

Africa

France has made ambitious commitments. Assistance to African countries amounted to 0.5% of gross national product in 2007 and will increase to 0.7% in 2012. This objective, set at the Monterrey Conference in 2002, was confirmed at each of the main international conferences. Since 2001, the overall amount has risen from 4.7 billion to 8.3 billion euros, an increase of 77%.

France calls for measures to be taken to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) and also encourages debt reduction and cancellation programmes, considering these measures a *sine qua non* for development in many countries. France is the largest contributor to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

To implement its official development assistance policy, France has seven sectoral intervention strategies and one cross-cutting governance strategy. The sectoral strategies cover the seven priority sectors of French cooperation: education, health and the fight against AIDS, agriculture and food security (these three strategies are currently being updated), water and sanitation, environmental protection, the productive sector and infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The priorities aim, especially in the Priority Solidarity Zone (PSZ), to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Sustainable Development Summit in Johannesburg. The MDGs, which aim to reduce poverty and inequality by at least 50% by 2015, will be difficult to achieve in Sub-Saharan Africa. The mid-term reviews drawn up in 2007 show that inequalities are growing between urban and rural areas and that the principle of gender equality requires redoubled efforts everywhere.

France plays a major, visible and often leading role in implementing a number of these objectives, both locally (projects of the French Development Agency (FDA), NGOs, local authorities, businesses) and internationally. It similarly plays a major role in sectors crucial to economic development, job creation and the improvement of incomes of the poor, even though these sectors are not covered by objectives or by specific targets.

The elements concerning the Africa thematic issue are addressed under three major headings in this report: health, environment and agriculture. Sustainable tourism supplements this chapter. Desertification is covered in a dedicated thematic issue (see page 24).

Reinforcing the productive sector: a prerequisite for sustainable development

French cooperation (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs¹ and FDA) has made the reinforcement of the productive sectors in rural and urban areas a key thrust for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and for sustainable development in African countries. Poverty and inequality reduction requires an improvement in household incomes and job creation, particularly for young people and women. Within this objective, improving the business environment and capacity building, notably with respect to small and medium sized enterprises, are a priority focus.

The majority of the enterprises making up the economic fabric of virtually all African countries are very small enterprises and small enterprises (VSE/SME), which account for a major share of the gross domestic product (GDP) of States.

The focus today is on improving support services for these enterprises (information, training, transfer of clean technologies, inter-company partnerships, access to markets) to enable them, among other things, to improve their competitiveness on local, national, regional and international markets.

¹ The Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DGCID) brings together all the ministries concerned, under guidelines set out by the *Comité interministériel de la coopération internationale et du développement* (CICID) (inter-ministerial international co-operation and development committee), chaired by the Prime Minister. Together with the *Direction Générale du Trésor et de la Politique Économique* (DGTPE) (Treasury and Economic Policy Directorate General) the DGCID provides the secretariat for the CICID, which draws up country strategies, sectoral guidelines and official development policy input.

Their access to appropriate financing is also considered a priority. An analysis of the conditions for gaining access to financing in the various countries shows that there is a lack of products suited to the needs of VSE/SMEs, particularly to cover their medium- and long-term investments. Between the ceiling of micro-financing and the floor of conventional bank offerings there is virtually no suitable product. The FDA, having analysed the situation in six African countries (in partnership with the DGCID), will be in a position to examine projects in 2008. This improvement will be supplemented by a reinforcement of intermediate CCI-type private sector structures.

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming

In conjunction with multilateral and non-governmental cooperation organizations, French cooperation has for a number of years supported specific projects aimed at promoting equality. These projects are focused on combating violence against women, promoting equal rights between men and women and women's capacity-building, a major aspect of gender mainstreaming.

In 2006 a policy commitment was made to systematically take on board gender equality and gender in all France's development cooperation actions. In practice this involves the integration of actions aimed at this objective in the *Documents Cadres de Partenariat* (DCP) (partnership framework documents) drawn up with most of the countries of the Priority Solidarity Zone (PSZ). It also involves enhanced support for NGOs, civic associations and local authorities, to enable them to mainstream gender in their international activities.

