

Nile Basin Initiative
Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP)



The Nile Environment

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NTEAP



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Editorial

The third quarter of 2004 has come to an end. Actually for the NTEAP it is the first quarter since the project's work plan was approved at the end of May 2004 by the Steering Committee.

The first half of 2004 was devoted to the start up activities which included renovation, equipping and furnishing of project office including recruitment of international and local support staff. National Project Coordinators (NPCs) in the NBI countries were also recruited during this period.

Right after the approval of the work plan the PMU team deliberated on detailed tasks necessary to implement the planned activities including a daily calendar of major activities. The Team then conducted brief visits to riparian countries. These missions were planned and executed in accordance with set objectives and detailed program.

The newly recruited NPCs did excellent job in organizing these missions. The PMU Team gained invaluable experience and succeeded in acquainting numerous institutions and individuals with the NBI and NTEAP.

Missions to the NBI countries will always be important activities of NTEAP as these will "provide forum to discuss development paths for the Nile with a wide range of stakeholders". We encourage sharing of experience among all stakeholders as depicted in this issue under the title "Collaborative Efforts". Thus the focus of this issue is on the NTEAP missions to Nile riparian countries, which we hope have contributed to the strengthening of the spirit of cooperation among the NBI stakeholders.

Gedion Asfaw, Regional Project Manager

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NTEAP mission to NBI countries

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS: NILETEAP MAY BUILD ON EXISTING EFFORTS – A CASE OF SOME NGO WORK ALONG THE NILE IN UGANDA

Lessons from the field : *Nabanyumya Robert – NPC, Uganda*

One of the Major threats to the Nile river environment is land degradation. There is however, a saying that one by one makes a bundle. Some efforts have been undertaken to address the threats of land degradation along the Nile by governments and non-government organizations through the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Uganda. One such effort is a project run by an NGO- the Integrated Conservation and Development Initiative (IRDI) in Kamuli district of Uganda. The project aims to reduce land degradation along the banks of river Nile in the sub-counties of Balawoli and Kisozi in Kamuli district where agriculture forms the major source of livelihood in the river's catchment area. Here poor agricultural practices and unsustainable harvesting of woodlands have exposed the banks to land degradation. Opening up of fragile land near the river for farming resulting from land shortage escalated the problem. When the NILETEAP joint mission visited Uganda in August 2004, one of the NGOs Visited was IRDI.



From left to right: Uganda National Project Coordinator, Nabanyumya Robert, John Omwenga, Water Quality Lead Specialist and District Environment officer, Nakasongola during a field tour around L.Kyoga, in August 2004

To address the Land degradation problem, the IRDI project strategy involves:

- *Making sustainable use of woodlands profitable as an incentive for conservation:* This has involved using beekeeping as an economically and environmentally viable way to use woodlands and is being supported both to provide an incentive for tree planting as bee forage as well as protect the existing ones.
- *Promoting sustainable agriculture as a means of rehabilitating soils:* This can reduce the need for communities to encroach on river banks as new and fertile farmlands when their farms further upland are too degraded to be productive. Emphasis is being put on the staple food crops in the area.
- *Reducing loss of biodiversity by checking the rate of harvest of woodlands for charcoal and fuel wood:* This is being done by promoting tree planting through agroforestry and woodlot establishment and use of energy conservation technologies.
- *Creating a conducive policy environment for conservation of river bank :* IRDI is contributing through overseeing the formulation of byelaws and engaging local leaders in the conservation process.

The outcome is that communities are now using efficient energy technologies, namely, energy saving cook stoves and fireless cookers and are practicing kitchen energy management. Communities have also started to adopt sustainable land management practices, that is, sustainable agriculture, agro-forestry, woodlot establishment and beekeeping.

NTEAP needs to assess the replicability of such approaches and promote them in other riparian countries through its micro grants component. Grass root NGOs and community based organizations are encouraged to come up as partners to help address environmental threats facing the Nile.

The Nile Environment from hence forth will be published on recycled paper. Our maiden issue was published on a glossy paper hoping you will keep it as a memorabilia.



Micro-grants - Impressions from the Basin countries

In spite of a bumpy start for the Micro-Grants Program, the component managed to overcome some of the obstacles it faced. Field visits to the different riparian countries produced some positive results especially in Egypt and Ethiopia, where there was some reluctance on the part of the NTEAP counterparts to agree with the designated host institutions for the Micro-Grants Program. Discussions were extremely fruitful and revealed a positive level of understanding, which focused on accepting the conceptual aspects relating to the Micro-grant Program including the merits generated by its structural base, which rests on the experience of the GEF Small Grants Program. The host institution in Egypt, which was carrying the GEF/SGP for the last seven years, was eventually accepted to host the Micro-grants Program.

