

Who is in Charge of Fisheries? Who Should be in Charge? What is the Role of Resource users?

**Proceedings of a Workshop to Introduce Adaptive Fisheries Governance, and
Disseminate Preliminary Findings on Assessment of Adaptive Fisheries
Governance Capacity, to Fishery Management Staff in Uganda**



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Authors

Frank Nansereko*, Rebecca Dushimimana, Barnabas Uzabakiriho, Bwambale Mbilingi, Ashraf Kamyra, Johnson Baluku, Laban Musinguzi

Affiliation

National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NaFIRRI), P.O. Box 343, Jinja Uganda

Corresponding author: franknansereko@gmail.com

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Contact

The Director, National Fisheries Resources research Institute (NaFIRRI); P.O. Box 343 Jinja; Nile Crescent, Plot 39/45, Jinja; Opposite the wagon ferry terminal; Telephone: +256 434 121369 / +256 434 120484; Email: director.nafirri@naro.go.ug; Website/URL: www.firi.go.ug

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About NaFIRRI

NaFIRRI is one of the seven public National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) under the policy guidance and coordination of the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) with a mandate to conduct basic and applied research of national and strategic importance in Aquaculture, Capture fisheries, Water environment, Socio-economics and Marketing, and Information Communication Management, and emerging issues in the fisheries sector.

NaFIRRI is also an African Union Centre of Excellence for Research and Training in Aquaculture, Inland Capture Fisheries, and Climate Change, endorsed at the Third Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and Environment (STC-ARDWE) in October 2019 and upheld by the Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the African Union Executive Council in February 2020.

Executive Summary

Building Adaptive Fisheries Governance Capacity is a project being implemented in Uganda to strengthen adaptive governance capacity to deliver positive impacts on biodiversity, poverty alleviation and improved ecosystem resilience. The project is investigating how adaptive fisheries governance could be developed and aims to produce national plans and guidance to adopt adaptive fisheries governance.

The workshop held on 17th and 18th February 2025 was to enhance the potential for uptake and impact from the research. This was done in order to speed up the process of sharing findings and raising awareness and interest in adaptive fisheries governance, as well as obtaining feedback on how to tailor the plans and guidance for adaptive fisheries governance. The workshop was attended by District Fisheries Officers (DFOs) from 46 riparian districts of all major waterbodies in Uganda (lakes Victoria, Kyoga, Albert, Edward, George, and Wamala), researchers from the National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NaFIRRI), and officials from the Directorate of Fisheries Resources (DIFR).

The workshop was an interactive one with presentations and updates provided on preliminary results on assessment of adaptive fisheries capacity and small group discussions. The group discussions were to obtain feedback on the results from the participants and fill data gaps on selected pertinent issues to enrich the data to inform the development of the national guidelines and plans for developing adaptive fisheries governance. The workshop also facilitated an open interaction or discussion among the DFOs, NaFIRRI, and DiFR. This interaction was intended to provide updates on the management and monitoring of fisheries and enable the DFOs to share experiences on any issues of concern or importance in research and management.

This report is a summary of the proceedings of the workshop intended as an update to stakeholders in the fisheries sector for reference, and reinforcing awareness on adaptive fisheries governance capacity and acquisition of more feedback and ideas on the pertinent issues discussed at the workshop as well as questions or issues raised by participants.

1 Introduction

Adaptive fisheries governance, which is the flexibility in the structures and systems involved in making decisions that determine how fisheries are accessed and managed, the best approach for managing fisheries resources. The flexibility of the approach, which can be in relation to new information and knowledge, changes in the environment or stakeholder needs, makes the approach the best to respond to multiple threats, risks and uncertainties that fisheries face including climate change. To be effective, adaptive fisheries governance needs capacity in terms of resources, systems, and structures among others.

The National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NaFIRRI) in partnership with the University of Birmingham is implementing a project *Building Adaptive Fisheries Governance Capacity* to strengthen the adaptive governance of fisheries in Uganda to deliver positive impacts on biodiversity, poverty alleviation and improved ecosystem resilience.

To define ways how adaptive fisheries governance can be strengthened and its challenges addressed, the project is assessing adaptive fisheries governance capacity for biodiversity protection, climate resilience and poverty alleviation at the community, local government, and national levels. The outcomes of this project will include plans for progressing towards adaptive fisheries governance systems, structures for inclusive adaptive fisheries governance, delivering on reduced drivers of biodiversity loss, strengthened protection of biodiversity, and greater integration of biodiversity protection, climate resilience, and poverty alleviation in fisheries governance and management.

The project is conducting research using a co-production approach where researchers work collaboratively with stakeholders to produce research to ensure direct adoption and use. In line with this, the project convened a stakeholders' workshop in September 2024 that brought together the Directorate of Fisheries Resources, representatives of fishing communities, selected civil society, and District Fisheries Officers from selected riparian districts of lakes Victoria and Kyoga. The outputs of research are informing plans for progressing towards adaptive fisheries governance. Since November 2024, the framework has been used to assess adaptive fisheries governance capacity at the community level in selected fishing communities, local government level in the selected districts, and at the national level.

This report presents proceedings of workshop held from 17th to 18th February 2025 at Rider Hotel, Mukono. The workshop brought together representatives from the Directorate of Fisheries Resources (DiFR), researchers from NaFIRRI and District Fisheries Officers from 46 districts. The District Fisheries Officers were from riparian districts of six major water bodies in Uganda i.e., lakes Victoria, Albert, Kyoga, George, Edward, and Wamala. The workshop was aimed at increasing the potential of adoption and impact of the results from the project by increasing awareness of adaptive fisheries governance and disseminating preliminary findings from the assessment of adaptive fisheries governance capacity.

2 Participation in the workshop

The workshop was attended by District Fisheries Officers representing 46 districts, Officials from the DiFR under the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), researchers from the NaFIRRI, communication, publicity and media teams from NaFIRRI, Sustainable Fisheries Initiative (SFI), and Daily Monitor (Figure 1; Annex 1). DiFR Officials included the Chief Fisheries Officers (Commissioners for Aquaculture Management and Development), Commissioner for Fisheries Resource Management and Development (Natural Stocks), Assistant Commissioner for Aquaculture Management and Development,

Assistant Commissioner for Fisheries Resource Management and Development (Natural stocks), and Principal Fisheries Officers.



