

ACCLIMATE

ADAPTATION AU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE
un projet de la Commission de l'Océan Indien

2008.2012



On account of their insular character, the member countries of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) share a “natural” fragility when they face the impacts of climate change. This phenomenon, which is already perceptible, will doubtless grow and do lasting damage to the environment, the economy and the means of subsistence of our populations, threatening thus the delicate balance of the States of the region and influencing the durability of their development. In 2008, the five member countries of the IOC decided to launch a structured initiative of adaptation to climate change in order to **better understand the climate changes on a regional scale, identify the vulnerabilities in countering climate change and outline a regional strategy for an effective adaptation and development opportunities**. This is how Acclimate, the first project of this kind in the region, was set up, initially for three years but this period was subsequently extended up to the end of 2012.

Provide keys to the understanding and analysis of climate change

The climatic warming is a complex global phenomenon which manifests itself by its impacts on a local scale. Before launching tangible and significant actions of adaptation, the project Acclimate started by carrying out fundamental studies to identify the challenges and major issues of adaptation to climate change in the region. The regional climatic tendencies of the last forty years have been identified and, consequently, the weaknesses by sector (water, agriculture, infrastructure, biodiversity etc) in each country and on a regional scale. Other studies and complementary work have made an inventory of the national early-warning systems in the event of natural disasters, have appraised the feasibility of a meteorological regional database, of a regional project of research on the climate and a specific climate model, and have integrated the climatic issue in a regional protocol for the integrated management of coastal zones, drawn up by the secretariat of the Nairobi Convention.

Sensitize, Train, Share Knowledge

At the same time, Acclimate supports training, information and communication activities. The Internet site, devised to serve the countries of the IOC, and revamped as a regional portal in September 2011, is a platform for an exchange of views and information on the means and ways of adapting to climate change. At the beginning of 2011, a regional competition “100 photos to adapt to climate change” was organized to sensitize the populations on the urgency of a mobilization. The 32 award-winning photos (more than 500 were received in one month) are displayed on a touring exhibition in the islands of the IOC and they help to make people think and exchange views on the topic.

Priorities for 2012

The project coming to an end in 2012, the team that has worked on it intends to devote all its energy to consolidate what has been acquired in the first three years, to have the preliminary draft for a regional strategy to adapt to climate change ratified politically, to capitalize on studies carried out, and to start a training on the means of accessing special financing to adapt to climate change, in synergy with the project ISLANDS (IOC) and the research and tertiary education activities of the IOC.

Acclimate is co-financed by the French Global Environment Facility (*Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial*), the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (*Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes: MAEE*), the French Agency for Development (*Agence française de développement: AFD*) and Reunion Region (*Région Réunion*).



Under the impact of climate change, the decrease in rainfall increases the problem of access to water, a problem which affects more the rural and underprivileged populations.
Venue: Akadinandry Sakay (Madagascar)
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The activities of the project and the actions underlying them fit in 4 great components:

1. Understanding climate change. Setting up a regional climate network and integrating it in the specialised international community.
2. Appraising and updating the vulnerabilities to climate change. Spheres coming under the regional cooperation.
3. Defining regional policies and measures for adaptation. Contributing to networking, training and communication.
4. Coordinating the project. Specific expertise. Monitoring and capitalisation. Communication.

For lack of coordinated regional approach as regards to the adaptation to climate change and in the face of a shared need for the member countries of the I.O.C to improve their understanding of the issues and knowledge in this domain, Acclimate started a series of studies intended to be tools to help the authorities in their decisions.

► **Workshop ETCCDI - Analyse the regional climatic tendencies**

The workshop, which gave birth to this study in October 2009, consisted of aggregating and homogenizing regional meteorological data, and determining the signs of climate change. It was organized by Acclimate and run with the technical support of the group of experts of ETCCDI (Expert Team on Climate Change Detection Indices) and the national meteorological services. This made it possible to compare the national meteorological data with one another and thus determining the climate trends of the region during the last forty years.

Dates: Preparation of the workshop from March to October 2009. Holding of the workshop from 19 to 23 October 2009.

► **Surveys of vulnerability to climate change**

The consultants firm Asconit-Pareto, which was given the task of carrying out these studies, analysed the degree of vulnerability of a set of sectors of activities (agriculture, fishing, biodiversity, health, infrastructure, transport, tourism, etc) in each member country of the IOC. After that, it made recommendations while taking into account the specific capacity of adaptation of each country and the measures already taken.

This process took place in 3 successive stages, each one giving rise to various productions, training and information activities, national and regional meetings as well as a number of publications in several magazines. It led to the handing-in, during the second half of the year 2011, of 5 studies of vulnerabilities (one by member country), that allowed to compare the state of the countries as to their vulnerabilities and capacities of adaptation. These studies made it possible to outline a regional strategy of adaptation to climate change which was handed in December 2011.

► **Elaboration of a protocol on integrated management of coastal zones – GIZC**

(order to IDDRI)

The regional system of the Western part of the Indian Ocean, governed by the Convention of Nairobi, started drawing up a GIZC Protocol, in January 2008, on the model of the one adopted by the Mediterranean States. The aim of this document is to ensure a better consistency between the development objectives, the exigencies of protecting the coastal resources and the integration of the adaptation to climate change in the coastal zone policies. The IOC/Acclimate supports technically the drafting of this protocol. The drafting should be completed in April 2012.

