Assessing the Effectiveness of Multistakeholder Platforms

Agricultural and Rural Management Councils in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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## Contents

Abstract v

1. Introduction 1

2. Agricultural and Rural Management Councils in the Democratic Republic of the Congo 3

3. Literature Review on Participatory Approaches and Multistakeholder Platforms 6

4. Data and Methodology 9

5. Effectiveness of Agricultural and Rural Management Councils 10

6. Determinants of Agricultural and Rural Management Council Effectiveness 11

7. Discussion 18

8. Conclusion and Policy Implications 20

References 21
Tables

3.1—Elements of a successful multistakeholder platform and network 8
5.1—Distribution of agricultural and rural management councils (CARGs) by objectives, 55 CARGs surveyed 10
6.1—Summary statistics of the independent and dependent variables 15
6.2—Results of estimation of the probit model 16
6.3—Marginal effects after probit 17
7.1—Comparison of factors of agricultural and rural management council (CARG) effectiveness across effective and ineffective CARGs (means) 18

Figures

2.1—Structure of the agricultural and rural management council 4
ABSTRACT

In 2008, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) established multistakeholder platforms in the agricultural sector known as agricultural and rural management councils (CARGs). The aim of CARGs is achieving a decentralized governance of the agricultural policies and strategies through a large participation of stakeholders of the sector in the design and implementation of agricultural policy processes. Multistakeholder platforms are institutional arrangements intended and used for learning, policy dialogue, and priority setting, but they are rarely evaluated. This paper analyzes the effectiveness of local-level (territory) multistakeholder platforms using data from 55 CARGs in 23 randomly selected territories in three provinces (Bandundu, Bas-Congo, and Kinshasa) of the DRC. The first CARG was established in 2008, and the survey was conducted three years later, from August to October 2011.

The results indicate that the effectiveness of the CARGs has been rather limited. Fifty-one percent of the surveyed CARGs achieved results consistent with at least one of the main goals of their processes. However, 45 percent have not yet achieved any tangible output, whether consistent or not with their main goals, while 4 percent achieved output outside their objectives. The results also show that the capacity to generate and sustain support for CARGs and their multistakeholder process is an important determinant of their effectiveness. Strategies aimed at improving CARG capacity are likely to improve their effectiveness.

Keywords: multistakeholder platform, agriculture, management council, governance, participatory process
1. INTRODUCTION

The dismay in the lack of tangible development outcomes and impacts, in spite of many programs and projects established to overcome these challenges, is largely blamed on the top-down approach and the lack of involvement of grassroots organizations in the public policy processes, governance, and design and implementation of these programs and projects. Participatory approaches and community involvement, from mere consultative processes to more complex transformative ones, are among the main institutional responses to this challenge and have been increasingly and popularly used in the last two decades in many international and local organizations to promote inclusive processes of decisionmaking and planning (Gaventa, 2004; Cornwall 2008; Funder 2010; Speer, 2012). However, there are mixed results on the effectiveness and impact of these approaches from various empirical investigations (Speer, 2012).

Brett (2003) synthesizes the benefits and challenges in participatory approaches based on empirical studies worldwide. He highlights that participatory approaches play a key role in strengthening accountability in certain kinds of projects and programs, but, they will only be effective where participating public and private sectors and producer organizations are well managed by experts, given appropriate incentives, professional autonomy, and adequate authority to perform their roles. Participatory budgeting, perhaps the most common form of participatory governance implemented in the last two decades, in various countries have shown mixed results (see review by Speer, 2012). Experiences in Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and Guatemala and other countries in Latin America show positive effects on service provision from implementation of local management councils and forums (Andersson and others, 2007; 2009; Brinkerhoff, Brinkerhoff and McNulty, 2007; Erugen, 2008). However, they also warn about remaining challenges, such as perverse incentives for corruption and clientelistic practices, which could hinder participatory governance. Experiences in Africa have been less ideal. Resnick and Birner (2010) suggest that participatory processes in agricultural strategy development in West Africa did not involve enough stakeholders and limited the scope of their participation. They also show that participation was not the real challenge, but rather it was the lack of policy outcomes or tangible results from the participatory processes that caused disappointment among stakeholders and constrained the sustainability of the participatory process. Similarly, Francis and James (2003) show many challenges in the design and implementation of decentralization and participatory approach in Uganda. Several authors have pointed out how participatory approach could be used as a means for governments and others in power to extend their reach and justify interventions that essentially remained top-down and autocratic (White, 1996; Botes and Rensburg, 2000; Funder, 2010). On the other hand, Spielman, Ragasa, and Rajalahti (2011) show that the multistakeholder and innovation platforms, coupled with a farmer-centered approach in management and decisionmaking, have been successful in bringing about changes and adoption of technological innovation in Senegal.

The comprehensive review done by Speer (2012) concludes that there is not enough evidence to support the claim that participatory governance causes improvements in government performance and service quality. Moreover, she shows that cases of successful participatory governance were characterized by the presence of a high capacity and motivation among public officials and citizens, which are not easy to find in many developing country contexts. Her review highlights that more research is needed before the scientific community can endorse the implementation of participatory governance as an instrument for improving public service provision and public policy processes. This paper attempts to respond to this call and provides an empirical evidence of the effectiveness of a specific participatory approach in the form of Agricultural and Rural Management councils (CARGs) set-up starting in 2008 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The DRC, as several African countries south of the Sahara, has been confronted with institutional and organizational challenges. These challenges have negatively affected the quality and coherence of its agricultural policies and created a wedge between the top-down policymakers and the grassroots’ actions.
More than 15 years of civil war has further eroded the infrastructure and institutional capacity of the country in policymaking and implementation.

Recognizing the urgency to overcome organizational and institutional challenges that so far have prevented the effective planning and implementation of policies and achievement of expected development outcomes, the government of the DRC launched several reforms in 2008 in the agricultural and rural sectors to improve agricultural productivity and promote rural development. Of those, the establishment of multistakeholder platforms known as agricultural and rural management councils (CARG) is one of the most important. The CARGs are councils and forums of consultation on decentralized governance of agricultural policies and strategies. They aim at improving the planning and policy processes through the stakeholders’ full participation in the design and implementation of agricultural policies. The involvement of all agricultural stakeholders in the planning and policy processes can increase the likelihood of achieving policy objectives for two reasons: First, stakeholders tend to be more informed than the central authority on the pressing issues of their socioeconomic environment or their community and can work harder toward achieving a satisfactory solution if they are involved. Second, they are more likely to accept a solution when they are part of it rather than when it is imposed upon them from the outside.

