



Water Governance in South Africa – Mainstreaming an Adaptation Agenda?



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Presentation Outline



- A framework for analysing and understanding – Vulnerability as a point of departure
- The potential for adaptive management in the South African legislative set-up
- Day-to-day challenges of a transforming country
- Windows of opportunity for change and adaptation

If adaptation is to succeed:

- ❑ Water management must be flexible when dealing with new insights and multistressor issues.
- ❑ We need to challenge our present decision-making processes (i.e. top-down, sector specific) and the information sources (e.g. statistics assuming climatic stationarity, or projections assumed correct) used to create knowledge.
- ❑ Identify what is being adapted to, here critical impacts of climate change and the resulting vulnerabilities to society, the economy and the environment are crucial issues.

(Stuart-Hill and Schulze, 2010)



Photo 1

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Water in a Country of Contrasts



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said:



“Knowing is not enough;
we must apply.
Wiling is not enough;
we must do.”

What does “knowing” and “doing” mean in a world of change and esp. climate change?



- ▣ A good understanding of the overall system.
- ▣ Constant uptake of new information into decision making processes.
- ▣ Flexibility to change and be responsive.

“Adaptive capacity is the ability of a system to adjust to climate change
(including climate variability and extremes)
to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities,
or to cope with the consequences.”

4th IPCC Assessment Report (2007)

However, there are rules to the adaptation game...



- ❑ Legislation and Regulation – *obvious*
- ❑ Organisations – *obvious*
- ❑ Policies and Politics – *less obvious*
- ❑ Assumptions and Knowledge creation – *not obvious*
- ❑ Individual realities... – *unknown*



Important is to gain predictability of
governance and government in times of change
as well as in periods after change.

Mainstreaming means making climate change part of our thinking
and decision making on a day to day basis!



Strengths and Weaknesses

- ❑ Recurring five-year review cycles (NWRS, CMSs)
- ❑ Incorporation of IWRM
- ❑ Supportive organisational structures (CMAs & WUAs)
- ❑ Holistic view, e.g. land-water link

- ❑ Shortage of skills and capacity (innovative management approach, organisational transformation, new organisations)
- ❑ Absence of an empowered civil society
- ❑ Technical control paradigm
- ❑ Missing open information system and communication plans

‘South African realities’ or ‘Day-to-day challenges’



- Country of high contrasts and climate variability
- An innovative, cutting edge law
- Too many policies, too little implementation
- A society and organisations in the mode of transformation
- High end water infrastructure not well maintained
- Democracy is not a lived reality by all South Africans
- New organisations need to be build and need time to mature

... just to name a few ...



Windows of opportunity

- Climate Change in itself.
- Regulatory Windows of Opportunity,
 - e.g. NWRS, CMS, WAR, CC hotspots
- Policy Windows of Opportunity,
 - e.g. capacity building, illegal water abstractions, deteriorating water quality, ecosystem services and the second economy, biodiversity and development, the water - energy - food security nexus.
- Designing Innovations....

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THANK YOU!



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