

**GEF-RLWDT/Niger Basin Authority**

**Reversing Land and Water Degradation Trends  
in the Niger River Basin**

**Final evaluation of Project components**

**Volume 1: Main Document**

**UNOPS contract No. 40917/2011/001-ETS**

**FINAL VERSION**

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This contract is implemented by the Ets. Kerkhof. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of UNOPS, UNDP or the NBA.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**PART 1: MAIN DOCUMENT**

**ACRONYMS**

**INTRODUCTION ..... 4**

**METHODOLOGY ..... 5**

**1. CONTEXT AND DESIGN ..... 8**

**2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT..... 14**

**3. COMPONENT 2: CAPACITY BUILDING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS ..... 23**

**4. COMPONENT 4: REGIONAL FORUM ..... 28**

**5. COMPONENT 5: PILOT PROJECTS AND PDPS ..... 29**

**6. ACHIEVING GOALS: IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY..... 42**

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS .....43**

**PART 2: ANNEXES**

- 1: Meetings held and field visits made**
- 2: Terms of Reference**
- 3: Resource Persons met**
- 4: Documents analyzed**
- 5: Summary of meetings and field visits**
- 6: Summary of Component 2 workshops**
- 7: Summaries of micro-projects and PDPs visited**

## ACRONYMS

AGR	income generation activities
CBO	Community Based Organisation
ESMF	Framework for Environmental and Social Management
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GNI	Gross National Income
LCCM	Local committees for coordination and monitoring
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MP	Micro-grant projects
NSC	National Steering Committee
NBA	Niger Basin Authority
NPT	National Project Team
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
OP	Operational Programme (GEF)
PADD	Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of the Niger River Basin
PMCU	Project Management Coordination Unit
PLCE/NBA	ABN project against siltation
PMS	Micro-grant projects programme
PDP	Demonstration Pilot Project
PRODOC	Project Document
PTBA	Business Plan and annual budget
RLWDT	Reversing trends in land and water degradation
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
SE-NBA	Executive Secretary of the Niger Basin Authority
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SGP	Small Grants Program
SFN-ABN	ABN-National Focal Structure
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WB	World Bank

## INTRODUCTION

The independent evaluation mission of RLWDT / UNDP was led by Paul Kerkhof (environmental specialist and team leader) and Marthe Diarra (sociologist). It was conducted over the period October 2011 - January 2012.

The main objective of the final evaluation is to determine to what extent the objectives and expected outcomes of the project were achieved. It is intended for the NBA Executive Secretariat, Member States, and UNDP / UNOPS. A general description of the project RLWDT is presented in the ToR of the assignment.

The final evaluation team would like to thank all the resource persons of the 8 countries visited, especially stakeholders and project partners of RLWDT, government agencies (Department of Water, Environment, Agriculture, etc.), community-based organizations, NGOs and private operators, as well as international organizations, for their full cooperation and support to achieve this assessment, provide information and advice which have greatly facilitated the flow of work.

Only evaluators are responsible for the content of the report.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology is essentially defined by the ToR. The present evaluation mission aims at the 3 components supported by UNDP, in synergy with the overall evaluation mission carried out in February 2011. The work began effectively after contract signature on October 22, 2011. The mission took place in November and December 2011 and the report (draft version) was submitted on December 24.

The mission was conducted in five stages:

1. Analysis of 5 documents sent by the PMCU, and the first contacts with the teams via the Internet in each country. On the basis of the first documents received, the evaluation team was able to obtain a first impression of RLWDT. Due to the small number of documents sent at this stage, it was not possible to prepare this mission more thoroughly<sup>1</sup>.

2. At the start of the mission in Niamey, a second stage of document review began (182 files), and of some documents in hard copy and a video. Interviews took place in the NBA and PMCU in particular. In terms of regional institutions, the Regional Centre Agrhymet was visited. Some national institutions and 5 micro-projects and a PDP in Niger have been visited. Before departure, the mission presented an inception report to refine certain elements of the ToR, with some additional indicators for evaluation.

3. Subsequently, the mission visited seven other members of the NBA, including four countries where field visits were conducted. Nigeria was not included in the evaluation due to unavailability of resource people and institutions. A total of 12 micro-projects and 3 PDP were visited and evaluated in five countries, whilst representatives of CBOs and PDP were encountered in all 8 countries. Some countries have provided electronic documents to complement those available at PMCU. In several countries a verbal debriefing was held which allowed the mission to get feedback on preliminary conclusions.

4. The draft report was sent on December 24, as forecast in the inception report. A telephone conversation was held with the representative of UNOPS in december, and with the regional representative of UNDP (based in South Africa) in january.

5. The final report was prepared by 20 January 2012.

Table 1: The national and local stakeholders met in the country.

Resource persons	Benin	BF	Cam	CI	Guinée	Mali	Niger	Tchad
Coordinator		1	1	1	1	1	1	
MP adviser	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Members NSC		1		1	1	4	2	2
FEM SGP unit		1		1		1	1	
Nat Directors		1				1	1	1
SE intersectorial		1				1	1	
UNDP						1	1	2
PDP operator	2		1	1	1			1

<sup>1</sup> The following was initially envisaged: see contractual document UNOPS-Ets.Kerkhof n°3, p.5, "The evaluators will be supplied with the relevant documents over the internet as soon as the contract is signed"

CBO	2	X	3			X	X	4
NGO			2	1	3	X	X	1
PDP actors	X		3					
Microprojets &	1	2	1			3	4	
PDPs visited	1		1				1	

X = numerous representatives in the case of CBOs, NGOs and local actors to PDP

The conduct of the mission and the list of people interviewed are available in the appendix. A summary of interviews and field visits to micro-projects and PDPs is also found in the appendix. The assessment follows the nomenclature of the OECD and the criteria adopted by the European Union for external evaluations, with emphasis on the following material.

#### Evaluation criteria and indicators

The consultants note that their terms of reference do not mention the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness, however, these notions are implicit in the ToR. Project indicators are presented in the TOR of the mission and the project document RLWDT, but with differences between the English and French versions.

The following indicators are considered:

#### Efficiency

The economic use of resources determines the question of efficiency. This kind of evaluation is often hardly possible in the absence of a results based budget during the implementation. This is not the case of RLWDT. Moreover, this type of efficiency analysis is not possible for the vast majority of development projects. Sometimes a qualitative comparison has allowed the mission to judge efficiency.

#### Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the RLWDT was expressed in this evaluation in terms of achieving specific objectives or expected results, as indicated in project documents.

#### Impact and Sustainability

Impact is long-term effects of project actions, positive or negative, expected or unexpected. The durability was evaluated in terms of change induced by RLWDT after the end of the project. The evaluation mission took place nine months after the end of the project, but many actions supported by the project date back a few years ago, which facilitated this type of evaluation.

#### Relevance

The question is to what extent the specific objectives of RLWDT match, on one hand, policies and priorities, and on the other hand, the needs of people.

The mission is an independent evaluation conducted by persons not related to those responsible for the design and implementation of the project. The credibility of this assessment depends in part on the full and free access to information. The difficulty of obtaining reports (files) of the project, and the impossibility of including Nigeria, to some extent, reduced the effectiveness and independence of the mission. In terms of availability of information, two constraints have emerged:

- The PMCU did not send the bulk of electronic documents in advance (5 received in

advance, 182 electronic documents received in Niamey)

- Many national level documents were not available to the mission

The result of the unavailability of documents during the preparatory phase, was that the mission could not interact with the regional coordinator and others on complex themes and apparent paradoxes identified later, after reading the documents whilst travelling in the countries. In the opinion of the mission, a debriefing in Niamey at the end of the mission should have been foreseen in the ToR.

The efficiency of the mission was somewhere reduced by extensive travel in a very short time. Several flights were canceled during the busy time at the end of the year. But overall, the mission was able to carry out the work expected by the ToR, with the exception of Nigeria.

# 1. CONTEXT AND DESIGN

The world is changing faster than ever in social, economic and environmental terms. The project document was produced in 2004. Seven years have elapsed between the project design and the present evaluation.

## Economic context

Since the project started in 2005, economic development has been rather positive in the Basin countries, as measured by GNI per capita. During the period of 5 years in the table below, GNI / capita rose 20% to over 40%. The growth rate is well above previous levels, such as 1990's and well above growth rates in developed countries. Naturally, this development does not take into account the economic inequalities between social groups.

Table 1. The evolution of GNI in \$ / capita, World Bank data

	Benin	BF	Cam	CI	Guinée	Mali	Niger	Nigeria	Tchad
GNI 2006 \$	590	410	990	900	320	410	280	840	460
GNI 2007 \$	630	420	1.060	950	330	470	290	970	500
GNI 2008 \$	730	470	1.160	1.070	350	520	330	1.170	550
GNI 2009 \$	780	500	1.210	1.160	380	570	340	1.190	610
GNI 2010 \$	780	530	1.180	1.160	400	600	370	1.180	620

Life expectancy was still between 46 and 49 according to the project document, while it is between 49 and 54 in 2009. Without going into an analysis of numerous development issues, we find that the socio-economic environment has changed significantly since the preparation of the project in 2004.

## Institutional context

The corruption index of Basin countries ranges from 1.7 (Chad) to 3.1 (Burkina Faso) in 2010, on a scale of 10, 1 being the worst, the best being 10. In 2005, the corruption index for Burkina Faso was 3.4 and for Chad 1.9. This is a governance dynamics in the wrong direction since 2005. The biggest challenge of reversing degradation trends in NR is probably corruption and gross economic inequality. The growing wealth of the country expressed in the above table, is appropriated by relatively few at the expense of public resources and welfare of the majority. A program to reverse NR degradation trends that ignores corruption, cannot really succeed, because the environment is essentially a public or community resource.

Some stakeholders expressed to the mission their grief concerning the corruption they face each day. They find that the phenomenon has degraded, supporting the indicators mentioned above. The only positive point is the fact that they express themselves freely on corruption.

The degradation of public resources is a result of demographic change, but also large-scale land appropriation by many politicians and wealthy people, often in ways which are not legal or not legitimate. This is likely to push many to the extreme rural poverty, knowing that communal resources are essential to overcome the most difficult periods.

The security situation has deteriorated in the Sahel and Saharan Africa especially, especially in Mali and Niger. The Air Ténéré, a large natural area and of great value to tourism, is now

mined. This is a change since 2005 has strongly influenced some project actions and it is likely to remain so in the short and medium term.

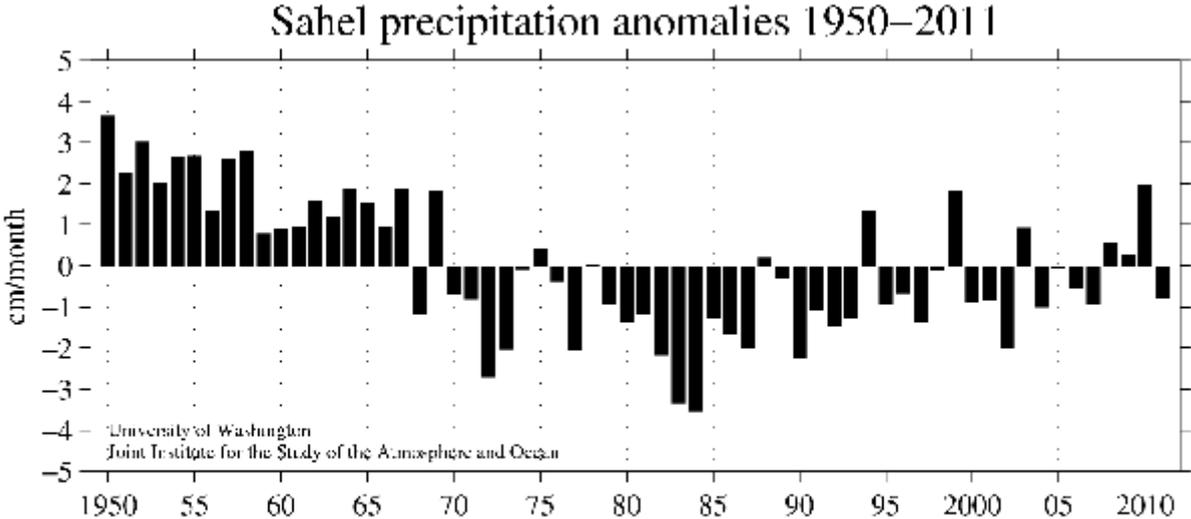
In a more positive note in terms of governance, decentralization moved further into the sub-region since 2004, particularly in Niger and Burkina Faso, since 2010 in Cameroon. The conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has come to terms, and democracy was reinstated in Niger. Support of the NBA will have to rely heavily on the relationship between CBOs and decentralized governance. However, the governance of wood resources in Chad, Niger and Mali has not changed in the right direction. Nevertheless, decentralized governance is a major pillar of the reversal of NR degradation trends in land and water degradation.

