



ORASECOM

THE ORANGE-SENQU RIVER COMMISSION

NEWSLETTER

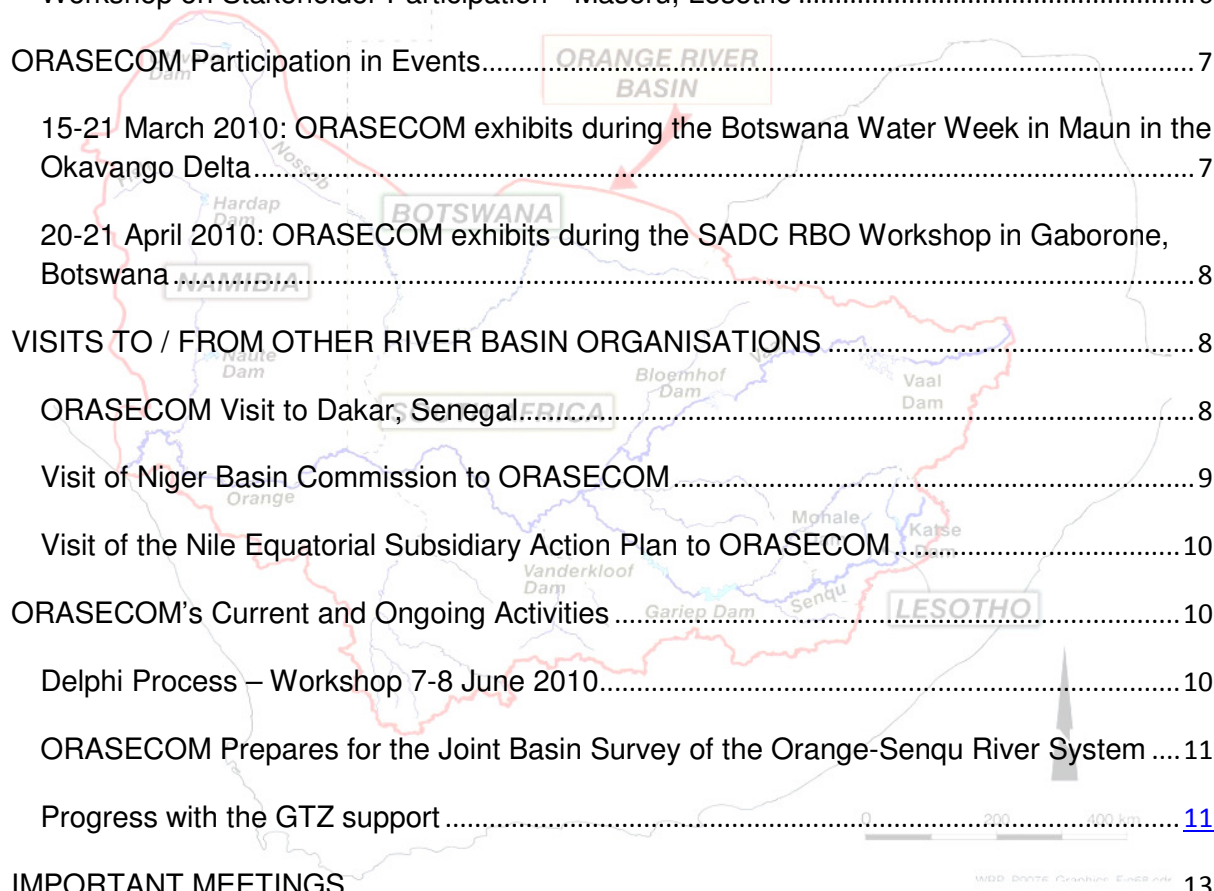
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Foreword from the ORASECOM Executive Secretary



This second Newsletter signals our ongoing commitment to communicating with stakeholders and other River Basin Organisations (RBOs) around the world. Visits to ORASECOM from other RBOs in Africa are increasing, and our International Cooperating Partners continue to lend their support in a collaborative effort to develop a Basin Wide Plan and Strategic Action Plan over the next few years.

