



**NeWater**

# **ORANGE RIVER BASIN MID-TERM REPORTING ON THE STAKEHOLDER PROCESS**



**Report of the NeWater project -  
New Approaches to Adaptive Water Management under Uncertainty**

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**Orange river Basin**  
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**- Policy Summary (D.3.8.4)**

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**Preamble**

This summary report documents the process, up to early 2007, to consult with stakeholders in the Orange River basin including the four host countries, Lesotho, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

The process of stakeholder consultation has been very much needs driven, firstly to document the research needs in the basin but later to communicate with water resource managers who would have a direct involvement in the products of the NeWater initiative. It has thus been difficult to design a stakeholder process but rather to be willing and able to respond to the needs of the research as it unfolded. In the process there has been consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, from the ORASECOM (basin Commission) to academics and other role players. This consultation has been carried out by the Project Team located in the basin as well as by NeWater team members from Europe, at times by senior professionals and often by students in various phases of their studies.

**Insights**

Possibly the most significant IWRM issue that has come up again and again during the consultation with stakeholders in the Orange Basin, is the *failure of government to implement* what is at times good policy and certainly good intention. Expression of this issue arose primarily from stakeholders who live and work in close contact with the river, in particular the Vaal River (a major tributary of the Orange), where the quality of the river has declined dramatically in the past few years despite the excellent South African Water Act. In speaking to persons within the responsible management authorities, there is clearly a good intent but for some reason this does not translate into action. *It is suggested that all that NeWater stands for i.e. adaptive management in the face of uncertainty, is the essence of this problem as it appears that management is unable to respond to the fact that the river is deteriorating.* This phenomenon was also detected in several other spheres of management of the river including the management of the environmental flows in the river both from Lesotho as well as in South Africa (of interest was that the situation in Lesotho is more advanced with deliberate management attempts to improve the situation). This situation thus bodes well for the practical implementation of NeWater products.

A serious issue that arose during this project has been that it has been difficult to engage with the ORASECOM, the transboundary commission set up to oversee management of the entire Orange basin. The main reasons for this include:

- NeWater did not *effectively* consult with ORASECOM during the proposal stage for the project (there was an attempt but this failed to take effect as the person within ORASECOM did not respond to requests that he be the local liaison person). It also transpired during this year that all communications to ORASECOM should have been channelled through the technical head and not to Commissioners themselves. This would have ensured that the various NeWater issues were put onto the agenda for consideration.
- We “oversold” NeWater at the first presentation to ORASECOM in 2005. As it became apparent that there would in fact less work done than suggested, we lost face.

- ORASECOM persist in seeing themselves as the principal client of this work and cannot understand that NeWater is a multi-national project focussing on the EU and that they are just one of many stakeholders.
- There are very complex perspectives and sensitivities within ORASECOM about the role of foreign donor funded projects in the basin mainly as they have been the target of much donor interest. Fortunately this has just taken a big step forward as ORASECOM have installed a position of Secretary, with one of his first tasks being to address the donor issue. It is clear though, that ORASECOM do not like being the object of research.

An interesting point picked up by John Colvin of the Environment Agency in the UK is that the situation in South Africa is more fluid than in Europe and that there is thus great prospect to introduce adaptive management.

### **Recommendations**

The message of adaptive management needs to be *strongly* carried to water resource managers in the Orange basin.

The two themes adopted for the Orange basin i.e. Scenarios for the Orange and Wetland Goods and Services in the Orange, need to be packaged *under the umbrella of adaptive management*. The packaging of these themes needs to be directed in a focussed way at those most linked to the subject matter and in this way to concentrate the project efforts and avoid the possibility of dilution.



Pictures from the middle Vaal river

*End of Policy Summary*



## **Preamble and Introduction**

This interim report documents the process, up to early 2007, to consult with stakeholders in the Orange River basin including the four host countries, Lesotho, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

The process of stakeholder consultation has been very much needs driven, firstly to document the research needs in the basin but later to communicate with water resource managers who would have a direct involvement in the products of the NeWater initiative. It has thus been difficult to design a stakeholder process but rather to be willing and able to respond to the needs of the research as it unfolded.

