

SHARED GOVERNANCE OF DRINKING WATER IN RURAL SENEGAL

Using the commons-based approach to co-produce a public service?



THE CARNETS FAIRE COMMUN were produced by the Commons and shared governance action-research programme, which was initiated by GRET in 2019. The programme is opening up a learning space, where commons-based approaches capable of generating and facilitating shared governance dynamics for fair, sustainable management of resources, services and territories can be tested and documented as part of development projects. How to create the conditions necessary for collective action and collective learning? How to promote systems of shared governance within which citizens-users have real power to control and decide on issues affecting them, alongside public authorities and the private sector? How to reflect on the position of development operator, how to design intervention strategies, which facilitation methods to choose? How to use projects as official development assistance tools to support these social transformation processes over the long term?

In line with the Cahier projet collection, the Carnet Faire commun series, with its short, easy-to-access format, shares operational findings drawn from concrete experiences in various geographies. The objective of these handbooks is to enrich the reflections and references of practitioners and political deciders wishing to promote forms of commons-based social organisation and shared governance.

SHARED GOVERNANCE OF DRINKING WATER IN RURAL SENEGAL

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFD	Agence française de développement (French Development Agency)
AICHA	Appui aux initiatives des collectivités locales en hydraulique et assainissement (Programme to support local authorities' initiatives in hydraulics and sanitation)
ARD	Agence régionale de développement (Regional development agency)
ASUFOR	Association d'usagers de forages ruraux (Association of rural borehole users)
ASUREP	Association d'usagers des réseaux d'eau potable (Association of drinking water network users)
CCREA	Cadre de concertation régional pour l'eau et l'assainissement (Framework for regional consultation on water and sanitation)
CIRAD	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
DEM	Direction de l'exploitation et de la maintenance (Directorate of Operations and Maintenance)
DISS'EAU	Dialogue initiated by civil society on water and sanitation in Senegal
DRH	Division régionale de l'hydraulique (Regional hydraulics division)
FASUREP	Fédération des associations d'usagers des réseaux d'eau potable (Federation of drinking water network users' associations)
GPSE	Gouvernance partagée des services d'eau potable (Shared governance of drinking water services)
LMC	Local monitoring committee
OFOR	Office des forages ruraux (Office of rural drilling)
PARDI	Problem-Actors-Resources-Dynamics-Interactions
POSCEAS	Plateforme des organisations de la société civile de l'eau et de l'assainissement au Sénégal (Platform for the coordination of civil society organisations on water and sanitation in Senegal)
REGEFOR	Réforme du système de gestion des forages ruraux (Reform in the management of rural boreholes)
SAEP	Système d'adduction d'eau potable (Drinking water supply system)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SENSE	Suivre ensemble les services publics d'eau potable du Nord (Joint monitoring of public drinking water services in the North)
SEOH	Société d'exploitation des ouvrages hydrauliques (Water systems operations company)
SOMH	Subdivision d'outillage mécanique de l'hydraulique (Hydraulic machinery subdivision)
UGB	Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis

THE COMMONS-BASED APPROACH

Our choices for society are mainly operated by **public authorities** (national and decentralised), which we expect to defend the general interest, and by the **private sector** (companies and foundations), which is often considered more efficient from a managerial point of view. Directly or indirectly, both of the latter monopolise arenas of governance, i.e. spaces in which decisions are made. They mobilise a model of society based on competition and survival of the fittest, exclusive private or public property, regulation by the market and by the State, and various forms of control over populations' behaviour.

These models of State-private governance **often struggle to ensure social and environmental justice**. Ecosystems are being degraded, biodiversity is being eroded and the climate is changing, accentuating social inequalities. In the Northern and Southern hemispheres, essential services such as access to drinking water or energy, under public control that in some cases delegates these public services to private operators, remain inaccessible to a large number of people who cannot afford them. Similarly, urbanisation and governance patterns in protected areas, which are decided by public or private authorities, are not reconciling conservation of the environment with inclusion of precarious populations who depend on it. The inability of current systems of governance to meet growing social and environmental challenges is generating defiance among citizens vis-à-vis institutions, with which they no longer identify. This situation is leading to socio-political insecurity, which is a threat to peace and limits the power to act.

This overview is deliberately exaggerated to underscore **the urgency of exploring ways to move beyond the State-private governance paradigm**. This realisation is expressed in particular in Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG), which targets the implementation of exemplary institutions and systems of inclusive decision-making¹. This is a considerable challenge for official development assistance.

The **commons** movement, which is multidimensional and has been growing since its renaissance in the 1980s with the work of political scientist Elinor Ostrom², is opening up new possibilities. The concept of the commons provides a powerful benchmark for social organisation, which can be described as a set of interdependent stakeholders directly affected by a common challenge, who decide to undertake collective action to co-

1. "Target 16.6 – Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels" and "Target 16.7 – Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels", UN, "16 Peace, justice and strong institutions", Sustainable Development Goals [accessed 3 May 2022], <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>

2. Her best-known publication is *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

construct shared governance. Within a continuous collective learning process, it defines and implements rules for access and use that are deemed fair, and ensure social, economic and environmental sustainability of the object of the common (see Figure 1 opposite).

GRET is convinced that forms of shared governance “in commons” are more likely to ensure social and ecological justice for several reasons. For example, they enable citizens to take (back) ownership of the powers to decide and control alongside public authorities and the private sector. They also maintain dynamics of collective action and learning on ways to define and develop the rules to be respected, which is a source of adaptation and resilience. Lastly, they recognise bundles of differentiated, inclusive rights (access, harvesting of resources, management, etc.) and mobilise levers for cooperation and “commoning” to build the society of the future.

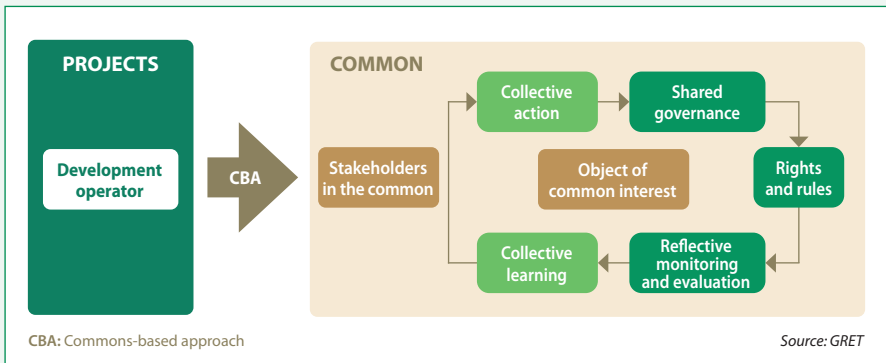
Such forms of social organisation, to be invented and built, are likely to provide better responses to the SDGs and to the issues and challenges targeted by official development aid.

GRET proposes developing a **commons-based approach** that can be adopted and rolled out by development operators wishing to promote such forms of social organisation as part of their interventions (see Figure 1 opposite). When implemented as part of development projects, a commons-based approach draws from the theory of the commons to promote and support dynamics for social organisation and construction of shared governance “in commons” around resources, services or territories. In this way, the commons-based approach covers everything an operator can implement as part of a project, notably to:

- reveal interdependencies between stakeholders and the common challenges they face;
- motivate collective action of concerned stakeholders to seek and implement solutions together;
- favour fair representation of stakeholders in the shared governance system;
- incite stakeholders to make their action part of a collective learning logic based on a system of internal reflective monitoring.

This initiative by GRET aims to contribute to and draw inspiration from the commons, the social and solidarity economy, and popular education movements. It explicitly targets the strengthening of civil society, citizen emancipation and democracy. Its specificity is that it focuses on interventions conducted as part of official development aid, an environment that is both privileged and constrained. It is in line with reflections undertaken by Agence française de développement (AFD) and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), while providing an additional contribution to the operationalisation of a commons-based approach within development projects targeting issues related to natural resources, services and territories.

Figure 1: THE COMMONS-BASED APPROACH



The commons-based approach discussed here is not a panacea. Apart from the fact that it is currently in vogue – which risks relegating it to the level of a slogan, a catch-all word or a travelling model³ – this approach aims to foster exploration of other ways of making society and of governing, locally and more broadly, for greater social and environmental justice.

The commons-based approach invites us to take a step back, to focus on issues of governance and on the manner in which we conduct development projects. It is neither a recipe nor a method, it is a way of guiding our interventions, of reading situations of action, of conducting our actions and thinking about our position as a committed facilitator. The best way to understand what a commons-based approach looks like in operational terms, is to see how it is rolled out in concrete actions... and, better still, to test it oneself.

As part of its Commons and shared governance programme, GRET is developing and testing a commons-based approach in diverse geographies and contexts with an operational and methodological ambition. The aim of the programme is to think about the operationalisation of a commons-based approach in concrete, practical terms. Tests conducted within projects supplied insights originating from various contexts and situations of action around diverse commons-related issues. Capitalisation on these experiences, focusing on governance and the commons-based approach, is aimed at enriching reflection and the various references of practitioners and policymakers wishing to promote forms of social organisation and shared governance inspired by the commons. ●

3. "Any standardised institutional intervention [...], aiming to produce any social change, and that is based on a 'mechanism' and 'devices' [...] assumed to have intrinsic properties inducing this change in various contexts of implementation", Olivier de Sardan J.-P. (2021), p. 26, (non-official translation).



Users carrying out technical monitoring of the water purification and treatment unit in Thiago as part of the Aicha project

Introduction

This Carnet Faire commun describes the approach taken by GRET to support the emergence of a shared governance of the drinking water service in the Gorom-Lampsar area in Senegal in the context of a national reform initiated in 2014 to delegate this public service.

In July 2015, the Gorom-Lampsar area, located in the Saint-Louis region in the north-west of the country, was the first territory to begin implementing the delegation of the public service as instituted by the reform. Even though for decades users had played a key role in managing the service, in particular through the associations of drinking water network users (Asurep) and their regional federation (Fasurep¹), following the reform they were not given a specific role and were disregarded by the new delegated operator. The ensuing collective mobilisation by users (through demonstrations and coverage in the media and on social media), in this area as well as in other delegated areas, led to the reform being suspended in 2020 to allow time for it to be re-evaluated.

Within the framework of the Shared governance of drinking water services (GPSE) project implemented between 2019 and 2022², GRET supported this collective mobilisation and helped users in Gorom-Lampsar stand in opposition and negotiate their role so they could have, at the very least, a monitoring or control function in the service's new governance structure. In line with its support strategy in the rural hydraulics sector which began in the 1990s, GRET decided to test a commons-based approach. The aim was to create the conditions for dialogue to achieve a more efficient and fair water service by implementing forums for consultation between user organisations, public authorities and private operators, and strengthening the ability of user organisations to make their voices heard and take part in decision-making with respect to the water service, which is considered a common good.

1. Federation of drinking water network users' associations.

2. As part of the Commons and shared governance programme, co-funded by the Agence française de développement (AFD).

As part of the GPSE project, GRET tested a participatory modelling method (Pardi³) with the support of the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) in order to better understand the interdependencies between stakeholders and the levers for collective action relating to the water service. This method enabled the Fasurep to reflect on how to increase the legitimacy of the users' representative bodies. Basing itself on these preliminary modelling exercises, GRET then tested a serious game as part of the Diss'eau project (Dialogue initiated by civil society on water and sanitation in Senegal⁴), this time with the support of Lisode, a cooperative consultancy. The game was designed by all the sector's institutional stakeholders, including the users represented by the Fasurep, and encouraged them to reflect together about a shared governance system. Notably, in partnership with the regional development agency (ARD), it helped set up the first local monitoring committee (LMC) of public service delegations, bringing together all the stakeholders concerned by the service, including its users⁵. This new consultation framework, established at both local and regional levels, tested a type of public service co-production. By linking the actions carried out at a regional level (as part of the GPSE project) with those carried out at a national level (as part of the Diss'eau project), GRET was able to actively contribute to achieving such recognition by the public authorities. ●

3. Problem-Actors-Resources-Dynamics-Interactions.

4. The Diss'eau project was also funded by AFD and implemented by the same team in conjunction with the GPSE project.

5. Since 2012, this approach, carried out with the ARD, has been supported by the Île-de-France water syndicate (Sedif) as part of the Programme to support local authorities' initiatives in hydraulics and sanitation (Aïcha).

PART 1

Strengthening the role of users in water governance in Senegal

Senegal, which had a population of 18 million in October 2023⁶, has higher-than-average human development indicators compared with other countries in West Africa. Known for the vitality of its civil society, it is one of the few states in the subregion to have experienced democratic continuity.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO “SAFELY MANAGED” WATER IN RURAL AREAS

In Senegal, the proportion of people with access to drinking water is higher than the average for West Africa. In 2021, 98.8% of people in urban areas and 91% of people in rural areas had access to drinking water⁷. However, **there continue to be weaknesses and inequalities in drinking water access, quality and continuity of supply**, in particular in rural areas which experience problems in the management of water services.

The international classifications set out in the text box on page 15 help give a better understanding of the situation. UNICEF estimates that, in 2021, 56.7% of the country's population had access to “improved-basic” drinking water services and 27.4% had access to “safely managed” services⁸.

6. Senegalese statistics and demographics agency, 2023, <https://www.ansd.sn/> [accessed 17 October 2023].

7. Senegalese Ministry of Water and Sanitation, <https://eau-assainissement.gouv.sn/> [accessed 17 October 2023].

8. UNICEF, Data by country, <https://data.unicef.org/country/sen/#water> [accessed 17 October 2023].

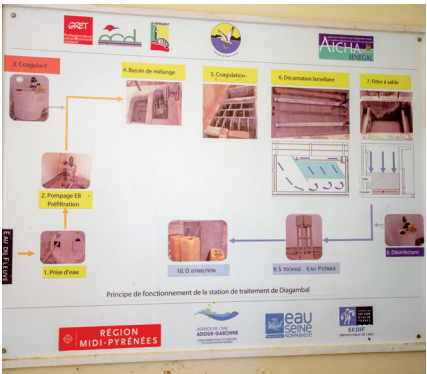
Shared governance of drinking water in rural Senegal

Using the commons-based approach to co-produce a public service?

Data from the previous year also show wide disparities between regions, with 20% of people in the less well-served regions not being able to access “improved” drinking water services⁹. Now the aim is to achieve universal access to “safely managed” services.



Water taken from the water purification and treatment unit in Bokhol



Principles of operation of the Diagambal treatment plant built within the framework of the Aicha project



Water purification and treatment unit in Thiago

9. WHO, UNICEF (2021), pp. 120 and 157.

INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION FOR ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER

Drinking water access levels are internationally classified into four main categories.

