



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

"A prosperous Science and Technology Led Ugandan Society."

STATUS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CE) IN RESEARCH IN UGANDA — REGULATORY PERSPECTIVE

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Presentation Outline

- Introduction
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- Why conduct Community Engagement
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Introduction

Globally, community engagement has become a central pillar of ethical and responsible research. It emphasizes mutual respect, transparency, and active participation of communities throughout the research process.

Effective Community Engagement ensures that studies address local priorities while meeting international ethical standards, enhancing trust, cultural sensitivity, and sustainability.

Regulators and institutions worldwide increasingly promote participatory frameworks that integrate community voices into policy and practice, thereby strengthening accountability and social value in research (Tindana et al., 2007; Emanuel et al., 2008; WHO, 2021).

Uganda's Perspective on Community Engagement (CE)



- In Uganda, where research increasingly involves complex technologies, from genomics to traditional medicine and One Health studies, meaningful community engagement is vital to uphold respect, equity and cultural sensitivity.
- Community engagement is an ethical and scientific imperative in Uganda's research regulatory ecosystem.
- It ensures that research is responsive to community priorities, promotes mutual trust and enhances the social value of scientific inquiry.

Uganda's Perspective on Community Engagement

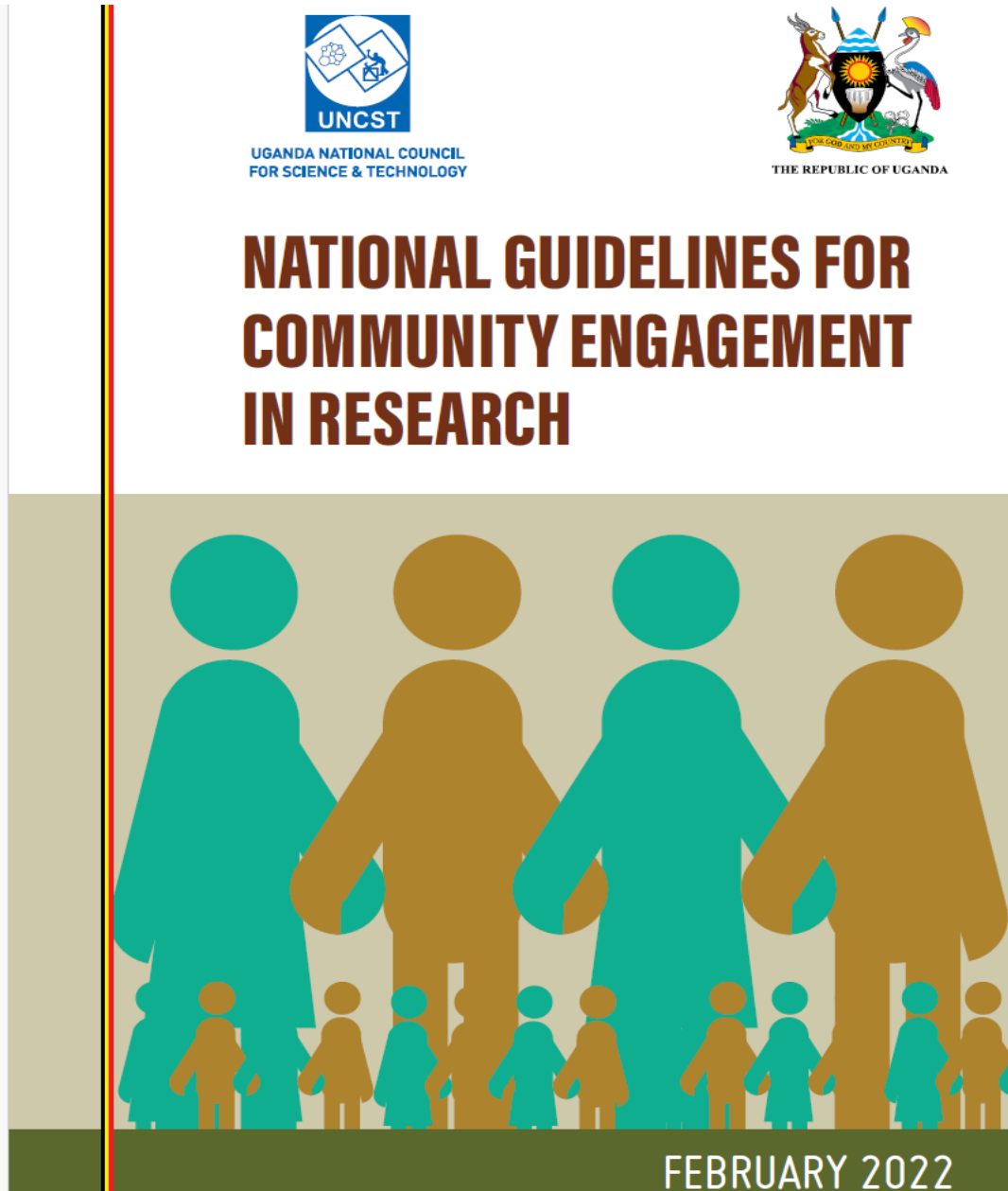
UNCST Requirement:

- Researchers shall make reasonable effort to involve community stakeholders in the research process, where appropriate, right from the inception of research to post research period.
- Protocols should include CE sections which indicates mapped stakeholder, feedback loops and dissemination plans. The CE plans are to be reviewed by RECs and UNCST, monitored and evaluated by investigators.

