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Orange-Senqu River Basin Stewardship Learning Journey

Session 5 Mini-Report

17 March 2021

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Resource Economics Africa



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INTRODUCTION

This mini-report presents a description of the final of five sessions of the Orange-Senqu River Basin (OSB) Learning Journey, which was held online on 17 March 2021.

The OSB Learning Journey is a learning exchange that aims to bring key stakeholders from Lesotho and South Africa together to identify shared risks around water security and joint solutions to protect the natural resources, the economic and social benefits stemming from the Orange-Senqu Basin for Lesotho and South Africa. The OSB Learning Journey is convened by GIZ NatuReS GIZ, ICM Lesotho and the Lesotho National ICU, and hosted under the auspices of ORASECOM.

The OSB Learning Journey constitutes the following five sessions:

- Session 1: Understanding the Orange-Senqu Basin
- Session 2: The people of the OSB: users & custodians
- Session 3: Catchment management lessons for learning.
- Session 4: Exploring possible financing mechanisms
- Session 5: Way Forward - How to protect the OS Basin?

SESSION 5: CHARTING A WAY FORWARD FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP ON OSB

The session was held online on 17 March 2021, and lasted two hours and 45 minutes. Stakeholders from Lesotho and South Africa were invited. The focus of the session was to bring the learnings from the previous four sessions together and to plan a way forward in the quest to develop a water stewardship programme on the Orange-Senqu basin. The main objectives of the session were:

- Collaboratively develop a way forward to protect the OSB, drawing from all previous sessions.
- Identifying potential projects of joint interest.
- Identify suitable institutional arrangements for a (partnership) platform to structure further engagements on collective responses.

Participants

Of the 31 people who participated in the second session¹ of the Learning Journey, 19 were from Lesotho (including GIZ staff), and 12 were from South Africa, (including GIZ staff). There was good representation from different sectors from both Lesotho and South Africa, as indicated in the table below:

LESOTHO STAKEHOLDER GROUPINGS	SOUTH AFRICAN STAKEHOLDER GROUPINGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Caritas■ Catholic Relief Service■ EU Delegation■ GIZ Lesotho■ GOL Ministry of Agriculture■ GOL Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation■ GOL Ministry of Water Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Dept of Water & Sanitation (DWS)■ Eskom■ GIZ NatuReS■ IFAD■ Orasecom■ SASOL■ TCTA

¹ An attendance register is attached as Appendix 1.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IFAD ▪ Lesotho Highlands Development Authority ▪ Lesotho Millennium Development Agency ▪ Liqhobong Mines ▪ UNDP 	
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Programme

The primary objective of this session² was to build on the previous four sessions and to plan a way forward. The session was organised into five parts³:

- Part 1: Visual representation of journey highlighting key learnings from each session
- Part 2: Example of a partnership model in water stewardship - SWPN presentation on value proposition, financial sustainability, partnership model & governance structure
- Part 3: Orange-Senqu Basin partnership way forward. What institutional/ organisational/governance approach needs to be used for setting up a platform that represents stakeholder interests from Lesotho and South Africa on OSB
- Part 4: Water stewardship projects that are already planned as part of the ICM programme along the OSB for consideration and support
- Part 5: Reflection on the Learning Journey
- Part 6: Summary of next steps

The preparation for the final way forward discussion combined looking back at the sessions of the Learning Journey, looking at institutional options, and learning about what projects are already being implemented on the OSB by ICM, LHDA and ORASECOM.⁴

Visual representation of journey highlighting key learnings from each session

A quick scan through all four sessions, reminding participants of the purpose of each session, and drawing out the highlights, assisted to set the scene for the planning session.

² The agenda is attached as Appendix 2.

³ A copy of the combined presentation is attached as Appendix 3.

⁴ A mural board summary of the session is attached as Appendix 4.

Session 1 Objectives:

- * The characteristics & importance of the OSB, including socio-economic value of the water resource.
- * Understanding & prioritizing shared risks & threats facing the OSB.
- * Establishing the basis & steps towards a collaborative, trans-boundary water stewardship partnership.