- **Safely managed:** drinking water from an improved water source⁽¹⁾ that is accessible on premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination.
- **Improved:** access is classified as improved in two cases:
 - Basic: drinking water from an improved source, provided collection time is not more than 30 minutes for a round trip including queuing;
 - Limited: drinking water from an improved source for which collection time exceeds 30 minutes for a round trip including queuing.
- **Unimproved:** drinking water from an unprotected dug well or unprotected spring.
- **No services or surface water:** drinking water directly from a river, dam, lake, pond, stream, canal or irrigation canal.

(1) “Improved” drinking water sources are those which, by nature of their design, satisfactorily protect the water from any outside contamination, in particular faecal contamination.

Source: WHO/UNICEF, JMP, *Drinking Water*,
<https://washdata.org/monitoring/drinking-water> [accessed 17 October 2023]

USERS’ ROLE IN WATER GOVERNANCE BEFORE THE REFORM

The public drinking water service in rural Senegal has experienced significant changes over the years, from fully centralised management, first under colonial administration and then under the State, to the gradual recognition and professionalisation of user organisations (the associations of rural borehole users [Asufor] and the associations of drinking water network users [Asurep]) in delivering the service. By becoming project owners of the drinking water infrastructure and networks, over the past few decades the user organisations had acquired and earned a key role in the governance of the service: **this was a local governance structure that involved the users.**

THE GROWING ROLE OF USER ORGANISATIONS IN MANAGING DRINKING WATER

A quick look back in history at how drinking water was accessed in rural areas from colonial times until the 2010s shows the way in which the central authorities were led to gradually hand over more responsibilities to the borehole and drinking water network user organisations⁽¹⁾.

“Water lines” designed by the colonial administration (prior to 1960)

Water access was a key strategic focus in the development of colonised territories. By using “water lines”, railways could be built, export crops and then livestock farming could be developed, and populations could settle. Well brigades, comprising European leaders and local workers paid by the colonial administration, dug hundreds of **wells** along these water lines, without the villagers being involved. Questions about how the wells would be maintained quickly arose. In 1910, indigenous provident societies took over from the brigades in operating, maintaining and funding the wells. These societies, chaired by colonial administrators, levied a mandatory fee on the local populations to carry out this work. With the arrival of private companies in the 1930s came the development of powerful **boreholes** to access deep water tables. As this was a more costly process, the borehole markets were allocated by the central authorities and from 1949 they were managed by the Hydraulic machinery subdivision (SOMH) of the French West Africa Directorate of Public Works. The SOMH brought the well brigades back into operation and created a borehole maintenance brigade as well as a water resources studies brigade. Hydraulic investments were funded by investment and equipment funds set up by mainland France.

A post-independence “all-State” with financial difficulties (1960-1984)

Following independence, the State took over from mainland France, maintaining the same territorial organisation and firmly resolving to take control of water services in order to assert its legitimacy. It relied on the SOMH in particular, and on funding then coming from international donors. In rural areas, the indigenous provident societies were eliminated. Prefects, and then the rural local authorities established in 1972, took charge of well construction and maintenance, while the SOMH well brigades and maintenance brigades were reinforced.

(1) This summary of the history of the public drinking water service in rural Senegal was largely based on a thesis written by Clément Repussard while carrying out operational work with GRET (Repussard C., 2011, pp. 86-110). It was also based on the book *L'État sourcier : eau et politique au Sénégal* (Gomez-Temesio V., 2019).

The significant increase in the number of boreholes created by the SOMH led to questions about who would fund their operation (pump fuel, civil servant operators) and maintenance, which until then had been the State's full responsibility. A semi-public company, the National drilling company (Sonafor), was created in 1979 with the aim of it taking over from the SOMH and charging users the operation and maintenance costs.

However, this project was not completed; the public service remained in the hands of the SOMH and Sonafor limited itself to developing boreholes. Following repeated droughts that increased water demand and restructurings that reduced public funding, the "all-State" model ended up in difficulty. Due to recurring borehole breakdowns, fuel supply delays and frequent service interruptions, several village communities decided to organise the collection of flat-rate contributions from users on a voluntary basis, thereby taking over from the State in managing the basic operating costs of the service. These were to be the origins of the future **borehole management committees**.

Limited recognition of motorised borehole management committees (1984-1997)

The declaration of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade brought about key reforms in the early 1980s: the enactment of a Water Code and the creation of a Ministry of Water and Sanitation divided into three directorates that took over the SOMH's activities (the Directorate of Hydraulics responsible for infrastructure, the Directorate of Operations and Maintenance [DEM] that coordinated the well and borehole brigades, and the Directorate of Water Resources Management and Planning [DGPRE]). However, although international funding enabled the Ministry of Water and Sanitation to increase investments in physical assets (boreholes, etc.), the neoliberal-inspired restructuring measures took away its means of ensuring the public service's continuity (operation and maintenance).

It was in this context that a rural hydraulics reform was enacted by the inter-ministerial circular of 1984, establishing **shared responsibilities** between the State and users through the creation of motorised borehole management committees. The management committees took charge of operating, maintaining and renewing small installations by selling the water or levying fees. This reform put an end to the free service; water was now sold at a flat rate. The State (DEM) retained responsibility for charges relating to large infrastructure and thereby held on to significant decision-making power. This sharing of responsibilities, which in many cases only served to confirm the de facto situation, resembled more a transfer of charges. Nevertheless, users were given a position of responsibility and became both the consumers and operators.

.../...

User associations responsible for managing the water service (1997-2014)

The motorised borehole management committees sometimes had difficulty maintaining a good quality service. Breakdowns continued to occur and water sales were low, giving insufficient income to cover running costs. It became apparent that funds had been misappropriated⁽²⁾. A new reform in the management of rural boreholes (Regefor), which benefited from financial support from the Agence française de développement (AFD) between 1996 and 2004, aimed to **professionalise the management committees**. They were replaced by the associations of rural borehole users (**Asufor**). At the same time, associations of drinking water network users (**Asurep**) were established around the water purification and treatment units that had been built along the Senegal River and Lake Guiers. The Asufor and Asurep mobilised all the different types of users (households, livestock farmers, market gardeners, manufacturers, etc.) based on voluntary membership. They grouped together all the individuals living in the area served by the borehole or purification plant who paid the fee, therefore making them both “users” of the service and “members” of the Asufor or Asurep. The association status of the Asufor and Asurep enabled them to open bank accounts, ensuring funds were less likely to be misappropriated. They also received greater recognition from the State, which gave them technical, commercial and financial responsibility for managing the drinking water service. In return, the Asufor and Asurep committed to complying with a number of principles: selling water by volume, using professional operators and ensuring the participation and involvement of women. As well as being in charge of operating the facilities, the associations were responsible for **representing users** and defending their rights and interests. Lastly, they often funded “social” expenses from the revenues received from water sales. Such expenses, which were unrelated to the water service but nevertheless appreciated by the users, included contributions to key fundraising events for the community⁽³⁾. Overall, Regefor was considered a success and was certainly an improvement on the previous mode of governance. However, a number of the Asufor and Asurep experienced problems and still struggled to ensure service continuity and water quality, and replace equipment and management bodies as needed. Despite the commitment they made, few of the Asufor and Asurep used private operators. Finally, it was not possible to replace all of the management committees by an Asufor or Asurep, which was one of the limiting factors of Regefor.

(2) These observations were analysed in detail during the second report of the consultation of participants in the field of water supply in Senegal organised in December 1997 by pS-Eau and the DEM in Dakar (Kaba O., Aubourg G, 1997).

(3) This practice came to an end following the reform of 2014 as it went against the principle of “water pays for water” promoted by the international community and according to which water revenues received from billing users should fund service costs, as part of an approach governed by sectoral autonomy. However, local populations highlighted this as an advantage that the Asufor lost.

The role held by user organisations in supplying the drinking water service in rural areas was suddenly challenged in 2014 with the enactment of a **national public service delegation reform**, significantly changing the way the service was governed across the country. Users, who had been responsible for managing the service through the Asufor andASUREP, were dismissed from their organisational role in their locality. Their responsibilities in terms of management and operations were handed over to the recently-established Office of rural drilling (Ofor) and a few large private operators under public service delegation contracts, respectively.

To ensure efficiency and economies of scale, eight delegation zones were defined to manage approximately 1,600 drinking water supply systems (SAEP) nationwide. The DEM was closed down and plans were made for the public water service in rural areas to be delegated over time to eight Senegalese and international business consortiums. The reform was to be implemented gradually.

The first public service delegation, implemented in July 2015¹⁰, operated across two different territories: the Gorom-Lampsar area (Saint-Louis region) and the Notto-Ndiosmone-Palmarin area (Thiès region). This was known as the “Gorom-Lampsar and Notto-Ndiosmone-Palmarin delegation lot” (NDP-GL¹¹).

GOROM-LAMPSAR, THE FIRST AREA TESTED BY THE REFORM

Gorom-Lampsar, located in the Senegal River delta in the Saint-Louis region in the north-west of the country, is made up of lowlands encompassing the ocean, river and desert, through which two distributaries of the Senegal River flow: the Gorom and the Lampsar.

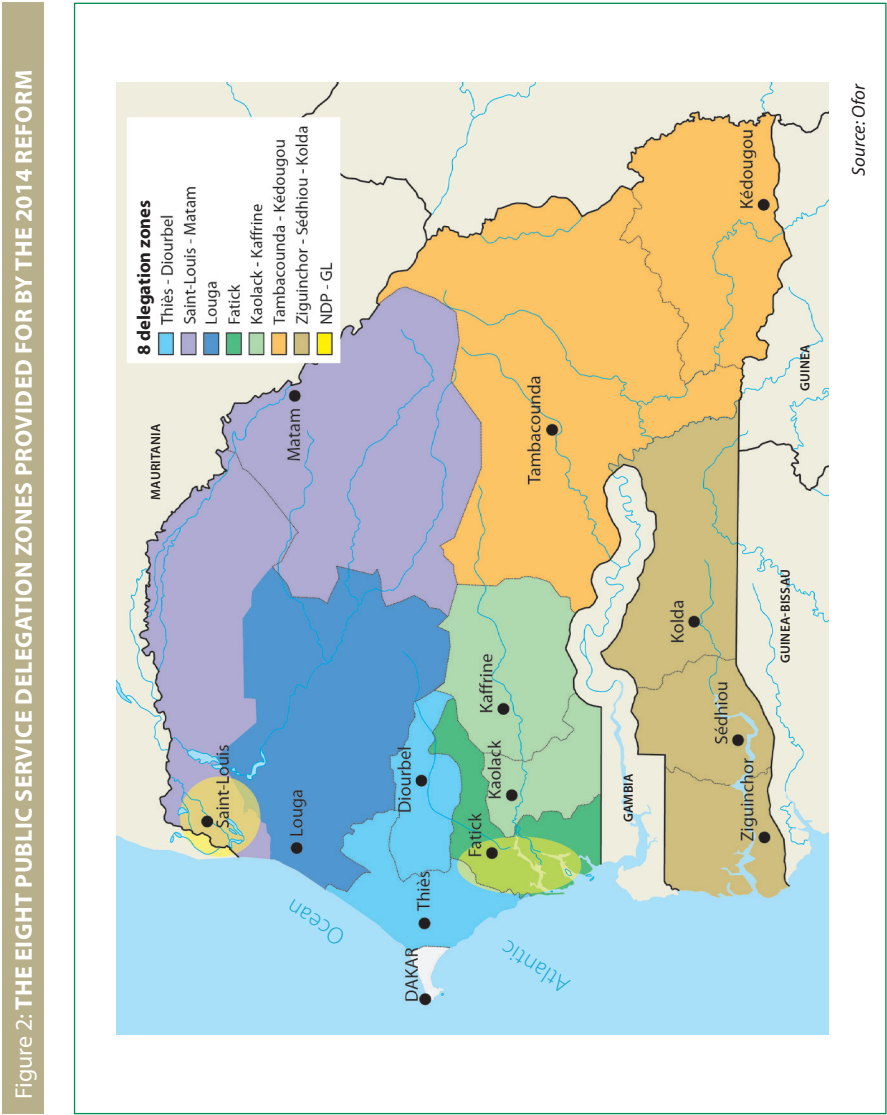
It is only in recent years that populations in this area have had access to drinking water networks. Until the 2010s, water was supplied to nearly all the localities directly from the river, bringing with it significant health risks. Since 2011, the implementation of the Millennium water and sanitation program (Pepam¹²) has enabled the construction of 13 **water purification and treatment units** (UTPs). As of 2017, these served around 63,000 inhabitants across 78 localities in the Saint-Louis and Dagana departments¹³.

10. By the end of 2023, four other contracts were operational with Aquatech (central area), Flex'Eau (Fatick-Kaolack), Soges (Tambacounda) and SDER (Matam).

11. As service delegation zones were allocated to private operators based on the principle of “water markets”, the State created different “lots” which were subject to calls for tenders. Each delegation lot corresponded to one or more geographic areas or even a group of SAEPs.

12. Pepam was officially launched in 2004 by the Senegalese government as a sectoral strategy and action plan for meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

13. David F., Chiron P. (2019), p. 20.



The SAEPs can be described as follows. The **12 purification plants**¹⁴ pump raw water out of the Senegal River or its distributaries (here the Gorom and Lampsar), then treat the water through a decantation, flocculation and chlorination process. The treated water travels through a primary network and then secondary networks to metered water points (standpipes and individual connections). As they are considered technically complex solutions, the State originally planned to entrust their management to professional operators as part of a public-private partnership.

Since all the SAEPs used purification plants, users grouped themselves into Asurep to **manage the networks**. In order to offer a professional, quality service, the Asurep decided to pool their efforts within the Gorom-Lampsar **federation of drinking water network users' associations (Fasurep)**¹⁵. As it benefited from legal recognition, the Fasurep's work included bringing down the cost of electricity, buying inputs (aluminium sulphate, chlorine and lime) in bulk and supporting Asurep members in producing annual financial statements, together with the Centre de gestion de la vallée (a management support organisation).

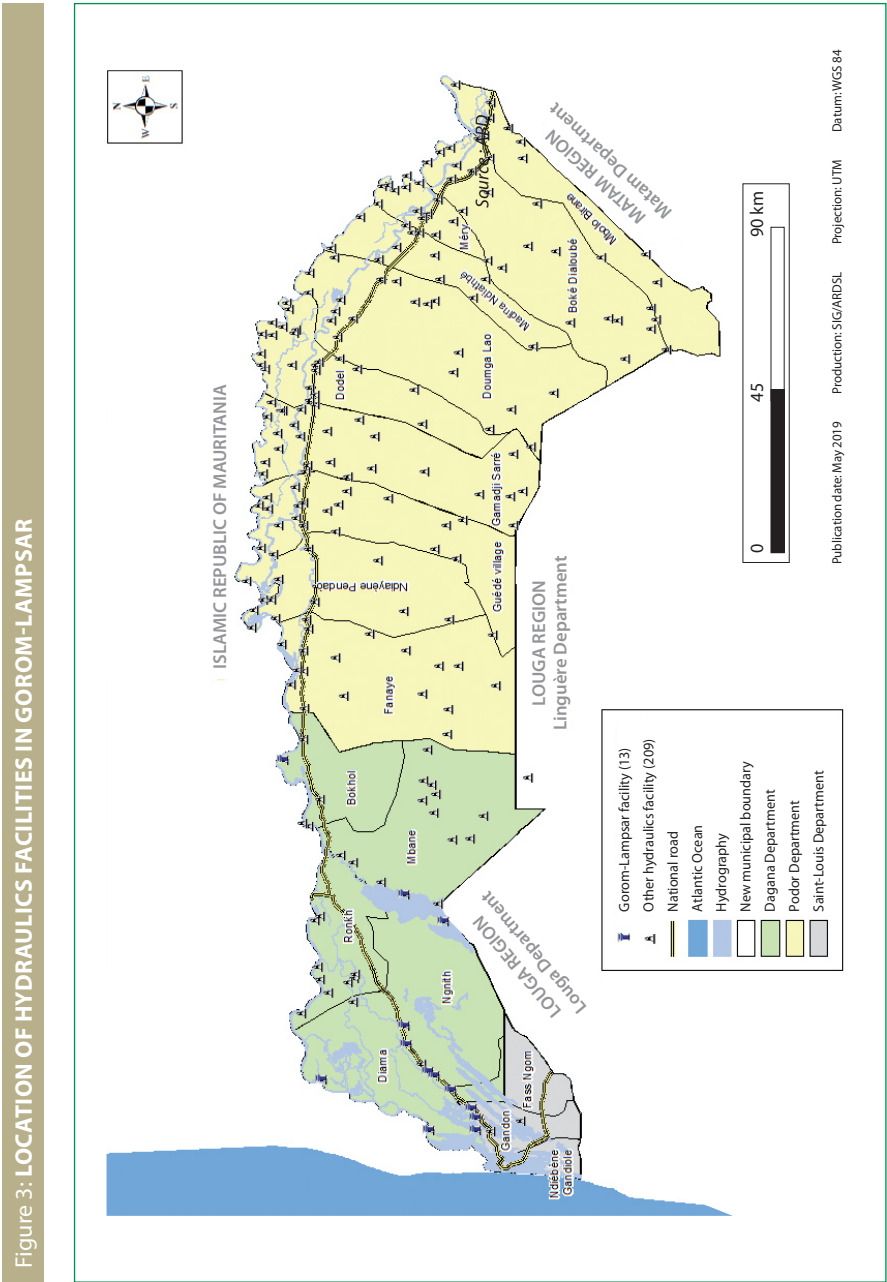
When the State implemented its public service delegation reform in the Gorom-Lampsar area, it effectively took away the control held by the Asurep over the networks. Ofor delegated these management responsibilities to the water systems operations company (SEOH), a Senegalese-Dutch-Rwandan consortium. This company took over managing the service and was not required to define the new role of the Asurep and Fasurep... who did not take long to react.



Mr. Gaye, President of Asufor, at the top of the Diagambal water tower

14. One of the 13 UTPs was not operational because the population was supplied water directly through Senegal's national water utility (SONES)/SEN'EAU network.

15. The Asufor and Asurep were sometimes grouped into federations, also known as unions, in order to pool their means and have greater power in decision-making bodies. These federations represented users with respect to home-grown initiatives that extended beyond the village level. In the Saint-Louis region, under the Aicha programme implemented by GRET and the region's sub-prefects, the Asufor and Asurep were organised into local unions (including the Fasurep), departmental unions and a regional union.



POSITIONING THE USER ORGANISATIONS IN THE NEW GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The public service delegation reform brought about a sudden overturn of the old process of building local governance structures involving users. According to the reform's promoters, the Asufor and Asurep would have been incapable of properly managing the water service and only the private sector was able to do this. However, this evaluation of the Asufor and Asurep was not based on any shared assessment. No justification has yet been given for the decision to turn to private operators to provide a quality service at a lower cost, which has given rise to problems of a different nature.

When Ofor and private stakeholders began to take over the organisation of the drinking water service, some users had immediate reservations and felt they were not sufficiently involved. One of their main concerns was the **loss of proximity of decision-making bodies**. In the absence of new local structures for representing users and giving them control over the service, the reform risked evading the operators' **accountability** towards users and failing to meet local expectations. Problems related to water management and the resulting conflicts continued to be managed locally, in particular at borehole level. Since the operator's management was based in another region and its local representatives (based in the municipalities) had no decision-making power, it took a long time for connection requests or complaints to be dealt with. Ofor, with just one management team based at national level, had no local structure enabling users to contact them easily.

In this context, the Asufor and Asurep, whose role in water services had been taken away from them, were quick to contest the reform. They received the backing of local councillors who appealed to the government. In 2020, the reform and the signing of the last four delegation contracts were put on hold by presidential decision. An **external evaluation of the reform**, commissioned and funded by the World Bank, was finalised in July 2021¹⁶.

In Gorom-Lampsar, when the new private operator (SEOH) arrived, the Asurep suspended all their activities and organised their come back, drawing on support from the Fasurep which opened a consultation among users. The concerns raised by the persons questioned confirmed the need to rethink the way in which the national reform was designed and implemented and **open up a dialogue between users, the operator and Ofor**. The Gorom-Lampsar users did not only pay close attention to the progress made in providing greater access to drinking water, but also to service continuity and water quality, and the speed at which breakdowns were resolved, etc.

16. As of the end of 2022, the report on the evaluation of the reform was still awaiting publication.

Following the arrival of the SEOH, they did not believe that the quality of the service had improved, even though it was promises of a better service that drove the move to the private sector. Bills were getting higher and higher and the delegated operator did not have enough employees to be reactive enough. The network had not been extended even though it had been announced that investments would be made in this area¹⁷ and no information had been provided concerning any future works. The users criticised the operator's and Ofor's lack of **transparency** as well as the absence of checks and balances in governance, for example through **regulatory or citizen control mechanisms**.

Given the users' determination in gaining legitimate and democratic representation in delivering and regulating the service, GRET supported the user associations, Ofor and public authorities in opening a dialogue concerning the hydraulics reform through the GPSE¹⁸ and Diss'eau¹⁹ projects. Initially positioned to provide technical support and promote local and shared management, since 2019 the GRET team has taken a commons-based approach to foster collective thinking on the shared governance of the drinking water service, support users in constructive mobilisation and set up dialogue and decision-making forums with all stakeholders. One of the objectives was for user organisations to make their voices heard and take part in decisions made relating to the service. ●

17. The delegation contract provided for a 135 km extension of the network through Fondev, one of the three funds to be used for splitting the expected revenues from water sales. The operator was supposed to inform Ofor of the areas where the network was to be extended (based on surveys and connection requests), make the necessary investments and inform users.

18. Shared governance of drinking water services (GPSE) was a project funded by AFD and implemented by GRET between 2019 and 2022.

19. Dialogue initiated by civil society on water and sanitation in Senegal (Diss'eau) was a project funded by AFD and implemented by GRET between 2020 and 2024.

PART 2

GRET's support, from technical expertise to dialogue facilitation

GRET has been working on drinking water projects in rural Senegal since the end of the 1990s. Its positioning has evolved over the years and projects, transitioning from a technical and managerial approach to a “commons-based approach”, focusing increasingly on user participation and then shared governance.

TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS AND SUPPORT IN LOCALLY-MANAGED WATER SERVICES (1997-2012)

GRET first worked in Senegal's drinking water sector in 1997 as part of the Rural hydraulics wind turbine programme in the Saint-Louis and Louga regions (Alizés)²⁰. It promoted the **development of technical innovations in drinking water production**, in particular the building of pump plants powered by wind and solar energy in villages in the Saint-Louis region and purification plants for water pumped from the Senegal River. At the same time, it supported each village in **establishing borehole management committees** to ensure management of the equipment over the long term. In 1984, the management committees became the first legally-recognised structures enabling users to participate in the governance of water services. The committees consisted of two or three people, including the village chief, and were responsible for collecting flat-rate contributions and paying expenses relating to the running of the service (driver's salary and fuel costs). Maintenance costs were, however, covered by the State.

20. With funding from the European Union, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, Aquassistance and the Seine-Normandie water agency.

Between 2008 and 2012, the Drinking water and sanitation support programme for rural communities in Senegal (Pacepas)²¹ enabled GRET to continue its technical support, in particular in five large rural towns in the east of the country (in the Matam and Tambacounda regions). It focused on **professionalising the user organisations** by helping the management committees convert into user associations (Asufor/Asurep) and encouraging these associations to recruit private operators. It also concentrated on **training local authorities** in making their sanitation master plans.

ASUFOR AND ASUREP: SOCIAL ROOTS AND PROFESSIONALISED SERVICE

The associations of rural borehole users (Asufor) and the associations of drinking water network users (Asurep) incorporated a board, an executive committee and a general meeting, at which the users were directly represented. The executive committee and board were made up exclusively of users. The executive committee was made up of delegates who each represented a category of users, a village, a district or a professional organisation. These delegates could not be village chiefs, local councillors or religious leaders. The executive committee elected an executive board of nine people, including a president, two vice-presidents, a secretary and assistant secretary, and a general supervisor and assistant supervisor. The way in which the Asufor and Asurep were constituted, as overseen by the sub-prefect, was rooted in the community dynamics of the villages and districts, thus underpinning their **social legitimacy**.

Each Asufor and Asurep had a “control committee” comprising municipal representatives, a local administration reporting to the sub-prefect and the head of the well and borehole brigade, himself reporting to the Ministry of Water and Sanitation. The municipality therefore had first-hand information which it could use to make local hydraulics and sanitation plans, contribute to investments in boreholes and provide financial support to development projects.

The Asufor and Asurep could either manage themselves or contract a professional manager. They were encouraged to delegate their operations to small private operators, but this was not widely practised. The association often took care of all aspects of the water service (operations, maintenance, infrastructure renewals, investment support and user representation).

21. The Pacepas project (2008-2012) was carried out with the support of the Seine-Normandie water agency (AESN), migrant associations, municipalities, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais regional council, local entrepreneurs, the Adoma Foundation, Grand Lyon, the Programme to support solidarity initiatives for development (PAISD), the Île-de-France water syndicate (Sedif), the Inter-municipal syndicate for gas and electricity in Île-de-France (Sigeif), Véolia and the City of Paris.

GRET initiated a **reflection process on the services' management and governance systems**. The State encouraged the management of the services to be professionalised and delegated to small private operators who were more experienced than the Asufor/Asurep and the local authorities. Such delegation took the form of either indirect management or lease contracts²², risking a decrease in service quality if disparities in the powers and abilities of the entities prevented local users exercising control over the operator.

STAKEHOLDER MONITORING TOOLS AND MECHANISMS FOR IMPROVING THE SERVICE (2012-2015)

The Programme to support local authorities' initiatives in hydraulics and sanitation (Aicha)²³, which was designed in response to Regefor and initiated in 2012, enabled GRET to extend its support in the Saint-Louis region. In partnership with the Saint-Louis regional development agency (ARD), GRET worked to strengthen local authorities' guidance and management abilities, implement technical and organisational solutions adapted to large rural towns, and professionalise service management and monitoring with the Asufor and Asurep. In particular, GRET supported the **design and use of water service planning tools and monitoring mechanisms** by the stakeholders concerned, i.e., local authorities, user associations and State departments.



Technical monitoring of the water purification and treatment unit in Thiago

22. Étienne J. et al. (2011).

23. A series of projects implemented by GRET since 2012 with funding from the Adour-Garonne water agency, the Seine-Normandie water agency, the Midi-Pyrénées region and the Île-de-France water syndicate (Sedif).

To facilitate service planning and monitoring, GRET supported the municipalities, region and then department²⁴ in drawing up a water and sanitation atlas of the Saint-Louis region²⁵. This atlas grouped together data on the proportion of people with access to the service and also enabled the ageing condition of the hydraulics infrastructure to be assessed: in 2013, 62% of facilities (boreholes and purification plants) were more than 10 years old. Failings in maintaining or renewing equipment led to recurring technical breakdowns. Therefore, the atlas was very useful to stakeholders for identifying where investments needed to be made to achieve universal access to water across the territory.

STEFI, A SYSTEM FOR MONITORING THE SERVICE, BY AND FOR THE SERVICE'S STAKEHOLDERS

The technical and financial monitoring system (Stefi)⁽¹⁾ was implemented by and for the water service's stakeholders. It is a "system for collecting, analysing and reproducing data relating to the running of drinking water services"⁽²⁾. To implement the system, an external service provider goes to each Asufor or Asurep to collect the technical and financial data required to assess a series of performance indicators. The service provider is paid based on the volume produced or on a flat rate, or both. The system has been designed to bring multiple benefits. By providing references, Stefi encourages managers to produce results and follow up on their commitments. It enables them to know their service better, identify problems and priorities, and make informed management choices. The data gathered are distributed to users, local authorities, the DEM and the Regional hydraulics division (DRH), thereby improving the sharing of information and accountability and transparency mechanisms. Since the data are produced by an external service provider, in principle they are considered to be reliable and allow for objective discussions. If the Stefi results become the subject of debate, the tool helps facilitate a real **collective learning** process which includes all of the water service's stakeholders. If, as a result, measures are taken to rectify any problems, the system can be a real asset in **improving the quality of the service**.

(1) Faggianelli D., Desille D. (2013).

(2) Amy A. (2015), p. 73, (non-official translation).

24. Following Act III of the 2013 decentralisation, which removed regions as a territorial authority.

25. Saint-Louis ARD, GRET (2015). The atlas comprised maps that presented and characterised the Saint-Louis region and showed the location of drinking water services, the different types of systems, the monitoring of infrastructure, the proportions of people with access to water and sanitation, the ways in which the services were managed and the rates charged.

The introduction of water service performance monitoring by the stakeholders met two needs. By often “self-managing” the water service, the Asufor and Asurep did not have all the necessary technical, commercial and financial expertise for handling unexpected events and making long-term investment plans. As for the local authorities and State departments, they did not have the performance data that would enable them to monitor the quality of the services or the regulatory mechanisms (pricing system, investment strategy, failure to meet commitments to one another, etc.). In this context, GRET proposed that the stakeholders test a pilot technical and financial monitoring system (Stefi)²⁶, which was designed as a management tool for improving the services.

Stefi was first trialled on 14 sites (purification plants managed by an Asurep or boreholes managed by an Asufor) before being rolled out to 46 other sites.

AN ACTION-RESEARCH APPROACH TO ANALYSE THE CONTESTED REFORM AND MAKE PROPOSALS (2015-2019)

The 2014 reform all of a sudden fundamentally challenged the locally-rooted dynamics of managing the service through the Asufor/Asurep and the local authorities. Ofor became responsible for managing the service and private operators took over the operations. As civil society was not given a role or a means of being represented under the new model, the users were excluded from the service management. Territorial authorities were also left out.

In the Gorom-Lampsar area, where the first public service delegation to the SEOH was tested in 2015, the transfer of management had significant consequences: when the Asurep lost their management role, most of their members became demoralised and tensions mounted when the assets under their possession that they had funded were taken away. As users were not consulted about the changes in governance, they strongly apprehended it. The Fasurep, which grouped together 13 Asurep in the area, tried to continue its role of representing the users, but it was not recognised by Ofor or the delegated operator. The latter only felt accountable to Ofor and did not consult the users.

In this context of a contested reform and poor dialogue, GRET adjusted its positioning. It set itself the objective of **encouraging consultation** between the State and operator, on the one hand, and local authorities and users, on the other, so the latter

26. Stefi was implemented for the first time in Senegal in 2012, having already been used in other countries (Mali, Niger).

could find their place in the reform. The Joint monitoring of public drinking water services in the North (Sense) project²⁷, implemented between 2017 and 2019 by GRET in collaboration with Gaston Berger University (UGB) in Saint-Louis, the ARD and the Fasurep, enabled local stakeholders to carry out action-research on three issues simultaneously: the representation of users in the drinking water service, the representation arrangements for users in the Saint-Louis region and the multi-stakeholder dialogue situation. The first study was carried out using a qualitative and quantitative method (questionnaires) and the two other studies only used qualitative methods (interviews and focus groups). This action-research enabled a **shared assessment** to be carried out on the situation and also on the perceptions and feelings of the stakeholders.

MAKING A SHARED ASSESSMENT OF THE WATER SERVICE

The action-research carried out as part of the Sense project fell within the scope of a new partnership arrangement, the University-territories action-research alliance (ARUT), which aimed to generate knowledge and add value to the knowledge generated through an action-research approach with a view to improving territorial practices, processes and dynamics. For the research, this alliance, co-led by UGB and GRET, brought together all the stakeholders involved in the public water service: the users, State, private sector, development operators, and technical and financial partners.

This action-research enabled a shared and documented assessment to be made on the lack of dialogue and user representation in the new configuration of the rural hydraulics sub-sector. It highlighted and described users' fears, which mainly concerned the risk of water rate increases, the decrease in water and service quality and the lack of operator involvement. It also underlined shortcomings in the running of the former representative bodies (Asufor and Asurep), bringing to light limited participation by user delegates, a wait-and-see attitude from the population and the monopolising of bodies by an opportunistic local elite. It confirmed that there was insufficient dialogue between the various stakeholders; there were virtually no relations between the civil society bodies and the new stakeholders (Ofor and the private operators) and users had great difficulty in escalating their complaints and accessing information. Finally, it indicated that users were given very little information about the service, which played a part in lowering their confidence in the private operator and Ofor.

27. Funded by the European Union as part of the Support programme for civil society initiatives (PAISC).



FEEDBACK FROM

Representation issues in Gorom-Lampsar

“One of the problems we are faced with is the sudden transfer of service management to the new operator, the SEOH. It ‘took’ the purification plants from us, without consulting with us. Another problem is that we don’t have any representatives at Gorom-Lampsar area level. We are only customers, whereas we should have representatives who are able to speak on behalf of us. Given the new situation, the users are going to try and set up an association so they can better work with the new federation that will be put in place. Currently, we have planned to draft a memorandum setting out all the complaints from the user associations so they can then be communicated at the federation level.”

Arôna Touré, former Chairman of the ASUREP in Makhana and member of the Fasurep. Arôna Touré was the founding member of the Gorom-Lampsar Federation. Prior to his death in 2020, he actively fought for greater shared governance of drinking water services for users in Gorom-Lampsar. His approach always helped ease tensions and preserve social peace, all the while advocating respect for user interests.

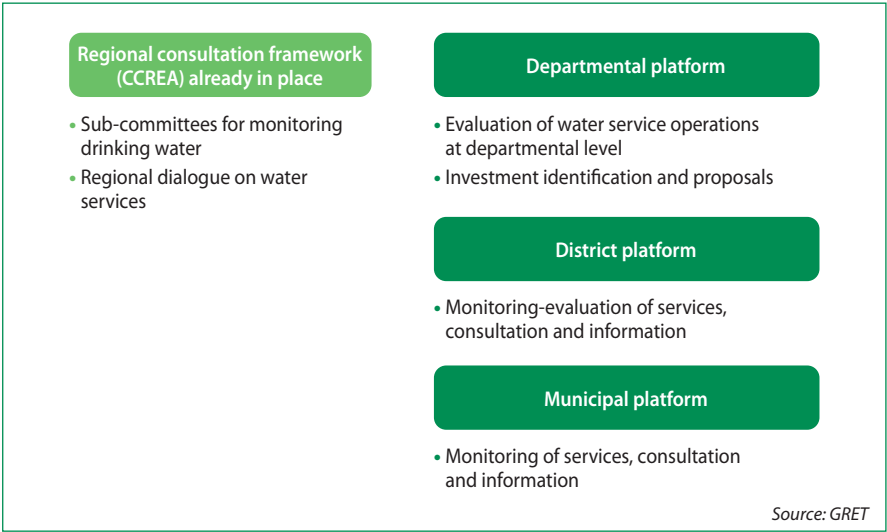
The action-research results were also used by GRET, UGB, the Saint-Louis ARD and the Gorom-Lampsar Fasurep as a basis for co-creating proposals to set up **consultation platforms at regional, departmental, district and municipal levels**. It was clear that these consultation platforms needed to be based on and consistent with the **Framework for regional consultation on water and sanitation** (CCREA), the only framework for dialogue still in operation at the time of the study and whose mandate it was to “serve as a reflection and exchange platform for achieving universal access to drinking water and sanitation with sustainable governance of the service”²⁸.

In November of the same year, a regional workshop at the university brought together all the stakeholders to compare and develop these proposals and consolidate the Sense project study. The final results of the studies were presented and approved during a national capitalisation workshop in June 2019 (the date on which the Sense project came to an end and the GPSE project commenced).

28. The CCREA was designed to ensure subsidiarity between its various stakeholders: the State, territorial authorities (municipalities and departments), the Asufor and ASUREP departmental unions, private operators, technical partners (including GRET) and the universities of Dakar and Saint-Louis.

Despite a rather reserved reception from Ofor, the proposal for consultation platforms, made by representatives from all the stakeholders, was the first step in setting up a shared governance system for water services across various levels. The planned system needed to enable the Asufor and Asurep to play a part in monitoring the services by making the voice of all users heard.

Figure 4: **PROPOSAL OF RELEVANT LEVELS FOR A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE**



A MULTI-FACETED STRATEGY TO CREATE GOVERNANCE "IN COMMONS" (2019-2022)

In 2020, the collective mobilisation by users (through demonstrations and coverage in the media and on social media) led to the reform being suspended by presidential decree. This interruption in the service delegation process and the start of an evaluation into the reform funded by the World Bank opened up an opportunity to initiate a dialogue with the public authorities on the reform and test out governance arrangements that included users. It was in this context that the GRET teams decided to integrate their support measures into the Commons and shared governance programme and test a commons-based approach within the GPSE project.

● SETTING OUT THE POSITIONING AND “INTENTION” OF GRET WITH RESPECT TO THE REFORM

With the support of CIRAD, a partner in the programme, the teams held two Problem-Actors-Resources-Dynamics-Interactions (Pardi²⁹) modelling workshops, which enabled them to define internally a **shared systemic vision** of how local stakeholders would be included in the service’s decision-making and management process. This exercise enabled GRET to refine and formulate its positioning and intention with respect to the reform as follows: support users in repositioning themselves as contributors to an essential service “in commons” rather than as simple consumers. As such, GRET aimed to support users and private and public stakeholders in establishing a shared governance system through forums for making decisions and negotiating the rules on delivery of the water service³⁰.

● TESTING a CONSULTATION BODY: THE LOCAL MONITORING COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE DELEGATIONS

Following on from proposals made as part of the Sense project, the GRET teams, who worked together and joined forces on the Aicha and GPSE projects, proposed testing a **local monitoring committee (LMC) for public service delegations**. Even though such a committee had been provided for by the reform, more than eight years after the reform came into force it had still not been defined or put into operation, despite, it being, according to the GRET teams, key to the reform’s success. GRET suggested that the committee should meet every six months and bring together sectoral authorities, the administration (governor and sub-prefect), local councillors, private operators and users. This body would also become an instrument in the shared governance of the services. The data from Stefi would be used to support discussions between stakeholders on infrastructure (including extensions and renewals), service performance and the measures needed to make improvements. In 2021, GRET received approval from Ofor and the SEOH to implement and test the LMC and, in August 2022, the LMC was established at a regional level. It reports directly to the CCREA, which meets at least once a year. This regional LMC is the first to be operational at both levels. The district LMCs, which still need to be established, will meet at least every six months. They will be convened by the sub-prefect at district level and by the governor at regional level. GRET will support the first consultation sessions to propose the format of the meetings and topics to be discussed.

29. See Part 3, p. 43.

30. Right at the start, GRET made the decision to not position itself as an “opponent” to the reform, but rather as a facilitator in making proposals to improve it, by working on the conditions needed for success. It was in this context that it supported the setting up of shared governance.

● FASUREP RESTRUCTURING AND SUPPORT

Since priority still needed to be given to strengthening the ways in which users were represented and their ability to play their part in governance, GRET continued to provide organisational support to the Fasurep. In line with the recommendations from the Sense action-research, GRET, UGB and the Saint Louis ARD supported the Fasurep in setting up **user committees** for each of the Gorom-Lampsar SAEPs. In 2019, 12 user committees³¹ were set up, replacing theASUREP. They comprise all the service's users, who make up the general assembly, and a steering committee of three people. The Fasurep was restructured and now consists of all the members of the 12 user committees. It is organised into several committees adapted to the current reform (monitoring-evaluation, communication, capacity building, hygiene and sanitation, and external relations). GRET and its partners provide them with training on the running of the public service delegation, advocacy and communication, and internal governance of organisations. GRET supports the Fasurep in defining its actions and facilitating multi-stakeholder discussions on the current reform (news, results of the evaluation of the reform, etc.) and continues strengthening its technical and managerial abilities. Workshops are also organised to reflect on the shared governance of the service using a collective analysis based on the Pardi method. Between 2020 and 2021, the Fasurep collected the expectations of the users of the 12 SAEPs through the user committees, drew up its action plan and drafted its plea to defend users' interests and improve the service.

● SUPPORTING CIVIL SOCIETY'S PARTICIPATION IN CO-PRODUCING WATER POLICIES

In collaboration with the Platform for the coordination of civil society organisations on water and sanitation in Senegal (POSCEAS), UGB and Lisode³², GRET commenced a new action-research project entitled Dialogue initiated by civil society on water and sanitation in Senegal (Diss'eau)³³. Launched in 2020, this four-year project put into action the commitments shared by GRET and POSCEAS³⁴ to strengthen **civil society's participation in co-producing and controlling public policies and water and sanitation services**. The team has supported the structuring of POSCEAS and provided

31. One of the 13 Gorom-Lampsar sites was no longer operational because the population was supplied water directly through Senegal's national water utility (SONES)/SEN'EAU network.

32. A cooperative consultancy specialised in designing and implementing participatory approaches.

33. Funded by AFD's FISONG "Citizen participation in water and sanitation".

34. Since 2018, POSCEAS has been committed to a series of initiatives in distributing information and promoting dialogue with the Senegalese State regarding current public policies or those in the process of being defined. POSCEAS aims to improve access to effective and sustainable water services through greater and renewed citizen participation.

its members with training on water law, advocacy techniques and management in order to help the platform become a major and legitimate player in sectoral dialogue. The Diss'eau project has thus provided an opportunity to reflect on public policies at a national level, which work in synergy with actions carried out at a local level in the Saint-Louis region.

To work at this national public policy level, GRET endeavoured to strengthen the role of civil society as a citizen watchdog and interpellator. Users, in particular, had to be able to keep control over decisions made by the operator or Ofor with respect to the service (investments, billing, etc.). They also needed to have the means to make their voices heard by going through either the POSCEAS citizen advocacy platform or consultation frameworks where they could express themselves, be heard and contribute to rural hydraulics policy.

● A serious game for dialogue, a complaints platform FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

To strengthen civil society's dual watchdog and interpellator role, GRET used a commons-based approach to design and implement innovative methods and tools for mobilising users and citizens, on the one hand, and promoting cooperation between them and public and private stakeholders, on the other. The GRET team first tried out a "serious game" that simulated the interactions that occur around the drinking water



POSCEAS pre-forum in preparation for the World Water Forum in March 2022

service and aimed to encourage dialogue between the users, Ofor and the operators. The second new development was a digital tool (in the design process as of the end of 2022) that works on the principle of a “telephone complaints platform”. It is being built and managed by the local social enterprise Jokalante, which specialises in what it calls “community accountability” in rural areas³⁵.

● **OBTAINING RECOGNITION FOR THE CO-PRODUCTION OF THE PUBLIC WATER SERVICE: A TWO-TIER STRATEGY**

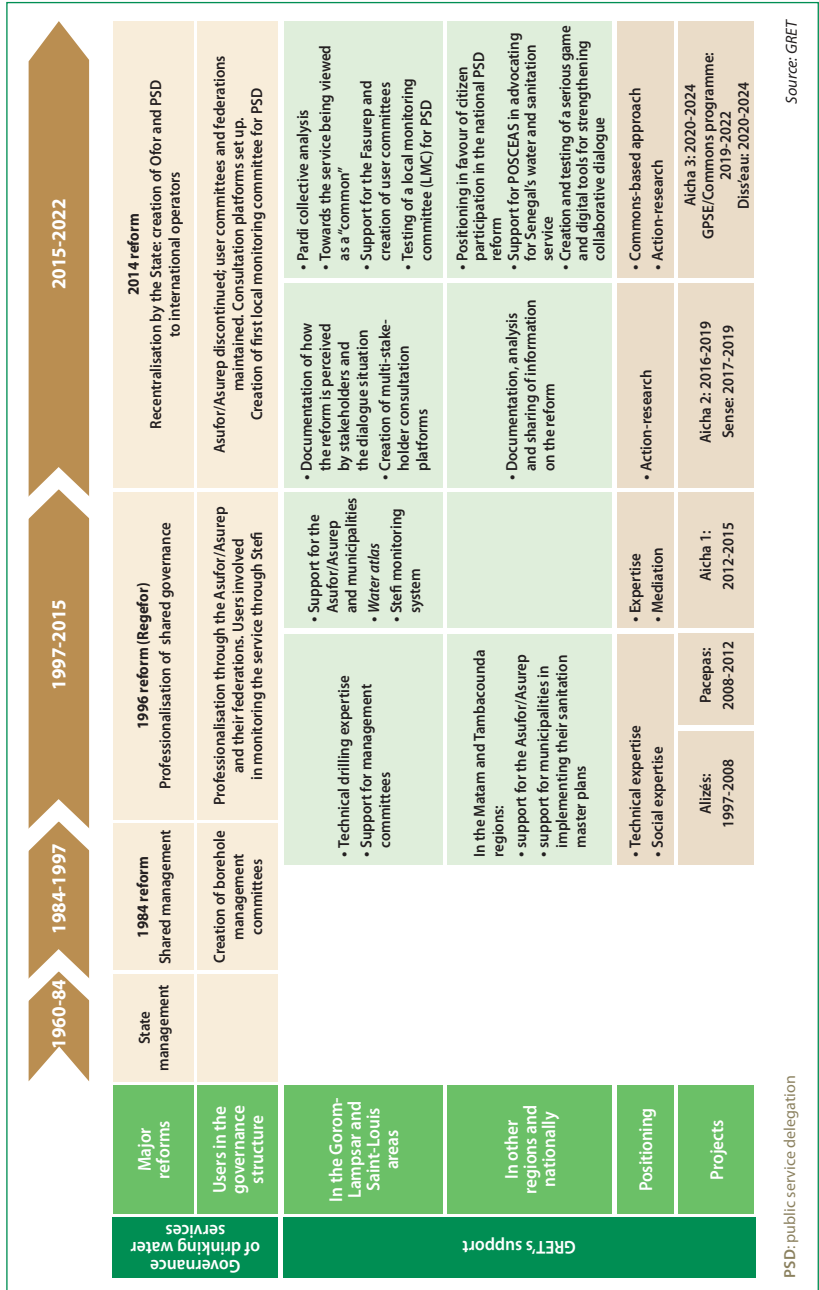
By bringing two complementary development projects (GPSE and Diss’eau) into synergy, GRET gave itself the means to work on strengthening the way civil society is organised and creating the conditions needed for a multi-stakeholder dialogue at a local and national level, with the aim of promoting shared governance measures for the water service. Simultaneously implementing a commons-based approach on both of these levels is a unique way of helping to create the conditions for a co-production of the public water service that gives users a key role. ●



Creation of a second local monitoring committee for public service delegation (PSD) in the Ndiaye district in Ross-Béthio

35. “Community accountability” is, according to the social enterprise Jokalante, the process by which the feedback received from all community members regarding a service or project is monitored in order to improve it. In this case, the complaints received through a dedicated freephone number are analysed by Jokalante and presented in a monthly report to the Diss’eau project team. Additional data are collected through a quarterly satisfaction survey.

Figure 5: EVOLUTION IN RURAL HYDRAULICS GOVERNANCE IN SENEGAL AND GRET'S SUPPORT



PART 3

The commons-based approach in practice

In Part 2, we outlined the wealth of experience gained by GRET over the past 25 years in addressing rural water issues in Senegal. In Part 3, we will demonstrate and expand on three dimensions of the commons-based approach: i) the way in which the team worked to “explain and formulate GRET’s positioning” in order to play its role as a committed facilitator in the public service co-production process; ii) how useful the Pardi participatory modelling method was for understanding the complex nature of the water service and the interactions between stakeholders, and identifying action levers; and iii) how effective the “serious game” was for understanding the perceptions of others and preparing stakeholders to participate in testing the shared governance measures.

IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC SERVICE CO-PRODUCTION

Is it possible to implement a commons-based approach without calling it by its name? Would a commons-based approach be as effective if it were named and made explicit? GRET’s experience in supporting the water sector in Senegal has been highly instructive. In particular, the teams learned that formulating their intention and positioning was of key importance in allowing them to fully play their role as facilitator.

● SUPPORTING ASSOCIATIONS AND AUTHORITIES WHOSE ROLE WAS BROUGHT INTO QUESTION BY THE REFORM

As part of a series of projects designed and implemented since 1997, GRET had been supporting stakeholders in Senegal’s water service for over 20 years. In line with the changes in sectoral policies, in particular the reforms of 1984 and 1997 which gave users and local authorities a key role in supplying the water service, GRET worked to

strengthen skill sets, including the ability to work together. For example, since 2012, GRET had helped users and local authorities develop and use planning tools (the atlas) and monitoring tools (Stefi), enabling them to be better equipped for understanding and planning extensions and improvements to the water service together. These tools were not unlike the system of **reflective monitoring**³⁶ by commoners for commoners, as recommended in the commons-based approach for promoting collective learning.

From one day to the next, the 2014 reform implemented by the State pushed away user associations and local authorities, who opposed the national project. This reform raised a new type of question for GRET. Until then, it had worked on strengthening the roles of the various stakeholders (the State, authorities, users and their organisations) within the framework of policies that were more or less accepted by everyone. Working closely with associations, on the one hand, and public authorities, on the other, had certainly given GRET an ambivalent image (the State perceiving it as being too close to users, and users seeing it as the spokesperson for the State). However, there had never really been any doubt as to which governance arrangements would be used for the service. Now, in the context of this imposed and contested reform, GRET had to define its positioning. Which role should it play with respect to the sector's stakeholders in order to help develop a fair and sustainable public water service? Where should it focus its attention?

● COLLECTIVELY-DEVELOPED POSITIONING, CAREFUL FORMULATION

In 2017, GRET joined forces with the Saint-Louis ARD, the Fasurep and UGB to conduct the Sense action-research project. As part of this initiative, all local stakeholders from the Saint-Louis region were invited to discuss their views, fears, expectations and proposals. This process of facilitating a "shared assessment" by stakeholders in the common is also recommended in a commons-based approach. At the same time, in 2018 GRET organised the ContrEauverses conference series in France, bringing together water policy specialists to reflect on the following question: "Could citizen participation be a lever for fairer, more extensive and better run services³⁷?" The action-research and ContrEauverses converged to show that **user participation in dialogue frameworks about the services and citizen participation in public policies** can be seen as the **main lever for improving the quality and sustainability of drinking water services** in Senegal. Consequently, it was appropriate to develop a specific approach to support the creation of frameworks for consultation, user representation and monitoring-evaluation mechanisms in the hands of citizens. In 2019, GRET's team decided to join the Commons and shared governance programme through the GPSE project.

36. See Glossary.

37. Le Corre M., Le Jeune T. (2019).

As part of this project, it carried out participatory modelling exercises (the Pardi method) to better understand the complexity of the water service within the context of the reform and identify action levers to help users negotiate their role so they could have, at the very least, a monitoring or control function in the service's new governance structure. However, it was still to be ascertained whether the State would be ready to accept this proposal.

There were several determining factors in favour of this approach. The decision to freeze the reform in 2020 revealed the social injustice denounced by users and authorities. The evaluation of the reform, a mission led by a private firm commissioned by the President of the Republic of Senegal, opened up the opportunity to take a positioning in favour of a more balanced governance of rural hydraulics across the whole country. GRET was able to draw on the support of two key stakeholders which it knew well, both of which favoured greater involvement of users and civil society in the governance of water services: the ARD, the technical arm of the municipalities and administrative authorities in the Saint-Louis region, and POSCEAS.

It was in this context and following this long reflection process that GRET clarified and “voiced” its analysis and positioning based on two hypotheses. Since these hypotheses were intended to be circulated both internally (in particular, within GRET in Senegal) and externally (among various stakeholders, in particular the public authorities), they were formulated from a highly technical perspective. They did not call into question the substance of the reform, rather the way in which it was implemented. They confirmed the need to promote more inclusive governance, giving the territorial authorities and user representatives a role in “resolving problems in the services”. They opened the way for testing new approaches.

TWO HYPOTHESES UNDERPINNING GRET'S POSITIONING

- **Hypothesis 1.** The rural hydraulics reform will only achieve the desired results if the regulatory mechanisms that give local stakeholders (territorial authorities and user representatives) a role are effective and enable problems in the services to be resolved.
- **Hypothesis 2.** If the substance of the reform is not called into question, the process by which it is implemented should be more inclusive: shared assessments, adapted communication and social engineering, and bodies for discussing results and any problems found. New approaches must be tested to help make the governance structure more inclusive.

These hypotheses, which were formulated very carefully, confirmed the adoption of a commons-based approach to help create the conditions needed for shared governance with users and local authorities. As such, the teams shifted their focus accordingly when developing their strategy. Diss'eau, which means "consultation" in Wolof, is a project launched in 2020 that is already based on the assumption that citizen participation is a powerful lever in improving water and sanitation policies and services, making them more suitable, inclusive and effective, and therefore better integrated by people and more sustainable. Taking advantage of its presence at both regional (with the ARD as part of the GPSE project) and national (with POSCEAS as part of the Diss'eau project) levels, the team decided to design and test "serious games" with all regional and national stakeholders in order to create the conditions for dialogue and open up opportunities for experimenting with shared governance. It suggested that public authorities test a local monitoring committee (LMC) for public service delegation. In August 2022, a pilot LMC was set up with the approval of Ofor and the ARD.

● MOVING TOWARDS PUBLIC SERVICE CO-PRODUCTION?

Based on its choice of positioning and adopted strategy, GRET suggested facilitating the creation of a governance structure in which users and citizens play an active monitoring, control – even decision-making – role in delivering the public water service. To do this, it took a commons-based approach aimed at mobilising all stakeholders concerned (central and local public authorities and their delegates, territorial authorities, users and their organisations, etc.) in a learning process in order to define and implement the rules and actions required to ensure a good quality, sustainable public drinking water service available to all. In this way, GRET tested the way in which a commons-based approach helps establish public service co-production.



Workshop to test the F'eau ba deg'eau game with sectoral stakeholders during the action-training organised by Lisode in October 2021

PUBLIC SERVICE CO-PRODUCTION

According to Elinor Ostrom, “co-production implies that citizens can play an active role in producing public goods and services of consequence to them⁽¹⁾”. Co-production concerns as much the power relations between various stakeholders as the process by which citizens or users, in becoming mobilised, can influence the design and implementation of public policies. They have, above all, a role in controlling the decision-making process with respect to all components of the service, including design, planning, management, implementation, financing and learning⁽²⁾. “Co-production is therefore understood as production carried out in common⁽³⁾.”

The concept of “public service co-production” differs from that of “public policy co-construction”, which refers to a “joint decision-making process⁽⁴⁾” that takes place from when a public policy is developed, using hybrid forms of governance.

(1) Ostrom E. (1996), cited in Carmouze L. (2022), pp. 221-223.

(2) Mitlin D., Bartlett S. (2018).

(3) Carmouze L. (2022), pp. 221-223 (non-official translation).

(4) Vaillancourt Y. (2016), p. 17 (non-official translation).

THE PARDI METHOD: USING MODELLING TO REVEAL INTERDEPENDENCIES

Identifying stakeholders and describing and analysing interdependencies between them are key steps in the commons-based approach. The approach also recommends that this identification, description and analysis be carried out by the stakeholders themselves in a collective learning process in which they bring together their knowledge and understanding to construct shared readings. In the case of the public water service reform in rural areas, this posed a great challenge as it involved numerous stakeholders, excluded some and brought in new ones, shook up existing relationships and tried to create others.

The GPSE project team chose to call on the expertise of CIRAD to try out the Pardi participatory modelling method. The aim of the exercise, which was carried out by several participants, was to collectively draw up a chart showing the stakeholders, resources, dynamics and interactions that come into play when the stakeholders wish to resolve a specific problem. This modelling exercise is recommended for understanding complex situations involving a range of stakeholders with diverging interests,

and enabling stakeholders to share their arguments and points of view in order to create a common vision, and even find a solution that is acceptable to everyone³⁸. The Pardi method enables a collective learning process to be developed through interactions between the participants and the models they build together.

PRINCIPLES OF THE PARDI METHOD

There are six main steps in implementing the Pardi method.

- **Prerequisites and principles:** designate a facilitator for each group of participants in the exercise; share and take into account all the points of view at each step; explain and discuss the points of view in order to construct a shared representation of the system; create the model transparently.
- **Problem:** define together, clearly and concisely, the problem to be resolved collectively.
- **Actors:** make a list of the actors who could or should play a role in managing the problem; distinguish between the direct and indirect actors, show and explain the linkages between these actors on the diagram, bring actors with strong linkages close to each other on the diagram.
- **Resources:** make a list of the key resources involved in the problem or question; associate pertinent indicators to each of the selected resources.
- **Dynamics:** identify and describe the dynamics creating change in the system.
- **Interactions:** using the items created collectively in the three previous steps (Actors, Resources, Dynamics), describe and analyse together the interactions between the actors and resources.

● PARDI EXERCISES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION OF ACTION

In July and August 2021, GRET and CIRAD organised two Pardi modelling workshops involving GRET team members and a CIRAD researcher who acted as the facilitator.

38. The Pardi method falls within the field of participatory modelling exercises, such as role-play games and social simulation for scientific research, which use “modelling as a support tool in the processes for generating knowledge and making collective decisions” (ComMod, 2013, p. 1, non-official translation).

The first Pardi exercise was to construct a shared reading of the whole system, viewed as a common. The **problem** to be resolved was defined by the GRET team as follows: "How can multi-stakeholder dialogue be strengthened to improve the quality of water services?" The participants followed the six steps presented above.

Having identified the **actors**, it was clear that it was the "direct actors", who were involved at a local level (administrative authorities [sub-prefect and regional governor], local authorities [in particular mayors³⁹], village chiefs, users and subscribers, user groups and community organisations), who had the least decision-making power on the water service. In contrast, the "indirect actors", who were involved at a national level (the private operator and its technical agents, the regional hydraulics department⁴⁰, the ARD, Ofor and the Ministry of Water and Sanitation), were harder to mobilise even though they had strong influence on the governance system being set up.

In the model, **resources** were included as levers to be activated to promote dialogue. Some resources came under existing levers, such as reports and audits, water rates⁴¹ and the State budget, which had to cover investment in and the running of services. Other resources fell under levers to be attained that could help achieve high-quality dialogue, such as service quality, local consultation and regulation, collective conflict resolution and, more surprisingly, "social peace".

By identifying the **dynamics** and analysing the **interactions**, it was then possible to characterise the interdependent relationships between stakeholders, the ability of each and every one to improve the quality of the service using the resources they had, and also the potential barriers to dialogue, such as one or more stakeholders failing to meet their commitments, a deterioration in equipment or rate increases.

This first Pardi exercise, for which it is not possible to present the discussions in their entirety in this report, enabled the GRET team to do a shared reading and analysis of the complexity of the system (as summarised in Figure 6) and better pinpoint the stakeholders, action levers and interdependencies to be taken into account to position itself as a committed facilitator and define an intervention strategy.

39. Even though authority over water had not yet been transferred to the municipalities, their general authority enabled them to intervene in this area. They could supervise, train and even, to a certain extent, structure the representation of users/citizens living in their respective territories. Mayors' institutional legitimacy enabled them to represent Ofor in the municipality's territory.

40. Technical department reporting to the Ministry of Water and Sanitation through the Directorate of Hydraulics, responsible for monitoring the State's hydraulics policy at a local level.

41. Applied over volume, water rates had to take into account three dimensions: economic (ensuring equilibrium of the service), social (in line with households' ability to pay) and political (social acceptance, mainstream prices to ensure uptake).

AN UNEXPECTED STRATEGIC LEVER: “SOCIAL PEACE”

One of the resources for dialogue identified during the first Pardi exercise was quite unexpected: “social peace”. The participants defined this as “a calm social climate resulting in balanced social forces”. They explained that, “this balance is guaranteed by the sharing of information, transparency, dialogue and joint decision-making by all participants in the territory”. According to the participants, social peace is a real lever of the common insofar as it represents a strong asset capable of generating collective action. By highlighting the question of social peace, it would also likely encourage the State, the guarantor of social and environmental justice in the country, to test the dynamics of co-producing the public water service by giving users a greater role in monitoring and governing the service.

The participants decided to place social peace at the centre of the diagram showing the Pardi interactions.

During the second Pardi workshop, the GRET team wanted to reflect more precisely on its support strategy. The **problem** was set out as follows: “How can the legitimacy of user groups be reinforced to improve service quality?”

An analysis of the direct **actors** showed the importance of village chiefs and religious leaders, whose positions were key in collective decision-making. It seemed appropriate to set out several categories of service users according to which user groups could be created and given legitimacy: women, who had a key role in water supply, and professional groups, some of which were official (market gardeners, livestock farmers, teachers, healthcare professionals, etc.⁴²). Lastly, although the Asufor and Asurep had lost their water management rights, they came out as key direct actors and the modelling exercise highlighted the interest to be had in supporting them so they could evolve into representative bodies for users or civil society.

As for the indirect actors, locally-based community organisations could significantly help give user groups legitimacy by offering their support.

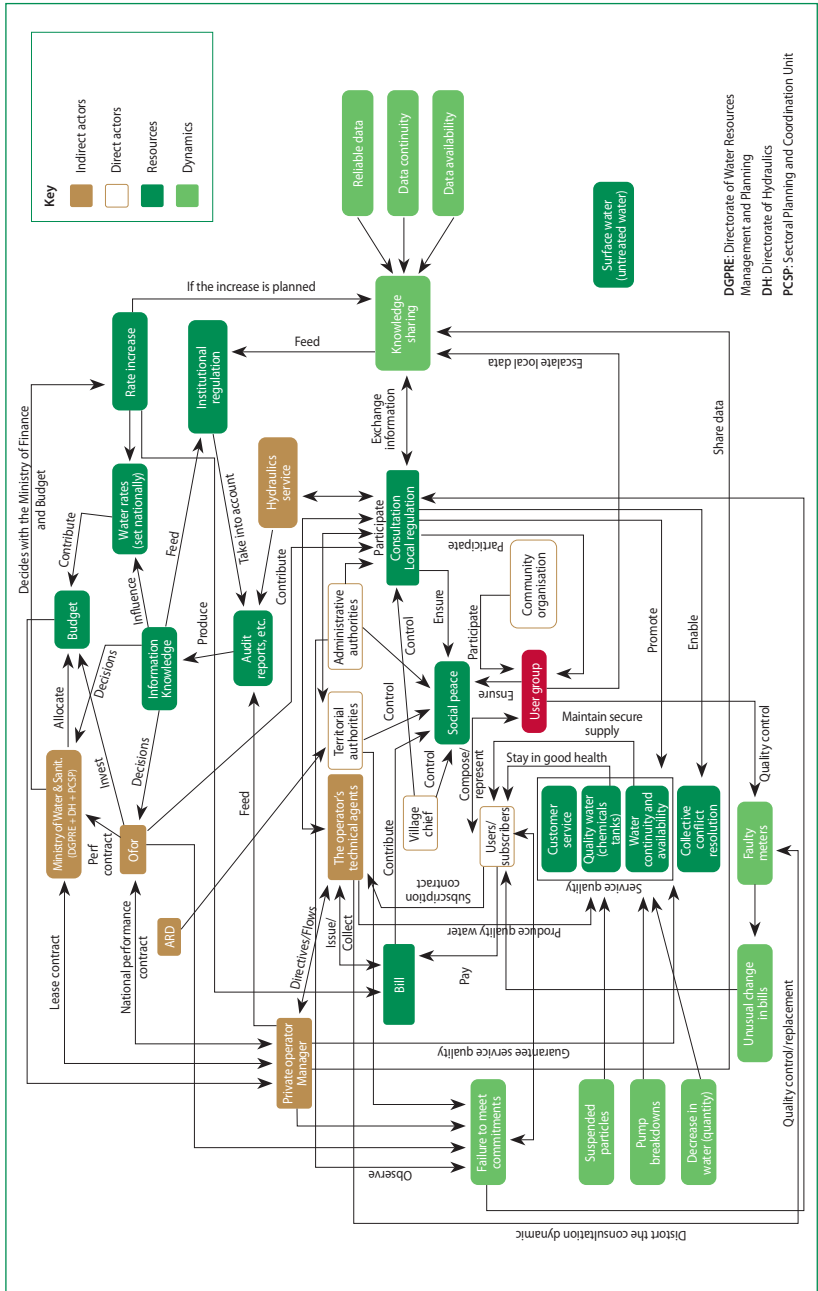
An analysis of **resources** and the levers that were likely to help give user groups legitimacy underlined the importance of defining reliable indicators produced by the delegated operator and users, having access to daily⁴³ and long-term⁴⁴ planning information, and advocating for changes in public policy to improve service quality.

42. Note that schools and healthcare facilities have community water connections.

43. For example, leak repairs that may lead to water cuts.

44. For example, the operator's planned investments.

Figure 6: PARDI INTERACTIONS DIAGRAM



The second exercise also enabled GRET to identify possible action levers and reflect on its intervention strategy to help give users power in the bodies governing the water service, alongside public and private stakeholders.

● The Pardi method applied by the Fasurep to reinforce its legitimacy

In February 2022, another Pardi workshop was organised, this time involving 22 members of the Fasurep and four GRET team members. The Fasurep questioned its legitimacy in representing users, acting on their behalf and making their requests heard. It wished to gauge its legitimacy and analyse the levers needed in order to reinforce it.

The results of the exercise confirmed and strengthened those of the previous workshop carried out by GRET on the same issue. The users and subscribers, Fasurep, village chiefs, religious leaders and community organisations were clearly identified as being key direct actors. A greater number and more diverse set of indirect actors were identified: NGOs, the ARD, Ofor, the SEOH, administrative authorities, the Senegal River Basin Development Authority (OMVS), the National Society for the Development and Exploitation of the Senegal River Land Delta and the Senegal and Falemé River Valleys (SAED), the Office for Lake Guiers and Waterways (Olac)⁴⁵, the DRH and agribusiness companies. This showed that the federation members were interested in not only the service, but also water resources and water quality. The participants highlighted the importance of managing the relationships between the various stakeholders and the need to seek legal advice. Failure to meet commitments, withholding of information and conflicts of interests and responsibilities between stakeholders were clearly identified as potential sources of problems.

The impact of the Pardi exercise was significant. The Fasurep used this collective learning to develop a more precise strategy for improving the quality of the service (water quality, sufficient volume, continuous service for all) alongside the users it represents and work towards the objectives of SDG 6⁴⁶. Having a more detailed understanding of the interactions between the various stakeholders, the resources they had and the levers that mobilised them enabled it to build a solid argument. Following the workshop, the Fasurep wrote an **advocacy note** which, based on the problems identified (breakdowns, bills contested for being too high, inconsistencies in the water rates structure, disruptions in quality, a lack of transparency which “undermined social

45. The OMVS is a sub-regional organisation bringing together Senegal, Mali, Mauritania and Guinea to develop the river through its management companies. The SAED is in charge of the country's hydro-agricultural developments. The Olac is responsible for securing waterway resources, including Lake Guiers which supplies most of the cities. The OMVS, SAED and Olac are not directly involved in the drinking water services, but they make decisions relating to the territory and water resources.

46. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

peace”, etc.), proposed alternative mitigating solutions: solar panels, the installation of certified meters, subsidised connections for low-income households and public entities, improved communication with users, the implementation and running of a local framework for consultation and the monitoring of public service delegations involving users and territorial authorities, etc.

A “SERIOUS GAME” FOR FACILITATING DIALOGUE BETWEEN USERS, THE OPERATOR AND PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to gaining an understanding of interdependencies, the commons-based approach recommends creating the conditions needed for dialogue between the stakeholders and promoting mutual understanding of the views and interests of others so the stakeholders of the common commit to building more inclusive governance arrangements together. Bringing together its teams involved in the GPSE and Diss’eau projects, GRET called upon the consultancy Lisode to design and test a serious game involving institutional stakeholders, the delegated operator and users in Gorom-Lampsar and across the entire country. This role-play game, called F’eau ba deg’eau or “Playing until we understand” in Wolof, the local language, simulates a drinking water supply and distribution system managed by a fictitious private operator, Delta’Eau. This service, represented by the game board, serves around 3,000 people. It simulates the positioning of all the stakeholders involved in managing the service to show their interdependencies, stimulate their interactions and create the conditions needed for dialogue and collaborative management.

● Designing the game

GRET took an original approach in creating the game by creating it in conjunction with the various stakeholders of the water service. In October 2021, the following stakeholders came together for a five-day action-training course⁴⁷: the sector’s institutional stakeholders (Ofor, the Directorate of Water Resources Management and Planning [DGPRE], the Directorate of Hydraulics, the Directorate of Administration, the National Sanitation Office of Senegal [Onas] and the Sectoral Planning and Coordination Unit [PCSP]), representatives from the SEOH and the Saint-Louis ARD, the President of the Fasurep, and the main point of contact from pS-Eau in Senegal. Together, they were invited to create the first version of the F’eau ba deg’eau game. Lisode organised and ran the workshop.

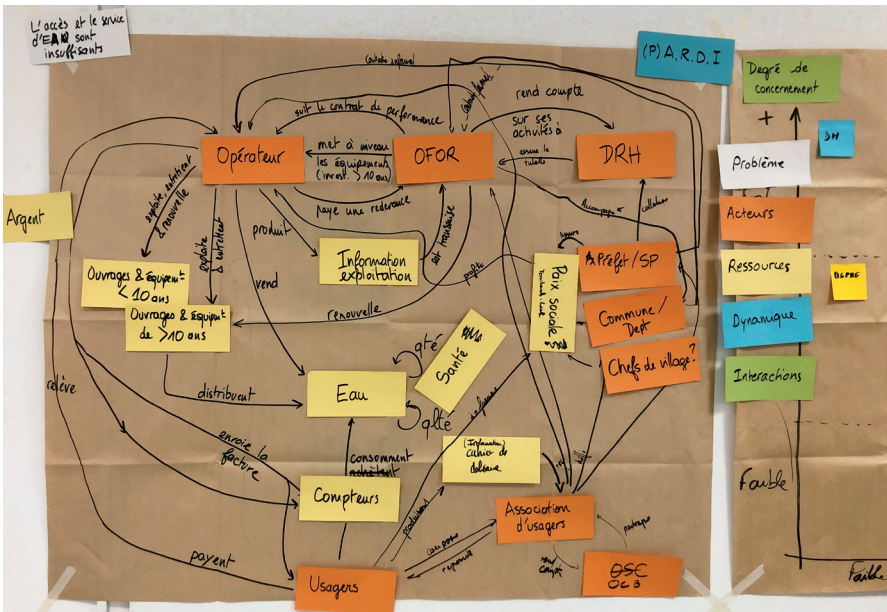
47. By alternating between theory and practice, reflection and action, action-training is based on the principle that participants learn more effectively when they are players in the training, for example by projecting themselves into real-life situations.

Shared governance of drinking water in rural Senegal

Using the commons-based approach to co-produce a public service?

The first step for the participants in designing the game was analysing the interactions between the stakeholders involved in the public service delegation in two areas in Senegal (Thiès and Gorom-Lampsar) by trying to calculate the “level of involvement” of each one. They thought about how to involve these various stakeholders in establishing a consultation process by making a timeline of the necessary activities (implementing a roadmap, organising a kick-off workshop, making a formal dialogue framework, etc.). To develop this analysis, they worked in little groups and used the Pardi method to create simple models focusing on two issues: insufficient access to the water service and funding of the service at a national level. The exercise prompted discussions, in particular on the roles, positions, risks and levels of involvement of different categories of stakeholders. This process opened the door for institutional dialogue between the participants, which had not taken place for a number of years.

The second step in co-creating the F’eau ba deg’eau game consisted in making a role-play scenario. This work was carried out meticulously. Through group work, the participants defined together the issue of the game, its objectives, the level of realism, its calibration (the dimensions and characteristics of the network represented in the game), the stakeholders involved, the time step and the representation of space, etc. This work concluded with a draft of the first version of the game.



Pardi diagram showing the relationships between the operator and users

The third design step comprised incorporating into the game and the way it was played how users and local authorities are represented in the service and the day-to-day problems they face that are the subject of debate. To do so, an expert from Lisode and a member of the GRET team went to Thiès and the outskirts of Gorom-Lampsar. Interviews with the Diagambal Asurep, the Fasurep, the ARD and the town of Ross Béthio highlighted problems concerning water supply (in particular, a lack of pressure), costs (which increase the further the household is from the connection point, creating inequalities in access to the service) and poor communication between the operator and users (difficulties experienced by users in escalating their complaints, delays in repairing leaks and breakdowns, etc.). This feedback led to some adjustments being proposed for the role-play game.

In January and February 2022, the game was tested several times with the GRET team at the Dakar office, then with Lisode, and finally with the Fasurep at Gorom-Lampsar level. The tests helped gradually improve the game so it resembled as closely as possible a real water service and was easier to understand. The first tests were followed by debriefing sessions, which gave the opportunity for participants to discuss measures that would likely foster greater efficiency, sustainability and transparency in a service.



First test of the prototype of the F'eau ba deg'eau game

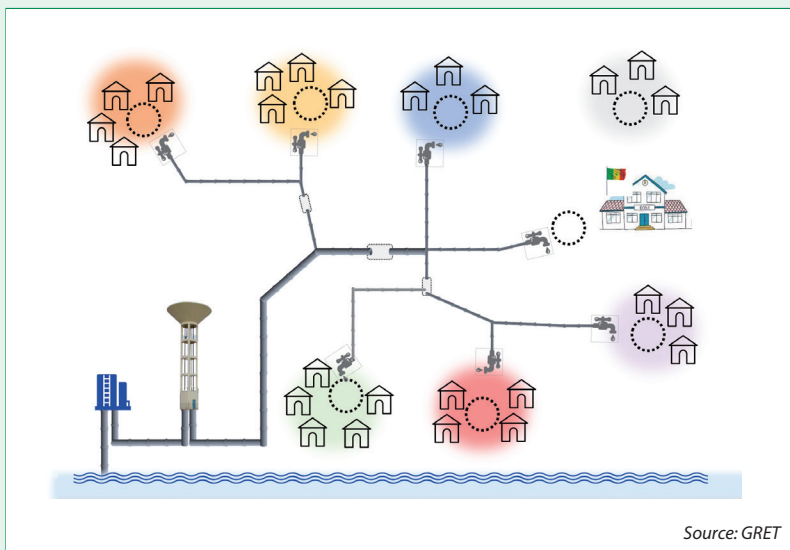
GAME RULES

The F'eau ba deg'eau game simulates the running of a drinking water service by focusing on the relationships between the operator and users. It reproduces virtually the situations of each stakeholder involved in the service.

A board represents a drinking water service, i.e., both the infrastructure and the water production and distribution, as managed by a private operator. There are seven households in the area, either connected or not connected to the network. Drinking water is represented by little blue balls, and poor quality water by little red balls.

The game has the following components: the game board, role-play cards, monitoring tables for the Delta'Eau operator, a pocket calculator, "contingency" cards, "event" cards, "water quality" cards, cowrie notes (fictitious currency), game materials ("claim", "cut-off coupon"), cards showing the actions that players can carry out, at least 50 little blue balls and 30 little red balls to represent the water, a big container (bag or jar) for the balls, cups to contain the water distributed to the subscribers, and either paper or a board for the monitoring table that the game leader completes at the end of each turn.

Figure 7: F'EAU BA DEG'EAU GAME BOARD



There are nine roles in the game (one operator, seven users and a game leader) which can be played in pairs. Each player has a role-play card which sets out his role, his objective and the actions he has to carry out on each turn.

- **The game leader** directs and facilitates the game. His role is to install the players, explain the aim of the game and the rules, and guide them through the different steps. He may have a partner who can help him by taking notes. The game leader paces the actions, monitors the time to avoid overrunning, gives players their revenue at the beginning of each turn and answers any questions players have during the game. At the end, he organises a debriefing session.
- **The Delta'Eau operator** runs the network and seeks to meet the water needs of the seven subscribers, all the while ensuring his business is financially stable. He has a lease contract with the SNES, the delegating authority responsible for renewing equipment with a lifespan of more than 10 years. Since improving water access is a national objective, it is in Delta'Eau's every interest to extend its network to users who do not yet have access as this would strengthen its credibility with the SNES and users.
- **The subscribers** (six households and a school) are, or should be, connected to the service. They have their own connection and a meter. One of the households has a secret connection and uses water without paying. Another household is not subscribed or connected to the service due to a lack of means. His objective is to work with his neighbours to get connected to the network and raise money (cowries) to do so.

In order to simulate unforeseen events that may arise in the running of a drinking water service, different types of cards are drawn by the players on each turn: "event" cards for households (damaged meter, various leaks), and "contingency" and "water quality" cards for the operator (operational disruptions, leaks on the network, etc.). Each type of card has an impact either on the quantity or quality of the water produced. Based on their level of satisfaction, at the end of their turn users can choose to either pay or not pay their bill, and the operator makes decisions accordingly (for example, he can cut the water for households who refuse to pay).

Each turn represents a monthly billing cycle during which an operator produces water for the users on its network. There are three main steps on each turn.

- **Step 1 – Preparation.** The operator enquires about the water needs of each subscriber and calculates the amount of water to be produced. During this time, the household that is not connected seeks to come to an agreement with its neighbours. The players turn over the cards that apply to them ("water quality" and "contingency" cards for the operator, and "event" cards for the users) and check the state of the network or private connections based on what is indicated on the cards (breakdowns, leaks, etc.).

.../...

Some cards may ask players to do certain actions, such as pay the operator for a repair. Finally, the operator tells the game leader how many blue balls (drinking water) and how many red balls (poor quality water) there are, showing the state of the network.

- **Step 2 – Water distribution.** The game leader gives the users the balls produced by the operator and they put them in their cup. He also puts balls on the board to simulate leaks in the network and branch pipes that have not been repaired. Users can buy specific equipment, such as tanks, to enable them to meet all their water needs even in the event of a leak. The operator then calculates how much each user should be charged. The number of balls charged per player corresponds to the water distributed and water from leaks.
- **Step 3 – Financial results.** Each subscriber chooses whether or not to pay his bills and can make claims. The operator collects the payments and acts accordingly. If a subscriber does not pay, he may decide to disconnect him. The game leader notes the results from the turn, in particular the financial results following these decisions, by completing the monitoring table. He may then open a discussion and call on specific players representing leading figures from the village.

As the game goes on, the different simulated behaviours show the **vicious circle** in supplying the water service: the less the operator invests in the service, the more the users spend to compensate for the shortfall and the less they are inclined to pay their water bill due to dissatisfaction.

On the other hand, the game reveals the **virtuous circle**: the more the operator invests, the greater the quality of the service and the more readily the user pays for the service. The more the user pays for his water consumption, the more the operator is in a position to reinvest in the service.

In reality, the interactions between users, non-subscribers and the operator are complex and generally difficult to see. The F'eau ba deg'eau game makes them more tangible and enables each player to understand the interactions system by trying out different points of view. During the game sessions, users take the place of the operator and vice-versa. This simulation creates the conditions for shared understanding of the issues concerning the governance of the water service and promotes the opening of institutional dialogue at different levels. The playful aspect enables the participants to step out of their usual position. Some institutional representatives played "the game" with great enthusiasm and turned out to be strong advocates for users' rights, a position that they would have undoubtedly not taken in a more classic meeting format.

It is interesting to see how the entire game creation process, from its design to the first tests, helped create the conditions for dialogue with a view to establishing shared governance. Firstly, the Pardi exercise and the discussions surrounding the co-creation of the game led the sectoral stakeholders and users to build a common understanding of the issues relating to the service and each person's interests. The discussions already showed the benefits of greater shared governance between users, local authorities, the State (Ofor) and private operators. The debates that took place during the co-creation of the game simultaneously prompted sectoral dialogue between stakeholders at the national level, marking the first step in their involvement in setting up governance forums. The game testing phase then created the conditions for concerted action towards shared governance: the operator better understood the problems caused by a lack of water, the subscribers had a better idea of the difficulties faced by the operator if bills were not paid, and the secret users understood the impacts that illegal connections had on water quality. This mutual understanding also extended to commercial water users, whose interests and expectations with respect to the service differ from those of domestic water users. Expressing these differences – indeed divergences – in interests based on how the water is used helped demonstrate how users are interdependent and complement one another, creating a common around the service.

The Feau ba deg'eau game also raised awareness among sectoral stakeholders about the pivotal role held by users in the overall running and governance of the service. Since the users are the ones who receive and pay for the service, they determine its existence and longevity and for this reason should be represented and involved in its governance. Following the Fasurep's analysis of its own legitimacy, it also defended the role of users during and outside of the game.



FEEDBACK FROM

"The serious game is very important insofar as it enables us to put ourselves in the shoes of each stakeholder, understand the difficulties they face day-to-day, especially as regards water management, whether they are a user, an operator or even an administrative authority."

Latyr Diockel Faye, head of the technical and commercial department at the SEOH

● From the game to the first local monitoring committee: a concrete impact

The game sessions held at Gorom-Lampsar level with the Fasurep representative and an official from the Saint-Louis ARD helped fuel reflections on the governance of rural hydraulics nationally. The game fostered collective thinking on **governance models** where users are represented alongside the operator and local authorities at district, municipal, departmental and regional levels. These discussions also fed into the **recommendations relayed by GRET at a national level to make changes to the reform**, in particular the implementation of regulation forums involving users, financial transparency and the need for support mechanisms for the most vulnerable, etc. By participating in these discussions and drawing up recommendations with the Fasurep, sectoral authorities are more inclined to involve users in the new consultation frameworks, as was the case with the creation of the local monitoring committee (LMC).

In August 2022, four months after the serious game was used in the Saint-Louis region, the first LMC for regional public service delegations was established by decree of the regional governor. The LMC included all of the sector's stakeholders, including the users. Equivalent committees continue to be set up locally in districts and municipalities. They are designed to be forums for collectively analysing service operations, carrying out shared assessments and, above all, co-developing and monitoring solutions. These local committees must enable the public service delegation process



First regional local monitoring committee for public service delegations

to be monitored collectively by using users' recommendations and points of view brought forward by the Fasurep that represents them. However, these local bodies have no official decision-making power; it is still the State, through Ofor, and the private operator, working within the scope of its delegation, who make decisions with respect to the service.

THE LOCAL MONITORING COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE DELEGATIONS

Officially set up in August 2022 at a regional level, the LMC for public service delegations is responsible for ensuring that the public water service delegation contracts in rural areas are properly carried out. It monitors Ofor's and the operators' investment programmes and action plans, acts as a consultation and information-sharing platform, and works as an intermediary between users, the territorial authorities, the State's technical departments, Ofor and the operators. The discussions and debates that take place concern the execution of the delegation contracts and the quality of the service in rural areas. Reports are then written up and sent to higher levels. Lastly, the LMC members may recommend measures to the delegating authority (Ofor) with a view to improving the quality of the public water service in rural areas. The committee is chaired by the regional governor and coordinated by the ARD. The DRH is responsible for the secretarial office. It comprises local authorities (departmental council, municipalities), administrative authorities (sub-prefects, prefects), sectoral stakeholders involved in water and sanitation at regional and national levels (Ofor, local technical services), the operator, user representatives in the three districts concerned, and a POSCEAS representative.

These LMCs for public service delegations, which were set up thanks to a sectoral dialogue propelled in part by the game and in part by support from user groups, in fact represent a **pilot project for co-producing the public service** at Gorom-Lampsar level. In 2022, GRET continued facilitating discussion sessions between the stakeholders involved in the LMC test at a regional level as well as institutional discussion forums at national level in order to promote, if the pilot project proved to be successful, the inclusion of this shared governance model in public policy. ●

PART 4

Lessons learned for a commons-based approach

The description and analysis of GRET's support in the water sector in Senegal are rich in lessons learned, giving many useful takeaways within the framework of a commons-based approach. These "situated" lessons are presented in their context, in the form of inspiring examples for those who wish to promote commons-based and shared-governance dynamics.

FORMULATING THE INTENTION AND POSITIONING OF THE COMMITTED FACILITATOR

When using a commons-based approach, it is recommended that the "committed facilitator" explain his intention and positioning, both within the scope of the project and, especially, in the interactions between the stakeholders involved in the common good, in this case the water service. For GRET, who had previously been more involved in the socio-technical dimension, **this criterion was key** in a context of tension between users and public authorities driven by the water service reform. It is particularly helpful to look at the way in which GRET took the time to develop its thinking. The team began by carrying out action-research, bringing together all the territorial stakeholders in order to properly understand the situation and the possible scenarios. It then held discussions with sectoral specialists to confirm the soundness of its hypotheses on citizen participation. Finally, it used the Pardi method to build a shared understanding of the situation and identify action levers. The team then waited for the right time and conditions to publicly state its position **based on hypotheses**, which, on the one hand, it had made with a certain degree of caution in order to be sure that they would be acceptable to all the stakeholders, whilst, on the other hand,

being sufficiently precise in its **intention** (giving users and territorial authorities a monitoring and control role) and **positioning** (testing out new inclusive governance approaches). Formulating an intention and positioning is no small feat. GRET spent almost four years on its reflective work.

TWO METHODS FOR “SHARED ASSESSMENTS”: ACTION-RESEARCH AND PARDI

Shared assessments carried out by all the stakeholders concerned is a key step in a commons-based dynamic. In the experience described here, assessments were made of the various water service stakeholders’ understanding of how they were represented and their points of view, their interdependencies, and the proposals and action levers they had identified. GRET used two original methods to help carry out these shared assessments.

Firstly, the **action-research** programme, which was co-led by GRET and UGB and involved all territorial stakeholders from the Saint-Louis region, enabled them to analyse together the situation brought about by the reform and make proposals. Through surveys and focus groups, the action-research enabled the stakeholders to assess each other’s situation, perceptions and feelings. Secondly, the **Pardi modelling method** helped the GRET team analyse the conditions needed for multi-stakeholder dialogue to improve the quality of water services, and identify action levers (such as social peace). The Pardi method is recommended for understanding complex situations involving a range of stakeholders with diverging interests, and enabling stakeholders to share their arguments and points of view in order to create a common vision, and even find a solution that is acceptable to everyone. These two methods, described in detail in this handbook, proved to be very useful in the commons process undertaken.

THE SERIOUS GAME FOR PROMOTING COLLECTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

How can stakeholders be encouraged to test inclusive governance mechanisms together? To address this key point in a commons-based approach, the GRET team used a “serious game”. By creating and then using the role-play game, called F’eau ba deg’eau or “**Playing until we understand**” in Wolof, all of the sector’s stakeholders were able to meet together in a calm environment. This in itself was already a significant step forward in a context marked by tension and the loss of joint sectoral reviews on water

and sanitation⁴⁸ which previously brought together the various stakeholders. Since the process of creating the game promoted dialogue between stakeholders and brought together sectoral authorities, the territorial administration, local councillors, private operators and users, it turned out to be just as important as the game itself. As the game was created by the stakeholders themselves, it also had the advantage of being perfectly adapted to the context (in terms of sector, geography and socio-culture) and was therefore meaningful to the participants. Even if it is difficult to demonstrate, the GRET team acknowledge that following their participation in this serious game, the national and regional institutional stakeholders were motivated to test out an innovative shared governance system in the form of the local monitoring committee (LMC), in which users and authorities collectively monitor and control the public service delegation. A more serious game than appearances may otherwise suggest!

THE COMMONS-BASED APPROACH AND CO-PRODUCTION OF A PUBLIC SERVICE

Applied to a public service, the experience shows how the commons-based approach can **create the conditions for co-producing a public service**. Co-producing a public service means that users play an active part, and in the best case a decision-making role, in formulating, implementing and monitoring a public service. In this case, the process supported by GRET led to the effective implementation of the LMC, a governance body comprising user representatives and territorial authorities to monitor the water service. Set up at a regional level, the LMC should now be rolled out to districts and municipalities to be as close as possible to users and therefore test out true co-production of the water service. The service monitoring tools developed with GRET's support, such as the technical and financial monitoring system (Stefi), which are used "by and for the service's stakeholders", will be a valuable asset for stakeholders in their ongoing learning of how to run and improve this shared governance. ●

48. Water and sanitation evaluation meetings that regularly took place between 2005 and 2018 thanks to the Millennium water and sanitation program (Pepam, then CPCSP), implemented to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

PART 5

Future prospects

At the end of 2022, the Senegalese water sector was characterised by interesting dynamics driving questions, discussions and experimentations, to which GRET intends to contribute in two ways.

CONTINUE EXPERIMENTING WITH CO-PRODUCTION OF THE DRINKING WATER SERVICE

In August 2022, a first step was made in implementing more inclusive governance of the drinking water services with the creation of the first LMC for public service delegations at regional level. This committee will be a driving force for collective learning and actions for concrete improvements in services. Therefore, the priority is to use a commons-based approach to continue experimenting with co-production of the service. Several actions will be carried out as part of the next phase in the GPSE project and the end of the Diss'eau project.

GRET, in conjunction with the ARD and local authorities (sub-prefect), plans to assist the implementation of local LMC pilot experiments in two districts in the Gorom-Lampsar area and support the running of the regional LMC by helping the local LMCs report information to the regional level. At the same time, a plan for using the Féau ba deg'eau game, created as part of the Diss'eau project, could be developed so local LMCs can make concrete proposals to improve the service supply. With UGB as the observer, game sessions will be held with other sectoral stakeholders (in particular, different Ofor departments, user associations and private operators) in order to document the governance recommendations. Furthermore, the digital platform will be rolled out, enabling users to inform operators and local authorities of their assessment of the quality of the drinking water services. Finally, the water service monitoring tools, which are currently mainly focused on technical and financial considerations, should

be expanded to cover governance, transparency and social justice, with, for example, indicators measuring the smooth running of the LMC, compliance with reciprocal contractual commitments and the proportion of the most vulnerable people with access to water.

LINK THE SERVICE AND WATER RESOURCES, EXTEND TO OTHER WATER SECTORS

In Senegal, the need for access to drinking water and sanitation services is combined with growing pressure on groundwater tables. The preservation of water resources and improvements to service access are currently managed in silos, both by the public authorities and by donors. GRET and CIRAD intend to continue reflections on the link between resources and services, in particular with respect to the idea of “maturity of the commons”⁴⁹. They should also experiment with ways of combining the two inputs of “resources” and “services” in the territories in which GRET works, for example through new serious games. Stakeholders from other sectors have also shown interest in the Pardi and serious game tools. They are taking part in the experimentations and would like to test them in their scope of intervention, outside the Saint-Louis region. This is particularly the case for the National Sanitation Office of Senegal (Onas) and its technical and financial partners, who see them as a potential lever for addressing certain issues in the sanitation sector (applying the polluter pays principle, monitoring their public service delegations, etc.). GRET will share the experience it has gained in the water service and offer to support these stakeholders in the sanitation sector. ●

49. This emerging concept developed by Étienne Delay, researcher at CIRAD, whilst designing the Pardi method, questions the distinction between the three commons categories initially proposed: resources, services and territory. “The three commons categories identified by GRET can be seen as three levels of maturity in a common: we always start with a resource, around which users mobilise and organise themselves to gradually establish a service and, when several commons networks intersect in the same territory, we begin to identify this territory as a common.” (Delay É., 2022, non-official translation).

GLOSSARY

COLLECTIVE ACTION. “Action undertaken by a group (either directly, or on its behalf through an organisation) in pursuit of members’ perceived shared interests (Scott and Marshall, 2009). The theories of collective action refer to the sharing of costs and advantages of collective action to manage public or collective goods¹.”

The concept of collective action that we use is part of the theory developed by Elinor Ostrom in opposition to theses whereby individuals only see their own short-term particular interests and are incapable of making decisions in the collective or long-term interest, thereby requiring solutions imposed from the outside, via the State or privatisation. Ostrom demonstrated that individuals, through their collective action, are capable of solving the fundamental problems of collective organisation without solutions imposed by an external stakeholder, by creating a common institution, committing to follow rules and mutual monitoring, i.e., by creating a common². The collective action creating the common is also referred to as “commoning”. Creating the conditions necessary for collective action is a central dimension in the commons-based approach.

COMMON. A social organisation dynamic in which all stakeholders, who are interdependent and directly concerned by a common issue, decide to undertake collective action to build shared governance. As part of a continuous collective learning process, the shared governance defines and implements rules of access and use that are deemed equitable and ensure the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the object of the common (a resource, service or territory for example).

COMMONER. A social, individual or institutional player who, as a stakeholder in a common, commits to both hands-on learning of commoning as well as the establishment of shared governance aimed at preserving living spaces and social and environmental justice.

COMMONING. “‘Commoning’ (Bollier *et al.*, 2014; Coriat, 2020) is the process that leads individuals to become mobilised in order to pool knowledge, experiences, and human, technical or financial resources with a view to achieving an appropriate, common interest. It is the essence of collective action³.”

1. Translated from Antona M., Bousquet F. (2017), p. 125.

2. Ostrom E. (1990).

3. Translated from Aubert S., Botta A. (2022), p. 240.

COMMONS-BASED APPROACH. A way of thinking and conducting a development assistance intervention when this intervention intends to facilitate the construction of shared governance “in commons”. A commons-based approach asserts a political intention of social and environmental justice; mobilises the conceptual frameworks of the commons, of the social and solidarity economy, and of popular education; and uses facilitation methods.

FACILITATION. Facilitation consists of creating the conditions necessary for co-operation between the various stakeholders, creating the conditions necessary for collective action, and creating the conditions necessary for collective learning. The facilitator helps the collective to become aware of its needs and find its own solutions. As part of the commons-based approach, when a political intention of the assistance intervention is specified, the facilitator is not neutral but is, on the contrary, “committed” to greater social and environmental justice, and a higher level of resilience.

GOVERNANCE. The process through which a set of rules, norms and strategies is created, which guides the behaviour of stakeholders in a given area of political interaction⁴. A system of governance includes stakeholders and institutions as much as it includes mobilised formal and informal standards, or practices to define rules, their implementation and their monitoring. These rules can be the subject of consensus or competition between stakeholders. In a prescriptive manner, governance refers to the power to decide on rules and to the various registers of authority on which they are based.

HORIZONTAL SUBSIDIARITY. Horizontal subsidiarity sets out the rule that public administration favours citizens taking autonomous initiatives for activities of general interest where such initiatives exist. “Thus, citizens can organise themselves to deal directly with spaces and services of common interest, in place of institutions, while ensuring that these institutions actively support these commoning practices, protect the general interest and act as guarantor of last resort⁵”. This principle of horizontal subsidiarity was incorporated into the Italian Constitution in 2001.

INSTITUTION. Institutions bring together organisations and rules, modes of doing and being, but also structures of thought, concepts and paradigms generated and used to organise modes of interaction within these organisations with the goal of influencing individual and collective decisions.

For Ostrom, “the term ‘institution’ is not [...] synonymous with organization. The term means ‘the set of rules actually used by a set of individuals to organize repetitive activities that produce outcomes affecting those individuals and potentially affecting others’⁶”.

4. McGinnis M. D. (2011).

5. *Société des communs* (n.d.), p. 9 (non-official translation).

6. Ostrom E. (2009), p. 9.

PUBLIC SERVICE CO-PRODUCTION. According to Elinor Ostrom, “co-production implies that citizens can play an active role in producing public goods and services of consequence to them”⁷. Co-production concerns as much the power relations between various stakeholders as the process by which citizens or users, in becoming mobilised, can influence the design and implementation of public policies. They have, above all, a role in controlling the decision-making process with respect to all components of the service, including design, planning, management, implementation, financing and learning⁸. “Co-production is therefore understood as production carried out in common”⁹.

The concept of “public service co-production” differs from that of “public policy co-construction”, which refers to a “joint decision-making process”¹⁰ that takes place from when a public policy is developed, using hybrid forms of governance.

REFLECTIVE MONITORING. Reflective monitoring mechanisms enable commoners to monitor the development of the resource, service or territory that they take care of together within a framework of shared governance. Unlike project monitoring-evaluation mechanisms, which are designed and implemented by the development operator, reflective monitoring of the common is designed and implemented by commoners for commoners. By regularly collecting information on the object of the common, commoners are able to reflect (like a mirror) the effectiveness and impact of their actions and the rules adopted on the object’s sustainability, as well as on how fairly it is used. Discussing this information enables commoners to reflect on the improvements to be made to their modes of action, regulation and governance to meet their objectives in terms of social and environmental justice. Reflective monitoring is a key aspect of the continuous learning dynamic of the common and is, as such, an indicator of good health.

SHARED GOVERNANCE. A model of public action which postulates that each of the stakeholders concerned – in particular citizens, but also the public and private sectors – exercises real power in the taking of decisions and monitoring of their application. We can qualify it as shared governance “in commons” when the governance is constructed and constantly improved in a social dynamic of commoning, in particular collective action and collective learning. The term “in commons” underlines the dynamic and evolutionary nature of this type of governance.

SITUATION OF ACTION. A social space in which stakeholders observe information, select actions, enter into models of interaction and obtain results from their interaction. The black box where political choices are made¹¹.

7. Ostrom E. (1996), cited in Carmouze L. (2022), pp. 221-223.

8. Mitlin D. (2018).

9. Carmouze L. (2022), pp. 221-223.

10. Vaillancourt Y. (2016), p. 17 (non-official translation).

11. McGinnis M. D. (2011).

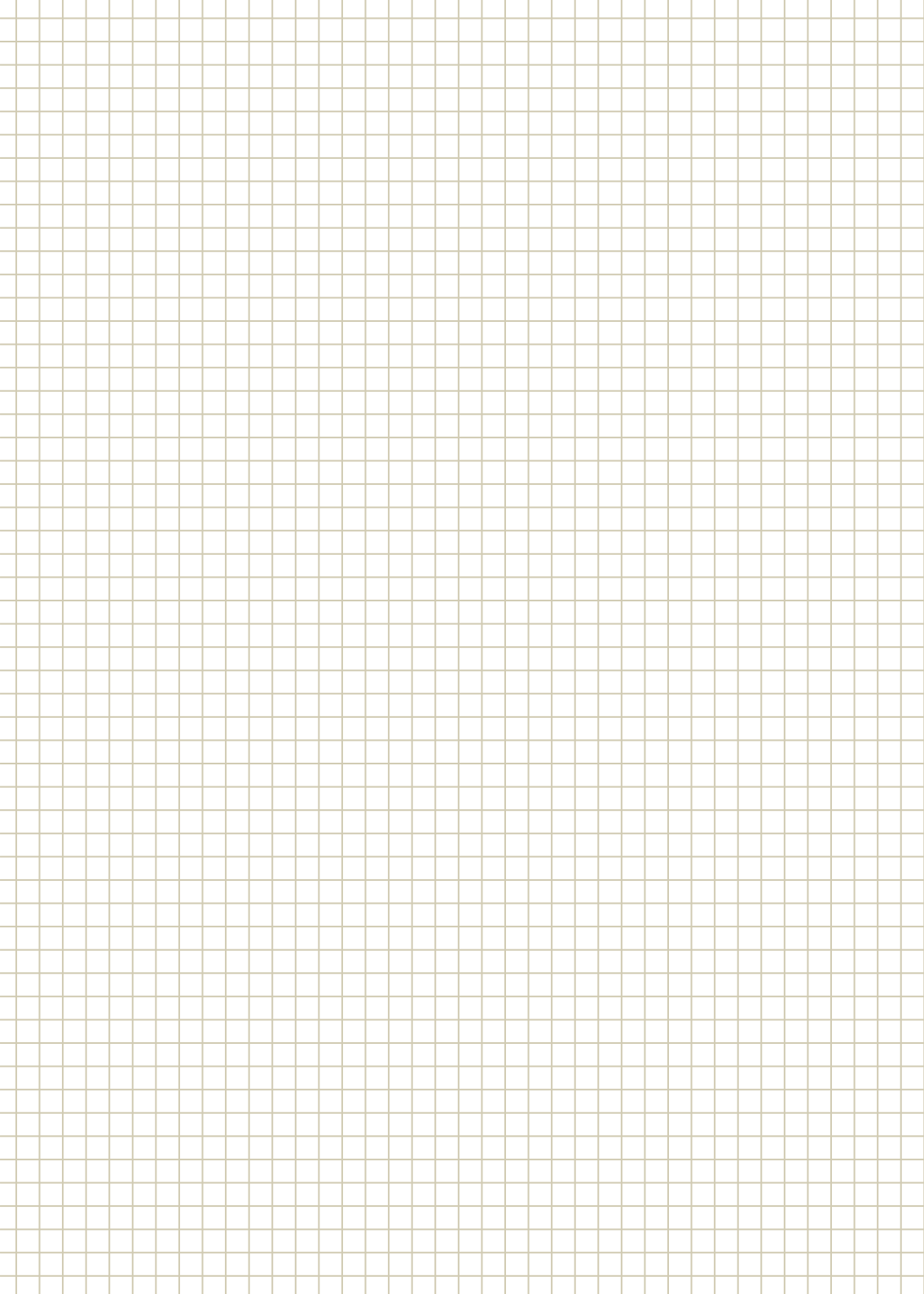
SUBSIDIARITY. According to Ostrom, the concept of “subsidiarity” is useful for understanding the complementarity of different territorial levels. The principle is that each stakeholder, at its own level, must only do and decide what is incumbent on it. In other words, that which can be achieved at a lower level with the same effectiveness is not done at a higher level, and everyone recognises the role that each level has to play¹². When each stakeholder has the same decision-making power as the others, this is referred to as “horizontal subsidiarity”. ●

12. Ostrom E. (1990).

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SHARED GOVERNANCE OF DRINKING WATER IN RURAL SENEGAL

Using the commons-based approach to co-produce a public service?

This handbook describes the approach taken by GRET to facilitate the emergence of a shared governance of the drinking water service in the Saint-Louis region in Senegal in the context of a national reform to delegate this public service to private operators.

Following on from more than 15 years of support, GRET adopted a commons-based approach, leading it to clarify its positioning with respect to the service's stakeholders. By using participatory modelling exercises, the stakeholders were able to build a shared vision of their interdependencies and subsequently enter into collaborative dialogue through a serious game. Interconnections between local and national actions paved the way for the implementation of a local monitoring committee, enabling users to become fully involved in monitoring and controlling the service alongside the delegated operator and public authorities, representing the beginnings of public service co-production.

Intended for associations, NGOs and donors promoting initiatives around commons, as well as public and private stakeholders involved in service supply, this document focuses on lessons learned that can be useful for continuing the dynamic undertaken in Senegal, and for designing and implementing similar approaches in other contexts.

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