Overview

- In October 2010, severe flooding affected 55 out of 77 municipalities in Benin. Heavy rain led to exceptionally high water levels and flooding of villages, especially along the River Niger the River Ouémé, and the lakes Ahémé and Nokoué.
- The communes of Athieme and Grand-Popo in the department of Mono/Couffo and those situated between Lake Ahémé and the Bay of Benin were badly hit by the floods. Accordingly, the Logistics Cluster conducted a river assessment near Grand Popo.

Assessment Coverage

- The area covered by the river assessment stretches from Grand-Popo about 18 km in direct line to the East and covers the coastal part of the River Mono, the lagoon around the Bouche du Roy up to River Aho, which is the connection to Lac Ahémé further to the north.
- Villages covered by the assessment include Héve, Agonékamé, Allongo, Avloh-Plage, Avloh, Hlihoué, Kouéta, Loti and Houdanou.

Findings

- The area between the Grand-Popo and the mouth of the River Aho can be passed by a loaded motorized boat in 2 hours 30 minutes one way.
- In Grand-Popo about a dozen boats (flat-bottom - 8 fibreglass, 4 wooden) are available for rent from private owners to transport goods; each with a capacity of 2 to 2.5 mt of goods.
- The exact draft of the lagoon is unknown. In many parts the lagoon is not deeper than 3 metres and the local population uses punting poles to move their boats. The boats are suited for the lagoon environment and are not severely restricted in their movement, even when loaded. On approach to landings, outboard motors can be switched off and raised out of the water to enter very shallow areas.

- There is no shortage of fuel in the area.
- There is a warehouse in the village of Avloh. The village is on the opposite side of the lagoon from Avloh Plage, some 300 metres in direct line by boat. The warehouse has an estimated capacity of 20-30 mt.
- Avloh-Plage can be reached over land from Grand-Popo. According to local sources, the route is good enough to enable transport by small vehicles to Avloh-Plage. The warehouse could act as a potential hub for river transport of humanitarian relief items.

Approximate Costs

- Based on transport of 29 mt of food from Grand-Popo to Loti (about 18 km one way).
  - Petrol: 350 CFA per litre, 400 litres required
  - Engine oil: 1200 CFA per litre, 20 litres required
  - Charging and discharging: 1000 CFA per mt
  - Transport (per trip): about 3300 CFA per 10 km
- Hence, the most expensive single aspect of river transport is the petrol for the motors.

Important Remarks

- Use tarpaulins to cover goods in order to protect them from rain and splashing water.
- Goods should be put on planks in order to protect them from water leaking into boats.
- To prevent loaded boats from tipping over, it should be considered to take boats on a detour around the small islands directly north of the Bouche du Roy, the opening to the sea.

Contacts

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