



Communicating Water

SADC Handbook for Water Officials

Prepared by Inter Press Service (IPS) Africa



In cooperation with:



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FOREWORD

Phera Ramoeli, Senior Programme Officer, SADC Water Division



The development of countries in the Southern African Development Community

(SADC) region is highly dependent on the availability of adequate and reliable water resources. As a result, water resources influence major aspects of the region's social and economic development.

Since the launch of the Southern Africa Water Wire (www.africawaterwire.org), the SADC water division has seen the extent to which communicating water issues can engage the public, water officials, policy makers and governments on this critical issue.

Putting water on the agenda is vital if we are to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Communicating SADC policies –

including water – is therefore a major step in our fight against poverty in the region.

The SADC Water Division has identified media training of water officials as an essential tool as this will give support to our continued efforts to promote integrated water resources management in the region by improving awareness and participation by policy and decision makers, the media and managers of both ground and surface water resources in implementing the integrated water resources management concept.

We hope that this handbook will provide support for water officials and water communicators across the SADC region to engage effectively with the media and, in so doing, and greater impetus to integrated water resources management.

THIS HANDBOOK

Paula Fray, Regional Director, IPS Africa



This handbook is to support the practical implementation of the **Regional Awareness**

and Communication Strategy for the SADC Water Sector to assist Water Division officials to engage effectively with the media to achieve their various goals.

It is developed as part of the “Southern Africa Water Wire” project to provide support to water officials in order to share the extensive work being doing in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region.

The media can play a critical role as a channel to various target audiences engaging in integrated water resources management.

As such, they themselves are an important audience when engaging the public.

Yet water issues in the SADC region remained under-reported.

To ensure that SADC’s citizens are informed and their voices heard during critical policy debates, it is important for SADC officials to have the skills to engage with reporters and share SADC’s key messages.

This handbook seeks to give practical guidelines and encourage interaction between the media and IWRM officials to ensure a greater understanding of water issues in the region.



COMMUNICATING WATER IN THE SADC REGION

Why communicate water?

The “Regional Awareness and Communication Strategy for the SADC Water Sector” notes that information is a prerequisite for regional integration, poverty eradication and socio-economic development. To effectively deliver its goals, SADC is committed to improving the availability of information to the peoples of the region as expressed through the adoption of the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport in 2001.

In order to implement the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sports and advance the cause of its agenda, SADC developed the “Communications and Promotional Strategy”. The Strategy calls for sectors to clarify their specific and thematic messages that should be communicated to different target audiences.

The media is an effective channel to communicate information about water and raise awareness on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) in the SADC region.

SADC Water Communication strategy

The “Regional Awareness and Communication Strategy for the SADC Water Sector” (2008) fulfils the call for establishing sector specific (Water Sector) strategies and crafting, packaging and dissemination of messages and themes, which should be based on but not limited to SADC’s priority intervention areas. It was approved by the SADC Interim Council of Ministers of Water and basically expands the “SADC Communication

Programme of Action” presented in the “SADC Communications and Promotional Strategy” by outlining a communication agenda for the SADC Water Division and the Water Sector as a whole.

The ultimate goal of this Strategy is: “improved awareness and understanding on water issues and initiatives in the SADC region contributing to poverty eradication and regional integration”

This goal would be achieved through a number of strategic objectives as follows:

- To build awareness, understanding and support of IWRM approach in the SADC region among defined target groups and increase the effectiveness of its implementation as an approach that contributes to SADC goals of poverty eradication and regional integration;
- To advocate and promulgate water related regional instruments and interventions among SADC institutions, relevant regional organizations and cooperating partners;
- To promote understanding of and adaptation to climate change phenomenon in the development and utilization of water resources especially in shared watercourses;
- To increase awareness and commitment among SADC institutions, other regional organizations, NGOs and agencies on the importance of water supply, sanitation and hygiene in poverty reduction and related IWRM issues;
- To encourage peaceful and cross-boarder investments in shared watercourses or transboundary water resources management and utilization that further promotes regional integration;
- To increase awareness and advance the importance of water demand management in the development and utilization of water resources especially in shared watercourses; and
- To advance water resources development, socio-economic and environmental aspects that promote investment in and use of water resources in poverty eradication and regional integration.

