The Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management Programme: What were the highlights for the FY2021/22?

Overview

The Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management (NRECCLWM) Programme focuses on reversing environment and natural resource degradation, ensuring availability of adequate water resources for national development, containing the effects of climate change and fostering effective land management. The programme has three sub-programmes namely: (i) Water Resources Management (WRM), (ii) Environment and Natural Resources Management (ENR), and (iii) Land Management (LM).

The lead agency for this programme is the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), while the other partner Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA), National Forestry Authority (NFA), Local Governments (LGs), Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and Uganda Land Commission (ULC).

Methodology

Primary and secondary data collection was done using random and purposive sampling methods. The exercise covered all three sub-programmes. The overall performance is an average of individual sub-programme scores assessed.

Criterion used to assess performance

Score	Performance Rating	Comment
90% and above		Very Good
70%-89%		Good
50%- 69%		Fair
49% and below		Poor

Key Issues

- ✓ Constant encroachment on forestland and wetlands with impunity.
- ✓ Escalating land conflicts and unlawful evictions.
- ✓ Inadequate human resource especially at the enforcement level such as the environmental police.
- ✓ Negative climate change effects on survival rate of tree seedlings.

Introduction

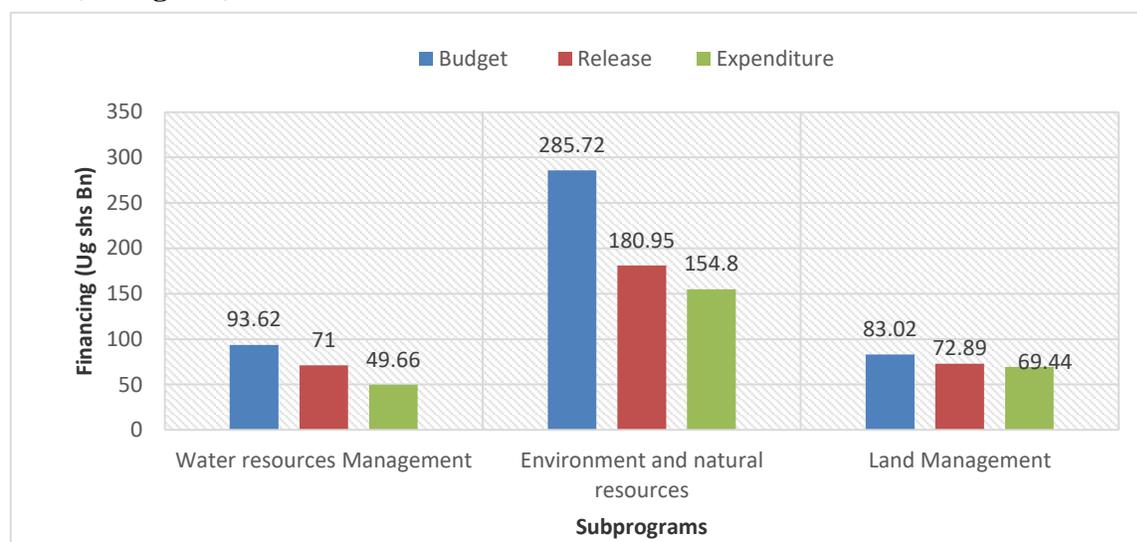In the FY 2021/22, NRECCLWM Programme set out to achieve several outputs and immediate outcomes. A total of 26 (66.7%) of 39 programme interventions and 11 of 17 indicators were assessed to measure the level of achievement of the outcomes. Six indicators were not assessed due to the unavailability of information. The four indicators assessed under WRM achieved their target, while the seven indicator targets under ENR and LM Sub-programmes were not achieved. The performance of the three sub-programmes was fair under LM, and good for both WRM and ENR.

Annual Programme Performance FY 2021/22

Financial performance: Overall financial performance was good. The approved budget was Ug shs 462.36 billion (bn) of which Ug shs 324.8bn (70.25%) was released and Ug shs 273.90bn (84.31%) spent by the end of the FY. Detailed financial performance is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Annual Financial Performance of the NRECCLWM programme as at 30th June, 2022 (Bn Ug Shs)

Source: Approved Budget Estimates, IFMS, Vote Work Plans, and Q4 Performance Reports

The Environment and Natural Resources Sub-programme had the biggest share of the budget at 61.8%. On the other hand, the Water Resources Management Sub-programme had the least absorption at 69.99%. **The overall Programme performance was** good at 71.4% (Table 1).

Table 1: Performance of the NRECCLWM Programme by 30th June 2022

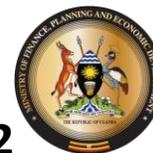| Sub-programme	Performance (%)	Remarks
Water Resources Management	73.5	Good
Environment and Natural Resources Management	60.9	Fair
Land Management	72.4	Good
Overall Programme Performance	**71.4**	**Good Performance**

Source: Authors' Compilation

Performance of outcome indicators

The overall programme performance in terms of intermediate outcome achievement ranged from poor to good. Some of the key outcome indicators are given in table 2.

