



National Fisheries & Aquaculture Policy



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

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1. The Challenge of Fisheries in Uganda

The fisheries sub-sector contributes 12% to the agricultural GDP and 2.5 % to the National GDP. There was a noticeable steady decrease in exports to international markets attributed to reduction in stocks of Nile perch in the lakes, increasing market standards requirements and growth of demand in local and regional markets. This decline in performance of fisheries sector explained by the following contributing factors;

- i. Limited institutional and legal framework to halt irregularities and fishing malpractices including: fishing inbreeding and nursery



grounds, use of illegal fishing gears, overfishing and trading of immature fish, and exploitation of fish farmers through sale of poor quality inputs especially fish seed and feed.

- ii. Limitations in technological, logistical, financial and human resource capacity of the institutions in charge of fisheries and research to regulate the sector on all water bodies;
- iii. Low public and private investment in aquaculture (fish farming) that has caused low access to quality fish seed, feed, processing and marketing support services.

In order to address these challenges, MAAIF has, in consultation with key stakeholders, put in place the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy with an intent to transform the fisheries and aquaculture sub-sector through improved governance and use of appropriate technologies for sustainable development.

2. Why the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy?

There were mainly ten reasons why the Fisheries and Aquaculture policy was put in place:

- i. To strengthen coordination organization, management and development of the fisheries and aquaculture sub-sector.
- ii. To ensure fisheries and aquaculture resources management and development are guided by the best scientific evidence
- iii. To sustainably increase human resource, knowledge, skills and expertise among staff and other actors throughout the entire fisheries and aquaculture sub-sector.
- iv. To ensure availability of adequate fish for domestic, regional and international markets
- v. To promote value addition, ensure quality and safety of fish and fishery products on the market as well as improving the value chain system.
- vi. To increase the value and volume of fish traded internally regionally and internationally.
- vii. To ensure that fisheries and aquaculture

management practices and technologies are environmentally friendly and climate resilient.

- viii. To prevent and control the introduction of pathogens, disease-causing organisms and contaminants as well as invasive species within the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- ix. To create a conducive investment environment through aqua parks to increase fish production and productivity.
- x. To ensure the availability of effective monitoring systems, adequate and relevant information for planning and decision-making.

This policy is also the bedrock for the current Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill that is before Parliament. The policy comes at a time when Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) has been deployed to curb illegal fishing among other reforms to enhance monitoring surveillance and control over the major water bodies beginning with Lake Victoria.

3. Key Advocacy Issues in Fisheries and Aquaculture

- i. The bedrock of the Fisheries and Aquaculture sub-sector are strong co-management structures right from the landing site, which require urgent support to manage and preferably by passing and enforcing a Fisheries Act and attendant regulations. At the moment, all hands are on the deck to ensure the Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill is passed into law to pave way for legislative reforms to regulate, guide and develop the sector. This law comes at a point where Beach Management Units and their management framework is being enhanced. Substantial support is required to ensure that every landing site has, at the minimum, the basic management apparatus to sustainably manage the fisheries resources at the lowest (but most critical) level.
- iii. An appropriate financing arrangement of the Fisheries and Aquaculture sub-sector. If the policy is enforced and implemented will ensure self-sustaining sub-sector. Since the colonial times, fish levies, permits and other fees ensured self-sustenance of the sector. Due to some limitations in enforcement, and a low level of accountability of collected revenue, the sub-sector has remained dependent on central government allocation to manage the resource.



- ii. The role of private sector needs to be enhanced in fisheries planning and management. There are various aspects at all stages of the fisheries and aquaculture value chain that require public-private partnerships. A fundamental aspect to ensure this is clarification of incentives across various aspects of the value chain for private sector. This calls for the enhancement of the National Fisheries Committee (or Council) to include representatives from the private sector and non-state actors (fisheries association and cooperatives).
- iv. With the development of Aquaculture, nationally, regionally and globally, the peculiar aspects of aquaculture development need to be embedded and mainstreamed in the law. In order to enhance, the profile of Aquaculture in Uganda, there are strong proposals for the establishment, through the powers of the minister, a National Aquaculture Board to govern the sub-sector and attendant issues.

Stakeholders appreciate the incentives to aquaculture within the law, but more incentives are needed at the earlier stages of the value chain (that demand substantial sunk costs) in order to attract new fish farmers as well as extension workers in providing technical service extension, support traceability, pollution control, and research as well as innovation adoption. The endurance of the aquaculture will rely heavily on the provision of high quality and affordable fishing feed and seed to farmers. Incentives that would attract investment in this regard would go a long way in boosting this sub-sector.

- v. While enforcement by Uganda People's Defense Forces Marine (UPDF)/Fisheries Protection Force has ensured increase in fish stocks, curtailed over-capacity and minimized irregularities, it is imperative that the internal enforcement capacity of Fisheries (including a para-military force establishment) to assume a technical lead that guides UPDF/Fisheries Protection Force in its enforcement efforts. Enforcement of the Act in many aspects will rely on the shoulders of the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Unit as elaborated in the Act. It is a wide view of all stakeholders that fisheries technical officers take the lead in identifying areas where enforcement is required and hence UPDF's role. However, ultimately, the role of UPDF is envisioned as interim and temporary measure.



