



# THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AFRICA

In the Words of 20  
Francophone African Entrepreneurs





# FOREWORD



A large, semi-transparent green leafy background covers the left side of the page. A triangular overlay containing a photograph of a person working in a field is positioned in the lower-left area.

As part of our mission to develop competitive agricultural sectors, and considering how vital agriculture is for Africa, we listened to the African entrepreneurs who are the real stakeholders in this agricultural future.

Rather than high-profile projects or those undertaken under the thumb of other world powers, we met with entrepreneurs who have chosen to work for themselves and their countries.

This first installment contains the accounts of twenty such individuals. They shared their occasionally chaotic paths, their successful or most difficult experiences, their fears and their hopes for the future of their projects.

They are everyday agricultural heroes, and anything could divert them from their mission. Competing with cheap imports, insufficient infrastructure, challenges finding qualified staff, climate change and financial

problems... nothing about their business is easy.

They have agreed to share their experiences, choices, concerns and solutions in the hopes that they may benefit others who are wondering how to conduct their own agricultural projects.

The strength of their experience, determination and their attachment to Africa is a tremendous source of hope.

Thank you to all of them.

**Marc DEBETS,**  
President of APEXAGRI and By.O Group

**Régis FOURNIER,**  
Director of APEXAGRI and Maisadour Semences (MAS Seeds)/International

**Jean-Christophe DEBAR,**  
Director of the Foundation for World Agriculture and Rurality (FARM)

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# INTRODUCTION

APEXAGRI and the FARM Foundation (Foundation for World Agriculture and Rurality) combined their complementary knowledge of the African agricultural and agri-food sectors with the goal of highlighting the experiences of local entrepreneurs. In our opinion, these entrepreneurs have the power to change the outlook held by the majority of Africans about agriculture and to work towards food independence, the creation of jobs and value and, as such, the reduction of poverty, unemployment and malnutrition.

We are convinced that by providing visibility to agricultural and agri-food project leaders and supporting their initiatives, we can collectively respond to the many issues facing the continent. The lessons that we cover in the study you are about to read are based on the responses of 20 discussion partners, who, for the most part, are in charge of the organizations we selected. As such, we can share with you factual and striking conclusions from lived experiences and their impressions. It is a reflection of their statements, even though some of their responses may seem debatable to us or yourselves. In our eyes, this study has the advantage of corresponding to a

grounded and realistic point of view, without being exhaustive.

In fact, our primary goal is that this publication will serve as concrete support for the development and strengthening of agricultural and agri-food initiatives in Africa. We hope that the projects presented can inspire all actors in the sector (current and future project leaders, public authorities, international organizations, funding agencies...) and that the factors of success featured will be widely promoted across the continent.

We have chosen a simple, easy to follow format. If you wish, you can read the entire study in less than an hour, or simply pick out the points which catch your attention in the presentation cards for the 20 initiatives. It is your decision.

Happy reading !



# 1

## Strong willingness to act & social responsibility

The main take-aways from these interviews was an incredible enthusiasm and a **strong willingness to take action** to improve local living conditions, despite an often unstable environment. **All our interviewees acknowledged their responsibility for the development of their country** and the impact of agriculture on the establishment and living conditions of populations, particularly in rural areas. .

# 2

## Acting without waiting for public intervention

Discussions with entrepreneurs revealed a certain ambivalence. On one hand, they wished that favourable policies would be adopted to facilitate the development of their businesses, but on the other, they seemed disillusioned and **no longer wait for government action and instead focus on compensating for shortcomings**. They do not hesitate to invest in sectors which were traditionally considered to be under the jurisdiction of public authorities, particularly in terms of services provided to the public (household waste collection, training youth) or infrastructure development. This public inertia is becoming a real economic opportunity.

# 3

## High social impact, but not organized

Each of the agri-food initiatives analyzed, regardless of their current size, has a significant impact on their ecosystem and brings together **a significant number of stakeholders**, directly or indirectly (the 20 initiatives presented positively impacted more than 40,000 people. However, with few exceptions - overseen by the government - **the sectors are not very structured, or, in all cases, not often discussed**. Either they are not very organized, or the influence of structuring stakeholders on local small-scale agricultural and agri-food entrepreneurs is weak.

# 4

## Major financing needs

Not surprisingly, entrepreneurs also compared the critical financing need with a cautious credit system, even for small amounts. Excluding entrepreneurs with sufficient personal assets, financial and/or technical support, even for small amounts (less than €10,000), would boost the creation of companies on the continent. When company founders have the opportunity to benefit from them, these initiatives flourish. **The implementation of awards/competitions initiated by local structures seems to be an easy alternative to reinforce the actions of small stakeholders and increase innovative agricultural initiatives**. Africa indisputably has great potential, **but a great need for support to integrate processing activities, as well as to increase the value produced**.

# 5

## Importance of continuous improvement

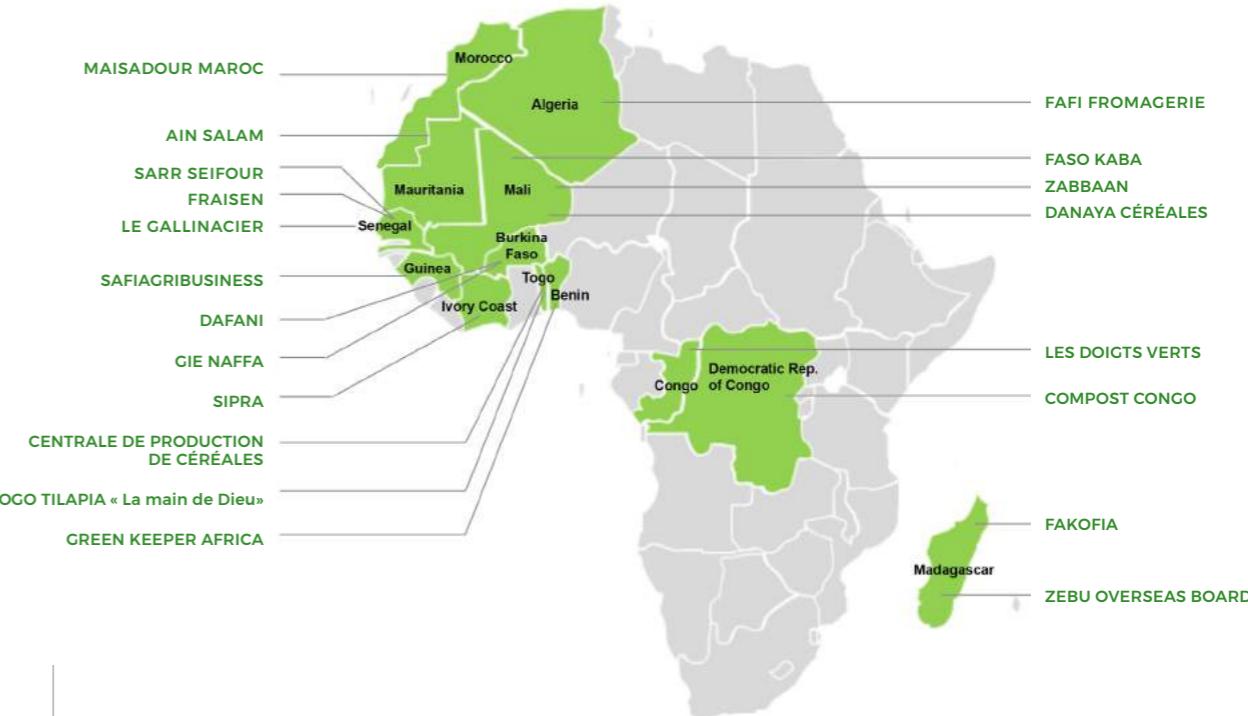
Once the core business is stabilized, entrepreneurs devote themselves to gradually improving management, processes or equipping their organizations. It seems that various challenges in Africa would be answered by **optimized local initiatives without interruption rather than totally upheaving know-how and large research and development programs**. These developments allow entrepreneurs to gradually adapt traditional agricultural practices, to work under the best conditions and produce more.



# THE 20 AGRICULTURAL AND AGRIFOOD INITIATIVES SELECTED

The 20 organizations you will learn about are a balanced mix of small initiatives with small sales revenues and larger companies with international reach. They are spread across the 13 Francophone African countries and fall under 10 different agricultural and agri-food sectors.

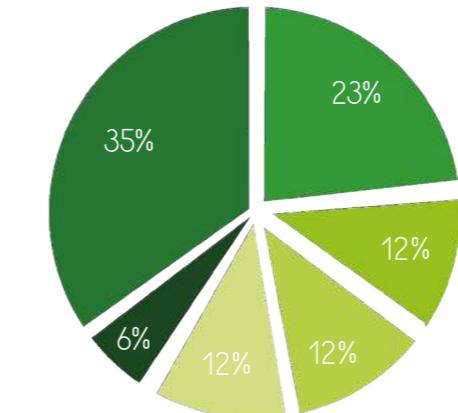
For more information, please refer to the "Methodology" section and the table on page 60.