Figure 1: Participation in the workshop by stakeholder category (A) and gender (B).



Dr. Samuel Bassa, NaFIRRI presenting remarks on behalf of the Director of Research, NaFIRRI

3.0 Workshop proceedings

3.1 *Welcome Remarks by the Director of Research, NaFIRRI*

Dr. Samuel Bassa, the representative of the Director of Research welcomed all participants and thanked them for honouring the invitation to attend the workshop. He emphasised that governance is considered as a big issue in the fisheries sector and that it was also given attention in a previous un related workshop. He called for a more holistic approach in the governance of fisheries and more support to capture fisheries from the government. He added that the holistic governance is required to address the needs of all stakeholders including the youth, women and elderly. He mentioned that the workshop is a platform to address these issues and establish a theory of change to promote the sector. He encouraged everyone to feel free and participate in the workshop and wished members fruitful deliberations.

3.2 *Welcome remarks from the project team*

Professor Fiona Nunan from University of Birmingham thanked everyone for honouring the invitation. She emphasized that more funding is needed to introduce more people to adaptive fisheries governance. She further mentioned the expectation of the workshop as a very participatory place where District Fisheries Officers (DFOs) and other stakeholders would share their ideas. She added that the workshop was a great opportunity for everyone to participate.



Mr. Joseph Bwanika, the Chief Fisheries Officer (Commissioner for Aquaculture Management, DiFR) giving welcome and official opening remarks at the workshop

3.2 Welcome remarks and official opening of the workshop by the Chief Fisheries Officer (Commissioner for Aquaculture Management, DiFR)

The workshop was officially opened by the Chief Fisheries Officer, Mr. Joseph Bwanika. He appreciated Prof. Fiona Nunan for her input into Uganda's fisheries sector. He mentioned fisheries as a sector with a lot of issues due to increasing demands for fish and its products. He acknowledged that the fisheries sector has a lot of uncertainties about sustainability of resources. He mentioned conflicts among resource users and other emerging lake uses as a key issue. He added that there are issues of climate change. He mentioned that there are challenges of maintaining fish stock assessments which guide decisions on the fisheries exploitation. This makes it difficult to guide management even when fish processing factories are indicating a decline in fish stocks especially those of Nile Perch. Related to principles of adaptive fisheries governance, he paused important questions such as: Who is in charge of fisheries? Who should be in charge? What is the role of resource users? What is the role of the government in addressing issues along the fish value chain? He encouraged everyone to read the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Strategy and Action Plan, 2026- 2035 to become enlightened about the future of our sector. He suggested the need for an inclusive, participatory, and non-discriminatory governance model that should be in place to address the issues of fisheries sustainability.



Dr. Mark Olototum, NaFIRRI, making a presentation about research conducted at NaFIRRI

3.3 Overview of research at NaFIRRI

3.3.1 Capture Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation

Dr. Samuel Bassa, the Program Leader, Capture Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation Programme highlighted what the program focuses on: understanding the biology and ecology of fishes, stock dynamics as well as the health of the aquatic ecosystem. He highlighted the program's mandate of conducting research on aquatic systems of Uganda which include the 5 major lakes (Victoria, Albert, Kyoga, Edward and George), 160 small water bodies including wetlands, streams and rivers that support about 500 fish species. The program aligns with NARO's strategies by generating knowledge and technologies critical for sustainable use of fisheries resources, development and conservation of aquatic ecosystems, ensuring food security, and improving livelihoods. The sector faces challenges such as overfishing, climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Measures put in place to curb these challenges include policy advocacy, community innovation technology such as advanced monitoring systems and capacity building. Running projects within the program include building adaptive fisheries governance capacity which focuses on strengthening adaptive fisheries governance to climate change, and projects focusing on small pelagic fishes. Dr. Bassa highlighted that more research projects are expected under the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP).

3.3.2 Fish habitat management (FHM) program

Dr. Olototum Mark, the program leader for Fish Habitat Management (FHM), emphasized NaFIRRI's role to support aquatic ecosystem health and productivity. Fish Habitat Management research program deals with: generation of technologies for integration of lake productivity processes into fisheries management, control of pollution, invasive weeds and

degradation of the aquatic environment to support fisheries productivity. The program has five thematic areas and these are: water quality and pollution (organic, inorganic, plastics, habitat degradation, and sand mining); aquatic productivity processes; primary productivity (algal studies) and secondary production (zooplankton and macro benthos); aquatic weeds; and climate variability and change. While progress has been made in environmental assessments and aquatic weed utilization such as spirulina, challenges remain.

At the moment, capture fisheries account for 80% of the fish production. Efforts such as cage farming, and aqua parks aim to bridge this gap. The program is contributing by assessing the suitability and capability of waterbodies for cage aquaculture as well as exploring the utilization of aquatic weeds as fish feed and biogas production. Other research efforts include utilising algae (spirulina) in fish feed formulation, monitoring greenhouse gases, monitoring of critical habitats in the Upper Victoria Nile, and biannual monitoring of Bujagali Energy Limited.



Prof. Fiona Nunan, University of Birmingham introducing the project to participants

3.4 Introduction to the project (Building Adaptive Fisheries Governance Capacity) and the workshop

Prof. Fiona Nunan explained the genesis of the project. The project originated from networks in several continents to strengthen natural resource governance. She clarified that the project is running in two countries, Malawi and Uganda, with funding from the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC) of the United Kingdom. In Uganda, the implementation of the project is coordinated by NaFIRRI. The primary role of the project is to strengthen adaptive fisheries governance in Uganda to encourage positive social outcomes for fishing communities and protect biodiversity. Given the pressing challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, adaptive fisheries governance seeks to develop resilient governance frameworks that ensure long-term sustainability and effective resource management. She highlighted the objectives of the project as assessing adaptive fisheries governance capacity for biodiversity protection, climate resilience and poverty alleviation from community to national government level; addressing key challenges to developing adaptive capacity for climate resilience in fisheries governance and how those challenges could be overcome; and developing communities for learning inclusive and sustainable adaptive fisheries.

