

ZAMBEZI WATERCOURSE COMMISSION

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR BASIN-WIDE COOPERATION





Introduction

The Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) is a river basin organization set up through the ZAMCOM Agreement by the eight riparian states that share the Zambezi River Basin.

The mission of ZAMCOM is to promote the equitable and reasonable utilization of the water resources of the Zambezi Watercourse as well as the efficient management and sustainable development thereof. In that regard, some of the functions of the Commission include promoting, supporting, coordinating and harmonizing the management and development of the water resources of the Zambezi Watercourse; as well as advising Member States on the planning, management, utilization, development, protection and conservation of the Zambezi Watercourse.

Context

The Zambezi Basin is home to over 40 million people and that is projected to increase to 51 million by 2025. Going forward, therefore, the mounting socio-economic pressures on the basin will require a better basin-wide understanding and agreement on the basin's opportunities and challenges; and the joint description of a sustainable development space for the basin that will meet national and basin-wide objectives without compromising ecosystems or indeed undermining the development aspirations of one state by another.

One of the explicit functions of the Commission is to foster greater awareness among the inhabitants of the Zambezi Watercourse of the equitable and reasonable utilisation and the efficient management and sustainable development of the resources of the Zambezi Watercourse. In order to foster that awareness and implement other related functions in a manner that facilitates stakeholder participation and the creation of effective partnerships for cooperation in a transboundary context, the Zambezi Watercourse Commission is organised in such a way that both top down and bottom up approaches are possible and complementary.



Stakeholder Participation and Partnerships for Cooperation

Stakeholder participation in ZAMCOM is critical in order to ensure ownership and legitimacy of outputs, products and outcomes in the context of sustainable cooperation. Therefore, It is important that processes are based on a sound, consultative approach that continuously builds trust and confidence among stakeholders. Consultation with and participation of governmental, non-governmental and civil society organisations linked to water and related resources management and development in the basin are at the heart of the overall approach.



The major ZAMCOM organs such as the Council of Ministers, the ZAMCOM Technical Committee and the ZAMCOM Secretariat are supported by National Stakeholder Coordination Committees (NASCs); and a Basin-wide Stakeholder Coordination Committee (BASC) which convene regularly to address specific issues relevant to the implementation of the ZAMCOM work programme in line with the ZAMCOM Agreement.

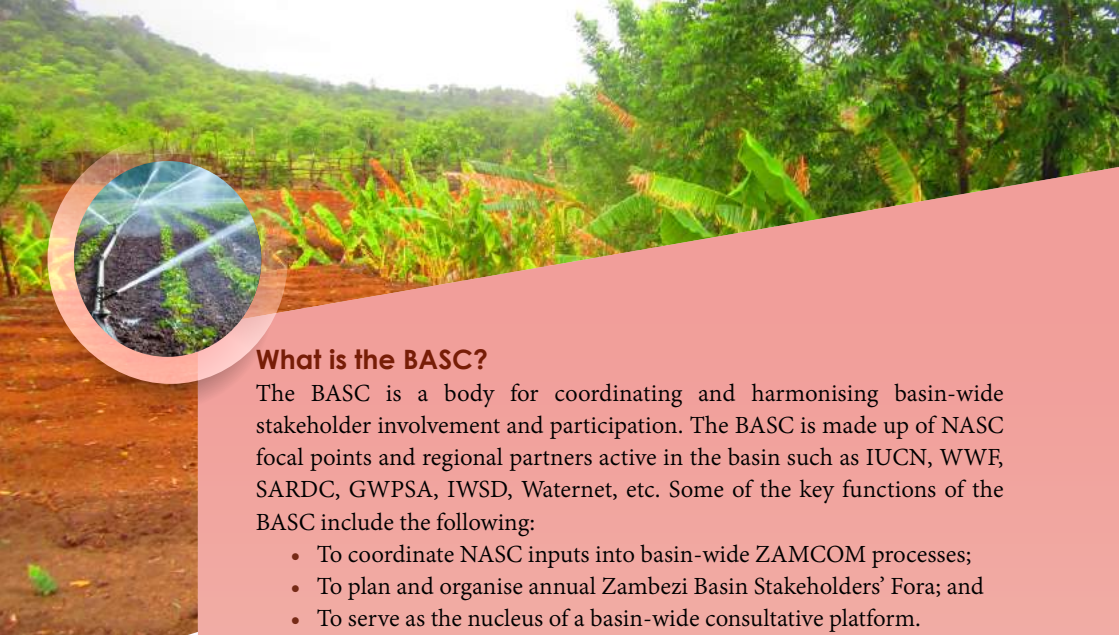


What are NASCs?

