

<p>Présidence de la République Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire</p> 		<p>APCAM/MSU/USAID Projet de Mobilisation des Initiatives en matière de Sécurité Alimentaire au Mali – Phase II (PROMISAM - II)</p> <p>MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY</p>
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PROMISAM - II

PROJECT TO MOBILIZE FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVES IN MALI – Phase II

(Projet de Mobilisation des Initiatives en Matière de Sécurité
Alimentaire – Phase II)

Quarterly Activity Report June, 2009 – August, 2009

September 2009

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Food Security III Associate Agreement
(Leader Award no. GDG-A-0-02-0000021-00)
Associate Award (Associate Award no. 688-09-00006-00)

Project to Mobilize Food Security Initiatives in Mali—Phase II (PROMISAM II)
[Projet de Mobilisation des Initiatives en Matière de Sécurité Alimentaire au Mali]

Quarterly Activity Report, June 2009-August 2009

*Strengthening the Capacity of the Malian Government to Develop Analytical and
Market-Based Food Security Responses*

The second phase of PROMISAM, funded for the period December 2008–November 2011, has four objectives: (i) Further enhance and develop the technical and analytical skills for the Malian food security commission (CSA) and related support agencies; (ii) assist Mali in implementing food security plans country-wide through the developing and testing of methods for monitoring plan implementation; (iii) help IPR/IFRA de Katibougou to develop an academic and practical curriculum in support of Malian educated analysts in a range of components to ensure continuing food security; and (iv) provide technical support to Mali’s national team developing Mali’s NEPAD/CAADP report and national compact.

MSU implements the PROMISAM II project in partnership with the Malian Food Security Commission (CSA) and the Permanent Assembly of the Malian Chambers of Agriculture (APCAM). Other key collaborators include the Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée (IPR/IFRA) de Katibougou and the Institut d’Economie Rurale (IER). PROMISAM II represents part of a larger portfolio of applied research, outreach and capacity-strengthening activities on food security implemented by MSU in Mali with funding from an array of sources, including USAID/Mali, USAID/WA, the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation, and ECOWAS. The non-USAID-funded work is complementary to that of PROMISAM II, thus leveraging USAID/Mali’s funding.

This report summarizes the activities and achievements of the project during the period June–August 2009 by objective as well as by cross-cutting management, administrative, and outreach functions. During the quarter, significant progress was made in achieving all four project objectives as well as contributing, at USAID/Mali’s request, to a study of the Malian rice value chain that was commissioned by USAID/EGAT as part of the Global Food Security Response (GFSR).

Cross-cutting outreach and administrative activities

The most significant cross-cutting activities included:

1. Preparing briefing notes in French and English for U.S. Ambassador Gillian A. Milovanovic in preparation for her audience with Malian President Amadou Tourmani Touré (“Some Thoughts on the Strong Increases in the Prices of Cereals and the Measures Taken by Malian Authorities”).
2. Participating in a USAID/EGAT-sponsored study of the rice value chain study in Mali in June and July, and participation in a subsequent on-line forum on West African rice value chains, organized by EGAT/AG in August. Boubacar Diallo, Ramziath Adjao, Nango Dembélé, and John Staatz all made substantive contributions to the Mali study (“Global Food Security Response Case Study: Mali” by Tom Lenaghan and Salifou B. Diarra), which the authors noted in the acknowledgements.¹ The report was submitted to USAID in July.
3. Meeting with various consultants referred by USAID to discuss issues related to food security in Mali (e.g., Ndeye Fatoumata Ba from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and Florence Lasbennes from the Secretariat of the UN Special High-Level Task Force on the World Food Crisis).
4. Helping design a new approach for the Peace Corps Master’s in International Development (MID) Program. MSU, like several other US universities, participates in this program in which volunteers can first enroll in a year of graduate work, then leave for their Peace Corps service and use data collected during their two years of service as a basis for their master’s degree when they return to the university. One problem that universities have experienced with this program is that the volunteers cannot choose in the country in which they will be placed; and this lack of prior knowledge and control about placement often makes it hard for volunteers to plan their research in advance or for their professors to obtain funds to visit the student while she/he was a volunteer in order to advise them on their study. In collaboration with Peace Corps headquarters in the US and Peace Corps/Mali, MSU professors Eric Crawford, John Staatz, and Nango Dembélé agreed to participate in a pilot program in which MSU students in the MID program can request to be placed in Mali, where they will work with the joint PROMISAM-Peace Corps-PGP2 Food Security program described below. If this model proves successful, Peace Corps will consider extending it to other universities that have USAID-affiliated applied research programs.
5. Beginning the development on campus of a database system to track and report more efficiently all project outputs as well as outputs from MSU’s non-USAID-funded food security activities in Mali. We anticipate that this system will be fully functional by the end of 2009.
6. Acquiring a second project vehicle (a Toyota Corolla) for in local travel.

