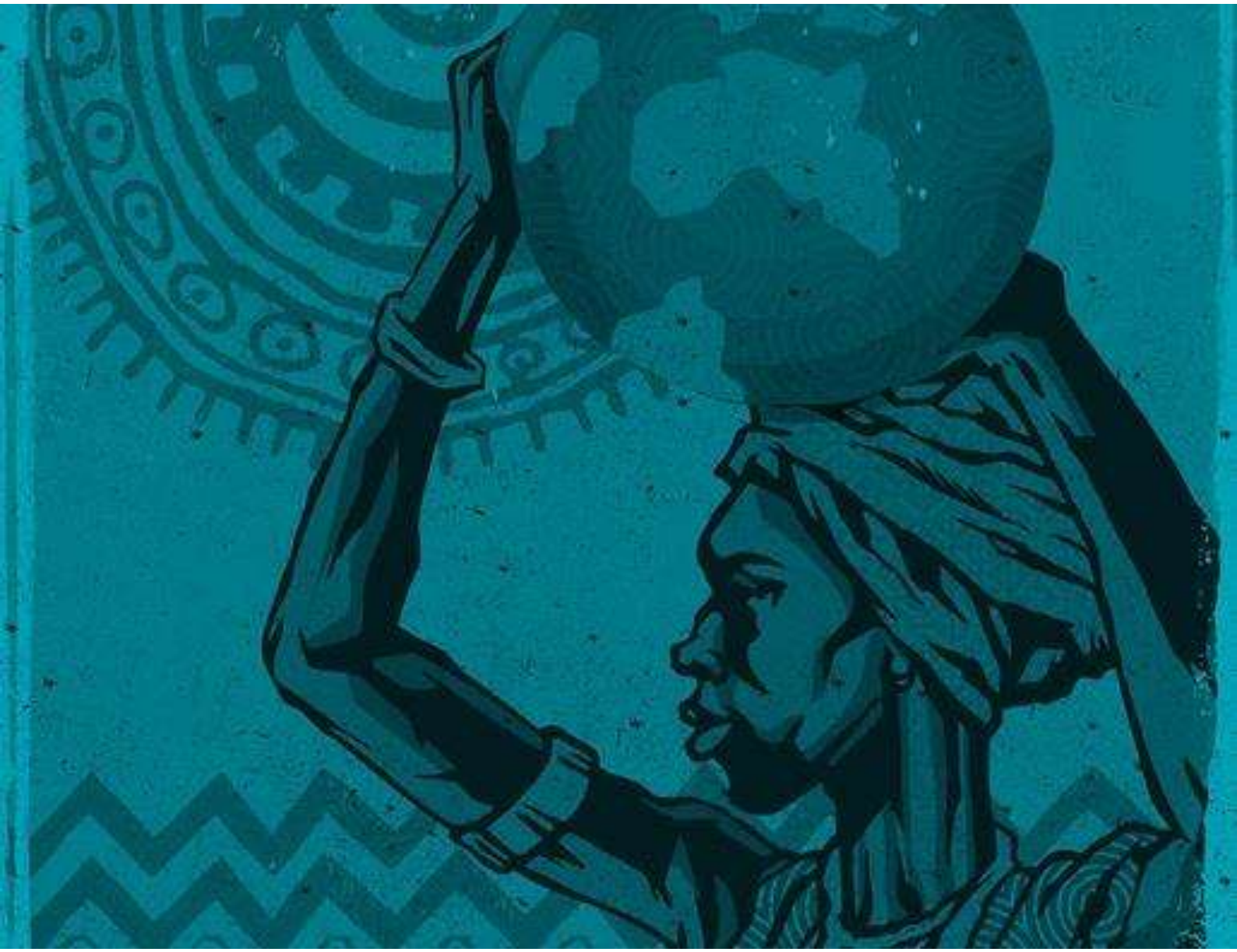
award
The Association for Water and Rural Development

April to June 2019

Progress Report
Quarter 3 2018-2019 FY

Resilience in the Limpopo – Olifants

Association for Water and Rural Development



USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE | SOUTHERN AFRICA

Acknowledgements

The USAID: RESILIM O project is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development under USAID/Southern Africa RESILIENCE IN THE LIMPOPO BASIN PROGRAM (RESILIM). The project is implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD), in collaboration with partners.

Cooperative Agreement nr AID-674-A-13-00008

Authors
This report was compiled by the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning team.

Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD)

P O Box 1919
Hoedspruit 1380
Limpopo, South Africa
T 015-793 0503
W award.org.za

Company Reg. No. 98/03011/08
Non-profit org. Reg. No. 006 – 821

Blyderivierspoort Dam. Photo credit: AWARD

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Agri-SI	Agriculture Support Initiative
AWARD	Association for Water and Rural Development
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CMA	Catchment Management Agency
CMF	Catchment Management Forum
CPA	Communal Property Association
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DEFF	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
DICLAD	Dialogues for Climate Change Literacy and Adaptation
DHSWS	Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
GIS	Geographical Information System
IHL	Institution of Higher Learning
InWaRDS	Integrated Water Resources Decision Support
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
K2C	Kruger to Canyons non-profit company
KRA	Key Result Area
LBCIN	Limpopo Basin Curriculum Innovation Network
LEDET	Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
LMC	Legalameetse Management Committee
LNR	Legalameetse Nature Reserve
MDF	Mahlathini Development Foundation
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning
MSI	Municipal Support Initiative
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRMP	Natural Resource Management Program
ORWDP	Olifants River Water Development Project
SANParks	South African National Parks
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

Executive Summary

Overview of the Quarter

This report covers the period April to June 2019. With several projects completed and the rest nearing completion within the next six months, we have started to plan for program close-out. This has included a focus on finalising RESILIM-O communications products and planning for evaluative final reports for each project as well as program-wide synthesis products. The focus of the May "RESILIM-O day" was on communications materials.

Institutions are key to building resilience in the Olifants catchment, as reflected in our theory of change. The challenges of working in a context of high institutional flux were compounded this quarter with the major reorganisation of national government departments that followed the elections in May. While some of these changes may be beneficial in the long term, they tend to have negative effects in the shorter term at operational levels within provincial and local institutions. Resources and energy spent on institutional realignment are necessarily diverted from "doing the work on the ground".

The changes include transfer of forestry and fisheries from the previous Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) into the Department of Environmental Affairs, to form the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF); amalgamation of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) with the Department of Human Settlements, to form the Department of Human Settlements, Water & Sanitation (DHSWS); and the inclusion of agriculture into the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) to form the Department of Agriculture and Land Reform (DALR)[1]. In the case of the DHSWS this places the focus for water primarily on water services (and away from water resources and ecosystems). Suggestions that there will be a major legislative review to align legislation related to water with that related to human settlements is further cause for concern, as this may divert attention away from the operational aspects of water resource management within the catchment.

This quarter highlighted both successes and challenges regarding **governance:**

- There has still been little traction with the DHSWS Regional Office on action items from the Lower Olifants River Network (LORiN) meeting in November, and a stakeholder meeting had to be cancelled due to non-availability of key DHSWS staff. Given the ongoing low flows in the Olifants River, the concern over unlawful water use upstream for irrigation, and the planned transfers out of the basin in the Middle Olifants, a more permanent solution is needed to keep the river flowing than periodic releases from De Hoop Dam.
- While similar challenges were experienced in the Middle Olifants with DHSWS responsiveness, strong interest has now been established amongst stakeholders to participate in further dialogue and information-sharing, and DHSWS staff have been supportive of plans to support and strengthen the Middle Olifants Catchment Management Forum (CMF).
- The proposal for operationalising the Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs) seems to be back on track – but given the history of this process, we will wait and see!
- We were disappointed to discover that an invitation from DHSWS to the South African Water Caucus to be part of a Presidential social sector working group was not open to all NGOs and that the window for nominations had passed.
- Governance issues continue to be a key focus for our work on co-management. The Cyprus, Balloon, Paris and Madeira communities with claims on Legalameetse Nature Reserve are still battling to get resolution on their land claims and we have started to support them in a legal challenge. The stalemate between LEDET and the communities over the co-management agreement has also not yet been resolved, and conflicts have arisen within and between the CPAs.

[1] The new departmental names and acronyms will be used from now onwards, although this does not always reflect the structures we have been working with over the course of the program.

- There were several rather serious challenges relating to proposed development of a resort in the Legalameetse Nature Reserve, including concern over the credentials of potential investors and who will benefit from the project, lack of proactive action by the Legalameetse Management Committee, and failure by LEDET to share the results of the feasibility study completed in 2017 (which did not follow required consultation processes). This experience highlights the difficulties in ensuring equitable benefit to communities from conservation-based developments, and the potential for elite capture of resources.