This report documents the main consultation that has taken place over the past year and does not reflect that which took place in 2005.

## **1 Factual elements of stakeholder involvement in the case study**

### **Stakeholders involved in NeWater during 2006/7.**

Over the past year the emphasis of the NeWater work in the Orange has shifted to introduce the two Themes that were designed to integrate the work that will take place. These themes are:

1. *Enhancing Orange Basin Management by Building Preparedness for Possible Future Basin Scenarios and*
2. *Developing a Motivation and Framework for Incentive-based Wetland Management in the Orange Basin*

The stakeholder consultation that has been carried out for these two themes will be recorded separately below.

#### **1. *Enhancing Orange Basin Management by Building Preparedness for Possible Future Basin Scenarios***

- a. Work on this Theme has been slow to take off. Generally it has involved liaison with ORASECOM and other water resource managers on the subject of IWRM. There has also been considerable work facilitating the work of NeWater partners from Europe who have visited the basin and carried out interviews with local managers.
- b. Included in the reports below are summaries of meetings that are general in nature, introducing NeWater to local IWRM practitioners.

### **1.1 Meeting with other research parties**

John Colvin of the UK Environment Agency – held in Durban.



**Objective of meeting:** This was a request of Claudia Pahl-Worstl to meet him, but also at his request to meet case study people in SA. It was also a valuable opportunity to gather perspectives on how to unlock implementation of IWRM.

**Format of meeting:** This was a one on one meeting held as a general discussion where both parties reported on existing initiatives, followed by a free discussion.

He was working with DWAF on the establishment of CMAs. He is also particularly interested in Poverty alleviation. His particular interest and specialty is in unlocking the potential of institutions. He feels that people are brimming with creativity and given the chance then organizations would flourish. What is needed is to give them the space to have an input. When asked how this translates into action at an official level – he said that each person giving input has to come up with only a few things that they are going to implement. For some, this will be accessing officialdom and getting things going at that level.

He agreed that action in African institutions is lacking but feels that the solution is as described above. He also agreed that the real issue is the level of consciousness in people and feels that by asking people to contribute, then the lights turn on and people make use of their consciousness which otherwise lies dormant. He finds the SA atmosphere very fluid and with great potential compared to Europe although he acknowledged the difficulties. They have plans all over Africa and are actively trying to build networks of good people. He was particularly interested in our situation as INR in that we have expertise and can act to prod officialdom from the side – adding another dimension to the normal debate.

## 1.2 Meeting with DWAF IWRM staff

**Objective of meeting:** To discuss implementation of IWRM in the Orange basin, partly to prepare for the presentation to the World Water Week in Stockholm where there was an invitation to present challenges of IWRM in Africa, the NeWater experience.

**Format of meeting:** Across the table discussions based on the questions prepared as indicated below.

Met separately with Derek Weston (development of CMAs), Reggie Tekateka (Commissioner of ORASECOM and senior manager in DWAF) and Peter Pyke (head of the Technical Task Team for ORASECOM).

The following questions were asked:

1. Do the stakeholder in the Orange know about IWRM – beyond officials?
2. What is the need for IWRM (ie. Do you really want it)?
3. Do the stakeholders in the Orange really want it?
4. Do they know what it is that they want? E.g. do they just want some aspect or do they really want the whole package of IWRM?
5. Is the concept of IWRM too complicated – should it be simple if it is to be sold to politicians, bureaucrats and the people? How is it possible to simplify without leaving out any important aspect?
6. Operability - How does policy filter down through the bureaucracy to action on the ground including the actions of grassroots stakeholders?
7. How do the needs of grassroots people get into the regulations etc?
8. What is the optimum institution for IWRM implementation in the Orange? ORASECOM, individual governments etc?
9. How do you get past the vested interests of those in between i.e. the researchers, the consultants, the politicians and bureaucrats?



10. Equity, sustainability and efficiency (reduced from Dublin principles) are these being fostered?
11. Project work on IWRM – short vs long term – is it a problem?
12. what about the role of donors – is this being helpful?
13. How seriously do DWAF/ORASECOM take the full integration of WRM?

The outcomes of these meetings were most useful and provided much valuable information. This was immediately of benefit to the NeWater presentation for the Stockholm Water Week but in the long run will be useful for Theme 1 in the Orange.

