MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE WEST AFRICA RURAL FOUNDATION (WARF)

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Section I — Executive Summary, Organizational Profile, and Evaluation Methodology (Jonathan Otto) 1

Section II — Component: Information and Communication System (Yawo Assigbley) 2

Section III — Consultant’s Report Requested by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) (Abdoulaye Sène) 3

Annexes 4
MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE WEST AFRICA RURAL FOUNDATION (WARF)

SECTION I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY
(Jonathan Otto)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ............................................................. ii

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE .................................................... v

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY .................................................. 1
  A. Analysis of Core Functions of WARF .................................. 3
     1. Constitutional Issues .............................................. 3
     2. Mission and objectives ........................................... 4
     3. Strategy ............................................................. 5
     4. Board of Governors ............................................... 6
     5. Structural elements ............................................... 9
     6. Human Resources .................................................. 10
     7. General and Financial Management ............................. 13
  B. Conclusions of the Analysis ............................................ 16
     1. Institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats 16
     2. Constitution ....................................................... 17
     3. Mission and Objectives .......................................... 18
     4. Strategy ............................................................ 18
     5. The Board of Governors ......................................... 19
     6. Structural elements .............................................. 20
     7. Human Resources .................................................. 22
     8. General and Financial Management ............................. 23
  C. Recommendations .......................................................... 24
     1. Recommendations on Institutional Matters .................... 24
        a. Constitution .................................................. 24
        b. Mission ....................................................... 24
        c. Strategy ...................................................... 24
        d. Board of Governors ......................................... 25
        e. Structural elements ......................................... 26
        f. Human Resources ............................................. 26
        g. General and Financial Management ....................... 27
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the life of a foundation, WARF is in its infancy. It is still very much involved with figuring out who it is, establishing who to work with and how, finding the limits of its action space and determining how its various elements -- Board, staff and Management -- all fit together. From its predecessor experimental phase called PRAAP, WARF inherited a wealth of experiences, a programme, procedures, a structure and some key personnel. Yet, the Foundation has had to find its own way of growing beyond that time-limited experiment to become an independent, permanent foundation in an environment where philanthropic foundations are virtually unknown.

On many levels, WARF has moved decisively in its first few years of life, accomplishing a significant amount of initial work. The Board of Governors is operating according to its legal mandate in an institutional framework that is novel to all concerned: a self-selecting, permanent Board for a philanthropic foundation. The financial side of WARF is functioning quite well in most areas, as confirmed to by two largely positive annual audits. The administration for the new organization is established and generally following its own comprehensive Procedures Manual.

On the program side, a core of staff have worked together for several years and now seem thoroughly in tune with the participatory methodologies that are a major tenet of the foundation's work. A series of partnerships have allowed WARF to refine and experiment with its mode of operation. It has expanded the kind of institutions it works with to include NGO intermediaries and state research organizations, all within its mandate to promote participatory methodologies. As a major part of this programme, grants have been made to over 20 institutions. Although it is premature to evaluate these grants, the reality of a smoothly functioning grant making system is in itself an important achievement for the Foundation.

WARF is to be congratulated for the fine work that has been done to date through the commitment by many dedicated people. The level of reflection and intellectual engagement by WARF staff, Management and Governors is one of its great strengths. Amidst all this progress -- and the progress has been very impressive indeed -- more remains to be done for WARF to be firmly established. These difficult areas, and recommendations on how to deal with them, are spelled out in the three separate reports that make up this evaluation report.

Having made these laudatory observations, it must be noted that evaluations are more focused on probing problem areas than on enumerating successes. Some readers of the draft evaluation report have commented on the excess of 'stones' to 'flowers' in the findings. On the contrary, the evaluators fully acknowledge the successes realized to date, and want to give the impression that much more is going well with WARF than is not. At the same time, the evaluators are charged with exploring problematic areas, many of which have been identified and documented by WARF itself, and proposing some recommendations to deal with them.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to WARF is the need to consolidate and expand simultaneously. If WARF had a few years to dedicate just to resolving some of its internal challenges rethinking its mission and strategy, and setting in order parts of its structure that need attention, this would be a prodigious accomplishment. But this is not the case. WARF also needs to assert itself more rigorously and publicly into the development community that still knows too little of its existence, to extend its operation within the sprawling five-country domain where its
outreach is still quite limited, and to compete more aggressively in the arena of fund raising where donors have still to appreciate the great potential of a truly African foundation.

This evaluation report cannot make this challenge less daunting for the Foundation. Hopefully, however, it will give the dedicated people of WARF some validation on their own extensive self-analysis, and some new ideas on how to move forward towards realizing the enormous potential of this institution.

The team acknowledges the generous assistance of WARF and its donors, partners, researchers, beneficiaries and other informants in the development community. The unfailingly patient contribution of the WARF staff, Board and particularly the Director during this invasive activity was exemplary. The team wishes to thank all those who so graciously fit us into their busy schedules on short notice, fielding dozens of questions with tolerance and candor. WARF undertook an in-depth and self-critical analysis in preparation for this evaluation, and offered detailed commentaries on the provisional reports, all of which aided the evaluators. Many conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation are based on data and observations provided by those we interviewed and by WARF's own documents. The insights and inputs from these sources are embedded in the report. Errors of fact, emphasis or interpretation belong to the evaluators, and not their sources.

When WARF was established in October 1993, its five year strategic plan called for a mid-term evaluation to be conducted in 1996. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for this evaluation (which is attached in the annexes) were established over many months in a process that involved the major stakeholders in this experimental institution: Board, Management and staff of WARF, two main funders, partner agencies and communities with which WARF works.

This evaluation has two main objectives: to evaluate the structure and management of WARF on the institutional level, and to determine effectiveness and efficiency of WARF's programmes. The Terms of Reference (TOR) call for a team of three consultants, with each working in one domain: 1) institutional issues linked to governance and resource management; 2) internal and external communications and information; and 3) the programme. The first two domains treat the functioning of the foundation as an institution, i.e., its systems, procedures, personnel, administration, and outreach; the third domain considers its grant making, institution strengthening and other programme activities. While there is overlap among these areas, the lines of inquiry for each consultant are clarified in three pages of questions in the TOR.

The two consultants working on the TOR's institutional objective completed their draft reports during the agreed timeframe, which allowed them to reach consensus on findings and presentation. The programme consultant's report was submitted several weeks after the field portion of the mission was completed, which precluded the possibility of integration and coordination of findings.

Section A, which treats governance and management issues, plus the Executive Summary, Institutional Profile and Evaluation Methodology sections are the responsibility of the institutional analyst and team leader, Jonathan Otto. Section B which deals specifically with internal and external communication and information was written by Yawo Assigbley. Section C contains the report of Abdoulaye Sene, the consultant charged with the TOR's programme objective.
The team leader, who also served as institutional analyst, was engaged by Ford Foundation under a contract with Management Systems International (MSI) of Washington, DC. The consultants for information/communication and for programme. Messrs. Assigbley and Sene, were selected and hired by IDRC in Dakar. MSI is not directly responsible for the content or quality of the IDRC consultants' reports. Its role in report presentation is limited to compilation.
ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

According to the Five-year Strategic Plan (1993-1998): "The West African Rural Foundation (WARF) is a new international non-profit institution with a West African governing board and professional staff. Through innovative grant-making, it seeks to strengthen rural organizations and promote participatory research methods in the sub-region of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Guinea.

WARF provides rural organizations with grants and methodological training so that they can better work with farmers and address farmers' problems. The WARF programme includes: grants for strategic planning, stabilization and methodological training supervised by WARF staff; multi-year institutional support grants; follow-up monitoring and advice; and linking grants to bring researchers and local organizations together to conduct participatory researching order to develop and test sustainable agricultural and environmental practices. WARF grant development procedures include feasibility studies and participatory assessments of grantee organizations' strengths and weaknesses and programmatic opportunities.

For local organizations and researchers not supported in the WARF grants programme, WARF also offers an annual short course in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and participatory agricultural research methods and produces a PRA newsletter, 'how-to' field guides, and audio-visual materials on participatory methods for research and action in rural development.

The West African Rural Foundation (WARF) officially began life in October 1993 as the outgrowth of a three-year pilot project called PRAAP by its French initials, or the Local Organization Support Project in English. The PRAAP period provided much of the groundwork leading to WARF including identification and training of staff from the region, and development and testing of methods and materials on participatory methodology. Thus, by the time it was founded WARF had in place many of the elements of a functioning foundation: a constitution and by-laws, an internal structure and some trained cadres, grant-making and monitoring mechanisms, a procedures manual, and a base of experience and reputation in the rural development community. It also had a sizeable portion of its first five-year budget secured from the two major PRAAP funders, the Ford Foundation and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

An enormous amount of basic organizational work had to be done in the first few years of the Foundation's existence. Simply securing an appropriate legal status from the government of Senegal and other regional governments was a year-long effort and a major accomplishment, because the kind of non-governmental regional foundation envisioned for WARF is virtually unknown in this part of the world. A lot of new personnel had to be recruited and oriented to the particular approach of WARF. Likewise, a whole new governance structure in the form of an independent, self-selecting, perpetual Board had to be set in place, involving recruitment and orientation of leaders from the five countries involved. At the same time, the Foundation's programme itself had to be established.

The Foundation's structure is modeled after the structures commonly found in North America for philanthropic foundations. Quoting the Five-year Strategic Plan, 'WARF has a tripartite structure composed of a Board of Trustees, a Director and a staff. The Board of Trustees is the sole governing body of WARF. It is made up of citizens of the five countries where WARF operates... Each Trustee
serves on a voluntary basis and is chosen by the Board itself." [Note: In French versions WARF documents refer to the Trustees as 'Gouverneurs', and to the second element of the tripartite structure as 'la Direction' which might be rendered in English as Office of the Director or as Management. For the most part, the term Management is retained in this report, except where the reference is explicitly to the Director as a person. And Trustees are referred to by the name used in practice, Governors.]

The Director and staff are all skilled African professionals from within the region. They are of a high caliber in terms of education, experience, field research and language skills. The internal structure of WARF as designed during the PRAAP era is quite flat, with no middle-management positions. Staff is functionally split into a programme side and an administrative side. This lack of an articulated hierarchy has meant that team work was favored over specialization, resulting in a high degree of mutual understanding among personnel.

Fund raising for WARF was initially envisioned as an exercise in getting other donors to subscribe to the Five-year Strategic Plan and making unrestricted contributions to that overall budget. Until recently it seemed quite likely that a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) would complement the funds already secured and cover the rest of the US$7.4 five-year budget. This now appears unlikely in the near term as CIDA's regional funding envelope for this area of Africa is over-committed at least through next year. However, since early in the Foundation's existence, WARF management has been active in fund raising, and has had discussions with a wide assortment of donors. Already a fair amount of funding has been secured through fee-for-service grants and contracts using WARF's participatory methods and personnel resources, rather than the unrestricted funds envisioned earlier. This kind of fund raising seems to hold considerable promise, although it is not the self-defined programme WARF prefers.

The overall image of WARF today in that of a young and dynamic institution, well on its way to finding its place in the segment of rural development activities it has mandated for itself. It has the usual growing pains of three-year old institution, and there are clearly areas where performance can be improved. However, the Foundation has the quality of people in all three branches of its structure, the vision and the near-term resources to build a stronger, more permanent structure on the solid base established to date.
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Preparation for this mid-term evaluation began months before the consultants arrived, with a participatory process that shaped the TOR and involved many of WARF's stakeholders in a pre-evaluation assessment. The team of evaluators began work 10 June 1996. They spend several days defining roles, developing a work plan, and negotiating with WARF and its funders. The agreed work plan included a series of trips within three of the five WARF countries (the evaluators added The Gambia which was not in the two-country TOR), presentation of a provisional report by 8 July, a round table to discuss findings and conclusions on 10 July, draft of commentaries by WARF, and presentation of a final report by 31 July.

The next step was collection of data, using the classic methods of document review and semi-structured interviews. On the programme side this was augmented by on-site visits to a number of grantee agencies' rural projects. The interviews required development of a series of interview formats or questionnaires for specific topics such as personnel policies or internal flow of information, and for various categories of actors.

The evaluators attempted to reach as many different kinds of informants and stakeholders as possible. These included Governors of the Board, WARF personnel and consultants, partner agencies, researchers, WARF funders, other donor agencies, grant-making agencies, NGOs and outside reference people. In all, large numbers of people were interviewed, including all of the WARF staff, both WARF funders, all but two Board Governors, and personnel of a dozen partners and clients. To the maximum degree possible, confidentiality has been respected in drafting the evaluation report. For situations in which interviewees' anonymity could not be maintained, their identities are indicated with permission. (See list of persons contacted in the annex ____).

Among the documents consulted were the publications and internal documents of WARF including activity reports, the five year strategic plan, the procedures manual, minutes of Board meetings, Board committee reports, workshop and seminar reports, the files on WARF grants, consultant reports, audit reports and manuals. Unfortunately, no list of pertinent documents beyond the most basic ones was compiled by WARF for the evaluation team. As a result, the evaluators had difficulty determining the existence of certain key documents unless and until they were cited by another source. For example, a consultant report on restructuring WARF surfaced only because evaluators investigated WARF's use of consultants. This hands-off attitude of WARF Management towards the evaluation, as captured in the oft-repeated phrase "c'est a vous de creuser", i.e., it is up to you to dig around, was apparently adopted in response to requests from Board and funders not to interfere once the evaluation began. While the team appreciated such concern for its autonomy, in this case it resulted in a loss of efficiency. (See list of documents in the annex ____.)

The TOR's were developed over several months as a result of inputs by all major stakeholders, from beneficiaries and partners to WARF staff, board and donors. Given the TOR's encyclopedic scope, it was necessary in preliminary meetings to limit somewhat the array of topics to be covered, to agree on priorities among the possible directions a 30-day study could take, and to adjust expectations on the deliverables. Before the evaluation started the topic of the Foundation's fund-raising and future financing was removed from the TOR, as it was judged important enough to merit its own investigation subsequent to the mid-term evaluation. During the preliminary meetings the donors made clear that their major expectations for this mid-term evacuation concern
the 'big picture' questions: is WARF well managed; are adequate systems in place; is the governance appropriate; is WARF going the right direction; and ultimately, is the Foundation bankable.

At the beginning of the evaluation it was conceded that an evaluation is not the vehicle to resolve significant problems or to develop detailed plans for solving them, as some TOR questions seemed to demand. The evaluation did not undertake to make detailed and specific inputs into operational tasks like revising the Procedures Manual, re-drafting the 'Five-year Strategic Plan, internal restructuring, and other recommended actions. Its role was to identify and analyze problematic areas, and make recommendations for addressing them through changes in structure or strategy, programme or procedure. The actual changes can only begin post-evaluation with acceptance of the analysis and agreement on implementation of changes by the principal parties involved. It was also agreed that the TOR's request for developing progress and performance indicators as the base for a monitoring system could best be done after the evaluation work was completed and gaps identified.

Another point clarified in the preliminary meetings is that this evaluation is not designed as a participatory exercise. Rather, it is an independent external evaluation in which WARF and its stakeholders are informants and subjects rather than full participants. While this might appear somewhat ironic for an organization whose mandate includes promotion of participatory methodologies, the evaluators acted accordingly. However, in keeping with the TOR's emphasis on full disclosure, the team leader held frequent meetings with the WARF Director, donor representatives and other involved persons to indicate tentative findings and foster a collegial atmosphere conducive to acceptance of recommendations.

One consultant was named team leader. The TOR defines the team leader's coordination tasks as ensuring that the evaluation proceeds in a manner that would allow for a synthesis among the three domains, and production of the final report. Each consultant was responsible for the quality of work in his domain, according to the TOR. The tardy presentation of draft reports by one of the consultants, which was still incomplete when the rest of the report was finalized, limited the capacity of the team to synthesize the separate findings. Further, the two team members hired by IDRC requested that their individual reports not be edited. This request was respected in the preparation of this report.

In actuality the level of separation of tasks among the consultants was greater than described in the TOR. Due to various circumstances, including repeated postponement of the evaluation, two of the consultants were absent from the region for other commitments for periods of a week or more during the 30-day evaluation. After the initial week, the three team members were in the same locale for only five days. They could not meet during the final ten days to develop of a coherent provisional report. The result is three parallel reports with three perspectives on the same overall subject. In essence, the consultants worked as a group sharing the same TOR, but not as a team in the sense of close coordination and collaboration. The team leader and MSI are presenting these three studies in one report. The reader is encouraged to draw his/her own comparisons among the three studies to conclude on the sum of the parts.
A. Analysis of Core Functions of WARF

Of the three major areas defined in the TOR, one deals uniquely with programme issues, which is the subject of Mr. Abdoulaye Sene’s report, section C of this evaluation report. Two domains concern the institutional aspects of the Foundation. On the institutional side, the domain of internal and external information and communications is the subject of the report by Mr. Yawo Assigbly, section B of this evaluation report. Section A deals with a series of issues about the core functions of the Foundation. The outline for each section calls for three main parts, namely, Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations. Each major topic of the section is treated sequentially: first in Analysis with a factual review of the situation; then in Conclusions with findings based on the analysis, and finally Recommendations for ameliorating the situation where required.

Looking over the list of questions prepared for the evaluation on the core functions of the Foundation, all the topics can be fit into seven general headings: constitution, mission and objectives, strategy, structural elements, human resources, and general and financial management. These elements form the basis of an institutional analysis of WARF.

1. Constitutional Issues

The key constitutional question raised by the TOR is: Is the constitution adequate to permit WARF to accomplish its mission and objectives? A summary of the main provisions of WARF’s constitution is presented in the Organizations Profile section above.

The Foundation has functioned without great difficulty under its present constitution and by-laws. WARF has established itself legally and has operated administratively under the original statutes. Nonetheless, there are some areas of conceptual complexity and practice that have created anomalies. Also the status of other WARF regulatory documents are somewhat unclear.

One of the first constitutional considerations to emerge was the status of the Director, who is at the same time a Governor on the Board and a salaried employee of the Foundation. Other aspects of this central relationship will be addressed subsequently, but the initial issue concerns the fact that according to the constitution, the WARF Director is elected anew each year. A strict interpretation of this provision would preclude a multi-year contract for the Director’s services. Such a contract has clear advantages for both the Director and the Foundation, essentially providing job security for the individual and leadership continuity for the institution. While it is not uncommon in North America for management and staff of non-profit agencies like foundations to serve at the pleasure of their organizations’ boards without long-term contracts, job security is given higher priority in Africa and is considered necessary to recruit and retain quality personnel.

A second constitutional issue arose when the Board decided to select the WARF Treasurer from among the Governors, rather than from among the Foundation’s staff as called for in the constitution. The apparent expectation of the framers of the constitution was that the WARF Controller would serve in this capacity. The Board felt it appropriate to maintain a closer involvement in the Foundation’s financial affairs, and so elected one of the Governors to serve as both Treasurer and head of the Audit Committee.
Another issue in the general area of WARF's statutes, is the role of the document called "Five-year Strategic Plan 1993-1998". The confusion concerns the status of this Plan. Should it be considered: 1) a contract or compact with WARF's two main donors that can be altered only by mutual agreement; 2) the WARF bible or blueprint for implementation to be strictly followed in all its provisions; 3) a fund raising document serving as a ready-made proposal for any new donor willing to consider contributing to the core five-year budget; 4) a reference work that naturally becomes more and more dated and obsolete, and so can be ignored when necessary or convenient. An example of the resulting confusion occurs in the annual budgeting exercise, with differing interpretations as to whether the original budget projections, programme-to-administration percentages, etc., are mandated or only indicative.

There is no provision for revising this Strategic Plan, even though annual plans, reports, budgets and other operational documents and the mere passage of time leave it increasing outmoded. A similar question hangs over the WARF Procedures Manual, which also has near-constitutional status but is likewise obsolete in certain areas. Given the significance of these documents as strategic and operational guides, their disposition within the statutes and functioning of WARF is an unresolved constitutional matter.

2. Mission and objectives

Key questions posed by the TOR in this area include: Are the mission and objectives of WARF clear? Is the mission pertinent? Is there coherence among the WARF mission, strategy and activities? The first two questions are treated here and the final one in the next section.

WARF's mission statement reads, "To help solve the problems of Africa's rural society by strengthening independent African local organizations and by promoting participatory methods of research and development." The constitution states that, "The exclusive objective of the Foundation is to receive and administer funds to help African organizations address the problems of rural people."

The central function of the mission statement is to guide the Foundation. It also has a vital role in presenting the institution to the world at large, which includes marketing to donors and clients. A mission statement should be compelling and easily understood. It encompasses the lofty long-term aims of the institution, and should stand for many years without need of change. Mission statements do not usually confine the institution to certain approaches or activities, as these may not remain pertinent to the institution's main aspiration. The interminable quality of an institution's mission distinguishes it from the goal and objectives of a time-limited project or programme.

WARF's mission statement contains direct mention of strengthening partners, and promoting a methodology. The mention of strengthening African partners, which is echoed in the objective, clarifies that the Foundation works with and through other agencies. The term 'local' stretches in WARF usage to include everything from peasant associations and service NGOs to nation-wide governmental research organizations. As to the promotion of participatory methods, WARF and its predecessor PRAAP were developed at a time of high enthusiasm for participatory approaches that seemed novel in the sub-region. These methodological tools are enjoying considerable popularity and their use is spreading widely within the development community.
WARF's mission statement does not mention the intended beneficiaries as individual people. only as part of society. This may seem just a question of word choice, but word choice in a mission statement is extremely important. The mention of 'rural society' is interesting in its recognition of the civil and social aspects of the Foundation's work. However, it does not seem well developed either here or in the strategy.

Several other themes are referred to in the explanation to the mission statement and in the philosophy statement of Five-year Strategic Plan. These include empowerment of civil society; environment and natural resource management; professionalism and diversity; and teamwork and collaboration.

3. Strategy

Essential questions of the TOR concerning strategy include: what are the methods used to put in place WARF's strategy? Are there mechanisms to re-examine and up-date WARF's strategy in a periodic manner? Is there coherence among the WARF mission, strategy and activities?

The distinctions among WARF's strategy, methods, programmes and outputs seem fluid and are sometimes divided by little more than situational usage. For example, 'strengthening local institutions' is referred to in various places as part of the mission, a main axis of the strategy, a major programme focus and an anticipated outcome.

The major elements of the WARF strategy are to work with local organizations as key actors and to empower them with new skills and capacities; to support participatory action-research programmes; and to carry out training and diffusion of participatory methods. The means for these three strategic axes are, respectively, grants and training for the partners utilizing a series of learning experiences; grants and methodological assistance for participatory technology development; and short courses and methodological materials for diffusion. Each of these methods becomes a programme activity as the strategy is translated into action.

An annual strategic planning exercise is part of the annual program of work, the results of which are presented to the Board. This takes place near the end of the calendar year. Various WARF personnel seem to perceive the process differently. Some see it as rethinking strategy, others as simply planning new activities. In essence, the distinction between strategic and operational planning is not maintained. The timing of the year-end activity is not coordinated with the annual budgeting cycle, which is completed in August for submission to the annual Board meeting in October or November.

In promotion of participatory approaches, WARF has not worked extensively with the growing in number of peer organizations in the sub-region that are also involved in participatory methodologies. While various groups including WARF have improved and elaborated these participatory methods, little new written material has come out in recent years to present advances publicly and to foster the techniques on the level of promoter agencies. No single agency is taking the lead in convening these practitioners.

As noted in the Mission section above, there are some thematic elements that seem to float around the WARF paradigm without being firmly grounded within it, and thus their value and
usefulness may not be fully realized. Two of these are natural resource management in the on-going environmental crisis, and local governance in the context of the current flowering of civil society through decentralization and other democratic liberalization processes.

Another potential strategic element that is not exploited coherently is the unique sub-regional nature of the Foundation. The Five-year Strategic Plan notes that WARF is sub-regional in focus because "these five countries are too small both in total population and in number of viable local organizations to each warrant a national-level organization such as WARF..." Beyond this debatable assessment, which may date from the PRAAP era when the focus was only on peasant associations, there is no positive expression of the strategic potential for the Foundation to work across this contiguous zone. An example is sharing techniques, findings, expertise and solidarity laterally within the sub-region. Although this is done by some WARF staff and programmes it is given no stature within the Foundation's strategy, nor is it yet done systematically.

