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USAID/West Africa Agribusiness and Trade Promotion & Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion Briefing Book



October 2011

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Abt Associates for the Agribusiness and Trade Promotion project and Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion project.

Recommended Citation: Briefing Book, USAID/West Africa Agribusiness Trade Promotion Project and Expanded Agribusiness Trade Promotion Project, Abt Associates Inc., Bethesda, Maryland.

Contract No.: EDH-1-00-00005-08 and EDH-1-00-00005-11

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USAID/West Africa Agribusiness and Trade Promotion & Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion Briefing Book

Cover photos: USAID/West Africa ATP and E-ATP work to expand regional trade in six value chains.

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ACRONYMS

AMASSA	<i>Association malienne pour la promotion de la sécurité et la souveraineté alimentaires</i>
ANOPACI	<i>Association nationale des organisations professionnelles agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire</i>
APROSSA	<i>Association pour la promotion de la sécurité et de la souveraineté alimentaires au Burkina Faso</i>
CIC-B	<i>Comité interprofessionnel des céréales du Burkina Faso</i>
CILSS	<i>Comité Inter Etat pour la Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel</i>
CMK	<i>Coopérative motorisée de Koutiala</i>
COFENABVI	<i>Confédération des fédérations nationales des filières bétail viande</i>
CORPAO	<i>Conférence Régionale sur les Perspectives Agricoles et les Opportunités d'Echanges en Afrique de l'Ouest</i>
FEBEVIB	<i>Fédération nationale de la filière bétail /viande du Burkina</i>
IFANET	<i>Information Aid Network</i>
RESIMAO	<i>Réseau des Systèmes d'Information des Marchés en Afrique de l'Ouest</i>
ONFO	<i>Observatoire National de la Fédération de l'Oignon</i>
OPA	<i>Observatoire des Pratiques Anormales</i>
ORO/AOC	<i>Observatoire Régionale de l'Oignon de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre</i>
UCOVISA	<i>Union des coopératives du vivrier des savanes (Côte d'Ivoire)</i>
UEMOA	<i>Union économique et monétaire ouest africaine</i>
UGCPA	<i>Union des groupements pour la commercialisation des produits agricoles de la boucle du Mouhoun</i>
UOFA	<i>Union des organisations de la filière avicole des pays de l'UEMOA</i>
UPPH	<i>Union provinciale des professionnels agricoles du Houet, Burkina Faso</i>
USAID	<i>United States Agency for International Development</i>

OVERVIEW

This briefing book is a series of short notes, or briefs, designed to provide a quick read to those who want to familiarize themselves with one or several project activities, before going into more detail with the project's various reports, deliverables, and other technical materials.

Background

The Agribusiness and Trade Promotion project and the Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion project are companion initiatives of USAID/West Africa.

The four-year (2008-2012) USAID ATP focuses on maize, livestock, and onion/shallots value chains. The three-year USAID E-ATP (2009-2012) focuses on rice, millet/sorghum, and poultry. Both aim to increase the value and volume of intra-regional trade in the specific commodities along the major commercial corridors linking Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria.

ACDI/VOCA and CARANA are major subcontractors on both projects. ASVELIS, Banyan Global, J.E. Austin, and Global Cold Chain Alliance are subcontractors on USAID/E-ATP.

Both USAID ATP and USAID E-ATP – hereafter also referred to collectively as “USAID ATP/E-ATP” and “the project” -- contribute to the following outcomes:

- 1) Reduced incidence of physical and policy-related trade barriers
- 2) Improved linkages among value chain participants
- 3) Improved advocacy by the private sector
- 4) Improved efficiency of the value chain

In addition, USAID E-ATP activities reduce the risk of avian influenza outbreak and transmission.

What the project does

At its core, USAID ATP/ E-ATP is about developing a more integrated and prosperous West Africa by providing value chain actors with opportunities and assistance so they can engage more effectively in intra-regional trade. It is also about contributing to economic growth and food security by helping locally grown products move more freely from surplus zones to consumption centers in West Africa. While barriers to regional trade are diverse and often challenging, the project has made good progress in addressing the underlying constraints, thereby helping to build solid foundations for regional trade.

USAID ATP/E-ATP is making targeted, catalytic investments in interrelated areas, focusing on value chains and cross-cutting areas to achieve its objectives. The project's main areas of intervention include the following:

- *Direct trade facilitation.* The project helps build trust and broker transactions between value chain actors, assisting them in expanding their networks, understanding the demands of new markets, and setting up contracts.
- *Organizational capacity building.* In fostering strong, representative organizations, the project is empowering West African farmers, processors, traders, and transporters to advocate for the development and enforcement of policies supporting trade, and equip themselves with the information and skills to take advantage of attractive business opportunities.
- *Promoting product competitiveness.* The project is strengthening technical capacities in different segments of its six value chains to help West African products compete in terms of price and quality.
- *Reducing road harassment.* The project is working to reduce bribery along its key value chain transport corridors by raising the awareness of truckers and traders about their rights and responsibilities, coaching them to stand up to corrupt public agents, and providing various stakeholders with data to engage in evidence-based advocacy.
- *Improving access to financial services.* Working simultaneously with banks and agricultural operators, the project is facilitating value chain actors' access to credit, funds transfer, and other financial services to facilitate intra-regional trade.
- *Improving access to market information.* The project is laying the foundation for the development of a web- and mobile-based market information platform, targeting private sector actors' needs.
- *Removing policy barriers to trade.* Working with both the public and private sectors, the project is facilitating policy and behavioral reform to translate regional free trade agreements from paper into practice.

Throughout its duration, the project has maintained a regional focus while simultaneously cultivating a productive relationship with USAID's bilateral missions in Senegal, Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria.

Briefing book structure

Briefs are provided on each of the project's above-mentioned key areas of intervention. Each brief follows a similar structure, presenting the project's rationale, strategy and achievements to date, and the "takeaway" or significance of these achievements.

I. DIRECT TRADE FACILITATION

Rationale

Trade facilitation is often broadly defined as the simplification and harmonization of international trade procedures required for the movement of and payment for traded goods. Trade facilitation aims to improve the efficiency of, and increase, international trade by reducing business transaction costs. USAID ATP/E-ATP pursues this objective within its regional mandate, helping firms and producer/trader organizations establish and expand direct connections for cross-border trade.

An important aspect of trade facilitation involves developing trust. In West Africa's environment, where informal transactions remain the dominant mode of exchange, trust is the currency of trade. Where relationships of trust are absent, potential trading partners are more likely to miss out on win-win opportunities. Mistrust and weak linkages within or across value chains can hamper the efficiency that greater communication, cooperation and risk sharing can generate.

In direct trade facilitation, USAID ATP/E-ATP banks on the idea that fostering face-to-face interactions and brokering transactions among potential trading partners will lead to successful business experiences that can be reinforced through repeated interaction and follow-on business. Direct trade facilitation aims to reduce the time and effort required for confidence-building, and encourages traders to expand their traditional networks beyond family or ethnic and linguistic ties.

Strategy and achievements

The main elements of the project's direct trade facilitation approach are summarized below.

Cereal exchanges and trade fairs. Cereal exchanges are special trade events organized by the project in collaboration with partners to bring cereal producers, processors and traders throughout the region in direct contact with one another to trade in cereals. Over a period of two to three days, participants make bids and offers, negotiate prices, and enter into contracts for future product delivery. By integrating the contributions of various staff (value chain leaders, access to finance specialist, market information system specialist, monitoring and evaluation specialist, and data analyst), the project works to match buyers with sellers; assists parties in formalizing contracts (*see text box*), documents and transactions; and monitors the completion of these transactions. To date, the project has implemented the following:

- Three cereal exchanges organized with the food security NGO Afrique Verte in Burkina Faso and Mali, bringing together more than 600 producers, traders and processors to engage in trade that generated about \$2 million in transactions;
- Assistance to the regional food security agency CILSS in organizing its version of a cereal exchange (CORPAO) in Nigeria, which attracted more than 60 participants;
- A cereal exchange that attracted 100 participants and was organized during the Ouagadougou *journées agro-alimentaires* (JAAL) trade fair.

Good contracts for lasting contacts

Traders are often unaware of contracting mechanisms and banking services designed to mitigate risk and build long-term relationships. To foster more successful deals, the project has conducted training on international contracting. For example, 118 producers and traders from five countries were trained in preparation for the 2009 regional cereal exchange in Ouagadougou, where the participants put the training to immediate use.

