



OKACOM

The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission

Thinking Transboundary:
Information and Communication
Strategy for OKACOM



Thinking Transboundary: Information and Communication Strategy for OKACOM

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OKACOM's mandate and objectives depend on effective management of information and sharing of knowledge. Documenting and sharing the results of Commission meetings and decisions, facilitating and tracking research results, providing reliable and permanent institutional memory, coordinating joint data use, continuously disseminating information about Commission activities and the state of the river basin, and raising awareness of good water resource management practice are the core elements of OKACOM's information and communications work and need to be addressed in any strategy to support it. This strategy is based on the concept of information as a key driver for communications processes.

Key messages for OKACOM's communications work are that wise management and sustainable development of the Cubango-Okavango river basin are dependent first on adopting a mindset that focuses on the river as a transboundary rather than a local resource, then on a combination of environmental knowledge, opportunities and competitive advantage; emphasis should be on sharing benefits, not quantities of water; and that OKACOM takes decisions about shared management to achieve the best return on investment for all its countries based on consensus. OKACOM's broad key messages speak to its communications objectives:

- To reinforce the principles of constructive dialogue, mutual understanding and consensus in planning, management decision making for Basin resources.
- To build trust, of the Commission and among member states, through joint provision of sound, credible and transparent knowledge that addresses Basin issues.
- To nurture a sense of ownership among people and institutions in the Basin through continuous engagement that relates directly to their interests.
- To ensure that member states and Basin dwellers are fully informed to enable them to drive management and development.
- To promote the best available return on investment in Basin resources through facilitating sound and transparent analysis and decision making processes.
- To address the practical needs of Basin resource users through exposure to relevant and appropriate technical development strategies.
- To show how environmental conservation can improve livelihood conditions.

A key goal of OKACOM's information and communications strategy is to transform the mindsets of Basin stakeholders to adopt a transboundary point of view. This will take place through reinforcing the Commission's role of a well informed and trusted advisor to its member governments and engaging stakeholders in planning and management of the Basin through developing understanding of common issues and facilitating opportunities for joint action. The strategy will increase the level of awareness of OKACOM's work and role as a source of information and advice for wise management for the basin. It will also help the multi-way flow of communications among stakeholders in gathering information needed for development and management of the river basin. The strategy is to have all stakeholders acknowledge OKACOM as a provider of vital information for decision-makers in the planning, allocation and use of the Basin's benefits, thereby reinforcing a shift towards transboundary thinking.

OKACOM will do this through a strategic combination of networking, information management and communications activities.

1.1 NETWORKING

- developing relationships with existing communities of governance and research practice to create **new networks** that will function as conduits of knowledge to support a body of informed stakeholders
- providing increased **support to its own formal internal networks** to stimulate the flow of information among network members and OKACOM stakeholders.
- forming **partnerships with other organizations** who are delivering programmes relevant to the Commission's work.
- tracking and facilitating **exchange of scientific research** relevant to the Cubango-Okavango river basin.
- **using relevant SADC and international policies** to support its own messages and to draw on the substantial networking capability of these organizations.
- having regular active **contact with country officials** by the Secretariat, for both intelligence gathering and facilitation of the sharing process.
- **engaging the private sector** on its own territory to show the member countries, through OKACOM, taking charge of development planning processes for the region's benefit.

1.2 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- **developing its Secretariat staff** as active, facilitative knowledge workers who respond effectively to the Commission's needs, providing the right information to the right people at the right time through facilitating access to the Commission's own knowledge assets as well as those of other relevant people and institutions.
- establishing capacity and systems at the Secretariat level to **manage the Commission's life cycle of information** to maximum advantage.
- functioning as a **hub of a network of information gathering institutions**, assisting to facilitate sharing of data, while focusing its own data collection and management activities on its own internally generated resources and on an up to date directory of stakeholders.
- understanding the background, content and intention of member countries' **national development plans**.
- treating **information and communications work as an integral part of the Commission's consultative processes** to ensure a multi-way flow of knowledge and information.
- making best use of opportunities offered by projects by ensuring that **project information resources are incorporated into OKACOM's systems** and structures and by clearly recognizing and separating the need for ongoing, in-house knowledge and capacity for core Secretariat information work from time-limited sub-projects.
- reviewing, summarizing and sharing **useful external codified information** to ensure its delivery in a regular and predictable way.
- maximizing **accessibility and usefulness of the documents** OKACOM produces through effective design and better tools for electronic access.
- increasing the use of **document sharing and discussion tools** customized for its members to improve the speed and ease of internal dissemination and information exchange.
- making the most use of **automated and user-driven generation of content** to keep OKACOM's web presence current and relevant.
- **reviewing its work** on an annual basis with Commission members to capture evidence about the effectiveness and impact of its programmes and activities.

1.3 COMMUNICATIONS

- using **its own members and information as primary resources** to deliver its messages
- **engaging with stakeholders** through facilitating multi-way flows of information and knowledge, guided by an effective access to information policy that balances safe internal communications with the need for transparency and public participation
- helping its stakeholders **interpret and understand complex ideas and approaches** so they can become effective partners in decision making.
- recognizing the importance of **national identity** in development of communications products.
- **actively listening** to its audiences and formulating dynamic responses
- **using events** as opportunities to actively build OKACOM's networks through capture of information
- making the best **use of print, broadcast and web-based media** through familiarization and training courses for Commission staff
- working with government communications specialists in member countries to **jointly develop information products and channels**
- adhering to **standards** in production of professional, effective and aesthetically pleasing communications products.

OKACOM's communications work will be closely aligned to the goals of its operational programmes. The Strategic Action Programme, in particular, represents a paradigm shift in natural resources planning and management that is based on lateral thinking -- cross-country and cross-sectoral. In this context, communication messages will focus on advocating this new and challenging paradigm, rather than concentrating on publicity and marketing of what the OKACOM does or intends to do. OKACOM's aim is to create messages that can re-direct mindsets, opening new opportunities and ways of doing business, to maximize the benefits from transboundary approaches to natural resources management in a river basin context.

2 OKACOM COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY CONTEXT

In April 2005 the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission endorsed functions for the first phase of the operations of OKACOM's Secretariat. These included specific tasks¹ for information and communications work:

- Communication of OKACOM decisions to relevant stakeholders
- Development of a communications strategy for the Basin using as far as possible existing communication channels
- Development of an information strategy for the Basin using existing databases and information sources
- An interactive web site for Basin stakeholders
- Provision of institutional memory
- Promotion of the Basin within external networks
- Organization of workshops and networking with Basin stakeholders on important issues to develop issue papers for OKACOM consideration.

At the time, OKACOM was supported through an Interim Secretariat at the USAID funded IRBM Project in Gaborone, Botswana. While information and communication work was carried out on an ad hoc basis by the project's interim secretariat services, in the following years resources were focused on staffing and development of the permanent Secretariat in Maun, and development of a workplan for the first three years of its operations. The workplan recognized the importance of developing a strategic approach to information and communications for OKACOM, in particular with Objectives 2 and 3:

Obj 1	OKACOM decisions well informed
1.1	Effective administration / functional and well organized OKACOM operational organs, systems and forums
1.2	Coordinated action plans for implementation of OKACOM decisions enhanced
1.3	Progress reports on implementation of OKACOM decisions timely produced and made available
1.4	OKACOM analytical systems regularly used to assess key issues
Obj 2	Information relevant to effective & equitable management
2.1	Present information sources & partners effectively identified, mapped and maintained
2.2	Present & future information needs effectively analysed and listed
2.3	Implementation of the information responsibility criteria, in a participatory manner
2.4	Design of an information access strategy
2.5	Plan of action for information duties of Secretariat
Obj 3	Participation of stakeholders in integrated governance of Okavango
3.1	Specific stakeholder categories & their information needs defined
3.2	Appropriate messages, media and platforms identified and linked
3.3	A field tested communication strategy developed with a mechanism for adaptive management
3.4	Capacity building programmes for communication strategy designed and implemented
3.5	Implementation of communication activities

Information and communication are mutually dependent functions. A communications strategy is by nature dependent on the information an organization generates, collects and analyses, and on the organization's attitude towards, and policy for, that information. In OKACOM's case, management of information resources has evolved gradually, following the evolution and pace of OKACOM's institutional structures. OKACOM's communications work has reflected this gradual evolution, at first promoting the mere fact of OKACOM's existence, then adding reporting of its meetings and other activities, its information work growing in sophistication and impact. Now, with a permanent Secretariat, OKACOM is positioned to begin making strategic use of available information to a much higher degree, providing pointers to knowledge and information gaps to direct additional knowledge generation, creating a dynamic knowledge-driven organization that is able to monitor the policy and development environment, provide direction and formulate effective responses.

¹ PEMconsult. *Guidelines and Procedures for the Establishment and Operationalisation of the OKACOM Secretariat*¹ Copenhagen, April 2005.

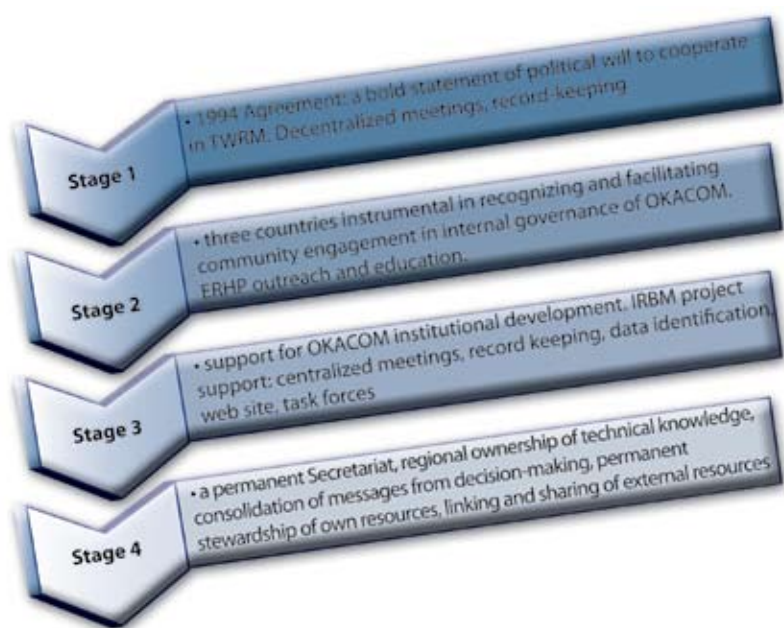


Figure 1 Evolution of OKACOM information and communications work

2.1 INFORMATION ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission was established through an agreement among the governments of Angola, Botswana and Namibia in 1994, making it the first river basin organization of its kind in Southern Africa and pre-dating the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses, which was to stimulate formation of other such bodies in the region. OKACOM grew out of the experience, led by Namibia, of negotiations over shared waters between Angola and Namibia, and between Namibia and Botswana. OK ACOM's stated role was to "act as technical advisor to the Contracting Parties on matters related to the conservation, development and utilization of water resources of common interest".²

The Organizational Structure for the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) of 2007 describes the Commission's functions more specifically as to include:

- identification and establishment of standards
- development and implementation of programmes
- development of awareness and education programmes, background documents and agreements
- promotion of joint hydraulic infrastructures and other projects of common interest
- prevention and resolution of conflicts
- establishment of coordination mechanisms
- collection and dissemination of information of common interest
- consideration of claims and complaints
- application for protective measures.

