



# MAURITANIA

## Reducing Vulnerability of Arid Oasian Zones to Climate Change and Variability through Improved Watershed Management

LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FUND	
LDCF grant	\$3,960,000
Cofinancing	\$4,500,000
NAPA completion	November 2004
Inclusion in LDCF Work Program	April 2009
CEO endorsement	April 2010
Implementation start and completion	January 2011–January 2015
GEF Agency	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
Other executing partners	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development; Ministry of Rural Development; Ministry of Water and Sanitation

The West African climate, particularly in the Sahel, has undergone recurrent variations of significant magnitude since the early 1970s. The whole region, including Mauritania, has experienced a marked decline in rainfall since around 1968–72. Mauritania has experienced chronic drought over the course of the last 30 years, which has had negative impacts on the rural communities that have been subjected to increased water stress. Their response has been to further exploit both surface and groundwater resources with little planning. A major environmental vulnerability related to climate change is the drop of water tables, which results both from current usage practices and years of precipitation deficits. The supply of water to cities

and large towns in Mauritania is drawn from groundwater from the nearby oasian zones. Current practice is resulting in frequent deficits for human consumption and agriculture needs in these oasian zones.

### Project Activities and Expected Impacts

This project's aims are twofold. It seeks to conserve water supply by creating catchment devices to promote the infiltration of runoff to replenish groundwater in the oasian zones. At the same time, the project aims to improve management of water demands by improving the hydroclimatic information needed to ensure sustainable use of a diminishing resource.



The long-term goal of the project is to improve water management in light of climate change impacts in order to improve ecological functioning and human well-being. The project addresses urgent issues through improved environmental management and shows how climate change information and improved data on water can be used to enhance resource management and decision making at several levels, including technical-, policy-, and community- level demand-side management.

The project enhances the capacity of the population for improved local water management through improved awareness and implementation of water management strategies and techniques appropriate to a changing climate. The project also aims at ensuring that the correct information and policy management systems are put in place to improve medium- and long-term planning to sustain water resources in an increasingly arid climate.

### **Synergies and Coordination**

IFAD, its United Nations partners, and the government of Mauritania are seeking complementarities with other development partners, for example, through the joint donor intervention matrix for 2006–10 in response to the second Mauritanian Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and related action plan. IFAD is leading the Terrafrica process in Mauritania through the preparation and implementation of a country strategic investment framework for Sustainable

Land Management (SLM). An ad-hoc SLM committee was established by law and is coordinating all SLM investment in the country, including activities that aim at mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Therefore, coordination with the IFAD/GEF-supported project *Participatory Environmental Protection and Poverty Reduction in the Oasis of Mauritania* is ensured.

With respect to capacity building, the project aims to link with the regional *Climate Change Adaptation Capacity Support* project supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and implemented by the AGRHYMET Regional Centre (ARC). Coordination is ensured with the World Food Programme (WFP) work in providing food security of poor rural households and mitigating vulnerability to unpredictable weather conditions through environment protection.

Coordination is also ensured with and cofinancing received from an IFAD *Support to Rural Poor to address Climate Change in Africa* program, which is under preparation and aims to reduce climate change risks and vulnerability in selected poor rural communities in Africa by developing community-based adaptation and mitigation activities through local risk management, expanded and climate-proofed options and land productivity, increased individual skills, and expanded community participation in decision making and implementation.

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### **For More Information**

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