

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND THE CHALLENGES OF UNDERTAKING CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS: A CASE OF KABAAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, HOIMA DISTRICT

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This paper presents significant findings of cultural heritage impact assessment on the proposed Kabaale International Airport, Hoima District. In relation to the oil and gas deposits discovered in the Albertine Graben in Western Uganda and mostly the area east of Lake Albert and the Nile Delta north of Lake Albert in the Districts of Hoima, Buliisa and Nwoya, it was recommended that a refinery be constructed close to the oil fields to avoid lengthy and costly pipelines. The Government of Uganda (GoU) therefore seeks to develop an airport that should be able to initially handle international cargo flights, and, later on, other commercial operations serving the area of Hoima. The earthworks design includes; Site clearance including top soil strip, and, if applicable, removal of existing pavement, signs, services, trees, hedges, buildings, hence interfering with the cultural heritage context. As a legal requirement, there was need to perform detailed environmental and social impact assessment studies for the project in compliance with Ugandan Act 19/1998, and any other applicable local regulation. In this regard, cultural heritage impact assessment was undertaken to; (1) identify and evaluate any archaeological and cultural sites, (2) identify and assess possible impacts of the proposed developments on identified archaeological and cultural sites and (3) recommend mitigation measures. The methods used were; Desktop survey, consultation meetings, ethno-archaeological study, archaeological survey and test pit excavations. A number of heritage sites were recorded; positive and negative impacts of the project on cultural heritage were assessed and evaluated with appropriate mitigation measures.

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