



WWF Technical Progress REPORT

Project Title: Lake Niassa Reserve
Project Number: 656-G-00-06-00129-00
Reporting Period: April - October 2008

1. Global Thematic Programme, Ecoregional Targets or Global Policy Initiatives

The project is part of the WWF Mozambique country program within the Southern African Program (SARPO). It contributes to the SARPO Conservation Strategy 2006-2010 and especially to the Strategic Objective 1: Conserving the Web of Life; Key terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems and processes conserved, sustainably managed and used in Southern Africa. Under this objective, the project contributes to Milestone/Target (LW 3.1.) 6.5 million ha of representative freshwater habitats are protected by 2010 in priority river basins. In regard to the global conservation priorities, the project contributes to the Freshwater Program, Target 3.

2. Project Successes

The progress and successes that can be reported for this period include the following:

1. **Consolidation and improvement in functioning of the Project Coordination Committee.** This was possible because of a greatly improved coordination environment with the Ministry of Fisheries, including its various departments (Instituto de Investigação Pesqueira, Instituto de Desenvolvimento de Pesca de Pequena Escala e Fundo de Fomento de Pesca). After one year of delay, an agreement was finally signed in September, with the objective of increasing fisheries co-management activities in the Lake Niassa area.
2. **Progress in Co-management with communities in the Lake Niassa area.** Six new fisheries management committees (CCP's) were registered and recognised by the Ministry of Fisheries, those of Messumba, Chuanga, Micuio, Seli, Sanjala and Tungo villages. The committee of Ngoo village was recognised by the District Government and will soon be by the Ministry of Fisheries. Several more CCP's were in process of formation, those of Mbueca, Cobué Sede, Mataka and Chigoma. The formation of these committees is very significant because they are legally charged with co-management responsibilities according to existing fisheries legislation. The second District Reserve Management Committee meeting was also held, with the participation of the 6 registered and recognised

associations, the Ngoo association, the Associação Umoji (linked to the Manda Wilderness Tourism Project) community leaders and rangers, and government development partners.

3. **A radio programme** was also initiated using the District Community radio station. Radio theatre and informative programmes were developed relating to fishing arts (legal and illegal) and community fisheries management. This programme is managed by a committee consisting of the District Administration, with the secretariat being the District Economic Activities Department (SDAE). The Fisheries Ministry approved the content of the programmes and is working directly with WWF to implement the radio programme until December 2008.
4. **Sixteen local associations**, including fishing, agricultural, animal husbandry, and agricultural marketing associations were identified by the District Economic Activities Department and the Local Investment Fund (a micro-loan programme of the Government) to receive GoM support and possibly loans. The idea here is to create more livelihoods alternatives for communities around the Reserve, to minimize pressure on fisheries resources.
5. **Extension of the Reserve to the South at the request of Local Communities.** During the extensive community consultations that concluded this past trimestre, local communities in the Meluluca area requested to be included in the reserve. This was a huge vote of confidence in the reserve design process, and also allowed an important seamount with unique species to be included in the proposed protected area. New maps are being created outlining the new dimensions of the reserve.
6. **Community Ranger Capacity and recognition: Official recognition of community rangers in the Lake Niassa area is based on the Law of Local Governmental Authorities--Lei dos Órgão Locais do Estado (LOLE)** that attributes certain competencies, including patrolling and supervision of patrolling functions, to the District Governments. The use of this legislation was used for the first time in the Lake Niassa Project and is considered to be a replicable success because with district support the rangers have strong authority at community level and a direct line of support and backup. It is in this context that the newly included communities in the Meluluca area selected 15 more rangers, raising the number of rangers officially recognised from 22 to 37. Formal training of the new rangers will occur in 2009. Also, new identification badges for the rangers were approved by the District government.
7. **The conclusion of the Community Consultation process about the Lake Niassa Management Plan.** The idea here was to divulge the management plan and add the final community comments to the plan. This was done and the last few comments are being added currently. Main changes included a 30 km increase to the south of the reserve as well as the approval of a 100,000 ha. buffer

zone on the continent beside the reserve (which is entirely aquatic) in the area from Lussefa to Utchesse.

3. Progress on Activities

Progress was steady although there were some delays which meant that target dates were sometimes not met. There were a variety of reasons for this, though most were due to political conflicts. These however were very much reduced this reporting period and as noted earlier cooperation with the Ministry of Fisheries is much better than in earlier reporting periods. Progress on Specific Objectives is reported below:

Objective 1: To develop and document a plan for the establishment and sustainable use of the Lake Niassa Reserve (LNR) area that is acceptable to all stakeholders and that ensures that development will be both ecologically sensitive and socially just.

A justification document that lays out the scientific, socio-economic, cultural, and historic basis for the declaration of the LNR

- The draft management plan lays out the above basis and is in its third drafting phase as mentioned earlier. After this third draft there remains only the District and Provincial Seminars before going to the Council of Ministers.

A draft General Management Plan (with associated zoning plan) is elaborated that is supported by stakeholders at all levels, from village level up to national level

Terms of Reference for the drafting of the management plan were approved in previous phases, and a first and second draft produced. A summary of the most relevant clauses was produced for divulgation at village level, and this was done during this period. Village level comments are now being incorporated in the third draft. Note that included in the Reserve plans are a business plan, a cash flow projection, and tourism development plan. Tourism development sites have already been identified and mapped by the Provincial government. Several additional events of this reporting period include:

- An in depth consultancy to bring together all of the information about the biodiversity of the Lake was undertaken, and results included in the management plan. The consultant's report is available as from July, 2008.
- Reserve area extended from Lussefa to Utchesse. This is an area of very high aquatic biodiversity.
- The final consensus about the reserve borders was achieved. The reserve will be aquatic and the buffer zone terrestrial, est. 100,000 hectares.

