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QUARTERLY REPORT

JANUARY 1 – MARCH 31, 2007

“Strengthened Networks of Regional Market Information Systems and Traders’ Organizations in West Africa (MISTOWA)”

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABIP	Agribusiness Information Point
ADP	Agricultural Development Project
APLS	Association des Acheteurs de Produits Locaux
BUSAC	Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund
CTA	Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DMDA	Dawanau Market Development Association
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FACIA	Federation of African Agricultural Input Trade Associations
FECAIDA	Federal Capital Agricultural Inputs Dealers' Association
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GAABIC	Ghana Agricultural Associations Business Information Center
GAPTO	Ghana Agricultural Products and Traders Organization
GHATAG	Ghana Haulage and Transport Owners Association
GIS	Geographic Information System
GSB	Ghana Standards Board
GSM	Global System for Mobile Communications
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Center
IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Center
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
ISCOS	Institut Syndical pour la Coopération au Développement
MIR	Marketing Inputs Regionally
MIS	Market Information Systems
MISTOWA	Strengthened Networks of Market Information Systems and Traders' Organizations in West Africa
NAMIN	National Agricultural Marketing Information Network (Nigeria)
NAMIS	Nigeria Agri Marketing Information Service
OMA	Observatoire des Marchés Agricoles (Observatory of Agriculture Markets)
OPAM	Office des Produits Agricoles du Mali
PCU	Project Coordinating Unit
PIR	Project Intermediate Result
PO	Producer Organization
RATES	Regional Trade Expansion Support Program
RECAO	Réseau des Chambres d'Agriculture de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Network of Chambers of Agriculture of West Africa)
ReSAAKS	Regional Strategy Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems
RESIMAO	Réseau des Systèmes d'Information de Marché d'Afrique de l'Ouest (Network of Market Information Systems of West Africa)
ROESAO	Réseau des Opérateurs Economiques du Secteur Agro-Alimentaire (Network of Economic Operators in the Food Industry)

ROPPA	Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Network of Farmers' Organizations and Agricultural Producers of West Africa)
SMS	Short Messaging System
SOCAMAD	Société des Coopératives Agricoles et des Produits de Débe
TA	Traders' Association
TO	Trade Organization
URCEP	Union Régionale des Commerçants Exportateurs de Pommes de Terre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WABNET	West African Businesswomen Network
WACSOFF	West African Civil Society Forum
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WAG	The West African Agricultural Trade portal (Short name for the MISTOWA Resource Center)
WARP	West African Regional Program
WATH	West African Trade Hub
ZADI	German Center for Documentation and Information in Agriculture

Strengthened Networks of Regional Market Information Systems and Traders' Organizations in West Africa (MISTOWA)






Second Quarterly Report (January – March 2007)

Executive Summary

USAID/WA awarded IFDC a \$14.4 million cooperative agreement in August 2004 to implement a four-year “Regional Market Information Systems and Traders’ Organizations in West Africa (MISTOWA)” project. Agriterra from the Netherlands contributed an additional \$1.4m to support the producers’ component of the project. MISTOWA aims to increase regional agricultural trade and food security by improving and linking the existing regional efforts to generate, disseminate, and make commercial use of market information. The project focuses on removing key obstacles to trade in West Africa including: i) lack of access to timely information on prices and market opportunities ii) inadequate business skills of producers and traders to respond to production and market opportunities and iii) unfavorable trading environment, including tariff and non-tariff barriers (e.g., harassments at the national borders).

In a letter dated July 28, 2006, IFDC-MISTOWA was notified of USAID/WA's decision to adjust funding levels of its programs to respond to new priorities and opportunities across Africa. The original end-of-project date was advanced from September 30, 2008 to September 30, 2007.

Major events of the quarter:

-  **TradeNet launched:** BusyLab, an Accra-based software development business, MISTOWA and Ghana Agricultural Producers and Traders’ Organizations (GAPTO) successfully launched “TradeNet.biz” in January. TradeNet is a market information service that targets the agricultural sector across Africa and allows producers, exporters and traders to sign up for SMS alerts for specific commodities.
-  **MISTOWA facilitated attendance at trade fairs to make deals:** As part of the program for face-to-face events for people to meet and make trade deals, the Lagos State Catfish and Allied Farmers’ Association (LASCAFA) organized an International Fish Fair in Lagos to which participants from Ghana, Togo and Benin were sponsored to attend. MISTOWA also facilitated the participation of ROPPA representatives from seven countries to the 8th International Agricultural Fair (FIARA) in Dakar, Senegal. Demonstrations on how to register to receive alerts and to compare prices were made at the MISTOWA stand.
-  **A high-level delegation visited DMDA:** A delegation from USAID/Washington led by Susan Thompson, Senior Policy Advisor and including Brinton Bohling and other officials from USAID Nigeria visited the DMDA Agribusiness Information Point in Kano, Nigeria. The purpose of the visit was to acquaint themselves with how the information point is serving the information needs of the association members and how it fits into the EGAT activities in Nigeria.
-  **ABIP managers trained:** 200 members of trader and producer associations responsible for providing information at the ABIPs in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo received hands-on training on the use of TradeNet and the cellular phone to upload information onto the platform and to register users.
-  **ROESAO opened Ivory Coast chapter:** The regional trade association (ROESAO), inaugurated the Ivory Coast chapter in Abidjan in March. The Prime Minister, Charles Konan Banny was the guest of honor and the function was attended by approximately 3000 members. Exhibitions of products were mounted.

Successes from the interventions during the quarter include:

- **TradeNet highlighted in the International Press:** Since its launch in January, Tradenet continues to be highlighted in the international press and is lauded as a new and innovative way for producers and traders to market goods. TradeNet was recently featured in the Economist, on BBC News, and in Le Figaro (France), as well as by several international and pan-african news agencies and organizations such as AllAfrica, GhanaWeb, MobileAfrica, FAO (Bridging the Rural Digital Divide), the World Bank, The Development Gateway portal and Berkeley University.
- **Advocacy victories in Benin and Senegal:** The advocacy training provided to leaders of producer and trader associations by the project has begun bearing fruits. In Benin, the president of ASSIHOC (onion importers association) reviewed the legislation relative to imports of onion and advocated for and got the authorities to remove the 18% Value Added Tax on onion. In Senegal, FEITLS advocated for a seat on the Inter-ministerial committee to implement new decisions that led to increased sales and profit during the 2006/07 *Eid-al-Kabir* festival in Senegal.
- **Increased intra-regional trade:** Intra-regional trade monitored for 15 trade associations was estimated at \$25.55 million for the second quarter of FY 2007. In addition, \$2.98 m trade in cattle, sheep and goats; cowpea, maize, millet, onion, rice, sesame and shea butter were reported by individual traders or their associations in 22 transactions.

Manager's Report

Major activities accomplished in the second quarter of FY 07 are briefly highlighted in this report by PIR. The attached appendices include the performance indicator and country summary tables and trip reports.

PIR 1: Improved market information generation and dissemination

1. TradeNet launched

- TradeNet (www.tradenet.biz) was officially launched by BusyLab on January 30th, 2007, the day prior to the public launch at the Agbogbloshie market by the Ghana Agricultural Producers and Traders (GAPTO). The official launch was the occasion for the software developers to explain the unique features of TradeNet to the target audience (the press, NGOs, and development partners). The public launch was a community event, attended by more than 800 traders, farmers, processors and government officials. Colorful stands were mounted to show off the market's varied commodities including yam, onions, tomatoes, beans, plantains and meat. The Guest of honor was the Hon Clement Eledi, Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture while other dignitaries included Hon Kwadzo Afram Asiedu, Deputy Minister for Trade, Industry, Private Sector Development and Presidential Special Initiatives, Dr. Jeff Cochrane of the USAID/WA mission, Chief and Elders of the Traditional area and traders from Nigeria who came to give testimonies. Mr Haruna Agesheka, General Secretary of GAPTO demonstrated how users can get information such as prices and offers from their cellular phones.
- ✚ Since its launch, the Tradenet story has been carried in the local as well as in the international press. The authors describe it as a new and innovative way for producers and traders to market goods. TradeNet was recently featured in the Economist, on BBC and the international press.

2. TradeNet development and use statistics

- **TradeNet usage statistics:** Statistics for West Africa during the quarter are summarized below and compared with last quarter's performance. In general, there is an increase in the indicators over the last quarter and remarkable increases are evident in the areas of cellular phone use to request prices or to post offers.

