

5th edition of the National Days of the Social Economy "JNES 2021

on 26-27-25/10/2021

Theme of the workshop: Development of the territories and competitiveness of the SEUs: What synergy of actions to put in place between the different actors

1- Definition of territorial development

Territorial development goes hand in hand with local development through the integration of three essential dimensions: territories, stakeholders, land/natural resource uses. It is the result of collective actions; it requires the implementation of governance mechanisms and its organisation.

Territories are not only geographical entities. They also refer to organised relationships as well as to particular populations, which recognise themselves in common projects.

Development processes do not only rely on productive actors or on the institutions that manage them, but also involve other stakeholders such as local or territorial authorities, decentralised state services, consular bodies (for metropolises and the capital) and the world of associations.

2- Definition of competitiveness of the SEUs

It is not easy enough to define the competitiveness of SEUs in Cameroon because these organisations do not benefit sufficiently from incentives and development levers to encourage their competitiveness.

The competitiveness of SEUs for territorial development represents the capacity of these SEUs to face the competition of enterprises on the employment market, on wealth creation and the emergence of social innovation, by maintaining or increasing their presence and weight on the market.

3- Definition of synergy of actions between actors

The concept of synergy of actions between actors refers to the pooling of several actions contributing to a single effect and leading to an economy of means.

In the framework of territorial development, the synergy of actions between actors represents the union of various organisations that seek the common good and the general satisfaction of the populations through the implementation of targeted local development projects.

4- Illustrate how the competitiveness of SEUs contributes to the development of territories

The Decentralised Local Authorities and the SEUs share common values (collective project, people at the heart of the economy, territorial anchoring). For this purpose, it is important that the TCs and SEUs collaborate in a spirit of creativity and promotion of common responses to common problems

The SEUs participate in the development of the territories by facing the following problems:

- *The creation and provision of inclusive employment for the unemployed and underemployed populations*

Faced with the thorny problem of employment in the territories, the SEUs contribute to generating adapted local solutions in various sectors of activity and insert vulnerable people along the value chain (job seekers and unemployed young graduates etc.)

- Strengthening social links within the territories

Faced with the problem of exclusion of the most fragile people in the socio-economic fabric of the territory, the SEUs promote actions to include everyone, they carry out vocational training and contribute to better management of new arrivals (e.g. on the effects of the security crisis in NOSO and border countries)

- Reducing the environmental footprint in the territories

Faced with problems related to food waste, the intensification of waste in cities, and energy issues in localities, the SEUs contribute to the provision of innovative solutions (circular economy, recycling, alternative energy, etc.) and thus participate in the development of territories

- Transforming dependence into autonomy for fragile and vulnerable people

The SEUs provide solutions for people with disabilities (e.g. ANOPHAC and other social utility associations)

- The valorisation of natural resources specific to each locality

The SEUs promote sustainable employment by enhancing the natural resources available in the territories, with the aim of creating dynamic, attractive and supportive territories (the GICs and cooperatives that enhance the maritime coast of Kribi within the framework of eco-tourism)

5- Show how the synergy of different actors can lead to the competitiveness of SEUs and local development in SSE

Several CSOs already active in the field (the NGO PFAC, RESCAM, REMCESS, ASSA, FORESSCAM, etc.) are working in synergy to bring out the competitiveness of the SEUs and promote local development.

The SEUs created by decree (RELES, RERES RENES) in the process of structuring and some already structured in 6 regions and 220 communes promote general awareness for territorial development, the competitiveness of SEUs and the adoption of SI by the populations (Example: the RELES cooperatives which have helped to limit the spread of COVID 19 within the communities, through the production of response kits to the spread of the coronavirus, barrier masks, handmade soaps, hydro-alcoholic gels, etc.)

The SEUs thus produce work and income for the most vulnerable populations through multi-actor cooperation at the territorial level and promote the emergence of SI in society. They thus deploy their capacity to face the competition of classical enterprises on the employment market, the creation of wealth and the emergence of social innovation, by positioning themselves firmly on the market

The adoption of social innovation in different sectors of activity supported by the SEUs represents a model of socio-economic and cultural development that responds to the social and environmental challenges of territories. Through concerted and value-added activities implemented by the SEUs, these Organisations are competitive and contribute to the sustainable and inclusive development of territories.

Similarly, the Fonds spécial d'équipement et d'intervention intercommunal (FEICOM) has set up a synergistic action framework for the formulation of a programme to promote and enhance SSE and SI as a lever for development. This consultation table includes some Ministries involved in the promotion of SI (MINPMEESA, MINEPAT, MINADER, MINDDEVEL) as well as some civil society organisations (PFAC, REMCES). **Concrete example:**

Within the framework of the Programme to combat the spread of the covid19 epidemic, an initiative implemented by the NGO PFAC, REMCESS, RELES and RELES member cooperatives, these actors have contributed to the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 by enabling the Communes affiliated to REMCESS to equip their populations and limit the spread of COVID 19 within the communities.

These cooperatives have been working on the production of response kits to the spread of the coronavirus by producing

- 75,000 reusable face masks were produced by RELESS women's cooperatives;
- 640 reusable 50-litre hand-washing containers were acquired and adapted;
- 25,000 handmade soaps. That is, 500 cartons of 50 pieces of soap of 300 grams each were produced;
- 250 cartons of hydro-alcoholic gels were produced.
- Forty-eight (48) decentralised territorial collectivities each received a response kit for the spread of the coronavirus health crisis;
- Two (02) prisons each received a kit to respond to the spread of the covid-19 pandemic.
- A total of 24 cooperative societies participated in this project;

6- - Proposing a model of SSE actors' synergy for successful local development

In order to realise a model of SSE actors' synergy and foster local development, it is first important to identify the actors of this synergy:

Public/private actors, SEUs, specific audiences (youth groups, women etc...), neighbourhood chiefs, village chiefs of 1st and 2nd degree etc...

Some guidelines for the implementation of a synergy model that promotes local development

- Create adapted and balanced technical and financial partnerships between the CTD, inclusive financing structures, large companies, research structures, schools and development aid institutions present in the territory;
- Bring the public actors to discuss local problems on the territory and with the populations concerned; it is a question of creating a climate of confidence between the various parties by organising socialisation events with the local populations;
- To propose meetings of actors in different territories, in order to encourage the sharing of experience in different contexts and to discover the realities of each actor's territory;
- Formalise an aide-memoire containing rules, information and appropriate techniques for collective projects and responses to local social problems and challenges.