

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

TO CONDUCT A RAPID APPRAISAL TO DOCUMENT THE STATUS AND TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF THE BAN ON MUKENE HURRY UP FISHING METHOD IN UGANDA

1. Introduction

The Uganda National Women's Fish Organization (UNWFO) was established in 2019 as a forum through which Ugandan women could share experiences, build the capacities of its members to adopt best practices, improve women's access to local and regional markets to sell their fish products, and advocate for women and youths fish workers' rights as 'One Voice' to leverage their role and contribution to the fisheries and Aquaculture sector. UNWFO is a member of African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET) and the current Secretariat of AWFISHNET East Africa. Today, UNWFO is composed of four hundred and seventy-eight (478) women and youth groups and about 150,000 individual members. The members of UNWFO are engaged in fishing, fish farming, fish seed production, fish feed production, trading of fish farm inputs and equipment, fish marketing and trade within and outside Uganda.

In February 2024, the Ugandan Minister of State for Fisheries, Hellen Adoa, introduced a ban on popular fishing methods used to catch Silverfish (*Rasbora argentea*), known locally as Mukene. The Hurry -Up fishing directive is having a devastating impact on the livelihoods of people working in the Mukene value chain. Due to the gendered structure of fisheries value chains in Uganda, the impacts have been particularly felt by women, who dominate the Mukene post-harvest sector.

UNWFO, as a National Women Fish worker's civil society organization representing women working in the Mukene fishing sector, has a responsibility to address the issues this recent policy change has raised for their members across the country. This intervention relates to UNWFO's fourth strategic objective to strengthen the capacity of women and youth groups in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture value chains. It is from this strategic objective that UNWFO derives the mandate to intervene.

UNWFO has secured funding from GIZ to carry out a study to get a better understanding of the ban, its effects and generate solutions and recommendations to inform advocacy messages.

2. Background information

The 'hurry-up' fishing method happens to be the popular method for Mukene fishing on Lake Victoria since the 1990s (Wandera, 1992).

According to the Minister, the ban has been introduced as a conservation measure, since the 'hurry-up' method is said to trap untargeted fish, specifically juvenile Nile Perch, threatening the sustainability of the commercially valuable Nile Perch fish stocks. The Minister claimed in her address that three quarters of the catch from the banned methods consist of juvenile Nile Perch (quoted in this article), though the source of this information is unclear. Whilst Mukene makes up the largest volume (60%) of fish catches from Lake Victoria for instance, Nile Perch is the most economically valuable fishery (Kolding et al. 2014 cited in Simmance et al. 2023). In comparison, small-sized pelagic species, such as Mukene, are perceived as resources with "low economic value" by fisheries managers (Kolding et al. 2019 cited by Nakiyende et al. 2023). Hence, fisheries regulations in Uganda chiefly support the existence of the commercial export-oriented fishery, and artisanal fishers who are said to increase the mortality of juvenile Nile Perch stocks, including those using paddled vessels in nearshore areas and nets with small mesh sizes, have been a targeted group in enforcing fishery regulations (Mpomwenda et al. 2022).

The directive issued in February 2024 advises Mukene fishers to use 'scoop nets' (*kyoota kyoota*), instead of the 'hurry-up' fishing method. Scoop nets were commonly used in the 1990s to catch Mukene (Wandera, 1992). However, in 2000, scoop nets were banned by the Government because of their use on small boats close to the shore. Subsequently, since 2002, the number of scoop nets in Lake Victoria has decreased by almost 85% (Nakiyende et al. 2021). In 2020, only

1.6% of Mukene fishers were reported to use scoop nets in Lake Victoria, Uganda (Nakiyende et al. 2021). Scoop nets are perceived as methods for 'poor people' who cannot afford small seine nets. Scoop nets are also traditionally used on smaller boats, which are currently prohibited by the current fishing regulations (Fish (Fishing) Regulations, 2010). Which has caused additional concern for Mukene fishers. As this news report suggests, fishers are particularly frustrated and confused by the directive issued in February 2024 because of the inconsistent and contradictory messaging around the sustainability of both the 'hurry-up' method, and the scoop net.