Special trade events. The project has organized trade promotion events to introduce one country's products to another country. As opposed to the cereal exchanges, these events result in cash-and-carry transactions, a good first step in building relationships between participants who have limited experience with each other. Examples include two *Opération Tabaski* in Accra and Abidjan, a livestock trade operation organized to introduce Nigerian livestock importers to Burkinabe exporters in Fada N'Gourma, and an April 2009 export promotion event in Abidjan featuring Burkina Faso products. This partnership with the World Bank/Burkina Faso-funded value chain development project and the Burkinabe export promotion agency was designed to revive the two countries' trade transactions, which slumped during the Côte d'Ivoire civil war (*see box below*).

Brokering deals. By facilitating contacts among value chain actors, the project has offered numerous value chain actors a chance to learn, connect, and discover untapped business opportunities in other countries. Examples include the following:

- In-person meetings in both Burkina Faso and Ghana, made possible by the project around *Opération Tabaski*, opened the door to new livestock flows from Burkina Faso to Ghana (*see above*).
- Large-capacity cereal processors in Senegal were introduced to some of the most capable producer/trader groups in the maize belt running across Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali. Whereas in the past, Senegalese processors imported grain from Brazil and India because of the low quality of maize available in their country, they now have had the experience sourcing high-quality maize from regional suppliers.
- Burkinabé and Malian livestock exporters were introduced to importers from Ibadan and Lagos, Nigeria, which resulted in a series of deals.

USAID ATP/E-ATP special trade operations

- *Opération Tabaski*. Starting in 2009, the project helped livestock traders mount Ghana's first sheep sale commonly organized in neighboring countries to cater to Muslim communities preparing for the annual feast of sacrifice. The project introduced the concept of the Tabaski event, arranged for Ghanaian traders to meet the Burkinabe breeders who delivered the sheep, and helped organize and finance marketing campaigns in Accra. At the same time, it ensured minimal road harassment in transporting the sheep, and helped with financial arrangements (see *briefs on financial services and road harassment*). Operation Tabaski quickly sold off all the sheep brought to Accra: 1,500 animals in 2009 and 2,564 in 2010.
- *Fada N'Gourma, Burkina Faso, livestock event*. Fada's livestock sellers have had a strong interest in penetrating Nigerian livestock markets, where animals can be sold at a 15-20% markup. Taking advantage of an agricultural fair, USAID ATP organized a special event to help Burkinabe livestock sellers raise their profile among buyers from Nigeria and Benin. The project helped more than 120 buyers and sellers attending the event negotiate deals that generated FCFA 105 million (about \$228,000) in trade.
- *Promotion of Burkina Faso's products in Côte d'Ivoire*. The project co-financed the transporting about 110 cattle and 250 sheep from Ouagadougou to Abidjan, provided health care for the animals, and facilitated sales negotiations between Burkinabe exporters and Ivoirian importers. All the animals were sold off for more than FCFA 70 million (more than \$150,000).

Networking during workshops. The project has also taken advantage of various regional industry events to promote networking among producers, processors, traders, and truckers. Value chain participants not only learned about new technologies, business models and advocacy strategies, they also established contacts with others across the region. In 2011, for example, the project sponsored representatives of the regional poultry value chain organization (UOFA) to attend an African poultry industry conference in Abeokuta, Nigeria. Taking advantage of this opportunity, they forged ties with local input and equipment suppliers looking to expand into the Burkinabe, Ghanaian, Malian and Senegalese markets. Similarly, as value chain stakeholders convened to establish a regional grains network and advocate for policy reforms at regional project-sponsored events, they forged new business relationships that promise to lead to trade for years to come.

Market facilitators. Market facilitators, positioned across the sub-region's terminal markets, have also been a force for catalyzing trade connections and transactions. Five traders holding high positions in their professional associations were hand-picked for their dynamism and command of the markets. The project has sponsored these market facilitators on a part-time or full-time basis to identify companies searching to source or sell in new markets, as well as to connect buyers and sellers, and arrange transactions. Since market facilitators will likely find it lucrative to continue playing this part after the project ends, there is an excellent chance that this project innovation will become a sustainable activity.

Take-away

Direct trade facilitation can lead to cash sales, contracts, or expressions of interest for future transactions. The volume and value of transactions only partially reflect the project's contributions to intra-regional trade. The significance of direct trade facilitation lies not only in the initial deals facilitated by the project, but also—and more importantly—in the stream of

subsequent transactions generated because of those initial contacts. In addition, under the project's impetus, the former *ad hoc* commodity exchanges—organized to promote national food security—have gained a regional dimension that supports increased trade.



USAID ATP

The project helped Burkinabé livestock traders organize the transport and sale of over 2500 sheep in Accra on the occasion of the Muslim holiday Tabaski in 2010.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Rationale

Most West African agricultural value chain actors lack the capacity and skills to mitigate trade risks and take full advantage of opportunities. Individually, they also lack the numbers and influence to address policy-related barriers. To overcome these limitations, West African farmers, processors, traders, transporters and wholesalers have established associations at the national and regional levels. However, these organizations often have an ineffective governance structure, lack long-term plans of action, and have a limited capacity to respond to members' needs. Projects like USAID ATP/E-ATP are well equipped to work with associations in a systematic way and help them build their organizational capacity over time.

Strategy and achievements

ATP/E-ATP has sought to strengthen and empower professional organizations to engage in trade by enhancing their ability to serve their members and defend their interests, especially in terms of reducing barriers to trade. The project's main interventions are summarized below.

Partner selection. The project has concentrated resources on nine organizations selected for their regional presence or orientation, and potential to stimulate intra-regional trade.

- *Livestock.* The trade-oriented apex organization for livestock, CONFENABVI, is present in UEMOA countries and is making inroads in Ghana and Nigeria.
- *Poultry.* The project is working with the regional organization UOFA, which represents the industry in the eight UEMOA countries plus Ghana.
- *Onion.* In the onion value chain, the project first worked with the Niger-based regional organization ORO/AOC. When the project was directed in FY10 to stop operating in Niger, it shifted its support to the national apex organization in Burkina Faso, ONFO. Burkina Faso and Niger are the sub-region's two key onion exporters.
- *Cereals.* No regional apex organization existed in the cereal value chains at the start of project, so the project supports several national apex organizations: in Ghana, GAPTO; in Burkina Faso, CIC-R for rice and CIR-B for all other cereals; and in Côte d'Ivoire, UCOVISA. The project is working with stakeholders in the cereal value chains to

establish the West Africa Grains Council (WAGN), a regional apex organization (*see text box*).

- *MIS*. To implement its market information services, the project is collaborating with three organizations: AMASSA and APROSSA, the local branches of the NGO Afrique Verte in Mali and Burkina Faso; and ANOPACI, the umbrella producer organization in Cote d'Ivoire.

The West Africa Grains Network

Created with project grant funding and technical support, the West African Grains Network is the first regional organization to bring together the different segments of the maize, millet, sorghum, rice, and cowpea value chains. The project has partnered with the strongest pre-existing national organization, CIC-B in Burkina Faso, has helped establish several national focal points (in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal), and is helping them collaborate regionally.

Partner Institutional Viability Assessment. The PIVA is an instrument developed by USAID to assess an organization's performance in various areas of competency. The initial PIVA serves as a baseline against which progress is measured in subsequent annual PIVAs. The project's PIVA process engages organization members in a structured self-evaluation that provides the framework for priority areas for achieving progress. The project has used the PIVA in two major innovative ways: adapting the original instrument to the characteristics of its partner organizations; and introducing a gender dimension that was not in the original PIVA template. Of note:

- The project has organized PIVAs with 10 organizations.
- Gender mainstreaming has been included in the PIVA for all organizations.
- There is noticeable evident progress in self-assessment through the PIVA process. For example, in annual, follow-up PIVAs, many organizations recognized and corrected some overly positive scores they had initially given themselves.

Capacity building plans. The project has helped organizations develop capacity building plans that include a vision and strategy based on the priorities identified in the PIVA process. It has supported organizations in the implementation of these plans with grants and technical advice. Of note:

- The project has helped draft statutes, organize general assemblies and elections, clarify the roles and responsibilities of elected officials and executive teams, and coached members in financial, human resources and other forms of management. For example, the project is helping three key regional organizations (COFENABVI, UOFA, and WAGN) set up permanent secretariats to manage their operations.
- The project has trained organizations in innovative techniques to become more competitive (*see also brief on "more competitive value chains"*). It has funded and trained organizations in data collection so they can provide better information to their

members and the project on trade-flows, prices, and road harassment. These data help the organizations advocate for better public policies and enforcement in an environment where official statistics on agriculture and trade are unreliable or lacking.

