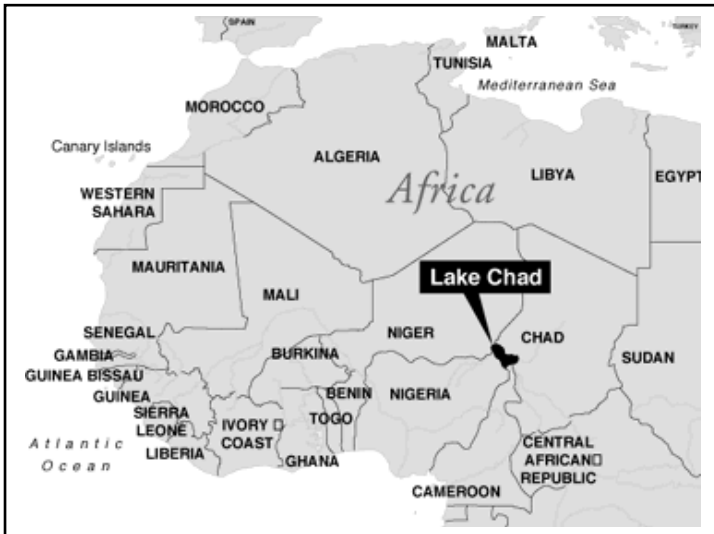


Knowledge Organiser #33: Lake Chad and the Transaqua Project



Impacts

1. The dams will potentially generate 15 to 25 thousand million KWh of hydroelectricity and irrigate 50 000 to 70 000 km² of land in the Sahel zone.
 - The project will stimulate development in agriculture, industry, transport and electricity for up to 12 African countries.
 - Along the canal, a road should be built which would become the backbone of inter-African land transport. The hypothesis is that the canal could also be suitable for navigation has been made.
 - The project will also create a possible generation of 15,000-25,000 kilowatts of hydroelectricity through the mass movement of water by gravity.
 - With Lake Chad shrinking, many unemployed youths who wander from this region fall prey to extremists who offer a new life with many promises. It is hoped the project will reduce this activity.

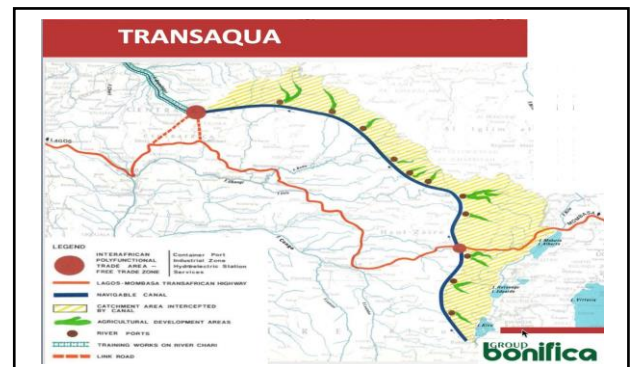
What is happening?

Lake Chad has shrunk by 90% since the 1960s, due to climate change, an increase in the population and unplanned irrigation.

Its basin covers parts of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, and has been a water source for between 20 million and 30 million people.

The Project

- The Lake Chad replenishment project is a proposed major water diversion scheme that would involve damming the Ubangi River at Palambo in Central African Republic and channeling some of the water to Lake Chad through a navigable canal.
- The canal was proposed by Italian firm Bonifica and would generate hydro-electricity at several points along its length. These would power new industrial townships, while the canal would replenish the lake. The irrigation scheme for a 2,400 km canal from the Congo Basin to the lake, which has been steadily shrinking.
- It involves 12 countries working together to build a 2 400 km canal to move about 100 billion cubic metres of water from the River Congo to the lake every year.



Which viewpoint do you agree with?

Viewpoint A:

"It's a ridiculous plan and it will never happen." That's the reaction many people have to the idea of trying to fill up Lake Chad and restore it to its former ocean-like glory by diverting water from the Congo river system 2,400km (1,500 miles) away.

Viewpoint B:

"It is a project which responds to the never-tackled infrastructural needs of the African continent, which maybe will give birth to a real African renaissance. There is vast potential for agriculture all the way along the canal and it could transform the future for Africa."

Key words

Desertification – Droughts – Degradation – Cultivation