

## ***Comments on Lake Dianchi Brief***

Lake Dianchi is an example of a shallow lake with a heavy urban and industrial presence, along with agriculture, around its shores. In this respect it is similar to Lake Biwa. However, unlike Biwa it does not have a wealthy cities downstream who can help fund lake management and has to rely on local private industry, government sources and international donors for funding.

The issues causing concern are primarily over-abstraction of water resources; urban and industrial pollution; destruction of riparian vegetation; and degradation of the surrounding agricultural catchment. Management of these issues has been given priority by the national government as well as by Provincial authorities and significant funds have been provided to tackle these issues. A GEF loan has also been provided to assist with biodiversity conservation. The brief describes the progress that has been made in improving the water quality of the lake (primarily through structural interventions) and the plans for further funding and actions in the next few years. The brief provides a good description of the improvements in the lake's water quality as a result of these interventions.

The Dianchi Protection Committee is now responsible for major-decision making on the lake. Its role is described and its success in regulating industrial effluents, including an innovative financing scheme whereby industries are provided with government loans to install treatment using income from pollution levies. If the treatment is successful, then the loan is turned into a grant. However, the brief makes little mention of progress in restoring the biodiversity of the lake. The GEF funded project has probably not yet commenced (it is not stated in the brief) but other activities could have been expected to have led to an improvement in the lake's ecology.

The laws governing pollution, fishing, etc in the lake are all mentioned in the brief. However, the adequacy of these laws, or the administrative arrangements, or government policies is not discussed. It is implied in the first of the Lessons Learned ("Lack of Sustainable Development Strategy") that the pursuit of a development policy at the expense of environmental considerations has led to the lake's decline. However, it would be helpful to have a more detailed examination of the policies and their inherent conflicts. Similarly, the ability of the Dianchi Protection Committee to coordinate actions across government agencies should be examined in some more detail. To what extent is the Committee able to get agreement when different agencies and the private sector are responding to different sectoral pressures??

Although there is a description of the lake's flora and fauna and its decline, there is no discussion or information on the scientific institutions and their programs that have contributed to this knowledge. While the decline can be seen from a comparison of species lists, it would be more instructive to have a report on the research that provides a causal linkage between this decline and the pollution. Better scientific research is listed

as one of the Lessons Learned; perhaps this implies that this type of research has yet to be undertaken.

The brief is very informative but would be improved if:

- Policies and institutional structures were examined
- The contribution of scientific research in providing causal understanding of the mechanisms that lead to the decline of the lake's ecology
- Progress in restoring the lake's biodiversity was described – what programs have been started and how effective have they been?