

**Integrated Management of Lake  
George, Uganda:  
The Lake George Basin Integrated  
Management Organisation  
(LAGBIMO)**

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## 1. Introduction

Managing lake basin natural resources is a challenge. Not only because of the complexities involved in managing intricate and connected ecosystems, but also because of the wide range of stakeholders involved in using and managing the basin natural resources.

To address this challenge, the stakeholders of Lake George, in southwest Uganda, have formed the Lake George Basin Integrated Management Organisation, LAGBIMO. This organisation was inaugurated in early 2003 and was set up by the three co-operating local governments around Lake George – Bushenyi, Kamwenge and Kasese – and all stakeholders involved in fisheries from the eight landing site communities of the lake.

The formation of LAGBIMO, and the subsequent development of an integrated lake management plan, represents the fruits of the implementation of an innovative integrated lake management (ilm) approach, piloted on Lake George and generating lessons for other lakes in Uganda and beyond. The implementation of the approach on Lake George is supported by the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), channelled through the Integrated Lake Management project and operating within the Ministry of Local Government.

The approach is innovative in its poverty focus, participatory and integrated approach and the implementation to date has generated many lessons that are shared here. There is certainly further to go in implementing this approach on Lake George, as outlined in the way forward, but the institutional framework and the plan provide firm foundations for improved integrated and poverty focused lake management.

The paper provides a brief description of Lake George and the formation of LAGBIMO, and focuses on discussing key lessons for other lakes in developing and implementing strong and effective integrated lake management approaches.

## 2. Why manage lake basin natural resources?

Lake basin natural resources are managed for a variety of reasons, with implications for the approach to management, institutional structures and the costs and benefits of management. The goods and services provided by lakes vary considerably, but for the sub-Saharan Africa region, some of the key dependencies include:

- Provision of important fisheries, for export and/or domestic consumption.
- Wildlife may be dependent upon a lake within a protected area.
- The lake may serve as, or be part of, a tourist attraction.
- It may serve as a reservoir, or an important source of water extraction for consumption or irrigation.

There are many other uses of, and benefits from, lakes and their basins. Within Uganda, the major lakes, and many of the minor lakes, are important fisheries making significant contributions to poverty reduction and economic growth by providing food, employment and incomes for millions of people. Not surprisingly, lake management has therefore tended to focus on managing the fishery resources. However, since many of the factors that influence resource productivity arise on land, lake management in Uganda is increasingly becoming more integrated and is taking a basin management approach.

The case study of Lake George, described here, illustrates how an integrated approach can be developed and implemented for improved productivity and livelihoods. The stakeholders involved in forming LAGBIMO felt it was essential to take a basin approach to management, but also realised that it was beyond their capacity to start at a basin level. The focus of LAGBIMO is primarily on the lake itself and its immediately adjacent catchment, on the communities directly benefiting from the lake and on the local governments, and other agencies, benefiting from, and responsible for, the lake. Some basin issues have been identified and incorporated into the management plan, particularly issues such as hillside agriculture and pollution from mines that are no longer functioning. In future, it is expected that LAGBIMO will address other basin wide issues and expand the range of operation, and this will involve forming more partnerships and working through, and with, a range of stakeholders.

### 3. What is integrated lake management?

The formation of LAGBIMO is rooted in an approach to lake management that is integrated in the following ways:

- Inter-district, including bringing all three levels of local government (Parish, Sub-county and District) together from three districts.
- Inter-sectoral, involving sectors such as fisheries, environment, water, wetlands and community development, to provide a holistic approach to lake management, recognising the interrelatedness of the system and livelihoods.
- Inter-stakeholder, bringing together many types of stakeholders, all concerned with the improved and sustainable use and management of Lake George basin resources for improved livelihoods.

Integrated lake management integrates government administrations, sectors and stakeholders at three levels: national, lake wide/district and community. These levels support and feed into each other to ensure that the factors needed for integrated lake management are recognised and supported.

The overall aim of this approach implemented through LAGBIMO is poverty reduction through improved livelihoods resulting from sustainable management of lake basin natural resources. To achieve this aim, many supportive developments are needed at national, local and community level, as set out in the following section.

#### 4. What is needed for lake basin management?

From experience in Uganda, an integrated approach to lake basin management must be supported by:

- An enabling policy and legal environment at national and local levels.
- An appreciation at national and local levels of the value of lake basin resources and the justification for investment in their management.
- Appropriate and effective institutional structures at national and local level that do not duplicate existing systems, but are integrated into, and supplement, government structures.
- Clear roles and responsibilities for effective planning and management.
- Legal mandate for local planning and management.
- Understanding of the ownership, and acceptance of sharing the value, of the lake and its resources between different stakeholders.
- An understanding and agreement on who does, and should have, access to, and benefit from, lake resources.
- A participatory, inclusive and bottom-up planning and management system and process.
- Good community-based information collection, use and dissemination system that feeds into planning and decision-making at all levels.

Before explaining these essential components of developing and implementing the integrated lake management approach, a brief background to Lake George and LAGBIMO sets the context for the lessons learnt.

