# **REPUBLIC OF NIGER**



**Republic of Niger** 





OASIS MICRO-BASIN SAND INVASION CONTROL PROJECT IN THE PROVINCES OF GOURÉ (ZINDER REGION) AND MAÏNE-SOROA (DIFFA REGION) (PLECO - PIMS No. 3225)





### PLECO FINAL EVALUATION MISSION (FINAL REPORT)

Submitted to

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP-NIGER) Niamey, Niger

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December 2015

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the conclusion of this final evaluation of the Oasis Micro-Basin Sand Invasion Control Project in the provinces (*départements*) of Gouré (Zinder region) and Maïné-Soroa (Diffa region) (GEF/UNDP-Niger, PIMS: 3225), the consultants would like to express our deep gratitude to UNDP-Niger for the trust placed in us and the unfailing support we received during the mission.

We extend our thanks to the Government of Niger and, specifically, the MESUDD/General Directorate for Water and Forests (DGEF), the PLECO National Coordination and its field teams in the provincial offices (Gouré and Maïné-Soroa), as well as the implementation partners, including government technical structures, technical and financial cooperation agencies, NGOs, and village communities, for their support and contribution to the mission.

We are particularly grateful to the authorities of the Zinder and Diffa regions, the departmental and communal authorities of Gouré, Goudoumaria, and Maïné-Soroa, and the project's beneficiary populations for being available to us and participating actively in interviews during field visits.

Without the contributions of all of these actors and the information and data provided, the mission could not have conducted a successful evaluation and achieved its objectives within the time frame established.

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#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

°C:	Degree Celsius
ADPRS:	Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
ANR:	Assisted Natural Regeneration
ARM:	Multi-Sector Regulatory Authority
BEEEI:	Environmental Assessment and Impact Studies Office
BIA:	Banque Internationale Africaine
CCA:	Food Crisis Cell
CCD:	Convention to Combat Desertification
CNP:	National Steering Committee
CNSEE:	National Centre for Ecological and Environmental Monitoring
COFO:	Land Commissions
COFOB:	Local Land Commissions
COFOCOM:	Communal Land Commissions
COGERNAT:	Local Natural Resources Management Committee
DAF/RRT:	Province of Forest Planning, Reforestation, and Land Restoration
DDH:	Departmental Hydraulics Department
DE/CV:	Province of the Environment and Living Conditions
DGEEF:	General Directorate of Environment, Water and Forests
DGH:	General Directorate of Hydraulics
EIS:	Environmental Impact Studies
EP:	Emergency Programme
ESDP:	Economic and Social Development Plan
FAO:	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF:	Global Environment Facility
GIS:	Geographic Information System
IEC:	Information, Education, and Communication
IFAD:	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO:	International Labour Organization
Inhbts:	Inhabitants
INS:	National Institute of Statistics
IPE:	Individual Protective Equipment
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
m/s:	Metres per second
ME/LCD:	Ministry of the Environment and Desertification Control
MESUDD:	Ministry of Environment. Urban Health and Sustainable Development
MH/E:	Ministry of Hydraulics and the Environment
MTE:	Mid-term Evaluation
NE:	Northeast
NEX:	National Execution
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NS:	North-South
NSIF-SLM:	National Strategic Investment Framework-Sustainable Land Management
PAE:	Environmental Action Plan
PAN/LCD-GRN:	National Action Plan for Desertification Control and National Resources
	Management
PANA:	National Action Plan for Desertification Control
PASAM:	Project to Support Household Food Security
PCU:	Project Coordination Unit
PLECO:	Oasis Micro-Basin Sand Invasion Control Project
PMIS:	Project Management Information System
PNEDD:	National Plan for Environmentally Sustainable Development

Final Evaluation of the Oasis Micro-Basin Sand Invasion Control Project in the Goure (Zinder) & Maïné-Soroa (Diffa) Provinces -GEF-UNDP-NIGER (PMIS-3225)

PRN:	Presidency of the Republic of Niger			
PRODOC:	Project Document			
RBM:	Results-Based Management			
RDS:	Rural Development Strategy			
ROSELT:	Network of Long-term Ecological Monitoring Observatories			
R-UNDP:	Representation of the United Nations Development Programme			
SE:	Southeast			
SG:	Secretary-General			
SIP:	Strategic Investment Programme			
SLM:	Sustainable Land Management			
SW:	Southwest			
TOR:	Terms of Reference			
UNCCD:	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification			
UNDAF:	United Nations Development Assistance Framework			
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme			
UNDP-RCU:	United Nations Development Programme – Regional Coordination Unit			
UNFCC:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change			
WB:	World Bank			
WFP:	World Food Programme			
WPAB:	Work Plan and Annual Budget			

#### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### A. Project financing

#### Table 1: Summary of project financing arrangements and sources

<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b> OASIS MICRO-BASIN SAND INVASION CONTROL PROJECT IN THE PROVINCES OF GOURÉ (ZINDER REGION) AND MAÏNE-SOROA (DIFFA REGION) (PLECO)				
COUNTRY NIGER				
GEF 3 Focal Area	EF 3 Focal Area Land degradation (LD), PO-15 Under GEF 3 SIP (Strategic Inves Programme for Africa)			
National Executing Agency:	UNDP-Niger			
Implementing Agency	MH/E (MESUDD/I	DGEEF)		
Project ID (Atlas)	00072224			
UNDP-PIMS Project	3225			
Project GEF ID PMIS	3381			
Business Unit, Atlas Award and Project ID:	NER10 / 00072224	/ 00058216	5	
Duration:			60 months	
Project Document Signature Date			07-Apr-2010	
Date of first disbursement of funds			25-Jun-2010	
Date of Inception Workshop:			02-Jul-2010	
Anticipated Closing Date:	01-Jan-2015			
Revised Closing Date:			01-Jan-2015	
Project Financing Arrangements (Source) Classification		Туре	Amount (US\$)	
GEF Funds	Multilateral	Cash	2,020,000	
Co-financing				
UNDP	Multilateral	Cash	500,000	
Government of the Republic of Niger	Government	In-kind	500,000	
Communes: Gouré, Kellé, Guidiguir, Bouné, Maïné-Soroa, Foulatari, Goudoumaria and N'Guelbayli.	Local government	Cash	4,000,000	
Programme to Support Local Development (PADL) – Diffa	Bilateral	Cash	3,320,000	
PADL – Zinder	Bilateral	Cash	560,000	
Special Programme of the President of the Republic Environmental Restoration Component	Government	Cash	3,200,000	
Project to Support Household Food Security (PASAM) - Gouré	NGO	Cash	1,200,000	
Total Co-financing			13,280,000	

15,300,000

December 2015

#### **B.** Evaluation objective and approach

The PLECO final evaluation field mission was conducted from 11 November – 5 December 2015. It involved (a) analysing the project's financing framework and implementation, (ii) conducting visits and interviews with the population at the project intervention sites, (iii) collecting data, (iv) assessing performance and results obtained relative to the objectives established and the verification indicators, and (v) developing subsequent recommendations.

The mission met with all of the project's key actors, particularly the communal authorities and the local populations who benefited from the project's achievements. It also maintained ongoing contact, throughout the evaluation, with the Project Coordination Unit (PCU)-PLECO and the UNDP-Niger Office.

#### C. Project description

- i. The project addressed a current, complex sub-regional problem, which requires considerable resilience within the populations and large-scale actions to address the effects of climate change and protect sylvo-pastoral ecosystems and the production base.
- ii. To address the disastrous consequences of climate change and the recurring drought that has affected the entire country and pursuing the actions begun in the early 1990s, the Government of Niger, with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP, launched the PLECO to provide a strategic, practical response to sand invasion in the two regions facing the greatest threat – Diffa and Zinder.
- iii. As indicated in the project financing document (PMIS 3225), the purpose of the project is to ensure the long-term protection of "the integrity of the micro-basins and improve the productivity of the agro-sylvo-pastoral ecosystems in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa" through rational management of land and water resources, while improving the livelihoods, living conditions, and resilience of vulnerable populations in the Zinder and Diffa regions.
- iv. The PLECO seeks to achieve three specific objectives that meet the both Government of Niger's expectations in terms of strategies and policies and the GEF's operational programmes to address the country's challenges in terms of the environment and sustainable socioeconomic development:
  - Component 1: Improve local land management and ecosystem management practices;
  - Component 2: Strengthen the SLM capacities of institutions and local communities; and, •
  - Component 3: Create a system to monitor sand invasion and land degradation.

#### **D.** Institutional project financing arrangements

- v. Based on the institutional financing framework, the PLECO implementation arrangements are as follows:
  - UNDP is the project implementing agency, based on the National Execution (NEX) method;
  - The Ministry of Environment, Urban Health and Sustainable Development (MESUDD) is the • government entity responsible for executing the PLECO at the national level, through the General Directorate of Water and Forestry, in accordance with the UNDP NEX;
  - A project Steering Committee was created to supervise the PLECO's implementation. Its members include representatives of key institutions and technical and financial partners; and,
  - A Project Coordination Unit, created by the MHE and based in Zinder, handles project • management and daily coordination in the two regions.

#### E. Conclusion, lessons, and recommendations

#### **01** - Start of project implementation

The project document was signed on 7 April 2010 for a term of five years, with closing date of 1 January 2015. The project was declared to be financially operational on 26 June 2010 (Project Number 00072224). The mission considers this to be the legal implementation start date, with official closing date of 26 June 2015. However, the project did not start until the 2 July 2010 Inception Workshop in Maïné-Soroa, organized by the Steering Committee.

The mission finds project implementation to be **satisfactory** overall. This finding also applies to the project's accomplishments and achievements in the areas of dune fixation and building strategies and national capacities in the areas of sustainable natural resource and ecosystem management.

#### 02 - Project Approach

- vi. The participatory approach adopted by the PCU addresses the need for involvement of the actors (territorial and communal administrative authorities and local elected officials, government technical services, and local communities; NGOs/development associations; UNDP and University/CNSEE; and, the beneficiary populations), which is required to ensure inclusive project implementation that can better confront the issues the project addresses.
- vii. We find the respective roles played by all of these actors to be *highly satisfactory*. This made it possible to achieve various aspects of the project results.
- viii. The results obtained were promoted and catalysed by (i) awareness-raising, (ii) training for local actors, (iii) establishing a partnership with other actors not initially involved, (iv) mobilizing and organizing the local populations, and (v) integrating the project into the UNDP programme framework, as well as support from the WFP and the Government.

#### 03 - Results and Achievements

- ix. Implementation and achievement of the PLECO objectives are highly satisfactory (HS).
- x. As expected from the project's implementation, the project mobilized and executed a budget with expenditures totalling US\$ 5,264,186<sup>1</sup> over its five years (2011-2015), compared to an initial budget of US\$ 2,520,000<sup>2</sup>. The resources executed were mobilized as follows: (i) GEF: US\$2,020,000; UNDP: US\$1,654,686<sup>3</sup>; Niger contribution: US\$592,000; and, WFP contribution: US\$997,500<sup>4</sup>. These funds were executed by the MHE/DGEF and the operational PLECO. The PCU opened the following accounts in Zinder in the name of the operational PLECO: Account N°25110079429 75 BIA Zinder, to manage the GEF and UNDP funds, and Account N°25110108542 opened at BIA-Zinder for the Government's counterpart funds.
- xi. In terms of dune fixation physical outputs, the PLECO completed 5,373 hectares (2011-2014), compared to the 4,410 hectares planned (or, 121.84%), divided among 62 sites across eight communes, including 43 sites for the PLECO Maïné-Soroa office and 19 sites for the PLECO Gouré

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Source: PLECO

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> GEF funds + UNDP funds

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This amount is 3.3 times greater (303%) than the amount noted in the financing agreement, although no revision was made.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Financing provided in the course of execution because not planned as part of co-financing when the PLECO was signed. This speaks to the ability of the project team to negotiate financing.

office. These 5,373 hectares were stabilized biologically with 3,365,300 plants produced by the populations (80% by women) at the village nurseries, supervised by the project facilitators. The sale of the plants generated substantial revenues for the women, who used them to meet household needs, pay for children's education, and create small-scale businesses.

xii. The results in terms of capacity-building are highly satisfactory. They include:

- Creating local natural resource management committees (COGERNATS) and local land commissions (COFOB) in several target villages. However, the function of these entities still needs to be improved;
- Capacity-building within regional, departmental, communal, and village institutions, specifically including consultation frameworks and existing conflict management frameworks (or those being formed), in the areas of (i) planning, implementation, and monitoring of local action plans and (ii) conflict management, which is needed to improve the development of natural resources and rural land;
- Creating a network for exchange, standardization, and collaboration among partners in order to disseminate information on sand invasion, land degradation, and SLM. Unfortunately, however, the mission notes that the partners' SLM network entities are only partially operational in the two project zones (Gouré and Maïné-Soroa). The mission encourages the PLECO to make every effort to ensure that the partners' network is operational during the transition phase of the future programme to be implemented;
- Executing (by the CNSEE and the School of Agriculture in Niamey) Component 3 through research and development activities at the sites selected in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa at automatic weather stations. *This research provided rainfall data, air temperature and humidity measurements, and wind speed and direction;*
- Creating a system to collect data on the environment (including climate, physical setting, and vegetation), biodiversity, and socioeconomic conditions for these two provinces. The data gathered are managed at CNSEE in the form of a database that is accessible online.
- xiii. These achievements were the result of a productive collaboration among the PLECO and local actors (including NGOs, projects, communes, and communal technical services) and capacity-building in integrated development, the diagnostic-participatory process, and dune fixation techniques.

#### 04 - Impacts

- xiv. The PLECO results and achievements produced major environmental and socioeconomic impacts that are **quite significant.** The project also had a significant impact on building the actors' capacities.
- xv. The mission notes that the results and achievements helped the project meet its specific objective to *"ensure the integrated protection of the natural resources and improve the agro-sylvo-pastoral productivity of micro-basin ecosystems in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa,"* with tangible ecological, environmental, and socioeconomic benefits. The results are very encouraging and should facilitate long-term achievement of the Government's and GEF/UNDP's SLM objectives. They should also help to achieve efforts to control sand invasion of land and socioeconomic infrastructure, leading to inclusive, sustainable development.

xvi. The mission notes that the results have produced significant achievements and impacts, specifically:

- **Environmental**: the project's achievements have produced beneficial effects, led to significant environmental benefits, and sharply improved the rangelands' forage productivity potential and agricultural development of the micro-basins (rain-fed market gardening). This is the result of mechanical and biological dune stabilization and restoration of degraded agro-sylvo-pastoral ecosystems, micro-basins, and socioeconomic infrastructure;
- Socioeconomic: the project has created jobs that provided payment for work on dune fixation (cash and food for work), the sale of plants grown by the women in their village nurseries (maintained 70-100% by women), and the hiring of caretakers. This has helped to inject or

generate substantial income in the villages, improve household income and food security, reduce household poverty, and slow the exodus of young people from rural areas;

- Institutional, operational, and technical capacity building: the studies and research conducted have (i) provided the government and the actors a greater understanding of land degradation and sand invasion and (ii) enabled them to establish networks of local SLM actors, thus strengthening the national ecological monitoring network initiated by the ROSELT project in the early 2000s and the operating and scientific capacities of CNSEE and the Agriculture Department at the University of Niamey;
- **Gender:** the involvement and equitable treatment of men and women in terms of payment for dune fixation work and the development of income-generating activities specifically, the development of the oasis micro-basins, the creation of village nurseries managed by the women, and the sale of plants grown in these nurseries has contributed significantly to establishing a base for women's empowerment (Gender Development). The income generated has also allowed women to invest in their children's education and to purchase and raise small ruminants, which serve as savings.

#### 05 - Lessons learned

- xvii. The mission identified certain inadequacies and weaknesses, which are considered here as lessons to be learned. They include the following:
  - The delays in setting up the financial resources and WFP foodstuffs often led the populations to slow their efforts, particularly as soon as compensation stopped;
  - The failure to adequately consider climate risks (late rains and droughts) when carrying out biological dune fixation resulted in poor seedling recruitment and significant loss of seedlings planted in the stabilized dunes (even those fixed mechanically);
  - The lack of a communications expert within the PCU despite the recommendation in the midterm evaluation (MTE) to fill that gap - prevented the project from implementing a consistent programme and from piloting awareness-raising, information, and outreach activities with the grassroots communities;
  - While the approach involving compensation for dune fixation in cash and food for work (WFP) adopted by the country (and, consequently, the project) did improve food security by generating household income, it could ultimately create dependency with the populations and discourage "voluntary" participation in the event of a failure to pay or payment delays;
  - The training and self-management that the COGERNATs sought was not achieved, probably because of their weak operational and organizational capacities and lack of formal legal status. That status could have allowed them to take greater accountability in terms of carrying out the actions initiated, monitoring the plots, and benefiting from the opportunities available to mobilize financing from the donors;
  - The spread of sand invasion, endemic poverty, and chronic food insecurity in the intervention zones call for long-term intervention and requires significant resources, justifying the efforts to be taken;.
  - The sand invasion of road (including production and access routes) and hydraulic infrastructure and of agricultural and natron production processing facilities compromises efforts to achieve sustainable development in the zone. Decision-makers should address this in the financing of sand invasion control projects.
- xviii. Despite the successes, the mission finds that poverty and weak operational capabilities within the populations and local organizations continue to slow efforts to control sand invasion.
- xix. Although in five years' time the project has strengthened the actors' capacities and shown that a consistent organizational approach is feasible with local communities, we must acknowledge that the efforts and the project's achievements remain fragile. The reasons for that fragility include: (i) the hostility of the climate and the natural environment; (ii) the continuing threat of sand invasion; and (iii) the weak operational capacities of the populations and local institutions. The following will

be necessary to sustain the project's achievements: (i) implement substantial resources; (ii) consolidate the actions initiated; (iii) operationalize the outreach system; (iv) formalize and increase the supervision of the COGERNATs; and (v) implement the local action plans.

#### 06 - Recommendations for future actions

- xx. Based on the results and the lessons learned, the mission notes that all the actors believe that sand invasion is the most serious threat to sustainable development in the Diffa and Zinder regions and neighbouring areas. Higher levels of government must thus consider efforts to control sand invasion a survival imperative if these regions are to avoid the risks of irreversible degradation of natural resources and the foundation of agricultural and food production and, even, forced population migration to other areas.
- xxi. In keeping with the wishes of local government officials (mayors and departmental and regional authorities) and the populations, the mission recommends that the actions initiated to ensure consolidation of the achievements continue. The mission further recommends protecting the natural resources pursuing sustainable micro-basin development as the basis for sustainable development in the zone.
- xxii. The activities initiated by the project would thus continue in two phases:
  - <u>Phase 1 (transition): Consolidation of the PLECO achievements (2016-2017):</u> this phase would focus on consolidating the achievements and developing a long-term strategic programme for the second phase of development (15 years: 2018-2032). Financing for this phase is based on the desire to maintain the achievements and continue the process of skills transfer to local entities (communes and COGERNATs) in the areas of natural resource management and sand invasion control;
  - <u>Phase 2 (development): Long-term strategic programme (2018-2032)</u> to control sand invasion of land and socioeconomic infrastructure and promote development of the oasis micro-basins: Focused on <u>implementing the Long-Term Strategic Programme to Control Sand Invasion and develop the micro-basins</u>. This will rely on two prerequisites: (i) a formal declaration by the Government that it considers sand invasion to be the most serious threat to sustainable development in the Diffa and Zinder regions and that it is committed to taking comprehensive, long-term actions to control the threat; (ii) a commitment to improve the visibility of actions to control sand invasion by establishing an independent specialized entity that is provided with significant human and financial resources.

#### **F.** Evaluation ratings

#### Table 2: Ratings: results, sustainability of results, and project relevance

Ratings for results, effectiveness, efficiency, monitoring/evaluation	Sustainability ratings	Relevance ratings
and surveys		
	3 Moderately likely (ML):	6: Very Relevant (VR):
Overall results: 6 Highly	Moderate risk	Impact ratings:
Satisfactory (HS):		6 Highly Satisfactory
Effectiveness: 5		
Efficiency: 5		
Monitoring-evaluation: 4		
Additional ratings as necessary:		
Not applicable (N/A)		
i) <u>Risks:</u> Satisfactory (4)		
ii) <u>UNDP agency:</u> 6 Highly S	atisfactory (HS):	

iii) <u>Executing Agency (MHE/MESUDD-DGEEF)</u>: Highly Unsatisfactory (5)

#### **1. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

#### **1.1. General introduction**

This final examination reviews the context, performance, and results of the 2010-2015 implementation of the <u>Oasis Micro-Basin Sand Invasion Control Project in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa (PLECO) (PIMS 3225)</u>, carried out pursuant to the directives set forth in the document, <u>Guidance for Conducting Final Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects</u>, and the mission's Terms of Reference (TOR) (Annex 1).

The final evaluation was conducted from 11 November 2015 - 5 December 2015 by a team composed of an International Consultant (head of mission) and a National Consultant.

This report presents the findings, results of the project implementation evaluation, conclusions, lessons learned, and the mission's recommendations on consolidating the achievements and future actions. It is organized as follows:

- Final evaluation framework;
- Analysis of the project's logical framework;
- Evaluation of project performance and results;
- Conclusion and recommendations; and,
- Annexes.

#### **1.2.** Objectives and scope of the results of the mission

As indicated in the TORs (Annex 1), this final project evaluation focused on an analysis of, among other issues: (i) the relevance of the project's objectives in relation to the government's policies and development strategies; (ii) the document's compliance vis-à-vis the design of GEF project documents and its alignment with the GEF's areas of funding; and, (iii) performance and results.

More specifically, the results, lessons learned, and recommendations of this evaluation will help the Government and UNDP/GEF assess the capacities of the Government of Niger to manage GEF projects that focus on <u>environmental protection</u>, efforts to combat land degradation, and the restoration of <u>ecosystems</u>, take the steps and measures necessary to capitalize on the achievements, and reach agreement on the directions and priority actions to pursue.

Under the terms of the mission, the International Consultant (head of mission) is to submit three final deliverables to UNDP within 40 days after the mission begins; that is, 20 December 2015. Unfortunately, because of the many demands on the UNDP team, which is responsible for supervising and validating the reports, the final report (the third deliverable) could not be completed until March 2016.

#### **1.3. Evaluation activities and methodology**

#### **1.3.1. Mission activities**

The mission analysed the following:

- The project's relevance (including justification, objectives, and results) relative to the policies of the Government and UNDP-GEF;
- The project's performance (including management, monitoring-evaluation, physical outputs, capacity building, action research and development of methodological tools, and involvement of actors and partnerships);
- The extent to which the achievements, results, and objectives were met;
- The relevance and scope of the techniques and methodologies used; and,
- The lessons learned and subsequent recommendations.

More specifically, the mission assessed the impacts of the results, particularly with regard to:

- Changes that occurred in the natural and socioeconomic environments of the intervention zones;
- Factors determining the sustainability of the project's benefits or impacts (including indicators and risk management);
- Factors that facilitated or slowed achievement of the objectives; and,
- Gender-related results, specifically the extent to which the project considered gender-related disparities when establishing and implementing the project interventions.

#### **1.3.2.Evaluation methodology**

In accordance with the TOR, the mission was conducted in a participatory, inclusive, and iterative fashion. It involved all of the national, regional, and local actors and was carried out in close collaboration with UNDP and the PLECO PCU.

The evaluation was conducted in four phases, as follows:

- 1. <u>Phase 1:</u> 12-19 November 2015:
  - Briefing and work session with the actors;
  - Documentary review;
  - Development of the detailed data collection methodology and interviews with the actors (see the components or questions in the structuring tasks in Annex 2); and,
  - Development of the mission scoping and framing memo.
- 2. <u>Phase 2:</u> Site visits, data collection, and evaluation of the achievements: 20 and 21 November:
  - Mission field visit and data collection at seven (7) sites that are representative of the 62<sup>5</sup> project intervention sites, accompanied by the PCU coordinator and the monitoringevaluation expert, as well as representatives from the Gouré and Maïné-Soroa offices. These seven sites were chosen based on (i) their accessibility (located along the road between Gouré and Maïné-Soroa); (ii) the results; (iii) the involvement of the populations; and (iv) the incorporation of gender issues in the activities;
  - Meetings with all the key actors (departmental and communal authorities, project teams, local partners, and beneficiary populations) during these visits.
- 3. <u>Phase 3:</u> Compilation and summary of the results and sharing of the conclusions and recommendations:
  - 22-23 November 2015: summary of the evaluation results;
  - 24 November 2015: feedback workshop in Zinder bringing together the representatives of the Diffa and Zinder regions, the communes and provinces concerned, technical services, and project teams;
  - 30 November 2015: feedback meeting at UNDP-Niger (Niamey) with the UNDP Resident Representative, coordinator of the United Nations System, and the representative's colleagues (Annex 3);
  - 1 December 2015: feedback meeting at the Secretariat-General of the Ministry of the Environment, Urban Health, and Sustainable Development, bringing together the SG, managers from the central divisions, and the team from the Environmental and Energy Division, and UNDP's Resilience Division (Annex 4).
- 4. <u>Phase 4:</u> Development of the evaluation mission preliminary report:
  - 2-5 December 2015: Development and submission of the preliminary report;
  - February/March 2016: UNDP and PLECO comments and corrections and consultants' submission of the final report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>: In Gouré, the interventions covered 19 sites in the four communes, while in Maïné-Soroa and Goudoumaria, they covered 43 sites in five communes.

The detailed methodology, the mission programme, and the list of persons met are provided in Annexes 2 and 4.

#### 2. ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT'S FINANCING FRAMEWORK

This section analyses the strategic and policy context of the framework and arrangements for the project's financing by the GEF, UNDP, the Government, the communes, and the co-financing partners (including Projects).

