

ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY IN THE ACP COUNTRIES:

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE AGRICULTURAL MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEM (OMA) OF MALI

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Plan of Presentation:

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2. The Malian MIS, from 1989 to 1998
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Why Build an MIS?

- To make the market transparent
 - Improvement of the effectiveness of the market (better arbitrage)
 - Equal access to all of the new opportunities offered by a liberalized market
- To better inform policy makers for a better management of food security

The Malian MIS of 1989-1998

- The MIS was created in 1989
 - Centralized system, entirely financed by the donors
 - In the Office of the Agricultural Products of Mali (OPAM)

The Malian MIS of 1989-1998

- Use of OPAM's data transmission tools (Radio-phones—RAC)
 - Delays and errors in the transmission of the data
 - Frequent difficulties of hearing the messages
 - Difficulties of instantaneous verification
 - Weekly broadcasts of market news reports in French on national Radio/TV (ORTM)

The OMA since 1998

- Restructured and decentralized in 1998, with USAID/Mali support, to:
 - Make it more dynamic, effective and financed from local resources
 - Connect It to other MIS in West Africa
- Need for a structure that could ensure:
 - Reliability of information
 - Timeliness in diffusion
 - Taking into account the specific information needs of different localities

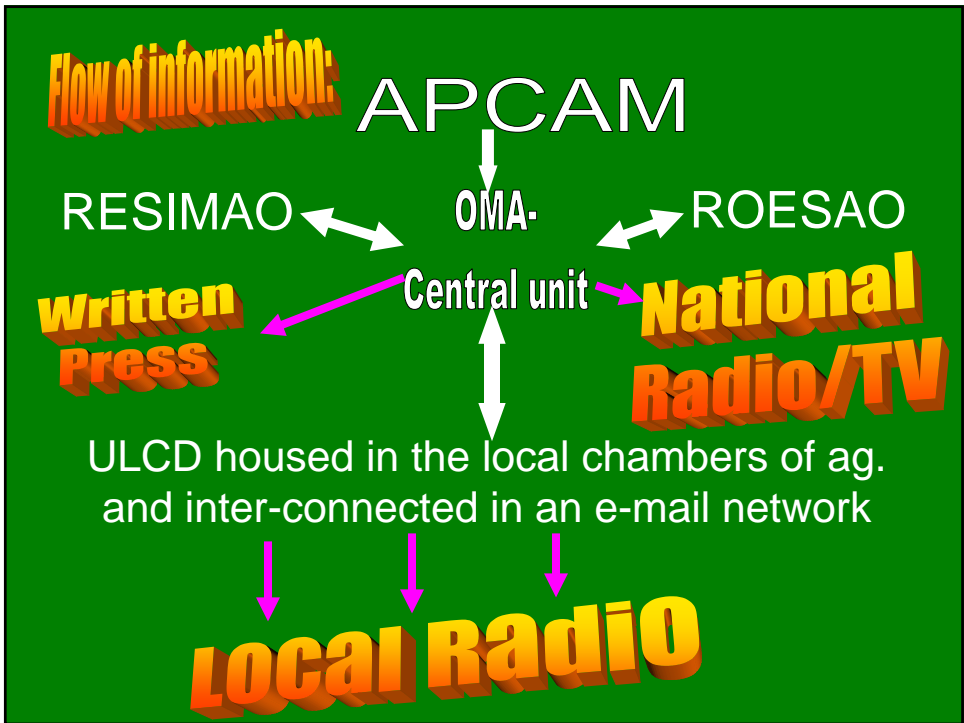
Current Structure

Decentralized network for collection and diffusion of data

- **Data Collection**
 - 25 ULCD inter-connected in networks, allowing an exchange of information in real time

Current Structure

- **Information Diffusion**
 - Each ULCD linked to at least one rural radio station (64 broadcasts per week in local languages)
 - Information diffusion by the OMA's central unit via national Radio/TV and newspapers
 - Linked in a network with other MIS in the ECOWAS zone
 - Access to information on neighboring markets through RESIMAO and ROESAO
 - Widespread use of the Internet in exchanging of information



Role of Rural Radio (20 in Total) in the Market Information System

- Essential tool to communicate with a largely illiterate rural population
- Linked with the Chamber of Agriculture (APCAM) through contracts for broadcasting the programs aimed at the rural population (extension, awareness campaigns,...)
- OMA has broadcast contracts with 20 radio stations
- Staff training by PASIDMA on agricultural marketing techniques

Indicators of Success

- A farmer-owned MIS (OMA)
- Operation covered by local resources
- Reduction in operating expenses of 32% since the restructuring
- Considerable increase in timeliness

Indicators of Success

- Reduction in transmission and transcription errors
- Weekly broadcasts of market information in local languages on 20 private rural radio stations
- Coverage, in addition to cereals, of fruits, vegetables and the livestock
- Thanks to the creation of the West African MIS and agribusiness/traders networks, information is now available to the Malian private sector on business opportunities elsewhere in West Africa

Factors Contributing to Success

- Orientation towards the real needs for the customers (“mutual listening”), thus creating political support for the MIS:
 - Support of the state and foreign funding agencies
 - Support of the private sector
 - Financially sustainable system
- Decentralization of the system
- Sufficient and sustained external support for:
 - Creation of technical expertise
 - Adequate equipment
- Innovative institutional evolution

Today, Malians have access to timely, precise and reliable market information for policy decisions and commercial trade



Advantages of the New System

- Farmers
 - Increased bargaining power (increase from 65% to 82% in the farmers' share of the retail price of rice; for millet, the increase was from 33% to 66%)
 - Information on new markets

Advantages of the New System

- Traders
 - Facilitated new entrants into the trade
 - Better market integration
 - Reduced transaction costs in trade
 - Geographically widened market
 - +60,000 tons of millet exports to Niger in 1999
 - Opening of the Guinean livestock market to Malian exporters
 - Facilitated spatial and temporal arbitrage

Advantages of the New System

- Consumers
 - in Bamako: Significant reduction of the price differentials between markets (20-30%)
 - Lower transaction costs (less negotiation)

Advantages of the New System

- Policy Makers (Mali & neighboring countries)
 - Avoiding bad policies
 - A better understanding of the reasons why prices rose in recent years (market integration)
 - Evaluating the impact of natural disasters (e.g., the 2004 locust crisis)
 - Contributing to good management of food aid (case of 1991)
 - Facilitating regional integration (for example, livestock exports to Guinea)

Conclusion

An MIS that has :

- a capable network of data collection and transmission, and
- a well-adapted structure for diffusion and outreach (including rural radio)

improves both the availability and access to foodstuffs, two key pillars of food security

Thank you very much!

