



"Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication and Knowledge Services
« (BRICKS) Project

Regional Workshop on communicating project results to different audiences
Niamey 17-21 July, 2017

Synthesis of the work

Organized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in collaboration with the Permanent Inter-States Committee on Drought Control (CILSS), the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) and World Bank, **the regional workshop on communicating project results to different audiences took place from 17 to 21 July, 2017 at Hotel Gaweye of Niamey, Niger.**

The workshop is part of the implementation of the « *Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication and Knowledge Services* » (BRICKS) Project, in support of the Great Green Wall Initiative (SAWAP). It aimed at contributing to communicating to key audiences the way SAWAP Projects' results are supporting the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative, by producing success stories for decision-makers within governments, the private sector and civil society that give evidence of the value added of the various country projects of the Great Green Wall.

About fifty participants came from 12 SAWAP countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Chad and Togo) and Guinea. They were made up of communication experts, journalists, representatives of the three BRICKS executing agencies (IUCN, CILSS, OSS), the Focal Points of TerrAfrica, of the Great Green Wall national agency and of ReSAD in Niger.

I. Opening ceremony

Chaired by Colonel Major BILA Maina, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Niger, representing the Minister, the opening ceremony was marked by three addresses:

- **The welcome remarks by the Coordinator of the Community Action Programme (PAC3)**

Mr. Ali Moha first welcomed the participants to the workshop. He then recalled the objectives of the Great Green Wall before explaining the context of the workshop that will enable communication experts of the 12 SAWAP projects and journalists to continue raising public awareness on the vision and challenges to be taken up as part of the Great Green Wall Initiative. According to him, the Great Green Wall Initiative has positively evolved over time in its design and implementation strategy by adapting to an ever changing physical, social and institutional environment. And it clearly appears that communication and the messages already conveyed or those to be conveyed to the general public in both our cities and country side have played and will still play a critical role. The workshop is of paramount importance for our countries in terms of development and sound natural resource management communication. Mr. Ali Moha concluded his speech by wishing the workshop a great success.

- **Address by the representative of the IUCN Regional Director for Central and West Africa**

First of all, Mr. Jacques Somda welcomed all participants to the workshop on behalf of the Regional Director of IUCN and of the BRICKS Project's implementing partner institutions (CILSS and OSS). He then recalled the objectives of the BRICKS project and the role of each executing agency, before giving an update of the actions undertaken in the field of communication in collaboration with the SAWAP project teams. Convinced of the competencies and expertise of each of the participants and confident in their commitment to working towards improved natural resource management in general, of land and water management in particular, he has no doubt about the good outcomes of this workshop. Mister Jacques Somda thanked the World Bank for their support to the 12 countries of Africa to increase their resilience capacity in view of combating poverty.

He also thanked CILSS and OSS for their perfect collaboration in the implementation of the BRICKS Project. To the Niger Government and to PAC3, he expressed his appreciation for their involvement in the preparations for and smooth running of the current workshop.

- **Opening speech by the Permanent Secretary, representing the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Niger**

Col. Major BILA Maina started by conveying warm congratulations and greetings from the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development who could not be present due to other duties. Welcoming the participants and wishing them a pleasant stay on the hospitable land of Niger, he hailed the outstanding presence at this workshop of high level specialists who accepted to travel to Niamey to share their knowledge, experiences and expertise. Col. Major then described the objective set for the BRICKS Project which is to bring an effective contribution to the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel. The workshop will enable the BRICKS Project communicators and journalists to be equipped with strategic communication and story telling techniques so as to better share best practices, inform and raise the awareness of decision-makers and of the general public with respect to the achievements recorded in the implementation of the SAWAP projects and of the Great Green Wall Initiative.

II. Introductory activities

The workshop was facilitated by Mr. Peter Paul Van Kempen for the IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), assisted by Mr. Christophe Hien and Madam Félicité Mangang.

Self-introductions expectations of the participants

The deliberations of the workshop started with the constitution of working teams and introduction of the participants. Each country team was made up of a pair (communicator and journalist). The constitution of pairs helped to establish working groups of 4 to 6 persons. The next phase consisted of voicing the participants' expectations. These preliminary steps formed the basis for kick-starting the deliberations.

III- The proceedings

1-Presentations, group work and discussions

The workshop methodology was based on "learning by doing" through group work and plenary discussions.

The deliberations were organized in the form of interdependent sessions that contribute to achieving the objectives of the workshop. Each of the sessions contained presentations followed by practical exercises, group work and feedback in plenary sessions.

The following points were discussed during the various sessions and alternated with a field trip:

- **Evaluation of the changes induced by participation in training, Jacques SOMDA, IUCN**

The workshop gave an opportunity for BRICKS implementing agencies to evaluate previous training workshops on communication capacity building (Dakar¹, Lomé² and Accra³). To this effect, a questionnaire was submitted to the participants to collect their views and suggestions on the relevance of the trainings already conducted. This enabled to assess the change induced by their participation in the various trainings.

Overall, 37 participants on 46 (Government actors, inter-State actors, media men and women (journalists), communication experts of the projects and NGOs) from 14 countries⁴ have filled in the forms.

¹ Parallel practical interactive session: communication tools, 5 May 2016, Dakar, Senegal (side event of the 3rd SAWAP Conference).

² Regional workshop on media men and women's capacity building on the theme of Sustainable Land and Water Management (SLWM): Sustainable land and water management in SAWAP countries: issues, challenges and local strategies, 3-7 October 2016, Lomé, Togo.

