



8th SADC River Basin Organisations Workshop Concept Note

*“Securing Strategic Investments to
Realise the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation”*

8-9 May 2018
Windhoek, Namibia

Overview of the SADC River Basin Organisations (RBOs) Workshops

The Regional The regional Southern African Development Community (SADC) River Basin Organisations (RBOs) Workshop is a biennial platform, which is organised with the aim of using RBOs as a vehicle for strengthening regional integration and cooperation. The SADC RBOs workshop is a platform for RBOs to share experiences and learn from each other. This biennial regional workshop is meant to build consensus on SADC's strategic approach to support the efforts of Member States with regard to the establishment, institutional development, and strengthening of RBOs, as well as other transboundary water resources development and management mechanisms in the region.

The initial six SADC RBOs Workshops, were successfully convened by the SADC Water Division during a period where most of the SADC RBOs were being established. With the establishment of RBOs in the region and their subsequent strengthening the SADC Water Resources Technical Committee (WRTC) recommended that future RBOs Workshops be hosted by a River Basin Organisation in collaboration with SADC Water Division in order to increase ownership of the Workshops by the RBOs. It is anticipated that having RBOs leading in the coordination of these Workshops will make them more relevant and respond to their emerging issues and priorities. Based on this recommendation the 7th SADC RBOs Workshop was

organised by the Orange-Senqu River Basin Commission in collaboration with SADC and GWP SA, and hosted by the Government of the Republic of South Africa. The RBOs Workshop remains a relevant platform for all the RBOs in the SADC Region and the Island States to convene and engage. The 8th SADC RBOs Workshop will be convened by the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) in collaboration with the SADC Water Division and GWPSA and hosted by the Government of Namibia as agreed by the riparian states of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin.

The SADC RBOs Workshops are implemented within the framework of the RSAP IV on IWRM, which drives the implementation of the regional water programme with the aim of “unlocking the potential of water to be a catalyst and engine for regional economic growth through cooperation and water resources development and management”. The funding of the SADC RBOs Workshop comes from the SADC Transboundary Water Management Programme implemented by GiZ with delegated authority from BMZ and DFID, on behalf of SADC Secretariat. In implementing this Plan, SADC employs the principle of subsidiarity i.e. to use institutions with comparative advantage for implementing specific interventions. In this regard, Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWPSA) as an implementing partner of SADC has been tasked to support the implementation of Stakeholder Engagement activities as part of the SADC Transboundary Water Management Programme.





Background of the 8th SADC RBOs Workshop

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region is home to some 280 million people relying on water for their livelihoods (water supply for domestic, industrial and agricultural requirements). Poverty eradication is at the top of the SADC agenda. Poverty remains one of the greatest challenges in the SADC region, with approximately half of the population living on less than \$1 a day, according to the International Council on Social Welfare. Hunger, malnutrition, gender inequalities, exploitation, marginalisation, high morbidity, and HIV and AIDS are a few of the complex challenges that contribute to poverty in the SADC region.


Over 70% of the region's fresh water resources are shared between two or more member states, a situation that has been the basis for the development and adoption of a series of regional instruments to support the joint management and development of shared watercourses. The Revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses, the SADC Water Policy and the SADC Water Strategy are the instruments of cooperation, which guide joint development, and management of the resources.

Over the years, SADC has driven the implementation of these key instruments through the implementation of the five-year rolling Regional Strategic Action Plans (RSAP) on IWRM. One of the key achievements has been the establishment of Shared Watercourse Institutions (SWIs) to play a critical role in the management of shared water resources. Increasing demand, poverty and the impacts of climate change on water resources in the region are posing a serious challenge to water managers in transboundary basins.

It is increasingly recognised that collaboration to manage transboundary resources is key to building resilience, promoting sustainable development and tackling issues of peace, sovereignty and security. The role of SWIs like River Basin Organizations (RBOs) is therefore, increasingly coming under the spotlight as to how they can directly support the region in responding to these challenges.