Setting up of a well-structured SGP in Ethiopia was considered a basis for having a functional Micro-Grants Program. That level of convergence, while challenging, for a newly starting SGP/MC, reflects the realization that it is more beneficial to adopt an integrated programmatic approach, rather than a stand-alone model, which may reap

smaller results. Hence, there is a need for the GEF/SGP to carry out an appraisal mission in Ethiopia to develop the SGP, so that the Micro-Grants Program can function through it.

An interesting observation, while visiting the source of the Blue Nile in Bahr Dar, Ethiopia was the extent and magnitude of land degradation to the arable land as a result of soil erosion caused by water and wind. While there are several attempts to mitigate the situation, the impact is not large enough and requires more efforts, both financial and technical. The NTEAP will provide support by launching a rapid assessment study and availing some of the Micro-Grant funds for pilot mitigation activities that could be replicated elsewhere.

The other three countries visited, namely Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, which have already the GEF/SGP functioning have expressed great enthusiasm to have on board the Micro-grants Program. Interesting debates on the Transboundary nature of the Micro-Grant Program, however, reflected the need for elaboration on the subject, especially among members of the GEF/SGP Na-

tional Steering Committee members, who find it challenging to engage in activities that involve more than one country, but question the approach to measuring the transboundary outcomes and impacts.

The field visits were extremely useful as they were an opportunity to expose the activities of the component to a wider audience, have an overview of the ongoing Small Grant activities, discuss the implementation approach of the project and forge partnerships with different stakeholders specially NGOs.

Amir Baker, Micro grants Lead Specialist



Presentation of Kenya's GEF/Small Grants Program, made at the Micro-Grant Meeting in Ethiopia during the recent PMU Mission.

Transboundary Environmental Education and awareness- Participatory planning

Local and national public awareness campaigns linked to specific environmental issues have been quite effective on a limited scale in some Nile countries. However, most of the environmental threats of the Nile are transboundary (TB) in nature which require beyond the borders environmental education and campaigns. Developing TB activities require participation of stakeholders from all countries. Involving stakeholders in planning, in most cases ensures ownership and smooth implementation. This article highlights the process of developing TB EE&A activities in a participatory manner.

The first step is to conduct a rapid assessment of existing and planned EE&A activities within the basin. This step is important as it gives a sense of history of environmental issues, knowledge of the key institutions and

individuals and an idea of which options are possible. The EE&A component has taken a two pronged approach in achieving this; visits to several Nile basin countries and a conducting EE&A reviews in each country. While the reviews are planned for October 2004, the country visits elicited a lot of information which is used in the planning process. Of fundamental importance is the diversity and level of EE&A activities of the five countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan (Khartoum), Tanzania and Uganda) visited. Interaction with key stakeholders during these visits also helped in highlighting issues of some planned activities like, university students exchange and the establishment of school networks without provision of hardware while this is the cur-

rent norm for projects similar objectives.

The second step is ensuring a bottom-up approach in activities formulation. The component has planned for national workshops, bringing together national EE&A stakeholders. The forum will also encourage networking and sharing of information.

As a third step, a regional EE&A workshop is planned for November 2004. This forum, which brings together EE&A practitioners from all the Nile countries, will stimulate an environment to exchange experiences and subsequently develop TB cooperative EE&A activities. Stakeholders participation is a slow and time talking process; however, it ensures sustainability

Maushe Kidundo, Environmental Education Lead Specialist

'Participation ensures ownership'

Monitoring and Evaluation: Echoes from the Field

Missions to different NBI countries gave NTEAP staff an opportunity to interact and provided a platform to discuss activity implementation at the country level. Field visits confirmed that NTEAP is not starting from zero as there are existing activities where NTEAP can build on and foster partnerships. Although the situation varies from one country to the other, it is evident that there is a wealth of information that exists in each country. However, there is need to compile and identify gaps which will be filled by carrying out baseline studies.

NTEAP has planned to carry out several studies through national consultants who will work closely with NPCs and coordinated by Lead Specialists. National baselines will be compiled to establish the regional picture which an international consultant will use to

develop SMART indicators for the project. These indicators and the consolidated information are critical for the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy. The strategy will take into account existing M&E databases within



NBI countries and will work closely with M&E departments within the environmental agencies and the NBI Secretariat.

