

Objectives and methodology

A favourable context for cross-border co-operation

In **March 2002**, in Sikasso, the government of Mali, with the support of the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat/OECD, organised the first West African meeting on the concept of “cross-border area”. This meeting led to a shared definition of the concept as “a geographic area that straddles two or more countries, where people are linked by socio-economic and cultural ties”.

In **May 2002**, in Accra, the SWAC organised a meeting entitled “Towards a better regional approach to development in West Africa”. It concluded that “the concept of a ‘cross-border area’ can bring about a healthy shift from today’s strictly bilateral approaches towards recognition of regional areas in which the population is actively involved at all levels of governance and which should now be considered as full fledged, rather than merely marginal, partners for co-operation”.

At a workshop on cross-border co-operation, Ouagadougou July 2003, the “West African Borders and Integration” initiative (WABI) was created. Its founding members being a government body (Mali’s National Borders Directorate, DNF), a NGO (ENDA-Diapol) and international organisation the SWAC/OECD, which also provided the funding.

WABI’s objectives are to promote implementation of cross-border co-operation programmes and “pilot operations” on the ground, develop synergies, exchange experiences and promote on cross-border co operation.

In **2004**, the SWAC established contacts with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), which brings together over 100 European regions. The AEBR is the policy arm of European cross-border co operation. The EU budget devoted to cross-border co-operation for the period 2007 13 has been set at €7.75 billion (over 5 trillion CFA francs).

Co-ordinated pilot operations were launched by on the ground operators who had been involved for many years in cross border development. Their role is to co-ordinate and local promotion of cross border activities (PDM for the Sikasso Korhogo-Bobo area; Enda Diapol for Southern Senegambia; GRDR for the Karakoro Basin; Fewnet, the Niger-Nigeria Joint Commission for Cooperation and the SWAC for the Kano-Katsina-Maradi area).

The strength of the WABI network resides in the complementarity of its members, the political lobbying by governments and ECOWAS, the dialogue between operators and institutions, the exchange of experiences between South and North and the strong commitment of the local population.

The enthusiasm of populations in border regions has won the support of regional institutions and national governments. Today, many West African countries advocate the use of cross-border co-operation to accelerate the regional integration process. Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria officially support pilot operations.

ECOWAS: launch of the Cross-Border Initiatives Programme in 2005 and submission of the Cross Border Co operation Convention at the summit of ECOWAS Heads of State in December 2008.

- ECOWAS adopted the Cross-Border Initiatives Programme (CIP) in January 2005. It aims to accelerate the regional integration process by promoting a growing number of locally initiated cross-border projects. In 2007, ECOWAS set-up a cross-border co operation desk in the Free Movement of Persons and Tourism Department.
- The 2007–2010 Strategic Plan (approved by the Heads of State of member countries in June 2007) calls for implementation of a regional strategy to support cross-border co-operation (Objective No. C-TCTMoPIM O2 EO2 A2.3). This strategy is based on the CIP.
- 2010, certain cross-border operations are eligible for financing from the ECOWAS Peace Fund.

UEMOA: incorporation of cross-border co-operation into its regional integration strategy in 2004, as well as the CILSS.

- UEMOA included border co-operation in the Act adopting the Union's Territorial Development Policy. Article 4 on the development of community solidarity states that the Organisation will organise cross-border and inter-communal co-operation programmes to support, strengthen and promote decentralisation and local development.

African Union: Launch of the Border Programme in June 2007

- In October 2006, the Commission of the African Union launched, with the support of the SWAC the formulation of a prospective Pan-African "Border Programme" based partly on the West African experience. The SWAC was member of the Steering Committee. In June 2007, in Addis Ababa, a conference of African ministers in charge of regional integration endorsed the African Union Border Programme.

Objectives of the Practical Guide

- To highlight the cross-border potential and needs of Mali – Burkina Faso and propose tools for implementing operational frameworks;
- To provide policy recommendations regarding regional and national legislative contexts;
- To help design regional strategies on the basis of sample pilot projects and propose a methodology developing solutions tailored to each situation.

The CD-ROM provides local actors, technical operators, governments, regional organisations and donors with analyses of possible approaches for facilitating financial and legal arrangements. To put the theory into practice, a pilot has been carried out on the Mali-Burkina Faso border, more specifically in the mango sector. The participative process involves focal points in the Malian Ministry for Territorial Administration and Local Authorities and the Burkina Faso Ministry for Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, private economic actors and representatives of local and regional governments. The methodology stresses the need to take each context into account in developing operational frameworks (more or less rigid or informal). It is for this reason that field missions, interviews and a review of existing situations have been included in a preliminary assessment. The process involves frequent meetings at which views are exchanged with the relevant stakeholders and culminates in a validation workshop.

The recommendations included in the “practical guide” are based on international “good practices” in the field of cross border development, but its status is merely advisory. Before they are transposed into national or regional legislation, recommendations should be carefully evaluated in terms of feasibility and sequencing.



Le Seine Saint-Germain
12 bd des Iles
F-92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux

Mailing Address 2 rue André Pascal
F-75775 Paris
Cedex 16

Phone +33 (0)1 45 24 89 87

Fax +33 (0)1 45 24 90 31

E-mail swac.contact@oecd.org