This paper assesses the effectiveness of CARGs in improving the design and implementation of agricultural and rural development strategies through consultation among relevant stakeholders, including the rural producers, women’s groups, other civil society organizations, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and the state. Improved policies and strategies are expected to raise the performance of the agricultural sector to the level consistent with the country’s huge agricultural potential. The paper uses a novel survey data set collected exclusively for this purpose by the International Food Policy Research Institute in three provinces in the DRC (Bas-Congo, Bandundu, and Kinshasa). The survey was conducted from August to October of 2011 using computer-assisted and mobile-based personal interviewing.

The survey results suggest that CARG effectiveness has been rather limited. Fifty-one percent of surveyed CARGs achieved results consistent with at least one of the main goals of their processes. However, 45 percent have not yet achieved any tangible output, whether consistent or not with their main goals. The results also show that the capacity to generate and sustain support for CARGs and their multistakeholder process is an important determinant of their effectiveness.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides an overview of CARGs in the DRC. Section 3 reviews the literature on multistakeholder platforms. This is followed by Section 4, which describes the methodology and survey data. Section 5 uses the survey data to discuss CARG effectiveness. Section 6 discusses the determinants of CARG effectiveness. Section 7 discusses the results. Section 8 presents the concluding remarks and policy implications.

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1 Other complementary reforms undertaken so far include the restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture, the adoption of the principles of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, and the decentralization and improvement of the provision of agricultural services.

2 This potential consists of an endowment of 80 million hectares of arable land (of which 4 million are irrigable); 125 million hectares of tropical forest, representing 6 percent of world forest reserves; climatic diversity allowing multiple agricultural seasons in the same year; grazing land capable of supporting nearly 40 million head of cattle; inland fisheries resources that can enable annual production of at least 700,000 tons of fish; and rich ecology and abundant hydrology that can allow the practice of various farming activities (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 2009).
The agricultural and rural management councils (CARGs) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are comparable to various consultative and demand-side structures developed in other countries. CARGs are similar to structures set up in Senegal such as the National Council for Rural Cooperation, Regional Rural Consultation Forum, and Network of Rural Consultative Fora, which aim to provide support to farmer-based organizations (FBOs) through linkage with the local government, information and communication, participatory preparation of projects and programs, dialogue with public- and private-services providers, advocacy, and approval and evaluation of local extension services. CARGs are similar to farmers’ fora set up in Uganda at various levels that aim at planning, costing, and contracting advisory services and a key interface between farmer groups and government agencies. These farmers’ fora are involved in monitoring and evaluation of service provision at the subcounty and district levels, while they are set up to furnish farmer information to National Agricultural Advisory Services board membership and influence policy direction in the agricultural sector at the national level.

Similarly, CARGs operate at the territory level, and their representatives form the advisory council at the provincial level, whose representatives are part of the national-level advisory council (Figure 2.1). The provincial representatives who form the national advisory council are the ones with direct linkage to and influence on decisionmaking at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock. Main activities of the national advisory council are the policy dialogues with and feedback to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock on processes and management and implementation of the communication and knowledge management platform. Key activities of the provincial advisory council are the development and implementation of the provincial agricultural development plans, development and dissemination of the journal/magazine of CARGs and thematic brochures, and the implementation and management of a market information system and rural radio communication. Key activities of the territory CARGs are general assembly meetings, executive management meetings, and discussions and feedback on agricultural and rural development projects and programs funded by government or external partners. To date, CARGs have been established in 143 out of 145 territories in the country. Their implementation at the sector and city levels is still ongoing.

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3 Administrative unit lower than territory. A sector consists of 50-100 villages, while a territory consists of 5-20 sectors. About 5-20 territories consist of a province.
At the territory level, CARG formation usually starts with a sensitization meeting to inform rural producer association leaders about the CARG. A consultant from donors, international or local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), or staff from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock, accompanied by the provincial coordinator, starts the awareness and sensitization meeting. After reading and analyzing the CARG documentation to the general assembly (which is open to all representatives of various groups and sectors), leaders of associations gather to approve or co-opt 30 CARG members at the territory level: one-third (10 members) from decentralized government agencies and two-thirds (20 members) from civil society. The 10 members from decentralized government agencies include the administrator of the territory and a representative from each of the following: Ministry of Land Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock; Ministry of Rural Development; Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Economic Affairs; Ministry of Gender and Family; Ministry of Justice, the land authority; and police.

For some CARGS, their members initiated contact with representatives of government, development NGOs, private sector, FBOs, donors, and producers to facilitate intersectoral coordination. The territory administrator is the default honorary president of the territory CARGS, who then interacts with the provincial-level coordinator. The provincial-level coordinator reports to the provincial focal points, based in Kinshasa, who then report to the national CARG coordinator.

The CARGS play a potentially important role in informing and influencing the policy and planning processes. Anecdotal evidence of some successes does exist, but discussions with CARG representatives and samples of meeting minutes reveal major capacity and incentive challenges. Among others, low meeting attendance is a big concern; many CARG meetings are attended by only 5–10 out of
the total 30 members. In addition, lack of concrete actions and outcomes erodes farmer and partner interest in these meetings. A review of some meeting minutes suggests that the same problems are being discussed, and follow-up of problems from previous meetings indicates that the problems have not been solved. The lack of commitment and incentive on the part of some government officials may also hinder the successful management of the CARG units.

The voluntary nature and sustainability of funding from members also pose a challenge to CARG activities. A review of meeting minutes revealed that contributions promised by members are not provided or are delayed. Many CARGs lack offices and supplies to operate. In addition, the difficulties of travel and lack of funding for travel among FBO representatives from the remote areas hinder the inclusive and participatory processes within CARGs. According to respondents, many CARGs still depend on international support to provide participants with financial means to cover transportation fees and other operational costs, and true ownership by rural institutions is still limited. Another source of concern is the level of control by influential people in the territory or province, which will potentially remain in spite of efforts to train marginalized groups and provide a platform for discussion unless structures and power relations are readjusted. In general, the potential seems to be limited for CARGs to change the existing power structure in the design and implementation of programs and projects in DRC.

