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RUVUMA RIVER BASIN

Background

The Ruvuma Basin spans 155,000km² and is shared by Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. Touted as one of Africa's last pristine wilderness areas, the basin is now threatened by rapid expansion of activities by extractive industries and climate change events. The river basin is also a vital water source for communities, agriculture and industries in the riparian countries.

BRIDGE implementation

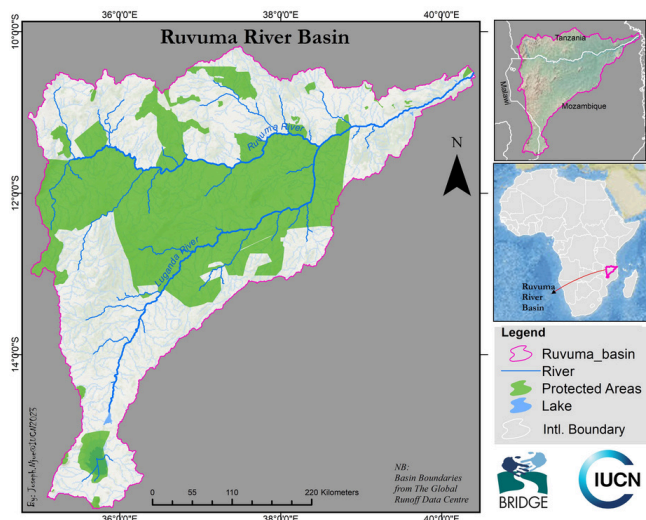
BRIDGE has operated in Ruvuma since 2022, following a formal request from SADC. Increasing climate risks and catchment degradation prompted the riparians to broaden water cooperation, initially between only Mozambique and Tanzania, into a basin-wide effort that incorporates all three countries. An MoU, being the first basin agreement, was finalised in 2024, and is expected to facilitate the formation of a basin treaty and the establishment of an RBO in the next three years.

Key achievements to date

- This basin is new to BRIDGE phase 5
- MoU have been developed between the three countries awaiting signature
- Resource mobilisation for the operationalisation of the above activities to complement BRIDGE funds - preparation of Global Environment Facility project for the Ruvuma River Basin

Basin objectives for Phase 5

- Support to initiatives formulating new water-sharing agreements and developing basin strategies and a sustainability plan to help determine future projects that can be implemented in the basin.
- Technical support to the Ruvuma Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Plan.
- Facilitate the development of a MoU between basin states, to lay the foundation for a future River Basin to govern the management of water resources in the basin.
- Developing Ruvuma Basin Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.



Basin at glance

Total area (km²): 155,00

Population: 2.4 million

Climate zone: Zone: high-moist in lake regions; temperate highland areas

Rainfall (mm/yr): 2,000

Countries sharing: Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania

BRIDGE operating in the basin since: 2022

CROSS-SECTORAL AND INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

Through BRIDGE, IUCN has collaborated with numerous partners to enhance integrated water resources management (IWRM) in the basin. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a key partner, as water cooperation in the region finds its footing in the SADC Water Protocol.

To better understand the water demands and water users in the basin, IUCN has partnered with WATERNET to develop a Basin-Wide Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and an updated map of stakeholders in the basin. BRIDGE also has a close relationship with the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWP-SA), through the preparation of a proposal to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the basin.

Throughout the process, IUCN has received invaluable support from the National Ministries and Departments responsible for Water as well as the National Basin Management Agencies in Malawi (Southern Region Water Board), Mozambique (ARA-Norte) and Tanzania (Ruvuma and Southern Coast Basin Office). Their contributions have been instrumental in ensuring the success of these initiatives and in promoting sustainable and equitable water governance in the Ruvuma Basin

BRIDGE activities in the basin have been complemented with funds from the US State funded Shared Waters Cooperation Facility project.

Additional information

BRIDGE website:
www.waterandnature.org/initiatives/bridge

Water Law and Governance website:
www.waterlawandgovernance.org/bridge/

Social media

@IUCN_Water (Twitter)
 @IUCN Water and Land Management
 (LinkedIn)

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