The *Comité Interministériel de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement* (CICID) (Inter-Ministerial Committee on International Cooperation and Development) adopted a "Governance" strategy in December 2006 that is aimed at "fostering respect for Human Rights and gender equity" as a "major component of French specificity, a founding element of our identity and of the values of diversity, modernity and tolerance". A strategic guideline document on "Gender", adopted in the CICID in 2007, now takes this ambition a step further. It supplements other sectoral and cross-cutting documents and like them is part of the implementation of the 2005 Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, the struggle against exclusion and inequality and the goal of shared growth. This strategic guideline document is therefore fully cross-cutting, the objective of gender equality being both a prerequisite and an instrument for sustainable human development.

To contribute to achieving these objectives, France has made a consistent three-pronged commitment to action aimed at:

- a) placing "gender inequality" at the heart of the policy dialogue: the idea is to make or encourage a strong policy case for gender equality and the defence of universal rights at all dialogue and decision levels, so as to promote legal equality between the genders and to move from formal to real equality;
- b) ensuring mainstreaming of the gender approach across all The French Cooperation policies, areas of intervention and instruments: this primarily involves taking gender equality on board in the objectives pursued, carrying out sociological and gender-specific impact studies and using cooperation tools and mechanisms that have demonstrably and effectively mainstreamed gender;
- c) undertaking and supporting actions to promote equality: this involves direct support for specific programmes and projects on women's access to fundamental rights, combating gender-related violence and women's capacity building. These actions can target primarily women or primarily men as direct actors and beneficiaries, but always by contributing to positive social change in gender relations.

Major health programmes

Child immunization programmes

France has embarked on a further effort to protect children against the main diseases that can be prevented by immunization. France spent a total of 45 million euros for this purpose in the period 2004–2006. These funds supported the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (€30 million) as part of the Health Action Plan adopted by France and its partners at the G8 Summit in Evian on 2 June 2003. The funds were also used to finance the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (€15 million). Since 2005, France has supported, thanks to funding from the

Priority Solidarity Fund (€1 million), the Epivac programme implemented by the Preventive Medicine Agency to build immunization programme capacity in eight West African countries.

Prevention and treatment of malaria and tuberculosis and the fight against HIV/AIDS

To support the struggle against malaria in the world, France has chosen to focus on the multilateral channel. First, since 2002 France has been devoting increasing amounts to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: 50 million euros in 2002 and 2003, 150 million in 2004 and 2005, 225 million in 2006 and 300 million in 2007. UNITAID, the international drug purchase facility, was officially launched on 19 September 2007. In 2006, an estimated 9 million dollars were spent, the equivalent of 7.2 million ACT treatments in 11 countries, and in 2007, 60 million dollars have been earmarked for the purchase of ACT.

In addition, France is providing technical support for the World Health Organisation (WHO) to build capacity in countries to fight malaria: a vector control expert will be assigned as technical assistant to the WHO headquarters in Geneva and a technical expert in malaria control was posted to the WHO sub-regional office in Burkina Faso.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs also supports malaria training and research activities carried out with a variety of French partners (Development Research Institute, Pasteur Institute and Universities).

French involvement in the international formulation and implementation of health standards

France contributes to the international formulation and implementation of health standards by means of the following mechanisms and schemes:

- STDF (Standards and Trade Development Facility) through the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries (MAP),
- strengthening of health systems (epidemiological surveillance and diagnostics network, etc.) and cooperation with international institutions such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). For example: implementation of veterinary service evaluations using the PVS tool,
- consultations and definition of policy memoranda within the ALIVE initiative (Partnership for Africa Livestock Development, Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Growth in Africa <http://www.alive-online.org/>),
- struggle against avian influenza: 16.6 million euros disbursed in Bamako in December 2006 out of 34.4 million euros pledged (subsidy to CIRAD, provision of additional experts and financial contributions to the WHO, the OIE and the FAO; support for the network of South-East Asia Pasteur Institutes, etc.)