By design, the representation among different sectors and types of organizations in the society holds some promise in terms of inclusive and demand-driven processes. The issue is that this representation is structured in a way that perpetuates or even worsens the power structure already existing in the society. Members chosen to represent their organizations in the meetings may also be the ones with sufficient means that allow them to travel easily to the meeting sites for the meetings. This may lead to the situation where multistakeholder platforms are used to achieve the private interests of those attending, at the expense of their constituencies, since these members are also participating in policy dialogues and multistakeholder platform decisions.
3. LITERATURE REVIEW ON PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS

The literature on worldwide experiences in participatory approaches is numerous, but empirical studies on multistakeholder platforms and forums (MSP) are more recent and scanty. Participatory approaches can have different meanings and various applications ranging from the weak end of the continuum, which assumes that at the minimum intended beneficiaries are consulted during the project design so as to take into account their felt needs, aspirations, and capabilities, to the strong end of the continuum, which assumes an educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with one another and those able to assist them, identify problems and needs; mobilize resources; and assume responsibility themselves to plan, manage, control, and assess their actions (Brett 2003). Similarly, multistakeholder platforms and forums (MSP), which are a subset of the broader concept of participatory approach, can also range from a mere consultative process to a more transformative one. Their main elements are multiple stakeholders coming together to contribute their own resources, inputs, and knowledge to reach a common objective. As with any participatory approach, the sustainability of MSP relies on tangible results and outcomes based on the objectives set by those who designed them.

A MSP can serve several purposes including dispute settlement, decentralized governance of policies and strategies, collaborative governance of natural resources, democratization, and empowerment (Warner 2006). Its consistent feature is its capability to facilitate the achievement of solutions to issues that go beyond the setting of formal institutions. This feature of a MSP is documented by Ribot (1995) regarding forest management in Senegal. Accordingly, the MSP was used to overcome the deforestation surrounding villages in Senegal by powerful woodcutters and traders. Through a participatory process including all stakeholders of forest management (villagers, village chiefs, woodcutters, traders, migrant workers, and others) within the MSP, unfair forest management policies were replaced by the new forest code, which transferred responsibility for management of local forests to the rural communities (Ribot 1995). Berger et al. (2007) emphasizes this feature in a case study of water basin management in Chile. Water policy reforms achieved through MSPs resulted in greater benefits (high quality and low cost of water) for all stakeholders of water management. Such benefits were the result of more efficient management of water, mainly via privatization of water rights, privatization of the provision of irrigation infrastructure, promotion of trade in water rights, and the transfer of the irrigation management authority to the user groups.

The achievement of the MSP goals is a key to its success. However, several challenges may prevent MSP from meeting the expectations of their stakeholders. Warner (2006) highlights weak participation as one of those challenges. Weak participation is the result of bad strategies such as underrepresentation of some groups, inclusion of many groups with similar interests, self-exclusion when the economic and political opportunity costs of participation outweigh the benefits of collaboration or cooperation, late entry due to lack of information on the MSP process, and the choice of stakeholders to operate outside the MSP in the case the latter robs them of their leverage. Faysse (2006) identifies the following challenges facing MSP: (1) high social inequalities, (2) a state that is either too strong or too weak to support MSP negotiation processes, (3) disorganized stakeholder groups, and (4) lack of the financial and technical capacities to implement MSPs.

In the area of agricultural strategy and policy formulation, Resnick and Birner (2010) highlight power imbalance and its negative effects on the credibility of participatory and multistakeholder processes as the most challenging constraints to achieving agricultural strategy development through a participatory approach and MSPs in Senegal and Burkina Faso. Using the case studies on the participatory processes in these two countries, they find substantial and broad-based participation of stakeholders (government ministries, research institutes, producer organizations, nongovernmental

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4 Regardless of the various areas a MSP or a MSPN seems to cover, most of the available literature on multistakeholder platforms or networks is in the area of environment and natural resource management.
organizations, agricultural producers, and the private sector) in the design of agricultural and rural development strategies. However, they note, the results on the ground were disappointing due mostly to power imbalance among stakeholders and lack of clarity on the function, role, and justification of participation in the policy processes. Years after the stakeholder involvement in the policy processes, the implemented policy provisions were different from those adopted by all stakeholders.

In the area of participatory learning and action, Green (2010) explains why participatory approaches persist as the main tool used by government and donor organizations, despite the lack of evidence on their outcomes. This author highlights that participatory approaches do not often lead to increased investment in and maintenance of public infrastructure, let alone a reduction of poverty, and notwithstanding the substantial transaction and financial costs associated with lengthy planning, problem identification, and priority setting. He uses three recently implemented participatory approaches in Tanzania (namely, the national participatory poverty assessment, the multidistrict initiative supporting civil society organizations to undertake participatory action research in communities, and the local government planning system of opportunities and obstacles to development) to suggest that despite lack of evidence of impact, significant representational effects from these participatory approaches include creating an impression of community engagement in the form of reports, action plans, and budgets, which delineate the relation of local communities to higher tiers of government. However, the author also emphasizes that these representational effects will not be enough and would need tangible results to be sustainable.

Similarly, Platteau and Abraham (2002) describe that the lineage-based societies of Africa, compared with those of Asia and Latin America, could provide higher risks of causing disillusionment among stakeholders, as well as undue appropriation by local elites, from participatory approaches. In conclusion they recommend a well-planned and properly paced implementation of participatory approaches; institutional strengthening of communities before substantial amounts of money are channeled through them; orientations, rules, and criteria to be set and enforced by the national government regarding the mode of operation of decentralized bodies and private institutional support organizations; and genuine decentralization of administrative powers coupled with building their requisite skills and expertise. Similar conclusions and recommendations are highlighted by Brett (2003) in his synthesis of experiences on participatory approaches.

Several challenges to MSP success can be overcome by finding a niche within the existing system of administrative and legal processes where a MSP can be installed, by designing a collaborative process that avoids much time or effort on behalf of stakeholders, and by achieving tangible output and social learning (Moellenkamp et al. 2010). Steins and Edwards (1999) emphasize social learning and collective action as determinants of MSP success. They insist on making a MSP physically and culturally accessible to representatives of the different user groups. The level of organization of those different groups, their relationships, and the strengths and skills of group representatives determine MSP performance. A third-party coordinator of multiple user groups is needed to guarantee continuity and reduce transaction costs of setting and operating a MSP.

In the area of multistakeholder platforms and innovation networks in agriculture, Spielman, Ragasa, and Rajalahti (2011) describe various types of these platforms ranging from research-extension linkage committees in Kenya and Nigeria to more engaged networks such as civil society partnerships as implemented by the Papa Andina program in Latin America and the agricultural innovation networks in Argentina. These authors emphasize that the type of platform depends on the stage of development, the enabling environment, and the focus of commodities and opportunities facing the network stakeholders.