In general, little attention is given in the current mission-strategy-programme paradigm to systematic learning and to WARF as a Learning Organization. The requirement for WARF to contribute to the technology and science of this field is not spelled out very strongly. As is the case for many of the points made in this evaluation, WARF Management is aware of this unmet potential and would like to improve in this area.

WARF Management and staff are articulate about and committed to the implementation of strategy in their programme as they have developed it. For them the coherence is clear and adequate. The Board is generally pleased with the convergence of strategy and programme, but some Governors speculate that WARF needs to lift its collective vision to see if other opportunities exist that are being overlooked. All of the three WARF structural elements were willing, in various degrees, to consider new interpretations of the mission and strategy.

4. Board of Governors

The WARF donors placed major emphasis on the Board and its functioning in the first years of the Foundation. Key TOR questions concerning the Board are as follows: Does the composition and the mandate of the Board permit it to accomplish its role? Does it have the necessary resources of function? What are the criteria for selection and performance of Board members? Does WARF need another kind of Board? What mechanisms are needed to permit Governors in different countries to work efficiently?

Central to understanding the WARF Board is the fact that it was founded after the Foundation itself was set up and running. The Management and some staff were in place, with strategy and general programme inherited from PRAAP, and core funding assured for several years. With all the other elements already in place, the Board of Governors was quickly constituted in late 1993. Only one Governor was a hold-over from the PRAAP era. As a result, the Director himself had to play a leading role in the recruitment and orientation of the Governors who were to supervise him.

Three new Governors joined in 1995 so their elapsed period of service is short. None of the Governors had prior experience on self-perpetuating Foundation boards. To help with Board development and other facets of WARF's formation, Ford Foundation designed and funded an extensive Technical Assistance package based largely around two international consultants, with
experience in the region. This assistance was prematurely terminated in 1995 with the concurrence of the Board, as the consultants' involvement was not meeting objectives and may actually have become a divisive element. The Board, Ford andWARF Management all expressed the desire to restart Ford-financed consultant services.

The Board of WARF is constituted along the lines required by the Constitution. The current number of Governors, eight, is within the numerical limits of five to eleven. Since October 1993, the Board has held its twice-yearly meetings as required, each time achieving its quorum. It has elected its President, Treasurer and Director annually, with the adjustments to these offices as noted in the Constitution section above.

It has established three committees following approximately the proposed division of tasks outlined in the By-Laws for two of the three. i.e., Audit and Legal (the latter's tasks include recruitment of Governors). At the initiative of one Governor a Committee for Strategic Reflection was formed, while the envisioned Fundraising Committee has yet to be set up. For reasons of efficiency, the committees typically meet immediately prior to semi-annual Board meetings.

The composition of the Board includes three Senegalese, two Malians and one citizen of each of the other three countries in WARF's action area. Its membership contains three women and five men. By the Board's own reckoning it could benefit from additional Governors with skills in certain areas, notably financial management, legal matters, fund raising and perhaps entrepreneurship. Several interviewees, both Governors and other people, have noted the lack of direct representation on the Board by the Foundation's intended partners and target group, i.e., local organizations and rural society, respectively. It seems this is an intentional choice after the PRAAP experience with an advisory board of partners and beneficiaries. Certainly there are champions of the rural population on the Board, and the absences of partner agency representatives reduces the potential for conflicts of interest.

The Board has taken seriously its task of self-appointment. It has both approved and rejected potential candidates as it attempts to increase the number and diversify of the Governors. The Board also took the important step of deciding to terminate the membership of one perpetually absent Governor, no less a person than the Board's first President. To date, none of the other Governors have resigned or refused re-election, although several have indicated that they may find the time commitment of membership too burdensome in the future.

In terms of meeting its core responsibilities, the WARF Board has shown strong evidence of understanding and accepting its role. Particularly in the key area of fiduciary oversight, the Board has been active. It has discussed and disputed the presentation of the annual budgets for FY 94 and 95 which some Governors found inadequate. It has restructured the Treasurer's position as a Board officer to guarantee more independence as discussed in the Constitution section above, and it has often challenged expenditures and other financial decisions that some Governors found questionable. For example the decision by the Management to raise all staff salaries by 80% in early 1994 proved highly controversial with the Board, which questioned both it high level and the Director's prerogative to make this decision without prior Board consultation.

The Board has modeled fiscal restraint and frugality in the management of its own limited budget by reducing expenditures for Governors' accommodations at Board meetings. The Board
meetings are now held at WARF offices in Dakar, which also has the symbolic significance of confirming the Board as an integral element of the Foundation. Further the Board has repeatedly underlined the priority it accords to securing donor commitments for the unfunded portion of the Foundation's initial five-year budget.

The Audit committee of the Board has attempted to fulfill its role of fiscal oversight, including the management of two annual audits. Although no insurmountable problems were identified by the reports of these audits, the audit process itself has not lived up to Board expectations, and remains a source of frustration for several parties involved. Reasons for limited success in this area are examined in more detail in the General and Financial Management section of this paper. Also discussed in that section of the report are several areas of WARF's financial management which are still not adequately rigorous and transparent, indicating the need for additional Audit committee involvement.

In terms of its responsibilities in areas of programme and strategic development, the Board has grown into these areas over the past two and one-half years. It has carefully studied, critiqued and ultimately approved, each grant proposal presented by the staff. Some issues, such as the Foundation's involvement in World Bank-funded programs and provision of services to governmental bodies, have provoked heated deliberations on the character and direction of WARF. The Board's Strategic Reflection Committee led the staff, Governors and selected partner agencies in a three-day retreat to consider the Foundation's strategic position in November 1995. This event was in part a preparation for this mid-term evaluation and provided the forum for a far-reaching assessment of WARF by participants. Unfortunately, direct Board involvement in this retreat was quite limited.

A major deficiency in Board involvement is its physical absence from the Foundation's main field of activity. To date, no Board member has visited WARF project sites or participated in a regular WARF program activities such as the Annual Workshop or a Participatory Diagnostic exercise. A planned Board meeting in up-country Mali that was to include site visits in April 1996 had to be abandoned as it conflicted with a presidential visit in that area.

From a reading of Board Minutes and Resolutions, and from interviews with all but two of the Governors, the Board appears to function in an enthusiastic and thoughtful manner. Most of the Governors expressed confidence in the overall functioning of the Board, its ongoing maturation, and its potential to provide the perpetual leadership required of it. That said, several areas of concern were registered.

One of these is the inadequacy of communication among Governors in the long periods between their semi-annual meetings. Another was the sense that more was required of them, both individually and collectively, than they are able to do as volunteers with professional commitments. This apprehension was especially acute for Board involvement in new fund raising. A third area of concern noted by the Governors is the discomfort they experience during some interactions with the Director during Board meetings, as discussed below in the section on Structure Elements.

Several Board members, as well as others who attend their meetings as resource persons or observers, commented on the difficulty of maintaining focus on long-standing issues over a series of meetings held six months apart. Governors expressed frustration that a recommendation adopted
at one meeting may not be systematically followed up or complied with before the next meeting, and may become lost in the shuffle by the following Board meeting. On a personal level, a Governor who is required by professional commitments or other constraints to miss one of the semi-annual meetings may go an entire year without direct contact with other Governors.

The Board has very limited financial resources, with no budget for secretarial assistance, personnel, communications and other basic needs. Thus, Governors are dependent on WARF Management and staff to perform all Board-related tasks, to keep them informed, and even to communicate with fellow Governors.

5. Structural elements

Evaluation questions dealing with structural elements include: What are the roles and functions of each structural element of WARF, that is to say, Board, Management, personnel? Do the roles permit these different elements to contribute in an optimal manner? How can they be better organized, oriented and strengthened to improve performance? What would improve exchanges among the structural elements? How do WARF personnel account to the Board (furnishing information, the decision making processes, Board monitoring of activities, etc.)?

The structural elements of the tripartite WARF system are explained in the Organizational Profile section above. Within this organizational structure with a strong, self-perpetuating Board, there remains considerable variation among the three WARF structural elements as to the understanding and acceptance of roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis each other. This comes out in the perceptions of each tripartite party towards the others. The following notes are based on interviews, the report from the November 1995 strategic reflection workshop and from the "Note d'Orientation" prepared by WARF for this evaluation, each of which contain important insights.

Staff is appreciative of Management's willing involvement of personnel in decisions that affect them. They are critical of Management over-involvement in operational areas, but acknowledge improvement on the programme side. They feel decision making authority is still sometimes unclear. Staff appreciate the collegial atmosphere and working relationships Management has engendered. They want Management to focus more on tasks that only that office can do, like fundraising, and to delegate a lot more to the staff.

Staff appreciates the Governors' work in setting the Board up and establishing committees, and they are impressed by qualifications and intellectual capacities of the Governors. Some staff felt sanctioned by Board disapproval of the slow pace of new grants in the first year, 1993-94, which staff considered necessary, and are critical of the Board's lack of on-site knowledge of WARF realities. Staff feel the Board is preoccupied with control and decision making, and not active enough in the issues of strategic orientation and development support. They are concerned that Governors' geographic isolation and infrequent contact with staff will limit the Board's conceptual contributions.

Management is generally pleased with the staff, although continually vigilant about meeting the high expectations and maintaining the high standards that have been put on WARF. Thus, Management is demanding in areas like public documents and major decisions. It is concerned about the Foundation's administrative capacity, especially in the financial and administration areas where
controls and personnel resources seem in need of improvement. While accepting some criticism of being overly involved in routine matters in the past, Management feels increasing delegation is changing this situation.

Management has high praise for the Governors on an individual level. It is aware of its continuing struggle with the Board, but feels some Board members are overly critical and want to micro-manage the Foundation. Management defends its decisions and its prerogative to make them without Board concurrence; yet, it expresses a desire to find the way towards a better relationship with the Board.

The Board is very positive about the quality of WARF program personnel and resulting program of activities. It is less sanguine about financial management aspects of staff performance, especially the quality of annual budgets. Governors express frustration over some aspects of written communication, feeling overwhelmed with the high volume of programme documentation and disappointed with the limited financial documentation. Many regret their own lack of on-site experience of WARF work. Some question the overall cohesion of the programme and WARF's emphasis on a limited number of participatory tools.

The Board voices appreciation for the intellectual leadership and commitment of WARF Management. Governors note strong awareness of tension between the Foundation's power centers. Some disagree with Management's assertion of prerogatives in finances and other matters, and most interviewed mentioned discomfort with a style which they describe as at times defensive, argumentative and/or confrontational. The Board is concerned about the distribution of decision-making authority between itself and Management, and wants to resolve this conflict.

Apart from the mutual perceptions among WARF's structural elements, the structural organization itself is an issue of great importance. The internal organization of WARF is flat, meaning that almost all the professional staff relate directly to the Director for administrative purposes. There are no division heads or other mid-level positions. The programme staff have been organized into three 'poles' for work purposes with three designated 'têtes de pôles' positions; but these task titles carry no administrative authority.

As a result of this flat structure, which was dictated in the Five-year Strategic Plan, everyone has direct access to the Director. He is constantly called upon to be involved in all levels of decision-making, although the pole systems has reduced this necessity somewhat on the programme side. As a result, the Director is obliged to spend a disproportionate amount of his time on tasks that in most organizations of a similar size would be handled by other administrators. For example, his written authorization is required on every expenditure over 25,000 FCA (US$50).

6. Human Resources

Key questions from the TOR in this area include: Are WARF's human resources and human resource strategies adequate for its strategic priorities? Given the resources, what work methods should WARF use: should preference be given to teamwork and slow the expansion process, or more specialization and enlarging the area of intervention to the detriment of teamwork? What are the recruitment promotion and rewards criteria? Do they permit WARF to recruit and keep quality
personnel and financial reward the best performances? How are personnel evaluated? Does WARF have a training strategy for programme and administrative personnel?

Due to time limitations of the mid-term evaluation, evaluators did not attempt independent assessment of actual workloads of all staff members. There is also considerable overlap with the mandate of the evaluator in the programme domain who has his own questions to answer about optimal use of WARF resources in the programme sector.

WARF lacks national diversity among staff members, despite goals in this direction. Nine of ten professional staff are Senegalese, one is Malian, and none are from the other WARF countries or elsewhere. (Subsequent to the evaluation exercise the one Malian staff member left the Foundation in August 1996 because of delays in setting up the WARF sub-office in Bamako that he was meant to manage. Thus, the Management and staff of WARF are now completely Senegalese.)

Interviewees in both Mali and The Gambia remarked on this imbalance, which they felt distracted from the regional character of the Foundation. The gender balance is somewhat better: four women to six men in professional positions. For a Foundation operating in countries with three different administrative languages, staff language skills are somewhat uneven, with far more French capacity than English, and even less Portuguese. As was the case for WARF staff nationality, this linguistic imbalance was noted in interviews with Gambians, although most of them also noted that skills in African languages helped overcome this remnant of colonial heritage.

Concerning compensation levels, WARF staff received an across-the-board 80% pay raise shortly after the West African franc was devalued in early 1994 from 50 FCFA to 100 FCA to the French franc. This was higher than raises accorded by any other national or international agency in Dakar at that time, although WARF Management asserts that major portions of the increase were not due to the devaluation, but rather to a desire to match peer salaries and secure staff loyalty.

This dramatic salary increase has apparently succeeded in retaining loyalty. In almost three years of operation, no WARF staff voluntarily left employment (until the recent departure noted above); nor have any been fired or not had their contracts renewed. Despite this high level of staff stability, job security of personnel remains a theme. Everyone seems concerned about losing key personnel, both for their skills and for the investment made in forming the WARF team.

Among staff interviewees, none indicated that they were unhappy with their level of compensation or that they are considering other job options because of discontent with terms or conditions. Several expressed concern that unnamed other staff might consider this option. Several people noted family stress and reduced social life from the frequent travel and long hours required.

Staff members interviewed indicated that they had gone through a rigorous recruitment process that, in some cases, had taken months. Several staff members had worked as WARF consultants before applying for staff positions, and considered this a sort of informal apprenticeship period of orientation and assessment.

At present there is no system of promotions within WARF because there is literally no where to go, i.e., there are no hierarchical positions to which staff members might aspire that would represent a promotion. A partial exception to this exists on the programme side with some
differentiation of titles and levels of responsibility. Although internal promotion is typically limited within any agency of this small size, it is essentially eliminated by WARF’s flat organizational structure.

Staff evaluations are done annually, with each staff member filling in a detailed self-evaluation form using a quantified ‘grill’ from the Procedures Manual. The response is then reviewed by the Director for each staff member, and is used by the Director to award an annual bonus which could amount to a maximum of one month’s salary. Since filling in the forms in December 1995, some staff were subsequently interviewed by the Director in person, while detailed written evaluations responses have been provided to everybody.

This personnel evaluation approach is meant to be in keeping with some of the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) as required by the Procedures Manual. In important ways it does not follow TQM, which rejects the idea of annual personnel evaluations in favor of more frequent ‘scorecard’ evaluations, and emphasizes feedback systems for groups of employees rather than only individuals. Also, the evaluation grill is skewed in some questionable directions, such as giving more points for days out of the office or staying late. Perhaps these had positive value in the early days of WARF, i.e., to encourage field visits and hard work. With increased task differentiation and, hopefully, with improved time management, this more-is-better approach seems out-dated.

A staff development programme was established at the beginning of WARF, but has not been up-dated since. It makes available funds for training and skills up-grading. Staff interviewed indicated that they had made good use of this facility, especially in terms of English language and computer learning. Some had even gone to Europe for training. All considered it a useful fringe benefit, even if most courses have to be taken outside of normal working hours. While funds for specific kinds of training are available, staff members do not receive any assistance in career planning, which most felt would be a very valuable asset and a welcome benefit.

The issue of the adequacy of the current WARF staff has two parts, one of which is: does it have enough people? In the opinion of the staff themselves, no one on the programme side said that more personnel were needed. Extensive use has been made of consultants, some of whom have had multiple contracts over the life of WARF, thus representing a repository of quasi-staff members in a resource network. On the financial and administrative side, where auxiliary consultants cannot so easily pick up the slack when work demands accelerate, the need for an additional staff person at a senior level was voiced. Additional reasons for this are explained in the General and Financial Management section below.

The second part of the issue is whether WARF has the right people, i.e., the best mix of skills to meet strategic priorities. Starting with the programme side, this depends on whether WARF continues with the same general approach to programming, or considers some new thematic approaches along the lines proposed in the Strategy sections of this report. For now, the signs are that this is a competent group, well oriented and motivated. If a thematic approach were adapted, WARF may need to bring in some new expertise, but this could probably be obtained through consultants who advise and train existing staff.

The issue of team work versus specialization addresses the fact that WARF is changing from the early days when everyone on the Programme side did everything, in part because they were all
learning together and all involved in developing the Foundation's approaches. The growth of the portfolio and the complexity of tasks, coupled with the maturity of the programme approach, appear to make greater task differentiation inevitable. Still, some personnel have a fond attachment to the days to tighter group interaction.

In finance and administration, the Governors, Director and some others involved have voiced the concern that the current staff may be overwhelmed by their tasks. Whether this is a question of staff numbers or competence could not be assessed in this short study. It does link directly to the issue of WARF's flat organizational structure and the need to reconsider this staffing formation.

The extensive use of consultants is somewhat formalized in WARF's network of trained resource persons. In many ways this network of freelance people appears to be a cost-effective way of expanding personnel for specific tasks without incurring the cost and management burden of increasing permanent staff levels. The down side is that these people are not secure, either for WARF's use or in their own personal situations: they can be hired by another agency at any time for short or long periods.

Another potentially negative aspect of extensive consultant use is the possibility of abuse, i.e., avoiding the rigors of personnel recruitment or the confines of the personnel salary scale (although consultant recruitment also is meant to be competitive and has a specific pay scale). Also, there does not appear to be any clear procedure for acceptance of consultants' contractual deliverables prior to payment, and records of contractual compliance. Given the high level of consultant use, such a procedure would seem necessary for purposes of audit or performance review.

In studying WARF's use of consultants, it appears that one consultant was hired on an open-ended contract, accorded terms and conditions beyond the norms specified in the Procedures Manual and did not complete a detailed set of deliverables before payment. The Procedures Manual does have provision for exceptional consultant pay rates in exceptional cases. However, the written justification for this was not on file as required. WARF Management maintains that this consultant is particularly valuable, justifying the unusual level of remuneration and benefits, and that some of his assignments produced sensitive documents that could not be generally distributed.

7. General and Financial Management

Some of the TOR questions in Financial Management are: To what degree are financial planning, control, audits and financial reports clear, adequate and complete? To what degree does the Board participate in financial planning and monitoring? Are the technical and human resources adequate to guarantee effective and efficient systems of financial control and information? The key question in the general area of management is how to reconcile transparency with rapidity in procedures? An additional series of questions slipped into the Terms of Reference which really relate to fund raising, a topic that was intentionally eliminated from this mid-term exercise, including: Under what conditions can WARF successfully raise funds? What are its capacities in this domain? How can they be strengthened? Can the civil society be mobilized or does that bring risks?

The general finances of WARF are presented in the Organizational Profile section of this report. Financial receipts to date have been of two distinct kinds: two large core grants committed
at WARF's launching by Ford Foundation and IDRC, and several smaller project specific contributions obtained during the past 2½ years. Apart from these two core grants, WARF has generated funds by providing services to several paying customers that wanted WARF's services. To date these include an evaluation in Guinea-Bissau and training in participatory methodology in Senegal paid for by GTZ. By far the largest is 63,000,000 FCA (about US$126,000) in billing to date for World Bank-funded services to IER (Institut d'Economic Rurale) in Mali from an anticipated five-year total funding that could be much higher depending on IER decisions.

Financial planning as explained by staff is only done annually. It is done by: referring back to the budget in the Five-year Strategic Plan, getting inputs from the programme people about the levels of grants and other expenditures they envision, and then factoring in the known costs of personnel plus other recurrent costs. All staff members were aware of the process and many had a direct hand in estimating their needs. The budgeting cycle is not synchronized with the annual strategy and operational planning exercise, as the former occurs prior to the Annual Meeting in October/November, and the latter takes place near the end of the calendar year.

Board participation in financial planning so far has been limited to reviewing the annual budget as presented by the staff. At both 1994 and 1995 Annual Meetings the Board found the budgets to be inadequately detailed. They also questioned the basis for budgeting. For example, at the September 1995 meeting the planned budget expenditures presented for FY 1996 included funds from IDRC that had been obligated and not yet been received by the Foundation (and which have still not been released almost a year later). In both years the Board felt it necessary to demand supplementary information and revised budgets. In a related move, the Board asked for and now receives monthly financial statements which are monitored by the head of the Audit committee.

The basis for budgeting remains an issue. Some staff still express frustration that they have been obliged to live with this year's budget based on the 'catastrophe' scenario of no new income. Governors, accustomed to the relative austerity of NGOs and other cash-strapped agencies, have demand that the Foundation make provisions to stretch its resources carefully until more money is actually in hand.

In terms of financial management of the WARF programme of support to local organizations, there appears to be a thorough and transparent decision making process in place. An exacting institutional diagnosis of all potential grantees is carried out, and a corrective plan negotiated before grants are made. All grants are subject to approval at regular internal meetings of key WARF staff, and Board approval is required on grants over 20,000,000 FCA (about US$40,000).

Internal WARF financial management controls address various aspects of institutional life, such as initiation of requests for work or purchases, authorization at different levels of expense, required receipts, payment procedures, management of the petty cash, reconciliation of bank accounts, internal and external audits and annual and biennial budgeting and annual reports to the Board. These systems have been reviewed only partially by the last audit, with relatively minor corrective action noted.

This evaluation could not systematically check on the application of all these procedures. That is the task of a thorough, external management audit which has not been conducted. Random checks found documentation in order and evidence of procedural compliance. However, two
investigations revealed what might be considered borderline irregularities, or lax application of specific procedures.

One involved the requirement to get competitive pro forma invoices from at least three suppliers. In two cases of procurement, the same suppliers have been used repeatedly over several years for similar but slightly different products, i.e., printing a series of newsletters and producing a number of videos. In each case, there was no attempt secure competitive invoices after the first item in the series was contracted. In the case of the videos the total cost for four films exceeded 17,000,000 FCA (about US$34,000). WARF staff explained that the printer's initial offer was cheapest and their work of high quality. WARF staff said that the video company was repeatedly retained without competition because it has not raised its rates in two years and the videographers were familiar with WARF activities. The evaluators found the video quality mediocre. The other area of lax application concerned the terms of engagement for a consultant, whose remuneration far exceeded WARF's pay scale and whose work seemed to be inadequately documented (see Human Resources section above).

In general, internal controls are in place, and seem to be functioning well as far as this limited study could determine. However, a major conceptual problem exists in the overall system. The Controller cannot, strictly speaking, serve the dual roles of administrator and controller, i.e., she cannot be expected to initiate and conduct financial operations, and then independently verify her own work. For example, in the current system the WARF Controller acts as an administrator to draw up a contract, which she gets the Director to authorize, and then she acts as the control person to verify that norms and procedures were followed. The Controller and WARF Management are aware of this potential conflictual situation and want to find a way to resolve it.

Although it is not explicitly stated in the Controller's Terms of Reference, it is anticipated that this position will have a measure on independence from the office of the Director, i.e., free to raise any issue concerning Foundation resource use and even to question his decisions in this regard as an internal check. The Controller confirms that she does feel this independence, but when asked to recall situations when she used it was unable to remember any over the life of the Foundation. Thus, it appears this independent check does not exist in practice.

