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STRENGTHENING INVESTMENT PLANNING TO BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN THE NIGER BASIN

Climate change imposes stark challenges for the food-insecure Sahel and particularly for the Niger Basin's already highly vulnerable population of 112 million. Six of the nine basin countries are among the world's least developed, with high poverty and weak social and economic safety nets. Water is a fundamental pathway through which climate change is impacting people and environment, making water-related resilience-building interventions a top priority.

Because the basin countries share surface and groundwater, a coordinated approach presents significant opportunities to more effectively build resilience and avoid maladaptation. Recognizing this, the Niger Basin countries, led by the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) and supported by the CIWA program, the World Bank, and African Development Bank, joined together in 2015 to develop a Climate Resilience Investment Plan.

The plan consists of 246 resilience-building investments estimated at \$3.1 billion. Identified in existing regional and national development plans, the resilience-building investments are diverse – ranging from climate insurance for farmers, adapting gender policies to free more productive time, enacting anti-erosion and silting measures to protect lands, to rehabilitating water-storage structures to preserve supplies and improve flood protection. Prioritizing across transboundary, national, and community levels allows the region to improve its ability to reduce risks and develop amid a changing climate.



REGION:
Niger Basin



COUNTRIES:
Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria



FOCUS:
Basin-level investment planning, capacity building for investment preparation, and improved understanding of climate related financing opportunities

RESULTS

- Nine countries in West Africa's Niger Basin, led by the Niger Basin Authority, **prepared a climate resilience-focused, regional investment plan with a prioritized list of urgent actions.** CIWA facilitated extensive dialogue and technical consultations among countries to highlight common interests and evaluate tradeoffs. This process enabled collaborative selection of investments that are sustainable and optimized at the basin level, generating shared benefits and minimizing negative consequences.
- A team of experts provided **training for regional and national officials on investment preparation and packaging** with the aim of helping them better understand and articulate their resilience needs towards securing financing for investments planned along the 4,200-kilometer Niger River.
- The plan, endorsed by heads of states of the basin countries at COP21 in Paris, **presents many implementation-ready investments to a diversified pool of investors.** This demonstration of high-level political cooperation boosts investor confidence for the inherently complex regional projects that are often risky yet offer potentially high rewards.
- The technical and political dialogue continuously undertaken by the Niger Basin countries shows a strong cooperative basis, allowing the countries to identify shared priorities and collaborate on regionally beneficial projects. As a result, **cooperative management has increased trust and reduced risk of unilateral acts** that could have negative externalities or foreclose optimal development options.
- Multiple investments from the plan have **secured financing commitments** and are included in the pipelines of investors such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and other bilateral development partners.

“In the absence of resilience-building actions, environmental, social, and political changes could compound climate challenges and overwhelm Africa’s ability to cope.”

—Jennifer Sara, Director of Water Global Practice, World Bank Group

CONTEXT

The people of the Niger Basin depend on the river: about 70 percent of the 130 million people in the basin live in rural areas where food security and social well-being are largely dependent on rainfall and river flow. Climate change increases uncertainty of the frequency, location, quantity, and quality of water availability, and people are unable to prepare adequate responses due to weak monitoring and information systems, absence of infrastructure, and limited institutional capacity. This threatens food and energy security, economic development, ecosystem health, and overall regional stability.

Current security threats in the region add to its fragility, which, coupled with resource scarcity, drive migration and exacerbate the challenges of daily life. Mobilizing resources for investments to help overcome resource-related conflict and reduce resource-driven migration can potentially secure lives and livelihoods and contribute to keeping fragility and growing insecurity at bay.

APPROACH

Acknowledging the importance of integrating climate change considerations into development efforts, the Niger Basin countries agreed to develop an investment plan based on their shared vision for regional climate resilience and development. Together, they built a coherent ensemble of actions and investments to strengthen the resilience to climate change across the basin, with the objective of mobilizing resources for climate-related development.

To ensure alignment with country priorities, the plan was built from the bottom up, using existing planning documents. Investments selected emerged from a rigorous screening of actions for their contribution to resilience and readiness for investment by all basin countries. CIWA supported both technical and political consultations for countries to jointly formulate and endorse the plan. CIWA also backed capacity-building workshops focused on improving participants’ ability to identify complexities introduced by climate change, recognize the range of opportunities available to mitigate climate risk, and understand the climate financing landscape.

The development of the plan demonstrates that the prospect of securing financing to advance mutually-beneficial investments can motivate countries to reach agreement on complex multi-state, multi-sector development plans. By consolidating regionally prioritized



investments in one place, the plan aids donor coordination and improves the efficiency of development financing and implementation. The plan’s endorsement by water and finance ministers and heads of state of the basin countries lends confidence to prospective investors to support sustainable development of the region.

NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, CIWA will work with the NBA to develop a monitoring and evaluation methodology for the plan to support accountability and capture lessons emerging from its implementation. CIWA will continue to enhance capacity of governments and the NBA, paying particular attention to the institutional ability to better understand and articulate climate resilience investment needs, apply sound methodologies for investment planning, and strengthen targeted skill-sets aimed at packaging investments and securing financing. CIWA will also support organization of donor round-tables to raise financing for investments in the plan.

ABOUT CIWA

CIWA, the Cooperation in International Waters in Africa program, is a multi-donor trust fund representing a partnership between the World Bank and the governments of Denmark, the European Union, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. CIWA supports the governments in Sub-Saharan Africa in unlocking the potential for sustainable and inclusive growth, climate resilience, and poverty reduction through cooperative transboundary water management and development. Since 2011, CIWA has supported improving the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of transboundary investments worth US\$8.9 billion across Sub-Saharan Africa.

