

INFORMO(T)RAC PROGRAMME



JOINT REVIEW MISSION REPORT 26 January – 19 February 2006

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Acknowledgements

The consultants are grateful for the pleasant and professional collaboration of the entire staff of each INFORMO(T)RAC country office. Without the extensive assistance of the National Coordinators, Mr. Ladislau Robalo (Guinea-Bissau), Mr. Paul Ndiaye (Senegal), and Mr. Joshua Nicol (Sierra Leone), this evaluation could not have been realized. The mission thanks the drivers Mr. Tairro Diallo (Guinea-Bissau), Mr. Secouba Sane (Senegal), and Mr. Abdulai Bangura (Sierra Leone) for their tireless driving and further assistance.

The mission appreciated the information gathering and availability for further queries of the INFORMO(T)RAC coordinator, Mr. Leon van den Boogerd; and Mrs. Afke van Dijk for her logistical and administrative support.

Last but not least, the consultants would like to thank all the Community Radio Station staff, their Management Committee members, Local Leaders, and the interviewed CRS listeners, whose contributions made the difference! Their enthusiastic collaboration, spontaneous contributions and observations made this evaluation a very pleasant exercise.

Hilversum, March 2006.

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Content	page
Title	1
Acknowledgements	2
Content	3
Appendices	4
Abbreviations	5
1. Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations	7
1.1 Introduction	7
1.2 RNTC Community Radio	7
1.3 Results	8
1.4 Conclusions & Recommendations	10
1.4.1 Conclusions	10
1.4.2 Recommendations	10
2. Introduction	13
3. Execution of the Joint Review Mission and the applied Methodology	13
3.1 Execution	13
3.2 Methodology	14
4. The RNTC Community Radio – RF041202	15
4.1 The Programme	15
4.2 Selected countries	16
4.3 Logical Framework: Objectives, Results, Activities, and Resources	16
4.4 Results	17
5. Research questions and the answers found by the review mission	19
5.1 Relevance	19
5.2 Efficiency	20
5.3 Effectiveness	21
5.4 Impact	24
5.5 Sustainability	25
5.6 Learning & Innovation	28

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Terms of Reference;
- Appendix 2 Les radios communautaires (AMARC conditions to be considered a CRS)
- Appendix 3 Analysis of the weekly broadcast programme of the visited CRS in GB
- Appendix 4 Analysis of the weekly broadcast programme of the visited CRS in SE
- Appendix 5 Analysis of the weekly broadcast programme of the visited CRS in SL
- Appendix 6 De-briefing note mission's visit to Guinea-Bissau
- Appendix 7 De-briefing note mission's visit to Senegal
- Appendix 8 De-briefing note mission's visit to Sierra Leone
- Appendix 9 RNTC checklist for CRS (summarized for all visited 15 CRS)
- Appendix 10 Visit reports to all the visited CRS
- Appendix 11 Logical Framework RNTC Community Radio
- Appendix 12 The 31 CRS serviced by the IP
- Appendix 13 Visit Schedules of the Joint Review Mission

Abbreviations

AMARC	Association Mondiale des Associations Radio Communautaire World Association of Community Radio Associations
BMO	Business Membership Organization
BSO	Business Service/Support Organization
BSOD	BSO Development
CRS	Community Radio Station
CR	Community Radio
CSD	Civil Society Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCO/OC	Dienst Culturele Samenwerking/Onderwijs en Onderzoek Department Cultural Cooperation/Education and Research
DGIS	Directoraat-Generaal Internationale Samenwerking Directorate-General International Cooperation
4W-drive	Four Wheel Drive (Vehicle)
FSC	Future Search Conference
FTE	Full Time Employment
GB	Guinea-Bissau
I	INFORMO(T)RAC
INFORMORAC	IN itiative pour la FOR mation MO bile de RA dio CO munitaire
INFORMOTRAC	IN itiative FOR MO bile TR aining of CO munity Radio
IP	INFORMO(T)RAC Programme
km	kilometer
MC	Management Committee
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprise
NA	Needs Assessment
NC	National Coordinator
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NL	Netherlands
OPC	Overall Programme Coordinator
RN	Radio Nederland
RNTC	Radio Nederland Training Centre

SE	Senegal
SL	Sierra Leone
TMF	Thematische MedeFinanciering Thematic Co-Financing (Programme)
TOT	Training of Trainers
TOR	Terms of Reference

1. Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations

1.1 Introduction

In November 2005, RNTC (Radio Nederland Training Centre) and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorate for International Cooperation – Dienst Culturele Samenwerking, Onderwijs en Onderzoek / DGIS – DCO/OC) requested the external consultants, Martin Faye (Director Intermedia Afrique – Dakar - Senegal) and Roy C. Kessler (NEDWORC Foundation – Zeist – The Netherlands), for a joint review of the INFORMO(T)RAC (Initiative for Mobile Training of Community Radio) programme.

The implementation of this programme in three West-African countries: Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone started on January 1, 2003 and will end on 31 December 2006.

Appendix 1 are the terms of reference for this joint review.

This report reflects the findings of the consultants.

1.2 RNTC Community Radio

RNTC believes that media plays an important role in a structural approach to fight poverty from the bottom up by stimulating active participation in social processes. This should be realized through information and dialogue about relevant social issues.

