

## MASTER

### Assessing political responsibility of transnational advocacy networks through social network analysis an empirical study

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# Assessing Political Responsibility of Transnational Advocacy Networks through Social Network Analysis

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An Empirical Study

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## **Abstract**

Advocacy NGOs are widely considered as important actors in national, regional and international politics, because of their simultaneous attachment to local places and cultures on the one hand, and their critical engagement with international and regional institutions on the other. During the 1990s, the forming of transnational advocacy network became an increasingly important means of social synergy among advocacy NGOs. Transnational advocacy networks include actors that are bound together by shared values, a common dialogue and a solid exchange of information and services that simultaneously pursue activities in different political arenas to challenge the status quo. However, transnational advocacy networks face a number of challenges with regard legitimacy, accountability and representation. Although downward accountability and representation are crucial to legitimacy, advocacy NGOs generally give more priority to upward accountabilities, thereby neglecting their downward accountability to the poor and marginalized communities they claim to represent. Downward accountability entails three components of analysis: representation, capacity building, and social capital. This study considered several useful frameworks for assessing the level of downward accountability of transnational advocacy networks. Jordan and Van Tuijls' (2000) concept of political responsibility is introduced as a useful evaluation approach. This approach aims to clarify issues on all three components of downward accountability in transnational advocacy networks that link multiple political arenas and involve a variety of different actors. This approach manifests itself in seven areas: the division of political arenas, agenda setting and strategy building, allocation of available financial resources, information flow, information frequency and formats, articulating information into useful forms, and formalization of relationships. This study however, argues that although political responsibility approach is a very useful and pragmatic way of assessing the downward accountability of transnational advocacy networks, it lacks a sound methodology framework. Social network analysis is introduced as a potential means towards a sound framework. Social network theory is about different types of relationships within a network, and starts from the perspective that actors' position in a network can improve or constrain their activities and that structure of relationships within a network determines its outcomes. Based on empirical case study on the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation, social network concepts proved to be very useful in analyzing the level of political responsibility achieved by a transnational advocacy network. Additionally, the availability of a variety of contrasting social network theories necessitates every result to be thought through very carefully. Furthermore, social network concepts make it feasible to value the level of political responsibility achieved in each area. By summing up all separate values, a score can given on the overall level of political responsibility achieved by a transnational advocacy network.

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# 1. Introduction

Transnational advocacy networks became an increasingly important way of social synergy in the last decade of the twentieth century and a central characteristic to the era of globalization. They focus on a variety of socioeconomic issues of poor and marginalised communities in developing countries. The networks connect the poor and marginalised communities in the less developed regions to national, regional and international politics.

However, these networks increasingly face challenges with their entitlement to participate in these political arenas. The main challenges are related to legitimacy and the relating issues of representation and accountability. For example, what authority do the networks have in the regional and international policy process? Who do they represent? And how are they accountable towards their target groups? Answering these questions proves to be a very complex matter for transnational advocacy networks indeed.

Generally, transnational advocacy networks derive legitimacy from a variety of sources. However, aspects such as good performance, quality and credibility, which are essential for a networks' legitimacy are very difficult to demonstrate. Not being able to tackle these challenges would hamper its grassroots support in the long run, and provides a (relatively easy) way for politicians to disregard numerous grassroots' interests and concerns.

This study aims at demonstrating that the concept of political responsibility is a proper way for transnational advocacy networks in tackling their challenges with legitimacy, accountability and representation. Furthermore, the study aims at identifying the potential use of Social Network Analysis in assessing the level of political responsibility achieved by a network.

This research is based on a thorough literature review on the above-mentioned challenges of transnational advocacy networks. It involves comparing different network evaluation approaches against the concept of political responsibility and reviewing a number of social network theories and analyses. The research also involves a case study of a transnational advocacy network of farmers' organisations in East Africa.

The research question that is addressed in this study is as follows:

*Why is the concept of political responsibility a pragmatic and appropriate approach to assessing the legitimacy, accountability and representations of transnational advocacy networks, and how could Social Network Analysis be potentially used within that approach towards a sound evaluation framework?*

Chapter 2 introduces transnational advocacy networks, and their challenges of legitimacy, accountability and representation. Chapter 3 discusses different network evaluation approaches and identifies the most appropriate approach for this research. In chapter 4 social network theories and

analyses and their potential use are reviewed. Chapter 5 analyses the potential use of social network analysis in evaluating transnational networks. Finally, in chapter 6 conclusions and recommendations are presented based on the research findings.

## **2. Challenges of transnational advocacy networks**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are widely considered as important in influencing global policy on development issues such as poverty alleviation, sustainable development and human rights (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000; Hudson, 2001). This has been possible because of their simultaneous attachment to local places and cultures on the one hand, and their critical engagement with international and regional institutions on the other (Hudson, 2001).

Several forces have contributed to the rise to prominence of NGOs (Madon, 2000; Edwards et al, 1999). The apparent ineffective public sector in less developed countries has led to a search for organisational forms that are more effective in the delivery of goods and services. In addition, the ideological dominance of neo-liberalism and globalisation in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has caused a massive emergence of new social movements as local communities and marginalised groups around the world strive to create their own self-identity. Current social theorists have referred to this emergence of social movements as ‘globalisation from below’, in which they claim that these movements operate in networks at grassroots level contrary to creating or maintaining existing authority structures. Many of these social movements look to NGOs to represent them in global policy and to meet their needs.

Until the 1970s, there was little recognition of the latent role of NGOs in influencing global policy (Madon, 2000: 1). The first NGOs from the 1950s consisted of large organisations such as Oxfam and the Red Cross. They began as charity relief organisations delivering welfare services to the poor and dispossessed throughout the world, mainly after natural disasters. They focused on providing immediate need through direct action (Hulme and Turner, 1990; Madon, 2000). The second generation of NGOs from the 1970s focussed on promoting local self-reliance by partnering with intermediate NGOs to maintain benefits beyond the period of assistance (Korten, 1987).

Since the 1980s, NGOs have engaged in a particular style of political action that relies on making political statements on behalf of beneficiaries outside the established channels of national governments (Madon, 2000). They mobilise views on a global basis on issues that national governments have given less priority. These third-generation NGOs aim at facilitating sustainable development through national international advocacy, which means more engagement in international and regional policy. They have been able to perform this advocacy role because of their simultaneous linkages with the grassroots on the one hand and their critical involvement with international and regional institutions (Hudson, 2001; Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000). Their ability to link micro-level experience with macro-level policy forms also their justification of their current engagement with national and international advocacy. Because of their stronger presence at the

grassroots, they have a significant advantage over official development agencies, and over grassroots organisations that have limited influence on national and international policy (Hudson, 2001; Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000; Madon, 2000).

Several factors played a role in the increasing attention of NGOs to advocacy (Edwards 1993; Hudson, 2001). In the early 1990s, policy-makers in leading international NGOs began to recognize that even though more and more public money was channelled through NGOs, their impact on the grassroots was still rather limited to temporary and small-scale successes. Their impact depended highly on fluctuations of policies, prices, interest rates and international exchange rates (Hudson, 2001: 333). For that reason, leading NGOs began to search for new strategies of ‘scaling up’ in order to enhance their impact at the grassroots (Uvin and Milner, 1996). An increasing number of NGOs adopted new strategies to develop more effective forms of transnational lobbying and advocacy (Hudson, 2001). In response, many NGOs have entered transnational networks for the purpose of gaining more profile. (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000; Hudson, 2001).

During the 1990s, networks became an increasingly important way of social synergy and a central characteristic to the era of globalization (Castells, 1998; Moghadam, 2000). This means of joining forces became also a central feature among advocacy NGOs (Wilson-Grau and Nuñez, 2003). In 2000, it was estimated that around 20,000 transnational advocacy networks were active around the world (Edwards and Gaventa, 2001). These formal or informal structures bring together diverse social actors with common purpose, thereby pursuing activities in different political arenas (Wilson-Grau and Nuñez, 2003; Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000)

Transnational advocacy networks focus on issues such as agricultural distortions, debt, the international financial institutions, international trade and the WTO, child labour, corporate social responsibility, climate change, bio-technology, human rights, capital flows, land-mines, education, and the arms trade. By linking grassroots in developing countries with international policy arenas, these try to networks to influence the policies and practices of consumers, companies, states and international institutions (Hudson, 2001).

## **2.1 NGO advocacy**

Advocacy has a broad range of denotations for NGOs. In many definitions NGO advocacy is seen as involving efforts to change institutions’ policies in ways that should favour the poor and marginalize communities in developing countries (Tandon, 1994; Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Hudson, 2001). It is based on policy analysis, research and the channelling of information (Hudson, 2001).

According to Jordan and Van Tuijl (2000: 2052) however, NGO advocacy is not limited to assisting the poor in accessing relevant information or providing them with the tools to reach out to decision-makers. They indicate that it is often overlooked that NGO advocacy also involves a fight against cynicism and despair among powerless communities that face huge political and practical difficulties when trying to improve their socioeconomic status. As they put it, ‘the underlying function of

advocacy is often to enhance the self-respect of weaker communities, to improve their self-confidence, constitute integrity and promote mutual trust: all essential ingredients to develop a healthy community' (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000: 2052). Consequently, they define NGO advocacy as 'an act of organising the strategic use of information to democratise unequal power relations' (Jordan and Tuijl, 2000: 2052).

For the purpose of this study, a more comprehensive and feasible definition of NGO advocacy would be more appropriate. Jordan and Van Tuijl's definition (2000) is therefore extended with Hudson's description of the activities involved in NGO advocacy (2001: 333). NGO advocacy is then defined as *an act of organising the strategic use of information to democratize unequal power relations, through activities ranging from awareness-raising, educational development, capacity building, lobbying and campaigning, to, in some cases, direct action.*

## **2.2 Transnational advocacy networks**

As already mentioned, networks have become a common way of social synergy among advocacy NGOs. According to Keck and Sikkink (1999: 200), 'networks are forms of organisation that are characterised by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange'. They consist of a set of interconnected nodes which are flexible and dynamic (Hudson, 2001; 334). They differ from hierarchies and markets because of their horizontal organisational forms that are based on trust, cooperation, loyalty and reciprocity between the different components, contrary to the vertical structure of hierarchies and markets (Thompson et al, 1991). Because of these characteristics, networks can ideally expand without limit, integrating new partners as long as they are able to communicate with the network, thereby sharing values and goals (Castells, 1996: 501).

Based on the abovementioned definitions of NGO advocacy and networks, transnational advocacy networks include actors that are bound together by shared values, a common dialogue and a solid exchange of information and services (Keck and Sikkink, 1998), that simultaneously pursue activities in different political arenas to challenge the status quo (Jordan and Tuijl, 2000). These activities are aimed at alleviating poverty and enabling sustainable development, and focus on the channelling of funding, expertise and information in particular (Hudson, 2001). Political arenas are geographically bound, such as New York or Nairobi, but they can also be institutionally bound such as the process of organising a congress on bio fuels or climate change (Jordan and Tuijl, 2000). As Evans (2000: 231) argues, transnational advocacy networks connect the poor and marginalised communities in the less developed regions to national and international political arenas where decisions that affect them are being made. In these political arenas, the interests of the poor and marginalised are promoted by the participants of the advocacy networks, i.e. advocacy NGOs and other organisations (Hudson, 2001), which therefore can be regarded as their representatives.

However, transnational advocacy networks face a number of challenges with their entitlement to participate in international and regional politics (Slim, 2002; The Economist, 2000; Hudson, 2001;



Keck and Sikkink, 1999; Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000). The main challenges are related to legitimacy, representation and accountability (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000; Hudson, 2001; Slim, 2002)

## **2.3 Challenges to legitimacy, accountability and representation**

Advocacy NGOs in general and transnational advocacy networks in particular increasingly face challenges with their roles in national and international political arenas. Most complaints about these networks engaging in the policy arenas are that they are unaccountable and limitedly rooted in the grassroots, thereby questioning their legitimacy as participants in global debates (Hudson, 2001; BOND, 2006; Edwards, 2000). This criticism comes from different sources, including the development community, in which commentators have questioned the motives and values of certain NGOs, suggesting that the NGO field is a donor-led business world, rather than a community that really represents and promotes the interest of the poor (Sogge 1996; Hudson, 2001; Edwards, 2000). Furthermore they suggest that advocacy NGOs in general are inadequately accountability to the people whose concerns they claim to promote which challenges their claim to be their legitimate representatives (Simmons, 1998; Edwards, 2000; Hudson, 2001).

### **2.3.1 Legitimacy**

Legitimacy in the case of transnational advocacy networks can be defined as the particular status with which this network is imbued and perceived at a given time that enables it to operate with the general consent of peoples, governments, companies and non-state groups around the world (Slim, 2002). According to Slim (2002) legitimacy is both *derived* and *generated*. It is derived from morality and law, and it is generated by veracity, tangible support and more intangible goodwill (Slim, 2002).

