



Developing capacity for effective water governance in South Africa

Watercourse Newsletter #1

September 2007

Background

The Watercourse programme is designed to support the implementation of the National Water Resources Strategy. It does this by building capacity and working with stakeholders to develop the required water governance arrangements. There is a particular focus on:

- co-operative governance – the arrangements whereby multiple water stakeholders, including those at national, provincial, local and community levels, learn to work together effectively;
- adaptive governance – the process through which water stakeholders adapt their priorities and actions as they discover the benefits of working together co-operatively, and as they prepare for future uncertainties, particularly those brought about by climate change.

The programme, which started in May 2007, is targeting two 'pathfinder' Water Management Areas (WMAs) – the Inkomati in Mpumalanga and the Mvoti to Umzimkulu in KwaZulu Natal.

Watercourse is also working with the Department for Water Affairs & Forestry (DWAFF) nationally to look at how the lessons from the two pathfinder WMAs can be shared and applied more widely.

Watercourse in the Inkomati

Preparation for the October future search workshop

Invitations have been sent out and preparations are being finalised for the 'Future Search' workshop that will take place at the Crocodile Inn, Nelspruit, from 16th – 18th October.

This workshop, to be facilitated by Cinnabar consultants John Goss & Dumisani Ncala, will play an important role in shaping the development of co-operative governance across the Inkomati WMA (IWMA).

Around 80 stakeholders from across the IWMA will come together to map the ways in which they are already shaping the water management of the IWMA and to agree on a vision for the future. This vision will then feed directly into the Inkomati Catchment Management Strategy.

Watercourse in KwaZulu Natal

First meeting of the Mvoti dialogue steering group

Facilitated by John Colvin, Sam Chimbuya and Mark Everard, the Mvoti dialogue is designed to develop agreement on the best institutional arrangements for the management of the Mvoti catchment. The first meeting of the steering group on 17th September

brought together members of the Qwabe tribal area, the Upper and Lower Mvoti Irrigation Boards and the Mvoti stakeholder forum, to consider the value of developing a dialogue process.

Participants considered how the Mvoti functions as an ecosystem and highlighted the inter-dependence between different parts of the catchment and between all those who depend on the catchment for their livelihoods.

Participants agreed to meet again on 5th November to progress the dialogue.

First day of the DWAF KZN staff development programme

On 18th September twenty four staff from the DWAF KZN catchment management, water quality and Working for Water teams attended the first day of this development programme, which will span eight workshops spread over two years.

Facilitated by John Colvin, Mark Everard and Sam Chimbuya, the day introduced key themes of the programme, including ecosystems thinking, multi-stakeholder governance, and communication and facilitation skills.

The response from participants was positive, and prepares the ground for the second development day, which will be held on 4th December.

Watercourse nationally

Supporting policy alignment across DWAF

In recent months there has been uncertainty across DWAF regarding the direction of the institutional reform process set out in South Africa's water laws, particularly the formation of Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs) and Water User Associations (WUAs).

The consultancy XbernetX was hired in June to review the opportunities and barriers facing DWAF in setting up CMAs and WUAs, and to consider options for aligning the water resources and water services reform processes.

John Colvin has been supporting the XbernetX review with advice which draws on his experience working with water reform processes in both Europe and South Africa, including early lessons from the Inkomati and KZN Watercourses.

To date, the outcomes of the review process have been positive, resulting in renewed commitment to the development of CMAs and WUAs.

The resignation of Jabu Sindane, the Director-General of DWAF, sends a further signal from the Minister, Lindiwe Hendricks, that there is an urgent need to pursue the institutional reform process set out in South Africa's water laws.

Contributing to national implementation of the National Water Resources Strategy

This research work has begun to address the challenges nationally of implementing an institutional transformation process based on a learning approach.

Recent work has been looking at how lessons from pathfinders might be 'scaled up'. There have been two main recommendations flowing from this work:

- the development of carefully targeted learning networks as a means of scaling up, supported by:
- the development of a national network of IWRM facilitators.

On 12th & 13th September John Colvin met with Kalinga Pelpola (DWAF Regions) to explore the application of

these approaches to the EU-funded Masimbambane III programme. The overall theme of this programme is 'Water for Growth and Development'.

It became clear from these conversations that, if Masimbambane III is to contribute effectively to the alignment of water resources reform, water services reform and water for growth and development through a co-operative governance approach, then learning approaches of the type being modelled by Watercourse could play a key role.

Developing a national network of IWRM facilitators

FETWater is a Flemish-funded project supporting a number of water-related networks in South Africa. On 14th September John Colvin met with Johnny Beumer, Mark Dent, Sharon Pollard and Derick du Toit, members of the FETWater CMA network, to consider how Watercourse and FETWater might join forces to develop a national network of IWRM facilitators.

Further development work is planned as a result of this meeting.

The Watercourse Newsletter is co-edited by Dr John Colvin and Dr Mark Everard (Environment Agency) with contributions from Sam Chimbuya (Khanya-aicdd), John Goss and Dumisani Ncala (Cinnabar Global Consulting).

Watercourse is co-ordinated by John Colvin and funded by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (Global Opportunities Fund) with support from the Environment Agency (England & Wales), DFID (Partners for Water & Sanitation Fund) and DWAF. It is a flagship project of the UK - South Africa Sustainable Development Dialogues programme.

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