



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 08/17/2001	
PROJ ID: P001745		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name: Natural Res. Mgmt	Project Costs (US\$M)	32.1	32.48
Country: Mali	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	20.4	20.78
Sector(s): Board: ENV - Other social services (27%), Forestry (20%), Crops (20%), Sub-national government administration (17%), Central government administration (16%)	Cofinancing (US\$M)	7.7	7.7
L/C Number: C2370			
	Board Approval (FY)		92
Partners involved : UNDP, Norway (NTF), Germany (GTZ)	Closing Date	06/30/1998	12/31/2000
Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	Group Manager :	Group:
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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The primary objective was to introduce a rational land use system that would stop and reverse the degradation of the natural resource base, which was the greatest threat to sustainable agricultural growth .

The specific objectives were to :

- build up the capacity of local communities to manage their own natural resources, and to build institutional capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Environment (MAEE) to enable it to advise villagers on these matters; and
- build an environmental information system for coordinating and guiding the diverse initiatives underway throughout the country and incorporate the lessons of these field experiences into a national National Resources Management (NRM) strategy.

b. Components

Five components were identified :

1. **Community Natural Resources Management (58% of base cost) :** identification, design and implementation of community-based NRM (CBNRM) plans involving about 150 villages within three administrative regions of Mali and distributed among representative agro -ecological zones of the country;
2. **Baoule National Park and Biosphere Reserve (7% of base cost) :** design and implementation of a management plan for the park, and the implementation of CBNRM plans in 10 villages initially part of the park, but for which tenure had been transferred to the communities and removed from the park reserve;
3. **Institutional Support for Government Services (16% of base cost) :** institutional support for central and local government authorities to (i) help with project management and assist rural communities in implementing their NRM plans and (ii) provide the Government with basic environmental monitoring facilities which could be further developed;
4. **Skills Development and Public Awareness (8% of base cost) :** a comprehensive training and public information/awareness program on NRM; and
5. **Technical Assistance and Research (11% of base cost) :** financial support for the provision of technical assistance, audits, consultant services, applied research and studies required for project implementation .

At the mid-term review (1995) it was decided that the whole process was too slow and too costly per village and that, if the approach were to be replicable, a more expeditious approach would have to be adopted . It was then decided to increase the number of villages to 600, while reducing the investment per village by 75%, primarily by not financing social investments (schools, clinics etc.). At the same time the number of field support teams was doubled . In 1998 the village targets were again increased .

c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates

The initial cost estimate was \$30.1 million. The IDA credit and cofinanciers grants were fully disbursed, the difference in final project cost being due to exchange rate fluctuations . The project closing date was extended by 30 months to accomodate the expanded work program . As a result, expenditure on institutional support was more than double the appraisal estimate, while that on village investments was 20% above estimate. These increases were compensated primarily by declines in the last two components (55% of estimate).

3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:

The project met the primary objective of introducing a rational land use system that will stop and reverse the degradation of the natural resource base . It built up the capacity of local communities and the institutional capacity within the ministry. A total of 844 villages and 58 communes completed the first three phases of the NRM approach : creation of a Village NRM committee; a participative technical and socio-economic diagnostic of the "terroir"; and development planning. 807 villages and 30 communes are implementing their plans . Substantial capacity building was achieved through the project at various levels (central, regional and local) of Government institutions involved in the project's implementation. Ten support teams were recruited, trained and posted at district level to provide support to village communities . A comprehensive training and extension program was carried out throughout the project's life enabling communities to acquire skills in basic literacy, organization and financial management, natural resource management, agricultural production, operation and maintenance of infrastructure and equipment etc .

Initial progress on the environmental monitoring and information system was slow, mainly because of the difficulty of finding an agency with the appropriate management skills to manage it . It is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Works, Regional Development, Environment and Urbanism . Data bases on environmental and natural resources have been established through a network of six national agencies, staff training undertaken and a series of reference manuals prepared. While a formal NRM strategy has not been adopted, in practice one is being implemented .

4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:

The CBNRM approach is showing positive effects on resource degradation and on agricultural yields and production. Water harvesting and soil erosion control techniques introduced under the project have visibly improved soil fertility, soil water capacity and re-growth of natural vegetation. Areas that, prior to the project, had become marginal for crop production, were rehabilitated and yields have increased . Based on a beneficiary assessment done in 1998, overall agricultural production in project sites increased by 47 percent.

5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):

There were no major shortcomings in project implementation . The most significant problem was the implementation of the environmental monitoring and information system component . This is an effort requiring specific technical skills and, for historic reasons, required the coordination of activities best housed in a number of different agencies . Work is now proceeding satisfactorily (see point 3) but is well behind initial expectations .

The objective of developing a management system for the Baoule Park that would arrest or reverse land degradation was not achieved. During the project, as significant area of natural habita was converted to cotton fields . Livestock encroachment, tree cutting and excessive fire continue to be a threat to the park area .

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Institutional Dev .:	High	High	
Sustainability :	Likely	Likely	
Bank Performance :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Borrower Perf .:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of ICR :		Satisfactory	

NOTE: ICR rating values flagged with '*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:

- Local community empowerment and capacity building require assistance from strengthened government, non-government and private agencies, each playing a specific complementary role .
- Decentralization must be accompanied by a deconcentration of government services to promote better dialogue and coordination between local and central governments .
- Regular supervision missions are essential in the context of community based approaches to enable stakeholders to maintain a common vision of the project and adjust to evolving community needs .
- Literacy is a necessary condition for successfully achieving local community empowerment and sustainable resource management.

8. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

Why? This project is one of a series of innovative attempts to address natural resource management and rural development issues through the development of participatory structures at the community level and appropriate public institutions to support them . As such they are of high priority for OED review .

9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR provides an excellent review of the project experience and outcomes . In particular the lessons cited are

exemplary in largely being of general applicability and not project specific conclusions of hindsight (see above). However, the quality of the ICR could have much been improved through the inclusion of indicators of the actual impact of the project on the natural resource degradation process . As shown in Annex 1, provision for a few such indicators (e.g., extent of forest regeneration, extent of pastoral canopy, park animal population, extent of soil erosion) had been made at appraisal . Their implementation and reporting in the ICR would have served to underpin and render more convincing such assertions as that "the approach started showing positive impacts ..." and "visibly improved soil fertility" (sec 4.1).