As pointed out by this definition, transnational advocacy networks claim legitimacy in a variety of ways (Hudson, 2001; Slim, 2002). First, they seek to influence policy by pointing out that they have practical experience on the ground. Second, they promote values that are broadly regarded within society and/or protected in international law. Third, they have the relevant expertise on certain issues. Fourth, they work in transnational networks with grassroots and other civil society organizations, and they support and strengthen democratic principles and practice. Fifth, because of the synergy of different advocacy NGOs, their individual members achieve legitimacy from other members of the network who themselves achieve legitimacy in one of the previous four ways. Finally, in the case of membership based transnational advocacy networks, they claim legitimacy because of their governance structure in which the council and management board are elected by their members.

A networks' most tangible form of legitimacy comes in the form the direct support from its beneficiaries and its members (Slim, 2002). If a network has an extensive and representative membership, their legitimacy is improved significantly because it enables them to demonstrate the precise extent of their support (Slim, 2002). The way in which a transnational advocacy networks as a whole and the individual members in particular balance and prioritizes their relationships gives

more information on its real values, which could contrast with its stated values (Hudson, 2001). Therefore, Hudson (2001; 343) argues that in order for a transnational advocacy network to improve its legitimacy, ‘the individual members should think carefully about: in which stakeholders’ eyes it is most important to be seen as legitimate; the implications of their legitimacy claims; the qualities of their relationships with a variety of both internal (members and beneficiaries) and external stakeholders; and, the ways in which these relationships might impact upon the legitimacy that different stakeholders ascribe to them’.

Because of their variety of relationships, most of the concerns on the legitimacy of transnational advocacy networks are related to the difficulties the network as a whole and the individual members in particular face in prioritizing and integrating the accountabilities to their multiple relationships (Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Hudson, 2001). Advocacy NGOs generally give more priority to *upward* or *external* accountability, i.e. accountability to external relationships with donors, international institutions, multilateral, and government bodies (Hudson, 2001; Ebrahim, 2003). This is not surprising as advocacy NGOs generally depend on donor funds, and relationships involved in upward accountability typically determine the allocation of funds or give a higher prestige or standing among the donors (Hudson, 2001).

However, as transnational advocacy networks claim to be the legitimate representatives of the the poor and marginalized communities in international, regional and national politics, it should also prioritize its *downward* or *internal* accountability, i.e. its relationships with the poor and marginalized (Hudson, 2001; Ebrahim, 2003). Downward accountability and representation are therefore crucial factors in claiming legitimacy. This idea is supported in a recent study conducted by BOND (2006), based on research across 60 NGOs. This study concluded that ‘*the quality of an NGOs’ work is primarily determined by the quality of its relationships with its intended beneficiaries*’ and that ‘*NGOs deliver quality work when their work is based on a sensitive and dynamic understanding of beneficiaries’ realities; responds to local priorities in a way beneficiaries feel is appropriate; and is judged to be useful by beneficiaries*’ (Bond, 2006: v)

### **2.3.2 Downward accountability and representation**

In 1995, Edwards and Hulme (1995) gave rise to the debate on NGOs’ accountability by concluding that that the state of NGO accountability at that time was unsatisfactory, and that improving their accountabilities is central to their continued existence as independent organisations. The Global Accountability Project conducted in 2003 showed that NGO accountability is still rather weak, particularly advocacy NGOs’ performance in crucial elements of advocacy such as the public access to information (Kovach et al, 2003; Ebrahim, 2005).

NGO accountability in general can be defined as ‘the process by which an NGO holds itself openly responsible for what it believes, what it does and what it does not do in a way which shows it involving all concerned parties and actively responding to what it learns’ (Slim, 2002). NGO accountability can be categorized into upward and downward accountability. As previously

mentioned, advocacy NGOs generally give more priority to upward accountability than to downward accountability. As Christina Bain (1999) put it:

While some progress has been made in addressing low upward accountability, it seems that downward accountability – at least within transnational NGO networks - continues to be the Achilles heel of the NGO movement. In an era when NGOs aim to become "vehicles of international co-operation in the mainstream of politics and economics" and have successfully won a place at many global negotiating tables, they now seem to be having difficulties in adjusting to their new role. While it would be unreasonable to expect all NGOs to adopt strategies of partnership and collaboration, it is not unreasonable to expect NGOs to begin to practice the downward accountability that they preach. (Bain, 1999:20)

Bain (1999) provides a useful explanation of downward accountability in transnational advocacy that is in line with the previous observation on the balancing and prioritizing of relationships. According to Bain (1999), downward accountability entails three components. The first component is *representation* which is defined as ‘the manner in which an organization, or group of organizations, speaks for its members or constituents and is held to account for this representation’ (Bain, 1996: 6). The second component is *capacity building* which is ‘the ability of a network to coordinate actors and bridge differences to achieve impact and leverage in a way that pools skills and builds the capacity of its members- to represent their own views in national and global arenas’ (Bain, 1996: 6). The third component is *social capital* which is ‘the ability of a network to promote trust, solidarity, respect and unity among its diverse members and re-enforce democratic practices by conducting itself in a transparent and accountable manner’ (Bain, 1999: 6). Based on these three components, Bain (1999) defines downward accountability in transnational advocacy networks as ‘the ability of the network to serve as a channel for the excluded while promoting balanced partnerships between its members and practices, skills and values that re-enforce democratic traditions’.

### **3. Assessing downward accountability and representation in transnational advocacy networks**

In the previous chapter, downward accountability was described as entailing three components: 1) representation, 2) capacity building, and 3) social capital. This chapter considers useful frameworks for assessing the level of downward accountability of transnational advocacy networks and identifies a framework that is most appropriate.

#### **3.1 Approaches to assessing downward accountability of transnational advocacy networks**

Provan and Milward's approach (2001) to assessing transnational advocacy networks argues that the effectiveness is crucial for its level of downward accountability, because a network will likely have considerable internal and external support by satisfying the needs of its beneficiaries. Evaluating the effectiveness of transnational advocacy however, has been generally neglected because of its complexity (Provan and Milward, 2001). To tackle the very complexness of network effectiveness, they developed a framework based on three levels of analysis: *community, network, and organisation/participant* levels (Provan and Milwards, 2001). First, on the community level, networks must be evaluated as service-delivery vehicles that provide value to local communities in ways that could not have been made possible through provision of services that are not coordinated by the individual agencies. Second, on a network level, a network must be evaluated to what extent it is a viable interorganisational entity if it is to survive. An effective network means that member agencies must act as a network, which implies incurring organising and transaction costs. Third, at the organisation/participants level, the importance of network involvement for individual agencies needs to be evaluated. The reason for this is that organisations considering becoming part of a network are motivated partly by self-interest in the sense that network involvement should be beneficial to their own agencies.

Creech (2001) supports the network effectiveness view in his *Measuring While You Manage Approach*, adding that efficiency is another core element of network evaluation. He argues that efficiency evaluation is often overlooked in traditional evaluation networks, while transactional costs of networks are often relatively high, that networks are weighty and time consuming to manage. This element is slightly incorporated in the network level of analysis in the previous framework.

The preceding approaches however, give insufficient attention to power differentiations within transnational advocacy networks, while proximity in social, cultural, political, and economic terms between its various members is central to the third component of downward accountability (Bain, 1999; Fox, 1998). Large power differentiations between members could decrease the trust, solidarity, respect and unity among its diverse members. Nunez and Wilson-Grau (2006: 3) tried to tackle this issue by arguing that a successful functioning of a transnational advocacy network depends on equity in relations and exercise of power within the network, and the diversity of its

membership. Their framework focuses on two aspects of evaluating of transnational advocacy network, thereby using several different criteria (Wilson-Grau and Nuñez, 2006).

The vulnerability of Nunez and Wilson-Grau's approach however, is that it is rather static; it focuses too much on outcome evaluation by comparing the ideal and actual performances and results of a transnational advocacy networks. Furthermore, their approach is relatively complex because of the too many indicators of performance and results that could get lost in translation.

Jordan and Tuijl (2000) introduced the concept of *political responsibility* as a pragmatic and practical view on power relations and processes involved in transnational advocacy networks. Their approach primarily focuses on the processes within a transnational advocacy network, instead of its outcome. Their approach aims to clarify issues on all three components of downward accountability in transnational advocacy networks that link multiple political arenas and involve a variety of different actors. Political responsibility is about the qualities of the relationships that an advocacy NGO has with other actors in a transnational advocacy network. They put it as follows:

We introduce the notion of political responsibility to respond to the problem that 'representation' does not provide a sufficiently viable conceptual or practical approach to come to terms with power relations and responsibilities as they emerge in the context of transnational NGO advocacy campaigns (Van Tuijl and Jordan 2000: 2053).

Jordan and Tuijl (2000) define political responsibilities in transnational advocacy networks as 'commitments to embrace not only aims of a certain campaign, but also to conduct the campaign with democratic principles foremost in the process' (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000: 2053). An additional advantage of political responsibility is that 'accountability' and 'representation' are particularly difficult to translate into other languages which provide a major problem in conceptual frameworks about transnational advocacy networks (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000). Based on these characteristics, the concept of political responsibility, is a way forward towards a transnational NGO advocacy network that is more effective and performed according to the principles and values by which the network members claim to be driven (Hudson, 2001; Marx, Barnett and Halcli, 2006; Hickey and Mohan, 2005; Meierotto, 2007).

### **3.2 Political responsibility framework**

Political responsibility in NGO advocacy manifests itself in seven areas (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000). In each area there are parameters by which political responsibility can be assessed. Summing up all variables combined can help an advocacy NGO to evaluate the extent to which they have successfully embraced their political responsibilities. The seven areas are elaborated on below (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000, 254).

#### *1. Dividing political arenas*

This area focuses on recognizing who has expertise and knowledge in which political arena and respecting the boundaries established by that expertise, which is the first necessary act of accountability in a transnational advocacy network (TAN). Transnational advocacy networks grow from the need to engage in more than one political arena. It is impossible for an advocacy NGO to have the understanding of each arena that needs to be engaged in. For example, it cannot be expected that a grassroots farmer organisation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will fully understand the protocols associated with contacting relevant decisions makers of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa based in Zambia or the World Trade Organisation based in Geneva, let alone have the resources to bring pressure to bear in that political arena.

### *2. Agenda setting and strategy building*

This area of political responsibility considers the priorities, for whose advantage, using which timeframe and how to approach authorities or power holders in which political arena. This means that agenda setting and strategy building is closely related to the management of risks. Agendas depend upon the objectives of all network members. Therefore, a format is needed that lays out explicitly what one's objectives are, resulting in an overall strategy with transparent objectives. Risk management is a key issue that needs to be recognized within the strategy as well.

### *3. Allocation of available financial resources*

A major factor contributing to the risk of unbalanced relationships among members of TAN is the availability of financial resources. As a result, this area determines who has money and can pay for activities, who has access to other financial sources and who cannot contribute financially to the activities agreed upon.

### *4. Information flow*

Information is the most powerful tool in advocacy (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000). The direction in which the information flows in a TAN, whether all members of the network have access to the same information, the density and accessibility of information flows, as well as the capacity to analyze, process and generate information, have impact on how and whether political responsibility is embraced.

### *5. Information frequency and format*

This area focuses on the frequency of information exchange. Equally important is that all members of the network use format and channels that are suitable for their working conditions. The identification of a suitable mix of information formats and communication channels is essential to agenda setting, strategies and risk management.

### *6. Articulating information into useful forms*

This area focuses on interpreting available information in accordance with the political arena in which it is being articulated. For example, documents of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or the East African Community (EAC) are difficult to understand for some members of a TAN, unless they are translated into a more appropriate format. Jordan and Tuijl (2000) state that it is essential that members that do have the understanding of those documentation, point out the key statements or aspects of the documentation to other members in other political arenas and if necessary, translate this information. In many situations, oral communication is the only method of communication that is effective at a local level. According to the authors, 'A key indicator of the quality of a campaign is the length to which NGOs will go to break through communication and language barriers' (Jordan and Tuijl, 2000).

### *7. The formalization of relationships*

This area focuses on the formalization of relationships to help establish transparency, which is another critical issue in advocacy. Transparency is a very important tool for the reason that a key objective of advocacy is the lack of transparency within national and international government bodies. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, in advocating against this lack of transparency, it is essential for a TAN and all its members to be as much transparent as possible.

## **4. Assessing political responsibility through Social Network Analysis**

In the previous chapter, the concept of political responsibility was introduced as a pragmatic and concrete notion of the quality of relationships within transnational advocacy networks, thereby incorporating all three components of downward accountability. It lacks however a sound methodology framework for assessing all seven areas of political responsibility. Since its focus on relationships within networks is similar to the concept of political responsibility, social network analysis is introduced as a potential means towards a sound framework of assessing political responsibility.

