The Importance of Lake Naivasha Basin

Lake Naivasha is the largest freshwater lake in the Rift Valley, a wetland of international importance, declared a Ramsar Site in 1995 and forms part of the Aberdare, one of the major water towers in Kenya. Lake Naivasha is an Important Bird Area (IBA) and was designated in 1995 as a wetland of international importance. Lake Naivasha Basin is also the hub of Kenya’s cut flower industry. It’s of utmost economic importance, it makes a significant contribution to Kenya’s Gross Domestic Product. 70% of Kenya’s cut flower exports, generate an estimated 9% of the total foreign exchange revenue, contributing 9% to the country GDP. 20% of vegetable exports and a greater contribution to local GDP from domestic vegetable growing.

The Importance of Lake Naivasha Basin

Challenges

The Lake Naivasha Basin faces many challenges in a unique blend of biodiversity, business, and livelihoods linked by the essential but finite natural resource of water. Over the years, the basin has seen major transformations, which have led to increased pressure on natural resources, particularly increased demand for scarce natural resources resulting into over-abstraction of both surface and groundwater, depletion of forest resources, pollution and siltation of water bodies.

The major threats include:

- Unsustainable agriculture among smallholder farmers, threatening provision of ecosystem services and undermining its resilience.
- Inappropriate land use practices by mainly small-scale farmers in the upper and middle catchments have continued to impact negatively on both water quantity and quality.
- Degradation of the catchment and in particular, destruction of forests is causing water stress, gradually manifesting itself in the river base flows and fluctuating Lake Naivasha.

Lake Naivasha Basin Map

Green Horticulture at Lake Naivasha (GOALAN) Project
Large and small-scale horticulture is a key contributor to Kenya’s economy, recording earnings of approximately 115.3 Billion Kenya Shillings in 2016 from exports of fresh produce (KNBS, 2017), but pose significant negative impacts on the local environment such as unsustainable water consumption and pollution from use of fertilizer and pesticides.

WWF-Kenya through the European Union funded Switch Africa Green phase II - Green Horticulture at Lake Naivasha (GOALAN) project, in partnership with the German based Center for Sustainable Consumption and Production, have embarked on an ambitious initiative with Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the basin to shift towards sustainable consumption and production and at the same time contribute towards green jobs provision and income improvement. The project is 30% youth led.

The GOALAN project works towards making the horticultural sector in Kenya and beyond contribute towards a shift to a green economy by a large uptake of sustainable consumption and production practices along the supply chain, providing green jobs and reducing poverty. It contributes to Kenya Vision 2030 and its Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan.

The European Union’s Switching Africa Green programme aims to promote the horticultural sector as a driver for the adoption of resource efficient and green practices to minimize its impact on climate, water and land, while ensuring social inclusion targeting youth and women by providing indiscriminate employment opportunities.

Overview

Objectives

Inclusive green economy: a large uptake of Sustainable Consumption and Production practices along the supply chain, providing green jobs and reducing poverty.

MSMEs increase net income and access agribusiness loans, sell certified products to untapped high-end markets while reducing the impact on the environment with an increased resilience to climate change.

Adoption of sustainable production by MSMEs in the horticulture sector with a focus on youth in agriculture and a shift towards sustainable consumption by customers, public institutions, retailers and hotels.

Project Objectives

- MSMEs adopt Sustainable Consumption and Production Practices. This will be achieved through training them on ecologically sound approaches which promote efficient water use, soil and water conservation, maximum use of organic fertilizer, soil testing, integrated pest management, safe use of pesticides, proper post-harvest management and social welfare.
- A shift towards sustainable consumption through creating awareness among consumers including public institutions, retailers and hotels.
- Strengthened MSMEs institutional and entrepreneurial skills to reach higher business management standards.
- MSMEs are able to negotiate for better contracts whilst managing the seasonality of production to enable them to supply farm produce as the market demands.
- MSMEs increase their net income and access to finance, while at the same time reducing negative impact on the environment.
- Counties adopt green procurement guidelines and domesticate Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- Tackling unemployment through promoting green jobs among the youth.

Challenges facing MSMEs

- They are not formally organised, hence it is difficult for them to access high-end markets or even sustain supplies to meet market demands.
- They still rely heavily on obsolete technologies characterised by low-quality products, over-reliance on pesticides, poor soil management and inefficient water use.
- They have limited capacity on contracting and rely heavily on exploitative middlemen (National Horticulture policy, 2012).
- They usually produce without having a marketing plan, which leads to high post-harvest losses and low selling prices.
- They have limited access to affordable credits from financial institutions.
- Inadequate capital and poor financial management skills.
- Inadequate and low adoption of new technology.

Located in peri-urban horticulture sector in Lake Naivasha Basin

The project targets 140 MSMEs

MSMEs are made up of individuals and farmer groups

30% are youth-led