Session 1 Highlights

1. Both Lesotho & SA are dependent on a sustainably functional OSB.
2. The private sector is uniquely placed to offer:
 - a) Unique perspectives on water resource management by businesses committed to sustainable growth & employment in the catchment.
 - b) An important collective voice supporting better water governance.
 - c) Innovative water technologies and processes, as well as associated supply chain developments.
 - d) Connections & influence with upstream custodians & downstream users, who can also engage on multi-stakeholder platforms.
 - e) Potential, additional sources of investment, especially relating to emerging mechanisms such as blended finance as well as patient capital, insurance/reinsurance, CSR
3. A holistic & integrated approach to water resource management is key, i.e. linking what happens upstream & downstream.
4. Important to work out now how we understand the way the system will be managed & used into the future.
5. We need to think in terms of asset management for long term sustainability.
6. Consistent implementation of known & new operating rules along the whole catchment is critical to catchment health.
7. Climate change adaptation is key to understanding cost & supply of water.
8. LHWP - IVWS transfer system needs ongoing maintenance for long term water security.

Session 2 objectives:

- * Understand stakeholder landscape of the OSB.
- * Understand the key interests of the major stakeholders.
- * Identify main responsibilities of government, private sector, communities, as well as NGO/Donors in respect of their main interests.
- * Identify benefits & challenges of trans-boundary & multi-stakeholder cooperation.

Session 2 Highlights

1. Mixed profile of participating stakeholders from Lesotho & SA: private sector (rural/agricultural & urban/ industrial & domestic) and civil society (individual & organised).
2. All stakeholder groups have shared and unique interests - all tied to access to quality, quantity, reliability of provision and sustainability. Unique interests are tied to mandates of different stakeholders.
3. All stakeholder groups have shared and unique responsibilities, which are directly tied to their interests.

Session 3 objectives:

- * Learn about water stewardship from stewardship practitioners and champions of collective multi-stakeholders approaches.
- * Examine key issues to be addressed in preparation for planning a water stewardship intervention.
- * Introduction to 10 x 10 best practices for the set-up and implementation of stewardship partnerships.

Session 3 Highlights

1. Water stewardship projects should be introduced close to the catchment if possible (upstream or downstream).
2. Water stewardship projects need to address issues related to:
 - a. Program & project Planning - should be integrated; helpful to use Water-Energy- Food (WEF) nexus approach; should be strategic (Sasol's 6 focus areas is useful framework); Interventions can be catchment-wide or local - all opportunities that meet project participant location, capacity, etc to be factored in
 - b. Trans-boundary Cooperation - Mobilise key participants; a capacitated secretariat is key; unified data sets are bedrock of agile decision-making.
 - c. Develop Capacity - at institutional, operational & grassroots - public, private & civil society. Use existing agencies & learning materials. Share lessons. Include upstream & downstream information; Include climate change information.
 - d. Stakeholder Identification, mobilisation & involvement - All stakeholder groupings have their challenges - engage them intelligently; requires skills, time & effort; Strategic (govt & key at national & trans-boundary level), operational (organisational users), local (organisational & Individual) all important - don't leave people out; communicate often & effectively. Build & service water networks.
 - e. Private Sector Participation - work from a position of interests; partner on design & implementation; mobilise resources - cash & in-kind; build common vision, synergies & combined actions locally & strategic; involve private sector in networks. Ensure involvement of key stakeholders - especially agriculture & mining.
 - f. Risk Management - Identify all risks (including climate change) & share information about these; design explicitly & proactively around risk management in a multi-sectoral way; encourage interaction between Transfrontier Conservation Areas & trans-boundary water institutions for ecosystems-based adaptation.
 - g. Livelihoods & Community Development - Be informed about WEF nexus impacts on livelihoods, bring this into intervention design; Encourage Climate Smart Agriculture & Water, Sanitation & Hygiene Investments; engage local communities re own practices, needs, issues; contribute to local economic empowerment.
3. Water stewardship 10x10 guidelines document is a useful reference to guide approach & design at all levels.

Session 4 objectives:

- * Learn about financing options from a portfolio of funding mechanisms, presented by fund experts from various agencies involved in integrated catchment management and water stewardship.
- * Ascertain the interest from participants and prioritise what may be most appropriate to promote integrated catchment management across the OSB through a water stewardship approach

Session 4 Highlights

1. There are various types financing mechanisms that show good potential for application in a cross-boundary context, including grants, shared risk grants and investment bonds. Most mechanisms are interested in integrated catchment approaches.
2. Most mechanisms encourage cross-sectoral partnerships.
3. The private sector has a significant interest in water stewardship based on direct potential impact on their operations. Not all private sector parties are aware of the importance of their participation. More information about how to contribute could assist this.
4. Trans-boundary is not a big barrier.
5. There are a number of precedents to build upon and to learn from.

After the quick scan of all the previous sessions, a presentation was made of an existing water stewardship network functioning in South Africa, namely the Strategic Water Partners Network (SWPN).