Under the Audit Committee of the Board, two annual audits have been conducted. They indicate that the straightforward accounting function of WARF seems to be done adequately, with no major signs of malpractice. Unfortunately, the limited terms of the audits or their interpretation by the contracted firms, cloud the acceptance of these findings. The audits and the audit reports appear to be superficial, with little detail on procedures used or findings. For instance, the 1995 auditors did not do a thorough audit study of any WARF grants to other organizations, which is a major expenditure area and should be a major concern for a grant making organization. This happened despite Board determination to get a much more detailed audit in 1995, and partly reflects the lack of financial resources for the Audit Committee to secure technical assistance. The procedure for acceptance of the auditor's report by WARF is unclear. Some Governors were still waiting for final explanation of Management compliance with 1994 audit findings even as the 1995 report was accepted in the May 1996 Board meeting.

WARF's capacities in fund raising are difficult to judge, since the evaluators did not explore in detail the range of on-going fundraising efforts or their exact state of negotiation. The need to
raise additional funds was found to be a preoccupation of WARF Governors and personnel. In general, the Director indicated that he is very positive about the likelihood of securing more service-based contracts or grants for specific donor-designed projects, especially relating to WARF's expertise in participatory methodologies. The WARF Director acknowledged that fund raising for the core five-year budget, like funds received from Ford Foundation and IDRC, has been far more difficult and less successful than first imagined, and that it will require much more intensive work on his part.

While WARF's capacities in fund raising were not explored deeply in this evaluation, the results to date of WARF's work in this area, can be assessed, and some donors' perceptions reported. The only large grant or contract negotiated to date is that with IER in Mali. From contacts the evaluators had with other donors, both bilateral and multilateral, WARF is currently viewed more as a potentially useful service provider than as an independent foundation to which donors might give unrestricted funds. One donor representative did concede that in the case where its local partners were not ready or able to articulate their needs for WARF services direct untied funding to WARF was likely. No investigation of the potential for local contributions beyond donors was attempted during this study.

An apparent handicap to fundraising is the relatively poor quality and uncoordinated state of WARF's public documentation and public relations material as well as their use and distribution. The lack of attractive, purpose-specific materials may be hindering WARF's efforts to project the image of a professional organization. This situation is detailed in section B of this report dealing with Information and Communications.

The human side of fund raising needs more attention, as seen in two cases. A European donor representative visited Dakar during the evaluation, but her local handler said there was no available time in her packed schedule, and a meeting was impossible. The evaluator ask for a breakfast meeting at her hotel during the one unprogrammed period of her daily schedule and had a relaxed session. Another example is donor relations. Personnel of WARF's two main donors expressed the sentiment that not enough attention was paid to them and their needs. While acknowledging that WARF reported as required, they want the Director to touch base with them more often to exchange ideas. These small examples illustrate the necessity of pursuing donors creatively, seeing donor representatives as people rather than just sources of money, and meeting them on those terms. WARP needs to cultivate these techniques and attitudes in the increasingly competitive arena of fund raising.

B. Conclusions of the Analysis

1. Institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths:
* Committed staff, Management and Board; trained core of consultant resources persons
* High standards set, and serious attempts to reach them
* Systems procedures in place and functioning
* Mission and strategy in keeping with needs and political opening
* Two donors already supporting WARF's development
Weaknesses:
* Internal tensions among tripartite elements could deflect attention from priorities
* Little contact with peer organizations
* Still too little visibility within circles of decision makers
* Underdeveloped internal structure
* Finance and administration overstretched
* Five-year funding not yet secured

Opportunities:
* Take leading role in convening promoter agencies of participatory methods
* Develop thematic portfolio on critical topics for greater impact
* Use Governors for in-country public relations and fund raising
* Exploit unique regional scope of WARF

Threats:
* Other grant-making projects and initiatives become more like foundations and compete with WARF for funding
* Costs of five-country focus too expensive for too little advantage
* Disparate programme activities fail to develop greater impact
* Board fails to complete its consolidation due to inadequate communication and contact
* WARF funders lose confidence if internal tensions and other problems are not resolved

2. Constitution

The Constitution has broadly served its purpose and a legal and practical framework for the Foundation. The WARF constitution in no longer up-to-date in some areas because of changes in practice. An example is the Treasurer position which is now held by a Governor. This and other changes are needed to bring the statutes in line with practice. They can be done without great expense or effort and need not become the subject of a protracted legal consultancy.

The conflict between the constitutional provision for annual election of the Director and the desire of both Board and Director for a multi-year Director's contract is unresolved. Beyond the issue of job security is the question of whether a multi-year contract effectively eliminates the annual decision to renew the Director's mandate. Reportedly, Senegalese labour regulations have recently made it much more feasible for employers to dismiss employees, so legal aspects are less of an impingement if the Board should opt not to re-elect the WARF Director. In sum, while this situation may be awkward, it does not appear to create a constitutional anomaly.

The increasingly out-dated Five-year Strategic Plan and Procedures Manual are occasioning some operational problems, as is the lack of agreement over the status of these documents. It should be possible for WARF Management and staff to identify all the areas where changes are required in the Procedures Manual, to propose specific improvements, and for the Board to review these proposed changes through its committee on legal matters. For the Strategic Plan, consideration should be given to re-drafting this document as part of the development of an overall marketing, public relations, and fundraising plan for WARF. A completely new strategic document may be more useful than a facelift of the old one, although much of the core thinking will naturally be retained.
3. Mission and Objectives

The current mission statement does not meet the need for a compelling, easily understood declaration of WARF's mandate. This is not to say that it is inaccurate, rather that it does not serve the marketing function very well. The mission and objectives need to be seen as part of the entire institutional proclamation that flows from mission statement through objectives, principles and strategy to the main lines of the programme.

The mission statement, or perhaps the objectives, need to capture the unique character and potential of the Foundation as a sub-regional African institution. Here the power of the mission statement is shown: omission of direct reference to expectations for cross-border synergy in the mission statement and strategy have resulted in a limited realization of this potential in practice.

Three thematic areas are mentioned in the mission and philosophy section of the 5-year Strategic Plan: empowerment of civil society; professionalism and diversity; teamwork/participation/collaboration. The second two themes are, to a large degree, behaviors to be promoted first within WARF and with partners. Civil society empowerment is a broader theme that could be considered for incorporation into the mission. It encompasses notions of democratic processes at all levels, burgeoning producer associations and other self-defined groups in rural society.

The mission statement may not be the place to enshrine the currently preferred methodology. Rather it may be best put into the principles and objectives or strategy statement. Promotion of participatory methodologies may eventually become less critical as a WARF primary activity, as their use spreads and gains wider acceptance. The focus on participation in the early stages of project analysis and design does not seem to be matched by tools that continue this theme throughout the cycle of project implementation. Several interviewers commented on this apparent imbalance. In the words of one WARF Governor: "La participation est bonne, mais la responsabilisation est meilleure". To be sure, increased responsibility is part of participatory processes, but there seemed a sense of the need looking beyond currently used approaches to post-project or post-intervention realities.

4. Strategy

Coherence among mission, strategy and programme is quite clear within the confines of each as they currently articulated and practiced. In fact, one might semifacetiously suggest that there may be too close a cohesion due to the confines in which these three elements now exist, i.e., that they are too tightly circumscribed. A parallel issue is whether there exist: 1) other facets of the Foundation's mission that are not captured in the current mission statement (see Mission and Objectives just above); 2) broader strategic elements than those now in use might be integrated into the strategic plan; 3) new programme initiatives that might come from a broader reconsideration of mission and strategy. Proposing this approach to the issue of coherence does not put into question the current mission-strategy-programme links; rather it suggests that more tools and techniques may be available than are now in use for realizing the mission and optimizing the strategic elements.

In considering the programmatic implication of the third strategic axis, that of training and diffusion of participatory methodologies, there appears to be an important opportunity for WARF.
This is the opportunity to take a leadership role in convening the practitioners of this field to share recent progress in application, promote high standards of training and use of these methodologies, and contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge in this area.

The strategic plan of WARF could benefit by integrating several of the themes that are now only loosely related to it, in particular those of natural resource management as a top priority for survival of rural society, and enlargement of civil society in terms of local governance both within rural society and at the interface of rural society and the State. Obviously, these two general themes have broad overlap, as enhanced user-based management of natural resources is one of the keys to positive environmental action. This thematic approach would also address the unmet potential for WARF to become more of a Learning Organization -- to make larger contributions to the body of public knowledge and practice as an integral element of its strategy.

One way to do this would be for the Foundation to take a proactive role in defining and proposing a specific programme focus area. This might involve selecting a central topic in rural society that might benefit from more intensive attention, commissioning papers on the topic, putting out a call for concept papers, convening a seminar of interested parties, and then creating a thematic programme using WARF's resources of grants, technical assistance, workshops, and publications to generate both ground-level impacts and new knowledge on how to work effectively within the selected thematic area.

5. The Board of Governors

The WARF Board has struggled hard to establish itself under difficult and trying circumstances. They have respected the requirements of the Constitution and followed accepted procedures for institutions of this nature. With little or no first-hand experience serving on a self-appointed Board, much less starting one from scratch, these busy professionals have lent credibility to the Foundation. Despite certain difficulties between Management and Board, the Director shares credit for the founding of this independent entity, having assisted in its recruitment.

There are areas where the Board could improve its performance. Visits to project sites and participation on Foundation programme events would both increase familiarity with grassroots activities and realities, and enhance the Governors' credibility with WARF staff and Management. The aborted Board meeting in rural Mali was an excellent initiative in this regard, but opportunities for Governors to visit projects individually should also be a priority.

Three more Governors can be added before the maximum is reached. While this larger number could somewhat complicate communications, it would add both talent and fresh perspectives, and spread out some of the Board responsibilities among more people. The level of financial oversight achieved in less than three years represents a major accomplishment for this fledgling institution. Nonetheless, the Board needs to continue its involvement with the internal financial controls, auditing, budgeting and other fiscal activities until they are handled to the Board's satisfaction.

Expectations for Board involvement in international fund raising may be unrealistically high. Not only is this a very time-consuming activity, but several Governors said they simply do not feel they have talents in this area. This may not be the best use of Governors' limited availability. What
is realistic and necessary is to elicit Governors' support and carefully timed involvement in fund raising efforts within their country of residence. In this milieu, their reputations, their knowledge of the terrain, and their networks of contacts can be best put to use to increase WARF's visibility and generate new resources. Board members also need to become directly involved in coordinated public relations activities, as discussed in the sections of this evaluation report that deal with Information and Communication.

The Ford Foundation's first attempt at Technical Assistance to the Board ended in disappointment. It seems the heavy-handed tactics of the consultants prevented them from accomplishing their mission. Adequate ground rules were not established and respected for this sensitive intervention, although this should not have been a handicap for seasoned professionals. Learning from this experience, the Board should now take a proactive role in defining the terms and content of Technical Assistance that it wants from the Ford Foundation or any other outside source, and in managing the process.

The Board does not have adequate resources to carry out its tasks in the context of a multi-country, emerging institution. The lack of communications resources is an obvious impairment to Board functioning. Particularly the audit committee, but also the Board as a whole is in need of some technical and secretarial services. By their nature and subject, these services should not always be provided only by the WARF staff. This is an issue of independence, efficiency and effectiveness.

While the Board has at times agonized over its relationship with WARF Management, and apparently spent disproportionate amounts of its limited meeting time dealing with issues arising from this relationship, the Board does not have a methodical approach to this situation. Beyond oral arguments, there is no agreed system of calibrated responses short of dismissal, for formally registering their demands of Management and indicating the consequences of non-compliance. Specific methods to resolve Board/Management issues might help the Board express its decisions with more precision, and give all parties better clarity on the course of action required.

6. Structural elements

The classic division of responsibilities among Board, Management and Personnel are appropriate to the Foundation's mandate. Inevitable and often positive tensions among these power centers exist in any such organization, as each element takes ownership for itself. Personnel, Management and Board are involved in very different ways with the same mission. There needs to be appreciation of the importance of each element's distinct contribution, and means of mutually valuing these contributions while respecting the checks and balances required for the system to function properly. The challenge is to understand and respect each other's synergistic roles and contributions: stewardship and governance by the Board, supervision and leadership by Management, administration and programme implementation by Personnel.

Of the three elements to the tripartite structure of WARF, it appears that the Board has the best grasp of how these elements are meant to interact in a mutually reinforcing manner. This does not mean that the Board always meets its obligations in this regard; rather that they have the more clear and comprehensive vision of how the Foundation structure should work. The staff seem to have unrealistic expectations concerning levels of Board time and energy for strategic planning and involvement in activities during this first few years of WARF existence. At the same time, staff and
Management express concern that the Board is too preoccupied with control and its own decision making. It may be worth reminding WARF staff that as salaried personnel they reflect, analyze and generally work on WARF activities approximately 20 to 30 times as many days per year as do unpaid volunteer Board members. The intensity of effort and involvement cannot be compared; on the other hand, the relative detachment of the Board and its self-perpetuating nature lend continuity and strengths to the institution that are not yet apparent to all concerned.

Tension exists between the Board, particularly certain members of the Board, and WARF Management with which neither side is comfortable. Partly this is historical, in that the Board was created with considerable assistance of the Director whom it must now oversee, evaluate and correct when needed. Partly it appears to be due to conflicting interpretations of appropriate level of authority the Director may exercise and the action space he may occupy, i.e., the scope and nature of discretionary decision making. This in turn is partly due to the dual role of the Director as both chief executive officer of WARF and a full Governor, i.e., holding both portfolios in a young institution whose modus operandi is evolving rapidly. Finally, the tension results in part from a forceful, articulate personality and leadership style that some on the Governors do not accept easily.

This situation, which has persisted since the first Board meeting, has the risk of creating an imbalance in the equilibrium of the Foundation. The Board does not feel that it has the freedom and independence it requires vis-a-vis Management. This can and should be addressed as a structural issue, for which a corrective action is needed to redress the perceived imbalance.

All would agree that Board members must find ways to become more conversant with the ground-level realities of the Foundation's work, and with that knowledge, contribute more to strategic thinking. That will come with time if all sides continue to work on initiatives like the proposed meeting in rural Mali. It would be erroneous to fault the Board for concentrating on establishing, exercising and refining its tools and techniques for stewardship. This is its core mandate; it must take priority in this initial period of the Foundation's existence.

The Board also seems well grounded in the desire to maintain a balance of power between itself and the Director. Although the best levers for dealing with this difficult issue have been illusive, the Governors have given it a lot of thought and have identified it as a major challenge. So, indeed, has Management, who seems increasingly cognizant of the need to find a more workable accommodation with his fellow Governors. Efforts to re-balance this power relationship must be the basis of a fundamental fact of institutional life: the Board is the supreme authority. It must be empowered to pay that role. This is not so much a question of which party is right or wrong rather than a process of building clearer consensus among all concerned.

The flat internal structure of WARF may have been appropriate during the early days of the Foundation's development, allowing for a very close working relationship among staff members and the Director. With the intensive level of teamwork everyone came to a shared understand of what WARF does and how. Now this is a luxury the Foundation cannot afford, and to a large extent no longer needs. Its negative aspects include the lack of promotion opportunities and responsibility building among staff, and inadequate time on the Director's schedule to deal with his other priorities.
Even with a well structured internal organization, the Management makes or breaks the Foundation. Of the three structural elements in this tripartite system, it is the Director who is now called upon by his colleagues to make the biggest adjustments:

* to share responsibility and authority more willingly with Board and staff,
* to manage WARF affairs more openly,
* to exercise leadership more democratically.

7. Human Resources

Despite wide-spread concern by staff, Director and some Governors, no overt sign was found that any WARF personnel are not secure in their employment, or are actively seeking new opportunities. This concern for 'securing' personnel reflects the widely-held value placed on permanent employment harking back to the time when most jobs at this level were with the government in the civil service mode of assured employment. This is less and less the norm, certainly with massive retrenchment programmes in government, but also in non-profits and the private sector which have always been less secure positions.

There is a possibility that some international agency may poach WARF personnel with offers of higher salaries and easier conditions: it may happen at any time. The only real hedge against such a possibility is to provide meaningful, intellectually satisfying work in a collegial atmosphere, and devise low-cost incentives to keep personnel content at WARF, i.e., career counseling, training and other self-improvement opportunities and recognition and rewards according to personnel's expressed preferences. Development of an institution structure with mid-level management positions would also create the incentive of promotions which is now lacking.

A thorough, individualized staff performance review systems is in place. Evaluation procedures and other areas of WARF management do not follow most of the fundamental principles of TQM, as called for in the Procedures Manual. WARF Management is aware of weaknesses in this regard, and expressed the need for assistance developing and using indicators and finding ways to integrate the 'customer-driven' concepts of TQM.

While the application of TQM to WARF may not be immediately obvious, it carries some fascinating possibilities when coupled with the Foundation's philosophy of participation, partnership and local organization enhancement. To date WARF has not used the terminology of 'clients' or 'customers'. The exercise of envisioning WARF's target groups as 'effective demanders' of WARF resources would sharpen its marketing strategy and could lead to new programme initiatives.

WARF is not in dire need of additional personnel on the programme side, even though people there are working hard and sometimes feel stressed by the level of travel demanded. Consultants can help out in times of heavy programming; the increase in monitoring chores for a portfolio of on-going programme grants would seem to be balanced somewhat with reduced levels of new programme development. The "poles" system has apparently helped organize the programme functions, but the lack of administrative authority for the 'tetes de pole' within WARF's flat management limits the system's effectiveness.
Consultants provide WARF with a cost-effective alternative to expanding full time staff, despite the lack of security on both sides. It may be possible to secure use of key consultants in the network with continual contracts for a certain number of days per month or per quarter, as already the practice in some cases. Irregularities in following written procedures is an area for administrative improvement.

WARF does seem to need a new senior level person in Administration and Finance. This person would allow for a separation of administration from financial controller functions (see General and Financial Management section), and pick up a variety of administrative tasks not currently well tended. Exactly how this new person would fit in and what her/his tasks might be will depend on the new internal structure developed by WARF.

While WARF has adequate gender balance among its personnel, its staff is totally Senegalese by nationality. This imbalance distracts from its image as a regional institution. Recruiting nationals from other countries in the WARF service area may be more difficult and costly for a Dakar-based institution than hiring Senegalese, but it is indispensable for its aspiration to become a regional presence service rural society in five countries.

8. General and Financial Management

At this point in its young existence WARF needs to take extra pains to assure that its claims to rigor and transparency are, in fact, above anyone's reproach. Despite hard work on the part of Management, staff and Board, this level of performance has not yet been attained. This conclusion does not indicate that there are overwhelming problems, though some do exist; rather it is a reminder that WARF has set high standards for itself and must continue to strive to reach them.

The external audits have not managed to penetrate beyond the most obvious questions of financial accounting. They have not looked in detail at resource use by WARF's grant recipients, nor at internal regulations and their application. The possible need for remedial action in the latter is demonstrated by spot checks of evaluators into competitive sourcing and consultant contracting practices.

The freedom of the Comptroller to act as an internal check on financial decisions of the Director may exist in principle but is not exercised in fact. Ways must be found to activate this kind of mutual oversight relationship.

The Director is too immersed in details of daily administration and programme work, which is not the highest use of his time or talents. This is due partly to regulations in the Procedures Manual, and partly to his personal preference for involvement in all aspects of WARF's work. The result is less time for Management tasks like fund raising and Board relations.

The conservative stance of the Board on the issue of budgeting is appropriate for WARF at this stage of its growth. Until clear patterns in new fundraising emerge, and better projections of new resources can be made, it is wise to do financial planning with funds on hand. In today's shrinking foreign aid environment it could be very risky to make new engagements based only on promising conversations or the encouragement of donor representatives unless commitments are in writing.
Without a thorough study of WARF's fund raising efforts, firm conclusions cannot be drawn about capacities in this area. The Director did indicate the need for assistance but did not specify the type.

C. Recommendations

1. Recommendations on Institutional Matters
   a. Constitution

   It is recommended that:

   * The Constitution be amended to reflect the new reality of the Treasurer position and the other changes. The adjustments are straightforward and could be done by the Legal Committee without the expense of outside assistance, or perhaps with minimal assistance. This is not a top priority, but it should be done along with any other changes resulting from decisions taken after this evaluation.

   * WARF consider re-drafting the "Five-year Strategic Plan"; either by doing a 'rolling' design for the next five year plan, 1997-2001, or adopting a different planning horizon and approach. This decision should be part of the marketing plan proposed below.

   * WARF Management and staff prepare a draft of needed changes in the Procedures Manual for Board concurrence.

   b. Mission

   It is recommended that:

   * That WARF re-draft its mission statement as part of an overall institutional manifesto that articulates principles, objectives and programme strategy. Participatory methodologies should be appropriately integrated into this ensemble, but perhaps not at the level of the mission itself. This revised statement can become part of a comprehensive marketing package. Ideally this up-dated manifesto will explain the relevance and relationships of primary WARF concerns like environmental degradation and civil governance, and would make better use of the Foundation's five-country regional scope.

   c. Strategy

   It is recommended that:

   * The annual strategic and operation planning exercise and the annual budgeting exercise by synchronized. At present they occur at different times of the year.

   * WARF consider ways to compile and disseminate the learning generated by its programme activities, and explicitly identify itself as a Learning Organization in its objectives or philosophy statement.
The Foundation consider developing thematic programmes that focus its resources on key problems of rural society in order to produce higher levels of impact.

d. Board of Governors

It is recommended that:

* The frequency of Board meetings be increased to three times per year, at least for a few years as the Board consolidates itself.

* The Board hold at least one meeting per year outside of Dakar, and have that meeting become an occasion for Board learning about WARF programme activities in the area where it is being held.

* That Ford Foundation renew its Technical Assistance funding for Board strengthening and other services, under active Board supervision.

* That a new post of Assistant to the Board be created to facilitate Board communications and involvement in WARF activities. The full time Assistant, responsible directly to the Board President, would have an office at WARF in Dakar. Possible tasks include accelerating communications among Board members; managing the Board budget; helping plan and convene Board and committee meetings, including preparation of agendas with Board inputs and approval; follow-up on recommendations made at Board meetings; help arrange Board members' visits to WARF programme activities and partners' projects; and assist the Governors in playing their full role in the life of the Foundation.

* On-site technical assistance of about 25 days per year in financial management advice be available directly to the Audit committee, both to handle the audit process and to review the monthly financial statements.

* The Board's budget be increased to permit needed improvements in communications and movement by Governors. An initial investment in setting up an electronic mail network among the Governors, as Management and staff now use effectively, would pay off handsomely in improved governance and Board involvement.

* The Board set up a Fund Raising committee as called for in the By Laws and use this committee to review the Foundation's development of a comprehensive marketing plan, and to monitor and support WARF fund raising efforts.

* To face squarely the continuing tensions the Management, the Board should clarify the limits of Management decision-making discretion, particularly in the area of expenditures where differences have occurred most frequently; and that the Board indicate the repercussions of non-compliance in an unambiguous manner.
e. Structural elements

It is recommended that:

* WARF develop a formal internal structure that will give more authority and responsibility to programme and administrative personnel while simultaneously freeing up the Director from micro-management tasks to concentrate on his other activities. As noted in the Human Resources section of this report, WARF may require the addition of one senior position.

* The WARF staff be given orientation to the tripartite structure and their role in it, so that they perceive their assistance to the Board as an integral part of their tasks, and not as an extra added burden that is not their real job.

* WARF develop a formal internal structure that will give more authority and responsibility to programme and administrative personnel while simultaneously freeing up the Director from micro-management tasks to concentrate on his other activities. As noted in the Human Resources section of this report, WARF may require the addition of one senior position.

The following two recommendations follow on the conclusion that there exists a disequilibrium within the Foundation's tripartite system, and that this disequilibrium needs to be redressed. This is especially true for the relationship between the Board and the Director. It is recommended that:

* During Board general meetings and Board committee meetings, the Director should formally and systematically remove himself from active participation and partisan promotion in discussions that treat a proposal (written or oral), contract, plan, budget or other document which the Director or other WARF staff members have presented. The Director's role in such discussions, and indeed in all Board deliberations and in communications with the Governors, is primarily that of a high-level resource person: readily available to provide background information, advice and other inputs when so requested by the President or other presiding Governors.