#### 2.1. Problems to be resolved

The PLECO financing agreement aligns with the concerns of the Government, GEF, and UNDP. The project thus addresses the objectives of the GEF/OP-15 programme, Sustainable Land Management.

It falls under the Strategic Investment Programme (SIP/GEF) for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and the TerrAfrica<sup>6</sup> work program and complements two other programmes – Programme 10 (Environmental Sustainability) and Programme 13 (Land Restoration and Reforestation).

It also seeks to address the populations' concerns and expectations, as well as the need for sustainable local development, decentralized natural resource management policy, and empowerment of grassroots communities, with regard to gender and vulnerable persons.

The mission notes that the project took a strategic approach to tackling a topical, complex problem; that is, efforts to combat land degradation and sand invasion of socioeconomic infrastructure that has affected the countries of the Sahel since the early 1980s. The repercussions have been particularly unusual for Niger, with disastrous environmental and socioeconomic consequences, given the country's location at the edge of the Sahara Desert, which continues to advance southward. The decades of sand invasion of agro-sylvo-pastoral lands and socioeconomic infrastructure have become the most visible threat from climate change, hindering all of the Government's efforts to ensure sustainable development and improve living conditions for 14,297,000 Nigeriens, particularly those living in the regions of Agadez, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéry, Zinder and Diffa, and including the watercourses of the main river basins (including the Niger and La Maggia Rivers and Lake Chad).

In the early 1990s, the Government, with support from UNDP and other technical and financial partners, launched strategic initiatives intended to contain this threat and implemented actions to <u>control sand</u> <u>invasion of land and socioeconomic infrastructure</u>. However, after nearly 25 years' of efforts and despite the success of multiple initiatives, sand invasion continues to advance, with ongoing resource degradation in both zones.

Pursuing its efforts, in 2000, the Government adopted the <u>National Action Plan for Desertification</u> <u>Control and Natural Resources Management (PAN-LCD/GRN)</u>, giving priority to efforts to <u>control sand</u> <u>invasion</u>. This plan increased awareness of the threat that sand invasion poses for the country's development.

Similarly, the PLECO project was funded as a practical response to the sand invasion threat in the Diffa and Zinder regions, with the strategic objective of following on and complementing previous projects. Although in its five years' of existence, the project has strengthened the actors' capacities and demonstrated the feasibility of SLM best practices by involving and organizing local communities, we must acknowledge that the efforts remain inadequate, given the breadth of the threat of expanding sand invasion, which is exacerbating the local populations' chronic poverty and food insecurity populations.

#### 2.2. Country eligibility

As the information in Table 3 below shows, the Government has ratified the various United Nations conventions and international agreements, particularly the Convention to Combat Desertification

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>: The TerrAfrica initiative is a collective partnership of among the NEPAD, the UNCCD Secretariat, the UNCCD Global Mechanism, the World Bank, FIDA, the FAO, UNDP, UNEP, ADB, GEF, the European Union, and others.

(CCD), the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC). Niger is thus eligible for GEF financing for the PLECO.

#### Table 3: International conventions and agreements ratified by the Government

Title	Date of signing/ratification by Niger
• The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (the Bonn Convention), signed in Bonn, Germany	Ratified: 7/7/1980
• The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, referred to as the RAMSAR Convention:	• Convention ratified: 30 August 1987.
• The protocol amending this convention was adopted and entered into force on 1 October 1986.	• Protocol ratified: 30 December 1987.
The Convention on Biological Diversity	<ul><li>Signed: 11/06/92</li><li>Ratified: 25/07/1995</li></ul>
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	<ul><li>Signed: 11/06/92</li><li>Ratified: 25/07/ 1995</li></ul>
United Nations Framework Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa	<ul><li>Signed: 14 October 1994</li><li>Ratified: 19 January 1996</li></ul>

Source: Project Document, 2010

#### 2.3. Co-financing

Pursuant to the arrangements entered into in the financing document, the financing of the Oasis Micro-Basin Sand Invasion Control Project in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa (PLECO) is estimated at US\$15,300,000, broken down as follows (Table 4):

- US\$2,020,000 from the GEF under Operational Programme, OP 15- Sustainable Land Management;
- US\$500,000 from the UNDP;
- US\$13,280,000 in co-financing from the Government as a financial counterpart, from the communes and the projects implemented in the zone and contributing to the environmental effects of the PLECO project.

Of that total, only the GEF and UNDP funds were certain to be used directly to finance the PLECO activities, for a total of US\$2,520,000. The financing for the projects implemented in the zone is accounted for as effects added to the environmental results of the PLECO.

Considering the hostile climate, the huge area affected by sand invasion, and the project objectives, and based on the costs of the prior fixation work that exceeded FCFA 500,000 (US\$ 1,000) per hectare of stabilized dune in 1991, the mission concludes that the budget allocated to the PLECO clearly underestimates the cost of covering the 4,410 hectares projected and, thus, is insufficient. To achieve that objective of 4,410 hectares, the PLECO budget should total, at a minimum, approximately US\$4,410,000. This explained why the project team sought to mobilize resources (particularly from the WFP).

#### Table 4: Co-financing arrangements and sources

Co-financier name (source)	Classification	Туре	Amount (US\$)
Communes: Gouré, Kellé, Guidiguir, Bouné, Maïné-Soroa, Foulatari, Goudoumaria and N'Guelbayli.	Local government	Cash	4,000,000 (30%)
PADL project – Diffa	Bilateral	Cash	3,320,000 (25%)
PADL project – Zinder	Bilateral	Cash	560,000 (4%)
Special Programme of the President of the Republic: <i>Environmental Restoration Component</i>	Government	Cash	3,200,000 (24%)
Government of the Republic of Niger	Government	In-kind	500,000 (4%)
PASAM Gouré	NGO	Cash	1,200,000 (9%)
UNDP	Multilateral	Cash	500,000 (4%)
Total Co-financing			13.280.000

Source: Project Document, 2010

#### 2.4. Institutional arrangements for project implementation

According to the project document, the arrangements entered into under the institutional framework for PLECO implementation and achievement are as follows:

- **UNDP** is the executing agency, through the National Execution (NEX) modality;
- **Ministry of Hydraulics and the Environment** (NHE/MESUDD) is the governmental body responsible for implementing and carrying out the PLECO at the national level, through the General Directorate for the Environment, Water and Forests (DGEEF);
- Environmental Steering Committee was established by the ministry in agreement with UNDP and is responsible for supervising PLECO implementation. It is composed of the key institutions and partner representatives. The role of the Steering Committee is to: (i) define the implementation modalities; (ii) coordinate the activities, ensure that they are consistent and comply with the Rural Development Strategy (RDS); (iii) establish a coordination framework; (iv) supervise, check, and evaluate progress; and, (v) prepare the interministerial RDS reports and oversee coordination with the other RDS programmes. This committee provided the forum for meetings among the three projects included when the project was formulated to simultaneously validate and evaluate the Work Plan and Annual Budgets (WPAB) and project annual reports. This provided an opportunity to discuss the standardization of their approaches and exchange lessons and knowledge;
- **Project Coordination Unit** (PCU): The PCU was set up by the DGEEF and UNDP and is responsible for implementing and executing the PLECO in the Diffa and Zinder regions. It is composed of a project coordinator (whose role is also to provide project management and technical advice), a specialist/expert in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and monitoring, an administrative and financial director, and four facilitators hired by the project through UNDP. However, the project staff has grown from eight to 12 people (technical) over time.

#### 2.5. Project duration

PLECO implementation was planned to continue for five years (60 months), from June 2010 to June 2015. However, the mission concludes that this duration is too short for the project to achieve all of its objectives and produce the expected results and impacts that would make it possible to reverse the trend of continuing land degradation, particularly in a context of climate change and recurring drought. Indeed, even six additional months (July-December 2015) were not sufficient for the PLECO to achieve all the expected outcomes and consolidate the achievements.

### This kind of project requires more time to achieve the expected outcomes and ensure that the achievements are sustainable.

#### **2.6.** Project intervention zones

The project interventions targeted the zones that are most threatened and have a high concentration of vulnerable populations in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa, broken down into eight (8) communes, as noted in Table 5 below.

Regions	Provinces	Communes	
Zinder	Gouré	Rural Commune of Bouné	
		Rural Commune of Kellé	
		Rural Commune of Guidiguir	
		Rural Commune of Gouré	
Diffa	Maïné-Soroa	Rural Commune of Nguel Bayli	
		Rural Commune of Foulatari	
		Rural Commune of Maïné-Soroa	
	Goudoumaria <sup>7</sup>	Rural Commune of Goudoumaria	

#### Table 5: Project Intervention Zones

Source: PLECO Report, 2012.

Approximately 35 priority micro-basins were scheduled for protection and development in the eight communes targeted by the project. However, thanks to the project's momentum, it was able to cover 62 sites (1.8 times the original number).

The populations of these communes and, particularly, those of the 62 sites covered, are thus the main direct project beneficiaries, in addition to the central services of the Government, the decentralized technical services of Diffa and Zinder regions, and, in particular, the General Directorate for the Environment, Water, and Forests.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>: The province of Goudoumaria was recently created, for a total of three intervention provinces.

#### 3. ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND RELEVANCE

The following sections present the evaluation of the project objectives as they relate to the priorities of the Government and GEF-UNDP, the institutional arrangements, the design and structuring of the global and specific objectives, the results, activities, and the monitoring-evaluation framework.

#### **3.1. Project objectives and their scope**

Given the project's overall goal of ensuring sustainable land management and controlling sand invasion, the mission finds it to be relevant and responsive to the concerns of the Government, GEF-UNDP, and the local populations. This goal is to be achieved through four specific objectives, translated into the following components:

- <u>Component 1:</u> Improve local land management and ecosystem management practices: apply models and practices for sand dune prevention and stabilization and achieve integrated management of dunes, land, and ecosystems in 35 priority micro-basins;
- <u>Component 2:</u> Strengthen the SLM capacities of institutions and local communities: enhance the technical and managerial capacity of local stakeholders in dune, land, and ecosystem management, focusing on the 35 priority micro-basins. This component focused on communities and local authorities, emphasizing information, education, and communications (IEC) activities in the areas of sustainable land management, sand dune protection, and land tenure issues (conflict prevention and resolution).
- <u>Component 3:</u> Create a system to monitor sand invasion and land degradation: establish a sand dune and land degradation monitoring system at the national and local levels. This component emphasized creating, demonstrating, and operationalizing a sand dune and land degradation monitoring system.
- <u>Component 4:</u> Project management: establish an adaptive system that can manage the lessons learned about efforts to control sand invasion and promote SLM and will gradually become a national structure for Niger. This involves conducting daily, adaptive project management and coordination, emphasizing the sharing of lessons learned in order to improve management and increase the commitment of the project participants.

These objectives align with the Government's policy and strategic guidelines in terms of environmental protection, sustainable land management, and, in particular, efforts to control sand invasion and reduce poverty in rural environments. As the purpose of these objectives is to "protect the integrity of the oasis micro-basins and improve the agro-sylvo-pastoral productivity of the ecosystems," the PLECO interventions should, ultimately, help to address land degradation and sand invasion and, thus, meet the sustainable development needs of the communities in the project's two regions.

In addition, as the PLECO was designed and financed in connection with the RDS,<sup>8</sup> its objectives – to protect the integrity of the oasis micro-basins and improve agro-sylvo-pastoral productivity – align with the Government's policy guidelines and strategies on SLM issues, efforts to control sand invasion, environmental protection, climate change resilience, and poverty reduction in rural environments. To that end, the project constitutes an operational tool that translates these policies into concrete actions that strengthen the actions of the flagship programmes and strategies, thus justifying the financing of the PLECO:

• PNEDD/PAN/LCD-GRN, "developed in 1998 and adopted by the Nigerien Government in 2000" in connection with Niger's Agenda 21,

 $<sup>^{8}</sup>$ : The Rural Development Strategy was taken up in 2012 by the ESDP (2012 – 2015).

- Medium Term Action Plan on the Environment and Desertification Control in Niger, 2006-2011,
- National Poverty Reduction Strategy (SRP), which seeks to "increase the contribution of the productive sectors to economic growth and food security," adopted in 2002 (revised in 2007),
- Rural Development Strategy (RDS), adopted in 2003, which became Initiative 3N in April 2012,
- National Adaptation Plan (PANA), adopted in 2006, and,
- Strategic Investment Framework-Sustainable Land Management (CSIN-GDT), adopted by the Government in 2012.

#### **3.2. Project design**

An analysis of the project funding document (PMIS 3225) shows that the design of the project document complies with the development procedure for projects funded by GEF-UNDP. It is organized into global objectives and specific objectives that are translated into components, results, targets and activities, presented in a consistent framework. Each of the four components is designed in complementary fashion, includes an indicative budget based on the costs of the activities, and identifies the co-financing sources.

Components 1, 2, and 3 constitute the key parts of the field program that the operational PLECO team<sup>9</sup> implemented in the two provinces of Gouré (Zinder region) and Maïné-Soroa (Diffa region).

However, although the project document addresses gender issues – in terms of empowerment and gender equality – they are not presented clearly enough to take specific account of them in the project's implementation.

However, the mission notes the certain weaknesses in terms of some of the activities that do not match the objectives of the components under which they fall. These weaknesses were emphasized by the MTE mission, which recommended that they be restructured, as noted below. Unfortunately, this recommendation was not followed.

- Improve the structuring of the components (Component 2, Section 2.5, p. 14, Project Document) and the framework of strategic results and outputs<sup>10</sup> so that they are more comprehensible and allow for stronger Results-Based Management (RBM) and effective monitoring-evaluation of the achievements;
- Refocus the project activities on sand invasion and protection of farmland and social and economic infrastructure. Intervention in the area of SLM should be minimal, which is very complex and expensive and results can be achieved only in the long-term.

Table 6 below illustrates the project results framework.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The project financing involves two components: i) the PLECO component, referred to as operational (subject of this evaluation): focused on sand invasion control in Zinder and Diffa, and (ii): SLM component: responsible for the institutional aspect of land management

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The project framework presents only one result: "Community-based implementation of actions to provide sustainable management of dunes, land, and the ecosystem, covering approximately 7,510 hectares of land," while the component includes two main outputs.

Table 6: Project Outcomes Fr	amework
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Project components	Expected outcomes	Expected outputs	Achievements & results	GEF funding (US\$)
1. Local dune, land, and ecosystem management practices	Sustainable dune, land and ecosystem management activities are implemented at the grassroots level, covering approximately 7,510 hectares of land. [SIP's IR-1] (*)	<ul> <li>Practices and models for sand dune prevention or stabilization are applied and assessed</li> <li>Integrated management of dunes, land and ecosystems is implemented in 35 priority micro-basins (operational plans elaborated, validated &amp; implemented)</li> </ul>	The component was executed in accordance with the guidelines in the financing agreement and achieved highly satisfactory outcomes overall. However, certain activities could not be completed (60-90%). These outcomes, as well as all the achievements, must be completed and consolidated.	695.000
2. Local capacities and institutions for SLM	Technical and managerial capacity of local stakeholders in terms of dune, land and ecosystem management is strengthened in the 35 priority micro-basins. [SIP's IR-1 & IR-4] (*)	<ul> <li>Local land tenure and management institutions are strengthened;</li> <li>Awareness and knowledge of SLM is enhanced (in at least 50% of population in the 35 priority micro- basins); and,</li> <li>Ecosystem services and ecosystem- based livelihoods are developed, resulting in a 20% increase in productivity of agro-pastoral zones.</li> </ul>	The project contributed to building the capacities of the populations and the COGERNATs in terms of land issues, knowledge of SLM practices, and ecosystem services. However, the outcomes sought cannot be achieved in the context of the project implementation, particularly within its five years, which have been dedicated primarily to developing dune fixation practices and micro-basins and organizing the population into operational structures. All of these outputs will have to justify the continuation of the actions initiated.	540,000
3. Monitoring system for sand dunes and land degradation	A monitoring system for sand dunes and land degradation is established and implemented at national level and harmonized with SIP/TerrAfrica at the regional level.	<ul> <li>A national centre for ecological monitoring is created (with a focus on sand dunes, land degradation and early warning);</li> <li>Ecological monitoring protocols are established and implemented at the community level;</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>This does not involve creating a centre but, rather, strengthening the CNSEE. This was achieved satisfactorily.</li> <li>Not achieved and difficult to carry out operationally, given the weak organizational capacities of the local communities;</li> </ul>	590,000

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Project components	Expected outcomes	Expected outputs	Achievements & results	GEF funding (US\$)
	[SIP's IR-4] (*)	<ul> <li>An early warning system on desertification and land degradation is functional; and,</li> <li>National M&amp;E system is harmonized with SIP/TerrAfrica M&amp;E and SLM indicators system.</li> </ul>	• Outputs 3 and 4 are unrealistic at this level of the project given the lack of such a system and the equipment and financial resources required. They represent a vision for the future, once the CNSEE is fully operational, with a formal collaboration established with the Niger Basin Authority (ABN) and the University of Niamey.	
4. Project management	An adaptive and lessons- sharing management system is in place. [SIP's IR-2 & IR-4] (*)	<ul> <li>Project management is closely linked to the country's SLM institutions;</li> <li>Lessons are shared with other SIP/TerrAfrica projects; and,</li> <li>Project evolves based on the ongoing SLM work at the national level.</li> </ul>	The project integrated the SLM aspect in its work programme and helped to organization a national forum, which led to the development of a long-term SLM strategy. The lessons and experiences were shared, but a formal sharing system was not established.	195,000
Total project cost			2,020,000	

Source: Project Document

#### **3.3.** Analysis of the logical framework and outcome indicators

The mission notes the following inadequacies in terms of the logical framework for outcomes:

- The outcomes matrix does not present the outcomes as detailed in the project components;
- The project's overall objective indicators are vague because they are defined in terms of activities;
- Some targets are confused with the indicators, particularly with regard to outcome 1 (the microbasins), which hampers monitoring/evaluation and the ability to trace progress toward achieving the outcomes based on the target indicators. In addition, as noted above, the physical targets of 4,410 hectares in five years are quite ambitious. It seem unlikely that the project can sustainably protect 4,410 hectares and develop 35 micro-basins economically and efficiently, while simultaneously increasing crop productivity (millet and black-eyed peas) by 20% on agropastoral dune lands that are completely degraded and in an unfavourable climate and socioeconomic context. As noted in the field, the average success rate for the 5,373 hectares stabilized (Table 7) mechanically or biologically is 80%, varying between 60-100% based on the plot (either not planted or seedlings did not survive because of inadequate mechanical fixation);
- With regard to component 1, 35 micro-basins and 90 pilot experimental and sites focusing on best agricultural and pastoral practices were to be protected the first year, which demonstrates the disproportionate nature of the project objectives. In addition, the project was able to protect only 62 sites in total (68.9%);
- With regard to component 2, the target was to increase practical knowledge of SLM within at least 50% of the rural populations in the 35 priority micros-basins. This would be difficult to achieve (22.77% of people affected, cf. Table 10), given that the micro-basins protected represent only a tiny number of the many inventoried in the two project zones and that those regions were not developed in optimal fashion to encourage participation.

As designed, these indicators and targets cannot be used to conduct dynamic monitoring-evaluation and measure the progress achieved based on the indicators and targets. Unfortunately, the recommendation of the MTE mission was not adopted. That mission had proposed that the PCU, in consultation with UNDP, redefine the indicators to achieve greater consistency between the ability to trace progress in terms of outputs and the ability to understand the monitoring-evaluation framework in terms of project outcomes and impacts on poverty reduction among the populations in the project zones.

#### **3.4. Risks and assumptions**

Although the risks and strategic mitigation assumptions are based on the assumption of no or moderate drought, the intervention zone is characterized by recurring drought and endemic food insecurity, which greatly influences the populations' participation. This would appear to be unrealistic, as demonstrated by the failure to achieve certain outcomes and poor seedling recruitment because of rainfall deficits after planting or after planting periods.

Table 6 below presents the project's implementation risks and strategies to mitigate them.

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#### Table 7: Summary of project risks and mitigations

Risk	Risk level	Risk mitigation strategy	Comments
Climate	Moderate	<ul> <li>Base the project on approaches and techniques for sustainable management of lands subject to prolonged drought and climate fluctuation.</li> <li>Create a national centre for ecological monitoring, so that the interested parties can forecast climate events and develop appropriate policies and programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Risks of drought cannot be dismissed because the area is subject to erratic rainfall and recurring periods of drought.</li> <li>Unfortunately, the CNSEE was not able to develop an early warning system capable of forecasting rainfall events and notifying the PLECO so that it could take the resulting precautions needed to plan planting activities.</li> </ul>
Actors' participation	Low	<ul> <li>Use participatory approaches to ensure community participation and commitment to the project objectives.</li> <li>Promote local revenue generation, based on improved ecosystem services.</li> <li>Hire four facilitators to support the field activities and community involvement.</li> <li>Support local capacity-building, including participants' engagement and raising awareness on the importance of SLM in socioeconomic development.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Thanks to the participatory approach, all actors were involved.</li> <li>However, population participation was encouraged via payments in cash and food for work, provided by the WFP, and development of the micro-basins, rather than by improved ecosystem services. Given the time period provided, the project is premature in claiming ecosystem services. "Ecosystems" (inappropriate term) should perhaps be understood to mean "protected sites."</li> <li>PLECO had to hire eight facilitators (two per commune), rather than four.</li> <li>Capacity-building was effective and contributed significantly to minimizing the risks.</li> </ul>
Institutional and political weaknesses	Low	<ul> <li>A key objective of the project is to build local, regional, and national SLM capacities (components 2 and 3).</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>This objective was achieved in certain regards and facilitated project implementation, although weaknesses remain at the local level.</li> </ul>

Source: Project Document, p. 27

#### **3.5. GEF-UNDP comparative advantages**

As highlighted in the explanatory statement and the statement of PLECO funding arrangements, land degradation and sand invasion of socioeconomic infrastructure are among the most serious threats to the sustainable conservation of agro-sylvo-pastoral and biogenetic resources and the development of eastern Niger. They must be addressed.

The analysis of the performance of the actors' interventions highlighted the central role UNDP has played since the early 1990s, demonstrating its comparative advantage relative to others. This confirms the decision by the GEF and the Government of Niger to choose it as the PLECO executing agency (NEX).

Indeed, through these field projects, NER/89/004<sup>11</sup> and NER/900000<sup>12</sup>, and the NAPA resilience project, UNDP-Niger has demonstrated its exceptional capacities in design, technical feasibility studies and implementation of complex projects, institutional capacity-building, and strengthening environmental strategies and local development. In addition, as coordination for the United Nations System for Niger, UNDP plays a central role as facilitator at the UNDAF level among the various agencies, helping to achieve convergence among international donors providing support to the Government.

#### **3.6. Monitoring-evaluation plan**

The project's monitoring-evaluation is designed to be conducted in accordance with established UNDP and the GEF procedures, provided by the project team and the country office (R-UNDP) with the support of the UNDP regional coordination unit (RCU-UNDP). The logical framework matrix (Table 5) shows the project execution performance and impact indicators and their respective methods of verification. They will constitute the foundation on which to build the monitoring-evaluation system.

The system will include; (i) <u>daily monitoring of implementation progress</u>, under the responsibility of the project coordinator, based on the annual project work plan and its indicators; (ii) <u>tripartite</u> reviews; and (iii) meetings of the <u>project's National Steering Committee</u> and financial audits. The activities will be addressed in reports to ensure that progress and results can be traced.

Table 8 below presents the project's monitoring-evaluation programme arrangements.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> *Project NER/89/004 Lutte contre l'Ensablement des Terres de cultures - Zinder/Diffa* ("Efforts to Control Sand Invasion of Farmland - Zinder/Diffa")

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Étude de faisabilité de la protection de la route Gouré et Maïné-Soroa; 1991 ("Feasibility study on protecting the Gouré and Maïné-Soroa road: 1991")

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#### Table 8: Monitoring-evaluation plan and budget

Activities	Manager	Timing	Comments
Inception workshop	Project team, R-UNDP, ME/LCD	Within the first three months after start	Project inception workshop held 2 July 2010 in Maïné-Soroa
Initial report	Project team, R-UNDP, ME/LCD	Immediately after the project inception workshop	Report produced by the PLECO PCU
Baseline situation and indicator	Project team (specifically, GIS and monitoring-evaluation expert)	Start, middle, and end of project (selected activities annually)	GIS expert hired and participated in the various project mid-term evaluation reports conducted in June 2013 and end of project evaluation
Annual reports and implementation review reports	Project team	Annually	Reports prepared and submitted periodically on time
Publications on lessons learned and technical reports	Project team and consultants, if necessary	To be determined by the project team and R-UNDP	PLECO published many best practices documents on SLM and sand invasion control (see bibliographies, Section 7)
Mid-term evaluation	Project coordinator, ME/LCD, R-UNDP, PCU-UNDP	Mid-term (end of 3rd year)	Conducted in June 2013
External final evaluation	Project coordinator, ME/LCD, R-UNDP, PCU-UNDP	End of project	Conducted in November 2015
Audit	Project team, R-UNDP	Annually	Conducted periodically and every year
M&E field visits	Project team	Every year	Conducted periodically by PLECO and UNDP-Niger team

#### 4. ANALYSIS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Based on the analysis of the information, data collected (including the results of the <u>June 2013 mid-term</u> <u>evaluation</u>), information drawn from the observations and interviews from site visits, and the review of documents the project produced, mission (i) assessed the project's performance and achievements, (ii) applied the lessons learned, and (iii) prepared conclusions and recommendations for future actions.

