

CONCEPT NOTE

Capacity Building in Combat Desertification and Sustainable Land Management in Niger

Short Description

Niger, a totally land locked country, covers a surface of 1,267,000 Km and is located between longitudes 0°16' and 16° East and latitudes 11°01' and 23°17' North. Its nearest border to the coast is at more than 600 Km from the Guinea Gulf.

The country climate is particularly dry. Niger belongs, in fact, to one the hottest zones of the globe. It has two types of hot climates: a desert climate on the major part of its surface, and a tropical climate with only one rainy season. The evaporation is intense and varies between 1700 mm and 2100 mm of water per year; the climatic hydrous deficit is therefore important during the dry season and for the flora, to survive, it must draw from the underground reserves.

In the North of the country represents around 65% of the national territory, with very scarce rains. The rainfall remains always inferior to 100 mm per year and the dry season is very long with average temperatures higher than 35° C.

In Niger, lands are generally poor in nutritive elements and in organic matters content. Most of the lands are unproductive and fragile and very sensitive to hydrous and wind erosion.

Like other developing countries in general and the Sahel in particular, Niger is facing with:

- _ An accelerated population growth (annual increase rate is 3,3%);
- _ A very high fertility level (synthetic fertility rating is 7.4 children per woman);
- _ A mortality level relatively high (infantile mortality rate is 123 for thousand and maternal mortality is 6,5%);
- _ A quite young structure of its population (49,5% are less than 15 years old);
- _ An unequal space distribution (75% of its population live on 25% of the national territory);
- _ A rapid urbanization of its population: 25.1% of the population live in urban area in 1993 (source pop sahel n°26-October 1997) against 13% in 1977 (RGP – 1977) ;
- _ A higher percentage of women who represent about 52% of the population;
- _ A poor school attendance rate

As for Forestry, national policies in the matter evolved three decades ago from a “conservative” attitude to a strategy of Desertification control and the integrated management of the whole of natural resources. It is in this framework that a *National Plan for combating Desertification* (PNLCD) has first been designed, then a *Natural Resources Management Project* (PGRN).

Between 1982 and 1989, an inventory of forest resources (except the region of Agadez) enabled to estimate in a global way, the productive potential at 16 millions ha (of which 11,600,000 ha of marginal forest lands and 440,000 ha of forest lands

which could be developed). Their productivity is very poor varying from 0.1 to 1.5 stere/ha/year (PUSF, 1982, 1989). The supplying of urban population represents about 12% of the total demand of the country. The natural forest formations provide about 87% of the population energy needs in wood, that is to say the equivalent of 2.5 to 3 millions tons per year of which 150.000 tons for the sole needs of Niamey city (Projet Energie II, 1991).

The supplying of urban populations represents about 12% of the global demand of the country. These same forest formations provide almost the totality of wood at the service of populations estimated at 113.000 tons in 1993 (Projet Energie II). Because of the demographic growth, this consumption is to double in the coming years, hence the risk to accentuate the green cover degradation whose production is already low. The "wood-energy assessment" of regions indicates that most regions are in deficit. The supplying in wood comes up in a particularly acute manner in regions of Tahoua, Maradi, Tillaberi and Zinder. To cope with this situation, the country has developed alternative situations, namely in the area of new and renewable energies. Several programs are thus elaborated in this framework: domestic energy project; Urban gas project; charcoal project... These programs encountered enormous difficulties in their implementation; However, wood rural markets whose principle is based on empowering villagers in the management of their areas, obtain positive results.

Objectives

To identify factors which contribute to desertification and concrete measures to be taken to combat it and alleviate drought effects. To analyze and follow up the factors that contribute to drought and desertification. To promote a sustainable management of natural resources in the areas (to organize, train and make the population participate in the sustainable management of the natural resources). Train local people and public servants on the combatting desertification and afforestation issues. To improve the production and the rural communities conditions of life namely through the adoption of more appropriate technical ways.

Justification

In Niger, it is obvious that problems of desertification and degradation of natural resources are becoming an acute issue. The climate, the demographic pressure and exploitation methods of the environment constitute decisive factors of these scourges. The major issue is expressed through a certain number of contradictions or paradoxes having significant consequences on the country's rural development whose resolution turned out to be imperative for an efficient socioeconomic development. It's about :

- The search for food security in a persistence context of unfavorable climatic conditions;
 - The rational natural resources management and demographic pressure on these resources followed by practices and exploitation methods not respectful of the environment;
 - The control of drought effects before the economic recession that the country goes through and the poverty situation of the population;
 - The struggle against rural population poverty and the low level of agriculture and breeding productions, populations main sources of income.
- The evidence of these contradictions and dilemmas which challenge the

natural environment, man and his exploitation methods are emphasizing the desertification phenomenon. Addressing desertification and land management issues and awareness building effort, will support Niger in solving the numerous environmental problems facing the country and its people.

According to results of Questionnaire prepared and presented by Turkish delegations to Niger's Participation at meeting of UNCCD COP 10 in Republic of Korea, there are important issues such as soil protection, Afforestation techniques, Combating Desertification, Water Harvesting, sand stabilization, Rural Development that both country could have coordination, collaboration, sharing experiences each other.