The Okavango Basin Steering Committee (OBSC) is the technical advisory body to the Commission. The OBSC appoints task forces to work on specific issues, and supervises the work of OKACOM's Secretariat whose function is to provide administrative, financial and general secretarial services to OKACOM. Among the functions of the Secretariat, as defined by the 2006 organizational structure document, are:

- provision of administrative and archiving services
- facilitation of implementation of projects
- liaison with stakeholders and sharing of information about OKACOM activities
- establishment and maintenance of a database to support information provided by the Commission relating to

2 Agreement between the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of Namibia on the Establishment of a Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM). Windhoek, 1994.

- transboundary issues of the Basin
- establishment of an archive of all OKACOM's documentation including, but not limited to, correspondence and minutes of meetings
- ensuring timely circulation of documentation.

The Commission's Rules and Procedures also recognize the central role of information and communications in OKACOM's work. Specifically:

- 9.1 The Commission shall issue a press release, signed by the all Co-chairpersons, to inform the public on specific decisions made at that meeting and distribute to all member states; and
- 9.2 To ensure effective stakeholder engagement in the Commission decisions, activities and initiatives, the Commission's external communication and outreach shall be facilitated through all possible media and communication tools, in Portuguese and English;
- 9.3 The Commission shall make provisions to explore other communication methods to facilitate continuous communication and interaction on matters pertaining to the Commission's core business; the methods and applications shall be an integral part of this rules and procedures.

Documenting and sharing the results of Commission meetings and decisions, facilitating and tracking research results, providing reliable and permanent institutional memory, coordinating joint data use, continuous dissemination of information about Commission activities and the state of the river basin, and raising awareness of good water resource management practice are the core elements of OKACOM's information and communications work.

2.1.1 Information from Meetings

Meetings play a central role in OKACOM's work. Agendas and minutes of OKACOM body meetings are considered internal, private documents and are valued by the Commission as evidence of the process of consensus building in the decision making process. They can also be viewed as documentation of history-making processes that can be used to provide valuable lessons in negotiation to other managers of transboundary resources.

2.1.2 Research Results

Decision making needs to be informed and backed up by solid, constantly updated research. A preliminary Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) carried out for OKACOM in 1998 was useful in identifying research needs for the river basin, especially in the context of Angola's approaching reconstruction that would bring with it the opportunity to conduct fieldwork that had not been possible for many years. OKACOM's 2008-2009 TDA work brought together researchers from institutions in the region: Agostinho Neto University in Angola, the Polytechnic of Namibia and the University of Botswana, as well as experts from South Africa and the international arena to analyse previous studies and new data in the context of new integrated flows methodology. This has laid the groundwork for developing decision support systems based on conditions in the river basin and possible human developments. Such systems, however, need to be constantly fed with new data as conditions change: facilitating tracking of ongoing scientific research is thus a core activity for OKACOM.

2.1.3 Record Keeping for Institutional Memory

As a permanent and governmental body, preserving and providing access to the Commission's institutional memory is a core activity of its information and communications work. Without records of what has gone before, the Commission runs the risk of constantly using its limited and valuable resources to repeat work already done, especially as the duties of OKACOM Commission members are only part-time and the members rotate and retire. While part of the solution is to ensure that Commissioners, OBSC and task force members' knowledge is shared among themselves and with stakeholders directly and personally, a key focus of OKACOM's information and communications work is to establish capacity and systems at the Secretariat level to manage the Commission's life cycle of information to maximum advantage.

2.1.4 Joint Data Use

Data about the river basin's physical and social environment, collected over time through monitoring programmes, has been identified as a key component in development of decision support systems for river basins worldwide. Studies such as the University of Delft's Newater Project point out that Integrated Water Resource Management deals with complex, unstructured problems: "These problems require collection of different types of data, like hydrological, ecological and socio-economical data. Furthermore, it is crucial that different frames of perception are considered in the framing of the problem. To handle this type of problem, it is necessary to:

- Improve the interaction between society, policy and science;
- Mobilise expertise across disciplinary boundaries;
- Include non-formal knowledge of stakeholders, which is not validated in a specific scientific area, in interactions;
- Use expertise in the form of storylines as a bridge between science and decision-making;
- Pay special attention to the validation of knowledge. In interdisciplinary research the classical quality control (peer review) of specific scientific areas needs to be broadened by including multiple experts in the validation of knowledge (extended peer review);
- identify and analyse uncertainties in knowledge. This might lead to new insights in the relevance of problem aspects and solutions."³

In the context of OKACOM, the need for access to good data has been given considerable attention: in 2005 the IRBM Project commissioned a study to identify priority information to support the Commission's work.⁴ Data about water resources supply and availability, water demand and water quality were identified as priorities. The more recent work of the TDA identified other priority data collection areas.

The IRBM study acknowledged that the most appropriate model would be for the Commission to function as a hub of a network of mainly government-based information gathering institutions, assisting to facilitate sharing of data rather than collecting, capturing and maintaining it at the Secretariat. The need to collect and centrally manage data and information from diverse sources should be thoroughly analysed to determine the resource requirements for such work.

The 2005 study also recommended creation of what it called a *metadatabase*: a compilation of descriptions of different sources of data and information about the Cubango-Okavango basin. This was very much in line with the recommendations of the study for the Commission to act as an information broker rather than as a producer: such a resource would direct the information seeker to the appropriate owner of the needed materials. The product of this work has been developed into a web based resource, *Okavango Collections*, on OKACOM's new web site.

2.1.5 Information Dissemination

Dissemination of information about Commission activities and the state of the river basin is a core communications activity that depends on the Secretariat's skill in identifying such resources, and on its capacity to maintain information management systems that are set up to prioritize, preserve, find and reuse appropriate information and to route it to appropriate recipients. The sheer quantity of relevant external information currently transmitted in electronic form both relieves the Secretariat of some of the work it might have had to do in the past, but adds a decision-making challenge: what to keep? who to share it with? how to reduce the reading burden on Commissioners and OBSC members?

Understanding of what information is highly relevant to the Commission, while aided by artificial intelligence tools, will come with time and experience gained by Secretariat staff members. A fundamental step in knowing how to get the right information to the right people at the right time is creation of a networking database that contains continuously updated contact details for people and institutions who might care about OKACOM's work, tagged to indicate specific areas of interest.

3 Raadgever, G.T. and Mostert, E. *Public participation in information management : analysis of participatory tools and their contribution to adaptive river basin management*, Deliverable 1.2.2 of the NeWater project, RBA Centre, TU Delft. Delft: 2005.

4 Okavango Integrated River Basin Management Project. *Report submitted to the Chief of Party for the United States Agency for International Development Project by the Senior Data Management Specialist for an Okavango Information Management Strategy*. Gaborone, November 11, 2005

2.1.6 Public Education and Awareness Raising

River basin stakeholders need to be aware of conditions in the overall river basin and opportunities for improvement of livelihoods and living conditions. While national, district and municipal levels of government in the riparian countries provide some support to this function, it is OKACOM's responsibility to help country populations understand the benefits of looking at the river's resources as joint assets, from the perspective of trans-boundary stewardship and community, and to engage communities in transboundary processes.

The programme, *Every River Has its People*, sponsored by Sida from 2000 to 2007, was successful in raising this type of awareness through a series of activities directed at Cubango-Okavango river basin grassroots inhabitants, among them development of educational materials for schools, craft marketing training, a roadshow, and creation of a community based organization with membership from the three countries, the Basin Wide Forum. Implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations ACADIR in Angola, Namibia Nature Foundation in Namibia and the Kalahari Conservation Society in Botswana, the well branded programme was widely acknowledged as an example of what could be achieved for public awareness of transboundary issues through direct interaction with local communities. OKACOM needs to build on this experience and use the momentum gained.

2.2 THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Since its creation in 1994, the Commission has seen a major shift in thinking about water resources management. River basin organizations used to focus on how to fairly share out the water in their river systems: the emphasis was on quantity. More recently, through the general acceptance of the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), the emphasis has shifted to understanding the benefits provided by all the natural resources in the river system and how use of those benefits might vary among the riparian countries, depending on comparative advantage. The end result of this approach should be equitable sharing of the river's benefits, even if one country has access to more cubic kilometres of water than another. Identifying and valuing benefits, however, is more complex than allocating quantities of water, and recent policy work for the Commission has focused on putting together enough information about the Basin's resources, as well as trustworthy systems, to allow such analysis. This is recognized as particularly important in the face of increasing demand for infrastructure development. An essential goal of OKACOM's communications work is helping its stakeholders interpret and understand such **complex ideas and approaches** so they can become effective partners in decision making.

While an institution like OKACOM obviously stands for joint decision making across political boundaries, its member countries are still very much nation states in their outward dealings with the world, having only relatively recently gained the sense of identity that accompanied independence and the beginning of full political participation of local – as opposed to colonial -- populations. Botswana was a British Protectorate until 1966, Namibia became a republic in 1990 and Angola, while gaining its independence from Portugal in 1975, is still emerging from a long civil war that hampered much development of national infrastructure and institutions. Strong **national identity and pride** have to be taken into consideration in developing communications approaches for the Commission.

Each of OKACOM's partner countries invests considerable resources in **national development plans** that aim at meeting the countries' need for a strong economy and a good life for the nation's people. Understanding the background, content and intention of these plans is essential in developing OKACOM's communications approaches, especially in directing the Commission's messages, since echoing the principles that have been developed and broadly disseminated in the country context will work to reinforce these messages.

Convincing people in nation states to think regionally is a challenge. All three OKACOM countries are members of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), established in 1980 to promote socio-economic cooperation and integration as well as political and security cooperation among 15 southern African states. SADC's Water Resources Division and Environmental Education Programme have been instrumental in developing a **regional approach** to and understanding of water and natural resources management among the member countries, including, through the *Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses*, the sharing of information and knowledge among riparian states:

6. State Parties shall exchange available information and data regarding the hydrological, hydro geological, water quality, meteorological and environmental condition of shared watercourses.⁵

5 Southern African Development Community. *SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses*. Gaborone, 199x

and

Article 4, 1 a): State Parties shall exchange information and consult each other and, if necessary, negotiate the possible effects of planned measures on the condition of a shared watercourse.

OKACOM's communications work needs to build on this progress by using relevant SADC policies to support its own messages and to draw on SADC's substantial networking capability.

Consultative processes are a public policy keystone in natural resources management and development. OKACOM must be seen to be involving its stakeholders in developing sound advice to the partner countries' governments and to be making the voices of these stakeholders heard to Commission members. OKACOM's communications work must begin with full involvement in the Commission's consultative processes to ensure a multi-way flow of knowledge and information.

3 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

OKACOM's communications goal and objectives are aligned to its vision and operations. OKACOM's principal work is to open pathways to improved livelihoods in the Cubango-Okavango river basin through revealing opportunities offered by joint transboundary management and development. It follows that its principal communications goal is to support and facilitate this opening of pathways.