Community Advisory Boards (CABs):

- A Community Advisory Board (CAB) also known as Community Advisory Group (CAG) is a group of individuals with diverse backgrounds, selected from the community to advise and facilitate dialogue between the community and the research team.
- The formation of a CAB shall be the responsibility of the research institution and Principal Investigator to voice concerns and priorities that otherwise might not be included into the PI's agenda and advise about suitable research processes that are respectful of, and acceptable to the community.

Guidance Documents on Community Engagement

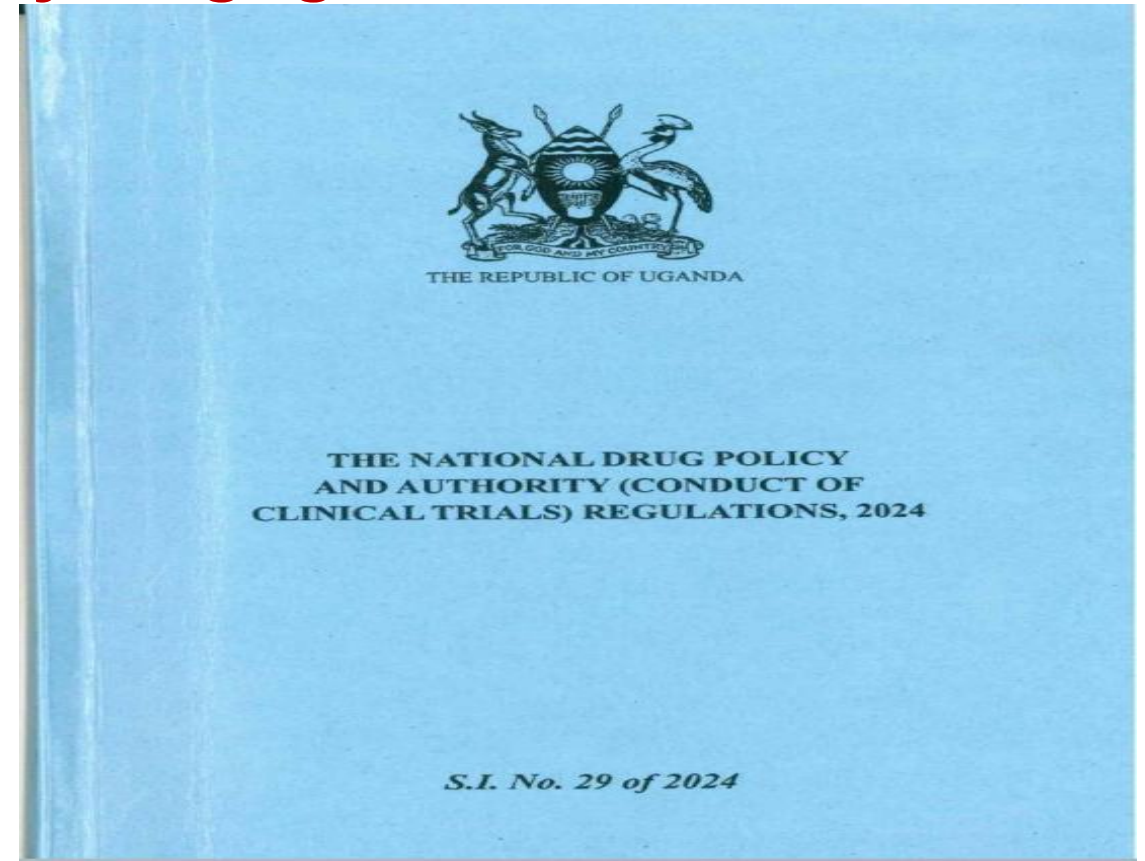


- These provide a structured framework for researchers to collaborate meaningfully with communities by promoting respect, transparency and mutual benefit.
- They emphasize early engagement, cultural sensitivity, and shared decision-making throughout the research process.
- These guidelines emphasize participation through formative consultations, collaboration with existing community structures.
- The establishment of Community Advisory Boards (CABs) to facilitate dialogue, transparency, and mutual accountability between researchers and communities.

Guidance Documents on Community Engagement



The UNCST Human Subjects Protection Guidelines (2025) establish ethical standards for research and explicitly require that researchers shall make reasonable effort to involve community stakeholders in the research process, where appropriate, right from the inception of research to post research period.



National Drug Authority (NDA) updated Regulations, (2024) and revised Guideline for the Conduct of Clinical Trials: Reinforce participant-centred practices and site responsibilities that intersect with Community Engagement .