## OVERVIEW OF THE 20 ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR POSITION ON VALUE CHAINS :

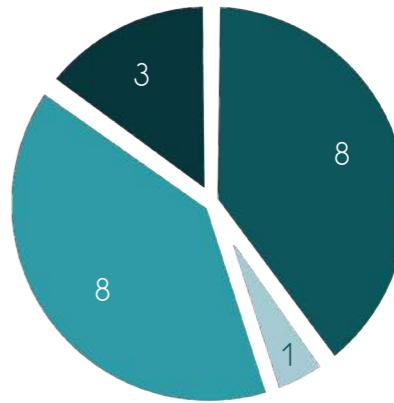


Size of initiatives  
(by sales €)



- LESS THAN 5 YEARS
- 5 TO 10 YEARS
- 10 TO 20 YEARS
- OVER 20 YEARS

Lifespan of companies





## DAFANI



BURKINA FASO  
Orodara

**Person interviewed :** Boubakar Diakité  
**Age :** 47  
**Responsibility :** Director of Farming  
**Training :** MAS in Agribusiness

COUNTRY  
INFORMATION

Country : Burkina Faso  
Population (Millions) : 19,6  
GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 650  
Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 11,8  
Main agricultural products : Cotton, cereals (millet, sorghum, corn, rice, fonio)  
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 35% of the GDP and employs 82% of the labour force.



In the beginning, Dafani was a small mango purée production unit for export, financed independently by a group of friends. The company avoided judicial liquidation in 2011 and redirected its operations towards the production of fruit juices for the local market. With the ambitious goal of tripling its sales revenues by 2022, new production lines will be installed.

January 2008	2009	2010	2012
Establishment	Operations stopped	Restructuring	Operations resumed

<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Processing of tropical products (mainly mangoes) to produce juices and purées		
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	€10-15 million in sales	156 permanent employees 350 temporary employees	430 federated mango producers
<b>MARKETS</b>	Local and sub-region through a Dafani network of certified distributors. International (France)		
<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Access to raw materials</li><li>Product and packaging quality</li><li>Technical knowledge</li></ul>		

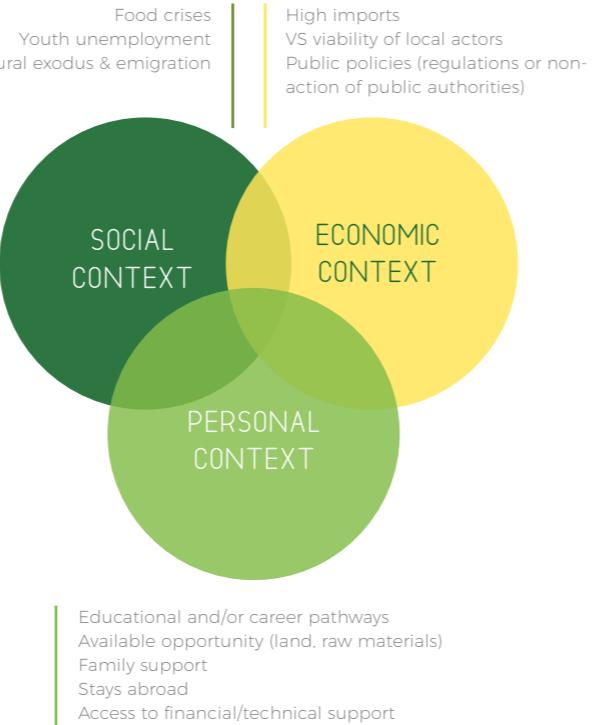
<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b>
Workforce loyalty
Access to markets

# LESSONS ON AGRICULTURAL AND AGRIFOOD INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

## 1. What are the reasons for initiating or taking over an initiative?

According to our interviewees, farming is largely considered a “poor man’s profession” in Africa performed by an aging segment of the population and one in which youth do not see a future. However, all of our interviewees are active in this neglected sector and take exception to this popular misconception and are contributing to changing these perceptions. They all created or took over a business in the agri-food sector, with various and complementary motivations.

Originally, the entrepreneurs became aware of the urgency of taking action to improve the social and economic conditions of their immediate surroundings. Along with favourable personal circumstances, they were able to realize their project.



### Social context

Whether provoked by conflict, brutal climate change or fluctuations in the prices of basic foodstuffs, food crises are getting out of control around the world, and especially in Africa<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the continent’s population growth is exponential (the total population of Africa should reach 2.4 billion by 2050 or a third of the world’s population), 60% of the population is under 35 years old<sup>2</sup> and unemployment is common, a situation not systematically avoided by good higher education. All our entrepreneurs are witnesses to or victims of this.

### Economic context

The demand for food products is constantly growing. Today, this demand is filled by imported products which are often cheaper than locally-produced foodstuffs. As such, it is difficult for local farms to consistently generate the quality and quantity of products while remaining affordable. However, some countries have adopted public policies that favour a specific production, like aquaculture in Togo or chicken in the Ivory Coast, encouraging project leaders to take advantage of a beneficial, albeit potentially temporary situation. The lack of intervention by public authorities also encourages private actors to tackle critical situations for which no measures are adopted. As such, they become opportunities to be seized to compensate for local structural problems, all while creating value. The company Compost Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) is a good example, as it has created a domestic waste collection network that produces organic fertilizer which is then sold back to farmers in the region

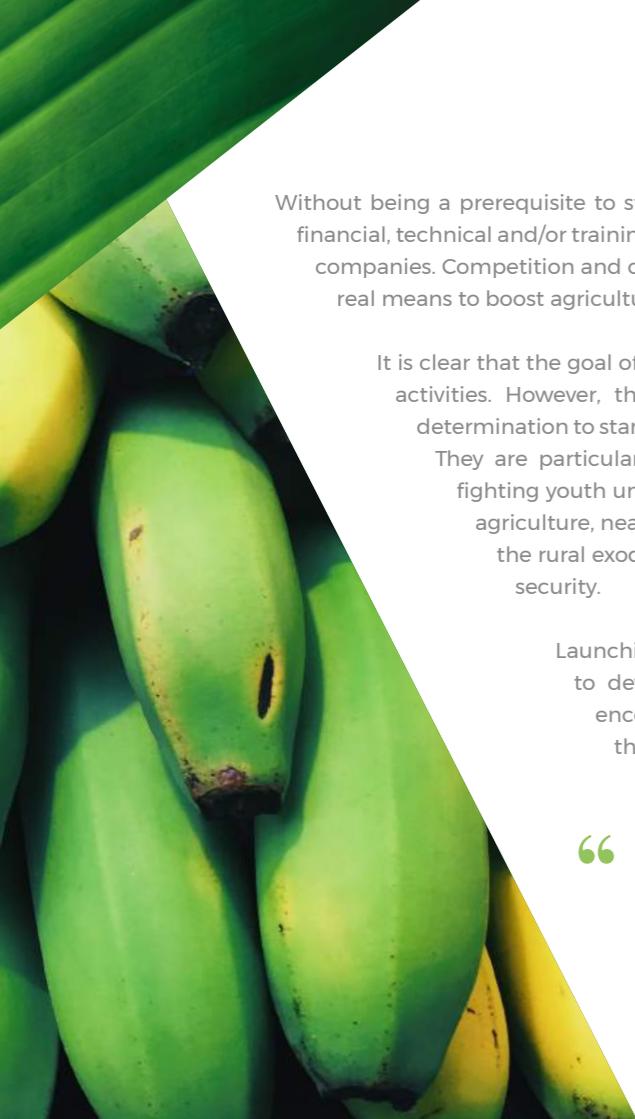
### Personal context

Awareness that agriculture and agri-food are essential resources to improve the lives of those around them is not always sufficient for someone to enter into a new business. Starting off with an available opportunity, whether it be vacant land, an unexploited raw material or an existing business (often family) gives project leaders a significant advantage. They bring an additional added value to this asset.

A stay abroad sometimes provides some hindsight on local agricultural practices. After returning from Europe or the United States, some of our entrepreneurs realized the extent of the potential improvements that could be made using the same resources, provided they make a change in work habits.

1. Food Security Information Network,  
*Global Report on Food crisis 2018*

2. UNESCO, Africa Department, “Demographic Growth”



Without being a prerequisite to start an agricultural or agri-food business, being able to benefit from financial, technical and/or training support accelerates the realization or transformation of projects into companies. Competition and other challenges with medium- and long-term guidance seem to be a real means to boost agricultural initiatives in Africa and to ensure their sustainability.

It is clear that the goal of project leaders is to be able to live reasonably from their agricultural activities. However, the main reason cited for starting a business lies in the ongoing determination to stamp out food crises and the satisfaction of supporting local populations. They are particularly proud to be contributing to the growth of their countries and fighting youth unemployment. It also proves to them that it is possible to "succeed" in agriculture, near their homes. In their words, setting this example is a way to combat the rural exodus and emigration in general, all while helping to increase local food security.

Launching or taking over a business is still always motivated by the desire to develop untapped potential and to resolve some of the difficulties encountered by populations in terms of access to sufficient food throughout the year, at a reasonable price.

“*People do not believe in agriculture in our country*”  
(LES DOIGTS VERTS - Republic of The Congo)

“*One of my dreams is to create jobs, the impact on society is priceless. I hope that the youth can do the same thing or even be more successful than I am currently*”  
(SAFIAGRIBUSINESS - Guinea)

”

## FAFI FROMAGERIE



ALGERIA  
Village de Tamassit

**Person interviewed :** Rachid Ibersiene  
**Age :** 52  
**Responsibility :** Founder & Director  
**Training :** DES in Industrial Planning,  
IT consultant, cheese maker training

Rachid's dream was to become a director. He left Algeria and went to Italy to join the Cinecittà and start his career. His expected success was a long time coming, so he left for Switzerland to do IT consulting. He discovered cheese while taking some training with friends. In 2007, Rachid made the decision to return to Algeria to create "Fromagerie Artisanale Fatma Ibersiene", named after his mother. While it is not a very profitable business, today his new motto is "give happiness".



