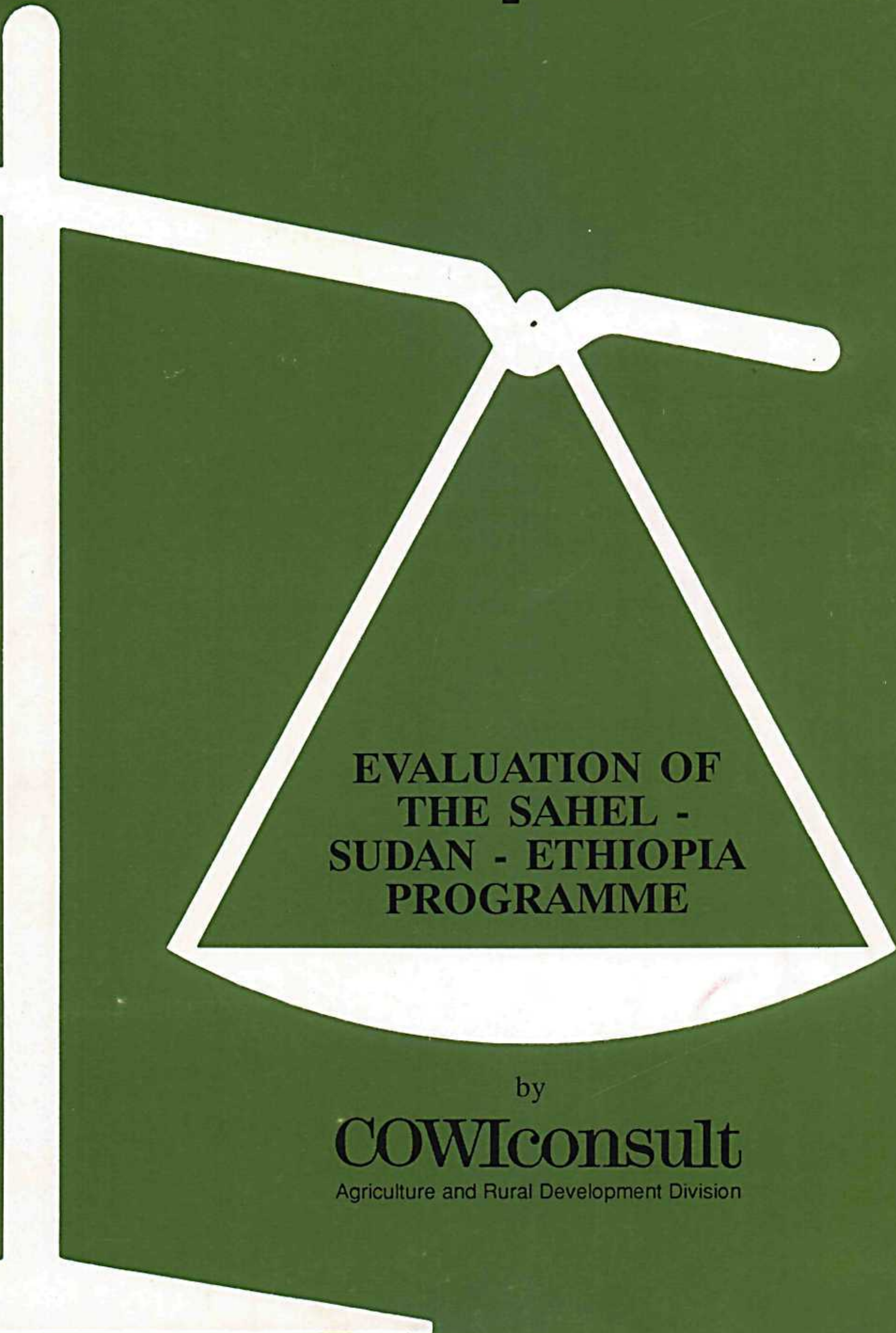


ROYAL MINISTRY  
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
Norway

# Evaluation Report 2.92



**EVALUATION OF  
THE SAHEL -  
SUDAN - ETHIOPIA  
PROGRAMME**

by

**COWIconconsult**

Agriculture and Rural Development Division



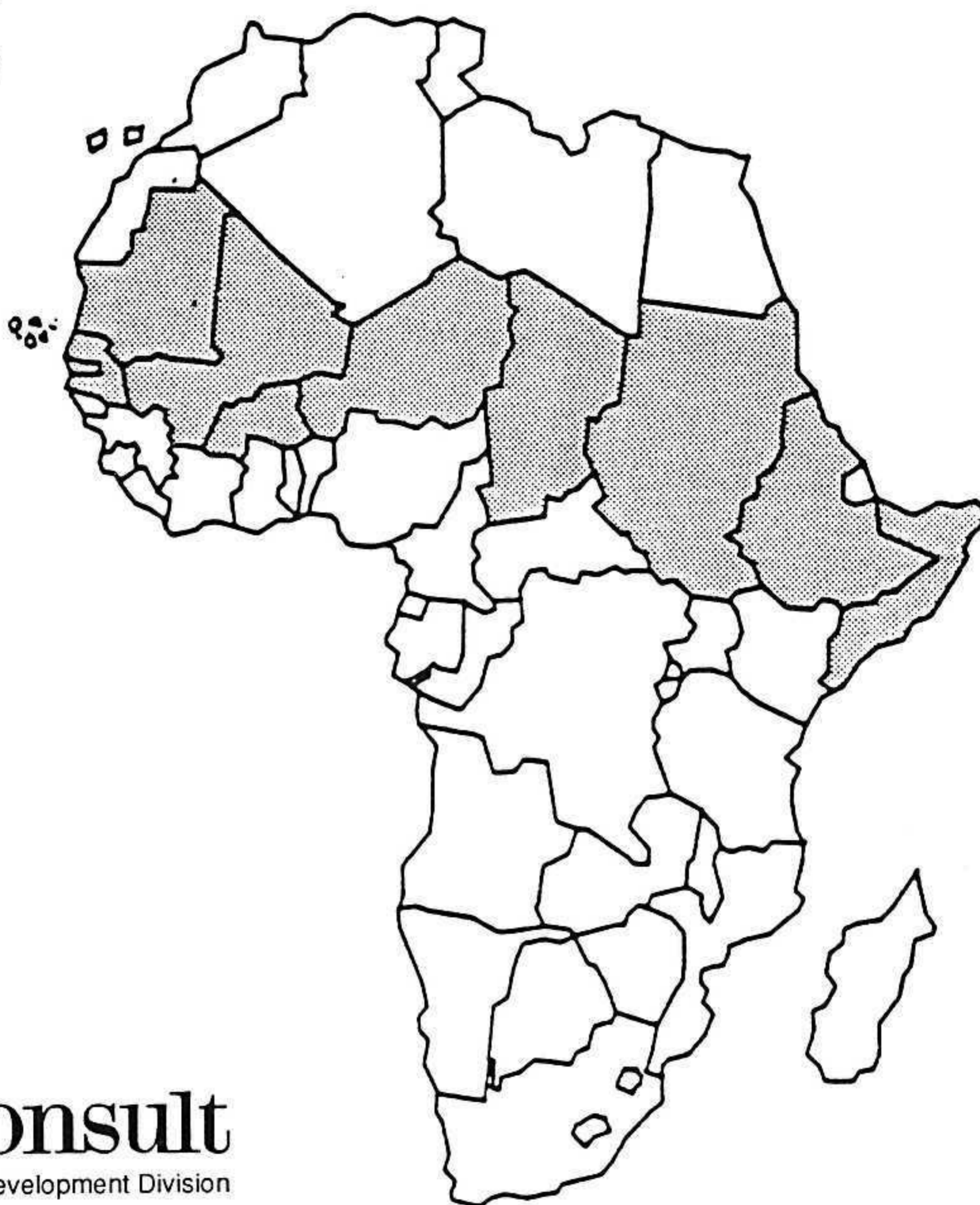


Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

# Evaluation of the Sahel - Sudan - Ethiopia Programme 1986 - 90

Synthesis Report

December 1992



by

**COWIconsult**

Agriculture and Rural Development Division

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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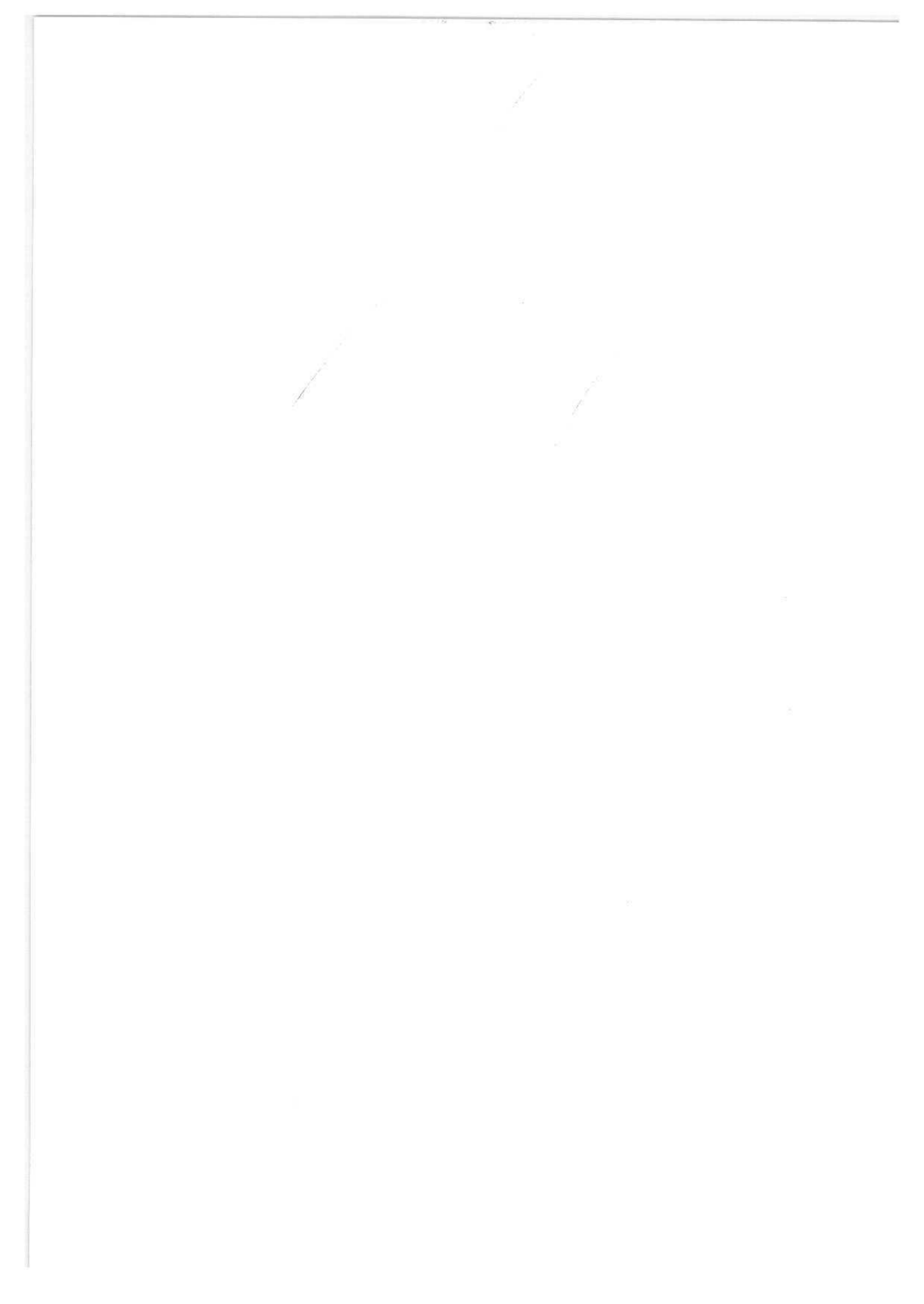
Document No. : 21742/002  
Issue No. : 002  
Date of Issue : December 1992  
  
Prepared : HSM - APW - JMK  
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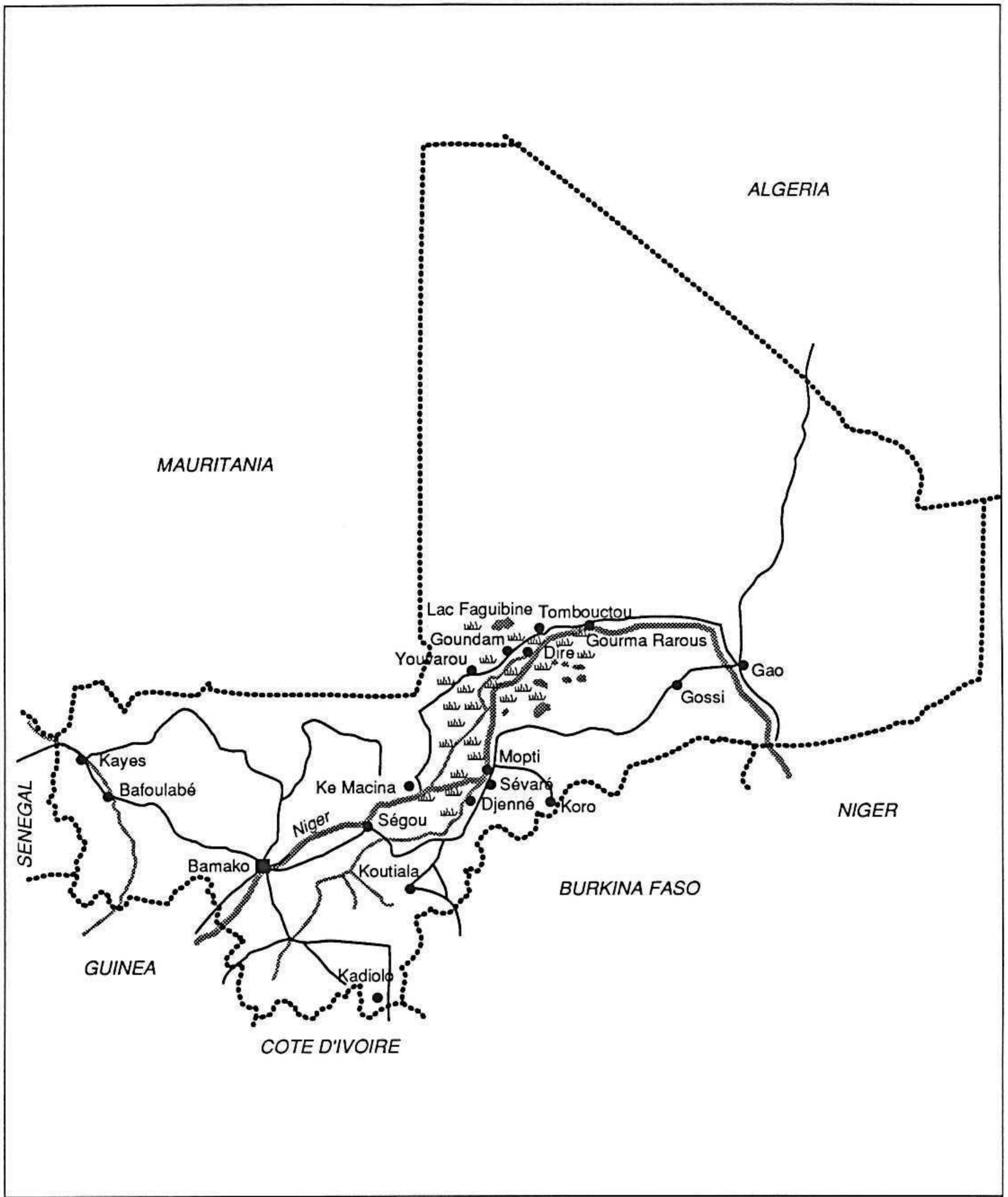


## List of Acronyms

ACOPAM	Appui Coopératif Aux Activités de Développement assistées par le Programme Alimentaire Mondial en Zone Soudano-Sahélienne
CDP	Community Development Project
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Agency
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
ERA	Eritrean Relief Association
ETE	Ethiopia, Tigray and Eritrea
FIOH	Future In Our Hands, now the Development Fund
FORSK	MFA, Research Division
GNP	Gross National Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILCA	International Livestock Centre for Africa
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
MAEE	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and the Environment, Mali
MDC	Ministry of Development Cooperation, Oslo
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo
MULTI	MFA, Multilateral Department, Oslo
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRCS	Norwegian Red Cross Society
NOK	Norwegian Kroner
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development
NORAGRIC	Agricultural University of Norway, Norwegian Centre for Inter-Agricultural Development
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NUFU	The National Committee for Development-Related Research and Education
ODEM	Opération de Développement de l'Élevage dans la région de Mopti
ORM	Opération Riz Mopti
PLAN	MFA, Planning Division
PNLCD	Programme National de Lutte Contre la Désertification
PRIVORG	NORAD, NGO Division
PROG	MFA, Programme Division
RB	Redd Barna, Save the Children
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
SAH	The Sahel, Akele Guzai, Hamasien Project, Eritrea
SASEBA	The Seraye, Senhit, Barka Project, Eritrea
SMF	Stromme Memorial Foundation

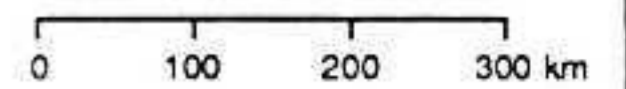
SS	Sahel-Sudan
SSE	The Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia Programme
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UD	Utenriksdepartementet
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSO	United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office
WB	The World Bank

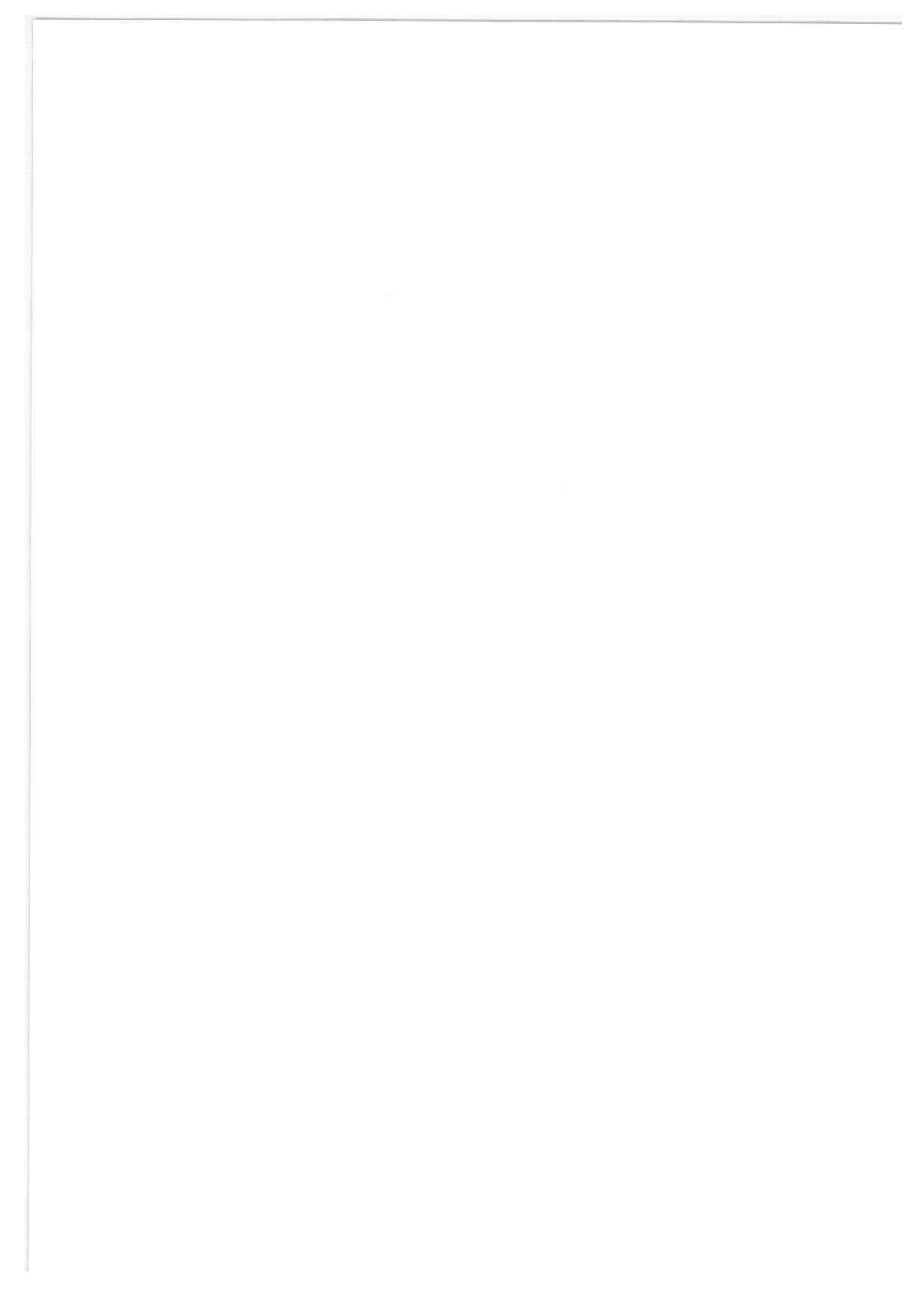




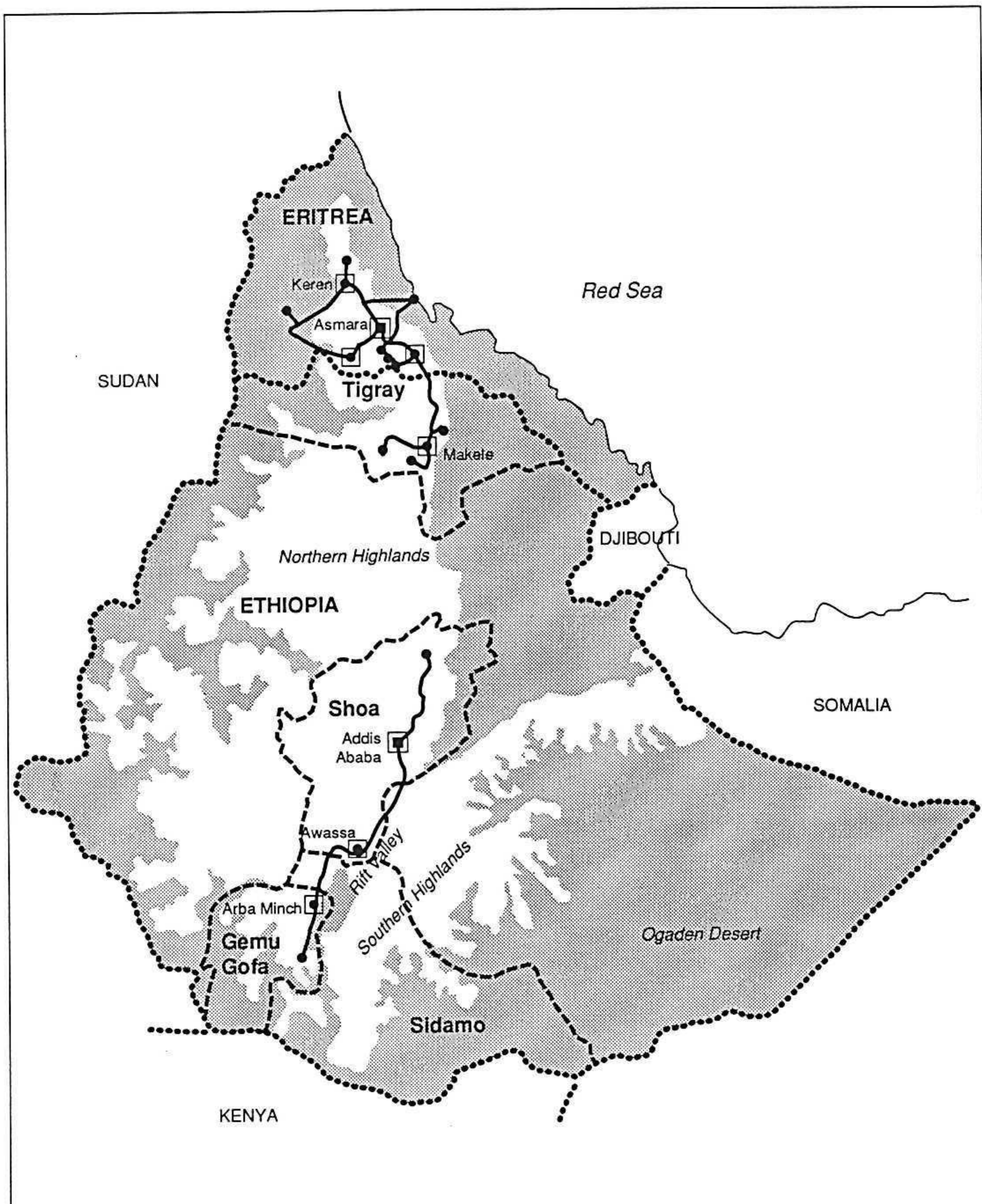
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- ~~~~~ River
- Town
- ⏟ Delta
- ▨ Lake





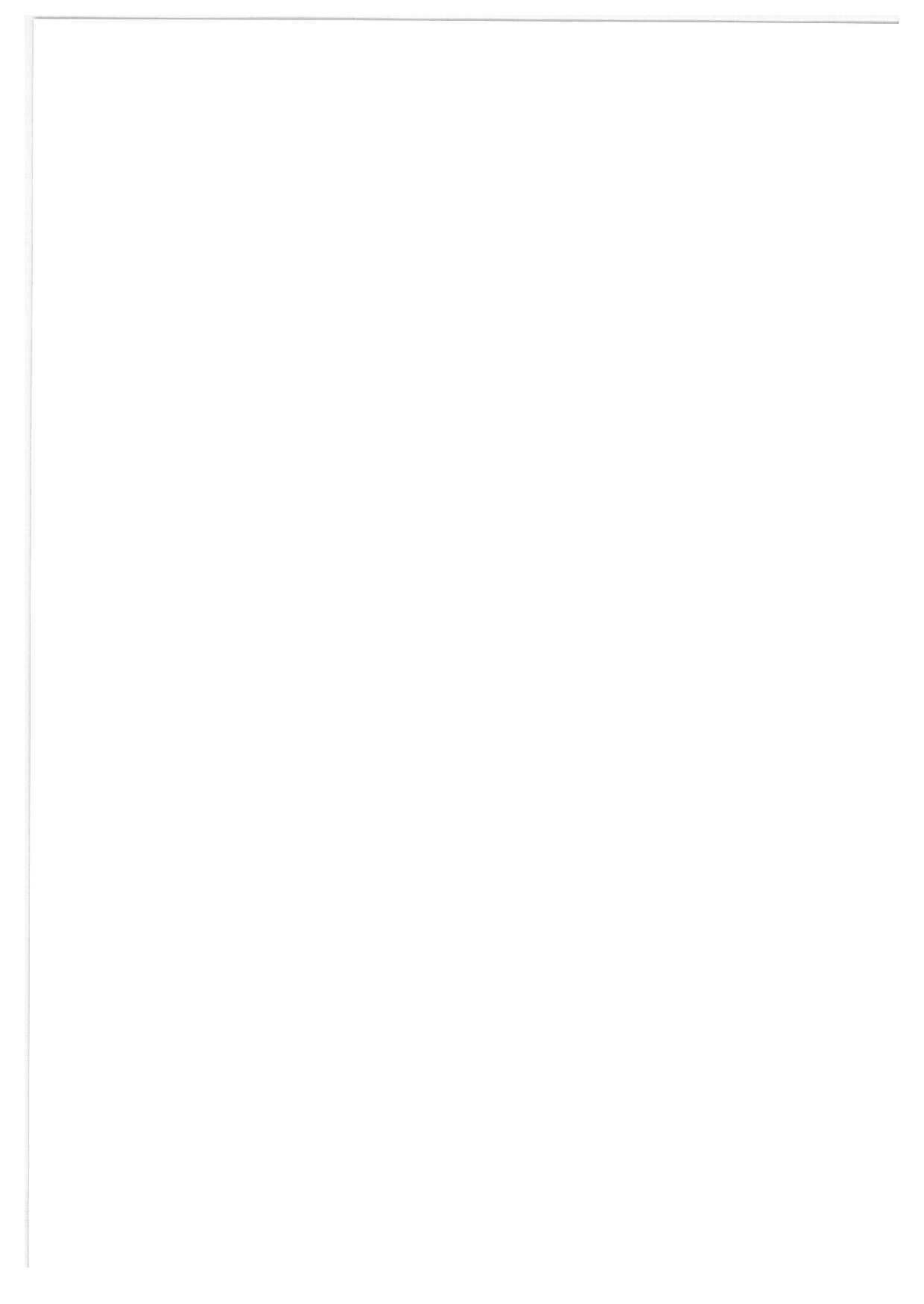




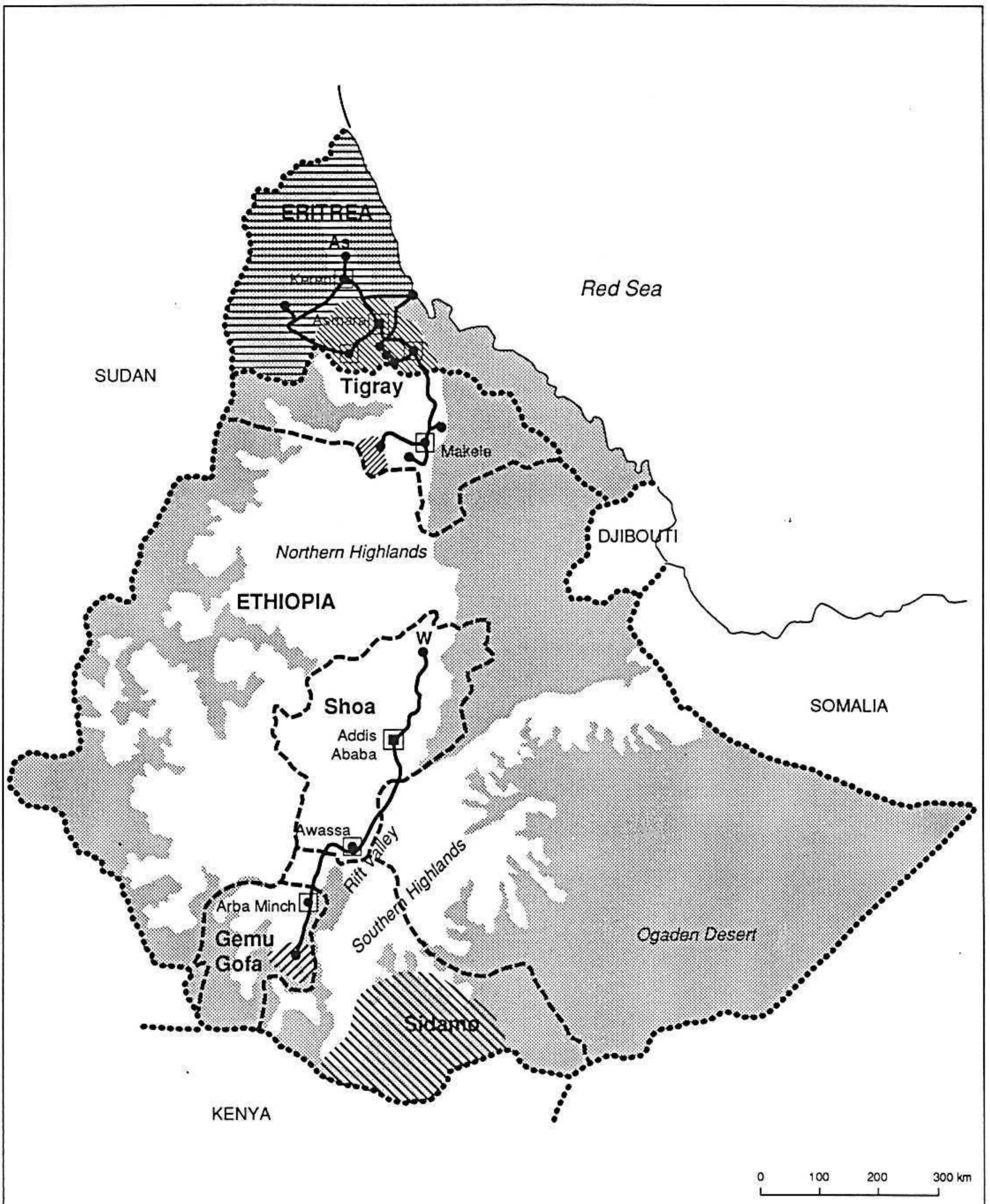
Legend:

- Provincial Boundaries
- ... International Boundary
- ▨ Land below 1500 metre
- Capital City
- ◻ Provincial Capital
- Rural Settlement
- Road Journeys by Mission

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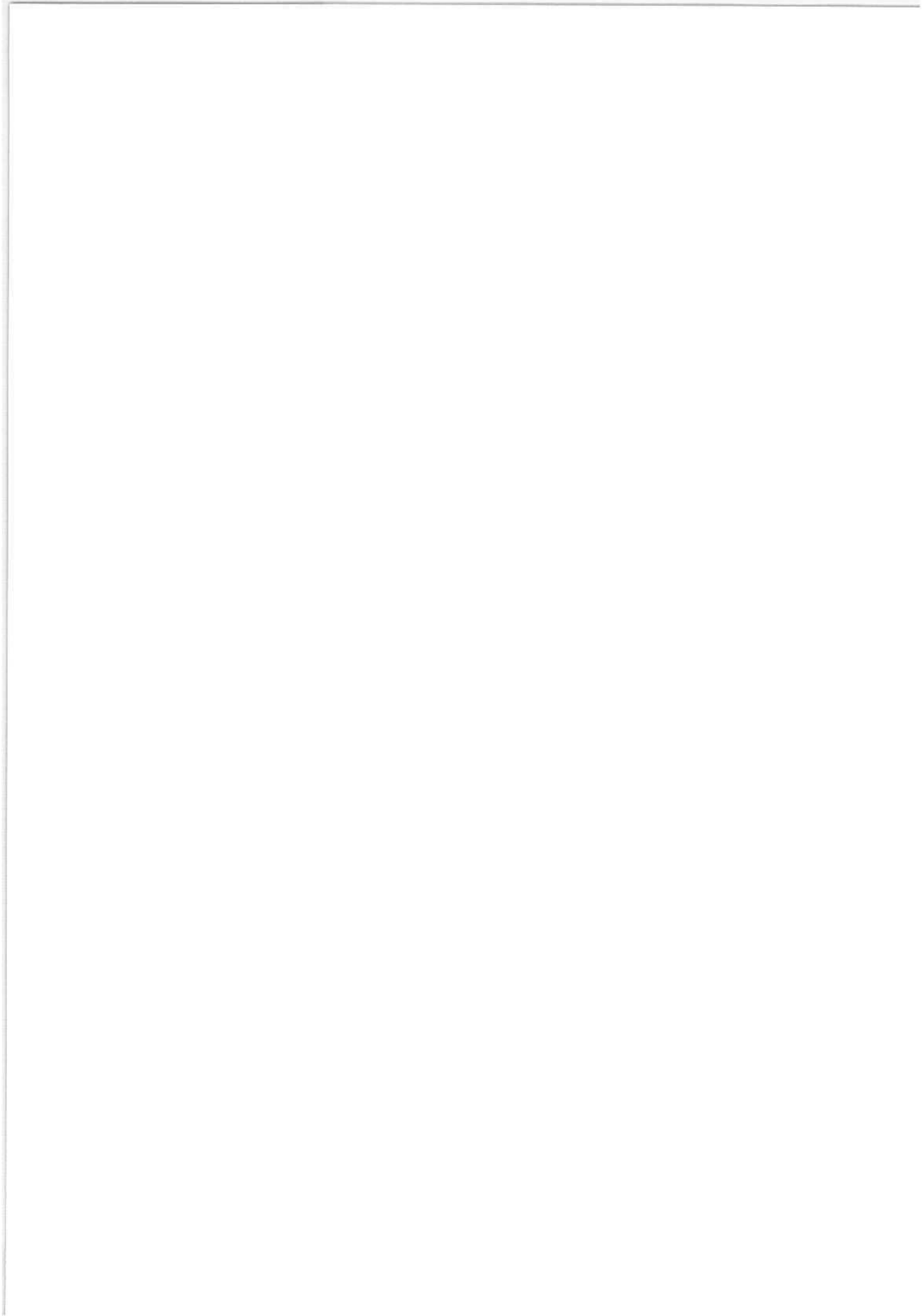
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| --- Provincial Boundaries  | ■ Capital City             | W Wogda Project     | ▨ SAH Project (Seraye, Akele Guzai, Hamasien) |
| ••• International Boundary | ● Provincial Capital       | As Asmat Project    | ▩ SASEBA Project (Sahel, Senhit, Barka)       |
| ▨ Land below 1500 metre    | ● Rural Settlement         | ▨ Abergelle Project | ▨ Konso Area of EECMY's CDP                   |
|                            | — Road Journeys by Mission |                     | ▨ Borana Area of EECMY's CDP                  |





# Executive Summary





# 1 Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

The Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia Programme (the SSE Programme) was initiated in 1985 as a mechanism for channelling Norwegian assistance to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa affected by severe drought, poverty and environmental degradation. The Norwegian government approved a budget of NOK 1 billion for the implementation of the initial phase of the Programme covering a period of five years (1986 - 1990). While the average expenditure was expected to be NOK 200 million a year, in actual fact only around NOK 150 million were spent annually. The Programme has thus continued in 1991 and 1992 in order to utilise the remaining funds.

