

NELSAP NEWS



NELSAP-CU
NILE BASIN INITIATIVE
INITIATIVE DU BASSIN DU NIL

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Dear Colleagues and Partners,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this edition of our newsletter, which offers a glimpse into the continued progress and collaboration within our programs in the Nile Basin Region.

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to all member states and governments, our development partners, and technical teams for their continued support and collaboration with NELSAP-CU. Your commitment is what enables us to drive forward meaningful, cross-border development initiatives that have real and lasting impact across the Nile Equatorial Lakes region.

As we reflect on recent milestones, I am proud of the dedication and resilience shown by our teams and partners in driving forward initiatives that have positively impacted communities on the ground. From advancing regional integration and sustainable infrastructure to ensuring environmental safety and social inclusion, your efforts continue to bring our shared development goals to life.

This edition of our newsletter highlights just a few of the significant strides we have made together, from strengthening regional power connectivity and advancing shared water resources, to addressing dam safety and improving preparedness for flash floods among others. Each story reflects our shared vision of cooperation, resilience, and sustainable progress.

As we look ahead, let us remain united in our efforts to deliver practical solutions that improve livelihoods, safeguard our environment, and foster inclusive development across the Nile Basin.

Thank you once again for walking this journey with us.

With Gratitude,
Dr. Isaac A. Alukwe, PhD
Regional Coordinator

WHEN POWER BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

South Sudan – Uganda Power Interconnection Project

In a transformative step toward regional energy integration and sustainable development, the South Sudan-Uganda Power Interconnection Project (SUPIP) is lighting the path to progress for two neighboring nations. Backed by the African Development Fund and the European Union through the African Development Bank, the project aims to weave South Sudan into the Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP), making reliable electricity not just a promise, but a reality.

At the heart of SUPIP lies a 400kV double circuit transmission line stretching over 300 kilometers, 149 km from Gumbo in Juba to the Ugandan border, and another 151.5 km connecting to Uganda's Olwiyo substation via a new substation in Bibia. This backbone will be supported by new and upgraded substations, including a major installation at Nesitu in South Sudan, bringing world-class energy infrastructure closer to communities that have long relied on costly, unreliable alternatives.

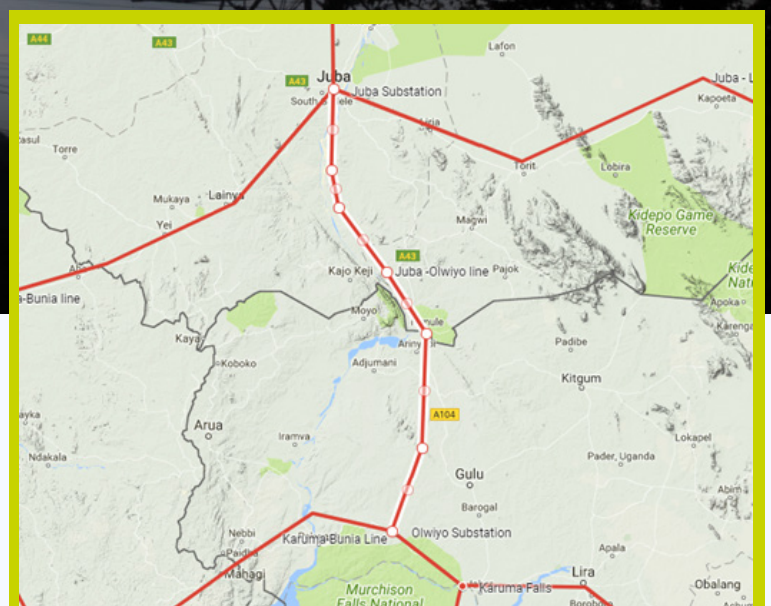
The benefits are already sparking hope. In South Sudan, 100 km of medium-voltage lines and 400 km of low-voltage reticulations in Nimule will enable 1,000 new household connections. For families and schools in Nimule, access to affordable and reliable power means more than just convenience. It is a gateway to better education for their children and safer, more productive homes.



