

# ENHANCING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN TOGO

## Scaling up systems to improve disaster preparedness

### AT A GLANCE

**Country** Togo

**Risks** Development gains lost from flooding and land degradation

**Area of Engagement** Building resilience at community level, strengthening hydromet services and early warning systems

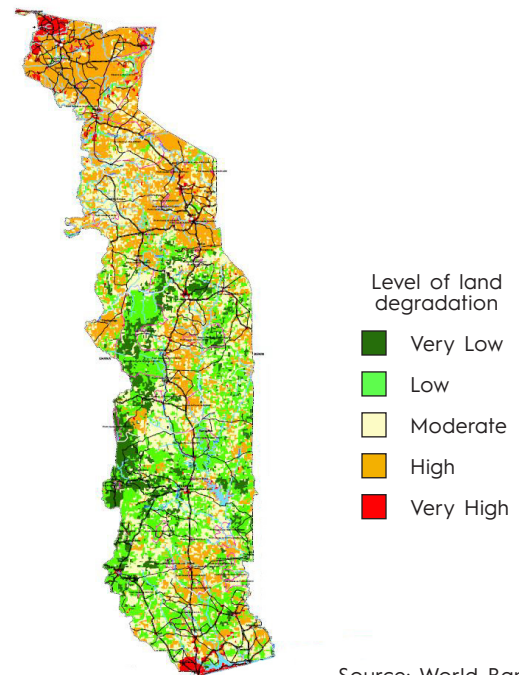
A combination of drainage system and hydromet system improvements, coupled with an extensive awareness campaign, has improved disaster preparedness in Togo and increased regional access to disaster response resources.

### AN INTENSIFIED FLOOD RISK

Recurrent floods and drought in Togo have hindered development gains and caused hardship for the population in recent years. The country experiences flooding almost every year, leaving infrastructure destroyed and land devastated. In 2008, approximately 11,688 hectares of cultivated land were washed away by the floods, four schools and eleven key bridges were destroyed, and over 300 km of rural roads were seriously damaged. Two years later, more than 82,000 people were affected by a flood following heavy rainfall, leading to extensive damages to property and livelihoods, with thousands rendered homeless and sheltered temporarily in camps and with friends and relatives. The 2010 flood resulted in over \$38 million in damages and losses, as was estimated by a GFDRR-supported post-disaster needs assessment.

Unsustainable land and forest management has exacerbated land erosion and intensified the negative impacts of climate change, in particular flooding. Land degradation affects at least 85 percent of arable land in Togo, and nearly one-third of protected land areas have been irreversibly lost in recent years or are too costly to rehabilitate. Deforestation, land degradation, and flooding constitute an intertwined problem that requires an integrated approach.

Map of land degradation in Togo (2015)



Source: World Bank

### BECOMING A REGIONAL HUB FOR DISASTER RESPONSE

To manage risk of flooding and land degradation efforts in targeted rural and urban areas, in 2013, the Togolese Ministry of Environment and Forestry launched the Integrated Disaster and Land Management (IDLm) project to work with multiple levels of stakeholders—from national platforms to community-level bodies—to improve disaster preparedness. This \$16.94 million project was funded by GFDRR (\$7.3m, including a \$3 million grant from the GFDRR-managed and EU-funded ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program), the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund (\$5.4m), the Least Developed Countries Fund (\$3.7m), and Terrafrica (\$500k).

The project focused on (i) strengthening of institutional capacity of key national, regional and local community organizations and awareness raising on risks of flooding and land degradation; (ii) community-based activities for adaptation and sustainable land management to strengthen resilience to flooding; and (iii) developing early warning, monitoring, and knowledge systems.

Sustainable land management practices were also expanded to targeted landscapes and climate vulnerable areas, and an emergency equipment warehouse in Tsevié was upgraded and rehabilitated. The facility, located 35 km from Lomé, has since become a regional hub for a variety of equipment including motor pumps, generators, and medical and specialized equipment, enabling members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to better address future emergency situations and improve disaster preparedness in the region.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders is essential for successful project implementation.

The IDLM project has played a critical role in strengthening collaboration between the Togolese government and development partners. It was instrumental in raising awareness about flooding, coastal erosion and climate change and helped initiate a dialogue between stakeholders and parties at national and local levels. This has been highlighted by the partnership agreement signed with five regionally-based agencies to support the implementation of community sub-level activities.

Combining targeted local activities with regional awareness outreach can spread best practices across the region.

The IDLM project has served as an example of how local, inclusive activities can also have an impact at the regional level. Specific activities such as the rehabilitation of the warehouse in Tsevié became a best practice example for all ECOWAS members.



Improved hydromet  
services benefit

**900,000**  
residents in  
flood-prone areas

### CITIZENS INFORMED

An extensive awareness campaign about climate change adaptation and risk reduction of land degradation and flooding reached a total of 115,000 people with the support of five NGOs and 15 radio stations in 80 schools and vulnerable areas. Activities included the training of 360 primary and secondary school teachers on how to integrate disaster risk management (DRM) in curricula, and distributing 10,000 guides on DRM and climate change adaptation.

### DRAINAGE SYSTEMS IMPROVED

As part of the project, 19 local disaster risk management platforms were established and are fully functioning. Additionally, a topographic study in vulnerable areas of Maritime and Savanes identified 87 km of drainage canals and river banks which were subsequently rehabilitated and protected.

### HYDROMET SERVICES STRENGTHENED

Each region of the country received new hydrological and meteorological data collection equipment. These improvements benefit an estimated population of 900,000 who reside in flood-prone areas, of which 37 percent are female.