

GEF project on

Reversing soil and water degradation tendencies in the Lake Chad basin.

MINUTES

1. At the invitation of the LCBC, a pluri-partite consultation meeting was held in N'Djaména, Chad, on 19th and 20th June at the LCBC headquarters. The meeting was to discuss the proposals for pilot projects in the final phase of the GEF regional project jointly supported by UNDP and the World Bank.
2. Besides the representatives of LCBC member states (Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Central African Republic, and Chad), and the stakeholders who prepared the project (LCBC, UNDP, World Bank), the meeting was attended by many representatives of bilateral and multilateral agencies of organisations and NGOs involved in water and soil resources survey and/or development programmes in the Lake Chad basin and the sub-region (see list of participants in the annex).

SUMMARY

Opening of the meeting and election of officers

3. The main features of the opening ceremony chaired by Mr TAM Lambert (the LCBC Assistant Executive Secretary) were welcome addresses by the representatives of the project stakeholders : David Laroche, from UNDP ; Tracy Hart, from the World Bank ; Abubakar Jauro, the Executive Secretary of LCBC (cf copy of speech in the annex). The meeting afterwards elected and approved its officers as follows : Chairman : A. Jauro (LCBC), Vice-chairman : Mr Ngaré Mahamat Abba (Chad), Facilitator : O. Dione (World Bank), Secretary : JF Aranossy (World Bank), Co-Secretary : Mr Olusegun Irivboje.

General presentation of the project

4. The UNDP representative recalled the general framework of the orientation strategies of the Global Environmental Fund within which the present project on the preservation of Lake Chad basin's water and soil resources was prepared. He recalled the particularly interesting nature – which is also unique in many cases – of the ecological system of Lake Chad and its environment. He highlighted how interested the international community in general and the GEF agencies in particular (UNDP, World bank , UNEP) are in contributing to the protection and development of the ecosystem. Through its various thematics, GEF constitutes an important tool for implementing multi-sector , integrated and trans-national

projects. But its means are necessarily limited and cannot cater to all the actions required in the lake Chad basin.

5. After quickly explaining the general procedures for preparing and submitting GEF projects (PDF-A, PDF –B, « Project Brief », PDF- C, final project document), as well as the background and place occupied in this process by the project presently being prepared (PDF – C), the UNDP representative then recalled the objectives and commented on the major components of the project, namely :
 - (1) Organizational and management elements of the project,
 - (2) Reinforcement of regional and national institutions and capabilities,
 - (3) Reinforcement of the involvement of stakeholders,
 - (4) Updating of the Trans-border Diagnostic Analysis,
 - (5) Finalization of the regional action programme,
 - (6) Mobilization of funds for implementing the programme.

6. He then answered questions from the participants (especially representatives from member states) on the following topics:
 - Involvement of national experts,
 - The principles of reinforcing the participation of actors and stakeholders
 - Funding of « incremental costs »,
 - Support to national programmes (with regional implications),
 - Principles of cooperation with the other organizations and the other on-going programmes in the region.

7. The World Bank representative then recalled the general conditions in the region which justify the preparation of the programme and the relevant support, by placing them in the perspective of the GEF initiative for the « integrated management of soil and water resources in Africa ».

8. During the question and answer session, participants particularly stressed, on the one hand, that the choice of exploitation strategies should be based on sufficient knowledge of all the potential surface and ground water resources (even though ground water resources potentials are often much lesser known than surface water resources potentials), and, on the other hand, that coordination and regulation efforts should also be extended to international institutions, rules and conventions.

9. A. Jauro (LCBC) and O. Dione (World Bank) then presented the broad strategic lines governing the choice of pilot projects proposed in the GEF project. The pilot projects are derived directly from previous studies which have been carried out for many years under the aegis of LCBC to identify the major problems and priority basinwide actions, the most remarkable being the Lake Chad basin diagnostic study and the strategic action plan. They are grouped together under 5 themes presented in the project brief, as follows :

- (1) Protected zones
- (2) Aquatic ecosystems
- (3) Demand management
- (4) Pollution control
- (5) Wetlands integrated management.

The pilot projects proposals (cf. annex) submitted for discussions at the meeting should, however, be considered as temporary documents, totally open to suggestions, amendments and possible additions by participants.

10. The discussion which followed highlighted the common concerns of the participants for the coordination of efforts between member states and the various institutions operating in the region. The discussions also emphasized the relatively high number of on-going projects related to soil and water resources integrated management in the basin as well as in the sub-region.

The need for coordination and effective harmonization between the project and the national master plans and the various programmes for implementing environmental protection conventions (desertification control, RAMSAR) was emphasized several times.

It was also stressed that the aspects of training, information systems, communication and national and regional capacity reinforcement were systematically included in all these thematics.

In the light of the various projects being carried out in the basin , proposals were made by the participants to amend the list of themes of the possible pilot projects. The proposals concerned notably :

- Forest ecosystems,
- Desertification control,
- Ecological niches constituted by « sacred forests » and other traditionally protected zones
- Restoration of wetlands
- Control of invasive species,
- Consequences of climatic changes ,
- Sustainable use of resources,
- Artificial water-table recharge processes...