Table 1: Selected Statistics on the Trade Portal Usage

	Months	January	February	March	Jan- Mar 07 Total	Oct- Dec 06 Total
Statistics tracked						
No of visits		12,049	14,420	19,690	46,259	12,117
No of pages viewed		62,656	155,940	365,093	583,689	108,375
No. of New registrations		71	59	91	221	113
No. of SMS price requests		102	244	451	797	470
No. of buy/sell offers submitted		38	63	32	133	77
Buy/Sell Offers submitted (tons)		17,947	12,063	16,418	46,428	46,457
Buy/Sell Offers submitted (heads)		200	350	195	745	545
Prices uploaded		7,696	7,213	6,595	21,504	23,325
News stories uploaded		34	20	43	97	75

PIR 2: Improved trader and producer skills

1. Training of ABIP information officers and managers

- ✚ The second in a series of three 3-day agribusiness training workshops was conducted for ABIP managers in Togo, Cote D'ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Benin, Nigeria and Senegal. In all 200 managers participated in the trainings in these countries. The training was modified to put more emphasis on hands-on-training on how to register new users, sign them up for alerts and to use the cellular phone to upload price and offers to the TradeNet platform. The purpose is to equip them to proactively register more users and increase trade.

2. TradeNet promotion in partnership with rural radios

- ✚ MISTOWA is partnering with rural radios for mass promotion of the TradeNet site. In Ivory Coast, the Community radio "Radio Lepin" at Alepe carried a live interview with project staff to explain how TradeNet works and how people can sign up for alerts. The interview was broadcast live to some 1 m listeners in the Abidjan catchment area. In Burkina Faso, Afrique Verte (a project partner) has signed standing contracts with the community radios to do a weekly special on TradeNet. In Mali, broadcasts were aired through local radio stations in Mopti and Bougouni to inform the public about ABIP and Tradenet services. Similar contacts are being made in Ghana and in Togo and will be extended to the other countries.

3. Assisting Partners in Identifying Ongoing, Post-MISTOWA, Support

- ✚ MISTOWA has worked with several partners in Ghana to identify various sources of continued assistance to support promising MIS and advocacy activities after MISTOWA project funding ends in September 2007. For example, key personnel in Ghana have collaborated with GAABIC, GAPTO, SRID and others to develop proposals targeting BUSAC, SPEED and the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs. These proposals are at various stages of preparation and review.

PIR 3: Improved West African trade environment

1. Trade fairs

- As part of the program for face-to-face events for people to meet and make trade deals MISTOWA facilitated the attendance to a number of trade fairs during the quarter. They include:

- an International Fish Fair in Lagos organized by the Lagos State Catfish and Allied Farmers' Association (LASCAFA). The fair was held from 1st to 3rd March and was attended by corporate organizations, feed millers, equipment suppliers, association members, government parastatals, fish traders and processors. About 30 organizations exhibited their produce at the fair and several contacts were made. Participants from Ghana, Togo and Benin were sponsored to attend.
- The 8th International Agricultural Fair (FIARA) in Senegal. MISTOWA sponsored ROPPA representatives from seven countries and individual traders from Niger. The Nigeria delegation took a special breed of 25 cattle, 88 sheep and 12 goats to the fair and was able to sell them for a total of \$22,780. New orders were taken for 38 animals for future delivery. A MISTOWA stand was mounted at the trade fair to demonstrate the use of TradeNet.

2. Reported trade

- During the quarter, fourteen trade associations from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal recorded intra-regional trade involving 104,986 tons of foodcrops and agricultural inputs, and 29,510 heads of cattle, all valued at \$25,552,228.
- In addition, other groups made \$2,981,293 in trade deals involving cattle, cowpea, maize, millet, onion, rice, sesame and shea butter.

3. Advocacy work

- Trade associations won advocacy victories in Benin and in Senegal. In Benin, the President of ASSIAHOC (onion importers association on Cotonou) successfully advocated for the suppression of the value added tax on onion (see success story). In Senegal, FEITLS (livestock traders' association) played an active role in an inter-ministerial committee set up to advocate for and implement favorable decisions for a successful Tabaski festival (see case study).

Project Management: Grants, M & E and Public Relations Activities

1. Grant administration

- Grant reports were received from grantees and the Grants manager is compiling the situation for a final report.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation

Chris Amedo and Kofi Debrah continue to analyze M & E data from the trade associations selected to report imports and exports of selected commodities. They also analyze the volume and value of reported trade deals by commodity and by country of origin and destination. Cumulative statistics as of March 31 are:

- \$418,200,594 worth of cross border trade involving cattle, rice, tomatoes, cassava, fertilizer, onion, shea nut/butter and maize recorded by 15 trade associations since October 2004. Total volume is 974,571 tons and 531,591 heads and
- \$43,880,511 worth of trade deals reported voluntarily by traders. These involve trade in cattle, cowpea, maize, millet, onion, rice, sesame and shea butter .

3. Visitors

Visitors to the the Nigerian office during this quarter included:

- Susan Thompson, Senior Policy Advisor and including Brinton Bohling and other officials from USAID Nigeria visited the DMDA

4. Newsletters

- A January-March issue of the MISTOWA newsletter was published

5. Public Relations and Promotional Activities

- The English and French versions of the MISTOWA/TradeNet promotional materials were published and used for training and launching activities in the different countries.

6. Reports

Reports produced during this quarter include:

- January, February and March activity reports submitted by MISTOWA coordinators from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.
- Trip reports

Annex 1: Performance Indicator Table

Indicator	Weight	Baseline Year	Baseline Year Data	Progress Direction + or -	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Qtr 1 Actual	FY 2007 Qtr 2 Actual	FY 2007 Qtr 3 Actual	FY 2007 Qtr 4 Actual	FY 2007 Actual
<i>a) Annual value of trade of selected products from 15 trade associations supported by MISTOWA increased (\$)</i>	5	2005	120,000,000	+	18,000,000	34,080,409	25,552,228			
<i>b) Annual value of trade of selected products reported as deals by project beneficiaries increased (\$)</i>	5	2005	185,221,152	+	35,000,000	15,040,882	2,981,293			
Total quarterly value (a + b) of selected products increased (\$)	5	2005	305,221,152	+	53,000,000	49,121,291	28,533,521			
Number of countries having compatible MIS	2	2004	0	+	10	10	10			
Number of users of MIS	3	2005	103,303	+	134,000	33,295	43,400			
Number of hits on partner websites	3	2005	117,085	+	2,488	190,582	1,442,163			
Number of individuals trained	4	2004	46	+	600	336	200			
Analyses produced for regional organizations	1	2005	0	+	1	0	0			

Annex 2: Additional Performance Indicator Table 2 (FY 07)

Indicator	Weight	Baseline Year	Baseline Year Data	Progress Direction + or -	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Qtr 1 Actual	FY 2007 Qtr 2 Actual	FY 2007 Qtr 3 Actual	FY 2007 Qtr 4 Actual
<i>Number of ABIPs that Break even by Sept 2007</i>	1	2006	0	+	20	2	2		
<i>Number of ABIPs that cover 30% of their costs by Sept 2007</i>	1	2006	0	+	50	0	1		
Number of PO and TO members trained at the ABIPs by Managers by Sept 2007	1	2006	120	+	1000	260	200		

Annex 3: Country Summary Table

FY 2007	Country	Qtr	Training (Men, Women)		Event Participation (Men, Women)		Fund Expenditure	Other
			Men	Women	Men	Women		
1	Benin	1	16	1	18	10	40,500	
		2	14	2	16	11	38,638	Includes participation at the fish fair in Nigeria
		3						
		4						
2	Burkina Faso	1	34	19	8	12	35,700	
		2	22	8	6	5	30,300	Includes participation of ROPPA at FIARA/Dakar
		3						
		4						
8	Gambia	1	2	0	0	0	3,600	
		2	0	0	1	0	1500	Includes participation of ROPPA at FIARA/Dakar
		3						
		4						
9	Ghana	1	35	15			42,160	
		2	14	6	5	3	37,300	Includes participation at the Fish Fair in Nigeria
		3						
		4						
10	Guinea	1	0	0	1	1	7500	Participation at FIARA
		2						
		3						
		4						
12	Ivory Coast	1	19	1	0	0	2,500	
		2	11	8			17,500	ANOPACI Training
		3						
		4						
13	Liberia	1	0	0	0	0	0	
		2	0	0	0	0	0	
		3						
		4						
14	Mali	1	14	5	22	25	17,800	
		2	15	4	1	1	12,500	Participation in FIARA
		3						
		4						
16	Niger	1	13	1	6	8	14,000	
		2	12	4	3	1	18,500	FIARA & Tradenet trng
		3						
		4						
17	Nigeria	1	21	8	0	0	3,300	
		2	12	8	30	40	35600	Fish Fair and ABIP trng

FY 2007	Country	Qtr	Training (Men, Women)		Event Participation (Men, Women)		Fund Expenditure	Other
			Men	Women	Men	Women		
19	Senegal	3						
		4						
		1	29	11	11	14	48,750	
		2	12	5	4	8	40,200	FIARA/ABIP trng
20	Sierra Leone	3						
		4						
		1	1	0	0	0	1,870	
		2	0	0	0	0	0	
21	Togo	3						
		4						
		1	11	5	26	35	15,100	
		2	12	4	2	1	12000	Fish Fair/PICA
	Total (2 nd quarter)		124	49	69	71	240,738	

Annex 4: Case Studies



CASE STUDY

Stakeholder partnership in *Eid-al-Kabir* festival preparation yields positive results

The Senegalese Prime Minister, Macky Sall presided over the inter-ministerial committee that worked with the livestock association in Senegal to ensure that Eid-al-Kabir 2006/07 was successful



Photo: Sadibou Gueye, MISTOWA/Senegal

Cattle came from neighboring countries and the regions of Senegal for the festival. They enjoy improved feeding, watering and health facilities put in place by the Eid-al-Kabir Inter-ministerial planning committee.