The overall objectives of the Programme, as formulated in the programme documents from 1986, are:

- to improve local food production and food security, and
- to improve the natural ecological base in order to develop sustainable production systems.

The main principles to guide the Programme were:

- minimized dependence on future aid, i.e. sustainability,
- recipient orientation,
- specific targeting of women, and
- poverty alleviation

The implementation of the Programme has been organised through three different disbursement channels, viz. multilateral organisations, NGOs, and research institutions. These three channels of disbursement were expected to have a degree of interaction from which it was expected mutual benefits and synergy would result.

The SSE Programme has operated primarily in Mali, Ethiopia (including Eritrea and Tigray) and Sudan. - Only Mali and Ethiopia (including Eritrea and Tigray) are covered in the present evaluation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided at the end of the first phase of the Programme in 1991 to commission an evaluation with the aims of:

- assessing the relevance of the programme objectives and overall strategy to the social, economic, political and environmental setting in the region;
- describing and categorising the programme activities and assessing the achievements of objectives, effectiveness, sustainability, synergy and compatibility of the activities and achievements;
- assessing the quality and effectiveness of programme management and monitoring;
- presenting recommendations or options on the objectives, strategies and management for Norwegian support to development activities in the SSE region.

The evaluation has been carried out through four discrete studies:

- a documentation study on the objectives and profiles of the Programme;
- a desk study of the social, economic, political and environmental context in the region;
- field studies on a sample of the SSE supported activities in Ethiopia, Tigray, Eritrea, and Mali;
- a study of the management and implementation of the SSE Programme.

The results of each study, with the exception of the last one, have been presented in separate working documents, while the overall findings along with the results of the management study are presented in the present Synthesis Report. In the following, the findings of the previous study phases are summarised.



## 1.2 Programme in Practice

The types of activities which may have been supported by the SSE Programme are diverse. The content of many of the field projects is similar to that of projects supported by other Norwegian aid votes such as the Environment Grant, NGOs and Multi-bi.

The activities supported by the SSE Programme can be categorised as projects, programmes and research activities. Respectively these three groups accounted for approximately NOK 385 million, NOK 315 million and NOK 55 million. Programmes are larger activities comprising more than one project and often covering more than one country. Typical examples are contributions to UNSO, IFAD and the World Bank. While NGOs are only involved in projects many of these are of a considerable size in terms of area and content, most of these projects having more than 5 different components and almost half having over 10 components.

Between 1986 and 1990 the multilateral channel received 54% of the funds, while the NGOs received 39% and research institutions 6%. There were 53 separate activities funded through the multilateral partners, 26 through the NGOs and 26 through the research institutions in this same period.

Cultivation activities have dominated the project and programmes supported by the SSE Programme with a large number of irrigation and rainfed farming activities funded along with support services such as extension and input supply. Forestry and protection activities are quite numerous, while the number of activities within the animal husbandry sector are the same as in forestry despite the much wider significance of livestock in the region's rural economy. Of the 79 projects and programmes supported only 7 support range management and a similar number restocking. It is only the research activities which have given much attention to the pastoral areas and communities.

Although health and education activities clearly fall outside the SSE objectives they are included in many projects supported by the NGOs. In some cases have such activities been funded by the SSE Programme, in others have the NGOs in question provided additional funding themselves. A more serious conflict with SSE objectives is the use of food aid and food distributions in NGO projects. While this is related to the origin of many projects as relief activities, this use of food aid can seriously prejudice the achievement of sustainable development.

Institutional support is concentrated at the project or community level, while assistance at the national level in legislation and the planning and preparation of strategies for addressing the food insecurity and environmental issues has been limited.



### 1.3 Findings from the Study

It is important to stress that the task of the Evaluation Team has been the evaluation of the SSE as a Programme and not a detailed assessment of the achievements of the individual projects implemented with SSE funds.

Although the Team's overall conclusion is that the potential of the Programme has not been fully exploited, the individual projects implemented at field level have contributed in varying degrees towards the realisation of the overall Programme objectives, i.e. improved food production and the development of sustainable production systems.

The main findings of the evaluation can best be grouped under a number of headings which reflect key aspects of the SSE Programme.

The findings presented here are drawn primarily from the Documentation Study, the Regional Context Study and from the ETE Field Study, and Mali Field Study. It is reported that the Mali Field Study has more positive reports of the field activities than was the case in the ETE region. While many of the projects have had positive impacts in terms of food provision and short-term development activities, the long-term impacts upon sustainable development and environmental rehabilitation, and upon the overall development of the SSE Programme, which is the focus of this evaluation, have been less positive.

These overall conclusions must be seen in the light of the complex nature of the problems being addressed and the long time needed to achieve results, especially in environmental rehabilitation. Hence it could not be expected at this stage, after only five or less years of operation, that major achievements would be seen in the field. In addition it must be recognised that in many areas the Programme has been affected by adverse conditions such as war, drought and an unfavourable policy environment, which have made it difficult for the Programme to develop rapidly.

#### Programme Findings

1. The programme concept is ambitious. It recognises that through sharing of information, mutual support, synergy and recognition of comparative advantage the overall impact of the Programme can be more than the sum of its different elements. In addition the programme concept recognizes that support in a number of different ways is necessary to solve the problems in the SSE region and that broad programme support rather than narrow projects are the type of development assistance needed, while the Programme concept is ambitious, the Programme itself was not ambitious enough as it did not set long term objectives beyond 1991.



2. The Programme had very commendable objectives which are central to development needs of the SSE region. It was correct to link environmental rehabilitation with food security in order to raise awareness of the essential linkage between these two issues.
3. The programme concept remains valid because of the way in which the principles outlined above could make a significant contribution to speeding up the achievement of sustainable natural resource use and food security in the SSE region.
4. The programme concept has not been recognised fully, or at all, among the partners in Oslo and especially at the field level. The SSE funds have been used with little or no consideration to the overall programme objectives, i.e. synergy and exploitation of the implementing bodies comparative advantages.
5. A major problem has been the lack of a detailed plans to operationalise the programme concept at the country level.
6. Individual partners have acted with considerable freedom and mostly in isolation from other partners of the programme creating their own "bastions of development". They have been able to filter the objectives and principles of the SSE Programme to suit their own needs.
7. There has been no development of synergy within the programme and few linkages have been established between the partners and relevant actors outside the programme. A few links between the partners in Mali have begun to develop.
8. The Programme failed to utilise the comparative advantage of the different disbursement channels and, as a result, its impact was reduced. Projects, whether implemented by NGOs or by multilateral agencies, had a tendency towards "convergence" with the use similar design concepts and approaches. Recognition of the comparative advantage of the partners should have led to greater attention to policy and institution problems by the multilaterals, while NGOs should have applied more community focused approaches.
9. The Programme has learned many lessons both positive and negative and established a body of knowledge and range of contacts. These provide the basis for making a significant contribution to addressing the problems of the SSE region in a future phase of the Programme provided that close contacts are established by the programme at the country level.

### **Administrative Findings**

1. The Programme concept has not been successfully fostered under the administrative set-up directed from Oslo. Serious administrative bottlenecks have included frequent changes in the administrative structure of the Programme, limited resources available for coordination and planning of Programme activities within the administration, and an unclear role and insufficient presence of field attaches, including the lack of representation in Mali and Ethiopia. Poor coordination at the country level is a major cause of the poor development of the programme concept.
2. The Programme has not received the necessary programme specific administrative and technical support from staff connected with it either in Oslo or in the field. Administrative support to facilitate information exchange, internationally and at the country level was not sufficient. These problems may in part be due to the considerable turnover of staff in posts supporting the programme and the frequent restructuring of the administration.
3. The pressure for disbursement at the start of the Programme led to an insufficient assessment of the design and content of individual projects, and of the role of the SSE Programme within the context of country specific needs.
4. The concentration of disbursement decisions during the first two years of the Programme shaped its profile leaving few subsequent opportunities for flexibility. As a result the Programme was unable to adjust to the experience gained over the years and incorporate the growing knowledge among agencies and researchers about environmental and food production problems in the SSE region.
5. Procedures to ensure appropriate design, monitoring and evaluation of activities supported by the programme have been introduced and adopted to varying extents. However, further attention is needed to improve the utilisation of appropriate design techniques and to improve the monitoring and evaluation undertaken.

### **Partner Findings**

#### **Multilateral Organisations**

1. The multilaterals have much more development experience than the NGOs in working in the SSE region. In some cases they have over 15 years experience. NGOs with long experience in the region have worked mainly in relief and disaster prevention.



2. The wealth of experience accumulated by the multilateral agencies has not been exploited because coordination and collaboration among the partners have been extremely limited. The multilateral agencies also seem to implement their projects in isolation as "enclaves" or "bastions of development".
3. In a number of cases the multilateral organisations have developed their projects or programmes in close relation to, and coordination with, established strategic planning frameworks. This difference from the NGO experience is partly due to the closer links with government institutions which the multilateral agencies have developed; some of them actually have planning and policy issues as part of their mandate, and preferred mode of operation. However, most of the multilateral activities implemented with SSE funds have been operational field projects, rather than policy oriented activities, or ones focusing at institutional development with central government agencies.
4. All the multilateral agencies have long and complex linkages from their headquarters to the field. These complex commands structure create problems at the field level for identifying the correct partners and procedures, slow project implementation and adversely affect project impact and quality.
5. The quality of the project documentation and the overall level of development professionalism is better among the multilaterals than with the NGOs.

#### NGOs

1. Norwegian NGOs have previously worked mainly in relief and disaster prevention. For them development work in food production and ecological rehabilitation is new.
2. Norwegian NGOs have a variety of different modes of operation in the field ranging from direct implementation, through forms of active implementation partnership with a local NGO, to funding and holding a dialogue with a local implementing NGO.

These different modes of operation, as well as the different objectives of the agencies involved, have had major implications for the impact and effectiveness of the Programme in achieving its goals. Generalisations about NGOs are consequently difficult.

3. Many of the NGOs had limited expertise to meet the management and technical backstopping needs of the large and complex projects in which they were often involved. In many cases they had no comparative advantages in the range of issues they were addressing and in



the geographical areas in which they were working. However, in a few cases NGOs have begun to develop field expertise in aspects of development relevant to the SSE Programme.

4. Coordination and information sharing amongst the NGOs, as well as between the NGOs and other partners in the Programme, have been limited, resulting in projects often implemented in relative isolation as "enclaves" or "bastions of development".
5. Most of the field-operating NGOs have faced problems in making the transition from relief to more long-term development activities. A key problem has been the continued use of food for work and free food distributions which distort field activities, create dependency among beneficiaries, and make it difficult to ensure that development initiatives are sustainable.
6. The SSE Programme has had only a limited impact upon the partner NGOs, both in Norway and in the recipient countries, in terms of the development of strategic thinking concerning food security and environmental rehabilitation, and in the development of integrated approaches for addressing these issues.
7. The nature of the relationship between the NGOs and the government or dominant political force in an area has been variable. In some cases NGOs have failed to comply with national policy frameworks, while in other cases they have not been critical enough of patently adverse policies.
8. In general the international NGOs, such as CARE and IUCN have been more effective and professional in their activities than the Norwegian NGOs.

#### **Research Component**

1. Unclear and mutually conflicting objectives about capacity building in Norway, capacity building in SSE countries and research providing immediate support to concrete development activities have caused confusion and led to considerable delays in the implementation of this component.
2. The firm steering of the research component by the Ministry and the uncertainty regarding the time perspective of the Programme have neglected the specific nature of research and worked against researchers motivation and interest in participating in the Programme.

3. Institutional problems related to the extremely varying experience from working in the region and the forced cooperation between Norwegian and SSE institutions have been a major problem.
4. The establishment of cooperation between Norwegian and SSE researchers has not been on an equal basis, as research disciplines / areas and geographical area were selected prior to the involvement of SSE researchers. The identification of SSE partner institution has in a number of cases been hazardous and the cooperation has not worked well in practice.
5. Cooperation and information sharing between research projects has been very limited.
6. The research component has existed in isolation from the other components of the programme. There has been little linkage to field activities through cooperation with the NGOs and multilateral projects. Research has not contributed to the development of strategic planning frameworks through cooperation with multilateral agencies.
7. Linkages to international research have been insufficiently developed.
8. The quality of the research is difficult to assess as it mostly started only in 1989 and as yet has produced very few internationally published articles / monographs or completed theses.

#### **Project Level Findings**

1. There was an emphasis upon crop cultivation and food production and a neglect of environmental and pastoral issues in the projects supported by the Programme.
2. Projects were designed on a blueprint rather than on a process approach. Hardly any projects included a pilot phase and most lacked the required flexibility in the design.
3. There was an emphasis upon short-term physical objectives and production goals rather than long-term development goals such as capacity building and sustainability in its various forms.
4. There was limited sensitivity in the projects to the socio-economic diversity within the recipient communities. As a result there was a tendency to neglect the diversity of economies and coping strategies within the project areas and to utilise a blanket approach.



5. The NGOs tended to have unrealistically large target beneficiary groups, and to address a great number of non-SSE related activities. The projects of the multilaterals were generally more focused and better targeted.
6. There was some neglect of the wider impact of projects, with support to some sections of society disadvantaging others.
7. Participation by recipient communities in projects, especially in design and management through discussion and empowerment, has been given limited attention both by NGOs and multilaterals. This has led to limited social sustainability of the project activities supported.
8. Poor participation has meant that projects have often not been sensitive to the real needs and conditions of the communities. As a result, communities have not been sufficiently supportive of, or involved in, the projects and activities to ensure their sustainability without external inputs.
9. There has been a neglect of institutional development in many of the NGO implemented projects. Projects implemented by multilateral agencies have generally been better in this respect.
10. Monitoring and evaluation have not been satisfactory, especially for the NGO implemented projects, with few baseline studies and insufficient external evaluation.
11. The general level of technical competence within the projects implemented in Mali appears to be better than among some of those implemented in the Ethiopia, Tigray, Eritrea (ETE) region. This may partly be a result of the circumstances within which the projects have been operating in the ETE region, but may also relate to the characteristics of the NGOs involved.
12. Within the ETE region major successes have been seen in a number of areas. In Tigray the local partner, REST, has emphasised the use of local institutions, village regulations, and local sources of inputs, while in Tigray and Konso (EECMY/NCA), and to a lesser extent Eritrea (ERA) there have been initiatives which build upon local knowledge as the basis for improving food security and rehabilitating the natural vegetation. In Tigray there was also some evidence of the development of an integrated view of the environment and food production systems.



13. The SSE Programme intended to exploit the comparative advantage of each partner and partner institution. However, similarity in approach, content and thematic as well as geographical coverage seems to have characterized the projects of multilateral and NGO components.

#### **Principles for Future Operation of a Programme**

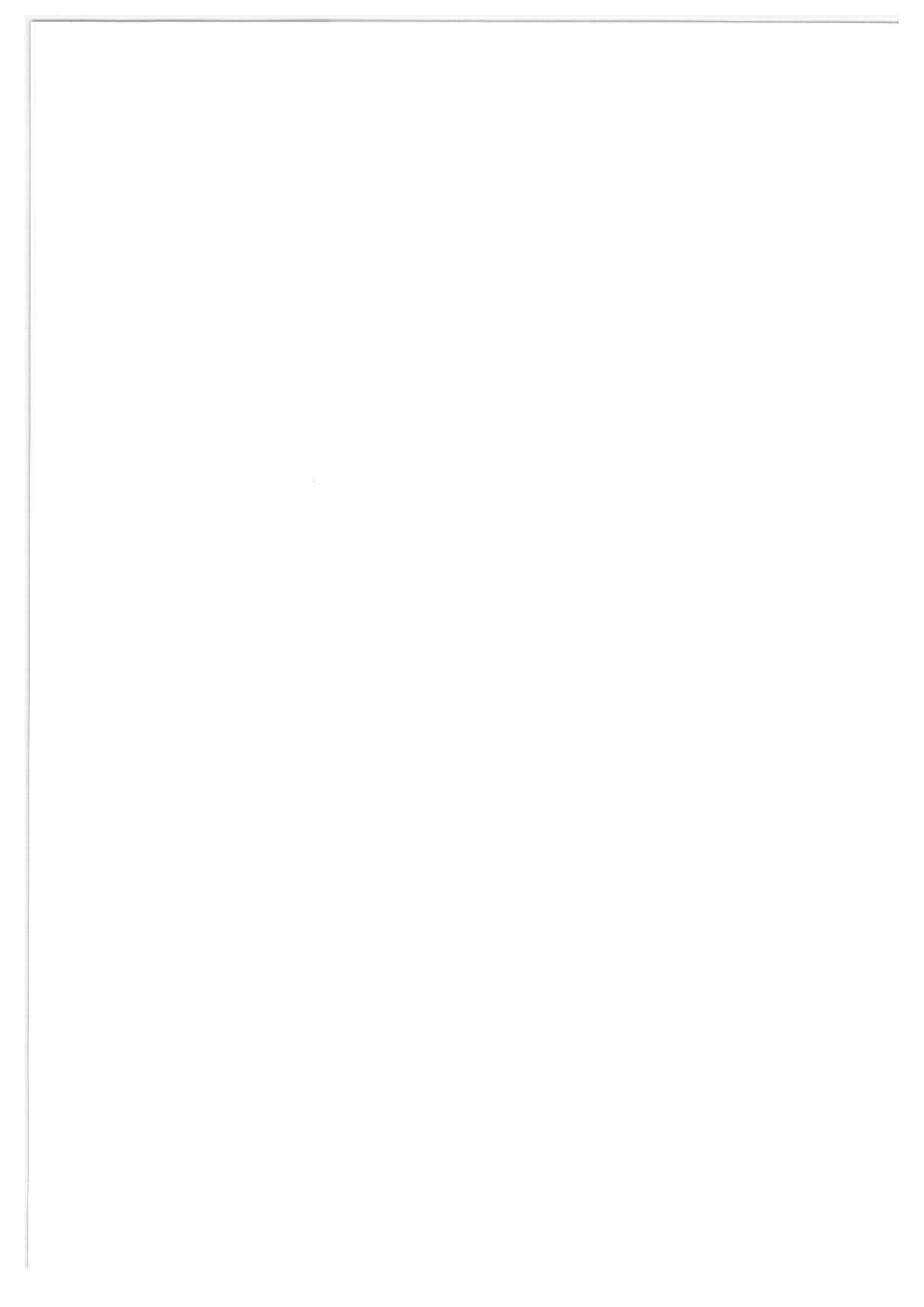
From these findings a number of overall principles can be identified. These must be the basis for guiding the design of a future Sudano-Sahelian Programme which we propose should take up the mantle of the SSE.

1. A programme concept is valid given its potential for synergy, mutual support, and increasing efficiency in addressing SSE issues. Greater attention has to be given to its operationalisation within the specific contexts of the recipient countries, especially in preventing projects being bastions of development.
2. Decentralisation is necessary to ensure the appropriate and effective operationalisation of a programme concept. This should be ensured by the preparation of country programmes.
3. The comparative advantage of the different channels must be given greater attention. Additional channels for disbursement should be considered so that the potential of other contacts between Norway and the SSE region can be used.
4. The project concept should be critically evaluated and greater attention paid to supporting the development of an enabling environment to achieve the goals of a Programme through policy reforms and institutional developments both at the national and community levels.
5. Food distributions might still be needed in famine and emergency situations, but should not be funded from a SSE Programme. Efforts should be made to remove its disturbing effects which make it difficult to ensure that initiatives linked to it are sustainable.
6. Improved communication is needed between the various channels, between countries, between partners and international research and field activities.
7. Improved backstopping and technical support for Programme activities is essential.
8. Greater emphasis should be given to participatory approaches, and to holistic systems analysis as the basis for developing interventions.



# Introduction





## 2 Introduction

The SSE Programme, which is rather unique in its concept and basic philosophy not only in a Nordic comparison, but also more broadly, was a very ambitious programme when conceived. It was seen as an experiment in a new form of Norwegian development cooperation. The ideals were high, and the Programme period of five years duration was considered as only a first phase in a more long-term aid programme. However, as this evaluation shows, the ambitions did not completely match the efforts devoted to making the Programme thinking come true, neither on the part of the partners, or disbursement channels, involved, nor on the part of the administration in Oslo. It is the general conclusion of the present evaluation that this unique opportunity has not been sufficiently exploited; in fact it is termed "a lost opportunity".

The present evaluation has also been rather ambitious, in scope, perspective and length. The evaluation started off in October 1991 by conducting a Documentation Study, continued with a Regional Context Study and was extended into the field by carrying out field studies in Ethiopia/Tigray/Eritrea and Mali respectively. Each of these phases of the evaluation have been separately reported upon in working documents. Finally, the present Synthesis Report attempts to summarize all the previous major findings, adding the results of a Management Study which carried out as well.

While the documentation study faced a major problem in coming to understand the very extensive documentation which exists, the field studies faced more serious problems the evaluation team shot at while conducting the field study in Eritrea. This was not because the team was particularly unwelcome (perhaps also that), but because the arrival of the team was the first contact for a long time the farmer had had with "outsiders", and still believed that Eritrea was in a state of war. In Mali, due to the political unrest situation particularly in the inner delta of the Niger river, the evaluation team was at times forced to accept military escort as a condition for paying field visits.



None of these situations can be said to be optimal for an evaluation mission, but the problems encountered are, of course, nothing compared to the conditions under which project personnel have been forced to work (or the conditions the local population have faced in their fight for survival). The extremely difficult political circumstances in Ethiopia/Eritrea/Tigray as well as in Mali, following the ousting of the former president early 1991, are clear indications of the constraints and limitations on project and programme impact, which the political situation has posed. In this light, and despite the criticism raised in the present evaluation, what actually has been achieved is far from negligible and requires admiration by all.

Another important factor to bear in mind when reading the present report is the fact that the evaluation has been carried out at a time where projects at best have been operating for the full Programme period of five years (with the exception of certain multilateral activities, also financed by Norway prior to the commencement of the SSE Programme). This very short time span is, of course, insufficient to provide the necessary background for a profound assessment, as impacts, particularly with environmentally related projects, can only be expected to show in the long run. In this sense the present evaluation - more or less "forced" by the timing of it - certainly leans more towards critical aspects and observations, and does not give so much attention to the positive results which might show later on.

Finally, the evaluation team has in its work (as requested in the Terms of Reference for the study) put major emphasis on comparing SSE Programme activities and results to the Programme concept, that is the very ideal Programme thinking which was behind the SSE Programme when it was initially shaped. Comparing achievements, impact and results to an ideal, the realism of which was questioned at an early stage by many of the actors involved, not least in the Oslo administration, will necessarily overemphasize a number of critical remarks and observations, and somewhat reduce in importance actual achievements.

Any evaluation carried out profits from the "wisdom of hindsight". It is always a lot easier ex post to point out certain misconceptions or obvious shortcomings in project/programme achievements, suggesting alternative paths of project development. And it is certainly quite easy for external evaluators, visiting the field for only a very short time, to present their findings, also the critical ones, in a way which tends to neglect the specific circumstances under which this or that project activity came into being.

However, with the modifying remarks above and the results of the present evaluation in mind it is hoped that the findings will be used less as expressions of "marks" given to this or that activity/organisation, but rather will be used for redirecting a future SSE Programme, where necessary,



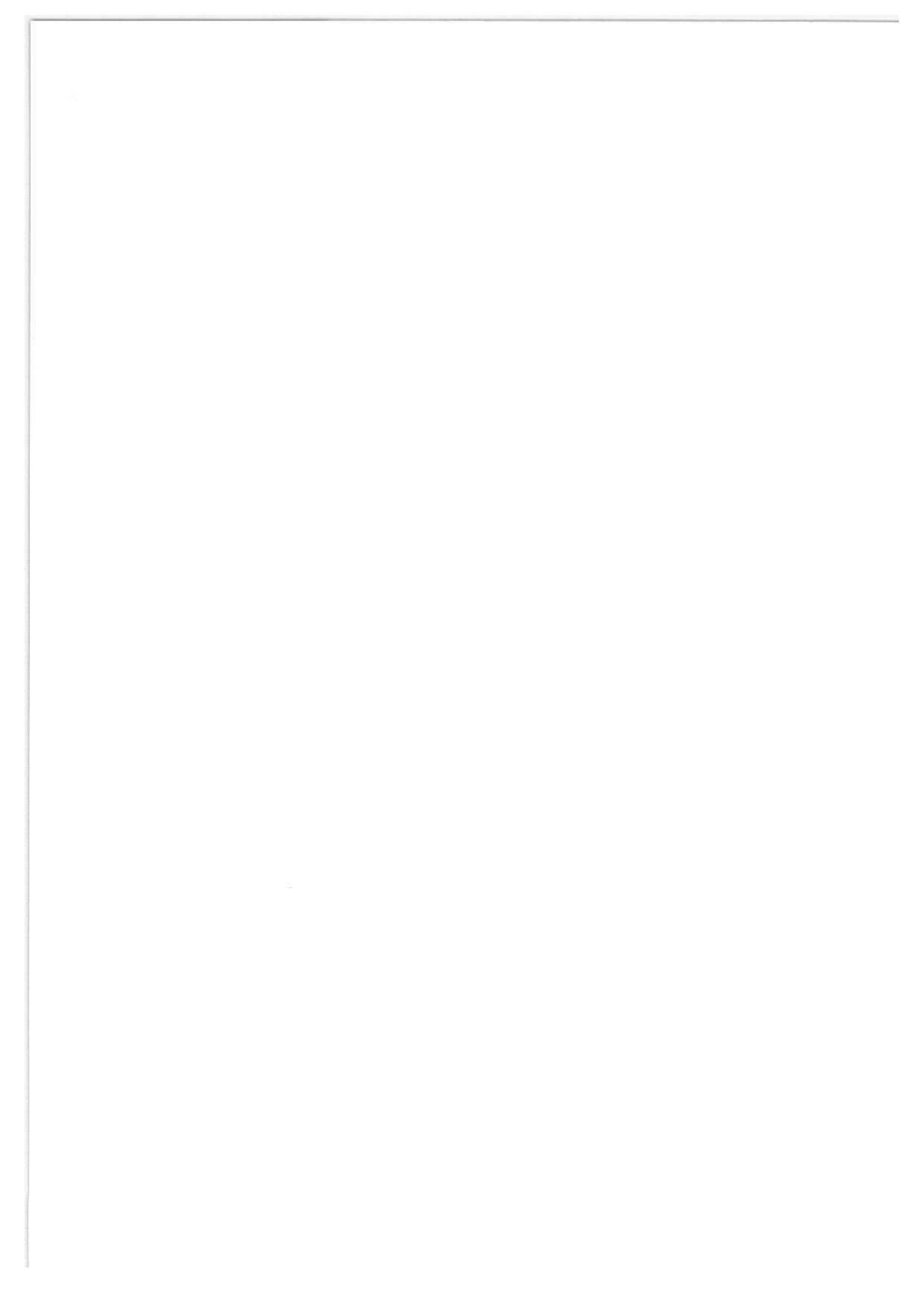
into more and promising directions, inclusive of more optimal administrative routines and procedures. In this regard, a number of recommendations are presented towards the end of this report.

The evaluation team wishes to thank all involved parties, whether project personnel, representatives of target beneficiary groups in the field, government officials, personnel in the Oslo administration, researchers from Norway and recipient countries and many others for their time and patience in dealing with members of the team. The logistical support provided by a number of the organisations and the openness and flexibility with which team members were met were indispensable for carrying out the evaluation.



## **Objectives and Background**





### **3 Objectives and background**

#### **3.1 Objectives of the SSE Programme**

Following a public request for a Norwegian contribution to the efforts to save lives and initiate sustainable development processes in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia Programme (the SSE Programme) was initiated in 1985 as a mechanism for channelling Norwegian assistance to countries in the region affected by drought, poverty and environmental degradation.

The overall objectives of the Programme, as formulated in programme documents from 1986, are:

- to improve local food production and food security, and
- to improve the natural ecological base in order to develop sustainable production systems.

With respect to the first objective, specific activities identified as relevant included agro-forestry, small-scale irrigation, livestock production and range management, storage of seeds and inputs, improved use of natural fertilisers, improved extension and family planning and support to input supply, credit schemes, and agricultural research.

With respect to the improvements of the natural resource base, relevant activities included protection and restoration of water, soil, vegetation, and forest resources, protection of genetic resources and indigenous species, support for local and national plans to combat desertification, support for training and institution building for better natural resource management, and support for relevant research.

The main principles to guide the Programme were:

- minimised dependence on future aid, i.e. sustainability,
- recipient orientation,
- specific targeting of women, and
- poverty alleviation.

The implementation of the Programme has been organised through three kinds of institutions, viz. multilateral organisations, NGOs and research institutions.

### **3.2 Concepts and Ideals behind the Programme**

The SSE Programme was organised on a programme basis because it was felt that this offered a number of potential benefits. These included the use of different, but complimentary, channels whose concurrent efforts in different but related activities would produce **more than cumulative effects**.

In other words, it was felt that through information sharing, mutual support, synergy and recognition of comparative advantage the overall impact of the Programme would be more than the sum of its different parts. Also behind the Programme thinking was the recognition that support in a number of different ways is necessary to solve the complex problems in the SSE region and that broad programme support rather than narrow projects would be more adequate and appropriate.

The three channels - the multilateral organisations, the NGOs and research - were expected to have a degree of interaction from which it was expected **mutual benefits and synergy** would result. In particular it was expected that the NGOs would work in liaison with multilateral organisations who were more experienced in project implementation in the region, while the researchers were expected to undertake their field research in collaboration with projects and contribute their findings to the projects.

At the same time it was expected that the programme concept would facilitate the exploitation of each partner's **comparative advantage**, to the benefit of the Programme as a whole, as each partner/organisation would support and complement each other, while the partners focused on activities where their skills and experience were most relevant.



In the case of the NGOs, it was expected that in particular they would be good at using participatory approaches and work closely at the grass-root level, preparing projects and implementing them in close collaboration with the local population and local communities.

The multilateral organisations were expected having certain strengths developed in dealing with mobilizing the potential of the smallholders. (Their policy and programming skills, however, were not recognised in the SSE Programme.)

The research component would ideally provide a valuable source of information, in support of project activities in the region, particularly the activities of the Norwegian NGOs.

In order to support the mutual interaction attention was to be given in the management of the Programme to the sharing of information, consultation and coordination. This was sought primarily through the SSE Programme Coordinator and the Field Attaches for the Programme. In addition a number of seminars were to be held to which participating organisations would be invited. The administration of the Programme in Oslo was also to emphasize coordination with recipient countries and with other donors at national and international levels.

### **3.3 Position of the Programme within the Overall Norwegian Development Assistance**

The total funds approved for the first phase of the Programme were NOK 1 billion over a period of five years (1986 - 1990): While the average expenditure was expected to be NOK 200 million a year, in actual fact the figure was around NOK 150 million a year. The Programme continued to operate in 1991 and 1992 in order to utilise the remaining funds.

Although the funds allocated through the SSE Programme for the five year period seem quite substantial, in the larger Norwegian aid picture, however, the contribution is only marginal. As it appears from Table 3.1, the SSE funds only constitute 3.2% of the total Norwegian bilateral aid package for the five year period 1986 to 1990, and around 6% of the total Norwegian bilateral aid provided for Africa. Even compared to the total bilateral aid given to the SSE region, the funding over the SSE Programme amounted to only one-third (33.0%).

**TABLE 3.1 - TOTAL NORWEGIAN ASSISTANCE\* IN RELATION TO TOTAL BILATERAL AND MULTI-BI ASSISTANCE IN THE SSE-REGION AND TO SSE FUNDS. 1984 - 1991, (NOK 1000)**

	Total Norwegian Assistance	Total Norwegian Bilateral and Multi-bi Assistance	Bilateral + Multibi % of total Assistance	SSE Funds	SSE Funds <sup>1)</sup> as % of Total Bilateral and Multi-bi Assistance
1984	4,431,700	2,366,500	53.4		
1985	4,945,800	2,660,800	53.8		
1986	5,890,800	3,334,200	56.6	104,690	3.1
1987	6,005,200	3,368,900	56.1	147,106	4.4
1988	6,424,500	3,462,800	53.9	147,167	4.2
1989	6,343,800	3,546,200	55.9	137,651	3.9
1990	7,551,100	4,400,100	58.8	129,375	2.9
1991	7,649,700	4,444,50	58.1	136,925	3.1
Total	49,242,600	27,624,000	56.1	895,316	3.2

Year	Total Norwegian Bilateral Assistance to Africa	SSE Funds as % of total Bilateral Assistance to Africa	Total Bilateral + Multi-bi Assistance to the SSE Region	SSE Funds <sup>1)</sup> as % of Total Bilateral and Multi-bi Assistance to the SSE Region
1984			180,504	
1985	1,603,000		282,194	
1986	2,009,000	5.2	294,516	35.6
1987	2,106,000	7.0	315,144	46.7
1988	2,097,000	7.0	358,060	41.1
1989	2,160,000	6.4	380,300	36.2
1990	2,587,000	5.0	367,401	35.2
1991			385,628	35.5
TOTAL			2,1714,437	33.0

\*Net Assistance. Loan instalments are not included.

Source: NORAD, 1990 and 1992 and SSE statistics, March 1991

1) Includes general contributions to UNSO and the World Bank



In contrast, the level of annual expenditure through the SSE Programme has been much greater than the annual worldwide expenditures of roughly NOK 40 million through the Women's Programme and NOK 70 million through the Environment Grant. However, it is well below the annual average of NOK 3.5 billion disbursed to multilateral organisations and NOK 500 million disbursed to NGOs for development work. In addition NGOs receive on average another NOK 800 million for food distributions, relief work and refugee programmes.

The types of field activities which have been financed through the SSE Programme have in a number of cases, as revealed in the present evaluation, been very similar to those funded through the Environment Grant and a number of projects funded under the Multi-bi Programme.

The justification for maintaining a number of different funding sources for financing often quite similar types of projects might be questioned, as it tends to obscure clarity and confuse partners, particularly at field and country levels.

### **3.4 Overall Size and Relative Importance of the Programme**

As shown in Table 3.2, the SSE Programme has been only one financing source among several in the SSE region, amounting to 33% of total bilateral Norwegian disbursements. Other major financing sources have been, in order of importance, Relief aid (29.3%), assistance to NGOs (17.7%), and the Multi-bi Programme (14.9%).



**TABLE 3.2 - TOTAL NORWEGIAN BILATERAL AND MULTI-BI ASSISTANCE IN THE SSE REGION - BY DISBURSEMENT CHANNEL, 1984 - 1991 (NOK 1000)**

Disbursement Channel	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	Total <sup>1</sup>	% of total
SSE Programme			104,690	147,106	147,167	137,651	129,375	136,925	895,316	33
Environment Grant	4,650	2,604	8,009	2,200	130	1,001	5,204		23,798	0.9
Women's Grant						5	46	12	63	0.0
Private organisations	13,076	62,344	59,014	41,894	74,745	61,515	99,254	68,126	479,968	17.7
Research	57		886	1,091	67	904	108	466	3,579	0.1
Multi-bi	32,736	66,990	76,723	41,676	41,962	58,102	43,647	42,030	403,866	14.9
Relief aid <sup>2</sup>	93,298	134,260	95,826	74,746	77,214	100,687	85,761	133,644	795,436	29.3
Others <sup>3</sup>	36,687	15,996	6,656	6,431	17,775	20,435	4,006	4,425	112,411	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>180,504</b>	<b>282,194</b>	<b>351,804</b>	<b>315,144</b>	<b>359,060</b>	<b>380,300</b>	<b>367,401</b>	<b>385,628</b>	<b>2,714,437</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: NORAD, 1992 and SSE statistics from UD, March 1991.