The missions also helped in highlighting the field based techniques in M&E of micro-grants activities. NTEAP can incorporate the lessons learnt by Uganda and Egypt GEF/Small grants. The monitoring of the Microgrant Program will be integrated in the existing monitoring system where SGP is currently running, while also improving existing systems through encouraging sharing of best practices and exchange of information between countries.

The missions were not only informative but also helpful in planning and implementing an NTEAP M&E system which will fit into the main NBI system and could be used effectively by both partners and NBI countries for planning and decision making.

Intisar Ali Salih, Monitoring and Evaluation Lead Specialist

Basin-wide Water Quality Monitoring Initiatives

NTEAP notes with appreciation, that many Water Quality Initiatives are being undertaken by the countries visited ie; Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan on water quality monitoring initiatives, and overall water resources management. It was also gratifying to note that all countries have created fully fledged Ministries or Departments of Water. The following are the major highlights of the mission with regards to water quality:

Most countries have well-established water quality monitoring networks from which water quality samples are taken for testing and data interpretation.

It was also noted that the countries have set up institutional and legal frameworks and developed water resources management strategies and formulated water quality standards and regulations, but enforcement needs to be enhanced. Water quality and pollution control units have been established in the countries, but the level of execution varies from country to country.

Some water quality data is available in the countries and can be readily shared or accessed on request.

There is a disparity in the level and number of water laboratories in the countries. Some countries have well-established laboratories with modern instruments, while others require investing more in training personnel and the procurement of more modern laboratory equipment. The scope of analysis varied from routine water quality testing in

some countries to advanced and specialized in others. For example, there exist Isotope tracer analysis and air quality monitoring facilities in Sudan and Egypt respectively. One important observation is that some laboratories in the Basin have been internationally accredited and are participating in water quality assurance programs.

Whereas some laboratories have highly qualified, well-trained and experienced staff, others may require support. It was observed that water quality monitoring is solely a gov-



ernment venture, and there is a need to involve more stakeholders and communities in the exercise.

There is a need to encourage joint trans boundary water quality activities leading to ultimate basin-wide, information exchange, and data sharing and networking.

Enhancing awareness at all levels on the

trans boundary nature of water quality and pollution control issues is also essential.

NTEAP requested all riparian countries to nominate water quality working group members and acknowledges the following nominations to the Regional Water Quality Working Group:

Mr. Boniface Nyakageni and Mr. Joseph Ndyagamiye (BURUNDI)

Mr. Mbe-Mpie Mafuka, and Ms Mayele Mukonkole (DRC)

Dr. Tarik A. Tawfic, and Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Abdel-Khalek, (EGYPT)

Mr. Zeleke Chafamo Shashore, and Mr. Solomon Gebretsadik (ETHIOPIA)

Mr. Mohamed Khalafalla Ahmed Ali and Ms Nadia Babiker Shakak (SUDAN)

Dr. Hassan Mujengera and Mr. Dickson Rutagemwa (TANZANIA)

The Basin-wide Water Quality Monitoring Component hopes to receive outstanding nominations from Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda. Meanwhile, a Regional Water Quality Working Group Meeting is planned for late in the year, in order to discuss basin-wide water quality baseline studies, management and review and develop action plans.

John Omwenga, Water Quality Monitoring

Signs of Cooperation

PMU Facilitates ENSAP Meeting

The PMU was honored to facilitate the working meeting of the ENSAP project team and will endeavor to be of service to all NBI family members. We thank Barbara Miller for her encouraging remarks. Nile Environment will appreciate if our readers provide us with news of cooperation and collaboration among the Nile family to share it with all under this column. RPM

Dear Gideon and Environment PMU Friends

On behalf of the ENSAP Flood Preparedness Project team, we wish to thank you for the very warm hospitality and tremendous support that we received at the Environment PMU in Khartoum. It is an excellent working environment, and it is wonderful to feel that there is now an 'NBI' home in Khartoum. Once again Environment is helping to set the tone for the NBI, as your spirit of cooperation across NBI programs is a visible sign of the strength and growth of the Initiative. It is quite exciting to know that there will soon be similar NBI 'homes' throughout the Basin.