Advocacy action plans. Prior to their work with the project, professional organizations' advocacy efforts were often of limited effectiveness since they were not part of a focused strategy and failed to engage members broadly, particularly at the regional level. The project has helped organizations design and implement advocacy action plans tailored to the organizations' specific challenges. For example:

- At the regional level, CIC-B has focused on cereal export bans; at the national level, in Burkina Faso, it has focused on a proposed law governing professional organizations.
- Onion value chain actors have focused on reducing bribes along the Niger/Burkina-Accra trade corridor.
- Livestock value actors have focused on road harassment at the regional level, and at the national level in Mali, they are concentrating on repealing the requirement for the regional governor's authorization to export livestock.

CONFENABVI

When the project started working with COFENABVI, it was an up-and-coming organization in Côte d'Ivoire, thanks largely to its active founder and president. It had already achieved diplomatic status at the national level for its role in facilitating dialogue among sub-regional livestock professionals, but it had not yet developed a *regional* strategic vision or robust structure. The project has helped the organization do this, in the process empowering it to represent its members' interests and address constraints to expanded trade.

With project support, COFENABVI has for the first time developed a participatory five-year action plan. It has mounted a successful advocacy campaign and is now recognized by UEMOA and ECOWAS as the key regional livestock value chain organization. During a series of advocacy trips, CONFENABVI leaders persuaded authorities in eight countries to exempt it from the value-added tax. COFENABVI has taken advantage of this favorable ruling to obtain animal feed in bulk for its members.

With more cattle fattening operations becoming successful in Burkina Faso and Mali, COFENABVI has helped create, *Africaine des viandes et services*, a private company that produces red meat in Mali and Burkina Faso for distribution to Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire and other coastal markets. This company has more than \$35,000 in start-up capital from Ivoirian, Burkinabe, and Malian shareholders. The project has provided technical support for the development of the company's market study and business plan.

Take-away

The project has helped professionalize and empower organizations across its six value chains. The organizations have become better advocates and service providers for their members. They have enhanced their ability to access finance, realized economies of scale, and adopted industry best practices.

The project's organizational strengthening activities may be its most significant long-term contribution to a more dynamic intra-regional trade as strong regional organizations offer solid foundations for trade expansion. Cohesive professional organizations are the cornerstone for

overcoming barriers to trade. It takes a well-managed, representative and dynamic organization to meaningfully engage in advocacy and develop effective member services.

COFENABVI and UFOA already have gained considerable experience in providing services to members throughout the region. WAGC is new, but its anchor, CIC-B, is well structured and along with the other national grain organizations provides a promising basis for more regional undertakings.



USAID ATP and E-ATP

The project has carried out collaborative organizational assessments with ten organizations, like those above (CIR-B *(left)* and CONFENABVI *(right)* in which participants use a USAID-developed tool called PIVA (Partner institutional viability assessment). This tool, which the project has tailored to the needs of the organizations and to strengthen its gender focus, provides a framework for organizational capacity building efforts.

3. PROMOTING PRODUCT COMPETITIVENESS

Rationale

Low farm yields and various quality problems make it difficult for many West African food producers to generate surpluses and compete in regional markets. Despite considerable potential for increased efficiency in the upstream portions of the value chain, persistent problems in these areas are a central constraint to the development of intra-regional trade. The specific circumstances vary significantly by commodity, but the themes are the same. For example:

- Low yields and poor quality are key factors in making local rice uncompetitive with imported rice. Many local consumers appreciate the taste of local rice but do not buy it because of its lower quality.
- The expansion of maize production is constrained by low yield and problematic quality issues, such as aflatoxin.
- The region's major onion exporters (Niger and Burkina Faso) are losing market share to imports in coastal markets because post-harvest losses are high and local supplies slow to a trickle during the rainy season from September to January.
- Trade in cattle and small ruminants has long been confined to animals on the hoof because cuts of local red meat cannot compete with imported meat in price, quality, and hygiene.
- Ill-fed cattle and sheep and goats have little value for exporters of live animals.

Strategy and achievements

USAID ATP/E-ATP addresses these competitiveness constraints by working with value chain actors grouped in trade-oriented producer/trader/processor associations whose members have at least some surplus that can be used to engage in cross-border trade. Generally, improving agricultural productivity, storage life and product quality are among the top priorities of association members. The project prepares development plans for each value chain and updates them yearly. These plans identify each value chain's key activities, including those

involving improved production and post-harvest practices, with an emphasis on environmentally-friendly techniques and food safety practices.

To reach as many value chain participants as possible, the project uses training-of-trainers and cascade training, in which master trainers from within producer organizations, community-based associations and NGOs train their peers. The project also works with lead firms that are the first to try out improved technologies. The main project interventions in these productivity-enhancing and related activities are summarized below.

Environmentally friendly agricultural production practices. The project has focused on increasing productivity in cereals through training programs in integrated pest management (IPM) and integrated soil fertility management (ISFM). A public-private partnership has been established with CropLife International (a global federation representing the plant science industry in 91 countries) to conduct such training in Burkina Faso, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Senegal. To date, about 3,400 producers have benefitted from the IPM/ISFM training. The project has also involved USAID bilateral programs in their regional training workshops. In collaboration with USAID/Senegal's *Projet de croissance économique*, for example, the project organized training in conservation agriculture, a natural resource-saving crop production technique that improve soil quality.

Reducing aflatoxin contamination in cereals. Aflatoxin (a type of mycotoxin) contamination in maize and other cereals is a critical food safety and commercial issue in the expansion of intra-regional trade in West Africa. Aflatoxins are produced by certain fungi, and are poisonous substances that accumulate in food crops during pre- and post-harvest operations, transport and storage. They can cause serious, at times fatal, diseases in humans, especially in children, and stunt growth in livestock.

The project worked with Nestlé to co-sponsor a stakeholder meeting in Accra in November 2009 to raise awareness, establish a regional mycotoxin stakeholder platform for the dissemination of information, and develop a concrete and realistic action plan for the control of aflatoxin in maize. The participants included farmers, agro-processors, traders and researchers from six West African countries, and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA). As a follow-up to this awareness-raising workshop, in April 2010 in Burkina Faso, USAID ATP/E-ATP organized training in the use of a field kit for the rapid detection of aflatoxin in cereals. In collaboration with Australian development agencies, Austrian universities, and IITA, the project trained 25 key actors, including food processors, representatives of producer groups, traders, and individuals from research centers and public health laboratories.

Boosting rice yields. The system of rice intensification (SRI) is a non-traditional and highly productive rice cultivation technique that involves little soil tillage, early seeding, intensive care of the seedlings, and efficient management of irrigation water. The project collaborated with the USAID/Mali IICEM project, which has successfully tested the technique in Mali, to expand it into other parts of West Africa. The project has trained 50 master trainers who are on their way to training 1,000 producers.

Rice parboiling. Traditionally produced for local consumption in parts of Burkina Faso and Mali, parboiled rice has recently shown promise as a regional trade activity (*see text box*). In Burkina Faso, women assert that they “saved their husbands’ livelihoods” by starting to produce parboiled rice for trade, when the sudden withdrawal of direct government intervention in the rice sector left producers without access to markets for their paddy. Parboiled rice can command 50% higher profit margins compared to husked white rice. USAID E-ATP has worked with women processors to improve their skills. As a result of USAID ATP/E-ATP’s initial training, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has trained 477 women in more effective parboiling. The project plans to train an additional 2,100 women. The project has designed and tested locally-appropriate equipment that will increase production capacity, reduce fuel use, and improve quality—for parboiling and for milling.

The promise of parboiling

With market liberalization, local rice processing capacity foundered in the 1990s and Burkina Faso experienced a glut of paddy rice. Now, the women belonging to Burkina Faso’s parboiling cooperatives are purchasing over 40,000 tons per year of local paddy (about 60% of national production) and processing it to produce a good quality, parboiled product for both the domestic and export markets. The parboiling revolution is strengthening the region’s self-sufficiency in a key staple commodity and spreading consumption of nutritionally superior rice (parboiled rice has several nutritional advantages over white rice).

New varieties of onion. To make local onions available year round, the project has collaborated with the West Africa Seed Alliance to introduce a new, consumer-pleasing onion variety, Prima 178, which can be grown during the rainy season. Production of Prima 178 comes after the marketing season of the traditional “Violet de Galmi,” which is grown during the dry season. The “rainy season onion” will enable onion exports from Niger, Burkina Faso and eventually Mali, to continue to trade with coastal countries year-round.

