

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN**



**OPERATIONAL AUDIT REPORT OF  
RWANDA ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT  
AUTHORITY (REMA)**

Kigali, November 2010

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	List of tables	ii
	Abbreviations and acronyms	iii
	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>CONTEXT OF OPERATIONAL AUDIT</b>	<b>3</b>
I.1.	Responsibilities of the Office of the Ombudsman	3
I.2.	Background of REMA	4
I.3.	Scope of operational audit	5
<b>II.</b>	<b>GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES WITHIN REMA</b>	<b>6</b>
II.1.	Transparency	6
II.2.	Accountability	7
II.3.	Responsiveness	7
<b>III.</b>	<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	<b>8</b>
III.1.	Organisation of REMA	8
III.1.1.	Board of Directors	9
III.1.2.	Directorate	10
III.1.3.	National Consultative Committee	10
III.2.	Internal resources management	10
III.2.1.	Procurement process	10
III.2.2.	Petty cash management	12
III.2.3.	Budget	13
III.2.4.	Assets management	13
III.2.5.	Human resources management	14
III.2.6.	Strategic plan	14
<b>IV.</b>	<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<b>15</b>
IV.1.	Inspection	15
IV.2.	Pollution control	16
IV.3.	Capacity building in environment matters	17
IV.4.	Activities for protecting environment	18
IV.5.	Research on environment issues	19
IV.6.	Sustainability and ownership	19
IV.7.	Institutional framework	20
IV.8.	Partnership and collaboration	21
<b>V.</b>	<b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b>	<b>21</b>
V.1.	Strengths	21
V.2.	Weaknesses	22
V.3.	Opportunities	22
V.4.	Threats	23
<b>VI.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>25</b>

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table n°1 :	Organisational chart of REMA	9
Table n°2 :	Board of directors meetings in 2008 and 2009	10
Table n°3 :	Tenders awarded in 2008 without following normal procedures	11
Table n°4 :	Tenders awarded illegally through the direct tendering method	12
Table n°5 :	Mismanagement of petty cash	13
Table n°6 :	Budget granted and spent in 2007, 2008 and 2009	13

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

COGEBAV: Comité de Gestion des Bassins Versants ;

DEMP : Decentralisation Environment Management Project;

EDPRS: Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy;

EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment;

IMCE: Integrated Management of Critical Ecosystems;

LVEMP: Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project;

MAGERWA : Magasins Généraux du Rwanda ;

MIFOTRA : Ministère de la Fonction Publique et du Travail ;

MINECOFIN : Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning ;

MINELA : Ministry of Environment and Lands;

MINICOM: Ministère du Commerce ;

NGO: Non- Governmental Organisation;

NP : National Park;

NYEP: National Youth Environment Project;

PAB : Strengthening Biodiversity Conservation Capacity in the Forest of Protected  
Areas of Rwanda;

PAIGER: Projet d'Appui Institutionnel pour la Gestion de l'Environnement ;

PEI: Poverty Environment Initiative;

RBS: Rwanda Bureau of Standards;

RECO-RWASCO: Rwanda Electricity Corporation - Rwanda Water and Sanitation  
Corporation;

REMA: Rwanda Environment Management Authority;

RENGOF: Rwanda Environmental NGO's Forum;

SIDA: Swedish International Development Agency;

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats;

UNDP : United Nations Development Program.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of the Ombudsman is entitled to conduct operational audit in public institutions in order to assess their functioning and make recommendations for the improvement of their performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. For this purpose, the Office carried out an evaluation of Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA).

REMA has been established to promote the protection of the environment and sustainable management of natural resources. It fights against critical environmental problems of twofold origin: natural and man-made. The degradation of environment is due to different causes among them, population pressure, serious erosion, pressure on natural resources, massive deforestation and pollution in its various forms. In rural areas, agricultural and pastoral activities are mainly those which degrade the environment. In urban areas, construction and industrial activities are main environment threats.

REMA has to be both efficient and effective in order to be successful. Its internal organisation and its collaboration with customers and partners rely on good governance principles, mainly, transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

This report highlights the importance of efficient management whereby the procedures should be respected. Irregularities have been pointed out in tenders awarded in 2008 but there are improvements in 2009. Mismanagement of petty cash and assets should be addressed.

As regards the management of environment, REMA conducts regulatory activities in order to ensure the implementation of regulations into force: it is prohibited to conduct commercial, industrial, agricultural activities in protected areas and to use banned plastics. In case of breach, following actions are undertaken: seizure of banned plastics, closing of an enterprise, suspension of activities that degrade the environment and order a removal of property. Moreover, REMA undertakes actions aimed at the reduction and the elimination of the consumption and the production of substances likely to deplete the ozone.

