



Draft 3.0
(31th October 2011)
FINAL REPORT

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSS-BORDER
 COOPERATION IN WEST AFRICA:**

A Contribution to the regional integration process

(Reference No 2010CE160AT057)

**Association of European Border Regions
 (AEBR)**

31th October 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Lists of annexes, tables and maps	3
Abbreviations	4
Executive Summary	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Context	6
1.2 Role of the EU	18
1.3 Purpose and objectives	20
1.4 Tasks	21
2. WORKING METHODS AND ACTIVITIES	23
2.1 Inception meetings experts and desk research	23
2.2 Key research questions and Interview Guide	25
2.3 Mini-Workshops and meetings on the ground	27
2.4 Selection of the areas for case studies	28
3. CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN WEST AFRICA	30
3.1 Current situation of CBC in Africa	30
3.2 General overview West Africa	32
3.3 Case studies	34
4. SWOT-ANALYSIS	38
4.1 Overall analysis	38
4.2 Case 1	40
4.3 Case 2	41
4.4. Case 3	41
4.5. Case 4	41
4.6. Case 5	42
5. CONCLUSIONS	44
5.1 Lessons learned	44
5.2 Obstacles identified	47
5.3 Good examples	49
5.4 Relevance of the European Experience	49
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	54
6.1 Action plan specific for the case studies	57
6.1.1 Concrete projects	57
6.1.2 Short-term and mid-term action plan	58
6.2 Road map for the development of Cross-Border Cooperation in West Africa	62
Bibliography	67

Annexes:

- I. Key Research Questions
- II. Interview Guide
- III. Table of contacts
- IV. Workshop programme(s)
- V. Map of “hot” CBC areas in West Africa

Tables:

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Maps:

- ...
- ...
- ...

Executive Summary

(under preparation)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Cross-border co-operation (CBC) in Africa is becoming a reality in many border areas. It is promoted principally by the supra-national organizations created by African nation-states in the last decades, being part of their current agendas, but the implementation at national or sub-national level is still very weak in most of the cases. The most relevant action has been made by the **African Union** with the implementation of a continental Border Programme since 2007, with the support of the German development agency **GIZ**¹ (former GTZ). African **Regional Economic Communities** (RECs) have also developed several initiatives to promote cross-border issues. This is particularly the case of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and its Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) and the Convention on CBC in the ECOWAS area (2006), or the **Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)**. The **West African Economic and Monetary Union** (known as **UEMOA** from its name in French) also promotes CBC. Nevertheless, there also are some key national contributions like the National Boundary Commission of Nigeria (NBC) created in 1988 or the National Borders Directorate of Mali (DNF). In fact, West African CBC is the most developed process up to now, and has been the base for other initiatives in the continent.

A borderless West Africa is not a utopia anymore, and trade and free movement can be enhanced greatly through the generalization of CBC. Therefore, the EU Commission (DG Regio) has asked to elaborate this study in order to quantify the obstacles for CBC in West Africa, highlight the opportunities and offer a clear picture to the organisations promoting regional economic development in the area on how best to allocate resources to promote regional integration and interregional cooperation.

As in other parts of the world, citizens living in border areas face disparities between social and economic policies, particularly regarding essential public services like healthcare or education. The barrier effect of the border is very evident and, in some cases, conflicts add more challenges with the presence of refugee flows, circulation of heterogeneous armed groups and illegal trafficking

So, border areas are at the same time promising areas with a great potential to develop practical integration and unstable scenarios facing many risks. As the European experience has largely demonstrated in the last half century, supporting CBC initiatives adds value to continental integration processes optimizing the potentialities and preventing the risks. At the same time, CBC increases the empowerment of the authorities more closely involved, promoting in this way decentralised governance. Africa is already fulfilling many tasks to achieve a sustained level of CBC, but many boundaries still need to be delimited and demarcated, a pre-requisite to launch sound CBC strategies.

¹ Since 1st January 2001, the *Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit* has brought together the *Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ), the DED and Invent into one organization.

Some scholars have studied African borders intensively and have produced a very interesting set of analyses and recommendations. Professor **Anthony I. Asiwaju** (University of Lagos, Nigeria), President of the African Regional Institute (Imeko, Nigeria) is one of the most prolific and relevant authors, and many of his contributions have been taken into account in the present study. This is also the case of **Mohamadou Abdoul** (Enda Diapol, Dakar, Senegal). **Dr. Ogunsola John Igué** (Université Nationale du Bénin) should also be mentioned when dealing with African borders, but there are many other personalities whose work should be studied in the rich and complicated process to define current African CBC concepts.

Political assumption is crucial to start sustainable CBC. In this sense, a milestone is the year 2000, when **Alpha Oumar Konaré**, ex-President of Mali, formulated a quite innovative approach to African regional integration processes by putting forward the concept of African “cross-border areas”, sharing same geographical spaces that could not be divided by physical borders. CBC was defined by President Oumar Konaré as a local initiative supported by the national governments involved and oriented to improve the living conditions of cross-border inhabitants. This input triggered afterwards plenty of experts’ meetings and political summits (Ghana-Mali, May 2002, in Sikasso and Accra , ...) where border realities have been analysed, various experiences have been exchanged and further actions have been proposed to make possible a better understanding of local border realities, and to share successful CBC experiences.

The International Community has been also paying a growing attention to the development of CBC in the African continent, particularly in West Africa. The **Sahel and West Africa Club** of the **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development** (SWAC/OECD) has promoted very relevant initiatives and studies aimed at strengthening CBC to achieve regional integration, development and peace, such as the **West African Borders and Integration Initiative** (WABI), together with **Enda-Diapol** (an NGO based in Senegal) and the DNF of Mali. WABI has promoted the implementation of several pilot projects, amongst them:

- Two pilot operations in Sikasso (Mali) – Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) and Southern Senegambia in 2003, both defined by local actors with the support of PDM, the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Canadian and Austrian co-operations. In 2010, a workshop on Burkina-Faso-Mali border experiences, held in Ouagadougou and based on the example of the mango industry in the regions of Sikasso and Bobo Dioulasso, focused on possibilities and constraints to cross-border development between both countries.
- Two more pilot operations were developed in 2006 in the Karakoro basin and the “Kano - Katsina - Maradi” area (K2M), with the support of GRDR, the EU, CCFD, UNDP and the SWAC Secretariat;

In 2010, the SWAC published a “Practical Guide to CBC: Mali-Burkina Faso Assessment and Regional Perspectives”, in cooperation with the **Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière** (MOT), a French Inter-ministerial Committee and European network of CBC actors aimed at accumulate and exchange good practices on CBC and provide operational assistance to projects and other networks.

The **Association of European Border Regions** (AEBR) has also followed these processes and has made frequent contacts, particularly with the African Union Border Programme (AUBP). These contacts led to the signing an agreement protocol in the year 2011 between the AU Commission and the AEBR.

Looking at the European experience for more than fifty years, the growing awareness on CBC in Latin America, and the developments in Africa since the 1980’s, we can see that the dynamics of national borders have some common elements for every continent. However, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial issues are to be especially taken into account when studying further enhancement of African border areas as bridges and not as ramparts. They have a cultural, historical and political background, as it is the case in other continents. They developed over several millennia by the indigenous civilizations, later by the European colonial powers (in some cases until very recently) and, in the last decades, by the African states and their supranational organizations after their independence processes. All of these circumstances have led to the current situation in which many cultural, linguistic and human relations exist across several borders, being particularly relevant in some areas. As Prof. Asiwaju has demonstrated in his works, to appreciate in full the localized impact of the border, a good knowledge of the culture areas prior to the partition is necessary². Therefore, when studying borders to show the contingency and historicism of these limits, this does not mean just emphasizing their porosity and their crossings, but also power struggles, persistent stigmas and new forms of nationalism.

There are some particular cases as well, such as Ceuta and Melilla (Spanish Autonomous Cities in Northern Africa, with boundaries to Morocco), or the maritime borders with the Canary Islands (Spain), with very special relationship with Cape Verde and the Portuguese archipelagos of Azores and Madeira (Macaronesia). The EU has already identified the particular opportunities for West African countries like Senegal and Cape Verde. They can play a relevant role in CBC actions, producing a number of benefits from them due to their proximity to the Canary Islands, Azores and Madeira”. In the programming period 2000-2006 (Interreg IIIB), the transnational cooperation zone Azores-Madeira-Canaries has proven to be very useful and effective, so it has been kept in the current period 2007-2013 with the MAC Programme, being one of the priorities the cooperation with third countries in their geographical and cultural context, as it was the case with North-West Africa and Latin America in the previous period.

² Asiwaju, A.I. *Artificial Boundaries* , Civiletis International, New York, 1990 (bilingual edition in French and English of his inaugural lecture at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, on 12 December 1984).

The main goal is increasing development and socioeconomic integration of the three archipelagos. Axis number three is "Third countries cooperation and Great Neighbourhood", with the following objectives:

- Development of a common area for growth and economic, social and cultural integration between the ultra-peripheral regions of the Macaronesia and neighbouring third countries.
- Strengthening stable institutional cooperation
- Serve as pilot experience of territorial cooperation between the EU and third countries, through effective operational coordination formulas between ERDF and EDF.
- Strengthening the role of ultra-peripheral regions as platforms for territorial cooperation between the EU and neighbouring countries.



Macaronesia (Source: Wikipedia; original from a CIA PD map)

In general, many studies on European, African, American or Asian borders^{3, 4} have shown that they are very heterogeneous and difficult to compare. Inter-state relationships are diverse, but the links between border societies and their nation states as well. Everyone has a particular link with nation, territory and population. All of these particular socio-cultural frameworks meet at the borders. As it happens in Latin America, some experts advice of a first bias in studying border territories: developing field work and analyses within comparative perspectives and using concepts originally developed for a specific case and even for other parts of the world (European borders or the US-Mexico one). They also advice that sometimes state and nation do not match, and border areas are spaces where transnational identities take place, as well as conflicts and stigmatizations between national groups.

Interstate conflict over boundaries has been relatively frequent. These disputes have sometimes escalated, and in some cases reached full-scale war. There are many aspects in the origin of these conflicts; some factors have made them difficult to be solved after years; and others have contributed to their lower potential for open conflict.

The development of democracy and supra-national integration processes have improved the prospects for territorial dispute settlement in some cases, but in other instances democratic practices and procedures have intensified bilateral conflicts between states over boundaries or territorial issues. In any case, supranational institutions (the African Union and the RECs

especially) and some countries' commitment (Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, etc.) are contributing to generate an environment prone to solve the conflicts.



Border Conflicts in West Africa

- **Niger and Benin:** inherited dispute from colonial times concerning inter alia Lete Island in the River Niger. Finally solved by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2005 to Niger's advantage.
- **Mali** faces the effects of the ups and downs in **Côte d'Ivoire**, but it is very involved to control and resolve regional conflicts. General insecurity along borders in the north, including cross-border banditry and terrorism, remain troubling issues in regional relations.
- **Burkina Faso:** relations with **Ghana**, in particular, have warmed up to the point of beginning discussions about uniting Ghana and Burkina in the manner of the defunct Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union. Burkina has mediated a political crisis in **Togo** and helped to resolve the **Tuareg** conflict in Niger. A territorial dispute with **Mali** and a border war over the allegedly mineral-rich Agacher Strip⁵ in 1985, which was mediated by **Ghana** and **Nigeria** and led to lessening of tensions between the two nations. **Côte d'Ivoire** made accusations of Burkinabé support for rebels and Burkina claims of mistreatment of Burkinabé workers. In September 2007, ECOWAS intervened to attempt to resolve

³ Donnan, H. and Wilson, T. (eds.) *Border Approaches. Anthropological Perspectives on Frontiers*. University Press of America, London, and Anthropological Association of Ireland, 1994.

⁴ Wilson, T. and Donnan, H. (eds.) *Border Identities*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.

⁵ As quoted by Asiwaju, A.I. (1990), op. cit.

the dispute over two villages along the **Benin**-Burkina Faso border that remain from a 2005 ICJ decision.

- **Mauritania**: since 1976 Spanish withdrawal from the **Western Sahara**, Mauritania was involved in this unsolved conflict, together with **Algeria** and **Morocco**. Mauritania and Algeria recognize the **Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic** (SADR) but Morocco still occupies the "Southern provinces" and claims Algerian and Mauritanian support to the Frente Polisario (Popular Liberation Front of Shaguiat-el-Hamra and Río de Oro). Mauritania has declared neutrality in the dispute, seeking a peaceful and expedient end to the conflict, and diplomatic relations with Algeria and Morocco have resumed. Also with Morocco, the completion of a sixth berm just north of Mauritania's crucial rail link along the border with the Western Sahara, between Nouadhibou and the iron ore mines, further complicated bilateral relations. With **Senegal**, very friendly relations after independence were followed by complications due to the split between blacks and Maures in Mauritania, seeing Senegal itself as championing the rights of Mauritania's black minority. Estimated 30,000 Afro-Mauritanian refugees living in Senegal.
- **Senegal** enjoys mostly cordial relations with its neighbours. Clear progress on other fronts with **Mauritania** (border security, resource management, economic integration, etc.). A short section of boundary with **The Gambia** is indefinite.
- **The Gambia** signed a Treaty of Confederation in 1982 with **Senegal**. The goal of the Senegambia Confederation was to combine the armed forces of the two states and to unify their economies and currencies. After just a short stretch of years, Gambia permanently withdrew from this confederation in 1989.
- **Guinea-Bissau**: The multitude of small offshore islands and a military able to sidestep government with impunity has made it a favourite trans-shipment point for drugs to Europe.
- **Guinea (Conakry)**: conflicts among rebel groups, warlords, and youth gangs in neighbouring states have spilled over into Guinea resulting in domestic instability. Guinea is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and sexual exploitation; the majority of victims are children, and internal trafficking is more prevalent than transnational trafficking.
- **Sierra Leone**: as domestic fighting among disparate ethnic groups, rebel groups, warlords, and youth gangs in **Cote d'Ivoire**, **Guinea**, **Liberia**, and **Sierra Leone** gradually abates, the number of refugees in border areas has begun to drop slowly. Sierra Leone considers excessive Guinea's definition of the flood plain limits to define the left bank boundary of the Makona and Moa rivers and protests Guinea's continued occupation of these lands including the hamlet of Yenga occupied since 1998.
- **Liberia**: The First Liberian Civil War, instigated by Charles Taylor and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) on December 24, 1989, eventually spread to neighboring **Sierra Leone** in 1991 when dissidents of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) began using Liberia as a staging ground for NPFL backed military assaults on border towns in Sierra Leone. In 2001, Liberian forces along with the RUF began attacking and burning refugee camps and **Guinean** villages along the border, and this subsequently led to a large number of attacks, beatings, rapes, and abductions of refugees by Guinean police and military forces. Liberia is a source, transit, and

destination country, principally for young women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Victims of cross-border trafficking come to Liberia from Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria and are subjected to the same types of exploitation as internally trafficked victims. It is also a transshipment point for Southeast and Southwest Asian heroin and South American cocaine for the European and US markets; corruption, criminal activity, arms-dealing, and diamond trade provide significant potential for money laundering, but the lack of well-developed financial system limits the country's utility as a major money-laundering center.

