



Support to the Niger Basin Authority

Project Partner:	Niger Basin Authority (NBA)
Project Region:	Benin , Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria
Project Term:	launched in 2007 current phase: April 2010 – March 2013
Project Budget:	total: EUR 7.5 million current phase: EUR 2.6 million

Context

The Niger River runs a length of approximately 4,200 km (the third longest river in Africa and the ninth longest in the world) and creates a catchment area of about 1,500,000 km². The basin area boasts an estimated population of about 113 million (2000), includes sections of nine West and Central African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger and Nigeria), and has become indispensable for food security, fishing, transport and power generation.

In recent years, the Niger River basin has suffered from serious degradation of its natural resources, occurring to varying degrees and across a number of agro-ecological zones. This situation is a result of both worsening climatic conditions as well as human activities carried out to exploit the basin's considerable natural resources. Though faced with very real challenges such as droughts and climate variability, the basin remains rich in natural resources – most of them renewable. The riparian states and their local populations are responsible for ensuring the best possible utilisation of the basin's resources, strengthening capacities at all levels in order to ensure sustainability.

The need to create a framework for optimal, integrated resource management in the Niger River basin became apparent back in the early 1950s, leading to the creation of the Niger River Research and Development Mission in Bamako. In November 1964, the Niger River Commission (NRC) was created, later replaced by the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) in 1980. The NBA is mandated with the task of assisting in cooperation efforts between member states in order to promote integrated, coordinated and harmonious development within the basin by supporting effective use of Niger River resources.

Project

The programme “integrated water resource management (IWRM) in the Niger basin” is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and is being carried out in cooperation with the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) and the German KfW Entwicklungsbank. This GIZ project works in collaboration with other NBA partners. It targets capacity development on the Executive Secretariat level as well as within local national structures and civil society organisations in the respective states.

The overall term of the project is set at 10 years. Project activities will focus on strategic planning, PR work, internal communication, and organisational development during the second three year phase. Effective river basin management must be based on reliable and up-to-date information about the hydrologic balance and ecological changes as well as on the local population's socio-economic situation. On account of this, the goal of organisational development will be achieved by improving the flow of information among member states and the NBA. Adjustment to climate change is another key area of cooperation.





The project also promotes the NBA's 'Shared Vision' initiative – adopted in 2002 – which seeks to enhance sustainable development through integrated management of water resources and related ecosystems. This will lead to an improvement of living conditions and income of the population living in the Niger River basin area. The project likewise supports the NBA in establishing necessary dialogue and cooperation structures.

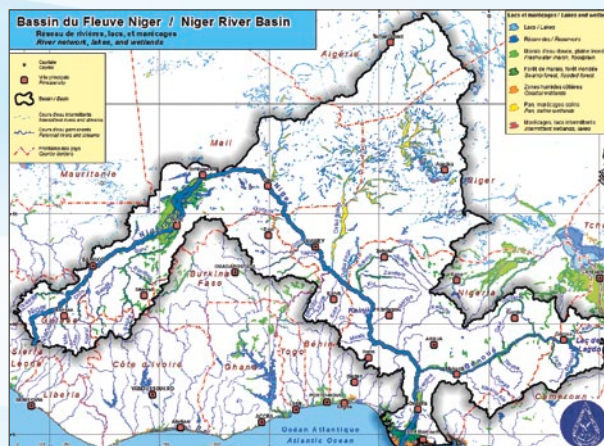
A framework for cooperation was signed in 2004 in order to coordinate the contributions of other NBA donors. It also puts forth that the contents of current and planned activities related to the various projects and programmes be agreed upon at meetings of the coordinators in order to avoid duplication. A technical consultant sent by GIZ heads the working group for "Capacity Building" at the regional level.

Impact

This GIZ project promotes the implementation of regional water policies into the national policies of the member states, taking transboundary realities into consideration. During the first phase of the project, the NBA drafted the Water Charter – with the approval of all member states – that covered water and environment policies. Moreover, an environmental annex was added at the last Ministers' Council meeting in 2011. Thanks to the Water Charter, various environmental policies and the investment plan, the NBA will be able to implement a sustainable integrated water resource management programme in its member

states and, by so doing, better fulfil its role as advisor and facilitator on regional water issues. Support for the NBA is characterised by a multi-layered approach and supports structuring, operation and collaboration with other projects and programmes by way of international technical and financial assistance.

Furthermore, an exchange platform for NBA's hydrological and environmental database provides an overview of the IWRM development scale in the Niger basin. The NBA also engages civil society for the sake of creating real impact in the socio-economic development of the basin. This involvement will guarantee that the basin's population benefits from natural resource protection in the long-term and that their living conditions steadily improve. A recent review attests to the positive impact of the NBA's communication policy and knowledge management.



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