In collaboration with development partners, REMA conducts the activities for protection of environment such as environmental impact assessment, construction of water tanks,

establishment of bamboos and agro-forestry trees nurseries. REMA organises trainings and advocacy on environment issues in order to raise community participation and ownership.

Environment threats are due to weak understanding of population, insufficiency of infrastructures, natural disasters beyond human control, human activities such as settlement, agriculture, industries and deforestation.

REMA should intensify regulatory activities and establish a close collaboration with districts which should enforce the regulations governing the environment and ensure a better implementation of different policies concerning for example settlement, energy saving, family planning, sanitation and health services. Central Government should expand Cleaner Production Programme and set up the recycling plant and infrastructures for dumping and treatment of waste.

Effective management of the environment is attainable in collaboration of all institutions in so far as their activities concern in some extent the use of natural resources and the welfare of human beings. REMA has to strengthen its leading role for promoting the activities aimed at fighting against critical environmental problems and controlling the environment mainstreaming and sustainability of achievements.

## **I. CONTEXT OF OPERATIONAL AUDIT**

Operational audit is one of main activities conducted by the Office of the Ombudsman in order to achieve its objectives. It is a deeper review of the public institutions aimed at improving their efficiency and effectiveness. This first part makes a brief presentation of the context underlying the assessment of REMA.

### **I.1. Responsibilities of the Office of the Ombudsman**

The Office of the Ombudsman has been instituted for strengthening the good governance through the prevention and the eradication of injustice, corruption and other related offences. Article 7 of the law n°25/2003 of 15/08/2003 establishing the organisation and the functioning of the Office of the Ombudsman as modified and complemented by law n° 17/2005 of 18/08/2005 provides various attributions and some of them include the following:

- act as a link between citizen , public and private institutions;
- prevent and fight against injustice, corruption and other related offences in public and private administration;
- advise Cabinet and other concerned institutions as regards strengthening and improving their policy of preventing, fighting and punishing corruption and other related offences;
- advise the public and private institutions as to improvement of the quality of services delivered to the population.

In order to fulfil its attributions, the Office of the Ombudsman has powers to evaluate public entities and make recommendations for their smooth running. It is in this regard that an operational audit of services operating at REMA's headquarters has been conducted from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The main areas of that activity were:

- to examine the internal organisation of REMA ;
- to analyse the collaboration with the external bodies;
- to examine leadership and the functioning of the authority ;
- to examine REMA policies, procedures, manuals and laws related to the environment;
- to examine the quality of services delivered;
- to assess the management of environment by various organs;
- to indicate the actions to be undertaken to address challenges.

The operational audit of REMA stems from the mission of the Office of the Ombudsman and that of REMA as a public institution involved in the management of the environment.

## **I.2. Background of REMA**

REMA was established to oversee the integrity of Rwanda environment for sustainable development. It has been empowered to promote and to ensure the protection of environment and sustainable management of natural resources through decentralized structures of governance and to seek national position to emerging global issues with a view to enhancing the welfare of the Rwandan people. It has been established by the law n°16/2006 of 03/04/2006 determining its organisation, functioning and responsibilities. REMA is bestowed of legal personality, administrative and financial autonomy.

REMA has the following responsibilities:

- to implement Government environmental policy as well as the decisions taken by the Board of Directors;
- to advise the Government on policies, strategies and legislation related to the management of the environment as well as the implementation of environment related international conventions, at any time it is necessary;
- to take stock and conduct comprehensive supervision of the environmental management, in order to prepare a report on the state of natural resources in Rwanda that shall be published every two years;
- to examine and approve environmental impact assessment reports at any level of socio-economic activities undertaken by any person;
- to undertake research, investigations, studies and other relevant activities in the field of environment and disseminate the findings;
- to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluate development programmes in order to respect instructions on environment in preparation, and implementation of all development projects, as well as those already in existence, and which are likely to have significant impact on the environment;
- to participate in the preparation of action plans and strategies for the prevention of risks and catastrophies which may degrade environment as well as propose remedial measures where such risks and those catastrophies occur;

- to render advice and technical support, where possible, to entities engaged in natural resources management and environmental conservation;
- to prepare, publish and disseminate manuals relating to principles and laws regarding environmental management or reduce environmental degradation.

The attributions assigned to REMA are aligned to Government policies in so far as one of the cross-cutting areas of Vision 2020 is the protection of environment and the sustainable natural resource management. The evaluation of the functioning of national institutions is a vital operation for detecting risks management and recommending better practices.

### **I.3. Scope of the operational audit**

The operational audit covered all activities and procedures of REMA in which staff, stakeholders and customers are involved. The auditing team examined various documents and obtained explanations from the appropriate persons.