She hinted on the definitions of governance and adaptive governance to instil the meaning of adaptive fisheries governance among the participants. Governance is about decision making. It involves systems and structures and determines how people access resources. Adaptive governance refers to flexibility in these systems and structures in response to for example, new information. She added that adaptive governance involves learning which is a key part in adaptive governance. Professor Nunan reminded participants on the intended outcome of the project which include: 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; and greater integration of biodiversity protection, climate resilience measures, and poverty alleviation in fisheries management.

In a response to a participant's inquiry on the challenges of adaptive governance, Prof. Nunan responded saying that so many issues are common between co-management and adaptive governance. These include limited financial resources.



Dr. Laban Musinguzi, Senior Research Officer, NaFIRRI, making a presentation on preliminary results from assessments of adaptive fisheries governance capacity

4.0 Preliminary results on assessments of adaptive fisheries governance capacity

The presentation of preliminary results to participants was led by Dr. Laban Musinguzi and Mr. Bwambale Mbilingi. The assessments involved qualitative data collection using focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Two major water bodies, lakes Victoria and Kyoga were selected for study. From each selected water body, two districts were selected i.e., Mayuge and Buikwe on Lake Victoria, and Amolatar and Buyende on Lake Kyoga. From each district, two landing sites were selected, totalling to eight fishing communities for community level assessments. At the local government level, KIIs were conducted with technical and political leaders in the districts. Technical leaders included District Fisheries Officers (DFOs), District Planning Officers, District Natural Resource or Environmental Officers, District Production Officers, and Chief Production Officers. Political leaders included secretaries for finance, production and district chairpersons.

At the national level, participants were representatives from government agencies and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) relevant to fisheries governance. Public agencies engaged included National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), and DiFR. Civil Society Organisations included Katosi Women Development Trust (KWDT), Lake Kyoga Integrated Management Organisation (LAKIMO), Association of Fishers and Lake Users of Uganda (AFALU) among others. By the time of the workshop, 300 participants had been involved in the assessments including 207 fisherfolk within fishing communities, and 55 community leaders. During an earlier workshop to develop a framework for assessing adaptive fisheries governance capacity, an emphasis was

made by stakeholders that adaptive fisheries governance extends beyond fisheries, requiring collaboration across multiple sectors. This explains the diversity of stakeholders involved in the assessments. The consultative approach used in the project ensures that the solutions generated from stakeholder discussions will contribute directly to planning and implementing sustainable fisheries governance strategies in Uganda.

The results were presented within four major thematic areas: i) enforcement and trust; iii) co-management; (iii) information and communication; and biodiversity protection and adaptation to climate change.

For enforcement and trust, the FPU has taken lead in enforcement since at least the end of 2015 on the waterbodies. Despite this, there are observations of increased illegal fishing practices, consistent accusations of violence and corruption. Corruption is manifested in an established extortion scheme that extorts illegitimate money from illegal fishers and encourages payment for illegal fishing and trading illegal catches. These issues undermine compliance and trust among stakeholders especially resource users. Among illegal fishing gear, monofilament nets are particularly problematic illegal gear.

Stakeholders in the sector want co-management brought back but with clear definition of roles of all parties to avoid conflicts and duplication. Fishing communities want to be involved while women desire functional representation in co-management. Trust was viewed as essential for collaboration and sustainability of co-management. Therefore, interventions such as regular interaction among stakeholders, proper accountability, and respecting the law to build trust were observed as key for more successful co-management.

It was unequivocal among stakeholders at the local government and national level that the fisheries sector is under financed and understaffed. These issues limiting enforcement, licensing, monitoring, and adaptation to climate change among others. For instance, at the local government level, the fisheries sector is the only sector in production with no direct grants from the central government yet it is also the least prioritized in the budgeting processes at the local government level. Stakeholders envisage a reasonable number of interventions to address the under financing. Local governments demand a share of revenue from licensing to increase funding which should in turn sustain revenue collection from the licensing. The current revenue collection mechanisms at the local level lack adequate accountability to fishing communities and issue that limits compliance.

Political interference was observed as an impediment that encourages illegal fishing and non-compliance thus affecting fisheries management and enforcement. 'It affects the ability and morale fisheries officers to do their work'. In addition, it side-lines fisheries interventions in the budget processes (resource allocation) in favour of 'politically' important interventions such as roads, class room blocks.

Regarding information and communication, information in the fisheries sector comes from multiple sources. However, stakeholders within the sector reported a limited information sharing, lack of opportunity to participate in decision-making and lack of accountability of FPU, LSMC and fisheries officers. Findings from research are not regularly shared with DiFR, fisheries officers and communities, and as result, there is limited evidence of use of research in decision making. There is lack of a clear structures or processes to relay information within the sector from local communities to the central government, for instance. Lack of a clear communication mechanism excludes resource users from decision making which disrupts fishing activities with undesirable socio-economic consequences.

The assessment of adaptive fisheries governance capacity also included elements of biodiversity protection and climate change. The need for enhanced biodiversity protection and adaptation to climate change impacts in fisheries is clear. Fisheries policy and legislation refer to biodiversity protection and climate change but responsibilities and actions are not reflected adequately in practice and roles of DFOs. Responsible protection of biodiversity may require collaboration with other agencies at the national level and other departments at the local government level. At the local government level, the departments of natural resource and environment resources are willing to collaborate. However, these are as under-resourced as fisheries and therefore struggle to enforce legislation that could benefit aquatic biodiversity and adaptation to climate change.

5.0 Feedback on the results

5.1 Information and communication

Under this theme, two major issues arose from the preliminary results: limited use of data and information in management, and prevalent gaps in available data and information. As feedback, participants highlighted data collection as a requirement even though its sustainability is still a challenge. This challenge emerges from unsustainable data collection systems, methods and data collection tools among others. Participants called for establishment of a fund for data collection and dissemination. Additionally, participants emphasised the adoption of improved data collection and management systems such as e-CAS (<https://lvfo.org/content/launching-electronic-fish-catch-assessment-survey-cas-system-lake-victoria>). Furthermore, they brought up the issue of government to take over the responsibility of recruiting and training more technical staff for data collection. In this discussion, a disagreement arose among participants in relation to the practicability of collection of daily catch data. Nevertheless, it was emphasised by others that daily data is collected at fish landing sites including what is landed and marketed every day. "This data is very use full", they reported. It informs DiFR and is also submitted to FAO. Additionally, they hinted on this data's relevance in revenue collection in local governments. However, this effort is challenged with funding and updated equipment. It was also indicated that data collection at fish landing sites was better managed under BMUs. Under the current enforcement structure, there is need for more support as there are more gaps for capacity building.

