

Ecosystems for water, food and economic development in the Central Rift Valley, Ethiopia

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Goal

To strengthen local authorities, development organisations and private sector in the field of sustainable land and water use, and sound environmental planning and management with the aim to contribute to the sustainable development of the Central Rift Valley of Ethiopia.



Central Rift Valley (CRV)

The CRV is a watershed where conflicting interests with respect to the use of water and land resources result in increased competition among domestic, industrial and agricultural water needs, while neglecting environmental considerations or impact on the livelihoods of downstream users. Increased and inappropriate use of water has resulted in decreasing availability of water for nature, agriculture, industry and the fisheries sector.

Demand for food and fuel to meet the requirements of a growing population has resulted in over-exploitation of land resources. Related activities have led to deforestation, soil nutrient depletion, and loss in biodiversity, while poverty remains a major driving force for further exploitation of natural resources.

The project collaborates with the Working Group Lake Ziway, a consortium of professionals from the private and public sector involved in the development of the CRV. Wageningen University and Research centre brings to this consortium a broad range of expertise and skills in analysis of complex problems on land and water resources use and management.

Approach

Both quantitative and qualitative multi-disciplinary approaches across multiple scales are used to identify trends and to analyse processes resulting in conflicts and competing claims on natural resource use. The project contributes to the knowledge-based institutional capacity in the CRV to balance the needs for conservation of ecological functions and services with economic development goals.

Challenge

There is a clear need for policy dialogue for conflict resolution, planning, decision making, and negotiation involving rainfed smallholders, horticulturists, fishers, pastoralists, industries, and needs of nature and environment. A policy dialogue is needed to address the various functions and services of natural resources, the multiple interactions between ecosystems and human society and to identify options for improved resource use and management.