Examined documents are the following:

- law governing the functioning of REMA, the protection of the environment and related issues;
- action and strategic plans ;
- activities reports from various units;
- research publications.

Discussions have been held with the persons mentioned below:

- director general;
- directors of different units;
- several employees of REMA ;
- civil society members.

Visits have been conducted from 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> May in the following districts: Gasabo, Burera, Musanze, Rubavu, Nyaruguru, Gisagara and Nyamagabe where the auditing team met various districts employees and authorities, schools directors and students, members of environment committees and particulars.

This report presents briefly the functioning of REMA, highlighting the best managerial practices, the achievements in terms of output and the factors which have an impact on its performance. Findings of the report are divided into four main parts: good governance principles, efficiency, effectiveness and SWOT analysis. Recommendations are submitted to REMA in order to strengthen its contribution to national development.

## **II. GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES WITHIN REMA**

The function of governance is to ensure that an organisation fulfils its overall purpose, achieves its intended outcomes for citizens and service users, and operates in a proper manner. Implementation of good governance principles is fundamental for REMA as service provider.

### **II.1. Transparency**

As an authority in charge of the environment management, REMA has elaborated a number of instructions and regulations which guide it in its functioning and which regulate the decisions taken and their enforcement: Law n°16/2006 of 03/04/2006 determining the organisation, functioning and responsibilities of REMA, Law n°04/2005 of 18/04/2005 determining the modalities of protection, conservation and promotion of environment in Rwanda and various ministerial orders such as Prime Minister's Order n°26/03 of 23/10/2008 determining the list of chemicals and other prohibited pollutants, Ministerial Order n°004/2008 of 15/08/2008 establishing the list of works, activities and projects that have to undertake an environment impact assessment.

Apart from national legal texts, REMA ensures the implementation of environmental international conventions such as Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and Kyoto Protocol.

### **II. 2. Accountability**

REMA has a website on which it publishes its activities and services, even if the information is insufficient. Internal control is regularly conducted. State bodies check the functioning of REMA: the Office of the Auditor General of State Finances has conducted a financial audit of

REMA for the fiscal year 2008. Meetings and workshops are held with stakeholders and partners for discussing on environmental issues and service delivery.

### **II.3. Responsiveness**

REMA has good working relations with partners, mainly citizens who expect its service, NGO's and different organizations operating in different districts. It provides required advices to investors.

As service provider, REMA receives and handles complaints of people relating to constructions to be removed, wetlands, quarries or any other prohibited activity. These complaints stem from the interests of the owners who should comply with environmental regulations. REMA ensures that the appropriate replies are delivered to complainants.

REMA delivers Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificates for those who wish to open their activities likely to have significant environmental impacts. At the end of February 2010, 245 certificates were delivered.