5.2 Enforcement and Trust

Under enforcement and trust, reactions were mainly toward the role of the fish protection unit (FPU). FPU is the leader of enforcement. However, observations indicate inefficiency of enforcement with high pervence of illegal fishing, and illegal schemes to extort money from resource users. Questions were asked on the work of FPU. Is DiFR mandated to supervise FPU? Should FPU be in enforcement? Participants wondered why the FPU is not performing yet it has full political support, security, and is well facilitated. This could be partly associated with FPU commanders lacking basic knowledge of what they are managing. For example, some commanders do not know the difference between the fish species and fishing gears. Most of the participants were against the existence of FPU in fisheries enforcement and they suggested that it is an illegal entity since it not lawful despite the presidential directive that deployed FPU for fisheries enforcement. Other participants were progressive and encouraged others to look at ways of joining hands with FPU in management of fisheries and deal with associated criminality of fishers. According to participants, one way of working with the FPU could be to ensure that the FPU is answerable to district leadership. It also emerged that the fisheries sector needs to be more organised like other sectors.

5.3 *Co-management*

For sustainability of fisheries co-management structures, participants envisaged a structure which includes landing site committees, sub- county committees, district committees and Lake wide committees such as LAKIMO. Participants emphasised political interference is an obstacle to co-management since political leaders encourage illegalities to gain favour for votes. "How best could this power conflict be combated?" Embracing co-management and defining clear roles of politicians and have every party playing their roles may be part of the solutions to political interference. Educating politicians about the role of technical staff and the significance of controlled fishing to the ecosystem and sustainability of the fishery could also be useful.



Participants of the workshop discussing pertinent issues derived from preliminary results on assessment of adaptive fisheries governance capacity

6.0 Group discussions and open interactions

The participants of the workshop were divided into groups to discuss pertinent issues under the result thematic areas to enrich the results on assessing adaptive fisheries governance capacity by filling data gaps. Involving the stakeholders in data acquisition is part of the production approach the project is utilising where both researchers and stakeholders jointly identify challenges and solutions.

6.1 Information and communication

Issue 1: How sustainable are systems of data collection and are there more ways in which data could be shared and used? Are data collection systems sufficient? If not, what data is supported to be collected and how can it be shared and used?

Sustainability and sufficiency of data collections systems

Data collection systems identified by participants included e- CAS, daily catches at landing sites, Frame Survey (FS), Catch Assessment Survey (CAS), and annual fisheries resource activity registration by DFOs. Participants opined that data collection systems in Uganda are not sustainable and sufficient. The reasons given for this are inadequate funding, insufficient data collection tools or gadgets, and inadequate staffing levels. In addition, data collection tools are not jointly developed and are manual. Participants also stated that there are no feedback mechanisms and no system for information sharing between MAAIF and other key stakeholders such as line ministries, CSOs, and development partners.

Types of data that should be collected

Capture fisheries data required includes: catches and value per species, number of landing sites; value chain actors (barias, boat builders, processors, traders, input dealers); and equipment (fishing vessels in terms of number, size, type; fishing gear in terms of size, type, number of panels, mode of propulsion for example paddles, engines). Other types of data to be collected includes: aquaculture data (production data, production systems, number of value chain actors), socio-economic data (number of households, infrastructure, children involvement in fishing, household incomes, other economic activities at the landing sites, fisher groups and their sustainability, women involvement in fisheries activities), and data on activities that occur in catchments of waterbodies.

Ways to sustain data collection

Participants suggested the following for sustaining data collection: i) Capacity building of actors in the sector on data collection methods and analysis, ii) Designing and equipping actors with appropriate user-friendly data collection systems iii) Designing web-based data centers or online data collection and information portals that ensure collection, analysis, sharing and usage of data including dissemination/publishing to ease accessible at all levels, iv) Designing an appropriate feedback system, v) Lobbying for a sustainable funding mechanism at national and local government levels, and vi) Empowering the data collectors – resources, capacity building, and legal recognition.

Issue 2: How could research findings be shared more consistently in ways that are affordable, sustainable, and effective?

From the group discussions, participants mentioned the following as ways of sharing research findings.

- Utilizing websites of central and local governments.
- Regular community engagements through stakeholder meetings and community barazas for dissemination and feedback for every research carried out. These were emphasized by all the groups.
- Utilizing all possible media channels including those in communities like megaphones (mukalakasa), talk shows (radios and televisions), social media, and leaders at different levels.
- Publications of research findings in simplified versions (brochures, posters, brochures, flyers, newsletters, and visualizations), and periodical publications (online, or print).
- Translation of research findings into local languages where possible.
- Building permanent communication infrastructure on landing sites like public notice boards where information in both local and English languages can be provided.
- Establishing research demonstration centres to test the application of research findings and prove their validity.
- Establishing and empowering community-based facilitators to disseminate research findings in communities.

Issue 3: How could the experience and knowledge of fisherfolk be better captured and used to inform policy and management?

Stakeholders suggested the following as ways of capturing the experience and knowledge of fisherfolk for use in informing policy and management: (i) regular community meetings, ii) focus group discussions with leaders, iii) involving fishers in policy engagement events like workshops, iv) establishing co-management structures, v) active engagement with elders in the community, and vi) documentation of traditional fisher folk experience and knowledge

related to fisheries. Capturing the knowledge and experience of the fisherfolk is the main way of enhancing the use in fisheries management and policy.

6.2 Biodiversity protection and climate change

Issue 1: Should fisheries officers pay more attention to the protection of aquatic, nearshore and onshore biodiversity and vegetation? How could they do that?