In order to put this strategy into effect, an “Implementation Framework” that outlines initial concrete activities for the major actors in the framework of the “Regional Strategic Action Plan III” has been developed. It will be implemented between 2011 and 2012 as a pilot. At the end of 2012, an evaluation will be conducted to assess implementation and adjust strategies for the 2012 – 2015 implementation period.

Media Relations, including this handbook and related media training, is a critical part of this framework.

Communicating Water

How does communication work?

Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another. It involves a sender transmitting an idea, information, or feeling to a receiver. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit.

Many of the problems that occur in an organisation are either the direct result of people failing to communicate which leads to confusion, and can cause good plans to fail.

Thought: First information exists in the mind of the sender. This can be a concept, idea, information or feelings.

Encoding: Next a message is sent to a receiver, in words or other symbols.

Decoding: Lastly, the receiver translates the words or symbols into a concept or information that he or she can understand.

Barriers of Effective Communication

During the decoding process many physical and psychological barriers exist that prevent understanding of the message. Some of them are mentioned here in order to prevent them before or during sending the message:

Culture, Background: Background and bias can be good as they allow us to use our past experiences to understand something new. It is only when they change the meaning of the message that they interfere with the communication process.

Noise: Environmental noise impedes clear communication

Ourselves: Focusing on ourselves, rather than the other person, can lead to confusion and conflict.

Perception: If we feel the person is talking too fast and not fluently, does not articulate clearly etc, we may dismiss the person. Also our pre-conceived attitudes affect our ability to listen.

Message: Distractions happen when we focus on the facts rather than the idea. (e.g. the word chairman instead of chairperson may cause you to focus on the word and not the message)

Environmental: Any stimulus that provides a potential distraction e.g. extremely colourful clothes by the facilitator.

Who to communicate to?

In order to communicate effectively, organizations identify who they need to speak to. Audiences are grouped as either external or internal target groups. In turn, these audiences can be broken up according to, among others, their gender (male/female); age; education; language; geographic location or sector (e.g. agriculture, industry, manufacturing or business).

Each target audience has different needs. The water information needed by households, for example, differs from that needed by businesses. In turn, the language used to communicate with these target audiences will also differ. And, these groups all consume (read, watch or listen to) different information sources.

If the media is just one channel we can use to communicate with these target audiences, then we need to identify the best medium available, the information they need and the best way to articulate that information.

Other communication outreach tools include web-portals (for example,

www.sadc.int), brochures, pamphlets, roadshows, dramas and advertising.

Internal versus external audiences

Internal communication takes place within the organization, group or project. It is often the starting point of any successful communication strategy in order to ensure that the messages emanating from the source are consistent and clear. If the internal audience is small enough, face-to-face communication is an effective way to create internal ambassadors for the project.

External communication seeks to engage external stakeholders by providing key information to allow for greater participation in a project. As the target audience expands, it becomes necessary to communicate with a larger audience. It is at this stage that the project requires channels of communication to extend the message.

The media can be an effective channel to spread key messages to a broad range of stakeholders. But, before starting to communicate with journalists and stakeholders, it is important to have a communication strategy that answers these critical questions:

- What is the key message of the project? What makes us unique/different from others?
- What target groups do we want to reach out to, and are there different messages?
- What kind of resources and tools do we have for external relations?
- How do we want to measure success of external communication?

Key Messages

SADC water issues cover a wide range of data and information. All of this can be distilled into a key message – a clear, simple, defining message – that encompasses the communication strategy.

The SADC Water Division's Awareness and Communication strategy outlines the following key message areas for the IWRM approach.