In line with this believe RNTC designed the INFORMO(T)RAC (Initiative for Mobile Training of Community Radio) programme, IP for short, in support of Community Radio Stations (CRS). These CRS are instrumental in realizing RNTC's, above described, vision.

On November 28th, 2002, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorate for International Cooperation – Dienst Culturele Samenwerking, Onderwijs en Onderzoek / DGIS – DCO/OC) approved RNTC's programme proposal with a total subsidy of €3,527,792 through the TMF funding 2003-2006. The IP concerns a capacity building programme for 31 community radio stations in three West-African countries: Senegal, Guinee Bissau en Sierra Leone.

1.3 Results

The IP started on the 1 January 2003. During the first year of the IP, in each country, the OPC (Overall Programme Coordinator) organized the start of the programme with Future Search Conferences¹, Needs Assessments, Taskforce recruitment, and the renting of adequate office space for the IP coordination centre. Training of CRS staff started in Guinea-Bissau in October 2004; in Sierra Leone in November 2004; and in Senegal in January 2005. The IP coordination centres were fully operational and equipped (including the studio), by February 2005 (Senegal and Guinea-Bissau) and June 2005 (Sierra Leone). Training of the taskforce took place earlier, e.g. National Coordinators (NC) in the Netherlands (October-December 2003), Training-of-Trainers (September 2004).

During their review, this joint review mission observed a well established IP (INFORMO(T)RAC programme) in each of the three countries.

In each country, a well managed, efficiently equipped , taskforce is in place. This taskforce consists of a national coordinator, two programme trainers, one (part-time) technical trainer-instructor, one office manager, one driver, and one caretaker/watchman. The taskforce operates from a well situated building with adequate offices, a broadcast studio for training purposes, and a suitable training/meeting space. Each taskforce has a 4W-drive vehicle.

The IP has an overall programme coordinator (OPC) who operates from the RNTC office in Hilversum (Netherlands).

As a result of the needs assessments, the IP selected 31 CRS (Community Radio Stations) to be supported by the programme: Twelve in Guinea-Bissau, eight in Senegal, and eleven in Sierra Leone. The staff of all the CRS received various training in the handling and operation of modern broadcast equipment; programme production; organizational and financial management. Twenty-eight out of the thirty-one stations received modern studio, and some received broadcast equipment, which the IP helped installing. In four stations this equipment still need installation due to seasonal wheather conditions (2), theft of relevant equipment (1 in Sierra Leone), and late commissioning of the building (1 in Sierra Leone).

In the course of 2004, the IP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with each of the responsible ministries in the three countries.

The review mission commends all the IP personnel for the many achievements of the programme. They managed to realize a valuable support programme to CRS under very difficult circumstances. Especially in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, the programme operates in a still difficult post-war situation, with in Guinea-Bissau still recent (October/November 2005) political unrest. Until the mission's visits, both countries did not manage to (completely) re-install the national power grid yet.

¹ FSC (Future Search Conference) is a unique planning meeting to assist diverse groups of people to discover values,purposes, ambitions, and projects they hold in common; it enables people to create a desired future together and to start working towards it right away.

The mission met in all the three countries very satisfied and appreciative staff of the CRS which are serviced by the IP. They especially appreciated the combination of hardware and training with 'hands-on' experience, which the IP brought to this radio staff. All had the feeling that they now operated their equipment, receiving a higher 'yield' than before when they just received hardware and had to find out by themselves how to operate it. Besides their own satisfaction, they based their appreciation on the many reactions of their listeners who appreciate the better quality of, as well the broadcasting (sound quality and further outreach), as the programme productions, since the IP supported their radio station.

All the reactions were positive till extremely positive, e.g. 'when the INFORMO(T)RAC programme came to our radio station, it was as if God had landed in our community'.

1.4 Conclusions & Recommendations

1.4.1 Conclusions

The mission fully supports RNTC's believe that Community Radio Stations (CRS) could play an important role in a structural approach to fight poverty from the bottom up by stimulating active participation in social processes.

As the mission saw, CRS do contribute to Civil Society Development (CSD), and as such, the INFORMO(T)RAC programme (IP) certainly (indirectly) contributes to poverty alleviation, especially in societies where previous war situations have destroyed various bases of the society. Improved functioning of CRS does improve the opportunities for information and dialogue about relevant social issues.

1.4.2 Recommendations

Although the review mission have come to a positive review of the INFORMO(T)RAC programme (IP), it would like to make the following recommendations to further improve the programme and to safeguard the programme for the future of the Community Radio Stations (CRS), and further contributions to Civil Society Development (CSD).

1. The mission are convinced, and have lived through the experience, that CRS could play an important role in a structural approach to fight poverty from the bottom up, by stimulating active participation in social processes.

The mission have seen and heard that CRS play an important role in CSD through the strengthening of the impact of CSO by enhancing their capacity to inform, and educate the marginalized population and to stimulate their awareness.

By the end of 2006, the IP just would have had one and a half year of full operations (in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, in Senegal a bit longer). This is too short to expect the IP to continue its valuable services to CRS independently.

Although the mission are impressed with the results sofar of the IP, the mission realize that these results are still fragile and still will need re-enforcement.