Better packaging for onions. The project has also guided producers and traders to improve the quality and value of onion, by establishing a public-private partnership with a regional manufacturer (EmbalMali) to offer mesh bags to replace the traditional second-hand cocoa jute bags. Smaller in size and aerated, mesh bags reduce spoilage during transportation and are more appealing to consumers. Through demonstration and promotion, the project has encouraged producers and traders to package “ready-to-market” onions (calibrated, conditioned, and weighed) in standardized 50kg, 25kg, and 5 kg mesh bags.

Cattle fattening. The project has emphasized cost-effective cattle fattening and business practices among Sahelian livestock breeders and traders to increase their margins on animals exported to coastal countries. Through training of trainers and cascade trainings, the project has reached approximately 4,000 members of the regional livestock apex organization, COFENABVI.

Meat that makes the cut. Responding to local butchers’ need to meet consumer demand, the project has organized training programs in high quality meat cutting and safe handling techniques. This has made butchers more responsive to quality-conscious, high-end consumers in the region’s lucrative urban markets.

Poultry value chain: guarding against avian influenza. USAID E-ATP has addressed the risk of avian influenza outbreak through regional participatory assessments of bio-safety practices in day-old-chick (DOC) facilities, and implemented a participatory process to develop standards related to DOC and eggs-to-hatch health status and trade in West Africa. In 2011, the project finalized a best practice guide and organized regional seminars on biosafety.

Take-away

Training in improved practices can go a long way, particularly when the practices are demonstrated by local master trainers. Using training of trainers and cascade training, and working through apex organizations, the project is reaching beneficiaries who are gradually adopting new and more effective practices to enhance trade competitiveness. “Returning to old ways is not a possibility,” say CONFENABVI members with regard to cattle fattening and butchering techniques.

The project’s work with lead firms has offered another avenue for demonstrating to influential actors the advantages of improved technologies. Now these technologies are starting to be replicated by others in the value chain. For example, thanks to improved packaging and the new onion variety the project has helped demonstrate, multiply, commercialize and disseminate, the West African onion trade is on the cusp of becoming a year-round activity. Working with lead firms has also allowed the project to reach large numbers of farmers. With project support, the agribusiness firm Burkina Primeur has trained 1,200 farmers in production of the rainy season onion variety and intends to establish a major, modern intra-regional onion export operation.



USAID ATP

The project works with each value chain to address key constraints to expanding trade. In the case of onions, introduction of the new Prima 178 variety allows producers from Niger and Burkina Faso to supply coastal markets when traditional local varieties are not available.

4. REDUCING ROAD HARASSMENT

Rationale

West Africa's road transportation costs are among the highest in the world, mostly due to the crumbling infrastructure, aging truck fleet, poor logistics, and road harassment. Improving road infrastructure and the truck fleet requires large, long-term investments beyond the scope of projects such as USAID ATP/E-ATP. The project has therefore focused on improving overland shipping conditions—and hence competitiveness—by helping to minimize road harassment.

Road harassment, consistently near the top of the long distance traders' list of concerns, refers to the battery of hassles to which transporters are subjected, including road blocks and bribes, often imposed by officials who take advantage of travelers' ignorance of their rights. Truckers who carry perishable agricultural products often have a limited understanding of free trade agreements that should allow these goods to pass easily and quickly across borders. Their lack of knowledge creates opportunities for intimidation and bribery, especially when they do not know whether officials' requests are legitimate or not.

Strategy and achievements

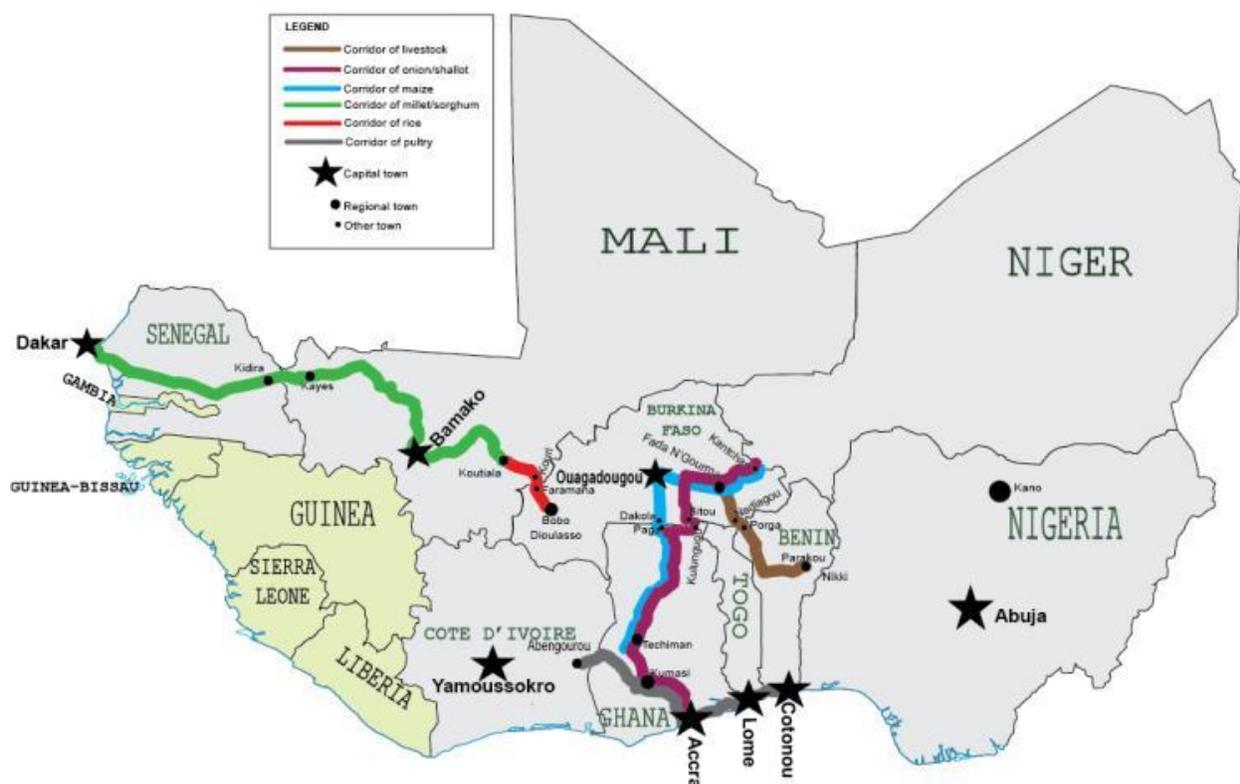
To help reduce road harassment, the project is pursuing a multi-pronged approach based on helping stakeholders understand and defend their rights. The strategy rests on the notion that information empowers.

By investing in data collection and dissemination, and education, the project aims to foster a culture of public accountability, “from the roadways to the hallways” of ministries throughout the region. Recognizing the scale and persistence of the problem, the project has joined forces with USAID's West Africa Trade Hub and is working closely with UEMOA, so that these efforts are carried forward beyond the life of these projects. USAID ATP/E-ATP, and WATH have each selected key corridors to carry out this strategy; USAID ATP/E-ATP have selected one corridor for each value chain. The main elements and results of the strategy are as follows:

Monitoring harassment along key trade corridors. The project uses a variation of a survey methodology developed by the West Africa Trade Hub (WATH) project to shed light on the specific nature of road harassment practices that affect trade in key agricultural products. Project data collectors intercept truckers traveling along these corridors, and guide them to record the number of stops along the way, the time spent at each stop, and the amount of illegal payments required by different categories of public agents.

