

Drivers of Noncompliance on Lake Volta in the Savannah Region, Ghana



Fisheries Training Programme

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Introduction

Lake Volta, the world's largest man-made lake (8,502 km²), contributes about 90% of Ghana's inland fisheries, but its long-term sustainability is currently under threat.

Despite sustained awareness efforts, non-compliance with fisheries regulations in the region remains high.

The study aimed to understand the root causes of persistent regulatory noncompliance on Lake Volta within the Savannah Region. Specifically:

- i. to examine the socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors influencing noncompliance; and
- ii. to propose policy and management recommendations to improve compliance.

Methodology

Study Area

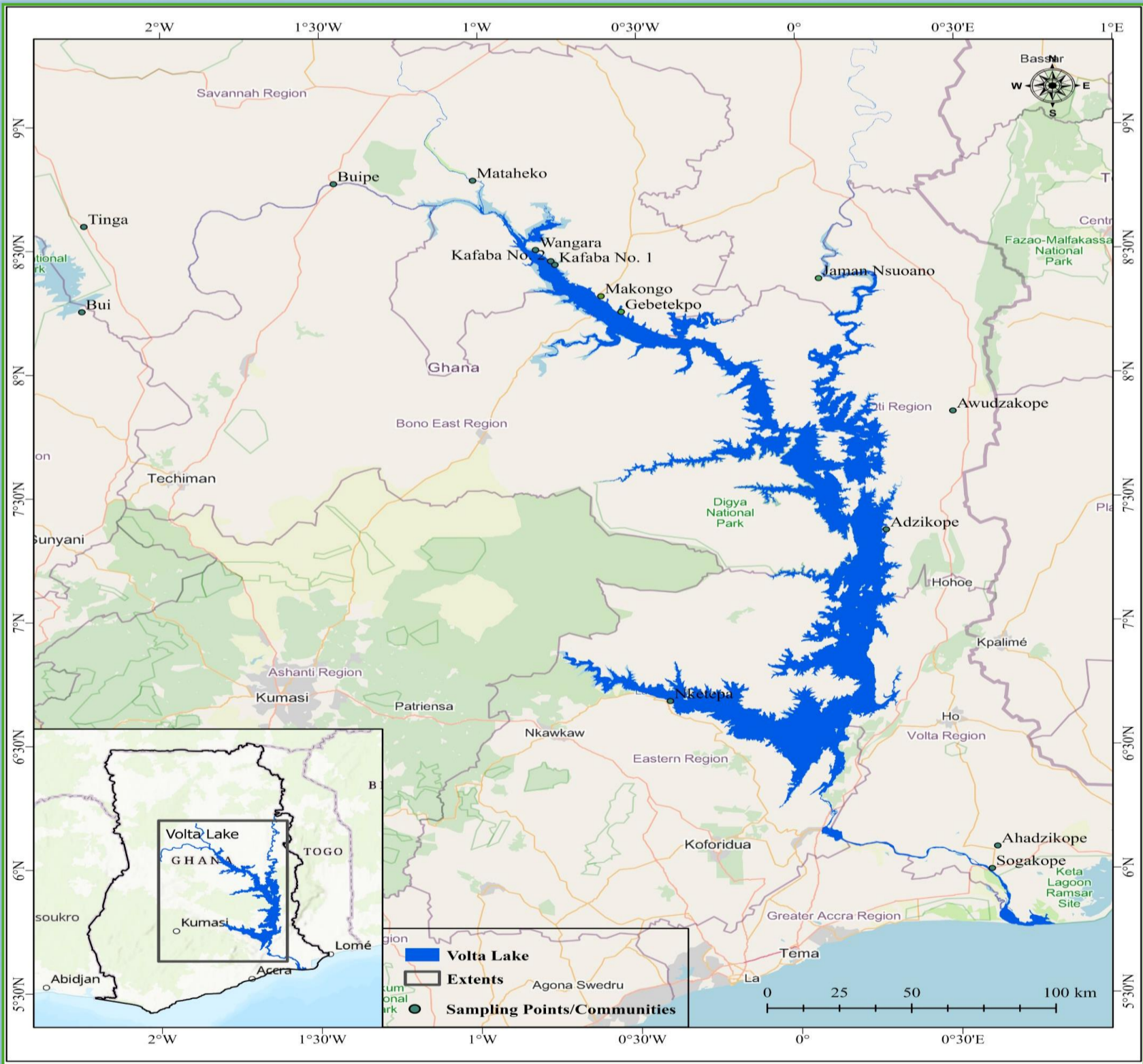


Fig 1. Map of Ghana showing Lake Volta and sampled communities.

Method of Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. A structured questionnaire with both closed- and open-ended questions was used to collect data from fishermen, fish processors, regulators and academics. The total respondents were 46 individuals.

Results

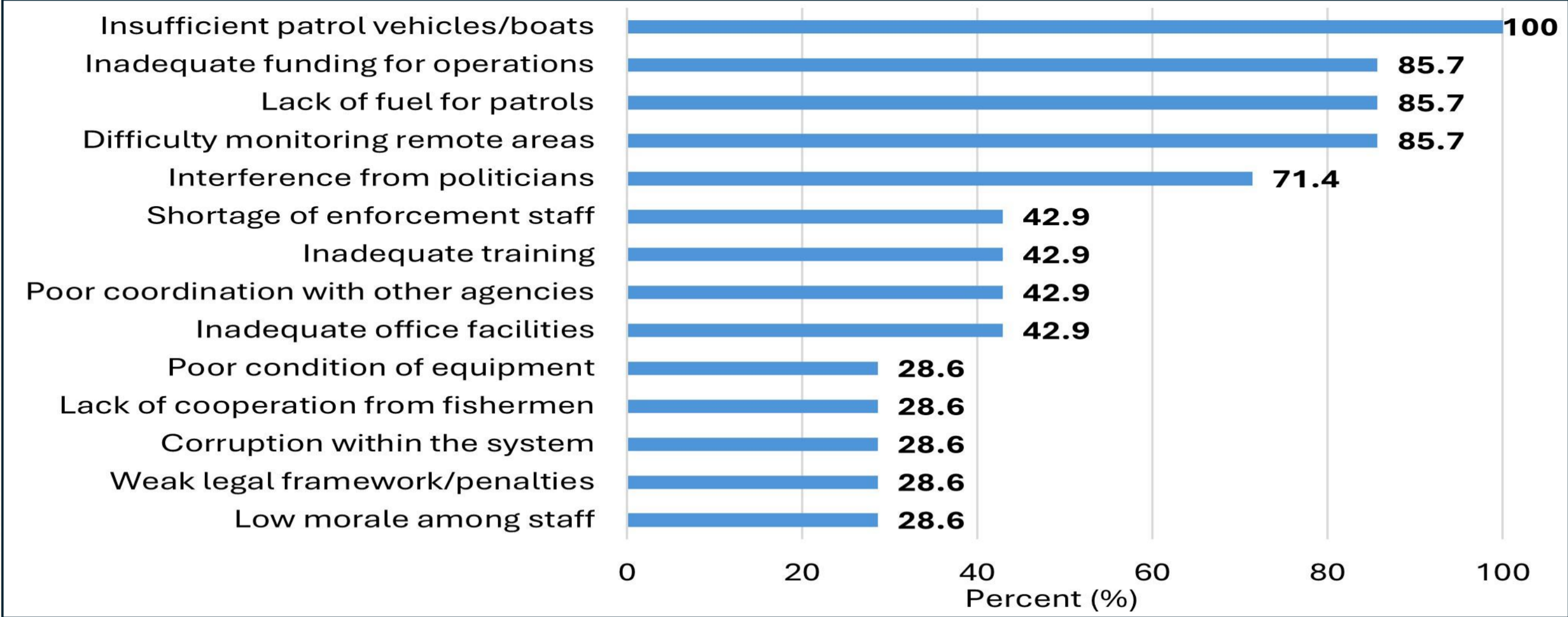


Fig 2. Institutional factors influencing continued noncompliance.

