



UNITED NATIONS



WORKSHOP LAUNCHING  
A CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION  
PILOT PROGRAMME

Held in Sikasso (Mali), 27, 28 and 29 September, 2005

Synthesis and follow-up mechanism

Organised at the invitation of the Malian Government

By the Sahel and West Africa Club,  
the United Nation Office for West Africa and  
the Municipal Development Partnership for West and Central Africa

In collaboration with the CILSS and the WAEMU

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*Cross-border Initiatives Programme*

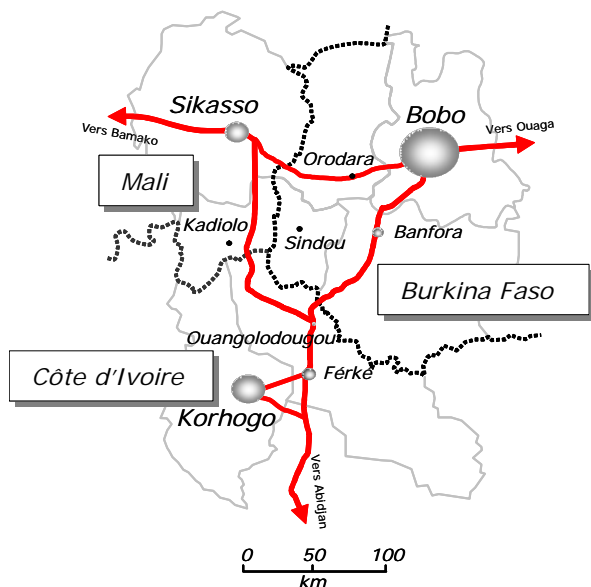


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## INTRODUCTION



Co-financed and co-organised by the Sahel and West Africa Club, the Municipal Development Partnership, the United Nations Office for West Africa, the workshop held in Sikasso from 27 to 29 September launched ECOWAS' Cross-border Initiatives Programme's (C.I.P.) first pilot project. The workshop brought together 150 participants from civil society, the private sector and government mainly of the Sikasso-Bobo Dioulasso cross-border area; some actors from the Korhogo zone were also present. The governments of Mali and Burkina Faso were represented by the Minister of the Interior and Local Communities of Mali and by the Minister of the Interior and Decentralisation of Burkina Faso. Côte d'Ivoire was represented by the Ministry of

Social Affairs and by the *Union des Villes et Communes de Côte d'Ivoire (UVICOCI)*. ECOWAS' Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, Defense, and Security, the Deputy Director of the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Executive Secretary of the CILSS, and the Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD also attended.

This document summarises the main proposals following the Sikasso workshop. It is supplemented by a comprehensive summary record of all of the work carried out during the workshop. This includes an action plan and follow-up to be implemented in order to bring to fruition the decisions made in Sikasso.

Financial support for the components of this action plan has already been confirmed from partners who were present in Sikasso. Furthermore, it must be emphasised that some of the propositions will not incur costs.


The two Ministers of the Interior (of Mali and Burkina Faso), who participated during the three working days in Sikasso, have undertaken to seek support from their colleagues in other technical departments and local administrations in order to facilitate the implementation of the projects and processes.

The action plan and follow-up is based on nineteen proposals which are set out below. Items I to V outline the activities and projects in the sectors of health, culture and the media, agriculture and livestock, roadblocks and customs, and child trafficking. Item VI describes the support process and follow-up.




### **First proposal: Implement a cross-border action plan for the health sector in 2006**

Local health sector operators met before the Sikasso workshop and drafted a priority action plan based on the themes for which direct cooperation between health services on both sides of the border is essential<sup>1</sup>. This plan will be fine-tuned and operationalised in a cross-border meeting scheduled for mid-November in Orodara. On this basis, regional health directorates on both sides of the border will include cross-border activities in their 2006 budgets and will organise four annual concertation/collaboration meetings (management of epidemics, sharing of data on vaccine supplies and other ways in which to coordinate).


 *This activity does not incur supplementary costs. It will need the approval by the Health Ministries of both countries. Ministers of the Interior who were present at the Sikasso workshop will contact their health colleagues on this subject.*

### **Second proposal: Undertaking in the short term an assessment mapping out all of the facilities, as regards health technical and personnel in the cross-border area as well as a directory**

 *This work, expanded to a directory of all cross-border services, will be carried out by the MDP with the SWAC's support. The cartographic directory will be widely disseminated in the cross-border area.*


### **Third proposal: Harmonisation of radio frequencies of the Communication Administrative Networks (*Réseaux Administratifs de Communication (RAC)*) as regards health care on both sides of the border**

This harmonisation, which in the medium-term should also include the Côte d'Ivoire, is technically possible.