Table 2: Programme Outcome Indicator Performance by end of FY 2021/22

Outcome Indicators	Target	Achieved
Compliance to abstraction permit conditions (%) - surface water	79.5	80.2

Compliance with wastewater discharge permit conditions (%)	65	66
Land Area covered by forests (%)	13	12.5
Land Area covered by wetlands (%)	9.2	8.9
Average Annual change in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions (MtCO2e).	1.23	1.09
Change in the Accuracy of Meteorological Information(%)	87	70
Titled land as a percentage of total land owned	23	22.4

Source: Quarter 4 Reports FY 2021/22

Water Resources Management Sub-programme

The WRM Sub-programmes performance was good at 73.5% as it attained most of the planned outputs. Its two interventions presented good performance in coordination and regulation having achieved the targeted outcomes though enforcement was poor. To ensure the availability of adequate and reliable quality freshwater resources for all uses, a total of 363 (22.6%) permits (209 new and 154 renewals) were issued against the 1,600 target. This is to control pollution and over-exploitation of water resources.

Only six out of the planned 15 smart water monitoring stations were procured and installed to pilot the smart water management system. Under catchment management, the preparation of four planned catchment management plans (CMPs) and six micro-CMPs averaged 10% and 85% respectively. Four catchment management committees were formed and undergoing training.

A total of 553.3km of degraded sections of the wetlands and 108.1km of degraded river banks were demarcated, while 7,898ha of critical wetlands were restored. Delayed provision of the revolving fund for the Water and Environment Cooperatives, shortage of manpower to monitor and enforce compliance of permit holders to permit conditions and climate change affected the achievement of the set targets.
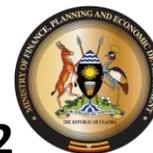
Environment and Natural Resources Sub-programme

The sub-programme performance was rated good at 72.4%. Eleven interventions were monitored (3 posted poor performance, two had a fair performance and six had good performance).

Nine out of 10 Forest Management Plans were prepared. A total of 504.38km of central forest reserve boundaries were re-surveyed and marked with pillars in all 16 management areas across the country. A total of 11,329ha of the targeted 20,560ha degraded Central Forest Reserves were restored, and 31,188,636 seedlings raised. Monitoring and supervision to ascertain the survival rate under the community tree planting project were found lacking. Under wetland restoration, 12,875.5ha out of the planned 15,000ha of degraded wetland were reclaimed/restored and protected across the country.

Reliability and accuracy of meteorological information declined from 75% the previous FY to 70% out of the targeted 87%. Limited work was done in the automation of weather and climate network because of inadequate financing. The two radars installed in Lira and Rwampara were functional increasing weather forecast accuracy levels. The Greenhouse Gas Act lacked regulations to operationalise it, while climate change was not prioritised in planning/budgeting at different levels.

The sub-programme continues to encounter challenges of encroachment and illegal titles on

forest land and wetlands, negative political propaganda, unresolved court cases and inadequate manpower among others.

Land Management Sub-programme
Overall sub-programme performance was fair at 68.2%. Ten interventions were assessed with three posting good performance, another three with poor performance and four fair. The review of land management administration policies and laws, and capitalization of the land fund was affected by limited funds.

There was a delay in the integration of the Land Information System with other systems in the MDAs, conclusion of several guidelines and policies for land valuation and resettlement. The survey of 62km for the Kenya-Uganda Border was done. A total of 38,976 of the targeted 90,000 land titles were offered, while 494 were cancelled. A total of 6,314 land titles were processed and issued to bonafide occupants. A data processing centre was established at Entebbe, whereas the issuance of land titles to women in the country registered slow progress due to delayed approval of the Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification component.

The sub-programme performance was affected by administrative challenges arising from interdiction of some technical staff at ULC, delayed procurement and non-prioritization of some key subprogram outputs in planning.

Key implementation challenges
- Escalated encroachment on wetlands, forestlands and riverbanks for livelihood activities, worsened by the issuance of land titles on protected land.
- Inadequate personnel (Environmental Police Force and ENR officers) and tools (facilitation, transport and standard regulation) to enforce laws.

- Inadequate planning where key outputs were not prioritized e.g. enforcement activities.

Conclusion
The FY2021/22 NRECCLWM Programme performance was good. New water user permits were issued and old ones renewed. Compliance to permit conditions was good for abstraction and fair for wastewater discharge. Key water management structures were established in the four priority catchments and restoration and protection of forests, wetlands and riverbanks was undertaken. However, the accuracy of meteorological information decreased (compared to last FY), and there was a minimal reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Uncoordinated planning, encroachment on wetlands and forest lands and manpower shortages continue to affect programme performance.

Recommendations
- The MWE should closely follow up on the creation of the Environmental Court to fasten environmental cases.
- The MLHUD should fast-track the cancellation of illegal titles and prioritise land conflict resolutions for bonafide occupants.
- The MWE should ensure that the NRECCLWM Programme Working Group is operationalized.

References
- BMAU NRECCLWM Programme Annual Monitoring Report FY 2021/22
- Ministerial Policy Statements for MWE, OPM and MLHUD FY 2021/22
- Sector Progress Reports FY2921/22