Example of a Partnership model in water stewardship - SWPN

Nandha Govender presented on the value proposition, financial sustainability, partnership model and governance structure of the Strategic Water Partners Network. He explained that the network had been established by the national government Department of Environmental, Forestry and Fisheries in 2011. He explained that “The Strategic Water Partners Network (SWPN) is a multi-stakeholder (public, private and civil society) partnership working collectively to close the gap between water supply and demand by 17% by 2030”.

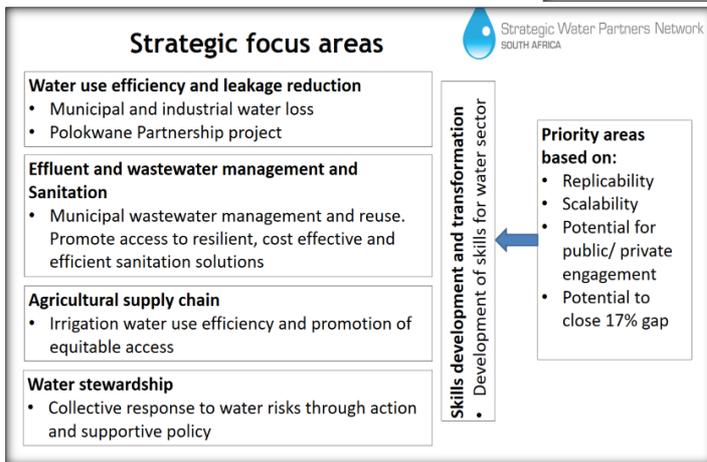
SWPN is co-chaired by the public (Director General Department of Water & Sanitation) and the private sector (currently Eskom acting Co-Chair), supported by a secretariat hosted by NEPAD Business Foundation (NBF), with a Management Committee (Manco) and Steering Committee (Steercom). Operational funds come from private and public sector contributions and donor grants (i.e 2030 WRG and GiZ). Work is carried out through four functioning Thematic Working Groups (TWG).

SWPN vision

To contribute to efficient, equitable and sustainable water supply and access to water and sanitation for all South Africans through the identification and application of innovative and cost-effective solutions

A wide range of partners are involved, as indicated in the diagram.

Nandha Govender described the reason for the establishment of the SWPN being tied to the massive risks facing water provision in South Africa. Related to the risk profile is the design of the pillars of intervention:



In describing the value proposition for the various stakeholders, it was pointed out that SWPN provides a critical platform for accessing key role-players, defining and strategizing about solutions to water stress collaboratively, pooling resources and sharing risks, amongst other benefits. There is scope for and commitment to improved impact through leveraging a more sustainable approach to financing the network.

Institutional/ organisational/governance options to consider for OSB

Any trans-boundary multi-stakeholder water stewardship solution that is developed for the OSB will need to be governed by an appropriate institutional vehicle. There are various types and combinations of institutions that can carry forward a water stewardship initiative.

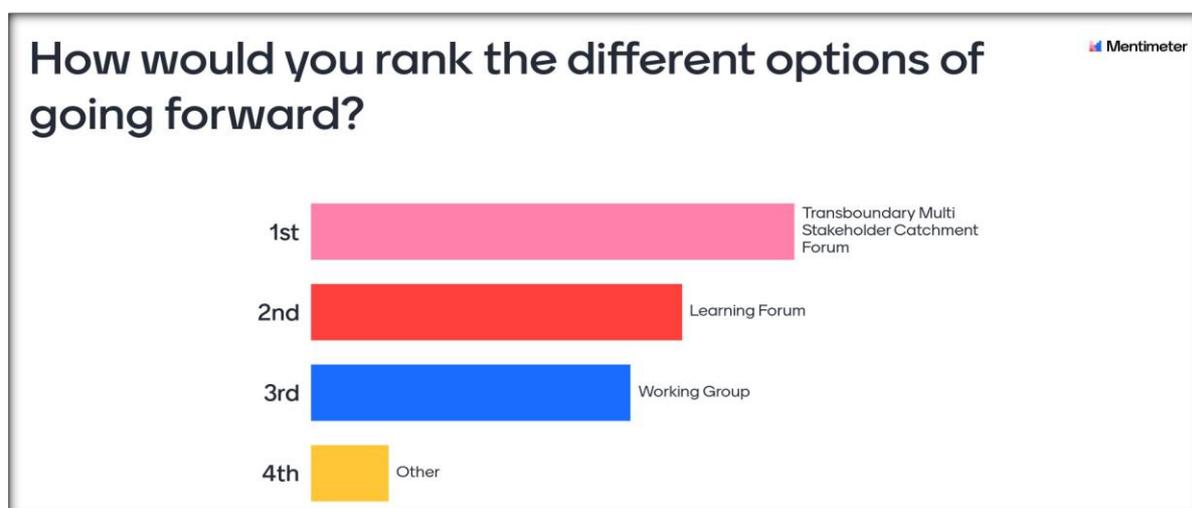
It was agreed by all that:

