



Newsletter

Issue 2, May 2011

Contact us

Our office, based in Keetmanshoop is run by our Support Officer, Kuniberth Shamathe.

Address: NamWater Building,
Keetmanshoop
PO Box 2071,
Keetmanshoop

Tel/fax: (063) 221075
Mobile: 081 236 0999
Email: ofbmc@iway.na

Executive Committee

Chair: Ben Haraseb
(ceaokar@iway.na)

Vice-Chair: Theresia Basson
(tbasson@hardaprc.gov.na)

Secretary: Andries Kok
(koka@namwater.com.na)

Treasurer: Augustinus Ucham
(augustinusucham@yahoo.com)

Member: Jaco van Niekerk
(jacon@mtcmobile.com.na)

Member: Karl Kisting
(Oukiss1108@gmail.com)

Member: Steve Swartbooi
(steveswartbooi@yahoo.com)

Funding

The production of this newsletter is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and through the support of GIZ.



This is the second newsletter published by the Orange-Fish Basin Management Committee. It brings news and updates on various projects taking place in the Orange-Fish Basin. We hope that you find it interesting and that it helps you keep abreast of the activities and issues related to the management of our basin's water – and related – natural resources.

If you have comments or queries relating to the articles or news that you would like to share with your fellow basin stakeholders, please write to our Support Officer, Kuniberth Shamathe, at our Basin Office (details left).

– OFBMC

The OFBMC, a year on

Throughout its first year, the Orange-Fish Basin Management Committee (OFBMC) remained focused on implementing its work plan that was drawn up soon after the Committee's inception. With the support of our basin officer, Kuniberth Shamathe, a number of achievements have been reached. Our newly established office in Keetmanshoop has provided a base for our activities, and the design and adoption of our logo has helped give us an identity. Our Constitution has been drafted and distributed for comment and is expected to be finalised soon and submitted to the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) for endorsement and formal recognition. We have also facilitated a number of meetings between our stakeholders, committee, executive committee and working groups with the main aim of addressing various challenges related to the management of our water resources in an integrated and participatory way.

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The OFBMC, a year on

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Of these, two were stakeholder forum meetings. The first of was held in Mariental (27–28 Oct 2010) and the second in Keetmanshoop (19–20 Apr 2011). Both events attracted many stakeholders from within the basin providing a great platform for information-sharing and the identification of challenges and possible solutions. Continuity is provided through feedback on various activities from one meeting to the next. Some of these to follow up before the next meeting (planned for October 2011) include progress on the Water Resources Management Bill and the need for stakeholder consultation on this, ongoing progress on the Neckartal Dam Project, collaboration between the Division of Water Environment and the Directorate of Environmental Affairs on the management of solid waste, and an update from the Mariental Flood Task Force.

Entering our second year, MAWF together with GIZ through the Namibia Water Resources Project have approved our 2011-12 work plan and the proposed ~N\$1,300,000 budget to carry it out. Much of this budget will be spent on efforts to create awareness of the challenges and issues faced in managing our water resources and on addressing them through our three working groups.

2011 was greeted with exceptional rains throughout Namibia and much of southern Africa. Rainfall measurements have exceeded all-time records in some areas of Namibia and rivers have flowed high and almost continuously for many months – those in the Orange-Fish Basin included! Our office has kept stakeholders in the Orange-Fish Basin updated on a daily basis with the official Flood Bulletin. Issued by the Division of Hydrology, the Flood Bulletin gives runoff figures at various strategic places along our main rivers and warns residents of imminent floods. If you have missed out on these fascinating daily updates, email Kuniberth at ofbmc@iway.na to be included on his email list.