#### 5. Lake George: background

Lake George is one of five major lakes in Uganda and is located in the southwest of the country. Lake George lies on the equator at an altitude of 914m covering a water surface area of 260km<sup>2</sup> with a catchment area of 9,700km<sup>2</sup>. The lake is very shallow with a mean depth of 2.5m and maximum of about 4m. The lake is fed by numerous rivers, most of which arise in the Rwenzori Mountains to the north and northeast of the lake. The rivers enter the lake through extensive permanent swamps up to 21km long and 14km wide that occupy more than half the area designated as a Ramsar Site under the Ramsar Convention's *List of Wetlands of International Importance* in 1988. The lake has a single outlet, the Kazinga Channel, which drains the south west corner of the lake and runs for 36km into Lake Edward, a lake that is shared with the Democratic Republic of Congo. In hydrological terms, Lake George is remarkably stable. Despite its very shallow depth, seasonal changes in water levels are less than 1m, with highest levels occurring in May-June and Nov-Jan, shortly after the two seasonal peaks in rainfall.

The lake is naturally eutrophic, with a very high phytoplankton biomass which results in low water transparencies. An extremely high rate of primary production is maintained throughout the year and dependent upon the rapid uptake of nutrients derived mainly from organic decomposition in the mud. The high rate of uptake is maintained by frequent, usually daily, disturbance of the bottom mud by winds due to the shallowness of the water. It is probable

that the high rate of production has persisted with little seasonal variation since the origin of the lake in its present form and climatic regime. The most remarkable feature of the lake compared with other tropical lakes is the high productivity coupled with the overall stability of the biomasses of its organisms. This, in turn, is due to the shallowness of the lake, its stable water level and the frequent winds in all seasons, which circulate nutrients from the mud more or less continuously.

About 75% of the lakeshore lies within the boundaries of the Queen Elizabeth Protected Area (QEPA), under the stewardship of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). This has implications for the use of the lake and for the livelihood strategies of the people living in the fish landing sites within the boundaries. The Rwenzori mountains, part of the Rwenzori National Park, are an imposing feature of the basin, influencing the local climate and flow of water to the lake.

The lake supports commercial fisheries, whose fleet size has been controlled by central Government through licensing since the 1950s. There are six landing sites on Lake George, with another two on the Kazinga Channel supporting a population of about 13,000 people, most of whom live within QEPA.

These features of Lake George present challenges to integrated lake management. The presence of the national parks, particularly QEPA, present challenges in terms of livelihood options and access to other natural resources (such as fuel wood) for those living in fishing villages within the Protected Area boundaries. The extensive and important wetlands of Lake George must be sustainably managed and access controlled and the lake itself is connected to Lake Edward, which as an international lake, faces different management challenges in terms of bringing Ugandan and Congolese stakeholders together.

### **5.1 The formation of LAGBIMO**

The development of the Lake George Basin Integrated Management Organisation involved the establishment of an Institutional Development Working Group (IDWG), with representatives from communities, different sectors within the relevant local governments and from national agencies. The IDWG guided the process and undertook considerable consultation with communities, local governments and other stakeholders. Technical assistance was facilitated by ILM to provide guidance on legal and financial issues, and assessment of training needs. The result of the lengthy and in-depth consultative process is LAGBIMO and its Constitution.

The aim of LAGBIMO is “to provide a framework for coordination and coherence in the planning and implementation of any form of interventions for the socio-economic development of communities within the basin through the sustainable management of Lake George basin natural resources”. The objectives of LAGBIMO are set out in Annex 1.

LAGBIMO has the following structure:

- The Lake Wide Assembly (LWA)
- Executive Committee (EC)
- Fisheries Management Committee (FMC)
- Finance, Planning and Budgeting Committee (FPBC)
- Secretariat

The detailed membership and functions of the Assembly and Committees are outlined in the LAGBIMO Constitution, but it should be noted that every Committee includes representatives from communities, sub-counties and districts. The two standing committees, FMC and FPBC, have developed detailed terms of reference to guide their operations and logical frameworks to set out what they want to achieve, how and by when.

Figure 1 summarise the functions of the LAGBIMO, which are briefly described in Annex 2.

## **5.2 The Lake George Basin Management Plan**

The Lake George Basin Management Plan (LGBMP), 2003/04 – 2005/06, is the operational plan for LAGBIMO, though there are other partners with interests in, and responsibilities for, the Lake George Basin, who contributed to the development of the plan and will be involved in implementation through their own plans.

The vision to be achieved through the implementation of the plan is:

