

MIEUX

Case Study

West Africa

(2014-2018)

Funded by the
European Union



Implemented by
ICMPD



How to read this case study?

MIEUX Thematic Areas



Migration and
Development



Legal Migration
and Mobility



Irregular Migration
and Trafficking in
Human Beings



International Protection
and Asylum Policy



Horizontal
Interventions

Ten features of good practice in MIEUX Actions

- 1 There should be ownership on the part of the partner country
- 2 Actions should provide an opportunity to be innovative in their context
- 3 Actions should be able to be replicated
- 4 Actions should provide tangible results
- 5 Actions should be endorsed at a high level
- 6 Actions should be integrated into existing priorities
- 7 Actions should be based on the highest levels of experience
- 8 Actions should complement and be in synergy with other initiatives
- 9 Actions should provide EU added value
- 10 Actions should act as a catalyst for the acquisition of knowledge through the exchange of experiences

SHARING KNOWLEDGE ON MIGRATION AND ENVIRONMENT

West Africa 2014-2018

Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Togo requested support to engage in dialogue at regional level about migration and displacement linked to climate change and environmental degradation, complementing the consultations with training activities at national level.

Context

Since the 1970s, strong climate variability has affected West Africa causing agricultural losses, cyclical food crises, water scarcity, flooding and environmental degradation. Sea levels and coastal erosion are, for instance, putting at risk the coastline from Accra to the Niger Delta, an urban corridor that has the highest population density in West Africa and where less than 10% of urban areas have access to sewerage services. At the same time, increased crop failures, reduced livestock, heat stress, reduction of water sources, increased food prices and insecurity, and loss of coastal agricultural lands to inundation, coastal erosion and salinisation are threatening the agricultural sector, on which so many livelihoods in West Africa are dependent. In the fishing industry, the rising temperature of the water since the 1980s has drastically reduced primary production.

This is having an enormous effect on the population of the region. Many facing increasing unfavourable conditions and eroded livelihoods have decided to move, frequently to urban areas. Many more are expected to follow in the future. Natural disasters have also created important numbers of displaced people, either internally or to neighbouring countries. According to the International Disaster Database of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of



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**MIEUX
FEATURES**

Disasters (CRED), droughts and floods have affected over 28 million people in West Africa during the period 2010 to 2014.¹

Conscious of the urgency, and given that no specific instrument existed to address the link between migration, environment and climate change, and wishing to frame migration as an adaptation strategy, the Governments of Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Togo sought assistance from MIEUX in 2014 to engage in a regional dialogue about migration and climate change.

Action Design

- **Two regional-level workshops:** First, a West African regional policy consultation on migration in the context of environmental degradation and the impact of climate change, and second, a 'restitution' and capitalisation workshop where countries were able to recall the main challenges, and capitalise on respective good practices and lessons learnt during the capacity building activities which took place in October 2018. Delegates discussed and agreed on some key points that could guide further action after the end of MIEUX's support, especially on data, cooperation and coordination, and external technical and financial assistance.
- **Background paper on migration, climate change and the environment in West Africa:** Prior to the first event, two experts from the Hugo Observatory, the first research structure in the world dedicated to environmental migration and located at the University of Liège, drafted a background paper to paint a picture of current challenges and initiatives in the field of migration, environment and climate change in West Africa. Representatives from Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Togo, as well as Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, were able to discuss its key points and display good practices in each country. In addition, recommendations and a way forward for the region were proposed.
- **Capacity building information sessions** were designed on the topics of migration, climate change and the environment in Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Togo.
- Three **consultations** took place in Cotonou, Lomé and then Bissau, gathering institutions working on topics such as environment, migration, planning, agriculture and social issues, as well as relevant NGO and academia representatives. The consultations made it possible to discuss and increase shared knowledge, through peer-to-peer exchange with EU MS and Southern experts, between the different actors on the state of play of the link between migration, environment and climate change, the challenges experienced in trying to address it and the way to strengthen national responses. Suggestions of a way forward focused on the following elements: addressing and integrating migration in policy and (development) planning, collecting data on environmental migration, devising adaptation strategies to

1 CRED, 2015. Available at: <https://www.emdat.be/>. [Accessed 25 August 2020].

climate change and environmental degradation including a migration component, and reinforcing multi-sectoral coordination among all relevant stakeholders.

Impact

- Increased understanding of the threats related to climate change and environmental degradation, and the role migration can play as an adaptation strategy in West Africa, as well as a possible way forward for countries and institutions in the region.
- Increased knowledge for relevant actors at national level of the risks related to climate change and environmental degradation, their impact on human mobility, and the potential of migration as an adaptation strategy in Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Togo.
- A series of policy documents and reports² that recorded concrete suggestions on how countries, individually and collectively, could better address the link between migration, environment and climate change in West Africa were produced for the participants.