WATH works only with trucks and drivers compliant with regional regulations; it is not concerned about the nature of the goods transported. USAID ATP/E-ATP focuses only on its value chain commodities and, because of the nature of intra-regional trade in locally produced food staples, includes drivers and trucks that may not be initially following all regulations. The table and map below show the main corridors the project is monitoring:

Rice	Bama/Bobo (Burkina Faso) to Koutiala (Mali)	273 km
Maize	Techiman (Ghana) to Kantchari (Burkina Faso)	976 km
Onion	(Madaoua/Niger border) to Accra (Ghana)	1,316 km
Livestock	Fada N’Gourma (Burkina Faso) to Parakou (Benin)	469 km
Millet/sorghum	Koutiala (Mali) to Dakar (Senegal)	1,865 km
Poultry	Kumasi (Ghana) to Lome (Togo) – shortened pursuant to Ivorian crisis	460 km



Publication of road harassment survey results. On a quarterly basis, USAID ATP/E-ATP sends the results of the road harassment surveys to be published by the Improved Road Transport Governance Initiative of the regional economic community UEMOA. (This group is commonly referred to by its French acronym OPA, *Observatoire des Pratiques Anormales*.) Borderless, a joint initiative led by WATH and the World Bank in which USAID ATP/E-ATP participates, has taken to publishing survey results in quarterly bulletins. These surveys have become the authoritative source of information on road harassment in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana. They are regularly quoted by national and regional authorities, local and international media, and the donor community. They are also used in advocacy efforts;

professional associations such as COFENABVI (the regional livestock apex organization) have expressed particular appreciation for these data, which they use in their advocacy work.

Road shows. USAID ATP/E-ATP and WATH have jointly organized open forums at truck rest stops, in order to publicly disseminate and discuss these survey results. “Road shows” bring together representatives of public agencies (customs, local police, national police, and public health, and phytosanitary agencies), traders, truckers, chambers of commerce, the press and civil society. Victims of road harassment can confront the perpetrators, and public officials can cite driver and truck safety violations. As of September 2011 the project and WATH had co-organized 15 road shows, attracting nearly 2,000 attendees.

Market shows. The project has recently begun organizing “market shows” as a way of strengthening its awareness-raising efforts. Market shows are not meant to be confrontational, but rather to provide more focused opportunities to disseminate survey results, hear the concerns of all value chain actors, and inform them about their rights and obligations. They are organized at large market places rather than at rest stops, and communication is in local languages, not just English or French. So far the project has held two market shows in the Fada N’Gourma and Pouytenga cattle markets in Burkina Faso; 163 persons participated. Market shows are planned along the major trade corridor for each value chain.

Coaching truckers. Non-compliance with official regulations opens opportunities for bribery, particularly when travelers cannot distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate requests for documentation. Ill-informed operators who think they may be missing required documentation are more vulnerable to intimidation. The project’s approach to imparting the knowledge and confidence truckers need to resist exploitation has been harassment coaching. The project uses road and market shows as the venues for information sessions on commodity-specific regulatory requirements, and for training in professional comportment in order to minimize extortion. Truckers are instructed to remain in the vehicle, and to politely but firmly assert their compliance with regulations when officials make unfounded requests. By several accounts, road operators find such tactics effective.

In addition, the project has carried out one-on-one harassment coaching with truckers. USAID ATP/E-ATP uses its team of data collectors stationed along project corridors to accompany truckers through the corridor. They discuss strategy for dealing with public agents at road blocks, and offer additional advice when needed. As truckers come to realize that success depends on awareness of their rights and duties, they are more likely to comply with requirements (thus denying public agents an excuse for requesting a bribe) and to inspire others to also stand firm. These sessions have also served as a means of verifying the soundness of the harassment survey data collection instrument. So far, the project has carried out 26 coaching trips (10 for onion, 10 for livestock, and 6 for maize).

Direct intervention. In some instances, the project has intervened directly to reduce harassment in order to more quickly create the environment where actors can see and reap the benefits of a more conducive trading environment. For example, during *Opération Tabaski* in 2010, the project worked with livestock traders to persuade customs and other public officials to

consider the special character of this Muslim festival sheep sale operation, and facilitate the free movement of animals from Burkina Faso to Ghana. No bribes were paid during the 2010 operation. Experiencing harassment-free trade helped truckers and traders appreciate the value of respecting road safety rules and possessing appropriate documentation.

Reduction in bribes. In a short period of time, illicit payments have decreased in several though not all of the project’s focus corridors. For example, surveys have measured the following changes in bribes per 100 km:

Value chain corridor	Baseline period	Bribes at baseline (CFA/100km)	Bribes as of Apr-Jun '11 (CFA/100km)	Absolute change (per 100km)	Percent change	Key Interventions
Rice	Oct-Dec 2010	51,406	7,189	-CFA 44,217 (USD 98.60)	-86%	Advocacy targeting "border brigades"
Maize	Jul-Sept 2010	9,060	3,189	-CFA 5,871 (USD 13.10)	-65%	Coaching
Onion	Jan-Mar 2010	11,156	6,941	-CFA 4,215 (USD 9.40)	-38%	Coaching
Livestock	Jan-Mar 2010	32,089	27,760	-CFA 4,329 (USD 9.66)	-13%	Coaching
Millet/sorghum	Oct-Dec 2010	11,111	14,025	+CFA 2,914 (USD 6.50)	+26%	Advocacy and coaching

Note: Monitoring along the poultry corridor was discontinued as a result of civil strife in Cote d'Ivoire.

Take-away

Information and evidence-based advocacy. Looking beyond the observed changes described above, the data collected by the project have generated valuable evidence for agricultural trade actors to use when approaching public authorities and demanding accountability. Road harassment is a well-known phenomenon throughout the region, and public awareness of it is not new, but until recently, advocacy efforts have lacked hard data on the scale and cost of harassment, and specific practices traceable directly to perpetrators have been under-documented. This shortage of hard data has contributed to an absence of accountability, and a culture of impunity and acceptance. None of this can be transformed overnight, but USAID ATP/E-ATP is building the foundation for transformation. Securing the involvement of high-level authorities is an area that requires further effort, and one the project takes seriously.

5. IMPROVING ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

Rationale

Agricultural growth in West Africa is constrained by the region's paucity of financial services. High-yielding agriculture requires an upfront investment in improved seeds, agricultural chemicals, labor, and farm equipment. Lack of adequate and timely credit limits agricultural production and reduces the ability to source agricultural products for processing or trade. Capital is needed to buy the costly equipment for processing. Access to credit is critical, but not the only financial service that is relevant to trade. Transacting over long distances is complicated by a lack of secure means to settle transactions remotely. Traders commonly transport cash across borders, and use barter and black market money changers when trading across monetary zones. Additionally, without insurance (another important financial service), certain forms of modern freight are off limits.

The way in which borrowers and financial institutions perceive each other is a crucial factor in limiting the expansion of financial services. While banks in West Africa generally have liquidity for lending to agribusinesses, they have little understanding of the agricultural sector, accompanied by the perception that the sector is high risk with little profitability. (There are exceptions to this perception: commercial operations in traditional cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, and palm oil, that are state-supported; and food staple imports such as rice, sugar, and cooking oil.) In turn, agricultural actors often see formal financial institutions as untrustworthy, bureaucratic, unfriendly, and too demanding in terms of collateral.

The informality of trade transactions is also incompatible with the demands of modern banking. Without receipts, contracts, titles, accounts, income statements, cash flow analyses and extensive documentation, a bank loan or insurance policy is difficult to obtain. USAID ATP/E-ATP's financial services component is designed to help project participants address some of these constraints.

Strategy and achievements

The project has sought to stimulate both the demand for and supply of financial services needed for trade. The main elements of project interventions are summarized below.

Formal trade contracts. Most agricultural trade transactions in West Africa today are informal, but without formal purchase orders and contracts, banks cannot make loans to traders. By

providing training in reading and writing a simplified formal model contract, the project has offered would-be customers avenues to formal financial services, while building more trustworthiness into business transactions. The project has worked in the cereals sector with participants at cereal exchanges and other events to negotiate and draft contracts leading to trade between the parties.

Bankable business plans and loan applications. To obtain loans for short- to medium-term capital investment, borrowers need a solid business plan. The project has trained ten value chain actors and associations in developing business plans and has assisted these firms and associations throughout the loan application process. For example:

- The project helped a Ghanaian farmers' association (AGRITA), which produces 18,000 tons of maize per year mostly for export to Burkina Faso and Niger, to secure a loan of more than \$50,000 to purchase tractors. The association rents the tractors to its members, thus collecting money to repay the loan, and in turn the members can plow and farm more acreage in a timely manner, thus increasing their exports.
- The project helped a poultry farm enterprise in Burkina Faso (Kali's Farm) obtain a \$40,000 loan from a local bank to expand its company and resume business with Côte d'Ivoire after the ban against poultry trade due to avian influenza was lifted. (USAID E-ATP was also instrumental in the policy change ending that ban.)
- The project helped an Ivorian cereals cooperative (UCOVISA) borrow \$ 15,000 and purchase new maize shelling equipment. As a result, the cooperative is producing higher quality grain, which has kick-started its export to a high-capacity processor (Agro-Cipa) in Burkina Faso.