There is a strong tendency to support the regionalization of institutions in West Africa. This tendency existed in 2004 but it now seems even stronger.

**Environmental context**

In environmental terms, the project document notes drought, continuing deforestation in the basin, etc. The SAP notes a significant decline in annual rainfall. Since the great droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, the description of the environmental context is expressed in a dramatized manner in many documents, a statement of facts does not necessarily correspond with reality.

First of all, the great droughts of the 1970s and 1980s stopped in the 1990s and there is no longer a decadal rainfall deficit, as was the case, see chart below. But the risk of drought in the Sahel remains omnipresent.



June through October averages over 20–10N, 20W–10E. 1950–2011 climatology. NOAA NCDC Global Historical Climatology Network data

The FAO statistics for the sub-region show that deforestation continues in the Basin countries. Too often, the demand for wood for domestic use is seen as the main cause. If cutting wood energy contributes to the degradation of forests, the main cause of deforestation is still agricultural expansion. Population dynamics supports this inexorable expansion.

However, agricultural intensification, combined with better governance of wood, also led to the reversal trends in land degradation in some areas. The examples most studied and published are those of the Maradi region of Niger and parts of Nigeria. In the case of Maradi, the reversal of trends is dramatic in the positive direction, and is calculated to 5 million hectares. The key is improved land tenure. Other Sahelian areas have been identified where the situation is now much better than some thirty years ago, such as the plains of Seno (Mali) and most of the Cape Verde islands. Studies are underway to quantify and publish the changes.

It is important for a project to reverse environmental degradation trends, to consider the complexity of environmental dynamics, much more complex than that presented in the project document, and rapidly changing.

### **The evolving policy framework of the GEF**

The project was conceptualized in the years 2004-2005, but no precise documentation of the process of conceptualization is available to the final evaluation mission. The reference of the mission is the project document, the French version follows the structure of a document from the World Bank, and the English version is a UNDP document. Both are reference materials, with significant differences in terms of content. The current review focuses on three of six components. Within the constraints of methodological evaluation, the mission at first evaluates the relevance of the project concept under the SGP program document GEF OP5<sup>2</sup>.

The strategic thrusts of the GEF SGP in OP5 can be summarized as follows:

In terms of some of the (sub) sectors:

- conservation and protection of carbon stocks through sustainable management of land ... .. and the fight against land degradation ... and improved stoves
- improve the flow of services of agro ecosystems and forest ecosystems to develop the living conditions of communities
- support the elimination of persistent pesticides in the communities: dioxin, mercury, etc..

The mission notes that the (sub) sectors GEF OP5 correspond with those of the project concept.

In terms of cross-cutting themes:

- for an integrated and holistic approach... the issues are related
- focus on community groups for commitment through a consultative processes; the generation, access and use of information and knowledge
- encourage participatory approaches in political decision-making
- “think globally and act locally” is the backbone of the action
- gender is one of the most central issues

The mission notes that the project document is often not very specific in terms of the cross-cutting themes listed above. It lacks strong elements of governance such as decentralization, which is now a key issue in member countries, and which it already was in 2004. The focus of

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<sup>2</sup> GEF Operational Programme 5 for the Small Grants Programme is the document used presently by this GEF programme. The mission therefore used it as a key reference of GEF guidelines for the project component evaluated here.

gender in the project document is rather low. The link between local actions (micro projects) and global actions (such as the formulation of the SAP) is mentioned but not much developed in the document.

GEF OP5 notes that the focal area “international waters” (No. 8) has not changed since the OP4, and that there are more challenges, including pollution, eutrophication, etc.

The document seeks “a critical mass of experiences, lessons, innovative technologies that will ... provide models for development”. The project document seeks to achieve this through the PDP sub-component. In the opinion of the mission, the notion of identifying innovation with PDPs is wrong: a critical mass of experiences can also be generated by micro-projects, an idea that GEF OP5 also seeks to exploit.

GEF OP5 emphasizes the need to share data and good information flow. The mission found that the concept was not well developed in the project document ITDTE: it lacks the most excellent communication tool of all, a well developed website.

Outcome indicators GEF OP5 are sufficiently complete and accurate, they show a richness that is somewhat missing in the project logical framework, for example:

- Percentage of projects with socio-economic analysis
- Percentage of projects with gender analysis, or that incorporates elements such a positive way
- Contributions to conferences, publications and research ...
- Hectares covered by best practices ....

### **Conceptual aspects to consider**

The evaluation is limited mainly to components 2, 4 and 5, but in terms of goals it is concerned by all components. The mission notes that the part supported by the World Bank is primarily related to institutional development and regional strategy. There is a certain weariness on the part of West African policymakers on new policies and strategies, whether regional or national. There are countless policy documents (sub) sector which have served to almost nothing, and there is talk of policy inflation. The investment plans (NIPs) and national budgets are probably more relevant to calibrate the political will of a government.

The minutes of the project RSC, but also meetings of the mission in the country have once again shown that the stakeholders want to support development in the field. Thus, component 5 has aroused the greatest interest of the actors during the implementation of the project, and during the final evaluation. This consideration must be taken into account during the formulation of further support.

The project has had only one phase of 5 years. Some experts believe that this time is insufficient to expect lasting achievements. The present mission does not agree with this notion. The five years is sufficient to get some lasting results, especially in the field. The limited period of 5 years allows for preparation of a new funding document that takes into account the lessons of the project, and which blends elements of its strengths whilst avoiding weaknesses.

The mission of February 2011 found that the project’s financial resources were not adequate in relation to the size of the basin and the goal of reversing the trends of NR degradation. The

current mission notes that the project is not the only player to contribute to the reversal of NR degradation trends. The mission was able to estimate the contribution of other actors through the database of the units responsible for coordinating cross-sectoral rural development in two countries, Niger and Mali.

In the case of Niger, the level of investment in the rural sector is 23 billion FCFA / year on average over the period 2004-2015 (realized 2004-2010, forecast for 2011-2015). This information was provided by the SE but is also freely available on the website of the SDR SE. The project's contribution in Niger in terms of investments may be estimated at between 200 and 500 million FCFA / 5 years (approx. 0.3%).

In the case of Mali, the rural development sector (which includes the Office du Niger, but excludes Environment) had the following level of investment for 2006-2009:

- 2006: 493 billion FCFA
- 2007: 517 billion FCFA
- 2008: 735 billion FCFA
- 2009: 828 billion FCFA

If the project's contribution ITDTE in Mali was in the order 200 to 500 million FCFA / 5 years, the conclusion is obvious: the reversal of NR degradation trends is by no means the only case of a project of the NBA or even all of its projects. A program approach is required to assess the investment vis-à-vis the challenges of development and the environment.

In the opinion of the mission, the program approach is insufficiently addressed by the project concept. Any policy, program or major project is expected to present the results of investments in the sector or sectors in which it wants to intervene. Too often the actions of development cooperation did not take into account the actions already taken. The Paris Declaration rightly referred to improved efficiency of cooperation by promoting the program approach.

In terms of sustainability, the project document is justified with the argument that “the financial commitment of the countries ... is amply demonstrated by their contributions to the NBA (\$ 2,140,000).” This element of sustainability is limited to the institutional sustainability of the NBA. The viability of components 2 and 5 requires further thinking. The conceptualization of the project has apparently been driven by the World Bank, with the result of bias, which does not help an analysis tailored to the components ‘support by UNDP’.

Reproducibility is referred to in the project document through a short sentence: “The PDP and micro projects ... are designed to be replicated in the entire watershed.” It is transforming the very complex concept of reproducibility in a statement without significance.

Finally, it is helpful to draw the limits of the watershed concept, as a concept of environmental intervention. Other units of environmental resources can be important. For example, nomadic pastoralism cuts through a number of watersheds. The domestic energy in the Sahel is organized according to ‘wood energy catchments’ for each major city, which also cut through watersheds, and there are others. It is important to regularly analyze the comparative advantage of the hydrologic vision and respect its limits.

### **A parallel project structure**

GEF funding goes separately by two institutions, the World Bank and UNDP, which have different organizational cultures. In the opinion of the evaluation mission, the logical framework and project resources have not been harmonized in the formulation process. On the UNDP side, overseeing the project has not been clarified by the project document and the issue was further diluted by a distribution of responsibilities between UNDP and UNOPS. The evaluation mission, for example, could not identify a UNDP lead agency to talk to. What is more, the project documents in English and French have significant differences, which often leads to confusion.

Many players met in the countries believe that the concept of the project is poor. The Deputy Representative of UNDP in Chad, who was closely involved in project preparation, as part of UNDP in Niger, summarized his position: “never again”. The evaluation mission agrees with the idea that the project concept was poor, a position that is developed in the following sections of this report. That did not stop the project from having good results for some of its components.

## 2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

### 2.1. Introduction

More or less even distribution of financial resources between the nine countries is not specified by the project document, but is implied by the distribution of resources (national teams parity) among the countries. The financial resources for the implementation of micro- and PDP were distributed fairly evenly, while there was some differentiation for Component 2. This may not meet the criterion of efficiency. The allocation of resources where most results can be achieved, could be a criterion for distribution of resources. In some countries, reversing environmental trends in the Niger Basin can be more relevant, and interventions can be more efficient, than in other countries.

In the opinion of the mission, it is quite normal that some regional programs benefit more in some countries while others are more beneficial to others. Regional energy programs, for example, the fight against the desert, and shipping programs cannot benefit countries equally – similarly for the NBA.

UNDP was generally present at the annual meetings of the RSC. It is not possible to measure the weight of UNDP in these meetings, based on reports. The participation of UNDP in the country is very variable. In some countries, the mission found a very good relationship between UNDP and the project (Mali and Chad for example), but in Guinea, relations were not constructive. In terms of evaluation, the complication is that in reality relationships are complex: UNDP, UNOPS, World Bank and the regional and national levels in the project are all involved. It's hard as an evaluator to isolate variables as to assign cause and effect.

From the perspective of national actors, a great weakness was related to slow procedures, especially during the early years. The final evaluation of February 2011 reviewed the procedures in detail, whilst the current evaluation does not enter into the same level of detail. The present mission notes that the role of UNOPS is not fully understood in the field. According to UNOPS, on-line information and training is available, but the mission has not been able to look into this during the field work<sup>3</sup>. The description in the project manual is extremely brief. The final evaluation mission has virtually no bibliographic elements to assess the role of UNOPS and the relationship between UNOPS and UNDP. The project document (English version) has the following citation: "UNDP, the World Bank, ADB and UNOPS each will be represented on the RSC." In 5 reports on RSC available to the mission, only one report mentions the presence of UNOPS. UNOPS mention the lack of invitations well in advance of the RSC meetings, but the RMCU does not agree with this.

