

November 14, 2004 (Version 5)

CIPE Workshop on Developing Guidelines for Building Sustainable Market Information Systems in Africa with Strong Public-Private Partnerships

**Hotel Avenida, Sala Incomati
Maputo, November 15-16, 2004**

Context

A steady flow of information between public and private sector actors is an essential component in building efficient market-oriented economies and democratic governance. As African countries have undertaken reforms aimed at increasing the role of the private sector in agricultural marketing, the need for improved market information for both the private and public sectors has become increasingly apparent. Private-sector actors cannot make good business decisions without adequate information, and the lack of understanding of market processes and conditions often leads public officials to make decisions that hinder private-sector development. Furthermore, given the “public good” nature of market information, the private sector does not always have the incentive to invest adequately in providing such information. Yet public-sector structures often act bureaucratically, are slow to adapt, and do not always allocate the resources nor create the incentives for their staff to act in ways that provide the type of timely, client-oriented information critical for the private sector. Therefore, a key component of agricultural policy reform programs is designing improved market information services (MIS) that respond to the needs farmers, traders, policy makers, and consumers, in order to promote more efficient and equitable resource allocation in a market-oriented economy. A crucial question is how to structure public-private partnerships within those MIS to make them successful.

Mali, Mozambique, and Zambia each have tried to address these issues in the development of their market information systems. This workshop, sponsored by the Center for International Private Enterprise, with technical support from Michigan State University, will provide a forum to share experiences on the challenges and opportunities on building sustainable, client-oriented Market Information Systems.

Objectives

As part of a broader project supported by CIPE, key participants in the development of the Malian MIS, the *Observatoire du Marché Agricole* (OMA, or Agricultural Market Watch), have developed draft guidelines, based on the Malian experience, for the development of a sustainable, client-oriented MIS. The workshop will provide a forum for the participants to review and discuss these draft guidelines and to see how they should be modified or amended based on the experiences of developing MIS in Mozambique and Zambia. The meeting will also serve as a forum for participants from the various countries to directly exchange ideas and experience that will contribute to improving their existing systems.

The workshop will build upon an initial visit of MIS experts from Mozambique and Zambia to Mali in 2002, when they attended the West African Agricultural Outlook Conference.

Specific objectives of the workshop include:

- 1) Analyze the experiences of Mali, Zambia and Mozambique in building a financially sustainable, client-oriented agricultural market information system that contributes effectively to agribusiness growth and food security. The aim will be to identify critical steps necessary for success and use that knowledge to develop a set of design guidelines for market information services that can be used in other countries.
- 2) Discuss role of complementary MIS actions beyond market reporting (price and quantities) that are crucial to increasing the payoff to investment in market information services:
 - a) Marketing Extension – Helping clients use market information more effectively for business and policy decisions
 - b) Market and marketing policy analysis. Understanding why markets behave the way they do and the likely impact of different government actions on them.
- 3) Analyze design issues that will influence the potential for future evolution of MIS in Africa. For example:
 - a) How should the mix of public- and private-sector involvement in the delivery of market information services evolve over time?
 - i) How does an MIS become responsive to the private sector while not being “captured” by a few large business interests to the detriment of the broader public interest?
 - (1) How does one design incentives within an MIS to be responsive to private-sector needs while still responding to important public-sector needs for market information (e.g., to monitor policy and emergency responses)?
 - (2) What structures (advisory boards, etc.) are useful in assuring an appropriate public-private balance (and who decides what is “appropriate”?)
 - ii) How should MIS go about setting priorities about which potential clients to serve as the market evolves?
 - b) What are the challenges in developing a customer orientation and an entrepreneurial spirit within a publicly supported MIS?
 - c) Should current MIS be privatized? What are the tradeoffs?
 - d) What role can private-sector business associations (e.g., traders’ networks) play in strengthening market information services?
 - e) What are the challenges in developing regional networks of MIS to deal with regional trade within Africa (e.g., the West African experience of developing a West African market information network)? How do/should such regional MIS networks relate to regional private-sector (e.g., trader) associations?
 - f) What key lessons come from the three countries’ experiences and the recent CTA Seminar on the potential roles of new information technologies in the development of MIS?
- 4) Can the potential be improved for public-sector supported MIS’s to help support (facilitate) the development of agricultural exchanges, including electronic exchanges? Can a MIS play a short-run role of creating specific opportunities for private sector exchanges? What are the benefits and costs of such actions to facilitate the development of private market exchanges and trading firms? What is the experience around the industrial and developing world in the relationships between public MIS’s and the emergence/regulation of private or semi-private commodity exchanges?