Barbara Miller
Nile Team, World Bank
Africa Region, Nile Coordination Unit (AFTNL)



Members of the ENSAP Project Team at the PMU, July 11-14 2004

NGO and Government Cooperation in Egypt

In the frame of the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources new policy of collaborating with civil societies and NGOs in the conservation of the Nile and its protection against pollution, the Water Resources Protection Association has started the formulation of an association of water users of one of the irrigation canals in Aswan in cooperation with the Ministry and the Swiss Development Fund. The canal is 5 km in length and stretches in two Districts in the southernmost Governorate of Egypt. The NGO has also provided equipment for canal cleaning and periodic maintenance to the farmers, as well as technical and administrative assistance to sustain the work. As such, this is considered a major precedence in the collaboration between the oldest and one of the strongest Egyptian Ministries and NGOs in the protection of the Nile.

Ithar Khalil, NPC Egypt

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NILE BASIN INITIATIVE

Initiative du Bassin du Nil

**Putting the
Shared Vision into
Action**

News and Events

UNESCO Chair of Sudan Organized Training

The training course was organized in Khartoum in the period between 5-10/09/2004. The course was supported by UN International Network for Capacity Building in addition to other international organizations and local water institutions in the region

The course which is held annually was intended to build a common platform on knowledge in integrated water resources management among the region capacity building institutions; and establish linkage & partnerships for training. Thirty two senior & mid level professionals and trainers from the Nile Basin, Arab East & Northern Africa countries working in water related institutions participated in the training course. Such type of cooperation may also be useful for NTEAP training activities. The NTEAP thanks the UNESCO Chair in Sudan for inviting NTEAP to participate at the training opening and closing sessions and for availing the training material.

Minister Appreciates Newsletter-The NTEAP first Issue Newsletter was distributed to NTEAP stakeholders & partners in Sudan. H.E. Minister of Environment & Physical Development of Sudan appreciated the effort and additional copies were distributed by his office to members of the council of ministers.

Readers corner

Dear Gedion,

Thanks for the newsletter, it is very informative and I am sure it took you much effort to prepare. Hope to maintain the channels of communication always open.

Mohamed Bayoumi, UNDP,
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Gedion,

Thanks for sending to me the first issue of NTEAP newsletter. Please accept my warm congratulations.

Dr. Nadir Awad,

Chair Steering Committee of
NTEAP, Khartoum, Sudan

Dear Gedion

Congratulation on your first newsletter. Very informative and interesting. Please add us (IUCN EARO through myself) to your mailing list in future.

Geoffrey Howard, IUCN Nairobi
Kenya

Dear Dr. Nadir Awad,

We are pleased to extend to you our thanks for receiving the first issue of the NTEAP Newsletter and also congratulate you for this wonderful start.

Rafaa Asham Alla

Deputy Director of Documenta-
tion and Information Center,
Sudan

Mr. Asfaw,

Must congratulate you and staff on the maiden issue of the NTEAP Newsletter.

It is impressive and excellent reading. Please keep it up.

Alexandra Karekaho, UNDP
Uganda

Trans Boundary Waters - Need for Enhanced Integrated Water Quality Management

The Nile River's drainage area straddles ten countries. In managing shared water resources, we must consider both water quality and quantity as two faces of the same coin. In addition we should also consider the complex inter linkages between water availability and human activities including settlement, health and development. Other issues to be considered include, legal and institutional issues, population and demography, socio-economics, politics and culture which fundamentally and ultimately affect the manner in which water quality and quantity are managed.

We should never forget as we often do the water needs of nature in maintaining critical and delicate natural and often cross-border ecosystems as a specific and important water use. The importance of water quality is inherent in all aspects of water resources management. Whatever the focus of the

water demand in each riparian country, irrigation or industrial water uses, water quality is a key factor.

Another often forgotten aspect of water quality management is the handling of waste water. Since water has the unique property of being cleaned over and over again after being dirtied, water re-use and re-cycling is a practice that should be encouraged especially in those countries experiencing water scarcity; but being conscious of water quality and health standards.

While addressing the complex hydrological issues in the complex Nile river system and the development of projects therein, water quality issues must always be borne in mind, and where feasible water quality impacts predicted and mitigation measures proposed. Indeed the need to appreciate a

comprehensive approach to sustainable fresh water resources was recognized in the identification of integrated water resources management, encompassing water quality assessment as the first programme area in Chapter 18 of Agenda 21.

As most of the national water resources in many countries face depletion, there is urgent need to effectively manage in an integrated manner and to usefully develop the shared water resources, bearing in mind that water quality is of paramount importance. Hence the need for enhanced trans boundary integrated water quality monitoring, an activity which is being supported by Basin wide Water Quality Monitoring Component of the NTEAP.

John Omwenga, Water Quality Lead Specialist