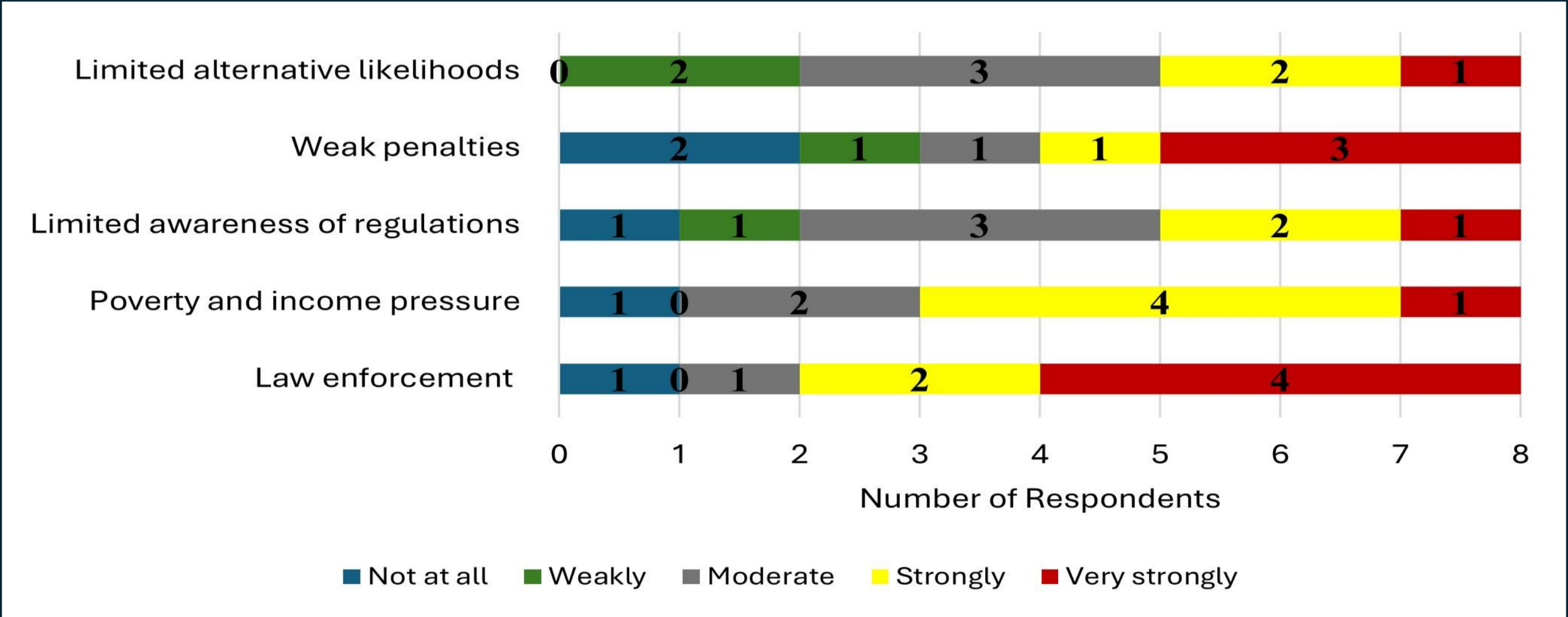


Fig 3. Factors contributing to noncompliance, as identified by lecturers.