The World Bank has carried out the supervision of the project as foreseen in the project document, with regular support according to the national teams met by the evaluation mission. UNDP was expected to carry out supervision missions according to a passage in one project document, but not according to other sources. In any case, no overall supervision mission was conducted. Many national teams have noticed the lack of field monitoring by UNDP. According to the Manual "UNDP's role is to assist the project through the strength of its presence on the ground." In some countries the local representative of UNDP visited micro-grant projects and PDPs (e.g. Chad). This presence is encouraging for other project actors.

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<sup>3</sup> Research of this kind in the countries was not possible in the absence of written information, given that with verbal information provided by UNOPS was only available after completion of the mission.

While the supervision mission of the World Bank (2008) recommended to re-allocate funds for micro-projects, a very good recommendation at the time, UNDP has not reacted, yet this component was primarily a matter of UNDP. Its presence and insistence on this point could have reinforced Component 5.

UNDP should also have insisted on the implementation of M & E. Among the nine national representatives of UNDP there was no lead agency to support the project, though UNDP Niger has specific responsibilities. Both UNDP in Niamey, Dakar and South Africa have played specific roles as a lead UNDP agency, but the mission feels that, overall, UNDP supervision of the project should have had a stronger profile

Attaching almost systematically the project to the Water Department found its logic in components 1, 3 and 6 (World Bank) and 4 (UNDP) but lacked logic for components 2 and 5, which are cross sectoral (technically and socio-economically). The institutional setup led to a lack of involvement in technical services for agriculture, livestock, environment (or forest) and the 'soft sector'. There was also a lack of involvement in organizations of the civil society. According to some resource persons, the project means (transport and others) were strongly absorbed by the Department of Water instead of actors who have contributed most to the implementation of the component. The result was a reduced effectiveness.

In the case of Cameroon, the 'World Bank components' were geographically based in Yaoundé, but the UNDP components mainly in Garoua in the North. The 4 wheel drive car (World Bank financing) was only available in Yaounde, for town use. This is where World Bank paid staff were based, whilst the micro-grant projects advisor was based in Garoua. The vehicle has not been available only once in Garoua, where a 4 wheel drive would have been helpful, at least during the implementation on the ground. However, hired vehicle helped to resolve this. To the micro-grant project adviser, RLWDT was like two independent projects.

The NSC represented, among others, the different line ministries. The institutional anchoring of the NSC, which requires proper communication between the representative and his ministry on project issues, was probably not fully functional. The mission was able to verify in the case of Niger, that the communication between the NSC representatives and the Planning Division of their respective ministries was not functional. The support provided by the project RLWDT the areas of environment, livestock or agriculture have not been communicated to the inter-sectoral coordination (SE-CSD) of Niger. Communication constraints within the ministries are not only a concern of RLWDT, of course.

Finally, the gender aspect is hardly mentioned in project planning and management. The evaluation mission would not have been able to properly analyze projects on the ground if there hadn't been a woman on the team: in many cases, the target group consists of women. Of the 20 professional positions of the project (PMCU and 9 national teams) one has been filled by a woman for 4 years. But women were the main target of the project in the field.

## ***2.2. Annual planning***

Procedures for annual planning of the project are mentioned in the English version of the project document. According to this document, the planning initiative is located at the level of national teams for the synthesis PMCU. The project implementation manual proposes a different formula, i.e. that the PMCU is responsible for the preparation of the annual plan

without reference to national teams. The manual is extremely brief in the matter (one small phrase). This suggests that annual planning is not considered in the manual as an important tool for implementation.

According to national stakeholders met by the mission, the PMCU actually prepared the annual plan of activities for approval by the RSC. Subsequently, the plan was sent to CNP but without a real chance to review and approve it - the plan was already approved by the RSC. The PMCU has expressed a different perception to the mission, as it does not see the planning procedure as top-down.

But for most national stakeholders met, it is a top-down planning that was not appreciated. In one case (Mali), the NSC has refused to approve an annual plan submitted by the PMCU, to realize later that no change was possible and that the project would suspend its activities for the year. The NSC then approved, against conviction heart.

The Niger Basin countries are very diverse, ranging from the Guinean zone in the Sahel-Saharan Africa, the English and French speaking countries, the petrol economies to the pastoral economies of the Tuareg. A regional project in which the annual work plans are first prepared at the regional level, instead of a planning initiative coming from the countries, runs the risk of lack of local adaptation, and risk of a lack of local ownership. The partners met (national teams and COP) have been discreet in some countries, but the reactions were strong in most countries, on the subject of top-down planning.

According to the project document, a participatory approach is pursued and the principle of subsidiarity is respected, i.e. the principle that decision-making powers are delegated as much as possible at lower levels. It is essential to follow a bottom-up planning. Of course, a bottom-up planning requires compliance with standards and overall budget ceilings given by the PMCU. It has the great advantage of being able to motivate the most effective national teams, especially if the approval by the CPR reflects the quality of national plans, and it is based on a competitive allocation of financial resources. This approach would meet the constraints felt by the PMCU expressed during the meetings of CPR: the inertia of some national teams.

The mission believed that the World Bank components may have required a strong regional guidance, to ensure scientific rigor and organization in the preparation of the SAP. Components 2 and 5 required a bottom-up planning. Participation and subsidiarity are strong elements of the GEF. Countries could have been facilitated to plan and propose a first draft of their national plan, for the synthesis by the PMCU.

Some reports (eg CR RSC) mention, especially early in the project, low performance of some national coordinators. Subsidiarity requires good performance at the lower level, i.e. the national team. If there were weaknesses in some national teams, the mission believes that several options could have been considered:

- Strengthening capacities of the national teams (increased training)
- Assure institutional set-up where better performance can be expected (not necessarily the Water Department)
- Support stronger countries with good performance (concept of competitive funds).

The PRC approved the Plans and Annual Reports. The implementation of components and the various problems have been reviewed regularly by the RSC. The mission is surprised that PRC has not decided to fund a second round of financing micro-projects. The mid-term

evaluation, a supervision mission of the World Bank, and many members of the PRC insisted on additional funding for the micro-projects. The people interviewed, including members of the RSC, say they do not understand why this decision was not taken in due course - in 2008, when it was too late for effective implementation of PDP. The mission wonders whether RSC was actually an instance of strategic decision making, since the impression given is that of decision by the NBA / PMCU.

Monitoring the project required a strong and significant support of the PMCU. The final evaluation in February has raised many details about the operational aspects, which the current mission will not duplicate.

The dollar rate is frequently mentioned as a budget constraint. Historical rates of January 1 of each year are presented in the following table. The fluctuation is expressed relative to the rate of 500FCFA / \$, the reference rate. The table shows that the average exchange rate is approaching the reference rate fairly well over this period. The variability of the exchange rate of FG (Guinea) was much greater.

Year	FCFA/US\$	Deviation with respect to the rate of 500FCFA/\$
2004	524	+5%
2005	485	-3%
2006	551	+10%
2007	492	-2%
2008	446	-11%
2009	466	-7%

Source: Xchange website.

The mission notes that by the end of 2006 the relationship between the regional coordinator and the Executive Secretary ABN was very poor. According to some sources, this was due to multiple interpretations on project management, referred to in the different versions of project documents. There have been a number of resignations over the years, in the NBA and in the countries, and a change of personnel at UNDP (regional officer) and UNOPS. The lack of continuity may well be an efficiency constraint of RLWDT.

**2.3. Annual Work Plans**

Project implementation was organized by the annual work plans (AWP). Annual plans were at first defined by the actions prescribed by the project document in the form of outcomes, then by more specific actions for the subsequent years. As time moved on, the expected results were modified to achieve the specific project objectives.

For example, actions in the PTA in 2006, component 2, were preparing the ToR of a study and the preparation of a training plan. In subsequent years, the expected outcomes for component 2 were defined by specific elements of the training plan.

In the case of the component 5, the micro-grant projects were the focus of PTA 2006-2008. The preparatory study of PDP was launched in 2006 to be completed in early 2007, but PDP did not begin until 2009, near the end of the year for action on the ground in some countries.

The PMCU notes that he had a lot of delays related to lack of understanding, lack of initiative and lengthy procedures. The documentation provided to the mission does not allow to precisely reconstruct the problem.

The completion report RLWDT note: “The nine documents of the PDPs should have been developed during the preparation of the RLWDT project document”. The mission does not think this idea is relevant, because a preparation phase is often limited in time and resources. And there is a risk associated with the lapse of time between formulation and implementation if this proposition is accepted. Instead, the mission believes that the issue is fundamentally linked to the concept, rather than the implementation (see subsequent section on PDPs).

Before contracting the PDP operators there has been a lot of arguing to reduce the budgets of PDP. The mission has no written information on the arguments that led to this situation. During the implementation of PDP, there have been significant delays associated with the complex relationships of operator- (PMCU) - (ETN) – UNDP - UNOPS, for various reasons. The main cause expressed in the countries, is the lack of information at the level of operators on the procedures of UNOPS and UNDP.

**2.4. Organization of the micro-grant projects**

According to the agreement between the NBA (Executive Secretary) and GEF SGP (Global Manager) in 2006, national micro-grant project advisers would be based in the coordination unit of GEF-SGP in the countries where they exist. Operational resources would be made available. In fact, RLWDT micro-grant projects advisers were not based in the GEF SGP national units. Interviews with national coordinators of GEF-SGP in several countries have demonstrated a certain frustration on the side of the coordinators. For the RMCU, the notion of a RLWDT project team based in one place was more important. The section on micro-projects provides further detail.

**2.5. Monitoring and evaluation: a basic management tool**

Operational monitoring was provided by the PMCU expert and the micro-grant projects adviser in particular. The following table summarizes the monitoring missions of the PMCU in the nine countries, based on the reports provided to the mission. One observes a relatively low level of support missions, at an average of four missions / year over the life of the project or 2.3 missions per country over the 5 year period, or about five days of mission / country / year. The analysis is incomplete given that other missions were held such as those related training workshops. Furthermore, in 2007, the micro-grant projects adviser was acting coordinator, which naturally hampered the possibilities to monitor the project in the country during this time. According to the PMCU, missions were also done in 2009/10 in support of PDPs, but the evaluation mission has not received mission reports.

Table 3. Monitoring missions in the country according to available mission reports (in days)<sup>4</sup> (excluding visits to attend workshops).

Pays	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Benin	3	4	6			
Burkina F				10		
Cameroun	3	4	15			

<sup>4</sup> Incl. one mission by FEM SG in Nigeria

Côte d'Ivoire		5				
Guinée	5					
Mali		4	7			
Niger		2		4		
Nigéria	8+6		5	8+10		
Tchad	3	4		12		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>44</b>		

The project document and in particular the GEF strategic document put a strong emphasis on M & E. In March 2004, the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for pilot demonstration projects and micro-grant projects program was produced. The procedures manual is from November 2004. According to the manual, the M & E plan will be updated by the PMCU from the start of the project and will comply with procedures for M & E based on the emerging policies of the GEF.

The evaluation mission believes that the ESMF is a weak document. It appears, as if the authors lacked the notion of potential social risks associated with technical interventions provided by the micro-grant projects and PDPs. For example:

Table 4: Some elements of the ESMF and 2004 observations of the mission

Project activity	Risk according to CGES	Observations mission
Boundary marking of cattle corridors and of pasture	None	Significant risk of social conflict during and after the activity: see examples of COFO Niger and PDP Benin
Creation of wells	None	In pastoral areas significant risk of social conflict
Forest plantations	None	Risk of land based conflict related to tree planting: take example of the PDP in Mali (plantation burned down by another social group)

The ESMF is also weak when it comes to identifying the actors: for all the 14 activities identified, the responsible actor is always national team, LCCM and CNP. Obviously, the authors did not take into account the broader institutional setup, which includes the PMCU micro projects adviser, the M & E adviser and other stakeholders at regional / international level.

