

Fish Transportation in Uganda

The fishing industry plays a crucial role in the local and national economy of Uganda, providing employment and contributing significantly to the country's export revenue earning.

- 1. On the lake:** Using boats, Fishermen, go out to lake Victoria in the morning or late in the evening to catch fish. They employ various fishing methods, including gill netting, long lining, and, in some cases, traditional basket traps. The primary fish species include Nile perch, tilapia, and small pelagic fish. The boats have iceboxes and insulated containers that are used to maintain low temperatures of any fish caught which they then bring back to the landing site.



- 2. At the landing sites:** Fish are inspected, sorted, graded, and weighed following quality control measures to ensure that only fish meeting the required standards proceeds to the next stage. This is either for local consumption or export

- 3. Transportation to Processing Factories:** After initial sorting and grading, the fish are transported to processing factories using refrigerated trucks to maintain the cold chain and prevent spoilage. These trucks are equipped with ice or refrigeration units to keep the fish at optimal temperatures during transit. Some of the factories are located in distances that go over 50 kilometers using a road network that has poor roads and at times traffic congestion.



- 4. Processing at Factories:** Upon arrival at the processing factories, the fish undergo a series of processing steps including cleaning, filleting, and packaging. Fish products are vacuum-sealed and stored in cold storage units to await further transportation. The processing factories must comply with stringent international standards, to ensure the fish products are safe for consumption in export markets.
- 5. Dispatch for Export:** Once processed and packaged, the fish products are transported to Entebbe Airport for export using refrigerated trucks to maintain the cold chain. At Entebbe Airport, the fish undergoes final quality checks before being loaded onto cargo planes. The airport is equipped with cold storage facilities to temporarily hold the fish before departure. Major export destinations for Uganda's fish include the European Union, the United States, and regional markets within Africa.

6. Some of the challenges include:
- a) Spoilage and Quality Degradation: Maintaining the freshness of fish immediately after it is caught
 - b) Limited Cold Storage: Inadequate or insufficient cold storage facilities on boats and at landing sites can lead to significant post-harvest losses.
 - c) Overfishing: Overexploitation of fish stocks can lead to reduced catches, impacting the supply chain.
 - d) Quality Control: Ensuring all fish meet quality standards requires rigorous inspection, which can be hampered by inadequate infrastructure and skilled personnel.
 - e) Transportation Delays: Delays in transporting fish from landing sites to processing factories can compromise quality.
 - f) Security: Maintaining security of the fish during transportation from the landing site to the factories to ensure that the fish are not tampered with.
 - g) Theft/Fraud: Ensuring that fishermen return to the landing sites to handover fish to their business owners. At few occasions, these fishermen defraud their employer by selling fisher to other traders before coming back to the landing site.