Support for the fight against climate change

France supports climate change capacity building in the African, particularly the French speaking African, countries (in partnership with the IEPF, *Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la Francophonie*): support for negotiators on climate change, research activities, training, introduction of Kyoto Protocol Clean Development Mechanism projects, etc.

Access to energy

France considers that improving access to modern energy services for populations lacking them is a prerequisite for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. At policy level, and in particular as part of the "European Energy Initiative for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development" (EUEI), France has taken many initiatives since 2002 to ensure that greater emphasis is placed on energy in development assistance. Many African countries have since then identified energy as a priority in national and regional strategic poverty reduction documents. In response, the European Union has created a 220 million euro Energy Facility to finance energy access projects in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. France is also taking part in the Partnership Dialogue Facility, which finances institutional support activities in the field of energy in Africa.

France supports the introduction of public energy policies geared to the energy needs of the populations concerned rather than to technologies. It also focuses on the integration of energy markets at regional level, in close conjunction with national regional development policies. It supports, in particular, the introduction of regional regulation of the electricity supply sector (in

West Africa) as well as the development of regional energy access policies. It has also helped UEMOA² and ECOWAS³ to draw up a White Paper on access to energy in rural and peri-urban areas in West Africa (within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals).

At national level, France is funding energy access projects in Africa on a variety of scales ranging from NGO micro-projects to major infrastructure projects, as well as projects on rational use of energy in production, especially in the agricultural and food processing services (example in Benin with the GERES NGO, multifunctional platforms with the United Nations Development Programme in West Africa).

Sustainable biodiversity management

The CICID sectoral "environment and biodiversity" strategy is part of the framework set out by the Biodiversity Convention, covering sustainable biodiversity management, sustainable use of natural resources and sharing the benefits derived from their use with local populations. The strategy sets out priority actions on terrestrial and marine protected areas, sustainable management of fishing resources and the sustainable economic use of non-wood forest products, access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of benefits. Africa is in the forefront of the beneficiary countries.

Since 2005, in addition to institutional support, a part of technical assistance provided in the area of biodiversity and fishing resources has been re-allocated to multilateral and regional bodies. In addition, five cooperation agreements have been signed with major conservation organizations (UICN, WWF, Conservation International, Wildlife Conservation Society). For example, the agreement with UICN establishes a commitment to expand French long-term cooperation in the fields of environment and sustainable development, as part of a framework agreement signed at the end of 2005 by the MAEE⁴, MEDAD⁵ and UICN⁶. Five common action priorities were selected: (i) understanding and monitoring of biodiversity, (ii) human welfare and conservation of nature, (iii) cooperation with public and private actors, (iv) strengthening international environmental governance, (v) promotion of Francophone expertise and know-how within the UICN.

Conventional funding (Priority Solidarity Fund, French Global Environment Facility) and more innovative funding from trust funds (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, Madagascar Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity) are aimed at sustainable, efficient and equitable use and management of natural resources in and around protected areas. France is taking part in work on sustainable economic use of ecosystem services by local populations. The regional approach is supported by France in West Africa and southern Africa in particular.

The MAEE employs its expertise (technical assistance network and embassy correspondents) to support sustainable biodiversity management and conservation within the framework of institution building projects funded by the PSF⁷ (examples. Madagascar, Senegal, Benin) and by support for the protected areas of the South funded by FGEF⁸ (examples: Ghana, Zimbabwe). The emphasis is on forest conservation (Central Africa) and the marine environment (Indian Ocean, South Pacific). The sustainable use of natural and genetic resources (Ethiopia, Bolivia) and sustainable development of indigenous populations (Brazil, Chile, Mauritania, Namibia) are other priority areas of the MAEE.