<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Production of artisan hard cheeses (Vacherin Fribougeois, Emmental, Parmesan)		
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	€30,000 in sales	3 permanent employees 0 temporary employees	12 milk producers
<b>MARKETS</b>	Local, through contracts with large retailers (Vital Uno, Carrefour, Ardis) and a few institutions (particularly the French Embassy)		

<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b>
Hiring support from the Algerian State Perseverance	Difficulty with milk supplies Inconsistent quality Access to financing

	<b>Pays :</b> Algeria <b>Population (Millions) :</b> 41 <b>GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) :</b> 3 844 USD (2016) <b>Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) :</b> 41,4 <b>Main agricultural products :</b> Wheat, potatoes, olive oil, wine, fruits <b>Agricultural sector :</b> The agricultural sector represents 13% of the GDP and employs 10.8% of the labour force. He met 70% of local demand.
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## FASO KABA



MALI  
Bamako

**Person interviewed :**

Maïmouna Sidibe Coulibaly

**Age :** 55

**Responsibility :** Founder & Director

**Training :** DUT in Administration/  
Accounting

Following a stay in the USA, during which she was able to study the production of American seeds, Maïmouna founded Faso Kaba (literally "Land of corn"), with the goal of increasing seed production in Mali, with corn being the priority, as the country is truly rich with it. Today, she aims to make small farmers aware of the use of higher quality seeds to increase the country's food production.

**2007**  
Established

**BUSINESS ACTIVITY** Production and sale of certified vegetable seeds (peanuts, corn, tomatoes, potatoes).



+ €1 million in sales



17 permanent employees  
60 temporary employees



25 cooperatives



350 T of seeds in 2017

**IN NUMBERS 2017**

**MARKETS** In 6 regions surrounding Bamako

**FACTORS OF SUCCESS**

Quality of seeds produced

Technical support for small farmers

Distribution network

**LIMITING FACTORS**

Strong low-quality competition

Access to financing

Cultural traditions/habits

Country : Mali  
Population (Millions) : 18

GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) : 780

Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 41

Main agricultural products : Cereals, cotton, farming

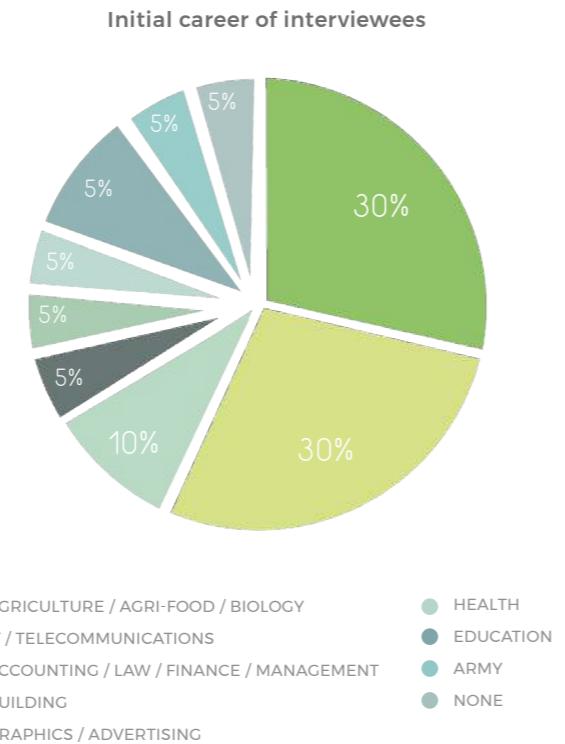
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 33% of the GDP and employs 79% of the labour force.



**COUNTRY INFORMATION**

## **2. What qualities are necessary for a successful initiative ?**

Those who build or take over a business in the agricultural and agri-food sector do not appear to fit one specific profile. Women and men have taken initiative in this sector in Africa, whether or not they have completed educational and/or professional training in this field (28% of interviewees) or have a knowledge of business management (29% of interviewees). The majority of the projects analyzed were initiated either after completing studies or after professional retraining slightly later. The entrepreneurs also benefited from complementary technical training, as was the case for the founder of FraiSen (Senegal), who completed an apprenticeship in horticulture before creating his company.



# FAKOFIA



MADAGASCAR  
Fianarantsoa

**Person interviewed :** Elmy Elein Raherinaaina  
**Age :** 46  
**Responsibility :** Operations Facilitator  
**Training :** Agronomist specializing in rural development

The Fakofia project (from "fako", waste, and "Fia", the short form of the name of the city of Fianarantsoa) was brought by Le Relais Madagascar in conjunction with "Engineers Without Borders", in order to reuse the domes of waste produced by this large city. Its goal is to "make the economy serve the people" and to promote a new model of environmentally-friendly economic development.

<b>2008</b> installation of Relais in Fianarantsoa	<b>2013</b> signing of the city waste operating agreement & creation of Fakofia	<b>2014</b> installation of the agri farm
<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b> Initially sorting, composting and reusing domestic waste, then an 10-hectare independent demonstration farm was implemented (fish farming, breeding, field crops, orchards). Also produces organic seeds.		
<b>IN NUMBERS</b> <b>2017</b>  N/A CA €	 102 permanent employees 0 temporary employees	 N/A
<b>MARKETS</b> Local (Haute Matsiatra region) and national		
<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b> Workers' qualifications Environmental protection values Promoting eco-citizenship		
<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b> Access to financing Access to clients and markets Difficulty promoting labels		
<p>Country : Madagascar          Population (Millions) : 22.3          GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) : 1396          Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 41,4          Main agricultural products : Rice, cassava, potatoes, corn          Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 29.1% of the GDP and employs 80% of the labour force.</p> 		

Although technical knowledge is not essential, there are two factors which seem to determine a company's success : a **solid understanding of the environment and local practices**, as well as certain personal qualities of the project leader: **personal effort, perseverance, resourcefulness and innovation**.

Ultimately, the project leader's personality and entrepreneurial qualities, as well as their conviction in the success of their business activity seem to be the best guarantees for success.

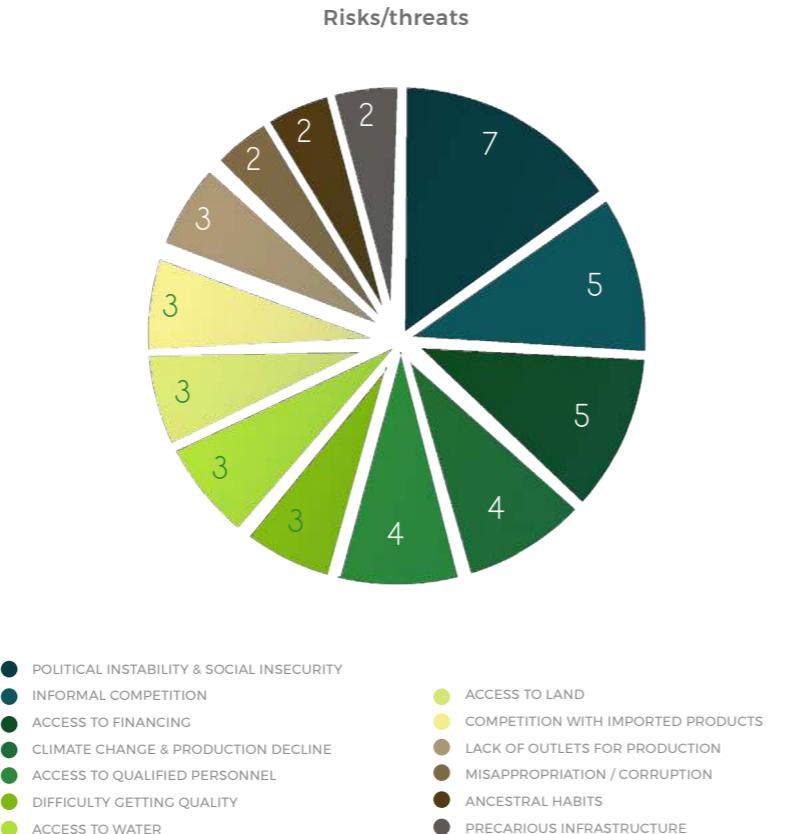
**“To move forward, I try to maximize available potential”**  
(COMPOST CONGO - Democratic Republic of the Congo)

**“If you know you have a good thing, don't let it go ! We fall, and we get back up. That is perseverance”**  
(FAFI FROMAGERIE - Algeria)

**“As an entrepreneur, you need to anticipate and reason”**  
(DAFANI - Burkina Faso)

**“Few people know what a company is”**  
(SIPRA - Ivory Coast)

”



## MAÏSADOUR COOPERATIVE



MOROCCO  
Agadir

**Person interviewed :** Frédéric Faillières  
**Age :** 45  
**Responsibility :** Director General  
**Training :** Agronomist



Country : Morocco  
Population (Millions) : 33  
GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) : 2 832  
Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 30,4  
Main agricultural products : Fruits and vegetables  
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 16,6%  
of the GDP and employs 70% of the labour force.



This sector of the French cooperative group Maisadour initially had the goal of producing fresh sweet corn for the English market. As such, Morocco was selected for its favourable climate and its strong political friendship with the EU.

