



The Global Water for Sustainability (GLOWS) Program is supporting the efforts of the East African Community (EAC), Kenyan and Tanzanian Water Ministries, and other national and local institutions to improve water resource management to reduce and mitigate threats to biodiversity in the Mara River Basin and Mara-Serengeti Ecoregion.

Our specific objectives are to:

- Facilitate improved understanding of the water needs of biodiversity and harmonize river basin management plans and policies to provide a sufficient quantity of clean water to service multi-sectoral needs, especially biodiversity.
- Promote a transboundary agreement between Kenya and Tanzania, under the authority of the East African Community (EAC), which will ensure water flows to sustain the biodiversity of the Mara-Serengeti Ecoregion.
- Promote explicit biodiversity conservation results that go beyond positive externalities of an integrated water resources management (IWRM) activity, and to monitor indicators for biodiversity conservation.

Specific activities include:

Develop a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Mara River Basin. An important first step in the TWB-MRB project is to prepare, through a participatory approach, a Biodiversity Action Plan for the region and for the Mara River Basin in particular. The scale of this plan will be the entire Mara River Basin, from its source in the Mau Forest in Kenya to its mouth at Musoma, Tanzania, on Lake Victoria. Special consideration is being devoted to the protected areas of Serengeti National Park and Masai-Mara National Reserve.

Quantify the flow characteristics of the Mara River required to sustain biodiversity and ecosystem processes in the Mara-Serengeti Ecoregion. Water management planning must be informed by a scientifically sound and credible quantification of the *reserve flow* acknowledged in the new water laws of both Kenya and Tanzania. The *reserve flow* is defined as the quantity of water that must be preserved in rivers to satisfy the needs of both rural domestic water users and ecosystems. We have mounted a team of local scientists and international experts to conduct an environmental flow assessment for the Mara River along the reach that passes through Masai-Mara and Serengeti conservation areas. We are also conducting a campaign to increase awareness of environmental flows among other users through outreach activities with the water user associations on both sides of the border.

Bi-national and Regional Consultations Leading to a Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In 2005, the EAC established official guidelines for environmental assessments addressing shared ecosystems in East Africa. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a proactive assessment that identifies the opportunities



and constraints that the environment places on development. The essence of SEAs is to maintain and enhance chosen levels of environmental quality. We are using the SEA process to assess the environmental consequences of integrated water resource management activities on biodiversity in the Mara River Basin and Mara-Serengeti Ecoregion. As a legally recognized mechanism for linking development and environmental concerns across EAC country borders, the SEA is the appropriate instrument to introduce biodiversity concerns into the policy and planning process in the transboundary Mara River Basin.

Consult with EAC and other Key Stakeholders on Development of an IWRM Strategy in the Mara River Basin. The governments of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda recognized their dependence on shared natural resources, and the need for equitable cooperation to manage them, when they agreed to the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. In order to further the aims of Article 111 of the Treaty, the Partner States recently developed the Protocol for Environment and Natural Resources Management. Now, in order to achieve cooperative management of shared water resources, the Partner States, the EAC Secretariat, and the Lake Victoria Basin Commission must begin to build cross-border management mechanisms as authorized by Article 13 of the Protocol. This project is providing valuable groundwork for the establishment of such a mechanism for the Mara River Basin, initiating a process of legal and policy research, stakeholder engagement, and institutional advocacy. The activity will conclude with the development and submission of a detailed proposal to the EAC Secretariat and the EAC Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources for creation and implementation of a transboundary management mechanism for the Mara River basin.

Project Duration – Phase One: 2006-2007

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About GLOWS

The Global Water for Sustainability (GLOWS) program is a new consortium financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) working to increase social, economic, and environmental benefits to people of the developing world through clean water, healthy aquatic ecosystems and sustainable water resources management. Launched in early 2005, GLOWS works on-the-ground to implement improved practices, builds local capacity through multi-level training activities, and shares lessons learned and advancements in IWRM practice with local and global partners. GLOWS is the freshwater component of USAID's Global Program for Integrated Management of Coastal and Freshwater Systems (www.imcafs.org).

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