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2.1	ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE	4
2.1.1	<i>National ownership and linkages</i>	4
2.1.2	<i>Extent and quality of facilitation process</i>	5
2.1.3	<i>Implementation set-up</i>	6
2.1.4	<i>Focus</i>	6
2.1.5	<i>Development on the ground</i>	7
2.1.6		

PAGEV is a project for “Improving Water Governance in the Volta River Basin”, implemented by IUCN under its Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), in cooperation with the Governments of Burkina Faso and Ghana. The project is financed by Sida and WANI/DGIS, and supported by GWP/WAWP and IUCN/BRAO.

The overall objective of the Project is to improve water governance in the Volta River Basin through a consensus on key water management principles and institutionalised coordination mechanisms.

PAGEV has four specific objectives:

- Key decision-support information base compiled and shared to inform constructive dialogues and collaboration on water management between Burkina Faso and Ghana.
- Burkina Faso and Ghana jointly develop, implement and learn from pilot IWRM interventions in a selected trans-boundary sub-basin.
- Existing bi-lateral consultations mechanisms between Burkina Faso and Ghana on water management broadened and strengthened through the adoption and implementation of a code of conduct in the management of shared waters.
- Project successfully managed and coordinated, structures of learning supported and lessons made available.

The present report has been prepared under a contract with Sida for external monitoring of PAGEV.

The monitoring consultant took part in the annual PAGEV/Sida meeting and in the meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) in Akosombo, Ghana, and participated as an additional member in the Midterm Review of the Project, which had been commissioned by IUCN. The work involved interviews with key stakeholders at various levels and a study visit to the pilot interventions areas on both sides of the border in the Nabanbé Basin. The detailed programme of the interviews and field visits is presented in the report of the Midterm Review¹.

Although the monitoring consultant took part in many of the discussions within the Review Team, he has not participated in writing the Review Report. The Review Report contains several observations and recommendations that are both relevant and important, and the monitoring consultant has no major differing opinion on any of the points made. The

¹ Mafing Konde: Evaluation à mi-parcours, Mars 2006.

observations and recommendations accounted for in the following text are those of the monitoring consultant alone.

With regard to the performance of PAGEV, a general impression is that the Project has already produced several valuable outputs. At the same time, however, there are some risks and weaknesses related particularly to (1) the pilot interventions and (2) the budgeting and financial reporting system, which need to be analysed and addressed by the Project in the coming months.

In summary, the positive aspects are as follows:

- Valuable facilitation of initiation, estab

The commitment to the Project measured in terms of actual contribution is as follows. In addition to the national directors of water resources being Co-Directors, the Project Coordinator is assigned from the WRC in Ghana, and one Water Resources Expert from each country is seconded to the PMU. The Coordinator receives salary from Project funds but the Co-Directors and the Water Resources Experts receive only limited additional allowances. In addition to this professional time inputs, there is substantial time input from national staff at all administrative levels. Other contributions include some input of vehicles, hosting of local meetings etc.

In addition to national inputs, support has also been provided by GWP/WAWP in the form of making available their network of experts, providing a course on conflict analysis, and facilitation of and participation in various forums and meeting

IUCN is looked upon as both an impartial and competent organisation, which may have been important in the initial stages of developing basin-wide and bilateral cooperation.

Cooperation on water resources management and on resolving actual and potential disputes has been going on between Burkina Faso and Ghana for a long time, particularly since there were serious disputes around two decades ago. This cooperation would certainly have taken place also without the existence of PAGEV. However, the Project has had an important role in facilitating communication and cooperation, and has assisted in organising several important meetings, both at the bilateral level with the Joint Technical Committee and a Ministers' meeting between Burkina Faso and Ghana, and at the basin level with the first meeting of the Volta Basin Technical Committee, which coordinates the establishment of the Volta Basin Authority (VBA). The Project has thus had, in spite of its fairly short existence, a tangible and positive impact on bilateral and basin-wide cooperation.

Through the work with the Code of Conduct, a good basis is being created for basin-wide joint water resources management. Although this has been developed by staff from the national services of Burkina Faso and Ghana, the result will have validity for the entire basin. The draft document on the Code of Conduct is planned to be ready in May, and is expected to form a major input to the VBA.

