

# Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation “Counting Our Gains”

## The Cubango-Okavango Case Study

Compiled by:

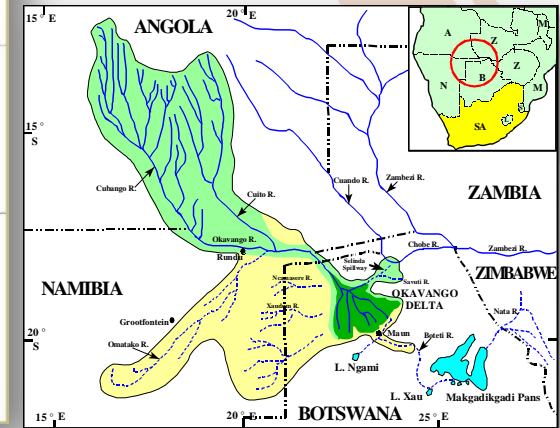
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# OKACOM

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*Comissão Permanente das Águas da Bacia Hidrográfica do Rio Okavango*

# Geography of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin



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# Flow Contributions

Country	Mean A. inflows (Mm3)	% Annual inflow	% Area contri. to annual inflows	% Area not contributing
Angola	9,320.5	94.5	38.7	0.9
Botswana	256.4	2.6	3.8	36.7
Namibia	286.1	2.9	4.1	15.8
Total	9,863.0	100.0	46.6	53.4



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# Background

## Motivation

- Need to maintain the tradition of good neighbourliness & close cooperation
- Emerging socio-economic development Importance and
- Relative paucity of water - need for Sustainable transboundary management of OKAVANGO river basin resources for the benefits to its people (Vision)

## Process

- Guided by international laws & regional protocols
- Reasonable and equitable sharing of beneficial uses - Helsinki Rules (1966) /article iv
- Equitable and optimal utilisation – SADC Protocol on Shared Water Course Systems

## Tri-country agreement, between Angola, Botswana & Namibia

- To establish The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (1994)
- A collaborative body known as OKACOM to drive the operationalization of the vision



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# Why?

To practically embrace the principles of:

□ Trans-national connectivity of:

- Natural systems
- Socio-cultural realities and
- Economic dynamics

**They do not recognize political boundaries**

**Need for a trans-boundary approach to basin  
resources management**



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# Process

- 1994 – Signing of the OKACOM Treaty
- 2007 – Agreement on the organizational Structure
  - ✓ Commission
  - ✓ Okavango Basin Steering Committee
  - ✓ Permanent Secretariat
- Infancy – 1994/2004 -7 / signing of the agreement
- Growth – 2007/2012 – TDA/SAP & OKASEC
- Maturity – 2012 to present – setting up of basic conditions for start up implementation of the SAP
  - ✓ IFA
  - ✓ GEF negotiations of PIF – secured \$6.1 M USD for SAP implementation – PPG phase on going/MS contr.; USAID; SIDA;



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# Identification and Assessment of Economic Benefits of TWC