Also shown in the table is the fact that a major expansion in aid channelled to the SSE region took place between 1984 and 1985, while the inception of the SSE Programme funding from 1986 onwards only contributed to maintaining this higher level of disbursement. In particular contributions under Relief aid, although fluctuating, have been kept at a rather high level, in 1985 and 1991 surpassing, or equalling, the average annual disbursement levels of the SSE Programme. Also the Private Organisations (NGOs) between 1984 and 1985 experienced a sharp increase in their allocations, maintaining a total level of disbursement at more than half of that of the SSE Programme.

<sup>1</sup> Totals for the years 1984 - 1991 include disbursements which cannot be identified by year.

<sup>2</sup> In this table Relief aid only includes disaster relief and humanitarian aid channelled through the Disaster Relief Division and the Division for Humanitarian Aid. Relief aid is disbursed through other channels as well, such as the SSE-Programme and Private Organisations.

<sup>3</sup> Others includes Scholarships, AIDS funds and other bilateral assistance through other channels than those mentioned above.

The SSE Programme has operated primarily in Mali and Ethiopia (including Tigray and Eritrea), with Sudan and Burkina Faso being next in importance. From Table 3.3 it appears that these four countries received 63.4% of the NOK 895 million disbursed through the SSE Programme between 1986 and 1991. A further 32.1% of the funds were spent on regional projects.



TABLE 3.3 - TOTAL SSE DISBURSEMENT, 1986 - 1991, (NOK 1000)

Country	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	Total <sup>4</sup>	Each country part of total incl. regional (%)	SSE allocation as % of total bilateral aid
Mali	18,069	43,012	50,045	63,462	48,131	53,949	286,860	32.0	64.0
Sudan	14,429	9,801	11,202	8,826	9,949	7,087	61,294	6.9	14.0
Gambia	5,100						5,100	0.6	4.2
Niger					2,000	3,000	13,430	1.5	10.8
Burkina Faso	1,200	12,200	4,800	8,992		4,600	33,791	3.8	38.3
Senegal					3,000	2,000	8,738	1.0	12.5
Somalia							0	0.0	0.0
Cape Verde			300	300	4,300		4,900	0.6	9.4
Mauritania			1,390	1,390	5,390		8,170	0.9	16.4
Chad			36	4			40	0.0	0.3
Ethiopia	6,618	40,402	26,112	32,544	38,736	40,993	185,405	20.7	19.4
Subtotal (excluding Regional)	45,416	105,415	93,885	115,518	111,506	111,629	607,728	67.9	22.4
Regional <sup>5</sup>	59,274	41,691	53,282	22,133	17,869	25,296	287,588	32.1	
Total (including Regional)	104,690	147,106	147,167	137,651	129,375	136,925	895,316	100.0	33.0

Source: NORAD, 1992 and SSE statistics from UD, March 1991

As it also appears from the table, within the major recipient countries during the period 1986 - 1991 the SSE Programme accounted for between 14% and 64% of total bilateral Norwegian assistance, these extremes being in Sudan and Mali respectively. Overall for the countries which benefitted from the SSE Programme during the 1986 - 1991 period SSE funds accounted for 22.4% of country specific aid from Norway, and 33.0% of the total bilateral funds to those countries once the regional aspect of the Programme is included.

<sup>4</sup> Totals include disbursements, which cannot be specified per year

<sup>5</sup> Only the SSE Programme finances regional activities. In Regional is included seminars and information activities, but in particular activities of the multilateral organisations covering several SSE countries, such as IFAD and ILO/ACOPAM.



Table 3.4 shows the importance of the SSE funding compared to other Norwegian funding sources in each of the major recipient countries Mali, Ethiopia (including Eritrea and Tigray) and Sudan.

**TABLE 3.4 - TOTAL BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO MALI, ETHIOPIA AND SUDAN BY DISBURSEMENT CHANNEL. 1984 - 1991. (IN PERCENT)**

Disbursement Channel	Country	Mali (%)	Ethiopia (%)	Sudan (%)
SSE Programme		64.0	19.4	14.0
Environment Grant		-	0.1	-
Women's Grant		-	-	-
Private organisations		2.0	25.4	31.7
Research		-	-	0.8
Multi-bi		9.8	0.8	8.6
Relief aid		24.1	52.9	34.7
Others <sup>6</sup>		0.1	1.4	10.2
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NORAD, 1992 and SSE statistics from UD, March 1991

As already mentioned, in Mali the SSE Programme is the dominant funding source (64%) while Relief aid accounts for 24.1%. In Sudan, the situation is the reverse, as SSE funding is only marginal (14%) compared to Relief aid (34.7%) and assistance through Private organisations (31.7%). Also in Ethiopia contributions channelled through Relief aid (52.9%) and Private organisations (25.4%) comprise the major sources of funding, while the SSE Programme contribution is 19.4%. - As a major part of the assistance channelled through the private organisations is believed to be food/relief aid, in both Sudan, but in particular Ethiopia, food and relief aid constitute between 2/3 and 3/4 of total aid contributions to these countries.

In other words, overall NGOs are the major recipients and channelling sources of Norwegian aid to the SSE region. While the NGOs have received 39.0% of total funding available under the SSE Programme, compared to 54.2% in the case of multilateral organisations, the distribu-

<sup>6</sup> Others includes scholarships, AIDS funds and other bilateral assistance through other channels than those mentioned above.

tion of SSE funding to NGOs as a share of total NGO bilateral assistance to the three priority countries, Mali, Sudan and Ethiopia (including Eritrea and Tigray) shows - as revealed in Table 3.5 - that only in Mali does SSE funding play a key role (where SSE funding constitutes around 75% of total NGO contributions to that country).

**TABLE 3.5 - NGOs: Mali, Sudan and Ethiopia**

Country	Total bilateral assistance channelled through NGOs	Total SSE funds channelled through NGOs	SSE assistance through NGOs as % of SSE allocation	SSE assistance as % of the total Bilateral Assistance through NGOs
Mali	256,308	173,462	60.5	74.5
Sudan	243,762	25,409	41.5	10.4
Ethiopia	916,940	161,995	87.4	17.7
Total	1,417,010	360,866		

Source: NORAD, 1992 and SSE statistics from UD, March 1991

In both Sudan and Ethiopia (including Eritrea and Tigray) the SSE assistance channelled through NGOs is a very marginal part compared to the much more important contributions by Norway to the NGOs outside the SSE Programme. The SSE NGO assistance constitutes only 10.4% and 17.7% out of the total Norwegian bilateral assistance channelled through NGOs in these two countries.

As in particular the Norwegian NGOs involved are the same organisations, whether being financed under the SSE Programme or outside it, and as the financing outside the SSE Programme in most cases is much more important, the impact of any SSE Programme thinking about mode of operation, priorities and approaches of these NGO organisations can only be expected to be limited. The NGOs are continually involved mainly in relief and disaster prevention activities, and only through relatively marginal contributions under the SSE Programme are they requested to engage in more long-term development activities, focusing on both food production/food security and environmental issues. Hence, the lower priority given to environment, even relative neglect of these issues, or the preference for doing "business as usual" - as revealed in the present evaluation - is hardly surprising.



In the case of research, funding for research collaboration is exclusively obtained under the SSE Programme in the case of both Mali and Ethiopia, while in Sudan only 78.1% of total research funding spent is from the SSE Programme. The rather heavy dependency of Norwegian researchers in particular on SSE funding possibilities seems quite obvious.

### **3.5 Disbursement Channels, their Rationales and Importance**

As mentioned, the implementation of the Programme has been organised through three different disbursement channels, the multilateral organisations, NGOs and research institutions. Each of these channels have been included in the Programme because of their specific areas of competence and experience, or their comparative advantage, which was expected to be exploited to the benefit of the Programme. Mutual support, coordination of activities, sharing of experience, information exchange, etc. were among the means which were expected to foster complementarity of activities and synergy effects.

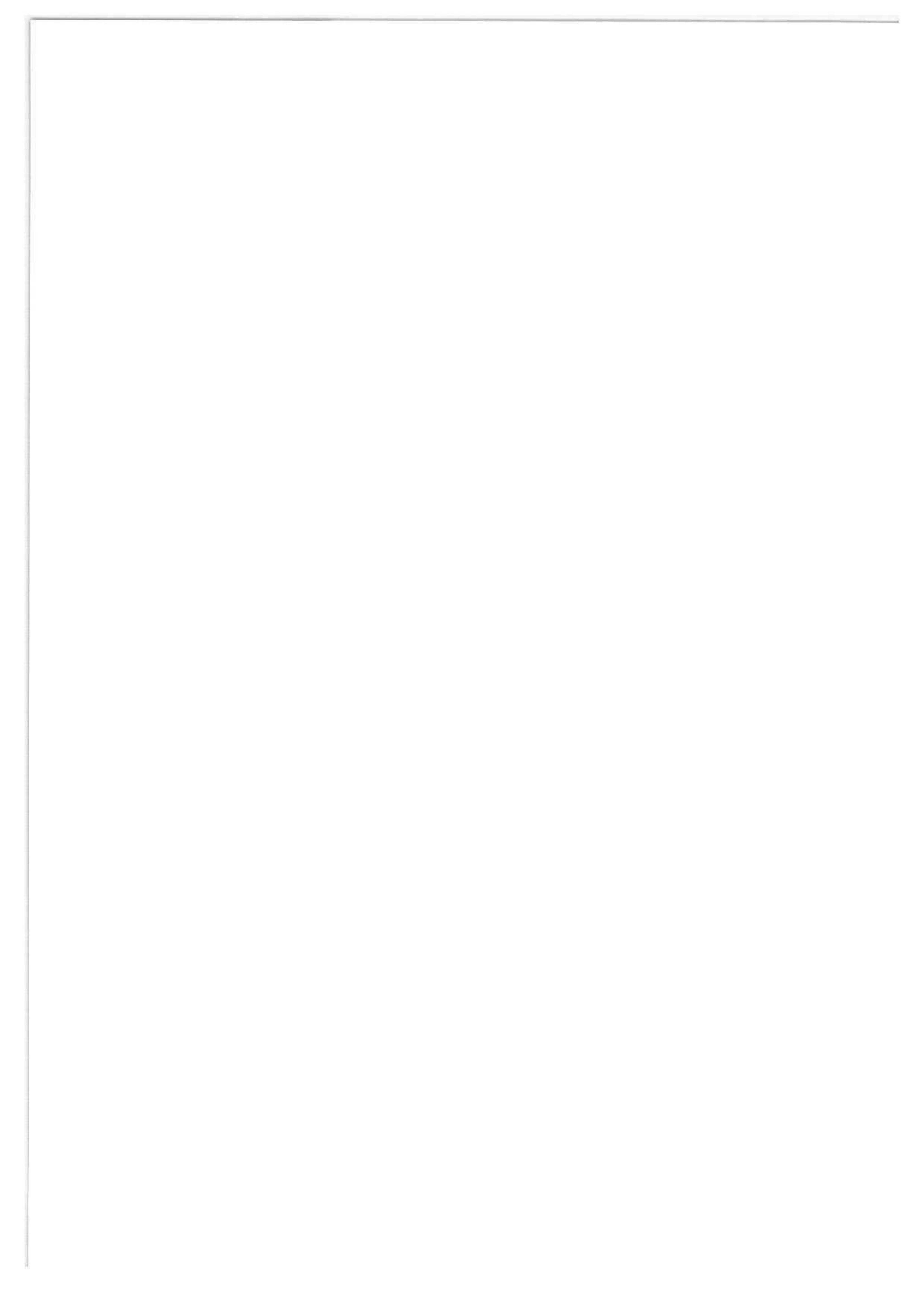
As mentioned above under section 3.2. Concepts and Ideals behind the Programme, it was recognised that the multilateral agencies in particular have considerable experience of development projects in the region as well as having dialogues with governments on policy and institutional matters. NGOs were known to have considerable grassroots experience relief activities and thus have a good basis for developing participatory activities with local communities. In the case of research it was expected that competence could be developed both in Norway and among institutions in the recipient countries through collaborative research, which could be of benefit to the activities of the implementing partners.

In practice there were 8 multilateral organisations which received SSE funds, 11 NGOs (Norwegian and international but none from the region), and 8 Norwegian research institutions with 11 partner institutions, and 2 international research institutions. In the case of NGOs these figures exclude the partner organisations which in most cases existed in the SSE country. In terms of funding received the major multilateral recipients were IFAD, UNSO, ILO, and the World Bank (together constituting 51% of total SSE Programme funding over the five year period). The major NGO recipients have been NCA, NPA, CARE-Norway, Redd Barna and the Development Fund. The research institutions which benefitted most from the Programme were the Universities of Oslo and Bergen, followed by ILCA, the University of Trondheim, NORAGRIC and the Christian Michelsen's Institute, Bergen.



Between 1986 and 1990 the multilateral channel received 54% of the SSE funds, while the NGOs received 39% and research institutions 6%. There were 53 separate activities funded through the multilateral partners, 26 through the NGOs and 26 through the research institutions in this same period.

# Evaluation Tasks





## **4 Evaluation Tasks and Methodology**

### **4.1 Objectives of the Evaluation**

At the end of the first phase of the SSE Programme the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to carry out an evaluation of the Programme in order to:

- assess the relevance of the Programme objectives and the overall strategy to the social, economic, political and environmental setting in the SSE region,
- describe and categorize Programme activities and assess the achievements of its objectives in terms of effectiveness, sustainability, synergy and compatibility,
- assess the quality and effectiveness of Programme management and monitoring;
- and present recommendations or options on objectives, strategies, and management for Norwegian support to development activities in the SSE region.

In order to address these objectives the evaluation has been undertaken in four discrete, but inter-related studies which were intended to produce a cumulative analysis. The four main studies are:

- a Documentation Study of the objectives and profiles of the Programme,
- a Regional Context Study of the social, economic, political, and environmental context in the region,
- a Field Study phase of selected SSE projects within the priority countries Ethiopia (including Eritrea and Tigray) and Mali; and

- a Management Study of the management and implementation of the SSE Programme.

Before the evaluation started, an Inception Report was prepared highlighting some of the key issues to be raised in the subsequent studies. This Inception Report was discussed during a seminar held in Oslo, arranged by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), in which most Norwegian partners attended.

The results of each study have been presented in separate working documents, with the exception of the Management Study, the results of which are incorporated in the present report. The consolidated findings and conclusions of the various studies have been integrated into the present Synthesis Report in order to identify the main recommendations.

The specific Terms of Reference prepared for the Synthesis Report include the following issues, which are to be given special emphasis:

- the relevance of SSE Programme objectives, strategies, criteria for support in relation to development problems and priorities in the region as well as other development assistance,
- effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of various categories of supported activities, including coordination with national development efforts,
- the relative effectiveness and comparative advantages of the various channels of assistance and recipient institutions. The adequacy of their guidelines and procedures,
- the extent to which the objectives of the SSE Programme have been achieved,
- role and adequacy of Programme management, coordination, administrative guidelines and procedures; and
- the merits of having all SSE activities coordinated within a Programme.

On the basis of this, the evaluation team is supposed to discuss future options and present recommendations regarding objectives, strategies, modalities of support and of management for future Norwegian support to development activities in the SSE region.



## 4.2 The Methodology Applied

In preparing the working document on the Documentation Study, the evaluation team focused their work on identifying issues and topics which were considered important for the overall assessment of the Programme and which needed to be elaborated upon during the consecutive phases of the evaluation.

This part of the evaluation was carried out as a desk study, based on a review of documents available in the MFA and in NORAD archives, supplemented by interviews with MFA officials and representatives from the Norwegian based organisations or research institutions associated with the Programme.

In reviewing the available written material, emphasis was placed on project documents and reports from evaluations or reviews carried out. In assessing the quality of documentation material, the evaluation team looked into whether a logical framework approach had been used, assessed objectives as to their realism, assessed relevance/adequacy of the means proposed for achieving stated objectives, and reviewed project and programme activities in relation to sustainability criteria, etc. In addition, compatibility between SSE Programme objectives and partners was included, as were established procedures for information sharing, coordination or cooperation between SSE funded activities. Also the quality of the reporting and monitoring procedures of the various partners in the Programme were assessed.

In interviewing officials from the Oslo administration as well as some of the Norway-based partner representatives, the evaluation team touched upon the involved parties' perception of the Programme concept, changes in policy during the Programme period, the role of SSE in context of the general programmes of the organisations and other programmes funded by MFA, the mode of execution, coordination and information sharing practices, the comparative advantages of the involved organisations and the strengths and weaknesses of the Programme.

On the basis of this a number of preliminary conclusions were drawn, to be tested during the subsequent field study phases.

The Regional Context Study was also carried out as a desk study, analyzing the social, economic, political and environmental context in the SSE region, and on this background assessing the relevance of SSE Programme objectives, strategy and individual activities.



The Regional Context Study had a regional scope, including a review of the CILSS and IGADD development strategies, but special attention was given to the situation in the major recipient countries - Mali and Burkina Faso in the Western Sahel, and Sudan and Ethiopia (including Eritrea and Tigray) in the East.

The Context Study was carried out at different levels: the regional, sub-regional and national level, with the emphasis on the national level. At each level, the major development problems as related to natural resource degradation, food production and food security were identified, and the strategies formulated by the different parties - sub-regional organisations (CILSS and IGADD), national governments and international donor organisations - were described, assessed and synthesized.

In particular the appropriateness, relevance and realism of national macro-economic and sectoral development strategies were reviewed, with emphasis on such issues as: land tenure, public participation, decentralized systems of natural resource management, institutional issues, planning and coordination, etc.

Against this background the relevance of the SSE Programme was assessed at each level, and in relation to both pertinent development issues identified and strategies and priorities formulated and, in cases, adopted by recipient governments.

The Field Study Phases, including assessments at field levels in both Ethiopia (including Eritrea and Tigray) and Mali, were intended for testing the preliminary conclusions drawn in the previous studies, the Documentation and Regional Context Studies.

The methodology for the fieldwork involved first a review of the documentation available on each project, in particular project documents, reviews and earlier evaluations. Following this, a check-list of issues and questions were prepared, including the issues raised in the Documentation and Regional Context Studies.

With the limited time in the field for project specific work an emphasis was placed on verifying the reports in the documentation about the project, assessing their potential impacts and sustainability, and verifying the conclusions of the previous studies.

The assessment of potential impacts and sustainability was often difficult because of the limited information available about the economics of the activities and the problems of assessing the nature of the reported participation. The extent of ecological sustainability was another difficult area given the limited time in the field but, not least, the limited time in which most projects have been operational.



Information was sought through different fieldwork methods. These included field observation and landscape analysis, interviews with project officials and technical staff, discussions with project beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, and critical observation and questioning of both officials and the local population. In many cases the team was accompanied in the field by officials from the respective organisations, providing information about the projects and the circumstances in which they had evolved. Further information relevant to the projects was obtained through discussion with officials of the partner organisations and regional or district authorities and officials. Finally, projects were discussed with villagers and target beneficiaries.

Given that the projects were being studied, not in their own right, but as part of an evaluation of the SSE Programme, emphasis was placed in the fieldwork upon the general principles and conclusions which could be drawn from the project experience of the Programme. Hence the details of the projects were not studied. Instead attention focused upon the general experiences and findings from each project which were relevant for other projects and the Programme as a whole and reflected on the overall Programme design and implementation.

As previously mentioned, in the present Synthesis Report it is intended to summarise of all the findings and conclusions of the preceding studies. In addition, however, the study of the Management and Implementation of the Programme has been included in the present report.

The objective of the Management Study has been to describe and assess the implementation of the SSE Programme by MFA and NORAD.

This has been done through two methods: on the one hand, questionnaires were sent out to all Norwegian based NGOs and research institutions, asking about the partner's assessment of how the Programme had been administered and handled in the past, as well as asking for the partner's suggestions as to possible improvements in a future phase of the SSE Programme. On the other hand, a number of additional interviews were carried out with representatives of the Norwegian research milieu, and with representatives in MFA and NORAD, particularly those close to the political decision-making process.

### **4.3 Work Programme of the Evaluation and Reporting**

As mentioned above, prior to the Documentation Study, the evaluation team prepared an Inception Report, outlining the approach and organisation of the two consecutive study phases. The Inception Report highlighted some of the key issues to be addressed during the Documenta-



tion and Regional Context Studies and a tentative list of contents for the two reports was presented during a meeting in Oslo in October 1991.

The Documentation Study was initiated immediately after this seminar and the first draft of the report was ready for initial distribution in December 1991. The Regional Context Study was prepared from November 1991 onwards and the first draft distributed in January 1992. After the MFA in Oslo had distributed the draft reports for comments to personnel in MFA and NORAD, as well as selected partner organisations, both reports were revised after a summing up meeting held in March 1992 in Copenhagen, attended by representatives of MFA. The two reports were ready in their final report form in April 1992.

The field study phases were commenced by the evaluation team visiting projects in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray from mid-January to the end of February 1992.

The first week of this mission was spent in Addis Ababa preparing logistics for the fieldwork and investigating aspects of the economic and political situation in Ethiopia. Those team members evaluating the research component of the Programme spent part of this week and the whole of the second week with staff from Addis Ababa University and Awassa College of Agriculture.

Project fieldwork began in the second week with two additional team members studying the Redd Barna Wogda project in North Shewa, while another member of the team spent this week in Eritrea arranging meetings and establishing logistics for travel.

The third and fourth weeks of the mission were spent in Eritrea with five staff studying projects in that country which had been funded through NPA, FIOH and Redd Barna to the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA). The mission divided into two field teams to visit various sites within three identifiable projects at Asmat, and in the SAH and SASEBA regions. In addition members of the team spent different amounts of time in Asmara holding discussions with the relevant authorities there.

The fifth week was spent in Tigray with three staff. During this period three field visits of up to three days were undertaken to sites where three project activities were being undertaken, all with funds from FIOH being channelled through the Relief Society of Tigray (REST).

Part of the final week was spent in the Sidamo and Gemu Gofa in the south of Ethiopia visiting the Konso part of the Community Development Project funded through NCA from the SSE Programme and implemented by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). The final



part of the week was spent in Addis Ababa discussing this project with the officials of the organisations concerned.

The first working document from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray was presented in April 1992, and after comments received from MFA in Oslo, a revised version was made available in July 1992.

The field visit to Mali was, due to the uncertain political situation in the country, divided into two missions. The first mission of 2 weeks duration took place in mid-March while the second mission was of three weeks duration and took place in April/May 1992.

During the first mission two team members visited the IUCN's "Walia" and Youvarou projects as well as CARE's Koro Agro-Forestry project. In addition the Norwegian NCA-project was visited in Gossi, Gourma, including visits to field sites in the Gourma region. A third team member evaluated the research collaboration programme between research institutions in Mali and University of Oslo through interviews with participating researchers, institutions and Malian principal researchers and the research coordinator.

As the political situation in Mali was still fragile, meetings were held with donors, agencies and government officials in Bamako to assess the situation and plan the following mission accordingly. In particular logistical problems were discussed, as only very few project vehicles were available in areas north of the Niger river (such as Tombouctou and Diré), where fighting and assaults had been reported to be heavy and frequent.

The next mission of three weeks duration had five team members participating.

Although up to the last minute it was uncertain whether field visits could be made to sites close to the Niger river, particularly around Tombouctou, Diré and Goundam, as occasional fighting and attacks were still frequently reported upon, the then newly established formal truce made in Algeria between government officials and representatives of the rebel forces, convinced the team, after having consulted with government circles and the UNDP office, that a mission would be feasible. Arrangements for sending vehicles up north were made and the partners in the SSE Programme showed a remarkable flexibility and willingness to assist the team in every possible way.

During this second visit the evaluation team, divided into two field teams, succeeded in visiting the three Test Zone Programmes and the Mopti Area Development project of the World Bank, CARE's projects in Macina and Tombouctou, ACOPAM's projects around Mopti and in Tombouctou and Diré, UNSO's project in Lac Faguibine, as well as the

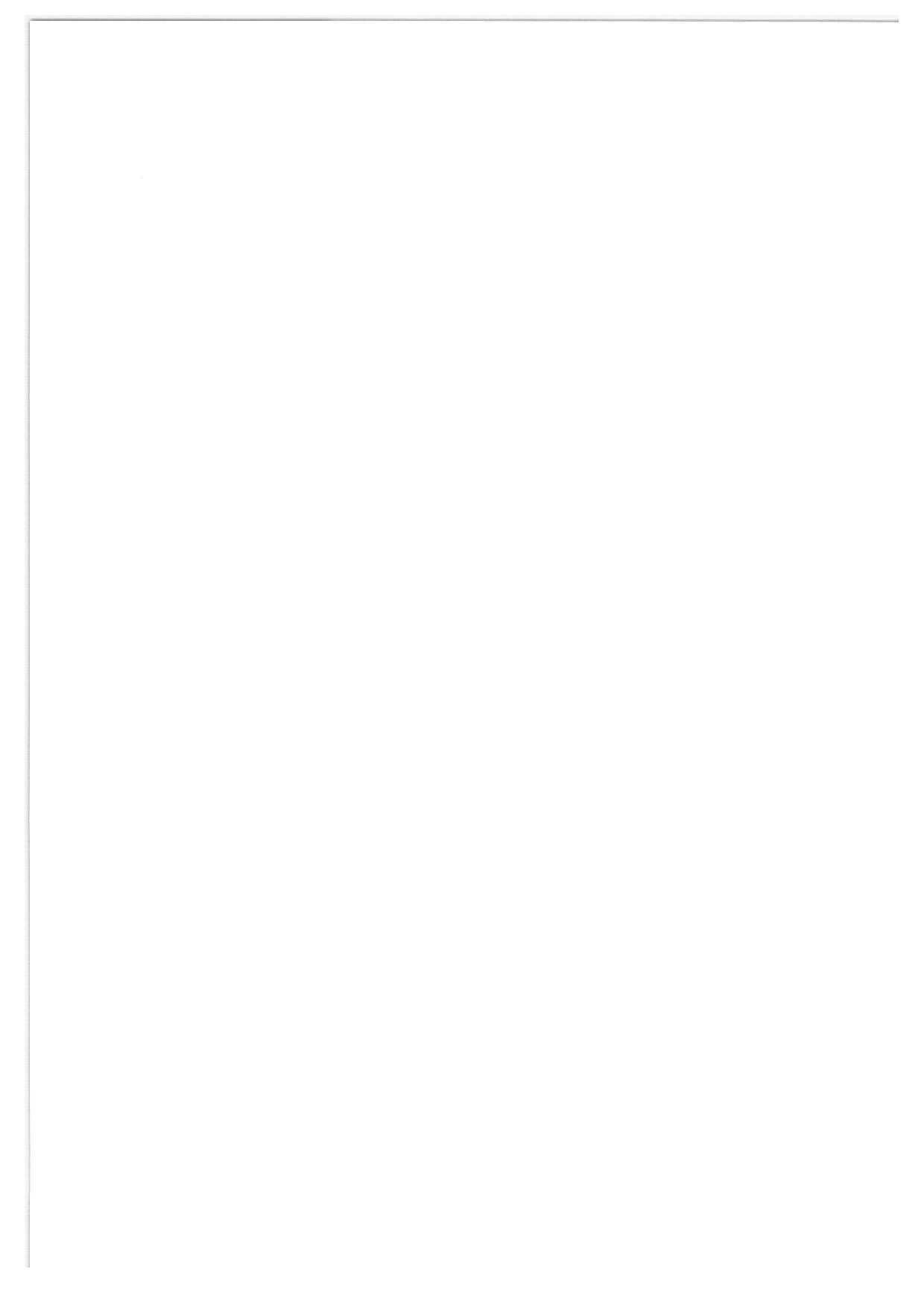
Zone Lacustre project, for reasons of comparison (although this project is financed by Norway out of the multi-bi grant). UNSO's Acacia Senegal project in Kayes was also included through discussions in Bamako with the project director and profiting from the fact that one mission member had an intimate knowledge of the project from a recent review mission in late 1990. Furthermore, the Fondation Stroemme project in Bafoulabé was visited and, due to the size of the project and the multitude of activities scattered over a vast geographical area, the Norwegian NCA project in Gossi was visited again by two other team members, now spending around one week in the project area.

In addition, team members followed a presentation in Bamako of preliminary research results from the research programme and took part, as observers, in the Fourth Annual meeting of the programme.

The working document from the Mali field visits was presented in June 1992.



# Development Trends and Problems





## **5 Development Trends and Problems in the Region**

### **5.1 The Nature of the Sudano-Sahelian Region**

#### **5.1.1 Environment and Economy**

The Sudano-Sahelian zone of Africa is strictly defined in ecological terms by rainfall. The wettest part of the zone, which is the Sudan savanna, has rainfall of up to 1,100 mm per annum while the driest part, the Sahelian zone which borders the Sahara desert for the most part, has rainfall of only 150 mm per annum. In actual fact within the countries which were included in the SSE Programme, notably Sudan and Ethiopia, there are extensive areas with higher rainfall of up to 2,000 mm and consequently more luxuriant vegetation.

A key characteristic of the ecological conditions within the SSE region is variability both over time and space. It is well known, because of the recurrence of drought, that rainfall tends to be cyclical with extended periods of low rainfall lasting for a decade or more and within this series of drought years. These long term fluctuations in rainfall mean that the precise extent of the SS zone varies from year to year and that there are fluctuations in the extent of the Sahara desert with both expansions and contractions. Similarly, within any part of the SSE zone there are variations in rainfall, and soil and moisture characteristics, with conditions more favourable to plant growth typically found in wadis and valleys where water and nutrients are concentrated.

The response to these diverse and variable conditions is the search for security through economic diversification and the utilisation of the different micro-ecological sites in various ways. Hence there are variations in the economy from agrosylvoculture in the wetter areas, through agrosylvopasture to sylvopasture in the driest areas, while crop combinations are diverse and are adjusted not only from site to site, but from year to year. Rural dwellers also pursue a range of economic activities besides cultivation and herding in order to increase their economic security.



This complex situation, with economic and ecological diversity, means that single project interventions applied uniformly across the SSE region are not appropriate. Rather there is a need for interventions to be fine-tuned to local economies, as well as ecologies, and for projects to be sensitive to the implications of one intervention upon the total range of activities. In addition it must be remembered that socio-economic diversity with communities also requires sensitivity in project activities.

### 5.1.2 Trends and Issues in the Sudano-Sahelian Zone

#### a) Introduction

Writings on the SS zone are prone to emotion and over-generalisation. There is an established stereotype of this region being in crisis and on the verge of collapse, with societies, economies and ecologies at breaking point. This view has to be evaluated carefully as in many cases the evidence is limited and does not support generalisation for the whole of the region.

#### b) Ecological Trends

The basic trend in the region is one of devegetation as a result primarily of the expansion of cultivation and to a lesser extent increased grazing pressures and deforestation for fuelwood. The key aspects of this are the impact upon biomass production and in turn upon soil fertility, upon moisture infiltration and soil erosion, and upon local climate where there are thought to be feedback mechanisms encouraging drier conditions. As a result it appears that attempts towards some "reclotting" of the landscape are desirable both to meet immediate needs as well as improve soil and environmental conditions for long term sustainability. The limited evidence of spontaneous efforts in this direction stress that attempts must be economically attractive to farmers and produce immediate benefits which are securely theirs. Hence, there is a need to move beyond shelter belts and afforestation on communal land towards the establishment of fodder shrubs and hedges of multipurpose plants, to which there is secure access, which will provide browse resources, fuelwood and stabilise land, and to develop legumes which can provide ground cover and improve soil fertility.

Another key trend related to the above is the degradation of the resource base in terms of reduced productivity of soil and vegetation. Land degradation rather than desertification is now seen to be the more important process affecting sustainable production in the SS zone. Degradation occurs through the mismanagement of land which may well involve the reduction in soil fertility and resistance to erosion. This is generally seen to be the result of increased human and animal pressure upon the resource base. However, it is now recognised that these increased pressures can be coped with in many cases by changes in management and



that degradation is not an inevitable result of population growth, although there are clearly ecological limits upon the extent to which nutrient can be recycled and used more efficiently.

A further point with respect to degradation is the recognition that the causal influences are much more complex than has been recognised in the past and that sociological, economic and political influences at a variety of levels, from the farm up to the international economy, must be considered. This points to the need for increased emphasis upon socio-economic and socio-political issues rather than just physical processes when undertaking problem analysis and trying to identify potential interventions.

#### **c) Demographic Trends**

An important element in the SS situation is population growth. The growth rate is still accelerating and is expected to exceed 3% in the first decade of the next century. The achievement of lower rates of population growth could be an important help in addressing the environmental and food security issues in the region by reducing the immediate pressure upon the resource base. However, given the link between poverty and high rate of population growth, the region appears to be in a very difficult situation where the prospects for improved economic conditions appear poor because of the importance of natural resources in the region's economy and the problems which have been encountered in raising production from this base in a sustainable manner. As a result it appears that the economic security, which is necessary for encouraging a widespread move towards smaller families, will not be achieved. An opposite view argues that population growth can be a major stimuli to agricultural change and economic development and that more labour intensive land use systems might be the way in which an increased population can be supported without leading to increased degradation. (See Table 5.1.)

#### **d) Economic Trends**

The problems in the SS zone also include a general economic malaise with slow or negative per capita economic growth. As a result SS zone countries are increasingly reliant upon foreign aid transfers for their economic survival. The problems in the agricultural sector have been made worse by policy failings, by adverse movements in international terms of trade, and by the failure to diversify the economies and so reduce the pressure on the resource base. Economic diversification is important because of the way in which it could create a breathing space which would allow adjustments in farming systems and natural resource use and provide funds for investment in agriculture.

The interlinkage of different aspects of the economic situation makes it clear that the search for solutions to the food insecurity and environmental problems of the region do not lie solely with the agricultural sector but require a more multi-sectoral and integrated approach. This search



for economic growth will increasingly see less direct involvement by the state, as a result of the structural adjustment processes they are undergoing, but there will remain a responsibility for the state to create a favourable policy environment for this.

**e) Political Conditions**

Another important problematic condition in the SS zone is the political situation. There are contradictions and conflicts at various scales which undermine the ability of the state, communities and households to address problems of natural resource management.

With respect to the state it can often be seen that governments do not represent all of the people within the country, and that they pursue policies in an authoritarian manner which are biased in favour of one section of the community. Typically governments favour cultivators and more especially the politically influential urban groups, and are biased against pastoralists. Political neglect and exploitation together with the failure of development have led to the collapse of a political consensus and the rise of secessionist movements.

Civil unrest and conflicts between ethnic groups may be caused by shortages of resources as a result of drought, degradation, population growth or government neglect. In turn the unrest disrupts natural resource management and food production making conditions worse. Often the underlying natural resource competition is given scant attention in attempts to settle these disputes and issues of rights to natural resources and of strategic policies and frameworks for improving the situation and stemming environmental degradation do not receive the same attention as the political causes of these conflicts.

Within communities commercialisation, population growth and the breakdown in traditional structure have led to increased differentiation in society and the breakdown of a sense of community responsibility with respect to natural resource management. This is particular seen in the failure of communities to manage the use of communal resources in a sustainable manner.

Conflicts also exist between the state and communities as national development priorities lead to the disruption of traditional uses of community resources. Fortunately there are some indications that governments are now recognising the need for more decentralised government and planning and the process of democratisation is spreading within the region. However, this is likely to lead to some further conflicts during this adjustment process.



**f) Conclusions**

Interpretations of this situation vary. On the one hand there are the pessimists who see the region as progressing towards a crisis, with inevitable deterioration of the resource base as demographic, economic and political pressures grow. Technical innovations which exist are limited in use by ecological and economic conditions. On the other hand there are optimists who point to the way in which communities are adjusting to the changing situation with more labour intensive conservation-oriented resource use systems and the diversification of rural economies. The optimists believe that the region is not on an irreversible path to crisis, but rather suffers from dynamic and fluctuating ecological conditions. These have existed in the past and will recur in the future. They are part of the normal characteristics or conditions of the region to which people have adapted as necessary in the past. Hence the way ahead is through building on and supporting these adaptive skills. (These two views are summarised in Table 5.1 below.)