The SADC Water Sector will:

- Communicate that water management is everyone's business: "SADC citizens must work together to manage water and related resources and services to ensure equity,

- maximum contribution to regional integration, economic investments and development, poverty eradication and a sustainable environment";
- Communicate the IWRM approach as "Watering life together forever";
- Communicate that people should conserve the finite and limited resource for present and future use;
- Communicate that water is everyone's interest and, as such, everyone should participate in its development, management and conservation;
- Communicate that women are key custodians of water and their needs must be considered through their effective participation in decision-making and implementation;
- Communicate that water has an economic and social value: Water users have the right to access water and also the responsibility to invest in water resources or pay for the services taking cognizance of their ability to pay;
- Communicate that IWRM benefits all sectors by ensuring more crops per drop, more energy per drop, more profit per drop, more jobs and

income per drop, and better life per drop for today and tomorrow; and

- Communicate that IWRM/WE Plans are key to achieving water related MDGs and, therefore, SADC Member States should ensure their development and implementation.

How to communicate?

The most effective form of communication is face-to-face where we are able to engage the audience directly. This allows us to deal with specific concerns and immediately assess understanding. However, this is time consuming and is difficult to implement.

The media, however, engages directly with the people we want to communicate with and, as such, are an effective channel.

The media produces independently sourced information based on the needs of their own target audiences, their editorial policies and ability to produce the story.

Effective public relations can help influence the media's focus but the final content will be independently sourced and published.

Having an understanding of the media – including who they speak to and how they speak to them – allows us to effectively target different water stakeholders.

Once we have identified our target audience, we need to understand how best to communicate with them.

Although each media – radio, television, print or online – seeks the news, they communicate this information differently to their specific audiences.

Knowing “who” each media is speaking to allows us to use the appropriate language, area of interest and examples for the target audience.



Consider the following examples:

Media	Target Audience	Language	Levels of technicality	Comments
Peer-reviewed water research	Researchers, academics, officials	Official, technical	High	Audience is limited; information sought is in-depth
Serious business newspaper	Business persons, policy makers, government officials	Formal, business tone yet accessible to all readers	Medium	Audience is limited; information needed to make decisions; seeking impact on business
Radio programme	General – ranges from ordinary persons to experts	Conversational tone; short “sound-bites” that can be cut for re-use on news	Low	Use anecdotes to reach across the spectrum
Tabloid Newspaper	Low Living Standards Measures	Accessible language; human interest approach; Comments short	Low	Seeking “user” information – how does it impact on me; clear language

Effective communicators

Effective communication does not take place in a vacuum. In order to ensure that key messages are maintained and the communication has a clear outcome, effective communication should take place within a well-developed communication strategy. This often includes developing a simple media policy that outlines who should speak to the media; what issues they should speak about and what key messages should be reinforced.

Ultimately, the strategy and its implementation tools ensure that

inaccurate or conflicting messages are avoided. Even if only one person is allowed to speak to the media, the strategy should seek to ensure that everyone takes responsibility for ensuring that the media’s needs are met. To do so, everyone needs to understand the strategy and know who to refer media enquiries to.

Effective communicators are always prepared for the unexpected. This allows them to deal with unexpected media inquiries by either providing basic information or referring the reporter to the most effective person.

MEDIA RELATIONS

Media relations recognises that the media is a critical channel to reach out to their listeners, viewers and readers. How effectively we are able to do so to promote water issues depends on how effectively we are able to build relations with them.

Relationship building cannot happen when there is an urgent message to convey – it must be a sustained effort over time in order for the media to feel confident that SADC water officials are accessible and available.

Media relations are best built on understanding: having a clear idea of what the media needs and working to assist them in gathering these resources as well as ensuring that the media have a clear idea of what water officials are able to provide them.

What does the media need?

Radio, television and print journalists are all looking for the same end result: an interesting story that would engage their listeners, viewers and readers. To establish whether the information we have will be interesting to the media, we need to consider the definition of news. According to the Collins Concise Dictionary, news is

“Important or interesting recent happenings; information about such events as in the mass media; interesting or important information not previously known.”