All the stakeholders gave an opinion that fisheries officers should pay more attention to biodiversity protection. Most of the stakeholders pointed out sensitization of communities or resource users, followed by demarcation of the Fish Breeding and Nursery Areas (FBAs) as the ways of protecting biodiversity and vegetation. Planning for habitat conservation and restoration projects and integrating these into local government plans and budgets was also mentioned by various stakeholders as an approach that fisheries officers could use. Habitat conservation and restoration projects listed include tree planting; promotion of energy saving technologies; proper planning of landing sites; adoption of the user pay principle for maintenance and sustainability; integrated community management approaches for natural resource management, protecting buffer zones, and digging trenches that channel wastes. Furthermore, stakeholders pointed out allocation or designation of waste dumping sites and proper waste disposal following the 3R principles of reduce, reuse and recycle. Other ways highlighted included developing a catalogue of available biodiversity and embracing the utilization of ecosystem approach in managing the resource. Collaboration with the natural resources department within the local governments to identify areas of concern and execute the habitat conservation and restoration projects was also suggested. Other important aspects highlighted by stakeholders include capacity building; community-based dialogues; information sharing through posters and brochures (see issue 2 in the previous section); formulation of by-laws; and enforcement of the existing laws (joint enforcement with relevant departments).

Issue 2: Have landing sites changed over years in terms of forest cover and distances of forest?

Stakeholders acknowledged loss of forest cover on landing sites as forests are degraded for settlements, agricultural activities, factories, and recreation purposes such as beaches. Trees are also cutdown for fuel domestic use, fish smoking and boat building. These have resulted into loss of biodiversity, reduced water purification, and reduced provisioning services. Several plants and animal species previously observed on some landing sites have disappeared and can no longer be sighted. Floods are also ravaging some landing sites in degraded areas resulting into loss of homes, destruction of landing site structures, biodiversity loss, and emergence of invasive of weeds. Unfortunately, there are no restoration efforts on the ground to combat the degradation and flooding.

Issue 3: What monitoring is being done or what is planned for, to protect identified fish breeding and nursery sites?

Where breeding and nursery areas exist, monitoring is done as part of enforcement of fishing regulations by the responsible authority. There are areas where the monitoring is through by-laws (may not be documented) enacted by resource users. Mapping of these areas is still ongoing in partnerships with stakeholders. Planned activities include sensitization of communities and leaders to create awareness for protection, demarcation and gazetting, restoration, and monitoring of the nursery and breeding areas. The stakeholders also envisioned establishment of community conservation areas, conservation committees, establishing community-based management plans, enacting punitive regulation to deter destruction of breeding areas, more funding, establishment of co-management structures, and community mobilization and training to increase compliance as ways to help in the gazettement of breeding areas, and proper enforcement to protect them. Alternative

livelihoods promotion to reduce pressure on the ecosystems is another important issue that stakeholders proposed as important.

Issue 4: What monitoring beyond fish catches could be undertaken to monitor impacts of fisheries activities on nature?

Stakeholders hinted on monitoring the effect of fisheries-related human activities, species and by-catch composition in catches, and sanitary conditions. The human activities or demographic and socio-economic activities include boat making, fish smoking, net making, repair and disposal, and use of outboard engines. Stakeholders also suggested designing of environmental indicator such as those based on invertebrates and water quality for purposes monitoring waste disposal, settlement, infrastructure, agricultural activities, wetland utilization, and pollution associated with the human activities associated with fisheries. Stakeholders also hinted on keeping track of all flora and fauna in relation to fisheries activities.

6.3 Co-management

Issue 1: Should FPU be part of the co-management system or only be involved in enforcement as protection for Fisheries officers?

All stakeholders disagreed on FPU being part of co-management. The general consensus was that FPU should focus solely on enforcement. Direct participation of FPU in management is not feasible since they are only trained in enforcement of law and order but not fisheries management. It was argued that their involvement could limit free expression among resource users. The command-and-control mode operation of the army is not an appropriate approach to sustainable co-management. Given their localized and limited command structure, they are seen as more appropriate for law enforcement. This would allow resource users to engage freely in governance i.e their presence creates fear among the fishers. Other reasons suggested for exclusion of FPU in co-management include FPU not being stakeholders at fishing community level and absence of a legal provision to support their participation in co-management of fisheries.

Issue 2: Can co-management be re-established without donor project support?

Regarding this, stakeholders had mixed opinions. Some believed that the allocation of 25% of revenue from fisheries can sustain co-management structures. Others however, emphasized the need for donor support especially at the initial stages for capacity building and driving the process. They proposed that local responsible agencies should actively seek funding through proposal writing and donor collaboration to ensure sustainability.

Issue 3: Could adaptive fisheries governance be the focus of a government project to improve fisheries governance?

Adaptive fisheries governance was highly embraced by all stakeholders as a focus for improving fisheries management. Participants advocated for a restructured co-management system, including boat owners, indigenous fishers, youth, women, and elders while ensuring clear roles and responsibilities. Strengthening horizontal and vertical linkages between governance structures at different levels from village and parish fisheries networks to district, national, and regional bodies was seen as an essential. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of empowering local co-management structures to make laws in line with national ones to enhance governance effectiveness.



Participants of the workshop discussing pertinent issues derived from preliminary results on assessment of adaptive fisheries governance capacity

6.4 Enforcement and trust

Issue 1: Should FPU be working more closely with DiFR, fisheries officers, and fishing communities? If yes, how and how could your suggestions be actualized?

Majority of the stakeholders agreed that FPU should work closely with the DiFR, fisheries officers and fishing communities to enhance security and provide support to the fisheries sector. They emphasized the need for clear terms of reference for FPU and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for enforcement. They argued that FPU should work under the guidance of the DiFR with established statutory instruments until a surveillance unit is established since they are not trained in fisheries management. On the other hand, some members supposed that The Fisheries and Aquaculture Act (2023) has a provision for a surveillance unit (that will be armed) that expected to work closely with DiFR, DFOs (Para-Military trained) and fishing communities meaning that there is no need of the FPU.

Issue 2: What roles could communities, and networks of communities, play in enforcement if they are not involved in patrols?

Participants suggested that communities could contribute through acting as informers, providing guidance, labor, and co-financing or mobilize resources to support legal fishing practices. Communities could also be involved in reporting and providing information on illegal fishers and activities, witness cooperation during trials in courts of law, engage in community surveillance, engaging in self-policing, dialogues and joint problem solving, and socio-pressure. Additionally, communities could vet fishers prior to licensing, and collect data. These communities can also participate in public awareness campaigns, including local

radio talk shows to as means of reinforcing lawful fishing practices and linking with wider lake management networks if established.