- **Cote d'Ivoire**: in 1989, after fifteen years of no progress, the **Ghana**-Côte d'Ivoire border redemarcation commission finally agreed on the definition of the 640-kilometer border between the two countries.
- **Ghana**: Transportation and communication links with both **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Togo** have improved, despite problems with both countries. By 1992 Ghana's relations with Côte d'Ivoire were relatively good, but ugly incidents in late 1993 and early 1994 developed following a championship soccer match in Kumasi, Ghana, that had resulted in the elimination of Côte d'Ivoire from competition. Ghanaian immigrants in Côte d'Ivoire were violently attacked, and as many as forty or more Ghanaians were killed.
- **Togo**: After 1918, following the defeat of Germany, the League of Nations divided the German colony of Togoland from north to south, a decision that divided the Ewe people among the Gold Coast, British Togoland, and French Togoland. After 1945, the UN took over the Togoland mandates. During the 1950s, when the independence of **Ghana** was in sight, demands grew for a separate Ewe state. Following a UN plebiscite in May 1956, in which a majority of the Ewe voted for union with Ghana, British Togoland became part of the Gold Coast. After Togolese independence in 1960, relations between Togo and Ghana deteriorated, aggravated by political differences and incidents such as smuggling across their common border. At times, relations have verged on open aggression. The result of the transfer of Togoland to Ghana has meant that many Togolese keep one foot on either side of the border, living in Ghana by night and working in the markets of the capital, Lomé, by day.
- **Chad**: since 2003, Janjawid armed militia and the **Sudanese** military have driven hundreds of thousands of Darfur residents into Chad. Chad remained an important mediator in the Sudanese civil conflict, reducing tensions with Sudan arising from cross-border banditry. Chadian Aozou rebels reside in southern **Libya**. Only **Nigeria** and **Cameroon** have heeded the Lake Chad Commission's admonition to ratify the delimitation treaty, which also includes the Chad-**Niger** and Niger-Nigeria boundaries. Chad is a source, transit, and destination country for children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. To a lesser extent, Chadian children are also trafficked to Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Nigeria for cattle herding.

In other parts of Africa, the Apartheid regime in South Africa provoked many disturbances in the normal relationships between African countries until the nineties. There were also times of uprising and tyranny. The crisis in the region of the Great Lakes in 1994 challenged enormously the international community and left their scars in African borders as well. Enormous movement of refugees to the camps of Goma, Darfur, and many others like the Sahrawi camps in Tindouf (in the extreme *Hamada* of Algeria) were several generations live

since the mid-seventies. Famine and droughts hit regularly wide areas of the continent⁶. But border conflicts like the exchange of fire between Kenyan and Ugandan security forces in 1989 are already forgotten and a new spirit of integration prevails. African countries have made a good use of international aid and now face new development challenges including governance and democracy, strengthening of supranational mechanisms and more South-South cooperation. This spirit is also perceived when talking about international boundaries, but not that much on the ground. Local trends prevail, as well as centralistic approaches, with very few exceptions. On the other hand, ancient cultures still are present in some border areas, overcoming the dictates of the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) and further international conferences, and opening another suggesting field to build cross-border concepts over pre-colonial entities. The territories covered by the Yoruba groups, or societies “on the move” like the Touareg and Mauri paint very interesting pictures to tackle cross-border cooperation.

It can be stated that most visible actions in favour of cross-border cooperation (CBC) are those included in main African integration agendas. In this framework, it is very challenging to analyse efforts to promote CBC, paying special attention to the involvement of the sub-national and the supranational levels. Supranational efforts (multilateral, continental and/or international) by the following organizations have promoted CBC activities, being the strongest made by the **African Union**, and some (African) **Regional Economic Communities (RECs)**.

It is very important to analyse main-streaming initiatives that can be vehicles or triggers for CBC. As it is the case in other parts of the world, the tasks to implement an integrated and sustained activity to promote and develop CBC initiatives in Africa should be done by institutions at national, regional and local level (multi-level governance and subsidiarity), as well as by other non-public actors (partnership), like non-governmental organisations and enterprises. However, the main role up to now corresponds to supra-national institutions, as it is the case of the **African Union** and the **RECs**, groupings of African individual countries by sub-regions with the objective of achieving greater economic integration. They are considered the bricks of the AU and are main actors in the implementation of the strategy “New Partnership for Africa’s Development” (NEPAD⁷). Eight RECs are recognised by the AU, each constituted under a particular regional treaty:

- The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA, 1989)
- The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA, 1994)
- The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD, 1998)
- The East African Community (EAC, 1967-1977, 2000)
- The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS, 1983)
- **The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, 1975)**
- The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD, 1996)
- The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC, 1992)

⁶ In the time of writing this Report (October 2011), a huge famine devastates the Horn of Africa.

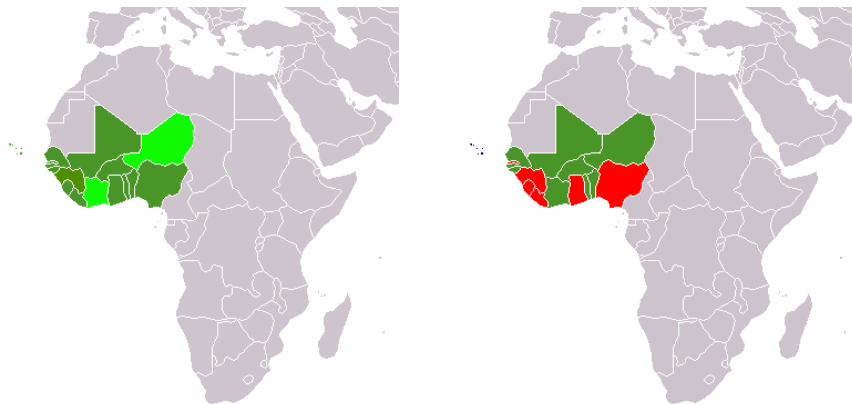
⁷ NEPAD was adopted at the 37th session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia. NEPAD aims to provide an overarching vision and policy framework for accelerating economic co-operation and integration among African countries.

For the purpose of this report, it seems very appropriate to analyse the activities of the **ECOWAS** (CEDEAO in French) to promote CBC. Grouping 15 West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo; Niger was suspended in 2009 after the auto-coup and Ivory Coast after the 2010 elections, but it came back in April 2011), it was founded by the Treaty of Lagos on 28th May 1975 with the mission to promote economic integration across the region. A few members of the organization have come and gone over the years. In 1976 Cape Verde joined ECOWAS, and in December 2000 Mauritania withdrew.

In November 2006, an ECOWAS’ experts meeting approved the “Convention on cross-border co-operation in the ECOWAS area”. To ensure sustainability of the cross-border programme, the ECOWAS Commission integrated CBC issues in its organization structure within its Free Movement of Persons Department. Then, the AU Commission expressed interest in learning from the West African experience to facilitate CBC at the continental level. A Steering Committee and a West African Experts Working Group were set-up. In 2009, a stakeholders meeting of the ECOWAS CBC Programme took place in Abuja (Nigeria) on May 2009, where cross-border actors discussed next steps and priority actions. The Programme’s aim is to bring regional integration and local populations closer together by empowering border areas.

The **West African Economic and Monetary Union** (known as **UEMOA** from its name in French), is an organization of 8 West African states. It was established by a Treaty in Dakar on 10th January 1994 (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo; Guinea-Bissau, lusophone, became the 8th member on 2nd May 1997) to promote economic integration among countries that share the CFA franc as a common currency, issued by the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO). It is a customs and currency union between these members of ECOWAS.

The **West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ)** is a group of 6 countries (Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) within ECOWAS that plan to introduce a common currency, the Eco, by the year 2015. Nigeria, the Africa’s largest oil producer and most populous country, leaders the WAMZ since its foundation in 2000. All members are English-speaking countries apart from Guinea (Conakry, Francophone). Along with Mauritania, Guinea opted out of the CFA franc currency, shared by all other former French colonies in West and Central Africa. A future goal is for the CFA franc and Eco to merge into a common and stable currency for all of West and Central Africa. The launch of this new currency is being developed by the West African Monetary Institute, based in Accra (Ghana). However, several of the WAMZ’s countries currently suffer from weak currencies and chronic budget deficits. Unfortunately, their attempts to close this economic gap by printing more currency as further encouraged inflation.



Map of ECOWAS with member states in dark green and states with suspended membership in light green. Patrick Braga, 2010. GNU Free Documentation License.

■ UEMOA
 ■ WAMZ
 ■ ECOWAS only
 (GNU Free Documentation License)

A very interesting initiative in the area is the ECOWAS rail, a Trans-ECOWAS project, established in 2007, with plans to upgrade railways in the area, including Ghana. All of this can support the strengthening of cross-border links.

There are some other transnational cooperation structures, which are worth to mention for the purpose of this study:

- The **Niger Basin Authority** (NBA) (French: *Autorité du Bassin du Niger, ABN*) is an inter-governmental organisation in West Africa aiming to foster co-operation in managing and developing the resources of the basin. Nine nations are members: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. While a small area of Algeria falls within the Niger Basin, it is not a member of the NBA. It is based in Niamey and works in both French and English.



Niger River with Niger River basin in green. Image by Astrokey44 (Wikipedia, GNU Free Documentation License)

- **Lake Chad Basin Commission.** Members: Cameroon (1964), Niger (1964), Nigeria (1964), Chad (1964), Central African Republic (1997), Libya (2008). The ratification of Sudan and Algeria is expected.

- The **Liptako–Gourma Authority** (LGA) is a regional organization seeking to develop the contiguous areas of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Created in December 1970, the zone covered corresponds to the border regions of the three countries (370,000 km², including 19 provinces of Burkina Faso, 4 administrative regions of Mali, and 2 departments and an urban community of Niger).
- The **Mano River Union** (MRU) was established in 1973 between Liberia and Sierra Leone. In 1980, Guinea joined. The goal was to foster economic cooperation among the countries. It is named for the Mano River which begins in the Guinea highlands and forms a border between Liberia and Sierra Leone. Due to conflicts involving the countries the objectives of the Union could not be achieved (Sierra Leone Civil War, First Liberian Civil War, Second Liberian Civil War). However, on May 20, 2004, the Union was reactivated at a summit of the three leaders of the Mano River Union states. On April 1, 2008, Côte d'Ivoire agreed to join the union during a state visit by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, being the current chair of the MRU.
- Senegal and Mauritania have cooperated successfully with Mali under the **Senegal River Development Office** (*Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal, OMVS*), which was formed in 1972 as a flood control, irrigation, and agricultural development project.
- Several development projects are organized in a bi- or trilateral basis, such as the OMVS, or the plan to improve roads between Nouakchott (Mauritania) and Bamako (Mali).
- There are also some joint commissions of cooperation and demarcation committees, such as the ones between Ghana and Burkina.
- The **Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel** (French: *Comité permanent inter-État de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel*, abbreviated as CILSS) is an international organization consisting of countries in the Sahel region of Africa. The organization's mandate is to invest in research for food security and the fight against the effects of drought and desertification for a new ecological balance in the Sahel. The CILSS was created in 1973 during the first great drought in the region with the aim of mobilizing the population in the Sahel and the international community to facilitate urgent need and the organization of works in various domains i.e. rainfed and irrigated agriculture, environment, transport, and communication. In 1995 it centered its activities on basic food security and the use of natural resources. The executive office is located in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). Member countries: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Chad.

In Africa there are also several financial institutions aimed at promoting development and integration. This is the case of:

- The **African Development Bank Group** (AfDB) is an international financial institution created to promote the economic and social development of its member African countries. It includes the African Development Bank (ADB), the African Development Fund (ADF), the Nigeria Trust Fund (NTF), and the Private Sector Department (PSD).
- **Central Bank of West African States** (BCEAO) is the common central bank of the eight member states which form the West African Monetary Union (WAMU, UMOA in French). BCEAO headquarters is located in Dakar, Senegal. Membership: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

- The **West African Development Bank** (BOAD) was established by an Agreement signed by the Member States of the WAMU in 1973. The aim of the BOAD is to promote balanced development of the States of the Union and to achieve West African economic integration.
- **Bank of Central African States** (BEAC). In 1972 the Governments of the five countries that were members of the Central Bank of Equatorial African States and Cameroon (*Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique Equatoriale et du Cameroun* (BCEAEC)) signed a new Convention of Monetary Cooperation with France which established the Bank of Central African States (*Banque des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale* (BEAC)) to succeed the BCEAEC. Its members include Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. BEAC is declared a "Multinational African institution in the management and control of which France participates in return for the guarantee she provides for its currency."
- In the active Southern Africa sub-region we can find the **Committee of Central Bank Governors of the Southern African Development Community** (established in 1995 as part of the Finance and Investment Sector of SADC), the **Development Bank of Southern Africa** (DBSA, established in 1983), the **Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa** (IDC, a self-financing state-owned development finance institution).
- The **East African Development Bank** (EADB) provides financial and technical assistance for the promotion of industrial development and projects to promote regional cooperation in the member countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- Established in 1985, the **Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank** (PTA Bank) has been transformed into the **Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States** (COMESA), as a financial arm of the integration arrangement.

We can see an enormous set of supranational efforts, though sometimes overlap.
- the sub-national level and the non-governmental sector

However, despite of that, the process to perform CBC in West Africa could be very slowly developed without the participation of **sub-national and non-governmental actors**. The empowerment of sub-national levels in the implementation of CBC programmes and projects, and their ownership of the outputs, enhance the impact of CBC strategies and their sustainability. As the AEBR and other experts have already stated, CBC can be the best example of South-South cooperation for territorial integration, putting border areas more central.

As it is the case in Latin America, and even in many European border areas, until now there has not been an African place-based approach for CBC with functioning structures like those developed in the EU during the last twenty years. At present this cooperation takes mainly place on an informal level.

But in the last years a growing political will to develop, strengthen and support cross-border cooperation in Africa can be stated. There is no doubt that African local and regional authorities as well as NGOs are playing a growing role in many cross-border fields. National

governments are also focusing and strengthening this role, even in countries where the sub-national level was underdeveloped or practically irrelevant.

Amongst many studies and initiatives to study and promote CBC in Africa, there are not so many involving European partners. It should be mentioned that European national agencies for international cooperation, with a extraordinary amount of projects implemented in Africa, involving local and regional governments as well as NGOs, have not dealt very much with territorial cooperation initiatives. This is an aspect of international cooperation with a lot of potentialities, but very slowly developed. Only GIZ (former GIZ) and the European Union can certify actions in this sense, particularly supporting the African Union Border Programme, but they are mostly concentrated in delimitation and demarcation tasks (a pre-requisite to build sustainable CBC afterwards). However, the AUBP has intensively dealt with further needs regarding capacity building, structures and specific programmes for CBC, where the participation of EU institutions and organizations, as well as other financial organisations is required (see chapter 3.1).

