

AN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE APICULTURE INDUSTRY BETWEEN SENEGAL, THE GAMBIA AND GUINEA BISSAU?

PARTICULARLY FAVOURABLE CLIMATIC AND BOTANICAL CONDITIONS

Apiculture in SÉNÉGAMBIE méridionale (the Gambia, Casamance, northern Guinea Bissau) relies on the favourable and homogeneous eco-geographic potential. It is developing along a wide band comprising Casamance (Senegal) and inclusive of an area between the southern axis which passes through the regions, from East to West, of Gabu, Oio and Cacheu (Guinea Bissau) and a northern axis from east to west of the Gambia and the western border of the Tambacounda Department (east Senegal) going back up eastward towards the Kaffrine Department (Kolda region of Senegal).

The Sudano-Guinean climate enables the development of tremendously diverse forestial growth, particularly melliferous botanical species (kapoktree, acacia, pau sange in Guinea Bissau, etc.) or in mangrove zones (mangroves). These favourable conditions encourage the high productivity of *Apis mellifera adansonii*, thus SÉNÉGAMBIE méridionale is the place of choice among honey production regions in West Africa. Indeed it is not unlikely for a beekeeper to have on average fifteen or more hives which each supply on average 20 kilos of honey.

AN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Beekeeping is an activity enabling supplementary revenue to be generated for populations, mostly rural, who are witnessing the curtailment of trade in agricultural products which threatens their revenue. Apiculture provides nutritional contributions as well supplementary income. Honey, its by-products (royal jelly) and its processed products (*cana* in Guinea Bissau, mead in Casamance) are frequently used in the diola rituals of Kassa (Senegal and Guinea Bissau), the Mancagnes (Bula village in Guinea Bissau) and more generally by traditional medicine practitioners. In addition, beekeeping and more particularly apiculture, contributes to agricultural development through crop pollination. Colonisation slowed down even halted the development of this industry. Efforts undertaken at the national level to structure this sector by setting up organisations uniting producers' interests (except for the *National Beekeepers of the Gambia*), were not enough to revive it.

The Bissau Guinean sector in the restructuring process

Guinea Bissau has extraordinary potential for apiculture, especially in the north east region (Gabu), with marshland inundated with planted mangroves covering an area of approximately 800,000 hectares, forest coverage of an estimated 1.5 million hectares and a population of which the majority earns their livelihood from agricultural activities and picked products. In 1987, the Apiculture Association produced around 80,7083 kg of refined honey as well as a little more than 10 tonnes of refined wax (ASTEAP – SNV). At the beginning of the 1990s, there were 22,352 traditional hives in the northern part and 93,464 in the southern part of the country.

Despite economic liberalisation set in motion in 1986, continual politico-military crises since the beginning of the 1990s has led to a noteworthy reduction of the activity which resulted in an overt decline in honey exports. The infrastructures (storage centres, bee farms, laboratories) and equipment (presses, boilers and wax extractors) were destroyed, producers and traders organisations collapsed following the disinvestment of financial partners. Today, the Netherlands cooperation (SNV Bissau) supports the restructuring of the sector relying on:

- ⇒ An still untapped forest potential;
- ⇒ An even more significant amount of traditional hives in activity (more than 21,700 hives among 310 producers);
- ⇒ Production projections are estimated at 195 tonnes in 2008 for only the Gabu region;
- ⇒ Development of cooperation strategies among Casamance and Gambian beekeepers;
- ⇒ Prospects that support the recent creation of a national trade body of honey and its by-products (ASTEAP).

ORGANISED PRODUCTION BASINS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDERS

While production satisfies mostly local demand, several reasons contribute to the honey industry's cross-border as well as trans-national dimension. Producers must travel to access rare and remote storage and processing equipment in the region. Itinerant trade is controlled by semi-wholesalers and retailers who set the trade terms in villages, cross the border to sell honey at the weekly border markets (loumo) or to wholesalers on the Diaobé central market (Kolda region – Senegal). There are three distinguishable cross-border production basins, each having distinct floral potential, specific supply and demand conditions, and various levels of equipment.



