

Implementation of Regional Strategic Action Plan on Integrated Water Resources Management and Development

The SADC Water Division is currently coordinating implementation of the third phase of the Regional Strategic Action Plan on Integrated Water Resources Management and Development (RSAP) 2011-2015. The RSAP is the framework for action to achieve the sustainable development of water resources in the region through the development of water infrastructures on the basis of sound water governance and water management. The RSAP III serves as a work plan to guide the development and implementation of activities in the SADC water Sector for the periods 2011 – 2015.

The first Regional Strategic Action Plan (RSAP I) on Integrated Water Resources Development and Management was approved by SADC Summit in August 1998. It ran from 1999 to 2004. The main focus of the RSAP I was to create an enabling environment for the joint management of regional water resources. It laid the institutional basis for the execution of infrastructure projects and other related development initiatives.

The RSAP I supported the implementation of 31 projects, falling into 7 broad categories:

- Legal and regulatory framework
- Integrated basin-wide approach
- Macro policies
- Knowledge management
- Public awareness
- Stakeholder participation
- Infrastructure investment

The RSAP I was reviewed in 2004 to provide recommendations for the formulation of RSAP II (2005-2010). The review concluded that the RSAP I “was the most advanced and comprehensive multi-country freshwater programme in the world”. Despite this success, the review also revealed that most stakeholders felt that the objectives of the RSAP I were too broad. It further recommended two paradigm shifts:

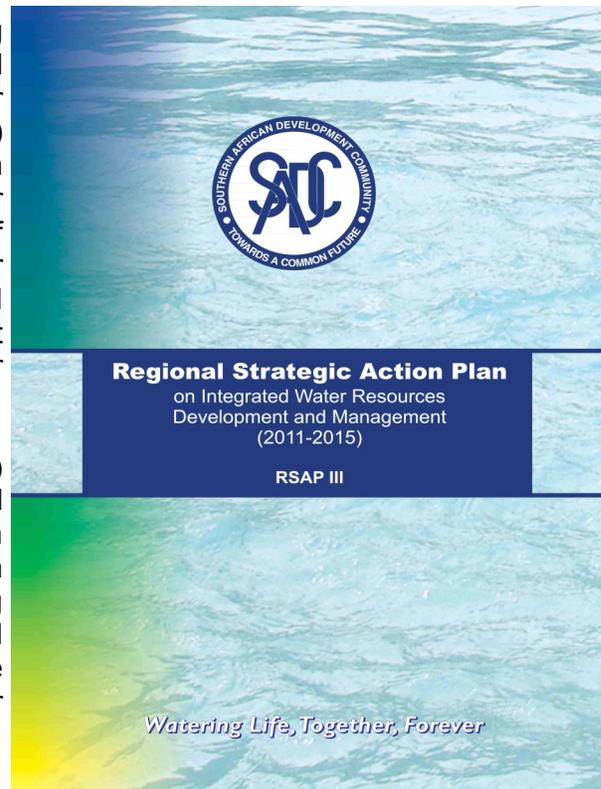
- i) Changing from a project approach to a programme approach and
- ii) Changing the focus of the plan from the creation of an enabling environment to water infrastructure development

The second Regional Strategic Action Plan (RSAP II) on Integrated Water Resources Development and Management was structured around four strategic areas:

- Regional water resources development, planning and management
- Infrastructure development support
- Water governance
- Capacity building

Like all SADC Sector Plans, the RSAP II constituted an integral part to the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan.

The RSAP II was reviewed in late 2009 to assess the progress made with the implementation of the plan. The results of the review confirmed that good progress had been made against the overall strategic objectives as well as with the implementation of projects relating to regional water



resources planning and management, water governance and capacity building.

Some of the progresses made in implementing RSAP II include:

- Development and approval of the Regional Water Policy
- Development and approval of the Regional Water Strategy
- Development of the Regional Awareness and Communication Strategy
- Procurement, distribution and installation of equipment under SADC HYCOS 2
- Completion of integrated water resources planning studies at basin level
- Development of basin strategies and databases
- Completion of IWRM demonstration projects in 5 SADC countries
- Establishment and strengthening of several RBOs
- Development of guidelines to strengthen RBOs

The RSAP III, builds on the progresses made by the RSAP I and II, and serves as a work plan to guide the development and implementation of activities in the SADC water sector for the period 2011-2015. It is anchored in the SADC vision and the Southern African Vision on Water, Life and Environment.

It is designed to provide an effective and dependable framework contributing to poverty reduction, regional integration, peace and security and socio-economic development.

The goal of RSAP III is to strengthen the enabling environment for regional water resources governance, management and development through the application of integrated water resources management at the regional, river basin, Member State and community levels.

In the SADC context, the successful implementation of IWRM is believed to rest upon three pillars, respectively reflecting the human, physical and engineering dimensions of integrated water resources management.

The RSAP's approach, promotes the implementation of interventions into three strategic areas:

- i) Water governance,
- ii) Infrastructure development and
- iii) Water management.

Within each of these strategic areas the RSAP provides a coherent set of activities to contribute to the achievement of three strategic objectives:

- Capacity development,
- Climate change adaptation and
- Social development.