As an important strategy for building sustainability, we continued to focus on **network-building** through all our projects. Highlights of the quarter include the completion of the Institutions of Higher Learning project which succeeded in establishing the Limpopo Basin Curriculum Innovation Network (LBCIN) for universities and other higher learning bodies in South Africa and Mozambique to share ideas and research outputs on climate change resilience in the catchment. This network provides a framework for continued collaboration and development of future generations of researchers and managers in the catchment.

The Lower Olifants River Health Forum (LoRHeF) network for private nature reserves made progress with selection of biomonitoring sites. The igniting of interest among stakeholders in the Middle Olifants River Network, mentioned above, was another highlight. This is an important step towards collaborative governance in the catchment, because these stakeholders were not previously working together and many were not even aware of each others' existence. Another highlight was the steps taken this quarter to better connect stakeholders from different parts of the Blyde River sub-catchment, including exploring the establishment of a network focused on restoration along the Lower Blyde River (creating an opportunity to link upstream and downstream restoration) and supporting development of a meaningful relationship between the Blyde CPAs and downstream landowners Sabi-Sand Wildtuin.

Training events this quarter were largely focused on youth and included the first session of the Moletele Youth Program (for youth from the Moletele CPA), climate change dialogues with the newly recruited K2C Environmental Monitors and the K2C Restoration Custodianship team (made up of youth from the Blyde CPAs), and computer skills training with the Restoration Custodianship team. More than 200 local primary school students took part in field lessons at the mangrove nursery and rehabilitation site in Xai-Xai, Mozambique. They had the opportunity to contribute to the mangrove restoration by planting young mangrove trees propagated through the project.

There was ongoing training of farmers under the Agriculture Support Initiative, including workshops on crop calendars, soil health, water management, poultry and marketing of herbs and vegetables. AWARD staff attended training on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes, climate risk informed decision analysis, and calibration of gauges for the real-time flow and water quality monitoring system.

Building **collective action and agency** is an important outcome of RESILIM-O which contributes to building long-term resilience in the Olifants Catchment. An external evaluation of the Agriculture Support Initiative in the Middle Olifants (Ukuvuna Harvests sub-grant) highlighted the success of this project in developing agency among small-scale farmers through the network of learning groups established, including confidence to experiment. This was achieved through careful development of catalytic and inspirational leadership at village level and the creation of simple interaction platforms to facilitate knowledge sharing and adoption. This has allowed the groups to begin to grow organically, as farmers invite others to join. Through the evolution of these functional local institutions, new interaction platforms for community members to discuss agricultural production (which did not exist prior to the project) have emerged. Given that the clusters are voluntary and the leaders highly committed, they are likely to be sustained beyond the end of the project. The project also successfully built an understanding of agroecology as a relevant climate change adaptation in a local context where very little understanding was present before. A similar model has been followed in the Lower Olifants under the Mahlathini Development Foundation sub-grant.

The communities at Legalameetse continued to plan for the Community Festival to be held at Legalameetse Nature Reserve and the survey on natural resource use in the Reserve, both of which they are planning and implementing themselves. While progress has been slow, these activities and the collaborative nature of all

the co-management work, are steadily building capacity and agency among these communities to participate more meaningfully in co-management of the reserve and its benefits.

Other **capacity building** highlights included the "critical mass" of 27 learning program developers within the LBCIN network, with the attitudes and capacities to design, teach and apply science-based strategies that enhance the resilience of people and ecosystems in the basin through systemic and social learning approaches. This represents capacity development at both individual and institutional levels.

Plans are now in place to ramp up support and capacity development for the four Blyde CPAs, through collaboration with our partners K2C and Working for Water, as well as Blyde team member Reuben Thifhulufhelwi's PhD project focusing on developing social learning spaces to support emergence of collective agency in ecosystem restoration. This work aims to overcome long-standing challenges with finding agreement on roles, responsibilities and ownership of restoration processes, which has led to many conflicts over the years.

Technical tool development (another aspect of capacity development) this quarter included development of a mobile friendly web version of the Flow Tracker app to accommodate IOS users, near-completion of the Lowveld Plantations Restoration Plan by the Blyde Restoration Group, and work on a zoning plan for the Legalameetse Nature Reserve Management Plan. The spatial planning mobile app is operational but still requires further work before it can be shared more widely.

Inputs into **policy development** included continued input into land-use planning policy through the Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and the Greater Kruger SDF. We are working with the consultants and stakeholders to ensure integration of the Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA) maps and Land Use Guidelines into municipal SDFs – an important aspect of capacity development since there are not enough practitioners who know how to work with CBA maps and Land Use Guidelines when dealing with land use applications. There is still a lot of resistance to 'environmental' issues as a way of constraining economic development, and rural communities and landscapes are often left out of the spatial planning environment. In Limpopo, while there is a recognition that tourism is important, the link to biodiversity is often not clearly made. We shared our experiences of implementing spatial planning tools and processes at the SANBI Biodiversity Planning Forum meeting in June and advocated for biodiversity planners to focus more strongly on the implementation context within which technical planning data and tools are used.

Regarding climate change policy, we noted the adoption of the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, to which we submitted extensive comments. We signed a letter of support for the CSO working group on the Green Climate Fund, providing feedback to the GCF Board requesting i) more inclusion of CSOs in the management and implementation of the fund (including not restricting the definition of "country ownership" to government entities); and ii) a more explicit inclusion of aspects of social justice and human wellbeing for mitigation and adaptation interventions rather than just focusing on cost.

Regarding **project management and human resources**, two familiar faces rejoined the AWARD team this quarter. Lilian Goredema was appointed as a consultant to assist with Co-management Support project, and Moredecai Hove was appointed as Financial Assistant. Mulweli Nethengwe took on some additional roles, assisting with MERL data collection and also with logistics for the Shared Learning sub-grant.

Nine sub-grants are currently active within RESILIM-O. The Ukuvuna Harvests and Rhodes University IHL sub-grants both entered the close-out phase having completed their final submissions. The sub-grant program is nearing completion with most projects due to reach completion next quarter. A total of 76% of the grants budget has been spent to date, and final disbursements will be complete on the submission of final reports by grantees before March 2020. A total of 94% of the total budget (excluding sub-grants) has been spent to date.

Overview of the Quarter in Numbers

Hectares under improved NRM, hectares under improved biophysical condition and all capacity development indicators will be reported annually, as agreed with USAID in January 2019.

This quarter, 389 people were trained in climate change adaptation and 446 people were trained in sustainable natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation (Table 1). Overall 64% of the people trained were women.

The following items were counted under the "laws, policies or guidelines that address biodiversity conservation and/or other environmental themes" indicator and the "laws, policies, regulations or standards addressing climate change adaptation" indicator, since they strongly enable both biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation:

- Fourteen revised learning programs (modules and/or courses) developed by the six institutions of higher learning in the LBCIN network (proposed). These learning programs now include systems thinking, transdisciplinarity, social learning and engaged place-based approaches. The IHLs are committed to implementing these learning programs next year.
- Thresholds of Potential Concern for the Lower Olifants River (standards for water quality and hydrology, covering all conditions – not only drought) (proposed and adopted).

The following additional item was counted under the "laws, policies or guidelines that address biodiversity conservation and/or other environmental themes" indicator:

- A business entity established by the Legalameetse CPAs to enable biodiversity-related enterprises in the Reserve (proposed). Paperwork is being finalised.

The following was also counted under the "laws, policies, regulations or standards addressing climate change adaptation" indicator:

- The National Climate Change Strategy (adopted). AWARD commented extensively on this over several rounds of comments.

The Our Olifants media and communications campaign reached 2,677,541 people this quarter. This figure was calculated from social media, website and newsletter reach statistics as well as readership, listenership or viewership figures published by the various print media, radio and television stations which have featured stories on RESILIM-O. The figure was greatly increased by the interviews with farmers featured on Thobela FM, with audience figures of 2,672,000.

The media and communications team continued to improve and update the AWARD website, with input from AWARD staff (http://award.org.za). A "bumper" newsletter was distributed in April, with shorter versions in May and June, reaching over 200 people. SABC radio interviews with farmers in April reached over two million people. A journalist with Radio France Internationale also interviewed farmers in the Lower Olifants in June.