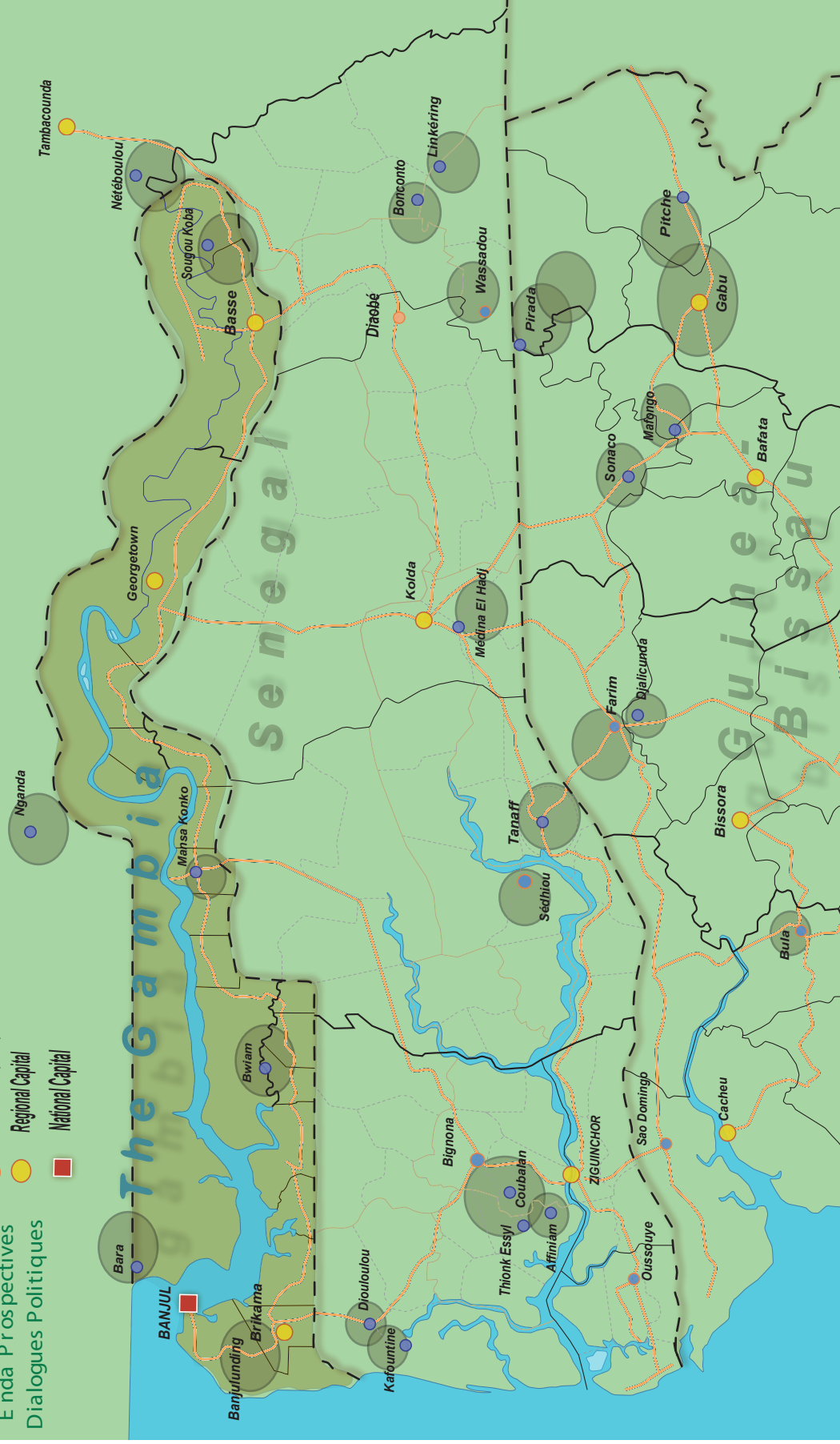
Enda Prospectives
Dialogues Politiques

- Active National Beekeeping Federation (the Gambia)
 - Major Production Areas
 - Beekeeping Site
 - Department / Sector Administrative Centre
 - Central Market (Diabé)
 - Regional Capital
 - National Capital
- State Border / Limite d'Etat
 - Regional Border
 - Departmental border
 - Routes

