



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Workshop report

Workshop on socio-economic baseline assessment and M&E planning

Action Against Desertification Project (EU-ACP)

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, March 21st-25th 2016

Background

Action Against Desertification (AAD) is an EU-ACP funded project implemented by FAO and aiming at: (i) alleviating poverty; (ii) ending hunger; and (iii) improving resilience to climate change in drylands and other fragile ecosystems in ACP countries, using a landscape approach.

In Africa, the project is a direct contribution to the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI), conceived as a “game changer” in Africa Dry zones’ development. Projects designed to contribute to this initiative are expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- the livelihoods of the target populations are improved, more diversified and the people gain income from sustainable land management;
- affected populations are less vulnerable to the socio-economic and ecological impacts of climate change, climate variability and drought;
- populations in affected areas are less inclined to migrate or subject to the consequences of migration, live in harmony, and peace and security are strengthened in these areas;
- land productivity and ecosystem goods and services in affected areas are sustainably improved, contributing to the development of livelihoods.

To ensure that the Africa component of AAD complies with the requirements of the Regional Harmonized Strategy and is addressing the biophysical and socio-economic changes expected from its implementation, FAO and AAD partners committed to continuously monitor the project, using (i) “Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) to be elaborated through relevant sources of verification and compared to baseline information established during the project’s inception phase”; (ii) “an adaptive management approach so that the assumptions identified during project planning are revisited on a regular basis”.

During the project inception phase, two socio-economic baseline assessments were conducted in The Gambia and in Nigeria. The baseline assessment in The Gambia was conducted with FAO direct support (definition of the methodological issues for baseline surveys, selection of the sample, type of data to be collected, final questionnaire adapted to the local context, supervision of the administration of the questionnaire, survey statistical analysis). In Nigeria, the National Agency for the GGWSSI conducted its own socio-economic baseline assessment, using some of the tools developed by FAO.

A biophysical baseline assessment was also conducted in the six participating countries (namely Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal) with a technical support from FAO (Collect Earth Team at HQ) and from CILSS-AGRHYMET. A workshop was organized in March – April 2015, gathering 3 to 5 experts from each participating country. Sharing experience and knowledge among the experts and having a close and timely technical support from CILSS-AGRHYMET was really helpful and instrumental in getting the biophysical baseline assessment done in a timely manner.

Based on this experience with Agrhymet, FAO has decided to develop a partnership with CILSS technical institutions (Agrhymet and INSAH), so that they can also support the identification and adaptation to local context of a core set of socioeconomic criteria and indicators, as well as the establishment of the socioeconomic baseline in each country. With the aim to share knowledge and experiences on how to conduct socio-economic baselines assessments and how to finalize respective plans for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities, a workshop was held in Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, on 21st-25th March 2016.

Structure of the workshop

Objectives

The workshop had the objective to develop the capacities of M&E experts working within the GGWSSI National Coordination mechanisms, as well as AAD Field Officers/NPC in the use of socio-economic baseline assessment tools and methodologies and to jointly develop country specific M&E plans that are harmonized with the AAD project logical framework.

More specifically, the workshop aimed to:

- Integrate experience, tools and methodologies used for M&E and assessment of socio-economic impacts of projects and programmes in support to sustainable resource management;
- Jointly plan with the participants the country-tailored implementation of the socio-economic baseline assessment methodology developed by FAO for the AAD project;

- Produce a draft customized questionnaire to be used for socio-economic baseline assessment in each country;
- Draft M&E operational plans for all the participating countries through team work and participatory activities during the workshop.

Target participants

The workshop was designed to provide guidance to M&E experts, extension staff and national project coordinators from the countries developing the AAD project: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. The participation of Chad, which is involved in a FLEUVE project (also framed in the context of GWSSI) was envisaged as well.

The workshop was especially addressed to the experts who will be responsible, in each country, of the development of the M&E plan and the socio-economic baseline assessment.

28 participants joined the workshop, among which 21 from countries involved in the AAD and FLEUVE projects, 4 from FAO, 2 from Aghrymet and 1 external expert from the University of Tuscia, Italy. The list of participants is provided in annex to this document.

Organization

The workshop on socio-economic baseline assessment and M&E planning was a crucial step to develop plans for the effective monitoring of the achievements of the AAD projects at the national and regional levels. The workshop was specifically focused on the drafting of M&E plans and on the development of tools (questionnaire, research design, sampling selection) needed for the socio-economic baseline assessment. The development of this survey during the inception phase of the national projects is a key step to be able, further in the project lifetime, to assess its capacity to improve the livelihood of the people living in the project areas.