One peer-reviewed paper was published during the reporting period:

- Selebalo, I., Scholes, M., & Clifford-Holmes, J. K. (2019). *A systemic analysis of the environmental impacts of gold mining within the Blyde River Catchment, a Strategic Water Area of South Africa*. In N. Pillay (Ed.), Proceedings of the Sixth Annual System Dynamics Conference in South Africa. 22-23 November 2018, Solomon Mahlangu House, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. (pp. 86-93). South Africa System Dynamics Chapter. ISBN: 978-0-620-83145-1

Conference presentations:

- De Villiers, A. "*Designing and implementing Dialogues for Climate Change Literacy and Adaptation: A deep reflection on the practice of capacity development on climate change adaptation within the South African rural context*". African Climate & Development Initiative (ACDI) conference, Cape Town, 10 April 2019.

- Kotschy, K. “MERL for enabling research and learning in landscapes”. Western Cape Biosphere Reserves Network Meeting, George, 4 April 2019.
- Nhanzimo, A. *A community-based approach to marine and coastal Ecosystem-based Adaptation*. “Growing Blue” Blue Economy Conference, Maputo, Mozambique, 23-24 May 2019.
- Two presentations (William Mponwana and Derick du Toit) on *challenges, lessons learned and the process of an emerging practice of biodiversity planning within local municipalities*. SANBI Biodiversity Planning Forum, Alpine Heath Resort, Northern Drakensberg, 4-7 June 2019.
- Two presentations at the REMCO conference in Mozambique, 13-15 May 2019:
    - Pollard, S. R. Riddell, E. and Retief, H. *From theory to practice: **The emergence of systemic, adaptive governance for resilience in the transboundary Lowveld rivers of Southern Africa**.*
    - Retief, H.R and Pollard, S.R. ***Open source** as the frontier for software development for sustainability: Experiences from the Olifants Integrated Water Resources Decision Support System.*


Journalist from Radio France Internationale interviewing farmers in the Lower Olifants

Table 1: Targets and results for the 2018/19 financial year to date.

Indicator	Annual Target	Q1 Results	Q2 Results	Q3 Results
EG.10.2-1 Hectares under improved biophysical condition	22,520	*	*	*
EG.10.2-2 Hectares under improved natural resource management	542,925	*	*	*
AWARD Institutions with improved capacity to address NRM and biodiversity conservation issues	133	*	*	*
EG.10.2-4 Number of people trained in sustainable NRM and/or biodiversity conservation	2,500	696 274 men 422 women	597 295 men 302 women	446 163 men 234 women
EG.10.2-5 Number of laws, policies, or regulations that address biodiversity conservation and/or other environmental themes officially proposed, adopted or implemented	58	15	9	17
AWARD Number of stakeholders (individuals) with increased capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change	1,118	*	*	*
EG.11-2 Number of institutions with improved capacity to assess or address climate change risks	167	*	*	*
EG.11-3 Number of laws, policies, regulations, or standards addressing climate change adaptation formally proposed, adopted, or implemented as supported by USG assistance	42	12	9	18
EG.11-1 Number of people trained in climate change adaptation	2,463	685 267 men 418 women	456 206 men 250 women	389 126 men 263 women
AWARD Number of people reached by Our Olifants campaign including social media	2,000,000	6,356	3,951	2,677,541
STIR-12 Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications resulting from USG support to research and implementation programs	10	1	0	1

1 Project background

The RESILIM-Olifants or RESILIM-O program focuses on the Olifants River Basin (Figure 1), the health of its ecosystems and the dependence of residents on these, and how people may adapt to climate change and other change factors through increased resilience. The overarching goal of RESILIM-O remains as outlined in the original project documentation: "To reduce vulnerability to climate change through building improved transboundary water and biodiversity governance and management of the Olifants Basin through the adoption of science-based strategies that enhance the resilience of its people and ecosystems through systemic and social learning approaches". For further detail on the background and rationale for this work, readers are referred to the 2018 Annual Report and the 2019 Workplan.

Figure 1: Map of the Olifants River Basin

2 Progress in Key Result Areas

2.1 KRA 1: Enhancing Resilience through Systems Approaches and Capacity Development

Key Area 1 objective: To institutionalise systemic, collaborative planning and action for resilience of ecosystems and associated livelihoods through enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to sustainably manage natural resources of the Olifants River Basin under different scenarios.

2.1.1 Municipal Support Initiative: Capacity Building to Support Catchment Resilience in Municipalities

The Municipal Support Initiative (MSI) focuses on improving preparedness and responsivity of local government (as institution) to DEFFl with natural resource degradation and climate change vulnerability. It supports practitioners in a professional learning process through workplace support, tool development and application.

Land Use Planning

Figure 2: SANBI Biodiversity Planning Forum meeting, northern Drakensberg, June 2019.

The team continued to institutionalise biodiversity-compatible spatial planning at district and local municipality levels in the Lower Olifants. They attended a meeting of the Greater Kruger Water Sector Working Group (one of the advisory committees for the Greater Kruger SDF process) and two Intergovernmental Steering Committee meetings for the Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality SDF. The comments provided by AWARD on the SDF were well received and the team has been able to significantly influence the process so far.

The team attended the SANBI Biodiversity Planning Forum in the northern Drakensberg from 4-7 June. This was a good opportunity to share our experiences of implementing spatial planning tools and processes and to challenge biodiversity planners to focus more strongly on the implementation context within which technical planning data and tools are used.

Moletele Youth Project

Phase 2 of the training program for youth from the Moletele CPA got off the ground this quarter. This project aims to capacitate young people from the CPA to understand and manage the biodiversity on their land. Eight young people were selected and an introductory training session held, focusing on the purpose of the program and the participants' understanding of their roles as youth within their communities.

Figure 3: Training session with the Moletele youth

Water projects

AWARD met with members of the DHSWS (Limpopo) Regional Office to develop an action plan for the Water and Sanitation Community Forum meetings starting in July.

2.1.2 Civil Society Organisation Support Initiative (CSO-SI)

Support to Civil Society Organisations continued through the "Olifants CSOs" and "Changing Practice Course" WhatsApp groups. Course facilitators and AWARD staff continue to contribute to these conversations. The WhatApp groups play an important role in sustaining the network of CSOs established by the CSO-SI and the Changing Practice course for environmental activists. The importance of these platforms can be seen by the frequency of postings (every 2-3 days) and by the nature of the conversations. Besides sharing relevant news articles on various environmental justice issues and job and funding opportunities, participants regularly update each other on the work they are doing (both their achievements and their disappointments) and encourage, congratulate, motivate and commiserate with each other on a personal level. This emotional support and solidarity is very important for the personal resilience of these activists (and their organisations), who work in very difficult conditions and with few resources.

2.1.3 Institutions of Higher Learning Capacity Building Project (Sub-grant)

The final report for this project, implemented by Rhodes University, was submitted in June. Significant achievements include:

Figure 4: Limpopo Basin Curriculum Innovation Network (LBCIN) members

- Establishment of the Limpopo Basin Curriculum Innovation Network (LBCIN), a network currently involving six institutions of higher learning (IHLs) operating in the Limpopo Basin[2], for collaborative learning and sharing ideas and research outputs on climate change resilience in the catchment.
- Innovative revision of higher education curricula through the development of 14 revised or new learning programs[3] which include systems thinking, transdisciplinarity, social learning and engaged place-based approaches, as well as one new joint, inter-institutional and inter-country field-based course (see previous quarterly report). These learning programs are ready for implementation, and the IHLs are committed to implementing them in 2020.
- Intellectual capital in the participating IHLs to ensure wider social learning and longer-term uptake and engagement with the work and objectives of the RESILIM-O program, particularly among future generations of managers and actors in the catchment. A critical mass of 27 learning program developers[4] now exists in the LBCIN, with the attitudes and capacities to design, teach and apply science-based strategies that enhance the resilience of people and ecosystems through systemic and social learning approaches.
- Strengthened institutional capacity within the six IHLs for both horizontal (across departments and faculties) and vertical (across organisational hierarchies) collaboration.
- A good foundation for future collaboration between the six institutions in the network through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) covering a five-year period.
- A functional and accessible e-learning platform for the LBCIN network, which can be further developed as a resource for training of interns, youth development programs, design of short courses and for wider social learning amongst catchment stakeholders and beneficiaries.

[2] University of Venda, Mpumalanga University, University of Limpopo and the Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa; and Universidade Eduardo Mondlane and Pedagogical University in Mozambique.
[3] Modules and/or courses
[4] Academics Including a DEFFn, heads of departments and lecturers who participated in the curriculum review and revision process

- A draft (joint) academic paper on the learning program review and revision process. Collaborative writing has been an important praxis space for the LBCIN members to reflect on, document and integrate their curriculum innovation experiences. As a product, the paper will not only publicize and make LBCIN work visible to the outside world, but also potentially serve as a generative tool to influence thinking on how curriculum review and development can be done in the current context.

