



INTERNATIONAL WATERS RESULTS NOTES

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Reversing Land and Water Degradation Trends in the Niger River Basin

GEF Agency Project ID#: 1093 P070256, Project Status: Closed



- 1. Contribution to the Shared Vision Process in the Niger Basin resulting in the approval by the Heads of State of the Niger Basin of a 20-year Investment Program (IP), for a total of US\$8 billion**
- 2. Contributed to the Improved knowledge base and data sharing supported appropriate development decisions at the Basin level:** In the context of the Shared Vision Process, hydrological and economic models of the Niger Basin for key development scenarios and key sectors (irrigation, energy, livestock, etc) were developed. The results of the models allowed the Niger CoM meeting to choose a specific development scenario in preparation of the 20-year IP.
- 3. Validation at the regional and national level of Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis and SAP** conducted in an inclusive process, and the SAP was endorsed by the COM as a regional policy framework. A comprehensive Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Program (SAP) were completed following a participatory process that included multidisciplinary teams at the national and regional level.

Lambert Ouedraogo
glouedraogo@abn.ne

Regional Management and Coordination Unit, NBA

Amal Talbit
atalbi@worldbank.org
AFTWR, World Bank

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Project were: (a) to strengthen the capacity of the Recipient to promote and improve coordinated and sustainable land and water management in the Basin; (b) to strengthen institutional mechanisms in Member Countries for management of transboundary land and water issues; (c) to develop a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) to improve the conservation and management of land and water resources in the Basin; and (d) to assist the recipient in coordinating donor support for implementing the Strategic Action Plan and an effective transboundary management.

RESULTS: PROCESS

Indicator 1: Strengthen collaboration and dialogue between the NBA and the member countries. This stronger collaboration yielded to the development of a sustainable strategic action plan and a 20-year investment program for the Niger Basin for an amount of US\$8 billion. The project has contributed to a conducive and enabling environment and supported the ongoing dialogue and intensification of collaboration between the nine countries. The project modalities provide an opportunity for multi-sectoral dialogue, sharing of lessons, learning from each other, and building cohesiveness of key partners. This project was the only NBA project with activities implemented in the nine countries.

Indicator 2: Validation at the regional and national level of Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis and SAP conducted in an inclusive process, and the SAP was endorsed by the COM as a regional policy framework. A comprehensive Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Program (SAP) were completed following a participatory process that included multidisciplinary teams at the national and regional level. The TDA analysis conducted during the project preparation in the main stem countries was completed in 2009 and validated through a participatory process. It presented the transboundary problems as identified and prioritized by the basin stakeholders, with high and medium priorities assigned to respectively (i) land degradation (degradation of vegetation cover and soil erosion), (ii) water resources degradation (reduced water availability and quality), and (iii) loss of terrestrial biological diversity. Following the conclusions of the TDA, the SAP is a policy document that: (i) complemented the Niger Basin Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP), (ii) identified future sustainable development investments in the Basin, (iii) ranked trans-boundary environmental problems, (iv) provided information on specific sites on the Basin that have a rich biodiversity, (v) identified political, legal and institutional reforms, and (v) integrated aspects related to climate change/variability emphasizing their transversal character and socio-economic impacts. The SAP also provided a first estimate of the cost of addressing the transboundary environmental aspects that were not yet included in the SDAP and estimated the cost to be about US\$1.5 billion. The SAP was endorsed at the appropriate political level (the Council of Ministers) in November 2010 and it covers the period 2013 – 2027, parallel to subsequent SDAP phases.

Indicator 3: Delivery of positive impacts on the ground through a micro-grant program and a public participation program. The positive impacts can be summarized in terms of awareness, environmental activities used as a basis for poverty alleviation, and concrete activities on the ground for reversal of environmental degradation. Under the UNDP-implemented components, intensive awareness campaigns on environmental issues and the role of the NBA were conducted and resulted in improved awareness of the NBA and its activities. These local activities have increased the visibility of the NBA across all the countries of the Basin. Local activities were supported with 108 micro-grant interventions to demonstrate environmentally sustainable approaches for the reversal of land and water degradation, as a basis for poverty alleviation. Local beneficiaries in each country have been consulted and encouraged to participate in resource management, and have developed an environmental awareness that could benefit long-term integrated basin resources management. In this process, NGOs/groups of youth and women were given the opportunity to implement local activities.

RESULTS: STRESS REDUCTION

N/A

RESULTS: WATER RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Improved knowledge base and data sharing supported appropriate development decisions at the Basin level: In the context of the SDAP, hydrological and economic models of the Niger Basin for key development scenarios and key sectors (irrigation, energy, livestock, etc) were developed. The results of the models allowed the Niger CoM meeting to chose a specific development scenario and the Heads of State Summit, in April 2008, approved the investment program (IP) related to this specific development scenario. Without the modeling it would not have proven difficult to compare and justify the choice of one of the nine potential development scenarios. The modeling allowed to have specific results in terms of impacts (on the inner delat (wetland in Mali), reduction of flow in the river, etc), and benefits (job creation, higher economic return, higher rice production, etc). The CoM had pertinent information to compare development scenarios and choose the one that presents the lower impacts and the higher benefits for the Basin. This is a concrete example on how better knowledge (through the hydrological and economic models currently used in the NBA) allowed for appropriate development decisions at the Basin level. The project activities also contributed to the capacity building of the Niger Basin Observatory (NBO), which is a critical department of the NBA in terms of modeling, monitoring, and providing the base of policy makers' decisions in the basin. The support of the NBO continues to be supported by partners, mainly AFD, ACDI, the EU, and GIZ.

*Environmental status monitoring*¹ has improved during the lifetime of the project thanks to collaborative effort among partners and good coordination among the NBA implemented projects. The Niger Basin Observatoire, established in 2006, monitors hydrological status and is expected to monitor the remaining 28 indicators. The NBA has established an on-line catalogue of Meta data (<http://georepertoire.abn.ne>), providing information relative to the available data for these indicators, and conducted an assessment of the quality of existing data. The prototype for the Environmental Information System (EIS) for the Basin is complete and on-line (<http://sie.abn.ne>). An exchange protocol is already in place for hydrological data, which started with support of the Niger-Hycos.

¹ *Environmental status monitoring* is defined as measuring environmental status indicators such as hydrological, environmental, and socio-economic information.