



## Press Release

### SADC- Groundwater Management Institute embarks on the Shire River – Aquifer System Conjunctive Water Resources Management Research (Shire ConWat) project

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**Bloemfontein – South Africa:** SADC-GMI is embarking on a major project on the Shire Transboundary Aquifer System shared between Malawi and Mozambique. The project is part of the Sustainable Groundwater Management in SADC Member States project, financed by the Global Environment Facility and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) through the World Bank. The International Water Management Institute based in Pretoria, South Africa won the tender to implement the project on behalf and under the strategic guidance of the Southern African Development Community – Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI). The project will involve conducting intensive studies in both Member States (Malawi and Mozambique) to support Transboundary Aquifers Management in Member States in collaboration with relevant government authorities and River Basin Organizations in finding solutions to shared groundwater challenges through Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plans. The Shire system serves as a good pilot project in the SADC region as it provides a fairly unique opportunity to explore conjunctive management of multiple water resources. It is also an important watercourse in Malawi and Mozambique, playing a crucial role in socio-economic development for both Member States.

Studies have shown that the SADC region has 30 Transboundary Aquifers, and most of these have not been studied to fully understand their dynamics. Currently only the Ramotswa (shared between Botswana and South Africa), and the Stampriet (shared between Botswana, Namibia and South Africa) transboundary aquifers have been substantially studied holistically. Going forward SADC-GMI, in collaboration with regional partners plans to replicate lessons and good practices learned from the two Aquifers to the remaining aquifers systems in the region.

#### Key objective

The primary objective of the Shire ConWat project is to contribute to sustainable water management in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), through transboundary cooperation on shared critical water resources, and enhance the capacity in SADC and its Member States to manage integrated groundwater and surface water resources, using the Shire River – Aquifer System as a pilot case.



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#### Key activities of the project will include:

- 1) Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis which will include data compilation and synthesis of inter-disciplinary aspects and identification of conjunctive water management issues of the basin,
- 2) Strategic Action Plan which will include stakeholder engagement, consultation, identification and consensus on priority conjunctive water management issues
- 3) Co-formulation of a joint short and long-term plan to respond to priority issues identified during the joint strategic planning sessions
- 4) Knowledge Management and dissemination of the research results throughout the SADC region and beyond.

The project recognizes the importance of transboundary water management through the application of conjunctive approaches that optimise water use across a diversity of water resources and scales. As the result, the conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water has the potential to offer benefits in terms of economic and social outcomes through significantly increased water use efficiency. Failing to consider conjunctive use of surface and groundwater represents a significant lost opportunity, as incorporating diverse water sources into transboundary water management frameworks can expand the range of cost-effective and sustainable solutions for the riparian states.

#### Partners involved

Regional partners involved in the project are the Shire Basin Management Program (Malawi), Administração Regional de Águas do Zambeze (Zambezi Regional Water Board, Mozambique or ARA-Zambeze) and the Zambezi River Commission (ZAMCOM). At national level the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Development (Malawi) and the Ministry of Public Works, Housing and Water Resources (Mozambique) and the owners of the project.

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