

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT: PROMOTING TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RDI COOPERATION IN SADC

Date: 16 March 2023

Time: 09:00 to 11:30

Registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FTR-BGluR32j-nTcxavFZw

Background

Transboundary water refers to water resources such as aquifers, lakes, and river basins being shared by two or more countries. Transboundary waters are very important in supporting the lives of a lot of people across the world. There are approximately 261 transboundary river basins across the world that cover almost half of the earth's land area. According to the OCED, there are 19 basins globally that cut across 5 countries or more such as the Mekong, the Nile, the Niger, and the Rhine. The United Nations (UN) reports that there are approximately 145 states that have territories alongside the river basins and that 30 countries are entirely in these basins. It should also be noted that transboundary river basins, aquifers, and lakes support more than 2 billion lives. In the Southern African Development Community (SADC), 70% of the renewable water comes from transboundary rivers, and the remainder from groundwater and lakes (GIZ).

Closer to home, it should also be noted that the 12 mainlands Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries share 15 river basins that collectively cover approximately 80% of the surface area and account for more than 70% of the freshwater resources in the region. The majority of these water resources are used in agriculture, the industrial sector, and personal consumption. It is estimated that 70% of the rural population of SADC relies on groundwater, and 30 significant aquifers are located in transboundary positions.

Recognising this high degree of interdependence, SADC developed and adopted several regional support instruments for transboundary water cooperation. One of the most powerful enablers of such cooperation is the SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses, which remains a unique document on the African continent and is considered one of the best examples globally of multilateral cooperation for water. The Protocol is given further effect through the Regional Water Policy, Regional Water Strategy, and Regional Strategic Action Plans on Integrated Water Resources and Development Management.

Key to the implementation of these instruments is River Basin Organisations (RBOs), responsible for being the leading voice for basin-wide water issues in shared river basins. There are currently ten such RBOs active in the SADC region. It is thus imperative that the SADC countries, the transboundary water resource organisations, and interested parties continue to work together to promote the provision of quality water to the more than 250 million SADC citizens. A key part of this includes cooperating across boundaries on water-related research, development, and innovation.

Aim of the Workshop

This strategic workshop aims to strengthen cooperation in the field of research, development, and innovation (RDI) in support of improved water security and universal access to water across SADC. The workshop aims to bring together the SADC countries and river basin organisation (RBO) in SADC to

promote RDI within and amongst themselves. This first workshop, will form part of a series of two workshops and will provide a platform for the SADC RBO to share and discuss their respective current RDI activities and develop a survey to identify common RDI needs. In between the first and second workshops, the identification and sharing of common needs and challenges amongst RBOs and transboundary water organisations concerning RDI, as well as tools/solutions that address some of the challenges where applicable will be carried out. The last workshop will seek to find ways of implementing programmes to address the challenges or needs identified.

Target Audience

Governments of SADC member states, RBOS, Transboundary water organisations, Policy Makers, Innovators, Academia and Investors and funders and Research funding institutions

Draft Programme

Chair: Mr Tiyani Chauke, International Project Manager, WRC

Time	Item	Person Responsible
09:00 – 09:05	Online arrival	All
09:05 – 09:10	Welcome	Dr Mamohloding Tlhagale, Head of International and Stakeholder Engagement (ISE).
09:10 – 09:20	Opening Remarks and setting scene	Mr John Dini, Research Manager Water Governance, WRC
09:20 – 09:30	Prioritisation of water for drinking and human rights to water	Ms. Yuri Ramkissoo, Senior Research Manager, SAHRC
09:30 – 10:00	Presentation of current RDI status, challenges, and opportunities in SADC RBO. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Lenka Thamae, Executive Secretary of the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) 	Facilitator: Prof: Jean- Marie Kileshye Onema, Executive Manager, WaterNet
10:00 – 10:40	Panel Discussion: Fostering RDI cooperation amongst the SADC RBOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Lenka Thamae, ORASECOM Dr Henry Roman, Director: Environmental Services and Technologies, DSI Ms Dudu Mthembu, Chief Director International Water Cooperation, Department of Water and Sanitation Prof Emilio Magaia, Professor and Researcher in the areas of Hydrology, Water Resources and Irrigation and Drainage and Agronomy, University Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique Prof Jackson, Copperbelt University and OR Tambo Chair (ORTARChI) in Water RDI 	
10:40-10:55	Way-forward, identification of challenges, Needs, and solutions-journey to the 2 nd workshop	Facilitator: Ms Amanda Loeffen, CEO of HR2W
10:55 – 11:00	Closing Remarks	Mr Tiyani Chauke