2.2 KRA 2: Enhanced Long-term Water Security and Water Resources Protection under Climate Change

Key Area 2 objective: To enhance long-term water security and protection by supporting collective action, informed adaptation strategies and practices and tenable institutional arrangements for transboundary IWRM.

This component of the program focuses on supporting the emerging governance of the Olifants Basin to secure sustainable plans and actions for water resources protection within Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). This is being done through:

1. Governance support to various institutions
2. Mobilising custodianship of water resources through the development of networks with greater capacity for monitoring and action in:
    a. the Lower Olifants (LORIN or Lower Olifants River Network)
    b. the Middle Olifants (MORIN - through a grant)
    c. Protected Areas in the Lower Olifants through a network known as the Lower Olifants River Health Forum (LORHeF)
3. Development of tools and protocols in support of a decision-support system for IWRM and training in the use of these tools.

2.2.1 Support for Systemic, Accountable Water Governance

On 28 May the water governance team finally secured their first meeting of the year with the Department of Water and Sanitation (now the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation; DHSWS) Regional Office in Nelspruit. This was an upbeat meeting, with a new Minister in place and plans to have the Olifants Catchment Management Agency (CMA) established by the 2nd quarter next year. Issues discussed included the CMA, the water use licence application for mining in the Blyde catchment, the Olifants River Water Development Project (ORWDP) in the Middle Olifants and unlawful water use in the Lower Olifants. The DHSWS was not aware of the Blyde water use licence application nor the extent of the ORWDP proposals, but showed willingness to act and respond.

However, interactions with the DHSWS during June were less encouraging. There were challenges with securing meetings with regional officials in the Middle Olifants. The Lower Olifants River Network meeting, requested by stakeholders to discuss their water security concerns, had to be cancelled after AWARD was unable to secure a meeting with Mr Nkuna, who currently oversees the Olifants WMA, on any of the dates previously proposed. Mr Nkuna will be on leave until 20 August. This is disappointing as we are now moving into the dry season and the areas cleared upstream are under full irrigation. Directives have been issued yet the irrigation has continued. If DHSWS does not take the next legal steps the Olifants will run dry, if there are no releases from De Hoop Dam.

Our near real-time monitoring system recorded lower flows than in usual in May and June. Compliance at Mamba weir in regards to water quality and quantity has become a concern (Figure 5). With the dry season ahead, we are already starting to drop below the Environmental Water Requirements (EWR).

In response to the agricultural clearing in the Lower Olifants, AWARD submitted detailed comments objecting to the approval of the S24G rectification Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for agricultural clearing on one of the farms.

Figure 5: Hydrograph for real-time discharge measured at Mamba weir showing periods of non-compliance (below the red line) in June

The team also met with the consultants who worked on the EIA for the proposed mining by Transvaal Gold Mining Estates (TGME) in the Blyde catchment. The consultants were not aware that the Blyde is a Class I catchment and were unaware of the implications of this for the proposed development. All issues to do with water appear to have been passed on to DHSWS under the WULA process, and there were no clear answers about the water rights of the proposed project. The finding that they are not independent consultants but are working under the developer is cause for concern. AWARD made it clear that we are not supporting the development in the Blyde. The EIA review completed by EMROSS Consulting in April found that neither of the above two EIAs described above provided enough legitimate information for the developments to be approved, and neither provided clear information about water rights.

In April, the South African Water Caucus (SAWC) received an invitation from DHSWS to be part of a Presidential social sector working group, an interface between government and civil society. AWARD shared this invitation with other stakeholders, delighted to finally have an invitation given the paucity of engagement over the last few years. However, we were subsequently informed that the invitation was not open to all NGOs and that the window for nominations had passed. This is unfortunate, since the need for stakeholder engagement and participation is written into both the constitution and the National Water Act.

Members of the water governance team attended the REMCO conference (River and Environmental Management Cooperation) in Mozambique from 13-15 May. The focus was on transboundary water-sharing arrangements in the Inkomati catchment. The team gained insight into the different compliance monitoring and enforcement approaches used in the two countries. The Dutch team running the Kingfisher project expressed an interest in integrating components of our INWaRDS decision support system into their Hydronet system (currently being used by the Inkomati-Usuthu CMA).

On 25 June, Sharon Pollard met with Nuno Costa from the NOVA Center for Environmental and Sustainability Research in Lisbon, Portugal. This is a research centre with a particular interest in participatory modelling approaches for stakeholder engagement in the integrated assessment of environmental and sustainability issues. She shared our work on systems thinking in practice and explored future partnerships for embedding systems thinking into (a) resilience training such as through the IHL-related work in the Lusophone Universities and their students and (b) potential joint proposal development at the transboundary scale.

2.2.2 Networks for Collective Action

An important part of the work on water governance is participation in and contribution to water networks in the region. In most cases, these networks were non-existent and, in a world of weakening governance and increasing complexity, they are regarded as key for long-term sustainability. They address a constitutional principle underpinning our democracy where people have a right to know and participate in governance. We have been supporting networks for water resources monitoring and management in the Middle and Lower Olifants.

Work on establishing the **Middle Olifants River Network (MORiN)** has revealed a large number of stakeholders, many of whom (including some large water users) were not aware of the plans for transfers out of the basin through the Olifants River Water Development Project. There is now strong interest amongst stakeholders to participate in further dialogue and information-sharing. The team has focused energy on supporting the establishment and effective functioning of the Middle Olifants CMF in particular as this is an important existing forum through which collective action and planning can be institutionalised. Despite initial difficulties in securing meetings with regional DHSWS officials, there was encouraging attendance by DHSWS staff at the CMF meeting in June, which the MORiN team helped to facilitate. The Regional DHSWS head is supportive of getting the charter for this CMF signed at the next meeting in September.

The MORiN sub-grant team also met with Lower Olifants farmers, including representatives from the Blyde Water User Association, to present the potential impacts that water transfers out of the Middle Olifants could have on them, especially if it precludes the use of De Hoop Dam for augmentation. However, the response from these farmers tended to be dismissive of the threats posed by the Middle Olifants activities ("nothing can be done about that")

Figure 6: Erich Ferrero (Kapama Nature Reserve) and Robin Peterson (Kruger National Park) selecting biomonitoring sites at Kapama.

Biomonitoring sites for the **Lower Olifants River Health Forum (LORHeF)** were selected in May at Kapama, Timbavati and Klaserie Private Nature Reserves. These sites will be monitored by the members of the forum (private nature reserves) on an ongoing basis, allowing for more integrated land and water biodiversity management.

2.2.3 Developing an Integrated Water Resources Management Decision Support System (InWaRDS)

The Decision Support System and Early Warning System, supported by the near real-time flow and water quality monitoring system, is integral to all our work with stakeholders around water governance and enabled us (once again) to alert stakeholders to the declining flow and water quality in the Olifants River this quarter. We have been asked to modify our SMS Early Warning System into a guiding tool for making releases from the Phalaborwa barrage.

This quarter saw an unfortunate coincidence of technical problems with the flow probes at Oxford and Mamba weirs as well as with our water quality probe. Some of these problems are suspected to be caused by low flows and sediment accumulation. The water quality logger appears to require a system reset; we have contacted the supplier about how to do this. To help the team to be more responsive to these technical issues, Hugo Retief trained two other AWARD staff members to calibrate the different gauges (Figure 5).

Figure 7: Hugo Retief teaching Sharon Pollard how to calibrate a Cello logger installed at Balule weir

Figure 8: InWaRDS technical pamphlet

A web-based, mobile-friendly version of the Flow Tracker app (*http://maru.award.org.za/flowtracker*) was developed this quarter to accommodate Apple (IOS) users. This turned out to be more complicated than expected and several technical issues were identified that need to be resolved before InWaRDS can be finalised as a tool to support managers. The current setup is, however, sufficient for InWaRDS training to commence. The InWaRDS developer attended training on climate risk informed decision analysis to enable further integration of climate risks into InWaRDS. Work continued on the comprehensive InWaRDS development report as well as a technical pamphlet.

