypotheses and assumptions
2.1: What is the influence of different narratives over the conceptualization of DLDD (Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought) and over the policy-making and evaluation practice in Senegal?	It is assumed that the evolution of international debates about DLDD influenced policy and interventions in the Sahel, and more specifically in Senegal. It also expected that mainstream degradation narratives are pervasive in policy documents and perceptions of key environment staff in Senegal in spite of timid incorporation of counter-narratives, impacting on the evaluation practice.

2.2: What are the main proposals identified by SLM evaluations in Senegal in relation to the specific challenges of evaluating Natural Resources Management (NRM) interventions of the literature?	It is assumed that project-level evaluations do not formally engage with the research on SD evaluation and do not discuss how to face specific evaluation challenges from this sector, but some scattered information can be found in reports and through interviews to reconstruct this issue. Evaluations are guided by projects' logframes and not by best practices from SD evaluation recommending encompassing socioeconomic and ecological objectives. It is expected that aid development evaluation (mainly dominated by social sciences) and environmental research practices are not supporting each other. This will probably yield a situation where some evaluation practice is focused on promoting nationally-led evaluation using OECD evaluation criteria and other is more engaged in environmental impact assessment and sector-based approaches. .
Research question 3 To what extent and for what purposes have SLM evaluations in Senegal been utilized to inform public policy-making and aid development effectiveness?	
Subquestions	Hypotheses and assumptions
3.1: Who are the main evaluation users of SLM evaluation practice and what types of utilization do they privilege?	The premise is that SLM evaluation reports are scattered but easily accessible through national authorities' representatives in charge of the administrative supervision of projects and interventions that use them for policy-making purposes. Nevertheless, it is expected that some of them will only be available at donors' headquarters offices because they are mainly oriented by accountability purposes to inform citizen and tax payers in the North about the results of interventions. Heterogeneous declared uses of evaluations are anticipated, among them accountability, improvement of future interventions, learning and policy-making within the SLM sector and improving evaluation practice in general. Problems to capture the level and type of evaluation utilization from the information contained in reports are foreseen, requiring complementary interviews with key stakeholders
3.2: What is the real current level of evaluation utilization and to what extent is it possible to identify a trend towards more country-led evaluation use in Senegal	A limited level of utilization of evaluation is anticipated, with differences among evaluation stakeholders at different levels. It is expected to find more cases where donors' accountability needs are privileged at the beginning of the sampling period with a certain trend towards a more active role of different national stakeholders in the management and delivery of evaluation processes.

2.1.2. Methodology and scope of the research

This research has used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. It has been influenced by previous work and experience in international development evaluation in Latin America and West Africa (See Annex C). Some preliminary fieldwork was needed to ground the thesis proposal, establish key contacts to contextualize the scarce number of indexed journal articles found and access grey literature about evaluation practice in Senegal and West Africa.

One of the methods most used in this research was document review. Key stakeholders in Senegal shared internal documents that only exist in draft version and are not stored in any library or electronic database. Different exchanges and interviews with them were the basis to understand their context and future prospects. Participant observation was possible through a continuous presence in Senegal (2010-2014), which allowed conducting extensive and repeated interviews and an ongoing validation of emerging findings. The participation in several conferences on aid development also offered key information to study the main international trends that have impelled advances in the enabling environment, institutional framework and individual capacities of the Senegalese evaluation community.

Meta-evaluation (MEv) was chosen as the analytical and methodological framework to apprehend the evaluation practice in Senegal. Additional specific techniques were crafted for studying capitalizations and the overall state of evaluation capacities. The main sources of information and data collection and analysis techniques user are summarized below, organized according to the capters of this thesis.

Table 6. Research sources of information and specific data collection and analysis techniques.

Chapter	Main research sources of information, data collection and analysis methods
Chapter 1	Analysis of journal articles and grey literature about land degradation and desertification at international and regional level, with special focus in documents emerging from international conventions and institutions like UNCDD, CILSS, among others. Discourse and content analysis of the National Action Programme (NAP) to implement the UNCDD (MEPN, 1998); Climate change NAPA (MEPN, 2006), Country Environmental Analysis (World Bank, 2008), some scattered academic articles to analyse the main debates around SLM and DLDD and their influence in SLM policy making in Senegal and to diagnose the current state of evaluation in Senegal. Interviews with key civil servants and key experts in the region and in Senegal. Grey literature about SenEval and other evaluation associations. Interviews with SenEval's stakeholders and staff from governmental structures, research institutions and the private sector in Senegal. The systemic and integrated approach to National Evaluation Capacities Development (Segone, 2013) to analyse the state of evaluation practice.
Chapter 2	Data collection to find evaluation reports: 4 workshops held in Senegal in 2010, systematic bibliographic search, websearch and contacts with key SLM and evaluation stakeholders in Senegal from August 2012 to January 2014 and others (see more information below). In order to choose the main analytical framework, the following sources of information were used: journal articles on meta-evaluation (mainly the work of Scriven, Stufflebeam and more recent researchers from Western Michigan University Evaluation Centre);[41] online grey literature on standards, guidelines; web search and analysis of 23 examples of application of Meta-evaluation in aid development evaluation. Development of a tailored MEv analytical framework for SLM evaluations. Bibliography on systematization from Latin America; grey literature and research thesis about capitalization in the Francophone development world; Delphi methodology with a group of 16 experts and practitioners. Development of an analytical framework for capitalizations.
Chapter 3	Application of the Meta-evaluation analytical framework (See section 2.2) to 40 project evaluations and application of the specific framework to 9 capitalizations (See Section 2.3); Basic descriptive statistics (average, dispersion, among others) and qualitative narrative analysis and application of the analytical framework; narrative analysis.
Chapter 4	Extra contacts with key evaluation stakeholders of the three case studies chosen to access complementary documents to inform the context of the evaluation process (Terms of Reference, minutes of recruitment processes, inception or methodological notes, draft versions of reports, any restitution documents or evidence showing the utilization of the evaluation). Tailored interview protocols by type of stakeholder on the basis of the MEv analytical framework. Interview with key evaluation stakeholders of the three case studies, emphasis on the process and utilization, as well as the overall evaluation function in each case.

The targeted evaluations were related to agriculture and food security interventions promoting sustainable practices, forestry interventions, integrated Natural Resources Management (NRM) with objectives related to environmental protection or sustainable use of natural resources, and climate-change mitigation interventions in rural areas. They were usually classed according to their scale as community-based, programme/project or national policy ((Bours et al., 2013); (UNDP, 2007)). The general criteria for selecting evaluations to be included in the MEv were:

1. Interventions focused in the Sahelian and desertification-prone areas of Senegal (those just focused on the tropical area or dealing with coastal management were discarded)[42],
2. Interventions with field activities involving Natural Resources Management (NRM) focused on soil and water (land) management (projects only related to training, institutional strengthening and information management were rejected),
3. Evaluations released after 2000 (date of publication of the report),
4. Evaluation reports conducted by external or mixed teams[43].

41 http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/

42 Initially the research was geographically focused on the groundnut basin of Senegal (centre and centre-East). After data collection, it was enlarged to all arid and semi-arid regions of the country, since the majority of SLM interventions covered various ecoregions.

43 Various stakeholders contacted sent ex-ante feasibility evaluations, audits, final monitoring project reports or specific studies as "evaluation reports ». They were excluded because they do not entail a valuing exercise (see definition of evaluation in the Introduction section).

The process of searching the evaluation reports started in 2010 with the organization of four workshops where main SLM stakeholders presented their work (see Annex C). A systematic bibliographic review, contacts with stakeholders and web search complemented the data collection strategy.

Table 7. Main stages of search of evaluation reports.

Date	Activity	Result of evaluation reports found
August 2010	Four workshops organized in 2010	Preliminary list of 20 SLM interventions
September 2010 - August 2011	Review of grey literature and a general web search Review of the study submitted to the UNCCD from Senegal	50 potential evaluations
September 2011 - January 2014	Contacts (email, telephone and physical meetings) with key SLM and evaluation stakeholders in Senegal and the donor community and web search (see the detail below).	40 project evaluations, 9 capitalizations and 7 country evaluations found

Five types of stakeholders were contacted to see if they had copies of the evaluations. In chronological order, firstly, *national authorities* were contacted. They had either a planning-evaluation role either or sector supervision competencies:

- Senegalese authorities in charge of the approval, monitoring and evaluation of development projects at the central level (Ministry of Economy and Finances): DCEF (Financial and Economic Cooperation Department) and DPN (National Planning Department).
- DREAT (Unit depending on the President's Cabinet assisting different Ministries in terms of technical assistance for planning, implementation and evaluation).
- Evaluation Focal Point of the Ministry of Environment; Director and Deputy Director of the Unit specialized in Forest and Soil Conservation (DEFCSS).
- Evaluation Focal Point of Ministry of Agriculture.
- Evaluation Focal Point of Ministry of Livestock.

Secondly, and following the recommendations of national authorities, *donors* were contacted (AfDB, IDRC, CIDA, Canada, FAO, French Cooperation Agency), both their Evaluation Offices and Country Offices. The electronic databases of Evaluation Units and Environment and Agriculture departments were screened. Thirdly, the *project teams* of SLM interventions were contacted by email. Lots of those addresses were no longer working. Fourthly, NGO's staff was contacted to find the evaluation reports of the SLM interventions listed in their websites (Senegalese NGO Federation (CONGAD), Green Senegal, SOS Sahel, FRAO, Enda, Apecs, Re.Te, IUCN, Hunger Project, *IED Afrique*, Asiford, World Vision, Plan Kaolack, CECI, Caritas and Symbiose). Finally, a list of *resource persons* was contacted (university researchers, key SLM stakeholders in other research centres).

In parallel, the web-based repositories of the National Unit to Support Projects and Programmes (CAP)[44] and the database of the Ministry of Environment[45] were screened. The library of the DPN and the DEFCSS of the Ministry of Environment in Dakar was visited. The e-library of the Community of Practice of Climate Change evaluation promoted by the Global Environmental Facility[46] was screened, but no evaluations of SLM/CC interventions in Senegal were included.

A total of 85 staff from these five types of stakeholders were contacted (by email, telephone or personal meeting). The most effective means to find the reports was the scrutiny of electronic databases in donors' websites. Project teams and donors (mainly at headquarters' offices) were also very helpful for finding 21 reports more. Eleven reports were found through national authorities.

44 Basins and artificial lakes department, Cabinet of the Minister, Environment and classified enterprises department, Water, Forest, Hunting and Soils Conservation department, National Parks department (http://www.capmef.gouv.sn/categorie-projets.php?id_categorie=2 Accessed on August 15, 2012).
45 http://www.environnement.gouv.sn/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=57, last accessed on March 28th 2014.
46 https://www.climate-eval.org/eLibrary accessed on July, 28th, 2014.

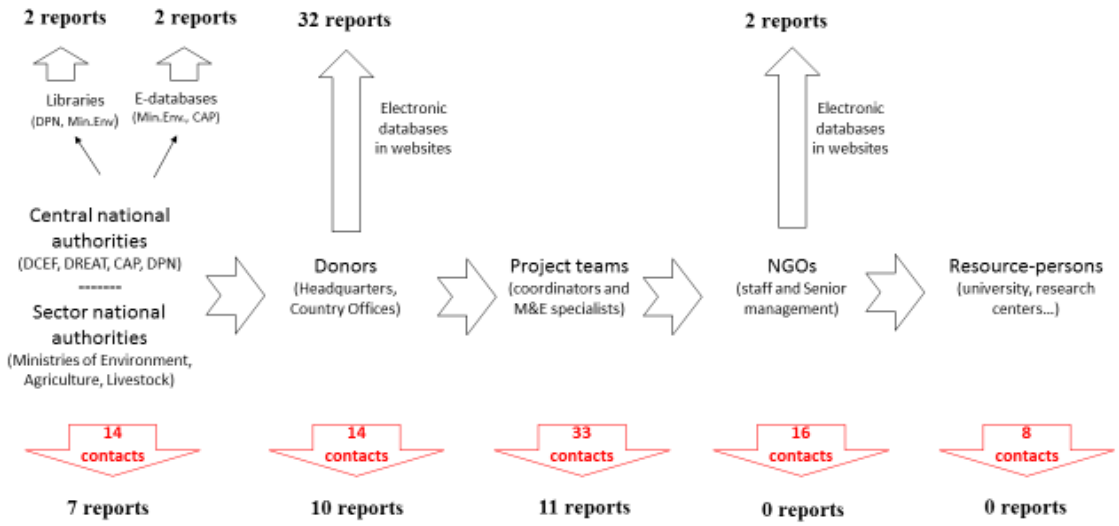


Figure 18. Data collection effort to find the evaluation reports.

A total of 66 evaluation reports were found. They were classed in three categories: project-level evaluations, capitalizations and country evaluations. Additional 34 reports were identified but not found. The complete list of 100 evaluation reports with their names, donor/implementer and the type of evaluation is included in Annex E.

Table 8. Summary of the potential and found evaluation reports by types.

	Number of evaluation reports (some evaluated twice or more)	Summary of study's scope
Project Evaluations found	40	**56** reports found
Country evaluations found	7	
Capitalizations found	9	
Project evaluations found but discarded	10	**10** reports discarded
Project Evaluations not found	34	**34** reports not found
TOTAL	100	**100** evaluation reports

Staff from the different Ministries related to SLM recognised their difficulties to access final versions of evaluation reports, usually only available by project team staffs or donors' representatives. This echoed the coordination problems highlighted some years before in the evaluation of the Forestry Action Plan in Senegal (Ba, Niang, & Niang, 2002). The study found that the problem of availability of evaluation reports by key national partners was still unresolved. Similarly, when contacting donors' country offices, staff recommended contacting Evaluation Units at headquarters. This confirmed the tendency of evaluation as a central function and the information sharing challenges within organizations. Finally, some key documents about the environmental sector in Senegal praised the level of activity of civil society in this sector (World Bank, 2008). This research got very low response rates to the requests of information from NGOs, so the high level of activeness could not be confirmed, at least from the evaluation side.

There was not a coherent bulk of evaluations of interventions at the policy level. This subset of evaluation reports (identified as "country evaluations" in Annex E) was very diverse, encompassing the evaluation of the overall portfolio of a donor in Senegal including some SLM projects (for example the IFAD or the Canadian cooperation Country Evaluations[47]) or the evaluation of the environment-related

47 (IFAD, 2004a); (IFAD, 2014); (CIDA, 2011)

interventions of a donor (for example, the German, the Japanese or FAO[48]). Other interesting examples were the budget-support evaluations conducted by the Dutch cooperation[49]. These few evaluations were used to inform the context of the research, especially Section 1.3.3. The data collection also captured the diversity of practice in Senegal. As highlighted in Section 1.3.1, various civil society organizations in Senegal have been working in participatory approaches. Some of the "evaluation reports" received had the word "capitalization" in their titles. They substituted project evaluations, and although they seemed to respond to some of the usual evaluation functions, some stakeholders attributed other purposes to them. A "desk audit" (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011)(Yarbrough et al., 2011) of the evaluation reports was conducted in order to assess their level of information completeness. A total of 10 project evaluations reports were discarded because they did not have sufficient information. They were identified in Annex E as "discarded". The summary of the scope of the study is shown below:

According to key staff at donors' offices and sector ministries in Senegal various reasons could explain why some of these potential evaluation reports were not found. Some were not evaluated following the Evaluation Policies of donors (projects under certain budget threshold or time duration) because donors changed their Evaluation Policies. This is a trend towards the delegation of the decision of which projects are evaluated to their country and regional offices. Other projects were not evaluated through a project-level evaluation but integrated into a Country Programme Evaluation by the donor. Moreover, lots of evaluations of interventions announced in different NGOs' websites (or even in the SLM workshops organized in 2010) could not be found. Only a few NGOs recognised they were not evaluated and national authorities were not informed.

The most active development partners in the battle against land degradation in Senegal have been France, the US aid cooperation, Germany, Italy, Canada, the European Union, the Netherlands, and Japan (bilateral) and UNDP, FAO, IFAD, UEMOA, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank (multilateral), with funds from GEF, UNCCD and the CILSS (World Bank, 2008). The set of evaluations found reflected this concentration of sources and implementers with some exceptions. This is maybe due to the use of NGO or decentralized entities to implement them, or the nature of their interventions, more focused on institutional or capacity strengthening. It was not possible to get the information about the budget of 25 of the 40 projects that were included in the evaluation set, amounting almost USD 200 million (See Chapter 3). Overall diagnosis of the SLM sector considered the total investment in SLM in Senegal around USD 643 million, including some expensive infrastructure projects beyond the sampling criteria of this study, like rural water and sanitation and traditional agriculture interventions (with no SLM components). Considering this and after a long and systematic search of evaluation reports, it can be considered that the set of 40 project evaluations and 9 capitalizations was representative of the SLM evaluation practice conducted in Senegal from 2000 to 2013.

2.2. Meta-evaluation as the theoretical framework to study SLM project evaluations.

Meta-evaluation (MEv) is proposed as the main theoretical and analytical approach to study the evaluation practice around SLM in Senegal, especially for project evaluations. This section defines the concept of MEv, its main types, functions and uses. It is also distinguished from other evaluation synthesis methodologies (like meta-analysis and systematic review). The actual practice of MEv in aid development evaluation is also explored through the analysis of 23 meta-evaluative exercises to portray how the concept has been applied.

MEv is used from its theoretical function to assess the role of evaluation for management purposes in a concrete policy sector, its adequacy and opportunity, and its contribution to the accomplishment of evaluation function ((Scriven, 1969); (Bustelo, 2002)). Therefore, the role of this MEv is ascriptive (Scriven, 2012), for research purposes, to enlarge the body of evaluative knowledge for benefit of the discipline and for improving the evaluation function around the concrete policy sector of SLM in Senegal. The research proposed an analytical framework to meta-evaluate a set of 40 evaluations of

48 (GTZ, 2000) (GTZ, 2004)(International, 2004)(Metameta-Management et al, 2008)
49 (Vanderlinde et al., 2011)

SLM interventions in Senegal *expost* facto (when evaluations were finished), externally (with no previous involvement in any of the evaluations analysed) and focusing on the design, process, results and utilization of the set of evaluations.

The last section presents the stages to develop the MEv analytical framework and the final result: a tailored checklist based on internationally-recognised standards that was applied to the 40 evaluation reports (Chapter 3) and used more in-depth in three case studies (Chapter 4). Capitalizations were considered as a specific subset of evaluation practice. The MEv framework proposed could not be fully applied to them. The theoretical and methodological proposal to apprehend them is presented in Section 2.3 as well as in Annex G.

2.2.1. What is and what is not Meta-evaluation?

Definitions, perspectives and functions of Meta-evaluation

MEv is usually defined as "the evaluation of evaluations", and it implies the evaluation of evaluators ((Scriven, 1991) in (Bustelo, 2002)). MEv is also described as "the systematic review of evaluations to determine the quality of their processes and findings" (Cooksy & Caracelli, 2005). In a similar line of thought, it is also defined as "the systematic research whose objective is to issue a judgment about the worth and merit of an evaluation". (Wingate, 2009) cites Stufflebeam: the fundamental question of "worth" is related to the extent to which evaluation satisfies the audiences' needs for evaluative information, while "merit" looks at how well it meets the requirements of a sound evaluation.

A key author in MEv proposed its use for checking for problems such as bias, technical error, administrative difficulties, and misuse ((Stufflebeam, 1974); (Stufflebeam, 2001)). Therefore, the focus is on how evaluations are done, not only on the results or findings of the evaluations. This is a key distinction in this study. Evaluation results (or evaluation result) are considered as the evaluation report and any other materials, the outputs of the evaluation process. MEv is not focused on the specific findings or conclusions of evaluations, but in analyzing the quality of those outputs to improve the usefulness of evaluation in the SLM policy-making. MEv is an evaluation whose object of study is a programme evaluation, instead of that programme itself, or an evaluation to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a set of evaluations.

Two MEv functions are: the theoretical function is the methodological assessment of the role of evaluation, while the practical function "is concerned with the evaluation of specific evaluative performances" ((Scriven, 1969); (Wingate, 2009)). The practical function of MEv has been prominent in the theory and practice of MEv. In a similar line, MEv has been used for evaluation quality control and for evaluation management purposes in a concrete sector or organization (Bustelo, 2002).
In its role of quality control, MEv tend to meta-evaluate one evaluation at a time and not in comparison with other evaluation processes. In the second function, the assessment of evaluation quality is not particularly stressed, but their adequacy and opportunity to the policy, organizational and evaluation context, and their contribution to the accomplishment of evaluation function. Therefore, MEv can be applied to individual evaluations, to a set of them, to the whole evaluation system in a certain setting or to the discipline overall ((Cooksy & Caracelli, 2005); (Wingate, 2009)).

On the one hand, MEv of an individual evaluation can offer judgmental information about its utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy and its systematic nature, competent conduct, integrity/honesty, respectfulness, and social responsibility to guide the evaluation and/or report about its strengths and weaknesses" ((Stufflebeam, 2000 in (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011)). Therefore, this use is more related to debates on the evaluation quality. As different authors have explored, the criteria for judging evaluation quality change with different evaluation paradigms and evaluands (Cooksy & Caracelli, 2009). On the other hand, the evaluation of a set of evaluations in a certain domain or the evaluation of an evaluation system can be used to guide the planning and management of evaluation within organizations (Scriven, 2009). Therefore, the MEv of various evaluations can be a useful tool for the better understanding and improvement of the evaluation function around a concrete policy sector and the broader evaluation

research developed in a certain period of time and setting. MEv is useful for understanding what is the role of evaluation in public policy, the level of integration of evaluation in public policies or institutions, as well as the usefulness of evaluation for the improvement, accountability and enlightenment of public policies. This study endorsed this latter and broader perspective.

From the first perspective (MEv as a quality control process), more extensive literature and practice can be found. In this case, MEv is similar to the peer review mechanisms in the academia sphere, where competent and independent professionals comment peers' work before appearing in print[50]. This point is related to the question of "who evaluates the evaluator" or the argument from self-reference or authenticity, evaluators practising what they preach, the need of serious and external evaluation (Scriven, 2009). This could be linked to some sort of analogy with the auditing processes (Schwandt and Halpern, 1988 in (Bustelo, 2002)).

Evaluations may also be subject to scrutiny and assessment through means that are not labeled as MEv (Wingate, 2009). For instance, some offices of evaluation at international organizations have institutionalized internal peer review processes, to ensure good evaluation quality practice before publishing their evaluation reports[51]. Moreover, project advisory panels, clients and other evaluation stakeholders can review and comment draft reports through their engagement in Evaluation Steering Committees. (Cooksy & Caracelli, 2005) also highlighted the power of MEv used as a "quality control approach" to inform the choice of studies (evaluations) to include in evaluation synthesis (the distinction between MEv and "evaluation synthesis" is further explain hereafter). By applying standards of quality, MEv screens out evaluation studies that are so weak (in terms of theirs processes, methodology and results) that the information they include is not defensible. Therefore, MEv can prevent misevaluations and flawed evaluations to be used on the evaluation synthesis.

From the second perspective, the one endorsed by this research, the evaluation of the evaluations done in a certain domain and country can shed light about the strengths and weaknesses of evaluation practice (and function) in that context. This can be used to tailor evaluation capacity programmes ((Bustelo, 2002); (Cooksy & Caracelli, 2005)). For example, if a MEv finds that none of a set of studies conducted by an agency used appropriate samples for the evaluation questions being addressed, specific trainings in this subject could be offered to strengthen this, and therefore, the evaluation activities of the agency. (Cooksy & Mark, 2011) further developed this: MEv could also help us identifying professional competencies to be strengthened as evaluators, advocating for better evaluation policies and diagnosing the new resources to be developed by evaluation centres and associations.
(Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011)also highlighted the role of MEv to understand the evaluation process within an organization or around a specific topic and to identify systematic weaknesses in the way that an organization approaches evaluation that may be compromising their ability, with their partners, to improve aid effectiveness. This has also been defended in the last edition of the Programme Evaluation Standards. MEv can contribute to knowledge about which kinds of evaluation approaches are most efficient and effective in specific situations and bring a new way of thinking for creative approaches to evaluation improvement (Yarbrough et al., 2011). In settings with a poor culture of evaluation, like Senegal and the majority of developing countries, using this broader perspective of MEv seems a more reasonable idea, than trying to circumscribe its use for the improvement of individual evaluations.

Usually mistaken concepts

50 Recently, peer review mechanisms have been strongly criticized because of its lack of consistency over time, divergence from one another, and the veto power of anonymous referees with different interests from the ones of the authors (Speer, 2010).
51 Colleagues critically assess the quality of the methodology, the evidence base of conclusions when there is still time to rethink some of the questions, look for more data or cross-check some of the conclusions.

MEv has been included in several key documents of evaluation, entailing some sort of confusion with other terms. For instance, it has been defined "*[The] evaluation designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It can also be used to denote the evaluation of an evaluation to judge its quality and/or assess the performance of the evaluators*" (OECD, 2002); or "*an evaluation that aggregates the findings from a series of evaluations. It can be considered as an expert review of one or more evaluations against professional quality standards*" (Morra-Imas & Rist, 2009).

The next paragraphs clarify the difference between MEv and other evaluation synthesis. The bulk of theory and practice to assess "valuation quality and the evaluation function entails some degree of confusion when distinguishing "meta-evaluation" from other terms like "meta-analysis", "evaluation synthesis" and "systematic reviews". They are related to different evaluative exercises, with different objectives, approaches and methodologies, although there are some commonalities and overlaps. (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011) distinguished three main synthesis methodologies used to deliver wider learning around evaluation processes.

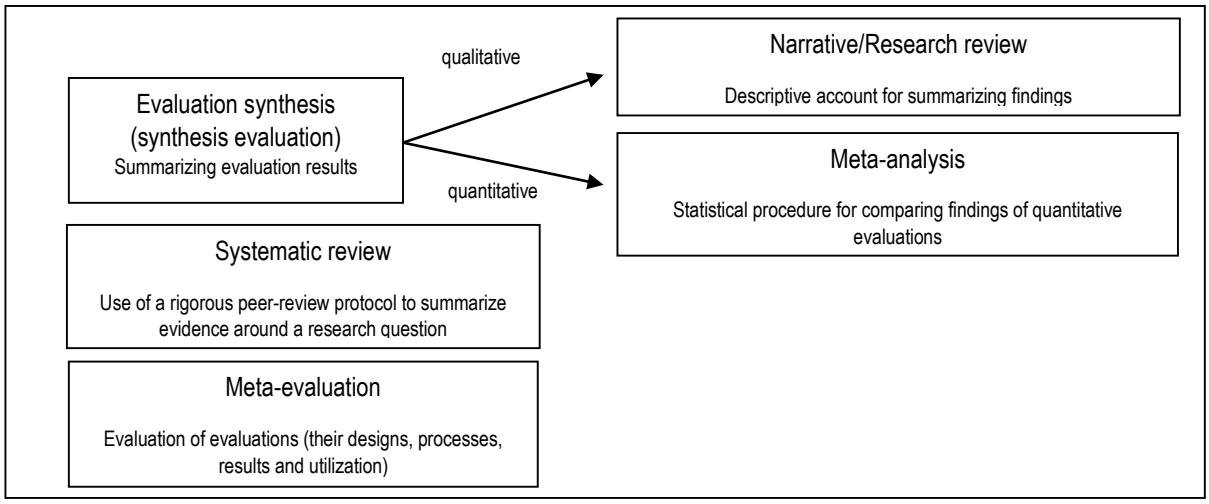


Figure 19. Synthesis methodologies related to evaluation. Source: modified from (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011).

Evaluation synthesis (or synthesis evaluation) summarizes results of evaluation studies of similar programmes or policies (Scriven, 2009). It combines information from more than one study in order to come to general statements about an intervention, to assessing overall impact (Cooksy & Caracelli, 2005). It is a formal approach (usually expert-led) of drawing together literature and studies on a specific topic with the purpose of providing analysis through the triangulation of a range of data sources (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011). Evaluation synthesis can be qualitative or quantitative:

Qualitative synthesis is called "narrative review" or "research review" ((Bustelo, 2002); (Cooksy & Caracelli, 2005)). According to the NONIE guidance on impact evaluation (Leeuw & Vaessen, 2009):

> "Narrative reviews are descriptive accounts of intervention processes and/or results covering a series of interventions. […] the evaluator relies on a common analytical framework, which serves as a basis for a template that is used for data extraction from the individual studies. In the end, the main findings are summarized in a narrative account and/or tables and matrices representing key aspects of the interventions".

Quantitative evaluation synthesis is usually called "meta-analysis". This is the concept that seems to be more often confused with MEv. According to (Scriven, 2009), is a statistical technique, applicable only to a set of quantitative studies (which may or may not be evaluative), for synthesizing their results in terms of statistical significance. Since meta-analysis is only as good as the evaluation findings they

synthesize, (Scriven, 2009) emphasized one of the use of MEv: to determine if a set of evaluations meets certain minimum validity standards to be considered in a meta-analysis.

According to several authors[52], meta-analysis is the systematic and statistical analysis of the results of a set of evaluations of similar programmes in order to estimate the overall effect or effectiveness of those programmes. (Mateu, 2011) added that evaluators can estimate not only the central tendency of study outcomes, test the pattern of outcome variations, and estimate the overall effects and relationships of variables, but also predict results of future evaluations. He highlighted the two stages of meta-analysis: the coding process and the statistical analysis. For the latter he recommended the Cochrane handbook[53]. According to the last edition of the Programme Evaluation Standards (Yarbrough et al., 2011), Meta-analysis refers to the practice of reviewing multiple research studies addressing the same phenomena to draw the most supportable generalizable conclusion. Therefore, Meta-analysis is a specific research technique, different from MEv as a way of investigating evaluation quality.

The second type of synthesis' methodologies is systematic review**,** which is defined as "a review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyse data from studies that are included in the review" (Mateu, 2011). The objective is synthesizing the results emerging from different high quality studies. They have been applied in the health sector, particularly systematic reviews of randomized control trials for evidence-based medicine[54]. In this case a rigorous peer-reviewed protocol is applied, from the identification of criteria, validation of evidence for review and subsequent phases of data collection and analysis. Systematic reviews are also increasingly common in international development, particularly in the context of evaluating impact. Some examples are the Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).

The use of systematic reviews and synthesis evaluations is therefore different to that of MEv. The former aims to synthesize what works, where, how and why, with consideration to the quality of the evidence (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011). A systematic review synthesizes findings in the case of a specific research/policy question for a certain context; synthesis evaluations synthesizes findings in the case a broader range of data and information sources using a less formal peer reviewed protocol. The latter, MEv, aims to learn from evaluative processes to improve the quality of evaluation itself and/or of the evaluation function within the policy, programme or project cycle.
The possibility of combining different synthesis methods is exemplified in complex evaluations like the evaluation of the Paris Declaration[55]. The NONIE Guidance for Impact Evaluation (Leeuw & Vaessen, 2009) also encouraged the combination of meta-approaches.

Types of Meta-Evaluation (MEv)

Different types of MEv can be distinguished according to their purpose and moment when conducted, the position of the meta-evaluator in relation to the evaluation process and the focus of the meta-evaluative exercise, as it is summarized in the following table.

Table 9. Types of meta-evaluation.

52 Weiss, 1998 in (Bustelo, 2002) and Glass, 1976; Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey, 1999 in (Cooksy & Caracelli, 2005).
53 http://www.cochrane.org/training/cochrane-handbook Accessed on Aug, 18th, 2011.
54 A randomized controlled trial (RCT) is a specific type of scientific experiment often used to test the efficacy of interventions within a patient population to prevent selection bias. After assessment of eligibility and recruitment, but before the intervention to be studied begins, patients are randomly allocated to receive or not the treatment, or receive an alternative treatment.
55 According to (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011), it is a combination of a meta-evaluation that synthesizes the evidence from a number of evaluations that used a similar protocol and from other studies and literature review.

ACCORDING TO THE ROLE OF THE META-EVALUATION

Formative: MEv used as an instrument for improving and changing the ongoing evaluation design and implementation, for improving the ongoing evaluation design, for illuminating and control for bias in evaluation.

Summative: its role is the recapitulation of completed evaluation efforts, in order to assess the quality, impact or utilization of evaluation work. The main purpose is focused on accountability.

Ascriptive: MEv is done for research purposes. In this case, MEv is conducted simply to enlarge or refine our body of evaluative knowledge, for benefit to the discipline, for the sake of the knowledge gained, not just for the specific evaluation under scrutiny (Scriven, 2012).

ACCORDING TO THE MOMENT OF THE META-EVALUATION

***Ex-ante* (provaluation):** MEv is carried out before the evaluation process is implemented.

***Ex-postfacto* (retrovaluation):** MEv is carried out when the evaluation is already done.

ACCORDING TO THE AGENT WHO META-EVALUATES

Internal: MEv carried out by the evaluators themselves, as an internal control (auto-MEv).

External: Done by someone not involved in the assessed evaluation process, being an external control.

ACCORDING TO THE CONTENT OR EVALUATION PHASE META-EVALUATED

Design MEv: Focused on the plan, structure of an evaluation study (conception, rationale, purpose, objectives, context adequacy internal coherence, scope, stakeholders' identification, the expectancy of usefulness and utility of evaluation). Contract agreements such as Terms of Reference can inform about the design evaluation.,

Process MEv: Focused on the implementation of the evaluation, how the study is carried out (implementation strategies including effective stakeholders' involvement, procedures to ensure quality control of evaluation, realism of the calendar and cost-effectiveness, difficulties in the implementation, consideration of ethical issues).

Results MEv: Focused on the quality of findings and information produced by the evaluation study (justification of epistemological and methodological choices, quality and completeness of findings, interpretations, judgments and recommendations, and their inclusion in evaluation documents).

Utilization MEv: Focused on the potential effects of the evaluation, including aiding decision making and facilitating organizational learning (actionable recommendations, timely dissemination of results to previously identified stakeholders).

Source: adapted from (Bustelo, 2001); (Bustelo, 2002), modified with other sources[56].

The conceptual and analytical framework proposed used MEv with an ascriptive role (to enlarge the body of evaluative knowledge in SLM in Senegal for research purposes). It is *expost*facto and externally conducted focusing on design, process, results and utilization of a set of evaluations.

2.2.2 Actual practice of Meta-Evaluation in aid development evaluation

A total of 23 meta-evaluative exercises published from 2003-2013 and commissioned by major donors in aid development (bilateral and multilateral) as well as some research centres and international non-governmental organizations were explored. The full list of them can be found in Annex D[57]. The majority of the "meta-evaluative exercises" contained the word "meta-evaluation" in their title (61%). Other similar or related expressions were used, like "evaluation of the evaluation programme", "assessment of evaluation reports", "analysis of evaluation system", "meta-review" or "review". The majority of the documents analysed were long documents (average of 76 pages), including an introduction, methodology, analysis and conclusions, and extensive annexes with detailed information

56 (Stufflebeam, 1974) (republished in 2001); Cooksy and Caracelli, 2005; (Wingate, 2009); (Scriven, 2011); (Yarbrough et al., 2011).
57 Emergency aid meta-evaluations were discarded, along with MEv conducted in developed countries.

about the evaluations or the evaluation systems under scrutiny. The coverage of evaluations analysed in each MEv ranged from 10 to 162, with an average of almost 50 evaluations, covering a period of 5 years (from 1 year to 19 years).

The analysis of the declared objectives of the 23 cases analysed showed a mixed scenario with multiple and sometimes blurred aims for the same exercise. The majority of the cases included some degree of confusion using "meta-evaluation" as a light systematic review, aiming to integrate results from a set of evaluations or reviews in order to inform future programming (14 out of 23). A similar number of meta-evaluative exercises also included objectives related to the improvement of individual evaluations (8 out of 23) or the improvement of the evaluation system (8 out of 23). All of them were *expost* summative exercises with accountability purposes. The majority were conducted by external consultants; only 5 cases were clearly undertaken by internal staff of the organization meta-evaluated, and in 3 other cases the MEv team was mixt.

Although the literature on MEv advises against basing meta-evaluative analysis only on evaluation reports, the sample of 23 MEv reflected the current practice: the majority (65%) was desk review-based. This finding was aligned with (Wingate, 2009) who analysed 54 publications that described MEv studies in education and found that only 24% used other methods than document review (interview, self-assessment, survey, site visit, focus groups, case study). The fact that other "similar" MEv exercises (like the evaluation of the evaluation function or system, and not only MEv in 'strict sense') were also accepted may have increased the number of exercises where it was complemented with interviews and questionnaires.

The MEv criteria used for the meta-evaluative exercises were very heterogeneous, some were based on prestablished standards and principles. More than half of them (14 out of 23) did not use formal or academic-recognised MEv standards, but a general qualitative analysis, using internal norms and standards for each organization. The DAC-OECD evaluation criteria were at least mentioned in the majority of documents, either to recall the results of evaluations or to assess how well the evaluations covered them. In 9 cases, checklists were crafted based on different standards (the American Evaluation Society standards, the Joint Committee of Standards (1994) and the DAC Principles and Criteria and the DAC Quality Standards, among others).

Most of the MEv were focused on the results and processes of evaluations, with less emphasis on design and very general statements about utilization of evaluations (with some exceptions). An interesting finding points out that in 57% of the cases there was a previous meta-evaluative exercise which was considered in the process. In 3 cases, there was more than one MEv exercise conducted in the same organization.

In 5 cases (22%) the previous MEv was considered as a benchmark to compare the results obtained in the more recent MEv. This suggests a certain tendency to institutionalize this type of exercises, like in CARE International where four MEv exercises were conducted since 2000.

2.2.3. Different options to conduct a meta-evaluation

The literature and practice on Meta-evaluation converge in a series of recommended paths to conduct MEv that are summarized as[58]:

1. The empirical reevaluation of some data sets or the whole evaluation, this is the replication of the evaluation. In this case, some authors propose to use the same methodology, and others a different one, and compare the results.
2. An after-the-fact commentary on a single set of evaluation data that are not reanalysed.
3. The review of the literature about a specific programme, or collective professional discussions.
4. Group review of the findings of an evaluation through beneficiaries or other stakeholders' exchanges, or through an experts panel or peers within or outside the organization,
5. Individual critical reflection where a particular individual stakeholder is asked for his/her independent feedback about the evaluation,
6. Applying evaluation checklists or standards to an evaluation. In that case, some warn about the danger to apply any set of evaluation standards ritualistically and propose instead to use them as a heuristic device to facilitate analysis and judgment (Wingate, 2009).

MEv is usually carried out through group reviews (option 4) where different stakeholders are asked to assess evaluations reports and other relevant sources including information ((Stufflebeam in (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011)). The assessment is also usually based upon a set of critically recognised evaluation standards or checklists adapted for purpose. In practice a wide range of criteria are used in MEv ranging from predetermined and structured to emergent and unstructured (option 6). (Cooksy & Caracelli, 2005) recommended metevaluators to tailor the criteria selected to the purpose of the MEv and to the culture and sensibilities of the MEv's stakeholders (especially when the MEv is done for a client and it is necessary to agree about what constitutes "quality"). (Wingate, 2010) also recommended the selection of those standards on which judgments can be made based on information typically included in evaluation reports, if this is the only source of information available (option 4).

This study is based on tailored MEv criteria and dimensions based on internationally recognised standards, checklists and guidelines (option 6). Although the researcher did the main assessment, the discussion was opened to various stakeholders who were interviewed individually (option 5) about the design, process, result and utilization of the evaluation. Some review of the literature around the challenges tackled by the SLM interventions and their evaluation (option 3) was discussed in Chapter 1, although the limited level of documentation of this policy subsector made difficult to attribute specific evaluation results to the overall available literature. The rest of options were discarded for practical reasons related to the budget and time of repeating the evaluations (option 1), impossibility to access to raw evaluation data (option 2) or difficulties to gather together evaluation stakeholders located in different geographical places some years after the evaluation exercise.

2.2.4. Stages to develop and propose an analytical framework for the MEv of evaluations of SLM initiatives in Senegal

As the Figure 20 below shows, firstly the purpose of the MEv was identified in relation to the recommendations in academic literature and the objectives of the study. The theoretical function of MEv (Scriven, 1969) was chosen to contribute to the improvement of the evaluation function and guide the planning and management of evaluations in the policy sector of SLM in Senegal through the assessment of a set of evaluations ((Bustelo, 2002); (Scriven, 2009)). Therefore an ascriptive MEv (Scriven, 2012) for research purposes was proposed as a summative and external MEv that assessed the quality, impact and utilization of evaluations (accountability purposes) conducted *expost* facto.

Secondly, considering the option chosen to conduct the MEv (the use of tailored meta-evaluation criteria), the review of the academic MEv guidelines and the practitioner-oriented application of Mev in aid development evaluation, yielded the prioritization of 15 evaluation standards, checklists and overall

58 (Wingate, 2009); (Scriven, 2009); (Scriven, 2012); http://betterevaluation.org/ (Accessed on August 25, 2014)

guidelines related to credible, feasibly and quality evaluation (See Table 10). The mix of MEv standards and checklists promoted by the academia and practitioner oriented guidelines was completed with guidance for evaluators and sets of competencies of evaluators developed by major evaluation associations. In order to capture the specificities of Sustainable Development (SD) evaluation, the Bellagio principles were also included.

Table 10. Evaluation standards and guidelines used in the MEv analytical framework.

Standards and checklists
1. Joint Committee on Standards Programme Evaluation Standards (PES)[59], (Yarbrough et al., 2011)
2. Programme Evaluations Meta-evaluation checklist (PEC-MEC), (Stufflebeam, 1999)
3. African Evaluation Guidelines (AEG), (AfrEA, 2007a)
4. Key Evaluation checklist (KEC), (Scriven, 2012)
5. Key Aid Evaluation Checklist (KAEC), (Ryoh, 2008)
6. Meta-Evaluation Checklist (MEC), (Scriven, 2011)
7. Context, Input, Process and product (CIPP), (Stufflebeam, 2007)
Practitioners-oriented norms, standards and criteria
8. Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) criteria for evaluating development assistance (DAC-OECD), (DAC-OECD, 2010)
9. United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards (UNEG-1), (UNEG, 2005a)
10. United Nations Evaluation Group quality checklists for ToR and inception reports (UNEG-2), (UNEG, 2010c)
11. United Nations Evaluation Group quality checklists for evaluation reports (UNEG-3), (UNEG, 2010b).
Guidance for evaluators and evaluators' competencies:
12. American Evaluation Association (AEA) Guiding Principles for Evaluators, (AEA, 2004)
13. Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice, (CES, 2010)
14. International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) Competencies for Development Evaluation Evaluators, Managers, and Commissioners, (IDEAS, 2012)
Sustainable development assessment
15. Guidelines for the Practical Assessment of Progress towards Sustainable Development (Bellagio principles), (Pintér et al., 2012)

Thirdly, in order to operationalize the MEv criteria, additional stages were considered, keeping in mind that the evaluation report was the only source of information for the MEv of the 40 project-evaluation processes. A first version of the MEv analytical framework was tested in 16 evaluation reports randomly selected. This helped to develop MEv dimensions and rubrics to make more transparent the "evaluation synthesis" (Davidson, 2014), to make explicit definitions of performance (the definition of quality and value and evidence) for each criterion, and to identify the information gaps in the reports. Moreover a "desk audit" (Yarbrough et al., 2011) of evaluation reports was conducted in order to assess their level of information completeness and some were discarded. Some MEv dimensions were fine-tuned, others merged to inform a higher-level MEv criterion. This process also included taking notes of the mix of evidence necessary to assess dimensions in certain performance levels (rubrics) in order to increase the comparison among cases. This preliminary analysis was shared with three experts to validate the MEv framework and highlight key issues to be considered during its application. The final version of the MEv analytical framework, including 12 criteria and corresponding questions organized in four big content categories (design, process, result and utilization of evaluations) is summarized in the following Table.

Table 11. MEv criteria and questions proposed for this research.

[59] For Programme Evaluation Standards (PES), the standards are introduced directly as U: utility, F: feasibility, P: propriety, A: accuracy, followed by the number used by this sources to class them. For the rest of standards, checklists and guidelines used, their acronym is included with the number of the specific standard in relation to the full list of standards included in those sources. For instance, Bellagio-7 means that it is the seventh recommendation of Bellagio principles.

#	Meta-evaluation criteria - DESIGN	Meta-evaluation questions - DESIGN
1	Clarity of purpose and objectives	**The ToR and the evaluation report specify what** is to be evaluated, for what **purpose and objectives**? (modif. CIPP, U3, UNEG (2): 1.0, UNEG (2): 2.0 and UNEG (3): 2.0 and 3, DAC-OECD: 2.1 and 2.2, KAEC: II)
2	Adequacy of the evaluation scope	Does the ToR and evaluation report explicitly and clearly define the **evaluation coverage?** (CIPP-1) Is the **scope adequate** to meet the stated objectives given resources and time? (UNEG(2):4, UNEG(3):2.3 and KEC-A3, DAC-OECD:2.3) Were there local consultants engaged in the evaluation (if feasible and appropriate)? (F1-PE MEC)
3	Clarity of foreseen utilization focus considered from the design	Does the ToR and evaluation report **clearly identify the evaluation client**? (MEC, UNEG (2): 1.3) Are the **information needs of the different audiences** clearly described in the report? (U5, U1- PE-MEC and Bellagio-7) What activities were conducted in order **to enhance future utilization** of the evaluation during its design and process? (U7)

#	Meta-evaluation criteria - PROCESS	Meta-evaluation questions - PROCESS
4	Right stakeholders' involvement strategy throughout the process	Were **all relevant stakeholders identified and included in the evaluation process** (U2, KEC-B3 and KAEC: B3), with special attention to beneficiaries at community level? (U1-AEG, UNEG(3): 2.4, U1-PE-MEC, CIPP-2, DAC-OECD: 1.4 and 2.5, Bellagio- 8) F3-AEG nuances: "full **participation** [in African settings] **to the extent feasible** in the given institutional and national situation". Did the evaluation allow the **participation of a full range of individuals and groups** invested in the programme and affected by the evaluation? (modif U2).
5	Adequacy of institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation process	Does the ToR or report describe **mechanisms used for quality assurance** of the evaluation information (A7-PE MEC) or the overall evaluation process (UNEG (2): 8.4, DAC-OECD: 1.7)? Do they describe the process for **obtaining and incorporating comments** on draft reports and **validating findings and recommendations**? (U6-AEG, U2-PE-MEC, UNEG(2): 8.5, CIPP, DAC-OECD: 3.15) Were any coordination **structures to facilitate the collection** of valid and reliable information during the evaluation process (modif. DAC-OECD: 2.11) What were the **power relations between evaluators and commissioners** that could have affected the evaluation process? (AEG-P6). What is the overall assessment of the management of the evaluation? (IDEAS)
6	Sufficient transparency and ethics consideration in evaluation process	Are the **shortcomings and strengths of questions and approaches** explicit? (P5, AEA: A, DAC-OECD. 3.13, UNEG (2): 7.7 and UNEG(3): 5.4) Was the evaluation designed and implemented to protect **Human and legal rights** and maintain the dignity of participants and other stakeholders? (P3, AEA: D and UNEG (2): 9). P3-AEG adds collective rights and cultural and religious values.

#	Meta-evaluation criteria - RESULT	Meta-evaluation questions - RESULT
7	Clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choice	Does the ToR and the evaluation report specify the **methods for data collection and analysis**, including information on the overall methodological design? (A6, UNEG (2):7 and UNEG(3): 4, DAC-OECD:2.9, KAEC: III), considering that **oral stories and traditional modes of recording information** are proposed as a good source of information in the African context (A1-AEG)
8	Clarity of evaluation synthesis	Is **evaluation reasoning** leading from information and analysis to findings, interpretations, conclusions, and judgments **clearly and completely documented**? (A7 and UNEG (2): 7.5 and UNEG(3): 5, KAEC-SDC:1) Are **conclusions logically and demonstrably correct and justifiable**? (KAEC-SDC: 1 and MEC: 1). **Are judgments, assumptions and uncertainties in data and interpretations explicit**? (Bellagio- 6 and P5) Evidence-grounded evaluation conclusions: Are **conclusions explicitly justified**? (A1, UNEG (3): 6), accompanied with **quantitative and qualitative analysis** (A8, A10- PE MEC, A9)? Is there a **one-dimensional evaluative conclusion** (overall grade) including an estimate of the relative importance of each dimension of merit or are conclusions presented as **subevaluations by dimensions**? (KEC-D1, KAEC: D11). Different evaluative interpretations: Are there any signs of **different (individual and cultural) value systems** around the evaluation? (U4-AEG, U4, F3, U4-PE-MEC, P1, KEC-B5, KAEC:B5) Are **multiple perspectives, procedures and rationale used to interpret the findings** carefully described and preserved in the report (U4-AEG, U4- PE-MEC, AEA: E) or did some **values dominated**? (U4-AEG, KAEC)
9	Adequacy of consideration of Development evaluation challenges	Does the approach proposed in the ToR or the evaluation report embrace all the **systems (economic, social, ecological)?** (Bellagio-2), this is the **"triple bottom-line" approach** (conventional outcomes such as revenue, social capital/community changes, and environmental impact? (KEC-C2). Is the **time horizon** adopted enough to capture ecosystem effects? (Bellagio-4) Responsiveness to the context: What is the quality and quantity of information about **the context** in the ToR and the evaluation report, especially about factors which **could hinder or ease the evaluation process, results and utilization**? (F3, A4, F2-PE MEC, A2-PE MEC, UNEG (2): 3.0 and UNEG(3): 2.2, KEC-1, KAEC: B1)
10	Sufficient documentation of the evaluation process and result	Does the ToR clarify the **expected content of the evaluation report**? (CIPP-1) Were any **quality criteria for the evaluation report** proposed in the ToR? (UNEG (2): 5, DAC-OECD: 2.8) in relation to r**eport clarity** (U5) and **completeness of the report (**KAEC, UNEG (3): 1.0-1.2, CIPP-10, DAC-OECD: 3.5, AEA: E, U2-PE-MEC) including a stand-alone executive summary (UNEG (3): 1.3, KEC-A1, DAC-OECD: 3.6, KAEC: I, MEC: 2, Bellagio-7) and annexes to increase the credibility of the report. Were the evaluation **process and findings sufficiently documented**, so that the evaluation can be rigorously evaluated? (CIPP-9). Were any agreed-upon **standards or guiding principles used** to help ensure that the evaluation is sound and fully accountable? (CIPP-9) Did the evaluation team take the time to **critically review the quality of the evaluation**? (KAEC: D15)

#	MEv criteria - UTILIZATION	Meta-evaluation questions - UTILIZATION
11	Actionable recommendations	Are **recommendations** relevant to the object and purpose of the evaluation, and supported by evidence and conclusions, developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders? (UNEG(3): 7.0) What **type of recommendations** are proposed (KEC-D2, KAEC: D12) and what is the feasibility of their implementation according to the report? Evaluation utilization – follow-up: Is there any **mechanism to follow-up** the utilization of the evaluation? , like a "management response" system including an action plan with clear responsibilities? (UNEG (1): N12, DAC-OECD: 4.2, U7-PE MEC) Are there clear **links between the evaluation and the knowledge management system** of the organization, if any? (MEC: D5, DAC-OECD, 7)
12	Adequacy of dissemination	Are **channels to communicate** evaluation results explicit in the report? (A8, CIPP-1, KEC-D4) not only written but also personal or verbal? (AEG-A1, DAC-OECD: 4.3, KAEC:D14, U7-PE MEC) Was communication tailored to given stakeholders? (KAEC 14, AEA: E), including **special needs of the audience**s (U5-PE-MEC), such as persons with limited French proficiency? Easiness of access to evaluation documentation: What is the level of **effort necessary to access the evaluation report**? (online access, in a documentation centre, in the governmental office, others) Is the evaluation report **accessible in a user-friendly way to targeted audiences**? (UNEG (1): N13), if allowed by the evaluation contract (U6-PE MEC).

Figure 21 shows the final version of the MEv analytical framework proposed to study the project evaluations of SLM interventions in Senegal, based on the analysis of the information contained in the evaluation reports. The left-hand column shows the general information about the MEv criteria (and dimensions) that informed the overall description of the evaluation practice in SLM in Senegal (see Chapter 3), while the right column includes the Meta-evaluative analytical framework, including 12 criteria and their corresponding dimensions. Annex G includes the full list, including further explanation, rubrics, ratings, and the evidence use to assess each dimension.

For the in-depth case studies (Chapter 4), two additional MEv criteria could be analysed with information emerging from the interviews with stakeholders. MEv criteria 13 deals with the level of credibility of the evaluation process and of evaluators, while MEv criteria 14 looks at the level of utilization of the evaluation (either the prospects of utilization or the real utilization of the evaluation process and its results).

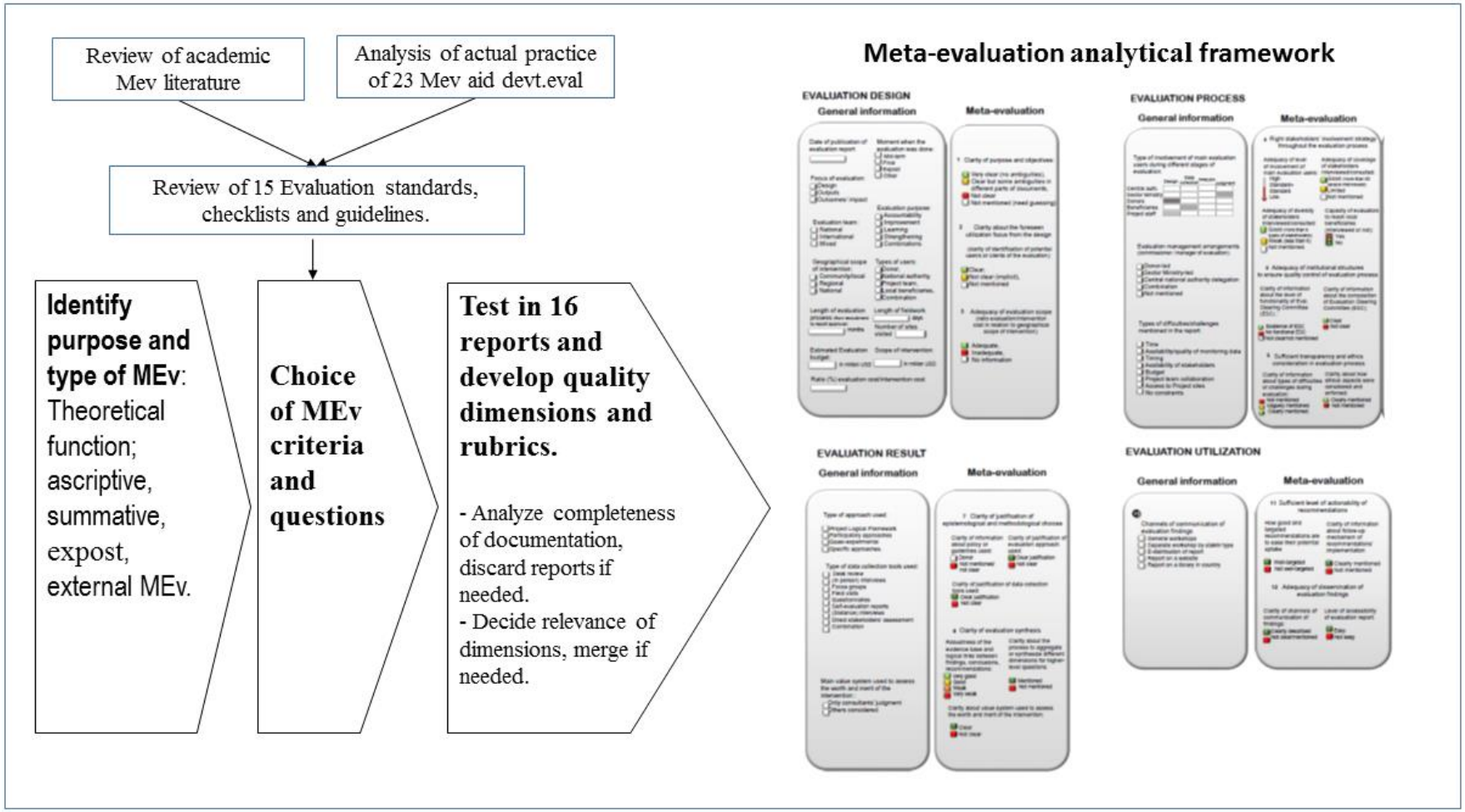
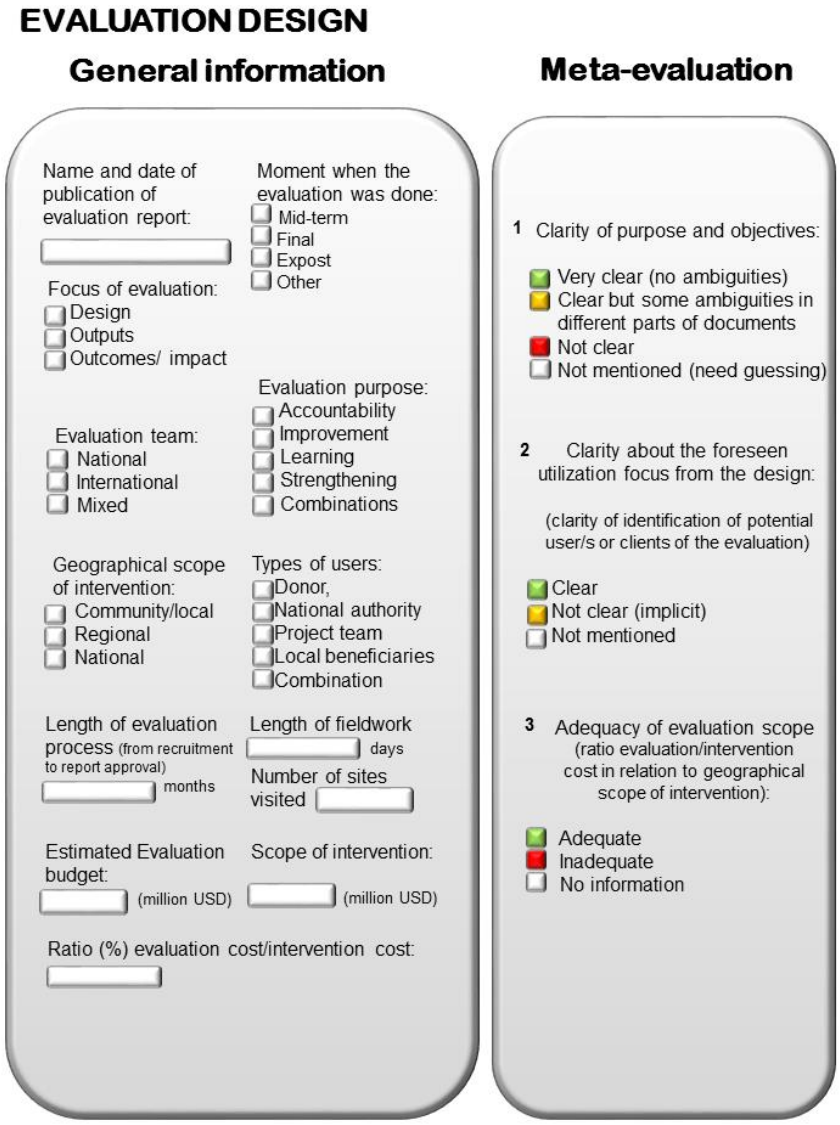
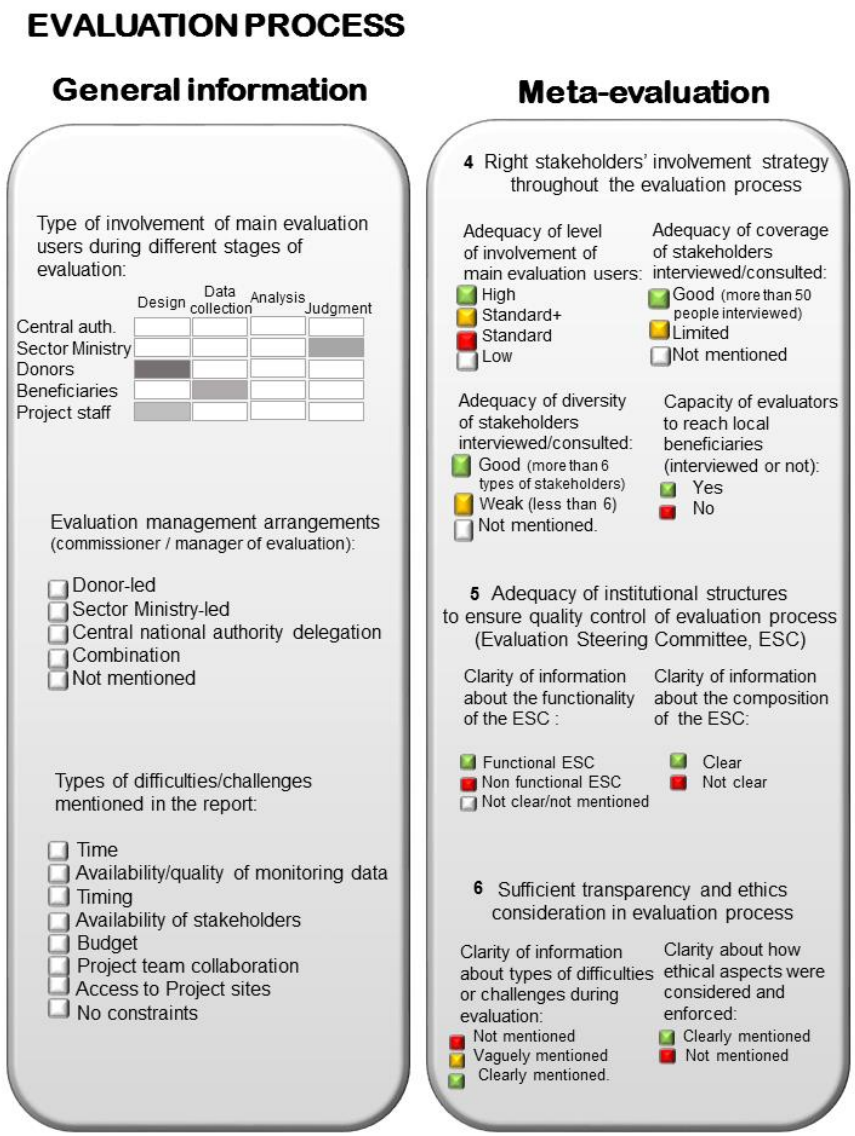


Figure 20. Stages to develop our Meta-evaluation analytical framework. Source: inspired by (Forss et al, 2008); (Yarbrough et al., 2011); (Davidson, 2012)


EVALUATION DESIGN
General information
Meta-evaluation
Name and date of publication of evaluation report:
Moment when the evaluation was done:
Mid-term
Final
Expost
Other
Focus of evaluation:
Design
Outputs
Outcomes/ impact
Evaluation purpose:
Accountability
Improvement
Learning
Strengthening
Combinations
Evaluation team:
National
International
Mixed
Geographical scope of intervention:
Community/local
Regional
National
Types of users:
Donor,
National authority
Project team
Local beneficiaries
Combination
Length of evaluation process (from recruitment to report approval)
months
Length of fieldwork
days
Number of sites visited
Estimated Evaluation budget:
(million USD)
Scope of intervention:
(million USD)
Ratio (%) evaluation cost/intervention cost:
1 Clarity of purpose and objectives:
Very clear (no ambiguities)
Clear but some ambiguities in different parts of documents
Not clear
Not mentioned (need guessing)
2 Clarity about the foreseen utilization focus from the design:
(clarity of identification of potential user/s or clients of the evaluation)
Clear
Not clear (implicit)
Not mentioned
3 Adequacy of evaluation scope (ratio evaluation/intervention cost in relation to geographical scope of intervention):
Adequate
Inadequate
No information


EVALUATION PROCESS
General information
Meta-evaluation
Type of involvement of main evaluation users during different stages of evaluation:
Design
Data collection
Analysis
Judgment
Central auth.
Sector Ministry
Donors
Beneficiaries
Project staff
Evaluation management arrangements (commissioner / manager of evaluation):
Donor-led
Sector Ministry-led
Central national authority delegation
Combination
Not mentioned
Types of difficulties/challenges mentioned in the report:
Time
Availability/quality of monitoring data
Timing
Availability of stakeholders
Budget
Project team collaboration
Access to Project sites
No constraints
4 Right stakeholders' involvement strategy throughout the evaluation process
Adequacy of level of involvement of main evaluation users:
High
Standard+
Standard
Low
Adequacy of coverage of stakeholders interviewed/consulted:
Good (more than 50 people interviewed)
Limited
Not mentioned
Adequacy of diversity of stakeholders interviewed/consulted:
Good (more than 6 types of stakeholders)
Weak (less than 6)
Not mentioned.
Capacity of evaluators to reach local beneficiaries (interviewed or not):
Yes
No
5 Adequacy of institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation process (Evaluation Steering Committee, ESC)
Clarity of information about the functionality of the ESC :
Functional ESC
Non functional ESC
Not clear/not mentioned
Clarity of information about the composition of the ESC:
Clear
Not clear
6 Sufficient transparency and ethics consideration in evaluation process
Clarity of information about types of difficulties or challenges during evaluation:
Not mentioned
Vaguely mentioned
Clearly mentioned.
Clarity about how ethical aspects were considered and enforced:
Clearly mentioned
Not mentioned

EVALUATION RESULT

General information

Type of approach used:

- ☐ Project Logical Framework
- ☐ Participatory approaches
- ☐ Quasi-experimental
- ☐ Specific approaches.