**Table 5.1 : Views of the Sudano-Sahelian Situation and Responses to Stress**

System	Behaviour under Stress	
	Primary Perception	Alternative Perception
Primary Production	Breakdown	Resilience
Food Procurement	Breakdown	Adaption
Wealth Distribution	Pauperization	Countervailing Processes
Environmental Management	Degradation	Conservation
Demography	Overpopulation	Labour Intensification, Diversification

(Source : Mortimore, 1991)

**5.1.3 General Principles**

While there are these difference of opinion over the scenarios for the SS zone, there is some agreement over a number of general principles which have to be taken into consideration when trying to address the problems faced in the SS zone.

Participation : It is the actions of the rural people which will determine whether or not natural resource management is improved in order to achieve improved food security and environmental sustainability. To be motivated and empowered to address these problems rural people have to be involved in the identification of problems, the design of project activities, their implementation and their management. Hence projects must be



flexible in their design to be able to cope with the diverse inputs which come from the participation of project recipients.

Sensitivity to Local Needs and Knowledge : Project staff must look at problems through the eyes of the local population. In particular they must seek innovations which are economically attractive to project recipients and provide them with immediate benefits which can help them break out of the cycle of poverty. Interventions should build upon traditional coping strategies and local knowledge where possible. However because of the changing circumstances these traditional practices will need amending through a process of interactive technology development, instead of the process of technology transfer. An integrated view of land use and natural resource management needs to be developed in projects which replicates the best aspects of traditional management.

Multi-Sectoral and Multi-Element : Projects have to take a multi-sectoral approach because of the complexity of factors which affect natural resource management and food production, and because of the wide ranging implications of changes in use of resources.

High priority issues for rural dwellers have to be addressed before these lower on their agenda, such as environmental rehabilitation, can be considered.

Socio-Political Issues : Projects must support local communities in the development of their own plans for the management of natural resources and help protect them from disruption by central government. This will involve discussion of rights to natural resources and the development at the state level of enabling environments, including security of access to land, which will help improve natural resource management.

The Role of Donors and Projects : The disruptive and patchy impact which projects can have suggests that a more programmatic approach is needed, with feedback and exchange of experience between different elements and areas in a programme. Indeed it may be questioned whether project interventions are appropriate given the complex nature of the problems involved and the often sectoral nature of projects. Hence it may be suggested that external intervention should concentrate more on helping develop an enabling environment. External support should also undertake participatory research to identify potentially valid interventions which can then be made available on a menu of options basis for individuals and communities to adopt as they find appropriate.



## 5.2 Development Issues in the Three Priority Countries

### 5.2.1 Ethiopia

The development situation in Ethiopia is dominated by slow economic growth which is unable to keep pace with population growth, environmental degradation which is reducing the natural resource base of the country, and political instability which has affected the country over the last 25 years.

Probably the most serious development problem in the country which has to be addressed for sustainable development to be achieved is environmental degradation. This is partially a result of devegetation which has reduced the forest cover in the highland from 40% in 1900 to 5.6% in 1988. Deforestation has led to increased burning of dung and crop residues with the loss of this humus and fertiliser from the soil. This is estimated to have reduced crop production some 10-20% below optimum, and is causing a continued decline in crop yields of between 1 and 2% per annum. Devegetation also has implications for soil erosion which leads to an average reduction on arable land of 4 mm of soil a year. By the mid 1980s over 2 million ha (3.7% of the highlands) were no longer able to support cultivation due to shallow soils and 75% of the highlands were estimated to need soil conservation measures. Soil erosion and reduced humus loss together lead to lower and more irregular crop yields. If present trends continue by 2010 75% of the highlands will be unable to meet the subsistence needs of their populations. Hence a critical issue is the development of soil conservation and soil fertility rehabilitation packages which are attractive to farmers. To date this has not been achieved, primarily because food for work measures have encouraged the development of a predominantly physical approach to soil conservation.

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. During the last 15 years GNP per capita has fallen by 0.8% per annum to USD 91 in 1989. The country's poor economic performance is primarily the result of the weakness of the agricultural sector which has been affected by draught, the collapse in coffee prices, interventionist socialist agricultural policies, and the low policy differences between the Mengistu regime and donors in the 1980s, the country has been heavily dependent upon NGO and multilateral aid for foreign exchange and investment funds.

The problems in the agricultural sector are increasingly seen to be more widespread than expected. Rather than food insecurity being restricted to the more drought prone provinces, it has recently been estimated that 80% of the population suffers from some form of food insecurity and that the major reason for this is poverty, rather than drought.



Another development problem in the country is the unclear rights to natural resources and political uncertainty which have discouraged investment by farmers during the last two decades. A major cause of this has now gone with the removal of the Mengistu regime with its aims to socialise production but legislative reforms to clarify individual rights to natural resources are needed. However, the political situation under the present transitional government is still uncertain, not least because of the withdrawal from the government of the Oromo who are the largest of the 76 nationalities in the country. Until a political settlement is reached and peace achieved the conditions will not exist to address the development problems in the country.

As with many other SS zone countries the pressure to increase food production to achieve food security has been seen primarily in terms of short term increases in crop production depending to a large extent on increasing the area under crops and to a somewhat lesser degree upon the use of external inputs. There has been little or no work on developing indigenous farming systems so that they are more ecologically sound and productive and linking such development to improved land use systems to ensure long term ecological stability. The beginning of some sensitization in this area has begun though the IUCN supported National Conservation Strategy (NCS) which is also trying to support the development of decentralised NCS groups in the new administrative regions.

A final point to note is that conflicts in resource use have been growing over the last 20 years as a result of the expansion of rainfed and irrigated cultivation into pastoral lowlands. The disruption of pastoral systems has led to considerable loss of life and threatens to undermine the ability of pastoral communities to use the drylands in a sustainable manner.

### 5.2.2 Mali

Mali is also one of the poorest countries in the world although the average GNP per head is USD 270 compared to USD 120 in Ethiopia. The country has suffered considerably from drought during the last two decades and even in non-drought years is a net food importer. The environmental base has been affected by widespread degradation through soil erosion and the loss of soil fertility as a result of the deforestation of savanna and land to create crop land and isolated overgrazing. In the north, on the desert fringe, the traditional pastoral zone occupied by nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists has been seriously affected by drought and water supply problems and by the expansion of cultivation on to the better watered grazing lands. Attempts to address the overgrazing in the surrounding areas. Environmental degradation is also severe in the central zone where coarse grain are cultivated, while in the inner delta of the Niger River the delicate balance between different seasonal land uses has



been upset by the expansion of cultivation. In the south of the country cotton production has expanded rapidly but the system is dependent upon chemical fertilisers, and the long term depletion of organic matter in the soil is a serious concern. The demand for fuelwood in the central part of the country, around the major urban centres, has led to deforestation and land degradation. The fuelwood deficit is also a continuing cause for concern.

The increased pressures upon the land as a result of population growth, drought, and commercialisation have led to reduced fallows which are a critical factor in land degradation and reduced soil fertility. Hence, a major concern is the development of farming systems which are both economically and ecologically viable. While this is difficult it has been noted that there is some evidence of regeneration of the savanna once rainfall conditions return to normal.

A major process in Mali over the last decade has been the development of a food strategy. This was one of the first agricultural sector reform programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, setting out to liberalise the grain trade, raise producer prices, eliminate consumer subsidies and improve the functioning of the cereals marketing board. However, this was a narrow strategy focusing primarily upon cereals paying virtually no attention to the livestock sector despite its importance in Mali. Its impact has also been limited in terms of the greater involvement of Malian peasant farmers in agricultural production.

The pressures which this and the structural adjustment measures created in the urban areas led to the fall of the Traoré regime in 1991 and a movement towards a more democratic process in the country. This is likely to see increased decentralisation which could be important for natural resource management.

The Malian government recognised the link between improved food security and environmental conservation and rehabilitation in the food strategy plans. This led to the development of the elaboration of a plan of action to counter desertification (PNLCD) in 1985, although it took until 1990 for the test zone component of this to become operational. The overall objective of the PNLCD is to encourage the implementation of natural resource management schemes, notably through land use plans at local level involving development committees representing different user groups from the population. The need for legislative reform as an essential component in improved natural resource management has also been recognised. These reforms need to address security of access to resources as well as the competition between different land users which are often manifest in military conflict. There is also a need to move away from the heavy handed and coercive approach of the former regime towards natural resources as was seen in the Forestry Service.



The recent move towards a more democratic situation has been characterised by remarkably open debate. However, the level of abstention from the political decision-making process, especially by rural dwellers has been high. Two contradictory tendencies can be observed in political and administrative affairs. On the one hand there is a recognition of the failure of the centralised, top-down approach and interest in more participatory approaches. But on the other hand the limitations of democratic political reform in dispersed, marginalised and often illiterate rural communities are increasingly apparent. A second contradiction is the emphasis upon privatisation and the need to reinforce community organisations and pastoral associations.

### 5.2.3 Sudan

Sudan is the richest of the three target countries with a GNP of USD 400 / head. However, population growth has exceeded economic growth in recent years, and with a major debt problem excluding the country from IMF support and much western aid the country has a very serious economic situation. The decline of the economy can be attributed to a combination of drought, government economic mismanagement and the civil war in the south. Despite major increases in the area under cultivation, these factors together have undermined the ability of the country to be self-sufficient in food. An additional contributing factor is the 8.8 million people who have been displaced by war and drought, some of whom become permanently destitute.

Like the other SS zone countries Sudan suffers from land degradation. A particular problem in land degradation is the large-scale mechanised farming which the state has supported since the 1960s, and the concurrent neglect of small-scale rainfed farmers and pastoralists. The emphasis has been on the rapid and economical expansion of production through the extension of the cultivated area. The terms of and enforcement of the leases by the state to these mechanised farmers have not required farmers to undertake soil and water conservation measures, leave shelter belts, or practice crop rotations. In addition, the lease have not provided any security with the result that there has been mining of the land, with vast areas abandoned once nutrients have been used. A further problem is that there has been no sensitivity in the demarcation of the plots to traditional farms, watering ponds and grazing uses of the lands with the result that millions of peasant farmers and pastoralists have been displaced.

Sudan was one of the first SS zone countries to develop a Programme for Desert Encroachment Control and Rehabilitation (DECARP). Although his was begun in 1976 its various activities have not continued and later national planning initiatives in the late 1980s and 1990s have not made any clear inclination towards addressing environmental concerns in a



coordinated manner. The whole situation with respect to planning has been further confused in the Sudan by the proliferation of NGOs during the mid 1980s following the 1983-4 famine.

The National Economic Salvation Programme (1990-1993) recognised the problems of insecurity which have led to exploitative land use on the mechanised commercial farms and proposed the introduction of land term leases while also recommending the privatisation of parastatals which had been using ecologically fragile land. However, in no place did this programme identify environmental sustainability as one of its issues.

Any future policy which is to effectively tackle the environmental problem in Sudan has to recognise the disruption and exhaustion of the traditional sector through the appropriation of land by mechanised farming, and the biases in various agricultural policies against small scale producers and pastoralists. Another area of concern is over land tenure and local land administration which must be coordinated with the agricultural development strategy if sustainable development is to be achieved. A key challenge is to introduce modern farming methods into traditional systems so that production can be raised without there being any negative environmental impacts. Overall the government must create an enabling environment which will encourage appropriate and sustainable use of land while also meeting national needs.

### **5.3 The Relevance of the SSE Programme to the Region's Needs**

In general it is clear that the broad objectives of the SSE Programme were clearly in line with the needs of the countries in the region which sought to improve their food security and stem environmental degradation. However, analysis of the difficulties in the SSE countries was increasingly recognising the complexity of the problems faced and the need for a number of specific issues to be addressed which the SSE Programme did not explicitly identify. These included the improved recognition of the link between environmental degradation and food insecurity, the development of enhanced environmental awareness amongst rural dwellers and public decision makers, the treatment of environmental and economic problems in an integrated manner, and the development of a policy framework and enabling environment which would encourage improved natural resource management as part of a move towards more secure and sustainable food production.

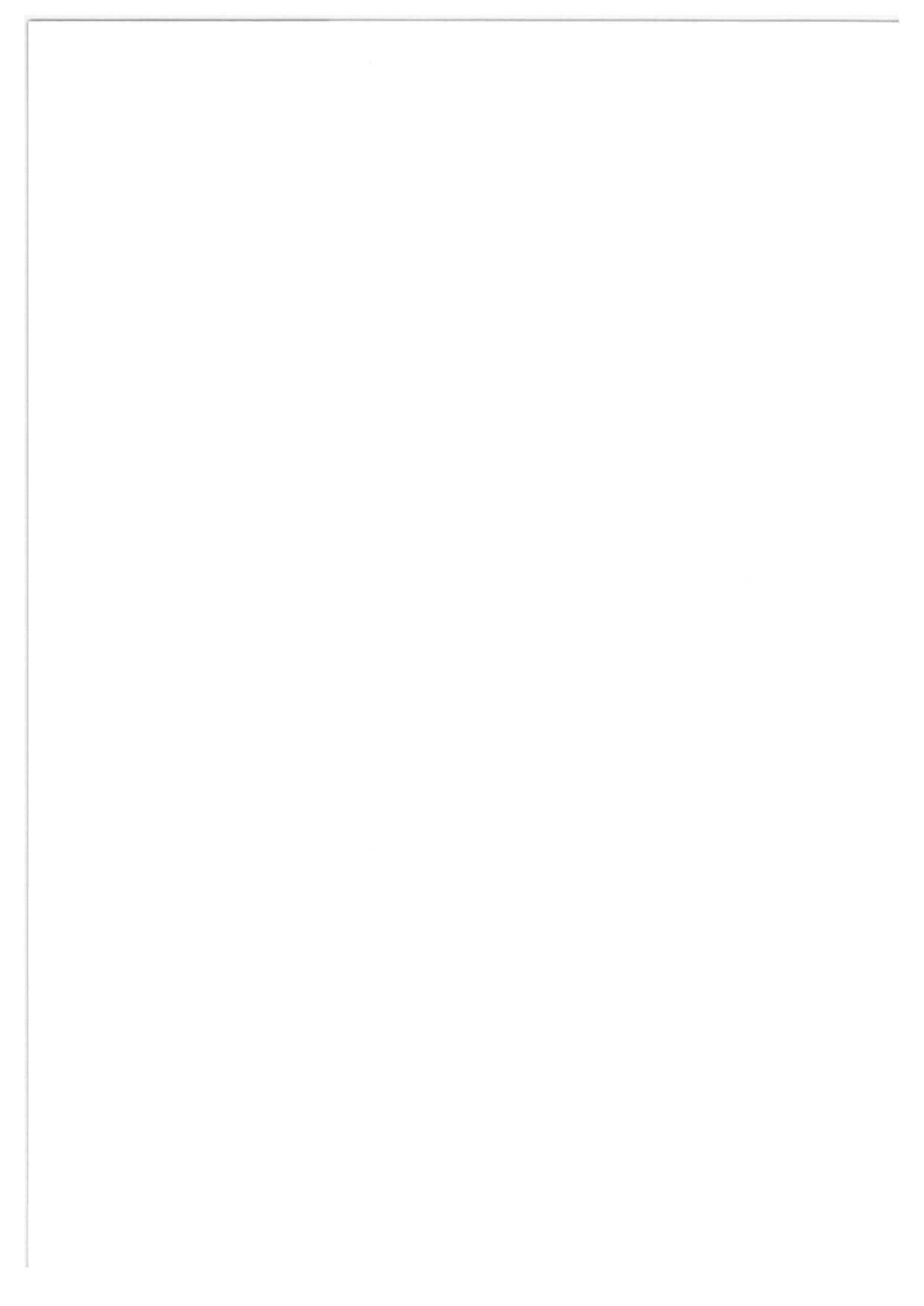
Some of the issues were addressed in projects which were supported by the SSE Programme, notably a number of the multilateral projects which did support strategic environmental planning and policy analysis and one of the IUCN projects which was concerned with environmental education.



However, in general it may be stated that the Programme as a whole, and a large number of the projects supported by it, were not based on a sufficiently detailed analysis of the problems faced. Many of the NGO projects involved a considerable amount of relief and rehabilitation, while they also tended to continue to apply techniques which had proven ineffective in addressing the problems in the past and did not work with communities to develop more appropriate and sustainable solutions. Thus, while the Programme was very much in line with the needs of the region, it would have benefitted from more explicit guidance of the projects which were to be selected and the ways in which they could have been developed.

# Management and Implementation





## **6 Management and Implementation of the Programme**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation of the Programme specify that a Management Study should be carried out. The objectives of this part of the evaluation have been to describe and assess the management and implementation of the Programme by MFA/NORAD. The TOR outlines the scope of the Management Study, which includes:

- review of the role of the Steering/Coordination Committee, the functions of the Programme Coordinator, the Field Attachés and officials at various levels within the Norwegian Aid Administration;
- assessment of the role of management in planning, approving, coordinating and monitoring the SSE-activities;
- assessment of the relationship between the SSE-Programme and the recipient institutions.

Information for the Management Study has been collected through:

- a review of documents and reports in the MFA/NORAD archives (Documentation Study),
- interviews with representatives from the Norwegian based organisations associated the SSE-Programme,
- interviews with field representatives of the associated and recipient organisations and institutions (Field Studies),
- a questionnaire survey addressing key issues and covering Norwegian based organisations and institutions involved in the implementation of the SSE-Programme, and
- interviews with representatives from MFA/NORAD.



Collection of information for this part of the Evaluation was initiated during the Documentation Study and the Field Studies and the tentative findings presented in the subsequent working documents. The final interviews with representatives from the administration and the Norwegian based organisations and institutions were carried out as the last part of the evaluation process. No separate report has been prepared for the Management Study, but the consolidated findings from various phases of the Evaluation in respect of management issues are presented here in the Synthesis Report.

It should be stressed that the scope of the study has not been to assess the Norwegian development administration in general, but only the part of the administration relevant for the management and implementation of the SSE Programme. Regarding administration procedures however, it has not been entirely possible to separate the two modes of operation as the general procedures and SSE Programme procedures in a number of cases coincide. For this reason emphasis has been given to those parts of the SSE Programme, which in an administrative sense are unique, and less to an assessment of the general organisational set-up of MFA/MDC/NORAD.

## **6.2 Preparation of the Programme**

Following reports from news agencies, from donor institutions and a growing public concern about the drought, hunger and ecological degradation in the SSE Region affected, the Parliament in 1985 decided to take quick action to formulate a programme for Norwegian Aid to address the long term development issues of the Region. The Parliament decided to launch a programme which both in terms of scope and financial allocations was unique and ambitious. The management of the newly established Ministry of Development Cooperation (MDC) was given the task of formulating a programme under which Norwegian assistance of NOK one billion could be given to Region within a period of five years. The responsibility for the formulation and planning was given to the Planning Division (PLAN) and an internal working group in MDC was established in April 1985. This group was given only one month to make a proposal for an integrated programme to be started in 1986, following the Parliament's approval. The mandate for the group included a description of major development problems in the Region, suggestions for priority countries and an outline of an adequate administrative set-up of the Programme. In drafting the proposal the working group was assisted by two short term consultants.



In the report, "Coordinated Development Assistance to the Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia-belt", (May 1985), the group concentrated on the description of development problems in the Region and only briefly discussed the other issues included in its mandate. The report suggested concentrating on two priority areas for increased long term Norwegian assistance to the Region, viz. ecological rehabilitation, and sustainable agriculture and rural development. As possible forms of assistance, the report mentioned general contributions to multilateral agencies, multi-bi assistance through WB, UNDP and UNSO, continued emergency assistance, development assistance through six Norwegian NGOs (NRCS, NCA, CARE, SMF, RB and the Development Fund) and assistance to a number of international research institutions. The three tier strategy proposed by the working group, with a programme executed by NGOs, multilateral agencies and research institutions became the framework for all subsequent planning initiatives. The group abstained from suggesting specific priority countries and did not discuss the organisational framework of the Programme nor coordination issues. Instead the report recommended that a thorough planning process should be initiated.

The first steps to establish an organisational framework for the coordination of the planning and implementation of the Programme were taken with the creation of the Steering Committee chaired by the head of the Planning Division (PLAN) in MDC. All heads of relevant sections in MDC and NORAD were members of the Committee. The first meeting was held immediately after the working group had submitted its report in May 1985.

In addition to the Steering Committee, two new positions for a full time SSE-Coordinator and Desk Officer with responsibility for the NGO component were established, although these were first formally approved by the Parliament in 1986. The Coordinator and Desk Officer were the first staff-members in what later became known as the SSE Unit, located within the Planning Division.

During the summer and autumn of 1985 several planning initiatives were taken simultaneously:

The Minister, the Permanent Secretary and the SSE Coordinator together visited Ethiopia and Mali, where meetings were held with politicians and Government authorities at national and local level. Norwegian NGOs were also visited.

In early June a meeting with representatives of eight Norwegian NGOs, with experience from the Region, was held to discuss the possible role of NGOs in the Programme. In July a questionnaire survey on the experience of the NGOs was initiated as a follow up to the meeting. The survey had a dual objective: to assess the administrative capacity and the technical



competence of NGOs with regard to the SSE Region and provide the basis for a decision on a geographical concentration of the Programme. Unfortunately, the Evaluation Team has not been able to locate a copy of the survey results nor any evidence that the outcome has been used in the subsequent planning process.

At the same time, MULTI, the division in MDC responsible for multi-lateral assistance, started preparing an overview of relevant activities carried out by Norwegian supported multilateral agencies.

The research component was subject to a rather thorough preparation. Two researchers were given the mandate of identifying the relevant Norwegian/Nordic resource base, the relevant national or regional research institutions in the SSE Region, the relevant international research institutions, preparing a draft research programme aimed at strengthening Norway's research competence and proposing possible cooperation between Norway, national and regional institutions and international research institutions. In October 1985 the two researchers presented their findings and recommendations in the report "Organisation and Development in the Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia Region, Research Problems and Priorities". Later that month, the report was discussed at a large seminar. All interested Norwegian researchers, researchers from other Nordic countries and a number of international specialists were invited to discuss how to ensure the most optimal contribution of the research component to the overall SSE Programme.

With regard to the country focus, it was politically decided that one country in the West and one country in the East should be selected as priority countries. The survey pointed to Mali as an obvious candidate in the West, while Ethiopia and Sudan were about equally preferred by the NGOs working in the East. Based on a general assessment of Norwegian experience, the MDC administration suggested Mali and Ethiopia as priority countries for the Programme. However, for political reasons, Sudan was later added to the list.

After the Programme had been formally approved by the Parliament in November 1985, country profiles for each of the three priority countries, Mali, Ethiopia and Sudan, were prepared by Norwegian researchers. The reports were submitted in February, March and April 1986. The three country reports prepared by the researchers do not seem to have been used by the administration when the Programme Document was drafted. Neither were they distributed to the NGOs.

In March 1986, what seemed to be a draft programme document - "Norwegian Assistance to the Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia Region - Development of NORAD's Programme" - was prepared by the Environmental advisor in MDC. Apparently neither the SSE Coordinator nor the Desk Officer



were involved in preparing this, and the status of the document is not clear. It differed from the final document - "Sustained Development in SSE" - prepared by the SSE desk officer and an external consultant, by having a more explicit statement of the need for coordination of the Norwegian initiative with similar efforts by other donors. Also, it criticized the planning process for being isolated and short-sighted in perspective, and stressed the need for further and more integrated planning.

Also in March 1986 the MDC administration presented its own programme document on the research component. This document, "Development Research Programme - Environment and Development in the SSE Countries", differs from the earlier research report presented by the researchers in October 1985 by ranking competence building in Norway and competence building in SSE countries as equally important objectives and adding research support to development activities carried out by NGOs and multilaterals as a third objective.

Planning continued through 1986, and the final programme document was not presented until late 1986. However, the review of the first project proposals presented by NGOs and multilateral organisations took place in March 1986, before the final programme document was available. Hence March 1986 marks the transformation from a planning to an implementation phase of the Programme.

### **6.3 Organisation and Administration (1985-86)**

#### 6.3.1 Organisational Needs and Response

The mandate given to the internal SSE working group in MDC also included a request to consider the organisational set-up and administration of the Programme. In the mandate it was specified that:

*Based on the framework conditions, the result of work carried out under points a) and b), the working group will outline detailed suggestions for the organisation and running of this particular assignment. In particular the group will evaluate whether a separate home-based office/secretariat over e.g. a five year period will prove necessary for the implementation. The alternative will be to extend this area of responsibility to existing offices in MDC. In this connection the group must evaluate needed capacity, at home and abroad, and the question of how best to administer the Programme. (translation from Norwegian).*

The response of the working group to this issue in their document was very brief, as it was simply stated that:



*Already from the summer of 1985 the professional and administrative capacity of MDC must be increased. (translation from Norwegian).*

This statement was not substantiated, but it was assumed that a proposal for an SSE administration would be part of the recommendations resulting from the thorough planning of the Programme.

Already from the start of the Programme the MDC management was aware that even with an assistance of NOK one billion, the impact of the Norwegian assistance would be limited as this assistance would only constitute a limited share of the total donor assistance to the SSE Region. The need for a concentrated and coordinated assistance were therefore prioritized by the management and mentioned in all documents from the planning period. An active Norwegian participation in the coordination is stressed in the Programme Document:

*Norway will actively participate in coordination efforts between the recipient countries and concerned donor institutions as well as coordination between donors at national and international levels. Emphasis will also be put on Nordic cooperation. (translation from Norwegian).*

However, no comprehensive plan for the organisational structure of the Programme was ever prepared and discussed within the administration. The interviews with staff from MFA/NORAD revealed very little information on considerations made concerning the organisational set-up and administration of the Programme and it seems as if the administration of the Programme was a non-issue.

The lack of a firm and clear administration structure has characterized the Programme from the very beginning. Numerous changes have taken place throughout the relatively brief period of the Programme's existence. The major events in the development of management and administration of the Programme are briefly outlined below:

- 1984: Ministry of Development Cooperation established as an independent ministry;
- 1985: Internal working group established in MDC;  
Steering Committee established chaired by the head of PLAN. All heads of relevant sections in MDC and NORAD were members;  
SSE Unit established under PLAN comprising an SSE-Coordinator and a desk officer with responsibility for NGOs;  
Permanent Secretary made the chairman of the Steering Committee;

- 1986: Advisory Committee with responsibility for the research component established;  
SSE-Coordinator and desk officer resigned;  
SSE Unit strengthened by the establishment of two positions as field attaches in Ethiopia and Sudan, but based in Nairobi, Kenya;  
New SSE-Coordinator recruited;
- 1987: New desk officer recruited;  
Steering committee dissolved;  
PRIVORG, FORSK and MULTI delegated formal authority of approving projects falling under their respective domain;  
Coordination Committee established;
- 1988: Field attaché based in Khartoum, Sudan;  
Advisory Committee dissolved;  
SSE-Coordinator mandate revised. SSE-Coordinator given authority to approve grants from a special budget to be used for information activities and seminars;  
SSE-Forum established;
- 1989: SSE Unit moved to PRIVORG;  
Coordination Committee dissolved;  
Position as field attaché, Ethiopia, abolished;
- 1990: MDC re-integrated in MFA;  
SSE Unit moved to PROG;
- 1991: Norwegian representation closed in Khartoum and position as field attaché abolished;  
Responsibility for research component given to NUFU;  
Consul General based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, also responsible for SSE activities;
- 1992: Responsibility for the administration of the NGO contracted to NORAGRIC;  
SSE Coordinator transferred to the Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi, India; and,  
New mandate for the SSE Coordinator under consideration.

### 6.3.2 Administrative Problems during Implementation

To understand the development in the organisation and administration of the SSE Programme three aspects are important:

1. The administrative set-up of the Programme based on an SSE Unit that cut across the ordinary line structure of decision making was never accepted by the staff from the different divisions in the ministry (MDC/MFA).



2. The many changes in the organisation and administration of the SSE Programme are only reflections of the changes in the administration of Norwegian foreign policy.
3. The pace at which the Programme had to be initiated, did not allow for a process of sensibilization of the programme concept within the administration and the development of an understanding of the need for a concerted planning effort and coordination.

Already during the planning period, the Steering Committee had been the forum for serious discussions between different divisions in MDC. In particular, the location of the SSE Unit under PLAN was questioned, as this division according to its functions should not be responsible for the implementation of developmental activities.

Although the Steering Committee and later the Coordination Committee were established to coordinate the Programme, this was not achieved. An attempt in November 1985 to strengthen the Steering Committee by making the Permanent Secretary chairman instead of the head of PLAN, did not change much. The heads of divisions were simply too powerful and had their own agenda; e.g. MULTI was allowed to formulate its own policy for the Programme and never considered it possible for the Norwegian administration to actively participate in the coordination process as envisaged in the Programme Document. Interviews with former members of the Steering Committee also reveal that the Programme concept was not clear to the members, and many felt that the composition of the Committee was wrong since persons in charge of the daily administration of the three components were not represented.

When the implementation started, the problems became even more prominent. Staff in the divisions responsible for administration of NGO and research projects (PRIVORG and FORSK, respectively) felt that projects which ought to fall under their responsibility were taken away from them. Communication problems and delays in the follow up on decisions taken by the Steering Committee often characterized the situation. The more independent status given to the administration of projects carried out by multilateral agencies was not conducive for maintenance of the programme concept.

In the beginning of 1987 it was decided that the Steering Committee should be dissolved and replaced by a Coordination Committee. The reason for this decision is not spelled out in the available documentation, but the difficulties in having a programme structure cutting across the line structure seem to have been a major factor in this decision. Thus, from May 1987, the three divisions PRIVORG, FORSK and MULTI were delegated the formal authority of approving projects falling under their own domains.



While the new organisation did not make a major difference to the already relatively independent administration of projects carried out by multilateral agencies, the hold on NGO projects by the SSE Unit was considerably loosened. The day-to-day administration was still carried out by the SSE desk officer placed under PLAN, but all decisions now had to be approved by PRIVORG, physically located in another part of Oslo.

While the approval authority for research projects was shifted from the Steering Committee to FORSK, the established Advisory Committee maintained the responsibility for the assessment of research proposals until March 1988 and a desk officer in FORSK continued administering of the Programme.

The mandate of the Coordination Committee differed considerably from that of the Steering Committee, as emphasis was put on information and coordination, while the only formal authority retained by the Committee was the decision on overall annual allocations to each of the three components in the Programme. The Committee had less frequent meetings than the previous Steering Committee (about once every third month) and debates on principal matters became rare.

In connection with the shift from a steering committee to a coordination committee, the mandate of the Coordinator was revised. A proposal delegating the authority to approve or disapprove of projects to the Coordinator was rejected by the Coordination Committee which decided in favour of a mandate stressing the role as advisor, coordinator and facilitator of the communication between the various components and partners. Although the SSE Coordinator was still consulted in relation to project assessments, gradually the work became concentrated on information activities. With the change in the Coordinator's mandate and the abolishment of the Steering Committee some of the preconditions for maintaining the programme concept, viz. a focal point for preparing, coordinating and monitoring programme activities, had disappeared. The only strengthening of the Coordinator's position came in 1988 when authority was given to allocate grants from a special budget to be used for information activities and seminars.

In late 1986, two field attachés were seconded to Ethiopia and Sudan to support the SSE Unit in Oslo. Due to Norwegian reservations about the Mengistu regime, the field attaché for Ethiopia could not be based in Addis Ababa, but the position was handled as a part time job by an advisor at the embassy in Nairobi. The field attaché for Sudan was initially based in Nairobi, until an office was opened in Khartoum in April 1988. Apparently the possibility of having a field attaché in Mali, the main recipient country for the Programme, was never seriously considered.



On several occasions the role of the attachés was questioned, not least by themselves. Most projects were identified by the administration in Oslo in cooperation with NGOs, research institutions and multilateral agencies, and the attachés, therefore, found it difficult to live up to the requirement in their mandate to identify projects. After 1987 their role was further limited, as identification of new projects practically no longer took place. Their role in assessing project proposals also seems to have caused frustration. Although their recommendations were sometimes followed, they often experienced that the administration in Oslo disregarded their advice and supported projects that they had strong reservations against. Coordination of project activities in the field was made difficult by the fact that activities had not been identified according to an overall plan. The only link between projects carried out by multilaterals, NGOs and research institutions was the common reference to the broad SSE objectives. Statements from the NGOs indicate that the field attachés were seen more as controllers than facilitators by these organisations.

In late 1988 a mid-term evaluation of the SSE Programme was carried out by an external consultant. Based on the conclusion that the factual integration of the various components in the Programme lagged far behind expectations, the evaluation recommended that the mandate of the Coordination Committee should be changed to cover overall policy decision making, while a strengthening of the role of the SSE Coordinator was also needed.

### 6.3.3 Recent Administrative Changes

Apparently the recommendations were never seriously considered, and in 1989 the opposite happened, when the Coordination Committee stopped working, and all coordination between the three components was left to the SSE Coordinator. Decisions on the overall allocation to each of the three components were from then on taken by the management of MDC.

In April 1989, an internal reorganisation of the ministry resulted in the decision to move the SSE Unit from PLAN to PRIVORG. The decision was subject to intense debate, as it implied closer linkages between the SSE Unit and the administration of NGO projects and a further separation of the Unit from the administration of multilateral and research projects.



As of 1 January, 1990 the administration of development assistance, since 1984 handled by MDC, was re-integrated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and MDC was dissolved. NORAD attained full autonomy as a Directorate. In consequence, the SSE Coordinator in January 1990 was moved again and is currently placed in an environmental unit in the Department of Development Cooperation Programmes (PROG). PROG is responsible for the preparation of proposals regarding the overall allocation of funds to the three components, but budgets are approved by the management of MFA.

Due to the political situation in Sudan it was decided to terminate the Norwegian representation in Khartoum in June 1991 and hence to abolish the position as field attaché. In the same year the Consul General attached to the newly opened Norwegian representation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was also given the responsibility for SSE activities.

In 1991-92 the responsibility for the research component and NGO component was given to NUFU and NORAGRIC, respectively. The decision by NORAD to contract NORAGRIC as the administrator of the NGO component has been questioned by PROG. The problem here is that NORAD had contracted NORAGRIC without consulting MFA and it is questionable whether the delegation of approval and funding authority to a private organisation is in conformity with Norwegian administrative practices and regulations. Most NGOs appreciate the decision as they find that NORAGRIC to a higher degree than PRIVORG has the expertise for assessing, monitoring, and reviewing development activities in the SSE Region.

With regard to NUFU, in particular the Norwegian SSE researchers attached to University of Oslo and University of Trondheim have reacted strongly against this new administrative arrangement, as they fear that funding will be more difficult to obtain and the initiated research programmes thus endangered. On the other hand have researchers attached to University of Bergen and NORAGRIC not expressed strong opinions, most likely because they feel more confident in meeting quality requirements in the more open and competitive application procedure fostered by the NUFU agreement.

#### **6.4 Implementation (1986-92)**

The planning and implementation phases of the Programme partly overlapped in 1986. While the planning was still ongoing until late 1986, the first applications from NGOs and multilateral organisations were received already in April 1986 and some projects were approved by the Steering Committee in mid 1986.



In assessing the implementation phase it should be borne in mind that only the period until May 1987 (where PRIVORG, FORSK and MULTI were delegated formal authority for approving projects) can be regarded as a period with administrative policies and practices different from the normal administration of Norwegian development assistance. Although differences in the administration of SSE activities and other development activities also existed after May 1987, this was due more to personal priorities of the SSE staff than to established procedures.

It would be most correct to define the management of the SSE Programme as the management of MDC. In relation to the implementation of the Programme the management will, however, here be confined to the SSE administration. Although the Coordinator was never given the responsibility of a manager, the organisations and institutions associated the Programme perceived the Coordinator and the Desk Officer as the management. To what extent decisions taken by the SSE staff needed to be approved by the management of MDC, e.g. the Steering Committee, was not known to the representatives from the NGOs and the research institutions and of little concern to them.