This can be compared to the lack of progress under the GEF project², which has a similar, albeit wider, agenda of facilitating basin cooperation but where nothing much seems to have happened.

In addition to these activities at basin and national levels, the Project is facilitating the setting-up of a transboundary forum at the local community level, an activity which is highly commendable and interesting.

² GEF: Addressing Transboundary Concerns in the Volta River Basin and its Downstream Coastal Area.

One experience from other transboundary river basin projects on the continent has been the need for smart implementation mechanisms and procedures.

PAGEV is active at basically four levels: basin/bilateral, national, provincial and local. The overall Project organisation with a Project Management Unit (PMU) strengthened by the national water resources Directors being appointed as Co-Directors of the Project, and with an active and representative PSC for supervision, is an appropriate solution.

The set-up is weaker at the provincial and local levels, particularly so with the lack of appropriate coordination between the Project and the provincial and local administration and its planning and technical services, as was observed during the field visits. At the local level, the Project works through two NGOs, which is a very good idea but which also has its problems, mainly related to the capacity and technical competence of the NGOs. Then, finally, the villagers themselves plan, implement and manage the Project activities, mainly through village committees. Filling gaps of knowledge, capacity and coordination is required at all these levels

The midterm Review report points to some weakness in the organisational functions at the PMU; it is important that this is rectified should it be verified by the Project itself.

A successful project on joint water resources management needs to be focused in terms of scope, activities and actors.

For a relatively small project such as PAGEV to be both efficient and effective, it is important that staff time and other resources are not spread too thinly over a large number of activities in too many subject areas and at too many intervention levels. In this regard it is clear that the Project is quite well-focused in general terms; it has four objectives and a fairly limited number of activities under each objective, which it seems as if the PMU is able to handle efficiently.

There is, however, one aspect that needs to be pointed to in this regard, namely the satellite imagery component that has been added to the project. This activity, which was not included in the Project document or the inception report, intends to produce land use and ecosystem baseline maps and eventually maps showing the impact of PAGEV. The component is financed and managed separately by VIASAT GeoTechnologies of Canada, which uses the Project as an institutional base.

It is not entirely clear how this activity will contribute to achieving the Project objectives. Monitoring physical changes on the ground, such as land use, erosion, extent of water bodies etc., is to some extent relevant in relation to water resources management, but such changes are long-term and the institutional home for such work should therefore be an established institution rather than a time-bound project. In

to know rather than useful. It is important that this component is not allowed to take up too much of the PAGEV staff's time.

In terms of achieving action on the ground, PAGEV has already reached much further than many other transboundary river basin projects on the continent. Pilot interventions are being carried out in eight villages; four in Burkina Faso and four in Ghana.

The pilots are a promising element of the Project; they are designed to provide concrete application of IWRM at that level, and give direct benefits to the people in the selected villages. They would also have direct positive effects on the riverine environment in that the river banks would be restored and protected, and provide a valuable learning process of how to engage and organise stakeholders and water users, and how to implement IWRM approaches at that level. Finally, the establishment of the transboundary joint consultative

In the setting up of the village committees it is important that there is no exclusion of groups actually living in the village, regardless of who they are. The existence of other relevant committees, such as already established women's committees which exist at least in one of the villages visited and which was engaged among other things in garden irrigation close to the river, should also be considered in this context.

In order to be able to provide a suitable package of interventions to each village, the implementing NGOs need to coordinate to the extent possible with on-going programmes of other NGOs and government agencies active in rural development, forestry, horticulture, water supply, environment etc.. Thus they could draw on surveys and information gathered by others which would help in identifying suitable activities, and they could also promote the direct intervention of the agencies in addition to what PAGEV can provide with its limited budget. Tree planting in itself is a technically complicated thing (seed acquirement, nursery operations, planting, watering etc), and in relation to village development in a socioeconomic context it becomes even more complicated. It is important therefore, that the expertise, as well as resources such as seeds and nurseries, already available with line departments is used, and that the implementing NGOs are active in promoting that relevant activities get directed to the particular villages where PAGEV has their pilot interventions.