Therefore, the mission recommend to continue the support to the operations of the IP in all the three countries with a period of two years, so till 31 December 2008. This will mean an extra financial contribution of approximately 430,000 euros (just for operations).

To take advantage of the dynamic momentum, existing in all the three taskforces and the (visited) CRS, the mission recommend to take the decision about the above recommendation as soon as possible to prevent loss of well trained and prepared human resources in the on-going IP;

2. Furthermore, the mission recommend that the existing IP coordination centres in the three countries develop to organizations with a suitable legal status (e.g. what is going on in Sierra Leone to become an NGO) which will function as a BSO (Business Service Organization) for CRS (also see chapter 5.5.4.2 on page 26). The mission see ample opportunity for a BSO which facilitates CRS development with training, participative programme production, technological innovation, lobbying/fundraising, and other identified services which are in demand by the CRS;
3. CRS have to comply with some basic conditions to really qualify as a COMMUNITY radio station. AMARC (Association Mondiale des Associations Radio Communautaire) defined the concept and the conditions to qualify as a CRS, as summarized in appendix 2. The mission recommend the IP to accompany and influence the CRS to become (in some cases) even better examples of real CRS than that they are at present;
4. After that the mission analyzed the weekly broadcasting programmes of the visited CRS (see appendix 3, 4, and 5), it recommend that the IP trains the radio stations in producing more balanced programming, to better reflect the COMMUNITY aspect of CRS (e.g. less popular music, more educational and informative programmes about the position of women in the society; about hygiene and health; about agriculture; and others);
5. Other aspects of CRS is the participative approach for programme productions, behavioural studies, and audience profiling. The IP can and should teach these techniques to CRS staff, to better include the community in community radio programme making;
6. Although the mission has seen good examples of the IP management training, it recommend to structurally train all the CRS in the correct organizational structures and management techniques to improve the organizational sustainability of the CRS;
7. Furthermore, the mission recommend that the IP structurally train all the CRS in proper financial management to give them better chances to obtain financial sustainability. The outcome of this training process should be an appropriate business plan for the CRS, including fundraising, depreciation of equipment, etc.;
8. In Guinea-Bissau, the mission noticed the absence of a national guideline for CRS. Therefore the mission recommend that the IP, together with other stakeholders, assist the national authorities with the formulation of adequate guidelines. Similar guidelines which exist in neighbouring countries like Senegal and Sierra Leone can be used as good examples;

9. The mission observed the production of various training materials by the IP. The mission recommend to develop this material in a standard format and to disseminate this material to each CRS in the IP in a specific file which will be available in an accesible spot for all the collaborators of the radio station, rather than that training materials are locked up in cupboards or drawers of just the trained person. In the future, these files will also be useful for the CRS of the new countries which will benefit of an IP.

2. Introduction

In November 2005, RNTC (Radio Nederland Training Centre) and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorate for International Cooperation – Dienst Culturele Samenwerking, Onderwijs en Onderzoek / DGIS – DCO/OC) requested the external consultants, Martin Faye (Director Intermedia Afrique – Dakar - Senegal) and Roy C. Kessler (NEDWORC Foundation – Zeist – The Netherlands), for a joint review of the INFORMO(T)RAC (Initiative for Mobile Training of Community Radio) programme.

The implementation of this programme in three West-African countries: Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone started on January 1, 2003 and will end on 31 December 2006.

Appendix 1 are the terms of reference for this joint review.

This report reflects the findings of the consultants.

3. Execution of the Joint Review Mission and the applied Methodology

3.1 Execution

The Joint Review Mission visited the three countries of the INFORMO(T)RAC programme (I-programme) from 26 January till the 19 February 2006. The following persons formed the mission:

Martin Faye, director of Intermedia Consultants Afrique (Dakar – Senegal), representing RNTC; and

Roy C. Kessler, consultant for international cooperation (NEDWORC – Zeist – The Netherlands), representing the Netherlands Government.

In each country, the mission visited the INFORMO(T)RAC office and a number of Community Radio Stations (CRS) which were serviced by the I-programme: five in Guinea-Bissau, four stations in Senegal, and five in Sierra Leone (See appendix 13 for the Visits Schedule). The mission are convinced that these CRS are representative of the 31 CRS which in total are serviced by the IP.

In Guinea-Bissau and in Sierra Leone, the NCs of the I-programme had organized a visit to the Minister of Information and Communications / Broadcasting.

The mission, in each country accompanied by the national coordinator (NC) of the I-programme and the programme's driver, drove a total of 3700 km on not always perfect roads (800 km in Guinea Bissau, 2000 km in Senegal, and 900 km in Sierra Leone).

3.2 Methodology

The mission prepared itself by reading a great part of the project literature which the OPC (overall programme coordinator) had made available to the mission, such as: Project document, Future Search Conference (FSC) proceedings, Needs Assessments, Feasibility Studies, Monthly (and later Quarterly) Progress Reports, Yearly Activity Planning, and Financial Reporting.

In each country the mission started with visiting the premises of the office, the offices, and the training studio. Furthermore, the mission had an extensive work session in the I-office with the entire I-team. The mission discussed the functioning of the office, and there was an exchange about functioning and about the experiences with the programme's execution with each teammember. At this occasion, the mission collected relevant documentation, such as: Training Event Reports, Training Modules, Training Outlines, and Geographical data.

