



OBSERVATOIRE DU SAHARA ET DU SAHEL

SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY

n°

**OSS Report to the Third Session of the
Committee for the Review of the
Implementation of the CCD (CRIC):
Measures Taken to Support Countries**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CoP:	Conference of the Parties
CCD:	United Nations Framework Convention to Combat Desertification
OSS:	Sahara and Sahel Observatory
NAP/CCD:	National Action Plan (to Combat Desertification)
SASS:	North-Western Sahara Aquifer System
SID/SISEI:	Information System on Desertification/ Environmental Information and Monitoring System on the Internet
UMA:	Union of the Arab Maghreb
CILSS:	Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
ACMAD:	African Centre for Meteorological Applications for Development
SMAP:	Small and Medium Action Programs
SRAP/CD:	Sub-Regional Action Plan to Combat Desertification
LIFE:	LIFE
ONC:	National Coordination Body in charge of CCD
EC:	European Commission
ROSELT:	Long Term Ecological Monitoring Observatories Network
CNEDD:	National Council of the Environment for Sustainable Development
IEEF:	Francophone Institute of Energy and the Environment
GEF:	Global Environment Facility
DISMED:	Desertification Information System to Support National Action Programmes in the Mediterranean
OACT:	African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing
TPN4:	Thematic Programme n° 4
IGAD:	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the various decisions of CoP/CCD, relating to the Institutional Procedures and Mechanisms to facilitate the examination of the implementation of the Convention, OSS has drafted this report on the measures it has taken to support the implementation of the national and sub-regional action plans (NAPs and SRAPs) in Africa.

In view of its mandate and its cooperation with the sub-regional organizations in a spirit of subsidiarity, OSS has directed its efforts to the development of methodologies and tools intended for the monitoring-evaluation of the NAP (National Action Plan to Combat Desertification) and of the management of shared water resources. In partnership with the international community and African countries, OSS has developed an approach for the management of environmental information in order to facilitate decision-making in the countries party to the CCD.

The concept of monitoring-evaluation comprising three components: (monitoring the NAP process, monitoring the desertification and the impact of the NAP) has contributed in capitalising the existing information systems and in stepping up the mechanisms of the circulation of information on desertification.

Monitoring-evaluation has become an integral part of the NAP and of the cycle of national projects to combat desertification; the experience acquired by the countries in setting up their monitoring-evaluation mechanism already reveals that the latter is an efficient tool for planning and integrating the NAP within the economic and social development plan, as attested, for instance, by the mechanism of integrating the NAP within the Tunisian Xth National Economic and Social Development Plan. The efforts of the OSS in the field of monitoring-evaluation relate to three major components:

- Development of conceptual documents on monitoring-evaluation;
- Implementation, in certain countries and regions, of monitoring-evaluation of their NAP;
- Strengthening the national mechanisms of desertification monitoring.

As regards the management of shared water resources, the experience developed by OSS in the Maghreb sub-region, through the SASS project, paves the way for a valorisation of this approach in the context of other shared aquifers and basins. This experience has allowed OSS to act as a facilitator by bringing the national partners of three countries to manage in a concerted way the water resources of a same basin based on scientific and technical tools.

I- REFLECTION AND CONCEPTUEL DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO MONITORING-EVALUATION

I.1- Monitoring-evaluation: Concept and place in the CCD implementation cycle

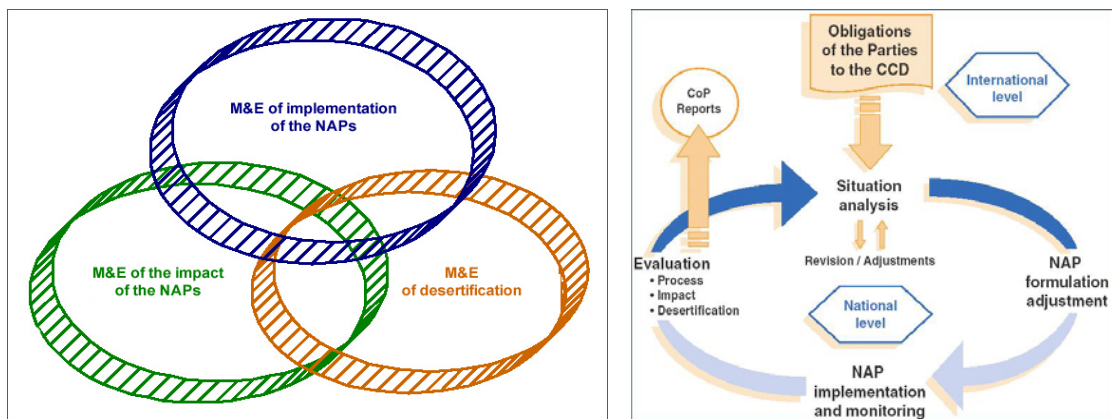
The monitoring-evaluation of the NAP comprises three components:

