



DJI MANSA : LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE KICK-OFF WORKSHOP

June 2024

INTRODUCTION

On 12 June 2024, AFR'EAU (Action-Formation-Recherche en Eau) and its consortium partners successfully launched DjiMansa, meaning Water Masters in Bambara- project. More than 100 participants, mainly from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, but also the Netherlands, Ghana and Canada joined the session. The theme of this hybrid event was "Citizen science for the preservation of water resources". On behalf of the Ministry of Energy and Water, Mr Mouhamed Oumar Cissé, head of the PACSRE project at the Direction Nationale

de l'Hydraulique, stressed the importance of the role of local communities in water management.

The event was marked by a speech by Almamy Ibrahim Koureissi, President of the Bozo Kabou Association, who invited the various stakeholders to support the Dji Mansa project, and confirmed Bozo Kabou's commitment to playing its part in demonstrating the place of the Bozo (Mali) and Sorko (Niger) ethnicities in preserving the quality of the water in the River Niger.



PRESENTATION OF THE DJI MANSA PROJECT

The Dji Mansa project, launched by AFR'EAU and its partners (SOMAGEP SA, ENI ABT, AJPEA Mali, AJPEA Niger), is funded by IHE DELFT. Its main aim is to promote citizen science to monitor water quality. According to project coordinator Hadi Touré Guindo, the project aims to shed light on the practices of local Bozo and Sorko communities and the measures they are putting in place to preserve the water quality of the River Niger. The project will run for 18 months and will focus on three areas:

- Partnerships and joint learning ;
- Research and advocacy;
- Capacity building



SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

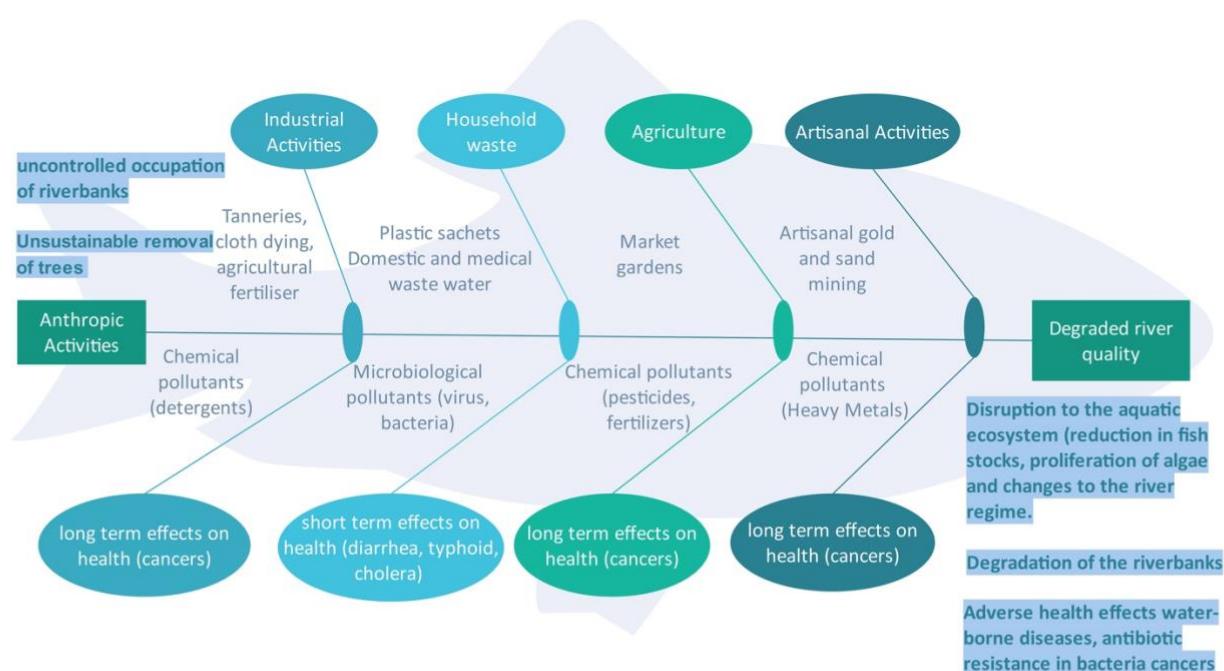
Participants also heard presentations from Dr Junias Adusei-Gyamfi, from Kwame Nkrumah University in Kumasi, on the concept of citizen science and the experience in Ghana, and from Ms Khadijatou Traoré, student and co-author of the Cart'eau study on mapping wastewater collectors in the District of Bamako, Mali. These practical examples of data collection and local community involvement aroused the curiosity of the participants during the question and answer session. Discussions focused on the effectiveness of citizen science in enhancing traditional knowledge, disseminating the results of scientific research outside the academic world, and increasing the frequency of data collection.

