

Executive Summary

The West-African Market Information Network (RESIMAO) was set up on the initiative of the Market Information Systems (MIS) of Mali, Senegal, Niger and Guinea. The main aim of creating the network, which now consists of 10 West African countries, was to provide all members with access to information on agricultural markets beyond national frontiers in order to facilitate analyses of prices, quantities and business opportunities for agricultural products.

Although contacts between the MIS had been initiated in the 1990s, the RESIMAO was not set up until November 2004 in Kpalimé in Togo. The RESIMAO currently covers 390 markets in the ECOWAS region, including 39 regional markets, and monitors virtually all agricultural products. The RESIMAO is the regional correspondent of the CEDEAO for agricultural market information.

Since its creation, the RESIMAO, via its members, has collected information on prices, quantities and business opportunities and disseminated this information to all stakeholders at national and international levels.

Although it has a platform, www.resimao.org, the RESIMAO is still experiencing problems regarding the site functioning. The consultants hired to that end have not proven to be satisfactory, which is why the network is currently working on creating a platform using in-house resources in collaboration with the ECOWAS, based on the functionalities defined in the old platform resimao.org.

The successes of the RESIMAO, since its creation, include among others:

- ◆ the development of symmetrical approaches between all agricultural market stakeholders;
- ◆ monitoring agricultural markets, processing, analysing and disseminating information via various media: print, electronic (Internet), e-mail, SMS and RAC radio communication;
- ◆ the creation of national databases;
- ◆ improving the fluidity of exchanges between States;
- ◆ improving market efficiency;

However, the RESIMAO is still faced with numerous challenges, including among others:

- ◆ getting all ECOWAS countries to join the RESIMAO;
- ◆ promoting the emergence of national MIS via administrative and financial autonomy;
- ◆ improving coverage of the true needs of users of the information disseminated;
- ◆ decentralising the MIS (bringing the system closer to local stakeholders in order to ensure that their needs are more closely addressed);
- ◆ creating a new platform using in-house competences;
- ◆ promoting the innovative institutional development of all the network's MIS;
- ◆ creating regional databases of agricultural products.

In conclusion, we can say that the RESIMAO is a series of national MIS at the service of stakeholders involved in the trade in agricultural products in West-Africa and that it:

- ❖ has an efficient collection and communication network; and
- ❖ an appropriate dissemination system
- ❖ Its role is to improve the availability of food products and access to them, which are two essential pillars of food security