

UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI)

Overall goal: *To contribute to poverty reduction and improved well-being of poor and vulnerable groups through mainstreaming of poverty-environment linkages into national development processes.*

Objectives at country level:

- *Inclusion of environmental sustainability as a central objective in national development strategies, such as poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), MDG implementation plans or equivalent;*
- *Increasing national budget allocations in support of pro-poor environmental outcomes;*
- *Building the long-term capacity of the government to integrate poverty-environment concerns into the design and implementation of development plans.*

Basic facts of the PEI in Mali

- The programme focuses on capacity building for a better articulation of the environment policy with the national development planning processes.
- PEI-Mali started in April 2005 (initiation phase based on a bilateral agreement signed with the Government) and has been scaled-up for 2007-2008 (phase I with a signed project document), as a joint initiative between the Government of Mali, UNDP-Mali and PEI-Africa.
- The programme is executed by the Government of Mali through national partner institutions, led by the Ministry of Environment and Sanitation through its National Directorate for Conservation of Nature and the PRSP Unit of Ministry of Economy and Finance.
- The programme is implemented by a National Project Management Unit under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Sanitation which leads the process and liaises closely with the other national partners.
- Donors include Norway (through UNEP) and UNDP-Mali. The funds are distributed through UNDP-Mali.
- The total budget is as follows:
 - 2005-2006: USD 200,000 (UNEP-Norway)
 - 2007-2008: USD 875,480 (UNEP-Norway: USD 625,480, UNDP-Mali: USD 150,000 and Government of Mali: USD 100,000)
 - 2009: USD 212,000 (balance 2008 UNEP-Norway funds: USD 137,000, UNDP-Mali: USD 75,000)

The context of mainstreaming of environment in Mali

- The 1st PRSP (CSLP) was developed in 2002. The CSLP was the basis for the development of Regional Poverty Reduction Plans implemented at the district level.
- In the 1st CSLP, Sustainable Environmental Management was not highlighted as priority and was barely mentioned.
- In 2006, the second generation of CSLP was developed. It was adopted by the Government on 20/12/06. The PEI country project team has been involved in the CSLP 2 drafting process as one of the PEI national focal points is a representative of the Ministry of Economy and Finance /CSLP Unit.
- CSLP 2 (entitled National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction) recognizes environment and sustainable management of natural resources as one of the priority areas of intervention for the country. However, the document states that the mainstreaming of the environmental issues into sectoral policies and development planning processes at all levels (national, regional and local) remains a challenge.

Main activities of the PEI

- Engagement in the CSLP drafting process through participation in various workshops and consultations.
- Training of academics, policy makers, economists and CSOs to the techniques of Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA), which will lead to a better understanding of the links between Poverty and Environment.
- Pilot IEA of the Mopti region conducted between June and December 2008. The draft assessment report was delivered in January 2009 and clearly highlighted some of the root causes of environment and natural degradation in Mali. Comments received from different stakeholders have been taken into account and the final version was adopted by the Project Technical Expert Committee (TEC) in August 2009. This pilot study has been followed by a training session organized for national stakeholders as a training of trainers to increase national capacities for ecosystem assessment. The organization of the training session offered the opportunity to PEI-Africa and WCMC¹ of UNEP to build partnership through joint funding, preparation and supervision of the session.
- Economic assessment conducted between July and December 2008. The assessment highlighted the monetary costs of environmental degradation and related costs of remediation. It shows to national decision makers the benefits of investing in sustainable natural resources use and environmental management. This study has raised strong national interest, five small fact sheets summarizing in 4 pages key findings of the study have been completed and disseminated as advocacy tools to increase the awareness of national stakeholders and strengthen partnership with in-country donors..
- Identification of the geographical areas (priority intervention sites) where the linkages between Poverty and Environment are the most critical in Mali. As a follow-up to this study, an assessment has been conducted in 12 districts located in the 3 most poverty-environment vulnerable regions, to identify potential small scale poverty-environment community projects. Recommendations have been elaborated to strengthen the mainstreaming of environmental issues in national and decentralized development planning.
- Identification of Poverty-Environment indicators for the national poverty monitoring system (Observatoire du Développement Humain Durable). As a follow-up to this study, a training workshop on P-E indicators was organized for government technical staff in July and the final report of the study adopted by the TEC in August 2009. The results of this study will be used to feed in the planned review of CSLP indicators.
- Exchange visit to Cotonou in March 2009 to learn from Benin's greening PRSP experience. Over 2006-2007, Benin conducted greening PRSP exercise using Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as the key approach. Five Malian delegates from the government and a national UNDP Programme Officer participated in the exchange visit and gained deep understanding of Benin's greening PRSP exercise and the use of the SEA. The Malian delegation committed to create an enabling environment to promote the SEA approach in Mali for their forthcoming greening PRSP exercise and related processes.
- Organization in April 2009 in Dakar, Senegal of a training session on leadership development for five Malian delegates from the government and a national UNDP Programme Officer. The training aimed at promoting PEI champions at country level in support to PEI activities in Mali.
- Data base management system for the environmental sector. Mali National Authorities reported the need of an information management system capable to provide accurate information for decision making purpose.