It is important to insist in the need of studying thoroughly some transnational areas corresponding to ancient African cultures, as has been reported by Prof. Asiwaju. A lot of potential for CBC lies in this areas, as processes for CBC have never been interrupted completely. Many cases are well documented, but it is very rarely taken into account in development processes (too biased by narrow national approaches either by nation-states or by financial institutions).

1.2 Role of the EU

This study has been implemented in the framework of the European Parliament's call for putting EU regional policy into a stronger international context and for more cooperation with third countries. In this sense, the EU-AU has been explored, as well as other agreements with relevant organizations and related countries. The innovative focus of the European Commission (DG Regio) on the territorial aspects of the strategic partnership between the European Union and other parts of the world means a strong step forward to achieve a certain level of territorial cohesion in other continents, but there is a need to involve other Commission's departments.

The growing interest in CBC and the information about the results in many European border areas makes stakeholders in the South extremely willing to know better what is going on in Europe. In some Western African countries, authorities at different governmental levels have already begun a process of **exchange of information with the EU** (and with other global actors like the OECD, or European networks for CBC) to develop the concept of border areas with shared/delegated competences between national and sub-national governments. There are many examples in the area (not very much coordinated, but enthusiastic); but the sub-national level still needs to grow in relevance in the whole development cycle of these initiatives.

One specific European experience is that territorial cooperation actions are fundamental for the development of regional integration processes and of progress for territorial cohesion, peace and protection of minorities. The irreversible aspect of CBC within the processes of

supranational integration and territorial cohesion in the EU also makes it very attractive for African actors. They have enormously demanded some initiatives to promote the exchange of practises with Europe, and it is necessary at this stage the **evaluation of already existing and potential CBC processes** in several African areas.

Again the development of CBC is linked to supranational and sub-national processes, where multi-level governance and subsidiarity are key issues. In Europe, we have a long experience on what to do, and what not to do in the practise of the CBC process. And European border and cross border regions (euroregions) cumulate an enormous expertise on it.

In any case, as in any other development process, long-lasting, proved and successful European best practice cannot be directly implemented in other continents just like that. CBC, as it is understood in Europe, could only be implemented in other parts of the world within comparable processes of supranational integration, where adapted EU-like solutions for specific problems can be explored. As already mentioned in the terms of reference for this study, “there is a particular opportunity for West African countries like Senegal and Cape Verde, which could play a part in CBC actions, and derive a number of benefits from them due to their proximity to the Canary Islands, Azores and Madeira”.

In fact the African Union and the European Union have developed a strong cooperation process after the first Africa-EU Summit in Cairo in 2000. At the second Summit in Lisboa (2007) a Joint Africa-EU Strategy was adopted in order to redefine the relationship between the two continents for tackling global challenges together. A first Action Plan 2008-2010 was structured around eight strategic partnerships:

1. Peace and security
2. Democratic governance and human rights
3. Trade, regional integration and infrastructure
4. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
5. Energy
6. Climate Change
7. Migration, mobility and employment
8. Science, information society and space

Anyway, looking at the studies carried out by the EU⁸, territorial cooperation issues are not identified by the partners as main cooperation areas, as poverty and hunger remain the most immediate challenges in many parts of Africa. On the other hand, African is increasingly speaking with one voice at the global level and the African Union is emerging as a key partner for the EU. Nowadays, EU-Africa relations have moved from a simple donor-recipient relationship towards a true partnership where problems are tackled together, taking into account the interest of both parties, and territorial cooperation issues have been put on table most strongly by the AU since 2007. The growing awareness by DG Regio in this dialogue with the African partners has opened the gate for deeper analyses of cooperation possibilities in this regards.

⁸ European Commission/TNS Opinion & Social, *The EU and Africa: Working towards closer partnership*. Special Eurobarometer 353, Brussels, November 2010.

1.3 Purpose and objectives

In this study we have analysed the different border areas which are cooperating actively in Western Africa, despite of the many obstacles faced. African institutions and organizations dealing with CBC have been consulted and main documents, reports and declarations have been reviewed. A selection of several cross-border areas have been made to elaborate a SWOT analysis in order to improve CBC in these areas through the assessment of their socio-economic standing, the impact of territorial divides and common challenges (e.g. environmental concerns, migration flows, linguistic divisions, transport, etc.), as well as to offer recommendations to organizations actively promoting regional economic development in the area in order to best allocate resources to promote development and interregional cooperation. Internal and external factors favourable and unfavourable to promote CBC have also been identified.

Particular attention has been paid to the Western seaboard.

An analysis of participation (a study of the involvement of active and potential actors) have also been carried out, as well as the instruments used to facilitate CBC.

Many of the activities planned have not being carried out in the planned manner, due to different constraints: time, budget available and difficulties to contact some of the key players. However, the AEBR has decided to include the follow up of CBC in Western African countries in particular (and in the whole African continent in general) as part of the Association's global strategy to promote territorial cooperation (particularly CBC) in other continents. The AEBR will keep on amplifying the scope and elements of this study even after the conclusion of the present study through the collaboration with main actors. To this end, an agreement has been signed with the African Union's Commission with the purpose of:

- Informing the AU on the development (and improvements) of CBC in the EU
- The AU will report the AEBR about CBC initiatives in Africa
- AEBR support to the AU Borders Programme through the exchange of experiences, the support to publications and the elaboration of legislative proposals.
- Invitation to events organized by both parties and organization of common events.
- Participation in training activities
- Participation in consultation processes

Similar agreements are to be established with the RECs, particularly with the ECOWAS, and also with the UEMOA.

This is the early set of objectives defined to guide the different activities implemented during the elaboration of this study, including the expected outputs:

- *Short-term objectives:*

- Recommendations to improve decentralised cross-border cooperation through partnership between the respective local, regional, national authorities and the supranational level.
- Start a process to increase capacities of national, regional and local actors, as well as private partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of cross-border cooperation.

- *Mid-term objectives:*

- Establishment of a series of steps to increase national, regional and local capacities for cross-border cooperation.
- Development of multi-annual strategy/programme and project management skills to contribute to institutional strengthening.

- *Long-term objective:*

- Structural approach to the regional integration process (e.g. through a Western African Interreg) and the extension to other African RECs

As a result of the SWOT analysis and overall result of the study, a road map has been elaborated including the next steps to strengthen cross-border cooperation in the selected border areas and how to proceed in other border areas in Africa.

In order to perform this study in a better way, senior experts in the field of cross-border cooperation were engaged. The AEBR staff was involved in the development of this study, too.

1.4 Tasks

Please refer to the technical part of the AEBR offer to see a short description of the AEBR and a general profile of the main team members directly involved in all activities related to this study.

The following *distribution of tasks* was designed:

- **Martin Guillermo Ramirez:** Overall coordination and organisation of the study, literature and desk research, interviews, meetings, first analytical report for West Africa.
- **Jens Gabbe:** Interview guide, preparation of reports (including SWOT and road map), interviews and meetings.
- **Haris Martinos:** Literature and desk research, contributions to the reports (including SWOT and road map), interviews and meetings.
- **Charles Ricq:** scientific assistance.
- **Hans-Günter Clev:** technical assistance.
- **Urpo Moisio:** technical assistance.

- **Chibuzo Opara:** technical assistance.
- **Other partner institutions:** technical assistance, interviews and meetings.

Related to the methodology, it was agreed on a variety of measures, including:

- desk research, literature and legislative review;
- data collection (see also key questions);
- interview guide;
- interviews with relevant actors in the field of cross-border cooperation;
- specific meetings with representatives of institutions, NGOS, universities and research centres active in this field,
- meetings and targeted training and exchange in “mini-workshops”.

2. WORKING METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

2.1 Inception meetings, experts and desk research

Inception meetings

Various contacts have been made with African local, national and supranational stakeholders, with experts from universities and research institutions, with cooperation agencies and embassies from European countries, with private and the third sector, both in Africa and in Europe, to explain the European experience in CBC, as well as to get to know different initiatives carried out in the African countries to promote CBC in very variable circumstances. These contacts have developed over the years and have led to a systematic exchange of information between African and European experts and organizations dealing with CBC from the point of view of the Academy, the Politics and International Cooperation for Development. The same can be said of other European institutions and networks: researchers in Gorizia, Switzerland or Scandinavia; Euroregions, particularly along the Rhine; NGOs and some national agencies for international cooperation and development (concrete projects / programmes have been identified by the AEBR with the involvement of agencies / NGOs in Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Ireland and Scandinavia). The OECD through the Club du Sahel has made an enormous improvement in the promotion and enhancement of African CBC. Several UN agencies have also supported many on-going initiatives, namely those proposed by African institutions. But it is the European Union the most expected partner to definitely launch an ambitious, sustainable and effective Programme of CBC in Africa, under the leadership of the African Union. The EU is the biggest provider of development aid in the world, and the strongest database on CBC practices, legislation, programming, etc.

Already in the eighties of the last century, the AEBR gained knowledge of African early efforts to promote CBC as a main tool to overcome the difficulties to achieve a certain degree of continental integration. Dr. Viktor Frhr. von Malchus, one of the European pioneers of CBC met Prof. Anthony I. Asiwaju (his African peer), and a first transfer of practices was then made. Contacts with Prof. Asiwaju has been kept over the time, and some exchanges have taken place between the AEBR and him in the course of this study, while taking good note of his recommendations. The AEBR has been following the efforts of the African Union and has also been invited to the different meetings organized since the launching of the AU Border Programme (AUBP) in 2007, and has signed an Agreement with the AU Commission for mutual exchange of information, participation in activities and support the AUBP in 2011. Other stakeholders have also been contacted in the framework of the AEBR participation in different platforms and networks (Platforma and FOGAR).

Since 2008 there has been an intensive advocacy at the European Parliament in favour of including a territorial dimension in EU cooperation policies, conducted by MEP Lambert van Nistelrooij (at that time President of the AEBR). As a result, specific funds were earmarked for this purpose, and the EU Commission has intensified the contacts, has influenced the EU-African dialogues and has promoted a better knowledge of current practices and perspectives to implement solid territorial cooperation in Africa.

In 2009 first exchanges took place between DG Regio and AEBR, with the result of very fruitful conclusions over key interventions to be implemented. DG Development (today DG DevCo) was also contacted, but the possibilities of a stronger territorial input in European cooperation are still in a very early stage. Nevertheless, this is one of the main targets for the overall objective of this study: to offer relevant information about obstacles and opportunities for CBC in West Africa “so that organisations actively promoting regional economic development in the area have a clear picture of how to best to allocate resources to promote regional integration and interregional cooperation”. Apart from DG DevCo, direct targets of this study are the UEMOA, ECOWAS and the AU.

In December 2010 a first exchange of ideas took place within the AEBR structure on how to implement the study and which methodology would be necessary. So, it could be possible to start the project activities immediately after the signature of the contract. On 28 January 2011 the project proposal has been intensively discussed in the AEBR Advisory Committee. Special attention was given to the SWOT analysis, the methodology, the types of actions, the key questions and the structure of the meetings foreseen.

In close cooperation with the other experts the Chairman of the AEBR Advisory Committee drafted the key questions, and a set of **kick-off** and **inception meetings** took place at DG Regio premises, where main aspects of the study were discussed. At the meeting on 26 January 2011 in the DG Regio in Brussels (the DG Regio was represented by Charles White and the AEBR by Secretary General Martin Guillermo Ramirez), an extensive exchange of views concentrated on the Inception Report, the key questions and the interview guide, some key stakeholders to be contacted, as well as the selection of cross-border areas for research. Please find as **Annex I** to this report the “**key research questions**”.

Desk research

Using traditional techniques, as **literature and legislation review**, as well as **desk research** and modern means as **electronic search**, the quantity and quality of available information is diverse. The AEBR uses **triangulation** as much as possible to increase the credibility and validity of the results. Subsequently, **desk research** had already started based on previous AEBR tasks on this regards. In order to provide a substantial “backing” further review of available material and a thorough update of information was carried out. Related activities mainly focused on:

1. Identifying existing documents / publications,
2. Analysing this documentation according to the draft “key research questions”, and
3. Elaborating a preview with respect to the state-of-the-art of CBC in the areas under research.

Main sources taken into account were:

- EU Institutions' communications and agreements.
- EU priorities in the area (through EC Delegations)
- EU Member States initiatives: German (GIZ), French, Spanish (AECID and Casa África), Irish, Austrian and Italian cooperation

- Other European networks like the MOT; and new platforms like Platforma or FOGAR
- *AU programmes*
- *ECOWAS and UEMOA programmes, initiatives and proposals*
- Other international initiatives, as the OECD's Sahel and West Africa Club
- NGOs, universities and others institutions working in the field

Many other documents and other sources of information have also been taken into account to elaborate this report, and they are properly quoted within the text.

Ongoing desk-research gathered additional documents and other sources of information on CBC initiatives existing in the case study areas; and provided elements for background analysis, supported afterwards through the realisation of **interviews / questionnaire surveys**, addressing key stakeholders involved in CBC at the selected areas.

To deepen / fine-tune the research framework elaborated in the context of this study, the AEBR elaborated a structured set of “**key research questions**” in order to achieve a clear and scientifically sound framework for all desk-research activities.

The *Inception Report (Deliverable 1)* established the following methodology:

- description of the purposes and objectives of the study;
- the role of the EU;
- the sources to study current situation of cross- border cooperation in Africa in general, and West African in particular;
- presents a proposal for cross-border capacity building;
- selects 2-3 case studies from border areas in West Africa;
- gives an overview on the senior experts to be involved and on the distribution of tasks;
- expected outputs; and
- a time table.

2.2 Key research questions and Interview Guide

Main questions to answer are:

- Which are main obstacles and opportunities for CBC?
- Are there formal CBC initiatives? Why and why not?
- If yes, up to which level?
- Main actors and main activities that take place in border areas
- Future prospects

In order to further deepen / fine-tune the provisional research framework as elaborated in the context of this study, a structured set of “**key research questions**” (see **Annex I** to this report) have been elaborated in order to achieve a clear and scientifically sound framework for desk-research and field-related activities. Draft “*key research questions*” were discussed with DG Regio in order to prepare the field work, the mini-workshops, the interviews and finally the SWOT analysis.

The draft questionnaire concentrates on two main chapters:

1. quantitative factors,
2. qualitative factors.

The quantitative factors include data on the geographical conditions, basic statistics of the cross-border area, infrastructural conditions, economic structure and development indicators.

The qualitative factors focus on existing cross-border agreements and procedures, the role of public authorities and private stakeholders, as well as traditional authorities and religious communities, different types of commuters (if any), economic, social and cultural cross-border relations, touristic potentials, consumer / trader behaviour, customs clearance, etc.

The strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats have been elaborated related to the key questions. Generally, the opportunities and threats can be derived from the answers to both chapters, as well as of the additional remarks and assessments from the interviews. Nevertheless, some additional aspects have to be considered:

- cross-border risk factors/threats (accessibility, security, illegal activities, social conditions, ...);
- cross-border favouring factors/sectors, existing economic potential with special dynamic of growth;
- border problems due to the different legal systems and procedures;
- cross-border differences in income;

The **interview guide** (see **Annex II**) was built upon the key questions elaborated by the AEBR for general assessment of border areas, being adapted to the Western African reality. This guide is the basis for the interviews with key actors, offering to prepare themselves for the interviews and understand by means of the explanations the whole purpose of the questions. As there are different interviewers, a common standard is assured, subsequently allowing a SWOT analysis and elaboration of the Final Report on a solid basis. Furthermore, it is ensured that all interviewees are answering the same questions. This does not exclude scope for additional information.

After the realisation of desk research, using the recommendations of the kick-off meeting, discussed and decided the “key research questions”, a **questionnaire** was elaborated to serve as a basis for **direct interviews** with the authorities and key stakeholders, as well as an interview guide to get maximum information on all relevant aspects. These interviews were planned as direct as possible, but in some cases the information has arrived rather by indirect ways. In fact, it is necessary to improve communication practices in this field, as it does not flow fluently. In any case, we have had access to most of the work developed by African supranational institutions, African nations, organizations and experts, as far as they have left written record of their activities. And this is the case in most of the occasions.

In any case, answers to our previous contacts have been arriving at the moment of writing this Draft Final Report, and more contributions are announced. In this sense, we have

proposed to produce an updated version of this Report after the formal delivery of the study on 31st October 2001 if the volume and quality of new material requires so. Due to the celebration of the main workshop in November 2011, a new draft will be produced anyway to be circulated amongst stakeholders afterwards for comments and an updated Final Report will be produced integrating all relevant contributions to be submitted to the European Commission (DG Regio) by the end of 2011.

Communication with EU delegations in African countries failed because of changing jobs for key persons (and the on-going process to build the European External Action Service), and this was also the case with some African organizations. On the other hand, we have found a great collaboration at the African Union Border Programme and most related partners, having access to very interesting information on current activities and pilot projects. Particularly relevant has been the information provided by the German GIZ, and the Senegalese ENDA DIAPOL, as well as by Prof. Anthony I. Asiwaju.

In Europe, the information has flowed with other CBC networks, and we have gained access to the valuable contributions of the Club du Sahel (OECD) and the *Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière* (MOT). We have also made use of the information available at the EU institutions, the Council of Europe and the archives of the Association of European Border Regions.

2.3 Mini-Workshops and meetings on the ground

After the realisation of desk research, using the recommendations of the kick-off meeting, discussed and decided the “key research questions”, the questionnaire served as a basis for direct *interviews* with key stakeholders. The questionnaire was accompanied by an *interview guide*, to get maximum information on all relevant aspects. As already mentioned, it was not easy to contact some stakeholders, due to the time and resources available, but also due to political situation or communication possibilities. In this sense, online or phone contacts were (and are still being) used in order to get maximum information on all relevant data and aspects.

A first *mini-workshop* was organized at the African Union Border Programme premises in Addis Ababa on 8 June 2011, with the participation of the AUBP, Prof. Asiwaju, the African Union Office of the German Agency GIZ and the MOT in order to better analyse the situation and conditions of cross-border cooperation in the areas under study.

Another workshop is organized on 7-8 November 2011 in Casa Africa (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), an institution constituted by the Spanish Government and Canarian institutions in order to promote Euro-African cooperation and dialogue. In this workshop, composed by two technical meetings and an open session with the public, take part the Commission (DG Regio), the AEBR, Casa Africa, the Government and the Parliament of the Canary Island, the African Union Border Programme, ECOWAS, institutional representatives and experts from several West African countries, NGOs and enterprises involved in cross-border cooperation and integration in West Africa. Other actors have been invited but declined for agenda reasons (MOT, Club du Sahel, ENDA Diapol). However, all of them have declared their will to react to the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop. If necessary, bilateral

meetings with these organizations will also be organized. Most relevant conclusions and recommendations and any other contribution addressed directly to this Workshop or indirectly to its outputs will be taken into account in an updated draft of this Final Report to be recirculated amongst main stakeholders and a definitive version will be submitted to the European Commission (DG Regio) before the end of 2011.

Contacts have been made in different meetings with the German Embassy in Addis Ababa, with the UN Liaison Office with the African Union, the UN Cartographic Section, the EU Delegation to the African Union, the Senegalese NGO ENDA Diapol and various African national organisations and institutions. European NGOs and some enterprises working in the areas under study have also been contacted.

After the realisation of desk research and following the recommendations of the kick-off meeting, the *questionnaire* as well as the *interview guide* served as a basis for authorities and key stakeholders, with the aim to get maximum information on all relevant aspects.

Along the elaboration of this study, some very active networks have been identified and many stakeholders have been registered (see **annex III**). Most of these stakeholders have been debriefed and got the questionnaire. Not many replies arrived in compliance with the questionnaire. Instead, studies, reports and seminar presentations were sent. The questions were also referred to other sources; or only some information was given. Some of the information was already registered in the AEBR before the beginning of the study, but some other very relevant information is still arriving. Therefore, it was extremely difficult and time-consuming to evaluate all these information and to integrate it up to certain extent into the timetable of the study. All of these circumstances have made an extension of the programmed time inevitable.

Where possible, the strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats detected have been processed and checked by the AEBR team in relation with the key questions (depending on the information available). Additional remarks and assessments from the interviews have been taken into account as well:

- Prevailing conflicts and prejudices;
- cross-border differences in income and foreign exchange differentials;
- the role of trade networks;
- the role of different stakeholders, including traditional authorities and religious communities;
- daily border problems due to the different legal systems and procedures;
- cross-border risk factors and threats e.g. conflicts, sectors under special threat, refugees flows, labour market problems, illegal activities, trafficking, etc.;
- cross-border favouring factors/sectors, existing economic potential with special dynamic of growth (particularly certain agricultural activities oriented to export) and innovation potential (opportunities);
- importance of city twinning (or twinning-like) as laboratories for future CBC.

2.4 Cross-border areas under study in West Africa (political-geographical situation and key indicators)

In addition to the Western African seaboard (as mentioned in the terms of reference), particularly Senegal and Mauritania, with related islands (the African Cape Verde, and the EU Canary, Azores and Madeira), where maritime cooperation can be explored even in relationship with EU territories; the following border areas have been considered to be taken into account for a detailed study:

- **The SKBo zone (Sikasso, Korhogo and Bobo Dioulasso), Mali-Ivory Coast-Burkina Faso**, an area of mixing and integration, typically peripheral with extreme spatial and social mobility. It has been called a “space of sub-national solidarity”.
- **The River Boundary Senegal Mauritania**, wet border where the river can be a development factor if potentialities are properly exploited.
- **Southern Senegambia-Guinea-Bissau (plus Guinea Conakry)** is an interesting case of complex border area, where some other countries are necessarily involved (Gambia, Mali).
- **The “Development Corridor” Maradi-Katsina-Kano (Niger-Nigeria)**. One of the most densely populated areas in West Africa. A strong economical power meets one of the poorest countries in the world.

Along the study, some more in-depth information has appeared on other cross-border territories. **Annex V** includes a map of “hot” CBC areas, accompanied by a description of cross-border structures (if any), cross-border specific measures, and an overview of the overall administrative political division, cross-border river basins, and other relevant data.

It has been very difficult to get direct information through interviews with West African institutions, but channels are opened in order to check preliminary analyses. Updated and more accurate information is awaited about main cross-border cooperation areas.

3. CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN WEST AFRICA

3.1 Current situation of Cross-Border Cooperation in Africa

Borders in Africa are very artificial in most cases⁹. Most of current borders were the result of the Berlin West African Conference of 15 November 1884 through 26 February 1885, made to divide the African territory according to the interest of the European colonial powers, and further conferences to negotiate particular demarcations. Despite of the controversy generated by many historians when assessing the Berlin Conference, one point seems reasonably clear, as very appropriately pointed out by Prof. Asiwaju: “it was at Berlin that the theoretical foundations were laid for the subsequent balkanisation of the Blackman’s continent”. The rule about “effective occupation” resulted in a demand for definitive boundaries and visible administrations, a new world of sharply bound territorial states on the model of European nation-states. In fact, it was the initiation of the delimitation”.

Therefore, cultural, historical and political backgrounds have to be taken into account. The colonial demarcation lines coexist with cultural, linguistic and human relations across borders in many cases, making very difficult to understand these processes without a sound knowledge of the antecedents.

African sub-national authorities are not playing such a growing role like their equivalents in other continents promoting CBC, but some national governments, and particularly supra-national structures, are focusing and somehow strengthening this tool for integration. Until now in Africa there is no place-based approach in cross-border cooperation with functioning structures like in the EU. But there are initiatives to promote a continental programme and a legal instrument for CBC. The cooperation is weak in general, and only some areas seem to have undertaken a sustained process of CBC. In this areas we have look for cases to be studied in depth. However, in the last years a growing political will to develop, strengthen and support cross-border cooperation in Africa can be stated. There is no doubt that local and regional authorities as well as NGOs are playing a growing role in many cross-border fields. Some national governments are also focusing and strengthening this role, even in countries where the sub-national level is underdeveloped or practically irrelevant.

The AEBR has been in contact with some of the institutions involved, in particular with the African Union (AU) since the very beginning of its Border Programme (AUBP), following this process and taking part in several meetings in order to make some contributions on its design and implementation. Particularly relevant was the participation in the Preparatory Experts Meetings for the two Conferences of African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues held in Addis Ababa on June 2007 (launching of the AUBP), with the presence of AEBR Vice-President François Maïtia (Aquitaine) and March 2010 (mid-term review of the AUBP) attended by AEBR Secretary General, Martín Guillermo Ramírez. Vice-president Maïtia and the Chairman of the AEBR Advisory Committee, Mr. Jens Gabbe, also attended respective experts meeting of the AUBP in Bamako (Mali) in 2007 and 2008.

⁹ Asiwaju, A. I. (1990), op. cit.

AU's Members States have adopted a certain number of political and legal instruments to support their efforts to manage border issues. Amongst them:

- The principle of the respect of borders;
- the principle of negotiated settlement of border disputes;
- the Memorandum of Understanding on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, which foresees the delineation and demarcation of inter-African borders by 2012 with the assistance of the UN Cartographic Unit

It is widely agreed by the AU's Member states that CBC should be fixed in their agendas, in order to:

- promote and consolidate peace security and stability;
- strengthen and develop good neighbourhood relationship;
- speed up integration, opening up of border areas and socio-economic development of cross-border areas; and
- contribute to improve policy coherence at community level.

As it has already been mentioned, the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) was launched in 2007, with the following aims:

- **Border delimitation and demarcation**, as a main consequence of the establishment of African border lines in the Conference of Berlin (1884) by European colonial powers, and further decolonization processes. There are around 80,000 km of land borders in Africa, being duly demarcated only one quarter of them. Therefore, there are disputes because of gaps and imprecisions in the archives provided by the former colonizers, particularly regarding intra-colonial segments (42 border cases producing latent tensions or open conflicts since 1964). To facilitate this, a Pan-African survey of borders has been launched for all Member States; and they foresee the establishment of a Boundary Information System (BIS), a data bank of information on African boundaries (with the support of the German GIZ and the UN Cartographic Unit).
- **Development of cross-border integration dynamics** sustained by local stakeholders. One first step is the identification of pilot regions or initiatives for a faster development of regional support programmes for CBC (and the establishment of regional funds for local CBC). The GIZ and the AUBP, in close cooperation with experts from different fields are currently developing an Atlas of CBC which can constitute a very helpful tool to plan concrete actions over well prepared territories.
- **Preparation of an African Legal Instrument for CBC.** There is a strong need of legislative basis to sustain community policies in border areas, with the participation of local authorities, border communities, etc. (all stakeholders should be identified and empowered to be active part of these processes).
- **Capacity building:** they have initiated a related assessment and are working to achieve sustained partnership (and a resource mobilisation process) with

experienced bodies outside Africa. There are also several publications aimed to promote and extend the knowledge about border issues in Africa ("From Barriers to Bridges", "Good Practice Handbook on Delimitation of African Boundaries"), made by the AUBP in cooperation with the German Agency GIZ.

- **Incorporation of CBC to regional integration processes**, in particular the RECs which have not yet included systematically CBC in their agendas, as it is the case of ECOWAS or SADC.

According to the reports of the AU, in the last years, efforts to mobilize local initiatives have been made; atlas and handbooks have been elaborated; some initiatives to promote free movement of persons and goods have been implemented; CB projects and programmes have been formulated; community radio networks have been established to inform and communicate about CB issues; some federations of associations from both sides of some border areas have been established under a CB label, and they have produced some joint action plans.

In any case, most of the related actions and initiatives to develop the AUPB have to do with a more "transnational" approach, and the sub-national level is hardly involved. In fact, African Ministers in charge of Border Issues have agreed that the "implementation of the AUBP should be effected at national, regional and continental level" (understanding "regional" in the sense of "continental regions") However, they have also requested the necessary coordination of the AUBP through "inclusive governance" (involving not only Member states and RECs, but also parliamentarians, local elected representatives and civil society). Therefore, there are many evidences that national governments and supra-national processes have clearly acknowledged the importance of involving local and regional governments to promote good governance, especially in border territories.

On the other hand, there are strong difficulties to mobilize resources and partnerships, being many actions and initiatives taken on board with the solely external support of the German agency for international development GIZ, plus some initiatives supported by Italy. Therefore, to extend the depth and scope of the AUBP, other European and national institutions should be involved in this process. The AU has already discussed with the EU the need to incorporate territorial cooperation in the bilateral agenda EU-AU, and has stressed the need of active partnership with the European border movement, in particular with the AEBR, but also with other European CBC networks.

3.2 General overview in West Africa

It is in Western Africa where Cross-Border Cooperation has been taken on board more strongly by some governments, in particular the boundary between Mali and Burkina Faso, where the border line (450 km) has been completely demarcated by the German African Border Project (GTZ)¹⁰. In this same framework, Mali and Burkina Faso are the scenario of a

¹⁰ Other areas being delimited and demarcated within this project are located in Eastern and Southern Africa (Mozambique's borders with Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia; and Zambia-Malawi), with more than 400 km already demarcated.

CBC programme for border villages, mainly related to conflict mediation and the elaboration of joint project proposals¹¹. Many things are happening at the borders of West African countries, and there are various studies going through this cooperation in depth, analysing the situation, its causes, and proposing measures to overcome difficulties^{12,13}. These and similar studies in other border areas have also been taken into account, as the information and recommendations provided fulfil very well the questions formulated in this study.

