

Terms of Reference
Consultant – Djibouti and Ethiopia

Position:	Consultant to carry out a hiking trail ecotourism study in the Lake Abbé Transboundary Landscape
Programme title:	The Lower Awash-Lake Abbé Land and Seascape – Enhancing biodiversity conservation in transboundary ecosystems and seascapes (IGAD)
Location	Djibouti / Ethiopia. The project target area is the Lower Awash-Lake Abbé transboundary ecosystem
Starting Date	April 2017
End Date	May 2017

1. Background

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a Regional Economic Commission comprising of the following Member States: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. Its headquarters are located in Djibouti.

The IGAD mission is to assist and complement the efforts of the Member States to achieve, through increased cooperation:

- Food Security and environmental protection
- Promotion and maintenance of peace and security and humanitarian affairs, and,
- Economic cooperation and integration.

The main objective of the IGAD Biodiversity Management Programme (BMP), funded by the 10th European Development Fund, is to contribute to poverty reduction by improving the social and economic wellbeing of the populations in IGAD region through a better regional integration in the environmental sector.

The Lower Awash-Lake Abbé land and seascape is one of three demonstration sites within the BMP where activities will be carried out to showcase best practices in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management to improve ecosystem goods and services for the benefit of local communities. IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) is the lead Implementing Partner for activities in the Lower Awash-Lake Abbé land and seascape.

Description of the study area

The Lower Awash-Lake Abbé area is predominantly a dryland ecosystem which is sparsely populated, with most communities practicing pastoralism and other limited forms of subsistence livelihood activities. They operate largely outside the cash economy. Local populations are organized largely according to traditional structures and manage natural resources accordingly. The ecosystem is under pressure from a number of threats, especially the prevalence of the invasive *Prosopis* species which is taking over grazing land, depleting ground water, restricting access to water and pasture, and aggressively displacing native plant species.

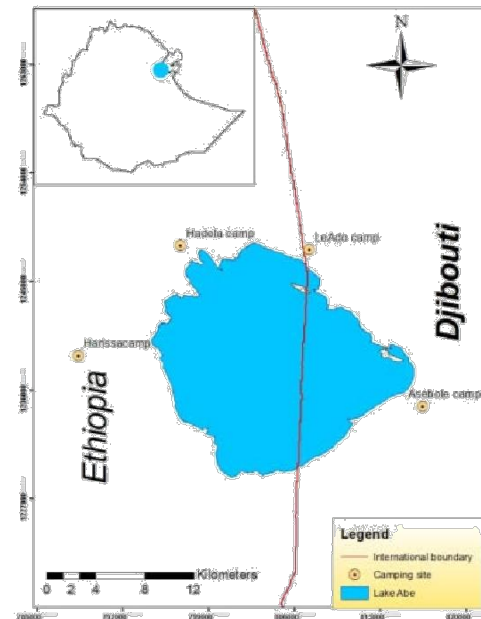


Figure 1 Geographic location of Lake Abbe Transboundary Landscape

The project has developed a management plan for the transboundary conservation landscape which has been approved by the Transboundary Project Steering Committee. A key recommendation in this management plan is to develop community-based livelihood improvement activities. The development of ecotourism has been highlighted as an opportunity in the short to medium term. However, there is very little existing tourism infrastructure on the ground and many of the potential opportunities remain unexplored and or un-developed. The development of a plan for a hiking trail has been identified in the management plan as a priority activity.

2. Objective

The objective of the consultancy is to develop **a development plan for an ecotourism hiking trail within the transboundary landscape.**

3. TASKS

The consultant is expected to carry out the following tasks to achieve the above objectives. This includes both desk works as well as field visits (conducted together with IUCN and nominated Djiboutian and Ethiopian government representatives) to consult key stakeholders in Djibouti and Ethiopia:

1. Review international best practices on transboundary hiking trails, and for hiking trails in similar ecosystems, as well as other transboundary tourism products.
2. Review all existing baseline studies carried out by the project to date, particularly the Lower Awash – Lake Abbé Transboundary Conservation Landscape Joint Management Plan
3. Debriefing with key stakeholders to collect additional baseline information, including at a minimum the following:
 - Key national and regional government focal points in Djibouti and Ethiopia
 - IGAD Technical Advisory Team in Djibouti
 - IUCN Project Technical Advisor in Djibouti
 - Nominated Djibouti and Ethiopian government authorities (national and regional),
 - Local community representatives
 - Local tourism operators
3. Define and develop a plan for the development of a transboundary hiking trail eco-tourism to encompass key features of **Transboundary Landscape for the Lac Abhe ecosystem** (e.g. proposed camp sites, nature hides, trail mark-up, etc...). This should include at a minimum:
 - Detailed description of the trail – main features and assets, geo-referenced map of the proposed trail, photographs¹, unique selling points (USPs).
 - Infrastructure required (e.g. signage, trail surfacing, safety rails, ablutions, interpretation, communication etc.).
 - Analysis of the potential market for the proposed hiking trail (domestic and international) as well as potential inclusion in a tourism circuit and ease of access for tourists (i.e. an understanding of the constraints to getting visitors to the product and potential institutional and logistical support which will be required to overcome these constraints)
 - Material and human resource requirements for operationalization, management and maintenance.
 - Marketing and promotional plan for the trail, including linkages to independent travellers and the tourism sector, and uses of social media.
 - Detailed budget for establishment of the hiking trail, and operational budget for the first 5 years, including an understanding of the pricing of the product in relation to other similar products, etc.
 - Recommendations for operationalization of the hiking trail – modalities for community participation and beneficiation, public-private sector partnerships etc.
 - Main risks and barriers to the establishment and operation of the trail.

¹ Note that the area is extremely remote and exhibits harsh conditions. This needs to be taken into account both in the planning of the field visits, but also in the subsequent assessment of the trail

Deliverables:

A development plan for an ecotourism hiking trail within the transboundary landscape. This should be produced in English and French.

9. QUALIFICATIONS

- At least a Master's degree in environmental conservation, community development, tourism management or related topics, with a minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in Africa, including demonstrated experience in the development of nature –based tourism industry, including community nature-based management enterprises.
- A good understanding of eco-tourism and community nature-based enterprises as well as community development and community Protected Area management planning, specifically in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ALAs)
- Experience in hiking trail planning and management.
- Experience in the development of transboundary tourism products would be an advantage
- Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping skills
- Fluency (written and spoken) in English and French
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity to gender, religious, political and ethnic issues
- Previous work experience in the Horn of Africa region a distinct advantage

Interested candidates should email their technical and financial proposals, along with detailed CVs to: Leo Niskanen, Technical Coordinator Conservation Areas & Species Diversity. Email: Leo.Niskanen@iucn.org and to Houssein Rayaleh, Project Technical Advisor – IUCN/ESARO Project Unit in Djibouti. Email: houssein.rayaleh@iucn.org by 20th March 2017