Challenge

Each year, *Eid-al-Kabir* or *Tabaski*, the most important Muslim holiday of the year, is celebrated with an abundance of sheep and other livestock for consumers in Senegal. In recent times, there has been difficulty getting the animals to Dakar's Terminal Market from the neighboring countries and other regions of Senegal. This situation has been attributed to the high cost of rail transport from Mali, insecurity along the trade routes into Dakar, high taxes and extortion of other fees from traders and inadequate feeding, watering and health facilities at the sale points. FEITLS, the 8,000-member federation of livestock producers and traders of Senegal knew that working with the various stakeholders from the public and private sector to remove the constraints would facilitate the inflow of livestock for the festival.

Initiative

The government of Senegal set up an inter-ministerial committee made up of the ministries of livestock, agriculture, local government and decentralization and of trade to implement decisions taken in 2006 to ensure the success of this year's market supply for the festival. FEITLS represented livestock producers and traders on the planning committee and ensured that the decisions which included an agreement with TRANSRAIL to reduce the freight cost by 50% on livestock from Mali, the provision of electricity, water, feed and health services at the points of sale, the suspension of import taxes and other fees, and improved security for livestock and people along the routes are all implemented. In anticipation of a large supply for the festival, FEITLS guaranteed a loan of \$2,000,000 to its members from the Regional Solidarity Bank (BRS) and also addressed the issues of road and rail transport.

Results

Compared with last year's *Tabaski* celebration, this year's was a great success. Last year, FEITLS supplied 38,435 animals estimated at \$3,766,630. This year, following the favorable conditions put in place for the celebration, a total of 650,000 animals estimated at \$66,955,000 were supplied of which FEITLS supplied 70%. According to Amadou Diallo of FEITLS, "the increase in sales at this year's festival is attributable not only to a better preparation and the implementation of the decisions by the inter-ministerial but also to the direct and proactive intervention of FEITLS".



SUCCESS STORY

Advocacy victory saves Benin's onion importers millions of dollars in VAT

Major advocacy victories begin with the simple actions. A thorough review of the relevant legislation was all it took the onion importers' association to have the value added tax removed, saving them millions of dollars.



Photo: Alain Soglo, MISTOWA Benin

Mr Lucien Guendehou, President of ASSIAHOC (Association of Onion Importers of Cotonou) and beneficiary of the MISTOWA advocacy training applied his skills to get the tax authorities in Benin remove the 18% Value Added Tax on onions

“the advocacy training showed me the way. I obtained and reviewed Law 2000-001 on fiscal taxes and saw possibilities for the removal of the VAT on onion imports” Lucien Guendehou

Participants of the onion forum held in Malanville, Benin in December 2005 expressed concern for the high taxes applied to onion imported from neighboring Niger. And when the representative of the Director General of Benin's Customs Department presented Legislation No. 2000-001 of 2 January 2000 relative to import taxes on unprocessed agricultural products, Mr Lucien Guendehou, President of ASSIAHOC (Association of Onion Importers of Cotonou) decided to advocate for the removal of the Value Added Tax (VAT) on onion. “The advocacy training showed me the way. I obtained and reviewed Law 2000-001 on fiscal taxes and saw possibilities for the removal of the VAT on onion imports” said Mr. Guendehou. According to him, maize, potatoes, fruits and vegetables, seed and root crops were all included in the list of items exonerated from VAT. Because onion was not explicitly cited and continued to attract 18% VAT, he wrote a letter to the Director General of the Customs Department, quoting the law and seeking exoneration on onion. With no response from the Director General, he sought audience with him and had a series of discussions on the necessity of including onion in the list. Mr Guendehou's arguments were compelling and led to the suppression of the 18% VAT on onion with immediate effect.

ASSIAHOC is one of the trade associations that benefited from the advocacy training facilitated by the Market Information for Traders' Organizations in West Africa (MISTOWA) project. They have also been trained in organizational management, technical and business skills and have participated in several face-to-face events organized by MISTOWA. ASSIAHOC is one of the 16 trade associations monitored, and provides cross-border trade statistics to the MISTOWA project. From January 2006 to March 2007, ASSIAHOC imported a total of 16,456 tons of onion worth \$7,722,376 on which they paid approximately \$1,390,000 in Value Added Taxes. With this advocacy victory, ASSIAHOC would be savings millions of dollars on their future imports that will hopefully be passed on to consumers.

Annex 5: Trip Reports

To: Central Files
From: Kofi Debrah
Subject: Report of a working trip to Ibadan and Lagos, Nigeria (Feb 3-10, 2007).
Date: February 9, 2007

Purpose of the trip:

- Presentation of MISTOWA experiences and lessons learned at a planning workshop entitled “Setting livestock productivity and marketing agenda in the three pilot-sites of the sub-Saharan Africa-Challenge Programme (SSA-CP)”
- Meeting with the Chairman of the Lagos Mile 12 Market to discuss the re-installation of the Lagos Mile 12 market ABIP
- Meeting with the Lagos Catfish Sellers Association (LACAFSA) to plan their International Fish Fair to be held in Lagos
- Other meetings

Major Conclusions

- There is a growing enthusiasm for the use of the TradeNet platform to provide access to real time market intelligence to producers and traders via radio, web and SMS.
- The Lagos Mile 12 Agribusiness Point (ABIP) will re-locate back into new and modern premises in the market (currently undergoing physical restructuring). The Chairman of the market has agreed to work with the ABIP to officially launch TradeNet and the 4 Nigerian ABIPs.
- LACAFSA will hold an international fish fair in Lagos, March 1-3 2007 and expect the participation of fish traders and farmers from Ghana, Togo and Benin
- WREN media from England will most likely air portions of my interview on soil fertility-market access linkages on BBC.

Itinerary

Feb 03 Accra – Lagos (Virgin Nigeria Airways)
Feb 04 Lagos – Ibadan (overland)
Feb 08 Ibadan – Lagos (overland)
Feb 10 Lagos – Accra (virgin Nigeria Airways)

Major persons contacted

- Participants at the ILRI planning workshop (Shirley Tarawali, Ade Freeman, Mohammad Jabbar, Acho Okike, Alastair Bradstock, Robert Abaidoo, Fred Ratunde, Joseph Rusike, B.D. Hulman and Moses Tenywa)
- The Chairman and Key Officers of the Lagos Mile 12 Market Association
- Members of the Lagos Catfish Farmers Association
- Dr. Olajide Basorun, Programme Manager, Lagos State Agricultural Development Authority
- Henk Knipscheer, Senior Managing Director, Global Operations, Winrock International, Washington DC.
- Dr. Kehinde Makinde, MARKETS project
- Alhaji Amed Iman, DMDA, Kano
- Henry Ekpiken and Kola Kuku, MISTOWA (Abuja and Lagos, respectively)
- Georgina Smith, Journalist, WREN Media, England

Description of activities

ILRI planning meeting

The meeting was held at IITA and its objective was to identify livestock productivity and marketing priorities to fit into sub-Saharan Africa-Challenge Programme (SSA-CP)'s pilot learning sites (PLS). The sites are Kaduna-Katsina-Maradi (KKM) in West Africa, Lake Kivu (LK) in central Africa and Zimbabwe-Malawi-Mozambique (ZMM). Joseph Rusike represented FARA and presented a paper outlining the progress in the implementation of the SSA-CP. Pilot learning site representatives (Abaidoo for KKM, Moses Tenywa for LK and Joseph Rusike for ZMM) presented priority activities and progress in implementing the SSA-CP. ILRI presentations by Ade Freeman and Shirley Tarawali were designed to guide the elaboration of a livestock agenda. I presented the MISTOWA project's design and progress, and described its collaboration with BusyLab to provide TradeNet services. I emphasized MISTOWA's role in building the capacities of producer and trader associations to access real time information on the web and cellular phones. Some of the participants had earlier read the related article in the *ECONOMIST* as well as others that came out after the launch in Accra. I had the opportunity to do live demonstrations of how they could get prices, offers to buy and sell and invited them to consult the website and register to receive information of their choice. They found the experience useful and would like to include the use of the platform and related training activities in their livestock and livestock products market components.