Indicators for monitoring of the ESMF are summarized in a few sentences and contain, in the end, only one monitoring indicator.

The project document notes that “the objectives of the project and its results will be regularly reviewed and evaluated in the context of M & E; and the M & E Plan for Component 5 will include specific indicators to measure the results of micro-grant projects programme, and effects on communities and will include an impact assessment.” The manual management, in terms of M & E, notes that “the ESMF will ensure compliance.” A manual for M & E of the small grants program was produced by the project.

During the implementation of the project, the expert in M & E did not deliver the expected products; the notion of shared expert was flawed and PMCU could not bridge the gap.

Despite weaknesses identified above, a number of procedures and mechanisms operated during the project cycle, in spite of the absence of a formal plan. These include the following:

- 31 missions of supervision and monitoring of PMCU including by the micro grants adviser
- 78 workshop reports, or reports on other activities under Component 2
- The minutes of the RSC and the PTA and annual reports (available to the mission except one)
- Reports of CPN, LCCM (unavailable)
- Supervision missions by the national teams, most often by the micro grants adviser (mission reports not available)
- 5 supervision missions of the World Bank (electronic reports are not available except one)
- Evaluation of 108 micro grant projects, one report per country (available)
- Mid-term and final evaluation of RLWDT (available)

So there is a certain wealth of information that has been exploited by the current mission. The lack of formal monitoring makes that the information collected and presented in the reports is sometimes not compatible, or does not meet GEF guidelines, or sometimes lack consistency or rigor. For example:

- The workshop reports (component 2) in some countries lack the lists of participants, aggregation is therefore not possible
- Lack of gender analysis in almost all documents
- Some micro grant project evaluation reports do not pose the question why certain results were not achieved: lack of depth of analysis
- Often the analysis lacks the socio-economic dimension (GEF guideline)
- Lack of evaluation of PDPs
- Lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of component 2
- Little information available on the contribution of the project to national debates, publications, press ... (GEF guideline)

The issues of monitoring and evaluation are developed further in the following sections.

The lack of monitoring and evaluation of the project (UNDP component) is probably the greatest implementation weakness. Why was M & E in the project weak ? The shared experts formula, is a constraint identified by the evaluation mission in February 2011, it is seen as the main factor, in conjunction with weaknesses in the NSC, LCCM and ETN.

Certainly, the lack of an M & E expert full-time in the project has contributed to weaknesses in project monitoring, and national and local structures have not (always) been effective. But in the opinion of the mission, the problem is more complex.

First, the project document is quite weak in terms of indicators and means of verification, as is shown above in the comparison with the GEF strategic program document. The project should have expanded and adapted its logical framework at startup, and during the project cycle. But practice shows that this reactivity rarely exists in projects: once a project starts, everyone is busy with the day to day activities. The mission identifies therefore a conceptual weakness.

Subsequently, the project logframe is substantially aligned to providing a cross-border strategic framework, the SAP. The logframe is biased by the components 1, 4 and 6,

supported by the World Bank. The role of governments, scientific and technical services is particularly important for achieving this goal. While the effectiveness of the component 5, the main component supported by UNDP / UNOPS, depends primarily on the involvement of civil society. Institutional orientations are not the same and, in the view of the mission, this has contributed to M & E constraints.

The example of the functioning of the LCCM in Ivory Coast is interesting. The project in Côte d'Ivoire has 3 LCCM up in the north. In 2006-2007, a period of insecurity in the north, authorities and state services were no longer present in this area. The LCCM were entirely a matter for civil society organizations, and all 3 LCCM working well. In 2008, the authorities and technical services have returned and have occupied important positions. The LCCM has become virtually non-functional, with the exception of a committee that was strongly supported by the project.

It should also be noted that the GEF SGP emphasizes support of civil society in its committees.

## ***2.6. Capacity of national stakeholders and resources***

Capabilities of the PMCU were strengthened through the World Bank components, on administration, data management, monitoring, etc. A certain number of training courses were given to national staff.

The level of funding to countries in terms of human resources (World Bank and UNDP funded), was substantial in the opinion of the mission. Compared to some regional projects known to the evaluators, human resources available in the countries were quite significant. Comparison with GEF SGP countries also shows that the human resources staffing of RLWDT in the countries was good.

The distribution of funds between the nine countries did not necessarily take into account real costs that vary greatly between countries. In the opinion of the mission, it is not very complicated to index costs by formal economic indices of the countries. The remoteness of sites from the capital (NPT headquarters), has led to significant costs for the services provided and thus decreased efficiency.

The need to adapt the project to the specific conditions of each country is a common thread in many issues that concern the project.

The lack of operational resources for NSC, LCCM, Conflict Prevention Platforms, Basin Consultation Frameworks, and Coordination and Communication Networks is a recurring theme in project reports. As for the NSC, representatives met in the country gave the impression that these committees have generally worked as intended by the project document, as a forum for discussing the progress of the project, less so for field monitoring.

The mission had discussions with many members of the LCCM. In most cases, the LCCM were functional for only a short time. It was a project organization with predominance of the local authorities and technical services of the state, with little operational resources. The mission was unable to obtain written documentation on the LCCM in any country, but the coordinators or advisors in the countries mentioned the existence of documents in several countries.

It is clear that the project budget did not provide significant resources for such organizations. However, one should distinguish between different categories of organizations:

1. The NSC and the LCCM in the country under the project document, with very limited resources (a few training opportunities, tea / coffee ...).
  - First the NSC. In the opinion of the mission, the means provided allowed the NSC to operate and motivate. But a little more funding for field monitoring would have been beneficial.
  - In terms of LCCM, the mission believes that there are two options: (a) fit within the framework of local consultation committees that generally exist in the countries, which are defined by the regulatory framework of each country. These frameworks are used to coordinate the various projects in the local administrative unit, according to the topics addressed. It is not advisable to create a project structure such as the RLWDT LCCM. It is instead recommended to see it as a 'sub committee' of the existing local consultative framework (b) the second option would be to use the kind of platform developed by GEF SGP.
2. Platforms, frameworks and networks created as a result of the component 2 Plan prepared by Impact Plus. Their existence was not foreseen in the project document and funding has not been envisaged. In the opinion of the mission, the creation of a committee envisaged by many of the workshops was not particularly useful. More significant adaptation to national institutional dynamics could have been exploited.

## **2.7. Language Management**

Managing multiple languages in an organization is always a difficult thing, unless all actors are truly bilingual. The mission observed that the translations are often of poor quality, both in English (for documents written in French) or French (in reverse). Unless the reader quickly catches the meaning of a text, he may abandon reading it. Another risk is that different interpretations of the original text may exist in an organisation, leading to the potential of conflict.

This issue concerns a number of project documents, including the TOR for the present mission: "The analysis of the scenario without project in order to have an idea of what would be happened if the project has been conducted" is simply a sentence with three errors, which can be corrected by the reader. If the errors are very frequent, one must be a motivated reader to finish the document. But comparing the two project documents made available to the mission (in English and French) shows that errors of interpretation are inevitable (see section 5), with potentially disastrous effects.

## **2.8. Archives**

Records management is the responsibility of the regional coordinator. The mission observed that significant numbers of documents are not available in the archives, or at least, could not be located and transmitted by the PMCU during the passage of the mission. The situation of archives in countries is much worse. At present, there are many inexpensive ways to safeguard digital files.

### 3. COMPONENT 2: CAPACITY BUILDING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

#### 3.1. Introduction

In the project document, Component 2 is described as follows: “Support to implementation by UNDP, it is designed to raise community awareness of the environmental issues, facilitate consultations and capacity building in environmental management at local, national and regional levels. “ Synergies are expected between the expected capacity building component of Component 2 and 5. The budget is \$ 1.62 million with 42% for sub-component awareness raising and 58% for the training component.

Component 2 is defined in terms of expected results and indicators, see table below. For the two sub-components (2a and 2b), the main purpose is respectively, public education and to train actors.

Table 5. Results

Intermediate results	Results indicators for each component	Utilisation du suivi du résultat
Increased local, national capacity and increased awareness on the challenges and issues of the basin Composante 2	2a) Diversified information sources available (radio, print material, school programs, workshops, etc.) stakeholders (notably youth) aware of basin soil and water resources and how to engage in local and national decision making <sup>5</sup> 2b) Increased number of local and national stakeholders promote community participation in Microgrant programme; and actively participate in the SAP development process through workshops to share data and lessons learned.	- Are training and messages effective and are they internalised by target groups ? <sup>6</sup> - Are delivery mechanisms and communication channels to be realigned ? - What types of incentives can be used to encourage local and national cadres to actively engage local level outreach ?

Data collection required for monitoring of each indicator is specified in the project document. These are the following.

- Baseline survey
  - Participatory Evaluation
  - Archives of the Communication Agency (radio and print)
  - Reports on local and national workshops with list of participants
  - Surveys/Studies

<sup>5</sup> There is a mistake in the french translation, where 'land' is translated into 'land ownership' (*foncier*)

<sup>6</sup> The french translation is very poor: *Y-a-t-il besoin d'une meilleure formation pour le personnel ?*The remainder of text is also poorly translated.

- Records of radio emissions
- Consultations record radio programs

The activities are as follows:

Action 2.1:

Task 1: Develop and implement a regional public awareness

Task 2: Develop and implement a national awareness & training

Task 3: Develop and an awareness program and local training

Action 2.2:

Task 1: Develop and implement a regional training program

Task 2: Develop and implement a national training program

Task 3: Develop and implement a local training program

In the English version, this description is quite different:

1. The Activities component are:

- Activity 2.1: Assess the gaps in capacity in the Basin at the regional, national and local level (both public sector and civil society);
- Activity 2.2: Elaborate year Operational Strategy for educational and training strategies
- Activity 2.3 Conduct training courses at all level; and
- Activity 2.4 Implement public education and awareness programs.

This version is different in that the initial activity is an assessment of existing capacities and requirements (in order to establish the gaps) (2.1), followed by an operational strategy to achieve the desired situation (2.2). Subsequently, two major areas of intervention are considered (2.3 and 2.4): training at all levels, and public awareness. In the French version, the distinction between training and education is not made in same way as the two activities fall into both categories (2.1 and 2.2). In English, “public education and public awareness” are two forms of awareness, one of which is public awareness of the problem, the other wants to change public behavior. There is a different conceptualization, depending on language, expressed in the two documents.

The mission decided not to pursue the many differences between the English and the French. However, it is very important to highlight the confusion that may arise as a result of poor translations. It is not a minor problem. It may lead to a lack of ownership of the project by some stakeholders. This is an assumption that the mission could not verify because Nigeria was not included in the evaluation.

### **3.2. Diagnosis and programming**

Generally speaking, analysis of human resources capacity and capacity building is an extremely complex matter. The heavily charged debate on education in developed countries illustrates the point. Nevertheless, it is the task which faced this project component.

A diagnostic study of capacity and public participation has been carried out by the service provider Impact Plus. The starting point of this study is:

*The need for training and information identified ...* (see Terms of Reference of the study). In the opinion of the mission, the ToR have not sufficiently taken into account the information requested in the project document (English version). Before arriving at needs, one must assess

the existing capacity.

This document is essentially a non-quantitative analysis. Data on the number of players involved in a training program and a program of public awareness by category are not available. Qualitative data, such as the themes of communication and training, are presented without priority, while the selection criteria to arrive at priority themes and priority target groups (the end of the document) are not clearly presented.

Existing capacities in IWRM are presented in this analysis, but they remain incomplete. For example, it lacks the information and training provided by the Regional Centre Agrhymet, regional center of excellence in the environment, and situated close to the NBA. But the presentation of a fairly complete picture of communication activities in the nine countries is a difficult task - it is not sure that anyone else could have done better.