* The Board should consider the option of amending the Constitution to make the Director an ex-officio member of the Board, rather than the Director being a full Governor as is the current situation. Ex-officio status on the Board of Trustees for the Director. Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer is used for certain kinds of organizations, especially where the need to delineate and respect distinct spheres of authority is strong. Such an amendment, however, is not the best means to resolve issues of personal management style, and should be taken only if the Board feels the long term need to structurally alter this relationship.

f. Human Resources

It is recommended that:

* Hiring of new staff take into account the disequilibrium among nationalities and that WARF recruit personnel that are nationals of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia, and Mali.
WARF develop a new internal structure, formally delegating much of the responsibility and authority now held by the Director to mid-level managers; the configuration should be designed by Management in consultation with the staff, and implemented with concurrence from the Board. One option: two major divisions, Finance/Administration and Programme, each with their own division Manager, plus a two-person Management division.

WARF help professional staff members with individual career planning, and work out an affordable incentives scheme as a means of assuring the staff's continued service at WARF for as long as is mutually beneficial.

WARF secure technical assistance to explore the potential for developing the customer-oriented institutional culture described by the Total Quality management (TQM) system, both in terms of the Foundation's internal workings, motivations, etc., and to develop the effective demand for its 'products' in a way that makes it more demand driven.

The Director sharply curtail his involvement in daily management decisions and concentrate most of his time on a smaller number of top priority tasks. Several that seem of prime importance are: fund raising including development of a thorough marketing plan; re-defining and re-establishing a positive relationship between Board and Director; engineering the Foundation's re-structuring; and improving donor relationships.

WARF establish clearer procedures for certifying completion of consultants' assignments prior to payment; and that Management adhere strictly to WARF's personnel policies dealing with consultants.

**g. General and Financial Management**

It is recommended that:

WARF needs to be more rigorous in application of its requirements for competitive invoices from various suppliers. At a minimum, WARF needs to document the logic for not seeking competitive pro forma invoices from repeat suppliers.

A thorough external review in the form of a management audit be conducted to study the compliance with WARF procedures and to recommend ways of making those procedures more effective in promotion transparency without impairing efficient functioning of the Foundation. If necessary, auditors from outside the region should be used if local ones are unable to carry out a performance audit that goes far beyond financial record keeping.

WARF develop a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Foundation, which would include: revisiting all of its written statements from mission on down to programme description; defining WARF's market niche; developing a more attractive image for the Foundation; integrating this with an Information and Communications package (as recommended in the Information and Communication portion of this report) that pulls together brochures, letterhead, new company logo, and all other public relations materials into a unified whole.
A new senior position be created dealing with finance and administration. This would greatly lighten the load of the Director, provide separation of management and controller functions, allow WARF to address some neglected areas like personnel management, and in general sharpen WARF's management profile in terms of transparency and overall competence.

Under this new senior position for finance and administration, the controller be empowered to play the role of internal review on Management's financial decisions rather than simply implementing these directives. This independence should be enshrined in the controller's terms of reference.

Management be given Technical Assistance in the crucial area of fund raising.
MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE
WEST AFRICA RURAL FOUNDATION (WARF)

SECTION II

COMPONENT: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM
(Yayo Assigbley, MBSI)
TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY ........................................................................................................................ iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ............................................................................................... iv

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY ............................................................................... 1

1. ANALYSIS OF THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM ........ 2
   1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM .... 2
       1.1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE LIBRARY .......... 2
       1.1.2 Analysis of the current status of the archives .............................. 5
       1.1.3 Analysis of publications ............................................................. 6
   1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM .................................. 7
       1.2.1 Analysis of internal communication ........................................... 7
       1.2.2 Analysis of external communication .......................................... 9

2. CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION .. 12
   2.1 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE LIBRARY ................................................................. 12
   2.2 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE ARCHIVES ................................................................. 13
   2.3 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS ......... 13
   2.4 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ................................................................................................. 14
   2.5 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION ............................................................................................. 15

3. DIAGNOSIS OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS ......................................................... 16
   3.1 STRENGTHS ......................................................................................... 16
   3.2 WEAKNESSES ..................................................................................... 16
   3.3 OPPORTUNITIES ................................................................................... 18
   3.4 THREATS .............................................................................................. 18

4. RECOMMENDATIONS ......................................................................................... 19
   4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE LIBRARY .......................... 19
   4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE ARCHIVES ....................... 20
   4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PUBLICATIONS ....................... 20
   4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION .... 21
   4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION ... 21
   4.6 SPECIAL RECOMMENDATION .............................................................. 22
5. POSSIBLE STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS .... 22

5.1 ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE SHORT TERM (1-3 MONTHS) ............................................................... 22

5.2 ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE MEDIUM TERM (3-12 MONTHS) ............................................................... 23

5.3 ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE LONG TERM (12-36 MONTHS) ............................................................... 23
SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the midterm evaluation of the WARF information and communication system. The evaluation focused on the main elements of the system, i.e., the library, archives, publications, internal and external communication, and identified a certain number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The strengths, of which the most important are the highly motivated staff, the excellent interpersonal relations and the existence of appropriate information and communication technologies, represent significant assets for WARF and should be further consolidated in order to take full advantage of them. The weaknesses, which include insufficient exchanges with other parties (Board of Governors, partners/clients, researchers and research institutions, NGOs, donor agencies, government structures, etc.), call for appropriate solutions that will enhance the credibility and visibility of WARF and affirm its position within the institutional framework of the subregion.

The most significant opportunity lies in the favorable stance of donor agencies and, in particular, their openness to providing support for information and communication activities. Thus, the climate is right for WARF to give renewed impetus to its activities. With respect to the risks now facing WARF and its future role, the greatest threat appears to be the existence of competition with other NGOs that are active in grass roots development and/or the use of participatory methods.

Many recommendations, including one special recommendation, were formulated to assist WARF in the development and implementation of an integrated information, communication and marketing plan.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to express our indebtedness and gratitude to the director and staff of WARF for their warm welcome and, in particular, the spirit of openness and participation that they displayed during the entire evaluation mission in responding to our numerous questions and requests. To the members of the Board of Governors with whom we were able to meet, we send our sincere thanks for facilitating our work by granting valuable interviews.

We also wish to thank the representatives of donor agencies (IDRC, Ford Foundation, CIDA, World Bank, NOVIB) who agreed to meet with us and share their opinions and perceptions of their relationship with WARF.

Finally, we extend our thanks to all the partners/clients, researchers, members of the research results user committees, consultants and other individuals with whom we met. Without the cooperation and assistance of all these persons, we would not have been able to successfully complete our mission.
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this evaluation included the following steps:

**Data collection**

Data collection was based in part on a documentary approach, which involved examining various documents from internal secondary sources, either produced or received by WARF in connection with the implementation of its activities.

In this respect, we analyzed a variety of documents, including progress reports, the five year strategic plan, IDRC and Ford Foundation project papers, the procedures manual, the products, services and programs, documents from strategic planning workshops and meetings of the strategic planning committee, reports on activities, seminars, training programs and workshops, the articles of association and bylaws, the organizational chart, reports from consultants, etc.

In addition, we collected data through interviews that were based on semi-structured questions. Interviews were conducted with the following groups:

- WARF staff (director, comptroller, accountant, executive assistant, managers, program officers and assistants, consultants, support staff, etc.);
- members of the Board of Governors;
- representatives of donor agencies (IDRC, Ford Foundation, World Bank, CIDA, NOVIB);
- partners/clients, researchers and research institutions;
- NGO partners in the subregion and other competitors.

**Subsequent steps of the methodology**

These included:

- processing and analysis of the data collected;
- preparation of the preliminary report;
- submission of the preliminary report;
- end-of-mission report: presentation of the conclusions of the evaluation to stakeholders (WARF officials, beneficiaries and donor agencies);
- preparation of the final report;
- submission of the final report.
1. ANALYSIS OF THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Evaluation of the current status of the information system focused on the three types of information managed by WARF. These include:

- scientific and technical information managed by the library;

- administrative information produced and/or received, of a semi-active or inactive nature, managed by the archives;

- administrative information produced and/or received, of an active nature, generally incorporated into the decision-making process and managed by the various organizational units (executive secretariat, office of the accountant and the comptroller, program office).

1.1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE LIBRARY

To support its activities, WARF set up a library when the foundation was established in 1990 to manage scientific and technical information. The library was placed under the responsibility of a secretary/program assistant, supported by a driver, and was reorganized by a consultant in November and December 1995 with a view to facilitating staff access to the scientific and technical information stored therein.

Analysis of the current status of the library included the following elements:

1.1.1.1 Analysis of the documentary products

The range of documentary products of the library is very limited. It basically includes:

- **Collection of documents**

The library's collection covers various fields, such as participatory methods, the management of nonprofit organizations, natural resources management, land management, rural extension work, fundraising, institutional strengthening, sustainable development, etc. It consists of:

- 850 works (monographs and reference documents);

- 38 WARF publications (methodological guides and manuals, seminar and DP training program reports, etc.);

- 22 maps and charts;

- 48 audiovisual documents (audio and video cassettes);

- 95 periodicals, of which 50 are received regularly.
The documents in the collection are relevant to the fields covered by WARF activities, but the collection remains very weak as regards nonconventional documents on the five target countries and reference documents (dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.).

- **Data bases**

The library was organized in accordance with manual principles when it was set up, and the task of computerizing its activities was begun some eight months ago. Computerization represents a large step forward in facilitating access to scientific and technical information. According to the report submitted by the consultant responsible for reorganizing the system, computerization has made it possible to create and manage three data bases (BFRAO, INST, SARAN) with the help of CDS/ISIS software, version 3.07/1993. However, at the time the evaluation was conducted, only the bibliographical data base BFRAO was functional. The INST data base, which is supposed to contain information on partner institutions, has not yet been installed. The configurations of the SARAN data base, which concerns fundraising, have been developed and installed in the computer of the executive assistant, however no information has been recorded to date.

The BFRAO bibliographical data base is bilingual and contains approximately 894 references to monographs, reference works and WARF publications. With the help of an in-house thesaurus, documents in French and Portuguese are entered in French, those in English are entered in English, while those in English and French are entered in both languages. This method of organizing the data base provides Anglophones with good access to the stored information but may create some information retrieval problems for bilingual persons if they are not properly informed. In addition, the data base is incomplete because it does not yet contain references to articles in periodicals, which decreases the opportunities for staff access to current information provided by periodicals.

1.1.1.2 Documentary services

The library offers only very few services to its users. These services include:

- **photocopies of summaries:** for each new document added to the library, a photocopy of the summary page is distributed to all professional staff;

- **consulting the bibliographical data base:** this is currently possible from a single work station set up in the library as the data base is not yet connected to the local network;

- **lending:** the lending of documents is solely reserved for WARF professional staff and consultants.

But for a specialized library such as the WARF library, the two indispensable documentary services that should be provided in order to make current and pertinent information available to professional staff are the selective distribution of information (diffusion sélective d'information: DSI) and a question and answer service (service questions-réponses: SQR).
1.1.1.3 Organizational system of the library

- **Processing of documents**

Using a macrothesaurus and an in-house thesaurus on participatory diagnosis (some 66 terms in English and French), the monographs have been indexed and the bibliographical references entered into the BFRAO data base. For WARF and the Board of Directors, creating a thesaurus on participatory methods is a major priority in order to target documentary research more effectively. At the present time, the in-house thesaurus is still at an embryonic stage of development and cannot fulfill its expected role. Nevertheless, it is destined to be constantly enriched with new terms as documents are indexed. In the meantime, it might be appropriate to contact international organizations such as the World Bank and ETC in search of specialized word lists on the subject in order to harmonize the terminology.

The current processing of documents could be improved through executive summaries, which would make managers and program officers aware of the content of the documents when they consult the data base.

- **Classification system**

The system adopted involves sequential classification. In this easy-to-use system, each document receives an alphanumerical classification which is a combination of the sequential number automatically generated by the CDS/ISIS software and an index, either M for monographs, F for WARF (FRAO) publications or REF for reference works. With this system, in principle all documents should be arranged sequentially, one after the other, along the shelves. But we noted that the monographs are arranged separately on two shelves, reference works on another and WARF publications on a fourth. This physical arrangement means that one wouldn't know whether a document missing on the shelves was out on loan, or was a reference work or perhaps a WARF publication. To determine which, it would be necessary to consult the record of works out on loan and check the FRAO publication and reference works shelves. In a small library, this system might suffice for awhile but, since the WARF library is bound to grow, it would be better to arrange all documents in sequential order along the shelves. This would mean dropping the F and REF indexes and applying the M index to all books, whether monographs, reference works or WARF publications.

1.1.1.4 Library resources

- **Financial resources**

Expenditures for document purchases came to CFAF 1,394,045 for the first year and CFAF 716,538 for year 2. The budget estimate for year 3 was CFAF 316,000. A quick comparison of these three amounts shows a gradual decrease in the documentation budget. This matter should be revisited and the budget should be substantially increased, because many needs in the area of documentation were expressed during interviews with the professional staff.

- **Human resources**
The library staff is currently limited to one secretary/program assistant. As she is often inundated by her own work, she can only partially tend to the activities of the library. In addition, since she is not a professional, there are limits to her ability to accomplish certain activities such as indexing, thesaurus enrichment, creating and managing data bases, examining periodicals, executive summaries of documents, selective distribution of information and organizing a question and answer service.

- **Physical and technological resources**

With respect to physical resources, the library occupies an air-conditioned, ground-floor facility and contains four shelves that are already very full, a small display unit for periodicals and a 386 microcomputer. For the moment, these resources are adequate, however it will soon be necessary to augment them by purchasing new shelves, a larger display unit and a more powerful computer.

1.1.2 Analysis of the current status of the archives

The classification and processing system set up for managing administrative information dates back to the PRAAP period. Under this system, the active, semi-active and inactive archives are dispersed among various structures (executive secretariat, office of the accountant and the comptroller, program office). As the activities and operational units have evolved, however, this system for managing administrative information was soon overwhelmed and no longer fits the needs of agents. As a result, serious problems in the classification of files and rapid retrieval of information have arisen.

To remedy this situation, a consultant was hired to propose a new system for classifying and managing all the archives produced and/or received by WARF. This activity was initiated in the month of May and was still in progress at the time of the evaluation mission. Nevertheless, a portion of the archives related to partner institutions has already been processed and classified in the main room of the library. The files on donor agencies have been processed and classified in the office of the executive assistant. Another portion of the archives has been processed, organized and classified in archive boxes set up in the entrance hall.

With this method of organization, which involves storing the archives in different places based on the old classification plan, it should be noted that there is no way to efficiently solve the problem that has arisen at WARF concerning rapid access to administrative information. To begin to solve the problem, the reorganization effort should be accompanied by the following steps:

- an institutional analysis to define the various activities of the different archives;
- a survey of all agents to determine their needs;
- a regrouping of all the archives based on the principle of adherence to funding;
- an inventory and sorting of archives in order to separate active archives from semi-active and inactive archives;
- development of a classification plan that takes the needs of users into account.
Under the new classification plan, active archives will be organized and stored within the organizational structures (executive secretariat, office of the accountant and the comptroller, program office) that frequently need to consult them. The semi-active and inactive files will be organized and stored together in the main room of the library.

1.1.3 Analysis of publications

The primary stated objective of the publications program is to "produce, disseminate and circulate information that will shape public opinion and encourage attitudes and behaviors on the part of all stakeholders in the rural sector in furtherance of the foundation's mission." In light of this objective, WARF has published documents that serve not only as training tools but also as tools of institutional communication. The range of publications includes:

1.1.3.1 "L'Atelier" ("The Workshop")

This informational bulletin on participatory methods and tools of research and intervention was supposed to be published three times a year. The three first-year issues were published in French. During the second year, however, only one issue was published in French, English and Portuguese. Since then, the publication has not appeared and it has been virtually replaced by "La Lettre de l'Atelier" ("Letter from the Workshop"). Of quite good quality, it is distributed free of charge to partners/clients, NGOs, researchers and research institutions and some donor agencies. Distribution to government structures is almost nil.

1.1.3.2 "La Lettre de l'Atelier" ("Letter from the Workshop")

The main purpose of this monthly informational bulletin is to circulate, more rapidly than "L'Atelier," information on activities in the field, programs and partners/clients. It also serves as a tool of communication with the latter group and, in particular, with members of the Board of Governors and outsiders. The first three issues were published in January, February and March 1996. The following issues are still awaited. This publication, edited by the PAO service of WARF, is of very average quality. It is distributed free of charge to partners/clients. NGOs, members of the Board of Governors, researchers and research institutions and some donor agencies.

1.1.3.3 Methodological guides and manuals on participatory diagnosis

According to the publications program, two methodological guides or manuals are supposed to be published each year. At the time of the evaluation mission, however, we saw only "Manuel de l'animateur sur le diagnostic participatif" ("The Extension Worker's Manual on Participatory Diagnosis") and "Les Astuces et aides mémoires pour les participants d'un atelier" ("Hints and Reminders for Workshop Participants"). These two manuals, which are not published by WARF directly but rather by PRAAP, currently represent the most important basic documents among the range of publications on participatory diagnosis. They are of very good quality and are the best selling titles, accounting for more than two thirds of total receipts from publication sales.

The other DP and DPT manuals and guides were not produced directly by WARF either. WARF was only responsible for their translation (into either French or Portuguese) and publication. They are of average quality and are sold or provided free of charge.
1.1.3.4 Annual training program and regional seminar reports

These are the only documents that WARF has actually published on the participatory methodology. These paperback reports are not of very high quality. The pictures and photos are blurred and the presentation is not very appealing. They are only distributed to individuals who participated in the various meetings because their content is limited to reports on the proceedings of the training programs and seminars.

1.1.3.5 Annual progress reports

These are published in a traditional paperback format. Distribution is limited. As a public relations and promotional tool, these reports should be published right at the end of each fiscal year in an appealing format and widely distributed to partners/clients, NGOs, research institutions, political and administrative structures in West Africa and potential donor agencies.

1.1.3.6 Prospectus and introductory brochure

These are very important publications from a public relations and promotional point of view. Accordingly, their presentation should be carefully designed to present a credible image of WARF. The current prospectus does not meet this description as it is produced on ordinary paper. It is not particularly appealing. The brochure is more or less well presented on glossy paper, but its quality could be further improved, for example by printing inside photos in color.

1.1.3.7 Films

Four films on participatory diagnosis and the annual training programs have been made. These are excellent training and promotional tools for explaining the participatory methodology dispensed by WARF. But the films are of very average quality and fall well short of reaching the objectives for which they were produced. Indeed, at a total cost of CFAF 17,367,825, they contain many sequences and images that are not very clear and that often flicker during presentations. In addition, the number of copies appears to be somewhat high in relation to actual needs since only a minuscule number are distributed free of charge.

1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The communication system comprises two main elements: internal and external communication.

1.2.1 Analysis of internal communication

1.2.1.1 Flow of information among staff members

Information flow is the basis of all effective internal communication. The flow of information within WARF is more or less fluid and occurs among and between all members of the staff through various channels:

- briefs, circulars, memos, visitor records and service records;
- field trip reports, partner reports;
- workshops, weekly planning meetings, pipeline meetings;
- skill areas;
- program visits and exposés;
- wrap-up reports, studies, financial and audit reports, self-evaluation reports;
- strategic planning workshops.

Through these traditional channels, the flow of information has encountered certain problems, which the most recent strategic planning workshop expressed in the following terms: "But the lack of a systematic framework for data analysis and interpretation, rapid generation of information and selective distribution of information leads to an overabundance of information in certain areas and the underutilization of others and, very frequently, to the delivery of information in a format or frequency that is poorly adapted to the needs of the receiver." These problems have been more or less resolved by installing new information technologies and creating a local e-mail network. In the course of the interviews, staff members indicated to us that the flow of information among various structures has been quite good since the e-mail system was installed. They also indicated that the new system has strengthened the spirit of teamwork and "family."

Nevertheless, some of the interviewees noted that there is still an overabundance of information due to the fact that some recipients receive information that is not useful in performing their tasks. As a result, the distribution of information by e-mail should be closely studied and structured in a way that will ensure that recipients actually receive the information that they require to accomplish their tasks.

1.2.1.2 Flow of information between the Board of Governors and WARF management

Most information circulates between the two bodies through specialized committees and at meetings of the Board of Governors. However, since the board members are spread throughout the five target countries, they receive some information between meetings through "La Lettre de l'Atelier," telecommunication systems (telephone and fax) and DHL. Information is rarely sent by regular mail because it is so slow. Since some of these channels do not function particularly well—for example, "La Lettre de l'Atelier" does not appear on a regular basis and telecommunications between the countries are often defective—the flow of information at this level encounters serious difficulties. Indeed, many board members have complained. on the one hand, that they are not sufficiently well informed about WARF activities between sessions and often lack crucial details regarding the paperwork that they do receive, for example on the budget, and, on the other hand, that they are inundated with undigested information on program activities at board meetings, whereas they would prefer to receive only useful and essential information that would help them assess the relevant aspects of the programs and make appropriate decisions. The board members also stressed that documents are often unavailable on time and in the different languages (English and Portuguese). As a result, they are unable to study the documents before attending meetings.
1.2.1.3 Flow of information between WARF and its partners/clients

Communication with partners/clients and researchers is carried out fairly effectively through various channels, such as workshops, training programs, seminars and "La Lettre de l'Atelier." But here as well, certain problems were identified and analyzed at the strategic workshop held in Saly, Senegal, on November 9 and 10, 1995, which was attended by some WARF partners. The results of this workshop indicate that "many partners have complained about problems of internal and external communication at WARF." According to the partners/clients who attended the workshop (five out of approximately one hundred) and those we met, these problems are often linked to a lack of precise information on training programs, seminars and workshops and their objectives, agenda and methods of payment. Some individuals also cited a lack of organization in the training programs, seminars and workshops and emphasized in particular that often they are not well received at these meetings. Others also mentioned the excessively slow processing of certain aspects of the grant documents, specifically the operations for disbursing funds. In describing their relations with WARF, some partners/clients even stated that WARF sometimes behaves like a "cold donor agency," giving rise to "feelings of frustration" on their part.

1.2.1.4 Analysis of the internal image

The internal image that WARF projects to visitors is quite good because it is quickly apparent that the work ambiance is very favorable. All the staff members appear to be joined in a familial relationship that characterizes their daily interactions. For example, at noon almost all the staff members have lunch together in a fraternal atmosphere. This climate has encouraged a sense of teamwork and the different organizational structures do not appear to be sealed off from one another.

Interpersonal relations are also excellent, and hierarchical differences among and between management staff, professional staff and support staff are barely perceptible. "Superior to subordinate" and "subordinate to superior" relations are not very pronounced because "everything is negotiable" at WARF.

In addition, the notion of a "business culture" is quite well developed among all the staff members, who appear to be highly motivated to perform their work. It is not unusual to see staff members working on week-ends or late into the evening. Their sense of belonging is also well developed, as each individual indicated during the interviews that he or she would be greatly concerned about anything that might reflect poorly on WARF.

1.2.2 Analysis of external communication

As a young organization that embraces the objective of influencing civil society by introducing new participatory methods to help solve the problems of the rural sector, WARF has developed various external communication activities to assert itself and achieve visibility and a solid position within the institutional framework of the subregion. These activities include public relations, promotional work and publicity.
1.2.2.1 Analysis of public relations activities

- **In-house public relations**

One of the first in-house public relations activities is the welcome. The secretary/receptionist welcomes visitors and provides a prospectus and brochure. This in-house greeting is very important in maintaining existing relations and creating new relations. It appears in general to be well organized, although some partners/clients have recently complained that the quality of the welcome has deteriorated.

Also in the area of in-house public relations activities, WARF makes abundant use of the telephone, fax and e-mail by Internet. These three doors to the outside world are indispensable tools and appear to be relatively well utilized. Congestion is rare, particularly as regards the telephone which includes three lines.

- **Public relations through products and services**

Products and services (publications, programs, workshops, seminars and training activities) are key tools for WARF in maintaining relations with partners/clients and the outside world. Other public relations activities are carried out during exploratory and identification missions. These basically consist of presentations concerning WARF, its operations and objectives that are given to public officials, NGOs and farmer associations.

