

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING  
PROCESS FOR THE  
  
LAKE TANGANYIKA BIODIVERSITY PROJECT  
(POLLUTION CONTROL AND OTHER  
MEASURES TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY IN  
LAKE TANGANYIKA)**

PANEL ABSTRACT PRESENTED TO THE

EXPERIENCE WITH GEF STRATEGIC (SAP) PROJECTS  
PLENARY OF THE FIRST BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL WATERS  
CONFERENCE

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BY

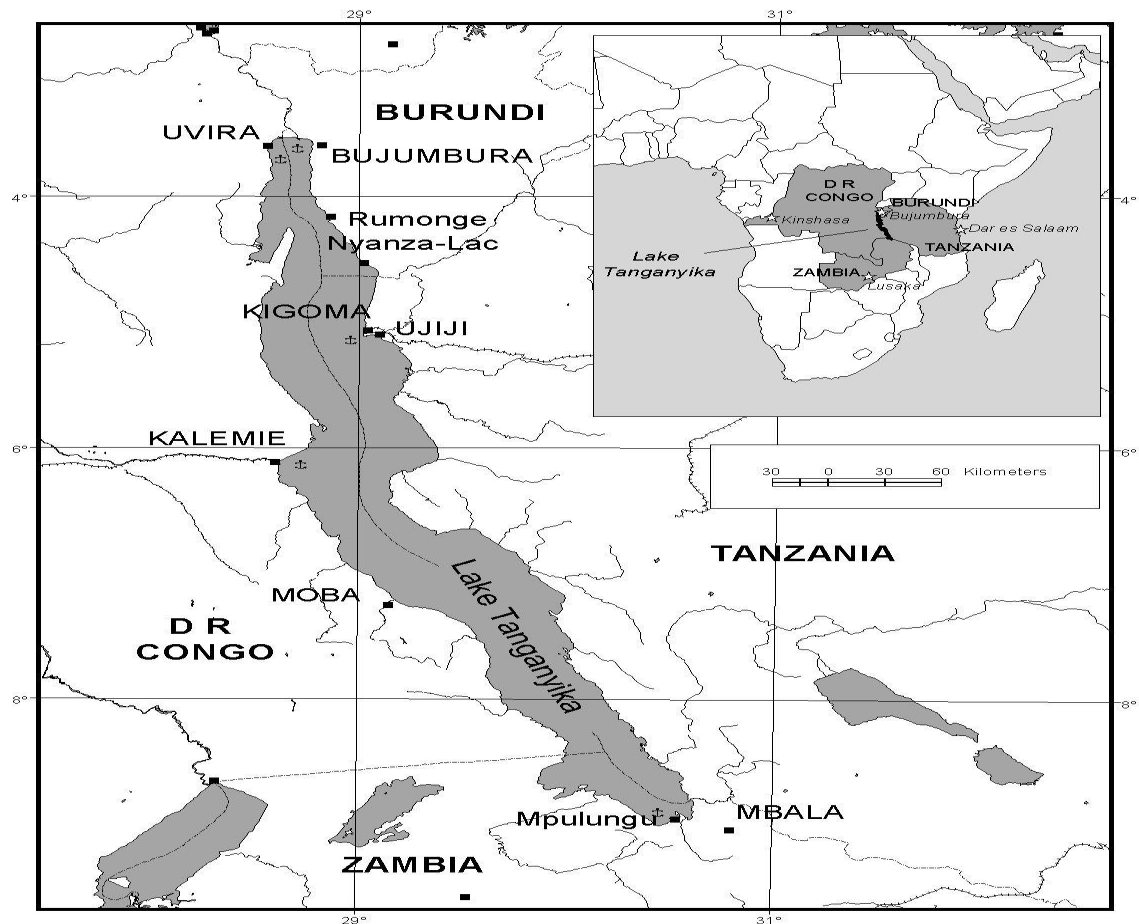
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## 1. THE LAKE

Lake Tanganyika is a fresh water body shared by Burundi, DR Congo, Tanzania and Zambia. Its surface area covers some 33 000 km<sup>2</sup> and has a mean depth of 600m. It is almost 1.5 km at its deepest point and holds a total water volume of about 19 000 km<sup>3</sup> – equivalent to about one sixth of the world's fresh water resources.



Lake Tanganyika is a unique environment with more than 1,500 different species of plants and animals, half of which are endemic. It hosts cichlid fish [with over 260 species], non-cichlid fish, decapod and ostracode crustaceans, and gastropod and bivalve molluscs. It is also host to two endemic aquatic snakes.