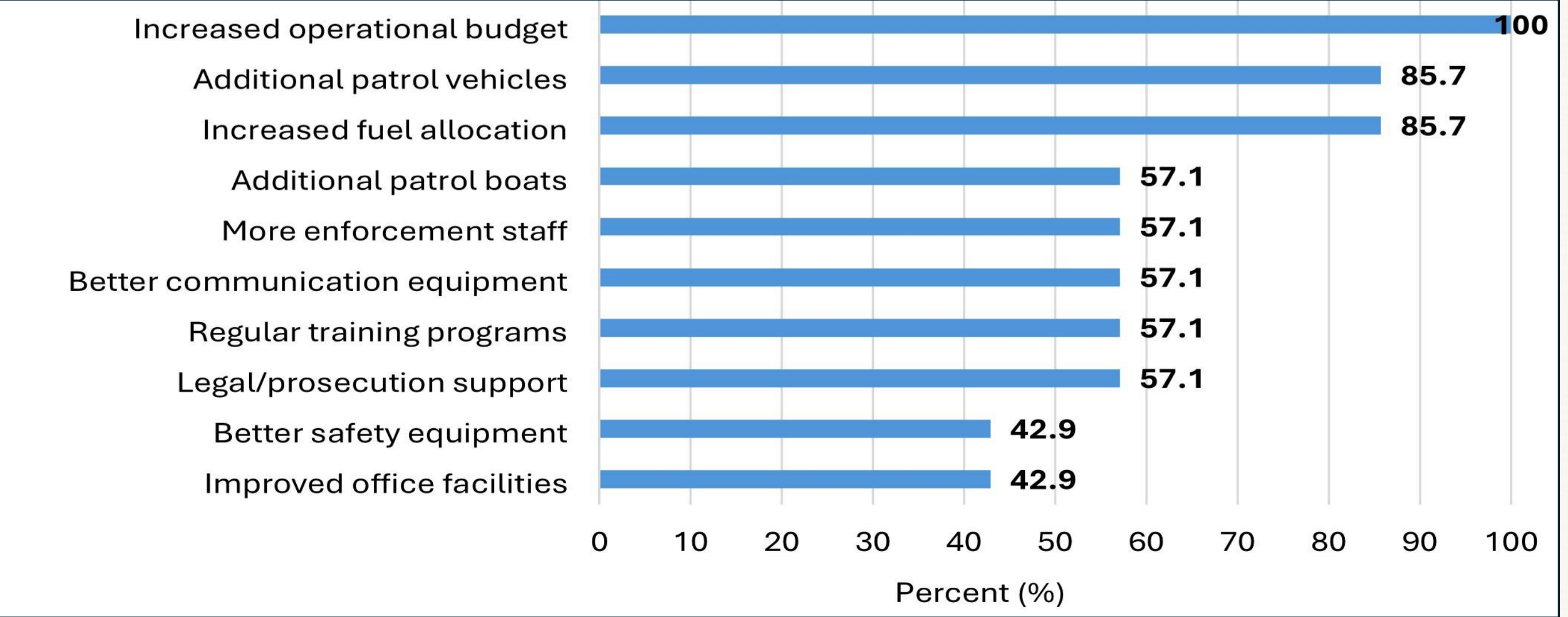


Fig 4. Resources needed by Fisheries Commission in the Savannah Region.

Key Findings

Primary drivers

- ✓ Weak and predictable enforcement
- ✓ Livelihood dependency and poverty

Secondary drivers

- ✓ Trader credit agreement and market pressure
- ✓ Corruption and informal payment systems
- ✓ Weak judicial enforcement
- ✓ Ineffective co-management system

Primary drivers make noncompliance economically profitable, while secondary mechanisms reinforce this pattern, creating a self-sustaining cycle.

Conclusion

Noncompliance on Lake Volta is driven less by a lack of awareness and more by weak enforcement, livelihood insecurity, and governance failures that make illegal fishing economically rational.

A holistic governance approach is required to ensure the long-term sustainability of Lake Volta.

Recommendations

- ✓ Provide alternative livelihood interventions
- ✓ Ensure equitable allocation of financial and institutional resources for supervision, enforcement and research
- ✓ Strengthen prosecution of offenders
- ✓ Conduct randomized enforcement operations

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