

CUBANGO-OKAVANGO RIVER BASIN WATER COMMISSION (OKACOM)

Realising the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation in the CORB

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14th meeting of the Working Group on IWRM
(Geneva, 22-24 October 2019)



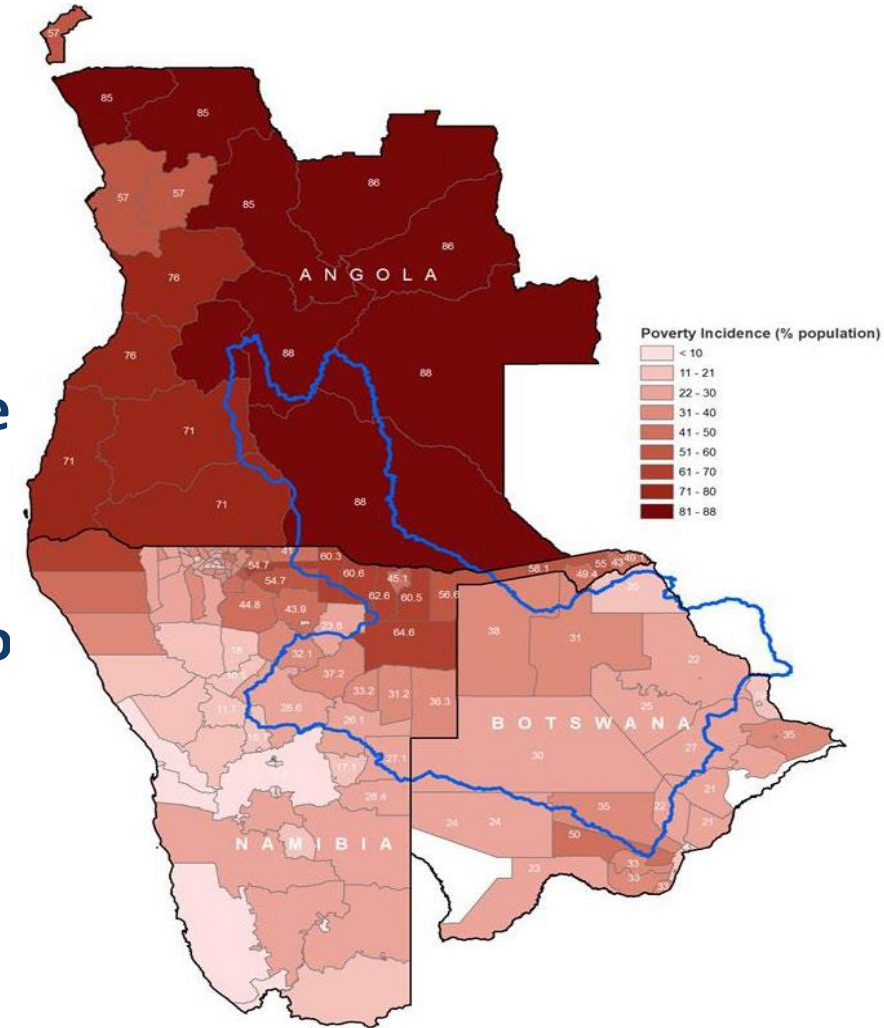
The CORB in Context:



RIPARIAN MEMBER STATES	TOTAL AREA OF COUNTRY IN SQ KM	AREA OF COUNTRY IN THE BASIN	AS % AREA OF COUNTRY	AS % OF AREA IN THE BASIN
ANGOLA	1 246 700	151406	12.14	23
BOTSWANA	581 730	345704	59.43	52
NAMIBIA	825615	168274	20.38	25

The CORB is at a turning point; has established cooperative process with shared vision

- High environmental value
- High levels of poverty
- Poverty-induced catchment degradation
- Large climate-related uncertainties
- Impacts from new water-related developments in Member States
- 25 years of cooperation through OKACOM
- Strategic Action Programme to guide basin wide and national plans
- Shared vision: “economically prosperous, socially just and environmentally healthy development of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin”



The CORB with the support of partners including the Water Convention Secretariat initiated a process of identifying and assessing the benefits of transboundary water cooperation (2017)

- Benefits assessment led by OKACOM, implemented in partnership with the World Bank, CRDIF and the Water Convention Secretariat.
- Participatory methodology (national + basin).
- Qualitative benefit assessment, 1st step towards characterising relative importance of the different benefits and their distribution.
- Major communication and stakeholder engagement action.
- Process and results communicated to the global water community.

Cooperation in the CORB has generated more benefits than usually considered; many potential benefits still to be realized

ECONOMIC BENEFITS	SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong expansion of tourism sector• Modest expansion of agricultural activities, particularly fishing• Land use improvement• Foreign exchange from tourism sector• Projects in the fields of energy, irrigation and water• Reduced costs of natural disasters due to early warning• Increased value of plots along the river• Decrease in water price	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment creation in tourism and related sectors• Improved livelihoods and poverty reduction• Food security• Water transport and recreation benefits• Improvement of drinking water supply• Community cohesion• Exposure to and appreciation of other cultures• Ecosystem integrity conservation by communities• Conservation of biodiversity and delta ecosystem• Maintenance of good water quality in the delta• More collaboration natural resource management• Protection of upstream environment and river flow• Improved control of invasive species
REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION	PEACE AND SECURITY BENEFITS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investments in research• Investment in road infrastructure• Increased transboundary tourism• Enhancement of bilateral relationships• Increased transborder commercial trade• Sharing of expertise on water management, sustainable tourism and agri-business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflicts avoidance• Increased collaboration in anti-poaching, border controls• Support from the three countries for World Heritage Site declaration of Okavango Delta• Cultural exchange visits• Agreement about a shared vision based on a shared identity• Increased security thanks to rapid alert systems

The MSIOA puts forward three basin-wide strategic development programmes

- ***Livelihood Enhancement Program***, to support low regret measures needed to address underlying drivers of poverty
- ***Tourism Investment Framework***, to extend private sector investment from the Delta into the whole basin
- ***Cooperative Infrastructure Development*** to promote joint regional infrastructure developments in urban water supply, irrigation and hydropower projects

Current work to Promote the work on Benefit Sharing going Forward



- **OKACOM has requested the support of the Convention Secretariat in Collaboration with the World Bank to prepare a policy brief that can be used to inform policy makers in the three countries and in the region.**
- **The draft policy brief was presented to the OBSC in July 2019 for their review and comments;**
- **This will be submitted to the Council of Commissioners for approval and endorse for publication.**

Conclusions

- Cooperation in the CORB **has already generated a range** of economic, social and environmental **benefits**
- Cooperation in the CORB has also generated peace and security benefits for all countries, and more than expected.
- There are **opportunities to deliver more and better distributed benefits**, mostly related to regional economic integration. Existence of OKACOM as a platform for cooperation has been a key to realise past and current benefits.
- The “*no development*” option is not an option for the CORB.
- There is **Development Space** in the CORB to meet **development** and **conservation objectives** if great care is taken in the implementation, sequencing and operation of infrastructure.
- Realising the potential regional economic integration benefits demands deeper cooperation and a **stronger OKACOM platform** to facilitate and sustain it.
- It is important that these benefits are adequately communicated and appreciated by all stakeholder especially policy makers



Thank you very much