¹ “This study would not have been possible without the active participation of Michigan State University staff from the West Africa Food Security Capacity Strengthening and Research Program. In particular, Boubacar Diallo and Ramziath Adjao contributed important research on productive systems and food security. In addition, Michigan State’s Nango Dembele and John Staatz provided comments and suggestions that were invaluable to the team both during the field work and in drafting stages.”

Objective 1: Enhancing the technical and analytical skills of the CSA and related support agencies

During the quarter, the project carried out the following activities and achieved the following results:

1. **National marketing strategy document:** As described in the previous quarterly report, in May 2009, at the request of the Food Security Commissioner, PROMISAM II organized a retreat of Malian experts to develop proposals for a new national cereals marketing strategy. The report that grew out of that retreat was delivered to the Commissioner in May, and in June she transmitted it to the Prime Minister.
2. **Analytic support to the CSA:**
 - a. In July, 2009, Nango Dembélé worked with the Observatoire du Marché Agricole (OMA) to implement a rapid reconnaissance study of cereal markets in the main surplus-producing areas. The results of the rapid reconnaissance survey are being used to produce the OMA *Bulletin* which is a key document used by the CSA and the Cabinet to analyze the current food situation and make policy decisions regarding food marketing and trade during the hungry season (the *soudure*).
 - b. In July, in response to a request to the CSA from the President of Mali, Nango Dembélé, Salif Diarra of the OMA and Mme. Dicko (head of the CSA's marketing unit) carried out scenario analyses of possible market trends that could emerge during the annual hungry season (*soudure*) and policy options under the different scenarios. Mme. Dicko drafted an initial scenario analysis, which was subsequently revised based on comments received from PROMISAM II and OMA and submitted to the CSA.
3. **Marketing studies:** In partnership with the CSA and the Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER – Mali's national agricultural research institute), PROMISAM II has started two major studies on cereals marketing in Mali. The purpose of these studies is two-fold. First, they will provide an improved empirical basis for designing cereals marketing policies in Mali. Second, since they will be carried out jointly with economists from the CSA and its affiliated organizations, they provide a form of in-service training for these economists in applied research and policy analysis, which contributes to the project's goal of strengthening the CSA's capacity for such work. During this reporting period, two studies were launched or expanded:
 - a. The first round of a major study of farmers' grain production and marketing strategies in three regions of the country (Koutiala, Tominian, and Macina) was undertaken in collaboration with IER. This study, which is jointly financed by PROMISAM II and a grant to MSU from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, aims at updating information from the

1980s (when the last comprehensive studies of this type were done in Mali) on farmers' marketing and household food security strategies. The study, which will involve four rounds of surveys of 450 households through June, 2010, began in May in the Koutiala zone in May and was launched in the other two zones in June. By the end of August, the first round of data collection was completed and data were being entered and cleaned. MSU data management specialist Margaret Beaver traveled to Mali in August to work with the PROMISAM and IER team in designing improved data entry and cleaning procedures and training the team in their use.