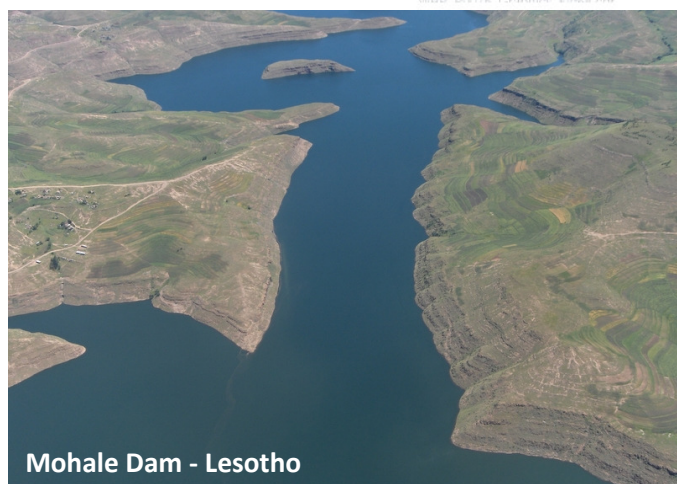
This first half of 2010 has yielded several key milestones, one of which was the meeting of ORASECOM Senior Officials in Durban, South Africa in April 2010. The Senior Officials' commitment, at this meeting, to meet more regularly will help strengthen the links between ORASECOM and the high level decision making in all the Contracting Parties. We hope to capitalise on this in the development and implementation of the Basin Wide Plan and Strategic Action Plan.

ORASECOM is also making headway with planning the first Joint Basin Survey (JBS -1) to be undertaken in September / October this year. This survey, joint both in that it will be actively supported by all the Contracting Parties and all our International Cooperating Partners, will set the baseline water resources quality in 2010 against which we can measure the impacts of our joint management. This represents the first basin wide collaborative assessment of the quality of the water resources of the basin by all the Contracting Parties. Technical support from the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube is also gratefully acknowledged.

With the FIFA World Cup in South Africa just starting, some ORASECOM activities may progress at a slightly slower pace. Travel will be more difficult and accommodation hard to find, and as such several training programmes and workshops have been postponed until after the big event. However, I am confident that the second half of 2010 will provide as many challenges and successes as the first.

About ORASECOM

ORASECOM was established in 2000 through an agreement between Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The Commission has its origins soon after the signing of the Revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses and is one of the first Shared Watercourse Institutions to be established under the Revised Protocol. The Permanent Secretariat was established in 2007 and is based in Pretoria, South Africa.



ORASECOM advises its Contracting Parties on matters related to development, utilisation and conservation of the water resources in the River system. This includes recommendations on *inter alia*; water availability, equitable and reasonable utilisation of water resources, development of the river system, stakeholder participation, harmonisation of policies, and a standardised form of collection, processing and dissemination of data and information.

In addition, ORASECOM may advise Contracting Parties on the prevention of pollution and control of aquatic weeds, contingency plans for responding to emergencies, and a variety of procedural matters on water related development between the Contracting Parties.

To date ORASECOM's International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) include the GTZ – the German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (BMZ – the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development - and DFID – The British Department for International Development), French GEF – Global Environment Facility, EU – European Union, and UNDP-GEF – The Global Environment Facility of the United Nations Development Programme.

TRAINING COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

Efforts to build the skills related to transboundary management have continued in this last six months with two new training courses, following on from the course on International Water Law presented last year in June. These courses are;

Training course on other international Agreements that may influence the Basin-wide Plan – Gaborone, Botswana

Water resources management in the Orange-Senqu System occurs within a wider framework of SADC integration and cooperation and is influenced by global agreements on environmental issues which the Contracting Parties have ratified. ORASECOM therefore arranged a training course on this broader cooperation framework. This course was held from 1 to 4 February 2010, and was supported by the EU. The course was held at the Gaborone Sun Hotel, in Botswana.



