

# NileNews

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## Study highlights importance of Nile Basin peatlands



Coring for peat in the Sudd Etlands, South Sudan.

**P**eatlands are types of wetlands with presence of partially decayed vegetation or organic material. They host rich and diverse biodiversity and provide multiple ecosystem services such as water supply, water purification, soil and water conservation, buffering impacts of floods and droughts, climate cooling, carbon sequestration and numerous livelihoods support. In addition, peatlands and associated organic soils' carbon sequestration makes them attractive in enabling the Nile Basin

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### DID you know?

Hydropower generation is the preferred energy option for most Nile Basin countries because of its suitability to generate relatively low-cost and clean electricity.

Find out more: <https://www.nilebasin.org/information-hub/technical-documents/1-the-state-of-the-river-nile-basin/file>

## There is room for increasing the pie



**T**here is room for increasing the pie, as long as all Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) Member States cooperate on how to take care of, develop and utilise the shared River Nile waters efficiently. This is key to meeting their current and future demands for water, food and energy and in a more equitable and sustainable manner.

Equally key to increasing the pie, is reinforced ownership and financial commitment by the Member States, both of which need to be remedied urgently. While the countries have gradually assumed responsibility for NBI in terms of increasing cash contributions to cover annual core costs, not all have shown the requisite due diligence in this respect, thus putting the institution in a difficult financial situation and threatening its very existence. It is important to acknowledge that NBI is the only inclusive, cooperative institution in the history of Nile cooperation.

Inclusive Nile cooperation, where by all NBI Member States are participating and working together will

result in improved water use efficiency, increased water storage and contribute to reduced evaporation, hence more water for all to use.

The NBI political track is indeed about inclusiveness and so we need not spare any efforts in resolving the current differences over the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA). Egypt froze its participation in NBI since 2010 when the agreement was opened for signature. Upon ratification by six countries, the CFA would enable the establishment of a permanent institution, the Nile River Basin Commission. Instead of bridging the gap, the non-inclusive commission is going to cause more division among Nile Basin countries.

I therefore call upon all stakeholders and friends of the Nile to work together to resolve the CFA differences and make timely contribution towards achieving inclusive Nile cooperation. I also call for enhanced Member States commitment to embrace optimal actions and as such, safeguard and increase the pie.

**Prof. Seifeldin Hamad Abdalla**

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countries meet their commitments under National Determined Contributions (NDC) for Paris Agreement, among others.

However, the narrative of tropics being poor in peatlands formation/extent coupled with poor data availability on peatlands in Africa has precipitated their degradation resulting into increased carbon emissions, biodiversity loss and reduction or loss of ecosystem services and goods associated with peatlands.

Given their importance, NBI with the support of the German Development Agency (GIZ) embarked on an elaborate endeavor to place peat lands at the heart of River Nile Basin Planning and Integrated Water Resource Management.

Among the key activities is a study dubbed “Assessment of Carbon emissions avoidance potential of the Nile Basin wetlands.” The aim of the Study is to build a knowledgebase on peat lands presence, extent, carbon stock and associated land-uses in the Nile Basin region.

The study undertaken by DUENE e.V. (Partner in the Greifswald Mire Centre) and Wetlands International on behalf of NBI involves two actions:

- i. Assessing the role of Nile Basin peatlands in avoidance of carbon dioxide emissions release by calculating the current carbon stock in the basin and estimating the carbon dioxide emissions from drained use.
- ii. Developing a discussion paper, which can serve as the backbone for further technical and policy discussions on emissions avoidance from peatlands in the region.

So far, peatlands extent mapping and carbon stock estimation has been carried out in both the Nile Equatorial and Eastern Nile sub-regions covering critical sub-basins and targeting landscapes such as Kagera, Sio-Siteko, Gambella, Lake Victoria, Semliki and Sudd Wetlands.

Activities included literature review, peatland mapping/delineation (using GIS and remote sensing),

stakeholders’ consultation and land use mapping. This is in addition to field campaigns to validate the mapping activities, measure peat depths and collect peat samples to estimate organic carbon content as well as estimate a preliminary carbon stock in the Nile Basin region and highlight areas with highest carbon stock potential.

This is in addition to capacity building for national wetlands officers, scientists and technicians as well as the ongoing National, Regional and Global Networking on Nile Basin Peatlands.

Land-use mapping on the other hand noted wide-spread degradation of peatlands for farming, livestock keeping, settlements and infrastructure development.

## << Preliminary results indicate that landscapes of South Sudan and Uganda are highly endowed with peatlands. >>

Preliminary results indicate that landscapes of South Sudan and Uganda are highly endowed with peatlands.

The final study results expected by the end of 2019 will be crucial in undertaking financial modeling for developing business or economic case for investing in the peatlands investment plan and mapping requisite financial flows under the overall NBI Investment Plan. This will reinforce Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) from peatlands and provide baseline information for peatlands conservation investments and designation as first peatlands Ramsar sites. Information generated will also inform the ongoing transboundary wetlands management and conservation investment planning.

**Leonard Akwany**  
**Regional Wetlands Expert**  
**Nile-SEC, Entebbe**

# Nile Basin Regional HydroMet Project – National consultations completed

The exercise to undertake National consultations and an update of the system baseline for the Nile Basin Regional HydroMet project was recently concluded in nine NBI Member States. The aim of the exercise jointly carried out with the National Teams and members of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee was to update geo-database of the full hydrological stations in the hydromet design with current station data as well as create a common understating of the project implementation approach, work plan and institutional arrangements.



Besides explaining the project, its components, outputs and milestones, various issues were addressed including custom clearance of instruments and equipment, special considerations for each Member State such as technology limitations, legal and administrative procedures as well as permits, among others. Also clarified was the role of National Teams, joint supervision of the works, quality control, capacity development and handover of the operational stations.