- It is essential to find the most appropriate institutional “home”.
- It would be sensible to build synergies with existing institutions such as Orasecom and SWPN.
- Orasecom would need to play a key role.
- There is a logic to developing a Lesotho-based “sister” network/organisation.
- Different country-based organisations could work together on an equal institutional footing to protect the OSB.

Dominic Mitchell tabled a comparison of three options for consideration against a number of criteria using the following summary table:

	Activity focus/function	Sustainable finance	Secretariat	Timeframe	Formality	Time commitment
Working group/s	Practical and task focused	In kind	No permanent secretariat 1 partner can offer admin support	Determined by projects	Semi-formal to formal	Moderate
Multi-Stakeholder Trans-boundary Catchment Forum	Cross-border stakeholder group Institutionalised or non-institutionalised	Requires funding	Requires secretariat	Normally longer term	Formal	More demanding
Learning forum	Group of individuals with common interest or focus Aim to share learning, capacity and experience	In-kind	No permanent secretariat, one partner can offer admin support	As agreed by participants	Informal	Moderate

The response to the discussion on the different institutional options is captured in the following diagram, showing keen interest in a Trans-boundary multi-stakeholder Catchment Forum. The support for a Learning Forum was indicative of the value of this Learning Journey. It is clear that stakeholders acknowledged the need to act to achieve an integrated and sustainable management of the OSB water resources through a multi-stakeholder stewardship platform.



Projects currently being implemented on the OSB by ICM, LHDA and ORASECOM

As a way of catalysing an OSB-based water stewardship initiative, 12 different projects were presented by the GIZ ICM programme, LHDA and Orasecom, all of which are in various stages of planning and implementation. All projects presented aim to contribute to rehabilitation and protection of the whole OSB. Aside from sharing what was already taking place to add to the work presented in the previous session by Letseng Mines, a further objective of this part of the workshop was to invite participating organisations to align themselves or become involved in any of the 12 projects presented.

Johannes Beuster kicked off this session by describing a number of projects that are being planned for implementation through the GIZ ICM programme in Lesotho. He mentioned the following pipeline of projects:

1. Priority sub-catchments and scaling, by which six priority sub-catchments have been identified in which rapid and detailed climate change vulnerability as well as water availability assessments are being planned in line with the “science before planning principle”. The aim being to ensure that any work carried out in any catchment is informed by a detailed analysis of the vulnerabilities and water stress levels. Those priority sub-catchments are pilots for the country and the methodology will be scaled to further catchments in time.
2. Integrated Sub-Catchment Management Plans with a 5-year planning cycle are being formulated.
3. A project looking at the economic and social value of wetlands, focussing on confirming and quantifying the main causes contributing to decreasing volumes of water in storage in Katse and Mohale Dams.
4. Protecting important headwater wetlands through the RAMSAR convention, which aims to identify and designate wetlands of international importance.
5. Development of a National ICM Data System, with the objective of supporting and promoting improvements in the collection and use of data for national monitoring and planning of ICM.
6. Developing a compendium of green livelihoods, looking at opportunities for Aquaculture, Farming/agriculture (Machobane farming, horticulture, green houses, dairy product, orchards, organic vegetables distribution and marketing, new niche markets), IT skills, Tourism industry, Medicinal herbs/plants, Alien invasive species value chain, and Mini hydropower and wind farms.

After Johannes Beuster’s presentation, Palesa Monongoaha spoke LHWP catchment rehabilitation intervention. She presented projects that were defined by a situational analysis that highlighted wetland degradation, diminishing river flows, sedimentation, waste management, and Alien Invasive Species infestation. She identified the following projects, for each of which she elaborated the project goals and activities, showing progress and impact:

1. Protection rehabilitation and restoration of wetlands (Establishment of protected area, Physical and biological interventions, Governance).
2. Conservation and sustainable use of rangelands (Removal of invasive plant species and reseedling, Livestock registration, Rangelands resting, Establishment of RMAs/Gas, Development and implementation of grazing plans).
3. Prevention and control of soil erosion (Establishment of a buffer zone above the dam, Physical and biological interventions, Improvement of vegetative cover).
4. Pollution control (Catchment assessment, Cumulative impact assessments, Stakeholders Engagement).
5. Livelihoods diversification (Wage-based, enterprise-based initiatives, Ecotourism, Private sector involvement through PPPs with strong community beneficiation component)
6. Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement.

