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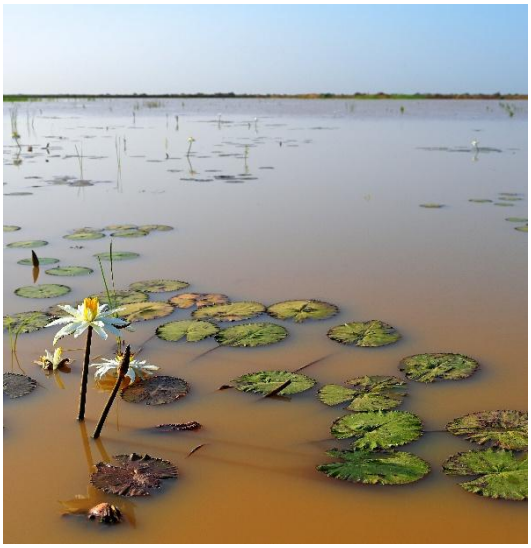


EVALUATION SUMMARY

COUNTRY: SENEGAL, MALI, CHAD, EGYPY, SUDAN

Protecting Waterbirds in the Major Sahelian Wetland Areas (RESSOURCE)

Evaluator: David BRUGIERE & Hélène LIVINGSTON

Evaluation date: February 2nd, 2022

KEY DATA ON FFEM SUPPORT

Amount of FFEM funding: €1 500 000
Project grant date: October 1st, 2017
Duration : 4 years
Project name: RESSOURCE
Project number: CZZ2010

Context

The RESSOURCE project (2017–2020) aimed to improve the conservation status of Sahelo-Sudanian wetlands and waterbird populations, in a context of increasing pressures from resource use (harvesting, agriculture, fishing) and limited national capacities. Implemented in four major river basins (the Nile, Lake Chad, and the Senegal and Niger Rivers), the project is aligned with the international Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the AEWA (African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement). It combines ecological data production, pilot site management, resource use analysis, capacity building, and support to institutional frameworks.

Participants and operating procedures

The project is led by FAO, with four technical operators (OFB, CIRAD, OMPO, Tour du Valat) and international partners (BirdLife International, Wetlands International). It is based on a multi-country, multi-component approach, combining scientific expertise, local pilot actions, and institutional support.

OBJECTIVES

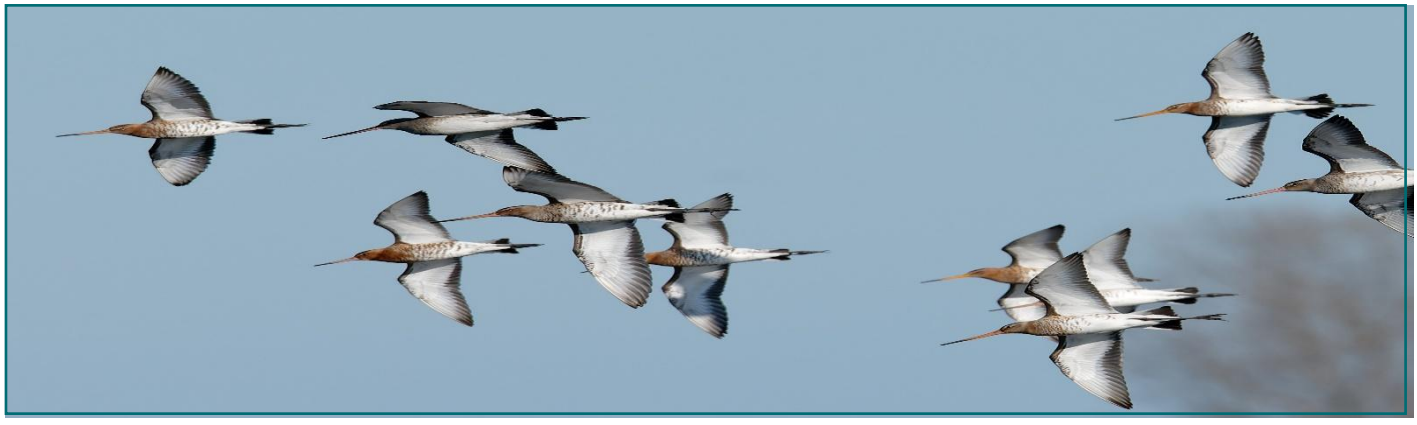
Improve the conservation and management of natural resources in wetlands, particularly waterbird populations.