These Western African border areas seem to be the most active for CBC in the continent, with a reasonable and increasing participation of border municipalities and regions. At the same time, there is a strong presence of EU national and sub-national development agencies in Western Africa, some of them working in border areas of Senegal, Mali, Burkina, Mauritania, etc. Within the possible coordination of these multiple European actors within the framework of the initiatives carried out by ECOWAS, OECD and others, some CBC actions empowering local actors in this regard could be included. In any case, other circumstances should be taken into account to study these complex and sometimes unstable areas.

There are many opportunities for these territories to develop cross-border cooperation, as there are already cross-border social and economic structures operating in some areas, some very interesting national supporting approaches and supranational integration processes closing the circle of multi-level governance, a precondition for successful cross-border cooperation.

The participation of the sub-national level will become a main factor for the definitive take-off of cross-border cooperation in West Africa. On the other hand, local and regional border authorities still need to strengthen public services and their responses to local deficits.

It is also very necessary to reinforce the supranational level, and the AUBP is a main actor in this regards. The role of the RECs seems to be the most interesting from the operational point of view. In this sense, the possibilities to explore the transfer of European know-how in the area of the ECOWAS, where some supranational integration processes have already been successful, seem to be a very good option to deepen CBC practices.

As all institutions involved have underlined, there is a great working field in knowledge and training, as well as in implementation of permanent structures for cross-border cooperation. There is a need of genuine cross-border projects, programmes and structures to strengthen social and economic cohesion, without duplication of objectives and functions between new and already existing initiatives and institutions. Therefore, it is also needed to combine rationally horizontal and vertical policies, following the logics of subsidiarity.

Other field of CBC is **environmental management and preservation of natural resources**. The absence of joint management of cross-border resources (e.g. rivers) is a source of

¹¹ The same experience is being implemented in COMESA, particularly the region of the Great Lakes, where a simplified trade regime is being developed together with conflict prevention and resolution

¹² ENDA Diapol-IDRC/CRDI *Transboundary Dynamics in West Africa. Analysis of the Potential of three "cross-border" areas in West Africa*. Dakar, 2009

¹³ SWAC (OECD)-MOT, *Practical Guide to CBC: Mali-Burkina Faso Assessment and Regional Perspectives study*, Paris, 2010

tension between the authorities across the borders, while CBC helps to reduce the vulnerability of the populations and allows the negotiated use of resources. But some initiatives in this sense have already been implemented by supra-national structures. The problem is a certain proliferation of structures, sometimes overlapping, and with irregular achievements. Climate change is another aspect to be taken into account when planning a wide agreement to promote CBC in this area.

Trade plays a very important role in CBC, as in other parts of the world. Commercial exchange based on local production and imported goods is a major vehicle for the dynamism of local CBC. Networking local traditional markets is an increasing initiative in some border areas. Main difficulty remain on the informal networks across the border, that can go from traditional exchange to more sophisticated and organized international smuggling.

And **demography** is another issue to explore: movements of people, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, ...

Nowadays, it is very relevant to mention that joint patrols have been organized to ensure border security, to prevent conflicts or to combat criminal activities. Governors in border areas have established **CBC mechanisms to accompany peace processes**, reinforce the security of populations and facilitate the movement of persons and goods across border areas. Some civil society organisations and traditional authorities also perform awareness-building, watchdog and collaboration activities to promote peace and good neighbourhood between communities and countries, in particular when refugees and displaced people are involved.

However, **border disputes** will remain in many African territories. As in other parts of the world, cross-border areas are sometimes the playground for conflicts, trafficking and related crime. There are many examples of African conflicts involving direct- or indirectly borders, from established armed conflicts to sustained low-intensity fights. But probably the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, or the complex case of Western Sahara are the most known examples of the difficulties to normalize CBC in some areas. In any case, as already explained, many conflicts have already been solved and the AUBP will probably close others in the coming years. To illustrate how things are developing in some African areas, a long lasting conflict in Sudan has evolved to the creation of a new state in Summer 2011, the Republic of South Sudan with capital in Juba.

As a summary, African cross-border cooperation also faces multiple challenges:

- Post-colonial border issues,
- the traditional concept of sovereignty,
- own national priorities,
- lack of subsidiarity,
- the consideration of border areas as marginal,
- long-lasting border disputes,
- need to increase autonomy of territorial authorities,
- the need to ameliorate citizens' life conditions,
- low local capacities,

- permanent and temporary migrations control,
- need to protect natural and cultural heritage,
- lack of security, terrorism,
- illegal activities across borders, from smuggling to trafficking, affecting children particularly.

And global challenges affect African territories as well as in the whole globe, being border regions particularly affected due to their most fragile conditions.

3.3 Case studies in West Africa

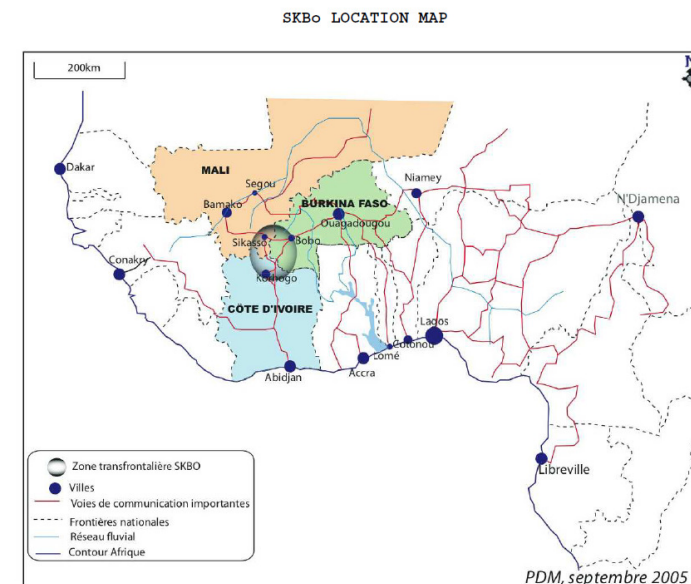
In addition to the Western African seaboard (as mentioned in the terms of reference), particularly Senegal and Mauritania, with related islands (the African Cabo Verde, and the EU Canary, Azores and Madeira), where maritime cooperation can be explored even in relationship with EU territories; the following border areas have been proposed to be taken into account for a detailed study:

- **The SKBo zone (Sikasso, Korhogo and Bobo Dioulasso), Mali-Ivory Coast-Burkina Faso**, an area of mixing and integration, typically peripheral with extreme spatial and social mobility. It has been called a “space of sub-national solidarity”.
- **The River Boundary Senegal Mauritania**, wet border where the river can be a development factor if potentialities are properly exploited.
- **Southern Senegambia-Guinea-Bissau (plus Guinea Conakry)** is an interesting case of complex border area, where some other countries are necessarily involved (Gambia, Mali).
- **The “Development Corridor” Maradi-Katsina-Kano (Niger-Nigeria)**. One of the most densely populated areas in West Africa. A strong economic power meets one of the poorest countries in the world.

Through the desk research, some more in-depth information has appeared on other cross-border territories. A map of “hot” CBC areas can be found as **Annex V** to this Report, accompanied by a description of cross-border structures (if any), cross-border specific measures, and an overview of the overall administrative political division, cross-border river basins, and other relevant data.

After consultations with different stakeholders in African and Europe these cases have been selected to be taken into consideration, in addition to the Western seaboard, including the Canaries and Cape Verde.

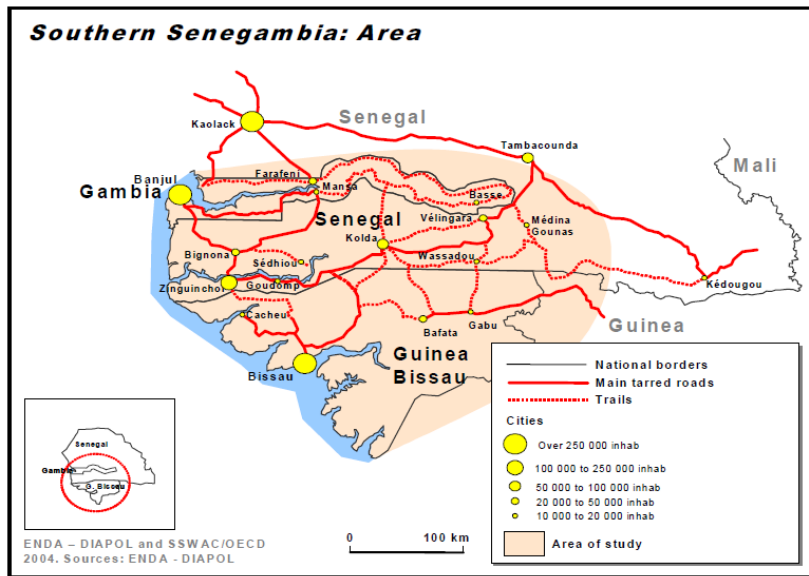
Description of case 1: The SKBo zone (Sikasso, Korhogo and Bobo Dioulasso), Mali-Ivory Coast-Burkina Faso, an area of mixing and integration, typically peripheral with extreme spatial and social mobility. It has been called a “space of sub-national solidarity”.



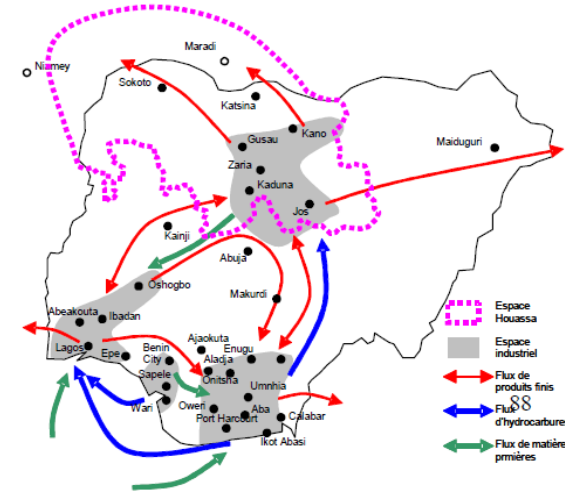
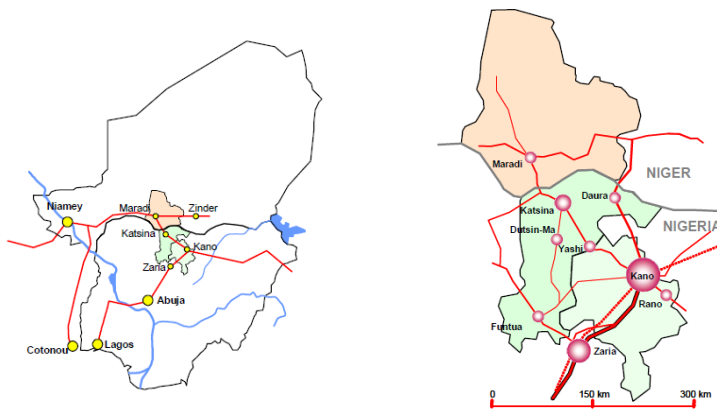
Description of case 2

The **River Boundary Senegal Mauritania**, wet border where the river can be a development factor if potentialities are properly exploited.

Description of case 3: Southern Senegambia-Guinea-Bissau (plus Guinea Conakry) is an interesting case of complex border area, where some other countries are necessarily involved (Gambia, Mali).



Description of case 4: The “Development Corridor” Maradi-Katsina-Kano (Niger-Nigeria). One of the most densely populated areas in West Africa. A strong economic power meets one of the poorest countries in the world.



Description of case 5: MAC Programme and West Africa

4. SWOT-ANALYSIS OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN WEST AFRICA

The inception report establishes the methodology to follow in the case studies from the selected border areas in West Africa. With the results of desk research, key questions and interviews, a participative SWOT analysis has been carried out based on quantitative facts, as far as available; and also a qualitative analysis addressing the socio-economic standing, its territorial divide and the identified common challenges. Internal and external factors which favour or hinder these processes have also been identified in order to draft a road map for CBC in those areas, with concrete actions and measures.

A **SWOT analysis** in selected cross-border areas, addressing current standing, territorial conditions and common challenges is extremely helpful to elaborate a feasible road map for CBC in Western Africa, taking into account most internal and external factors affecting these processes and including the next steps to strengthen cross-border cooperation in the selected border areas and how to proceed in other border areas in Africa.

4.1 Overall analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> growing awareness of the importance of cross-border areas for the African integration process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> borders mostly artificially established borders keep somehow their role of separation and military areas national peripheral location of border areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a set of political declarations, laws and instruments for cooperation (bilateral/trilateral treaties, agreements, organizations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> too many different instruments proposed implementation rather weak lack of financing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> numerous studies, publications, and other papers on cross-border cooperation (CBC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mainly national approaches bi- or multi-national studies rather exceptional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly rural areas with a dominating agricultural sector (big farms, large enterprises) several big cities develop and a growing network of secondary cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak economic structures danger of mono-structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of SMEs and small businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> often strong dependence on traditional/informal activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> importance of twin cities (relative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive single effects are too small places of illegal activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> capitalization of differences along the border 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> borders only poorly controlled
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> several cross-border areas cooperate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no definition of a cross-border area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> numerous "one-off activities" to establish contacts for cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no coordinated activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> various single cross-border projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> too much depending on concrete individuals/organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> economic and social partners active in CBC (informal cooperation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no coordinated activities potentials for CBC hardly exploited in economic and social terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some groups and national authorities dominate the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regional/local authorities depending on the national level

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing favourable framework conditions for CBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> long distances weak infrastructure (or absent) conflicts and illegal activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> favourable AU + RECs rules for free trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transport still difficult long waiting time at the border
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> growing export of agricultural products growing diversification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pending on large enterprises and big farm taking profit from low wage level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> twin cities as laboratories for CBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> up to now twin cities often places of illegal activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some positive developments on the labour market due to big firms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> national governments in favour of implementation of sensitive projects in border areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a common bank and common currency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no specific funds for CBC or transnational activities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong will for integration funds 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> raising awareness of the need for regional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> depending very much on political developments, weak subsidiarity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong feeling, that CBC requires a bottom-up approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lacking knowledge capacity at regional and local levels conditions very different in political, historical, economic and geographical terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support of national governments to encourage CBC at regional and local levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> national governments playing a dominating role decentralisation of financial resources rather weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> starting dialogue between national and sub-national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> missing distribution of tasks and responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> economic and social partners ready to cooperate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no coordinated activities up to now sustainable implementation rather weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> political will at all levels to support CBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> border regions not at the top of the political agenda politicians hardly involved on a regular basis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong interest in a more strategic and sustainable approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no experience in developing decentralized cross-border strategies and programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> growing awareness of the need of cross-border structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> networks and permanent cooperation structures missing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> languages favourable (many speak various) presence of vehicle languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prejudices prevailing (media)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> starting contacts with the EU and European organisations experienced in CBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no systematic training of regional and local actors to do it by themselves (like in the EU)

4.2 Case 1

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing bilateral/trilateral treaties and agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementation up to now rather weak lack of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> long and large rivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extreme climate in some areas no bridges, but traditional crossing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (many) border crossings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> few border crossings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> international and local airports (?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no international connections enough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regional roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no highways no railways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> important transport on roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> long waiting time at border crossings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simplified system for export (including traditional and informal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> separate border facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some important cities on both sides of the border 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly large rural areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> city-centres are improving, as well as secondary cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low attractiveness of many cities and villages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> growing accommodation capacity in large cities (also improved quality) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> business and touristic travel still weak

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong agricultural sector as a source for export 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exports depending on one sector difficulties for export/import (customs clearance)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMEs and innovation sector developing interaction between decentralised CBC and the national/multi-national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak service sector weak involvement of regional/local authorities in national activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> many cross-border activities relatively strong cooperation at project level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mainly one-off activities isolated activities no long term approach/ strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regional/local level and social partners involved in CBC on the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no permanent structures voluntary structures doubled missing legal instruments for cooperation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tourism development (?) good consultancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly national promotion (?) lack of own knowledge at regional/local level potentials of regional/local actors poorly developed

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a test case for successful CBC in West Africa (concrete examples) cross-border health technological products, business corridors, services and innovation open labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illegal activities cross-border education mostly absent health system special institutions involved, but only on one side of the border high unemployment rate informal mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> potential for cross-border tourism starting cooperation between tourist authorities and operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cross-border touristic infrastructure rather weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of twin-cities to commercial gateways universities more and more active in CBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improvements only in the border area and not in the whole region no systematic/strategic involvement in cross-border development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-national Committees, 	

4.3 Case 2

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bilateral treaties, agreements, associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementation up to now rather weak information missing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> border with social and cultural ties airports at long distances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> difficult and expensive border crossing lack of airports (only minor facilities for small airplanes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> roads centres connected by new trade routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no highways or railways mostly rural border areas low population density
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong agricultural sector twin cities with commercial links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lower wages level in ... lack of hierarchy of cities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> illegal activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> benefit from international economic development (export) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> depending on the global market
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reinforced migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one way road from ...to ...