#### 6.4.1 Project Identification

Many NGOs perceived the invitation to present proposals for projects in the SSE Region almost as a request from the SSE unit. For organisations with on-going projects in the region it was mainly a question of shifting the funding source from emergency assistance or the general NGO budget to the SSE Programme. Many organisations, new to the region and its problems, however, saw it as an opportunity to build up competence in a new field free of costs for the organisation and presented proposals for projects which were often only cursorily prepared.

The SSE administration has not been involved in the identification of any of the NGO projects. During the preparation of the projects, it appears that it has interacted quite differently with the various organisations. While it has not been much engaged in proposals from well-established and larger NGOs such as NCA and RB, some of the smaller NGOs apparently have experienced direct intervention in project formulation.

The identification and preparation of projects to be carried out by multilateral agencies were taken care of by MULTI. None of the multilateral organisations seem to be aware of the SSE Programme, its objectives, character and intentions and have therefore not designed projects specifically according to SSE Programme principles. The SSE Coordinator was consulted, but had no influence on the selection of activities with the multilaterals to be supported by SSE.



The SSE administration has been much more actively involved in formulating policy guidelines for research projects than for projects carried out by NGOs and multilateral agencies. While many NGO and multilateral projects were approved already in 1986, most research proposals had to go through three rounds of assessment with a final assessment in September 1987.

#### 6.4.2 Project Approval

The initial assessment of project proposals was done by the Coordinator and the Desk Officer, while the Steering Committee had to approve all activities funded by the Programme. While the only formal criteria for the assessment of projects carried out by NGOs and multilateral agencies were the broad SSE objectives presented in the programme document, very detailed criteria were formulated for the research component.

##### NGOs

Criteria for funding in the first two years of the Programme have been decisive in shaping the profile of the NGO component. Two persons, the desk officer and the SSE coordinator, undertook most assessments with very limited support from PRIVORG and technical advisers within MDC. In this respect, it is surprising that the Environmental Advisers from the Technical Division hardly have been involved in the process of assessing proposals and monitoring the implementation. After the reorganisation of the SSE-administration in mid-1987, when the basic premises for the Programme had already been established, PRIVORG was given direct responsibility for administration of SSE-supported NGO projects.

At the time of the first assessments, detailed guidelines for preparation of NGO projects had not yet been developed. In 1988 PRIVORG published a series of three handbooks with detailed instructions in planning and evaluation models, including the logical framework approach, and discussion of key issues such as people's participation, identification of target groups and institutional sustainability. In 1986-87, however, the logical framework approach was hardly known by NGOs and other project planners, and NGOs applying for SSE funding were asked to present project proposals according to the relatively simple standard format used by PRIVORG at the time. The questions in the standard format stressed the background and objective of the project, the target group, the components, the duration, the management and the costs. Very few applications from NGOs for funding of projects have been rejected by the SSE administration and the Programme has been seen by many of the NGOs as an easy way of getting access to very favourable funding. Unlike the general NGO budgetline, the SSE provided 100% financing and did not require of the NGOs to co-finance the activities with resources of their own.



While many NGOs describe the dialogue with the SSE administration as more thorough and demanding than they were used to in their cooperation with PRIVORG, the staff in the SSE administration expressed frustration over poor working conditions and lack of detailed objectives and guidelines for assessment. Despite the efforts made, which are reflected in the correspondence and in a reported extensive oral communication between the administration and the organisations, the SSE-administration felt that their real influence in shaping the profile of the NGO component was relatively limited. Among the major constraints mentioned for a thorough assessment were the unclear role of the two field attachés covering Sudan and Ethiopia and the pressure for fast disbursements.

#### Multilaterals

During most of the Programme period the assessment of the relevance of SSE funding of projects proposed by multilateral agencies has been left to the various desk officers in MULTI, under the overall authority of the head of the division. When the Steering Committee existed, a number of projects recommended by MULTI were rejected, but since the Steering Committee was dissolved, MULTI has been fully in charge of the administration of this component.

Unlike the two other components, the Programme Document does not state as a criteria for funding of projects carried out by multilateral agencies that they should concentrate on the three priority countries. The question of a possible concentration of MULTI projects was, however, debated by the Steering Committee on several occasions, but every time it was argued by representatives from MULTI that disbursements in Mali, Sudan and Ethiopia were difficult and the money would be better spent broadly in other SSE countries as well.

The combination of very broad objectives and a relatively independent status of MULTI right from the start of the Programme made it difficult for the SSE administration to influence the profile of the multilateral component and integrate the component into the overall Programme.

#### Research

As described above, a special programme document for the research component added a number of objectives to the overall SSE objectives and presented detailed guidelines for the funding of research projects. At the first meeting held by the Advisory Committee in June 1986 criteria for the assessment of project proposals were further specified. The 16 members of the Committee represented MDC, the larger research institutions and the larger NGOs. The problem of the limited Norwegian resource base was reflected by the fact that several of the members were involved in some way or another in projects to be assessed by the Committee itself.



A certain shift in the interpretation by the Committee of the objectives of the research programme seems to have taken place from 1986 to 1987. When the first assessment of research proposals in 1986 took place seed money for preparation of detailed project proposals was granted, and the Committee did not specifically mention the obligation of applicants to identify partners in SSE countries.

At the second assessment in March 1987, when money for pre-projects was granted, and in September 1987, when project proposals were assessed, the demand on Norwegian researchers to have SSE Partners was clearly mentioned. A more strict interpretation was established and it was made clear to the applicants that the Programme could not support basic competence building in Norway in the form of for example language courses and financial support to students' participation. The tightening of criteria applied by the Committee was perceived by researchers as a major shift in approach, and some have described the policy of the administration during the first two years as a "zig-zag course".

A shift also in the quality of assessments took place from 1986 to 1987. In 1986 research proposals were assessed by the members of the Advisory Committee, and only to a very limited extent external specialists were consulted. In at least one case the Steering Committee overruled the Advisory Committee and without further arguments approved a project which did not meet any of the criteria.

In 1987 many external specialists were involved in assessing project proposals, and the recommendations by the Committee seem to have been followed by the Coordination Committee.

Concerning the influence of the SSE administration the problem for the research component seems to have been the opposite of the one characterizing the two other components in the Programme: a very comprehensive list of objectives and varying criteria which confused the message sent to the participating institutions and left them with an impression of ambiguity in policies.

#### 6.4.3 Monitoring of Projects

After the approval of the projects by the Steering Committee and later PRIVORG, MULTI and FORSK the implementation of the projects was the responsibility of the applying organisation and its local counterpart if any. The SSE administration was therefore left with the sole task of monitoring the projects.



The monitoring was mainly done through annual progress reports provided for each project by the responsible organisation. In principle the project documents could have been used for monitoring, but apparently these documents were hardly ever utilized as a monitoring tool. The main reason for this seems to have been the quality of the project documents which generally were not of a high standard, many having been subject to a hasty preparation. For most of the project proposals thorough baseline surveys and other preparatory surveys were the exception, and hence the possibility later to monitor the impact of the projects was limited. In a few cases, project documents were not even available as a basis for approval decisions (in the case of IUCN and the World Bank).

The monitoring which has taken place during the Programme period has not been done on the Programme level, but only carried out at the project level by the responsible division within MDC. The lack of common guidelines for reporting is reflected in a considerable quality variation in most annual progress reports. As already mentioned the management of MDC, with the exception of the annual statistics, was never provided with compiled information on the Programme which could have facilitated programme monitoring.

The monitoring of the NGO component appears mainly to have concentrated on the accounts. Given the use of many different funding sources, such as relief aid, the NGO budget and the environment grant, it has often been difficult to establish the relationship between SSE funds and other sources. In a few cases the administration has asked the organisations to repay part of the funds, as there has been evidence of double funding. Questions on wage levels for project staff, vehicle costs and administration costs have rarely been posed.

It does not appear from the files that major changes in project activities, such as the change from development to relief activities, change of target group or change of geographical scope have been discussed with the SSE administration before the changes have been implemented. One may gain the impression that the encouragement by the administration to do so has been limited, as such changes usually appear to have been accepted without major comments when reported to the administration. Given the difficult political situation in many of the project areas the Programme would have to be managed in a flexible way, allowing the executing agencies and organisations to adjust the field activities according to the needs in the project areas. However, the administration has not taken the lead in providing the agencies and organisations with guidelines on how to address acute needs and revise project focus, in ways which would ensure that the overall direction of the Programme was maintained.



For the monitoring carried out by MULTI two factors in particular seem to influence the reporting level from the multilateral organisations: on the one hand, reporting seems to depend on whether Norway is only one among several other donors, where such donors might contribute much greater sums than Norway; and on the other hand, whether the Norwegian contribution is in support of a programme, with or without possibilities for identifying components / activities directly financed by Norway. In situations where Norway is contributing with others to a package, perhaps in the form of a programme, reporting seems to be weak. This might, however, be modified in cases where personal relationships are established between desk officers in the organisation in question and in the Norwegian administration. The monitoring of SSE activities has, however, not in any way been different from the monitoring of other activities supported by MULTI.

The response by the SSE administration to the annual progress reports under the research component have generally been limited to comments on budgets and accounts.

A comprehensive management information system, which compiled information on the three components, was never developed. Apart from annual statistics on the disbursement of funds prepared by the SSE Coordinator, the management of MDC did not have access to information on Programme activities which could facilitate a proper coordination and monitoring of the Programme.

#### 6.4.4 Coordination and Information Sharing

Coordination and information sharing on project achievements and experience gained was from the inception one of the important elements in the Programme. This can ideally take place both within and among the organisations, and within the Norwegian administration itself and between the Oslo administration and the different partners in the SSE Programme.

As MULTI never considered it possible or advisable for Norway to actively participate in the coordination process, attempts at coordination were left to the organisations themselves, possibly through planning and coordination fora established at country levels. In actual fact, this meant limited or no coordination, as illustrated by SSE support to various projects located in the inner delta of the Niger river in Mali. IFAD had a project supporting activities in the regeneration of Bourgou, which again is an important project component in the World Bank supported Mopti Area Development Project, and IUCN's Youvarou project. Even more confusing is the fact that Norway is financially supporting an UNSO project in the Zone Lacustre, with nearly identical project objectives as the mentioned in the IFAD project, but this project is not financed under the



SSE Programme, but out of the multi-bi budget. It does not seem as if any of the organisations have ever consulted with each other, nor does it seem that MULTI or the SSE Unit have tried to force or provoke coordination, not to speak of cooperation.

The contacts among the participating NGOs and between NGOs and research institutions and multilateral organisations involved in the Programme have generally been very limited. When asked about the cooperation with other organisations and institutions, most NGOs have mentioned the SSE Forum and seminars as their main relation to other participants in the Programme. However, the NGOs and the research institutions have hardly been made aware of the activities supported by the multilaterals and the multilaterals have not been informed about the activities of the other partners of the Programme. Some of the NGOs have on an informal basis maintained contacts and shared information concerning the development in the countries particularly related to political problems or the coordination of food aid.

The research component in many ways has represented a unique attempt to ensure that an often isolated academic research milieu contribute directly to development activities. High ideals have characterized the attitude of both participating researchers and the SSE administration, and a lot of personal effort, resources and expectations have been invested in the work carried out. But the outcome has been limited. For many research institutions, the contact to other research institutions and to NGOs involved in the Programme has not stretched much beyond participation in SSE Forum and seminars. These activities have generally been appreciated, although it is regretted that only Norwegian researchers and not their SSE partners have been attending.

Coordination within the administration of MDC seems also to have been very limited. Interviews with staff from MFA/NORAD clearly reveal only limited information on the Programme and, what is more serious, little interest. The Steering and the Coordination Committees never gained the required support from the departments and the SSE Coordinator did not have a mandate which could facilitate the handling of SSE activities across departmental boundaries.

Ample opportunities have existed for better coordination of Programme activities, a more optimal use of available information and a more systematic process of cross fertilization, which all could have contributed to shaping the SSE Programme more as a Programme. Except for the information sharing in seminars held these opportunities were never fully utilized.



## 6.5 Conclusion

The start and the preparation of the SSE-Programme can only be understood in its political context. The forceful exposure through the mass media of the severe 1983-84 drought in the Sahel-Sudan-Ethiopia belt, based on reports about acute famine and accelerating environmental degradation, created a strong public opinion in Norway for help to the people of the SSE countries. Parliament responded to this, particularly the Minister of the newly established Ministry of Development Cooperation. The Programme launched was unique in the sense, that it attempted to make use of the complementarity of three very different instruments for implementation, i.e. the multilaterals, the NGOs and the research institutions.

Unfortunately, right from the very beginning, the intentions behind the Programme concept were jeopardized by two main factors: the political pressure for an immediate start and the administrative set-up involving MDC, MFA and NORAD which did not facilitate the necessary coordination and integration of the activities under the three programme components.

Sufficient time and resources were not allocated for the planning of the Programme, including the preparation of an organisational framework. Although the mandate for the internal SSE-working group within MDC comprised an assessment of the needed administrative capacity in Norway and abroad, and an evaluation of the best ways to administer the Programme, no comprehensive analysis ever took place in this respect. The lack of detailed understanding of what would be required from the administration in terms of ensuring coordination of the SSE activities and exploiting the comparative advantage of the associated organisations and institutions in implementing a coherent programme, subjected the Programme to the rivalry of the various divisions within the administration, which all seem to have had their own agenda. As no actions were taken to maintain the overall programme concept in an administrative sense, the SSE Programme quickly evolved from a more tightly steered preparatory stage to disintegration. The half-hearted organisational structures which were established never gained the support from the various divisions within the administration - particularly MULTI - and only lasted for very short periods. As a result the SSE Programme has ceased to exist as a programme and is today mainly a budget line for activities planned and administered by MULTI, NUFU and NORAGRIC, without any overall coordination.

The initial planning of the Programme was left to a fairly small group of people and only involved on a limited scale staff from the relevant divisions within the administration, the associated organisations/institutions and not least representatives from the recipient countries. Few outside the

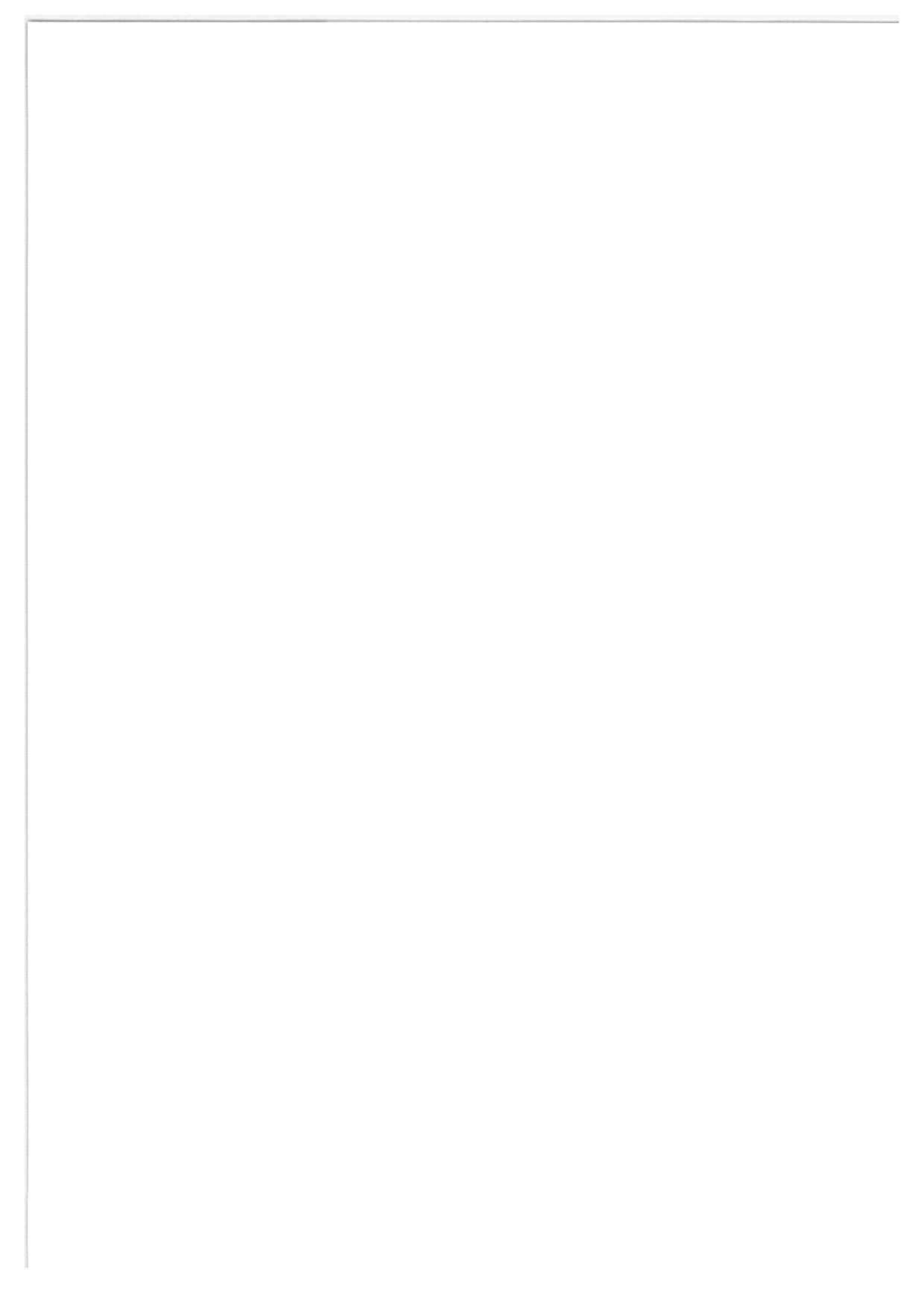


inner group were ever aware of the overall programme concept and had a full understanding of the intended complementarity of the three components which the Programme used for disbursement. It is therefore not surprising, that few initiatives have been taken by the participants to ensure, that the funded interventions were coordinated in a way which could fully exploit the strengths of the various organisations and ensure that Norwegian assistance to the recipient countries addressed the most needed issues and had a quality superior to single-standing projects and programmes. The establishment of a comprehensive management information system, which compiled information on the three components, could have facilitated discussions within the administration on the complementarity of the initiated activities and ensured that a proper division of labour would develop. Apart from annual statistics on the disbursement of funds prepared by the SSE Coordinator, the management of MDC did not have access to information on Programme activities which could facilitate a proper coordination and monitoring of the Programme.

A salient feature in the attempts to establish a framework for the Programme has been, that they have focused on the structures within the Norwegian aid administration in Oslo, rather than on establishing a facilitating organisational framework in the recipient countries. The measures taken to establish an organisational structure for the Programme have all implied a top-down donor driven approach, with coordination mainly seen as an issue for the Norwegian administration. Very little attention has been given to the potential for involving authorities and institutions in the recipient countries, with assistance from either multilateral agencies or the Field Attachés. As neither the Steering Committee nor the Coordination Committee ever functioned as an overall body for the planning and coordination of the Programme, the cohesiveness and complementarity of the initiated activities never were realized.

# The Programme in Practice





## **7 The Programme in Practice**

### **Introduction**

This chapter summarises the main findings from the evaluation studies, drawing particularly on the experience obtained through the two field missions to Mali and the Ethiopia-Tigray-Eritrea (ETE) region. After first outlining the characteristics of the different activities supported by the SSE Programme, the main achievements at the project level, including research projects, are discussed with particular emphasis placed on the sustainability of the innovations and impacts introduced through these project activities. The impacts of the Programme are then discussed at the level of the institutions and partner organisations with attention given to the extent to which the Programme has helped the partner organisation develop their skills and capacity to address the issues of concern to the SSE Programme. Finally the achievements at the Programme level are discussed paying particular attention to the way in which the programme has operated and its ability to achieve the synergy and compatibility which are essential elements of a programme approach. Hence this chapter progresses from the individual project level to the overall Programme level in its review of the achievements of the SSE Programme.

### **7.1 Profile and Character of SSE Activities**

#### **7.1.1 Characteristics and Scale**

The activities supported by the SSE Programme (excluding support to regional activities) at the country / sub regional level have been categorised as 60 projects, 15 programmes and 19 research activities. Respectively these three groups accounted for approximately NOK 385 million, NOK 315 million and NOK 55 million. Programmes are larger activities comprising more than one project and often covering more than one country. Typical examples are contributions to UNSO, IFAD and the World Bank. While NGOs are only involved in projects many of these are of a considerable size in terms of area and content, most of these projects having more than 5 different components and almost half having over 10 components.



The average size of the projects implemented by the NGOs are larger than those implemented by the multilateral organisations, the former being NOK 11 million compared to just under NOK 8 million for the latter. The average size of the research funding is NOK 2 million per project. Within these figures there are considerable variations. The largest project of all is the NCA Gourma project in Mali which has received over NOK 90 million while the largest multilateral project is UNSO's Lac Fagubine Project in Mali which received only NOK 25 million. All of the major NGOs and multilateral partners have major projects involving over NOK 10 million but there is a long tail of projects which have involved expenditure of only a few million kroner. Many of these are research projects, although in some cases there have been quite large grants to research, for instance NOK 12 million for the project in Mali and NOK 10 million in the case of Sudan.

Considerable disbursements have also been made through the support of regional activities with IFAD receiving NOK 118 million, ILO NOK 62 million, UNSO NOK 43 million and the World Bank over NOK 20 million for regional activities. In total a third of the SSE funds were spent in this way in the period 1986 to 1990 this being NOK 253 million.

#### 7.1.2 Content and Activities

The types of field activities which have been supported by the SSE programme are diverse (see Table 7.1). They are similar in many ways to those in projects supported by other Norwegian aid votes, such as the Environment Grant, NGOs and Multi-bi, and so it is difficult to say that the SSE Programme in its content, though not in its ethos, has a distinct character.

Cultivation activities have dominated the project and programmes supported by the SSE programme with a large number of irrigation and rainfed farming activities funded along with agro-forestry, research trials and water harvesting and terracing. Support to agriculture has also been given through a number of service activities which primarily involve credit and seed storage. Together it is estimated that some 37% of the activities are involved with supporting agriculture. This should be compared with the 8% of activities which have addressed livestock and the fact that only 7 of the 75 projects have been involved with range management and the restocking of herds. Given the limited agricultural potential in many parts of the SSE region this suggests that overall there has been a neglect of the livestock and pastoral sectors by the SSE Programme.

The next most important group of activities accounting for 16% of the total are those grouped as institutional support. These involve support to government and project extension services and the development of cooperatives or community organisations. Institutional support is concentrated at the project or field level, while assistance at the national level in legislation and the planning and preparation of strategies for addressing the food insecurity and environmental issues has been limited. There has also been little or no support for the development of decentralised planning structures which are important in improving natural resource management.

Forestry and protection activities account for only 8% of the project activities despite the importance of this activity for environmental rehabilitation given the present paradigms for rehabilitation in the region. In general there has been limited attention to natural resource management in the projects overall and the environmental aspect of the SSE goals appears to have been lightly covered by the field projects.

**TABLE 7.1 Frequency of Components in Project and Programme Activities, 1986-1990.**

	Number	%
Cultivation	96	24
Animal Husbandry	33	8
Forestry / Protection	33	8
Infrastructure (roads)	9	2
Drinking Water and Human Health	22	5
Education	27	7
Services for Agriculture	52	13
Industry / Handicraft	9	2
Famine Relief	23	6
Studies (not research component)	32	8
Institutional Support	66	16
Total	402	

Although health and education activities clearly fall outside the SSE objectives they are included in many projects supported by the NGOs. A more serious conflict with SSE objectives is the use of SSE funds for food aid and food distributions in NGO projects. While this is related to the origin of many projects as relief activities, this use of food aid can seriously prejudice the achievement of sustainable development. (See Section 7.2.4 below).



Finally it might be noted that there are relatively few projects which pay attention to the need for economic diversification which as noted above in Chapter 5 must become a major element of the development strategy in the SSE region given the natural resource constraints.

**Table 7.2 FREQUENCY OF DISCIPLINE IN 16 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, 1986-1990**

Agricultural economics	2
Agronomy	1
Animal science	2
Biology	2
Biotechnology	1
Botany	3
Chemistry	1
Dairy technology	1
Demography	2
Ecology	2
Economics	3
Geography	3
Geology	1
Geophysics	1
History	3
Home economic	1
Hydrology	1
Media	1
Medicine	2
Museology	1
Nutrition	3
Pedeology	1
Pharmacy	1
Social Antropology	8
Sociology	3
Soil science	2
Toxicology	1
Zoology	2

The subject areas covered in the research activities are given in Table 7.2. These show a predominance of agricultural and natural science specialities although 42% of the researchers are from a social science background. The research projects have varied in the extent to which they focus on the joint goals of the SSE Programme, and in their actual field activities relatively few have investigated the area of interaction between natural resource management, environmental degradation and food secur-

ity. Generally the research projects despite general titles, such as "Farming Systems of Southern Ethiopia" or "Environment and Development in Mali" have tended to break down into specific studies of narrow topics without making clear reference to the overall aims of the SSE Programme.

## **7.2 Achievements at Project Level - Sustainability and Lessons Learned**

### **7.2.1 Introduction**

The project level refers to the actual field activities which have been undertaken as a result of the SSE funding. In general this has been through specific projects or programmes. This section identifies the impact of these activities upon the rural population, economy and ecology. (It does not consider the impacts of projects on strategic thinking, capacity development etc. of partners as these are dealt with in 7.3).

The field impact and achievements of the projects, are assessed in relation to the goals of the SSE Programme which are primarily concerned with improved food security and environmental rehabilitation. The precise impacts are only one aspect of the achievements of the projects, as the more important aspect is the extent to which the achievements are sustainable. This requires attention to be given to the approach which the projects have used. Hence this section is divided into three, namely the approaches of the projects, their actual achievements and an assessment of the sustainability of the achievements. In each of these sections the experience of the NGOs and the multilateral projects are considered and specific differences in experience are stressed. In addition the research projects are considered in a separate section.

In making this assessment, it must be recalled that given the complex nature of the problems being addressed and the long time needed to achieve results, especially in environmental rehabilitation, it could not be expected at this stage, after only five or less years of operation, that major achievements would be seen in the field. It must also be recognised that in many areas the programme has been affected by adverse conditions such as war, drought and an unfavourable policy environment, which have made it difficult for the programme to develop rapidly.

### **7.2.2 Field Projects - Approach and Implementation**

There are a number of differences in the approach and implementation of projects by the NGOs and the multilateral agencies and these warrant separate discussion.



**a) Multilateral Agencies**

There are three major multilateral agencies which have been involved in project implementation under the SSE Programme in Mali, the only area where multilateral projects were studied. These are UNSO, the World Bank and ILO/ ACOPAM.

The former two have mainly been concerned with large area development programmes designed in close association with the government. These have generally been formulated with the use of baseline surveys and detailed studies and tied into strategic planning by the government. While there have been clear planning activities based on these, they have not always been very good and in some cases, where planning has been insensitive to the reality on the ground, project implementation has had to be halted. In general the blueprint planning procedure which these projects have followed means that they suffer from inflexibility and are not as adaptable as the variations in circumstances over time and space may require. However, there are some exceptions to this most notably in the Test Zone where the World Bank's work on natural resource management is more participatory and flexible. The World Bank and UNSO do not implement the projects themselves but do so normally through government services or units within government, the World Bank projects in particular having close links with the government extension services.

In contrast to the World Bank and UNSO, ACOPAM tends to work in a small number of villages building up cooperative structures and developing local level training. It has its own staff in the field and has collaborative links with a local parastatal organisation concerned with cooperative development at the national level. While still primarily following the blueprint approach to project design, ACOPAM is somewhat more flexible in its approach having closer links with the communities because of the small scale at which it works and the individual village foci which it has.

ACOPAM has links with other interested organisations and stresses information dissemination as part of its project activities. The other two agencies have links with government and with some agencies but in general they could and should be much more involved with sharing their experience.

In terms of activities, food production has dominated many of the multilateral projects with support to irrigation and rainfed agriculture, and to crop trials and research. However, both UNSO and the World Bank are also concerned with supporting efforts in natural resource management.



**b) NGOs**

The approaches of the NGOs while quite diverse stand in some contrast to those of the multilateral organisations. Their project activities are usually based on previous relief work and they have not usually developed baseline surveys or undertaken any in-depth analysis of the project areas and communities. As a result projects are designed on the basis of pre-conceptions of the area, the problems and the best solutions. In other words, the NGOs, despite their espousal of participatory methods, have not applied them in project design. Consequently, their projects are rather inflexible in design, and implementation effectively becomes a matter of trial and error.

The only flexibility in project design seems to be in the way additional issues get added on, or tagged on, to projects as they are recognised to need attention. This is found with the larger Norwegian NGOs such as Redd Barna and NCA, especially in the NCA Gourma project in Mali, where the list of project activities exceeds 20. This is a major problem as the various activities have no coherence having been added in at different times rather than being based on any thorough analysis of the situation.

Exceptions to many of these points are Care and IUCN who have undertaken baseline studies for their projects in Mali and as a result have developed more focused and sectoral project activities based around analyses of specific problems. In addition it should be mentioned that there was a more participatory approach to project design in Tigray where the inputs from baitos or village committees and from a major survey of socio-economic needs were used by REST in projects funded by FIOH.

The content of the projects of IUCN and Care also contrast with most of the other NGOs because of their lesser involvement with relief and food for work. These two agencies have also undertaken more technical work in their projects and have paid more attention to natural resource management than the other NGOs, for whom this is a major area of neglect.

Despite the belief among NGOs in participation there are few signs of this in terms of project implementation involving more than free labour in food for work activities. Most projects were implemented in a top down manner. The only exceptions were the projects runs by IUCN and SMF in Mali and REST in Tigray, within the latter case the projects being managed by the baitos, not REST (the NGO) or the advisory TPLF Department of Agriculture.

A general characteristics of NGO implementation is that it takes place independently of government agencies, although this is not so true in some parts of the ETE region, most notably Eritrea. While this is understandable when there are dogmatic and authoritarian regimes, this means that project sustainability is dependent upon the continued presence of the



implementing NGO and partners. Where no community structures develop to take over responsibility for the innovations and services developed by projects these collapse once the project ends. Thus it seems that NGOs should pay greater attention to helping communities develop their own organisational infrastructure to take over these responsibilities or work more closely with government agencies and try to improve the quality of their services and sensitivity to the issues being addressed.

### **c) Conclusions**

Overall it seems appropriate to identify a number of general points which require much greater attention in project design and implementation in any future phase of a SSE Programme.

In the first instance, projects should be based on a profound and thorough assessment of the problems of the area and people. Detailed socio-economic baseline surveys should be undertaken to provide the basis on which project personnel can understand the development problems which the project seeks to address, and develop in themselves greater sensitivity to the socio-economic diversity within the recipient communities. Only in this manner will it be possible to avoid some of the blanket approaches which have been pursued in the past.

Secondly, project planning needs to be much more of an iterative process with flexibility in activities both over time and space. This requires a rejection of the blueprint approach and the use of a more flexible process approach to project planning with pilot phases and menus of options to be pursued on the choice of the local communities. This flexibility is essential in the SSE region where projects are dealing with poorly understood problems and there is considerable socio-economic and environmental diversity and irregularity.

Thirdly, projects should place greater emphasis on capacity building rather than short-term physical objectives and production goals in order to produce more sustainable results. At the same time projects should have specific focal issues rather than the broad range of activities which many of the NGOs have supported. However, these focal issues must still be seen in an integrated and holistic manner.

Participation by recipient communities in projects, especially in design and management through discussion and empowerment, must be given more attention both by NGOs and multilaterals to improve the social sustainability of the project activities supported. Participation must not be based on buying people's interest with free food and seeds, but must be sought through education and sensitization which leads to people getting involved voluntarily and taking over the responsibility for the project. It must be recognised that following these principles in project design is not



easy. Baseline surveys delay the start of field activities, and capacity building is a long-term process. Participation takes time, and requires particular skills rather than just financial resources. Above all participation and the process approach expose diversity and conflicts in communities and so require heightened sensitivity by project staff. However, awareness of these problems, and a slow sensitive approach are essential if projects are to produce lasting results rather than just disburse funds quickly.

### 7.2.3 Field Projects Achievements

#### a) **Project Content and the Linkage of Food Production and Environmental Considerations.**

Overall the field projects are consistent with the main objectives of the SSE Programme in that they seek to improve agricultural production and include a number of environmental rehabilitation components. However, in general the field projects studied showed little evidence of an integrated and balanced approach to these issues in the sense that both SSE objectives were seen as closely interrelated. This was especially true of the Norwegian NGOs whose field projects usually gave primary attention to improving food production and only as a secondary goal paid attention to environmental rehabilitation. In a few projects run by what is here termed international NGOs, the reverse was the case. These included IUCN's Youvarou and Walia projects and Care's Koro project, all in Mali, where environmental rehabilitation and awareness were dominant and food production was seen as a rather long term concern. In general the multilateral projects struck a better balance between environmental rehabilitation and food security with environmental issues addressed in order to improve food security, for instance through better management of water resources. However, some awareness of the importance of environmental rehabilitation as a basis for improved food security existed in Tigray with REST and the TPLF and in Eritrea with the concern of ERA and the EPLF for better water management. However, the integration of environmental rehabilitation with improved food security could have been developed further in many of the projects which the SSE Programme supported.

Another major concern is the sectoral and partial view of the rural situation which has been taken by the SSE funded projects. The most extreme of these problems is the failure to recognise the linkages between pastoral and arable economies and resource management systems. For instance the link between Care's acacia rehabilitation project at Koro and its impact upon fodder supplies for neighbouring pastoral peoples has been neglected, while the impacts of increased cropping through rainfed and irrigated production upon pastoral systems has been ignored by NGO projects in Ethiopia and Eritrea, and multilateral projects in Mali. In the



latter case this lacuna may well be linked to structural problems in the agricultural services with whom the projects are working as these tend to be sectorally organised, but in other cases the problems lie specifically with the SSE partners. More integrated approaches are seen in the two UNSO projects in Mali which have given some attention to the need for a farming systems approach, and in Tigray where there has been some recognition of the interlinkages between different land uses. Greater attention must be given in future SSE activities to approaches which include analysis of farming systems and integrated land use, given their importance in helping to ensure successful environmental rehabilitation and address land use competition within the SSE region.

A third area of concern is the emphasis within SSE projects upon irrigation and rainfed agriculture and the overall neglect of pastoral issues. Where pastoral peoples have been considered, too much attention has been given to sedentarisation and introducing them to cultivation. This is problematic and neglects the potential of rangelands and pastoral production systems. Even where this link is recognised the focus tends to be upon fodder production alone with little attention given to the potential for improved rangeland management.

Another example of narrowness of approach is also seen in the way in which all projects studied neglect the need for economic diversification in the rural areas in order to help address the problem of coping with the growing population and the increased demands upon the resource base which are occurring in the region.

#### **b) Relief and Rehabilitation or Development.**

A particular issue noted from the field studies concerns the way in which the NGOs in both the ETE region and Mali, have been heavily involved in the distribution of relief food and the use of food for work within the SSE Programme. Although these NGOs are in the process of evolving from being relief-oriented agencies to ones for whom development is the priority, this is a slow and difficult process, and the SSE funds have not yet had the desired impact in facilitating this process. This is especially true in the ETE region and with the NCA Gourma project in Mali. In contrast SMF and Care have minimised their use of food aid and IUCN has never been heavily involved in its use.

While the SSE Programme was designed with the view of building on this relief experience of the NGOs, in actual fact this has proved to be a rather problematic heritage. This is because the Norwegian NGOs concerned have been forced by circumstances to continue to be involved in relief distributions and have received the bulk of their operating funds in all SSE countries except Mali from the Norwegian relief funds (see Chapter 3). This orientation has meant that even in development projects relief



grain has been used extensively through food for work arrangements. This has had adverse impacts upon development efforts and the search for sustainability as relief grain and food for work have respectively undermined traditional coping strategies, and encouraged the introduction of development and rehabilitation measures which are not sustainable. In particular it must be noted that food for work subsidises activities, encourages farmers to undertake them in order to obtain food rather than because the activities are attractive in themselves. Food for work thereby hides from project officials and farmers the true economics of the activities.