Focus: The project will focus on the following areas;

- (a) Rehabilitation of degraded lands by conserving the ecosystems productive character and combating desertification.
- (b) Training the local communities for adopting a participatory approach for land development.
- (c) Regular afforesting courses to develop technical senior staff and training seminars for developing technical experts for public servants, NGO's and CSO's.
- (d) With information and education, responsabilizing the population in the management of forest and wildlife resources and the desertification control.
- (e) Reinforcement of local population effective participation in the designing, planning, implementation, follow up and evaluation of hydrous and wind erosion control actions.
- (f) Training and information of the decision makers, public (namely women, young people), NGOs, as well as development agents on the importance and consequences, especially long-term, of desertification.
- (g) Elaboration and implementation of a joint afforestation Project.
- (h) Technology and equipment transfer.

Beneficiaries

The main beneficiaries and target groups of this project will include Government officials, environmental inspectors, academicians, civil society (such as women and youth groups), community-based organizations, private sector, and regional administrations.

Results: The expected results include:

- (a) drought and desertification observation and followup arrangements will be strengthened .
- (b) enhanced capacity and expertise of government officials, and other stakeholders in sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation, combating desertification;
- (c) increased public participation.
- (d) increased environmental awareness and information.
- (e) civil populations will be informed about the desertification effects.
- (f) youth and women will actively participate in desertification control.
- (g) Recovery of degraded lands.
- (h) Recovery and protection of forest lands.
- (i) Creating income generating activities.

- (j) Development of cooperation between Turkey and Niger.
- (k) Realized Small –scale Income Activities

Outputs:

- (a) At least 10 officials of ministry of environment (Ministere de L'Hydroulique er de L'environnement), academics and other stakeholders trained in combating desertification and sustainable land management in total of 5 years.
- (b) At least 10 officials of the civil society, women groups, community based organizations, etc empowered to participate in combating desertification and sustainable land management.
- (c) At least 4 manuals, toolkits, and other printed materials in combat desertification and sustainable land management.
- (d) At least 1 pilot project on afforestation developed and implemented;
- (e) At least 1 mid-term and 1 final evaluations of the project undertaken and reports produced;

Activities: The following are activities to be carried out under the project:

- a. train government officials, including sectoral ministries and other stakeholders on improving skills and knowledge base in combating desertification and sustainable land management;
- b. assess and strengthen the institutional structure of the government bodies responsible for natural resources management and protection of the environment;
- c. developing community-based local land management plans.
- d. support gender mainstreaming and greater understanding of the different gender roles in combating desertification and land management; and
- e. develop pilot projects on afforestation.
- f. Development Integrated participatory Watershad Project

Verifiable Indicators: The verifiable indicators of the project include:

- (i) the number of officials of ministries, agencies and other stakeholders trained in combating desertification and sustainable land management;
- (ii) the number of pilot and demonstration projects developed and implemented;
- (iii) the number of guidebooks and manuals on combating desertification and sustainable land management produced.

Implementation modalities

Implementation of the project will be in three phases starting with training officials. Then it will address the needs of a spesific area with a pilot Project. The third phase will consist the evaluation and lessons learnt.

The Project will be participatory involving all relevant stakeholders. The Project will create focus on how to address the desertification problem and land management issues collectively.

The implementation of the project will be mainly at country level but **General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion (CEM)** will provide training and technical expertise. CEM will start with the pilot project and will collaborate with TIKA, as well as local environmental NGOs that are implementing projects in the field. National (Niger) Coordinator will be identified to train on the job, if unfamiliar, to manage and coordinate all national activities. With this person, there will be a team of about 3 National Task Force who will form the base for building national capacities. They will be working closely with the coordinator. The coordinator will participate in the development of national training programmes. This core group will form the basis for sustaining the project activities when the project ends.

Partners

- a) TIKA
- b) UNCCD
- c) Ministry of Environment Niger
- d) NGO's, CSO's, other stakeholders.

Risks and Assumptions

- (i) The extent of political will and cooperation among the country cannot be fully determined. However, it is expected that the consultative arrangements built in the project will address this aspect early in the preparatory stages of implementation of the project.
- (ii) Inadequate baseline data, weak technical capacity. The project activity relating to assessment of capacity, state of the environment and socio-economic situations will provide the required baseline data upon which to design specific demand-driven activities, and to address specific problems.
- (iii) Lack of security will delay any activity.
- (iv) Availability or assignment of competent personnel to handle the activities of the project by the Government. The assumption is that minimal requisite capacity exists that can be built upon with the various capacity building activities and on-the-job arrangements in the project design.
- (v) Regime changes in the country.
- (vi) Continuity of the same persons for the trainings may be a problem. It is a must for the same person to attend to the training programs for productivity.

Sustainability

The project is intended to provide the initial steps in building an enabling situation for combating desertification and sustainable land management in Niger. The sustainability of the project will be enhanced by the strong emphasis on local institutional capacity-building and strengthening of existing national institutions. Through the participatory process of the project, country ownership will be fortified.