



Water for Life – Newsletter

July 2020

Message from the Head of NABU's Africa Program and Deputy Head of International Affairs

A welcome to the reader

Dear partners, colleagues and supporters,

NABU, The Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union, is a German international NGO with its headquarters in Berlin, and it is one of the oldest conservation organizations in Germany. NABU has been promoting the interests of people and nature for over 110 years with more than 770,000 members and supporters.

In Ethiopia NABU is working since 2006 supporting conservation, capacity development and sustainable livelihood development. In collaboration with the regional government, NABU has been working in protecting Lake Tana and its environs since 2012. Amongst the most important achievements, certainly is the establishment of a UNESCO biosphere reserve at Lake Tana in 2015 a highlight.

Lake Tana Watershed is rich in natural resources and a haven for both people and nature. However, unsustainable expansion of agriculture, use of natural resources (overgrazing, overfishing, and extraction of sediments), invasion of alien species, deforestation, pollution and urban growth result in the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, not to mention the decline of productivity and land degradation.

After successfully concluding two projects (2012-2015 and 2016-2018), NABU started a new project in collaboration with the Amhara National Regional State: 'Water for Life – Partnership for a joint sustainable future of Lake Tana Watershed' which is kindly funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation.

This project will unite relevant stakeholders of the civil society, government, business and science in order to jointly tackle challenges and to contribute to the common good and sustainable future development of Lake Tana Watershed. Joint forces, knowledge and capacities will enable us to bring positive change for a long-lasting healthy environment of Lake Tana Watershed.

We are looking forward to working with you!



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Traditional papyrus boat in Lake Tana



Hippos

Message from the Project Coordinator

NABU's long-lasting work in Lake Tana

Dear Lake Tana Watershed development partners and practitioners,

Lake Tana Watershed comprises about 29 districts in the Amhara regional state and about four million people's livelihoods are directly and indirectly dependent on the lake and its tributaries. The lake with its extensive wetlands and tributaries are of national and international importance as the source of the Blue Nile, providing 50% of Ethiopia's freshwater resources to the people of Ethiopia and neighbouring countries. It provides significant ecosystem services such as water for people and agriculture, grounds for tourism, fishing, water transport, as source for the generation of energy and habitat for fauna and flora.

NABU has been working in the Lake Tana area since 2012. A first project supported the establishment of the UNESCO biosphere reserve, the second project was entitled 'Community based Climate Adaptation and Biodiversity Conservation in Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve Area' (2016-2018) and currently, NABU started the new Water for Life project (2019-2022).

We will issue this newsletter biannually. Our goal is to update you about the project's achievements, share background of the complexity of the Lake Tana Watershed

and offer opportunities of working together with actors to secure Lake Tana's water, and to together shape development sustainably. I hope you will like the newsletter and enjoy it.

Thank you very much for your attention!



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Inauguration of the Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve in 2015



Water is a source of life

Introduction to the project ‘Water for Life’

A quick introduction to our project’s goals

Lake Tana Watershed is located in the north western parts of the country with a total area of 15,000 km². The watershed is divided into four administrative zones (Awi, West Gojjam, South Gondar and Central Gondar), 29 districts (Woreda) and 429 Kebeles. The watershed has both national and international importance: it is the source of the Blue Nile providing 50% from the total Ethiopia's freshwater resources, harbours unique biodiversity and is rich in natural resources. Its waters are used for drinking, irrigation, sources of food (e.g. fish), and many other sorts of use. However, because of the rapid population growth and increasing industrialization, these resources are under pressure.

The new project will involve partners that are users of or have stakes at the Lake Tana Watershed. NABU's major role will be facilitating the process of bringing all partners together and working for a common objective.

The major components of the project are:

- Stakeholder mapping and capacity building of the initiation committee
- Capacity building for NGOs, CBOs, scientific institutions and the private sector
- Working group pilot activities: ecosystem restoration, water quality and containment of invasive species, generate income out of waste, educating companies about sustainability and a campaign for behaviour change

- Transformation of the national and regional legislative processes for secure access of water, and protection of the water resources
- Establishment of a local NGO
- Project distribution through media campaign

With this project, we are aiming to maintain the functionality of the Lake Tana Watershed as an important supra-regional water supplier in the long term, through working together with its main stakeholders and interested public.



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WATER FOR LIFE



The region has rich bird wildlife

The concept of Multi Stakeholder Partnerships and its significance to the Lake Tana Watershed

What are Multi Stakeholder Partnerships?

To solve complex challenges or to exploit promising new opportunities, people should work together instead of individual attempts. The term multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) is used as an overarching concept which highlights the idea that different groups can share a common problem or aspiration, while nevertheless having different interests or stakes.

MSPs offer practical ways forward in situations like creating better environmental and social standards, working with the local communities to create a sustainable management plan, impacting investors to source responsibly from small-scale farmers and in many others. While the different actors may share a common problem or aspiration, they also have different stakes or interests. MSPs thrive when the initiator/s can make their concern a shared concern and create a core group that leads collaboratively so it helps to have a strong and persistent initiator.

Why Multi Stakeholder Partnerships at Lake Tana Watershed?

The increasing population and unsustainable resource use in the Lake Tana Watershed creates immense pressure on its resources. These days increasingly the challenges and opportunities we face at the watershed level are large and complex. Our actions are linked with the actions of others, and we cannot work alone.