Meeting with the Authorities of the Lagos Mile 12 Market Association

The authorities of the Lagos Mile 12 market have embarked on physical demolition of the structures of the Lagos Mile 12 market and intend to finish by mid-March. On short notice all existing shops and stalls were to vacate the premises so new store spaces, roads, toilet and other modern facilities would be built and rented back to interested traders. The Lagos Mile 12 market ABIP was affected, so the equipment including the V-SAT MISTOWA supplied under the equipment grant was temporarily relocated to the premises of the Lagos State Agricultural Development Authority where the IFDC office is located. I went there in the company of Ahaji Imam (DMDA/Kano), Henry Ekpiken (MISTOWA/Abuja) and Kola Kuku (MISTOWA/Lagos) to assess the situation and see how best we could rent the offices back and re-install the ABIP. The association members have so far made contributions of approximately \$2000 including contributions of \$300 each from Alhaji Imam from DMDA/Kano and the Lagos Catfish Farmers Association. MISTOWA will complete the payment so they can secure the spaces before the deadline next week. The market authorities agreed to work with the Mile 12 ABIP for a big launching which would also be an occasion to launch the TradeNet and the other 3 ABIPs. This event will take place after the presidential elections in April.

Meeting with the Lagos Catfish Farmers Association

LACAFSA is one of the women-dominated associations that benefited from a MISTOWA competitive grant and a number of trainings. From the testimonies of how MISTOWA has helped build the capacities of members of their association, I concluded that LACAFSA has a big potential to improve the lives of their members. They agreed to provide materials for MISTOWA to do a "success story" on them. The meeting was for me to get up to speed on their activities and their plans for the International Fish Fair being planned for Lagos, March 1-3. About 14 members attended the meeting and I took advantage of the meeting to thank them for coming to the aid of the Lagos Mile 12 market ABIP by contributing to the office rental. I explained the developments of the trade portal and how more people are using the cellular phone to post offers and receive price information. I also described the "groups" feature where they can have a LACAFSA-customized website. They would like that fresh and smoked catfish information be carried on the platform (they are willing to supply related information). They would like to have further training in the use of the TradeNet and on advocacy. I promised we will discuss the inclusion of catfish on the platform as well as the creation of the website for them when I return to Accra. They want it done early enough so they can announce the International Fish fair. Earlier in the day, I was informed by Henk Knipsheer and Kehinde Makinde of the MARKETS project that they are complementing MISTOWA efforts by working with

LACAFSA to link them to sources of credit and to companies producing fish feed. After the meeting with LACAFSA, we paid a courtesy call to Dr. Olajide Basorun, Programme Manager of the Lagos State ADP who hosts MISTOWA in Lagos. I explained how MISTOWA is using the new ICT tools to collect and disseminate market information. He invited Kuku to make a presentation on the TradeNet portal and uses to his staff at the next planning meeting.

Interview granted to WREN Media

Georgina Smith, a reporter from WREN media, UK overheard me explaining our IFDC and MISTOWA work to Henk Knipscheer at the IITA Guest House. She got interested and invited me for an interview. I explained the work IFDC does (she was interested in the fertility of the soil) and its linkages with the output market. In the process, I gave her a live demonstration of how farmers are checking prices and posting offers to sell all over Africa. She will share the interview with BBC for a possible broadcast.

Staff Interactions

Henry Epkiken and Kola Kuku briefed me on their activities. In view of Blessing's resignation we discussed how best we can fill the gap and most effectively meet our objectives in Nigeria. In addition to contributing to the cost of replacing Blessing at the IFDC office in Abuja, we will use local consultants to help Henry carry out MISTOWA activities in Abuja and Kuku in Lagos. We will review Gafar's situation in Kano and offer him local consultancy for his support to DMDA in Kano. Kuku will continue to help LACAFSA to plan the Fish Fair and the re-location of the Mile 12 market.

Copies:

Rob Groot, Tom Crawford, John Allgood, Amit Roy, Dan Waterman, Van Campen, A. Maatman, A. Mando, MISTOWA staff, Jeremy Strauss.

To: Central Files
From: Kofi Debrah, Patrice Annequin, Emmanuel Alognikou, Ibrahim Toure and Ibrahim Kouyate
Subject: Report of a working trip to Abidjan and Alepe, Cote D'Ivoire (Feb 25 to March 2, 2007).
Date: March 3, 2007

Purpose of the trip:

- Courtesy visits to key MISTOWA/ANOPACI partners
- Targeted training on TradeNet use and ABIP management for Field Agents (Animateurs de PIV) for ANOPACI (a national producer organization and member of ROPPA)
- Meetings with Rural Radio programmers and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for partnership
- Discussions with MTN (Cellular phone company) to develop partnership with ANOPACI and TradeNet to promote dissemination of market information through the use of cellular phones.
- Launching of the Cote d'Ivoire chapter of ROESAO (ROESAO-Cote d'Ivoire)

Major Conclusions

- MTN will sign an agreement with ANOPACI to create awareness and promote the use of TradeNet information access through cellular phones
- There is a good possibility the FIRCA in Cote D'Ivoire will provide financial support to ANOPACI to lead the market information component of their programme.
- Radio Lepin in Alepe will participate in the awareness campaign and registration drive in Cote d'Ivoire. It is expected that similar community radios working with ANOPACI in the other PIVs will do the same.
- There is a good possibility the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Cote D' Ivoire will work with IFDC/MISTOWA to use European Union funds to reopen the "marche de gros" as an ABIP in Bouake.
- There will be further hands-on training for APIV and Rural Radio programme managers so they can embark on awareness and registration drive campaign

Itinerary

Feb 25 Accra – Abidjan (Emirates Airways)
March 02 Abidjan – Accra (Emirates Airways)

Major persons contacted

- ANOPACI: President Mathias Aka N'goan, Secretary General Dihyie Amoakon, Executive Secretary Seraphin Biatchon, Sylvain Kwao, Innocent Sindikubwabo, Francois Agnimou and 14 ANOPACI PIVs
- ANADER: Director General Guédé Béhinan, Daniel Glounaho, Director, Département de l'Appui aux Filières et aux Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles
- ROESAO : Mad. Rosalie Boti (President) and about 3000 members in attendance at the inauguration of ROESAO-CI under the patronage of Mr. Charles Konan Banny, Prime Minister
- *FIRCA: Mr. Jean Paul Lornng, Directeur Département Cultures Annuelles et Ressources Animales; Mr. Yao Leon Atsin, Directeur, Département Cultures Pérennes et Diversification; Mr. Benoit Behi, President Conseil d'Administration*
- Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie : Mr Nicolas Djibo, 1st Vice President
- MTN : Abdoukarim Ouatarra, Conseiller Commercial ; Mr. Ndiaye, Ag Commercial Director
- ANADER/Alepe: Kan Bernard Konan, Chef de zone;Moise-Yves Avit, Animateur APIV/Alepe
- Resource persons: Ms. Madioman Meite (OCPV) and Jean Claude Ehui.
- Radio Lepin, Alepe: Chef d'Antenne Maxine Olivier Yapo

Description of activities

We took advantage of the working visits to pay courtesy visits to key partners. The main objective was to discuss ways for mobilizing internal funding to continue technical assistance for our activities in Cote d'Ivoire after USAID funding ends in September 2007.

Courtesy Visits (ANOPACI, ANADER and FIRCA)

ANOPACI: Accompanied by Mr. Biatchon of ANOPACI, we met Mr. Mathias N' goan, President of ANOPACI's Board of Directors and Vice President of ROPPA. He is also the president of OCAB (Organisation Centrale des Producteurs et Exportateurs d'Ananas et de Bananes). Mr. Amoakon, Secretary General of ANOPACI was in attendance. They expressed satisfaction of collaboration between MISTOWA and ANOPACI and promised to mobilize internal funding for continuation. We discussed the possibility of an official launching of the ANOPACI ABIP about the same time of the ROPPA Annual Convention to be organized in Cote d'Ivoire later in the year. The same occasion could be used for a special ABIP manager and TradeNet training for information officers of the ROPPA platforms. This could be organized and conducted by ANOPACI with support from MISTOWA at a time most convenient for ANOPACI.

ANADER: This is the national extension service with a wide rural network. Almost all the 15 PIVs (Village Information Points) are located in the ANADER premises and they in turn provide market information for broadcast by radio. The Director General, Guédé Béhinan advised that we make efforts to involve existing structures e.g. ANADER in the planning and implementation of the project to ensure ownership and sustainability. We demonstrated how information from TradeNet could be obtained through the use of the cellular phone.