Type of data collection tools used:

- ☐ Desk review
- ☐ (In person) interviews
- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Field visits
- ☐ Questionnaires
- ☐ Self-evaluation reports
- ☐ (Distance) interviews
- ☐ Direct stakeholders' assessment
- ☐ Combination

Main value system used to assess the worth and merit of the intervention :

- ☐ Only consultants' judgment
- ☐ Others considered

Meta-evaluation

7 Clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choices

Clarity of information about policy or guidelines used:
- Clear (donor)
- Not mentioned/ not clear

Clarity of justification of evaluation approach used:
- Clear justification
- Not clear

Clarity of justification of data collection tools used:
- Clear justification
- Not clear

8 Clarity of evaluation synthesis

Robustness of the evidence base and logical links between findings, conclusions, recommendations:
- Very good
- Good
- Weak
- Very weak

Clarity about the process to aggregate or synthesize different dimensions for higher-level questions:
- Mentioned
- Not mentioned

Clarity about value system used to assess the worth and merit of the intervention:
- Clear
- Not clear

EVALUATION RESULT (II)

General information

Consideration of the Sustainable Development pillars:

- ☐ Three pillas considered
- ☐ Only social and economic aspects
- ☐ Only ecological aspects

Extent to what monitoring data was used in evaluation:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No possible (bad quantity or quality)

Length of evaluation report ____ pages

Length of annexes ____ pages

Information about the demand (ToR) included in the report :
- Yes
- No

Meta-evaluation

9 Adequacy of integration of economic, social and ecological aspects of the evaluand and its context

Clarity of justification of adequacy of time coverage:
- ☐ Clear justification
- Not justified/ linked to project span

Clarity of justification of adequacy of geographical scope in relation to project intervention area
- Clear justification
- Not clear

Clarity of justification of sites visited
- Clear justification
- Not clear/ vague

Sufficiency context analysis:
- Good analysis
- Weak analysis

10 Sufficient documentation of the evaluation process and result

Level of completeness of the report (quality of info and sections included) :
- Very complete
- Complete
- Incomplete
- Very incomplete

Level of easiness of conducting the Mev (number of dims missing):
- Very easy
- Easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult

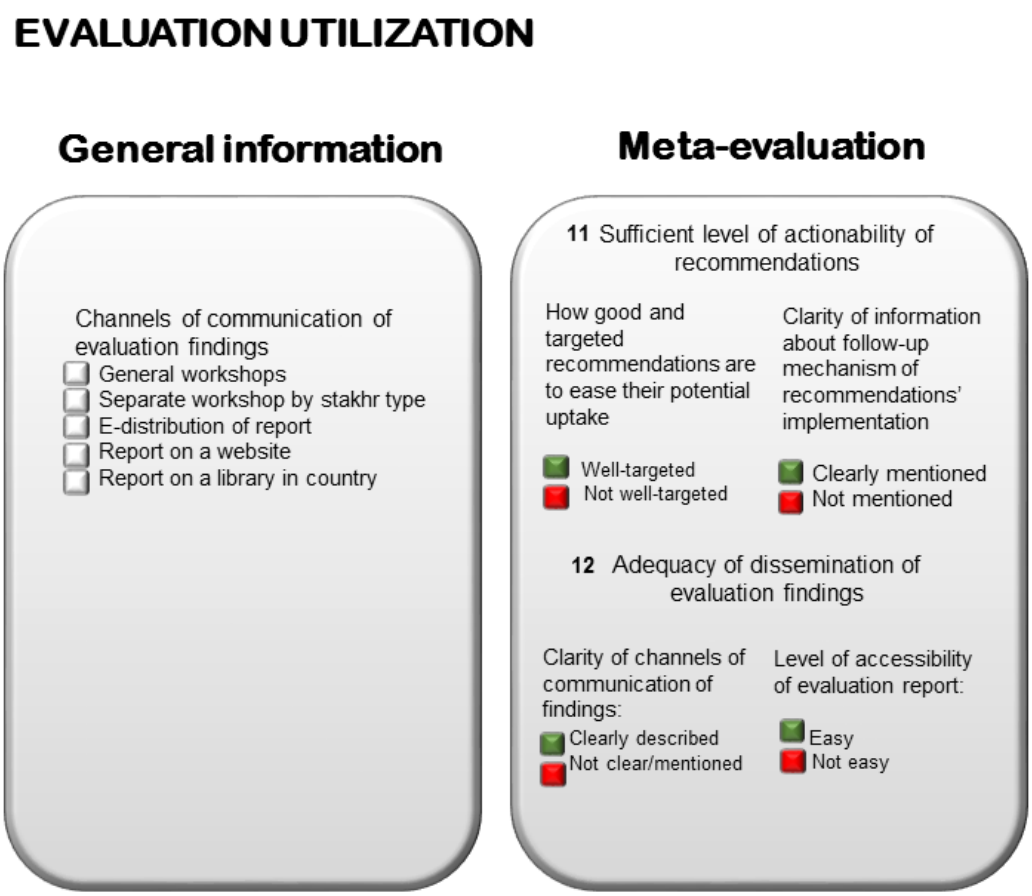


Figure 21. Meta-evaluation analytical framework.

2.3. What are capitalizations? A proposal to study SLM capitalizations in Senegal.

What is capitalization?

"Experience capitalization" (*capitalization d'expériences* in French) and "systematization" (*sistematización* in Spanish) are less known approaches in evaluation literature and by evaluation practitioners. Nevertheless, they are much appreciated and are commonly used by development practitioners both in Francophone Africa and Latin America. Some bibliography use the term "systematization" as the equivalent to "capitalization", or "experience capitalization", while others make a clear distinction between them. In general there has been some kind of confusion around the translation of the concept and its operationalization from Spanish to French and to English[60]. There seems to be a certain tendency of working in language silos, although the predominance of systematization (in Spanish) seems to have permeated (more or less directly) the related work in English and French ((Grand, 2014) and experts interviewed).

Overall, some of the key features usually associated to "capitalization" or "systematization" are: Participatory multi-stakeholders reflection, importance of contextual conditions, subjective perceptions and interpretations, focus on the process and not only in results and impacts, and shared learning. Experience capitalization refers to the process by which implicit (or tacit) knowledge is made explicit and shared widely (FAO, 2013b). Knowledge is usually associated to individual or collective immaterial heritage about different domains that is generally implicit and is transmitted informally (IDRC, 2012).

60 This research focused its efforts to disentangle the difference between the Francophone and the Spanish-based practice, paying less attention to the bibliography in English (usually related to "lessons learned papers").

Capitalization encompasses not only the assessment of experiences and lessons learned, but also the sharing and dissemination of good practices and their adoption, adaptation and application. Others emphasize the importance of "capitalization" to enrich and better adapt development experiences through the generation and access to knowledge and information (IED Afrique; ILEIA, 2007).

"Systematization" is today recognised as an endogenous evaluation approach originated in Latin America in the late 1970's (Carden & Alkin, 2012). It emerged from the work in adult education from Paulo Freire, social work and the NGO participatory bottom-up approaches. It tried to raise the voices of programme participants, breaking the monopoly of academicians and external evaluators. Through "systematization" people critically reflect on and make sense of development experiences, turning the lessons into new and explicit knowledge which in turn can inform a new round of practice and be communicated to others who may also benefit from it (Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014). Actually, there are a myriad of resources, examples and websites available on the subject of "*sistematización*"[61]. Similar approaches to the original *sistematización* are 'Documenting Experiences' (Chavez-Tafur et al., 2007) and 'Capitalization of Experiences' (Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014).

As analysed in Section 1.3.1, apart from the manuals and specific application of the approach to some development interventions, little theoretical research has been produced about capitalization from West Africa. Annex F offers for more detail about capitalization theory and practice. There are different versions about the origins and precise date of apparition of Francophone (experience) capitalization ((Didier, 2010); (Grand, 2014)):

- Some are related to the sector of private enterprises, related to management of knowledge from companies' staff, to the organization of key information to communicate it more efficiently within the enterprise. A recent trend about "knowledge management for development" in 2000's reinforced the use of capitalizations in this context[62].
- Others attributed the origin of the concept of capitalization to Pierre de Zutter who conceived "knowledge from experience as a type of capital" ((Zutter, 1997a); (Zutter, 1997b)).
- Others identify the origin in the development sphere in the work of the *Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme*[63] and *Innovations et Réseaux pour le Développement*[64], especially related to the work of "self-evaluation exercises" accompanied by certain organizations in West Africa ((Mersadier, 2011); (Grand, 2014)).
- And as mentioned in Section 1.3.1, for West African actors the ILEIA magazine, *IED Afrique* and later FRAO were the precursors of the approach.

The work on capitalization of Pierre de Zutter in French is considered by some "as the bible of capitalization", and himself "the father of the approach" (F3E, 2014). After several decades of experience in rural development in the South American Andean countries, Zutter proposed the most quoted definition of "capitalization of experiences" in French: "Experience capitalization is the passage from experience to shareable knowledge". The influence of the Latin American "systematization" into Francophone capitalization could have been mediated by Zutter, although he stressed some differences between these two approaches. The potential South-South transmission from Latin America to West Africa could also have been mediated through the work of IFAD (from FIDAMERICA to Fidafrique) or the ILEIA magazine and the AgriCultures Network. This entailed a continuous South-South exchange where systematization approaches were adapted and widely used in West Africa.

61 A google search yielded more than 2,6 million entries (Accessed on April 21, 2014).
62 Some donors consider "experience capitalization" as a form of organizational learning overlapping with other procedures like documentation and exchange of experiences, evaluations, case studies, cross-section ((SDC, 2007); (SDC, 2011)).
63 http://www.fph.ch/rubrique9.html?lang=fr Accessed on April 22, 2014.
64 http://fr.coredem.info/wiki/Capitalization_d%E2%80%99exp%C3%A9riences accessed on June, 13, 2014.

Although similar, the literature consulted and the interviewees underlined some differences between the two approaches:

1. Capitalization allows "shareable knowledge" to emerge without a pre-established framework, while systematization considers a system to order the knowledge emerging from experience;

2. Capitalization considers experience as the only source, while systematization uses also other sources like research;

3. Capitalization emphasizes on disseminating the lessons learned while systematization emphasizes on transforming the reality (a more political perspective, sometimes neglecting the supports to disseminate the systematization). Several documents about capitalization emphasize the need to promote the uptake of the "shareable knowledge" emerging from capitalizations.

In spite of these ideal features of capitalization, Zutter and other authors deplored the loss of critical strength of capitalization and its standardization towards focusing on practices (actions) instead of actors' experience that characterized capitalization practice. Experience is actor-centred, how (s)he lived and how (s)he has transformed her/his knowledge during practice (Pierre de Zutter in Grand, 2014). This opens a debate to distinguish between "capitalization of practices" (focused on actions, models, practices) and "capitalization of experiences" (focused on actors, on their experiences) (F3E, 2014). This perspective is shared by some capitalization experts interviewed, who considered that the vast majority of capitalizations conducted today are far from the original approach of capitalization by Zutter.

They are more "enhancement exercises" (*valoriser* in French) focused on the description of good practices for communication purposes. They do not try to identify the know-how and knowledge generated from the field, including failures. For the majority of the interviewees, capitalization could help proposing models from field experience to enhance current practice or to be replicated elsewhere, as Latin American systematizations try to do.

What is the difference between capitalization and project evaluation?

Very little theoretical discussion has been developed between these two learning-oriented evaluation approaches (systematization and capitalization) and project evaluation. Just recently, some authors have been weaving links between systematization and "systems thinking in evaluation" because of their shared attempt to overcome linear cause-effect logic models (Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014). These types of reflections are yet to be done in relation to Francophone capitalization.

The conclusion from the literature review on capitalization and interviews with experts and practitioners, pointed to a conception of capitalization as something different from evaluation, in spite of the recognition of some parallelisms. From this perspective, evaluation is conceived as an accountability donor or external-controlled exercise focused on results and impacts, ignoring participatory and more actor-oriented streams of evaluation. For instance, for some authors capitalization is related to introspective approaches, voluntarily promoted by actors, while evaluation is related to external looks, sometimes imposed, results-oriented and producing a judgment (Graugnard & Quiblier, 2006).

Capitalization (as participatory and actor-oriented evaluation approaches) arrived later to the project cycle for major donors, in comparison to M&E approaches. (Villeval & Lavigne-Delville, 2004) placed experience capitalization between the project cycle (programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and the learning cycle (experience and become aware/ Reflect and

observe/ Analyse, develop theories and conclusions/ Try out new ideas). If a clear difference could be highlighted is that while evaluation usually produces a value judgement and yields conclusions and recommendations, capitalization is focused on an experience that can be useful for others, shareable knowledge, without valuing it. Nevertheless, they could be complementary, or share objectives within the learning and evaluation culture agenda.

The real practice of capitalization has entailed mixed uses. Around 30 French aid development - stakeholders (NGO and their partners) confirmed that capitalisation is used in practice as a catch-all term, usually misunderstood, even confused with MEv (Didier, 2010). Capitalization is a recent practice (at least in a systematic way in Francophone contexts). The need to document and evaluate capitalization endeavours is recognised by different stakeholders interviewed for this research and the available literature about the subject. This should inform the future development of this learning-oriented approach in West Africa, while preserving its diversity and richness. The analytical framework proposed in Section 3.2 it is a first attempt to cover this void of research.

No analytical frameworks, checklists or guidelines similar to the ones used in Section 2.2 for MEv were found for capitalization. The grey literature available, including guidelines and manuals to conduct capitalizations[65], and the reflections from a group of practitioners of capitalization were the basic source of inspiration for the proposal to analyse the nine capitalizations of SLM initiatives in Senegal. The same logic of the MEv analytical framework was kept, using 12 criteria to question capitalization reports about their design, process, result and potential utilization.

2.4. Research limitations and mitigation measures

Firstly, challenges for compiling data about SLM evaluations in Senegal were encountered. On one hand, it was not obvious to determine if evaluations effectively happened (showing limited evaluation institutional memory at the level of national authorities). On the other hand, there were problems to find their reports, suggesting problems of documentation storage or institutional memory at national authorities' offices. Moreover, different ministries or different units of the same ministry supervised administratively SLM interventions. Therefore information about SLM evaluations was scattered among lots of different stakeholders with no central authority. In some cases, internal monitoring final reports or specific studies were received instead of evaluation reports, illustrating the loose conception of evaluation by different actors. This limitation was mostly overcome with a long and thorough data collection process, including contacts with all key institutional evaluation stakeholders and systematic search of electronic and physical libraries (See Section 2.1.2).

A second potential drawback was related to the use of MEv as the analytical framework and its application to a poorly documented research context. MEv has been sometimes criticized due to the difficulty of raising conclusions when comparing very heterogeneous evaluation processes (Bustelo, 2002). The objective of this research was to study evaluation practice in order to enlarge the body of evaluative knowledge and inform the policy-making cycle SLM in Senegal. Although the individual cases could be very different, they should complement each other and get integrated in a higher-level purpose in order to improve the evaluation function in general and the development results of those interventions (See Section 2.2). Therefore, MEv was considered the best theoretical and analytical approach to study this neglected research area.

Moreover, MEv based on evaluation reports can be limited if certain dimensions are not explicitly discussed in the reports themselves. For the MEv of the 40 project evaluation reports based on a desk review (section 3.1), findings were based solely in the information included in the evaluation reports. Therefore, it was assumed that the evaluation reports included correct and adequate information about the evaluation process and that evaluators (and commissioners who validated those reports) were faithful in portraying the real process of the evaluation. In some cases, MEv

65 See a summary of them in Annex G.

analysis lacked data because evaluation reports presented insufficient information. This was minimized discarding evaluation reports with incomplete information to be meta-evaluated (Yarbrough et al., 2011). Nevertheless, this limited the level of depth of the analysis of certain issues in the review of 40 evaluation reports of the present research. For instance, the inherent conflicts of interest around SLM initiatives could not be fully explored if they were not explicitly mentioned in the report by evaluators when describing the design and process of the evaluation. All the evaluation standards and guidelines used as a source of inspiration of the MEv analytical framework mention as the gold standard a highly inclusive and participatory evaluation process. Nevertheless, when they are operationalized, the MEv criteria do not allow to grasp the quality or real depth of the participation (as discussed in MEv criterion 4 about the level of stakeholders' involvement in the evaluation process). The study only captured, when possible, some aspects related to the use of different value systems and perspectives to assess the success of a SLM intervention, but could not unveil the potential existence of conflicts of interest around access to land and its sustainable management by different land users.

This drawback was also counterbalanced adding three case studies of evaluations that were meta-evaluated in-depth (chapter 4), where other available documents[66] and interviews with key stakeholders were analysed. This allowed the triangulation of information included in the evaluation report with data from interviews to assess real usefulness and credibility, and explore some power relationships among different evaluation users and stakeholders. Similar limitations for the analysis of the capitalizations based on their reports were expected because of their emphasis on the process (See Section 2.3). Nevertheless some minimal content was found in the capitalization report on the basis of the review of available literature, practice and answers from a group of experts and practitioners.

Another limitation arose from the fact that only one person applied MEv to SLM evaluation reports. Wingate (2009) highlighted the weak inter-rater agreement when using the Programme Evaluation Standards (PES) in MEv, using evaluation reports as the only source of information. This was more acute for certain standards where the information included in evaluation reports was not enough[67]. In the current study, only the researcher assessed the reports of SLM evaluations in Senegal in relation to a carefully crafted MEv framework, including criteria and dimensions. Therefore, there was no analysis about "interrater reliability" understood as the implicit assumption that different individuals would reach comparable judgments about a given evaluation report when using MEv Standards as rating criteria. Ideally, several people should have conducted the same exercise and discussions should have been held to reach a consensus rating and to improve reliability. This limitation was counteracted being very explicit about the "evaluation synthesis" (systematic combination of evidence with definitions of quality and value to draw well-reasoned and defensible conclusions about performance (Davidson, 2014)). The MEv criteria were considered as the set of high-level evaluation questions that guided the MEv. MEv dimensions were the basis for the definition of levels of performance. In some cases, MEv dimensions were accompanied by evaluation rubrics in order to further define the mix of evidence that prompted decisions about the level of performance in each case. Due to the heterogeneity of the set of evaluations, it was also decided to include examples for each MEv dimension to illustrate the justification of evaluative judgments and identify points to be explored in-depth in the case studies. This is included in the findings of the MEv in Chapter 3.

Finally, some limitations were encountered when conducting the in-depth MEv of the three case studies. In two of the cases there were problems to access some additional documentation and to interview some key stakeholders. The idea of interviewing local-level evaluation stakeholders (beneficiaries and their representatives) was abandoned after several attempts because of serious

66 Terms of Reference of the evaluation, draft and final versions of evaluation reports, other information like methodological notes, minutes of meetings of the Steering Committee of the evaluation, presentations of preliminary findings of consultants.
67 She analysed 54 published metaevaluations using document review and looking at the interrater agreement. Wingate concluded that the use of PES for metaevaluation presented serious challenges when the only source of information for the MEv is the evaluation report, finding the lowest agreement for the PES criteria about feasibility and propriety.

recall problems about the evaluation mission[68]. After the research was granted the informed consent, it was found that some of the main evaluation documents were not public or were not available in the official language of Senegal. Sufficient time was allowed to contact reiteratedly key stakeholders to interview them or to get access to key documents. *Evaluation champions* in each of the case studies greatly facilitated data collection. In comparison to similar MEv exercises, the in-depth three MEv of this study reached a significant number of stakeholders (See Chapter 4). For instance, the MEv conducted within the framework of (Varone, 2007) in Senegal, Niger and Congo Brazzaville could only reach 3 representatives of evaluation managers, the evaluators and the evaluated. The present PhD study reached at least six different types of evaluation stakeholdres and interviewed 8 (FLCD-RPS MEv), 9 (PRODEFI MEv) and 13 (PROGERT MEv) individuals (See Chapter 4 for more details).

Moreover, the limited culture of MEv (as the evaluation of evaluations) was also evident during some of the interviews. Even some consultants had problems to reflect and review about past evaluation practice through interviews. Some stakeholders were uneasy to discuss about the evaluation process, its management and main constraints, they were not initially willing to go deeper in certain aspects, or even recognise some recall problems. Their reflection was boosted from the clarification of the study's objectives to enlarge the body of evaluative knowledge to contribute to the improvement of evaluation practice and SLM development results. Sufficient information could be finally raised to inform the meta-evaluative analysis and conclude about some trends of evaluation practice of SLM in Senegal.

68 This dismissed the in-depth study of a fourth evaluation management arrangement that could be identified: participatory project-evaluations with high involvement of local users. Too little information was included in the reports and findings most of the relevant interviewees was too challenging.

Chapter 3: Findings from the Meta-evaluation of SLM initiatives in Senegal.

3.1. Specific findings about the project evaluations in Senegal

The focus of the research was on evaluation processes, and not their findings. It was not intended to conduct a synthesis of evaluation findings of a set of evaluations of SLM interventions in Senegal, but to raise key information about how evaluation was practised in this sub-policy domain: how evaluations were conceived, how they were done and by whom, what were the main outputs of evaluation processes, and what were their prospects of utilization. Firstly, this chapter summarizes the findings emerging from the Meta-evaluation (MEv) using the 12 criteria to assess the design, process, result and utilization of the evaluations of SLM interventions in Senegal. Afterwards, the conclusions from the analysis of the 9 capitalizations are discussed and overall conclusions are presented.

3.1.1. Meta-evaluation of evaluation designs.

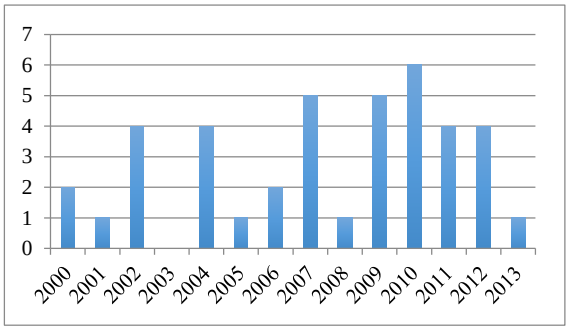


Figure 22. Frequency of reports according to their dates.

The 40 SLM project evaluations were published or released throughout the research period (2000-2013), with a certain concentration of cases after 2007 (65% of cases).

The majority of evaluations were conducted at the end of the project (final) while almost a third where conducted during the project implementation (mid-term). Only four SLM *expost* evaluations (more than five years after the completion of the intervention) were conducted in Senegal.[69] Finally, in other two cases the evaluation was part of a series of annual evaluations ("other").

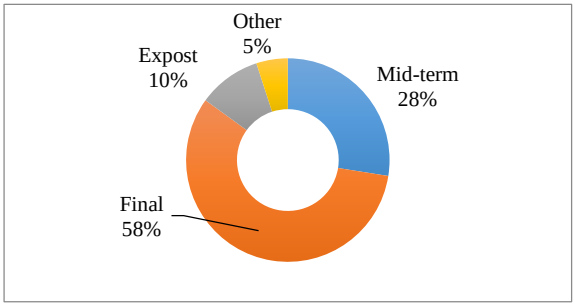


Figure 23. Distribution of evaluations according to the moment they were conducted.

In some cases, the title of evaluation reports did not match with their content. For instance, the title announced a Mid-term evaluation (MTE), but was conducted by the time of the closing date of the Project, which was considered by commissioners as a transition phase waiting for a new formulation. Moreover four mid-term "evaluative exercises" were titled "review" instead of "evaluation", without finding a clear distinction in their approach, methodology or content. Although the majority of Evaluation Policies of the main donors tend to distinguish between "evaluations" as exercises conducted externally and "reviews" as internal project management tools conducted by project managers, this distinction was not clear in those four cases of the set of evaluations. They were conducted by external consultants and shared a similar scope and

69 The four *expost* evaluations were promoted by two donors. Two cases pretended to analyse the results of programs funded during the 1990's in order to inform the future Forestry Development Action Plan and the possibility to move towards Sector Budget Support. The other tried to look at impacts after more than a decade supporting community forestry projects in the same region.

procedure to evaluations. Only seven of the projects were evaluated both at mid-term and at final stage of their cycle. This reflected the trend of donors of strategically choosing evaluations at certain points of time instead of mandatorily evaluate projects at mid-term and final moments following criteria related to project length and budget. This could enhance evaluation utilization in a financial resource scarce environment where, ideally, evaluations without prospects of utilization are not conducted.

The main *focus of the evaluation* was more difficult to assess than expected. The level of the results chain where the evaluation put the emphasis in relation to their main findings and the evidence base provided to sustain conclusions was analysed. Different organizations and evaluators understood differently the distinction between output, outcome and impact[70]. The definitions from (UNDP, 2009b) was embraced (See figure below). The analysis was focused on what the evaluation delivered, not on what was announced in the Terms of Reference or the objectives of the evaluation report. For instance, in some cases although the ToR proposed and recommended an outcome-level evaluation, the report admitted that it was not possible because of the pitfalls of available data and it was finally focused on outputs delivery.

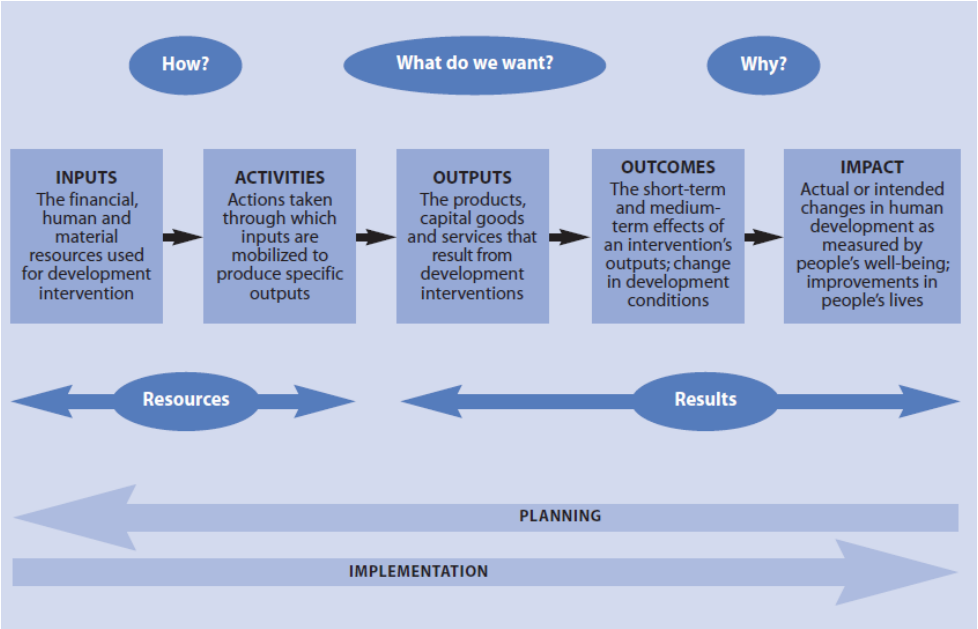
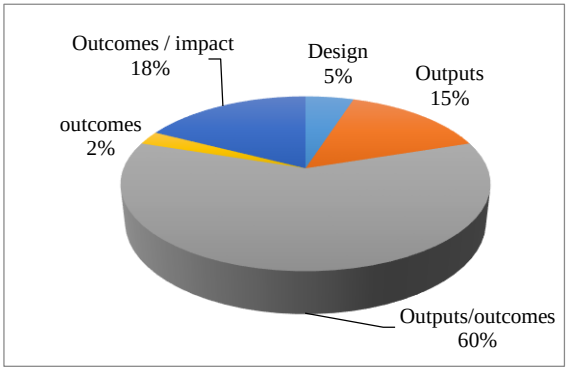


Figure 24. Typical Results-Based Management Results Chain. (UNDP, 2009b)**, page 55**



The majority of cases were "hybrids" mixing the assessment at different levels of the results-chain. The majority of evaluations were considered as outputs/outcomes (24 cases), followed by outcomes/impacts (7), outputs (6) and outcomes (1). Two cases were classed as design because of the weak implementation status by the time of the evaluation. No examples of evaluations focused on implementation or "process" were found.

Figure 25. Distribution of evaluations according to their focus.

70 This was highlighted in some evaluations covering different projects in different countries. A disclaimer in the evaluation report warned that different projects used differently the logframe terminology: activity, output, outcome, objective, and goal.

"Outputs" were considered as the products, capital goods and services that result from a development intervention, including changes caused by the intervention which were relevant to the achievement of outcomes. "Outcomes" were the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs, capturing the utilization of goods and services of a project or programme. They measured the level of benefice and services to targeted populations and were related to short and medium-term objectives. "Impacts" were the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Because of the nature of SLM interventions, impacts were considered in relation to social and economic betterment of population and improvements in the overall state of ecosystems and natural resources-base.

Evaluations were classed as "Outputs" when the focus was on the description of activities and immediate goods and services promoted by the project, with very limited information about potential future outcomes, for instance, only listing the level of achievement of activities contributing to certain outputs. "Output/outcome evaluations" captured some evidence about the access to and use of the goods and services offered by the project, without arriving to offer enough evidence about the utilization of goods and services. For instance, assessing the number of people trained and revenue improvement from management of natural resources, analysis of level of operation of some agriculture investments and their effects on decreasing the level of agricultural products loss or damage, perceptions from stakeholders about the usefulness of outputs to change the targeted problems (mangrove conservation, access to credit, among others), and perceptions about the decrease of erosion rates or change in the local revenues.

"Outcome-focused evaluations" used M&E information (for instance data series about the change in land productivity, yields, and soil erosion rates) or conducted surveys to local population about the number of hectares restored thanks to SLM techniques, increased income of local population, nutrition status, among others. They also included ecological indicators, such as the return of bird species, vegetation restoration and overall biodiversity. Evaluations were classed as "outcome/impact" if more systematic efforts were made to capture the change in selected indicators, along with the project contribution to them. For instance, they included an "impact matrix" where the change in chosen impact areas was measured, along with the number of beneficiaries concerned, split by gender. Each category was also assessed in a four-level scale of project contribution to this change. In others, a survey was done and econometric analysis (regression model and instrumental variable) was applied with the responses of a number of targeted and non-targeted village chiefs (similar villages in terms of natural environment and socio-economic attributes such as economic activities and income).

1. Clarity of purpose and/or objective of the evaluation

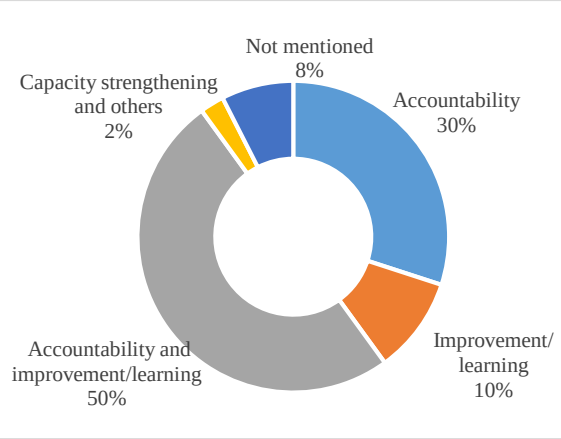
Having a clear purpose from the outset of the evaluation planning is widely recognised as been a key element to ensure "actionable evaluations" (Davidson, 2012). The study found that very few evaluation reports (and their ToR) presented in a very clear and unambiguous way their objectives. The coherence with the evaluation questions was neither straightforward in most cases.

The evaluation purpose is related to the types of decisions that the evaluation report should inform and the audiences it is addressed to. The most typical classifications of evaluation purposes are accountability (informing citizens, tax payers or donors about the results of an intervention) [71], improvement (informing the implementation of ongoing programmes and projects or future designs), and learning (increasing the knowledge about a certain policy sector or programme) (Davidson, 2012). This last one is related to more general "enlightenment" objectives, conceived

71 Accountability is related to the "demonstration that work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results *vis à vis* mandated roles and/or plans" (OECD, 2002).

as their capacity to make generalizations from evaluation that build up the stock of knowledge on the policy sector of the project or programme (Weiss, 1998).

No evidence was found that the SLM evaluations analysed achieved the purpose of enlightenment, in spite of some claims by some about their contribution to learning. Some evaluation processes included some of these ideas, although there was a predominance of improvement purposes. These evaluations were classed as "improvement/learning". An additional evaluation purpose is related to building capacities within organizations to foster evaluative reasoning. This was classed as "capacity strengthening".



The majority of the evaluations mixed accountability and improvement/learning purposes (20 cases), while only 12 only focused on accountability. Four cases were clearly oriented towards improvement-oriented purposes, some including explicit "capitalization" aspects. Only one evaluation included purposes related to capacity strengthening of self-evaluation of local partners (farmers' grassroots organizations). In three cases it was not possible to determine the purpose of the evaluation exercise.

Figure 26. Distribution of evaluations according to their objectives.

2. Clarity about the foreseen utilization focus considered from the design of the evaluation.

The clarity of identification of potential user/s, audience or client/s of the evaluation in the ToR and evaluation report was used to judge the level of integration of utilization-focused aspects from the evaluation conception. Some reports included a specific section where evaluation users were listed . Others only mentioned this very briefly among evaluation purposes and others only included implicit information.

In 55% of the cases the evaluation audience or future users were not clearly described, it was only possible to be guessed. In 22 cases of those cases, potential users (either explicitly mentioned or implicitly) were a mix of donor, national authorities and project team. In three cases, the report was only addressed to the donor, in three more to national authorities and in one case to the project team and in only case to local beneficiaries.

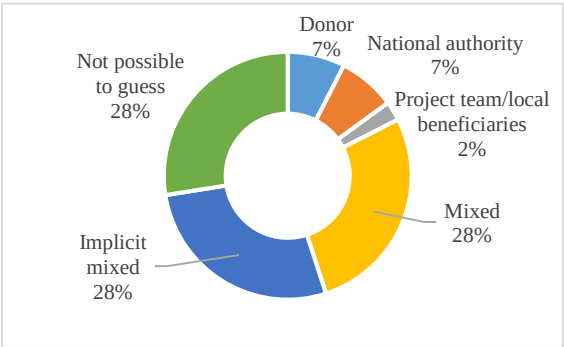


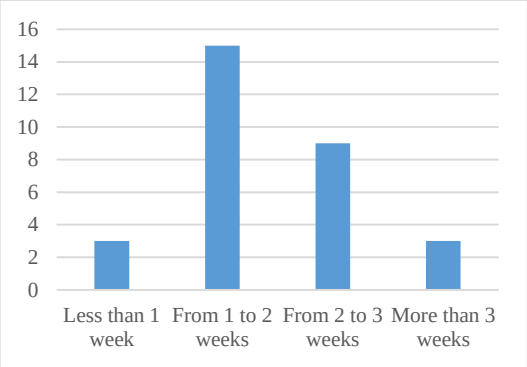
Figure 27. Distribution of reports according to potential users or audience of evaluation.

Evaluation purpose was crosschecked with the main audience mentioned in the report, expecting to find some relationship between the accountability-oriented evaluations and donors as the main audience. This relationship was not found. Only 26 reports offered information for these two dimensions simultaneously. The small number of cases and the highly diverse evaluation practice might blur this relationship. The only certain concentration of cases was found around evaluations mixing different purposes and mentioning different audiences (with a 20% of the 40 reports).

3. Adequacy of evaluation scope

The comparison of the evaluation budget (or cost) with the total cost and geographical scope of the intervention offered an idea of the adequacy of the evaluation scope. Nevertheless, key information about those dimensions was missing in the majority of evaluation reports. None of the reports included any direct data about the evaluation budget, and only some included the SLM intervention cost under evaluation (the evaluand). As proxies, different variables were used to estimate the evaluation budget: the time span of the evaluation process (desk review, preparation of data collection tools, fieldwork and data analysis, report writing and validation of findings) and the type of and composition of the evaluation team (number of persons, their level of seniority and if they were national or international).

The information about the time necessary from drafting ToR until report submission, including the time to recruit evaluators (length of evaluation process) was only possible to be guessed for 12 cases.[72] For those cases, the evaluation took around 6 months, ranging from 3 to 12 months. More reports included information about the length of the evaluation fieldwork (both in the capital and on the field).



For 42 reports, the "one-shot" average fieldwork was around two weeks long, excluding an outlier multicountry evaluation that did not conduct fieldwork in Senegal. This was considered as too short time for the scope of the evaluands and the difficulty around the evaluation of this policy sector. A great variability was found ranging from very short fieldwork phases (3 days) to very long and exhaustive ones (45 days), also considered as an outlier.[73]

Figure 28. Distribution of reports according to the number of fieldwork days conducted.

The interest in relation to the type of evaluator was two-folded. On one hand, international consultants are always paid much higher than national ones, impacting the evaluation cost. On the other hand, this was important in relation to the National Evaluation Capacities strengthening agenda mentioned in Chapter 1. The engagement of Senegalese consultants in evaluation could improve their individual capacities through learning-by-doing. The nationality of consultants was guessed by their names and consultations with SenEval's actors.

In 65% of cases the evaluation team included international expertise and in 40% a national consultant was also associated. Thirteen evaluations were conducted by "national evaluators" (project teams, Ministries staff or representatives of key beneficiaries' organizations). In some cases, no information was found about the evaluators, or it was contradictory.

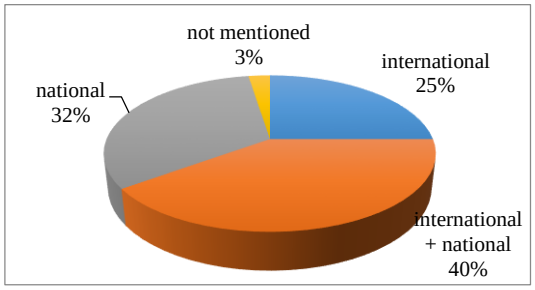


Figure 29. Distribution of evaluations according to the type of evaluator/s.

72 For instance, in some the date of the negotiation around evaluation objectives and the date of the final evaluation was considered, in others the expected date of consultancy start was compared with the date of the report.
73 The duration of the evaluation was of one year, with two field missions of two weeks each in two different years. It is not clear if this was the real length of the field mission since the same evaluator conducted two evaluations during the same mission period.

In the mixed evaluation teams, the report was clear that the international consultant was the team leader (in charge of the final write up, decisions about the content and findings of the report), while the role of the national consultant was not clearly defined. In some cases he/she just supported the field mission (including translation services) or presented preliminary results when the team leader left the country before restitution. It was expected finding more evaluations led by international consultants at the beginning of our sampling period (2000-2005) with an increase in the use of national evaluators by the end of that period (following the international efforts to promote NECD). This trend was not clear in the set of SLM evaluations in Senegal. The ten evaluations conducted by international consultants started in 2004 (25% of the total). The first seven evaluations by chronological order were mainly focused on the forestry sector with a high involvement of staff from the Ministry of Environment, especially during the field mission of the evaluation (considered as national evaluators).

It was not possible to determine the level of involvement and real role of civil servants in these evaluations in comparison to those conducted by external consultants or donor staff. It was not either possible to distinguish a clear pattern in the use of international/national evaluators according to the donor funding the project, although some of them showed a predilection to use international consultants. Smaller-scale projects were systematically evaluated by national consultants, probably to decrease the cost of the evaluation.

In terms of evaluation costing, the contribution of government staff and project and donors' teams is not usually valued or recorded because they are not paid extra or separately for their participation through the evaluation process. Only 11 reports included information to estimate the fieldwork length and the number of international consultants' days, considering an average *per diem* of USD 400 for mid-career international consultants.

Table 12. Evaluation budget estimates (data for 11 reports).

	Number days of international consultant/s	Proxy cost of evaluation (USD)
Average	65,64	26.255
Minimum	20,00	8.000
Maximum	300,00	288.800

For those evaluation processes, international consultants were hired for more than 2 months, an average evaluation cost of 26.000 USD. Omitting a very long evaluation (where different international evaluators were hired during three months), the average decreased to 42 days.

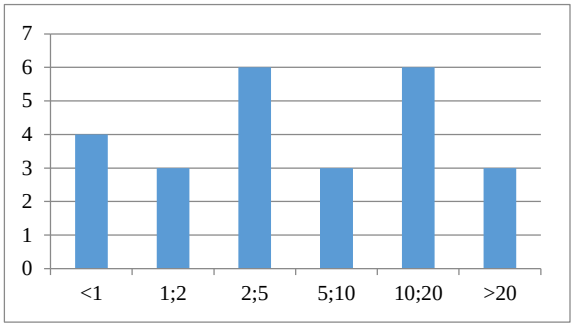
Basics statistics of the budget of the project (intervention) or the evaluand were found in 25 of the 40 evaluation reports or Terms of Reference. The SLM interventions were quite big in terms of resources invested (average of 8 million USD), typically funded by a bilateral or multilateral partner.

Table 13. Scope of the evaluand (budget of projects being evaluated).

	Scope of the intervention (million USD), for 25 reports
Average	8,31
Minimum	0,07
Maximum	35,00
Sum	191,16

As discussed in Section 2.1.2 (Scope of the research), it was not possible to access to the majority of NGO evaluation reports, presumably with lower budgets. (World Bank, 2008) estimated that the share of the investment raised by 116 NGOs between 1996 and 2000 in environment was USD 94 million, although it was not possible to determine if they would have met the sampling criteria of SLM interventions of this study. According to the Review of Public Expenditures in (World Bank, 2008), between 1992 and 2007 a total of USD 643 million were invested in SLM projects (around USD 42,8 million per year). This calculus considered types of interventions beyond the sampling criteria of this study, for instance, rural water and sanitation, other infrastructure projects and institutional strengthening. Considering that the budget of 15 of the 40 SLM interventions

was missing, the sampling criteria and the difficulties to access some reports, it could be presumed that the USD 191 million covered most of the SLM interventions targeted by this study.

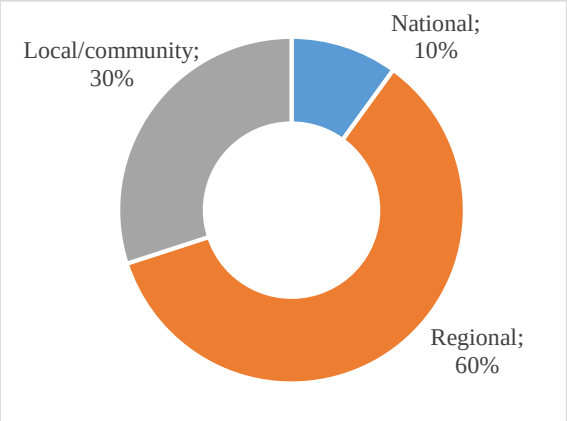


The analysis of the distribution of SLM interventions (projects) in terms of their cost showed that 50% of the 25 cases costed less than 5 million USD, with another peak of cases with costs around 10-20 million USD. No relation was found between the purpose of the evaluation and the inclusion of information about the total cost of the evaluand (the SLM intervention).

Figure 30. Frequency of reports by scope of intervention evaluated (budget in million USD).

It was expected that accountability-oriented evaluations would systematically include the cost of the project in the report (to reinforce the idea of evaluation of the "valor-for-money"), but in 3 of the 12 accountability-oriented evaluations this information was missing. The 25 reports with information about this had a variety of evaluation purposes. It was not possible either to conclude that donor accountability-oriented evaluations assessed the most expensive interventions.

It was assumed that evaluations mirrored the geographical scope of interventions. They tried to cover, at least, a representative sample of the project intervention sites. Evaluations were classed as "community/local" if they based their findings on visits to some communities within the same region, as "regional" if they also visited SLM interventions in communities in different regions or bigger geographic areas, and "national" if the evaluation encompassed information from the whole Senegalese territory[74].



Regional evaluations, covering villages from different regions, represented 60% of the cases in the evaluation set. Twelve were focused at the community/local geographical level, for instance some villages or rural communities in the same administrative region, or some villages in an ecoregion covering different administrative regions (for instance, Niayes or the Sine-Saloum). Only four evaluations covered almost the entire country (national). They encompassed SLM demonstrative interventions promoted by the government in all regions.

Figure 31. Evaluation/evaluand geographical coverage.

In the majority of those cases it was not clear how the evaluation fieldwork embraced this big geographical area (both regional and national evaluations) with very limited fieldwork time. In some evaluations the fact that project interventions were geographical scattered was criticized by evaluators. They declared that this made difficult the technical monitoring on the ground during implementation and hindered their evaluation work.

Different bibliographic references recommend a ratio between the cost of the evaluand (project/intervention) and the cost of the evaluation. Nevertheless these figures mix overall monitoring and evaluation costs. For instance, the World Bank recommends that M&E costs are

74 For a number of cases the evaluations also covered other countries in the subregion. In those cases the analysis was focused in the specific sections of the report about Senegal.

3-5% of total project costs (Levinson et al., 1999), but monitoring is usually the most expensive part because it entails recurrent missions along the project implementation. Moreover, this budget usually considers at least two evaluations (mid-term and final). Therefore, a ratio around 0,5% between a project-level evaluation and the cost of the evaluand could be considered as reasonable.

Table 14. Ratio between the evaluation cost and the intervention cost, in million USD.

Scope of the intervention (budget)	Proxy cost of evaluation	% cost of eval / project budget
21,7	0,12	0,55%
14,7	0,012	0,08%
12	0,016	0,13%
11	0,008	0,07%
7	0,030	0,43%
5,15	0,012	0,23%
3,5	0,016	0,46%

A positive and high correlation coefficient (0,73) was found between these two variables for 7 cases with enough information. As the average, the ratio evaluation cost/intervention cost was 0.28%. Therefore, although caution is needed because of the limited number of cases, the evaluation scope was considered as too low on average, with some exceptions. Nevertheless, it was too limited for the big geographical scope to be covered in most evaluations.

Summary of findings about the designs of the 40 evaluation reports

The 40 SLM evaluation reports in Senegal were scattered between 2000 and 2013, with a certain concentration of cases after 2007. A certain tendency was observed towards not evaluating projects following pre-established criteria like their budget or time-span, as the evaluation policies of main donors recommended. Nevertheless, seven interventions were evaluated (at least) twice. They were mainly final and mid-term evaluations (and some *expost* evaluations), dealing with quite big projects (average of 8 million USD). The majority of evaluations were "hybrids" mixing up the assessment at different levels of the results-chain. The majority centreed their analysis on the blurred area between outputs and outcomes (focus on goods and services delivered by the intervention plus some evidence about their effects).

In general reports did not state clearly their *evaluation purpose or objectives* that seemed to be implicitly related to accountability (justification of the use of public resources), although other combinations with improvement purposes were found. The majority of reports did not describe clearly the *evaluation audience or potential users*, which seemed to be implicitly donors in the majority of cases, along with national authorities and project teams. No strong correlation between evaluation purpose and audience was found, only some concentration of evaluations with mixed purposes and mixed audiences.

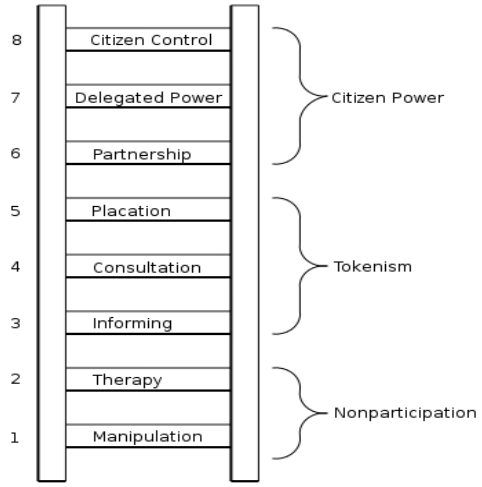
Assessing the *adequacy of the evaluation scope* was challenging due to very limited data in evaluation reports to estimate the evaluation budget and the total cost and geographical scope of the intervention in order to calculate the ratio. On average, the overall evaluation cycle entailed around six months, with only two weeks on the field. This was considered as a very short period when considering the scope of the evaluands (around USD 8 million and 70% of cases covering interventions in different Senegalese regions) and the inherent challenges of Sustainable Development (SD) evaluations. The majority of the evaluations in the set failed to associate a national consultant in the evaluation team. When they participated, reports did not explicitly detail what was their role in the evaluation process. Only 12 evaluation processes were entirely conducted by national expertise, either external consultants or a mix of staff from Senegalese Ministries or project teams, with no clear pattern over time. The only trend identified was that smaller projects were often evaluated by national consultants. For seven cases an average ratio of 0,28% between evaluation budget and intervention budget was estimated, which seemed too low from the 0,5% for one evaluative exercise recommended in some guidelines.

3.1.2. Meta-evaluation of evaluation processes.

4. Right stakeholders' involvement strategy throughout the process

This MEv criterion was assessed using four different MEv dimensions: adequacy of level of involvement of main evaluation users at different evaluation stages, adequacy of coverage and diversity of stakeholders interviewed or consulted, and capacity of evaluators to reach local beneficiaries. The usual definition of "relevant evaluation stakeholders" is related to those who have been or are likely to be affected by the project, those who have participated in or contributed to the project, and those who in other ways have a stake in the outcomes of the project.

Stakeholders can be engaged at different moments of the evaluation process: formulation of evaluation questions and definition of quality and value (ToR drafting and validation of methodological note), evidence gathering (data collection and field phase), data analysis and interpretation (validation of draft evaluation report) and establishment of actionable recommendations. Engaging the right mix of stakeholders can be challenging (Davidson, 2012), and it also proved difficult to be grasped through the meta-evaluation of evaluation reports which included very little information about this, but some patterns could be identified.



Arnstein's "ladder of citizen participation" (Arnstein, 1969) was used to reflect about the type and level of stakeholders' involvement. Arnstein proposed eight levels of participation taking into consideration citizens' power in determining the end product. For this study, the "end product" was the evaluation process itself, how the evaluation was designed (evaluation approach and methodology, evaluation questions, potential users), conducted (including who participated, who was interviewed, who conducted the evaluation) and used and disseminated.

Figure 32. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation.
Source: (Arnstein, 1969)

Very little explicit information was found in the majority of evaluation reports in relation to the type and level of involvement of different evaluation users during the preparation, the process and the utilization of the evaluation. Nevertheless, the comparative analysis of the type of information included in evaluation reports allowed classifying them as high, standard+, standard and low level of stakeholders' involvement. These different levels of performance are explained below.

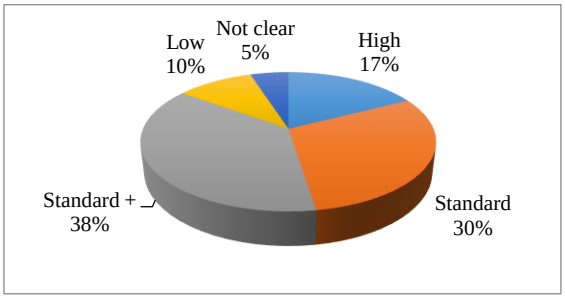


Figure 33. Distribution of reports according to the level of users' involvement.

Twelve cases were classed as standard involvement, while eighteen involved "more" some key stakeholders at certain stages of the evaluation (standard+). Seven cases showed signs of a higher involvement of different types of stakeholders, five by governmental actors and two by local ones. Finally four entailed low involvement. Data were insufficient to assess two cases ("not clear").

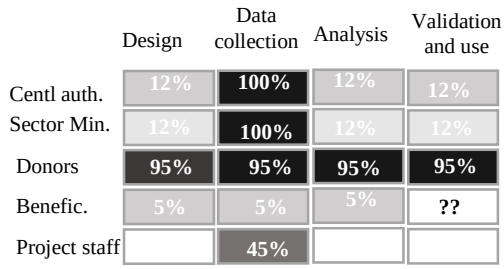
"High" involvement of evaluation stakeholders (delegated power, level 7 in Arnstein's ladder) was identified in those processes where either the national authority, the National Planning Department (DPN) had full control of the evaluation management (governmental level) or local population was more meaningfully involved through participatory workshops and other meetings (citizens' level)[75]. Stakeholders were involved in most of the stages of evaluation: setting evaluation objectives, collectively validating the evaluation questions of the ToR, through participatory data collection and writing-up of evaluation report. "Standard+" was granted to those cases were timid advances were found towards partnership (level 6 in Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation). For instance, representatives of the national authority or the project team actively participated, at least, in the evaluation field mission, with some level of influence on the process, results and utilization of the evaluation. In other cases, the project team was also closely associated.

"Standard involvement of users in the evaluation process" was assigned to those cases where no evidence was found that other stakeholders (representatives of national authorities, beneficiaries and project teams) actively participated in the drafting and validation of the ToR, being only interviewed or surveyed during the field mission. This "standard" involvement corresponds to "informing, consultation or placation" in Arnstein's "ladder of citizen participation" (Arnstein, 1969). Informing entails a one-way flow of information, stakeholders provide their opinion through interviews or focus groups, but without any capacity to influence the evaluation design, process, result and future use. Consultation includes the use of Evaluation Steering Committees, where a selected group of institutional stakeholders are invited to comment at key moments of the evaluation process and can propose changes in relation to the focus, approach or methodology of the evaluation. Nevertheless, it is usually difficult that they meaningfully influence the evaluation process. Finally, placation implies placing a few hand-picked worthy local people to transmit the voice of a group. This would be the case if some local representatives play a significant role through more extended workshops to distil evaluation findings and conclusions. Arnstein warned about the need to ensure that the ones participating are accountable to a constituency in the community. This was not possible to be assessed with the level of information available about the evaluation processes in our reports. Finally, evaluations were classed as "low level of involvement of users" when the report was only based in an expert-judgment, with very limited consultations with few stakeholders.

Very little disaggregated information was found in evaluation reports about the level of involvement of different stakeholders at different evaluation stages. The graph below captured some of this scattered information which only tried to show graphically that participation of stakeholders was mainly limited to the data collection stage (mainly through interviews, focus

75 For instance, a "popular evaluation" where more than 80 local beneficiaries and local representatives were gathered to evaluate the project around six pre-established impact domains. In other cases, the ToR established that a first phase of the evaluation process would entail a consultation with the project manager to find the best approach to associate the rest of project partners in the evaluation, as well as to negotiate the evaluation methodology.

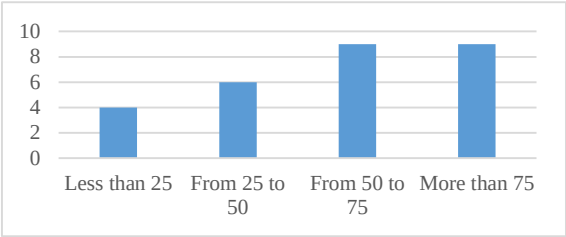
groups and surveys) and the prospects of higher participation through national-led evaluations managed by DPN.



National-led evaluations entailed higher involvement in all stages for the central National Planning Unit (5 cases); national authorities and project teams were especially associated during the fieldwork. Donors (especially headquarters offices) participated in all evaluations' stages, except for the two participatory processes where beneficiaries and grassroot-level organizations controlled the process.

Figure 34. Stakeholders' involvement level at different evaluation stages.
The four levels of participation were represented with more or less grey tone color
and numbers captured the % of cases of that level of involvement for each category of stakeholder.

In order to assess the adequacy of coverage of stakeholders interviewed, data from 28 evaluation reports could be used. As Meta-evaluation criterion 7 below explored, most of project evaluations used a similar approach (based on the project logical framework) and similar data collection tools (mainly desk review, interviews and focus groups). Although it was not possible to categorically compare the adequacy of the effort to interview stakeholders because of the different intervention sizes and geographical dispersion, the number of stakeholders interviewed offered an idea about the opinion base of evaluations.

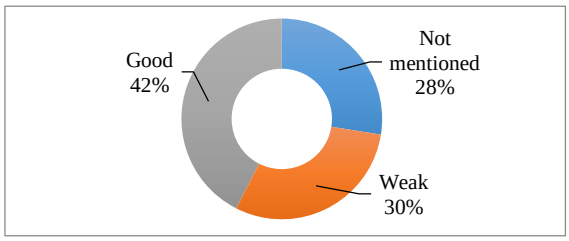


The average number of people interviewed was 75, with a high standard deviation (50 people). Nevertheless, these numbers need to be considered as approximate, since it was not possible to discern in all cases the number of people participating in focus groups.

Figure 35. Distribution of reports according to the number of people interviewed.

Excluding 12 cases where this could not be guessed, 65% of the cases interviewed more than 50 people. This was considered as a quite good coverage although it was not possible to conclude if they were the good mix of stakeholders to be interviewed and what was the quality and meaningfulness of those exchanges in order to get evidence to answer the evaluation questions.