## **III. EFFICIENCY**

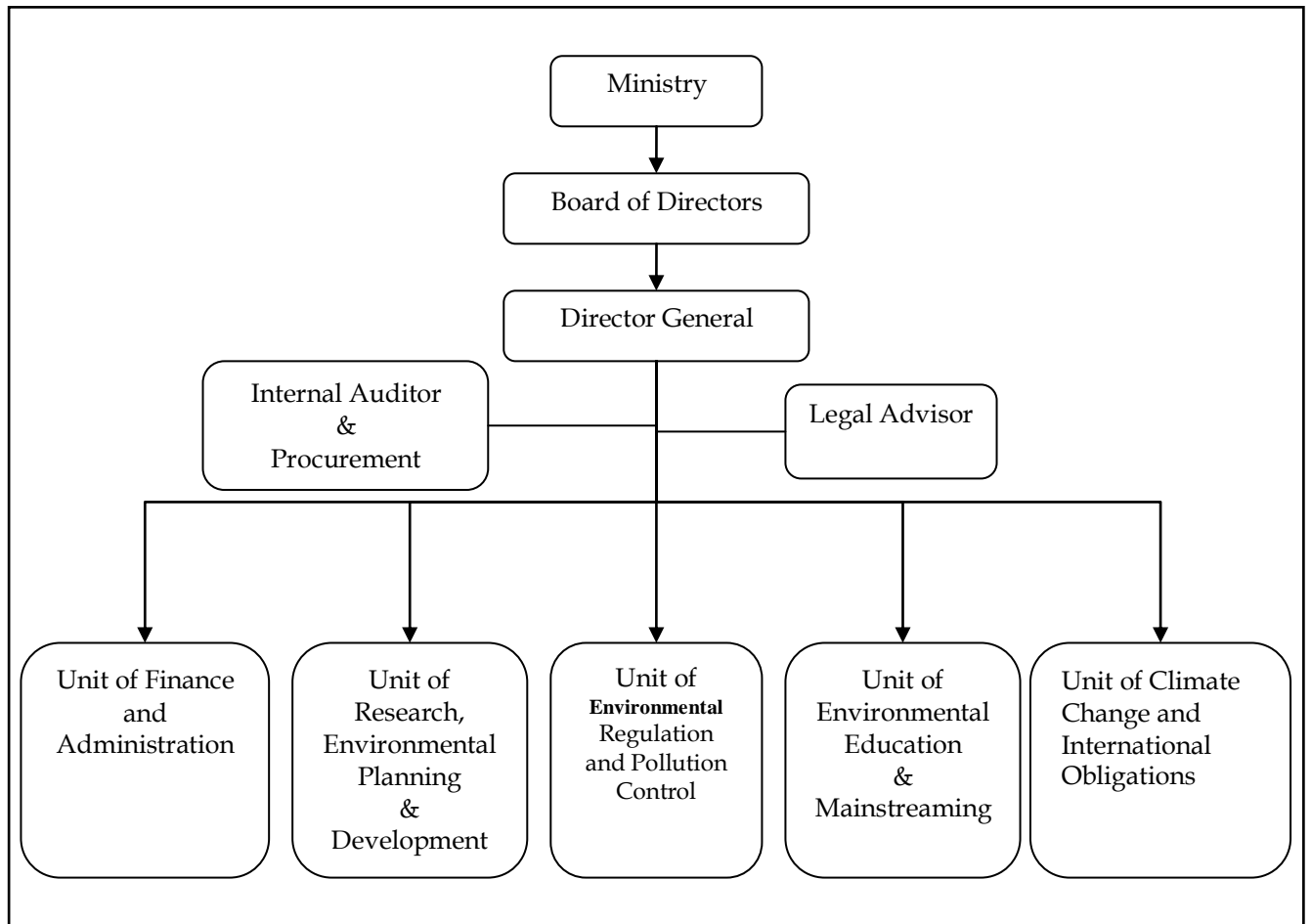
The three principles of good governance as implemented within REMA are key elements which lead to its efficiency. This part makes a brief analysis of REMA internal organisation and resources management.

### **III.1. Organisation of REMA**

REMA is comprised of three organs:

- The Board of Directors;
- The Directorate;
- The National Consultative Committee.

REMA is under technical tutelage of the Ministry having the environment in its attributions, currently Ministry of Environment and Lands. Even these organs are hierarchically organised, they are complementary in their working in order for REMA to fulfil its responsibilities.

**Table n° 1: Organisational chart of REMA**

### III.1.1. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is composed by seven appointed members, among them three are female. The meeting of the Board of Directors is held once in every term and at any time it is considered necessary. However, it held 2 meetings in 2008 and 2 meetings in 2009. The procedures through which the meeting is convened, held, chaired and the mode of taking decisions must be determined by the rules of procedure of REMA which was not published at the time of the audit.

**Table n°2: Board of Directors meetings in 2008 and 2009**

Period	Number of meetings	Attendance	Date
2008	2/4	5/7	23/04/2008
		6/7	17/12/2008
2009	2/4	4/7	15/05/2009
		5/7	07/07/2009

The Board of Directors discussed among issues the budget, financial reports, the implementation of decisions, the plan of action of the following year.

### **III.1.2. Directorate**

The Directorate is composed of Director General and the staff deployed in five technical units: Unit of Finance and Administration; Unit of Research, Environmental Planning and Development; Unit of Environmental Regulation and Pollution; Unit of Environmental Education and Mainstreaming; Unit of Climate Change and International Obligations.

### **III.1.3. National Consultative Committee**

The National Consultative Committee on environment is empowered to provide views and recommendations on concrete programs, and to examine reports on the state of natural resources. It is composed of various personalities representing ministries, public bodies, NGO's and private sector. It is convened and chaired by the Prime Minister. It is held once in two years and at any time it is considered necessary. However, this committee had never been convened.

## **III.2. Internal resources management**

### **III.2.1. Procurement process**

REMA has an internal tender committee composed of seven persons. This committee is entitled to ensure all activities related to the procurement process. REMA has elaborated an annual procurement plan for 2008 and for 2009. Some irregularities have been observed in

tenders awarded in 2008. 25 tenders awarded were not in the annual procurement plan. Some tenders have been awarded contrary to legal provisions of Law N° 12/2007 of 29/03/2007 establishing public procurement and the Ministerial Order n° 001/08/10/MIN of 15/01/2008 establishing regulations on public procurement and standard bidding documents. The two legal texts provide for procurement methods including the threshold for use of restricted tendering and direct contracting methods in public entities.