Issue 3: Communities have asked over many years why illegal nets are imported. What, if anything, could be done to stop the availability of monofilament nets?

The discussions pointed out that illegal monofilament nets remain a significant challenge due to inefficiency in inter-government agency coordination between the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) and the DiFR. They added that these nets enter the country as twines which are legal and they become illegal on individual water bodies when the twines are turned into nets locally. The solutions given include strengthening laws on importation of fishing gears and conducting holistic enforcement. Stakeholders suggested strengthening border control through increased recruitment of fisheries inspectors, developing a traceability system, political will and developing better scanners at the borders. Other suggestions were controlling illegal entry of cargo which doesn't go through points of entry (porous border), and ensuring that inspectors of cargo operate with high integrity. Other suggestions included banning net imports and supporting local production and developing a register of fishing gear importers.

Issue 4: What could be done to prevent theft of legal gears?

To prevent theft of legal gears, members recommended strengthening fishing community institutions; monitoring, strengthening the landing site by-laws and ordinances; strengthening monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) operations through logistical support and enhanced enforcement; strengthening security; and registering all the fishing gear. Mandatory marking of fishing gear at landing sites was emphasized, alongside regular inspections, strict penalties, and improved co-management structures to detect and deter thieves. Fisheries officers also encouraged fishing communities to guard their gear on fishing grounds.

Issue 5: How can trust be built and maintained?

Participants emphasized the need for transparency, accountability, and collaboration in fisheries governance. Participants suggested keeping law and order, legitimacy, having exemplary leaders, uniformity in implementation, training, information dissemination, recognition, and empowering the fishing communities as some of the ways to build trust.

In addition, rewarding and sanctions by the responsible authorities to promote compliance are other ways of as another way of building trust. Facilitation of surveillance teams and teamwork among the stakeholders to combat corruption, ensure integrity, proper policy implementation and enforcement could build and maintain trust.

6.5 Political interference

Issue 1: What strategies can be employed to advocate for prioritization of fisheries interventions?

Stakeholders highlighted the following as efficient ways for advocating for prioritizing fisheries intervention

- Mindset change among the leaders involved in the budgeting process.
- Encouraging the fisher folk to participate in activities to gather priorities during the budgeting process.
- Affirmative action for the fisheries sector to set up a special fund for fisheries and lobbying or negotiation for the fisheries sector to have a fair share of the resource envelope.

- Team work among the technical staff who should stop lamenting but make themselves relevant.
- Increased engagement of donor agencies through concept and proposal development
- Linking fisherfolk to financing institutions like banks.
- Creating synergy and collaboration with other sectors like Community Development Organisations (CDOs) and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).
- Involvement politicians in planning.
- Strengthening the implementation of the laws such as licensing.
- Organizing stakeholder engagement meetings at all levels to increase understanding of activities in the sector. The meetings may include exchange visits for the politicians to other districts for benchmarking.
- Strengthening fisheries associations to increase lobbying power for the fisheries sector.

Issue 2: How could political interference be prevented and/or countered over time?

Participant came up with a number of points regarding prevention of political interference and these include mind set change, allowing the law to take its course, effective communication, teamworking and effective collaboration, formation and empowering of fisheries (producer & marketing) cooperatives to take lead in fisheries, MAAIF led political mobilization of stakeholders in local governments, strict observation of applicable laws, and regulations pertaining service delivery, emphasizing co-management and incorporating politicians, involving the political leaders in the fisheries activities (monitoring, sensitization and other fisheries activities), avail regular feedback reporting about fisheries to the politicians, continued consultations with the politicians on issues concerning fisheries, and involving politicians in the planning and budgeting process for fisheries work plans.



Participants of the workshop discussing pertinent issues derived from preliminary results on assessment of adaptive fisheries governance capacity

6.6 Resourcing

Issue 1: What should be the mechanisms of raising the profile of the fisheries in the budgeting processes?

Political lobbying and advocacy were the only common points stated among the stakeholders. Other ways which may overlap the ideas given for prioritizing fisheries interventions (see issue one in the section above) included the following.

- Sensitization on the relevancy of fisheries.
- formation of fisheries unions and empowering them as it is done in other countries.
- Showcasing the contribution of fisheries sector to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), contribution to district and national development, revenue, employment (direct and indirect) and nutrition.
- Increasing visibility by showcasing successful implementation of fisheries and aquaculture activities.
- Enhancing accountability and transparency for the funds advanced towards the fisheries sector.
- Integration of cross-cutting issues in fisheries sector in collaboration with other sectors and organizations.
- Organizing and participation in fisheries public events such as aquaculture conferences, fish festivals, and world fisheries day.
- Building a strong case with data and research on for example economic importance, environmental and social benefits.
- Establishing fisheries advocacy groups such as Fisheries Professional Associations.
- Improving on reporting and information sharing using both print and digital media.
- Mindset change for leaders especially those involved in the budgeting process.
- Encouraging the fisher folk to participate in priority gathering.
- Affirmative action for the fisheries sector to set up a special fund for fisheries.
- Promotion of aquaculture.
- Decentralization of revenue collection from fisheries activities.
- Establishment of projects for economic development within fisheries.

Issue 2: How can accountability be built in revenue collection processes?

Stakeholders highlighted the following as key ways to enhance accountability: digitization of the revenue collection processes; sharing with the local governmental a percentage of the revenue collected; publicly disclosure of revenue data to promote trust; effective communication and feedback; sensitization of the fisher communities on fisheries; participatory and inclusive budgeting and planning; rewarding the best performing districts; establishment of a clear structure to collect revenue, and defining proper lines of authority to conduct audits to ensure compliance with policies and procedures.

Other ways included training of revenue officers; involving the stakeholders along the value chain; transparency in revenue collection; proper record keeping; active involvement of fisher communities or interim landing site committees during revenue collection; transparency in bidding process; formation of a central database; and building a strong revenue team at all levels.

Issue 3: What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure transparency and accountability?

Most stakeholders highlighted presence of feedback mechanisms such as display of income and expenditure (public accountability); Improved service delivery; penalties to defaulters;

conducting internal and external audits; active involvement of all responsible stakeholders at community, local and national level during revenue collection and management; digitalizing the revenue collection system; sensitizing revenue/tax payers; demanding for accountability; regular and timely reporting; capacity building (revenue collectors, landing site committees); and establish stakeholder forums to discuss revenue collection processes through public feedback mechanisms such as barazas.



