

WATER POLICY BRIEF

January 2017

Considering social and gender aspects in transboundary assessments and cooperation



KEY MESSAGES

- Transboundary arrangements can influence gendered livelihoods and wellbeing on the local level; a gendered approach to reading law and policy on all levels can provide a framework for considering gender in transboundary assessments and cooperation.
- There is a gap between ambitious international aspirations on gender and policy commitments by governments on one hand, and international water law and actual programs and practices at the local level, on the other. Indicators at multiple levels can guide the implementation of gender aims and harmonize approaches across the transboundary, national and local levels.

BACKGROUND

Cooperation is important in transboundary groundwater management. Actions in the utilization of aquifers on one side of the border can have negative impacts upon a neighboring state's overall access, and consequently their delivery on national social and gender equity goals. In turn, cooperation on shared groundwater can offset conflicts and enhance joint benefits of the aquifers. International instruments increasingly emphasize gender and social factors, but transboundary arrangements and practices regarding shared aquifers continue to fail to address these issues. This may jeopardize water security and livelihood options for small communities in the border regions, enhancing risks to social cohesions, livelihoods and wellbeing.

Gender and Groundwater in Transboundary Sustainable Development

In 2015, 194 Member States of the United Nations deliberated and produced 17 aspirational 'Global Goals' for Sustainable Development. Included were goals for gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and the realization of peace, justice and strong institutions. When read together, the interdependent nature of these goals are revealed: **gender equality** necessitates 'equal rights to economic resources... access to ownership and control over land and ... natural resources' to be achieved through 'enforceable legislation'; **clean water and sanitation** requires access to be 'universal and equitable', 'paying special attention to the needs of women and girls', and integrated water resources management must be implemented 'at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation'; and finally, **access to justice for all** through the national and international rule of law requires 'effective', 'accountable' and 'transparent' institutions, which are 'inclusive', 'participatory', and 'non-discriminatory'.



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: Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin Program

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SOUTH AFRICA AND BOTSWANA: GENDER AND SOCIAL ASPECTS IN LAW AND POLICY

Since 1992, gender has been considered important in environmental and natural resource management in international instruments. Moreover, global compacts acknowledge that gender issues should be addressed at all levels, including the transboundary level (1992 Dublin Principles; 1995 Beijing Platform for Action; 1996 Habitat Agenda; 2016 Sustainable Development Goals). In regard to the governance of shared water resources between South Africa and Botswana, both governments acknowledge gender as important in national law and policy. Yet, the transboundary agreements and institutions, like the SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourse from 2000, continue to leave the issue unaddressed.

Local Level

Gender sensitive tools and guidelines for assessments and actions are available to apply. These include the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), the FAO Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Approach, and the UNESCO World Water Assessment Program (WWAP), among others, which promote women's participation in decision-making, control over resources, as well as increased capacity, empowerment, and leadership within communities. However, there is no linkage between these approaches and transboundary water use and allocation.