**Table n° 3: Tenders awarded in 2008 without following normal procedures**

Title of tender	Successful bidders	Procurement method	Amount (Rwf)
Cabling for new building of REMA	Computer Support and Consultancy	Restricted tendering	27,924,640
Cleaning service	Techno Stras	Restricted tendering	19,089,600

According to the article 16 of the Ministerial Order n° 001/08/10/MIN of 15/01/2008, the restricted tendering method is applicable for procurement contracts of which value are less than 5,000,000 Rwf. Concerning the above-mentioned tenders, the method legally recommended is the open tendering.

Concerning the two tenders in table n°3, REMA's Director General pointed out during the discussions on provisional audit report that this tender was awarded through restricted tendering method due to the abrupt change of office building. This was to enhance smooth working environment in the new office building as fast as possible.

According to the article 56 of the Law N° 12/2007 of 29/03/2007 and the article 18 of the Ministerial Order n° 001/08/10/MIN of 15/01/2008, the direct contracting method is applicable for tender whose value does not exceed 100,000 Rwf. Following tenders have been awarded through the direct contracting although the value of each tender exceeds 100,000 Rwf and the products and the services could be requested to various bidders.

**Table n° 4: Tenders awarded illegally through the direct tendering method**

Title of tender	Successful bidders	Procurement method	Amount (Rwf)
Clothing for female employees (1/05/2008)	Ets MONA	Direct contracting	293,820
Clothing for male employees (1/05/2008)	Magasin Mukandangi Léa	Direct contracting	240,000
Reception for staff of REMA (1/05/2008)	Emeraude Restaurant	Direct contracting	240,900
Supply of 50 “take a way”	-	Direct contracting	250,000

Improvements have been made in 2009 and the regulations of tender process are respected as far as tenders plan and execution are concerned.

According to the Director General of REMA, the tenders of clothing the employees were awarded directly in order to cope with the celebrations of May Day of 2008. There was no any other method due to the fact that the circular REF:N°1465/19.18/32/2008 from the Minister of Labour with instructions to participate in May Day celebrations was received on the 25th April 2008, so the time was not enough to use the normal method.

### **III.2.2. Petty cash management**

Irregularities have been observed in the management of petty cash. REMA did not comply with the petty cash replenishment ceiling of 100,000 Rwf as stipulated in the financial management manual for central administration.

**Table n° 5: Mismanagement of petty cash**

Date	Amount	Details
28/03/2008	107,614	Petty cash replenishment
20/04/2008	105,114	Petty cash replenishment
05/06/2008	107,614	Petty cash replenishment

**III.2.3. Budget**

REMA annual budget is allocated by the Government. It benefits donors' funds. The table below shows the budget granted and spent in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

**Table n°6: Budget granted and spent in 2007, 2008 and 2009**

Year Source	2007		2008		2009	
	Budget granted	Budget spent	Budget granted	Budget spent	Budget granted	Budget spent
Government budget	490,484,044	438,613,699	565,082,316	427,599,731	402,541,788	383,555,724
Donors support budget	41,000,559	-	15,759,734	-	5,000,000	-

The figures for 2009 concern the period from January to June.

**III.2.4. Assets management**

The management of office assets faces some irregularities, such as:

- failure to undertake stocktaking of items ;
- store files not updated so that there is a gap in physical store and number of items on store files ;

- delay for providing a monthly report of assets management.

The storekeeper is temporarily appointed for the assets management. She is mainly the accountant for projects operating in partnership with REMA.

### **III.2. 5. Human resources management**

At the time of the audit, REMA had 22 permanent employees, 17 posts were vacant. The administration Unit is in charge of human resource management. This Unit deals with personnel files management, salaries and other employees' allowances, as well as daily management of personnel. Employees' files are well managed.

REMA elaborated a human resource capacity building plan for 2008 and 2009 which was not implemented as it was planned because trainings are offered by MIFOTRA. Internal rules governing REMA were not adopted at the time of the audit.

During the discussions on provisional operational audit report, REMA's Director General said that at the time of audit, the recruitment of new staff was under way and the candidates have already made written exams. The internal rules governing REMA were in place awaiting Cabinet approval at the time of operational audit. They have already been approved by the Cabinet awaiting publication.

### **III.2.6. Strategic plan**

REMA has elaborated a strategic plan for 2007-2011 which focuses on the following six priority areas:

- promote environmental mechanisms for effective review, monitoring, audit and ensure compliance and enforcement;
- enhance environmental information system, communication and technology ;
- promote environmental education institutional support and outreach programmes ;
- improve research , environmental planning and development;
- resources mobilisation and management;
- enhance supervision and coordination of environmental issues.

