



Addressing Transboundary Concerns in the Volta River Basin and its Downstream Coastal Area

# **Report of the Regional TDA validation and SAP planning workshop of the Volta River Basin**

**14<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> August 2012, Cotonou Benin**

Project Number: 53885

## **Final report**

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
APNP-VRB	Action Plan for the National Part of the VRB
DGEF	Division of GEF Coordination
EQO	Environmental Quality Objective
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
PAGEV	Projet d'Amélioration de la Gouvernance de l'Eau dans le bassin de la Volta
PMU	Project Management Unit
RPC	Regional Project Coordinator
SAP	Strategic Action Program
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
VBA	Volta Basin Authority
VRB	Volta River Basin

## Executive summary

The Volta Basin TDA Validation and SAP Starting Workshop was held in Cotonou, Bénin from 13th to 17th August 2012. The purpose of the workshop was to validate the draft regional TDA document and engage key stakeholders in the Volta River basin, in the participatory process for the development of a mutually negotiated and regionally agreed Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Volta River Basin.

The Workshop was organized by the UNEP-GEF Volta Project entitled '*Addressing Transboundary Concerns in the Volta River Basin and its Downstream Coastal Area*'. The Workshop was attended by 40 participants from water and environment background and experts from the six states of the Volta basin.

The main objective of the workshop is to validate the draft regional TDA document and engage key stakeholders in the Volta River basin, in a participatory process for the development of a mutually negotiated and regionally agreed Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Volta River Basin that would be implemented within the framework of the Volta River Basin Convention.

The workshop presented opportunity for stakeholders in the basin to validate the TDA document following extensive deliberation of the document. During the workshop, details of the planned SAP and the process for its development were discussed and timeline agreed for its implementation. This report provides a summary of the discussion during the workshop.

## **1. Opening of the Meeting**

### **1.1 Opening remarks**

1. The GEF Volta Project prepared a draft Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and decided to present it for validation by project partners and also launch the process for the development of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for the Volta basin. It is within this framework that the Regional Workshop for TDA Validation and SAP planning workshop was held.
2. The main objective of the workshop is to validate the draft regional TDA document and engage key stakeholders in the Volta River basin, in the participatory process for the development of a mutually negotiated and regionally agreed Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Volta River Basin that would be implemented within the framework of the Volta River Basin Convention.
3. The meeting was held at Sun Beach Hotel, Cotonou, Bénin from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012. It was attended by 47 participants including the National project Coordinators, representatives from VBA, IUCN/PAGEV, TDA/SAP Regional and National Consultants, National/ Regional resources persons and selected national institutions /stakeholders.
4. The opening ceremony was performed by the Minister in Charge of Environment, Habitat and Urbanisation (MEHU) of Benin, H.E. Mr. Blaise Ahanhanzo Glele. It started with the first speech by the Regional Coordinator of the UNEP GEF Volta project, Dr. Hubert Onibon who in his remarks thanked the government of Benin for hosting the workshop and for the presence of the government minister at the opening ceremony. He highlighted the task that led to the preparation of the TDA document, presented the objectives of the workshop, and outlined the expected outputs. He stressed the importance of the involvement of all actors in the process and extended his appreciation to the participants present and the VBA for all the support to the process.
5. The Executive Director of VBA, Dr. Charles Biney, in his remarks also added to what had been said, by commending the project and partners for the efforts towards the preparation of the TDA document and the plans towards developing the SAP. He assured the project of VBA support during the SAP development and in its execution.
6. The Minister of Environment, Habitat and Urbanisation, welcomed the participants and thanked the VBA and GEF Volta project for having chosen Benin for the validation of the TDA and the SAP starting workshop. He offered the Benin government's support to the project activities and commended the VBA's leadership in the process. He ended his remarks by encouraging all the participants to play an active role in the workshop and wished the participants a successful workshop; he thanked the VBA, GEF Volta and project sponsors and declared the workshop formally opened.

### **1.2 Appointment of the Bureau and Introduction of participants**

7. The working session started with the establishment of the meeting secretariat. The GEF Volta Project Regional Coordinator suggested the following and they were accepted by the participants: As Chairman: Mr. Nii Boi Ayibotele of Nii Consult from Ghana; Vice-Chair Mme Victoire Elegbe from Benin and Secretary Olumide Akinsola from the Project Management Unit. The chairman then requested the participants to introduce themselves by giving their names and affiliation with project.

## **2. Presentation of the Volta Basin TDA**

### **2.1 Overview of the TDA/SAP Processes**

8. The Regional Project Coordinator, Dr. Hubert Onibon, presented the overview of the TDA and SAP in the absence of Ms. Kelly West from UNEP. The presentation addressed the characteristics of the TDA sub-processes such as the political framework, the scientific component, and stages involved in the process. He further provided insight into the management approach adopted towards the preparation of the TDA and highlighted key results from the process and how this is linked to the SAP.
9. There were no comments on the GEF methodology and approach adopted for the preparation of the TDA.