The evaluation covered the period from 26 June 2010 (the effective project launch date) to 11 November 2015, relying on the following reference documents:

- Project financing agreement (project document), signed by the Government, GEF and UNDP;
- Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPB) for 2010, 2011, and 2012;
- Annual review of accomplishments;
- Quarterly progress reports, financial audit reports, Steering Committee meeting minutes, PLECO and UNDP-Niger team monitoring-evaluation and supervision mission reports, and technical reports from thematic consultation workshops;
- GEF monitoring-evaluation reports, *Project implementation review (PIR) for 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015.*

The mission found all these documents<sup>13</sup> to be extremely valuable. They made it possible for the mission to assess the project implementation context and evaluate the scope of the achievements, impacts of the outcomes, and lessons learned.

#### 4.1. Project implementation start-up

The project document was signed on 7 April 2010 for a term of five years, with closing date of 1 January 2015. Because the project was declared to be financially operational (under Project Number 00072224) on 26 June 2010,<sup>14</sup> the mission considers that to be the legal implementation start date. Consequently, the five-year project execution term runs from 26 June 2010 to 25 June 2015. However, the project did not actually start until the inception workshop, organized by the Steering Committee, was held on 2 July 2010 in Maïné-Soroa.

When the project began, the Ministry of Hydraulics and the Environment established the supervisory bodies and the project technical units, specifically:

- **Project Steering Committee:** Composed of (i) Chair, (ii) two Vice-chairs, and (iii) a Secretary-General. This committee brings together all the actors involved in sand invasion control, including UNDP. Its role is to supervise implementation of activities via periodic meetings of its members:
- Project Management and Coordination Unit (PCU), based in Zinder
- The departmental offices, including one located at the departmental environmental agency (DDE) in Gouré and the other at the Maïné-Soroa DDE.

The <u>project inception workshop</u> was organized by the CNP, with support from PLECO and UNDP. Participants included all of the CNP members, the full project team, representatives of the government agencies concerned, the co-financing partners, and the UNDP team. The objective of this inception workshop is to review the project document to ensure that all actors have a clear understanding of the project framework.

 $<sup>^{13}</sup>$  : See the list in the references.

#### 4.2. Outcomes analysis

The mission is pleased to note that all of the outcomes expected from PLECO were achieved (even if to varying degrees), including:

- 62 out of 90 priority oasis micro-basins were protected (68.9%);
- PLECO: 5,373 hectares compared to the 4,410 hectares planned;
- Local operational plans to protect 62 strategic micro-basins were developed and validated ;
- Nine pilot experimental and best agricultural and pastoral practices demonstration were created with full commitment from the populations;
- Knowledge of SLM practices improved among 22.7% of the populations of the 62 sites protected;
- Productivity in the agro-pastoral zones increased by more than 40%;
- Knowledge and operation of the Land Commissions (COFO) created in Gouré and Maïné-Soroa improved;
- The CNSEE created a network system of environmental studies on dune dynamics and land degradation was created in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa; and,
- Many documents on techniques and achievements in the area of dune fixation and SLM, as well as political strategies and long-term investments, were published.

Tables 9 -13 below present the project's accomplishments.

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#### Table 9: Overall outcomes compared to projections

Component	Targets	Outcomes	Comments
Project objective: Protect the integrity and improve the agro- sylvo-pastoral productivity of micro- basin ecosystems in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné- Soroa.	7,510 hectares protected in the micro-basins and sylvo- pastoral zones as follows: PLECO: 4,410 hectares Project to Support Local Economic Development (PADEL)/Zinder: 400 hectares PADEL/Diffa: 750 hectares Project to Support National Resource Management (PAGRN): 800 hectares Second Private Irrigation Promotion Project (PIP2): 150 hectares Other actors: 1,000 hectares	<ul> <li>5,373 hectares, compared to the 4,410 hectares planned (or, 121.84%), divided among 62 sites across eight beneficiary communes, including 43 sites for the PLECO Mainé-Soroa office and 19 sites for the PLECO Gouré office;</li> <li>Reforestation with 3,365,300 plants (<i>Leptadenia pyrotechnica, Projopis juliflora, Acacia raddiana</i>,) produced by the populations (80% by women) in the village nurseries;</li> <li>Rehabilitation of the agro-sylvo-pastoral ecosystems in village lands and the micro-basins of 62 protected sites;</li> <li>Substantial generation and improvement of household income (cash payment, sale of plants and development of the micro-basins for market garden operations), invested in household needs, children's education, small businesses, and raising small ruminants;</li> <li>Training and supervision of the populations in mechanical and biological dune stabilization techniques; and,</li> <li>Organization of Grassroots communities in COGERNATs; creation of COFO, COFOB, and COFOB.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>i)- Overall note: 5</li> <li>ii)-The PLECO could not recognize the 3,100 hectares that were to have been protected under the co-financing projects contributing to the additional environmental effects because they were completed just as the PLECO project began.</li> <li>iii)- the project's accomplishments must be consolidated and strengthened to ensure that they are sustainable and produce the expected impacts, which is why the efforts initiated by the PLECO should continue.</li> </ul>

Source: Project Document

The mission notes that the work program was executed in accordance with the guidelines in the financing agreement and in **highly satisfactory** fashion. However, achievement rates vary from 80-100%. Certain activities could not be completed, specifically: the operationalization of the COFOs and COGERNATs; the dune monitoring and environmental warning system; and, the definition and use of planning and monitoring indicators for dune fixation activities (CNSEE).

The success rate of mechanical and biological fixation is estimated at nearly 80%, ranging between 60 to 100%. In terms of the arid climate conditions and recurring droughts, as well as endemic poverty and food insecurity in which the project evolved, this rate is **highly satisfactory** and exceeds the expectations of the final evaluation mission.

However, the mission also notes that the global environmental and socioeconomic objectives <u>could not</u> <u>be achieved within the five years assigned</u>. In addition, the mission notes that because many projects under the PLECO co-financing ended before the PLECO began and because no post-project outcome evaluation was conducted to capitalize on those accomplishments, the achievements and impacts could not be recognized in the PLECO outcomes.

## 4.2.1. Component 1: Improve local land management and ecosystem management practices

All the activities included in this component align well with the country's policy, which combines environmental protection and socioeconomic development of the rehabilitated zones. More specifically, protecting and improving the productivity of the agro-sylvo-pastoral ecosystems and micro-basins can address the populations' development needs and encourage them to engage in long-term efforts to control sand invasion of their lands.

As a reminder, <u>component 1</u> seeks to carry out dune fixation and sustainable land and ecosystem management by protecting 7,510 hectares, including 4,410 for the PLECO and 3,100 through co-financing projects.<sup>15</sup>

Tables 10 and 11 below present the project's 2011-2015 mechanical and biological fixation accomplishments (annex 3, photo boards: 1-6) for component 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>: PADEL/Zinder: 400 hectares; PADEL/Diffa: 750 hectares; PAGRN: 800 hectares; PIP 2: 150 hectares; other actors: 1,000 hectares.

#### Table 10: Mechanical dune fixation

Activity/year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Fixation of new dunes	862	1,108	2,582	821	0	5,373
Site rehabilitation	267	480	342	1,741	625	3,455
Total	1,129	1,588	2,924	2,562	625	8,828

#### Table 11: Biological dune fixation

Activity/year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Plant production (fixation of new dunes)	344,800	388,000	669,500	600,000	-	2,002,300
Plant production (replenishment)	108,600	160,000	88,400	715,000	291,000	1,363,000
Total plant production	453,400	548,000	757,900	1,315,000	291,000	3,365,300

Table 12 below presents the component 1 outcomes compared to the targets.

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#### Table 12: Component 1 outcomes compared to projections

Component	Targets	Outcomes	Comments
Outcome 1: Sustainable dune, land, and ecosystem	Operational plan to protect 35 strategic micro-basins developed and validated during year 1 and implemented as of year 2	<b>O1.1 Analysis-diagnosis:</b> Diagnosis, inventory of sanded up areas, and mapping (GIS) were conducted.	The diagnosis revealed the extent of sand invasion in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa.
management activities implemented locally		O1.3: Development of multi-year communal operational plans, accomplished	Highly satisfactory outcome, accomplished 100%.
covering approximately 7,510 hectares of land [SIP's IR-1]	90 experimental and best agricultural and pastoral practices demonstration pilot sites created with the populations' full commitment	O1.2: Participatory development of local action plans for dune/land management, accomplished.	62 of 90 plans scheduled (68.9% completion rate); implementation has begun on some.
		O1.4: Network established for exchange, standardization, and collaboration among partners to disseminate information on sand invasion, land degradation, and SLM, accomplished.	Satisfactory result, 80% accomplished, but not widely operational.
		O1.5: Rehabilitation and consolidation of older sites stabilized for plots created by PLECO from 2010-2014.	None of the older plots stabilized between 1990 and 2010 were rehabilitated by the PLECO, despite the MTE recommendations.
		O1.6: Fixation of new dune plots around micro-basins and depressions, accomplished.	Very good population participation, with 100% women in certain sites (Maïné-Soroa) and income generated (cash and WFP foodstuffs) for participants.
		O1.7: Identification and dissemination of SLM- compatible best practices (O1 &O4) accomplished at nine demonstration sites	Highly satisfactory outcome, with good SLM practice indicators, minimal financial investment, and accessible to the populations.
		.O1.8: Monitoring-evaluation of the project activities, conducted by the PLECO, UNDP-Niger, DGEF, the communes, and COGERNATs.	The system operated well, thanks to the organization set up by the PCU under the supervision of the M&E expert, with assistance from the supervisors and facilitators.

Source: Project Document

The specific achievements that fall under this component are as follows:

**O1.1 Analysis-diagnosis:** The project conducted a diagnosis and inventory of sanded-up areas and of the threat of sand invasion (photos 1 and 2, annex 4), using the GIS and digital mapping, with the population involved in collecting and confirming certain data;

**O1.2:** Participatory development of local action plans for dune and land management (100%): The activities involved: (i) training managers from departmental agencies (environment, livestock production, agriculture, hydraulics, rural engineering, and planning) in Gouré and Maïné-Soroa to use a planning tool essential to carrying out local development correctly; (ii) creating the COFODEPs and COFOCOMs; and, (iii) developing local action plans in sixty-two (62) sites, initiated in the field with support from their respective communes. This decentralized and participatory planning process was intended to create permanent, sustainable forums for consultation and dialogue among local stakeholders. The mission is pleased to note that this planning exercise addressed the concerns raised by the various studies, specifically by: (i) developing a monitoring-evaluation manual; (ii) conducting an analysis-diagnosis of the sanded-up areas; and, (iii) creating a training program for staff members on IEC and land degradation;

**O1.3: Development of multi-year communal operational plans:** This outcome helped to strengthen the actors' capacity to achieve <u>Outcome R2 of component 2</u>. The activities were conducted based on the technical diagnoses performed at several sites and the data gathered from all eight communes<sup>16</sup> covered by the project, which today have a multi-annual plan to protect the strategic sites. The mission assesses this kind of community-based planning involving the actors-beneficiaries favourably because it helps to create a process that can sustain the achievements, even if the process could not mobilize investments from the communes and financial partners;

**O1.4:** Network established for exchange, standardization, and collaboration among partners to disseminate information on siltation, land degradation, and SLM: This outcome was achieved to 80%. It helped to: (i) build the actors' capacity and achieve outcomes O1.2, O1.3, and O2 via exchanges, collaboration, information dissemination among the actors and partners in terms of knowledge of land degradation at the national, local, communal, and departmental levels; (ii) create the regional and departmental SLM committees; (iii) prepare the networking document in 2013 and provide it to the actors for information sharing and exchange among the members of the regional SLM platform in the various regions of the country; and, (iv) achieve publication of multiple technical and methodological documents capitalize on the PLECO outcomes and achievements;

**O1.5: Rehabilitation and consolidation of older stabilized sites: This activity involved only those plots created by PLECO (2010-2014), covering a total area of 3,455 hectares of dunes, or 39.14%:** This work involved straightening/strengthening the damaged woven wattle fencing, replanting the seedlings in the degraded planting areas, and seeding pastoral plots using pastoral plants and grasses. It covered a total land area of 3,455 hectares in plots that were either not planted after mechanical stabilization or that showed low rates of seedling recruitment (<80%), caused by drought or the pressure of livestock wandering in village lands (Annex 3, photo boards).

**O1.6:** Fixation of new dune plots around micro-basins and depressions: This outcome focuses on demonstrating active dune stabilization techniques around the villages and the oasis micro-basins at the priority project sites: (i) mechanical fixation (collection of plant materials: doum palm leaf stems, *Leptadenia pyrotechnica* stalks and branches; (ii) creating village nurseries (90% women-run); and (iii) biological fixation, using forest species (including *Prosopis juliflora, Prosopis chilensis, and Acacia raddiana);* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> As a reminder, this involves Gouré, Kellé, Bouné, and Guidiguir communes in the province of Gouré and Foulatari, Maïné-Soroa, Goudoumaria and N'Guel Beli in the province of Maïné-Soroa.

**O1.7: Identification and dissemination of SLM-compatible best practices (O1 & O4):** This outcome aims to support local producers in identifying and cataloguing SLM-compatible practices, analysing why traditional practices of natural resource exploitation persist, and proposing appropriate solutions. Accomplishments include the following: (i) nine SLM best practices demonstration sites were created, including: (i) three assisted natural regeneration (ANR) sites (Karamba, Gatawa, and Baboulwa), (ii) three agricultural production and water management support sites (Kilakina, Malfaram, and Kil), (iii) a pastoral zone (Hérori) where a diagnostic study on joint management, securing, and restoration was created, (iv) an improved clearing site (N'Guel Lamido), and (v) a crop rotation site (N'Guel Lamido). The behaviour studies disseminated on resources and practices provide encouraging results. However, to ensure that these pilot sites are sustainable, the mission recommends that the communes' technical services and the COGERNATs provide ongoing monitoring-evaluation of the plots and that technical and methodological documents on SLM best practices and theme-based technical datasheets be produced;

**O1.8: Monitoring-evaluation of the project activities: This is intended to be participatory** at the village, commune, department, and project levels. It was based on a consistent monitoring-evaluation system established by the PLECO and supervised by monitoring-evaluation and GIS expert based in the PCU. Several actors were involved: (i) the DDE departmental services' agency teams (the facilitators hired for this purpose and working in each commune); (ii) the communal technical services' representatives; (iii) members of the COGERNATs; and (iv) the DGEEF and UNDP-Niger. It addressed verifying progress periodically in implementing the planned activities, analysing the outcomes, and measuring the achievements and impacts of the outcomes, based on the outcome indicators compared to the component's objectives. In the event of failures, corrective measures will be necessary. The mission notes that the activities favoured quantitative over qualitative monitoring and focused on components 1 and 2, without synergies with the component 3 activities and the institutional aspect of SLM.

#### 4.2.2. Component 2: Strengthen the SLM capacities of institutions and local communities

Component 2 activities address operational and technical capacity-building among stakeholders and, specifically, the populations of the 62 priority sites protected by the project. More specifically, the activities involved three major elements:

- Building the capacities of the consultation and existing (or under development) conflict management frameworks at all levels (regional, departmental, communal, and village);
- Implementing training and IEC at the local level; and,
- Building the local partners' technical capacities.

To improve guidance on the areas of intervention, the PLECO first assessed the existing consultation and conflict management frameworks to improve how local communities are organized into specialized committees and to take appropriate measures to facilitate their operation and the populations' participation in implementing the project. The performance analysis was based on field visits and discussions with the actors. It provided satisfactory results, with an average completion rate of 75%.

Table 13 below presents the outcomes of the component.
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#### Table 13: Component 2 outcomes compared to targets

Component	Targets	Outcomes	Comments
Outcome 2 Technical and managerial capacity of local stakeholders in dune, land and	At least 50% of the rural population in the 35 priority micro-basins improved their practical knowledge of SLM	Build capacities of the populations at the 62 sites developed (18,600 people and 847 households); Creation/capacity-building of the COFOBs and COGERNATs to manage land tenure issues, SLM best practices and rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems.	Based on an average number of 5 people/household, the 62 sites protected represent a total population of 4,235 persons affected (22.77%).
ecosystem management is strengthened in the 35 priority micro-basins. [SIP's IR-1 & IR-4]	At least half of the Gouré and Maïné-Soroa COFOs improved their operations thanks to the project	<b>O2.1:</b> Support existing local, communal and departmental structures on SLM issues with the goal of fostering networks and collaborative initiatives: achieved by capitalizing the experiences with consultation and collaboration networks and, in particular, disseminating best practices developed by prior projects	Conducted satisfactorily, but only partially operational, with few concrete actions in the field.
		<b>O2.2</b> : Support the consultation frameworks that have been or will be created as an integral part of the decentralization process at the regional, departmental, communal and village levels, including diagnostic exercises, training, and other capacity-building support: creation of COGERNATs, COFOBs, and COFOBs and whose members have been trained in local planning.	Conducted satisfactorily, but the structures created are still only partially operational, particularly the COGERNATs
		<b>O2.3</b> : <u>Conduct a participatory evaluation with the local communities to identify the technical knowledge base at the community level</u> : (i) A guide to developing an action plan for dune and land management is available; (ii) 24 location plans for the strategic sites are developed.	Conducted satisfactorily, but with very limited participation by the populations because the activities involved only the studies
		<b>O2.4</b> : <u>Build capacity in land management and land conflict resolution in the land commissions</u> ( <u>COFOs</u> ): established and strengthened in the two provinces.	Satisfactory outcome, but the structures created are still only partially operational.
		<b>O2.5</b> : Prepare and implement an adapted information, education, and communication (IEC) program for dune, land, and ecosystem management: an IEC and environmental education programme was developed and implemented.	Satisfactory outcome, but the programmes were not implemented as expected because an IEC expert was not hired, despite the MTE recommendation.

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Component Targets Outcomes		Outcomes	Comments
		<b>O.2.6</b> : Provide updated information on land degradation issues and sustainable land management opportunities to all concerned stakeholders	Highly satisfactory outcome
		O2.7: Strengthen social and organizational capacities so that local actors use new knowledge to come together to plan and implement SLM activities and develop and implement a theme-based participatory training program targeting the local structures.	The structures (COGERNATs and COFOB) were created and members were trained in planning, as were the 62 COGERNATs. However, these bodies are still only partially operational and their knowledge base needs to be strengthened.

Source: Project Document

**O2.1:** Support existing local, communal, and departmental SLM structures to encourage the formation of networks and collaborative initiatives: The mission notes that the PCU capitalized the experiences of the existing consultation and collaboration networks in the two project zones, as well as the best practices developed by: Project (NER-89-004), Lutte Contre l'Ensablement des terres de cultures dans les départements de Zinder et de Diffa, (*Controlling the desertification of croplands in the provinces of Zinder and Diffa); Project (MEVCO I and II)*, Mise en Valeur des Cuvettes Oasiennes de Goudoumaria (*Development of the Oasis Micro-Basins in Goudoumaria*); Projet PAGRN Appui à la Gestion des Ressources Naturelles dans le département de Maïné-Soroa (*Support for Managing the Natural Resources in the Province of Maïné-Soroa*); Programme PASR Appui au Secteur Rural (*Support to the Rural Sector*); Programme PAC II Actions Communautaires Phase II (*Phase II Community Actions*); Projet RRM-Programme MYAP-USAID Renforcement de la résilience des ménages (*Strengthening Households' Resiliency*); Project (PASAM II) Appui à la Sécurisation Alimentaire des Ménages phase II (*Support for Household Food Security, Phase II*).

The mission also notes that the project helped to build the actors' capacities at the operational level by, among other actions:

- establishing Sustainable Land Management bodies;
- developing a range of documents (technical and training);
- creating natural resource management committees (COGERNATs) and local land commissions (COFOBs) in several target villages. However, their operation still needs to be improved;
- developing a training document for local actors (COGERNATs, COFOBs and communal services representatives) and the departmental technical services that addresses (i) SLM; (ii) action planning; (iii) implementation of local actions plans; (iv) social organization and application of sustainable land management knowledge;
- capacity-building for regional, departmental, communal, and village institutions, specifically including consultation frameworks and existing (or are being established) conflict management frameworks, on (i) planning, implementing, and monitoring local action plans and (ii) conflict management needed to improve natural resource and rural land development. The land commissions (COFOs) are thus targeted so that they can ensure improved security for the protected sites by listing them on the rural registry;
- IEC training for all actors to supplement the achievements of the other interventions, through forums, media, and audiovisual projections addressing topics from sand invasion to dune and land management;
- developing multi-annual local plans ( all eight communes have a multi-annual operating plan);
- setting up a network<sup>17</sup> for exchanges, standardization of approaches, collaboration, and dissemination of information on sand invasion and SLM. A networking document has been prepared but has not yet been validated; and,
- training more than 30 farmers on ANR, 15 farmer-volunteer on market garden production, and 20 farmers on improved land-clearing practices and ANR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>: The experience gained by these projects thus represented significant capital enhancing the implementation and success of PLECO's SLM and sand invasion control actions. To capitalize on these experiences, the PLECO assembled the actors into a <u>Partners' Network</u> in 2011, as a framework for consultation, dialogue, and exchanges among the actors intervening in the area of SLM and, more specifically, sand invasion control. These consultations enabled the PLECO to prepare a guidance document, supported by a draft regulatory text "on the establishment, responsibilities, structure, composition, and operations of the national network of actors on sand invasion control and land degradation." In 2014, these consultations wrapped up with a national forum and the development of a long-term investment plan (2015-2029) on SLM, including sand invasion control.

**O2.2:** Support the Consultation Frameworks, which were or are to be created as an integral part of the decentralization process at the regional, departmental, communal, and village levels, including diagnostic exercises, training, and other capacity-building supports

This is the context in which the COGERNATs and COFOBs were established at the 62 sites and their members trained in local planning. The PLECO's activities also included:

- involving local and regional authorities and technical and financial partners in the project's implementation;
- collaborating with other projects working in the zone; and,
- strengthening the existing regional, departmental, and communal consultation frameworks that promoted local conflict management.

# **O2.3:** Conduct a participatory evaluation, with local communities, to determine the technical knowledge base at the community level

The following were developed in the context of this activity:

- a guide to developing an action plan for managing dunes and land; and,
- 24 local action plans for the strategic sites.

# O2.4: Build capacity in land management and land conflict resolution within the land commissions (COFOs) established by the Rural Code and that are still weak

As part of this outcome, the project created 10 local land commissions (COFOBs) in the province of Gouré and 14 geo-referenced strategic sites in the province of Maïné-Soroa. They are listed in the rural registry as soil restauration sites.

Securing the protected sites (stabilized and planted dunes) by listing them in the registry means that they cannot be used or developed, thus ensuring the sustainability of the regenerated plant cover around the micro-basins and infrastructure. However, unless this listing is temporary, the mission believes that these provisions could prohibit the populations that created the plots and have usufruct rights from making any use of the resources. In the long term, conflicts arising from the loss of traditional use rights could also develop among the neighbouring populations, local authorities, and technical services responsible for ensuring compliance with these prohibitions. The same problem also arises in terms of the microbasins which, in most cases, are the property of traditional leaders (the populations enjoy only a customary use right).

# O2.5: Formulate and implement an adapted information, education, and communications programme (IEC) on dune, land, and ecosystem management.

The PLECO developed a communications programme to inform communities and local structures on sand invasion and environmental protection by protecting their production sites and socioeconomic infrastructure.

The outcomes achieved may be summarized as follows:

- i. IEC programme for structures and local populations
- 600 members of the 62 local natural resources management committees (COGERNATs) were trained;
- several "advertorials" were developed and broadcast, including two audio reports in local languages (Haoussa and Kanouri) and one video in French;
- two offices received IEC equipment (two generators, two loudspeakers, two video readers, two TV screen, two radios, and two electrical controllers);

- more than 7,000 individuals were reached directly and informed through the radio and TV reporting and broadcasts.
- ii. **Specific environmental education programme:** to instil an understanding of sustainable land management and environmental protection among students and teachers and integrate those topics into the curriculum. Approximately 30 teachers from schools in villages that host protected sites were trained (15 teachers from Gouré and 16 in Maïné-Soroa) and each received a dune fixation manual for class preparation. The mission notes that these trainings improved the teachers' knowledge of sand invasion control and environmental protection efforts.

#### iii. EIC/communications effects

With the goal of promoting knowledge of the project and bringing the public's attention to efforts to combat sand invasion, the PLECO produced and distributed T-shirts, caps, stickers, calendars, and brochures in its intervention zones, as well as at meetings, workshops, and meetings held at the regional and departmental levels.

At the international level, the PLECO coordinator participated in and presented the project's accomplishments and achievements at conferences, including the regional conference in Laghouat, Algeria on wind erosion and efforts to combat sand invasion.

# O2.6: Provide updated information to all stakeholders concerned on land degradation issues and sustainable land management opportunities.

This activity is also related to the outcomes of component 3. It involved updating the stakeholders' knowledge, collecting data, and creating an operational database (CNSEE).

In that regard, the project:

- disseminated tools and practical knowledge of efforts to combat sand invasion and land degradation and SLM;
- held consultation/information meetings to encourage the actors to assume ownership of the technical dune fixation/SLM documents.

# O2.7: Build local actors' social and organizational capacities so that they can use new knowledge to come together, plan, and implement SLM activities, including developing and implementing a participatory and theme-based training programme that targets local structures.

The mission notes that this activity integrates the two activities, O.2.6 and O.2.7 (Project Document), and that it required a study to identify the existing consultation frameworks and the need to strengthen them.

In connection with this outcome, the PLECO:

- created 62 local natural resources management committees (COGERNATs) and COFOBs;
- trained 150 COGERNAT and COFOB members (72 in Gouré and 78 in Maïné-Soroa) in techniques to implement local action plans on land and dune management; 192 members of these committees received training on community organizations and mastering SLM best practices;
- developed publications for training on dune fixation techniques and SLM management experiences in Niger; and,
- prepared and distributed nationally a technical document on long-term SLM.

