

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Expertise Risque Projet – Cuma Bénin

# INTRODUCTION

The “*Expertise Risque Projet*” is an assignment for 5th-year Sciences Po Bordeaux students in order to work close at hand with a specific project to develop risk management: look for the weak points of the project, think about the actions to prevent the risks and consider the solutions to take if they happen.

In this case, the assigned project is the association CUMA BENIN, an agricultural cooperative composed of about thirty volunteers, mostly from the agricultural world, which has been working for more than 20 years in Benin. Its objective is to support Beninese farmers in the investment in agricultural equipment and the acquisition of skills and know-how (agro-environmental, managerial). The idea is to mutualize or pool financial resources in a “CUMA” (Coopérative d’utilisation de matériel agricole in French), a structure developed in France during the post-war period. This makes it possible to Beninese farmers to access to equipment that is too expensive to acquire individually.

For the “*Expertise Risque Projet*”, the Terms of Reference (TOR) defined the objectives and purpose that the team of experts should accomplish. In this particular case, the general objective consisted in setting up an evaluation tool in order to provide a reflexion on the potential risk that could hinder the regular activity of the project, to provide decision support tools, and to be propositive in a risk reduction approach. Taking into account this general framework, the specific objectives were the following: a) Identify the risks related to the governance and the structuring of CUMAs; b) propose a risk management plan related to the governance and structuring of CUMAs; c) identify and analyse the risks and opportunities of the politics designed by the Beninese government over the agricultural modernisation procedure.

# PROJECT RISK ANALYSIS

The whole procedure was highly supported by a field mission carried out by two of the expert team members in June 2018. Based on a documentary study, preparation of interview strategies and different focus groups, the mission allowed the whole expert team to gather important information and data that was then used and analyze throughout the semester.

To develop the project, the team of experts created a diversity of tools able to meet every objective outlined. In order to carry out the risk assessment of the Cuma-Benin project and to analyze the strengths, constraints, opportunities, and limits of the CUMA’s in Benin, we made up a project modeling: a synthetic approach allowed us to identify the main stakeholders, their activities, roles and the links among them. This tool helped us to highlight potential sources of risks.

With the project modelling, the main interactions and dynamics in the web were identified but a deeper tool, the “*Système d’Action observée*”, was constructed to analyze each stakeholder’s category and specific position in the CUMA BENIN project. Through a detailed description of each role, a “*Tableau d’Action Observée*” supports the “*Système*” to precise the study in seven different criteria: their mission or objectives in the association; level and nature of each member’s integration in the project; the type of interest in the project; kind of power; position in the structure or hierarchy; relationship among members and predictable strategies.

As a result, 38 agents were identified and divided into 3 categories: members of the association, its technical and financial partners, and beneficiaries of the Cuma Benin network. From the TAO, a mapping of actors has been developed to construct a visual representation of the impact of the 13 stakeholders identified as the most influential on the sustainability of the Cuma Benin project.

Consequently, the risk identification was achieved in four different categories: governance and legal risks; operational and institutional risks; economic risks and risks linked to negative effects over the environment. Each risk was identified and analyzed from its causes, effects and possible control methods. Finally, a score over the impact and probability of each risk was assigned taking into account every detail during the assessment.

For each sector, the team of experts identified the most probable and important risks: on the governance and legal framework section: non-respect of the principles of cooperatives, limited judicial appeal, the possible instrumentalization of CUMA and possible external dependence (empowerment of CUMAs); for the operational and institutional sector, there is a lack of qualified human resources (training and tractor drivers and mechanics and facilitators), multiplication of projects and abandonment of the fundamentals of CUMA Benin and risk of fraud and wrongdoing.

In the economic and financial field, economic instability and access to financial facilities in the agricultural sector; as social risks, there is social disengagement and difficult women integration. Finally, for the environmental risks, the team identified an important impact of the agricultural activities over the land, soil degradation due to climate change.

Furthermore, we decided to go back to the elements of the Cuma Benin Logical Framework and update them. A Logical Framework Approach (GOPP in french) has been developed since the 1970s. It is a tool used to make a deep deliberation about the project but also to verify if it exists a harmony and logic in the programming of such. Thanks to this exercise, our group was also able to identify certain risks and their causes and thus propose solutions adapted to the project. This logical framework has been completed with the help of a member of Cuma Benin Nouvelle Aquitaine. For its realization, we used documents of CUMA Benin New Aquitaine and its various partners (especially Icosi).

This risk identification contributed to construct the evaluation tool, which was applied and tested by one of the volunteers of Cuma’s project. Designed as a Microsoft Excel tool, this test is divided in each risk category and likewise, they are subdivided into factors, criteria, and indicators. This evaluation tool has as the main goal to evaluate the current action of the association in different areas. This means that in each section, there are indicators

stated/framed as questions with four possible scores or answers (0 being the lowest score and 3 the highest one). In the end, the tool will throw quantified results to measure the high or low presence of risks in each work area. This excel tool is backed up by an evaluation guide that aims to support the use of the evaluation grid. It specifies the indicators used as well as the expected benchmark to guide the evaluator in his rating work.

Finally, as the expert team identified the main risks in governance, legal framework, operational, institutional, economic, financial and environmental areas, a risk matrix was designed to arrange them depending on their score (probability and impact) as a visual representation of them. Hence, we conceived and designed a risk management plan (*Plan de Gestion de Risques* in french) illustrated by a table. The risk prioritization and the identification of feasible measures were carried out respecting the order of risk analysis in three categories. Five proposals for administering these risks at the heart of CUMA Benin programs are presented. These suggestions were favored by the team of experts who considered that they were the most feasible and the most faithful given the technical, financial and human resources of the CUMA Benin project.

These actions have been evaluated/estimated to be the most conducive to develop the project's performance indicators (relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability) in the framework of the CUMA Benin missions. Each action plan is organized into 3 stages: the presentation of the factual elements of the risk, the mitigation scenario and finally, if the case is appropriate, a cost-benefit calculation of each scenario to present an assessment of the equilibrium; between the decision to manage this risk and the costs that this entails for the association.

Therefore, the management plan was elaborated in five general approaches: a) Establish an official framework to avoid governance obstacles and carry out a meeting to present and adopt this document, b) Carry out different assessments and trainings with a focus on new agricultural practices to fulfill the objectives displayed in the global objectives, c) diversification of activities from the classic or traditional CUMA to the CUMA of transformation (women), d) "*parrainage*" system to reinforce and improve the know-how transfer and e) partnerships to create or reform.