Communications Goal

To promote and support opening of pathways to improved livelihoods in the Cubango – Okavango River Basin through revealing opportunities offered by joint transboundary management and development.

The vision of OKACOM for the river basin, based on the founding principles of the 1994 Agreement, is to create coordinated resource development, balancing:

- Economic efficiency
- Social equity
- Ecosystem sustainability.

This translates into the concept of acceptable development space, which is the optimal combination of development activities and the threshold for these activities

that allow for maintenance of the good condition of the river and its environment while providing real economic benefits to its peoples. This optimal development space should lead to *a clean and flowing river system* that delivers:

- Opportunities for joint economic ventures among the three countries
- Improved livelihood options
- Freedom of commerce and social interactions among residents of the Basin
- A safe and secure environment with controlled impacts of adverse natural conditions such as floods and droughts
- Continuing richness of biodiversity that supplies optimal ecosystem services
- World-class green infrastructure and business centres.

A clean and flowing river system...

In the years since the initial expression of this vision in the 1994 Agreement, OKACOM has identified management challenges to achieving this vision. These include:

1. fragmentation of institutional responses
2. lack of capacity
3. weak local institutions
4. lack of resources for integrated planning
5. inadequate representation of all stakeholders in governance of the Basin.

OKACOM's communications strategy strives to address these potential barriers to achieving the Commission's vision of the Basin. This can be done through:

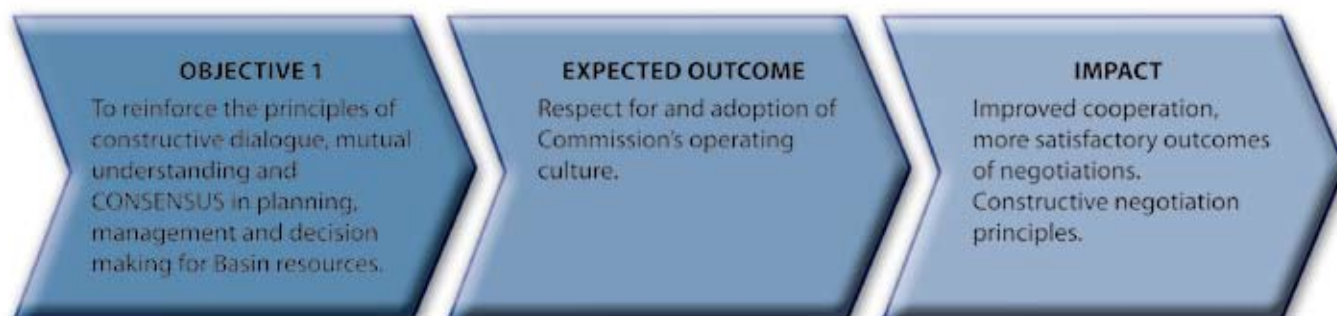
1. developing communications networks and technical data sharing among member states ministries
2. facilitation of improved systems and tools for managers
3. provision of accessible information and technical coaching

4. raising awareness of needs among cooperating partners
5. identification of critical points of entry for including stakeholders in OKACOM’s work.

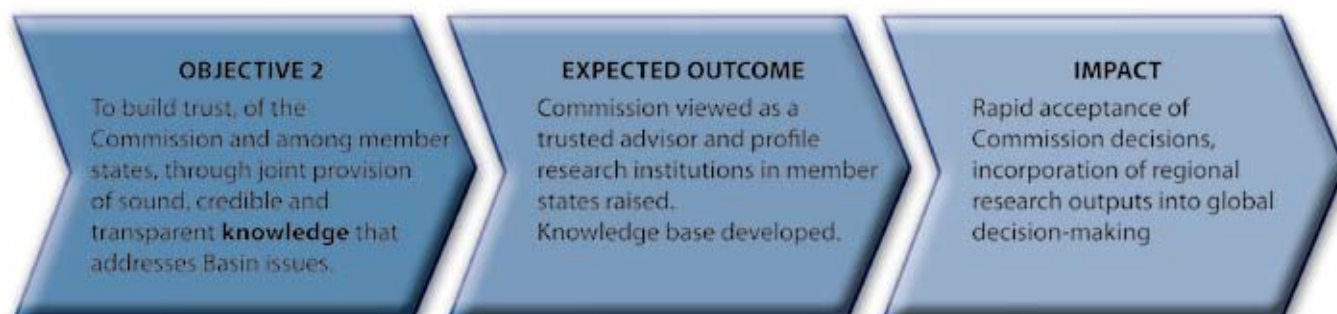
In operational terms this work can be framed in a set of communications objectives, tied to expected outcomes, anticipated impacts and to key messages.

3.1 COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

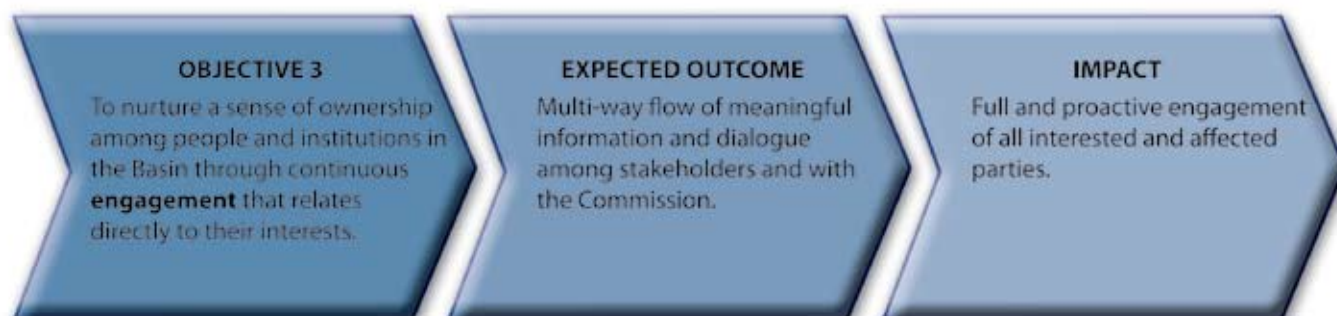
OKACOM’s communications objectives build on the Commission’s 1994 vision and its understanding of the challenges to its realization by using the organization’s operating culture as a first step in opening pathways to improved and sustainable livelihoods.



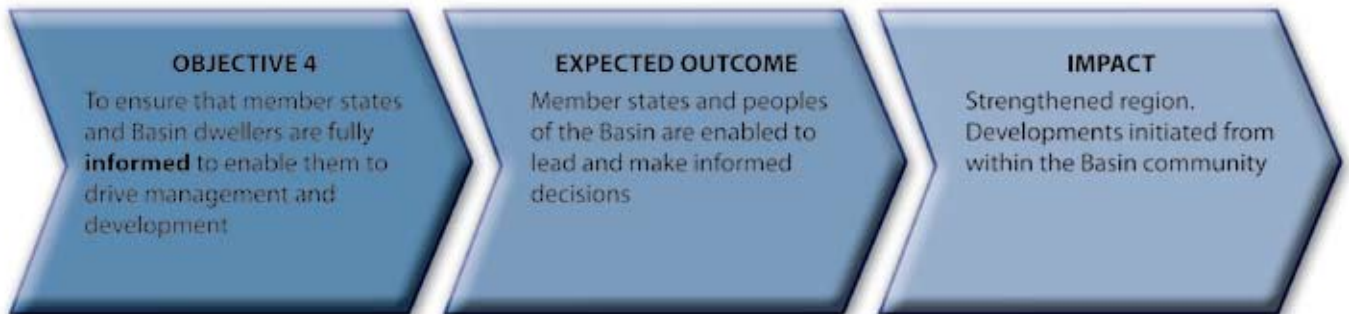
The second communications objective is based on the Commission’s conviction that sound decision making requires good knowledge and information generated through ongoing research.



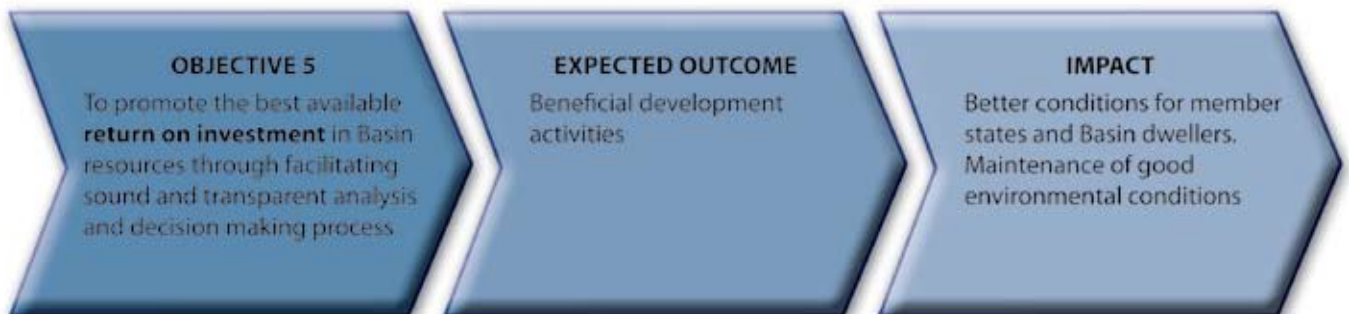
The third communications objective emphasizes the need to engage meaningfully with Basin stakeholders to create a true multi-way flow of information that leads to their full engagement with management and development issues.



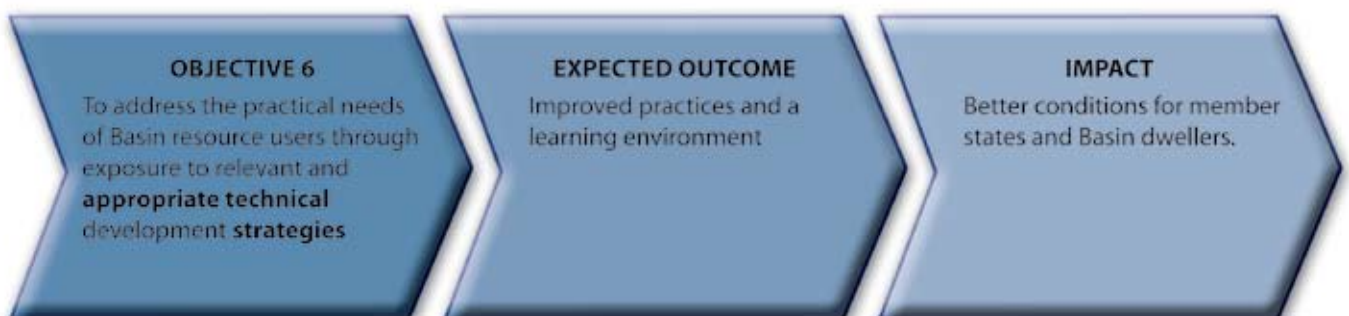
Objective Four aims at putting OKACOM's member states in the driving seat of management and development through ensuring that they are prepared, not only to respond in a knowledgeable way to proposed activities from outside the Basin, but to initiate appropriate work.