- b. Since early April 2009, PROMISAM II has hosted a guest graduate student, Nadège Mbomi, from the Institut des Régions Chaudes in Montpellier, France, whose dissertation topic analyzes the performance and impact of CSA's cereals banks. In August, she began her field research, which she is conducting jointly with CSA economists Tagalifi Maiga and Boh Koné. The study will thus contribute to a better understanding of how the cereal banks affect market performance in selected rural areas and provide hands-on practice in policy analysis for the CSA economists.

4. **Training of CSA and CSA-affiliated staff in analytic and data management techniques**

- a. Mme. Dicko Bassa Diané (the head of the CSA's Département Promotion des Échanges) and Mr. Boh Koné (the economist at the PRMC—one of the two economists in the CSA system) participated in the June 17-18 methodological workshop on price transmission and calculation of import and export parity prices that MSU organized in Bamako under our Syngenta Foundation project. Mme Dicko and Mr. Koné are now also part of the network of national researchers (from Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger) who attended the workshop and are carrying out price analysis studies, and hence they will be seeing/reviewing those studies and "learning while doing" food policy analysis.
- b. The training requested by CSA and its associated services (*services rattachés*) began during this quarter with a training session for OMA enumerators on use of new programmable mobile phones for market data collection and transmission. (This involves techniques developed under MSU's Hewlett Foundation funding.) The first session of this training, for enumerators from northern and eastern Mali, took place on August 10-14 in Mopti for the enumerators from the Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao regions. A second training session for the OMA enumerators from other regions was scheduled for September 4-8 in Segou.
- c. On the MSU campus, John Staatz worked with a Hubert Humphrey Fellow from Haiti, Jean Claude Cenatus, to prepare a first draft of training materials in French on food policy analysis for use in training sessions with the CSA staff. These materials will be finalized by the end of

October for use in the CSA training activities planned for the next reporting period.

5. Provision of computer equipment to the CSA and affiliated services and the subsequent theft of some of it

During the first two quarters of the project, PROMISAM II carried out a study of the computer and related equipment needs of the CSA and three of its affiliated services: the market information system (OMA), the early warning system (SAP), and the Technical Committee for the Coordination of Food Security Policies. In response to the identified needs, the project acquired the needed equipment, and on June 18, in a ceremony at the CSA attended by representatives of USAID and by the Food Security Commissioner, the equipment was officially turned over to the CSA. The equipment included 22 desktop and 37 notebook computers, 10 printers, and assorted other equipment (see Annex 1 for a complete list). Malian press and television covered the ceremony.

Just one month after the ceremony, on July 19, the CSA reported the theft of 18 of the notebook computers and one multifunctional printer from a room in the CSA headquarters where the equipment had been stored. The Malian police have undertaken an investigation (which has been covered extensively by the Malian press), but by the end of August, there had been no arrests and none of the stolen equipment had been recovered. The Commissioner has written both to USAID/Mali and to the Presidency reporting on efforts to identify those responsible and to recover the equipment.

Objective 2: Helping develop methods for monitoring the implementation of local food security plans

The development of tools to monitor the implementation of the commune-level food security plans will be a joint activity between PROMISAM II, the USAID/Mali-funded PGP2 (Shared Governance Program) and the new Peace Corps/Mali Food Security Program. MSU/PROMISAM II team will work with the PGP2 team to train local officials and affiliated NGOs and Peace Corps volunteers in monitoring the implementation of the local plans using a set of tools and associated materials developed by PROMISAM II. Once the plans have been tested and refined by the PROMISAM II team in an initial set of 30 communes, PGP2 will extend the techniques to the all 80 communes where PGP2 plans to work.

