



KARAKORO BASIN PILOT OPERATION (ECOWAS CIP): Summary Record of the Meeting in Kayes, Mali, February 2007

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF THE KARAKORO BASIN

The main objective of the initiative (feasibility study of a Karakoro cross-border programme) led by the African Coordination of the *Groupe de Recherche et de Réalisations pour le Développement Rural* (GRDR) is to carry out prospective strategic thinking and advocate for the promotion of local cooperation in the Senegal River basin.

The institutional approval of the Karakoro initiative is being carried out in three steps: (1) the primary phase of institutional and political preparation; (2) a broad consultation phase and the development of an action plan; and (3) further consultation and validation of a programme document. The process has completed the second stage.

- (1) The institutional and political preparation: The GRDR has carried out extensive lobbying in the Senegal River basin (Mali, Mauritania, Senegal) for over thirty years. It is based on numerous cross-border cooperation agreements and conventions linking Mali and Mauritania since independence. This phase was validated at the official launching meeting held in Nouakchott (Mauritania) in September 2006.
- (2) A broad consultation phase and the development of an action plan for 2007–2010 was validated in Kayes at a workshop held from 7 to 9 February 2007 with locally-elected officials and civil society organisations from the two countries.

KAYES, THE BASIN'S BORDER COOPERATION ISSUES AND POTENTIAL

Cross-border cooperation is not a development sector but rather a tool. It combines several aspects, for example: in the area of security of refugees during conflict; in the area of migration where land planning zones must become settlement and development areas. The issues are:

- To strengthen social, economic and cultural exchanges.
- To assure better movement of persons and goods and increase trade.
- To promote cross-border inter-communality.
- To harmonise sectoral policies.

Karakoro is composed of nine communes of which 4 are in Mali and 5 are in Mauritania, covering an area of 6 900 Km² with 150 000 inhabitants. With an eco-climatic friendly environment, the river basin has significant natural resources as well as social services used concurrently by populations on both sides of the border. It is above all the last natural resources reservoir of the pre-Sahelian zone between Mali and Mauritania.

OVERVIEW OF THE ZONE BASED ON THREE STUDIES PRESENTED AT THE WORKSHOP

- **Infrastructure** (public, agriculture, economic, communications, decompartmentalisation, energy).

Recommendations from the debates:

Communications:

- Planning of crossing routes in the Karakoro Basin.
- Local opening up.
- Establishing a network of community radio stations.
- Improving the mobile telephone network.

Socio-community infrastructures:

- Developing a concerted land planning diagram of educational services.
- Developing a concerted land planning diagram of health services.
- Developing domestic rural electricity and water supply.

□ **Dynamics of the Local Economy**

Production activities underpinning this economy are agricultural (rain-fed and market gardening), livestock breeding (intensive and extensive), fisheries, handicrafts and use of forestry products (wood and non-wood). Essentially based on production activities and commercial trade of raw materials, the Karakoro Basin's local economy is also stimulated by imported products. The zone's economic reality can be illustrated by a three-concentric circle structure: i) the Basin as it is; ii) the Basin in an area polarised by Kayes and Sélibaby; and iii) the Basin as an important transit place which links up wide open spaces: Nouakchott and Bamako.

Constraints identified during the debates:

- The issue of water: resolving drainage issues and reintroduction of off-season crops with a recession system are presented as a solution to food security.
- Conflicts between farmers and livestock breeders or cattle theft.
- Speculative practices on staple foods production.
- Obstacles to movement and populations' misunderstanding of their rights.

Karakoro's position as Kayes' northern transit zone must be taken into account. The border is demarcated by Mauritanian warehouses in which products are collected and stocked and benefit from a well-structured network which controls the market.

WEST AFRICAN BORDERS AND INTEGRATION

Actions to undertake in order to capitalize on existing potential:

- Strengthen existing markets.
- Create weekly markets.
- Make Karakoro a free-zone.
- Develop information and communications.
- Create rural routes.
- Develop inter-communality in the Basin.
- Share available funds.

These actions would be strengthened if Karakoro were to be considered a land planning zone with its own Convention based on the Senegal River model; if migrants were involved in the process.

□ Natural resources management

The study focus on three areas: water, land and forest. A concerted action plan was suggested by participants:

Water:

- Planning of Karakoro's water surface areas.
- Water supply to isolated villages.
- Creating pastoral watering points.
- Protecting deteriorating river banks.

Land:

- Restoring and preserving land through Water and Soil Conservation measures.
- Reforesting deteriorating zones (promoting gum trees).
- Creating transhumance corridors, transit corridors.

Forest:

- Reforesting and conserving threatened areas.

Cross-cutting proposals concerning the 3 themes emerge:

- Furthering analysis initiated by the studies.
- Studies, harmonizing and disseminating texts on natural resources.
- Developing and applying better adapted local conventions.
- Strategic thinking on renewable energy.
- Defining land planning diagrams.
- Actions for acceding, mobilising, and sensitising communities, increasing political lobbying.
- Building capacities of actors (training in "GRN", Natural Resources Management).

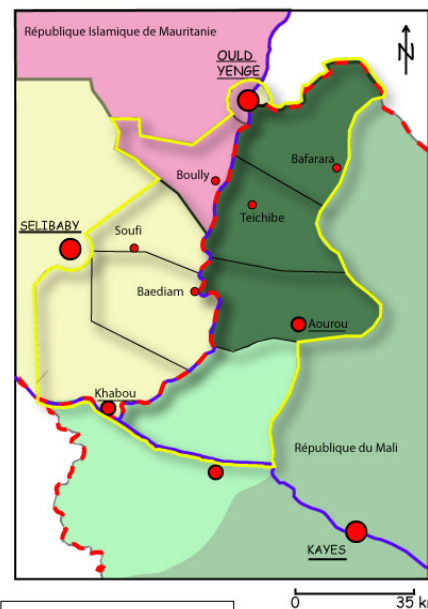
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The next steps of the process are phase 3:

- Validating the programme's logistical framework (July 2007).

- Meeting in Bamako to present the programme to decision-makers and government officials so that they remain mobilised and involved in this initiative (October 2007).

CARTE DE LA ZONE D'INTERVENTION



Sources : Tracés Mauritanie : oueds = PROGRN-GH / limites administratives = DGCL
Tracés Mali = ARP Développement

Réalisation: GRDR Mauritanie, juillet 2006.

HOW TO LEARN MORE www.afriquefrontieres.org

Key-sheet produced by the SWAC.
Summary Record and studies available on the website www.afriquefrontieres.org and via the GRDR.

Contact: arezki.harkouk@grdr.org
www.grdr.org

Institutional Partners:
Land Planning and Regional Action Directorates as well as the General Directorate of local communities under the responsibility of the Mauritanian Minister of the Interior, Postal Service and Telecommunications.
The National Borders Directorate of Mali under the responsibility of the Ministry of Regional Planning and Local Communities.

Technical and Financial Partners: SWAC, CCFD, European Commission Delegation in Mauritania, ENDA-Diapol.