



Trans-boundary Fisheries Frame Survey on Lake Albert to Improve Fisheries and Community Livelihoods in the Albertine Graben

Participants at the National technical planning meeting at (12th July 2018)

The Lakes Edward and Albert Integrated Fisheries and Water Resources Management (LEAF II) is a multinational 5 year Project implemented between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project, whose goal is to contribute to the sustainable utilization and management of the fisheries and allied natural resources of the Lakes Edward and Albert Basin through harmonized legal framework and policies, is coordinated by the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP) in Kigali, Rwanda.

Fishing effort data is one of the key information required to guide management planning. These data are obtained through Frame Surveys, the complete enumeration of total fishing effort (landing sites, fishers, fishing vessels, and gears by type and size) and other infrastructure supporting the fisheries sector. Under LEAF II, Frame Survey is one of the key fisheries assessment activities planned on Lakes Albert and Edward to generate information on status of fishing effort and other infrastructure/services supporting fisheries on the two lakes to aid decision making. The National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NaFIRRI) of the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) is leading these surveys on the Ugandan side while the *Service National de Development et de Promotion de la Peche* (SENEDEP) is spearheading on the DRC side, following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which were jointly harmonized and agreed upon by the two lead national fisheries agencies in August 2017. The Frame Surveys are expected to run from 2nd July to 16th November 2018, and will be followed by the Catch Assessment Surveys (CAS) from 14th January to 14 June 2019.

NaFIRRI, as a lead agency on the Uganda side, is working closely with the Directorate of Fisheries Resources (DiFR), District local government (Fisheries staffs), LEAF II coordination office, and selected personnel from the fisher communities of the riparian Districts; Kasese, Rukungiri, Rubirizi and Kamwenge (on Lake Edward) and Pakwach, Buliisa, Hoima, Kikuube, Kagadi and Ntoroko (on Lake Albert) to implement the Frame Surveys. This approach of involving key stakeholders and resource users in planning



and implementation of the surveys is seen as a long term strategy to sustain the data collection beyond the project life. The strategy involves building capacity of the lower level fisheries managers and members of the user community in the planning and implementation FS field data collection.

One of the enumerators translating the fish species names of on Lake Albert into local languages during the training workshop.

In preparation for the 2018 Frame Surveys, national planning meetings involving participation from NaFIRRI, DiFR, LEAF-II national coordination office and the fisheries staff from the riparian District Local Governments have been conducted, followed by the recruitment and training of Frame Survey Field enumerators (Data collectors) and supervisors on the two lakes.

At the national planning meeting held at Miika Eco Resort hotel in Hoima, while officially opening the meeting on the 6th August 2018, Mr. Kiiza Hanington the Principal Assistant Secretary in the office of the Chief Administration officer, Hoima noted that the project stakeholders should work within the time lines of the project to achieve the project goals. Mr. Mangeni Richard from DiFR noted that “Fisheries is a sector facing a lot of challenges among which is lack of current data. He further noted that absence of the much needed information on the state of lake fisheries, has forced them to manage a resource that they do not know its stock size as well as optimal harvest limits. He appreciated LEAF II for the component on Fisheries Stock Assessment Studies including Frame Surveys which will generate the data that will guide policy, planning and decision making. *“We have been put on pressure to give information and there has been a gap so when we get the frame survey it will go a long way to inform the various issues of fisheries that we need to understand on Lake Albert. Without this data we may not offer good advice”.*

The Director NaFIRRI, Dr. Anthony Tabbu Munyaho said that the surveys to be conducted come at a time when current data on the two lakes is needed because things have changed a lot in their fisheries. He cautioned the stakeholders to mind the quality of data as they conduct the survey. *“We want to identify what is there today regarding fisheries, we want to know the status of what gears are being used, type of fish, number of illegal gears, number of boats in the Lake and the number of people involved. We will do a Catch Assessment Survey after the Frame Survey for us to know how much we get out of the Lakes. We will have to get accurate information from these surveys in order to give us a good baseline”.*



Mr. Nakiyende Herbert, the LEAF II Coordinator, NaFIRRI observed that the Frame Survey activities will enable harmonization of policies and joint monitoring for fisheries activities. He also informed the meeting that the project has set aside funds to support the establishment of a Fisheries Research Station and procurement of a Fisheries Research Vessel which will be used

to undertake the fishery independent assessments such as Bottom Trawling and Hydro-acoustics to determine the quantities (biomass) of fish, their species composition and distributions in the lakes. The envisaged outcomes of the project include reduction of the fisheries post- harvest losses and reduced cross-border conflicts. After the planning and training workshops at TJ Global Hotel, Kasese District and Miika Eco Resort, Hoima, NaFIRRI has embarked on publicity of the Frame Survey exercise on the two lakes, with the aim of creating awareness among the riparian communities, particularly the fisher-folk, to enable smooth implementation of the exercise. The actual Frame Survey field data collection is expected to start in October, 2018.