USAID | WEST AFRICA
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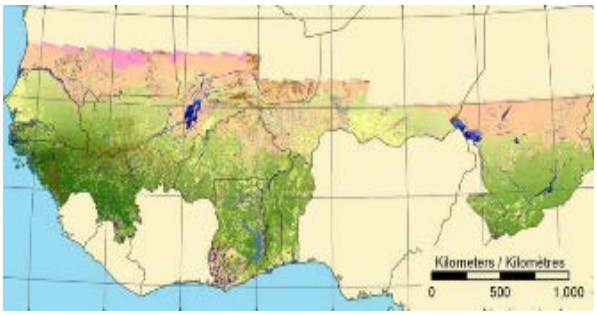
FACT SHEET

Land Use Dynamics and Adapting to Climate Change in West Africa



Goal:
Monitor land use and land cover change in West Africa

Life of Program:
2011 – March 2016

Total USAID Funding:
U.S. $3.9 million

Geographic Focus:
13 West African countries

Implementing Partners:
The United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel Agrometeorology, Hydrology and Meteorology Center (CILSS/AGRHYMET)

Background:
West African countries are experiencing change at many levels—climatic, agricultural, demographic, political and socioeconomic. As a result, a growing number of major challenges threaten the region including high climatic variability; rapidly growing populations and climate-driven land use; and human and land cover changes that result in considerable pressure on the fragile resource base. For centuries, human impact on this region was minor due to low populations, but this has dramatically changed in the last 50 years. Over the past decades ecosystem health has steadily been on the decline. Environmental changes are predicted to accelerate, with unknown and potentially serious implications for both the people and environment of West Africa. The drivers of change are very complex and knowledge of West Africa's resource rich areas remains limited. Land degradation is believed to be widespread, but to what extent is unknown. There is an urgent need to monitor the trends in West Africa's land resources so that viable and practical solutions can be implemented with a better understanding of the human impact on the environment.

Implementation:
The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is a science organization that provides information on the environment, its natural resources, and the natural hazards that threaten it. Through this USAID-funded project, the USGS will work in close partnership with the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and its technical and regional training institution, Agrometeorology, Hydrology, Meteorology, regional Center (AGRHYMET), to implement the project. CILSS has the mandate for monitoring West Africa's land resources and for generating information that can be used to address major problems including environmental degradation and increased vulnerability to climate change.

Program Objectives:
- Map land use and land cover change and associated trends from 1975-2013 for 13 West African countries.
- Document, investigate and promote successes in natural resource management and in the re-establishment of vegetation in the Sahel's landscapes in support of improved food security, increased biodiversity and adaptation to climate change.
- Monitor biologically diverse forest and protected areas in West Africa's Upper Guinean Forest eco-region.