Full minutes of these meetings are available.

### **1.3 Communications with ORASECOM (Orange/Senqu Commission) through Mr. Peter Pyke**

**Objective of meeting:** As representative of the ORASECOM Task Team it was important to keep him abreast of NeWater developments.

**Format of meeting:** One on one meetings and electronic communications.

This communication has proved rather difficult as it was not at first realised that all communications to ORASECOM should have been directed through him – so that he could make sure that they were attended to. As a result, a number of communications directly with Commissioners never elicited a response. Unfortunately at some stage (by 2005) an impression had developed that NeWater was not communicating efficiently with ORASECOM. They had the view that the activities of NeWater in the Orange needed their approval and blessing which they were inclined to withhold as they had not been involved in the planning of this project. Despite the fact that NeWater took Peter Pyke, Mr. OT Katai from Botswana and Mr. Potloane from Letotho (the former two representing ORASECOM) as stakeholders to Mallorca, ORASECOM retain the position that we have not communicated sufficiently with them. A testing case in point was that we provided a presentation with hand-outs to the 2006 ORASECOM meeting (which clashed with the dates of the NeWater GA in Hungary) but this was not actually presented and so did not reach their meeting.

A real limitation in the dealings with ORASECOM has been that NeWater was not offering much in the way of products to the basin. In comparison to the other international and donor funded project, NeWater was considered small.

In conclusion – we did not enter into this liaison very effectively for the following reasons

- a. We did not realise the status of ORASECOM during the project drafting stage
- b. We did not seek the approval of ORASECOM to carry out research in the Orange (not that they have a mandate to approve or disapprove!)
- c. We did not write to the respective country Ministers informing them of the project
- d. We “oversold” NeWater at the first presentation to ORASECOM – i.e. we promised all sorts of interventions by NeWater (in 2005). As it became apparent, reinforced by the presence of Peter Pyke at Mallorca, that there would in fact be little work done by NeWater in the Orange, NeWater lost face.



- e. It has not helped that we have directed much of the NeWater research effort to the Wetlands project (Theme 2), which is very specialised and not central to the ORASECOM agenda.
- f. We have certainly not kept them informed of all activities in NeWater. As time passes, they feel more and more alienated. But, it is difficult to keep them informed when so little is happening in the basin.

#### **1.4 Liaison with Orange basin stakeholders**

**Objective of meeting:** The INR set up an impressive list of interviews for Ecologic in their visit to the basin.

**Format of meeting:** These were mostly interviews.

Meetings were facilitated in part by formal introductions by the INR and in part by the handing over of contact details. The INR also participated in some of these meetings with senior personnel where it was felt that the Basin representatives for NeWater needed to be present at the meetings. This was found to be most valuable.

#### **1.5 Peter Van Niekerk – Commissioner in ORASECOM and from DWAF**

**Objective of meeting:** As a senior official from ORASECOM, this interview was with a key manager of water resources in the basin.

**Format of meeting:** Interview.

This senior ranking official has influence in both DWAF and ORASECOM. He received the visitors graciously but was certainly not controversial in any of his statements.

He stressed that ORASECOM is essentially advisory and does not put into place any actions other than information gathering and strategizing via projects etc.

The meeting was fruitful and he provided hints of information that would be useful to NeWater. He noted that there is effective coordination of all donor projects by ORASECOM, or by the donors themselves (specifically GEF?) so that the gaps between existing knowledge are systematically being filled. (later Peter Pyke criticized this very matter saying that there is wasteful overlap e.g. the recent initiation of IWRM strategizing).

#### **1.6 Peter Pyke – chairs the Technical Committee of ORASECOM.**

**Objective of meeting:** As the “hands on” person of ORASECOM he was an important stakeholder for Ecologic to meet.

**Format of meeting:** Interview.

He provided much more detail about ORASECOM and its workings. He feels that its main value is in the networking and communication opportunities that it provides.

He pointed out that the ORASECOM Secretariat that will be started in Pretoria will comprise fairly senior staff. They are very optimistic that this will be a great step forward for ORASECOM.