It was not possible to do a formal actors map for each intervention and its corresponding evaluation in order to really grasp how comprehensive was the coverage of stakeholders by the evaluation in relation to the universe of key project stakeholders. Nevertheless, the dimension related to the adequacy of the diversity of stakeholders interviewed assessed if the evaluation collected data from a good array of stakeholders, if there was a good representation of different types of stakeholders previously mentioned in the evaluation report or in the ToR. The sample of of stakeholders by evaluators was considered at as diverse if at least 6 types of stakeholders were interviewed. In some cases, a clear list of types of stakeholders and their characteristics (main occupation, communal leader, etc.) was added. In others, a clear analysis of the number and type of stakeholders interviewed in relation to the total and their geographical location in relation to project sites was presented. For the cases where less than 6 different types of stakeholders were consulted, the diversity was considered as "weak". For instance, only 14 people interviewed from 4 different groups of stakeholders without consultation of beneficiaries outside the capital.



The adequacy of the diversity of stakeholders interviewed was good (diverse group of stakeholders associated) in 17 cases, being weak in 12 other cases and with lacking or limited information about this in the rest (11 cases).

Figure 36. Distribution of reports according to the level of diversity of stakeholders interviewed.

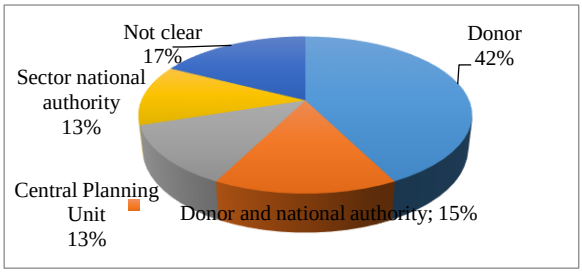
Finally the capacity of evaluators to reach local beneficiaries was assessed. Although some projects considered sector ministries, Senegalese NGO or others as their "direct beneficiaries", this MEv dimension was focused on the involvement of local people (farmers, herders, forest managers who are in charge of managing the natural resources of their immediate environment), on how well the evaluation accessed hard-to-reach populations (Davidson, 2012). The majority of reports (38) claimed to have included beneficiaries among their interviewees. Only two evaluation reports did not mention that "beneficiaries" were interviewed. Nevertheless, it was not possible to assess the representation of those consulted or associated following Arnstein's concept of "placation" (level 5 of citizen participation) where a non-representative group can perpetuate the traditional power elite structures.

5. Adequacy of institutional structures to ensure quality control of the evaluation process

For this MEv criterion two MEv dimensions were considered: who the commissioner or manager of the evaluation was and what the level of clarity of information about the composition and functionality of the Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) was. For the first MEv dimension, the definitions of evaluation commissioner and evaluation manager were explored (UNDP, 2009b)[76]. Nevertheless, very limited information about the distinction between these two functions was included in the evaluation reports. Only DPN-managed evaluations clarified the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation manager and the consultants/evaluators.

"Donor-commissioned or managed" evaluations are those where it was clearly stated or it could be guessed from the report that they were conducted because of the requirement of the donor or funder of the project who retained the control over the main evaluation decisions. In other cases, this responsibility was shared between the "donor and national authority", while in others donors were not mentioned (only "national authorities", like the Ministry of Environment or Agriculture in charge of supervising the project). Some of these were directly conducted by a national consultant and staff from the Senegalese Ministry. "Central national authority delegation" captured those processes where the donor or the implementing agency decided to delegate the management of the evaluation to the National Planning Unit, DPN of Ministry of Economy and Finances (see Chapter 1). DPN acted as the manager throughout all the stages of the evaluation, while the donor was considered as the commissioner.

76 The "evaluation commissioner" determines which outcomes and projects will be evaluated and when, provides advice to the evaluation manager on how the findings will be used, responds to the evaluation by preparing a management response and use the findings, safeguards the independence of the exercise and allocates adequate funding and human resources. The "Evaluation manager" leads the development of the evaluation ToR, manages the recruitment and contractual arrangements with the external evaluators, provides coordination support to the reference group (Evaluation Steering Committee), provides the evaluators with administrative support and required data, connects the evaluation team with key evaluation stakeholders, ensure a fully inclusive and transparent approach to the evaluation, review the inception report and the draft evaluation reports; ensure the final draft meets quality standards.



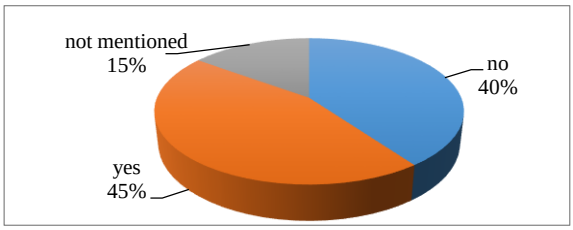
Donors kept the control of evaluation processes in 23 cases, in solo in 17 cases and shared with national authorities in other 6 cases. The sector Ministry (Environment or Agriculture) and the central Planning Unit led five cases each, while this was not possible to be determined in 7 evaluations.

Figure 37. Distribution of reports by type of commissioner/evaluation manager.

No consistent trend was found in terms of increasing number of cases of national-led evaluations at the end of the sampling period. Evaluations led by Ministry of Environment or co-managed by the donor and the Ministry were spread over the 2000-2013 period. The recent practice of evaluations managed by the central National Planning Unit (5 cases) were concentrated after 2010, although this practice started in 2008 according to the interviews

In order to assess the clarity of information about the composition and function of Evaluation Steering Committees (ESC), some key definitions in (UNDP, 2009b) were considered. The ESC, also called Reference Group or Joint Evaluation Partnership is defined as the group of key stakeholders to guide the evaluation process. Their main roles and responsiblities are to define the profile and competencies of the evaluation manager; to review the draft ToR; to assist in collecting required data; to oversee progress and conduct of the evaluation; and to review the draft evaluation report to ensure quality standards. The effective functioning of an ESC can increase the level of involvement of key stakeholders, facilitating the evaluators' work in terms of access to key data and interviewees and ensure better quality of the evaluation report.

The roles of responsibilities of the different partners interacting in the evaluation, including the functions of the Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC), were described in some reports. In other cases, this was not formally mentioned but different stakeholders commented the draft and the final reports according to the report. In others there was clear information about the formal procedure of incorporating comments received from different stakeholders in the final version of the report. Other reports included as an Annex the list of the comments and observations received from its members. In some cases consultants were asked to detail where certain aspects required by the Terms of Reference could be found along with the answer to particular questions of the ToR. On the contrary, those reports where it was explicitly mentioned that only the donor or the Evaluation Unit of the donor provided comments to improve draft version of the reports were considered as not having a proper ESC.



The existence, composition and functioning of an ESC was more or less clearly mentioned in 18 evaluation reports, while only one actor participated in the management of 16 cases (no formal ESC). In the rest this could not be assessed due to lack of information in the report.

Figure 38. Distribution according to the existence of an Evaluation Steering Committee.

6. Sufficient transparency and ethics consideration in the evaluation process

Extensive literature exists today about the constraints faced by evaluators when asked to design and conduct an evaluation of a real-world programme in complex and evolving contexts. Typical constraints include lack of comparable baseline data, much less data on a comparison group and insufficient time or budget allocated by clients (Bamberger et al., 2011). This Meta-evaluation criterion assessed how clearly evaluators informed evaluations' users about the types of challenges and limitations they faced during their work and how they dealt with them. Some of the evaluations did not mention any specific limitations or challenges during the evaluation process (24 reports). The information about challenges and difficulties in the 16 remaining reports was very diverse. In the majority of cases it was scattered in the evaluation report, in others it was included in the methodology section. Only in few there was a separate section to deal with challenges during the evaluation process. The classification from (Bamberger et al., 2011) was used to group the challenges mentioned. Different challenges were mentioned in the same report and have been recorded separately below:

Table 15. Frequency of number of reports where types of challenges are mentioned.

Time	6
Problems with availability or quality of monitoring data	6
Timing of the evaluation	4
Availability of stakeholders	2
Budget	2
None	2
Project team collaboration in logistics and access to data	1
Access to Project sites	1

Time (in terms of fieldwork length) and data quality and quantity were the most frequently mentioned constraints. The timing (moment) when evaluation was conducted was also raised in various cases, along with budget constraints. In two reports from the same consultant, it was explicitly said that no constraints were found during the assignment. In specific cases, reluctance of projects' teams to participate or restrictions to access intervention areas were also mentioned.

Interesting information was provided in some cases to overcome those limitations. For instance to counteract the short fieldwork time, evaluators praised the association of a national consultant with a good previous knowledge about the context and the project. In some cases where challenges associated to data availability were mentioned, the problem was related to difficulties to process project-related documents because of the lack of prioritization of the documentation that the evaluation manager should do for consultants. In other reports it was clearly stated that it was too early to assess any outcomes or impacts or the decision to go for a second phase was already officially taken when evaluation took place (timing constraints). In one case, problems of availability of certain actors to be interviewed during the limited time of the mission were raised. The evaluators hypothesized that this was due to the belief of project teams that they should not interfere in the evaluation (lack or limited project team collaboration). In others, the evaluation conducted some data collection over the phone or by email, with low response rates. In one case, the evaluation team could not visit some of the project sites because of security issues.

Another dimension related to the transparency is related to the clarity and completeness of information in the report about how ethical aspects were considered and enforced during the evaluation process. This information should cover both, commissioners/managers and evaluators, in relation to the deontological and professional ethics of the discipline. Only in two of the 40 evaluation reports there was an explicit quote to evaluation principles dealing with ethics that guided the evaluation process, using the donors' principles related to disclosure and ethics. Some of the methodological principles applied to conduct the evaluation were also related to ethical considerations like integrity (any issue with respect to conflict of interest, lack of professional conduct or misrepresentation was to be immediately referred to the client), respect and anonymity (all participants had the right to provide information in confidence). Issues related to ethical

considerations were overlooked in evaluation reports, although it was not possible to determine if they were effectively considered and enforced during the process and not mentioned in the report.

Summary of findings about the processes of the 40 evaluation reports

It was challenging to assess the adequacy of the *stakeholders' involvement strategy throughout the evaluation process*. Very little explicit information was found in the majority of evaluation reports in relation to the type and level of involvement of different evaluation users during the preparation, the process and the utilization of the evaluation. There were some cases with interesting practices to go beyond the most common practice based on brief consultations and interviews with stakeholders only at one stage of the evaluation process (data collection). For instance, five cases of delegation of evaluation management to national authorities involving Evaluation Steering Committees and eighteen cases with deeper involvement of sector national authorities during the fieldwork mission. In less than half of cases, selected key stakeholders were associated to the evaluation through their participation in Evaluation Steering Committees or similar. Only two isolated cases involved higher levels of participation of local beneficiaries. Evaluators reached at least 50 people (good coverage) during their data collection, including in all cases hard-to-reach populations. Nevertheless, there was still room for improvement in terms of the diversity of groups of stakeholders consulted and to clarify their level of representation.

Institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation process highly depend on the evaluation management arrangement that determines who leads the evaluation process, who decides who participate and validate evaluation outputs. The meta-evaluation unveiled four types of options coexisting in Senegal, although in a third of cases this was not possible to discern. The dominant option was still donor-led evaluations, although national authorities shared the management with donors in 15% of cases. A similar share of cases were managed either by the Ministry of Environment or the central National Planning Unit (DPN) for national-execution interventions (around 13% of cases each), with a certain tension between these two options to be solved, as it is analysed in conclusions.

Serious problems of *transparency about limitations encountered during evaluation and ethics consideration* were found in the 40 reports. Only very scattered information about difficulties was mentioned, mostly related to constraints of time, budget and the moment when the evaluation took place. Very few cases included a discussion about deontological and ethical issues. In those cases it was more related to a description of the overall framework and principles used, but nothing about how they were enforced and applied.

3.1.3. Meta-evaluation of evaluation results.

Given the rather uneven quality and quantity of information included in evaluation reports, it was difficult to draw conclusions about the quality of the evaluation –other than the report itself –or about the relevance and robustness of the findings and recommendations. Nevertheless, the research captured some trends about the evaluation result that are summarized below.

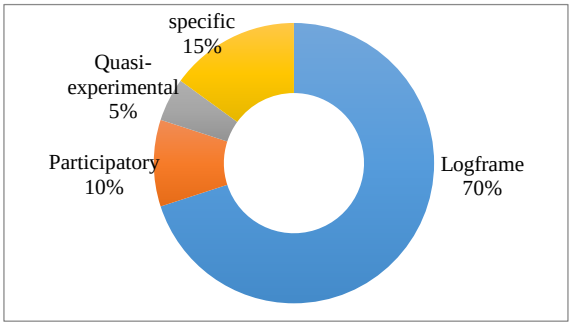
7. Clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choices

Three different MEv dimensions informed this MEv criterion: the clarity about the evaluation policy or guidelines and the evaluation approach used and the justification of data collection tools. In relation to the first MEv dimension, the majority of evaluation reports (68%) did not mention any specific evaluation guidelines. The majority used the most typical OECD evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability)[77]. Although the source was not

77 Similar evaluation criteria were used in other evaluations: coherence, design, implementation, capacity building, partnership, gender equality, social inclusion, technical and financial feasibility, level of appropriation by local populations, potential replication.

clearly mentioned, it could be presumed that these were the guidelines adhered by donors of the interventions being evaluated. In the rest of cases (32%) more specific donors' guidelines were mentioned as being the basis for the methodological approach of the evaluation[78]. Nevertheless, this was not systematic. For instance the evaluation of the same project at mid-term and at the final stage did not mention the donor's evaluation policy or guidelines in both reports. Similarly, in some cases they were mentioned in the ToR but not in the evaluation report.

In relation to the clarity about the justification of the evaluation approach used, none of the reports included a discussion about alternative epistemological and methodological evaluation options to answer the questions and objectives of the exercise and its adequacy to the evaluation context. Only in an isolated case, evaluators specified the improvements made by consultants in relation to the ToR, including their proposal for certain analyses.[79] Evaluation processes were classed according to how the empirical evidence was gathered and analysed in the evaluation, using four big categories: evaluations based on the Project Logical Framework, participatory approaches, quasi-experimental and specific approaches.



The predominant evaluation approach in the set of evaluations was the logframe, also related to Results-Based Management, followed by specific approaches according to the ToR's demand. Finally, some cases emphasized the participation of stakeholders in the evaluation and two evaluations merged quasi-experimental techniques with the logframe approach.

Figure 39. Distribution of reports according to type of evaluation approaches.

The widespread use of logframe or results framework was mixed in some cases with some analysis of the Theory of Change. As done for other MEv dimensions, the study assessed the evaluation delivery in the report over ideal claims of ToR. In practice, logframe or results-based evaluations were focused on reviewing output achievement by component and offering some data about potential outcomes arising from them. "Participatory" evaluations made a significant effort to foster a meaningful process of stakeholders' involvement in relation to data collection and analysis: evaluation objectives set in consultation with different stakeholders, collective development of evaluation matrix, a collective and inclusive workshop to validate the findings. In one case, a specific participatory methodology was used: outcome mapping, promoted by the Canadian cooperation agency.

Although there was no formal quasi-experimental design in the 40 evaluations, qualitative logframe analysis was complemented with some quasi-experimental exercises in two cases (three-staged impact evaluation and an instrumental variable regression analysis). Specific approaches followed the ToR requirements or responded to the nature of the evaluand. For instance, some evaluations used specific methodologies asked in ToR like the "Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for assessing contributions to poverty alleviation, gender mainstreaming, social, economic and environmental sustainability, etc. In another case, the donor asked evaluators to answer a list of specific key questions to test the project's hypotheses.

78 For instance, UNEP Evaluation Policy, Manual and GEF Guidelines for terminal evaluations, the UNDP M&E procedures, UNEG standards, the UNDP's "Handbook on Planning, M&E for Development Results", Canadian CIDA Evaluation Guidelines, JICA Project Cycle Management Method, FIDA Guidelines.

79 Assessment of effects of the SLM techniques over yields and biomass production using before-after and with-without comparisons, cost-advantage of the SLM techniques; analysis of changes according to beneficiaries, comparing impact data from the project with literature, identification of the main challenges faced by producers.

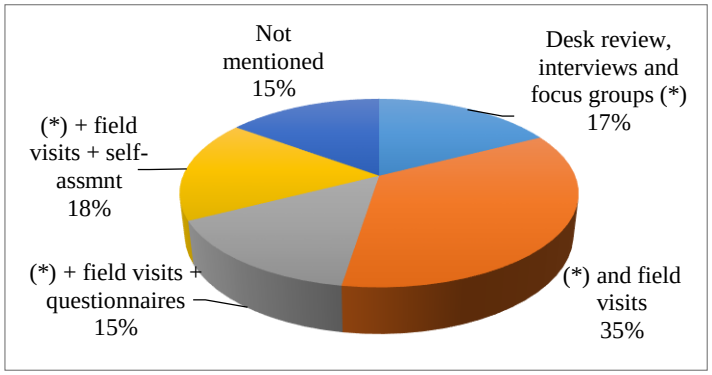
Therefore, the set of 40 SLM evaluations conducted in Senegal for the past years did not explicitly engage with the epistemological and methodological debates around the legitimacy and credibility of evidence and knowledge in development evaluation (Donaldson, 2009). The quantitative-qualitative divide between experimental quantitative approaches and non-positivist/constructivist qualitative ones had entailed lots of literature and exchanges among scholars and practitioners of development evaluation. Experimental approaches in evaluation like the Randomized-Control Trial have been criticized because of the restricted control of the evaluation process by a small group of experts who understand the "ins and outs" of these advanced-level statistical and econometrics-based methodologies[80]. They seem difficult to reconcile with the participatory approaches in development, very popular since the 1970's (Chambers, 1997), and the participatory M&E approaches developed later ((Estrella, 2000); (Pasteur & Blauert, 2000)). Although the major donors incorporated the "discourse of participation", their effective practice and their full inclusion in M&E systems has been very limited (Abbot & Guijt, 1998).

Different authors have recently proposed to delink evaluation credibility from "gold standard methodologies", like some positivist evaluation strands promoted for the past decades. Mixed methods and paradigmatic pluralism should be considered at the moment of choosing the epistemological, approach and methodologies to be used in an evaluation, and should be clearly justified at the outset of the process (Bustelo, 2014). Only two evaluations using quasi-experimental approaches hinted that no further justification about this epistemological and methodological choice was needed. The rest of evaluations just omitted this point.

Finally, the clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choices was related to data collection tools. Major evaluation theorists warned about the "evaluation discipline becoming methodologically manic obsessive" (Scriven and Patton in (Davidson, 2012)). It is not about methods, but about *evaluative reasoning* as the piece that makes evaluation fundamentally different from descriptive research. It was not possible to distinguish between methodologies (case studies, surveys, experiments, Delphi expert consultation) and methods (questionnaires, interviews, others) with the information in evaluation reports. Therefore, the broader category of "Data collection tools" (OECD, 2002) was used: "methodologies used to identify information sources and collect information during an evaluation".

In general, the 40 reports responded to the ToR requirements with very limited space for evaluators to propose different evaluation approaches or methodological pathways or reflecting about their adequacy. Although it was not possible to assess the comparative level of effort made by each evaluation process in terms of using and combining different tools, keeping in mind the predominant logical framework-based approach, there was a clear concentration in the use of some data collection tools. Only in few cases there was an explicit mention of the use of the combination of different data collection tools. For example, triangulation through the concept of "*multiple lines of evidence*" using several evaluation tools and gathering information from different types of stakeholders and different levels of management.

80 Some international research institutions are using experimental and quasi-experimental approaches for the evaluation of agriculture extension projects, including SLM initiatives (e.g. CGIAR, DIME of the World Bank…)



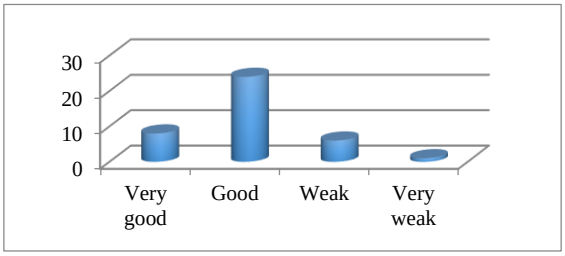
The most used combination of data collection tools was desk review, interviews and focus groups with a sample of stakeholders, highlighted with (*) in the graph. Field visits were also widely used (27 cases in total), followed by the use of self-assessments completed by project teams or stakeholders and findings from previous surveys.

Figure 40. Distribution of reports according to data collection tools.

Field visits were considered as very important for the type of policy sector being evaluated. SLM measures on the ground (agroforestry plots, for instance) should be checked and validated by evaluators, beyond the monitoring and reporting information received from project teams or the Ministry in charge. The use of self-evaluation reports, usually administered by the project team or enlarged to other stakeholders through workshops (self-assessment) was also considered by some evaluators and contrasted with the findings emerging from primary data collection through interviews and focus groups. Similarly, some evaluations used the findings emerging from previous surveys conducted some months before by local staff from Ministry of Environment, in some cases specially commissioned for the evaluations. Others recognised that due to the broad multicountry scope of the intervention and the evaluation, the evaluation relied on phone, Skype interviews and emails.

8. Clarity of evaluation synthesis

Three MEv dimensions were proposed to assess this: the robustness of the evidence base and logical links between findings, conclusions and recommendations, the clarity about the process to aggregate or synthetise results to answer higher-level evaluation questions and clarity about the value system used to assess the worth and merit of the intervention. The first assessed what was the level of robustness of the evidence base of evaluation reports in order to justify how findings and conclusions were derived from the evidence gathered, and their articulation with evaluation questions. Following (Bustelo, 2002), this dimension tried to capture "what it is to obtain good and right findings in evaluation processes", the logical coherence between evidence, interpretations, judgments, and recommendations. Interpretations should be based on reliable data systematically gathered (evidence). Those interpretations should be the base for judgments. Lastly, recommendations should be based on judgments. The ideas of the attributes of "good evidence" were considered ((Schwandt and Halpern 1988) in (Bustelo, 2002)): relevance, reliability, sufficiency, representativeness, timeliness (valid in a specified time frame and reasonable cost). Nevertheless, this was one of the most difficult dimensions to assess. In general, evaluation reports did not clearly describe how findings and conclusions were derived from data. The level of robustness of the evidence base and the logical links between findings, conclusions and recommendations was classed as very good, good, weak and very weak.



The majority of evaluation reports were robust in terms of logical links and evidence base offered to sustain conclusions and recommendation (24 cases), with eight outstanding ones. Serious flaws were identified in six cases and an extra isolated case showed serious problems of robustness.

Figure 41. Distribution according to the robustness of evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

The distinction between "very good" and "good" was the existence of some pitfalls in the logical chain. For instance, when conclusions and recommendations were presented in a way that it was not easy to identify the quality and value to draw well-reasoned and defensible conclusions about performance (Davidson, 2014). Another example included overall conclusions followed by a multiplicity of recommendations not clearly attributed to those conclusions. "Weak" evaluation reports were those with no clear connection between conclusions and recommendations, or with no clear reference to findings and data collected to back-up conclusions. "Very weak" was attributed to those cases where substantive problems of robustness in terms of logical connections and evidence-base were identified.

A common evaluation challenge is associated to finding explicit ways to aggregate or synthetize results about different dimensions to answer higher-level evaluation questions (Davidson, 2014). This is very relevant for any policy sector related to sustainability. Following the literature on SD evaluation, it was expected to find results and findings classed by sub-evaluations of the three SD dimensions: economic, social and ecological, as well as some reflection about the challenges to weight them if an overall one-dimension conclusion about the worth and merit of the intervention was presented. None of the evaluation reports made a serious attempt to address this challenge or clarify the process to aggregate results arising from each of the three SD dimensions. The majority presented their conclusions by project components following the logical or the results framework (in line with the choice of evaluation approach). Most of them just jumped from the assessment by different evaluation criteria for each component to the evaluation of the achievement of project objectives. There were no cases where more formal multi-criteria methods were used. Only in six cases evaluators decided to leave the conclusions at the level of project components or objectives, without trying to aggregate their judgment.

Findings about the extent to which the evaluation report mentioned or considered different value systems or perspectives to assess the worth and merit of the intervention did not follow the recommendations from the Sustainable Development (SD) literature. For instance, lots of debates at different levels have raised the need to include traditional knowledge about resources management, along with the underlying concepts of success and failure of interventions based on local beneficiaries' perceptions and priorities. This is key to identify the base for defining "levels of performance". Almost all evaluation reports (95 %) did not explicitly mention divergent voices about the overall evaluation conclusions and recommendations. All of them were based on consultant/s' judgment about the worth and merit of the project or programme. Nevertheless, some isolated decided to include the conclusions of the intervention's assessment done by local population as complementary judgments to the ones made by consultants. They were contrasted with the findings of the main evaluation report and previous evaluations when they differed, but clearly stating that no unanimity was found among beneficiaries.

9. Adequacy of consideration of Sustainable Development (SD) evaluation challenges

This MEv criterion covered the specific challenges of evaluation of SD, and more specifically SLM aid development evaluations. Six MEv dimensions informed how adequately the set of evaluations encompassed the most commonly mentioned SD evaluation challenges. Firstly, the clarity of the evaluation in relation to the justification of time coverage and adequacy of its geographical scope, including the specific sites visited during the evaluation in relation to the project intervention area. Moreover, the adequacy of integration of economic, social and ecological aspects of the evaluand and its context and the extent to what monitoring data was used in evaluation. The SLM evaluations did not clearly justify their choice of the time window assessed. Although in most cases it was implicit that the evaluation covered the implementation period of the project under evaluation, in other cases previous phases were also considered and results were mixed-up.

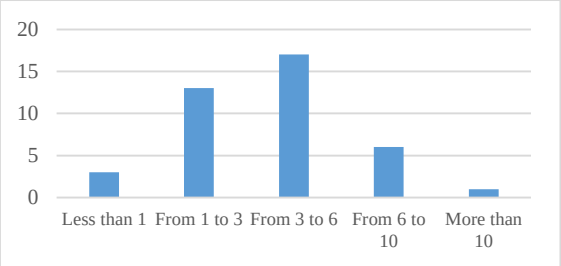


Figure 42. Frequency of reports according to the number of years covered by evaluations.

On average, the evaluations covered 4,6 years. Nevertheless, very diverse cases were found from evaluations covering just 1 year to others conducting *expost* evaluations of 20 years. There was a certain concentration of cases in the first two categories (covering from 1 to 6 years) that coincided with the implementing times of these types of projects.

Due to the nature of the interventions evaluated, it was assumed that evaluators should have verified the information in monitoring reports through field visits. As per the target criteria, all projects included some field interventions (agriculture, forestry, livestock management measures). As mentioned above 35% of evaluation reports claimed to have done field visits among their data collections tools. Evaluations were not clear about the geographical scope of those field visits. It was implicit that they covered (or tried to cover) most of the intervention area of the project (10% covering sites in all the national territory, 60% in two or three regions of Senegal and 30% within the same region).

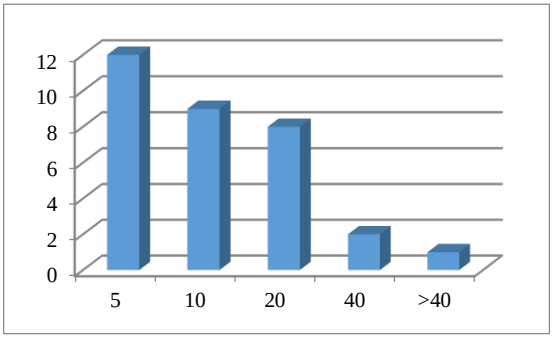


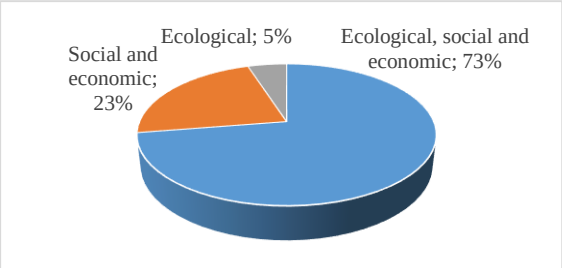
Figure 43. Distribution of reports according to the number of sites visited by evaluators.

Some evaluation reports were very clear about the representation of the sites visited in relation to the total (for instance, including geographical information of their location). For the 32 cases with this information, an average of 10 sites visited, with most of cases visiting from 1 to 20. In eight reports this information was very vague, for instance, no fieldwork agenda or the number of sites visited was included.

Difficulties to capture long-term effects (or impacts) and to encompass wider geographical zones were commonly mentioned challenges in the literature about evaluation of SD, and especially those related to land management and climate change adaptation. The majority of the 40 SLM project evaluations was conducted either during (28%) or in the last months of implementation (58%) and focused their analysis on the direct project intervention sites. Although landscape approaches were used in the implementation of some of the SLM interventions, no evidence was found of strategies to include this in the evaluation processes. The *expost* evaluations included in the set of evaluations did not either meet the requirements to consider those challenges or continued to be more focused on the logframe of the projects.

Common practice recommends including a good background section of the intervention and its context in order to better understand the choice of the evaluation approach and its coverage, as well as to assess the robustness and relevance of its conclusions and recommendations. This was assessed through the amount of information about the context included in the evaluation report, rating it as "weak" or "good". The majority of reports (68%) offered some context information that was assessed as good or good enough, including a diagnosis of the problem, the solution proposed, among others. In some isolated cases the context of the programme was included in an annex and a summary of other similar interventions. In 32% of evaluations, the information about the context (and the evaluation itself) was very limited, and the report jumped into the analysis of outputs or outcomes without offering an overview of the context.

The essential considerations of the new Bellagio Sustainability Assessment and measurement principles, one of the most referenced principles to measure Sustainable Development (SD), recommend considering the underlying social, economic and environmental system as a whole and the interactions among its components. They also suggest including issues related to governance and the dynamics and interactions between current trends and drivers of change (Pintér et al., 2012), as well as human well-being and ecosystem condition (Rojas, 2009). This study looked at the balanced consideration of the three dimensions of SD (economic/social/ecological) in the analysis and recommendations emerging from the evaluation. Special attention was given to those evaluations (and interventions) that claimed to focus in all three dimensions or pillars. The targeted interventions purposefully avoided forestry or agriculture market-oriented projects, without any environmental considerations. Therefore, it was not expected to find lots of evaluations only focused on economic aspects.



The majority (29 evaluation reports) considered indirectly aspects of the three pillars. Nine were mainly focused on social and economic aspects, without a clear analysis of ecological dimensions, and two only focused on environmental or ecological factors (dealing with survival rates of plants and numbers of seeds available).

Figure 44. Frequency according to focus of evaluation (Sustainable Development dimensions).

In general, the challenge of including the dimensions of SD was not analysed in detail in the majority of them. In some cases, in order to include the three dimensions of SD simultaneously, the evaluations used matrices encompassing different impact domains or associated socioeconomic impacts with environmental changes. In some cases, evaluators regretted that in spite of the initial intervention's SD objectives, the environmental dimension was neglected during implementation. Those evaluations did not find ways to overpass this and did not present any analysis on potential ecological changes that the intervention could have contributed to.

Using the information generated through the project M&E system of the project or any other secondary sources available can be key in ensuring adequacy of resource use, contrasting findings emerging from primary data collection and building a time series able to capture SD evaluation challenges. This MEv dimension assessed if evaluations could use key social, economic or environmental indicators that the project team or applied research generated at the baseline moment or during implementation. This indicator did not consider the quantity or quality of this information, which was already identified in some reports as being of limited quality (see MEv dimension about evaluation limitations and constraints and overall sector diagnosis in Senegal (M. M. Ba et al., 2002)). The lack of systematic information from an operational M&E system was denounced in several reports. Nevertheless, evaluators claimed to have used this scattered information in almost all reports.

10. Sufficient documentation of the evaluation process and result

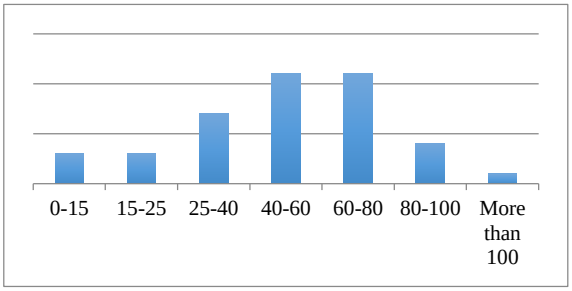


Figure 45. Frequency of reports according to their number of pages.

Excessively long and wordy reports, using too academic language or being too detailed are considered as poor evaluation reporting (Davidson, 2012). The average length of the evaluation reports was 51 pages, quite long but within the standard evaluation practice. A great disparity of cases was found with a standard deviation of 24 pages.

In four cases, the annexes of the report were not available or found. The annexes typically contained the agenda, list of interviewees and documents consulted. The average length of the annexes was 31 pages (ranging from 101 to 1 page),[81] also within the usual evaluation practice.

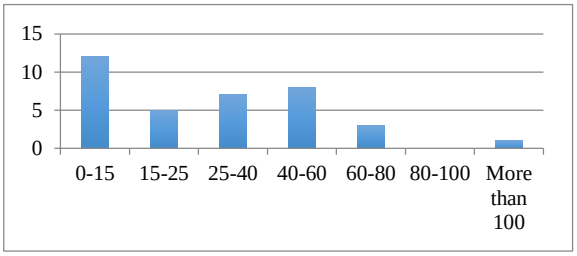


Figure 46. Frequency of reports according to the number of pages of Annexes

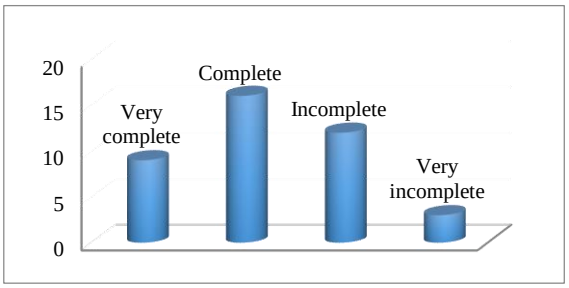
In order to assess the sufficiency of the documentation of the evaluation process and result, three MEv dimensions were proposed: the level of completeness of the report, the level of information about the demand (the ToR), and the level of easiness of conducting the MEv based on information and documentation available.

Different levels of detail are needed for different audiences. For managers, evaluation reports should never be longer than a 2-page bullet point summary, while just one page would be advisable for senior managers. Having a good Executive Summary (2-3 pages) focused on addressing high-level strategic questions can ease the use of the evaluation by an executive audience, while the main body of the report (20-30 pages), including a clear description of scope, methodology, the evidence to achieve conclusions and recommendations, is addressed to donor and national authorities staff. Finally, Annexes offer more detail about the evidence and the methodology to achieve conclusions for project teams and evaluation managers in order to ensure evaluation quality assurance (Davidson, 2012). This was more or less respected in the majority of SLM evaluations, with the use of Executive Summaries at the beginning of the report in 63% of cases, including key information about the context, project objectives and components, some basic information about the evaluation and its objectives, and conclusions and recommendations. In some other cases, the summary was only a very brief introduction about the project that was not enough to grasp the main elements of the report and communicate key conclusions and recommendations and the evaluation context and methodology.

Four levels of completeness were considered, being the ideal a "very complete" report including very detailed information, including an Executive Summary and sections about the scope, methodology, conclusions, recommendations and annexes. A report was considered "complete" if some of those sections were either not included or too vague but there was overall a good level of information. For instance, when the scope of the evaluation was not clearly described and

81 In some cases, the length of the report and its annexes was similar. These were exceptions where Annexes included a full-length study informing evaluation findings (the participatory popular evaluation, the summary of the donors' evaluation policy documents, or a summary of the field visits).

recommendations were too vague and not targeted to each actor or they were mixed up. This hindered the robustness of conclusions and recommendations, and the overall understanding of the evaluation scope. Finally those with very limited information about the evaluation itself, with no section about the scope or the methodological approach and key Annexes were classed as "incomplete". In some cases, there was no formal section with conclusions arising from findings, and recommendations with actions. "Very incomplete" were those with too little information about most of the required sections.



A total of 25 of the 40 cases where classed as complete or very complete. Nevertheless, 12 cases presented important pitfalls in relation to key information about the methodology and the evidence base for the main findings (incomplete). This situation was even worse in 3 very incomplete reports.

Figure 47. Distribution of reports according to the level of completeness.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) are the main document where the demand of the evaluation is described. The fact that ToR are included or not as an annex of a report highly determine the level of information about this demand. The terms of reference (ToR) give directions of how a consultant or a team should conduct an evaluation. They define the objectives and the scope of the evaluation, outline the responsibilities of the consultant or team, serve as the basis for a contractual arrangement and set the parameters against which the success of the assignment can be measured (World Bank, 2011). They usually contain some background information about the evaluand, the evaluation objectives and intended users, as well as the competencies required for the evaluation team. They can be more or less detailed in terms of the evaluation approach and methodology as well as in terms of the institutional arrangement to manage and validate the evaluation report. Sometimes consultants are asked to respond to the ToR through an inception report or a methodological note.

In 13 out of the 40 cases, the Terms of Reference (ToR) were not mentioned or annexed to the evaluation report. Three additional evaluations mentioned their existence but they could not be found. The majority of evaluations (60%, this is 24 reports) included the ToR as an Annex, which was considered as a good practice to increase the transparency of the evaluation process. Nevertheless, the content of ToR was quite diverse and in the majority of them it was virtually impossible to compare the "intent" (what the evaluation pretended to do according to the ToR) and the "delivery" (types of analyses effectively done according to the evaluation report).

The level of easiness to conduct the meta-evaluation was assessed on the basis of the level of information included in the documentation available (mainly the evaluation report and the ToR if available), according to the total number of MEv dimensions that could be informed, considering very easy (less than 8 dimensions missing), easy (from 8 to 10), difficult (from 11 to 14) and very difficult (more than 15 MEv dimensions hard to inform).

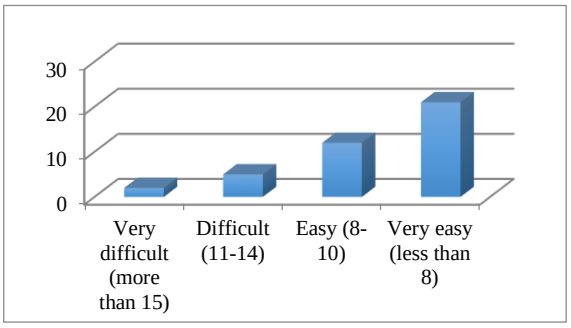


Figure 48. Distribution according to easiness to conduct MEv (number of indicators missing)

Only two and five reports were very difficult or difficult to meta-evaluate. The majority (82,5%) was easily or very easily meta-evaluated, considering that sufficient information was found to assess the majority of MEv dimensions. This is in line with expectations since the approach was previously tested with some evaluation reports and some MEv dimensions refined.

No clear relationship was found between the number of pages of the report and the easiness to conduct the meta-evaluation. Although the shortest reports showed quite low scores for this dimension, other longer reports also presented similar problems. Lots of the information about the process and methodology aspects was found in the ToR in an annex. The most difficult reports to be meta-evaluated were those with no annexes. Other cases were difficult to meta-evaluate because the only version of the evaluation report disclosed by the donor was a summary in English and a note for the Ministry in French.

Summary of findings about the results of the 40 evaluation reports

In general, the 40 evaluations reports included very little reflection about their *epistemological and methodological choices* (approaches, methodologies and collection tools or the overall evaluation policies guiding the process). The regular practice seemed to qualitatively assessed the worth and merit of the project in relation to its logframe or results framework, with some mix with Theory of Change analysis using desk review, interviews and focus groups. Field visits to SLM realizations were very important for those types of evaluations, but they were just mentioned in a third of cases. Only 10% were classed as participatory evaluations while quasi-experimental and experimental approaches were marginal or inexistent.

Evaluation reports did not clearly detail the *evaluation synthesis.* They did not describe how findings and conclusions were derived from data. Nevertheless, 75% of cases were indulgently classed as providing good or very good robustness of evidence and logical links between findings, conclusions and recommendations. The common challenge in evaluation about clarifying how different dimensions are aggregated to answer higher-level evaluation questions was very evident in these SD evaluations. None presented findings around sub-evaluations by SD dimensions (economic, social and ecological) or a reflection about their weighting to conclude about the worth and merit of the intervention. Similarly, they ignored the recommendations of the SD literature about including different value systems and perspectives about an intervention (for instance, beneficiaries' perceptions about the definition of "success and failure" of the intervention).

Limitations were detected about the *adequacy of consideration of Sustainable Development evaluation challenges* in the set of SLM evaluations in Senegal. The time covered by evaluations was not very clear in most of reports, although the majority of them were linked to the Project implementation time (5 years on average). Very few cases justified the representativeness of the10 project sites that evaluators visited in relation to the total sites and diversity of types of SLM techniques promoted by the intervention. The majority of evaluations claimed to have covered all project interventions. This seemed quite difficult since project sites were spread out in different regions of Senegal (70% of cases) and fieldwork time and budget was very limited. Only one third of the evaluations were classified as local or community evaluations (with interventions localized in the same Senegalese region), probably facilitating fieldwork and allowing deeper analyses about the local environment.

The majority of evaluations (86%) was conducted either during or just at the end of implementation and focused their analysis on the direct project intervention sites. Therefore, these project-level evaluations were not able to capture long-term effects or to encompass wider geographical zones. The two *expost*-evaluations did not either meet the requirements to consider those challenges. The majority of evaluations presented at least some basic data about the evaluation context, although focused on the programme itself and its results framework making difficult the assessment of the responsiveness of the evaluation to its context. The results of the assessment of the integration of the three SD dimensions (economic/social/ecological) were quite disappointing. This was not at the centre of the analysis in most of the reports. Some omitted environmental aspects and were more focused on the overall improvement of local people's livelihoods (social pillar), and some isolated cases were only focused on the need to restore the natural resources base (ecological pillar). Only some interesting examples of data collection and analysis to embrace the multidimensional nature of SD could be identified.

In relation to the *sufficiency of documentation of the evaluation process and result,* evaluation reports were quite complete and long documents, 60% of them included an Executive Summary to ease the use of evaluation findings by policy-makers or managers. In spite of very variable content, most of the reports included Annexes and the Terms of Reference of the evaluation, increasing the transparency about the evaluation process. As expected due to the different stages to develop the MEv analytical framework, most of them (82,5%) were easily or very easily meta-evaluated, with sufficient information to assess (or to guess) the majority of MEv dimensions.

3.1.4. Meta-evaluation of the information about evaluation utilization

The evaluation reports did not include lots of information about their credibility and future utilization in spite of best practices recommending the consideration of the evaluation use from the design of the evaluation.

11. Actionable recommendations

Good and targeted recommendations can ease their consideration and potential uptake. Having the evaluation report (and sometimes the ToR) as the only sources of information, it was difficult to analyse how good and actionable recommendations were. A good understanding of the evaluation context and the intervention itself was needed. It was also challenging to say if recommendations were too many or too few, although some extreme cases were recorded. It was decided to keep this as key questions for the in-depth case studies, and just focused the attention on how did the evaluation foster that its recommendations would be considered and applied.

On one hand, some guidelines suggest that in order to make recommendations more actionable they should clearly identify the target group in charge of implementing them, as well as priority actions (UNDP, 2009b). The majority of reports did not follow this best practice (only 40% were well-targeted). Different organizations have developed procedures to promote the effective implementation of recommendations through a "management response system", where project teams or executing agencies formally accept the recommendations and propose a series of actions to put them into practice. Afterwards, the Evaluation Offices of the donor or the executing agency are in charge of following-up that this happens[82]. This study could only assess if the evaluation report clearly mentioned the existence of this mechanism, either in the ToR or the evaluation report. Only four cases explicitly mentioned the follow-up mechanisms but it was not possible to find the management response in the website of the donor.

82 As an example, UNDP developed the website "Evaluation Resources Center, ERC" (erc.undp.org) where Terms of Reference, reports and management responses of evaluations are posted and are publicly available. It provides timely data on the status of evaluations in the evaluation plans, management responses and and an periodic update of the status of committed follow-up actions (follow-up) (UNDP, 2009b). The responsibility of writing the management response resides on UNDP's country or regional office.

On the other hand, other authors disagree with the idea of evaluators providing specific recommendations because of their insufficient knowledge about the budgetary and organizational implications of them. They warn about the risk of proposing impractical or unworkable recommendations. Psychological reasons are also given, related to the limitation of appropriation of those courses of action if they are not decided by the organization that must put them into place (Davidson, 2012). This was done in some reports of the evaluations of SLM interventions. They claimed that recommendations were discussed and agreed with those with decision-making and budgetary responsibilities, along with community members. Possible scenarios (proposed in conjunction with the project team) in relation to the targeted recommendations by actors were drafted, as the literature recommends (hinting some potential broad courses of actions and their trade-offs, while asking the client organization and the community to determine what makes more sense to them). In thos cases, the evaluation report includes a formal evaluation profile with the evaluation findings, available at the donor's website ("agreement at completion point", signed after a meeting with the "Core Learning Partnership of the project" including the Project management unit and the formulation mission of next phase). This agreement reflected an understanding among partners to adopt and implement evaluation recommendations.

Finally, some ideas about ways of helping the actionability of recommendations included in the set of evaluations were adding a section focused on explaining actions related to each recommendation; targeting recommendations by actor for those at the component level and leaving more general recommendations at the end of the report; including a table summarizing recommendations by theme, actions, responsible actor and delay of execution.

12. Adequacy of dissemination

In relation to the clarity of channels of communication of evaluation findings, some of the most common methods for dissemination of evaluation reports are doing summaries or syntheses for the project team or the main partners and holding (restitution) seminars, while the use of audio-visual techniques targeting local population is more limited (M. M. Ba et al., 2002). Although this was not a clear section in any of the 40 evaluations, some of the dissemination practices in 12 of them could be identified: workshops were held to communicate the results and collect the opinion of some stakeholders at the end of the field mission or after the submission of the final version of the report and separate discussions with different groups of stakeholders, especially local ones. In other cases the list of donors' and national authorities' staff that should receive the report was included in the report, or it was mentioned that the report would be available at the donor or the executing agency's website. In other cases, the evaluators mentioned the availability of hard copies in the library of the DPN.

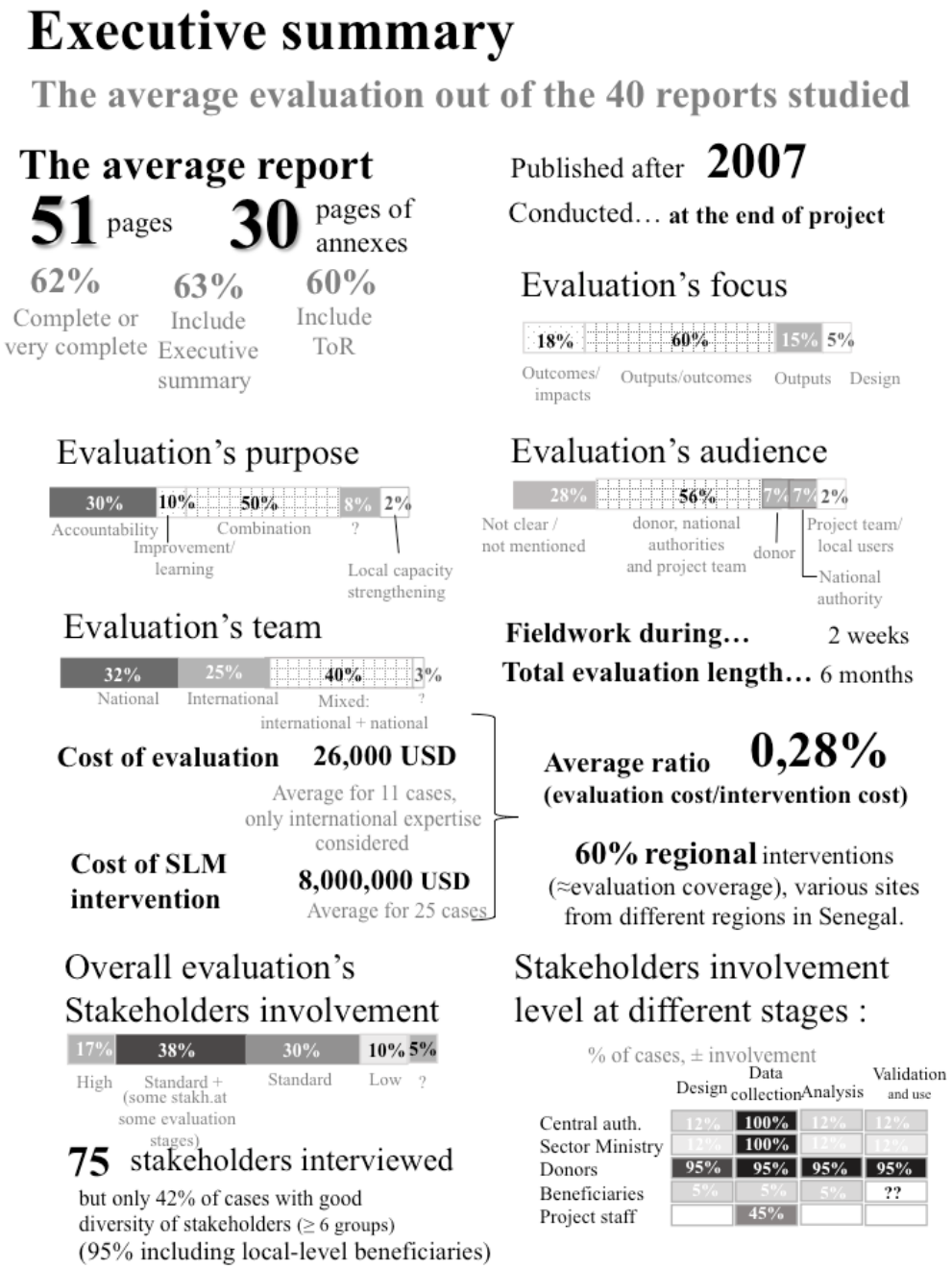
In order to assess the adequacy of dissemination of evaluation results it was also assessed how easy was to access the evaluation report. The information from the research journal to find the evaluation reports was used to estimate the difficulty to find the evaluation report. On one hand, around 45% of them (18 reports) were "easy" to find, meaning that the report was found on an open-access website (donor or other evaluation stakeholder) or through a web search. On the other hand, 22 reports were "not easily" accessible since they required different emails or phone calls to stakeholders to get a copy of the evaluation result.

Summary of findings about the prospects of utilization of the 40 evaluation reports

Considering only evaluation reports, it was difficult to analyse how *good and actionable recommendations* were. Some of the mainstream practice in evaluation of aid development advocates targeting recommendations to the group of stakeholders in charge of their implementation. Only 40% of SLM evaluations identified a target group and priority actions. Some isolated cases included another option that is also supported by other sources: drafting some possible scenario proposed by evaluators in conjunction with the project team and other

stakeholders. Only four cases mentioned the use of mechanisms to follow-up recommendations' implementation, although their real tracking could not be verified.

Very little information about means of *dissemination of evaluation findings and conclusions* was included in reports (only 12 cases). Among the most frequently mentioned communication channels: holding restitution workshops, making the report available at the donor's website, distributing it by email to key stakeholders, of storing it in the national authority's library. All of them were mainly addressed to institutional stakeholders, and nothing was mentioned to reach grass-root level stakeholders. Less than half of evaluation reports were easily accessible, either online or in the national authority's library. A graphical Executive Summary with the main characterization of the 40 SLM project-level evaluations was extracted from the above analysis, see below.



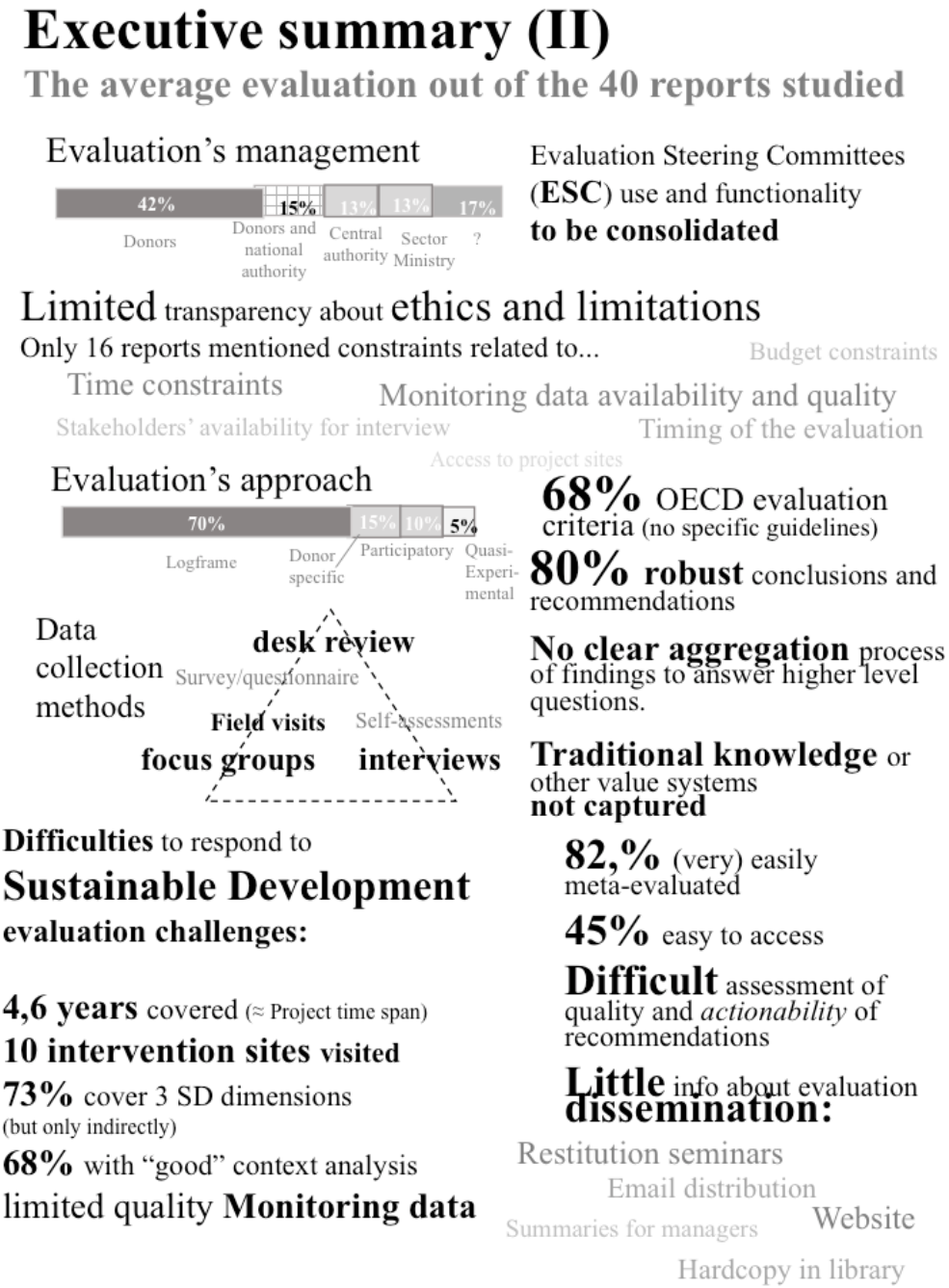


Figure 49. Executive summary of the 40 project-level SLM evaluations.

3. 2. Specific findings about the capitalizations.

The titles of the nine SLM capitalizations were quite diverse and although the use of the term "capitalization" was the norm, other terms like "success stories", "lessons learned" or "tacking stock of field experiences" were also used. Except for the first capitalizations conducted in 2003, the rest were concentrated in the 2008-2012 period, being the last one from 2013[83]. They were very diverse and no clear trend about their nature or approach could be associated with their date of execution.

There was a quite clear concentration of actors promoting or conducting them: 4 capitalizations of German cooperation-funded initiatives and 2 conducted by the Senegalese NGO *IED Afrique* (with support from Canadian and English development partners). Canada and the UK aid development agency also promoted another interesting case where a coalition of Senegalese NGO collectively capitalized their experience related to soil salinization. USAID promoted another one and *Fondation de France* was in charge of a very interesting capitalization from the methodological perspective, with the *Comité Francais pour la Solidarité Internationale*.

The nine capitalization reports were quite different and diverse among them. Nevertheless, it was expected to find some minimal content following the recommendations emerging from guidelines, grey literature and practitioners' experience. Some of the ideal features of capitalizations that guided the analysis ("MEv criteria") were:

- Objectives related to organizational change,
- Oriented to raising key lessons and learning from experience,
- Internally promoted and locally-led instead of donor-controlled project evaluations,
- High levels of participation from a big array of stakeholders,
- Use of similar methods and information sources to the ones used in project evaluations,
- Less standardized report's content than project evaluations,
- Richer description of the overall initiative, going beyond logframe objectives and results,
- No specific judgment about the worth and merit of the intervention, but diversity of opinions and visions from different stakeholders.

The findings emerging from the analysis of the 9 capitalization reports applying the framework presented in Annex F are presented below.

Design of capitalizations

The diversity of purposes and objects of the nine capitalizations followed the diversity announced in the bibliography. They were far from the ideal purpose of being focused on actors' experiences. Some were focused on capitalizing practices, tools and methods, instead of the more comprehensive purpose of experience capitalization. Some examples of purposes of the capitalizations were related to improving practices to increase interventions' effectiveness, promoting the tools and methods developed during the programme to be used in the next project's phase, to disseminate and scale up tools and approaches of the programme. Others were focused on reporting lessons and success stories (to capitalize lessons from successful experiences and to use local population knowledge or to report success stories to ensure sustainability). Finally, some other cases claimed very similar objectives to the ones of a regular project evaluation: to describe results of the programme and overall results of the approach of the project. Two capitalizations repeated in different parts of the document an interesting objective: to reinforce arguments to support local adaptation initiatives. From this perspective, capitalizing farmers' innovations was conceived as strengthening their capacities to lead SLM processes on the ground. The capitalization was conceived as a lobbying exercise trying to raise key information from the field to policy-makers. In one case, objectives were not clearly stated and the exercise was difficult to assimilate to a capitalization since it was more focused on the historical analysis of the evolution of the main ethnic group in the region of the programme. There were no cases in the nine

83 The complete table with the titles of the 9 SLM capitalizations during the period 2000-2013 can be found in Annex G.

capitalization examples where an organization change was searched through the capitalization process. The majority of them tried to extract lessons from specific interventions.

Most of the bibliographic sources and experts consulted highlighted the advantages of capitalizations being part of an organizational change to promote learning and improvement. Therefore, they could be related to a certain moment of the life of an organization or a collective initiative, instead of being attached to a certain project or programme and conducted at its closure. All capitalizations found were punctual exercises, although some of them were part of an overall capitalization strategy encompassing other activities, like the publication of lessons learned leaflets, or periodic workshops with stakeholders. In two cases, there was another capitalization of a previous phase of the project. Only the case promoted by the French Foundation had an explicit explanation that the document was just the result of the first stage of the capitalization process (to get consensus with stakeholders about the capitalization approach, including objectives and methodology, and validating the working hypothesis of the capitalization). In this case it was announced that the capitalization would spread over the whole implementation period of the project. Therefore, this was the only case where the capitalization was a continuous endeavour, instead of a punctual one at the end of the project.

The majority of the nine cases included the whole programme being capitalized. In two cases, it was evident that just one component or domain of the programme was prioritized (the component related to vegetation cover rehabilitation and wild fauna, or the forest component of the programme). In another case, a crosscutting theme (integrated water and soil management) was targeted as the axis of the capitalization. There was no mention in any of the capitalization reports about its relationship with an evaluation that could be complementary or how it would feed into the project cycle or overall organizational learning objectives. It was not very clearly stated who the potential users of the document were in four cases, while in the rest, the usual audience of an evaluation report was somehow mentioned (beneficiaries/farmers' organizations, development partners, project staff…). In one case, the capitalization was meant to nurture some training on Integrated Water and Soil Management, using field-level information from the practices promoted from an array of local-level partners.

Process of capitalization

None of the reports stated who had the mandate to conduct the capitalization from the outset of the process. In the majority of cases someone external to the organization promoting the project seemed to have facilitated or conducted the capitalization exercise. There were three case where the facilitator (or at least the author of the document) was non-Senegalese, and three cases where the facilitator or author was a Senegalese expert or project team staff (ex. *IED Afrique* staff). In two cases it was not clear who led the process, and in one case it was stated that the document was the result of a collective endeavour by NGOs and research institutions.

The SLM capitalization reports did not place lots of emphasis on explaining the participatory process of the capitalization itself. In all of them, there was no clear description of the types of stakeholders involved or the mechanisms and channels that were used to make them meaningfully participate in the capitalization process. The type of information found about this point was similar to the average project evaluation report analysed in the Section 3.1. There was no information at all in two cases, in three cases only the consultant or experts opinions were considered and in another case only project staff, national authorities and donors participated in the capitalization process. In three other cases a more diverse group of stakeholders participated, including grassroots' stakeholders.

In 6 out of the 9 capitalizations, no reference was found about any institutional arrangement to validate the document or the process (as it usually happens with evaluations). Only in one case, a formal Steering Committee was mentioned and described as being composed of donors and external experts who guided the capitalization process. In other two cases, some information about

comments received or workshops held to validate the report were mentioned in the report. None of the nine capitalization documents mentioned or included any Terms of Reference or similar. The information about the resources, information and time available was not included in any of the nine capitalizations, neither in the ones conducted by *IED Afrique*, the organization recommending this in their manual. Maybe this reflection was part of the process but was not included in the final capitalization report.

