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SUB-REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
FOR NORTH AFRICA (SRDC)

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE

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Introduction

The North African subregion is yet to take off economically and enter an era of sustainable development. Problems of youth and employment, trade and regional co-operation, along with rational management of the natural resources are priority areas to be looked into. There is also a need for long term perspective studies and vision that can enable member states to foresee well in advance possible developments at home and overseas, and plan their policies and strategies so as to cope better with the ever-changing climate of the global competitive market.

At the thirteenth Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) meeting, recommendations were made on the need for enhanced activities in various areas. The issues of training in modern techniques of irrigation, of desertification control, of subregional co-operation in the transport sector along with seminars and workshops were the objects of these recommendations. There is also a need for greater partnership in the implementation of the recommendations. Along with the member States who are the main beneficiaries, local, subregional and concerned international governmental and non-governmental institutions are expected to participate in the activities, along with possible donor agencies.

In the light of these and with concern for long term perspective vision for the subregion, the Centre has developed five projects in the following themes:

- a. Trade Management in Africa
- b. Long Term Perspectives Study
- c. North Africa Steppes Conservation
- d. Training in Leadership Skills
- e. Irrigation.

A summary of the various projects with their background and justification, objectives, outputs and activities, and budget requirements and prospective donors follows.

A. Trade Management in Africa

Project on Promoting Trade through Economic Integration and Co-operation among North African Countries: A Summary.

1. Introduction

All African countries face major challenges in world trade which include:

- a. Increasing the share of Africa in world trade, which presently is presently just about 1 percent.
- b. Dealing with all issues related to the World Trade Organisation Agreements and other trade agreements;

- c. Setting up capacities to meet the challenges of a liberalised world economy and a domestically privatised structure of production
- d. The mastering of information technology;

For North Africa there are some specific considerations that make the project both essential and urgent namely:

- * The relative development and the importance of industrial exports compared to agricultural exports;
- * The proximity to Europe which has engendered unique and important links between the countries of the subregion and the European Union as a block and bilaterally with individual countries of Europe;
- * The proximity to Gulf countries;
- * The slow progress, despite the potential, that has been made thus far, in the area of subregional co-operation and integration;
- * The easy viability (because of the location of most countries of the subregion) of free trade zones.

2. The objectives

The project aims specifically at four objectives:

Objective 1: Increase the volume and diversification of trade of the countries of the subregion through:

- (a) adoption and implementation of dynamic trade policies that encourage domestic exports and attract foreign direct investment;
- (b) the modernisation of the activities of women entrepreneurs in the informal sector (e.g. handicrafts) and training of women involved in the trade sector;
- (c) Support of the potential role of small and medium-scale enterprises in trade promotion including, in particular, increasing their competitiveness

Objective 2: Accelerate the process of subregional co-operation and integration through trade with special focus on:

- (a) the role of the private sector;
- (b) coherence and symbiotic compatibility of trade policies and bilateral trade agreements of the individual countries with the process of economic co-operation and integration;
- (c) more effective payments arrangements;
- (d) infrastructural development at the subregional level.

Objective 3: Increase access to and exchange of trade data and information by:

- (a) increasing the connectivity of trade operators in trade extension of the GTP-net* model to all countries of the subregion
- (b) encouraging the acquisition and sharing of experiences through trade forums trade fairs, gender workshops and the co-operation of national Chambers of Commerce and Industry at the subregional level.

Objective 4: Increase the negotiating capacity of:

- (a) policy makers;(b) women entrepreneurs;(c)private sector operators.

3. Outputs and Activities

To effectively realise the objectives of the project over the envisaged period of 3 to 4 years, the following activities and outputs will be undertaken under concurrent modules of the project as outlined below:

Under **objective 1. the outputs** will be seven country packages of present and future trade issues and prospects, with recommendations for increasing competitiveness of SMEs, and working manuals for entrepreneurs, as well as a booklet for best practices.

