

Katsina Workshop: Conclusions

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I. Presentation of K²M Initiative outlined at the Workshop

During the workshop it was decided to set-up a cross-border cooperation initiative in the Kano - Katsina – Maradi area under the auspices of the Niger-Nigeria Joint Commission.

The initiative will initially be set up for a two-year period after which it will be evaluated. During this time, three platforms will be set up and supported by a cross-cutting communications programme.

Platform 1: “Information on Food Crop Markets”

This platform shall:

- Develop proposals aimed at harmonising price, quantity and flow data collection methods; monitor the implementation of a medium-term harmonisation process of such methods.
- Identify / map out designated markets as a common basis for the survey.
- Strengthen operational partnerships among market information systems of Niger and Nigeria.
- Identify the needs of economic operators (producers, merchants, market managers, entrepreneurs, transporters) concerning information on prices and trade flows as well as public calls for tender procedures for the reconstitution of food security stocks and food crisis management.
- Negotiate an agreement with GSM operators active in Niger and Nigeria aimed at facilitating the circulation of information via portable telephones.

This platform will bring together representatives all of the actors concerned: public and private, local, national, regional, international in order to facilitate the decision-making and the implementation process.

Platform 2: “Cross-border Movement of Goods”

This platform shall:

- Define the modalities of establishing a network of the Dawanau, Katsina, Jibya and Maradi markets; to monitor this process which should contribute to simplifying official control mechanisms.
- Lead a permanent dialogue among operators of these four markets (producers, merchants, market managers, entrepreneurs, transporters), of border control officials (Police, customs, health services, etc.) and local political authorities.
- Train economic operators to deal with various types of controls carried out by police, customs officials, veterinary/sanitary services, etc.

This platform will bring together representatives of all public and private actors concerned including representatives of the police force, customs officials and other technical services.

Platform 3: “Cross-border Movement of Capital”

This platform shall:

- Assess all the financial transaction and trade operation systems within the K²M area.
- Dialogue with ECOBANK and other commercial banks in order to set up a greater number of branches and diversify services offered within the K²M area.
- Carry out strategic thinking on the development of a cross-border bank card payment system based on existing models in Nigeria with the banking institutions concerned.
- Engage in strategic thinking involving the governments of Niger and Nigeria as well as public and private financial and trade operators in the K²M area in order to improve existing mechanisms for the reconstitution of public stocks (broadening and facilitating calls for tender systems, improving financial channels, etc.).
- Undertake strategic thinking on the development and establishment of a network of microcredit institutions to support small and medium-scale trade.
- Undertake strategic thinking on the creation of a specific financing system for the cattle trade sector, based on the work undertaken by the CILSS on the “Livestock Breeders Bank”.

Cross-cutting Communications

A Cross-cutting Communications Programme will be launched in order to support the work undertaken by the three platforms. This programme will firstly address the setting up of a network of cross-border radio stations broadcasting in the K²M area in order to:

- Disseminate locally information on prices and quantities
- Disseminate locally information on exchange rates
- Disseminate locally the rights and responsibilities of populations with regard to ECOWAS laws and national legislation with regard to the movement of persons, goods and capital
- Disseminate all other relevant information for food security and trade and financial transaction facilitation in the K²M area
- Promote the K²M initiative, and make its work known.

II. Institutional Organisation

Firstly and contingent upon the feasibility study recommendations and decisions by the parties concerned:

- The K²M initiative will be placed within the framework of ECOWAS’ Cross-border Initiatives Programme thus constituting one of its pilot operations. The extent of the involvement of the ECOWAS Commission in the “initiative’s governance” shall be defined.

- The initiative shall be implemented under the auspices of the Niger-Nigeria Joint Commission for Cooperation. The governments of Niger and Nigeria will be represented by the *Commission Nationale des Frontières* of Niger and the National Boundary Commission of Nigeria.
- Through these three platforms and the Communications Programme, the initiative should encourage the leadership of local public and private actors (producer associations, merchants, transporters, banks, radio stations, civil society associations, etc.).
- Involvement of other national, regional and international actors dealing with food security issues is essential. The modalities of this involvement shall be defined.

III. Next Steps

Drafting of a Concept Paper and Seeking Financing for a Feasibility Study.

The organisers of the workshop were asked to draft a concept paper by mid-October 2007 presenting the overall mechanism, highlighting unresolved issues and outlining the possible next steps in setting up the initiative.

This document will serve as a basis for drafting the terms of reference for the feasibility study.

At the same time, the Niger-Nigeria Joint Commission for Cooperation with the support of the Katsina Workshop organisers will seek financing from potential financial partners for the feasibility study and a political meeting presenting the initiative (described below).

Feasibility Study with the Involvement of all Concerned Actors

This study aims to extend the work undertaken at the Katsina Workshop by deepening and broadening consultations with K²M area actors based on the proposals described above.

This study should be carried out within the framework of the Niger-Nigeria Joint Commission for Cooperation.

The study could be carried out by a Niger-Nigeria team mostly made up of members from the K²M area. This team shall:

- Meet with all of the actors potentially interested in the initiative and with them define objectives and procedures for the implementation of the various platforms.
- Develop, on this basis, a two-year project with a corresponding budget.

Political Process

The Katsina Workshop provided the broad technical outline of an ambitious initiative which falls within an already established regional policy framework:

- On 18 January 2005 the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat presented a memorandum entitled “The Cross-border Concept or Local Integration” to the ECOWAS Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Council adopted this Memorandum and asked that the Executive Secretariat extend cross-border cooperation to all West African borders.
- In February 2005, the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat wrote to all of its Ministers of Foreign Affairs informing them of the launching of the ECOWAS Cross-borders Initiatives Programme.
- On 9 January 2006 the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat presented to the ECOWAS Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs a second Memorandum entitled “Assessment and Perspective of the Implementation of the Cross-border Initiatives Programme Following the adoption of the Memorandum on “the cross-border concept or local integration” by Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 18 January 2005”.
- The 2007-2010 Strategic Plan approved by Heads of State of member States in June 2007 foresees the implementation of a regional strategy in support of cross-border cooperation (Objective No. C-TCTMoPIM O2 EO2 A2.3)

Nevertheless, the Katsina Workshop highlighted the need to undertake a broad political dialogue process with regard to the K²M initiative to be carried out under the auspices of the Niger-Nigeria Joint Commission for Cooperation with the support of the *Commission Nationale des Frontières* of Niger and the National Boundary Commission of Nigeria.

This process could in particular be supported by the organisation of a one day meeting at the political level to present the initiative to all of the authorities directly concerned by the initiative: the two ministries responsible for border issues, the governors of Maradi, Kano and Katsina as well as representatives of local public and private actors. The political meeting could be organised after the finalisation of the aforementioned feasibility document.