FIRCA: The Fonds Interprofessionnel pour la Recherche et le Conseil Agricole (FIRCA) is a private financial entity with capital generated by contributions by the agricultural professional organization members (www.firca.ci). Market information is a transversal theme running through the major programmes and ANOPACI is well placed to provide the service with technical assistance from MISTOWA and TradeNet. FIRCA invited ANOPACI to send a formal request in the form of "fiche de projet" for consideration.

Targeted training on TradeNet use and ABIP management for Field Agents (Animateurs de PIV) of ANOPACI

This is a follow-up training to an earlier one held for the PIV managers but this particular one was focused on the use of the TradeNet tools to prepare them for a mass campaign to get people to use it. The planning, logistics and part of the training was assured by ANOPACI's Chargé de Programmes (Innocent Sindikubwabo) who was earlier contracted by MISTOWA to train ABIP managers in Niger. Other resource persons were Patrice Annequin (MISTOWA Accra) and Ibrahim Kouyate (Mali). Market information agents from 14 PIVs were present and were joined by 2 information officers from OCPV (public sector MIS) and 1 ABIP manager from ROESAO-CI. This 3-day training focused mostly on the various aspects of the TradeNet and put a lot of emphasis on how to use and teach others to use TradeNet. There was on-line help directly from BusyLab in Accra through Skype chat to answer questions. This was very much appreciated and showed how they as potential trainers can obtain instant help during training sessions as needed.

Interviews with beneficiaries

On hearing that the MISTOWA team from Accra was in town, two women leaders and beneficiaries of ICT training provided with MISTOWA support, Mme Rosalie Anvo and Mme Rose Digra came to attest to the benefits they obtained from the project. We had a 20 minute interview (available on request) during which Mme Anvo, President of Coopérative des Vivriécultrices de Bédié (Coopérative Mbokawo) from Abengourou declared her revenues increased 2 or 3 times since using information from TradeNet. According to Mme Digra, Secretary General of "Cooperative Ajiri", our project initiated her to the computer she had never used before, but she has opened an email account which she opens 2 or 3 times a week anytime she comes to the ANOPACI office in Abidjan. This new tool has also helped her to buy better and to sell more.

Live radio programme to explain MISTOWA and TradeNet

We visited the PIV and the Community Radio at Alepe, situated at 80 km from Abidjan to see how the PIV works and how information is broadcast to the community using Radio Lepin. At the radio station we took advantage of the visit to explain how the MISTOWA project has equipped and strengthened the capacity of producers and traders to use the TradeNet platform to access real time market information and to post offers to sell and to buy. In order to inform the roughly 1,000,000 listeners of Radio Lepin about the new product, we were accorded a 20-minute live interview. The speakers were Mr. Biatchon (ANOPACI), Emmanuel Alognikou and Kofi Debrah (MISTOWA, Ghana) and Ibrahim Kouyate (MISTOWA Mali). The transcript of the interview is available at http://www.mistowa.org/files/ANOPACI_MISTOWA_Interview_Radio.mp3. The radio station and the PIV will serve as centers for registration of cellular phones for alerts and other information.

Meeting with MTN-CI

This is a follow-up visit to the one made by Patrice Annequin late September 2006. Our delegation made up of Seraphin Biatchon, ANOPACI, Patrice Annequin and Kofi Debrah (MISTOWA) had a series of discussions, mainly to discuss a draft MOU involving ANOPACI and MTN. There is a very high probability that a contract will be signed by the end of March. We learnt from MTN that they have embarked on a programme of targeting the agricultural sector to subscribe and use MTN on very favourable terms. They have so far registered close to 3,000,000 producers in the coffee, cocoa and food crop subsector.

Official opening of ROESAO-CI

Mr. Ibrahim Toure from MISTOWA Mali and Kofi Debrah participated in the official launching of ROESAO held at the Palais de la Culture at Trechville, Abidjan on March 1. The Prime Minister, His Excellency Charles Konan Banny was the guest of honour. About 3000 members including several commodity groups were in attendance. There were exhibits of commodities and speeches to mark the occasion. In his speech, Kofi explained the objectives of the project and the level of support received by ROESAO and more importantly to inform the audience about the availability of the Tradenet service. The Prime Minister in his speech paid homage to women traders for their hard work and deplored the attitude of the uniformed corps at the countries borders for harassing traders and especially women. The highlight of the event was the outdooring of the new executive.

Discussions with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Messrs Ibrahim Toure and Kofi Debrah paid a courtesy call to the 1st Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Mr. Nicolas Djibo. The discussions were on how the “marché de gros”, an EU-financed wholesale market in Bouake could be taken back from the “Force Nouvelle” into the private sector. After demonstrating the TradeNet capabilities and MISTOWA’s wish to use the market as an ABIP, Mr. Djibo suggested that a formal request be made by IFDC for him to follow up with the Minister of Interior. Mr. Toure has been given the responsibility to follow up, including a trip to Bouake to review the current situation.

Working meeting with ANOPACI

Emmanuel Alognikou took advantage of his presence in Abidjan to discuss the implementation of the equipment grant awarded to ANOPACI with François Agnimou who is the MIS technical contact of ANOPACI. In accordance with grant obligations as prescribed in the grant agreement and associated MOU, ANOPACI had submitted activity and financial reports covering the 1st semester. Discussions focused on the review of progress made so far, problems encountered as well future activities and budget. Since ANOPACI was preparing a request for 2nd and last grant installment, Emmanuel provided guidance on how they could adjust budget lines to meet grant management procedures while satisfying their current needs.

Copies:

Rob Groot, Tom Crawford, John Allgood, Amit Roy, Dan Waterman, Van Campen, A. Maatman, A. Mando, MISTOWA staff, Jeremy Strauss.

To: Central Files
From: Patrice Annequin
CC: Kofi Debrah, Rob Groot, John Allgood, Ian Gregory, Amit Roy
Subject: Report of trip to Nigeria, 26 to 31 March 2007
Date: 31 March 2007

Purpose of the trip

- Train ABIP (agri business information points) managers and MISTOWA staff in Nigeria on Tradenet.biz [Kaduna, 28-30 March]
- Assist NAMIN in preparing its negotiations with MTN Nigeria and national launching in Nigeria

Major Conclusions

- MISTOWA is seen by our partners as one of the most successful project implemented in Nigeria so far, and IFDC can count on all NAMIN members' full commitment to "tell their story" and support IFDC to seek for new funding in Nigeria.
- ABIP managers are quite well trained and aware of Tradenet uses and potentials. Successful training, with live demonstrations and uses of SMS alerts and prices/offers uploads. However, the number of ABIP is very small to actually match PO and TO needs across the country. Expanding the network of ABIP MISTOWA has initiated is critical for success and permanence.
- This can be achieved only if a transparent, medium-term and balanced deal is sealed between NAMIN and MTN Nigeria, as this is a prerequisite for revenue generation and promotion of the MIS service in the country. Therefore, it is vital that all interested parties, including IFDC/MISTOWA, IITA, NAMIS/PCU/FMARD, push for quick registration of NAMIN as a company, then ensure that NAMIN quickly recruits its secretary (with support from MISTOWA thru competitive grant) and assist them in their negotiations with MTN.
- Due to presidential elections in April, NAMIN registration and MTN deal, I recommend that the national launching of Tradenet/NAMIN service in Nigeria is programmed for June 2007.

Itinerary

March 26 Accra (08h20) – Abuja (13h00)
March 27 Abuja (16h00) – Kaduna (18h00) [by road]
March 30 Kaduna (16h00) – Abuja (18h30) [by road]
March 31 Abuja (11h10) – Accra (16h00)

Major persons contacted

- ABIP managers (see list of participants attached)
- Gabriel Afu (NAMIS/NAMIN), Paul Obasi (IITA/NAMIN)

Description of activities

Training for ABIP managers (Kaduna, 28-30 March)

- This training was a follow up of the 1st ABIP managers training conducted in November 2007 in Kaduna by Claudia LaLumia and MISTOWA staff in Nigeria. A special focus was given to the effective of Tradenet and SMS possibilities (2 days), with the third day reserved for refresher on ABIP management.
- All trainees have a fairly good knowledge of basic Tradenet use, from a user or a host point of view. They all easily understood the new features available (mypage, groups, publish). Every trainee created at least one "group" website for his own association or updated existing ones.
- The major outcome was certainly the use of mobile to upload prices and offers, and to receive prices and offers via sms alerts. The service was working extremely well, and all were amazed to receive offers on their mobile phones almost instantly after approval. This was a real eye-opener for them,

as they much better understand how Tradenet, NAMIN and ABIP can REALLY make a difference and bring market information to every mobile phone user in Nigeria (more than 20 millions subscribers so far).