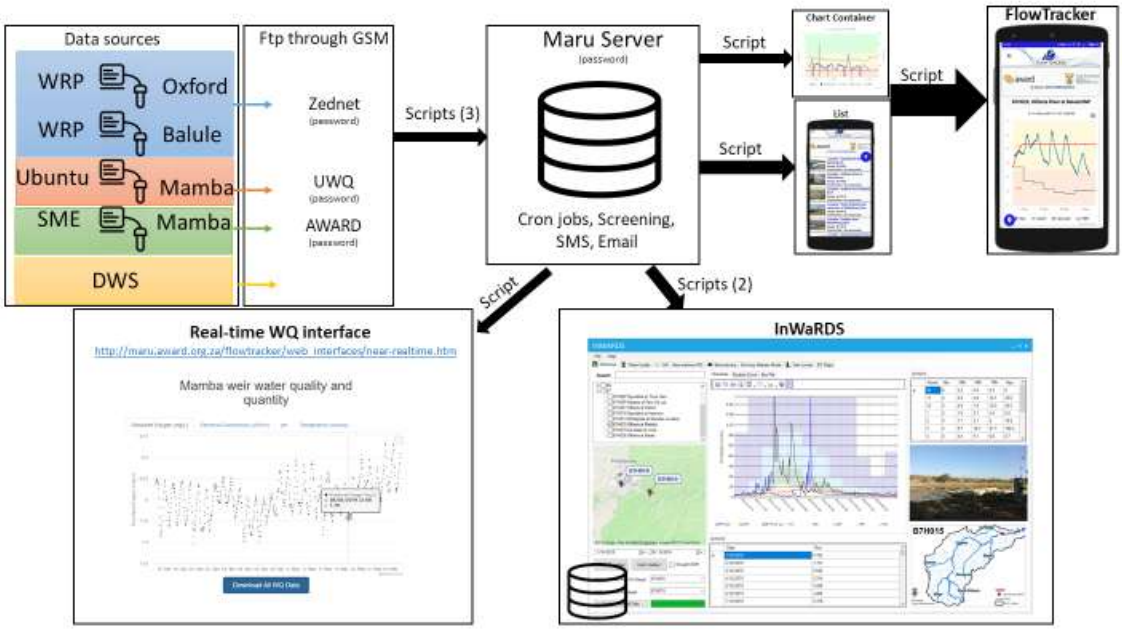


Figure 9: Schematic showing all the components and processes of the InWaRDS decision support system.

2.3 KRA 3: Enhanced Natural Resource Management for Securing Biodiversity and Associated Livelihoods under Climate Change in High Priority Areas

Key Area 3 objective: To conserve biodiversity and sustainably manage high-priority ecosystems by supporting collective action, informed adaptation strategies and practices and tenable institutional arrangements.

2.3.1 Mangrove Restoration through Community Participation in the Limpopo River Estuary, Mozambique (Sub-grant)

This project, implemented by CDS-ZC, aims to increase the resilience of the mangrove livelihoods social-ecological system in the Limpopo estuary through restoring and maintaining biodiversity and hydrological processes to provide ecosystem services that sustain both local people and mangrove ecosystems. This quarter the team, with the help of three permanent and 30 seasonal workers from the local communities, collected, bagged and nurtured mangrove seedlings and propagules for mangrove rehabilitation. Although enough material was collected to produce 60,000 plants (enough to rehabilitate an area of 24 ha), unfortunately germination in the nursery was low. This was attributed to weather conditions at the time of harvesting – high winds had stripped seed and propagules from the trees before they were fully mature. Nevertheless, 24,000 mangrove plants (*Avicennia* species) were successfully propagated. This number will be supplemented with other mangrove species which can be harvested later in the year.

Figure 10: Work in the mangrove nursery in Xai-Xai

Figure 11: School students participating in mangrove rehabilitation

In May, 227 students from local primary schools and their teachers visited the mangrove nursery in Xai-Xai for a field lesson. Besides learning about the role of mangroves and the rehabilitation process, the students took part in planting and watering mangrove seedlings at the rehabilitation site.

The NRM committees established last quarter were authorised by the District Governors of Xai-Xai and Limpopo and the statutes published in the respective gazettes. The team also made progress with the delimitation of the Mahielene (Zimilene) and Zongoene-Sede communities for natural resource management. Two community consultation meetings were held, and the fieldwork and mapping for the Zimilene community was completed, with fieldwork for the Zongoene-Sede community to start shortly. This process ensures security of tenure to support good governance and management of the mangrove social-ecological system.

2.3.2 Blyde Catchment Restoration for Enhanced Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

The Blyde sub-catchment constitutes a high-priority biodiversity and strategic water source area in the Olifants catchment. However, its functioning is being threatened through invasion by multiple alien plant species, particularly those associated with timber plantations.

Following on from the discovery last quarter of peat wetlands and swamp forest in the upper Blyde catchment, AWARD and a group of wetland specialists visited the area again in May to gain a better understanding of these unique ecosystems. A project proposal was submitted to the Water Research Commission to support further research on these critical hydrological resources and their socio-economics, and enable collaborative catchment restoration, management and custodianship for water security.

AWARD hosted a very productive Lowveld Plantations Restoration Plan workshop in April at which many aspects of the plan were addressed by the partners, including management zones, restoration options and scenarios, and the monitoring plan. This plan is a sub-component of the larger Blyde Restoration Strategy and also aligns with the Blyde Nature Reserve Management Plan.

Some steps were taken this quarter to better connect stakeholders from different parts of the catchment. AWARD and a small group of interested parties explored the establishment of a "Friends of the Blyde" network focused on restoration along the Lower Blyde River, creating an opportunity to link upstream and downstream restoration activities. We also supported the Blyde CPAs with a mapping exercise requested by Sabi-Sand Wildtuin (a downstream landowner in the Sand River catchment) as a foundation for developing ecotourism ideas for the landscape. It was good to see that the SSW values the development of a meaningful relationship with the CPAs into the future and is interested in supporting the NRM work.

Plans are now in place to ramp up support and capacity development for the four Blyde CPAs, through Blyde team member Reuben Thifhulufhelwi's PhD project focusing on developing social learning spaces to support emergence of collective agency in ecosystem restoration. This work aims to overcome long-standing challenges with finding agreement on roles, responsibilities and ownership of restoration processes, which has led to many conflicts over the years. These plans were discussed with the CPAs at two meetings in May, at which it was resolved to focus initially on the skills needed for the CPAs to govern and implement NRMPs as the base support which will eventually enable other opportunities, such as protected area management and tourism. The CPAs expressed their continued support for restoration activities in the catchment and for the planned capacity development.

2.3.3 Blyde Restoration Custodianship (Sub-grant)

This project, implemented by K2C, aims to support and enhance current efforts to control invasive alien plants and restore ecosystems in the larger Blyde area (including the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve and the sections of the Lowveld Plantations which are to be incorporated into this). It is also aimed at the beneficiation and capacity development of local landowners and community members. The Restoration Custodianship clearing team is made up of eight young people from the Blyde CPAs, known as the "Restoration Champions".

In May, the Restoration Champions joined the High Altitude Teams (HAT) from Mpumalanga and Limpopo in the field to clear a helicopter landing space for the second round of inaccessible area clearing in the Blyde. This was a good collective exercise amongst all the different partners, and a very good experiential learning opportunity for the Restoration Champions. The team managed to clear all their allocated polygons on Hebron Mountain, despite the very challenging terrain, bad weather and road closures due to protests – a great achievement!

Figure 12: The Restoration Champions joined the HAT teams to clear a helicopter landing zone to facilitate clearing of inaccessible areas on the northern slopes of Hebron Mountain.

The team participated in their second AWARD climate change literacy and adaptation workshop in April (see KRA 4 below), which led to some "aha moments" as participants made the connection between alien plant clearing and the long-term resilience of their communities. In May and June, a series of planned monthly capacity development sessions were run jointly with AWARD, focusing on computer skills (a need identified by the team themselves). They focused on report writing and data capture skills, including how to collate their individual work into a single document to be submitted every month to the project coordinator and developing in-field reporting forms to capture all the information needed for record-keeping.

2.3.4 Support for Evolving Co-Management Arrangements for the High Priority Legalameetse Nature Reserve

Legalameetse Nature Reserve (LNR) was selected as a pilot project for supporting co-management of protected areas which have been claimed by local communities under South Africa's land restitution process. Legalameetse is a major biodiversity hotspot and important water source area for the Selati sub-catchment, and also has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the livelihoods of local communities with land claims on the reserve.

With the prospect of a large tourism development within LNR[5], the AWARD, EMROSS and K2C partners have continued to emphasise the importance of proactively assessing development options in the reserve in terms of whether they are in line with the communities' vision for LNR and whether they will generate appropriate benefits. Work this quarter focused on the following tools which can help in this regard:

[5] Driven by Limpopo Tourism within the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET).