It is generally acknowledged among stakeholders that Mukene fishing in Uganda needs to be better managed. Evidence suggests that fishing effort in Lake Victoria is gradually shifting from the Nile Perch fishery to the Mukene fishery due to the overexploitation of Nile Perch (Mpomwenda, 2018). More people are reportedly joining the Mukene fishery because of better outputs (catches) and thus better wages (Mpomwenda, 2018). Between 2016 and 2020, the number of boats targeting Mukene in Lake Victoria increased by 19.3% (Nakiyende et al. 2021). Whilst it is important that this growth in the Mukene sector in Uganda is sustainably managed, management regulations need to be informed by scientific evidence, and devised through effective consultation with stakeholders. The directive issued in February 2024, however, was not. The changes were abrupt and unexpected.

In practice the ban on the 'hurry-up' method has led to the cessation of Mukene fishing in Uganda, as affected actors were unduly informed and underprepared for these changes. Furthermore, inadequate support has been given for affected actors to make the proposed changes to their fishing activities.

Anecdotal evidence gathered from UNWFO's members suggest that the ban on the 'hurry-up' fishing method has caused the price of Mukene to increase from 5,000 to 20,000 (UGX) in some areas, a price too high for many women - who are said to have disproportionate access to capital and credit compared to men - to continue trading in the product; increased the pressure on women fish processors and traders to engage in fish-for-sex transactions due to increased competition for scarce Mukene catches; left many women incomeless and caused several women to drop-out of the sector entirely due to a lack of adaptive capacity; re-directed fishing effort and women's livelihood activities to other fisheries, particularly illegal, under-sized Nile Perch and Tilapia, due to shifting market demands for affordable fish, putting women at risk of prosecution. At the landing site level, the ban on the 'hurry-up' fishing method has also left many fishermen without work, this has apparently contributed to a rise in gender-based violence.

Furthermore, women and men have differential capacities to adapt to new technologies and be able to effectively innovate to environmental, social, economic and political changes. Consequently, women, particularly the most poor and marginalised, risk being 'left behind' by those who are more able adapt and innovate to this political change.

Moreover, the ban and its impacts, particularly on the price of Mukene which has quadrupled since the directive was issued, is obstructing UNWFOs efforts to promote Mukene as an affordable livelihood strategy for women's economic empowerment, and an effective food source to tackle malnutrition in the country.

3. Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study is to generate evidence to inform state actors in the fisheries sector on the implications of the ban on the 'hurry-up' fishing method used to catch Mukene/muziri, particularly for woman and youth; and engage relevant stakeholders to identify solutions that address the concerns of affected populations.

The specific objectives are (i) generate information to understand and raise awareness of the multi-dimensional impacts of the ban on the 'hurry-up' fishing method used to catch Mukene, (ii) identify and agree with stakeholders a way forward that enables Mukene fishers to fish in a cost-effective and productive way whilst minimising catch of juvenile Nile Perch, and (iii) generate recommendations to lobby decision-makers and influence the decision making process.

4. Study area

The study will be conducted on three lakes: Victoria, Kyoga and Albert. One landing site in each of the 15 districts that border lakes: 6 on Lake Victoria, 6 on Lake Albert, and 3 on Lake Kyoga.

5. Scope of the Consultancy

The Consultancy assignment will involve conducting a study on the implications of the ban on hurry up mukene fishing method regarding landing sites, fishers, processors, traders as well as producers of animal and fish feeds.

The consultancy will be conducted by a team of at least two persons. It will involve the following:

- i. Literature review
- ii. Development and review of questionnaires. Development of semi-structured and pre-prepared questions for focus group discussions and key informant interviews for the following:
 - 15 focus group discussions (1 at each landing site) with women fish processors and trader groups. The focus of these discussions will be on the gendered impacts of the ban on the 'hurry-up' method (max 8