It is clear that in future SSE activities further attention must be given to reducing the use of food for work or eliminating it in its present form, and of managing relief grain better so that it can contribute to sustainable development. In future, more independent analysis is required of the need for food aid along with study of the conditions in which food for work may be useful. This could be undertaken by the research component of the Programme which could thereby help NGOs design projects which have a greater potential for contributing to sustainable development.

#### **c) Socio-Economic and Environmental Sensitivity**

A key characteristic of the SSE region is the way in which drought, degradation and population growth are leading to increased pressures upon the region's resource base. This resource base is diverse in terms of soil and water conditions with many small micro-environments which are critical resources in times of hardship. The population is also diverse with different pastoral and cultivating groups using the resources in a variety of ways. As pressures grow so the potential for conflict increases and examples of these were found extensively in Mali and to a lesser extent in the ETE region. In this situation there is a need for increased sensitivity in external interventions especially where these might favour one group and disadvantage another.

However, such sensitivity is difficult to achieve in the present situation where few of the projects have baseline studies and those which do exist, mainly among the multilateral agencies, are primarily of a technical rather than socio-economic nature. Coping with the diversity in the rural areas is also made difficult by the blueprint approach to planning and the absence of flexibility in the project designs through the use of options of menus to utilise as local circumstances change. Overall the problem of limited sensitivity seems to be most severe in the projects implemented by the Norwegian NGOs while the international NGOs (Care and IUCN), REST and some of the multilaterals have often had closer links with the communities and a little more flexibility and sensitivity to local conditions.



A prime example of the lack of socio-economic sensitivity is seen in the neglect by projects of the interactions between pastoralists and cultivators, with projects generally supporting the latter without considering the impacts upon the pastoral economy and community. Both the ETE region and Mali provide examples of the failure to understand such complex and potentially explosive situations. In the Gourma area of Mali and in the Sidamo area of Ethiopia NCA supported projects have tended to see sedentarisation and the adoption of cultivation as the primary solution to the problems which pastoralists face and have encouraged other peoples to settle in areas which traditionally have been used for grazing. There have been some successes with sedentarisation, as with Touaregs in ACOPAM project at Dire in Mali, but generally the Norwegian NGOs have failed to understand where cultivation fits into the range of activities of the pastoralists.

Another aspect of the failure of the NGOs to recognise the diversity of the situation in which they operate is the way in which, especially in Ethiopia and Eritrea, they have tended to have uniform packages of activities and inputs. This problem has also occurred in the Test zone in Mali where a too uniform approach by the World Bank and MAEE/PNLCD made it necessary for implementation to be halted until the full diversity of the situation was better understood.

Limited environmental sensitivity has also occurred with respect to the selection of sites by NGOs for environmental rehabilitation activities. Because of the reliance upon food for work in environmental rehabilitation in most of the SSE region, sites were chosen on the basis of the people's need for food, rather than any strategic and long term view of where environmental rehabilitation works should start as part of an holistic programme. (This reiterates the points made above that in most cases environmental considerations were secondary to food needs.) In addition, there appears to have been no attempt to identify in the rehabilitation programmes sites representative of particular agro-ecological zones in order to identify lessons from these for wider dissemination. This is seen in many cases in the ETE region and in the NCA Gourma project in Mali where the selection of the 45 ha for reforestation appears to have been quite arbitrary. Again strategic thinking with a long-term overview of how the problem should be addressed in different areas has been missing.

Some successes have been achieved with respect to socio-economic sensitivity, mainly where the projects concerned have had relatively uniform populations with which to deal and where they have established close links with the communities. Care and SMF of the NGOs have been sensitive to the needs of women in Mali, as have REST and the TPLF in Tigray and NCA / EECMY in Sidamo. IUCN has stressed in its field project at Youvarou the need for a partnership with the population which will allow the different needs within communities to be articulated into the project.



**d) Participatory Approaches and a Development Dialogue**

All of the project implementing partners of the SSE Programme, multilaterals and NGOs alike, recognise the importance of participatory approaches which involve a dialogue about development between the partners and the recipient communities. However, in practice few of the partners are good at pursuing participatory approaches and the SSE Programme has had little or no impact upon the development of this type of approach where it has been pursued. In particular there has been no clear distinction between the multilateral agencies and the NGOs in terms of approach and the latter have not in general shown the more advanced level of participation expected of them. (See Section 7.2.4. below for the implications of this for sustainability).

This is a major concern given that participatory approaches are seen as essential for addressing the problems which are faced in the marginal, diverse and risk prone environments about which outsiders tend to have little knowledge.

The lack of participation can be explained in a number of ways. In the case of some NGOs, especially the Norwegian ones, there has been a top-down approach because of the traditional relief orientation of the agency. This has been continued through the use of food for work which has generally been imposed upon communities with little or no discussion. In other cases attempts to cover large and diverse areas with little baseline information has led to blueprint planning. Finally, in the case of ERA in Eritrea and NGOs working in Ethiopia the war and political situation encouraged more directive approaches.

A further problem found with Care in Mali has been the way in which a project model has been imported from Niger which has not allowed much of a grassroots input. In the case of the multilaterals they are constrained by agreements with governments, by the project cycle and by the behaviour of local partners with whom they have to work, such as the Forestry Service in Mali, who may be rather coercive and averse to participation.

In contrast to the general failing to develop more participatory approaches, it must be noted that there have been some success on which further stages of the SSE Programme could build. These include the approaches of REST and the TPLF in Tigray where baitos, or village committees, have had a major say in projects design and are managing these at the implementational level, and in Mali where both IUCN and SMF have tried to form partnerships and develop dialogues with local communities. Among some of the multilateral agencies in Mali, notably ACOPAM and the World Bank in its village natural resource management activities in the Test Zones, there have also been important ventures into more participatory approaches.



However, these experiences have never been disseminated, and there has been no discussion encouraged among the SSE partners about the best ways to approach the development issues the Programme sought to address. The SSE Programme never required its NGO partners to develop dialogues with the recipient communities to ensure that project activities were in line with the needs and wishes of the people. Where this did occur it was the result of the initiative of partner agencies themselves.

#### **e) Innovations**

In order to have a major impact upon the food security and environmental situations in the region, as the SSE Programme sought, changes are needed not only in the way in which problems are addressed but also in terms of the type of solutions which are developed. Despite this desire for new solutions to the problems which are faced in the region many of the projects which the SSE Programme has supported have continued to implement, almost unquestioningly, techniques and measures which have already been applied and in many cases found to be of limited effectiveness.

This has been particularly true among the Norwegian NGOs in Mali and among local and Norwegian ones in Eritrea and Ethiopia. In these cases there has been considerable reliance upon external inputs and established approaches to soil and water conservation. In both cases few questions have been asked concerning the long term sustainability of these measures (see Section 7.3 below).

Despite these general concerns it is encouraging to note that some important innovative techniques have been developed in connection with SSE-funded projects and these have important potential for sustainability because they build on local institutions and capacity, develop local knowledge and help people take an integrated view of the environment. These included in Tigray the development of local seed banks, bull servicing, and "standardisation" extension which are all based on local skills. Additionally there have been attempts in that area through REST as well as in Mali through the World Bank to develop integrated village land use plans although there are concerns about the need to scale these up and coordinate them at a higher level. Multilateral agencies in Mali have been working on improved water management for irrigation while in Eritrea low technology spate irrigation has been disseminated by the EPLF and ERA. NGOs in Mali, namely Care and IUCN have paid attention to innovations in natural resource management, while projects funded through the multilateral ACOPAM and the World Bank in Mali and the NCA/EECMY project in southern Ethiopia have tried to address the problem of maintaining soil fertility in different locally sustainable manners.



It is not clear how many of these innovations have been developed solely because of SSE funding. Generally they seem to be ideas which had already come into circulation from other sources and in no cases did the ideas seem to be the result of any dialogues or exchanges of information between the SSE administration, the Norwegian NGOs or the SSE researchers and the agencies implementing in the field.

In general it appears that future phases of the SSE Programme should give greater attention to supporting the development of locally relevant and sustainable technical innovations. This could have been done by encouraging research in particular problems areas identified by the implementing partners, by supporting the development of technical capacity within both Norwegian and SSE region NGOs, and by encouraging the exchange of information and experience among the NGOs, multilaterals, SSE researchers and the partner agencies in the local government.

#### **f) Conclusions**

Overall it may be concluded that while some important steps in the right direction have been taken, progress has been slow. This is to be expected given the nature of the problems in the region and the way in which past attempts at addressing these problems have been of limited effectiveness. However, there are clear lessons which have been learned from the experience of the various partners about the way in which future SSE type programmes should develop. These make it clear that greater sensitivity to the needs of local communities and to the variations within the communities are needed, along with increased sensitivity and understanding of the ecological conditions which are faced. These will only be achieved if thorough analysis is undertaken of the situations into which interventions are proposed, and if flexibility in project activities is achieved in order to allow appropriate responses. This requires both more participatory approaches and more of a process approach to planning project activities. Together these imply a major change in the approach to project and programme activities on the part of the SSE partners with a greater willingness to build on local knowledge and to delegate responsibilities to communities with project staff acting more in a supportive role.

#### **7.2.4 Field Project Sustainability**

##### **a) Technical Sustainability**

This refers to the extent to which technical innovations can continue to operate successfully when they rely primarily on the expertise, funds and resources of the recipient community. This does not completely exclude external inputs, such as oil and spare parts, but individuals or the community must be able to finance these from their own resources. The greater the level of external dependence, for inputs and advice on how to



use them, the more unlikely it is that an innovation can continue to operate without external funds and expertise and so is not sustainable.

While the NGOs in Mali and REST in Tigray tended to use intermediate technology which was relatively easy for the communities to adopt and appears sustainable, many of the projects studied involve reliance upon external technology and inputs, following the technology transfer approach to problem solving. For instance many of the projects relied upon hybrid and composite seeds imported from abroad, while distribution of chemical fertiliser was a common element of many of the larger projects of both NGOs and multilateral agencies. Mechanisation was also introduced in different forms in many of the projects, most typically for irrigation in Eritrea and Mali, while external inputs were used in environmental rehabilitation efforts where centralised nurseries used diesel pumps and plastic seedling bags and mechanised distribution systems. Large scale mechanised construction methods have been used in a number of projects and it is doubtful whether in all cases communities can themselves cope with the necessary maintenance. In some cases these technologies could be managed with local skills and external inputs could be obtained relatively easily, but more often there were doubts about the future of these approaches.

One of the causes of this use of external technology was the pressure to produce immediate benefits to meet local needs quickly, while the ready availability of funds in the projects meant that financial constraints did not limit the use of this approach. As a result there was a neglect of local skills and knowledge and little consideration of how to build on this to produce solutions which were technically sustainable.

There were some important exceptions to these general problems. For instance in the Redd Barna Project in North Shewa, Ethiopia, the project revised its tree seedling production process to reduce the need for external inputs by decentralising the nurseries and producing bare rooted seedling, and also supporting farmers own traditional tree production practices. Addressing soil fertility problems through leguminous intercropping rather than chemical fertilisers has been encouraged in Konso, Ethiopia by EECMY, NCA's local partner, while integration of crop and livestock production to address this same problem has been supported in the World Bank's Mopti Area Development Project in Mali. Local irrigation techniques have been developed in Eritrea where spate irrigation has been encouraged widely building on local practices and using labour intensive construction methods. However, much irrigation development has been based on pumps and the shadoof technology has been completely neglected, even by the NGOs.



**b) Ecological Sustainability**

Ecological sustainability has a number of elements. The main one of relevance to the development process is the maintenance of the productivity of the natural resource base. In particular, projects must ensure that the actions of present generations do not undermine the capacity of the natural resource base to continue to provide benefits for future generations. Of particular concern is the maintenance of agricultural and pastoral productivity as rural populations increase pressures on the natural resource base. Ecological sustainability also refers to the maintenance of ecological processes, such as the cycling of nutrients and water, which are parts of the basic life support system. The functioning of these systems must be protected so that the survival of communities of people, flora and fauna is not endangered.

Despite the emphasis upon environmental rehabilitation within the SSE Programme, there was little attention given to ecological sustainability in the project activities overall. Immediate production of food seemed to predominate in the thinking of most of the partners and despite the attempts at afforestation and environmental rehabilitation there were few attempts to ensure that indigenous activities of communities with whom projects worked or those introduced by projects were ecologically sound.

Where irrigation activities were supported little attention was given to monitoring their impact upon water table or salinity, although where salinity problems have occurred there have been attempts to address the problem, most notably in the case of the ACOPAM project in Mali where agroforestry and crop diversification are being tried.

There has been a similar neglect of the ecological impact of project activities in a number of cases where the development of project services has led to spontaneous concentrations of population and livestock or has disrupted traditional movement patterns and resource use by pastoralists. For instance irrigation development in the western lowlands of Eritrea has restricted the access by pastoralists to pasture and water, while the NCA-Gourma Project in Mali has led to the concentration of people in an area of sandy soil which is vulnerable to population pressure without proper management.

A major weakness in most of the projects has been the lack of an awareness of the need for, and potential of, improved natural resource management for addressing the ecological problems which are faced. Exceptions were found in the IUCN Youvarou Project which takes a long term and integrated view of the natural resources, in the Care's Koro agro-forestry project and in the second phase of the UNSO Acacia Senegal Project where appropriate management of the acacia is a prime concern. The World Bank in the Test Zone Programme in Mali is also attempting to use



a decentralised approach to natural resource management, although the results have so far been rather limited.

Improved management of natural pasture and fodder as a way of rehabilitation has generally been neglected in favour of planting, although exclosures on pasture have been tried in Eritrea. However, this has been in a limited manner with no conception of an integrated view of land use. One area where an integrated view of natural resource use is beginning to develop is in Tigray where REST and the TPLF Department of Agriculture have begun to help communities develop their own land use plans which include protected areas.

A further weakness in most projects is the limited attention in general given to the integration of crop and livestock activities and their potential to be mutually supportive through fodder and manure production. The only example of sensitivity to this was found in the Mopti Area Development Programme. Use of legumes in maintaining soil fertility was found in Konso but wider use of such ecologically sustainable forms of helping to maintain soil fertility were expected.

#### **c) Social Sustainability and Participation**

Social sustainability refers to the extent to which change is rooted in a society and so is accepted by the population and will be supported and maintained by them without external support. The crucial point is that innovations as a result of project activities should be appropriate for the recipient society. This not only involves them being affordable and attractive through offering immediate gains, but also means that they should be easily accepted by the community and incorporated within their way of thinking. To be sustainable innovations must become part and parcel of the norms and values of a society and support the goals of the people. This has implications for the way in which innovations are developed, as where possible they should be developed by the community itself rather than imposed or introduced from outside. This means that participation is a crucial element for ensuring social sustainability. Meaningful participation requires that the recipient community contribute not just labour to a project but are involved in the design and management of project activities and have control over them.

In both the NGO and multilateral projects there was widespread recognition of the need for participation although this was more strongly supported by the NGOs in their project philosophies. However, when it came to the actual practice of participation to ensure that projects and their activities were rooted in communities, there was little evidence of the involvement of communities in the design and management of projects. The only exceptions were found in Tigray where the *baitos* (village committees) actually run the projects in the field and in the ACOPAM Project



in Mali where the project has close links with the local development committees and cooperatives. Also a number of projects in Mali work with local development committees, such as the NCA project in Gourna and IUCN's projects. However, this collaboration is more often formal rather than real.

A basic problem connected with this situation is the failure of the NGOs in particular, and the multilaterals to a lesser extent, to undertake and utilise baseline studies. As a result the project designers and implementors often fail to fully understand the communities with whom they are working, and design their projects in a top-down manner based on preconceived ideas and well meaning intentions. An example of this is the sedentarisation of the pastoralists which has been proposed and implemented in a number of cases with SSE funds without recognition of the problems which this can involve.

In particular the NGOs appear to have difficulties, especially in Mali, in facing up to the socio-economic complexity of the societies with which they are working and recognising the potential for conflict within communities as pressures upon natural resources increase. The importance of more participatory and discussive modes of project implementation and of the process approach to project planning in such situations have generally not been fully recognised. In addition, aspects of land tenure and rights to natural resources are frequently neglected (perhaps because of their complexity) even though they are central to the issues of natural resource management which is one of the key issues for the SSE Programme.

Projects often think that involving people in project implementation, typically through food for work, is an adequate form of participation. However, this involves no real participation in the project and its activities as the local community has no say over what is done. Participation has to involve discussion of project design, implementation and management with the local communities if the activities are to be rooted in the community.

Social sustainability has to be developed through a two way learning process with the project staff recognising the complexity of the societies with whom they are working while at the same time helping the community to recognise the problems they face and develop their own solutions with some external support where this is needed. Hence, social sustainability takes time and requires much patient discussion and understanding. The five year phase which many projects have gone through is only sufficient for a start to be made on this, but so far the attention to social sustainability has been limited.



**d) Institutional Sustainability**

This refers to the long term survival of institutions which can ensure that activities developed through projects continue and evolve as conditions change. The institutions involved may be village and community ones, or parts of a government administrative structure. Where institutions require funds to operate this aspect of sustainability will also require attention to be given to the ways in which the necessary finances can be raised. Institutional sustainability also refers to the strength and characteristics of the institutions in a community and their ability to continue to operate effectively and provide sustainable services or functions to the community. The strengthening of community institutions and local representation of line ministries may be an essential part of achieving institutional sustainability.

There is a danger with many projects that in order to speed up the implementation of their activities they establish new structures through which to work. In some cases SSE funded projects had replicated the government structures and were competing rather than coordinating their efforts with the extension staff of the Ministry of Agriculture in both Mali and Ethiopia. This seems to be a tendency among the bigger NGOs such as CARE and NCA. In contrast the multilateral projects have all been implemented in close association with the government structures where they have provided some help in training, capacity development and institutional development. However, in some cases, notably the ORM and ODEM projects in Mali, external assistance from the World Bank has led to the development of a top-heavy extension structure which cannot be sustained from local resources. Hence in many cases there is a need for the multilaterals to strengthen their support for locally initiated institutional reform to help create more sustainable and sensitive government services. New ideas for extension structures which are financially as well as institutionally sustainable need attention because of structural adjustment pressures. These reforms might follow the recommendations which UNSO received concerning greater community links for its Kayes project in Mali or build on the model of village extension staff developed in Tigray by the TPLF.

NGOs in both Mali and the ETE region have operated at the field level through local organisations, development committees in Mali, Peasant Associations in Ethiopia and village committees / baitos in Eritrea and Tigray. While in Tigray the SSE funded projects have been implemented through the baitos and this has helped these organisations develop, in most other cases the local bodies have only been used in a fairly superficial consultative process, and have had no real input and involvement in project formulation or control over implementation. The NGO projects have done little to strengthen these organisations and the links between these organisations at the village/local level.



The NGOs have tended not to develop links with government especially at anything above the local level, and have not utilised the expertise in government departments. One exception to this is the EECMY CDP in Sidamo/Gemu Gofa regions of Ethiopia where good links have been established with the Regional Planning Office whose staff have been involved in evaluations of the project.

NGOs have been especially neglectful of any phasing out strategies, again with the exception of the REST projects where the baitos manage them. In general it is expected that the local government officers will provide the necessary support even though they have often been avoided by the projects.

There are two key areas in the future where SSE funded projects could pay greater attention. These are support to the decentralisation processes which are underway in both Mali and Ethiopia, and the development of local organisations which can help ensure that different interest groups are represented in local negotiations. Both are very important for the development of improved natural resource management arrangements which need local support if they are to be successful.

#### **e) Economic and Financial Sustainability**

This aspect of sustainability refers to the ability of project initiated activities to cover the costs involved and be able to produce a net economic benefit. This net benefit should be sufficient to make it worthwhile for the people involved to continue to undertake the activities with their resources and without external support. Hence a project can be defined as sustainable if the investment in the project results in a long term flow of economic benefits to the project beneficiaries, without a further flow of external funds being required.

This was one of the major areas of weaknesses in many of the projects which were part of the SSE Programme, especially those run by the NGOs. In particular it was frequently found that little or no data of an economic nature was recorded, including production and input data, which would provide a basis for such economic analysis. While it is recognised that some types of economic data are difficult to obtain, especially concerning environmental rehabilitation, the neglect of collecting even basic data on climate and crop yields was noted in many projects. Far too often projects saw the implementation of an activity in its own right and did not think beyond the first year to consider how such activities could be financed by local communities in future years. This problem was certainly more pronounced with some of the NGOs and seems to be the result of their relief and rehabilitation background and the plentiful supply of relief food or food for work activities. However, other NGO projects, notably the IUCN and Care Projects in Mali have carefully



monitored their operating costs and kept them low so that future local funding could meet these. In contrast the very costly extension services established in the ODEM and ORM projects in Mali are not sustainable from the resources in the area and "lighter" extension services with more involvement of the communities seem to be needed as has been practised in Tigray by REST and the TPLF Department of Agriculture.

The danger with an approach to development and environmental rehabilitation which neglects the financial and economic considerations is that projects may invest vast amounts of money and resources in encouraging activities and indeed complete rural production systems which in the current situation are not economically viable and so are unsustainable. Projects then end up ignoring the need for the development of new rural economies and ways of earning a livelihood and slow down the natural adjustment processes which otherwise would occur and by trial and error lead to the development of new viable livelihoods.

There are clear signs that a number of the activities which have been supported by the field projects are not sustainable because they have not been adopted spontaneously by farmers in areas adjoining those where SSE projects have introduced such activities. In particular the lack of any economic analysis of the costs and benefits of environmental rehabilitation measures has meant that there has been an emphasis, certainly in the ETE region, upon technically elegant and effective measures irrespective of their costs. The result has been an almost complete absence in any spontaneous diffusion of innovations with lateral adoption by farmer to farmer extension.

Some projects have undertaken careful cost benefit analysis, such as the ACOPAM Project in Mali, while a number of projects involving credit have kept adequate records. In two of these three cases, the SMF Bafoulabe Project and the REST seedbank projects in Tigray detailed data collection and annual review of performance and policy has ensured high levels of repayment (80%) so that the capital sum originally invested has not been dissipated. In the other credit activity in the NCA Gourma Project the repayment has been much poorer.

Besides economic analysis, greater attention also needs to be given to marketing and the liberalisation of marketing in order to ensure that project activities are economic.

#### **f) Conclusions**

The question of sustainability is a critical aspect of the SSE Programme in its desire to have a significant and long-term impact upon the food and environmental problems in the SSE region. However, this characteristic is difficult to assess at the present point in time when the projects have only



been operating for a few years. Sustainability will only be seen in the long term once the projects have stopped and it is possible to assess what lasting impacts they have had. Nonetheless it is critical that the issue of sustainability is considered from the initial conception of a project as if the project is not correctly planned and orientated at the outset, with an approach which is sensitive to the needs and conditions of a community, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to rectify this later to make the project more sustainable. This problem makes it clear that the pressures for fast disbursement under which the SSE Programme operated and for the rapid achievement of goals may well have worked against the need for a slower process approach to project formulation and the development of project activities through more participatory methods.

#### 7.2.5 Research Component Achievements

The research activities which have been supported in Mali and Ethiopia have involved links between Norwegian universities / research institutes and universities and research institutions in these SSE countries. In the case of Ethiopia five Norwegian institutions have been involved each having separate links with the five Ethiopian partner organisations. In Mali the situation was different with a single Norwegian university having links with seven different research organisations. In Mali this simpler linkage situation has allowed a better level of coordination of the research activities which have developed overall aims as well as ones specific to each project. This has not been the case in Ethiopia where the individual research projects have operated in much greater isolation.

The research element of the SSE Programme has had an impact upon research in both SSE countries considered here through the provision of funds which have allowed an increased amount of fieldwork to be undertaken with an increased emphasis upon environmental and food production issues in general. The impact in terms of capacity building has probably been greater in Mali because of the weaker research capacity which exists in that country, but in Ethiopia the funds have been important in keeping some critical social science research underway despite the difficulties of doing this under the Mengistu regime. The projects have also helped improve Norwegian experience of research in Ethiopia and more significantly Mali where there were even less research contacts before the programme started.

A major problem with the research programme in both countries is that it has been donor driven in the identification of the projects. This appears to be the result of having rather conflicting goals which include the improvement of Norwegian research competence and the development of research competence and research institution capacities in the SSE countries. Additionally the objective of undertaking action-oriented research led to the MFA specifying research locations and subjects for the cooper-



ating research institutions in Norway. As a result the researchers had to develop projects to meet these goals of the MFA and so, despite various joint planning procedures in Mali and to a lesser extent Ethiopia, the projects were on the whole imposed from Norway. Only in a few cases were individual researchers in Mali and Ethiopia able to develop their own specific research activities within the broader frameworks established in Norway.

In both Mali and Ethiopia the actual research linkages which were established and the specific researchers who were involved were the result of a series of personal contacts rather than an independent assessment of the research needs and skills of the participating institutions in those countries and their staff. In general the Norwegian researchers with limited field experience in Mali and Ethiopia had little except funds to offer their partners and consequently there were difficulties, especially in Ethiopia, finding appropriately skilled local researchers who wanted to take part in the rather imposed research activities.

The donor driven project selection has meant that the cooperation between Norwegian and SSE researchers has not worked well in practice and partnership has been unequal with little truly mutual interest and complementarity. There has been limited joint fieldwork and little partnership in the development and undertaking of the research. Cooperation has been forced rather than natural.

In particular, it should be noted that it has proved difficult to attract the active participation of Norwegian senior researchers, and that the active participation of SSE researchers has been hampered by heavy teaching obligations.

Despite the objective that the research should be action-oriented the research topics were not developed in collaboration or consultation with the field projects being implemented through the SSE Programme. Even in Mali, where the MFA required the research to be undertaken in the Gourma area, where the major NCA project funded by the SSE Programme was operating, there was still little or no research collaboration and cross fertilisation of ideas. As a result there has been almost no feedback of research findings from the research activities to the NGO and multilateral projects, nor has research contributed to the development of strategic planning frameworks through cooperation with multilateral agencies and government planning bodies. There have also been few linkages between the researchers and relevant international research bodies which could have contributed to their studies.

The quality of the research is difficult to assess as it mostly started only in 1989 and as yet there are few published articles or completed theses. However, it does appear that at present it tends to be rather descriptive,



whereas more hypothesis-oriented and problem-solving research is needed if it is to contribute to the needs of the SSE Programme. Overall it would seem that in future greater attention must not only be given to ensuring that the topics chosen for study are more applied and problem oriented, but that the researchers must be encouraged to be more analytical and holistic in their work with better coordination to create a truly inter-disciplinary approach.

Finally, it should be stressed that while the research programme has contributed to some extent to supporting competence building in Norway, Mali and Ethiopia, in future greater attention should be given in the SSE countries to broader support in training and teaching to facilitate the research activities and the building up of in-depth research expertise. Funds for research alone will not ensure this capacity development.

### **7.3 Achievements at Level of Organisations and Institutions**

#### **7.3.1 Introduction**

In the previous section a number of project achievements were pointed at, as well as a number of deficiencies in particular with regard to meeting sustainability requirements in project output.

The primary objective of this summary will be to assess whether the Programme has made a difference to the way each partner has acted in the past, and whether the Programme has made a contribution to improving future project implementation and performance.

At the level of the organisations and institutions involved - the multilateral organisations, the NGOs and the research institutions - the impact of the Programme on the institutions' technical proficiency and learning ability, as well as their capacity in strategic thinking, will be dealt with in the present section. The degree to which the Programme concept and content have influenced project or programme activities will be summarised on the basis of the working documents of this evaluation. Similarly aspects such as coordination with other activities within the same subject area or geographical region will be treated, as well as examples of direct collaboration among partners. Other aspects addressed will be monitoring and feedback mechanisms and general methods of experience gaining/sharing in the respective types of organisation/institution, particularly such aspects which might have evolved out of the context in which the Programme has been functioning.



### 7.3.2 Achievements at the level of the Multilateral Organisations

For the multilateral organisations, the major conclusion is that the SSE Programme concept, its scope and objectives, has never been perceived and the influence of the Programme concept on the institutions' working modality and mode of operation has thus been extremely limited.

There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, there was no consistent effort by the administration in Oslo to inform the organisations in question about the Programme and its specific aims. Apparently, the SSE Coordinator made some efforts to spread the "message" about the SSE Programme to the various partners, but for the multilateral organisations this only happened in a rather arbitrary way, and did not have any significant impact.

The multilateral organisations forwarded to the Oslo administration their project proposals as usual, and they were hardly aware of whether a given project was financed out of the multi-bi grant or the SSE Programme. For the multilateral organisations, the SSE Programme has mainly been seen as an alternative budget line, rather than as a source of funds for which certain requirements were made, such as sharing in experience and coordination. This seems to be the case at least for the World Bank, where the major key person in shaping a new more appropriate approach to decentralized natural resource management systems was unaware of the existence of the SSE Programme and its content. Also in UNSO the knowledge about the Programme has been limited.

For the ILO/ACOPAM programme, which has received Norwegian funding since 1978, the financing of the programme nearly exclusively with SSE funding for the period since the SSE Programme's inception has certainly made ACOPAM aware of the existence of such a programme. However, it has hardly influenced basic concepts or approaches. With certain obvious improvements over the years, the ACOPAM programme has been more characterized by continuity of activity. For IFAD, where the SSE contribution to IFAD's country programmes has been only additional funding to larger loan packages with several other donors, the impact of the SSE Programme thinking has been even more minimal.

Seeing the SSE Programme contribution as yet another budget line has been reinforced by other factors. Among these was the fact that MULTI within the MFA also tended to see the SSE Programme finance as a budget line. As mentioned in Chapter 6 on the Management and Implementation of the Programme, within the Oslo administration in particular MULTI acted rather autonomously and pragmatically in their approach to using the budget lines at their disposal, whether it was the multi-bi grant or the SSE grant, and administered its portfolios rather independently of any serious Programme consideration. This is illustrated by the



fact that in some cases the same project shifted status when it was financed out of different budgets, and when rather similar and thematically and geographically complementing projects (for example the UNSO Lac Faguibine and Zone Lacustre projects) were financed by different sources of funds, for instance the SSE Programme and the multi-bi grant.

When MULTI processed applications for funding from the multilateral organisations they forwarded their notes as well as the proposals to the SSE Coordinator for comments/approval, but as the mandate of the SSE Coordinator was rather unclear, this review procedure seemed more formal than real. In other words, the fact that the multilateral organisations were generally unaware of the SSE Programme, and tended to see the Programme only as an additional financing source, was a perception clearly matched by the one existing in MULTI in Oslo. As a result the limited impact of the Programme on partner thinking is hardly surprising in the case of the multilateral organisations.

The limited impact is probably also explained by the fact that most of the multilateral organisations have been quite active in the region for a long time, in some cases for more than 15 years. For the SSE Programme while these organisations represent a wealth of experience, at the same time they have developed administrative routines and a certain professionalism in project implementation. In this situation a newly conceived Programme could hardly be expected to affect these institutions in any major way.

On the other hand it is surprising that the wealth of experience of the multilateral agencies and relatively well established administrative routines have not had any significant impact on the other less experienced partners in the Programme, in particular the Norwegian NGOs, but also the research component. Only occasionally have officials from the multilateral organisations been invited to take part in SSE Programme seminars in Oslo, but generally not been asked in a systematic way to share their experience. In this regard, a more active role on the part of the Oslo administration, in particular the SSE Coordinator, could possibly have made a difference.

Another area in which an intensified effort on the part of the Oslo administration possibly could have made a difference was in trying to influence and redirect the activities of the multilateral organisations, if such a wish existed in Norway. The SSE Programme contribution to various multilateral organisations is far from negligible, in some cases quite substantial, and if taken together with contributions from other Nordic countries very important. In other words, if Norway had wanted to direct the activities of certain organisations in certain directions given the content of the SSE Programme, plenty of leverage would have been available.



In the case of the ILO/ACOPAM programme this is clear, as this programme is almost exclusively financed by Norway. In the case of the World Bank, the importance of the SSE contribution to the functioning of the planning and monitoring institution in Mali in association with the grants provided to other World Bank projects, particularly the pilot zone test programmes, provides an obvious opportunity for influencing things. As for UNSO, the very heavy Nordic contribution to this institution's functioning, even existence, could provide considerable leverage if Norway had wanted to make a point. Only in the case of the SSE contribution to IFAD would influencing matters have been somewhat reduced, given the marginal role of the Norwegian grant financing in larger package deals. However, in no case does it appear that the Norwegian administration seriously tried to influence matters, but rather left the institutions to doing business as usual.

One area where Norway could have tried to exercise some influence for the benefit of the Programme, but also in general for improving project impact, was in fostering closer collaboration and coordination among the multilateral partners operating in Mali. For example, many of the partners in Mali work in close geographical proximity in the inner delta of the river Niger, and include similar project components of regenerating the fodder plant "bourgou" grown on river banks. This is a component in the UNSO Zone Lacustre project, IFAD's programme for the zone, the World Bank's Mopti Area Development Project, IUCN's Youvarou conservation project and NCA's Gourma project. However, efforts to share experience related to this component appear to have been insufficient. Neither have initiatives been taken to share experience of addressing the very complex development issues in the troubled region of Gourma where representatives of the different production systems are virtually at war with each other, partly as a result of limited access to the natural resources. Instead, the different partners within the Programme are carrying out their project activities as usual and almost in isolation. This represents a good example of projects being "enclaves" or "bastions of development", which was exactly one of the problems the Programme, when conceived, sought to address and rectify.

The achievements of the SSE Programme at the level of the multilateral organisations seem to have been a lost opportunity in two respects. On the one hand the information from Norway on the Programme and its objectives was extremely limited, which together with the mutual handling of the SSE financing as merely another budget line in the multilateral organisations as well as in MULTI in the MFA, left the Programme concept null and void. In addition to this laissez faire handling of the multilateral organisations was the failure by Oslo to exercise any influence, via the Programme and its other funding over the activities of the multilateral organisations.



Secondly, the Oslo administration did not systematically try to communicate the SSE Programme message to participating multilateral organisations. Neither did they, on the other hand, try to exploit the wealth of experience of project operations gained by the multilaterals over many years, for the benefit of the other less experienced Programme partners, particularly the Norwegian NGOs.

The rather infrequent use of the JPO system existing within multilateral organisations is another area in which the Oslo administration could have tried to establish closer contacts while more systematically contributing to the build up of Norwegian expertise. The lost opportunities, or the only sporadic use of these opportunities, naturally hampered the impact of the Programme philosophy.

To conclude, in the case of the multilateral organisations it seems that in relation to the SSE Programme they have been conducting "business as usual", preparing, designing and implementing projects/programmes as they would do, irrespective of financing source.

### 7.3.3 Achievements at the Level of the NGOs

The SSE Programme has involved a great variety of types of NGOs, from the international NGOs such as CARE and IUCN, through the rather large Norwegian NGOs, such as RB and NCA, and the smaller Norwegian NGOs such as FIOH and NPA, to local NGOs primarily working in the ETE region. With the exception of the international NGO CARE (and perhaps also IUCN), which have considerable expertise and experience from working in the SSE Region, most of the other institutions can be considered as relatively new to development work when compared to the multilateral organisations with their rather long project record. In other words, not least for the NGOs did the SSE Programme represent a unique opportunity of learning, of developing a stronger position in an area for which most had only limited experience (the environment) and building up professional expertise and competence in project preparation, design and implementation, thereby enabling these institutions to better fulfil their role in the future. The extent to which this opportunity has been exploited during the SSE Programme period will be dealt with below.

In the Documentation Study a classification of the NGOs was suggested, where NGOs were divided into three groups according to their mode of operation, as follows:

- the "operative" way of acting, which means that the Norwegian NGOs are in charge of implementation of the activities in the recipient countries;



- the "bilateral" way of acting, which means that the activities are implemented by a local partner organisation with varying amounts of technical advice, with financial support from the Norwegian NGO; and
- the "multilateral" way of acting, which means that the funds from the Norwegian organisation are transferred to international bodies in charge of project implementation.

Depending on established reporting and monitoring procedures one would expect that feedback and learning mechanisms, enabling the NGOs in question to improve the quality of their operations, would exist for those with an operative mode of operation, where personal interrelations are close and links of communication and lines of command are within the same institution. Similarly, one would expect that the two other modes of operation would not to the same extent facilitate experience building and learning processes, at least not throughout the system especially when several partners are involved.

