

Ministry of the Environment
with responsibility for the
Management of Climate
Change, Reforestation, and
the Protection of Natural and
Forest Resources



Republic of Benin



National portfolio of priority projects to be financed with funds allocated to Benin under the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) for the fifth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Report on the Identification Exercise

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Overview

This study falls within the framework of the preparation of national priorities based on which the Global Environment Facility will direct its interventions in Benin to ensure better visibility and clarity of its actions with respect to the environment, as well as improve the country's absorptive capacity. This report focuses mainly on the three key GEF focal areas covered by the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR), namely land degradation, climate change, and biodiversity.

The report aims to formulate specific national priorities in these three focal areas to be submitted to GEF-5 for the 2010-2014 period, based on stakeholder consultation. The priority avenues for intervention selected are aligned with those outlined in the National Environmental Management Program [*Programme National de Gestion de l'Environnement* PNGE] and the National Program for Sustainable Natural Resource Management [*Programme National de Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles* PNGDRN]. This exercise is based not only on document research, but also on a process of collaboration and consultation among the various stakeholders, as well as site visits. At the end of this study, it was evident that the environmental challenges in the areas of land degradation, climate change, and biodiversity are substantial and require urgent action. To this end, consultations were organized and two priority projects--the National Adaptation Program of Action for Climate Change in the energy sector (NAPA 2) and the Great Green Wall Initiative--were selected for submission to the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) for GEF-5 over the 2010-2014 period.

Introduction

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is an international cooperation mechanism that plays a crucial role in improving the global environment. Created in 1991, the Global Environment Facility helps developing countries such as Benin finance projects and programs that contribute to global environmental protection. The GEF currently finances projects associated with the following focal areas: biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants. Over the 2009-2010 period, the GEF Secretariat decided to improve the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) by shifting to a process of replenishment of the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) amounting to US\$4.25 billion.

For more than a decade, the GEF has financed numerous projects in Benin through its implementing agencies (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, UNIDO, etc.), in particular in the areas of climate change, biodiversity, and persistent organic pollutants. Despite this financing, more work remains to be done on the GEF portfolio of national projects to promote better visibility and clarity of its actions as well as improve the country's absorptive capacity. It is with a view to addressing this concern that Benin requested and received an allocation of US\$30,000 in the context of the fifth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and in line with the reforms introduced by the General Assembly in Uruguay in May 2010. This sum was granted under the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources in order to help the country carry out the consultation process including all the stakeholders to define the national priorities for preparation of the GEF-5 country portfolio.

Priorities are defined by formulating a national portfolio of priority project ideas to be developed through a participatory, transparent, and inclusive process. Benin conducted its portfolio formulation exercise in strict compliance with the guidelines provided since August 2010. The process of defining national priorities

for the use of GEF-5 resources was conducted by a National Committee for the Coordination of GEF Activities (COCAFEM), based on a participatory approach.

1. Description of the National Committee for the Coordination of GEF Activities

A coordination committee was created by ministerial order no. 0058/MEHU/DC/SG/PFO-FEM/SA of August 25, 2003 on the creation, terms of reference, composition, and operation of the Committee for the Coordination of GEF Activities. This committee's mandate is as follows:

- Review the projects submitted to the Global Environment Facility before their endorsement by the Operational Focal Point;
- Ensure that the projects to be submitted to the Global Environment Facility and the other financing mechanisms reflect national priorities;
- Explore the financing opportunities offered by each convention and protocol so that Benin may benefit from them;
- Monitor the implementation on the ground of the conventions and protocols to which Benin is a party;
- Periodically review and assess reports on activities under these protocols and conventions.

This committee was reinstated to carry out the identification process. The Committee comprises the GEF Operational Focal Point for Benin, the Political Focal Point, and the various stakeholders involved in the management and implementation of conventions.

2. Description of the National Portfolio Formulation Process

2.1. Methodology

This exercise is based, on one hand, on document research and on the other hand, on a process of collaboration among the different stakeholders through the organization of national workshops.

2.1.1. Document Research and Analysis

Document research has allowed for the identification of environmental challenges and the Government's strategic and policy directions in the areas of land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change.

To this end, documents on the strategies, policies, and programs related to sustainable development (linking the environment, the economy, and social issues) currently under way in Benin were consulted. These include the third Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS-3) paper, the long-term outlook planning document "Benin-ALAFIA 2025," the reports on project activities executed under the conventions relating to GEF priority areas (NAPA), documents from programs such as the National Environmental Management Program (PNGE), the National Program for Sustainable Natural Resource Management (PNGDRN), the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification (NAPCD), and Benin's Environmental Profile, among others.

2.1.2. Information and Education of Stakeholders on the GEF Process

Several information sessions, targeting a wide audience, were organized to promote the process for effective stakeholder involvement. In addition, workshops and consultation sessions among different stakeholders involved in environmental management were necessary for the formulation and preparation of the project identification forms (PIF) for projects implementing the priority actions identified.

