



## A Strategic Action Plan for Lake Tanganyika

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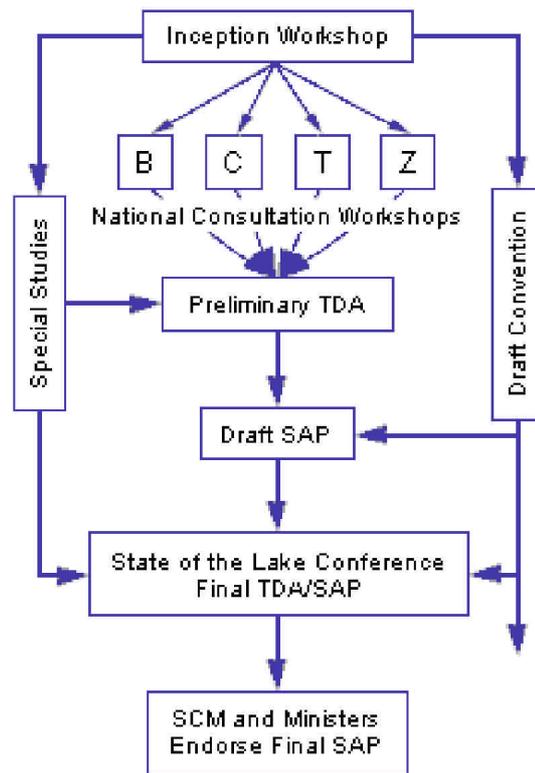
The RAF/G32/92 project document signed by Lake Tanganyika's four riparian nations describes the first immediate objective as: "...establish a regional long term management programme for pollution control, conservation and maintenance of biodiversity in Lake Tanganyika". The key mechanism for achieving this output was seen as the formulation of a Strategic Plan. The project document also envisaged establishing a permanent organisation, or Lake Management Body, to promote the cooperative management of the lake, effectively becoming responsible for supervising the implementation of the strategic plan.

This same approach has been adopted in many other international resource management programmes; lessons have been learned and concepts refined. The Strategic Action Plan - the SAP - is now central to the GEF approach to achieving consensus in the management of international waters. And it continues to evolve.

There is no definitive blueprint for a Strategic Action Plan, but underlying the SAP are two interlinked management requirements. These both relate to principles embodied in the Rio Convention. The Preventative Principle states that it is generally better to prevent damage than to cure it. While the Precautionary Principle states that "...lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimise such a threat."

The management implication is that there is a need to set priorities, based on best available information; and a need to respond to change as either the situation changes or the knowledge on how to manage it improves. A Strategic Action Plan is therefore not static, it becomes a tool and function of a Management Body responsible for adapting and implementing it as the situation changes.

Over the last year, the process of developing the Lake Tanganyika Strategic Action Plan has increasingly involved many of the stakeholders, planners, decision makers and scientists linked to the project in all four countries. But the process started three years ago with the inception workshop, where the four countries identified their priority management concerns. Following this, and informed by the baseline reviews, the priorities for the special studies were defined to answer specific management questions. In January 1998, the Project Steering Committee endorsed a process of national and regional consultation that would lead to a final SAP being endorsed within the project time frame. This process would be led by the Technical Advisory Committee with additional members brought in specifically for the SAP. In parallel with this, the steering committee approved the work programme for the development of a formal Convention that will provide the legal framework for the SAP. Since then the project has supported a series of national and regional meetings. The national meetings were led by the national working groups, with additional representation to include as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. The outcome of the national meetings was that all four countries developed a common analytical



framework, and that the national representatives, members of the restructured Technical Advisory Committee, were fully aware of their "Constituents" concerns.

The first major task of the Technical Advisory Committee has been to refine and expand on the priorities and management concerns identified at the inception workshop, using the formal mechanism of a Preliminary Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis - the TDA. This is simply a mechanism to establish a common framework of facts and an understanding of threats and opportunities, as a means of arriving at a consensus on the priorities for action that need to be included in the SAP.

The TDA workshop was held in Lusaka in November 1998 and the workshop report has now been distributed for comment.

The next stage in the process will be for the TAC to prepare a draft Strategic Action Plan. This will include both the results of the TDA and the conclusions from the first steps in preparing the draft Convention. Following this, the preliminary TDA will be revised to include implications of the final results of the special studies programmes, due to be completed later this year. And on the basis of the revised TDA a final SAP will be prepared for endorsement by the steering committee and additional ministerial representation. The SAP will then become the guiding path for the Lake Management Body, and its responsibility.

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