 *It only depends upon a political decision. It requires the approval of the Health Ministries of both countries. Ministers of the Interior who were present at the Sikasso workshop will contact their health colleague on this subject.*

### **Fourth proposal: Free circulation of ambulances**

If one political decision is made on the matter, the governors on both sides of the border would be able to sign a border-crossing pass which would be affixed to the windshield of ambulances in the zone in order to reduce the minimum time to cross the border and thus save lives.

 *The implementation of this proposal requires the Ministries of the Interior to give instructions to the governors in close collaboration with the health ministers.*

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<sup>1</sup> Notably: 1) The fight against STD/HIV AIDS and epidemics; 2) The prevention of cervical and uterine cancer; 3) Integrated family health and community services; 4) Obstetrical and neonatal care; 5) Education for health.



**Fifth proposal: A cultural event calendar for the cross-border zone**

☞ *Local cultural operators will be meeting within the context of the next FESTRIM (Senoufo Arts, rites and music festival – Festival des arts, rites et musiques sénoufo) (1 to 4 December 2005) in Banfora, in order to develop a comprehensive calendar which will serve as the basis for a better harmonisation of upcoming events<sup>2</sup> but lack coordination. The creation of this cross-border cultural platform should enable the development of cooperation and complementarities. In the medium term, a large revolving festival (one year in one country, the second year in another) could be envisaged.*

**Sixth proposal: To organise Mali's next Integration Week under the cross-border cooperation theme and take this opportunity to valorise cross-border cultural initiatives**

Mali has adopted, as have Burkina Faso and other ECOWAS countries, the memorandum on Cross-border areas presented at ECOWAS last statutory meetings (January 2005); it has been proposed that the next Integration Week, organised each year by the Malian Government, have a cross-border cooperation theme. Some of Integration Week's events and celebrations could also thus be organised in the Sikasso zone capitalising on cross-border cultural potentials.

☞ *The implementation of this- proposal requires the Minister of the Interior of Mali to discuss with his colleague in charge of regional integration.*

**Seventh proposal: A joint cross-border cooperation programme**

The Association of Mayors of Mali (AMM) and the Association of Mayors of Burkina Faso are linked by a cooperation agreement. As of February 2006, there will be locally elected officials in Burkina Faso's rural communities; all of the communities in the Sikasso zone will henceforth have "counterparties" on the other side of the border. Under these conditions, it has been proposed to set up a cross-border cooperation programme between communities in the Sikasso zone and those in the Bobo Dioulasso zone.


☞ *As from mid-October 2005, this programme will receive financial support from the AMM project which is supported by France. This programme will be carried out via three means: 1) production of short films on the Sénoufo culture as a basis for strengthening decentralisation; 2) establishment of a children's parliament; 3) development of local development plans seeking cross-border coherence and complementarities. The basis of this operation will be discussed within the FESTRIM framework (Banfora, 1 to 4 December 2005) between elected officials from the Kadiolo circle on one hand and those from Bobo Dioulasso and Banfora on the other.*

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<sup>2</sup> "Triangle of Balafo" Festival between Sikasso, Korhogo and Bobo Dioulasso, "Black Peasant Festival of arts, rites and music – Festival des arts, rites et musiques du paysan noir (FESTRIM)" of Banfora, Festivals sénoufo of Ferkéssédougou and Korhogo, Sénoufo Foundation in Sikasso with an outpost in Bobo Dioulasso and Banfora, biennial cultural project in Kadiolo, Bobo Dioulasso's National culture week, etc.

### **Eighth proposal: A network of “S.K.Bodougou” radio stations**

The S.K.Bo zone is covered by a number of community FM radio stations which play an important role in the circulation of local information. The populations are familiar with these radio stations. The creation of two technical programme production centres (surveys, reports, programmes providing vaccination awareness campaigns, citizens' rights as regards free circulation, the fight against trafficking, discussion and mediation forums, etc.) in the S.K.Bo zone will help consolidate these radio stations and set up a network serving local regional integration and maintaining good neighbour relationships.

 *The Municipal Development Partnership will support this programme's development and initial implementation. A meeting of local radio operating will be organised before the end of 2005 in order to set up concrete modalities for the implementation.*




## **AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK BREEDING**

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### **Ninth proposal: Establishment of a regular dialogue framework between actors in the livestock sub sector**

This framework, inexistent at present, is essential to the development of the livestock breeding industry. Its implementation will be supported by two facilitators who will be set up within the Sikasso workshop's implementation and follow-up process (see Item VI).