The **activities** will consist of in-depth country studies, organisation of trade forums, workshops for small-scale entrepreneurs, and compilation of best practices.

Under **objective 2. the outputs** will be recommendations, a subregional plan of action on trade, and political support for the action plan.

The **activities** will be studies on level and potential trade in the subregion, trade policies and agreements, payment arrangements, steps required for realising the North African Free Trade Zone, infrastructure requirements, and the organisation of a meeting of senior government policy analysts and advisors, followed by a Policy Summit of Heads of States of the subregion.

Under **objective 3. the outputs** will be national web-sites, increased awareness by producers and exporters of opportunities, gender sensitisation of policy makers, a Foundation for sustaining the federation of Chambers of Commerce , and a draft constitution of the federation.

The **activities** will be the setting up of national web-sites, organisation of two trade tours for exporters, and the organisation of workshops for women entrepreneurs and for national Chambers of commerce and Industry.

Under **objective 4. the outputs** will be a pool of confident and qualified trade negotiating teams including women.

* GTP-net (Global Trade Pole Network)

The activities will be to organise training workshops for gender sensitisation.

Budget

The estimated budget will be 1.762 million dollars.

Donors will include:

European Union, North America, and Japan.

B. Long Term Perspective Study

Title: Support to the implementation of National Long-Term Perspective Studies in North Africa

Introductory Summary

There is a need to develop long-term perspective studies in the North-Africa subregion with a view to enabling the member States have a capacity to foresee well in advance possible developments at home and in the world, and thereby tune their development policies and strategies accordingly. Such studies will provide a socio-economic frame of reference for orienting structural reforms and short and medium term investment programmes. This project will play the role of a catalyst for facilitating national long-term perspective studies (NLTPS) processes, and ensuring co-ordination between various national long-term perspective and policy studies. It will also come up with a regional long-term perspectives study (RLTPS) and establish a subregional information system to meet the needs of NLTPS and strengthen a network of centres of excellence for perspective studies, while providing training of trainers and national leaders in this area.

Background and Justification

The seven countries of North Africa covering 31 percent of Africa's surface area and having 22.5 percent of its population, occupies a strategic position bordering the Mediterranean, and is likely to have closer ties with the European Union. They have all been affected by global social and economic upheavals, and have adopted structural adjustment measures with limited success. They have rich natural resource endowments, but are still debt-ridden, and have to import food. The absence of long-term perspective studies with various scenarios for alternative development paths, has constrained successful strategic planning and implementation. Weak public sector management, recurrent natural droughts, shortages in food supply, falling commodity prices, and worst, the vagaries of the world market, have all contributed to unsustainable situations in many of these countries. Hence, in view of a future marked with growing uncertainty and rapid change, North African countries must move away from crisis management and define long-term objectives and strategies that can guide them in policy implementation. To this effect, long-term perspectives studies have to be undertaken, both at national and subregional levels.

Objectives

While the long term objective is to strengthen capacities to better manage their social and economic development, the immediate objectives of the project are to assist countries in developing national long-term perspectives studies (NLTPS) and a subregional similar study (RLTPS), enable them to share experiences and develop common strategies and policies, set up a net-work of institutions and experts specialised in such studies, and a subregional data-base of social and economic indicators, and ensure co-ordination between the various national long-term perspective studies and the subregional study.

Outputs and activities

The main outputs will be:

- a. a conceptual and methodological framework for NLTPS,
- b. national and subregional long-term perspectives studies,
- c. strategic planning techniques and national plans of action to address the NLTPS,
- d. a network of institutions and experts in this area,
- e. and a database on socio-economic indicators.

The activities will consist of studies at national and subregional levels, with seminars and workshops on methodological framework both at national and subregional levels, advisory services to member states, and the development of a subregional data-base at the Tangier subregional development centre. There will also be publications of trimestrial information bulletins, annual reports, and exchange of information between the different partners involved.