To sum up, various elements of a successful MSP highlighted in the literature include: (1) achievement of tangible results; (2) effective coordination and organization characterized by minimal transaction cost for stakeholder participation, which often require a third-party coordinator or strong management and coordinating team; (3) inclusiveness and equal opportunity of participation; (4) financial and technical capacity of stakeholders; (5) opportunity for social learning and training; (6) better designs of collaborative process; (7) balance of power in decisionmaking between stakeholders; (8) balanced representation of all user groups; and (9) enabling environment and supporting institutions. However, this
literature hardly evaluates empirically the importance of each of the above elements in the achievement of the MSP goals. The scarcity of microdata has been a major constraint to this empirical analysis.

This study contributes to this literature by filling the gap; that is, it uses the survey data on 55 agricultural and rural management councils to assess their effectiveness in agricultural strategy and conditions determining such effectiveness. Given the difficulty to collect data on each element of a successful MSP documented in the literature, this study resorts to five key elements and their indicators, which are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1—Elements of a successful multistakeholder platform and network

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Balanced representation by occupation, gender, and age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Participation of members in meetings, discussions, or debates on relevant issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support-generating capacity</td>
<td>Resources in the form of member contribution or external support (financial, labor, in-kind, grant, sponsorship, and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power balance</td>
<td>Absence of influence of certain groups in decisionmaking processes at the expense of other groups and marginalized segments of the stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Systems of communication and coordination; communication and management skills of leadership; preparations and meetings within different groups to provide inputs to upcoming higher-level meetings; meetings with different groups on feedback and dissemination of past higher-level meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ creation based on literature review on multistakeholder platforms and participatory approaches.
4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study is based on survey data from 55 agricultural and rural management councils (CARGs) identified in 23 territories in three provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Bandundu, Bas-Congo, and Kinshasa. Data were collected from August to October of 2011 using computer-assisted and mobile-based personal interviewing. Scoping field visits in Bas-Congo, Bandundu, and Kinshasa were conducted in February to April 2011 to better understand the workings of CARG and to test the feasibility of the CARG questionnaire. During these visits, the CARG questionnaire was pretested using the management teams and CARG members from the territories of Seke-Banza (Bas-Congo) and Kenge (Bandundu), from the commune of Maluku (Kinshasa), from the cities of Kinzau-Mvuete and Inga (Bas-Congo), and from the city of Kenge (Bandundu). These visits were followed by intensive training of enumerators.

To implement the survey, we first randomly selected territories that are consistent with the National Statistics Institute’s implementation of the 1-2-3 household survey. Within these selected territories, we identified all the existing CARGs in the geographic areas covered by the survey (territory, city, and sector). Next, for each CARG we randomly selected members and management team members to be interviewed and used a semistructured questionnaire to complete the interview, which lasted two hours on average. This questionnaire included sections on CARG operations and activities, and respondents’ perceptions on the usefulness and effectiveness of CARGs. We also interviewed randomly selected members and management team members of provincial CARGs.

No CARGs in our sample belonged to the Province of Kinshasa. Indeed, although Kinshasa was chosen as one of the three provinces to be covered by the survey, field visits revealed that most planned CARGs for this province had not been implemented or were not operating. Of the remaining CARGs, 38 percent (21 CARGs) and 62 percent (34 CARGs) were in the provinces of Bas-Congo and Bandundu, respectively. Seventy-four percent of these CARGs are the territory/commune CARGs and 20 percent are sector/quartier CARGs. The remaining 6 percent are either provincial or city or groupement CARGs. The majority of these CARGs (91 percent) were implemented in 2009 (36 CARGs) and 2010 (14 CARGs). Only 4 percent and 6 percent of the sample CARGs were established in 2008 (2 CARGs) and 2011 (3 CARGs), respectively.

We use survey data to construct an indicator of CARG effectiveness as well as those of various dimensions of multistakeholder platforms, namely, (1) participation, (2) representation, (3) support-generating capacity, (4) balance of power between stakeholders, and (5) coordination of the multistakeholder process. Next, we use the probit regression to assess the link of each of these conditions to this indicator of CARG effectiveness.
5. EFFECTIVENESS OF AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL MANAGEMENT COUNCILS

A multistakeholder platform (MSP) can be implemented to serve several purposes. No matter how vibrant the MSP processes may sound, stakeholders would want to see tangible results (Warner 2006; Vallejo and Hauselmann 2004; Resnick and Birner 2010). Accordingly, the viability of an MSP is determined by its effectiveness, that is, its capacity to deliver on its objectives.

To analyze the effectiveness of CARGs, we construct the effectiveness indicator through matching the objectives and outputs from the survey data for each CARG. We assign a value of 1 to this indicator if the CARG achieved output consistent with at least one of its objectives, and a value of zero if a CARG did not achieve any output or if it achieved output outside its objectives.

Starting with the objectives, the survey results show that 78 percent of the CARGs pursued multiple objectives and 22 percent had a single objective. The distribution of CARGs by objectives is displayed in Table 5.1. As this table shows, agricultural extension was the most-pursued objective, with 33 percent of CARGs having it on their objective lists. This was followed by grassroots organization and promotion (24 percent of CARGs) and by farmer advocacy and promotion of nonagricultural infrastructure in rural areas, each reported by 20 percent of CARGs. Other pursued objectives included design of agricultural policy design and planning and technical and/or financial support to farmers (each reported by 16 percent of CARGs), agricultural sector governance and agricultural information sharing and promotion (each reported by 13 percent of CARGs), welfare improvement (11 percent of CARGs), and several others.

Table 5.1—Distribution of agricultural and rural management councils (CARGs) by objectives, 55 CARGs surveyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main objectives of CARG</th>
<th>Percentage of CARGs (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural extension</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grassroots organization and promotion</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer advocacy</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of nonagricultural infrastructure in rural areas</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural policy design and planning</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical and/or financial support to farmers</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural sector governance</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural information sharing and information system promotion</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty reduction/welfare improvement</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding access facilitation and coordination</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural input distribution</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resource management</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of public–private partnership</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization of agricultural services</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural commodity chains</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure rehabilitation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural marketing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land tenure and land conflict management</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ creation based on survey results.

