



<b>1. Project Data:</b>		<b>Date Posted :</b> 06/30/2003	
<b>PROJ ID:</b> P001967		<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Project Name:</b> Natural Res. Mgmt	<b>Project Costs (US\$M)</b>	42.7	27.43
<b>Country:</b> Niger	<b>Loan/Credit (US\$M)</b>	26.7	26.41
<b>Sector(s):</b> Board: ENV - Other social services (74%), Central government administration (25%), Sub-national government administration (1%)	<b>Cofinancing (US\$M)</b>	3.0	1.93
<b>L/C Number:</b> C2796; CP477			
	<b>Board Approval (FY)</b>		96
<b>Partners involved :</b> Government of Norway Government of Denmark	<b>Closing Date</b>	03/31/2002	09/30/2002

<b>Prepared by :</b>	<b>Reviewed by :</b>	<b>Group Manager :</b>	<b>Group:</b>
Roy Jacobstein	Ronald S. Parker	Alain A. Barbu	OEDST

**2. Project Objectives and Components**

**a. Objectives**

The Project had two Objectives: (i) to assist selected rural communities in different agro-ecological zones in designing and implementing management plans for their lands and to provide them with the necessary know-how, information, technical and financial resources and the proper institutional and legal framework to successfully carry out such an endeavor; and, (ii) to assist the Government in building up a national capacity to promote, assist and coordinate the diverse NRM (national resources management) initiatives underway in Niger within the framework of the National Natural Resources Management Program (NNRMP), and help prepare NRM policies and strategies, based on lessons learned from field experience.

**b. Components**

The Project had three components: (a) Design and Implementation of Resource Management Plans (U.S.\$28.7 million): direct technical and financial assistance to communities for the design and implementation of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Plans involving about 280 selected communities in five districts; and assistance through ongoing NRM projects to another 100 communities in Niger; (b) NRM Support Operations (US\$8.0 million): provision of services to help the Project's objectives, namely: human resource development, national assessment of the state of natural resources, natural resource information networking, research and studies; and, (c) Implementation, Management and Monitoring Support (US\$4.5 million): assistance to decision-makers in devising national NRM policies and strategies.

**c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates**

By closing, IDA had disbursed US\$26.41 million (99%) of the planned US\$26.7 million credit. The Government (and/or local beneficiary community) contributed \$2.98 million (41.2%) of its planned \$7.23 million contribution. The Government of Denmark's planned contribution of \$US5.0 million never materialized due to political turmoil in 1997. At closure, the government of Norway had contributed \$1.93 million (64.3%) of its planned \$US3.0 million contribution.

**3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:**

The Project met or surpassed its development objectives. With respect to the first objective, coverage was planned to cover 380 rural communities (villages or hamlets) with a population of approximately 270,000 people; in actuality, the project covered 568 such rural communities with a coverage of over 500,000, which represented more than 1/3 of the entire population of the five participating districts. Every community developed its own CBNRM Plan, and most communities effectively implemented them (under

simplified Community-Based Procurement procedures introduced after Feb 2000 MTR). With respect to the second objective, the project: helped to establish an adequate institutional basis for the implementation of land tenure policies; strengthened capacities for environmental monitoring and mapping; developed a participatory monitoring and evaluation system for NRM; and assisted the Borrower in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of the Rural Development Policy Framework, the Law on National and Regional Development; the Forestry Code; the National Action Program of the Convention to Combat Desertification; and the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

**4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:**

Approximately 1300 micro-projects were implemented to help rehabilitate natural resources and improve land management, with slightly fewer than 25% of the completed projects directly benefiting women. Overall, an area of almost ¼ million (233,775) hectares was covered by various land improvements, representing 11% of the gross area where the project worked, and double the gross area planned to be rehabilitated. This includes 70,000 hectares of forest that were planted or rehabilitated, 10,900 hectares of pastoral area restored, and over 10,000 community members having received literacy training. A number of national institutions had their technical capacities strengthened, and 150 national experts were trained in the latest CBNRM concepts and methodologies. This in turn led to useful products such as the collection and updating of national data on natural resources, the development of a national map production capacity, the design and implementation of simple participatory M&E systems, and the adaptation of procurement and disbursement procedures to rural communities. Two socio-economic impact assessment surveys estimated the project's Economic Rate of Return as 41% (104% if operational costs are excluded from calculations).

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

A budget crisis and political turmoil in the late 1990s significantly delayed—and ultimately reduced—Government counterpart funding. In 1999 IDA imposed a global suspension of all IDA credit disbursements. Project management efficiency was relatively low in the first half of the project implementation period (with community investment only 14.6% of budget allocations during the first three years.) There were five changes of political administration during the project implementation period. The Agricultural Research Institute failed to have its capacity augmented to provide services on a commercial basis, though the ICR does not elaborate upon this statement. Only 20% of the target beneficiaries were women, although women in Niger are important users of natural resources and very active in crop production. One of the local NGOs contracted as a district team failed to perform on a number of dimensions.

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

Perhaps the most notable lesson this project demonstrates is the viability, flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness that locally designed and implemented, community-level, micro-projects can achieve, even when they require local co-funding, arise in severely resource-constrained settings, and involve largely illiterate communities. In addition to the immediate effects of such successful initiatives, the community-centered approach followed in this project suggests a high level of ownership and sustainability can be achieved in these settings. The quick and transparent process of funding proposals, with decisions made at the level closest to the beneficiaries, is an approach that was well-considered and effective, and is worth replicating elsewhere. Other lessons include the need to specifically target women and youth in these projects, and the importance of coupling decentralized NRM activities and initiatives by supportive and synergistic national policy reforms (e.g., on land tenure).

**8. Assessment Recommended?**  Yes  No

**9. Comments on Quality of ICR:**

This ICR is well-written in crisp, clear prose. It is well-organized, consistent (for the most part), and affords reasonable judgments amply buttressed by quantitative and qualitative data and analysis. Its lessons learned section is particularly robust, and flows well from earlier sections.