- Monitoring the process of implementation of the Action Plan, and of its quality;

- Monitoring desertification;
- Monitoring the impact of the NAP.

It encompasses several functions, of which the major ones are:

- consultation between the information producers and users;
- definition of the procedures of regulation of information exchanges;
- integration of reference national information systems;
- planning the NAP actions and their integration within the economic and social development plan.



I.2- From the concept to the implementation of the « Dash Board»

The development, by the OSS, of a conceptual document on the "Methodology of elaboration of a Dash board" (performance chart) and its have elicited on the part of the countries involved the need to have, at the national level, operational Dash board Based on the experience acquired by the countries in matter of definition and calculation of indicators, formats of Balanced Score Cards were developed in certain countries, namely in Niger and in Tunisia.

In order to provide for a veritable tool to help in decision-making, the approach to making the Dash board operational has proceeded as follows:

- formalising the desertification problems according to key development sectors and their organisation within a problem setting table;
- development, testing and validation of national indicators;
- establishment of an initial Dash board.

The analysis of desertification with a view to obtaining the problem setting table has been conducted on a sector basis for several reasons:

- a pedagogical reason aimed to ensure an initiation into the information systems of the national institutions in charge of the management of natural resources and of combating desertification, as well as the appropriation by the actors of these institutions of the established national monitoring-evaluation mechanism;

- economic and institutional reasons calling for an optimisation of the use of the capacities available;
- an opportunity reason consisting in facilitating the integration of monitoring-evaluation in the economic and social development plans.

The problem setting table facilitates the hierarchisation of the indicators and their takeover by the various institutions which need to supply them with data.

Each indicator allows to monitor and evaluate the state of the environment; it is worth underscoring, however, the importance of arranging several indicators to end up with a “Dash board” representing an easily accessible tool that facilitates decision-making.

The structuring of the « Dash board » stems from the concern to firmly establish monitoring-evaluation in the institutional set up of the national services in charge of environmental management.

The « Dash board » is a synthetic document of evaluation of the evolution trends of the indicators. It may also comprise additional supporting evaluation items and orientation indications to facilitate decision-making.

I.3- Contribution in the synergy between the Rio Conventions

One of the major qualitative results of OSS lies in the dissemination and sharing of a conceptual document on the synergy between the three Post-Rio Conventions. This document proposes an approach of opening up of OSS programmes into this synergy.

At the time when the action plans of the three conventions proceed to the implementation phase, the national focal points are gathering awareness as to the need to undertake consultation and to consider a common minimum program.

The implementation of monitoring-evaluation allows for mutual consultation; indeed, and as mentioned above, the monitoring-evaluation mechanisms are major means of integration of the producer, provider and user institutions of information related to the three Conventions.

The systems of information circulation (SID/SISEI) and the modules of training in monitoring-evaluation developed by the OSS within the framework of the CCD may be gradually made available to the stakeholders of the two other Rio Conventions.

I.4- Reflection on taking drought into consideration in the implementation of the NAP

OSS has extended support to the Union of the Arab Maghreb (UMA) within the framework of the installation of an early warning system on drought and desertification; it has commissioned, in this regard, national case studies and developed a synthesis document which gives an overview of drought in the Maghreb countries, from which it emerges that the socio-economic consequences are considerable. Indeed, the toll claimed by this phenomenon is particularly heavy for the States and the populations, while the emergency plans implemented in an ad hoc manner are not sufficient measures.