 *In the meantime, the mayor of Bobo Dioulasso has demonstrated his willingness to organise a meeting of all of the livestock sub sector professionals in the cross-border zone with the theme of capitalising on all of this industry's products, notably capitalising on the new refrigerated slaughterhouse which will be built in Bobo Dioulasso. This meeting would constitute the development of a concertation framework cited above.*

### **Tenth proposal: Concerted capitalisation on fruit terminals**

The S.K.Bo zone has at the same time great fruit production potential, particularly mangoes, and performing but under-utilised fruit terminals. Emblematic of this situation, Bobo Dioulasso's<sup>3</sup> fruit platform or even the Koba ranch, ought to set up a cross-border concertation process including those responsible for these structures, producers' cooperatives and governments concerned notably by the roadblocks and customs officers. It seems that in effect these circulation hindrances constitute a major constraint to this industry's development<sup>4</sup>.

 *During the Sikasso workshop short-term operational proposals were not made for this complex yet essential issue. This issue has received support by two facilitators who will be set up within the framework of the implementation and follow-up process to the Sikasso workshop (see Item VI).*

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<sup>3</sup> With a capacity of 35 000 to 40 000 tons per year, this structure can only handle 1 000 ton of mangoes per year coming from the Houet, Kéné Dougou, Léraba and Comoë provinces.

<sup>4</sup> The prolonged immobilisation of the shipment of mangoes at border posts leads more often to the deterioration of this cargo.

### **Eleventh proposal: Fight against the devastation of mango trees**

Another major constraint in the development of the fruit industry: the devastation of the mango trees which if not dealt with will threaten the short-term even existence of this sector of activity. The same as human and animal diseases, this threat can only be handled at the national level. It is the S.K.Bo mango basin that is threatened. As a reminder, this basin is, with 10 000 tons/year, the second supplier of mangoes to the European market.

☞ *The organisation of a consultation on this hot topic is urgent. The Chamber of Agriculture of Banfora has already established an update on the situation (identifying the devastation, proposals for treatment, etc.). The situation requires support and, in particular, the organisation of a meeting with all of the agriculture offices in the S.K.Bo zone and concerned technical services. This dynamic will be supported within the framework of the implementation and follow-up process of the Sikasso workshop (see Item VI).*

### **Twelfth Proposal: Rehabilitation of three unpaved roads**

When it comes to debates in the health sector (access to medical services) or strategic thinking on economic development or even proposal related to free circulation, Sikasso workshop participants unanimously asked that three cross-border communications routes be provided in the range of territorial development priorities in their respective countries. These routes would be the following (see map annexed hereto):

- Sikasso / Mandela / Sifarasso,
- Loulouni / Oueleni,
- Zégoua / Baguera / Negueni / Faco Koura.

Currently, these routes are practically inaccessible by automobile. Their state impedes trade development, circulation of ambulances, the implementation of vaccine campaigns, etc.

☞ *Within the framework of the implementation and follow-up process of the Sikasso workshop (see Item VI), the facilitators will bring together the regional technical services of the Sikasso zone and that of Bobo Dioulasso, and locally elected officials concerned with an aim to setting up a concerted cross-border development project would be submitted at the same time to the donors represented in Ouagadougou and Bamako.*

### **Thirteenth proposal: Hydro agricultural cross-border development between the department de Wéléni (Burkina Faso) and the cercle de Kadiolo (Mali).**

The small Kôbada and Loufônôrô rivers (Burkina Faso) join together to form the Bafini river (Mali). All along this water course, the populations have set up diversions in order to market garden during the dry season (okra, sweet potato, onion, etc.). For some time, the market gardening situated upstream leads to the drying of perimeters downstream and consequently tense situations. Carried out without preliminary studies, this market gardening consumes much too much water (waste). The construction of dirt dams over the three rivers concerned and their concerted management would enable the heightening of the water level in dry seasons and to irrigate parcels of land within the entire zone.

☞ *This project, with an estimated cost of 100 000€ in the first analysis, has been presented within the Sikasso workshop framework by Mr. Tiémoko Dembelé, Deputy to the National Assembly of Mali, elected in the Kadiolo circle. Within the framework of the implementation and follow-up process of the Sikasso workshop (see Item VI), the definitive development of this project will be supported under several forms:*

- Drafting of a final project document with local authorities and locally elected officials on both sides of the border;
- Seek “twinned” financing from representatives of the same cooperation agencies in Bamako and Ouagadougou with ECOWAS’ support as well as organisers of the Sikasso workshop;
- This project is emblematic of concrete border constraints in terms of access to financing: what juridical status could this cross-border “association” project be given? How can this project be financed? Through this example, ECOWAS and the Sikasso workshop organisers will try to pose this essential question at the political level.

## **IV. ROAD BLOCKS AND CUSTOMS**

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### **Fourteenth proposal: Establish local recourse routes**

Participants asked that local mediation structures be set up in order for economic operators and individuals can have means of recourse locally in case free circulation is hindered. This is a delicate problem which can only be resolved by a dialogue process in which security concerns and the principles of free circulation will be taken into account.

