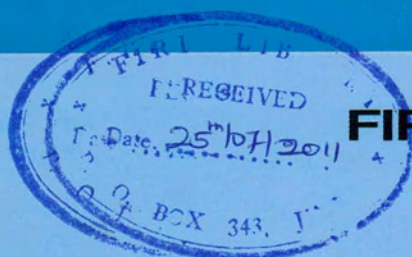
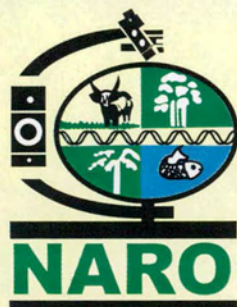


Institutional Arrangements for Management of Water Hyacinth



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Introduction

Institutional arrangements for the control and management of water hyacinth took at least three years to take effect probably because the original Government objective was to formulate an eradication-focussed strategy. Deliberate efforts to control water hyacinth started in 1992 (three to four years from the earliest reports of the weed's presence in lakes Victoria and Kyoga respectively). Government delegated the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to coordinate other relevant institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the control efforts. Consequently, there have evolved over an 11-year period, various levels of administration and coordination, control, monitoring and research on water hyacinth. Control has mostly depended on biological, manual and mechanical methods even though several natural factors (e.g. ecological succession and hydrological changes) have contributed to the reduction in weed biomass especially in Lake Kyoga. The chemical control option had been proposed but was rejected on the basis of results from rapid research assessments and environmental concerns. Monitoring and research have been used as input information for control and awareness strategies regarding impacts of the weed on aquatic resources (fisheries, water quality). The net result of the control efforts has been a reduction of water hyacinth biomass from a peak of 4000 ha to less than 20% by 1998. This chapter reviews the evolution and status of the institutional arrangements that were put in place to manage water hyacinth and whether they are still relevant, available, active and effective.

4.2. Institutional arrangements

One of the first steps undertaken by MAAIF to direct action towards water hyacinth control was the creation of a National Technical Committee on Water Hyacinth (NTCWH) in 1992. The committee composed of high-level

representatives of Government institutions and was chaired by the Director General, NARO. It elaborated various levels of responsibility which resulted into creation of other organs. These are categorised as:

- a) Administration, co-ordination and policy level;
- b) Technical evaluation;
- c) Control Co-ordination;
- d) Community participation; and
- e) Regional mechanisms;

a) Administration, co-ordination and policy level

At the Administration, Co-ordination and Policy level, there was a Steering Committee under the Prime Minister's Office. This was the top most administrative and political organ in charge of water hyacinth control in Uganda. An Agricultural Policy Committee's sub-committee on water hyacinth alternately co-chaired by the Permanent Secretaries (MAAIF and MWLE) was also established to coordinate and streamline activities of lower organs and to link up with the Steering Committee. These two committees were active at the height of the water hyacinth problem but relaxed when hyacinth was brought under control.

b) Technical Coordination

The National Technical Committee on Water Hyacinth (NTCWH) chaired by the Director General, NARO, comprises of personnel from relevant Government Departments and research institutions. The Fisheries Resources Research Institute (FIRRI), Jinja, Namulonge Agricultural and the Animal Research Institute (NAARI), Fisheries Resources Department (FRD) have been in charge of research and monitoring and remain active in these aspects. The technical institutions continued to be active after the collapse of the weed and have sustained research and control efforts to date.

c) Co-ordination of the Control Process

The Water Hyacinth Unit (WHU) was formed in MAAIF and mandated to undertake and co-ordinate water hyacinth control activities. The unit has acquired capacity (machinery, trucks, hand tools, booms and human resources) to deal with infestations especially at economically critical locations (e.g. the hydropower station at Jinja and the Wagon ferry terminal at Port Bell). The WHU is also responsible for providing communities with hand tools at landing sites. The unit has been active and has maintained the facilities acquired for its functions. The LVEMP is to procure an Aerial Digital Photographic System (ADPS) for the WHU to be used in mapping and monitoring water hyacinth hot spots so that timely control is targeted.

d) Community participation

Water Hyacinth Management Committees (WHMC) were formed to co-ordinate and supervise community participation in water hyacinth control. These were later integrated into Beach Management Units (BMU) to take care of all beach management activities including water hyacinth control. Some of these committees are active but others have relaxed and need sensitisation.

e) Monitoring and Research

Monitoring and research undertaken by FIRRI provided guidance to water hyacinth control by generating information on weed distribution, magnitude, and ecological impacts; and on the impacts of control measures. Research on biological control weevils and their multiplication is carried out by NAARI. National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC), and Directorate of Water Development have generated some information relevant to water hyacinth control. Both FIRRI and NAARI continue to undertake research on the ecological and biological control aspects of water hyacinth, respectively.

4.3. Regional Mechanisms

The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP), which addresses wider environmental issues on Lake Victoria and is funded by the World Bank/GEF, has a water hyacinth component in its activities. Regional coordination workshops are held at least once a year, and information on water hyacinth infestations on Lake Victoria is routinely shared. The LVEMP has also facilitated lake-wide aerial surveys.

The East African Community has developed a "Regional Strategy for the control of water hyacinth and other invasive weeds in East Africa," and has formed a Task Force to oversee an EIA on water hyacinth in Lake Victoria. The EAC is also working on mechanisms to involve Rwanda in water hyacinth control on Lake Victoria.