



AGRIBUSINESS AND TRADE PROMOTION (USAID ATP)

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In collaboration with:
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**WORKSHOP REPORT: PROMOTING ACCESS
TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
MARKETS FOR AFRICA'S AGRICULTURAL
COMMODITIES
USAID AGRIBUSINESS AND TRADE PROMOTION
(ATP) PROJECT**

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(ATP) PROJECT**

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the United States Government

CONTENTS

Contents	iii
Acronyms	v
1. Introduction	1
2. Workshop Proceedings	3
2.1 Preparatory Workshop.....	3
2.2 Roundtable on Promoting Access to Regional and International Markets for Africa’s Agricultural Commodities	5
2.3 Review Session	6
2.3.1 Main Outcomes of the Roundtable	7
2.3.2 Formulation of Short-Term Action Plans	7
2.3.2.1 The Cereals Value Chains (Maize, Millet—Sorghum, and Rice).....	7
2.3.2.2 The Onion Value Chain.....	7
2.3.2.3 The Livestock and Meat Value Chain.....	8
2.3.2.4 The Poultry Value Chain.....	8
2.3.3 Evaluation of Logistic and Organizational Issues	8
Annex I: List of Participants	11

ACRONYMS

AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
ATP	Agribusiness and Trade Promotion
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
CSO	Civil society organization
CTA	<i>Le Centre technique de coopération agricole et rurale</i> (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation)
E-ATP	Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWAP	ECOWAS Agricultural Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ETLS	ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FDA	Foundation for Democracy in Africa
FO	Farmer organization
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
SPS	Sanitary and phytosanitary
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. INTRODUCTION

The Agribusiness and Trade Promotion (ATP) and Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion (E-ATP) project aims at increasing the value and volume of intra-regional agricultural trade in support of the target of six percent annual agricultural growth set by the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of the African Union. The project contributes to the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agricultural policy (ECOWAP) and its regional joint programs. The project is focused on six value chains (maize, onion–shallot, livestock–meat, millet–sorghum, rice, and poultry) along the transport corridors linking production areas to consumer markets in West Africa. By facilitating the linkage of surplus food production areas with deficit production areas, the project contributes to food security in West Africa.

As part of its contribution to establishing an environment conducive to trade, since 2008 the project has supported the education of value chain actors about the ECOWAS trade liberalization scheme (ETLS) trade rules. This support has led to the formulation and implementation of advocacy plans by regional value chains partner organizations.

As part of the Fifth African Agriculture Science Week program and Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) General Assembly, the Foundation for Democracy in Africa (FDA), and FARA invited the collaboration of ATP/E-ATP project in mobilizing West African civil society organizations (CSOs) and farmers organizations (FOs) for a roundtable on Promoting Access to Regional and International Markets for Africa's Agricultural Commodities. In collaboration with partners such as the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (*Le Centre technique de coopération agricole et rurale*, or CTA), the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and FDA, FARA has been engaged in organizing a series of policy dialogue workshops across the continent to enhance understanding of critical agricultural policy and trade issues in Africa, and to devise effective ways of addressing these policy challenges. Given the objective of the proposed roundtable and the profile of the intended participants, ATP/E-ATP considered it a good opportunity to pursue several project activities including enhancing participants' understanding of agricultural trade policies, strengthening their capacity at advocacy, and enabling them to carry advocacy campaigns to a new set of policymakers.

In order to enable key West African agribusiness stakeholders to participate in the event, the project sponsored 22 representatives of the six value chains drawn from six countries in its geographical area of intervention. The project developed a strategy to mobilize the representatives and prepare them for effective participation in the roundtable. The project set up a team led by Raphael Vogelsperger, Deputy Chief of Party and comprising of Frank Ofei, Senior Policy Advisor; Suzanne Ngo-Eyok and Jules Sombie, Institutional Capacity Building Specialists. The team was provided technical support by the value chain leaders.

The project team conducted a one-day preparatory workshop on trade policy barriers and advocacy techniques to be employed during the roundtable. It also facilitated effective participation of the representatives in the various sessions of the roundtable. Following the workshop, the project organized a review session to enable the representatives to assess the outcome of the roundtable and plan necessary follow-up actions. The list of participants mobilized by the project to represent the value chains in the roundtable is attached as Annex I to this report.

2. WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

The events were held in Ouagadougou. The preparatory workshop took place on July 19, the roundtable on July 20, and the review session on July 21.

2.1 PREPARATORY WORKSHOP

The preparatory working session was held at the ATP/E-ATP office in Ouagadougou. The workshop aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- Stimulate dialogue among stakeholders on key trade policy issues
- Identify and agree on policy options to respond to critical intra-regional trade issues
- Build broad-based support for alternative regional agricultural trade policies that will bridge the gap between agricultural trade policies and actual practices
- Clarify the added value of regional approaches and how these link up with national initiatives and policies
- Disseminate outcomes to a wide range of stakeholders in order to support national and regional policy-making processes, including CSO involvement in those processes
- Ensure the visibility of the regional network of professionals and their advocacy plans
- Meet other institutions/organizations and contacts to expand the group of potential allies for the advocacy plans of the value chains
- Expand and strengthen the regional network of professional associations
- Advocate for pragmatic agricultural trade policies that promote and facilitate access to regional and international markets, taking into account the needs of smallholder agricultural producers

The session commenced with self-introduction by both the representatives of the value chains and the project team members. It was evident that the representatives were not only high executives of their respective associations but also seasoned business-persons in their own right. They were in a good position to speak on behalf of the associations.

A presentation of the roundtable was made to acquaint the value chain representatives with the theme, objectives and structure of the roundtable, as well as the nature of the audience they would be interacting with. The short discussion that followed the presentation clarified some points that had been raised.

The value chain representatives were then introduced to the findings of the study undertaken by the project on agricultural trade policy barriers. The representatives were invited to contribute their everyday business experience to complement the presentation and identify with the regional policy-compliance issues raised. The policy issues related to duties and various taxes that continue to be

imposed on agricultural products, and numerous non-tariff barriers like seasonal restrictions on cereal exports, prior authorization of livestock export, issuance of export permits, demand for certificates of origin, lack of mutual recognition of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) certificates across national borders, and harassment and extortion at borders and along the trade routes.

Against the background of their individual and corporate experiences of the regional trading environment, the focus that the project's study had put on the trade policy constraints, and the profile of the prospective roundtable participants, the workshop encouraged the value chain representatives to spell out their expectations of the roundtable. The representatives indicated that their interactive session with an audience of senior officials and policy-makers should lead to such achievements as:

- Effective presentation of their concerns to policy makers and advancing their advocacy plans
- Having significant influence on policy change
- Reaching an audience wide enough to raise awareness on policy constraints affecting agricultural trade in the West African region
- Raising their organizations' profile on the African civil society scene and exploiting networking opportunities
- Meeting and initiating collaboration with potential financial and technical partners

The last substantive item dealt with at the preparatory workshop related to the formulation of messages that outline the position taken by the private sector operators on some priority policy issues, and developing strategies to be adopted during the different segments of the roundtable in order to pass their messages along and defend their positions. This segment of the workshop was conducted in working groups to encourage in-depth discussion and close interaction. Issues covered in the group messages that were adopted portrayed a pre-occupation with building and maintaining relations between private and public sector operators, among the value chain associations themselves, and with development partners for technical and financial support. The messages dealt with other issues such as:

- Ensuring full involvement of CSOs in policy-making
- Creating trust and confidence between private and public sector operators
- Promoting CSO representativeness
- Establishing and sustaining free flow of information
- Institutionalizing consultative systems
- Strengthening operational capacities of CSOs
- Operating a monitoring and evaluation system

After reaching agreement on the messages, the representatives developed strategies for delivery of their messages at the roundtable.

2.2 ROUNDTABLE ON PROMOTING ACCESS TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS FOR AFRICA'S AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa led the organization of the roundtable for CSOs and FOs on July 20 at the Ouagadougou 2000 Conference Center. The roundtable started with a formal opening ceremony consisting of statements by a high-level panel composed as follows:

- Fred Oladeinde, President, FDA
- Monty Jones, Executive Director, FARA
- Raphael Vogelsperger, Deputy Chief of Party, ATP/E-ATP Project
- Jean Martin Kambire, Advisor to Burkina Faso Minister of Agriculture
- Hon. Kwesi Ahwoi, Ghana Deputy Minister of Agriculture
- Julie Howard, Executive Director, Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa

In their statements, the speakers addressed several important issues regarding measures being taken at national and regional levels toward the development of agriculture in fields of research, production, storage, processing, distribution and marketing, and financing. There was particular emphasis on the need for making more effort at promoting access to regional and international markets for Africa's agricultural commodities. The speakers indicated that institutions and resources already exist to achieve this objective and urged that the participants put particular attention on how to create additional avenues and also maximize opportunities offered in relation to such issues as:

- Working with CSOs and FOs;
- Enhancing the institutional capacity of CSOs and FOs and promoting collaboration among them
- Improving access to regional and international markets for members of CSOs and FOs

During the question-and-answer session that followed the statements, participants raised several issues regarding West Africa agricultural commodities trade, particularly relating to the numerous impediments still being encountered despite the ECOWAS protocols on free movement of persons and goods. The participants offered many pertinent suggestions, such as:

- The need to comply with SPS standards to enhance the promotion of trade in agricultural products
- Enhanced access to domestic and regional markets through the improvement of regional transport and telecommunications infrastructures
- Business-friendly legislation
- Checking unfair competition from imports of subsidized agricultural commodities and products from developed countries

- The need to add value to primary agricultural products and to reduce post-harvest losses, and learning from the success of the other countries on this issue
- Direct allocation of a portion of donor funds to CSOs and FOs for capacity building

After the question and answer session, the following thematic presentations were made:

- “Key Messages and Recommendations from the East and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa Regional Policy Dialogue Workshops on Promoting Access to Regional and International Markets for Agricultural Commodities in Africa” by Dr. Emmanuel Tambi, Director NSF 3, FARA
- “Profile and Activity Programs of USAID Agribusiness and Trade Promotion and Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion Project” by Frank Ofei, Policy Advisor
- “US–Africa Trade Performance under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)” by Fred Oladeinde. Mr. Oladeinde also requested that participants complete a survey to assist the reform work of the Secretariat in aligning AGOA with CAADP goals and objectives
- “Application of Agricultural Trade Policies at Country Level-Burkina Faso” by Dr. Jean Martin Kambire, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture

The presentations gave rise to several questions on policy issues from the participants. There were immediate responses from the respective presenters, and it was also urged that the issues should be pursued further during the working sessions. During the working session that ensued, two groups were formed and examined the questions:

- What are the most appropriate strategies for engaging the CSOs and private sector in evidence-based policy-making processes?
- How can the capacities of CSOs and the private sector be strengthened to promote access to markets?

The representatives of the value chains took advantage of this particular discussion forum to introduce and elaborate on a number of key messages and recommendations aimed at addressing issues affecting trade within their respective value chains.

During a brief closing ceremony, Mr. Oladeinde summarized the day’s activities and thanked all the CSOs, FOs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and sponsors for their various contributions to the success of the roundtable.

2.3 REVIEW SESSION

The post-roundtable review session was held on July 21 at the ATP/E-ATP office. The objective of the session was to give the value chain representatives the opportunity to reflect on their participation and assess their achievements in the roundtable, and identify next steps for capitalizing on the experience to improve the trade business environment in the region.

2.3.1 MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE ROUNDTABLE

Generally, the participants indicated that they had been able to present and discuss their concerns with policy-makers and high-ranking officials. They listed some of the key outcomes as:

- Meeting and interacting with executive members of other institutions
- Obtaining information about other organizations with which business relations could be developed by the value chain associations and their members
- Disseminating materials about their value chain organizations
- Engaging policy-makers in trade policy dialogue
- Establishing contact with veteran policy-makers (former ministers)
- Expressing their points of view on critical value chain issues to an appropriate audience
- Getting the value chain recommendations included in the FARA/FDA report for distribution to a much wider audience;
- Gaining greater exposure for their organizations
- Learning about the agricultural trade environment and relevant organizations
- Learning about new technologies (onion seeds)
- Learning about the AGOA initiative for promoting North–South trade
- Appreciating the importance of good preparation

2.3.2 FORMULATION OF SHORT-TERM ACTION PLANS

Building on the above positive appreciation of the outcome of the roundtable, the participants were assisted to formulate value chain-specific follow-up action plans, as indicated below.