### **2.2 Presentations on water resources, ecosystems, governance and economy**

10. The consultants for the four thematic sectors of the TDA made presentations on their areas of contribution to the TDA (Water Resources framework, ecosystems, socioeconomic aspects and Governance analysis of the VRB) by highlighting key issues and reports into the TDA.
11. On the Water Resources framework, representatives from Mali, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Benin made several comments relating to the need to update the numbering of paragraphs and tables included in the report in addition to typographical errors identified by the participants in the versions translated into French. At the end, participants with comments were requested to make available their comments to the project management unit.

### **2.3 Presentation of the priority transboundary concerns of the VRB (TDA)**

12. The regional coordinator presented the identified priority transboundary concerns of the Volta River basin as integrated into the TDA document. The problem analysis framework adopted for the identification of the priority problems, and the three areas of concern including Changes in water quantity & seasonality flows, Degradation of ecosystems (Coastal erosion downstream of the basin, Aquatic invasive species, Increased sedimentation in the river courses, Loss of soil and vegetative cover) and the Water quality concerns (Agricultural, Industrial and Domestic) addressed in the TDA documents and their associated root causes were shared with the participants.

## **3. The Volta Basin Strategic Action Process**

### **3.1 Overview of management planning process in the VRB**

13. The presentation on the VRB management planning process was presented by the VBA Executive Director, Dr. Charles Biney. He highlighted the key components of the VBA Strategic Plan, the proposed Water Charter and Communication Plan and the proposed Master Plan. He further presented the details of how these activities and documents to be prepared would link with TDA/SAP. Finally, he provided insight and recommendations for all partners to support the finalisation of the TDA and SAP process in order to ensure ownership and facilitate the future implementation phase. In addition, he emphasised that VBA would take into account the outputs and outcomes of the TDA and SAP process in its management planning and activities
14. Day two of the workshop started with the discussion of the presentation by the VBA. The concerns raised by Mali and Burkina representatives include possible contradictions in view of the fact that several studies have been conducted by GEF Volta, and the need to ensure integration and the sustainability of the SAP outputs. Dr. Biney clarified many of the concerns raised and stressed that the Water Charter development would be for three years and that the SAP is about soft actions and Master-Plan more of the hard actions like dams and irrigation needs in the basin

### **3.2 Presentation of the VRB SAP methodology and Outline**

15. In his intervention, Mr. Jean-Luc Frerotte, SAP Team Leader, presented the general principle for the development of the SAP, the five stages of the process towards developing the SAP and the general outline for the SAP content. He itemised areas to ensure collaboration and integration to the VBA and suggested that the document should be precise and not be more than fifty pages in all.
16. During the comments session, the VBA suggested that detailed timeline/plan be prepared to guide the four and half months schedule for the SAP development. M. TRAORE Chaka from Mali and Mr. Dibi Millogo from Burkina suggested the need to define an orientation for the SAP upon which the EQO would be based. Finally, the SAP facilitator from Togo suggested that the issue of risk and how to mitigate the risks should be included in the plan. In responding to these comments, Mr. Frerotte noted the comments from the participants and agreed that the activities presented would require the commitment of all. He added that the action sheet to be prepared would address the risk issue and noted that national action plans that are yet to be concluded would be included in the action sheet.

### **3.3 Presentation on SAP Action Sheets & Environmental Quality Objectives (EQO)**

17. The presentation of the action sheet template by Mr. Oumar Fall was followed by the participants group work. Participants were constituted into three groups in order to become familiar with the action sheet template based on the three priority areas identified during the TDA development. These include the changes in the quantity of water flow, the degradation of the ecosystem and the changes in the quality of water in the basin.
18. Key aspects of the EQO as related to the VRB were also presented by SAP team Leader, Mr. Frerotte. He provided examples of EQO targets for riverine ecosystems, water supplies, and Sustainable land use that could apply to the VRB area and the likely indicators for such targets. He also made suggestions for the approach to be considered in preparing EQO for the SAP consisting of countries proposal for EQO and the synthesis of the propositions by the consultant.
19. While commenting on the presentation, Ousmane Diallo from Burkina Faso suggested that the overall objective of the SAP need to be defined in order to help in defining the EQO. While Mr. Alamir Touré from Mali expressed concern about rationale of defining EQO at national level and or at basin scale. In responding, the lead Consultant responded that the SAP objective would be arrived at through a political negotiation while some of the EQO would be specific to one or more countries.

### **3.4 Presentation of the SAP development timeline**

20. Mr. Frerotte, the lead consultant made the final presentation on the timeline for the SAP development process. He highlighted the various activities, deadlines, and responsible persons or group for various activities and reiterated the concern expressed on the time available for the completion of the SAP.
21. There were general concerns about the time available for the implementation of the process and the Chair encouraged everyone to put in the required efforts to ensure prompt delivery.