The project will require specialists in information systems analysis, ecology and natural resource management, social anthropology, and science and technology, to run the programme for a five-year period.

Budget

The total estimated budget for the project is US\$ 2,920,000. -

Prospective donors

UNDP- North Africa and Arab Bureau, EEC, AFDC.

C. North Africa Steppes Conservation (NASC) Project

Introductory Summary

Today there is a broad consensus on the need to halt the degradation "cascade" that goes from the arboreal to the shrub and grass steppes. The majority of steppes in North Africa are degraded. Strong climatic and anthropological impacts are the main causes of their destruction. On the other hand, they are considered as important socio-economic and environmental assets for development of the sub-region. The main types of steppes which suffer from that degradation are: (i) the grass steppe with alpha (*stipa tenacissima*);(ii) grass

steppe with *lygeumspartum*; (iii) halophytic steppes rich in *Chenopodiaceae* and (iv) Atlantic steppes rich in cactus-like and succulent plants. Each type includes a cluster of dynamic states interlinked by transitional phases.

Sustainable management of steppes projects in drylands of North Africa is crucial. So far few projects have been rated as successful. The failure reflects a combination of social, institutional and technical gaps in the ideas and design of coherent and integrated policies and programmes to support such projects. For example "human dimensions and capacities" are rarely incorporated in a formal way into the programmes, whereas the conceptual framework for drylands range management is experiencing an accelerated evolution across the world. The implementation of a project of this type is of paramount significance for the sub-region. These steppes need to be regenerated and their area eventually expanded specially for (1) improving the living conditions of the inhabitants of the zones where the steppes stretch. (2) halting desertification and (3) fostering carbon sequestration through photosynthesis. The project will develop and disseminate a multipurpose model for the sustainable management of this ecosystem.

Background and Justification

The North African Arid Zone, defined between 400 mm and 100 mm annual rainfall, covers around 500,000 sq. km of land consisting mainly of steppes, traditionally managed as rangelands, agriculture being a complementary activity. During the last 50 years, the North African steppes are being progressively destroyed and degraded by overgrazing, bushfires and encroachment of rainfed marginal agriculture. The process is triggered by the synergic effects of overpopulation in rural areas, urbanisation, construction of communication networks, and climatic changes.

Sustainable management of all North African steppes is therefore an urgent need, not only for the sake of their own conservation as ecosystems, but also to support rural life and reduce the negative environmental impact that their destruction implies.

Loss of biological diversity, release of carbon to the atmosphere caused by the decay of organic matter or fires, desertification, loss of soil permeability to facilitate the recharge of underground aquifers and human migration are associated to poor steppes management. Alpha steppes are among the most widespread in the sub-region, stretching from western Libya to eastern Morocco. Atlantic steppes are smaller and associated with high level of moisture, a climate that prevails in western Morocco. Ligneous and halophytic steppes are azonal types, associated to particular soil conditions, silty, and moister or saline respectively

The policy implications of new concepts that are being actively worked out in Australia and USA, have been only tentatively explored in Africa, where rangelands are mostly communal and often managed by nomadic approaches characterised by a very complex social and cultural structures. It is therefore imperative to move ahead in this direction and to incorporate into the project analysis the considerable amount of information and data which is available on ecological and human dimensions, to ensure the sustainability of these ecosystems.

Objectives

- To produce a dynamic simulation tool, adapted to the halophytic steppes of selected units of decision systems or enterprises for predicting and exploring their sustainability conditions and responses to economic and demographic pressures, fluctuating and uneven rainfall and management strategies;
- To provide a set of fast methods for assessing rangelands condition, adapted to the steppes under study e.g. evaluation of degradation status, irreversibility conditions and early warning of degradation risks. Their applications include the monitoring of impacts of management strategies and the identification of areas where either rehabilitation (soft techniques), restoration (hard techniques) or no actions taken are appropriate for rangelands improvement and;
- to prepare a Permanent Demonstration Programme for sustainable halophytic steppes management in a network of pilot areas across the NASC zones covered by the project.