Coordination and flow of information needs to be strengthened at several levels. During the field visit it was found that there had been no cooperation between the two NGOs in spite of the fact that they are doing basically the same work in the same area. For instance, it had been difficult for ZOVFA to get hold of plastic bags for the seedlings, something that could have easily been arranged through a contact wibie des need tonical7r

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this regard. In the latter case, the Basin Officer of the White Volta Basin Office is already taking part in the planning of the pilots on the Ghana side. No formal linkages are foreseen between PAGEV and PAGIRE with regard to the village committees and the CLEs³ respectively. Even if they are established at different levels and with different purposes, it could be beneficial to make use of goodwill and motivation created and experience gained at different levels .

members in the village committees, but the exact extent of their participation is not known. There are also, at least in Ghana, women's committees at village level and it may be considered to coordinate the Project activities with these committees. One specific example of addressing the HIV-Aids issue was observed during the field trip, with a poster depicting the fight against aids being displayed at the entrance to a village. This shows that the Project is doing something in this area but again, the extent of the work is not known.

Poverty alleviation and the integration of gender and HIV-Aids issues are specific points in the agreement between IUCN and Sida. They were substantially covered in the Project inception report, but this needs to be followed up also in the reporting. It is suggested, therefore, that the way the cross-cutting issues are being addressed by the Project be treated under a specific heading in future progress reporting from the Project.

As pointed out above, the spending in relation to budget so far has been low and it is not likely that the Project will spend the budgeted amounts within the agreed Project period. Considering the need to make sure that the interventions made by the Project are sustainable, neither is it desirable that it should. It will most likely then be appropriate with an extension of the Project period. The Project should approach Sida in this regard at the earliest.

There should already now be some forward thinking aiming at preparing for the post-project situation, including what activities should be continued in a new Project phase; what the linkages would be with other basin IWRM activities such as the VBA and the GEF project, and with national programmes such as PAGIRE in Burkina Faso and the on-going IWRM decentralisation programme in Ghana; and what the financing options for a new phase would be.

The opportunities for exchange of experience between PAGEV and other similar joint river basin projects have been discussed to a limited extent with the PAGEV stakeholders. Activities that could be relevant would be participation in meetings, and the organisation of study visits and joint training programmes. One interesting similar activity where there is relevant experience which could benefit PAGEV stakeholders would be the cooperation between the Governments of Zimbabwe and Mozambique in the Pungwe Basin. The Pungwe Project, which is just getting finalised, has produced a monograph on river basin conditions, a report on development scenarios and a strategy for joint management, along with capacity building and facilitation of stakeholder participation. This cooperation is presently moving into a new and more development oriented phase which will support investments, further capacity building and deepened stakeholder participation, and efforts to solve critical development issues relating to i.a. pollution and other environmental threats. Similarly, PAGEV would provide an interesting study object for stakeholders from the Pungwe Basin, particularly with regard to the pilot interventions and the local transboundary forum. Due to the present status of both projects, such study visits could be contemplated at the earliest for 2007.

Other river basins which could be contemplated for study visits include basins in West Africa, and the Nile Basin, where maybe particularly the Kagera River could be of particular interest, with a Sida-financed project being under implementation.

It is suggested that the external monitoring be performed through a combination of study of Project documentation in Sweden, participation in selected Project meetings, and field visits.

All relevant reports and documents produced under the Project should be made available by the Project to the monitoring consultant directly by e-mail. This would include the Annual Progress Report and the Completion Report, background documentation and minutes of PSC meetings, and important technical reports.

In relation to the Annual Progress Report one comment should be made. The report for 2005 uses a table format where the progress for each output and activity is presented. Percentages indicating degree of delivery are even given in many cases. This is clear and good, and makes it easy to assess the performance of the Project in relation to its objectives. However, the text section could be more elaborate and relate specifically to each of the outputs, providing more in-depth description and analyses of challenges and opportunities encountered as well as tying the project outputs to actual results.

It is suggested that the monitoring consultant participate in at least one meeting of the PSC annually and preferably also in the annual PAGEV/Sida review meeting. Field visits to the pilot intervention area should be performed at least once a year.