- vi. Sustainable resources management requires that all fisheries exploit all aquatic resources in a manner that preserves them for both



current and future generations. The transition from open-access of fisheries resource use towards a managed resource use modular, sustainability (not just of fisheries but also of water resources management) is very paramount. There is need to ensure that traditional systems like local fishing are not exploited irregularly by fishers in ways that destroy the resource. Sustainability also requires higher investments in pollution reduction. As cage farming becomes more pronounced, there is need to ensure that gradually, fish feed and other implements conform to set quality standards. Fisheries are also under threat from pollution from industrial waste and other foreign bodies. The tranquility of Uganda's fresh water bodies requires that the Act is implemented along the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA Act revised).



4. Who are the Winners and Losers?

The table below shows the winners and losers from the implementation of the policy

Category	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Farmer Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making affordable quality fish seed and flies available to the farmer which will increase yields as opposed to the current dependence on sometimes low quality seed and feed known to be declining in quality (in low protein) ▪ Operational fry centers that will provide both inputs and knowledge to farmers ▪ Enhanced information and linkages between different value chain actors through multi-stakeholder platforms ▪ Increased food and nutrition security ▪ Increased incomes providing higher opportunities to venture in enterprises that will create employment especially for youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added cost to the farmer in the interim as they set up ponds and purchase the initial inputs (as opposed to free provision of inputs) ▪ Competing farm enterprises which may stretch the family expenditure assignments in the interim. For instances, in some cases the high cost of farm feeds implies that poor families have to abandon other farming enterprises to focus on fish farming.
Farmer Institutional Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support to farmer association and cooperatives to identify and mobilize fish farmers in attempt to ease knowledge extension and services distribution in ways that reduce transaction costs and protect prices from 'middle men' exploitation ▪ Enhanced group marketing and bargaining power 	
Community Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased women and youth empowerment to actively participate in the fish farming 	
District Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District council empowered to develop ordinances to implement policy ▪ Extension services enhanced to reach more farmers with knowledge on fish farming issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New districts may face challenges in implementing bylaws of mother districts
Sub-Regional Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More investments in fry centers that will support the work of ZARDI to enhance the productivity in the respective agro-ecological zones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintaining fish stock is capital intensive to do this investment at all ZARDI levels
Private Sector and other non-state actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enforcement of regulations that will weed out producers of poor quality seed and feed and other practices that compromise the advancement of the aquaculture business in Uganda ▪ Strengthened private sector to effectively play their roles at each stage of the value chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Producers of fake products (seed and feed) will lose their licenses to do business and face high penalties and jail time.

5. Know your Role in Policy Implementation

- 1. Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries:** formulate and appropriate laws notably a national Fisheries Act and implement guidelines and regulations for capture fish and aquaculture.
- 2. Ministry of Water and Environment and its Agencies:** Undertake national water resources assessment, water control, water resource planning, allocation and regulation; Carry out monitoring, evaluation and compliance standards; and demonstrate and promote fishing technologies that are efficient, cost effective and sustainable fisheries (especially on sustaining water quality).
- 3. Fish Farmers:** Embrace and actively participate in all planned interventions and activities; ensure proper use and maintenance of water resources through self-monitoring; and engage in gainful and progressive fisheries and fish farming. Participate in events that advance fair, efficient and effective fisheries management mainly through co-management structures.
- 4. Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development:** Mobilize and allocate public financial resources for implementation of fisheries especially ensuring that the planned investments in both the ministry and sector plan are financed, in as far as fisheries is concerned. The ministry shall also lobby for financial resources to support the sector.
- 5. Ministry of Local Governments:** Coordinate LGs and support efforts to ensure farmers and their groups and associations embrace fisheries management principles and motivate the population to support the sector at all levels of the value chain. Work with fisheries offices, since fisheries is a decentralized function to ensure successful implementation of co-management mechanisms.
- 6. Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives:** Promoting marketing trade, value addition of fisheries products and mobilize cooperatives and farm institutions to trade fairly and competitively regionally and globally. This is in awareness that Uganda's Tilapia and Nile Perch remain globally acclaimed products.
- 7. Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development:** Deal with issues related to land ownership as well as property rights in fish farming schemes
- 8. District Local Governments:** Participate in planning and development of fisheries infrastructure; provide fisheries extension services, Technical Assistance to farmers and other stakeholders; support the acquisition of land for construction of construction of ponds; provide backup support for operation and maintenance of established infrastructure and including for equipment for water for production; support and monitor implementation of policy; participate in data collection, validation, storage and use in planning and management; mobilize and allocate resources for fisheries and aquaculture development.
- 9. Non state Actors and Development Partners:** Share good practices and alternative approaches in fisheries research, management and development; provide advocacy, financial and technical support for fisheries and aquaculture development

For Details contact ACSA, Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries on addresses at back of document.



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