Intermediation. The project has played the role of an honest broker facilitating in-person meetings between agricultural sector actors and financial institution representatives. Being presented as solid partners by a respected third party no doubt helps both sides take each other more seriously. Introductions do not replace due diligence or guarantees, but they help establish goodwill. During the 2009 *Operation Tabaski*, thanks to facilitation by USAID ATP, the Burkinabe livestock association was able to mobilize an additional \$71,000.

Warehouse receipts. Warehouse receipt programs are designed to address the dual challenge of storage and liquidity that many agricultural producers face. They offer agricultural operators the option to securely store their agricultural products, collateralize them, and if they choose, borrow using that collateral. USAID ATP/E-ATP, in collaboration with the USAID ADVANCE project, has provided a grant and technical assistance to help the Ghana Grains Council design and pilot a warehouse receipts scheme. They also co-sponsored a regional conference to inform stakeholders about the opportunities and requirements for developing such a system, which is the first step toward establishing a commodities exchange.

Funds transfers through mobile banking. To overcome the challenges and costs associated with trading on a cash basis over long distances, the project has experimented with the use of

mobile banking to facilitate funds transfers, input and freight forwarding payments, and other trade-related transactions. The project encouraged a mobile banking platform developer (INOVA) to partner with a rural microfinance institution (URC Nazinon) in this experiment. In 2011, with project support, the two entities launched a pilot program targeting cereal and cattle traders exporting from Burkina Faso to Ghana. The service lets mobile users make payments, transfers and savings deposits from their handheld devices.

In its first six months, the service facilitated almost \$60,000 in deposits and transfers. The project co-financed the platform license, roll-out, and initial product dissemination; it also provided technical advice for the development of a viable business plan. Going forward the project plans to facilitate expanded product dissemination, help the partners bridge the gap between multiple currencies, and facilitate foreign exchange—an enduring challenge for those trading across monetary zones.

Take-away

USAID ATP/E-ATP has leveraged approximately \$2 million in financing by facilitating more than \$200,000 in agribusiness loans. Project-facilitated loans help companies expand their operation and over time, increase trade. Through its training in contract reading and writing and development of business plans, the project has prepared others to access formal financial services. And by its initiatives in warehouse financing, mobile banking, and funds transfers, the project has helped pave the way for new financial services that are essential to the expansion of trade.

6. IMPROVING ACCESS TO MARKET INFORMATION

Rationale

Limited access to market information is an impediment to the integration of West Africa's food commodity markets. It inhibits value chain actors' ability to respond to risks and opportunities, and the public sector's ability to make well-informed policy decisions in support of economic growth and food security, among other objectives. Private and public sectors need different types of information. In making buy-sell decisions, private traders have limited use for the monthly market-balance reports needed by those involved in shaping food security policy. Conversely, the real-time bids and offers that traders need are not the kind of data governments can use to detect and act on a looming food crisis or for steering trade policy.

Since lack of timely market information is a major constraint to trade, USAID ATP/E-ATP's primary emphasis has been on private MIS. The project's predecessor, the regional project Market Information Systems and Traders' Organizations for West Africa (MISTOWA), established a partnership with a private software developer, Busylab, and together they launched Tradenet.biz, a web and cell-phone MIS platform. MISTOWA, however, ended before that system had fully taken hold. USAID ATP and E-ATP continued this work with Busylab with the goal of building a regional system.

Strategy and achievements

To help establish a viable private sector-led regional MIS to cover the project's six value chain products in five countries, the project's strategy has been to build on MISTOWA's efforts and work with the already established Esoko MIS platform (*see below*) and existing national MIS partners, rather than trying to create a new system.

Esoko Networks. The project initially partnered with the Ghana-based Busylab, which soon evolved into Esoko, a company with headquarters in Mauritius. Tradenet.biz also morphed into Esoko Networks, with the stated objective to grow and improve the platform. Esoko continued the Busylab/Tradenet.biz business model, which centers on a license for the right to use its platform. The license is sold to a franchisee, who sells subscriptions to groups or end users. The goal is for subscriptions to cover the license fee, the cost of data gathering, and a profit margin. USAID ATP/E-ATP (like MISTOWA) has provided funds to MIS partners to acquire one license per country to provide MIS access to project beneficiaries.



Esoko.com screenshot

MIS partners. To provide the needed content to the Esoko platform, the project has supported MIS partners in data collection and dissemination in five countries. These partners are the same as were supported by MISTOWA:

- Esoko/Ghana, Esoko's franchise in Ghana;
- Two branches of the *Afrique Verte* NGO APROSSA in Burkina Faso, and AMASSA in Mali;
- ANOPACI, the Ivorian producer apex organization; and
- IFAnet, a private data collection agency in Nigeria.

Esoko MIS services. Esoko Networks provides price information on cereals, cattle, onion, and day-old-chicks from at least 10 key markets in each country. The platform also provides bids and offers for the sale or purchase of agricultural commodities. Upon registration, users upload their profile, which includes contact information for those making bids and offers. Users can access market information by querying the platform either online or by phone, or by subscribing to receive alerts for price, bids/offers for commodities and markets of interest to them. Esoko is still developing other services, such as the ability to simultaneously send multiple SMS to multiple users, either to inquire about a specific event (polling), or to provide specific information or advice.

Strengthening the Esoko MIS. To help the Esoko.com platform better accommodate a regional MIS, the project worked with Esoko Networks to streamline product characteristics, train its partners (the content providers) in data collection, and train beneficiaries in the use of the platform.

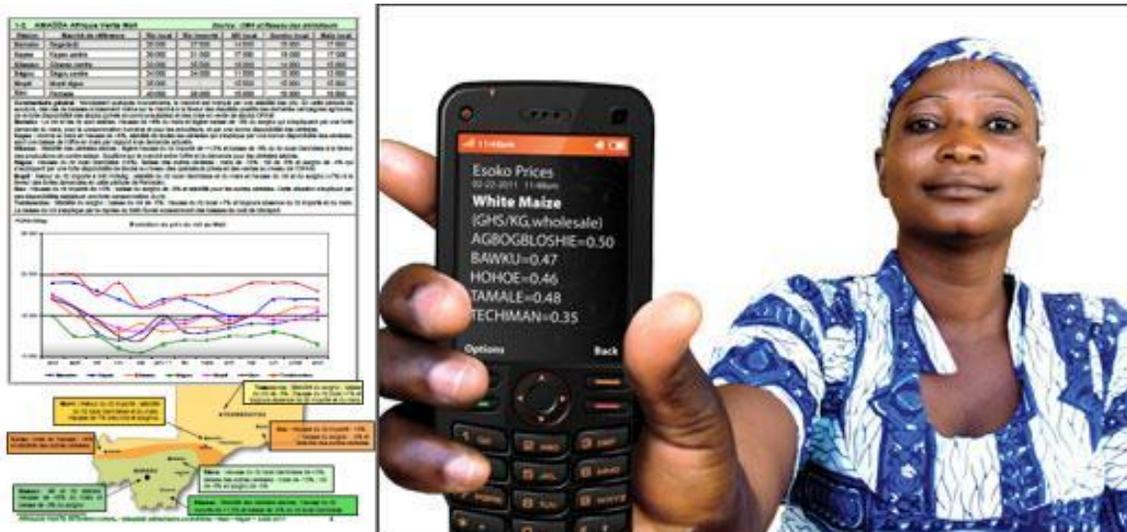
Results. In FY10 Esoko.com registered nearly 6,000 new users requesting market information on rice (3,737), millet (1,116) and sorghum (994). With Esoko.com, users expand their outreach beyond their traditional markets. For example, when women rice parboilers in Burkina Faso posted offers on the platform, they quickly found sales possibilities in Nigeria and other coastal countries. During the cereal exchange event the project co-organized in 2009, the platform recorded \$1.9 million in bids and offers for 5,556 tons of cereals.

Take-away

Work in progress. Whereas much learning has taken place on how to provide efficient and reliable MIS services to Africa's value chain actors, much remains to be done to determine which business models work best and how to best send messages, especially to farmers who are often illiterate. Given unreliable networks, providing internet-based services is a challenge, as is collecting good quality data on a timely basis. Although many challenges remain in the collection and provision of up-to-date, extensive, and reliable market information, the project has made inroads to developing regional information services essential to intra-regional trade.

