



LIFE JACKETS AFRICA

Lake Kivu Water Safety & Maritime Resilience Initiative

Managed and Operated by Kipuke Consulting LLC

Safer Waters. Stronger Communities



*Generated concept.

Executive Summary

Life Jackets Africa is a public-service water safety initiative managed and operated by Kipuke Consulting LLC. The project is designed to reduce preventable drowning deaths and strengthen maritime emergency preparedness in African communities where passenger transportation, commerce, fishing, and daily life depend heavily upon lakes and inland waterways.

The initial pilot proposes a network of strategically positioned containerized Water Safety Stations along Lake Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, beginning with Kituku Port in Goma and Bukavu.

Each station will serve as a visible and accessible community safety resource capable of storing and distributing certified personal flotation devices, maintaining basic rescue and first-aid equipment, supporting safety education, providing communications capability, and functioning as a local node within a broader maritime incident-response network.

The need is substantial. On October 3, 2024, an overcrowded vessel carrying 278 people capsized while approaching Kituku Port in Goma. At least 78 deaths were initially reported. Reporting following the disaster identified inadequate life-jacket availability/use, overcrowding, weak enforcement, and deficiencies in rescue capability as continuing problems on Congolese waterways.

Life Jackets Africa therefore proposes more than the distribution of flotation devices. The longer-term objective is to develop an integrated model connecting prevention, equipment, education, communications, incident awareness, emergency response, government cooperation, and maritime-safety reform.

Mission

The mission of Life Jackets Africa is to protect life on Africa's waterways by increasing access to reliable lifesaving equipment, strengthening community water-safety knowledge, improving emergency preparedness, and developing sustainable partnerships between government, communities and the private sector.

The project seeks to make basic maritime safety infrastructure available at the places where people actually enter and leave the water transportation system.

Vision

Our vision is an Africa where access to water transportation does not require accepting preventable risk as an unavoidable part of daily life.

Life Jackets Africa seeks to establish a scalable network of Water Safety Stations that can ultimately extend beyond Lake Kivu to other high-risk lakes, rivers, ferry crossings and coastal transportation corridors.

Core Objectives

The project has five interconnected objectives:

- **increase immediate access** to certified life jackets

- establish permanent water-safety infrastructure at high-volume ports
- improve public education and safety compliance
- increase local emergency-response and communications capability
- support government authorities in developing stronger, sustainable maritime-safety systems.

Life Jackets Africa is therefore designed around the principle that prevention and response belong in the same system.

Why Lake Kivu

Lake Kivu supports substantial passenger movement, commerce and community transportation between North Kivu, South Kivu and Idjwi Island.

The 2024 Kituku disaster demonstrated the consequences that can result when passenger demand, vessel safety, enforcement and emergency-response capability do not develop together. Road insecurity and poor transportation alternatives have also increased dependence on water transportation in eastern DRC.

The DRC Ministry of Transport itself identifies lake and maritime transportation, transportation regulation, safety and modernization of infrastructure among its responsibilities.

This makes Lake Kivu an appropriate environment for demonstrating a practical public-private water-safety model.

The Life Jackets Africa Water Safety Station

The preferred station is a modified 20-foot ISO shipping container rather than a conventional temporary shack.

The container provides security, durability, modularity and the ability to preconfigure each station before deployment. A typical station would be divided into an operations section and an equipment section.

Core capabilities

A station could accommodate approximately 150–300 life jackets, separated into adult and child inventories; rescue rings and throw ropes; first-aid/trauma supplies; flashlights and emergency PPE; VHF communications where legally authorized; cellular communications; incident

documentation; emergency contact information; public safety materials; and equipment charging.

A solar array and LiFePO4 battery system would allow lighting, communications and essential electronics to operate independently of unreliable grid electricity.

The flagship will additionally incorporate CCTV, enhanced radio capability, emergency lighting, an AED where sustainable, larger rescue-equipment caches and coordination capability for a future maritime emergency-response/QRF function.

