



Managing land and water resources by consensus: the Anambé irrigation scheme charter



Why is this important ?

In a global context of rising agricultural prices, the government of Senegal has made national food security a strategic concern. The government's National Rice Self-Sufficiency Programme (Programme National d'Autosuffisance en Riz or PNR) set the objectives of increasing the area of land under irrigation in the Anambé basin from 5,000 to 22,500 hectares by 2018, with yields of 6.7 tons per hectare. To ensure the scale of development and the yields being targeted are achieved, these investments must be based on good governance of irrigated land. Creating the Anambé irrigation scheme charter and extending the use of local land use and allocation plans (Plans d'occupation et affectation des sols or POAS) should enable land tenure conflicts to be forestalled and reduced, and contribute to solving governance problems.¹

Key Statistics

- 16 rural communities (*communes rurales*) with a total population of 864,598 inhabitants (RGPH 2002, DPS/MEF) are covered by the charter.
- The charter covers the 5,000 hectares already developed and the 11,000 potentially to be developed.

The Anambé irrigation scheme charter sets out management principles for efficient and sustainable agricultural development. The charter is based on a consensus between river basin users and local authorities. Now the challenge is to put this into practice.

The Anambé basin is situated in the Haute-Casamance area in the Kolda region of Senegal. The area is drained by the Kayenga river and its tributary the Anambé and irrigated by the Niandouba and Confluent dams. Its water resources make it an area with good potential for agricultural development. The river basin covers 16 rural communities, with 5,000 hectares of land already developed for irrigation, and future potential for up to 16,000 hectares.

Local production systems are based on extensive agro-pastoralism, with cereal cultivation (of sorghum, rice, maize and fonio) and cash crops of cotton and groundnuts. The mainly Fulani population (peul in French) and relative abundance of natural grazing means that pastoralism is also an important activity. Cohabitation between different groups of actors in this part of Senegal, in the absence of an agreed formal framework of rules governing water and land management, is often fraught with conflicts threatening social cohesion.

A background of recurrent land tenure conflicts

When the Global Water Initiative (GWI) started work in the Anambé basin in 2009, there were many constraints to attaining the production objectives set by the government of Senegal for its Agricultural and Development Agency (the Société de Développement Agricole et Industrielle du Sénégal - SODAGRI). These included land tenure governance problems, limited access to credit and agricultural inputs and equipment, and poor water management. This was coupled with frequent conflicts between farmers and herders (due to crop damage caused by herds accessing water and pasture and a lack of livestock corridors) and competition between producers for access to the best farming land in terms of water access, freedom from invasive weeds, and good levelling. There was also a lack of transparency in the administrative and financial management of farmers' organisations, and rivalry between

small and largescale landholders, with land speculation linked to agribusiness.

To deal with these constraints, the SODAGRI put forward the idea in 2013 of drawing up a charter for the Anambé irrigation scheme. The proposal was approved and taken up by the Niandouba and Confluent Large Dams Water and Land Users' Platform for the Niandouba and Confluent dams. The platform was set up with support from GWI to bring together representatives of the different stakeholders in the basin (local government, the SODAGRI, locally elected officials, user groups such as farmers, herders, fishers and forest users, and civil society organisations). It aims to be a dynamic partnership for determining rules for collaboration and defining roles and responsibilities for each actor in the overall system of resource management in the basin, and to oversee its future development.

Drawing up the charter: an inclusive and participatory process

The main aim was to come up with a document which reflected the vision and the perceptions of these diverse groups, and this meant that the process to develop the charter had to be inclusive and participatory in its approach. Based on the need to reach a consensus among all the actors involved, it relied on a series of meetings to exchange viewpoints; this process enabled the problems to be diagnosed and solutions to be proposed in the form of concrete actions to be taken and changes of behaviour to be agreed and adopted.

About 15 such meetings were held between 2013 and 2014, taking the form of stakeholder workshops. Building notably on the experience of the *Société d'aménagement et d'exploitation des terres du delta* (SAED), stakeholders set out the contents of the charter, identifying obstacles, solutions and proposed commitments from stakeholders. During this first phase, key elements to be incorporated in the

charter were defined after multiple negotiations between representatives of different stakeholder groups such as farmers, herders, fishers, forest users, youth associations, women's groups, technical services, local government, and community organisations. In the second phase, community-level meetings to share information about the charter and to seek approval for it were held with users and locally elected representatives, leading to a formal adoption meeting bringing together 72 participants representing the various groups of stakeholders.²

Commitments by the different actors included in the charter

The charter is a response to the need to have an agreed management tool, which takes into account the state of the resources and the challenge of conserving them while securing their development, and at the same time being integrated into current Senegalese law and regulations. With this in mind, the charter defines the conditions for accessing and exploiting irrigated land, and sets out the roles and responsibilities of each actor. The clauses of the charter are drawn up in the form of commitments by the three groups of signatories (communities, river basin users and the state via its technical services), designed to overcome the constraints inherent in developing irrigated farmland.

Each producer or applicant for a plot of land has to sign in advance an "irrigated land allocation agreement" which commits him or her to follow best agricultural practice and to respect agreed rules of water management and neighbourly behaviour. The state, through its technical services, commits itself to providing training to local communities in irrigated land tenure management. The communities responsible for rural land tenure, for their part, pledge themselves to follow the rules laid down in the charter in all instances of allocation or withdrawal of rights to irrigated farmland. They also have the duty to negotiate

and sign farming agreements with private individuals which lay down the conditions for profit sharing with smallholders, and to define the rules for good cohabitation between different actors. Finally, they are also responsible for close monitoring of the exploitation of plots in the irrigated area.

To respond to the specific problems and issues of management in each commune or agricultural sector, the charter relies on local land use and allocation plans which regulate the land tenure situation in each locality, and the policy governing repair and maintenance of water management infrastructure.

Ensuring the charter's positive and concrete impact on local populations

In September 2014 all the local actors met at Kolda for the charter validation workshop and recognised the major challenges involved in applying it successfully. In particular, they recommended the setting up of a monitoring and evaluation committee relying on local watch committees. They also stressed the importance of sharing information about the charter and of the systematic adoption of local land use and allocation plans (POAS) across all the area's 16 rural communities within five years of the adoption of the charter. Finally, they drew attention to the need for a participatory process to develop the policy for repair and maintenance of the irrigation infrastructures.

If all parties meet the challenges of effectively putting the charter into practice, this will create the best possible conditions for production, while strengthening social cohesion by reducing conflicts between users.

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1. For more information about the POAS, see: <http://gwiwestafrica.org/en/participatory-process-reducing-land-conflicts-senegal>

2. For the workshop report, see: <http://gwiwestafrica.org/en/workshop-report-validation-anambe-irrigation-scheme-charter>

GWI in West Africa

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In West Africa we are working in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal on the theme of agricultural production linked to large dams and irrigated perimeters.

To find out more about our work in Senegal: www.gwiwestafrica.org/en/countries/senegal