These studies also highlighted several concerns which are worth following up within the framework of implementation of the environmental Conventions:

- institutional compartmentalisation and information flow constraints;
- the need for a global approach to drought based on creating synergy between the Conventions.

Certain countries, such as Morocco, and organizations, such as CILSS and ACMAD, have equipped themselves and built competencies. However, the scattering of efforts and institutional compartmentalisation still do not make it possible to meet the needs of a global strategy of monitoring and anticipation of the phenomena.

Emphasis must be laid on a better organization of the national structures concerned and the pooling of acquired experience and knowledge; the OSS, serving as an interface and a facilitator, will take action aimed at developing cooperation between the various African sub-regions in order to facilitate the sharing of experience and expertise in matter of early warning.

On the national level, several countries have moved from an approach of management of drought crises to an approach of risk management, which represents a significant step forward. This new approach has encouraged OSS to propose, as a first step, a preliminary project design for Maghrebi early warning based on stepping up the national multi-sector mechanisms and networking them in order to constitute a sub-regional mechanism.

Within the framework of its Strategy for 2010, OSS envisions to extend the early warning concept beyond the drought phenomenon, thus proposing warning systems involving several environmental components. Accordingly, the monitoring of several environmental indicators would allow the envisioning of warning systems pertaining in such areas as brush fires, water resources, or soil erosion.

II- SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES TOWARD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF M & E

Following the regional project of monitoring-evaluation incepted the OSS in 2000 to strengthen cooperation between Maghreb and Sahel countries, one of whose outcomes was the definition of basic indicators common to six countries (Burkina Faso, Morocco, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Tunisia), the effort of operational implementation continued on the level of a few countries through the implementation of national projects.

Indeed, OSS has strengthened cooperation relations between some African countries and several bilateral and multilateral agencies with regard to monitoring-evaluation; the projects below have been generated by multi-actor partnership, and their implementation represents a qualitative phase in the development of international solidarity in combating desertification:

The Tunisian-Italian project (PTI) ("Support Towards the Implementation of the Monitoring-Evaluation of the NAP/CD", financed by Italian cooperation and implemented by the Secretariat of the Tunisian National Coordination Body (NCB), with OSS support), has achieved the following outcomes:

- a diagram of the national mechanism of monitoring-evaluation;

- an information charter;
- a grid of national indicators;
- an information system on desertification.

The project "Installation of the System of Monitoring-Evaluation of the National Action Plans to Combat Desertification (NAP/CD) in the Maghreb Countries", initiated by Morocco, Tunisia and UMA, benefited from financial support by the European Commission (SMAP facility), in order to achieve the following results:

- a monitoring-evaluation mechanism on sub-national and local levels;
- a data base on the actions and impacts of combating desertification;
- a catalogue of indicators of impact of the actions made on sub-national and local levels.

The project "Setting up Desertification Monitoring Pilot Systems in the Countries of the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean: Morocco and Tunisia, Study of Prospect of Extension to Algeria", financed by the European Commission (LIFE-Pays Tiers facility) has allowed:

- the development of a macro-geographic zoning in Morocco and in Tunisia, based on the use of earth observation data (low resolution);
- design of meso-geographic and macro-geographic indicators;
- integration of the indicators in the NAPs «Balanced Score Card».

The project of "Institutional Capacity Building for the Niger NAP (PRIPAN)", fruit of Italian cooperation, has contributed, in cooperation with OSS, in building the monitoring-evaluation capacities in Niger, based on training, and has allowed the development of indicators on sub-national level, as well as a «Balanced Score Card» for the NAP.

II.1- Support Toward the Integration of Monitoring-Evaluation in the NAPs

Following the formal adoption of the monitoring-evaluation concept by the international community in 2001, OSS directed its efforts toward providing support for the development and implementation of a Monitoring-Evaluation component within the NAPs of member countries. In spite of the differentiated approaches of the countries and the disparity of the results, it is worth noting that some ONC (National Coordination Bodies) have appropriated the monitoring-evaluation concept. Further effort remains to be made, however, as regards the de-compartmentalisation of the national institutions and technical services in order to ensure their effective participation:

- With the support of OSS, considerable headway was made in Tunisia with the integration of monitoring-evaluation in the NAP. The Tunisian-Italian project, specifically dedicated to the establishment of the monitoring-evaluation system, has developed the institutional set-up necessary to support the participation of the groups of national and local actors; it has organized the national system for the circulation of information by developing Intranet networks for each national department involved;

- As regards other African countries, the participation of OSS in the activities of the ONC, through incentive actions, has allowed formal integration of a monitoring-evaluation component within their NAP; worth mentioning in this regard is the example of such countries as Algeria, Kenya, Niger, Mauritania and Senegal.