Outputs and activities

The main output will be "semi-distributed hydrological model linked to the human, livestock, vegetation and soil components". Demographic fluxes livestock and economic production, spatial and timing variation of soil water content, and area of degraded rangelands will also be produced by sub-regions.

To address the steppes across the whole arid zones the project will focus on three N/S transects, from the West to the East in the sub-region. Each section will cover a range of annual rainfall ranging from the semi-arid (400 mm) to the arid-desert climate (<100 mm). The main activities phase will be:

- Phase 1, [One year]: Collection and analysis of data and information for diagnosis and selection of the areas where the project will be located and implemented;
- Phase 2, [Two years]: Collection of basic field data, define and test perceptual models of range lands responses to disturbances by using economic, ecological, cultural and environmental approaches (The Dynamic Systems Approach);
- Phase 3, [One year]: Monitoring and evaluation the whole project performance and extension of its results throughout the countries of the sub-region (one year).

Budget

The estimated budget of the NASC five years project is US \$ 546,300, with this:

Phase 1	(US \$ 74,200);
Phase 2	(US \$ 294,500) and
Phase 3	(US \$ 177,600).

Prospective donors and partners

UNDP, ADB, the EU, the Spanish Agency for International Cupertino (AECI) and the Arid Zones Research Station in Almeria (Spain).

D. Training in Leadership Skills

Title: Training workshop on leadership skills for youth in North Africa

Introductory Summary

The project aims at training youth leaders through a subregional workshop in North Africa, to improve their skills in youth management in their own countries. Both male and female youth leaders will get together to discuss common and specific problems related with the management of programmes and activities that promote youth development. After the workshop, they will have acquired the skills to conduct similar workshops at national levels, and train other youth leaders. They will also be able to embark into joint co-operative projects with other countries in the subregion, in areas of common concern.

Background and Justification

North African youths share common characteristics and problems like:

- a socio-cultural milieu marked by a predominance of Islamic and Arabic culture ;
- A fairly high level of literacy with access to primary and secondary education;
- A high level of unemployment , specially amongst school leavers ;
- A strong influence of European culture because of proximity on the Mediterranean coast, and regular contacts through trade, travel, media ;
- Three countries influenced by anglophony in the East, and four by francophony in the West of North Africa.
- A strong emigration, especially of qualified manpower.

These commonalties give rise to possibilities of stronger co-operation in diverse fields of social and economic importance. The problems of relevant education and employment of youth are getting more and more critical, and along with donor directed programs of leaner governments and privatisation, unemployment is becoming worse in most countries of the subregion. There is heavy brain drain, and concerted efforts must be made to arrest the loss of qualified manpower. A host of other similar issues need to be looked into, and experiences at national levels may lead to plausible solutions.

Objectives

While the long term objective is to improve the quality of life of North African youth by enabling them to better play their roles in their society, the immediate objectives are to train youth leaders in the subregion on skills that can enhance their leadership in youth organisations, and enable them to better manage their activities in areas of youth and development.

Outputs and activities

The outputs expected from the project are:

- a. Selected number of youth leaders trained and able to conduct similar national workshops and train other local youth leaders on leadership skills;
- b. Report of workshop with specific recommendations for enhancing youth leadership skills in member States;
- c. Proceedings of subregional workshop in published form useful for consultation by policy makers and concerned authorities.

The activities will consist in search for funds for the training workshop, in recruiting consultants to prepare substantive input papers for the workshop, in conducting the workshop, and in preparing its report and proceedings that will then be despatched to the beneficiaries.