2.1.3. Validation of Project Ideas Identified

A local consultant was selected to review implementation of the formulation process for projects to be included in Benin's portfolio. The resulting draft report was validated by the National Committee for Coordination of GEF Activities.

2.2. Consultation

2.2.1. Initial Information Workshop on GEF Policies and Procedures

At the beginning of the process, it was deemed necessary that stakeholders be informed and educated about the policies and procedures of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). To accomplish this, a workshop was organized on Wednesday, March 10, 2010, chaired by Mr. Théophile C. Worou, Director of the Office of the Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection, and the GEF National Focal Point. This workshop brought together 32 participants from an array of professional spheres (public administration, private sector, civil society, etc.), and entailed three presentations followed by discussions:

- Presentation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF);
- The roles of implementing agencies in implementing projects cofinanced by the GEF;
- The origin, terms of reference, and operation of the Committee for the Coordination of GEF Activities (COCAFEM) in Benin.

2.2.2. Feedback Workshop on GEF Reforms

On Thursday, June 10, 2010, a meeting was held at which the GEF National Political Focal Point reported on his participation in the Fourth GEF Assembly, which took place in Punta del Este, Uruguay from May 24-28, 2010. During this workshop, the GEF organization chart was presented to participants as well as the revised list of partner institutions whose policies include an environmental component. Mr. Théophile Worou also presented the report on the fifth GEF replenishment as well as the three scenarios outlined.

3. Main Environmental Challenges Facing the Country in the GEF-5 Thematic Areas

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the leading and principal fund dedicated to financing environmental projects. It is the financing mechanism for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

3.1. Climate Change

Similar to other countries on the planet, Benin is subject to the adverse effects of climate change, which have a disruptive influence on the production system. The need for adaptation measures to address major challenges is therefore critical, for example:

- Establishment of a system for forecasting climate risks and an early warning system to ensure food security;
- Promotion of aquaculture in fishing zones;
- Development of production systems adapted to climate change;
- Water management in agricultural systems.

3.2. Land Degradation

Various stakeholders are exploring possible solutions to address challenges, such as developing flexible and experimental land restoration initiatives at the community level. To this end, restoration projects such as the Special Reforestation and Land Rehabilitation Program (PSRRT), the Forest and Adjacent Land Management Project (FALM), and the National Adaptation Program in the Agricultural Sector, among many others, have been implemented.

3.3. Biodiversity

Biodiversity preservation and conservation in Benin is an integral component of the forest policies drafted.

In recent decades, population growth and the resulting increase in demand for food and infrastructure have given rise to significant conflict between human activities and biodiversity conservation. Natural vegetation, which has been seriously altered and fragmented, is now essentially limited to protected areas, which are themselves severely degraded. This requires that the appropriate protective actions be taken to prevent the decline of numerous populations of plant and animal species. Climate change is another obstacle to biodiversity conservation and sustainable human development.

4. Resources allocated to Benin under the STAR for GEF-5 and priority project identification

4.1. Resources allocated to Benin under the STAR for GEF-5

In the context of the fifth GEF replenishment (GEF-5), Benin received a total sum of eight million, one hundred fifty thousand US dollars (US\$8,150,000), distributed as follows:

FOCAL AREAS	ALLOCATION (US\$)
Biological Diversity	1,500,000
Climate Change	2,000,000
Land Degradation	4,650,000
TOTAL	8,150,000

4.2. Call for project proposals eligible under GEF-5

Following the information workshops during which stakeholders learned about the GEF's priorities and mode of operation, officials from the sectoral entities and other private sector and civil society stakeholders were invited by official note to propose priority projects. These proposals were submitted to

COCAFEM for evaluation and modification. The projects submitted were then reviewed before preselection according to previously defined criteria.

4.3. Preselection of projects

To facilitate the process, the projects identified were analyzed by a team of two local consultants whose mandate was to provide support to the entities with identifying projects and screen the projects based on specific criteria. The results of their work were submitted to COCAFEM for evaluation and then for approval at the national validation workshop.

Of the 12 projects proposed, four were preselected. The seven [sic] rejected projects did not comply with the project selection criteria, namely, alignment with GEF priority areas, compliance with national priorities, technical and financial feasibility of the project, ability to mobilize cofinancing, if necessary.

4.4. Project selection

A national validation workshop for project proposals was organized for 38 participants from several sectors in Benin. The local consultants presented their work at this workshop. Based on the criteria proposed, the projects were then ranked, which helped identify the projects to be included in Benin's portfolio.

4.4.1. Project ideas approved for inclusion in Benin's portfolio

The four preselected projects are:

- The Forest and Adjacent Land Management Project (FALM 2);
- The National Adaptation Program of Action for Climate Change in the energy sector (NAPA 2)
- The Sahel and West Africa Program (SAWAP) for Sustainable Land and Water Management, which is a regional project that aims to support the Great Green Wall Initiative

- The fourth project deals with promotion of and access to renewable energy in Benin

4.4.2. Validation of projects to be included in the GEF-5 national portfolio

During the workshop to validate the preselected projects, Benin received support from the World Bank through the Sahel and West Africa Program for Sustainable Land and Water Management to facilitate mobilization of additional resources to finance FALM 2, with a view to consolidating the progress made in the initial phase of the program through effective implementation of management plans for 19 forest massifs. NAPA 2 was selected because of its eligibility for LDC financing from the GEF.

