



World Meteorological Organization

Weather, climate, water

Volta-HYCOS

FIRST IMPLEMENTATION REPORT “*THE PREPARTORY PHASE*”

Prepared by the Secretariat of WMO

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VOLTA-HYCOS
FIRST PROGRESS REPORT ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREPARTORY PHASE
20TH JULY 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in collaboration with the French Institute for Development Research (IRD), prepared a draft project document in February 2003 to implement the Volta-HYCOS project. The ultimate objective of this project is to develop a system of pertinent information on the water resources in the Volta Basin, using quality data, with easy access, especially using Internet technologies by users. The project intends to consolidate the technical and institutional capacities of the NHSs in the participating countries, reinforce the hydrological observing networks, in particular through the use of different technological options in remote data acquisition, promote the development of national and regional data bases, foster regional cooperation and organize pertinent training programs. The estimated budget for the project is presently fixed at 2 220 000 Euros, comprising the contribution of FFEM (1 000 000 Euros), IRD (870 000 Euros), countries (200 000 Euros), and of the Group of schools EIER-ETSHER (GEE), now 2iE, (150 000 Euros). The Volta-HYCOS project has a duration of 3 years, which includes 6 months of the preparatory phase.

1.2 The project document proposes an institutional mechanism for implementation of the project. This consists of the Project Steering Committee; the Executing Agency and Supervisory Agency (WMO); the Project Management Unit (PMU), under the the Project Regional Center hosted by 2iE, and the National Executing Agencies (participating countries). The project will benefit from the scientific and technical expertise of IRD, the project technical partner. The responsibilities for each partner are specified in separate agreements and are described subsequently.

1.3 As per the preconditions of the Agreement, signed between WMO and AFD in Nov 2004, which envisages that WMO as the Executing Agency for the Volta-HYCOS, to undertake finalizations and signing of the following agreements:

- An agreement between WMO and 2iE which envisages the responsibility of GEE as the host institution for the Project Regional Center (PRC).
- An agreement between WMO and IRD, which also envisages the responsibility of WMO as Executing Agency and IRD as cosponsor and technical partner providing the services of technical experts to support PMU.

All the above agreements have been signed.

1.4 As part of the conditions for funding the VOLTA-HYCOS project, the WMO is expected to report bi-annually on the progress of work accomplished under the

project. This is the first semi-annual report and it covers all the activities undertaken during the preparatory phase.

2. THE PREPARTORY PHASE

AFD approved the start of the preparatory phase on 26th August 2005 by transferring the first installment for funding (€ 69.000). The work on the preparatory phase started with the recruitment of the Project Coordinator, who joined duties on 1st January 2006.

2.1 Objectives

2.1.1 The principal objectives of the preparatory phase are as follow:

- a) Obtain commitments from the participating countries.
- b) Prepare for the establishment of the project Regional Center including the establishment of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and Regional Data Center (RDC).
- c) Carryout visits to participating countries to collect more information about their needs.
- d) Prepare Draft Detailed Project Document.
- e) Establish the Project Steering Committee.
- f) Organize the first Steering Committee meeting to finalize the project document and the workplan with its budget.

2.2 Status of implementation of the preparatory phase

2.2.1 The Preparatory Phase has been successfully completed and achieved its objectives as all participating countries are committed to support and sustain the project, the Project Management Unit is established; the project management team visited all countries in the basin and collected useful information, the draft detailed project document was prepared and the Project Steering Committee is established.

A) Obtain commitments from the participating countries

2.2.2 WMO received, from all countries in the basin, letters from high-level officials including Ministers confirming their country's interest in participating in the project and their commitments to support its implementation and ensure sustainability of the project.

B) Establishment of the Project Regional Center (PRC)

2.2.3 Under the agreement between WMO and the 2IE (GEE) for implementing Volta-HYCOS, the latter has allocated three offices to the Volta-HYCOS project within its premises starting January 2006. This includes office space and furniture for the Project Regional Center (PRC). The PRC consist of the Regional Data Bank (RDB) and the Project Management Unit (PMU).

The Project Management Unit (PMU)

2.2.4 Administrative support to PMU is assured by the 2IE (Group EIER-ETSHER), within the facilities they provided for hosting the Project Regional Centre (PRC). The Project Management Unit (PMU) for the Volta–HYCOS Project consists of the Project Coordinator to be appointed by the project and four technical support staff. Under the MOU signed between WMO and IRD, the latter is expected to provide all the technical expertise required to assist the project Coordinator in implementing the Volta–HYCOS project.

