

Understand, analyse and manage a decentralization process

The RED-IFO Model and its use



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The Institutions for Rural Development Series includes four categories of documents (Conceptual Notes, Guidelines, Case Studies, Working Papers) aiming at supporting efforts by countries and their development partners to improve institutions, be they public, private, centralized or decentralized.

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Foreword

The FAO's Division for Rural Development has developed projects in a multitude of countries. This technical assistance is carried out from three perspectives:

- 1 The Public Institutions Perspective. This is related to the production of information to improve the performance of state actions, institutional restructuring and training.
2. The Civil Society Perspective. This is a contractual approach to management capacity, participatory extension, participatory programs for the structuring of farmers' organizations and, more recently, the sustainable livelihoods approach.
3. The Local Government Perspective. This is related to the role of local governments and development poles, the building of interfaces and regionalization.

The accumulated experience of working within these three perspectives constitutes the expertise that the FAO can offer to Member States to help them create the necessary conditions to successfully lead decentralization processes and the restructuring of institutions in charge of rural development. These FAO – led actions are in line with a legitimization and re-legitimization of the role of the State, which is based on three factors that favor the Public Perspective:

- the diffusion of accompanying measures (information, training, organization), related to institutional restructuring plans at central level;
- support to the design and application of the legislative and operational framework for the sustainable establishment of partnership and social dialogue related to social and territorial agreements at local level;
- support to the strengthening of the regional dimension, which is the most conducive to partnership and social dialogue.

The manual capitalizes on the experience of the Division over the last ten years of following the Analytical RED-IFO Model of Regionalization of Demand and Policy Differentiation, as well as accompanying measures in Information, Training, and Organization. It offers a tool for thinking and training for managers and trainers.

The manual is based on the experience of field projects, on the results of the Technical Consultation on organized Decentralization organized by the Division in 1997 and on a series of publications on this same theme which was subsequently initiated.

Parviz Koohafkan

Director of the Division for Rural Development

Presentation of the document

This manual is a training and self-training tool on decentralization. It allows executives and technicians to familiarize themselves with the main principles and operational aspects of decentralization in rural development and to start a more in-depth analysis on particular points of interest

The manual is made up of three parts:

- UNDERSTAND (Part one);
- ANALYZE (Part two);
- MANAGE (Part three) a Decentralization Process.

The document proposes the Analytical RED-IFO Model of Regionalization of Demand and Policy Differentiation as a tool for decentralization management. It also presents accompanying measures in Information, Training and Organization. The RED-IFO model supposes the allocation of resources by the state as well as other actors to allow the fulfillment of the following functions:

1. the identification of the risks of decentralization;
2. a good understanding of different types of producers and regions and; the ability to follow them up and foresee their evolution;
3. the preparation of dialogue between different actors through the establishment of an information system on several aspects related to the national and local level;
4. the capacity building of local actors through a formal transfer of competencies and training which is tailor made to the local situation;
5. the redefinition of the role of public institutions supporting rural development at central level;
6. the creation of a forum for dialogue at regional level between different actors in the interests of a participatory and negotiated management of the territory.

The pedagogical nature of this document is based on the following elements:

- i) the main themes dealt with propose a specific tool (RED-IFO) to allow familiarization with the technical content in question. For example, a specific methodology for assessing a decentralization process in a given country is dealt with using the “Country Outlook” tool (Part Two, Chapter 2).
- ii) an illustration concerning Senegal allows the reader to follow the evolution of concepts and different tools;
- iii) one part of the document presents concepts and definitions;
- iv) at the end, experiences referring to each part of the document are presented.

The themes presented are taken from a series of analyses carried out by the Rural Development Division of FAO over recent years in different countries through support to field projects or the realization of case studies. The Country Outlooks concerning the Maghreb and West African countries come from a survey conducted by FAO in 1997.

The illustration of the Senegal example was carried out by Mr. M'Baye Sarr, consultant and was presented during a training course for members of the Federation of Senegalese NGOs (FONGS). It was then updated at the end of 2004.

The interested reader will find the summaries of the 21 documents published by the Rural Development Division (SDA) in the series "Rural development and Decentralization" in the annexes. The complete texts are available and downloadable on the FAO's website at page www.fao.org/sd/index_en.htm.

Complementary information is provided on the FAO/World Bank web site www.ciesin.org/decentralization.

The final version of the document¹ was produced by Jean Bonnal, Rural Development Officer of the Rural Institutions and Participation Service (SDAR), in collaboration with Massimo Rossi, consultant. The English version was produced by Clare Sycamore.

¹ The FAO tested the manual's pedagogical nature between January and March 2005 during the "Advanced Course on Sustainable Agriculture in the Mediterranean and Balkan Area" organized by the Institute of Mediterranean Agronomy in Bari (CIHEAM) during distance training of SARD operators (Agriculture and sustainable rural development). Furthermore, in April 2005, the manual was tested during a 2 week course as part of the Masters in Rural Development at the Institute of Mediterranean Agronomy in Montpellier.