2001	Significant financial losses in the sector
2002	2nd attempt to develop the activity
2007	300 Ha of sweet corn and first own factory

<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Production of off-season sweet corn and vegetables, distribution of farm inputs and racehorse feed.
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	€15 M in sales     50 permanent employees     N/A temporary employees (average of 20 hectares)     23 federated producers
<b>MARKETS</b>	Europeans (large retailers in Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands)

<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b>	Values of cooperation Quality infrastructure Guidance of export authorities
<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b>	Late payments & delinquencies Ambiguous economic environment



### 3. What are the main constraints that affect these initiatives ?

Each economic actor bears the risks related to their ecosystem and environment, some of which present real challenges to entrepreneurship and serious threats to the sustainability of business activities. Regardless of the country and the business, three major obstacles to development were brought up by the private agri-food actors interviewed :

Political and social instability

The weight of informal competition

Difficulties accessing financing

## CENTRALE DE PRODUCTION DE CEREALES



TOGO  
Lomé

**Person interviewed :** Ayéfoumi Olu  
Adara  
**Age :** 48  
**Responsibility :**  
President and one of the founders  
**Training :** Accountant and farmer

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Country : Togo

Population (Millions) : 7,6

GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) : 578,5

Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 3,8

Main agricultural products : Cotton, millet, sorghum, corn, cassava, cacao, coffee, shea

**Agricultural sector :** The agricultural sector represents 40% of the GDP and employs 60% of the labour force



Between 2004 and 2006, access to production factors (by-products and farming equipment) and commercialization of waste was difficult in Togo. CPC was created to end the 2008 food crisis with an ambitious goal: double cereal production in Togo. It brings together the 5 "regional unions of cereal producer organizations" in the country and sells their products through a network of 39 stores across the country.

2008  
creation of umbrella organization  
in the context of the food crisis

2009  
export to Benin  
through the Frudor company

2015  
Export to Ghana

**BUSINESS ACTIVITY** Cereal producers organization (pooling of equipment, help with market entry, advocating with authorities to promote access to production factors and to increase sales outside the country)

**IN NUMBERS 2017**  
€1.4 M in sales  
16 permanent employees  
0 temporary employees

30,000 federated producers



**MARKETS** National and international

#### LIMITING FACTORS

Access to raw material and inputs



#### FACTORS OF SUCCESS

Access to financing  
Collective organization and networks  
Access to information



## CLOSEUP ON INFORMAL COMPETITION, WHICH DESTABILIZES THE AGRICULTURAL AND AGRI-FOOD SECTORS :

According to the interviewees, informal competition, which was listed as the second limiting factor for developing sustainable agricultural initiatives, takes two different forms:

- Control over locally-available arable land, which can impede the development of upstream organizations located in the territory.

- Counterfeit agri-food products that are lower quality and sold at a low price, destabilizing the market and the position of historical products.

- Informal actors who do not respect the standards cause health issues and endanger all local actors. For example, the case of three small poultry farms in the Ivory Coast.

These factors are essentially external to the business but reflect the reality on the ground. In fact, it is incredibly complex to create or expand a business activity in a changing environment, as the ecosystem is difficult to understand.

Another noteworthy fact is that companies are faced with the challenge of **large-scale production**, the main barriers to which are the lack of quality infrastructure or, at least, infrastructure that is not adapted for companies, and climate change. This is the case for small fruit and vegetable growers who do not have guaranteed constant access to water (equipment is not adapted or obsolete, lack of powerful irrigation systems or incomplete infrastructure works..). Due to this, they are only able to produce six months out of the year, like Safiagribusiness (Senegal) or the cooperative Ain Salam (Islamic Republic of Mauritania). This has a direct impact on the price of basic foodstuffs, which skyrockets outside of the periods of production.

In addition to productivity, the challenge remains to provide a **consistent level of quality**, a particularly important aspect for actors working with foreign clients, particularly wholesalers.

## TOGO TILAPIA “THE HAND OF GOD”



TOGO  
Kovié

**Person interviewed :** Cephas ADZOMLA  
**Age :** 49  
**Responsibility :** Founder & Director  
**Training :** Civil Engineer

### COUNTRY INFORMATION

Country : Togo

Population (Millions) : 7,6

GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) : 578,5

Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 3,8

Main agricultural products : Cotton, millet, sorghum, corn, cassava, cacao, coffee, shea

**Agricultural sector :** The agricultural sector represents 40% of the GDP and employs 60% of the labour force

Cephas used to split his time between his professional construction sites and his aquaculture farm. But given the significant amount of fish theft, he decided to take this business on full time and to significantly increase it (new ponds). He wants to expand to a semi-intensive production in order to provide a local alternative to imported Chinese fish.

2007  
Installation of the farm

2012  
Professionalization of operations

2015  
Installation of the smoking factory

**BUSINESS ACTIVITY**  
Production of organic fresh water fish (tilapia, clarias), from nursery to direct sale, including feeding, fishing and smoking as part of the process.



Between €50  
and 100,000 in



6 permanent employees  
Some temporary  
employees during fishing  
periods



No federated producers



75 T of fish

**IN NUMBERS  
2017**

**MARKETS**

Local

### FACTORS OF SUCCESS

Access to water  
Grants to buy foodstuffs  
Training for workers

### LIMITING FACTORS

Access to market (wealthy clients)  
Financing to expand



## CLOSEUP ON GIE NAFFA (BURKINA FASO) :

The Groupement d'intérêt Economique Naffa brought together up to 15 Burkinabe mango producers between 2003 and 2011. These members, benefiting from training on drying these fruits, were able to develop an export business and sell almost 100 tonnes annually. In 2010, their main client, a Dutch wholesaler, began to question the product quality, particularly a drying phase that was too strong, and uneven colour. The combination of a climate which was not flourishing, an undiversified client portfolio and decreased product quality eventually led the organization to a loss.

One of the other major pitfalls encountered by the companies was related to the human factor. **Traditional work habits have an enormous impact on agricultural practices**, and they are often not very compatible with the concept of productivity and adapting to climate changes. In addition, there is the double **challenge of finding qualified and trustworthy labourers**.

Finally, it is clearly evident that the economic environment is made more complex by **informal operation**, which requires a detailed understanding of the unwritten rules, which may resemble wrongdoing.

“*The reality is often quite different from what is written on paper, with unwritten rules that you only discover once you engage in the business activity* » (SIPRA - Ivory Coast)

«*All cooperatives function informally, they are not developed and lack support* » (AIN SALAM - Islamic Republic of Mauritania)

“*The State does not play its part* » (LE GALLINACIER - Senegal)

## ZEBU OVERSEAS BOARD



MADAGASCAR  
Antsirabé

**Person interviewed:** Eric Morand  
**Age:** 55  
**Responsibility:** Vice-President and Co-Manager  
**Training:** Graphic designer/publicist

### COUNTRY INFORMATION

Country : Madagascar  
Population (Millions) : 22,3  
GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) : 1396  
Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 41,4  
Main agricultural products : Rice, cassava, potatoes, corn  
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 29,1% of the GDP and employs 80% of the labour force.

The founder, Stéphane Geay, created this company to allow small farmers in Madagascar to work their land more easily (ploughing, manure), to feed their families (milk production) and to facilitate the sale of market garden products at a reduced cost. It was important for the founder that this social initiative took the form of a company, not an association.

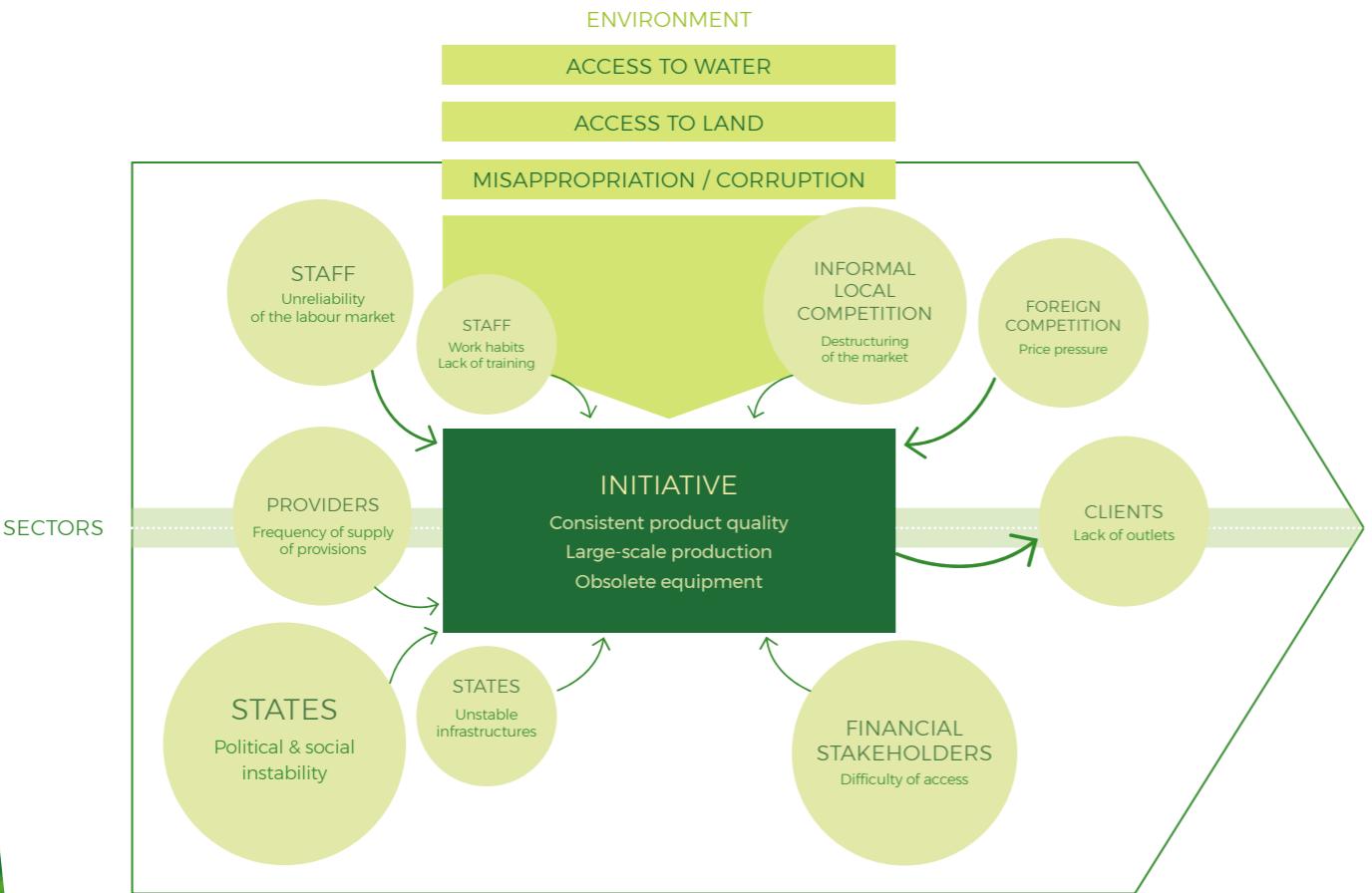
1997	Development of micro-credit activities
2007	Creation of the educational farm
2017	Search for funds to revitalise the business

<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Rental/sale of animals (zebus, grade cows, pigs) or agricultural equipment (cart) to small farmers who are not eligible for micro-credit. Operations also include an educational farm.
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	 Losses 13 permanent employees 0 temporary employees
<b>MARKETS</b>	 No federated producers 5,800 rentals/sales made over 20 years The small farmers who benefit are within 100 kilometres of Antsirabé and the contract holders are mainly in France.