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> potentials of a wet border growing role of ECOWAS free trade zone / single currency railway project under planning (?) starting up of joint border control (training programmes, veterinarian control) (?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transfers (?) few national investments in border areas only benefits one side of the border improving infrastructures is a main issue still weak border control illegal activities (drugs, smuggle, crime-related, illegal migration, trafficking)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> twin cities with a gateway function, and connecting metropolis trade routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development limited to the border
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> growing economic and technical knowledge, particularly from agro-industries cross-border labour market in principle agreed (?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong dependency on mono-agricultural and agriculture and livestock (tensions) slow implementation (weak) labour migration because of ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong feeling of the need of CBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> long distances (very much time-consuming) for CBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attractive touristic conditions in ... (?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak security at the borders fear of corruption and criminality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public health care system in ... (?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one-way migration from ... to...

4.4 Case 3

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

4.5 Case 4

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

•	•
•	•
•	•

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

4.6 Case 5

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

Notes:

- ...
- ...
- ...

5. CONCLUSIONS

The topic-related conclusions on the workshops and the aggregated conclusions and recommendations reflect the best evidence available based on the results of tasks and the best African practise, and compared with best tested European practice, to offer clear and applicable recommendations for supra-national, national, regional and local authorities. The report will be available on line, as well as a comprehensive and well-structured collection of all relevant documents gathered and/or presented during the research project and the contact databases developed and used by the AEBR.

5.1 Lessons learned

CBC has to be built over a certain period of time, using previous historical, socio-economic and cultural relations. One of the pioneers was Nigeria, with its National Boundary Commission, or Mali, whose former President of Mali Alpha Oumar Konaré, who first referred to CBC within the African Union. Today, many bilateral border conflicts are solved (or on their way) follow the examples of these pioneers of CBC and being supported by the African integration efforts. Bilateral commissions to tackle common problems and/or opportunities have been constituted, and very interesting pilot projects are rendering very interesting information to further build solid CBC programmes.

A strong need and a growing political will reveals that, despite of the difficulties, there are many opportunities for these territories to develop cross-border cooperation. There are already cross-border social and economic structures in some areas, some very interesting national supporting approaches and supranational integration processes closing the circle of multi-level governance, a precondition for successful cross-border cooperation.

The participation of the sub-national level will become a main factor for the definitive take-off of cross-border cooperation in West Africa. On the other hand, local and regional border authorities still need to strengthen public services and their responses to local deficits. The participation of national programmes, including border areas as priorities and taking into account their development potential and the added value of a sound CBC.

It is also very necessary to reinforce the supranational level, and the AUBP is a main actor in this regards. The role of the RECs seems to be the most interesting from the operational point of view. In this sense, the transfer of European know-how in the area of the ECOWAS, where some supranational integration processes have already been successful, seem to be a very good option to deepen CBC practices. This is one of the main conclusions in all studies, reports and policy recommendations consulted.

As all institutions involved have underlined, there is a great working field in knowledge and training, as well as in implementation of permanent structures for cross-border cooperation. There is a need of genuine cross-border projects, programmes and structures to strengthen social and economic cohesion, without duplication of objectives and functions between new and already existing initiatives and institutions. Therefore, it is also needed to combine rationally horizontal and vertical policies, following the logics of subsidiarity.

Providing services to local population, rationalizing structures across borders; intervention in traditional and informal processes across the borders, particularly trade; development of associationism (or strengthening the current one) across the borders with the participation of all stakeholders; exploration of new fields for job creation (competitive export products and efficient commercial organization, renewable energies, depuration of water and food security, etc.); ... There are many fields to explore and the task is huge, but the benefits to obtain will definitely be worth the invested efforts. A strong coordination of many domestic, African and international programmes would avoid overlapping. The resulting rationalization of expenditure would render a "coordination dividend" that can be invested in more coordination. A demonstrated tool for the best coordination of local, national and international efforts in border areas is Cross-Border Cooperation with a Multi-level Governance approach.

An issue that traditionally has been source of tensions, but also the first occasion for neighbouring communities to agree since ever (even before the creation of modern states) is the distribution of task and the preservation of shared natural resources. As they can also be main sources of economic development, there is always a risk of over-exploitation, exhaustion and strong pollution. This a field to explore thoroughly as well, the **joint environmental management and preservation of natural resources**. There are some structures already implemented to manage river and lake basins. They can be the source of more complex CBC processes, as already existing structures can be the basis of further strategies for the sustainable development of these territories. Clear cases in this regards are the River Niger and the Lake Chad basins. CBC helps to reduce the vulnerability of the populations and allows the negotiated use of resources. Climate change is another aspect to be taken into account when planning a wide agreement to promote CBC in this area.

Trade plays a very important role in CBC, and is a main economic activity in Africa, as in other parts of the world. Commercial exchange based on local production and imported goods is a major vehicle for the dynamism of local CBC. Networking local traditional markets and networks is an increasing initiative in some border areas. Attention is to be paid to illegal trade, which is a tradition in many areas (and one of the few income possibilities for many families). Smuggling and informal trade of local products are very much influenced by foreign exchange differentials.

And **demography** is another issue to explore: movements of people, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, victims of trafficking, etc. The control of illegal activities affecting persons, particularly children and young women, is a must to begin a serious process of long-lasting cooperation. Illegal trafficking of merchandises is to be prosecuted, and the role of tradition should be taken into account, but the trafficking of persons is absolutely not acceptable, and local authorities and societies should take the main stake to combat them. CBC can also support the coordination of regular security forces (and this is the case in some Western African borders), but main action has to move forward beyond formal declarations.

Nowadays, it is very relevant to mention that joint patrols have been organized to ensure border security, to prevent conflicts or to combat criminal activities. Governors in border areas have established **CBC mechanisms to accompany peace processes**, reinforce the security of populations and facilitate the movement of persons and goods across border areas. Some civil society organisations and traditional authorities also perform awareness-

building, watchdog and collaboration activities to promote peace and good neighbourhood between communities and countries, in particular when refugees and displaced people are involved.

However, **border disputes** will remain in many African territories. As in other parts of the world, cross-border areas are sometimes the playground for conflicts, trafficking and related crime. There are many examples of African conflicts involving direct- or indirectly borders, from established armed conflicts to sustained low-intensity fights. But probably the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, or the complex case of Western Sahara are the most known examples of the difficulties to normalize CBC in some areas.

In West Africa the geographical, historical and political preconditions for regional development and cross-border cooperation (CBC) differ strongly from European experiences. The total border lines are less than in the EU, while the African surface is much bigger. With some exceptions, the economic centres in West Africa are settled in the coastal regions. Important ports and metropolis at the seaside are far away from the borders in many occasions, some countries are completely innerlands, and huge extensions of them are deserts. In Europe some important economic centres are located close to the border (Vienna, Bratislava, Berlin, and Copenhagen), being some of them already established cross-border metropolitan areas. Compared with Europe, distances are much longer, while transport infrastructure needs a lot of development. Most common transport means are animals, cars, trucks, and then ships and aircrafts. Railways exist only incidentally. So, travelling from one point to another is very time-consuming. In general, this has an impact on the mobility of citizens, workers and transport of goods. This mostly affects border areas and CBC, because border regions in the respective areas are usually less developed than more central regions; and border controls need sometimes hours, above all for goods. Nevertheless, people are familiar with these realities and accept even long distances and travel time, when it comes to CBC.

It can be concluded that geographical areas for CBC are much larger than in Europe, mostly rural with a low population density and a weak economy, except in some particular cases. The sub-national level is playing an increasingly important role. Relevant statistical and political levels are the departments (Niger) or the states (Nigeria).

Due to historical developments, national governments in Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Senegal are the most important political players up to now. Regions, states and departments depend on national governments in political, financial and planning terms. This top-down approach is hardly shifting to a bottom-up one, including elements of South-South cooperation. Regionalisation and CBC are more and more on the political agenda of all countries. But integration processes are running informal and not well structured. However, there is a clear need and political will for change.

The development of CBC is linked to supranational, as well as to national and sub-national processes, where multi-level governance and subsidiarity are key issues. The role of regional and local authorities and other actors on the ground is growing. City twinning could play a major role in this process.

In the EU, the creation of the Single Market was very important for the development of CBC. Border regions are considered to fulfil a bridge function, to create added value and to contribute significantly to European integration. At the same time, several processes of national integration have begun in West Africa, also with the objective to integrate peripheral border areas in national and supranational markets.

As a consequence, in the course of modernisation and improving the situation of border areas, from a national point of view, informal cross-border activities were strongly “disturbed”. The reasons lied, in many cases, in the fact that, suddenly, national governments were present in peripheral border areas and tried to control the (often illegal) cross-border activities.

Like in the EU, it can also be observed that national governments tend to support the implementation of sensitive infrastructural and economic projects in border areas. But currently the tendency (with the support of the African Union and the RECs) is more to change national development policies (and international programmes in border areas in favour of supporting genuine CBC).

5.2 Obstacles identified

Apart from the necessary efforts for development in general, the provision of essential services to the populations, the control of transmission diseases, and the fight against poverty, that's to say the Development Millennium Goals, quite far from being achieved, these territories face conflicts and illegal activities developed especially across national boundaries. So, the priorities for national governments fall in most of cases within the limits of national possibilities and challenges. In this sense, external support is very much needed, either from the African supra-national level or from the international community.

A main element identified by most of the studies consulted is the need of a stronger Euro-African dialogue on CBC, and the implementation of a huge capacity building programme.

Up to now there is no targeted staff training for CBC in regional and local authorities to develop common programmes or strategies, to organise permanent cooperation, and to establish cross-border institutions/structures for cooperation and, in this way, create necessary added value for the citizens living along the border.

With the view to *targeted training*, the AEBR has identified a series of challenges to be addressed:

- to avoid the terms “administration level” and “competences” for a cross-border structure. It is only about “practicable instruments” to cooperate and the “execution of necessary cross-border tasks”;
- not to compare structures, competences, legislation, etc., on both sides of a border (they will never be or become comparable);
- to overcome the lack of experiences and skills of the regional/local administrations and relevant organisations in the field of cross-border cooperation;

- to build up communication and exchange mechanisms based on a system of trust and to contribute to changing people's attitudes, perceptions and approaches;
- to encourage a bottom-up approach in regional/local development (in close partnership with the respective national authorities), involving all key actors and taking into account the targeted regional specific conditions (geographic, economic, social, cultural and political).

The colonial heritage and the historical consideration of borders as lines of separation and militarized areas, traditional national policies and the generally peripheral location within national frameworks, impeded border areas to become meeting places. Instead, in most of the cases people were living “back to back”.

As already explained, long distances, the lack of common border control facilities, weak infrastructures (compared with European standards) as well as the fragile economies would have a strong impact on the development of a sustainable CBC which has to be strengthened in the future. Financial resources do not seem to be the main problem, but using national funds for cross-border activities does (national funds are devoted to national projects only). Up to now there is no common funding. As in many other fields, some countries can play a leading role in the preparation of Regional Development, Subsidiarity and Territorial Cohesion in West Africa, thus creating favourable framework conditions for CBC.

Despite the processes promoted by the African Union and the RECs (e.g. ECOWAS) cross-border transport remain difficult (e.g. export to Europe seems to be easier than from some neighbouring countries: excessive waiting time at border controls).

In some parts large international enterprises in the agricultural sector and landowners are dominating the economic situation, while in other parts (twin cities along borders) only some small businesses are settled up to now, depending on the existence of the border and its services. Illegal immigration, smuggling, drug and persons trafficking and related crime are part of daily life and somehow considered as a source of income.

While CBC is increasingly present on national political agendas, a clear strategy, specific or common financial resources and a distribution of tasks and responsibilities are missing. One-off activities, which in principle are welcome, depend too much on the commitment of individuals, organisations or institutions (there is danger that these activities will finish if persons leave). They are not part of a regional development or even an overall cross-border development concept or strategy, and sometimes compete against each other. Permanent cross-border institutions or structures, which could channel the cooperation in a more strategic and permanent way, are missing as well.

While politicians are in principle in favour of CBC, a strong political support at every level is not the rule. The reason could be that politicians usually need concrete proposals on how barriers can be overcome and problems can be solved in practice. This knowledge (especially on practical solutions without time consuming agreements or treaties) can hardly be found at national level (it is not the task of a ministry to think in cross-border terms), but should be available at regional and local level in the border regions themselves.

On the other hand, international organisations and NGOs are playing an increasingly crucial role in border areas, offering services mainly for one-off activities.

Therefore, African cross-border cooperation also faces multiple challenges:

- Post-colonial border issues,
- the traditional concept of sovereignty,
- own national priorities,
- lack of subsidiarity,
- the consideration of border areas as marginal,
- long-lasting border disputes,
- need to increase autonomy of territorial authorities,
- the need to ameliorate citizens' life conditions,
- low local capacities,
- permanent and temporary migrations control,
- need to protect natural and cultural heritage,
- lack of security, terrorism,
- illegal activities across borders.