Initial Lake Kivu Funding Objective:

\$45,000

Initial funding will support the deployment of containerized Water Safety Stations, certified life jackets, rescue and first-aid equipment, solar-powered communications, site preparation, training, logistics, and initial Lake Kivu pilot in Goma.

Our objective is not simply to distribute life jackets, but to establish permanent water-safety infrastructure capable of supporting prevention, preparedness, and emergency response.

The target would establish two initial stations and approximately 600 life jackets, subject to final procurement pricing.

Equipment Standard

Life Jackets Africa will establish a procurement policy requiring recognized safety certification rather than purchasing inexpensive products marketed simply as "marine life jackets."

For commercial passenger operations, the preferred benchmark will be SOLAS-compliant inherently buoyant foam life jackets, subject to applicable Congolese requirements.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Water Safety Supporter (Education)	\$1,000+
Community Safety Partner (Policy)	\$2,500+

Equipment Partner	\$5,000+
Water Safety Station Sponsor	\$15,000
Regional/Founding Partner	\$25,000+
Lake Kivu Pilot Partner	Custom
In-kind Manufacturing Partner	Equipment/value negotiated

*Recognition could include station signage, website recognition, annual impact reporting, launch-event participation, approved media recognition and inclusion in Life Jackets Africa public education campaigns.

Public-Private Cooperation

Life Jackets Africa is particularly suited to a public-private model.

The public sector brings legal authority, port access, maritime regulation, law enforcement, emergency services, transportation oversight and public legitimacy.

Kipuke Consulting LLC/Life Jackets Africa brings project development, private capital and sponsorship development, equipment procurement, infrastructure management, training coordination, communications systems, operational standards and performance reporting.

Corporate and development partners provide capital, equipment, logistics, telecommunications, insurance, technical expertise and other resources.

Local communities provide personnel, knowledge, education networks and ultimately the culture of compliance necessary for the program to work.

DRC law already provides a framework for private participation in public infrastructure through Law No. 18/016 of July 9, 2018, and implementing measures were subsequently developed. The government's investment agency describes infrastructure as open to private participation under that framework. The Ministry of Planning also identifies PPPs as a means of mobilizing complementary public and private resources for infrastructure and public services.

The DRC began revising its PPP framework in late 2025, and in April 2026 the government described a developing national portfolio of structured, bankable PPP projects.

The Four-Step Government Strategy

These are the website-ready short sections you requested.

01. Government Recognition

Recognition creates legitimacy.

Life Jackets Africa seeks formal recognition of Water Safety Stations as critical public-safety resources supporting maritime transportation and drowning prevention. Government recognition creates a foundation for coordination among transportation authorities, ports, emergency services, communities and private partners while preserving governmental regulatory authority.

02. Protected Status

Protecting the resource protects the community.

Following recognition, Life Jackets Africa will seek an appropriate legal designation or agreement protecting authorized Water Safety Stations and lifesaving equipment from unauthorized removal, vandalism, interference or misuse. The objective is not to create a private security zone, but to ensure that resources dedicated to saving lives remain available when emergencies occur.

03. Situational Awareness

A safety station can become an information hub.

Connected stations can improve awareness across Lake Kivu by providing reliable communications, incident reporting, emergency contact networks and standardized observations from participating ports. This information can help authorized government and emergency-response organizations identify incidents sooner, understand resource needs and coordinate an appropriate response.

04. Maritime Reform & Response

Infrastructure should ultimately strengthen the system around it.

The long-term objective extends beyond life-jacket distribution. Data, training and operational experience generated through the project's network can help government authorities identify

safety gaps, improve passenger-safety practices, strengthen emergency-response procedures and inform future maritime policy and enforcement priorities.

How the Four Steps Work Together: Recognition, Protection, Awareness, Response

Government recognition establishes legitimacy. Protected status preserves lifesaving assets. Communications and reporting improve situational awareness. Better information and infrastructure strengthen emergency response and provide practical evidence that can inform maritime-safety reform.

Together, the four components transform individual equipment depots into an interconnected public-safety system.

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