In terms of publications, the annual report remains the primary public relations tool. At the present time, however, it falls well short of filling this role, because it is not presented in an appealing format and is not distributed to the public. From a public relations point of view, the annual report should be a concise publication (a few pages in length) with careful attention to graphics.

Correspondence is another tool utilized by WARF in maintaining its relations with the outside world. To help raise the foundation's visibility, its letterhead stationery should no longer be a simple computer-generated sheet, as is now the case, but printed instead on quality paper with a meaningful logo and an appropriate slogan. The logo should also be printed on everything produced by WARF (envelopes, publications).

- **Relations with partners/clients**

WARF maintains more or less favorable relations with approximately 100 partners/clients through 22 programs financed by the foundation in the five target countries. These relations are maintained through various seminars, workshops and training programs, in addition to field visits. They have also led to a close relationship with researchers and research institutions in Mali (IER), Senegal (ISRA), Gambia (NARI) and Guinea-Bissau (INPA). However, as we noted above, certain problems have arisen with respect to the flow of information and misunderstandings.

- **Relations with the press**

In the area of relations with the press, WARF has not developed any concrete and formal activities in Senegal or the other target countries. Considering that, in today's world, the mass media are a
powerful tool within the grasp of organizations seeking to "sell" their ideas, one can only regret the WARF's inaction in this area. To inform the public about its activities and to enhance its reputation within the institutional framework of the subregion, effective action could be taken to develop good relations with journalists, potentially leading to television and radio broadcasts on efforts to introduce the principles of participatory diagnosis in the rural sector. In addition, articles could be published in various journals (private and public, national and African) on WARF's key role in introducing the participatory methodology to the subregion.

- **Relations with political and administrative authorities**

  Relations between WARF and administrative and political authorities are not very well developed. However, we should make note of certain initiatives in Senegal, during the negotiations concerning the home office accords, and also in Mali. To achieve a substantial degree of visibility from the point of view of government structures, WARF should create and promote a lobbying network to impress influential individuals (ministers, deputies, politicians, businessmen) and administrative decision-makers within the target countries. Within their respective countries, the members of the Board of Governors should act as vectors to create and maintain such relations.

- **Relations with NGOs**

  Relations with NGOs in the subregion that are concerned with the same issues are also not particularly well maintained. In the report on the most recent strategic planning workshop, this observation was expressed in the following terms: "these collaborative relations were not as broad as they might have been to produce a true synergy of operations..." Insofar as WARF is not the only institution working on the participatory methodology and support for grass roots organizations, it could nonetheless play a leading role in developing strategies for collaborating with other NGOs. It could, for example, organize meetings with other NGOs to discuss and exchange experiences on participatory diagnosis. At such meetings, it could also identify those that are its competitors, evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to turn them into allies.

- **Relations with donor agencies**

  With respect to fundraising, it appears that WARF maintains good partnership relations with its two most important current donor agencies (Ford Foundation and IDRC). As regards potential backers, WARF is attempting to establish relations with them in the hope that they will support its activities. In this fashion, more or less fruitful contacts have been made with various bilateral and multilateral sources such as CIDA, NOVIB, CEBEMO, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the International Youth Foundation, TROCAIRE, the World Bank, the EC, USC Canada, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. But these fundraising efforts lack a vigorous and consistent strategy based on specific objectives, which is necessary to achieve concrete results.

1.2.2.2 *Analysis of promotional activities*

Some activities have also been carried out in this area. They consist of presenting WARF and its objectives, products and services through a brochure, a prospectus and films during informational, exploratory and identification missions with partners/clients and also in national and international
forums. Certain promotional activities are also conducted during field visits, training programs, seminars and workshops, as well as in film presentations.

These promotional activities could be supplemented by others in order to solidify WARF's position and publicize its operations. For example, its anniversary could be marked by "open door" events and promotional products could be created (gadgets, calendars, bookmarks, etc.).

1.2.2.3 Analysis of publicity

With respect to publicity, i.e. direct communication with the outside environment through planned, structured messages designed to make WARF's products and services known and to promote their use, it appears that nothing has been done since WARF was created. As we noted above, there has been no television or radio coverage; there also have been virtually no articles and reports in private and public journals in the target countries when significant events have taken place (training programs, seminars, workshops, meetings of the Board of Governors). However, an article on a training program on participatory diagnosis in Gambia was in fact brought to our attention. Publicity could be developed and implemented in the other target countries.

2. CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

In analyzing the status of the information and communication system, a certain number of specific elements emerge that WARF should take into account in order to improve the management and the flow of information, on the one hand, and increase its visibility and solidify its position within the institutional framework of the subregion, on the other.

2.1 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE LIBRARY

Several critical elements should be considered with respect to the library: the operation to computerize library activities, the lack of qualified staff, the absence of two key services for disseminating information and the slight use that is made of documentary products.

The lack of qualified and adequate staffing remains the most important problem. The library is currently managed by a secretary/program assistant who is often inundated with her own responsibilities and can only partially tend to library activities. In addition, since she is not a professional, there are limits to her ability to accomplish certain activities such as indexing, thesaurus enrichment, creating and managing data bases, examining periodicals, executive summaries of documents, selective distribution of information and organizing a question and answer service.

The two key documentary services that the library does not yet offer are the selective distribution of information (diffusion sélective d'information: DSI) and a question and answer service (service questions-réponses: SQR). These are indispensable in order to make current and pertinent information available to professional staff.

Contrary to what members of the professional staff indicated about their regular use of the library during the interview sessions, examination of the record of lending and on-site observations during
the evaluation mission showed that the existing collection of documents appears to be underutilized. To remedy this situation, a policy of collecting information primarily based on the specific needs of the professional staff should be developed.

2.2 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE ARCHIVES

Analysis of the archives indicates that the reorganization efforts now under way are substantially inadequate to provide lasting solutions to the problems encountered by staff members in accessing the administrative information contained in the active, semi-active and inactive archives.

For these reorganization efforts to begin to solve the problem of classification and rapid retrieval of administrative information, the method of approach and intervention will have to be modified.

Initially, an institutional analysis should be conducted to develop knowledge of the various activities, followed by a user survey to identify and assess real needs. Subsequently, all the archives should be regrouped based on the origin of the documents and the foundation should proceed with an inventory and sorting of archives in order to separate active archives from semi-active and inactive archives. Next, a new classification plan that takes the needs of users into account should be developed.

Finally, under the new classification plan, active archives will be organized and classified according to the principle of adherence to funding within the organizational structures that frequently consult them (executive secretariat, office of the accountant and the comptroller, program office). The semi-active and inactive files will also be processed and will be classified together in the main room of the library.

2.3 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS

The first conclusion that we reached is that the range of publications is very limited. Moreover, within this range, very few documents are directly published by WARF itself. The two basic manuals on DP (participatory diagnosis) were published at the time of PRAAP, while the manuals on DPT are translations into French and/or Portuguese of documents already published by other institutions. We also noted the lack of published articles on field work. Since the methodology of participatory diagnosis is still at an experimental stage, WARF should have a systematic policy for disseminating the results of its field research by publishing relevant articles on various experiments and new approaches developed in West Africa in scientific reviews and other outreach publications. This would provide the foundation with visibility and a leadership role through its scientific contributions to the development of participatory methods.

The second conclusion is that the various documents (reports, prospectus, bulletins, films, etc.) published by WARF are not of very high quality from a graphic and design point of view. This is somewhat unfortunate because, on the one hand, these publications have involved considerable expense (see the list of publications and their production costs in the annex) and, on the other hand, one could hardly say that WARF lacks the resources to present attractive publications as a matter of external communications.
We found a total absence of a systematic and consistent policy for disseminating publications. The various groups that should be targeted in this respect were identified in the strategic plan. They include partners/clients, NGOs, researchers and research institutions, trainers and farmer associations, government structures and donor agencies. In examining the mailing list and the summary of sales, however, we found that these target groups are only partially reached by efforts to disseminate the publications. Only the bulletin "L'Atelier," which has since become "La Lettre de l'Atelier," is disseminated to partners/clients and some NGOs, researchers and research institutions, and donor agencies. Reports on training programs and seminars are solely distributed to the participants and some partner institutions. Very few researchers and government structures have received publications, which is indicative of the weak impact of the methodology of participatory diagnosis on this category of stakeholders in the rural sector. If a consistent dissemination policy were developed and maintained through marketing efforts, these publications would no doubt raise WARF's visibility in spite of their small number. The lack of a dissemination policy is described as follows in the report on the most recent strategic planning workshop: "with only very few exceptions (DP manual, "La Lettre de l'Atelier"), dissemination efforts are not consistent with a clear strategy, rooted in the analysis and identification of the various target groups of publications, necessary for achieving specific, measurable objectives in terms of communication and position."

WARF is of course a very young institution and its activities are still at an early stage. Nevertheless, with a consistent strategy for disseminating and selling its publications, it could already, at this stage of its development, significantly influence civil society.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

With respect to internal communication, we found that the work ambiance at WARF is good and that hierarchical differences are barely perceptible. In addition, information circulates quite well among staff members due to the installation of information technologies and, in particular, an e-mail system operating through a local network. However, the same cannot be said of communication with members of the Board of Governors and with partners/clients.

Between WARF and members of the Board of Governors, information circulates fairly well during sessions of specialized committees and meetings of the Board. But problems arise in the interim. Since the members of the Board are spread throughout the five target countries, information reaches them with some difficulty, either through "La Lettre de l'Atelier" or through telecommunications (telephone, fax) and DHL. The difficulties arise from the inadequacies of these channels. As a result, several members of the Board lack information on WARF activities between sessions.

With respect to communication between WARF and its partners/clients, difficulties are encountered as a result of a lack of precise information on training programs, seminars and workshops, their objectives, their agenda and the methods of payment. The slowness in disbursing funds creates an additional difficulty.
2.5 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The most important observation is that WARF does not yet possess a consistent policy of external communication. The few activities that have been carried out have been sporadic in nature and have not been linked to specific objectives or part of a communications program designed to promote the organization's visibility. As a result, knowledge of WARF activities within the subregion is limited. WARF is in fact well known by its partners/clients and in the villages where it is active, as well as among certain NGOs and research institutions, plus the donor agencies to which it is connected. However, it appears that WARF is not well known within the five target countries among government structures, farmer associations and other stakeholders in the rural sector. The general public of the subregion, primarily farmers, is also unaware of its objectives and activities. This situation seems particularly unfortunate when we consider that one of the main objectives is to influence civil society and decision-makers by introducing the methods of participatory diagnosis as a tool for solving the problems of the rural sector. External communication (public relations, promotional activities and publicity) is in fact WARF's weak point although, for an institution like WARF, this should be one of the most important operations. There is no specific line item in the budget for external communication activities, a situation that has the effect of limiting the scope of such activities.

In the area of publicity, no action has been taken. This is incomprehensible, considering that other, smaller institutions undertake relatively large scale activities in this area.

However, publicity may not be the optimal external communication activity for WARF. Public relations may prove more effective in helping it position itself and achieve visibility. But here as well, there has been limited action. We have already mentioned the bulletin "L'Atelier," replaced by "La Lettre de l'Atelier," which however appears at very irregular intervals, which means that the information it contains is outdated by the time it appears. Progress reports are another public relations tool. Any modern organization should use its annual report to inform outsiders about the progress it has made, its objectives for the coming year and its main expenditures and revenues. From a marketing point of view, the annual progress report should be a concise publication (a few pages in length) with careful attention to graphics. However, the first two progress reports did not meet these criteria. The prospectus and the brochure are also public relations tools, but their audience is very limited since they are not attractively designed and are therefore unlikely to catch public attention and enhance WARF credibility.

As regards public relations with donor agencies, we noted a certain number of actions that helped to open fundraising channels with CIDA, NOVIB, CEBEMO, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the International Youth Foundation, TROCAIRE, the World Bank, the EC, USC Canada, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. But since these relations are not built upon consistent strategies, there have yet to be any concrete results. As for relations with NGOs, the mass media and political and administrative authorities, activities are not very well developed. It also appears that there is no planning of public relations activities and that no single individual is officially responsible for them.

Finally, with respect to promotional activities, WARF has organized certain actions such as audio-visual presentations on the participatory diagnosis training programs, in addition to presenting its objectives, products and services through the brochure, prospectus and films in connection with
exploratory and identification missions. In national and international forums, presentations involving films and publications have also been organized. Other actions should be organized in order to solidify WARF's position and publicize its activities. For example, its anniversary could be marked by "open door" events and promotional products could be created (gadgets, calendars, bookmarks, etc.).

3. DIAGNOSIS OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Analysis of the status of the information and communication system enabled us to assess the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, which are presented in the following tables:

3.1 STRENGTHS

These are the various positive experiences and results obtained by WARF in implementing its activities. WARF needs to take full advantage of its strengths and develop other actions in order to achieve greater results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Relevance of library documents to the fields covered by WARF activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Good flow of information regarding newly acquired documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Motivated staff committed to achieving objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Excellent interpersonal relations and a familial sense of teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hierarchical differences barely perceptible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Good flow and rapid processing of administrative information through e-mail, a shortened time frame for decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Appropriate physical facilities for the library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Adequate information technology equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Significant interest in the implementation of external communication activities displayed by the Board of Governors, management and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Effective actions to explore and identify partners/clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Functional work environment</td>
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</tbody>
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3.2 WEAKNESSES

These are the problems, limitations and difficulties observed at the internal level. WARF should develop vigorous strategies to identify appropriate solutions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of available and qualified staff to manage the library effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lack of a selective distribution of information system (DSI) and a question and answer service (SQR) among the documentary services provided by the library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of nonconventional documents on the target countries in the collection of documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Steady decline in the documentation budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ineffective utilization of the collection of documents by professional staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shelves for arranging documents already very full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Inconsistencies between the sequential classification system adopted and the physical arrangement of documents on shelves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Disparity between the archives classification plan and the needs of users: semi-active and inactive archives dispersed among several locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Very limited range of WARF's own publications on participatory diagnosis and DPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lack of outreach publications on participatory diagnosis and DPT targeting farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lack of publications on research results and field work likely to contribute to the development of the participatory diagnosis methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Unattractive appearance of publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lack of a consistent policy for disseminating publications to target groups identified in the strategic plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Inadequate exchanges and flow of information between WARF and its Board of Governors</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Inadequate exchanges and flow of information between WARF and its partners/clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Inadequate public relations and promotional activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lack of publicity directed toward the public</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lack of an external communication policy based on specific objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lack of a vigorous and consistent fundraising strategy based on specific objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>No single person officially designated to handle external communication activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 OPPORTUNITIES

These are the favorable opportunities and possibilities offered to WARF by the outside world over the short, medium and long term. WARF should take full advantage of them in order to develop its information and communication activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Probable existence of standard terminology used by international organizations in discussing the methodology of participatory diagnosis, which could help in developing the WARF thesaurus on participatory diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Favorable attitude of NGOs active in grass roots development regarding the potential for more dynamic collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Favorable stance of donor agencies and, in particular, their openness to providing support for information and communication activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Development of information technologies (Internet) allowing for improved management of information and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Policy of decentralization in many countries, potentially favoring the dissemination of participatory diagnosis methods among increasingly well structured farmer organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 THREATS

These are the difficulties, constraints and obstacles imposed by the outside world and that weigh on WARF and its future in the areas of information and communication. WARF should confront them as rapidly as possible and identify urgent solutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A very pronounced financial dependence on donor agencies for funding to carry out information and communication activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Probable competition with other NGOs active in grass roots development and other organizations disseminating participatory methods (MARP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. RECOMMENDATIONS

We have noted that the most critical problem in the area of information and communication remains the inadequacy of exchanges between WARF and various stakeholders: members of the Board of Governors, real and potential partners/clients, farmers, NGOs, government structures, researchers and research institutions, potential donor agencies, etc.

Based on this assessment, the Board of Governors, WARF management and current donor agencies should realistically accept that, after two and a half years of WARF activities, it is time for WARF to reorient its information and communication policy in order to maximize its exchanges with stakeholders. It is within this context that we offer the following recommendations:

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE LIBRARY

1. Recruit a documentation professional or identify among existing staff an available person with a good educational background who could be trained in documentary techniques and ensure effective management of the library.

2. Extend the computerization process to other tasks such as managing the lending of documents and creating new data bases on the content of periodicals, on partner institutions and on potential donor agencies.

3. Enrich the collection of documents by establishing a vigorous collection policy based on the specific needs of users, including both conventional documents (technical documents, dictionaries, encyclopedias) and nonconventional documents published in the target countries (economic and social development plans, economic statistics, local and participatory development policies, charts and maps, etc.).

4. Substantially increase the budget for document purchases in the coming years.

5. Set up as soon as possible documentary services such as the selective distribution of information (diffusion sélective d'information: DSI) and a question and answer service (service questions-réponses: SQR) to ensure the rational dissemination of scientific and technical information.

6. Proceed as quickly as possible with loading the bibliographical data base onto the local network (e-mail) so that professional staff can consult it from their work stations.

7. Reserve the last page of the bulletin "La Lettre de l'Atelier" to announce new acquisitions.

8. Study the possibility of rapidly developing full access to the Internet to enable professional staff to consult the data bases of large international libraries on the methodology of participatory diagnosis.
4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE ARCHIVES

1. Develop a new classification plan that takes the needs of users into account.

2. Centralize, process and classify all semi-active and inactive archives in the main room of the library.

3. Organize, process and classify active archives within the organizational structures where they are most frequently consulted (executive secretariat, office of the accountant and the comptroller, program office).

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PUBLICATIONS

1. Set up, as quickly as possible, a systematic policy for disseminating research results by publishing reference documents and relevant articles in scientific reviews on the various experiments and new approaches developed in West Africa concerning participatory diagnosis.

2. To reach farmers and influence their behavior by introducing the participatory methodology, WARF should summarize participatory diagnosis guides and manuals and translate them into local languages, then publish them as outreach tools (audio cassettes) and disseminate them to farmers as widely as possible.

3. Rigorously adhere to the monthly publication schedule for "La Lettre de l'Atelier."

4. Publish the last two annual reports as soon as possible and ensure that they are widely disseminated to the public.

5. Increase the range of publications by developing new manuals and guides on the methodology of participatory diagnosis.

6. Improve the quality of the publications, including their graphic presentation and design (photos, etc.).

7. Undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the various publications (manuals, reports, bulletins, films) and examine the possibility of decreasing their costs while improving their quality.

8. Establish a rational and consistent policy for disseminating and selling publications to target groups and ensure that the publications correspond to their needs.

9. For marketing purposes, redesign the WARF prospectus as soon as possible to make it more attractive.

10. To evaluate the performance of managerial staff, program officials and assistants, establish criteria reflecting the ability to publish the results of research and field work.
4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

1. Develop and implement a consistent and systematic information and communication strategy with members of the Board of Governors. This might involve, for example, connecting them to WARF's local e-mail network and/or the Internet so that they could be rapidly informed of the progress of activities and easily communicate with the staff.

2. Improve communication and the flow of information with partners/clients concerning training programs, seminars and workshops by organizing such meetings in a more rational fashion.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

1. Adopt a meaningful logo, a color and an appropriate slogan to be used on everything produced by WARF (publications, letterhead stationery, envelopes, etc.).

2. Have letterhead stationery printed on quality paper with the logo and slogan.

3. Advertise the presence of WARF headquarters in the neighborhood with a large, well constructed sign (illuminated if possible).

4. Identify each office by inscribing names and functions of occupants on the doors.

5. In areas where exchanges with visitors take place, make the decor more lively and appealing by adding flower pots, particularly in the office of the director, where important visitors are received, as well as in the reception area and the office of the executive assistant.

6. Establish an effective policy for maintaining public relations with government structures, the mass media, NGOs, researchers, funding agencies, etc.

7. Develop promotional activities and tools, for example a film that covers all WARF activities, as well as gadgets, bookmarks and calendars bearing the logo and slogan.

8. This year or the next, organize an "open door" event to celebrate WARF's anniversary.

9. Increase the awareness of members of the Board of Directors so that they will become powerful vectors for promoting WARF and maintaining public relations within their respective countries and institutions.

10. Establish a publicity strategy directed toward the general public (radio and television broadcasts and press articles on WARF, its activities and objectives).
11. Organize as soon as possible a collaborative meeting with other NGOs active in grassroots development and/or disseminating the participatory methodology with the following objectives:

- to determine each entity's specific objectives in the field;
- to set up mechanisms for collaboration and sharing experience.

12. Study the potential for developing full access to the Internet in order to create a website on WARF, its objectives, activities, publications and accomplishments both as a selling point and to achieve international visibility.

13. Establish a consistent policy on relations with potential donor agencies for the purpose of developing an effective fundraising strategy.

4.6 SPECIAL RECOMMENDATION

WARF should adopt an overall information and communication policy designed to produce and implement, as soon as possible, an integrated information, communication and marketing plan, focusing on specific objectives and stipulating short, medium and long term actions to be taken with respect to information management and flow, publications, communications, public relations, promotional activities and publicity.

5. POSSIBLE STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE SHORT TERM (1-3 MONTHS)

Until such time as an integrated information, communication and marketing plan is actually implemented, WARF could immediately undertake certain recommended actions without incurring significant expense. These include the following:

1. Computerizing the management of document lending and the creation of the remaining data bases.

2. Connecting the BFRAO data base to the local network.

3. Having the consultant responsible for organizing the archives reconsider the operating procedures in light of all three recommendations.

4. Publishing late issues of the bulletin "La Lettre de l'Atelier," as well as the last two annual progress reports which should receive wide public distribution.

5. Choosing a significant color for WARF and printing letterhead stationery with a logo and slogan.

6. Advertising the location of WARF headquarters with a large, illuminated sign.
7. Placing flower pots in offices and identifying offices by inscribing the names and functions of the occupants.

8. Making members of the Board of Governors aware of the next session’s issues so that they will become true vectors of external communication within their respective countries of residence.

5.2 ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE MEDIUM TERM (3-12 MONTHS)

These actions require a somewhat larger budget, which would need to be programmed for the next budget cycle prior to their implementation. They include:

1. Recruiting a professional in documentation or the training of documentary techniques. Having a professional staff member available would make it possible to carry out certain activities such as setting up DSI and SQR documentary services, indexing and summarizing documents, managing data bases and archives effectively, etc.

2. Providing a substantial budget to the library to enrich its documentary resources by purchasing new documents. This enrichment will also involve collecting nonconventional documents in the target countries.


4. Organizing a collaborative meeting with other NGOs who share the same concerns. In collaboration with the various NGOs, other organizations and government structures involved in grass roots development and/or disseminating participatory methods, WARF could study the most appropriate way to set up a policy of cooperation and exchanges of field results.

5. Developing an integrated information, communication and marketing plan. The main objective of this plan would be to define relevant strategies for improving exchanges and communication between WARF and its environment, to reposition WARF within the institutional framework of the subregion, to enhance its reputation and credibility and, above all, to respond more effectively to client needs through the participatory methodology.

5.3 ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE LONG TERM (12-36 MONTHS)

The following actions should be the subject of an in-depth study as a part of the process of developing the integrated information, communication and marketing plan. Thus, they constitute actions to be implemented in the long term. They include:

1. Developing full access to the Internet and creating a WARF web site.

2. Establishing a consistent policy for disseminating and selling publications to carefully selected target groups.
3. Developing strategies for public relations, promotional activities and publicity.

4. Having managerial staff, program officers and assistants regularly publish research and fieldwork results.

5. Summarizing and publishing participatory diagnosis and DPT guides and manuals as outreach tools in local languages within the target countries.

6. Studying the costs and benefits of various publications.

7. Publishing new guides and manuals on participatory diagnosis and DPT.

8. Developing a strategy for communication and information flow with members of the Board of Governors and partners/clients.

9. Studying the possibility of connecting members of the Board of Governors to the local WARF network (e-mail) and/or the Internet.