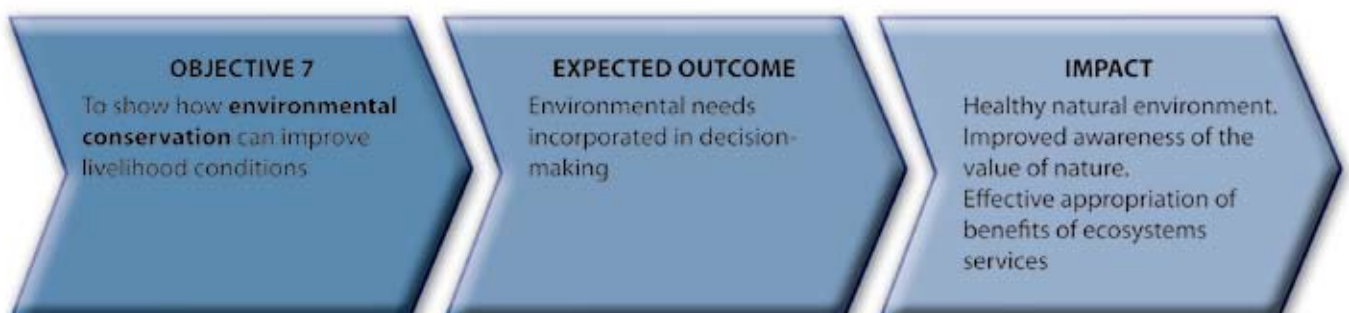
The fifth objective emphasizes the need for riparian countries to make reasoned choices among development alternatives to ensure that these choices result in benefits for the river system and the people of the three states.



Objective Six highlights the need for increased dissemination and awareness of best technical practices to optimize productivity that results in improved livelihoods.



Objective Seven aims at ensuring a balance of human development activities and environmental health through promoting a deeper understanding of the ecosystem services offered by the river.



Together, these objectives work towards supporting OKACOM's goal of improved livelihoods through a critical shift, from thinking that ends at national borders to thinking that incorporates the entire basin and its common resources.

4 STAKEHOLDERS AND AUDIENCES

OKACOM, as a governance institution, subscribes to the principles of consultation and consensus. The broad and cross-cutting nature of river basin issues means that the community of stakeholders involved in the management process is large and diverse, with varying needs for information and levels of participation. Active listening to these audiences and dynamic response are core functions of OKACOM's information and communications work. A separate study commissioned by OKACOM is identifying and organizing information about the natural points of access to the stakeholders in the basin and analyzing institutional arrangements that could support their meaningful participation.

OKACOM's Stakeholder Integration Strategy identifies the following categories of people and institutions that have a vested interest in what happens in the Cubango-Okavango river basin. These stakeholders are the target of OKACOM's communication efforts to facilitate a multi-way cycle of information flow – from local knowledge to international best practice – that both informs OKACOM and keeps its stakeholders informed about the most appropriate pathways for management and development.

1 Private Sector	2 Civil Society	3 Government	4 Media	5 Academia	6 Donor	7 Regional and International Bodies
Power Utility	NGO	Regional Governments		Scientists	International Funding Institutions	SADC
Tourism	CBO	District Water Management		Teachers		UN
Mining	Youth Groups	Municipal Government		Students		
Construction	Conservationists	National Government				
Agro-Industry	Basin Wide Forum	Parastatals				
Factory Farmer	Communities	OKACOM				
Irrigation Farmer						
Health Care Provider						

OKACOM Stakeholder Integration Strategy Final Draft, 2011

Among these stakeholders there are groups that require particular attention in OKACOM's communications work.

4.1 COMMISSION MEMBERS



Figure 2 Mr A. Nebemia signing agreement for hosting of OKACOM Secretariat by Botswana

Senior government officials from the three countries who make up the membership of the Commission and the Okavango Basin Steering Committee constitute both a major knowledge asset of the Commission and a primary audience for its communications work. Highly skilled and experienced technocrats responsible for development and implementation of natural resources management policy, they bring technical expertise and finely tuned political awareness to the organization. They need access to clearly timely, trustworthy, synthesized information upon which they can base OKACOM's advice to their respective governments.

4.2 GOVERNMENT POLICY MAKERS

Government officials in the three countries are on the front line of policy making for natural resources management. While high level government officials from each of the three countries participate in OKACOM as Commissioners, and officials from selected ministries and departments as members of the OBSC and OKACOM task forces, some influential government officials outside the water sector do not know about or understand the work of the Commission and the work it has been sponsoring. This is significant because the river basin as a system provides services that cut across sectors: these officials need to have access to the new knowledge developed both to support their decision making in their respective administrative areas and to nurture development of joint investment approaches to resource management. Officials from departments of agriculture, energy, business investment, economic planning, health and education all have a stake in managing the Cubango-Okavango system. Of special importance are officials at the provincial, district and municipal levels, and the members of village development committees. These people are an important conduit for the multi-way flow of information in remote areas.

4.3 INVESTMENT COMMUNITY



Figure 3 Botswana members of Basin Wide Forum meet at OKACOM Secretariat

As a major natural resource necessary for business and industry, water is key to consideration of new developments by the private sector. The riparian countries need business investment and their national development plans identify priority areas for economic growth. The Cubango-Okavango river basin, long underdeveloped in the three countries, has the potential to become an area of high interest for local, regional and international investors.

Joint development projects based on sound planning principles set out by OKACOM's Strategic Action Programme (SAP) will require substantial financial input to ensure that costs and benefits are balanced. Partnership with Basin countries offers businesses and industry the opportunity to develop good return on investment while at the same time building their reputation by applying state of the art sustainable development principles. Essential in this process is trust, based on the knowledge that the riparian countries have put into place agreed upon and institutionalized policies that will support major investments over time, with long term goals. Potential investors need to know that the Cubango-Okavango river basin has this long term planning and institutional development underway, and, when the Basin is "open for business", OKACOM is able to identify potential partners for engagement in green development enterprise.

4.4 RESEARCH COMMUNITY

The Cubango-Okavango river basin needs ongoing scientific research to support an evolving set of sound principles for management. Regional scientists collected, collated and analysed data for OKACOM through its Transboundary Diagnostic

Analysis and Strategic Action Programme work. Production of these studies was an innovative collaborative and multidisciplinary process that identified many knowledge gaps, including baseline information for key biophysical and socio-economic characteristics of the Basin such as hydrology, sediment transport, water quality, biodiversity indicators and socio-economic indicators and the legislative framework. The TDA has recommended that research to fill these gaps should focus on problems and aim at formulating solutions that are relevant within the Basin, and that OKACOM take on the role of promoting and facilitating research as part of building capacity within the Basin to identify and formulate these solutions. Learning about the TDA process and the findings it produced can stimulate other scientists and researchers throughout the region and globally to both engage in further studies to fill the data gaps, and to experiment with new methodologies that integrate different types of work through environmental flows and Integrated Water Resources Management approaches.

OKACOM is frequently approached by project managers and researchers from all over the world for review and approval of research projects in the Basin. Developing a framework for an integrated response to these requests and nurturing an expanding research network that focuses on the Cubango-Okavango river basin are priorities for support by this strategy. This role demands that the Secretariat be both aware of opportunities for collaborative research support and of the capacity of research and education institutions in the three countries to contribute to new knowledge about the Basin.

4.5 BASIN AND RIPARIAN COUNTRY RESIDENTS

The people who live in the Cubango-Okavango river basin have the most to gain or lose from development there. They are, as a group, the poorest people in the three countries: the least educated and with the least access to government and commercial services. It is acknowledged that these people must have access to information from OKACOM to both help them respond to proposed developments and to take advantage of new knowledge in planning and managing their livelihoods. Women, children and youth are a special focus group within this category, with the potential to multiply effective information dissemination and learning through their social networks.

Citizens of the riparian countries who do not live in the river basin are nevertheless important stakeholders in that they are in a greater position of economic strength and political influence in the national planning process. OKACOM needs to consider the demands and expectations of rapidly expanding and literate urban populations to the south, populations that may have never visited the river basin and for whom it appears to offer resources to support their urban lifestyles. Care must also be taken to consider non-urban communities outside the Basin that require inter-basin water transfers for domestic or agricultural use.

4.6 WATER RESOURCES MANAGERS

Most river basin organizations world-wide are faced with management of troubled river conditions. The Cubango-Okavango is different because the basin is still relatively undeveloped. Instead of identifying problems and possible remedial measures, OKACOM is looking at how to avoid degradation of the services and benefits provided by the river. This unusual approach is of interest to other water resources planners and managers. They are watching with interest to see if the Cubango-Okavango's riparian states are able to come up with workable and sustainable development approaches that preserve and make best use of the resources. Sharing the challenges and successes of OKACOM's work with this community through targeted communications will help build an increasingly engaged group of experts who will feed OKACOM's own learning process with their knowledge.

4.7 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATING PARTNERS

Located in three developing countries, the Cubango-Okavango river basin has seen the benefit of significant amounts of international development aid since OKACOM was established. Large internally supported projects to support conservation and sustainable development governance of the Basin have included the European Union's *WERRD Project* that looked at basin hydrology and socio-economic conditions from 2001 to 2004, Sida's *Every River Has its People Project* (ERHP) that raised awareness of basin wide issues at the community level from 2004 to 2007, USAID's *Integrated River Basin Management Project* (IRBM) that hosted OKACOM's interim secretariat from 2002 to 2008, and the United Nations Global Environment Facility's *Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin Project* (EPSMO) that has focused on a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Programme for the Cubango-Okavango from 2006 to 2010. The Swedish Government, through Sida, has supported establishment and ongoing operations of the permanent Secretariat for three

years. A continuation of USAID support in the form of the SAREP Project that is assisting the Cubango-Okavango communities in water supply and sanitation work and a Water Audit project sponsored by the Italian Government/FAO began in 2010. SADC's Water Division has also benefited from international assistance, such as that the Global Water Partnership, WaterNet and the German government's support of IWRM capacity building and River Basin Organization workshops, assistance that flows over to support OKACOM work.

International agencies often come with their own set of objectives and policy frameworks, some of which may not appear to reflect the priorities of the governments they seek to assist. OKACOM can provide an interpretation and facilitation role when participating governments agree to work with these international partners. It is clear that international development aid will continue for some time to assist governments in the region to build capacity and institutions in the water sector, making donor agencies an important stakeholder group and audience for OKACOM's communications work. They will want to see the results of their assistance made public, and evidence that their investments have been wisely put to use.

4.8 THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The Cubango-Okavango system is internationally viewed as a global commons. The Okavango Delta is a Ramsar wetland of international significance and may be considered for World Heritage status. This results in a global vested interest group that can be that can be used as a lobby group to influence OKACOM's agenda.

5 KEY STRATEGY ELEMENTS

OKACOM's communications strategy is based on OKACOM's unique knowledge base: the experience and learning that has taken place in the years since the 1994 agreement, as well as the knowledge embedded in its current Commission members and their networks. Other river basin organizations naturally look to OKACOM for the benefit of this combined knowledge, as do OKACOM's stakeholders. How is it best codified and communicated? The following diagram outlines key elements of the strategy.

