

# Building adaptive fisheries governance capacity

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Research project in Malawi and Uganda

1 December 2023 – 30 November 2026



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# Project Team

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- Project Lead: Professor Fiona Nunan, International Development Department, University of Birmingham, UK
- Deputy Project Lead: Professor Mafa Hara, Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape, South Africa
- Malawi: Dr Judith Kamoto (Country Lead) and Dr Friday Njaya, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Uganda: Laban Musinguzi (Country Lead) and Bwambale Mbilingi, National Fisheries Resources Research Institute

# Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate

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- Funded by International Climate Finance of the UK Government through the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Managed by a consulting company, DAI, with Royal Botanic Gardens Kew providing scientific advice
- Aim of GCBC: ***We seek to unlock the potential of nature to deliver climate resilience and improve livelihoods***
- Theme project awarded under: Natural resource management approaches resilient to climate change
- <https://www.gcbc.org.uk/>

# Aims and objectives

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Aims to strengthen adaptive governance capacity of inland fisheries in Malawi and Uganda to deliver positive impacts on biodiversity, poverty alleviation and improved ecosystem resilience.

***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.



# What is governance?

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the norms, institutions, and processes that determine how power and responsibilities over natural resources are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens – including women, men, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities – secure access to, participate in, and are impacted by the management of natural resources (Campese, 2016: 7).

- Management is different to governance: the actual implementation and activities that put into practice decisions made by those involved in the governance system
- Co-management is a form of governance: shared responsibility and power between resource users, government and others
- Can be fragmented, uncoordinated and not that effective, including between different parts and levels of government

# So, what is adaptive governance?

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- Implies that governance needs to respond in a timely and effective way to new information and change; needs to be flexible and able to cope with uncertainty
- If you've got a governance system that doesn't work well, is slow and under-resourced, it will struggle to be adaptive
- Also implies that information is generated, shared and used – feedback loops inform decision-making – should be a learning system that is able to adjust
- Linked to building climate resilience, coping with environmental change and ecosystem-based management



# Intended outcomes of project

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- Plans for progressing towards adaptive fisheries governance
- 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
- Supporting departments of fisheries and other organisations in securing government funding and applying for donor funding



# Work Package 1: Assessment of adaptive governance capacity

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1. Development of adaptive governance capacity assessment framework and tools: **Dec 2023 – Sept 2024.**
2. Participatory assessment of adaptive fisheries governance capacity: **August – December 2024**
  - National and district workshops (4 districts in each country)
  - Interviews
  - Secondary data
  - Focus groups at community level, one in each district

# Work Package 2: Addressing challenges to inclusive adaptive governance capacity

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2.1 Study on information generation, flows, use and gaps: map generation, sharing, use and gaps, focusing on four sites per country: **Oct 2024 – Feb 2025**

2.2 Study on dynamics and implications of fishing practices: document and analyse changing fishing practices, with interviews, focus group discussions and a workshop: **Oct 2024 – March 2025**

2.3 Pilot and monitor interventions to protect biodiversity and increase climate resilience, four in each country, over 6 months: **April – October 2025**

# Work Package 3: Developing communities of learning and practice

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1. Quarterly meetings with partners, to co-plan and reflect on progress, and facilitate exchange and collaboration between Malawi and Uganda
  2. Network meetings between communities and government officers, over 6 months in four districts per country, observed by a researcher to document discussions and progress: **September 2025 – Feb 2026**
  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: **July 2026**
- Potentially another national workshop in early 2026 as well, to review draft guidance on building adaptive fisheries governance capacity.

# Day 1

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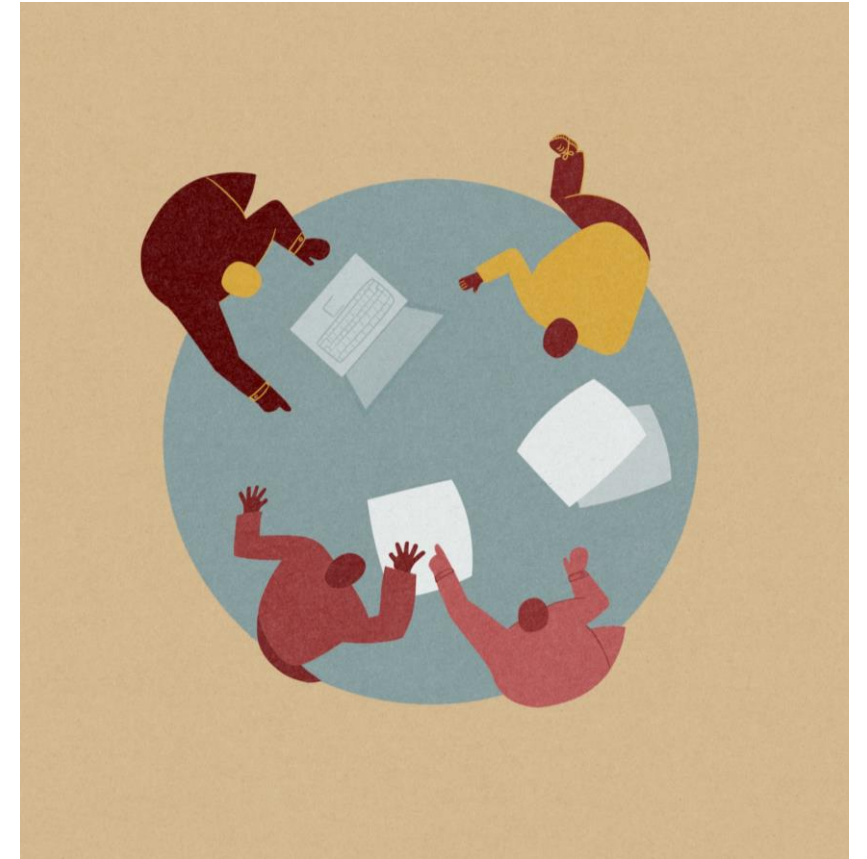
- Introduction to the project and workshop
- Overview of the fisheries sector and fisheries governance
- Overview of fisheries, biodiversity and climate change
- Small group discussion: Why move towards adaptive fisheries governance
- Small group discussion: Identify issues that should be investigated to improve governance



# Day 2

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- Small group discussion: Mapping of stakeholders involved in fisheries governance: What factors affect the performance of fisheries governance?
- Small group discussion: How do fisheries affect habitats and ecosystems and should anything be done to address negative impacts?
- Small group discussion: Responding to change in fisheries, including climate change



# Day 3

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- Knowledge, data collection and use in fisheries
- How could fisheries governance be improved, whilst better protecting ecosystems and building climate resilience?
- All group discussion on way forward
- Closing remarks



# Concluding thoughts

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- Assessing adaptive governance capacity is an opportunity to assess governance capacity more generally and inform efforts to strengthen governance
- Adaptive governance requires different approaches to governance and leadership:
  - Accepting that there are no easy solutions and that ‘solutions’ may come from deliberation and negotiation;
  - Willingness and space to experiment, learn and reflect;
  - Recognise and use different forms and sources of knowledge.
- Co-management brings stakeholder groups together and should provide the opportunity to use different forms of knowledge, encourage deliberation and negotiation, and to experiment with different management measures and approaches to decision-making.