The training program developed by the operator started in the countries so that it was in principle a product of bottom-up planning. The Impact Plus report notes that “The development of information and training programs varies depending on the country.” But it was necessary to “generalize programs based on substantial trade-offs ... countries may have refocused or resized their programs.” The proposed program is, by the end of the day, fairly uniform for the nine countries, see Tables 6.

The mission believes that the diagnostic study lacked, to some degree, direction and rigor. Such a study is extremely complicated even if the conditions of implementation are good - which was not so. The complications include:

- The cross-cutting nature of IWRM
- The geographic extent and variability in 9 countries: cultural, social, linguistic, physical, economic ...
- Weak data: little information is available in the sub-region on the capabilities and resources provided by all technical and financial partners.

The operator has proposed a plan for capacity building and public participation (PP & PRC) with an operational program. The proposed program was approved in March 2007 through a regional workshop.

The PRC & PP gives evaluators the impression of a certain uniformity between countries. Some regional and national interlocutors of the mission expressed the feeling that there was no choice. It was felt that identical actions between the countries was inevitable for a regional project. Others have expressed the feeling that the component 2 could respond more strongly to the diversity of countries. The mission rather takes the latter conclusion. On the other hand, the mission notes that the PRC & PP shows a certain diversity in its ‘menu’ of communication.

Tables 6 Workshops and meetings scheduled by the PRC & PP. A cross means one or more workshops and meetings.

Title of PRC & PP	Benin	Easo Burkina	Cameroon	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinée	Mali	Niger	Nigéria	Tchad
Exchange workshop on conflict prevention	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

platform									
Regular concertation meetings for local actors in basin	X	X	X	X <sup>7</sup>	X	X	X	X	X
Workshop, exchange for private sector actors on EIA, norms, clean technologies				X	X	X	X	X	
Workshop on basin management problems and participation of actors	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Specific workshops not mentioned in this table are: Burkina Faso - workshops prevention and management of natural disasters, Nigeria and Mali: Exchange of partners in large urban centers on the management of waste. Mali: consultation for the establishment of local contracts; Niger consultation workshops on the use of water. The PP & The PRC also provided booklets and radio activities in the country.

At the regional level, the following activities were carried out:

- Production and distribution of pamphlets on the NBA / RLWDT;
- Production of a documentary film about the state of the basin in the 9 countries
- Training on management (such as results oriented management)

The mission feels that, in terms of content, the PP & PRC lacks some main orientations of GEF : support for decentralized governance, socio-economic themes, communication on conclusive results and interesting micro projects, and action to give shape to the idea of ‘Act locally and think globally ‘. It also lacks a wider range of awareness-raising. Radio, video and booklets were retained, but the program lacked other options: youth programs, women, website, newspapers ...

The operational program developed by Impact Plus includes a monitoring system. For example, for sub-component information, education and public awareness, tools on offer are:

- Activity Reports (of committees, teams, national and regional), and
- Final evaluation report of the program

The project document proposed much richer tools for monitoring: baseline survey, participatory evaluation, archives of the Communication Agency, reporting on local and national workshops with list of participants, surveys, radio recordings, studies.

Impact Plus has reduced the wealth of tools offered by the project document, the only realistic means being progress reports. A final evaluation mission is not a source of information for monitoring. If monitoring is not performed during the implementation, an evaluation team can not make up for it.

### **3.3. Monitoring and evaluation component**

The mission has three sources of written information on the realization of the component:

1. The project completion report RLWDT (March 2011)
2. Workshop reports provided to the mission by the PMCU
3. Some workshop reports provided by the national teams during the passage of the mission

According to the completion report, 69 workshops were held. The workshop reports provided

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<sup>7</sup> Et gestion coopérative

by the PMCU, supplemented in some countries by national teams, are 44. This is short by 25 of 69 workshop reports mentioned in the completion report (36%).

At first, we note that the achievement rate is good as far as the completion report is concerned, nearly 100% of planned activities in the plan. But on the basis of reports of workshops available to the mission, the rate of achievement of documented workshops is 64%. An evaluation of the efficiency of this component requires a thorough understanding of unit costs. The mission has no information to assess this criterion.

The workshop reports available to the mission have been used to estimate some quantitative criteria. Appendix 8 summarizes the workshops funded by the Component 2 in terms of participation. 82% of workshop reports available to the mission include the number of participants and the number of training days, but only 57% have lists of participants (25% mention the number of participants as a whole, without giving a list) . On this basis it is possible to quantify the training: 2,824 days \* training provided participants for the workshops where this information is available, and 4,428 days \* participants, extrapolated to the 69 workshops held according to the completion report.

The mission believes that the effectiveness according to the indicators used in the project document is satisfactory, a significant number of players involved in component 5 was trained, and communicating by radio and television carried out. However, indicators on specific targets (eg youth, women) and impact (influence on decision making) require information which has not been collected.

The M & E plan should have been developed, specified and updated, with indicators along the lines of the GEF. For example, women's participation in the workshops should have been noted (lists of participants), and the participation of young people, news clips, archives of programs, description of feedback from field experiences to the media, etc.

In the opinion of the mission, the PRC & PP has lost certain qualities by uniformity. For example, workshops on the establishment of a platform for the prevention and conflict management in the basin were not very useful in a number of countries. The clearest example is that of Niger, which had already platforms for the prevention and conflict management (the COFOs) at all levels (village, commune, region, country), and this long time before the start of RLWDT. Perhaps the project could have usefully invested in publication of the Niger land tenure experience at the benefit of the other 8 member countries.

In several other countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, ...), this kind of platforms were in the process of being developed by the respective governments. Workshops and studies funded by the project RLWDT have not really helped and were not effective in these countries to underpin this process. Maybe RLWDT should have limited the initiative to countries where the dynamic was missing.

Basically, communications networks and consultation frameworks in place at the end of the workshops were not functional in the countries visited. In the light of this, the impact of such workshops is relatively low, in the opinion of the mission.

If Component 2 as a whole may well have a significant impact and effectiveness, this information is not available. During the stay of the mission in Niamey, eight months after the end of the project, the regional DVD was used by the country's national television. While in

Guinea, some project publications were being published again. In the absence of monitoring, the impact of the component is uncertain.

Did the local and national stakeholders trained by the project participate in the development of the SAP? This is confirmed in the completion report, but the mission believes that there was no monitoring to verify this statement.

The mission recommends a component of ‘Communication’ most highly professionalized in the case of further support, with, among others:

- A highly professional reference (or baseline) study. Many countries and many players invest in the communication on the environmental sector and IWRM, usually in the absence of a baseline and professional. A regional institution such as the NBA has comparative advantage in terms of economy of scale to achieve this kind of study. Regional collaboration (with CILSS, for example) can give more weight to this kind of investment.
  - Some high quality training can be contracted to specialized agencies such as the Regional Centre Agrhyet.
  - A website of high quality, incorporated in the NBA, properly updated, is essential for good communication to the public and specific project actors (possibly with extranet for national teams). See CILSS experience.
  - Professional monitoring can be delegated to specialized communication agencies (television and radio) that have the capacity. Specialized institutions can undertake opinion polls and other research.

## **4. COMPONENT 4: Regional Forum**

The objective of this component, supported by UNDP, is to facilitate exchanges of lessons and good practices other regional projects in Africa south of the Sahara.

The planned activities were (1) workshops to share lessons learned, (2) study tours to visit other International Waters projects, and (3) the publication and dissemination of reports on best practices and lessons learned.

National teams have organized workshops to review and learn from the implementation of the project including components 2 and 5. The workshops were held in late 2010 and early 2011.

In terms of study tours and participation in workshops and conferences, we retain the following events:

- OMVS, Dakar in 2006
- Saint-Louis, Senegal in 2006
- LEARN Regional Workshop, 2006 in Nairobi
- A workshop in Maseru (Lesotho), 2007
- The biennial conference of international waters in 2007, South Africa
- Part of the cost of a study trip in the Danube basin was funded by the project.
- The fifth biennial conference of the GEF International Waters in Cairns (Australia), 2009
- Workshop to exchange experiences on the management of international waters, Uganda, 2010.

The evaluation mission believes that exchange may be an important means of learning and networking. However, the PMCU has not archived (or made available to the mission), the majority of mission reports. The reports are the principal means of monitoring. In their absence, an assessment is not possible.

In some cases, the mission report is not available since it is held at the Executive Secretariat. These are missions where some executives of RLWDT participated, but which are organized in a broader NBA context.

The project has produced a summary report on the experience of PPS / GEF / UNDP from 4 countries. It also held the Regional Forum on lessons learned from the implementation of the project, followed by the publication and dissemination of the report.

In the opinion of the mission, the Forum report may be of interest to RLWDT staff and ABN. However, it lacks the lessons learned among different international waters programs, and their synthesis. The report of the Forum in its present form and content are not of much interest for wider publication. It is important to distinguish between a report with limited use (mainly internal), and a report to a wider audience, even though it remains limited to professional in IWRM and environmental management. A broad publication demands a special effort: strong analytical skills, high quality writing and editing, followed by a publication campaign. The mission believes that the operations financed by component 4 (\$ 596,000) have not resulted in the kind of publication that can reach an audience outside of the NBA and its projects. In that sense, Component 4 was not effective. However, the RPCP is presently involved in a process to achieve this objective.

**5. COMPONENT 5: PILOT PROJECTS AND PDPs**

**5.1. Introduction**

Component 5 is expected to contribute to the development of a shared vision taken by the riparian countries, and defining a cross-border strategy. To contribute to this objective, the funding of micro-grant projects and PDPS will lead to realistic proposals, consistent and promising for the development and implementation of the SAP.

Synergy with component 2 (Communication) is expressed as follows: “The numerous local workshops, national and regional will be a good way to ensure this participation ....” The project document presents the expected outcomes of the component, see following table.

Table 7 : Expected results and indicators

Intermediate Results	Indicators of results for each component	Utilisation of results
Demonstration Pilot Projects applied, validated and packaged for scaling up and microgrant program executed and documented	5a) Experiences, models and lessons learned on good practice for land and water degradation reversal from the 9 PDPs documented and shared	- Do demonstrations provide outcomes , modalities for scaling up ?
	5b) Appropriate administrative and financial mechanisms as of PY2 for	- Do community groups have proper

	<p>microgrant disbursement in place</p> <p>5c) Community groups have received microgrants executed priority actions and adopted new practice on the basis of lessons learned from implementing microgrants (and other projects)</p> <p>5d) increased awareness of Basin environmental challenges in local community &amp; stakeholders.</p>	<p>incentives to adopt new resource management practice ?</p>
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Component 5 aims at additional actions that contribute to better management of natural resources. The component consists of subcomponent 5a (pilot demonstration projects) and 5b-d (micro-grants program):

(5a) The pilot projects priority demonstration (PDPs) are implemented by consulting firms and NGOs, with results expected in terms of demonstrating best practice of integrated management of land and water. According to this idea, the knowledge and culture of the various populations in the basin must be integrated.

The sub-component must address seven burning environmental themes, through the implementation of nine pilot projects demonstrate, one by each member country, and they are designed to be innovative in their context. They aim at best practices in management of land resources and water in a sustainable manner. Their innovative character requires a period more important than the micro-projects, a minimum of 2 years. The final step consists of PDP evaluation in order to draw conclusions, to be disseminated.

(5b-d) Micro-projects implemented by NGOs and CBOs are models of the GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) and run under the same conditions (same selection criteria, same conditions of financing, implementation, and monitoring). The GEF SGP were already well established in 4 of the NBA member countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Cote d'Ivoire), with up to 13 years of experience in implementing micro-projects in these countries by now.