► **Studies–assessment of the possibilities of regional climate simulating concerning climatic variability and extreme phenomena**

These studies, which were entrusted to Météo-France La Réunion, in partnership with Météo-France International and the Malagasy and Seychelles Meteorological Services, make it possible to take stock of the state of science and to:

- set the results of the ETCCDI workshop in the largest context of the Indian Ocean or even beyond;
- examine the feasibility of a regional and shared meteorological database;
- take stock of the climatic models applicable to the region;
- map out the main lines of a programme of regional climatic research.

These studies were carried out in July 2011 and handed in at the end of 2011.

► **Inspection of natural risks and disasters early-warning systems**

Within the context of a study for a GRNC (management of risks and natural disasters) project, the IOC placed an order with the research department “Risks and Development” to assess 4 aspects of the national capacities of the five member states of the IOC as regards regional issues and the conditions for implementing a common plan of Management of risks and natural disasters:

- Analysis and assessment of the existing early-warning systems;
- Analysis of the national plans concerning risk prevention
- Analysis of potential synergies between the existing national early-warning systems and the various initiatives and regional projects;
- Inventory of regional capacities.

The whole output of this project is available online: www.acclimate-oi.net (Productions Acclimate).

► **Programme of Information and Training**

- Organisation of a regional photo competition: 550 photos were received within 6 weeks. The 32 award-winning photos have already been exhibited in all the countries of the IOC. The idea of a competition has been taken up by the UNFCCC and by the Adaptation Fund.
- Co-organisation of a conference on the impacts of climate change for the countries of the Western Indian Ocean (an initiative of WIOMSA). It brought together 146 participants: senior civil servants, scientists, development partners, representatives of IGO's, NGO's, research institutes and private sector. This conference was a big first in giving a formal status to a dialogue between all the stakeholders in climate change in the region.
- Academic grants: 11 students of the region (except Reunion) have thus been able to follow a course leading to a Master TRN at the Universities of Antananarivo and Saint Denis.
- Website: the previous website of the project has been replaced by a subject-wise portal. The aim is to provide free services such as usefull information and knowledge sharing to the experts and observers of climate change in the countries of the IOC.
- Lobbying the institutional partners (AFD, ADB, EU etc).
- Since 2009, the attendance of the IOC at the meetings of the UNFCCC-CdP/COP allows it to better understand the process of international negotiations together with the issues facing its member countries. A course of action which might develop in 2012, taking into account the converging interests of many of its projects (Acclimate, ISLANDS, IRACC, GRCN).

2012 started with the fourth steering committee, held in Antananarivo (Madagascar) on the 8th & 9th February. At the end of these two days, the participating countries drew up the following ten recommendations, whereby they:

- Promise to send swiftly to the General Secretariat of the IOC their comments on the document of regional Strategy of adaptation to climate change.
- Suggest favouring the video-conference, as far as possible.
- Suggest contributing to the elaboration of a strategy to raise funds for the fight against climate change.
- Recognize that the member States of the IOC must have in their possession the Acclimate Studies and ask that the studies be translated into action proposals, or even implemented at local and regional levels.
- Would like to authenticate information concerning them – and of an official or sensitive nature – which might appear on the Acclimate website, and propose to specify the institutions which, at the national level, will authenticate these information (Environment Departments, Universities, Meteorological Services, Early-warning services, etc.) and to provide information on a regular basis to the project, to include the address of the project in their Mailing List.
- Would like the IOC to ensure the continuity of the Acclimate site at the level of the General Secretariat.
- Ask the IOC to raise funds to implement projects and activities identified in the national communications, the PANA, the strategies.
- Ask the IOC to support the development of a national action plan so as all the countries have an Action Plan.
- Recognise that it is important for the countries to have a common position in the region of the IOC on the fight against climate change.
- Would like the programme undertaken by the General Secretariat of the IOC in the field of adaptation to continue, either under an 'Acclimate 2' or under any other form.

It is in 2012 that the project must provide the support that certain member countries of the IOC are asking for. This support will be provided in 3 different ways which intersect and converge towards the same objective.

▶ First, in setting up a regional training on the access to 'climate change' special financing. The terms of reference of this training are ready. The IOC ISLANDS (ISIDS-MS) project and UNITAR would like to join. A first session might take place in April, a second one in September. ISLANDS would carry out the training in 2013.

▶ Secondly, in encouraging the acquisition of the Acclimate products, thanks to national workshops. The adopted methodologies allow comparisons between countries. With these products, these countries have at their disposal comparable information to understand their specificities and their common vulnerabilities, and to share a vision for the region in adapting to climate change. These workshops will be helpful to the preliminary work of the COP 18 in Qatar.

▶ Thirdly, during a regional symposium whose date is yet to be fixed by Région Réunion (the organizer), in presenting the broad lines of an 'Acclimate 2' which focuses on the lessons drawn from the regional strategy of adaptation and the needs of countries in term of equipment, training, and 'adaptation' technical support; so many aspects which could not be dealt with by Acclimate, although they are essential to the lasting reinforcement of capacities.

Finally the year will end with the COP18 at the end of November in Qatar. The project will close its accounts in December.



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To get further information

... about the activities of the project Acclimate and, broadly, about Climate Change news in the South-West of the Indian Ocean and worldwide:

www.acclimate-oi.net

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