The Trainees with Mr Malzbender (2nd row, 4th from the left)

The intention of this training was to make staff from all for countries aware of the suite of other international commitments their governments have made. This included examining the provisions of the Southern African Customs Union, Trans-frontier Parks Agreements, the Southern African Power Pool, as well as global conventions directly pertinent to water resources management which have also been ratified by the ORASECOM Contracting Parties. These include the;

- ❖ The Convention of Combating Desertification;
- ❖ The Convention on Biodiversity;
- ❖ The Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- ❖ The Ramsar Convention on wetlands of international importance.

The course, designed and presented by Mr Daniel Malzbender from the African Centre for Water Research, emphasized the relationship between these agreements and their relevance for the development of the basin-wide plan, highlighting possible opportunities within the international legal framework for greater regional integration and optimal use of the basin's water resources.

Training course on Negotiation Skills and Conflict Management – Windhoek, Namibia

While ORASECOM remains strongly committed to decision by consensus, it also recognises that negotiation may form an essential part of achieving this consensus. The Secretariat therefore, with support from the EU, organised a course on Negotiation Skills and Conflict Management from 15-18 February 2010. The course was held in the Hotel Safari in Windhoek, Namibia.

This course, also a follow up to the International Water Law Course, provided an overview of the key principles of cooperation and negotiation specifically as they pertain to ORASECOM. In particular the course, designed and presented by Dr Owen McIntyre from the University College Cork, National University of Ireland, elaborated on:



Dr McIntyre (2nd left 2nd row) with the Trainees

- ❖ Key principles of cooperation and negotiation in International Water Law.
- ❖ Negotiation Skills, including how to prepare for negotiation, the negotiation process itself, as well as the conclusion of the negotiation process.
- ❖ Conflict avoidance and conflict resolution, including modes of dispute resolution, international best practices, and obligations for peaceful resolution of disputes.
- ❖ The ORASECOM negotiating context, including the provisions of the ORASECOM Agreement, as well as the institutional and procedural arrangements for negotiation.

The course included practical exercises in negotiation around both procedural as well as substantive issues, building on the practical examples used during the International Water Law course in June 2009.

Workshop on Stakeholder Participation - Maseru, Lesotho

Following Council's recommendation in April 2010, to review the modalities of stakeholder participation in ORASECOM, a workshop on the modalities of stakeholder participation in ORASECOM was organised at the Victoria Hotel in Maseru, Lesotho on 12 May 2010. This workshop, supported by the EU, was attended by representatives of the Technical, Legal and Communications Task Teams.

Since the publication of the ORASECOM 'Roadmap Towards Stakeholder Participation' in 2007, ORASECOM has explored scenarios for effective stakeholder participation – this workshop continued this process through;

- ❖ The completion of SADC's Participation Positioning System.
- ❖ The identification and involvement of national stakeholder forums.
- ❖ The composition of a Basin-wide Advisory Committee.
- ❖ The establishment of an Observer platform to ORASECOM.

Mr Quibell and the Workshop participants



The outcomes of this workshop will now be taken forward into the establishment of Stakeholder forums.

During the afternoon session all Task Teams took part in a lively discussion around the implementation of the ORASECOM Communications Strategy (approved by Council in April 2010) and a 6-month forecast of ORASECOM Communications opportunities, to be presented to Council in November this year.

ORASECOM Participation in Events

ORASECOM has participated in a number of events; building on the stands presented at the Africa Water Week and Orange River Symposium in November last year. These events continue to raise ORASECOM's profile in the water community in southern Africa.