## 5.2. The sub-component Pilot Demonstration Projects

The seven priority areas identified and retained in the project document for the 9 PDPs are:

Table 8: List of priority areas for pilot demonstration projects

N°	Thèmes prioritaires									
		Bénin	Burkina	Cameroun	Tchad	C. d'Ivoire	Guinée	Mali	Niger	Nigeria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● lead country</li> <li>✕ participating country</li> </ul>									
1	Reduced dependence on wood for cooking		✕	✕	●	✕	✕		✕	✕
2	Improved dryland agriculture		✕			●	✕	✕	✕	
3	Improved irrigated agriculture	✕		●	✕			✕		✕

4	Action in the livestock sector		●	●			×	×		×	×	
5	Sustainable fishing	×						×	●	×	×	
6	Ecotourism and environmental protection	×	×	×						●	×	
7	Improved water quality by pollution control			×		×	●	×			●	

The monitoring plan defines PDP potential indicators to monitor who position themselves as indicators of outcome and impact, and which should be compared with a baseline. The monitoring plan states that monitoring should be ensured by the structure responsible for implementation and to a lesser extent by the beneficiaries. In the case of PDPs, the operator will be responsible for conducting field activities. The PDP evaluation provides information on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of project actions "... It is usually conducted by an external structure." The budget for this sub-component, including the preparation and evaluation, was \$ 2.322 million.

Table 9 shows the sequence of activities related to PDPs.

Dates	Stages
2005/6	Selection of private operator for formulation of 9 project documents
2006	Selection of national consultants by the operator BERD
Mars 2007	Production et amendement of documents (PDPs)
Août 2007	Validation during workshop
Fin 2008	Bidding procedure of implementation
2 <sup>e</sup> trimestre 2009	Signature of contrats des
mi 2009 à fin 2010	Implementation of PDPs, production of project achievement reports

Based on the documentation provided, the evaluation mission draws the following conclusions:

1. The expected result of PDPS was that lessons on good practice from 9 pilot demonstration projects are documented and shared. Demonstration and dissemination of innovative practices should be adopted by communities and reproduced with micro projects. The expected results were not achieved in that the PDPS were implemented after the implementation of micro projects had been completed.

Indeed, micro-projects were implemented over the period 2006-2008 while the PDPs began in mid-2009, to be closed in December 2010, towards the end of the project. Evaluation and dissemination could not be conducted due to time constraints. There were some exchange visits by the end of the project.

But according to the PMCU, the idea of implementing PDPs right at the start of the project so that the experience could assist micro-projects, was dropped even before RLWDT started. However, the project document was not revised. But key project stakeholders no longer expected PDPs to be carried out before the micro-projects.

2. The assessment, funding and publication have not been carried out by RLWDT. However,

an internal lessons learned exercise was carried out by the operators. Exchange visits also took place.

3. It remains to be seen if the PDPs were able to acquire good and innovative practices and specific, that could be capitalized in terms of good practice for future actions. The mission assessed a sample of 3 PDPs for this purpose.

### 5.3. Evaluation of PDPs

The mission was able to visit and assess PDPs in Niger, Benin and Cameroon.

The PDP Benin aimed at “reverse land degradation, grazing and animal health in the livestock sector” with the activities of social mediation for better community management resources and the environment, under the supervision of the Malanville Commune. A successful outcome is the initiative of inclusive management of cross-border pastoralism with stakeholders of Benin and Niger, with an active partnership in terms of livestock movement and conflict prevention, still in progress.

<p>PDP Benin</p> <p>The PDP has achieved all of the activities of information, training sessions and workshops with local actors, social mediation that is central to the process. This has facilitated the identification and marking of livestock corridors for agro-pastoral activities. The grazing areas have been identified and the geo-coordinates are available, but are not yet materialized. Two border Communes participate (one in Benin, one in Niger).</p> <p>In terms of results, the mission found that the boundary markers were trees (marked by paint), but part of the trees were cut by actors who did not agree with the boundary (or with the activity). The expected outcome of security of tenure has not been reached, and PDP has an unexpected impact of tree cutting.</p> <p>Other activities were carried out without strong sensitivities, such as the installation of demonstration plots for forage production (12 ha of Panicum maximum and Aschynomenae hystrix), storage and processing rice straw with urea at the household level and installation of manure pits, innovative practices in the area....</p>
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The completion report did not identify the land dispute that the mission observed: the destruction of trees. This shows that a completion report can not replace an independent ex-post evaluation.

The PDP Cameroon is “improving techniques and cultural practices for irrigated land” using essentially the use of compost. The mission observed the proper functioning of compost pits in two fields and the satisfaction of both owners met. There appears to be good efficiency at this level, and good socio-economic impact in terms of actual increase in rice production, and income level of farmers, are noted. Some followers are now applying the introduced techniques in their own way. But the innovation has shown limits in economic terms, given that manure which was free before the project, is sold today. Manure is an essential input for this innovation.

One of the activities that targeted irrigation channel maintenance has little or no effect, because the PDP has not been able to mobilize producers bordering the canals.

The mission believes that innovations developed by the ‘followers’ are interesting for a thorough analysis, and publication. The innovation of the 15 rice PDP is probably too expensive, the PDP has built its innovation too heavily on free supplies of concrete compost pits without farmer contribution. There was no socio-economic analysis.

As for another activity, planting trees near the river designed to protect the banks, trees were planted by farmers over 4 km. The farmers planted them on the edge of their fields to protect them against the hippos. This action is successful in terms of agroforestry (although it remains to be seen whether the hedge will stop the hippos ...). It is not in terms of management of public land between the edge of fields and the river, because they are still prey to bushfires (witnessed by the mission).

PDP Cameroon
<p>The activities are to promote concrete compost pits in the rice fields of farmers, with acquisition of a cart on subsidized credit, and a small equipment grant, as well as a grant of a pump shared between the 15 producers. All activities were conducted.</p> <p>A rice farmer ‘follower’ (after the PDP) was visited by the mission, who had dug his own pit. Another follower adapted the method in his own way after the project, using very different but effective techniques: the mission has calculated the added value (gross) to be 110.000FCFA in 2011, a significant improvement in income.</p> <p>The PDP had no impact on the use of pesticides. Tree planting near the Benue river was partially effective (4 km). However, the banks of the river (between fields and river) are still not managed, bush fires are common.</p>

The PDP Niger contributes to “support for eco-tourism and environmental protection”, managing natural areas, giraffes and support well-being of local people.

The PDP has implemented erosion control structures (bunds and stone bunds) but did not plant trees or grass seeded. On soils visited in Koura, recovery of degraded land was expected but has not taken place. The training of 17 guides and a calligrapher is certainly an asset but not sufficient on its own.

PDP Niger
<p>.The activities in this PDP together to create and preserve the environment for ecotourism and benefit populations. The actions undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training of guides and artisans, awareness</li> <li>- The restoration of land and planting: soil conservation structures made but restoration not carried out because the areas have not been planted.</li> <li>- Tourist trails were created in 2010 but they are disappearing in absence of maintenance</li> <li>- Equipment was provided to the artisans, but a significant number of guides and craftsmen have stopped the activity, given the context: foreign tourism (85% of revenues) stopped following the kidnapping of Westerners in Sahel.</li> <li>- A tourist home was built but never used for any activity</li> </ul>

The PDP was found in a context of ecotourism has changed radically and unpredictably since the project was designed: there are no more foreign tourists since last year. One can not expect a significant socioeconomic impact today under these conditions.

Regardless of the dramatic change of context, the mission wonders about the concept of the PDP. Many financial partners supported ecotourism in this area with the same actors. The project document has not taken this into account and the level of complementary of actions is therefore not known. In the case of the house built for tourists, one wonders about learning from past experiences. A tourist house had already been built 6 years ago by another project, without the use thereafter. Yet the PDP funded a 2<sup>nd</sup> tourist house, which also remained unused.

Some additional activities have been carried out by the PDP:

- The extension of fruit trees: the mission visited two plantations, one fully successful, but not the second.
- The Food Bank of *Andonsonia digitata* leaves and *Moringa oleifera* worked one year with good results. But now the bank is empty and non-functional. It seems that the operator has taken money from villagers and then stopped responding.
- The weed cutting of *Typha australis* pools was followed by an action of restocking, including new fish species. The fishing conditions are now improved. But the pond visited by the mission is used only visited by two fishermen; others do not go there because of the evil spirits of the pond. The operator was evidently not aware of the evil spirits.
- The PDP considered revitalization of the Decentralized Decision making Board, pre-existing the Communes, to manage the giraffe zone. This did not take into account the fact that the mayors of the four Communes concerned had already instituted a coordination platform. Support from the PDP to the existing consultation platform would have been better.

In the opinion of the mission, the opportunity of funding and publication of the Niger PDP experience is very low, even in the longer term, with a resumption of foreign tourism.

Two PDPs were analyzed on the basis of the documentation and exchange with the operators concerned. The activities of the PDP in Guinea have not been completed as envisaged in the original project document. The operator has criticized the concept of PDP, but other factors are also concerned: insecurity, weak support from UNDP Guinea, the highly variable exchange rate of the FG. On the concept, the following observations are made:

- The 'foreign' goldminers are not interested in local development and conservation of the environment;
- Gold mining sites may be closed for a time and then be reopened - making rehabilitation useless;
- The strong elements of the project are : planting cashew nut trees (580 plants), the waste management site and the water well are still functional, and local people are now sensitive to environmental issues.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the operator views the PDP as successful. He prepared on his own initiative a lessons learned document. Among the success factors of the PDP is the presence of a French AFVP volunteer, attached full-time to the project. Another factor is the preliminary land ownership mapping, which avoided thorny problems at a later stage.

Among the constraints of this PDP is the lack of legal recognition, for which the authorities were not ready. The operator, an agricultural economist, notes that it is important to take into account the great deal of agricultural research already completed before the PDP, yet not included in the project concept. 'One should rely on research institutions and the vast amount of research already completed, rather than start from scratch. '

## **5.4. Conclusions on PDPs**

The PDPs evaluated by the mission evidently did not achieve the expected result of shared models for large-scale application. But some PDPs showed good performance in relation to some outcomes, particularly in the agricultural sector. Expected results for the improved management of community and public resources have not been achieved.

On the methodological side, the PDPs have not been conducted within a national framework of research and development. There was no research protocol, the literature research was weak, there was no iterative approach which is normally required to implement a development research (or action research) project.

The PDPs are larger than micro-grant projects, they were required to be innovative and a source of publication and demonstration. The poor performance was attributed in a number of documents and interviews, to weaknesses of operators and slow procedures.

However, in the opinion of the mission, the very concept of the PDP, which did not respond to dynamic field conditions, was the key constraint. The PDP themes were defined long in advance. A national consultant was required to define the project in all details (over a 100 pages/PDP). Once defined and approved, an operator was required to implement it, years later. The PDP concept does not allow for innovation, as can be expected from action research or development research concepts. A number of micro-projects financed by RLWDT were significantly more innovative than the PDPs.

## **5.5. The sub-component micro-grant projects**

It is expected that the activities of micro-projects are identified and managed by the CBO in a process of action research and learning. It is expected that they will contribute to safeguarding the environment and improving living conditions of the populations of the Niger Basin.

The activities of this sub-component are classified by the following themes:

- Theme 1: Recovery of degraded land;
- Theme 2: Improving soil fertility and agricultural production;
- Theme 3: Income-generating activities;
- Theme 4: Forestry and environmental protection;
- Theme 5: Protection of ecosystems and water courses;
- Theme 6: Household energy saving

The selection of micro projects is defined in the procedures manual: “analysis will focus on technical aspects, economic and social dimension to take into account the impacts on poverty, participatory design and management, as well as the pattern financing and the terms of participatory monitoring and evaluation of expected impacts ... the technical quality of micro-projects and the importance of their contribution to the achievement of various objectives of the project remain above all other considerations in the selection process and approval of applications. “

The Local Committees for Coordination and Monitoring (LCCM) is put in place to facilitate a partnership at local level. Priority is given by the project document to existing, capable CBOs,

rather than newly established organizations. The regional project team has trained national teams in micro-grant project management, through workshops of 2-3 days / country.