☞ *This process will be implemented (creation of a local working group) and supported by two facilitators recruited within the implementation and follow-up process of the Sikasso workshop (see point VI). Identified objectives are: 1) Set up “mediator couples” comprised of renowned member of civil society with local influence and a government representative; 2) security forces (police, gendarmerie and customs) to wear obligatory badges indicating their name and their official number, 3) regroup three administrative control offices in the same building on both sides of the border (awaiting the setting up of the juxtaposed border posts on the Sikasso, Bobo Dioulasso route envisaged within the WAEMU framework).*

Furthermore, setting up a network of community radio stations in the S.K.Bo zone (see eighth proposal) should enable a wide dissemination of citizens’ rights as regards free circulation while cooperating with security forces for the fight against bandits.


### **Fifteenth proposal: Re-instituting meetings of cross-border administrative control offices**

These consultation meetings are no longer held. Participants would like that they resume on a regular basis and be opened up to representatives of locally elected officials and civil society.

☞ *This objective will appear on the agenda of the implementation and follow-up process to the Sikasso workshop (see Item VI).*

**Sixteenth proposal: Commit locally to strategic thinking on how to facilitate the procedures to obtain identity cards**

One of the main reasons there are obstacles to free circulation lies in the fact that many people do not have birth certificates and consequently are unable to obtain identity cards. For others, the cost to obtain this identity card can be a major constraint. This is a problem begins at the national policy-level. Nevertheless, participants would like that this problem be accurately documented locally (what exactly is the current situation, how many people do not have identity papers, are there concrete and realistic solutions?) in order to provide their example to the appropriate government officials.

 *This objective will appear on the agenda of the implementation and follow-up process to the Sikasso workshop (see Item VI).*

**V. CHILD TRAFFICKING**


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**Seventeenth proposal: Create a tri-lateral concertation framework between Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire**

The debate on child trafficking has focused on what needs to be done and what can be done locally. Nevertheless, participants have decided to launch an appeal in order to set up a regional monitoring commission of the multilateral agreement signed 27 July 2005 in Abidjan by nine West African countries which include Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. They also would like that this Commission's first meeting take place no later than 27 July 2006, the anniversary of the signing of the agreement in Abidjan.

In the meantime and within an operational approach, participants made remarks and the following proposals:

- Bi-lateral concertation structures exist (Mali – Burkina Faso / Burkina Faso – Côte d'Ivoire / Côte d'Ivoire – Mali);
- The trafficking of children as well as women between the three countries is concentrated in the S.K.Bo zone ;
- In order to limit the number of meetings and fight this scourge more realistically, it has been proposed to create a tri-lateral framework associating these three countries. This framework would be able to meet within the zone and not in one or other of the capitals in order to associate local structures (NGOs, services) in charge of this matter.

 *This objective will appear on the agenda of the implementation and follow-up process to the Sikasso workshop (see Item VI). Furthermore, in relation with other local associations fighting this scourge and police services, a review of child trafficking cases will be undertaken. Finally, a support project to repatriate the children will be developed.*

### **Eighteenth proposal: Establish two facilitators to support this process.**

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has agreed to finance two facilitators (one from Mali, the other from Burkina Faso) each of them coming from the Sikasso and Bobo Dioulasso zones. These facilitators will undertake:

- Follow-up and implementation of activities to be carried out in the short term (activities that do not incur costs<sup>5</sup>, or those which are already financed<sup>6</sup>).
- Support the final development of projects which have been drawn up during the workshop<sup>7</sup>
- Assist in the formulation of new projects<sup>8</sup>
- Develop a more ambitious cross-border process project in terms of concertation dynamics.

In terms of raising awareness and information, the two facilitators will be helped in their work by youth movements in the SKBo zone who will undertake symbolic and mobilising activities: for example, the reforestation by youth in the Sikasso and Bobo Dioulasso zones, of four hectares of land in Koury (5 000 Eucalyptus plants) during an “integration youth camp”.

### **Nineteenth proposal: An update meeting in Bobo Dioulasso in six months**

The Mayor of Bobo Dioulasso has enthusiastically accepted to host an update meeting in six months to evaluate the first results of the action plan and to define the following part of the process. The Sahel and West Africa Club will support the organisation and financing of this meeting.

This will be a restricted meeting (thirty people) consisting of those who were present at the Sikasso workshop.

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<sup>5</sup> Notably proposals Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 5.

<sup>6</sup> Notably proposal Nos. 2, 7 and 8.

<sup>7</sup> Notably proposal Nos. 11, 12 and 13.

<sup>8</sup> Notably proposals Nos. 9, 10, 14, 15 and 16.