³ Regional Workshop on SAWAP teams' and media men and women's capacity building for the use of social media and collaborative web 2.0 tools for development: The collaborative web 2.0 tools: a new opportunity for distance cooperation, 13-16 February 2017, Accra, Ghana.

⁴ Benin, Burkina Faso, Tchad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Soudan, Togo, Guinea and Tunis

The assessment covered various aspects:

- Relevance: all workshops ranked from "*relevant*" to "*extremely relevant*".
- The most extensively discussed issues were in the Lomé workshop on SLWM.
- Effectiveness: the trainings made it possible to improve knowledge and awareness level within projects and to some extent, within the target populations.
- Usefulness of the trainings in terms of influencing the target audiences: the knowledge was used in the projects for influencing policies more particularly.
- Factors of implementation: the environment of countries and projects has greatly influenced the use of the knowledge acquired. There were however, some minor problems.

Furthermore, the outcomes show that there were more male than female participants in the various trainings. There was therefore a gender imbalance.

The outcomes of this assessment also reveal that 11% of participants feel that the BRICKS trainings are more relevant than those received under other projects.

In conclusion, this assessment indicates that the trainings were all relevant in terms of knowledge strengthening and partnership establishing as well. This shows that the community of practices is a reality under construction in the BRICKS project.

- **Sharing the Vision on the Great Green Wall, Razingrim Ouédraogo, IUCN**

The presentation enabled participants to schematically represent the Great Green Wall. The exercise and discussions that following the drawing of sketches made it possible for participants to further understand the Vision on the Great Green Wall.

Mister Ouédraogo, in his presentation and through the answers to the questions, gave the history of the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) clarifying the background to the establishment of the GGWI, the initial vision and developments in the GGW vision which moved from creating a physical barrier made up of trees from the East to the West of Africa in order to "stop desert encroachment " to a set of integrated sustainable development interventions addressing the multisectoral issues that affect the lives of the people. In this new vision of the GGW which calls for synergetic actions, the presenter specified that in the longer term, the GGW extending from Senegal to Djibouti should change from a green strip to an all-green area where one will be able to undertake soil reclaim, agro forestry, farming, livestock breeding, soil irrigation, area protection and more activities.

- **Resilience & Nature-Based Solutions, Bora Masumbuko, UICN**

The woman coordinator of BRICKS at IUCN first recalled the various ecosystem services (support, supply, regulation and cultural services) rendered by nature and which contribute to human well-being. Ecosystems and the services that they deliver are submitted to disruptions and resilience is the capacity of a system that is submitted to disruption, to respond to long term chocks and stress; it thus maintains its structure or rebuilds itself after having gone through a choc; the more an ecosystem is protected and healthy, the more it is capable of coping with chocks. Finally, resilience and nature-based solutions are strongly linked as the latter help to protect, manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems, thus enhancing their resilience.

- **Frogleaps Presentation, Félicité Mangang, IUCN**

As a reminder, the Frogleaps (<http://frogleaps.org>) site is a sustainable development communication tool. It is a free, online interactive learning course on strategic communication and story telling techniques. Created by two members of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (IUCN - CEC) (Frits Hesselink and Peter Paul van Kempen), this Web platform assists professionals and helps them implement the international agreements on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development. The French version (<http://fr.frogleaps.org>) of this platform is now available and this was made possible with the support of the "Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication and Knowledge Services" (BRICKS) Project. Madam Mangang called on participants to make of the www.frogleaps.org site a learning tool to deepen the knowledge shared during the workshop and of course on many other subject matters related to strategic communication and story telling.

- **Storytelling through peer learning by Peter Paul, CEC/IUCN**

Peer learning was the flagship topic of the present workshop on communicating outcomes. It consisted of learning story telling techniques depending on target audiences. With the exercises, the teams made up of journalists and communication experts were able to improve the listening capacity of participants on one hand and the story telling techniques of participants through telling stories to their peers on the other hand.

The key points of the various sessions on storytelling were the following:

- Techniques of telling captivating stories;
- Understanding and designing storyboards;
- Definition of target audiences;
- Writing a story based on a story board;
- Learning from peers' stories.

III- The field trip

The field trip was to the rural commune of Say, located at fifty kilometers from the capital city Niamey. The aim of this visit was to have an insight of the reality of sustainable land and water management in Niger and concerned two sites: Tchirofondou and Lougabanda in the Tillabéry region.

In Tchirofondou, the participants were welcomed by the prefect, the mayor and the populations including women as the major beneficiaries. The land reclamation initiative carried out by PAC3 on 30 hectares has as aim objective to improve women's income through soil rehabilitation and productive activities, particularly agroforestry.

In Lougabanda, the participants discovered what Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) is all about. It consists of building the potential of an existing ecosystem, making it more productive in all aspects. ANR in the Say commune enables to regenerate 1,468 hectares, covering 15 villages.

IV- Recommendations

At the participants:

- Practice the exercises more individually and between them.

To the trainers and presenters:

- Allocate more time for practical work;
- Further clarify the presentations.

To the organizers:

- Organize specific sessions for journalists and communicators in the sidelines of the workshop;
- Better prepare the demonstration-discussions sessions;
- Work towards making the community of practice a reality under the BRICKS Project;
- Consider training in photography that will allow the participants to have beautiful photos to illustrate their productions.

To the PAC3 Coordination in Niger:

- Draw the attention of PAC3 on the risks of destroying the ecosystem of the site for farming purposes.
- Assist women in the Tchirofondou site in undertaking dry season farming activities by building water bodies.

The participants wish to thank the Government and people of Niger as well as the PAC3 project for their warm welcome and all arrangements made for the organization of this workshop.

Niamey, 21 July, 2017

The participants