



renOKa
We are a river

10 Highlights from 2021

The citizen movement
and national programme
for Integrated Catchment
Management in Lesotho



European Union



Introduction by the National ICM Coordinator

Bo-mme le bo-ntate, dear friends of ReNOKA

2021 marked the beginning of the ReNOKA Programme (ReNOKA). Under the leadership of His Majesty King Letsie III, and the Right Honourable Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro, we celebrated the launch of this citizen movement and national programme for Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) in Lesotho and the Orange-Senqu basin.

During a celebratory event in May 2021, five government ministers, and development partners, signed a declaration, committing to the ReNOKA principles of cooperation and coordinated action to benefit Integrated Catchment Management in Lesotho for today's and future generations.

As it has been for the rest of the world, 2021 was a challenging year for Lesotho due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the appropriate safety measures in place, we have nevertheless been able to initiate rehabilitation measures and

community-based planning processes in Lesotho's communities. The ReNOKA programme currently partners with more than 300 community-based associations for watershed management, and about 1,300 individuals from these associations have been trained in natural resource management and sustainable livelihood approaches. All these activities are coordinated by ReNOKA regional offices, staffed by Catchment Managers, NGO partners and GIZ technical advisers.

At the national level, we have been able to form and advance important new partnerships, such as our partnership with the National University of Lesotho for a new Integrated Water Resource Management Master's course, and teaching modules at tertiary level. With the support from Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), we developed an innovative land cover database to track land cover changes across Lesotho. A comprehensive policy assessment was completed,

which will guide important legal and policy reforms. To enhance transboundary cooperation, we have developed partnerships with regional and international partners like ORASECOM, Global Water Partnership Southern Africa, WaterNet and the Busara Centre for Behavioral Economics. We have also finalised the ReNOKA Operational Plan 2022, a comprehensive map of sector-wide activities to advance climate resilience and restore Lesotho's catchments.

As the National ICM Coordinator, I thank all of our partners who have made important contributions to ReNOKA in this past year. Together, we will continue to work to restore our land and water resources for the benefit of our communities and our future generations.

Makomoreng Fanana
National ICM Coordinator



Makomoreng Fanana, National ICM Coordinator

01

Official launch of the ReNOKA national programme and citizen movement

ReNOKA was officially launched on the 14 May 2021 by His Majesty King Letsie III and the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, Dr Moeketsi Majoro. The launch took place in Ha Koporale, Thaba Tseka, in the presence of community members, civil society representatives and international partners. During the ceremony, the ministers of five participating Ministries signed a partnership declaration, committing themselves to ReNOKA's vision and guiding principles:

"We believe that the benefits of Integrated Catchment Management in Lesotho for today's and future generations can only be achieved through coordinated action and cooperation that empower and support partnerships between all stakeholders."



Commencement of watershed rehabilitation measures



Invasive shrub removal and runoff control at Setibing, Maseru District



Checking dam construction at Ha Jimisi, Maseru District

Construction contracts were awarded to two Lesotho-based firms to undertake emergency rehabilitation measures in six hotspots in four priority sub-catchments. The measures are geared towards water security (pumps, irrigation schemes and weir storage), stabilisation (gabions, checks dams and storm water trenches), and land management (terracing, tree planting, fencing and road rehabilitation). Additionally, community-led *cash-for-work* measures were carried out in six sites in the Mafeteng and Maseru districts. This was done with support from the CRS-led NGO consortium using separate COVID-19 special funds from the German Government.

03

Formation of Community Watershed Teams

A total of 321 community-based associations in six priority sub-catchment areas participated in ReNOKA through Watershed Teams at both village and community level.

Village Watershed Teams (VWTs) and Community Watershed Teams (CWTs) were engaged to undertake watershed visioning, where degradation issues are identified, solutions are envisaged, and actions to achieve the vision are agreed. Catchment Planning Units (CPUs) were familiarised with the activities that are undertaken with the ICM community structures, which they will support with technical advice.

The role of the Watershed Teams is to represent the communities in ICM. They are directly involved in the planning and implementation of catchment activities, and continuously provide feedback to the communities. Their involvement ensures ICM ownership and safeguards their continued involvement in ICM interventions even after the project phases out.

Associations at local level include rangeland management associations, herders' associations, farmers' associations, funeral schemes, money loaning schemes, etc. They comprise 43% women and 13% youth.



CWT Members holding the Action plan



CWT Members during a visioning exercise at Menkhoaneng Community

Trainings of land and water users



CWT members at the NRM training listening attentively to the presenters



A participant expressing excitement and happiness to have been part of the training

A total of 1,320 land and water users received training through ReNOKA in 2021. Training topics included the implementation of watershed rehabilitation measures, principles and practices of natural resource management, financial education, marketing, organisational development and watershed visioning.

Trainings were provided by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-led NGO consortium for ReNOKA and focused on community groups that participate in CWTs.

05

Opening of ReNOKA regional offices

The National ICM Programme signed agreements with district government institutions for the opening of five regional ReNOKA offices. The government institutions will provide office space to ReNOKA on a long-term basis, alleviating the need for donor funding.

The Regional Offices form an essential part of a decentralised ReNOKA government structure. They house ReNOKA Catchment Managers, NGO partners and technical advisers to coordinate local planning and implementation.