2.2.5 The process of recruiting the Project Coordinator followed the WMO procedures. In order to set up an effective and efficient recruiting process for the project coordinator, WMO assisted 2IE (GEE) in drafting an advertisement note for the post of the Project Coordinator. The post was advertised in October 2005 and was kept open for one month and was well circulated. It was also advertised through the Internet and throughout the Volta Basin countries through WMO, IRD and GEE networks. The applications were addressed to GEE in Ouagadougou.

2.2.6 A selection committee (SC) composed of representatives of WMO, GEE and IRD was established to analyze applications and identify the most suitable candidate. Nine applications from four countries in the basin were received. WMO organized on 20th November 2005 a meeting of the SC to finalize the selection process for the project coordinator. In order to ensure fair selection amongst the applicants and to identify the most suitable candidate, the SC members agreed on an evaluation process based on a points system.

2.2.7 The SC identified Mr Jacob Waake TUMBULTO from Ghana as the most qualified and suitable candidate for the post and urged GEE to finalize the process of recruiting him as soon as possible in order to ensure that he can resume duties by 1 January 2006. Mr Jacob Waake TUMBULTO joined his duties as project coordinator on 1 January 2006. The current status of the four other experts to be provided by IRD is as follow:

- i. One hydrologist, charged with providing the coordinator of the project with technical assistance in the project implementation, has taken office since January 2006 at PMU.
- ii. One Hydrological technician, responsible for the hydrological observing network and also in charge of the maintenance and update of the database, is also available since January 2006.
- iii. One Webmaster, responsible for the development and update of the Internet Website of the project. IRD is making arrangements to recruit someone for the position.
- iv. One Computer engineer/ Electronic Data Processing Specialist, responsible for the development and maintenance of the database. Since March 2006, IRD has assigned a Computer Engineer/ Electronic Data Processing Specialist who is based in Montpellier. He has experience in Electronic data base management and will intervene in the project in the form of missions to the Project Regional Centre in Ouagadougou, as and when necessary. WMO expressed its concern to IRD about the need for an expert to be

stationed on Ouagadougou to develop and maintain the Regional Data Base and assist National experts in establishing their National Data Bases. Such task needs a permanent computer and data base expert attached to the PRC.

The Regional Data Bank (RDB)

2.2.8 The establishment of RDB has started. Some of the IT equipments such as three computers (two desktop and one laptop), other computer accessories and office equipment (UPSs, printers, scanner and fax etc) have been purchased. The RDB will be further equipped as and when deemed necessary. The process of procurement of the equipments followed the WMO (UN) procurement procedures.

C) Country Consultation: Missions to participating countries in the Basin

2.2.9 The PMU team carried out country visits, from 14 March 2006 to 27 April 2006 to all the participating countries in the Volta Basin which are Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali.

2.2.10 The main objectives of the country consultation were to hold meetings with water resources information users so as to solicit their views on specific information needs or hydrological products they would like to see as well as their expectations from the Volta-HYCOS project, hold discussions with the officials in the National Hydrological Services of the participating countries on the status of their operational activities and the assessment of the country's needs in terms of technical, institutional and financial support for strengthening their hydrologic network and improve services.

2.2.11 The visits also offered opportunity to the PMU team to established contact with the Focal points and officials of NHSs. Many stakeholder groups were met, including various staff of hydrological services departments, researchers, dam managers, hydropower and water supply managers and managers of other related projects in the Volta basin. Useful information was obtained especially through the questionnaires that were sent out earlier to the Hydrological Services of all the participating countries. Finally the team visited a selected number of hydrometric stations proposed in the Volta-HYCOS project document of February 2003 with the view to establishing their current state and assessing complementary material requirements.

2.2.12 In addition to the country consultation visits; the PMU team had two missions to the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) in Niamey in March and May 2006 and had discussions with the Niger HYCOS team with a view to bring synergies between the two projects as four countries are participating in both of the projects. The objective of the first meeting was to familiarize the Volta HYCOS team with that of Niger-HYCOS. The second visit was to meet IRD expert from Montpellier to discuss with him the equipment proposed to be purchased for Niger-HYCOS project. This was essential to ensure that the equipment later to be purchased under Volta-HYCOS project meets the similar specification that of Niger-HYCOS equipment.