How can we establish whether or not our information is newsworthy?

Consider these factors:

- Has the information been released previously?
- Can we explain why the information is important to the target audience?
- Does it have a direct impact either geographically or emotionally?
- It is unusual? The first, the smallest, the largest ...
- Can you assist the reporter to find a “human interest” angle to a technical water issue?
- Can you explain the technical language in simple, layman’s terms?
- Can you back up your story with statistical data and background information?

Ways of Engaging the Media

A variety of tools exist to assist in reaching out to the media. All encourage greater clarity in our media engagement: More information is not necessarily better and it is important that we communicate our key messages effectively.

Some tools include:

- **Media Alerts/Advisories:**
Short notes to alert the media of upcoming events in order to interest them in the event and help them plan their story diaries effectively;
- **Press Releases:** Short but comprehensive articles highlighting the news angle, key information and key quotes about upcoming events/announcements and/or just completed events. Avoid press releases that do not have a news angle or do not add value to the reporter's story.
- **Fact Sheets:** Key facts around a newsworthy water issue that can be used to provide background information.
- **Briefing documents:**
Comprehensive briefings on key issues with a wide range of information that can be used by reporters seeking context, background and analysis for their stories.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** A selection of key questions and answers to assist reporters with the basic information around the water issue being discussed.
- **Web Presentations:** An organizational website is the first port of call for anyone seeking information. To be effective, the website must provide an overview of critical information. Contact details for the media will assist in ensuring the information is followed-up.
- **Brochure/pamphlets:**
Publications outlining the key messages and activities of an organization help reach out to target audiences still dependent on face to face and printed communication.

AN OVERVIEW OF MEDIA IN THE SADC REGION

The Media in the SADC region is not uniform but by understanding the basic needs of each media platform, we are able to target our message accordingly.

RADIO

Radio has the highest numbers of consumers in the SADC region – reaching across the spectrum to include rural and urban households, the full range of age groups, officials and ordinary users of water.

Radio includes community radio (serving the communities in their vicinity and therefore seeking local news); state-owned radio (serving a broader, usually national audience with a focus on educating the audience) and privately owned radio (serving a particular target audience with an entertainment and education mandate).

As a mass medium, it highlights water issues in a variety of ways, including:

- Short hard news bulletins;
- Longer current affairs inserts;
- Talkshows (Discussions); and,
- Advertisements and/or public service announcements

Specific Needs:

Radio journalists need story angles that will interest their listeners. However, they also need voices to tell their stories effectively. Water officials engaging radio reporters need to be informed and articulate in their story telling. Their comments should be short and relayed in a conversational tone (not read) and their voices distinct.

Radio Advice:

- Keep comments short and at a steady pace – about four words a second;
- Use your voice to reflect your passion in the subject by keeping it lively and interested; never read your answers during an interview;
- Avoid dead space – silent pauses – and “ums” and “ahs” by being prepared;
- Bring technical water issues to life through anecdotes – real stories – on how IWRM works.

TELEVISION

Television is popular medium because it allows us to *show* progress in IWRM through its use of visuals and is useful for creating visibility. However, it is not as accessible in rural areas and informal settlements and tends to reach mainly middle and higher income groups.

Television can be used to highlight water issues through various formats including:

- Short hard news bulletins;
- Longer current affairs inserts;
- Documentaries;
- Talk show discussions; and,
- Advertisements/public service announcements.

Specific Needs

Television journalists need story angles that will interest their viewers but, more importantly, they need visuals that relate to the story in order to convey these effectively. They need sources who are informed and articulate and able to tell the story at a place of interest that is visually attractive.

Television Advice

Television is as much about presentation as it is about information. Appearances and body language are therefore important: a confident water official who appears engaged with the issue is far more effective than one who appears reluctant to be interviewed. Once again, the ability to discuss water issues in short, jargon-free “sound-bites” is important to get the message across.