The workshop was held in Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, at the Ouaga 2000 hotel. It was organized with daily sessions from 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. with an alternation of presentations from the conveners to frame the topics in a common background, discussions in plenary with the participants and group work. Groups were composed by the delegates of the same country, who were invited to work together on the drafting of the M&E plans at the national level and on the finalization of the tools to carry out the socio-economic assessment. The results of the group work were shared with all the participants at the end of each day, with the aim to learn lessons from the work done and to improve the quality of the final result. The workshop was held during five days, from 21st to 25th March 2016 (detailed agenda in the annexes).

The first day concerned the opening ceremony and an introduction to the development of country specific M&E plans. A group work was carried out as a practical activity. Groups were formed by respective country teams.

On the second day, results of the previous day group work were presented, then the elaboration of outcome indicators was the core of the day's theoretical and practical activities.

On the third day, participants were introduced to the development of socio-economic baseline surveys and guided through the development of a questionnaire for socio-economic baseline assessment.

On the fourth day, participants' progress on previous day activity was assessed and more time was consequently allocated to finalize the group-work with support from the workshop organization team members who were visiting the groups. Group work results were presented by the end of the day.

On the fifth day, participants were guided to the development of country specific work plans for conducting baseline assessments, then the indicators for the AAD log frame were presented and discussed with participants. The workshop was then concluded after an evaluation was carried out (see evaluation sheet in annex).

The opening ceremony

The workshop was opened by the General Secretary of the Burkina Faso Ministry of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change, Mr. Ouedraogo, who acknowledged FAO for the organization of the event and underlined the importance of pursuing the GGWSSI initiative in a context where land and plant resources are increasingly being degraded in vulnerable areas by climatic and anthropogenic hazards. Indeed, desertification and land degradation generate devastating socio-economic effects that make the living conditions of the populations increasingly difficult or even impossible. He also commented the coincidence of the first day of the workshop with the International day of Forests, whose theme was, in 2016, "forests and water", in accordance with the main topics covered by the AAD project.

The FAO Representative in Burkina Faso, Mr. Ongone Obame, gave a speech as well. He recalled that FAO is committed to assist the States for the operationalization of the Great Green Wall Initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel through the mobilization of resources, the development of guidance tools and monitoring/evaluation of the actions implemented on the ground. It was underlined that the AAD project benefits from the financial support of the European Union, and that M&E activities are considered crucial to assess its achievements. The speech of the FAO representative also recalled the main objectives of the workshop, i.e. training on planning, monitoring and evaluation of the situation of socio-economic project reference, to ensure that the project meets the requirements of the harmonized regional strategy and expected changes induced by its implementation as on the biophysical and socio-economic domain.

The opening ceremony also included the participation of a member of the European Union Delegation in Burkina Faso, Mr. Peigne, who is in charge of the Rural development and Environment programme.

Outputs of the workshop

Knowledge sharing

The workshop focused very much on knowledge and experience sharing and training in the domain of M&E and, more specifically, on how to develop M&E plans and socio-economic baseline assessments. The main outputs of the many knowledge sharing exercises developed during the workshop can be listed as follows.

- After productive discussion, the importance of carrying out M&E activities to successfully manage a project was clear and shared among the participants.
- Participants developed a common understanding of how the structure of the national AAD logical framework is able to influence the choice of M&E indicators; they also agreed on a definition of performance indicators (assessing the achievement of the expected results, i.e. the short term effect of project activities) and of outcome indicators (assessing the achievement of the objectives of the projects, i.e. the medium and long-term effects of the project).
- A common understanding of the structure and content of M&E plans was achieved, as well as of the issues to be considered in its implementation.
- Participants were trained on the key activities required to coordinate and implement household surveys to assess the socio-economic baseline situation in the project areas, and they developed country-specific tools to be used in each national context where AAD activities will take place.
- A common understanding of the practical issues to be considered in the planning of socio-economic surveys, from the financial aspects to the logistical issues, was achieved after training and discussion with the participants.

Working groups

The group work sessions took most of the time of the workshop and they represented a very interesting exercise. The work done during these sessions provided several concrete outputs, as well as a general deepening of the participants' knowledge of M&E issues.