Results of capitalizations

The methodology was not described in detail in the 9 capitalization reports. Apart from one case where the *IED Afrique* capitalization manual was mentioned as having guided the process, the rest of the reports did not make any reference to any specific methodology or steps taken in the capitalization process. Only one capitalization offered some information in an annex about the theoretical elements of capitalization that were considered, along with the methodology used. The methods used for the capitalization exercises were not mentioned in three of the nine cases. Document review was used for three cases, along with the information emerging from surveys in two cases. In one case it was clearly stated that the methods to collect the information were the ones designed during the project. Only in one case, methods were dully described (interviews, online discussion forum, workshops and field visits).

Only one report clearly stated the four steps of the capitalization process, clarifying that the report was the result of the first and second steps.[84] The rest of capitalization reports did not mention the intermediate stages to conduct the capitalization. Similarly, the information sources were not clearly described in any of the reports. It could be guessed that most of them were written sources, related to the programme (monitoring data, etc.), and some informers like field facilitators and beneficiaries. Two capitalizations also used available surveys to back up some of the conclusions about lessons learned. This offered a similar portray to the evaluation practice analysed in Section 3.1, without any special emphasis on the use of oral sources.

Some of the practitioners interviewed for this research warned about the need for capitalizations to also include quantitative and statistical data about the experience, along with the qualitative evidence based on interviews, focus groups and workshops. The type of information included in three of the nine reports was similar to the one included in an evaluation report. Some of the previous surveys conducted within the monitoring system of the programme were used to contextualize the intervention or to offer some numerical data about results. In four cases, only qualitative descriptions or appreciations about results were included.

The analysis of the nine capitalizations confirmed that they usually entail a description of the initial situation, the context and challenges of the project (or experience) being capitalized. Six reports included a thorough description of the initial situation, while in another one the information was less complete. The information in two cases was considered as totally insufficient to offer an overview of the capitalized intervention to the reader. From bibliographic sources and discussions with experts, one of the most remarkable added values of these types of exercises, in comparison to project-level evaluations, was that it allows a collective and deeper description and analysis of the experience going beyond the linear logic models. It was expected to find different perspectives of different stakeholders about what the experience was and what meant to different stakeholders, how it worked in practice, going beyond what was expected in project documents. Five of the nine capitalizations offered interesting information about the objectives, hypotheses, implementation approach, methods and main activities, as well as the stakeholders involved. Nevertheless, that was not the case for all the reports.

[84] These steps were 1: collective building of capitalization objectives and methodology with the definition of hypothesis; 2: deepening hypothesis to identify blockages and constraints; 3: the identification and analysis of the innovations and 4: their diffusion and the appreciation of the capitalization process itself.

Six out of the nine capitalizations included a whole section explaining the final situation, including similar information as in project evaluation reports. Four reports directly talked about the results, effects or impacts of the project. In all these cases, they were mainly qualitatively described and classed in ecological, economic and social. The hypothesis that capitalizations allow emerging different visions about the same experience, without searching consensus or a final judgment, did not hold for those cases. In five of the reports, there was no hint of considering a diversity of perspectives in relation to the project (theme or domain); the report was only based on the vision of the authors of the capitalization report. In three cases, some testimonies from beneficiaries, project staff or national authorities were included to exemplify some of the issues or conclusions of the capitalization (as it was commonly done in project evaluation practice, See Section 3.1). Only in one case it was clearly stated that different visions would be respected, but since the report only captured the first two steps of the capitalization, those opinions or visions were not yet included. The majority of capitalizations included some photos and maps, which was recommended especially for Natural Resources Management (NRM) interventions under capitalization, according to interviewees.

Project evaluation reports have usually standard content, some minimal sections that are included to be considered a "good quality report" (see section 3.1 and standards and guidelines in Chapter 2). In the case of capitalizations, practice has been more diverse. No shared sections were found among the nine reports. Only 2 out of the 9 reports included a summary of the capitalization. The length of the reports ranged from 26 to 88 pages, with an average of 44 pages, including annexes. This is half of the average length of evaluation reports when considering annexes. Only three of the nine reports included a whole section dedicated to lessons learned. They were more detailed than similar sections in project evaluation reports. In two cases this information was similar to the one included in an evaluation, and in four more, this information was totally missing. Therefore these nine capitalizations did not confirm the learning orientation of these exercises in comparison to regular project-level evaluations.

Potential utilization of capitalizations

Except from the case where methodological aspects related to capitalization were considered with more detail, none of the other eight reports discussed any learning emerging from the capitalization process itself, or the limitations encountered and how to overcome them in a future exercise. Considered as a more open-ended process and related to its learning-oriented nature, according to some experts, capitalizations should include clear information about how to get more information about the experience capitalised, the main actors or the theme under capitalization. This was done with lots of detail in two cases, with additional bibliography and contacts provided to expand every section of the capitalization report. In four other cases, some key contacts were provided, while in other three the reader would have problems to access that type of additional information or resource persons. The possibility of appropriation of the experience was mentioned in six (seven if another one where some vague information was included). These capitalizations emphasized the learning aspects and the potential scale up of the intervention in other settings and by other actors, especially local partners and beneficiaries' organizations.

All the capitalization analysed were in the form of a report written in French. In three cases, some notes or brief cards were used to summarize specific examples of the interventions capitalized, written in a leaflet-form easily to disseminate. Other complementary products were mentioned in the reports, such as articles and videos. The majority of capitalization reports were easily accessible online, in the websites of the organizations in charge (Senegalese or foreigner NGOs and donors' websites). In three cases, specific restitution sessions were held with local and regional actors who might have some limitations to access the capitalization report. Only two cases of the nine capitalizations were not available online.

Figure 50. Executive summary of the 9 capitalizations.

3.3. Main strengths and challenges of SLM evaluation practice of SLM in Senegal

A total of 40 reports of project evaluations and 9 capitalizations of SLM interventions in Senegal published between 2000 and 2013 were studied. On average, they were quite long reports, but within the usual practice. Project evaluations included the common basic sections; most of them had an Executive Summary to ease the use of evaluation findings by policy-makers or managers. The practice of capitalization was more recent than traditional project-evaluation evaluation and was less standardized in terms of report content.

Most of the SLM evaluation practice was conducted at the end of the interventions, with only 4 project *expost* evaluations published more than five years after project completion. The 9 capitalizations were not part of organizational dynamics to promote learning and improvement during project implementation, as the experts recommend. Those capitalizations were used for similar purposes than project evaluations, according to the information in their reports.

Project evaluations and capitalizations tended to mix up the assessment at different levels of the results-chain, although most of cases were focused on the blurred area between outputs and outcomes. Similarly, they had difficulties to conclude about environmental changes that the project could have contributed to. In general, capitalizations offered some more information about the emerging learning from the development process than project evaluations.

Very few of the 49 evaluative reports stated their objectives very clearly. While project evaluations seemed to be mainly addressed accountability purposes, other combinations with improvement purposes were also representative of this set of evaluations (including loose definitions of learning and knowledge generation). In spite of their ideal learning-oriented purposes, some of the capitalizations shared similar objectives to project evaluations. None of them explicitly mentioned their link with organizational changes. They were more related to documenting practices, tools, methods and success stories. Two examples used capitalization to advocate about the capacity of local partners to propose meaningful SLM interventions, although this was also done in a tow other examples of highly participatory project evaluations.

From the very little information about the scope and budget of the project evaluations, both the time and budget seemed insufficient in relation to the scope of the evaluands and the inherent challenges of those types of evaluations, especially in relation to SD evaluation. No information about the budget of the interventions capitalized was included in the 9 capitalization reports, although they seemed smaller in scope. No clear pattern was found in relation of the composition of the teams conducting the project evaluations and capitalizations. The assumption about the increase of use of national consultants over time (2000-2013), following the National Evaluation Capacities agenda, was not confirmed. The only trend identified was that smaller projects seemed to be more often evaluated by national consultants, probably due to budget constraints since they are usually paid less than international ones.

The type, level and mechanisms to involve different stakeholders during the evaluation process were poorly described in the 49 reports. For the project evaluations, the Arnstein's ladder was used to reflect about the real power of stakeholders to affect the evaluation process (how the evaluation was designed, conducted and used and disseminated). Some reports described interesting attempts to delegate the evaluation management to national governmental structures and to go beyond the usual processes of consultation or information of stakeholders. Nevertheless, it was still very common to only extract information from stakeholders with very limited real participation in the evaluation process. Surprisingly, capitalization reports did not include detailed information about the number and typology of stakeholders associated to the process, that was more commonly included in some project evaluation reports.

Four types of arrangements in terms of the management of the evaluation processes were distinguished in the set of project evaluations. Donors still control lots of cases, while national

authorities partnered with them in fewer cases. An interesting bulk of emerging nationally-managed practice (line ministry or central planning unit) was identified. It was expected to find more cases at the end of the sampling period, but this was not confirmed for the evaluations managed or co-managed by the Ministry of Environment. Very little information was included in reports about the commissioner, manager and responsible for the capitalizations, and no clear pattern could be identified. The use of Evaluation Steering Committee to enlarge the debate about the evaluations design and results among institutional stakeholders was still not widely used in those 49 cases.

The evaluation practice analysed in this study did not include any reflection about the evaluation epistemological and methodological choice or the evaluation policies guiding the processes. The majority of capitalizations did not justify the pertinence or utility of this evaluation approach for its context and objectives. The data collection tools used by both types of evaluations were similar. Very scattered information about difficulties encountered during the process and about deontological and ethical issues was included in the 49 reports.

Neither the 40 project evaluations nor the 9 capitalizations followed the recommendations of the SD literature about including different value systems and perspectives about the worth and merit of an intervention. Although beneficiaries' perceptions were mentioned in some cases, there was only one case where evaluators explicitly presented divergent opinions about the project without looking for consensus about the definition of success and failure of the intervention. The evaluation practice analysed did not respond to other common challenges in SD evaluation. For instance, the time covered was linked in the majority of them to the implementation time and the villages targeted by the interventions. Being conducted in short fieldworks times and reduced budgets, these evaluative exercises rely on data generated by project management (monitoring system), applied research or national authorities. The serious shortcomings in quantity and quality of this information useful for project-level evaluations hindered their capacity to capture long-term impacts beyond the geographical focus of the intervention.

In spite of diverse quality of information, the majority of the project evaluations presented at least some basic data about the evaluation context, although there was certain tendency of focusing this information about describing the programme itself and its results framework. As expected, capitalization reports included more complete context information.

The 40 project evaluations echoed the diverse options in relation to the level of detail recommendations, for instance some identified a target group, priority actions and mechanisms to follow-up their implementation. Others prefer to include more general orientations to be further negotiated with responsible parties. Only few capitalizations included recommendations as project evaluations do. Finally, the level of detail about the dissemination means of evaluation findings and conclusions was quite limited in the reports. No evidence was found of dissemination at grass-root level stakeholders for project evaluations. Capitalizations mentioned some other dissemination formats and supports (like videos and short articles), but their declared practice was similar to project evaluations and none discussed about the future utilization or uptake of the knowledge raised during the process.

Less than half of the 40 project evaluations and all the 9 capitalizations were easily accessible mainly through the donor's or national NGO's website or as a hard copy in the national authority's library. Only 2 of the 9 capitalizations detailed how to get more information about the experience or theme capitalized, as recommended by experts and guidelines, and 4 additional cases provided some more vague data in this direction emphasizing the learning-oriented principle of the approach.

Chapter 4. In-depth Meta-evaluation of three case studies.

The study proposed three in-depth case studies around evaluations that complemented the analysis based on desk review of the evaluation reports and ToR of the previous chapter. This allowed contrasting and complementing findings with the perceptions from evaluation stakeholders and the analysis of additional documents. Three different evaluation management arrangements that coexisted in Senegal were purposefully chosen. They offered additional insights about the context and main challenges and contributions of real-world evaluation practice, the evaluation of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) interventions in a developing context.

- Evaluations managed by the donor. This is the case of the *expost* evaluation of PRODEFI funded by Japan and conducted by an international external consultant, with very limited participation of national actors.
- Evaluations led by the sector Ministry in charge of the supervision of the project. This was exemplified by the final evaluation of FLCD-RPS managed by the Ministry of Environment and conducted by national consultants, with very limited participation of the donor.
- Evaluations led by the National Planning Department (DPN) of the Ministry of Economy and Finances, following the delegation from the executing agency (UNDP). The final evaluation of PROGERT, managed by an Evaluation Steering Committee chaired by DPN and conducted by a team of an international and a national consultant.

The summary of the findings emerging from the analysis of the evaluation documentation and the exchanges with a group of stakeholders is presented in the following sections. It is presented following the same structure of the MEv analytical framework, and adding two extra criteria: the level of credibility and the effective evaluation utilization. Some other dimensions could also be explored through discussion with stakeholders in relation to the limited quantity and quality of information in evaluation reports. A more detailed analysis is included in Annex H.

4.1. Meta-Evaluation of the evaluation of PRODEFI (Integrated Community Forestry Development Project)

4.1.1. Introduction and context of PRODEFI.

The Project "Integrated Community Forestry Development", PRODEFI, was a Japan-funded intervention. The Senegalese counterpart was the Water, Forest, Hunting and Soil Conservation Department of the Ministry of Environment (DFECSS in French). It entailed two phases (2000-2005 and 2005-2008) and an extension for a total budget of 8 million USD. This is considered as a long-term engagement of a donor in the same region of Senegal: the department of Nioro in Kaolack. The Japanese cooperation was also active in this sector through the support of other forest projects since the 1980's (International, 2004).[85]

PRODEFI's documents described, using general terms, the problems arising from the serious drought and desertification affecting Senegal for the past twenty years, along with forest fires, overgrazing and excessive land exploitation. As the main causes, PRODEFI identified the vicious circle of soil degradation and ecological systems deterioration fuelled by forest resources reduction and insufficient communities' awareness. These documents completely endorsed the mainstream degradation narratives discussed in Chapter 1.

PRODEFI was a technical cooperation intervention, focused on capacity strengthening at local and national level, but with strong emphasis in the village level. PRODEFI targeted 9 villages in the main phase while the extension phase increased its influence to a total of 30 villagers, all of them in the Nioro department of Kaolack (See map below, in Figure 51).

85 PROVERS (Greenery Promotion Cooperation Project) (1986-98), PAPF (Nursery Maintenance Project) (1994-2000), PRL (Afforestation Project in the Coastal Areas) (2001-2005).

It aimed to develop and extend a model for community forestry. PRODEFI had important up-scaling objectives through the replication of the integrated community forestry management model. It proposed a training package to promote different forestry technologies, and especially their dissemination by the trained villagers. The trainings were meant to improve group management and the level of activeness and cooperation of villagers in nine SLM techniques: tree planting, seedling production and procurement, charcoal production and selling, stone line, frame dams, vegetable growing, fruit and vegetable processing, livestock fattening and fruit tree.

PRODEFI's logical framework was changed two years after project approval and an extension was required to achieve the initial objective. This gap was justified by its innovative features (active villagers' participation and use of local trainers). PRODEFI was implemented through a Project Unit, based in Dakar and in the Nioro Department, whose staff tried to liaise with the *deconcentrated* forest officers in the area. The overall supervision and implementation was advised by a Project Steering Committee with technical staff of the JICA Country Office and representatives of the Ministry of Environment.

The first phase of PRODEFI was evaluated both at mid-term (2002) and at final stages of implementation (2004)[86]. Those evaluations were conducted by Japanese consultants who associated with staff from the Ministry of Economy and Finances and the Ministry of Environment at some phases of the evaluation process. The second phase was evaluated in 2007 following a similar scheme (JICA, 2008), and then an *expost* evaluation was conducted in 2010 (Takaki, 2010). This meta-evaluation is focused on the *expost* evaluation of PRODEFI conducted three years after the end of the intervention by a Japanese consultant, with some support by a Senegalese translator and a team of local surveyors. Nevertheless, the information in previous evaluation exercises was also used in order to contextualize the evaluation process. Although formal informed consent was granted from JICA's country office and the Ministry of Environment, some difficulties to reach some stakeholders and access to key documents were encountered. Nevertheless, sufficient information was raised about this evaluation process in order to establish some trends in donor-led project evaluations in the Senegalese forest (and SLM) sector.

Table 16. List of documents found and not found in relation to PRODEFI evaluation process.

Found (√) or not (X)	Name of the document/s
√	2004 JICA Guidelines (JICA, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d, 2004f)
X	ToR of the *expost* evaluation.
X	Information about recruitment process.
X	Technical proposal submitted by the selected evaluator.
X	The more detailed JICA guidelines sent to the consultant.
X	Methodological note ("direction of the evaluation") submitted by the consultant.
√	Memo about the *expost* evaluation report, 2010 (6 pages).
√	Orientation note of the *expost* evaluation at JICA (3 pages) and notation appendixes, 2010
X	Draft versions of the evaluation reports and comments received.
√	Ex-post evaluation (39 pages in French and 39 pages in English), 2010 (Takaki, 2010)
X	The questionnaire used during the evaluation.
X	Minutes of any restitution workshop or meetings with Ministry of Environment.

86 Those reports are only available in hard copy and were found in the library of the Water, Forest, Hunt and Soils Conservation Unit of the Ministry of Environment.

The document review was complemented with interviews to key stakeholders: JICA Country staff, representatives of the JICA Forest Department who collaborated during the PRODEFI evaluation; M&E expert at central level of the Ministry of Environment (DEFCSS), PRODEFI's project coordinator, regional staff from Ministry of Environment in the intervention area of PRODEFI; the international evaluator, the Senegalese translator and local staff from the Ministry of Environment who conducted the survey that was used in the *expost* evaluation. Some emails were also exchanged with Headquarters' JICA Evaluation Unit. The following figure shows the main stakeholders of PRODEFI. Those in red could not be interviewed for this meta-evaluation, while the ones in green were interviewed or email exchanged.

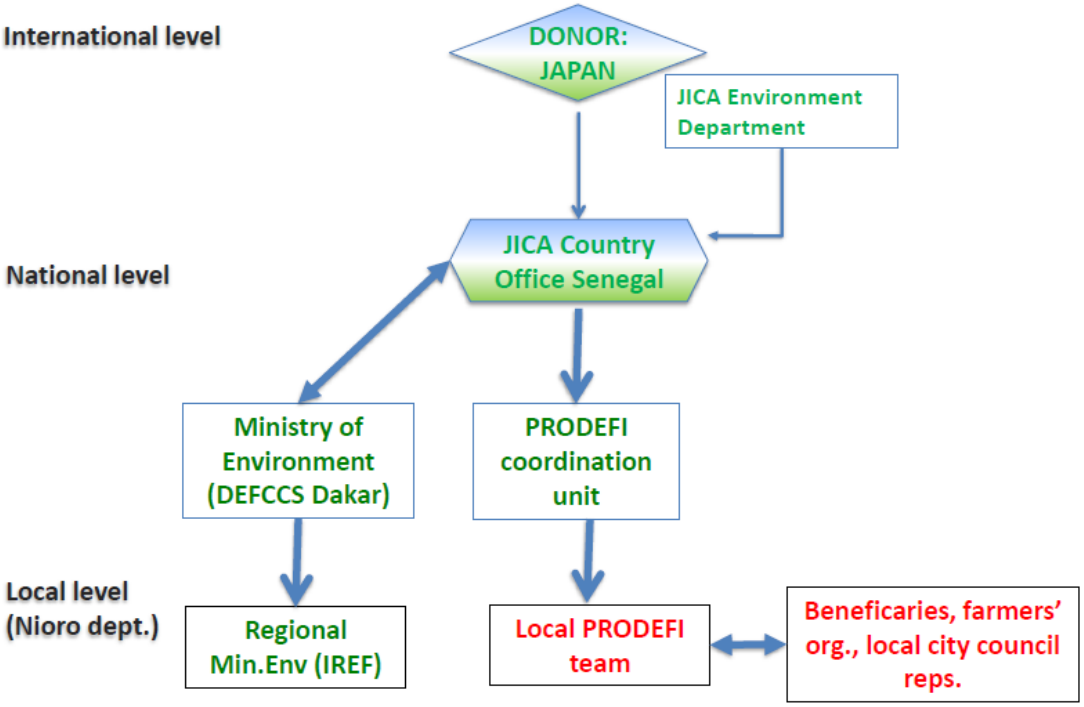


Figure 51. Main stakeholders of PRODEFI[87].

4.1.2. The intervention: PRODEFI

Figure 52. PRODEFI intervention area.
Source: (Takaki, 2010)**: page** 1.

PRODEFI intervened in different villages within the same region in Senegal: the department of Nioro, in the Kaolack region.

The purpose of PRODEFI was improving livelihood and promoting sustainable Natural Resources Management with the participation of the local population in the Senegal drylands. The evaluation report distinguished the "overall goal", "project objective", seven outputs of the main phase and seven outputs of the extension phase.

[87] DEFCSS: Water, Forest, Hunter and Soils Conservation Division of the Ministry of Environment.; farmers' org.: farmers' organizations; JICA: Japanese International Cooperation Agency; Min. Env. (IREF): Ministry of Environment, Water and Forest Regional inspections; Reps: representatives.

Table 17. Main components, results and objectives of PRODEFI.

Overall PRODEFI's goal	Action programmes for sustainable management of natural resources are initiated and implemented by local populations.
Project objective	Main phase: The extension model of sustainable natural resource management (NRM) is established in the target areas. Extended phase: to implement the PRODEFI model as NRM extension model, improve it, and disseminate it in the target areas.

Source : (Takaki, 2010): page 2.

The main phase and extension phase of PRODEFI shared seven outputs that were phrased in a slightly different way in the documents of each phase. The memo (in French) talked about these outputs as "*rendement*" (a wrong translation for "*produits*"). They could be summarized as:

- Output 1: collection of baseline data (environment and socioeconomic situation for the main phase and information about the target villages for the extension one).
- Output 2: development of the training programmes (in the extension phase the participation of local people in the design of the trainings is emphasized).
- Output 3: modification and implementation of the training (villagers trained).
- Output 4: implementation of the extension model through a network of trainees.
- Output 5: mobilization of local villagers' own resources to continue SLM.
- Output 6: publicity of the model (main phase) and access of the model (extension phase).
- Output 7: capacity building of PRODEFI project.

4.1.3. Findings from the Meta-evaluation of the *expost* evaluation of PRODEFI

The *evaluation purpose and objectives* were neither clear nor consistent in different evaluation documents, ranging from accountability to improvement. The effective purpose of the evaluation did not follow the recommendations for *expost* evaluations included in the JICA's Guidelines. The fact that the ToR were not shared with national partners and were not made public by the donor made impossible the negotiation of their focus among different evaluation stakeholders. Therefore, it was not surprising that different stakeholders held different opinions about the main *potential users of the evaluation*.

The *scope of the evaluation* was challenging to estimate due to very limited information available in all the accessed documents and recall problems of the interviewed. It was only possible to estimate roughly the longer than the average consultancy days of the international consultant (65 days with two field missions) and the contribution of the local translator and field interviewers who conducted a survey for the evaluation. When compared to the PRODEFI cost, the ratio evaluation/evaluand was less than 0,06%, quite far from the average of the 7 other evaluations with sufficient information in their evaluation reports to estimate this ratio. This was also very low in comparison to the recommendations of 0,5% for an evaluative exercise, and not comparable to similar *expost* quasi-experimental evaluations. Nevertheless, the restricted geographical area of PRODEFI and the fact that the evaluation decided to focus its attention on the targeted district could explain this.

This evaluation exemplified a highly donor-controlled evaluation process, with very *limited participation of national partners* in all evaluation stages. It showed how concepts of **participation in evaluation are usually understood in a very restricted way**. For some of the interviewees for this study, interviewing some stakeholders through questionnaires or focus groups was considered as "participatory data collection tools". Others, like the international consultant, justified the limited level of participation because it was not required in the evaluation ToR.

The real level of participation ranged from consultation to information for different types of stakeholders, and it was restricted to the data collection phase. The design of the evaluation was totally controlled by the donor at headquarters. The evaluation reached a high number of

stakeholders (above the average of the set of 40 project evaluations) but with very low diversity of stakeholders. They were mainly local people who were surveyed by local staff of the Ministry of Environment between the two field missions of the international consultant.

The evaluation was managed centrally by the evaluation Unit of the donor and did not entail any formal *institutional structure to ensure quality control* by a group of different stakeholders. The following figure depicts this institutional arrangement where the central National Planning Unit (DPN) of the Ministry of Economy and Finances did not participate in the evaluation process and the Ministry of Environment had no real power to influence the evaluation process.

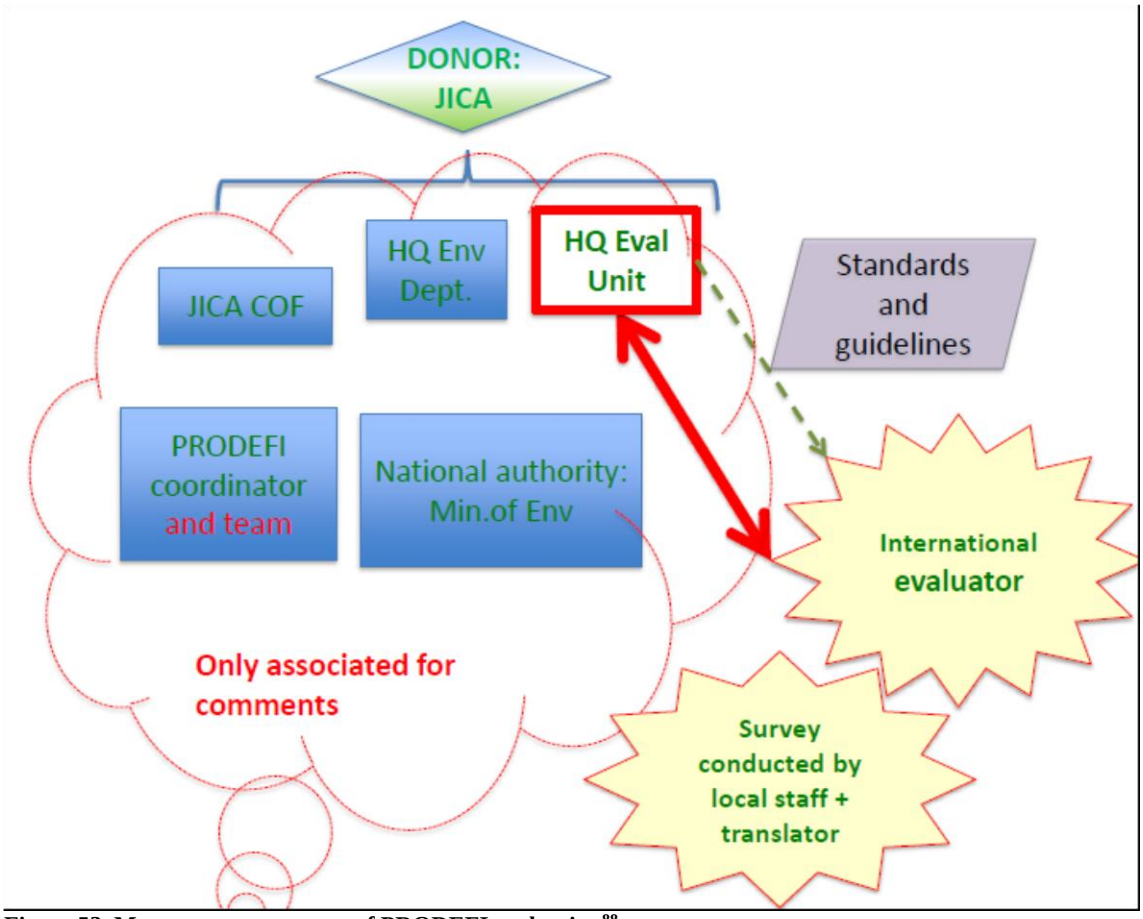


Figure 53. Management structure of PRODEFI evaluation[88].

There were serious *constraints in terms of transparency of the evaluation process* in relation to the access to key documents. According to interviews, the evaluation planning was delivered in a timely way and no constraints were encountered during the evaluation process. The only mention about the efficiency of the evaluation in relation to its budget was that the international consultant and headquarters' JICA staff combined their trip to Senegal with another evaluation, reducing costs. The only limitation admitted was the use of recall techniques through the use of a survey because of the lack of baseline data. The consequences of this were not discussed in the report. Similarly any ethical considerations were totally omitted and interviewees had problems to reflect about them during the exchanges for this study.

There was no justification of the *choice of the epistemological and methodological approach used* and their suitability for the context of the intervention and the evaluation. It was implicit both in the report and from the responses of the evaluator that the quasi-experimental approach used was

[88] JICA: Japanese International Cooperation Agency; COF: Country Office; HQ Env Dept; Headquarters Environment Department; HQ Eval Unit: Headquarters Evaluation Unit; Min of Env: Ministry of Environment.

considered as a gold-standard approach able to raise robust conclusions. Probably arising from this conviction, no further information was included about the choice of evaluation questions. This has been repeatedly contested by the evaluation bibliography (Bustelo, 2014).

The PRODEFI evaluation did not follow the JICA Guidelines for *expost* evaluations that recommend focusing on impact and sustainability. The five OECD evaluation criteria were assessed, like in a terminal evaluation. Findings about the project objective and outputs were presented separately for the main phase and the extension. This undermined the value added of the *expost* exercise.

Results were presented in an aggregated way with only detail about the econometric procedure to reach them. Other *perspectives or value systems*, for instance those of the local population or deconcentrated staff of the Ministry of Environment on the field, were not included to assess the worth and merit of the intervention.

The evaluation *failed to include most of the challenges specific to evaluation of Sustainable Development*, in terms of time and geographical coverage, analysis of the context and inclusion of a balanced assessment of the economic, social and ecological dimensions of SD. Even as an *expost* evaluation, this exercise missed the opportunity to include a bigger geographical area and to encompass the temporal evolution of key indicators. Findings were presented in relation to the logframe of the main and extension phases, and only circumscribed to the PRODEFI's target department.

The specificities of the context and problematic addressed by PRODEFI was not sufficiently described in the report, which was focused on the indicators of the logframe. Therefore, this *expost* evaluation did not entail an overall assessment of the three main dimensions of Sustainable Development (ecological, social and economic). The level of information included in the evaluation report was deemed as *incomplete*, being the Terms of Reference and the questionnaire used not public.

There was no evidence of any reflection with national actors to test the validity and feasibility of *recommendations* to foster their implementation, which were mainly addressed to the national counterpart who was not fully involved in the evaluation process. There was no evidence of any system of *management response or tracking of the implementation of the recommendations* emerging from the evaluation. The report was only *disseminated* through the donor's website, in Japanese, English and French, with very limited active presentation of its results to key stakeholders in order to foster its utilization. Interviewees placed the responsibility to disseminate it to the local level on local staff of the Ministry of Environment, but they did not receive a copy of the report by the time of this study.

The *credibility of the evaluation process* according to the main stakeholders controlling it (donor and international consultant) was based on the use of a "robust methodology" and the independence of the evaluator. The rest of stakeholders considered this evaluation exercise as a donor requirement without reflecting about its overall credibility. The *potential utilization* of the evaluation was placed by stakeholders between the ideal situation and wishful thinking in terms of its use in future JICA's formulations and continuation of similar activities under national budget. No evidence was found that this ever happened, so the *expost* evaluation was mainly used for accountability purposes.

4.2. Meta-evaluation of the evaluation of the FLCD-RPS (Fund Italy-CILSS to fight against desertification for poverty reduction)

4.2.1. Introduction and context of FLCD-RPS

The "Fund Italy-CILSS to fight against desertification for poverty reduction" (FLCD-RPS) was conceived in 2000 as a pilot poverty reduction intervention in four Sahelian countries: Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali, in collaboration with the subregional institution CILSS (Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel). The FLCD-RPS was the pivotal point of the Programme Italy-Sahel of poverty reduction that also entailed other regional and national programmes funded by this bilateral donor. The Senegalese counterpart (administrative supervision authority) was the Direction of Water, Forest, Hunt and Soil Conservation of the Ministry of Environment, DEFCSS (as for PRODEFI).

With a total budget of 15,5 million of euro, and around 2,5 million of investment in Senegal, FLCD-RPS was finally launched in Senegal in 2005 and finished at the end of 2011. Within each country, the Fund proposed to intervene in zones at high social and environmental risk (ZARESE), comprising around 20 villages and 50,000 inhabitants. In Senegal, three ZARESE were chosen in three distant administrative regions: Bignona, Louga and Matam. Neither the document project nor the evaluation report clearly presented the problem that the FLCD-RPS tried to tackle. This was maybe included in previous publications of the Fund. It was only possible to implicitly discern that the Project tried to contribute to changing the degradation trends in relation to desertification in the four countries that highly affected poverty levels.

The FLCD-RPS proposed to intervene with small community investments, income generation activities, strengthening local credit services, along with the promotion of reflection, dialogue, analysis and experimentation about poverty at local, national and regional levels. A total of 20 villages in the three ZARESEs were targeted and chosen following the procedures explained in the project document. The institutional arrangements to manage the Fund were articulated at the regional level (CILSS and Sub-regional Steering Committee), national level (National Steering Committee[89] and Operational Secretariat) and at the intervention areas (ZARESE Committees). UNOPS was chosen as the executing organism and the IAO (Italian Overseas Agronomic Institute) provided some supranational technical assistance. Technical support was provided by Italian NGOs that worked with local collectivities, rural communities and farmers' organizations. In Senegal ASPRODEB, a local NGO, was chosen to deploy a team at national, ZARESE and community/village level.

The conceptual document of the Fund included a cascade of general and specific objectives at regional, national and local levels. The general objective of the FLCD-RPS was related to poverty alleviation and social exclusion at the policy level in the Sahel region. It did not explicitly include environmental concerns related to land degradation or desertification.

The specific objective at the regional level, considered as the general objective at the national level, mentioned the improvement of Natural Resources Management (NRM) policies in the four target countries, along with sustainable food security and decentralization. At this regional level, the FLCD-RPS pretended to analyse, capitalize and disseminate the experiences in managing those types of interventions and to strengthen CILSS' capacities to conceptualize and implement M&E systems for poverty fighting interventions in marginal zones, with special attention to their impact on social and environmental vulnerability.

89 In Senegal, it was composed by representatives of the National Council of Farmers' organizations, the Association of Presidents of Rural Communities, the Ministry of Social Development and the Agency of Social Development.

At national level, the objective of the FLCD-RPS was to promote "rational NRM and decentralization, adequate food security strategies and effective investments for local development" as means to contribute to poverty reduction of rural populations. The specific objective at the national level was to improve socioeconomic conditions of vulnerable rural population in specific zones.

Finally, at the local level, the objective was repeated (improving socioeconomic conditions) while the means were more detailed: "through the partnership between the Italian and Sahelian civil society within development lines of local institutions and the population". The objectives of the types of eligible investments were to improve production capacities, diversification and to increase income of rural vulnerable families.

The findings of the study revealed that the FLCD-RPS was managed in Senegal as a discrete project, in the traditional sense, so its evaluation was considered a "traditional project evaluation". In fact the Terms of Reference of the final evaluation considered it as "a Project Fund". In 2007 an external mid-term evaluation (MTE) was conducted by two Italian consultants and encompassed the four countries (Macri & Garavini, 2007b). This evaluation complemented an internal exercise in 2006 and was focused on outputs delivery and some information about potential outcomes of the project in each country. The evaluation noticed that the majority of microprojects chosen by local beneficiaries were more related to basic social services, and environmental objectives were neglected. This prompted a reorientation of the FLCD-RPS in 2008 from microproject projects at the village level, chosen based on villagers' demand, towards a programme approach at the *terroir* level[90]. This tried to promote NRM, food security interventions and mainstreaming gender issues.

This meta-evaluation was focused on the final evaluation of the FLCD-RPS conducted in 2011 by Senegalese consultants (one external consultant and one staff from the Ministry of Environment, but from a different unit from the one in charge of the supervision). A survey to the beneficiaries was administered by local staff of the same Ministry (regional and local forest specialists). This evaluation covered the three Senegalese ZARESE, although the one in Casamance could not be visited due to security issues. The following Table details the documents used in this meta-evaluation, as well as documents that were not available:

Table 18. List of documents found and not found in relation to the FLCD-RPS evaluation process.

Found or not	Name of the document/s
√	Reference Document of the FLCD-RPS, 2003 (37 pages) (Cooperazione italiana-CILSS, 2003)
√	Terms of Reference of the final evaluation of FLCD-RPS, January 2011 (6 pages) (MEPN, 2011)
X	Information about recruitment process.
√	Evaluation guidelines elaborated by consultants (including evaluation matrix), unknown date (13 pages) (Djiguisso, 2011b)
X	Draft version of the report and any comments received
√	Report of the final evaluation, December 2011 (82 pages) (Djiguisso, 2011a)
X	Minutes of any restitution workshop or meetings with stakeholders.

The document review was complemented with interviews to key stakeholders of FLCD-RPS: the national coordinator of the Senegalese NGO (ASPRODEB), the project coordinator and the M&E specialist at the Ministry of Environment in Senegal, some of the supervisors at the level of the ZARESEs and animators (focal points) in the rural communities, and staff from the Water and Forest Regional Inspections involved in the monitoring and support of FLCD-RPS. The two evaluators in charge of the final evaluation of FLCD-RPS were also extensively interviewed.

90 As described in Chapter 1, terroir is related to the concept of land, comprising the cultivated and fallow lands, pastureland, livestock paths, forest land used by villagers as well the wilderness considered needed for future extension" (Boye, 1978).

In spite of reiterated attempts to interview the rest of stakeholders, some of them never replied or could not be located (in red in the following figure). For instance, no other representatives of other ministries or representatives of beneficiaries could be located. The stakeholders interviewed are highlighted in the following Figure 54, in green.

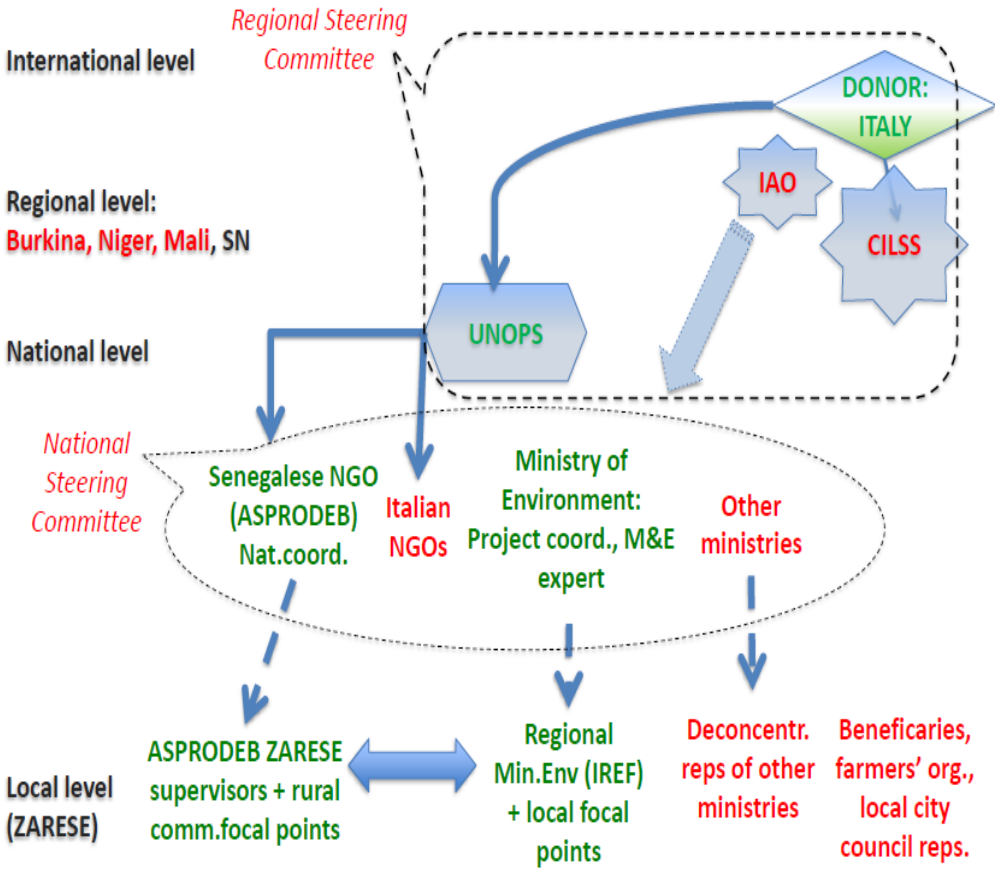


Figure 54. Main stakeholders of FLCD-RPS[91].

Although this Meta-evaluation was limited because of the difficulties to locate some of the key stakeholders to grasp elements of the evaluation design, process, result and utilization, the findings exemplified the case of a national-led evaluation, in this case, led by the administrative supervision Ministry of the project without a deep involvement from the donor.

[91] ASPRODEB: Senegalese Association for the promotion of grassroots development; Deconcentr.reps: representatives of deconcentrated authorities; Farmers' org: farmers' organizations; IAO: Italian Overseas Agronomic Institute; IREF: Ministry of Environment, Water and Forest Regional Inspections; CILSS: Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel; Nat.coord.: national coordinator; Project coord. : Project coordinator; UNOPS: United Nations Office for Project Services; ZARESE: Zones with High Environmental and Social Risk.

4.2.2. The intervention of FCLD-RPS

The FLCD-RPS was focused in three ZARESE (Zones with High Environmental and Social Risk): Matam, Louga and Bignona where nine rural communities were chosen according to agrometeorological, environmental, demographic, socioeconomic, political, operational criteria. The Meta-evaluation was focused in two of the three ZARESE, since Bignona is not a Sahelian or desertification-prone area in Senegal.

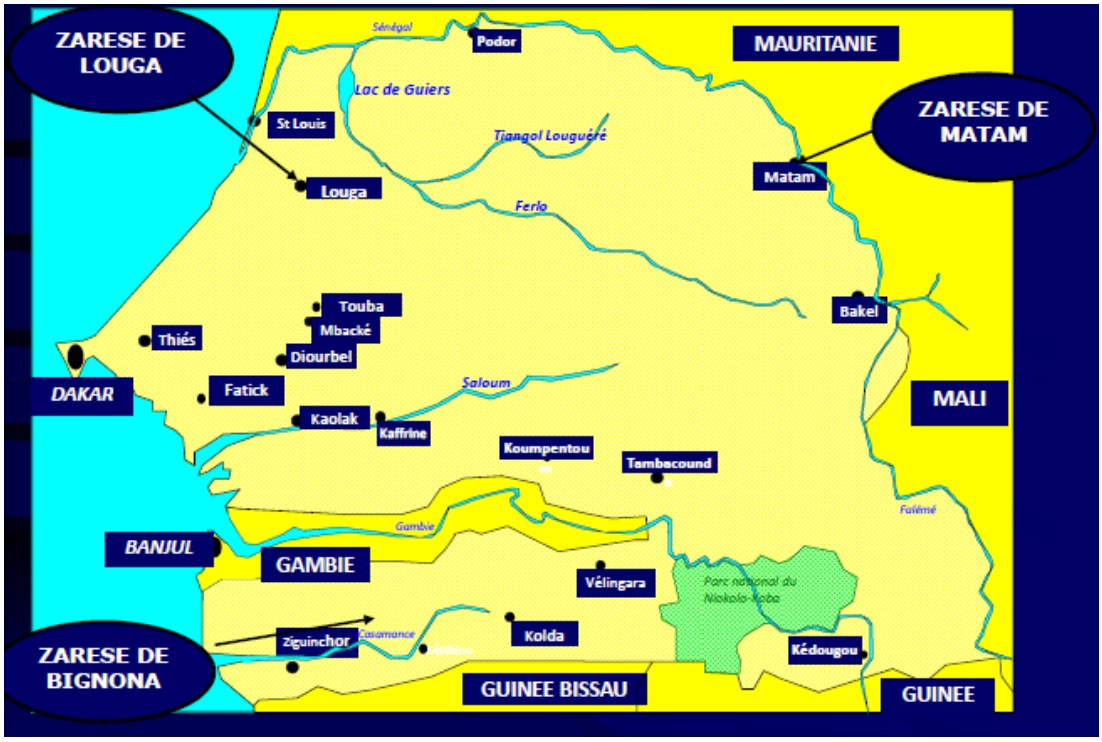


Figure 55. FLCD-RPS' intervention area.
Source: presentation of the ASPRODEB coordinator, 2010.

The specific characteristics justifying the choice of those three ZARESE and their respective rural communities were not presented in the evaluation report or the FLCD-RPS design documents. The evaluation could not conduct any fieldwork in Bignona (Casamance) due to security restrictions, being the only region of Senegal affected by a long date conflict with separatist groups.

The general objective of FLCD-RPS did not explicitly include environmental concerns related to land degradation or desertification: "to contribute to improve living conditions of vulnerable populations of the Sahel, through the definition and implementation of policies capable of eliminating factors leading to poverty, social exclusion and inequity" (Cooperazione italiana-CILSS, 2003).

The specific objective at the regional level mentioned NRM at the policy level: "to contribute to decrease poverty of rural populations of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal through the improvement of capacities of CILSS to elaborate and implement policies and strategies of sustainable food security, national natural resources management and decentralization, coherent with broader policies to fight poverty". Two expected results of the FLCD-RPS at regional level can be highlighted: to analyse, capitalize and disseminate the management experiences FLCD-RPS at regional level and to strengthen CILSS' capacities to conceptualize and implement M&E systems for poverty fighting interventions in marginal zones, with special attention to their impact on social and environmental vulnerability.

At national level, the general objective of FLCD-RPS was “to contribute to poverty reduction of rural populations through rational NRM and decentralization strengthening, adequate food security strategies and effective investments for local development”. The specific objective at the national level was "to improve socioeconomic conditions of vulnerable rural population in specific zones of the four countries through investments in favour of communities or private individuals, coherent with local development priorities and decentralization processes, rational and sustainable NRM and national food security strategies".

The general objective of FLCD-RPS at the local level was "to contribute to improve socioeconomic conditions of vulnerable rural households through investments promoted by the partnership between the Italian and Sahelian civil society within development lines of local institutions and the population". The specific objective at this level did not consider any objectives of environmental protection ("to promote and to implement investments able to improve production capacities, diversification and to increase income of rural vulnerable families through strengthening and creation of local development capacities in the zones at high environmental and social risk").

Table 19. Results and components of FLCD-RPS.

Expected results	Components
Community interventions to create basic infrastructure and NRM	1. Support to community development to ease access to basic social services.
Investments to improve family income, job opportunities, commercialisation of products and access to basic services.	2. Support to socioeconomic development: credit or grants to promote economic activities of local populations.
Strengthening capacities of grassroots communities and decentralized institutions in managing resources for investments to fight poverty	3. Strengthening of community capacities: capacities of local city councils and farmers’ organizations in rural development planning, management and monitoring.
Improvement of capacities to manage and exploit sustainably environmental resources at local level.	4. Support to Natural Resources Management: microprojects to manage, restore or preserve natural resources.
Improvement of access to rural financial services.	5. Support to Income Generating Activities (IGA) to improve poor and vulnerable population’s income through financial intermediaries.

Source : Self-elaboration on the basis of (Cooperazione italiana-CILSS, 2003)**;** (Djiguisso, 2011a)**.**

According to the Terms of Reference and the final evaluation report, the fifth component of the project was finally abandoned. A total of 197 Microprojects and 42 Projects/activities were implemented classed in the following broad categories:

- Community water microprojects: village wells, well drilling and annex facilities;
- Social basic services: health village centre, building of schools and classrooms;
- Economic activities: milk production farm, multifunctional platform (millet mill), livestock vaccination park, banana plantation, rural fish farming;
- SLM-related activities: weaving to construct fences to prevent livestock to enter village agro-gardens, village plant nurseries, agroforestry plots, reforestation (live fences using *Acacia mellifera*), protective barriers and enrichment with different species, firebreaks to protect pastureland, mechanical and biological techniques to fix coastal dunes.

The initial logic of intervention of FLCD-RPS, the project proposed a microproject approach, at the village level, changed in 2008 after the mid-term evaluation. The deep involvement of beneficiaries (producers’ organizations, grass-root level community associations, economic interest groups, local city councils) was articulated through a prioritization process based on local demands. A Senegalese NGO based in Dakar, ASPRODEB, was in charge to ensure the identification, elaboration and monitoring of these microprojects, supported by Italian NGOs. The staff mobilized by ASPRODEB was composed by a National Coordinator, 3 supervisors at the level of each ZARESSE and 9 focal points at the level of each rural community. The involvement

of the local staff of different ministries was also sought and they were actively associated to the implementation of the microprojects at the ZARESE and local levels.

According to interviews, the initial M&E arrangement for the FLCD-RPS fell short to provide the required management information. At the beginning there was only a technical advisor at Ministry of Environment as the Focal Point for the project, with limited time allocated to oversee FLCD-RPS's implementation. This prompted the nomination of a full-time project coordinator and M&E specialist at the level of Ministry of Environment in 2008. Nevertheless this did not solve implementation tensions, according to some interviewees, related to the high autonomy of the supervisors in each ZARESE, limiting baseline data and the consolidation of a M&E system beyond reporting. Hierarchical problems might have also hindered information flowing from the field to Dakar, and its integration in the regional CILSS database.

4.2.3. Findings from the Meta-evaluation of the final evaluation of FLCD-RPS

The meta-evaluation of the final evaluation of FLCD-RPS was an example of an evaluation managed by the sector Ministry. The evaluation was conceived as an additional project activity, without a deep involvement of the donor or other regional actors and with a strong focus at the national and the project intervention zones. This affected the adequacy of the *evaluation scope* that lost the regional dimension, being FLCD-RPS a pilot initiative in other three Sahel countries.

The design of the evaluation, according to the ToR, was quite vague and mixed *objectives* of a traditional accountability-oriented project evaluation and restrictive understanding of a capitalization. This also influenced the *audience*, both implicit in the report and from the responses in the interviews. The final evaluation was mainly addressed to national authorities, being the donor a secondary potential user.

It was not possible to guess the *evaluation budget* but several interviewees justified the choice of national consultants because of the limited budget available. This hints the preference of international expertise, when possible, by most of national evaluation stakeholders.

The length of the evaluation process was the average of the 40 evaluations analysed, although the fieldwork was shorter (one week). This certainly posed problems to cover the three ZARESE located in three different regions of the country. The security restrictions that prevented consultants to visit the one in Casamence helped to overcome the very limited fieldwork time.

The arguments provided by the evaluation manager about the constraints to *involve other stakeholders in the evaluation process* due to the closure of the project were not very convincing. This is a common situation in final evaluations, but can usually be overcome if sufficient time is allocated to involve a good sample of stakeholders in the evaluation. The very limited number and type of stakeholders involved could be attributed to limited time available for the staff in charge at the Ministry of Environment or their lack of experience in these processes, usually managed by donors for other evaluations. The use of a survey for *data collection* administered by deconcentrated staff of the Ministry of Environment helped the evaluators to reach a high number of stakeholders, who were just interviewed and could not influence either the evaluation design or its conclusions. Nevertheless, evaluators aggregated those interviewed through the survey with those directly and individually interviewed by them or through focus groups. Evaluators could not reach regional and international stakeholders.

Being a regional initiative with strong anchoring at the national level, the *management of the evaluation* was delegated to the administrative supervision within the Senegalese national authority. In this case, the M&E specialist of the Ministry of Environment managed the evaluation, with very limited participation from other stakeholders, especially at the regional and international level. Only the executing agency commented the draft report but quality assurance procedures seem to have been applied in a very loose manner.

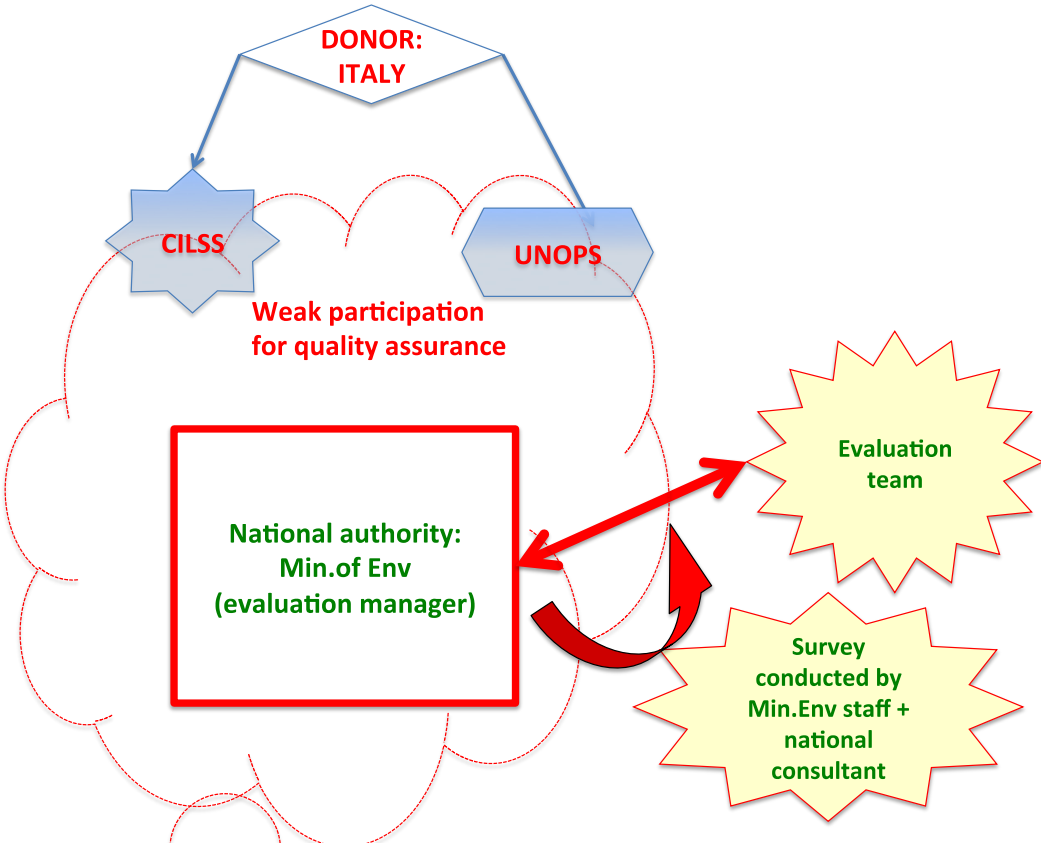


Figure 56. Management structure of the FLCD-RPS final evaluation.

Key documents of the evaluation process could be accessed for the study (ToR, methodological note drafted by consultants, draft and final version of the evaluation report). Nevertheless, it was not possible to review intermediate information about the recruitment process or the restitutions to other stakeholders. Consultants made an effort in their methodological note to include their *deontological code*, although its implementation and limitations on the ground were not discussed later in the evaluation report.

Neither the methodological note nor the evaluation report justified the *epistemological or methodological choice* used. This was taken for granted by all interviewees: qualitative logframe based on the OECD evaluation criteria. Consultants made a remarkable effort to make *transparent* the tools used for data collection: evaluation matrix, questionnaires tailored for different types of stakeholders. Their efforts of triangulation fell short in relation to some results and conclusions parts. The evidence provided to support some of the findings around the different evaluation criteria were too limited. The conclusions section was not sufficiently developed, being focused in one of the criteria. There were some problems of *coherence between findings, conclusions* and the evidence presented in Annexes.

The final evaluation of FLCD-RPS did not overcome any of the *challenges mentioned in the literature about evaluation of Sustainable Development*: longer time and geographical periods, careful analysis of the context of the intervention and the evaluation and balanced inclusion of the three dimensions of SD (ecological, economic and social). The evaluation report in this case included the usual sections although the quantity and the quality of information for some sections were too vague or descriptive. The only remarkable effort documented in the report was related to the choice of the project sites visited, but the opportunity to compare the contribution of those pilot interventions in a subregional scale was missed by the evaluators. The evaluators replicated the bias of the evaluation manager, focusing their findings on the forest sector (especially for the relevance criterion).

The report included the standard versions, although some of its sections were assessed as too vague or including too little information. In relation to utilization, this report did not present *actionable recommendations*. They were very vaguely stated and no discussion about their feasibility was included. No *mechanism to follow-up their implementation* was proposed by the evaluators or the Ministry of Environment in charge of the evaluation. The *dissemination and current accessibility of the report* was very limited, only evaluation managers had electronic copies that were not available online or distributed (at least) to those interviewed. This hindered the assessment of the *credibility of evaluators and the evaluation in general*. The *effective utilization of the evaluation* remained contingent to future conditions. No evidence was found of its utilization either by the Ministry of Environment or the donor. None of the interviewees seemed to be very certain about the prospects in that direction.

4.3. Meta-evaluation of the final evaluation of PROGERT (Groundnut Basin Soil Management and Regeneration Project).

4.3.1. Introduction and context of PROGERT

The PROGERT (Groundnut Basin Soil Management and Regeneration Project) was approved and funded by the GEF within its Focal Area of "land degradation", Operational Programme "SLM" and Strategic Priorities "Implementation of Innovative and Indigenous SLM Practices" and "Targeted Capacity Building". The project was meant to demonstrate innovative and indigenous SLM practices, with indirect replication potential, through the promotion of a consensus and institutional coordination involving various actors. These GEF-promoted projects seek two-level objectives: global (ecosystem integrity maintained and restored) and national/local benefits (bolster gross domestic product and ensure sustainable livelihoods) (GEF, 2004a).

PROGERT was expected to contribute to SLM to fight against global land degradation. Its objectives were focused in maintaining the stability of ecosystems services and functions in Senegal through SLM at the landscape level, both to combat land degradation and to reduce poverty. PROGERT was focused in the groundnut basin of Senegal, a strategic zone for its demographic and economic importance.

UNDP was chosen as the executing agency for this GEF-funded project. The project document was signed in September 2007 and implemented until September 2012. The total project cost was around 5,5 million euro, with 1,5 million euro from the Senegalese government. The GEF provided incremental funding to catalyse lasting change and redress the degradation trend on the basis of the baseline scenario (a total of 3,6 million euro). Over the last two decades, UNDP has promoted National Execution (NEX) implementation modality for its assisted programmes to avoid the previous arrangement by which projects were directly managed by UN specialized agencies. National authorities of partner countries ensure administrative and procurement support. Since 2007 the *Cellule d'Appui aux Projets et Programmes* (CAP) of the Ministry of Economy and Finances of Senegal played this role.

PROGERT had also a Steering and Scientific Committee, and was under the administrative supervision of the Ministry of Environment (Directorate of Water, Forestry, Hunting and Soil Conservation, DEFCSS). A Project Unit based in Dakar and composed of a coordinator, M&E expert, and finances and accounting assistants was created with high autonomy from the Ministry but following national procedures with the CAP support. Since the PROGERT acted in five regions of the groundnut basin, five Project Local Units were created, each with a chief and technicians. Each Project Local Unit covered three intervention sites or rural communities. In each one, a number of operational sites were chosen. Staff of the project local units was in direct contact with the state technical services at local level, as well as community-based organizations and rural councils and the Regional Development Agencies, which promote the decentralization of state functions.

In 2010 PROGERT had a mid-term review (MTR) in conformity with GEF-UNDP M&E policies and procedures (all medium and full size projects were subjected to an independent terminal evaluation upon completion). According to them, the terminal evaluation should provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance by assessing its design, relevance, process of implementation, and achievements vis-a-vis project objectives, including any changes in the intended results (Roby & Mbengue, 2013). The National Execution implementation modality of PROGERT also affected the management of its evaluation, which was delegated by UNDP to the national authority in charge of planning and evaluating public policies: the National Planning Unit (DPN) who chaired the Evaluation Steering Committee. The terminal evaluation was conducted in 2013. This final evaluation was the focus of this meta-evaluation. An impressive documentation effort was made by the evaluation manager (the National Planning Unit, DPN), having a very good overall picture of the evaluation process, as the following table shows.

Table 20. List of documents found in relation to the PROGERT evaluation process

Found	Name of the document/s
√	Project Document of PROGERT, 2004 (106 pages) (GEF, 2004a)
√	Report of the Mid-Term Review of PROGERT, 2010 (88 pages) (Stanislaw & Mangoné, 2011)
√	ToR of the final evaluation of PROGERT, (DPN, 2012)
√	Minutes of the Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) for the validation of ToR (hard copy)
√	Minutes of the ESC about the recruitment of the national consultant (hard copy)
√	Technical offer submitted by the international consultant for the recruitment process (3 pages)
√	Evaluation guideline by consultants (including evaluation matrix), unknown date (13 pages)
√	PowerPoint presented by consultants with preliminary findings, November 9, 2012 (13 slides)
√	Draft version of the evaluation report, December 2012 (109 pages)
√	Final version of the evaluation report, March 2013 (109 pages) (Roby & Mbengue, 2013)
√	Note sent from DPN to the Minister of Economy, (7 pages) (hard copy)

Moreover, guidelines from the donor (GEF), the executing agency (UNDP) and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) which were used during the evaluation process, according to the evaluation report and interviews, were consulted:

Table 21. Additional documents found in relation to the PROGERT evaluation process

Found	Name of the document/s
√	Norms for evaluation in the UN system (UNEG, 2005a)
√	Standards for evaluation in the UN system (UNEG, 2005b)
√	Guidance for GEF agencies in conducting terminal evaluations (32 pages) (GEF, 2008)
√	UNEG quality assurance guidelines for ToR and inception reports (2010) (UNEG, 2010c)
√	UNEG Quality checklist for evaluation reports, 2010 (6 pages) (UNEG, 2010b)
√	UNEG good practice guidelines for follow-up to evaluations (2010) (UNEG, 2010a)
√	GEF Evaluation Policy (2010) (GEF, 2011)
√	UNDP Evaluation Policy (2011) (UNDP, 2011b)
√	Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects (project-level evaluation), (58 pages) (UNDP, 2012)

The following graph captured the key stakeholders during the design and implementation of PROGERT. They should have been involved in the evaluation process. In green those directly interviewed for the meta-evaluation, in red those who either did not have any meaningful information about the evaluation design, process, result or utilization, or could not be located.