Challenges

The idea that migration might also be driven by environmental factors is relatively new. Currently, no legal definition of environmental migration exists. International conventions or treaties frequently do not cover it³ and still few governance instruments exist to address it. Given its complexity and multi-dimensional nature, environmental migration does not lend itself to an easy and quick understanding, and cannot work whenever migration is interpreted through the dichotomy between refugees and migrants.⁴ This has meant that it has not been easy to identify and replicate good practices in this domain. Cooperation and exchange with organisations and countries that have pioneered on this topic, such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), IOM, the Government of Bangladesh or the Hugo Observatory, were essential to the positive outcomes of this Action.

2 Background paper on migration, climate change and environment in West Africa: Benin, Togo and Guinea-Bissau; Report of the Regional Consultation on Migration, Climate Change and Environment (October 2015); Capitalisation Report of the Consultation in Benin (September 2016); Capitalisation Report of the Consultation in Togo (September 2016); Capitalisation Report of the Consultation in Guinea-Bissau (April 2017); Report of the Regional Restitution and Capitalisation Workshop in Benin (September 2018).

3 One of the few exceptions is the Kampala Convention, which addresses the issue of the protection of those displaced by environmental factors. For further information, please see: Allehone Mulugeta Abebe, *"The Kampala Convention and environmentally induced displacement in Africa"*, IOM Intersessional Workshop on Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration, 29-30 March 2011, Geneva, Switzerland. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/climate-change-2011/SessionIII-Paper-Allehone-Mulugeta-Abebe.pdf>. [Accessed 25 August 2020].

4 Dina Ionesco, Daria Mokhnaceva, François Gemenne, *"The Atlas of Environmental Migration"*, Routledge, London & New York 2017, p. 2.

Practices

- **Thematic focus:** While environmental migration is being recognised as an issue that is shaping our present, and will play an even greater role in the future, much work is still to be done to understand and address it. The Action rallied with those initiatives contributing to creating a global knowledge base while adapting content to West Africa.
- **Multi-layered methodology:** Recognising the complex response that environmental migration needs, with responses to be developed by a variety of stakeholders, the Action fostered exchange and cooperation both at national and regional levels.
- **Exchange with world innovators:** Particularly vulnerable to climate change,⁵ in 2005 Bangladesh developed a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and in 2008 adopted the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP).⁶ In 2015 Bangladesh also launched its National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement (NSMDCIID).⁷ Given this, representatives of the Government of Bangladesh were invited to share their experience with the West African countries present throughout the Action.
- **Coordination at national level:** In two countries, the learnings from the MIEUX Action could be steered and connected to broader work on M&D by specific coordination structures at national level. In Benin, the Migration and Development Working Group, including also a Subcommittee on Migration and Climate Change, and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Coordination and Monitoring of Migration and Development Activities⁸ in Togo work on all migration topics.
- The GFMD included the MIEUX West Africa Action as a good practice related to the SGD 13 in its Recommendations to the 2019 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development of 15 March 2019.⁹

5 Tim McDonnell, "Climate Change Creates a New Migration Crisis for Bangladesh", National Geographic, 24 January 2019. Available at: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/01/climate-change-drives-migration-crisis-in-bangladesh-from-dhaka-sundabans/>. [Accessed 25 August 2020].

6 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, "Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009", September 2009. Available at: https://www.iucn.org/downloads/bangladesh_climate_change_strategy_and_action_plan_2009.pdf. [Accessed 25 August 2020].

7 Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, "National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement (2015) (NDMDCIID)", prepared by Tasneem Siddiqui, Mohammad Towheedul Islam, Zohra Akhter, September 2015. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b2b99f74.html>. [Accessed 25 August 2020].

8 Created under MIEUX Action Togo II 2012-16. Available at: <https://www.mieux-initiative.eu/en/actions/122-togo-migration-and-development>.

9 Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=1872&menu=3170>. [Accessed 25 August 2020].

Lessons Learnt

Understanding and addressing the link between migration, environment and climate change has become essential, especially in a region struck so hard by climate change and environmental degradation such as West Africa, where environmentally-induced migration and displacement are becoming more and more important. Knowledge exchange and capitalising on good practices from around the world are therefore essential in this still relatively unexplored topic. The peer-to-peer exchange was essential for the good success of the Action, especially because it joined together representatives of countries and initiatives that seldom have the possibility to exchange on these important topics.



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Migration EU Expertise



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Since launching operations in 2009, the Migration EU expertise (MIEUX) Initiative has provided space to request capacity development activities and EU expertise, allowing the sharing of knowledge and practices between peers working in institutions in and outside of Europe.

The adoption of the Global Compact on Migration and the creation of the UN Network on Migration coincided with MIEUX's ten-year anniversary. To mark the occasion, MIEUX undertook a comprehensive analysis of its achievements, methodologies and practices.

By delving into MIEUX's portfolio of over 100 interventions, this series of case studies intend to offer a glimpse of the broad range of tools, methodologies and approaches that can inspire or be used by governments and migration and development practitioners to advance a cooperative and sustainable international architecture of migration.