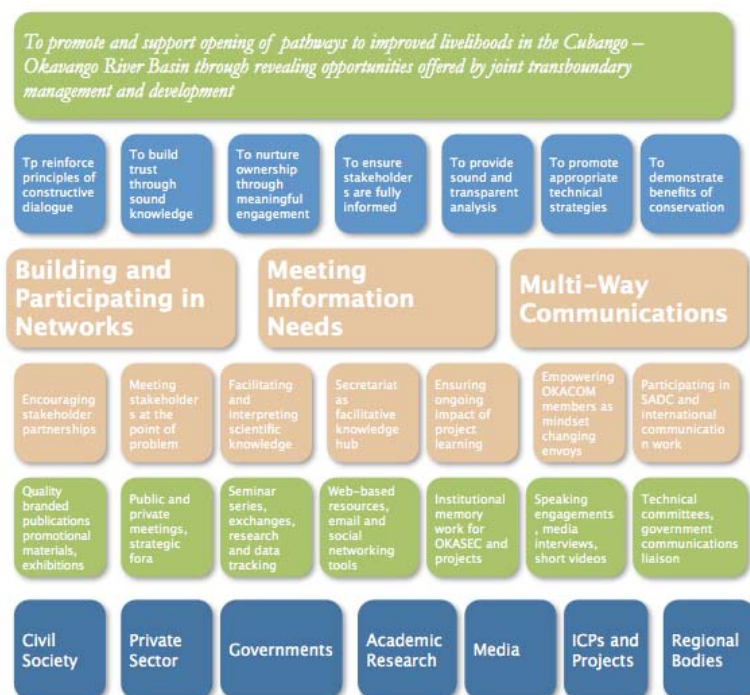


Figure 4 Key Communications Strategy Elements

5.1 MEETING INFORMATION NEEDS

A lot of thinking has already gone into defining the information needs of the Commission and its stakeholders. A recurring theme is the need to help the people and organizations working on Basin issues to understand each other through access to each others' knowledge sources.

5.1.1 Access to Relevant Distributed Information Sources

Information sources relevant to OKACOM's work are widely distributed. They include:

- Internal knowledge assets
- Research results
- Monitoring data
- Community consultation
- Global best practice.

5.1.1.1 Internal knowledge assets

The first best source of knowledge for OKACOM is in OKACOM. The Commission's members are chosen for their experience and expertise in natural resources management – together they represent a formidable source of knowledge valuable in managing the Basin. But like many organizations, OKACOM does not really know what it knows. Capturing the tacit knowledge of Commission members is a key element of OKACOM's knowledge strategy. A first step has been collection of biographical information that shows that wealth of experience of Commission members. The strategy will also include production of accessible issue papers based on interviews with Commission members. Testimonials from credible sources like Commissioners and OBSC members can go far in enhancing acceptance of a management approach, or research results. Speaking engagements and media interviews for the Executive Secretary and Commissioners should allow for question and answer sessions and for some degree of debate. On OKACOM's web site, three minute videos of Commissioners talking about current issues will allow this first-hand experience to be more widely shared.

OKACOM's retired Commissioners are also a key element in its information and communications strategy. A living source of institutional memory and experience, these elders will be invited and encouraged to take part in OKACOM activities and events.

5.1.1.2 Research results and monitoring data

OKACOM develops research partnerships to fill needed gaps and take advantage of new knowledge. A recent example is the cooperation with the University of Botswana's Okavango Research Institute in relationship to flood monitoring. While research exposes pockets of usually very narrowly defined data, government shoulders the burden of ongoing collection of environmental and social data year after year – data that OKACOM needs for big picture planning. Under-resourcing and lack of good communications tools often isolate and discourage the collectors of this data, and often breed mistrust and reluctance to share it. OKACOM's strategy is to encourage and facilitate quality in data collection and monitoring – an example is the hydrological data sharing protocol signed by Commissioners in 2010. Part of the strategy is also to capture and bring related data from different sources together in the context of current issues -- an example would be to consolidate existing data about water demand from different countries for a transfrontier park area through a web-based tool supplied by OKACOM. Existing work towards an Okavango Basin information System (OBIS) can also be used to encourage governments at all levels to make their data available: the technology is there, but the challenge is to develop information preservation and access policies that satisfy potential participants and build trust.

5.1.1.3 Community consultation

Stakeholder participation is key in development of effective and workable policies. OKACOM will create and provide spaces and opportunities for its stakeholders to interact. Its strategy is to not only capture the documented statements of community members at formal meetings but to track, encourage and facilitate indigenous knowledge research, as well as continually identify new opportunities and locations for capturing local knowledge and opinion. Use of new web based networking tools and, as telecommunications capacity improves in our rural areas, mobile telephones for alerting and polling, will be essential to facilitate the multi-way flow of knowledge and information.

5.1.1.4 Global best practice

OKACOM should learn from the experience of river basins around the world. The Secretariat maintains a watching brief for global best practice and the latest thinking on natural resources management policy, summarizing and alerting the Commission through electronic media and briefing notes. OKACOM is also working towards participation in global information capture efforts, like INBO's *AWIS system* and the *Aquatic Commons*.

The role of the Secretariat is not to become a huge original data repository that requires significant resources to develop and maintain, but rather a point of gathering and synthesis of information from different trusted sources. A first step in this direction was compilation of information about approximately 50 sources of information relevant to the Cubango-Okavango river basin through the IRBM's metadatabase project. OKACOM Secretariat is now in the process of updating and converting this information to web-accessible database format to allow addition of new sources. This resource will be called *Okavango Collections* and will be available through OKACOM's public web site.

5.1.2 Core Capacity in Keeping and Learning from Records

The Secretariat's key role is to provide the Commission with sound knowledge to support decision making, and to share the Commission's deliberations and advice with all concerned.

Making and keeping records is the best first step towards sharing knowledge. As a body of government, OKACOM must document its meetings, deliberations and the advice it offers to member countries as evidence of its work, and to demonstrate accountability. Facilitating accurate and clear documentation is a primary responsibility of the Secretariat. This can mean dealing with as small an issue as ensuring that Ministry names are correct on official letterhead to ensuring that lists and meeting minutes are proofread and corrected. An important element of OKACOM's information strategy is to build the information literacy capacity of the Secretariat staff to produce professional documentation.

Key to effective records management is preservation of knowledge assets. The strategy is to build the Secretariat's capacity for stewardship of OKACOM's key documents and records to ensure that it is possible to find what the Commission done before, meeting the requirements for accountability and evidence, and, more importantly, allowing the Commission and its stakeholders to learn from past experience. First steps taken include an inventory of records transferred from the IRBM Project, development of Secretariat filing system for key records, centralized capture of email and organization of public documents into a Resource Centre with electronic catalogue that will be shared on OKACOM's website. The Secretariat is also looking at best options for support of and access to electronic records, given the limited technical capacity in-house. Most river basin organizations in Africa identify information management as a key challenge, but few have implemented good records management systems. OKACOM could easily become a leader among its sister organizations in this area.

Once applied at the Secretariat, sound records management principles can be applied throughout OKACOM's information chain. Trust built in the Secretariat's information stewardship capacity will translate into trust in OKACOM's decision making ability when stakeholders realize that the Commission *knows what it knows*. OKACOM's strategy will be to establish state of the art records management practices and capacity at the Secretariat through clear assignment of responsibilities and targeted training.

The strategy for dealing with distributed ownership already discussed also applies to records that are relevant to the Commission's work. Active liaison with records and information managers in the governments of Angola, Botswana and Namibia is an essential part of this process.

5.1.3 The Secretariat: a Team of Responsive Knowledge Workers

Key functions of OKACOM's Secretariat are:

- Anticipation of stakeholder needs
- Facilitation, requiring presence, responsiveness, and willingness
- Support
- Coordination
- Alerting.



Figure 5 Stakeholders Workshop, December 2009.

Meetings are the lifeblood of the Commission's work. Working to make them more accessible, more organized and with higher impact is a core function of the Secretariat.

These are the functions that underpin a smoothly functioning and effective Secretariat and, by extension, development of a knowledge sharing environment. It must be recognized, in this rapidly changing world, the need for flexibility, multi-tasking and "ad hoc" solutions. It is essential, however, to also identify ongoing core information management activities for which there are clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This is the key to sustainability. Computers and consultants can't do it all – yet. OKACOM, is very much still in a transition stage that requires transition solutions, and one of these is adequate human resources support for key information functions.

5.1.4 The Role of Projects

Many of OKACOM's substantive activities outside meetings will take place in the context of projects. The additional funding that such projects make available will provide opportunities to carry out work that the human and budgetary resources of riparian governments and Secretariat may not be able to support. Projects are important to OKACOM's information and communications strategy in two ways: they produce a lot of information and new networking opportunities that must be captured and shared, and they can support one-off, labour-intensive information work such as development of databases or digitization of legacy resources. OKACOM's strategy must make the best use of the opportunities offered by projects by:

- ensuring that project planning and financing includes provision for incorporation of project information resources into OKACOM's systems and structures, including transfer of information assets at project closure.
- clearly recognizing and separating the need for ongoing, in-house knowledge and capacity for core Secretariat information work from time-limited sub-projects that may require temporary expertise.
- Using project experience to adequately understand local dynamics, problems and issues, capturing impacts and lessons learnt providing feedback in planning, management and decision making, and assisting in crafting adaptive management for continuous corrections and adjustments of intervention strategies.

5.2 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

This strategy is a tool that will be used to reach OKACOM's stakeholders – both external and internal. It will guide and assist OKACOM's Secretariat to develop activities and messages appropriate to these stakeholders. The strategy is intended to cover the three riparian countries, as OKACOM's focus is the entire river basin, but will be flexible enough to be adapted for use in specific countries and in specific circumstances. The main aim of the strategy is to increase the level of awareness of OKACOM's work and role as a trusted source of information and advice, thereby promoting transboundary thinking. This strategy will help with the multi-way flow of communications with stakeholders in gathering information needed for development and management of the river basin. The goal is to have all stakeholders look to OKACOM as a provider of vital information for decision-makers in the planning, allocation and use of the benefits of the Cubango-Okavango system through:

- Education and awareness raising of OKACOM amongst all stakeholders using appropriate channels and languages.
- Engagement of stakeholders in the process of planning and managing the resources of the Basin through providing interactive channels for a multi-way flow of knowledge and information
- Offering support to the process of consultation and public participation, and facilitation of buy-in by stakeholders.
- Creation and maintenance of appropriate communication tools.
- Continuous communication of useful information about OKACOM and its work.

Public communication – communication strategies and activities directed towards targeted audiences -- provides information to these audiences to raise awareness and influence attitudes and behaviour. For OKACOM, the desired objective of public communications is to explain the principles of its policies and approaches to stimulate engagement of the public in the process of jointly developing the Basin for the best possible return on investment while minimizing negative impacts.

Public relations, part of the public communications function, enable OKACOM to develop and maintain a positive image and reputation with the public, cultivating a public profile that is seen to be informed, attentive to concerns of all stakeholders, fair in its advice to governments and actively facilitative in achieving the best possible deal for the people and environment in the Basin.