Interviews were held with UNDP Country Office staff, the UNDP technical assistance support at regional level, as well as the Evaluation Office of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). Three different departments of the Ministry of Environment of Senegal were interviewed: the one in charge of the administrative supervision of PROGERT (DEFCSS: Water, Forest, Soils, Hunt and Soil Conservation Unit), the National Parks Department (Min of Env: DPN in the graph) and the Monitoring Unit of Ministry of Environment (Min of Env: CEPS in the graph). This last one was especially key in understanding the potential utilization of the PROGERT final evaluation in the policy-making cycle. Staff from Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock was also interviewed, but it was not possible to associate representatives from other Ministries involved in the Steering Committee of the project.

Exchanges with the Project Unit staff at central level (coordinator and M&E specialist) were paramount to understand the articulation of the evaluation with the monitoring system and overall implementation of PROGERT. It was not possible to interview representatives of the project unit and the Ministry of Environment in the regions. The international and national consultants and the evaluation manager (staff from the National Planning Unit within the Ministry of Economy and Finances) were extensively interviewed. It was not possible to interview staff from the CAP or the UNDP Evaluation Unit at headquarters in spite of several emails and calls.

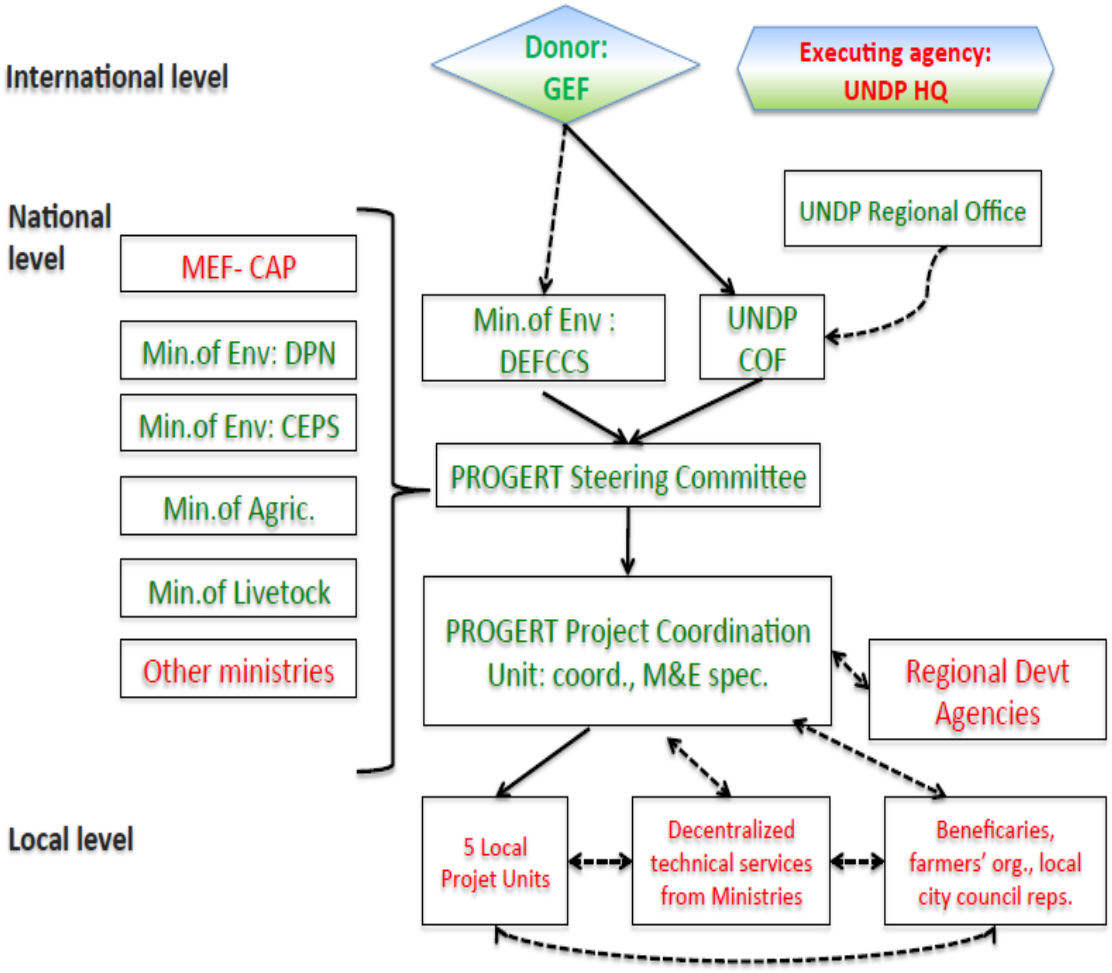


Figure 57. Main stakeholders of PROGERT[92].

[92] Coord. : Coordinator; GEF: Global Environmental Facility; M&E spec: Monitoring and Evaluation specialist; MEF-CAP: Ministry of Economy and Finances - Project Support Unit; Min. of Agric.: Ministry of Agriculture; Min. of Env: CEPS: Ministry of Environment Monitoring Unit; Min. of Env: DEFCSS: Ministry of Environment Unit of Water,

The majority of stakeholders were available and the documentation of the evaluation was almost ideal in order to assess elements of its design, process, result and utilization. The style of the evaluation management of DPN was criticized by some of some interviewees for being over-bureaucratized. Nevertheless, this thoughtful documentation allowed accessing a very rich base of documents, including intermediate ones and exchanges among different evaluation stakeholders that could inform the improvement of the system through meta-evaluative exercises in order to make it more suitable for the needs of different audiences.

4.3.2. Information about the intervention of PROGERT

The project was focused on the peanut or groundnut basin**,** where different uses such as agriculture, livestock and forestry were considered to be in competition and could trigger potential future conflicts in the area, according to the main policy documents. The evaluation report engaged in the global debates on environmental degradation in arid areas mentioning the importance to rehabilitate farmland in arid regions to ensure food security, due to the water shortage in those regions that is likely to be exacerbated by global warming.

The diagnosis of the problem in the evaluation report (mirroring the one in the project document) were in line with mainstream degradation narratives (See Chapter 1): falling world prices for groundnuts and its related products, poor weather conditions, domestic and international economic shocks, falling yields due to loss of fertility.

The evaluation diagnosed that the main causes of land degradation) were anthropogenic and related to poverty (improper management and inappropriate farming practices, overharvesting of fuelwood, livestock pressure). This situation led to overexploitation of scarce resources and the expansion of agricultural land at the expense of forests, according to the PROGERT documents and its evaluations, exacerbated by climate change and nearly four decades of drought.

The baseline information used in the evaluation report considered that over one million hectares of forest formations and rangeland were degraded in the Groundnut Basin, out of the 4,6 million hectares of this area (around 22%). Although this was a lower rate than the national one (over 65% of the land or 12,7 million ha), it was considered as a high priority intervention because of the severe poverty indices in the area, the high density of population, and the high levels of land degradation.

The project was implemented in five regions of the Groundnut Basin (Thies, Louga, Diourbel, Fatick and Kaolack, in which 15 sites were selected on the basis of socio economic and environmental criteria (Figure 57).

Forest, Hunt and Soil Conservation; Org.: Organizations; Regional Devt Agencies: Regional Development Agencies; Reps: representatives; Min. of Env: DPN: Ministry of Environment, Direction of National Parks; UNDP COF: United Nations Development Programme Country Office; UNDP HQ: United Nations Development Programme Headquarters.

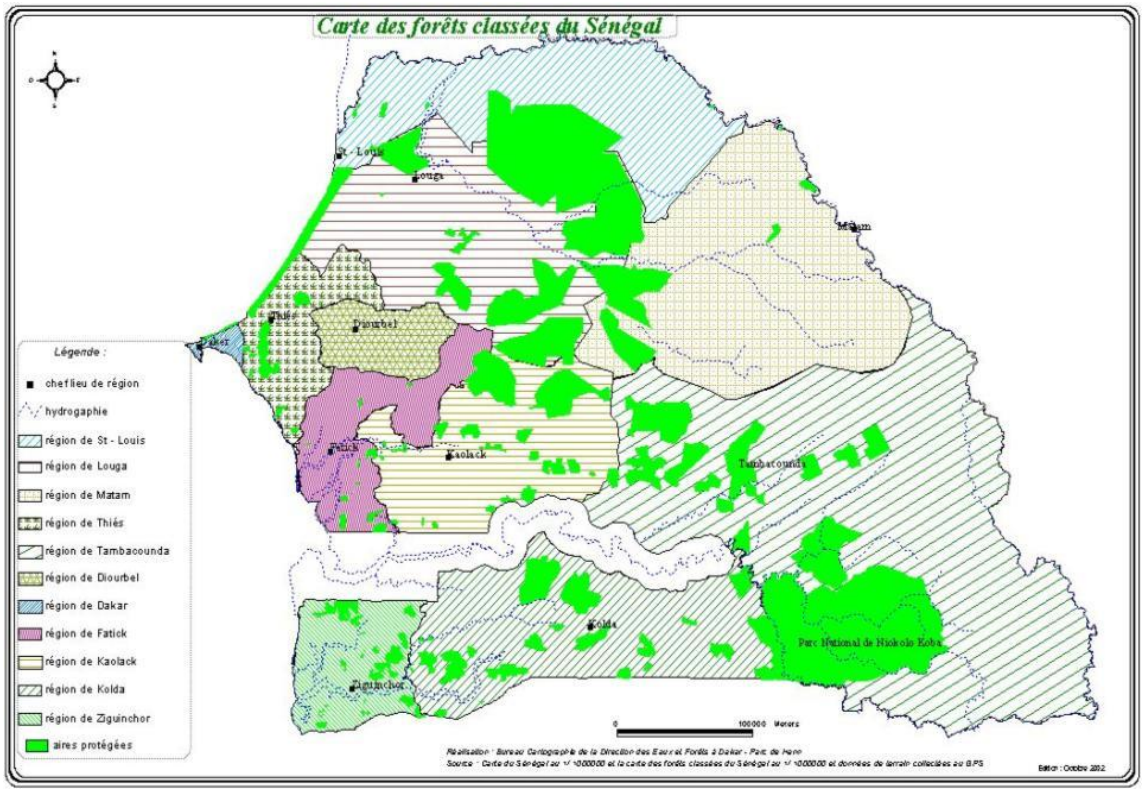


Figure 58. PROGERT intervention area. Source : (MEPN, 2007)

The global environmental benefit of PROGERT was promoting SLM and rehabilitating 46,367 km^2 of land in order to reduce the rate and extent of land degradation; to preserve and restore natural habitats contributing to ecosystem stability; as well as the integrity of agro-forest ecosystems and their functions; to create a protective barrier against the desertification process; to increase in carbon storage in rehabilitated areas and improved biodiversity preservation; and to reduce sedimentation in rivers and streams. The overall objective of the project was to contribute to the Sustainable Development of the rural sector in Senegal and to the preservation of the integrity and stability of ecosystems to ensure the sustainability of their functions and services. The immediate objective was to catalyse SLM at the landscape level with the goal of combating land degradation and reducing poverty.

The project was structured into five outcomes (or components) and 22 outputs.

- Outcome 1: Cropland fertility increased through upscaling innovative, adapted technologies;
- Outcome 2: Rationalized forest and pasture use through upscaling of best practices;
- Outcome 3: Policies and local partnerships are harmonized and capacities are strengthened for integrated land management following a landscape approach;
- Outcome 4: Income Generating Activities made compatible with the principles of Natural Resources Management and Sustainable Land Management;
- Outcome 5: Adapted management from lessons learned and the monitoring system.

The monitoring of these results was made through 33 indicators. According to the evaluation report, 8 baselines of those indicators were not provided. Targets were monitored for the entire project, which was broken down into annual targets.

PROGERT proposed reversing the degradation trend of the peanut basin through restoration of soils, diversifying crops, intensifying sustainable agriculture, using varieties resistant to arid conditions and spreading production throughout the year. The landscape approach was presented as the main intervention modality in order to advance towards a common long-term vision based

on shared governance, responsibilities and benefits while ensure meeting the full range of essential functions for both supply (food, fibre, energy, etc.) and the maintenance of healthy ecosystems. It encompassed larger areas to reduce negative environmental impacts upstream and downstream agricultural, forestry and pastoral activities, and various stakeholders. This was supported by the evaluation report that praised the landscape approach over previous regional planning and integrated rural development models in the 1970s and 1980s (top-down approach and for a definite period).

The PROGERT was conceived as a "demonstration project" that sought a variety of technical solutions to various anthropogenic and climatic causes of land degradation in different ecosystems of the Groundnut Basin. It proposed to implement those SLM solutions by raising awareness and mobilizing resource users to participate in the restoration and better management of land and natural resources. The potential for replication of achievements laid in demonstrating the feasibility of the tangible benefits provided by the solutions in terms of agricultural and forage production, restoration of degraded lands and for generating income. According to the evaluation report, the approach adopted by the project was based on peasants' demands and on information, awareness and capacity building through the involvement of NGOs, CBOs, technical services and the private sector. The models supported were vetted by the Scientific Technical Committee for environmental impact assessments both on-site and off-site.

4.3.3. Findings from the Meta-evaluation of the final evaluation of PROGERT

The PROGERT evaluation was managed by the National Planning Unit (DPN) of the Ministry of Economy of Senegal following national procedures. The thoughtful documentation of the stages of the evaluation process by DPN allowed a detailed analysis of the contribution of different institutional actors during the evaluation design and process around the Evaluation Steering Committee (partnership level using Arnstein's ladder terminology). This facilitated a shared understanding of *evaluation purposes and objectives*.

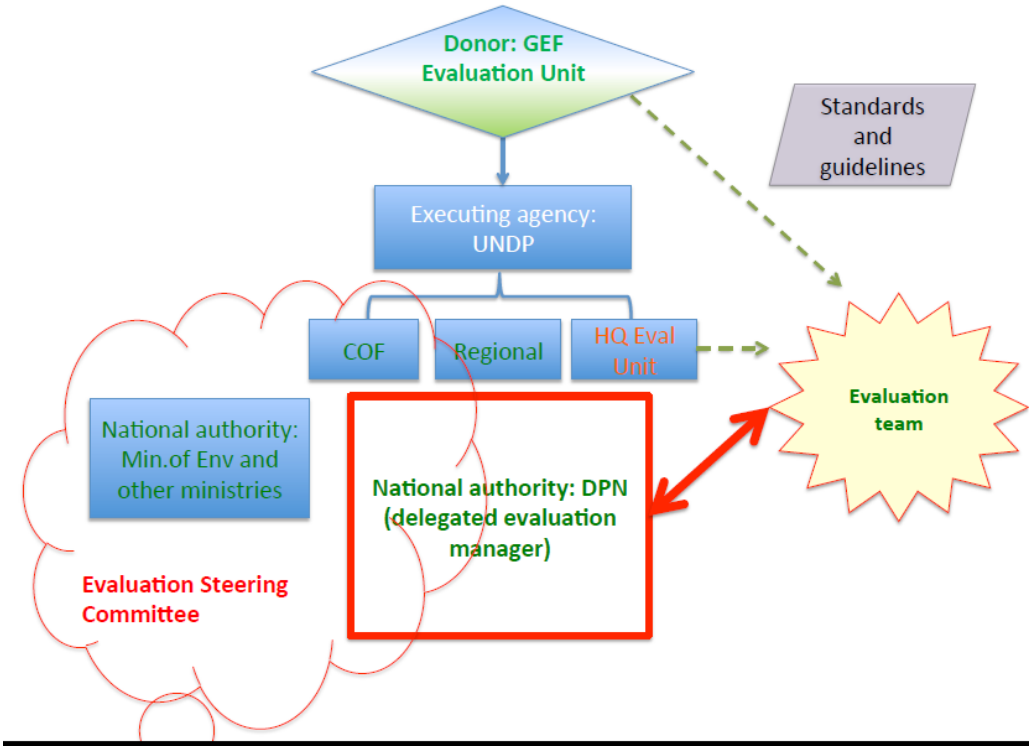


Figure 59. Management structure of the PROGERT evaluation.

The National Planning Unit (DPN) chaired the ESC. UNDP Country Office approved and paid directly consultants, and participated in the ESC meetings, along with other Ministries. The evaluation team was in direct relation with DPN, and the participation of GEF was negligible apart from indirectly provide the guidelines used by consultants.

As can be seen in the Figure 59, local-level stakeholders were not associated in the ESC and could not be interviewed for this study to verify if they also thought that the main objective of the exercise was accountability, followed by some timid improvement/learning purposes. Some doubts were raised about the capacity of the specialist of the DPN to tailor the ToR to the challenges of the evaluation of Sustainable Development interventions. The ToR of the final evaluation of PROGERT had the same general content of an intervention of any other sector. Consultant could correct a bit this limitation using the donors' guidelines because of their previous experience in GEF evaluations.

While the *main audience* of the evaluation was the donor, its utilization by national authorities presented additional threats. The sensitiveness from the Ministry of Environment staff, usually associated more deeply in evaluations conducted by other donors, was a serious blockage during the process. This could be explained for the coexistence of different institutional arrangements promoted by different donors to evaluate similar projects, even projects anchored in the same government structure.

Some interviewees considered the role of the DPN in the evaluation management as too administrative and hierarchical with limited value added. For those interviewees, only people directly involved in the project or users of the evaluation findings should be part of those meetings, along with those with sufficient knowledge of GEF (donor) vocabulary. This posed some questions about the *composition and functionality of these institutional structures to ensure quality control* of the evaluation process: should they only be composed of technical staff of key Ministries and Units or should they be open to other institutional stakeholders? The conclusions of this study propose to find effective ways between these two options, including both sector and central national authorities to maximize the utilization of evaluations both from the specific sector and from the general learning emerging from evaluation experience and practice.

The ratio between the budget of the evaluation and the cost of the intervention was below the average of the 7 evaluations that included sufficient information in their reports. Being a regional intervention, the low budget and time allocated for fieldwork were identified as being a serious limitation to the *scope of the evaluation*. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees considered the findings of the evaluation adequate for its purposes and future utilization. An international and a national consultant composed the evaluation team, as the best practices recommend, although some problems in their recruitment delayed the process due to inconsistencies between the direct and national execution modalities.

Even with a very short fieldwork mission, evaluators *reached a high number of stakeholders* with a fair diversity and with a high concentration of local beneficiaries. Interviews for this meta-evaluation showed the restricted concept of participation of most stakeholders: an evaluation is "participatory" if it entailed some interviews and focus group meetings with a sample of stakeholders. Nevertheless, this was only restricted to the stage of data collection, and was just as consultation or information.

The level of *transparency of the main limitations* encountered during the evaluation was very limited in the evaluation report. Nevertheless, interviewees raised interesting points about the pitfalls of project monitoring data, the limited time allocated for the mission and the over-bureaucratization of the evaluation management (according to some). As the general practice in the set of evaluations, *ethical considerations* were not discussed in the report.

The evaluation report did not offer any justification of the *choice of the evaluation approach* used, which seems to be implicitly "imposed" by the donor's guidelines. *Data collection tools and the evaluation synthesis* were clearly presented in the report, and it was easy to follow the process of synthesizing data to reach findings, conclusions and recommendations. As the rest of the 40 evaluations, PROGERT final evaluation did not deem necessary to include different perspectives about the worth and merit of the intervention arising from different (and even sometimes competing) *value systems of different stakeholders*.

Although PROGERT evaluation made an effort to consider the *challenges of Sustainable Development evaluation*, it did not achieve to fully consider adequate *time and geographical scope* to grasp upstream and downstream effects of the intervention, as well as its interaction with other similar interventions and with local-promoted activities. It made a good job on *context analysis*, using the scattered project monitoring data and visiting a good sample of intervention sites. Nevertheless, the straitjacket of the logframe of the project and the timing of the evaluation (just at the end of project activities' implementation) hindered the possibility to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development in a dynamic temporal and geographical way. When asked, interviewees tended to respond about the consideration of landscape approaches during the implementation of the project, but did not provide any evidence about how the evaluation encompass the challenge of encompassing the three systems.

The evaluation manager (DPN) made an amazing effort to *document the evaluation process*. On their turn, consultants presented a very *complete report*, with good quality and quantity of information that eased the meta-evaluation. The ESC allowed a restricted space for discussing and negotiating evaluation conclusions and recommendations, although only institutional stakeholders participated in the capital city. The *management response system* of other executing agency (UNDP) was not yet activated, but there was evidence that recommendations of the mid-term review in 2010 were to be implemented four years after the publication of the report and uploading the management response in the Evaluation Resource Centre website.

The *dissemination efforts* of the management conducted by DPN were also remarkable: consultants were asked to restitute their preliminary findings at the end of the fieldwork mission to ESC members, copies of the evaluation report were kept in their library and distributed to the sector Ministry and the donor and a summary note was sent to the Ministry of Economy by DPN. Nevertheless, some interviewees complaint they did not receive the final electronic version of the report and it has not yet been uploaded to the online repository of UNDP.

None of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned any concerns about the *credibility of evaluators or the overall evaluation process*, in spite of the close association of project staff with evaluators during the field mission. The *effective utilization of the evaluation* remains elusive between the uptake for new formulations by the donor and the executing agency and some continuation of activities with national funds. In spite of the promising perspectives to increasing utilization of project evaluations in policy-making with this evaluation management, this seems to be ignored by most of the interviewees. It is to be proved that the Commission of Monitoring and Evaluation of public policies created in 2012 will be able to capitalize these types of nationally-led evaluations and promote partnerships between the central DPN and the sector Ministries to smooth institutional rivalries and advance towards a more national-owned evaluation agenda.

4.4. Summary of findings arising from the in-depth MEv of the case studies

Some key documents of the design donor-led evaluation (PRODEFI) were totally elaborated by headquarters evaluation units, with very restricted participation of national partners, including the institutional Senegalese counterpart. They were sometimes only available in Japanese. This was a clear barrier for national appropriation (and eventual utilization) of the evaluation process that hindered the collective decision about the *purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation*. In the case of the *expost* evaluation of PRODEFI there seems to be a clear contradiction between the actual donor-led evaluation practice and their own recommendations on their guidelines. While the main users of those evaluations are ideally national authorities, these are weakly involved in the evaluation and perceive the evaluation as a merely accountability-oriented exercise.

For the other two case studies of national-led evaluation processes, the Terms of Reference went through a certain negotiation process, more restricted for FLCD-RPS and wider for PROGERT final evaluation (at least among some institutional stakeholders in the capital). For FLCD-RPS the design of the evaluation was proposed in a very vague way by the staff of the Ministry of Environment in charge of the evaluation. In spite of the efforts of the evaluators to clarify this hybrid evaluative exercise, between a traditional project evaluation and a capitalization, in their methodological note, the final report had problems to balance the purpose and objectives of the final evaluation. For the case of the PROGERT evaluation, directly managed by the DPN, the Evaluation Steering Committee members contributed from the outset of the process adding their comments to the ToR. Nevertheless, the resulting ToR did not either achieved to integrate the challenges of the evaluation of this sector.

Determining the real scope of the evaluation was challenging in all cases because no information about the evaluation budget was included in the reports and only vague information about the length of the overall process could be found. The estimation for PRODEFI and PROGERT yielded very low ratios of evaluation cost/intervention cost, below the average of other 7 evaluations with this information in the set of 40 SLM evaluations. This confirmed the limitations of those types of evaluations to meaningfully assess key questions related to SD with short fieldwork time and limited budget for quite big interventions spread in different regions of the country.

The three evaluations used a different *composition of evaluation teams*: PRODEFI an international consultant with the support of a translator/interpreter, FLCD-RPS a national consultant supported by a staff from Ministry of Environment in secondment and PROGERT a full evaluation team composed of an international and a Senegalese consultant. The interviews showed a certain preference for international expertise. For instance, the evaluation managers of FLCD-RPS acknowledged that they could not hire an international consultant because of budget limitation, but that was their "gold standard". Moreover, even in the case of a mixed team (PROGERT), the role and responsibilities of the national consultant were not very clear.

The *foreseen utilization* of the PRODEFI evaluation was not clearly discussed in the available reports and different stakeholders held divergent opinions about the *main evaluation users*. In all answers, donor accountability seemed to be implicit. Although some mentioned donor's learning purposes, no evidence was found about organizational learning at JICA. In the case of the FLCD-RPS evaluation, the implicit *audience* was the national authority, being the donor the secondary audience. For PROGERT, this was almost unanimously the contrary, being the first client the donor and secondly the national authority. Some replies around this topic raised the distinctive nature of utilization of those types of evaluations depending on the type of "national authority" considered as the main actor in the evaluation: the sector or technical Ministry of Environment (informing policy-making from a technical perspective) or the National Planning Unit of the Ministry of Economy and Finances (for improving the general uptake of the evaluation function and advancing the National Evaluation Capacities agenda). Nevertheless, there is still some tension among stakeholders who have not endorsed this last option.

The continuum of *types of and levels of participation* (Arnstein, 1969) applied to evaluation processes was interpreted in different ways by different stakeholders. While some classed an evaluation as "participatory" because it just reached different actors through interviews or focus groups, others would admit that this was not enough but considered it was normal because it was not the purpose of the evaluation. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 3, other evaluations of the set achieved to involve in a more meaningful way other types of stakeholders at all evaluation stages. Interviewing a sample of stakeholders using a questionnaire before the field mission or interviewing them individually or in groups during the evaluation fieldwork is not sufficient to be considered as a *right stakeholders' involvement strategy* throughout the evaluation process.

For FLCD-RPS final evaluation, staff from the Ministry of Environment and national consultants was the main actors controlling the evaluation process. Another level of participation (closer to partnership) could also be found in the nationally-led evaluation of PROGERT where the management of the evaluation was delegated entirely to DPN following national execution procedures. The three examples *reached a high number of stakeholders* (especially local beneficiaries) because of the use of a survey administered before the actual evaluation fieldwork mission (for the cases of PRODEFI and FLCD-RPS) and focus groups (for PROGERT). The *diversity of stakeholders* associated to the evaluation (even if it was just to be interviewed or consulted) ranges from weak to good. There was a certain tendency to focus the efforts in reaching lots of local people, but sometimes other stakeholders key for the institutional uptake of the evaluation recommendations were neglected. A clear example was found in FLCD-RPS where the regional dimension of this pilot intervention was lost during the evaluation and actors at that level were not involved.

The different evaluation management options of these three cases were exemplified in the *institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation processes*. On the one hand, the PRODEFI donor-led evaluation was totally controlled by the donor's headquarters Evaluation Unit and did not entail the constitution of an Evaluation Steering Committee. Only JICA Country Office and a representative of the Ministry of Environment interacted twice with the international consultant and shared their thoughts about preliminary findings, without a formal process of reviewing draft evaluation reports. Therefore this was a clear example where a donor has not embraced the National Evaluation Capacities strengthening agenda that we analysed in chapter 1. On the other hand, in the case of FLCD-RPS evaluation, there was neither an Evaluation Steering Committee. This was justified by the evaluation manager because of the timing of the evaluation, happening at the end of the implementation, where the majority of stakeholders were no longer available. Nevertheless, this is common practice in final evaluations and it did not seem as a valuable justification to restrict wider participation of stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. Finally, for PROGERT, a full-fledged Evaluation Steering Committee was created, chaired by the National Planning Unit (DPN) of the Ministry of Economy and Finances, after the delegation of UNDP following national procedures. The ESC was functional but some key stakeholders were very critical about the value added of some of their members in terms of quality control of factual errors and overall understanding of the intervention and its context. After a great effort of documenting the evaluation process by DPN, it seems to be time to reflect about improvement points of this national-led evaluation management. For instance, about the guidance offered to consultants, the overall quality of the report and its future utilization. This could foster a certain dialogue with all national authorities and donors who have not yet tested this.

The *level of transparency of the three evaluation processes* was related to the evaluation management arrangement. The donor-led evaluation was less transparent, with very restricted access to key documentation. The level of information was better for the case of the evaluation of FLCD-RPS, and very good in the case of PROGERT evaluation, where it was possible to get access to draft versions and all the written exchanges among stakeholders. None of the three evaluation reports presented a serious attempt to discuss *ethical aspects or the challenges* encountered during the evaluation process. Only the evaluators of FLCD-RPS included in their

"methodological note" some information about their ideal deontological principles but no reflection was found in the report about the challenges they encountered to apply them.

The evaluation reports presented a similar *content* for the three case studies. Nevertheless, PRODEFI did not include the ToR of the evaluation, the information about the context of the intervention and the evaluation process was too succinct and more focus on the methodology and statistical procedure to obtain results. The other two cases included the ToR in the Annexes along with the main data collection tools like interview protocols and evaluation matrices.

The *justification of the epistemological and methodological choice* was absent in all three cases. The *guidelines* used, either from the donor or any other source, were in some cases implicit and their influence in the *evaluation approach* finally used was not clearly discussed. For instance, the PRODEFI evaluation was focused on its logical framework and expected results, according to the interviews because it was demanded in the ToR (not public and only in Japanese). Only the international consultant considered that the chosen quasi-experimental data collection and analytical approach was the "gold standard methodology". This was not praised by any other of the evaluation stakeholders as giving more credibility to the findings or utilization. Moreover, the report did not include the questionnaires used or the rationale of the choice of questions. The evaluation of FLCD-RPS did not justify its choice of a results-based log-frame based evaluation but clearly explained and included in the report the data collection tools (evaluation matrix, questionnaires tailored for different types of stakeholders). Similarly, the PROGERT evaluation report does not directly mentioned the GEF or UNDP Evaluation guidelines that the report followed and did not justify the approach to adapt them to the specific context of the PROGERT final evaluation. It also disclosed the data collection tools in the Annexes.

In order to assess the clarity of *evaluation synthesis* (Davidson, 2014), the main arguments and evidence used by evaluators to assess evaluation criteria and answer evaluation questions were reconstructed. This was very challenging in the case of PRODEFI evaluation since only the aggregated responses were included in the report and the consultant (and the donor) perspectives were the only ones considered to value the worth and merit of the intervention. In the case of the evaluation of FLCD-RPS some coherence problems were found between the conclusions in the report and the supporting evidence in the Evaluation Matrix in the Annex, and for some dimensions only anecdotal evidence was presented as the basis of conclusions. The openness of the reasoning in relation to its shortcomings and uncertainties was not very well developed. The *different value systems to assess the worth and merit of the intervention*, if ever considered, were confounded and aggregated in the report. The PROGERT evaluation report offered a clearer picture about the logical links between data, findings and conclusions, with supporting tables to clarify the *synthesis and aggregation of results* about different dimensions to answer higher-level evaluation questions. Nevertheless, it also fell short in preserving different value systems around the worth and merit of the intervention.

The assessment of the *adequacy of consideration of Sustainable Development Evaluation challenges* in the three case studies yielded very disappointing results. Even in the *expost* evaluation of PRODEFI, the time and geographical coverage of the evaluation did not consider the main recommendations of the literature about SD evaluation. The report presented results separately for the main and extended phase, without aggregating them over time and without considering upstream impacts. The evaluation of the FLCD-RPS also neglected its inclusion in a regional initiative comprising similar activities in four Sahel countries. The careful inclusion of the context of the evaluation and the evaluand was also insufficient in the first two cases, being richer in the PROGERT final evaluation. Probably the evaluations had problems to encompass the three SD dimension due to the constraint imposed by the logical framework and expected results of the intervention. The final evaluation of PROGERT tried to make more efforts in this direction. An interesting point raised during the was related to the need to associate field staff from the Ministry of Environment or other institutions in order to grasp social, economic and ecological dynamics to the evaluation. These types of partnerships could help external evaluators

to better apprehend the contribution of a discrete intervention and place it in the overall efforts to tackle Sustainable Development issues at the local, regional and national level.

There were great differences in the *level of documentation* of the three evaluation processes. The donor-led evaluation (PRODEFI) presented serious restrictions in terms of access to key evaluation documents and the level and quality of information offered. The ToR was not included and the report was assessed as incomplete. Nevertheless, the MEv was easy to conduct since the majority of dimensions could be implied. For the final evaluation of the FLCD-RPS some more information could be accessed, although key information about the process (like the recruitment of consultants, exchanges around draft versions, among others) were not documented. The evaluation reports of FLCD-RPS and PROGERT were considered as complete, including the usual executive summary, scope, methodology, conclusions, recommendations, and annexes. Nevertheless, for FLCD-RPS there were some information gaps and some sections were assessed as too vague and not very well targeted in order to foster evaluation utilization. PROGERT evaluation process was very diligently documented by the evaluation manager (the DPN) and the whole evaluation cycle could be tracked from the negotiation about the ToR content to the note sent to the Ministries informing about the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

Some proposed that *actionable recommendations* should be targeted to specific groups of stakeholders and include a discussion of their feasibility in terms of institutional setting and financial resources available. This was not totally clear in PRODEFI's and FLCD-RPS evaluation. There was no evidence of any serious reflection with national actors to test the validity and feasibility of recommendations to foster their implementation. Only the PROGERT evaluation opened certain space of discussion of conclusions and recommendations among stakeholders through the validation of the final report through the ESC. For the two first cases there was no evidence of any *system of management response or monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations* emerging from the evaluation. UNDP has an evaluation management-response mechanism, centralized in a website, which has not yet been used for the PROGERT evaluation. No evidence was found that the recommendations from the mid-term review in 2010 were implemented, according to the information of this system.

The *dissemination mechanisms* of the three evaluations were also quite different. The donor-led evaluation informed in a very limited way national partners and considered the JICA website as the main tool to share the results of the evaluation process. This was considered as easily accessed but only by certain types of actors (with Internet access and fluent in French or English). This passive accessibility was not accompanied with any active presentation of the evaluation findings in order to promote its potential uptake, especially at local level in the PRODEFI intervention area. The situation was even worse in the case of the FLCD-RPS evaluation that was not available online and had not been widely circulated to the main stakeholders (at least the ones interviewed for this meta-evaluation). PROGERT evaluation managers made an interesting effort to actively and passively disseminate the report, with special emphasis at the national level. The Evaluation Steering Committee members were invited to a restitution made by consultants at the end of the fieldwork, DPN summarized in a note to the Ministry of Economy the main conclusions and recommendations to promote its uptake. They also kept a hard copy of the evaluation report in its library. The Country Office of the donor, UNDP, also undertook several actions to disseminate the results of the evaluation among its staff, summarizing key findings for management. The final report has not yet been updated in the Evaluation Resource Centre website.

No clear conclusions could be drawn from the interviews in relation to the *overall credibility of the evaluation (and the evaluators)*. In the case of PRODEFI, the international consultant placed all the weight of the credibility of the exercise in the choice of an evaluation approach and methodology he considers as "more robust than others". This was not raised or agreed by any of the rest of the interviewees, who did not seem to fully understand the suitability or the advantages of the approach. No credibility problems around the FLCD-RPS were raised by any of the interviewees, although it was difficult to assess this dimension with such a limited dissemination

of the evaluation result. The close association of some members of the Project team during the evaluation fieldwork of PROGERT was extensively discussed with different interviewees in relation to its potential effects on credibility (in relation to independence and objectivity). None of the interviewees understood this as a challenge but as an opportunity for evaluation to grasp key issues and propose more feasible recommendations.

It was also challenging to discern about the *level and type of effective evaluation utilization* through interviews and the information contained in evaluation documents. In all cases the types of reflections made by interviewees fell in the blurred zone between the ideal utilization and what happened in reality. Using evaluation results and recommendations for future formulations of the same donor in Senegal or elsewhere and for continuing nationally-funded activities were the most frequently mentioned (potential) uses of those types of evaluations. None of the interviewees mentioned the possibility of using these project-level evaluations to inform policy making. Even donors recognised their problems to aggregate findings emerging from Project evaluations into national, regional and global endeavours related to environmental monitoring. The agenda to strengthen National Evaluation capacities through the management of evaluations by national authorities (either the sector Ministry or the DPN) was not mentioned by any of the interviewees.

Chapter 5. Conclusions of the study.

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. Justification and gaps in the field of study

Evaluation is the systematic determination of the worth, merit and significance of the evaluand (Scriven, 1991). Evaluation practice has been defined as the planned and actual evaluations, considering their institutional context, main stakeholders involved and their capacities and systems to promote, conduct and use evaluations. Research on evaluation, conceived as the empirical enquiry on the practice, methods and profession of programme evaluation, has been quite limited (G. T. Henry & Mark, 2003). As a relatively young field (around thirty years in some countries) and its eminently practical nature, little consensus has been reached to guide evaluation practice. Various evaluation theorists have argued for more empirical knowledge of evaluation to explain the nature of evaluation practice (Christie, 2003).

More research has been conducted around learning from the findings of evaluations than about learning from evaluation itself. This is a key difference between *synthesis methodologies* related to evaluation. On one hand, meta-analysis, research synthesis or systematic review aim to synthesize what works, where, how and why, with consideration to the quality of the evidence (Olsen & O'Reilly, 2011). On the other hand, Meta-evaluation (MEv) aims to learn from evaluative processes to improve the quality of evaluation itself and/or of the evaluation function within the policy, programme or project cycle. Within MEv, two functions have been distinguished in the bibliography ((Scriven, 1969); (Wingate, 2009)). The practical function deals with the quality control of individual evaluations and has been more extensively researched. The theoretical function of MEv that assesses the adequacy, opportunity and the role of evaluation for management purposes in a concrete policy sector has been less developed ((Scriven, 1969); (Bustelo, 2002)).

Peer-reviewed research on evaluation is scarce and usually centred in public policy evaluation in developed countries. Research on evaluation in development contexts is rare, usually characterized by low levels of institutionalization and scattered donor-led evaluations. The contribution from developing countries to the progress of theoretical evaluation has been limited (Carden & Alkin, 2012). The search for a "made in Africa evaluation" and indigenous evaluation is still on progress ((Gariba & Hoop, 2012); (Traore & Wally, 2013)). The bulk of information about evaluation practice in Africa is grey literature, supplemented by some very recent endeavours to promote research on evaluation (Abrahams & Nkamleu, 2013).

The limited amount of research on evaluation is even more acute in Francophone Africa in comparison to other developing contexts, including Anglophone Africa ((OIF, 2004); (RFE, 2014b)). Specific Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) events and evaluation trainings have proliferated to attenuate the backward state of Francophone evaluation. In parallel to the evaluation practice promoted by institutional partners, participatory approaches, commonly conducted by African civil society organizations, are hardly known to the evaluation community. Evaluation practice in Senegal is a clear example of this situation.

Significant changes in the global development arena have highlighted the need to move from evaluating "aid" to evaluating "development" (Segone, 2006). It is implied that in order to ensure use of evaluations in public policy making cycles, national actors should be engaged in deciding what evaluations to undertake and how and when they are done, be enabled by a supportive environment to foster demand, supply and use of evaluation ((OECD, 2006); (OECD, 2011); (Segone, 2013)). Countries are at different stages in this shift towards country-led evaluation. The donor community has promoted different initiatives to strengthen evaluation capacities in Africa with the aim of improving governance and overall development aid effectiveness (Lom, 2009).

The focus on short-term training of individuals, especially in government positions has been superseded, at least in the discourse, by more comprehensive and contextually relevant Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) linked to national development processes (Tarsilla, 2012). After several decades of efforts to improve the functioning of institutions, practices and individuals competencies, still little is known about advances that can integrate the evaluation needs of donors, partner countries and beneficiaries. Senegal, being one of the most important "development hubs" in Francophone Africa has participated of these endeavors, although with mixed results in terms of improvement of the enabling environment and overall evaluation practice.

The development of conceptual and applied evaluation methods specific to natural resource management (NRM) interventions have been more limited than in other sectors like education or health (Rowe, 2012). Approaches and measures for Sustainable Development (SD) evaluation are still debated although some common difficulties have been widely acknowledged in research ((Pintér et al., 2012); (FAO, 2013a); (Swartzendruber, 2015)): the limitations to encompass the multi-sectorial and inter- and transdisciplinary nature of NRM interventions; the trouble of setting agreed goals and definitions, incorporating inherent uncertainty; the epistemological dilemmas, including the practicality of methods and tools; the need for weighting of the multiple systems (the environment, the economy and society); the urgency to include values of different stakeholders; the difficulties of dealing with different time and space scales, and the scant quality and quantity of data and information.

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) has been seen as a possible solution to the management of dryland environments affected by Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) in the Sahel, the broad strip of semi-arid, sparse savannah immediately South of the Sahara Desert. The study considered SLM interventions as those initiatives associated with the promotion of land conservation and measures against desertification, climate change adaptation, organic farming and similar. The majority of the Sahelian countries have cumulated a good array of SLM experience, but their evaluation and dissemination is still limited. Senegal is a Western Sahelian country with most of its surface in a climatic zone prone to DLDD where lots of SLM funding and pilot initiatives have been promoted from different strands.

Multilateral and bilateral donors have promoted evaluations of their SLM projects and programmes for the past decades. Others have centred their efforts in the study and documentation of local SLM practices ((Reij & Steeds, 2003); (Dieng et al., 2008); (Botoni & Reij, 2009); (Liniger, 2007); (WOCAT, 2011)). Moreover, civil sector organizations in Senegal have developed participatory learning-oriented approaches, like capitalization, more focused on actors' experiences, and sometimes their practices ((IED Afrique; ILEIA, 2007); (Fall et al., 2009)). Finally, Senegal has been part of global efforts to improve environmental monitoring, for instance remote sensing to assess long-term changes in DLDD ((CSE, 2005); (CSE, 2010)). This study has pretended to encompass all these streams of theoretical and applied research and practice related to SLM evaluation practice in Senegal, within the global trend towards fostering country-led evaluation.

5.1.2. Objectives, research questions and scope of the study

The study was set up to enlarge the body of evaluative knowledge and to reveal the main strengths and challenges associated with the real-world evaluation practice of SLM initiatives in Senegal. Three research questions (and subquestions) were considered:

1. To what extent do SLM evaluations in Senegal satisfy the sound evaluation requirements and meet various audiences' needs?
2. What are the proposals from different evaluation actors in Senegal to solve the SLM evaluation challenges identified in the literature?
3. To what extent and for what purposes have SLM evaluations in Senegal been utilized in relation to public policy making and aid effectiveness?

The analysis of the evolution of the concept and the proposed solutions to Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) in drylands, and more particularly in the Sahel, shed light about different schools of thought around this subject and how they have influenced policy-making, intervention design and evaluation in Senegal. This was complemented by a diagnosis of the state of evaluation practice in Senegal using the systemic and integrated approach to National Evaluation Capacities Development (Segone, 2013) focused on the enabling environment, the institutional framework and individual evaluation capacities.

The Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) efforts that could have influenced the functioning of institutions, practices and competencies of individuals in Senegal were also analysed. Some content analysis of the main themes raised in 16 major ECD events in Africa since the 1990's were done to inform the evolution of the discourse towards country-led evaluation. Finally, the initiatives to improve Monitoring and Evaluation in the environmental sector and the institutional SLM were also screened.

Due to the lack of in-country consolidated databases of evaluation reports, a long and painstaking effort was necessary to collect SLM evaluations conducted in Senegal. The study targeted evaluations of interventions entailing field NRM activities focused on the desertification-prone areas of Senegal, released after 2000 and conducted by external or mixed teams.

A total of 40 project level evaluations were found, along with other types of evaluative exercises: 9 capitalizations and 7 country level evaluations. This is in line with the average of number of evaluations (from 10 to 162, with an average of 50 evaluations) and the number of years covered (from 1 year to 19 years) of the 23 metaevaluations of aid cooperation analysed in Section 2.2.

On one hand, capitalizations (or experience capitalizations) refer to processes by which implicit (or tacit) knowledge is made explicit and shared widely (FAO, 2013b). They are usually conceived as learning-oriented evaluations focused on the richness of experiences and practices of actors rather than seeking unanimity or judgment of the worth or merit of an intervention. On the other hand, country evaluations were either portfolio-level assessments or thematic evaluations where donors conducted a retrospective of all their support in the environmental sector in Senegal.

Two other cases were focused on the Sectorial budget support promoted by a donor. The country evaluations were extensively used to understand the environment policy and programme context in Senegal. Additional 34 project level evaluations that were supposed to take place could not be found either, some because they never happened due to their cancellation following changes in donor evaluation policies. According to the investment figures in diagnostics of the SLM sector in Senegal, the set of evaluations of this study could be representative of the total evaluation practice considering the targeting criteria.

Meta-evaluation (MEv) was proposed as the main theoretical and analytical approach to study the evaluation practice around SLM in Senegal, especially the most common type of evaluations, project-level evaluations. A summative external and *expost* MEv assessed the quality of designs, processes, results and utilization of completed evaluations. Fifteen of the mostly recommended standards, checklists and overall guidelines were chosen from the review of the academic MEv guidelines and the practitioner-oriented application in development aid evaluation. After some fine-tuning, an analytical framework including 12 tailored MEv criteria was proposed, including specific dimensions and rubrics.

The crafted MEv analytical framework was applied transversally to the 40 project evaluation reports and guided the in-depth comparative analysis of three case studies encompassing different management arrangements. The three case studies complemented the analysis based on the desk review of evaluation reports and ToR with the inclusion of the perceptions of stakeholders, especially about the adequacy, opportunity and utilization of evaluation to contribute to SLM policy making, among others. The scant bibliography, guidelines and examples of capitalizations in Francophone Africa were analysed and contrasted with the responses of a group of 16 experts and practitioners (Delphi methodology) to develop a specific analytical framework for capitalizations that was used to analyse the 9 SLM capitalizations.

5.2. Conclusions emerging from the empirical findings of the study

Conclusions are presented following the research questions of the thesis.

5.2.1. Conclusions about the first research question

In relation to the question "to what extent do SLM evaluations in Senegal satisfy the sound evaluation requirements and meet various audiences' needs?", the research found very heterogeneous SLM evaluation practice, with serious shortcomings in relation to "sound evaluation" standards explained by constraints at three levels: enabling environment, institutional framework and capacities of stakeholders. It also identified a non-inclusive evaluation practice, where the information needs of some stakeholders were privileged and only limited involvement of a restricted group of stakeholders at different evaluation stages.

The 40 project evaluation reports and 9 capitalizations of SLM interventions in Senegal constitute a very heterogeneous set that presents serious shortcomings preventing many from being considered as "sound evaluation". SLM project evaluations are conducted just at the end of the project in a short period of time (on average, six months with two-week fieldwork phase, including data collection and preliminary restitutions in Dakar) and with little resources (around USD 25,000-50,000). This is considered as a very short period of time in relation to the scope of the evaluands (USD 8 million of averaged budget) and the inherent challenges of Sustainable Development evaluation.

The empirical analysis of 40 SLM project evaluations conducted in Senegal from 2000 to 2013 confirmed that evaluation practice has mainly been dominated by donors, with limited capacity of other stakeholders to include their information needs (see discussion about levels of participation below). Senegal has responded to the changes towards country-led evaluation largely at the discourse level, with very limited advances in their effective implementation. There is no coherent National Evaluation Policy or formalized evaluation system, and performance monitoring is still dominant over evaluation defined as systematic determination of the worth, merit and significance of the evaluand.

At the institutional level, different evaluation management arrangements coexist without exchanges among them or a system to learn from them. In spite of the decision to create a National Commission for Monitoring and Evaluation of public policies and programmes (2012), there is

no formal definition of institutional responsibilities for evaluation and evaluation practice is promoted by different governmental structures with no clear national quality assurance system.

The different levels of evaluation competencies in the Technical Ministries, civil society organizations or the private sector (consultants) could also explain some of the limitations found in the quality of evaluation design and the overall management of evaluation processes. Moreover the study found that some key evaluation actors in Senegal are unaware of the endeavours to advance towards Country-led Evaluation (CLE). From the analysis of reports it seems that most evaluation practitioners around SLM evaluation in Senegal are agriculture or forestry sector experts who are not proficient in evaluation theory or the current debates around CLE.

Evaluation design is usually crystallized in the Terms of Reference (ToR) that define the objectives and the scope of the evaluation that should include the information needs of various evaluation stakeholders and ensure a common understanding of the exercise (World Bank, 2011). The ToR of the 40 project evaluations includes different levels of detail, some explain the methodological approach requested and others are very general. In a very few cases, consultants were asked to respond to the demand of the ToR in a methodological note that is reviewed by the evaluation manager before the fieldwork phase. None of those documents discussed the challenges associated with SD evaluation, having a similar content to an evaluation of the any other sector.

Very few ToR of the 40 SLM project evaluations presented in a sufficiently clear way their objectives or purpose and the potential users or audiences. In the majority, donors were mentioned explicitly or implicitly, along with national authorities in some cases. Accountability objectives seem to be dominant while learning objectives are very limited (see conclusions about Research Question 3 about evaluation utilization).

SLM evaluations have been mostly done in relation to pre-established logframes and results-based frameworks in project documents. This makes it difficult to include the different visions, values and perspectives around a development intervention at the moment of conception of the evaluation. As discussed later, a restricted number and diversity of stakeholders participated in the evaluation design of the majority of the SLM evaluations in Senegal. The prevalence of the values of donors in the straitjacket of the logframe is usually blamed by evaluators who propose to adopt a more inclusive project planning and implementation to mitigate this problem.

Overambitious project planning in relation to implementation capacity is a common feature in NRM interventions (Swartzendruber, 2015). Most of the ToR for the evaluation of SLM interventions in Senegal are also overambitious and mirror the ideal types of purposes and analyses recommended in guidelines of donors. Moreover, evaluation reports failed in most cases to describe the difference between the intent and the real execution of the evaluation. Only very scattered information about the most significant limitations was found in reports. For instance, some reports acknowledged the impossibility to assess outcomes as requested, and justified their focus at the output level due to lack of monitoring data.

The 9 SLM capitalizations studied did not include formal Terms of Reference as being a less standardized practice. Nevertheless when they were analysed, serious flaws were identified. For instance, the institutional or organizational learning purposes (Fall & Ndiaye, 2005) were lost in most cases. The empirical findings of this study coincide with the findings of a group of Francophone researchers on evaluation and capitalization (F3E, 2014). Capitalizations were punctual exercises not integrated in organizational dynamics; they were conducted at the end of a project, focused on a specific theme or the whole intervention, innovation or practice, instead of tapping on the experiences and knowledge gained by actors. Nevertheless, caution is needed

since it is possible that this was just overlooked in the reports but a deeper analytical process based on learning was promoted through the capitalizations.

Fluid communication among evaluation stakeholders as well as the documenting of the different stages and exchanges during the evaluation process foster transparency and appropriation. The empirical evidence showed that this was enhanced when an evaluation manager was in charge and institutional arrangements (like an Evaluation Steering Committee) promoted the interaction among stakeholders at key moments of the evaluation process. Nevertheless, the interviews show that caution is needed to avoid over-bureaucratization and to keep a focus on meaningful content exchanges.

Evaluation dissemination seems to have been neglected. Information about dissemination channels and formats was missing in the majority of the 40 SLM reports. Restitution (or feedback) seminars are mentioned in some cases, restricted to ESC members or encompassing other institutional stakeholders, but only located in the capital Dakar.

The distribution of the reports or their synthesis by email to national authorities or senior donor managers are other options envisaged in some reports. The National Planning Department (DPN) is trying to systematize sending briefing notes on the findings and recommendations to the Minister of Economy and Finances.

A common practice is posting reports on the websites of donors and keeping hard copies of the recent DPN-managed evaluations in their library in Dakar. This was also done by the Ministry of Environment, but not systematically according to the evaluation reports found for the study.

Most of central level institutional stakeholders considered that the dissemination of project evaluations to the local level should be done by Ministry staff in the field. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that there is no system to ensure this, and the high turnover makes it difficult. Capitalizations ideally emphasize the sharing and dissemination of good practices and their adoption, adaptation and application (FAO, 2013b). The SLM capitalizations studied yielded reports similar to project level evaluations, but also included other dissemination formats. For instance, audio-visuals, journals and lessons learned papers (for instance the AGRIDAPE journal with almost 50 numbers since 2003).

Very restricted information is included in the reports that can help to assess the efficiency of the evaluation process, timeliness of evaluation results according to its purpose and challenges encountered. Less than half of the 40 evaluation reports and none of the 9 capitalizations discuss the challenges and limitations faced during the evaluation process and how they were solved in order to explain the limits of the scope and analysis of the report. This information is very limited and mainly centred on constraints related to the time allocated, the quality of available monitoring data and the timing of the evaluation.

Very few reports deal with limitations arising from the epistemological choice of the evaluation or other methodological issues like the use of recall techniques or the fact that surveys were administered by those evaluated, among others. Similarly, the evaluators do not engage in clarifying their problems to face the SLM evaluation challenges (see below). The information included in evaluation reports does not permit the assessment of the cultural competency of evaluators, or the limitations of using interpreters and local translators. The study finds a total absence of analysis of ethical and deontological aspects in all but two evaluation reports. The two isolated cases that mention this aspect only describe the guiding principles they tried to enforce. The evidence emerging from interviews shows that this does not seem to be deemed necessary or a priority in evaluation practice in this policy sector in Senegal, in spite of the existence of these aspects in most manuals and guidelines.

The majority of the 40 reports include annexes with the evaluation mission's agenda, list of interviewees and documents consulted. More than half of them include the ToR. Very few cases include the data collection tools like questionnaires and interview protocols for more transparency. Transparency about the evaluation synthesis (Davidson, 2014) is quite limited. In some cases only aggregated responses emerging are included in the report, without distinguishing responses arising from different types of stakeholders.

The claims about high levels of participation in the 40 evaluation processes are contested by the study. There is need for a broader understanding of participation by stakeholders involved in SLM evaluation in Senegal in order to be in a position to integrate the needs from a diverse group of stakeholders. Neither the evaluation reports nor the interviewees distinguished different levels of participation of different types of stakeholders at different evaluation stages. When asked about participation in evaluation, interviewees have difficulties in making explicit the trade-off decisions about the level of participation according to the evaluation purpose and the information needs of the eventual users. In general, most reports and interviewees claimed that the SLM evaluation processes entailed a high level of participation, conceived as consultation or information during data collection**.**

The "ladder of citizen participation" (Arnstein, 1969) was used to reflect about the involvement and power of stakeholders in determining how the evaluation was designed, conducted (including data collection and analysis) and used. In relation to central institutional stakeholders, the findings show that their participation is highly constrained if they are not associated from the first stages of evaluation conception.

The effective functioning of an Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) can increase the level of involvement of key stakeholders, facilitating the work of evaluators in terms of access to key data and interviewees and ensure better quality of the evaluation report. The level and meaningfulness of participation of ESC members is highly influenced by their previous involvement in the design and implementation of the evaluand or their substantive knowledge about the SLM sector.

Some of the 40 project evaluation reports explicitly recognised the high participation of the project team during the external evaluation mission. Although extensive exchanges with Project Coordinator (and M&E specialist if any) can be key to analysing data, understanding incoherencies and grounding the analysis and conclusions, it can also limit the independence and credibility. This should at least be discussed in the evaluation report, which was not the case in any of the reports.

Participation at the level of local institutional stakeholders proves to be very challenging for the types of SLM evaluation analysed. Senegal has deployed both representations of central Ministries at regional and local levels (*deconcentration*) and delegated some competencies, like NRM, to locally elected authorities (decentralization). *Deconcentrated* and decentralized institutions are seldom associated in the design of evaluations. While the former usually only act as facilitators of the logistics and translators for field interviews and administrators of surveys, the latter are just interviewed or courteously visited.

From this restricted level of participation of local-level institutional stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, it is surprising that most of the interviewees mentioned them as the main actors to disseminate evaluation findings to beneficiaries and the local authorities. An additional challenge is related to the high turnover of this staff, limiting the real possibility to use them for local dissemination of evaluation findings if this is not institutionalized. Moreover, local authorities and deconcentrated services seldom participate in ESC or the restitution meetings due

to logistical and budget constraints. Only some isolated cases mentioned regional restitution meetings.

The level of participation of local stakeholders (beneficiaries) and civil society organizations is perceived as high by most of interviewees, although it was found that it corresponded to the lowest steps of Arnstein's ladder of participation (consultation or information). Evaluation reports offer very little information about their real participation. They do not identify them by types of stakeholders groups (gender, age, profession), or make explicit who could not be interviewed, explaining the targeting criteria and real list of interviewees. Most of them do not discuss the representativeness of the sample of stakeholders associated in relation to different stakeholders groups or their distribution in relation to the project intervention areas.

It is assumed that local-level stakeholders only participate during evaluation data collection, as providers of information. Clear information is also missing about how they participated in the evaluation. For instance, some evaluation reports mix the number of people reached through different types of data collection tools, offering little possibility to assess the depth of the exchanges (questionnaire-based surveys, open-ended individual interviews or general or segregated focus groups, holding different sessions by gender, age group, etc.).

The capitalizations of the nine SLM interventions were conceived by their promoters as more participatory qualitative evaluations, and replaced traditional end-of-project evaluations. The claimed value added of capitalizations is that they are able to raise the voices of the unheard, generating valid knowledge from the experiences (and sometimes the practices) of local natural resource users, fostering more meaningful local-based participation. The 9 reports fail to include a detailed description of the local-level participation process they generated, if any. All the development partners interviewed, along with staff from Ministries, seemed familiar with capitalization and praised it as being less donor-oriented. Nevertheless, it is a catch-all term understood differently by different actors, and the restrictive notion of capitalization (focused on practices, not on the explicit experience to be shared) is the norm in the 9 cases.

The study considers that although the real-world 9 capitalizations did not meet all the ideal features of the approach, they should be considered as another type of evaluation within the array of approaches to inform decision making, interacting with the project and strengthening learning cycles around an intervention and responding to the special information needs of certain stakeholders. The objectives related to organizational change and learning associated with capitalizations could be also extended to other evaluation processes finding bridges and complementarities. Therefore fostering the "culture of evaluation" and the "organization learning culture" emerging from experience should not be conceived as separate dynamics.

5.2.2. Conclusions about the second research question.

In relation to the question "what are the proposals from different evaluation actors in Senegal to solve the SLM evaluation challenges identified in the literature?", the thesis found very timid engagement of SLM evaluations in Senegal in relation to the literature on the specific challenges of evaluating NRM interventions.

Reports did not include any discussion about the limitations of SLM real-world evaluations in relation to the NRM evaluation challenges identified in the literature. Most of the limitations mentioned in the 40 reports are related to the logistics of the evaluation mission. The trans-disciplinarity and cross-cutting nature of SLM poses specific challenges for the integration of interventions supervised by different sectors (Agriculture, Environment-Forestry, Livestock, Water, among others) and makes difficult the coordination and integration of evaluation results from projects to the policy-level ((MEPN, 1998); (Swartzendruber, 2015)).

In Senegal, a landscape dominated by discrete short-term (3-4 years) donor-funded project interventions and limited levels of collaboration and information sharing with national authorities is an extra challenge for SLM evaluation according to key documents (World Bank, 2008) and interviews. Moreover, preferences in the use of indicators and methods by agriculture or forestry sectors are not always compatible and make difficult the integration of evaluation results into public policy making (Baslé, 2013). The use of ESC in 18 of the 40 evaluation processes can potentially foster the trans-disciplinarity necessary, with representatives from different ministries interacting at key stages of the evaluation process.

The analysis of the general ecogeographical context of the Sahelian drylands and the main theoretical debates around DLDD and SLM as a solution, showed that Senegal has integrated the mainstream concepts of the international arena into its policy making over time. The Senegal National Action Program (PAN/LCD) is the main policy document translating the Convention to fight desertification (UNCCD) and influences programmes and projects (MEPN, 1998). It depicts an scenario tinted by the mainstream degradation narratives in relation to ecological, social and economic dimensions, with only some hints about counter-narratives.

Key environmental staff from Ministries and research centres confirmed this, and the study confirms how the sections about the context of evaluations also defined the problem using similar perspectives. SLM evaluation practice (and policy making and projects) reflects the coexistence of new counter narrative ideas about DLDD with old paradigms that are still very pervasive in the design of interventions and their evaluations. Some of the 40 evaluation reports echo the problems with the availability of scientific evidence to support decisions or attribute observed effects to discrete SLM interventions. In general, they do not take advantage of the applied research conducted by national and foreign entities.