The multiple and complex challenges at Lake Tana Watershed require a coordinated effort with multiple stakeholders contributing to innovative and sustainable solutions. The widening scope, complexity and ambition of sustainable development in the area require an increasing commitment to dialogue and collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders. Effective stakeholder engagement provides the opportunity to manage those challenges, to find innovative solutions and to create value for everyone involved. Our regional and technical experience put us in the position to tackle the challenges and achieve real changes. Though, there is the need to work together with a wide range of different people and organizations with

different settings. Moreover, the global community decided for the sustainable development goals in order to address the big challenges facing humanity for the coming decades. And it recognized that the goals will only be achieved through strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships.

NABU sees the need to make sustainable development happen by generating economic growth with greater resource efficiency, while minimising environmental impacts and with maximum social well-being for more people in the watershed. Business is an indispensable part of the solution to the problems of LTW. There is a need to improve the relationships with governments, NGOs and others in the ways projects are being implemented. In the course of MSP implementation the idea of sustainable development through practical partnerships can be turned into a growing reality on the ground for any development endeavours which are based on a direct and indirect water uses.

Many different groups in LTW are concerned with the same issues (e.g. environmental degradation and limited economic opportunities), but from a different perspective and with different interests. Bringing a positive change at LTW depends on dialogue and alignment across different sectors in society.

The collaborative and learning-oriented approach of MSPs is definitely not a solution for every difficult situation we face at the region. Nonetheless, it is often astonishing just how much progress can be made when we focus on the human aspects that help people and organizations/institutions cooperate, rather than remaining locked in conflict.

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Boat harbour in Lake Tana

Water for Life news

First stakeholder's conference

The conference is expected to be conducted annually and the first one was conducted for three consecutive days from 4-6 December 2019 at Bahir Dar, Grand Resort hotel. The purpose of the conference was to introduce the 'Water for Life' project and its concept to all stakeholders and set up the MSP structure, to jointly create a vision of our goals together.

The composition of invited stakeholders were from Federal level, Ministerial representatives, Amhara regional state sector offices, academia, civil societies, developmental organizations, private sectors, religious institutes, zone administration sector offices, Woredas (district) administration sector offices and local community representatives.

In addition, H.E. Brita Wagener German Ambassador to Ethiopia, and Dr. Tsegaw Tibebe, Deputy Bureau Head of Amhara Regional State Finance and Economic Cooperation were present, and showed their support to our project.



Participants of the first stakeholder's conference in December 2019

Intensive training and strategy workshop

The training was held from 11 to 15 December 2019, to 20 initiation committee members of the Water for Life project. It was thrown by two international consultants from Collective Leadership Institute (CLI) from South Africa.

The focus of the training was on stakeholder dialogues, the concept of the Multi Stakeholder Partnerships and its application to the project.

Following the training was the strategy workshop. It was conducted from 16 to 17 December 2019, to the project's secretariat. The workshop was also held by the CLI.

The objective this time was to design a strategic plan and set up working groups to implement the project's activities.

The outcomes of the workshop were:

- The draft of a vision statement and common objective, and a strategy plan with milestones
- The concrete identification of the activities to be done in each of the Water for Life MSP structures

With those intense trainings, the team and highly interested stakeholders used the opportunity to develop a shared language and understanding towards the project, engaging therefore dialogue and building connections.



Participants of the intensive stakeholder dialogue training, in December 2019





Man washing his face from one of the streams near Lake Tana



Fish is an important source of food in the Lake Tana Watershed

COVID-19

Why is preserving the integrity of our water sources so important, especially now?

It is impossible to imagine life without water. Our daily tasks depend on it, not to mention most of our economic activities. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council first recognized safe drinking water as a human right, acknowledging therefore its essential importance for our lives. Water plays a big role in public health, being indispensable for personal hygiene. Hence, deterioration of natural water bodies such as the one currently taking place in the LTW, can be considered a threat to healthy living, and can harm the life of about four million people that are dependent on its resources.

The long overdue action to preserve the ecosystems services from LTW is especially pertinent in the time we are living, given the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is a serious threat throughout the world, and in March 13th the first case was confirmed in Ethiopia. Since avoiding the spread of diseases is strongly connected to safe drinking water and personal hygiene, it is necessary to reflect on how sustainable are the activities in the LTW. If there is no change, will there be access to clean water in the future? How are we going to protect our future generations, in case of pandemic outbreaks?

A new vision on economic activity and sustainable use of water can walk side by side with environmental protection, and this can bring significant positive development to LTW. This is our main goal with the Water for Life project, and we hope to overcome this difficult COVID-19 situation together, with a more conscious attitude towards our relationship with nature, and especially, with water.

Meanwhile, people can take action to prevent the disease through simple, day-to-day measures. These include the following precautions: to wash your hands with soap and water, to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, to maintain a

physical distance of at least one meter from each other, to stay home in case of illness and to make sure to cough or sneeze into a tissue or a bent elbow. Stay healthy!

How is Corona affecting our project, and what are we doing about it?

Regarding the Water for Life Project, we have been using this time to develop activities that avoid people's gatherings and travelling. When possible, the staff is working from home and making its best to stay safe.

NABU has also contributed to the Amhara Regional State (COVID-19 control task force) with 250,000.00 Ethiopian Birr to purchase necessary sanitary materials. The task force committee sent to us an appreciation letter for our contribution.



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Find out more at: [our Facebook](#)

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WATER FOR LIFE



Final message

We hope that you have enjoyed reading our first newsletter. Please feel free to share this with anyone you know who would be interested in our project. For us, it is very important that every person that is directly or indirectly connected on the Lake Tana and its tributaries feels free to contribute to our partnership for a joint sustainable future.

Thank you.

The Water for Life Team





WATER FOR LIFE

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