

## Case Study # 4: Focus on Results

### Malian farmers find success in shallots

**USAID/Mali helped 2,000 shallot farmers increase production by 27 percent and double revenue through strategic investments across the value chain.**

Along Mali's Dogon Plateau, farmers used to struggle to make a living harvesting and processing shallots and selling them before they spoiled. Thanks to strategic investments across the value chain, shallot farmers, most of whom are women, have significantly improved the quality of their product and dramatically increased revenue so they can better provide for themselves and their families.

Increases in shallot production and revenue were made possible by USAID/Mali's Integrated Initiatives for Economic Growth program (IICEM). Using funds from the Global Food Security Response (GFSR) – the U.S. government's initial efforts after the 2008 rise in global food prices that helped lay the foundation for Feed the Future – IICEM launched a comprehensive plan to sustainably improve the competitiveness of several



agricultural value chains, including shallots. Shallots were selected in large part because of the high participation of women in their growth and sale. IICEM provided technical expertise to stakeholders all along the value chain – including assistance on production, post-harvest storage, processing, and marketing. As a result, shallot harvests have increased, the quality and shelf-life of processed shallots was extended, and sales have greatly improved. Through their cooperative, shallot farmers now have better access to technology, such as simple, mechanized grinders that reduce processing time, keep shallots fresh longer, and improve the quality of the final product. Before, farmers used a hand-processing and drying method that yielded only 50 kilograms of shallots per day and led to quick spoilage. With new processing equipment, farmers are now able to process up to one ton of shallots per hour. To further support the Dogon shallot farmers and leverage the resources of multilateral institutions, USAID initiated a partnership with the World Bank and FAO to reorganize the farmers' cooperative and improve the transparency of donor aid.

The IICEM program has reached nearly 2,000 cooperative members, three-fourths of whom are women. This comprehensive approach helped Dogon farmers increase production by 27 percent and revenues from \$10,700 to \$21,300 per hectare. The program was so successful that USAID helped a group of Dogon women attend an agro-foods fair in Burkina Faso, where they won a \$1,700 first prize for the quality of their product. One farmer left the fair with an order for 25 tons of the celebrated shallot, an order that she can easily fill.

***Integrated, evidence-based investments will be a cornerstone of Feed the Future. We will scale up programs that make strategic investments across the value chain and show measurable impact. Our approach will be comprehensive, including investments such as affordable agricultural inputs, better access to technology and extension services, and expanded markets and trade.***

“We used to spend the entire day under the sun grinding shallots with our children crying beside us. We would return home exhausted, with cooking and cleaning that awaited us and only 50 kilograms of processed shallots to show for our day's work. Now, we can process one ton in one hour which leaves us plenty of time for other tasks.”

Kassara Kene,  
President,  
Kokodiogo's Women's  
Cooperative