Expected Outcome

The expected outcome of the workshop is a set of revised guidelines for the development of sustainable, client-oriented MIS. The guidelines will focus on developing appropriate and dynamic public-private partnerships to improve agricultural market information services. The guidelines and short papers will be developed based on the workshops deliberations and circulated widely in Africa.

A second important outcome of the conference will be reinforced links between the Mozambican, Zambian, and Malian MIS, which should lead to an ongoing exchange of experiences and lessons learned, which will strengthen each system.

Organization and Draft Schedule

All sessions will be in plenary (given the small size of the group).

Need to designate chairpersons/moderators and reporters for each session. Also need an overall reporter team (maybe use same group for whole workshop).

Tentative Schedule-Monday, Nov. 15, 2004

9:00 -10:00	Opening
9:00 - 9:15	Welcoming remarks Pedro Arlindo and Anabela Mabote SIMA-Mozambique
9:15 - 9:30	Workshop objectives Cynthia Donovan
9:30 - 10:00	Discussion and adoption of draft agenda, selection of moderators and rapporteurs
10:00 - 10:30	Key messages from the CTA seminar “Role of Information Tools in Food and Nutrition Security in ACP Countries” – Eric Tollens or André Vugay abagabo
10:30 - 11:00	A Global Perspective: Historical Development of MIS in Latin America – Michael Weber, MSU
11:00 - 11:15	Coffee/Tea Break
11:15 - 13:00	Presentation and discussion of national experiences
11:15 - 12:00	Mozambique experience
11:15 - 11:40	Presentation – Pedro Arlindo/Anabela Mabote
11:40 - 12:00	Discussion
12:00 - 12:30	Zambia presentations: AMIC - James Mwandwe, “Agricultural Marketing Information System in Zambia: Current Status and Future Directions” Lemmy Sikombe, District Marketing Information System: Experiences from Central Province, Zambia
12:30 - 13:00	Discussion
13:00 - 14:30	Lunch

14:30 - 15:30	Malian Experience: Salif Diarra , OMA
15:30 - 16:00	Presentation of Draft Guidelines/Lessons Learned from Malian Experience Abdramane Traoré
16:00 - 17:30	Discussion of the Malian experience and of the draft guidelines A. Do they capture/reflect the experiences of Mozambique and Zambia? B. Are there important omissions? C. Suggestions of other issues/modifications
17:30	End of 1 st day's discussion
Evening	Evening: Dinner as a group to be arranged (Costa Sol or some such place) and continuation of informal discussions

Tuesday, Nov. 16

8:30 - 9:00	Summary of key points from previous day's discussion (Rapporteurs)
9:00 - 11:00	Discussion of how to build effective public-private MIS partnerships in a rapidly evolving market and technological environment: (See discussion points in item 2-4 of workshop objectives) A. Role of MIS in marketing extension and market analysis B. Design Issues that will influence potential future evolution of MIS in Africa (see item 3 in workshop objectives for details) C. Relationship between MIS and Exchanges. D. Developing MIS strategic plans and "selling" those plans to various stakeholders, including donors and domestic constituencies.
11:00 - 12:00	Break; time for rapporteurs to develop draft report/conclusion
12:00 - 13:30	Lunch
Afternoon	Visit to SIMA and selected courtesy visits-consider arranging a quick visit to a cash and carry wholesaler (broad-line food wholesaler) in Maputo
16:30	Return to hotel
17:00 - 17:30	Closing session; discussion and approval of workshop report