Budget

The estimated budget for the training workshop is US\$ 49,000.-

Prospective donors:

UNDP National IPFs, UNTFAD, ADB

Title: Irrigation Seminar

Introductory Summary

There is a need for a better water management in the sub-region. On the one hand, there is growing demand for irrigated land and therefore for water supply. On the other hand water is scarce. In order to cope with the problem countries have to learn to optimise water utilisation, basically through the adoption of innovative water systems, principally in agriculture. This activity consumes a large volume of water. It is therefore necessary to identify technical and economical solutions to enable countries to tackle the problem. The seminar will offer an opportunity, for the exchange of experiences on irrigation among the countries of the sub-region and for the dissemination of the most efficient irrigation technologies for arid and semi-arid zones.

Background and Justification

Irrigation still continues to be an important activity in the sub-region. It contributes to food security and foster employment. It is estimated that some 7.2 millions ha of agricultural land are actually under irrigation, or have some kind of irrigation, this being out of a potential of about 13 million ha. Egypt and the Sudan together, have the largest irrigated area, 5.1 million ha, followed by Algeria and Morocco, 1.3 million ha and by Libya and Tunisia with 0.8 million. Agriculture consumes about 84 million cubic km of water per year, which represents 87 percent of the total water consumed in the zone. Egypt and the Sudan are the biggest users of this resource, as the Nile crosses both.

Finding out the limits of water consumption/supply is today an issue of paramount environmental and economic importance since they are directly linked to (1) population growth and (2) its utilisation.

A way to keep the irrigation rate growing consists in optimising the volume of water consumed. The approach is mainly valid for those lands, which are still using gravity irrigation. The system consumes more water than that required by the plants for their growth, and this causes drainage and salinity problems to soils. Their regeneration implies large investments that most countries cannot afford. A less expensive and efficient solution is offered by the new irrigation methods. It is estimated that they can save up to 20 percent of water, while providing even better yields.

The main purpose of the irrigation seminar in Cairo, ISC, will be to focus on sprinkler, and micro-irrigation systems.

Objectives

a. Generals

- Set up a sub-regional forum for discussing and assessing relevant irrigation issues;
- Foster sub-regional public and private awareness and sensitivity for a more efficient utilisation of water in agriculture;
- Strengthen sub-regional scientific, and economic ties for co-operation;
- Highlight environmental issues associated to new irrigation practices and
- Promote political initiative and support to efficient irrigation methods.

b. Specifics

- Exchange of information, knowledge, achievements and gaps on irrigation systems among countries, regional and specialised groups and organisations,
- Analyse economic returns of irrigation alternatives
- Enhance dissemination of the efficient irrigation techniques (impulse, sprinkler and micro-irrigation), in particular for arid and semi-arid zones;
- Highlight and disseminate information to minimise the environmental impact of the new irrigation technologies and

- Recommend approaches, technical, legal and financial, for disseminating efficient irrigation technologies in the sub-region on the impact of the new irrigation technology as well as on other issues related to intensive irrigation.

Outputs and activities

The main output will be a report of the seminar giving: (1) summary of the documents presented, (2) main discussions and (3) proposals for action.

The main documents to be presented at the seminar will be:

- Sub-regional status and trends on irrigation,
- Irrigation economics,
- Promising irrigation techniques for arid and semi-arid zones and
- Irrigation and environment protection.

The activities will consist of field missions, preparation of technical and economic documents as well as the organisation and servicing the seminar. Field training visits to the main irrigation projects in the country will also be mounted.

Budget

The total estimated budget for the seminar is US \$ 64,640 (US \$ Sixty four thousand six hundred forty) of which 20% will be for consultancy services (two), 25% for per diem payment, 43% for air tickets cost and the rest for other activities.

Prospective donors

UNDP, AFDC, the EU, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacinal (AECI) and other partners.

Conclusion

The realisation of these five projects is envisaged over the next five years. Member States as the main beneficiaries, will all be involved through their respective governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as stakeholders from the private sector. Support, financial or otherwise, is necessary. International support is also essential and donor agencies are being approached to fund them. The meeting is invited to examine the proposed projects attached, and give the necessary support towards their realisation.