During the discussion it transpired that he had not carried much of the communication from NeWater to ORASECOM, which had negative consequences for NeWater and the project team.



## **1.7 French IRD – Billy Troy and Jean Marie Fritsch**

**Objective of meeting:** As representatives of the French GEF they are important stakeholders in the Orange.

**Format of meeting:** Round table.

This meeting considered more the view of a donor agency – from the outside of ORASECOM. Some interesting insights were gained.

Billy pointed out that of the 30 FGEF ORASECOM projects that were previously described, 10 of these are being carried forward and have been initiated. He described a 3 year time frame for these.

## ***2. Developing a Motivation and Framework for Incentive-based Wetland Management in the Orange Basin***

### **2.1 Meeting with John Dini from Working for Wetlands and David Lindley of WWF/Mondi Wetlands Project**

**Objective of meeting:** This was to engage the two most important and influential role players in wetland management in the Orange basin, to get their participation in Theme 2.

**Format of meeting:** Informal round table.

At this meeting a possible relationship between NeWater and these two organisations was discussed as there is plenty of scope for mutual benefit. These two organisations are in the business of wetland management. On the table was the possibility of a workshop of wetland experts designed to take forward the possibility of an incentive based framework for wetland management.

The meeting was very successful and resulted in gaining support for the Clarens workshop and beyond.



## 2.2 Clarens Workshop

**Objective of meeting:** To develop ideas for an incentive based management system for wetlands in the Orange and more importantly to start on the evaluation of wetland services.



**Format of meeting:** Formal workshop.

A workshop with stakeholders (in particular those involved in wetland management as well as specialists) was held in November 2006, the objective being to initiate the Theme 2 for NeWater. In the process, it was anticipated to collect background information on the valuation of wetlands and how this could be used to develop an incentive based wetland management strategy.

- a. The workshop was held over three days, making use of Mindmanager to document the discussion. The meeting was kept to a single forum and was characterised by vibrant discussion with valuable contributions made by management at Working for Wetlands and WWF and especially good contribution by specialists such as Drs. Batchelor and Kotze.

The following were the attendees:

Name	Organisation
Chris Dickens	Institute of Natural Resources
Kate van Niekerk	Institute of Natural Resources
Myles Mander	FurtureWorks
John Dini	Working for Wetlands



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David Lindley	Mondi Wetlands Project
Donovan Kotze	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Moliehi Shale	Stockholm Environment Institute
Caroline Sullivan	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Billy Troy	French Research Institute for Development
Sechocha Makhoalibe	GWC Consulting Engineers (ORASECOM GEF Project)
Allan Batchelor	Wetland Consulting Services (Pty.) Ltd.
Nacelle Collins	Free State Department of Tourism, Environmental & Economic Affairs

### 2.3 Meetings with wetlands specialists.

**Objective of meeting:** These were to gain specific information about the wetlands project and also to manage cooperative work.

**Format of meeting:** General meetings

Several meetings have been held with wetland specialists in the region, in an attempt to negotiate a way forward for Theme 2 of NeWater.

Progress has been slow as the specialists all seem to be extremely busy. A strong link was built with Prof. Fred Ellery and Dr. Donovan Kotze of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, who are in the process of wrapping up a major wetland project dealing with best practice for rehabilitation. An agreement was reached where we would work with them on a single case study on the valuation of wetlands so that they could use the results for their report, and at the same time we would benefit by their inputs to the NeWater project (they funded the Clarens workshop).

### 2.4 SEI group of researchers who worked in Lesotho.

**Objective of meeting:** SEI researchers were due to work in Lesotho to collect social and vulnerability data. It was necessary to meet with them to give local perspectives and to maximise the information gathering that they were going to do.

**Format of meeting:** Informal round table.

A meeting was held in Lesotho and introductions made to the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) who then assisted with the field work.

Some key directions were given by the INR to SEI in order to influence the outcomes of their research for the benefit of the Case Study. It transpired that this meeting was very important to maximize the outputs of the SEI work.



## 2.5 Contact with fellow researchers who are working on similar themes.

**Objective of meeting:** To synchronise with others doing similar research.

**Format of meeting:** Electronic communication with University of Cape Town who are working on the benefits of wetlands in Lesotho. There is now a plan to communicate closer to support each other.