- **The LNR Management Plan** and associated zonation of the reserve. We collaborated with LEDET and K2C on gathering and cleaning up existing geographically-linked data to support zonation of LNR for the Management Plan. This forms part of LEDET's process of updating the zonation for all 22 state-owned nature reserves in the province[6].
- **A "Development Guideline" tool** collaboratively developed by the EMROSS sub-grant and the communities. This takes the form of a set of questions to work through when assessing a particular development. The guideline was tested at a workshop in June by the LMC and the youth/EMs, using the proposed tourism development and a proposal for cattle grazing in the reserve as test cases. Community members concluded that it will be a useful tool: "*The document was well researched, this is exactly what the communities should ask the government and the developers. It is also a good tool to question the current EOI"* and "*In cases of assessing of a particular development, this will be a good tool, it will also assist in decision making*".
- **The natural resources survey** being led by the EMs. Having information on what resources are being harvested in the reserve and by whom is important for informed decision-making. Data collection is underway after a slow start due to distrust of the process by some harvesters (who may be harvesting illegally). A workshop in May focused on three controversial LNR resources (avocado orchards, cattle grazing and medicinal plants) with communities discussing what is used, the rules of use, who uses it, when and where.

Figure 13: Group activities during the Development Guideline Workshop

Figure 14: Group discussion about community use of natural resources in LNR

Progress regarding the cultural day was slow this quarter. The LMC has not yet managed to find financial support for the event, having been declined by LEDET until the co-management agreement is signed. The communities responded with a letter stating that they will not be coerced into signing an agreement with which they are not happy. They are considering a smaller event in case funding is not obtained.

There are still many challenges regarding governance and institutional arrangements at LNR. While LEDET is now making an effort to involve the LMC in matters concerning the Reserve (as representatives of the communities owning the land), they are still largely treating them as observers rather than partners. The communities regard LEDET as leaders (in terms of power and authority) and there is a need to help them understand their rights and powers without raising conflicts. There were challenges this quarter with poor attendance at events and conflicts within the LMC as a structure as well as the six individual committees. Specifically:

- There is ongoing concern over the proposed tourism development and who will benefit from it. A tender investment meeting held by LEDET for potential investors raised concerns because none of the invited investors had any experience in the conservation or tourism sectors, and the feasibility study for the development was not shared with the investors. The feasibility study (prepared in 2017) was only shared with the LMC a few days before the meeting. This study did not follow proper

[6] This process might take a while, since LEDET only has two ecologists in its Biodiversity Management Division.

consultation processes and the six communities with land claims on the reserve were not even mentioned in the report.

- Despite the above, there has been a lack of proactive action by the LMC regarding the tourism development in LNR.
- Intra-CPA conflicts have arisen, particularly at Balloon.
- There is an urgent need to find a mediator to break the deadlock around the Co-management Agreement, to prevent LEDET from using this as a sword over the heads of the communities.
- The registration of the four unregistered CPAs (now to be achieved through incorporation into Makhutšwe CPA) still needs to be resolved.

Lilian Goredema has been reappointed as a co-management consultant to help address these issues. A three-day governance workshop is planned for August and will include conflict management sessions at CPA/community level and at LMC level, with reference to their MoU signed in 2018. AWARD engaged the Legal Resources Centre and the LEDET Deputy Director General in June to find a way of breaking the deadlock over the Co-management Agreement.

2.4 KRA 4: Reduced Vulnerability to Climate Change through Collective Action, Informed Adaptation Strategies and Practices and Tenable Institutional Arrangements

Key Area 4 objective: To reduce vulnerability to climate change and other factors by supporting collective action, informed adaptation strategies and practices and tenable institutional arrangements.

This Key Result Area contributes to the overarching RESILIM-O goal of building climate resilience in the Olifants Catchment, and is supported by continual updating and collation of climate information relevant to the Olifants catchment.

2.4.1 Dialogues for Climate Change Literacy and Adaptation (DICLAD)

The DICLAD team ran two climate change (CC) dialogues this quarter: one with the K2C Restoration Champions in April, focusing on the impacts on natural resources, water resources and fire hazards and the role of invasive plant control as an adaptation measure. There were some important “aha moments” when people realised that clearing invasive plants helps to build their communities’ resilience – helping to build a sense of purpose and custodianship. The second dialogue was held in June for newly recruited K2C Environmental Monitors from Mametja, Mariepskop and Acornhoek. Examples were given of climate change adaptation from the work with small-scale farmers in Mametja, to help participants to link climate impacts to local realities and show how people in their own communities are taking action.

Figure 15: Bigboy Mkhabela facilitating during a climate change dialogue with Environmental Monitors, showing how increased temperatures could impact on natural resources and communities.

Figure 16: Participants of the climate change dialogue workshop with K2C Restoration Champions, Apr 2019

The final evaluation carried out for the Ukuvuna project (see below) provided encouraging evidence of the success of our DICLAD approach. Farmers mentioned the DICLAD workshops as project activities that created a lasting impression, and were able to explain what they had learnt about climate change and to link this knowledge to the agricultural techniques they adopted. Posters made during the workshops are still displayed in public places (e.g. school notice boards) in some villages to disseminate knowledge and highlight the role of communities in adapting to climate change. This internalisation of climate change knowledge and translation into adaptation actions is remarkable given that farmers' baseline understanding of climate change was extremely limited and even the term was foreign.

Contributions to policy and the broader national discourse on CC included:

- Submitting comments, as part of a joint submission by the South African Adaptation Network, on the **Draft National Climate Change Strategy** which was gazetted on 6 May 2019 for public comment. While this is a notable milestone, much of the key legislation needed to support it remains at the draft stage, including the Climate Change Bills (draft gazetted in 2018) and the provincial climate change strategies (drafts developed in 2016). Therefore, many of our stakeholders in government still lack the necessary institutional and legislative clout to make climate change a priority.
- Signing a **letter of support for the submission by the Civil Society Organization Working Group** on Strategic Vision 2019 for the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The submission summarised feedback from the CSO community to the GCF Board, requesting i) more inclusion of CSOs in the management and implementation of the fund (including not restricting the definition of "country ownership" to government entities); and ii) a more explicit inclusion of aspects of social justice and human wellbeing for mitigation and adaptation interventions rather than just focusing on cost.
- Participating in a **Mpumalanga Climate Change Forum workshop** run by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) as part of a training program on climate change adaptation for rural human settlements. It was discouraging to see that this capacity development initiative for local government was essentially a rehash of training by previous service providers, for example the 2016 "Lets Respond Toolkit" and the development of district climate change response plans. It felt like we were just "spinning our wheels" on the issue.

2.4.2 Support to Small-Scale Farmers for Climate Change Adaptation through Agro-Ecology (Agriculture Support Initiative or Agri-SI)

Three events this quarter proved motivational to farmers in the Lower Olifants and encouraged them to be an example in their communities. These were a series of farmer interviews conducted by SABC Radio and a field visit by Jeanette Normand of USAID in April, which provided an opportunity for farmers to tell their stories, demonstrate their innovations and explain what they have learnt.

Figure 17: Journalist Noé Hochet-Bodin interviewing farmers in the Lower Olifants.

Figure 18: Jeanette Normand of USAID visits Makibeng Moradiye in Mametja.

Figure 19: Martha Moloto from Mametja explaining the uses of herbs to Jabulani Baloyi from SABC Radio in Polokwane.

In June a journalist from Radio France Internationale, Noé Hochet-Bodin, interviewed farmers in the Lower Olifants on the impacts of climate change in the Limpopo River Basin. Farmers shared their difficulties with obtaining water for agriculture and the agroecological practices introduced by AWARD and Mahlathini to help them cope with and adapt to climate change, such as mulching, minimum tillage, trench beds, water harvesting techniques and tunnels.

Lower Olifants (Mahlathini Development Foundation sub-grant)

The Agri-SI team continued to support livelihood diversification opportunities in the Lower Olifants. A successful herb marketing workshop was held with Hoedspruit Hub in April, to discuss and reflect on the new "veggie bag" marketing scheme and agree on the rules of the scheme and the responsibilities of all parties to keep it working. Farmers suggested including more common vegetables, so that they can sell any extra surplus in their villages.

Figure 20: Organic veggie box scheme.

Ongoing training and farmer support this quarter included follow-up on the organic mango training, distribution of winter seeds, and a reminder on compost-making, the importance of keeping records and experimentation (most farmers failed to keep records during the summer). Workshops were held in Turkey village on soil and water conservation, rainwater harvesting, small dam construction, crop calendars and poultry production; on crop calendars in Sedawa, and on crop management and soil health in The Willows. The Willows learning group is now active again.