The "operative" way of acting is typically represented by the large Norwegian NGOs, such as RB, NCA and the smaller SMF. Of these NCA has projects financed by the SSE Programme in both Ethiopia and Mali, while RB and SMF have only projects in Ethiopia and Mali respectively.

Most of these agencies have in the past been primarily concerned with relief and disaster prevention. Through the support of the SSE Programme, and guided by its objectives, these agencies were supposed to make the transition to become more long-term development agencies. As mentioned in the section above on Achievements at Project Level (see 7.2.), however, this transformation has not yet materialized to any great extent. Although a number of project activities related to food production and environmental rehabilitation have been included, adding to the more traditional health, education and food distribution/food for work activities, these institutions are still very much guided by their past in their spirit and approach.

For example, the project activities of RB in Ethiopia are still primarily guided by the concern for children and women. This is confirmed by RB in their annual reports, in which this concern is expressed as the basic and continuing priority of the organisation, while the SSE Programme objectives are treated as somewhat secondary in importance. In the North Shewa project, the components dealing with the environment are also judged by the evaluation team as being secondary work, carried out with insufficient technical expertise and professionalism.

For the NCA-Gourma project in Mali the concern for poverty, malnutrition and even starvation has on the one hand led to a rather excessive use of free food distributions or food for work project activities. On the other



hand it has led to an overall strategy of settling the pastoralists as farmers, although this is a debatable and highly controversial strategy which, given other similar efforts elsewhere in the Sahel, is likely to be very difficult.

However, for the much smaller SMF operating in Mali, a greater flexibility and adaptability to the new challenge of directing project activities into more long-term and sustainable development work was observed by the evaluation team.

While the SSE Programme has not contributed to basically changing the approach and priorities of the large Norwegian NGOs, a certain awareness concerning environmental issues has nevertheless been created. However, this has not yet been turned into practice, or led to a changed profile of project personnel. At present, the project personnel used by the larger Norwegian NGOs are primarily professionals in administrative functions, while professionals and technicians experienced in agronomy, range ecology, socio-economics, etc. are much less common, which again has limited the Programme's effect on capacity building in Norway. Given the objectives of the SSE Programme and the problems in the areas this imbalance is more apparent in expatriate professional profiles, as a number of qualified nationals increasingly are being employed.

The major conclusion is that the large Norwegian NGOs have not been able sufficiently to use the SSE Programme as a tool for internal quality upgrading and increasing professionalism in what they are doing, at home and abroad. Although quite substantial amounts of money have been at the disposal of these organisations, where for example the NCA-Gourma project has a five year budget of more than NOK 100 million, the extensive project infrastructure in Oslo as well as in the field has not been subject to basic changes in approaches or innovative thinking. The experience gained in the relatively new field of environmental rehabilitation has not (yet) materialized into a quantum leap forward, although it has been registered that some institutions (e.g. NCA) have improved on their policy formulating capacity. Whether this can be ascribed to the impact of the SSE Programme or is a result of a more general institutional development, following requirements from the other funding sources, is difficult to say. However, country programming of activities and developing country based strategies still only take place sporadically.

The other NGOs, particularly those under the "bilateral" and "multilateral" modes, operate under a less favourable system of experience learning due to the many links involved in the process, from funding to implementation, and the general remoteness from the Oslo administration and this administration's efforts in communicating the SSE Programme message. Hence the limited impact of the Programme thinking on the general project experience is less surprising than in the case for the larger Norwegian NGOs.



The NGOs which have worked under the two other types of working modalities, have primarily been working in the Eritrea and Tigray regions. More than anything else the difficult political situation has limited their abilities of establishing systematic feedback and learning processes, but so too have the very weak lines of communication. For the Norwegian NGOs working as "mail box" operations, who secured finance from the SSE Programme, but more or less automatically transferred the money to either London or Khartoum-based organisations affiliated with the liberation movements in Eritrea and Tigray, communications, not to speak of systematic processes of monitoring and reporting, have been erratic at best, and at times completely absent. In such circumstances it is quite obvious that using the SSE Programme as an opportunity for strengthening professionalism, developing technical backstopping capacity, and learning from past experience to the benefit of future projects, etc. are rather impracticable theoretical hopes.

To sum up, exploiting the opportunities provided by the SSE Programme for further professionalising the various NGOs seem to have been quite limited. This is obviously more surprising in the case of the larger Norwegian NGOs, in particular RB and NCA, which to a certain extent have been operating within the SSE Programme as they would outside the Programme, than for the other types of NGOs, which have been very much restrained by the specific situations characterizing Eritrea and Tigray in the past.

In a future Programme it is important that better harmony between NGO and SSE objectives be sought, possibly through a country programming and strategy development, while NGOs working as "mail box" operations foster much greater dialogue with implementing partners, to ensure awareness of SSE goals and objections.

#### 7.3.4 Achievements for the Research Component

The research component is probably the component which has gained most from participating in the SSE Programme although, again, the potential of the Programme has not been exploited to its fullest.

The research collaboration programme between the University of Oslo and Malian research institutions has been characterized by both partners gaining in experience as related to approach, methodology and improved knowledge of the pastoral region of Gourma, in which research has been concentrated.

For the Norwegian researchers, starting nearly from scratch in their collaboration, with only limited prior knowledge about Sahelian West Africa, the research component has provided a unique opportunity for building



up competence and expertise. Although it is very difficult to assess the quality of the research programme as it only commenced in 1989 and as field work came to a virtual standstill for most of 1991 due to the prevailing political problems in Mali, the researchers have undoubtedly gained much from participating in the programme. The investment made and the process initiated through the programme might in the future be further exploited, by the researchers themselves formulating and carrying out relevant and qualified research, individually or in interdisciplinary groups, and by the other partners in a future SSE Programme, who might request the expertise of the researchers as consultants.

Also for the Malian researchers the Programme has contributed a lot, enabling them to carry out research (which would have been close to impossible without the external funding provided), providing them with certain equipment, gaining knowledge about the complex problems in a pastoral region, and, particularly, being trained by the Norwegians in research methodology and techniques of statistical analysis.

The SSE funded research collaboration agreements established between several Norwegian research institutions and institutions in Ethiopia, primarily associated with the University of Addis Ababa, has contributed to experience gaining and an important increase in competence. Again this competence building has probably been more important and significant for participating Norwegian researchers than for their Ethiopian counterparts, as the SSE Programme has provided the opportunity for several Norwegian researchers to get an more intimate knowledge about Ethiopian problems than they would otherwise have had.

The partnership established between Norwegian and Ethiopian researchers has -as in the case of Mali - also been characterized by not being a true partnership between equals, but has more or less been forced upon the researchers by the Oslo administration. Apparently, this has had the implication that the primary motive on the part of the Ethiopians for participating has been the money provided (rather than the prospects of gaining superior research results from pairing researchers with mutual interests and complementarity of qualifications), while the Norwegians have more directly profited from the collaboration agreements by building up their knowledge base as related to Ethiopia.

Capacity building, however, has to be seen in a larger perspective than the one provided by the way in which the research component has been administered. Particularly in relation to capacity building in Norway among Norwegian researchers, the Programme has taken a limited view, as students were not allowed to take part as junior researchers in the Programme, as no language courses were be financed out of the Programme (particularly devastating for the start-up of the Mali research programme) and as no scholarships were provided for study visits to relevant univer-



sities/research institutions abroad. The reluctance on the part of the Oslo administration in using the Norwegian researchers as consultants is another limiting factor for exploiting the Programme concept to the fullest.

### 7.3.5 Concluding Remarks

To sum up, the importance and impact of the SSE Programme for organisations and institutions taking part has been rather limited.

The multilateral organisations have hardly known about the principles and objectives of the SSE Programme and have generally been conducting "business as usual" in using the Programme merely as just another budget line. In this they have been supported by the Oslo administration, as in particular MULTI has handled the SSE Programme as yet another budget facility, which could be used for financing project activities, and did not differ much in substance, scope or approach. A rather "pragmatic" and arbitrary use of the budget lines at the disposal of MULTI has occurred.

For the NGOs one would have expected that the Norwegian NGOs, particularly the larger ones with well established administrative routines and reporting procedures, would have gained from participating in the SSE Programme. However, it does not seem as if these organisations have used the opportunity provided for upgrading their professional competence of the region or for dealing with environmental questions or complex socio-economic issues related to drought and ecological degradation. Rather, the NGOs have had difficulties in making the requested transformation from a relief and disaster orientation to one concerned with more long-term development. Generally they have conducted project activities and favoured project components which have been related to food production and food security, health and education, while the environment has been dealt with as a secondary issue and with less professional back-up and expertise. For the other types of NGOs involved, the experience gained through the Programme has also been limited, but this is less surprising given their mode of operation and the political-contextual problems which they have faced in Eritrea and Tigray.

The research institutions and the researchers taking part in the SSE Programme have probably gained most. The capacity building in both the recipient countries, but in particular in Norway, has been important, providing an expertise which can be further exploited for a future SSE Programme.



## **7.4 Achievements at Programme Level - Compatibility, Synergy and Comparative Advantages**

### **7.4.1 Introduction - The Programme Concept**

When the SSE Programme was conceived, a major justification behind the Programme was that each component, each disbursement channel, was thought of as acting together, complementing and supporting each other, and gradually developing synergy effects which would make the Programme more than the simple sum of its parts.

For instance, according to the Programme thinking, the long experience of working in the Sudano-Sahelian region, which characterizes most of the multilateral organisations, should be of benefit to the NGOs through intense collaboration and coordination of activities. In this way the multilaterals would help the Norwegian NGOs make the transition from being predominantly relief agencies to being more development oriented institutions. To further this process it was also envisaged that some of the Norwegian NGOs would work under the aegis of the multilaterals, but this never materialized.

It was thought that the research component would benefit from research already conducted or in the progress, by establishing research sub-projects under international research organisations or other experienced research bodies. This also did not materialize. At the same time, however, it was expected that the research component and the results coming from collaborative research with institutions in recipient countries should be relevant for contributing to solving development problems in the region. In particular the NGOs were expected to profit from the results stemming from research efforts.

Although it can be argued that the understanding of the Programme as constituting more than the sum of its parts was never explicitly made in official documents, such as those forwarded to the Parliament for approval ("Stortingsmeldinger") or similar documents, it was nevertheless the justification behind, as well as in the "spirit" of, the phrasing of the Programme.

A number of internal documents available in the SSE administration in Oslo stress again and again the potential benefits related to the complementarity of the three components. As an example the comments by the SSE Coordinator to the mid-term evaluation of the Programme made in late 1988 can be cited:



"The sum of the components was expected to be more than the parts of the Programme. It is important to stress this fact, as the possibility of reaching the target groups improves considerably, if the effort is coordinated, if one learns from others' experience, corrects the errors made and finds better methods to achieve objectives".

Not least during the preparations of the Programme and the early implementation phases, synergy effects were central elements in the administration's interpretation of the Programme. That the Programme concept in the process gradually lost some of its meaning and importance and in reality more or less was given up by the administration in Oslo, as mentioned in Chapter 6 above on Management and Implementation of the Programme, does not make the Programme concept less valid, nor does it make it less relevant for an evaluation to carefully consider this aspect.

In actual fact, that is exactly what the evaluation has been asked to do, as the Terms of Reference request the evaluation team to "describe and categorize Programme activities and assess achievements of objectives, effectiveness, sustainability, synergy and compatibility" (underlining ours). Furthermore, the evaluation team has been asked to "assess compatibility and/or complementarity between the various activities and organisations supported; describe information sharing, coordination and cooperation between SSE-funded activities; and discuss findings in relation to emphasis given to these aspects in the Programme-strategy".

Throughout the evaluation, the team has thus focused on the Programme thinking, the extent to which the different partners have acted together, coordinating or directly collaborating, sharing in experience, exchanging information, etc. The evaluation team has reported upon these aspects right from the start.

In the present section, the results of the evaluation will be summarised by presenting findings on achievements at Programme level as related to each of the three partners, the multilateral organisations, the NGOs and research. Before that, however, the role of the administration in Oslo in fostering the Programme concept, which was treated in more detail in Chapter 6, "Management and Implementation of the Programme", will briefly be dealt with.

#### 7.4.2 Administration of the Programme

As previously mentioned, the Programme concept has not been successfully fostered under the current administrative set-up in the Oslo administration.



From a rather strict approval procedure and administration of the Programme at the start, things gradually relaxed, as illustrated by the different committees established - and quickly abolished again. At the start of the Programme, a Steering Committee was established in 1985, dissolved in 1987 and followed by a Coordination Committee, which was then dissolved in 1989. In 1986, an Advisory Committee with responsibility particularly towards the research component was established, but this was dissolved again in 1988.

The SSE Coordinator was placed in a somewhat impossible situation, with an ambiguous mandate and difficult role to play. The field attachés had an unclear role as well, and were not sufficiently close to the field. Mali, the single most important recipient country among those targeted under the SSE Programme, did for instance not have a field attaché, and the two responsible for Sudan and Ethiopia were located in Nairobi for considerable periods of time. In addition the Oslo administration was hampered by frequent changes in personnel and administrative structures as well.

Neither did the Programme in Oslo receive the necessary administrative or technical support. Administrative support to facilitate information exchange, which is essential to the Programme concept, was not sufficient, and although the Sahel fora and seminars which were held are judged positively by participants, they were insufficient for ensuring coordination and sharing in experience between partners.

The particular role foreseen for the administration in Oslo in actively participating in coordination efforts between recipient countries and concerned donor institutions as well as coordination between donors at national and international levels clearly went beyond their capacity. However, a little did happen in this regard, mainly through rather active Norwegian participation in the so-called "Nordic Sahel Club". Otherwise, coordination efforts and fora did not have frequent and active participation by the Oslo administration.

The pressure for disbursement at the start of the Programme led to an insufficient assessment of the design and content of individual projects, and assessment of the role of the SSE Programme within the context of country specific needs. This in combination with the administrative bottlenecks, and insufficient administrative priorities given to the Programme in Oslo, led to a growing fragmentation of the Programme, where each component was increasingly handled separately by the different administrative divisions and sections, as any other budget line would be.

While the Programme concept, as revealed in i.a. the Management Study of this evaluation, clearly has received insufficient support and priority from the administration in Oslo, elements of the Programme thinking as outlined in available documentation and background material on the



Programme could, however, have been implemented by the partners themselves. In the following, the extent to which this has taken place will be considered.

#### 7.4.3 Coordination and Information Sharing

The multilateral organisations present in Mali have, with the exception of the ILO/ACOPAM programme, not tried systematically to coordinate their activities with other multilateral activities.

The ILO/ACOPAM programme has actively collaborated with a local NGO in project implementation and has at the same time tried to involve some of the multilaterals working in Mali, such as, for obvious reasons, the World Food Programme, but also UNICEF and others. The fact that the ACOPAM programme is closely attached to the UNDP office in Bamako has also contributed to this programme being more open towards active coordination and collaboration. However, this might be explained more by the kind of activities implemented by ACOPAM, and its approach, rather than as a result of SSE Programme influences.

UNSO being a fund raising organisation within UNDP is also closely related to the UNDP Bamako office, where the organisation maintains its own programme officer. The participation by UNSO in UNDP Round Table meetings and its involvement in the PNLCD Cellule are examples of this organisation's coordination efforts, but again these examples are more part of UNSO's normal country approach, rather than the effects of any SSE Programme thinking.

For the World Bank, its involvement in both Structural Adjustment negotiations and support to the PNLCD makes it an obvious partner in coordination efforts at country level. However, such efforts are again "normal" Bank routines, and would take place irrespective of the existence of a SSE Programme.

At the level of the projects of multilateral organisations, which were financed by the SSE Programme, little or no coordination and information sharing took place. Even in the same geographical region with rather uniform geographical and socio-economic characteristics, such as in the inner delta of the river Niger, coordination and information is almost completely absent. The few examples where some of the SSE partners (and others) have been brought together to share experiences have been at the initiative of the international NGOs, such as CARE and IUCN.

Within the group of NGOs - Norwegian and international NGOs - IUCN in particular with its "Walia" environmental education programme has tried systematically to disseminate experience by distributing a newsletter



to all SSE partners. Recently, a visit was arranged by the SMF-Bafoulabé project to CARE-Macina in order to enable the Bafoulabé project personnel to learn from this project. Another recent meeting at CARE-Tombouctou was held in order to discuss with other partners active in the region problems of security and mutual support in cases of continued violence in the area.

These recent examples, some of which have been initiated through the SSE Programme, indicate that the prospect exists for fostering coordination and information exchange within a programme concept. This could be further developed with the necessary administrative and professional backup by the administration in Oslo, but in particular by a programme representative at country level.

Apart from these few examples, the NGO component is characterized by rather limited coordination or sharing of experience. Contacts with the projects of the multilateral organisations hardly exist, not even with the PNLCD which is believed to be a focal point for coordination in Mali in connection with drought and desertification.

When the SSE Programme was conceived it was believed that in particular the NGOs would be able to profit from the experience gained by the multilateral organisations through their rather long track record in the region. However, it can be concluded that the NGOs in Mali have generally not been able to establish the links with the multilaterals, or vice versa. If sporadic contacts have been established, they have been more between the NGO themselves, but in both Mali and Ethiopia these have been very limited.

Another important consideration made when formulating the Programme was that the research component by providing research results of practical use for the implementing bodies could establish another important Programme link. In particular it was expected that the Norwegian NGOs, relatively inexperienced in working with environmental issues in the region, would profit from the research component, delivering important data and providing general support to project activities.

This has not materialized either in Mali or Ethiopia. The research component started relatively late in the SSE Programme period and research results have not yet been produced which might have a positive influence on project quality and implementation. It seems as if where links have been established to Norwegian NGOs, they have been based more on personal relations and in order to assist in solving logistical problems of the researchers, rather than based on established professional relationships. For the NGOs working in Mali, the researchers are not (yet) considered a valuable source of information and inspiration. This, however, does not seem to be the case in the Sudan, where relatively close contacts



have been established between Norwegian Red Cross working in the Red Sea Hills and researchers from the University of Bergen.

The way in which research has been administered, with the Oslo administration forcing partnerships between Norwegian researchers and researchers in the recipient countries, rather than these growing out of mutual interests, and with the research topics and geographical areas mainly being chosen in Norway, without reference to what the NGOs and researchers felt were problems in need of study, have also limited the impact of the research component in this respect. Links between the multilateral organisations and the research component in Mali do not exist.

Contacts between the Norwegian NGOs working in Ethiopia, RB and NCA, take place occasionally, informally and formally through both NGOs participating in the meetings and discussions under the Ethiopian NGO Liaison Office and the Christian Relief and Development Agency (CRDA). The contacts have, however, been more oriented towards discussing matters related to security and how to establish more efficient monitoring procedures for food distribution, than they have been related to sharing experience from project activities related to environmental degradation and development.

Contacts between researchers and NGOs working in Ethiopia are also a bit more frequent than is the case in Mali, as researchers, both Norwegian and Ethiopian, are occasionally used as consultants. This may be related to the fact that research in Ethiopia compared to Mali is a bit more advanced, implying that Norwegian as well as Ethiopian researchers here actually represent a fund of knowledge and experience more easily exploitable by the implementing partners. However, the use of researchers as consultants has been quoted more often in the case of NGO project activities financed by Norway outside the SSE Programme. In other words, the occasional use of researchers is apparently taking place in relation to project activities which are less geared towards solving or dealing with environmental issues, than is the case for SSE funded projects.

In Ethiopia, a few meetings have been held where researchers and NGOs have come together to discuss issues of common interest. Such meetings have, however, been rather infrequent and do not alter the picture of the partners generally working separately and with only limited mutual professional support.

In the case of NGOs working in Eritrea or Tigray, only limited coordination and information sharing have been reported through exchanges between the offices in Oslo. Warfare prevented field sharing of experiences.



#### 7.4.4 Partners' Comparative Advantage

When the Programme was conceived, it was presupposed that the comparative advantage of each partner and organisation would be used to the benefit of the Programme as a whole, as each partner/organisation would not only support and complement each other, but would also do what they were best qualified for.

In the case of the NGOs, it was expected that in particular they would be able to exploit the participatory approach, and involve local authorities and local NGOs and communities in discussing both design and implementation. The closer links of the NGOs to the grassroots would constitute a valuable complement in the Programme to the more top-down and streamlined project activities believed to be characteristic of the multilateral organisations' mode of operation and approach.

In the Programme it was specifically suggested that the incorporation of NGO projects under the umbrella of international institutions/organisations might be a feasible way to strengthen collaboration between partners, exploiting what each was supposed to be good at, and fostering "synergy" effects. - No examples of such collaboration have been found.

The multilateral organisations were expected to have certain strengths developed in project activities dealing with mobilizing the potential of small farmers.

The research component had as its objectives to stimulate development of competence in the Norwegian research institutions as well as in the region, providing an important knowledge base in support of the activities of the multilaterals and NGOs.

The few projects of particularly the World Bank, and UNSO, in supporting the planning and policy formulation processes in Mali, are examples of where the comparative advantage of the multilaterals has been exploited.

Otherwise, the conclusion of the evaluation is that the projects of the NGOs and multilateral organisations do not differ much with regard to their participatory approaches. Both NGO and multilateral projects state as a primary objective the need to work closely with the local population in design and implementation phases, in order to strengthen sustainability. But the approaches of the two partners do not basically differ, and the NGOs are not in any way superior to the multilaterals in this regard.

In general, it seems that the projects of the NGOs and the multilaterals resemble each other closely in many respects. Although the multilateral organisations produce project documents of much better quality than the



NGOs, which facilitates monitoring and evaluation, in most other respects the projects are characterized by similarity rather than complementarity. The projects of NGOs and multilaterals alike are situated geographically in the same ecological and socio-economic areas, often quite remote places, and both target agriculturalists and food production/agricultural issues, even in areas with large groups of pastoralists and where the pastoral production system predominates.

The activities of the multilateral organisations address the environmental issues more directly, while the NGOs, in particular the Norwegian ones, still give high priority to activities such as food distribution/food for work, health and education, leaving the environment as a relatively less important project component. However, when dealing with environmental issues, the projects of the NGOs and multilaterals often use the same standard approaches, such as tree planting and agro-forestry measures in combination with soil and water conservation techniques. - An exception from this is the IUCN "Walia" environmental education project.

At the same time, however, are both the projects of the NGOs and the multilaterals quite often developed as "enclaves", even if they are relatively close to other partners of the SSE Programme, as interactions are restricted - as mentioned above. This leaves the impression of rather single-standing and separate, but similar projects, which can best be described as "bastions of development".

The role of research in strengthening project activities of the NGOs and the multilateral organisations has been very restricted, as has been its contribution as a source of new inputs and innovative thinking. This probably has to do with the fact that research in both Ethiopia and Mali experienced considerable delays, in the case of Mali only starting up in 1989 and being halted again in 1991 due to political strife in the country. Another limiting factor has been the strongly varying prior knowledge among the Norwegian researchers about the region.

To sum up, the comparative advantages of the different partners and organisations have not been sufficiently exploited in the Programme. Rather, projects carried out by the various partners resemble each other, and the limited contacts between them leaves an impression of single-standing, relatively isolated projects. In other words, despite the commendable considerations in developing the SSE Programme concept, the Programme has not succeeded in getting beyond the traditional limitations in the project concept, as single standing projects with only limited internal information and experience exchange were still at the fore.



#### 7.4.5 The Programme and the Development Needs

Undoubtedly, the Programme has contributed to meeting the two basic Programme objectives, to improve local food production and food security, and to improve the ecological resource base in order to develop sustainable production systems. However, Programme activities have generally been focusing more on the first, rather than the second of these objectives, at least in the case of the NGOs. Furthermore, the two objectives have often been addressed separately in project activities, rather than being seen as interlinked problems, needing integrated approaches.

The standard approaches used and the limited innovative capacity in most organisations (perhaps with the exception, again, of IUCN) have also restricted Programme achievements. The projects have generally not got beyond the limitations of the traditional project concept, and have addressed the development problems in the region in similar and rather traditional ways, thereby limiting the Programme's thinking and impact.

Another indication of this is that only in a few cases have the organisations developed detailed plans for operationalising activities at country level, using country programming as a tool for placing their respective activities in a larger context, as well as relating them to national strategic frameworks or plans. Links with national development strategies are particularly absent in NGO projects, while the multilateral organisations, such as the World Bank and UNSO, make clear references to the PNLCD and similar strategic frameworks.

Neither have projects been related to regional or other decentralized planning efforts, where project activities can be seen in a regional perspective. For the NCA-Gourma project in Mali, covering a whole region the size of Denmark, project activities have not evolved out of an analysis of regional development needs, and the setting of priorities accordingly, but have been formulated more or less as problems arose. Such arbitrary and piece-meal efforts are not conducive for developing the Programme concept, or putting experience gained into a larger perspective.

#### 7.4.6 Concluding Remarks

The ideas and ambitions behind the SSE Programme when conceived were commendable, as the Programme provided a rather unique opportunity for the partners involved to reach beyond the limitations of each individual effort. Complementarity, mutual support and experience gaining and exchange, exploiting the comparative advantages of each partner/organisation, etc., were the principles guiding the Programme concept. These could have provided a much greater impact, if efficiently and systematically implemented, than the impact and result of each activity



taken separately. In this sense is the Programme concept still believed to be valid.

The reasons for the Programme not being successfully implemented are many. Key among these is the way in which the administration of the Programme in Oslo proved to be a tremendous bottleneck. Despite the positions created, not least as SSE Coordinator and as Field Attachés, and the establishment (and abolition) of steering and coordination committees, etc., the Programme concept quite soon after its inception gradually fell apart. After the first disbursement decisions had been taken, the interest and priority given administratively to implementing the Programme concept in Oslo faded, and increasingly the Programme and its funds were handled as any other budget line.

Also the coordination efforts supposed to be carried out with the active participation of personnel in Oslo, as well as the dissemination of information about the Programme, the holding of seminars and arranging for the systematic sharing in experience, received only half-hearted support, or at least did not have the impact needed for maintaining the Programme thinking among partners.

The partners involved, whether NGOs, multilateral organisations or research institutes, also bear a definite responsibility for the Programme concept not being exploited to its fullest potential. For the partners the Programme was perceived as just another budget line (the multilateral organisations) or as just an additional funding source to already established financing arrangements for relief or food distribution activities (the Norwegian NGOs).

In both cases the result was that each partner or organisation generally continued doing "business as usual", meaning that without much interference from the Oslo administration they continued carrying on the kind of project activities they would in any case have done. Neither the Programme objectives, nor the Programme "spirit", had any significant impact in shaping activities, revising existing approaches or directing project activities into new directions.

Following on from the results of the present evaluation, it seems that in order to overcome some of the problems which have hampered Programme impact and implementation, a clearer country perspective is needed. Country programming and country strategies would have to be formulated within a Programme conception, but including all the partners and clearly relating project and programme activities to identified needs and problems in the country in question as well as to prevailing national and decentralized planning and strategy formulation efforts.



## 7.5 Conclusion

From the SSE documentation it appears that in initiating this Programme the Norwegian Parliament was seeking to make a major contribution to addressing the problems of food insecurity and environmental degradation in the SSE region. It was not seeking to fund agencies to undertake more relief and rehabilitation work for which other sources of funding were already available. Rather it sought to support activities which would directly address the long term problems of food security and environmental rehabilitation and to do so by developing techniques and approaches which would prove effective. Further, by placing a considerable sum in one particular programme it is clear that the Norwegian authorities were seeking to ensure that there were benefits from the programme concept, through interactions and synergy between the participants, and guidance from the Programme Administration which together would ensure that the overall result would be more than the sum of a string of separately funded projects.

Even though the total SSE funds received in the ETE region were small in relation to other Norwegian activities and the overall foreign assistance they did provide significant funds to the NGOs and researchers. In addition, there was the unique potential for synergy between the three elements of the Programme, the Multilateral, the NGO and the Research components, with their interaction and exchange of experience and information stimulating ideas and solutions to problems.

The results and achievements outlined above show that this potential has only been partially fulfilled in terms of field achievements towards sustainable agricultural development and environmental rehabilitation, while the application of the programme concept has been very limited. The successes which can be identified in connection with the Programme often cannot be seen to be explained entirely, or at all, by the SSE initiative. Overall it appears that this phase of the Programme has not been good value for money. Far too much of the field activities have involved repeating approaches which have not in the past been particularly successful, and from both the field projects and the research there has been little development of new analyses, approaches and technical inputs to achieve sustainable solutions to the food security and environmental problems. In many ways the first phase of the SSE Programme represents a lost opportunity. However, it is not without its lessons, and although they have been learned at some considerable cost, they provide an important output which must be built upon in future phases of a Programme.

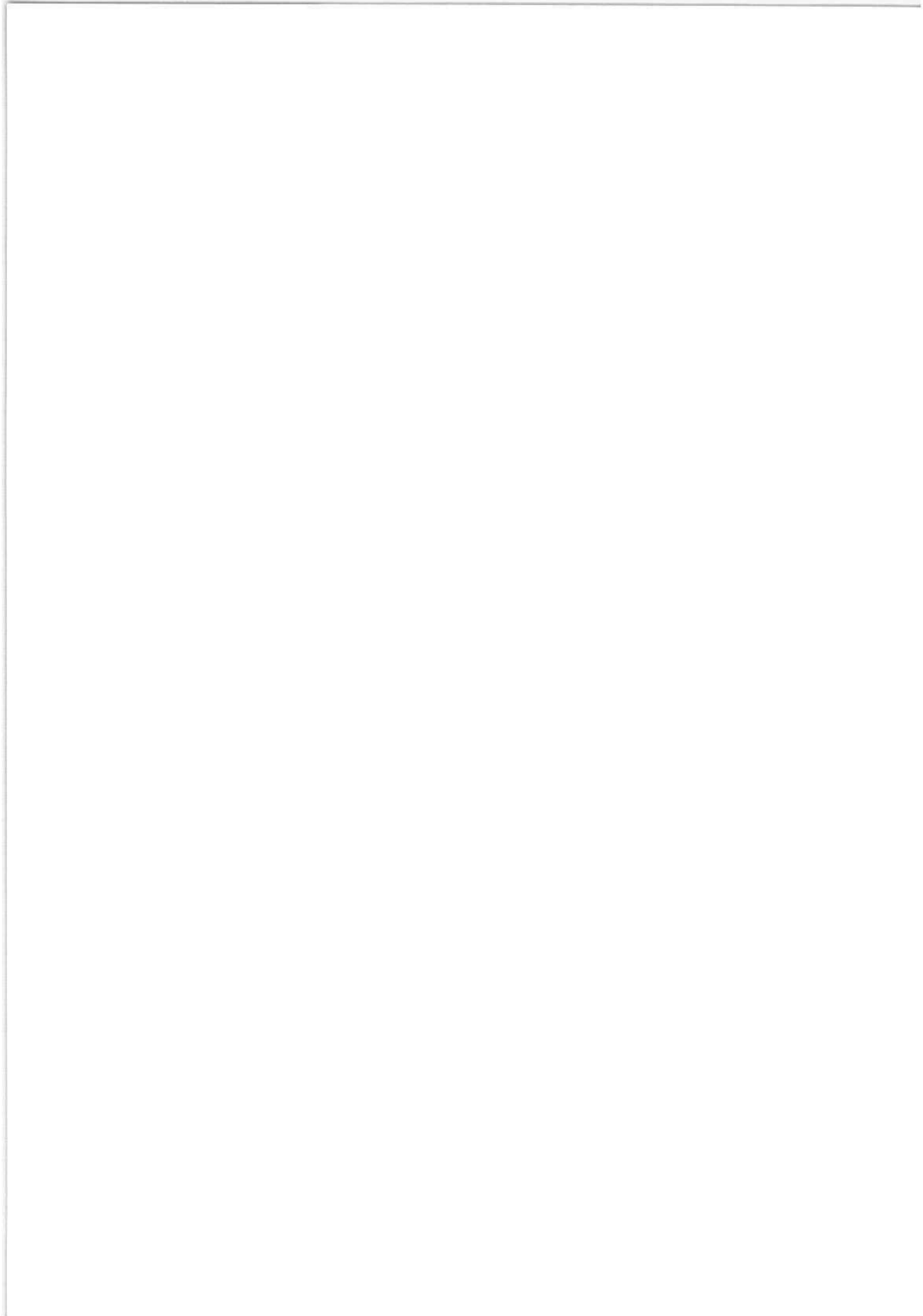
The base established and the investment done hold promises for returns to increase if a Programme concept be better managed in future.





# Principles for the Future





## **8 Principles for Future Operation of the Programme**

From the achievements and shortcomings in the design and implementation of the Programme presented above a number of principles for a possible future operation of the SSE Programme can be identified. These principles are presented below and they form the basis for the recommendations outlined in Chapter 9.

1. The programme concept is valid given the potential for synergy and complementarity in exploiting the comparative advantages of the agencies, organisations and institutions involved in the execution. The core idea of applying the programme approach is the potential for combining the different modes of operation, levels of intervention and variations in mandate of the executing bodies in addressing common problems in the SSE Region.
2. A country specific approach is necessary to ensure the appropriate and effective operationalisation of the programme concept. The complementarity and the potential synergy of the executing agencies should be seen in a national context, i.e. the recipient country. An assessment of needs for interventions, the activities of government institutions and local NGOs, and the programmes of other donor agencies should form the basis for formulating a Norwegian funded programme which facilitates and supports a cohesive national approach to combat environmental degradation and poverty. This should be ensured by the preparation of country specific programmes for Norwegian assistance developed with the participation of national authorities and key executing bodies.
3. The comparative advantages of each of the different channels and the involved multilateral agencies, NGOs and research institutions should be given greater attention. Prior to inception of a future programme an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and capacity of the potential recipient organisations and institutions at country level should be made. Particular attention should be given to



the role which the multilateral organisations could play in assisting the governments in the selected countries in respect of formulating policies and sector programmes addressing the problems of environmental degradation and food security. A similar assessment should be made of the most appropriate level of intervention for the NGOs and their role in implementing the Programme. New channels for disbursement should be considered and the appropriateness of those currently associated the Programme should be reassessed.

4. The project concept should be critically evaluated and greater attention paid to supporting the development of an enabling environment to achieve the goals of the Programme through policy reforms and institutional development both at the national and community levels. A central issue in the Programme should be capacity building pursued through a more participatory approach with involvement of the local partners in all stages of the formulation of activities as well as their implementation.
5. Food distribution should be separated from the Programme in order to avoid its disturbing effects which make it difficult to ensure that the initiated activities are sustainable. Temporary incentives to participate in programme activities should as far as possible avoid the use of external subsidies which distort the local economic and social mechanisms for allocation of resources. SSE funds should not be used for relief food for which other sources are available.
6. Improved communications are needed between the various channels, between countries, between partners and international research and field activities. As the SSE Programme is unique in the sense that it uses very different organisations and institutions in the execution of activities, it could play an important role as a facilitator for cross fertilization of experience gained within very different settings and with different organisations.
7. Improved backstopping and technical support for Programme activities is essential to ensure the channelling of the most up-to-date knowledge to the field and a professional dialogue between resource centres and front-line organisations and staff. The improvement of technical support would require a more active participation of professional development staff both within the organisations/institutions and the MFA administration in discussions on policy issues and project monitoring and supervision.