#### 4.2.3. Component 3: Sand dune and land degradation monitoring system

This component seeks to strengthen the PLECO's capacities in terms of knowledge of the sand invasion process and efforts to control it and the CNSEE's capacities in terms of environmental monitoring.

The component's activities focused primarily on accompanying research based on establishing a system of scientific equipment for monitoring dune parameters and land degradation at selected sites. These activities are particularly relevant because they can increase technical and scientific knowledge of sand invasion and improve decision-making regarding the importance and urgency of Government actions, both politically and financially.

In 2006, the CNSEE and the Niamey School of Agriculture conducted R&D activities at selected sites in the PLECO project zone based on the results of the preparatory phase. Those results showed an alarming expansion of sand invasion during the period 1975-2005, with approximately 25% of land (around 300,000 hectares) affected in the provinces of Maïné-Soroa and Goudoumaria, compared with just 5% in 1986 in the province of Gouré. The increase totalled nearly 12,000 hectares per year.

The goal of this action-oriented research is to develop, in the medium-term, a database and indicators to monitor environmental change and assess the risks and consequences of land degradation and sand invasion of socioeconomic infrastructure and the agricultural production base.

The activities involved:

- action-oriented research studies on knowledge of the sand invasion process and its corollaries in the two PLECO intervention zones;
- data collection, compilation and analysis; and,
- capacity-building and academic trainings.

Table 14 below presents the Component 3 achievements compared to the expected outcomes.

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#### Table 14: Component 3 outcomes compared to projections

Component	Targets	Outcomes	Comments
Outcome 3 A system to monitor sand dunes and land degradation established and implemented at national level and harmonized with SIP/TerrAfrica at regional level [SIP's IR-4]	Outcome O3.1: The national centre for ecological monitoring creates a system to monitor sand dunes and land degradation. A sand dune monitoring system at the national level is developed and implemented and standardized with the SIP/TerrAfrica at the regional level. [RI-4 du PIS] (*)	<ul> <li>A tripartite collaborative partnership was entered into among the PLECO, CNSEE, and the School of Agriculture at the UAM of Niamey</li> <li>A system to monitor-evaluate sand invasion and land degradation was established within the CNSEE, with data collection field sites in the Gouré and Maïné-Soroa zones.</li> <li>CNSEE will be fully operational, with a formal collaboration established between the ABN and the University of Niamey.</li> </ul>	Satisfactory outcome. The national centre for ecological monitoring hires skilled professionals to develop the indicators and a strong monitoring system.
	Outcome O3.2: At least 6 projects and/or institutions in the country use the new centre's indicators to plan/monitor activities	<ul> <li>Data collection, management, and dissemination;</li> <li>Development of concepts and methodological tools to monitor sand invasion and assess the parameters for monitoring the increase in sand invasion of land and social and economic infrastructure;</li> <li>Capacity-building and academic trainings.</li> <li>Creation of a database, a GEONETWORK, and a virtual library accessible online</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Highly satisfactory outcome, with significant impact on capacity-building at the PLECO and institutions working on sustainable land management.</li> <li>The ecological monitoring system of sand invasion is still under study, so the indicators developed have not yet been adopted.</li> <li>In addition, the early warning system on desertification and land degradation is not yet operational, and is not yet standardized with the TerrAfrica SIP M&amp;E system and the SLM indicators.</li> </ul>
	Outcome O3.3: MTR and Final Evaluation rate publications and IEC materials produced as "satisfactory" based on the following criteria: quantity, educational quality, and level of use.	Documents, composed of technical, scientific, and academic publications (master's and PhD candidate dissertations) were produced and disseminated.	Satisfactory outcome

Source: Project Document

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To that end, four study sites (Bouné and Woro in Gouré province and Kil and Goudéram in Maïné-Soroa province) were created and supplied with automatic equipment to measure and monitor the indicators and climate, ecological, and sand invasion growth parameters, as illustrated in photo 7 (Annex 3).

The main achievements include:

- purchase and installation of equipment to strengthen monitoring of dunes and land degradation (Annex 3, photo boards: 7);
- creation of a station supplied with an automatic system to measure climate data and monitor the dunes, land degradation, and the sand invasion process at 20 measurement stations;
- production and dissemination of plant cover change maps;
- monitoring and evaluation of wind erosion and sand invasion of land and micro-basins;
- baseline study of the changing parameters: (i) herbaceous and woody vegetation; (ii) soil surface conditions, (iii) variation in the water table level, using automatic measuring probes and piezometers at three Gouré micro-basins;
- development of the national multi-annual action plan on ecological monitoring and CNSEE capacity building for its implementation; and,
- creation of sand invasion and land degradation observation stations in the PLECO intervention zones.

Figure 1 below illustrates the variations in annual measurements taken at certain observation sites. They show that the speed with which dune faces progress is based on the condition of the surface of the top of the dune and the type of dune face. The results of the active dune faces are the most active and monitored of those stabilized, while those of the dunes stabilized by vegetation are more stable.



Figure 1: Speed (cm/year) of dune face advance in the PLECO intervention zone

Average annual speeds by type of structure are estimated at 2.48 metres for active dunes (with maximums sometimes exceeding 6.57 to 9 metres/year), 0.97 metres for mechanically stabilized dunes, and zero for biologically stabilized dunes.

# 4.2.4. Component 4: Project management

This component involves project management and global coordination by the coordination unit established for that purpose by the ministry responsible for project implementation and UNDP.

The responsibilities of the PCU, which is the main implementation, management and project coordination entity, included:

- implementing the project at the regional and local intervention levels;
- setting up the teams and equipping the project's departmental offices at the Gouré and Maïné-Soroa DDEs;
- developing the annual work plans and budgets for 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015;
- budgetary, accounting, and material execution of the project investments;
- conducting periodic missions to monitor/evaluate the activities and support the field teams; and,
- implementing a programme to build the capacities of the departmental offices, the communes' technical services, and local actors.

Table 15 below presents the Component 4 achievements compared to the expected outcomes.

Table 15: Con	nponent 3 outcomes	compared to	projections
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Component	Targets	Outcomes	Comments
Outcome 4 An adaptive and lessons-sharing management system is established [SIP's IR-2 & IR-4]	Project management is closely linked to the country's SLM institutions; Lessons are shared with other SIP/TerrAfrica projects; based on the work underway, the project evolves into a national SLM institution.	Global project management is judged to be highly satisfactory: During the five years' of implementation, the PCU handled daily management, coordination, and monitoring- evaluation of the project activities. More specifically, it handled the following responsibilities:	The PCU and the departmental offices achieved highly satisfactory outcomes. The PCU did not evolve into a national SLM institution, although the Government developed and adopted a long-term SLM strategy.
	At least eight (non-project) stakeholders and other departments or foreign visitors visit the project sites to draw on and learn from the project's best practices and innovations.	<ul> <li>i)- A delegation from Niger's National Assembly, led by its vice-president, visited the Maïné-Soroa dune stabilization sites (October 2012);</li> <li>ii)- Students from Calavi University (Bénin) visited the Koublé Doki and Kilakina sites (September 2011);</li> <li>iii)- Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, (ES/UNCCD), Luc Gnakadia, accompanied by Victor Womitso, UNDP Resident Representative in Niger, visited the Koublé Doki site (14/02/2013);</li> <li>iv)- Journalists from Niger's national press agency (ANP) and Radio and Television Office (ORTN) visited the dune stabilization and sustainable land management sites in Maïné-Soroa and Gouré (4/03/2013 and 28/03/2013);</li> <li>v)- UNDP and journalists from Japan's ASAHI newspaper conducted a joint visit to the dune stabilization and SLM sites in Maïné-Soroa and Gouré (30 April – 1 May 2013).</li> </ul>	Security conditions in Gouré and Maïné-Soroa did not improve over the project's last three years. However, the project's achievements drew high-level visitors who came to assess and learn from the experiences in the two PLECO areas.

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Component	Targets	Outcomes	Comments
	MTR and Final Evaluation rate publications and IEC materials produced as "satisfactory" based on the following criteria: quantity, educational quality, and level of use.	Many documents capitalizing on the project's experiences were published by the PCU, in collaboration with UNDP and the DGEF. A key document, the Long-Term Sustainable Land Management Strategic Plan, 2015-2029, was also published after the 2014 national forum in Niamey. The lessons and experiences were shared, but a formal sharing system was not established.	These publications enshrine the PLECO's efforts and are important and decisive milestones in the process of creating a national institution to achieve sustainable land management and combat sand invasion of agricultural land and socio-economic infrastructure.

Source: Project Document

# 4.2.4.1. Global project management and coordination

The mission notes that project management is highly satisfactory and was conducted in accordance with the provisions and the administrative, financial, and accounting directives of the UNDP procedures manual, adapted by the project in 2010, and with the project implementation plan.

#### 4.2.4.2. **Project implementation approach**

The mission acknowledges and appreciates the participatory and adaptive process that the PCU used to implement the project.

The PCU and the departmental office teams developed a WPAB at the start of each year. This served as the reference for all of the year's activities. The development of the programme culminates with an annual report produced around December. It presents the activities conducted, the outcomes and constraints, and the solutions chosen to address the constraints.

Technical and financial reports are produced periodically and submitted to UNDP and the Government for approval.

#### 4.2.4.3. Management of project personnel

The PCU administered and managed 25 employees in accordance with the UNDP manual of administrative procedures, as follows:

Zinder Coordination Unit:

- Coordinator, water and forests engineer (under the DGEF, hired by the project);
- Monitoring-evaluation-GIS expert (hired by the project);
- Manager (hired by the project);
- Executive secretary (hired by the project);
- Two drivers (hired by the project); and,
- Security guard/reception (hired by the project).

Each of the two Gouré and Maïné-Soroa offices:

- Office director (DDE, civil servant);
- Operational team director (Deputy-DDE, civil servant);
- Two supervisors (under the DDE, civil servants);
- Four facilitators (hired by the project); and,
- Driver (hired by the project).

The mission notes that the project operated with 25 employees, rather than 21, as indicated in the project financing document, in accordance with the "faire-faire" approach (involving the delegation of certain tasks).

# 4.2.4.4. Management of financial resources

Based on the arrangements approved in the financing agreement, a variety of sources - specifically the GEF, UNDP, communes, the Government, and the partners - provide finding for the budget. As presented in Table 2 (above), GEF funding in the amount of US\$ 2,020,000 was to be supplemented by co-financing from UNDP, the Government, the project's eight beneficiary communes, and the projects implemented in the two PLECO zones, for a total of US\$13,280,000 (Table 5).

The mission notes that the project mobilized and executed funds only from the GEF, UNDP, and the Government. In addition, the WFP provided support in connection with its programme, Appui à la lutte contre l'insécurité alimentaire à travers la lutte contre l'ensablement des espaces de productions agro-

sylvo-pastorales et des infrastructures (Support for efforts to combat food insecurity through efforts to control sand invasion of agro-sylvo-pastoral production areas and infrastructure), following negotiations between the PLECO and the WFP.

The financial resources managed and executed by the PCU/PLECO are estimated to total US\$5,264,186, compared to an initial budget of US\$2,520,000, broken down as follows:

- GEF: US 2,020,000;
- UNDP: US 1,654,686;
- Niger counterpart: US 592,000; and,
- WFP contribution: US 997,500.

UNDP co-financing totals US 1,654,686, compared to the initial amount of US 500,000 (303% higher). This substantial increase in the contribution from UNDP-Niger and additional WFP funding of US\$ 997,550<sup>18</sup> were critical because they enabled the project to address the financial gap noted in the initial budget, implement all of its field programme's activities, and achieve satisfactory outcomes.

These funds were executed by the Project Coordination and Management Unit (UCGP)/Operational PLECO, under the joint supervision of UNDP and the DGEF, through accounts opened in PLECO's name: (i)Account: N°25110079429 75 BIA Zinder, for the GEF and UNDP funds and (ii) Account N°25110108542 opened at BIA-Zinder for the Government's matching funds.

Table 16 below and Figures 2-4 present show the details and annual variation in PLECO total annual expenditures for GEF and UNDP funds (by funding source and component).

YEARS	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total (US\$)
Component 1:	39,535.82	395,849.41	400,437.03	578,534.37	659,969.15	443,300	2,517,625.78
Component 2:	5,884.62	8,583.11	39,922.67	39,238.16	64,221.10	97,000	254,849.66
Component 3:	23,665.40	65,923.22	55,602.91	29,958.58	33,862.01	8,000	217,012.12
Component 4:	357,714.41	261,279.50	231,385.91	223,591.12	275,514.58	187,700	1,537,185.52
TOTAL	426,800.25	731,635.24	727,348.52	871,322.23	1,033,566.84	736,000	4,526,673.08
COORDINATION	44,155.44	106,052.28	122,776.57	96,800	73,000	73,200	51,584.29
EXCLUDING COORDINATION	382,644.81	625,582.96	604,571.95	77,422.23	960,566.84	662,800	4,010,688.79

Table	16:	Project	budget	execution	2010-2015
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>: Through this partnership, the PLECO received foodstuffs (Food for Work) and funds placed in WFP Account No. 25110091827-32, opened at the BIA-Zinder and managed directly by the PCU, in the amount of US\$ 997,500 (cash) (US\$ 259,987 for monitoring and supervision) between 2011 and 2014.



Figure 2: Breakdown of total expenditures by component (2010-2015)



Figure 3: Annual expenditures by component for 2010-2015



Figure 4: Budget execution by component

# 4.3. Efficiency of project implementation

#### 4.3.1.Project approach

The mission is pleased to note that the PLECO implementation strategy complies with the RDS principles, adopted in 2012 by the economic and social development plan (ESDP, 2012-2015), the TerrAfrica guidelines and objectives specifically with respect to sustainable land management practices, strengthening national and local capacities, and developing participatory monitoring-evaluation systems.

The PLECO interventions are built around the following basic pillars: inclusive participation of the actors, efficacy, efficiency, relevance, and capitalization of experiences and achievements.

To ensure that the field programme was implemented efficiently, the PCU encouraged a local approach to supervising the populations through the teams from the two technical offices in Gouré (Zinder region) and Maïné-Soroa (Diffa region). These teams worked closely with the communes' technical services, the COGERNATs, and the NGOs working in the two departments. The mission notes that in place of the field teams' simple structure, anticipated initially in the PRODOC and limited to four managers and technicians per office (or eight in total), the PLECO operated with 12 technicians, in keeping with the "faire-faire" approach. The PCU thus had to hire two additional facilitators per office, bringing the number of employees per office to six.

To carry out certain activities that required specialized knowledge – in particular, technical studies – the PCU used the services of consultants (including individuals, engineering firms, and NGOs) through the "faire-faire" approach, hired in accordance with public procurement procedures.

At the institutional level, the arrangements set forth in the financing agreement (Section E, page 28) proved to be efficient insofar as the different managers performed their tasks effectively:

- The Ministry of Hydraulics and the Environment and the DGEF provided administrative control and technical supervision of the PLECO and the SLM institutional component, performing those tasks rigorously and in accordance with Government and UNDP-GEF procedures;
- As the executing agency, UNDP supervised project implementation, working closely with the national GEF focal point and the MHE/MESUDD. It issued all regular fund disbursements and purchased equipment and supplies, supported planning for annual activity programmes, conducted monitoring-evaluation of accomplishments in the field, and provided guidance in overall implementation of the activities programme.

The mission notes that by encouraging the involvement of the local populations in achieving the project activities, the PLECO made a very efficient contribution to meeting the poverty reduction and improved food security objectives and to strengthening their skills.

Although payment in cash and food for work on dune fixation contrasts sharply with the typical approach recommended in connection with efforts to transfer natural resource management skills to local communities, it was a catalysing factor in mobilizing the populations. The emphasis on gender – by giving women's participation a central role in achieving the project – was a key factor in the efficiency of the PLECO approach.

#### **4.3.2.** Team interventions

The teams' field interventions were based on the WPABs that the PCU developed at the start of each year. These WPABs identify and define the activities, their framework, and implementation schedule, as well as the financial and human resources necessary. They are validated by the NSC during a workshop held jointly with the other projects. Participants included UNDP, the DGEEF, and the partners intervening in the two PLECO zones. The mission notes that adopting the WPABs as a planning and intervention tools was key to the project's success because it helped to bring together all of the actors (including political decision-makers, technical services, research and teaching institutions, local elected officials, and territorial administrators) around the issues and the choice of best practices for sustainable land management and efforts to control sand invasion.

The efficiency of the project interventions was also the result of the energy of the project teams and the financial and material support provided by UNDP, the GEF, and the WFP. Unfortunately, although the project posted satisfactory outcomes, the mission notes that IEC activities fell short because the project failed to follow the MTE evaluation and hire an IEC expert. This expert could have developed and implemented a consistent programme to build the facilitators' organizational, awareness-raising, and functional literacy skills<sup>19</sup> that would have enabled them to absorb the proposed technical packages.

#### 4.3.3. Project supervision and monitoring-evaluation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Provide technical supervision of village communities and disseminate the technical packets and innovations on issues of sand invasion control and land degradation; Mobilize village communities around the project's and partners' activities; Organize the planning, execution, and management of activities in the field; Ensure that the project and the partners' intervention sites are managed properly; Monitor field activities daily and collect the data needed to monitor-evaluate the activities; Write regular progress reports on field activities; Ensure that the technical supplies provided to carry out the project and the partners' activities are managed and used properly; Conduct analyses and develop appropriate proposals to ensure that the field activities are executed properly.

The project monitoring-evaluation complied with the procedures established for GEF/UNDP projects, based on the matrix of the logical framework of the outcome and performance indicators. It seeks to identify and analyse progress, delays, and problems experienced during project implementation in order to take or propose corrective measures in a timely fashion. Monitoring-evaluation is conducted periodically by the project teams, with support from the UDNP-Niger office, the regional office (UNDP-Senegal), the DGEEF, and the CNP.

The monitoring-evaluation expert and the staff members in the field conduct the assessment of <u>implementation progress</u>, under the responsibility of the project coordinator and based on the project's annual work plan and its indicators. The project coordination develops a detailed schedule of the project review meetings. This schedule is incorporated into the project's WPAB, in consultation with the execution partners and stakeholder representatives. The schedule includes proposed tripartite meetings, meetings of the Steering Committee, and the activity monitoring-evaluation missions. Using this schedule and the WPAB, the PCU conducted <u>periodic monitoring of implementation progress</u>, under the responsibility of the project coordinator. The project team informed the DGEF and UNDP regularly about progress and problems encountered during implementation.

As the technical supervisor, the Steering Committee provided effective support to the PCU from the project start to end, ensuring that the project's implementation complied with the annual work plan and that the results reflected the objectives. A scientific and technical committee was to have been set up to provide technical advisory support. However, it was not created and neither were the departmental structures intended to supervise the project within each department, supporting the departmental offices.

The CNSEE (which was created by national decree and with the financial and technical support of this project) played a role as a repository of information, expertise, and best practices for all of the SIPs and RDS interventions. However, the mission notes that the CNSEE is not yet fully prepared to support this role. Thus, the repository and the mechanism for performing the monitoring-evaluation of sand invasion were not as efficient as hoped, as demonstrated by the quality of certain publications, which read like simple accounts.

In its capacity as executing agency, UNDP provided overall monitoring of project implementation and encouraged experience-sharing with other GEF projects and creating necessary synergies within the UNDAF, GEF, and other international projects. It also performed the following tasks:

- hired the project's contract staff, in collaboration with the MHE and DGEEF;
- hired and mobilized experts and consultants, in consultation with the Project Coordination unit;
- transferred the funds necessary for project implementation and financial co-management;
- participated in the project Steering Committee;
- reviewed and approved expenditures for the interventions recommended by the Steering Committee;
- conducted regular monitoring and evaluation of project implementation and outcomes;
- completed required reporting (including quarterly and annual reports, PIRs);
- conducted mid-term and final project evaluations;
- approved the Terms of Reference and the final version of the technical and financial reports;
- participated in meetings and supervision missions; and,
- approved budget revisions and organized financial audits.

In addition to the aspects specific to each actor, monitoring also involved <u>tripartite reviews</u> of project implementation and preparation of periodic technical and financial progress reports, submitted to UNDP and the DGEEF for review and action. All the required progress<sup>20</sup> and annual reports were prepared properly and submitted on time and in satisfactory fashion. Annual project reports were also prepared at the end of each year (June for the PIR) and quarter and submitted to UNDP

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>: The quarterly progress reports briefly describe the progress achieved and the main updates on the project's progress.

and the DGEEF. All of these reports constitute internal evaluation documents and reflect the progress made in executing the Work Plan and Annual Budget (WPAB).

#### 4.3.4. Project risk mitigation measures

The potential risks noted in the project financing document were mitigated by the adaptive approach that the PCU adopted and the emphasis on organizing and capacity-building for the entities created, as well as by material and financial support from UNDP. On the other hand, climate risks – specifically, recurring droughts - which were more difficult to assess when the project was defined, worsened over the project implementation period. The mission notes that despite the measures taken to mitigate these climate risks – strengthened mechanical fixation of the plots and selection of species adapted to the hydropedological conditions of dune formations – droughts have killed significant numbers of young plants and resulted in high replenishment costs (not evaluated).

However, during the work in the field, other risks arose, which the project did not identify during its development; specifically, injuries due primarily to lack of individual protective equipment (including boots and gloves) while pruning and cutting back palm rachis and during mechanical fixation of woven wattle fencing made of doum palm rachis.

Inadequate funds proved to be another unforeseen risk. This was mitigated by financial support from the WFP and via UNDP through TRAC funds provided under the Resilience and Climate Change programme. This support was critical to carrying out the project.

#### 4.4. Project achievements and impacts

The mission is pleased to note that the project's work produced major achievements. The impacts led to a host of significant visible changes – from political, strategic, economic and environmental to reducing poverty, gaining experience in GEF/UNDP project management and implementation, and building institutional, operational, and technical capacities, both nationally and locally.

#### 4.4.1.Strategic and political

National-level achievements include:

- greater knowledge of the extent of the sanded-up zones and the environmental, social, and economic consequences for the Diffa and Zinder regions;
- greater awareness within the Government, at the policy level, of environmental and land degradation issues, efforts to combat sand invasion of land and socioeconomic infrastructure, and integrating these issues into the country's strategic programmes. Niger's Renaissance Programme is one example. It was implemented by decision of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister and translates the Government's June 2011 Declaration of General Policy, which included efforts to combat land degradation and sand invasion among the President's Renaissance Programme priorities. The programme represents a formal expression of the country's political commitment at the highest level. The Economic and Social Development Plan, which the government adopted in 2012, translates this commitment through the strategic focus areas of the Renaissance Programme.
- The development (with PLECO support) and adoption of a National Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management (NSIF/SLM) also demonstrates the commitment of the Government and its technical and financial partners (TFPs) to additional long-term interventions to control the factors responsible for the degradation of the basis of agricultural production and secure the livelihood of the rural populations;
- Implementation of the PLECO also gave women a voice in local development decision-making bodies, thanks to their involvement in the project's work (estimated at between 40-90%, based

on the zone), particularly in plant production, biological dune fixation, and micro-basin development;

- The development and promotion of a partnership among the State's technical services, NGOs, and private service providers reflects the willingness to join forces to better combat land degradation and sand invasion of socioeconomic infrastructure; and,
- The involvement of the beneficiary populations as key stakeholders in environmental protection aligns with the Government's decentralization policy and the transfer of natural resource management capacities to local authorities, civil society, and grassroots communities.

#### 4.4.2.Biophysical and environmental

Dune fixation produced the project's most visible achievements, with environmental impacts in terms of ecosystem rehabilitation and the reconstitution of agro-sylvo-pastoral resources and biodiversity. They include:

- stabilization of 5,373 hectares of sand dunes in the provinces of Gouré, Goudoumaria, and Maïné-Soroa;
- restoration of the ecological environment for 40,000 village residents living around 62 oasis micro-basins and improved living conditions;
- reduction of the erosive processes of winds (NS and SW-NE) and of the advance of dune faces in the stabilized zones;
- slowing of sand invasion of land, micro-basins, agro-sylvo-pastoral zones and social and economic infrastructure;
- reconstitution of plant cover through planting and regeneration of pastoral resources, with significant environmental impacts by reducing the deflation of sand particles in villages and protected plots in the stabilized zones, with a substantial improvement in the regeneration of the pastoral ecosystems;
- improved reconstitution of the stands of *Leptadenia pyrotechnica* in the removal areas, thanks to coppicing; and,
- improved plant biodiversity with regrowth of natural vegetation and return of small fauna (including gazelles and squirrels), avifauna, and microfauna of the soil in the protected zones.

#### 4.4.3.Social and economic

In terms of social impacts, the PLECO interventions helped to create or encouraged:

- farmer organizations through creation of the COGERNATs;
- greater social cohesion in villages and among communities and ethnic groups living around the micro-basins by organizing community work and establishing consultation mechanisms. This social dynamic strengthened social relationships and their relationships with populations from neighbouring villages not affected by the project seeking to work there temporarily or to live there; and,
- community-building, thanks to the social organization built around common interests by establishing natural resource management committees (COGERNATs) and developing local action plans for the sustainable management of land and protected micros-basins. This marks the start of a true change in behaviour and vision on the part of the local populations regarding the sustainable management of shared natural resources.

