What’s new about MIS in Sub-Saharan Africa?

An overview of MIS evolution

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CONTEXT

80’s – 90’s : 2 decades of fast development of MIS, in a context of market liberalization

But the results appear disappointing (Bowbrick, 1988 ; Shepherd, 1997 ; Egg et Galtier 1998 et 2003) :

- Information disseminated doesn't meet stockholders needs
- Financially unsustainable
- Lack of M&E tools and lack of reactivity
- Market functioning and specificities are not considered

A new generation of MIS emerge in 2000’s, in a changing environment : NTIC, strengthening of farmers organizations, regional integration policies
Objective: what are the main evolutions and innovations in today’s MIS?
Sources

- **SIM inventory** (77 MIS data base - 66% Africa, 18% Asia, Lat. Am. 11%, Caribbean 4%, World 1%)
- **Email survey** (identification, main features, evolution, constraints/solutions)
- Several reminders and revisions
  => 31 “clean” answers (mostly Africa : 94%)
- Additional information from literature and web
Limitations

• Mostly descriptive (no indications about effectiveness of the services provided)

• Preliminary results (some filled in questionnaires received mid-March)
Methods

- Evolution of the first generation of MIS ("1G": 80’s & 90’s ): comparing their beginning / today’s situation
  ("1G" terminology will be kept here to avoid confusion, even if they have integrated many innovations)

- Main features & innovations in today’s MIS :
  comparing “1G” today / recent MIS ("2G" : 2000’s)

"artificial" chronological limit in 2000 ?
  • necessity to set a limit to analyze evolution
  • relevant considering changes in the environment (1st SIM using Internet and mobile phone, regional integration policies…)
  • MIS are influenced by their history
RESULTS
General mapping of MIS in Africa

Légende :

SIM régional / réseau de SIM

SIM international / Plateforme

SIM national
### Geographical classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1G</th>
<th>2G</th>
<th>Sub-total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supranational</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

- National MIS are most well spread
- Few supranational: regional, network, World

We will focus on national MIS, as supranational ones are too heterogeneous to be analyzed as a single type.
Main features and evolution

Focused on aspects that have been changing significantly (or that are expected to have changed)

- Information collected and sources
- Internal transmission and users diffusion
- Other services provided
- Monitoring and feed-back
- Institutional home
- Funding
1G have extended the scope of prices and volumes collected. More attention now on traded volume and stocks.

2 G appear more selective on the level of prices, and are interested on volume as well.
Other information collected

- **1G**: strong diversification of information collected (supply/demand, extension – production & market, costs, prevision of harvest and prices, policies…)

- Today strong heterogeneity among all the MIS (2 to 18 «other info.» collected). No clearly related to an other parameter.
SIM provide today a limited number of services (apart from information). Mostly related to training and extension.

Studies appear a specificity of 1G.
sources and modes of internal transmission

today

- Most 1G have integrated NTIC (email - SMS), but still use classical media of transmission (fax, phone, hand delivery, postal, radio).

- 2G rely mostly on NTIC, more specifically on SMS (seldom on traditional media)
Diversified means:

- Email and Web are generalized
- SMS well spread among 2G but much less among 1G
- NTIC are not excluding more traditional: large scale dissemination means (radio) and analytical media (news-letter, news papers) in both categories of MIS
© Large panel of SE and feed-back tools
© No significant difference between 1G and 2G
© But no ex-post analysis of actual requests
1G: public sector home remains largely dominant

2G: almost no public home.
Large diversity (projects and NGOs, farmers/traders organizations, private firms)
Several mixed institutional home is common
1G: public largely dominant and limited contribution of donors (previously funded by project related to liberalization, they are now included in government budget)

2G: rely mostly on donors (new SIM, benefiting from renewal of interest towards MIS). Some (very marginal) contribution of users.
## Discussion

What can be expected from these innovations ?

(in term of potential to improve efficiency)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limits of 1G MIS</th>
<th>Indicators of (potentiel) improvement of performances</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lack of reliability and utility of the information provided</td>
<td>Modes of diffusion (utility)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Information collected (utility)</td>
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<td>Modes of infernal transmission (reliability)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quality control (reliability)</td>
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<td>2. Lack of tools / methods of monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>Feed-back devices (monitoring + adjustment capacity)</td>
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<td>3. Lack of adjustment capacity (administrative management)</td>
<td>Institutional home (incentive to match users needs)</td>
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<td>4. Problem of durability (project funded)</td>
<td>Funding (durability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Market functioning insufficiently considered</td>
<td>Other services (respond to non informational constraints)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.1. Meet stakeholders needs (frequency, accessibility, diversity)

- Real improvement in transmission technologies. Updated ITCs, along with traditional media (radio)
- A major innovation using SMS: interactivity (the user chooses the information he needs)

⇒ Adequate tools to (potentially) transmit a targeted information, at a fast speed, when requested, as well as a mass dissemination at very low cost

1.2. Reliability

- The use of NITCs reduces the risk of errors due to internal transmission.
- Different methods to control the quality of information
- But, risk of voluntarily bias information, in case of contribution of the users to provide information to the MIS.
2. Feed-back, monitoring
- Different monitoring and feed-back are used (including involving users)
- But lack of real impact evaluation

3. Reactivity
Less administration management, more involvement of farmers’ organizations and private sector; should provide more incentives to meet the users expectations

4. Sustainability
The issue is not solved (recent MIS are mostly financed by donors or foundations; users contribution is still marginal)

5. Taking into consideration market conduct
- Very heterogeneous.
- The most multi-services integrated are projects (but not sustainable…)