<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b>	Founder's relationships Media coverage of the project
<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b>	Misappropriation of funds Access to financing



## The weight of the threats facing agricultural & agri-food initiatives



## COMPOST CONGO



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO  
Kinshasa

**Person interviewed :**  
Maximilien Kungana Kola  
**Age :** 27  
**Responsibility :** Founder and manager  
**Training :** Biology and Environmental Science

### COUNTRY INFORMATION

Country : Democratic Republic of the Congo

Population (Millions) : 85.3

GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 466

Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 26.2

Main agricultural products : Corn, rice, cassava, beans, bananas, peanuts, sweet potatoes

Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 20% of the GDP and employs 81.9% of the labour force.



In the significant crisis in DRC (standstill in collection of waste by public authorities, dirtiness, development of disease and difficulty finding skilled jobs), Maximilien saw an opportunity to develop his project. He took advantage of two challenges in 2014, INNOV4AFRICA and the "Green start-up challenge" to define the organization and to profit from technical and management advice.

	2014 Pilot phase	2015 Beginning of incubation and production	2018 Semi-industrial scale
<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Collection of household organic waste, sorting, crushing, composting and commercialization, mostly for farmers.		
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	Between €10 and 15,000 in sales 5 permanent employees 0 temporary employees, but a team of volunteers	No federated producers	100 T of waste collected and 30 T of compost produced
<b>MARKETS</b>	Local farmers and private clients		
<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b>	Accumulated competencies and know-how Technical support received Promising national environment		
<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b>	Unstable political climate Lack of urbanization policies Lack of dialogue between private and public sectors		

The entrepreneurs raised numerous means of action to compensate for the main obstacles to the development of their businesses. Some have already been implemented, others should be promoted :

 THREATS	 SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY THE 20 ENTREPRENEURS
<b>Political and social instability</b>	No evoked solutions
Weakening of the sectors by <b>informal competition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Increase knowledge of local actors</li><li>- Know the "rules of the game" and the environment</li><li>- Encourage/support regulation to limit fraudulent practices</li></ul>
Difficulty accessing <b>financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Consider alternative financial arrangements (merger with a holding)</li><li>- Participate in competitions with allocations</li></ul>
<b>Decreased product quality</b> due to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Diversify products</li><li>- Increase the value of by-products</li><li>- Popularize permaculture</li><li>- Modernize production equipment</li><li>- Promote discussions among local actors and watch for future climate changes</li></ul>
Difficult to find qualified <b>staff</b> and they leave once trained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Work on the project manager's leadership skills</li><li>- Create real teams and give them "freedom to create"</li><li>- Choose to hire uneducated youth who are not afraid to "get their hands dirty"</li></ul>
Difficulty obtaining <b>quality</b>	Comply with standards and/or obtain certifications (particularly for international markets)

 THREATS	 SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY THE 20 ENTREPRENUERS
Access to <b>land</b> , particularly for women	No evoked solutions
Access to <b>water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improve use of wastewater</li><li>- Develop a complementary activity that would optimize water usage</li><li>- Encourage/demand action on the part of public authorities</li></ul>
<b>Imported products sold at lower prices</b> than local products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Create labels which highlight quality/regional production to set them apart</li><li>- Improve packaging</li></ul>
Lack of production <b>outlets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Develop innovative products and packaging</li><li>- Encourage governments to support R&amp;D</li><li>- Diversify operations</li></ul>
<b>Habits</b> "we have always done it this way..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Change practices by example and by raising awareness</li><li>- Set up training centres</li></ul>
<b>Misappropriation</b>	Pas de solutions évoquées
Precarious <b>infrastructure</b> , which companies must offset	Encourage urban planning policies (roads, electricity, water...)
Irregularity of supply	No evoked solutions
Speculating about raw materials	No evoked solutions



## GREEN KEEPER AFRICA (GKA)



BENIN  
Cotonou et So-Ava

Person interviewed : Fohla Mouftaou  
Age : 42  
Responsibility : Founder and manager  
Training : Pediatrics

COUNTRY  
INFORMATION

Country : Benin  
Population (Millions) : 11,5  
GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) : 789  
Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 3,4  
Main agricultural products : Cotton, pineapples, cashews, corn, cassava, sorghum, millet, cowpea  
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 25% of the GDP and employs between 45 and 55% of the labour force.



BUSINESS ACTIVITY			
IN NUMBERS	2017	€15,200 in sales (divided by 3 in 2017 after the end of service activities)	Manufacturing of a pollution control fibre from manually-harvested water hyacinth and other R&D developments from this raw material (packages, cosmetics)
MARKETS	2017	17 permanent employees 700 temporary employees	Local and soon regional (Burkina Faso, Gabon, Togo, soon to come : Cameroon and Ivory Coast)
No federated producers			2,600 T of fresh plants harvested and 200 T of finished products

FACTORS OF SUCCESS		LIMITING FACTORS
Mass communication	Financial funds available from the beginning	Skills and cost of labour Country's lack of openness to innovation Administrative constraints

2014	establishment and incubation
2017	Support from a Dutch public fund for innovation
2018	Company restructuring and diversification projects

## 4. What are the factors of success for these initiatives ?

According to the interviewees, success is based on a balance between financial, human and technical factors, and a perfect understanding of the environment and local practices reinforced by a solid collective organization.

Unsurprisingly, **access to financing** was named as the primary vector of company sustainability (20% of respondents). Whether it comes from financial institutions, non-governmental organizations or family, the more easily funds are mobilized, the easier it is to create an agricultural and/or agri-food business activity. Approximately half of the initiatives in our sample group entered the value chain or moved up through financial support. For example, some of them benefited from a business start-up competition with a monetary prize, which was often less than €10,000.



## GIE NAFFA



BURKINA FASO  
Ouagadougou

**Person interviewed :** Rosemonde Touré  
**Age :** -  
**Responsibility :** Former President  
**Training :** Lawyer

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Country : Burkina Faso  
Population (Millions) : 19.6  
GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 650  
Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 11,8  
Main agricultural products : Cotton, cereals (millet, sorghum, corn, rice, fonio)  
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 35% of the GDP and employs 82% of the labour force.



GIE was created by the NGO "Centre Ecologique Albert Schweitzer" after holding training sessions on mango drying. The sector experienced a significant crisis in 2010. Despite efforts to resume operations, GIE stopped operations in 2015/2016. Even if it was fleeting, this initiative allowed the local sector to be built (implementation of an inter-profession) and started reflection on organic production.

2003	Establishment	2010	Crisis in the mango sector Participation in a State project to relaunch operations	2016	Operations stopped
<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Commercialization of dried mango and shea butter (and other by-products) and facilitating training				
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	 €0, versus €457,000 in 2011	 0 permanent employees 0 temporary employees	 15 federated producers	 100 T of dried mango in the best year	
<b>MARKETS</b>	Exclusively international (one Dutch wholesaler)				

### FACTORS OF SUCCESS

Collective organization which brought credibility  
Government recognition

### LIMITING FACTORS

Dissension within the group  
Lack of diversification  
One client

## CLOSEUP ON THE SUCCESS OF SARR SEIFOUR (SENEGAL) :

Seifour grows sweet potatoes on 30 hectares, destined for wholesalers in Dakar. As opposed to other farms in the region, which primarily grow melons, tomatoes or onions, he decided to focus on a staple that is neglected in the field (due to a more than three-month maturity time), even though the demand in Senegal is very high. Seifour saw a development opportunity and took the challenge of offering locally-produced sweet potatoes to compete with imports from Mali.

In terms of access to financing, the profile of the agricultural entrepreneur, **their motivation and perseverance** are equally important. However, the **necessity of relying on the collective and creating partnerships** with private individuals and legal entities with complementary competencies to the project leader, was also brought up here, particularly in terms of business management. In fact, it appears that small-scale agricultural projects are often developed first to ensure family food security, then, they are gradually expanded to obtain a certain level of economic security. This transition requires additional competencies.

The **values of cooperation and mutual assistance** implemented in collective organizations comprising different types of actors such as producers, seasonal workers, immediate family, neighbours... seem to play an important role in the success of an agricultural project. The prerequisites to ensuring the creation and sustainability of a business in Africa are knowledge of the ecosystem and bringing together and reaching out to local actors.