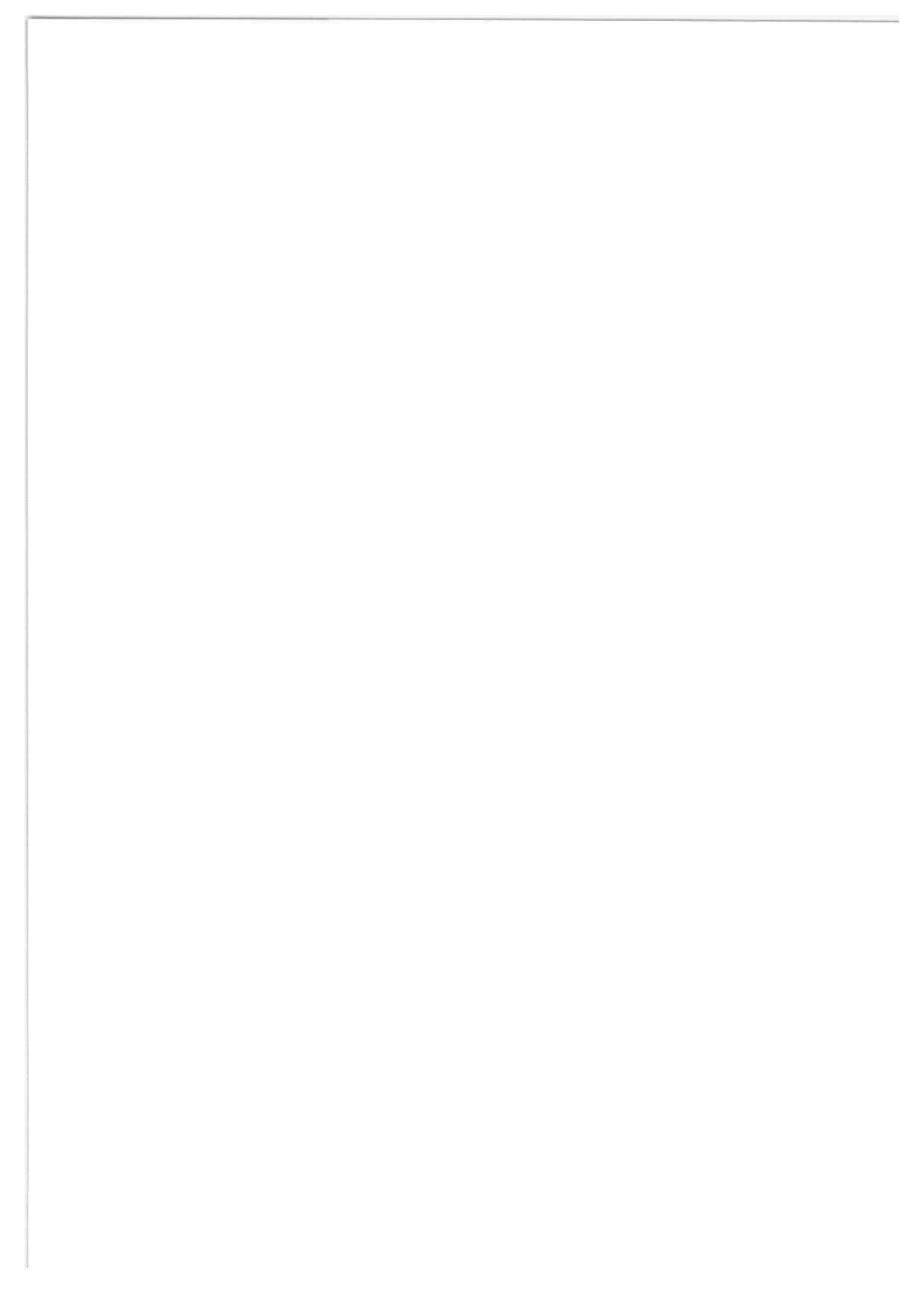
8. Greater emphasis should be given to participatory approaches, and to holistic system analysis as the basis for developing interventions. Organisations should devote more resources to the preparatory stages of the activities and consider a cautious step by step approach through initiation of pilot/development phases prior to the launching of complex and ambitious programmes. A process approach, involving continuous interaction with recipients and reformulation of activities in response to local needs, is recommended.





# Recommendations and Proposals





## **9 Recommendations and Proposals**

### **9.1 Programme Level**

1. It is recommended that Norway continues to operate a development programme in the SSE countries in Africa. This region should be given priority attention because of the extent of poverty, the difficult environmental conditions, and the poor economic prospects, especially for economic diversification.
2. The SSE Region also merits special attention because of the fragile, but evolving, democratisation process in a number of these countries. By supporting the development of sustainable and more secure rural livelihoods and food security the new Programme will indirectly support progress towards democratisation.
3. The Norwegian development programme in the SSE Region should address environmental and food security issues jointly in order to support the search for sustainable development which is particularly difficult given the conditions and resources of these countries.
4. A programme approach is valid given the potential which it has for synergy and mutual support provided it is planned and implemented with attention to the specific needs of the selected countries and the activities of other agencies and institutions.
5. This new Programme should clarify and operationalise its general objectives at the country level so that they are more specific and operational than those of the present SSE Programme. This country level operationalisation of objectives will also help ensure that the programme concept is more effective.
6. The new Programme should focus on a limited number of the countries in the SSE Region. These countries should include Ethiopia, Eritrea and Mali because of the experience already built up here over the last five-six years, and because of the democratisation processes



taking place. The focus on these countries should also ensure that the activities initiated under the current Programme are continued and developed to a sustainable stage. Based on the experience from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Mali, it could be considered at a later stage to include other countries in the region, such as Burkino Faso and Niger, where similar democratisation tendencies are appearing. For political and field operational reasons the inclusion of Sudan should be reconsidered.

7. Within the selected countries, all Norwegian aid funds which are relevant to aims of this Programme, i.e. including the Environment Fund, Multi-bi, and Private Organisations (NGOs) should be placed under and coordinated with the activities of the new Programme in order to ensure a coherent Norwegian effort in supporting environmental interventions of governments, multilateral agencies and NGOs. There is no logic in using different budgetlines to finance similar projects without any coordination as is the present case.
8. The emphasis of the Programme should not be solely upon projects; greater attention must be given to helping recipient governments and communities create the appropriate enabling environments through policy development and institutional structures to ensure food security and sustainable use of the natural resource base. This is of particular importance in Ethiopia and Eritrea, where new governments are facing the challenge of establishing a framework for the provision of support and services to the rural areas.
9. The quality of the projects supported by the Programme needs to be improved especially in terms of participation in their design and implementation, and in terms of the monitoring and evaluation which is undertaken. Special attention should be given to the utility of the process approach to planning and implementation.
10. The new Programme should evolve from the present SSE Programme, which should be seen as a Preparatory Phase during which experience in the Region has been built up, important contacts established, and some analyses undertaken.
11. A transitional period of 2 to 3 years is needed for the Programme to be restructured on the country basis, its goals and strategies to be reformulated and to allow the partners involved to adjust the content and approach of their activities supported by the Programme. During this transitional period no new projects should be included in the Programme.

12. Given this transitional period and the long term nature of the changes in natural resource management, policy, participation and institutional structures which are sought, a ten year period is envisaged for the first phase of the new Programme in order to provide a realistic time span within which significant achievements can be made.
13. There should be a ten year programme framework, with a rolling planning process, probably divided into two five year periods. Annual programmes should be approved each year.
14. Improved technical backstopping for the Programme should be provided from within the newly reformulated Technical Department within NORAD. However, given the considerable demands on that unit and the difficulties of expanding the technical staffing it would probably be necessary to provide some of this technical advice by developing contracts with private companies or individuals, or by establishing joint NORAD / University advisory groups in some specific areas.

## 9.2 Channels of Disbursement

### General

1. The Programme should consider including alternative organisations/agencies through which the funds are disbursed. Also the role of those currently associated the SSE Programme should be reviewed in order to increase the capacity and flexibility of the Programme to meet the needs of the communities and countries targeted.
2. The different agencies selected to receive the Programme funds must be given specific responsibilities within an overall programme strategy, those responsibilities being related to their areas of expertise and comparative advantage.
3. It is extremely important that recipients of programme funding in the different disbursement channels should develop a division of labour and a local country level coordination to ensure that they work together with local initiatives and other donors activities to form a coherent approach to solving the problems of environmental degradation and food security.



### Multilateral Organisations

4. The multilateral organisations receiving funds from the Programme should be required to focus on activities which are concerned with assisting governments in developing policies and institutional structures which support the development of sustainable natural resource use and improved food security.
5. The funding of field operational activities implemented by multilateral organisations should be limited and redirected to local capacity building and policy and institutional development programmes.
6. The intervention by the multilateral organisations should focus on strengthening the coordination of initiatives addressing issues of environmental degradation and food security implemented by local institutions and other donors with those funded under the SSE Programme. Such coordination should particularly take place at country levels, in close collaboration with governments and government institutions.

### NGOs

7. In diversifying the channels and partners, consideration must be given to the use of non-Norwegian NGOs specialized in sustainable resource management (including those based in the "North" and in the recipient countries), and the development of bilateral activities under the Programme involving support to both recipient government field activities and training, and also directly to local NGOs.
8. The NGOs should concentrate on activities where they have comparative advantage, that is in working closely with rural communities. This will involve a shift out of the large area development programmes into smaller, more participatory projects, and a shift from long-term, diverse and complex projects to ones with more specific foci to meet particular needs as they are identified by communities. This will require a more flexible mode of operation by the NGOs and a stronger local presence.
9. The NGOs, because of their close links with communities and their flexibility, should be able to be innovative in four ways. Firstly in developing new ways of developing project activities with communities based upon participatory modes which ensure that the real needs and values of the communities are given adequate consideration. The second innovative aspect is through participatory on-farm research and adaptive on-farm trials which try to solve problems in ways which the communities find appropriate. Thirdly, they should also place greater emphasis upon the development of capacity and institutional



structures within communities which help them address their problems without high levels of external assistance. Fourthly, the NGOs should exploit their knowledge about the local communities in developing environmental education programmes and public awareness campaigns to be implemented at local level. The NGOs should be encouraged to engage in such activities funded by the SSE Programme.

10. The NGOs who receive funds in the future through this Programme should be those which support the development of local capacities to address the environmental and food security issues. Such recipient NGOs should practise active partnership with indigenous organisations and have a country technical presence to provide support to the local organisation. Much more careful selection of the NGOs will be necessary to ensure that they can provide the analytical skills and technical capacities required. The current practices applied by some of the Norwegian NGOs, where they act primarily as fund-raising arms of local organisations, should be reassessed and their potential for transferring skills and knowledge closely examined.
11. Consideration needs to be given to developing ways in which all NGOs involved in the Programme (i.e. those from Norway and the North, and those in the recipient countries), can be required to develop their own professional development expertise - especially in peasant agricultural economics and resource economics. They must also be encouraged to utilise relevant technical expertise; this can either come from developing such skills within the organisation or from utilising external sources, such as NORAGRIC or specialist companies, international agencies and NGOs.
12. Ways need to be developed to ensure that NGOs establish linkages to international research and information which are relevant to their field activities under the Programme.
13. NGOs should be required to develop their analytical capacity by developing country programmes within which their programme funded activities are located.
14. The SSE Programme should support the establishment of NGO networks within the recipient countries to facilitate the sharing of experience and coordination of activities and strategies between Norwegian, local and international NGOs engaged in environmental programmes and supporting food security initiatives.



### Research Institutions

15. The objectives of the research activities under the Programme should be reformulated so that the capacity development in Norway and SSE countries are separate, without enforced structures of collaboration.

Long-lasting structures of collaboration can only be expected to strive between equal partners having mutual interests and naturally developed wishes for cooperation.

16. The tying of research to contributing to solving short term development problems should be eased in order to free researchers motivation and innovative thinking. Research' direct support to development activities could be provided from a variety of sources, including international research institutions, in cases where Norwegian and/or SSE institutions are unable to deliver.
17. The Programme should provide funds to facilitate the establishment of international contacts and networks between research institutions engaged in activities relevant to the SSE Programme.
18. It should be considered at a later stage to include more SSE institutions on the Programme, however, only after careful scrutiny and assessment of needs.
19. Research institutions in SSE countries should not exclusively be university institutions, but also include government research units to ensure that more practical research issues are addressed.
20. Support to training and teaching in SSE countries is needed to facilitate research activities and to release local staff for research.
21. A more flexible and adequate attitude should be taken in Norway as to providing funding for scholarships for SSE researchers studying in other countries than Norway, in those cases where Norway does not have the relevant experience, background or facilities.
22. Capacity building in Norway should be pursued, however, in the longer term perspective without continued, heavy subsidies. Instead, researchers should be encouraged to apply for funds in relevant research councils, where applications are assessed on a competitive basis, as based on merits, relevance and quality.
23. The perspective on capacity building in Norway should be broadened by including additional measures, such as support to international students' and researchers' exchange programmes, specific measures



to ensure senior researchers' continued participation, funding of necessary language courses, systematic use of trainee and internship programmes, more active use and exploitation of JPO/AE positions with international organisations, etc.

24. The Programme should stress the importance of multi-disciplinary approaches to research and the importance of linkage to international work.

#### **Bilateral Assistance**

25. None of the priority countries for the current SSE Programme are included as programme countries for Norwegian bilateral aid. However, funds channelled to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Mali through the SSE Programme and other non-bilateral disbursement channels are substantial in comparison with allocations made to many of the countries receiving bilateral assistance. Hence, there is scope for a stronger effort to coordinate and strengthen the Norwegian assistance to Mali, Ethiopia and Eritrea by including a direct bilateral assistance component. This does not have to be in the form of changing the status of these countries to programme countries for bilateral assistance. However, it may be appropriate to second bilateral funded personnel to positions where they would be able to assist in coordinating or supplementing Norwegian funded initiatives with those of the governments and other donors addressing the same issues as the SSE Programme.
26. Bilateral aid has a considerable potential to contribute to the Programme where it can facilitate the establishment of a long-term dialogue between Norway and the recipient countries. Hence, a bilateral component could ensure that the experience gained through the SSE Programme is channelled back to the Norwegian aid administration and used in the planning and design of similar efforts in the programme countries for Norwegian bilateral assistance and in the policy dialogue with multilateral agencies and the discussions with the NGOs.

### **9.3 Organisation of the Programme**

The programme concept has not been successfully fostered under the current administrative setting directed from Oslo. Serious administrative bottlenecks have been frequent changes in the administrative structure of the Programme, limited resources available for coordination and planning of programme activities within the administration, an unclear role and insufficient presence of field attachés, including the lack of representation in Mali and Ethiopia. The measures taken to establish an organisational structure for the Programme have all implied a top-down donor driven



approach which has not ensured adequate coordination at country level and in Oslo. The major cause for the poor development of the programme concept has been the lack of country specific strategies for the interventions supported under the Programme and coordination of the initiated activities at country level. A more coherent approach is required in order to establish an organisational framework for the Programme, which can facilitate a coherent programme approach and coordination with other efforts to combat environmental degradation and insecurity in food production.

A number of options for the organisation of a second phase of the Programme are briefly outlined below. The strengths and weaknesses of the various models are discussed vis-a-vis a number of factors all of them essential for the understanding of the Programme's mode of operation, the implementation of a cohesive programme concept and the shortcomings identified during the evaluation of the current phase. The factors are:

1. Programme components to be included
  - a. Research.
  - b. Bilateral aid.
  - c. Multilateral organisations.
  - d. NGOs.
  
2. Programme coherence
  - a. Project focus - no coherence in SSE funded activities.
  - b. Intra-agency coherence - SSE funded activities linked to other agency/institution activities.
  - c. Inter-agency coherence - links between SSE funded agencies/institutions.
  - d. Extra-SSE coherence - SSE funded activities linked to activities of other agencies/institutions and the governments to facilitate a coherent national approach .
  
3. Level of intervention
  - a. Regional level.
  - b. National policy level.
  - c. Institutional development - central government.
  - d. Institutional development - local government.
  - e. Local communities.
  
4. Focal point for management and coordination of Programme
  - a. SSE Unit.
  - b. MFA departments.
  - c. SSE field advisor.
  - d. Norwegian Aid Mission/Embassy.

- e. Contracted external bodies (e.g. NORAGRIC/NUFU/multilateral agencies).
  - f. UNDP and PRIVORG.
  - g. Recipient governments.
  - h. Regional bodies (e.g. CILSS/IGADD).
5. Major problems encountered in implementing the SSE Programme
- a. Departmentalized structure of MFA leading to constraints in horizontal planning and coordination.
  - b. Lack of coherent country specific programmes and no overall coordination with activities of recipient governments and other donor agencies.
  - c. No cross fertilization between research and other programme components.
  - d. Considerable scope for improvement of NGO performance.
  - e. No coordination with other Norwegian funded programmes related to SSE objectives.

Below nine options for the organisation of the second phase are discussed. Some of them may not be relevant when considering the future framework, but have been included in the discussion to highlight the basic requirements for establishing an effective organisational fabric for the realization of Programme objectives. The nine options included in the discussion are:

- Government execution;
- Execution by Norwegian based organisations;
- Execution by regional bodies;
- An approach focusing on limited number of organisations;
- Execution through UNDP and NGOs;
- A bilateral programme with Norwegian representations;
- A parallel approach with no overall coordination;
- A programming approach focusing on strategic planning;
- A decentralized approach with secondment of SSE Advisors;



### **Government Execution**

One option for the organisation of the future programme is direct Government execution. In principle Government execution should ensure that all SSE funded activities are complementing and supporting programmes and projects implemented by the Government and other donor agencies, and hence facilitating a coherent national approach to combat environmental degradation and insecurity in food supply. Government execution could provide means for interventions at national policy level and institutional development at both central and local government levels. However, channelling resources through government institutions to NGOs working with local communities may be counter-productive for the development of true grassroots organisations. It is most likely that this approach would face problems in terms of accountability vis-a-vis the donor, management and absorption capacity within the executing government agencies and institutional and financial sustainability of the initiated activities.

### **Norwegian Execution**

This approach implies that the Programme would be executed by Norwegian based organisations and institutions only. Hence the Programme would only have two tiers, viz. the NGOs and a research component. In this case, the Programme would not be able to exploit the advantages of interventions at different levels within the recipient countries and it is unlikely that Norwegian NGOs and research institution could make any significant contributions in terms of facilitating a cohesive national approach to address the problems of environmental degradation and food production. The interventions would be "gapfillers" or singlestanding projects and it is unlikely that there would be any major cross fertilization between the two components. To this has to be added that research for a number of reasons has proved least able to contribute to the Programme, which essentially would leave this option unrealistic.

### **The Regional Approach**

The future Programme could channel all resources to organisations with mandates similar to SSE objectives and their programmes having a regional coverage, such as CILSS and IGADD. The regional approach could facilitate intervention at many levels within the recipient countries. However, this approach would not ensure a coherent country focused strategy for the implementation of the Programme and a cohesive coordination with related activities implemented by other organisations and institutions. In addition, these regional organisations do not have the mandate nor experience in project implementation, and have recently gone through major administrative restructuring.

### **The Focused Approach**



The focused approach implies a concentration of the Norwegian assistance to a limited number of multilateral organisations (1-2) and may also include a limited number of NGOs. The multilateral organisations would concentrate on policy, planning and institutional capacity building, and to the extent financing of experimental and innovative projects/programmes do take place (e.g. the World Bank's Zone Teste Programmes in natural resource management) such activities could, when been tested, be taken over by and financed through Norwegian NGOs. Thereby the much needed experience sharing between multilateral organisations with a long track record and NGOs could be established. The scope of the focused approach is to enhance the capability of a selected number of organisations to plan and implement environmental programmes and to strengthen the dialogue between the recipient organisations and the aid administration. This approach would allow for a programme with interventions at different levels within the recipient countries, but would not necessarily facilitate a coherent national approach to combat ecological degradation and food shortage and coordination with other agencies and NGOs.

#### **The UNDP/PRIVORG Approach**

This option implies that the Programme provides additional resources to UNDP's country specific five year programmes (either as additional funds to the IPF or as trustfunds to the executing agencies) and that these resources are earmarked for programmes and projects complying with the SSE objectives. A second tier would be an allocation to NGO activities. UNDP's mode of operation is country focused, the mandate concentrates on capacity building with central and local governments and the organisation plays an important role in funding and coordinating activities with the UN specialized agencies and other agencies. In principle UNDP's five year programmes are developed in close collaboration with the recipient governments and the executing agencies. By including a NGO component, planned and coordinated with the activities funded through UNDP, it should be possible to form a coherent country specific strategy for the SSE Programme, addressing the problems of environmental degradation and food production at a policy level, institutional development with central/local governments and capacity building with local communities.

#### **The Bilateral Approach**

The bilateral approach assumes that the Norwegian Government will decide to include one or more of the SSE countries as priority countries for Norwegian aid and will establish a permanent representation in the recipient countries. The bilateral model would be able to make use of the expertise from all types of aid assistance, including bilateral programmes. A comprehensive country focused strategy for Norwegian support could



be drawn up in collaboration with the recipient government(s), key multilateral agencies and NGOs with expertise relevant to SSE objectives. The involvement of the multilateral agencies could take place through trust fund arrangements and the NGOs, bilateral programmes and research activities could be funded through the existing arrangements for Norwegian assistance.

#### **The Parallel Approach**

The parallel approach includes the three components of the present programme, i.e. multilateral agencies, NGOs and research institutions. The programme would be planned, coordinated and monitored by the responsible departments within MFA without any overall coordination. By giving up the basic SSE idea of a coordinated and concerted Norwegian effort to address the issues of environmental degradation and food production, the problems of the departmentalized structure of MFA, which have constrained the ability of the SSE Unit to undertake the necessary horizontal planning and coordination, would be overcome. The major scope of the parallel approach would be to strengthen the coordination of the SSE funded activities with those implemented by the organisations with funds from other sources, to coordinate the activities within each of the three components, and to strengthen the planning and implementation capacity of all the involved organisations and institutions. The parallel approach would to some degree follow the same practice, which de facto has prevailed during the current phase of the SSE. Hence, the parallel approach would most likely suffer from the same shortcomings pointed out by the evaluation, viz. lack of country focused strategies and exploitation of the potential synergy of utilizing the comparative advantages of the three channels for disbursement. In combination with this model particular efforts (and means) could be introduced in order to strengthen the professionalism and technical expertise of the Norwegian NGOs.

#### **The Decentralized Approach**

The proposal for an organisational structure is based on the principle that planning and coordination of SSE activities to the extent possible should take place at country level in order to ensure that Norwegian funded activities complement those of other donor agencies and relevant government institutions. The focal point for planning, coordinating and monitoring the activities implemented under the decentralized approach would be seconded SSE Field Advisors in collaboration with the recipient government and key aid organisations. Seconded Field Advisors would in this model have extended mandate in all Programme matters, and would be persons with both an administrative, but in particular professional background. The decentralized model could involve the multilateral agencies, NGOs and research institutions. Hence, the approach should enable the Programme to fund activities at various levels of intervention, exploiting



the comparative advantage of the executing bodies and to have a potential synergetic impact at the level where things matters, viz. the country level.

### **The Programming Approach**

The programming approach assumes that the focal point for planning, coordinating and monitoring the Programme would remain in Oslo with a small SSE Unit in MFA. The model focuses on strengthening the strategic planning and the monitoring capacity in Norway and the dialogue between the administration, the recipient governments and the executing bodies. The SSE Unit would be responsible for drawing up comprehensive country focused strategies and plans for the implementation of the Programme complementing, activities of other agencies and government institutions. The problems of inter-departmental coordination would have to be addressed and the SSE Unit given a mandate to carry out the required horizontal coordination.

The above proposed models can be implemented in various combinations. However, it is recommended that the organisational structure of the future Programme is confined to models ensuring a maximum of coordination at country level, exploitation of the various agencies' comparative advantages and interventions from policy, central/local government level to mobilization and strengthening of true indigenous NGOs. Hence, the bilateral model may apply for Ethiopia, where a permanent Norwegian representation already exists. Whereas in countries such as Mali, with no Norwegian Embassy or Mission one of the other models may be more appropriate, e.g. the decentralized approach, the programming approach or the UNDP/PRIVORG model. The combination of models may also be changed over time.

In all cases the technical backstopping from Oslo would have to be strengthened. One way of doing this, could be to establish a technical panel comprising key personnel from MFA supported by external specialists and/or institutions. The role of a panel would vary from one model to another. Apart from being involved in the overall planning and monitoring of the Programme, the technical panel could provide valuable support to the NGOs in improving their capacity and skills in identification, designing, implementing and monitoring environmental projects and ensuring that relevant information on Programme strategies, policies of recipient governments and activities of other aid organisations are shared and discussed with the NGOs.

Very little has been achieved in terms of cross fertilization between the research component and the two other programme components. The advantages of associating research institutions to a SSE Programme should be reassessed. The present arrangement with NUFU may be more appropriate for future support to research in SSE related issues.



The administrative structure of the Programme would vary according to the organisational model(s) chosen for the implementation of future programme activities. However, in all cases due consideration should be given to the overall Programme objectives, to the multiple interests of the involved bodies and to the mode of operation of the executing organisations, when drawing up the administrative structure.

# Annexes





## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### EVALUATION

#### THE SAHEL - SUDAN - ETHIOPIA PROGRAMME

1986 - 90

#### BACKGROUND

The Sahel - Sudan - Ethiopia Programme (SSE) was established by the Norwegian Parliament in 1985 in order to increase Norway's medium- and long-term development assistance to 11 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, which were affected by catastrophic droughts in the 1970s and 1980s. The countries are Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mali, Mauretania, Niger, Senegal, Somalia and the Sudan.

The objectives of the Programme are:

- To improve local food production and food security.
- To improve the ecological resource base in order to develop sustainable production systems.

The Programme aims to improve the living conditions of poorer sections of the population, with particular attention to the situation of women. The Programme should also be recipient-oriented and concur with the development priorities of the various governments.

In order to maximize development effects, the Programme was designed with three channels of assistance. The first two, which are assistance through multilateral agencies and Norwegian NGOs, were to encompass productive activities within agroforestry, cultivation, animal husbandry and range management, with supportive measures such as credit, marketing, physical infrastructure and institution building. The aims of the third component, the research programme, were threefold - to improve Norwegian research competence related to the overall objectives of the programme, to improve action-oriented research, and to develop research competence and research institutions capacities in the SSE countries.

Initially, the Programme was managed by a high-level Steering Committee, but in 1987, managerial responsibilities were transferred to the various departments within the aid administration through which Programme funds were channelled. Programme staff has included a Coordinator, several full- and part-time desk officers in the aid administration and two Field Attachés. The overall planning, development and budgetting responsibility presently rests with the Environmental Division of the Department of Development Cooperation Programmes (DDCP), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

NOK one milliard (1.000.000.000) were allotted to the first five-year period 1986-90. By end 1990, some NOK 760 mill. had been disbursed. 53 per cent of Programme funds have been disbursed to seven multilateral organizations through MFA's Multilateral Department (MULTI), 40 per cent to 11 Norwegian and a few international NGOs through the Non-Governmental Organizations Division of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and six per cent have been channeled via five Norwegian research institutions covering eight agreements for collaboration with research institutions in the SSE countries. A few information activities, consultancies and one rural development project have been funded through the SSE Coordinator.



Ethiopia, Mali and the Sudan are the main recipients of SSE funds channelled through NGOs and research institutions. Mali has received one third of the disbursed funds, i.e. NOK 225 mill. Ethiopia has received NOK 135 mill, the larger share of this amount going to non-government controlled areas. The Sudan has received nearly NOK 55 mill. While multilateral SSE funds are negligible in Ethiopia, and amounting to merely NOK 7 mill. in the Sudan, they constitute 35 per cent of total SSE funds to Mali. Burkina Faso is the country receiving the second largest part of SSE funds directly through multilateral organizations, i.e. NOK 20 mill. Some NOK 300 mill. of total disbursements have been given to programmes and projects covering more than one country.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The SSE-Programme constitutes a regional strategy for food security and ecological resource base improvement. Its implementation is organized through a set of independent agents. The management of the Programme has given emphasis to information-sharing, consultation and coordination within MFA/NORAD and in the relations to and between the implementing organisations.

At the end of the first programme period, the MFA has decided to carry out an evaluation with the aims to:

- Assess the relevance of Programme objectives and overall strategy to the social, economic, political and environmental setting in the region.
- Describe and categorize Programme activities and assess achievement of objectives, effectiveness, sustainability, synergy and compatibility.
- Assess the quality and effectiveness of Programme management and monitoring.
- Suggest future options and make recommendations regarding objectives, strategies and management for Norwegian support to development activities in the SSE-region.

#### SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will comprise of four discrete studies:

- A. A documentation study on objectives and profile of Programme activities.
- B. A desk study on the social, economic, political and environmental context in the region.
- C. A study on management and implementation of the SSE-Programme.
- D. Field studies on a sample of SSE-projects.

The results of each study will be presented in separate reports, and the consolidated findings and conclusions will be presented in a synthesis report.

Draft Terms of Reference for the studies A and B are given below. The terms of reference for studies C and D are preliminary and will be adjusted according to the findings in the preceding studies.



## A. DOCUMENTATION STUDY ON OBJECTIVES AND PROFILE OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES.

### Objective

The objective of the documentation study is to generate information on the specific Programme activities, and as far as available data permits, to analyse achievement of Programme objectives, effectiveness, sustainability, compatibility and synergy.

### Scope

The scope of the documentation study is to:

- Assess the compatibility between SSE-Programme objectives and the stated objectives of the various activities.
- Describe and assess the overall profile and character of the SSE-Programme as defined by the specific activities supported.
- Discuss the Programme activities in relation to OECD/DAC's sustainability concept containing seven factors. (Ref OECD/DAC: Selected Issues in Aid Evaluation - 1, 1989).
- Assess compatibility and/or complementarity between the various activities and organizations supported. Describe information sharing, coordination or cooperation between SSE-funded activities. Discuss findings in relation to the emphasis given to these aspects in the Programme-strategy.
- Assess the systems and practices in the organizations concerning planning, monitoring, accounting, auditing and evaluation.
- Assess the ability of the organizations to change or adjust priorities or approaches under changing conditions.
- Assess the extent to which Programme objectives or coordination efforts are described or reflected in plans and reports.
- Identify and categorize other central issues raised in studies and evaluation reports.
- The report shall seek to summarize the achievements and merits according to disbursement channel, location and types of activities.

On the basis of the above assessments, the study shall identify issues to be addressed in the field studies and in the study on management and implementation. These issues shall be discussed in the perspective of the overall objectives of the evaluation, and while considering the methods and costs of providing additional data and the probability of achieving more valid and reliable conclusions.

The report shall also suggest projects to be selected for the field studies. For these projects, the study shall present initial assessments of achievement regarding the issues to be addresses in the field study and discuss data requirements and methodology.

### Method

The study which will be based on available documents, shall seek to provide a comprehensive SSE Documentation List and consider the quality of the various planning, progress, evaluation, and research reports.



On the basis of this assessment, a selection of documents shall be made for further study. The selection shall be representative of the various types of activities and disbursement channels.

In the Documentation study report, the content of the selected documentation shall be systematized and analysed in the order listed under Scope. Each of the issue analyses shall identify variations according to disbursement channels, and shall summarize lessons learned.

The latter part of the study shall be carried out in cooperation with the Aid context study outlined below.

## B. DESK STUDY ON REGIONAL CONTEXT

### Objectives

The objective is to describe and analyze the social, economic, political and environmental setting in the region, against which an assessment of the relevance of Programme objectives, strategy and individual activities can be made.

### Scope

The study shall have a regional scope, but special attention shall be given to the situation in the major recipient countries Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali and Sudan. The study shall:

- Describe relevant official policies, programmes and development plans.
- Identify important factors which may influence or limit relevance or effectiveness of the various types of activities funded through the SSE-Programme.
- Analyse and discuss how such factors influence food security and sustainable natural resources management, and identify implications for individual Programme activities as well as the selection of and balance between different types of interventions and disbursement channels.
- Give an overview of the level and types of foreign aid to the region and the individual countries. Discuss the relevance and possible merits of the SSE-Programme in this context.

### Method

The team shall consult available national official documents and development plans, strategy documents of major multilateral and bilateral donors and international publications and prepare a synthetic desk study.

The study shall mainly cover the 1986 - 1990 period, and discuss scenarios for future development.

The study shall be organized according to a more detailed TOR and table of content drafted by the Evaluation Team in consultation with MFA.

The team preparing the study shall also suggest and make available background material for the SSE-field studies.



The study shall be carried out over a period of three months.

### C. STUDY ON MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SSE-PROGRAMME

#### Objectives

The objective is to describe and assess the management and implementation of the SSE-Programme by MFA/NORAD. As the implementation of the activities within the programme is delegated to independent organizations, the quality of monitoring and management within these organizations must be assessed, as well as the relationship between MFA/NORAD and the respective organizations.

#### Scope (Preliminary)

- Describe roles, responsibilities and functions of the Programme Coordinator, the Steering/ Coordinating Committee, department heads, leaders and desk officers within MFA/NORAD in previous and present phases of the Programme.

- Assess the role of management in composing programme activities, setting goals and adjusting projects to conform with programme objectives, priorities and professional standards.

- Assess the adequacy SSE-Programme guidelines and procedures for planning, reporting, monitoring and control, and the extent to which these have been adhered to.

- Assess efforts for informations sharing and coordination, hereunder the links between the three channels, and the balance with respect to internal programme coordination vis-a-vis external coordination with national governments, recipient organizations and intended beneficiaries.

- Assess functions, relevance and importance of field attachés.

- Consider how organizations channeling the assistance and recipient institutions perceive and respond to SSE-guidelines and procedures in their submittal of application for funds, reports, audits and other relevant documents. Assess quality and relevance of these documents and the effectiveness of guidelines and procedures as measured through the documents.

#### Method

The study will be based on relevant documents in the archives of MFA and NORAD, interviews with MFA/NORAD personnel and questionnaires to organizations and recipient institutions. The questions shall be prepared by the evaluation team in cooperation with MFA. If needed the questionnaires will be supplemented by interviews. Interviews with representatives of multilateral organizations must be covered by the field studies, as this study will not include field visits.

The findings and conclusions of this study will only be presented in the final synthesis report.

The implementation and management study shall be initiated upon the finalization of the Documentation Study, and should be completed before the field visits to allow for supplementary data collection.



#### D. FIELD STUDIES

The projects for field studies shall be selected on the basis of the Documentation study. However, it is recommended that this selection shall be limited to project activities in Eritrea/Tigray and Mali. While the activities in Eritrea/ Tigray can only be sampled from NGO-funded activities, the activities selected in Mali must represent all three disbursement channels.

##### Objectives

The main objective of the field studies is to test and validate findings and conclusions in the Documentation and Context study and to provide an opportunity for in-depth studies, mainly on a selected set of problems and findings arising from the preceding studies.

##### Scope

The scope of the SSE-Programme field studies is to:

- Validate the initial assessment of the selected activities in relation to the factors of sustainability as defined by OECD/DAC.
- Assess the congruence between the objectives and achievements reported in the documents analyzed in the Documentation study and the findings of the evaluation team.
- Discuss the relevance of SSE Programme and activities objectives in relation to pressing development problems and priorities in the areas of operation.
- Examine how factors identified in the context study are being addressed.
- Assess choice of local partner institutions and the comparative advantages of the three disbursement channels.

Particular emphasis shall be given to the following problem areas:

- The projects' ability to deliver an appropriate flow of benefits when major donor assistance is terminated, with particular emphasis on financial and institutional sustainability
- Institutional and popular participation in the planning and implementation of activities.
- Cooperation and division of roles between local partner institutions and organizations channeling funds.
- Cooperation, coordination and relation between SSE-funded organizations and central and local government institutions.
- The nature and quality of monitoring and evaluation practices, the extent of participation by beneficiaries, and the follow up of findings and recommendations from such reports.
- The present extent of and potential for sharing of information and experience between SSE-funded organizations.
- Effects on environmental awareness in SSE-partner institutions.



## Method

The field visits will be preceded by a questionnaire survey comprising all direct recipient institutions, partner institutions and managers of SSE-supported activities.

Based on an analysis of the findings of the Documentation and the Context Studies, the evaluation team shall prepare a plan for the field studies. This plan shall include an up-dated and more detailed TOR, and a description and discussion of methods and data to be used.

The field study report shall be presented to the Ministry within 15 April 1992.

## FINAL SYNTHESIS REPORT

The report shall present a synthesis of all the findings and conclusions of the preceding studies. Special emphasis shall be given to the following issues:

- The relevance of SSE-Programme objectives, strategies, criteria for support in relation to development problems and priorities in the region as well as other development assistance.
- Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of various categories of supported activities, including coordination with national development efforts.
- The relative effectiveness and comparative advantages of the various channels of assistance and recipient institutions. The adequacy of their guidelines and procedures.
- The extent to which the objectives of the SSE-Programme have been achieved.
- Role and adequacy of Programme management, coordination, administrative guidelines and procedures.
- The merits of having all SSE activities coordinated within a Programme.

The team shall discuss future options and present recommendations regarding objectives, strategies, modalities of support and of management for future Norwegian support to development activities in the SSE-region.

A draft report shall be presented to MFA within 1 June 1992. The final report shall be submitted within one month after receipt of MFA's comments to the draft report.