II.2- Consistency and integration of projects and programmes with respect to monitoring-evaluation

Monitoring-evaluation has served as a convergence framework for several national projects and programmes and for OSS programmes.

Within OSS, each of the projects is related to a link in the development process of products to help in decision-making (data collection and processing, information flow and calculation of indicators). The guiding principle of the various OSS programmes is their contribution in the monitoring of desertification and the development of the state of the environment in order to generate investments in favour of the environment.

On the level of the countries, efforts of consistency may be illustrated as follows:

- In Morocco and Tunisia, the project of "Setting up the System of Monitoring-Evaluation of the National Action Plans to Combat Desertification (NAP/CD) in the Maghreb Countries", the project of "Setting up Desertification Monitoring Pilot Systems in the Countries of the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean: Morocco and Tunisia, study of Prospect of Extension to Algeria" and the Long Term Ecological Monitoring Observatories Network (ROSELT/OSS) develop a synergy by seeking out complementarity between their actions;
- ROSELT/OSS is integrated in the national monitoring-evaluation systems as an ecological monitoring mechanism likely to substantially contribute in data collection;
- All the tools developed within the framework of the « Morocco/ Tunisia Remote Sensing Pilot Project» represent a significant contribution to the Monitoring-Evaluation System of Morocco and Tunisia;
- The « Morocco/ Tunisia Monitoring-Evaluation Project» applies the concept of information sharing on combating desertification developed within the framework of the SID/SISEI of OSS; besides, this project has established the information sharing systems on the national level in Morocco and Tunisia;
- In Niger, the launch of the ROSELT national network has offered the opportunity to establish a link between ROSELT activities and the monitoring-evaluation of the NAP; the positive outcome generated by this connection has been the set up of a joint scientific committee for the development and monitoring of NAP indicators.

Niger, with Italian cooperation and OSS support, has defined its monitoring-evaluation system of the NAP based on the experience available under the projects of management of natural resources. More specifically, this process has allowed the country:

- to capitalize the approaches and methods of impact monitoring-evaluation used by the projects;
- to identify the impact indicators used by the projects of Management of Natural Resources and of Local Development;
- to identify the contributions of the projects to the national system of monitoring-evaluation of the NAP;
- to reinforce exchanges between the projects, the CNEDD and the monitoring-evaluation partners in the technical ministries.

Thus, Niger has been able to set up a national monitoring-evaluation mechanism and now has a minimum set of local indicators that are representative of the major ecosystems of the country.

II.3- Capacity building based on training

OSS has been much requested by its member countries, as well as by other regions, in relation to its training programme on monitoring-evaluation of the NAP.

This training has contributed in raising awareness as to the role and place of monitoring-evaluation in the process of implementation of the CCD by underscoring its global character (process, desertification and impact), its participatory character and the importance of coordination and consultation.

The awareness gathered by the participants in the training sessions as to the need to have a global vision of monitoring-evaluation is likely to have a direct bearing on the set-up of monitoring-evaluation systems in Morocco and Tunisia, by granting particular attention to the mechanisms of coordination or to the process indicators, for instance.

The lessons learnt from the training workshops have revealed new capacity building needs in more specialized technical fields and, more particularly, at a level closer to the ground.

OSS training capacities prove to be insufficient, as from now, to meet the ever increasing training requests from its member countries and from other States and other African sub-regions; particular attention must be granted to the training of trainers (wholesale training) in the field of monitoring-evaluation, as well as to its firm establishment in sub-regional or national institutions capable of taking over with regard to national and sub-national needs.

Two further needs will have to be addressed in future: these include the translation of the training modules into the national languages and their adapting to the local contexts.