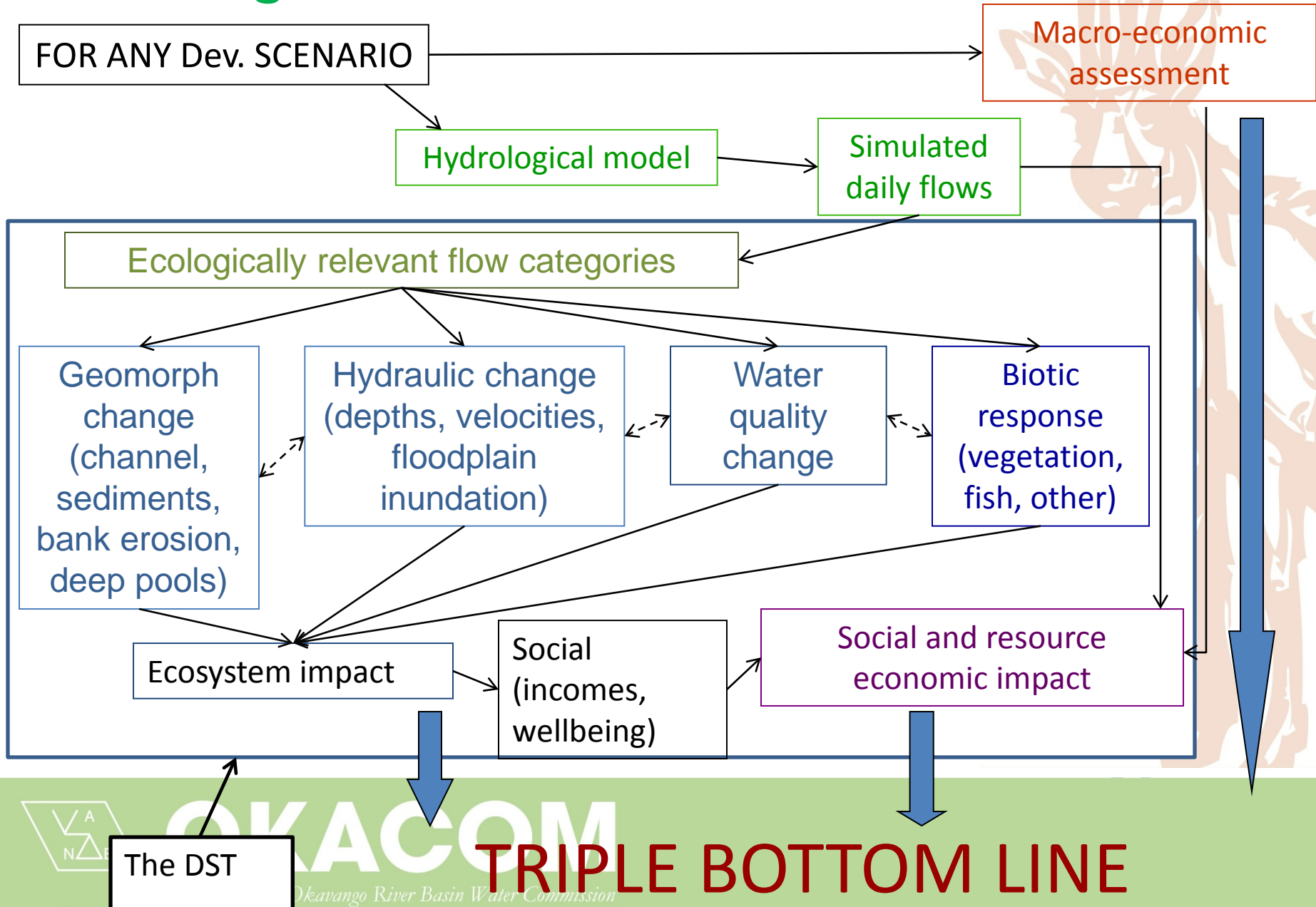
- *Economic benefits within basin:*
  - ✓ TDA = understanding of basin development opportunities without overstretching the limits of the “acceptable development space”
  - ✓ Facilitate informed negotiation and management of “trade-offs”
- *Environmental benefits:*
  - ✓ Platform established for development of a basin wide mosaic of transboundary RAMSAR sites – mgt of wetlands & bio *with associated socio-economic returns (conservation agric.; Tranb. Tourism Vent.)*
  - ✓ Okavango Delta/Botswana + Bwabwata Ramsar Site/Namibia
- *Geopolitical benefits:*
  - ✓ OKACOM as a platform to enact the SADC Protocol on Shared Water Courses / Prior notification process – *Country Specific Develop. Plans*



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# The Integrated Basin Flow Assessment Process



**TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE**



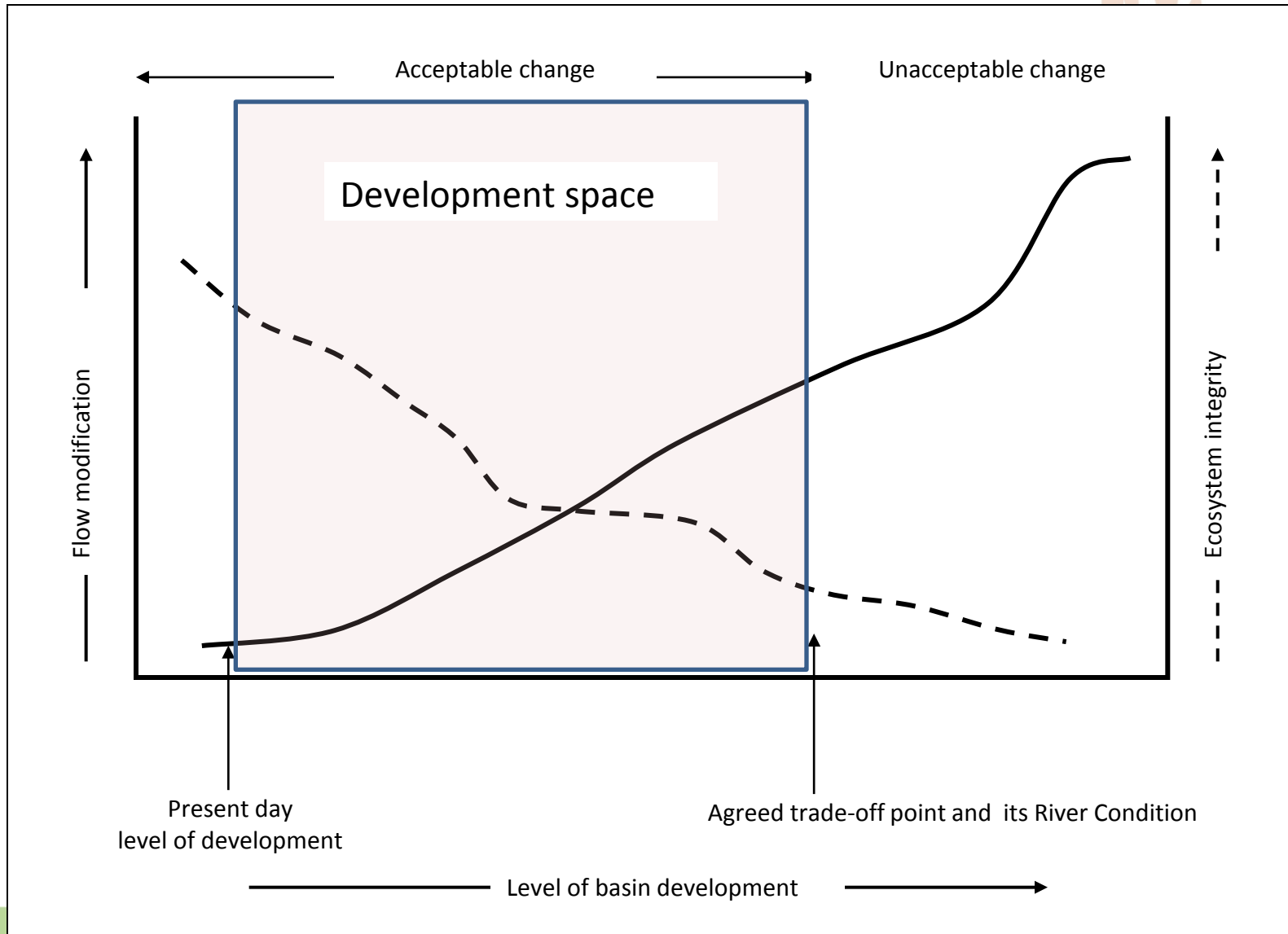
The DST

Okavango River Basin Water Commission

Comissão Permanente das Águas da Bacia Hidrográfica do Rio Okavango



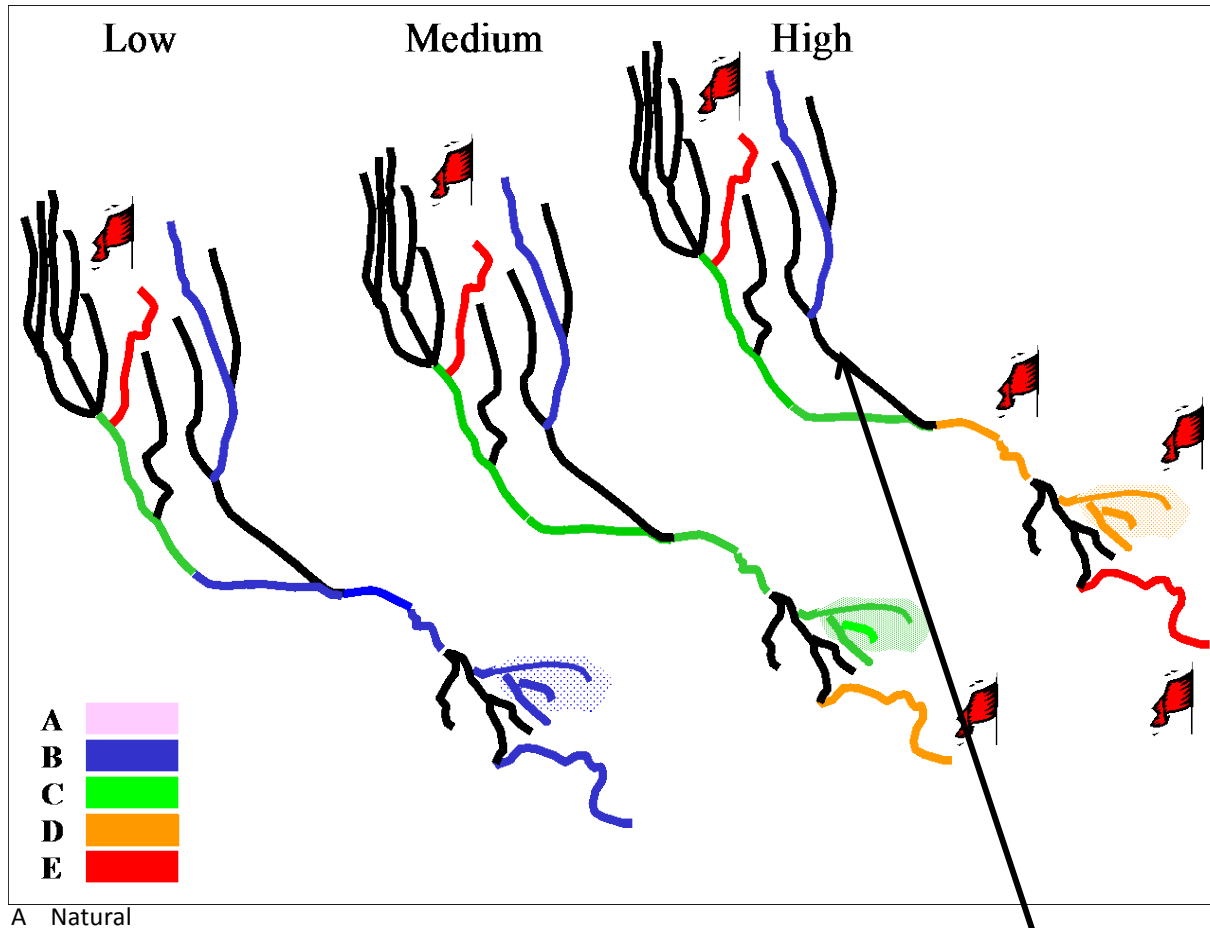
# Using the Findings to Negotiate a Basin Development Vision



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# Response curves and flow stats brought together in the DSS: summary of predicted changes in ecosystem condition with flow change



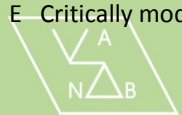
- A Natural
- B Largely natural
- C Moderately modified
- D Largely modified
- E Critically modified

Cuito River is  
**VERY important**

Progressive decline  
from Low to High  
scenarios

Impacts would become  
increasingly  
transboundary; felt  
most severely in lower  
basin

High scenario: large parts  
of the system would be  
unable to sustain present  
beneficial uses;  
significant  
terrestrialisation



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# Main Challenges

- Programme Development
  - Relevance
  - Impact – *People's livelihood & ecosystems health*
  - Sustainability
- Stakeholder Engagement
  - Who is who? How to Engage?
- Benefit Sharing
  - On what basis? – *water volumetric sharing vs beneficial uses*
- Transboundary Institutional Arrangements (RBO)?
  - Optimal Structure and Composition – *TW Governance + skills mix*
- Financial Sustainability



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# Main Challenges

- To find common ground when there are different governance principles in each country
- To harmonise the values and aspirations of different stakeholder groups
- To coordinate and train into one basin-wide technical team more than 40 people, who speak one of two languages (English and Portuguese) and have backgrounds in many different disciplines
- To describe the links between eight flow indicators, 70 biophysical indicators and eight socio-economic indicators and use these links in a structured way to predict development-driven change
- Time required to reach-out targeted stakeholders specially the policy makers



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# Key Lessons & Messages Learnt

- Country-specific governance principles must be addressed with care
- Stakeholders must be engaged on an issues-driven principle
- An environmental flow assessment, as done for the TDA, should be completed BEFORE detailed engineering planning and design begins
- Rural people rely on rivers for far more than water, and so ecosystem condition and its links to livelihoods must be factored into flow assessments
- Basin-wide flow assessments can provide insights into win-win situations that are not apparent in project-based assessments
- The complex technical languages of technical and scientific studies need to be simplified to the needs of policy makers



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# Way forward

Is the OKACOM vision  
doable?



The response is in our  
HANDS!



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ENGLISH



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