



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Environmental Sensitivity Atlas for the Albertine Graben



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Table of Contents

Foreword	iv
Acknowledgement	v
List of Acronyms	vi
List of Maps	vii
List of Plates	viii
List of Tables	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background to Oil Exploration in the Albertine Graben	1
1.2 Objective of the Sensitivity Atlas	2
1.3 Geology of the Albertine Graben	3
1.4 Climate	5
1.4.1 Rainfall	5
1.4.2 Temperature and Humidity.....	6
1.4.3 Wind	7
1.5 Surface and Ground Water.....	8
1.5.1 Drainage.....	9
1.6 Minerals and Energy Resources	11
1.6.1 Mineral Resources	11
1.6.2 Energy Resources.....	11
1.6.2.1 Energy potential.....	11
1.6.2.2 Energy use	12
1.7 Land use	12
1.8 Protected Areas.....	12
1.9 Agriculture	13
1.10 Human Settlements.....	15
1.11 Tourism.....	15
1.12 Fisheries.....	15
1.13 Ecosystems and Biodiversity	17
1.13.1 Vegetation	19
1.13.2 Fauna	20
1.13.3 Avifauna	21
1.13.4 Biodiversity outside protected areas	22
1.14 National Heritage	22
1.14.1 Archaeological sites	22
1.14.2 Historic and cultural sites.....	24

Chapter 2: Biological sensitivity	27
2.1 Biological sensitivity	27
2.1.1 Species biodiversity	27
2.1.2 Wildlife distribution along the Albertine Rift	27
2.1.3 Fish breeding or spawning areas	28
2.1.4 Woody plants species and forest bird species diversity.....	29
2.1.5 Species of special importance	29
2.1.6 Combining variables	29
2.1.7 Highlights of the species richness map	31
2.1.8 Highlights of the species of spacial importance map	32
2.1.9 Conseravation status	33
2.1.10 Highlights of the conservation status map	34
2.1.11 Overall biodiversity	35
2.1.12 Highlights of the overall bidiversity map	36
2.2 Socio Economic data in the Albertine Graben region	36
2.2.1 Infrastructure.....	36
2.2.1.1 Road classes	36
2.2.1.2 Railway lines	36
2.2.1.3 Airfields	37
2.2.2 Human settlements.....	37
2.2.2.1 Fishing landing sites	37
2.2.2.2 Hotels amd lodges	38
2.2.2.3 District boundaries	38
2.3 Geology Map	38
2.3.1 Morphology of Albitine Graben	38
2.3.2 Geology of the Albertine Graben.....	38
2.3.2.1 Sediments	39
2.3.2.2 Rift flank basement	40
2.4 Land cover sensitivity	41
2.5 Sensitivity of soils in the Albertine Graben	43
2.5.1 Soil permeability	43
2.5.2 Soil erosion	38
2.5.2.1 Development of the Erosion Sensitivity map for the Albertine Graben.....	45
2.6 Sensitivity of Ground water in the Albertine Graben	52
2.6.1 Static water level	52
2.6.2 Depth to Bedrock	54
2.6.3 Definition of depth classes.....	54
 Chapter 3: Sensitivity of the Lake Albert shoreline and the Bathometry of the lake	 57
3.1 Sensitivity of the Lake Albert shoreline and the Bathometry of the lake	57

Foreword

Oil exploration has been ongoing in the Albertine Graben since the 1920's. Currently there is confirmation of commercially viable oil deposits in this area with early production scheduled to begin 2009. Oil spills can have severe and long term ecological and socio-economic adverse impacts if not properly planned for and addressed. While it is not possible to predict the impacts of an oil spill with certainty it is possible to evaluate the vulnerability of an area to a defined spill scenario based on the environmental resources present in the area.

An environmental oil spill sensitivity atlas has been prepared to provide environmental planners with tools to identify resources at risk, establish protection priorities and identify timely appropriate response and clean-up strategies. The atlas enables oil companies and authorities to incorporate environmental consideration into exploration and contingency plans. It also provides an overview of such aspects as the occurrence of biological resources, human resource use (fishing and hunting) and archaeological sites that are particularly sensitive to oil spill. Furthermore it contains information regarding the physical environment, lake shore and bathymetry of Lake Albert and the climate of the area.

The Albertine Graben is known for its high biodiversity spots at the same time it is now an oil rich region. Oil is a non-renewable resource meaning that at one time it will be exhausted. Therefore, care has to be taken to ensure that exploitation of oil resources is done without compromising the quality and quantity of environmental resources. The oil for development strategy should improve services such as conservation of natural resources, infrastructure, energy, education etc.

I hope the information in this atlas will be used effectively during all decision making processes connected to oil and planning of all activities in oil for development.

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