### **3.5 Final Overview of the Workshop**

22. During the final overview of the workshop presented by the Chair, he noted that the participants had a good deliberation during the 3 day meeting. He recalled that the TDA document was presented to all the participants and validated subject to the receipt of written comments from participants within two weeks for the finalisation by the report. He noted that the timeline for the development of the SAP is very tight and encouraged project and partners to work towards meeting the set objectives.



#### **4. Closing remarks and closure of the meeting**

23. Dr. Hubert Onibon thanked the government and colleagues from Benin for supporting the workshop. In summary, he reminded participants that the TDA would be finalised taking into consideration all the comments received from the participants. He also highlighted the fact that during the workshop, participants looked at the various aspects of the proposed SAP to be developed and concluded that there was consensus on the approach presented by the consultants for the SAP. He finally thanked all the participants, experts, and institutions including the interpreters.
24. Dr. Charles Biney thanked the workshop secretariat, participants, and the able chairman for steering the meeting to a successful end. He also thanked the government of Benin for hosting the meeting.
25. In his closing remarks, the representative of the Minister in Charge of the Environment, Mr. Imorou Ourou-Djeri, noted that the meeting provided the opportunity to move the VBA regional process forward and thanked the project and VBA for all the efforts towards this objective. He concluded by expressing his happiness for the successful organisation of the workshop and on behalf of the minister declared the workshop closed.



## 5. Annexes

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## 5.2 Annex 2: Workshop agenda

### Day 1: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012

Time	Activity	Responsible
08:00 – 09:00	Arrival and registration	PMU and National partners
09:00 – 09:45	Opening remarks	Regional Project Coordinator UNEP Executive Director of VBA Minister in charge of Environment/Minister in charge of Water
09:45 – 10:00	Tea/Coffee Break	
10:00 – 10:20	Appointment of the Bureau of the meeting Introduction of Participants Review and Agreement of meeting Agenda	Hubert Onibon
10:20 – 10:35	Overview of the TDA/SAP	Kelly West
10:35 – 11:05	Presentation of VRB Water Resources framework	Albert Goula
11:05 – 11:35	Presentation of the VRB ecosystems	Kudzo Atsu Guelly
11:35 – 12:05	Presentation of socioeconomic aspects of the VRB	Oumar Fall
12:05 – 12:35	Governance analysis of the VRB	Ousmane Diallo
12:35 – 13:30	Questions and discussions	All participants
13:30 – 14 :30	Lunch	
14:30 – 15:15	Presentation of the priority transboundary concerns of the VRB (TDA)	Team leader TDA
15:15 – 16:30	Questions and discussions	All participants
16:30 – 16 :45	Tea/Coffee Break	
16:45 – 17:15	Overview of management planning process in the VRB	Charles Biney
17:15 – 18:00	Questions and discussions	All participants
18:00 – 18:20	Summary remarks and brief instructions for the following day	Chair and main facilitators
18:20	End of day 1	

### Day 2: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012

Time	Activity	Responsible
08:30 – 09:00	Presentation of the methodology to prepare the VRB SAP	Jean Luc Frerotte
09:00 – 09:30	Presentation of an outline of the VRB SAP and guidelines	Jean Luc Frerotte
09:30 – 10:30	Questions and discussion	All participants
10:30 – 11:00	Tea/Coffee Break	
11:00 – 13:00	Brainstorming on identification of actions (plenary/groups?)	SAP regional Team
13:00 – 14 :00	Lunch	
14:00– 15:30	Brainstorming on identification of actions (plenary/groups?)	SAP regional Team
15:30– 15:45	Presentation of action sheets template	Oumar Fall
15:45– 16:00	Questions/discussions of the template	All participants
16:00 – 16:15	Tea/Coffee Break	
16:15 – 18:00	Working session on action sheets filling and environmental quality objectives	SAP regional Team
18:00 – 18:20	Summary remarks and brief instructions for the following day	Chair and main facilitators
18:20	End of day 2	

**Day 3: Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
08:30 – 08:45	Constitution of thematic working groups	Albert Goula
08:45 – 10:15	Group work on themes (as per the TDA) – identification of actions to address the transboundary concerns of the TDA (including and environmental quality objectives)	SAP regional Team
10:15 – 10:30	Tea/Coffee Break	
10:30 – 13:00	Continuation of group work	SAP regional Team
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 – 16:00	Presentation of group work results and discussions	All participants
16:00-16:15	Tea/Coffee Break	
16:15-17:00	Guidelines for the national processes	Jean Luc Frerotte
17:00 – 17:45	Closing Remarks	Regional Project Coordinator UNEP Executive Director of VBA Minister in charge of Environment/Minister in charge of Water