ABOUT LBDCA
The Lake Balaton Development Council founded the Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency (LBDCA) on January 1, 2000. The main tasks of the LBDCA are:

- take part in the development and implementation of the Strategic Development Programme and its subprogram and the long-term and medium-term regional development plans;
- coordinate and manage the projects which contribute to the development of the region;
- take part in the coordination of research projects on Lake Balaton, especially those on water-quality, the protection of the environment and socioeconomic conditions;
- support and coordinate the local and micro regional initiatives in connection with development;
- prepare (environmental, economic) grant applications for submission to various national and international funding agencies while controlling and managing the use of these funds;
- assume responsibility for the continuous cooperation with the three counties, the three regional development councils, the municipalities, entrepreneurs, professional and civil organisations;
- create a unified data processing and information service system, which contains data not only on water quality, environmental protection but also on tourism, education and the different kinds of national and international applications.

Association of Civil Organizations of Balaton
The mission of this association is to stop and avert the deterioration of Lake Balaton, and to protect the natural shores and fauna of the lake and its vicinity. Its goals include effective representation of the conservation efforts, urging the population for effective protective actions, saving cultural and historical traditions and the education of emerging generations to protect the environment. The association represents the interests of civil groups that are active in the Balaton region. It was established in 2001 by 24 civil groups and through its member organizations the associations activities are supported by 10,000 volunteers.

The Vision for the Future
The Lake Balaton Region wants to become a European-level model region of environment, tourism and an information society where foreign and domestic tourists spend their leisure time in all seasons of the year in a preserved natural environment and a restored, carefully developed constructed milieu. Quality of life and level of education of the population improves and its regional identity strengthens.
Hungary and the Lake Balaton region have a long tradition and a well established infrastructure for scientific research. The Limnological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was established to study the ecology of the lake. Since then, research efforts have focused mainly on the preservation of the environmental resources of the lake, with special emphasis on water quality. The measures to protect the quality of the natural environment and the water are essential elements of the tourist draw to the region. Thus, measures to protect the environment indirectly served social purposes as well, since they laid the foundations for tourism and contributed to the improvement of the residents' quality of life.

Recent cross-sectoral research and adaptation efforts are attempting to reconcile the traditional paradox between economic development and environmental protection. For example, through LBDC and other partners, Lake Balaton has been included in the international CLIM project that tries to understand the impact of climate change on the ecology of a number of lakes in Europe. Work on adaptation in Hungary has also started through the VAHANA project lead by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) and the Ministry of Environment and Water that is looking at adaptation issues with primary emphasis on agriculture at the national level.

Economic Activities
The area’s economy is driven predominantly by highly seasonal tourism with visitors arriving from within Hungary, Germany, and other neighbouring countries attracted to its warm, shallow water and sandy beaches. The peak season for tourism is short, comprising only eight weeks corresponding to the vacation period for schools in the sending countries and to the period when the lake is warm and amenable to swimming. Tourism is very dependent on water quality and quantity. If the beaches are not attractive enough, tourists turn elsewhere and less demand means less income both at the individual and community level.

Seasonality also affects the construction industry and agriculture. Annual average unemployment is about 9%, reduced to around 5% in summer months. The relative weight of tourism, industry and agriculture in the economy of the region is about 12:4:1. According to official statistics, tourism related income in the region is about US $1.5 billion/year, but the actual figure may be up to two to three times higher, since many of the tourism businesses are registered and pay taxes outside of the region in Budapest or other large cities and because of unregistered private accommodations and employment.

Major Threats to the Lake
Concerning the ecological and socio-economic integrity of Lake Balaton and its watershed, long-standing and recently emerging issues can be identified as shown in the table below. Note that while some long-standing issues, such as eutrophication have partially or temporarily been resolved, the risk that they re-emerge again may increase as a combined result of multiple stressors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF ISSUE</th>
<th>HISTORIC</th>
<th>NEWLY EMERGING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL</td>
<td>Vulnerable water quality (WQ), eutrophication</td>
<td>Negative water balance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Landscape degradation</td>
<td>Declining fish catch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overbuilding</td>
<td>Reel degradation</td>
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<td>Intensive use of agrochemicals</td>
<td>Appearance of invasive species</td>
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<td>SOCIO-ECONOMIC</td>
<td>Slow pace of WQ control measures</td>
<td>Deficiencies in WQ monitoring system</td>
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<td>Sub-standard waste management</td>
<td>Water conveyance conflicts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conflicts of conservation vs. development</td>
<td>Declining number of tourists and tourism income</td>
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<td>Aging and other demographic issues</td>
<td>Fragmented land ownership</td>
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Although not widely studied and understood apart from water quality aspects, these problems and the lake's sensitivity to stress are culminating in substantial increases in ecological and socio-economic vulnerability and loss of resilience. For example, low lake levels can damage the ecological and socio-economic subsystems of the lake and its catchment in a multitude of ways: loss of wildlife habitat, loss of fish catch, increased benthic primary productivity, changing water chemistry, difficulty for commercial or recreational watercraft operation, aesthetic concerns, loss of tourism related income, and so on. As a consequence, the lake's decreasing capacity to provide habitat for wildlife and environmental services to key sectors such as tourism or agriculture could induce societal vulnerability.

Special Event – 2005! Carlos Pena to Swim Lake Balaton
*By recommendation from Living Lakes partner, Lake Chapala, Mexico*

Description: Spanish athlete Carlos Pena will swim the length of Lake Balaton over four days to raise the environmental profile of the region. In addition to swimming the Lake, Senor Pena will be speaking to children in local schools about his motivations and previous adventures swimming in many of the world’s great lakes, rivers and oceans. The event is being organized by the LBDC with help from local NGO, The Women of Lake Balaton Alliance, and will run from May 13 until May 16, 2005.