

Eastern Africa: Water, Climate and Development Programme for Africa

Water security for development



The Lake Victoria region is a climate change hot spot: impacts are clearly recognisable in increasing temperatures, changes in the timing and amount of rainfall, and extreme weather events. The Kagera River basin, which is regarded as the source of the White Nile, is the main source of water for Lake Victoria, contributing about 25–34 percent of the annual flow. The 60 500 km² river basin covers portions of Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda and supports a population of nearly 15 million people.¹ Its natural resources face increasing pressure as a result of rapid population growth, agricultural intensification, livestock raising and unsustainable land management practices.

Bugesera is a catchment within the Kagera basin shared by Burundi and Rwanda. Food insecurity is the major problem for the communities in Bugesera, accompanied by soil erosion, deforestation and the degradation of wetlands. Nutrient load (mainly from agriculture) is a major source of pollution for both the river and Lake Victoria, leading to the spread of water hyacinths and eutrophication. Recurrent droughts and floods pose a growing threat to development and to the well-being of poor rural communities, and may aggravate social problems like migration and conflicts over access to, and use of, natural resources.

The Water, Climate and Development Programme

In November 2010 the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) adopted a decision recommending that the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and partners operationalise the Water, Climate and Development Programme (WACDEP).

WACDEP aims to integrate water security and climate resilience into development planning processes, build climate resilience, and help countries adapt to a new climate regime through increased investments in water security. The 5-year programme, which is implemented in eight countries, four transboundary river basins and one shared aquifer, runs from May 2011 to April 2016.

The goal of the programme in Eastern Africa is to achieve a higher level of water security and climate resilience in Burundi and Rwanda and in the communities of the Bugesera transboundary catchment, for both economic growth and human security.

¹ *Kagera River Basin Monograph*, 2007

WACDEP supports riparian countries of the East African Community that share the Kagera basin in formalising the cooperative framework for sustainable management and development of the basin. It supports Rwanda to establish a national integrated water resource management (IWRM) framework to enhance water security and climate resilience in the water sector development programme. This will be done as part of the implementation of Rwanda's National Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy.

In Burundi, WACDEP has a key role in supporting the drafting of a national climate change adaptation strategy for the water sector based on the newly approved national climate change policy, thereby linking the national IWRM Plan with climate change policy. WACDEP also aims to enhance the resilience of local communities to climate change through demonstrations of innovative green solutions in the Bugesera transboundary catchment (Lake Cyohoha watershed).

Expected outcomes

- Enhanced capacities of partnerships, institutions and stakeholders in the targeted areas to integrate water security and climate resilience in development planning and decision-making processes.
- No/low regret investment strategies developed to enhance security and climate-resilient development, and fundable projects prepared and shared with development partners.
- Climate adaptation and water resources management plan developed for Lake Cyohoha catchment.
- Community-based climate change adaptation and water security actions defined and implemented for demonstration or piloting in the Bugesera catchment.

Activities undertaken and progress

- Two national WACDEP consultation workshops organised to support Burundi in developing a national climate change adaptation strategy and to strengthen Rwanda's efforts in establishing a national IWRM framework to enhance water security and climate resilience in the water sector.
- Assessment of national frameworks for climate adaptation and water resources management conducted in Burundi and Rwanda.
- Advocacy materials prepared for Burundi and Rwanda to integrate water security and climate resilience in national development planning and decision-making processes.
- Information and studies analysed to identify investments for transboundary interventions in the Bugesera catchment.



The Rwandan side of Lake Cyohoha basin (Photo by GWPEAF)

- Consultation workshop organised for local level stakeholders in the Bugesera catchment.
- Pilot demonstration project launched in the Bugesera catchment aimed at enhancing communities' resilience to climate change.
- Situational analysis on climate resilience carried out in the Lake Cyohoha catchment.
- Awareness of water security and climate change risks raised among stakeholders at national and local levels.

The programme is already demonstrating positive economic, social and environmental benefits. It supports community-based climate change adaptive actions on the ground to improve communities' resilience. Most of these activities benefit the most vulnerable groups in the community, particularly women and children. Moreover, the programme's environmental conservation activities improve local natural resources, which form the basis for community livelihoods.

Financing management

Initial funding is through GWP's financing partners. AMCOW and GWP are committed to increasing the funding base by engaging additional partners. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (Danida) are the main financial partners of the programme.

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