Under the banner of a joint venture between ORASECOM, GEF and UNDP, Simbotwe Mwiya presented a group of interventions that collectively have the following objective and components:

Strengthening of joint management capacity for implementation of the basin-wide IWRM Plan & demonstrating environmental and socioeconomic benefits of the ecosystem-based approach to water resources management through the implementation of SAP priority actions in the Orange-Senqu River Basin. The intervention components were identified as:

- Component 1: Institutional and policy reform and technical capacity building towards enhanced trans-boundary basin planning and joint management.
- Component 2: Reducing stress on Water Resources Quality.
- Component 3: Addressing Changes to the Hydrological Regime through the source-to-sea application.
- Component 4: Addressing Land Degradation through community-based ecosystem management.

The projects were defined as:

1. Innovative Private Public Partnership schemes developed under the auspices of ORASECOM, building on successful pilot project with Emfuleni municipality.
2. Potential for implementation of trans-boundary Paying for Ecosystem Service (PES) schemes in the basin explored and PES project concepts developed.

Discussion: Orange-Senqu Basin partnership way forward

Subsequent to the presentations, a short discussion was held that focussed on participant interest in the existing projects, what other interventions they felt should be incorporated, and a reflection on the learning journey itself. It was clear by the comments made that there was still much work to be done, but that the Learning Journey had made an important contribution to initiating an impetus towards a trans-boundary, cross-sectoral water stewardship intervention on the Orange-Senqu River Basin.

The following key points were put forward by participants by way of issues that need following up:

- Collaboration with existing structures:
 - Need to identify what institutional arrangements, if any, exist currently that can be leveraged to drive water stewardship at river basin or project level.
 - There are strong synergies with ORASECOM UNDP GEF on Public Private Partnership development.
- Collaboration between stakeholders:
 - The elephant in the room is the role and involvement of the private sector and civil society which requires more attention during the institutional design process.
 - The role of the private sector needs to be explored more carefully, including examining all focus areas and plans e.g. supply chain risks.
 - It would be useful to continue as a platform that facilitates collaboration around efforts on the Orange-Senqu River Basin to avoid duplication and ensure efficient use of resources creating synergies that builds efficiencies and delivers to the stakeholders in the best way possible.
 - Smaller consultation to establish culture of working together
 - It would be useful to work together on the establishment of a trans-boundary multi-stakeholder forum.
 - Opportunity for LHDA to collaborate with the ICM to ensure a smooth operation in water stewardship – for example the National ICM Programme in Lesotho in which the rehabilitation of degraded wetlands and catchments are prioritised.

- More work around wetland and RAMSAR convention is foreseen and might be a great area for cooperation.
- Initiate water stewardship practically:
 - Support ongoing projects as a quick win?
 - Rehabilitation of catchments above LHWP dams
- Financial mechanisms:
 - The Green Climate Fund should be approached for the wetlands work, especially with co-financing from LHWP.
 - LHDA paying for projects through the O&M cost of the water transfer component i.e. by South Africa from the sale of electricity, which is financed on cost-sharing basis.
- Data and information-gathering:
 - Wetland degradation is likely also affected by climate change. From earlier conversations there were questions around the shown precipitation data where it was stated in the past two years Lesotho didn't receive winter snowfalls so it cannot be true that precipitation did not change. Information needs verification to develop keen initiatives.
 - LHDA is in the process of developing SOS for climate change vulnerability assessment and development of an adaptation and mitigation strategy for the LHWP, it will offer an opportunity for the speculation to be confirmed/disputed.
- Building on existing systems:
 - The existing treaty on LWHP makes provision for the protection of the catchments through the LHDA.
- Integrating holistic principles into activities and projects:
 - Gender equity features in the criteria to identify priority green livelihoods.

Closing comments

In closing the session, participants were invited to comment on the value of the Learning Journey, and to identify specific benefits that they enjoyed from the experience. The following infographic presents some of the reactions.

For me the highlight of the learning journey is...



It was agreed that the discussion was not complete and that follow-up engagement was needed. In the immediate term, participants would be invited to complete an online survey reflecting more deeply on the Learning Journey as a whole. The ICM Team will look into how to take the process forward. In closing the Learning Journey, Lenka Thamae thanked all for excellent participation.

