

Natural resources conservation and tourism

Tanzania is an exceptionally beautiful country with its national parks, game reserves, marine parks as well as landscape and biodiversity. The growing number of tourists, providing approximately 14% of Tanzania GDP are mainly attracted by the unique natural resources. However, extensive agricultural and livestock production, with associated burning, overgrazing and deforestation, as well as the felling of trees for various uses (energy, construction etc.) have resulted in a rapid depletion of natural resources and habitat loss.

The Government has adopted separate sector policies for forestry, the mineral sector, wildlife, fisheries, lands and tourism. Priority is accorded to implement national action plans to combat desertification and for biodiversity conservation.

EC support related to natural resources and tourism has come both from national and regional programmes and individual budget lines (18.5 million Euro since 1991). The main interventions have been in the areas of community conservation and sustainable management of national parks and game reserves, fisheries and rural development. In addition the Commission is involved in the institutional strengthening of the tourism sector.

In the environment sector, the EC is financing projects such as the Kagera Kigoma Game Reserve Rehabilitation Project which aims to re-build wildlife stocks and management capacity in refugee-affected areas. In addition, the EC has recently approved a new project titled the Mahale Ecosystem Management Project which aims to sustainably improve the management of the ecosystems natural resources by involving local communities and in collaboration with Tanzania National Parks. Those projects are featured among the three projects described below.

In the fisheries sector the EC is supporting a Monitoring, Surveillance and Control Project which will assist the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in controlling and monitoring fishing efforts in the Tanzanian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

And in the livestock sector the EC is contributing to projects which aim to enhance the livelihoods of farmers through effective disease control.

EU Member States also providing bilateral support to the natural resources sector include Denmark, Belgium, Germany, UK, Finland, France and Ireland.

Mahale Ecosystem Management Project

The Mahale Ecosystem Management Project is a new 5-year partnership between Tanzania National Parks and the Frankfurt Zoological Society, with counterpart support from the EU Programme on Tropical Forests in Developing Countries. The overall goal of this integrated conservation and development project, expected to begin in April 2003, is to help conserve the Mahale ecosystem globally important tropical forest biodiversity while at the same time improving the livelihoods and environmental security of neighbouring communities.

At the core of the ecosystem is the spectacular



Mahale Mountains National Park - an area of outstanding natural beauty and biological diversity.

Mahale Mountains National Park on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, one of Tanzania prime biodiversity hotspots. Famous for its chimpanzees, the park is also home to eight other primate species, varied habitats from tropical rainforest to mountain grasslands, and unique aquatic flora in the waters of Lake Tanganyika.

The park adjoins growing local communities, including the Tongwe and Bembwe fisher people and the agro-pastoralist Sukuma, all of whom are heavily dependent on the natural resources of the ecosystem for their livelihoods. In recent years these communities have noted a serious deterioration in the natural resources and ecological functions that sustain them (e.g. water, fish and building materials) as resources have been subjected to increasingly unsustainable human pressures.

The project purpose is to sustainably improve the management of the ecosystem forests and other natural resources both within and outside the national park, through a range of initiatives designed to reconcile the interests of the different stakeholders in the use of the ecosystem natural resources, in particular those of park managers and park-adjacent communities. These initiatives include:

1. Enhancing park-community dialogue and cooperation
2. Identifying ecosystem management priorities and threats and developing a system for long-term monitoring of ecosystem health
3. Developing a general management plan for the national park through a participatory process
4. Strengthening the resource protection and

maintenance, administration and ecotourism functions of the national park

5. Strengthening community-based systems and institutions for sustainable development and natural resources management

6. Developing conservation-compatible income-generating activities and rural enterprises, especially involving poor, park-adjacent households. The Kagera Kigoma Game Reserves Rehabilitation Project (KKGRRP) was initiated to control the depletion of wildlife in the game reserves of north western Tanzania following massive influxes of refugees into these regions from Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). The reserves supported by the project include Ibanda & Rumanyika, Burigi & Biharamulo, Muyowosi & Kigosi which together cover an area in excess of 24,000 square kilometres.

The reserves include a wide diversity of habitats from unique dry mountain forest, extensive and pristine miombo woodlands, diverse wetlands some of which were the first designated RAMSAR sites in Tanzania and large freshwater lakes. Wildlife in the reserves include breeding proportions of endangered species such as shoebill storks, wattled cranes, African wild dogs and remnants of black rhino populations. Large populations of elephants, lion, leopard and buffalo are also present. The project is implemented by the Wildlife Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.

The major activities supported by this project are (1) strengthening the reserve management; (2)

protection of the wildlife resources through funding law enforcement operations; (3) development of management plans; (4) encouraging community based conservation of the surrounding wildlife resources.

The project has been successful in implementing retention schemes approved for the above game reserves whereby 50% of the income generated by the reserves is retained for management purposes. All boundaries of the reserves have been permanently demarcated, roads constructed, airstrips rehabilitated and staff housing and outposts both built and rehabilitated. Computers have been provided and office capacity upgraded.

Extensive law enforcement has been funded together with introduction of new technologies and equipment and as a result, wildlife populations are showing a significant recovery in many of the game reserves. The legal and controlled harvest of wildlife has again become viable and the reserves are beginning to regenerate their own income. Other project outputs include:

- Management plans developed for Burigi & Biharamulo Game Reserves and Ibanda & Rumanyika Game Reserves.

- Small scale community development and conservation programmes are currently underway.

- Support from the project has been instrumental in pushing the gazettement of Kimisi Game Reserve which creates a continuous protected area from Lake Victoria across to the Rwandan border and provides a link to the Akagera National Park of Rwanda

A second phase to the project is under preparation which will include a component for the conservation of the Selous Black Rhino.

TACARE Project

The project aims to seek ways of arresting the rapid degradation of natural resources, especially indigenous forest in the Kigoma region partly due to the influx of refugees. The objectives of the project include the creation of environmental protection awareness; to provide models for sustainable socio-economic development; to strengthen local institutional capacity for sustainable development; to introduce farming and agro-forestry systems; establishment of a tree nursery service and the promotion of income generating activities through village based savings and credit schemes.

The project has been successful in de-centralising activities to schools and villages in order to help ensure sustainability which is facilitated by skills and knowledge dissemination as well training. In addition, the project has made significant impact in Roots and Shoots component (environment awareness training in schools) and in improving farming methods (e.g. contour farming). Woodlots in over 30 locations and longer term forest conservation activities have been established and the development of a GIS system aims to consolidate progress and enhance natural resource management planning.