The lake is an economic, social, cultural and scientific resource of local and global importance. It is a permanent water source for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses. It is an important transport channel and offers employment and livelihood to many people living along its shores and the wider catchment.

## 2. THE PROBLEM

Increased population growth in the lakeshore and wider catchment coupled with an increase in human activity is threatening the sustainability of the lake as a rich resource base. Fishing pressure, sedimentation and pollution are threatening the lake's biodiversity as induced ecological change exceeds the lake's adaptive capacity. The situation has called for urgent intervention.

### **3. THE SOLUTION**

In recognition of the lake's exceptional biodiversity and the threats against its sustainability, UNDP/GEF funded the Pollution Control and Other Measures to Protect Biodiversity in Lake Tanganyika. The project was aimed at producing an effective and sustainable system for managing and conserving the lake's biodiversity.

### **4. THE SAP AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

The Strategic Action Programme (SAP) was adopted as the framework for putting in place a regional mechanism for sustainable management of lake Tanganyika. Development of the SAP started with each of the riparian countries undertaking a series of consultations to identify priority threats and appropriate interventions. The national priority threats and interventions were then subjected to a trans-boundary diagnostic analysis to come up with a regional framework of prioritised threats and interventions.

The outcome of this consultation process was thus a SAP document indicating both national and regional priority threats and actions, and an institutional framework (draft Convention and a Lake Management Body) for its implementation.

Other outputs of the UNDP/GEF project intervention was the generation of valuable data and information which has contributed to the understanding of the biophysical and social characteristics of the lake as well as a heightened level of awareness of the threats affecting the lake and the need for quick intervention together with increased regional capacity to address the problems affecting the lake.

### **5. LESSONS AND CHALLENGES**

A number of lessons were learnt during the process of developing the SAP. Notable amongst these were:

- **Cooperative Action**

First and foremost development of the SAP by the 4 riparian states with support from other stakeholders was a demonstration of co-operative action for a common goal. Similar demonstration was registered at the project level where the LTBP worked hand in hand with the LTR project to work out agreed joint commitments. The lesson learnt from this process is that with good planning it is possible for governments, projects and people of different backgrounds to successfully work together when there is a common goal. This demonstration gives support to the GEF International Waters Programme approach.

- **Stakeholder Participation**

It was clearly established that to solve the problems affecting the lake needed the participation of both those responsible for the lake's problems (fishermen, farmers, charcoal burners/tree harvesters, transporters/ship owners, business community/industrial, community etc) and those working to solve the problems (Regulators/government departments and Agencies, NGOs, Funding Agencies, etc). Practical experience showed that those responsible for the lake's problems were only involved during the initial consultative stages and did not participate in the final development of the SAP and its implementation mechanism. This raises the question of how effective SAP implementation will be since most practical interventions will be the responsibility of this group of stakeholders

- **Capacity Building**

Whilst appreciating capacity built by the project in many areas such as information generation, equipment provision and skills training at various levels one critical area remained wanting. All project management positions (Project Managers and Coordinators), except for those at the national level were filled up by people from outside the region. The question is whether the local people will be in a position to effectively implement the project after the project has wound up. The challenge for future projects is to ensure that local people are given the responsibility to manage the project by putting them in key decision-making identified in this regard should be a subject of project intervention. Only then will project ownership be a reality, thereby allowing for continuity after the project intervention period.

- **The Need for Quick Follow up Action**

One area of critical consideration is that of follow up action. The project has developed a SAP and its implementation mechanism. It is however one thing to develop the SAP and the other to have it practically implemented. Many similar project interventions have produced wonderful results on paper such as the SAP (according to project objectives) but the same has never been implemented thereby creating no impact on the ground. The challenge is to cut down on the consultancy syndrome where only recommendations are generated without practical change on the ground. GEF should work out mechanisms which allow for incorporation of practical interventions beyond reports in project design, monitoring and evaluation.

## **6. References**

The project has generated a lot of information and a data base has been created in both English and French and can be accessed on the web site: <http://www.ltbp.org>

Notable Documents include:

1. Project Document, UNDP, 1994
2. Project Inception Report, 1997
3. State of Biodiversity in Lake Tanganyika, 1998
4. Minutes of various meetings both at national and regional level
5. Various Project Evaluation/Review Reports
6. Special Study Reports: Biodiversity, Environmental Education, Fishing Practices, Geographical Information System, Legal and Institutional Framework, Pollution, Sedimentation and Social Economics
7. Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
8. Strategic Action Programme (various – national, regional and final)