Next, we matched the reported outputs with objectives for each CARG to construct our effectiveness indicator. This indicator reveals that 51 percent of the surveyed CARGs were effective, achieving results consistent with at least one of the main goals of their processes. However, 45 percent have not achieved yet any tangible outputs, whether consistent or not with their main goals, while the remaining 4 percent achieved some output outside their goals.5

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5 For instance, the Boma Ville CARG reported promotion of land tenure to reduce or eliminate land conflicts and farmer
6. DETERMINANTS OF AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS

Model

The five conditions summarized in Table 3.1 have been discussed extensively in the multistakeholder platform (MSP) literature as key elements of a successful MSP. To what extent these elements determine the success of a MSP is not well known. To assess the impact of each of these elements on the effectiveness of the agricultural and rural management council (CARG), we specify the following probit model:

\[
\Pr(Y_i = 1 | X_i) = \Phi(\beta_0 + \beta_1 REP_i + \beta_2 PART_i + \beta_3 SGC_i + \beta_4 COORD_i + \beta_5 PI + AZ + \varepsilon_i),
\]

where

- \( \Pr(Y_i / X_i) \) is the probability that the CARG is effective \( (Y_i = 1) \), given the values taken on by explanatory variables \( X_i, X_i = (REP_i, PART_i, SGC_i, COORD_i, PI_i, Z), i = 1, 2, ..., I; \)
- \( \Phi \) is the standard normal cumulative distribution function;
- \( REP \) is the measure of representation, \( PART \) is the measure of participation, \( SGC \) is the measure of support-generating capacity, \( COORD \) is the measure of coordination, \( PI \) is the measure of power imbalance (the opposite of power balance), and \( Z \) is a set of control variables;
- \( \varepsilon \) is the disturbance term, which follows a normal distribution with mean zero and with variance 1, that is, \( \varepsilon \sim N(0,1) \);
- \( \beta_k \) is a fixed parameter, \( k = 0, 1, 2, ..., K, \) and is expected to be positive except for the ones associated with the variable \( PI \), which is hypothesized to be negative, and with \( REP \), which can be either positive (in the case of underrepresentation) or negative (in the case of overrepresentation) or zero (in balanced representation); each parameter \( \beta_k, k = 1, 2, ..., K, \) is used to calculate the marginal effect of its corresponding explanatory variable on the probability that the CARG is effective; \( \beta_0 \) is the constant term; and
- \( A \) is a vector of coefficients associated with the vector of control variables \( Z \).

Below, we first describe the variables involved in the estimation of equation (1) and then the procedure used to measure them.

Description of Variables

Effectiveness

A MSP is a set of institutional and organizational arrangements set forth to reach specific goals that can hardly be achieved through formal institutions. Thus, its viability is determined by its capacity to deliver on its objectives—its effectiveness. The effectiveness helps to check whether a MSP is achieving results consistent with its objectives.

advocacy as its two main missions. However, the only activity this CARG had organized since its establishment in 2009 was “sowing crops on a few hectares for its members,” which is unrelated to its two reported missions.
**Representation (REP)**

The effectiveness of a multistakeholder process is highly dependent on how the process is organized to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders on the issues for which their interests and views are diverging, and to induce consensus building on actions and strategies for desirably solving these issues. This implies that the process needs a balanced representation of all stakeholders to guarantee its fairness, assuming the stakeholder representatives convey the ideas and defend the interests of their constituencies. Such representation should avoid underrepresentation of some groups or overrepresentation of groups with similar interests.

**Participation (PART)**

A MSP is set up to solve issues on which stakeholders have different interests and views. To guarantee that these divergent interests are accounted for in the outcome of the MSP, the MSP process should be based on broad participation of all interested groups in strategies and actions leading to such outcome. Participation in a multistakeholder process implies involvement of stakeholder representatives in MSP activities including attendance at meetings, active involvement in discussion, negotiation for consensus building, and so on. Participation may not be effective regardless of the opportunity given to each stakeholder to participate. Most of the time, stakeholders may decide to evolve outside the process if they don’t see immediate benefits of participation or if the opportunity cost of participation outweighs the benefit of collaboration.

**Support-Generating Capacity (SGC)**

The attainment of the MSP objectives is highly dependent on the capacity of its stakeholders to continuously provide support, from the set-up stage throughout the life of an MSP. Such support can take different forms including financial contributions and grants; technical support; and in-kind contributions such as labor, inputs, land, building, equipment, sponsorship of activities, information, documentation, training, and several others.

**Coordination (COORD)**

The effectiveness of an MSP depends on the nature of coordination set forth to deal with the level of complexity of its processes, which in turn is determined by its assigned goals; the number of layers of relationships between resources, institutions, and stakeholders; and the nature and design of the collaborative process. The level of complexity of a multistakeholder process can force an MSP to resort to external facilitators or a third party to help in the coordination of the MSP activities. This third party most of the time will have the required skills to operate a MSP and coordinate a participatory process. Most importantly, their lack of direct interest in the outcome of the process contributes to making the process fair, diverse, and balanced in terms of power between stakeholders. In the absence of an external facilitator, coordination can still be done by an effective and dedicated management committee. The capacity, commitment, and organizational and coordination skills of this management committee can be strengthened to contribute to effective coordination of the participatory process.

**Power Imbalance (PI)**

The outcome to a participatory process is the result of a well-organized dialogue during which stakeholders recognize their interdependency and express their willingness to work together to achieve an outcome beneficial to all. This implies that some balance of power is required to prevent exclusion (voluntary or forced) of some interested stakeholders or groups from the process or the achievement of solution outcomes that put some groups at a disadvantage. The power relation between stakeholders becomes unbalanced when a stakeholder or group of stakeholders imposes one’s ideas or views to other stakeholders or groups or manipulates the process to control the decision outcomes or how the decisions are implemented.
**Measurement of Variables**

**Effectiveness (Y)**

We construct the indicator of effectiveness (Y) through matching of objectives with achieved outputs or results. We assign a value of 1 to this indicator if a CARG achieved output consistent with at least one of its objectives and a value of 0 otherwise.

**Representation (REP)**

To date, there is no standard for accurately measuring representation (Vallejo and Hauselmann 2004). However, our survey results include information on gender, occupation, and age group, which we use to construct our representation indicators.

For gender, we assume balanced or equal representation, that is, the number of female representatives is the same as that of male representatives. To implement the measure of gender representation, we calculate the ratio of female representatives to male representatives or vice versa for each CARG. Our indicator will vary in the interval \([0,1]\) in the case of underrepresentation of either female or male group and in the interval \([1,+\infty]\) in overrepresentation of either female or male group. This indicator can take on a value of 1, which indicates balanced gender representation.