- Interesting to note that Kola Kuku posted using SMS a real offer to sell catfish on behalf of LASCAFA, Lagos. After publishing this offer by SMS using Tradenet publish feature, he received in response 2 sms and 3 phone calls the same day from people interested in the deal.
- Yusufu (CRC Kaduna), Gabriel Afu (NAMIS) and Kola Kuku (MISTOWA) were excellent trainers for the business management session on Friday.

NAMIN

- I had a meeting with Gabriel Afu (NAMIS coordinator, NAMIN vice president); Paul Obasi (IITA), Henry Ekipken and Kola Kuku (MISTOWA) to have an update of the registration process of NAMIN as, and the preparation of the next steps of discussions and collaboration with MTN Nigeria.
- NAMIN registration is still ongoing, with the General Accountant of the FGN. NAMIN representatives are hopeful that this last step will be concluded in April 2007. The file is monitored by Richardson Ocheckuwu from IITA, Ibadan and a lawyer recruited for the circumstance. However, NAMIN and MISTOWA should put the necessary pressure to ensure that this will be effectively completed in April, because as long as NAMIN is not fully registered, no further negotiation and agreement can be signed with MTN, and NAMIN can not start the recruitment of its permanent secretary (a significant portion of the competitive grant awarded by MISTOWA to NAMIN being dedicated to support the salary and the operational costs of it).
- I brought some clarifications and ideas to NAMIN staff about technical and business issues and possibilities that can be proposed to MTN, based on current negotiations and proposals made by NANIM-like organizations with other GSM operators in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mali. A 3 page document was prepared and distributed to that respect. Among others, I stressed the need for a harmonized strategy across countries where MISTOWA and Tradenet operate, in order to increase our chance to actually conclude deals with MTN branches in at least 3 countries (Nigeria, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire) before the end of the project, and access to the MTN Foundation funds that can be a great source of technical and financial support for our partners in the near future.

Copies:

Dan Waterman

Scott Wallace

MISTOWA staff

To: Central Files
From: Claudia LaLumia, Business and Trade Advisor
Subject: Trip Report – Claudia LaLumia to Mali, March 19- April 7, 2007
Date: April 8, 2007

Purpose of the trip:

- Assist MISTOWA team (Kouyate, Toure, Abdoulaye N’Diaye- APCAM, Mr. Balo-Afrique Verte) throughout the PICA management training in Segou.
- Attend “fora” at CLIC in Mopti
- Visit other partnering CLICs in Kadiolo and Bougouni in preparation for their “fora”
- Visit other PICA partners: APLS, SOGEMAF
- Visit institutional partners to discuss collaboration (RECAO, APCAM, PCDA, Afriquelinks)
- Meeting with BNDA and Ecobank to discuss possibilities for collaboration using Tradenet to extend banking services to producers and traders associations. (Ecobank not possible)
- Meeting with USAID, Jean Harmon (courtesy and up-date on activities)
- Attend “bourse de cereale” organized conjointly by APCAM, Afrique Verte, Global 2000 and others to present Tradenet, collect offers, sign up new users, etc.
- Meet with and collect trade transaction proof from Issah Keita (visit AMEPROC PICA)
- Visit ROESAO headquarters’ office and CONOESAM head office (later to discuss recent workshop financed by MISTOWA and outcome)
- Meet with Sarah Gavian and Yves Duplessis to discuss MISTOWA/WACIP/1000+ collaboration/linkages

Itinerary

March 19	Accra-Abidjan-Bamako (by air)
March 20	Bamako
March 21-22	Bamako-Segou
March 23-25	Segou-Bamako
March 26	Bamako-Djenne
March 27	Djenne-Mopti-Sevare
March 28	Mopti-Sevare
March 29	Sevare-Sikasso
March 30	Sikasso-Bamako
March 31-April 1	Bamako
April 2-4	Bamako-Segou
April 5	Segou-Bamako
April 6	Bamako
April 7	Bamako-Abidjan-Accra

Major persons contacted

- PICA managers: Participants at the training. See training report and list of trainees.
- Sarah Gavian, WACIP and Yves Duplessis, 1000+
- Global 2000 – Soule Traore, National Coordinator
- APCAM – Fousseni Traore, Secretary General and Abdoulaye N’Diaye
- Afrique Verte – Yacouba Balo
- Afriquelinks – Animata Maiga, Coordinatrice, CLIC managers and community management committee members
- PCDA- Mr Timbo, Director and Syni Fofana, Responsable Secteur Prive et Commercialisation
- AMEPROC- Issah Keita
- BNDA – Jean Francois Hoarau, Directeur General Adjoint

- RECAO – Mr. Kassim Dembele, Coordinateur PRIECA/RECAO
- USAID – Jean Harmon, Mr Dembele, and another staff member

Major Conclusions

The PICA training

Logistics of the training were good. Decent connectivity at SOTELMA cyber in Segou. OMA was unfortunately not present as they had not attended the last training either. All other PICAs were represented. Kouyate, Mama Coulibaly and N'Diaye did a very good job on the Tradenet training part. All trainees were able to practice the various new functions and seemed fairly comfortable with them. The SMS function (price search and alerts) was only working for part of one morning so they did not get to practice this that much. Still some functions do not work (alerts) either due to Tradenet bugs or GSM provider problems. All managers seemed quite strong with respect to comprehension of tradenet. The ones that seem to actually use it most being AV in Segou and Kayes, AMEPROC, APCAM, APLS and SOGEMAF. CLICs understand the site and services but I did not get the feeling that they have started using it yet (they say the fora will aim to explain to PO/TOs the utility of Tradenet and new services it brings to the CLICs). The business management part of the training was basically two sessions (the business plan and financial management – income statement and cash flow statement example based on one of the CLIC's actual financial books). These were interesting but of less practical use since among all the PICAs only the CLICs are actually charging for services (AMEPROC just beginning to do so). The need to create network among the PICAs in Mali (as in other countries) is clear as there is very little communication between them (excepting perhaps among Afrique Verte PICAs).

Meeting with PCDA – Programme Competitive Diversification Agricoles

March 20 – Toure and I had a meeting with Dr. Timbo, Directeur PCDA and Seyni Fofana, Responsable Secteur Prive & Commercialisation to discuss possibilities for PCDA to continue/integrate some of MISTOWA activities into PCDA composante 2 which aims to reinforce commerce for certain agricultural commodity chains (mango, potato, onion, green beans, “souchet”, Gomme arabique, shea, milk, livestock/meat and fish). IFDC has already had at least one meeting with PCDA to talk about IFDC projects and activities in general and possible collaboration with PCDA. Since these meetings PCDA has drawn up and approved their 2007 action plan enumerating activities they will be carrying out under each of their 4 major components. The next step is to meet with IFDC to discuss concretely which activities we could collaborate on implementing, and how. PCD is also in the process of doing this with Trademali and MaliFinance. Timbo explained that to implement the action plan PCDA will subcontract certain activities/activity sectors to national and/or international consultants, and likely collaborate with national or regional structures like Chambers of Ag or Commerce. From my understanding, collaboration with IFDC could take on the following forms:

- 1) Sub-contract to IFDC (or a project under IFDC) to implement certain specific activities outlined in the action plan.
- 2) Take on (hire) IFDC staff (like former MISTOWA staff) to be responsible for implementing certain activities with partners in the field.
- 3) “Collaborate” with IFDC programs to ensure that initiatives carried out separately are complementary.

Of course the first option is what I think we should be aiming for and to do this I recommend that Dr Debrah be present at the next meeting with PCDA (which is supposed to be scheduled for around April 10th) to ensure that MISTOWA or IFDC as a larger entity is able to assume some responsibility under the PCDA program and hopefully be sub-contracted. Important to note that when we met with PCDA they mentioned “Pole d'entreprise agricole” several times and less so “PICA”. I think this is due to fact that Arno has been present at the meetings with PCDA and perhaps more communicative about the “pole” than the PICAs. We need to ensure that PCDA understands the value of a combined PICA/Pole approach that could be used to support their composante 2 activities.

Afriquelinks – Fora in Mopti and visits to CLICS in Djenne, Kadiolo and Bougouni

Toure and I visited the Program Coordinator, Aminata Maiga, at the Afriquelinks office in Bamako on March 20th to verify our program for the three fora to be carried out in Mopti, Kadiolo and Bougouni. She informed us that only the fora in Mopti could be programmed during my visit because the producers and traders in Kadiolo and Bougouni could only be mobilized on Mon, Tues or Wed, the Mopti fora had already been programmed for Wednesday 28th, and Mon 26th is a Holiday. We resolved to do the fora in Mopti and visit CLICs in Kadiolo and Bougouni to give them lessons learned from the fora in Mopti and advise them on how to organize fora at their CLICs in the near future.