5.2.1 The Communications Environment

5.2.1.1 Internal Communications

Trust is an essential ingredient for OKACOM's effectiveness. While for external stakeholders this trust is related to the soundness of information the Commission shares and transparency of the Commission's activities, for its internal stakeholders – Commission, OBSC and Task Force members -- trust is mainly related to the Commission's ability to be circumspect about the government and industrial intelligence shared with OKACOM. In the tradition of quiet diplomacy, the Commission must be seen to facilitate good decision making without initiating or participating in judgments about the motivation of its member governments, or revealing potentially sensitive or embarrassing information. A single mistake can lead to an information channel – and with it, the ability to positively influence decision making --drying up for years.

The 1994 agreement made it clear that member country government were to share needed information:

“1.3 ... each Contracting Party shall, to the extent permitted by its own laws and procedures, provide such information as the Commission may require for the performance of its functions, and shall notify the Commission of any proposed development or other matter which falls within the functions of the Commission.”⁶

Notification of this kind requires busy government officials to pause in their work to think about whether an issue is relevant to OKACOM and, if the pause take place, to analyse the ramifications of sharing the information. The communications strategy will include regular active contact with country officials by the Secretariat, for both intelligence gathering and facilitation of the sharing process. A trusted Secretariat member should be able to discuss the issue with an official to establish the level of sensitivity of information and the options for sharing it.

A Secretariat checklist for such regular contact could include questions about any relevant developments related, but not limited to

- legislation or regulations
- national development plans
- financing and incentive structures
- changes in government structure and posting
- protected areas
- proposed development projects.

Regular ongoing scanning of codified information sources – news, reports, media releases -- by the Secretariat will provide a starting point for many such contacts and, when officials have come to anticipate a regular telephone call or visit from Secretariat staff, the sharing of information will flow more smoothly through knowing what to expect.

6 Agreement between the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of Namibia on the Establishment of a Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM). Windhoek, 1994.

Even when such information is quickly shared among the countries making up the Commission, in an increasingly pressured public communications environment, where news is generated and shared almost instantly through broadcast, tweets, blogs and web sites, and in which environmental issues are considered of high interest, the time required to consider, discuss and thoroughly consider development activities with potential impact on the river basin shared by three countries does not make responsive knowledge sharing with the public easy. OKACOM must look to the communications strategies of other institutions that negotiate joint governance activities for examples of how to balance the need for a safe internal communications environment with the need for transparency and public participation.

Information access policies of organizations involved in international peacemaking may help to show the way. Against a background of intense and quiet negotiation, these organizations focus their external communications on current conditions and interventions. Those with the most successful communications focus on the hard-won mechanisms that allow actual or potential adversaries cooperate in difficult circumstances.

The best public outreach activities will not have a significant impact if internal communications are poor. Email is a powerful tool but is becoming less effective as it is more used. OKACOM will increasingly use web based document sharing and discussion tools customized for its members to improve the speed and ease of internal dissemination and, particularly, information exchange.

OKACOM's communications work must include support mechanisms to encourage and stimulate interaction among its formal network members. It can do this by raising awareness of specific issues and finding opportunities for meeting and discussion. Simultaneously it must build relationships with decision-makers who can include the findings of the networks into policy through regular and repeated contact. This way the work of these internal knowledge networks is converted into implementation through the engagement of decision-makers and communication with broader audiences.

5.2.1.2 External Communications

The key activities in external communications are consultation --tapping into the knowledge and listening to the concerns of stakeholders; advocacy -- speaking for the wellbeing of the river to maintain it in a condition that ensures optimal benefits; speaking for the people of the Basin and the people of the riparian states to ensure best return on investment; and education and outreach -- providing honest and meaningful information that exposes stakeholders to best knowledge and practice.

A first step is creating public awareness of OKACOM's location, makeup and official mandate. Recent activity at the Secretariat has built on communications work of the IRBM Project to design fresh corporate identity guidelines and outreach products. Attractive brochures and branded gifts are sometimes necessary (see Annexes A and B), but more important is delivery of useful information in a regular and predictable way so that OKACOM becomes that trusted source. The strategy is to develop key messages and responses to inquiries from the public so this reputation is earned. An information access policy is a key element in this strategy, to ensure that OKACOM is viewed as an open and transparent organization.

Documents are a key product of much of OKACOM's work. Many people are not tempted to read, or claim the lack of time, but often there is no shortcut to thoroughly understanding an issue. The strategy is to maximize accessibility and usefulness of the documents OKACOM produces through effective design and better tools for electronic access. OKACOM's documents will be richer, more visually arresting and more informative, and the information they contain will be re-used creatively to reach targeted and broader audiences. In 2009, for example, OKACOM captured insights of participants at the Flood Pulsed Wetlands International Symposium and later issued a full length video of the event, sensitizing the viewer to issues relevant to the Cubango-Okavango basin and stimulating further investigation.



Events offer the opportunity to inform people about OKACOM's mandate and activities, but mere display of communications products at booths in workshops and conferences is not enough. The strategy is to use these opportunities to actively build OKACOM's networks through capture of information for contacts and through conducting small surveys on specific communications issues to promote the two way flow of information.

Figure 6 Waiting for the Flood in Maun: presentation about flood modeling at HOORC

Encouraging people to share knowledge doesn't have to be heavy or expensive work. Sometimes it is just a matter of listening to the concerns of a group and informally bringing them together so they can offer their experience. Offering access to a knowledge specialist or expert can be a drawing card.

Knowledge sharing is encouraged through building communities of practice – groups of people who share interests and activities. OKACOM will use electronic technologies to promote formation of such communities relevant to the Cubango-Okavango, while also making use of distribution lists generated from its networking

databases.

5.2.2 Working with the Media

Commissioners, OBSC members and Task Force participants are for the most part government officials with technical, rather than communications, backgrounds. Many of these are used to having their institutions' communications needs met by communications specialists in their relevant government ministries. When confronted with the inquiries of media representatives, Commission members are often cautious, concerned that what they share with the media may not be fairly interpreted and reported. Since the knowledge and commitment of these Commission members is one of OKACOM's most potent resources, the organization needs to equip and support these people to effectively deliver the Commission's messages to journalists and other media representatives who can in turn deliver them to the world. OKACOM's Secretariat will work with partner institutions to develop appropriate familiarization and training programmes for Commission members in working with the media and vice versa.

The public information and communications departments of government agencies that deal with issues relevant to OKACOM's work are another valuable resource with the potential to disseminate the Commission's messages, both to their own internal constituencies and to the wider world. The Secretariat will develop working relationships with these specialists to share and jointly develop information products and channels. This includes the communications departments of institutions such as SADC.

While every opportunity should be used to work with local news sources, both print and broadcast, to reach rural and remote communities, OKACOM's communications work must also target specific business sectors – agriculture, energy, transport, forestry, mining and tourism --with articles in business publications and displays at trade and industry exhibitions, showing the OKACOM states, through OKACOM, taking charge of the development planning process for the region's benefit.

5.2.3 Knowledge Networking

Knowledge networks, established to deal with increasingly complex social and technical environments that cross disciplinary, sector and political boundaries, are fundamental to an organization's effective communications work. OKACOM itself is a formal knowledge network, with functional links among the OBSC and the OKACOM task forces. The formality of this internal knowledge network is indicated by documented terms of reference and criteria for membership. While OKACOM's organization and support of these internal networks provides accountability, continuity and commitment of resources, their effectiveness, however, is less the result of rules and procedures and more related to the fact that its members are also members of several overlapping communities of practice – natural resources governance, water engineering, and nature conservation, for example.

The knowledge captured and exchanged through these communities of practice is not always evident and applied in the context of OKACOM's work. Communications work needs to help OKACOM to get more from its internal formal networks: communications and engagement must be built into their activities. To have something to communicate – within the network or to the outside world – activities, in the form of actual applied work that addresses specific problems and issues, are essential. The best example of this is the work of OKACOM's Hydrology Task Force, which has developed and had approved a data sharing protocol among the three countries. Now the task force must engage in the process of making sure that the resources and will of the three governments are put to work to fulfill the intention of the protocol.

As mentioned, OKACOM's years of experience and learning is much sought after among other RBOs and expected from its stakeholders. OKACOM's communications work will include codified versions of this knowledge, for example, though formatted responses, based on OKACOM's unique experience, to frequently asked questions (FAQs) published on its web site.

5.2.4 Grassroots Outreach

Ensuring that local communities are part of a multi-way flow of knowledge and information for the Cubango-Okavango is a major communications challenge for OKACOM. Remote villages, low levels of literacy, poor access to media and telecommunications are issues to resolve. The strategy will take note of lessons learned through the ERHP Project's most successful activities, identifying influential people and groups in communities and communicating through them by using relevant and practical ways of presenting issues. For example, for children and youth a printed colour publication in comic book format tells the story of three "river cousins" who explore the Cubango-Okavango from their respective countries, learning and sharing information extracted from the TDA and, through the adventure, planning future joint activities. For adults, a series of podcasts can be distributed to radio stations broadcasting in the Basin region, explaining issues and their significance to local livelihoods. These podcasts will be available for download from the OKACOM website, but can also be distributed through mobile telephones. "Old media" techniques such as a hard copy news flyer that provides regular reprints of selected Cubango-Okavango basin media coverage can also be highly effective in reaching rural audiences.

Existing successful organizations and networks, including local government officials and committees, educational and faith based organizations will be approached to form communications partnerships. Perhaps most important of all, the strategy will support the Basin Wide Forum's liaison with local officials and governance bodies in polling local populations and communicating the opinions and wishes of local people in the Basin to the Commission.

5.3 EXPECTATIONS AND REPUTATION

River basin organizations come in many different shapes and sizes, their functions varying with the objectives of the specific governments that put them in place. The 1994 agreement makes it clear that OKACOM is an advisory body. A communications challenge is to explain what that means to the general public and to many of OKACOM's stakeholders. Some go so far as to see a regulatory function for the Commission. In general, stakeholders expect the Commission to be an honest broker, impartial, aware of and sharing of knowledge of events that may have impact on their interests, providing fora for discussion of development and conservation activities, filling investigation gaps, building awareness and promulgating best practice.⁷ In other words, they expect that OKACOM will possess current intelligence about development activities and environmental conditions in the Basin, will make that intelligence available to the organizations and people who are affected, and will suggest or carry out interventions that are in the best interest of all Basin stakeholders. Examples include coordinating the sharing of information for a specific end such as flood disaster prevention, or review of a proposed irrigation project.

This implies, as a priority, that the Commission develop a sophisticated network that actively seeks, gathers and shares information, identifying both opportunities and threats, and arranging appropriate expertise to analyse complex physical and social environments. It also implies an open and fair set of standards about what information is made available to stakeholders. OKACOM's Rules and Procedures presents ground rules:

- 11.2 All communication, decisions and documents shall be produced and conveyed in a transparent and accessible manner;
- 11.3 Commission members shall hold all information declared as being "confidential information" as such;
- 11.4 Confidential information shall not be released to the public without express consent given by all members.

