

FP042 Irrigation development and adaptation of irrigated agriculture to climate change in semi-arid Morocco (AFD), Morocco

CSO comments on the project given as intervention during the 16th GCF Board Meeting, April 2017

The project does provide as one of the two target areas/groups welcome attention to the needs of traditional oasis communities in the semi-arid plains of the Boudnib Valley. This focus on preserving and improving cultural identity while strengthening the climate resilience and adaptive capacity of oasis communities is welcomed. This project also promotes a concentrated development of projects led by young entrepreneurs who have 'reinvented' a small farming model based on the adoption of new techniques and the density of social networks of cooperation.

However, we have some concerns regarding the project design and implementation:

- With water provision for both large scale commercial farms for agriculture, and water for drinking water and irrigation for vulnerable people in the oasis areas, **we would like to see water for vulnerable people in the oasis areas clearly prioritized over commercial farm needs** and that oasis inhabitants have a say in the management of the water infrastructure under the envisioned Public Private Partnerships.
- While the proposal speaks about focus group sessions with women, young men, nomads and semi-nomadic breeders in the project preparation, the extent of the involvement of CSOs and non-governmental stakeholders is not clear. We would like to see a strong mandatory plan for comprehensive stakeholder involvement in project implementation, especially also on the gender component of participatory management of water resources.
- We welcome the fact that an attempt was made by the AFD **to provide a gender analysis and action plan, and appreciate the promise that a gender specialist will be recruited for the technical assistance team of the project** (p.63). **However**, gender considerations should be integrated into the entire project, not just a select project component. For example, there should be a gender target regarding overall jobs creation.?
- Also, women's current **limited access to agricultural extension and training services should be addressed.**
- Second, **since drinking water provision is a main goal for the oasis communities, the design upgrade for the water infrastructure in the oasis needs to take women's access to water for household use into account.**

- Third women should be empowered to take leadership roles in water user associations, regardless of whether they own property.
- With this and other projects up for Board consideration that **focus on the provision of remote surface water to replace aquifer depletion**, there should be an assessment on the sustainability of water removal, considering that in this specific project the dam reservoir impacts also drinking water allocation in other areas, including neighboring countries.
- **We also stress the concern about the growth of irrigated large-scale agriculture and the danger this poses in terms of increasing water demands in an arid region. There should be adjustments to more suitable, less water consuming crop varieties.**
- Lastly, from the proposal **it was not clear to us how acquisition of land (and compensation) for pipeline construction will be handled** and how it will be ensured that this proceeds in an equitable and gender-responsive manner.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS for FP042 AFD Morocco:

- Require the elaboration of a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan as well as provision of sufficient budgetary resources for its implementation as a condition for the first funding disbursement.
- Require the elaboration of a full gender action plan with detailed activities, targets, indicators and responsibilities as well a provision of sufficient budgetary resources for its implementation as a condition for the first funding disbursement.
- Require the implementation of a land acquisition and compensation scheme that is equitable and gender-responsive as part of the funded activity agreement
- Provide a guarantee/covenant that water provision for the vulnerable population of the oasis will be prioritized as part of the projects as part of the funded activity agreement.
- Require the commitment to ongoing monitoring by the AE and the EE of the impact of the surface water transfer on the ability of the reservoir to fulfill the water needs of other communities downstream as part of the funded activity agreement.
- Require the AE and the EE to establish measures to limit maladaptation, i.e the conversion of rainfed agriculture in the area to irrigated agriculture as a result of the water transfer PPP as part of the funded activity agreement.

The project description of the vulnerability of the country and beneficiary groups uses data from 2007 and 2009 to demonstrate how agriculture's value added to GDP has undergone significant fluctuations due to weather conditions. This data should be updated in order to provide a relevant contextual understanding of the current vulnerability level and adaptation needs in the project area.