Therefore, the final selection of projects eligible for STAR funding resulted in the selection of two projects:

- *The Sahel and West Africa Program for Sustainable Land and Water Management is a regional program to support the global initiative to establish a green wall, spearheaded by African Heads of State to combat land degradation along the Senegal-Djibouti corridor.*
- *A project to promote and enhance access to renewable energy in Benin*

4.5. Preparation of project briefs

In view of the nature of the two projects selected, the workshop recommended that the Ministry of Environment organize meetings to collaborate and work with the GEF implementing agencies in Benin to finalize the process.

To this end, a training workshop on the preparation of Project Identification Forms (PIF) was held at the Atlantic Beach Hotel in Cotonou from April 17-19, 2012. This workshop helped make the tools needed for PIF preparation available

to participants. It therefore paved the way for formulation of the National Adaptation Program of Action for Climate Change in the energy sector (NAPA 2) and the preparation of the respective PIF. The following entities were represented at the workshop: UNDP, the GEF, the relevant entities from the Ministry of Environment (the Directorate of Programming and Forward Planning, the Directorate General of Forests and Natural Resources, the Directorate General for the Environment, the National Fund for the Environment), SNV Benin, the convention focal points (UNFCCC, CCD, CBD, POP), the Directorate General of Energy, the Directorate for Long-Term and Strategic Planning, the National Directorate for Health Protection, the Directorate for Hygiene and Basic Sanitation, the Universities of Benin (Abomey-Calavi, Ecole Polytechnique d'Abomey-Calavi), NGOs (OFEDI, IDID, ABED, JSF, GERES), and State bodies such as CBRST, CIPCRE, GEA, ASECNA, DGAE/MEF.

The strategic objective of the workshop was to hold an information meeting with all the key stakeholders on green, low-emission and climate-resilient development (Green LECRD) strategies and to prepare a PIF for NAPA 2. The specific objective was to support Benin with its evolution toward low-carbon, climate-resilient, green development in order to help the Government attract and direct public and private funds toward green technologies.

The work done at the workshop helped identify problems associated with the energy sector and that could be subject to climate change adaptation.

4.6. Details of the project ideas selected

- *The Sahel and West Africa Program for Sustainable Land and Water Management is a regional program to support the global initiative to establish a green wall, spearheaded by African Heads of State to combat land degradation along the Senegal-Djibouti corridor.*

The Great Green Wall is an initiative spearheaded by African Heads of State to combat land degradation along the Senegal-Djibouti corridor. This initiative aims to combat environmental degradation, in particular desertification and the impoverishment of populations. The project formulation process is under way with support from the World Bank. However, at the national level, priorities have already been identified and essentially deal with the establishment of a green belt approximately 320 kilometers long and 200 meters wide to be set up over a surface of approximately 6,400 hectares. Activities for this project could be grouped into the following components:

- *Information and public awareness campaigns for local populations on local radio stations;*
- *Surveys of populations affected by the establishment of the green belt; organization of sessions to raise awareness and mobilize affected households in the installation zone;*
- *Establishment and maintenance of the green belt;*
- *Promotion of measures to support adjacent communities and management staff;*
- *Financing of income-generating activities.*

- ***Project to promote and enhance access to renewable energies in Benin***

This is an integrated project covering three GEF focal areas (climate change, biodiversity, and land degradation), which aims to create a national framework and enabling environment for new investment in renewable energy in Benin and for strengthening local technical capacities. It also seeks to develop and support new renewable energy projects by focusing on the electricity grid and solar photovoltaic solutions.

This project will be implemented through the following four components:

Component 1: National capacity building with respect to the policy, institutional, legislative, and regulatory framework for renewable energy

Component 2: Technical and human capacity building in the management of renewable energy for renewable energy solutions connected to the network

Component 3: Support for the development of mini renewable energy networks

Component 4: Investment promotion

5. STAR allocation for selected projects

STAR allocations for the two projects selected are as follows:

PROJECTS	ALLOCATION BY AREA (US\$)			TOTAL
	Biological Diversity	Climate Change	Land Degradation	
<i>Sahel and West Africa Program for Sustainable Land and Water Management</i>	1,000,000		3,500,000	4,500,000
<i>Project to Promote and Enhance Access to Renewable Energy in Benin</i>	500,000	2,000,000	1,150,000	3,650,000
TOTAL	1,500,000	2,000,000	4,650,000	8,150,000

Conclusion

The National Project Formulation Exercise for Benin for GEF-5 was carried out using a participatory approach that resulted in the identification of two major projects that cover the following GEF priority areas: biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation. The document on the selected projects must be prepared as quickly as possible to facilitate the mobilization of resources before the selected project ideas become actual projects.

ANNEXES

- **TWO PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORMS**
- **TWO LETTERS OF ENDORSEMENT**