– *Kuniberth Shamathe and Ben Haraseb, OFBMC*

Monitoring Working Group

The Groundwater Monitoring and Compliance to Conditions of Water Permits working groups have merged to become the Monitoring Working Group. This working group incorporates aspects of groundwater, surface water and water quality monitoring and will support monitoring efforts with staff from the responsible divisions of the Directorate of Water Affairs (DWA). Funds were not secured for the proposed mini-hydrocensus, but the working group has received monitoring equipment from DWA, including five GPSs, 20 rain gauges and two dip meters. A training course is planned on monitoring of groundwater levels, surface water flow, water quality and permit inspection and allocation. Stakeholders interested in learning more about monitoring and becoming actively involved should contact Kuniberth Shamathe.

– *Kuniberth Shamathe & Ben Haraseb, OFBMC*

Neckartal Dam Project

The design of all facilities and infrastructure for the Neckartal Dam Project is now complete. The tender process for the dam is currently underway and will be completed in July 2011 with the awarding of the contract at the end of August 2011. Construction of the dam and bulk water supply system is expected to commence in September 2011.

The construction of the access road from the B4 road onto the farm Schlangkopf will precede the main contract in order to provide access to the site. The contract was awarded to a Namibian contractor and construction will commence in May 2011. The current agreement with NamPower is to establish temporary power on site by January 2012.

Status of environmental authorisations

The Project has received environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism for the access roads and other support infrastructure (letter dated 12/01/2011) and the overall project (letter dated 30/03/2011). The permits from the Directorate of Forestry for vegetation clearing are in process.

Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)

The ESMP was completed and incorporated into the tender documentation together with detailed environmental requirements. Heritage resources and other sensitive areas are considered no-go areas and will be managed according to the Heritage Management Plan.

Ongoing stakeholder liaison

A small number of households located within the area of inundation will have to be relocated. Consultation with affected communities and traditional authorities are ongoing and a Relocation Action Plan is being compiled. Ongoing consultation with Governor Swartboo resulted in the establishment of the Neckartal Erf Provision Revolving Fund, available to the Keetmanshoop Municipality to service stands for the employees of the irrigation scheme.

The Project Director and Project Manager met with Mr John Pallett of the Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment to address concerns in terms of the Karas Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Determining downstream environmental flow requirements

The terms of reference for the ORASECOM study on the Fish River are still being developed and the project team will provide input once required.

– *Amelia Briel, Knight Piesold*

Enhancing capacity for improved water resource management

Funded by the Finnish Embassy and implemented by Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, a project aimed at enhancing capacity in the areas of water resource management and sanitation was launched towards the end of 2010. The project, referred to as 'E-CAP', targets current and future decision-makers at different levels through a multi-pronged approach. Two components of this project are of direct interest to stakeholders in the Orange-Fish Basin (OFB).

The first of these intends to provide support in addressing specific challenges related to water, wastewater and solid waste management faced by local authorities. This component builds on experiences gained through the LA-CAP Project carried out by DRFN in 2009/10. Efforts are currently being piloted in Kalkrand where a baseline study and analysis was recently carried out. The intervention resulted in the development of an Operational Plan addressing central challenges identified. The plan was developed by representatives of the village council supported by the project team. The plan is implemented by the Kalkrand Village Council, assisted by the project team when required.

The second component targets support to rural communities to improve water supply and sanitation management, with a focus on protecting groundwater sources on which they depend. Preliminary observations indicate that the groundwater sources there are contaminated due to ill-placed pit latrines, livestock pens and drinking troughs. By working together with the local community and relevant service providers, solutions to these challenges are being found through this project. Currently, a dry sanitation system and a filter for cleaning drinking water are being piloted at an Odendaal farmstead south of Gibeon in the Hardap Region.

Fransiska Gamises and Faith Simataa, leading these two components of the E-CAP Project are working in close collaboration with the OFBMC's Pollution and Sanitation Working Group to help streamline efforts.