The occupational representation indicator is constructed using the same assumption of balanced or equal representation. Recall that the occupational representation in the CARG is two-thirds or 67 percent of membership for the organizations of the civil society and the private sector, and one-third or 33 percent of the membership for government and its agencies. Within each CARG, however, the information on member occupation was not made available during the survey. To overcome this difficulty, we use occupation at the CARG leadership level. Each CARG has six leadership positions: president, vice-president, financial councilor, technical councilor, secretary, and vice-secretary. We apply the same membership proportions to the total of CARG leadership positions to obtain the quota of representation in the CARG leadership for each group; that is, four positions have to be filled by representatives of the organizations of civil society and the private sector, and two positions have to be filled by representatives of the government and its agencies. Whenever those quotas are observed, representation is balanced and this indicator takes on a value of 1. The other two cases (overrepresentation and underrepresentation) are indicated by taking either the ratio of twice the number of leaders from government to the number of leaders from the civil society, or the ratio of the number of leaders from government to 0.5 times the number of civil society leaders. Similarly, we can construct the occupational representation indicator by taking the ratio of 0.5 times the number of leaders from the civil society to the number of leaders from government, or the ratio of the number of leaders from the civil society to twice the number of leaders from government. A value of this indicator in the interval \([0,1]\) is indicative of underrepresentation of one group, and its value in the interval \([1,+)\) is an indication of overrepresentation of one group. A value of 1 indicates balanced occupational representation.

The population age-group representation indicator is constructed using the distribution of household heads across population age groups from the 2012 Food Production, Processing, and Marketing (FPPM) Baseline Survey report (DAI 2012). This survey covered the same geographical areas as the CARG survey, that is, the provinces of Bas-Congo, Bandundu, and Kinshasa. According to this FPPM survey report, 36 percent of households surveyed belonged to the population group aged 18–39 years, 49 percent belonged to the population group aged 40–55 years, and 16 percent belonged to the population group aged 56 years and over. Since the information on the age of the CARG members was unavailable, we use instead that of the CARG leadership members together with the FPPM population age group distribution to construct our indicator of population age group representation. If this FPPM distribution of population age group is applied to the CARG leadership, two members of the CARG leadership are expected to belong to the 18–39 years’ group, three members to the 40–55 years’ group, and one member to 56 years and over’s group.
To construct the indicator of the age group representation, we need to take as in the cases of gender and occupational representation the ratio of leaders from one group to leaders from another group. Two issues arise, however, in the construction of this ratio. First, there will be three pairs to be used for the construction of the ratio, and thus three ratios to choose from. Those pairs are: (leaders from 18-39 years’ group: leaders from 40-55 years’ group), (leaders from 18-39 years’ group: leaders from 56 years and over’s group), and (leaders from 40-55 years’ group: leaders from 56 and over’s group). Second, since the balanced representation across three groups is not one to one, we need a scaling factor that will reflect the FPPM distribution in the calculation of the ratio.

We calculate first the scaling factor by dividing the highest proportion among the three groups (that is 49 percent) by the expected proportion of each group. The calculated scaling factor is 1.4 for 18–39 years’ group, 1.0 for the population group aged 40–55 years’ group, and 3.1 for the population aged 56 years and over’s group. Next, we apply the scaling factor calculated above to the observed number of leaders of each group and then take the ratio for each of the three pairs of the scaled numbers of leaders. Since there are three ratios for each CARG, we pick the one for which the distance to 1 (balanced representation) in absolute value is the largest. As for the other two indicators of representation (gender and occupation), this population age-group indicator value will belong to the interval [0,1] for the underrepresentation of some groups and to the interval [1,+] for the overrepresentation of some other groups.

**Participation (PART)**

Our survey results report meeting attendance as the only piece of information collected on the level of involvement of stakeholder representatives in the CARG activities. We use this information as well as the total number of members per CARG to calculate the participation rate per meeting, that is, the number of members attending a meeting divided by the total number of CARG members. Next, we calculate the average participation rate for all the meetings organized during a year. Then, we calculate the average of yearly average participation rates and use it as our indicator of participation. This indicator varies between 0 (no participation) and 1 (strong participation).

**Support-Generating Capacity (SGC)**

To construct our indicator of SGC, we use the survey data on members’ financial contributions and grants, financial grants from donors and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and in-kind contributions. The latter type of contribution includes labor, inputs, land, and equipment from members and nonmembers. While the values of land and equipment donated were reported by the beneficiary CARGs, those of inputs and labor were not. For the inputs, the respondents were unable to report either the quantity donated or their value. Concerning labor, they reported the maximum number of volunteered hours by some women (up to 3 hours per quarter per woman volunteering labor) and by some men (up to 12 hours per quarter per man volunteering labor). However, the exact number of hours and people for each CARG were not reported. This made it difficult to determine the value of in-kind contribution in the form of labor.

Other types of in-kind contributions were provided by donors and international NGOs including equipment, sponsorship of training, information, and documentation. However, the values of these in-kind contributions were unknown from respondents.

Given the difficulty of evaluating most of the in-kind contributions, we limit the inputs of our SGC indicator to financial contributions from members, financial grants from members and donors, and land and equipment contribution from members and nonmembers. We sum across all the reported values of contributions and grants benefited by each CARG since its establishment, and then calculate the average annual value for each CARG. This is our SGC indicator, which is expressed in U.S. dollars.
Coordination (COORD)

The CARG did not resort to a third party for coordinating its activities. This coordination is ensured by its leadership members or management committee.

To construct the coordination indicator, we use the information from the survey data on skills of CARG leadership members and their experience in coordinating a MSP process. Skills and experience are not enough for a successful MSP process. This is the reason we also include in the calculation of this index the time spent by the management committee to prepare and organize CARG activities.

We use the average years of schooling of the CARG leadership members plus their average years of experience in CARG activities plus years of training of CARG leadership members as our first measure of coordination, \( \text{COORD}_\text{AYSET} \), where AYSET stands for average year of schooling, experience, and training. Next, we use time spent by the CARG leadership during a year to prepare, plan, and organize CARG activities (CARG leadership meetings, visits to or from other organizations, and time of supervision of CARG activities) as our second measure of coordination, \( \text{COORD}_{\text{CLT}} \), where CLT stands for CARG leadership time. This indicator is expressed in number of hours spent.

Power Imbalance (PI)

To construct our indicator of power imbalance, we need information on the involvement of different stakeholders in the decisionmaking process during the CARG general assembly meetings leading to the CARG outcomes. Such information was not available in the survey data. However, survey data include some specific information that can be used to determine whether power imbalance existed in setting the CARG agenda, managing the information, and implementing CARG decisions. The CARG meeting agenda, CARG information, and decision implementation are managed by the CARG management committee (CARG leadership). Given the role this management committee plays in the determination of CARG outcomes, the designation of its members is of crucial importance. Based on CARG regulations, the mode of designation of such members is either choice by election, by consensus, or by informal agreement between stakeholders. However, the survey data indicate that some members of the CARG management committee were directly appointed by government officials. Thus, we use the proportion of leadership members not chosen by the CARG regulations among the total of CARG leadership positions as our indicator of power imbalance (\( \text{PI} \)). This indicator varies between 0 (power balance) and 1 (strong power imbalance).