To ensure credibility, it is important to be approachable and have authority. Your body language is important: Make eye contact, move deliberately with gestures that have meaning and emphasize the points you are making. Remember to look at the interviewer and not at the camera.

Additional tips are given under **Presentation Skills**.



NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES

Cost, literacy rates and availability of print media in the SADC regions means this medium reaches fewer consumers (readers) but targets a literate community that often includes influential policy makers and community leaders.

Print is therefore an influential platform that helps frame debates and can be used to “explain” policy initiatives through its ability to provide more details.

Print reporters cover issues in a variety of formats including:

- Hard (breaking) news, e.g. events, announcements, debates;
- Features, e.g. background stories or in-depth reviews of issues;
- Investigations, e.g. reviews of progress or monies spent;
- Special focus projects, e.g. World Water Day; and
- Opinion, e.g. columns on critical water issues.

Specific Needs

Print stories, like all other media, need human-interest angles to engage their readers – asking how water issues

impact their readers rather than simply relaying official policy. Print reporters are also looking for background, context and explanation, as their stories are more comprehensive than the short radio and television formats.

Print reporters need quotes that bring a story to life – they will often not be satisfied with the press release alone but will require “fresh” or “unique” quotes. They also need to back up their stories with statistics or background information. Even though print can allow for longer stories than radio or television, the story lengths are still restricted by the available space.

Newspaper/Magazine Advice

A print source needs to know their subject and provide background documents if possible. Although the reporter might require greater detail, they are not necessarily experts in the subject and it is important to check for understanding.

Avoid using long sentences with qualifying clauses. Instead, keep your answers short and simple.



ONLINE

Although online media has the smallest target audience, this is growing exponentially as access to the Internet – often via mobile phones – grows.

These online story formats are often short, the ability to click through for more information – including full documents – means the medium can offer water officials greater space for information.

Online does not have the same space constraints as print media and can make more detail and background information available to the audience.

Furthermore, the stories remain accessible over time.

Access to the stories and the availability of various search tools allows this platform to build a body of information that is accessible to internal and external audiences over time.

It offers water officials the following opportunities:

- **Hard news**
- **Features**
- **Multi-media presentations**
- **Full-document uploads**
- **Blogs - opinion**

NEW MEDIA VS TRADITIONAL MEDIA



Online interactivity – the ability of the audience to engage with the media – is what distinguishes traditional media from new media.

Traditional media refers to newspapers, radio and television, as we traditionally know it while “new media” are the interactive forms of communication that use the Internet.

These include blogs, podcasts and social networks (such as Facebook and Twitter).

Some forms of new media worth considering include:

Blogs: A blog is a regularly updated website that typically combines text, images (graphics or video), and links to other websites in the form of a journal. Although most blogs are personal, water officials can establish programme or project blogs to engage their external and internal stakeholders.

Podcasts: A podcast is a short audio or video file that you can listen to or watch on your computer or on a variety of portable media devices. They are an easy and inexpensive way to communicate directly with your target audience.

Social Network Sites: Social network sites, such as Facebook, allow us to create online communities to connect with and provide resources to specific target audiences. Facebook, for example, allows you to create events, upload videos or photos, send group messages and have group conversations. Sign-up on the Southern Africa Water Wire site at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Southern-Africa-Water-Wire/127807900618555>.

SMS/ Text Messaging: The short message system (SMS) is becoming an increasingly popular way of communicating with target audiences as the access to cellphones improves in the SADC region. Text messaging allows us to send information to and from cellular and smart phone devices either individually or to group lists.

Twitter: Twitter allows SADC officials to share information, ask questions, and connect with people who share their interest in IWRM. These can be sent via cellphone or computer but are restricted to 140 characters. These messages are sent to people who have chosen to follow your twitter feed but can also be retweeted. SADC officials can also use Twitter to follow other water agencies. The Southern Africa Water Wire hashtag is #africawater.

You Tube/V-Casts: You Tube or Vimeo are video-sharing site that allow water officials to upload and share online videos. See also WaterChannel.tv.