### **4.1 Introduction to the Social Network Theory**

The literature describes a variety of social network theories. Although the definition of networks vary significantly within and between sectors and disciplines, all share the common characteristic that networks are about different types of relationships, whether these are objectively measurable ties or subjective emotional links (Keast and Brown, 2005; Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Ties may be social contacts, exchanges of information, political influence, membership, participation in certain events, or many other aspects of human relationships (Davies, 2003). According to Keast and Brown (2005: 2), ‘the notions of connections through linkages brings into play the image of networks as ‘webs’ of affiliations or ‘nets’ of links, metaphors that are a powerful way of conceptualising, presenting and discussing interrelationships between entities.

The network approach starts from the viewpoint that actors’ position in a network can improve or constrain their activities. It hypothesizes that the position of actors and the type and nature of their relationships with other actors within the network, determines the network outcomes (Borgatti, 2003; Keast and Brown, 2005).

Grandovetter’s (1973) concept of the strength of weak ties is one of the key theories on network relationships and their impact. According to this theory, weak ties between entities, rather than their close and stronger relationships, provide access to new information and innovation. Grandovetter (1985) also argued that strong ties add little value in the search for new ideas, knowledge and resources as everyone in the network has access to the same resources. He added that insufficient new input of resources and ideas could result in cliques of network which limits a network’s innovativeness.

Other theorists however, argue that networks with high density that have multiple and stronger connections are more beneficial because they allow for consolidation of strategies and actions (Walker, Kogut and Shan, 1997; Wasserman and Faust, 1994). The basic idea behind cohesion theories is that dense networks with strong and frequent relationships encourage the development of shared norms, common understanding and the level of trust, all necessary conditions for sharing of information and collective action.



Burt (1992) provides an alternative perspective on network relationships in his Structural Hole theory, which states that relationship advantages are derived from the ability of network actors to position themselves to bridge holes and as a result quickly learn about and speculate on new opportunities. This theory argues that entities that bridge structural holes within a network tend to have access to newer information and consequently are more likely to adopt or generate innovation.

Social capital forms an additional significant area of the network theory. The social capital theory is based on the idea that social relations affect the productivity of individuals and groups, and that better connected individuals or groups perform better (Putnam, 2000). Putnam (2000) also transformed the notion of social capital from a resource possessed by individuals to a collective attribute. Social capital is commonly defined as the trust, norms and relations or networks between people and communities (Putnam, 1993; Coleman, 1990). Social capital is also described as an important base for challenging power differences in intersectoral cooperation (Brown and Darcy, 1996). However, the same beneficial characteristics of social capital could potentially cause negative network externalities. Intensification of social contacts eventually leads to grouping and associations that could possibly increase the risk of exclusion of certain entities (Hunter 2000; Morrow 1999).

Other network theories posit to improve and predict network effectiveness by linking structural characteristics of networks to their effectiveness (Provan and Milward, 1995; 2001). Provan and Milward (1995) suggest that an integrated structure through network centralization and direct mechanisms of external control have a positive effect on network effectiveness.

Finally, theories on network governance explain under what conditions networks have comparative advantage, and are therefore likely to emerge and thrive (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997). This theory argues that the network form of governance within the business sector is a response to exchange conditions of asset specificity, demand uncertainty, task complexity, and frequency. These exchange conditions drive firms toward structurally embedding their external relationships, thereby enabling the use of social mechanisms for coordinating and safeguarding exchanges (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997)

## **4.2 Social Network Methodology**

Progress in conceptualisation and methodology has enabled the network concept to move beyond merely metaphor to the representation of aspects of social structure (Borgatti, 2003; Breiger, 2004; Keast and Brown, 2005). There is a wide range of methods for describing the structure of networks, and entity's places within those networks, categorized under the rubric of social network analysis (SNA). SNA's defining characteristic is that, unlike other evaluation approaches, it focuses mainly on the relationships between actors within a network (Keast and Brown, 2005; Serat, 2009). It measures, describes and analyses social structure based on multiple sets of relationships between people, organisations and other entities (Wellman, 1983; Keast and Brown, 2005). SNA views relationships in terms of nodes and ties - nodes being the individual network actors and ties the relationships between the actors (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005).

SNA can be used to develop two core sets of analysis: *graphical* (visual mapping) and *mathematical* (statistical) (Keast and Brown, 2005). The graphical aspect of network analysis uses data on basic linkages to represent the pattern of relationships between entities as well as the overall structural network features. Furthermore, by analysing the layout and positioning of network actors, network maps help to discover hidden patterns of relationships and to make the underlying structure of relationships become more visible (Keast and Brown, 2005). Another way of using network mapping is to visualize differences and similarities between the actual and ideal functioning of a certain network, which provides network administrators and members the opportunity to identify issues within the network, diagnose impacts and adjust both the type and strength of relationships (Milward and Provan, 1998). Data collection and measurement for network mapping analysis focus on identifying different types of relationships, calibrating their different structural properties and topologies based on characteristics such as density, size, centrality (Davies, 2003; Keast and Brown, 2005). Network maps are constructed through network drawing software such as Netdraw, Mage and Pajek (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005).

Progress in the development of more sophisticated and powerful SNA, particularly computer software, have increased the ability to put network relational data through more comprehensive mathematical and statistical analyses (Keast and Brown, 2005; Breiger, 2004). This makes it possible to gain more detailed understanding network features and their components (Keast and Brown, 2005). At network level, it is possible to determine the density of relationships between actors. Centrality measures provide information on where influence or power in a may be concentrated. Reachability measures on the other hand could provide insights on how quickly norms and values become diluted. At tie level, the strength of relationships (based on intensity frequency of a linkage), provide information on possible network outcomes. Weak ties for example may be useful for information gathering and dissemination, while strong ties enhance cohesion and collective action (Keast and Brown, 2005). UCINET is a program generally used for mathematical and statistical analysis of social networks data.

However, according to Breiger (2004), SNA depends heavily on the completeness of a network, i.e. securing a network set that is as close to a complete network response set as possible. Missing data can therefore have a serious impact on data accuracy and derived results (Keast and Brown, 2005). As Davies (2006) puts it:

It is important to remember a general point: that all network models are incomplete. Many if not all the actors in the network of concern will have connections with others outside the network. And even within this network, there will be multiple other kinds of relationships between the actors. A network model will always be a purposeful simplification of reality' (Davies, 2006: 9)

### **4.3 Basic concepts of SNA**

The structure of networks needs both description and interpretation (Davies, 2008). The reason for this is that although various structural characteristics can be discovered in many networks, the

meaning of these characteristics highly depends on the context and the position of the respondents within the network. Having uncovered certain structural features within a network, makes it easier to seek stakeholders' interpretations of the significance of these features.

The literature provides a variety of characteristics to describe the structure of networks. According to Davies (2006), these can be roughly classified in three groups: 1) terms describing the positions of individuals within the networks, 2) terms describing how similar one actor's position is to others, and 3) terms describing the structure of the whole network.

#### **4.3.1 Terms describing the positions of individuals within a network**

*Degree centrality* is based on the idea that the central actors in a network are the ones with most connections to other actors (Wilson et al, 2005). It is determined by the number direct links an actor has to all other actors. Actors with a high degree centralities are thought to be the active ones within a network and therefore more powerful (Wilson et al, 2005; Davies, 2006). These actors may be less dependent on other actors and may have better access to available resources within a network (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). Degree centrality can be divided into In-Degree and Out-Degree which is related to the extent to which links between actors are reciprocated (Davies, 2006). This division is useful for the reason that one actor may report working with a certain actor, which a second actor may not say working with the first actor.

*Closeness Centrality* measures the average distance between an actor and all other actors in the network (Davies, 2006). It is about how fast an actor can get in touch with other actors in the network. The higher the closeness score of an actor the more knowledge it possesses about what is happening. Furthermore, a high closeness score could indicate an actor's efficiency in communication information throughout the network (Wilson et al, 2005).

*Betweenness centrality* illustrates the extent to which an actor is situated between two groups, and therefore a necessary path between those groups (Davies, 2006). Even in the case of having a low degree centrality, these actors might still have a very important role within a network because of their potential mediator role between different groups. However, they can also intentionally hinder communication between two groups, which depends on their relative power and status (Davies, 2006).

*Peripheral actors* are the exact opposites of the above with few links to other actors, not in any key brokerage role, and high average distance to other actors. However, because they are not part of group they may be more independent minded and have links with other networks, which could provide useful knowledge and resources to the network that is being examined (Davies, 2006; Wilson et al, 2005).

#### **4.3.2 Terms describing how similar one actor's position is to others**

*Reciprocity* is about actors reporting the same kind of relationship with each other as already mentioned in relation to In-Degree and Out-Degree centrality (Davies, 2006).

*Structural equivalence* occurs when two or more actors have the same relationship structure with other actors. It is based on shared activities, aims, or engagements (Davies, 2006; Hoppe and Reinelt, 2009). Members who share the same activities and activities that share the same participants are placed next to each other (Hoppe and Reinelt, 2009; Hanneman and Riddle, 2005; Davies, 2006). Structural equivalence helps uncovering important subgroups within in network (Hoppe and Reinelt, 2009).

### **4.3.3 Terms describing the structure of the whole network**

*Network density* is a measure of the interconnectedness of a network. A network where all the actors are connected to all the other actors is said to have a density of 1.0 (Davies, 2006). It is calculated by dividing the number of actual ties in a network by the number of possible ties. Higher values indicate denser networks, while lower values indicate sparse networks (Wilson et al, 2005). Information flows are also regarded as being better in dense networks than in sparse networks (Wilson et al, 2005). A high density means that a network is less vulnerable for a loss of any of the ties between the actors. However, all the actors are required to manage a variety of relationships which is more difficult to maintain. When developing networks it is important not to start with a network that is too dense, in which all actors seem to be connected to everything else (Davies, 2006; Wilson et al, 2005). Better is to focus on the most important linkages. This makes the mangement less complicating (Davies, 2006; Wilson et al, 2005).

*Reachability* is the average number of nodes per network actor over all possible steps. In network networks with high reachability norms and values may defuse faster than in networks with low reachability

*Clusters* are groups of actors with many interconnections between the actors within the cluster, but few with others (Davies, 2006; Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). Clusters are an important aspect of network structure because they likely influence information flows within a network. Information flows within clusters are relatively better than between clusters (Davies, 2006).

*Bonding and bridging*, often named *closure* and *brokerage* (Burt, 2005) denote connections in a cluster and to others.

*Components* are multiple smaller networks that are connected within, but disconnected to other networks. The concept of components can be used to find meaningful weak-points, holes and locally dense subparts in a network (Hanneman and Riddel, 2005).

*Cliques* are groups of actors within network that are totally connected to each other. The notion of cliques can be used for the same purpose as when using clusters, and to find out most 'central' or 'isolated' from the cliques (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005).

## 5. Empirical study of assessing political responsibility using SNA

This chapter examines the potential use of SNA in assessing political responsibility of transnational advocacy networks. This examination is based on a case study on the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF). By means of SNA a value is given to its overall level of political responsibility achieved. First a methodological framework of assessing political responsibility through SNA is introduced. Afterwards, an introduction is given to the transnational advocacy network concerned. Finally, the empirical results of the case study are presented.

### 5.1 Methodology Framework

Area of political responsibility	Value parameters of political responsibility	Possible social network theories for parameter assessments	Possible operationalisation measures (network concepts)
1. Dividing political arenas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identification of expertise and knowledge based on external relationships</li> <li>– Boundaries established based on expertise and knowledge identification</li> </ul>	The strength of weak ties (Grandovetter, 1973)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Cohesion theory (Walker, Kogut and Shan, 1997; Wasserman and Faust, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Structural hole theory (Burt, 1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
2. Agenda setting and strategy building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Interlockedness of members' stated set of objectives</li> <li>– Joint management</li> <li>– Risk management</li> </ul>	Cohesion theory (Walker, Kogut and Shan, 1997; Wasserman and Faust, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Social capital theory (Putnam, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reachability</li> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
		Network effectiveness theory (Provan and Milward, 1995; 2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
		Network governance theory (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> </ul>
3. Allocation of available financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identification of extent to which members have access to financial resources</li> <li>– Identification of allocation agreements between members</li> </ul>	The strength of weak ties (Grandovetter, 1973)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Cohesion theory (Walker, Kogut and Shan, 1997; Wasserman and Faust, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Social capital theory (Putnam, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reachability</li> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
		Network governance theory (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> </ul>

4. Information flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Direction of information flows within network</li> <li>– Density of information flows</li> <li>– Accessibility of information flows</li> <li>– Equality of members' access to information flows</li> <li>– Sufficiency of information and communication management capacities</li> </ul>	The strength of weak ties (Grandovetter, 1973)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Cohesion theory (Walker, Kogut and Shan, 1997; Wasserman and Faust, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Social capital theory (Putnam, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reachability</li> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
		Structural hole theory (Burt, 1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
5. Information frequency and format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Frequency of information exchange</li> <li>– Identification of suitable mix of information formats</li> <li>– Identification of suitable mix of communication channels</li> </ul>	The strength of weak ties (Grandovetter, 1973)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Cohesion theory (Walker, Kogut and Shan, 1997; Wasserman and Faust, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Social capital theory (Putnam, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reachability</li> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
		Structural hole theory (Burt, 1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
6. Articulating information into useful formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Extent to which research and other official documents are translated into concrete and knowledge</li> <li>– Extent to which relevant knowledge is available in appropriate languages</li> </ul>	The strength of weak ties (Grandovetter, 1973)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Cohesion theory (Walker, Kogut and Shan, 1997; Wasserman and Faust, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Social capital theory (Putnam, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reachability</li> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
		Structural hole theory (Burt, 1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>
7. Formalisation of relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognition of network parameters</li> <li>– Establishment of network parameters</li> </ul>	Cohesion theory (Walker, Kogut and Shan, 1997; Wasserman and Faust, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Density</li> <li>– Clusters and cliques</li> <li>– Structural equivalence</li> </ul>
		Social capital theory (Putnam, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reachability</li> <li>– Centrality (closeness, degree and betweenness)</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Introduction to case study: The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation

The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) is a regional agricultural advocacy network in the Eastern Africa region with members from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Its role is to voice legitimate concerns and interests of farmers in the region with the aim of enhancing regional cohesiveness and social-economic status of the farmers.