Equally, the project unlocks a new electricity market for Uganda's surplus clean energy, strengthening bilateral ties and economic cooperation. Institutions in both countries will also gain capacity building support, ensuring the sustainability of operations and maintenance long after the last pole is raised.

But the journey isn't without its costs. Beyond the technical investment, SUPIP is making a social one, funding environmental and social safeguards, resettlement and compensation for affected persons, and empowering women and civil society groups along the route.

From policy rooms in Kigali to power lines crossing borders, SUPIP is more than just a project, it's a symbol of regional resilience, partnership, and shared progress. The lights are coming on, and with them, a brighter future.



A NEW ERA FOR SHARED WATERS IN THE NILE BASIN

Water Without Borders: Kenya and Uganda Unite to Transform Lives in Angololo



Under the bright skies of Busia, Kenya, Representatives from the Government of Kenya and Uganda came together not only to sign an agreement but to make a promise. A promise of shared water, shared benefits, and a shared future.

This was the official signing of the Bilateral Agreement for the Angololo Water Resources Development Project (WRDP), a flagship initiative that symbolizes what's possible when nations move from competition to cooperation. Facilitated by the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU)

a subsidiary of Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), the agreement marked a milestone in transboundary water resource management.

« Today is a testament to what cooperation looks like when it's rooted in trust, shared vision, and the needs of our people, » said Eng. Eric Murithi Mugaa, Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Sanitation Kenya « We are turning political goodwill into tangible outcomes that will uplift generations. » He added.

More than just infrastructure, the Angololo Project is about people. With a total investment of USD 137 million including infrastructure, livelihood restoration and supervision among others, the project will touch the lives of over 300,000 people across both countries.



Once implemented, Angololo will store over **31 million cubic meters of water**, irrigate **4,000 hectares of farmland**, and provide **clean drinking water to 270,000 people**. It will also generate **1.3 MW of renewable hydropower**, with potential for an additional **27 MW through floating solar panels** paving the way for greener, more resilient communities.

The project also aims to **restore 447 square kilometers of degraded catchment** areas and empower farmers through improved agricultural productivity and market access.

« This project stands as proof that regional cooperation can deliver real, life-changing results, » said Hon. Beatrice Atim Anywar, Uganda's Minister of State for Environment
« The people of Tororo and Busia will not only get clean water they will get new hope. »

The Angololo WRDP is part of a broader vision that aligns with Kenya's Vision 2030, Uganda's Vision 2040, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



With the Bilateral Agreement now signed, the focus shifts to implementation. This includes structuring the project and achieving financial closure, establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to oversee delivery, negotiating subsidiary agreements such as Power Purchase Agreements and Water Protocols, and finalizing budget commitments from both governments.

« This water project will change how we live, » said Rose Anyango, a smallholder farmer from Busia.
« Our children will grow up with better health, and we'll be able to farm without fear. »

Behind this success is the collective effort of many from regional institutions and national technical teams to legal advisors and community leaders. Special thanks go to the Project Steering Committee, the African Development Bank, NEPAD-IPPF, AUDA-NEPAD, IUCN, and the African Legal Support Facility, whose support helped bring this project to this defining moment.

« This isn't just about water, » said Dr. Isaac Alukwe the Regional coordinator for NELSAP
« It's about dignity, energy, food security, and peace. »

This agreement is more than ink on paper; it's a promise to the people of Angololo and a beacon for the entire Nile Basin. It is a commitment to resilience, to unity, and to building a future where water is not a source of conflict, but of connection.

BEYOND POWER

How Local Area Development Programs are Transforming Lives in Kirehe, Ngoma and Ngara

When the Rusumo Hydropower Project was first announced, many imagined transmission lines, turbines, and electricity. What few expected was the deep, personal transformation it would spark in villages around the project area especially in Kirehe, Ngoma District in Rwanda and Ngara District in Tanzania. From water treatment plants to youth centers, technical schools to modern markets, the Local Area Development Program (LADP) has become a symbol of grassroots progress in the communities surrounding the Rusumo Hydropower Project. In Ngara, Ngoma and Kirehe Districts, more than 40 community projects are bringing real change, one village, one family, one youth at a time.