The summary statistics of the constructed indicators are presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1—Summary statistics of the independent and dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP-Gender (index)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP-Occupation (index)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP-Population Age Group (index)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART (index)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGC (US$1,000)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COORD_AYSET (number of years)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.58</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>19.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COORD_CLT (number of hours)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>47.31</td>
<td>54.87</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>286.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI (index)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ creation based on survey results.
Estimation of the Model

We use the maximum likelihood method to estimate the probit model from equation (1) and report results in Table 6.2. For the control variables (Z), we use the province dummy-PRODUM (PRODUM = 1 if CARG is located in the province of Bandundu and PRODUM = 0 otherwise) and the CARG Age-CARGAGE (number of elapsed months since the CARG establishment). Several points can be made about these results. First, the fit of the probit model to data is quite satisfactory. The likelihood ratio (LR) statistic of the probit estimation is statistically significant at 1 percent significance level (p-value of chi-squared test of LR = 0) and indicates that the coefficients associated with independent variables are jointly significant and maximize the likelihood function of observing effectiveness. Next, the model predicts correctly 84 percent of observations on effectiveness of CARG (Y=1) (Table 6.3). The R-squared, however, is 0.57 and may suggest that only 57 percent of variation in the probability of effectiveness is jointly determined by the independent variables included. This statistic is not reliable and thus cannot be used to assess the fitness of the probit equation because its distribution and properties are unknown (McKelvey and Zavoina 1975).

Table 6.2—Results of estimation of the probit model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: Probability that CARG is effective—Pr(Y=1/X)</th>
<th>Estimated Coefficient</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-4.678**</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP-Gender</td>
<td>-1.423**</td>
<td>0.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP-Occupation</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP-Pop Age Group</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>0.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART</td>
<td>0.469</td>
<td>0.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGC</td>
<td>3.075</td>
<td>0.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COORD-AYSET</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>0.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COORD-CLT</td>
<td>0.034*</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>-0.242</td>
<td>0.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUM</td>
<td>1.971**</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARGAGE</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>0.208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 55
LR chi²(8) 43.18
Prob > chi² 0.00
Pseudo R² 0.57
Percent Effectiveness 50
Log likelihood -16.53

Source: Authors’ creation based on probit regression results.
Notes: * indicates the estimated coefficient is statistically significant at 1% and ** indicates it is statistically significant at 10%.

At the individual level, however, only 3 out of 10 estimated coefficients (the constant term not included) are statistically significant at either the 5 percent or 10 percent significance level. The significant coefficients include those associated with gender representation (REP-Gender), coordination-CLT, and province dummy (PRODUM). The other coefficients are insignificant either at the 5 percent level or at the 10 percent level of significance.
Next, we use the estimated coefficients as well as the derivatives of the probit function evaluated at the means of independent variables to estimate the marginal effects of those variables on the probability to observe CARG effectiveness. The results are in Table 6.3. It is obvious from these results that only the marginal effect of SGC is statistically significant at the 10 percent significant level. One unit increase in SGC (that is, a US$1 increase in support to CARG activities\(^6\)) increases the probability to observe CARG effectiveness \(\{Pr(Y=1/X)\}\) by 0.7 percent. Similarly, an increase in financial support to CARG of $1,000 increases the probability that CARG is effective by 70 percent. However, the marginal effects of other independent variables included in the model appeared to be insignificant at the 10 percent confidence level (see p-value). However, if we look closely at the figures of marginal effects, Table 6.3 reveals a high marginal effect of the indices of gender representation, coordination-AYSET, participation, and power imbalance. A decrease of 1 unit of the gender representation index (overrepresentation of male members) is associated with an increase in the probability that the CARG is effective by 35 percent. An increase of 1 unit of the coordination index (one additional year of AYSET) is linked with an increase in the probability of effectiveness by 5 percent. Further, a 1 unit increase in participation (1 percent increase in the participation rate) results in an increase in the probability of effectiveness by 12 percent. Finally, a 1 unit decrease in the power imbalance index results in an increase in the probability of having effective CARG of 6 percent.

Also, these results seem to suggest that the CARG of the province of Bandundu (PRODUM = 1) has a higher probability to be effective (an increase of 55 percent in probability) than that of Bas-Congo (PRODUM = 0). Higher probability of effectiveness for the Bandundu CARG may reflect the motivation for this CARG’s members to work harder to overcome the disadvantage at which they are put by poor-quality infrastructures and limited resources in comparison to Bas-Congo, which reduces the scope of agricultural and rural development solutions that can be achieved through formal institutional settings.

Finally, the results support what has translated from several CARGs’ meeting minutes concerning the relationship between the age of the CARG and the likelihood of success, that is, recent CARGs have more resources and information, which increase their probability of effectiveness compared with older CARGs. However, the marginal effect of CARG age on effectiveness not only is not statistically significant but also is negligible in spite of having its expected sign.

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\(^6\) All dollar amounts are expressed in U.S. dollars.
7. DISCUSSION

To date, several agricultural and rural management councils (CARGs) are still in their implementation stage and may not move to the development or take-off stage unless the constraints they are facing are eliminated. Of these constraints, the lack of support has proved to be one of the most crucial.

Ineffective CARGs (27) were comparable to effective CARGs (28) in the skills of the CARG management team (Table 7.1). Survey data show on average 15 years and 16 years for the average years of schooling plus experience plus training (COORD-AYSET) for ineffective and effective CARGs, respectively. Further, representation was less unbalanced for women in ineffective CARGs compared with effective CARGs (underrepresentation of women), with the former having on average a slightly better indicator (0.84) than the latter (0.42). In addition, youth underrepresentation (or other population groups’ overrepresentation) was stronger for effective CARGs (with an average value of 1.60) in comparison with the ineffective CARGs (with an average value of 1.27).

Table 7.1—Comparison of factors of agricultural and rural management council (CARG) effectiveness across effective and ineffective CARGs (means)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effective CARG (N = 28)</th>
<th>Ineffective CARG (N = 27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Representation (Index)</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation Representation (Index)</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group Representation (Index)</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination AYSET (Year)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination CLT (Hour)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support-Generating Capacity (US$1,000)</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation (%)</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Imbalance (Index)</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ creation based on survey results.

However, the lack of support prevented ineffective CARGs from achieving results consistent with their missions. As mentioned before, support-generating capacity (SGC) includes financial, technical, in-kind, and other types of support. Only the CARGs that were successful at generating and sustaining the capacity of support were effective. As reflected in Table 7.1, effective CARGs mobilized on average $470 per year, which represents 43 times the corresponding value for ineffective CARGs ($11).