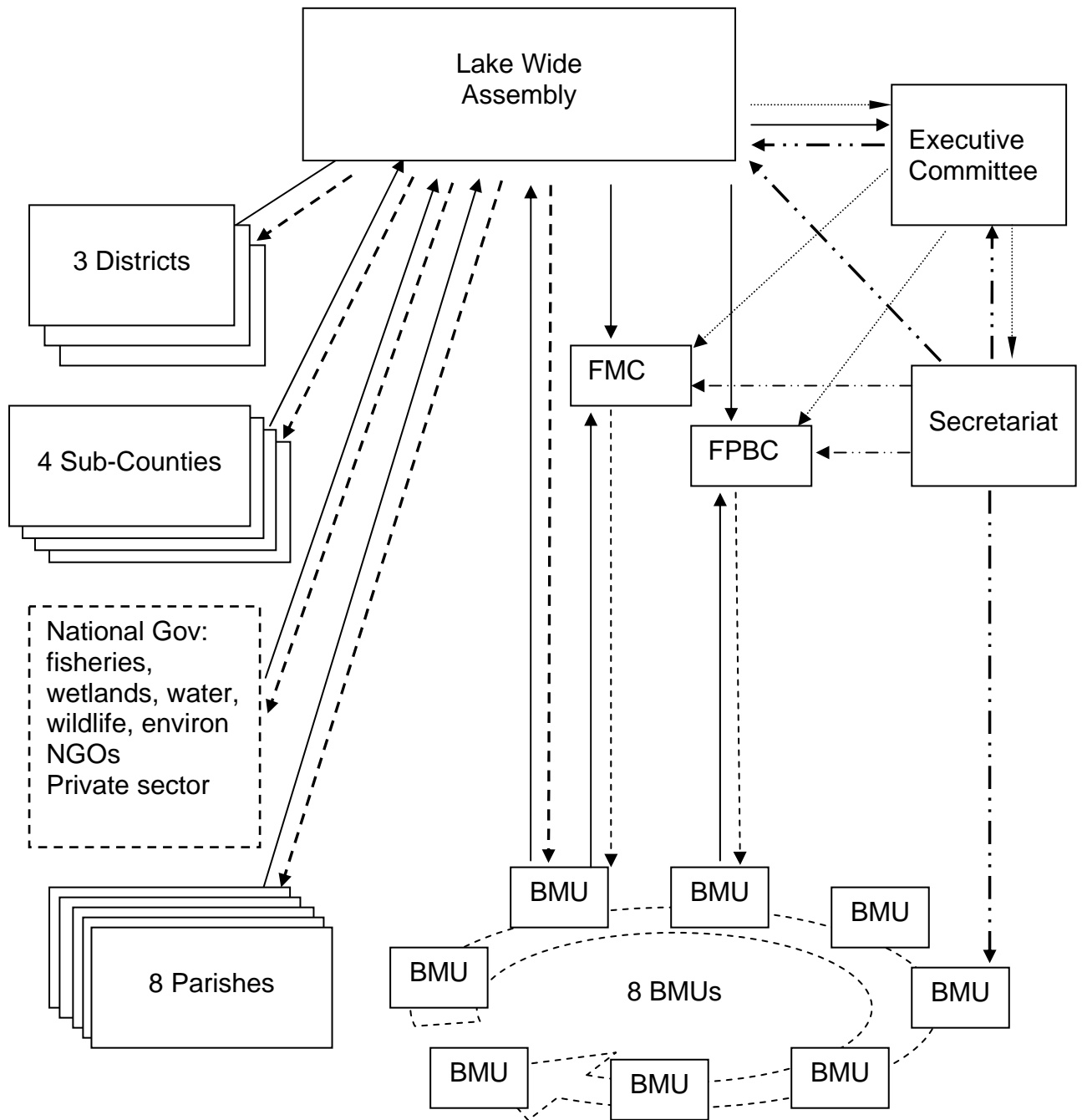
*Sustainable management and use of Lake George natural resources for the improved livelihoods of poor communities within the Basin by 2013.*

It is intended that the implementation of the plan will lead to nine outputs (set out in Annex 3), which in turn should contribute to the purpose and vision. The plan describes the outputs and activity areas essential for achieving each output.

The implementation of the LGBMP will involve many stakeholders and partners, which will require integration of issues and actions into the work plans and operational plans of partners, and into local government development plans through the planning processes. Figure 2 sets out the planning system within LAGBIMO and highlights the importance of integration into local government development planning.

The LGBMP will be reviewed on an annual basis and rolled over within the three-year time frame. LAGBIMO is supported in its first year by the Integrated Lake Management project and the cooperating local governments at district and sub-county levels. Further funds for the implementation of the plan and to support the operation of LAGBIMO will be sought.