From the point of view of OKACOM's stakeholders, however, "Everybody needs information to do their work. We are so needy of this resource that if we can't get the real thing, we make it up. When rumours profligate and gossip gets out of hand, it is always a sign that people lack the genuine article -- honest, meaningful information."⁸ This insight puts the responsibility for public perceptions squarely in the hands of the Commission and its bodies. To meet this need, OKACOM has developed an Access to Information Policy and Strategy to underpin this communications strategy. The Access to Information Policy anticipates the need for information dissemination and the communications strategy ensures that it happens at the appropriate time and to the appropriate stakeholders.

⁷ Meeting Notes, OKACOM Stakeholders Integration Workshop, 15-16 December, 2009.

⁸ Wheatley, Margaret, *Leadership and the New Science*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1999 : p. 99.

6 KEY MESSAGES

OKACOM's broad key messages speak to its communications objectives.

Objective	Message
To reinforce the principles of constructive dialogue, mutual understanding and consensus in planning, management decision making for Basin resources.	<i>We speak with one voice and make no decision without full agreement.</i>
To build trust, of the Commission and among member states, through joint provision of sound, credible and transparent knowledge that addresses Basin issues.	<i>We act only on good information and knowledge that is accepted by all of us.</i>
To nurture a sense of ownership) among people and institutions in the Basin through continuous engagement that relates directly to their interests.	<i>We actively seek stakeholders' knowledge and experience and will act on it.</i>
To ensure that member states and Basin dwellers are fully informed to enable them to drive management and development.	<i>We believe investment should be in the hands of the governments and peoples of the Basin.</i>
To promote the best available return on investment in Basin resources through facilitating sound and transparent analysis and decision making processes.	<i>We compare all options to ensure understanding of optimal benefits at Basin scale.</i>
To address the practical needs of Basin resource users through exposure to relevant and appropriate technical development strategies.	<i>We find and share the best tools and techniques for the good of both people and environment.</i>
To show how environmental conservation can improve livelihood conditions.	<i>We recognize and promote the value of ecosystems services to human livelihoods in the Basin.</i>

These broad messages will underpin the more specific messages shared in relation to specific projects and activities carried out by OKACOM.

7 METHODS AND PROCESSES

Information and communications work will be carried out using appropriate channels, methods and tools.

7.1 NETWORKING

- developing relationships with existing communities of governance, developers and research practice to create new networks that will function as conduits of knowledge to support a body of informed stakeholders.
- providing increased support to its own formal internal networks to stimulate the flow of information among network members and OKACOM stakeholders.
- forming partnerships with other organizations who are delivering programmes relevant to the Commission's work.
- tracking and facilitating exchange of scientific research relevant to the Cubango-Okavango river basin.
- using relevant SADC and international policies to support its own messages and to draw on the substantial networking capability of these organizations.
- having regular active contact with country officials by the Secretariat, for both intelligence gathering and facilitation of the sharing process.
- engaging the private sector on its own territory to show the member countries, through OKACOM, taking charge of development planning processes for the region's benefit.

7.2 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- developing its Secretariat staff as active, facilitative knowledge workers who respond effectively to the Commission's needs, providing the right information to the right people at the right time through facilitating access to the Commission's own knowledge assets as well as those of other relevant people and institutions.

- establishing capacity and systems at the Secretariat level to manage the Commission's life cycle of information to maximum advantage.
- functioning as a hub of a network of information gathering institutions, assisting to facilitate sharing of data, while focusing its own data collection and management activities on its own internally generated resources and on an up to date directory of stakeholders.
- understanding the background, content and intention of member countries' national development plans.
- treating information and communications work as an integral part of the Commission's consultative processes to ensure a multi-way flow of knowledge and information.
- making best use of opportunities offered by projects by ensuring that project information resources are incorporated into OKACOM's systems and structures and by clearly recognizing and separating the need for ongoing, in-house knowledge and capacity for core Secretariat information work from time-limited sub-projects.
- reviewing, summarizing and sharing useful external codified information to ensure its delivery in a regular and predictable way.
- maximizing accessibility and usefulness of the documents OKACOM produces through effective design and better tools for electronic access.
- increasing the use of document sharing and discussion tools customized for its members to improve the speed and ease of internal dissemination and information exchange.
- making the most use of automated and user-driven generation of content to keep OKACOM's web presence current and relevant.
- reviewing its work on an annual basis with Commission members to capture evidence about the effectiveness and impact of its programmes and activities

7.3 COMMUNICATIONS

- using its own members and information, as well as that of selected partners, as primary resources to deliver its messages.
- engaging with stakeholders through facilitating multi-way flows of information and knowledge, guided by an effective access to information policy that balances safe internal communications with the need for transparency and public participation
- helping its stakeholders interpret and understand complex ideas and approaches so they can become effective partners in decision making.
- recognizing the importance of national identity in development of communications products.
- actively listening to its audiences and formulating dynamic responses.
- using events as opportunities to actively build OKACOM's networks through capture of information.
- making the best use of print, broadcast and web-based media through familiarization and training courses for Commission staff
- working with government communications specialists in member countries to jointly develop information products and channels.
- adhering to standards in production of professional, effective and aesthetically pleasing communications products.

8 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

In the context of current holistic thinking about water resources management, OKACOM's mandate is broad, touching on a cross-section of subject areas and sectors, among them:

- Agriculture / Energy / transport and Communications / Trade and industry, etc
- Fisheries
- Geography, including GIS
- Geosciences
- Hydrology
- IWRM
- Mining
- Municipal governance
- Political science

- Public health
- Rural development studies
- Tourism
- Water chemistry
- Water engineering.

8.1 PARTNERSHIPS

Even if the size of the Secretariat were to double, it would not be able to meet the challenge of effective communications campaigns alone to address all these issues and areas. Working across three countries adds to the challenge. With the Secretariat hosted in Botswana, partnerships with government departments and organizations in Angola, Botswana and Namibia need to be developed and nurtured to ensure that the Secretariat is serving the riparian states equitably.

8.1.1 Programme Partnerships

Partnerships with other organizations are essential: partnerships with government communications departments, with agriculture, health and disaster management NGOs, international donor organization projects, the private sector and faith-based organizations are some of those needed to address issues across the broad spectrum of issues faced by OKACOM. There is much overlapping of messages among these organizations and therefore much opportunity for collaboration. Examples of existing advocacy and training programmes that offer opportunities for OKACOM partnerships are, on the benefits of biodiversity conservation, *Coaching for Conservation*, and on effective municipal water governance, the Swedish River Eman twinning programme. The strategy is to scan the environment for appropriate programmes and link with their organizers to share resources and branding.

8.1.2 Technical Partnerships

OKACOM's Secretariat is minimally staffed, with the built in limitation of being hosted in one country at a time. For this reason, OKACOM needs to seek partnerships with institutions with broader and deeper technical expertise to deliver to its stakeholders high end user-friendly services that require significantly more background technical work and support than OKACOM's Secretariat is able to supply. For example, the Global Environment Facility's IWLearn Programme assisted OKACOM with development and hosting of an interactive content management system based web site, and OKACOM is working with Inter Press Service Africa's *Southern Africa Water Wire* programme to provide familiarization and training for journalists in river basin management and for Commission members in media relations. Other organizations with potential to provide ongoing technical assistance and capacity building could include IISD Reporting Services for documentation and dissemination services, the Global Water Partnership for communications support and Cap-Net for training.

8.1.3 Policy Partnerships

OKACOM is somewhat of a self-made organization, created as a result of perceived need by the riparian countries, and grown according to the ideas of its country members and cooperating partners. Policy work and advice related to river basin management, however, is increasingly available from all over the world, and OKACOM should take advantage of this to be able to cope with the inevitable increasing pressures and complexity that come with a shrinking world. The strategy will engage more with the training and information resources provided by organizations such as SADC, the International Network of River Basin Organisations (INBO) and its subsidiary, ANBO, as well as regional and international natural resources policy centres.

8.1.4 Research Partnerships

OKACOM's Secretariat has been actively engaged in building on the research network established through the TDA and SAP work, drafting memoranda of agreement that will support research institutions in Angola, Botswana and Namibia in discovery of new knowledge needed for effective management of the river basin. In parallel, information and communications work has been

adding researchers into the Secretariat's networking database. Next steps include making meaningful contact with these research institutions' information management and communications programmes to reinforce the research links being developed, and to engage the country institutions in organizing seminars to draw diverse stakeholders into dialogue about recent research findings and their policy implications.

8.1.5 Private Public Sector Partnerships

Perhaps one of the greatest impacts OKACOM can make in promotion of wise management of the river basin is in its facilitation of dialogue between private sector developers and country governments. Prepared with an approved Strategic Action Programme based on conditions in the river basin, and with a clear and complete understanding of the national development plans of Angola, Botswana and Namibia, OKACOM has the opportunity to match investors with appropriate Basin activities, performing introductions and providing information. This role of honest broker can be supported through information sharing and communications partnerships with industry: arranging for OKACOM materials to be placed on commercial aircraft and in tourism lodges in the Basin region, for example; or arranging joint workshops in water infrastructure maintenance with equipment suppliers.



8.2 WEB BASED INFORMATION

A strong web based presence is central to OKACOM's communication work. Increasingly, web sites are becoming the first point of reference for people to learn about an organization's work as well as the primary location of much of their work and social interaction, so the importance of having current, engaging and genuinely useful information on OKACOM's site is growing. Making documents broadly available over the Web also substantially increases the feedback and discussion of their content – the multi-way flow of knowledge that is an essential ingredient in the consultative processes that OKACOM wishes to promote.

Figure 7 New OKACOM web site

A new interactive web site, based on content management system (CMS) technology, is being launched in 2012. The new site allows for private, Intranet-type space for Commission members to share internal discussions and information as well as a public space. Its content reflects the objectives of OKACOM's communications strategy, highlighting the Commission's culture of consensus and its support of sound knowledge development and dissemination.

9 TRACKING SUCCESS

Building an institutional environment that facilitates creation and sharing of knowledge is the primary objective of OKACOM's information and communications work. To do this, ongoing evaluation and re-evaluation is required. Usually when organizations are functioning well, there is not much feedback – the complaints come when things go wrong. The Secretariat will on an annual basis, review its work through a series of one on one interviews with Commission members and stakeholders, using these criteria to capture anecdotal evidence about the effectiveness and impact of its programmes and activities. What is learned from these interviews will be incorporated into revised and new programmes.

10 ANNEX A COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCT STANDARDS

STANDARDS FOR PROCUREMENT OF OKACOM COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTS

Communication materials and promotional products are distributed to increase awareness of OKACOM, its key messages and its work. These guidelines should ensure that OKACOM's operating principles and its reputation are both highlighted and safeguarded.