<u>At the economic level</u>, the populations benefited from:

- significantly improved living conditions at the 62 sites, thanks to protection of their ecological environment via the restauration of vegetation and reduction in wind-blown sand particles;
- easing of food insecurity, which threatens the daily lives of the most vulnerable populations, thanks to the Food for Work programme which helped to improve food availability, particularly during the "hunger" season; a reduction in the number of young people leaving rural areas for

more prosperous regions, by mobilizing 311,085 people/day and creating 2,604 temporary jobs (security guard to monitor the sites, paid FCFA 25,000/guard/month from 2011 to 2014, for a total cost of FCFA 65,100,000 and 11,063 seasonal jobs);

- generating significant income<sup>21</sup> (total value of FCFA 444,207,000) from compensation in cash and foodstuffs for labour for mechanical work, and FCFA 275,735,500 from the sale of plants produced in the village nurseries by women, and by the agricultural development of the protected micro-basins;
- improved household food security, thanks to the foodstuffs distributed in exchange for dune fixation work;
- extending the project's beneficial effects to neighbouring populations who seek paid employment and better living conditions; and,
- reduced poverty and investments in business and small-scale breeding.

Achievements in protecting socioeconomic infrastructure include:

- stabilizing dunes around the villages and the oasis micro-basins, allowing the populations to remain; and,
- fixing dunes along roadways, resulting in improved traffic safety and lives saved, thanks to fewer traffic accidents caused by frequent sand build-up on the roads.

Women earned most of the income generated by the project's activities based on their significant involvement in the dune fixation work, plant production, and micro-basin development, although that activity is generally reserved for men.

In addition, transportation of the materials used for dune fixation promoted the private sector in the rural environment by providing individuals with carts or vehicles an opportunity to earn considerable sums.

#### 4.4.4.Capacity-building and experience-sharing

#### Capacities of the actors and stakeholders:

Through their active involvement in project implementation, all of the stakeholders (including administrative authorities, local elected officials, NGOs, specialized institutions, and populations) improved their technical and operational capacities on environmental issues, mechanical and biological dune fixation, community-based planning for development, and preparing long-term development plans and strategies.

The MESUDD strengthened its operational and strategic capacities in the areas of natural resource management planning, protecting socioeconomic infrastructure, and developing and implementing multi-sectoral projects.

#### Academic research:

• The CNSEE also benefited from the tripartite collaboration among the School of Agriculture/Abdou Moumouni University, CNSEE and the PLECO, thanks to the definition of the methodology and tools for collecting and processing environmental and socioeconomic data, and monitoring-evaluation indicators on climate and environmental change and natural ecosystems at the national and local levels. The national ecological monitoring network launched in the early 2000s by the ROSELT project in Diffa department, along the Niger River by the ABN and Tchago in Gouré (PIC REC Gouré), was strengthened and is operational

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>: The adoption of payment for work performed by the populations in the form of in-kind provision of WFP Food for Work foodstuffs (4.06 kg of rations daily/labourer) and in cash, in the amount of FCFA 100,000/ha of dunes stabilized, under the programme, *Support for efforts to combat food insecurity and sand invasion of agro-sylvo-pastoral production areas and infrastructure*, contributed significantly to addressing the endemic poverty and food insecurity that the populations face.

following installation of sites to measure and monitor biophysical and environmental parameters, leading to improved knowledge of land degradation factors and processes;

- The PLECO helped to establish entities, networks, and mechanisms for consultation, dialogue, and knowledge- and experience-sharing on issues of environmental degradation and sustainable land management;
- The training offered to master's and doctoral students created valuable capital in terms of expertise and scientific and technical knowledge on desertification, land degradation, and sand invasion. In addition, methodologies were developed to analyse, diagnose, and manage natural resources. These achievements were highlighted in the master's and doctoral theses submitted by students from the School of Agriculture at Abdou Moumouni University (two theses written and three in process since 2008; 20 masters' theses written since 2005; 10 bachelor's theses; five theses at the junior secondary school diploma level(BEPC) + 4-Institut Pratique de développement rural). In addition, the issues associated with efforts to control sand invasion are now incorporated as academic modules in the environmental monitoring curriculum at the School of Agriculture at Abdou Moumouni University;
- Despite certain weaknesses, the awareness-raising, education, and capacity-building activities for these actors and the mechanisms created for consultation and dialogue, particularly at the community level have been catalysing factors. They have improved efficiency and helped the project mobilize the populations and partners in carrying out the project activities and achieving the successes to date.

The analysis of the outcomes shows that:

- the automatic meteorological stations installed at four sites in Gouré provided rainfall data, air temperature and humidity measurements, as well as wind speed and direction;
- the objective of this component was to support the creation and operationalization of the CNSEE by strengthening its capacities to conduct action research intended to identify, disseminate, and monitor the impacts of best practices in sustainable land management and dune fixation. This objective was achieved satisfactorily;
- thanks to the PLECO-School of Agriculture partnership, the CNSEE improved its technical and scientific capacities with regard to sand invasion and land degradation;
- the research undertaken has helped to define (even if partially) the phenomenon and process of sand invasion by:
  - $\checkmark$  defining the typologies<sup>22</sup> of dune landscapes and their ecological characteristics;
  - ✓ developing and setting up an observatory system in the provinces of Maïné-Soroa and Gouré;
  - ✓ developing and implementing a multi-annual priority action plan, focused on: (i) biological monitoring, (ii) soil surface conditions, (iii) seasonal water table fluctuations, and (iv) wind dynamics;
  - creating a system to collect environmental (including climate, physical setting, and vegetation), biodiversity, and socioeconomic data; and,
  - ✓ setting up a committee to validate, manage, and disseminate the data and information collected.
- the research also helped the PLECO to improve its knowledge of monitoring seasonal processes of sand invasion and to refocus its methodological tools to control sand invasion effectively and over the long term;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>: <u>Province of Gouré:</u> (i) transverse dune system (SE-NW) and elongated micro-basins at the Tchago-Worro-Balla site (Gouré commune); (ii) large micro-basin dune system and wooded depressions with granite foothills at the Bouné site (Bouné commune). <u>Province of Maïné-Soroa</u>: (i) system of large modified dune clusters, interspersed with agro-pastoral depressions at the Goudérami site (straddling Foultari and N'Guel Beli communes); system of dunes interspersed with depressions and micro-basins with intermediate water tables at the Kil site (Maïné-Soroa commune).

- the results were disseminated to national and local actors through technical training workshops and direct contact in the field;
- concepts and methodological tools were developed to monitor sand invasion and to assess the parameters for monitoring the increase in sand invasion of land and social and economic infrastructure.

#### Transfer of achievements and experiences to the sub-regional level

The mission notes that the PLECO outcomes were relayed nationally, regionally, and internationally. The project's experiences and achievements were shared with stakeholders outside the project, who visited the project sites from other departments in Niger and neighbouring countries to observe its accomplishments and draw on the best practices and techniques for control sand invasion. The PLECO coordinator also presented the project's accomplishments at the Algiers meeting on efforts to control sand invasion.

The project hosted many site visits from national and institutional institutions and partners who came to take note of the experiences and learn best practices to control sand invasion of land and socioeconomic infrastructure:

- A delegation from the National Assembly of Niger, led by its vice-president, visited the Maïné-Soroa dune fixation sites (October 2012);
- Regional (Zinder and Diffa) and sub-regional (Gouré and Maïné-Soroa) committees for the prevention and management of food crises paid visits;
- Students from Calavi University (Benin) visited the Koublé Doki and Kilakina sites (September 2011);
- The joint UNDP/Government supervision mission visited the PLECO sites (12-14 July 2012);
- Ms. Denise Brown, World Food Programme Representative visited the Kil and Koublé Doki sites (September 2012) and the Kil and Korsorom sites (10 January 2013);
- The WFP/Rome mission, composed of Mr. Voli Carocci and Mr. Jean-Noël Gentile visited the Kil and Bagaléram sites (15 November 2012);

Luc Gnakadia, Executive-Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), accompanied by Victor

- Womitso, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Niger, visited the Koublé Doki site (14 February 2013);
- Journalists from the national press agency (ANP) and the Niger Office of Radio and Television (ORTN) visited the dune fixation and sustainable land management sites in Maïné-Soroa and Gouré (4 March 2013 and 28 March 2013); and,
- A joint mission of UNDP and Japanese journalists (Tadashi Sugiyama and Tomoaki Nakano) from the ASAHI newspaper visited the dune fixation and sustainable land management sites in Maïné-Soroa and Gouré (30 April 1 May 2013).

All these visits speak to the success of the project's experiences and to the need for the actors interested or involved in sand invasion control to capitalize on these achievements. They also offered the PLECO teams an opportunity to discuss the experiences with their guests and share the project's accomplishments, while emphasizing the limits on the extent to which achievements can be transferred.

#### 5. Conclusion, lessons learned, and recommendations

Based on an analysis of results of the review of the documents produced by the project, the site visits, and the discussions with the actors, the mission assessed performance, learned lessons from the PLECO, and prepared recommendations to consolidate the project's achievements and continue the actions begun.

# 5.1. Conclusion

The mission concludes that the project's implementation was **highly satisfactory** overall. We congratulate the PCU and the field teams for the relevance of the outcomes and the scope of the achievements at the national and local levels.

The mission noted that the project had very significant impacts at the sites in terms of environmental and socioeconomic changes and to strengthened institutional, operational, and technical capacities among local and national actors, particularly local communities in the two project zones. Those include:

- ✓ increased productivity potential, thanks to rehabilitation of the agro-sylvo-pastoral ecosystems and restoration of plant cover via mechanical and biological stabilization of active dunes;
- ✓ greater institutional capacities within the Government (including the DGEEF, DRE, DDE, and the communes) and operational capacities among local actors and partners in sustainable land management, efforts to control sand invasion, and development of oasis micro-basins;
- ✓ creation of national and local networks to share and capitalize data, information, experiences, and achievements among actors in the project intervention zone and at the national level; and,
- ✓ greater scientific and academic capacities within the CNSEE and the Agriculture School of Abdou Moumouni University, as a result of providing equipment, developing methodological tools for action research, and creating a collection system. The PLECO strengthened the CNSEE's operational capacities by providing and installing monitoringevaluation equipment at the climate data and land degradation measurement stations in the field. It also supplied equipment (including a computer, storage server, and GPS) used to process the data, manage the environmental database (EDB), and host a virtual library, accessible online.

These achievements constitute a strategic foundation for implementing a long-term programme to achieve the policy and operational objectives of inclusive community-based development at the local level sought by the Government and GEF-UNDP. It also constitutes a foundation for implementing sustainable environmental management and controlling land degradation and sand invasion of socioeconomic structures.

The mission also welcomes the awareness at the policy level created by the PLECO's achievements. This is evident in the commitments that the Government has already made to issues of climate resilience, land management, and efforts to control sand invasion of lands, with a view to creating conditions favourable to sustainable socioeconomic development. By integrating these issues in the Government's inclusive development strategic documents, particularly with regard to the 3N Initiative and, more specifically, Niger's Renaissance Programme, called for by the President of the Republic, intended to operationalize the June 2011 Declaration of General Policy by implementing the Economic and Social Development Plan (ESDP), also adopted in 2012, the highest level of Government has shown that it is aware of the urgent need to address environmental degradation and efforts to control sand invasion. This is the living legacy of the impacts of the PLECO.

# 5.2. Lessons learned

# 5.2.1. Objectives and project implementation

As noted above, the overall environmental and sustainable socioeconomic development objectives cannot yet be felt, given the project's short term of five years. Furthermore, the mission believes that it is unrealistic to expect ecosystem services at the end of the project or that the achievements and impacts

would be sustainable. After all, the project's actions that demonstrated best practices in the area of sustainable natural resource management are of a very limited nature. In that regard, it should be acknowledged that a combination of factors - the very ambitious nature of the PLECO's physical objectives, a climate context that is highly unfavourable to a rapid reconstitution of the natural environment, food insecurity facing the beneficiary populations, and the project's limited financial resources - prevented the project from achieving all of the outcomes.

Even if the PLECO results did exceed, in terms of physical objectives, the 4,410 hectares planned, we note that the objective of 7,510 hectares referred to under the co-financing was certainly not achieved. The PLECO did not receive direct support from that co-financing and the outcomes could not be recognized because those projects ended when the PLECO started in 2010. This raises the ongoing question of the GEF approach, which involves setting the project's physical objectives and environmental effects by including those of co-financing projects, whose feasibility is not guaranteed. It would be more appropriate to limit the evaluation to assessing the concurrent effects and impacts of these projects on the PLECO achievements. That approach only inflates the objectives and very often encourages the project teams to focus on physical outcomes at the expense of quality.

In terms of project implementation, the mission notes that although the project's monitoring-evaluation system was very satisfactory, it did not emphasize the quality of outcomes, particularly in terms of components 1 and 2. Rather, it promoted quantitative aspects, without actual synergy with the component 3 activities. In addition, DGEEF support was insignificant, aside from several field visits and an "environmental evaluation" conducted by the BEEEI. However, UNDP-Niger and the WFP did provide ongoing support and make field visits, which helped to correct certain weaknesses and encourage the teams, the beneficiary populations, and the communal, departmental, and regional authorities to increase their involvement.

The mission notes that despite the PLECO's "dual command structure," the DGEEF and UNDP-Niger carried out both elements – one that addressed <u>institutional SLM capacity-building<sup>23</sup></u> and a second, the operational PLECO aspect, that dealt with "<u>efforts to control sand invasion</u>" – in satisfactory and coordinated fashion. They provided a framework for the institutional, operational, and technical aspects and recommended legal measures and instruments. The complementarity of these actions made it possible to identify convergent priority actions and combine the efforts of both aspects in developing a Long-Term Sustainable Land Management Investment Strategy (GDT-2015-2029), which integrates efforts to combat sand invasion, among other elements. These combined efforts would not have been possible without joint coordination by the DGEEF and UNDP.

However, the mission notes certain weaknesses both in terms of linking the two elements - sustainable land management and efforts to combat sand invasion, topics that were somewhat obscured in the Long-Term Investment Plan - and organizing and capacity-building among local actors. The mission also notes that the expected end-of-project strategic objective – PLECO's gradual evolution into an autonomous structure responsible for SLM and efforts to combat sand invasion - could not be achieved because of the weaknesses and institutional contradictions described above. Establishing such a structure is particularly important because it will ensure, via implementation of the Long-Term Strategic Investment Plan (2015-2032), that the achievements are consolidated and the actions begun will continue.

# 5.2.2. Project approach

The participatory approach that the project adopted proved to be aligned with the current development strategy guidelines, designed to involve all key actors (including territorial administrative authorities,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> In fact, this component existed and was supported by UNDP well before the Operational PLECO, to which it was linked in the interest of streamlining the UNDP project portfolio; so as not to create a specific work plan (and, thus, a specific project) for this institutional support.

communes and local elected officials, government technical services, local communities, NGOs, and international cooperation and research-action institutions (university, CNSEE and others)).

The mission notes that the project outcomes and achievements reflect the combined work of all of these actors and stakeholders, who carried out their commitments in very satisfactory fashion. The consultants' involvement in conducting specific studies using the "faire-faire" approach was also a factor in the project's success.

The consultation and collaboration between the PLECO and its partners and the experience-sharing through the consultation networks helped to build the partners' institutional, operational, and technical capacities and also helped the PLECO to mobilize significant human and financial investments. Those contributions proved critical to the project's successful implementation. In that regard, the mission notes that by encouraging the populations to participate in the project activities through the cash and food for work programs, the PLECO contributed very efficiently to laying the strategic groundwork for meeting the objectives of reducing poverty, improving food security, and pursuing sustainable agricultural development of the protected oasis micro-basins. The mission acknowledges the reasons that the PCU adopted this form of beneficiary participation in the project (cash or food for work). However, we believe that while it may temporarily resolve food deficits and inject cash into the community, this approach cannot mobilize the populations or ensure their long-term ownership of the biophysical achievements. As noted, and as the populations confirmed during the field visits, once those resources are no longer available, their participation and stewardship of the plots declined drastically. This leads to considerable damage to the woven wattle fencing and plantings, caused by the intrusion of livestock. The mission believes that compensation in cash or foodstuffs from the WFP is not negative in and of itself. Nonetheless, the project and the populations must understand, from the outset, that it is temporary, cyclical support, provided solely to compensate them for their efforts and to create conditions for improved participation that will lead them gradually to take independent responsibility, at the end of the project, for the actions begun.

In addition, in terms of gender, the PLECO gave a central place to women's participation in the project, as did earlier projects. Thanks to the income generated from work on dune fixation, production of plants in their village nurseries, market gardening, and investments in income-generating activities (small business and small-scale livestock production), the PLECO helped reduce women's dependence on their husbands and increase their financial autonomy.

The support from UNDP, the Steering Committee, and the MESUDD were critical as it provided for regular monitoring of project implementation, beginning with the project's start in July 2010 and continuing to this evaluation.

# 5.2.3. Financial management

The mission recognizes that financial resources and budget execution have been managed satisfactorily. However, we also note that management of the project's resources is highly concentrated within the PCU. This does not align with the project's <u>commitment to local intervention and management</u>, particularly given that the two Gouré and Maïné-Soroa offices are located several hundred kilometres from the PCU, based in Zinder.

Decentralized management of financial resources, by delegating authority to the officers' team leaders through periodic allocations, would have allowed each office to make its own expenditures locally. This would have granted them greater autonomy and facilitated operations, while increasing their efficiency in implementing the field programme. The PCU could thus have spent more time on interventions in the field and on technical assistance, coordination, and local monitoring-evaluation.

# **5.2.4.** Environmental achievements

The mission notes that the populations developed expertise in the techniques of mechanical and biological fixation. Biological coverage helped to strengthen dune stabilization over the long-term and achieve rapid reconstitution of the soil and ecosystems. However, the increasingly long distances required to travel to find the materials needed for mechanical dune fixation discouraged the populations - particularly women - from participating (because of lack of transportation). This reduced the project's performance somewhat. It also explains why certain plots were not properly wattled and staked, thus reducing the seedlings' chances for recruitment and survival after planting.

While protecting treated sites is a practice available to the populations, it can ultimately create conflicts with livestock producers. It restricts livestock use of the regenerated grazing land in areas where producing livestock is one of the populations' main socioeconomic activities. The prohibition should last only until it is determined that direct grazing or cutting grass may be authorized. Furthermore, the period of prohibition should be determined by the commune officials and the COGERNAT in charge of the sites.

# 5.2.5. Socioeconomic achievements

Even if the socioeconomic impacts generated by the project achievements are not yet felt, the populations gained significant benefits through market gardening, the distribution of WFP foodstuffs, and cash payments for dune fixation work.

The PLECO helped to create social cohesion at all the sites where it was involved, with different communities working together and profitably developing the micro-basins on their lands. These are among the project's most noteworthy and visible achievements.

# 5.2.6. Capacity building

The mission notes that all of the outcomes of the planned capacity-building activities for the actors were achieved. Implementation of the capacity-building programme benefited all actors, including elementary school teachers in the project's two intervention zones, who received training in environmental education.

The mission notes that the capacity-building objective – to ensure that conditions were created to enable community across the country and, specifically, in the intervention zones, to master and adopt best SLM practices – was not achieved, given the weaknesses noted locally and at the institutional and operational levels as the PLECO (institutional and operational) was not able to operationalize and promote a true consultative process at the local level for SLM issues and experience-sharing or for preparing local communities and organizations (including the COGERNATs and COFOBs) to take ownership of the achievements at the end of the project. This was particularly the case with regard to the lack of formal legal structure and the failure to apply the law on decentralization and transfer skills in local natural resources management and mobilizing financial resources.<sup>24</sup>

The actors fully acknowledge that the importance of creating networks of actors has been proven. Everyone is convinced of the significance of the dialogue and consultation initiated.

However, the mission believes that given the weak institutional capacities within the Government's and the communes' technical services, substantial work is still required at the operational level. This will entail actions to promote and manage the SLM networks and organize local communities. The mission thus believes that the issues to be developed must be relevant and aligned with strategies to control desertification and sand invasion and with creating the conditions for food security and poverty reduction.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> In that regard, in January 2016, the Government, through the Council of Ministers, issued a decree transferring jurisdiction for the management of environmental, among other, issues. It is now in effect. With its implementation, the current problems at the communal level should be resolved.

The PLECO-CNSEE and university partnership has helped to establish a data management system within the CNSEE, thanks to the creation of a database and a GEONETWORK. A virtual library that can be used online and is accessible everywhere (with an internet connection) was also established.

The mission notes that the absence of an IEC expert – despite the MTE 2013 recommendation – significantly weakened the programme's performance in raising awareness and informing and organizing local actors, particularly the populations. Indeed, because an appropriate IEC framework was lacking, the appropriate mechanisms to supervise and train facilitators to use the communications equipment and tools available to them were also lacking. This explains why the actions of the teams and the unaccredited consultants were not effective.

# **5.2.7.** Sustainability and capitalization of the achievements and impacts

The mission believes that if government authorities and all of the actors make sustained efforts, the project's implementation will ultimately produce the expected overall environmental benefits, including: restoring degraded lands; combatting desertification; preserving specific ecosystems; maintaining biological diversity; limiting cross-border migration that creates conflicts and pressure on the micro-basins; and, reducing poverty.

The mission notes that to strengthen the project's fragile achievements, urgent and adequate measures must be taken to consolidate them and avoid the risk that they could be lost in the short-term (the next three years). The institutions must thus design appropriate mechanisms by which to consolidate the protected plots through local multisectoral and multilateral cooperation agreements. They must also ensure that a long-term programme is created to build the institutions' and actors' capacities to update knowledge on a continuing basis and expand the stabilized land areas.

At the national level, the long-term protection of the SLM achievements and utilization of the biophysical benefits generated by the project will rely on the ability of government institutions – particularly the ministry in charge of the environment, the DGEEF, and the partners' specialized institutions – to design and coordinate programmes to use SLM best practices and integrate them into all environmental protection policies and strategies and, more specifically, into future initiatives to control desertification, soil erosion, and sand invasion.

The PCU has worked hard to publish the project's experiences and achievements so as to capitalize on the project's accomplishments. All of the documents published are intended to share the achievements and lessons learned with the actors and stakeholders participating in or concerned by SLM issues. Knowledge, dissemination, mastery and large-scale adoption of these best practices will promote the efforts undertaken by the PLECO.

# 5.3. Recommendations

To preserve the project's achievements and correct its weaknesses, while simultaneously minimizing the constraints that marked its implementation and performance, the mission recommends that the Government, UNDP/GEF, and all of the actors consolidate the achievements be consolidated and that efforts to control sand invasion continue into the post-PLECO period, as detailed below.

# 5.3.1. Sustainable land management and sand invasion control policy and strategy

The mission notes that all of the actors we met during field visits and the participants at the Zinder feedback workshop on 25 November 2015 (mayors of commune, SGs of Diffa and Zinder, regional technical services and DDE) believe that sand invasion must be recognized as the greatest threat to sustainable development in the Diffa and Zinder regions, as well as to neighbouring areas (including Maradi and Bilma), both in environmental and socioeconomic terms. As a result, efforts to control sand

invasion must be considered as long-term actions to guarantee the survival of the populations in the regions concerned. Without such efforts, the country could experience, in the medium-term, the irreversible degradation of its natural resources and major losses of the potential to produce and survive, with the forced migration of populations to other areas. We thus encourage government authorities to give greater national visibility to <u>efforts to control sand invasion and develop the micro-basins</u> by <u>creating a permanent, independent structure</u>, financed by the Government with support from the technical partners and cooperation agencies, to pursue efforts to obtain funding for actions to control sand invasion through long-term commitments that can ensure sustainable local development.

The mission believes that if the actions initiated by the PLECO do not continue after the project ends in December 2015, the country will face the unavoidable risk that the achievements will be lost, as was the case in 1990-1994, when the UNDP-funded NER/024 project ended. In addition, we believe that the zone can develop only as part of a long-term (15-year) programme that emphasizes sustainable land management and development of the oasis micro-basin resources. To that end, in accordance with the actors' wishes and based on the lessons learned from these achievements, the mission supports the creation of a national independent structure responsible for SLM issues and efforts to control sand invasion. We thus recommend that appropriate solutions be identified to ensure that these achievements are consolidated and that the actions initiated by the PLECO continue. The priority actions targeted are designed in two phases: (i) a two-year transition, preparatory phase (2016-2017) and (ii) a subsequent long-term phase to implement the strategic programme (2018-2032), consistent with the guidelines of the SLM strategic investment plan (2015-2029) and focused on priority sustainable development actions. These must include securing the production base and achieving inclusive local socioeconomic development, benefiting the entire country.

Carrying out these two phases will require that appropriate mechanisms for multisectoral and multilateral cooperation are created at the national and local levels and that a long-term programme is developed to build the capacities of the institutions and local actors.

Two structures would oversee the coordination and technical supervision of the preparatory phase: the PCU and the communes' technical services. During the one-year interim preparatory phase, the COGERNAT members would be trained and supervised by NGOs on various aspects of managing and organizing the populations.

#### 5.3.2.<u>Phase 1 (2016-2017): Consolidating the achievements and preparing the Long-Term</u> <u>Strategic Programme</u>

This phase would focus on continuing the actions initiated by the PLECO during 2011-2015 and rehabilitating older plots stabilized by prior projects. It would involve the following actions:

i. Affirm the political commitment to continue the actions initiated by implementing a long-term programme to control sand invasion and develop the oasis micro-basins.

<u>Managers:</u> Government/MESUDD/DGEEF, regional, departmental, and communal authorities

ii. Support the financing of a transition phase to consolidate and sustain the achievements and prepare a long-term programme to control sand invasion (2016-2017).

Managers: UNDP, WFP, and others

iii. Conduct an inventory and analysis-diagnosis of the older plots, which is required to determine their current status and the land area of reforestation remaining and develop appropriate consolidation plans. The actions will involve strengthening the woven wattle fencing, planting the restored dunes with trees and shrubs, and creating a system for ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the plots. The beneficiaries will be responsible for these actions and will be supervised by the communes' technical services. The goal is to ensure permanent plant cover for the dunes.