¹ The World Conservation Monitoring Center

At the request of the Government, PEI through a consultancy work is helping the Government Unit in charge of monitoring of sustainable development issues to put in place a data base management system for environmental data monitoring. The structure of the information system will repose on the PSA principles(Pressure –Status- Answer).Tangible indicators are being put in place and guidelines on how to implement environmental monitoring system and to manage data collection for each indicator are being set up. The system is being arranged in twelve main environmental themes and a web page will allow easy access to data users and data providers. The list of indicators will be regularly updated, as the system will be flexible and allow regular updating activities. The completion of the study is underway and an advanced report will be available soon.

PEI support to the organization of Malian National Assizes. National Authorities organized last July a national assize on Environment aiming at updating and sharpening existing strategies, and formulating new strategies and policies in areas where this is lacking. Updated or newly formulated strategies had to be in line with MDGs and the Paris Declaration principles to more take into account the poverty dimension of Environment and to improve aid efficiency. One of the areas requiring new strategies is the Strategic Environmental Assessment(SEA) that national Authorities wanted to assign high priority to. PEI support enabled consultancy work and the organization of the forum which recommended among others the mainstreaming of environmental indicators into the next PRSP review as recommended by PEI studies and the involvement of strategic ministries, mainly those of Economy, Finance and planning in the forthcoming PRSP greening and the budget allocation processes.

Organization of advocacy workshop for the forthcoming PRSP greening process. The objective of the workshop was among others to provide to decision makers in Mali a deep understanding of PEI objectives and activities, and a clear explanation of the methodological approach required for Environment mainstreaming.

It targeted high level decision making actors and raised interest from in-country donors after their attendance.

The workshop suggested an organizational arrangement and a roadmap to be put in place for the success of the greening process. At the request of in-country donors, PEI-Africa made a presentation on PEI and on the PRSP greening process .The meeting has been for the two parties(PEI-Africa and the donor group) a starting point to make prevail a donor dialog focusing on the PRSP greening process.

What has been achieved to date?

- Recognition by the Government of Mali of the importance of environmental issues and their links to poverty.
- Importance of involving all relevant stakeholders in order to achieve better results by turning our objectives into the main priorities of the different Government bodies.
- Increased awareness and improved knowledge base on the links between environment and human well-being through training on integrated ecosystem assessment and the identification of priority intervention zones for PEI-Mali.
- PEI-Mali evaluation: in view of the slow progress of PEI in Mali, an independent evaluation of the country programme was conducted. The evaluation permitted to highlight the main barriers to date including the lack of technical and managerial capacities and lack of respect of the agreed institutional arrangements (steering committee meetings and technical committee meetings). However, based on the progress achieved in 2008 in terms of activity implementation and the number of studies and assessments conducted, the evaluation recommended the continuation of PEI-Mali for 2009 to disseminate and use the results and re-dynamize PEI-Mali by energizing its steering committee and technical committee, reinforcing the Programme Management Unit, engaging with key ministries and in-country donors and refocusing the work plan to target strategic results (realistic and achievable).

Lessons learned

- Importance to build up a strong Project Management Unit at country level to ensure a stronger impact on the national and local planning processes and stronger advocacy on national decision makers.
- Importance to promote PEI vision (strengthen communication) and to enhance government ownership and commitment through exchange visits and coaching of national P-E champions that can influence decision makers.
- The use of qualified international experts and institutions to support PEI activities provides invaluable opportunities to increase decision makers' awareness and to strengthen local expertise.

Way forward

- Support the mainstreaming environment into sector strategies and the implementation of the CSLP 2.
- Support capacity building activities on sustainable environmental management targeted at decision makers and national planners.
- Elaboration and dissemination of briefing notes and fact sheets highlighting key messages and results from PEI studies as advocacy tools targeting various stakeholders.
- Strengthening to PEI-Mali's implementation bodies (steering committee, technical experts committee, project management unit) to strengthen its institutional position and ownership.
- Strengthening the nascent partnership between PEI-Africa and the donor group to consolidate dialog at country level in Mali.