Information campaigns and awareness raising has been undertaken. This allowed the start of the first round of micro-grant projects to a total 108, with an implementation period of 8 months to 2 years. Funding was over 20.000.000FCFA/micro-projet to less than 2.500.000FCFA/project. This wide difference is justified by the experience of OCB which predates RLWDT. The total funds used are 919 million FCFA.

The implementation of micro projects by CBOs / NGOs was supported by the national teams and micro-grant project advisors in particular, and the LCCM. Some micro-projects have also relied on other support structures. Independent evaluation was done for all micro-projects on a country by country basis.

Table 10. Implementation stages of micro-grant projects

Dates	Principal stages
04.2005	Recruitment of regional micro project advisor
2005	Same, national advisors
Octobre 2005	Finalisation arrangements with GEM SGP/PNUD
December 2005	Adoption of Manuel
1 <sup>er</sup> -2 <sup>e</sup> trimestre 2006	Announce of 1 <sup>o</sup> round of microprojets
2006	Information campaigns of population
2006 (except Cote d'Ivoire in 2007)	Local workshops to prepare population for micro projects
2 <sup>e</sup> trimestre 2006	Funds made available
2007	Implementation
Towards end 2008	Evaluation by independent consultants

The available documents analyzed by the mission arrive at positive conclusions and good environmental and socioeconomic effects.

## **5.6. Evaluation of micro-grant projects visited**

The mission evaluated a selection of 12 micro-grant projects in 5 countries, based on the proximity of the projects to the capital, with the exception of Cameroon and Benin. All the micro-projects near the capital were visited and evaluated. The appendix presents an assessment for all 12 micro-grant projects visited.

Some CBOs have had two projects funded by GEF because of their demonstrated ability in project management. Some countries such as Niger have opted for the micro-grant projects management by NGOs.

### **Activities implemented directly by OCBs**

One notes a certain organizational alignment among micro-projects, no doubt based on procedures. The internal organization depends on the type of leadership, but in all cases the micro-projects are effective in terms of planned outputs and sometimes obtain results that exceed expectations, particularly when local control is strong.

CBOs are run by village leaders who make involve a large number of people, who generally work with a management and decision making committee, and which report regularly on the progress of activities to village and other local. But some leaders take on a disproportionate role, which is the case of the Youth Association of Fishers in Yanfolila (Mali), led by a Commune councilor who lives in the Commune capital rather than the local community.

### **Theme 1: Recovery degraded land**

The projects under this theme seek to address issues of environmental degradation, through the recovery of land for agricultural production (Burkina, Benin, Mali), silviculture (Benin) and pastoral production (Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali) with 14 projects financed by RLWDT.

The results at the environmental level are generally achieved. Land is restored, sometimes in excess to planned targets. Recovery of degraded soils has required numerous awareness campaigns, training on rehabilitation techniques, and financial incentives, for numerous participants.

Generally the environmental recovery is accompanied by other activities, targeted to increase agricultural, pastoral and forestry production. One action is to soil fertility restoration, with technical support for compost production instead of manure. But many structures made of local material ('banco') were little resistant to rain.

Reforestation with *Acacia senegalensis*, cashew, and *Jatropha*, depending on the site, was done for environmental and economic purposes. The choice of *Acacia senegal* was felt by local people as a success with the potential to produce and sell gum arabic. Cashew trees have had a low success rate in dry areas. As for *Jatropha*, they had poor survival in land reclamation in Boulsa, Burkina Faso. The choice of *Jatropha* (encouraged by the forest officer) seems unwise in an economic context, in which it lacks the infrastructure for its commercialisation. Even in more southern areas of Burkina Faso, with large plantations of *Jatropha*, its economy is now in doubt.

The experiences and Boulsa Baol cover much village land, and the villagers met want to gradually cover all the village land. According to the people met, over 50% of the land is now covered. This result is probably due to the strong involvement of traditional authorities in community mobilization. Endowments by another project have also facilitated the activities of the villagers.

Pastoral restoration through the grazing area protection was realized in several projects. These areas are protected, with or without project paid guards. Communities have generally mastered the techniques of degraded lands recovery.

### **Theme 2: Improving soil fertility and agricultural production**

This theme concerns seventeen micro-projects whose activities aim to contribute to the sustainable conservation of land resources of the basin, through the improvement of food security and income generation. This theme was not addressed during the field work of the mission.

### **Theme 3: Income-generating activities**

This theme includes: animal husbandry, horticulture, apiculture, fish farming. It is always carried out in conjunction with environmental conservation activities (awareness,

reforestation, river banks protection). The mission visited a number of AGR such as gardening (Moribabougou Mali), livestock (Kokomani Niger), beekeeping in Burkina Faso and Benin, and fish farming in Niger and Mali.

### **Gardening**

Moribabougou women are engaged in market gardening on a plot borrowed for biological gardening using hyacinth compost, with hyacinth collected with the Bozo fishermen, who are disturbed in their fishing activities by the proliferation of this water plant. Women produce and sell eggplant, cassava, sweet potatoes, carrots etc., with financial contributions made to their community fund. On the same plot but they produce maize for their cereal bank. The fund allows to grant loans to members, who then carry out individual AGR. The use of compost has resulted in the reduction of mineral fertilizers. One woman gardener said to the mission: “my vegetables now conserve themselves better. My vegetables are sold better primarily because many customers have made the same observation”. Organic farming has improved the shelf life of products, particularly with regard to vegetables. Bozo women in Yanfolila, southern Mali, who also use the same compost for gardening, have confirmed this.

### **Fishing and fish farming**

Several micro-grant project address fishing activities directly or indirectly and allow the generation of income. At Kokomani, Niger, women have deepened a pond that was subsequently restocked, but the unfortunately the pond is not permanent, and the sale of fish, after two to three months, provided little income. The pond is near the river, and there is competition with other fishers. The activity stopped after the first year. “We can not buy fingerlings each year to see them leave for the river after every heavy rain ...” said one woman. But if certain conditions are met, the stocking of ponds is an important income generating activity: according to members of the group of fishermen of Lake Muta, “currently we have water and the lake was restocked. Large fish can be taken. Fishing is possible again”

Fish farming by Bozos in Yanfolila is an innovation, which complements traditional fishing. Four fish ponds are presently operated by the group (of which 2 financed by the project). The fish are distributed evenly (according to the group leader) and sold between members of the association of young fishermen. This activity seems to have a strong economic impact.

The production of fingerlings by the project in Niger (Seberi), supplied 30 ponds and lakes in 2011. This activity lead to economic benefits, through the improvement of fish production and through diversification. Some ponds are located more than 300 km. from Seberi. An agreement to supply ponds is signed by the group with a development project. This project has interesting lessons learned to be analyzed and published.

### **Beekeeping**

The AGR is done in conjunction with reforestation (Burkina and Benin). Modern beekeeping equipment is made available to members of CBOs. Several sites were visited by the mission. In the view of women in the OCB Walters Sabirou Gogounou of Benin, this activity provides us with income that is paid into the fund group. Part of the honey is used for direct consumption by members. The necessary equipment was provided by the project.

### **Theme 4: Production forestry and environmental protection**

The summary report mentions 36 micro-grant projects dealing with issues of reforestation and protection of stream banks against erosion and siltation. The mission held discussions with CBOs on:

- fruit trees (Association for AFAP fruit orchards etc. Chad, Cameroon Horizon Info mango, orchards, Harkanassou Niger, cashew trees in Burkina Faso, Guinea). Results vary depending mainly on the availability of water (rainfall, well ...).
- timber production and domestic woodfuel (Sekoukou, Kokomani) with results that are often associated with rainfall in the first year of planting. In Kokomani, Niger, women report a success rate of 30 plants against 1,500 planted.
- Planting of *Acacia senegalensis*, which is widespread in Cameroon, and on a small scale in Burkina Faso, with a good success rate. The mission notes certain constraints “survival and growth is going well, but the trees do not produce gum arabic even in older trees”. The NGO Gommab ICG has undertaken research which is still ongoing.

All these projects have been involved in tree nursery production, with several cases of water constraints (Group Samini Chad, AFAP) or lack of protection against animals. Most nurseries stop when goals are achieved in the first year. The NGO Gommab GIC aims at supporting private growers on a large scale. In the case of the village visited by the mission, the nursery stopped producing : “I have not produced plants this year ... I have not received a payment since 2008 ... “(a ICG Gommab nursery). Innovation supported by the project is not always sustainable.

At Kokomani, the production of seeds from unripe fruit has led to a failure in the production of plants, since they have not germinated.

#### **Theme 5: Protection of rivers and river banks**

This issue is addressed by several of the visited projects. They did a great deal of awareness raising in order to change behavior that is harmful to the river (land clearing, bush fires, making bricks, drain excreta). Activities include generally planting at the river banks, erosion control works, gardening plots and small scale irrigation ... These actions are generally well appreciated but and they involve conflicting interests:

- In Maribabougou, with support of Communes of the district of Bamako. The cooperative Boué has contributed to regulate harmful uses, e.g. prohibit the dumping of garbage and excreta, in conjunction with the Commune authorities;
- In Yanfolila, with support of the Commune, which has prepared an agreement for development of 100 hectares along the banks of the association of young fishermen, to prevent and manage conflicts and to facilitate the environmental management of the river bank. Currently, 6 Communes collaborate on the protection of river banks (with assistance of another donor).
- Case of Baol Sekoukou with planting and erosion control works with the support of the broader community.

These activities can not be successfully achieved without social legitimacy. When locally legitimate norms are in compliance with the law, they are usually supported by local authorities. The link between local initiatives (by CBOs) and Communal authorities does not always stop polluters from outside, who may have obtained permits from regional or national authorities (possibly based on corruption). But it is an important step that has proved its value and should be pursued.

#### **Theme 6: Household Energy Conservation**

During the mission one micro-grant project addressed this issue of reducing wood energy consumption. Awareness raising aimed to change wood consumption behavior. The NGO concerned has adopted a group approach to extension. The immediate problem addressed is

not one of severe wood shortage, but rather of spending less time on wood collection. Improved stoves have been introduced to respond to this. The project has been successful in the town of Garoua, with improved stoves being sold at half the cost price.

The benefits recognized by women are: i) better cooking fore qualities ii) dishes cooked better and faster ii) two dishes cooked for the same fuel quantity since it conserves the heat and iii) a lower consumption of wood (we use half of what we used with the three stones) and iv) it is less messy.

Women of Ouro Kessoum adopted stoves more easily because of their active participation in search of a prototype suitable to their condition. The fixes stoves more common than mobile ones. Visits to the homes confirmed this; improved mobile stoves are used mainly in the rainy season. “ in Although the results are still insignificant, the realization of these micro-grant projects had a significant impact on changing attitudes of women vis-à-vis the economy of energy wood, with 60-70% reduction of household energy” according to the regional synthesis of RLWDT. However, a study in the micro-grant projects of northern Cameroon found that the economy was around 50%. This corresponds with bibliographic data in many countries. The mission observes that the support by RLWDT to this topic is a great success<sup>8</sup>.

### ***5.7. Institutional context of micro-grant projects***

At the institutional level, the community-based organizations managed their projects in accordance with rules and regulations. The national coordination is perceived as a partner who can provide technical advice. The involvement of mayors and local councilors contributed to the success of micro-projects. The mayors have always assisted the CBOs when problems arise:

- When the dyers, manufacturers of bricks, continue to pollute the river, refusing to respect the local consensus on the compliance of anti-pollution laws (Moribabougou, Mali);
- Failure to respect land protection rules (case of Boala, Burkina Faso).
- When farmers let their cattle into areas closed for protection (Sekoukou, Niger).
- Everywhere, when the local technical services fail to fulfill their duties.