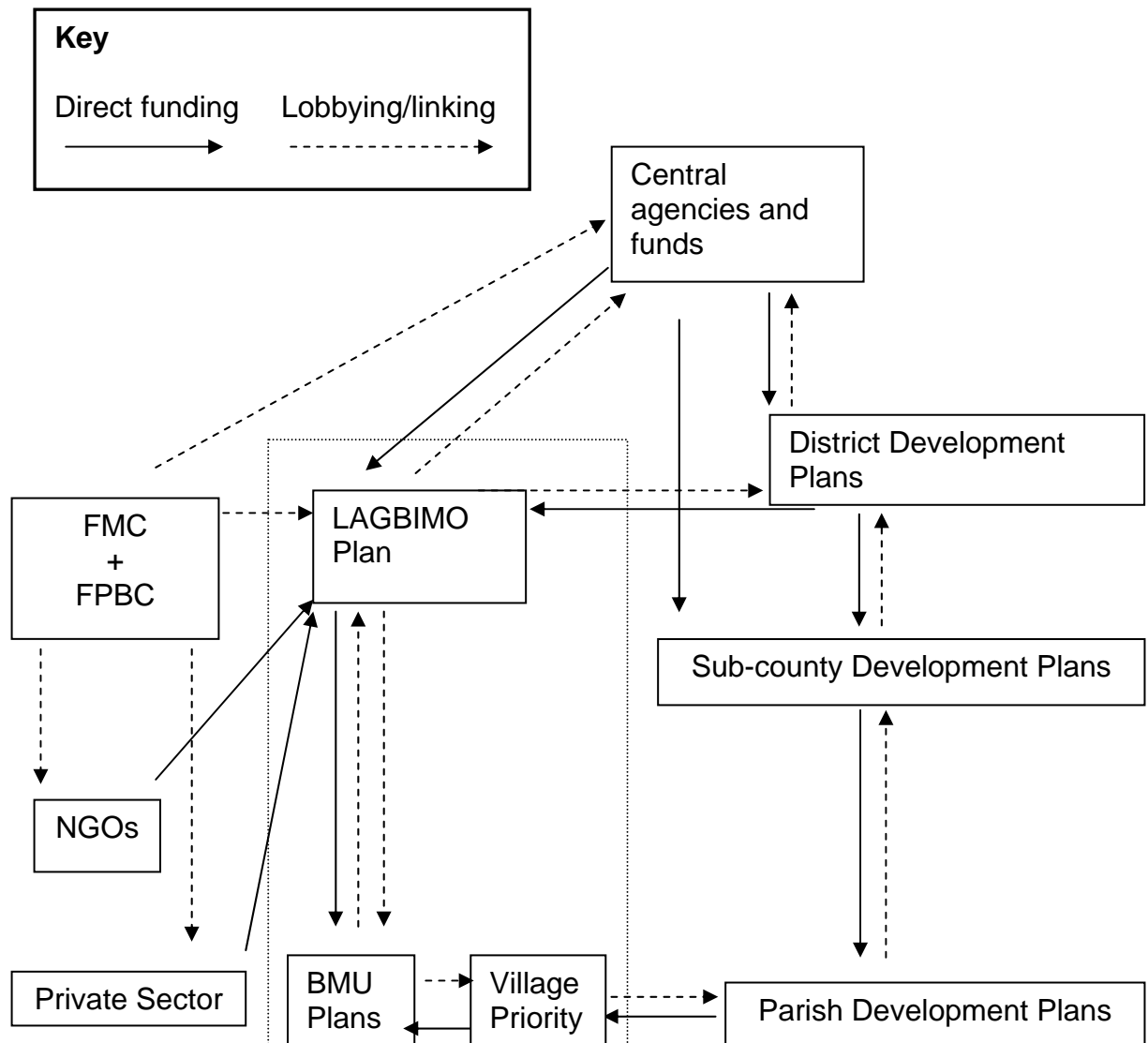
**FIGURE 1 STRUCTURE OF LAGBIMO**



KEY			
Representation	Feedback	Service Support	Supervision
—————▶	- - - - -▶	- · - · - ·▶	· · · · ·▶



**FIGURE 2 LAKE WIDE PLANNING SYSTEMS ON LAKE GEORGE.**



*Points to note:*

- 1 Direct implementation can take place at community level with little external support e.g. protecting fish breeding zones, by-law enforcement
- 2 BMUs are a key interest group in LGDP process, so feeding into village development plans.
- 3 Lake management priorities from BMUs will feed upwards into the ILM plan to promote harmony across the lake.

## 6. Critical areas of support for the integrated lake management approach

The design and implementation of the integrated lake management approach has been piloted on Lake George, leading to the formation of LAGBIMO and the lake basin management plan. Critical key lessons from this process are described below.

### **6.1 Creating an enabling policy and legal framework at national level**

Effective integrated lake management is dependent upon support from an enabling policy and legal environment to provide the mandate for institutions and processes and to facilitate allocation of funds to lake management. Those involved in lake and basin management must inform and influence policy and legislation, to support recognition of the environment and natural resource sector and, therefore, budget allocation. The wider policy environment of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and decentralisation are highlighted here.

#### ***Raising the profile of lake resources management: Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers***

Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) are required by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to develop Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), to form the overarching policy framework within a country. This policy framework informs policy within sectors and sub-sectors and it is critical that environment and natural resource management concerns are fully integrated into PRSPs, so that the contribution of ENR to poverty reduction is recognised and resourced. This is because budget ceilings are set within the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, meaning that sectors and sub-sectors are competing with each other for scarce resources.

Lake management institutions must have, therefore, good relationships with policy makers and convincing evidence to support their arguments that integrated lake management contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction, to gain recognition and support. This requires the development and operation of information collection and monitoring and evaluation systems, that incorporate links between natural resource management and improving livelihoods of the poor.

The integrated nature of lake management does, however, pose challenges for influencing policy design and implementation, as it is a multi-sectoral approach, requiring links to those responsible for fisheries, water, environment, wetlands, forestry, land and social development at a national level.

Within Uganda, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) serves as the PRSP. Poverty reduction through natural resource management is being promoted during the ongoing revision of this policy framework, including through lake management.

#### ***Government decentralisation can facilitate NR co-management***

Many African countries have decentralised government functions and are still in the process of implementing this process. The purpose of decentralisation

is to bring the management and delivery of services closer to those receiving the service.

The Local Government Act 1997 institutionalised decentralisation, including the decentralisation of the management of common property resources. Increasingly, community organisations are working closely with local governments to ensure natural resources are managed in a sustainable way, contributing to poverty reduction through equitable access and transparent and accountable governance arrangements.

The involvement of community organisations is increasing through the implementation of co-management arrangements, which involve local people and government sharing responsibility for management, planning and development activities. Community involvement in managing natural resources is being promoted for managing land, forests, wetlands, wildlife and fishery resources.

The management of lakes in Uganda depends particularly upon the implementation of co-management arrangements within the fisheries sector, which form the foundation of lake management organisations.

## **6.2 Developing appropriate and effective institutional structures**

In Uganda, as in most other countries, fisheries management in the past was vested with central Government using out-posted fisheries staff. The administration and management was based on a command and control approach. There was very little or no participation by fisheries communities in resource planning, management and development.

At various stages in past management history, informal institutions have been established, including local fisheries leaders, known as "*Gabungas*", Landing Site Committees and Fisheries Taskforces. On Lakes George and Edward, where fishing boat numbers were legally controlled, a Lake George and Lake Edward Rehabilitation Committee was set up in an attempt to reduce illegal fisheries activities. Representatives in all these informal institutions were not democratically elected, their functions were not clearly defined and their operations lacked sufficient transparency and accountability. Consequently, fisheries management using these institutions within a centralised approach was not very effective and did not reflect the needs of all fisheries stakeholders.