The main outputs achieved during the group work sessions can be summarized as follows.

1. The Country Teams revised the AAD national logical frameworks in the light of taking it as a base for planning M&E activities. This activity allowed to identify some weaknesses of the logical framework documents, such as the lack of clear distinction among activities, expected results, objectives and targets. Some Country Teams (e.g. The Gambia and Burkina Faso) expressed the need to update

the national logical framework to make it more suitable for M&E planning in line with the AAD regional logframe.

2. The Country Teams identified appropriate indicators to assess the achievement of the expected results (performance indicators) and of the project objectives at the national level (outcome indicators). For each indicator, an indicator table was compiled, including information on how to calculate the indicator, where and how often to retrieve the data, baseline, target and resources needed for its evaluation.
3. Working on the planning of the socio-economic survey, needed to set the baseline situation in the project areas, the Country Teams defined the sampling strategy to select the households participating in the survey. This was done on the base of the data on the project areas that the participants had retrieved before the workshop.
4. The Country Teams drafted a questionnaire for the household survey to be done in each country, by adapting a model questionnaire that had been provided within the workshop training material. The finalization of the questionnaire, to be done once the delegates come back in their countries, should take into account the specific issues linked to the context of the project area, e.g. some techniques and good practices of sustainable land management which were missing in the model questionnaire.
4. Each Country Team was able to produce an operational plan for (i) the implementation of the household survey, (ii) the finalization of the M&E plan, (iii) the production of a comprehensive workplan for the implementation of project activities and monitoring. The deadlines to which the countries have committed are reported in the next section.

Conclusions and way forward

At the end of the workshop, on the basis of the lessons learnt and of the advancement of the work done so far, the Country Teams committed to finalize (i) the socio-economic baseline assessment, (ii) the M&E plan, (iii) a comprehensive workplan for the implementation of project activities and monitoring.

In doing so, the countries have committed to the deadlines displayed in the following table. Where possible, the responsible person to develop each of these outputs was also identified.

Country	Description	Responsible person	Title	Deadline
Burkina Faso	Baseline socio-economic assessment	Damas Poda	National project coordinator	15 June 2016
	Monitoring & Evaluation plan	Roch Pananditigri	M&E responsible	15 April 2016
	Detailed working plan	Kagambega Ouamtinga	-	30 April 2016
Ethiopia	Baseline socio-economic	Ashebir	-	20 June 2016

	assessment	Wondimu		
	Monitoring & Evaluation plan	Ashebir Wondimu	-	30 April 2016
	Detailed working plan	Ashebir Wondimu	-	30 April 2016
The Gambia	Baseline socio-economic assessment	-	National project coordinator	-
	Monitoring & Evaluation plan	-	National project coordinator	30 May 2016
	Detailed working plan	-	National project coordinator	30 May 2016
Niger	Baseline socio-economic assessment	Assoumane Garba	M&E responsible	30 June 2016
	Monitoring & Evaluation plan	Abdou Maisharou	General Director GGWSSI	14 April 2016
	Detailed working plan	Abdou Maisharou	General Director GGWSSI	14 April 2016
Nigeria	Baseline socio-economic assessment	-	National project coordinator	15 August 2016
	Monitoring & Evaluation plan	-	National project coordinator	07 April 2016
	Detailed working plan	-	National project coordinator	30 April 2016
Senegal	Baseline socio-economic assessment	Amady Cissé	National project coordinator	30 July 2016
	Monitoring & Evaluation plan	Amady Cissé	National project coordinator	30 April 2016
	Detailed working plan	Amady Cissé	National project coordinator	30 April 2016
Chad	Baseline socio-economic assessment	Alexis Ramadji Ngangtar	-	30 April 2016
	Monitoring & Evaluation plan	Alexis Ramadji Ngangtar	-	30 May 2016
	Detailed working plan	Alexis Ramadji Ngangtar	-	30 May 2016

Workshop evaluation by participants

At the end of the workshop, an evaluation exercise took place. All the participants were asked to answer to the following questions:

1. Describe what, according to you, went well during the workshop.
2. Describe what, according to you, didn't go well during the workshop.
3. Please list what you think are the main results (outputs) of the workshop (i.e. what you learnt).
4. Please describe what is the main the outcome(s) you expect from the workshop (i.e. how you are going to apply what you learnt).
5. Please rate the relevance of the topic of the workshop to your activities (1=very low; 5=very high).