The involvement of local authorities in the management of abuse has been very effective. But the limitations are there when the issue is broader than the competency of Communes. Indeed some of the concerns require broader support based on inter-municipal alliances. On waste in Bamako, neighboring Communes have taken on board the Association of Municipalities adjacent to Bamako, to handle the issue with the District of Bamako because the decentralization process has not been completed.

CBOs are emanations of a civil society, which the project contributes to, sustains and provides visibility through the funding of micro projects. The implementation of micro-grant projects raises issues of environmental governance which are of a very high priority.

CBOs regularly report to local authorities, as they also remain responsible to elected local governance. This is even more so the case of women’s OCBs, knowing the crucial role they play during election campaigns. The approach based on partnerships with the Communes, inter-Communal organizations, technical services and NGOs, is a guarantor for sustainability of the activities funded by RLWDT.

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<sup>8</sup> The two mission members have a combined 60 years experience of support to improved woodfuel stoves. The RLWDT experience is the most successful among all projects known to the mission members.

## **5.8. Conclusions on micro-grant projects**

In terms of efficiency, the mission notes that the implementation set-up of the micro projects sub-component has not complied with the agreement signed between the Global Manager GEF SE and the NBA-ES in 2006. Contrary to this agreement, the NBA has not integrated the micro-grant project advisor in the RLWDT GEF-SGP unit in the countries concerned. The consequence in terms of efficiency is significant.

RLWDT has implemented \$ 200,000 / countries micro-grant projects over 5 years, approximately \$ 40,000 / year calculated over the project duration, with a national team consisting of a national coordinator, an advisor, a secretary and a bookkeeper, a vehicle plus running costs. The GEF-SGP unit has exactly the same resources, and implemented 200,000 to 500,000 \$ / year of micro-grant projects (by country). Even if one takes into account the other activities of RLWDT, one notes that the efficiency of sub-component micro-grant projects was significantly lower than that of the GEF-SGP. Possible future support of GEF to NBA micro-projects should comply with the set-up planned in 2006, in order to improve efficiency.

In terms of efficacy, the mission notes that the micro-grant projects have clearly contributed to the defined areas of intervention (water and land, biodiversity, etc.). A significant percentage of micro-grant projects seems to be sustainable in terms of socio-economic and institutional impact. The institutional innovation is very much appreciated by the mission, especially with respect to the relationships built between OCBs and elected local governance (Communes).

The component is embedded in the principle of bottom up planning, it is an innovation that is driven by local actors, the direct beneficiaries of the project. In countries like Niger, it was usually carried out by NGOs who have tendered and executed actions on behalf of community-based organizations, somewhat similar to that of PDPs which are in a more complex process of development research, and are therefore implemented by national NGOs and consulting firms. NGO's and firms may have their own agendas, different from those of CBO's. These two different orientations have different consequences.

The gender approach consisted of support for dynamic women groups. When the project supported mixed groups, women received economic support as part of a broader package. But the implementation of the gender approach could be more focused in the future support, for better impact.

Safeguarding the environment has been a common thread through all the micro-grant projects. This concern is taken into consideration in the selection of the projects, excluding access to finance any action at odds with the protection of the environment. In isolated cases, the mission poses questions about environmental safeguards, eg fattening as AGR in a micro-grant project in Niger, where the issue of land carrying capacity had not been considered.

Micro-grant projects have all benefited from one or more supervision missions by the different structures involved in the implementation of the project: NPT, UNDP, World Bank, CNP, LCCM (in some countries for a limited time), and PMCU. These missions have undoubtedly helped the projects "At one time there was an epidemic among our goats and during a mission visit to the project, they advised us to separate the kids ... that's how we

were able to save those who were healthy, we also agreed to sell some of them “(Zala group in Chad).

But in the opinion of the mission, monitoring and evaluation, synthesis and publication of numerous experiences have been insufficient. RLWDT evaluations were conducted in each member country. But they were generally limited to the level of achievement, rather than socio-economic and institutional impacts, which are much more interesting for publication. The project limited outreach to the production of certain reports, some exchange visits, and a regional workshop. Much work of analysis and publication needs to be done, to take full advantage of the experiences through the micro-grant projects.

The budget of the sub-component micro-grant projects was \$ 2.7 million, that of PDPs was \$ 2.3 million, the total budget of the component being \$ 5 million. The funds used for the sub-component micro-grant projects were \$ 1.8 million, plus some funds for support (preparation, evaluation, ...).

Given the difficulties to meet the timetable for implementation of the PDPs (2009-10), the very positive experiences of the 1<sup>st</sup> round of financing micro-projects (2006-2008), and the relentless pressures of members of the Regional Steering Committee for a second round of micro-projects, the mission regrets that the NBA did not give priority to funding more micro-grant projects. Perhaps strong guidance by UNDP at this point in time could have made a difference.

## **6. ACHIEVING GOALS: IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The long-term objective of the project can be identified with program no.9 GEF “to obtain multiple global environmental benefits through the implementation of International Waters Projects, based on integrated land and water management, to make changes in sectoral policies and actions, while promoting sustainable development “

This is an all encompassing objective, formulated to include just about everything: it is both sectoral and intersectoral, interested in the environment and economic development, policy and on-the-ground-development, and both global and local. It is true that, for example, soil conservation and plant production is both a contribution to the local environment, and to carbon sequestration, as a global objective.

The evaluators confirm that the RLWDT/UNDP has contributed to achieving this goal. Contribution to policy frameworks was probably low, since the experiences in the field (component 5) were insufficiently communicated to political level and to the public in general.

The global environmental objective of the Project is to “reduce and prevent cross-border ecosystem degradation associated with water, preventing land degradation, to protect a globally significant biodiversity, through sustainable integrated management and cooperation in the basin, while ensuring greater involvement of people in decision making about the basin” If the element “globally significant biodiversity” is somewhat of an overstatement in the case of the Sahel, it applies to certain sites (Ramsar, etc.). In general, the project component RLWDT UNDP contributed somewhat to this goal, in the opinion of the mission.

The development objective of the project is to “provide riparian countries with a cross-border framework for sustainable development of the basin, with capacity building, and through a better understanding of land and water resources of the basin “. This evaluation is limited to the component supported by UNDP and therefore lacks the ability to appreciate the objectives for the entire project.

It seems that the development objective of the project is more strongly associated with components supported by the World Bank, as those of UNDP. The contribution of the UNDP supported components to the 3 above mentioned objectives, can be more clearly identified with the first and second objective mentioned above.

### **Impact and sustainability**

According to the project document, institutional sustainability at the regional level is guaranteed by the very existence of the NBA. However, the organizational flowchart of the NBA clearly shows the very limited role of projects in institutional terms. Projects are by definition temporary structures. The lack of institutional memory is already noticeable in the case of RLWDT, nine months after the end of the project. The evaluation mission has encountered significant difficulties to collect the many reports produced during the project cycle, particularly in the countries.

The impact and sustainability of the project is mainly guaranteed by the micro-grant projects. They have carried out actions that are still visible, with lasting stream of income and, more generally, material and environmental benefits. In some projects, the immediate benefits are less visible but very present in environmental management - for example, women Moribabougou, Bamako, which protect the river against major polluters of the city.

The sustainability of the project is primarily considered in the project document in regional terms: acceptance of the Shared Vision, SAP, the revitalization of the NBA, the support of bilateral donors in the years to come. In the opinion of the mission, strategic documents produced by RLWDT are unlikely to be sustainable in the countries, since the national partners feel overwhelmed by the political and strategic documentation (“policy inflation”). According to interviews, their interest in the project is underlined by the component 5, which is much appreciated and should probably be the priority for further support.

If the project had not taken place, national partners would probably not have known or appreciated the NBA as much as they do at present. CBOs and their members could not have generated the benefits mentioned in the present document.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The evaluation mission proposes the following recommendations to the NBA and its partners for support to reverse trends in land and water degradation.

1. Develop a concept that takes into account the social, political and environmental dynamics in member countries, including:

- in terms of decentralized governance and its link with grassroots organizations;

- in terms of corruption and ways to mitigate its effects;

2. Develop a concept which takes into consideration all support provided to member countries in the reversal of trends in land and water degradation, at regional and country level. This boils down to a program approach in line with the Paris Declaration.

3. The concept should be based on the comparative advantages of regional support. One of the advantages of regional institutions is relatively independent position of a regional institution with respect to interests that may govern in a country, and which may go against the reversal of trends in land and water degradation. One of the mechanisms suggested to make this work is the concept of ‘peer review’. High quality regional analytical studies are also a potential tool.

4. The main objective to be pursued, in the opinion of the mission, is to support CBOs in management of public and community resources, accompanied by socio-economic development. Innovative actions by the CBOs may be a selection criterion. This objective corresponds with component 5. A major effort of funding and publication of innovative results is desirable.

5. The phenomenon of ‘strategy and policy inflation’ has been observed in countries and leads to recommend not to invest heavily in the formulation of strategies and policies. However, the publication of interesting experiments in micro-grant projects can contribute to informing an update of the regulatory and institutional framework supported, by NBA and other partners.

6. The mission strongly recommends avoiding the dichotomy of RLWDT. If the NBA and UNDP want to develop a partnership, it is highly desirable to focus on the objectives of components 2 and 5. Unambiguously UNDP support requires a leader among the 9 representations of the UNDP, with a clearly defined and respected ToR, and a coherent logical framework.

7. The micro-grant projects should be anchored in the GEF SGP units to ensure efficiency. Specific criteria of the NBA may be considered by the selection committee (geography of the Niger basin, IWRM, etc.). Experts funded by the NBA can possibly add value to the entire GEF GSP program in the countries, with respect to IWRM.

8. The sub-component ‘PDP’ should be reviewed. If the NBA considers that innovation already practiced by a number of micro-projects is insufficient, a component “innovation in IWRM” can be developed. But the mission believes that it must rely on the existing innovation development practice and on existing research and development institutions in the countries. The comparative advantage of NBA is not that of a research and development institution.

A NBA grant for existing research and development systems avoids the weaknesses of conceptualization, the lack of efficiency and effectiveness, and lack of communication (extension) thereafter. Of course, NBA (as the client) defines the major issues related to IWRM it wishes to explore. The proposed setup would be similar to that of micro-grant projects: funding and major policy lines will be provided by the NBA, the implementation will be provided by specialized institutions (national research and development institutions, national GEF SGP units, respectively).

9. GEF micro-grant projects are managed by grassroots organizations. Improved environmental management of community and public resources increasingly demands a legal framework. Communes are increasingly the preferred legal framework for community organizations. The phenomenon of corruption has worsened in NBA countries. Decision makers in ministries may collude with private interests at the risk of environmental degradation, with or without the law on their side. The mission recommends a fund to support inter-communal organization in order to protect specific environmental interests.

10. The mission recommends a highly professional Communication component with, among others:

- A highly professional baseline study. A regional institution has comparative advantage in terms of economy of scale to achieve this kind of study. Collaboration between regional institutions may give more weight to this kind of investment.
- Some formations of high quality can be contracted to the specialized agencies, such as the Regional Centre Agrhymet.
- A high-quality website, well-updated and expanded, is essential for good communication.
- Professional monitoring that can be delegated to specialized agencies, should be undertaken.

11. Quality monitoring and evaluation and archiving must be done. A monitoring and evaluation expert based in Niamey does not guarantee this activity: it is necessarily a joint venture of national and regional teams.

12. Gender issues should be on the agenda. It is not limited to women secretaries, or the target group of women as beneficiaries of the micro-grant projects. Without strengthening the role of women in decision-making, development will not be in full swing.

13. Clear leadership in UNDP for project supervision is recommended. This can provide added value to the project.

14. Financial support aiming at equality between the nine member countries may be diplomatic but is be misguided in terms of efficiency. Targeted support is recommended.

15. The quality of work in two languages requires a much greater effort, and requires funds