



## Programme for Decentralised Rural Development (PDRD)

Chad – reviving the ‘heart of Africa’

**giz**





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## Chad – Reviving the 'heart of Africa'

The United Nations' Human Development Index ranks Chad as the seventh poorest country in the world, with 80% of its population living below the poverty line. Over 80% of the people here rely on subsistence farming and on raising livestock for their livelihoods. Since 2003, crude oil has become Chad's primary source of export earnings. But the income this has generated has not benefited those living in the rural areas of the country.

Due to its location and weak economic situation, Chad is commonly referred to as the *dead heart of Africa*. This country suffers from several other problems that restrict its development. Among these are widespread illiteracy and insufficient access to primary healthcare and clean, safe drinking water. Indeed, Chad has one of the world's highest mortality rates for children under the age of five.

The country's economic development is constrained on the one hand by being landlocked and 1,700 km away from the nearest port and, on the other, by the fact that it has only around 600 km of asphalted roads serving an area of 1.2 million km<sup>2</sup>. The transportation of people and goods is, thus, exceptionally difficult, and can even become temporarily impossible during the rainy season.

Heavy population pressure and unsustainable farming practices are causing increasing degradation of natural resources

in the south. Meanwhile, northern regions are suffering from spreading desertification which poses a major obstacle to agricultural activity.

Clearly, in Chad, any success in fighting the battle against poverty must start with a thriving agricultural sector. Rural development is the basis for a prosperous rural economy that provides jobs and income opportunities, not only within the agricultural sector. Rural areas have many functions, and without a fundamental change in rural Chad, there can be no sustainable economic growth and no sustainable food security.

## A partnership for a firm foundation

On behalf of the *German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)*, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)* has been engaged in development cooperation activities in Chad since 1986 – prior to January 2011, as the former *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)*. The focus of our engagement is on developing rural areas as sustainable and viable living and working environments for local communities.

They should:

- ▶ provide the basis for secure livelihoods and economic growth
- ▶ act as a *centre* for the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.



4 In 2002, the *Programme for Decentralised Rural Development* (PDRD) was launched. As agreed by the governments of Chad and Germany, development cooperation activities are currently focused on the priority area of rural development in the Mayo-Kebbi and Ouaddai/Biltine regions. The programme involves a range of partners.

### Three pillars, one goal – how the programme operates

The programme aims to improve living conditions and to reduce poverty in the Mayo-Kebbi and the Ouaddai/Biltine regions of Chad, located in the south-west and north-east, respectively. It focuses on promoting natural resources and their sustainable management, and on the establishment of efficient social and economic structures.

Up until January 2011, the programme was executed by GTZ in cooperation with the *German Development Service* (DED) – both of which are now under the umbrella of GIZ – and the *KfW Entwicklungsbank* (KfW). The programme was formed on the basis of the *National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty* (NSGRP).

It is divided into three components: one concerned with providing coordination-related support and advice to local institutions on-site in Ndjamen, and two concerned with specific regions. The latter would include the PRODABO programme in the

north-east and the PRODALKA programme in the south-west. Both are based on three main thematic pillars:

- ▶ local governance
- ▶ Community Management of Natural Resources – Agriculture and Sustainable Farming (GCRN – AED)
- ▶ the Decentralised Development Fund (FDD).

### 1. Local governance

The PDRD supports a process of decentralisation in Chad and the adoption of democratic principles. In the context of programme activities, local communities (i.e. townships) including farmers' organisations and local decision-making forums, define their priorities, actions and goals in a local development plan. To date, the programme has supported the creation of 59 local development plans relating to, for example, health, education, the economy, craft, trade, and the sustainable management of natural resources. About 15% of Chad's population has benefited from the programme.

Sustainability is achieved through a specific control and monitoring system. As the major goal of the programme is to support the development of learning and decision-making patterns at a local level, it does not directly interfere with local systems. Instead, it promotes the training of local experts capable of helping local authorities who pursue the strategy defined in the local plan.



## 2. Community management of natural resources – agriculture and sustainable farming

Social and climatic conditions differ within the area covered by the programme. Thus, local development plans reflect the differing local conditions.

### North-eastern region

The specific challenges here are:

- ▶ low rainfall
- ▶ high degradation of watersheds
- ▶ low agricultural productivity
- ▶ the negative impact of large herds of cattle on the surrounding environment.

Major programme activity:

- ▶ protecting watersheds and fighting erosion.