Starting in June, the PROMISAM II team began meeting with the new PGP2 team and Peace Corps to develop the approach and identify the communes to carry out the activity, assuring that some of the communes chosen had Peace Corps volunteers present so that they could participate in the effort. A list of 30 communes in Gao, Tomboctou, Mopti, Kayes, Sikasso, Segou, and Koulikoro regions were selected in for the initial work (see Annex 2). Twenty of the 30 communes are among the 166 communes classified by the

CSA as “most vulnerable.” The Millennium Village Program (MVP) is planning to use the 166 most vulnerable communes to scale up its pilot efforts in Mali. We anticipate that the MVP will base its food-security related initiatives in these communes on the local plans, as the MVP scale-up, known in Mali as the “Initiative 166”, is being implemented through the CSA. Thus, the monitoring methods developed by PROMISAM II, PGP2, and Peace Corps will likely also be incorporated into the Initiative 166.

The local-level training in monitoring methods is expected to begin in October.

Objective 3: Helping IPR/IFRA de Katibougou develop an academic and practical curriculum in Agricultural Economics and Food Policy Analysis

During this quarter, MSU/PROMISAM II worked closely with IPR/IFRA colleagues to advance their initiative to launch an undergraduate and a master’s program in agricultural economics and food policy. Actions included:

1. Working closely with an IPR-led team to finalize:
 - a. A study on the supply and demand for agricultural economists in Mali and its implications for the design of the IPR Program
 - b. A review of draft course programs developed by IPR to be proposed to the Program Validation workshop held at IPR in July.

Campus-based and Bamako-based staff provided extensive comments on the draft reports and Professor Eric Crawford worked with the committee during his June TDY to Mali.

2. In July, MSU faculty members Brent Ross and Scott Loveridge and graduate assistant Amadou Diallo traveled to Mali to help prepare and participate in the workshop held in Katibougou to discuss, amend, and validate the proposed program. They also participated in follow-up discussions and helped revise the proposed program so that it focuses more on key skills, orients it more towards the needs of the private sector, and delivers the material at roughly 2/3 the cost of the original design (see Annex 3 for details). Diallo also carried out further follow-up interviews with several agricultural and food processing firms in Bamako to assess their potential demand for graduates of the program.

Based on the progress made during the validation workshop and follow-on consultations, IPR/IFRA plans to admit its first class into the undergraduate major in October 2009.

Objective 4: Providing technical support to Mali’s NEPAD/CAADP team

The PROMISAM II team worked diligently during the June-August period to help assure that Mali would be on track to complete the design of its CAADP compact by late September or early October. MSU’s ability to provide this assistance was bolstered by the participation of Nango Dembélé, Boubacar Diallo, and John Staatz, via non-USAID/Mali funding, in a team providing technical assistance to ECOWAS in the preparation of the regional CAADP agricultural investment plan. Participation in the

regional effort allowed the PROMISAM II team to help the Malian team assure that its proposed national CAADP plan was consistent with the regional plan. In June, Dembélé and Staatz attended a Dakar workshop with the Mali team, called by ECOWAS and IFPRI, to help plan for the national roundtables later in the year, and Dembélé, Staatz, and Diallo served as reviewers of draft regional CAADP plans.

A particular concern during the quarter was the existence of two parallel processes going on in Mali to develop national agricultural investment plans, one under CAADP and the other under a donor-supported Sectoral Review of Rural Development (see PROMISAM's March-May 2009 quarterly report for details). In June, Nango Dembélé and John Staatz met with the Prime Minister and his main agricultural advisors to brief them on the two parallel processes and to urge that the two efforts be harmonized. This led subsequently to the first meeting, on August 12, 2009 at the CPS of the Ministry of Agriculture of a newly composed Malian CAADP technical committee (composed of people involved in both the prior CAADP efforts and the Sectoral Review). A new strict timetable for preparing the documents, organizing and holding the roundtable was agreed upon during the meeting. The first national CAADP retreat was held in Segou in August 14-19, which Nango Dembélé attended. He provided substantial review and feedback of the draft documents.

The Segou retreat/workshop produced first drafts of a consolidated diagnostic report (that merged elements of the Sectoral Review studies and an earlier CAADP/Mali diagnostic report), reviewed the first simulation study of the impact of different investments and agricultural growth rates on attaining the Millennium Development Goals, and drafted the brochures and briefs to be presented at the CAADP national roundtable.