2.3.2.1 THE CEREALS VALUE CHAINS (MAIZE, MILLET—SORGHUM, AND RICE)

Short-term activity (before end December 2010)

- Formulation of a basic document on tariff and non-tariff barriers affecting intra-regional trade in cereals, based on the findings of the project study. The document is to be distributed widely among cereal value chain actors for the formulation of advocacy messages.
- Organization of a series of national workshops to develop various activity programs (identification and planning of advocacy events, and strengthening of the cereal professional network)

2.3.2.2 THE ONION VALUE CHAIN

September

- Training in advocacy techniques
- Formulation of onion advocacy plan

October–December

- Advocacy campaign for elimination of road harassment

2.3.2.3 THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT VALUE CHAIN

September

- Press release on COFENABVI participation in the FARA round table
- Printing of branding material and advocacy documents for wide dissemination

October–December

- Study on the financing of a guarantee fund

2.3.2.4 THE POULTRY VALUE CHAIN

September

- Formulation of capacity-building plan

October–November

- Regional workshop to raise awareness on bio-security, and political advancement of the poultry sector
- Formulation of poultry advocacy plan

2.3.3 EVALUATION OF LOGISTIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

The FARA/FDA roundtable was only one of the many events marking the celebration of the Fifth African Agriculture Science Week and FARA General Assembly, which was held alongside a major African meeting at the Ouagadougou 2000 Conference Complex. This gave rise to a number of difficulties or limitations that the value chain representatives were invited to comment upon and make suggestions for the future. The participants pointed out the following:

- Organizational deficiencies at the roundtable venue, and poor management of the event
- Insufficient time allocation, particularly for the question and answer session
- Not enough information released before the event
- Language problem (particularly with respect to translation of documents into English)
- No opportunity to review the strategy developed
- All expected stakeholders not being present, particularly institutional allies and public

officials, and disappearance of some key participants (minister and officials of FARA)

- Inadequate mastery by the facilitator—the subject did not appear to be of prime interest to FARA and the other organizations

ANNEX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

N°	Last name	First name	Organization		Email	Telephone
			Acronym	Full name		
1	Legba /Housounou	Valérie	GEA BENIN	Groupement des Exploitants Agricoles / Point focal		
2	Ala	Tidjani Aboubacar	FENABEV	Fédération Nationale Filière Bétail / Viande du BF		
3	Azomahou	Camille	UOFA	Union des Organisations de la Filière Avicole		
4	Gbenou	Pascal	CCRB	Cadre de Concertation des Riziculteurs du Benin		
5	Sanou	Soumaïla	CIC-B	Comité Interprofessionnel des filières Céréales et niébé du Burkina Faso/ Point focal		
6	Salia	Amaria Issoufou	J.EXPERT	Jeunesse Expert International		
7	Tapsoba	Abdoulaye	RVCC	Réseau de veille sur la commercialisation des céréales/Point focal		
8	Ouedraogo	Salam	ASPMY	Association Professionnelle des Maraîchers du Yatenga		
9	Sawadogo	Timbila Thomas	FEBEVIB/ COFENABVI	Fédération Nationale Filière Bétail/Viande du Bénin		
10	Sekongo/Coulibaly	Jeanne	UCOVISA	Union des Coopératives du Vivrier des savanes / Point focal		
11	Traore	Drissa Sakoulba	COYEBO	Coopérative COYEBO		
12	Kalou Lou Djenan	Marie Epse Djèbi Néné	Cocooignon/ ORO RCI	Observatoire Régional de l'Oignon Côte d'Ivoire		
13	Boni	Roger Felix N'Cho	FENACOBVCI	Fédération Nationale des Coopératives Bétail Viande de Cote d'Ivoire		
14	Kadri	Nassirou	APFOG	Apex Farmers Organization of Ghana / Point focal		
15	Issah	Mumuni	-	Progressive Ghana Onion Cooperative		

16	Cisse	Mamadou	CNOP	Conseil National des Organisations Paysannes du Mali / Point focal		
17	Sissouma	Abdoulaye	FASO JIGI/ PACCEM	FASO JIGI/Projet d'Appui à la Commercialisation des Céréales au Mali		
18	Tembely	Boureima	ULPTE	Union Locale des Producteurs et Transformateurs d'Échalotes de Bandiagara		
19	Barbier	René Alphonse	FEBEVIM	Fédération Nationale Filière Bétail Viande du Mali		+
20	Boly	Faliry	-	Plateforme des organisation des producteurs du riz du Mali		
21	Tokpa Yao	André	CPC-Togo	Centrale des Producteurs de Céréales du Togo / Point focal		
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