Outreach. To date, more than 17,000 market operators can obtain the price of any of 50 commodities in 75 markets spanning five countries. With Esoko.com, users expand their outreach beyond their traditional markets. Access to market price information is empowering farmers and traders to negotiate fair prices with intermediaries. Anecdotal evidence indicates that farmers are making use of prices posted on Esoko.com to hold their ground in negotiations. The integration of MIS into cereal exchanges has showcased the Esoko.com platform's functionality. Leveraging professional organizations' membership base helped introduce the system to large numbers of potential users. Though Esoko.com is a work in progress, hands-on training in platform and data use has begun to demonstrate its commercial value to users.

Foundations for the future. The project has carried out foundational work without which national MIS could not take on a regional dimension. A regional MIS needs to be able to support reporting on a large number of commodities originating in many countries. Helping MIS partners develop common metrics and data collection methodologies has served to streamline and harmonize data collection and information dissemination. Through its support for Esoko.com, the project is piggy-backing on rapid cell phone penetration to broaden and speed up access to the kind of information needed for trade to develop.



Before and after: An Afrique Verte AMASSA monthly bulletin for Mali (left) and a woman using Esoko.com (right)

7. REMOVING POLICY BARRIERS TO TRADE

Rationale

Established in 1999, the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) called for member states to abolish customs duties levied on imports and exports, abolish non-tariff barriers to establish a Free Trade Area, adopt a common external tariff vis-à-vis third countries, and remove all obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital. This vision has not yet been realized, however, as intra-regional traders are still subjected to a variety of barriers.

The project's role is to help value chain actors identify key policy barriers affecting their ability to engage in intra-regional trade and work toward their removal.

Strategy and achievements

The project has worked with public and private sector actors to analyze and design policy reforms, and contribute to their implementation and monitoring. To ensure a closer collaboration with ECOWAS, the project placed a trade policy advisor at ECOWAS headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. The project's main interventions in the policy area are summarized below.

Lifting the ban on poultry trade. The project was instrumental in successful advocacy efforts with the governments of Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire to lift their bans on poultry trade between the two countries. The bans had been in place since the 2006 avian influenza outbreaks. Lack of trade within the region, especially in day-old-chicks and eggs-to-hatch, has increased the costs of production and hurt other key activities along the value chain, with adverse impact on the competitiveness of the poultry industry throughout the region.

In late 2009, USAID E-ATP completed an assessment of the poultry value chain in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Mali. It also analyzed the avian influenza and biosafety situation in those countries, Senegal, and Nigeria. This investigation culminated in a regional workshop held in Accra in January 2010. Over 40 participants representing leading private sector actors, professional organizations, and government officials discussed the assessment findings, with particular focus on the impact of avian influenza on intra-regional trade in poultry. In the following months, USAID E-ATP implemented several activities in close collaboration with the poultry industry, including selected owners of breeding farms and hatcheries; the *Union des*

organisations de la filière avicole en Afrique de l'ouest (UOFA), the regional poultry apex association; and the public sector, including national veterinary service organizations:

- Technical options for removing trade bans were identified during a meeting with the director of the veterinary service in Burkina Faso organized by USAID E-ATP.
- During a workshop organized by the national laboratory on testing for AI in poultry farms in Burkina Faso, the project and other participants discussed the difficulties poultry farmers face in securing day-old-chick supplies.
- USAID E-ATP recommended policy options to senior representatives of the West African veterinary services, who were invited to a regional workshop organized by the West African Economic and Monetary Union. Immediately following the workshop, the veterinary services from Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire submitted a proposal to lift the ban to their respective ministries in charge of animal resources.
- USAID E-ATP met with poultry farmers in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso to evaluate their needs in day-old-chicks and discuss their interest in procuring supplies from coastal countries such as Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.
- USAID E-ATP organized a regional workshop with veterinary services and the poultry industry to promote biosafety best practices, together with the idea that, with a properly regulated poultry sector, regional trade in poultry products poses no health threat to animals or humans. During the workshop, poultry farmers advocated for the development of bilateral agreements to eliminate trade bans and concomitant completion of the AI-free self-declaration process of the World Animal Health Organization.

These efforts led to a meeting in August 2010 between the ministers in charge of animal resources in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. The two ministers concluded that the health, sanitation, veterinary, biosafety, and commercial measures undertaken by the two governments and the poultry industry in both countries had reversed the spread of the disease, which had not been detected in either country since 2006. In a press conference, the two ministers announced that the four-year ban on poultry trade between the two countries was immediately removed.

In working on this reform, the project faced many challenges, including (i) countries' focus on the World Animal Health Organization AI-free self-declaration process, without due consideration for faster options; (ii) a widespread misunderstanding that lifting the ban would be associated with considerable health risk to animals and humans; (iii) the temptation in some countries to protect the domestic poultry industry under the guise of protecting the health of its citizens; (iv) a complex policy dialogue between the public sector and the private poultry industry; and (v) the lack of effective advocacy skills within the regional and national poultry associations. These barriers were overcome, paving the way for increased intra-regional trade in day-old chicks and eggs-to-hatch, two key inputs in poultry production.

Policy gap analysis. To shed light on implementation of the ETLS, the project conducted a "policy gap analysis." The project first reviewed existing policies and practices pertaining to

intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities. It then conducted field interviews of value chain actors to identify the policy measures not being respected by public agents. In addition to road harassment, it identified both tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers. Tariff barriers include:

- Export taxes disguised as contributions to the livestock development funds (for example, in Burkina Faso) are forced upon livestock exporters
- Export taxes disguised as statistical taxes are imposed on onion exports (e.g., in Niger)
- Import duties are levied on another country's produce (e.g., Burkina's duty on Niger's onions)
- A value-added tax is levied on Malian livestock imports by Senegal to protect Senegalese livestock producers.

Non-tariff barriers include:

- Cereal export bans
- Demands for certificate of origin, which are not required for locally-grown food staples
- Imposition of transit formalities, such as inter-state road transit – ISRT log-book, transit fee, and bond guarantee, which are not needed for agricultural products
- A Malian requirement that the regional governor authorize the export of livestock to protect local meat consumption
- Non-recognition of sanitary and phytosanitary certificates beyond national borders, despite agreements to the contrary.

ECOWAS policy watch system. The project has also helped ECOWAS design a mechanism for monitoring the application of ETLS regulations and procedures. The so-called policy watch system serves four functions: policy formulation, coordination, implementation, and evaluation. Policy formulation involves meeting regularly to review and update regional policy decisions, directives and guidelines. Coordination is to ensure that member countries are implementing regional policy consistently. Implementation consists of guiding member countries in adapting regional policies so that they can be adopted in national codes of laws. Evaluation and monitoring is to track and take stock of progress on all of these fronts.

Clarifying institutional roles. The project has worked to clarify roles and responsibilities between ECOWAS and national bodies, and within ECOWAS itself. For example:

- ECOWAS and the national units that serve as its liaison in member states have not been proactive in ensuring the implementation of regional trade rules. With respect to ETLS implementation, the project has provided technical input into the development of the National Units Manual, which explicitly defines the relationships and responsibilities of these bodies.
- The policy advisor has worked to bring more attention to agriculture-specific implementation issues and make the sector an integral part of the official mandate of

ECOWAS' National Approvals Committee, which coordinates ETLS implementation across member states.

- Another effort has centered on the formulation of a monitoring system, which is being documented in a manual that will cover indicators, how data will be reported by ministries, and a mechanism for systematically soliciting industry feedback.
- Within the Commission itself, the project has steered the ECOWAS transport committee's attention to the challenges that face agricultural traders and transporters crossing borders.

Involving the private sector in policy debate. Working with the public sector as well as private practitioners, the project has stepped up agricultural sector involvement in the policy sphere, both at the regional and national levels. To improve communication and awareness between agricultural sector and regional authorities, the project has organized events to allow the actors to meet national and regional-level officials face to face. In March 2011, for example, top ECOWAS officials welcomed 18 free trade advocates representing the project's value chains to the Abuja headquarters to discuss impediments to the flow of agricultural commodities in the region. Association leaders put their advocacy training to use, presenting both orally and in writing the challenges they face.

Take-away

The project has worked to remove policy barriers to regional trade in four different ways.

Reforming policies. The campaign that led to Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso lifting their ban on poultry trade was a success region-wide and other countries are gearing up to remove their own bans.

Re-tooling for trade. The project has helped equip ECOWAS and its national emissaries with important tools for moving forward with the implementation of regional free trade agreements. The policy watch system represents a major contribution to this effect, as do the various manuals and guidelines the project has helped regional and national entities draft to realize their mission more effectively.