Specific objectives:

-Produire et harmoniser des données sur les oiseaux d'eau ;
-Tester des actions de gestion intégrée sur des zones humides pilotes ;
-Analyser les filières et prélèvements d'oiseaux d'eau ;
-Renforcer les capacités locales et nationales ;
-Appuyer les cadres juridiques et la gouvernance sectorielle.

TESTED INNOVATION

The project has developed a unique regional database consolidating over 50 years of waterbird counts (1966–2021; 4,051 sites across 9 countries), as well as innovative methodologies for analyzing resource use (local surveys, digital tools, and cross-referencing of harvest data with population data), which remain scarcely documented in the Sahelian region of Africa.



EVALUATION RESULTS

Relevance

The project addresses major conservation challenges for critical habitats, namely Sahelian wetlands, and ensures compliance with international commitments (Ramsar, AEWA), in a context of significant data gaps and limited national capacities. Its originality lies in approaching wetland conservation through the lens of sustainable use of waterbirds, which are intrinsically linked to wetlands and serve as excellent bio-indicators of ecosystem health and quality.

Coherence

There is good internal coherence between the project components and strong alignment with multilateral frameworks. The project's integration into the broader Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) program enhances its visibility, despite high reporting requirements.

Effectiveness

The results observed are generally robust in terms of knowledge production, capacity building, and conservation dynamics, although these outcomes vary between sites.

ADDED VALUE OF THE FFEM

FFEM played a key financial and strategic leverage role, enabling the experimentation of innovative approaches, the structuring of a reference regional database, and the integration of biodiversity issues into multilateral frameworks. Its contribution is considered highly relevant, despite a relatively limited financial weight.

The RESSOURCE project enabled the creation of a unique regional database covering 9 countries, 4,051 sites, and over 50 years of waterbird data (1966–2021), providing an unparalleled technical foundation for the large-scale implementation of management and conservation actions in Sahelo-Sudanian wetlands.

Efficiency

Budget execution is considered satisfactory, and the program has been able to adapt effectively, when possible, to the numerous constraints related to security, political, and health contexts prevailing in the Sahelian region during the implementation period. FAO management costs remain high, with administrative entry costs sometimes outweighing the technical contribution.

Impact

The activities implemented have led to a significant improvement in regional knowledge, the structuring of stakeholder networks, and support for wetland designation and management initiatives.

Viability/sustainability

Sustainability is considered uncertain, particularly regarding the adoption of tools and methods by national administrations, due to limited resources and insufficient ownership. It is recommended to continue and expand activities related to this objective, which were supported during the project, in a subsequent phase.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

The RESSOURCE project demonstrates that improving knowledge is a central lever for wetland and waterbird conservation, particularly in contexts characterized by a historical lack of data. The establishment of harmonized tools and regional databases significantly strengthens technical capacities and cooperation among stakeholders. However, translating scientific results into concrete management actions remains highly dependent on local political and institutional contexts. Innovative work on waterbird counts and harvests has led to notable methodological advances, but their complexity still limits adoption by national administrations. Finally, effective governance mechanisms are essential to maximize impact, yet they can be constrained by high administrative costs. It is therefore recommended to:

- Consolidate achievements through an additional phase focused on the operational management of waterbird populations and wetlands.
- Strengthen national ownership and institutional sustainability.
- Simplify financing mechanisms for local pilot actions.

Find details of the project sheet by scanning the QR Code