Fora at CLIC in Mopti

The CLIC in Mopti is hosted by “Action Mopti” a local NGO. We arrived at the office late in the morning of the 27th and meet with the NGO coordinator, Ousmane Hydrara to review preparation for the event. He had already sent the invitations to a combined total of about 30 local institutions (Chambers of Ag and Commerce, Mayor’s office, etc) and PO/TOs they had identified during meetings with local officials. Kouyate verified the internet connection and we tested the ICT equipment to ensure that all was functioning correctly. Kouyate also briefed Ousmane on new Tradenet functions (it was not Ousmane that was trained at the manager training in Segou but rather the “PICA manager” for the CLIC). Animata insisted that Ousmane take the lead in demonstrating Tradenet at the fora to reinforce the credibility of the CLIC. I also insisted that Kouyate assist Ousmane (especially in demonstrating new functions like alerts). The actual fora event started at 10AM (instead of programmed 9AM). About 20 invitees were present. The program consisted of: Action Mopti welcome, Presentation CLIC by Aminata, Presentation MISTOWA by Toure, Presentation (concept and background) Tradenet by Claudia, Q&A by all, Demonstration Tradenet by Ousmane and Kouyate, practical session on Tradenet. The entire program lasted from 10AM to 4PM (including practicals with some but not all of the invitees). In general the invitees were very interested. Many had already attended a previous meeting with Touré and Aminata to describe CLIC/MISTOWA partnership but had not actually seen the Tradenet tool. Unfortunately there were only about 7-8 representatives of actual PO/TOs present, the majority of invitees were institutional in nature (see list participants and program). We were able to register about 20 new users, about half of which signed up for alerts, but none had any offers to put directly on line. There were about 5 people that were extremely interested and whom I think could play a role in data (price/offers) collection and up-load. Ousmane was not bad as a Tradenet demonstrator but Kouyate is much better in general and more systematic. In actuality Kouyate helped Ousmane a lot during the demos. At the end of the day we meet with Aminata and Ousmane to give feedback, noting particularly that it would have been even better if more PO/TO were represented, and noting the need now to follow up with the institutions and PO/TOs to get them to schedule Tradenet trainings for their members and PO/TOs they assist. Afriquelinks and the CLICs will also decide how they will assist the most interested persons to help them collect and upload prices and offers regularly onto Tradenet (this is a contractual engagement under the grant received by Afriquelinks).

Around 4PM Toure, Aminata, Kouyate and I went to the local radio (Radio Djamana) to do an emission on the fora, agribusiness assistance at the CLIC, Tradenet services, etc. We broadcasted live for 15 minutes in French and then 15 minutes in local language. It was a very good emission but when we asked for a copy afterwards we were informed that they had not recorded it! Lesson learned for next fora....

Visit to CLIC Kadiolo

On March 30th we visited the CLIC in Kadiolo. Several members of the CLIC community management committee were present as was the CLIC manager, Amidou Diane (who had just been trained at the PICA manager training in Segou). We visited the CLIC and learned that they have been disconnected (internet) since about 9 months ago. The MISTOWA grant is meant to reconnect them any time next week. Nevertheless they were actively giving ICT trainings, and providing other services such as photocopy, digital photos, certificates, typing, etc. They are having a difficult time covering their costs and hope that with connectivity they will be able to earn more through navigation. They have not started advising PO/TOs about agribusiness or consulting Tradenet for them since they do not have connectivity and they are counting on the fora to inform producers (primarily in the area) and traders of the ag-business services that will be

available at the CLIC through tradenet. We advised them to invite many PO/TO and to plan that only about half of those invited will actually show up. They had already drafted a list of 70 invitees but Aminata told them to reduce due to budgetary constraints. We advised that they increase again to at least 60 and assume that about half will actually come. In actuality each CLIC has a budget of 500,000 fcfa per fora, and 2 fora scheduled per CLIC. We wanted also to do a radio emission in Kadiolo as the radio actually hosts the CLIC but the radio has not been working for about a month now due to equipment failure.

Visit to CLIC Bougouni

Also on March 30th we visited the CLIC in Bougouni. The content of the visit was the same as in Kadiolo. The CLIC did not have electricity when we arrived due to EDM (public electricity supply) cut in town but they said they usually have no problem. They too though are having difficulty balancing their accounts with much more in expenditures than revenues and difficulty to pay monthly internet connection. MISTOWA grants will help them on this. The CLIC is hosted by the Mayor's office which conducts their business at the CLIC (copies, etc.) and actually pays for services. We met the Secretary General of the Commune Urbaine de Bougouni who is also the president of the Community CLIC management committee. He seemed a very knowledgeable type that already clearly understood the objectives of MISTOWA and Tradenet utility. After the visit at the CLIC we went to the local radio station where we (Toure, me, Kouyate and the CLIC manager, Coulibaly) taped an interview that also lasted 30 minutes in French and Bamabara. We got an unedited copy of this interview which also focused on MISTOWA, partnership with CLICs, Tradenet services and the coming fora.

Preparation and participation at Bourse Cereales in Segou

On March 20th, Toure, Kouyate and I went to visit APCAM and Global 2000 to discuss MISTOWA participation at the Bourse de Cereale in Segou (April 3-4). Both institutions welcomed our participation and guaranteed us a spot on the program to present Tradenet, talk briefly about the PICA, etc. When we later met with Abodboulaye N'Diaye and Yacouba Ballo in Segou (during the training of PICA managers) we further discussed our participation and worked out that we would be able to collect information on all participants, register everyone on Tradenet, post all offers to buy and sell on Tradenet, and sign people up for alerts as well.

The fora itself went very well. Kouyate and I arrived the afternoon prior to the event to set up the internet connectivity and ensure our space and how we would set up the area. We were finally able to transfer the Afrique Verte Segou telephone line to get connectivity on site. The morning of the bourse we set up three computers with connectivity and put up the Tradenet banner and MISTOWA posters, arranged hand outs for people to take and sign up sheets to be filled out. The opening ceremony for the bourse was marked by the Minister of Agriculture's presence. After the opening the Minister made the rounds around the stands. Kouyate and I explained tradenet to him and demonstrated how to receive prices and alerts. The minister was very impressed and explained that the President of the republic requests twice per week the regional prices on various commodities, and that Tradenet could be very useful to the Ministry and to the President. He requested that MISTOWA demonstrate tradenet use to his staff of advisors who could then show it to the President of the Republic. We promised that we would be in touch to follow up and schedule the meeting/demo at the Ministry of Ag.

During the bourse Kouyate and I were present to register people and sign them up for alerts. Unfortunately the connection was not very fast and some of the tradenet pages were not working properly. We were able to work at SOTELMA cyber café at night to upload offers to buy and sell. Kouyate finished this work a few days after the bourse and I finished registering the participants as Tradenet users (based on the participants list which everyone signed) by Saturday. Patrice was able to publish offers we had uploaded by the end of day one so many of the participants received offers on their phones throughout the first night of the bourse. People were impressed with this though there were too many offers (a bit of spamming). Near the close of the bourse the organizers presented the offers and the deals concluded. In summary about 14 contracts were signed amounting to approximately 64,000,000 Fcfa. This was reported as better than last year's bourse results. By close of the bourse still others continued negotiations towards additional trade deals. The full report will be drafted and submitted by the organizers.

Meetings with Sarah Gavian (WACIP) and Yves DuPlessis (1000+)

I met with Sarah and Marjatta over dinner one night. We talked specifically about the support which MISTOWA has given to CILSS in carrying out Crop Outlook Conferences in the recent past. She was not aware of the block on EU funds that supported the Crop Outlook Conferences last year so I gave her the context. Apparently she has been receiving some pressure to assist CILSS specifically on this and other activities. We discussed the possible reasons and motives behind this. We also discussed possible linkages WACIP/MISTOWA which although not that direct, there are a few possibilities. I later e-mailed her a summary of my recommendations (cced to Dr Debrah and Patrice).

Discussion with Yves

Yves, Kouyate and I discussed at some length possibilities for collaboration between 1000+ and MISTOWA (merging the PEA and PICA concepts to complete each other). There are several possibilities how to do this, particularly in view of IFDC potential collaboration with PCDA in Mali. Yves and I also met with Toure and Dr Debrah to further elaborate our ideas. Toure is now to meet with PCDA (Seyni) to work out particular activities to be carried out by IFDC (MISTOWA and 1000+ and possible MIR together) to contribute to PCDA objectives.

