

# Feed the Future Mali

## Scaling up technological and institutional livestock innovations

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The Mali Livestock Scaling Technology Program works with public, private and non-profit partner organizations to increase income, food and nutrition security of livestock value chain actors in the Mopti, Timbuktu and Sikasso regions in Mali. The program works to improve animal health delivery services and promote health interventions that reduce disease burden in livestock, increase availability of quality feed biomass, and improve feed utilization and husbandry practices together with facilitation of market access by producers.



The program seeks to foster the transformation of livestock value chains through the development of partnerships among key stakeholders. Innovation platforms are seen as a mechanism to harness collective action to address the constraints and opportunities pertaining to animal health and ruminant livestock value chains development as a whole. In this specific context, they have been established to empower livestock value chain stakeholders to scale up innovative solutions to sectoral challenges.

The initial phases in the establishment of innovation platforms focuses on ways of addressing policy and organizational barriers inhibiting access by producers to adequate animal health inputs and services. These spaces also serve as an 'incubator' for the design and rollout of innovations that remove bottlenecks to livestock value chain development. This, hereby, benefits all participants by improving access to inputs and services and enhancing the business environment.

## The process

### Scope of intervention

Innovation platforms have been established in 31 program communes. A 'commune'—an urban or rural territorial collectivity acting as a legal entity with financial autonomy—is the unit of intervention. In this case, a commune comprises 6–35 villages. Each commune comprises an established municipal council of elected officials. The municipal council regulates the affairs of the commune, particularly those relating to economic, social and cultural development.

An innovation platform is a space for information sharing and learning to improve the coordination and promotion of changes in agricultural practices. Individuals—often representing different organizations and sectoral interests—come together to identify problems and ways of taking advantages of existing opportunities. They may design and implement activities as a platform, or coordinate activities assigned to individuals by a project (Kilelu et al. 2013; Tucker et al. 2013).

## Stakeholders

The stakeholders include direct actors such as livestock producers and traders; transporters and butchers; women's cooperatives; local promoters of small livestock feed enterprises; milk processors and associations of private veterinarians<sup>1</sup>; and public and private

<sup>1</sup> Collectif des Vétérinaires du Mali, Association Nationale des Vétérinaires Mandataires du Mali.

input and service providers such as government agencies<sup>2</sup>; non-governmental organizations<sup>3</sup>, communal leaders and microfinance institutions.

## Establishment of innovation platforms

This process involved the following steps:

1. An analysis of existing multi-stakeholder initiatives in target communes as a way of leveraging those with similar goals and learning from their successes and weaknesses.
2. The identification of and consultation with project partners leading the facilitation of the innovation platforms.
3. The provision of training to program partner institutions on facilitation and leadership using material (<http://learning.ilri.org/course/detail/80>) from the International Livestock Research Institute.
4. The formal establishment of the innovation platforms.
5. The development of an action plan.
6. The development of monitoring and evaluation tools.
7. The elaboration of a capacity development strategy.



## Approach

The initial interventions have been articulated around priority constraints identified by the program through a participatory process together with stakeholders. As such, they constitute an entry point to (1) generate tangible results; and (2) serve as an incentive for stakeholders to engage in innovations responding to other important local priorities.

For producers to become more market oriented, they need to access quality extensions services, sustainable and organized farmer institutions, well developed market channels, and more favourable credit and financial products. The key program outputs include the development and implementation of strategies increasing access to extension services, innovative livestock marketing approaches, and appropriate credit and financial products for producers and private veterinarians.

To help make progress in these areas, the platforms have focused on:

- the design and testing of sustainable partnerships models for capacity development in disease control and prevention, herd and flock management and feeding, as well as access to quality animal health services;
- the design and testing of alternative livestock marketing models; and
- increasing access to credit and finance by value chains actors.

## Interventions as entry points

Because of the broad range of members engaged in the platforms, their priorities, interests and entry points are often diverse. In order to deliver on program outputs—while responding to platform expectations not prioritized by the program—the innovation platforms first agreed on keys activities as a starting point. Five key areas of common interest have been selected.

- a) Strategies for increased participation of producers in livestock vaccination campaigns: The platforms catalysed a participatory process to guide the planning and evaluation of vaccination campaigns through information sharing and feedback. Community approaches to animal census set up by the platforms have helped obtain improved statistics on livestock population for use by private veterinarians seeking to estimate vaccine demand. In this way, the platforms have enhanced participation of producers in vaccination campaigns, generating further business for private veterinarians. The platforms have encouraged the timely supply of vaccines by facilitating the signing of contractual agreement between private veterinarian associations, financial institutions, and the Central Veterinary Laboratory.
- b) Support for the development of business models for a livestock fattening scheme: The main role of the platforms here has been to facilitate sheep and cattle fattening activities with a particular emphasis on supporting linkages between producers and local (Laham Industries) and regional markets in Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of Guinea and Senegal.

<sup>2</sup> Direction Nationale des Services Vétérinaires, , Direction Nationale des Productions et Industries Animales

<sup>3</sup> Association Malienne des Veilles au Développement Durable (AMMED); Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières; Catholic Relief Services; SNV Netherlands Development Organisation

- c) Support for the development of business models for women's cooperatives: The platforms foster a conducive environment for women producer cooperatives to diversify their sources of income through the development and rolling out of viable business models, such as the production of mineral blocks for livestock feeding.
- d) Development of a community-based Bracharia seed system: Through participation in the platforms, model farmers have been identified. They are encouraged to get involved in the Bracharia seed production business and were provided with training.
- e) Capacity development: The platforms facilitate the implementation of capacity development activities for value chain actors on animal health, food safety and livestock production through the promotion of an integrated technological package (health, feeding and housing).



## Lessons learned

Some of the lessons learned in the process include:

- a. The importance of the relationship between understanding the process and developing shared objectives, and enhancing participation.
- b. The importance of the involvement of key value chain stakeholder representatives from the beginning to creating synergies and enhanced complementary collective actions. The absence of some key actors may discourage the involvement of others who need their support.
- c. The need to have a self-financing mechanism to ensure the sustainability of the platforms, in order to avoid collapse after the life span of the project.
- d. The need to constantly strengthen platform governance and leadership for the process to become sustainable.
- e. The importance of a good communication strategy in raising platform visibility through the sharing of success stories. This raises trust in the process in the eyes of the community and can act as an effective incentive-based strategy in increasing participation.

## References

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The Feed the Future Mali Livestock Technology Scaling (FTF-MLTS) program seeks to contribute to the inclusive growth of the ruminant livestock value chain for increased income, food and nutrition security for 266,000 cattle, sheep, and goat keepers and other value chain actors in three regions in the country (Mopti, Timbuktu and Sikasso), hence lifting them out of poverty. Supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of the US government's Feed the Future initiative, the program sets out to bridge ruminant livestock productivity gaps and to enhance the volume and value of ruminant livestock marketed through a wide-scale dissemination of proven livestock technologies and best practices.

The program is implemented by ILRI working with a consortium of public institutions, such as Direction Nationale des Services Vétérinaires, Direction Nationale des Productions et Industries Animales; Laboratoire Central Vétérinaire, Institut d'Economie Rurale, private sector organizations (private veterinarians, feed manufacturers) and non-governmental organizations, such as the Catholic Relief Services, the SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, the Association Malienne d'Eveil et de Développement Durable, and the Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans Frontières. FTF MLTSP also collaborates with ongoing FTF projects such as Livestock for Growth and other rural development programs in Mali that are pursuing similar objectives in order to create synergies among them.

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