Cited earlier as one of the major risks, **matching the offer to the situation and the quality of the products on offer** are also two of the most important factors in the success of an initiative, guaranteeing a deep and loyal client base.

## SAFIAGRIBUSINESS



GUINEA  
Kindia

Person interviewed : Boubacar Aliou Diallo

Age : 29

Responsibility : Founder and manager

Training : BAC +5 years in  
Telecommunications

COUNTRY  
INFORMATION

Country : Guinea

Population (Millions) : 10,9

GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 531

Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 14,5

Main agricultural products : Rice, coffee, pineapples, citrus

Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 20% of the GDP and employs 50% of the labour force.

Boubacar had the goal of creating a company which allowed him to actively contribute to the development of his country and to employ youth, even in rural areas. He was able to achieve this dream through a \$5,000 award from a Nigerian foundation. With his head filled with projects and family support, he wanted to expand his operations to become an African agricultural leader.

2014  
Establishment

2019  
Project to begin fish farming (five nursery ponds)

**BUSINESS ACTIVITY** Agricultural company that integrates agriculture and animal husbandry over 5.5 hectares (market gardening, eggs and broilers, and agroforestry)

IN NUMBERS  
2017

~ €20,000 in sales

6 permanent employees  
5 to 10 temporary employees

No federated producers

2 T of pepper, 500 broilers, 90 bags of cucumbers

**MARKETS** Local (market and hotels/restaurants in the region)

### FACTORS OF SUCCESS

Vision  
Work  
Perseverance

### LIMITING FACTORS

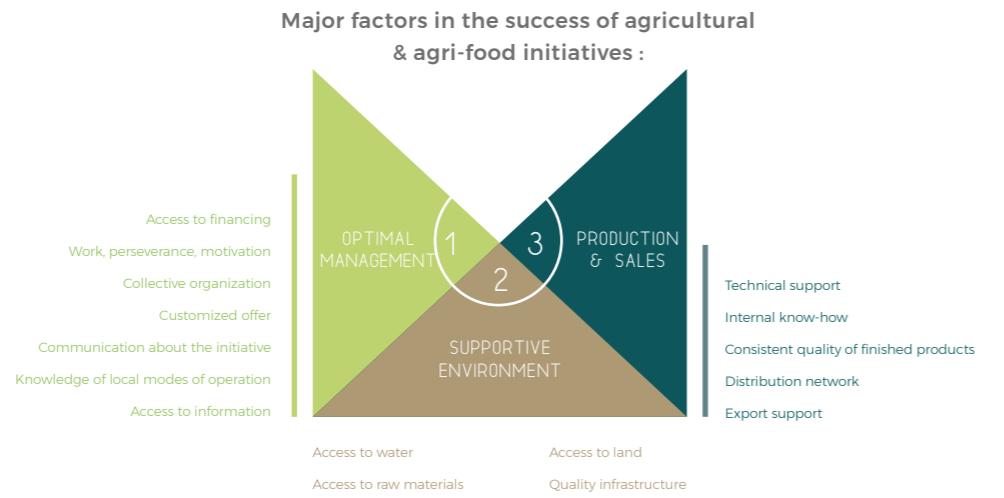
Access to financing  
Little control over water (irrigation)  
Dependency (animal feed)



Other factors of success were also shared with us, such as access to know-how and skills, availability of technical advice and the availability of resources (raw materials, water, land). However, according to the respondents, these are not as critical to the prosperity of an agricultural project.

**It is reassuring to note that the elements which promote the start-up and success of African initiatives have been identified and can be reinforced :** availability of financial support, organization of training and technical and management support programs, consolidation of agricultural cooperation and sectors, etc.

“ *« You have to understand the codes, know and respect them » (ZABBAAN - Mali)  
 « You have to know how to combine tips » (COMPOST CONGO – Democratic Republic of the Congo)  
 « You cannot build a business on your own » (FRAISEN - Senegal)* ”



## SOCIETE IVOIRIENNE DE PRODUCTION ANIMALE SIPRA



IVORY COAST  
Abidjan

**Person interviewed :** Sylvain Gotta  
**Age :** 48  
**Responsibility :** Director General  
**Training :** Studied finance in France then 7 years on the council in Abidjan

COUNTRY  
INFORMATION

Country : Ivory Coast  
 Population (Millions) : 23,7  
 GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 1 054  
 Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 20,6  
 Main agricultural products : Cacao, cashews, coffee, rubber, corn, rice, yams  
 Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 24.3% of the GDP and employs 50% of the labour force.

Co-created by the Ivory Coast government and forebears of INVIVO in 1976 with the goal of developing local protein production, SIPRA began operating in 1978. In the beginning it exclusively made animal feed, but the company has greatly diversified and maintained its distribution network over the last ten years. The French multinational company divested its shares in the company to Ivory Coast capitals in the 90's.

1976 Establishment	1990 INVIVO's departure and entry of Ivory Coast capital	2007 Development of its own distribution network	2016 Opening of a subsidiary in Burkina Faso
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<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Production of animal feed, chicks, chickens, eggs and charcuterie
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	~ €100 M in sales 850 permanent employees 300 temporary employees 30 federated producers 200,000 T of feed and 20,000 per year
<b>MARKETS</b>	National and international

<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b>	Technical experience of a multinational company Understanding of local context Effective management
<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b>	End of protection of the domestic market Informal actors Socioeconomic environment

## 5. What is the impact of these business activities on sectors and local ecosystems ?

The 20 organizations analyzed employ more than 2,500 people and bring together 44,000 people worldwide (producers, permanent and seasonal employees, volunteers, family members). Twelve of these initiatives have less than 50 employees (direct and temporary). Unsurprisingly, the smallest organizations (less than 10 people) are mostly growers and engage their immediate environment (family, neighbourhood, village). Processors have a more varied ecosystem made up of independent stakeholders and agricultural cooperatives that supply raw materials.

**As such, agri-food project leaders have a real economic impact and a significant social impact.** They "provide work" for local populations, counteracting the attraction of youth toward big cities and their desire to emigrate.



However, we noticed a **weak standard in terms of the structure of the sectors**, except when this is promoted by public authorities, as is the case in Togo with fish farming, rice and corn. Entrepreneurs are individually calling for them to be strengthened. They feel the need for their interests to be defended by groups of actors to stabilize the economic environment. This is particularly true for organizations which will have to deal with the imminent reopening of the borders for imports in protected sectors, such as poultry farming in the Ivory Coast (the ban on the import of chicken since the world avian flu crisis is scheduled to end in 2020).

As such, the impact of agricultural actors on their immediate ecosystem is immediate, but very rarely includes other upstream and/or downstream economic organizations that would enable the structuring of complete and solid sectors.

As such, encouraging local initiatives to develop and strengthen their position in the agri-food value chains is critical. Guiding them towards processing will allow them to create more added value, all while further mobilizing dynamic forces in Africa.

“

*« The sector needs to be guided to move further forward »*

(LE GALLINACIER - Senegal)

*« It is my mission to build up this sector »*

(FRAISEN - Senegal)

*« I can make a good product, but it is the surrounding environment that needs to be organized »*

(FAFI FROMAGERIE - Algeria)

*« We have co-developed with our producers »*

(MAISADOUR MAROC - Morocco)



## 6. What are the outlets and markets targeted by these initiatives ?

Although the demand for food products is constantly growing, the sale of unprocessed agricultural production can be complex. Certain foodstuffs flood the market during the same season, only to disappear from stalls in a few weeks, causing prices to fluctuate significantly. One specific case is chicken in the Ivory Coast, as production is not regulated. Farmers buy eggs to be hatched from Brazil, France and Belgium at the same time, which results in a plethora of chickens for short periods of time.

The majority of the initiatives (11 out of 20) that we analyzed address the local market through **direct sale** to individuals or institutions (hotels, restaurants, embassies, etc.). When they target a domestic market, they develop a **distribution network**, either independently or through previously established partners (resellers, small independent shops or large-scale retailers). The four international

companies that we interviewed go through **wholesalers**.

As such, markets are essentially accessed through a distribution network or wholesalers. E-commerce also seems to be starting to take off, but this concerns more high-end processed products such as Zabbaan fruit juices (Mali).

The stabilization of the business activity and the domestic markets reaching maturity seems to be compulsory steps before an entrepreneur can consider expansion to the subregion or international markets. In fact, it is rare that long-term initiatives exclusively address foreign clients and from the beginning.

**“It's because foreigners see us as interesting that locals are now beginning to look to us”**  
(GREEN KEEPER AFRICA - Benin)

**“The more demanding ordering parties are, the higher developing countries are pulled.”** (MAISADOUR MAROC - Morocco)

”

## LES DOIGTS VERTS



REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO  
Brazzaville

Person interviewed : Prince Ngou Ngou

Age : 32

Responsibility : Project Leader for producers

Training : French Army

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Country : Republic of the Congo

Population (Millions) : 5.1

GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 1528

Agricultural land(Millions of Hectares) : 10.6

Main agricultural products : Sugar cane, cacao, coffee, rubber, bananas, corn, cassava

Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 7.2% of the GDP and employs 37.3% of the labour force et occupe 70% de la population active.

Founded by a veteran of the oil industry who wanted to promote the agricultural sector, which was abandoned in comparison with hydrocarbons, the company aims to transform Congolese agriculture by strengthening the capacities of farmers and local sectors. It commercializes seeds in partnership with the French company Catros Gerand and rents "fully-equipped" land (technical guidance, soil analysis, etc.).

2014  
Establishment

BUSINESS ACTIVITY Production and sale of vegetable seeds (tomatoes, onions, peppers, etc.) and guiding producers to achieve better production.