PRESENTATION

SKILLS

Research shows that the audience remembers more about HOW the information was presented than WHAT information was presented.

Presentation skills distinguish effective communicators from those who merely present information.

Whether the presentation is in the form of a one-on-one interview or a group presentation, certain skills are core.

1. **Preparation is key:** All media encounters should be underpinned by preparation to ensure that key messages are not only understood by the communicator but presented effectively.
2. **Connect:** Remove all barriers – physical, emotional or intellectual – between you and your audience. This includes physical barriers such as a podium or even a laptop; emotional barriers such as personal dislikes or irritations; and, intellectual barriers such as technical language.
3. **Presentation:** A well-groomed person will present themselves as more confident and therefore credible. Even if it is an informal interview, ensure that you are well groomed. Avoid too much jewelry or busy clothing. On television, avoid black or white clothing or busy patterns.
4. **Body language:** Use gestures sparingly and with meaning – avoid flailing hands; instead use them to emphasize points. Do not wriggle or shift around. Avoid defensive body language such as clenched fists or folded arms.
5. **Voice:** Keep your voice steady. Four words a second is a steady pace. Preparation will help you avoid stuttering or “ums” and “ahs”.
6. **Avoid dead space:** Take care not to lapse into silence during live radio or television interviews.
7. **Eye contact:** Keep eye contact with the interviewer not the camera.

INTERVIEW TIPS FOR TV AND RADIO

As much as possible, be prepared. If you have had advanced warning, consider the potential questions and how you can answer these as short and simply as possible.

Don't feel pressurised to conduct the interview immediately. Check if the reporter has a deadline and if they can call you again once you have had a chance to review the information. If not, give basic information and answer as clearly as you can.

Establish the ground rules of the interview: what is the interview for (background or attributable sourcing) and how will it be used. At all times, speak "on the record" – if you don't want to see something in print, don't say it.

Ahead of a radio or television interview, establish what angle the journalist will pursue; whether there will be other people in the radio/television studio; how long will the interview be; who the interviewer will be and when it will air.

It is important to know the interview style of the interviewer – antagonistic, informed or friendly - and to prepare for that.

Always tell the truth. If you make a mistake, correct this as quickly as possible – even if on live radio. If you don't know the answer, tell the reporter you will find out the information and revert as soon as possible.

Keep it short and simple. To do so, you need to be concise.

Never speculate. Don't answer hypothetical questions. Never discuss rumours. If the reporter's question is wrong, say so immediately.

Every media interview is an opportunity to reinforce your key messages. Key messages are not only what you say, but also how you say it.

It is important to know your subject and it is equally important to know what message is most important to convey.

If possible, prepare for unfriendly interviews by anticipating difficult questions and practicing your responses.

A successful interview is more than a set of questions and answers – it is a conversation between you and the reporter. Take time to establish a rapport. Maintain eye contact.

Maintain confident – not defensive – body language.

Avoid jargon and technical language – unless you are speaking to a technical publication. Always relate the technical language to its impact on ordinary SADC citizens.

Always answer the question. Never say “no comment” – it implies you have something to hide. If you are unable to provide an answer, say why:

“We are currently investigating the situation and as soon as we have the relevant information, we will issue a statement.”

“I do not have the information at hand but will come back to you by ... with a response.”

“I am not the correct person to comment on that. However you can contact ...”

Never become angry or defensive.

Never take difficult questions personally – it’s your job to communicate water issues in the SADC region and the target-group can be reached through the interview. So use the platform wisely.

Be accessible. Journalists have deadlines that they need to meet. The more information and contact-opportunities you are able to give them, the more informed their stories will be.

MEDIA READY CHECKLIST

Organizational Assessment:

- ✓ Does your organisation have a media strategy?
- ✓ Is the media plan discussed as part of the overall influencing plan?
- ✓ Do you revise the media plan on a regular basis as your influence campaign evolves?