10. Organizing an "open-door" event.

11. Implementing a consistent fundraising policy.
MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE
WEST AFRICA RURAL FOUNDATION (WARF)

SECTION III

CONSULTANT'S REPORT REQUESTED BY
THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER (IDRC)

(Abdoulaye Sène)
# Table of Contents

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** ................................................................. ii

1. **SUMMARY** .................................................................................. 1

2. **ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION** ................................. 1
   2.1 Methodological approach .......................................................... 1
   2.2 Analysis of programs ............................................................... 2
      2.2.1 Program support for the WARF strategy ............................ 2
         2.2.1.1 Institutional strengthening of rural organizations .......... 3
         2.2.1.2 Participatory development of technologies ................. 3
         2.2.1.3 Training of actors and dissemination of participatory methods ... 4
      2.2.2 Selection of beneficiaries/partners .................................... 4
      2.2.3 Methods of program implementation ................................. 10
      2.2.4 Resource utilization for program implementation ............. 12
      2.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation system .................................. 13

3. **CONCLUSIONS** ........................................................................ 15
   3.1 Strengths .................................................................................. 15
   3.2 Weaknesses ............................................................................ 16
   3.3 Opportunities .......................................................................... 18
   3.4 Threats ..................................................................................... 19

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS** ............................................................. 20

5. **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY** ............................................... 22
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Ola Smith, the IDRC regional representative, who assigned this work to me; Mr. Akwasi Aidoo, the regional representative of the Ford Foundation, who provided support and encouragement; Ms. Léona Ba for her assistance; the director and entire staff of WARF; and the other consultants with whom this work was shared.

We apologize for any delays in the completion of this work and sincerely hope that it addresses the concerns of all stakeholders.
1. **SUMMARY**

The West African Rural Foundation (WARF) was created in 1993 "to help solve the problems of rural society by strengthening local organizations and promoting participatory methods of research and development." The foundation adopted a five year strategic plan, which the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and the Ford Foundation agreed to finance. It was within this general context that the present midterm evaluation of WARF was undertaken. The purpose is to perform a comprehensive evaluation comprising two main objectives:

- to evaluate the structure and management of WARF at the institutional level in relation to its mission and objectives;
- to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of WARF programs.

The second objective is thus to evaluate the program component and, more specifically, to analyze strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats, in the area of program implementation and to develop recommendations and implementation strategies to improve program management. In addition, suggestions which could serve as the basis for a system of monitoring and evaluation of WARF activities are expected in order to establish indicators of progress and performance over time.

2. **ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION**

2.1 **Methodological approach**

To identify WARF's mission and monitor its strategy, we examined basic documents, including grant documents, the introductory brochure, the strategic plan, the annual reports and various publications (see the list of documents consulted). We found a wealth of information which we were not able to fully appreciate because of the amount of time required to carry out the other evaluation activities. Such time constraints risk skewing the results of the analysis by interfering with careful examination of the data.

The field trips took us to the regions of Dakar, Thiès, Kaolack, Tamba and Kolda in Senegal; we also traveled to Bamako and the Cercle de Douentza in Mali to meet with the senior staff of WARF partners and to observe the results obtained in the field. At public meetings of farmers (both men and women), we had the opportunity to meet representatives of village committees and local structures, as well as project technical agents and extension workers. We held discussions with two members of the Board of Governors and the director of WARF; in addition, several working sessions and individual meetings were organized with most of the staff members (program managers, program officers, administrative and technical staff) in order to carry out the evaluation.

It is regrettable, however, that the work performed by the evaluation team was not adequately coordinated and that, from the outset, the consultants displayed divergent approaches and points of view. The perception of the respective roles and responsibilities of the individual members of the evaluation team was a source of friction, which had a negative effect on the implementation of the work and on the degree of integration normally expected within the team for this type of activity.
Nevertheless, it must be said that the work was indeed carried out in a responsible, participatory and serious manner.

2.2 Analysis of programs

Creating WARF within the context of the democratization of society and a quest for transparency in governance suggests that WARF's mission must involve defending and strengthening pluralism in order to develop civil society in rural areas. What strategy should WARF follow to ensure its sustainability and fulfill its mission? Does WARF work to strengthen local organizations that support farmers or does it help solve the problems of rural society (by strengthening local organizations and promoting participatory methods of research and development) for the benefit of the populations concerned, made up for the most part of farmers? With whom has WARF chosen to work? Does WARF meet the challenge of developing rural societies by strengthening the endogenous capacities of local structures specific to rural areas? The answers to these questions will determine to what extent the strategy is consistent with the mission.

2.2.1 Program support for the WARF strategy

WARF developed a general plan for moving forward within the countries in which it is active. In order to help ensure consistency and a steady progression, the foundation established a strategic five year plan (1993-1998) covering the entire subregion; the rhythm and nature of the operations are adjusted in accordance with the specific characteristics of each country. The strategic plan should extend and expand the PRAAP pilot project; it should also provide WARF with the opportunity to strengthen its capital base and achieve institutional growth, which is why it was created at the same time as WARF.

Initially, the objective of the exploratory work within a country is to set up support mechanisms to enhance the effect of the activities and create future synergy; subsequently, the objective is to scrutinize local organizations likely to benefit from grants; ultimately, the purpose is to consolidate the programs of partners and support the mechanisms that will safeguard the technological and institutional innovations of local and subregional development.

Do the programs developed by WARF support the institution's strategy?

There are five themes underlying programs that support WARF strategy: environmental issues and the sustainability of rural development; action targeting women and disadvantaged social groups; support for applied research; the financial autonomy of local organizations; and local philanthropy.

WARF develops three types of programs: the institutional strengthening of intermediary rural organizations; the participatory development of technology for agriculture and natural resources management; and training of actors and dissemination of participatory methods for research and action.

This trio can in fact be reduced to two main types of programs: the strengthening of local organizations and the participatory development of technology.
The third category, i.e. the training of actors and the dissemination of methods, actually represents a series of activities that enter into the capacity-building process in the form of institutional support, training in participatory methods different from those traditionally used in rural development, and publications (manuals and audio-visual aids). Efforts to promote participatory methods of research and development can be considered a strategy to initiate, complement and extend the above-mentioned types of programs.

Multiple and varied actors with sometimes conflicting interests all play a role in solving the problems of rural society, which accounts for the diversity of partners and the tailoring of products and services offered to them by WARF.

2.2.1.1 Institutional strengthening of rural organizations

The rural sector needs strong and dynamic local organizations that are capable of undertaking activities identified by farmers to solve their day-to-day problems. The farmer associations of men and women and the professional nongovernmental organizations that together comprise the rural organizations need to be consolidated and to cooperate with each other in order to play the role of a catalyst in rural development.

The institutional strengthening of rural organizations involves three phases:

- To begin, the relationship between WARF and a rural organization is formalized through a participatory institutional diagnosis (diagnostic institutionnel participatif: DIP), even though a relationship of mutual recognition has already been established through other activities (field visits, participation in a training program or a participatory diagnosis, participation in a seminar, etc.). The DIP scrutinizes the organization (type of organization, level of growth, absorptive capacity) and, once the rules of the game have been accepted, serves to identify the shortcomings and the potential of the future partner, thus establishing a basis of agreement on proposals to correct weaknesses and decisions to either adopt or reject specific alternatives. The purpose of the DIP is to create, in a participatory way, a tailor-made support plan and to identify forces of change such that the organization can progressively solve its deficiencies from within; it is an arduous exercise that is not often easy and that requires many compromises, as well as the understanding and tolerance needed to move on to the next phase.

- The one year grant agreement seeks to ensure the stability of the organization and provides training in participatory diagnosis for staff; it may then lead to a multi-year grant.

- The multi-year grant is the mechanism that allows for the expected strengthening of the internal capacities and visibility of the organization; the objective is for the beneficiary to become sustainable and autonomous.

2.2.1.2 Participatory development of technologies

The failure of traditional agronomic and agricultural research and the difficulties in achieving a "green" revolution are reasons to re-examine the prevailing strategies and methodologies of rural development. The goal of making the system of agricultural production viable, both in our time and for future generations, can only be attained with the full participation of farmers, who are recognized
as the repositories of wisdom and knowledge based on local techniques and who independently determine the parameters of agricultural output and natural resources management.

The goal is to develop a collaborative program among farmers, NGOs and researchers in order to develop, test and transfer innovations, solutions and appropriate technologies for the problems faced by farmers in the areas of agricultural production and natural resources management.

The DPT supports the process of participatory research as opposed to merely keeping the participating organizations afloat; it involves collective planning and exchanges of experiences and ideas on rural problems and identifies opportunities for finding solutions. It provides methodological and financial support for programs receiving multi-year grants.

Partners who have developed a multi-year program are DPT-eligible. Prior support, in the form of a DPT planning grant, is necessary to diagnose constraints, identify solutions, carry out farmer evaluations, arrange collaboration and organize fundraising; the grant allows for planning the DPT and, in principle, covers a three year period. The pilot program for promoting collaborative research with IER in Mali should lead to a DPT, while a similar program for strengthening agricultural technologies and innovations on the Bijagos Islands of Guinea-Bissau is also pending, with approval expected in Year 3.

The DPT process is strengthened by the development of methodological guides.

2.2.1.3 Training of actors and dissemination of participatory methods

The purpose of this program is to promote the use of participatory methods and approaches within research institutions, educational facilities, NGOs and donor agencies; WARF hereby enters into competition with other institutions that are specialized in providing training in the participatory methodologies currently in fashion for rural development. WARF provides the following products: the annual course in DP and DPT; the annual regional workshop; the publication of documents, bulletins, methodological guides and audio-visual aids.

2.2.2 Selection of beneficiaries/partners

The original partners of WARF include grass roots organizations, NGOs and researchers.

Based on our review of the grant documents, there are 22 partners, which can be broken down as follows:

* 13 NGOs;

* 2 federations of farmer associations;

* 3 partners of a collaborative nature (community, government, NGO) and 3 coordinated groups or federations of NGOs functioning as intermediary rural organizations;

* 1 research partner (National Institute of Research).
Once the exploratory work within a country has been completed, the selection of partners involves two steps: an initial selection is made at an annual training program, a regional seminar or a DP workshop; secondly, the DIP procedure is applied to the partners that have been identified. If the DIP results are convincing, accepted and shared by both sides, then a letter of request is drawn up for the grant program.

As regards the length of the programs (21 of 22), the grants are for 3 to 18 months (16), for 3 years (4) or for 5 years (1). An organization does not become a partner until the completion of the DIP, which analyzes the strengths, the weaknesses and the potential of the organization for the purpose of establishing a one year, provisional program of institutional strengthening. A series of intensive workshops (5-10) is conducted in the field to introduce the partner to a process of strategic planning and training on various subjects as a way to encourage more rigorous program management and design.

The signed grant document contains an analysis by the program manager charged with assessing the request. This analysis includes: a restatement of the proposal; an analysis of partner institutions; a restatement of the negotiation process; a justification of the design in relation to WARF's mission; the impact of the activities on women and disadvantaged groups; the limitations and risks; the mechanism for monitoring and evaluation by WARF; and the elements of methodological capitalization.

WARF attempts to promote high standards of financial management and program quality, both internally and among the organizations that it supports; the criteria for selecting partners reflect this twofold objective and thereby set WARF apart from many structures operating in rural areas.

The foundation looks for the following characteristics in its partners: the active presence of management and staff within their target region; the ability to monitor local activities; the capacity to analyze and understand farmers' problems; the capacity to utilize and adapt participatory tools and methods; acceptance of transparency and honesty in financial management; a spirit of teamwork and availability to work and communication with farmers; willingness to collaborate with other national institutions.

Organizations assumed to be established for personal or political ends are excluded from partnership.

In the field, we visited and held discussions with the management of several of the foundation's partner institutions; for this purpose, five partners in Mali (USC) and Senegal (SAFEFOD, UGAPS, GADEC, 7 "A") and one subregional partner (Institut Carrefour) were selected. They effectively represent the full range of organizations collaborating with WARF and also represent significant degrees of institutional development in relation to the wide variety of actors operating in rural society.

**USC-Mali** (Unity Service Corporation) is an offshoot of a Canadian NGO that has considerable resources, an institutional environment, institutional support and appropriate start-up capital and that already has secure programs. It is now being nationalized, i.e. transformed from a representative office into an autonomous national NGO. The one year grant that it received from WARF (CFAF 48,758,000) covered three areas: institutional support in terms of office logistics, salaries and
support for the Douentza program, with portions of the funding earmarked for organizing workshops on participatory diagnosis and developing a strategic five year plan.

The head of USC was absent during our visit and we were unable to obtain certain information; under the circumstances, the staff members present were reluctant to provide full information. In Bamako, we tried unsuccessfully to meet with the president of Guamina, one of the two organizations that collaborate with USC.

The WARF grant may be having a positive impact during this period of transition. USC is implementing the Douentza project with two other local organizations, Guamina and ARAFD. However, the effects of the programs may be hidden or diluted due to the numerous activities undertaken by USC in other collaborative programs. We were unable to verify with certainty the actual results of the WARF grant, as opposed to the results of grants from other programs, on site in Douentza. Support for the Douentza program consumes three quarters of the total grant (CFAF 30,908,000) and covers the water and soil conservation components, agro-forestry, information-education-communication, seed stock and a line of credit for farmers to obtain small agricultural equipment. A local newspaper, “Nouvelle Etoile,” is produced in the Dogon dialects (3 issues have already appeared).

Four staff members received training in DP (participatory diagnosis) at the annual training program in the Gambia, and a DP workshop was organized in Douentza, led by the head of USC (who himself participated two years earlier in the training-of-trainers session in Dakar) and a WARF consultant. However, we should note that the DP products that were shown to us are the result of another activity carried out by a Malian consulting firm for the Douentza Village Lands Management Project. Indeed, a land use plan for Falembougou was developed with the help of a DP; the agents of the Douentza Village Lands Management Project (GAT) were trained in DP; this session took place shortly before the WARF DP in the Gambia, which was attended by 3 agents from the GAT project.

The NGO maintains a significant portfolio of development programs in cooperation with several partners. It is indeed an NGO of national stature that works with intermediary farmer organizations offering assistance to grass roots farmer groups. It is a substantive partner capable of collaborating with the national research organizations of the country. WARF has already initiated a series of activities with USC-Mali and the prospects for developing a partnership are open. The weaknesses of USC are primarily in the areas of management, marketing, development of post-production activities and technical staff.

GADEC (Groupe d’Action pour le Développement Communautaire: Action Group for Community Development) is a local NGO that has developed, affirmed through its personality and established a level of professionalism that is very impressive from all perspectives. It was created by five rural development specialists with very strong intellectual credentials. GADEC is well established in the Tambacounda region and it is a development partner highly regarded by the local authorities. We visited the sites of its activities (small dams on the Sandougou River, wells sheathed in concrete, land use planning for shared spaces such as ponds, forests and grazing lands) and confirmed their source of funding. There is a farmer advisory council that serves as a mediator between GADEC and the farmer organizations.
Its relationship with WARF is exemplary and offers many lessons: it received a sizable multi-year grant for its program to manage and rehabilitate village lands. GADEC is one of the organizations that WARF inherited from the IRED-PRAAP pilot project. The DP tool dovetailed nicely with GADEC's need to evaluate its activities; the DIP enabled it to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the institution (operations, organizational structure, fundraising, strategic planning); the diagnosis proved to be enriching because it highlighted previously unrecognized issues for GADEC (the development of thematic DPs, the development of alternative income-generating activities, etc.). GADEC formed a pool of DP trainers who have been called upon to conduct sessions not only in Senegal and the Gambia but also in Burkina Faso.

GADEC earlier practiced a somewhat scattered approach but has now refocused its activities in line with its expertise and the needs expressed at the grass roots level. It has moved from a "project approach" to a "program approach," which has however introduced new budgetary constraints associated with the program approach: GADEC's resources were in fact dwindling at the time when program funding was being sought. During the current period of transition, institutional support from WARF has allowed GADEC to ensure the sustainability of its activities. As a result, GADEC's overall planning has been enriched.

As an association and NGO in support of development, GADEC applies a research-action approach within its organization, its programs and projects. Its village lands management and rehabilitation strategy has led to the creation of a vast EAU program on food security; negotiations concerning the funding for this program (CFAF 1.6 billion over 5 years) are now well under way with Belgium. The grant has served to strengthen GADEC's capacities (development of capacities, financial management, human resource management, financial support mechanisms, communication). The impact of the grant to GADEC is multifaceted and includes not only the physical improvements selected by local farmer associations but also the fact that the beneficiaries have organized themselves at the village and inter-village levels to work together on projects of mutual interest. Internally, the grant has enabled GADEC to develop a fundraising strategy and become more aware of the need to reorganize and restructure GADEC, specifically through a more integrated and centralized approach to program management and greater consistency. According to one member of GADEC's management committee, WARF should also focus on the issue of human resources development.

GADEC is very concerned with capitalizing on the wealth of research-action experience and debate regarding rural development; local NGOs have made numerous innovations, unbeknownst however to development institutions and African universities. WARF can play a decisive role in supporting this capitalization effort. GADEC has organized "open door" events and produced a videocassette on the theme, "What approach for sustainable development?"

UGAPS (Union des Groupements Agropastoraux du Sénégal: Union of the Agropastoral Groups of Senegal) is a local NGO that typifies the difficulties and vicissitudes associated with new organizations working to support rural development. It has very scant resources and shows clear signs of organizational and institutional weakness. The organization is unsteady and lacks both resources and management capabilities. However, it is well grounded in its environment and concerned about issues of food security and health for local populations. UGAPS is a network of 68 farmer groups spread across 43 villages in the east central part of the country, between the regions of Tamba and Kaolack.
UGAPS is backed up by a structure called the Central Coordinating Office (Bureau Central de Coordination: BCC) which speaks for UGAPS, hence the acronym UGAPS-BCC. This office maintains a higher profile than UGAPS and acts on the latter's behalf. According to several sources, the credibility of its current leaders is very much in question; however, their commitment and their determination to find solutions to rural problems cannot be disputed.

UGAPS has done a good job of defining the concerns of rural populations and has identified a relevant point of entry: a research and development program for a local cereal, fonio, which is found throughout the subregion targeted by WARF but which remains marginalized. An international seminar on fonio was organized in Kounghel by UGAPS, with support from foreign partners; the organization has also been asked to participate in a certain number of development projects focusing on regional integration. To its credit, it has secured financing for various programs related to the environment, health and literacy education.

This is an ideal partner for WARF, yet attempts to establish collaboration between UGAPS and WARF have so far been unsuccessful. Issues of availability and subjective reasons appear to be the main factors underlying the inertia between the two potential partners. But there is a desire to collaborate on both sides, and efforts to foster collaboration should be pursued.

7 "A" Maaréwa (Chemin Incontournable: The Inescapable Path) offers the most tangible benefits of a lengthy collaboration with the foundation, beginning with the pilot phase. This NGO has received the longest multi-year grant: a five year strategic program on food security and primary health education. Reports are regularly produced and have been routinely approved ever since an initial problem was straightened out (payments were temporarily suspended in February 1994). The organization has already acquired considerable experience in rural development and has benefited from varied and significant collaboration with other donor agencies; in addition, it has developed its own methodological tools for carrying out programs and outreach in rural areas.

The executive secretary, who founded 7 "A" in 1988, was absent during our visit and, as a result, we were only able to meet two program officers (literacy education and health), two outreach workers (health and women) and the manager. Here once again, we unfortunately encountered some hesitation in providing information, in spite of their eagerness to collaborate and facilitate our work. Their restraint was, however, understandable in light of the executive secretary's absence. We held an informational session with the farmers in charge of the village committees (hygiene, sanitation, nivaquine program for malaria prophylaxis, agriculture, livestock) at the Coumamboure Center.

Collaboration between WARF and 7 "A" dates back to 1990-91, when both DP workshops and planning workshops were held; the apparent result was a new orientation for 7 "A". The NGO adopted the DP methodology, whereas it had been using the GRAAP method of rural outreach that the founder had always followed. The founder is a former trainer at the West African Center for Social and Economic Studies (Centre d'Etudes Sociales et Economiques de l' Afrique de l'Ouest: CESAO) in Burkina Faso.

The WARF grant was used to develop a five year strategic plan beginning in 1993 that includes two components (food security and primary health education) and covers twelve villages. The institutional support includes computer training; project development and management; cash forecasts; IEC training for outreach workers; equipment in the form of motorbikes, computers and
assorted furniture; and salaries. Much of the grant has gone to the food security component, which includes farmer workshops, DPs, agricultural trials and a credit program for raising goats. The latter involves a local initiative of rotating credit for 30 goats raised by women and women's groups.

The impact of the project activities on women and disadvantaged groups may amount to income generation and improvements in community health. However, there is reason to question whether this component of the grant may have been covered by other funds that 7 "A" received from other donor agencies.

SAFEFOD (Société Africaine d'Education et de Formation pour le Développement: African Institution of Education and Training for Development) is an African-oriented educational and training institution that focuses on development. At an earlier date, SAFEFOD had proposed a project to PRAAP to translate and adapt the DP guide into local languages, but the offer was politely rejected. SAFEFOD is not specifically a rural development NGO, but its governance program has led to interventions on concrete issues of grass roots development. It is from this perspective that WARF decided to provide a grant which, however, has produced mixed feelings as regards its appropriateness and its real impact on overall programs and on the institution itself.

The grant was awarded in order to test local governance mechanisms as applied to development activities (livestock fattening, vegetable gardening, cereal banks, support for the operations of the rural council). The methodological and financial support fail to justify this grant, which does not fit the profile of a program of institutional strengthening for local organizations, nor a DPT program, nor even a program of training and dissemination. While one might agree that economic issues define the structure of governance, it is hard to accept that an institutional and training institution should finance economic development activities.

The Institut Carrefour (Crossroads Institute) is an outgrowth of a subregional NGO called the Carrefour des Mouvements Paysans (Crossroads of Farmer Movements). It was created by farmer associations in the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal. It has two main goals: social development and economic enterprise. Social development is an activity carried out by the office of the executive director, with components on training, outreach, communication and social marketing, education for development, the status of women, agro-forestry and natural resources management; economic development, on the other hand, is managed by a commercial enterprise, Exchange Crossroad Limited (based on the Gambia) and focuses on market studies, subsector organization, exchanges and marketing raw products among farmer associations at the subregional level.

With an eye to reducing tensions and conflicts between the farmers and the commercial enterprise, it was decided that the two branches of Carrefour should be autonomous. Thus it was necessary to create Institut Carrefour and modify the Senegal-based executive directorate. The grant request falls within the pilot phase of operationalizing Institut Carrefour.

The WARF grant is for an intermediary program designed to formulate policy in the areas of communication, social marketing, outreach and institutional strengthening. The objective is to create a permanent framework of communication within the Carrefour movement and to facilitate the movement's access to the process of subregional integration. The grant makes it possible to initiate
the process of redefining the orientation of Carrefour des Mouvements Paysans by convening the board of directors to reflect on Carrefour's actions and prospects.

The allotted funds have been used for several purposes: to finance decision-making sessions in connection with setting up the board of directors; to carry out information-education-communication activities targeting the associations in order to spell out the Institute's objectives (through outreach sessions in farming areas); to arrange exchange visits among farmer organizations; to provide institutional support, training and a DP workshop; and to hold the constituent general assembly. This grant definitely fits the profile of a program of institutional strengthening.

WARF is currently developing new partnerships in Senegal (Comité National de Concertation des Ruraux: National Committee for Rural Collaboration), Mali (with the national and regional commissions of research users), the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau (Bijagos Islands).

It appears that WARF is more oriented toward NGOs that operate as rural intermediary organizations (13) than as local farmer organizations (2).

Grass roots farmer organizations no longer represent the main target group for partners: increasingly, the targets are intermediary organizations situated between rural and urban society, as well as national institutions involved in research and development at the macro-economic level. While PRAAP's target was farmer associations, WARF is designed to strengthen rural civil society.

This new approach has a distancing effect that tends to isolate WARF from contact with the grass roots, i.e. local farmer organizations; however legitimate and strategic this orientation may be, it raises problems at this stage of the institution's development. WARF's mission is still to provide support in order "to help solve the problems of rural society in the subregion by strengthening local organizations and promoting participatory methods of research and action."