10 kms



Predominance of Beekeeping Activity by Geographic Zone



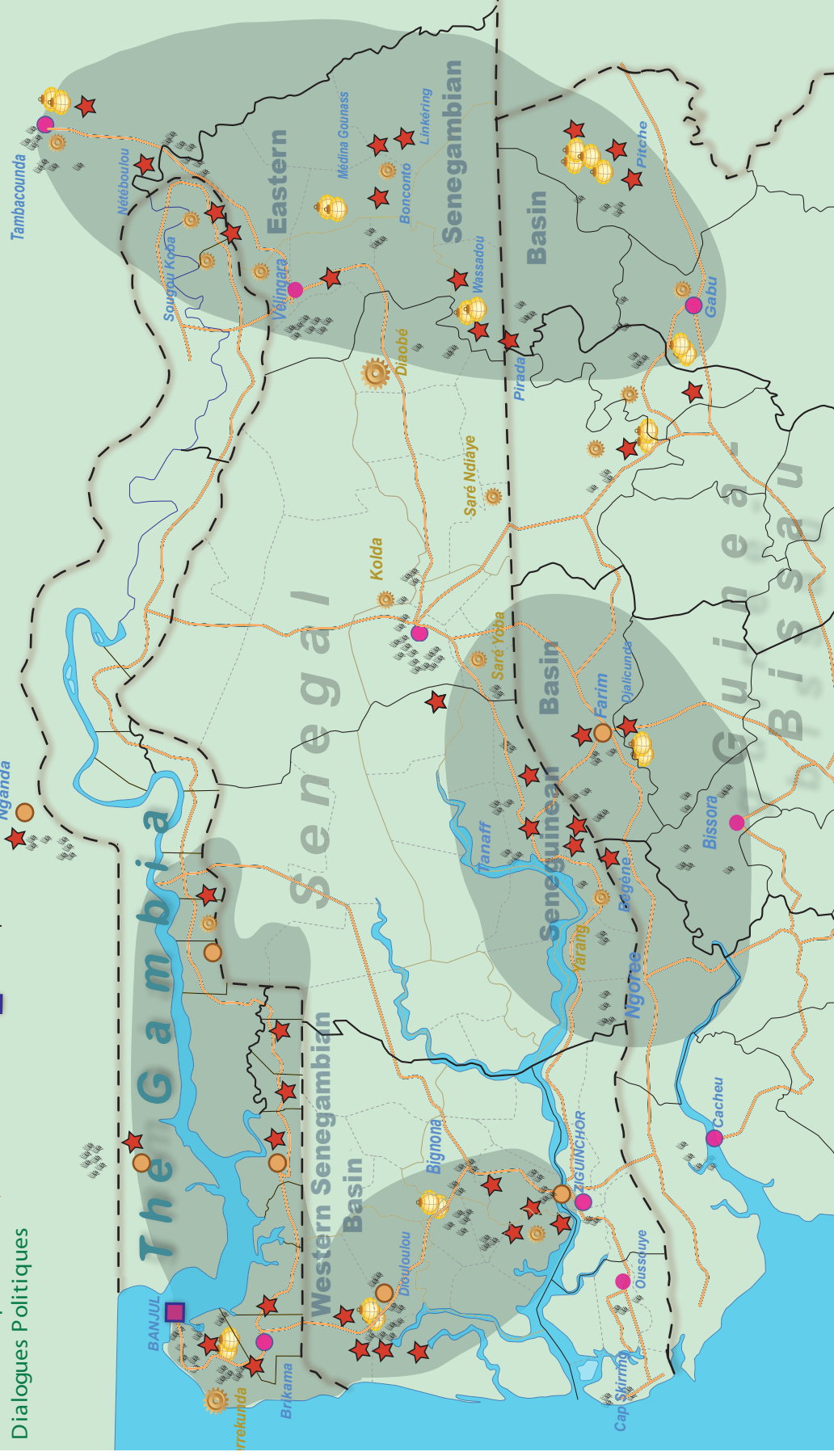


Enda Perspectives
Dialogues Politiques

- Production Basin
- Producers / Apiaries
- Bee Farms
- Processing Plants
- Consumers
- Markets
- State Border
- Regional Border
- Departmental Border
- Routes
- Department / Sector Administrative Centre
- Regional Capital
- State Capital