IN NUMBERS 2017  
N/A

20 permanent employees  
0 temporary employees

50 federated producers on 50 Ha

N/A

MARKETS Local

### FACTORS OF SUCCESS

Management's strong motivation

Context of abandonment of the agricultural sector

Discipline

### LIMITING FACTORS

Trust in foreigners

Unfair competition

Cost of Land



## 7. How can these initiatives be sustained ?

None of the organizations have significant ambition in terms of growth; some simply wish to maintain their current level of production. However, in the short- and medium-term, the main method used to sustain these companies is identical. Whether the initiatives are well-established or in development, it is the **diversification of products and operations through continuous improvement and innovation**.

Innovation, which is essentially used to optimize practices and available resources, is considered to be one of the major challenges in Africa. We identified few major R&D projects; rather, there are a number of **small, gradual improvements**. The majority of the initiatives are centred around classic, conventional production. Then, innovation comes into play to breathe new life into the business, once access to resources and existing practices are complete and secure. (This aspect is sufficiently reassuring for actors who want to invest in local initiatives).

These optimizations are generally completed with limited means and help to grow the offer and **improve the quality of local production to achieve better overall value**. They are also vectors of differentiation, and as such, growth drivers

“

*« Today, relying on mangoes is suicide, you have to diversify »*  
(DAFANI - Burkina Faso)

“

*« Agricultural technology is extraordinary »*  
(FRAISEN - Senegal)

“

*« The project has to be innovative, Africa needs innovation »*  
(DANAYA CEREALES - Mali)

”

## ZABBAAN



MALI  
Bamako

**PERSON INTERVIEWED :** Aïssata Diakité  
**Age :** 29  
**Responsibility :** Founder and Director  
**Training :** Agribusiness engineer

COUNTRY INFORMATION

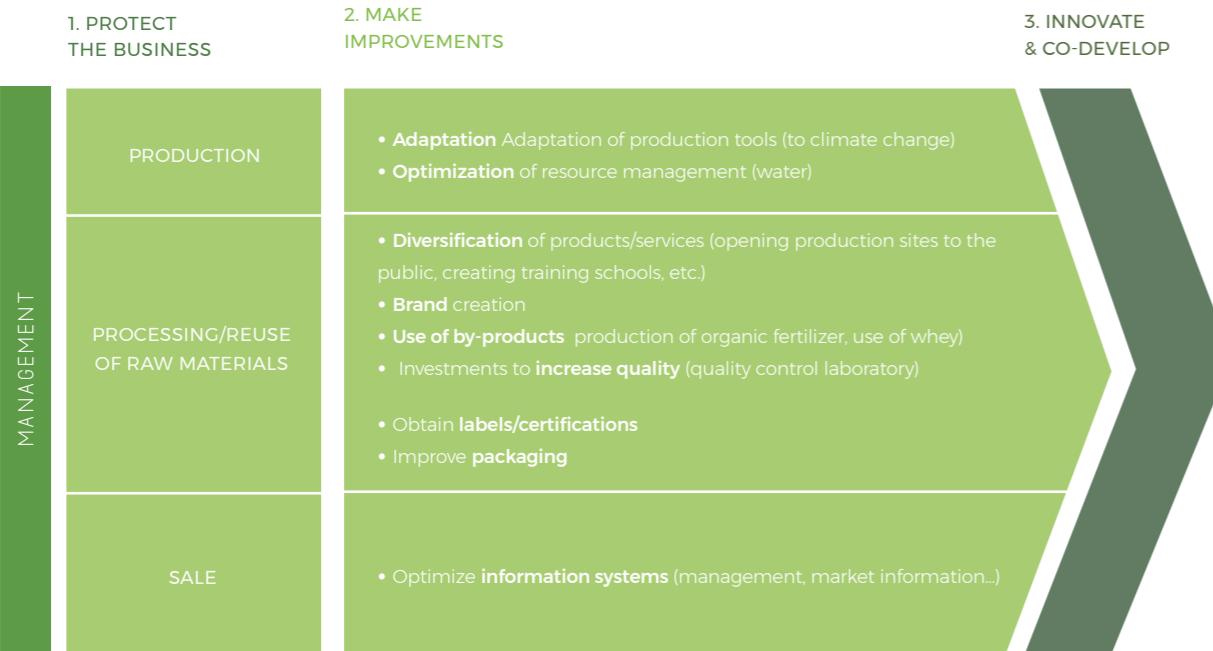
Country : Mali  
Population (Millions) : 18  
GDP per inhabitant (USD / 2016) : 780  
Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 41  
Main agricultural products : Cereals, cotton, farming  
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 33% of the GDP and employs 79% of the labour force.



During the years of study for her project, Aïssata set two goals: to promote Mali's wealth and to get involved in the agri-food sector. From a young age, she enjoyed cooking, making ice cream, and creating new recipes. It is only natural that she created her own juice production company, which today has dozens of product lines for individuals and businesses.

2010	Start of incubation	2015	Establishment and start of operations	NEAR FUTUR
				desire to reach out to the French market
<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Processing of 90% wild berries into juice			
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	Between €100 and €150,000 in sales	30 permanent employees 35 temporary employees	5 000 federated producers	5 to 10,000 bottles per day
<b>MARKETS</b>	Local (speciality stores)			
<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b>	Maîtrise de l'environnement malien Entourage porteur Qualité des produits			<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b> Géopolitique du pays

Several types of innovations were mentioned to increase the value of raw materials, to stand out and optimize the overall management of the operation or company :



## DANAYA CÉRÉALES



MALI  
Bamako

**Person interviewed :** Halatou Dem  
**Age :** 32  
**Responsibility :** Director General  
**Training :** Master of Finance, and family involved in agriculture

COUNTRY INFORMATION

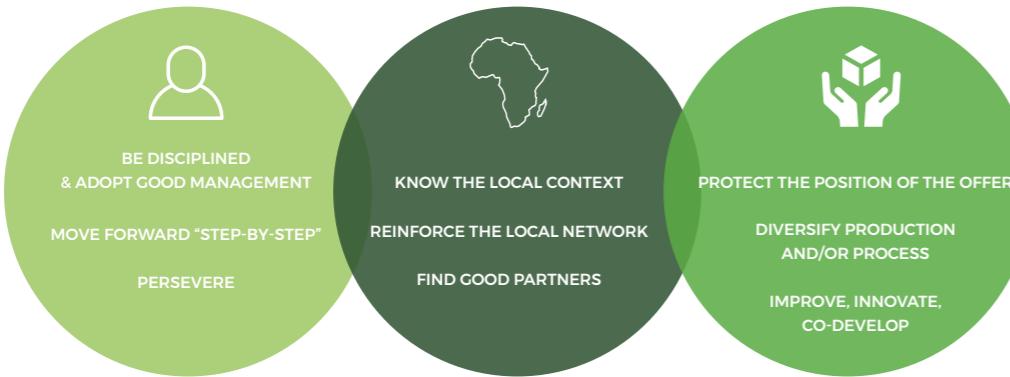
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Danaya Céréales was founded by Halatou's mother using unemployment pay she received when the cement factory where she worked closed. She began to process products at her home, before her daughter decided to take advantage of her skills in finance to industrialize production. Today, the two women hope to get ISO certification by 2020 in order to facilitate export, particularly to Asia.

1992 Establishment	2010 Halatou's integration into the family business Beginning of the change of scale	2013 Significant increase in production capacity
<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b> Processing primarily cereal products (fonio, millet, sorghum, peanuts) into porridge, flours, etc.		
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b> ~ €150,000 in sales 33 permanent employees 0 temporary employees		 2 cooperatives of more than 1,000 members providing the raw materials 1.5 to 2 T per day of processed products
<b>MARKETS</b> National, West Africa and international (France and United States). Sold to shops and wholesalers		<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b> Political instability Informal competition Speculation on raw materials
<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b> Her mother's avant garde vision Mother-daughter's complementary skills Consistent product quality		

## 8. Advice from entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs



In light of their respective experience, the project leaders shared with us the advice that they would give to any entrepreneur who is currently in the process of developing or taking over a business in the agri-food sector.

First, they must **have a perfect understanding of the national context** of the country in which they wish to establish themselves. The chances of success are greater if the project leader knows the "rules of the game" of the area and has a significant **local network** consisting of institutions, political organizations, economic stakeholders, and a **solid network of family and friends**, so that they can easily solicit help in the beginning. When starting a business, it is critical to **promote partnerships, mobilize the available support as much as possible**, "show the benefits they bring to the right people", in short, "do not go it alone", rely on the collective strength and learn from the experiences of those who began the adventure earlier.

## AIN SALAM



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC  
OF MAURITANIA  
Sélibali

**Person interviewed :** Bilel Thiam  
**Age :** 43  
**Responsibility :** Member of the  
cooperative union  
**Training :** English Teacher

COUNTRY  
INFORMATION

Country : Mauritania  
Population (Millions) : 3,9  
GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 1 078  
Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 39,7  
Main agricultural products : Cereals (sorghum, millet, wheat), farming  
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 21% of the GDP  
and employs 62% of the labour force.



There are many agricultural cooperatives in Mauritania, which respectively gives them little weight. As such, the government encourages them to organize themselves into Cooperative Unions in order to increase production by sharing goods and strengths (primarily women with low literacy). Ain Salam is an example. It brings together 42 cooperatives on 50 hectares of land.