2.2.3 Methods of program implementation

The professionalism of the staff has been tested and strengthened through the updated methods used to implement WARF programs. The staff has initiated, developed and shared participatory methodological approaches, a task that has engaged staff members both conceptually and in policy terms (implementation and steps to be followed) in order to make the programs consistent with the WARF mission.

Once a grant is approved, WARF first trains two professional staff members of the partner organization in DP at its workshops; subsequently, it will assist these two individuals in training outreach workers during DPs carried out in five of the partner's target villages.

The strategic planning workshop is the next step and it offers the opportunity to apply the lessons learned during the DPs. A methodology workshop and two programming workshops are organized to develop a plan of action and define long term objectives and performance indicators; the budget can also be prepared in a workshop. If this procedure is adhered to, then the grant will continue until its expiration date since both parties are satisfied with the results; the final step is to formulate a strategic plan for institutional strengthening, the goal of which is to stabilize the partner organization.
This process is not always easy, nor exempt from problems linked to the different expectations of the two partners to the agreement. Yet this only adds to the professional experience of those program officers who have consistently sought the means to improve the quality of their work.

The program staff of the institution is not immune to slips and lapses in the face of the considerable cultural diversity of stakeholders in rural society. As a counterweight, the staff tries to minimize the risks and collectively develop, through teamwork, the planning and action tools needed to develop a transparent partnership capable of producing the expected social changes in rural life.

A panoply of techniques for safeguarding and improving the work performed by the staff have been set in motion; these tools for administering and managing the programs and program activities are not necessarily detailed in the procedures manual. Accelerated procedures for developing programs have proved necessary. The search for greater efficiency is the common denominator of these methodological instruments.

A variety of increasingly strategic tools are being tested both internally and as program approaches:

* The Exploration-Assessment-Reprocessing-Information (Prospection-Appréciation-Rétraitement-Information: PARI) approach is used to formulate a program within a reasonable, relatively short time frame once exploratory work in a country has been completed; this tool was developed in 1994 through a planning workshop after the Board of Governors and donor agencies had criticized the slowness in program implementation. The annual training program is one opportunity for identifying programs to be financed, as well as potential partners; a PARI may be performed as a follow-up to the training program.

Two PARIs have been undertaken to formulate programs and a third is now being performed in connection with a quality control activity for the program formulation process of the CNCR, which is entering negotiations with the World Bank.

* The Negotiation-Planning-Monitoring (Négociation-Planification-Suivi: NPS) workshop extends and reinforces the DIP or institutional analysis by applying the Success-Failure-Potentialities-Obstacles (Succès-Echec-Potentialités-Obstacles: SEPO) approach, which is limited to examining the strengths and weaknesses of the partner; the DIP requires considerable time and resources and cannot be uniformly applied to all partners. The NPS workshop pays more attention to monitoring and is appropriate for examining strong organizations that possess relatively large capacities.

* POLES have been established to develop and support programs, take full advantage of methodology and improve distribution, but it is also necessary to reduce the "subjective impact" on a program and avoid centralizing certain activities around a single specialist. While the goal is to ensure that programs fulfill their true role in supporting the institutional strategy, an implementation approach that is dispersed, isolated and lacking in coordination will lead to inefficiency and ineffectiveness since both the FAPs and the grants will not result in the judicious use of resources.

A more strategic approach requires a sharing of initiatives and information among professional staff cooperating together to achieve the objectives of the institution. The procedures manual is indeed
an operational guide, but it cannot provide answers to the specific questions that arise during the program development and formulation process. Refocusing the various phases of program development and implementation and defining the areas of operation have made it necessary to organize the work around poles of expertise.

Thus, three poles have been established:

* The partnership information, communication and development pole, which focuses on developing the client portfolio, managing and disseminating information and coordinating communication activities;

* The pole of support for partners and the resource person network, which focuses on coordinating the resource person network, the work performed by the network and the activities designed to support programs;

* The method, capitalization and methodological production pole, which focuses on issues related to the capitalization and development of specific methodologies for individual cases.

Creation of the poles is based on the idea that innovation must be shared with and maintained by capitalization or generation of memory; since each person is situated along a curve of innovation and learning, the point is to collectively benefit from the experience of a variety of situations in which staff members are involved. The critical stages of the partnership process should be segmented, with one segment assigned to each pole. Lastly, centralization and accountability are required to benefit from the synergy that is created.

A breakdown of the programs (21 of 22) by poles of initiative shows that three quarters of the programs are jointly based on two poles (info-com-dev and partners-network: 6; info-com-dev and method: 8; partners-network and method: 1) and that only one quarter of the programs are based on a single pole (info-com-dev: 4; method: 2).

The SEPO (Success-Failure-Potentialities-Obstacles) method is used in connection with institutional analysis.

WARF's progressively greater openness to partners that operate at the macro level and possess diverse expertise requires that the institution develop its capacities with respect to designing and steering programs; this necessarily calls for internal reorganization of program staff.

2.2.4 Resource utilization for program implementation

The resources used by WARF to implement its programs are divided between grants and FAPs (projects administered by the foundation). The rate of implementation of the budget rose from 64% in year 1 to 71% in year 2, including the component on technical assistance to partners.

The grants and FAPs originate from partnership ideas formed by a program manager, ideas for internal projects administered by WARF or project proposals submitted to WARF. Project proposals and partnership ideas are likely to lead to grants, while internal project ideas translate into FAPs and concern program activities. The FAPs are not intended to maintain the functioning of the institution.
The procedures manual determines the process for developing and the conditions for implementing grants and FAPs.

Grants are divided into two categories: grants under CFAF 20 million are authorized and signed by the director and the program officer; those above CFAF 20 million are submitted to the Board of Governors for approval. The 21 grants already awarded in five countries can be broken down as follows: 15 for institutional strengthening of local organizations, 3 for DPT and 3 for training and dissemination (not including the two annual training programs).

A program proposal for a grant can be initiated by WARF or jointly developed by the partner and the program manager following a DP workshop or a program formulation workshop; the partner must then declare itself and support the program content. Execution of an institutional diagnosis of the partner and access to the partner's legal documents are preconditions for negotiating program objectives, details of the budget, specific terms and the schedule of activities.

This process culminates in the drafting of an official letter to request a grant. WARF makes sure that the objectives of the program proposal are consistent with its mission to strengthen capacities and promote the emergence of rural civil society. It expects transparency and honesty from the partner with respect to financial management as a prerequisite for future collaboration. The letter of understanding stipulates the conditions governing the use of funds and the breakdown to be followed in managing funds between WARF and the beneficiary.

A FAP is a program activity, of which there are five types: technical support to partners in order to receive a grant (planning DPs, consultations, field trips), annual training programs, seminars, studies in support of WARF's mission, and audio-visual productions and publications, with the exception of annual reports and brochures on the foundation. The amount allocated for FAPs varies from CFAF 3 million to 6 million. The program managers are responsible for finalizing and implementing the FAPs.

Grants and FAPs are initially examined at monthly pipeline meetings before being considered by the approval committee. Grants and FAPs are appropriate and complementary mechanisms for using the resources efficiently.

The three WARF programs pursue complementary objectives, with specific consequences as regards the level and scope of the partnership. We have identified 15 grants that focus on strengthening intermediary rural organizations, three grants that focus on DPT (including two that are multi-year grants) and three miscellaneous grants (support in connection with the cost of participating in a workshop, organization of restitution workshops).

2.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation system

The activities financed through a grant include an evaluation. Are the methods and techniques used by WARF to monitor, evaluate and present program activities effective and efficient?

The partner develops its project or program proposal jointly with WARF; the request is then placed in the pipeline although the general terms of the proposed program are decided between the program manager or program officer and members of the requesting organization. It is then the program
Officer's responsibility to defend the program by highlighting the features sought by WARF in all of its programs. The letter of understanding stipulates the monitoring and evaluation mechanism:

- the type of monitoring: strategic monitoring and evaluation;
- the method of evaluation: midterm, ex post;
- the activity implementation schedule and a description of the partner's other activities that are not related to the present grant;
- budget controls and implementation: administrative costs must not exceed 30% of the institution's budget;
- submission of narrative reports: progress reports every six months and a final report at the end of the grant period;
- submission of financial reports;
- verification of procedures for incurring and discharging expenditures, annual audit of the partner.

The partner is expected to provide WARF with a statement of its finances and to submit a record of its bank account six months after the grant expires.

This control mechanism facilitates the process of reaching agreement on the partner's methods of evaluation, provided that the partner is willing. It can thus lead to a higher level of partnership.

To date, some ten grants are nearing completion, but there have not yet been any final evaluations of them. According to information provided by the consultant who visited the Gambia, the GARDA program has performed a self-evaluation; WARF was invited to participate but did not. WARF, on the other hand, maintains that it was never invited to participate in a self-evaluation; moreover, this partnership is still active through the Sukuta program.

In the field, there is no way for the evaluator to readily distinguish between the results of the WARF grants and those from other sources. This impression was formed in particular during our visit to villages in the Douentza region; the realization that another institution had carried out a DP for the Falembougou land use plan heightened our apprehensions.

Is WARF fully equipped to control the destination of its resources? Does its control extend to actual performance and are the field visits appropriately programmed to meet the requirements of monitoring and evaluation? WARF has, on occasion, disputed the technical and financial reports submitted by the beneficiary (as in the example of 7 "A"), but did the program managers ever visit Douentza once the grant was executed?

WARF possesses the means to apply an effective monitoring and evaluation system for FAPs and the fraction of each grant that it retains in order to carry out quality control. But does the monitoring and evaluation system generally work?
3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Strengths

During the space of two years of existence, the level of complexity achieved by WARF for carrying out its mission and the signs of vital growth that it displays must be considered. The results obtained during this short period of time are encouraging; formidable exploratory efforts have been made in the target countries.

The mechanism that leads to the emergence of program proposals is both internal and external. The staff is not in a passive situation of simply waiting; it takes risks by working to identify potential partners and works hand in hand with them in a relation of intersubjectivity and mutual questioning, which is sometimes a source of problems.

One of WARF's concerns is to develop themes that cut across the basic problems common to rural society within the five countries. WARF is trying to create a framework that will tighten the link between research and farmer associations.

Several operational plans have been tested on internal methods for organizing human resources for program management (POLES) and the methods and work tools used in workshops to support partner programs (NPS, SEPO). The team is motivated by both anticipation and innovation.

In order to define programs likely to help it accomplish its mission, WARF organizes seminars, annual training programs and theme-based workshops. The entire program identification and definition process (a combination of institutional diagnosis workshops and field visits) is both participatory and iterative.

The staff has made use of participatory methods and tools of research and action in various ways with WARF partners; it has helped partners develop a program of activities based on these methods; it has enabled the partner to negotiate a grant and has provided both monitoring and advice; altogether, this represents a mine of information that could help redirect WARF strategy if used effectively.

Collaboration with the professional staff of institutions in the field is a way to implement effective programs designed to strengthen farmer organizations and it is an action strategy that creates synergy and the opportunity to tap other sources of expertise and funding.

The participatory process and the desire to make steady progress are helpful in developing support programs that are tailored to specific circumstances and consistent with the organization's absorptive capacity.

The DIP is not an audit and program officers are not auditors; nor is the point to prop up the partner, but it does create the opportunity to establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect, thus opening the door to the necessity for the organization to break with practices that do not strengthen the institution. WARF has handled this process well, and formerly reluctant partners have agreed to modify their behavior.
Promoting high standards of financial management and program quality is also a strength.

In my opinion, the DPT is the most appropriate program for linking research and development and simultaneously contributing to the emergence of a civil society based on rational citizenship. The DPT recognizes local knowledge as being just as legitimate as expert knowledge and considers farmers as researchers. This gives WARF a comparative advantage in relation to other, competing methodologies.

The institutional support envisioned by the program for strengthening intermediary rural organizations has been achieved once the beneficiary's staff has been trained in DP, a certain level of stability has been obtained and strategic planning of the partner's activities has been completed. The partner reaches the point where it needs to abandon a sectoral approach to projects and adopt a more comprehensive strategy for planning and streamlining its operations. A higher threshold is crossed in the case of a multi-year grant for developing a participatory agricultural research activity.

From this point forward, the conditions are met for engaging the mechanisms of the Participatory Development of Technologies program. The objective of the DPT is to develop, finance and provide methodological support for participatory research programs that involve NGOs, researchers and farmer researchers and that either generate or test appropriate solutions to the agricultural and environmental problems experienced by farmers.

WARF has a network of resource persons on whom it can call to meet its partners' needs in the area of training and DP.

It has strengthened the culture and the level of expertise in participatory methodologies.

An initial self-evaluation was conducted in the form of a strategic planning workshop attended by staff members, a member of the Board of Governors and partners.

3.2 Weaknesses

The characteristics identified during the partner selection process are not based on objectively established criteria: a liberal philosophy of the honest man takes the place of evaluation, which, given the social conditions of on-going change experienced by many local organizations, may mask the entire dynamic of social reconstruction in rural areas and ignore the bridges connecting the rural and urban sectors.

The partners consider that the process of developing programs is very time-consuming.

DP is not the product that provides WARF with a significant advantage; the foundation is in competition with consulting firms that offer an identical service, as was noted in the case of the USC-Mali program. WARF has nothing more to gain through DP.

The methods of participatory research in rural areas designed for outreach activities, research-action and research and development (GRAAP, DP, MARP and others) have gradually become more appropriate to the objectives of rural development: they produce identical, totally comparable results.
WARF does not hold a monopoly nor a leadership role in the use of DP, and other structures are capable of providing the same services.

Formalization of the DIP has served to strengthen the capacities of organizations and increase the credibility and confidence of partners, but it appears that the use of DP and DIP is excessive, nearly to the point of excluding other approaches, with the result that their impact is reduced.

The program for training stakeholders and disseminating participatory methods is not sufficiently distinct even though it includes activities specified in the terms of the grant. A fraction of the grant awarded to the partner is retained by the foundation for DP training; the other component of this program, i.e. dissemination, is an activity covered by a FAP.

The methods of monitoring and evaluation are inadequately applied and are not totally participatory as in the phase that precedes the grant. The actual practice is in no way different from what traditionally happens in project evaluations.

Indicators of progress and performance cannot be developed unless an evaluation is performed on the programs carried out within the country at a minimum. This is a prerequisite for establishing criteria to measure, quantify and evaluate the degree of success in obtaining results.

The impact of the WARF grant is tangible only for the partners who have developed multi-year programs and secured the participation of other donor agencies. These are programs whose objectives include the sustainable development of village lands (GADEC), linkages between users and research products (IER) and integrated development (Kounayan). The leverage provided by financial support has succeeded and the conditions needed to ensure the sustainability of the organization have been met. For partners who have not developed a multi-year program, however, the impact of the grant is not perceptible.

The publication program is one of WARF's weaknesses. It is limited to putting the DP workshops down on paper; the result is not so much an account of the proceedings as an attempt to show signs of activity. There is no intellectual effort made, nor any sharing of information on experiences reflecting the social reality of rural life.

Capitalization is the effort that is least developed in the WARF strategy, both internally and in relation to partners. Yet this effort is necessary to evaluate the consistency between mission and strategy. Capitalization of experience has yet to be accomplished; accordingly, staff development needs to be strengthened.

With respect to research-action, a wealth of experience has been accumulated but there has not been sufficient emphasis on sharing and taking advantage of it. The study and systematization of lessons drawn from the practice of grass roots development are theoretical contributions too often ignored in the area of methodology and strategic planning.
3.3 Opportunities

The development of partnerships such as the National Committee for Rural Collaboration in Senegal, the Commissions of Research Users in Mali and collaborative programs with local communities provides assurance that WARF has remained true to the PRAAP goal of strengthening farmer associations.

The agricultural focus of the programs cannot continue to dominate if the WARF mission is to remain relevant. Social demand has grown increasingly diverse. Support of an operational type today takes a back seat to strategic issues (local governance, mobility of the population, etc.). The urban-versus-rural dimension strongly reflects the social reality of rural areas and the key themes are constantly changing.

WARF is evolving within a geographic framework where maritime activities are of critical importance to the regional economy. During an ever greater portion of the year, fishing is the primary productive subsector occupying a significant fraction of farmers who have fallen "victim to the dramatic decline in the quality of available natural resources." Fishermen and their social organizations are emerging and need the multifaceted support that WARF can provide.

Rural artisanal activities and the development of services in the countryside that contribute to income generation are potential vectors of partnership. Fishing, rural artisanal activities and the production of goods and services are all sectors in which to invest.

The farmer is not "a citizen apart" and rural society is an integral part of the general, national society; it exists in relation to urban society and the two entities maintain a complex, non-exclusive, interdependent relationship. They both participate in the dynamics of the country and are crisscrossed by the fault lines of society. The rural exodus of the recent past and today's gradual return to the countryside depend on the rural-urban interface.

Some partners, such as NGOs that were formed to provide support, are right at home at this interface: they operate as intermediary structures between the local level and a higher level. The function of intermediary organizations also depends on specific national dynamics and the degree of integration at the local level. They are not the sole repositories of the social demand for capacity-building on the part of the structures and actors involved in developing rural society.

Farmer groups, women's associations, socio-cultural associations and youth groups are all rural grass roots organizations that reflect the problems of rural society and that can influence the direction of social change. They are involved on a day-to-day basis and need to be encouraged and supported if structures are to emerge that are truly capable of combatting poverty and gender-based social inequality.

A new citizen-based capacity is forming within rural society and WARF should play a role in this dynamic. WARF is aware that macro-economic indicators structure the rural sector and that a balance must be maintained, in other words a give-and-take among and between the government, multilateral and national institutions and local communities.
Year 3 is a year of support; the programs that have already received grants need to be stabilized. The foundation plans to provide various types of strategic, methodological and operational support. This fills the weaknesses of the monitoring and evaluation system.

Fuller integration of the programs or even a merger among them is needed. The pole-based approach is one way of laying the foundations.

3.4 Threats

The foundation should rethink its strategy in terms of strategic, methodological and operational support and target partners with programs that are consistent with their level of growth and ultimate goals. Examination of the partners' grant documents shows that the analytical grid is uniform and identical for all of the beneficiary organizations. This contradicts the claim that the approach to providing support is specifically tailored to each partner. There is a risk which leads to applying identical criteria to organizations that are different in all respects. Research-action organizations, research and development organizations and those that are purely involved in development activities pursue objectives that are necessarily different.

It is not really a matter of innovating new methods but rather of technology transfer; do the current participatory methods use specifically African plans and tools to approach the community? Does the DP lead to ways of appropriating techniques and methods that necessarily require a commitment to break with the past?

In the opinion of one member of the Board of Governors, the participatory methodology seems exaggerated and DP is a method held at arm's length.

Program proposals can also be submitted by organizations capable of hiding a scheme wholly at odds with WARF's philosophy and mission for the sole purpose of obtaining a grant as a breath of air. Senior staff members of NGOs are sometimes more seasoned and have broader professional knowledge and skills because of their longer experience with unregulated associations. They may be better suited to motivating men and women to participate in the process of strengthening capacities to solve rural problems.

Some program grants seem more like a bonus or a sign of recognition and legitimacy than a necessity (SAFEFOD).

While it is true that an institution like IER needs WARF to learn to work more effectively with grass roots organizations, nothing prevents WARF from making direct contact with grass roots organizations which have a much greater need for capacity building. Public research institutions of national stature have the opportunity to develop relations with multinational and international institutions and may, in some cases, not truly need the WARF grant.

The method of selecting beneficiaries is limited and closed, despite the concern with participation that may be displayed; it lacks rigor and there is no competitive process for obtaining a grant. A healthy dose of good will may push things along, but there is no criterion or sign for measuring the beneficiary's commitment to the principles on which the collaboration is based. It is very difficult
to distinguish between semblance and sincerity when the ultimate purpose is to obtain a grant. Experience will help show the types of partners who deserved grants.

NGOs that provide support behave similar to donor agencies in their relations with farmer associations, which can amount to deviating from the WARF mission.

Intermediary organizations risk becoming new structures for training farmers in lieu of the government: decentralization and regionalization are not processes for transferring delocalized powers to certain public and state bodies and structures in order to perpetuate the domination of farmers.

A concentrated effort is being made to avoid a scattered approach and yet the dynamic is blurred due to a lack of consistency between program management and the use of internal human resources and skills.

The organizations active in rural areas are diverse and varied and they have divergent, contradictory interests: rural society is the arena for a process of social differentiation that does not seem to be taken into consideration in the selection of partners, particularly as regards the strategy of strengthening rural organizations.

The training for stakeholders and dissemination of participatory methods is a true IEC program that rounds out the two preceding ones; accordingly, the indications given in terms of the expected results of the IEC part of the evaluation may be retained. External communication is deficient and inadequately developed, while communication products are under-utilized.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Every foundation pursues an ideal and advocates a philosophy of life and existence that is put into action through projects affecting society. The mission of the institution must be redefined and refocused on the issue of sustainable development for a democratic, agriculture-based rural society. It lacks a clear perception of the type of project for which WARF's strategy would consist of "embracing the long haul" rather than "resisting the passage of time." The institution is constructing a lasting and beneficial position over time; we must work together to ensure that it moves in the direction of emancipated, family-based agriculture within a democratic rural society.

2. Developing the capacities of partners is a necessary step for reaching autonomy but, as one member of the Board of Governors said, "participation is good but accountability is better." The strategies for strengthening local organizations are based more on developing capacities than on the autonomy of partners; WARF should focus on developing programs that will make them autonomous.

3. To achieve more efficient teamwork and a clearer program focus, two innovations can be introduced without creating new or additional budget line items: a program director (man or woman) and a research assistant (man or woman).

A reconfiguration of human resources is required and can be accomplished by taking advantage of the wealth of internal experience possessed by staff members, who have already received additional
training for capacity-building purposes (DP, DPT, English, management, etc.). As regards the profile of the two positions, the main criterion should be based on seniority and degree of responsibility and involvement in the existing activities.

This restructuring would of course serve to lighten the work load of the director, thus allowing him to concentrate on raising the visibility of the institution and fundraising.

4. A "return" toward farmer associations, local socio-cultural organizations and autonomous producer organizations would allow the foundation to renew its original philosophy: helping the rural sector become free and fight poverty and social exclusion, thus encouraging the emergence of a capable citizenry that is prepared to assume responsibility with no supervision.

The raison d'être of many intermediary rural organizations is to provide support and seek gifts and grants for grass roots farmer organizations. While the role of these intermediary organizations is undeniable, it is nevertheless true that they owe their livelihood to the problems of farmers. The extent of intermediation between intermediary rural organizations and farmer associations should be reduced.

5. Alleviation of poverty cannot be obtained with a scattershot approach or by delegating opportunity; to reach the most disadvantaged social groups, the rural poor, we must approach their own organizations or encourage the emergence of such organizations where the need exists. There is much to be done in this area using the tools of DP and DPT.

6. WARF should approach grass roots organization of modest scope that are experiencing real difficulties in capacity building and institutional development. All things considered, the handicaps are not the same for all partners; they are more severe and critical for farmer organizations than for intermediary and support organizations, and there also a difference in this respect between minor and major organizations.

7. The impact of the foundation's operations is more likely to provide the catalyst required by local organizations that are having trouble in determining their role within the arena of international development aid. Above all, grants should not be awarded to NGOs that already possess adequate capacities, visibility and institutional stability, nor should they be awarded to partners whose annual turnover is close to the total amount of all WARF grants to grass roots organizations.

8. WARF should support initiatives to share and exchange information on the region's key development issues; it should also share its concerns with foundations of a similar nature that support the development of rural society and the strengthening of farmer organizations in West Africa.

9. An evaluation of programs by country should be carried out, specifically for Senegal and the Gambia, during year 3.

10. By restructuring the programs, it will be possible to remobilize the resources and strengthen the mechanisms for exchanges between WARF and partner organizations, as well as among partner organizations.
11. Consideration should be given to setting up a system of grant proposals to cover specific themes, which is a way to reach a greater variety of partners.

