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### Opening remarks
The System of Rice Intensification (SRI), which represents a paradigm change for  
agriculture, is an agro-ecological innovation promoted in more than fifty countries.  
Developed in Madagascar in 1984, this method is used in Asia (China, India,  
Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia etc.) increasing yields of 20-50 % and sometimes  
100 % and even more. A group of rice producers in the south of Benin were very  
interested to test SRI for themselves as they heard about the good agronomic  
results as well as the controversy questioning the good results fueled by the  
research community.

### Methods
Over a period of 4 years (between August 2009 and June 2012), 90 farmers from  
different areas of the country implemented 6 different trials (with a total of 44 plots)  
by comparing the SRI system with the conventional system. Different aspects were  
evaluated: yield, labor demand, weeding with the cono-weeder, fertilization with  
compost, and age of the transplanted seedlings. This was done in two agro-
ecological zones: low lands (with a high natural soil fertility, which is renewed  
through yearly floods between July and October) and the uplands (with poor soil  
fertility that requires fertilization).

### Results
Various trials revealed statistically significant disparities in results for the different treatments:
- **SRI** needed 36 % more labor compared to the conventional system,  
  + 77 % more labor for land leveling  
  + 70% transplanting of young plants.  
  - 47% labor saved by the use of the mechanical weeder.  
- Increase in yields was between 50 - 70 % for SRI.  
- Economy of seeds : 87%  
- Reduction of the crop cycle : 14 days.

![Figure: Average yield per système and ecology](image1)

![Figure: Amount of seed per system per hectare](image2)

![Figure: Labor per system](image3)

### Conclusion
The farmers who participated in the trials were persuaded of the outstanding performances of SRI  
in comparison with the conventional rice production and were surprised at the opposition of some  
researchers towards this innovation.