MSU also worked with USAID/Mali to arrange an invitation for Fousseyni Mariko, the director of the Cellule de Planification et de Statistique (CPS) of Rural Development, and a key supervisor of both the CAADP and Sectoral Review processes, to attend a USAID/AFR meeting in early September in Addis Ababa to discuss the CAADP process. His participation helped to consolidate Mali's planning for the national compact.

Based on the substantial progress made during the quarter and in September, Mali is on track to hold the signing ceremony for its CAADP national compact on October 12-13, 2009.

TDYs during the Reporting Period

The following TDYs were carried out in support of the project objectives during the quarter. Many of the TDYs were co-financed by MSU's non-USAID/Mali food security projects in Mali, as the MSU staff frequently combined trips to work on more than one project.

Ramziath Adjao (Graduate Research Assistant)- June 4-27 (Trip funded 50% PROMISAM II; 50% Syngenta Foundation project): PROMISAM II component involved working with the MSU Bamako-based team (especially Boubacar Diallo) and the DAI

and Abt-Associates teams that were carrying out the EGAT/GFSR funded study on the rice value chain study for Mali.

Nango Dembele and John Staatz (MSU faculty members) – to Dakar on June 9-13 to participate, with the Mali CAADP team, in a regional meeting organized by ECOWAS and IFPRI to develop and adopt a new timetable of activities leading to the national CAADP roundtables.

John Staatz to Bamako, June 13-20, 2009. Trip co-financed by PROMISAM II (30%) and Syngenta Foundation project on West African agricultural integration (70%). PROMISAM activities included: (a) Working with MSU team that participated in the rice value-chain study; (b) consulting with IPR/IFRA colleagues on progress to date in preparing the July workshop on the agricultural economics program, (c) discussing with the CSA colleagues how to advance the proposed new national cereals marketing strategy, (d) working with CSA colleagues who participated in Syngenta-funded workshop on developing their skills in price analysis and calculation of import- and export-parity prices.

Eric Crawford (MSU faculty member)- June 20, 2009 through July 1, 2009 (1/3 PROMISAM; 2/3 Syngenta): PROMISAM activities included: (a) working with the MSU team that participated in the rice value-chain study; (b) consulting with IPR/IFRA colleagues on progress to date in preparing the planned July workshop on the agricultural economics program, (c) helping to define the Agricultural Economics training model needed by IPR. The French model emphasizes first a general training in agriculture and then amends to it some economics courses, while the US model puts more emphasis on economics, and then adds applications to agriculture. It was agreed that the model needed at IPR will be a hybrid of the two.

Amadou Diallo (MSU graduate research assistant) – July 11-August 25. Trip jointly financed by PROMISAM II (1/3) Syngenta-Foundation funded project on regional agricultural integration (1/3) and the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation funded study of cereals marketing in West Africa (1/3). PROMISAM II activities involved working with Mali-based staff, IPR/IFRA staff, and MSU faculty (Loveridge and Ross) in preparing for, carrying out and following up the IPR workshop to validate plans for the new Agricultural Economics program and in carrying out follow-up interviews with private-sector firms about their potential demands for graduates from the program. Mr. Diallo has an undergraduate degree in agribusiness management from MSU and hence is well placed to help evaluate content for similar courses in Mali.

Brent Ross (MSU faculty member) – July 16-23, 2009. Participated in the IPR/IFRA workshop to review its proposed degree programs in agricultural economics and follow-up discussions after the workshop with IPR/IFRA colleagues on next steps to implement the program, including strengthening of IPR/IFRA faculty skills in agricultural economics.

Scott Loveridge (MSU faculty member and director of the graduate program in agricultural, food and resource economics at MSU) - July 16, 2009 through July 28, 2009. Dr. Loveridge participated in the IPR/IFRA workshop to review the proposed degree programs in agricultural economics and worked with IPR/IFRA colleagues after the workshop to refine the design of the proposed program in light of comments received.