Apart from voicing the farmers' views and demands on crosscutting issues, EAFF also endeavors to promote regional integration through trade and good neighbourness, strengthen information exchange between member organisations, as well as seeking benefits from the comparative advantage in farm input supply and market options. Furthermore, the network seeks to strengthen its members' capacity to lobby and advocate for farmer issues, and to ensure that the required resources are timely delivered and effectively utilized.

In 2009, EAFF's executive body carried out a background study and information needs assessment in support of an overall lobby and advocacy plan. This assessment showed, among other things, that EAFF faces a number of key legitimacy challenges with regard to its role as representative of East African farmers in the national, regional and international political arenas. The main challenge here is to clearly confirm that it indeed voices the interests and concerns of its members and beneficiaries (Agriterria, 2009).

Because of this challenge, trade unions such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC) prefer working directly with a few individual national farmer organisations, thereby declining to give EAFF an important role in the regional agricultural policy. This fact is remarkable, since agriculture is the largest economic sector in East Africa and that EAC's partner states are all included in EAFF's target region. Additionally, East African farmers are little aware of the existence of a regional network that represents their concerns and interest at various levels.

These problems are mainly caused by a lack of cooperation and communication among its member organisations and as a result a deficient overall lobby and advocacy plan. Program planning at network level is commonly based on opportunities coming across then by priorities set by the member organisations. There is also a general lack of communication between member organisations, mainly caused by insufficient organizational capacities available to member organisations. Consequently, EAFF has not managed yet to effectively represent farmers' interests and concerns that are many and heterogeneous.

These challenges are very much in line with the challenges TANs generally have to cope with, and are typically related to a lack of downward accountability. Embracing its political responsibilities is therefore crucial to EAFF. It would facilitate dealing with its lack of cooperation and communication among its member.. This approach would also help EAFF to identify and analyse key issues hampering its representation and function.

As mentioned earlier, EAFF has members from Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Its members include the following national farmer organisations (NFOs):

- Syndicat des agri-eleveurs du Rwanda (IMBARAGA) of Rwanda;
- Confédération des Associations des Producteurs Agricoles pour le Développement (CAPAD) of Burundi;
- Cooperative Centrale Du Nord – Kivu (COOCENKI) of DR Congo;
- Fédération des Organisations des Producteurs Agricoles du Congo au Nord-Kivu (FOPAC) of DR Congo;
- Ligue des Organisations des Femmes Paysannes du Congo (LOFEPACO) of DR Congo;
- Syndicat De Defense Des Interests Paysans (SYDIP) of DR Congo;
- Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers (KENFAP) Kenya;
- Syndicat Rwandais des Agriculteurs et Eleveurs (INGABO) of Rwanda;

- Mtandao wa Vikundi Vya Wakulima wa Tanzania (MVIWATA) Tanzania;
- Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE) of Uganda.

EAFF is managed by a council and a management board that is elected by its members. Its executive body is based in Nairobi, Kenya, and is primarily responsible for coordinating and facilitating the actions and activities of its members.

### **5.3 Results case study**

It should be noted that the research data gathered for this case study was initially not generated for the purpose of assessing EAFF's level of political responsibility through social network analysis. Instead, the data was collected to identify and assess key challenges in its communication and information processes with the view of setting up a foundation for an improved information and communication strategy. Due to lack of time and resources it was not possible to carry out new activities for the sole purpose of generating social network data on the area parameters of political responsibility. When available, information was also obtained from (online) documents and stakeholders' homepages.

The data used might of course not be sufficient for a proper social network analysis, since it was originally generated for other purposes. This meant that social network data had to be extracted and interpreted from the available data. Therefore, analysis and empirical results might not be fully comprehensive compared to a situation in which the focus is on assess a network' political responsibilities. However, the purpose of this case study is to use preliminary findings to demonstrate the potentially significant role of using social network analysis in assessing the level of political responsibility achieved by a TAN. Obviously, more research would be required to further examine and refine the presented framework and approach.

Tabulated data is aggregated across all member organisations of EAFF into Microsoft Excell, and then imported into UCINET and NetDraw. UCINET is used to generate simple statistical descriptions of the relationship structures, and NetDraw is used to generate network maps to make those structures visible. In the next section, the analyses for each area of political responsibility are presented in separate sections.



### 5.3.1 Dividing political arenas

Member organisations were asked list organisations with which they have some type (information exchange of relationship with, including other members. The findings are summarized in table 1 (For more information on organisations mentioned, see annex A)

Table 1: Relationships mentioned by member organisations, including other members

Member organisation	Relationships mentioned
CAPAD	11 11 11, Agriterra, CCFD, FENACOBU, IFDC/CATALYST, Ministry of Agriculture, Oxfam Novib
EAFF's executive body	ACP-EU, AGRA, Agriterra, ASARECA, CIRAD, COMESA, CSA, CTA, DFID, EAC, FAO, GCP, GFAR, GTZ, IFAD, NEPAD, SCC, Terra Nuova
FOPAC	Agriterra, FAO, Ministry of Agriculture, Oxfam Novib, Oxfam Solidarité, Oxfam GB, UNDP
IMBARAGA	Agriterra, CCOAIB, EAFF's executive body, Embassade de Belgique, IFDC/CATALYST, Ministry of Agriculture, Oxfam Novib, RCN J&D, ROPARWA, TROCAIRE, VSF-B, World Accord
KENFAP	Agriterra, BAF, CTA, CWW, Equity Bank, IFAD, KAPP, KEBS, Ministry of Agriculture, Oxfam Novib, WFP
LOFEPACO	Agriterra, BIC DRC, CECAFEP, DGI, FOPAC, IFDC/CATALYST, INSS, Ministry of Agriculture, OCC, Oxfam Novib, SONAS, VECO, VSF-B
MVIWATA	Agriterra, IFAD, Ministry of Agriculture, Oxfam Novib, SCC, TRIAS, VECO
SYDIP	AGRISUD, Agriterra, CTA, EAFF's executive body, IFAP, MDF Hollande, Ministry of Agriculture, UCG, VECO
UNFFE	Agriterra, DANIDA, EAFF's executive body, IFAP, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade, NARO, PSFU, RASC, UCA, UNBS, VECO

The findings from table were imported into NetDraw to identify the current relationships between network members (figure 1). Furthermore, findings were categorized into different organisational sectors to analyse the structure of relationships currently present in EAFF's network (figure 2). UCINET was used for examining the structural equivalence of the different relationship sets (table 2) and the degree centralities of all actors within the network map.

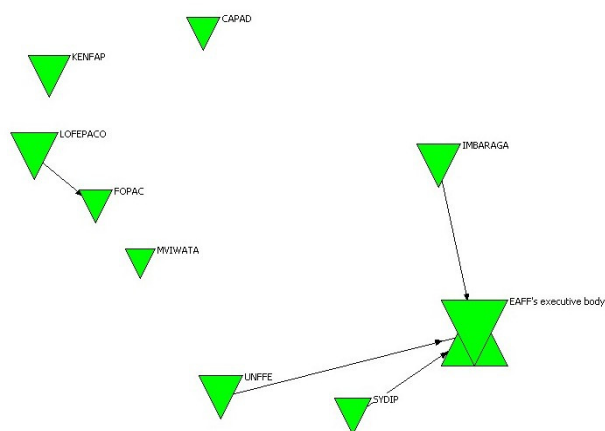


Figure 1: Connections between member organisations

		Organisation								
		2	1	3	7	4	8	5	6	9
Level (Pearson r)	1.000									
	0.965			x	x	x				
	0.916		x	x	x	x	x			
	0.878		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	0.866		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	0.830		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	0.673	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	0.629	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	0.553	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	0.000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		1=CAPAD				6=LOFEPACO				
		2=EAFF's executive body				7=MVIWATA				
		3=FOPAC				8=SYDIP				
		4=IMBARAGA				9=UNFFE				
		5=KENFAP								

Table 2: Hierarchical clustering of equivalence matrix based on Pearson correlations

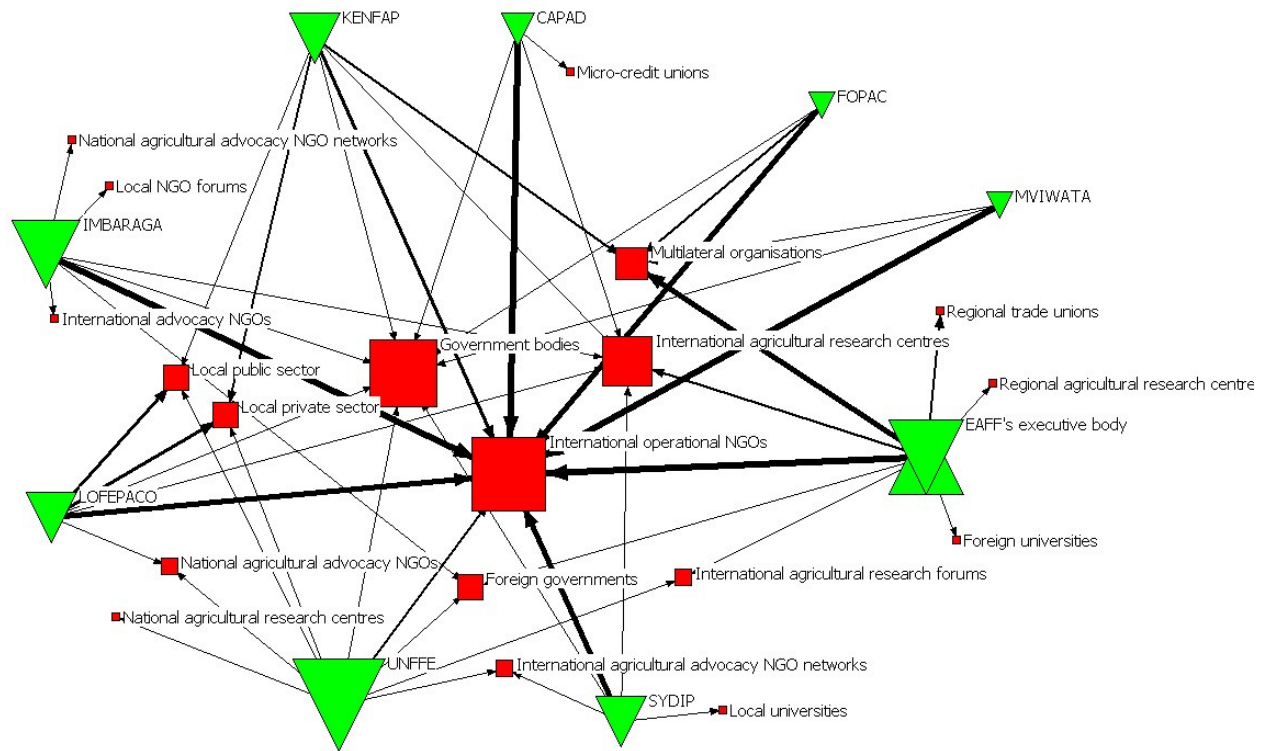


Figure 2: Types of organisation mentioned by EAFF's network actors as having a relationship with (size of nodes determined by degree centrality and tie strength by number of ties to a node).