NASCs are stakeholder platforms that ensure that there is effective engagement of key stakeholders in the Riparian States of the Zambezi Basin. Representation on NASCs is drawn from major relevant stakeholder institutions and bodies in each Riparian State including government, non-governmental organisations, academia, civil society, traditional leadership, etc.

Some of the key functions of NASCs include the following:

- To serve as a platform for national consultations that facilitate input into basin-wide processes, outputs, outcomes and decisions;
- To serve as a vehicle for dissemination of ZAMCOM plans, products, processes and outputs as well for obtaining feedback; and
- To serve as a multi-sectoral platform for coordination; and fostering national ownership of ZAMCOM plans and processes; and for building trust and confidence in ZAMCOM processes.



What is the BASC?

The BASC is a body for coordinating and harmonising basin-wide stakeholder involvement and participation. The BASC is made up of NASC focal points and regional partners active in the basin such as IUCN, WWF, SARDC, GWPSA, IWSD, Waternet, etc. Some of the key functions of the BASC include the following:

- To coordinate NASC inputs into basin-wide ZAMCOM processes;
- To plan and organise annual Zambezi Basin Stakeholders' Fora; and
- To serve as the nucleus of a basin-wide consultative platform.

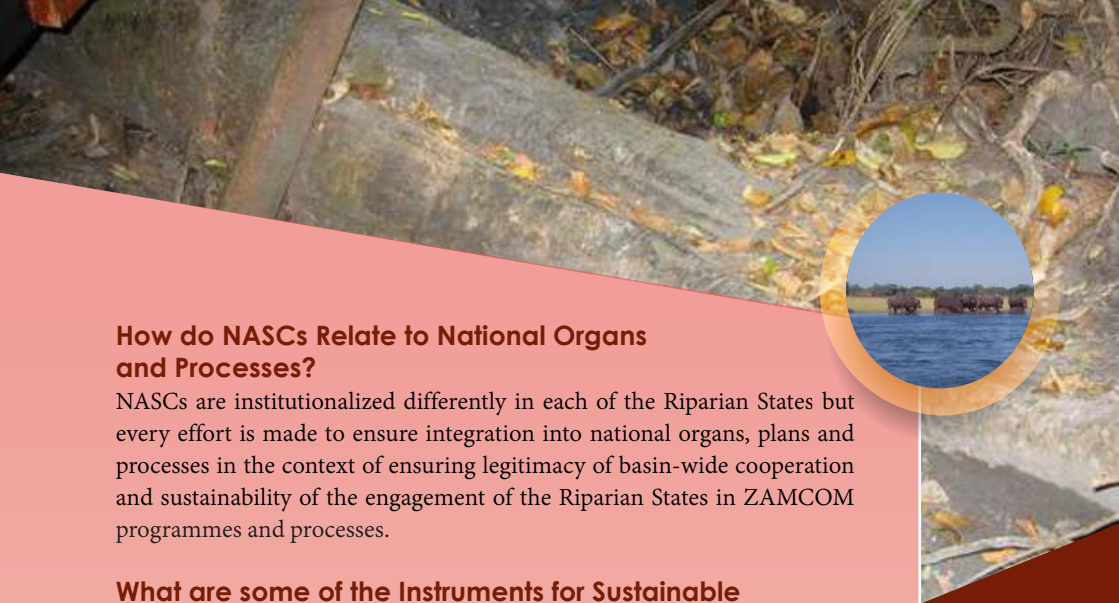
What are the Zambezi Basin Stakeholders' Fora?

The Zambezi Basin Stakeholders' Fora provide a wider platform – beyond committees of ZAMCOM – for stakeholder involvement. The objective of the fora is to bring together representatives of stakeholders with interests in the management and development of water and related resources in the basin to share knowledge and experiences; and provide general advice and inputs that contribute to ZAMCOM programmes and processes.