And global challenges affect African territories as well as in the whole globe, being border regions particularly affected due to their most fragile conditions.

5.3 Good examples

Case 1

Case 2

Case 3

Case 4

Case 4

Case 5

5.4 Relevance of the European Experience

In Europe, there is a long experience on what to do, and what not to do in the practise of the cross-border cooperation (CBC) processes. European border and cross border regions (Euroregions and similar structures) cumulate an enormous expertise on it. The European experience has taken decades to develop a number of measures and programmes, and especially permanent structures for cooperation amongst local and regional authorities.

In West Africa the European experience in cross-border and interregional cooperation is becoming particularly relevant. African stakeholders wish to use all of this unique set of experiences in order to take profit of the best practise available to develop real CBC amongst most of the countries involved. This concerns above all the border areas between Mali and Burkina Faso; Niger-Nigeria, Senegal with The Gambia, Mali and Guinea-Bissau, and the coastal border with the EU Canary, Azores and Madeira islands, with a strong cooperation with Cape Verde, far the most dynamic continental area in this regard.

One specific European experience is that territorial cooperation actions are fundamental for the development of regional integration processes and progress.

Some national and supra-national authorities have already begun a process of regionalisation and exchange of information with the EU, developing the concept of border areas with shared competences between national and sub-national governments.

But, as described before, political, historical, geographical, social and economic framework conditions in West Africa are different, sometimes even much more different, than European

ones. The relevance of European experience is explained in this chapter from the point of view of best practice, while key messages, adapted to the needs and capacities in West Africa, are included in the recommendations.

In Europe, inside and outside the European Union, successful CBC is based on:

- a step by step development (first the tasks, then the structure);
- a strategic/programmatic approach;
- real joint projects;
- permanent working structures (joint decision making bodies, joint secretariat and staff);
- own financial resources.

In Europe it turned out, that the regional/local level is the most suitable to implement CBC (in partnership with the national authorities on both sides of a border and the EU), because:

- the actors on site are the most familiar with the cultural, social, geographical, economic and political conditions as well as with obstacles and problems for cooperation;
- they do not only know about barriers and problems, but are also able to offer very practical solutions;
- they have the strongest interest in successful CBC, as their daily life is concerned;
- they are more interested in practical cooperation based on partnership than in clarification of questions of competence (always on table when the national level is involved);
- step-by-step development of CBC.

One-off activities are found at the beginning of each type of cooperation. They pave the way for networks, which can be used to establish contacts between the actors benefiting from cooperation in a cross-border area (entrepreneurs, trade unions, universities, tourism agencies, public sector). Networks as platforms to promote generalised CBC have a multiplier effect.

In a second step, a more strategically and development oriented cooperation occurred in Europe. This requires a long term approach, based upon analysing the existing situation and the potentials for social and economic development. Objectives, priorities, key issues and activity fields have to be defined, resulting in a cross-border strategy/programme.

Advantages of a cross-border strategy/programme

It will become very clear for the actors what they want to achieve in the next 10-15 years. Furthermore, the added value of cross-border cooperation will be visible.

Based on the cross-border strategy/programme, it has to be decided which part of the regional development objectives have to be done with national/regional/local resources and which part will be supported by supranational funds (especially INTERREG in the case of the EU).

Particular role of the EU-Programme INTERREG

The EU-Program INTERREG, established in 1990, introduced for the first time in Europe the possibility to cooperate with a long term perspective. It is divided in three strands: A = cross-border cooperation, B = transnational cooperation, C = interregional cooperation. Also in the EU, the main focus is on national development with the result that only 3% of the total ERDF funds are allocated to territorial cooperation. Despite these small financial resources, good and even excellent results have been achieved with regard to European integration, regional development of peripheral areas and decentralisation of regional policy.

The key advantages of INTERREG from the regional/local point of view are:

- CBC is defined as a political objective of the EU;
- within the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), a fixed percentage is devoted to territorial cooperation, but with a clear priority for CBC;
- a programming period with about 60 operational programmes covers along 6-7 years, guaranteeing for the same time the financial contribution of the EU;
- each programme has to be co-financed (20-25%); this has to be guaranteed by the Member States concerned;
- in practice this rate of co-financing is out of the political debate on annual budgets at national or regional level over 6-7 years;
- CBC is not depending anymore from the political situation in a member state or a single ministry.

The conditions for successful INTERREG-Programmes and genuine cross-border impact and results can be described as follows:

- a joint programme does not mean two national programmes "stuck together" or drawn up on one side of the border and then submitted to the partner for comments;
- cross-border programmes have to develop together right from the outset, this is the only way to avoid legal, financial and psychological barriers from the beginning;
- joint implementation/management requires partnership. All partners within the cross-border area and at national level have to be taken on board;
- joint monitoring/steering committees have to be established for each programme taking joint decisions;
- a joint bank account for the EU-funds (in most advanced cases even for the national/regional co-financing rate) guarantees genuine cross-border projects;
- genuine cross-border projects require joint development, joint implementation/management (Lead Partner Principle), joint staff and joint financing.

Advantage and role of a cross-border structure (Euroregion-like or similar structure)

To establish a cross-border structure is not an objective by its own. A structure should always follow the task identified before and not vice versa.

The need of a cross-border structure becomes evident because:

- sovereignty rights of two neighbouring states meet at the border;
- but no state has a cross-border sovereignty;
- different competences, structures, laws, social systems, spatial planning remain to exist, and collide at the borders;
- no state will ever change its competences, structures etc. only on behalf of border regions or continental integration (asymmetries will remain);
- even if a state wants to do so, it will not be able to succeed (even if everything is harmonised with one neighbour, this does not mean this solution can be adopted by other neighbours).

It can be concluded that it makes no sense to compare competences, structures etc., or trying to harmonise them. Actors would only lose years without concrete results. Because there is a need to cooperate, it has to be done despite those barriers that continue to exist.

The advantage of a cross-border structure is to be an instrument responsible for cooperation with a single objective "cross-border cooperation". This structure is able to take joint decisions and serves as a platform to offer solutions for all partners on both sides of a border. It is equipped with more administrative and legal capacity as well as liability (important to implement EU-programmes in a decentralised way) than any organisation based on private law.

One mistake which can be encountered in the EU very often is to consider such a cross-border structure from a national point of view and to compare it with an administration with competences. A cross-border structure is not a new administrative level, but only an instrument to cooperate, a catalyst to balance different competences and structures on both sides of the border. And CBC is not a question of competences. Its aim is to perform necessary cross-border tasks (in close partnership with the national authorities concerned) for the benefit of the people living in the border regions. This understanding of CBC is a great help to avoid misunderstandings on the role of a cross-border structure and to overcome legal barriers.

The establishment of a legal cross-border structure can hardly be achieved in a short time period. In Europe bilateral/trilateral treaties for CBC needed 5-7 years, especially if they allow cooperation based on public law. The whole process to develop a legal instrument applicable in all states like in the European Union (the case of the EGTC, the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation) lasted even 30 years.

So, practical arrangements are needed for cross-border structures. They can be concluded in a short time based on private law. This is possible by setting up two associations (with regional and/or local authorities as members) on both sides of the border following public law, with their registered offices in the states concerned. These two associations can conclude a cross-border agreement in line with private law to allow CBC.

The role of cross-border structures (whether based on private or public law) can be described as follows:

- they serve as a platform, turntable, and motor for all cross-border tasks and contacts, keeping cooperation alive in a permanent way;
- they advocate all cross-border issues and daily border problems;
- they offer solutions for cross-border problems;
- they focus on cross-border services for citizens, public services, economic and social partners;
- they mobilise and strongly involve all politicians at all levels;
- they are responsible to implement cross-border strategies/programmes;
- they have to look for the necessary joint financial resources to implement programmes and projects.

Taking joint decisions (whether in a private or public structure) means, in practice, that these decisions have to be implemented by the partners within their respective already existing national competences and structures on both sides of a border.

This working method always depends on a functional partnership. Partnership within a decentralised structure requires:

- External partnership with the national governments on both sides of the border, because of political, strategic and financial reasons. National plans/programmes have to be taken into account. Political and financial support is needed.
- Internal partnership in order to involve all actors within a cross-border area (economic, social, cultural actors, public authorities and equivalent bodies, NGOs) to mobilise already available knowledge at national level for CBC.

Handling partnership in this way will avoid any conflict of competences and will not build up new bureaucratic structures.

The definition of a cross-border area is not purely depending on administrative and geographical factors. In Europe most partners cooperate because they have identified joint interests/concerns, joint issues and problems.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations (to organizations actively promoting regional economic development in the area) on how best to allocate resources to promote development and interregional cooperation there.

The European Commission tries to strengthen the contents of its agreements with Western Africa, bilaterally or in the framework of already existing integration structures. But the

process of cross-border cooperation could be very slowly developed without the participation of sub-national and non-governmental actors. European experiences clearly demonstrate the regional and local level to be the most appropriate ones to implement cross-border projects and programmes, if they act in close partnership with the national authorities on both sides of the border.

It would be essential, that public authorities involve from the very beginning all stakeholders, non-governmental organisations, etc. while developing cross-border projects and strategies/programmes. All actors of all sectors on both sides of the border have to become engaged in cross-border cooperation. This is the best way to use the existing knowledge of these actors and to give them an important role while creating a sustainable platform for cross-border cooperation, as well as to inform and mobilise them for national strategic policies in favour of border areas.

The empowerment of sub-national levels in the implementation of cross-border cooperation projects and programmes, and their ownership of the outputs, would be helpful to enhance the impact of cross-border cooperation strategies and their sustainability. Cross-border cooperation can be the best example of South-South cooperation, putting border areas more central. Based on this outline, the key cross-border actors should be selected for a first approach.

Due to the fact that a provisional selection of case study areas was already suggested in the application, the AEBR has already made contacts amongst qualified practitioners in these areas, representing the empirical cases that could complete a feasible, consistent and qualified “target group” for the analysis. The provisional list of stakeholders that shall be included in the “target group” has been drawn up.

Key cross-border actors

- Supranational, national, and sub-national authorities;
- universities and research institutes,
- enterprises from selected economic sectors,
- social and cultural organisations (local NGOs),
- European institutions and NGOS.

A stronger input of the European Commission to promote regional policies in Africa would play a crucial role. The efforts of DG REGIO are very much encouraging, but a stronger involvement of other relevant EC departments, e.g. the European External Action Service (EEAS) and EuropeAid, is very much needed.

Modern tools like the Internet or videoconference facilitate enormously the contacts, but not everywhere there are technology and skills enough to perform correct electronic communication practices. It is very much recommended to establish political contacts, face to face, between European politicians and experts engaged in CBC and the competent authorities of the target countries. This would pave the way for the exchange of information and staff. The meeting of experts from both sides in order to identify, articulate, implement

and monitor successful CB activities often need to take the form of person-to-person contact, especially in early stages.

The participation of the AEBR and other European regional associations, as well as their partners in developing countries, can offer expertise and good practises in the process of capacity building in these areas of the world, where sustainable and systematic territorial cooperation has not yet been achieved. Actually, there is great working field in **knowledge and training**, and in the implementation of **permanent structures for CBC**.

Here there is a set of objectives defined to guide the different activities and the expected outputs:

- Short-term objectives:

- Recommendations to improve decentralised cross-border cooperation through partnership between the respective local, regional, national authorities and the supranational level.
- Start a process to increase capacities of national, regional and local actors, as well as private partners in cross-border cooperation.

- Mid-term objectives:

- Establishment of a series of steps to increase national, regional and local capacities for cross-border cooperation.
- Development of multi-annual strategy/programme and project management skills to contribute to institutional strengthening.

- Long-term objective:

- Structural approach to the regional integration process (e.g. through a Western African Interreg) and the extension to other African RECs

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) will create sustainable added value and contribute to (West) African integration becoming therefore the cement of a “African House”. In order to succeed, existing back-to-back situations in this process of integration must be transformed into a “face to face” relationship, while respecting the national sovereignties. Barriers have to be overcome and prejudices too.

Decentralised CBC at regional/local level in partnership with national governments and supra-national organisations is the most suitable instrument to pave the way for a new quality of borders as meeting places offering a wide range of opportunities. At the same time there is a chance to transform the national peripheral situation of border areas in West Africa into a more favourable internal position within the continent. CBC is not about abolishing borders, but reducing them to administrative limits like those between provinces and departments.

Based on this background, in the recommendations short-term objectives (concrete projects, need of decentralised cooperation, establishment of partnerships, informal structures for CBC in general); mid-term objectives (to increase local/regional/national capacities for sustainable CBC, to elaborate joint strategies/programmes and projects, as well as strengthening cross-border institutions); and long-term objectives (with a view to a regional integration process throughout Africa) are developed.

Many current and potential key actors in the process have been identified:

- National, regional and local authorities, from both side of the (selected) borders;
- supranational structures;
- universities and research institutes,
- enterprises from selected economic sectors,
- social and cultural organisations,
- trade unions and employers organisations(as feasible),
- third sector organisations in concrete cases;
- organisations responsible for infrastructures.

CBC depends many times on individuals who can belong to the groups listed above, but they can also act on behalf of other entities, or even on an individual basis, to promote concrete CBC activities. In annex III there is a comprehensive list of contacted individuals.

6.1 Action plan specific for the two case studies

The relevance of the European expertise in cross-border cooperation has been used for an action plan with concrete proposals concerning:

- capacity building needs and targeted training;
- the creation or activation of working groups in selected border areas in order to establish permanent structures for cross-border cooperation;
- the development of common strategies/programmes and projects;
- the promotion of partnership and subsidiarity (bottom-up approach and multilevel governance);
- the exchange of best practices in Africa and with the EU.

The SWOT analysis has provided the basis to elaborate a road map for CBC in the territories under study, using main results, outcomes and conclusions.

The recommendations given in this chapter can be implemented in the short-, mid- as well as in the long-term.

6.1.1 Concrete projects

Case 1

Case 2

Case 3

6.1.2 Short-term and mid-term action plan

The growing interest in cross-border cooperation (CBC) in West Africa and the information about the prior results achieved in many European border areas pave the way along some border areas. The main objective is to enhance CBC in this area by exchanging information and staff and securing the transit from individual cross-border activities to a more strategic programmatic approach (sustainability). The tasks to implement an integrated and sustained activity in order to protect and develop cross-border initiatives in this area should be done by institutions at regional/local and national level (multi-level governance and subsidiarity), if possible with the support of supra-national organisations as well as other non-public actors (partnership). The stronger involvement of sub-national and non-governmental actors will speed up the process in a favourable way, because the potentials of border regions are far away from being fully used, neither in socio-cultural or socio-economic terms.