## Analyses of data

Area of political responsibility	Results	Interpretation with regard to social network theory	Level of political responsibility
1. Dividing political arenas, and	<p><i>Degree centrality, tie strength and structural equivalence</i> (based on Pearson r similarity<sup>1</sup>) is used to determine the structure of EAFF's external relationships, thereby assuming that structure of relationships provides insights on the availability of knowledge and expertise on national, regional and international (political) arenas (See figure 1-2, table 1).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ties between member organisation are very limited</li> <li>2. EAFF has multiple ties with international operational NGOs (mainly based in Europe and the United States), national government bodies, and international agricultural research centres.</li> <li>3. EAFF has rather limited ties to local research centres, local NGOs and to the local private sector.</li> <li>4. EAFF has rather limited relationship with regional trade (and political) unions such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC).</li> <li>5. UNFFE, IMBARAGA and EAFF's executive body have most ties with <i>different</i> external</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This result clearly shows that relationships between member organisations are very weak. Important in this result however is its interpretation. It is most unlikely that no relationships all exist among the members. For example, they all participate in congresses organised by the executive body every two years, which is a form of relationship. However, apparently these relationships are not regarded as valuable. Based on the network governance theory, this could indicate that resource exchange is not embedded within the network. This is clearly a limitation since strong ties are beneficial for common understanding and trust among the members. Although weak ties can be beneficial for the gathering of new information and sources, the fact that members themselves regard their interrelationships as being weak provides little arguments for possible benefits.</li> <li>2. EAFF's multiple relationships with international operational NGOs are not surprising since these organisations are strongly connected with donor funds from the EU and the US and the majority of these funds are transferred to developing countries through these organisations. They generally provide most financial sources for financing the activities of EAFF's members and its executive body. EAFF's multiple relationships with national government bodies are anticipated as its key to its advocacy mission. This characteristic indicates that all members have expertise on the national political arenas. This strong relationship however, could lower EAFF's independence of the national government. Based on the cohesion and social capital theory, these strong and frequent ties are beneficial to EAFF, as they foster the development of shared norms, common understanding and the level of trust between EAFF and these groups of external partners. The strength of weak ties theory on the other hand, shows that strong ties add little value in the search for new ideas, knowledge and resources. Extending this notion to this context, EAFF's strong dependence on this international operational NGO sector makes it difficult to carry out long term projects, since funds from this sector are generally provided for short term periods, Besides, receiving funds from several sources results in having many different accountabilities. This could make EAFF's balancing of relationships with a range of stakeholders shift in favour of international operational NGOs and work out badly for its beneficiaries.</li> <li>3. EAFF multiple relationships with international agricultural research centres is beneficial to its (agricultural) information provision, however the lacking relationship with local research centres, NGOs, and the private sector is, in accordance with the cohesion theory, a matter of concern. The strength of weak theory is a rather invalid argument in this context, since local research organisations typically produce scientific knowledge that is</li> </ol>	<p>The results show that opportunities exist for division of political arenas based on knowledge and expertise. However, these opportunities are strongly hindered by the weak relationships between the member organisations. This, together with the fact that the respecting of boundaries established by that knowledge and expertise needs a common understanding and trust, makes the level of political responsibility achieved in this area low.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Pearson correlation is used because the data is valued, i.e. member organisation can have more external relationships of a certain organisation type. Pearson correlations range from -1.00 (meaning that the two actors have exactly the opposite ties to each other actor) to +1.00 (meaning that the two actors always have exactly the same tie to other actors - perfect structural equivalence).

	<p>organisations. CAPAD, FOPAC and MVIWATA on the other hand have least ties to different external organisation.</p> <p>6. UNFFE, IMBARAGA, and to a lesser extent LOFEPACO and KENFAP, have relatively strong engagement with local organisations.</p> <p>7. At a Pearson correlation level of 0.83, three member clusters are identified with a relatively similar structure of relationships: a) FOPAC, MVIWATA and CAPAD b) IMBARAGA and SYDIP, and c) KENFAP and LOFEPACO.</p>	<p>essentially more relevant and appropriate to the East African farmers. Additionally EAFF's weak ties with local NGOs could lead to fragmented development initiatives and a loss of potentially valuable and relevant knowledge. Furthermore, its lacking relationship with the private sector could hardly be seen as strength, considering the role the private sector could play in irrigation projects, supply chain, agro consultancy, research and development, and granting of credit.</p> <p>4. The implication of EAFF's limited relationships with regional trade unions is twofold. First, in accordance with the cohesion theory, it hinders the development of shared norms, common understanding and the level of trust between EAFF and the trade unions. However, because its weak ties with regional politics, it makes it easier to maintain independence during advocacy and lobby missions.</p> <p>5. Based on their relationship structure with external stakeholders, UNFFE, IMBARAGA and EAFF's executive body potentially possess most diverse knowledge and expertise (structural hole theory).</p> <p>6. Because of their strong relationship with local organisations, UNFFE, IMBARAGA, LOFEPACO and KENFAP potentially possess most local expertise and knowledge (structural hole theory).</p> <p>7. The identification of three clusters of member organisations with a relatively similar relationship structure gives more insights on the knowledge and expertise these three clusters possess. This could enhance the division of political arenas as the forming of clusters that allow consolidation of thinking and action. The remaining members could potentially bridge holes towards other knowledge, expertise and resources in other arenas.</p>	
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### 5.3.2 Agenda setting and strategy building

#### Data

For assessing the interlockedness of members' objectives, data on objectives was derived from members' websites and Agri-info.net. Interlocking objectives are categorized into same groups. Since no data was available on possible joint or risk management, these parameters are left out from the analysis. The data is summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Hierarchical clustering of equivalence matrix based on exact match similarities

Member	Stated objectives	Member	Stated objectives	
CAPAD	economic empowerment	KENFAP	promote cooperation and alignment in agriculture	
	capacity building		timely intervention	
	improve establishment of farmer organisations		promote cooperation and alignment in agriculture	
	lobby and advocacy		consultancy services	
	awareness raising on cross cutting issues		research conduct	
"EAFF's executive body"	promote human rights and duties	LOFEPACO	awareness raising on cross cutting issues	
	facilitate knowledge exchange		institutional development	
	capacity building		lobby and advocacy	
	improve access to agricultural information		economic empowerment	
	lobby and advocacy	capacity building	MVIWATA	promote cooperation and alignment in agriculture
	promote cooperation and alignment in agriculture	lobby and advocacy		lobby and advocacy
	facilitate cooperation among members	economic empowerment		economic empowerment
	consultancy services	capacity building		capacity building
research conduct	promote establishment of farmer organisations	SYDIP	awareness raising on cross cutting issues	
FOPAC	facilitate knowledge exchange		institutional development	lobby and advocacy
	lobby and advocacy		land conflict mediation	land conflict mediation
	improve access to agricultural information		awareness raising on rights and duties	awareness raising on rights and duties
	collective marketing of products	educational development	educational development	
	promote cooperation and alignment in agriculture	promote human rights and duties	promote human rights and duties	
promote participation of farmers	consultancy services	consultancy services		
improve establishment of farmer organisations	UNFFE	lobby and advocacy	lobby and advocacy	
IMBARAGA		improve establishment of farmer organisations	capacity building	capacity building
		lobby and advocacy	improve access to financial resources	improve access to financial resources
		improve access to financial resources	improve access to agricultural information	improve access to agricultural information
		institutional development		
	awareness raising on cross cutting issues			
	good governance			

*Analysis of social network data*

<b>Area of political responsibility</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Interpretation with regard to social network theory</b>	<b>Level of political responsibility</b>
2. Agenda setting and strategy building	<p><i>Degree centrality</i> and <i>structural equivalence</i> (based on exact match similarity<sup>2</sup>) are used to measure members' consensus on objectives since agendas and overall strategy depend on objectives. There is no data available on possible joint or risk management. (See figure 3 and table 4)</p> <p>1. Lobby and advocacy and capacity building of target groups have the highest degree centrality. Awareness raising on cross cutting issues such as gender inequalities and HIV prevention, the promotion of alignment in agriculture, have a moderate level of degree centrality.</p> <p>2. The overall similarity of members' tie profiles is 0.699. This implies that when comparing all members' objectives, their tie profiles match 69.9% of the time.</p>	<p>1. The objectives of lobby and advocacy and capacity building of target groups have clearly the highest overall consensus among member organisations, followed by awareness raising on cross cutting issues such as gender inequalities and HIV prevention, the promotion of alignment in agriculture, and good governance among farmer organisations</p> <p>2. A percentage of 69.9% means that 30.1% of the different sets of objectives do not interlock. To really value whether this figure is insufficient, is only possible if more case studies are done on this subject.</p>	When assuming that all objectives should be interlocking, the situation in which the level of political responsibility is the highest, the political responsibility level achieved in this area is relatively low.

<sup>2</sup> Data on ties between members and objectives is binary, i.e. a member has or has not engaged to an objective. Exact match similarity. Exact match similarity counts the number of times that an actor A's tie to other actors is the same as actor B's tie to the same actors, and express this as a percentage of the possible total. In this case, a tie profile consists of existing ties to objectives.

Table 4: Hierarchical clustering of equivalence matrix based on exact match similarities

	Member								
	2	3	5	8	6	1	7	4	9
Level (Exact matches)	1.000								
0.885						x x x			
0.872					x x x x x				
0.847					x x x x x				
0.811					x x x x x				
0.810					x x x x x		x x x		
0.794				x x x x x x x x x x					
0.769	x x x			x x x x x x x x x x					
0.752	x x x	x x x x x x x x x x							
0.699	x x x x x x x x x x	x x x x x x x x x x							
					1=CAPAD		6=LOFEPACO		
					2=EAFF's executive body		7=MVIWATA		
					3=FOPAC		8=SYDIP		
					4=IMBARAGA		9=UNFFE		
					5=KENFAP				

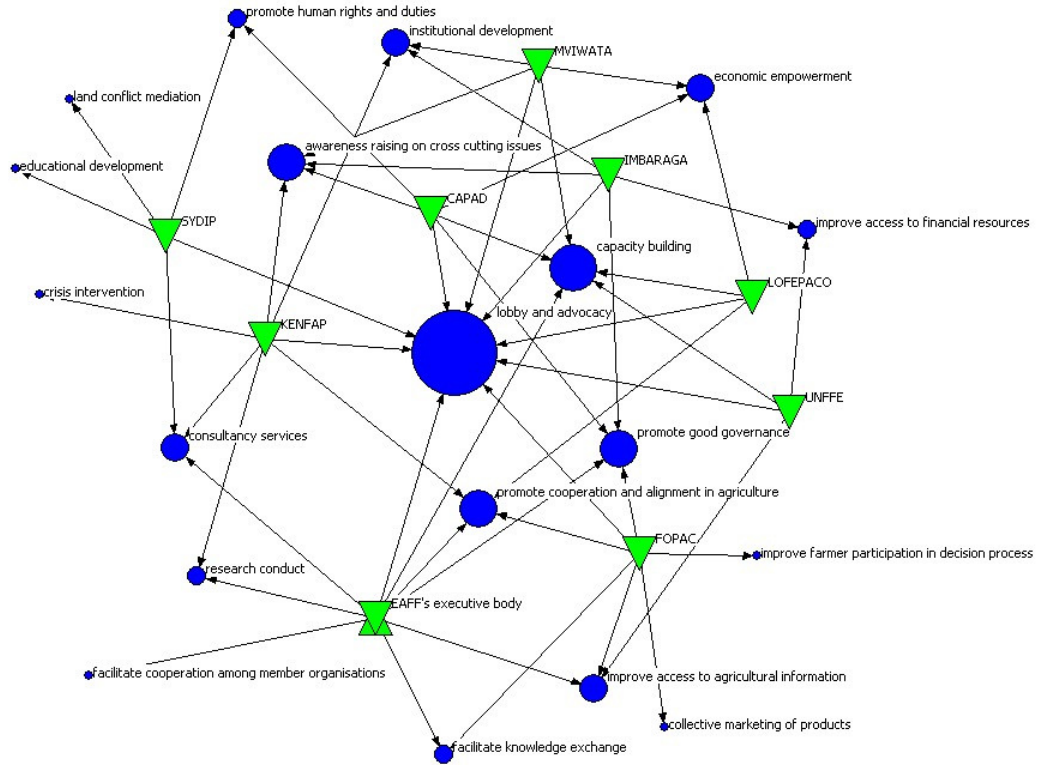


Figure 3: Objectives stated by EAFF's members (size of objective nodes based on indegree centrality)

### 5.3.3 Allocation of available financial resources

#### Data

Findings from section 5.2.1 and 5.2.4 are used for assessing this area of political responsibility.