6. Please rate the quality of the technical content of the training (1=very low; 5=very high).
7. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the workshop (1=very low; 5=very high).
8. Please provide any other suggestions and comments.

20 participants filled in the evaluation forms, and their feedback can be summarized as follows.

- Regarding what was perceived to have gone well, most participants highly appreciated the organization and facilitation (13 participants), then the practical exercises (8 participants), the logical presentations (7 participants), and the interaction among themselves favored by the workshop delivery style (7 participants).
- On the other hand, most participants did not see anything that did not go well. However, a few challenges mentioned by the participants were related to logistics, as translation was not provided until the end of the workshop (translators had only been hired for the first three days of the workshop, when speeches and presentation were planned) (3 participants).
- In assessing what participants learned, the most frequent responses revealed knowledge regarding “how to establish a monitoring plan” (15 participants), “Performance indicators, outcome indicators and targets” (13 participants) and how to carry out household sampling (7 participants).
- Regarding the way participants intend to apply what they learned from the workshop, the most frequent responses indicated the intention to use the knowledge
 - to establish a good monitoring plan (8 participants),
 - for good implementation of baseline surveys (8 participants),
 - to build capacity and share the information received with their colleagues (7 participants),
 - to improve the national component of the AAD project (6 participants)
- The relevance of the topic to the participant’s activities was rated as either high (10 participants) or very high (10 participants).
- The quality of the technical content of the training was rated as very high (8 participants), high (10 participants), or medium (2 participants).
- The overall satisfaction of participants was rated as very high (9 participants), high (9 participants) or medium (2 participants)
- General comments indicated that the workshop was enlightening. Other few comments suggested:
 - It would have been better to let participants present their logical frameworks at the beginning in order to spot areas of improvement through the workshop
 - it would be good to start such a workshop with a common understanding of concepts related to monitoring

- It would be good to share examples of performance indicators and outcome indicators
- more time should have been devoted to logical framework development way before the time of the workshop
- the daily intensity of the workshop should have been reduced
- the need to train participants in AAD project on results based management
- It would be necessary to synergize with teams working on the field for the project
- a follow up on and support to country teams in finalizing their monitoring plans
- the need to create an online platform for continuous experience and knowledge sharing
- the need to increase possibility for participants to further share their knowledge and experience among themselves

Annexes

List of participants to the workshop

Country	Name & Surname	Title	Affiliation
Niger	Nouhou Abdou	Cartographe	ANGMV
	Asoumane Garba	Expert en SE	ANGMV
	Abdou Maisharou	DG	ANGMV
The Gambia	Sonko Bintou	M&E expert	Ministry of Agriculture
	Danso Abdoulie	National Project Coordinator	AAD
	Ceesay Omar	Programme Officer	NEA
Senegal	Aïssata B. Sall	M&E Expert	CSE
	Kany Sarr Ndoeye	Assistante du Directeur Technique	ANGMV
	Amady Gnagna Cisse	Directeur de la planification et du suivi	ANGMV
Ethiopia	Aberu Tena	Forestry Officer	Ministry of Environment
	Getachew Adugna	M&E Expert	FAO - Ethiopia
Burkina Faso	Kagambega Ouamtinga	Agent Technique	FAO - AAD
	Oubida Regis	Ingénieur des Eaux et Forêts	CNSF
	Diabrio Amadou	Chef Suivi-évaluation	Direction Régionale de l'environnement
	Panantigri Roch	Expert Suivi-évaluation	Coordination Nationale GMV
	Zongo Dominique	Expert Suivi-évaluation	PNGTV/SAWAP
	Poda Damas	NPC	FAO - AAD
	Serge Zoubga	Chargé de Programme	Tii Paalga
Nigeria	Hadiza Lawan	Communication Officer	AAD – NAGGW
	Chindaba Mhusaya	Programme Officer	NAGGW

Chad	Ramadji Ngangtar	M&E Expert	ANGMV
Aghrymet	Bako Mamane	Expert SIG-Télédétection	Centre Régional
	Magagi Kabirou	Expert Suivi-évaluation	Centre Régional
Italy	Clara Cicatiello	Workshop organizing team	Tuscia University
FAO	Paolo Ceci	Workshop organizing team	FAO - Rome
	Marc Parfondry	Workshop organizing team	FAO - Rome
	Patrick Bahal	Workshop organizing team	FAO - SFE
	François Tapsoba	Workshop organizing team	FAO - SFE