## 2 Dynamics of the case study objectives in relation with involvement of stakeholders

- a. *With regard to the initially-stated objectives, how have the overall objectives of the case study evolved until now?* The development of the case study work in the Orange has been frustrated by the lack of uptake of opportunities by researchers in Europe. Initial ideas were that there would be a broad suite of NeWater activities taking place in the Orange, but this has progressively narrowed as it was found that these activities would not happen. During 2006 it was decided to focus the activities on the two Themes as documented above.
- b. *Which part of this evolution (if any) can be attributed to the stakeholders (please specify the respective stakeholders)?* The direction to move towards the Theme 2 on wetlands was a direct response to the indication from major stakeholders that the LHDA in Lesotho had unused funds available for wetland management in Lesotho. After consultation with South African colleagues (Working for Wetlands, WWF, Mondi Wetlands Project, University of KZN), this extended into South Africa.
- c. *To what extent these objectives have been shared by the various stakeholders and researchers? This can be tracked back through ex post reflexive analysis of changes in objectives, as well as through the current thoughts among stakeholders on the objectives of the case study.* There has been broad consensus that the Theme 2 was a good way to approach the topic, evidenced by the enthusiasm to attend and to participate in the Clarens wetland workshop held in November 2006.

## 3 Factors driving stakeholder involvement

- d. *At the outset of the process and with regard to implying the stakeholders what were the most important factors that had to be taken into consideration?* It was important to engage stakeholders and to provide what they needed and not what we needed. It was important to listen rather than to talk. It was also important to recognise the differences between the 4 countries in the basin which had divergent capabilities. As the project has progressed, it is clear that those stakeholders with the most to offer were those who are actively involved in the subjects that NeWater is working with e.g. Theme 2 on wetlands.
- e. *How did you take these factors into consideration in the implementation of the process?* Initially we had workshops in Lesotho and South Africa, but cancelled plans to have workshops in Namibia and Botswana, the former as



government officials did not wish to be “bothered” by EU research projects and the latter as there is a very limited participation in the water cycle. Also, presentation has been made to ORASECOM on which sit representatives of all four countries. It becomes easy to liaise with stakeholders who are actively involved in the work that we are doing as they are interested in the outcomes. It is VERY difficult, uncomfortable and counter-productive to liaise with people who are not interested in what we are doing.

- f. *What other factors and events have influenced the case study process during its implementation?* As noted above, the most difficult aspect of this case study has been the reticence of EU partners to work in the Orange. This caused an “over-sell” of the project in the beginning, promising delivery of things that have never transpired due to the lack of participation of EU partners in the Orange.
- g. *How have these factors been dealt with?* It has been necessary for the case study team to take charge of the local situation and to carry the theme of NeWater into the basin in the absence of significant inputs from Europe.

#### **4 Future steps**

- h. *What are the most important considerations for the remainder of the process?* It is important to go through with a comprehensive research process that will produce products that are of value to the basin as well as NeWater as a whole. Some of these products need to be designed in a format and distributed in a way that will be accessible to the local basin.
- i. *Further needs in conducting stakeholder processes.* Each stakeholder consultation is a unique event and has needs directed by the occasion. No situation has been encountered that has not been manageable.
- j. *Next stages to be implemented in continuity with current stage.* There is a strong need to begin meeting with important stakeholder around some of the research processes that need to take place. These meetings will be in-depth meetings designed to gain active participation and not just information sharing.

*Additionally to that textual part of the report, we suggest a schematic representation of stakeholder processes since the beginning of the project, made as a chronicle made of:*

- *major events*
- *evolution of level of activity in the project for the various categories of stakeholders concerned by it*
- *evolution of research activities (among the following categories: research setting, field work, modelling, analysis, reporting, knowledge management)*

The figure below documents how the various Work Packages of NeWater were planned to knit together in order to ensure a meaningful outcome. Various stakeholder consultations have been held around these activities (as recorded in 1. above) but not in a way that can be schematically represented. It is also not possible to allocate the stakeholder consultations into the categories suggested above.



## Integrated Work Plan for NeWater in the Orange River Basin (May 2006)