Participants of the workshop discussing pertinent issues derived from preliminary results on assessment of adaptive fisheries governance capacity



Mr. Anthony Otunga, the District Fisheries Officer (DFO) of Amolatar district making a briefing on the exploitation and management of Lake Kyoga system.

7.0 Interaction between DFOs, DiFR, and NaFIRRI

This interaction began with brief updates on the management of lakes Kyoga, Edward, and George by the DFOs of Amolatar (Lake Kyoga) and Kasese (Edward and George).

7.1 Waterbody briefs

Lakes Edward and George

The overview of Lakes Edward and George were presented by Mr Agaba Charles, the Representative DFO of Kasese district. He mentioned that fisheries resources support thousands of livelihoods in Kasese, Kitagwenda, Rubirizi, and Rukungiri districts. He stated that the lakes are shared among the districts of; Kitagwenda, Rubirizi, and Kasese and DRC and managed under a closed-access system in Uganda. Fishing activities are regulated through restrictions on boat entry and gear size following the Fish (Fishing) Rules 2010, with enforcement by the FPU.

The lakes face significant challenges including overfishing, water hyacinth, rising water levels, and habitat degradation. Conflicts arise from transboundary fisheries management between Uganda and the DRC, and human-wildlife interactions because crocodiles and hippos attack fishermen. Tourism activities on the Kazinga Channel also contribute to disputes among fishers, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), and canoe owners.

To address these challenges, recommendations such as strengthening fisheries co-management at local and international levels, harmonizing fisheries regulations between Uganda and the DRC to reduce transboundary conflicts, improved fisheries monitoring,

enforcement and community training in alternative livelihood activities are needed to enhance sustainability.

Lake Kyoga

Mr. Anthony Otunga, the DFO of Amolatar, gave the overview of the status for Lake Kyoga. Lake Kyoga hosts 17 Local Governments and supports about 41,000 fishermen, hence a big resource. The trends of fish catch in the lake show high catches in 1978 which by 2013 had decreased. Recent research shows an increase in fish catches. Lake Kyoga faces environmental challenges such as water hyacinth, pollution, and impacts of climate change which cause severe flooding. Additionally, illegal fishing, poverty in fishing communities, low life expectancies resulting from diseases, under development of infrastructures affect the fishing communities around this lake system. On the contrary, co-management on landing site communities is doing well in some landing sites. Enforcement on the lake is done by the FPU while funding, manpower, and training are inadequate on the Kyoga system, requiring capacity building.

7.2 Main conclusions and challenges arising from the interaction

- ***Monitoring and surveillance:*** Promote the use of advanced technologies in monitoring and surveillance of Ugandan water bodies and fisheries as a way to address the challenges of monitoring and surveillance. Two opportunities were suggested by the DFOs. The DiFR should seek a partnership with the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT) to tap into the electronic number plate system for cars and mainstream it into fisheries by installing electronic vessel number plates for easier tracking and monitoring. The DiFR should also explore the possibilities of partnering with the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs (MODVA) for possibilities of using radar technologies in monitoring and enforcement.
- ***Stakeholder responsive research:*** There is demand for a mechanism for the DFOs, fishing communities, and other stakeholder to inform the research agenda at NaFIRRI. An alarm system for fisheries, akin to the disease surveillance of the Ministry of Health (MoH) is needed. This is because several emerging significant issues in fisheries go on unnoticed with no action by DiFR and NaFIRRI.
- ***Inadequate research and management coverage of the water bodies:*** There are still low levels of research and management on many water bodies. Lake Kyoga is the most affected among the main water bodies in terms of low coverage for research. Efforts are needed to increase research carried out in the system.
- ***Empowerment:*** It is of concern that technical people in the fisheries sector are not empowered, with the power belonging to politicians and the FPU. This weakness could be the reason why the president directed the deployment of FPU in fisheries. Related to this, decision making does not adequately incorporate research findings and opinions of scientists for example during policy formulation and decision making.
- ***Conservation and sustainable management of fisheries:*** Tendency of prioritising economic benefits by everyone involved in fisheries, leaving no one responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources, is an issue. The tragedy of the commons in the sector is clear with most people driven with an exploitation mindset. The DiFR needs to cooperate with the local governments among others to manage and promote aquatic biodiversity conservation. This should involve the empowerment of all those relevant in conservation, sustainable use of resources, and mobilizing funding.
- ***Destruction and encroachment on gazetted landing sites.*** Flooding of lake shores is destroying gazetted landing sites, fisheries infrastructure, and livelihoods of fishing communities. Is there a way to give aid to the affected communities? Gazetted landing sites in some places like Kampala, Wakiso and Masaka are suffering encroachment from

developers establishing beaches and hotels, displacing fishing activities as well as encroaching on the buffer zones.

- ***Fish breeding areas:*** Mapping of breeding areas has been completed or conducted in many areas including Lake Kyoga with funding from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). However, there is slow progress in demarcating and protecting fish breeding areas, an issue that encourages illegal fishing within known fish breeding areas such as Kazinga channel.
- ***Control of invasive weeds:*** There are concerns about inaction on the control and eradication of aquatic weeds on water bodies especially Lake Kyoga, Lake Edward, and Kazinga channel. An update from DiFR indicated that the Uganda Climate Smart Agriculture project will facilitate the acquisition of equipment to work on both water and land as a solution for invasive weeds. Updates from NaFIRRI highlighted technological research innovations to utilize the invasive weeds as resources for biogas and other products despite funding challenges.
- ***Conflicts in the fishing of pelagic fish species like Mukene:*** The fishing of Mukene is still a sensitive issue. The fishing community, referring to a dialogue held in September 2024, still demands for clear guidance from NaFIRRI and DiFR on appropriate mesh size and number of panels recommended for fishing Mukene.
- ***The Parish Development model (PDM):*** Fisheries sector is disadvantaged because the one million Uganda shillings disbursed to help the people to start economic enterprises is not adequate for most enterprises in the fisheries sector such as fish farming.
- ***Riverine system fishing boats and gear sizes:*** Unlike lakes, rivers have not been adequately considered in the regulation of fishing boats and some fishing gear. There is a need for full incorporation of river-based fisheries in regulations.
- ***Stakeholder engagement:*** Stakeholders raised concerns about stakeholder engagement within the sector which is limited. The DFOs noted that they used to have regular meetings and engagements with DiFR in the past which are non-existent. These should be revived.