Managers: PCU, DGEEF, regional, departmental, and communal agencies

- iv. Formalize the local organizations, specifically the COGERNATs, through appropriate legal acts, pursuant to legal and regulatory provisions in effect;
- v. Help the communes initiate sand invasion control activities and take charge of certain activities, specifically security for the plots, plant production, and the transport of dune fixation materials.
- vi. Assess the institutional, operational, and technical capacities of the local natural resource management structures (COGERNATs);
- vii. Develop and implement an IEC, organization and management capacity-building programme for the COGERNATs and for developing the micro-basins;
- viii.Strengthen the capacities of the local natural resource management structures (COGERNATslocal sustainable development committees, CLDD) and the communes' technical services. Manager: PCU, DGEEF, regional, departmental, and communal agencies
- ix. Accelerate and finalize the process to collect and validate the data and strengthen the database and its use by the partner exchange networks.
- x. Capitalize on the achievements and strengthen knowledge of dune fixation and micro-basin and oasis development techniques;
- xi. Set up a system by which to use the data collected by the CNSEE to improve the effectiveness of the PLECO actions;
- xii. Strengthen the collaboration with Niger's universities and promote students' training by providing them resources to carry out internships;
- xiii.Capitalize on the research results by translating them into development actions;
- xiv. Disseminate the reports produced by the CNSEE to the technical services.

Manager: PCU, CNSEE, University School of Agriculture

xv. Consolidate the earlier projects' institutional and biophysical sand dune fixation achievements (including NER/024 and PLECO)

Manager: DGEEF, PCU, and communes

xvi. Develop technical and financial partnership approaches with other partners interested in efforts to control sand invasion, such as the WFP, FAO, ABN, GEF micro-grant;

Manager: MESUDD, DGEEF, UNDP/GEF, and PCU

- Amend and implement the natural resource management and sand invasion control plans; <u>Managers:</u> PCU; communes and technical service providers;
- Mobilize all forces needed to operationalize the partners' SLM networks by implementing a consultation and experience-sharing programme;
- Formalize the communes' technical agency frameworks for integrated natural resource management and SLM;
- Encourage the communes to integrate SLM actions and efforts to control sand invasion and develop the micro-basins and oases in their annual investment plans (PIA) and communal development plans (PDC);

Managers: PCU, DGEF, and regional and departmental technical services,

• Create synergies between the PLECO/departmental and communal technical services and the UN system agencies/other potential partners;

Managers: PCU, DGEF, and regional and departmental technical services,

- Disseminate widely and increase the visibility of the achievements and best practices for dune fixation and micro-basin development;
- Define and implement an approach strategy and a strategy to open bank accounts or mutual benefit accounts to increase the COGERNATs' financial contribution to dune fixation work and establish an investment fund for micro-basin development; Managers: PCU, DGEEF
- With regard to information, education, and communications (IEC), the mission notes that the MTE's recommendations to the PCU (see below) were not implemented. They are restated here so that they will be considered and implemented during the transition phase:
  - ✓ Hire a full-time communications expert who is well-informed on environmental issues in general and rural development in particular, with significant experience in agricultural extension;
  - ✓ Assign an expert to develop IEC tools (including audiovisuals and image boxes) to inform and create awareness on SLM within local communities and among students;
  - ✓ Train facilitators to use communications tools (including audiovisual tools, CDs/DVDs, films, audio cassettes for listening and response during discussions and radio programmes at the village level);
  - ✓ Adapt and expand distribution of the environmental education programme to all schools in the PLECO intervention zone;
  - ✓ Continue to train teachers and monitor their school performance to assess the impact on teachers in the schools concerned;
  - ✓ Prepare appropriate teaching tools (including posters and image boxes) and provide them to teachers in the project intervention zone;
  - ✓ Support the schools to create school gardens to set up nurseries so that trees can be planted to protect school facilities; and,
  - Train facilitators to hold evening audiovisual sessions at schools on environmental protection.

# Manager: PCU, UNDP, MESUDD

• Study the feasibility of a specific long-term programme to control sand dune invasion and develop the oasis micro-basins on a national scale;

Manager: UNDP, MESUDD

• Hire independent consultants (international and national) to develop a long-term strategic programme (2018-2032) to control sand dune invasion and develop the micro-basins. This long-term programme (at least 15 years) will be specific to efforts to control sand dune invasion and develop the oasis micro-basins on a national scale. It will integrate the institutional dimensions of implementing the programme and the creation of a permanent, independent structure with adequate resources (human and financial), responsible for implementing the programme and financial partners.

Manager: MESUDD, UNDP, PCU, WFP, other financial partners

- Hire a team of senior consultants to create the long-term programme (15 years), composed of an international expert in efforts to combat sand invasion and land degradation, a national expert in socio-economics and local development, and an expert in promoting small-scale food and food processing/agricultural product development businesses. <u>Manager:</u> UNDP and MESUDD/DGEEF
- Lobby to promote a partnership within the UN agencies and with other partners to obtain their support for and participation in financing the long-term programme to control sand invasion and develop micro-basins (2018-2032).

Manager: UNDP, MESUDD, communes

#### 5.3.3. <u>Phase 2: Implementation of the Long-Term Strategic Programme to combat sand</u> <u>invasion and develop the micro-basins PSLE/MVC (2018-2032).</u>

Phase 2 will focus on implementing a long-term strategic programme (2018-2032) to combat sand invasion of land and socioeconomic infrastructure and promote the development of the oasis microbasins.

The mission is pleased that environmental issues and the control of sand invasion of land and infrastructure are acknowledged at a higher level and integrated into the Niger Renaissance Programme, called for by the President of the Republic in order to operationalize the Government's June 2011 Declaration of General Policy. This declaration should be the foundation of a better long-term development strategy and implementation of the ESDP, also adopted in 2012.

The priority actions are focused on implementing the long-term strategic programme to combat sand invasion and develop the micro-basins. This programme will require the following preliminaries:

- Formal declaration by the Government that it considers sand invasion to be the most serious threat to sustainable development in the Diffa and Zinder regions and that it is committed to taking comprehensive, long-term actions to control the threat;
- Commitment to increase the visibility of actions to control sand invasion by establishing an independent specialized entity provided with significant human and financial resources.

Manager: MESUDD and regional authorities

- <u>For information</u>, the programme's main components could include:
  - i. Sustainable land management:
    - $\checkmark$  study and evaluation of sand invasion;
    - ✓ development of techniques;
  - ii. Land fixation and protection of micro-basins and socioeconomic infrastructure;
  - iii. Economic development of land and oasis micro-basins;
  - iv. Promotion of private entrepreneurship to develop the micro-basin products and ensure economic development in the zone (including Diffa and Zinder); and,
  - v. Capacity-building within the local communities on sustainable land management and consolidation of the achievements
- The programme implementation approach could be designed as follows:
  - vi. A local programme, implemented by the local populations under direct supervision by the commune, with technical assistance from communal and departmental services and the PCU. The PCU's role would be limited to technical, operational, and monitoring-evaluation (for example, technical, administrative and accounting) supervision. Financial and material resources would be managed directly by the COGERNATs through direct contracts between the PCU and the COGERNATs, and under the direct supervision of the communes (revenue collection agency).

Table 17 below presents the work programme for the two phases.

COMPONENTS	COMPONENTS ACTIVITIES MAN		SCHEDULE
Phase 1 (2016-2017):	<b>Consolidating the achievements</b>	and preparing the Lo	ng-Term Strategic
Programme			
Component 1:	O 1.1: Conduct an analysis-	PCU and	Jan-March
Consolidating the	diagnosis of the plots and	communes'	2016
achievements	identify the plots to be	technical service	es
	consolidated		
	O 1.2: Prepare the 2016 annua	1 PCU, UNDP,	Jan-March
	work plan	DGEEF	2016
	O 1.3: Strengthen mechanical	PCU and	2016-2017
	and biological dune fixation	communes'	
		technical service	es
	O 1.4: Conduct an analysis-	PCU and	April - May
	diagnosis of older plots	communes'	2016
		technical service	es
	O 1.5: Conduct planting layou	t PCU and	Oct-Dec 2016
	and management (NER-89-00	4 communes'	
	and other projects)	technical servic	es
	O 1.6: Strengthen local entitie	s PCU and	2016-2017
	(including COFOB and	communes'	
	COGERNAT)	technical servic	es
	O 1.7: Strengthen institutional	PCU and DGEE	EF 2016-2017
	capacities of departmental and		
	communal actors		
	0 1.8: Operationalize the SLM	1 PCU and DGEE	EF 2016-2017
	networks		
	O 1.9: Amend and implement	the PCU and	2016-2017
	natural resource management	and communes'	
	sand invasion control plans	technical servic	es
	O 1.10: Develop and impleme	nt DGEEF, UNDP	, 2016-2017
	an IEC programme	PCU	
	O 1.11: Accelerate and finaliz	e CNSEE and	April – Dec
	the process for collecting and	university	2016
	validating the data and		
	strengthening the database		
	O 1/12: Capitalize on	PCU, CNSEE	2016-2017
	achievements and strengthen	and university	
	knowledge of dune fixation		
	techniques and development o	f	
	micro-basins and oases		
	O 1.13: Strengthen the	PCU, CNSEE	2016-2017
	collaboration with the university	ity and university	
	and CNSEE		
	O 1.14: Develop technical and	PCU, UNDP,	2016-2017
	financial partnership approach	es DGEEF	
	with other partners		
	O 1.15: Disseminate best	PCU, CNSEE	2016-2017
	practices	and university	

Table 17: Work programme and implementation schedule

Component 2:	<u>O 1.16:</u> Study the feasibility of a	PCU, UNDP,	November
Preparing the	specific long-term programme to	DGEEF	2016
long-term	control sand dune invasion and		
program to	develop the micro-basins and		
control sand	oases on a national scale		
invasion	<u>O 1.17:</u> Hire an international	DGEEF and	December
	consultant who specializes in	UNDP	2016
	land and environmental		
	management (team leader) and a		
	national consultant who		
	specializes in socio-economics		
	and institutional capacity		
	O 1.18: Formulate the long-term	Consultants	Dec 2016 -
	programme mission (2018-2031)		January 2017
	<u>R 1.19:</u> Lobby to promote a	PCU, MESUDD-	Feb-Sept
	partnership within UN agencies	DEGEEF and	2017
	and with other partners	UNDP	
Phase 2: Implementin	ng the Long-Term Strategic Program	<u>ime to combat sand i</u>	nvasion and
develop the micro-ba	sins PSLE/MVC (2018-2032).		I
Component 2.1:	<u>O 2.1:</u> Create an independent	Government of	Oct-Nov
Formal	specialized entity and provide	Niger	2017
declaration by the	human and financial resources	(MESUDD)	
Government to	(decree)		
control land			
degradation and			
sand invasion			
Component 2.2:	Implement the Long-Term	Structure charged	2018-2032
Implement the	Programme	with addressing	
Long-Term		SLM and sand	
Programme to		invasion control,	
combat sand		Ministry and	
invasion and		IFPs	2010
develop the oasis	O 2.2: Prepare and implement	Structure charged	2018
micro-basins	annual work plan	with addressing	
		SLM and sand	
		invasion control,	
		Ministry and	
		TED	

# 6. RÉFÉRENCES

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## 7. ANNEXES

## 7.1. <u>Annex 1:</u> Terms of Reference for the final evaluation mission

Two (2) consultants (international and national) for the final evaluation of the oasis micro-basin sand control project in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa (PLECO).

Location:		Niamey and Zinder region, Niger
Application Deadline:		01-Sep-15
Additional Category		Environment and Energy
Type of Contract :		Individual Contract
Post Level :		International Consultant
Languages Required :		English French
Starting I	Date	:01-Oct-2015
(date when the selected candida	ate is expected to start)	
Duration of Initial Contract :		28 working days
Expected Duration of Assignme	ent :	40 calendar days

#### Background

Pursuant to the monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures of UNDP and the GEF, a final evaluation of the Oasis Micro-Basin Sand Invasion Control Project in the Provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa (PLECO) (PIMS 3225), implemented by the General Directorate for the Environment, Water, and Forests (DGEEF), must be conducted when its implementation ends in 2015. The project began on 7 April 2010 and is in its fifth year of implementation. The final review process must follow the directives issued in the Directives document on conducting a final evaluation of UNDP projects financed by the GEF (see annex). The project's long-term goal is to "protect the integrity of the oasis micro-basins and improve the agro-sylvo-pastoral productivity of the ecosystems in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa." The PLECO interventions thus address a major challenge and respond to the policy guidelines of the Government of Niger intended to ensure the socioeconomic development of the two target regions.

#### **Objective:**

The project objective is to ensure sustainable, improved management of land and water resources to improve the livelihoods and income of the rural populations in Niger's Sahelian zones. The project's main expected outcomes are as follows:

• Protection of approximately 35 priority oasis micro-basins.

7.510 hectares protected in the micro-basins and sylvo-pastoral areas, broken down as follows:

- PLECO: 4,410 hectares;
- Projects and programmes in the PLECO intervention zone 2,100 hectares;
- Other actors in the PLECO intervention zone 1,000 hectares;
- Development, validation, and implementation of an operational plan to protect 35 strategic micro-basins;
- Creation of 90 experimental and best agricultural and pastoral practices demonstration pilot sites with the full commitment of the populations;
- Improved practical knowledge of SLM among at least 50% of the rural population in the 35 priority micro-basins;
- 20% productivity increase in the agro-pastoral areas at the end of the project;
- Improved operations within at least half of the Gouré and Mainé-Soroa land commissions (COFOs).

#### **Duties and Responsibilities**

Scope of the activities and main tasks

The team will be composed of two independent consultants who will conduct the final evaluation. The international consultant will be the team leader. That person must have considerable knowledge of and experience with GEF operational programmes. In particular, he/she must be very familiar with sustainable land management (particularly sand invasion control) and have an understanding of the relevant science and in-depth experience with project evaluation techniques (particularly projects financed by the GEF).

The national consultant must have proven experience in sustainable land management and local development, as well as strong knowledge of the intervention zone.

The team responsible for the final evaluation will begin by reviewing the project documents (project identification form, UNDP project initiation plan, UNDP policy on environmental and social safeguards, project initiation report, mid-term evaluation report, finalized monitoring tools for the GEF intervention area, minutes of the project's evaluation committee meetings, financial and administrative guidelines applied by the project team, project guidelines, manuals and operational systems) provided by the project team and the UNDP Niger office. The final evaluation team will then participate in a final evaluation orientation workshop so as to better understand the final evaluation objectives and methods and, thus, the development of the initial final evaluation report. The final evaluation mission will then conduct interviews and site visits (to Zinder, Gouré, and Maïné-Soroa).

The team will assess progress in the project areas in the four categories referred to below.

#### **Project Strategy**

Project design

- Analyse the problem the project addresses and the underlying assumptions. Review the effects that incorrect assumptions or changes in the context may have on achieving the project results, as outlined in the Project Document;
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and whether it is the most effective means of achieving the expected results;
- Review how the project addresses the priorities of the country; and,
- Review the decision-making processes.

Results framework/logical framework:

- Conduct a critical analysis of the project's logical framework indicators and targets, assess the extent to which the end-of-project targets meet the SMART criteria (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary;
- Examine whether progress to date has led to, or could lead to in the future, beneficial development effects (for example, income generation, gender equality, women's empowerment, or improved governance) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored annually.

#### **Progress toward results:**

- Fill out the logical framework indicators towards progress in achieving the end-of-project targets; complete the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as indicated in the directives for conducting the final evaluation of UNDP-supported and GEF-financed projects;
- Progress achieved is indicated by colour in a "traffic light system", based on the level of progress for each outcome;
- Make recommendations for the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red);
- Compare and analyse the GEF baseline tracking tool with the one completed just before the final evaluation;

- Identify the remaining barriers to achieving the project objectives during the remainder of the project;
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify how the project can further expand these benefits.

#### **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

Using the Directives for conducting a final evaluation of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects, review the project's progress in the seven following categories:

- Management mechanisms;
- Activity planning;
- Financing and co-financing;
- Project monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Stakeholder participation;
- Communication of data; and,
- Communications.

#### Sustainability

Assess all of the risks to project sustainability, based on the following four categories:

- Financial risks;
- Socioeconomic risks;
- Risks associated with the institutional framework and governance; and,
- Environmental risks.

The final evaluation consultant/team will include a paragraph in the final evaluation report presenting the conclusions, based on evidence from the final evaluation, in light of the results.

In addition, the final evaluation consultant/team shall draft recommendations for the project team. These recommendations shall be presented in the form of succinct proposals aimed at key interventions that will be specific, measurable, achievable, and appropriate. A table that lists all of the recommendations may be included in the Report summary. The final evaluation consultant/team will draft a maximum of 15 recommendations.

Expected documents and documents to be produced

The final evaluation consultant/team will prepare and submit:

- Initial final evaluation report: The team responsible for the final evaluation will specify the final evaluation objectives and methods no later than two weeks before the final evaluation mission. The report shall be sent to the UNDP Niger office and to the project management;
- Presentation: The initial results are presented to the project management and the UNDP Niger office at the end of the final evaluation mission;
- Draft final report: The complete report, with the annexes, shall be presented within three weeks after the final evaluation mission;
- Final report\*: The revised report with the documents detailing how the comments were (or were not) taken into account in the final evaluation final report. The report will be sent to the UNDP Niger office within the week after the UNDP comments on the draft report are received.

The final report of the final evaluation report must be in English. If necessary, the UNDP Niger office may arrange for the report to be translated into a language widely shared by national stakeholders.

Management arrangements

The Commissioning Unit has primary responsibility for managing the final evaluation. The Commissioning Unit for the project final evaluation is the UNDP Niger office.

The UNDP Niger office will contract with the consultants and ensure that the final evaluation team receives per diems on a timely basis and will make its in-country travel arrangements. The project team will be responsible for contacting the final evaluation team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

#### Timeframe

The total duration of the final evaluation will be approximately 28 working days, spread over five weeks starting on 1 October 2015. It shall not exceed five months from the date of hiring of the consultant(s). The preliminary final evaluation timeframe is as follows:

- Mission preparation 3 days;
- Evaluation mission 15 days;
- Draft evaluation report 5 days;
- Final report 5 days

The contract start date is 1 October 2015.

#### Duty station

Travel:

- International travel to Niger will be required during the final evaluation mission;
- The Basic Security in the Field II and Advanced Security in the Field trainings must be successfully completed before travel commences;
- Consultants are responsible for ensuring that they have the necessary vaccinations/inoculations when traveling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director;
- Consultants are required to comply with the UN security directives set forth at <a href="https://dss.un.org/dssweb/">https://dss.un.org/dssweb/;</a>
- All related travel expenses will be covered and reimbursed as per UNDP rules upon submission of an F-10 claim form and supporting documents.

#### Skills

- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management;
- Demonstrated understanding of gender-related issues;
- Excellent communication skills; and,
- Demonstrated analytical skills.

#### **Required Skills and Experience**

#### **Education:**

• Engineering degree or PhD in Environment/Agroforestry or other closely-related sectors. **Experience:** 

- At least 5 years' experience in results-based management evaluation methodologies;
- At least 5 years' experience collaborating with the GEF or on GEF evaluations;
- At least 2 years' professional experience in the Sahelo-Saharan region or in Niger;
- At least 10 years' professional experience in sustainable land management;
- At least 5 years' experience in gender-sensitive evaluation and analysis; and,
- At least 5 years' experience in project evaluation/revision within the UN system.

#### Languages required:

• Excellent oral and written French, which is the working language;

• Knowledge of English is a plus.

Additional information

#### Schedule of payments

- 10% of payment upon approval of the final evaluation mission framing memo
- 30% upon submission of the draft final evaluation report
- 60% upon submission of the final final evaluation report

#### Presentation of offers:

The technical offer must include:

- CV and P11 Personal History form, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as contact details (email and telephone number) of the candidate and at least three (3) professional references;
- Brief description of the approach to work/technical proposal indicating why the individual considers him/herself to be the most suitable for the assignment and a proposed methodology indicating how he/she will approach and complete the assignment (maximum 1 page).

The financial offer must include:

• The financial proposal must be "all-inclusive," with a fixed total contract price. "All-inclusive" means that all expenses are included (including fees, travel expenses, and living allowance, etc.) Incomplete applications will not be considered.

NOTE: Please send your offers (financial and technical) to this site.

Criteria for selecting the best offer

The award of the contract will be made to the individual consultant who obtains the highest combined score and has accepted the UNDP's General Terms and Conditions. Only those applications that comply with the criteria will be evaluated.

Offers will be evaluated using the "combined scoring method" where:

- Educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted to a maximum of 70%;
- The price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring.

NOTE: The criteria for the technical scoring are as follows:

- Engineering degree or PhD in Environment/Agroforestry or other closely-related sectors (15 points);
- Methodological note indicating how the consultant will approach and conduct the mission (20 points);
- At least 10 years' professional experience in sustainable land management (30 points);
- At least 5 years' experience in project evaluation/revision within the UN system (30 points).
- At least 2 years' professional experience in the Sahelo-Saharan region or in Niger (5 points).

## 7.2. <u>Annex 2: Evaluation methodology</u>

#### Introduction

As planned, the PLECO final evaluation mission began on 11 November 2015, with the International Consultant's arrival in Niamey. The field mission was scheduled to last 15 days out of a total of 28 days' work, with the final deliverables to be submitted to UNDP, by the International Consultant (head of mission), within 40 days after the start of the mission, or 20 December 2015.

The purpose of this report is to establish the context and process of the evaluation mission by setting out the context and the expected results of the mission, the methodology adopted by the team, the work programme, and the timeline of deliverables.

The report summarizes the experts' understanding of the mission, work methodology, timeline of field visits, and the organization of meetings. This memo will serve as a reference for conducting the mission and developing and validating the reports expected.

#### 1. PROJECT CONTEXT

Under the "Sustainable Land Management" Operational Programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Niger obtained financing for the operational phase of the Oasis Micro-Basins Sand Invasion Control Project (PLECO) in the provinces of Maïné-Soroa and Gouré from the GEF and from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the latter.

We understand that the long-term goal of the PLECO project (PIMS 3225) is to "protect the integrity of the micro-basins and improve the productivity of the agro-sylvo-pastoral ecosystems in the provinces of Gouré and Mainé-Soroa." The PLECO interventions thus address the major challenge and respond to the policy guidelines of the Government of Niger, which seek to achieve the socioeconomic development of the two targeted regions.

#### **1.1. Project Objectives**

Implementation of the project will produce the following main benefits overall: (i) restoration of degraded lands; (ii) desertification control; (iii) preservation of specific ecosystems; (iv) preservation of biological diversity; and (v) limitation of cross-border migratory phenomena that create conflicts and pressure on the micro-basins.

The project's general objective is to contribute to efforts to control land degradation and conserve the Saharan ecosystems of northern Niger by integrating the processes of local development and decentralization. The project seeks to ensure the sustainable, improved management of land and water resources as a step toward improving the livelihoods and income of the rural populations in Niger's Sahelian zones.

The main national benefits expected include poverty reduction, improved natural resource management, reversal of the trend toward land degradation, and identification of appropriate sustainable land management approaches and methodologies that address social needs.

#### **1.2. Expected outcomes**

The purpose of the project is to ensure local, sustainable land management through:

- disseminating proven compatible practices;
- activities that protect the oasis micro-basins in the provinces of Gouré and Maïné-Soroa from sand invasion; and,
- local institution capacity-building.

More specifically, the project's main expected outcomes are as follows:

- Protection of approximately 35 priority oasis micro-basins.
- Protection of 7,510 hectares in the micro-basins and sylvo-pastoral areas, broken down as follows:
  - ✓ PLECO: 4,410 hectares;
  - ✓ Projects and programmes in the PLECO intervention zone -2,100 hectares;
  - ✓ Other actors in the PLECO intervention zone -1,000 hectares;
- Development, validation, and implementation of an operational plan to protect 35 strategic micro-basins;
- Creation of 90 experimental and best agricultural and pastoral practices demonstration pilot sites with the full commitment of the populations;
- Improved practical knowledge of SLM among at least 50% of the rural population in the 35 priority micro-basins;
- 20% increase in productivity in the agro-pastoral areas at the end of the project;
- Improved operations within at least half of the Gouré and Mainé-Soroa land commissions (COFOs), thanks to the project.

#### **1.3. Institutional arrangements**

The project is co-financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as part of the GEF Operational Programme under the "Sustainable Land Management" operational programme, with the contribution of the Government of Niger and local collectivities (communes).

The financing agreement was signed on 22 August 2006.

PLECO implementation began on 7 April 2010, by the General Directorate for the Environment, Water and Forests (DGEEF) of the Ministry of Hydraulics and the Environment (MHE). The project launched on 2 July 2010 in Diffa.

The UNDP Niger office serves as implementing agency and is responsible for supervision, operations, and technical support.

#### 2. Final evaluation framework

#### 2.1. Scope of the activities and main tasks

As the project is in its fifth year and ends in December 2015, pursuant to UNDP and GEF project monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures, a final evaluation must be conducted when implementation ends in 2015. UNDP/GEF and the Government of Niger thus intend to hire an international consultant to conduct the final evaluation mission. The final review process must follow the directives issued in the Directives document on conducting a final evaluation of UNDP projects financed by the GEF (see annex).

The team responsible for the final evaluation will then participate in a final evaluation orientation workshop to better understand the final evaluation objectives and methods and, thus, the development of the initial final evaluation report. The final evaluation mission will then conduct interviews and site visits (to Zinder, Gouré, and Maïné-Soroa).

