

# Mauritania Technology Fosters Tradition (TFT)

## Participatory Research Mapping (PRM)

### (3) Methodology (En)

v 1, May 2004

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#### A. Introduction

The intention with this document is to provide some necessary training for Cherif and Mokhtar (for the purpose of the TFT, they will have the title of “Surveyor”). This document contains, in addition, some specific technical information connected with analysis of data.

Training and methodology deals with two broad issues, namely: (i) participant observation and (ii) fieldwork and data collection, which are addressed in sections below. Participant observation deals with our values and attitudes as field workers, and how we present ourselves to the people we want to gather data from, in order to get the best result. Fieldwork and data collection addresses the practicalities and techniques of administering data collection tools.

We want to collect different information from a broad group of people, and not just farmers and pastoralists living and/or working in the wetlands. It is true that the focus will primarily be on people in the *tamourts* and *ghats*, and these will be referred to as *respondents*. Also officials at the relevant three levels of administration (Hodh, Moughata and Commune) have relevant information, and the same applies to officials in development projects. Taken together, all these people are TFT’s *stakeholders*.

#### B. Participant observation

Participant observation means, ideally, that a person lives among a group of people (belong to ones own culture, or two another culture), to get to know that group of people well, and to function among more or less as the other members of the group. In terms of learning how that group lives, participant observation means that that this person, while being more-or-less a regular member of the group, at the same time manages to take an outside view on and observe the group as an outsider. In other words, the person at one and the same time has to be two persons: an insider and an outsider. Participant observation means the unique possibility of observing life from the inside, while still being able to analyze and understand it as an outsider.

In the context of TFT, there is no need – or indeed plans – for participant observation in this ideal sense, as we will not live in the communities in Chlim, Oum Lelle and Sawana. But the same principles apply nonetheless to the data collection we are going to do. In order to collect good data we need to be accepted by the people that we hope will provide the information.

Cherif and Mokhtar are to keep diaries of what they do, when they do it, and where they do it. Any output or results should be noted. Mistakes made and lessons learned should be noted. Thoughts about what they have done, together with any questions and/or advice for me, should be noted.

- Transparency: present all information and findings and results to all stakeholders, including those that live and work in the wetlands, the whole year or part of the year, as well as those that live permanently outside the wetlands. The latter include local and regional administration in Ayoun, managers of development projects, etc.
- The presentations of draft maps, as well as the final workshop where the final maps will be presented, are key occasions for transparency.
- An important aspect of field work and participation is that data collected and lessons learned should be given back to the respondents / local people. This is extremely

important in this project. The several sessions where draft maps as well as final maps are presented, together with the final large workshop where all stakeholders are presented (directly or indirectly) is crucial in this respect

### **C. Field work and data collection**

This section addresses fieldwork and data collection in general terms, while section D contains specific information about the various questionnaires to be administered and sketch maps to be made.

There are two main types of interactions with the TFT's stakeholders: interviews or administering of questionnaires. While interviews will be used for all stakeholders, only the people living and working in Chlim, Oum Lelle and Sawana will be administered questionnaires.

Interviews can be characterized in different ways: (i) they can be formal or informal (in the former case the setting is more or less formal, for example, one is seated around a table, while an informal interview is not), and (ii) they can be structured or unstructured (in the former there is a list of prepared questions and/or issues to be covered, and in the latter there is not), and (iii) structured interviews can be closed or open ended (in the former questions are provided with set answer alternatives, while in the latter there is much more room for the respondent to respond individually and provide his/her own answers.

Drawing sketch maps is part of an informal and unstructured interview. This is an activity that is best done in a smaller group of people.

Most questionnaires (Toponymy, Resource use, and Customary rights) will be administered in settings or situations that are partly informal and partly structured. In most cases an optimal group size will be fairly small. As for the Household survey this will be administered only to the family or household it concerns.

For other more broader and general topics, for example, what do local people think of what is happening in the wetlands, how to they perceive what TFT is and what/how it can help, a larger group of people is advisable.

#### **Introductory visit**

The purpose of this is to visit all communities/villages whose inhabitants utilize the selected wetlands, and inform everybody about why we are here, what we are doing, how we propose to involve each community in our work, how we propose to collaborate with each community, what kind of data we would like to collect, what they will get in return for collaborating with us (short-term), and how this will aid them in the long run.

#### **Administering questionnaires**

- Will all questionnaires be retrospective, i.e., how many times was a particular resource utilized/accessed the past 12 months? Likewise, should I include columns that refer to the previous year and to 2 years ago?
- How to select whom to interview?
- Administered (ideally?) to both household head and wife separately
- To be administered to all households
- [The questionnaires are discussed below]

## Asking questions

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## Eliciting responses

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## Sequencing of questionnaires and other data collection tools

- That is the order in which to administer questionnaires and sketch maps:
  1. Visit 1 – Introductory visit
  2. Visit 2 – Questionnaire 1: Socio-economic (target: individual households)
  3. Visit 3 – Questionnaire 2: Toponyms (target: (1) households that Questionnaire 1 were administered to, (2) anybody interested. Group session. Use sketch maps.)
  4. Visit 4 – Questionnaire 3: Resource use (target: individual households. Use sketch maps.)
  5. Visit 5 – Questionnaire 4: Customary law (target: (1) households that Questionnaire 1 were administered to, (2) leaders, (3) anybody. Group session. Use sketch maps.)