8.0 Closing remarks

Prof. Fiona Nunan thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and thanked the project team in Uganda for excellent preparation. She mentioned that the team will try to share proceedings in a workshop report and more detailed results in form of report at local community, local government, and national levels.

Mr. Alio Andrew, the Assistant Commissioner for Aquaculture Development, on behalf of the DiFR thanked the organizers, funders and participants for choosing to attend the workshop other than any other responsibilities. He thanked them for their contribution towards providing solutions for the challenges in the fisheries sector. He mentioned that it was a good idea to always have all the stakeholders discussing issues pertaining fisheries governance. He urged all members with identified responsibilities, to take them up with the emphasis on researchers, managers including the DFOs.

9.0 Annex

Annex 1: Participants in the workshop from District Fisheries Officers, Sustainable Fisheries Initiative (SFI), University of Western Cape (UWC), University of Birmingham (UoB) and Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF)

Name	Designation	Organisation/District	Sex
Mr. Achibu Ekwilu D	District Fisheries Officer	Serere	M
Mr. Agaba Charlse	District Fisheries Officer	Kasese	M
Mr. Agaja Joseph	District Fisheries Officer	Kaberamaido	M
Ms. Alupo Caroline	District Fisheries Officer	Kumi	F
Ms. Apadet I Specioza	District Fisheries Officer	Katakwi	F
Ms. Atuhaire Everlyne	District Fisheries Officer	Kitagwenda	F
Mr. Ayebale Jude	District Fisheries Officer	Kampala	M
Mr. Balikoowa Michael	District Fisheries Officer	Kaliro	M
Mr. Byangwa Daniel *	District Fisheries Officer	Kalungu	M
Mr. Ediru John Francis	District Fisheries Officer	Kalaki	M
Mr. Egesa Eugene	District Fisheries Officer	Busia	M
Mr. Enyaku James Michael	District Fisheries Officer	Soroti	M
Mr. Gwazo Francis Xavier	District Fisheries Officer	Kagadi	M
Mr. Igoma Fred	District Fisheries Officer	Namayingo	M
Mr. Isebadhu Nathan	District Fisheries Officer	Mukono	M
Mr. Kanya Geoffrey	District Fisheries Officer	Kassanda	M
Mr. Kanakutanda J. Henry	District Fisheries Officer	Kamuli	M
Mr. Katali James	District Fisheries Officer	Buikwe	M
Mr. Kavuma Adrian *	District Fisheries Officer	Kalangala	M
Mr. Kiburara John *	District Fisheries Officer	Kikuube	M
Mr. Kutegeka P Ngongaha	District Fisheries Officer	Buliisa	M
Mr. Mugyenyi B Dan	District Fisheries Officer	Rukungiri	M
Mr. Munyaami Ali	District Fisheries Officer	Mpigi	M
Mr. Musiige George	District Fisheries Officer	Ntoroko	M
Mr. Musunguzi Edgar Fred *	District Fisheries Officer	Kanungu	M
Mr. Mwesigwa James	District Fisheries Officer	Hoima	M
Ms. Nabayunga Stella	District Fisheries Officer	Wakiso	F
Ms. Nakaziba Sarah	District Fisheries Officer	Mayuge	F
Mr. Nakwaki Abdul Majid	District Fisheries Officer	Buvuma	M
Ms. Nalukwago A Sarah	District Fisheries Officer	Buyende	F
Mr. Nsamba David	District Fisheries Officer	Nakasongola	M
Mr. Ntale George	District Fisheries Officer	Masaka	M
Mr. Obore Sam	District Fisheries Officer	Ngora	M
Mr. Odyeke Caesar	District Fisheries Officer	Apac	M
Mr. Oloya Michael	District Fisheries Officer	Pakwach	M
Mr. Otim Ronard	District Fisheries Officer	Kwania	M
Mr. Otto Charlse	District Fisheries Officer	Pallisa	M
Mr. Otunga Anthony	District Fisheries Officer	Amolatar	M
Mr. Rubeihayo R Anthony	District Fisheries Officer	Rubirizi	M
Mr. Rusoke Jonan	District Fisheries Officer	Kyotera	M
Mr. Sempala Jimmy	District Fisheries Officer	Gomba	M
Mr. Ssenyonjo K Elija	District Fisheries Officer	Mityana	M
Mr. Walugada Michael *	District Fisheries Officer	Jinja	M

Mr. Wasimera Stanley	District Fisheries Officer	Kayunga	M
Ms. Were Immaculate	District Fisheries Officer	Bugiri	F
Ms. Lominda Ajedraru	Journalist	Monitor	F
Mr. Geoffrey Dheyongera	Principle Fisheries Officer	MAAIF	M
Mr. Byamukama Patrick	Principle Fisheries Officer	MAAIF	M
Ms. Nabuule E Clare	ACF	MAAIF	F
Mr. Bwanika Joseph	C/AMD	MAAIF	M
Ms. Daisy Olyel Aciro	C/FRMD	MAAIF	F
Mr. Bakora Moses Mujuni	ED	SIF	M
Ms. Betty Aliba	DMC	SIF	F
Dr. Mafaniso Hara	DPL	UWC	M
Prof. Fiona Nunan	Professor/Project lead	UoB	F
Mr. Ashraf Kamyra	RA	NaFIRRI	M
Ms. Rebecca Dushimimana	RA	NaFIRRI	F
Mr. Johnson Baluku	RA	NaFIRRI	M
Ms. Frank Nansereko	RA	NaFIRRI	F
Mr. Uzabakiriho Barnabas	RA	NaFIRRI	M
Mr. Bwambale Mbilingi	RO	NaFIRRI	M
Ms. Alice Endra	SDCO	NaFIRRI	F
Dr. Laban Musinguzi	SRO	NaFIRRI	M
Dr. Mark Olokotum	SRO/PL	NaFIRRI	M
Dr. Samuel Bassa	SRO/PL	NaFIRRI	M