#### Analysis of social network data

Area of political responsibility	Results	Interpretation with regard to social network theory	Level of political responsibility
3. Allocation of available of financial resources	<p>As concrete data on both parameters of this area are absent, <i>tie strength</i> is used to analyse this area of political responsibility, based on the assumption that members with most relationships with international operational NGOs have highest access to financial resources. This assumption is partly based on social capital and cohesion theory which state, among other things, that better connected people perform better, or in this context, the better the relationships with international operational NGOs, the more funds generated from these organisations.</p> <p>1. All members, except for KENFAP and UNFFE, have a similar strong relationship with international operational NGOs.</p>	<p>1. International operational NGOs generally provide most financial sources for the member organisations and the executive body. Since all member organisations, except for KENFAP and UNFFE, have a comparable strong relationship with international operational NGOs, the access to financial resources is relatively equal. KENFAP and UNFFE however, have least financial resources to contribute financially to activities agreed upon.</p> <p>However, the members' strong relationship with international operational NGOs however, could hinder their independence in allocating financial resources across the network.</p>	<p>According to the previous assumption, KENFAP and UNFFE have least access to financial resources. The financial contribution of these organisations should therefore be lower than the others'. Although the available data provide some insights on the availability of financial resources among the network, there is no data available on possible agreements between members on allocation of financial resources. However, as put forward in the results of area 1 and 4, structural embeddedness of resource exchange within the network seems to be rather low. This could signify that this is also the case with allocation of financial resources. Drawing on this assumption, the level of political responsibility achieved in this area is low.</p>



### 5.3.4 Information flow

#### Data

Data used for this section was originally generated to identify members' information and capacity building needs. Table 5 to 7 show the availability of agricultural information to members. Agricultural information is divided into development, technology, and economy. Table 8 to 10 show the availability of capacities. Capacities are divided into human, ict, and financial resources.

Table 5: Availability of information on agricultural development

Topic	Organisation							
	CAPAD	FOPAC	IMBARAGA	KENFAP	LOFEPACO	MVWATA	SYDIP	UNFFE
farming/agricultural problems	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
non-farm livelihoods	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
social development issues	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
gender issues	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
government and international regulations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
conferences and meetings	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
trade fairs	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
development and funding programmes	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
available agricultural/ livestock/development networks	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Availability:</i> 0=none, 1=insufficient, 2=sufficient								

Table 6: Availability of information on agricultural technology

Topic	Organisation							
	CAPAD	FOPAC	IMBARAGA	KENFAP	LOFEPACO	MVWATA	SYDIP	UNFFE
post-harvest technology	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
grading systems	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
equipment sourcing/ availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
crop varieties	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
packaging	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
integrated pest management	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
industrial profiles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
transportation (e.g. sea, land, air)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
waste utilisation	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Availability:</i> 0=none, 1=insufficient, 2=sufficient								

Table 7: Availability of information on agricultural economy

Topic	Organisation							
	CAPAD	FOPAC	IMBARAGA	KENFAP	LOFEPACO	MVIWATA	SYDIP	UNFFE
farming/agricultural problems	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
non-farm livelihoods	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
social development issues	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
gender issues	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
government and international regulations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
conferences and meetings	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
trade fairs	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
development and funding programmes	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
available agricultural/ livestock/development networks	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

Availability: 0=none, 1=insufficient, 2=sufficient

Table 8: Availability of human recourse capacities

Human recourse capacity type	Organisation							
	CAPAD	FOPAC	IMBARAGA	KENFAP	LOFEPACO	MVIWATA	SYDIP	UNFFE
skilled staff in the field of ICM and information and communication technologies (ICT)	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
capacity to translate research findings into formats appropriate to members	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
skills to search the Internet and access online journals	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
skills to edit scientific papers	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
IT consultant	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
skills to digitalize available information on paper	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0

Availability: 0=none to insufficient, 1=sufficient

Table 9: Availability of ICT resource capacities

	telephone	mobile tele-phone	fax	copy machine	PC/ laptop	printer	internet connectivity and speed	LAN	intranet	Word/ data processing software	MIS/ database	website
CAPAD	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
FOPAC	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMBARAGA	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
KENFAP	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LOFEPACO	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
MVIWATA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
SYDIP	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
UNFFE	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1

Availability: 0=none to insufficient, 1=sufficient

Table 10: Availability of financial resource capacities

Capacity type	Organisation							
	CAPAD	FOPAC	IMBARAGA	KENFAP	LOFEPACO	MVIWATA	SYDIP	UNFFE
to sustain ICM and ICT activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
to sustain, replace and add ICT infrastructure	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
to collect and distribute information in appropriate formats	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
to employ skilled ICM and ICT staff	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
to enable capacity building	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
for publishing and marketing	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

*Availability:* 0=none to insufficient, 1=sufficient

### Analysis of data

Area of political responsibility	Results	Interpretation with regard to social network theory	Level of political responsibility
4. Information flow	<p><i>Degree centrality, density<sup>3</sup> and direction</i> are used to analyse information flows and information management capacities. Agricultural information is divided into three categories: development, technology, and economy. Information topics on each category were predefined. (See figure 4)</p> <p>Information management capacities are categorized in: human resources, ICT resources, and financial resources. (See figure 5)</p> <p><i>a) Information flows; equality of access, accessibility and density</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information flows between members barely exist. This network shows only one tie flowing from the executive body in the direction of UNFFE.</li> <li>The degree centrality varies among both member nodes and information topic in all three information categories.</li> <li>In the first information category, the nodes for gender issues and farming/agricultural problems have highest indegree centrality because of the higher number of inward ties (respectively five and four). The nodes</li> </ol>	<p><i>a) information flow</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to this result, no information flows exist among members. As mentioned in previous results it is most unlikely that no information flows at all exist among the members. Attending congresses for example is a form of information exchange. Apparently the agricultural information exchanged during these congresses is not regarded as valuable.</li> <li>The variance in indegree centralities of information nodes imply that some members have access to certain topics that are insufficiently accessible to others.</li> <li>The indegree centralities of the different information nodes indicate that information on gender issues and farming/agricultural problems is relatively more accessible to the network as a whole. However, information on government and international regulations and non-farm livelihoods are (nearly) insufficiently accessible to the whole network.</li> <li>In accordance with social capital and structural hole theory, the outdegree centralities of CAPAD and MVIWATA indicate that they have relatively high access to agricultural development information, and are more likely to generate innovative</li> </ol>	<p>First, results show that not all members have access to the same information and that access to all information categories was very insufficient.</p> <p>Second, the results show that the sufficiency of capacities to analyze, process and generate information is generally low and has a high variance among members.. Availability of ICT resource capacities on the other hand, was less insufficient.</p> <p>These results show with regard to political responsibility, that the network has not yet managed to create a situation in which all members have sufficient access to the same information, and in which ICM capacities are</p>

<sup>3</sup> “All possible ties” in this context excludes ties between member nodes, since ties in this context can only exist between members and information topics.

	<p>for information on government and international regulations and non-farm livelihoods on the other hand, have lowest indegree centrality (respectively 0 and 1). In the second and third category all information nodes have a relatively low indegree centrality (the highest value is 3).</p> <p>4. In the first category, CAPAD, MVIWATA have highest outdegree centrality (5 ties), contrary to KENFAP and SYDIP which have lowest outdegree centrality. In the agricultural technology category, again CAPAD, together with LOFEPACO have highest outdegree centrality (4), followed by MVIWATA (3). All other members have insufficient access to nearly all information nodes. In the economy category, only MVIWATA (3) and LOFEPACO (3) have sufficient access to most information topics, followed by CAPAD (2).</p> <p>5. The network density of the different categories is respectively 0.33 (24/72), 0.18 (13/72), and 0.25 (10/40)</p> <p><i>b) Information management capacities</i></p> <p>6. The degree centrality varies among both member nodes and information topic in all three categories of information management.</p> <p>7. In the first category, the effective web searching node has the highest indegree centrality (6). All other capacity nodes have low indegree centralities varying from 3 (translating research findings) to 1 (scientific paper editing). In the second category, the mobile telephone node has the highest indegree centrality (8), followed by printers, word/data processing software, PCs and laptops, and Internet connectivity (all 5). Databases, fax, and websites have the lowest indegree centrality (respectively 0, 1 and 2) In the third category, all capacity nodes have low indegree centrality, varying from 0 to 2.</p> <p>8. In the first category, IMBARAGA has the highest outdegree centrality (4), followed by FOPAC (3). All other members score rather low, particularly</p>	<p>ideas. The opposite counts for KENFAP and SYDIP.</p> <p>5. A network with maxim access to the whole set of information topics, e.g. all members have sufficient access to all information topics, has a density of 1. Thus, the higher the density, the higher the accessibility is to the whole set of topics. The density of this network is 0.33 (24/72) which indicates that at network level, there is rather insufficient access to this type of information. Suppose that both sets of nodes are literally regarded as a whole. A density of 0.33 would then indicate that for EAFF, the sufficiency of access to information on agricultural development is merely 33%. The access sufficiency to the other categories is respectively 18% and 25%. This value should be considered as the actual portion of the ideal situation in which all members have sufficient access to all information topics. Thus, access to information on agricultural development is least insufficient, followed by respectively information on agricultural economy and technology.</p> <p><i>b) Information management capacities</i></p> <p>6. Again, the variance in indegree centralities of the information capacity nodes in all categories, imply that some members have sufficient access to a certain capacities insufficiently accessible to others.</p> <p>7. Capacities for effective web searching are relatively sufficiently available within the network. All other human resource capacities are insufficiently available. Mobile telephones are sufficiently available to all members. Printers, word/data processing software, PCs and laptops, and Internet connectivity are sufficiently available to most members. Databases, websites and fax are least available. All financial resource capacities are generally insufficiently available.</p> <p>8. Only IMBARAGA, and to a lesser extent FOPAC, have a somewhat sufficient availability of human resources. The availability of ICT resources is very uneven across the network, with KENFAP and MVIWATA having most insufficient availability of ICT resources.</p> <p>9. The availability of the different categories of information management capacities has a sufficiency of respectively 33%, 45%, and 11%. This implies that the availability financial</p>	<p>sufficiently available to all members. Therefore, the level of political responsibility achieved in this area is low</p>
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	<p>LOFEPACO (0)</p> <p>In the second category, CAPAD, UNFFE (both 8) and IMBARAGA and LOFEPACO (both 6) have the highest outdegree centrality. KENFAP and MVIWATA on the contrary, have the lowest outdegree centrality (respectively and 2)</p> <p>In the third category, only MVIWATA, CAPAD and IMBARAGA have a outdegree centrality of more than 0.</p> <p>9. The network density of the three categories of information management is respectively 0.33, 0.45 and 0.11.</p>	<p>resource is least sufficient, and that availability of ICT and human resources is less insufficient.</p>	
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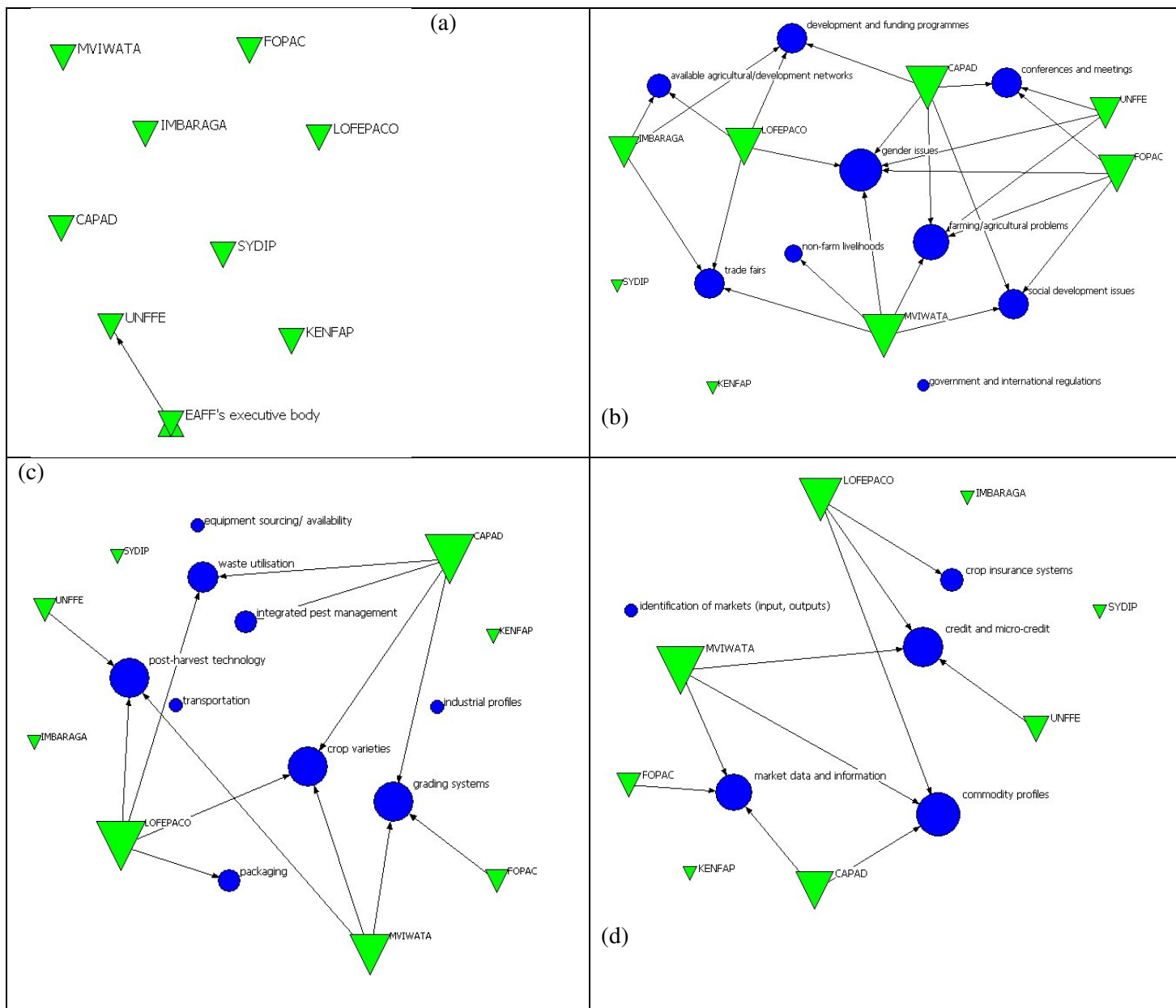


Figure 4: (a): connection between members. (b), (c), and (d): Accessibility to information on respectively agricultural development, agricultural technology and agricultural economy (a tie points at a topic that is sufficiently accessible). Size of nodes is determined by degree centrality.