Agenda of the workshop

DAY 1 (Monday 21st March)

- 08.30 - 09.00 Registration of the participants
- 09.00 - 09.30 Opening ceremony
- 09.30 - 10.00 Coffee break and press interviews
- 10.00 - 10.20 Introduction to the objectives and the agenda of the workshop
- 10.20 - 10.45 Round table of introduction of the participants
- 10.45 - 11.00 Overview of Action Against Desertification Project (F. Tapsoba)
- 11.00 - 11.30 Presentation "How to develop M&E plans" (P. Ceci; C. Cicatiello)
- 11.30 - 13.00 Presentation of the country logical frameworks (6 countries)
- 13.00 - 14.00 Lunch break
- 14.00 - 14.10 Presentation of the group work session (C. Cicatiello)
- 14.10 - 15.30 Group work on M&E plans: definition of performance indicators
- 15.30 - 15.45 Coffee break
- 15.45 - 17.00 Continuing the group work

DAY 2 – Tuesday 22nd March

- 08.30 - 09.00 Presentation of the results from Day 1 (1 Country Team)
- 09.00 - 09.15 Presentation on Collect Earth (B. Mamane)
- 09.15 - 09.30 Presentation of the group work session (C. Cicatiello)
- 09.30 - 10.30 Group work on M&E plans: definition of outcome indicators
- 10.30 - 10.45 Coffee break
- 10.45 - 13.00 Continuing the group work
- 13.00 - 14.00 Lunch break
- 14.00 - 14.15 Presentation of the group work session (C. Cicatiello)
- 14.15 - 15.30 Group work on M&E plans: working plan
- 15.30 - 15.45 Coffee break
- 15.45 - 16.30 Continuing the group work
- 16.30 - 17.00 Presentation in plenary of the results from day 2

DAY 3 – Wednesday 23rd March

- 08.30 - 08.45 Introduction to day 3 objectives and activities (M. Parfondry)
- 08.45 - 09.45 Presentation "How to develop socio-economic surveys for baseline assessments" (C. Cicatiello, P. Ceci)
- 09.45 - 10.30 Group work on socio-economic baseline assessment: sampling
- 10.30 - 10.45 Coffee break
- 10.45 - 13.00 Continuing the group work
- 13.00 - 14.00 Lunch break
- 14.00 - 15.00 Presentation in plenary of the group work results
- 15.00 - 15.15 Coffee break

- 15.15 - 15.30 Presentation of the group work session (P. Ceci)
- 15.30 - 17.00 Group work on baseline assessment: questionnaire

DAY 4 – Thursday 24th March

- 08.30 - 10.30 Continuing the group work
- 10.30 - 10.45 Coffee break
- 10.45 - 13.00 Continuing the group work
- 13.00 - 14.00 Lunch break
- 14.00 - 15.45 Continuing the group work
- 15.45 - 16.00 Coffee break
- 16.00 - 17.00 Presentation in plenary of the group work results

DAY 5 – Friday 25th March

- 08.30 - 08.45 Presentation of the group work session (M. Kabirou)
- 08.45 - 10.30 Group work on baseline assessment: workplan
- 10.30 - 10.45 Coffee break
- 10.45 - 11.15 Presentation "Indicators of AAD-Africa logframe" (F. Tapsoba)
- 11.15 - 12.15 Open discussion on the AAD-Africa logical framework
- 12.15 - 12.30 Evaluation of the workshop (M. Parfondry and P. Bahal)
- 12.30 - 13.00 Conclusions of the workshop and discussion of the way ahead

Workshop evaluation form

The following questions were administered to the workshop participants, by asking them to fill in an evaluation form.

1. Describe what, according to you, went well during the workshop [open question]
2. Describe what, according to you, didn't go well during the workshop [open question]
3. Please list what you think are the main results (outputs) of the workshop (i.e. what you learnt) [open question]
4. Please describe what is the main the outcome(s) you expect from the workshop (i.e. how you are going to apply what you learnt) [open question]
5. Please rate the relevance of the topic of the workshop to your activities (1=very low; 5=very high) [Likert-scale question]
6. Please rate the quality of the technical content of the training (1=very low; 5=very high) [Likert-scale question]
7. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the workshop (1=very low; 5=very high) [Likert-scale question]
8. Other suggestions and comments [open question]