« Implementation of the first phase of the Nile Basin Regional Hydromet System is expected to end in 2021. This phase, with a total budget of nearly USD 5.0 million is jointly supported by the European Union and the German government. »

Follow-up activities during 2019 include field visits to all hydrological stations basin-wide, where detailed site assessment and updated technical specifications shall be the prime outputs as well as site civil works.

Also planned is the Regional Inception and Review/Validation workshops after which, NBI will support the Member States to implement the infrastructure and data management systems as well as install, configure and commission the ground stations, as well as develop and conduct a capacity building programme. This is in addition to establishing the Data Management Systems, generating knowledge and information products and therefore operationalising the system within the next two years. The exercise was jointly carried out jointly carried out with the National Teams and members of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC).

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**Mohsen Alarabawy (PhD)**  
**Regional Hydromet Systems Coordinator**  
**Nile-SEC, Entebbe**

# NBI engages Member States on implementation of activities at national level



Participants who took part in the meetings

**D**esk Officers and Communication Officers from the NBI Member States recently met in Kampala, Uganda to review progress in the delivery of NBI programmes at national level and plan for the future.

In his opening remarks, the Deputy Executive Director who is also the Head of the Basin-wide Programme at the NBI Secretariat, Dr Abdulkarim Seid underscored the importance of the National NBI Office with regard to coordinating the successful implementation of NBI activities at national level.

The meeting held from September 24 - 25, 2019 was followed by a one day workshop on September 26, 2019 to familiarise participants with the overarching NBI Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2023 and to jointly forge ways to enhance awareness of NBI's achievements and the benefits of Nile cooperation within the Member States.

Approved by the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) in August 2018, the aim of the Strategy is to support the successful implementation of NBI's 10-year Strategy in a coordinated and consistent manner.

At the end of the two meetings, participants identified national level priority actions for implementation during the financial year 2019/2020.

The two meetings were attended by participants from Burundi, D R Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda; NBI staff and a representative of GIZ.

**Jane K. Baitwa**  
Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Specialist  
Nile-SEC, Entebbe

# NBI to adopt Accrual Basis International Public Sector Accounting Standards

**T**he Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) recently adopted the Integrated Financial Information System (IFMIS) while the accounting policy is being reviewed from Modified Cash Basis to Accrual Basis International Public Sector Accounting Standard (IPSAS). The aim is to improve its financial system to enhance transparency and accountability to the Governance and other stakeholders.

The change is in line with the decision taken by the Nile Council of Ministers during the 25<sup>th</sup> annual meeting held in 2017 in Entebbe – Uganda.

IPSAS represents international best practices for public sector entities and intergovernmental regional and international organizations and its adoption by NBI will improve the quality, comparability and credibility of its financial reporting.

According to the plan, preparation of NBI's financial statements under the IPSAS accrual basis of accounting

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will commence with the financial year 2019/2020. However, two major challenges for the successful implementation of IFMIS and IPSAS include funding and capacity of staff.

The review exercise from Modified Cash Basis to IPSAS is carried out with financial support from World Bank (CIWA).

**William T. Oduk**  
Head of Corporate Services/IPSAS Project Coordinator  
Nile-SEC, Entebbe

# Share your story - 20 years NBI

**O**n February 22, 2019, the NBI celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These are 20 years of weaving the histories of the Nile Basin together, 20 years of working to bring the potentials of the whole region to life, and 20 years of pushing to preserve our regional treasures. To mark this momentous occasion, the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM), NBI's highest political decision making body, declared 2019 as 'The year of the Nile Basin'. As part of the celebrations, we are running an online campaign dubbed: #MyNileStory and you are invited to share your personal most memorable or favourite

NBI, Nile or Nile Basin moment with your fellow Nile Basin citizens. Please send either a photo, in text (150 words maximum), or video (2 minutes maximum) to: [nbianniversary@nilebasin.org](mailto:nbianniversary@nilebasin.org)

May I also request that you attach your passport size photo, which, together with your story, will be published on the website dedicated to the NBI 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary: <http://nbi20.nilebasin.org/>

We look forward to your contributions!

*Nile News* would like to share with you some of the stories so far received

## KAYITESI ODETTE



Former Member of the Nile-COM, Burundi



<<The Nile Basin Initiative is a very important institution, promoting equitable utilisation of the shared River Nile. What I also like is the culture of rotating the key positions of chairperson of the Nile Council of Ministers and that of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee as well as Executive Director of the NBI Secretariat; this too promotes cooperation among Member States. Also the joint investment projects enable interaction among the citizens of the different countries and at all levels. However, the non-ratification of the Cooperation Framework Agreement is affecting the success attained over the last 20 years. Establishment of the River Nile Basin Commission presents a good opportunity to the Nile Basin countries.>>

[#MyNileStory](#)

## PROF. MARK J. MWANDOSYA



Former member of the Nile-COM, Tanzania



<<At the technical level much has been accomplished in the last two decades, thanks to Basin States and to our cooperating partners. Political will is what is required to move cooperation to a higher level. I believe the will is somewhere there and the way can be found. And as the Late Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere succinctly put it: 'It can be done. Play your part.>>

[#MyNileStory](#)



Peat in Kagera landscape.



Access NBI knowledge and best practices in water resource management.  
Share your knowledge and best practices.  
Log on to <http://nileis.nilebasin.org>

### NBI MEMBER STATES



Burundi



DR Congo



Egypt



Ethiopia



Kenya



Rwanda



South Sudan



The Sudan



Tanzania



Uganda

### NBI SHARED VISION OBJECTIVE

To achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilisation of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources.



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Want to know more about NBI?



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