## **IV. EFFECTIVENESS**

REMA ensures the promotion of the activities aimed at fighting against critical problems which hamper the environment. Some of these problems are:

- over-exploitation of natural resources and inappropriate farming techniques;
- marginal lands including wetlands which are cultivated and this accelerates soil erosion;
- wetlands in urban areas are exploited for industrial and commercial activities;
- encroachment of forests and national parks which has contributed to their degradation and diminution of their ability to provide climate and ecological services;
- waste management still extremely rudimentary.

The activities for environmental protection tend to improve citizens' welfare, the utilisation of natural resources and the protection of vital ecosystems for present and future generations.

### **IV.I. Inspection**

The inspection is a regulatory activity aimed at ensuring the protection of the human safety, the natural resources and the biodiversity mainly conserved in protected areas: three national parks (Nyungwe NP, Akagera NP, Volcanoes NP), natural forests and wetlands. These areas cover almost 10% of the national territory. It concerns also the protection of water resources located in lakes, rivers and aquatic lands. A mapping established by REMA identifies 860 marshlands covering a total surface of 278,536 ha which corresponds to 10.6% of the country surface, 101 lakes covering 149,487 ha and 861 rivers totalling 6462 km in length.

The inspection relies on the enforcement of the environment national regulations, international conventions and other obligations. REMA controls the prohibited activities such as the construction of houses in protected areas, the use of banned plastics, the dumping of waste water or any hazardous waste. Following measures can be taken in case of the breach of regulations:

- seizure of banned plastics. These plastics are dumped in the warehouses at Gikondo (MAGERWA and SDV);
- closing of an enterprise;

- suspension of activities that degrade the environment;
- order a removal of property.

The removal of property is ordered according to the law governing the expropriation for public interest in case the owners have official documents authorizing their activities. At the time of the audit, only one garage owner had presented his official documents to REMA and he was entitled to compensation, the valuation of his assets was under way by Kigali City.

The removal of properties erected in protected areas is not done systematically due to lack of compensations so that some are removed and others remain. Moreover, according to the article 116 of the organic law n°04/2005 of 08/04/2005 determining the modalities of protection, conservation and promotion of environment in Rwanda, the owners of existing activities in protected areas should respect the requirements of this organic law in a period not exceeding two years from its publication. Given the fact that the period has elapsed, this provision must be applied.

In order to perform their duties, some of REMA's employees are vested with powers of preliminary investigations. They easily conduct regulatory activities and can investigate on cases of offenders. However, REMA recourses to the members of National Police for thorough investigations on the environmental crimes.

REMA concludes the contract with Kayitaba General Trading for inspecting, impounding and assembling banned plastics. The two parties entered into this contract following an open tender. The company carries out operations in Kigali City and in up country nine main borders.

## **IV.2. Pollution control**

Rwanda supports the efforts of the international community which contribute to the reduction and the elimination of the consumption and the production of substances likely to deplete the ozone. In this regard, REMA undertakes some of the following activities:

- establishment and implementation of mechanisms to collect plastic bags at all borders and their recycling;

- preparation in collaboration with RBS of standards on air quality and on domestic and industrial effluents (sewages) discharges;
- advise the industries or any other entity on pollution control. Advices have been provided to RECO-RWASCO and Central Prison of Kigali;
- promotion of the Cleaner Production Programme. Cleaner Production is applied to the entire production cycle to increase productivity by ensuring a more efficient use of raw materials, energy and water and to promote better environmental performance through reduction at source of waste and emissions. More than 10 Rwandan industries participate in Cleaner Production.

### **IV.3. Capacity building in environment matters**

REMA puts a great importance on trainings and education for raising understanding, awareness and participation of population in environment protection activities. This capacity building includes aspects related to a wide variety of environment and development issues that affect and are affected by human activities and natural phenomena. Some of the activities carried out are the following:

- trainings towards teachers and students in primary and secondary schools, universities and institutions for higher education;
- trainings towards technicians and authorities from central and local government and from private sector on environment mainstreaming in order to strengthen the integration of environment in all development policies, programmes and planning of development activities at all levels;
- trainings of members of District Environment Committee for conducting the activities of monitoring the implementation of environment policies;
- training and support of police staff whose intervention in the inspection is of paramount importance;
- integration of environment matters in schools curricula and support to Environment Clubs in schools in order to promote the education for sustainable development as key instrument for bringing out changes in values and behaviour;
- conducting advocacy as regards the environment issues at all levels;
- using media and other tools (posters, brochures, diaries,...) for raising public awareness and communicating information required to address critical

environmental problems. There exists Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Strategy 2009-2014.

#### **IV.4. Activities for protecting environment**

Effective management of the environment relies on different activities carried out by REMA such as:

- conducting the environmental impact assessment and issuing the certificate required for the establishment of a construction;
- distribution of tanks to schools for improving their water harvesting and use;
- support to projects prepared by schools environmental clubs;
- construction of water tanks, establishment of bamboos and agro-forestry trees nurseries;
- promotion of energy saving stoves;
- delivery of equipment (computers and accessories, motorcycles) to environment officers in different districts.

