



Social Aspects and Dynamics in Geothermal Development Along the East African Rift: The case of the The case of the GV1 Project in Djibouti

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1. Introduction

- The Geothermal Village (GV1) forms part of Research and Development (R&D) project called LEAP-RE.
- LEAP-RE aims to create a research and innovation community between European and African countries in renewable energies to be applied in Africa's off-grid sector.
- GV1 four pilot sites are in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Djibouti with collaboration by 4 EU countries (France, Italy, Norway and Germany) providing expertise in low and medium enthalpy geothermal energy, aimed at setting up a methodology for geothermal exploitation.
- LAC ABHÉ site is the target in Djibouti
- The project has a social science component with Social Aspects and Dynamics as one of the sub-tasks and areas of focus.
- ODDEG and Geo2D have jointly carried out some activities under this sub-task with pertinent stakeholders as will be outlined in this presentation.



2. Background information of the two partners



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ODDEG is the public geothermal entity, created by the Djiboutian in 2014, to identify geothermal resources and manage implementation of geothermal projects in Djibouti.

Géo2D is a French Limited Company created by Jacques Varet in 2011 to promote innovation in geological science and engineering for sustainable development with geothermal energy as a key area of focus.



3. Activities



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a) Interaction at local community level

The activities included:

- As a key priority, meeting the local population (with representation cutting across gender and age) to jointly discuss the project, with one of the aims being to identify their socio-economic priorities related to “direct use” geothermal application.
- In line with the project’s emphasis on a gender-based approach, the discussions focused on aspects such as existing structures at local level, gender relations, gender dynamics and gender roles with a view of understanding how these social aspects and dynamics within the local population would impact the GV1 and other related initiatives.
- Extensive site visit to see its characteristics, understand its indigenous use by the local population and other related issues.
- Preliminary data collection of a socio-anthropological nature to have a general overview of the context of the site.
- The local population gave access to potable water as their first priority in terms of need.



3. Activities



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b) Interaction with state representatives

The activities included:

- Meeting with the Prefect of the Lake Abhé then with the site President of the Regional Council in their respective offices whereby the project was presented and discussed alongside other pertinent issues were discussed.

The pertinent issues discussed included consideration of these state agencies for:

- Infrastructure initiatives to the site area by the State (water supply, health centers, access roads and telephone networks projects)
- A policy for the development of tourism or promotion of tourism in the region of Lake Abhé.



3. Activities



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b) Interaction with state representatives (contd):

- Initiating a registration of the Lake Abhé site on the World Heritage List; an idea that was well taken by both with a promise to integrate the same into their draft regional plan.
- identification of a potential non-saline aquifer as a priority of GV1's feasibility study as one of the project's possible contributions as a follow-up to a previous study's challenge of identifying a drinking water resource in the area



4. Anticipated future meetings

a) Before the start of a demo project:

The Social Aspects and Dynamics component of the GV1 project has been designed with both the traditional and State administration structures considered as key stakeholders to facilitate compatibility of the local initiative with the existence of these structures. As the project was yet to start, other key stakeholders at state and traditional level to be met at the appropriate time in the course of the project depending on findings of the feasibility (ie if a demonstration project would be implemented) were identified as:

State level:

- Agency for Social Development (ADD),
- Ministry of Decentralization, ordinarily in charge of the development of local communities and
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity.



4. Anticipated future meetings

a) Before the start of a demo project (contd):

Traditional level:

- Sultan
- The various Okal (Regional Chiefs)
- The various Makaban (Village Chiefs).

Some of the aims of these meetings would be to discuss the potential role of these institutions in the project and see how they could contribute to the success of a GV project at Lac Abhé.



4. Anticipated future meetings

b) In the longer term:

Identified as necessary to meet in the long term with the view of improving the infrastructure at Lake Abhé included :

- The Ministry in charge of Roads construction, as the road leading to Lake Abhé needs upgrading.
- The Ministry of Telecommunications, in charge of installing an antenna, as there is no telephone communication network at the Lake Abhé site.
- The Ministry of Commerce and Tourism as a player that should play the role of promoting tourism and economic activities in the Lake Abhé site.



5. Prospects for setting up a local geothermal entity in the context of Djibouti's legal framework



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- The legal framework for community organizations in Djibouti had been drafted and was in the process of being validated.
- Géo2D therefore encouraged ODDEG to look at the laws of Djibouti with the view of identifying the best type of community-based geothermal entity that could potentially be set up at local level.
- Compatibility of the local entity with both the traditional and State administration context was also underscored.



6. Conclusion



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- The Social Aspects and Dynamics component in the GV concept aims at enhancing the participation of local stakeholders, including local populations in geothermal development processes.
- The process and stakeholders considered in the Social Aspects and Dynamics would differ from country to country depending on the respective context, but the objective remains the same – encouraging the participation of local stakeholders in geothermal development processes and ownership of the initiatives by these local stakeholders – particularly the local populations on targeted sites.



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Thank you

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