Most SLM evaluations in Senegal did not make explicit their position in relation to the epistemological and methodological debates around the legitimacy and credibility of evidence and knowledge in evaluation. Positivist approaches have been proposed by some to ensure evidence based programme evaluation, calling for "counterfactual thinking" in environmental policy (Ferraro, 2009). Others disagree about the suitability of those approaches for the environmental sector where it is impossible or impractical to "control" for some important external factors and complex environmental programmes ((Vanden-Berg, 2012); (Swartzendruber, 2015)).

Participatory approaches are preferred by others because of their inclusiveness and capacity to capture complex social dynamics and fostering alternative types of knowledge. The majority of SLM evaluations in this study followed the pattern found by (Swartzendruber, 2015): constrained scope of accountability assessments in comparison with the original project design, with a short "lessons learned" section that seldom raises the underlying or systemic evaluation challenges mentioned in the peer-review literature.

Only 2 of the evaluation processes use quasi-experimental methods to compare NRM treatment outcomes against counterfactuals. None of the national interviewees highlighted their usefulness to better inform evidence-based policymaking. None of the 40 reports include a discussion about alternative epistemological and methodological evaluation options to answer the questions and objectives of the exercise and its adequacy to the evaluation context. Although major donors have adopted the discourse of participation, its effective practice and its full inclusion in M&E systems is still very limited (Guijt, 1999).

SLM evaluation in Senegal is dominated by terminal results-based and logframe approaches with limited level of participation in spite of the literature warning that linear cause-and-effect logics are poorly adapted to NRM evaluation (Swartzendruber, 2015). These approaches have also been criticized for responding more to compliance requirements for project approval than as a tool to engage different stakeholders in a collective reflection about how to proceed (Vogel, 2012).

The dual nature of NRM evaluands (Rowe, 2012), entailing both natural and socioeconomic objectives, is also mostly ignored in the 40 project evaluations and the 9 capitalizations. The three dimensions of Sustainable Development are not clearly discussed in the set of evaluations. Instead of making explicit the process of synthesis and aggregation of results (Davidson, 2014) by ecological, social and economic aspects, findings of evaluations are presented by components of projects according to their logframes or results frameworks. Therefore, multi-criteria considerations are overlooked. The 40 SLM project evaluations seem to be conducted with no links to recent efforts to document and value traditional and indigenous NRM systems, along with local innovation ((Reij & Steeds, 2003); (Liniger, 2007); (Dieng et al., 2008); (D. S. Ndiaye & Touré, 2010); (WOCAT, 2011)).

Very scattered information about "SLM traditional knowledge" is included in the 40 project-level evaluations. There are still blockages to accepting alternative goals and measures of success in project level evaluations. Some of the SLM evaluation in Senegal included scattered opinions from local beneficiaries as a source of evidence for some of their findings, for instance, their perceptions about environmental changes using recall techniques and field visits. Nevertheless, in general this was considered as "anecdotal evidence" when no other monitoring data was available.

Capitalizations are presented as a way to raise and value local perceptions and proposals about the management of ecological, social and economic systems. Hence, knowledge emerging from experience is placed at the same level as academic/scientific knowledge and traditional/ancestral knowledge ((Zutter, 1997a); (Zutter, 1997b)). Similarly, some interviewees propose to increase the level of involvement of local agents of Ministry of Environment or Agriculture, and any other *field extension agents*, who possess deeper knowledge about the local social, economic and environmental systems while being knowledgeable of national SD challenges. This is in line with the distinction in the systematization/capitalization practice in Latin America that considers as capitalizations those participatory evaluative processes led and done by field technicians, community leaders and promoters, while systematization are those done by project staff (Van-Dam, n.d.). Some of the 9 capitalizations tried to learn from SLM technologies used by local resource users. Nevertheless, they do not fully conform to these ideal features of the approach (at least, according to the information included in their reports). They are not exclusively led by field technicians and more focused on identifying good practices than learning from experience.

The SLM evaluation practice in Senegal has problems in facing the challenges associated o different time horizons and the disparities in geographical scales of human and natural systems. The empirical findings of the MEv are in line with the conclusions from (Swartzendruber, 2015) that found little indication of progress in resolving issues of time horizon and spatial scale in recent years. SLM evaluations focus their analysis on the project's intervention sites and time-span. Wider geographical areas or upstream influences and longer time horizons are hardly considered. Although landscape approaches were used in the implementation of some of the SLM interventions, no evidence was found of strategies to include this in the evaluation. Moreover, the majority of evaluations were conducted either during or just at the end of the intervention. Evaluation questions are not framed as if interventions contribute to long-term macrolevel national development efforts. Some evaluators attribute some local changes to the project, in spite of the lack of monitoring data about emerging results. Others admit the difficulties of even assessing its contribution due to the short project timespan, and place their findings at the level of outputs.

All interviewees mentioned ex-post evaluations as the way forward to surpass the straitjacket of results frameworks or logframes and integrate different geographical and temporal scales. Nevertheless, two of the *expost* evaluations in the set of 40 evaluations did not solve this limitation, being also focused on the logframe outputs and the immediate project intervention area ((Takaki, 2010); (JICA, 2012)). The literature also recommends retrospective and stock-taking to

untangle complex causes and effects after NRM intervention completion, to identify changes which were neither foreseen in project design nor picked-up in the project M&E systems (Swartzendruber, 2015). This was only done in 2 *expost* evaluations. Interestingly both are conducted by staff from the Ministry of Environment and included several interventions ((Thiam, 2002); (Tapsoba, 2003)). A similar endeavour, but less comprehensive was done through the Study Sahel that also encompassed various projects (C. Dieng et al., 2008).

The use of theories of change has also been recently proposed to better understand the path to impacts and the changes to the bigger external environment over time. According to the proposals of the Global Environmental Facility (Vanden-Berg, 2012), they should encompass SLM technologies and approaches and financial mechanisms to ensure sustainability, as well as knowledge generation and awareness raising, creation of institutional and behavioural change and broader adoption. These ideas were very timidly included in some evaluation reports, but logframe-based evaluation is dominant. Country Portfolio Evaluations are also portrayed as the missing link for the articulation of project-level evaluation into the national planning and evaluation systems (Vanden-Berg, 2012).

As mentioned, very diverse evaluation practice was found at country level. With some exceptions, these country evaluations also present limitations to respond to the SD evaluation challenges. There are also other proposals to include different methods of evaluation that are mainstreamed during the implementation. One of the most commonly mentioned is the Wula Naffa intervention funded by USAID that used a conceptual framework for community-based natural resource management ("Nature, Wealth and Power") and combined theory of change, results-based approaches and quasi-experimental methods (USAID, 2013).

Finally, the last challenge identified in the literature as hindering the evaluation of Sustainable Development interventions is related to the availability and quality of data. The lack of baseline data and the misclassification of outputs and outcomes are additional shortcomings mentioned in the literature, although not specific to SLM evaluation (Swartzendruber, 2015). Lots of the 40 SLM evaluations reveal frequent shortcomings in the M&E arrangements of projects, but mainly focused on information about activities and output achievement. The literature considers this administrative data is not very useful for the types of analysis necessary in SD evaluation aiming to capture change trends of change in social and ecological systems (Uitto, 2014). Environmental monitoring data produced by research centers offers interesting information ((CSE, 2005); (Bunning & Ndiaye, 2009); (SOW-VU, 2010)).

Only very few reports and interviewees mentioned the use of this type of information or the limitations found in using data about key environmental and social indicators of the context (generated from applied research and governmental structures). The importance of developing action research was mentioned by some interviewees as a way to join efforts to improve evaluation practice of discrete interventions and also the links with overall policy objectives and to address the micro-macro paradox inherent in the evaluation of environment in international development (Uitto, 2014).

5.2.3. Conclusions about the third research question.

In relation to the research question "to what extent and for what purposes have SLM evaluations in Senegal been utilized in relation to public policy making and aid effectiveness?, the thesis concludes that donor accountability evaluation purposes and uses related to development aid effectiveness are still dominant. There are some emerging practices to foster national and local use, but they are still to be consolidated.

The analysis of the declared purposes and potential users in the 40 reports and interviews with main stakeholders confirmed that SLM evaluation practice in Senegal is still dominated by donor

accountability purposes and privileged development aid effectiveness over public policy evaluation. This is consistent with findings from recent research about evaluations of NRM interventions linked to climate change (Swartzendruber, 2015). This was also confirmed during the data collection of evaluation reports. The targeted evaluation reports for this study were not easily accessible to the national authorities in charge of their administrative supervision. Ministry staff did not have all the reports of evaluations conducted in the country, either because they were not aware of the existence of the evaluation or because other national authorities or donors did not share with them the final report. This is especially pronounced in the case of the NGO-promoted evaluations. The study had real difficulties to find them, in spite of the active declared practice in the NGO sector. Moreover, at the level of donors, evaluation reports tend to be centralized at headquarters, and country offices do not keep copies easily available for their use.

The purpose of an evaluation is related to the types of decisions that the evaluation should inform and the audiences it addresses (Davidson, 2012). Evaluation management arrangements seem to have some effects on the type of utilization envisaged and the main stakeholders that should make it effective. Three types were fully explored through the in-depth cases studies (donor-led evaluations, those managed by the sector Ministry in charge of the supervision of the project (mainly Ministry of Environment) and finally the recent practice of evaluation management delegated to the central National Planning Unit (DPN) of the Ministry of Economy and Finances. A fourth hybrid option is also analysed in relation to this research question, those evaluations entailing higher levels of participation of local or national stakeholders.

The most commonly declared purpose and utilization of SLM project-level evaluation in Senegal is informing citizens, taxpayers or donors about the results of an intervention (accountability). In the majority of cases, this is mixed with loose definitions of improvement (informing betterment in the implementation of on-going projects or future designs) and learning (increasing the knowledge about a certain policy sector or programme). Both reports and interviewees stated the intention to use evaluation findings in the design of future phases or similar projects by the donor. Nevertheless, they tend to only repeat the ideal scenarios included in guidelines without any convincing evidence about the effective utilization of past evaluations. This is in line with recent studies of major donors that showed limited uptake of "lessons learned" from evaluations due to their limited operational relevance and vagueness. Therefore their inclusion in project documents is more a pro forma exercise than a real consideration in the selection of new operations or the improvement of their designs (Swartzendruber, 2015).

Its use for wider learning within donor organizations was only mentioned by some isolated interviewees. Constraints to aggregating findings of projects into higher-level strategic or sector documents were raised by several interviewees from donors. None of the evaluations claimed to have been designed and conducted for "enlightenment" purposes (capacity to make generalizations from evaluation that build up the stock of knowledge on the policy sector of the project or programme (Weiss, 1998).

The main presumed advantage of evaluations managed by the sector ministry (mainly Ministry of Environment), or with the deep involvement of its staff, is either boosting evaluation utilization by policy-makers or managers, influencing their decisions and actions or affecting stakeholders from the fact of being involved in the evaluation process (Bamberger, 2008). Responses from interviewees were not conclusive about this happening. Moreover, for some authors, only rigorous evaluation methodologies could improve evidence-based environmental policy making (Ferraro, 2009). None of the interviewees from governmental structures in Senegal mentioned the type of methodology used as a blockage for policy uptake.

The study did not find any evidence of use of project-level evaluation findings in the policy-making cycle of SLM sector. Key national authorities acknowledge the challenges to aggregate findings of projects into higher-level policy objectives due to the lack of a Strategic Monitoring Framework and in some cases problems with the timeliness of project-level evaluations. There

have been hardly any sector-wide evaluations, and staff from the various Ministries with SLM-related competencies denounced the difficulty of getting a clear image of what has worked in this policy sector.

Whether for use for new formulations by senior donor management or for policy-making by national authorities, all sources coincide on the need to facilitate the uptake through synthesised versions of evaluation findings and recommendations, addressing high-level strategic questions (Davidson, 2012). The majority of SLM evaluation reports include an Executive Summary that plays this role, including key information about the project and the evaluation. Similarly DPN-managed evaluations generate a policy brief to promote this policy-level uptake.

Contradictory proposals are found in the literature about the level of detail for evaluation recommendations to foster policy-making evaluation uptake. On the one hand, some recommend to clearly detail evaluation recommendations, identifying the target group in charge of implementing them, and priority actions and deadlines (UNDP, 2009b). On the other hand, some evaluators propose to just indicate possible broad courses of actions and their trade-offs, while asking the client organization and the community to determine what makes more sense to them.

The limited knowledge of evaluators about the budgetary and organizational implications of recommendations and the need to promote ownership from decision-makers justify this (Davidson, 2012). Around 40% of the SLM evaluation in Senegal followed the first option, probably because of the enforcement mechanisms of donors' policies, including follow-up mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of recommendations. The rest were divided between vague recommendations disconnected to findings and evidence and the second option. For instance, this is the option promoted in some country portfolio evaluations where restricted ESC composed of national institutional partners and donors jointly propose policy-level directions and agreed recommendations ((IFAD, 2004a); (IFAD, 2014)).

For evaluations managed by the DPN another complementary use of evaluation practice is the potential learning from evaluation management of different types of interventions that could eventually nurture a national evaluation system promoting transdisciplinarity, key in sustainability (Bamberger, 2008). The in-depth interviews showed some limits to this potential use due to some frictions between the different national institutions and lack of coordination and complementarity.

Finally, local use is seldom mentioned as one of the evaluation purposes in the project evaluation reports. Only 9 project evaluations and all the 9 capitalizations declared purposes related to strengthening capacities of local users and the integration of their proposals in the policy-making. As discussed before, further discussion needs to be held between different stakeholders about the credibility and usefulness of this. The deviation of the 9 real-world capitalizations in relation to the ideal purpose of capitalizations (institutional or organizational learning to influence public or institutional policies) is consistent with the findings of (Niand & Fall, 2010).

There are clear synergies and complementarities to be promoted from the different evaluation management options coexisting in the SLM policy sector in Senegal. The case studies found some sensitiveness by some key national actors who have differing levels of power and involvement according to these different arrangements. The conclusions of this study propose to promote more dialogue among national institutions to find synergistic solutions to maximize the advantages of different actors to advance for a common goal of making evaluation more useful for national development. This debate could be framed in the progress towards a Country-led National Evaluation system where the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders are clarified.

In spite of the predominance of donor accountability purposes and uses arising from the empirical analysis of SLM evaluations in Senegal, (Porter & Goldman, 2013) and this thesis identify some

timid steps towards more national-led evaluation. National authorities, both at the central and sector level, should replicate similar studies to find systems linking project evaluations, capitalizations and applied research findings with policy-making cycles in the sector of SLM (environment, agriculture, livestock and in any other related sector), while incorporating information needs and uses by local-level stakeholders.

5.3. Theoretical and policy implications of the study

Theoretical implications

This study has exemplified the use of the theoretical function of MEv to assess the role and utility of evaluation in a policy setting ((Scriven, 1969); (Bustelo, 2002)). It has enlarged the body of evaluative knowledge and proved its usefulness in settings where evaluation culture and practice is limited, with a very low level of institutionalization and responsibilities dispersed among different stakeholders. The phased-development of a MEv analytical framework described in the study could inspire similar endeavours to be applied in different sectors and settings.

The study has confirmed the usefulness of standards, guidelines and professional competencies of the evaluation discipline to guide the critical reflection about a specific set of real-world evaluations, surpassing the narrow conception of evaluation quality. The study is consistent with (Wingate, 2009) about the need to complement the review of evaluation reports with interviews in order to grasp dimensions related to evaluation utilization and to better understand the constraints of real-world evaluation. Interviews also helped to contrast the real delivery in relation to the initial evaluation design and identified the complementary needs of different audiences and their understandings of evaluation.

Findings from the use of capitalizations and more participatory project evaluation processes endorse the proposals that prioritize salience and legitimacy through joint knowledge production processes over additional rigor in NRM evaluation (Rowe, 2012). Therefore, development aid project evaluation should learn from capitalization and other learning-oriented approaches that value local knowledge, instead of favouring more quantitative evaluation approaches that limit the inclusiveness of evaluation processes, already quite constrained due to the institutional and policy context. This could also establish links with the scientific and research endeavours that could document SLM local practices and solve some of the problems of the availability of monitoring data for aid development evaluation. Mixed methods and carefully selected case studies address some of the SLM evaluation methodological challenges through the triangulation of different tools, instead of relying on a single “best practice” or “gold standard” methodology (Woolcock, 2013).

The empirical study of evaluation practice in a specific sector policy is able to unveil the underlying non-formalized theories proposed by different stakeholders, and proposes research lines to contribute to the theoretical development of evaluation. For instance, the Research on the evaluation practice promoted by civil society organizations working with rural grassroots and farmer groups through participatory approaches in West Africa could weave clearer links between knowledge management and evaluation.

Policy implications

The expected benefit of this study is to provide empirical evidence from real-world SLM evaluation practice in Senegal to inform nationally-promoted evaluation for better development results. The main target audience includes policy makers, decision-makers in government agencies, evaluators, environmental scientists, academics, donors and local communities. The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of evaluation practice and the MEv based on quality standards allow to propose strategies to improve the enabling environment, the institutional

framework and tailor ECD programmes not only for evaluators but also for the commissioners and users.

In relation to the enabling environment, MEv can help surface divergent perceptions about evaluation use and purpose to foster a wide dialogue led by key national institutions to guide the development of a comprehensive and inclusive national evaluation system. The National Commission for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies and Programmes, with the support from DREAT and the General Accounting Office, could start conducting MEv of selected evaluations in key policy sectors and sampling different evaluation management arrangements in order to promote meta-evaluative culture. Formative MEv, including constant feedback and dialogue with policy makers and other evaluation stakeholders, could increase evaluation quality and eventual utilization.

Research institutes, public administration and civil society should be actively involved in shaping the role of evaluation in the Senegalese political context. Evaluation capacities are not only about skills and competencies, but also about the capacity to choose what and when and how interventions are evaluated. The donor community should be sensitized about the need to negotiate their evaluation plans and timetables with national authorities, as well as exploring ways to allow national authorities to manage the whole evaluation cycle, including financial resources.

For donors where this is not yet possible, efforts should be done to share early versions of ToR with national partners and to integrate some of the features of joint-evaluations. The need to build an "evaluation culture" at different levels in Senegal has been long recognised ((République du Sénégal, 2002); (SenEval, 2003); (République du Sénégal, 2002) (République du Sénégal, 2010); (M. A. Ndiaye & Aw, 2012); (Sow, 2014)). A wide conception of evaluation should encompass capitalizations and other similar approaches and mainstream their ideal functions of fostering "learning organizations and institutions" ((Fall & Ndiaye, 2005); (F3E, 2014)).

The study also informs on the advantages and shortcomings of different evaluation arrangements that coexist in a setting without a national evaluation policy and institutional framework to guide evaluation practice. For instance the in-depth MEv of a DPN-managed evaluation shed some ideas to streamline the bureaucratic side and building on the accumulated experience.

For instance, simple procedures could be easily developed, including clear phases, roles and responsibilities. Evaluation Steering Committees have showed advantages when they are well led with members who are carefully chosen and well informed about the evaluation process. The use of this type of MEv studies could also help clearly identify the evaluation documents that should be made public and accessible and develop a national database on evaluative exercises.

There is also a need to nationally promote portfolio-level retrospective reviews evaluating different interventions over many years (Swartzendruber, 2015). This could promote longer implementation commitments where theory* based approaches and mixed methods could provide an overall emerging picture of the causal linkages from inputs to impacts (Vanden-Berg, 2012). It is essential to promote exchanges between applied research like LADA and project-level development aid evaluations. Moreover, bridges need to be built between social scientists and biologists, practitioners and researchers, and policy makers, planners and evaluators and knowledge management experts. SLM Investment Frameworks could foster these synergies and complementarities.

Several studies have identified that National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD) activities have usually proposed standardized approaches not customized to different evaluation functions (operational or strategic) or roles (commissioners, evaluation managers, evaluators, policy-makers) (Tarsilla, 2012).

The empirical findings of this study show ideas about tailored ECD programmes for those with a commissioning or management role in evaluation about how to ensure clear evaluation designs. This could be complemented with a dialogue between commissioners and national consultants about the development of good quality methodological notes, as well as the suitability of developing checklists to ensure SD challenges are incorporated, especially evaluation questions useful for policy-making in that subsector.

All evaluation stakeholders should be sensitized and trained about the concept and implementation of participation in evaluation and the need to make explicit the trade-offs about different levels of participation by different stakeholders in relation to the purpose and use of the exercise.

The most recent trends advocate shaping ECD in relation to the political economy, considering governmental actors influencing the evaluation demand side and the agents to delivering the supply-side. They propose to involve local universities, think tanks and civil society actors as being in a better position to navigate in this context than foreign experts (Feinstein & Porter, 2014). The study endorses this proposal and recommends national authorities to document the value added of using national consultants in relation to certain dimensions and key stages of evaluation processes.

5.4. Future research work

Various potential papers could expand some of the findings of this study. Firstly, more research should be done about the *potential use of the theoretical function of Meta-evaluation in development contexts*. This could emphasize the connections between the theory and practice of evaluation and unveil the comparative evolution of the practice and use of evaluation in different regions of the world.

Secondly, in order to bring the Francophone African capitalization practice into the theoretical evaluation debates, another line of enquiry should explore the *epistemological grounds of participative evaluation approaches in West Africa, including capitalization*. This was collectively identified as an urgent need by a group of experts and practitioners of the region who expressed their interest in this research line.

Thirdly, a policy brief about *strategies to strengthen national evaluation capacities and lessons emerging from the three different management arrangements studied* could be adapted to the information needs of key evaluation actors and policymakers in Senegal and the subregion. Finally, a paper on *challenges of evaluating SLM initiatives in the Sahel area* could study more recent evaluations at project, policy and applied research level.

5.5. Final remarks

In spite of efforts of Evaluation Capacity Development of different actors for the past decades, evaluation practice in Senegal still presents serious shortcomings when compared with "evaluation standards". Only in some exceptional cases the evaluation reports discussed their epistemological and methodological choices, along with the limitations of their analysis and the ethical and deontological aspects considered. Moreover, the level of transparency about the evaluation synthesis to derive conclusions from evidence was quite weak.

Although interviewees around the three case studies of this study claim a good level of participation of a vast array of stakeholders, the findings demonstrate that participation is low, appart from some isolated examples. Most cases only entailed a mere consultation or information of a restricted number and types of stakeholders during data collection. The capitalization

processes of SLM interventions were not explicit about the local-level participation process they entailed, if any, as the proponents of this approach recommend.

Most SLM project evaluations in Senegal are currently just responding to accountability requirements of donors, in spite of the discourse about the advances towards more evaluation national appropriation and the ideal contribution of evaluations for policy-making. Although some recent arrangements try to promote country-led evaluation, progression is still too timid for the SLM policy sector in Senegal.

The SLM evaluation practice in Senegal does not engage with the Natural Resources Management evaluation literature. The most commonly challenges pinpointed are mostly overlooked both in the designs and the reports of project evaluations:

- They do not use the three dimensions around Sustainable Development (economic, social and ecological) but are mainly driven by the components and objectives of the project logframe.
- They SLM are not able to integrate of promote a reflection about the long term and geographical wider impacts, ignoring the challenges associated to consideration of different time and space scales of human and natural systems. They mostly happen during of just after the end of the initiative and are focused on the project direct intervention area. Only two *expost* evaluations conducted by the Ministry of Environment integrated various interventions during various decades.
- The straitjacket of the logframes (predominant as the framework against the worth and merit of the intervention should be assessed) and the prevalence of the values of donors impede the mainstreaming inclusion of different visions and values about the success of the interventions from different stakeholders. Only some isolated cases with well functioning Evaluation Steering Committees or highly participative evaluation processes offered some interesting paths to democratize the evaluative analysis. Grassroot-level stakeholders are seldom associated in the project evaluation processes. Capitalizations emphasized their participation, although information in the reports was insufficient to apprehend their value added in relation to regular project evaluations.
- The project evaluation reports confirmed the limits (or even inexistence) of project monitoring data to be used in evaluation. The potential use of the results of applied research and governmental structures was not exploited in the majority of evaluation and capitalization reports.

The predominant use of project evaluations is related to development aid effectiveness and donors´requirements of accountability. This was even confirmed during the search of the evaluation reports. Staff from national authorities does not hold copies or have access to all evaluation reports which are mainly available at donors, especially at their central evaluation units. A secondary declared evaluation use is for improvement of ongoing or future similar interventions, although interviewees had problems to provide real examples. No evidence was found about the use of project-level evaluations in SLM national policy-making.

Some interesting examples among the SLM capitalizations declared their use for strengthening capacities of local users to integrate their proposals into the national policy-making cycle. This would require further research in order to be verified and could offer valuable complementary reflections about SLM interventions to boost policy dialogue among different stakeholders.

In spite of the above-mentioned limitations, there are some signs for optimism in relation to national-led evaluation processes and empowerment of various stakeholders in the Senegalese evaluation community. Moreover, a broad conception of evaluation could take advantage of the interesting capitalization practice promoted from West Africa. These learning-oriented

approaches could contribute to the joint knowledge production about SLM solutions in order to value traditional and local knowledge which could be combined with scientific research and improved practices.

Annexes

Annex A. SLM technologies

This Annex is not intended to be an exhaustive description of all the available SLM technologies and approaches, but briefly describe some of them to contextualize the information about the SLM practices of the interventions under analysis in this study.

- Mixed cropping is usually mentioned as one of the production practices that emphasizes integrated nutrient and water management (along with others like no-till production or conservation tillage). It combines food crops with cover crop legumes and/or tree and shrub species. The strategy of reducing risk by planting several species and crop varieties can stabilize yields over the long term, provide a range of dietary nutrients, and maximize returns with low levels of technology and limited resources (World Bank, 2006).

- Composting and manuring are traditional technologies, which are often reintroduced in an improved form, through projects / programmes. Composting is the natural process of 'rotting' or decomposition of organic matter such as crop residues, farmyard manure and waste by micro-organisms under controlled conditions. The composting of vegetable residues and the use of animal manure efficiently conserve farm nutrients (World Bank, 2006) and maintain a healthy soil structure and fertility (WOCAT, 2011).

- The term "agroforestry" has been around for the past decades and it is today classed among the most typical vegetative SLM measures. It consists on growing on the same plot woody plants, agricultural crops and/or raise livestock. It is more stable and provides a wider range of products of economic value, agroforestry methods contributing significantly to restore local environments. They offer some guarantee against crop failure to the extent that different cultures are more or less vulnerable to drought, disease, predators and other risks, and where trees and shrubs improve the microclimate and promote regeneration (OCDE-CILSS, 1984). An example of agroforestry is the plantation of relatively fast-growing trees with very high density around field plots, orchards or cultivated land to prevent roaming animals from entering (commonly called live hedges) (Zähringer, 2010).

- Assisted natural regeneration consists in identifying and protecting seedlings that settled naturally, while enriching the environment with seedlings produced in a nursery (Roby & Mbengue, 2013).

- Among the structural conservation measures, terracing can increase productivity fairly quickly by increasing soil moisture retention (World Bank, 2006). It reduces soil loss and runoff increasing yields and reducing downstream siltation and flooding (WOCAT, 2011).

- Fallowing to maintain physical and chemical soil fertility is one of the usual recommended management SLM measures. An alternative to long natural fallows is improved fallows where economically useful and fertility-improving trees are planted a few years before a field is left fallow in order to give the seedlings a competitive advantage over natural regeneration.

Table 22. Classification of SLM technologies in Senegal according to the Strategic Framework.

SLM technology	Cost	Location
Systematic rotation of crops / associated farming	No costs	East Senegal, Casamance, Sylvopastoral Zone, Peanut Basin, Senegal River Valley, Niayes
Composting	Not very high	East Senegal, Casamance, Sylvopastoral Zone, Peanut Basin
Water filtering dykes or embankments	Quite high (easy to build but needs maintenance)	East Senegal
Anti-salt dykes	Quite high	Casamance
Anti-salt dams	Very high	Casamance
Soils enrichment products (phosphogypse)	High	Casamance
Water and agriculture planning/ Land settlement (aménagement hydroagricole)	High	Casamance
Stone contour to retain water	High depending on stone availability (hard work)	East Senegal, Sylvopastoral Zone, Peanut Basin, Senegal River Valley
Reforestation / haies vives/brise vent/ Natural Assisted Regeneration / Agroforestry	High (usually entail external subvention)	East Senegal, Casamance, Sylvopastoral Zone, Peanut Basin, Senegal River Valley, Niayes
Livestock penning	No costs	East Senegal, Casamance
Chemical inputs addition	Quite high	Casamance
Sand dunes fixation	High (usually entail external subvention)	Niayes

Source : Summary of the author based on (INP, 2012)

Annex B. Efforts of Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD)

Table 23. Main ECD events in Africa from 1990.

Date, place and funder or promoter	Name and main characteristics of the event	Analysis of the participation of Senegal
1990, Abidjan (Ivory Coast). AfDB and OECD-DAC. More information at (AfDB, 1990) Held following a recommendation of a DAC/OECD seminar in Paris in 1987 ("Evaluation in Developing Countries: A Step Towards Dialogue").	**Regional Conference on Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB)** Its objectives included the clarification of evaluation needs as perceived by African countries and an exploration of ways to strengthen national capacities. Four themes: 1-Need for strengthening evaluation capacity, a perspective for beneficiary countries; 2-Regional training opportunities in the area of evaluation. What African institutions can do? 3- Evaluation systems in industrialized countries - Lessons to be learnt?, 4- Assistance for strengthening evaluation capacities - What the Donors can contribute? 62 participants: OECD-DAC members, 11 African countries, 3 African training institutions, 4 multilateral agencies, others.	A Senegalese representative + IDEP (Institute of the United Nations for economic development and planning). No presentation available in the information found.
1998, Abidjan (Ivory Coast). AfDB, WB, UNDP, DANIDA, NORAD, SDC, SIDA. (AfDB, 1999)	**Evaluation Capacity Development in Africa.** Five main objectives: to provide an overview of progress of ECD in Africa, to build consensus on the purposes and elements of evaluation in support to development, to identify strategies and resources for building evaluation demand and supply in African countries, to help country teams to develop preliminary action plans for developing evaluation systems in their countries, and to support the creation of country and regional networks to encourage follow-up work. The 259 pages of the proceedings are available online and include the main conclusions of the five strands of presentations: perspectives on M&E in Africa, experiences in ECD, Strategies and Resources for building Evaluation capacity, Options for ECD, and Challenges and Prospects. The main trends identified during this workshop were the following: First, there is a global trend towards more accountable, responsive and efficient government. Second, the role of evaluation within individual development assistance agencies is gaining in clarity and effectiveness. Third, the outlook for development partnership, across the development community is brighter than it has ever been. With the spread of results based management there is a growing demand for evaluation capacity development (ECD) programmes that would help foster better planning 40 participants from 12 African countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and a large number of representatives of development assistance agencies.	No information found about participants from Senegal or representatives of Senegalese institutions.

1999, Nairobi (Kenya). No information available on the AfrEA website about donors, (AfrEA, 1999).	**1st Conference of the AfrEA, "*Developing Evaluation Capacity in* Africa"** Overall goal "Increasing Evaluation Capacity in Africa", and six specific objectives: 1) To foster the creation of networks of professional evaluators and professional associations; 2) To develop a sustainable structure to link national associations to an Africa-wide association;3) To review the US programme evaluation standards for adoption or adaptation in Africa; 4) To create a database of evaluators in Africa; 5) To invite contributions to an annotated bibliography of evaluations in Africa; 6) To publish the papers and proceedings of the Conference. 88 papers were presented, eleven national associations or networks of evaluators in Africa were established. Moreover, during this inaugural conference the African Evaluation Guidelines (AEG) was presented. As a starting point, the US "Programme Evaluation Standards" (PES) were reviewed, an adapted version for the African context was developed, consulted and tested in the field by national evaluations and networks in Africa. The first formal version of the AEG was finally endorsed by ten of them in 2002. The AEG are structured as the PES in four groups: utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy, with changes in 13 of the 30 standards, especially regarding political and cultural considerations. At this first conference, it was also promoted the creation of a database of consultants and evaluators in Africa and the completion of preparations for the Association's website. Participation: 300 evaluators from 35 countries. More than 80 papers presented.	No information available on the AfrEA website about the presenters and their presentations.
2000, Johannesburg (South Africa). AfDB, Development Bank of Southern Africa, World Bank, (DBSA, AFDB, & WB, 2000)	**Regional Workshop and Seminar on Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Development in Africa** The two main objectives were a) the definition of the requirements and capabilities of M&E in the context of good governance and accountability for better results, and b) the development of a collaborative strategy and infrastructure for a pan-African M&E network. During the conference, the links between governance and M&E were also emphasized and exemplified. The view emerged that there should not be an externally imposed model for M&E, but rather one that has emerged organically from Africa and the experience of Africans. At the end of the seminar, it was agreed that national action plans for M&E capacity development should be prepared for different countries. Delegates from 11 SSA countries participated, among them Senegal, but only Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda presented their experiences.	A participant from the Senegalese private sector (Mr Tidiane Tall, Consortium d'Etudes et de Promotion Industrielle et Commerciale). He proposed a timetable for M&E Capacity Development comprising a mailing to potential members at the end of 2000, and a series of meetings and workshops to promote M&E. No further information was found about the fulfilment of those activities

2002, Nairobi (Kenya), (AfrEA, 2002) . AfDB, Canadian Institutes of Health, CIDA, CARE (Kenya) IFPRI/CGIAR, IUCN, La Francophonie, UNAIDS, & UNICEF, UNIFEM, the World Bank, among others.	**2nd Conference of the AfrEA,** The prime objectives were institutionalizing AfrEA and strengthening it to be an important vehicle for building evaluation capacity, dissemination of tools and best practices in evaluation in Africa and ensure its growth for the future. The activities included opening & closing sessions and plenary discussions, training on evaluation theory and methods, presentations and strand discussions, working group activities of evaluation leaders and donors, and networking and fellowship development. It offered 109 papers, within multiple and very diverse strands: Conservation & Sustainable Development, HIV/AIDS, Gender and Development, Crises and Unstable Situations, Poverty Reduction, Education, Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD), Social Statistics, Health, GIS Strand, Agriculture Research and Development, and the Kenya Evaluation Strand (AfrEA, 2002). Among the outcomes of the Conference, their organizers mention "the umbrella organization (AfrEA), and the 17 existing national evaluation associations are now better known and recognised by the donor community, several NGOs and other development agencies, and their vision and mandate better understood." The strand about ECD explored the various purposes or uses of M&E: accountability-traditional auditing, learning function, and to support national decision-making and prioritization in annual budget processes and in preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategies. Over 300 evaluators, researchers, policy makers, evaluation users and donors from Africa, Europe, Asia, New Zealand, Colombia and USA.	One paper in the "Agriculture Research and Development Strand", one was from a Senegalese author: Mr Amadou Abdoulaye FALL (Impact assessment of rice research in the two West African Countries: Senegal and Mauritania). No other information found about participants from Senegal or representatives of Senegalese institutions.
September 2004, Paris (France), (OIF, 2004). Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie	**1st Francophone Days of Evaluation** Four main themes articulated the presentations: the situation of evaluation in the Francophone space, evaluation at the service of policies, Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB), and the launch of an informal international Francophone evaluation network in order to promote Exchange of practices and tools, as well as the development of a training offer. The state-of-the-art drawn by the presenters is one where the member states of the Francophonie and the evaluation Francophone professionals were almost absent as actors in the international institutions which designed the concepts, tools, methods, standards and criteria of evaluation to measure development of governance quality. The situation was considered even more worrisome in the South Francophone countries, especially those in Africa (half of the least developed countries). The emergence of an African expertise in evaluation, through the creation of national associations and other networks was considered during the Conference presentations as a promising endeavour. Around 40 evaluation specialists from Francophone countries.	Presentation about a "Strengthening Strategy to create an evaluation expertise: potentialities and limitations", by Mr:Mouhamed Gueye, M&E Officer at the Ministry of Education
November 2004, Nouakchott (Mauritania), (UNDP, 2004). Organization of the Francophonie (OIF), UNDP and UNICEF, OCDE, AfDB and others.	**Regional Workshop on M&E processes in West and Central Africa** (in French) The main objectives were to exchange about the common challenges in evaluation, to promote the evaluation culture within the UN system and the participant countries, to support the capacity building on evaluation of development policies, programmes and projects, to define some collaboration axes between countries in relation to experience sharing and ECB.	Six presentations from and about Senegal, some of them by UN staff and other TFP of the subregion. Only two representatives of government agencies (Planning Ministry and the MEF) participated in

	Among the recommendations from this workshop, we highlight: to favour a better understanding of the challenges of M&E in terms of governance and implementation of development policies and strategies, to harmonize the M&E procedures and the articulation between the MDGs, PRS and NEPAD (as well as the coherence between sector and transversal national and local policies), to promote an evaluation culture among decision-makers and other key national actors, to promote participative approaches, and to conduct capacity evaluation studies to promote the conception of National Strategies for M&ECB, to start a sensitization campaign about evaluation for key actors as parliamentarians, and to federate evaluation networks, to promote the federation of evaluation networks at the regional level. Around 100 participants from 20 countries and almost 25 international and regional institutions.	the workshop, out of a total of 22 participants from Senegal.
December 2004, Cape Town, South Africa, (AfrEA, 2004) Agence Intergouvernementale Francophonie, AfDB, ALNAP, Department of Public Service and Administration (South Africa), Development Bank of Southern Africa, Ford Foundation, IDEAS, IDRC, ILO, IMF, OECD-DAC, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNIFEM, USAID, IUCN and others.	**3rd Conference of the AfrEA, "Africa Matters, Evaluation Matters: Joining Forces for Democracy, Governance and Development**". Its objectives were: to stimulate and plan for renewal in evaluation in Africa; to debate, develop and demonstrate the role that evaluation should play in promoting democracy, good governance and effective development in Africa; to showcase South African evaluation expertise and achievements; to create a forum for the interaction of representatives from various sectors; to provide opportunities for sharing technical expertise and insights between African and international specialists; to build capacity on the continent among evaluators and their clients; and to encourage a better understanding of the articulation in Africa between evaluation theory and practice, and development theory and practice. Among others, there were nine Technical Strands (such as HIV/Aids, education, poverty reduction, NEPAD, innovative methods and community-based M&E); two Special Technical Sessions on the evaluation of humanitarian relief, and the practice of self-reflection. More than 500 people from 56 countries, of which 36 were African countries. Half of the participants were South African professionals. 45% of the participants were women. Only 47 participants (around 10% of the total) preferred French above English but due to the high costs not all sessions could be translated into French.	Three participants from Senegal: Management Development Institute, Ministry of Education, West Africa Rural Foundation and CESAG.
2007, Niamey (Niger), (AfrEA, 2007b) No information about funders, ReNSE played a key role in the organization.	**4th AfrEA Conference, "Making evaluation our own: strengthening the foundations for Africa-rooted and Africa-led M&E".** The purpose of the conference is to strengthen capacity in Monitoring and Evaluation in order to improve policy development and programme performance in Africa. The conference is expected to have a major impact in the building of an Evaluation culture in the African mindsets. It will culminate in a joint communiqué from African national leaders: the "Niamey Declaration". This declaration will set up the future of Evaluation in Africa and promote the use of the African Evaluation Guidelines. There is a need to foster and develop the intellectual leadership and capacity within Africa and ensure that it plays a greater role in guiding and developing evaluation theories and practices. It was preceded by 17 workshops by African and international evaluation experts, and was attended by more than 600 people from more than 50 countries. IDEAS regional workshop on Country-Led Evaluations (CLE) coincided in Niamey with the 4th AfrEA Conference. Participants asked how to adapt and create endogenous theories and methodologies in low-capacity	The only information available mentions Mr. Ngegne Mbaw as a contributor from Senegal, but no additional information was found about his structure or theme of presentation.

	and scarce-resource contexts. Additional challenges mentioned are how to stimulate domestic demand for evaluation and build good governance and transparency. Participants identified the Paris Declaration as the starting point of the discussion on the need for a more active participation and responsibility (including joint evaluations) as regard the evaluation of development programmes.	Mr. Abdou Salam Fall presented the experience of the public policy analysis of "Governance and corruption in natural resource management in Senegal" where a civil society organization embarked public research and regulation institutions on an evaluation of public policies related to natural resources management and environment.
2009, El Cairo (Egypt) The Conference was co-hosted by the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), the Networks of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).	**5th AfrEA Conference, 'Perspectives on Impact Evaluation: Approaches to Assessing Development Effectiveness'** Some quick off questions were proposed: How do we know when 'development' is truly successful? How can evaluation contribute to development in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world? What can different evaluation approaches tell us about which policies, programmes and projects work, why, for whom and under what conditions? How can evaluations best be conducted and used to inform policies, strategies and interventions that can benefit the many millions in Africa and elsewhere, many with little hope for a better future? Amongst some of the outcomes of the conference were: the launch of the Journal of Development Effectiveness; the launch of the draft NONIE Guidance on Impact Evaluation and the official formalisation of the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), which celebrated its tenth anniversary. The website of the Conference was no longer available when finishing this chapter. 700 people from different continents, disciplines, sectors and methodological traditions	No information available about the specific presentations and participants. The website of the Conference www.impactevaluation2009.org is no longer working.

2009, Casablanca (Morocco), (UNDP, 2009a) UNDP Evaluation Office, in cooperation with the Moroccan National Observatory for Human Development	**1st International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities (NEC)** The objectives were: to share experiences from countries with different levels of development of national M&E systems; to identify lessons and constraints in implementing national M&E systems; and to identify supply and demand for technical assistance in strengthening institutional capacity for national M&E systems under the umbrella of South-South cooperation. Benin, Uganda, Senegal, Ethiopia and Rwanda presented in this strand. Evaluation policy practices from Mauritania and South Africa were also shared and discussed. About 80 participants from 20 countries (senior policymakers of countries with national M&E systems, regional and international evaluation specialists).	Presentation of the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Economy and Finances (Diallo, A., 2009. "Senegal: the Senegalese experience with evaluation: overview of the National Planning System") and participation of CESAG.
2011, Johannesburg (South Africa), (UNDP, 2011a), UNDP Evaluation Office and the Public Service Commission of South Africa	**2nd International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities (NEC)** The objectives were the same as the 1st International Conference on NEC. 30 African participants (from 11 countries), 9 offered presentations, and 4 of them were in French (Benin, Mauritania, Morocco and Niger). They were focused on the establishment of a Bureau of Evaluation of Public Policies in Benin, the results of the evaluation capacities assessment conducted in Mauritania in 2009, the Gender-Responsive Budgeting as a tool for public policy evaluation in Morocco, and the German-cooperation promoted "Monitoring Project Progress" applied in Niger. About 70 participants (30 of them from African countries).	Participation of the Director of General Planning and the Coordinator of the Monitoring Unit of the Economic Policy, but they did not offer any presentation during the conference.
2012, Accra (Ghana) Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and other donors www.afreaconference.org Accessed on June 3, 2014	**6th AfrEA Conference - Rights and Responsibility in Development Evaluation** Five sub themes (Conference strands, working groups, panels and parallel sessions): State/Country Rights & Responsibility; Donor/funder Rights & Responsibility; Evaluation Commissioner, Manager & Evaluator Rights & Responsibility; Stakeholder & Beneficiary Rights & Responsibility; and Human Rights and Gender Equality in development evaluation. A 6th strand will be devoted to presentations in French. Almost 400 participants attended to a total of 33 panes, 58 paper presentations and roundtables. There were 21 pre-conference workshops.	Five papers from Senegal-based authors, all them in French (relationship between M&E and GAR, M&E of the Millennium Village Project and VIH prevention programme). A very preliminary version of this Chapter was also presented in the 6th AfrEA Conference, in English.
2013, Sao Paolo (Brazil) (UNDP, 2014) UNDP Evaluation Office and Brazilian Secretariat of Evaluation and Information Management. Regional Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR), Independent	**3rd International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities (NEC)** Four main strategies to build national evaluation capacities: (1) promote evaluation use through in-country and global advocacy; (2) define and strengthen evaluation processes and methods; (3) engage existing and new stakeholders in exchanges and collaboration; and (4) explore options for different institutional structures for managing evaluation. An agreed landmark (International Year of Evaluation – EvalYear 2015) to monitor progress and promote mutual accountability to commitments for strengthening national evaluation capacities. For the first time, there was a pre-conference Community of Practice with online discussions about Independence, credibility and use of evaluations (UNDP, 2013c).	No presentations from Senegal.

Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank and EvalPartners. Donors included the Governments of Finland, Norway and the United Kingdom. http://www.nec2013.org/ accessed on November, 27, 2014	160 participants from 63 countries.	
2014, Yaoundé (Cameroon) AfrEA, NONIE	**7th AfrEA Conference - Evaluation for development in Africa: from analysis to impact.** The proceedings of the conference are not yet available at the AfrEA website (end of 2014). The only information available is that 400 participants attended, with 30 pre-conference workshops and 220 papers in health evaluation, gender and equity evaluation, evaluation in poverty alleviation.	No information about the participation of Senegalese actors.
2014, Dakar (Senegal) OIF, UNDP, Senegal government, UNICEF, UNWomen, AfDB, IDEP, CLEAR, CESAG, AfrEA, Evalpartners, IOCE	**First Francophone Evaluation Forum (FIFE)** Conceived as an advocacy event to promote evaluation as a good public and development governance vector just happening before a Summit of Francophone Heads of States also happening in Dakar. Participants were not only evaluators and experts, but also government representatives at different levels. The themes chosen were evaluation institutionalization processes, local-level evaluation, evaluation in (economic, demographic, political, ethical) crisis contexts, gender evaluation and evaluation of education interventions, professionalization of evaluation (RFE, 2014b). One of the outcomes of this event was the "Dakar declaration" (RFE, 2014a), advocating for evaluation in the Francophone space, linked to the Declaration of 2015 as the Evaluation Year and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals agenda. Around 250 participants from 20 Francophone countries attended to the event. A Research seminar tried to launch ideas about research topics relevant to Francophone evaluation practice.	No information about Senegalese participants, full involvement of SenEval core members in the organization of the event.

Annex C. Previous exposure to the research topic and ethical considerations

Being an environmentalist by training and the coordinator of rural aid development projects in Bolivia from 2002 to 2004, the first exposure to evaluation was as "the evaluated". The need to improve monitoring systems and to explore learning-oriented evaluation approaches yielded a capitalization of a rural fish farming experience in the Bolivian Amazon lowlands[93]. Further reflections about the theory and practice of M&E in developing contexts were held through a Masters' dissertation around a case study of an organic agriculture project in Cuba in 2006.

The involvement in evaluation in Latin America from 2007 to 2009 as Research Fellow at the Office of Evaluation of the Inter American Development Bank allowed deeper reflections about challenges to evaluate bigger Sustainable Development interventions. While approaches and methods for evaluation of education, health and employment programmes seemed to be standardized, approaches and methods for the evaluation of Sustainable Development and environmental protection initiatives showed less agreement. This prompted some of the hypotheses of this research. Parallel reflections were also promoted through trainings in M&E both as participant and as a facilitator. The main ones are listed below:

Trainings in Monitoring and Evaluation as a participant:

1. Participation in the FAO-AECID online course about "Environmental Impact Evaluation" (2007),
2. Training on Evaluation of Sustainability (EASY ECO) in Germany in 2008,
3. Attendance to the Impact Evaluation course by the World Bank in Dakar on February 1-4 2010 ;
4. Attendance to the training about Participatory M&E at *IED Afrique* (Dakar) on April 27-28 2010;
5. Attendance to the trainings "Case study evaluation" and "Complex systems evaluation" at the 9th Conference of the European Evaluation Society (Czech Republic), October 2010;
6. Attendance to the trainings "Real-time evaluation" and "Formative and Summative Rapid Evaluation" at the 6th Conference of the African Evaluation Association (Ghana), January 9-13 2012;
7. Attendance to the training "Rights and responsibilities of the evaluation commissioner » from Professor Marie Gervais from Laval University, Canada (Dakar), on January 26 2012;
8. Attendance to the trainings "Gender-sensitive evaluation » and "Results-based M&E systems» at the 10th Conference of the European Evaluation Society (Finland), October 1-5 2012;
9. Online course «Equity-focused evaluations» by UNICEF from September 2012 to January 2013;
10. Online course "the role of statistics in development" by the German Cooperation, April-May 2013;
11. Training on "Applied statistics for evaluators"; "Applied regression analysis", "Policy analysis and evaluation" at Evaluator's Institute, George Washington University (Washington DC) in July 2013,
12. Online course of UNDP Evaluation for practitioners, January 2013.

Trainings in Monitoring and Evaluation as a facilitator:

1. Collaboration in organizing and teaching in the World Bank course on M&E and Results-Based Management for project coordinators (Dakar), June 2010;
2. Teaching the M&E module in the Masters on Project management at the public university of Dakar (UCAD). Dakar, June 2010;
3. Teaching in the course EASY ECO (sustainability evaluation), organized by the EASY-ECO university network (Czech Republic), on October 2010;
4. Support to the organization of the course on project evaluation with Professor Brad Cousins from Ottawa University, Canada (Dakar), on April 2011;
5. Teaching about aid development evaluation for the Catalan NGO Federation (Barcelona), April 2011;
6. Speaker at the Evaluation Days on evaluation organized by the Catalan Aid Development (Barcelona) on November 2011;
7. Teaching about "Real World Evaluation" with Jim Rugh and Oumuou Tall (Dakar) on May 31 2012;
8. Teaching at the Masters in Development Practice (M&E module) at UCAD (Dakar), May 2012;
9. Teaching at the Masters in Development Practice (M&E module) at UCAD (Dakar) May 2013 ;
10. Teaching about "Experience capitalization and systematization: relevance and utility of learning-oriented evaluation approaches in developing contexts" with Oumou Tall and Esteban Tapella (Dakar), First International Francophone Evaluation Forum, 27 October 2014;

93 (Canal-beeby, 2007)

A marking moment for the choice of the methodological approach of this research was an invitation in 2009 to meta-evaluate NGO evaluation reports as part of a seminar in a Masters' course in Spain. An internship at the World Bank Office in Senegal during nine months, with the financial support of the Catalan government (*Canigó* scholarships) was paramount to ground the research in its real setting. The general objective of this Internship was to support the monitoring of the "Sustainable Land Management project" while establishing some preliminary contacts to prepare the PhD thesis proposal, which was finally defended on September 15, 2010. The attendance to several SLM and evaluation meetings and courses in Senegal was also useful for reflecting about the best methodological approach[94].

The organization of four workshops to foster coordination among Senegalese SLM partners in August 2010 was key for preliminary data collection. Cofunded by the Development Cooperation Centre (CCD) of the University Polytechnic of Catalonia, the World Bank and the *Centre de Suivi Ecologique*, 75 people presented 27 SLM experiences. All the presentations and the final document are available on Internet at the PSAOP website. This was used to have the first list of potential SLM initiatives.

The national partners in charge of each of the components of this Project (ASPRODEB, ISRA, INP and ANCAR) presented their activities in the four workshops. Other key SLM stakeholders also presented in the following venues:

- Dakar (August, 3rd, 2010): staff from CSE about LADA, Ministry of Environment Focal Point for the UNCCD about the Convention and its implementation in Senegal, FLDC-RPS, INP staff about WOCAT, NGO SOS Sahel International, staff of the Ministry of Environment about the initiative to fix the coastal dunes.
- Saint Louis (August 5th, 2010) : researchers from the University Gaston Berger about the use of Geographical Information Systems in land management, ISRA about mixt pastoral management, NGO Green Senegal, Mauritania-Senegal Biodiversity Project, decontrated staff of Ministry of Environment and INP about their nationally-funded activities, NGO ASSIFORD.
- Kaolack (August 10th, 2010) : NGO Caritas, GIZ-funded PRODDEL project, ISRA activities against soil salinization, FAO-funded Wackngouna project.
- Louga (Augsut 12th, 2010) : NGO World Vission, NGO APECS, NGO FADEC.

The experience as the Regional M&E Officer for the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) fostered reflection about accountability-based evaluation practice in West and Central Africa and about the overall agenda about National Evaluation Capacities Development. No data from UNCDF has been used in this research. Preliminary findings of the research were shared and discussed in different Evaluation Conferences.[95] Finally, the collaboration with the Senegalese Evaluation Association (SenEval) was a great learning platform that may have probably facilitated data collection and significantly improved analysis and conclusions of this study.

From the ethical perspective, the three-hat involvement in Senegal as a researcher, UN professional staff and volunteer for the Senegalese Evaluation Association (SenEval) allowed continuous and fluid exchange of information about the objectives of the research with all stakeholders who kindly provided data, documents and shared their views for the study. No internal data from the UN was used for this research, but this position helped and prompted some reflections. Preliminary findings of the study were restituted and shared with SenEval colleagues through formal and informal meetings, as well as specific trainings. The final result of data

94 Regional Meeting on SLM and climate change in Bamako (Mali), on March 11-12 2010, coordinated by TerrAfrica and the World Bank; conference on "Land Management" at the University of the Francophonie, coordinated by *IED Afrique* (Dakar), April 29 2010; First African Drylands Days (Dakar) on June 13-17 2011; meeting with a mission of the University of United Nations about the development indicators of SLM at the global and national level (Dakar), on August 19 2010.

95 Draft of the Section 1.2 presented in the 6th Conference of the African Evaluation Association (AFrEA) : "*Etat des lieux de la pratique de l'évaluation au Sénégal: Bilan et perspectives* », Ghana, January 2012 ; presentation of the advance on the first chapter in the framework of a restitution of the AfrEA Conference in Dakar in April 2012, draft of the second chapter presented in the 10th Conference of the European Evaluation Society (EES), Finland, October 2012 and a excerpt of chapter 1 published in the inaugural open-access journal "African Journal of Evaluation, September 2013.

collection, in the form of electronic versions of evaluation reports found was systematically shared with all interviewees in Senegal and donors' staff. All this information will be widely disseminated by email at the end of the research.

For the in-depth interviews written informed consent was sought from interviewees. Some of them rejected to sign the form and just acknowledged their willingness to collaborate in an email or verbally. Although in the majority of cases the responses are included in an anonymous form, it is hard to do it because of the small pool of actors. Only controversial arguments are kept with the permission of the interviewee and carefully discussed if it is considered that they reveal interesting discussion points for the research purpose. Once available to the general public, the study will be shared with key informants and active experts in evaluation practice and SLM in Senegal and in the region. Specific sections will be translated into French and addressed to policy makers and prominent evaluation stakeholders in the country.

Annex D. Meta-evaluation in aid development cooperation

Table 24. Meta-evaluation exercises in aid development evaluation.

Year	Name of the Meta-evaluation (or similar) analysed
2003	The CGIAR at 31: An Independent **Meta-Evaluation** of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (Ingram, Fostved, & Lele, 2003a)(Ingram, Fostved, & Lele, 2003b)(Lele, Barrett, Eicher, & Gardner, 2003)
	IUCN- The World Conservation Union: **Meta-Evaluation**. An analysis of IUCN Evaluations: 2000-2002 (Universalia, 2003)
2004	DANIDA **Meta-Evaluation** of Private and Business Sector Development Interventions. (DANIDA, 2004)
2005	Evaluation of the evaluation programmes (2000-2004) of the *Agence Française de Développement* (Crombrugghe, Decker, & Valette, 2005)
2007	The MEGA 2006 Evaluation. **Meta-Evaluation** of Goal Achievement by CARE projects and programmes. (Rugh, 2007)
	Meta-Evaluation of research studies, evaluations and reviews conducted by the UNICEF Pacific Office during programme cycle 2003-2007 (Baba, 2007)
2008	UNICEF Child Protection **Meta-Evaluation** (Sheeran, 2008)
	Are SIDA Evaluations Good Enough? An Assessment of 34 Evaluation Reports (Forss et al., 2008)
2009	Evaluation in German Development Cooperation – A System Analysis (BMZ, 2009)
	UNIFEM Global **Meta-Evaluation** (Ljungman, 2010)
2010	A Joint Evaluation of AfDB and IFAD Operations in Agriculture and Rural Development in Africa. A **Meta-Evaluation** of Past Performance (AfDB & IFAD, 2010)
	UNIDO. **Meta-Evaluation** of integrated programmes evaluated in the period 2007-2009 (UNIDO, 2010)
	Independent External Evaluation of the International Labor Office Evaluation Function. (Mathiason, Williams, Arora, & Sutherland, 2010)
	Performance of (Asian Development Bank) ADB Assistance to Agriculture and Natural Resources—Evidence from Post-Completion Evaluations. (ADB, 2010)
2011	OECD: Aid for Trade: a **metaevaluation**. OECD, *Strengthening Accountability in Aid for Trade*, OECD Publishing. (Delpeuch, Jouanjean, Vernoy, Messerlin, & Orliad, 2010)
	Meta-review of AusAid education sector evaluations (Shah & Patch, 2011)
	***Meta-Evaluation** du programme de cooperation Maroc*-UNFPA 2007-2011. (Desbarats-Degerman, 2011)
	Meta-Evaluation of AusAID's Technical Review Process. (Rogers, 2011)
	Review of GEF engagement with private sector (Wadhwa, B., Cox, P., vandenberg, 2011)
	A **Meta-Evaluation** of Foreign Assistance Evaluations of USAID (Eriksson, 2011)
	Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: A meta-analysis of project evaluations, 2009-2010. (C. Henry, Engerlhrdt, & Standa, 2011)
	Meta-Evaluation of GEF climate mitigation evaluations (Worlen, 2011)
	UNICEF Quality Review of 2010 Evaluation Reports (Barnes, Dinsmore, & Watson, 2011)

Annex E. Final list of 100 evaluation reports: found, discarded and not found.

Table 25. Evaluation reports of SLM interventions targeted and found (2000-2013).