The Government of Uganda has adopted a new, more participatory approach, embedded within the new National Fisheries Policy, 2003, which is founded upon principles underpinning wider Government policies that promote, among others, poverty focused and gender sensitive development strategies. It aims to build good governance, transparency and accountability. It also deepens decentralization through participatory fisheries planning and management. This includes marginalized stakeholders, especially poor fishing crew members (*barias*) and women in decision-making structures and processes governing the management of resources upon which their livelihoods depend.

This decentralised participatory approach is being implemented through the formation of Beach Management Units (BMUs) at designated landing sites, as required by the Fish (Beach Management) Rules, Statutory Instrument No. 35, July 2003. They are the institutional structure within which fisheries stakeholders will work in partnership with local and central governments, to improve planning and to sustainably manage fisheries resources.

BMUs are set firmly alongside the government system. Although they are not formally part of the government system, many of the functions set out in the Statute require close collaboration with local and central government. In fact, the Parish or Village Executive Committee is charged with monitoring and supervising the operations of BMUs. The Chief Administrative Officer of the District local council has overall responsibility and reports directly to the Commissioner of the Department of Fisheries Resources.

In order to be effective in management, BMUs are required to develop local fisheries management and beach development plans and advocate for their integration in other local development plans. Integration of their plans into local government development planning, through Parish Development Plans, will increase the opportunity for funding and implementation. This strong integration into the local government system ensures that a BMU works closely with government and that its plans and activities are integrated into local government development and work plans.

The National Fisheries Policy is being implemented through the Fisheries Sector Strategic Plan, which clearly sets out the roles of BMUs and lake management organisations and the support needed for them to be established and effective. The plan calls for lake wide or lake basin management bodies to be established for all major systems, though this will require central government support in terms of capacity building and funding. The inclusion of lake management organisations in the plan confirms the commitment of central government to the role of such organisations in fisheries management.

### **6.3 Legal mandate, setting out clear roles and responsibilities**

Legal mandate for Beach Management Units and for lake management organisations is essential for ensuring that roles and responsibilities are defined, understood and accepted.

The legal mandate for Beach Management Units is set out in the Fish (Beach Management) Rules Statutory Instrument No. 35, July 2003, which describes the roles and functions of BMUs. The Statute is supported by a set of guidelines, which provide further guidance on how BMUs should be formed, how they should operate and on their role. The guidelines are also a legal document and provide further support for the legal responsibilities of BMUs in managing fisheries resources.

LAGBIMO has its legal mandate from the 1997 Local Government Act, which allows local governments to form associations and undertake certain functions through the association. In addition, the Constitution of LAGBIMO was

approved by the Attorney General, after being ratified by the three District local governments, giving it a legal mandate. The Constitution clearly sets out the roles of the structures of LAGBIMO and of key stakeholders.

#### **6.4 The ownership and share of lake resources**

Common property resources in Uganda are held in trust for the benefit of the people of Uganda by the government. This is enshrined in the 1995 Constitution. The resources are owned by the people, but the government is responsible for ensuring they are managed in a sustainable and equitable way.

In developing and implementing co-management arrangements, raising the awareness of stakeholders about ownership of, and access to, resources is critical for ensuring they believe they have a genuine stake and role in management. Access to the fishery resources on Lake George is through licences, permits and, more recently, through registration with a BMU.

Lake George is a controlled access fishery, with a limited number of boat licences. Prior to 2001, the issuing and regulation of licences was the responsibility of central government. There was no review of licences and licences were handed down through generations. The implications of this system were a lack of involvement of local stakeholders in determining and regulating access, lack of financial benefits from the licensing system to local stakeholders and inadequate opportunities to gain access for women and boat crew. There was, however, ready acceptance of the need to share access and pay for a licence to fish on the lake.

In December 2001, after lengthy consultation, the centre delegated responsibility for fisheries licensing to district governments. This was a radical change after years of a fixed number of licences for Lake George and the new system brought in the opportunity to develop a completely new, more participatory and transparent, licensing system. The number of licences was doubled, fixed allocations for women and boat crew were set and a system for involving stakeholders in the selection process was developed and implemented.

This change was institutionalised through a Statutory Instrument, to bring licensing in line with the new National Fisheries Policy. There are agreed criteria to assess applications, in terms of experience, dependency on the lake and meeting the allocations for women and boat crew.

With the establishment of BMUs, BMU Committees will become involved in scrutinising licence applications, though licences will not be reviewed on an annual basis. Access to licences will be through a waiting list and licences will become available through confiscation of licences as a result of illegal fishing activities.

In raising awareness about ownership of lake resources and on the need to share the management of, and access to, resources more equitably attitudes need to be changed. During the review of the licensing system and the

creation of BMUs, there was some resistance from established leaders at some landing sites. These were boat owners who had always had a licence and who felt threatened by the inclusion of boat crew and women in management and decision-making and by the new licensing system. Other stakeholders have dealt with this resistance through awareness raising and by bringing those resisting on board, so that they are included in the new systems and become convinced of the new approaches.

### **6.5 Valuing lake resources**

The lake provides an important source of livelihoods, particularly for people involved in fisheries, and of revenue for local governments. The uses of the lake and the associated rivers include:

- Water for domestic and industrial use.
- Wetlands – seasonal fishing, purification of water coming into the lake, papyrus and sustaining wildlife.
- Fisheries – fishing is the major use of the lake and around 50% of those living at the landing sites are dependent on fishing as their primary source of income. Local governments benefit from revenue from licences and taxes.
- Wildlife – the lake and its environment contribute to conservation and tourism by providing a habitat for wildlife.

