

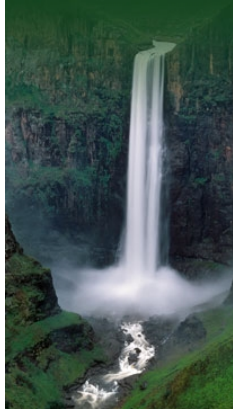


Orange-Senqu River Awareness Kit

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Southern African Development Community (SADC): Protocol on Shared Watercourses in SADC

Water has played a unifying role in the SADC region, leading to regional cooperation. The Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses in SADC (Revised Protocol) was the first binding agreement amongst SADC member states, which illustrates the important role water plays within the region (UNESCO 2009). Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa have all ratified this agreement, making it the applicable treaty law for the Orange-Senqu River basin.

The Protocol on Shared Watercourse Systems (Original Protocol) was originally drafted in 1995 to be aligned with the Helsinki Rules, but was revised to reflect the 1997 UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Convention). The Revised Protocol was signed in 2000 and came into force in 2003 (ORASECOM 2007).

The Revised Protocol defines a watercourse as "a system of surface waters and ground waters constituting by virtue of their physical relationship a unitary whole normally flowing into a common terminus such as the sea, lake or aquifer." A watercourse state is a state "in whose territory part of the watercourse is situated."

The Revised Protocol stresses the importance of taking a basin-wide approach to water management rather than emphasising the principle of territory sovereignty. It outlines specific objectives including improving cooperation to promote sustainable and coordinated management, protection, and utilisation of transboundary watercourses and promoting the SADC Agenda of Regional Integration and Poverty Alleviation (ORASECOM 2007j). The Revised Protocol provides the flexibility for countries to enter into specific basin-wide agreements, which is the approach promoted under the Watercourses Convention. The agreement allows for planned measures, such as environmental protection, management of shared watercourses, prevention and mitigation of harmful conditions and emergency situations (ORASECOM 2007j).

To view the [Revised Protocol](#), please go to the Document Library.

The objectives of [River Basin Organisations](#) proposed under Article 4 of the Revised Protocol are as follows (SADC 2000):

- To develop a monitoring policy for shared watercourse systems
- To promote the equitable utilisation of shared watercourse systems
- To formulate strategies for the development of shared water course systems
- To monitor the execution of integrated water resource development plans in shared watercourse systems

In support of the objectives outlined above, [River Basin Organisations](#) are responsible for harmonising national policies and legislation, conducting research and data gathering, managing water control and utilisation, promoting environmental protection measures, and promoting a hydro-metric monitoring program (SADC 2000).



Water meters are one method of managing water control and utilisation.

Source: McKenzie 2008

(click to enlarge)

Implementation of the SADC Protocol

SADC's [Regional Water Policy and Strategy](#) (RWPS) is designed to support the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses as the key legal instrument for promoting regional cooperation regarding water related issues (SADC 2007). As outlined in the RWPS (2007), the implementation of the Protocol should be supported by the following key activities:

- Strengthen the SADC Water Division as the implementing organisation responsible for promoting, coordinating and monitoring the Protocol
- Negotiate bilateral and multilateral agreements between Watercourse States within the framework of the SADC Protocol, which include mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes
- Strengthen shared watercourse institutions to promote good governance and cooperation between Watercourse States
- Strengthen the capacity of Member States to implement the Protocol through harmonisation of national laws and policies, national institutional

Interactive

Basin Map

Explore the sub-basins of the Orange-Senqu River

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Principles of IWRM

Explore the principles of Integrated Water Resource Management applied to the Orange-Senqu

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ORASECOM

Learn about water governance in the Orange-Senqu basin

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