	Acronym	Name	Implementer / Donor	Outcome of the research of the evaluation report
1	AACC	Adaptation to Climate and Coastal Change in West Africa	UNDP/GEF	Not found
2	AAP	African Adaptation Programme	UNDP/ UNOPS/ JICA	Evaluation found, finally discarded (criterion 2) (Corsi & Salgado-Silva, 2012)
3	AAP	African Adaptation Programme	UNDP/ UNOPS/ JICA	Evaluation found, finally discarded (criterion 2) ; (Prasada-Rao, Ipsen, & Jorgensen, 2013)
4	Acacia	Introduction of information and communication technologies in the management and restoration of village land	IDRC	Found, project evaluation 3 (Aw-Thioune & Ndiaye, 2001)
5	ACCA	Adaptation to CC in Africa	IDRC-DFID	Evaluation found, finally discarded (criterion 2), (Watkinson, A., Khennas, S., Misselhorn, A., Footitt, 2008);
6	ACCA	Adaptation to CC in Africa	IDRC-DFID	Evaluation found, finally discarded (criterion 2) ; (Lafontaine, Oladipo-Adejuwon, Dearden, & Quesne, 2012)
7	Action Aid	Groundnut seed multiplication programme	Action Aid	Not found
8	AfDB portfolio	African Development Bank SLM Portfolio Review	AfDB	Not found
9	APECS NGO	Various according to the website and other documents	various	Not found
10	Assiford NGO	Various according to the website and other documents	various	Not found
11	ATADEN	Technical Assistance to Land Use and Economic Development of the Niayes Region	IDRC	Not found
12	Bey-sa-tol	Projet Bey-sa-tol /"Labour ton champs»	World Vision/ Switzerland	Not found
13	Caritas	Various according to the website and other documents	various	Not found
14	CIDA	Evaluation of CIDA's Senegal Programme from 2001-2010	CIDA	Found, country evaluation 5 (CIDA, 2011)
15	cordons pierreux	Impact evaluation of lines of stones and fertility soils in two CILSS micro projects	Green Senegal / CILSS	Found, project evaluation 23 (S. Ndiaye, 2009)
16	CTL Nord	Land Conservation Project in the Coastal area of Louga	CIDA	Not found
17	CTD Sud	Land Conservation Project in the Thies area	CIDA	Not found
18	Decentr.	Succeeding decentralization	*IED Afrique*	Found, capitalization 7 (IIED, 2011)
19	FLCD-RPS	Fund to fight desertification and to reduce poverty	CILSS/Italy	Found, project evaluation 17 (Macri & Garavini, 2007b); (Macri & Garavini, 2007a)
20	FLCD-RPS	Fund to fight desertification and to reduce poverty	CILSS/Italy	Found, project evaluation 34 (Djiguisso, 2011a)
21	form GRN	Training Project on natural resources management and food security	Italy	Found, finally discarded (criterion 2) (Frazzoli, Diagne, & Cissé, 2003)
22	Forestry 3decades	Review of three decades of FAO support to the forestry sector in Senegal	FAO	Found, country evaluation (Tapsoba, E.K., 2003).
23	FSSA	Support Fund for Local Adaptation Strategies	IDRC-DFID	Found, capitalization 6 (Sall, Fall, Mbow, & Gueye, 2011)

24	GIZ	Senegalese-German technical cooperation in natural resources management	GIZ	Found, country evaluation 1 (GTZ, 2004)
25	GDT-PSAOP	Sustainable Land Management Project	World Bank	Found, project evaluation 38 (Gueye & Ndiaye, 2012)
26	GIPD/CEP	Subregional programme of participatory training in integrated management of production - producers' school fields	FAO / Netherlands	Found, project evaluation 30 (Ton & Sarr, 2010)
27	GL-GDRN	Local Governance and decentralized management of Natural Resources in Senegal	CSE/IDRC	finally discarded (criterion 2) (IDRC, 2007)
28	Gum-resines	Support food security, poverty alleviation and fight against soil degradation in the producer countries of gums and resines	FAO	Found, project evaluation 19 (Maiga, Soncini, Okoro, & Zoubi, 2007)
29	Hunger Project	Various according to the website and other documents	Various	Not found
30	IFAD	IFAD country programme evaluation	IFAD	Found, country evaluation (IFAD, 2004a)
31	IFAD	IFAD country programme evaluation	IFAD	Found, country evaluation (IFAD, 2014)
32	INTAC	Mainstreaming climate change adaptation in sustainable development	UNDP/ JICA	Found, finally discarded (criteria 1 and 2) (Savane, 2013)
33	IUCN	Various according to the website and other documents	Various	Not found
34	JICA	Evaluation of of the environmental sector	JICA	Found, country evaluation 3 (International, 2004)
35	LADA	Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands	CSE/FAO, UNEP, GEF	Found, project evaluation 21 (Bellamy & Ieradi, 2009)
36	LADA	Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands	CSE/FAO, UNEP, GEF	Found, project evaluation 34 (Kellner et al., 2011)
37	LEAD GDT	Pilot Initiatives of micro-irrigation and SLM	ENDA/GEF	Not found
38	LEAD Training	Strengthening capacities of civil society in climate change adaptation	ENDA/DFID	Not found
39	Netherlands	Evaluation of the environmental sector	Netherlands	Not found. Only a similar case study for Colombia was found (Metameta-Management et al, 2008)
40	Netherlands2	Seventh review of sector budget support on environment in Senegal	Netherlands	Found, country evaluation 6 (Vanderlinde et al., 2011)
41	Ndoff	Agrobiodiversity project in salted lands of Ndoff	GEF	Found, project evaluation 13 (B. Diouf, 2006)
42	PADEN	Project to support management and economic development of the Niayes area	IDRC	Not found
43	PADF	Project of Support to Forestry Development	FAO/ Netherlands	Found, project evaluation 4 (MEPN and FAO, 2002)
44	PADV	Project of community management and development	IFAD-BOAD	Not found
45	PAEP	Project of Support to farmers' entrepreneurship in Thies	CECI/CIDA	Found, project evaluation 12 (Winter, Blouin, & Tine, 2005)
46	PAFS	Socioeconomic effects of the implementation of the Forestry Action Plan of Senegal	Netherlands	Found, project evaluation 7 (M. M. Ba et al., 2002)
47	PAGEMAS	Enhancement of Sustainability in the Mangrove Forest Management of Saloum Delta	JICA	Found, project evaluation 15, (JICA, 2008)
48	PAGEMAS	Enhancement of Sustainability in the Mangrove Forest Management of Saloum Delta	JICA	Found, project evaluation 37 (JICA, 2012)
49	PAGERNA	Project of Management and Natural Resources management	GIZ	Found, capitalization 1 (Kremer, 2003)
50	PAGF II	Agro-forestry project to combat desertification	IFAD-BOAD	Not found

51	PAPEL II	Project of Support to promote livestock	AfDB	Found, project evaluation 22 (IDEV-ic, 2009)
52	PAPF	Management Project of forestry nurseries	JICA	Found, project evaluation 1 (MEPN, 2000)
53	PAP Ferlo	Pastoral autopromotion in Ferlo Project	GIZ	Found, capitalization 2 (Guibert, 2008)
54	PAPIL	Project to support small-scale local irrigation	AfDB	Found, project evaluation 24 (AfDB, 2009)
55	PASEF	Project to improve and to promote forest ecosystems	UNDP/ GEF	Found, project evaluation 32 (Bellamy, 2011)
56	PASYME	Project to support M&E system of FIDA programme in Senegal	FIDA	Not found
57	PBSM	Biodiversity Project Senegal-Mauritania	FAO/Nether lands-GEF	Not found
58	PERACOD	Programme to promote renewable energies, rural electrification and sustainable domestic fuel supply	GIZ	Found, capitalization 4 (Bodian & Jorez, 2009)
59	Periurban systems	Integrated Peri-Urban Systems: Horticulture and Livestock in West African Cities (Phase 2)	IDRC	Found, finally discarded (criterion 2) (Whyte & Drescher, 2004)
60	PGCRN	Natural Resources Community Management Project	USAID	Found, project evaluation 5 (Sy-Seck, Fall, Sall, Diakhabi, & Ndiaye, 2002)
61	PGIES 2	Project of Integrated Management of ecosystems in four representative landscapes	UNDP/GEF	Found, project evaluation 9 (Lacroix et al., 2004);
62	PGIES 2	Project of Integrated Management of ecosystems in four representative landscapes	UNDP/GEF	Found, project evaluation 35, (Khouma, Ndiaye, & Quiroga, 2010)
63	PISA	Italian Programme for Food Security	Italy	Found, project evaluation 39 (FAO, 2012)
64	Plan	Project of Sustainable management of environment and protection of vulnerable population	Plan	Not found
65	POGV II	Village Organization and management project II	IFAD-BOAD	Not found
66	PPSA	Farmers promotion within the framework of "terroir" management for food security	FAO/ Belgium	Found, project evaluation 18 (Cossee, Magadoux, Dia, & Doumbia, 2007)
67	PRL	Reforestation Project in the Coastal area of Senegal	JICA	Not found
68	PRODAM	Project of agriculture development in the department of Matam	IFAD	Found, project evaluation 8 (IFAD, 2004b)
69	PRODEFI	Community Project of integrated forestry development	JICA	Found, project evaluation 3 (hard copy, 2002)
70	PRODEFI	Community Project of integrated forestry development	JICA	Found, project evaluation 11 (JICA, 2004e);
71	PRODEFI	Community Project of integrated forestry development	JICA	Found, project evaluation 16 (JICA, 2008)
72	PRODEFI	Community Project of integrated forestry development	JICA	Found, project evaluation 29 (Takaki, 2010)
73	PROFEIS	Promoting farmers experimentation and innovation in the Sahel	*IED Afrique* / NGO (Austria)	Not found
74	PROGEDE	Sustainable and Participatory Energy Management	World Bank	Not found
75	PROGERT	Groundnut Basin Soil Management and Regeneration	UNDP/GEF	Found, project evaluation 28 (Stanislaw & Mangoné, 2011);
76	PROGERT	Groundnut Basin Soil Management and Regeneration	UNDP/GEF	Found, project evaluation 40 (Roby & Mbengue, 2013)
77	Projet Bambey	Project of food security and natural resources management in the department of Bambey	Green Senegal / Belgium	Not found
78	PROMASC	Multi-stakeholders Project for adaptation of vulnerable	IDRC	Found, capitalization 8 (IDRC, 2012)

		populations to soil salinization caused by climate change		
79	PROMER	Project of promotion of rural micro-enterprises	IFAD	Found, project evaluation 10 (IFAD, 2004c)
80	PRONASEF	National Project of Forestry Seeds	FAO/ Netherlands	Found, project evaluation 2 (Kamga et al., 2000)
81	PRV	Village reforestation programme	Netherlands	Not found
82	PRVS	Rehabilitation project of the valley of river Senegal	JICA	Not found
83	PSAOP2	Agricultural Services Producer Organizations Project	World Bank	Found, project evaluation 25 (Diarra, Gueye, Sall, & Sarr, 2009);
84	PSAOP2	Agricultural Services Producer Organizations Project	World Bank	Found, project evaluation 36 (Faye & Gueye, 2011)
85	RE.TE NGO	Various according to the website and other documents	various	Not found
86	Sahel Study	*Impacts des investissements dans la gestion des ressources au Sénégal: synthèse des études de cas.*	CILSS	Found, but finally discarded (very qualitative study) (C. Dieng et al., 2008)
87	SOL.SOC	Various according to the website and other documents	various	Not found
88	SOS Sahel	Restoration and integrated management of the Australian Pine belt of the Northern Coast	SOS Sahel/ GEF	Not found
89	small-scale organic agriculture	Improving income and food security of small farmers in West and Central Africa through export of biological tropical products	FAO	Found, project evaluation 26 (O. Diouf, 2010)
90	SPDF	SPFDC-Green Senegal	Green Senegal/ CILSS	Not found
91	Symbiose	Various according to the website and other documents	various	Not found
92	TACC	Territorial Approach to climate change	UNDP	Not found
93	TIPA	Techno-Agriculture Innovation for poverty alleviation	Israel	Not found
94	VABAF	Development of low lands	GIZ	Found, capitalization 3 (Mbodj, 2008)
95	various	Evaluation Report of the evolution of results of finalised forestry projects (PROBOVIL; PROWALO; PREVINOBA; PRECOBA)	FAO/ Netherlands	Found, project evaluation 6 (Thiam, 2002)
96	W.Af-cities	West Africa: feeding cities with local family agriculture. Taking stock of field experiences	Fondation de Franc	Found, capitalization 8 (Cavalier, 2012)
97	Wula Nafaa	Agriculture - natural resources management programme	USAID	Found, project evaluation 14 (Weidemann Associates, 2006)
98	Wula Nafaa	Agriculture - natural resources management programme	USAID	Found, project evaluations 20 (IRG, 2008)
99	Wula Nafaa	Agriculture - natural resources management programme	USAID	Found, capitalization 9 (USAID, 2013)
100	zones sylvo-pastorales	Strengthening projects of local strategies of management of sylvopastoral zones in the peanut basin	IDRC	Found, project evaluation 31 (Bihibindi, 2010)

Annex F. Additional information about capitalization

Capitalization theory and practice of capitalization

Capitalization and Systematization are used as direct synonyms or similar approaches using similar procedures of knowledge production, claiming to come from praxis (Grand, 2014). The origins of what is known today as "systematization" are usually related to the work of Latin American social scientists during the late 1970's. Oscar Jara is often quoted as one of the main authors in Latin America who has theoretically developed the approach of "systematization" (Holliday, 1994)[96]. Jara defined "systematization of experiences" as the critical interpretation of one or various experiences that, from its ordering and reconstruction, discovers or makes explicit the logic of the experience' process: the factors intervening, their relationships and why they related to each other in that way. Systematization of experiences produces significant knowledge and learning that allow appropriate the experiences, understand them theoretically and orient them towards the future with a transformative perspective.

Chris Van Dam has also accumulated lots of experience in systematization in Latin America. Some authors give him the credit to have been the first to use the term "*sistematización*" in Latin America (pers. Comm. from Esteban Tapella, November 2012). He introduced some differences between systematization (done by project team members) and capitalization (experiences of field technicians, community leaders and promoters)[97].

(Grand, 2014) highlighted that despite the diversity of practices classed as "systematization", their common ground is to be part of a critical movement trying to avoid the positivist reductions of social reality. For him, experience systematization is a collective and participative process, being individuals the main authors of their own histories on the basis of their own experiences where the process of systematization is as important, if not even more, than its result.

One of the hypothesis about the origin of Francophone capitalization is the private enterprises sector (related to management and organization efficiency, productivity and economic gains), which seems to justify the choice of the term, with a market-oriented sense ((Grand, 2014); (Didier, 2010)). The objective was related to *capitalize* the knowledge from companies' staff, to organize key information and communicate it more efficiently within the enterprise[98]. This was difficult to digest by some aid development partners (in France), and especially the non-profit actors who originally rejected the concept because of its closeness to the accumulation notion (*capitaliser*) (Grand, 2014). (Robert & Ollitrault-Bernard, 2005) did not see any problem with the concept of "an ulterior profit from knowledge", and although private and public organizations can use this approach, their objectives are considered to be quite different from the ones of development actors. Capitalization was finally accepted and it is today commonly used in the Francophone development arena.

Other authors considered the work of different NGOs as the precursor of the approach ((Mersadier, 2011); (Grand, 2014)): *Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme*[99] *et Innovations et Réseaux pour le Développement*, as a reaction to smooth the defensive position of different actors against evaluations in the 1980s. Capitalization was then perceived as a way to document a lived experience to make it useful to others. It is focused on experiences of actors as well as their actions. Other Francophone sources about capitalization mentioned "self-evaluation exercises" accompanied by certain organizations in West Africa as the precursors of the approach. For instance, the work of some French NGOs in the 1970's-1980's supporting farmers' organizations

96 http://www.kaidara.org/upload/246/Orientaciones_teorico-practicas_para_sistematizar_experiencias.pdf Accessed on April 22, 2014.
97 http://www.sistematizaciondeexperiencias.com (Accessed on April 22, 2014).
98 Other actors interviewed for the research did not agree with this hypothesis.
99 http://www.fph.ch/rubrique9.html?lang=fr Accessed on April 22, 2014.

who develop tools and approaches related to capitalization in the Sahel[100].

A reference document on capitalization is the one published by Pierre de Zutter in French. This is considered by some "as the bible of capitalization » (F3E, 2014). This has been confirmed by most of interviewees and the consulted bibliography.[101] After several decades of experience in rural development in the South American Andean countries, Zutter proposed the most quoted definition of "capitalization of experiences" in French:

> "Experience capitalization is the passage from experience to shareable knowledge"

For Zutter it is necessary to make emerge knowledge from experience, from practice, to consider people as "knowledge carriers", without searching for unanimous results, but increasing the "palette of reflections" (Grand, 2014). This type of knowledge is considered as complementary to academic/scientific knowledge and traditional/ancestral knowledge[102]. Zutter distinguished between "systematization" and "capitalization" ((Zutter, 1997a); (Zutter, 1997b)):

- Capitalization entails going back to the experience to see what we can learn of it, without any pre-established framework or theme, respecting subjectivity, without focusing on lessons to be extracted;
- Systematization aims to put order in a "set of knowledge" (both those arising from practice and from research) in relation to a certain objective, in order to produce a "system" of knowledge. Systematization is not only limited to a certain experience but takes advantage and uses knowledge emerging from all types of experiences and other sources too.

In the 2000's, another trend influenced the practice of capitalization by Francophone development actors. It was the emergence of "knowledge management for development" (KM4D) that tried to rationalize knowledge in international development after lots of scientific research and field practice. A good array of capitalizations emerging from KM4D efforts have been focused on Natural Resources Management, livestock and agriculture, with some key organizations as precursors: FAO, IFAD and UNDP. (Didier, 2013) found a certain tendency towards the integration of experience capitalization in the project cycle at the centre of the learning cycle.

The interviewed "capitalization theorists and practitioners" for this research, even those who were not very acquainted with the previous experience of *sistematización* in Latin America, acknowledged the indirect influence that this stream had on Zutter's practice and theorization since he developed all this career between Peru and Bolivia. Some of them call Zutter "*le père de la capi*" (the father of capitalization). The South-South transmission from Latin America to West Africa was also mentioned by others through the work of IFAD (from FIDAMERICA to Fidafrique), the ILEIA magazine and the AgriCultures Network. Nevertheless, all of them highlighted that the approach was adapted to the West African context and was not copied from a blueprint proposed by donors or any other partner.

For (Martinic, 2010) capitalization encompassed a diversity of approaches that respond to different contexts emerging from the reflection of experience. (Villeval & Lavigne-Delville, 2004) placed experience capitalization between internal evaluation (that uses sources of

100 http://fr.coredem.info/wiki/Capitalization_d%E2%80%99exp%C3%A9riences accessed on June, 13, 2014.
101 The e-link provided for Zutter's work in Mersadier, 2011 (Des histoires, des savoirs et des hommes : l'expérience est un capital, réflexion sur la capitalization d'expérience. Réalisé par Pierre de Zutter, 07 / 1994) is no longer working: http://p-zutter.net/mediapool/54/542579/data/en_francais/ 1994_Des_histoires_des_savoirs_FPH.pdf Attempt to access on April, 19th, 2014. Some general information from this author can be found at http://base.d-p-h.info/fr/dossiers/dossier-117.html (Accessed on April 20th, 2014). The Spanish version from 1997 is available at http://p-zutter.net/mediapool/54/542579/data/1997_Historias_Saberes_y_gentes.pdf (Accessed on April 22, 2014)
102 (IDRC, 2012) considers "traditional knowledge" as local, tacit, usually transmitted orally or by observation, more based on experience than on theory, and learned and passed through a repetition process, in continuous change.

information related to the project and it is not widely disseminated beyond stakeholders) and research (aiming to generalize results and a wide communication).

Others advocated for the inclusion of those types of exercises within the evaluation practice. For instance, in the second edition of 'Evaluation Roots' (Carden & Alkin, 2012), "*sistematización"* was included as an "endogenous approach" developed in Latin America. They distinguished it from the "adopted and adapted approaches and methodologies" in the low and middle-income countries.[103] "Endogenous approaches" are those specific to certain regions, with little or no contact between them, with strong theoretical and practical roots with its original context and usually primarily developed by groups of individuals rather than single writers (Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, "Shared Learning and Participatory Evaluation: The Sistematizacion Approach to Assess Development Interventions."Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, "Shared Learning and Participatory Evaluation: The Sistematizacion Approach to Assess Development Interventions."Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella, "Shared Learning and Participatory Evaluation: The Sistematizacion Approach to Assess Development Interventions."(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014)(Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014) (Tapella, E. & Rodriguez-Bilella 2014).

This research did not find any strong evidence that could justify a similar statement (capitalization is an evaluation approach originated in Francophone West Africa). The majority of sources seem to suggest that it can be considered as an "adapted evaluation approach". Some critics of the current practice would even contest that there is such a real capitalization practice, being just another "magical word" devoid of its pretended features. On the contrary, others think that from the adaptation of the approach during the 2000's, some endogenous capitalization practice is slowly emerging in the sub-region thanks to the tools and training available to local organizations.

The majority of authors and organizations that have developed systematization/capitalization approaches integrated them in the information management and communication domain (FAO, 2013b), others include them within evaluation classifications. For instance, the Swiss cooperation included "experience capitalization" amongst the 20 methods and tools for knowledge sharing and learning[104]. The methods and tools proposed for experience capitalization are similar to the ones used in evaluation.[105]

103 According to these authors, adapted methodologies are "still developed in large measure by evaluators and theorists in the global North, but they are explicitly concerned with the adaptation of the approach to different socio-cultural, political, economic, and ecological settings" (page 108), while adopted methodologies are "those that are transferred from systems developed in North America and Europe for use in low and middle-income countries, in particular in assessing aid flows" (page 106).

104 http://www.sdc-learningandnetworking.ch/en/Home/SDC_KM_Tools/Experience_Capitalization accessed on May, 20th, 2014

105 Storytelling, anecdote circles, focus groups, interviews, after action review, critical moments of reflection, appreciative inquiry, SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), peer assists, village assembly, calendars, briefing and

For some of the interviewees, the confusion comes from a non-recommended capitalization practice. Since capitalizations are done at the end encompassing the whole intervention they tend to be "similar to a qualitative evaluation", sometimes less systematic than a regular evaluation. From this perspective, a capitalization should be done during the project implementation and be focused on the learning process of certain aspects of an intervention (and preferably on the overall experience), while an evaluation is usually bound to the initial objectives and more focused on results in order to value an intervention.

Recent developments in experience capitalization

Different actors in Latin America, West Africa and France have been promoting the usage of manuals and other materials and offering trainings of systematization or (experience) capitalization. Some of the main ones used to craft the analytical framework for capitalizations of SLM interventions are mentioned below:

- Manual of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (Selener, Zapata, & Purdy, 1996)[106].
- Handicap International and *Groupe de Recherche et d'échanges technologiques* (GRET) (Villeval et al, 2004)[107].
- French NGOs CIEDEL, F3E et GRET, training about capitalization (Graugnard & Quiblier, 2006).[108]
- ILEIA (Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture)[109] ((Chavez-Tafur et al., 2007); (Vandermeij, Hampson, & Chavez-Tarfur, 2008)).
- *IED Afrique* first manual adapted to the West African reality (IED Afrique; ILEIA, 2007).
- Fidafrique Manual (South-South transmission through the IFAD network, from the FIDAMERICA manual (Fall et al., 2009).
- Promotion of easy access to knowledge and experience generated in development cooperation projects and programmes based on "knowledge profiles" (IFAD & GTZ, 2009).[110]
- *IED Afrique*'s second manual about farmers' innovations and experimentation in the Sahel through the programme PROFEIS (2008-2009)[111], (IED Afrique, 2010).
- *IED Afrique* and UNDP manual focused on climate change adaptation (IDRC, 2012).
- Guide on capitalization from a French group of NGOs and other actors (F3E, 2014)[112].

Delphi methodology for the analysis of capitalizations of SLM interventions

A preliminary list of experts was created from the scrutiny of the bibliography. An email was also sent to the Knowledge Management for Development and the Francophone section.[113] Some of them were specifically contacted by email, along with other experts. The aim of the research was introduced and the following key questions about capitalization and systematization were proposed to guide the exchange that happened in most of the cases on skype (or telephone).

Table 26. Lists of questions for semi-structured interview with key experts about capitalization

debriefing, templates/checklists, knowledge fairs. The Participatory Rural Appraisal or Rapid Rural Appraisal tools are very useful for experience capitalization (social maps, timelines, historical mapping, village resource map, transects, ranking) (FAO, 2013b).
106 http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/library/59610 Accessed on April 22, 2014.
107 http://www.groupe-initiatives.org/IMG/pdf/traverse_15.pdf Accessed on April 22, 2014.
108 http://f3e.asso.fr/IMG/pdf/Note_de_synthese_formation_capitalization_2006.pdf Accessed on April 22, 2014. This is a synthesis note from a training on capitalization.
109 http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/about-us/members/the-netherlands Accessed on April 22, 2014.
110 http://www.ifad.org/english/water/manual/kp.pdf Accessed on April 22, 2014.
111 http://www.iedafrique.org/Objectifs-du-PROFEIS.html Accessed on August 22, 2014
112 http://f3e.asso.fr/IMG/pdf/Fiche_outil_F3E_capitalization-2.pdf accessed on April, 18th, 2014 and http://f3e.asso.fr/IMG/pdf/guide_capitalization-web_2_.pdf accessed on June, 3, 2014112
113 www.km4dev.org and http://dgroups.org/groups/km4dev-l/SA-GE Accessed on June, 14, 2014

1. What is your conception of "capitalization", "systematization", "and documentation of experiences"? Do you consider them to be the same? If not, what would be the main differences?
2. « Systematization » started in Latin America, what were the main authors or organizations that brought it to West Africa? Could you please provide examples and dates?
3. Who are the main actors working in « capitalization » in West Africa and in Senegal? Could you please give some examples of their work?
4. Do you consider « capitalization » as an endogenous approach in West Africa? Please justify.
5. What is the relationship between capitalization and traditional project evaluation approaches?
6. Do you have any evidence of the impact or utilization of the capitlizations you or your organization have conducted?
7. How many trainings have you conducted in capitalization in the subregion? What are the profiles of participants?
8. What are the key elements or stages in a capitalization that you would recommend to use when analysing the capitalization reports of our sample?

The experts based in Senegal and West Africa also received the list of capitalizations found for the study and were asked to add any additional one published during the period 2000-2013. Only other capitalizations not focused on SLM were received and discarded for the research. The final list of interviewees (Delphi methodology) is summarized below:

Table 27. Experts contacted and interviewed for this research.

Place where the expert interviewed is based or have developed his/her main work on capitalization	Interview done or relevant info shared by email	No info available	No answer/ not possible to be interviewed	Total
West Africa/Senegal	7	1	4	12
France/Canada	8	1	7	16
Latin America	0	3	0	3
International organization	1	0	1	2
Total	16	5	12	33

As can be seen in the previous table, the experts interviewed were based in West Africa and France or Canada. Some of them were not available in spite of different emails and reminders sent (ex. senior management of FRAO). Some leading Latin American practitioners on systematization were not aware of capitalization approaches in West Africa and the potential links of these two approaches.

Analytical framework for capitalizations

From the analysis of the information mentioned above and exchanges with experts, the following questions were proposed to analyse the 9 SLM capitalizations.

Table 28. Criteria to analyse the capitalizations of SLM initiatives in Senegal.

#	Criteria to analyse capitalizations - DESIGN	Questions to analyse capitalizations - DESIGN
1	Clarity of purpose and objectives	**1. Was the purpose or object of the capitalization clearly stated?** Yes / No Types: focus on practices or methods / focus on best practices and success stories / focus on results / strengthen and advocate for local beneficiaries 'capacities
2	Adequacy of scope	**2. Was it a punctual exercise or a continuous endeavour during the initiative implementation?** Punctual / continuous / periodic-part of an overall capitalization strategy **3. When did the capitalization process take place in relation to the experience/initiative?** Throughout implementation / end of project / end of phase **4. Was there any capitalization axis or theme prioritized?** No (all programme/project) / one component of project / theme
3	Clarity of foreseen utilization focus considered from the design	5. **Was the target audience and the future utilization of the capitalization defined clearly?** Yes / No **Target audience:** Not clear / beneficiaries / development partners / project staff **6. Were there any (potential) uses of the capitalization mentioned?** Yes / No Types: extract lessons learned and good practices/ strengthen and advocate for local beneficiaries 'capacities / improve future training / organizational learning

#	Criteria to analyse capitalizations - PROCESS	Questions to analyse capitalizations - PROCESS
4	Right stakeholders' involvement strategy throughout the process	**7. Who led the capitalization process?** Not stated / external / collective endeavour. International / national / not clear **8. Who participated in the capitalization process?** Not clear / only consultant / only project staff + consultant / others (including beneficiaries)
5	Adequacy of institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation process	**9. Was there a Steering Committee to guide the capitalization process?** No / Yes
6	Sufficient transparency and ethics consideration in evaluation process	**10. Were there any ToR or similar to guide the capitalization process and provide some theoretical foundations?** Yes / No / Light information **11. Were the resources, information and time available as well as the missing information mentioned in the report?** Yes / No

#	Criteria to analyse capitalizations - RESULT	Questions to analyse capitalizations - RESULT
7	Clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choice	**12. What was the methodology used and its source?** Not mentioned / manual-guide mentioned / description of methodology included **13. What were the types of methods and tools used to collect information?** Not mentioned / document review / survey/ online discussion forum / workshops / field visits **14. What were the main steps of the capitalization process?** Not clear / clearly described
8	Clarity of evaluation synthesis	**15. What types of information sources were used?** Not clear / clear. Types: written project reports / interviews / survey data / oral sources **16. Were statistical / quantitative data about results of the experience included?** Yes / No **17. Was the initial situation and the context sufficiently described?** Yes / not very complete / No **18. Was the experience (objectives, theory of programme/change) sufficiently described?** Collective clear reconstruction presented / Similar to evaluation reports **19. Was the final or current situation sufficiently described?** Yes / not very complete / No
9	Adequacy of consideration of Development evaluation challenges	**20. Were different opinions or visions about the initiative under capitalization clearly distinguished by types of stakeholders?** Yes / No / not clearly but some information included **21. Were maps and graphs about NRM included in the report?** Yes / no
10	Sufficient documentation of the evaluation process and result	**22. What was the level and quality of information contained in the capitalization report?** Summary included / No **23. Were lessons learned clearly presented and discussed?** Yes / No (similar to evaluation report) / No (section totally missing)

#	Criteria to analyse capitalizations - UTILIZATION	Questions to analyse capitalizations - UTILIZATION
11	Actionable recommendations	**24. Did the report mention any recommendation for future capitalizations?** Yes / No **25. Did the report mention any sources of information to expand our knowledge about the experience?** Yes / Yes (but not sufficient) / No **26. Was there any discussion in the report about the relevance and possibility of appropriation of the experience by other actors?** Yes / No / Vague
12	Adequacy of dissemination	**27. Were there any other formats to dissemination the capitalization process mentioned apart from the report?** No / Yes. Types: brief cards / articles / videos / others **28. What were the dissemination channels mentioned in the capitalization report?** Online / restitution sessions / Others **29. What was the level of accessibility of the capitalization report?** Easy (online) / Hard copy in a library in Senegal

Titles of capitalizations analysed in this study

Table 29. Set of capitalization of SLM initiatives in Senegal analysed in this study

#	Original title	Title in English (translation of the researcher)
1	***Capitalization des acquis*** *du PAGERNA Projet Autopromotion et Gestion des Ressources Naturelles au Sine Saloum) dans le domaine de la réhabilitation du couvert végétal et de l'habitat de la faune sauvage.* (Kremer, 2003)	**Capitalization of the learning** of PAGERNA in the domain of vegetal cover and wild fauna habitat rehabilitation.
2	***Capitalization*** *du projet PAPF (Projet d'Autopromotion Pastorale dans le Ferlo, Sénégal)*(Guibert, 2008)	**Capitalization** of the PAPF Project
3	*Une meilleure valorisation des ressources des bas – fonds du Sine Saloum par la GIRE (Gestion Integrée des Ressources en Eaux).* ***Expérience du Programme*** *de Lutte contre la Pauvreté en milieu rural dans le Basin Arachidier 2004 - 2007* (Mbodj, 2008)	A better promotion of low lands resources in Sine Saloum through water integrated management. **Experience of the programme** to fight rural poverty in the peanut basin (2004-2007)
4	*La mise en aménagement participative des forêts au Sénégal.* ***Enseignements tirés*** *de l'approche PERACOD (Programme pour la Promotion des Energies Renouvelables, de l'Electrification Rurale et de l'Approvisionnement Durable en Combustibles domestiques).* ***Capitalization de la composante*** *forestière* (Bodian & Jorez, 2009)	Implementing participatory forest management in Senegal. **Lessons learned from** the PERACOD approach. **Capitalization** of the forest **component**.
5	*Décentralisation au Sahel****: leçons, questions, défis****. Dix ans de cheminement du programme "Réussir la décentralisation ».* (IIED, 2011)	Decentralization in Sahel**: lessons, questions and challenges.** Ten years of the programme "Succeeding decentralization".
6	*Resilience et Innovation Locale face aux Changements Climatiques.* ***Capitalization des résultats du programme*** *"Fonds de Soutien aux Stratégies Locales d'Adaptation (FSSA)"* (Sall et al., 2011)	Resilience and Local Innovation to fight climate change. **Capitalization of the results of the programme** FSSA "
7	*Projet Partenariat Multi-acteurs pour l'Adaptation des Populations Vulnérables à la Salinisation des sols induite par les Changements Climatiques (PROMASC) au Sénégal* (IDRC, 2012)	Multi-stakeholdres partnership project for vulnerable population adaptation to soil salinization caused by climate change in Senegal.
8	*Afrique de l'Ouest: nourrir les villes par l'agriculture familiale locale.* ***Valoriser les expériences de terrain.*** (Cavalier, 2012)	West Africa: feeding cities with local family agriculture. **Taking stock of field experiences**
9	Agriculture and Natural Resources Management Programme - USAID Wula Nafaa - **capitalization document - success stories** (USAID, 2013)	Original title in English.

Annex G. Complete list of MEv criteria and dimensions, including sources of information.

Table 30. Meta-evaluation criteria, dimensions and rubrics.

#	Meta-evaluation criteria	Meta-evaluation dimensions	Rubrics and ratings	evidence to assess the dimension
DESIGN				
1	Clarity and type of purpose and objectives	1. Level of clarity and type of the main purpose and/or objective of the evaluation	Clarity: very clear (no ambiguities), clear but some ambiguities in different parts of documents, not clear/not mentioned (need guessing) Types of purposes: accountability, improvement, learning, strengthening, combinations	Statement about the objectives/purposes of the evaluation in the evaluation report or the ToR; evaluation questions also screened to assess their coherence with the stated evaluation objective/purpose
2	Adequacy of the evaluation scope	2. Length of evaluation process (from recruitment to report submission/ approval), in months 3. Length of fieldwork phase (days)	Calculus of evaluation budget (scope) only for those with international consultants = (number of evaluators* number of days * average of 400 USD per day), in USD. Calculus of ratio (%) evaluation cost/intervention cost These first two MEv dimensions were also assessed in terms of the clarity of information about it in the reports and ToR and their adequacy in relation to evaluation objectives and data collection tools proposed. Clear, not clear/not mentioned	Comparison between the expected date of launch of evaluation according to the ToR (or report) and the final publication date of evaluation report. Information in the report about the number of days on the field, especially in Annexes detailing the agenda of the mission.
		4. Type of evaluator	National (Senegalese), international, mixed	Names of evaluation team / description of the composition of the evaluation team (ex. Internal staff from Senegalese Ministries) in cover page or methodological section of report or ToR.
3	Clarity about the foreseen utilization focus considered from the design	5. Clarity of identification of potential user/s or clients of the evaluation	Clear, not clear (implicit), not mentioned Types of evaluation users: Donor, national authority, project team, local beneficiaries, combinatio	Assessment of information scattered throughout the report or ToR, very few cases with specific section

#	Meta-evaluation criteria	Meta-evaluation dimensions	Rubrics and ratings	evidence to assess the dimension
		PROCESS		
4	Right stakeholder involvement strategy throughout the process	6. Adequacy of the level and type of involvement of evaluation users	Level: high, standard+, standard and low. Type: involvement during evaluation design (ToR drafting and validation of methodological note), during field mission, during data analysis and interpretation (conclusions and recommendations).	Analysis of the information about methodology and evaluation process in report and ToR, when available.
		7. Adequacy of coverage of stakeholders interviewed	Good (more than 50 people interviewed), limited, not mentioned	Analysis of the mission's agenda included in ToR or any other information in the evaluation report.
		8. Adequacy of diversity of stakeholders interviewed	Good, fair/weak, not mentioned.	
		9. Capacity of evaluators to reach local beneficiaries	Local beneficiaries interviewed, not interviewed	
5	Adequacy of institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation process	10. Commissioner / manager of evaluation	Donor-led, Sector Ministry-led, central national authority delegation, combination, not mentioned	Scattered information throughout the report, some reports or ToR with specific section about roles and responsibilities in evaluation management
		11. Clarity of information about the composition and function of Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC)	Clear information, not clear information Existence of ESC, no functional ESC, not clear/not mentioned	
6	Sufficient transparency and ethics consideration in evaluation process	12. Clarity of information about types of difficulties or challenges during evaluation	Not mentioned, vaguely mentioned, clearly mentioned. Types of difficulties/challenges: time, availability or quality of monitoring data, timing, availability of stakeholders, budget, no constraints, project team collaboration, access to Project sites.	Scattered in the evaluation report, methodology section or specific section about challenges in the report.
		13. Clarity about how ethical aspects were considered and enforced	Clearly mentioned, not mentioned	Scattered in the evaluation report, methodology section or specific section about ethics in the report, if available.

#	Meta-evaluation criteria	Meta-evaluation dimensions	Rubrics and ratings	evidence to assess the dimension
RESULT				
7	Clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choices	14. Clarity about the evaluation policy or guidelines used	Not mentioned/not clear, donor	Analysis of the methodological section of the report (and ToR)
		15. Clarity of justification of evaluation approach used	Not clear justification of approach choice, clear justification Type of approach used: project Logical Framework, participatory approaches, quasi-experimental and specific approaches.	
		16. Clarity of justification of data collection tools used	Not clear justification of the choice of data collection tools, clear justification Types: desk review, (in person) interviews, focus groups, field visits, questionnaires, self-evaluation reports, (distance) interviews, direct stakeholders' assessment, combination	
8	Clarity of evaluation synthesis	17. Robustness of the evidence base of report and logical links between findings, conclusions and recommendations	Very good, good, weak and very weak.	Analysis of the overall coherence and logical links of results section of evaluation report.
		18. Clarity about the process to aggregate or synthetizing results about different dimensions to answer higher-level evaluation questions	Mentioned, not mentioned (general evaluation synthesis and consideration of SD evaluation challenges).	Analysis of conclusions.
		19. Clarity about the value system used to assess the worth and merit of the intervention	Clear, not clear. Only consultants' judgment, others considered	Overall analysis of the evaluation report.

9	Adequacy of consideration of Sustainable Development evaluation challenges	20. Clarity of justification of time coverage of evaluation	Clear justification of years covered by the evaluation, not justified/assumed to be linked to project implementation span	Analysis of data considered and results of evaluations, and any other specific information in the methodology section of report of ToR.
		21. Adequacy of geographical scope of evaluation in relation to project intervention area	Clear justification of coverage of evaluation in relation to project intervention area/ not clear. Geographical scope types: Community/local, regional, national	Analysis of the information included in the introduction or context section of the report, and any other information in Annexes.
		22. Sufficiency of context analysis in the evaluation	Good analysis of the context in relation to the evaluation, Weak analysis	
		23. Adequacy of integration of economic, social and ecological aspects of the evaluand and its context	Consideration of the three SD pillars, only social and economical aspects considered, only ecological aspects considered	Analysis of types of evidence and aspects considered in evaluation results
		24. Extent to what monitoring data could be used in evaluation	Yes, no, not possible (bad quality and quantity of monitoring information)	Analysis of information in methodology section or scattered throughout the report and ToR.
		25. Clarity of justification of the coverage of sites visited in relation to project intervention area	Clear, not clear/vague. Number of sites visited	Analysis of information in methodology section or mission's agenda usually included in Annexes.
10	Sufficient documentation of the evaluation process and result	26. Level of completeness of the report	Very complete, complete, incomplete, very incomplete. (Executive Summary, section on evaluation scope, evaluation methodology, conclusions, recommendations and Annexes. A decreasing level of detail and quality of information of those sections or if they are missing determines the rating)	Analysis of the report's sections and their content.
		27. Level of information about the demand	ToR included in the report , ToR not included in the report.	Inclusion of ToR in report or its annexes, light analysis of their content.
		28. Level of easiness of conducting the Mev based on information and documentation available	Very easy, easy, difficult, very difficult (on the basis of number of MEv dimensions with missing information).	Analysis of results of applying our MEv dimensions to evaluation reports and ToR.

#	Meta-evaluation criteria	Meta-evaluation dimensions	Rubrics and ratings	evidence to assess the dimension
UTILIZATION				
11	Actionable recommendations	29. How good are recommendations in terms of targeting to ease their consideration and potential uptake 30. Clarity of information about the follow-up mechanism to ensure evaluation recommendations are considered or implemented.	Well-targeted recommendations, not well-targeted. Clear mentioned, not mentioned.	Analysis of recommendations included in the evaluation report. Analysis of information about (the intent of) recommendations follow-up in evaluation report or ToR
12	Adequacy of dissemination	31. Clarity of channels of communication of evaluation findings 32. Level of accessibility to the evaluation report	Clearly described, not clearly described/not mentioned Types: general workshops, separate workshop for type of stakeholders, distribution of report by email, report available at a website, hardcopy available at the library of the national authority Easy, not easy	Analysis of information in the evaluation report and ToR about the mechanisms to communicate and disseminate evaluation findings (and the report itself). Analysis of the research journal (level of effort to find the report and procedure used to find it)

Annex H. Detailed findings around the in-depth case studies.

Meta-evaluation of the *expost* evaluation of PRODEFI

Meta-evaluation of the design of the evaluation

1. Clarity of purpose and objectives of evaluation

The Terms of Reference were only available in Japanese and were used to prepare the technical proposal for the competitive tendering by potential consultants. These documents detailing the evaluation purpose, objectives and methodology were in Japanese and were not public. As a proxy, the JICA's Guidelines advised about the purpose of ex-post evaluations: to verify whether the outcomes that the project aimed for are continuing after the end of the cooperation (sustainability aspect related to accountability purposes). The results of *expost* evaluations should be used for the formulation of new phases (improvement purpose) or to extract lessons for future programmes on the macro level (for example JICA's Country Programmes) or improving the overall management of the organization as a whole (learning purpose). Accountability is not mentioned.

According to the memo presenting the *expost* evaluation, the evaluation's aim was to reexamine the situation, operation, maintenance and management of achieved projects in a neutral and impartial way to raise lessons learned for future projects and recommendations for improving interventions of partners and JICA (accountability and improvement). The methodological section of the report emphasized the accountability purpose (to measure the direct and indirect project effects arising from the fact that PRODEFI model was broadly disseminated also to those who did not participate in the training programmes). Therefore, the evaluation purpose was not totally clear and consistent in different evaluation documents. When interviewed, the international evaluator repeated the ideal aims of the exercise (informing Japanese tax payers about the use of funds, accountability, and informing future new phases or similar projects, improvement). Nevertheless, national partners confirmed that the real emphasis was on donor's accountability.

2. Clarity about the foreseen utilization focus considered from the design.

According to JICA's Guidelines, since by the time of an *expost* evaluation the cooperation of JICA has already ended, they usually include recommendations for the partner country organization that is continuing the activities. This was not totally shared by the interviewees and the implicit quotes in the evaluation report. The main audience of the report was the general public, especially Japanese taxpayers. For some Senegalese interviewees, the evaluation was conducted mainly for the Ministry of Environment and JICA, and for the project team in second place. Others also included as the main clients the Senegalese taxpayers, considering that also national funds were involved. This showed that different stakeholders held different perceptions about the uses of the same evaluation process, probably because of the exclusion of certain ones during the conception of the evaluation.

3. Adequacy of evaluation scope

The scope of the mission and the content of the report were agreed between the consultant, JICA Evaluation Unit, the Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo at the beginning of the mission on the basis of a methodological note. This document could not be accessed. The Ministry of Environment of Senegal did not remember to have reviewed this.

No information was found about the budget of the evaluation. The evaluation was conducted by a Japanese consultant and a Senegalese interpreter/translator supported him during fieldwork, but not in data analysis or report writing. A team of staff from the Senegalese Ministry of Environment also contributed to the evaluation through the administration of a previous survey.

The international consultant conducted two missions to Senegal over a period of twelve months, over the average of the evaluation set, although normal for a more ambitious exercise trying to capture longer term impacts. Nevertheless, it was not possible to guess the exact number of consultancy days, including desk review, preparation of data collection tools, data analysis and report writing. Using as a proxy a total of 65 consultancy days, the budget for the international consultant was estimated around USD 39,000 (using a daily rate of USD 600, considering the seniority level of the Japanese consultant). It can be assumed that the local translator was paid around USD 6000 (translation services) and the local staff who administered the survey received around USD 5000 more, for a total evaluation budget of USD 50000. The logistical costs were probably assumed under PRODEFI's budget. This approximation did not include the time that staff of JICA's Country Office and HQ Evaluation Unit or the Ministry of Environment of Senegal contributed to the evaluation process. PRODEFI had a cost of around USD 8 million, the ratio between the evaluation cost and the intervention cost was just 0.0625%, below the average calculated for other seven cases (see Chapter 3). Nevertheless, this is a very rough estimate that seemed too low for comparable impact evaluations based on quasi-experimental approaches, although the limited geographical area of PRODEFI could explain this.

Meta-evaluation of the process of the evaluation

4. Right stakeholder involvement strategy throughout the process.

The report did not include a section describing the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders during PRODEFI evaluation. Evaluation stakeholders were implied from their scattered mention throughout the report, but the evaluation did not identify or explain how and when they were involved in the evaluation. The ToR were entirely drafted in solo by JICA Evaluation Department, excluding the Senegalese Ministry of Environment and the JICA Country Office who were just asked to provide key information about the project and its implementation. Similarly, local authorities or beneficiaries did not participate in the evaluation design and were only interviewed during the fieldwork phase of the international consultant and to answer the survey beforehand. An information memo was sent by JICA to the Senegalese government to inform about the mission and ensure their adherence to the process. This was considered by interviewees as a good procedure to ease the fieldwork, since the national level informed the regional one, and village chiefs were also informed about the objectives of the mission. The Ministry of Environment staff did not join the evaluation fieldwork and only provided documents and was interviewed.

Stakeholders on the field were only interviewed by consultants or participated in the survey some months earlier, but were not associated in any other phase of the evaluation. No evidence was found of any participation through an Evaluation Steering Committee or other structures. Only selected staff from the Ministry of Environment in Senegal and JICA Country Office participated in two brief exchanges with the international consultant where preliminary findings were shared. According to the Japanese consultant, the level of participation during the evaluation was restricted because it was not the purpose of the evaluation. This limited level of participation corresponded to consultation or even placation according to Arnstein's ladder (See chapter 3).

Nevertheless, most of interviewees claimed that the main stakeholders of the project were associated in the evaluation, although the concept of participation seems to be quite restricted. For instance, the Senegalese translator assessed the level of participation as very good because they did not only interviewed people next to the road, they also went deep inside the rural communities. Other interviewees also praised the fact that all stakeholders' types were associated to the evaluation. This evidenced the different perception about the concept of real and meaningful participation in evaluation. The *expost* evaluation of PRODEFI was done with a low level of involvement of stakeholders. For the majority of stakeholders this was a mere "information" with no capacity to influence the design, process, data interpretation and future utilization of the evaluation (one-way flow of information from JICA to the Senegalese

government about the evaluation approach; interviews to gather information about the questions for the survey, some focus groups to get some general information with previously chosen questions). For the Ministry of Environment of Senegal and the JICA Country Office the level of involvement was "consultation" for some stakeholders because they participated in some kick-off meetings with the consultant and commented preliminary findings.

The evaluation reached a high number of stakeholders (around 150 according to the evaluation report), although the majority of them only responded to the questionnaire administered some months before the final field mission of the international consultant. This was above the average number of interviewees in the evaluations set, based on a logical framework approach and using focus groups and individual interviews as main data collection tools. The *expost* evaluation of PRODEFI used a survey that was administered by local staff between the two missions of the international consultant. This might explain this but also was detrimental to the diversity of types of stakeholders (being the majority of them beneficiaries or local representatives).

5. Adequacy of institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation process

The donor Evaluation Unit not only provided guidelines, but also managed the whole process, from drafting and validating the ToR, recruiting the international consultant, providing methodological guidance and validating the report. The Ministry of Environment of Senegal was the only national authority associated, discussing directly with the Japanese consultant about preliminary findings at the end of the first visit to Senegal. At the end of the second visit, a similar process was done, on the basis of a translation of the evaluation report in French. A consensus was found about the comments of the participants, but there was no formal exchange of written comments or control of their inclusion in subsequent versions. The Country Office of JICA in Senegal and the PRODEFI Project Unit only provided logistical support to the consultant, and also assisted to the informal exchanges about preliminary findings of the evaluation. JICA Sector Department at headquarters.

The introductory memo announced a month for receiving comments on the draft report, although there was of a functional Evaluation Steering Committee. The external consultant did not recall having received any comments from Senegalese actors, only from JICA headquarters. Some of the interviewees claimed to have not received any draft version of the report to be commented. This could not be confirmed in the email exchanges with JICA Evaluation Department. Local staff of the Ministry of Environment were associated to administer the questionnaires prepared by the international consultant and a local interpreter/translator accompanied the consultant during the fieldwork and transalted key documents into French.

6. Sufficient transparency and ethics consideration in evaluation process

The introductory memo presenting the mission included the schedule of the evaluation, one year from the launch of the mission (January 2011), the administration of a survey by national staff (local assistants), two missions of 15 days on the field of the Japanese consultant in February and July 2011, and the final report expected to be available in November 2011. This schedule was respected. The evaluation report did not mention any constraints during the evaluation study even when a specific section about this was included in the report. This was confirmed by the interviewees, there were no problems delaying fieldwork or the finalization of the report. Therefore the evaluation planning was timely delivered.

Interviewees considered that resources were used wisely during the evaluation of PRODEFI, as it was the case for the implementation of the project. The relationship between the donor, Japanese experts and the Senegalese counterpart was smooth. The missions conducted by international consultants are usually planned in packages of several evaluations in the same trip. In this case, the Japanese consultant and JICA staff from HQ conducted fieldwork for two evaluations during the same mission, reducing costs. It was not possible to get any information about costs or the

workload division among these two assignments.

The only limitation of the evaluation mentioned in the evaluation report was related to the use of recall techniques during the surveys to villagers and village chiefs. According to interviews, it was unavoidable because of the absence of baseline and weak monitoring data available. No other uncertainties in data or interpretations were mentioned either in the report or during exchanges with stakeholders. For instance, nothing was said about the limitations of using quasi-experimental evaluation approaches or the lack of time for conducting more qualitative exchanges with stakeholders within the PRODEFI area and near regions and no discussion was done about the consequences of the non-random selection of target villages for the evaluation.

The very restricted access to key documents about the evaluation (especially its design) for the general public, researchers and national authorities made the evaluation process not transparent. Moreover, the fact that the questionnaire used was not included in the report and the lack of justification of the chosen assessment dimensions about effectiveness, impact and sustainability hindered the transparency of the evaluation reasoning. Similarly, ethical aspects were not discussed in any of the evaluation documents, neither from a theoretical perspective nor the way they were enforced throughout the evaluation.

Meta-evaluation of the result of the evaluation

The PRODEFI *expost* evaluation report is a 30-paged document plus 9 pages of Annexes for its English version (45 pages in French). After a very short and vague summary section, the report introduces in three pages a description of the project, its intervention area and main objectives and outputs. The evaluation report presents the achievement of the overall goal and project objective separately for the main and the extended phase. It then includes very succint information about the evaluation methodology (section called "outline of the evaluation study"). The next 25 pages of the report are focused on the results of the evaluation. They are organized around evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness and impact, efficiency and sustainability. Most of the results are presented separately by the seven outputs and project objectives of the main and the extended phase. The report includes a section called "impact evaluation" (linked to further information in the Annex). Finally the report presents conclusions and recommendations in one page, along with lessons learned. The Annex of the report (called "Column ») presents the purpose of the evaluation study, and explanation about the data collection procedure and the analytical method of the Project Effects, the results of the regression model and analysis.

7. Clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choices

JICA developed Evaluation guidelines that seemed to guide the exercise,[114] although they were not mentioned in the evaluation report. According to the interviewees, the guidelines available to the public are very general. JICA usually sends more detailed ones to the consultants selected, these are not public. According to the interviewees this more detailed document specified that consultants were not allowed to go beyond the project design. The methodological choice was "instrumental variable regression analysis". The only justification of this selection was that it statistically removes the conditions which already existed in the villages before project implementation. The international consultant considered obvious the advantages of this approach in relation to the rest available, even when the difficulties to understand data analysis for some national partners were reminded to him.

The main data collection tool used was a questionnaire administered to chief villages and beneficiaries from 30 target and 30 non-target villages (similar in terms of natural environment and socio-economic attributes such as economic activities and income), selected through a two-

[114] The "JICA Guideline for Project Evaluation - Practical Methods for Project Evaluation" is available online http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/tech_and_grant/guides/pdf/guideline01-01.pdf (accessed on March 21st, 2014). They were developed in Japanese in March 2004 and translated into English in September 2004 (239 pages).

staged process. The questionnaire developed by consultants could not be accessed. The report did not justify either the choice of evaluation questions or the specific content of the questionnaire. It is possible that this was part of the internal negotiation between the international consultant and the JICA Evaluation Unit included in the methodological note that was not public.

8. Clarity of evaluation synthesis

The choice of the evaluation methodology (quasi-experimental design using regression analysis) was considered by the international consultant as a good way to offer robustness to the evaluation and avoid subjective interpretations. From his perspective, it yielded more sound conclusions in comparison to more usual qualitative-base evaluations. This has been contested by the bibliography in evaluation and it is today acknowledged that mixed methods are the best approach over using "gold standard methodologies" (Bustelo, 2014). Moreover, the documentation of some of the conclusions of the PRODEFI *expost* evaluation was quite limited, since only the questions and aggregated responses were included in the report.

The main arguments and evidence used by the evaluator to assess the evaluation criteria were analysed in order to reconstruct the evaluation synthesis (Davidson, 2014). Efficiency was assessed comparing the time and number of Japanese and Senegalexe experts planned and effectively involved during project implementation. Effectiveness analysed dichotomously the achievement of outputs, without any other information in most of the cases. This was analysed separately for the main phase and for the extension phase instead of aggregating cumulative results over time in order to assess their sustainability after the external assistance, hindering the accomplishment of objectives of an *expost* evaluation according to the JICA's Guidelines. The questionnaire also included some interesting information about an environmental indicator: "number of trees newly planted", using the responses from the chiefs of villages, and without comparing them with inventories of the Department of Forestry of the region. Some inconsistencies in the data based on recall from villagers was justified saying that some trees could have been cut and sold, and others did not grow well and died.

To assess the effectiveness (and impact) the evaluator used impact evaluation techniques in relation to two questions: "degree of activeness in a certain technique" (being 5 very active and 1 not active at all) and "degree of sufficiency of resources necessary for that technique" (being 5 much sufficient resources and 1 not sufficient at all). The nine above-mentioned SLM techniques presented a good level of correlation and statistical significance. The evaluator concluded that this analysis confirmed the activeness of villagers in each SLM activity because they had sufficient resources. Nevertheless, there was a big logical jump from the evidence provided and the conclusion, being the main problem the lack of discussion about the choice of the variables. In relation to the effectiveness in achieving the output related to PRODEFI publicity, the evaluation report highlighted the limited knowledge of PRODEFI model outside the target areas, although potential donors and NGOs were not interviewed to assess the current level of knowledge and adoption of the PRODEFI model. The assessment of the impact of the project was done through the "number of development organizations that implemented the PRODEFI model" and the "number of villagers that continued to use the model" in Nioro Department. The evaluation also used impact evaluation methodologies to examine this using data from a questionnaire to 200 randomly-selected households from target and non-target villages. The evaluator mixed some testimonies of some of the respondents, backing up the general quantitative conclusion that social relationships improved in target villages.

The sustainability of PRODEFI was assessed through the level of continuation of PRODEFI activities by people using their own resources in target villages after project completion (recall responses of 30 village chiefs in 2008, 2009 and 2010) and the effect on villagers' income increase (1 not increase at all and 5 much increased) rated by the chiefs. The evaluation report also noted that two forestry officers of the Nioro Forestry Department were using the PRODEFI model. The evaluation also looked at the use of the model by other donor organizations to assess

sustainability.

The conclusion section in the evaluation report was too synthetic. It would have required some more evidence to back up some of the arguments, while keeping this short format. For the consultant, the quantitative methodology used (impact evaluation) was in line with the Terms of Reference and offered robustness to the conclusions. The rest of interviewees did not point out any discomfort with the conclusions and their robustness. The consultant decided to keep different evaluative dimensions instead of aggregating or weighting them.

The translator/interpreter mentioned that during interviews it was evident that beneficiaries have different priorities from the PRODEFI's objetives, more focused on their subsistence. Nevertheless, after some explanation, interviewees at local level understood that they had to answer in relation to the project's objectives. In his opinion, local knowledge was praised during the evaluation and gave some examples of tree plantation or old techniques used by farmers that were improved by PRODEFI. The report did not echo those potential different value systems around the evaluation. The fact that the questions of the survey were only conceived by the external consultant constraint the possibility to include multiple perspectives or rationales to interpret findings or the overall success/failure continuum in relation to the project. Donor's values seem to be the ones used since the straitjacket of the logframe was narrowly used by the consultant in this mainly accountability-oriented evaluation.

Another dimension to assess the clarity of evaluation synthesis was related to the completeness of evaluation criteria and questions. The evaluator's proposal was compared to the JICA's guidelines about *expost* evaluations. According to JICA's guidelines, *expost* evaluations should only focus on two evaluation criteria: impact and sustainability[115]. The verification of efficiency and effectiveness should have been already completed in the terminal evaluation. Only if necessary, *expost* evaluations would analyse relevance. In spite of these orientations, the memo (and probably also the ToR) asked the consultant to assess the project using the 5 DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability). This is different from the focus recommended by the JICA 2004 Evaluation Guidelines, as mentioned above.

9. Adequacy of consideration of Sustainable Development evaluation challenges

The time coverage of evaluation was not clearly justified, especially for an *expost* evaluation. The evaluation analysed the results of the main and the extension phase separately for most of the evaluation criteria (with the exception of sustainability), instead of aggregating them as the JICA's guidelines recommend. In relation to the geographical coverage, the evaluation covered the 30 PRODEFI villages, along with some control villages to establish some comparisons. Considering that PRODEFI had important up-scaling objectives (replication of the integrated community forestry management model), some more interviews to key staff of Ministry of Environment in other regions should have been added during the evaluation process. The *expost* evaluation did not cover if other donors were promoting a similar approach in other regions or the assessment of the value added of PRODEFI model.

The information about the context of the evaluation was too limited in the memo and the *expost* evaluation report (just a paragraph with very general information about Senegal and the desertification trend and natural resources depletion). There was no clear information about the socioeconomic context or more detailed information about the environmental problems in the target zone. The quantity and quality of information about the context was insufficient to justify

[115] "Impact" is expected to appear after a certain period of time after the end of the cooperation, easily influenced by factors other than the project, it is important to check the causal relationships of the cooperation project. Examinations of impact cover broad areas of the target society, grasping tendencies. "Sustainability" looks at whether the effect is continually produced after the end of the cooperation. For example, in training and dissemination projects (like PRODEFI), evaluators should look at the implementation status of trainings, the development of teaching materials and if the work continued in a new form.

the adequacy of the approach and the methodology applied and its future utilization. The consultant denounced the weak quality of monitoring data about the project. This prompted the need to conduct a survey to reconstruct the baseline situation using recall techniques. This data collection tool allowed a good coverage of sites visited in relation to the intervention area.

According to the variables used in the *expost* evaluation, the analysis was focused on the uptake of forestry technologies and the transmission to other villagers. Very limited information was included about environmental and economic dimensions of SD. When asked if they thought that variables related to the overall state of the environment and impacts on poverty levels of those communities should have been included, interviewees highlighted that the evaluation was based on the achievement of PRODEFI targets, which did not include those types of indicators. This confirmed that in spite of the use of the quasi-experimental methodology, the PRODEFI *expost* evaluation was also a logical framework-based evaluation. For other interviewees, the budget of PRODEFI was too small and the time period too short to see any environmental impact on the ground. Moreover the emphasis was on the transmission of knowledge and practice amongst villagers, and not the environmental change.

10. Sufficient documentation of the evaluation process and result

Lots of the documents about the evaluation process were not public and could not be accessed, in spite of JICA's permission to conduct this study (see table above). This hindered the capacity to assess the completeness of the evaluation report in relation to the quality criteria of JICA. The PRODEFI *expost* report was considered as incomplete, because it did not have a proper Executive Summary and the methodology section was very weak. The evaluation report was quite succinct in information about the context and evaluation process. In spite of this lack of documentation, the majority of information required for the meta-evaluation could be at least implied in the scattered documents. Only 7 MEv dimensions could not be informed (easy to conduct), although the quality and level of detail was very weak. The access to some key stakeholders was also limited, as it has been discussed earlier. No further information about the potential utilization and users of the evaluation was included in the report published in JICA's website or was mentioned during interviews.

Meta-evaluation of the utilization of the expost evaluation of PRODEFI

11. Actionable recommendations

The recommendations of the evaluation were firstly summarized in the evaluation report. They were mainly addressed to the government of Senegal as JICA's guidelines recommend for *expost* evaluations. The evaluation report added some information about the early reaction to those recommendations, although it was contradictory at different parts of the report. The lessons learned section repeated the same idea of one of the recommendations. According to interviewees, all recommendations were feasible but highly dependent on the willingness of the Senegalese government. Although these recommendations were well targeted, their level of real feasibility was uncertain because they were dependent on not secured resources. There was no evidence of any system of management response or tracking of the implementation of the recommendations emerging from the evaluation. No signs of efforts were found to link project evaluation findings and the overall knowledge management system of the Ministry of Environment or JICA.

12. Adequacy of dissemination

The *expost* evaluation memo said that "homologues" (Senegalese partners) would be informed about evaluation results. The report was also available to the general public at JICA's website. There was no formal restitution workshop about the preliminary findings of the evaluation with key actors in Senegal. The only interaction was a tripartite meeting with the directors of units and other management staff of the Ministry of Environment, representatives of the Office of JICA in

Dakar and the project unit of PRODEFI. According to interviews, other stakeholders were afterwards informed, but no more information was provided so this could not be further analysed. There were no workshops in Tokyo, the only method to disseminate the report was the JICA website (easy access for those with an Internet connection). Nevertheless, only the final report was translated into French (not considered an official version for the donor), being most of the key documents of the design and process of evaluation in Japanese or English, and not public. This was considered as a quite restricted dissemination procedure that hindered the appropriation and utilization of the evaluation process by national partners.

For some of the interviewees, the task of disseminating the results to the local level should be done by the local staff of the Ministry of Environment. Nevertheless, the interview with one of them showed that they were not (yet) informed of the results of the evaluation. No other channels of communication of evaluation results are mentioned in any of the available documents.

13. Level of credibility of the evaluation

JICA's choice of third-party evaluators seems to implicitly try to enhance their credibility through independence and objectivity. The external evaluator (Japanese) did not speak or write French. There was no Senegalese evaluator to team up with him, but only an interpreter/translator who helped during the fieldwork phase. This Senegalese consultant also coordinated other research assistants on the field (5 local people who administered the survey). The Japanese consultant considered that the relationship of the translator with local people was smooth and very collaborative. From the consultants' perspective, there were no problems related to their credibility, all Senegalese actors were very cooperative with the evaluation team and they understood the need of the evaluation. No other interviewees mentioned any problem related to credibility of evaluators or the evaluation process and result.