Organisational Infrastructure:

- ✓ Do you have a staff person who is responsible for carrying out the media plan and coordinating all the media efforts in your organisation?
- ✓ Do you have a planning calendar of key political events?
- ✓ Has your organisation identified its primary, formal spokespersons?

- ✓ Do your spokespersons need media training and preparation?
- ✓ Have your board and staff prepared a plan for 'rapid response' to an opportunity or a crisis that presents itself with little warning?
- ✓ Is the chain of decision-making for media statements clearly designated and understood by everyone within the organisation?
- ✓ Does your public policy budget have a media component?

Media Systems:

- ✓ Are your media lists up-to-date, complete with names of editors, reporters, or producers for all media outlets you plan to use?
- ✓ Do you know deadlines, work hours, and preferred communication modes for key people who work on your public policy issues?
- ✓ Do your lists distinguish types of coverage: news, feature, editorial, columns, and calendars?
- ✓ Do you have a clipping file for all relevant media coverage and for a complete record of coverage of your organisation's work?
- ✓ Are you in regular contact with the editor and reporters you have designated as key contacts?

Is your information media ready?

- ✓ Do you have accurate, concise, interesting information about your organisation its mission, history, programmes, and services?
- ✓ Have you shaped a clear message and talking points for the policy issue you plan to raise?
- ✓ Have you held introductory meetings with members of the press who are likely to cover your organisation and issues?
- ✓ Do you maintain an information base that is a valuable resource to the press, including a portfolio of data and stories, and a list of staff or others who are willing to talk to the press?

Tips on becoming a resource for journalists

- Be available. Give reporters, especially at news services where they work odd hours, home and mobiles numbers and tell them it's OK to call.
- Seek journalists at meetings etc and give them your business card.
- Be ready to be quoted. Having to call back once the quote has been cleared will reduce the chance of the quote being used.
- Know the issues. Read and comment intelligently on developments relating to your cause.
- Don't always assume journalists have received the information you have about topical events or relevant news releases.
- Avoid rhetoric and ideological arguments; most journalists have heard all this before.
- Know your facts; never pass on information unless you know it's true.
- Know where to find information or contacts fast and therefore gain a reputation as a good source.

Tips for getting editorial

- Familiarise yourself with the position of the newspaper.
- Identify the right person on the editorial team and get their email address.
- Explain your position in a short email and ask whether and how they would like to receive information (email, phone, meeting).
- If you don't receive a response in a couple of days, call. Persistence pays.
- If you are accepted it's likely you'll go into the office to discuss the issues.
- Conduct a trial session first, practise difficult questions, and further familiarise yourself with the editorial position.
- Don't expect more than half an hour, and make sure anyone you take can explain their views simply.
- Ask what they need from you.
- Bring written material, even if you've emailed them in advance. Don't show videos.
- Send a follow-up email offering further information.
- Offer to submit an opinion editorial if they do not adopt your position.

CONTACTS

SADC Water Division, IPS Africa and GTZ Transboundary Water Management Programme prepared this drafted “Media-Handbook for Water Practitioners in the SADC Region” jointly.

Comments, feedback and suggestions to improve this draft are much appreciated. Please contact the following for any further information:

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Additional Media Contacts for water-issues in SADC region:

Southern Africa Water Wire
<http://www.africwaterwire.org>

Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC)
<http://www.sardc.net>

IRIN News - Africa
<http://www.irinnews.org/IRIN-Africa.aspx>

The Water Channel
<http://www.thewaterchannel.tv/>

Water Media Programme – World Water Council
<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=737>

Glossary of Terms Frequently Used in the Water Sector

[Source: Media Handbook]

Aquatic Growing or living in or near water; refers to marine or freshwater Ecosystems

Aquifer Underground layer of rock, sand, or gravel capable of storing water within cracks and pores, or between grains. Water in an aquifer is called groundwater, and this can be used for drinking and other purposes if sufficient quantity and quality.

Arid Dry

Basin A large low-lying area drained by a stream or river system (see Catchment)

Benefit sharing This concept sees the potential for sharing the environmental and socio-economic benefits of water in shared water bodies, rather than simply equal allocation.