1. All communications materials will be designed with strict adherence to OKACOM's **corporate identity** guidelines.
2. Purchase of novelty items must be based on **necessary expense**: purchase will only be allowed if the item will contribute to the accomplishment of the OKACOM's mission, and is not otherwise prohibited by law.
3. Promotional products will be selected for their **appropriateness, quality and sustainability**.
4. **Quality of design and products** will be considered a key deciding factor in procurement: samples should be provided before selection of a supplier.
5. Choice of promotional materials must reflect OKACOM's commitment to a **clean environment** and to recycling.
6. Promotional materials items must appeal to **multiple audiences**, be able to fulfill a variety of uses and meet specific cost restrictions that favor the purchase of **green products**.
7. Promotional materials must contain or represent a **message** that is concise, readily understandable by the audience it reaches, and is usually part of a larger OKACOM theme or campaign.
8. Examples of appropriate promotional materials are:
 - Bookmarks
 - Banners
 - Buttons
 - Conference bags
 - Flags
 - Key chains/fobs
 - Lanyards
 - Magnets
 - Mouse pads
 - Pencils
 - Pens/pins, recyclable
 - Posters
 - Signs
 - Stickers
 - Water bottles (safe materials)
9. Communications materials and promotional products, will be sourced, whenever possible, from the three member states, from the southern African region and then Africa. **Preference will be given to local businesses**, artists and craftspeople in the interest of supporting livelihoods in the Cubango-Okavango basin.
10. Adherence to these guidelines and control of quality of communications products of will be the primary responsibility of the communications specialist at OKACOM Secretariat.

11 ANNEX B CORPORATE IDENTITY GUIDELINES

OKACOM's Corporate Identity Guidelines have been issued as a separate document, available from OKACOM Secretariat and on OKACOM's web site.

12 ANNEX C DRAFT ACCESS TO INFORMATION POLICY AND STRATEGY

OKACOM's Access to Information Policy and Strategy has been issued as a separate document, available from OKACOM Secretariat and on OKACOM's web site.

13 ANNEX D COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR THE STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME

COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR THE SAP

As outlined in the context and rationale of the proposed OKACOM communication strategy, the point of departure for communicating OKACOM's Strategic Action Programme is that RBOs are by far a new configuration of institutional arrangements aimed at embarking on a transboundary approach to basin resources management. Transboundary management procedures and associated institutional arrangements, including policies, are still in their infancy and conceptual and practical approaches that support them are not yet well understood. Their definition is an evolving process. For this reason, an underlying principle of OKACOM's information and communication strategy is that of advocating a paradigm shift in natural resources planning and management that is based on lateral thinking -- cross-country and cross-sectoral. OKACOM's communication messages should be focused on advocating the various dimensions of this new and challenging paradigm, rather than concentrating on publicity and marketing of what the OKACOM does or intends to do. The aim is that of creating messages that can re-direct mindsets, opening new opportunities and ways of doing business, to maximize the benefits from transboundary approaches to natural resources management in a river basin context.

What follows is a preliminary description of messages that voice specific components of transboundary management of the Cubango-Okavango river basin, guided by the Integrated Management Objectives of OKACOM's Strategic Action Programme (SAP).

The basin states have agreed on a set of six Integrated Management Objectives that will guide implementation of the SAP. These objectives form the basis of a communications framework to support Basin governments and OKACOM's stakeholders in understanding the principles of transboundary resources management and integrating these principles in their work. The framework will also guide development of specific, targeted communications plans for activities carried out under the SAP and NAPs.

Number	IMO	Key Messages	Target Groups	Expected Outcomes	Impacts
1	The sustainable management of the Cubango/Okavango basin is based on a shared basin-wide vision and jointly agreed decision framework	The three riparian states share a common vision for development and management of the river's resources.	All	States and stakeholders share language, goals and willingness to achieve consensus.	Shared ownership. Framing of issues in transboundary context.
		The riparian states make decisions about the Basin based on consensus, while acknowledging their differences.	All		
		Joint investigations and investments reinforce the shared vision.	Government Academia		
2	Decisions are based on solid scientific analysis of available data and information and improved basin knowledge through research programmes designed to answer management questions.	Decisions for the Basin are best based on sound knowledge	Government Academics Private Sector	Appropriate information for decision making is available.	Better integration of science with policy.
		Research should target practical management needs.	Government Academics Private Sector	Knowledge generated is applicable to Basin problems.	Decisions taken are acknowledged as appropriate.

Number	IMO	Key Messages	Target Groups	Expected Outcomes	Impacts
3	Focused environmental and socio-economic monitoring programmes to support management decisions and track long-term trends are established and strengthened, and the results are used in adaptive management strategies.	Consistent monitoring is the foundation of good information required for decision making.	Government	Data and information are available when needed.	Less delay for data gathering in the face of demand.
		Current decisions must be based on accumulated evidence.	Civil Society Government Private Sector	Adaptive management strategies formulated.	Improved adaptation to changing conditions.
4	Integrated planning criteria and objectives for sustainable development of water resources of the Cubango-Okavango basin are agreed and established.	Riparian states plan together using the same established criteria.	Governments	Master plan for the Basin that address all country needs	Improved uptake of investment opportunities
5	The livelihoods of the basin's peoples are improved.	The needs of Basin peoples must be understood and addressed.	Civil Society Governments Private Sector	Incorporation of livelihoods needs in programmes and developments	Improved living conditions for Basin dwellers
6	Technical capacity in the basin and involvement of stakeholders in SAP and NAP implementation are improved.	Investment in local capacity is essential for Basin management and development.	Governments Private Sector	Resources are allocated at local level	Strengthened initiatives at local level
		Voices from the Basin need to be heard and integrated into planning.		Plans and programmes reference local needs.	Better programmes and plans
		Active public participation is essential to effective management.		Stakeholders engage in the planning and management process.	A growing sense of ownership

MAJOR OKACOM COMMUNICATIONS MILESTONES 2012-2016

Process	Brand Establishment	TDA Launch	Endorsement of SAP	Creation of NAP NIUs	Development of BDMF	Thematic Interventions
Period	2009-2011	2012	2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2016
Communications Objective	To raise awareness of OKACOM and its progress, and establish a brand	To share knowledge gained in the TDA process and see it integrated into external programmes and approaches.	To internalize joint application of best practices for biodiversity preservation and livelihoods development.	To internalize integration of SAP principles in national programmes.	Member states are planning and managing Basin resources jointly.	Operationalisation of good management principles. Ongoing learning through knowledge updating.
Responsibility	OKACOM	OKACOM, Partners	OKACOM, member states	Member states	OKACOM	OKACOM, member states, partners
Key Message	OKACOM is here to stay, building on its steady progress with a permanent secretariat and completion of TDA and SAP	Basin knowledge is owned by the region and shared to face challenging issues.	A common vision for development and management of Basin resources.	Basin states are using best practices.	Member states are planning and managing Basin resources jointly.	Wise management principles are applied Ongoing learning for member states and partners
Appropriate Tools	OKASEC office launch, signage, flags, reception procedures, corporate identity guidelines, published annual report, updated promotional materials, banners, business cards, exhibits as partner events, published TDA and SAP documents, comic book for basin audiences, consolidation of knowledge assets and information management procedures	Mail distribution of printed reports Book launches / public presentations Media releases Web/mobile posts Press conferences	Development of brand/tagline for SAP Background briefing notes for countries Web posts Short videos from Commissioners	Country launches: Media releases, Press conferences Web posts Posters in government offices	Development of brand/tagline for plan Explanatory brochure Web posts News releases, blog posts as process evolves Online creative discussion forum	Media releases Web/mobile posts Press conferences Presentations at conferences, meetings Radio Contact handouts Media releases Progress reports Short videos
Stakeholder Responses						

Process	Brand Establishment	TDA Launch	Endorsement of SAP	Creation of NAP NIUs	Development of BDMF	Thematic Interventions
Stakeholder: Civil Society	Building of networking contacts database, stakeholder strategy, engagement with BWF and NGO community	Report, accessible explanations, launch events, promotional materials, Web/mobile posts	Report Accessible explanations	Accessible structure handout with contact numbers, alerts	Web/mobile posts	Consultative processes, Accessible brochures, Web/mobile posts
Stakeholder: Private Sector	Building of networking contacts database, stakeholder strategy, engagement with tourism industry through events	Report, sector specific briefing notes, launch events	Report, briefing sessions and presentations at meetings, , exposure in sector media	Accessible structure handout with contact numbers, alerts	Web posts, targeted emailing, briefings at meetings	Consultative processes, Accessible brochures, Web/mobile posts
Stakeholder: Academic Researchers	Building of networking contacts database, stakeholder strategy, engagement with research bodies through TDA follow-up, events, draft MOUs	Report, exposure on academic web sites	Report, exposure on academic web sites	Accessible structure handout with contact numbers, alerts	Signing of MOUs with key research institutions, Web posts, targeted emailing, exhibits at conferences and workshops	Participation in sub-projects, data sharing agreements, exhibits at events
Stakeholder: Government	Building of networking contacts database, stakeholder strategy	Report, sector specific briefing notes, launch events	Report, briefing note, presentation	Accessible structure handout with contact numbers, alerts	Web posts, targeted emailing, materials supplied to meetings, targeted briefings to Parliamentary fora	Web based updates, progress reports, alerts and targeted emailings, site visits
Stakeholder: Media	Building of networking contacts database, stakeholder strategy, engagement with media through events / annual meeting publicity, responding to queries	Report, media releases, launch events	Report, media release and briefing, strategically placed articles	Media release and briefing, strategically placed articles	Regular progress briefings, releases	Regular progress briefings, releases, tours
Stakeholder: ICPs	Building of networking contacts database, stakeholder strategy, engagement with ICPs through TDA work, events	Report, exposure in ICP publications, inclusion in branding, participation in launch events	Report, strategically placed articles, presentations	Accessible structure handout with contact numbers, alerts	Web posts, targeted emailing, progress reports and materials supplied to meetings	Web based updates, progress reports, alerts and targeted emailings, exhibits at events

Process	Brand Establishment	TDA Launch	Endorsement of SAP	Creation of NAP NIUs	Development of BDMF	Thematic Interventions
Stakeholder: Regional and International	Building of networking contacts database, stakeholder strategy, engagement with SADC communications group	Report, exposure in regional publications, participation in launch	Report, exposure in regional publications, participation in launch	Accessible structure handout with contact numbers, alerts	Web posts, targeted emailing, progress reports and materials supplied to meetings, lessons learned briefs to RBOs	Web based updates, progress reports, alerts and targeted emailings, exhibits at events

15 ANNEX F STAKEHOLDER POINTS OF ACCESS

Effective implementation of both OKACOM's Stakeholder Integration Strategy and its complementary communications work requires identification and organization of information about the natural points of access to the stakeholders in the basin and analysis of institutional arrangements that can support their meaningful participation in basin management.

OKACOM Secretariat is responding to this need by creating a document and database that will:

- document key functions that have an impact on OKACOM's work
- define requisite institutional interfaces and channels of interaction
- suggest effective communication and information dissemination points of access
- suggest creation or development of appropriate stakeholder fora
- build and/or strengthen capacity of existing stakeholder platforms and practices.

The result of this work will be a calendar tool that alerts OKACOM Secretariat to key events and opportunities to engage with stakeholders, as outlined in Section 1.1 of this report, on their own territory and at the point of problem.



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