

Côte d'Ivoire: Forestry Sector Programme I (Eastern Forests Component)

Ex post evaluation report

OECD sector	31220/Forestry development	
BMZ project ID	1989 66 426	
Project executing agency	Société de Développement des Forêts (SODEFOR)	
Consultant		
Year of ex post evaluation report	2009	
	Project appraisal (planned)	Ex post evaluation (actual)
Start of implementation	Q1 1991	Q2 1993
Period of implementation	60 months	90 months
Investment costs	EUR 6.1 million	EUR 13.3 million
Counterpart contribution	EUR 0 million	EUR 0 million
Financing, of which FC funds	EUR 6.1 million	EUR 13.3 million
Other institutions/donors involved	GTZ	GTZ
Performance rating	4 – unsatisfactory	
• Relevance	3 – satisfactory	
• Effectiveness	3 – satisfactory	
• Efficiency	3 – satisfactory	
• Overarching developmental impact	4 – unsatisfactory	
• Sustainability	4 – inadequate	

Brief description, overall objective and project objectives with indicators

The National Forestry Sector Programme has been supported by German Financial Cooperation (FC) and other donors since 1993, with German Development Cooperation focusing on the eastern forests. Initially, Forestry Sector Programme I comprised two components – the Taï National Park and the eastern forests. In 2002, the Taï National Park component was upgraded and has since been managed under a separate Forestry Sector Programme II (BMZ No. 2002 65 256). This ex-post evaluation covers only the eastern forests.

The objective of this joint programme of German Financial and Technical Cooperation (FC/TC) was to protect, rehabilitate and sustainably manage seven selected state forests (forêts classées) in the Abengourou region with the strong involvement of the local population.

The national forestry administration Société de Développement des Forêts en Côte d'Ivoire (SODEFOR) acted as the programme's executing agency. For SODEFOR's regional directorate in Abengourou, German FC funded construction measures and

equipment (vehicles, forest implements and office equipment), forestry measures (introduction of a forestry management plan, afforestation and forest tending measures) and the creation of alternative sources of income for farmers in the adjacent areas. The TC measures focused on strengthening the institutional capabilities of the regional SODEFOR office.

The programme's overall objective was defined in the appraisal report as 'making a contribution to preserving the function of eight forests in the east and in the Taï National Park for the micro and regional climate and the water balance and, hence, for adjacent agricultural areas, and protecting these eight forests as a natural resource by preparing their sustainable management in harmony with nature. This overall objective included aspects related to the water balance and the micro climate for which no indicators were defined at the time of programme appraisal. In the absence of corresponding data, this ex-post evaluation can track the overall objective only by measuring 'the integrity of forest areas', an indicator that is also used to track the programme objectives.

The programme appraisal report defined the programme objectives as follows: (1) to preserve the area size of eight primal forests in the east of Côte d'Ivoire; (2) to substantially reduce uncontrolled logging and clearing of new agricultural land in the eight forests; (3) to draw up and introduce environmentally sound and sustainable forest management plans for the eight forests; and (4) to develop and test participatory and incentive-driven concepts to stabilise local farmers. The programme's target group comprised the local population (approximately 200,000 people from 48 villages) in areas adjacent to the selected seven state forests; most of them are poor subsistence farmers. The target group also included about 4,370 plantation workers who operate a plantation in the forest, some of them living on site.

Programme design / major deviations from the original programme planning and their main causes

The basic concept consisted in helping SODEFOR manage the seven selected state forests with a view to preserving and rehabilitating forest areas and introducing a sustainable forestry management system. The FC-funded investment measures included (1) rehabilitating or building new forest stations; (2) marking boundaries, developing a forestry infrastructure and building forest roads; (3) setting up a forestry management plan and introducing sustainable management methods; (4) afforestation and rehabilitation of cleared or degraded land; (5) promoting new sources of income for the local population; (6) providing equipment and vehicles and (7) conducting studies and mapping projects.

As a result of the construction measures (as under (1) above), the forest administration of the programme region was provided with operational stations and appropriate equipment. Due to the difficult terrain, the costs of road construction and maintenance were substantially higher than planned, and in spite of reduced mileage and a cost-efficient design, the budget was overspent by 22%. Roads were maintained by local villagers under FC-funded service contracts. The equipment and the vehicles were delivered as scheduled, but except for two off-road cars, they all disappeared or were no longer operational. Various studies and mapping projects were carried out under the programme, but the results were no longer available or outdated. Bio monitoring as a method for determining silvicultural conditions was discontinued after 2005 for want of funding. In 2006, measures to determine the number of plantations and planters in the programme region were abandoned for cost reasons.

The majority of the measures were inappropriate to achieve the overall objective. For instance, cost-intensive rehabilitation of forest tracks has also provided illegal users with easier access to the forests. A forest inventory survey, which is a sine qua non for

rehabilitating and managing the forests, has still not been carried out. The provision of equipment was not matched by sufficient training in order to maintain and use it properly. The same is true for maintaining and storing the collected data. Also, there is no concept to ensure that current operating costs and minor replacements are adequately funded, which gives rise to major sustainability risks after the end of FC funding. Forestry management is unsatisfactory too, as there is no incentive for small farmers to leave the forests or to promote sustainable use. The same applies to the executing agency which has no incentive to sustainably manage the forests.