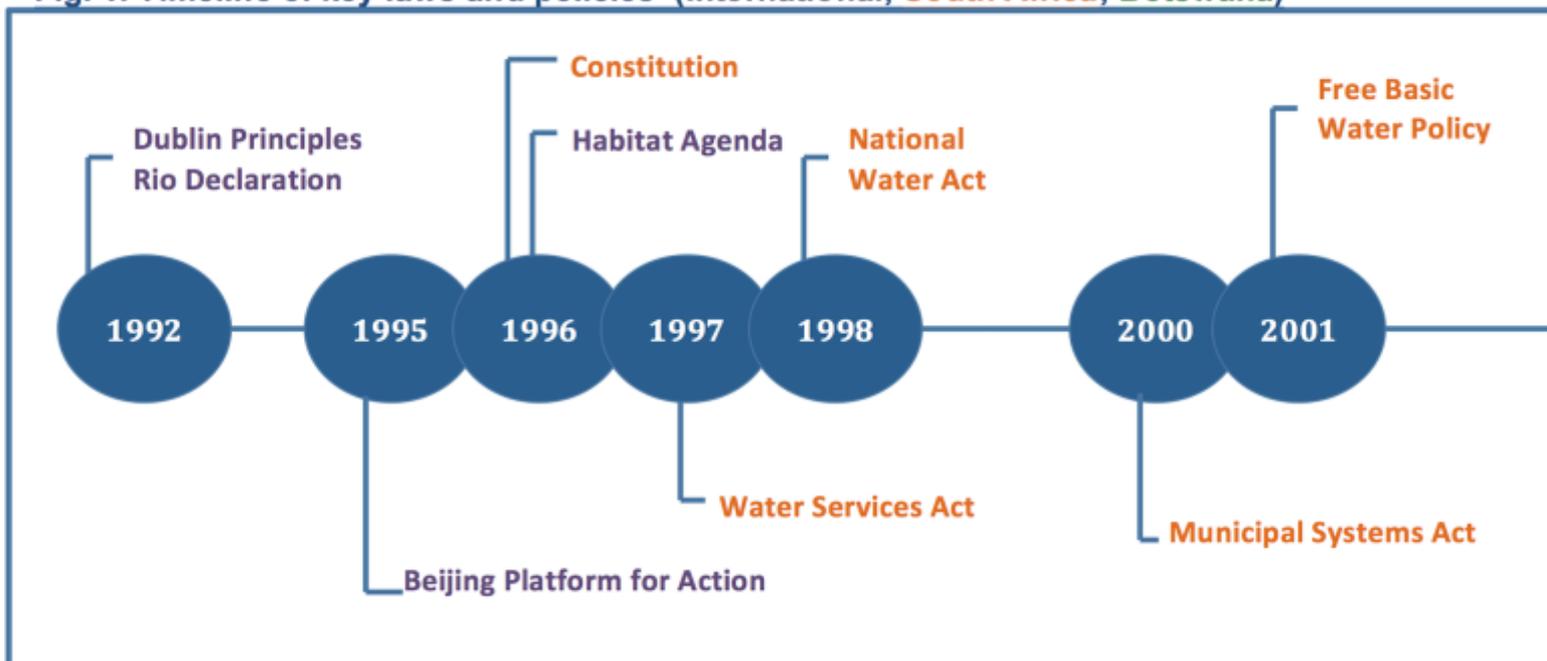
National Level

As illustrated in the timeline of key laws and policies in Figure 1, South Africa promotes the principle of non-discrimination, as well as gender representative institutions and the redress of past gender inequities. Similarly, Botswana promotes institutionalized gender sensitivity, as well as emphasizing the importance of participation, the recognition and rights of women, and measuring performance through monitoring and evaluation. The institutional frameworks show that both countries emphasise consideration of gender in decision-making. However, while both countries place importance upon equal rights, they give limited attention to goal-oriented approaches and related actions, such as equal access and control over resources, as well as capacity building and empowerment.

Transboundary Level

The countries' gender-oriented values are not reflected at the transboundary level. Gender considerations are absent from both the SADC and LIMCOM agreements. However, current provisions that require states to consider social needs within the territory of other states, through the harmonization of state policies, and the requirement to undertake transboundary social impact assessments, could be expanded and operationalized to integrate gender.

Fig. 1. Timeline of key laws and policies (International; South Africa; Botswana)