Beekeeping Potential by Cross-border Production Basin

10 kms



The eastern Senegambian basin has significant forestry capital and trained beekeepers having benefited from financial and technical support distributed over a period of time (PROMER, PROGEDE, IRSV in Tambacounda and Kolda, FAO Pitche in Guinea Bissau¹). The Senegambian basin which includes the villages of Farim (Guinea Bissau) and Tanaff (Senegal) is also well-structured with the FAAT² in Tanaff (Senegal), the proximity of the markets (Ioumo), the existence of a honey processing plant and a storage centre in Djalicunda (Guinea Bissau). The western Senegambian basin is set apart by the wide variety of hives used, production based on satisfying local demand as well as a low level of cooperation between producers associations.

CONSTRAINTS TO THE SECTOR'S INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

Several factors come together in Senegambia restraining the full development of this economic niche. Producers are poorly structured with a minimum level of cooperation. They are isolated which makes it difficult to access financing or credit. Unable to negotiate favourable trade terms, they cannot risk taking up modernising techniques. Employed traditional burning practices contribute to destroying all or some of the bee colony during the honey extraction phases. They also provoke small brush fires adding to the overall destruction of the forestry vegetation.

By responding to constant local demand that is not quality-conscious and with weak purchasing power, producers can sell a kg of honey for between 1,000 and 1,200 CFA Francs. Without support, they have no other choice other than to continue using unsound techniques which discourages other organisations from modernizing. While some take the risk, the benefit gained from sales is not enough to amortise the price of material used to construct the modern Langstroth, Vautier or Kenyan beehives, which are more environmentally-friendly and produce better quality yet more expensive honey.

While strong competition does not make the honey obtained competitive with the modern processing techniques, its marketing is also problematic given an insufficient number of storage centres, a relatively dismantled marketing chain and difficult distribution conditions due to the distance between production zones and harassment at the borders. The creation of national federations or even sub-regional organisations has been unable (except perhaps with regard to the Gambian experience) to develop operating strategies protecting producers interests such as low price fixing.

... WHICH CALLS FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS

In order to lift the constraints, producers organisations have spontaneously sought to share their experiences and their opportunities: FAAT brought modernisation techniques to the attention of Bissau Guineans so as to harmonise sale prices and prevent brush fires. FAAT has also been their guarantors with the Senegalese MEC³ who have provided them credit. For their part, the *National beekeepers of the Gambia* would like to train the Senegalese and Bissau Guinean apicultures in honey and wax processing techniques so that the Senegalese and Bissau Guineans can take advantage of the Gambian experiences in order to create national operating structures. At the workshop launching the pilot operation in support of cross-border cooperation in Ségambie méridionale (CIP - ECOWAS – October 2005), the valorization of these initiatives enabled a proposal to be put forward to set up a network of beekeeping industry professionals. Since the end of 2006, the SWAC/OECD, Enda-Diapol and GTZ PROCAS/PERACOD⁴ have helped actors of all the production line to work together to carry out an analysis of the sector and develop a cross-border action plan. This plan shall provide producers with increased control of the sector, greater price and regulation harmonisation as well as a financing framework in order to attract financial partners likely to invest.

Action Plan of Cross-border Senegambian Beekeeping Professionals

- ⇒ Promotion of cross-border self-training of industry actors
- ⇒ Set up a joint price and marketing harmonisation strategy
- ⇒ Renovation of storage centres
- ⇒ Credit access facilitation strategies
- ⇒ Promotion of quality honey harmonised due to setting up information/advice units, etc.

As from April 2007, a far-reaching review will be launched on the three countries' borders in order to collect and analyse specific information related to producers, their competencies, their level of equipment, the types of honey produced as well as the marketed volume.

HOW TO LEARN MORE

www.afriquefrontieres.org

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¹ Promotion of rural micro-enterprises project, Sustainable and participatory management of traditional and substitutional energies programme, Regional inspection of veterinary services, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

² *Fédération des apiculteurs de l'Arrondissement de Tanaff.*

³ *Mutuelle d'Epargne et de Crédit.*

⁴ Socio-economic Development Programme for Peace in Casamance and Programme of Support of Rural Electrification and Sustainable Supply of Domestic Fuels