At the end of each country visit, the mission had an extensive de-briefing session with the entire I-team. A short de-briefing note was discussed and left at each I-country office (see appendix 6, 7, and 8).

For the workvisits to each CRS, the mission proceeded as follows:

- Paying an extensive visit to the station's premises, offices, and studio;
- Experience exchange with many staff members of the CRS about: broadcasting, programming, audience audits, financial resources, human resources, and last but not least, about the relevance of the I-programme for the CRS;
- Experience exchange with several members of the station's Management Committee (MC) and Local leaders (Community Chairman, Paramount Chief, Village Council);
- Rapid CRS's Listeners Appraisal;
- Collecting the CRS Programme Schedule for further analysis (see appendix 3, 4, and 5); and
- Collecting data to fill out the RNTC checklist for CRS (see appendix 9).

The mission prepared a visit report for each CRS (see appendix 10).

Furthermore, the mission took about eight hundred pictures of the meetings, the CRS, and the environment in which the CRS operate.

4. The RNTC Community Radio – RF041202

INFORMOTRAC – INitiative FOR MOBILE TRaining of Community Radio
INFORMORAC- INitiative pour la FORMation MOBILE de RADIO Comunitaire

4.1 The Programme

The INFORMO(T)RAC-programme (Initiative for Mobile Training of Community Radio), the I-programme in short, was approved by the name ‘RNTC community radio’ on November 28th 2002 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the framework of the TMF funding 2003-2006. The total subsidy amount for the INFORMO(T)RAC-programme is €3.527.792. The programme concerns a capacity building programme for 31 community radio stations in three West-African countries: Senegal, Guinee Bissau en Sierra Leone.

For almost sixty years, Radio Nederland (RN) has a wide experience with radio broadcasting to and in developing countries. Radio Nederland Training Centre (RNTC) was established in 1968 as a training and consultancy unit of RN. Starting out with activities in Hilversum in the Netherlands, through the years, RNTC developed more and more, demand-oriented, training, consultancy, and production on-the-spot. This happened with partner organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin-America, Central and (South)-Eastern Europe. As such, RNTC developed as a networking organization, mediating between organizations, and supporting organizations in view of accelerating processes which will lead to institutional sector development.

RNTC believes that media plays an important role in a structural approach to fight poverty from the bottom up by stimulating active participation in social processes. This should be realized through information and dialogue about relevant social issues.

So, RNTC designed the I-programme. The programme consists of five components²:

1. Cross-sectoral networks for community-based newsreel programmes and educational productions;
2. Institutional support for sustainable rural development, in particular through mobile community training units;
3. Capacity building within community radio stations;
4. Production of thematic educational programmes; and
5. Infrastructural support to community radio stations.

² As formulated in the ‘English Summary Project Document’ and the TMF evaluation (Draft document).

The programme follows four different intervention strategies³:

1. Establishment of cross-sectoral networks using Future Search strategy.
During Future Search Conferences, representatives of media (community, private and public), local government and civil society discuss common values, objectives, ambitions, projects, regulatory issues, strategies and scenarios. It will form the basis for knowledge networks;
2. Audience profiling.
This strategy is aimed to effectively reach the target groups of the community radios. Results of the research are translated in thematic programme formats;
3. Capacity building for sustainable development.
Locally trained national trainers provide training to community radio stations, by mobile production and training units and distance education; and
4. Infrastructural support to community radio stations.
Training is supported by the provision of basic technical hardware (simple studio equipment, including mixing panel (making phone insert possible), and digital editing.

In addition the methodology:

- Builds on endogenous development processes;
- Is tailor made; and
- Builds on a network (especially alumni of RNTC courses).

4.2 Selected countries

The I-programme selected three countries for implementation: Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. In view of a vision for the future, this selection envisaged the preparation of training and programme materials in three languages: Portuguese, French, and English. These materials would then be useful if the I-programme would be extended to other countries in Africa and elsewhere.

4.3 Logical Framework: Objectives, Results, Activities, and Resources

The three year I-programme describes ten objectives with planned activities and the expected results in the project document. This mission reviews the realization of these in the table as seen in appendix 11. Chapter 5.3 (page 21) gives a further description of the activities, their results, and the contributions to the realization of the ten objectives.

By official letter (DCO/OC-080/05) dated 01 March 2005, the Netherlands Government agreed with a budget neutral (= with the same original total budget amount of 3,527,794 euros) extension of the programme period with one year, so till 31.12.2006. In the same letter, the Netherlands Government agreed with the proposed budget revision (still budget neutral) as shown in appendix 11.

³ From Project Doc (English summary) and TMF evaluation (draft document)

The provision for 'Overall Project Management' was increased with 88%. In the original budget, a provision of 0.5 FTE was foreseen for the overall programme coordinator (OPC) in Hilversum. In the budget revision, this was changed in an 0.8 FTE.

In practice, the present OPC immediately started working for 80% upon his arrival in July 2004. RNTC just charged the IP-budget for the originally agreed 0.5 FTE. Since January 2005, this budget was charged with the 0.8 FTE for the OPC.

Other reasons for the 88% increase of the 'Overall Project Management' provision, were the expected expenditure for public relations and the planned joint review mission.

4.4 Results

The IP started on the 1 January 2003. During the first year of the IP, in each country, the OPC (Overall Programme Coordinator, who operates from Hilversum in the Netherlands) organized the start of the programme with Future Search Conferences, Needs Assessments, Taskforce recruitment, and the renting of adequate office space for the IP coordination centre. Training of CRS staff started in Guinea-Bissau in October 2004; in Sierra Leone in November 2004; and in Senegal in January 2005. The IP coordination centres were fully operational and equipped by February 2005 (Senegal and Guinea-Bissau) and June 2005 (Sierra Leone). Training of the taskforce took place earlier, e.g. National Coordinators (NC) in the Netherlands (October-December 2003), Training-of-Trainers (September 2004).

During their review, this joint review mission observed a well established IP (INFORMO(T)RAC programme) in each of the three countries. The taskforce operates from a well situated office with adequate offices, a broadcast studio for training purposes, and a suitable training/meeting space. Each taskforce has a 4W-drive vehicle.

In each country, a well managed, efficiently equipped, taskforce is in place. In each country, the IP has a national coordinator (NC), an office manager (OM), and a driver.

In Guinea-Bissau, the programme works with two programme trainers, in Senegal with one programme trainer and one programme/technical trainer-instructor, and in Sierra Leone, the IP has two programme trainers.

A technical trainer-instructor works in Guinea-Bissau on a part-time basis (2 days in the week), in Senegal this position is shared by the programme/technical trainer-instructor, while in Sierra Leone, the IP just contracts the technical instructor, locally, when there is demand for such training.

The mission observed that the IP in practice deviated from the originally set objectives regarding the taskforce composition (see appendix 11, result 3.2). With the workload at the hands of the taskforces, the mission wonder if the IP should not adhere to the original composition of the teams.

As a result of the needs assessments, the IP selected 31 CRS (Community Radio Stations) to be supported by the programme: Twelve in Guinea-Bissau, eight in Senegal, and eleven in Sierra Leone (see appendix 12).

The mission noticed that in one case (Radio Kailahun), the IP selection of the participating CRS deviated from the recommendations of the needs assessment. Although, the mission appreciate that sometimes for other (good) reasons, a deviation from the original criteria is necessary, the mission fiercely disagree with this selection as it does not adhere to the principles of community radio as mentioned earlier in appendix 2.

The staff of all the CRS received various training in the handling and operation of modern broadcast equipment; programme production; organizational and financial management. Twenty-eight out of the thirty-one stations received modern studio, and some received broadcast equipment, which the IP helped installing. In four stations this equipment still need installation due to seasonal wheather conditions (2), theft of relevant equipment (1 in Sierra Leone), and late commissioning of the building (1 in Sierra Leone).

The mission did not receive the total number of persons trained by the IP until the date of the review, with the exception of the IP in Senegal, where 101 persons were trained, of which 25 were women. From various other information sources though, the mission are confident that the IP realized the planned results in terms of persons trained.

In the course of 2004, the IP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with each of the responsible ministries in the three countries.

The review mission commends all the IP personnel for the many achievements of the programme. They managed to realize a valuable support programme to CRS under very difficult circumstances. Especially in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, the programme operates in a still difficult post-war situation, with in Guinea-Bissau still recent (October/November 2005) political unrest. Until the mission's visits, both countries did not manage to (completely) re-install the national power grid yet.

The mission met in all the three countries very satisfied and appreciative staff of the CRS which are serviced by the IP. They especially appreciated the combination of hardware and training with 'hands-on' experience, which the IP brought to this radio staff. All had the feeling that they now operated their equipment, receiving a higher 'yield' than before when they just received hardware and had to find out by themselves how to operate it. Besides their own satisfaction, they based their appreciation on the many reactions of their listeners who appreciate the better quality of, as well the broadcasting (sound quality and further outreach), as the programme productions, since the IP supported their radio station.

All the reactions were positive till extremely positive, e.g. 'when the INFORMO(T)RAC programme came to our radio station, it was as if God had landed in our community'.

5. Research questions and the answers found by the review mission

The evaluation questions are grouped following the five classical criteria for programme or project evaluation: Relevance; Efficiency; Effectiveness; Impact and Sustainability. Furthermore, another criteria, that of 'Learning & Innovation' is added. The key research questions, and the found answers, are:

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Is the programme responding to the real needs of the radio stations, the direct target group?

As the needs assessments in 2003 in all the three programme countries already clearly indicated, the INFORMO(T)RAC programme (IP) is responding to the real needs of the CRS. The mix which the IP offers of technical, programme production, and management training, combined with the supply of some specifically identified hardware needs (e.g. mixing panel, portable interview equipment), is precisely what all the visited CRS mentioned to the mission when asked for their present needs.

The mission support the hardware choice of the IP. It represents state of the art technology which will facilitate the functioning of CRS in a modern way developing up-to-date skills in the station's staff.

Adding to the relevance of the present IP, are the mission's expectations for future developments in the field of communications. It is likely that future developments (e.g. interactions between internet/telephone/radio) will even more facilitate the dissemination of information in a democratic, and just way. As such, well developed CRS could serve their communities better.

5.1.2 Is the programme responding to the interest of the final target group, the listeners of the programmes of the community radio stations, most of them poor and marginal?

Although the IP just started 'audience needs sampling' (e.g. 'Étude Auditoire' in Senegal), and therefore not much 'hard' evidence can be shown, the mission believe that the IP also is responding to the interest of the final target group, the listeners of the programmes of the community radio stations, most of them poor and marginal. The many reactions, the mission heard by listeners themselves, and above all, by their representatives in the management committees, confirm this opinion.

5.1.3 Has the target group been involved in the elaboration of the activities undertaken by the programme?

The mission did not observe structural listener's involvement in the IP. However, when participative programme producing will become generally accepted and practiced, the mission are confident that this involvement will be realized.

5.1.4 What is the complementarity and coherence with related activities and projects undertaken by government or other support agencies?

The mission noticed that the IP created complementarity and coherence with related activities and projects undertaken by government and other support agencies through their service activities to CRS. For instance, in Guinea-Bissau, during the government campaign to mitigate the cholera outbreak, the CRS did not only play a decisive role, but also developed governmental appreciation for the significance of CR in such circumstances. Similar experiences with the collaboration between the government and CRS for the election process.

In Sierra Leone, the CRS collaborate in the government programme 'Search for common grounds', to create better grounds for peace development.

Furthermore, the mission noticed many relevant collaborations between CRS and agencies of a various nature, e.g. on women's situation, on children, on health issues, on education, etc., now made more interesting due to the support of the IP to CRS. This support directly improved the quality and reach of the CRS' broadcasting.

5.2 Efficiency

5.2.1 What is your appreciation of the day-to-day management such as financial management, HRM, internal communication, delegation etc.?

The mission saw (e.g. monthly and quarterly internal reports, quarterly reports to the financier) and heard (from the taskforce members) many examples to consider these aspects well taken care off by the IP. The whole programme implementation gives an open, relaxed, but certainly hard working, impression.

The mission saw correct financial management, reflected in good financial reporting. Some criticism was heard about the money transfers from RNTC in Hilversum to the 'field'. All involved were satisfied with the administrative procedures of which the mission saw some examples, e.g. 'Demande mensuel d'argent informorac', amongst others, on the basis of a 'Budget de formation'.

The criticism came about the time the intermediary organizations needed before the taskforce received the money, e.g. via MAVEGRO in Guinea-Bissau; via Action Aid in Sierra Leone; while the 10% handling costs by SNV-Guinea-Bissau (before MAVEGRO was used) seemed exaggerated. In Sierra Leone, where the money came late in 80% of the requests, it even lead to postponement of planned training activities.

Fortunately, in all the cases, the taskforce leadership managed to find what seems to become adequate solutions for this problem. Direct money transfer from Hilversum to the IP local taskforces is eminent.

5.2.2 What is your appreciation of the planning and monitoring mechanisms of the programme?

The mission considers the planning and monitoring mechanisms of the IP in good order. This is reflected in the yearly activity planning, quarterly reporting (monthly in 2003 & 2004) by the national coordinators, and three workvisits per year by the general coordinator from Hilversum.

5.2.3 How far the costs of the programme were justified by the benefits that they generated, in comparison with similar projects executed by other organizations?

The mission do not know of any similar projects, and therefore can not give any comparison. Some experience is known about a far less structured support to radio activities in the francophone world, by no comparison such a capacity developer as the IP tries to achieve.

The mission believe that the costs of the IP is justified in view of the efforts to realize important capacity building to support CRS, which in turn will be an important factor in civil society development. As such the mission consider the IP contributing to poverty alleviation.

5.3 Effectiveness

5.3.1 Looking at the logical framework of the project document, are the planned results achieved?

As appendix 11 shows, at the time of the review mission, many of the planned results are achieved, 6 out of the ten objectives have been realized or are on schedule (e.g. objective 10).

By the end of 2005, the expenditure was 57% of the budget. The main reason for underspending is an overestimate of the expected costs, e.g. for activity 3.3, objective 4, and objective 7. The mission expect that the IP may have exhausted the present budget by 80% by the end of 2006.

Regarding the realization of objective 4.1, the IP in each country did not organize the planned (second half 2003) 3 days workshop as a specific activity, but each taskforce identified with the staff of the selected CRS their training needs. This was realized in 2005. The mission have reports describing these needs, and considers objective 4.1 realized.

The web-based coaching facility, an expected result for the second half of the first year (6-12/2003) has not been realized. Insufficient and non-existent internet access is the main external reason for this negative result. Lack of computer literacy is another minor reason.

The very important objective 6 ('Plans for sustainable networks in three countries, able to support the coordinating centres, incl. the mobile training unit, realized') was planned for the beginning of the 2nd year (2004), part 1, and the beginning for the 3rd year (2005), part 2. At the time of this review mission, in Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, part 1 of this objective was realized. So, realization of this objective is behind schedule. The mission urged the NC in all the three countries to seriously speed up the realization of this objective as it is of paramount importance for the future of the IP and its services to CRS.

Regarding the realization of objective 8, the mission observed the following: The IP has started the peripatetic training in all the three countries, where the staff of 31 CRS received some basic training. Fifty till a hundred participants per country received this training. The NC and the trainers of the taskforce, also received further training (Thiès in Senegal and in Freetown in Sierra Leone). The results 8.3 & 8.4 were not yet realized, but the mission is confident that this will happen in 2006.

Related to the realization of objective 9, the mission commend the IP for the realization of a well structured informative website. However, this website still needs further completion, such as with educational materials. The mission are confident that this will happen in 2006.

The final installation of the supplementary hardware for one CRS in Guinea-Bissau and one CRS in Sierra Leone, still awaits favourable weather conditions. Up till the mission's visit (since the arrival of the equipment), due to the rain season, the transport of the equipment to these CRS was not feasible yet. The taskforces should have planned this differently, e.g. the installation at these difficult CRS before the start of the rains.

In general the mission noticed that the realization of objective 10 is according to the (revised) planning.

5.3.2 If there are any, what are the unplanned results of the programme?

The mission noticed the following unplanned results:

In Guinea-Bissau, the activities of the IP lead to the formation of an association of women, working in community radio stations.

In Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, the CRS related to the IP, with the improved supplementary hardware, now are able to relay the news programmes of the national radio system. The local communities of these CRS are now better informed about the national news.

A positive, at the same time 'negative', unplanned result, the mission heard from one of the CRS, which lost their trained staff (already three times!) to the national radio system, which gladly recruited this trained staff.

5.3.3 Compared to similar projects executed by other support agencies, what is your appreciation of the effectiveness of the programme?

The IP seems to be more effective than other (similar) programmes for CRS. In the three countries, the mission were regularly told that the IP made true what others promised. Furthermore, there was ample appreciation for the complementary training activities, complementary to the provided equipment. CRS staff mentioned that with IP support they got more out of their equipment, due to the relevant training.

5.3.4 Have there been any unforeseen external factors that influenced the execution of the programme?

Various unforeseen external factors influenced the execution of the programme. First of all the untimely and unfortunate illness of the OPC (overall programme coordinator of the IP in Hilversum). Her illness delayed programme implementation with at least 3 till 4 months.

The political (e.g. in October 2005) and economical situation in Guinea-Bissau also had a delaying effect on the programme implementation overthere. Nowhere in Guinea-Bissau, sofar, they managed to restore the electrical power supply. So all the CRS are dependant of generator support, an expensive fuel cost.

The refusal for tax-free import of the IP equipment in Senegal, delayed the programme implementation with about 6 months.

Theft of equipment in Sierra Leone delayed the installation in one CRS, while for another station delay was caused by late commissioning of the building (still not realized, but now upcoming, during the mission's visit). The rain season delayed the installation of the equipment in one CRS in Guineau-Bissau, and in one CRS in Sierra Leone.

5.4 Impact

5.4.1 To what extent the programme contributed to the reduction of poverty by informing, educating and stimulation awareness rising of the ordinary mostly poor and marginalized population?

Although no figures are available, the mission heard many statements from members and representatives of this population, showing positive impact on a great variety of subjects, which (indirectly) contribute to the reduction of poverty in these marginalized groups.

Testimonies of persons about higher scolarity, better hygiene, healthier diets, women and child rights, women and child abuse, women mutilation, HIV/Aids and venereal disease prevention, peace development, better house construction, disarmament, children for children on better behaviour, better crop results, and enlightening information on cultural differences, all via CRS broadcasting which improved in technical and programme quality through the IP support to CRS.

5.4.2 In what way the programme contributed to the reinforcement of the capacities of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the three involved countries?

The CRS play an important role in the reinforcement of the capacities of CSO in all the three countries. Through various broadcast programmes (informative, discussion, and participative programmes) let the CRS the CSO reach out to the population. The IP assists the CRS to improve their broadcasting as well technically as in quality of the programmes as the IP trains CRS staff in better handling of their equipment and in better programme production.

5.4.3 To what extent the programme contributed to enhancing freedom of expression and participation of ordinary people in public debate on issues of their direct concern?

The IP contributed to enhancing freedom of expression and participation of ordinary people in public debate on issues of their direct concern, by assisting CRS to improve their performance technically and in quality. Through IP assistance in acquiring modern hardware, phone insert, distant interviewing and

distant live reporting, became a reality for the CRS. The CRS could service their listeners better since their performance was improved and their equipment extended.

Various examples of this enhanced freedom of expression and participation of ordinary people in public debate on issues of their direct concern were presented to the mission, e.g. Radio Kasumay and Radio Quelele (Guinea-Bissau) on people's concerns about corrupt government officials; Radio Awagna on post-conflict CSD (Civil Society Development) and peace development in the Casamance region; Radio Mankeneh (Sierra Leone) on the stepping down of a corrupt local government official; on the deteriorating road condition of the main road to Makeni; Radio Bintumani (Sierra Leone) on scolarity issues.

5.4.4 In what extend the programme contributed to the enabling of diversity and independency of the media landscape?

The mission noticed that the IP reinforced the radiophonique pluralism in all the three countries. Since the arrival of the IP, CRS are servicing their listeners better, bringing alternative radio opportunities to the region, where before the state radio, with their top-down approach, had some kind of a monopoly. Now there are more bottom-up radio broadcasting opportunities.

5.5 Sustainability

5.5.1 What is your appreciation of the “ownership” of the achievements of the programme at the level of the community radio stations?

The CRS are very much aware of the contributions of the IP to the improvement of their performance. Although all the CRS operate under a constant scarcity of financial resources, they all realize that they have to contribute something to help realize further existence of the IP to continue the good performance of the CRS for their communities.