2006 Establishment			
<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b>	Cultivation of vegetable plants (eggplant, lettuce, carrots, peanuts, cowpea) and wheat processing (couscous). These activities are completed with a little animal breeding and local crafts.		
<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b>	< €3,000 in sales	1 permanent employees 0 temporary employees	
<b>MARKETS</b>	Local (markets)	42 federated cooperatives, specifically approximately 800 women	N/A

<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b>
Authorization to drill for market gardening Available workers	Access to water Finding production outlets Knowledge and training of workers

As with any entrepreneurial activity, **strong personal investment** on the part of the founder(s) is required, as well as discipline and perseverance in the face of all challenges to deal with the political, social and economic complexities of the continent. It is important to "move forward one step at a time" while "keeping faith in the project".

**The offer should be very well defined** based on demand, local/regional needs and the circumstances, while taking the volume of imports into consideration, which can often change the course. Once the initial business activity is under control, the interviewees encouraged all entrepreneurs to **quickly diversify their production, invest in processing, constantly innovate and co-develop** to expand the market and share their value.

However, all of these recommendations would be useless without this last piece of advice to sustain young organizations: adopt an optimal and **rigorous management system for your company**, "look for every last euro" and be sure to train and retain your associates so that the **know-how stays in-house**.

**“Projects have to be built one step at a time to determine the reality and evolve accordingly”** (TOGO TILAPIA - Togo)

**“We invest in processing so that agriculture can create jobs”** (CPC TOGO - Togo)

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## LE GALLINACIER



SENEGAL  
Bambilor

**PERSON INTERVIEWED :** Papa Bakary Coly  
**Age :** 38  
**Responsibility :** Founder and manager  
**Training :** Created a small poultry farm before emigrating to Europe for several years.

As he was not very passionate about his studies, Papa left high school during his second year, with his parents' support to start a small poultry farm. He lived abroad for several years then came back to Senegal to live his dream when the Senegalese State announced that the borders would be closed to imported European chickens (after the avian flu crisis in 2005). Today, he is spearheading aviculture in the country (President of Agriculteurs Autonomes du Sénégal and an instructor at several organizations).

Breeding 30 chickens

2006  
Immigration to Europe

2014  
Return to Senegal and establishment of the company

### BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Breeding broilers and egg production, completed by market gardening.



~ €300,000 in sales



20 permanent employees  
0 temporary employees



20 exclusive resellers



15,000 to 20,000 broilers and 700,000 eggs per year

### IN NUMBERS 2017

### MARKETS

Local (markets through resellers)

### FACTORS OF SUCCESS

Passion and determination  
Family support  
Chicken imports stopped (2005-2020)

### LIMITING FACTORS

Access to land (growing urbanization)  
No compensation for illness  
Outlets and markets fluctuate



Country : Senegal

Population (Millions) : 15.2

GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 2,712

Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 8.9

Main agricultural products : Cereals (rice, corn, millet), peanuts, onions, watermelons, potatoes, tomatoes

Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 16% of the GDP and employs 50% of the labour force.





We would like to thank everyone who agreed to share their experiences with us with confidence, whether their projects are a great success or their path has been more complicated. We hope that your stories will show the path travelled and guide future entrepreneurs who want to create or take over an agricultural business in Africa.

This study would not have seen the light of day without the valuable support of the FARM and APEXAGRI teams, as well as their respective ecosystems made up of agronomists, specialized consultants and experts on Africa. They allowed us to formulate this study, to obtain this rich sample group of initiatives and to gradually refine the lessons to be highlighted.

## ENTREPRISE SARR SEIFOUR



**SENEGAL**  
Village de Thiarène

**PERSON interviewed :** Sarr Seifour  
**Age :** 27  
**Responsibility :** Founder and manager  
**Training :** Degree in management

**COUNTRY INFORMATION**

After his studies, Seigour found himself unemployed. One of his parents came looking for him when he was playing soccer with his friends to tell him to come back to the village. He made a piece of land available to him and stood surety with a bank so he could set up his sweet potato operation. In his turn, he supported the investment of youth in agriculture by making them responsible for the fields, then complete management of the land so that they "stop dreaming of going abroad".

**2015**  
Launch of business

**BUSINESS ACTIVITY** Production of sweet potatoes and direct sale from the field to wholesalers

**IN NUMBERS 2017** Between €50 and €100,000 in sales      15 permanent employees (9 months of the year)  
0 temporary employees

-  
250 bags per hectare per year, or 17.5 T

**MARKETS** Local (through wholesalers)

#### FACTORS OF SUCCESS

Motivation  
Quality of land and access to water

#### LIMITING FACTORS

Outlets (client loyalty)  
Competition with imports from Mali  
Infrastructure (water pipes)



**Country :** Senegal  
**Population (Millions) :** 15.2  
**GDP per inhabitant (USD) :** 2 712  
**Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) :** 8.9  
**Main agricultural products :** Cereals (rice, corn, millet), peanuts, onions, watermelons, potatoes, tomatoes  
**Agricultural sector :** The agricultural sector represents 16% of the GDP and employs 50% of the labour force.

This study was performed in 2017-2018. Following the first phase of framing, we identified and contacted the project leaders of the initiatives which, in our opinion, seemed impactful, with the goal of bringing together twenty accounts.

Our sample group of initiatives was carefully selected according to several complementary criteria to guarantee that we had a representative sample of African agricultural and food diversity and organization types: We sought initiatives that were:

- Upstream/downstream (from production to distribution);**
- Ideally implemented by Africans, for Africans;**
- Of various sizes, from small businesses to multinational companies;**
- From various agricultural and agri-food sectors which are representative of the main productions from the continent;**
- Located in diverse francophone countries (a complementary study will be completed for anglophone African countries).**

As you can see, we have not excluded initiatives that did not make it since, in our opinion, their trials can also provide a wealth of lessons.

Finally, all the diagrams and graphics in the study are taken from an analysis of the data collected during the interviews conducted by the FARM and APEXAGRI teams with the 20 entrepreneurs.

**FRAISEN**

SENEGAL  
Près de Dakar

**PERSON INTERVIEWED :**  
Thierno Souleymane Agne  
**Age :** 29  
**Responsibility :** Founder and manager  
**Training :** Legal studies then vocational training in horticulture

Souleymane is a "serial investor", who wants to put innovation and technology at the heart of his agricultural activities. He left a Law program in his second year to study horticulture and entrepreneurship. At that time, one of his professors told him "red berries in Senegal, do not even think about it", and since then it has become his challenge. He began with 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> and today he grows strawberries on 5 hectares.

<b>2010-2014</b> Creation of several agricultural start-ups (Naatangue, Waalu Ma agri, Baytech)	<b>2016</b> Creation of FraSen	<b>2023</b> Production goal of 10 T per month and export development
<b>BUSINESS ACTIVITY</b> Production and marketing of organic strawberries, particularly in the off-season	<b>IN NUMBERS 2017</b> < €3,000 in sales 9 permanent employees 15 temporary employees	<b>IN NUMBERS 2023</b> 1 T per month
<b>MARKETS</b> Exclusively local	<b>FACTORS OF SUCCESS</b> Motivation, passion and perseverance Relationship of trust with associates Fertility of the land and access to water	<b>LIMITING FACTORS</b> Qualified and loyal workers Potential future legal restrictions Climate for off-season production

Country : Senegal  
Population (Millions) : 15,2  
GDP per inhabitant (USD) : 2 712  
Agricultural land (Millions of hectares) : 8,9  
Main agricultural products : Cereals (rice, corn, millet), peanuts, onions, watermelons, potatoes, tomatoes  
Agricultural sector : The agricultural sector represents 16% of the GDP and employs 50% of the labour force.



# OVERVIEW OF APEXAGRI & FARM

The FARM Foundation and APEXAGRI cooperation on this project was born out of the acknowledgement of our complementary expertise and actions, along with a common goal: to develop and strengthen the African agricultural and agri-food sectors so they may respond to the various social and economic challenges facing the continent.



APEXAGRI is an international consulting company created in 2014, specializing in the development of competitive and sustainable agri-food sectors. It works with agribusinesses, investment funds and public agencies to secure supply, build competitive economic systems, develop partnerships, and combine sustainable agricultural growth and support to local populations.



The Fondation pour l'agriculture et la ruralité dans le monde (Foundation for World Agriculture and Rurality - FARM) was created in 2005 and is recognized for its public utility. Its mission is to promote competitive and sustainable agriculture and agri-food sectors which respect the interests of producers. Through its think tanks - publications, studies, conferences - FARM feeds the debate on the critical role of agriculture in development and clarifies the reflections of policy-makers and actors in the sectors.



# THE 20 INITIATIVES

NOM	PRODUCTION	PAGE
AIN SALAM	Vegetables, livestock farming	55
COMPOST CONGO	Compost	35
CPC TOGO	Cereals	29
DAFANI	Tropical fruit juices and purées	17
DANAYA CÉRÉALES	Porridge, cereal flours	53
LES DOIGTS VERTS	Vegetable seeds	49
ENT. SARR SEIFOUR	Sweet potatoes	59
FAFI FROMAGERIE	Cheeses	21
FAKOFIA	Compost	25
FASO KABA	Vegetable seeds	23

NOM	PRODUCTION	PAGE
FRAISEN	Strawberries	61
GIE NAFFA	Dried mangoes, shea butter	41
GREEN KEEPER AFRICA	Depolluting fibre (water hyacinth)	39
LE GALLINACIER	Chickens, eggs, vegetables	57
MAISADOUR	Vegetables, animal feed	27
SAFIAGRIBUSINESS	Vegetables, chickens	43
SIPRA	Animal feed, chicks, chickens, eggs, charcuterie	45
TOGO TILAPIA	Freshwater fish	31
ZABBAAN	Fruit juices	51
ZEBU OVERSEAS	Rental/sales of animals and farm equipment (micro-credit)	33



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