

COOPERATION IN MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES IN THE RUIZI CATCHMENT, SOUTHWESTERN UGANDA

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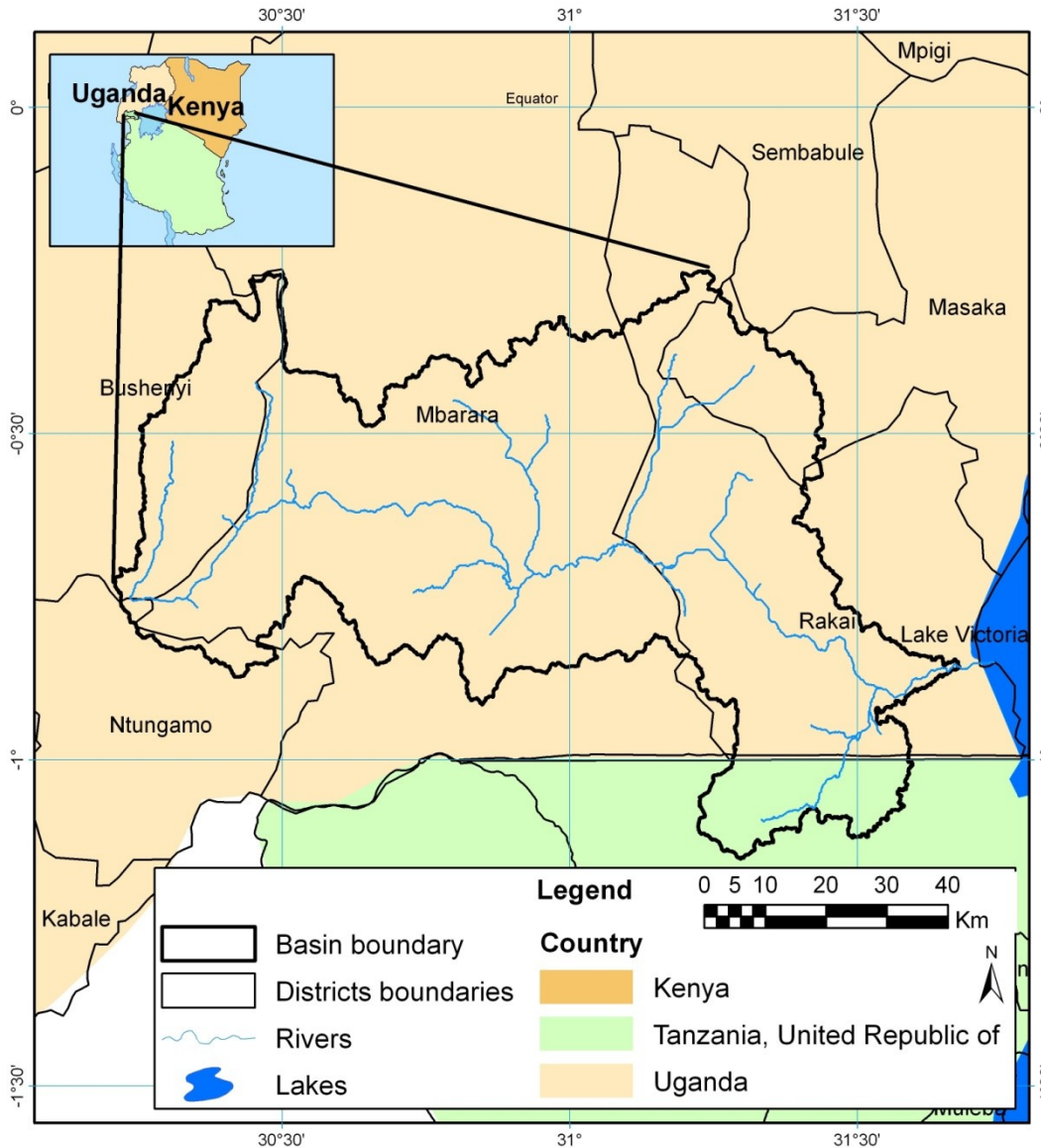
OUTLINE

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INTRODUCTION

- The River Rwizi transects five districts located in Western Uganda. This river is the major source of economic activities in the districts.
- Several activities take place within and at the river banks of the resource. Such activities include cattle rearing, brick making, use of the papyrus reed for making baskets, mats and art pieces, agriculture growing, eucalyptus tree planting.
- These activities are all done without notification of downstream users as a result the river has deteriorated both in quantity and quality and drying up of wetlands fringing the river.
- The Reform Study of the Directorate of Water Resources Management provides a unique opportunity to build on the efforts made to protect, use and manage freshwater resources in a sustainable manner.
- In the current study, highlights of existing legal and policy frameworks are evaluated in establishing the integration of transboundary context in managing shared water resources at District level.

STUDY AREA



The study area covers a total geographical area of approximately 8,346 sq km, subdivided as follows:

- Wetlands 240 sq km,
- Forests 207 sq km
- Open water area 85 sq km.

Lowland areas are occupied by wetland systems.

- Population 300,000



OBJECTIVES

- Study existing practices of the legal & policy frameworks for integrated water resources management in the catchment.
- Examine the weakness in the legal & policy frameworks for IWRM

FINDINGS

There is a comprehensive policy and legal framework for management of water resources in Uganda.

- **National Water Policy**
- **National Environment Management Policy (NEMP)**
- **National Wetlands Policy (NWP)**
- **The Water Act, 1995**

FINDINGS cont...

- **National Water Policy:-** The National Water Policy (NWP), adopted in 1999, provides the overall policy framework for the water sector. The National Water Policy promotes the principles of integrated water resources management as a means to ensuring sustainable management and utilization of Uganda's water resources.
- **National Environment Management Policy:-**The NEMP sets out the overall policy goals, objectives and principles for environmental management in Uganda.
- **National Wetlands Policy:-** This policy (1995) aims at promoting conservation of Uganda's wetlands in order to sustain their ecological, social and economic functions for the present and future generations.
- **The Water Act, 1995:-**This act provides the legal framework for use, protection and management of water resources and water supply. The Water Act, enacted in 1995, is the principle law for the water sector, which incorporates legislation for both water resources management and water supply and sanitation.

Weakness in the legal & policy frameworks for Integrated Water Resources Management

- There is a lack of effective policy framework and implementation mechanisms in place at district level.
- There is also the lack of effective implementation of existing legislation and regulatory mechanisms
- Harmonization of policies, legislation and action plans of the multi-sectoral units through an ecosystem approach.
- Most importantly the integration of the transboundary waters into the policies and legislative framework is deficient.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The policies and legal framework nationally and locally in relation to transboundary water resources is of limited awareness and needs to be emphasized at district level to create cooperation and sustainable utilization of shared resources.
- Integration of the transboundary water use into the policies and legislative framework. The National Water Policy should provide explicit provisions for the management of water resources. This would promote interdistrict transboundary water cooperation as a tool for conflict prevention.
- Promotion of improvement of inter-sectoral water use of the districts for sustainable utilisation of water in the basin.



Thank you