Following the discussions, the subjects studied and developed, together with the thematics previously presented, resulted in the proposal of three new themes, viz. :

- (6) Desertification control,
- (7) Traditional ecological niches,
- (8) Drought mitigation.

Presentatin of options for the choice of pilot projects

12. The meetings of Monday 19th in the afternoon and Tuesday 20th in the morning were afterwards entirely devoted to the presentation of 8 options for the choice of pilot projects. The presentations were followed with thorough discussions by all the participants.
13. To varying degrees, the participants expressed their support for the proposed pilot projects. In the light of this, some proposals were made, such as :
 - Including **protection of forests** in the theme on protected zones,
 - Including **sustainable use of resources** in management by request,
 - Including **the restoration aspect** in the integrated management of wetlands.
14. The proposed pilot projects were reviewed, discussed and enriched, their outlines better defined and the contents reinforced. It was in this vein that :
 - some of the projects were amended ;
 - additions and corrections were made in the specifications of some of the activities as in the proposed work plan ;
 - besides, participants indicated or suggested some on-going projects whose activities are similar or can be complementary to the projects proposed in the perspective of harmonizing them or avoiding duplication of efforts.
14. Members of the technical consultative group suggested a range of possible criteria to use for Technical Committee selection of the proposed pilot projects. These included :
 - selection of individual country projects according to country contribution to the LCBC budget ;
 - participation rates of country members in LCBC efforts ;
 - development of infrastructure in individual countries ;
 - benefit to Lake Chad on behalf of all member countries ;
 - contribution to land and water degradation agenda ;
 - government and/or NGO ownership/motivation of pilots chosen ;
 - even distribution across sub-ecosystems in Lake Chad basin ;
 - even distribution across five thematic areas.
15. The technical committee (scheduled for Wednesday 21st) will take these factors into account when proposing the choice of pilot projects to be retained for the final draft of the GEF project.

SUMMARY OF THE TECHNICAL MEETING OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION

1. At the invitation of the LCBC, a pluri-partite consultation meeting was held in N'Djaména, Chad, on 19th and 20th June at the LCBC headquarters. The meeting was to discuss the pilot project proposals planned in the final phase of the GEF regional project jointly supported by UNDP and the World Bank.
2. Besides the representatives of LCBC member states (Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Central African Republic, and Chad), and the stakeholders who prepared the project (LCBC, UNDP, World Bank), the meeting was attended by many representatives of bilateral and multilateral agencies of organisations and NGOs involved in the water and soil resources survey and/or development programmes in the Lake Chad basin and the sub-region (see list of participants in the annex).

Reminder : A more detailed document of the various discussions will be made available as soon as possible in both French and English. Therefore, the following is a summary of the discussions held since yesterday.

Report : To varying degrees, the participants expressed their support for the pilot projects proposed.

Results : The five themes on which the pilot projects were based were reviewed and discussed by the participants. The themes concerned : protected zones ; aquatic ecosystems ; demand management ; pollution hazards ; wetlands integrated management.

In the light of this, some proposals were made, such as :

- Including **protection of forests** in the theme on protected zones,
- Including **sustainable use of resources** in management by request,
- Including **the restoration aspect** in the integrated management of wetlands.

1. In view of the fact that the themes were not exhaustive, participants thought it useful to add three other themes considered relevant by them ; these are :

- Desertification control ;
- Participatory management of village ecological niches ; and
- Drought mitigation.

2. The pilot projects proposed, 14 in all, were reviewed, discussed and enriched. Their outlines were better defined and the contents reinforced. As a result,

- some of the projects were amended ;

- additions and corrections were made in the specifications of some of the activities as in the proposed work plan ;
- participants indicated or suggested some on-going projects whose activities are similar or can be complementary to the projects proposed, in the perspective of harmonizing them or avoiding duplication of efforts.

3. Criteria for selection :

Participants then examined the possibility of classifying by order of priority, the various pilot projects proposed. Various criteria for selection were proposed and discussed with a view to conforming the pilot projects with the themes retained and to make GEF operations more expressive and appropriate. Among these criteria, the most relevant ones proposed concerned :

- The critical trans-border aspects which, when taken into account, will contribute to facilitating the dissemination of lessons and experiences and stimulating cooperation.
- The issue of saving the lake, bearing in mind the most urgent aspects such as resources degradation and increased sedimentation ;
- The protection of ecosystems in the most sensitive zones having significant impact on the basin's resources.

4. Next steps

The criteria proposed by the participants will serve as a reference for the technical committee in classifying the pilot projects by order of priority and choosing those to be funded by GEF. It will also be the duty of the technical committee to define the technical content of each pilot project, by including the estimated costs. Feasibility studies will be made on the priority pilot projects in the GEF agenda before the process for their implementation is set into motion.