Margaret Beaver (MSU programmer and data management specialist) – August 9-19, 2009. Trip jointly financed (50/50) by PROMISAM II and the Gates-foundation funded project on cereals marketing. She worked with the project data management and research personnel to launch the data entry activities for the joint PROMISAM II-Gates foundation funded panel study of farmers' marketing strategies. Her activities included: a) training project staff and IER collaborators in the use of the data entry template she designed, b) making modifications to the template as needed during the initial data entry process and training project staff to make future modifications, c) developing initial data cleaning routines that can be implemented by the project staff; and d) training project staff in procedures for data management, data base documentation, and data cleaning used by MSU in similar types of surveys.

Nango Dembele to East Lansing for annual food security planning retreat – August 21-September 13 (including personal leave time). 39% of costs covered by PROMISAM II; the rest was covered by MSU food security projects funded by non- USAID sources. He participated in the MSU food security team retreat for annual program planning and also met with campus-based faculty and administrative staff to plan specific activities, administrative support and analyses for the West Africa work

Anticipated Focus of the Work for the Coming Quarter

We anticipate that during the coming quarter (September-November), the project will put a strong emphasis on (a) working with the Mali national CAADP team to complete the work leading up to the signature of the national compact in mid October; (b) working with IPR/IFRA to launch the new undergraduate program in agricultural economics and food policy; (c) launch the second round of the farm-level marketing study; (d) complete the study on the role of cereals banks role in the cereals markets and launch additional marketing studies with CSA staff; and (e) in partnership with PGP2 and Peace Corps, begin the training of local-level officials and NGOs on monitoring the implementation of the local-level food security plans. In addition, MSU, as a partner in the USAID/Senegal-funded Economic Growth Project, will be working to organize a border conference among key stakeholders involved in agricultural trade between the two countries, aimed at reducing non-tariff barriers. This work will be closely coordinated with the PROMISAM II work in order to exploit any possible synergies between the two projects.

**Annex 1 – List of computer and related equipment provided the CSA and its affiliated services
June 2009**

Type of Equipment	Organizations										TOTAL
	Food Security Commissariat (CSA)						Affiliated Agencies				
	DPPGA ^a	DPS ^b	DPE ^c	SAF ^d	SCI ^e	PNSA ^f	TELE ^g	SAP ^h	OMA ⁱ	ST/CTCPSA ^j	
Desktop computer	2		3	2			1		12	2	22
Laptop computer	3	1		1	2	1	1	2	25	1	37
Color printer	1	1	1							2	5
Multifunctional printer				2	1			2			5
USB Flash Drives	1	1	1			1					4
Programmable cell phones									10		10
Video projector						1					1

^a Département Production, Prévention et Gestion des Crises Alimentaires

^b Département Planification et Suivi

^c Département Promotion des Echanges (DPE)

^d Service Administratif et Financier

^e Service de Communication et de l'Information

^f Programme National de Sécurité Alimentaire

^g Programme Téléfood

^h Système d'Alerte Précoce

ⁱ Observatoire du Marché Agricole

^j Secrétariat Technique du Comité Technique de Coordination des Politiques de Sécurité Alimentaire

**Annex 2 – List of Communes Selected Jointly with PGP2 and Peace Corps Mali for
Development and Testing of System for Monitoring the Implementation of Local
Food Security Plans**