To capitalize this body of training experience and make it available to a larger number of stakeholders, OSS has developed, with GTZ support, a virtual training platform on the Internet which will allow, in particular, the establishment of a network of trainers, enhance their capacity, maintain training quality and ensure its constant enrichment by new modules in response to the identified needs.

Besides, the training modules developed by OSS have elicited cooperation interest among international institutions and organizations; thus, the Francophone Institute of Energy and the Environment (IEPF) and the GEF have requested OSS to contribute in the training sessions on project formulation and ensuring the integration of a monitoring-evaluation component in the projects and programmes of combating desertification.

III- STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL MONITORING-EVALUATION MECHANISMS

Several projects initiated and/ or implemented in cooperation with OSS contribute in the enhancement of the monitoring-evaluation of the NAP.

III.1- The ROSELT/OSS mechanism

The key objectives of ROSELT/OSS as regards environmental monitoring are three-pronged:

- enhancement of knowledge about the mechanisms, causes and consequences of desertification;
- monitoring the state and long-term evolution of the ecological systems and the resources which they contain;
- understanding the functioning of these ecosystems and the interactive effects between the populations and their environment on the local level, in particular for the determination of the respective and/ or synergistic part of the climatic and human causes of land degradation.

In addition to the supply of data, ROSELT/OSS contributes towards monitoring-evaluation by providing support to the development of indicators and the establishment of the states of reference for the observatories, as represented by the following products:

- land cover maps which give the features and localization of plant formations (physiognomic units defined by the dominant plants, their strata, their cover and their density) and the plant forms which represent their uses;
- maps relating to the physical features of the local land concerned, which inform about the major topographic, soil and geo-morphological sets.

The valorisation of the whole body of available historical data allows the national teams entrusted with data collection and processing to contribute in the identification of the relevant indicators.

Some OSS member countries, such as Mali and Niger, have launched their national ROSELT, thus broadening their network of ecological observation and monitoring sites; this extension helps the ROSELT/OSS to contribute in the monitoring-evaluation of the NAP on the various local, sub-national and national levels.

In order to reinforce the national monitoring-evaluation systems, ROSELT/OSS makes available to the countries a whole set of tools and methodological supports:

- a methodological guidebook for data collection and processing;

- technical and conceptual documents;
- an information system on the local environment;¹
- a metadata base allowing the sharing of knowledge, acquired experience and the data produced within the network;
- a charter relating to the management and dissemination of data and products; Tunisia and Morocco have been selected to test and validate this charter before submitting it for adoption by the whole of the currently operational network in eleven countries.

III.2- National Mechanisms for the Monitoring of Desertification by Remote Sensing

Alongside with the set up of a long term ecological monitoring based in the ROSELT/OSS observatories, OSS has initiated the establishment of a desertification monitoring pilot mechanism combining satellite images with field data.

This mechanism has been designed in such a way as to allow monitoring on a macro-geographical scale (about 1/1Mo) based on wide range indicators for purposes of detecting any anomalies in the state of the vegetation likely to lead to desertification, then to analyse more finely on a meso-geographical scale (between 1/200 000 and 1/100 000), the reality of the risk, its causes and its site coverage.

The installation of this mechanism on a pilot basis has been initiated in Tunisia and in Morocco with financial support by the European Commission (LIFE-Pays Tiers facility). Algeria is involved in the project steering committee, as well as through its participation in all the workshops organized within the framework of the project.

III.3- The DIS-MED project

Within the framework of the DIS-MED project aimed at the establishment of an active cooperation between the countries of the two shores of the Mediterranean in matter of setting up a system of information circulation related to the NAP, OSS has contributed significantly toward the definition of a concerted methodology for the development of a cartography on desertification sensitivity.

Work on the development of the sensitivity map for the countries of North Africa was incepted in May 2003 by the exploitation and valorisation of the data available. The first version of this map, which covers the five countries of the Union of the Arab Maghreb (UMA), was presented during the 2nd General Assembly of the OSS in April 2004.

