

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 environment 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 equivalents;*
- *Increasing national budget allocations towards the environment;*
- *Building the long-term capacity of the government to integrate environmental concerns into the design and implementation of development plans.*

Basic facts of the PEI in Mauritania

- Programme on Capacity building for better inclusion of environment policy in the national development planning processes.
- Started in October 2005, PEI-Mauritania has been scaled-up for 2009-2011 as additional funding was mobilized for the mainstreaming programme by UNEP and UNDP through the Spanish MDG-Fund Environment and Climate Change Thematic window.
- A joint initiative between PEI, UNEP, UNDP-Mauritania and the Government of Mauritania;
- Executed by the Government of Mauritania (NEX) through national partner institutions, led by the Ministry of Environment (Ministère Délégué auprès du Premier Ministre pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable - MDEDD) and the Ministry of Economics and Finance (Ministère des Affaires Economiques et du Développement - MAED).
- The project is implemented through a National Project Management Unit – under the supervision of the MDEDD - who leads the process and liaises closely with the other national partners.
- Donors include Norway – through UNEP, UNDP-UNEP PEI (Global Award), UNDP-Mauritania (TRAC) and Spain (MDG-F). Funds distributed through UNDP Mauritania.
- Total budget:
 - 2005-2006: USD 240,000 (UNEP-Norway: USD 200,000, UNDP-Mauritania: USD 40,000)
 - 2007-2008: USD 827,460 (UNEP-Norway: USD 577,460, UNDP-Mauritania: USD 200,000 and GoM: USD 50,000)
 - 2009-2011: PEI-Mauritania scale-up USD 1,660,200 (MDG-F USD 599,000 - UNEP-MDG-F: USD 333,500 and UNDP-MDG-F: USD 265,500, UNEP-Norway remainder 2008: USD 375,000, UNDP-Mauritania: USD 130,000, PEI Global Award: 256,200, GoM: USD 300,000)

The context of mainstreaming of environment in Mauritania

- The 1st PRSP was developed in 2002. It was the basis for the development of the regional Plans for Poverty Reduction implemented at the district level.
- In 2004-2005, a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) was developed which was approved and adopted in 2006.
- In 2006, the second generation of PRSP was developed. The PEI country project team was involved in the development of PRSP 2 and made contributions towards mainstreaming environment in it.
- CSLP 2 recognizes Environment and sustainable management of natural resources as one of the 2 priority cross cutting-issues through the implementation of the NEAP as an important step in to fully take into account the cross-cutting aspect of the environment.
- Due to the ongoing political instability the national PRSP unit has not been operational since the formulation of the second PRSP in 2006.
- The revision process of PRSP 2 is planned to take place between February 2010 and August 2010 and will lead to a third generation PRSP that will cover the period of 2011-2015.

Main activities of the PEI 2005-2009

- Engagement in the CSLP process by participation in various workshops and consultations, supporting the Environment Thematic Group and other thematic groups for the integration of P-E issues. In 2009, PEI supported MAED and MDEDD in the review and monitoring of the implementation of the PRSP 2. Within this exercise, PEI provided specific support to the sectors of Water, Energy and Fisheries for the production of environmental and sustainable development indicators related to their activities.
- Training of academics, policy makers, economists and CSOs to techniques of integrated ecosystem assessment (IEA), which lead to a better understanding of the links between poverty and environment in

Mauritania. In 2009, a regional francophone training on the Millennium Assessment methods manual was organized in Mauritania by PEI and UNEP-WCMC. In addition, a pilot IEA focusing on wetlands [Diawling National Parc, Maâl lake and Kankossa pond] was launched.

- Identification of the national geographical areas where Poverty-Environment linkages are the most critical. In 2008, as a follow-up to this study, Poverty and Environment profiles have been developed for 4 districts situated in the most P-E vulnerable regions and in 2009, 2 P-E micro-projects have been launched in 2 of the districts [Assaba and Brakna].
- In depth analysis of to which extent environment is integrated into the main national development strategies, the sectoral strategies, the decentralized development strategies/plans and national projects/programmes. This work was complemented in 2009 by Strategic Environmental Assessments on the health sector, the rural development sector and water sector.
- Development of environmental indicators for Mauritania. In 2009, this work was complemented by an additional study on P-E indicators.
- In 2008, an economic analysis of the cost of environmental degradation and unsustainable management of natural resources in Mauritania was conducted. This study was complemented in 2009 with additional environmental economic assessments focusing on water, fish resources and rural development [livestock and agriculture].
- In 2008, PEI supported the development of Mauritania's first State of Environment Report.

What has been achieved to date?

- The development of the national environmental action plan (PANE) has been strongly supported by PEI.
- Recognition by GoM of the importance of environmental issues and their link to poverty.
- Increased awareness and improved knowledge base on the links between environment and human well-being through the training on integrated ecosystem assessment and country specific evidence on P-E linkages.
- PEI has played a key role in mobilizing MDG-F funding related to the 'environment and climate change' thematic window in Mauritania (MDGF -1724: Mainstreaming Local Environmental Management in the Planning Process). In this process, PEI developed a template concept note for environmental mainstreaming activities to be used by the MDG-F Secretariat for other MDG-F countries.
- Mauritania's First State of Environment Report was produced in 2008.
- PEI's engagements with MAED/PRSP led to the development of a matrix for monitoring environmental activities planned in the PRSP 2 (2006-2010) and more recently during the review process of PRSP 2 indicators, twenty new indicators specific to environmental governance and the links between poverty and environment have been integrated.
- Exchange visit to Cotonou to learn from Benin's greening the PRSP experience. Over 2006-2007, Benin conducted a greening the PRSP exercise using Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as the key tool. One Mauritanian delegate 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.
- Technical validation of the 15 studies produced through the project

Lessons learned

- Political and related instability makes it very difficult to achieve environmental mainstreaming. There has not been adequate national ownership of the programme largely because of the political instability including the frequent changes in the government structures and personnel.
- Importance of having a strong communication strategy to disseminate the results of PEI activities and strengthen national ownership of the programme.
- Strong involvement and ownership of the programme by the UNDP Country Office (management, Environment and Poverty Units) strengthens synergies with ongoing projects and increases impacts and chances of success.
- Good understanding of the programme by in-country donors strengthens P-E mainstreaming advocacy and increases impact and chance of success.

Way forward

- Organization of a national high level P-E mainstreaming workshop [Etats generaux de l'environnement] to mobilize key decision makers from the new government and disseminate PEI results to date.

- Editing, translation in Arabic and printing of key PEI-Mauritania studies for proper dissemination.
- Support to the PRSP revision process planned for 2010.
- Support capacity building activities on sustainable environmental management targeted at decision makers and national planners.
- Development of mainstreaming tools and specific tools for mainstreaming environment into national financial mechanism and budgeting processes.