In conjunction with development partners, REMA supervises the activities for strengthening the protection of Nyungwe National Park and Volcanoes National Park; the rehabilitation activities of the shores of lake Kivu, lake Muhazi, Burera and Ruhondo, banks of Karago, Sebeya, Giciye, Satinskyi, Mukungwa and Nyabarongo rivers; the protection of wetlands such as Rugezi. These activities have a positive impact on these areas.

In conjunction with other sectors, REMA is involved in ecosystems rehabilitation and forests protection and much has been done. However some regions of the country are more exposed to erosion impact than others because of their geographical relief (hilly regions) or soil such as volcanic soil where terracing techniques commonly used cannot fit. The best way is to work closely with the specific sectors such as agriculture and forests to plant appropriate species of trees.

#### **IV.5. Research on environment issues**

In conjunction with development partners, REMA conducted research, studies and other relevant activities in the field of environment and disseminate the findings. REMA makes an assessment of environment degradation and indicates actions to be taken for its protection. REMA elaborated a mapping of wetlands and other protected areas and issued a state of environment and outlook in 2009.

REMA conducted preliminary studies for the rehabilitation and protection of critical ecosystems and degraded river banks:

- assessment of the landscape and land use identification on Gishwati ecosystem;
- study on rehabilitation of Sebeya river banks and watershed;
- preparation of watershed management plans for Rugezi, Rweru-Mugesera, Akagera and Kamiranzovu wetlands;
- environmental management plan for Nkombo island in the lake Kivu.

#### **IV.6. Sustainability and ownership**

REMA collaborates with local residents associations and NGO's operating in various districts for the maintenance of activities aimed at the protection of the environment. Citizens are sensitised for the positive impact of protecting the environment on their development. This arises their ownership and their participation. Associations involved in environment protection are for example COGEBAV operating in Burera District for the protection of Rugezi wetland and lakes Burera and Ruhondo. NYEP is involved in rehabilitation of shores of Akanyaru and Nyabarongo rivers.

It has been established in some districts committees responsible for the conservation and protecting the environment. These committees have been sensitised on their role even if they are not operating.

#### **IV.7. Institutional framework**

After having assessed the negative impact of human activities on environment, REMA orders the displacement of the residents of the areas to be protected. Their resettlement devolves on districts authorities. However, REMA contributes to their sensitization, to organisation in cooperatives and to fund mobilisation. This intends to raise their stake in protecting environment.

Districts take into account the environmental issues in their plans, they include in their performance contracts activities for environment protection such as radical terraces, trees planting, and erosion control. Furthermore, districts authorities and employees are mainly concerned with the design, the supervision and the implementation of all activities for the protection of the environment. They ensure the enforcement of environmental regulations.

However, it is noteworthy that:

- some districts have environment officers;
- other districts did not have such employees;
- in other districts, environment protection is a part of agronomists' attributions.

Civil society organisations are on their turn involved in the protection of the environment.

They are operating under an umbrella known as RENGOF in charge of:

- making coordination of NGO's and other associations;
- dealing with REMA on environment policy and practices;
- conducting the advocacy towards development partners;
- capacity building by providing trainings to members or delivering necessary information.

Even if RENGOF serves as a channel through which REMA deals with NGO's for environment matters, all concerned NGO's are not affiliated to it. It does not make a control of their activities, it is why they don't report to it.

#### **IV.8. Partnership and collaboration**

REMA implements the environment management projects in collaboration with various development partners such as IMCE for the rehabilitation of critical wetlands, DEMP by strengthening the capacity of grass-roots levels, PEI for the integration of the environment in EDPRS, LVEMP for studies on the management of common and transboundary water resources of lake Victoria Basin. These projects are funded by institutions such as World Bank, UNDP and SIDA.

In sum, REMA is a key piece in the environment management by undertaking and controlling rehabilitation or protection activities which have positive effects on environment such as:

- diminution of land degradation due to terraces and water harvesting;
- increase of water resources in wetlands;
- conservation and increase of biodiversity species;
- increase of rainfall following trees plantation;
- diminution of types of pollution.

#### **V. SWOT ANALYSIS**

Environmental problems are consequences of bad management of natural resources such as land, forests, water and animals. Others are caused by industrial, commercial and human settlement activities. Despite efforts largely made, a number of handicaps persist in environmental sector. This part points out strengths and weaknesses of REMA. Opportunities and threats are also identified.