N°	REGION	CERCLE	COMMUNE
1	Gao	Gao	Gabéro
2	Gao	Gao	Soni-Aliber
3	Koulikoro	Kati	Bougoula
4	Koulikoro	Kati	Sanankoro-Djitoumou
5	Koulikoro	Kati	Diogare
6	Koulikoro	Dioila	Massigui
7	Koulikoro	Dioila	Benko
8	Mopti	Bandiagara	Dandoli
9	Mopti	Djenne	Madiama
10	Mopti	Mopti	Fatoma
11	Mopti	Mopti	Konna
12	Mopti	Mopti	Korombana
13	Ségou	Niono	Diabaly
14	Ségou	Niono	Dogofry
15	Ségou	Niono	Siribala
16	Ségou	Niono	Sirifila-Boundy
17	Ségou	Ségou	Boussin
18	Ségou	Ségou	Cinzana
19	Sikasso	Bougouni	Domba
20	Sikasso	Kadiolo	Loulouni
21	Sikasso	Koutiala	Zangasso
22	Sikasso	Sikasso	Farakala
23	Sikasso	Sikasso	Kléla
24	Tombouctou	Goundam	Tonka
25	Tombouctou	Tombouctou	Bourem-inaly
26	Kayes	Diéma	Bema
27	Kayes	Diéma	Gomitradougou
28	Kayes	Nioro	Troungoumbé
29	Kayes	Yélimané	Kremis
30	Kayes	Kita	Djidian

Annex 3
Michigan State University
Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics
PROMISAM II:
Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de Recherche Applique de
Katibougou
Technical Assistance Trip Report

Workshop on Proposed Agricultural Economics Degree Program and Follow Up

July 2009

Michigan State University Dept Agricultural Food and Resource Economics Team members:

1. Scott Loveridge, professor
2. Brent Ross, professor
3. Amadou Diallo, MS student

Prior to the workshop, the team met with Mssrs. Coulibaly, Kouyate, and Diarra of IPR (the team organizing the workshop) to review the agenda and to become oriented to the process for degree approval in Mali. We made some suggestions to improve group process during the workshop.

The workshop was well attended, drawing roughly forty participants from peer disciplines at Katibougou, various ministries, NGOs, and the private sector. Normally one might expect a decline in attendance for day two of a workshop like this, but any absences on day two were imperceptible. Participants engaged in debate, sometimes heated, about various aspects of the program, but it was clear by the end of the workshop that everyone fully supported the proposal to move forward with both License and Master's levels degrees in agricultural economics. Several faculty from other disciplines noted that attention to business and economics is the missing link in helping them make their projects more feasible. (The workshop summary is attached).

Following the workshop, the team met again with the proposal authors. Taking into account feedback from the workshop and also our own experiences in managing a large and highly ranked department of agricultural economics, we proposed increasing the number of core classes and reducing the number of specializations from three to two. By also combining certain course topics we were able to reduce the number of proposed classes from 38 to 25. The new plan will provide a very solid foundation for work either in the private sector or the public/NGO sector, but importantly, will reduce the costs of offering the degree by roughly one-third. A more efficient program has additional benefits in that it will help free up faculty time to develop contacts with employers that should lead to internship opportunities, thesis topics, and of course employment for IPR graduates. Through interaction with employers, faculty will be able to refine the curriculum to meet needs of Malian enterprises, public and private.

The balance of the visit was devoted to meetings with large scale food and agriculture enterprises. While the managers of these enterprises in general confirmed the findings of the workshop, through dialog with the managers about various expansion constraints they face, a pattern arose. Some good news is that our interviewees were generally experiencing growth in sales, indicating a robust market for their products. Substantial opportunities for import substitution may exist—all enterprises we interviewed are importing substantial proportions of inputs that are technically feasible to produce locally. Without further study, it is not possible to know whether they are economically feasible. There are problems obtaining sufficient inputs from small holders. The team therefore is recommending that management of cooperatives be given more attention as the curriculum is further refined. Effective cooperatives can help reduce agro-enterprise costs in obtaining inputs in the value chain. Overall, interviews with the firms revealed great interest in more interaction with IPR and from the discussion of their operations, it would appear that most of them are growing and could use staff with the kinds of skills an agricultural economics program could develop.

The team's next steps include:

1. Sending the project's IT support to IPR to determine exact nature of slow internet connectivity at the IPR library.
2. Further development of course outlines in anticipation of successful efforts by Malian counterparts in winning Ministry approval of the new degrees.