Their locations are in Maletsunyane, Makhalaneng, Khubelu, Hlotse, Senquunyane and Likhetla



Engineering team visiting the Makhalaneng office



Ongoing renovations at Makhalaneng office

ReNOKA partnership with the National University of Lesotho



Representatives from the ICM Coordination Unit, NUL and GIZ signing the MoU

A partnership agreement was signed between ReNOKA and the National University of Lesotho (NUL) to collaborate on the introduction of a Master's Programme in Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). The partnership will also include modules in various undergraduate programmes, an internship programme for students, short courses for professionals, and practical training courses at the Institute of Extramural Studies (IEMS).

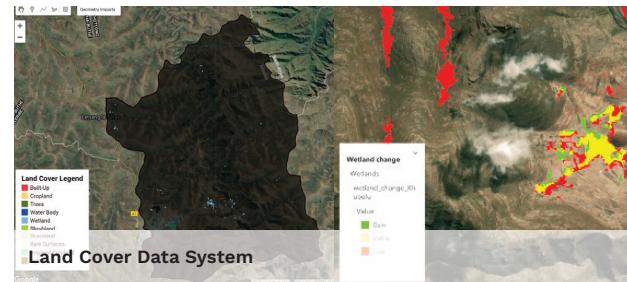
07

Lesotho Land Cover Data System

A Lesotho Land Cover Data System, used for catchment planning, was developed with support from FAO. The system is based on an innovative approach for the dynamic tracking of land cover changes. It allows for frequent land cover updates at minimal cost, tracking of land cover changes over time, and impact monitoring of ICM interventions.

The users of the database, such as catchment managers, resource planners or policy makers, can easily access data through dashboards to monitor events, see cover change trends and make evidence-led decisions.

The system is based on a machine learning model trained to recognise landcover types and automatically generate specific landcover products. Data sources include freely available satellite imagery at 10m resolution and high-res UAV footage of 2.5 cm available for specific sites (e.g. wetland mapping).



Field verification on status of the wetlands

Completion of policy assessment for ICM



Participants during engaging in discussions during the Policy Operational planning workshops



Presentations during policy operational planning workshop

A comprehensive assessment of Lesotho's policy framework was completed by a team of external experts in 2021, culminating in a series of key recommendations for legal and policy harmonisation in support of ICM. This will form the basis for the programmes policy harmonisation work going forward.

The recommendations include a revision of the Water Act (Act 15 of 2008) to institutionalise the ICM approach; harmonisation of key legal instruments for the implementation of ICM - such as the Environment Act (Act 10 of 2008) and the 2010 Land Act (Act 8 of 2010); enactment of regulations and guidelines to operationalise ICM; and capacity building for local government institutions, including specific processes to develop by-laws and enhance the financial management capacities of Local Councils.

09

Transboundary learning journey for water stewardship

A transboundary learning journey led by the ORASECOM Secretariat brought together more than 40 stakeholders from private sector, government and civil society institutions in Lesotho and South Africa.

Participants learnt about the geophysical environment of the Orange-Senqu river and the risks threatening the basin. To facilitate a dialogue on their roles as “stewards” of the basin, they engaged with several case studies of stewardship approaches to inspire collective action.

In preparation for the event series, a study on the social and economic value of water was commissioned to provide quantifiable indication on the risks for regional water security of inaction against the ongoing catchment degradation in Lesotho.

The event series led to an improved understanding of the interdependencies between South Africa and Lesotho. It mapped out the potential to engage jointly in the ReNOKA movement, and provided an opportunity to discuss options for a financing mechanism towards regional water security.



The Senqu river captured from Qhoasing, Lesotho

First joint operational planning process for Integrated Catchment Management



Stakeholder Dialogue for the ReNOKA Operational Plan in Maseru, November 2021

In November 2021, ReNOKA stakeholders came together in 11 workshops across the country to coordinate their activities for the restoration of land and water in Lesotho's catchments. The result is the ReNOKA Operational Plan 2022.

The ReNOKA Operational Plan 2022 provides, for the first time, a comprehensive mapping of activities of government departments, civil society organisations, the private sector, regional institutions and international partners to advance climate resilience and the restoration of land, water and livelihoods in Lesotho's catchment areas.

Stakeholders worked together across institutional lines to ensure they use their resources effectively, reduce overlaps and redundancies, and make an impact for all Basotho and for the entire Orange-Senqu River Basin.



Technical team in the field collecting data in a degraded wetland



Engineering team in the field



ReNOKA regional technical advisor enjoying a ride to Tsoelike (Thaba-Tseka) for CWT Training



Overgrazing is threatening the health of wetlands



Community being briefed during visioning exercise



Healthy wetland with marshy hay cordgrass



Puete Wetland

ReNOKA is a national programme and citizen movement for the restoration of land and water in Lesotho and the Orange-Senqu basin. Support for ReNOKA is provided through a partnership between the Government of Lesotho, the European Union (EU) Delegation to the Kingdom of Lesotho and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The EU and BMZ contributions are implemented through a technical assistance project “Support to Integrated Catchment Management in Lesotho” by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

For more information contact
Makomoreng Fanana
National ICM Coordinator
ICM Coordination Unit
Ministry of Water
Government of Lesotho
Email: makomoreng.fanana@renoka.org

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