

Needs Based finance project in West Africa is launched with the support of RCC Lomé

The member states of the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) are increasingly facing the adverse effects of climate change – floods, prolonged droughts, strong winds, coastal erosion, etc. Accessing and mobilizing finance for adaptation and mitigation actions foreseen in countries' NDCs and national development plans and policies is critical for the West African region and its Commission.

Against this background the ECOWAS Commission, on behalf of its member states, and the West African Alliance on Carbon Market and Climate Finance (WAA) agreed to embark on the Needs-Based Finance (NBF) project to facilitate the development of a strategy to enhance access and mobilisation of climate finance for the implementation of priority mitigation and adaptation actions. The NBF now covers more than 10 regions and several individual countries globally, supported by the UNFCCC secretariat and its regional collaboration centres (RCC), in west Africa the RCC Lomé. The NBF project was established in response to the decision of the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its twenty-third session (COP23) in 2017, which requested the UNFCCC secretariat to assist developing country Parties in assessing their needs and priorities and in translating the climate finance needs into action (6/CP.23, para 10).

The West African NBF project was officially launched at a virtual technical workshop held on 26 to 27 October 2020 preceded by an introductory webinar in September. The launch brought together over 40 representatives from ministries of environment and finance institutions including UNFCCC focal points, and National Designated Authorities of the Green Climate Fund. The workshop provided an opportunity for countries to take stock of the state of climate finance in the region, reflect on common needs and initiate discussions around the development of a “West African Climate Finance Strategy” as well as a pipeline of priority investment needs.

In opening, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources of ECOWAS, Mr. Sekou Sangare, encouraged the assessment of countries' needs and engagement for a development of a regional strategy to find appropriate and coordinated responses to the challenges faced by the region. He called for the strategy to closely link to the ECOWAS climate change strategy under development. The commissioner further stated that support needs to be intensified and better targeted, while the quality of projects must also increase. He emphasised on nature and community-based solutions. The West African Alliance coordinator Mr. Ousmane Fall Sarr called for identifying the priorities and financing the implementation of NDCs with all types of financial instruments as further emphasized by the Regional Coordinator of RCC Lomé, Mr. Moubarak Moukaila.

In a country driven manner, national representatives of all fifteen member states (except for Mali) presented their climate finance experience, needs, priorities and challenges during the two-day workshop. Issues such as understanding access requirements of climate funds, as well as tracking data of domestic and private climate finance were named as challenges.

Countries called for a broad range of governmental and related institutional strengthening to enable effective mobilization of finance, mainstreaming of climate efforts across ministries, as well as greater private sector involvement. The ECOWAS commission, RCC Lomé and UNFCCC secretariat shared results of a review of international data on climate finance flows, as well as needs expressed by

countries in reports submitted to the UNFCCC (NDCs, BURs, NAPs, NAPAs, NCs, TNAs, TAPs, etc.). Countries noted with concern the large gap in climate finance needed (annual average of around USD 20 billion to 2030) versus current annual flows of climate finance from international public sources of around USD 1.6 billion. Regarding climate finance from private and domestic public sources, challenges in tracking and data availability were pointed out. These and other insights shared by countries will all contribute to the development of a technical assessment of climate finance in the region, which will serve as a basis for the development of the West African Climate Finance Strategy.

Participants agreed that the development of the regional strategy will be coordinated by a core group of five (5) countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Niger, and Sierra Leone, as supported by the ECOWAS Commission, the West African Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance, the UNFCCC secretariat, and RCC Lome.

The 2-day virtual workshop, which was well attended throughout despite some technical challenges, was closed by the Director of Environment at the ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Johnson Boanuh, who thanked participants for making it a success and assured the Commission's commitment in successfully delivering the project for the region.