Figure 21: (Clockwise from top left) a) Silence Malapane in his garden at The Willows, b) Mazwi from MDF teaching farmers how to take care of egg layers, c) Revision on filling trench beds at Nthara Seotlo's household in Sedawa, d) Learning how to determine ground level when constructing check dams at Lucas Mokhawane's homestead in Turkey.

Middle Olifants (Ukuvuna sub-grant)

The final report for this project was submitted in May together with an external project evaluation.

By the end of the project Ukuvuna Harvests was working with 266 small-scale farmers in the Capricorn and Sekhukhune districts in the Middle Olifants, a significant increase from the initial group of 74 and an increase of 21% above the target of 220 households. The project covered two local municipalities, 5 wards and 16 different villages (surpassing the target of 12), with the aim of increasing food security, diversifying livelihoods, improving nutrition and increasing community empowerment through climate-smart agroecological farming methods. The latest statistics show that 81% of the farmers involved in the project are women, and at least 54% are aged over 55 years. The percentage of farmers under 30 years old is about 16%, an increase of 4% from the last record.

The final project evaluation was done by Osiman Mabhachi and was completed in May. It involved semi-structured interviews with 48 farmers (8 from each of 6 sites) and 6 community leaders who did not participate in the project directly, as well as focus group discussions with 74 farmers. Stories of change gathered from farmers were subjected to qualitative analysis to identify common themes and determine what worked and why, and what didn't work and why. Photographic evidence of project impacts was also gathered.

Key achievements:

- The project was largely successful in **introducing the concept and principles of agroecology** to communities that had no history of agricultural adaptation. Farmers across all sites now see agroecology as an appropriate and accessible solution to their soil and water management challenges under climate change.
- Establishment of **functional local institutions** (clusters or farmer groups) through careful development of catalytic and inspirational leadership at village level and the creation of simple interaction platforms (meetings and regular informal visits) to facilitate knowledge sharing and adoption. The clusters have begun to grow organically, without external input. Through the evolution of these farmer groups, new interaction platforms for community members to discuss agricultural production (which did not exist prior to the project) have emerged. Given that the clusters are voluntary and the leaders highly committed, they are likely to be sustained beyond the end of the project.

- **Improved livelihoods** (access to diverse foods, increased yields, emergence of new income streams). While the scale of benefits is variable, there have been stories of livelihood change for most farmers over the years.
- **Psychological fulfilment** (appreciation of health benefits, self-reliance, confidence, opportunity to lead).
- **Improved community status** as a result of recognition of project activities by municipal authorities.
- **Recognisable change in micro-environments** around homesteads (greening of spaces).
- Adoption of **diverse techniques to reduce vulnerability of crops** to water stress imposed by climate change (the most popular being mulching).
- **Systematic (better space utilisation) and consistent (planting appropriate crops across seasons) vegetable production** through adoption of agroecology. In the past, most farmers planted crops in a haphazard way and were not producing throughout the year. A councillor for one of the villages commented that "you can tell the difference between a farmer trained by Ukuvuna Harvests and a farmer who is not getting support from anyone".
- **Diversification of crops** through improved knowledge, knowledge sharing and experimentation.

Figure 22: From poor farming to self-sufficiency through planning, design, learning and experimentation

In the spirit of adaptation and continuous learning, these positive impacts should be viewed as milestones on the road to effective and sustainable agricultural adaptation in Sekhukhune and Capricorn Municipalities. It is important to highlight that the various components of the project are not only replicable and adaptable but can be up-scaled. The lessons learnt provide insights for better design of agricultural adaptation projects in Limpopo Province and other semi-arid parts of the country.

2.5 KRA 6: Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting & Learning and Media & Communications

Key Area 6 objective: Strengthen organisational learning, integration and coherency through continuous reflective and collaborative processes.

2.5.1 Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL)

The composition of the MERL team changed this quarter, with Vhutshilo Mushwana, our MERL Officer, leaving AWARD at the end of March. She will continue to work on her Masters in Education study which focuses on how reporting is used for learning in different organisations, including AWARD. Mulweli Nethengwe took over the role of archiving MERL data and following up on missing data with staff in June.

Figure 23: MERL Manager Karen Kotschy and AWARD staff reflecting on program results for the year to date.

The MERL team successfully compiled and submitted the Q2 quarterly report to USAID on 30 April. AWARD staff reflected on and discussed the indicator data for quarters 1 and 2 on 30th May, as part of our commitment to adaptive management.

We also took part in the Media & Communications RESILIM-O Day on 29th May (see below) which included a review of progress and creation of an action plan for MERL products.

The focus for the rest of the year is on successful completion of all projects, production of evaluative final reports for each project, and completion of all communications materials as a legacy for the program. We are planning to ensure that our learning is adequately captured in some final synthesis products. In reflecting on how best to support evaluation in the time remaining, the following was resolved:

- Evaluation activities in 2019 will be limited to supporting the USAID evaluation and the project final reports, which will require substantial input from the MERL team, including collation of life-of-project indicator data for each project, integration of evaluation themes and evaluative thinking, identification of gaps as well as editorial support. The final reports are due by 5 December.
- Next year, the final reports will be summarised into 8-10 pg summaries by a smaller writing team. Flyers will also be produced summarising each project's aims, activities and achievements.
- Synthesis across the whole program will be undertaken next year, and the MERL team will look for funding to support writing activities.

An opportunity for sharing our MERL experiences with the Western Cape Biosphere Reserves Network arose in April, where we presented a talk on how MERL processes can facilitate research and learning in landscapes. This contributed to our goal to develop a community of practice around MERL for environmental programs in catchments and landscapes.

2.5.2 Media and Communications

The AWARD website (http://award.org.za) was accessed by 978 people this quarter (13.5% returning visitors), with the most popular page being the Resources page (23% of page views). The media and communications (CSV sub-grant) team further improved and updated the AWARD website based on feedback and contributions from staff. The website is being significantly reorganised into a more user-friendly format. Missing information and photographs were sourced and the main landing pages for WATER, LAND and CLIMATE CHANGE are being reworked. Many AWARD staff spent significant amounts of time this quarter working on their web pages. Over 20 resources have now been uploaded onto the "Resources" page, which has been divided into sections (Flyers & Brochures, Booklets, Guidelines, Training Manuals, Games, Newsletters and Reports). Resources are also now cross-linked from relevant focus areas and projects to improve accessibility.

Regarding social media statistics, the quarter closed with 379 followers on the AWARD Twitter feed and 633 followers on the AWARD Facebook page. The Our Olifants feed ended the quarter with 227 Twitter followers and 1,357 followers on the Facebook page.

The first ("bumper edition") AWARD newsletter was distributed to stakeholders in early April, giving a summary of the achievements of RESILIM-O and insight into the scope of the work. Subsequent shorter "newsflashes" containing current stories were sent out via MailChimp in May and June (opened by 98 and 103 people respectively).

The CSV team visited AWARD in Hoedspruit on 29-31 May to review progress on all communciations products and clarify with staff their particular report and resource requirements. An action plan was collectively developed to guide further work together.

Communications products finalised this quarter included the ***Moletele Youth Fieldbook***. This fieldbook has six modules with a number of tasks and will be used by participants in the Moletele Youth Project (see KRA 1). A 'Resource Pack' folder cover also was designed, to hold collections of resource materials for a particular meeting or training course. Other products in the pipeline include co-management brochures, an agro-ecology resource on soil and water conservation (SWC) using the Five Finger Principle, a booklet on *Herbs and their Uses* (English and Sepedi), electronic resources on invasive alien plants and a MERL brochure.

Figure 24: Kim Ward (CSV) and AWARD staff with some of the completed communications materials.

For various reasons (largely due to the difficulty of key staff members not having sufficient time while running projects to develop resource materials), it has not been possible to spend all the sub-grant money during the allocated time. A no-cost extension is therefore being requested till the end of September 2019.

2.6 KRA 7: Internal Governance

Key Area 7 objective: To ensure good programmatic governance through developing and maintaining organisational capacity and effectiveness through tenable management systems and sub-contract management.

2.6.1 Human Resources and Office Management

Two familiar faces rejoined the AWARD team this quarter. Lilian Goredema was appointed as a consultant to assist with Co-management Support project, and Moredecai Hove was appointed as Financial Assistant. Mulweli Nethengwe took on some additional roles, assisting with MERL data collection and also with logistics for the Shared Learning sub-grant.