Catchment An area that receives or “catches” the rain that flows into a watercourse (see Basin)

Climate change Alteration to measured quantities of rain, temperature, wind, cloudiness and other characteristics of a climate system that departs significantly from previous average conditions and remains, causing changes to ecosystems and socio-economic activity

Community participation Process whereby a community is encouraged to take part in decision-making and implementation of development programmes in which it is a beneficiary

Consumptive use Any use that permanently removes water from the natural stream system

Dambo Shallow, seasonally or permanently waterlogged, grass-covered depression

Degradation Deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as water or soil

Delta Triangular tract of sand and soil at the mouth of a river where it flows into the sea enclosed or traversed by its diverging branches

Desalination Process of removing salt from water

Downstream In the direction to which a river or stream flows

Ecological value A measure of the significance of an area of land as a habitat supporting trees, plants and animals

Ecosystem All the living organisms and the physical environment in an area as well as the processes that link them together

Effluent Liquid waste that is a by-product of human activity, such as sewage or industrial discharge

Endemic Species believed to exist only in a specific area

Estuary Part of a the river where it meets the sea, characterised by a mixture of seawater and freshwater

Floodplain Area adjacent to a river or lake and seasonally flooded

Flood An overflow or influx of water beyond its normal confines

Food security Availability of food when needed, through production, storage or import

Freshwater Water with less than 0.5 parts per thousand of dissolved salts, found in lakes, rivers and groundwater

Groundwater Rainfall that seeps into the ground through cracks in the soil, sand, or rocks until it reaches a layer of rock and collects there

Groundwater recharge Replacement of water, usually through rainwater seeping into the ground, to replenish that lost through abstraction, evaporation of transpiration

Helsinki Rules A basis for international agreements on water management, stating that each basin state has rights to an equitable share of water in the basin, and that maximum benefit should be achieved with minimum disadvantage to other states

Hydrological cycle Process by which water reaches the Earth through rain, passes through transport and storage stages on the Earth's surface, and is returned to the atmosphere through evaporation

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) The coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, to maximise the economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems

Irrigation Watering land by canals, sprinklers or drips for purpose of crop production

Non-consumptive use Water usage that does not involve reduction in the quantity of water available

Perennial Lasting throughout the year or for a long time

Pollution Poisoning of land, air or water with anything that reduces its ability to support life

Rainfall variability Pattern of rainfall in arid environments where the amount and location of rain differ widely from year to year

Ramsar Treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources

Riparian Adjacent to a river

River basin Area of land from which all surface run-off of water flows through a sequence of streams, rivers and sometimes lakes into the sea at a single river mouth, estuary or delta

Runoff Storm water flowing over the ground surface

SADC Treaty The Treaty establishing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) signed on 17 August 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia

Sanitation The maintenance or improvement of sanitary conditions through drainage and disposal of sewage and refuse

Semi-arid Areas where mean annual rainfall is between about 250 and 600mm, rainfall is seasonal and variable, and potential evaporation is high

Surface water Water found on the surface of the land, such as that in rivers, lakes and dams

Sustainable development Term used by the World Commission on Environment and Development to denote development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Upstream The opposite direction to the water flow in a river; towards the source

Water allocation Distribution of water among the various sectors of society

Water-borne diseases Those caused by parasites that live in water, for example cholera, dysentery, bilharzia, or typhoid, among others

Water harvesting Collection of rainwater

Water resources Water that is useful or potentially useful

Water scarcity This occurs when the annual freshwater supplies drop below 1,000 cubic metres per person, and there is not enough water to support agricultural, urban, human, or environmental needs

Water stress A community or country is said to be water stressed when annual supplies of freshwater drop below 1,700 cubic metres per person. This can be caused by the drying up of boreholes or lakes, or other activity that reduces the liquid water available.

Water table A more or less horizontal layer in the soil below which all spaces between soil particles are saturated with water.

