



## SUCCESS STORY

# Three USAID projects partner to bring together traders from Ghana and Mali

**Collaborative efforts of USAID funded projects for trade tours continue to make market deals possible.**



Photo: MISTOWA

*Ghanaian producers and traders exchange ideas with their counterparts in Mali. These meetings result in lasting relationships that foster future business deals.*

***MISTOWA intervention is resulting in a market deal for the sale of tons of potatoes and mangoes from Mali to Ghana. Associations recognize that such deals could not have happened without the opportunity to tour and meet other traders.***

“It takes time to develop new trade channels in West Africa, particularly between Anglophone and Francophone countries,” says GAPTO (Ghana Agricultural Products and Traders Organization) Chairman Haruna Agesheka. Business contacts made by GAPTO during a Mali trade tour that occurred in March 2005 are now materializing into major business deals. Daouda Traore and Abdoul Karim Sanogo, both members of *Mali Yiriden*, a commercial fruit and vegetable cooperative, met GAPTO members, Alhajii Adramani Musah and Alhajii Sidik Abubakari during the tour and are now finalizing an agreement for the sale of 30 tons of potatoes and 20 tons of mangoes.

Although several organizations are attempting to develop West African trade, they do not always have the opportunity to merge their efforts. However, last year, MISTOWA and two other USAID funded projects—*TIPCEE* in Ghana and *MaliTrade* in Mali—joined forces to support a five-day trade tour for seven GAPTO members. The purpose of the tour was to provide GAPTO members the opportunity to meet with their ROESAO (Network of Business Operators in the Food Industry) counterparts in Mali. As a result of this effort, trade deals continue to be negotiated. MISTOWA orchestrated the collaboration to allow the greatest number of participants the important opportunity to tour Malian markets.

Trade between Mali and Ghana has traditionally occurred, but few traders have the occasion to visit their counterparts elsewhere and ascertain the possibility of future trade agreements. “It is vital that traders have the chance to discuss crop seasons and availability so that we can begin to forecast when certain commodities will be scarce,” says Elizabeth Coffie, a GAPTO participant. The GAPTO delegates hoped to increase the level of trade between Mali and Ghana for mangoes, potatoes, tomatoes, rice, and cattle and meat. During the Malian tour, the GAPTO representatives were able to make contact with traders and visit market places in cities like Bamako, Segou, Niono, and Sikasso.

The collaborative effort of MISTOWA and the two other USAID-funded projects is proving that connecting people is the first step towards future market deals.