15-21 March: ORASECOM exhibits during the Botswana Water Week in Maun in the Okavango Delta

On 22 March 2010, the Communication Task Team member Ms. Kulthoum Omari organised an ORASECOM exhibition at the Annual World Water Day celebrations in Maun - Botswana. The theme for the event was *"Communicating Water Quality Challenges and Opportunities."* The event was opened by the Chief of Tawana, Kgosi Keleatile Moremi. Among the



The ORASECOM stand in Maun

dignitaries that graced the occasion were the Director of Water Affairs for Botswana, Dr. Obolokile Obakeng; former Botswana North West Council Chairman Mr. John Ben and the Council Chairman Hon. Tebogo Bethia.

The event was well attended by government departments in the water sector, the private sector and other River Basin Organisations of which Botswana is a Contracting Party,

including the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) and proposed Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM). Locals from Maun and neighbouring villages attended the event in large numbers. The event provided a good opportunity to showcase ORASECOM's key achievements through its stand in the exhibition tent. ORASECOM communication products including the ORASECOM information pack, Newsletters, mouse pads and the River Awareness Kit were distributed.

The event was a great success and the ORASECOM awareness materials proved to be very popular.

20-21 April 2010: ORASECOM exhibits during the 4th SADC River Basin Organisation Workshop in Gaborone, Botswana

ORASECOM participated in the 4th Annual SADC RBO Workshop which was held from 20-21 April 2010 in Gaborone, Botswana. The theme of this year's workshop was *"Benefit sharing and transboundary water management and development in SADC"*. The ORASECOM team, comprising of the ORASECOM Executive Secretary Mr Lenka Thamae, the Water Resources Specialist Mr Rapule Pule, the CTT member Ms. Kulthoum Omari, and the EU support Team Leader Mr Gavin Quibell attended the workshop and exhibited ORASECOM awareness materials.

The objective of the workshop was to launch four SADC guidelines for strengthening River Basin Organisations and to share best practices and information-sharing for the different RBOs in the SADC region.



The guidelines launched were:

1. Guidelines on stakeholder participation;
2. Guidelines on environmental management;
3. Guidelines on funding and financing;
4. Guidelines on RBO establishment and development

ORASECOM has already built some of the lessons from these guidelines into its ongoing work.

VISITS TO / FROM OTHER RIVER BASIN ORGANISATIONS

ORASECOM Visit to Dakar, Senegal

On 24 and 25 February 2010 the Secretariat's Water Resources Specialist, Mr Rapule Pule and the Chairperson of the African Network of Basin Organisations (ANBO), Mr. Reginald Tekateka visited the Senegal River Development Organisation (OMVS) based in Dakar.

The purpose of the visit was to exchange ideas, and experiences relating to the development and management of trans-boundary river basin organisations using the Senegal and the Orange-Senqu River Basins as case studies. This also supports ANBO's role in facilitating exchange of ideas and experiences between River Basin Organisations in Africa.

Useful lessons learnt for ORASECOM during the visit were:

- ❖ Sound political leadership is a pre-condition to the appropriate functioning of RBOs.
- ❖ Established legal and institutional frameworks are critical to sound water governance.
- ❖ Capacity building of stakeholders for sustainable development and management of a River Basin is essential.
- ❖ Communication with stakeholders to raise awareness on the importance of maintaining a balance between environmental, social and economic aspects of water use needs to be ensured at all stages.
- ❖ Data collection and understanding of a River Basin is key to a proper planning and development of that River Basin.
- ❖ Maintenance of a proper balance between the ecological and the socio-economic needs of the Contracting Parties is central to the success of a transboundary water management institution.
- ❖ Water allocations in the Senegal River system are based on the needs of sectors rather than countries, with emphasis on those sectors being environmentally sustainable, economically efficient and in support of maintaining social equity.
- ❖ Strategy planning must be oriented towards benefit-sharing with an evolving burden sharing formula.
- ❖ Transparent and optimal management of provided funds needs to be ensured in order to ensure the ongoing support of cooperating partners.



