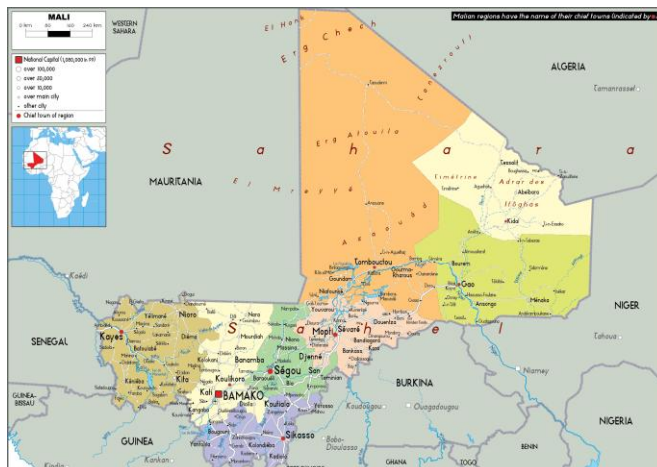


Projet An Ka Baara – Mali

Implementation: International
Labour Organisation (ILO)

Funding: Italian Agency for
Development Cooperation
(AICS)

Budget : 3,500,000 euros (2023-
2026)



Introduction

The project aims to promote job creation and income generation, with a particular focus on youth, women, and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. The project's area of intervention centres on the development of the mango and horticulture value chains. It operates in southern Mali, specifically in the regions of Sikasso, Bougouni, Koutiala, Dioila, southern Koulikoro, and the District of Bamako.

The project adopts the Market Systems Development (MSD) approach, which is widely used in private sector and value chain development initiatives. This approach is based on three key principles: in-depth analysis of the issues to be addressed, implementation through partnerships with market actors, and adaptive management to adjust or redefine activities as needed to achieve the project's objectives.

Implementation phase

The project has completed its start-up phase (initially funded by a contribution from the Swedish International Development Agency – SIDA, USD 2.4 million). During this phase, the project conducted a Market Systems Analysis (MSA) of the mango and horticulture value chains, as well as pilot activities, to establish a foundation for the An Ka Baara project. The ILO and AICS are focusing on geographical areas in southern Mali, targeting the mango and horticulture value chains.

Mango Value Chain Strategy

Although demand for fresh mangoes is high, production remains constrained by low productivity and significant losses. Orchards, often aging, are not being renewed with varieties suitable for export and are not regularly maintained. Moreover, small-scale producers—who make up the majority in the sector—face challenges in accessing inputs and technologies needed to improve their yields.

Mango processing also represents an important lever for creating wage employment and is a major source of demand for fresh mangoes. However, processors, like exporters of fresh mangoes, face supply challenges due to insufficient productivity and post-harvest losses, often caused by diseases. In addition, these actors must overcome competitiveness challenges, including technological and skills gaps, as well as barriers to accessing markets—particularly European markets—which also hinder fresh mango exports.

Based on the findings of the analysis, the project has defined its mango value chain development strategy, which consists of three main components:

1. **Promoting productivity, maintenance, and renewal of orchards.** The focus will be on promoting nurseries, disseminating practices such as intercropping horticulture and modern grafting techniques, and improving access to key inputs and equipment (such as those for fruit fly management).
2. **Enhancing the competitiveness of processors** to increase their profitability and sales volumes to create jobs and ensure a reliable market for producers. The focus will be on access to modern processing equipment and the development of both technical and managerial skills.
3. **Facilitating market access** to reach more lucrative markets for fresh and processed mangoes, thereby creating incentives for the modernization of the value chain. Efforts will focus on linking with potential buyers and strengthening commercial skills and marketing/sales strategies tailored to target markets.

Six Malian mango exporters participated in the 2024 MacFrut international trade fair in Italy, a key event for exotic fruits. They received targeted training on business prospecting, including company presentation, B2B meetings, and the use of digital platforms. Each exporter secured several purchase commitments, one of which materialized in the export of 3 tons of mangoes to Belgium. In addition, a Belgian company committed to purchasing 3 tons of mangoes per week during the next season.

Horticulture Value Chain Strategy

Through its Market Systems Analysis (MSA)—as with the mango value chain—the project identified that the greatest potential for income generation and job creation in horticulture lies at the production level, which already employs many youth and women. The growing demand for fresh horticultural products presents significant opportunities for sectoral growth and import substitution during off-seasons. These opportunities are accessible to youth and

women, given that horticultural production has relatively low entry barriers (e.g., land requirements, initial investment). However, small-scale producers—particularly the most vulnerable, including youth and women—face several challenges that shorten the production season, reduce productivity, hinder market access, and lead to high post-harvest losses. These challenges are primarily linked to limited access to water and poor water management, the low use of appropriate productive inputs (especially seeds), and weak technical and managerial capacities.



Based on the conclusions of the Market Systems Analysis (MSA), the project has defined its horticulture value chain development strategy, which consists of three main components:

1. **Promoting information services on production methods, financial management, and other relevant advice**, using information and communication technologies (ICT) to make advisory services widely accessible—particularly through mobile phones and support to community radio stations.
2. **Promoting the supply of modern technologies and inputs to horticultural producers** to significantly increase their productivity. This will build on previous pilot activities, focusing on supporting suppliers of solar pumps and inputs (especially seeds) to adapt their business models to the needs of small-scale producers.
3. **Promoting a hands-on training centre** to facilitate the establishment of youth and women as horticultural producers and to introduce new technical innovations to them and the sector more broadly. The project will also explore opportunities for contract farming to improve market access for trained youth and women.