Community Engagement Plan

A community engagement plan helps researchers design and implement activities in a systematic manner. It also provides a point of reference for those involved, evidence and, or criteria against which to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of the engagement.

The minimum elements of a community engagement plan shall include:

- a. Goal and objectives
- b. Key community stakeholders.
- c. Research team responsible for community engagement.

d. Approach(es) justification for selecting them; activities and mode of their implementation.

e. Annual work plan and budget.

f. Communication strategy for engagement.

g. An evaluation plan for the community engagement activities.

h. Plan for identification, mitigation, documentation and addressing risks, conflicts as well as grievances resulting from community engagement efforts.

I Where applicable monitoring efforts for long term follow up shall be provided.

Why Conduct Community Engagement

- a. Such engagement enhances the relevance, acceptance and ethical integrity of scientific endeavours and ensures that research outcomes align with the priorities and realities of the people it seeks to serve.
- b. When communities are actively involved as true partners, research becomes more trustworthy, **culturally sensitive**, and sustainable.
- c. Improves protocol development feasibility (recruitment/retention) to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.
- d. Strengthens consent comprehension for the study requirements, risk communication and enhance credibility of dissemination and benefit-sharing.

UNCST's Public Engagement with the Community

The UNCST) established the Public Engagement campaigns with the community in 2024. The objectives of these engagements is :

- To inform communities about their rights as research participants.
- To sensitize research communities on the research regulatory and clearance processes in Uganda.
- To identify existing bottlenecks and possible solutions to streamline research registration and clearance processes in Uganda.



OBUGABE BWAWE WAYETABA OMU KUCONDOOZA



Nk'omwe aha betabire omu kucondooza omukichweka kyawe, oyiine obugabe kumanya byoona ebikwasire aha kucondooza oku, kandi omucondoozi nahariziibwa,

a. Okukumanyisa ku oriyo n'oshabwa kwetaba omu kucondooza

b. Okukumanyisa ekigyendererwa ky'okucondooza

c. Okukumanyisa ebirabeho omukucondooza, ebi orikushabwa kukora kandi n'obwiire obu okucondooza kuratware

d. Okukuyamba kwetegereza ekichweka ky'okucondooza ekyinemu okugyeesibwa hamwe n'ekiteine okugyeesibwa.

e. Okukumanyisa ebizibu nebintu byoona ebibi ebyakubaasa kukuhikaho washaramu kwetaba omu kucondooza oku.

f. Okukumanyisa emihanda endijo eyiwakubasa kusharamu kutwara, waba otarikwenda kwetaba omukucondooza oku.

neinga okurekyeraho okwetaba omu kucondooza n'obuwakuba wabeire wayikirize, eshaha yooona, obwe otaheirwe ekibonerezo kyoona neinga okuferwa kwoona. Ekyokureberaho, okuruga omukucondooza tikurikuhindura obujanjabi obworikutunga, ebyokushoma, neinga ebyemirimo yawe.

i. Okureeba ngu washaramu oyetegereize kandi oyekundiire. Eki nikimanyiisa ngu omucondoozi ashemereire kukushobororera gye byoona eburikukwata aha kucondooza, rero oteine kuharizibwa, akakuha obwiire oburikumara okweshariramu.

j. Okukuha "kope" ya "foomu" yo'kweshariramu eyogizemu, kandi n'okukumanyisa n'aborikubasa kuhikirira waba oyiine ekibuuzo kyoona

k. Okukumanya akubabwira akubabwira



YOUR RIGHT AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT





As a participant in any study being carried out in the community, the researcher/data collector is required to:

1. Inform you are you are being asked to participate in research.
2. Inform you about the purpose of the research.
3. Inform you about what will happen during the study, what you are being asked to do, and how long it will last.

participate at any time without penalty or loss of benefits (for example, leaving the study will not affect your medical care, student status, work status, etc).

9. Ensure you make an informed consent discussion. This means the researcher should explain the whole study to you, and then without any pressure, allow you time to make the right choice for yourself.
10. Give you a copy of your consent form, and information about who to contact if

Public Engagement through radio

- Bridge FM in Jinja,
- Jogoo FM in Busia and
- Elgon FM in Mbale



Public Engagement through radio

- Centenary Radio, Impact FM , in Masaka
- Radio Buddu
- Radio West , UBC TV, BBS TV, TM TV ,TV West
- Endigito, FM in Mbarara



UNCST's Public Engagement with the District Leadership

- The Buganda Leadership- Pookino Buddu District,
- Resident City Commissioner (RCC)
- Resident District Commissioner (RDC) for Masaka and Mbarara



Public Engagement with District Leadership

District engagements in Jinja, Busia, Mbale with the:

- Resident City Commissioner (RCC)
- Resident District Commissioner (RDC)

Who underscored the importance of empowered gatekeepers.



Public Engagement with Hospitals and Universities

Discussion about the research regulatory process in relation to establishment of RECs at the institutions





UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH



FEBRUARY 2022

Thank you for your attention

**“Stronger Science Starts
with Shared Voices”**

**Engage Early. Listen Deeply.
Act Together.**