Visit of Niger Basin Commission

From 22 to 27 March 2010 the ORASECOM Secretariat hosted a Delegation from the Niger Basin Commission. The Delegation was made up of 6 officials headed by their acting Executive Secretary, and visited the Vaal Dam and the Rand Water treatment plant in South Africa, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, the Katse Dam and the Muela hydropower station in Lesotho.

On Monday 22 March the Secretariat and the ICP Programme Managers met with the visitors from Niger Commission near the OR Tambo Airport in South Africa. This provided the opportunity to share the work being undertaken in ORASECOM with the Niger Basin Commission, and to learn from their experiences.

Visit of the Nile Equatorial Subsidiary Action Plan group

From 10 to 18 May 2010 the Nile Equatorial Subsidiary Action Plan, an investment arm of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), conducted a study tour to southern Africa, both the ORASECOM Secretariat and the Komati Basin Authority.

The ORASECOM Secretariat used this opportunity to introduce our visitors to ORASECOM, its mandate and functioning. The meeting was held at the Kopanong Hotel & Conference Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Executive Secretary presenting ORASECOM



Presentations were given by the ORASECOM Executive Secretary Mr. Lenka Thamae, Mr. Steve Crerar of the GTZ support and Mr. Gavin Quibell and Mr. Arno Haegens of the EU support.

Lively discussions followed, especially with regard to the modalities of stakeholder participation in ORASECOM. Mr. Thamae expressed the wish to have similar exchanges of ideas in the future.

ORASECOM's Current and Ongoing Thematic Activities

Delphi Process – Workshop June 2010

Following on from decisions made at the October 2009 and April 2010 meetings of Council, the Secretariat, with support from the EU, will be undertaking a series of workshops aimed at providing clarity on a number of issues relating to the role ORASECOM should play in the Basin. This process will provide greater clarity on the contributions the Basin Wide Planning process and the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) and National Action Plans (NAPs) can make to realising regional and national developmental objectives.

Discussing the results of the Delphi



The workshops will be based on a Delphi approach. The Delphi method is a forecasting process which relies on a panel of experts. The experts answer questions in two or more rounds. After each round, a facilitator provides a summary of the experts' forecasts. Experts are then encouraged to revise their earlier answers in light of the replies of other members of their panel. During this process the range of the answers may decrease and the group may converge towards the consensus answer.

Three Delphi workshops are planned. The first was held on 7 and 8 June 2010, while a further two are planned for August and November 2010. These workshops will be attended by experts from the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and the ICP Programme Managers.

The intention is that these workshops will firstly build consensus on ORASECOM's role in managing the water resources of the basin, then secondly to address how this role will be fulfilled through the Basin Wide Plan and Strategic Action Plan, while the last workshop will address the most appropriate institutional form for the organisation.

The first workshop has already yielded some valuable contributions to understanding the role ORASECOM can play in managing the whole basin into the future. While there was insufficient time to do several rounds of answers, there was already some convergence on some scenarios for the future.

A map of the Orange-Senqu River Basin is shown in the background. It highlights the river's course through Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa. Key dams like Naute Dam, Bloemhof Dam, and Vaal Dam are marked. The word 'ORASECOM' is also visible on the map.

ORASECOM Prepares for the Joint Basin Survey – 1

ORASECOM will undertake a detailed assessment of the state of the Orange Senqu River system in September / October 2010. This Joint Basin Survey will provide the first broad understanding of the state of the aquatic ecosystems, Habitats, the presence of Persistent Organic Pollutants, and water quality at river sites throughout the basin. The survey will learn from similar surveys conducted by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR).