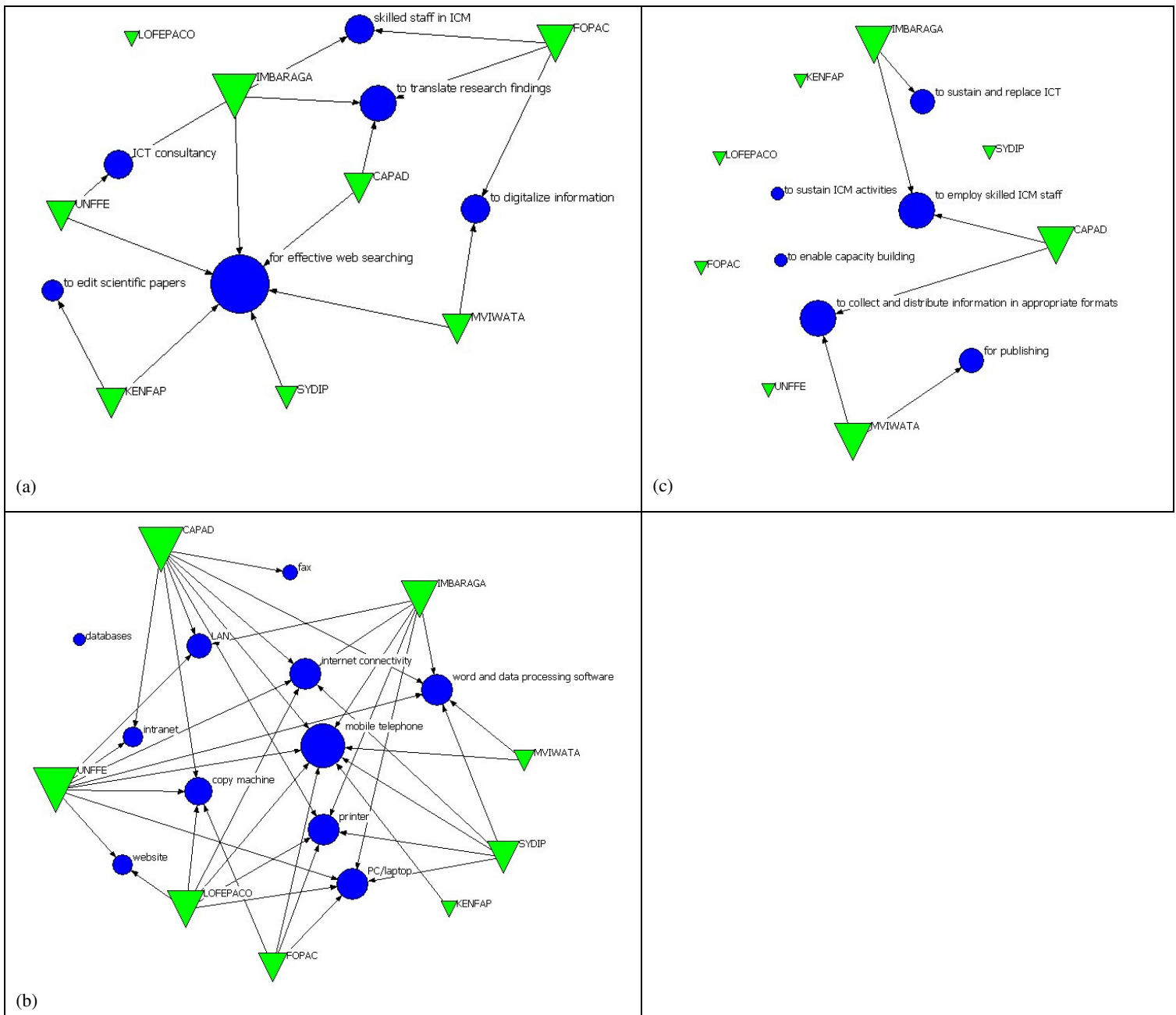


Figure 5: Sufficiency of available information management capacities: (a) human resources, (b) ICT resources, (c) financial resources (a tie points at a resource type that is sufficiently available). Size of nodes is determined by degree centrality.

### 5.3.5 Information frequency and format, articulation in useful forms, and formalisation of relationships

#### Data

Data was only available on communication channels. Table 11 summarizes the communication channels used by the members and their valued importance. Analyses of the other area parameters are based on the previous results.

Table 11: Used channels for communication

Network member	Communication channel	Use 0= no, 1= yes	Importance: 1: unimportant 2: neither unimportant nor important 3: important
CAPAD	1 letters	1	2
	2 technical leaflets	1	2
	3 professional journals	0	1
	4 general newspapers	1	2
	6 mobile telephone	1	3
	7 e-mails	1	3
	8 electronic newsletters	1	2
	9 website	0	1
	10 Internet forums	0	1
	11 radio	1	1
	12 television	1	1
	13 seminars and workshops	1	2
	14 conferences	1	2
	15 fairs	0	1
	FOPAC	letters	1
technical leaflets		1	2
professional journals		1	1
general newspapers		1	3
mobile telephone		1	3
e-mails		1	3
electronic newsletters		1	3
website		1	3
Internet forums		0	1
radio		1	3
television		1	2
seminars and workshops		1	3
conferences		1	2
fairs		1	3
IMBARAGA		letters	0
	technical leaflets	0	1
	professional journals	0	1
	general newspapers	1	2
	mobile telephone	1	3
	e-mails	1	2
	electronic newsletters	0	1
	website	1	2
	Internet forums	0	1
	radio	1	1
	television	1	1
	seminars and workshops	1	2
	conferences	0	1
	fairs	1	1



KENFAP	letters	1	2
	technical leaflets	1	2
	professional journals	1	2
	general newspapers	1	2
	mobile telephone	1	2
	e-mails	1	3
	electronic newsletters	1	2
	website	1	2
	Internet forums	1	2
	radio	1	2
	television	1	2
	seminars and workshops	1	2
	conferences	1	2
fairs	1	2	
<b>LOFEPACO</b>			
LOFEPACO	letters	1	3
	technical leaflets	1	2
	professional journals	1	2
	general newspapers		3
	mobile telephone	1	3
	e-mails	1	3
	electronic newsletters	1	2
	website	1	2
	Internet forums	0	2
	radio	1	3
	television	1	2
	seminars and workshops	1	2
	conferences	1	2
fairs	1	3	
<b>MVIWATA</b>			
MVIWATA	letters	1	3
	technical leaflets	1	3
	professional journals	0	2
	general newspapers	1	3
	mobile telephone	1	3
	e-mails	1	3
	electronic newsletters	1	3
	website	0	2
	Internet forums	0	2
	radio	1	3
	television	1	3
	seminars and workshops	1	2
	conferences	1	2
fairs	1	3	
<b>SYDIP</b>			
SYDIP	letters	1	3
	technical leaflets	1	2
	professional journals	1	2
	general newspapers	1	2
	mobile telephone	1	2
	e-mails	1	3
	electronic newsletters	1	2
	website	1	2
	Internet forums	1	2
	radio	1	3
	television	1	2
	seminars and workshops	1	2
	conferences	1	2
fairs	1	3	
<b>UNFFE</b>			
UNFFE	letters	1	3
	technical leaflets	1	2
	professional journals	0	1
	general newspapers	1	2
	mobile telephone	1	3
	e-mails	1	3
	electronic newsletters	0	1
	website	1	2
	Internet forums	0	1
	radio	1	2
	television	1	2
	seminars and workshops	1	3

## Analysis of data

Area of political responsibility	Results	Interpretation with regard to social network theory	Level of political responsibility
5. Information frequency and format	<p>1. Since no data is available on the frequency of information flows, network governance theory is used as an indication of the sufficiency of frequency of information exchange within the network. (See figure 6)</p> <p><i>Degree centrality, density<sup>4</sup></i> are used to analyse the appropriateness of the communication channels used. The valued importance of a channel is regarded as being positively related to its suitability.</p> <p>2. All communication channels have relatively high indegree centrality except for internet forums and professional journals.</p> <p>3. E-mail and mobile telephone are have highest indegree centrality (respectively 7 and 6), followed by radio, letters and fairs clearly the most important communication channels to the members, followed by letters and fairs (both 5), and radio (4). Professional journals, conferences, internet forums, technical leaflets, television and websites, have lowest indegree centrality, ranging from 1 to 2.</p>	<p>1. In the results of area 1 and 4, network governance theory indicated that resource and information exchange is not sufficiently embedded within the network. This together with the absence of information flows implies that the frequency of information flows is very insufficient.</p> <p>2. All communication channels are generally used, except for internet forums and professional journals.</p> <p>3. E-mail and mobile telephone are generally suitable communication channels to nearly all members. These channels are therefore very suitable for information exchange. Professional journals, e-newsletters, internet forums, technical leaflets, websites and television are less suitable to most members.</p>	The insufficient frequency of information exchange between members and the fact that members use communication channels less suitable for their working conditions, makes the level of political responsibility achieved in this area is low.
6. Articulating information into useful formats	As no information is available on this subject, this area is left out of the analysis		
7. The formalisation of relationships	This area is not applicable for social network analyse in the case EAFF, since it has already established formal relationships in the form of a council, management board, and an executive body.		The level of political responsibility in this area is therefore high
<b>Overall level of political responsibility achieved</b>			<b>Low</b>

<sup>4</sup> “All possible ties” in this context excludes ties between member nodes, since ties can only exist between members and information topics.

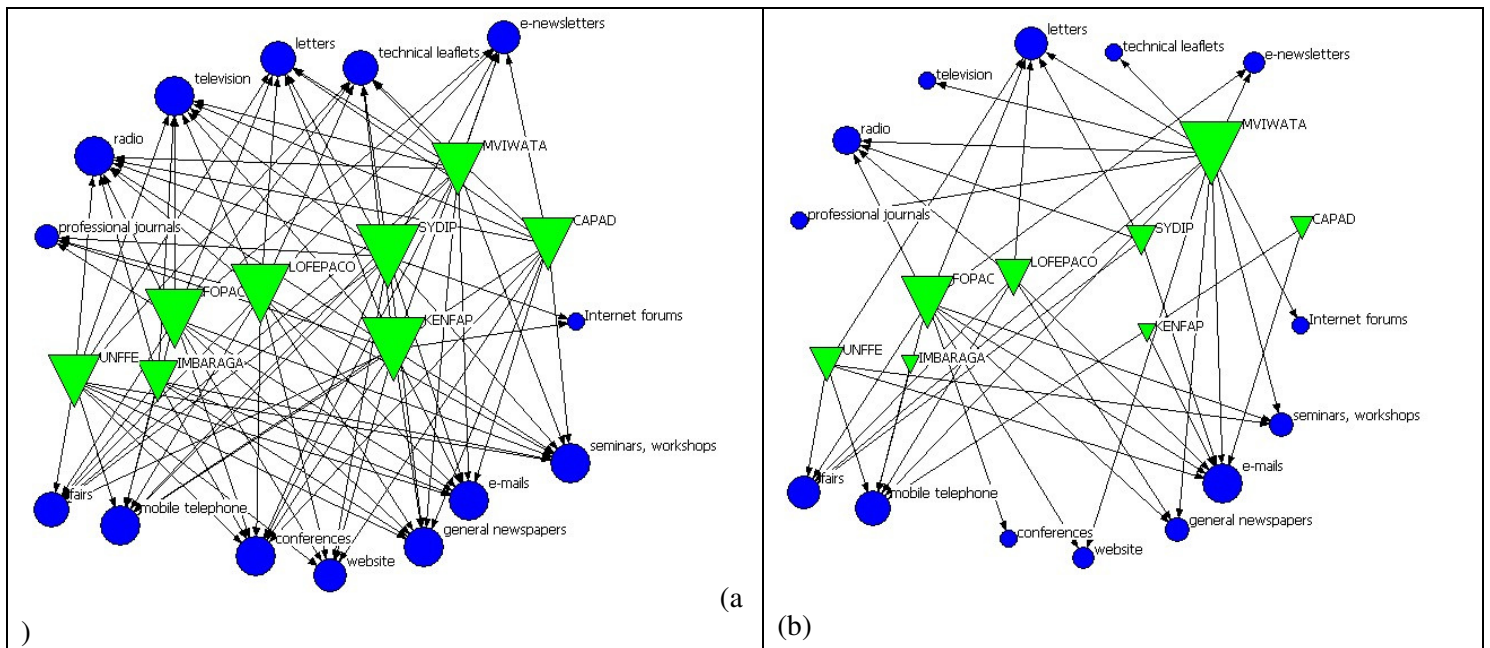


Figure 6: (a) Used communication channels. (b) Most important communication channels (a tie points at a channel that is valued very important). Size of nodes is determined by degree centrality.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Transnational advocacy networks are widely considered as important actors in national, regional and international politics. This is due to their simultaneous attachment to local places and cultures on the one hand, and their critical engagement with international and regional institutions on the other. Advocacy in the NGO field is the act of organising the strategic use of information to democratize unequal power relations, through activities ranging from awareness-raising, educational development, capacity building, lobbying and campaigning, to, in some cases, direct action.