The benefits of the lake include revenue of Ush<sup>4</sup> 14.5 million in 2002/03 from the fish commodity chain from Lake George and the Kazinga Channel, resulting from an approximate annual fish catch of 3000t. This represents an increase of over 400% from 2.7 million in 1999/2000. Benefits are shared by local governments and fisheries stakeholders – fishing crew, boat owners, fish mongers and processors, etc., and those that provide services to the fishing community.

The three district local governments receive approximately Ush 90 million in tax from a range of sources within the sector, from personal taxation to landing and trading fish.

These benefits are being increased through the new co-management structures, as management is more participatory, there is better planning, management is more informed by better information and the number of illegal boats operating on Lake George has already been drastically reduced (from an estimated 300 in 2001 to 150 in 2003).

Benefits to stakeholders must be clearly understood, accepted and valued from integrated lake management, so that reinvestment is encouraged and can be justified.

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<sup>4</sup> The approximate exchange rate is 2000 Ugandan Shillings to 1 US dollar.

## **6.6 Participatory, inclusive and bottom-up planning**

Integrated lake management depends upon participatory, bottom-up planning and management to ensure that plans are effective and are implemented, as the users of a resource must be fully involved.

Participation of users in the management of lakes in Uganda is primarily supported by the BMU Statute. The guidelines that supplement this statute set out clear allocations for different stakeholders for membership of a Beach Management Unit Committee, to ensure that all stakeholders are involved and their voices are heard.

A BMU Committee contains the following proportions of stakeholder groups, by law:

- 30% boat owners
- 30% crew (fishing labourers/bariasis who do not own boats)
- 30% other stakeholder groups listed in the BMU Statutory Instrument, including fish processors, boat makers, local gear makers or repairers, fishing equipment dealers, managers, and chatterers
- 10% fishmongers

A BMU Committee will, wherever possible, have 30% women. This allocation to women supports and implements Government policy on gender balance.

This allocation promotes a poverty focus and gender sensitivity within decision-making and planning processes. Set allocations for poorer members of fishing communities and for women are also institutionalised within the Constitution of LAGBIMO.

In addition to set allocations, LAGBIMO has strong poverty reduction objectives and has committed itself to building the capacity of women and the more marginalized members of BMUs and LAGBIMO structures, so that they can articulate their views and concerns and genuinely represent their constituencies. Effective participation cannot come from allocating seats on committees alone, it is recognised that the capacity of those who have been largely excluded from decision-making in the past must be built so that their voices are heard. This in itself tackles poverty by addressing powerlessness and increasing the ability of people to voice their concerns and advocate for inclusion of these in plans and decision-making.

During the development of institutional structures, ILM worked closely with local governments around Lake George to develop capacity and processes for effective participatory bottom up planning. ILM also fed this experience into national efforts to develop new guidelines for lower levels of local government for community based planning.

LAGBIMO is now firmly founded on participatory planning and management, linking into local government development planning, also founded on community based planning, including the involvement of BMUs as a civil society organisation.

## **6.7 Community based fisheries information collection**

The collection of fisheries information is essential for informed and effective fisheries planning and management. The centralised collection of such information has failed, as it was piecemeal, inconsistent and not effectively used.

Prior to the formation of LAGBIMO, ILM assisted local government and the fishing communities in the development and implementation of a community based fisheries information collection system. This system enables each BMU to collect and use information on fish catch, value and fishing effort. The communities remunerate the collectors by offering fish from the landed catch on the data recording days. This represents a major breakthrough in fisheries information collection. Communities recognise the importance of collecting information and using it in fisheries management. The information is also transferred to local government and the LAGBIMO Fisheries Management Committee to inform lake wide planning and management, before being passed on to central government to inform national policy and planning.

The collection of fisheries information is now provided with legal requirement through the BMU Statute. For such a system to be successful, however, the usefulness of information for the community, as well as for government must be apparent. ILM, and now LAGBIMO, is strongly supporting BMUs in planning and in contributing to local government development planning.

## **6.8 Financing integrated lake management**

Lake management inevitably requires funding. The institutional structures and operations of LAGBIMO require financial support to run effectively. At present, LAGBIMO is supported financially by ILM and contributions from local government. The local government commitments for 2003/04 total Ush 27 million. This is about 20% of the recurrent costs of LAGBIMO and over 50% of the fisheries taxation income that can be currently derived from the lake through licences and permits. The annual recurrent cost of LAGBIMO represents only a small fraction of the value of the annual catch of Lake George.

At a LAGBIMO Lake Wide Assembly meeting in October 2003, it was agreed by resolution that each BMU member should pay an annual fee of Ush 2000. If paid in full, this will generate a further Ush 3.5 million for the current year.

It is acknowledged, however, that once ILM support ceases at the end of June 2004, additional funding will be needed for at least a few years, so that capacity is built and productivity and livelihood improvements are realised. ILM is supporting LAGBIMO in seeking funds from central government, through advocacy, and from other sources.

BMUs themselves also require modest funds for effective operation. The BMU Statute sets out three sources of funding for BMUs, as follows:

- 25% of the money generated from issuing of Fish Movement Permits at the landing sites as prescribed in Statutory Instrument No. 61 of 2002.