The proposed Orange-Senqu Joint Basin Survey -1 (JBS-1) will set the baseline water resources quality for the system and will have four main components;

- 1) Aquatic Ecosystem Health – This will be funded through the EU and will include a detailed assessment of all components of aquatic ecosystem health, as well as the impacts on aquatic ecosystems.
- 2) Persistent Organic Pollutants and Metals – This will be funded through the UNDP-GEF project, and will include analyses of both water and sediment. This will also provide more information to support the update of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis.
- 3) Water quality assessments – These will be based on analyses for dissolved salts, nutrients as well as algae and faecal bacteria, and will be funded by the EU.
- 4) An inter-laboratory calibration exercise – This will be managed through the GTZ Phase II project support. Inter-laboratory analyses will only be undertaken on the initial priority points identified in the Trans-National Monitoring programme. The intention of this

- 5) programme is to support laboratories in each of the Contracting Parties, through the provision of guidelines, with respect to improving and standardizing methodologies in each of the Contracting Parties.

The planning and execution of JBS-1 will prove to be logistically demanding, and will be actively supported by all the Contracting Parties. The first planning workshop was therefore held on 24 May 2010, with participation from the Contracting Parties. The main output of this workshop was a Briefing Note for the Contracting Parties, which outlines the initial plans for the event, including plans to involve the public and senior officials in all the Contracting Parties in outreach programmes.

Progress with Phase II of the GTZ/UKAID support

The first ORASECOM Newsletter introduced Phase II of the GTZ Support to the ORASECOM Basin-wide IWRM Plan Project. The Project is divided into six 'Work Packages'(WPs):

1. Assessment and upgrading of an Integrated Orange-Senqu River Basin Model
2. Updating and extension of Orange-Senqu River Hydrology
3. Assessment of requirements for, and the development of, an Integrated Water Resources Quality Management Plan for the Orange-Senqu River
4. An assessment of the impact of global climate change on the hydroclimatology, water resources, vulnerabilities and adaption requirements in the Orange-Senqu River Basin
5. An assessment of Environmental Flow Requirements



Seeheim gauging site on the Fish River



The trainees in Lesotho

6. An assessment for the potential for Water Demand Management in the irrigation sector of the Orange River Basin.

A number of field visits were made under the Environmental Flow Requirements Work Package. These included visits for the installation of data loggers at three of the environmental flow requirements monitoring sites, i.e. Boegoeberg, Augrabies and Vioolsdrift.

Under the Hydrology Work Package the first capacity building workshop, concentrating on the HYDSTRA data processing software and other aspects of hydrological data collection and processing, was held in Maseru from 26 to 30 April. Namibia and Botswana were also visited to identify their training needs, and similar training courses will take place in Windhoek and Gaborone in the near future.

Following on from the capacity building course in Maseru a visit was made to selected hydrological gauging stations in Lesotho. The three day field trip was attended by hydrologists from Lesotho, South Africa and Namibia, experts from the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, WRP Consulting Engineers and the ORASECOM Secretariat.

Earlier, from 8 to 10 March 2010, WRP Consulting Engineers visited hydrological gauging stations on the Fish River, its tributaries and other rivers flowing directly into the Orange River from Namibia. They were accompanied by Quentin Hammond from the Hydrology Division in the Namibia Department of Water Affairs.



IMPORTANT MEETINGS

ORASECOM Council Meeting – Durban, South Africa

On 14 April 2010 the Ordinary meeting of the ORASECOM Council took place in Durban, South Africa. This was followed by the meeting of Senior Officials from the Contracting Parties, on 15 April 2010. Prior to this the Task Teams (Technical, Legal, Communications) met in Johannesburg during the week of 15 March to discuss submission for endorsement by Council in April. Council also met on 17 April 2010 to prepare for the meeting of the senior officials.

Meeting of Senior Officials – Durban, South Africa

On 16 April senior Officials of ORASECOM met in Durban, South Africa. The intention of this meeting was to brief Senior Officials from all the Contracting Parties on progress made since ORASECOM's establishment, as well as the plans for the future. The Senior Officials expressed a desire to become more involved in ORASECOM, and during the meeting it was decided that they will now meet at least once a year to review ORASECOM work programmes and progress.

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