12. WARF should play a role in the area of intellectual and scientific production by helping publication and capitalization (studies and memoranda) projects deal with the common experiences of rural development.

   Experienced staff members (program officers and assistants) should be encouraged to produce master's and doctoral theses and studies based on activities that have been carried out where data used by other organizations could be very useful to WARF.

   Staff should also be encouraged to write articles for scientific reviews.

13. WARF could play a role in the interface between universities and the stakeholders in development by encouraging the organization and development of activities in the areas of information dissemination and capitalization.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

   - Short term (3-18 months)

   WARF could organize a seminar to exchange and evaluate the participatory methods used in the subregion.

   Conduct monitoring and evaluation of grants nearing completion

   Publish articles in specialized reviews

   - Medium term (2-3 years)

   Update the strategic plan

   Proceed with a program evaluation in each of the five countries

   Provide staff members with specialized training (in degree programs if necessary)

   Undertake capitalization and publication activities

   - Long term (5 years and beyond)

   Prepare a permanent training plan
ANNEXES
ANNEX I

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE
WARF MIDTERM EVALUATION

I. JUSTIFICATION

The West African Rural Foundation (WARF) launched its operations on October 1, 1993. Its primary objective is "to help solve the problems of rural society by strengthening local organizations and promoting participatory methods of research and development." The foundation is currently implementing a five year strategic plan, during which it is expected to set up the mechanisms needed to ensure financial sustainability. This sustainability will depend to a considerable extent on WARF's ability to demonstrate that it can produce results. Within this general context, the need for an overall evaluation seems obvious. The stakeholders entitled to inspect the evaluation include WARF's beneficiaries and staff, its Board of Governors and two donor agencies, the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and the Ford Foundation (FF). The purpose of the evaluation is thus to generate conclusions and recommendations useful to these parties.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The two principal objectives of this evaluation are:

- to evaluate the structure and management of WARF at the institutional level in relation to its mission and objectives and, more specifically:
  
  • issues related to governance, such as: defining the relevance of the mission; the roles of and linkages between the various structural units of WARF, including the Board of Governors, management and staff (both program staff and administrative staff);
  
  • financial aspects including planning, financial management and accountability, and auditing. The evaluation will also assess the appropriateness of providing funds to support the sustainability of WARF at its current stage of development. It will also determine the conditions that WARF should fulfill to merit such support;
  
  • issues related to human resources management, such as: planning, training, staff development and systems of motivation and compensation;
  
  • internal and external information and communication;

- to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of WARF programs and, more specifically:
  
  • the consistency between the mission and program planning and implementation:
• the effectiveness and efficiency of program management, as well as the
degree of success in achieving results.

Annex I proposes a menu of questions clarifying the content of each objective.

III. EXPECTED RESULTS

1. BRIEFING

Once the evaluation activities have been completed and a preliminary report is available, a round
table will be organized at which the members of the evaluation team will present their
recommendations to the three groups participating in the evaluation (WARF, beneficiaries and donor
agencies) and respond to their questions and comments. The round table should take place before
the team draws up its final conclusions, first of all because this will provide an opportunity to clarify
any ambiguities or misunderstandings and, secondly, so that the individuals involved in WARF
activities will feel that they have had the opportunity to contribute to the final conclusions and
recommendations. They will then be more inclined to accept and implement the recommendations.

2. A SATISFACTORY EVALUATION REPORT INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING
ELEMENTS:

- An analysis of WARF’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and
threats in carrying out its mission.

- Recommendations and suggestions for actions to be taken in order to:
  • improve WARF performance at the institutional level (planning and
    administrative strategies);
  • improve financial management and budgeting;
  • improve program management;
  • improve human resources management;
  • improve internal and external information and communication;
  • establish a solid basis for financial sustainability.

- Suggestions for progress and performance indicators which could serve as the basis
for a system to monitor and evaluate WARF activities.

IV. EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team will be composed of three consultants, each of whom will cover one of the
following areas:
a) institutional aspects related to governance and resource management;

b) internal and external information and communication;

c) programs.

One of the consultants will be the team leader, charged with coordinating the evaluation activities. Each consultant will be responsible for the quality of work in his or her area. The role of the team leader will be to ensure that the various stages of the evaluation are carried out in a way that will facilitate a satisfactory overview of all areas. This will require, for example, a certain harmony with respect to the methodology used by each consultant. The team leader will be responsible for preparing the final report.

V. CONDUCT OF THE EVALUATION MISSION

Once they have been recruited, the consultants will receive a set of documents that will help them prepare for a meeting to be held in Dakar, at which the objectives and expectations of the mission will be reviewed. These documents will include evaluation input from the donor agencies ("Projet d’un cadre conceptuel") et from WARF ("Note d’orientation de la FRAO"). At this meeting, the consultants will propose a work plan (see suggestions in Annex II).

The entire mission will last no longer than 30 days. The number of days required for each of the main phases (data collection, data processing and analysis, report to stakeholders and preparation of the final report) will be decided at the Dakar meeting.
Do information technologies exist that could help WARF achieve its objectives?

Do staff members have access to information through the library and the information systems?

Are the documents contained in the library adequate? What additional documents would be useful?

Does WARF work in partnership with other organizations that enable it to improve its performance? What are the opportunities in this area?

**PROGRAMS**

To what extent to the programs support the institutional strategy of WARF?

What strategy does WARF use to define programs that will help it carry out its mission? How can WARF focus its activities in line with its resources? What comparative advantages does it enjoy? Are the programs implemented in a way that optimizes the utilization of WARF's resources?

How can WARF seize the opportunities offered by the dynamics between the rural and urban sectors? How can these two systems be integrated into a framework of mutual enrichment and exchange?

How are WARF's partners selected?

To what extent have the program objectives been achieved? Have the expected results been obtained?

How effective and efficient are the methods and techniques used by WARF to monitor, evaluate and present program activities?

What types of data could serve as indicators of program progress and performance?

What are the effects of WARF's programs on the beneficiaries?

What are the impacts of WARF's programs?

What lessons can be drawn for future activities?

**VII. SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE WORK PLAN**

While the work plan is being prepared, the individuals participating in the evaluation formalize their working relationship. The work plan specifies how the terms of reference are to be implemented. It defines the types of data to be gathered in order to answer the questions of the evaluation, it indicates the sources of information and it assigns responsibilities so that each participant will know who is doing what, when, how and why. The main elements of a work plan are as follows:
How should transparency be reconciled with rapid procedures?

How should the procedures manual be revised?

What type of financial management would best prepare WARF for self-management?

To what extent does the Board participate in financial planning and monitoring?

Are the technological and human resources adequate to guarantee effective and efficient systems of financial control and information flow?

What proportion of WARF income is used to cover financial management expenses?

During the first two years of activity, what significant changes took place with respect to financial status, funding sources and WARF expenditures?

What are the reasons for these changes and what measures have been taken as a result of them?

What are the necessary conditions for WARF to carry out successful fundraising? What are its capacities in this area? How could its capacities by strengthened? Could civil society be mobilized or would that entail risks?

Are WARF's human resources and its human resource strategy appropriate to its strategic priorities?

In view of its resources, what work methods should WARF use? Should it encourage teamwork and stop expanding its scope or become more specialized and increase its field of operations at the expense of teamwork?

What are the procedures and criteria in the areas of recruitment, promotion and incentives? Do they enable WARF to recruit and retain quality staff and reward superior performance?

How are staff members evaluated? How are the results of staff evaluations used?

Does WARF have a training strategy for both program staff and administrative staff?

What types of activities would motivate staff and partners?

3. Information and communication

How is WARF perceived from within the institution and without?

What is WARF's information and communication plan regarding its products and services? To what extent does this plan contribute to carrying out its mission?
VI. QUESTIONS FOR THE EVALUATION

INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

1. Organizational structure and governance

- Are WARF’s mission and objectives clear?
- Is WARF’s mission relevant?
- Is WARF appropriately structured for it to accomplish its mission and objectives?
- What are the methods used to establish WARF policy?
- Are WARF’s mission, strategy and activities consistent with each other?
- Do any mechanisms exist to prepare, re-examine and update WARF strategy on a periodic basis?

- What are the roles and functions of each of the structural units of WARF, i.e. the Board of Governors, management, program staff and administrative staff (finances, library, etc.)? Do these roles allow the various units to contribute optimally to WARF performance? How could they be better organized, oriented or strengthened to improve their performance? What mechanisms should be introduced in order to improve the quality of exchanges among them? Are the necessary mechanisms in place to ensure that the various committees function properly?

- Do the management and type of information system at WARF translate into optimal time use by management staff and effective decision-making?
- Do the composition and mandate of the Board of Governors allow it to fulfill its role?
- Does the Board possess the resources needed to function properly?
- What are the selection and performance criteria for members of the Board?
- Does WARF need a different type of Board? What mechanisms are needed to enable members in different countries to work effectively?
- How do WARF staff report to the Board on their activities (information supplied to the Board, decision-making process, monitoring of activities by the Board, etc.)?

2. Resource management

- To what extent are financial planning, comptroller functions, audits and financial reports clear, appropriate and timely?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description of the element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>The introduction describes the context, gives the reasons for the evaluation and explains how the work plan is organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal and objectives of the evaluation</td>
<td>This section reiterates the goal and objectives of the evaluation as stated in the terms of reference. It also summarizes the main problems to be addressed, thus providing context for the questions of the evaluation, and may specify the structure of the final report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation questions</td>
<td>This is a list of the primary and secondary questions that will need to be answered. They may be worded differently than those appearing in the terms of reference. These questions define the scope and limits of the evaluation. Thus they must address numerous requirements for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>This section describes the sources of information, instruments and methods of analysis. It identifies information sources in terms of categories of people to be interviewed (for example, administrators, beneficiaries, Board of Governors), as well as specific individuals to be interviewed (for example, the director, comptroller, etc.). It also enumerates the key documents of the institution and specifies all data collection instruments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule and scope of work</td>
<td>This section determines the implementation schedule and specifies the time frame for each of the products of the evaluation. It also specifies the work to be done by each member of the team during the evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration of the evaluation</td>
<td>This section indicates the members of the evaluation team and their respective roles and responsibilities, as well as the responsibilities of the institutions participating in the evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 2

LIST OF CONTACTS

SENEGAL

WARF STAFF

- Fadel Diamé, director
- Thierry Barreto, program manager
- Abdou Fall, program manager
- Ndèye Coumba Fall, program manager
- Sanyo Koné, program manager
- Mamadou Ba, program officer
- Momar Dieng, program assistant
- Oumou Wane, comptroller
- Rose Diatta, accountant
- Saran Kourouma, assistant to the director
- Manuella Santos, program secretary
- Mame Bineta Sall, secretary/receptionist
- Abdoulaye Ba, WARF consultant

WARF BOARD OF GOVERNORS

- Diana Lima-Handem, member
- Famara, member

DONOR AGENCIES

- Ola Smith, IDRC regional representative
- Akuasi Aïdoo, Ford Foundation regional representative
- Léona Ba, planning and evaluation officer, IDRC
- Papa Léopold Sarr, agricultural services specialist, World Bank
- Paul Lachance, advisor, director of international cooperation (CIDA), Embassy of Canada
- Monica Maassen, NOVIB

PARTNERS/CLIENTS

Institut Carrefour
- Director

SAFEFOD
- Director

GADEC
- Mamadou Daff - Lamine Ba
- Demba Malal Ba - Alassane Guiré
- El Hadj Ba - Tao Sow

7 "A" MAAREWA/COUMAMBOURE
- Colette Kouyouga - Oumar Diamanka
- Samba Mbalo - Colette Badinka
- Bougoupé Coulibaley - Amadou Madel Baldé
- Dialigné Diamanka - Mamadou Baldé
- Coumba Baldé - Samba Gano
- Ballaba Cissé - Mamadou Sabally
- Moro Gano - Siren Diao
- Samba Diallo - Coumba Aissata Baldé
- Teyal Balde, village chief of Coubambouré

UGAPS
- Boubacar Fofona - Daouda Diallo
- Mamadou Sakho - Diafara Fofana
- Djienaba Guisté - Astou Seck
ANNEX 3

LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

1. WARF: Manuel de procédures
3. WARF: Rapport du séminaire régional: appui et renforcement des organisations locales: problèmes et nouvelles idées
4. WARF: Compilation de rapports de diagnostic participatif du stage annuel 1994
5. WARF: Compilation de rapports de diagnostic participatif du stage annuel 1995
7. WARF: Analyse des performances réalisées pendant la période 1994-1995
8. WARF: Stratégie de fundraising
9. WARF: Board of Governors, Bamako, April 21-26, 1996: Gestion optimale de développement de la FRAO (fundraising document)
10. WARF: Board of Governors, Bamako, April 21-26, 1996: Gestion optimale de développement de la FRAO (PARI-6 document)
11. WARF: Présentation du rapport annuel: An 1, 1er octobre 1993 au 30 septembre 1994
15. WARF: Rapport de l'atelier de réflexion stratégique avec les partenaires de la FRAO, 9-10 novembre 1995
17. WARF: Résolutions de la session huis clos de la réunion du Conseil des Gouverneurs tenue à Dakar du 29 au 31 mai 1996
18. PRAAP: Comment faire un atelier d'initiation en diagnostic participatif: manuel de l'animateur, 1992
NGOs
- Awa Pape Gueye, NGO Support Project, USAID
- Lilian Baer, BAOBAB Training and Resource Center
- Moussa Fall, ENDA Tiers Monde

MALI

BOARD OF GOVERNORS
- Ousane Sy, board chairman
- Snémoussa Soumah, member

PARTNERS/CLIENTS
IER
- Mêmè Togola, director of the Regional Agronomic Research Center of Sikasso
- Siaka Dembélé, scientific coordinator at the General Directorate

USC
- Fatima Traoré - Youba Koné
- Abderahmane Ngoïta - Ntomarry Diara
- Mareme Ouloguem

ARAFD
- Mariame Sy

GUAMINA
- Ousmaïlla Bamany - Awa Nango
- Ousmane Guindo - Adama Maïga Goïta
- Seydou Ougoïba - Amadou Ougoïba
- Gallo Ougoïba - Samandé Traoré
NGOs

- Daba Coulibaly, Stop Sahel
- Mamadou Jobbateh, PIA
- Nancy Devine, World Education

GAMBIA

- Solomon Owens, treasurer of the Board of Governors
- Kebba Ba, GARDA
- Fatma Baldé, TANGO

OTHER CONTACTS

- John Sutter, Ford Foundation consultant (telephone contact)
- Boubacar Traoré, deputy commander, Cercle de Douentga, Mali
19. PRAAP: Astuces et aides mémoires sur le diagnostic participatif: manuel du stagiaire, 1992
20. WARF: Méthodes participatives de développement de technologies
21. WARF: Evaluations paysannes de la technologie: méthodologie de l'évaluation flexible: unité d'instruction n°1
22. WARF: Evaluations paysannes de la technologie: méthodologie de l'évaluation flexible: unité d'instruction n°2
23. L'Atelier, N°0, 1, 2, 3
24. La Lettre de l'Atelier, N°1, 2, 3
25. WARF: Brochure de présentation
26. WARF: Prospectus
27. WARF: Film: "D.P. à Kolda"
28. WARF: Film: "Sur les pistes du monde rural"
29. WARF: Film: "Stage annuel 1994 en Casamance"
30. WARF: Film: "Gestion des ressources naturelles"
31. WARF: Dossiers des programmes subventionnés (22 programmes)
32. Fergusson, Frances D. & Moohr, Michael: Report to the Ford Foundation on a trip to Senegal
33. WARF: Stratégie de formation et de développement professionnel du personnel
34. WARF: Le scénario de programme
35. WARF: Rapport d'audit des comptes arrêtés au 30 août 1994
36. WARF: Analyse des performances réalisées pendant la période 1994-1995 (auto-évaluation du Directeur)
37. WARF: Meeting of the audit committee, September 19, 1995
38. WARF: Meeting of the audit committee, January 6, 1995
39. WARF: Meeting of the audit committee, May 26-27, 1996
40. WARF: Termes de référence pour l'audit 1995
ANNEX 4

LIST OF WARF PUBLICATIONS

1. List of Publications in Distribution

1.1 Publications Sold and Offered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Number Printed &amp; Cost</th>
<th>Number Sold</th>
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<tr>
<td>Methods participatives de développement de technologies, price: 2500 F, French version</td>
<td>1000 copies</td>
<td>690,000 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment animer un atelier de formation en Diagnostic Participatif: Manuel de l'animateur, price: 8000/6000 F</td>
<td>400 copies</td>
<td>1,765,000 F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Astuces et aides mémoires sur le Diagnostic Participatif, price: 5000/3000 F</td>
<td>600 copies</td>
<td>1,235,000 F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluations paysannes de la technologie: Méthodologie de l'évaluation flexible, Unité d'instruction n°1, price: 3600 F</td>
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</table>
Evaluations paysannes de la technologie. price: 4200 F

1.2 Free Distribution

Titles

Number Printed & Cost

Number Distributed

• L'Atelier n°1

1000 copies
500,000 F

Out of stock

• L'Atelier n°2

1500 copies
695,000 F

Out of stock

• L'Atelier n°3
(French: 1000 copies; Portuguese: 500 copies; English: 500 copies)

2000 copies
3,365,450 F

Fr (983), Port (282), Eng (34)

• La Lettre de l'Atelier n°1
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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Price</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<td>La Lettre de l'Atelier n°2</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>48,000 F</td>
<td>172</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geração participativa de tecnologias</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>360,000 F</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Analise institucional das organizações rurais en Afria - Guia Pratica</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>850,000 F</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>O Diagnostio Participativo</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3,250,000 F</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compilation des rapports de DP du stage annuel 1994 (French, English and Portuguese)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,980,000 F</td>
<td>Fr 60, Port 15, Eng 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compilation des rapports de DP du stage annuel 1995 (French, English and Portuguese)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,980,000 F</td>
<td>Fr 75, Port 27, Eng 46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Rapport du séminaire régional: "Appui et renforcement des organisations locales: problèmes et nouvelles idées" (French, English and Portuguese)
  300 copies
  Fr (146), Port (40), Eng (10)

• Brochure de présentation de la FRAO (French, English and Portuguese)
  1500 copies
  1,054,000 F
  Fr (989), Port (101), Eng (197)

• Prospectus
  As needed

• Film: "DP à Kolda"
  25 copies
  2,600,000 F

• Film: "Sur les pistes du monde rural"
  25 copies
  1,550,000 F

• Film: "Stage annuel 1994 en Casamance"
  15 copies
  5,000,000 F

• Film: "Stage annuel 1995: Gestion des ressources naturelles"
  20 copies
  8,212,825 F

2. To be issued or re-issued
• Inventaire de technologies testables pour l'agriculture et la gestion des ressources naturelles
• Analyse institutionnelle des organisations locales - Guide pratique
• Rapport public des activités An 1 et An 2
ANNEX 5

SUMMARY OF SALES OF WARF PUBLICATIONS

DOCUMENTS

Manuel de l’Animateur - Quantity
Astuces et Aides Mémoires - Quantity
Analyse Institutionnelle - Quantity
Module DPT - Quantity
Evaluations Paysannes - Quantity
Manuel d’Evaluation - Quantity
Recherche d’une Solution à un Problème - Quantity

CLIENT - City/Country

Projects/NGOs

Livestock Support Project - Dakar
Agricultural Education Project - Dakar
ANFA - Dakar
Arid Lands Program CRWR - Dakar
GARDER OUEME - Benin
Central Casamance Project - Ziguinchor
PAGERNA - Kaolack
PROGES - Ziguinchor
NCDT - Nigeria
Canada-Sahel Solidarity - Mali
BASANKUSU - Zaire
CIRADE-GRADE - Dakar
ARED - Dakar
LVIA - Diourbel
NIGER NGO - Niger
LVIA - Thiès
EUPD NGO - Guinea
ASRADEC - Dakar
ACA/Mali - Mali
LVIA - Thiès
SAHEL 3000 - Dakar
CBDIBA NGO - Benin
Institut Carrefour - Thiès
KAMOBEUL Project - Ziguinchor
DEDRA/SUEEB - Benin
MADJIGUI NGO/KAYES - Mali
Agro-Sylvio-Pastoral Project - Guinea-Bissau
PROARES - Dakar
AILD - Burkina Faso
GAVD (African Volunteer Development Group) - Dakar

Subtotal

International Organizations

North-South
MISEREOR - Germany
AGRECOL - Switzerland
World Neighbors - Burkina Faso
GTZ/SAP - Dakar
ENDA/ACAS - Dakar
ENDA/Youth Action - Dakar
ILO/ACOPAM - Dakar
UNICEF - Dakar
ACE - Luxembourg
Micro-Réalisation Coop. Technique - Niger
ILLEIA - Niger
CARITAS - Kaolack
Office of Assistance and Social Development - Mali
DED/German Development Agency - Mali
CFRAR - Côte d'Ivoire
Save the Children - Gambia
OXFAM Belgium - Sédhiou
IRED - Sri Lanka
DED/German Development Agency - Mali
Münstergass-Buchhandlung - Switzerland
Brot fur die Welt (Africa Bureau, Finance and Monitoring Division) - Stuttgart
ACIVA (Association for International Cooperation through African Volunteerism) - Dakar
Winrock International - Dakar
Senegal-Germany Project - Dakar
MICCAO - Nigeria
AFVP (French "Volunteers for Progress" Association) - Dakar
RITA - Dakar
Plan International - Dakar

Subtotal

Research and Training Institutions

ISE (Institute for the Environmental Sciences) - Dakar
ISE - Dakar
INADES Documentation - Côte d'Ivoire
Central Library, Faculty of Agronomy - Belgium
ISE (foreign seminar participants) - Dakar
ISE (foreign seminar participants) - Dakar
CESAO - Kaolack
Research Team for Support to Development - Mali
RODALE International - Thies
ISRA - Dakar
IER - Mali
ISRA/NRBAR - Dakar
INADES Training - Chad
Center for Technical Training - Bakel
R.T. Senegal - Dakar
CNRA - Mali
Oumarou Ibrahim - Niger
Mamdou Ndiaye - Dakar
Mathias Basséne - Thiès
Ms. Jeanne Nanitelamio/IFAN CA - Dakar
Mr. Peeters/APEFE - Dakar
Djibril Koulibaly - Sédhiou
Daouda Sakho - Thiès
Abasse Tidjani/Institute of Agronomic Research - Niger
Barkallil Nadia - Morocco
Chérifa Aloui - Morocco
Babacar Faye/ISRA - Dakar
Mario L. Martins - Guinea-Bissau
Mody Ba - Dakar
Moussa Guéye, DUA/GTZ Project - Dakar
Ousmane Thiam/BPC - Dakar
Gorgui Sow/ADF-AFRIQUE - Dakar
Ngagne Mbao - Dakar
Assane Goudiaby/ISE - Dakar
Mohamed Sy/ACIST - Rwanda
Mr. Delacosta (document in Portuguese) - Cape Verde
Ibra Diakhaté/SRAT Governance - Louga
Mr. Sama/Plan International - Guinea
Gilbert Ndiaye/Plan International - Guinea

Subtotal

GRAND TOTAL

TOTAL SALES FIGURE
ANNEX 6
MISSION SCHEDULE

Period from June 10, 1996 to July 22, 1996

Dakar: June 10-19, 1996
- meeting of consultants, IDRC, WARF, Ford Foundation
- presentation of the work plan
- collaborative meetings of consultants
- visits to partners in Thiès and Dakar
- meeting with donor agencies
- meeting with members of the Board of Governors present in Dakar
- meeting with program officers

Mali: June 20-30, 1996
- Mr. Otto's visit (June 20-23)
- Mr. Sène's visit (June 26-30)

Gambia: Mr. Otto's visit on July 1-3, 1996

Senegal: field visits to Koungheul, Tamba and Kolda on July 2-5, 1996

Dakar: July 8-12, 1996
- consultant meeting
- report preparation
- presentation of preliminary reports

Departure of consultants

July 15-22, 1996
- meeting with WARF staff (programs)
- completion and submission of program report