Sustainable forest management

The French Development Agency is the main implementation agency of the French Cooperation. It acts to promote sustainable and coordinated management of forest ecosystems. This is aimed at ensuring economic development while conserving and sustainably

² UEMOA: West African Economic and Monetary Union

³ ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

⁴ MAEE: Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

⁵ MEDAD: Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Spatial Planning

⁶ UICN: World Conservation Union

⁷ PSF: Priority Solidarity Fund (*Fonds de solidarité prioritaire*)

⁸ FGEF: French Global Environment Facility (*Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial*)

using biodiversity resources. This is done not only by supporting industries engaged in this approach but also by offering this possibility to small permit holders (project in the start-up phase in Gabon and under consideration in the Republic of Congo). This includes both support for drawing up forest development plans and for obtaining internationally recognized ecocertification. The Agency also supports efforts by countries to achieve effective management of their protected areas networks. As a facilitator of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, France advocated the establishment of a new funding mechanism to guarantee the conservation of the large tropical forests.

In the field of training and capacity building, France supports the forestry institutes of Central Africa in their higher-education and vocational training in forest development in the Congo basin. In local authority and population capacity building, France assists *communes* in Cameroon as well as the association of forest *communes* in the decentralized management of forests, supporting the process of State decentralization by the strengthening of a network of *commune* forests. The network is headed by motivated and trained mayors, who are given support in their applications for classification and then assisted in drawing up development plans for these forests that ensure sustainable management and local development and that generate rural employment.

The need to reduce world greenhouse gas emissions and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals make it indispensable to pay countries with forest resources to maintain their forests in the best possible condition. France worked with the countries of the Central African Forest Commission to make proposals in the negotiation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Disaster Reduction

France has taken a variety of different actions at international level in the area of disaster reduction. France is involved in the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the associated international conferences (Kobe, Bonn, Geneva). France has, in addition, participated in:

- implementing the Indian Ocean early warning mechanism following the tsunami in December 2004,
- setting up a hurricane and earthquake insurance fund in the Caribbean, through the FDA,
- contributing to UNOSAT, the United Nations risk mapping programme,
- providing support, advice and stand-alone expertise to countries requesting them (earthquakes in the Maghreb and flood management in Morocco),
- disaster reduction training programmes as part of the APELL programme of the United Nations Environment Programme,
- actions in the area of security and civil protection.

In addition, France is engaged in the locust control⁹ programme alongside the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Locust outbreaks often have catastrophic consequences in terms of both economic and social development and the environment and food security: destruction of harvests impacting food security, sharp rise in the cost of products on local markets, rural exodus, household indebtedness, de-capitalisation of farms, massive use of pesticides to eradicate swarms with often poorly controlled side-effects on public health and environmental pollution.

The MAEE takes part in the implementation of a prevention policy in West and North Africa through regional projects (3 million euros allocated) and in technical assistance to CLCPRO, the Algiers-based FAO Commission responsible for coordinating desert locust control in Africa/Western Region. It has a three-pronged focus: (i) setting up a regional ongoing risk prevention and monitoring system, (ii) efficient management of packaging and storage of pesticides used for desert locust control and (iii) developing and disseminating alternative methods to the use of chemical pesticides.

⁹ Desert locust: hopping orthoptera such as crickets and similar insects.

Action in the field of water

1/ Strategic guidelines of the French Cooperation

A) Encourage governments to define national water policies.

The French Cooperation supports the elaboration of national policies covering both the issue of resources and the issue of access to drinking water and sanitation services. Special attention is paid to their reflection in an appropriate legal, regulatory and accounting framework, together with evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.

B) Promoting integrated and concerted management of water resources in watersheds

The French Cooperation seeks to promote the principles of integrated water resource management. This consists in managing water resources in such a way as to respect natural water balance, avoiding excessive use and pollution, developing and controlling the mobilization of resources, providing flood prevention and protection and ensuring fair allocation among the different uses of water.

Action in this area has a four-fold thrust: (i) management of national and international rivers, (ii) irrigation water saving in areas where water shortage management is the main focus (with priority given to the countries of the Mediterranean area), (iii) managing upstream watersheds (iv) rational management and protection of water resources.