The Office Management team carried out the usual essential tasks including management of leave, timesheets, overtime and medical aid, fleet management, supervision of the IT infrastructure, procurement of goods and services, preparation of service-level agreements with suppliers and logistical support for meetings.

2.6.2 Knowledge Management

Project staff continued to upload reports, photographs, data and other documents to the Knowledge Management System (KMS). Uploading of sub-grant data is overseen by the Senior Grants and Contracts Administrator. Access to the KMS was granted to the IHL sub-grant team to facilitate sharing of resources in the LBCIN network.

2.6.3 Grants and Contracts Management

Nine sub-grants are currently active within RESILIM-O (Table 2). The (G9) Ukuvuna Harvests and (G11) Rhodes University IHL sub-grants both entered the close-out phase having completed their final submissions.

A no-cost extension modification was negotiated for the (G15) CSV Media & Comms sub-grant which will come into effect in the next quarter. This will utilise funds which have been allocated to the sub-grant but remain unused at the initial end date of the grant due to delays in the finalisation of some media and communications products. EMROSS Consulting (G18) has also indicated that they would like a no cost extension to be considered for their LNR / EIA sub-grant which is due to complete next quarter.

Administrative issues with Rhodes University led to a delay in the signing of the (G20) Rhodes MOROC follow-on grant. There has also been a delayed response from the sub-grantee in relation to milestone amendments and submissions which has led to delays in payments.

Table 2: Summary of RESILIM-O sub-grants as at end June 2019

Sub-grantee	Sub-grant Title	Period	Progress
Mahlatini Development Foundation	G10: Support for Small-Scale Climate Smart Agriculture (Lower Olifants)	Feb'18 -Oct'19	Milestone 6 of 7 submitted
Ukuvuna Harvests	G9: Support for Small-Scale Climate Smart Agriculture (Sekhukhune Middle Olifants)	Feb'18 -Jun'19	Milestone 6 of 6 submitted
Rhodes University	G11: Capacity Development through Institutions of Higher Learning	Mar'18 - Jun'19	Milestone 5 of 5 submitted
CSV	G15: Media and Communications	Aug'18 – Oct'19	12 of 15 months complete (cost reimbursable)
K2C	G16: Blyde Restoration Custodianship project	Aug'18 – Jul'19	Milestone 4 of 5 complete
CDS-ZC Mozambique	G17: Mangroves rehabilitation in the Limpopo river estuary	Sep'18 – Oct'19	Milestone 3 of 5 complete
EMROSS	G18: Support for Strategic NRM & Environmental Regulation in Priority Areas of the ORC	Sep'18 – Sep'19	9 of 12 months complete (cost reimbursable)
Aves Africa	G19: Support for shared learning for collective action	Apr'19 – Mar'20	0 of 14 events complete (cost reimbursable)
Rhodes University	G20: Networks for collaborative, systemic action in the Middle Olifants River Catchment	Apr'19 – Nov'19	No milestones received this quarter, 0 of 4 complete

2.6.4 Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan

The contractual requirements governing our Cooperative Agreement with regard to the EMMP as submitted with our 2017 Work Plan continue to be upheld and monitored across all program activities. All consultancies and sub-contracts have equally been informed of this requirement.

2.6.5 Fundraising

AWARD continued with submission and follow-up of various fundraising proposals:

- Hugo Retief met with the Freshwater Research Centre (FRC) in Cape Town to discuss collaboration around the Freshwater Biodiversity Information System for the JRS proposal (which was subsequently accepted)
- Jan Graf attended a week-long United Nations Forest Forum and DAFF workshop to help stakeholders in the forestry sector access international funding (e.g. Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility funding).
- Sharon Pollard has had ongoing discussions with the Resilient Waters Program with the aim of looking at ways in which the RWP can build on our work given the significant investment made already.
- A WRC project proposal was submitted on understanding critical hydrological resources and their socio-economics in a key Strategic Water Source Area: enabling collaborative catchment restoration, management and custodianship for water security. This will provide an opportunity to continue restoration work in the Blyde, Sand and Klaserie Catchments.
- Sharon Pollard visited the NOVA Center for Environmental and Sustainability Research in Lisbon, Portugal to explore joint proposal development and support for work in Mozambique. The proposal focus would be on modelling the impacts and linkages in the mangrove rehabilitation project (social and ecological as well as upstream influences from Chokwe).

Outcomes of the following proposals were received:

- The proposal to the JRS on enhanced bioinformatics for freshwater biodiversity in the Kruger National Park region was accepted.
- We received verbal confirmation that the DEFF Land User Incentive (LUI) implementation proposal jointly submitted by the K2C, AWARD and Blyde CPAs has been accepted.
- Resilient Waters funding was approved for continued employment of the K2C Blyde Restoration Custodianship clearing team.

2.6.6 Sustainability

Since the beginning of the program, our approach to ensuring sustainability of the work done under RESILIM-O has been to build and strengthen networks and social learning spaces that are (where possible) co-owned and co-funded by the members and can therefore continue to function after the end of the program. Strengthening institutional and inter-institutional networking is key to longer-term sustainability of the RESILIM-O initiative and its outcomes and methodologies and to longer-term climate resilience building in the catchment. Capacity development at individual and institutional levels is also important. Some specific aspects of sustainability are discussed below under each KRA.

KRA 1

- The SDFs and biodiversity guidelines developed for Mopani District Municipality and Maruleng and Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipalities (which now take biodiversity and climate change into account) will continue to guide land use planning and land use decisions. We have also had input into the Greater Kruger SDF and its integration with municipal planning.

- The work with the Moletele youth will continue through William Mponwana's Masters in Education.
- The training and turnaround plans for the wastewater treatment works provide a solid basis for future action and all documents have been handed over to the Ba-Phalaborwa and Mopani District municipalities. Likewise for the findings and recommendations from the water conservation and demand management project.
- Support for CSOs will continue through the very active WhatsApp groups and AWARD's membership of the South African Water Caucus.
- A good foundation exists for future collaboration between the six institutions in the Limpopo Basin Curriculum Innovation Network through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) covering a five-year period. The institutional make-up of the network is set to expand to include three IHLs from Botswana and Zimbabwe in the Limpopo Basin. There are plans to build stronger linkages with other like-minded IHLs and NGOs, while remaining closely connected with AWARD, RESILIM-O and its system of stakeholders. The sub-grantee has submitted several fundraising proposals to build on the achievements of this project. Avenues being pursued include the Global Challenges Research Fund, Community of Practice (CoP) funding in South Africa under the SARCHI Chairs, the Resilience Alliance and the Resilient Waters Program.

KRA 2

- Collective action around water resources management in the Middle and Lower Olifants will continue through the LORiN, MORiN and LORHeF networks established through RESILIM-O, as well as through the improved capacity of the CMFs and proto-CMA.
- AWARD's proposal to JRS International was accepted. This will allow expansion of the InWaRDS decision-support system to the whole Lowveld region and strengthen both InWaRDS and FBIS (Freshwater Biodiversity Information System) as tools for integrated water management.

KRA 3

- The Blyde Restoration Group, made up of several partners, has been working together effectively for several years now such that collaborative planning has become institutionalised.
- K2C and SAEON are strong partners in the region.
- The biophysical monitoring network will be maintained by SAEON, with data collected by the Environmental Monitors.
- Capacity development work with the Blyde CPAs will continue through Reuben Thifhulufhelwi's PhD.
- Funding has been secured from the Resilient Waters Program to keep the Blyde Restoration Custodianship team employed for another year.
- LUI funding has been provisionally approved, covering April 2019 to March 2022.
- A WRC proposal was submitted in June to build on the restoration work in the Blyde, Klaserie and Sand catchments.
- Lilian Goredema has been encouraged to apply for a grant under the Resilient Waters Program to continue supporting the development of effective co-management at Legalameetse.

KRA 4

- Support for agroecology networks will continue under DKA funding for the next two years.
- The models of farmer learning groups developed by Ukuvuna and MDF have great potential for sustainability because of the effective development of local institutions and local leadership. These models can be up-scaled and the sub-grantees have been encouraged to apply for funding to the Resilient Waters Program and elsewhere. The lessons learnt provide insights for better design of agricultural adaptation projects in Limpopo Province and other semi-arid parts of the country.
- The DICLAD approach can be extended to future projects by AWARD staff, who have all been trained in how to run climate dialogues. Training will also be provided to CDS-ZC in Mozambique, allowing them to run climate dialogues with their stakeholders.

- The learning network for Disaster Managers set up through RESILIM-O will continue to operate, as will networks that AWARD helped to strengthen, such as the Mpumalanga Climate Change Forum.