



Findings reports on ongoing operational, economic and sector work carried out by the World Bank and its member governments in the Africa Region. It is published periodically by the Knowledge Networks, Information and Technology Center on behalf of the Region.

Natural resources management : The Sahelian Operational Review (SOR) Status Report II

Objective: To present brief summaries of 20 SOR-funded activities, the lessons learned, and a reflection on the overall experience. These activities largely consisted of studies, workshops and conferences.

Context: The Sahelian Operational Review (SOR) is a Bank-managed activity, funded by the Government of Norway, that has been in existence since 1990. The objectives of the program were to accelerate the application of operational lessons from natural resources management projects and to seek better information to improve environmental monitoring and reporting systems for such projects in the Sahel. The first twenty-seven diverse activities were summarized in a previous report by entitled *Sahel Operational Review: Status and Lessons Learned*.

Lessons Learned

1. Environmental Policy and Monitoring

A well-researched strategy paper is a good basis for the development of a national plan. In Niger, the World Bank's Country Environmental Strategy Paper (CESP) served well as a starting point for the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), developed in partnership with the government.

Financial resources are needed to expand opportunities for more public consultation and discussion while developing environmental policy, as the case of Eritrea illustrates.

Environmental database development in Senegal shows that there is a need for long-term technical and institutional support if environmental monitoring is going to be operational.

2. Dryland Management

There is need for a "new" approach signified by a more profound understanding of the rationality of traditional practices, greater reliance on local community institutions such as pastoral associations, more open-ended and flexible programs, greater participation of all stakeholders in shaping the interventions, and the provision of an enabling economic environment that provides market-driven incentives for change.

Views differ about the degree to which outside technology and assistance can actually improve upon traditional practices.

3. Community-based Natural Resources Management

Community involvement raises the chances of success, and decentralization of responsibility is critical.

There is an important role for government in providing information and training to local communities.

The study on park fees in Tanzania concluded that tourists would be willing to pay more for access to the parks,; in fact, fees could be raised to almost double the present revenue.

An analysis of different benefit distribution schemes to reward local communities indicated a preference for community development projects as opposed to cash benefits.

4. Water Management

Scarce water resources can be saved by incorporating water management into road construction, as was illustrated in Burkina Faso.

There is need to emphasize the appropriate use of incentives and user involvement in water management.

5. Forest Management

Positive results can be achieved if governments are willing to unleash the creativity of the private sector to make use of forests and forest-related products.

6. Fire Management

Current legislation banning burning is not only unenforceable, but also inappropriate, and should be replaced with a policy of controlled burning in most areas.

Key Documents

Walter Lusigi and John Buursink, *Sahel Operational Review : Status and Lessons Learned*,

AFTES Working Paper no. 11, Environmental Policy and Planning series, September 1994.

Jan Bojo and Nina Chee, *The Sahelian Operational Review : Status Report II*, AFTE1, date, series name and document number to be announced.

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