SUMMARY OF GROUP WORK

The various stakeholders brought together for the launch came from civil society, governmental and non-governmental bodies, academia and riverside communities. Five working groups were set up, with each group including at least two members from the riverside settlements.



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE POLLUTION OF THE NIGER RIVER



SOLUTIONS TO PRESERVE THE NIGER RIVER

01 Application of laws and texts

- Urbanisation and protection of riverbanks (against illegal activity)
- The water code (texts for the application of the polluter pays principle)
- Enforcement of the water police

Adoption of biodegradable water sachets

02 Awareness raising

- Grass-root awareness raising committees within riverside communities
- Environmental content within the education system

03 Wastewater management

- Construction of wastewater and fecal sludge treatment plants
- Construction of sewer network
- Recycling of wastewater and river hyacinth into compost

04 Inclusion

- presentation of project and research results
- involvement of community authorities and chieftains in land management
- Adoption of an inclusive and participatory strategy of all the actors and users in the preservation of water resources.

CLOSING REMARKS:

The participants discussed the natural indicators of pollution in the river. In addition to the water hyacinth, users also mentioned the presence of "Nalo" (Bambara for canvas).

The ceremony ended with an evaluation and recommendations session. The fishermen were keen to demonstrate their fishing techniques. They also voiced their concern that the scarcity of fish was reducing their income.



RECOMMENDATIONS :

Participatory approach: Users want to be involved in the implementation of the project in order to ensure the sustainability and continuity of efforts. It was suggested that suitable methods/procedures be adopted or even "co-created" by the various stakeholders.

Large-scale awareness-raising: Each participant is required to raise awareness of the harmful effects of polluting practices on the health and survival of the populations whose income-generating activities depend on the River Niger.

Call to action: Everyone was invited to play their part in preserving the river, which represents a vital resource, and not to give in to corruption/(bribing) in favour of the common interest. The users also offered to take the project to the highest authorities in order to maximise its chances of success and gain their support.

The participants thanked the initiators of the project for this initiative and the approach taken. There was no shortage of words to encourage AFR'EAU in its approach. Some were quick to point out the complexity of the mission that the Djé Mansa consortium has set itself, but remained optimistic that together we can all make a real impact.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS IN THE DJI MANSA CONSORTIUM

WATER AND
DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAMME

IHE
DELFT

Institute for
Water Education
under the auspices
of UNESCO



Association des Jeunes
Professionnels de l'Eau et
de l'Assainissement du Mali



● AFR'EAU

AFR'EAU is an association created in 2022 that carries out action-based interventions, training young professionals and applied research in water management. AFR'EAU's role is to coordinate and bring together the various players and members of the project consortium.

<https://afreau.org/>

● AJPEA MALI

The Association des Jeunes Professionnels de l'Eau et l'Assainissement (AJPEA) is a young, non-political, non-profit organisation created in 2013. It works to promote and strengthen the leadership of young people in the WASH sector in Mali.

<https://www.ajpeamali.com/>

● SOMAGEP SA

The Société Malienne de Gestion de l'Eau Potable was created in August 2010, with the task of operating and distributing drinking water throughout the country. It is responsible for the professional integration of young trainees recruited as part of the implementation of the project.

● AJPEA NIGER

With the same acronym as AJPEA Mali, it works to facilitate access to water and sanitation for the population of Niger. Officially recognised in 2023, it has carried out WASH awareness-raising activities, organised clean-up days and taken part in national and international WASH events.

Together, AJPEA Mali and AJPEA Niger are responsible for organising and holding exchange and awareness-raising workshops in Mali and Niger to promote the endogenous knowledge of riverside communities in terms of managing and preserving water quality.

● ENI ABT

Founded on 14 April 1939, the Ecole nationale d'ingénieurs Abderhamane Baba Touré (ENI-ABT) specialises in a number of fields, including geology and mining, water and the environment, and civil engineering.

<https://www.eni-abt.ml/formations/> The ENI ABT is responsible for providing the project with technical assistance to help it achieve its objectives, and for providing students for the internship programme.