5.5.2 Were the services provided affordable for the beneficiaries and will they remain so after funding will end?

While in Senegal the CRS operate in a slightly ‘richer’ environment than the CRS in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, none of the IP supported CRS could afford to pay in full for the IP services. So the provided services were not affordable for the beneficiaries.

5.5.3 Organizational viability: What is your assessment of the organizational and management capacities of the three training centres?

The mission saw that the relatively simple organizational structure of the three training centres is an adequate one to realize the IP objectives to service CRS.

Although differences in the management capacities of the three training centres were observed, the mission is of the opinion that all the three training centres have sufficient management capacity to continue the IP to service CRS in the respective countries.

5.5.4 Juridical viability

5.5.4.1 In your opinion, what are the perspectives that the Informotrac offices will get/maintain a legal statue and could continue their activities as an autonomous independent organization?

The mission considers it really viable that the IP develops a legal statue to continue their activities as an autonomous independent organization. The environment in which the IP operates is very much in favour of the programme and its objectives. As well the CRS as the relevant government institutions as many CSO insist that the IP continues in one way or another.

5.5.4.2 To whom and to what extent could the actual activities of Informotrac be transferred to an existent local organization?

The mission looked into the opportunities and possibilities for a transfer of the IP to an existent local organization. The mission has come to the conclusion that in none of the three countries there is such an organization. In none of the three countries exists a sufficiently specialized organization who could take over the IP tasks.

The mission support the efforts to come to a suitable legal statue for the existing IP organization, e.g. what is going on in Sierra Leone to come to an NGO which will function as a BSO (Business Service Organization) for CRS.

The concept of the BSO is quite common in the MSE-sector (Micro and Small Enterprise). It refers to organizations which facilitate MSE development through support services, such as skill and management training, marketing activities, assistance with product development, human resource development, and other relevant needs. Supported by sufficient demand for specialized services, specialized BSO exist, e.g. BSO for management training, for marketing, for human resource development, etc.

The mission see ample opportunity for a BSO which facilitates CRS development in a specific country. The existing INFORMO(T)RAC coordination centres should develop in such a BSO, which services CRS with training, participative programme production, technological innovation, lobbying/fundraising, and other identified services which are in demand by the CRS.

5.5.5 Financial viability: In your opinion, what are the perspectives that the Informotrac training centres could continue their activities and generate their own revenues after TMF-funding?

The mission considered and discussed the options for financial sustainability of the IP to continue their activities and to generate their own revenues after TMF-funding has ended. The options in countries with such meager resources as Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, and to a lesser extent Senegal, are very limited. Nevertheless, the mission sees the following (limited) possibilities:

Local contributions from the CRS and from their communities might be feasible in some situations, but always to a very modest extent, far from what is needed to have the IP operational. It should be seen more as a token of seriousness about their demand for such specialized services, as kind of ‘ownership’, as their willingness to take some responsibility.

More feasible might be the resources of the strategic partners which the IP already managed to mobilize during its short existence. Partner organizations, such as Plan International, UNICEF, WHO (OMS in the French speaking countries), Action Aid, and many others, already paid considerable amounts to CRS for producing special programmes and broadcasting them for their target groups.

Furthermore, the mission would like to see that the ongoing IP programme could be assisted longer than till the end of 2006, to enable the programme’s management to mobilize more and better opportunities for financial viability of the programme. After all, in all the three countries, the IP programme was only fully operational and equipped (including the studio), since June/July 2005. That is just one and a half year by the end of 2006, too short to already expect the programme to assume full financial viability.

There is a great chance that the IP, left by its own to create financial viability after 2006, will collapse as it is too young to do so. Would this not be a great loss of investment, as well in human resources as in hardware?

5.6 Learning & Innovation

5.6.1 In what way progress in the execution of activities is monitored and are corrections made in case of failures?

The IP has a comprehensive project document which logical framework is used as a management tool for programme implementation.

Training sessions are evaluated at the end of each session. These evaluations are included in a report of the session. These training reports are attached to the quarterly reports and so, reviewed by the OPC of the programme. The latter visits each training centre about three times a year, and furthermore there is extensive telephone and internet contact. Furthermore, a financial controller in Hilversum produces half year budget/expenditure reports.

The above described processes give ample opportunity for monitoring and corrections as the mission have noticed.

5.6.2 In what way the programme is innovative and applies new technologies, services or methods?

The mission noticed various innovations and the application of new technologies in the IP.

All the CRS staff spoken to, expressed their great appreciation for the IP approach to training which accompanied the provision of equipment. Through this combination many reaped higher benefits than from the usual provision of equipment only. They now understood their equipment better, and that was to the advantage of their own work and the performance of the CRS.

Also many appreciated the ‘hands-on’ training experience, which they considered directly beneficial, more than the usual classroom theoretical classes.

For the introduction and application of new technologies, the mission frequently heard about the great steps forward, thanks to the digital editing equipment; mixing panel which, amongst others, made telephone insert feasible; and the advantages which the portable broadcast equipment brought for live interviews.

Most of all, the mission were impressed by the way many commended the IP for its transparency and commitment. ‘If INFORMORAC promises to do something, we can trust them that they will do it!’.