Institutionalizing private sector input. The project has helped open and institutionalize channels of communication between agricultural operators and ECOWAS and national government ministries. This is a significant step because incorporating the private sector into the policy process is key to seeing free trade agreements become a reality.

Attention to agriculture. The project has raised the profile of agricultural trade issues within ECOWAS and UEMOA, helping to sensitize regional and national actors to the unique challenges (perishable goods, live animals) and stakes (livelihoods and food security) attached to agricultural commodities.

8. CREATING SYNERGIES WITH BILATERAL PROGRAMS

Rationale

To achieve their objectives, regional programs – such as this project – must not only maintain a regional focus, but also need to cultivate a close relationship with initiatives at the country-level where activities are ultimately implemented. This project has added value to bilateral programs-- while pursuing its own regional objectives--by engaging in the following activities:

- Sharing with bilateral programs pertinent lessons learned and successes achieved elsewhere;
- Undertaking with bilateral programs joint activities in areas of both local and regional significance;
- Applying lessons learned and successes achieved by bilateral programs to regional activities-- thus helping bilateral programs achieve a greater impact beyond their countries' borders;
- Facilitating regional events that allow several bilateral programs to interact with the regional program, with one another, with stakeholders from various countries, with other donor-funded projects, and with regional economic organizations.

An effective collaboration between this project and bilateral programs has benefited both programs by eliminating duplication of efforts, minimizing the risk of working at cross purposes with the same stakeholders involved in country-level and regional activities, and complementing each other's efforts in activities that originate in one country and spill over into the region.

Strategy and achievements

The project has developed an effective approach to creating synergies between its regional interventions and bilateral programs, incorporating five elements:

- *Work planning.* Bilateral programs from Senegal, Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria were invited to participate in the presentation of USAID ATP/E-ATP's FY10 work plans;
- *Regional workshops.* The project invited bilateral programs to participate and contribute to regional workshops that benefit their countries' stakeholders. For example:
 - Validation of regional assessments of rice and cereals value chains
 - Agro-food trade fair in Ouagadougou

- Cereal exchanges, in Bamako and Ouagadougou
- Rice parboiling techniques in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso
- Poultry biosafety in Accra, Dakar and Ouagadougou
- *Stakeholder travel.* The project sponsored stakeholders from other countries to participate in, and contribute a regional perspective to workshops organized by bilateral programs. For example, USAID E-ATP sponsored intra-regional producer/trader groups to participate in a workshop and field demonstration on an innovative rice production technology introduced by USAID IICEM in Mali.
- *Scopes of work.* The project shared the scopes of work with bilateral programs for activities in their countries, to solicit their support and align with their schedules as necessary.
- *Briefings.* The project briefed bilateral missions on the regional programs' field visits to their countries.

By following this approach, USAID ATP/E-ATP have added value to bilateral missions and programs in many areas, as highlighted below.

Collaboration with USAID/Ghana. The pilot Ghana warehouse receipts system is a joint activity between the project and USAID/Ghana's Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) program. In September 2011, the two programs sponsored a regional workshop to introduce the warehouse receipt system concept to stakeholders from various countries. USAID ATP and USAID ADVANCE will continue to collaborate in Ghana-based activities that are part of USAID ATP's regional maize value chain development plan.

Collaboration with USAID/Mali. The project's value chains have been aligned with USAID/Mali priority value chains (maize, millet/sorghum, rice, and onion/shallot), thus providing many areas of collaboration between the regional programs and USAID/Mali's *Initiatives intégrées pour la croissance économique au Mali* (IICEM) project, as well as the Sorghum, Millet and other Grains Collaborative Research Support Program (INTSORMIL CRSP). USAID/Mali is also interested in USAID ATP's livestock value chain, a major source of economic growth in Mali.

- *Rice value chain.* USAID E-ATP and USAID IICEM jointly organized a regional workshop on the Rice Intensification System, a rice cultivation practice successfully tested in Mali by IICEM that USAID E-ATP is helping promote in other countries, to contribute to increased production and trade in the region. In addition, USAID E-ATP assisted USAID IICEM in organizing a study tour in Burkina Faso for Malian operators to learn from processes and techniques used by women rice parboiling organizations. The two programs will collaborate in identifying regional markets opportunities for Malian white and parboiled rice.
- *Millet/sorghum value chain.* USAID E-ATP's collaboration with USAID IICEM and INTSORMIL CRSP includes promoting the export of Malian millet/sorghum-based processed products, the dissemination of business models in millet/sorghum processing, and advocacy to reduce cereal export bans and other trade barriers in Mali and the region.

- *Maize value chain.* USAID ATP and USAID IICEM have collaborated in all USAID ATP maize activities that took place in Mali.
- *Onion/shallot value chain.* USAID ATP and IICEM have developed a strong collaboration in several areas. First, USAID ATP shared with IICEM the rainy-season onion production technology it successfully tested in Burkina Faso for the purpose of expanding the country's onion production and marketing season to compete more effectively with onion imported from Europe and Asia into coastal countries. Second, USAID ATP shared with IICEM lessons learned in the strengthening of an onion inter-professional organization in Burkina Faso, to help IICEM promote the establishment of a similar inter-professional organization in Mali. Finally, USAID ATP and IICEM jointly sponsored Malian producer/trader groups to participate in regional activities such as the Ouagadougou regional trade fair, *Journées Agro-Alimentaires* in December 2009, during which Malian dried shallots, a novelty for most at the trade fair, were appropriately awarded the top price for innovation.
- *Livestock value chain.* With USAID/Mali's support, USAID ATP is working with the World Bank and Malian stakeholders to eliminate the requirement of an authorization from local authorities to export Malian livestock. Another area of collaboration is the complex issue of the value added tax (VAT) imposed by Senegal on livestock imported from Mali, which regional economic organizations do not support.

Collaboration with USAID/Senegal. USAID ATP/E-ATP have initiated a close collaboration with USAID/Senegal *Projet de Croissance Economique* (PCE) since mid-2009, covering many areas of common interest.

- *Policy and road-related barriers to intra-regional trade.* In 2010, at the invitation of USAID PCE, the project's policy team participated in the workshop that launched Senegal's Presidential Investment Council (*Conseil présidentiel de l'investissement* or CPI). The policy team presented an overview of the regional trading system under ECOWAS and UEMOA and the specific regional trading rules affecting the project's six value chains. The discussion touched on several persistent trade barriers, including a VAT assessed on imports from the region (but not on similar domestic products), documents necessary for the free movement of goods, and technical trade barriers.
- *Road harassment monitoring.* USAID E-ATP and PCE are cost-sharing data collection and analysis of road harassment along the Bamako-Dakar corridor. This joint effort will provide a complete picture of the Dakar-Bamako-Ouagadougou, considered a priority corridor for Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso.
- *Rice value chain.* USAID E-ATP collaborated with PCE on parboiled rice studies and in establishing regional business linkages between Senegalese and other regional actors.
- *Millet/sorghum and maize value chains.* USAID ATP/E-ATP and USAID PCE jointly supported a Senegalese processing company in procuring cereals from Burkina Faso and Mali; identified cereal post-harvest equipment for small and medium enterprises in Senegal and elsewhere; and organized a regional training workshop on conservation farming, an environment-smart agricultural practices initiated by USAID PCE.

Collaboration with USAID/Nigeria.

- *Rice value chain.* USAID E-ATP sponsored a regional rice parboiling workshop in Burkina Faso, for which USAID/Nigeria's Maximizing Agricultural Revenue and Key Enterprises in Targeted Sites (MARKETS) project identified training expertise, and shared experiences in promoting improved rice parboiling practices.
- *Trade facilitation and market information system.* In FY10 USAID E-ATP opened an office in Kano, Nigeria, and initiated trade facilitation and MIS work on the strategic Dawanau market, which provided an added opportunity for close collaboration and information exchange with USAID/Nigeria via the MARKETS satellite office in Kano.

Take-away

USAID bilateral missions and programs have responded well to USAID ATP/E-ATP's approach to building synergies between regional and bilateral programs. By being informed about all regional program activities in their countries, bilateral programs are able to build on these regional activities to advance their own objectives. Both regional and bilateral programs have enjoyed the rewards of this collaboration. For example, during the agro-food trade fair in Ouagadougou, Malian onion processors received the top cash prize for innovation, and the two programs' rice value chain leaders received awards for their successful organization of the SRI regional workshop in Mali.