*Comments:* (i) The reference to visits means how many times a specific community and/or household should be visited, as well as which questionnaires should be administered and in which order, (ii) For visits 4-5, the sketch maps prepared in visits 3-4 should be brought along, to be corrected, accepted, and/or amended.

## Validation

An important part of validation is to bring output/analysis back to the respondents, and request their comments and feedback. The most important example of validation in the TFT is perhaps when the communities (and later on indeed all stakeholders) get to see the draft/finished maps and comment upon them.

## D. Questionnaires and sketch maps

The questionnaires to be used are presented below.

### Questionnaire 1: Socio-economic

- This is partly a socio-economic questionnaire and partly a census.
- To be administered to all households that were utilizing Oum Lelle and/or Sawana last year (or last season, or the past 12 months??)
- The census data will reflect the present situation, while all or most of the other information refers to the past year (meaning exactly 12 months or last season or something else?), in other words, a 1-year recall study.

See the separate document “Questionnaire 1: Socio-economic, Guidance”.

### Questionnaire 2: Toponymy

This questionnaire addresses local place names. Toponymy is the same as historical cartography. In this connection: gather also stories about place names.

To be administered together with sketch maps.

Identify: (i) place names, and (ii) places / sites of cultural and historical significance

Place names connected with the (external) border(s) of each specific wetlands should also be noted.

This will be the situation at the time of recording it (actually the permanent situation, as these names are assumed to have been existing and used for a (very) long time.

See the separate document “Questionnaire 2: Toponymy, Guidance”.

### Questionnaire 3: Resource use

Administered together with sketch maps.

Necessary to have categories of land use? For example, farming, pastoralism, gathering, and hunting?

- How to get at the variability in resource location and use, from yr. to yr.? Use columns, one for each yr?
- Will be administered *also* to people living in the wider catchment area, that is, outside the three study areas, in the case that these people utilize resources in the one or more of the study areas. This will give a qualitative indication of the extent, geographically, of resource use. Cf. note in doc “Training” on the difference between ‘village’ and ‘hamlet’, and how the latter could include habitation also by passing-through pastoralists.]
- This will be 1 yr retroactive recall (then there is the question of collecting data also for earlier yrs.?)
- Resource codes:

A – 04 – 2,3,5

*Where:* A = resource activity/type/use; 04 = the year; and 2,3,5 = community

*Comments:* (i) the year is only necessary in case data from more than one year is collected, (ii) location should be coded, for example, by reference to the toponyms, (iii) ‘community’ must be understood broadly, to cover also hamlets of sedentarized people as well as groups of pastoralists (see comment under ‘Training’).

Revised formula:

A – 04 – 1 – 2,3,5

*Where:* A = resource use (individual case of); 04 = year; 1 = location (ref. to the list of toponyms); and 2,3,5 = community

- Subsistence zones. If communities outside of the three wetlands use resources there, it makes sense that they also utilize resources elsewhere. Should this also be included in questionnaires and on (sketch) maps? I think so, otherwise the representation would be flawed / incorrect. The opposite applies: people in the communities within the wetlands likely use resources located *outside* these wetlands. For a third category of people/users, there are the pastoralists, that live in the wetlands and use resources there part of the year, as well as outside them, while living completely different and far away the rest of the year.
- Focus on both subsistence and cash-earning activities.
- To include questions on:
  1. Type of resource
  2. Location (name [toponymy], direction, distance, location relative to other environmental features and/or to cultural features.

### 3. How often accessed/use (times/trips/visits per (each?) month

See the separate document “Questionnaire 3: Resource use, Guidance”.

### **Questionnaire 4: Customary rights**

Administered together with sketch maps

- This will be the situation at the time of recording it (actually the permanent situation, as these names are assumed to have existed and been used for a (very) long time.

See the separate document “Questionnaire 4: Customary rights, Guidance”.

### **Sketch maps**

Sketch maps are cognitive maps

They are neither geometrically precise nor inclusive.

Sketch maps should be made of the external borders of each wetlands.

- How to prepare sketch maps? I am not sure I will provide much guidance here.
- For (i) the Q Resource use, (ii) Q Toponyms, and (iii) Q Customary rights. In addition: prepare sketch maps using the information, specifically the list of layers in document “List of layers”.

Respondents initially (first interviews) to suggest which colors to be used for what feature, which will lead to constructing a color key.

Respondents to provide all information to go on to the sketch maps.

Also make sketch maps of all settlement

Sketch maps to be made in black on white paper. That is, there will be 2 kinds of sketch maps: (i) those simple ones to explain the location of a special feature, and (ii) the composite ones containing several different types of data. The former will be produced first, and go towards producing the composite one(s).

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## **E. Evaluation**

Evaluation means to go through critically what we have done, relative to the training given, and also to go through critically all the information /data gathered critically, in order to learn from it.

### **Notes:**

1. Important to show how crucial these resources are to/for local people
2. Transparency, involve everybody
3. Differences between ‘village’ and ‘hamlet’ (the latter here understood as habitation outside villages). The latter includes, possibly, but if so as a special case, ephemeral settlements by pastoralists. ‘Village’ and ‘hamlet’ together will be referred to as ‘community’.

## **F. Output**

Maps are clearly a very important, and also the first, output. To be followed, most importantly, by the traditional legal code.