With 21 projects in Ngara and 19 in Ngoma and Kirehe, the LADP is reshaping the social and economic fabric of these areas. It's a story about more than just electricity, it's about empowerment, health, and opportunity. These are not just numbers. They represent real stories of people whose lives are being changed in meaningful ways.

A New Start for Youth in Ngoma



In a quiet corner of Ngoma District, the YEGO Youth Center hums with new energy. Once a place where many young people faced hopelessness and the lure of drugs and unemployment, today it is a space of learning and community. The YEGO Youth Center in Ngoma now stands as a beacon of hope. The center provides counseling services, a computer lab, and recreational facilities including football and basketball courts. With regular IT training sessions and mentorship programs, the center is equipping young people with skills for the future.

« I used to spend my days wandering the streets, » says Jean-Claude, 22.

« Now, I've completed computer training and help others learn too. This center gave me a future. »

Markets that Empower, Especially Women

Across Ngoma and Ngara, the newly built modern markets have become more than just trading spaces, they're platforms for empowerment. With better infrastructure and access to customers, small-scale traders, especially women, are seeing their businesses grow.

« I used to sell vegetables by the roadside, » says Maria Ndikumana, a trader in Ngoma.

« Now I have a proper stall. I earn more and feel proud of my work. »



Health Close to Home



Kazo Health Center in Ngoma District stands as a lifeline for mothers and children. Before, many expectant mothers had to travel long distances for care. Today, they can access maternal services, immunizations, and even minor surgeries right in their community.

« My last baby was born here, » says Esperance Uwizeye, a mother of three.

« It was safe, clean, and close to home. This center is saving lives. »



A Shared Journey of Growth

The Rusumo project is a powerful example of what regional cooperation can achieve—not just in powering homes, but in powering human potential. From classrooms to clinics, sports fields to market stalls, the LADP is building more than infrastructure. It's building pride, dignity, and a better tomorrow.

« This is what real development looks like, » says John Mwesigwa, a teacher in Ngara.

« You don't just see it you feel it in the lives of the people. »

