

PROJECT PROFILE

<u>Sector</u>	Natural Resources
<u>Sub-sector</u>	Environment
<u>Code</u>	NR 07(A & B)
<u>Title</u>	National Wetlands Conservation and Management Programme Phase III
<u>Implementing Agency</u>	Ministry of Lands, Water and Environment
<u>Location</u>	Countrywide
<u>Total Plan Exp</u>	US\$ 5.57m
<u>Funds Secured</u>	US\$ 3.01m
<u>Funding Gap</u>	US\$ 2.56m
<u>Starting Date:</u>	1996
<u>Completion Date</u>	2002

Background

Wetlands cover about 12% or 35,000km² of the country and include areas of seasonally flooded grassland, swamp forest, permanently flooded papyrus and grass swamp, and upland bog. Generally, wetlands support a wide variety of biophysical and socio-economic functions and traditionally in Uganda, they have been important to local communities, providing open access to various resources including fish, water, grazing and plant products. However, with the rise in human numbers and decline in dry land resource yields, wetlands are now under threat from more destructive forces. In the South West, many wetlands have been drained for crop production and dairy farming; the rural poor have been dispossessed by private landowners and the microclimate apparently altered, with potential consequences for both crop production and public health. In the East, widespread conversion to rice has taken place, but the initial promise of high yields to peasant farmers has not been sustained while the traditional dry season grazing areas may have suffered long-term damage. In urban centres, swamps have been in-filled, often with garbage, for industrial development and housing, with hydrological consequences for those living downstream, while in peri-urban areas encroachment and the over harvesting of plant resources have damaged the water purifying capacities of wetlands putting public health at risk.

Objectives

- (i) To sustain the bio-physical and socio-economic values of wetlands for present and future generations.
- (ii) To strengthen the national capacity for wetland conservation and management.
- (iii) To develop the capacity for wetland conservation and management at District level.
- (iv) To develop and extend methodologies for wetland resource management by local communities.

Expected output

- Technical skills acquired by local communities and district administration and management
- Appropriate policy framework put in place
- Wetland profiles and maps developed
- Self-help community based wetland activities initiated
- Number of seminars held.
- Number of district officers trained.
- Demonstration sites developed and made operational.

Technical Description

- Phase III activities include:
- development of the Wetlands Unit in NEMA to provide technical services to local communities, District Administration and central Government.
 - further development of the Wetlands Inter-Ministerial Committee through training courses, study tours and involvement in technical studies to clarify policy issues within relevant departments/line Ministries in such a manner that will harmonize wetlands policy with other sectoral policies;
 - performing a specialized national inventory of wetlands with the aim of identifying areas for future protection, investigating areas under pressure, providing inputs into the national re-mapping exercise and providing information on wetland resources appropriate to district requirements;
 - assisting and encouraging self-help community based wetland initiatives in selected districts through the provision of intervention funds;

- further increasing awareness amongst the general public and government concerning the values of wetlands and wise use practices, particularly in policy harmonization, wetland resource assessments and action plans;
- Continuing targeted research into the functions and uses of wetlands in order to strengthen management policy and ensure that wetland use is sustainable; and further to initiate specific research in integrated conservation and management of important wetlands.
- Enhancing the ability of Government to carry out its obligations under the Ramsar convention and encouraging cooperation with other national and international bodies with responsibilities for wetland management.

Financing

The first and second phase received financial support from NORAD and Royal Netherlands Government respectively through IUCN - The World Conservation Union. The third phase is financed by the Royal Netherlands Government at a total cost of US\$ 5.285m. over a period of five years.

Plan of Operation

The Project is implemented by the Wetlands Unit of Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment (MWLE) with technical support from IUCN.