While giving advice based on the European experience, it has to be taken into account that the framework conditions in West Africa differ in political, historical, economic, bilateral, social and geographical terms. But there are key elements for successful CBC in Europe that can be adapted to the needs on the ground and can also be used in the area of the case studies:

- Step-by step development (first the tasks, then the structure).
- Strengthening of regional and local tasks and responsibilities.
- Strategic/ programmatic approach.
- Real joint projects.
- A permanent working structure per cross-border area (informal, later formal) as the main player (with joint decision making bodies, joint secretariat and staff).
- Own joint financial resources).

This requires the following framework conditions and steps:

- The political will of all states concerned.
- Bottom-up approach, where regional/local actors are playing the main role in partnership with the national government (external partnership, avoiding conflicts of competences).
- Involvement of politicians at all levels from both sides of the border to build up lobby in favour of CBC.

- Hands-on participation of all actors in both sides of the border (public/private and public-equivalent bodies, NGOs, etc.) in order to create a solid basis for CBC by using already existing knowledge on both sides of the border (internal partnership, avoiding conflicts of competences).
- The awareness that socio-cultural cooperation is as important as economic cooperation (and often a precondition for successful CBC as a whole).
- In the starting phase, informal cooperation based on private law.
- At the end, creation of permanent cross-border structures based on public law.

By introducing these key elements and establishing the framework conditions, it has to be underlined again that a cross-border structure is not a new administrative level, but only an instrument for CBC to balance existing and remaining differences at national level along a border (laws, competences, structures, etc.). And CBC is not a question of competence but of implementing necessary cross-border tasks for the benefit of the population living at the border area and, at the end, for the benefit of the national governments concerned as well.

The idea to harmonise existing differences at national level has to be rejected, because like in the EU, also in West Africa this will not be possible, and it will only produce frustration and loss of time to start with the CBC process.

The AEBR recommends using the following instruments:

- permanent advisory support and training;
- exchange of experiences on best practices and information;
- workshops/seminars, including targeted training;
- international conferences.

Permanent advisory support and training should last over 3-5 years. It has to be secured by a team of experts with European-wide practical and strategic expertise in CBC (drafting and implementing joint cross-border programmes and projects, cross-border legal aspects and structures, evaluation) together with West African experts. Without this practical and European-wide experience the aim "to help actors at regional/local level to help themselves" cannot be achieved and consultants will remain the main actors in the field of CBC.

A multi-annual approach is needed as well. The experience in Europe shows that, in the "old" EU, CBC developed quite fast with targeted training by qualified experts over more than one decade. Under the regulation of PHARE-CBC and TACIS-CBC programmes in the new member states and third countries, the period for training and advice lasted only a few months, while the need for support was much stronger. And many different experts with strong varying ideas for CBC have been involved. As a result advice and training were not consistent, stopped after one year at most, and were not completed. People on the ground contributed with some new expertise, but also very different practices, and were always expecting a new contract. Most of them finally left to other jobs where they could capitalise

their knowledge. And, when advice and training started up again after the break, they have to be implemented from zero.

In the following text, a consistent training programme to enhance regional and local competences and to achieve a more strategic approach in CBC involving all partners from both sides of the border is described.

Priorities

- Short missions to the individual border regions in order to work out a Position Paper with an Action Plan for the individual border areas as soon as possible.
- Short-term creation of bilateral/trilateral Working Groups in every border area.
- Training of the working groups in basic CBC questions using best European practice.
- Systematic training of working groups to develop common projects and applications.
- Training of working groups with regard to the elaboration of common strategies and programmes.
- Development of common cross-border structures as well as a joint secretariat.
- Creation of vertical and horizontal partnerships, i.e. with national governments and social partners on both sides and across the border.

Activities

- The main activities are to be developed by the border regions themselves. The objective is to establish CBC based in cross-border structures and working groups, which is able to become active permanently. Own activities are a precondition to obtain external assistance.
- Work concentrated on the needs of the regional and local partners on the ground.
- During the period 1990–2001, the AEBR advised and trained practically all partners in INTERREG-, PHARE-CBC- and TACIS-CBC-programmes with the support of EU Funds. Therefore, specialists with a unique knowledge of CBC are available. Furthermore, practitioners from border regions could be mobilised in special cases.
- Working groups and structures should stay active themselves in those periods when external experts are absent. External experts need to be on the ground especially at the starting period for a systematic training during several days.
- The coordination with other partners will be secured in a Steering Committee.
- Association(s) for Cross-Border Cooperation should be promoted in Africa, like the well as their cooperation with other related platforms, national associations of municipalities and regions, and similar structures in other continents.

Brief description of the instruments:

- *Networking*: range of activities with practitioners, experts, social partners at local and regional level and other representatives of border regions actively exchanging

experience. This includes feedback from the border regions concerning strategies, programmes, financial engineering, projects and cross-border structures/organisations; and information advice to the border regions regarding good practice.

- *Information*, training activities and technical assistance: transfer of know-how, advisory missions, workshops, seminars, annual conferences, publications (e.g. handbooks, practical guides, info-sheets) concerning development of actions (e.g. cross-border concepts, structures, projects).
- *Management*: could be done by the AEBC in close consultation and partnership with the partners involved and other stakeholders. The management functions include work planning, coordination, monitoring, etc.

Besides, capacity building at regional/local level and a more sustainable and strategic CBC the following practical results can be achieved step by step:

- stronger bottom-up approach;
- better distribution of tasks and responsibilities;
- genuine cross-border programmes and projects;
- solutions for daily border problems;
- solutions for social problems;
- improving CBC of SMEs;
- development of new CBC between manufacturers and suppliers;
- intensified cooperation in sectors like health, environment, innovation and research; and tourism;
- improved cooperation in education, especially bilingual schools in some border areas;
- stronger role of universities through cooperation in targeted analyses and studies (cross-border infrastructure, environment, diversification of economy, service sector, development of city centres, spatial planning);
- creation of a network for a cross-border labour market through cooperation between workers, trade unions and public authorities;
- promotion of cross-border vocational training and the mutual acknowledgement of national qualifications;
- creation of cross-border commercial sites;
- long-term cross-border development plans taken into account in national programmes;
- CBC between police, customs and border police departments.

In the first phase it is recommended to initiate a parallel process, because targeted training and the elaboration of cross-border strategies/programmes takes time. In the meantime, concrete cross-border projects (see 6.1.1) and other actions coming out from the SWOT analysis can be drafted and implemented. Otherwise nothing will happen in this phase and as a result there would be a strong frustration of actors and citizens on the ground coming with high expectations.

The whole process has to be accompanied by a range of concrete steps to be taken at local/regional, national and supra-national level.

In the ... area (...) and along the ...-... border a cross-border organisation/association (having as members regional and local authorities) has to be established for each area in order to avoid duplication of structures. It will be responsible for managing and coordinating all cross-border activities (political responsibility). The objective will be not to do everything by oneself, but to establish a strong external and internal partnership, to build up a political lobby and to mobilise all actors (and their knowledge) from both sides of the border in favour of CBC (e.g. forming bilateral working groups in all fields of activities where private actors are playing a major role).

In each province/department being a member of such a cross-border organisation/association, one full time person has to be responsible exclusively for CBC.

At national level one department should be the overall responsible body for territorial cooperation with the main focus on CBC. Also, in this department one person has to be designated to deal exclusively with CBC and coordinate all cross-border activities within the government. National funds earmarked for border and cross-border activities have to be provided on a multi-annual basis.

The departments responsible for customs and border control have to secure, together with the respective ministry in the neighbouring country, a joint training programme for staff, to provide the necessary electronic equipment, to allow joint border facilities, etc.

The role of the EU is to encourage and facilitate the whole process through intensifying political contacts and allocation of some financial resources enabling the implementation of the recommendations. In a first step the EU-activities will be concentrated on providing advice, training, exchange of staff and politicians. But, in the long run, advice and training will not be enough to cover the high expectations placed in Europe

6.2 Road map for the development of cross-border cooperation in West Africa

Main lessons learned and best European practice (dynamics of territorial cooperation through EU Regional Policy support and national/regional/local co-financing) have been used to draft a road map, with concrete proposals regarding:

- Creation or activation of working groups in the selected border areas, with strong institutional support, in order to establish permanent structures for CBC
- Addressing capacity building needs, with concrete measures regarding exchange of best practices in Africa, with the EU and with other parts of the world, e.g. with Latin America.
- Development of common concepts, strategies, programmes and projects, through appropriate training of key stakeholders
- Focus on the governance and coordination model (promoting a multi-level approach)

Legal framework and capacity Building

One of the main tasks to be accomplished by international institutions is the support to African continental and sub-continental (regional) integration processes. Within them there are very promising CBC initiatives, particularly in the case of the African Union, ECOWAS or UEMOA. A concrete mission should be the support to the establishment of a (West) African legal framework for CBC in the sense of the Madrid Outline Convention¹⁴. In fact, many are asking for such an instrument in Africa for more the times of the Madrid Outline Convention. The AU is also determined to launch an African legal instrument for CBC. These supranational institutions and other organizations, think-tanks and NGOs, both from Africa and from Europe, have produced very valuable analyses with very similar conclusions in most of the cases: the need to implement a concrete African-European partnership to promote territorial cooperation, particularly cross-border, focused on **capacity building**. The EU institutions and CBC networks can design, together with African actors, a strategic framework to implement legal regulations for CBC and a capacity building programme to fulfil main need. European border and cross-border regions can also offer a great support in this task due to their knowledge and expertise in defining, implementing and evaluating CBC practices. European experts can take part, together with their African peers, in a huge capacity building programme to be supported by the EU's and the Members states' official aid.

Delimitation and Demarcation

Meanwhile, another main task in African border, which still is to take considerable time, debate and resources, is **delimitation and demarcation**, a pre-requisite to launch sound CBC strategies. Many efforts have been implemented already and the number of delimited and demarcated borderlines increased dramatically in the last years. Some financial contribution from European aid agencies would be very convenient, as well as technological support to use the possibilities offer by satellite systems and the building of accessible communication networks.

...

Integration is one of the main objectives of many supra-national organisations and associations existing in West Africa. It goes without saying that integration needs regional development taking into account social and economic conditions. And integration is closely connected to cross-border cooperation (CBC), a laboratory for integration at continental level, and the instrument to implement development along borders. At the same time, the development of CBC is closely linked to supra-national, national and sub-national processes in West Africa where Multi-level Governance and Subsidiarity are key issues.

CBC in West Africa should be implemented at local, regional, and national level with the support of supra-national organisations as well as by the participation of the economic sector (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) and non-public actors (civil society) following the Principle of

¹⁴ The *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities and Authorities* was approved by the Council of Europe on 21st May 1980 in Madrid and is commonly known as the Madrid Outline Convention. Its three Additional Protocols complete a historical hint for CBC in the wide territory covered by the Council's 47 Member states.

Partnership. But the relevance of the sub-national level still needs to grow within the whole development cycle of this regional integration process (bottom-up approach).

There is a need of genuine cross-border programmes, projects and structures to strengthen social and economic cohesion without affecting sovereignty rights. Actually, West and Southern Africa are great working fields in knowledge and training, as well as in the implementation of permanent structures for CBC. Europe has cumulated an enormous experience in this regard (EU institutions, Member States, participating border and cross-border regions, EGTCs, associations, etc.), therefore a stronger process of cooperation in territorial development between the EU and the African Union (and RECs) would be very helpful.

As in many other fields, some countries can play a leading role in the promotion of Territorial Cohesion and Subsidiarity by CBC in the continent. The dialogue between national and EU authorities should be followed by some practical implementation.

This road map needs a territorial vision to enhance (West) African integration and regional development by CBC. It describes step-by-step how to proceed with CBC in West Africa through short-, mid-, and long-term activities.

Short-term (by the end of 2010 and 2011)

- At the very beginning concentration on the area of ECOWAS and its members having already regional development and cross-border cooperation (CBC) in their agendas.
- Realisation of concrete cross-border projects (with external assistance):
 - ...;
 - ...;
 - ...;
 - ...;
 -
- Exchange of politicians and staff.
- Establishment of a cross-border organisation/association and targeted training in the area of the two case studies (see chapter 6.1.2 for a proposed way to proceed).
- In parallel, stronger bilateral relations between the EU (Commission, Parliament, Committee of the Regions) should be established with other the African Union, ECOWAS and some members (Mali, Burkina, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal) in order to prepare the ground for further implementation of regional development and CBC in West Africa.
- First seminars and conferences in missing areas, offering quite favourable conditions for CBC among themselves and also with more experienced countries, focussing on information, initial capacity building, European experiences and best practice coming from the two case studies.

- Elaboration of cross-border statutes based on private law.

River and Lake basins need a specific approach, as they develop an own integration process. Some long-lasting conflicts are in their way to be solved, with the intervention of the International Court of Justice, but other obstacles do not (trafficking). In any case, there is a general feeling that CBC will generate sustainable benefits for people living in border areas, with the added value of joint protection of natural resources, and subsequent benefits for participating countries. There are already bilateral and multi-lateral agreements, showing a strong institutional commitment at national level, but the participation of the sub-national level is still too reduced. A stronger support to ongoing processes of local development, stressing decentralization and CBC interventions, is needed within their main development strategies.

Mid-term (2012-2014)

- Targeted training (see chapter 6.1.2) will be organised in selected areas:
 - ...;
 - ...;
 -
- First cross-border initiatives and concrete activities in the following areas:
 - ...;
 - ...;
 - ...;
 - in regions where the preconditions for CBC from the geographic point of view and regarding the population density are rather unfavourable: the river basins of the Niger and the Senegal.
- The legislation of border activities in all countries has to be ensured.
- Bi- and trilateral treaties between national governments concerned in favour of territorial cooperation.
- Strengthening of a “(West) African Cross-Border Association” as a platform and lobby for all border regions.

Long-term (end 2014-2016)

- Further strengthening of the role of the AU, ECOWAS and other RECs on the implementation of free trade and free movement of persons, goods, services and knowledge.
- A supra-national financial framework for territorial cooperation in different RECs with a main focus on CBC (like INTERREG), assuring multi-annual implementation of territorial programmes.

- Elaboration of a legal instrument for territorial cooperation, applicable throughout (West) Africa (voluntary, not obligatory).
- Building of sub-national authorities' capacities to manage cross-border programmes and projects by themselves.

Bibliography:

SWAC:

- Cross-border Diaries - regional magazine on cross-border realities
- Food Security and Cross-Border Trade in the Kano-Katsina-Maradi (K²M) Corridor, joint mission report, July 2006
- Synthesis of Sikasso workshop proposals (French - 1,1 Mb)
- Cross-Border Directory: Sikasso, Korhogo and Bobo Dioulasso (French - 4,6 Mb)
- "Kurumba" Community Radio Stations Network (French - 1,6 Mb)
- Towards a Euro-African Dialogue on Cross-Border Co-operation, by Karim Dahou, March 2004

(to be completed)