- The community consultation process was concluded with success with all communities affected signing for the reserve. Official documents (Auto da Consulta Comunitaria) were produced and signed in the presence of the relevant officials from the GoM. The District Government officially approved the process. Twenty communities and 2061 people attended the consultations.
- Official notices (Editais) were hung in public places as per law, allowing 30 days for any complaint to be registered. No complaints were registered about the legalisation of the reserve.
- The Official opinion from the Surveyor General's Department (Serviços Provinciais de Geografia e Cadastro--SPGC) was issued, which said that the process and the concept of the reserve is in accordance with law and that the process of declaration had been legally conducted.
- The final, official map was created by the SPGC and is now available to the public.

Objective 2: To improve managerial and decision making capacities of the LNR population to allow them to better defend their own interests and better manage their own natural resources

Enhanced community capacity among men and women to use and manage Lake resources in a sustainable way in coordination with relevant authorities

- As mentioned earlier six CCP's were created and recognized legally. This follows a year long conflict which has just recently been resolved. These are: Chuanga, Micuio, Messumba, Sanjala, Tungo e Seli. The CCP of Ngoo has been formed and is in the process of legal recognition. Four additional CCP's are being formed as well: Cobué sede, Mataca, Chigoma e Mbueca. Underway are training courses for these, in terms of understanding associations, legal status, rights, obligations, and objectives of these associations.

Enhanced organizational and democratic capacity of community-based organizations and traditional/religious structures to resolve developmental and resource management issues

- New areas and new rangers were brought into the reserve project as mentioned in earlier sections.
- The UMOJI Association, an association which is linked to the Manda Wilderness tourism project and represents 14 communities in the near-lake area, has established an agreement with WWF to harmonise the management plans of the Lake Reserve and buffer zone with the Manda Wilderness project management plan, so the two adjacent areas can be managed as a single integrated block. This will effectively

increase the size of the buffer zone. Rangers will be allowed to operate in the Manda Wilderness area under this agreement, because they are credencialisied by the District and so can operate anywhere within the Lago District. This was an elegant solution to UMOJI who worried that their legal land rights would be altered with the establishment of the reserve.

Objective 3: To establish a “first-phase” LNR management scheme and management structures (in collaboration with local fishers and villages and existing governmental departments and agencies)

Ranger team organized, trained and officially recognized

- Identification tags have been designed and approved and a local firm is printing these nametags for the rangers.

First phase LNR management established, based to the extent possible on the use of existing organizations, administrative bodies, and local community structures.

- Activities and progress here has been described in earlier sections.

LNR project has the necessary equipment and infrastructure to function.

- Two plots in Metangula town have been requisitioned (20 x 30 meters) for the future offices of the reserve.

Development of livelihoods programme and second phase LNR funding proposal with relevant partners and stakeholders

- A livelihoods programme designed with Oxfam and submitted for EU funding was not successful. Further fundraising efforts are ongoing. Second phase Lake reserve project financing from USAID secured and contract signed in August 2008.

4. Problems and Constraints

The following problems and constraints were encountered during this reporting period:

- One year of delay was encountered because of a disinformation campaign with the UMOJI association, who were informed that the establishment of the Reserve would mean the loss of their land titles. Official opinions on this were sought from the National Director of Lands and this was shown to be a false position and false information. While the issue is now resolved it took a year to do so.

- A long-running conflict with Ministry of Fisheries as explained earlier also caused delays. However, Fisheries and the project are now cooperating in the formation of CCP's, an important part of the Lake Reserve establishment process.

5. Learning and Sharing

The creation of the District Level Management Committee (Unidade de Maneio) to supervise the project and eventually assume legal responsibility for the management of the reserve after declaration is a highly replicable solution, as it involved the use of existing structures and broadbased grassroots stakeholder participation to create a decentralised and inexpensive management structure. WWF wishes to use this model in the Primeiras and Segundas Marine Reserve area as well, where we have to create three district-level management units, one for each district of the Marine Reserve.

The community consultations were also a big success because the district and provincial governments assumed ownership of this process, and WWF played a nearly invisible role in the background.

6. Adaptive Management

The timelines had to be adjusted due to the conflicts mentioned earlier.

7. Communications/ Success Stories

Two communications events involving the provincial government were held during the reporting period, one with the members of UMOJI and one with communities in general. His Excellency the Governor of Niassa Province addressed hundreds of people and reinforced not only that the Reserve was an important government initiative, but also that community consultation and participation were essential. This led directly to the resolution of the UMOJI conflict and the signing of positive community agreements (Autos da Consulta Comunitaria) about the Reserve.

8. Future Issues/ Challenges

- **Finish the final revisions and consultations about the Management Plan.** There remain the District and Provincial consultations left to implement.
- **Submission of documents to the Council of Ministers for their approval.** After the plans are written and approved, the final step is their submission to the Council of Ministers.

9. Anticipated future problems or delays

Conflicts and extra time spent resolving them, as well as other necessities of the project, mean that funds until April are very short. Also causing funding stress is the fact that the reserve will be 30 km longer than originally planned for. On the one hand additional fundraising needs to be done and on the other, some delays may be anticipated.

10. Information on security issues

At this point there is no information on security issues that would affect program integrity and safety of cooperating and implementing partners.

11. Overall Assessment of Progress

The project overall is ahead of schedule on some issues and behind on others. Ahead on establishing management structures and patrolling, but behind schedule on reserve design and community consultations, due to conflicts mentioned earlier, and additional opportunities (the opportunity of extending the reserve 30 km to the south to capture important seamounts and other biodiversity sites).

The positive conclusion of the Community Consultation process is a great step forward. Funding stress is a concern.

No insuperable obstacles are expected.

Report completed by:	
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