– Fransiska Gamises, DRFN

Pollution and Sanitation Working Group

A new working group to address pollution and sanitation issues in the Orange-Fish Basin was formed during the stakeholder forum meeting in October 2010. The purpose of the working group is to contribute to the reduction of pollution and the improvement of sanitation in the basin. Its formation was prompted after the OFBMC visited Gibeon during the OFBMC training week and then later stakeholders attending the forum meeting in October last year. They found solid waste deposited at inappropriate places, including tributaries of the Fish River and an unprotected spring. The village's sewage ponds were no longer functioning and water pipes were leaking. Many of the residents of Gibeon have a bucket toilet system and the public toilets were unpleasant and poorly maintained. Stakeholders were told that installing flush toilets was expensive and unaffordable for many households; only government buildings and some households that were better off had them.

Since establishment of the working group, three meetings have been conducted. The first meeting focused on identifying areas of action for the working group; this action plan was further developed during subsequent meetings. Planned activities include a clean-up campaign to be held in Gibeon in June; a baseline assessment on the water reticulation, sanitation and waste management situation in Gibeon; and a meeting with village councillors, the Chief Executive Officer of the Village Council, the Traditional Authority and other leaders and stakeholders to discuss the protection of natural springs and rivers in the area.

– Kuniberth Shamathe & Karl Kisting, OFBMC



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Putting our land to best use

The Ministry of Lands and Resettlement has embarked on a regional land use planning process. The process is different to other land use planning processes in that it takes an integrated approach – bringing together stakeholders from a number of different sectors – and because each regional land use plan is accompanied by a strategic environmental assessment (SEA). The SEA can be described as ‘an assessment of opportunities’ with the objective to identify the potential of the specific region’s natural resources and to suggest land uses that make best use of those strengths.

Karas Integrated Land Use Plan (KIRLUP)

KIRLUP was the first of the regional studies to be initiated and together with the SEA has been presented to the Technical Committee on Lands and Social Issues and will soon be presented to top management in the Ministry of Lands. The Orange River is seen as Karas’ most important natural resource, but also a source of great concern with both the quantity and quality of water declining. The study recommends, among other things, but specific to the region’s water sources, that:

- water demand management strategies are introduced to ensure water-efficient irrigation methods are adopted and that the production of high-value crops are encouraged;
- mines take care not to contaminate soils and groundwater with heavy metals, especially around Rosh Pinah;
- steps are taken to address urban poverty and the deterioration of social services, including water and sanitation;
- the Orange-Fish Basin Management Committee and its parent ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry take the lead in promoting integrated water resources management in the region to protect this vital resource for future developments.

Hardap Integrated Land Use Plan (HIRLUP)

The land use planning exercise in Hardap was officially launched in November 2010 with a meeting in Mariental, which was attended by the Regional Council and many line ministries. This was the first of a number of meetings that will take place through the process. It is important that this participatory process is done in conjunction with the SEA. The call for tenders from potential SEA consultants is now closed and being assessed. Once that team is appointed the participatory land use planning process will begin in earnest.

– Daleen Brand, SPC, & John Pallett, SAIEA

Progress with *Prosopis*



The *Prosopis* Working Group of the OFBMC has compiled a concept note outlining a project to determine best practices to manage this aggressively invasive plant through an integrated approach. The working group plans to pilot the project in the lower Orange-Fish River Basin – an area in which conservation is a high priority and is neighboured by large informal settlements with high unemployment rates and limited energy sources for cooking and heating. The project aims to eradicate *Prosopis*, restore the area and find viable commercial uses for the wood. As important, the project aims to provide jobs and train local community members, equipping them with skills for use in other *Prosopis*-infested areas.

The development of the proposal has been well supported by a variety of stakeholders, including government departments responsible for Forestry, Water and Environment, various private sector organisations in the pilot area, such as Roshkor and Obib Training Centre and stakeholders from further afield in the OFBMC and South Africa who also have infestations of this aggressive alien plant.

While funds to carry out some aspects of this integrated project are being secured through the Directorate of Forestry, and that of Water Resource Management, the working group will take the concept note to other potential donors to try and find the remainder of the N\$8.6 million required for this three-year pilot project.

– Carole Roberts, DRFN

Monitoring Working Group

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– Kuniberth Shamathe & Ben Haraseb, OFBMC