Visit to APLS, SOGEMAF, and Radio Kenedougou, Sikasso

Toure, Kouyate and I visited APLS and then SOGEMAF on March 30th. In each case it was simply to see the PICA, discuss with the PICA manager and the organization office holders (president, treasurer, etc.) about PICA activities. Neither APLS nor SOGEMAF have really started promoting Tradenet services to their members or the public even though both PICA managers are adept in internet and Tradenet. APLS does send information regularly on prices for cereals from Sikasso, and SOGEMAF regularly places offers to sell livestock but neither has started showing their members how to use Tradenet. SOGEMAF said that they have been posting offers for almost a year and only a few days ago that they receive their first contact from someone in Ghana interested in their offer. We recommended that they start targeting other PICA managers directly based in markets that deal heavily in livestock, and that they target actual contacts registered on Tradenet by sending them personalized e-mails presenting the profile of SOGEMAF and an offer for partnering with the contact. APLS says they have not been posting offers because they are selling almost all their produce inside Mali (in the past to OPAM). Now they are free to sell outside the country. I again stressed that even though they may have enough buyers there in Sikasso or in Mali, that they should not hesitate to put offers on line in case someone from another country is interested in buying at a higher price. People seem to continue to believe that Tradenet services only help people that don't have a local buyer (this is not the case especially if you are looking for an outside buyer who is willing to pay more). At APLS we asked if they could again start providing us with information on trade conducted within Mali. They had started to do this last year but MISTOWA told them we did not need this information, so they stopped recording it. Now that we are again interested in this information they will start collecting it again (they do not have retrospective data to report). SOGEMAF explained to us that they are looking into changing their status from a "societe" to an organization so as not to be heavily taxed on transactions they are trying to help their members make. They also explained that their aim is to bring buyers to SOGEMAF and members rather than having members have to haul livestock all over the region in search of buyers. We stressed again that Tradenet can help them do this but they need to target specific contacts listed (if indeed they have noted that no one is responding to their offers to sell livestock). APLS (like the three CLICs) all had their sign and price boards delivered and installed very nicely. With both partners we stressed that they must submit their activity and financial reports so that they could access the next "tranche" of funding and we warned that if they do not submit overdue reports soon that they risk losing further finances promised. We also explained to both partners that they are responsible for paying connectivity fees to Radio Kenedougou. Both claimed that they did not understand that they were to pay but rather that MISTOWA already paid that on their behalf out of the grants they received. We explained that this is not the case and that they still owe the radio (now for about 8 months each at 50,000/month). Both agreed without any problem to pay the back pay due to Radio Kenedougou.

After the visits to APLS and SOGEMAF Toure, Kouyate and I went to visit Radio Kenedougou to explain to the Director (his second was present) about the misunderstanding with APLS and SOGEMAF and that they would be coming soon to pay the connectivity fees. The radio understood with no difficulty and reiterated their willingness to collaborate with MISTOWA and her partners to announce prices and offers to buy and sell, and other promotional spots. So far neither APLS nor SOGEMAF has approached the radio to program emissions that would be of interest. We wanted to do an emission but they did not have a slot available that morning. We agreed that when Kouyate comes for the forum in Kadiolo, he would stop and record or do live a radio emission on Tradenet, etc.

Meeting with Kassim Dembele, Coordinateur RECAO/PRIECA

Toure, Kouyate and I met twice with Mr. Dembele to discuss potential MISTOWA support to RECAO for the duration of the project, and “after MISTOWA” what PRIECA and RECAO can do to continue (or what we may be able to do together to continue) MISTOWA-type activities. We established the following:

Before end MISTOWA funding ends (September 2007)

- 1) Kouyate will work with Abdoulaye N’Diaye to create RECAO regional website AND work on National Chamber of Agriculture websites for each of the 7 RECAO member countries. The regional RECAO website will have an automatic link to each national CA website. Dembele thought MISTOWA was working on a logo but we said that they should go ahead and do this with a local artist and do what is necessary to have the logo adopted, then communicate to N’Diaye and Kouyate who will include it in their RECAO website. I will check with Meg to double check whether she had already started working on this.
- 2) National CA “Charges d’Information et Communication” will continue to be trained with PICA managers (on Tradenet management, PICA management, etc.). As such they should be competent to eventually train regional (within the country) Chamber of Agriculture CICs.
- 3) RECAO will invite MISTOWA to the workshop they are planning in July for National CA CIC on SIM. Although the actual content of the training is not yet established, they will invite MISTOWA to present/organize a half to full day training on Tradenet (a sort of recyclage for national CA CIC after the training done for them in April 2006 in Accra). Abdoulaye N’Djaye and Kouyate would be the trainers for this and MISTOWA would not be asked to contribute anything financially (but rather only to provide technical support), apparently they already have funds for this activity.
- 4) In order to evaluate whether it would be of interest to respond to RECAO’s request that MISTOWA help support (technically and financially) a training in Mali at the national level of regional CA CIC, Dembele will carry out a small study to find out the following in each of the 8 regional CA in Mali and the central one in Bamako:
 - a. If the regional CA has a CIC
 - b. What is the level of computer literacy of the CIC (internet, e-mail, office?)
 - c. Is the regional CA equipped (does CIC has access to a computer)?
 - d. Does the regional CA have internet connectivity? (PASAOP was supposed to finance connectivity for each regional CA in Mali but there was a blockage of funds at some point, still seemingly unresolved)

On the basis of the results of this small study (which Dembele will send to MISTOWA) we will decide whether we can help finance a training for regional CIC in Mali at the national level. This would be like a pilot training to see how it goes and to see if this is something we might like to do in all 7 RECAO countries during MISTOWA phase II if funding is eventually available. Whether or not we could or would want to do this is dependent upon the results of this small study to determine the reality in the regional CAs in Mali.

- 5) RECAO had requested assistance after the MIS workshop in Cotonou last year, to organize a workshop at the regional level to train National CA CICs on techniques for disseminating information via various means (bulletins, newsletter, etc.). There had been some discussion about doing this just after or before SIAGRI which brought the National CA CICs to Bamako last year, but the request was not honored. They are still interested in organizing such a workshop and want to know if MISTOWA could contribute financially and technically. I explained that I doubted that our limited budget could support this but advised that Dembele go ahead and draft something (content, participants, location, proposed dates) for consideration. If we are not able to finance before end

MISTOWA there may be possibilities under MISTOWA phase II (if we find funding with Agriterrra or other).

After MISTOWA

We also discussed “after MISTOWA” funding and I explained that we are in the process of trying to find other sources of funding to continue our activities and that if we found such funding we could possibly continue to support RECAO and PRIECA on some key activities. The following was identified after studying their (PRIECA) objectives and their 2007 program of activities.

- 1) Ensure that all 63 regional CA in the 7 countries are equipped with at least one computer post and connectivity.
- 2) Provide training for regional CA (within each country) CICs on ICT, MIS, Tradenet (one series of three trainings) AND on advocacy skills (one training). The potential pilot training in Mali (above) would provide lessons learned and an example of how to carry out these trainings in the other countries.

*1 and 2 above would enable each of the Regional CAs to establish a PICA. The advocacy skills training is in view of MISTOWA’s success in this area, and PRIECA’s goal/objective of bringing producers closer to decision-makers and giving them more voice in policy and decisions that affect them.

- 3) Ensure that national CAs in each RECAO member country are represented on the National Advocacy Committee that the MISTOWA project has initiated.

- 4) Accord some funds to support selected activities included in National Advocacy Action Plans (activities to be selected would be those that most closely respond to producers needs)

RECAO could see to it that PRIECA 2008 take into account some the above aspects (contribute financial and technical resources to it), and/or if additional funding is attained to continue MISTOWA activities, IFDC could help support the above activities.

Next steps for RECAO:

- 1) develop logo
- 2) create website(s)
- 3) do the small study on situation in regional CAs in Mali
- 4) submit their ideas pertaining to the workshop on techniques for disseminating information via various means.
- 5) MISTOWA will review again the proposed regional CA CIC training that Abdoulaye N’Diaye proposed (and which was proposed to take place just prior to or after SIAGRI last year)

Meeting with BNDA

Dr, Debrah, toure, Kouyate and I met with the Directeur General Adjoint of BNDA to discuss possible collaboration on developing financial services for producers and traders and using Tradenet and PICAs to access clientele, manage loan profiles, etc. We discussed for about 45 minutes and Mr Hoarau was very interested in exploring possibilities as BNDA is just now looking at how they can modernize and use new technologies to enhance/expand their services/outreach. We left him the one page summary of how tradenet services could assist financial institutions for his continued reflection and he invited us to stay I touch if we had further, concrete ideas to propose. MISTOWA senior staff should follow up whenever on next trip to Bamako.

Meeting at USAID

Dr Debrah, Toure, Kouyate and I met with Jean Harmon and her team at USAID. We provided an up-date on Tradenet development, negotiation with GSM providers, recent activities (training trainers and users on tradenet services (especially alerts and other SMS functions). Jean expressed that the project really seems to be getting into a steady stride now and that she is pleased to see this. She did however reiterate her disappointment at the beginning of the project and regret that MISTOWA got a “slow start”. We informed her that though USAID funding is ending in September this year, we are doing everything possible to find other funding sources to continue activities and capitalize on successes to date.