

New portal to improve utility of freshwater biodiversity in Uganda

The impact of water biodiversity on environment and human life conditions is a key issue in Uganda's fisheries subsector. In this regard, NARO's National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NaFIRRI) has carried out enormous scientific investigation and socioeconomic studies on the country's freshwater bodies, generating a number of reports about the state of freshwater biodiversity.

Among the findings is that uncoordinated information among stakeholders has led to the continued loss of biodiversity and reduces the future productive potential of water bodies, even as global demand for fish and related species continues to grow. To counter the information gap, NaFIRRI has set up with the Freshwater Biodiversity Portal via <https://freshwaterbiodiversity.go.ug> to act as a one-stop center for all freshwater biodiversity data in Uganda. This was announced on December 4 at Imperial Royale Hotel where NaFIRRI partnered with Nugsoft Technologies for the initiative.

Given that effective conservation of biodiversity depends on the existence of reliable data being available on the status and distribution of species, the portal aims to expand the accessibility and utility of freshwater biodiversity information in Uganda. The portal will also enable developers, journalists, researchers, NGOs, citizens as well as policy makers to easily find data and use it to make policies and decisions. The portal, allows addition of new records and datasets by users, hence stimulating data sharing in future.

NaFIRRI has so far collected data from different research efforts throughout Uganda's freshwater ecosystems on fish, invertebrates, and algae. For instance, the research shows that there are over 3,000 fish species in the country. So, now that the data has been posted to the portal, government can use it to help develop, monitor and achieve Uganda's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

By increasing awareness, access to freshwater biodiversity data, and identifying areas for conservation priorities, government will be poised to make data-driven decisions about Uganda's freshwater biodiversity. Furthermore, this project will build on the initiative to map the key biodiversity areas in Uganda for freshwater biodiversity to prioritize areas for conservation.