LINKING THE TRANSBOUNDARY TO LOCAL LEVEL IN PRACTICE

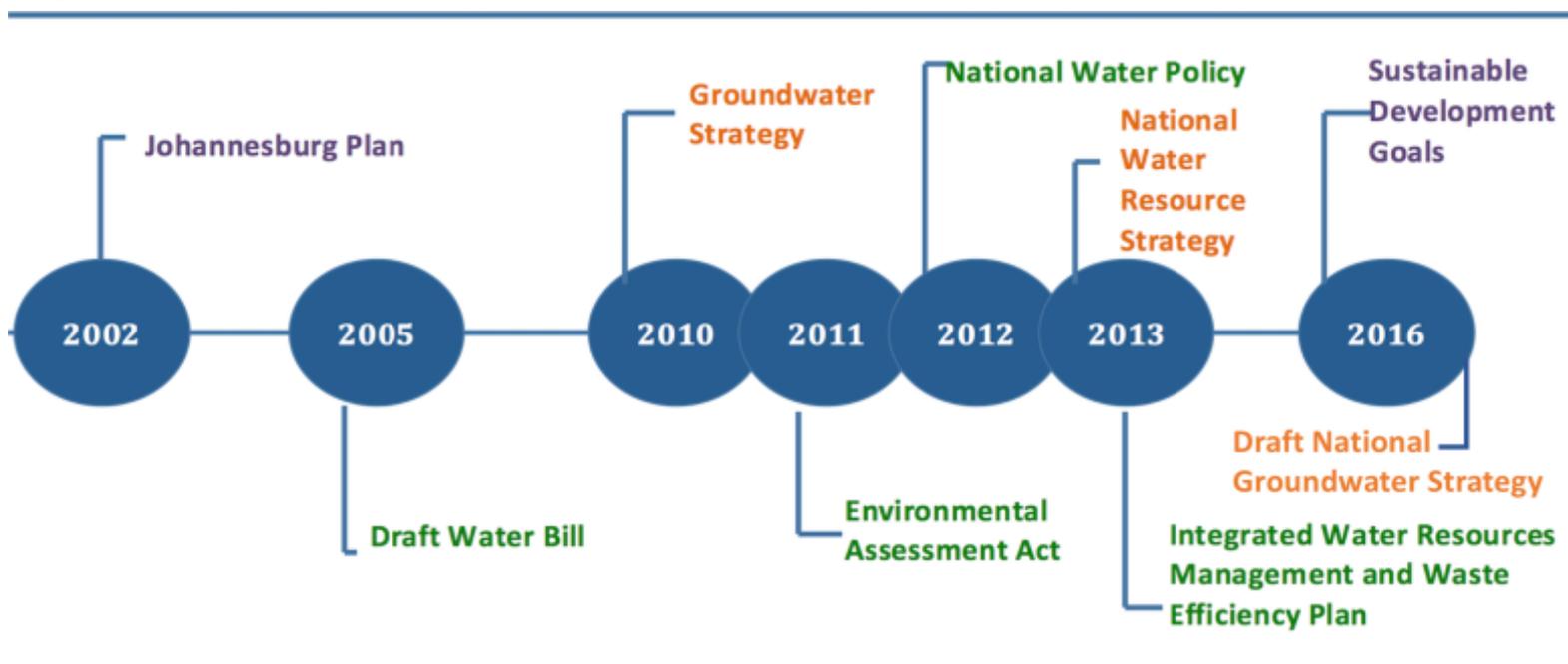
Linking the transboundary to the local level in practice can be achieved by firstly applying principles of international, national and local water management to the transboundary aquifer arrangements. Secondly, steps for integrating gender equitable arrangements in planning, management and governance of transboundary aquifer resources at nested levels need to be invoked. This should be accompanied by specific actions that increase and ensure local equity in benefits from the transboundary resource – within both countries as well as across the border. Finally, monitoring gender responsiveness with indicators at multiple levels is required. Potential indicators for the success in achieving social inclusiveness and gender responsiveness at the transboundary, national and local levels are suggested in Table 1. These should be decided jointly by the states.

Table 1: Potential indicators for monitoring social inclusiveness and gender responsiveness

Transboundary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harmonised national gender policies in transboundary arrangements 2. Enabling environment for transboundary institutions providing for gender sensitive groundwater management 3. Requirement for transboundary environmental and social impact assessment
National	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender representative institutions at national level 2. Capacity strengthened in gender representative institutions to enhance gender sensitivity 3. Gender sensitive infrastructure, technical and access point design
Local	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender equality in access to groundwater for multiple uses 2. Gender representative engagement in productive activities with groundwater 3. Gender representative institutions on sub-basin and catchment level

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Actions that the states could take toward integrating social and gender aspects into transboundary assessments and cooperation include: (1) entering into dialogue to improve cooperation on achieving gender equitable benefits from groundwater resources; (2) developing and agreeing upon harmonized local-to-transboundary indicators (Table 1); (3) the creation of modalities for monitoring performance and improving learning; (4) capacity development on gender-sensitive infrastructure planning and project design; and (5) integration of gender provisions into future transboundary agreements.



Resilience in the Limpopo Basin: the potential of the Transboundary Ramotswa Aquifer

This brief serves as an output of the potential of the Transboundary Ramotswa Aquifer (RAMOTSWA) Project, within the Resilience in the Limpopo Basin (RESILIM) programme.

The overall focus of the project is to support a long-term joined vision and cooperation on the shared groundwater resources of the upper Limpopo region where South Africa and Botswana potentially share significant and valuable freshwater underground resources as well as space for enhanced water storage. The project facilitates joint management and better groundwater governance focused on coordination, scientific knowledge, social redress and social sustainability, in order to reduce poverty and inequalities and increase prosperity, livelihoods and food security in the face of climate variability.

The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development for Southern Africa (USAID) and the CGIAR, Water, Land and Ecosystems Research Program (WLE), and implemented by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), and XRI Blue.

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The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is a non-profit, scientific research organization focusing on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. It is headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with regional offices across Asia and Africa. IWMI works in partnership with governments, civil society and the private sector to develop scalable agricultural water management solutions that have a real impact on poverty reduction, food security and ecosystem health. IWMI is a member of the CGIAR System Organization, a global research partnership for a food-secure future, and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE).