

**Mohamed Sidibé**  
National Coordinator  
Integrated Framework Implementation Unit  
Mali

## **THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING THE INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the organizers of this meeting at which I have been asked to open the discussions on the subject of "the challenges of implementing the Integrated Framework".

The subject is clearly one of interest to the participants: representatives of the beneficiary countries, donors, and participating organizations, as well as the Executive Secretariat and UNOPS, whose difficult task it is to come up with procedures and steps with a view to recommending to the decision-making bodies of the Integrated Framework an efficient way of making the programme operational so that the expectations of all those involved can be met.

In order to help explain the challenges encountered in implementing the Integrated Framework in Mali, let me start with the context in which they arose.

I shall begin with a brief description of the development of the Integrated Framework in Mali through its institutional environment and what we commonly call the key stages of the Integrated Framework.

### **PART I: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK IN MALI SINCE 2004**

#### **I. INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND EXECUTING AGENCIES**

##### **1. Legal institutional framework: Steering Committee and Inter-Ministerial Follow-Up Committee**

Since joining the Integrated Framework in 2003, the Government of Mali has issued ministerial decrees creating the institutional framework needed to implement the programme. This framework consists of:

- The Steering Committee (*Comité Directeur National*) under the chairmanship of the Minister of Trade and made up of the Secretaries-General of the ministerial departments involved in the development of trade, of private sector representatives through the consular organizations (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Permanent Assembly of the Chambers of Agriculture, etc.) as well as representatives of civil society. The Steering Committee is the policy and decision-making body for the implementation of the programme;
- the Inter-Ministerial Follow-Up Committee chaired by the Prime Minister and made up of the sectoral ministers represented in the Steering Committee. This high-level body is responsible for ensuring the conformity of the activities undertaken with the

Government's priority objectives. The creation of this Committee reflects the political will of the Government and the importance it attaches to the Integrated Framework.

NB: The institutional framework is currently being reviewed to alter the composition of the committees, but also to expand their area of competence to all trade-related assistance programmes (e.g. Aid for Trade: our vision since the meeting of Montreuil in 2007 and the meetings organized in Paris by the OECD and the WTO).

## **2. Executing agencies: Focal Point and Implementation Unit**

The following executing agencies, responsible for operationalizing the programme, complete the institutional framework:

- The National Focal Point, namely the National Director of Trade and Competition;
- the Integrated Framework Implementation Unit, created in May 2005 and run by a National Coordinator recruited according to UNS procedures.

In addition to the decrees for the revision of the above-mentioned committees, an administrative act will shortly be issued to validate the recruitment of the National Coordinator of the Implementation Unit in accordance with the recommendations of the UNOPS mission to Mali in January 2009. Seconded staff will also be subjected to the same recruitment procedures.

## **3. Donor Facilitator**

USAID has undertaken to support Mali as Donor Facilitator.

## **4. UNDP, partner focal point (during Window II), and now "strategic partner"**

During the Window 2005-2007 phase, the UNDP assumed with great efficiency the role of partner focal point, providing much appreciated technical assistance and financial support.

This is why it was decided that following Window II, the UNDP should be given its current role as strategic partner at the national level.

## **II. KEY STAGES OF THE INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK IN MALI**

The key stages of the Integrated Framework are:

### **1. Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS):**

Conducted in 2004, and the National Validation Workshop took place from 29 November to 1 December 2004.

### **2. Incorporation in the national development strategy – Strategic Framework for Growth and Poverty Reduction (SFGPR)**

With the development of the SFGPR 2007-2011, the trade component of the national development strategy was reinforced. Integration into the world trade system is one of the priority targets of Mali's SFGPR 2007-2011. Since the SFGPR is a unifying framework, it seemed essential to develop sectoral trade policy and the department's Medium-Term Spending Framework (MTSF), both keys to efficient planning. This has enabled Mali to provide for financing under the national budget of priority projects and actions of the matrix, as I shall explain later on.

**3. Window II with the implementation of certain "pilot" projects from 2005 to 2007:**

Certain projects were implemented, for example in the mango industry, where thanks to synergy with an STDF project on the application of phytosanitary standards, it was possible to obtain convincing results. With all due modesty, the Integrated Framework contributed considerably to today's surge in Mali's mango exports, which have risen from 2,915 tonnes in 2005 to 12,676 tonnes, i.e. 330 per cent over the period. And thanks to contributions from the UNDP and the State budget, which will undoubtedly be supplemented by a contribution from the AFD, we were able to launch a pilot project on the creation of a fruit processing unit for a rural women's cooperative.

**4. Transition from Integrated Framework to Enhanced Integrated Framework (Mali, from 2007 to this day – until when?)**

Although the Window II resources have been used up, Integrated Framework activities have not come to a halt in Mali. Thanks to financial support from the UNDP, and above all from the State budget, which alone contributed a total of CFAF 1,100,000,000 (€1,676,939 or approximately US\$2,500,000) from 2007 to 2009, the momentum has been maintained. In other words, Mali is already involved in financing IF activities through the national budget.

