

2018 at a glance

 **Desjardins**
Développement international

The activities of Développement international Desjardins (DID) yielded some excellent results over the past year, in a context of increasingly complex projects and numerous challenges. It was also a year marked by fruitful discussions and experimentation, which will enable DID to better position itself in the coming years. Most of the initiatives presented below were made possible with the financial support of the Canadian government.

Agricultural finance and food security

Haiti: Nearing completion, the Agricultural Financing and Insurance Systems in Haiti project has helped strengthen the Haitian agricultural financial sector and equip agro-entrepreneurs with agricultural financing and insurance, as well as financial education and technical support.

Cameroon: In October, DID concluded three years of support under the Programme for the Promotion of Youth Agro-Pastoral Entrepreneurship. This initiative enabled the establishment of a financing system for youth aged 18 to 35 and the reinforcement of the capacities of participating financial institutions.

Burkina Faso: The project carried out in partnership with the International Development Research Centre ended in April. The aim of this 36-month-long project was to demonstrate that improving access to financing could help farmers acquire and integrate new innovations into their agricultural operations. By capitalizing on the close cooperation established between the research sector, financial industry, input suppliers and trading partners, the initiative led to some impressive results, including:

- An increase in the acreage of seeded land and an improved performance, while reducing post-harvest losses;
- The adoption of more environmentally friendly practices;
- Improved food security for the families involved.



Mali: In addition to professionalizing credit granting to agro-entrepreneurs, particularly women, the Agriculture and Rural Financing in Mali project also supports the development of integrated agricultural value chains. In 2018, a pilot initiative enabled groups of onion growers to access a full range of financial services (input credit, savings, crop insurance) and non-financial services (financial education and training in agricultural and environmental best practices) adapted to their needs.

Colombia: The Support for the Agricultural Finance System in Colombia project, which will end next year, has posted results exceeding all expectations. Since its launch in 2014:

- More than 10,000 farmers and 3,500 financial advisors have benefitted from financial educational programs;
- Some 33 financial institutions (and their hundreds of branches) have received technical support aimed at improving their credit practices or opening new branches in post-conflict zones.



Inclusive finance



Senegal: The DID-Senegal team participated in the financial education of youth and women through two projects, which focused on:

- Nutrition for women and children;
- Skills training for employment for young people.

Haiti: The National Support Program for Organizing Haitian Entrepreneurship yielded the following results:

- More than 340 non-financial services were provided to local businesses;
- Several financial products tailored to the needs of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) were deployed, including a new group product for women;
- A second financial centre for entrepreneurs, affiliated with Le Levier federation of Haitian financial cooperatives in the southern region of the country, was launched.

Panama and Tunisia: The Entrepreneur Financial Centres (EFCs) established by DID continue to post positive results. After nine years in operation, EFC Panama successfully transferred its management responsibilities to a local team and is now running independently. In total, as at December 31, 2018, the five EFCs established by DID (in Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Panama and Tunisia) were reaching 37,844 clients, 35% of whom were women, through their 38 branches and service outlets.

Benin: The Support Project for Developing, Professionalizing and Revitalizing Microfinance in Benin aims to promote financial inclusion for some 500,000 Benin citizens, the majority of whom are women and youth. Currently, less than 20% of the population has access to financial services. Over the course of the year, the program led to the creation of a second financial centre for entrepreneurs as part of the FECECAM network as well as the development of a large-scale financial education program.

Vietnam: DID continued to support the governance of the Cooperative Bank of Vietnam (Co-opBank). Two pilot projects were also launched to develop and test new methodologies and tools for managing the credit cycle, assessing loans and carrying out internal audits for Co-opBank's affiliated cooperatives.

Sri Lanka: The project carried out by DID in partnership with the SANASA cooperative financial network led to the analysis of two value chains (rice and pepper) and the development of four credit products adapted to them. Desjardins Financial Security's participation in this project also led to the index-based crop insurance program being reactivated for rice growers.



Other notable achievements

DID continued to support Desjardins caisses in coordinating, deploying and monitoring three **solidarity-based finance** initiatives: Créavenir, Desjardins Microcredit to Businesses and the Desjardins Mutual Assistance Fund. Offered in partnership with 172 community organizations, these initiatives provide customized financing and coaching for entrepreneurs who have trouble qualifying for credit in the traditional financing system and people who are in financial difficulty.

As at December 31, 2018, the two **investment funds** managed by DID supported 11 financial institutions (in as many countries) and four investment funds. Over the course of the year, DID actively participated in the governance of institutions benefitting from equity investments: efforts were particularly focused on developing strategic plans, searching for new capital or financial partners, turning around operations, carrying out merger and acquisition projects or launching new business lines.

In 2018, 14 **volunteer experts** dedicated the equivalent of 420 working days to the Partner Assistance Program. They shared their expertise in areas as wide-ranging as credit management, governance, communications, manager training and internal control.

Thanks to the financial support of Desjardins Foundation, DID was able to offer **rewarding internships** to five young professionals, who were deployed to Tunisia, Vietnam and Haiti to participate in DID projects.

In October, the international **Proxfin** network, which brings together 21 DID partner community finance institutions, held its annual meeting in Montreal, which was centred on the theme of digital finance.