Key results of the impact analysis and performance rating

The target of preserving 95% of the forest area by the year 2000 (as compared to 1995 as the year of reference) was not achieved for the forests of Songan and Tamin. For the forests of Mabi, Manzan and Yaga, there are no precise area data for 1995. In Bossematié, the forest area increased; in Beki the decrease was within the tolerance range. The forests of Beki, Songan and Tamin experienced a decline in the forest area until 2008. Obviously the programme was not successful in reducing logging activities and the clearing of agricultural land. Between 1998 and 2008, the forest area size declined in all forests by a rate higher than the tolerance range of 5%, except in Bossematié. It is not possible to evaluate the Mabi state forest, as there are no data for 2008. The forest stock area did not grow (except in the Bossematié state forest). Incentive schemes for the local population appealed only to a limited number of persons within the target group. It is not possible to evaluate the silvicultural conditions as no data were collected during the implementation phase of the programme and after the conclusion of the investment. As regards the programme objectives of preserving forest areas, reducing illegal activities in the forests (such as logging and the clearing of land for new plantations) and introducing sustainable management methods, only the preservation objective was achieved, and here, too, there are reservations to be made.

The developmental efficacy of the programme is rated as follows:

Relevance (sub-rating 3): The relevance of projects to protect, rehabilitate and sustainably manage tropical forests continues to be very high, and they continue to gain in importance. This is particularly true for Côte d'Ivoire, a country which between 1980 and 2000 lost approximately 50% of its woodland areas and still has not been able to reverse this trend. Rather, the trend has been aggravated by high population growth and the outbreak of civil war in 2002. Recent developments have put even more pressure on the forests. Between 2000 and 2008, another 15% of the nation's remaining woodland areas were destroyed. In 2009, the situation worsened again as more state forests were ravaged. The National Forestry Sector Programme was declared a failure in 1997. Its breakdown was also ascribed to a lack of political and financial commitment on the part of the Ivorian government, which caused the underlying sectoral conditions to deteriorate and prompted other donors, including the World Bank, to withdraw from the sector. As a large number of people who live in the original rain forest belt directly depend on service functions provided by the forest ecosystem (including the pollination of crop plants, the purification of drinking water and the provision of fertile soil), there is a continued urgency to ensure long-term preservation of the forests, introduce sustainable management schemes and create alternative sources of income. However, it is the very target group of such measures that jeopardises the survival of the forests by exploiting them in an unsustainable manner. The programme's design was not adequately focused on resolving the core problem of that target group. The programme was in line with Côte d'Ivoire's national activities and plans, with international development goals and agreements and with new approaches to combating climate change (as, for instance, proposed by the IPCC).

Effectiveness (sub-rating 3): As regards the programme objectives of preserving forest areas, reducing illegal activities in the forests (such as logging and the clearing of land for new plantations) and introducing sustainable management methods, only the preservation objective was achieved, and here, too, there are reservations to be made. Important data for the evaluation of the forest areas have never been collected, or they were lost in the course of the programme. A comprehensive forest inventory survey as a basis for rehabilitating and managing the forests has never been carried out. Only a small number of villages, households and individuals have benefited directly from the implemented measures. This applies both to the awarding of forestry work contracts (tending, afforestation and thinning) and to sponsored micro-projects, many of which failed while others were continued on a reduced scale. Bio monitoring data (including information related to biodiversity and to the forests' ecological processes as crucial parameters to track the success of preservation measures) were collected only in 2005 and were not comprehensively evaluated. Measures against poaching have not been carried out at all or only in urgent cases. As SODEFOR's operating costs are almost exclusively funded by logging revenues, there is a major risk of compromising sustainability principles because of economic constraints. There was some early evidence to prove this point when teak plantations were established or when individual trees (which were said to be ill) were cut down in the Beki state forest.

Efficiency (sub-rating 3): As no forest harvesting activities had been scheduled during the implementation phase of the programme, it was not possible to generate any revenue from that source. At the same time, high costs were incurred for SODEFOR's equipment (vehicles, mobile saws, road rehabilitation and maintenance) which had to be covered by the programme. In that context, the specific costs for rehabilitating and maintaining the forest roads appear very high. Probably the monitoring, afforestation and tending measures could have been carried out just as well without spending so much money on the forest road system. What is more, the construction and maintenance of the forest roads has also benefited other (illegal) forest users who now find it easier to access the forests and remove their products. It cannot be ruled out that this might have produced an effect that runs counter to at least one of the defined overall objectives, namely the protection of the forests. In the medium and long term, SODEFOR will obviously not be able to fund the required activities on its own. This is also due to the poor efficiency of SODEFOR's operations whose large and expensive administrative machinery has to be funded by tapping a resource that has already been depleted to a large extent.