- participants in each focus group)
 - 180 surveys with Mukene value chain actors (12 at each landing site). These surveys will collect quantitative and qualitative data on the impacts of the ban on the 'hurry-up' method for fishing communities and individuals including fishers, boat owners, processors and traders.
 - 15 key informant interviews with stakeholders impacted as a secondary consequence of the policy change including animal feed manufacturers, animal-sourced food producers, manufacturers of fortified infant foods, under-five nutritional referral centres.
 - 15 focus group discussions (1 at each landing site) with actors in the other major fisheries sectors, namely the Nile Perch and Nile Tilapia fishing sectors to understand the implications on these fisheries sectors (i.e., how has the ban shifted demands for other fish, such as under-sized Nile Perch). (max 8 participants in each focus group)
- iii. Collection of data. Use of existing structures is encouraged. e.g. use of District Fisheries Officers in data collection
- iv. Data analysis and writing a report
 - The report should among other things highlight the status of Mukene/Muziri production, processing and trade before and after the ban. Challenges being faced, adaptations and recommendations for the fisheries sector regarding the ban on the 'hurry-up' fishing method for Mukene.
 - The report should also point out Policy areas which will be used to develop a policy brief to lobby decision makers
- iii. Preparation of a PowerPoint presentation summarizing findings which will be shared at stakeholder dialogue meeting

6. Methodology

The focus group discussions and key informant interviews will be semi-structured and guided by a list of pre-prepared questions. The surveys will be structured, and Kobo ToolBox will be utilised to collect and manage this data. The tools will be pre-tested at one landing site on Lake Victoria not selected as part of the final 15 landing sites sampled and revised where necessary. Piloting of the research tools is expected to take 2 days.

Following the piloting and subsequent review of the research tools, data collection is expected to take around 30 days to complete. The research activities will be done in close collaboration with UNWFO and GIZ. The Consultant will lead the development of the research tools, piloting of the research tools, data collection and management. Research assistants will help the Consultant to collect the data. The research assistants will be contracted and will also be required to translate and transcribe the qualitative data in English. Community mobilisers in each of the 15 districts will also be hired based on their contextual knowledge of the landing site to support the development of the participant recruitment strategy.

The Consultant will also lead on the analysis and production of the situational analysis report on the multi-dimensional impacts of the Mukene fishing gear ban. The report will be informed by a literature review and policy analysis, also conducted by the Consultant. From the report, key information will be extracted and presented in PowerPoint format. The Consultant will share this presentation at the stakeholder dialogue.

A one day validation meeting will be held after data analysis, but before the write-up to ensure the validity of the data collected. The data validation process will be led by the Consultant. The qualitative data will be validated through member checking, also called respondent validation, whereby the Consultant will present the analysed data back to a selection of respondents (around 15) and the project research assistants (at least 3) to cross-check the data to check for accuracy and completeness. Participants should be able to identify their experiences in the synthesized themes. The ultimate purpose of the validating meeting is to offer findings that are trustworthy, but this collaborative technique may also increase the overall richness of data. Following the validation meeting the Consultant may be required to add new information or change the results.

7. Deliverables

- Inception report
- Revised questionnaires and semi-structured and pre-prepared questions for focus group discussions and key informant interviews
- Qualitative data for validation
- Study report
- Power point presentation

8. Eligibility Criteria

This Request for Proposal is open to individual expert consultants who can provide the stipulated services. To be eligible, the consultant must have high quality and demonstrable local experience and relevant educational background, strong understanding and experience in conducting surveys in fisheries and aquaculture.

9. Duration and Time lines of the assignment

The assignment shall be conducted between the month of October and December 2024 and a final report to be submitted by 15th of January 2025.

10. Requirements/Proposals

Complete proposal with the following information must be submitted by 30th September 2024 at 1700hrs East Africa Time.

Technical Proposal detailing the understanding of the TOR and proof of experience with similar assignments, a brief description of the consultant and a detailed workplans (including timelines and methodology) and any other technical input requirement and a detailed financial proposal.

NOTE:

The completed Proposals to be submitted to the following contact:

UGANDAN NATIONAL WOMEN'S FISH ORGANIZATION
Block 270, Agribusiness House; Plot No. 174 Town Council Road
P.O. Box 30026
Wakiso District-Uganda
Email: womenfish.ug@yahoo.com / info@unwfo.org