C) Ensuring sustainable management of water and sanitation services.

To ensure that the efforts of governments and their partners are even more effective in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), The French Cooperation promotes investment support through organizational procedures that ensure long-term services.

D) Developing fair access to water and sanitation services.

The French Cooperation is particularly attentive to meeting the vital needs of poor populations. Taking a global approach to urban development, it gives preference to projects that have strong impact in this area and it monitors actions. The French Cooperation supports services to small towns and disadvantaged neighbourhoods in large cities. It also focuses on improving economic performance and on strengthening service operators.

E) Achieving greater involvement of populations, operators and local authorities

The French Cooperation supports projects aimed at strengthening local authorities' role as public sector contracting authorities and local regulators. It pays particular attention to

The French Cooperation brings together many actors: the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Spatial Planning, the French Development Agency, The French Global Environment Facility, research institutions, NGOs, water authorities, local authorities, etc. Their activities complement each other and make it possible to offer a wide range of instruments to meet the needs of the various stakeholders: subsidies, loans, guarantees, residential and stand-alone technical assistance, institutional support, development of management tools, public-private partnerships, training, research, etc.

A) Pan-African actions

The French Cooperation provides support in the form of financial resources and experts through a large number of international organizations.

Within this framework, France supports a large number of African initiatives, and in particular:

- The African Ministers Council on Water, a major interlocutor of France on issues relating to water in Africa
- The African Water Facility, an initiative of the African Ministers Council on Water
- The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative, supported by the African Development Bank
- The water and sanitation infrastructure development programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD),
- The African Network of Basin Organizations (ANBO) to promote integrated water resource management and the creation and strengthening of basin organizations

Other multilateral initiatives on Africa receive French support:

- EU Water Initiative (launched in 2002 at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development), which has a working group devoted to Sub-Saharan Africa that was co-chaired by France in 2007,

- European Water Facility, set up at the initiative of the European Commission following the Johannesburg Summit
- The Water and Sanitation Programme administered by the World Bank.

B) Regional action

The French Cooperation also supports regional institutions responsible for water development and/or management, such as basin organizations and regional economic communities. France is closely involved in the integrated water resources management process and supports three cross-border basins in particular - the Senegal, Niger and Nile. In addition, it monitors and provides support for other initiatives such as that of the Volta Basin Authority, the International Commission of the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin and the Orange/Senqu River Commission. Last but not least, it supports the Water Resources Department of ECOWAS.

C) National actions

The French Cooperation works very closely at country level and finances major investment projects, primarily through the French Development Agency. This support is part of a move toward institutional ownership and improvement with a view to sustainable development.

Improvements in education, training, awareness and capacity building

Representatives of some twelve countries of Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa specializing in national agricultural and rural training policies and strategies met on the occasion of a workshop organized in 2005 by the French Cooperation, the World Bank and the Intergovernmental Francophonie Organization. They set up the International Agricultural and Rural Training Network (FAR Network).

Members of this network shared the view that their countries are facing a crisis in the agricultural and rural sector and emphasized the urgency of building the capacities of rural actors. Several issues were identified.

With a population that is particularly young, of which 37% is under the age of 14 in North Africa and 46% in Sub-Saharan Africa, the continent faces serious difficulty in providing literacy for new generations and ensuring jobs or self-employment for working-age populations. This demographic situation is accompanied by a phenomenon of particularly sustained urbanization, with the rural population continuing to grow (at a slower pace). The number of farms has never declined: it has increased in virtually all Sub-Saharan countries. Every year, approximately 15,000 to 50,000 farms, depending on the country, change operator (*chef d'exploitation*) and others are created without outside support.

Meeting the challenges of poverty reduction and the challenges of the rural world will necessarily require the involvement of new generations who must, starting now, bring about a difficult transformation of farm holdings, calling into question some of the foundations of traditional production systems. Adapting to the requirements of the emerging context requires in particular: integration into the national and international merchant economy, monitoring of agricultural and food imports, participation in work to elaborate the land tenure and spatial planning code, participation in the implementation of a farm structure and credit policy, integration in regional development bodies, participation in the definition and management of agricultural and rural training systems. Policies are necessary to massively train a critical number of producers, both men and women, so as to achieve significant impact on farm productivity, rational management of natural resources and the organization of rural areas.

The objective of the FAR network (www.far.agropolis.fr), co-funded since 2006 by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries, is to support and pool work on rural policies and broad-based rural training systems. It disseminates information, leads a discussion forum, maintains a virtual library and monitors relevant information. In addition, it carries out support actions by sponsoring studies, analyses and expert reports on the functioning and economics of training systems and by organizing events on the major agricultural vocational training themes. In 2007, the three countries of the Maghreb joined the FAR network. In 2008, the FDA will take over its funding.

This network is a cooperation tool implemented jointly with the African countries to support work on the economics of rural training, stakeholder management of systems, on balancing out the various categories of stakeholders (engineers, technicians, farmers) and redefining

teaching content by taking account of the farm, its overall environment and its patterns of change.

Food security

Prevention and management of rural food crises and improvement in rural living standards (targeting nutritionally vulnerable populations) are two priority objectives of the CICID agriculture and food security sectoral strategy.

This is reflected in particular in the allocation of food aid, with an annual budget of approximately 30 million euros. France's policy in this area, revised in 2005, is consistent with the principles set out in the International Food Aid Convention, the so-called London Convention, signed in 1999. It is based on (i) untying of aid (ii) an end to monetization (the practice of re-selling food aid in the beneficiary country), (iii) provision of financial aid, (iv) a response to identified needs, targeting vulnerable populations, (v) promotion of local and regional purchases of foodstuffs. Sub-Saharan Africa is the main beneficiary. This aid is allocated primarily in response to humanitarian emergencies, but also in the context of post-crisis reconstruction (seed distribution, for example) and prevention (replenishing national strategic stocks, programmes targeting child malnutrition). Through so called "work for food" operations it contributes to land rehabilitation works and the fight against drought. To the extent possible, this assistance is implemented in such a way as to recognize beneficiary States responsibility for coordination of emergency response (for example in Niger in 2005) and promote intense consultations among the actors.

France also supports the development of early warning systems, notably those managed by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) in West Africa, and those developed by United Nations institutions (for example, capacity building by the WFP in child malnutrition monitoring). Over the years, the areas covered have been broadened from monitoring the growing season and the weather to cover a broader range of issues (market monitoring, for example). Thus applied research is currently being carried out on nutritional monitoring in the Sahel with expert input from the Research Institute for Development, with a view to promoting more effective and above all more responsive monitoring of the child malnutrition situation.

France provides support (particularly in the form of expertise) for the policies and strategies of the countries exposed to recurrent food security and agricultural and rural development risks (mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa), coordinating with other development agencies in accordance with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Policies and programmes aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and farm incomes

Fair trade, a sustainable development tool of the disadvantaged producers and processors of the South, and also for raising awareness of relations – particularly trade relations – between the North and the South, is taken on board and supported by DGCID. It is also part of the national sustainable development policy.

Since 2003, a support programme with a budget of 5.6 million euros has been implemented for the main fair trade associations in France. The goal of the project is to encourage the French market to open up to fair trade products so as to achieve greater inclusion of the producers and processors of our Priority Solidarity Zone. Subsidies granted to the main fair trade actors in France have contributed to the sharp increase in public awareness of fair trade from 9% in 2000 to over 80% in 2007. The turnover in products sold under the fair trade label reached 160 million euros in 2006, with annual growth averaging 80% over the last five years. Two new sectors have come on stream: shea butter and cotton. Fair trade in cotton holds out real hope for the cotton producers of West Africa, who have experienced a steady drop in earnings over the last several years due to the decline in world cotton prices. Over 6,500 metric tons were sold during the last marketing year and the figure is expected to increase to 60,000 metric tons in 2012.

Action to promote fair trade is also focused on support for structuring the actors, gaining better understanding of the economic flows generated by these forms of trade and support for measuring the impact of fair trade on beneficiary populations.

The DGCID also takes part in discussions and actions undertaken by the State on regulation of the sector at both national and international level.

Agriculture, trade liberalization and regional integration

It is claimed that trade liberalisation benefits a country because it transfers resources from protected sectors in which the country does not have a competitive advantage to other sectors where it is more efficient. But this reasoning assumes that resources are fully employed at the start, whereas in developing countries high unemployment is endemic, especially in rural areas. Moreover, trade liberalisation often damages agricultural and food processing enterprises and producers who are in direct competition with imports from the world market and are therefore unable to increase their volumes. Exports are a major outlet for a few cash crops in African countries and the trade preferences maintained by developed countries support them, but low productivity in these sectors makes competitiveness a constant struggle; and in addition, legal (rules of origin) and technical (standards) barriers to trade are a major impediment to their expansion.

The issue of quality and competitiveness of supply touches on a set of recurring problems in the economies of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs): deficient infrastructure, lack of access to credit or excessively expensive credit for businesses, insufficient human skills, old and inefficient technologies, etc. Until lasting solutions have been found to these problems, trade liberalisation will not bring about an improvement of the world market and will further weaken the economies of the LDCs.

Their access to the world market being fraught with these difficulties, regional integration is the real challenge and opportunity for LDCs at this time. Regional markets should foster economies of scale and generate sufficient orders to boost growth in agricultural sector and improve the competitiveness of agricultural products. But there are at least three pre-conditions:

- a genuine effort to remove non-tariff barriers to trade;
- a sufficient degree of ongoing trade protection at sub-regional level;
- effective application of regional or sub-regional agricultural policies.

If these pre-conditions are to be met, agricultural lobbies must emerge at regional level and the sub-regional institutions must be substantially strengthened.

For the current Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations between the European Union and the ACP countries to meet these requirements, the following conditions must be met:

- detailed identification of sensitive agricultural products and industries and of the extent and timetable of the relevant tariff dismantling;
- implementation of technical and economic upgrade programmes in the sectors covered by this dismantling;
- substantial support for regional institutions, especially through the implementation of the common agricultural policies;
- strong institutional support for agricultural associations and federations

French assistance to the African cotton sector

French assistance to the African cotton sector is a long-term endeavour in support of the ongoing restructuring (privatization and integration) and competitiveness improvement process.

France is however aware of the parlous financial situation of the cotton sector as a result of numerous factors and compounding effects such as fluctuating world prices and exchange rates, climate variations and changing technical and economic conditions affecting production. For these reasons, France has always been in favour of striking a balance between addressing urgent trade and financial issues and taking indispensable measures to foster medium-term development. France therefore focuses on four different strategic areas.

Supporting the African trade initiative

As part of its overall support for the cotton initiative taken by African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad) at the WTO, France is helping to fund the negotiating capacity building programme of these countries. The main purpose of these negotiations is to rapidly settle the cotton issue, and specifically to obtain a sharp reduction by the United States of its trade-distorting cotton subsidies.

Support for sector restructuring

The French Cooperation supports ending direct State involvement in managing the sector, while aiming to:

- maintain the sector's vertically integrated structure, a prerequisite for securing contractual relations between producers and cotton companies;
- support the structuring of producer organizations able to bring together the producers and serve as a strategic partner in managing the sector;
- establish trade association frameworks bringing together the actors of the sector to co-manage it.

Support for improving competitiveness

The FDA's cotton strategy is aimed at pursuing structural reforms and ensuring the future of the sector by improving its competitiveness and producer margins. Currently, five programmes are under way: one each with Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal and one multi-country fair trade and organic cotton programme. These contributions are designed to improve field (Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal) and industrial (Burkina Faso, Senegal) productivity, conserve natural resources (Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali) and set up a fair trade and organic cotton programme (Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Benin).

Meanwhile, the MAEE will soon be implementing a 2 million euro PSF cotton mobilization project aimed at strengthening the regional coherence and coordination of the Europe-Africa action plan. This project comprises three operational components:

- sustainable improvement in productivity through support for the creation of a regional biotechnology platform and regional coordination of pest control;
- representation and negotiation capacity building for the actors, including support for the Association of African Cotton Producers (APROCA) and the Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA);
- control of sectoral information management through support for the establishment of a cotton observatory within APROCA and the structuring of a regional cotton information system.

To supplement this project, MAEE will provide technical assistance to APROCA.

Support for reducing the sector's vulnerability to fluctuations in world prices

In Geneva in March 2007, France presented the operational basis for a system to mitigate the effects of world price volatility on African cotton producer incomes. Following a joint evaluation mission carried out in February 2007, this system is expected to be implemented in 2007-2008 in Senegal and Burkina Faso. Technically, there are three levels:

- national price smoothing funds, managed by the trade federations (*interprofessions*), to cope with intra-annual price variations. A regional intervention facility would in addition partly cover the risk of high-amplitude declines in prices that endanger macroeconomic, social and political equilibrium;
- recourse to market instruments, primarily at the level of the cotton companies, by intervening on the options market;
- recourse to international assistance and to non-sector funds to cope with cotton crises that require public intervention and the mobilization of the donor community (safety net).

French financial aid to date amounts to 3 million euros for the Burkina Faso trade federations (*interprofessionnel*) fund (a further 15 million have been budgeted for 2007) and 5 million euros to the Senegal trade association. The regional facility is expected to receive 10 million euros from the FDA as soon as the price smoothing funds are set up.

Promotion of more sustainable tourism

France heads an international task force on the development of sustainable tourism, with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme and Norway. The goal is to identify and

share best practices, encourage the creation and dissemination of projects promoting sustainable tourism and foster the elaboration of national and regional sustainable tourism policies. Three meetings have already been held in Paris (one in 2006 and the others in 2007). They brought together eighteen countries, UN organizations, trade associations and international NGOs. Four African countries (Cape Verde, Madagascar, Mali and Morocco) are members of the task force and some of the activities on its programme are being carried out in those countries.

Responsible tourism and solidarity tourism are part of a social movement that seeks to control and sustainably use the tourist economy on behalf of the host communities. It is part of a sustainable regional development approach building on the human, societal, cultural, economic and environmental resources that make up the life of the host communities. It involves the responsibility of all the stakeholders - host populations, their social representatives, intermediaries and tourists. It is based on respect for the customs and values of the local inhabitants and of their environment. It is also aimed at fair redistribution of income from the tourist activity.

DGCID support for these forms of tourism, which are potential development tools in developing countries, takes the form of a variety of support schemes for actors engaged in pilot community tourism development projects aimed at verifying project viability on the ground. Actions also included aid to association structuring through the establishment of a federation. At institutional level, DGCID is engaged in a partnership with the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the German and Dutch development cooperation agencies, aimed at promoting sustainable tourism in developing countries and setting up action synergies. DGCID works to enable actors to network and share experience by supporting a variety of events, such as the International Forum on Solidarity Tourism (with the third such forum to be held in Mali in 2008).

Through the various strategies that have been set up, the fundamentals of sustainable development are reflected in French Cooperation activities in Africa, and especially such aspects of its approach as governance, training and participation of populations in projects. In the fields of energy, water and agriculture particularly (production, marketing and food security), France shares its know-how (see section on water) and employs a variety of tools to enable populations to take part in the decision-making process. The cross-cutting approach is applied in France by involving a wide variety of stakeholders in the various operations. Monitoring and evaluation have also been introduced in order to improve the effectiveness of programmes for those whom they are designed to benefit.

To supplement conventional funding, project integration at regional level is supported in the various fields addressed. Projects are scrutinized up-stream at Pan-African, national, regional and local level. Distinguishing between these levels make it possible to identify the various objectives and issues and thus improve the efficiency of funding and action taken.