Overarching developmental impact (sub-rating 4): As no data relating to the microclimate and the water balance of the individual forests or the region were collected during or after the term of the programme, one can only use 'forest area preservation' as an indirect indicator to track the positive effects on the microclimate and the water balance which the programme aimed to produce. Against the backdrop of ongoing deforestation at a rapid pace, which also takes place in conservation areas and other state forests, the programme had a crucial role to play. While in other parts of the country numerous protected forests disappeared between 2000 and 2008, the integrity of the eastern forest areas was largely preserved. Yet there were also some visible losses in the east. The programme did not manage to rehabilitate and sustainably manage the forests to the extent that would have been necessary. A positive side-effect, which has been emphasised by the executing agency time and again, was the transfer of the programme's expertise and working methods to other operating units of SODEFOR. However, SODEFOR has yet to review its approach to protecting the forests under its control. In summary, the overarching developmental impact falls considerably short of the expectations that were raised at the programme appraisal stage, and the negative aspects prevail.

Sustainability (sub-rating 4): SODEFOR is not able to provide the budgetary means on its own that are required to carry out its protection, monitoring and management tasks,

which in turn are crucial for the long-term preservation, rehabilitation and sustainable management of the forests. Over the next ten years, SODFOR will need approximately CFA 2 billion per year to manage the seven forests covered by the programme, but as past experience has shown, only about 25% of the funding requirements will be met from SOEDFOR's own budget. In addition, there is a shortage of qualified manpower. At the same time, the pressure on the forests (arising from strong population growth and poverty) is increasing strongly and so is the demand for firewood and timber, which are hard to find outside the Taï National Park and the eastern forests. Therefore, it will be very difficult to manage the forests on the basis of the original objectives of the programme. Cooperation agreements that have already been concluded with timber companies give rise to the fear that logging will start as soon as the agreed moratorium ends in 2010. If efforts fail to manage the forests as an integral unit and ensure sustainable management under an FSC regime, there is an immense risk of them disappearing in the years to come. After the forest area had declined by 15% between 2000 and 2008, more state forests were cut down in the west of the country in 2009. In that context, unsustainable logging and the very lucrative production of charcoal pose a serious threat to the forests. The executing agency is ill-equipped to confront the massive pressure exerted by the existing charcoal mafia. SOEFOR relies almost exclusively on its logging revenues and is therefore under direct pressure to exploit the very resources (in an unsustainable manner) it is supposed to protect. As a consequence, the agency's economic situation is diametrically at odds with the programme's overall objective. For the reasons cited above, we have come to the conclusion that the programme is beset by major sustainability issues, and related risks are going to increase after the end of the programme.

Overall performance (rating 4): For the reasons cited above, the programmes overall developmental efficacy is rated as unsatisfactory (rating 4).

(Details on performance assessment can be found in the technical information sheet "Criteria and rating system in ex post evaluation reports on German bilateral FC" of 14 September 2006.)

General conclusions and recommendations

Tropical rainforests are being destroyed in numerous countries, and the forest ecosystem is becoming increasingly dysfunctional. As population growth and changes in land use aggravate the problem further, it will remain high on the agenda of Germany's Financial Cooperation. Yet the size of projects like the one under review may well overstretch the capacities of FC intervention, particularly if such factors as population growth and civil war exacerbate the situation and other donors withdraw from sector support, as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire. In such a situation, it may be advisable to fundamentally reconsider and adjust the original design of the project.

Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success (project rating)

Projects are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being relevance, effectiveness (outcome), “overarching developmental impact” and efficiency. The ratings are also used to arrive at a final assessment of a project’s overall developmental efficacy. The scale is as follows:

- 1 Very good rating that clearly exceeds expectations
- 2 Good rating fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings
- 3 Satisfactory rating – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate
- 4 Unsatisfactory rating – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
- 5 Clearly inadequate rating – despite some positive partial results the negative results clearly dominate
- 6 The project has no positive results or the situation has actually deteriorated

A rating of 1 to 3 is a positive assessment and indicates a successful project while a rating of 4 to 6 is a negative assessment and indicates a project which has no sufficiently positive results.

Sustainability is evaluated according to the following four-point scale:

Sustainability level 1 (very good sustainability)

The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to continue undiminished or even increase.

Sustainability level 2 (good sustainability)

The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline only minimally but remain positive overall. (This is what can normally be expected.)

Sustainability level 3 (satisfactory sustainability)

The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline significantly but remain positive overall. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability of a project is considered inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation but is very likely to evolve positively so that the project will ultimately achieve positive developmental efficacy.

Sustainability level 4 (inadequate sustainability)

The developmental efficacy of the project is inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation and an improvement is very unlikely. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability that has been positively evaluated to date is very likely to deteriorate severely and no longer meet the level 3 criteria.

The overall rating on the six-point scale is compiled from a weighting of all five individual criteria as appropriate to the project in question. A rating of 1 to 3 indicates a “successful” project while a rating of 4 to 6 indicates an “unsuccessful” project. In using (with a project-specific weighting) the five key factors to form an overall rating, it should be noted that a project can generally only be considered developmentally “successful” if the achievement of the project objective (“effectiveness”), the impact on the overall objective (“overarching developmental impact”) and the sustainability are considered at least “satisfactory” (rating 3).