This essential point brings me to the matter of the challenges involved in implementing the Integrated Framework.

**PART II: THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING  
THE INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK IN MALI**

I deliberately place financing at the centre of the challenges encountered by us, even if the problem of financing is common to all of the major programmes developed for the benefit of many recipients and involving several donors.

I would like to highlight here the specific problem of the delay in obtaining access to resources from the Multilateral Fund.

There should be no doubt as to the efforts made – on the contrary, I acknowledge with considerable respect the efforts made by those responsible and by the donors, and I would like to congratulate the former and thank the latter. Hopefully, we have reached the end of the setting up process. But where would the Integrated Framework be in Mali now if the State had not taken upon itself to fund almost entirely such activities as the creation of the National Export Promotion Agency (cooperation with the ITC); the production of a trade policy development paper (sectoral policy), currently underway with UNCTAD; capacity-building of actors in the mango industry and the promotion of mango exports in cooperation with the ITC; development of the department's MTEF, etc.

The main challenges apart from the delay in obtaining access to resources from the Multilateral Fund, I have classified in two categories:

- Those linked to the beneficiary country, i.e., at the national level;
- those linked to the donors.

## **I. CHALLENGES LINKED TO THE BENEFICIARY COUNTRY (NATIONAL LEVEL)**

### **1. Strengthening trade in the national development strategy**

Two types of problems were encountered:

1.1 Lack of understanding: the strengthening of the trade component in the national development strategy is not often understood or considered justified by those in charge, who are used to traditional planning exercises. It was therefore necessary to explain, during the preparatory work for the SFGPR 2007-2011:

- How the role of trade in economic and social development and poverty reduction could be enhanced;
- that the need to strengthen the trade component in national strategy meant always taking account of trade when approaching the subject of development. Example: the rice initiative.

It is these considerations that justify the strengthening of trade in national development strategies, in the LDCs in any case.

To overcome the challenge of strengthening the trade component in the national development plan on which we have based our arguments and all of our communication on the subject, we had to illustrate the impact that trade could have on the income of the poorest populations (example: mangos), an impact that would contribute to boosting inclusive growth, to use the UNCTAD term, or "redistributive" growth to use the national term.

1.2 At the technical level: lack of planning tools - sectoral policy and the NTEF, significant follow-up indicators

The strengthening of trade in the national development strategy calls for the use of planning tools, namely sectoral policy and NTEF, both essential tools which we did not have.

For the sake of coherence of the planned objectives and activities of all sectors under the national development plan, we have had to develop a sectoral trade policy and an NTEF for the sector. To our knowledge, most LDCs did not, until recently, have these two essential national planning tools.

Our NTEF was finalized a few months ago, and the sectoral policy framework document developed with the assistance of UNCTAD was validated in April 2009. The policy paper itself will soon be available.

### **2. Coordination of trade-related activities by the Ministry of Trade or the Integrated Framework Steering Committee – Explanations backed up by examples**

This difficulty is the corollary to the first point regarding understanding, but can also be explained by the relatively insignificant "weight" generally attributed to the Ministry of Trade in our country, as often reflected in the Government's order of precedence. The Ministry of Trade is often seen as a "bother", as an obstacle that gets in the way of the duties or areas of competence of other ministries, such as agriculture and finance.

The solution lies in continuously explaining the role of coordination.

## **II. CHALLENGES LINKED TO THE PARTNERS**

### **1. Distribution and understanding of roles: the Facilitator**

The role of the Facilitator is to arouse the interest of donors in providing support for the Integrated Framework implementation process. This also involves ensuring that the process is properly conducted according to the well-defined rules. In fact, we believe that the fundamental principles of the Integrated Framework are essentially those of the Paris Declaration. It is therefore difficult to understand that certain donors should insist on imposing their own vision outside this framework.

We recognize that this is a rather singular practice, but since it is something that we do experience, we felt that it should be mentioned.

### **2. Revised procedures for the approval of Tier 1 projects**

The revised procedures for the approval of Tier 1 projects are an impediment to the smooth functioning of the process in Mali, and could eventually become a problem in other countries (reminder of the project of the Group of West African Countries in September 2008). No consultation of the LDCs as was the case with the transition team (broad consultations, e.g.: Dakar 2007).

Indeed, the rules state that the Facilitator must participate in the meeting to approve projects, or if that is not possible, the Facilitator is solely responsible for appointing a substitute.

What happens, then, when the Facilitator does not participate in the meetings for the approval of Tier 1 projects, and worse still, does not appoint a representative?

Would it not be better for the Chairman of the Steering Committee to be able to appoint the substitute if the Facilitator is absent? In any case, as they stand, the revised procedures penalize Mali. The committee for the approval of the projects has met twice, but our Facilitator has not responded to the invitations sent to him, and all of the efforts made in this respect have been in vain – the situation has not changed. Witnesses.

To conclude our remarks on the problems linked with the partners, and in particular the Facilitator, we ask the following question: What place should be given to Integrated Framework donors that have not signed the Paris Declaration, and have not therefore assumed any commitments as regards its principles?

Thank you.

Bamako, 2 July 2009

---