

Building Adaptive Fisheries Governance Capacity

Research project, 1 December 2023 – 30 November 2026; Malawi and Uganda

Team

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Research aims: The research aims to strengthen the adaptive governance capacity of inland fisheries in Malawi and Uganda to deliver positive impacts on biodiversity, poverty alleviation and improved ecosystem resilience. The research is guided by the following question and has three objectives:

How can capacity for adaptive fisheries governance for improved biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation and climate resilience be strengthened within inland fisheries?

1. Assess adaptive fisheries governance capacity for biodiversity protection, climate resilience and poverty alleviation from community to national government level.
2. Address key challenges to developing adaptive capacity for climate resilience in fisheries governance and how those challenges could be overcome.
3. Develop communities of learning for inclusive and sustainable adaptive fisheries governance in sub-Saharan Africa.

Research outcomes: The research aims to assist the fisheries sectors in:

- Forming plans for progressing towards adaptive fisheries governance;
- Having systems and structures in place for inclusive adaptive fisheries governance;
- Delivering on reduced drivers of biodiversity loss and strengthened protection of biodiversity
- Greater integration of biodiversity protection, climate resilience measures and poverty alleviation in fisheries governance

Research approach: The objectives will be addressed by the research taking a transdisciplinary co-production approach. This means that the research team will work collaboratively with partners, namely the Department of Fisheries, Malawi, and Directorate of Fisheries Resources, Uganda, fishing communities and relevant NGOs/CBOs throughout. Rather than collecting data and then sharing findings, the project will generate data with stakeholders and through activities that aim to build adaptive governance capacity.

Research locations: Research activities will be undertaken nationally and at selected field sites on Lake Chilwa and the Elephant Marsh fishery in Malawi and on lakes Kyoga and Victoria in Uganda.

Research activities: The research is organised into three Work Packages, as follows:

Work Package 1: Assessment of adaptive governance capacity

1.1 Development of adaptive governance capacity assessment tools, through:

- Drafting of background paper
- Multi-stakeholder workshops – one in Malawi and one in Uganda

1.2 Participatory assessment of adaptive fisheries governance capacity

- Collaborative assessment at national (workshop), district (4 in each country, workshops) and community level (2 in each selected district)

Work Package 2: Addressing challenges to inclusive adaptive governance capacity

2.1 Study on information generation, flows, use and gaps: map generation, sharing, use and gaps, focusing on four sites per country.

2.2 Study on dynamics and implications of fishing practices: document and analyse changing fishing practices, with interviews, focus group discussions and a workshop.

2.3 Pilot and monitor interventions to protect biodiversity and increase climate resilience, four in each country, over 6 months.

Work Package 3: Developing communities of learning and practice

3.1 Quarterly meetings with partners, to co-plan and reflect on progress, and facilitate exchange and collaboration between Malawi and Uganda.

3.2 Network meetings between communities and government officers, over 6 months in three districts per country, observed by a researcher to document discussions and progress.

3.3 Exchange workshop between key stakeholders in Malawi and Uganda, to be held in Malawi over 3 days, to generate national plans for further developing adaptive fisheries governance.

Communication will include

- Quarterly electronic newsletters, policy briefs and press releases
- Webpages on the project, with documents, including policy briefs, accessible
- Providing information for sharing within fisheries departments and with other government departments in Malawi and Uganda
- Providing information to the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization, the East African Community, the Southern Africa Development Community and the African Centre for Aquatic Research and Education for sharing with members
- WhatsApp messages
- Photovoice: community members will be tasked with taking photos relevant to adaptive fisheries governance, then interviewed about the photos. The photos and text will be used in an online exhibition.

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