#### **2.2.** Composition of the team

The team will be composed of two independent consultants who will conduct the final evaluation. The international consultant will be the team leader. That person must have considerable knowledge of and experience in GEF operational programmes. In particular, the international consultant must have considerable knowledge of sustainable land management (particularly sand invasion control), understanding of the relevant science, and in-depth experience with project evaluation techniques (particularly projects financed by the GEF).

The national consultant must have proven experience in the area of sustainable land management and local development, as well as strong knowledge of the intervention zone.

#### **2.3. Expected documents and documents to be produced**

The final evaluation consultant/team will prepare and submit:

- Initial final evaluation report: The team responsible for the final evaluation will specify the final evaluation objectives and methods no later than two weeks before the final evaluation mission. The report shall be sent to the UNDP Niger office and to the project management;
- Presentation: The initial results are presented to the project management and the UNDP Niger office at the end of the final evaluation mission;
- Draft final report: The complete report, with the annexes, shall be presented within three weeks after the final evaluation mission;
- Final report\*: The revised report with the documents detailing how the comments were (or were not) taken into account in the final evaluation final report. The report will be sent to the UNDP Niger office within the week after the UNDP comments on the draft report are received;
- The final final evaluation report must be in English. If necessary, the UNDP Niger office may arrange for the report to be translated into a language that is more familiar to the national stakeholders.

#### 2.4. Work to be performed by the consultant

The consultant responsible for the final evaluation will assess the progress made in the project areas in the five categories referred to below.

#### i. Project design:

• Analyse the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effects that incorrect assumptions or changes in the context may have on achieving the project results, as outlined in the Project Document;

Review the relevance of the project strategy and whether it is the most effective means of achieving the expected results;

- Review how the project addresses the priorities of the country;
- Review the decision-making processes, and,
- Review how gender issues are taken into account and integrated.

#### ii. Results framework/logical framework:

- Conduct a critical analysis of the project's logical framework indicators and targets, assess the extent to which the end-of-project targets meet the SMART criteria (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary;
- Examine whether progress to date has led to, or could in the future lead to, beneficial development effects (for example, income generation, gender equality, women's empowerment, or improved governance) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored annually.

#### iii. Progress toward results:

- Review the logical framework indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets;
- Fill out the logical framework indicators against progress made towards the results, as indicated in the directives for conducting the final evaluation of UNDP-supported and GEF-financed projects;

- Progress achieved is indicated by colour in a "traffic light system", based on the level of progress for each outcome;
- Make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red);
- Compare and analyse the GEF baseline tracking tool with the one completed just before the final evaluation;
- Identify the remaining barriers to achieving the project objectives during the remainder of the project;
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits, particularly with regard to the role of women and the extent to which the project has contributed to empowering them in terms of organization and generating economic benefits.

#### iv. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Using the Directives for conducting a final evaluation of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects, the consultant will review the project's progress in the following categories:

- Management mechanisms;
- Activity planning;
- Financing and co-financing;
- Project monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Stakeholder participation, including women and youth;
- Transfer of data; and,
- Communications.

#### v. Sustainability

Assess all of the risks to the sustainability of the project, using the four following categories:

- Financial risks;
- Socioeconomic risks;
- Risks associated with the institutional framework and governance; and,
- Environmental risks.

#### 2.5. Management arrangements

As noted in the TORs, the UNDP Niger office, as the Commissioning Unit, will have primary responsibility to manage the final evaluation and will thus contract with the consultants and ensure that the team receives its per diems on a timely basis and will make its in-country travel arrangements.

The project team will be responsible for guiding the process throughout the mission, ensuring that all the documents needed to gain a clear understanding and make an objective evaluation are available, that preparations and plans for interviewing with the stakeholders are made, and that field visits are organized properly.

#### **2.6. Duration of the evaluation**

The total duration of the final evaluation will be approximately 28 working days, spread over five weeks starting on 1 October 2015. It shall not exceed five months from the date of hiring of the consultant(s).

The preliminary final evaluation timeframe is as follows:

- Mission preparation 3 days;
- Evaluation mission 15 days;
- Draft evaluation report 5 days;
- Final report 5 days

#### 3. Proposed methodology and work plan

#### **3.1. Evaluation approach**

Our approach is built on a participatory process that is consultative and iterative, based on professional ethics, a strong commitment to confidentiality, and respect for the client's procedures. However, this participatory approach can succeed only if the main actors and contacts concerned are available during the period in which the evaluation is conducted.

At the start of the mission, the team's emphasizes on identifying the key actors – institutional, operational, decision-making, government and local implementation authorities, project teams (coordination unit, field units, and others), co-financing partners, stakeholders, and, in particular, the populations and local communities at the intervention sites, women, and civil society. All these actors will be involved in the evaluation at different levels, based on their involvement in the project's implementation and their roles and responsibilities.

The consultant will be particularly committed to establishing ongoing consultation with UNDP, the project teams, and the government authority responsible for project execution, as well as the other stakeholders involved in the co-financing. The goal is to conduct an evaluation on the most consensual basis possible. All the data collected and information provided by the actors must be verified and confirmed before they are disseminated to avoid misunderstandings that can often prove confusing.

#### **3.2.** Phases of the evaluation activities

The evaluation will be carried out in four successive phases:

All of the work required to achieve this objective can be divided into the following four components (or phases):

•	Phase 1(100)	Planning and preparing for the mission
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- **Phase 2(200)** Field visits and analysis-diagnosis of the situation
- **Phase 3(300)** Evaluation of the project implementation and performance
- **Phase 4(400)** Development and sharing of findings, recommendations, and evaluation reports

These four (4) phases/components are subdivided into units of work, which are subdivided, in turn, into activities to be implemented in order to carry out all of the services requested and achieve the results and objectives targeted by the evaluation.

#### **3.3. Description of the work breakdown structure**

All of the activities are presented in a work breakdown structure in Figure 2 below. This structure summarizes the activities proposed to complete all of the mission's activities. Each work unit structure is described in detail, along with the related activities.

The content of each of the mission's four phases and their task and activity structures are described below.

#### **3.3.1.** Phase 1(100) : Planning and preparing for the mission

The objective of this phase of the assignment is, first, to agree on the TORs and use the available project documents (including the project evaluation report, credit agreement, monitoring reports, and various

documents emanating from relevant studies) and, second, to finalize the proposed methodology and develop interview grids and questionnaires to collect data from the project's main actors and supplement the second-level data in order to produce an objective, exhaustive evaluation.

The mission guidelines, key topics to address, and the process to follow will be specified subsequently with the project managers during the briefing session. This will allow the work to begin on a consensual basis and to adapt the process in the event of changes in direction.

This component of the assignment includes four work units:

- <u>Work unit 110</u> : Detailed review of the mission's terms of reference
- <u>Work unit 120</u> : Review and analysis of the project's basic documents and the reports
- <u>Work unit 130</u> : Development of the interview grids
- <u>Work unit 140</u> : Feedback and validation of the work plan and the mission implementation timeline.

#### 3.3.1.1. Work unit 110: Start and briefing

#### i. <u>UNDP-Niamey:</u>

The mission team first held a briefing and work sessions with the managers responsible for PLECO project support and monitoring from the UNDP, the Climate Change and Resilience Unit team leader, and the UNDP-Niger country coordinator (11-16 November 2015).

The discussions addressed the scoping of the mission (including objectives, expected results, organization, practical questions, meetings with the partners, review of the mission TORs to clarify the context and the expected results of the evaluation), planning the field visits, and the practical arrangements for consulting with the partners.

The team of experts also focused on the following questions:

- How will the mission ensure that the objectives are achieved within the timeline set?
- What provisions should be made so that the mission can move forward as planned?
- How will the actors participate with regard to managing the process, collecting data, analysing data, drafting findings/presenting recommendations, and responding to reactions to the preliminary findings?
- Which stakeholders should the evaluation team meet?
- Which field sites should the evaluation team visit?
- What is the work plan (including the schedule of field visits, interviews, breakdown of tasks between the experts, and interview grids)?
- Specific questions.

#### ii. <u>Partners</u>

The mission team held work sessions with the project implementation partners:

- 16 November 2015: the Director of the CNSEE and the representative of the School of Agriculture from MG University in Niamey; Discussions addressed the companion research on understanding sand invasion and the environmental parameters linked to sand invasion occurring in the Gouré zone;
- 17 November 2015: the manager of the institutional aspect, "Efforts to control land degradation": Interviews focused on progress since 2013, achievements, and documentation;
- 17 November 2015: World Food Programme –Niger: Interviews focused on interventions and current guidelines for their support to the PLECO; and,
- 17 November 2015: General Directorate for Water and Forests (DGEF): Interviews addressed institutional and financial support for the project achievements and post-project measures.

### iii. Project Coordination Unit (Zinder):

Based on the consultation among the team members and discussions with UNDP and the central-level partners (Government and UNDP partners), the team will hold a briefing session with the project coordination unit in Zinder to examine, in greater depth, the aspects discussed and finalize the in-depth review of the TORs to reach mutual agreement on the objectives and expected results from the field visits and the evaluation in general. This will involve reviewing the TORs with the project coordination unit to ensure that the work begins on a consensual basis and that the practical arrangements are defined (including offices, documents to be consulted, contacts inside and outside the project, and other logistics resources required at the start).

The goal is to reach an agreement among the mission team and the project managers on the choice of sites to visit and to determine the practical arrangements for the field mission, data gathering, and consultation with the actors and populations in order to achieve the expected results.

After the meeting, the team and the Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU) will begin the field visits.

# 3.3.1.2. <u>Work unit 120:</u> Review and analysis of the project's basic documents and the reports

We believe that all the sources of information and data suggested in the TORs are relevant to perform an effective and efficient scoping and develop the mission evaluation grid. However, additional information may be required as the mission proceeds. In that regard, the client shall provide information and data when the contract is signed and, in all cases, within a reasonable timeframe after the international consultant arrives and before the field mission begins.

Documentary review is an important step in this evaluation because it will allow the available documentation on the project's execution to be assembled, used, analysed and summarized. Secondary data will be collected from the coordination unit and the partner institutions involved in the project.

The mission team will analyse all documents that may include technical, socioeconomic, and financial data on the project addressed in this study. The data from these documents will serve as the basis for preparing the technical evaluation report.

This involves, specifically:

- The project evaluation document (PLECO project number: 00072224)
- The GEF PIR (APR) 2005, 2006, and 2007;
- Activity programmes, budgets and achievement assessments;
- CPP meeting reports;
- Mid-term independent evaluation report;
- Supervision mission or project mid-term review memos;
- Microproject and demonstration pilot project evaluation reports;
- Study trip and meeting reports;
- Administrative, financial and monitoring-evaluation procedure manuals;
- Activity reports;
- Information on the ABN site, documents, audit reports, and relevant studies; and,
- Documentation on capitalizing best practices.

This documentary review will enable the mission to develop a thorough understanding of the project through its components and to better target the interview grids to be developed (Work unit 130) and the start of the interviews (Phase 200) and the investigations required for the mid-term evaluation mission.

#### 3.3.1.3. <u>Work unit 130:</u> Development of interview grids and data collection

After a summary review of the documents, activity reports, and studies, the consultant will develop the questionnaires for collecting additional information from the project component managers, partners, and beneficiaries in the field. The questionnaires will focus, in particular, on project execution, beneficiaries' reactions and degree of receptivity, ownership of planning, problems, and corrective measures.

Investigation criteria will be developed for each target group, based on the evaluation elements referred to in the terms of reference and complementing the secondary data collected. As suggested in Table 2.1 below, a reference will be developed. It will define the project components, relevant data to be collected, appropriate sources of information to examine, and the instruments or procedures to be used.

Co	mponents	Type of data to be gathered	Sources to consult	Collection procedures or instruments
1.	Project institutional development and management			
2.	Capacity-building among local communities and raising public awareness			
3.	Data and knowledge management			
4.	Training and other workshops			
5.	Pilot demonstration and micro-grant projects			
6.	Development of the diagnostic analysis, strategic studies, etc.			

#### Table 2.1: Evaluation grid

During the phase in which these tools are administered, the consultants will focus specifically on the indicators chosen for monitoring project implementation.

# 3.3.1.4. <u>Work unit 140:</u> Validation of the methodological approach, data collection tools, and work plan

This involves ensuring that the mission is consistent with the vision and expectations of the project's managers. To that end, the head of mission will make a brief presentation about the recommended methodological approach during a work session with the project coordination managers and other key partners involved in the project's execution. The results of the discussions will be used to prepare a definitive work plan.

The list of individuals responsible for the components and of other direct and indirect project actors (including ministries and development partners) to be interviewed in both project provinces (Gouré/Zinder and Maïné-Soroa/Diffa) will be drawn up by common agreement with the contracting authority during this phase. Steps will be taken to inform the focal points.

# 3.3.2. <u>Phase 2(200)</u> SITE VISITS AND ANALYSIS-DIAGNOSIS OF THE SITUATION

This evaluation phase will highlight the appropriate accomplishments that can provide a greater understanding of the immediate changes generated, to some extent, by the PLECO, with regard to both the actors and the entire intervention zone (the two departments).

#### 3.3.2.1. <u>Work unit 210:</u> Meetings and interviews with the authorities and actors

The sites to be visited will be chosen based on the following criteria:

- success of biological fixation: poor, average, successful
- population motivation and involvement: poor, average, good
- women's involvement and gender development
- sustainable environmental impacts
- socioeconomic impacts

Interviews/discussions will be held with the project's main actors and partners during visits to the field and the central level. These interviews will be held at various project levels:

- i. <u>Actors:</u>
  - project staff members (coordinator, project team, and project focal points);
  - departmental and district managers;
  - national or local government authority; and,
  - project steering committee (CNP) and local steering committee (CL) members.
- ii. Partners
  - partners responsible for executing the project activities;
  - representatives of local stakeholders;
  - representatives of relevant NGOs; and,
  - representatives of the villages and stakeholders not directly involved in the project but who may have experienced or hope to experience its impacts.
- iii. <u>Direct and indirect beneficiaries</u>, specifically, micro-grant beneficiaries (including women and youth)

These interviews will provide additional detail on certain data obtained from the documentation (Work unit 120). Information will be collected from team managers responsible for implementing the components at different levels via analyses of experiences and discussions of their interventions in connection with the project. These exchanges can contribute to a relevant, objective project evaluation.

They will allow the evaluation team to assess the level of understanding and ownership of the strategic and operational planning, the effectiveness of the project's institutional arrangement, the perception of strengths and weaknesses in the project's execution, and proposals that may benefit future projects.

The team will also meet with local authorities to obtain answers to the following questions:

- How do they view the project's achievements?
- What was the nature and extent of the support they provided the project?
- What is their vision of the future of the physical outputs in the field?

# 3.3.2.2. <u>Work unit 220:</u> Work sessions with the departmental directors of the technical services

The team will hold work sessions with the office teams at the department and/or district administrative centres prior to the field visits to inquire into the accomplishments, achievements, constraints, and lessons learned.

The team will also meet with the managers of other Government technical services (including agriculture, hydraulics, health, and social and economic affairs) and representatives of the decentralized technical and financial partners.

# 3.3.2.3. <u>Work unit 320:</u> Site visits and description and assessment of achievements

The project's coordination and management unit will propose a certain number of sites in each of the project's three intervention zones, based on four main outcome criteria:

- Highly Satisfactory
- Average
- Fair
- Poor (failure)

The team will thus randomly choose a certain number of sites to visit in each category to cover all of the outcomes defined above. Other criteria will be considered for the final choice of sites; specifically, the distance of the site, the year the site was set up, and the nature of the site (dune fixation or production micro-project undertaken by women's or mixed-gender associations).

Each site visited will be described in terms of its biophysical environment, physical outputs, and socioeconomic aspects. The team will assess the quality of the mechanical and the biological fixation (including soil coverage, plant density, stabilization of wind dynamics, lushness and use of grazing lands, restoration of biodiversity, wildlife, and income generation, particularly for women) and of the achievements, particularly the environmental and social impacts, sustainability, and the strategy for transferring from the site to the communities.

In addition, the mission team will hold consultations and interviews with the entire site population, in target groups and with individuals, to better assess their awareness, commitment, and solutions for consolidating and maintaining the achievements.

The mission will emphasize their local organization and actual motivation, how they assess the progress of the work, and individual perceptions of the project's achievements and performance.

## 3.3.2.4. Work unit 240: Evaluation of physical outputs

The consulting team will evaluate the physical outputs at each site visited, as well as the environmental and social achievements and impacts. This will involve assessing:

- Mechanical fixation
- Biological fixation
- Quantitative and qualitative results
- Progress in relation to the mid-term evaluation
- Site status in relation to the initial status
- Development of the protected lands, particularly the pastoral zones, micro-basins, and dune crops
- Achievements and impacts

#### 3.3.2.5. Work unit 250: Assessment of support measures

During discussions with the populations and the other actors, the consulting team will assess the support measures that the project developed at each site. This includes, among others:

- Micro-projects
- Revenue-generating activities
- Actions geared specifically to women
- Others

The team will analyse the relevance and scope of these measures, as well as their impacts on the general operation of the project and on the environmental and socioeconomic environment of the populations involved in the project's work.

The women's component, as well as that of marginalized social groups, will be targeted specifically in terms of evaluating these measures.

#### 3.3.2.6. Work unit 260: Analysis of constraints and solutions

Constraints are part of the project implementation process and can significantly affect performance results in some cases. The consulting team will thus work with the actors to determine the constraints that the project teams and the actors faced, particularly at the local level.

The following kinds of constraints will be considered:

- Institutional and legal
- Technical
- Operational
- Involvement of women for sociocultural or religious reasons
- Use of resources and space
- Access to resources and natural resource management.

The results of this work unit will help to explain the performance of some teams or sites.

#### 3.3.2.7. Work unit 270: Summary of field visits

When the visit to the sites chosen in a given province is complete, the team will draft a summary memo, including the list and description of the sites visited, the accomplishments, achievements, lessons learned, and findings and recommendations.

#### 3.3.2.8. Work unit 280: Feedback for local authorities and actors

Before leaving the zone, the consultant will hold a feedback meeting, with the support of the project coordination unit, on the evaluation's findings and recommendations. The findings and recommendations will be discussed with the department's authorities and actors to obtain reactions, comments, and suggestions on the key issues that the evaluation raised.

The team will consider the comments and suggestions in its mission report.

# **3.3.3. Phase 3(300): EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT CONTEXT AND PERFORMANCE**

The data obtained from the internal monitoring reports, site visits, and interviews conducted in the field with the beneficiaries and local actors (population and grassroots communities) will be processed and analysed. This analysis will make it possible to evaluate the project, with an emphasis on the results obtained at the end of the project in terms of effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability. The results will be summarized.

The analysis of this quantitative and qualitative data from the documents and interviews conducted as part of this mission will help to objectively assess the project's implementation outcomes and its impact on both the general and socioeconomic environment of the two zones.

The progress achieved must be assessed in relation to the operational objectives, the expected results, and the activities planned, as well as to the major themes of the project.

Based on the quantitative information available, an analysis of progress on the PLECO's main technical and financial achievements will be conducted, on a year-by-year basis, until the end of the project and consolidated (the project team must provide the consultants a summary of the activities carried out during the project's execution). This analysis will be accompanied by a memo on the project's progress from its launch up until the evaluation.

#### 3.3.3.1. Work unit 310: Summary of field visits in the two provinces

When the visits to the field and project coordination headquarters are completed, the evaluation team will prepare a report summarizing the results of the visits, the performance and achievements of the field teams, the lessons learned, and the preliminary findings and recommendations.

## 3.3.3.2. <u>Work unit 320:</u> Work session with the coordination unit and discussions on the findings from the field visits

The evaluation team will present its findings from the site visits to the project coordination unit in Zinder for discussion and suggestions.

This preliminary presentation will allow the evaluation team to create consensus on critical questions that could create misunderstandings and to achieve the mission's expected results.

In addition to basic questions about the final evaluation, the mission will focus particularly on gathering relevant information needed to answer to other questions during the mission.

### 3.3.3.3. Work unit 330: Analysis of the project document design

In general, the mission will analyse (a) the general design of the project document, to determine whether it complies with the rules for developing GEF projects, and the structuring of the activity programme into components and (b) the consideration of the environmental priorities and the populations' need for resilience in the face of changes in the intervention zones, the political-cultural realities, the poverty index in the intervention environment, the long-term vision for the targeted actions, and the alternatives and anticipated risks.

This will involve an objective evaluation and analysis, based on the results of the field visits and the analysis of the documents, of:

- the project's relevance in terms of the environmental challenges and the development priorities of local populations and the Government;
- the definition of the objectives, results expected, and activities planned;
- the structuring of the components;
- the project's institutional financing and implementation arrangements;
- the results monitoring-evaluation framework (logical framework);
- the project risks;
- problems, basic assumptions, and post-project changes;
- strategic relevance;
- response to the priorities; and,
- decision-making process.

#### 3.3.3.4. Work unit 340: Project implementation analysis

The consulting team will analyse the project approach and implementation strategy, aspects related to organizing and capacity-building among community-based organizations, the involvement of NGOs, and the consideration of gender issues (including women's empowerment and mitigating gender-based disparities).

The evaluation team will analyse the organization established by the PMCU, including:

- the teams' capacities;
- coordination approach and strategies;
- management mechanisms;
- activity planning;
- financing and co-financing;
- project monitoring and evaluation systems;
- stakeholder participation;
- communication of data; and,
- communications.

The team will thus analyse the project's merits and implementation framework, specifically:

- Are the project's fundamental intervention logic and principles still correct, relevant vis-a-vis the objectives, and adapted to the project's contexts (socio-economic, technical, environmental, and political)?
- Are the concepts and the project design appropriate in terms of the regional institutional, socioeconomic, and environmental concerns?
- Is the project well-integrated into the government's poverty reduction strategy and sectoral policies?
- Is the coordination management framework appropriate to the project type? How did the consultation framework that was established to coordinate activities with the many partners function?
- Are the public procurement system, financial management procedures, and the project's manual of administrative, accounting, and financial procedures adequate, effective, and flexible? Does the financial management system comply with the donors' standards?
- How did the institutional, monitoring, and support systems provided to the project by all parties concerned function?
- How did project management respond to changes in its environment?
- What were the main factors that facilitated or slowed the project's implementation?

# 3.3.3.5. <u>Work unit 350:</u> Performance analysis and Results framework/logical framework

The evaluation team will analyse the performance of the project and the actors in implementing and carrying out their activities and of the project in general, specifically with regard to executing the project's components and producing the expected results.

#### i. Evaluation of the results framework and effectiveness

Based on the logical framework, the consultant will review the planned/completed activities, as well as the expected/achieved results. The consultant will focus on the beneficiaries' use of the results and the year-by-year progress made toward achieving these objectives. The consultant will highlight the factors that influenced the project results. The following points will thus be addressed:

- Analysis of the resources and inputs needed to implement the project that were put in place (projections/achievements, meeting deadlines) through the annual component work plans;
- Analysis of the outputs/products by component (projections/achievements), including related studies and issues of institutional policy and arrangements;
- Analysis of the results (projections/achievements) of the components;
- Evaluation of the implementation partners' progress in implementing the project components;
- Analysis of budget expenditures by component and category;
- Analysis of the response to the mid-term evaluation recommendations; and,
- Assessment of the quality of cooperation among the project partners (including governments, UNDP/GEF, and communes).

#### ii. Evaluation of efficiency

The consultant will analyse:

- Results in terms of quality, schedule, and cost of products/services provided; Cost-effectiveness;
- Quality and quantity of the resources and inputs provided to implement the project (including human, inputs, and methodologies developed);
- Organization established to manage the project's implementation, calling on service providers; and,
- Mechanisms set up to consult with the beneficiaries.

### 3.3.3.6. <u>Work unit 360:</u> Monitoring-evaluation of achievements and impacts

In this phase, the mission will analyse the monitoring-evaluation system. The structure responsible for the project's monitoring-evaluation will be a key partner for the consultant because it is charged with guarding the project's institutional memory.

Specific attention will be given to the logical framework and the indicators chosen for project monitoring. The technical evaluation based on these indicators will provide the most complete and objective results possible because they offer an appropriate method for ranking the objectives summarized in the logical framework.

The evaluation team will examine whether the monitoring-evaluation system established is appropriate to the project context for monitoring progress and measuring the achievements. Is it simple and does it emphasize the relevant indicators? Are the collected data validated? Can they be adjusted to improve implementation of the annual work plan for greater efficiency?

Was a baseline/reference study conducted to measure the project's impact (including the methodology)? Ideally, the project would have the results of baseline or specific studies for monitoring impacts in order to better assess project-induced changes, based on the impact indicators chosen and addressed in a baseline survey at the start of the project.

More specifically, the consultant will evaluate the effects and impacts, in particular:

- data collected to assess the project's effects (anticipated and unanticipated) and impacts (analysis of the monitoring framework for all the components, based on the indicators); that is, its achievements with regard to the regional objectives, results, and activities as specified in the project evaluation document and project implementation plan;
- impacts on raising awareness about the project results among the participating partners; level of project ownership among the participants; authorities' commitment to support the project; human resources aspects within the project management unit and field structures (in the two zones);
- commitment of the MESUDD and other ministerial departments to integrate the objectives and the results and achievements into their programmes dealing with environmental development and other related projects;
- project coherence and consistency in relation to the development policy of the country's technical and financial partners;
- project impact on improving capacities to prepare and implement collaborative, targeted, and effective efforts to manage natural resources and control sand invasion of the socioeconomic infrastructure in Niger and countries facing similar problems (including Mali, Chad, and Nigeria);
- project impact on developing inter-agency and interministerial cooperation and at the level of regional cooperation;
- project impact on cooperation among international organizations, civil society, and all the other stakeholders; and,
- project impact on cooperation with sister projects in the GEF portfolio that contributed to PLECO co-financing.