##### **V.1. Strengths**

REMA is an institution which has oversight of environment management. There are factors which enhance its strengths including:

- legal personality, administrative and financial autonomy;
- motivated staff;
- respect of regulations for procurement process;
- existence of the Environment 5 years Sector Strategic Plan

- good collaboration and partnership in environmental management with a wide range of institutions.

## **V.2. Weaknesses**

REMA's activities are hampered by following aspects:

- inadequate office space, working facilities and equipment at headquarters;
- inadequate inter-sector mechanism for environmental coordination;
- limited trained and qualified staff in some specialised disciplines;
- low capacity of professionals in charge of monitoring all projects or activities having the impact on environment: for example, Methane Gas Project;
- limited understanding by different organs on integrating environment issues into their planning, management and reporting processes;
- partnership and coordination still not strong and reluctant.

Concerning the limited understanding by different organs on environment mainstreaming, REMA's Director General said, during the discussions on provisional audit report, that REMA had trained several to no avail but it has strategically trained MINECOFIN to the extent that now this Ministry is taking the lead beginning this year to train and ask all sector plans to include environmental concerns as well as allocate budget starting with the next budget call circular.

## **V.3. Opportunities**

REMA operates in a conducive context which allows it to achieve its goals by means of opportunities like:

- strong political will for environment management actions and environment being one of the pillars for sustainable development in Rwanda;
- existence of several NGO's involved in environmental management ;
- existence of decentralised policy and other sector-based policies such as forest, land and urban planning policies ;
- donor community willing to provide support and resources ;
- variety of ecosystems, flora and fauna;
- wealth of water resources and wetlands;

- existence of alternative and renewable energy sources.

#### **V.4. Threats**

REMA makes efforts in environment management despite of handicapping exogenous factors among them:

- weak understanding of environmental issues;
- reluctant enforcement by local authorities of regulations governing the protection of environment;
- insufficiency of infrastructures available for dumping or incinerating waste;
- inadequacy of wastewater treatment systems in urban areas;
- natural disasters beyond human control (floods, droughts, landslides, earthquake, volcanic eruption);
- climate variability and change;
- high population density leading to land shortages, over-cultivation, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion;
- mining activities conducted irrespective of environment protection regulations;
- deforestation for settlement, agriculture, grazing land and other human activities such as illegal logging, charcoal production and bushfires;
- lack of a human settlement development framework;
- enormous pressure on water resources and wetlands through agricultural intensification, pollution, invasive species, overuse and inadequate institutional framework for wetlands management;
- scarcity of energy resources.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Effective management of the environment concerns every human being. All institutions are involved in the enforcement of regulations and the implementation of national policy. Monitoring role of REMA is very important for making better coordination. Following recommendations are accordingly designed.

**REMA should**

- ensure permanently regulatory activities;
- collaborate closely with decentralized institutions;
- speed up the implementation of Environment Information Network and the Environment Resource Center in collaboration with other institutions involved in environment management;
- enhance partnership with private sector;
- prepare a compilation of laws and regulations related to environmental issues;
- increase the awareness of population on environmental threats and their participation for addressing them;
- ensure better management of assets;
- develop the capacity of districts environment committees to enable them to contribute to the monitoring and enforcement of laws and regulations governing the environment and other activities such industrial, housing, mining operations;
- strengthen the capacity of institutions for the environment assessment, policy analysis, monitoring and enforcement.

**Decentralized entities should**

- enforce strictly the law governing the protection of environment;
- control all prohibited activities carried out in the protected areas or which degrade the environment;
- respect the mapping of wetlands elaborated and commnicated to them when delivering authorisations for constructing houses;
- address the threats to agriculture through soil erosion control;
- ensure environment mainstreaming;
- ensure the better implementation of different policies concerning for example settlement, energy saving, family planning, sanitation and health services.

**Central Government should**

- expand through MINICOM the Cleaner Production Programme to cover more industries;
- promote with (without) collaboration of Private Sector Federation the recycling plant for banned plastics;
- promote agro-forestry adapted to land availability situation;

- foster collaboration between the ministries in charge of agriculture, environment and energy to ensure that the development of wetlands does not interrupt the availability of water from the wetlands that feed hydro-power stations;
- set up required infrastructures for dumping and treatment of waste.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Environment management is one of the challenges in Rwanda where economic development is highly dependent on the natural resources base. Rwanda's environmental problems are associated mainly with bad management of natural resources such as forests, land and water.

There are also problems caused by industrial, commercial and human settlement activities and various pollutions. The production and management of waste constitute also a threat to environment quality, particularly in urban areas.

REMA plays a leading role in the implementation of Government environmental policy of which the overall objective is the improvement of man's well-being, the judicious utilisation of natural resources and the protection and rational management of ecosystems for sustainable and fair development. The attainment of this goal requires the combination of efforts of all institutions and the participation of every citizen.