

Technology Fosters Tradition

A New Action Research Initiative in Mauritania

Date September 23, 2004

Time 12:30 - 2:00 pm

Location MC9-W150

Chair: Talib Esmail, Co-chair of
CBRD Thematic Group

Introduction by: Hans Wabnitz,
Senior Counsel, LEGAF

Speaker: Lars T. Soeftestad,
Supras Consult, Norway

Participants from outside the Bank need to confirm attendance by sending an e-mail to **ibampadde@worldbank.org** so that a building pass can be arranged

Mauritania is facing increased desertification to the point where rainfed agriculture is no longer possible in many regions. This leads to conflicts, and the legal system -- a mix of traditional, Sharia, and French colonial law -- is not able to handle it.

Technology Fosters Tradition (TFT), a research and action project that addresses these issues, integrates elements from the areas of law, social development, GIS/GPS, economics, and environmental assessment and management. It addresses the current situation of traditional land use rights, including whether they are adhered to and can help regulate access to increasingly scarce natural resources today. TFT will also produce a body of traditional knowledge pertaining to local management of natural resources. The data will help measure whether traditional land use regulations are adapted to the environment and foster optimal productivity and sustainable management.

The presentation will give particular emphasis to the causes of the current problems in the project area in southeast Mauritania, present the methodology (a combination of micro-level data gathering, mapping, and GIS/GPS together with ICTs), and present some data. A preliminary analysis of the current situation will be presented, emphasizing, among others, the institutional setup and prognoses for the future. The BBL aims to inform Bank staff of the project, to solicit feedback, and to determine interest in other countries, in particular in West Africa and the Sahel. If TFT proves successful, its underlying assumptions, approach, and methodology can be applied across the ecosystems in Mauritania and in other Sahelian countries.

For more background and context visit the TFT web site at:
<http://www.cbnrm.net/web/tft>.

Bring your lunch. Coffee and dessert is on us!

Sponsored by Community Based Rural Development Thematic Group (CBRD)