

## Evaluation Abstract

**Title, author and date of the evaluation report:**

Support Project for Wetland Management in the Inner Niger Delta, Final Evaluation, prepared by Meg Gawler and Bréhima Bérédogo, March 2002

**Name of project, programme or organizational unit**

Support Project for Wetland Management in the Inner Niger Delta

**Objectives of the project, programme or mandate of the organizational unit:**

The project was generally aimed at implementing the management plans of the Akka-Goun and Dentaka sites located in the Circle of Youwarou. Its scope was defined by the following three objectives:

- 1) Develop local initiatives for the conservation of local resources;
- 2) Build the capacity of the local population, technical services and NGOs in conservation techniques and use of fisheries, plant and animal resources; and
- 3) Help local institutions to set up legal measures and mechanisms necessary for implementing the principles of local management of natural resources.

**IUCN area of specialisation:** Wetlands and Water

**Geographical area:** Mali

**Project or programme duration, length of existence of organisational unit:**

Phase I (1984-1988); Phase II (1990-1992); Phase III (1995-1999); Phase IV (under evaluation): (1999-2001)

**Overall budget of the project, programme or organizational unit:** 190 million CFA francs

**Donor(s):** The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bamako

**Objectives of the evaluation:**

To analyze the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

**Type of evaluation:** Final project evaluation

**Period covered by the evaluation:** 1999-2001

**Commissioned by:** The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bamako

**Audience:** Not specified

**Evaluation team:** External

**Methodology used:**

- Document review
- Development of an evaluation matrix
- Field site visits and semi-structured interviews with IUCN staff, the staff of the Netherlands Embassy, national and international NGOs, the national Department for Nature Conservation, technical services in Mopti, regional technical services in Youwarou Circle, and beneficiary populations at several levels.

- Two debriefings – in Youwarou and Bamako – in order to solicit the reactions of the people concerned by the evaluation to the initial findings of the review.
- Data analysis, data synthesis, and report preparation.

### **Questions of the evaluation:**

1. *Relevance:* How does the project address the needs of Mali? How does it address the needs of the beneficiaries as regards the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity? Up to what level does the project contribute towards IUCN's strategic orientation?
2. *Effectiveness:* To what extent does the project achieve its objectives and the expected results? Has the project practiced adaptive management?
3. *Efficiency:* To what extent does the project use its resources cost-effectively?
4. *Impact:* What is the impact of the project on biodiversity and the environment? What is the impact of the project on the socio-economic situation of the beneficiaries? Are there unforeseen impacts?
5. *Sustainability:* Has the approach of the project favored the sustainability of results? Which results could be further built upon by the beneficiaries? Which results could be further build upon by the partners?
6. *Lessons:* What lessons can be learned from this project?

### **Findings:**

1. *Relevance:* The project addresses the implementation of the international conventions signed by Mali (the Convention on Biodiversity, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, etc). It is in line with national environmental and rural development policies, as well as meets local needs with regard to the management of natural resources and decentralization.
2. *Effectiveness:* Project objectives were largely achieved, including the development of local initiatives for natural resources management, expansion of income-generating activities, capacity building among local populations and technical services, development of land management plans, etc. Partnerships were developed, and local populations were involved in project implementation. A major weakness identified was the inadequate, or absent, monitoring and evaluation.
3. *Efficiency:* The project succeeded in accomplishing a lot with the means at its disposal. However, there were problems with the circulation of funds, an underestimate of operational costs during the first two years of the project, and a poor allocation of the funds among budget lines.
4. *Impacts:* The impacts of the project can be observed in five areas: ecological, social, natural resource management, poverty alleviation, and unforeseen impacts. The flooded forests, which have positive effects on biodiversity, have been restored. Natural resources are managed thanks to rules developed and accepted by the local people. The project has contributed to poverty alleviation by creating village credit systems, developing cattle breeding and vegetable gardening, improving fish processing methods, etc. Human lives have been saved through conflict settlement among the users of natural resources, as a result of the local covenants developed.
5. *Sustainability:* The activities initiated are very likely to continue since they were undertaken collectively by IUCN, the technical services, and the local populations together. However, the sustainability of vegetable gardening seems unlikely.

### **Recommendations:**

- A follow-up is suggested, aimed at developing maps for the management plans and local covenants. Other recommendations include: holding a workshop to validate the Integrated Land Management Plans; applying for formal recognition of the planning instruments; and translating the plans.

- A long-term ‘real’ management plan is seen as a critical tool for the long-term survival of the ecosystems. IUCN is considered well-placed to support this effort.
- It is also essential that the management plans be expanded to the Youwarou Circle and the whole river basin.

**Lessons Learned:**

- The development of successful co-management systems is dependent upon the level of confidence between communities and technical services. Project has made every effort to change a situation of distrust into an atmosphere of confidence.
- Repayment of micro-loans was close to 100% due to the initial capital coming from women themselves. If one of them is late paying, her fellow members go to her house and request payment.
- Traditional management systems are often most relevant. In this project, management rules generally originated from the users and not from the technical services; the rules and regulations were built upon tradition.
- A participatory approach does not automatically lead to a management plan.

**Language of the evaluation:** French; English translation available

**Available from:** IUCN Global Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, Gland, Switzerland; IUCN Regional Office for West Africa