III.4- Support to the Launch of the TPN4 Network of the Regional Action Programme Africa

After having contributed in the organization in Tunis, in October 2002, of the inception workshop of the TPN4 network, OSS pursued the support brought to the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing (OACT) toward the set-up

¹ The SIEL prototype was developed in the Niger Observatory of Banizoumbou; it is in process of adaptation to the North Africa Observatories (El Omayed, in Egypt and Menzel Habib, in Tunisia).

of the network. Within this framework, OSS, with GTZ support, ensured the installation of the cartographic server and of the virtual library on the local server of OACT; their data supply is underway by OACT. OSS also contributed in the design of a document on "Ensuring sustainability of the TPN4 through the establishment of a mutually profitable partnership" which was submitted by OACT to the appreciation of the UNCCD Secretariat, then widely disseminated on African level. Specialized African institutions have already manifested adhesion to this network, but their number remains limited, and it would be advisable to further activate the main functions of the network.

IV- MANAGEMENT OF THE AQUIFERS OF THE MAJOR BASINS

The concerted management of the non renewable water resources has been addressed by OSS within the framework of an integrated approach of combating desertification and from the perspective of sustainable development of Saharan zones.

Under the Major Basins Aquifer programme, OSS action has been aimed at promoting the concept of "Basin Awareness" and facilitating the establishment by African countries of common strategies and appropriate tools in the service of a concerted and sustainable management of shared aquifers.

OSS strategy is based on the enhancement and sharing of knowledge on the water resources and the means of ensuring an optimal and sustainable use of them in order to combat desertification and to mitigate drought effects.

Among the salient results achieved by OSS in this field, it is worth mentioning the following:

- publication of the monograph on the Nubian aquifer system shared by Libya, Egypt, Sudan and Chad;
- the capitalization of knowledge on the shared aquifers of the Sahel zone of West Africa; a synthesis of the state of knowledge on the water resources of this zone was published in 2002.

Nine sedimentary basins have been identified of which that of the north-western Sahara which was the subject of in-depth studies.

The SASS project has succeeded in bringing together three countries sharing the water resources of the same basin within the framework of a partnership and has undertaken jointly with them the establishment of scientific, technical and institutional tools in the service of the countries; these tools include a common data base, a mathematical model and a "Consultation Mechanism".

The results of the SASS have also made it possible to extend the valorisation of this approach to other shared aquifers and basins in Africa.

OSS was requested for similar projects in East and West Africa and West by the IGAD and the CILSS; within this framework, a cooperation has developed between UNESCO and OSS with regard to the Illumenden basin shared by Niger, Nigeria and Mali.

Upon request by IGAD, OSS contributes in the development of a vast programme in East Africa; a preliminary project design has been developed, national studies are being conducted and consultation continues with IGAD and the cooperation partners with a view to launching this programme.

The encouraging results of the SASS allow the contemplation of optimistic prospects relating to the exploitation of shared aquifers in Africa. The approach and the tools developed by the project may be considered as a powerful instrument to equally extended to surface water, based on some adaptation and further refining work.

V- CONCLUSION

The various OSS programmes have sustained the member States and Organizations in their efforts aimed at setting up and at making operational the monitoring-evaluation mechanisms of National and Sub-Regional Action Plans (NAPs and SRAPs/ to Combat Desertification).

The monitoring-evaluation aspect has gradually become a requirement in view of the awareness of the stakeholders as to the need for a veritable accountability in matter of natural resources and the socio-economic impacts of their degradation; the actors also need a set of tools to measure the efforts which they invest toward environment protection.

In spite of the results reported, many obstacles still need to be overcome as regards an operational implementation of the monitoring-evaluation of the NAPs of African countries. Among the challenges which need to be taken up, the following are worth mentioning in particular:

- lack of a monitoring-evaluation culture, which calls for a change of mentality; indeed, monitoring-evaluation is still regarded as an instrument of control and sanction;
- there is hardly any firm establishment of sustainable institutional and organisational monitoring-evaluation; the set-up of a national system of monitoring-evaluation is closely dependent on the existence of an operational ONC with enough capacity to set the pace for the national institutions;
- shortage of trainers in monitoring-evaluation to meet the need for capacity building at country level.
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These identified challenges, among others, do not question in the least the progress made; but they should call for further effort in order to involve all stakeholders in the implementation of monitoring-evaluation. It is inspired by this spirit that OSS will pursue its action of national capacity building based on training and methodological support.