



Ministry of Agriculture, Water  
and Forestry



# OKACOM

The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission

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06 May 2018

## MEDIA RELEASE: 8TH SADC RIVER BASIN ORGANIZATIONS WORKSHOP

Established in 2006, the SADC River Basin Organizations (RBOs) series of workshops is organised every two years with the aim of using RBOs as a vehicle for strengthening regional integration and cooperation. The 8<sup>th</sup> SADC RBO workshop will be held from 8 to 9 May 2018, providing a forum for RBOs to share experiences and lessons amongst each other.

This year's RBOs workshop will be convened by the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM), in collaboration with the SADC Secretariat, Directorate of Infrastructure - Water Division and GWP SA and hosted by the Government of Namibia, one of OKACOM's riparian states. Convened under the theme *"Securing Strategic Investments to Realise the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation"*, the workshop will provide a platform for various stakeholders to discuss the opportunities of investing in projects in transboundary river basins and also enable RBOs in the region to share their experiences within their jurisdictions.

The objective of the workshop is to share experiences on how RBO's can play a key role in basin-wide investment planning and implementation processes in order to realise the benefits of transboundary water cooperation

The regional SADC RBOs workshops are meant to build consensus on SADC's strategic approach in supporting the establishment, institutional development, and strengthening of RBOs, as well as other transboundary water resources development and management mechanisms in the region.

Since 2006, the SADC Secretariat's Directorate of Infrastructure Water Division has facilitated for RBOs to meet and share experiences around managing shared river basins in the region through the RBOs workshops. The workshops are implemented within the framework of the Regional Strategic Action Plan on Integrated Water Resources Development and Management



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The first six workshops were convened by the SADC Secretariat, during a period when most of the SADC RBOs were being established. Following the establishment and strengthening of RBOs, the SADC Water Resources Technical Committee (WRTC) recommended that RBO workshops be hosted by RBOs in collaboration with SADC Water Division, as a means of increasing ownership of the Workshops by the RBO's. This decision, which was first implemented in 2017 when the Orange-Senqu River Basin Commission organised the 7<sup>th</sup> SADC RBOs Workshop, in South Africa. By so doing, it is expected that the relevance of RBOs and responsiveness to emerging issues and priorities will be boosted

The overall objective of the RBOs workshops has been to promote the sharing and exchanging of experiences in implementing the revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses by building consensus on the region's approach to supporting 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 region's RBOs are at different stages of maturity in terms of establishment and riparian states are showing their commitment through contributing resources to support these institutions. However, for this support to be sustained, member states expect to see social, economic and environmental benefits derived from transboundary water cooperation. The need for RBOs to demonstrate value addition in order to get continuous funding from the Member States is increasing, due to competition for resources.

Despite being assessed, documented and understood, the benefits of transboundary water cooperation have not been communicated well in the region. Empirical evidence to support the extensive existing literature on the benefits derived from transboundary water cooperation is still lacking. There is need, therefore, to take further steps of ensuring that the benefits are not only understood but are also realised within the region. It is against this background that this year's RBOs workshop is underpinning on the theme ***“Securing Strategic Investments to Realise the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation.”***



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It is expected that through the workshop, stakeholders will gain a better understanding of the on how the benefits of transboundary water cooperation can be identified, assessed, and communicated to foster cooperation, whilst at the same time sharing experiences on basin-wide investment planning and implementation processes that can contribute to the realisation of benefits of transboundary water cooperation. The workshop will also be a forum for stakeholders to share experiences of compelling evidence on the contribution of investments as a tool to enhance the benefits of transboundary water cooperation. In addition, the workshop proceedings are expected to lead stakeholders to a consensus 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

The upcoming RBOs Workshop will be attended by SADC Member States, RBO Secretariats, the SADC Nexus Project Regional Steering Committee, Regional Institutions, International Cooperating Partners and experts among other participants.

Through the subsidiarity principle of SADC, Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWPSA), as SADC Secretariat's implementing partner, has been mandated to support the implementation of Stakeholder Engagement activities as part of the SADC Transboundary Water Management Programme. In this regard, GWPSA will be organising this year's RBOs workshop on behalf of the SADC Secretariat and OKACOM. 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.

## 8<sup>th</sup> SADC River Basin Organisations Workshop Concept Note

Draft Programme

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### **About SADC Directorate for Infrastructure Water Division**

The SADC Water Division falls under the Directorate for Infrastructure and is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the implementation of regional water related activities in close collaboration with the member states of SADC under the guidance of instruments for water cooperation, which include the Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses (2000), the Regional Water Policy, adopted in 2005; the Regional Water Strategy adopted in 2006 and Regional Strategic Action Plan on Integrated Water Resources Development and Management which was first approved by SADC Summit in August 1998 to run in five-year phases.

### **About the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa**

The Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWPSA) is one of the 13 regional networks of the international network. It is created to foster an integrated approach to water resources management, and solutions to water related problems (such as climate change and urbanisation). GWPSA manages activities and programmes with stakeholders in the SADC Region and at Pan-African level to bring about solutions that are both tailored to local conditions and informed by local experiences and good practices from across the continent.

### **About The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM Secretariat)**

The Permanent Okavango River Basin Commission, a regional river basin organization, provides advice to the governments of Angola, Botswana and Namibia about issues related to conservation and wise management, development and utilisation of the natural water resources in the Cubango-Okavango River Basin.

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