

June 8, 2012

Comments from Germany on Approval by Mail: Niger: Water Resources Mobilization and Development Project (PROMOVARE) (AfDB)

Summary

We welcome the proposed project, and would like to commend all involved parties for submitting the proposal. However, it is not immediately apparent to us how the proposed project would respond to climate change in a way different from any conventional water resources mobilization and development project, and how the project would contribute to bringing about transformational change. There are a number of issues that, from our point of view, would require the proposal to be revisited and amended, as outlined in our recommendations (see **bold** highlights below).

Individual Comments on the Proposed Project

The project seems to follow a rather conventional approach, focusing mostly on building irrigation infrastructure for around 11 million US\$, combined with support measures, including some community support, at 2.5 million US\$, and project management at 2.1 million US\$. The project seems to be based on a continuation of the PMET and PADAZ projects that operated between 2001 and 2007. The project's inputs will range from drilling boreholes, building mini-dams, irrigation sills and banks of dry stone, California grids, providing some pumping equipment and water resources monitoring hardware, to watershed treatment and developing pastoral facilities.

The project's core rationale appears to be that (conventional) *irrigation* is the key to increasing climate resilience in Niger, combined with some elements of sustainable land and water management (SLWM). Irrigation and SLWM certainly contribute to increasing climate resilience. However, since CIFs are designed to deliver strong *development* outcomes, but also strong *climate* outcomes, the project might take a somewhat more explicit climate change oriented – and possibly ecosystem based – perspective. This would imply (i) that more explicit use should be made of the modelling of water resources and their availability under climate change; (ii) that the approach should be based on site specific vulnerability analyses; and (iii) that alternative technological options to irrigation

such as water-spreading weirs and their economic and ecological advantages should be assessed more thoroughly. **We therefore recommend more distinctly addressing climate change aspects. This should involve strengthening the analytical part concerning e.g. water availability scenarios, making explicit use of vulnerability analyses, and identifying innovative measures other than conventional irrigation. We would further like to see at least one indicator tracking such measures.**

In a similar vein, the proposal remains somewhat vague on how climate information as well as monitoring information from the *Climate Information Development and Forecasting Project* (PDIPC) under the PPCR would be incorporated into the planning and implementation process. **We therefore recommend that the issue of making use of climate information provided under other pillars of the PPCR be discussed at greater depth.**

The project's range of activities is broad and to some extent community *based*, but not clearly also community *driven*. **Mechanism of communal decision making appear to be missing, and, more generally, communal action seems to be supported only rather weakly. We therefore recommend addressing these aspects more thoroughly.** In the same context, it is also unclear to us how resilience building of communities, or, better even, their improved resilience, would be measured. **We recommend that indicators be modified or the log frame be supplemented with additional indicators to reflect measurable criteria for resilience building of target groups and its success.** Also, it is not very clear to us how the project will interface with the government, its sectoral ministries, and their regional structures, and **we feel that the proposal would benefit from more clarification on these matters.**

Comments on Cross-Cutting Issues

Learning

Best practices play a pivotal role in the design of future PPCRs, and of the numerous other climate change related initiatives supposed to learn from the PPCR. **We would appreciate the proposal being more explicit about the identification and selection of best practices, considering that adaptation to climate change is a relatively new field of activity, with few if any proven best practices readily available.**

Synergies with German Climate Change Related Engagement in the Country / Region

The project will work in the same three regions (Agadez, Tahoua, Tillabery) as the German-supported bilateral agriculture programme, and may to some extent even be active in the same communes. It would seem important that approaches should be harmonized by a national strategy for small scale irrigation. Development of such a strategy for small irrigation in Niger (SPIN), including a monitoring system, within the Ministry of Agriculture is presently being supported by said programme, possibly to be adopted by the Government of Niger by the end of 2012. The strategy is expected to provide guidance for the implementation of small scale irrigation measures implemented by some 15 donor organizations throughout the country. These organizations are members of the *subsector group of technical and financial partners*, also initiated with German support, and meeting on a monthly basis. **The PPCR becoming a partner in strategy development and joining the subsector coordination would be very much appreciated.**