How do NASCs and the BASC Relate to Other Zamcom Organs?

The relationship among the ZAMCOM organs is illustrated in the diagram below.





How do NASCs Relate to National Organs and Processes?

NASCs are institutionalized differently in each of the Riparian States but every effort is made to ensure integration into national organs, plans and processes in the context of ensuring legitimacy of basin-wide cooperation and sustainability of the engagement of the Riparian States in ZAMCOM programmes and processes.

What are some of the Instruments for Sustainable Cooperation that Zamcom has put in Place?

One of the key functions of ZAMCOM is, “to promote, support, coordinate and harmonise the management and development of the water resources of the Zambezi watercourse” in the context of sustainable basin-wide cooperation.

In this regard, ZAMCOM has developed a number of instruments for basin-wide cooperation. These include:

- Rules and Procedures for Sharing of Data and Information Related to the Management and Development of the Zambezi Watercourse.

The overall objective of the Rules and Procedures is to give effect to the provisions on information and data sharing in the ZAMCOM Agreement and the SADC Revised Protocol on shared Watercourses in order to ensure that relevant and quality data and information are shared effectively and efficiently between and among the Riparian States in order to facilitate the taking of informed decisions in relation to the management and development of the shared water resources of the Zambezi Watercourse.



The Rules and Procedures were adopted by the ZAMCOM Council of Ministers in February, 2016 and became effective in March, 2016.

- ZAMCOM Procedures for the Notification of Planned Measures

The notification of planned measures (projects and programmes) is an important element of international water law and crucial for the cooperative management and development of shared watercourses. For Zambezi Watercourse states, the “duty to notify” is a legally binding international treaty obligation set out in the ZAMCOM Agreement as well as in the Revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses. Furthermore, the equitable and reasonable utilisation off the Zambezi Watercourse as well as the efficient management and sustainable development thereof presuppose the orderly and transparent notification of planned projects and programmes which are likely to have significant transboundary impact in the context of sustainable development.

How Is Zamcom Promoting and Assisting In Efforts Aimed at Harmonising Relevant Water Policies and Laws for more Effective Cooperation?

ZAMCOM has recently commissioned a study entitled, “An Equivalence Assessment of National Water Laws among Riparian States in the Zambezi River Basin”. The study aims at assessing several aspects of equivalence among the Riparian States with regard to provisions in national legislation in relation to the ZAMCOM Agreement; and regional and international protocols. It is expected that the study will recommend appropriate provisions and guidelines for ZAMCOM to facilitate efforts aimed at ultimately harmonising for effectiveness in the context of basin-wide cooperation.



How is Zamcom Addressing Capacity Development, Secondment and Gender Mainstreaming in the Context of Basin-Wide Cooperation?

In view of the fact that ZAMCOM is a new and growing organisation, ZAMCOM has embarked on a process of obtaining, strengthening and maintaining the capabilities to set and achieve her objectives over time. The capacities that need to be developed include those related to the enabling environment (broader system within which individuals and organisations function); the organisational level (internal policies, arrangements, procedures, frameworks, etc); and the individual level (skills, experience, knowledge, etc).

The secondment of staff from riparian countries to the ZAMCOM Secretariat is seen as a very important part of ensuring stakeholder participation and capacity building among staff from Riparian States in the development and implementation of ZAMCOM programmes and projects. The overall goal of the ZAMCOM Secondment Programme is to contribute to confidence and trust building amongst the riparian countries, partner organizations and other stakeholders of the Zambezi River.

Gender mainstreaming is also an important aspect of the ZAMCOM work programme. The overall objective of gender mainstreaming in ZAMCOM programmes, projects and processes is to incorporate and integrate a gender perspective in ZAMCOM's efforts by ensuring that programmes benefit men and women equally, in accordance with their different needs, and with their input and equal participation at all levels.



How is Zamcom Developing Sustainable Regional Partnerships?

ZAMCOM continues to strategically engage and harness synergies with other regional bodies and programmes. In that regard, ZAMCOM has entered into a number of broad MOUs in order to strengthen and extend the partnerships and ensure that they are sustainable.

The partnerships allow for joint activities, coordination; and co-organising of regional events and so on in the context of promoting the sustainable management and development of water and related resources in the basin.





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