### South-eastern region

The specific challenges here are:

- ▶ deforestation
- ▶ low agricultural productivity
- ▶ high demographic pressure.

Major programme activity:

- ▶ promoting agricultural development
- ▶ protecting natural resources through the establishment of local conventions.

To prevent erosion, it is necessary to fight desertification, since this would help preserve watersheds, protect arable land, ensure better access to water, and protect pastures. Therefore, the establishment of thresholds for the spread of agriculture and the use of stone bunds are important means of preventing further soil degradation, to safeguard the groundwater level and, finally, to increase agricultural production.

One outcome of the self-organisation of the local population is the creation of the Sena Oura National Park, which was initiated by local people. Confronted with droughts and the land degradation arising from overexploitation of natural resources, the local population here recognised the need to protect their natural heritage through this park. All the local stakeholders decided jointly which territories and natural resources they wanted to see protected and, together, they identified the mechanisms for achieving this goal. Up until now, local inhabitants have signed 59 conventions and 9 charters in order to protect their land.

Moreover, the creation of thousands of improved fireplaces helps to protect the environment and to save up to 35% of the wood required for cooking purposes. Thus, thousands of trees are saved every week.



### 3. The Decentralised Development Fund

The Decentralised Development Fund is an important instrument for establishing and maintaining the financial structures needed to support sustainable local development.

It helps to finance and establish social and economic, as well as hydrological and agricultural infrastructures, as described in the local development plan. The fund can only be accessed after the *award committee* has agreed upon its use.

The strategy of the FDD is to promote collaboration with the local population and to share knowledge and know-how as regards maintaining infrastructure. The success of the FDD depends largely on how well the stakeholders – farmers as well as cattle herders, entrepreneurs and experts – cooperate. Therefore, capacity building measures are of crucial importance, and an integral component of the activities.

Since 2003, more than 320 micro projects have been funded and successfully implemented in Chad. The programme has improved the daily lives of more than 1 million inhabitants (i.e. 9% of the total population) in the north-east and almost 1 million inhabitants (i.e. 8.6% of the total population) in the south-western part of the country.

### Empowering the stakeholders – a new era in local development has begun

Given the future environmental challenges anticipated, initiatives such as the PDRD can make a very real difference. This programme has proved a success in Chad, with both project regions benefiting from both new organisational processes and newly developed technological innovations. Hence, it can be a role model for other areas of Africa facing a similar set of challenges. Clearly, coherence between the three main pillars – Local Governance, Community Management of Natural Resources – Agriculture and Sustainable Farming, and the Decentralised Development Fund – is an important precondition for widespread acceptance among the population.

Participation itself is especially relevant in the context of decentralisation. As the PDRD programme combines democratic planning instruments with an efficient financial tool, the population has every opportunity to take matters into its own hands. This programme has helped start a new era in Chad's rural development. It shows that development can take place to the benefit of the local population – even under unfavourable environmental conditions. Due to the successful training of experts and the comprehensive documentation realised, the strategies and solutions developed under the programme can be implemented beyond its bounds. They have the potential to inspire other initiatives and nascent decentralisation, either within Chad or its neighbouring countries.



## Creating an impact, improving livelihoods – some PDRD achievements

- ▶ The *Build our Schools* contest involved 179 villages who, in turn, financed 100% of the related building costs. The lessons learnt from this successful event laid the foundations for a second version of the contest involving 244 villages in the construction of school buildings that respect environmental and quality standards.
- ▶ The construction of stone-bunds increased the productivity of 3000 hectares of land from 40% to 70%. Almost one third of this land was restored using locally adapted methods which are easy to implement, but still effective.
- ▶ The development of just one weir for spreading water increases the groundwater level by up to 20 metres, leading to 10 to 15 times higher agricultural productivity thanks to counter-season crops.
- ▶ In the city of Pala, more than 40% of households now use improved fireplaces. This represents a saving of 35% for weekly wood consumption.
- ▶ Almost 355,000 hectares are protected through the 60 local conventions developed by local populations.
- ▶ The management plan of the Sena Oura National Park (73,000 hectares) was drawn up by the local population itself. This voluntarily accepted leaving the park zone in order to ensure its protection.
- ▶ In total, 59 local development plans have been created by local populations for the Sena Oura National Park. These have been drawn up in a realistic way and are still being carried out today.

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The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH was formed on 1 January 2011. It brings together the long-standing expertise of DED, GTZ and InWEnt. For further information, go to [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de).

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