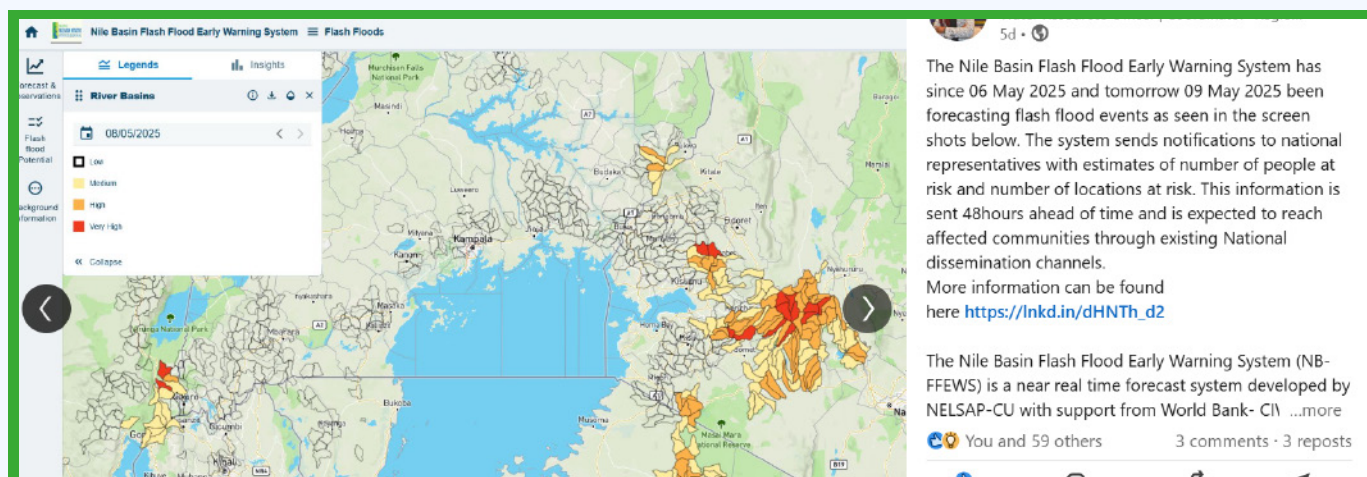




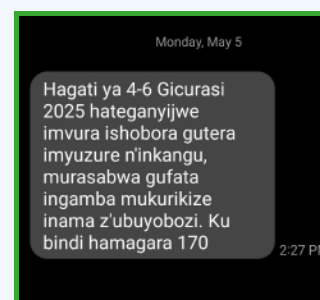
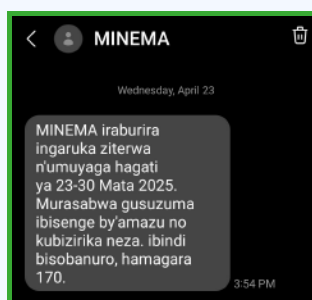
RWANDA EMBRACES USE OF FLASH FLOOD EARLY WARNING INFORMATION

As climate-induced weather extremes continue to rise across the Nile Basin, a groundbreaking initiative is helping vulnerable communities stay one step ahead of disaster: the **Flash Flood Early Warning System (FFEWS)**. The Nile Basin Flash Flood Early Warning System (NB-FFEWS) is a near real time forecast system developed by NELSAP-CU with support from World Bank- CIWA. The purpose of the system is to contribute towards enhancing the preparedness and resilience of communities in the Nile Basin countries to flash flood disasters. This system uses a combination of scientific modeling and local communication to provide timely alerts that save lives and protect livelihoods.

At the heart of this system lies a region-wide flash flood risk assessment carried out across all nine Nile Basin countries. Using advanced tools like the **Flash Flood Potential Index (FFPI)** and **Dynamic FFPI**, the project identified dozens of flood hotspots areas where heavy rainfall can lead to dangerous and sudden flooding within hours. Rwanda, a hilly and densely populated country prone to flash floods, stood out not only for its risk level but also for its rapid integration of the early warning system into national disaster response..



In Rwanda's Northern and Western provinces, frequently affected by flash floods and landslides communities are now receiving **flash flood alerts via SMS**, thanks to coordination between the Rwanda Meteorology Agency, local government units, and the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA). These alerts give residents precious time to evacuate or take protective action.



Summary of Flash Flood Forecast and Early Warning for Nile Basin Countries

Severity	Administrative unit	Number of impacted locations			Population at risk in the affected areas		
		Medium	High	Very High	Medium	High	Very High
	Burundi						
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	15	7		1,425,905	228,344	
	Ethiopia	23	3		1,157,648	259,571	
	Kenya	37	33	17	1,212,326	1,209,587	1,353,997
	Rwanda	1	2		262,459	115,116	
	South Sudan						
	Sudan						
	Tanzania	3	2		95,421	16,606	
	Uganda	5	10	5	124,234	439,890	451,614

« Before, floods would catch us off guard, »

says Jean-Claude Habimana, a resident of Nyabihu District.

« Now, when we get the warning on our phones, we know what to do and where to go. »

The success of Rwanda's implementation stems from its **people-centered approach**. Alongside modeling tools, the country conducted extensive stakeholder consultations, built local capacity, and tailored the communication of warnings to different groups; farmers, school leaders, transport operators, and community health workers.

« Rwanda's example shows that technology must go hand in hand with community engagement, » said a NELSAP official.

« A model is only useful if the people it aims to protect can respond in time. »

Across the Basin, over 50 potential flash flood hotspots have been mapped in countries including Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. The next phase involves replicating Rwanda's success by supporting other nations to install localized early warning systems, develop hydrological and meteorological forecasting models, and build mobile-friendly alert dissemination platforms.

The FFEWS project represents more than a technological upgrade; it is a shift in how the region prepares for climate-related emergencies. With more storms, more unpredictability, and more lives at stake, early warning is no longer optional, it is essential.

As regional collaboration continues, Rwanda's proactive response is serving as both a model and a motivation.

« When we receive an alert and act early, we protect our children, our crops, and our future, » said Claudine Uwimana, a teacher in Musanze.

THE RUSUMO LEGACY

A Power Project Fulfilled; A Region Transformed

As Rusumo Hydro Power Project marks completion, the riparian countries (Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania) are at the brink of energy transformation. The hydropower plant, whose construction is complete, generates 27 megawatts for each participating nation providing electricity for over a million households across the three countries.

« The project is complete and now under management of Rusumo Power Company Limited with just a few snags being rectified which do not hinder the operation of the plant » says Eng. Jacob Manyoun Deng the Programme Officer at NELSAP-CU.

Jointly implemented by the Governments of Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania through the NELSAP -CU, and funded by World Bank and the African Development Bank, the Rusumo project is more than just a power plant but rather a testament of cross border solidarity and cooperation. The 80 MW facility will deliver reliable, clean electricity to the three national grids, hence powering lives and economies in one of Africa's most interconnected subregions.

« This is not just a power project; it is a demonstration of what countries can achieve when they pool resources, align goals, and prioritize their people, » says Dr. Isaac Alukwe, NELSAP-CU Regional Coordinator.



Navigating Challenges with Resilience

The completion status is a testament to years of meticulous coordination, adaptive project management, and political will among the riparian countries. The project weathered global supply chain disruptions, complex terrain, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, engineering teams, local contractors, and government stakeholders stayed the course to date.



« The last mile is always the toughest, but the dedication from everyone involved from site engineers to regional ministers has been unwavering, » adds Dr. Alukwe.

Lighting Up communities and unlocking opportunities

Beyond the infrastructure, the real story lies in the changed lives of rural households in the partner countries. For rural households that relied on kerosene lamps and charcoal, the promise of affordable electricity means safer homes, better healthcare and endless opportunities. Entrepreneurs across the region anticipate lower operating costs while health centers and schools operate more efficiently.

Through Local Area Development Projects (LADP), the project has been able to upgrade roads, schools, health facilities, and access to clean water in districts surrounding the plant, such as Ngara in Tanzania, Kirehe in Rwanda, and communes in Burundi.

In an era when the world is shifting towards cleaner energy, Rusumo contributes to climate action goals and strengthens the region's resilience to fossil fuel price shocks. Rusumo stands as a green energy milestone. Utilizing the natural flow of the Kagera River, the project is a run-off-river hydropower scheme, meaning minimal environmental disruption and sustainable power generation. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal, which calls for access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

With commissioning tests underway and final inspections taking place, the energy ministers of the three partner countries are expected to meet soon for the official handover. Power Purchase Agreements have already been signed, transmission infrastructure is in place, and national utilities are preparing for integration into their grids.

The commissioning of Rusumo isn't just a ceremonial milestone, it's a signal to the rest of the continent that regional integration through infrastructure is not only possible, but powerful.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Lessons from Rwanda

The latest mission by NELSAP-CU and two Regional Water Quality (WQ) Consultants demonstrates Rwanda's continued strong commitment to environmental management. The mission examined realistic and forward-looking approaches to wetland conservation, solid waste management, and electronic waste recycling. During a week-long series of stakeholder consultations and field visits in cooperation with national agencies. These are all critical areas of focus in the joint endeavor to address urbanization and climate change throughout the Nile Basin.



A Country Putting Policy into Practice



One of the first stops was the Rwanda Water Board (RWB), where NELSAP and the consultants held in-depth discussions on water quality regulation, pollution control, and the evolving role of data in managing natural resources. A visit to RWB's water quality laboratory highlighted the country's commitment to monitoring and managing water resources. The facility plays a crucial role in collecting and analyzing water quality data, which informs national policies and strategies aimed at safeguarding public health and the environment.

According to the **2021 UNESCO World Water Development Report**, only 59% of global wastewater is safely treated, highlighting a significant gap in water quality management worldwide. Rwanda's emphasis on institutional capacity-building in water testing and pollution management is not only ambitious it positions the country ahead of many of its peers in Sub-Saharan Africa.

From Waste to Wealth: Circular Solutions in Action

Field visits to landfill sites and the NDUBA Biowaste Processing Facility in Kigali provided a candid look at Rwanda's waste management challenges and achievements. While the country faces the same pressures as other rapidly growing urban centers limited land space, growing consumption, and informal waste collection Rwanda's push to modernize waste systems and embed circular economy principles is noteworthy.



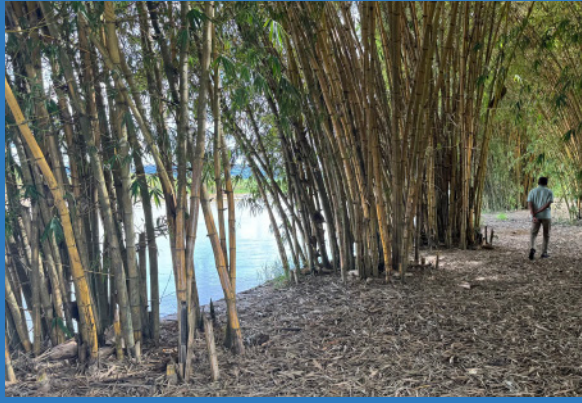
« Rwanda is very remarkable. The way they handle waste is one of the factors contributing to its cleanliness. » noted Eng. Sami the Regional Water Quality Resource Engineer at NELSAP-CU
« From Trash to Treasure. »

The Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) reports that Kigali alone generates more than 500 tons of waste per day, and efforts are underway to improve separation, composting, and bioenergy production at facilities like NDUBA. The consultants noted that Rwanda's model could serve as a learning hub for neighboring countries seeking to balance urban growth with environmental integrity.

In Bugesera District, the team toured Enviroserve Rwanda Green Park, the only E-Waste recycling facility in East Africa. Backed by a public-private partnership, the center dismantles and recycles old electronics using global best practices, offering a real-world example of how circular economy strategies can drive both economic opportunity and environmental responsibility. According to the Global E-Waste Monitor 2020, only 17.4% of global e-waste is formally collected and recycled. Rwanda's approach is thus pioneering for the region.



Wetlands: Where Ecology Meets Economy



The mission also visited the Nyandungu Eco-Park, a 121-hectare restored wetland in Kigali transformed from a degraded, flood-prone site into a thriving biodiversity sanctuary and community recreation space. The park is one of Rwanda's success stories in merging conservation and sustainable tourism. Since its opening, Nyandungu has welcomed over 80,000 visitors and inspired similar wetland rehabilitation initiatives across the country.



With wetlands disappearing three times faster than forests globally, Rwanda's protection of critical ecosystems is both timely and strategic. Beyond Nyandungu, the team visited other high-value wetlands that are part of Rwanda's broader effort to restore over 2 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 as part of its AFR100 commitment.

« The mission has been both inspiring and instructive. Rwanda's approach to environmental governance reflects a genuine commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience » said Dr. Ahmed, one of the consultants during the site visits.

Looking Ahead: Regional Lessons from Rwanda

As part of the broader Water Quality Water Quality Multicriteria Analysis (WQ MCA), the insights from Rwanda are expected to inform policies and practices across other Nile Basin countries. From the institutionalization of data-driven decision-making to the roll-out of scalable recycling infrastructure, the mission highlighted replicable models of innovation, policy coherence, and community engagement.

In a region where climate impacts are intensifying, and where rapid population growth strains existing infrastructure, Rwanda's model offers a compelling path forward. It is not simply a case study it is a call to action for governments and partners across Africa to invest in solutions that are both locally grounded and globally relevant.

PEATLANDS, PEOPLE, AND CLIMATE

A Regional Mission for a Climate Resilient Kagera



In the quiet rhythm of East Africa's wetlands, something remarkable is stirring a regional mission that blends science, policy, and community voices to unlock the power of peatlands in the fight against climate change.

From April 27 to May 8, 2025, national consultation meetings were held across Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda as part of the Kagera Wetlands Mission. Led by NELSAP-CU and supported by GIZ under the DIAPOL-CE Project "Policy Dialogue on Low Emission and Resilient Economic Development" these consultations marked a critical step toward designing a project proposal for the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The heart of the mission was, understanding how peatlands those often-overlooked wetland ecosystems can sequester carbon, support livelihoods through sustainable agriculture like paludiculture, and build climate resilience for some of the region's most vulnerable communities.

« Peatlands are not just wet soils they're carbon vaults, biodiversity reservoirs, and lifelines for many, » said Eng. Kayiranga Damascene the NELSAP Project Officer/Kagera RBM.

The mission follows the regional inception workshop held in Rwanda in July 2023, where experts from all four countries first came together to align on goals and tools. Since then, consultants and country teams have been working in the field, gathering scientific data and local perspectives in two key wetland landscapes: the Lower Kagera (Minziro-Sango Bay) and Upper Kagera (Akanyaru, Lakes Rweru and Cyohoha).



The consultation meetings brought together high-level stakeholders, including GCF National Focal Points, policymakers, technical experts, and members of the Regional Expert Working Group. Their task was to review and refine the proposed theory of change, ensure the initiative aligns with each country's climate priorities, and guide the process for official endorsements and NBI accreditation with GCF.

« We are not just reviewing a document. We are shaping a project that must speak to our national climate goals and bring benefits to our people » said Dr. RENATUS JAMES SHINHU NELTAC Tanzania.



Each country provided practical guidance on how to tailor the project to their existing governance frameworks and environmental strategies, laying the groundwork for a concept note to be submitted to the GCF. The mission also clarified steps for securing the letters of nomination and endorsement needed to support the project proposal submission.

Looking ahead, NELSAP-CU and GIZ will support the ongoing development of the concept note and begin preparations for the second regional workshop, scheduled for mid-June 2025. That workshop will bring all countries back together to review the full proposal and agree on the path forward.

In the end, the Kagera mission isn't just about policy or funding, it's about unlocking a landscape's potential and giving communities the tools to thrive in a changing climate. It's a powerful reminder that some of the best solutions lie in the most natural places if we listen, collaborate, and act.

TELLING THE NILE STORY BETTER

Challenging Journalists to Harness New Tools for Impact



NELSAP-CU Strengthens Media Capacity for Transboundary Cooperation

With a spirit of innovation and collaboration, the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU) has kicked off the 10th Nile Journalists Media Training, bringing together leading science and environmental journalists from across the Nile Basin.

Held under the theme "Artificial Intelligence, Mapping, and New Journalism Tools: Improving Accuracy and Fact-Checking," the training blends classroom sessions in Bugesera with hands-on field visits to project sites in Rusumo, Tanzania.



Opening the training, Dr. Isaac Alukwe, NELSAP-CU Regional Coordinator, urged journalists to go beyond learning to turn new knowledge into powerful stories that highlight the real impact of NELSAP and Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) projects on local communities, particularly through Local Area Development Projects.

« Journalists need new tools to better analyze data, tell impactful stories, and promote factual narratives around Nile cooperation, » Alukwe emphasized.

Over the course of the program, participants will dive deep into the latest digital tools, honing their skills to tell compelling, data-driven stories that foster greater public understanding of transboundary water cooperation.



This important initiative is made possible with the support of the World Bank through the NCCR Project and the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI). NELSP-CU remains committed to building a strong, well-informed media network to champion sustainable development across the Nile Basin.



In Loving Memory

A decorative horizontal line with ornate scrollwork at both ends, positioned below the 'In Loving Memory' text.

Jean Bosco Mukurarinda

Bosco departed from us on 8th April 2025, He was one of the longest-serving and most respected members of the NELSAP-CU team, having dedicated many years as **Finance Professional** with unwavering commitment and professionalism.

As one of NELSAP's oldest staff members, Bosco was not only a steward of sound financial management but also a pillar of wisdom, integrity, and humility. He played a vital role in shaping the institution's financial systems and was admired for his calm leadership, mentorship, and quiet strength. Even after his recent retirement, Bosco's presence continued to be felt across the organization. He faced life's final challenges with grace, courage, and unwavering faith. Till we meet again.

PICTORIAL

9 th Implementation Support Mission (ISM) of the Nile Cooperation for Climate Resilience (NCCR) Project in Addis Ababa



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