D) Preparation of the Draft Detailed Project Document.

2.2.13 Based on the results of the information obtained from the questionnaires distributed to the participating countries, discussions with the National Hydrological Services, visits to the regional offices, and discussions with the water resources information users in these countries, the PMU team identified the hydrological stations to be modernized and rehabilitated and training requirements for each country. This information has been used as a basis for developing the budget and action plan for the project.

2.2.14 The Project Coordinator in collaboration with the IRD Hydrologist reviewed and prepared the Draft Detailed Project Document for Volta-HYCOS using the information collected from the countries and NBA. The project document contains, among others, the information on the selected stations, the proposed equipments and their estimated cost. The total project budget was over and above the available funds. Therefore provision was made for executing the project with the currently committed funds as one scenario. The other scenario with complementary funds totaling € 717,354 is also presented along with complete action plan. Negotiations are on with the African Water Facility for the balance financial support.

2.2.15 The revised draft project document and the 9 Annexes including an action plan covering specific issues in the project document were circulated to the countries for comments and it were finalized during the first Steering Committee meeting.

E) Establishment of the Project Steering Committee- PSC

2.2.16 WMO has received letters from all participating countries, designating National experts to represent their countries in the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Focal points to coordinate the project activities at the national level.

2.2.17 The first Steering Committee meeting was organized on primacies of 2iE in Ouagadougou on 6-7 September 2006. The country representative made their final comments in the project document and indorsed the workplan with its budget.

3. PROJECT PERFORMANCE AND LESSONS LEARNED

3.1 Project Performance

The process for the Preparatory phase started on September 2005 after ten months from signing the agreement between WMO and AFD. More time than anticipated was consumed in finalizing agreements between WMO, 2iE and IRD, which were a pre-condition for the release of the funds. The time needed for selecting a suitable candidate for the post of the Project Coordinator was unforeseen and as a result there was some delay in his appointment. The Project Coordinator started his work on 1st January and submitted the Draft Detailed Project Document in July 2006. That demonstrates good progress on implementing the actual activities of the Preparatory phase in six months as originally planned.

3.2 Lessons Learned

3.2.1 The procurement procedure in 2IE (GEE) seems to be very slow. The possibility of requesting for supplies from stores of 2IE and to have the project billed is being explored by the project coordinator.

3.2.2 The project had to operate for the past six months without the full compliment of the PMU team and without the support of a secretary/administrative assistant. The project team experienced some difficulties with translation facilities from French to English and vice versa and other minor administrative tasks.

3.2.3 As there was no project vehicle, the PMU had to hire a vehicle for its missions. Since the procedure at 2IE (GEE) is to take the company with the lowest pro forma invoice, the PMU stood the big risk of using vehicles, which were not well maintained. Provision has been made for the acquisition of a vehicle in the revised project document.

3.2.4 Currently, it is only the Project Coordinator and the Hydrologist from IRD that carry out all the activities in the preparatory phase of the Volta HYCOS project. The hydrological technician would be more helpful in the field and in updating the hydrological information. If the entire team were available, there would have been the possibility of working as a team on some aspects of the project, as is the case in Niger-HYCOS project.

4. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

4.1 The preparatory phase has been successfully completed and has achieved its objectives within the given budget though behind schedule. Some delays were experienced in starting the activities, due to unforeseen circumstances. All tasks have been accomplished:

1. The Project Management Unit has been established and is operational.
2. Country needs have been assessed through country visits and they have provided the necessary information.
3. A Draft Detailed Project Document has been prepared.
4. The Project Steering Committee has been established.
5. The 1st Steering Committee was organized and the project document including the detailed workplan with its budget was endorsed.

4.2 In general all countries demonstrated goodwill of cooperation and provided support to the PMU team when they were carrying out country visits. The interaction with users have been very fruitful and have helped in identifying the needs of training and capacity building in the NHSs for providing users oriented hydrological products.

4.3 As the Steering Committee Meeting was organized in September 2006 and endorsed the Detailed Project Document, including the action plan and the corresponding budget, the process for modernizing/rehabilitating the hydrological network and supplying equipments to countries should start. The training programme on specific topics should start in parallel with the field activities. The development of the Regional Data Base will also be finalized in parallel with other activities with the availability of the funds for the second phase.