During the 1990s, the forming of transnational advocacy network became an increasingly important means of social synergy among transnational advocacy networks. Transnational advocacy networks include actors that are bound together by shared values, a common dialogue and a solid exchange of information and services that simultaneously pursue activities in different political arenas to challenge the status quo.

However, transnational advocacy networks face a number of challenges with their entitlement to participate in national, regional and international political arenas. Most complaints about transnational advocacy networks are related to poor legitimacy, limited representation and lack of accountability towards the people whose concerns they claim to represent. Transnational advocacy network' legitimacy is the extent to which this network is imbued and perceived at a given time that enables it to operate with the general consent of peoples, governments, companies and non-state groups around the world. Because of the complexity and variety of relationships, most of the concerns on the legitimacy of transnational advocacy networks are related to the difficulties the network as a whole and the individual members in particular have in balancing their multiple accountabilities. Transnational advocacy networks generally give more priority to upward accountabilities,

thereby neglecting their downward accountabilities to the poor and marginalized communities they ought to speak for. Adequate downward accountability and representation are crucial factors in claiming legitimacy.

Downward accountability in the context of a transnational advocacy network is its ability to serve as a channel for the excluded while promoting balanced partnerships between its members and practices, skills and values that reinforce democratic traditions. Downward accountability entails three components, i.e. representation, capacity building and social capital.

During this study several useful frameworks and approaches for assessing the level of downward accountability of transnational advocacy networks have been reviewed. Most common approaches give insufficient attention to power differentiations within transnational advocacy networks, however, attention to proximity in social, cultural, political, and economic terms between its various members, which is central to the third component of downward accountability, remains limited. Other approaches tend to be rather static and complex, and focus too much on outcome evaluation by comparing the ideal and actual performances and results of a transnational advocacy networks.

The concept of political responsibility is argued as a way forward for transnational advocacy networks to become more effective and to perform according to their declared principles and values. This concept aims to clarify issues on all three components of downward accountability in transnational advocacy networks that link multiple political arenas and involve a variety of different actors. Political responsibility is about the qualities of the relationships that a member organisation has with other actors in a transnational advocacy network. This approach manifests itself in seven areas: the division of political arenas, agenda setting and strategy building, allocation of available financial resources, information flow, information frequency and formats, articulating information into useful forms, and formalization of relationships. Each area contains parameters and indicators by which political responsibility can be assessed.

This study argues that although political responsibility approach is a very useful and pragmatic way of assessing the downward accountability of transnational advocacy networks, it lacks a sound and complete methodology framework for assessing all seven areas of political responsibility. To solve this, social network analysis is introduced as a potential means towards a more comprehensive assessment framework.

Social network theory is about different types of relationships within a network, whether they are objectively measurable ties or subjective emotional links. The social network approach starts from the perspective that actors' position in a network can improve or constrain their activities and that structure of relationships within a network determines its outcomes. A number of key theories on social networks are the strength of weak ties, cohesion, structural holes, social capital and network governance. Although all theories generally use the same network concepts, they differ in outcome interpretation. Social network concepts can be categorized in three groups: 1) terms describing the positions of individuals within the networks, 2) terms describing how similar one actor's position is to others, and 3) terms describing the structure of the whole network.

Based on an empirical case study on the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation performed in 2009, social network concepts proved to be a very useful tool in analyzing the parameters of each area of political responsibility. Additionally, the availability of a variety of social network theories provided many interpretation opportunities, which necessitated each result to be thought through very carefully. Furthermore, social network concepts made it feasible to value the level of political responsibility achieved in each area. By summing up all separate values, a score can be given for the overall level of political responsibility achieved

by a transnational advocacy network. By using the social network theory in assessing political responsibility framework in the case of EAFF, the overall political responsibility level of this network proved to be low. This case study confirms findings from other studies that showed that generally these networks face challenges with their legitimacy, accountability and representation.

The results of the empirical case study are summarized in the table below.

<b>Summary of case study findings using Social Network Theory</b>	
<b>Area of political responsibility</b>	<b>Level of political responsibility achieved</b>
1. Dividing political arenas	Opportunities exist for division of political arenas, however hindered by the limited relationships between network members. → Political responsibility level achieved: low
2. Agenda setting and strategy building	The interconnectedness of all set of objectives declared by members is rather low. → Political responsibility level achieved: low
3. Allocation of available financial resources	Structural embeddedness of resource exchange within the network seems to be rather low, which implies that this is also the case with the allocation of available financial resources. → Political responsibility level achieved: low
4. Information flow	The network has not yet managed to create a situation in which all members have sufficient access to the same information, and in which ICM capacities are sufficiently available to all members. → Political responsibility level achieved: low
5. Information frequency and format	There is insufficient frequency of information exchange between members. Furthermore, they use communication channels that are not suitable for their working conditions. → Political responsibility level achieved: low
6. Articulating information into useful forms	No research data available.
7. The formalization of relationships	The network has only established formal relationships in the form of a council, management board, and an executive body. → Political responsibility level achieved: low
<b>Overall network level of political responsibility</b>	<b>Low</b>

It should be noted that during this case study the social network data has not been sufficient and comprehensive enough for each area of political responsibility. This might cause a distorted view on the results, and consequently a biased view of the level of political responsibility achieved by EAFF. However, the use of different social network theories and other information sources turned out to provide useful insights on many parameters, even though available data on these areas was limited. This is an important additional advantage when using social network analysis, particularly in the complex case of assessing transnational advocacy networks.

The strength of the political responsibility approach is that it is primarily focused on the processes within a transnational advocacy network, instead of its outcome. Using social network analysis enables the level of

political responsibility achieved to be methodologically valued by using a variety of mathematical measurements and graphical illustrations. An important additional advantage of social network analysis is its ability to provide many different interpretations. The latter is an essential for conducting assessments and evaluations, as it enables discussions among the parties concerned, in this case EAFF and its members. Discussing the results with all stakeholders is an important step forward towards a valid interpretation. The results of the presented methodological framework should therefore not be regarded as an outcome, but as a start in the process of enhancing all areas of political responsibility towards a legitimate, representative and accountable transnational advocacy network.

More research is required to develop further and fine-tune the political responsibility and social network approach. For further research it is essential that social network data gathered on each parameter, is as complete as possible. This would make it possible to assess all parameters more extensively, and to deploy all possible social network concepts of assessments. The more complete the social network data is on the different parameters, the more accurate and relevant is the value of the level of political responsibility achieved.

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## Annex: Information on External partners

External partners	Name	Location	Scope	Sector
11 11 11	11 11 11 Vlaamse Noord-Zuidbeweging	Belgium	International	Development
BIC DRC	Banque Internationale de crédit	DR Congo	National	Credit services
EMBASSADE DE BELGIQU	Embassade de Belgique	Belgium	National	Diplomatic Missions
EQUITY BANK	Equity Bank	Kenya	National	Commercial Banks
MDF HOLLANDE	MDF Hollande	The Netherlands	International	Development
MINAGRI Rw	Ministry of Agriculture Rwanda	Rwanda	National	Agriculture Ministries
MINAGRI Bu	Ministry of Agriculture Burundi	Burundi	National	Agriculture Ministries
MINAGRI DRC	Ministry of Agriculture DR Congo	DR Congo	National	Agriculture Ministries
MINAGRI DRC	Ministry of Agriculture DR Congo	DR Congo	National	Agriculture Ministries
MINAGRI DRC	Ministry of Agriculture DR Congo	DR Congo	National	Agriculture Ministries
MINAGRI Ke	Ministry of Agriculture Kenya	Kenya	National	Agriculture Ministries
MINAGRI Ta	Ministry of Agriculture Tanzania	Tanzania	National	Agriculture Ministries
MINIAGRI Ug	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries	Uganda	National	Agriculture Ministries
MINITRADE Ug	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism	Uganda	National	Trade Ministries
OXFAM GB	Oxfam Great Britain	United Kingdom	International	Development
OXFAM NOVIB	Oxfam Novib	The Netherlands	International	Development
OXFAM SOLIDARITE	Oxfam Solidarité	Belgium	International	Development
RCN J&D	RCN Justice et Democratie	Rwanda	International	Development
WORLD ACCORD	Terra Nuova	Italy	International	Agriculture
WORLD ACCORD	World ACCORD	Canada	International	Development
ACP-EU	ACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreement	Belgium	International	Trade
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa	Kenya	Regional	Agriculture
AGRISUD	Agrisud International	France	International	Agriculture
AGRITERRA	Agriterra	The Netherlands	International	Agriculture
ASARECA	The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa	Uganda	Regional	Agriculture
BAF	Business Advocacy Fund	Kenya	National	Development
CCFD	Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement	France	International	Development
CCOAI	LA PLATE FORME DE LA SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE RWANDAISE	Rwanda	National	Development
CECAFEF	CECAFEF	DR Congo	National	Micro-Finance
CIRAD	Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement	France	International	Agriculture
COMESA	The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	Zambia	Regional	Trade
CSA	Centre for the Study of Aids	South Africa	Regional	Health
CTA	The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation	The Netherlands	International	Agriculture
CWW	Concern World Wide	Ireland	International	Development

(Continued)

DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency	Denmark	International	Development
DFID	Department for International Development	United Kingdom	International	Development
DGI	Direction Générale des Impôts	DR Congo	National	Taxation
EAC	The East African Community	Tanzania	Regional	Trade
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	Italy	International	Agriculture
FENACOBU	Fédération Nationale des Coopératives d'Épargnes et de Crédit	Burundi	National	Micro-Finance
GCP	The Global Carbon Project	Australia	International	Climate Change
GFAR	The Global Forum on Agricultural Research	Italy	International	Agriculture
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit	Germany	International	Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	Italy	International	Agriculture
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers	France	International	Agriculture
IFDC/CATALIST	An International Center for Soil Fertility & Agricultural Development	USA	International	Development
INSS	National Social Security Institute	DR Congo	National	Social services
KAPP	The Kenya Agricultural Productivity Project	Kenya	National	Agriculture
KABS	Kenya Bureau of Standards	Kenya	National	Policy
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation	Uganda	National	Agriculture
NEPAD	The New Partnership for Africa's Development	South Africa	Regional	Development
OCC	Office congolais de contrôle	DR Congo	National	Policy
PSFU	Private Sector Foundation of Uganda	Uganda	National	Development
RASC	The Royal Agriculture Society of the Commonwealth	United Kingdom	International	Agriculture
ROPARWA	Le Réseau des Organisations Paysannes du Rwanda	Rwanda	National	Agriculture
SCC	The Swedish Cooperative Centre	Sweden	International	Agriculture
SIDI	Solidarité Internationale pour le Développement et l'Investissement	France	International	Development
SONAS	Société nationale d'assurances	DR Congo	National	Insurance
TRIAS	TRIAS	Belgium	International	Development
TROCAIRE	TROCAIRE	Ireland	International	Development
UCA	Uganda Co-operative Alliance	Uganda	National	Agriculture
UGG	Université Catholique de Graben	DR Congo	National	Education
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of Standards	Uganda	National	Policy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	USA	International	Development
VECO	Vredesellanden	Belgium	International	Development
VSF-B	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgique	Belgium	International	Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme	Italy	International	Agriculture