- Profit generated from tender holding for those Beach Management Units who may win district fish landing site tenders.
- Collection of a number of fish or a set value per boat landing as established through bye-laws vetted by the lower local councils as per section 40 (1) of the Local Governments Act, 1997.

Establishing sustainable funding mechanisms for lake management remains a challenge, but one that stakeholders are fully aware of and committed to addressing.

## 7. Implementing the World Lake Vision

Many of the principles and strategies set out in the World Lake Vision are reflected in the policy, institutional and management frameworks for managing Lake George. As noted, however, LAGBIMO is initially focusing on lake management, although it supports the World Lake Vision principle that “lake drainage basin is the logical starting point for planning and management actions for sustainable lake use”.

LAGBIMO and the management plan concur with the World Lake Vision in developing information collection systems, facilitating effective participation of all stakeholders, and having transparent and accountable structures.

In terms of the strategies recommended in the World Lake Vision, the lake management plan includes strategies to tackle key environmental threats and to seize environmental opportunities, implement a fisheries management strategy that promotes sustainability and equity, work closely with the Queen Elizabeth Protected Area and with the Wetlands Inspection Division to ensure biodiversity and ecosystems are conserved and build the capacity of stakeholders to implement co-management and integrated lake management principles and strategies.

LAGBIMO represents an excellent example of the implementation of the World Lake Vision and, so, should be supported to ensure it is as effective as possible and to ensure that performance and impacts are monitored and evaluated.

## 8. Way forward

Although LAGBIMO is in its early days, many useful lessons have been learnt. Benefits are already being felt by stakeholders, such as women and the poor feeling no longer excluded and being able to speak up at meetings.

Local governments are also already seeing benefits, through improved revenue and from sharing experiences and capacity between the three districts. The local governments have expressed the view that wider benefits are already coming through, such as sharing capacity in planning, monitoring and evaluation, and financial management.

Key areas for the future development of LAGBIMO and implementation of the integrated lake management approach include:

- Sourcing additional funding for the medium term and strengthening funding mechanisms from within government and from the lake resources.
- Capacity building of BMU and LAGBIMO members, and local government officers so that integrated co-management is effectively implemented.
- Links with partners and central government must be strengthened so that the potential of LAGBIMO in basin management is realised.
- Implementation of the Lake George Basin Management Plan has only recently started and will very much depend upon integration of components into local government development plans and into the operational plans of key partners. This will require advocacy and strong partnerships.
- The performance of LAGBIMO structures and BMUs will be monitored to review effectiveness, impacts of the new approach and to learn lessons for improving systems and processes.
- LAGBIMO will continue to strengthen the community based fisheries information collection and, as part of its management plan, will seek to support communities in collecting other types of information, focusing on social development and environment, essential for integrated lake management.

## Annex 1 The objectives of LAGBIMO

The objectives of LAGBIMO, as set out in the Constitution, are to:

- Promote poverty eradication and the social and economic development of the Lake Basin communities through the integrated and sustainable management of Lake George Basin natural resources;
- Ensure collection, exchange and use of information in order to improve the management and sustainable use of the Lake George Basin natural resources;
- Increase social and economic benefits to all the parties, especially to the poor sections of the local communities within the lake basin;
- Promote alliances in the management of the lake basin natural resources by encouraging operational, economic and other partnerships among the respective central government agencies, the co-operating local governments, private sector, local communities and civil society organizations;
- In accordance with article XII of the Constitution of LAGBIMO, develop a framework whereby local communities can effectively participate in, and tangibly benefit from, the management and sustainable use of the lake basin natural resources;
- Subject to Article 178(b) of the Constitution of Uganda, 1995, establish and manage funding mechanisms and financial resources for the sustainable management of Lake George Basin natural resources including the establishment of trust funds, endowments or any other funding mechanism as may from time to time, by resolution, be determined by the Lake Wide Assembly.

## Annex 2 Functions of LAGBIMO structures

### **The Lake Wide Assembly**

One of the constitutional responsibilities of the Assembly is to ensure harmonisation of management plans and projects to be implemented by different stakeholders, including central government institutions. The Assembly will annually review, update, and approve the Lake George Basin Management Plan (LGBMP) and budget. It will also advocate for integration of the plan into local government development plans and budget cycles. In particular, this will involve lobbying to ensure that the sub-county budgets take into account the priorities of poor people and support the sustainable use and management of the Lake George basin natural resources. The LWA approves Standing Committees and ad hoc Technical Committees required for efficient implementation of LAGBIMO activities. The Assembly will meet at least twice a year.

### **The Executive Committee of the Lake Wide Assembly**

On behalf of the Assembly, the EC commissioned the preparation of the LGBMP for its consideration and approval. It has a constitutional responsibility to mobilise and sensitise communities on relevant government policies, plans and programmes and ensure that these policies, plans and programmes remain focused on the poor. It will also ensure appropriate interaction of cooperating local governments and their counterparts from central government agencies. It too will ensure that LAGBIMO plans and interventions are pro-poor and address the needs and aspirations of community stakeholders. It will advocate for the incorporation of LAGBIMO plans into the district and sub-county development processes and plans, and will commission and approve technical assistance, including service provision, to guide and support activities of LAGBIMO. The EC meets at quarterly intervals to approve work plans, technical reports and budgets.

### **The LAGBIMO Secretariat**

As a support and resource centre for LAGBIMO, the Secretariat is responsible for the recording, documentation, dissemination and custody of all information relating to the operations of the organization. It provides support to the other organs of the organization including provision of technical guidance in inter-sectoral planning and coordination as well as implementation of work plans. On behalf of the EC, the Secretariat prepares annual work plans and budgets of the organization.