The low value of SGC for ineffective CARGs is explained by both limited sources and small support (including financial and in-kind). Ineffective CARGs relied on member contributions, which, however, were insignificant. Monthly financial contributions of members varied between 200 Congolese francs (CDF) \(^7\) (the equivalent of $0.22) and 5,000 CDF (the equivalent of $5.60) across the surveyed CARGs. Effective CARGs, on the other hand, in addition to the members’ monthly contributions mobilized other financial resources including grants from members, donors, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). For instance, three CARGs (Kahemba, Bulungu, and Bagata) in the year they were established each received from an Italian NGO known as ISCO (Impresa Servizi Coordinati) a monthly financial grant varying between $380 and $450. ISCO also donated equipment (such as motorbikes, mills, and tractors) to these three CARGs. Three other CARGs (Oshwe, Mushie, and Gungu) received funds from government or donors (such as FAO) to cover the transportation fees for each of their members’ representatives to attend some of their meetings (equivalent to $5 per participant). Two CARGs (Seke-Banza and Feshi) received financial grants varying up to $100 per donor member and other in-kind contributions including land (80 hectares of land for Seke-Banza, and land valued at $580 for Feshi). The Matadi CARG received a donation from one of its members in the form of a building to

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\(^7\) One US$ was equivalent to about CDF 900 (as of January 13, 2013).
house its office. One or another of these effective CARGs also benefited from other support from their members, NGOs, and donors; for example, seeds, volunteered labor, trainings on the best agricultural practices, information, and documentation, and so on.

Without support, organizing multistakeholder processes and implementing decision outcomes were difficult for ineffective CARGs, as is reflected in the differences in the participation rates and time spent by the CARG leadership members on CARG activities (COORD-CLT) between the two groups. On average, the participation rates were 57 percent and 27 percent for effective CARGs and ineffective CARGs, respectively. Concerning time spent by the CARG management to organize CARG activities, survey data show an average annual value of 73 hours for effective CARGs but a corresponding value of only 21 hours for ineffective CARGs.

In addition to somehow better participation and coordination, better resource mobilization allowed effective CARGs to improve occupation representation and to balance power among various parties involved. Starting with occupation representation, Table 7.1 shows that this indicator was on average close to balanced representation for effective CARGs (1.23) compared with ineffective CARGs (1.74). On the other hand, effective CARGs had on average a slightly better indicator of power imbalance (0.57) in comparison with ineffective CARGs (0.40).

In sum, support to CARGs includes mostly resource mobilization and in turn better coordination to ensure balanced representation, active participation, and balanced power among various parties involved.

Improving representation in all three dimensions (occupation, gender, and population age group) proves to be useful to ensure outcomes of CARG processes take into account diverging interests of different stakeholders. In terms of occupation, policies and strategies will be needed to reduce overrepresentation of government and its agencies while using better communication strategies to inform underrepresented groups on the benefits of involvement in the process. Concerning gender, the scoping mission indicated that weak technical capacity has been a constraint to women’s participation in the CARG process. Thus, capacity-building strategies targeting women on the goals and functioning of CARG as well as on the benefits of participating in its process will be effective. Finally, these policies will need to target youth groups, which seem almost nonrepresented.

Participation in CARG processes has been constrained by poor communication strategies associated with lack of financial means to cover costs of trips to areas where activities are organized. Strategies aimed at identifying the best means of reaching each member can facilitate communication on CARG activities and improve participation. Also, financial support to those who can’t afford trips to the areas of activities can prove effective. Attendance to the CARG activities without meaningful full participation in debates will lower the quality of the process and discourage participation in the future. Thus, capacity building on issues of interest to stakeholders will increase technical capacity to participate in the process.

Power imbalance discourages participation since it is perceived as ownership of the process by some groups or individual at the expense of other groups. Thus, strategies aimed at reducing power imbalance through verification of the transparency of the decision mechanism will prove effective since they will alert stakeholders anytime a group tries to use nonagreed means to increase its influence and control the decisionmaking process. Reducing power imbalance also means capacity strengthening and empowerment of all parties involved to have an equal playing field and active engagement in the multistakeholder and participatory process.
8. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study investigates determinants of the effectiveness of the agricultural and rural management councils (CARGs) using unique survey data collected from August to October 2011 on 55 CARGs identified in 23 territories in three provinces (Bandundu, Bas-Congo, and Kinshasa) of the western Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The results of the surveys have demonstrated that the effectiveness of the CARGs has been limited. Fifty-one percent of the surveyed CARGs achieved results consistent with at least one of the main goals of their processes. However, 45 percent have not yet achieved any tangible output, whether consistent or not with their main goals, while the remaining 4 percent achieved output outside their goals.

We have also specified the probit model to investigate the determinants of CARG effectiveness. The probit model includes representation, participation, support-generating capacity, coordination, and power imbalance as explanatory variables of CARG effectiveness. Additionally, it includes two control variables: the province dummy and CARG age.

The regression results show that support-generating capacity is the major factor explaining the effectiveness of the CARG. An increase of $1,000 in support to a CARG results in a 77 percent increase in its effectiveness. An increase in participation increases CARG effectiveness by 12 percent; and a decrease in overrepresentation of male members increases effectiveness by 35 percent. Similarly, an increase in coordination leads to an increase in effectiveness by 6 percent, while a decrease in power imbalance results in an increase in effectiveness by 6 percent.

The results as described above call for more pragmatic strategies to improve CARG effectiveness. Such strategies should be based on more mobilization of resources in support for the CARG, as lack of support has been a constraint to CARG effectiveness. Resource mobilization, however, needs to be complemented with other strategies to improve CARG efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency will prove crucial when CARGs start moving from the current stage of project and program implementation to a later stage of policy and strategy design as well as the coordination of layers of relationships between stakeholders. Furthermore, support to CARGs should include ensuring balanced representation, active participation, and power balance among various parties involved.

Our results are also consistent with the findings in the literature suggesting that financial support is extremely important for participatory and multistakeholder platforms, especially at their early stages of setup and implementation. Strengthening capacity to mobilize resources among members and external partners should be among top priorities. General and broad-based multistakeholder platforms have a tendency to tackle many different activities and functions and sometimes to deviate to other unplanned activities, but given limited resources and efforts, the focus should always be on the specific goals and objectives set and what the platforms are meant to do, rather than on spreading their wings too thinly.

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8 No CARG member has yet participated in the design of agricultural and rural development policies or strategies. Also, CARGs operate independently, so the true coordination of layers of relationships at different CARG levels (national, provincial, territory, sector, and city) does not exist. The only coordination observed so far across different layers is in terms of communication.
REFERENCES


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