#### 3.3.3.7. <u>Work unit 370:</u> Identification and assessment of constraints and risks

The evaluation team will identify whether and how the project identified the critical assumptions, risks, and constraints that slowed implementation and the achievement of the results expected. Were the risks under-estimated? How were they managed? Were they foreseeable?

Were these constraints on implementation analysed adequately and taken into account in the project design? Did new constraints appear?

Was the beneficiaries' participation in project implementation and project-related decision-making effective? How? Do the beneficiaries feel involved in the project and decision-making? Are the tools and working methods established by the projects and the partners appropriate to the context and the capacities of the local government?

More specifically, the consultant will analyse:

- financial risks to sustainability;
- socioeconomic risks to sustainability;
- risks to sustainability associated with the institutional framework and governance; and,
- environmental risks to sustainability.

#### 3.3.3.8. <u>Work unit 380:</u> Evaluation of sustainability

The sustainability of a field project's achievements is always difficult to address because there are so many unknowns.

One might ask whether the actions carried out under the project overall will produce tangible results, both in social and environmental terms. Are the income gains from the micro-grant micro-projects significant enough to contribute to poverty reduction over time, while ensuring environmental and natural resource protection? Are the results obtained and gains generated sustainable? Will the national and local structures be able to continue some of the activities with the populations post-project?

More specifically, the consultant will evaluate the following effects and impacts:

- the project's organization in terms of the community's and beneficiaries' ownership and continuation of the activities in each intervention zone;
- assessment of the transferability of the achievements at the national level;
- the sustainability of the project's impact in relation to the specific objective of each component;
- the transferability of the practices adopted in terms of sustainable development (natural resources);
- capitalization of the achievements for future projects;
- analysis of a "without project" scenario; and,
- analysis of the cooperation and partnership practices adopted in the project's philosophy, design, and implementation (including the Government, decentralized administration, UNDP/GEF, project team, international organizations, and NGOs) that can benefit future projects.

## **3.3.4.** <u>Phase 4(400):</u> Development and sharing of findings, recommendations, and evaluation reports

Component 400 includes three work units:

- 410 Development and validation of the preliminary evaluation report
- 420 Comments and suggestions regarding the preliminary report
- 430 Correction, amendment, and submission of the final evaluation report + annexes

# 3.3.4.1. <u>Work unit 410</u>: Development and validation of the preliminary evaluation report

Based on the various summaries (including documents, interviews in the field, and analyses), the consultant will draw up the findings and final recommendations and will prepare the preliminary report of the project evaluation mission. This preliminary report will consider the following headings:

- evaluation of project execution. This evaluation will include: adequacy of the support provided, relevance of the physical and financial outputs, quality of the intervention approaches, effectiveness of the project management and steering committee arrangements, relationship among the main project actors;
- evaluation of the project's products;
- strengths and weaknesses of the system set up;
- analysis of cost-effectiveness;
- project's main indicators and key achievements;
- summary of the actions requiring monitoring, decision-making with an indication of the level of responsibility (PLECO, partners, specific beneficiaries);
- observations and recommendations regarding the extent to which the project objectives were achieved in order to learn lessons on behalf of similar projects underway and others to be designed. This involves:
  - ✓ making general recommendations on project implementation;
  - ✓ defining the degree to which the project objectives were met;
  - ✓ defining the key lessons that can be learned from the experience and the project outcomes, particularly those elements that worked well and those that did not;
  - ✓ making recommendations regarding actions to be taken after the current project ends;
    - etc.

The preliminary report (Work unit 410) will be presented to the key managers from MESUDD, UNDP and the PLECO team, as well as to the partners, during a validation workshop.

#### 3.3.4.2. Work unit 420: Comments and suggestions

When the report is validated, the project team, UNDP/GEF, and their partners will conduct an exhaustive review. They will deliver comments and suggestions to the consultant so that the evaluation report can be finalized within one week.

# 3.3.4.3. <u>Work unit 420</u>: Correction, amendment, and submission of the final evaluation report + annexes

The mission's preliminary report will be reviewed based on the comments and suggestions from the project team and UNDP, as noted in the TORs, before it is formally transmitted to the contracting authority. The final mission report will thus consider the observations and recommendations drafted by the actors during the work meeting or workshop (see Work unit 420), as well as those submitted post-validation, particularly those regarding the financial partners' other observations (specifically, the GEF). This final report will also contain annexes, including:

- any other element of the "Objectives and Scope of the mid-term evaluation" that is not part of the structure of the FEIS form;
- final evaluation Terms of Reference;
- evaluation mission itinerary;
- list of meetings held and/or attended;
- list of persons interviewed;
- summary of field visits;
- list of documents reviewed; and,
- any other relevant material used.

#### **3.4. Mission programme and schedule**

The mission schedule below was developed based on the TORs and preliminary discussions with the client, the partners and the PLECO PMCU. The mission was scheduled to begin on 11 November and end on 18 July 2015, including briefings, field visits, preparation and validation of the deliverables.

11/11/2015	(i) Arrive Niamey at 13.32 on flight ET 937
	(ii) Reservation at the Grand Hôtel (11-15 November)
	(iii) Driver sent for airport-hotel transportation (Grand Hôtel)
11/12/2015	UNDP, WFP, DGEF/Ministry, etc. briefing;
11/13/2015 :	Briefing at the DGEEF and CNSEE
11/14-15/2015 :	Review of PLECO documents
11/16/2015	Briefing with Deputy Programme Representative
	Briefing with El Hadj Lawali
	WFP-Niamey briefing
11/19/2015	Document review and preparation of data collection and interview forms
11/20/2015 :	Trip to Zinder via UNHAS
	Briefing and work session with project coordination,
	(ii) contacts with the authorities and partners
11/21/2015 :	(i) Prepare schedule of field visits
	(ii) Submit inception report (Report 1)
11/22-23/2015 :	Field visits and interviews with populations and local authorities (Gouré and Maïné-Soroa = round-trip)
11/24-26/2015 :	Summary in Zinder and Niamey
11/25/2015 :	Feedback workshop for actors in Diffa and Zinder: Presentation and discussion of findings and recommendations
11/27/2015 :	Travel to Niamey
11/28-29/2015	Summary of results, Niamey
11/30/2015 :	Feedback meeting on findings and recommendations at UNDP
12/01/2015 :	Feedback meeting on findings and recommendations at SG-MESUDD
12/01-06/2015	Comments from the project, UNDP, and partners
12/02-04/2015	Meeting with PCU to review findings and recommendations discussed during feedback meetings Preparation of preliminary report
12/05/2015 :	International consultant return trip
12/07/2015 :	Submission of preliminary report
12/07-13/2015 :	Submission of comments on the preliminary report
12/13-14/2015 :	Submission of the final report of the evaluation mission

## Table 2.2: Final evaluation mission programme and timeline

## 7.3. Annex 3: Photo boards

#### Photos 1 and 2: Sand invasion of micro-basins and dwellings



Source: Photos, PLECO (2013)

## Photo 3: Mechanical dune fixation work

Photo 3a: Cutting and transporting fixation materials (Leptadenia pyrotechnica)



Source: PLECO

Photo 3b: Digging trenches for mechanical fixation



Source: PLECO





Photo 3d: Proper mechanical fixation with woven wattle fencing of appropriate mesh size



Source: PLECO

### <u>Photos 4:</u> Biological fixation of mechanically stabilized dunes

Photo 4a: Proper fixation

Photo 4b: Average fixation



Source: PLECO

#### Photo 5: Dunes threatening older plots protected between 1990 and 1994



Photo 5: Nguel Beyli (MEMP, 2013) Photo 5 b: Ambouram Ali (MEF, 2015)



Photo 5c: Protection of the Gouré road (MEF, 2015)

## Photo 6: Protected plots (1990-1994), not developed (MEF, 2015)



Photo 6a: Protection of the Maïné-Soroa – Diffa road Photo 6 b: Micro-basin, Ambouram Ali village

<u>Photo 7:</u> Automatic equipment for measuring meteorological parameters installed near Malla (a) and Nguel Magagi (b) – Gouré province for wind dynamics and sand invasion of land and environmental monitoring



Source: Final evaluation mission (November 2015)





## 7.4. <u>Annex 4:</u> Implementation of the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation (2013)

	PLAN D'ACTIONS POUR LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DES RECOMMANDATIONS DE L'EVALUATION A MI PARCOURS							
_	Bureau de pays : Niger					De ser estatut		
No	Constat/Observation/Commenta ire des évaluateurs	Recommandation	Commentaires Mission	Actions Planifièes	Date cible	Ke Unité	Personne	Etat de mise en œuvre (Achevé, En cours ou non adressé)
R1	Réalisations et acquis du projet sont jugés encore très fragiles et ainsi même après la fin du projet	Ajuster la durée du projet dans phase actuelle	N'a pas fait l'objet d'une prolongation	Demander la prorogation de la date d'achèvement du projet pour prendre en compte le retard d'un an de démarrage	T4 2013	PNUD	Mahamane Lawali	PAS DE PROLONGATION OFFICIELLE, MAIS LE PROJET A BENEFICIÉ D'UNE RALLONGE DE SIX MOIS (DEC 2015)
R2	Faibles impacts même à la fin du projet en raison de la nature des activités et de l'hostilité du milieu d'intervention	Envisager la possibilité d'une deuxième phase de développement durable	ACCEPTE MAIS SOUS FORME DE PROGRAMME DÈINVESTISSEMENT	Prendre les mesures pour une deuxième phase de consolidation et diffusion des acquis de GDT et de développement durable	T3 2015	PNUD- GoV	?	Accepté mais non encore officialiséi; consiolidation phase 1 et élaboration et formulation de programme à long terme (mise à l'échalle) Durée suggérée du Programme = 15 ans en 3 phases
	Le programme d'activité paraissant très amblieux et certains résultats majeurs ne pourront être réalisés dans la phase actuelle du projet	Recadrer le programme d'activités		Mettre l'accent sur les actions prioritaires et stratégiques permettant de réaliser globalement les objectifs et les principaux résultats attendus du projet (section 5);	Nov. 2013	UGP- PNUD	Coordinate ur- Mahamane	FAIT: 1. Accent mis sur la consolidation; 2. la mise en valeur des cuvettes; 3. poursuite de la recherche developpinerles (simpliffer les résultats pour qu'ils solent accessible aux utilisateurs; permettent de comprendre la dynamique d'ensabienent et d'affiner les techniques de fixation mécaniquement; le suivi piézométrique des nappes a permis de déterminer la porfondeur minimale des forages(min 15m): mise en aau de Sm
				par la fixation biologique des 3952 ha réalisés par le PLECO	2013-2016	UGP	Coordinateur	Continu
	+			Réhabiliter et aménager les anciennes parcelles réalisées par les projets précédents dans les 44 cuvettes protégées	2013-2016	UGP	Coordinateur	Continu
R3				UGP/PLECO	Nov. 2013	PNUD	Mahamane	Consultations permanentes
PA	Le budget et l'exécution budgétaire manquent de lisibilité du fait de l'augmentation substentielle	La mission recommande une		Entreprendre une révision budgétaire pour mettre à jour les lignes budgétaires et donner une meilleure lisibilité aux dépenses	Octobre 2013	UGP/ PNUD	Coordinateur- Mahamane	ALLOCATIONS CONTINUES, MAIS SANS REVISION BUDGETAIRE
R4	non justifiée advenue en cours de réalisation du projet (aucune note de révision n'a été remise à cet égard à la mission)	révision budgetaire		Officialiser la contribution du PAM, en l'intégrant comme un cofinancement au Projet (Cadre de UNDAF)	Octobre 2013	PNUD- PAM	Operations	Non Fait; Formaliser le cofinancement du PAM (convention PNUD, PAM et Gouvernement)
R5	Les actions de renforcement des capacités n'ont pas produit les impacts recherchés tant au niveau de la maîtrise des outils de diagnostic-analyse des phénomèenes de GDT et de	Continuer le renforcement des capacités des acteurs		Mettre en œuvre un programme efficient de renforcement des capacités des acteurs locaux et de constituution d'un référentiel en matière de GOT/Lute contre l'ensablement. (Syaka : voir doc ABN)	2013-2014	UGP, CNSEE, DGEEF	Coordinateur	Existence d'une étude IEC mais le programme reste à etre élaboré
	lutte contre l'ensablement, ainsi que de mise en valeur des cuvettes stabilisées			Renforcement des capacités des acteurs locaux	2013-2016	UGP	Coordinateur	Fait mais à élargir aux ONG, communes , Cofo et Cogernat
R6	Les actions de renforcement des capacités étant jugées encore prendre en charge le	Redynamiser les cadres de concertation communaux pour nrendre en charge les questions	: de ux pour uestions al	Inciter les communes à intégrer des actions de GDT dans leurs PDC respectifs	2013-206	UGP/ DGEEF	Coordinateur	Pas encore automatique mais la prise de conscience est réelle et certains engagements sont pris au niveau des communes
	faibles	de développement local		Encourager les communes à contractualiser avec les pépiniéristes locaux, notamment les groupements féminins, la production de plants	2013-2016	UGP	Coordinateur	FAIT
R7	Il a été noté que la faiblesse des résultats reposait en partie sur le manque d'outils et de cadre de communication appropriés	plein d'un expert en communication expérimenté et averti des questions d'environnement en général et de		Mettre en œuvre les volets d'information, communication et Éducation environnementale Non fait	2013-2016	UGP	Coordinateur	NON FAIT
	dans la chaine de réalisation des actions de renforcement des capacités des acteurs	développement rural en particulier avec une longue expérience dans la vulgarisation agricole		Créer des ouils adaptés en matière d'organisation sociale et de renforcement des capacités de GDT Non fait	2014	UGP	Coordinateur	NON FAIT
	Malgré les succèes enregistrés au niveau de partenariat avec le	Encourager l'UGP à poursuivre les		Etablir des contacts avec les anciens partenaires financiers et techniques (FAO, USAID, etc.) pour accompagner la réalisation du projet	2013-2015	UGP- DGEEF	Coordinateur- DGEEF	Pas fait. Lors du forum de Mai 2015 des bailleurs de fonds ont pris des engagements pour appuyer le GDT ;A Continuer
R8	PAM, CNSEE et l'université/Faculté d'agronomie, les acquis réalisés dans le domaine de transfert des compétences restent très faibles	contacts avec of autres partenairespour mobiliser des ressources financières additionnelles et acquérir une assistance technique		Signer des accords de partenariat stratégique avec des institutions quailfiées en matière de gestion des bases de données et de GDT: ABN (PLCE, OBN), AGRHYMET, etc.	2013	UGP	Solange Bako	Non Fait. mais à réaliser par le projet et la CGDT
				DGEEF et le PLECO explorer la possibilité de renforcer les capacités des cadres du projet à travers des voyages d'études à l'étranger (Sénégal, Maroc, Egypte, etc.)	T2 2014	UGP- PNUD	Coordinateur- Mahamane	NON FAIT
	Faible coordination des volets opérationnels et institutionnels de la part de la DGEEF, les différentes composantes PIECO aménaciones	Faire jouer à la Direction des aménagements et de la		Instituer des réunions périodiques de coordination entre UGP-PLECO, CNSEE et Cellule GDT	2013-2016	UGP- DGEEF	Coordinateur- DGEEF	Consultation permanente non officialisée
R9	opérationnel, CNSEE et Cellule de GDT ayant travaillé en vase clos, sans réel prise en main des actions par la Direction des aménagements	restauration des terres son rôle de superviseur direct de la mise en œuvre globale du projet		Améliorer la visibilité des réalisations du projet par l'installation des panneaux d'indication sur les sites d'intervention	2013-2014	UGP	Equipes	FAIT
	Il a été constaté un manque de référence en matière des techniques de GDT et de lutte contre l'ensablement, malgré	La mission recommande l'organisation urgente, si possible		Finaliser le recrutement des trois consultants retenus par la DGEEF en avril dernier pour élaborer le document introductif du Forum	Octobre 2013	UGP- DGEEF	Coordinateur- Mahamane	FAIT
R10	['existence d, expériences' Goldes au riveau du pays, ta expériences permettrainent expériences permettrainent d'une projecte actuel et d, assurer une base durable et d, assurer une base durable et d, assurer une			Relancer le Comité d'organisation du Forum, préparer un budget et initier les actions d'organisation	Octobre 2013	UGP- DGEEF	Coordinateur- DGEEF	FAIT

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December 2015

## 7.5. <u>Annex 5:</u> Table 1: Detail of operational PLECO budget execution by financing source, June 2010 – July 2015

Operational PLECO financial implementation (June 2010 – July 2015)							
Project components	Type of funds	2010 Expenditures	2011 Expenditures	2012 Expenditures	2013 Expenditures	2014 Expenditures	2015 (Projection)
-9 I	JIII	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$
Component 1: Improve local land	UNDP funds	9,307.02	134,289.24	143,549.40	145,103.38	170,805.38	303,300
management and ecosystem management practices	GEF Funds	30,228.80	185,741.13	165,443.01	191,193.99	186,676.94	-
	Counterpart	-	32,500.00	79,500.00	140,000.00	200,000.00	140,000
	WFP	-	43,319.04	11,944.62	102,237.00	102,486.83	-
Total 1	2, 517,625.78	39,535.82	395,849.41	400,437.03	578,534.37	659,969.15	443,300.00
<u>Component 2:</u> Build SLM capacities of	UNDP funds	5,884.62	8,583.11	28,239.06	19,662.10	34,843.19	97,000
institutions and local communities	GEF Funds	0	-	11,683.61	19,576.06	29,377.91	-
Total 2	254,849.66	5,884.62	8,583.11	39,922.67	39,238.16	64,221.10	97,000
<u>Component 3:</u> Create a sand invasion	UNDP funds	0	-	13,928.84	10,487.28	-	8,000
system	GEF Funds	23,665.40	65,923.22	41,674.07	19,471.30	33,862.01	-
Total 3	217,012.12	23,665.40	65,923.22	55,602.91	29,958.58	33,862.01	8,000
	UNDP funds	50,097.87	113,222.65	117,075.86	69,826.98	118,977.90	187,700
Component 4: Project management	GEF Funds	307,616.54	148,056.85	114,310.05	153,764.14	156,536.68	-
Total 4	1, 537,185.52	357,714.41	261,279.50	231,385.91	223,591.12	275,514.58	187,700
TOTAL BUDGET	4, 526,673.08	426,800.25	731,635.24	727,348.52	871,322.23	1, 033,566.84	736,000
Coordination	515,984.29	44,155.44	106,052.28	122,776.57	96,800	73,000	73200
Total excluding coordination	4, 010,688.79	382,644.81	625,582.96	604,571.95	774,522.23	960,566.84	662,800.00

## 7.6. <u>Annex 6</u>: PLECO staff members

Last name, first name	Position
Zabeirou Toudjani	Coordinator
Guéro Mamane	Monitoring and evaluation expert
Mme Gambo Bassira Magagi	Manager
Mme Lawan Halimatou Aboubacar	Secretary
Oumarou Elhadji Adamou	Security guard-reception
Issa Rabilou	Facilitator
Ramatou Habou	Facilitator
Daouda Sani	Facilitator
Diallo Maimouna	Facilitator
Haido Abou kassoum	Facilitator
Djibrim Abdou	Facilitator
Lamido Gagaré	Facilitator
Boubacar Abdou Bara	Facilitator
Soumana Hama	Driver
Mamadou Touré Harouna	Driver
Tandja Moussa Diallo	Driver
EMPLOYEES SECONDED TO THE PLECO	
Issoufou Soumana	DDE/Office Director
Maman Siradja Mani	DDE/Office Director
Boubacar Boula Seydou	Operational team leader
Bouzou Mani	Operational team member
Mamadou Ousmane	Operational team member
Moustapha Magagi	Operational team member

### 7.7. <u>Annex 7</u>: List of persons met

FIRST AND LAST NAME	ENTITY
Mourtala	UNDP
Michel Abedi	UNDP
Ibrahim Goumey	UNDP
Fode NDiaye	UNDP
Abdou Soumaila	UNDP
El Hadj Mahamane	UNDP
Elizabeth /Operations	UNDP
Martine/programme	UNDP
Maria/M&E	UNDP
Bouzou	UNDP
Amadou	UNDP
Security	UNDP
Hamissou GARBA	DGEF/SLM
Abdoulaye Maizama	D/CNSEE
Dr. TIDJANI A Didier	School of Agriculture - A. Moumouni University
Mr IBRO	DGA/DGEF/MESUDD
Toudjani Alou Ibrahim	WFP
C.Mjr Bila Maina	SG/MESUDD
Toudjiani Zabeirou	PLECO
Guéro Mamane	PLECO
Mme Gambo Bassira Magagi	PLECO
Mme Lawan Halimatou Aboubacar	PLECO
Issoufou Soumana	DDE/Gouré
Maman Siradja Mani	DDE/Mainé
Boubacar Boula Seydou	Operational team
Bouzou Mani	Operational team
Mamadou Ousmane	Operational team
Moustapha Magagi	Operational team
Diallo Maimouna	Facilitator/Maïné

LAST AND FIRST NAME	ENTITY	CONTACT
Soumana Issoufou	Office Director/Gouré	96 67 97 75
Issa Ado	DREL/ZR	96 58 54 11
Ousmane Lamido H.	Initiative 3N	96 50 41 05
Salifou Abdou Aziz	DRGR/ZR	96 06 69 90
Souley Zangui	DRA/ZR	90 22 50 05
Maman Sirradja Mani	Office Director/Maïné-Soroa	96 07 83 02
Ari Jarami	Guidiguir mayor's office	96 48 64 01
Malam Moctar Garba	Bouné mayor's office	96 90 21 51
Alassan Maman	Gouré mayor's office	96 70 01 72
Moussa L. Kanta	Foulatari mayor's office	97 20 34 00
Elh Sani Ado	CRAC/GRN	96 98 50 60
Elh Soulé Gambo	CRI 3N	96 98 24 61
Rado Moustapha	CR Goudoumaria	96 96 52 04
Almadjir Mamane	DRESU/DD/Zinder	96 99 65 87
Pierre Nignon	Consultant	96 98 15 97
Syaka Sadio	Consultant	90 25 95 11
Zabeirou Toudjani	PLECO Coordinator	96 98 25 21
Tahirou Moussa	Maïné-Soroa SG/mayor's offide	96 28 26 98
Rahman Brandé	DDEST/DD/Goudoumaria	96 50 59 85
Assane Amadou	1st Vice President, Zinder Regional Council	96 46 36 06
Issa Moussa	SGA Zinder	96 96 64 11
Mme Adamou Maimounatou	SGA/Diffa	97 16 60 08
Moustapha Magagi	PLECO Supervisor	96 42 25 25

# 7.8. <u>Annex 8</u>: Attendance list at the feedback session for the project final evaluation mission (Zinder, 24 November 2015)
## Rapport Final

## ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE FINAL EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS - PLECO 00072224

Country office: Niger

No.	Evaluators' comments/observations	Recommendation	Project management/country office comments	Actions planned	Target date	Manager		Implementation
						Unit	Individual	status (completed, underway, not addressed)
	Project Title: PIMS 3225: FSP - Oasis M	icro-Basin Sand Invasion Control Pr	roject					
01	Sand invasion control must be considered a long-term action to guarantee the survival of the populations in the regions concerned. Without such efforts, the country could experience, in the medium-term, irreversible degradation of its natural resources and major losses of its potential for production and survival, with forced migration of populations to other areas.	Give greater national visibility to sand invasion control efforts and development of the micro-basins by creating a permanent, independent structure, financed by the Government with support from the technical partners and cooperation agencies, to pursue their efforts to obtain funding for actions to control sand invasion through long-term commitments to ensure sustainable local development.	This recommendation depends on the political will of the Government. However, if the structure proposed is established and financed by the government, it would have to be under the auspices of a government institution.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
02	If the actions initiated do not continue after the PLECO ends in December 2015, the project's achievements will be lost, as occurred during the period when the NER/024 project, funded by UNDP from 1990-1994, was interrupted.	Ensure a two-year transition phase (2016-2017) to consolidate the achievements and prepare the Long-Term Strategic Programme.	Recommendation is relevant and consistent with the Government's wishes. However, certain actions recommended during this phase can be carried out only during the Long-Term Strategic Programme phase. This specifically involves formalizing the COGERNATs,	Finance a one-year transition phase to consolidate and sustain the achievements and prepare a long- term sand invasion control programme (2016-2017).	January 2016	UNDP	Martine Therer (DRRP)	Completed

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			the communes' taking charge of certain sand invasion control activities, implementing major IEC actions, establishing a system to use the data collected by the CNSEE, strengthening the collaboration with the universities, disseminating research results and translating them into development actions. Also, the long-term programme proposed would focus primarily on sustainable land management and not only on sand invasion control. In addition, this programme would be a component of a modular integrated programme.	Implement activities to consolidate the achievements (identification of plots to be rehabilitated, strengthen actors' capacities, carry out dune fixation actions, and develop micro- basins).	December 2016	PCU, DGEF, regional, departmental, and communal agencies	Zaberou Toudjani	Underway
				Support the development of a long-term strategic programme (2018- 2032) to control sand dune invasion and develop the micro-basins.	December 2016	ME/DD UNDP	Abdou Malam Issa, Abdou Soumaila, Mahamane Lawali	Underway
03	The zone can develop only as part of a long-term programme (15 years) that emphasizes sustainable land management and development of the oasis micro-basin resources.	Implement the Long-Term Strategic Programme to combat sand invasion and develop the micro- basins PSLE/MVC (2018-2032).	However, the proposed programme focuses primarily on sustainable land management, not only on sand invasion control efforts.	Support the mobilization of resources to implement the program, specifically with the Green Climate Fund.	March 2017	ME/DD CNEDD UNDP	Abdou Malam Issa	Underway