The RBOs in the region are at different stages of maturity in terms of being fully established. Countries are contributing resources to support these institutions, and this shows a high level of commitment. However, for this support to be sustained there is need for RBOs to realize clear benefits for the member



An aerial photograph of a winding river flowing through a vast, green landscape. The river meanders through the terrain, creating a series of loops and curves. The surrounding land is covered in dense, vibrant green vegetation, likely a savanna or wetland area. The sky is a clear, bright blue, and the overall scene conveys a sense of natural beauty and environmental health. The image is framed by a blue border at the top and bottom, with a yellow and green abstract shape in the upper left corner.

states. Member states are expecting to see social, economic and environmental benefits derived from transboundary water cooperation. However, the systematic assessment, documentation and understanding of the benefits of transboundary water cooperation have not been communicated well in the region. With competing needs there is a growing need for RBOs to demonstrate value addition for their continued funding from the Member States.

Although literature is extensively available regarding the benefits derived from transboundary water cooperation, there has been little work done to demonstrate the benefits of transboundary water cooperation using empirical evidence. The Cubango-Okavango River Basin Commission (OKACOM) and Orange-Senqu River Basin Commission (ORASECOM) have recently conducted some high-level studies to increase the understanding of benefits derived, and the Zambezi River Basin (ZAMCOM) in its last Basin Stakeholder Forum also focused on similar issues. These discussions and assessments are increasing the understanding of what benefits can be derived; however, the region needs to move a step further to ensure that these are realized.

In order for countries to realize benefits from transboundary water cooperation that will address issues of social justice,

economic prosperity and environmental health – joint planning and investing in strategic basin projects is critical. It is important to secure investments in the river basins that will derive benefits that will transform the region. The distribution of the benefits across all levels from local to national and regional can also inform the design, type and placement of such investments to ensure equity and fairness in the beneficial use of shared watercourses. This will subsequently result in strengthening of RBOs by shared watercourses states.


Theme, Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Following consultations with RBOs in the SADC region, the theme, justification, objectives and expected outcomes of the 8th SADC RBOs Workshop are as follows:

Theme: Securing Strategic Investments to realise the benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation

Justification for the 8th RBOs Workshop Theme

The commitments to peace and prosperity among the riparian states and the broader efforts of the Southern African Development Community to facilitate greater regional integration provides the prospects for increasing development. Transboundary water cooperation is necessary to manage



shared waters in an integrated and sustainable way. It has the potential to generate many significant benefits for cooperating countries, such as accelerated economic growth through strategic investments, improved human well-being, enhanced environmental sustainability and increased political stability. Nevertheless, many challenges can prevent or delay countries from embracing effective joint management of transboundary waters, because of an incomplete or biased perception of the benefits that could be attained as well as their distribution.

As cooperation is one of the main obligations of the SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses, SADC Member States naturally reflect on what benefits such cooperation can bring. Strategic investments and a deliberate effort to monitor and evaluate impacts of such investments through a well-structured, systematic and robust process of benefit assessments can help countries to fully realize the potential benefits of cooperation, including by uncovering previously overlooked benefits and identifying opportunities arising from increased cooperation. It can therefore provide arguments and compelling evidence for cooperating and help to ensure the much-needed political support and funding for the cooperation process.

Objective

To share experiences on how RBOs can play a key role in basin-wide investment planning and implementation processes in order to realise the benefits of transboundary water cooperation.

Expected Outcomes

1. Increased understanding on how the benefits of transboundary water cooperation can be identified, assessed, and communicated to foster cooperation
2. Experiences shared on basin-wide investment planning and implementation processes that can contribute to the realisation of benefits of transboundary water cooperation
3. Experiences of compelling evidence on the contribution of investments as a tool to enhance the benefits of transboundary water cooperation
4. Agreement on the priority arguments and examples of compelling evidence for cooperating in order to ensure the much-needed political support and funding for the cooperation process.

Dates and Venue

The 8th SADC RBOs Workshop will be convened from 8-9 May 2018 in Windhoek, Namibia. The RBOs Workshop will be preceded by a Special Session on Gender which will reflect on the RBOs theme from a gender perspective and a Workshop of the Water Utilities in the SADC region.

The RBOs Workshop will be attended by SADC Member States, RBOs Secretariats, Regional Institutions, International Cooperating Partners and experts among other participants.