From the international consultant's perspective, the choice of the evaluation approach and methodology offered lots of credibility to the evaluation. This was not reinforced by the rest of interviews. The general opinion of other interviewees was in line to "any other evaluation exercise managed by a donor", without emphasizing about the methodology, its robustness or credibility. One key representative of national authorities acknowledged his problems to understand the functioning of the quasi-experimental method used.

14. Effective evaluation utilization.

One of the pretended uses of the project evaluation was for future designs and approval of a new JICA projects (improvement). JICA staff claimed to have used it for new formulations. The Ministry of Environment in Senegal could have also used the evaluation to include some key PRODEFI activities under their budget. Interviewees recognised that was the plan, but resources are always short without external financing. Nevertheless, they tried to promote some of the "successful" technologies of PRODEFI model (according to the evaluation) to other projects in Senegal, like PROGERT. Other interviewees also mentioned that the evaluation could also be useful to improve the practice of evaluation of those types of interventions. Nevertheless, no one was aware of this having happened. It was surprising that none of the interviewees mentioned the utilization of this *expost* evaluation to assess the sustainability of project's interventions. Therefore, due to the limited evidence about the utilization of the evaluation for other purposes, this *expost* evaluation seems to have only be useful for justifying the use of public resources and the compliance with agreed rules and standards (accountability).

Meta-evaluation of the final evaluation of FLCD-RPS

Meta-evaluation of the design of the evaluation

1. Clarity of purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The object of the evaluation included in the ToR was quite vague: "final evaluation of all microprojects and activities of the NRM programme in the three ZARESE". The objective mentioned in the evaluation report was similar, although more elaborated in the methodological note that consultants presented before the fieldwork: "measuring efficiency and effectiveness of activities in relation to initial objectives and generating knowledge including the identification of best practices and lessons learned. Therefore, accountability and learning objectives were included, since the evaluation was conceived as part of the set of knowledge gathered by the M&E function of the project. The report reinforced this idea, mentioning objectives related to accountability (direct use of donors and executing agency) and learning (more addressed to national authorities at different levels).

Surprisingly, the Terms of Reference explicitly considered this exercise as both "evaluation" and "capitalization" in order to show the realisations of FLCD-RPS, to share lessons learned, to evaluate the implementation of activities within a capitalization process of the obtained benefits. The mix of objectives between a traditional project evaluation and a restricted concept of capitalization (raising key information about the bright spots of the project implementation and results, See Section 2.3 of this research) hindered the clarity of purpose and quality of the final report.

2. Clarity about the foreseen utilization focus considered from the design

The potential users or clients of the evaluation were not clearly identified in the evaluation report, although it was implicit assumed that it was firstly done for the national authority (Ministry of Environment, manager of the evaluation), and secondly for donors. The answers got from interviewees were not very categorical about this.

3 Adequacy of the evaluation scope

There was no information about the evaluation budget. The length of the evaluation process could be guessed comparing the date of the ToR and the final report: 11 months with a very restricted one-week fieldwork. Security issues that prevented the evaluation team visiting one of the ZARESEs played in favour of this limited time. Evaluators made a good use of resources through the help of a questionnaire to the beneficiaries that was administered by local staff of the Ministry of Environment and focal points at the community level. Nevertheless, the bias introduced by this method was not discussed in the evaluation report.

In this case, it was extremely difficult to guess the daily rates that national consultants received for this assignment. During interviews evaluation managers acknowledged that the main reason to have discarded international consultants was the very limited budget available for the final evaluation. It was not even possible to hire two national consultants. In fact the second consultant was a civil servant who was seconded by the Ministry to accompany the external consultant. It could be assumed that he only obtained some per diem during fieldwork.

The evaluation was not definitely capable to embrace the regional level of FLCD-RPS. The evaluation conclusions totally oversaw the inclusion of the project within a subregional endeavour. The fact that the evaluation was only focused in Senegal made difficult the comparative analysis with the three Sahelian countries in terms of implementation strategies, results or future prospects. The evaluators admitted that they did not get any contact with the

regional coordination structure (CILSS). They focused their efforts in getting as much information as possible from Senegalese actors.

Meta-evaluation of the process of the evaluation

4. Right stakeholder involvement strategy throughout the process.

The evaluation report listed the main FLCD-RPS stakeholders ignoring some stakeholders at the international and regional level (Italian cooperation, IAO and CILSS). The Italian NGOs that also supported with technical assistance the implementation of the project were not involved in the design and process of the evaluation (and were only mentioned once in the evaluation report). The overall level of involvement of stakeholders during the different phases of the evaluation was assessed as standard. According to the interviews, the ToR of the final evaluation were drafted by the team at the Ministry of Environment who took in charge the central management of the FLCD-RPS in 2008 (project coordinator and M&E specialist). According to them, they shared the ToR with the National Committee of rural communities, CNCR (representatives of beneficiaries). This could not be verified since it was not possible to locate any representative of them. By that time, the rest of the project team (especially those on the field) were already gone and they did not participate in drafting the ToR. They were only interviewed by consultants.

During the evaluation process, local staff of the Soils Conservation Unit of the Ministry of Environment and local populations were the main stakeholders in direct contact with evaluators. The evaluation report explained how the Project Coordinator asked the deconcentrated staff of the Ministry of Environment at the ZARESE to facilitate the field phase of the evaluation. They were the ones who arranged the agenda for the evaluators. The final list of interviewees (both through the questionnaire, interviews and focus groups) was included in Annex of the report. More than 100 people were mentioned, most of them people at the local (village) level. This number aggregated those interviewed by deconcentrated staff of the Ministry of Environment before the real fieldwork of the two consultants (survey). The diversity of stakeholders was considered as weak since only national and local ones were associated to the evaluation.

5. Adequacy of institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation process

The M&E specialist of the Ministry of Environment managed the evaluation, from drafting the ToR, recruiting national evaluators, commenting draft reports and validating the final version. There was no mention in the evaluation report of the establishment of an Evaluation Steering Committee to orient evaluators during the evaluation process. According to interviews, consultants only stablished regular contact with the staff of the Ministry of Environment who directly managed the evaluation. According to the evaluation managers, the timing of the evaluation did not allow any deeper participation from other key stakeholders, for instance the Project Steering Committee members, since the project already phased out. Neither the ToR, the evaluation report nor the interviewees mentioned the use of any formal procedure to ensure quality control of the evaluation. The evaluators did not receive any guidelines about the expected content of the report. They applied their own professional standards and some deontological considerations.

As part of the process, and according to the ToR, the consultants had to send a draft version of the report to the evaluation manager before finalization. It was assumed that this was shared with the executing agency (UNOPS) and CILSS, although this could not be confirmed. The evaluation team recalled to have received comments from UNOPS (especially in relation to financial statements) and from the Ministry of Environment. No records of these exchanges were kept. The role of CILSS and IAO during the final evaluation of FLCD-RPS was not clear, but it seemed to have been negligible, according to interviews and the lack of mention in the evaluation report.

6. Sufficient transparency and ethics consideration in evaluation process

No details about the time necessary to approve the ToR and recruit the national consultant were documented. As a proxy, from the date of the last version of the Terms of Reference and the date of the evaluation report, almost a year was needed to complete the exercise. The mission involved a one-week trip to two of the ZARESEs, which seemed to be slightly below the common practice of two weeks. It was not possible to access any preliminary versions of the report in order to assess the timeliness of its presentation, the comments received from stakeholders, among others.

The only limitation mentioned in the evaluation report was related to the security restrictions that prevented the consultants to visit one of the ZARESE (the one in Casamance, affected by an internal conflict). Assumptions and data uncertainty were not explictly mentioned in the report and no reflection was done about the shortcomings of the evaluation approach and methodology. For instance, the potential bias of answers collected through a survey conducted by the Ministry staff at local level was not discussed. No other challenges were mentioned in the report or raised by interviewees.

Among the methodological principles to be used during the evaluation, "integrity" (conflict of interest, lack of professional conduct or false representation) and "respect of confidentiality" (right of participants to provide information in a trustworthy manner) were mentioned in the methodological note and the report in a general way. Although insufficient, this attempt to disclose their values and deontological principles was more than the usual practice in the rest of 40 evaluation reports.

Meta-evaluation of the results of the evaluation

The report of the final evaluation of the FLCD-RPS is a 54-page long document, with 28 pages of Annexes, including the Terms of Reference. It presents in pages 11-30 a description of a sample of microprojects in the three ZARESE. It offers a very succinct description of the investment, the year when the microproject was chosen, a picture, costs, beneficiary population and the main expected benefits (according to the testimonies of beneficiaries). The results of the evaluation are then presented in 15 pages mixing up evaluation criteria and other more general dimensions. Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations are the last sections of the evaluation report.

7. Clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choices

The consultants presented a "methodological note" before starting the field mission (the "itinerary of the evaluation framework of FLCD-RPS"). No specific Evaluation Policy was mentioned, only logframe and results-based approaches. The evaluation presented its findings following more or less the standard OECD evaluation criteria. There was no epistemological reflection about this choice. Triangulation was mentioned as giving more robustness to findings (use of different evaluation tools and collecting information from different stakeholders at different levels).

The data collection tools used were document review (all documents were listed in an Annex), interviews and focus groups, questionnaires and field visits of a sample of sites to assess the technical and visual quality of works. A clear description of the representation of the sites visited in relation to the total was given for the three ZARESE. In order to conduct more systematical data collection and analysis, the evaluators used several tailored methods that were included in the report (an 8-paged evaluation matrix organized by evaluation criteria with questions, indicators, sources; a five open-ended questionnaire for national partners about strategic aspects of the project; and a questionnaire for local beneficiaries). Interesting information was provided about the targeting process of project village focal points to choose the interviewees (gender balance, inclusion-exclusion criteria). The report was very detailed about the number of responses (180 responses to questionnaires), including descriptions of gender, age and occupation of respondents.

8. Clarity of evaluation synthesis

The ToR and the methodological note drafted by consultants were slightly different and not very clear in relation to the evaluation criteria and questions considered in the evaluation. On the one hand, the ToR were not very well targeted in terms of orienting consultants towards key evaluation criteria. A list of 18 tasks for consultants was included in the ToR mixing key information about evaluation criteria with phases of the evaluation process. The evaluation criteria mentioned in the ToR were not ordered or prioritized. The evaluation criteria proposed by consultants were quality of design, internal pertinence and external coherence with national strategies, efficiency (operational and management model of FLCD-RPS), effectiveness at technical and financial level (achievement of expected results), contribution to capacity development, contribution to objectives of fighting desertification and poverty, impact and sustainability and appropriation by national and local partners, potential duplication.

The logical links to assess efficiency were not robust because it was not clear if costs presented in the report were the real ones or the expected ones. This information was too descriptive to be considered as "an evaluation » and too rough to be considered as "a capitalization ». The only point the report was clear was that evaluators visited some of the investments presented in the evaluation report and discussed with beneficiaries. Some incoherences were found between the text of the report and the information in the Evaluation Matrix in an Annex. For instance, some questions in the Matrix related to aid effectiveness (appropriation, harmonization, results-based management, mutual accountability) were not considered in the report.

The information and evidence provided to assess the level of achievement of the results of the microprojects was very descriptive and limited. Some estimates of impact of the project on local beneficiaries' income were interesting, based on their responses. This was complemented by some examples from the answers of beneficiaries (reduction of transport cost of children thanks to a new school classroom, reduction of costs of livestock management thanks to the creation of village vaccination pens, accrual microfinance access at the village level).

For the component related to NRM, the evaluator mentioned some behavioural changes of population in relation to wood harvesting, the extension of garden centres (nurseries) and market gardening without providing more data or figures. Another interesting point, although not sufficiently backed up with evidence, was the raise awareness results of some opinion leaders in relation to the interactions of desertification, natural resources degradation and poverty. This was surprising when it was acknowledged in the report and by the interviewees that the increase in investment in NRM was a formal decision of the Steering Committee to reorient the project due to the low prioritization from local population.

In order to assess the sustainability of the effects of the project, the evaluation proposed a quite ambiguous question to beneficiaries, with no conclusive findings. The evaluator proposed a method using eight indicators in a 1-5 scale based on expert judgment (participatory approach at all levels, capacity development at grassroots level, involvement of local technical structures, adequacy of technical proposals to local context, local appropriation of techniques in relation to future duplication, monitoring database of achievements of project, integration of project activities in Forest Service agenda, resources mobilization schema in place to ensure sustainability). It was not clear from this analysis who were the "experts" who provided this assessment.

Although some of the "evaluation reasoning" of the consultants was quite clear, the openness of the reasoning in relation to its shortcomings and uncertainties was not very well developed. The majority of results and conclusions of the evaluation were presented as if enough evidence was gathered, when it was obvious that triangulation was not possible.

The conclusion section was very weak, just three paragraphs focused on the evaluation criterion of "pertinence". Therefore, conclusions were not explicitly justified and accompanied with qualitative and/or quantitative analysis. The lessons learned section included was not used to reinforce the main ideas emerging from the evidence presented in the results section and it was organized in the form of bullet points without any connection with the rest of the text. Similarly, the next section Constraints was also very long, and not related to factors that negatively affected project implementation.

In spite of the Terms of Reference explicitly conceiving the exercise as a capitalization, no information about the learning arising from the experience of different stakeholders was included in the report. From its consideration as an evaluation, the report did not either offer different evaluative interpretations, for instance, distinguishing the visions from different levels (supranational, national, regional or ZARESE level and local/community level). Opinions coming from different types of stakeholders were confounded in the report, and the majority of conclusions about results seemed to be based on the own judgment of consultants.

9. Adequacy of consideration of Sustainable Development evaluation challenges.

Both the ToR and the consultants' methodological note clearly stated that the evaluation would be focused in project activities, understood as the 197 microprojects and 42 activities/projects of the NRM programme implemented in Senegal. Therefore, the scope and purpose of the evaluation was an output-based evaluation or a capitalization of the scattered interventions in the three ZARESE.

In relation to time, the evaluation report did not try to include a longer time frame than the 5 years of implementation of the project. The report offered very little and mixed information about outputs from microprojects approved in different years, without having a clear approach about the challenges to assess the prospects of contribution to long-term effects.

Nothing was said about the geographical space to consider the local, national and regional level. The evaluation analysis unit (study object) was the Project, according to its logical framework. In relation to geographical spatial coverage of the evaluation, a great effort was made in visiting a good sample of intervention sites and having discussions with beneficiaries groups and local representatives. The evaluation was responsive to the national level, but neglected the regional level and the articulation of the Senegalese FLCD-RPS with the other Sahelian countries and the CILSS coordination. Upper-level objectives at the regional were totally ignored.

The need "to determine to what extent microprojects contributed to fighting desertification and reducing poverty in the intervention zones through the assessment of the quality of project results" was only mentioned once in the Terms of Reference. The information in the ToR and the evaluation report about the context of the evaluation was totally insufficient, especially the analysis of relevance of solutions proposed in relation to local challenges. The change promoted by the microproject and the local development process associated was not analysed.

The evaluation report denounced the low concentration of microprojects to promote sustainable NRM and fight desertification due to the demand-approach used during the first years of implementation. Therefore, according to evaluators, the environmental dimension was neglected during implementation to balance the three dimensions of SD. The evaluation did not find how to address this limitation. Moreover, it replicated a unisectorial approach when analysing the relevance of the project only in relation to the Forest Policy, instead of considering the multi-sector nature of desertification and land management. The fact that the ToR and the administrative supervision of the project was under the Forest and Soils Conservation Unit (DEFCCS) of the Ministry of Environment may explain this bias. It was also surprising when it was acknowledged in the ToR that the majority of the microprojects funded were not focused on NRM or forest

management, but the majority of them were focused on social community infrastructure and economic activities.

10. Sufficient documentation of the evaluation process and result

The evaluation process of FLCD-RPS was not very well documented, no information was available about the process of drafting and validating the ToR, the recruitment of consultants, draft versions of the report and comments received, or any tracking system to ensure that all comments were incorporated in the final version. The evaluation report was considered as "complete" because all the usual sections were included. Nevertheless, there were some information gaps and sections too vague and not very well-targeted to foster evaluation utilization. Only 5 meta-evaluations dimensions were missing like the average of the rest of evaluations ("very easy to meta-evaluate").

Meta-evaluation of the utilization of the evaluation

11. Actionable recommendations

The recommendations were too vague and not targeted by responsible actor, without deadlines and clear actions. Four out of the seven recommendations were related to implementation modalities. Their wording was problematic and nothing was said about how to operationalize them. Some recommendations did not have any connection with findings and conclusions, for instance one recommended to develop a regional strategy when the evaluation neglected this level throughout the whole exercise. Similarly, the recommendation related to prepare a second phase of the FLCD-RPS did not discuss its real feasibility, but some of interviewees showed some skepticism about them.

Nothing was mentioned in the report about a mechanism to ensure the implementation of recommendations (follow-up). According to the interviewees at the Ministry of Environment, there was no formal mechanism to ensure this. The Unit in charge of monitoring and feeding the policy-making process at the Ministry of Environment (CEPS) did not develop any mechanism to ensure the uptake of evaluation conclusions.

12. Adequacy of dissemination

The evaluation report did not mention any communication channels of the report or any other product of the evaluation process. It was surprising that the final evaluation report was not available in the CILSS website dedicated to the Fund. Some of the interviewees, who played a key role during the implementation of the Fund, did not receive the report. According to the interviews, there was no workshop to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Only the commissioner, the staff from the Ministry of Environment in Dakar, were dully informed and kept an electronic copy of the ToR and the final report. There was no evidence of tailored communication to beneficiaries at the local level, apart from their sporadic interaction with the staff from the Ministry of Environment. Similarly there was no feedback provided to those evaluated. For instance the ASPRODEB coordinator did not receive a copy of the report, and it would be quite surprising if CILSS or the Italian partners were aware of the interim and final findings of the evaluation.

It was not easy to find either the Terms of Reference or the Evaluation Report. They were only available at the level of the Ministry of Environment's evaluation manager. None of the rest of interviewees received a copy of the final version of the report.

13. Level of credibility of the evaluation

During interviews no credibility issues in relation to evaluators emerged. The national consultant had a well-known consultancy company in Dakar that had undertaken different evaluations for different partners. The evaluation report did not mention any particular ethical considerations during the fieldwork phase, as the rest of evaluations. It could be assumed that both consultants, being Senegalese with long experience in the sector, had the cultural competencies and skills for these types of missions.

The external consultant of the final evaluation conceived this evaluation as contributing to the "bulk of knowledge gathered by the M&E Unit of the project". Objectives related to evaluation and capitalization were mixed in the same exercise. Nevertheless, capitalization seemed to be limited to the restricted understanding of this approach, the one focused on practices and not experience, prioritizing success over failure or perfectible dimensions. None of the interviewees had problems with this and did not raise any problems of credibility of the evaluation in terms of independence.

The evaluation/capitalization report was considered as a "standard exercise" by the main stakeholders interviewed. Nevertheless, some of them were quite critical because they were not sufficiently associated to the evaluation process (or even interviewed) in spite of their key role during implementation. This research did not find any concerns among stakeholders related to the fact that part of the findings were based on surveys conducted by staff from the Ministry of Environment, partly evaluated in the exercise.

14. Effective evaluation utilization

For the interviewees at the Ministry of Environment all evaluations are used through the inclusion of some follow-up activities in the national budget. For instance, in this case, reforestation activities continued without external support although the link with evaluation recommendations was not clear. National authorities also tried to continue the support to the microprojects, in spite of the limited resources. This was assessed as a too vague statement, difficult to sustain with evidence. None of the recommendations of the evaluation, most of them related to a potential second phase had been applied so far by the time of the interviews. None of the interviewees mentioned any other utilization of the evaluation process during the exchanges. No further information about the attempts to share lessons learned among the four countries where the FLCD-RPS took place (utilization dimension) was found.

Meta-evaluation of the final evaluation of PROGERT

Meta-evaluation of the design of the final evaluation of PROGERT

1. Clarity and type of purpose and objectives of the evaluation

According to the ToR, the global objective was "to conduct after 5 years of implementation, a final evaluation according to initial objectives and to formulate recommendations". As specific objectives of the evaluation, the ToR listed the evaluation criteria and some ideas of the expected dimensions to assess them. This accountability objective was focused on assessing the worth and merit of the intervention, in relation to its expected objectives. The ToR were in line with GEF and UNDP requirements and the basic information about the project implementation was included. For most of the interviewees for this meta-evaluation, the Terms of Reference were clear and correct bearing in mind that they were a tradeoff among different stakeholders. Other actors thought that the ToR could have been reinforced to include some of the weaknesses of the monitoring system, for instance explicitly asking consultants to assess the economic impact of some SLM approaches promoted by the project.

The consultants were more critical about the quality of the ToR. They considered they were too vague and this forced them to complete the content of the ToR considering the 2008 GEF Directives (2012 in French). The national authority in charge of the management of the evaluation, the DPN, appointed specialized staff to manage evaluations according to the policy sector. Nevertheless, the effort to tailor the ToR to the environmental sector was quite limited. ToR for evaluations prepared for other sectors by DPN had almost the same content. This poses questions about the capacity to mainstream donors' requirements but, more importantly, the main evaluation questions useful for policy-making in that subsector. The evaluation report echoed the GEF Evaluation guidelines in relation to the accountability-oriented purpose of the terminal evaluation of PROGERT, related to transparency according to the report. It also included among the evaluation purpose to synthesize lessons for future activities (improvement) and to report on the effectiveness of GEF operations in achieving global environmental benefits. Therefore, accountability and improvement/learning objectives were mixed, although the accountability dimension was stronger.

2. Clarity about the foreseen utilization focus considered from the design.

The evaluation report was quite clear in terms of determining the first audience and client: the Global Environmental Facility, although in some parts of the report it was also mentioned the Senegalese government. This was confirmed by all interviewees. The majority placed firstly the donor, while national authorities were mentioned in second place. In some cases this was justified because the project document already included the evaluation and the approaches and methods of the donor are the ones used. Some emphasized that the main audience was the national authority over donors that were only supporting national endeavours, but it was not clear if that was the ideal or the real situation in PROGERT's evaluation.

Two different national authorities were mentioned as the main audience of the evaluation: Ministry of Finances and the Ministry of Environment as the administrative supervision entity of the project. The majority of the interviewees for PROGERT hinted that in order to maximize the possibilities of uptake and utilization of the evaluation, the Ministry in charge of those types of interventions should manage and be the main actor of the evaluation. Therefore, the role of the central National Planning Unit (DPN) of the Ministry of Economy and Finances was downgraded as hindering the potential utilization of evaluation conclusions and recommendations. Only in two cases beneficiaries and institutions at local level were mentioned as the main audience.

3. Adequacy of the evaluation scope

The budget of the evaluation was estimated through three MEv dimensions: length of evaluation process, length of fieldwork phase, and type of evaluator. The evaluation team was composed by an international consultant and a Senegalese consultant. The thoroughful documentation of the evaluation process by DPN allowed a detailed analysis of the internal stages of negotiation around the evaluation design, including minutes where the contributions of different Evaluation Steering Committee members were recorded.

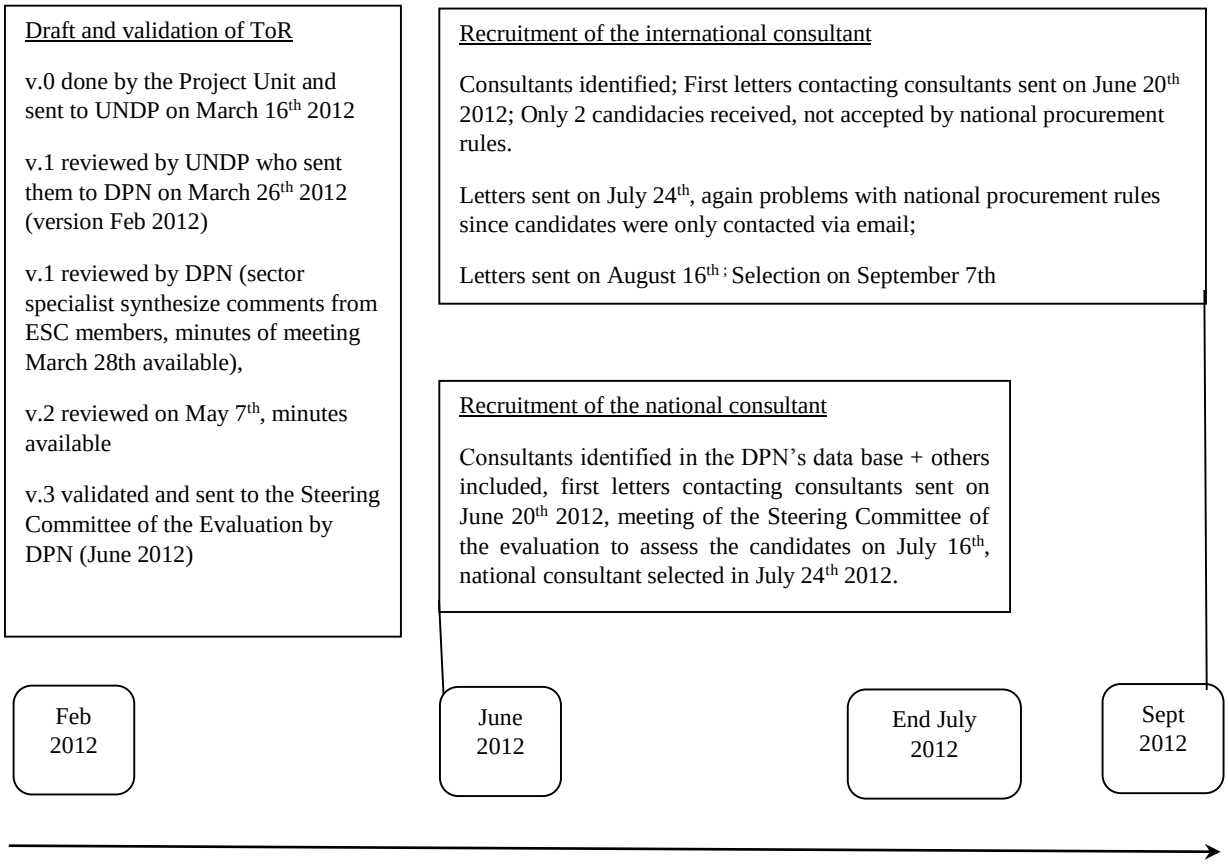


Figure 60. Main phases of evaluation design of PROGERT evaluation.

This figure showed that ToR were commented and reviewed during three months from a first draft written by the PROGERT Project Unit, reviewed by UNDP and validated by the DPN. Once ToR were validated, the recruitment of the evaluation team was launched. The problems during the recruitment of the international consultant affected the timeliness of the mission.

The following Figure details the stages of the evaluation from the launch of the mission until the validation of the final report and later dissemination of evaluation findings and recommendations to the Ministry of Economy and Finances. The field mission had the usual length for these types of evaluations and the draft and final versions of the report were ready at a reasonable time. While the draft version was circulated in December, the final report with comments incorporated was available in March 2013. The short time of consultants on the field (1-9 November) was mentioned as a limit for the evaluation scope, being PROGERT an intervention in different regions of the country. Consultants were quite critical about the overambitious scope of the evaluation in the ToR considering the means and time available. A big effort to sample some intervention sites was made.

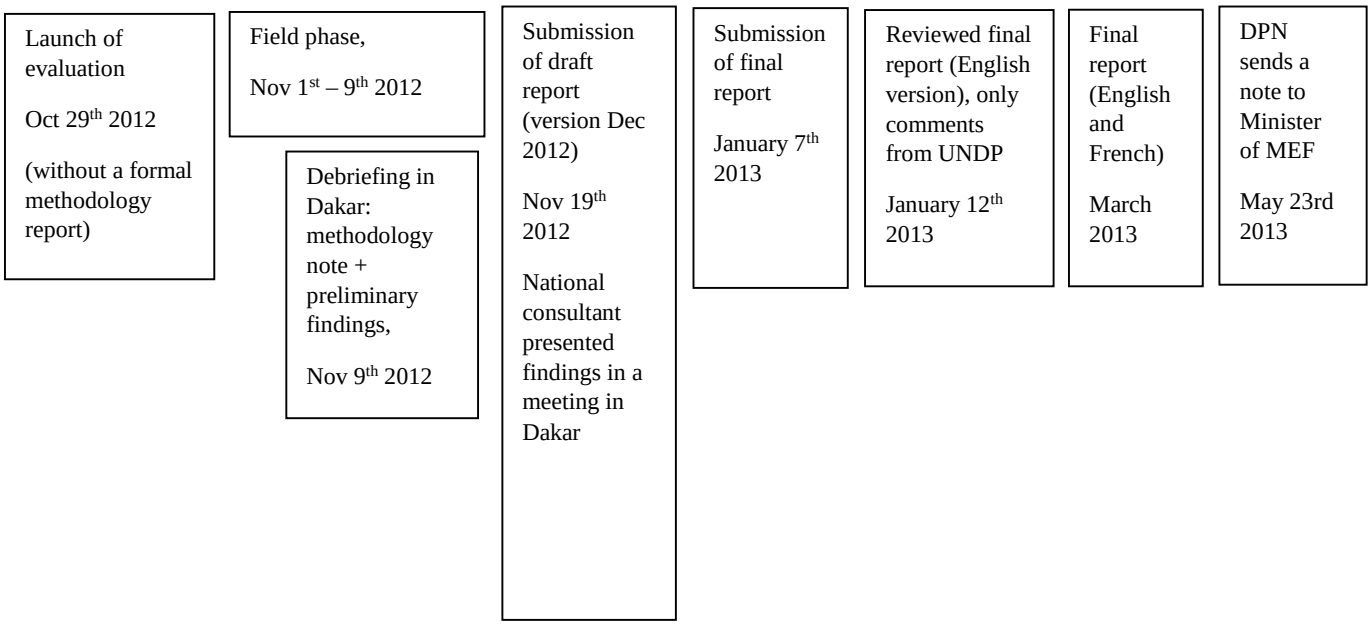


Figure 61. Main phases of the PROGERT evaluation process.

The total evaluation process took one year (and two months more if the briefing note sent to the Minister of Economy and Finances is considered). It was not clear how many work days the consultants were paid, but at least 30 days taking into consideration the fieldwork time and the writing phase. The cost for the international consultant was estimated around USD 18,000 (using daily rate of USD 600, because of her long experience and seniority level). It is estimated that the national consultant was paid around USD 6000 for his support during fieldwork and restitutions; while the local staff who administered the survey received around USD 3000 more, for a total evaluation budget of USD 27000. The logistical costs were probably assumed under PROGERT budget. This yielded a ratio of 0,12% when comparing the cost of the final evaluation with the total cost of the intervention. This is below the average obtained for other 7 evaluations of the set that included information in the report to calculate this ratio (0,28 %), but quite higher than the 0.06% calculated for PRODEFI *expost* evaluation.

Meta-evaluation of the process of the final evaluation of PROGERT

4. Right stakeholder involvement strategy throughout the process

This criterion was assessed through the combination of four MEv dimensions: adequacy of the level and type of involvement of evaluation users, adequacy of coverage of stakeholders interviewed, adequacy of diversity of stakeholders interviewed, and capacity of evaluators to reach local beneficiaries.

PROGERT evaluation management entailed some level of partnership (using Arnstein's ladder terminology) because different institutional stakeholders participated in the drafting and validation of the ToR, preliminary findings and draft reports through the Evaluation Steering Committee. The project team and some members of the Project Steering Committee conducted a visit to inform local stakeholders about the evaluation field mission, its objectives and use, and to foster their active participation some weeks before the arrival of consultants. There was also a high involvement of the project coordinator during the field mission. This might have positive and negative effects on the evaluation process. On one hand this seems like a good strategy to sensitize local-level stakeholders about the importance of evaluation but could also be a source of bias since beneficiaries can associate the evaluation with project implementers and the possibility of receiving future assistance.

DPN's role as the main evaluation manager and chair of the ESC was limited to administrative procedures and chairing ESC meetings because of the lack of budget to accompany consultants to the field at key stages of the evaluation process and the overburden of its staff with other tasks. From donors' side, UNDP participated in the Evaluation Steering Committee, through its country office representative. GEF Evaluation Office did not participate in this project-level evaluation. They only regularly check in an aggregate form the compliance of evaluations managed by the executing agencies (like UNDP) with the GEF Evaluation Policy. They use the reviews conducted by UNDP Evaluation Office (standardized ratings of evaluation reports), taking a subsample of this oversight tool (Annual Performance Report, where terminal evaluations quality is assessed). The PROGERT final evaluation was too recent to have been included in this report.

Several interesting points where raised during the interviews about the effective functioning of the ESC in this real-world evaluation. For instance, several interviewees recommended ESC members to receive supporting documents about the project, not only the ToR and the draft report to be commented. Nevertheless others argued that this would not be a problem if those participating in the ESC were already involved the design and implementation of the project. In any case, ESC members should be associated from the beginning of the process to avoid their impression of not being able to contest or contribute to the improvement of the documents to be reviewed. For instance, an advanced draft of the ToR hinders the real contribution of members of the ESC.

Moreover problems were raised about the difficulties of some ESC members to ensure their continuous participation to different ESC meetings, with a limited hand-over to his/her colleague who attended to the next ESC one. This jeopardized the meaningful participation since they did not hold the overall picture and discussions on previous stages of the evaluation. Consultants and staff from the Ministry of Environment also expressed some concerns about the relevance of the contribution of some ESC members because of their limited knowledge of the project. For the Ministry of Environment, they were the key actor to be involved, and their participation in ESC meetings was not enough. Their preferred evaluation arrangement would be project evaluations conducted by multidisciplinary teams, including donors and staff from units of the Ministry of Environment, as it is the usual practice of some donors (ex. FAO forestry project evaluations). This was mentioned as one of the causes of the weak involvement of the representative of the DEFCSS during the PROGERT evaluation process. ESC meetings and circulation of key evaluation documents usually happen in the capital and only among institutional partners. Although the logistical and financial constraints to involve grassroots' partners in these types of evaluations are obvious, the deconcentrated services of different ministries interacting in the ESC, along with the project team, could try to raise specific concerns and information needs from local population. This was not done for PROGERT evaluation.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the concept of participation (related to the level of coverage and diversity of stakeholders involved in an evaluation process) was still controversial and not all actors shared the same conception. Most interviewees for this study conceived participatory evaluations as those entailing interviews and focus group meetings with a sample of stakeholders. The report included the list of the main stakeholders of PROGERT and a final list of 75 interviewees. A comprehensive sample of representatives of most of the nine stakeholders' categories was finally interviewed by evaluators (although some of them were not reached). From this standpoint, most of interviewees considered PROGERT final evaluation as "adequately or highly participative". According to Arnstein's ladder, the level of participation of beneficiaries and other stakeholders was assessed by this study as "standard", because it is the usual practice for this type of project or programme in developing contexts, but cannot be considered as high participation. For the short fieldwork time, the consultants reached 75 people, including beneficiaries, which was considered as a high coverage with a fair diversity of stakeholders.

5. Adequacy of institutional structures to ensure quality control of evaluation process

The delegation of the management of the evaluation to the central national authority was clearly explained in the Terms of Reference, and the functioning of the Evaluation Steering Committee seemed to have been well understood by the interviewed stakeholders. The only influence of the donor GEF and the executing agency UNDP, was providing some guidance about evaluation principles, approaches and methodology, being PROGERT a decentralized project evaluation, managed by the UNDP Country Office who delegate it to the corresponding national authority, the DPN.

The ToR did not clarify the expected content of the evaluation report or the quality criteria to be applied to the evaluation report. The evaluators followed the GEF Evaluation guidelines, although they were not mentioned in the ToR. Some tracking about inclusion of comments in the ToR and evaluation draft reports could have been done by the evaluation manager to enhance the sense of ownership of the process by different ESC members. For instance, one interviewee expressed his frustration because his comments were not considered in the final version of the report. Consultants could also have been asked to detail where and how they considered comments received.

There was room for improvement in terms of standards and guiding principles from the national authority managing those types of evaluations that continued to rely on donors' guidelines. This affected the perception of the majority of the interviewees about the administrative and not very meaningful role of DPN as the evaluation manager.

There were some delays during the evaluation planning affecting the evaluation delivery. The national execution implementation modality of PROGERT affected the timeliness of the recruitment of consultants, especially the international one because of problems to apply national procedures (see figure above). The process started at the end of June 2012 but was re-launched twice because of problems in the announcement process according to national procedures or lack of candidates. The international consultant was finally recruited in September 2012. The national consultant, who was chosen at the end of July faced some difficulties to combine this mission with others, since the fieldwork did not effectively start until November. This also limited the time of preparation of the mission. Due to calendar constraints of the evaluation manager (DPN), the restitution was also held later than previewed, and the national consultant was forced to work beyond the expected calendar. According to the interviews this could be smoother if DPN could get the information about the evaluation plans of UNDP. This study advocates for national-led evaluations to be totally managed by those actors, including budgets and agendas (following the definition of ECD in Chapter 1).

In relation to the adequacy of resource use during the evaluation process, the above-mentioned delays in the recruitment process of consultants caused some misunderstandings and unease by consultants. Other interviewees criticized the over-ambition of ToR for this type of evaluation and their requirements (translating the report into English), which was not realistic with the short consultancy time and limited budget.

6. Sufficient transparency and ethics consideration in evaluation process

The PROGERT evaluation report did not discuss the challenges or difficulties encountered during the mission, although the consultants highlighted some during the interviews. They were mainly related to the short time in country of the international consultant and the budget constraints. Ethical aspects were not discussed in the report. According to the consultants it was implicit in their practice and in the donor's guidelines they followed during the evaluation.

Meta-evaluation of the result of the final evaluation of PROGERT

The final version of the evaluation report (March 2013) is a 109-page document in French, also translated into English by the consultants. After an "Executive summary" of 10 pages, the "Introduction" states the purpose, the methodology and the structure of the report. The context and nature of the project under evaluation are described in four pages, including a description of main stakeholders.

The main body of the evaluation report is centred in section 3 ("Results"), distinguishing three levels: contribution to the achievement of the development objective, to the immediate objective (progress, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and the assessment of the same criteria in relation to outcomes and outputs. The fourth section deals with the sustainability of the outcomes. Sustainability is rated through an assessment of four dimensions of the risks that are likely to affect the persistence of project outcomes: financial, socio-political, institutional and governance, and environmental. This section also considers the contribution to national capacity building (systemic, institutional and individual capacities), in line with GEF procedures. The next section of the report analyses the Monitoring and Evaluation system of PROGERT, both at its plan stage and during its implementation. An interesting subsection deals with the monitoring of long-term changes. The seventh section of the evaluation report is focused on the analysis of the potential of replication within the PROGERT sites, and at the national and international levels (also in line with GEF objectives). Before introducing lessons learned and recommendations, factors affecting Project results are analysed.

Concerns about the uneven quality of decentralized evaluations at UNDP prompted a system for quality assessment of them in 2011. The assessment tool covers six parameters: terms of reference; evaluation subject, context and purpose; evaluation framework; findings; conclusions; and recommendations and lessons. Each element of an evaluation report is reviewed and rated on a six-point scale. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP also assesses the quality of terminal evaluations of GEF-financed projects using a similar tool, which has additional sections based on the specific requirements of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office. This considers different types of evaluations: project, outcome and others (UNDP, 2013b). Results from these meta-evaluative exercises showed a certain improvement trend in the average quality of evaluations from 2011 to 2013. UNDP Evaluation Office was contacted to verify if the PROGERT final evaluation was part of this exercise but no response was received.

7. Clarity of justification of epistemological and methodological choices

Three MEv dimensions informed this criterion: clarity about the evaluation policy or guidelines, about the justification of the evaluation approach and about the data collection tools used. The ToR did not clearly specify or recommend any evaluation approach or methodology. GEF or UNDP evaluations guidelines were not mentioned as the methodological reference. According to the interviews, the standard methodology using DAC evaluation criteria was considered as sufficient orientation.

The usual practice is that evaluators submit a methodological note at the beginning of the evaluation where they specify how they propose to evaluate the project (main focus, methodology, sources of information, draft agenda), in response to the ToR. This is usually related to the first payment trench. For the evaluation of PROGERT, and due to the delays in recruiting the international consultant, there was an exception and a 13-paged methodological note was not available until the end of the field phase (November 2012). DPN did not provide a template for this methodological note. Therefore the only information available at the time of starting the field phase was the general statement in the ToR and a very synthetic note (the technical offer presented by the international consultant for her recruitment, 3 pages).

The evaluators explicitly mentioned the GEF guidelines for project terminal evaluations (GEF, 2008). The evaluation report contained a section on "Conduct of the evaluation", where techniques and sources of information were detailed: project document review, meetings with different project's stakeholders, 8-day visit to project intervention sites to interview additional stakeholders. A semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure the systematic collection of relevant information on performance indicators (outcomes and impacts) and management issues. A total of 13 days were spent by the international consultant in Senegal, including field visits and interviews and restitutions in Dakar. For all interviewees, this was the standard procedure for these types of evaluations (the use of project monitoring data and double-check this information with some interviews and field visits). For consultants, the number of consultancy days was too short.

8. Clarity of evaluation synthesis

Four MEv dimensions were proposed to assess this criterion: robustness of the evidence base of report and logical links between findings, conclusions and recommendations, clarity about the process to aggregate or synthetize results about different dimensions to answer higher-level evaluation questions, and clarity about the value system used to assess the worth and merit of the intervention. Interviewees were also asked about the completeness of evaluation criteria and questions.

Although the ToR were not very clear and tailored to the specificities of an evaluation of a SLM intervention, the evaluation team proposed quite detailed criteria and questions in their methodological note, taking into account the guidelines of the donor. The evaluation report described very precisely how the tailored evaluation criteria were assessed. For instance, relevance in relation to country priorities and GEF/UNDP programmes, effectiveness in relation to intended results, efficiency in relation to the inputs required to produce results. According to consultants, the evaluation dimensions were chosen by donors (and they should be clearer in the ToR) because they are based on the expected results of the logical framework. They decided to add some other dimensions to respond to donors' requirements (like gender and capacity building). They faced challenges to include a meaningful analysis of sustainability issues due to lack of data (field information from the monitoring system, which was too focused on activity completion). Interestingly, some interviewees from the Ministry of Environment thought that the usual OECD evaluation criteria (and similarly the GEF guidelines) fell short to capture environmental complexities. From this perspective, more work would be needed to establish adequate indicators and acceptable thresholds as well as to capture behavioural changes of local population in relation to natural resources use. This is in line with one of the challenges of SD evaluation identified in the introduction of this study: the difficulties to establish links between the standard aid development evaluation practice and scientific and technical research on sustainability.

For all the interviewees the evaluation report was coherent with the quality requirements. The evaluators validated the information included in the project M&E database (and reports) on the field. This was considered as robust evidence. Consultants also highlighted the use of extensive exchanges with the Project Coordinator (present during the full length of the field phase) to ground their analysis and conclusions, logically linking findings, interpretations, conclusions and judgments. This helped them to overcome some coherence problems among different project reports.

The assessment of the majority of evaluation criteria was based on a qualitative judgment using a graded scale. Some interpretations could be contested, but consultants tried to document their reasoning (clear *evaluation synthesis*), and some tables were useful to see the logical links between data, findings, interpretations and conclusions. The evaluation report presented the assessment related to relevance, effectiveness and efficiency per outcome and objective, and then a global assessment by each of those criteria and for each outcome. This was assessed as a quite

clear process of synthesis. Evaluators clearly detailed when they preferred to aggregate results to inform higher-level evaluation questions.

Some of the indicators and evidence used were related to yields of different products before and after the project. They were used to assess the level of achievement at the immediate objective, as well as number of hectares restored and the sustainability of income generating activities. Evaluators tried to offer information about their relative value, for instance, comparing figures with the overall situation in the groundnut basin and at national level. Nevertheless, the evaluation chose to mention the various output-level indicators under the level of outcomes (See Table below). The four dimensions analysed in terms of sustainability (risks likely to affect the persistence of project outcomes), were only presented by each of the outcomes, without an overall assessment. Although there was a global (positive) conclusion, consultants tried to highlight the constraints for different dimensions.

Table 31. Indicators according to the results-chain of PROGERT.

Intervention logic level	Indicator/type of measurement
Immediate Objective	Yield of groundnuts, millet, maize and beans: before-after project measure, according to Monitoring info of the project
	Implementation of management of classified forests (no more data offered by evaluators, qualitative statement: "allowed to stop agricultural encroachment on forests")
	Number of ha of degraded land restored (in relation to the total surface of the groundnut basin and national surface), implying a restoration of the vegetal cover, of habitats and of biodiversity (impact on soil productivity capacity)
	Deliberations for granting of good quality and well-located land to women groups (thanks to awareness actions-workshops, gender quality circles).
	Success and sustainability of the development of income generating activities of communities beyond the project period, […] as well as women's groups to increase their assets
Outcome 1	Introduction of adapted varieties to meet the needs of communities of cassava, maize, cowpea, hibiscus and watermelon in the "ecologically sustainable fields » and to spread the harvests on a greater part of the year.
	Number of Local Development Plans updated to incorporate environmental and sustainable land management dimensions
	Number of plants produced in community nurseries
Outcome 2	Development of conventions for pastoral units (in local languages and disseminated to population), constitution of fodder reserves
	Dissemination and adoption of best practices for the rational use and protection of forest and pastures through participatory management plans (number of plans and ha covered)
	Elimination of bushfires (number of village committees equipped and trained and number of km of firebreaks cleared)
	Number of women trained in the use of improved stoves, solar ovens
Outcome 3	Number of credits granted for Income Generating Activities related to SLM and based on resources valorization
	Revision of the Forest Code, particularly on the legal recognition of local conventions and contracts of culture (to ensure sustainability of PROGERT actions)
	Better knowledge of local decision makers (through capacity building and sensitization on SLM: articles in newspapers, reports on community radios and national television networks)
	Gender Quality Circles to conduct advocacy with Rural Councils to allow women access to land
Outcome 4	Land and sustainable NRM activities generated income for involved individuals and communities (the only evidence are the interviews with beneficiaries, the monitoring system of PROGERT has not capture changes in poverty or income)
	Benefits emerging from the IGA for women groups supported (evidence given by women)[116].

[116] "income enabled them to share the responsibility of their household, to cover the costs of tuition, to purchase medicines, clothing for children, school supplies, seeds and food for the transition period, to establish a small herd that serves as risk insurance, and to set up tontines to make individual loans for solidarity/support to other women in their group who do not already have access to credit."

The evaluation report mentioned in an open way the *sources of its conclusions and the limitations of them*. For instance, it was directly mentioned when some preliminary conclusions were backed up just with discussions with beneficiaries (for instance, their perceptions about environmental changes), without having any other hard-data source like statistics or research. The difficulties to include certain analysis in the evaluations and visit one of the PROGERT intervention regions were also justified due to time, data and logistical problems. The report claimed to have tried to raise local perceptions about changes promoted by the project. Nevertheless, there was no explicit effort to distinguish those interpretations from the opinions of other types of stakeholders. *Different perspectives and rationales* to interpret findings were not preserved and the *values* dominating conclusions and recommendations seemed to be the ones from the external evaluators.

9. Adequacy of consideration of Sustainable Development evaluation challenges

Six MEv dimensions informed this criterion: clarity of justification of time coverage of evaluation, adequacy of geographical scope of evaluation in relation to project intervention area, sufficiency of context analysis in the evaluation, adequacy of integration of economic, social and ecological aspects of the evaluand and its context, extent to what monitoring data could be used in evaluation, and clarity of justification of the coverage of sites visited in relation to project intervention area.

In relation to the first one, the tension between these types of exercises (final evaluations conducted during the last months of implementation of a project) and their ability to capture longer-time impacts is well known. Most of interviewees responded that it would have been necessary to conduct an impact or an *expost* evaluation to achieve this. For the majority of the interviewees, the purpose and scope of these types of evaluations is just assessing the contribution of project in relation to its global objectives. Nevertheless, others interviewees criticized the concept of "contribution" as being too vague to inform decisions.

The fact that the evaluation focused its attention in the PROGERT's intervention sites without considering wider geographical areas or upstream influences hindered the capacity of the evaluation to respond to one of the challenges of Sustainable Development Evaluation. The ToR of the final evaluation of PROGERT were not tailored for the specificities of the project and its context, as well as the challenges of the evaluation, even with the presence of sector specialists at DPN. For instance, no environmental indicators were included in the ToR. Consultants claimed to have tried to tailor their methodological proposal to the project and its context, although they admitted it was very difficult due to short time for preparation and fieldwork. Nevertheless, the evaluation report presented a very good analysis of the environmental challenges associated to land degradation in the peanut basin. They also reviewed previous projects in the area to consider how PROGERT included those technologies.

Most of the interviewees had problems to respond about the level of adequacy of the evaluation to integrate economic, social and ecological aspects. Their responses were more related to the project itself than to the evaluation process. For them, the main element of the project in relation to sustainable development resided the approach used, the landscape scale. They recognised that this approach could not be fully assessed in these types of evaluations, with such a short time on the field. In order to better grasp SD elements during the evaluation, some of the interviewees suggested that these types of evaluations would require more involvement of local agents of Ministry of Environment who posses deeper knowledge on the social, economic and environmental systems. This could be coupled with the good use of the available project monitoring data and the visit of project sites conducted by the external evaluators.

For consultants, those types of evaluations had to inform about the results and level of achievement of objectives at the end of project and to document the contribution of project in relation to preservation of ecosystem. They tried to capture some of the local people's perceptions on the effects at ecosystem level and the conditions to promote sustainability of results and

external factors affecting it. *Expost* evaluations could be more relevant for SD issues, since final evaluations are just a reflection at the end of the project with little resources available. The interviewees of the GEF Evaluation Office also recognised the difficulties of including SD elements in programme or project evaluations. They were reflecting about ways to improve projects design with the use of theory of change approaches.

10. Sufficient documentation of the evaluation process and result

DPN staff ensured a diligent documentation of the evaluation process that was very useful for this meta-evaluation. This can be seen from the quantity of documents that we could access, not only final versions but also draft versions, minutes of meetings and comments received. The evaluation report was clear and complete, including a stand-alone executive summary and comprehensive annexes with key data about the evaluation process such as Terms of Reference, the list of interviewees, the field visits and the interviews guides. Therefore, this MEv was easy to conduct because of the good documentation and the availability of all stakeholders.

Meta-evaluation of the utilization of the final evaluation

11. Actionable recommendations

The evaluation report defined recommendations as "actions to contribute to the sustainability of the project results and for improving or facilitating the execution of similar projects in the future". The report included eleven recommendations addressed to different stakeholders: DEFCCS as the institution in charge of soil conservation in the government of Senegal, institutions and projects working in the field of SLM, as well as UNDP and the CAP (office supporting the national execution implementation). Nevertheless, this sense of clearly targeting recommendations to a responsible stakeholder was lost when recommendations were introduced in a general way. The first five do not have a heading, and then two others are about "project management" and four more about "documentation of the project experience". For the majority of interviewees for this meta-evaluation, the recommendations were well balanced and feasible. For others they seemed realistic and they highlighted that they were already implementing some of them. Other interviewees warned about the difficulties of implementing some of them, for instance, the one entailing a policy change (securing investments of local populations in SLM) or transferring assigned resources to the partner microfinance institution.

According to the procedures of UNDP Evaluation Policy and the manual for follow-up (UNEG, 2010a), the Management (Project Coordination Units and UNDP specialists) should respond to evaluation conclusions and recommendations. The Country Office, in direct liaison with the Ministry of Environment, should prepare a "management response" with a clear engagement of actions and those in charge to implement recommendations with deadlines. This information was not available at the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) one and a half years after the completion of the evaluation mission. No response was received from UNDP staff from the Evaluation Unit at Headquarters about this situation.

The Final Evaluation Report (2013) included among its recommendations the same one that the Mid-term review (2010) recommended: "to document the costs and benefits associated with all types of restoration intervention and sustainable land management". This exemplified that the mechanism to follow-up the recommendations of the MTR did not function correctly. In fact the "management response" of this evaluation available at the "Evaluation Resource Centre" of UNDP, only included the two recommendations for UNDP and the Senegalese government, but not the rest (four for the project team). Nevertheless, according to the interviewees, these recommendations could not be implemented due to the decrease of project funding (non favourable exchange rate with the USD).

12. Adequacy of dissemination of evaluation results.

Formal channels of communication of results of the evaluation were neither included in the ToR nor considered in the evaluation report. The only event to disseminate findings was the restitution workshop that happened at the end of the fieldwork phase of the evaluation. Only ESC members participated, and some interviewees highlighted that key stakeholders, like the Water, Forest and Soils Unit of the Ministry of Environment did not attend. There was no restitution at the regions or local level. DPN summarized in a note the main findings and recommendations of the evaluation and sent it to the General Planning Unit and then to Ministry of Economy and Finances on May 2013, two months after the final version of the evaluation report was available. The note asked the Ministry of Economy to transfer the evaluation report to the Minister of Environment and the UNDP Country Representative.

A hard-copy of the evaluation was also kept at the DPN library, another one sent to the Ministry in charge and to the donor (this is why consultants were asked to submit several hard copies). Some of the members of the ESC said they did not receive the final electronic version of the evaluation report. In other cases, interviewees from governmental units blamed the problems of information circulation within their own units. From their side, UNDP Country Office sent a copy of the evaluation report to the Regional GEF Advisor. He also sent an email summarizing the main findings to some selected UNDP colleagues in Dakar (country representative, country director and programme officers). The English version of the evaluation report was used by GEF Evaluation Office. The dissemination of evaluation results to the local and beneficiaries level was more challenging. No representatives of the beneficiaries were present in any evaluation restitution meetings due to logistical (and budget) constraints and the centrality of these meetings in Dakar. For the interviewees, the only way to restitute them at local level would be the inclusion of related activities in the Annual Work Plan of the project or the budget of the Ministry of Environment. Nevertheless, this is not the common practice, and no one has any evidence that this happened. There were informal channels through the engagement of the staff of Ministry of Environment on the field (IREF and local focal points).

Some of the governmental structures that participated in the Evaluation Steering Committee did not receive the reports for comments, and especially the final version. This hindered their utilization and the sense of ownership of the process. Some of "the evaluated" did not receive any feedback after having participated in the evaluation through interviews or focus groups.

It was easy for this research to access the evaluation documentation. The availability of the DPN and its staff greatly facilitated this. For the general public, and following the information disclosure policy of UNDP, the evaluation report should be easily accessible at the Evaluation Resource Centre, along with the Terms of Reference and the "management response". Nevertheless, one and a half years after the finalization of the evaluation report, this information was still not available at the ERC[117]. The only information available in this online database about PROGERT was related to the Mid-Term Review.

13. Level of credibility of the evaluation

The Terminal Evaluation of the PROGERT was conducted by a team of an international and a Senegalese consultant. The profile of both consultants was included in the Terms of Reference. The international consultant (team leader of the mission) was chosen by the DPN with the assistance of UNDP that posted the consultancy opportunity on its website. (S)he was expected to hold a PhD or equivalent, be fluent in French and English and specialist in SLM, with a focus on desertification and climate change with ten years of experience. The selected consultant seemed to have a solid experience in previous GEF and UNDP evaluations in the sector, and none

[117] http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=4990 (Accessed on September, 4th, 2014).

of the interviewed actors expressed any concern about her expertise. Nevertheless, some members of the ESC complaint about the very limited time in country, and the rush during the restitution of preliminary findings.

The national consultant was chosen from a list from a pool of candidates from the database kept by the National Planning Unit and other candidates added by the Steering Committee or the Project Unit. The usual national procedures of noting CV were used. In this case the problem was related to the fact that the national authority in charge of the recruitment did not know the financial resources available for this consultancy. The selected one had the desired profile, including an undergraduate degree, NRM expertise, and also 10 years of experience in agroforestry and decentralized financial systems. His competencies and skills during the evaluation were not questioned by any of the interviewees. The presence of the national consultant who was an interpreter and the previous experience of the international consultant in Senegal (she also evaluated the project PGIES) complemented each other. The international consultant seemed to be very knowledgeable about the key questions related to project and global GEF objectives, while the national consultant offered the local skills needed for interviews and interpretation of findings. Consultants mentioned their satisfaction with some reactions from participants in the ESC, who praised the good quality of the report, as being one of the best reports they had reviewed.

Issues of independence and objectivity during the evaluation process were discussed because of the close association of the PROGERT project team during the "independent and external evaluation". The Project Coordinator accompanied the consultants during all the interviews on the field. This was not considered as a problem by any of the interviewees, but as a value added to better understand and frame some of the analysis, findings and recommendations. For the interviewees, the project coordinator had the perfect attitude during the fieldwork, he smoothed lots of field interviews and focus groups introducing the mission, contextualizing some of the discussions when interviewees did not grasp the objective of consultants' questions, and even leaving consultants alone with local stakeholders in some cases. A similar precious contribution was made by one of the coordinators of one Project Local Unit, who played a role of translator with the national consultant. Their full involvement during the field mission was considered key by all interviewees to get deeper discussions and key clarifications to come up with interesting conclusions for the draft report in such a short time. None of the interviewees expressed any concerns about the evaluation trust and overall credibility.

14. Effective evaluation utilization

The direct learning and uptake of recommendations of mid-term evaluations (or reviews) is usually more difficult to achieve for final evaluations with no funding engaged for a next phase. This is related to specific actions related to improving project results' contribution to its objectives. The fact that the project evaluation was led by national authorities offered a great opportunity to advance towards strengthening National Evaluation Capacities since DPN cumulated experience. Moreover, this institutional arrangement could foster the integration of project evaluations into the policy-making of beneficiary countries, breaking the usual work in silos of some donors. This could foster higher policy influence at national level beyond donors' learning and accountability objectives of the donor.

Some of the interviewees only highlighted the direct utilization of these types of evaluations to formulate new projects, without an explicit link with higher-level policy-making. For instance, designs of new projects including a section on lessons learned from previous interventions written on the basis of evaluation conclusions and recommendations. This could happen in the same country (through the work on the Country Office of the donor or the national sector authority), or within the region, through the use of the evaluation report by Regional donor's units. Other respondents also mentioned the utilization of evaluation reports to write Annual Reports and the Performance Report of the Ministry of Environment. They tried to capitalize the good practices

identified in evaluations. For instance, in 2011 they did three capitalization reports on NRM, one of them about the water and soil conservation techniques tested by PROGERT. Nevertheless, they acknowledged the limits to aggregate findings of project evaluations in the Sector Policy Letter.

A similar disconnect could be found at the level of donors and executing agencies. For instance, according to interviews, environmental indicators used in these types of project evaluations are not articulated with other broader initiatives, for instance, the environmental observatory managed from the Ecological Monitoring Centre in Senegal. Project evaluations could be used for donor portfolio evaluations or evaluations of their focal strategic areas (like land degradation). According to interviews and document review, there have not been any of those evaluations recently, apart from a technical paper on land degradation, dealing with the theory of change underlying these interventions.

Annex I. Responses to comments received from the thesis' external reviewers

Comment from Reviewer 1 demanding an action from the PhD candidate: "In relation to the content, there is a topic of great importance in the debate about the planning and evaluation of Sustainable Land Management which is the existence of important conflicts of interest among different stakeholders which are affected and affect these projects and policies, that, in my opinion, has not been treated in the thesis with the necessary depth that this issue merits. Evidently, this is linked with the introduction of participatory evaluations to the extent that these allow the inclusion of different visions and values about the success of the programme, but there is no reference to the analysis of conflicts and their management".

Response from the PhD candidate: The second limitation discussed in Section 2.4 has been expanded to describe why the study could not entirely grasp "the conflicts of interest among different stakeholders which are affected and affect these projects and policies". As discussed, being the evaluation reports the main source of information for the MEv findings in Chapter 3, this aspect cannot be fully assessed if it is not explicitly mentioned in the evaluation reports. The ultimate objective of the MEv is to understand the power relations around evaluation processes, and not around the SLM interventions themselves. Nevertheless, some of the MEv criteria used can hint some ideas about whose voices are not heard. For instance, through MEv criterion 4 the evaluation reports are assessed about the level of diversity of stakeholders involved in the design and process of the evaluation. This could be used as a proxy of who has not been involved in the decision of evaluation questions to be used and who was not interviewed or consulted. MEv criterion 8 also tries to raise all available information in the evaluation report about the different value systems and perspectives about the success of the SLM intervention.

Comment from Reviewer 2 demanding an action from the PhD candidate: "As the manuscript is in English but most of the responsdents met in country are French-speakers and might not necessarily be proficient in English, it would be useful to develop a synopsis of this thesis (not a simple executive summary) in French. This would definitely contribute to the accumulation of knowledge on meta-evaluation and its applicability for policy-making and management purposes, among a variety of researchers and officials with executive and management functions in the environmental sector in Senegal and the rest of West Africa".

Response from the PhD candidate: Executive Summary in French included, page iii. Moreover, key extracts of the thesis will be fully translated into French and submitted to Senegalese and West African evaluation stakeholders, especially those who contributed to this research. A policy brief in French will be developed for policy-makers and high-ranked civil servants after the thesis' viva. Finally, at least one of the publications issued from this PhD research (mentioned in Section 5.4, future research work) will be written in French.

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