The Metolong Dam, with a capacity of 63 million cubic metres, supplies water to Maseru and other lowland districts. © Metolong Authority

CASE STUDY

Lesotho

ADVANCING CAPACITY FOR GREENING LESOTHO'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The European Union provides training to improve the effectiveness of its interventions where the environment and climate change are at play, and contribute to poverty eradication, sustainable development and green growth. Training sessions are demand driven and adapted to specific country needs. A good example is the 'Greening National Development' course carried out in Lesotho in October 2016.

CONTEXT AND KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Lesotho is a Least Developed Country that depends heavily on the state of its environment. More than 70 % of the population engage in subsistence rain-fed agriculture. The main sources of foreign exchange for the country are water and diamonds. The environmental resources that underpin Lesotho's economy have been seriously degraded and are highly vulnerable to climate change. Food security remains one of the main challenges, with decreasing agricultural yields due to a changing climate, among other factors. Arable land is very limited (less than 10 % of total land area) and soils are being washed away and degraded. Some farmers resort to erosion control measures such as terracing and diversion furrows; however, these techniques are not widely applied, often not maintained, and in some cases even destroyed to increase arable land.

To address these environmental issues, a training course was organised by the EU Delegation to Lesotho and the country's government to build capacities for enhanced integration of environment and climate change in national strategic planning.

OBJECTIVE

The 'Greening National Development' course in Lesotho was aimed at training representatives of the Government of Lesotho, to enhance their understanding of the linkages between the environment, climate change and the development of the different sectors, and to address these linkages in national development planning.

LESOTHO'S "GREENING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT" COURSE

A key success factor was linking the training to the revision of the country's five-year National Strategic Development Plan, identified as an excellent entry point to build environmental sustainability and climate resilience into the strategic planning process.

"The EU Delegation to Lesotho identified this as an important juncture to train key actors in the government so that they could be better prepared to address environmental and climate issues when

PROJECT NAME
Greening National Development training course

PERIOD
2016

BENEFITING ZONE
Lesotho

PARTNERS
- Government of Lesotho
- European Union

FACTS AND FIGURES
- 25 people trained, from 5 ministries, 3 EU Delegations in Africa, government agencies, regional authorities, UNDP, and the private sector.

revising their national development strategy, ensuring linkages and the engagement of all sectors of their economy," said the EU Delegation's Programme Manager for Water, Energy & Climate Change, Sjaak de Boer.

The course was coordinated by the EU Delegation and saw broad participation of various Ministries (including Development Planning; Agriculture and Food Security; Energy; Water; Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation; and Finance), regional authorities, the private sector, development partners and the media.

"Another particularity of this training course was the strong emphasis placed on the water-energy nexus, first because they are two of the focal sectors in EU programming for EDF 11, and also because they are clearly fundamental for the country's development and economic growth. Interactions between water management and energy production are so closely related that inter-sector coordination becomes imperative for effective strategic planning, a condition that is not always forthcoming. For example, reduced water availability affects hydroelectric power production; biomass plantations assist in water conservation efforts that are also vital for agricultural production; and water retention infrastructure can satisfy power generation and water supply needs," explained Juan Palerm, course facilitator and expert of the Environment and Climate Change Mainstreaming Facility.

Water is Lesotho's main source of wealth, since it exports water to South Africa, and energy is also key because of the potential vast water resources available for renewable energy. One day of training was thus devoted to addressing the linkages between energy and water, with the participation of an external facilitator from the Global Water Partnership. This training session included a visit to the Metolong Dam and Water Supply Programme (MDWSP), a project co-financed by the EU and European Investment Bank to improve the water supply to Lesotho's capital and other lowland districts. Although water is abundant, its production is concentrated in the highlands, whereas the lowlands often face water shortages, with consequences for food security and clean water availability.

BEST PRACTICES LEARNED

During the field visit, trainees learned about the importance of promoting good land management and agricultural practices in the area surrounding the dam, so as to reduce the drag of sediments that can affect its lifespan, and consequently, the water supply. Also, the integrated water catchment management approach was promoted through the training to help revert land degradation and improve water management.

Participants learned that water management can only be effective if it takes into account the whole catchment. This includes measures to guarantee water quantity and quality, such as protection of water sources (e.g. wetlands), buffering of run-off (e.g. vegetation cover), and water quality control (e.g. effluent management). It also includes measures to satisfy demand, such as water for irrigation, electricity generation, industrial use and household consumption.

Integrated catchment management is becoming increasingly important in the context of climate change, as water supply is likely to decrease; water-dependent productive sectors (e.g. rain-fed subsistence agriculture) are especially vulnerable and can be affected by erratic rainfall patterns, putting further stress on food security.

IMPACT OF THE TRAINING

In total, 25 people participated in the course, from five ministries (Development Planning; Agriculture and Food Security; Energy; Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation; Water and Finance), three EU Delegations in Africa (Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia), government agencies, regional authorities (e.g. Lesotho Highlands Water Commission), UNDP and the private sector.

According to Sjaak de Boer, *"the Greening National Development workshop sensitised the participants to the importance of mainstreaming environment and climate change into national planning."*

"One of the very encouraging outcomes of the training course," said Juan Palerm, *"is that authorities in the fields of water and energy expressed a keen interest in working in a more coordinated fashion, focusing on the water-energy nexus."*

After the training, with the technical assistance of the EU, Lesotho developed the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) and National Climate Change Policy Implementation Strategy (NCCPIS), which are helping to mainstream climate change and environmental considerations in the New Strategic Development Plan under development.

DEVCO units C2 and C6
Environment and Climate Change Mainstreaming Facility

T: +32 229 622 83
E: EuropeAid-C2-MAINSTREAMING@ec.europa.eu