### **The Fisheries Management Committee**

This committee leads all activities relating to lake wide fisheries planning and management. It is responsible for ensuring that fisheries monitoring information is collected and analysed on monthly basis by BMUs and governments. It will use this information on a quarterly basis to review the status of the fishery and identify priority issues to be addressed and develop agreed actions to address these issues. It will also ensure that priority fisheries management issues identified at LWA meetings are appropriately addressed. It has developed a Lake George Fisheries Management Strategy, which has been incorporated into this plan.

### **The Finance, Planning and Budgeting Committee**

This committee is tasked by the EC to lead on all activities related to planning, budgeting and finance. The Committee is responsible for ensuring participation and consultation in the development of the LGBMP, and overseeing the implementation. The Committee is responsible for advocating for the incorporation of the LGBMP and BMU plans and activities into the development plans, workplans and budgets of local government and other agencies at appropriate levels. Information management and monitoring and evaluation systems will be critical to the development and implementation of management and work plans, and the Committee is responsible for the development of these. The Committee is also responsible for overseeing the budget, co-ordinating the raising of funds and ensuring that appropriate audit systems are in place.

### **Role of BMUs**

BMUs are responsible for developing and implementing local fisheries management plans and more holistic beach development plans within their area of jurisdiction. They will advocate for the integration of LGBMP and BMU plans into parish development plans using community action plans as a pathway (see Figure 2). They will collaborate with local government partners in the collection, use and dissemination of fisheries and environmental information for the improved management of resources. At lakewide level, BMUs are well represented in the Assembly, EC, FMC and FPBC. They are empowered under the Fish (Beach Management) Rules 2003, Statutory Instrument No. 35, to undertake a range of functions and responsibilities.

## Annex 3 Outputs of the Lake George Basin Management Plan

### **Output 1: Information for participatory and integrated planning at all levels generated, used and disseminated**

Good information is the foundation of effective planning and management, as long as the information used and disseminated. The need for co-ordinated planning is a major challenge. This is addressed through the development of the LGBMP and through integration of LGBMP, and BMU plans, in the development, work and operational plans of partners, particularly local government. Information is needed from all levels, that is community, sub-counties, district and lake wide. The importance of inclusive, participatory and poverty-focused planning is also reflected in the action areas.

### **Output 2: Fish resources sustainably used and managed**

Maintaining and improving the sustainable productivity of the lake is essential for improving the livelihoods of lake dependent communities, as well as for increasing the contribution of the fisheries sector to local and national government revenue.

The introduction and enforcement of new and existing management measures are essential for realising productivity increases. The involvement of BMU members in enforcement activities is a critical component of fisheries co-management.

### **Output 3: Post harvest fishery efficiencies improved**

Inadequate infrastructure and service provision at landing sites is a major challenge. In addition to impacts on health and livelihoods, post harvest efficiency is severely reduced, through unhygienic conditions and poor access to markets. Improvements in this area will contribute to increased income generation, improved health and livelihoods.

There are strong gender dimensions to this output, with an urgent need to ensure that women benefit more from lake resources and from investment in landing site infrastructure and services.

### **Output 4: Livelihood security of lake dependent communities improved**

A wide range of challenges for livelihood security exist. Improved provision of education and health facilities, access to saving schemes, support for those living with the impacts of HIV/AIDS, improved housing conditions and increased opportunity to earn money from fisheries activities are all vital for improving livelihood security.

Access to the lake resources is also critical for livelihood security and is addressed by Output 5.

**Output 5: Equitable access to, and benefits from, natural resources within lake dependent communities**

The new boat vessel licensing system introduced in 2002 has specific targets and measures to increase the chances of barias and women accessing licences. This is designed to provide a route out of poverty, providing they are supported in accessing boats and gears.

For communities living within QEPA, there are specific difficulties in accessing sufficient natural resources for fuel wood and craft making, etc. QEPA already has a system in place for regularising access to certain natural resources within the protected area. LAGBIMO will assist in the negotiations for access agreements between the fisheries communities and QEPA authorities. Finally, wetland resources must also be used sustainably and there is a need to formalise access to, and management of, wetlands.

**Output 6: Sustainably managed environment within the lake and its basin**

A number of specific environmental challenges were set out in Chapter 2. Action to address the threat posed by the redundant mining facilities in Kasese is urgent. Soil erosion, pollution from agrochemicals and encroachment into wetlands are also challenging issues.

A sustainably managed environment is critical for improved productivity of the lake and for improved livelihoods of the lake dependent communities.

**Output 7: Improved capacities of BMU and other LAGBIMO structures to participate in integrated lake planning and management**

To manage the natural resources sustainably and to ensure plans and management strategies address poverty reduction and gender issues, the skills and capacity of all those involved in LAGBIMO must be improved. Some training will be provided to BMU members, but capacity building will also be supported through regular meetings and activities.

**Output 8: Sustainable funding for integrated lake management in place**

Improved lake management is contingent upon investment, both from local government and from BMUs. Increases in revenue generation should come from efficiency improvements and equitable taxation, ensuring that efforts to reduce poverty are not compromised.

**Output 9: Monitoring and evaluation systems at all levels of LAGBIMO development and implemented**

Monitoring and evaluation plans and systems are essential for reviewing progress towards achievement of targets and outputs, and ultimately of the purpose and goal of the plan.

M&E will be closely aligned with the plans and systems of the concerned local governments for continuity and coherence.