DWF Danish Water Forum

Danish Development Research Network
Bringing together knowledge and development

ENRECA HEALTH
danish research network for international health

Concept note

Climate Change and impacts on human health, water and food security, in the SADC region - a network initiative to improve knowledge sharing, research cooperation and the uptake of research into policy and practice

First event: A workshop on ""Understanding the linkages between climate change, human health, water and food security: Research and knowledge sharing for Southern Africa" in Cape Town, South Africa 18-20 February 2009 hosted by Global Water Partnership - SADC

Introduction:

The Fourth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of 2007 highlights Africa south of Sahara as one of the most vulnerable regions in the world with regard to climate change. The report further states that there is evidence that some areas in Africa, including parts of southern Africa, are highly vulnerable to climate variability and change. Current climate predictions for southern Africa foresee increased variability and changes of different climate factors. These changes are expected to impact on human health, water and food security through modifications of environmental and socio-economic determinants.

The agricultural sector is crucial in terms of sustaining local livelihoods and contributing to the GDP in all SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries. Recent assessment studies, including regional-scale analysis, estimate significant decrease in areas suitable for rain-fed crop production. Some parts of the southern Africa are likely to experience considerable reductions in maize production with serious implications for food security and human nutrition, especially among poor and vulnerable groups. Food insecurity and malnutrition is also likely to be further aggravated by climate change interacting with other multiple stressors such as HIV/AIDS, poor governance and low capacity to adapt to climate change.

Water, primarily in the form of rainfall, is one of the most important resources in all SADC countries. Increased variability, changes in temperatures and rainfall patterns associated with global warming may therefore have significant consequences for a wide range of environmental and economic activities.

Climate variability and climate changes are also expected to lead to changes in disease transmission, range, prevalence, incidence and seasonality. Such changes may in turn cause health risks from flooding, changes in temperatures and precipitation. Southward expansion of the transmission zone of malaria may likely occur.

It is worth noting, however, that not all changes in climate will be negative, and that the impact of climate change on e.g. water resources, is not uniform. There are possibilities that rainfall and the duration of the crop growing season may increase in some parts of the SADC region. Such positive changes will require the development of measures for taking advantage of these opportunities.

Against this background it is clear that adaptation to climate change is closely linked to issues of sustainable development. Climate change and variability is an additional hindrance and a serious threat to achieving the MGDs in Africa. Given its prevailing poverty, weak institutions and limited knowledge and capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change; this poses a huge challenge to the southern African region.

The need for knowledge sharing and improved research

Detailed and context specific knowledge of the consequences of climate change at global, regional, national and local levels is vital for mitigating against the negative effects of climate change in southern Africa, and to secure the most needed and efficient adaptation to climate change. In order to facilitate the access to the public of the results from existing research on climate change in SADC, and enhance networking and knowledge sharing for action among policy-makers and practitioners, the three Danish research networks: Danish Development Research Network (DDRN), Danish Water Forum (DWF), and the Danish Research Network for International Health (ENRECA Health) have taken an initiative to promote the idea of establishing a knowledge sharing and research network in the region.

Objective

The main purpose of the initiative is thus to initiate a process towards creation of a regional knowledge sharing network on the mentioned thematic areas within the SADC region, and between the SADC region and Denmark. Besides knowledge sharing it is also the intention that the network will facilitate development of joint project applications and other research cooperation in the various thematic areas.

It is envisioned that establishing a formal, sustainable research network will facilitate cross-disciplinary cooperation for evidence-based actions in response to climate change. Furthermore, the network will aim at contributing knowledge and research input to conferences and activities within the area of climate change, facilitating the development of joint research proposals, and informing developing practices and policies within the SADC region.

Process

The first step in the planning process included holding a meeting in Botswana in November 2008 with the purpose of exploring the interest in establishing such a network. At the meeting representatives of the organizations mentioned in the following made a decision to carry on with the organization of a workshop in South Africa in 2009, where the establishment of a network will be further explored.

Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre, Botswana
Kalahari Conservation Society, Botswana
GWP-SADC, South Africa
DDRN, Denmark
DBL-Centre for Health Research and Development, Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
DWF, Denmark
Ministry of Energy and Water Development, Zambia
CISR, South Africa

To facilitate the identification of participants and scoping of the activities it was decided to commission three desk studies focusing on mapping of: (i) Research projects on climate change and human health (responsible: DBL (+ENRECA Health)); (ii) Research projects on climate change and water (responsible: DWF); and (iii) Research projects on climate change and food security (responsible: DDRN). The ToR for the three consultancies are available at the websites of the Danish knowledge networks and have been circulated to key persons and collaborators within the focal areas for further distribution in the SADC region. The desk studies will be conducted by researchers or consultants from SADC.

The next step is the actual workshop, which will take place in Cape Town, South Africa on February the 18-20th hosted by Global Water Partnership, Southern Africa. The above mentioned mapping exercise will be discussed at the workshop. A paper will be developed to be presented at the Scientific Conference on Climate Change to be held in Copenhagen 10-12 March 2009. The paper and the oral presentation of it will be discussed at the workshop.

An abstract was developed at the Botswana meeting in November and has been submitted and accepted for the mentioned conference in Copenhagen. This will also be presented at the workshop in Cape Town.

The 3rd step of this network is the activities beyond the workshop, where the aim is to establish a platform for knowledge sharing among researchers, practitioners and policy makers provided that the workshop participants agree on this.

The next steps will then be to ensure a sustainable network including North-South working groups, joint project applications and increased research cooperation. This includes a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral research agenda on linkages between the three topics.

To achieve this in a sustainable manner funding will be sought from various sources including Danida's Initiative funding. Another objective will also be to identify other places to meet and to present this Network such as other conferences or related to the COP15 in Copenhagen, December 2009.

It is the intention that the different research working groups should work between this workshop and another workshop to be held a year later in 2010. A website will be established as a communication tool. Activities in the working groups will mainly be virtual, but depending of funding obtained for the network activities possibilities to meet on a bi-annual basis, at conferences or elsewhere in the working groups will be explored.

The overarching objective for this activity is to establish a functional, sustainable research network for climate change research in the regions and between the region and European (primarily Danish) researchers.

Draft Workshop Agenda

Day 1 – 18th February	Day 2 – 19th February	Day 3 – 20th February
Arrival, opening and introduction to networks and organizations Official opening by representative of SADC Water Division Keynote paper on implications of climate change on: 1. Health: 2. Water: 3. Food Security in the SADC region	Keynote speech on limate change impacts and activities in a regional perspective, (Belinda Petriye, One World South, South Africa (A DFID funded Regional Climate Change Programme for the SADC region))	• Keynote speech on Getting research into practice (invited guest, experiences in successful knowledge sharing) Report back to plenary on assessment of interests and objectives of formation of a network

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Presentation of position paper and mapping of Research Institutions, also Danish, Projects and networks in the region within the three topics. From consultants – on three topics: 1. Health 2. Water 3. Food Security in the SADC region + Mapping of Danish climate change research Q&A	Group Work Session – on interlinkages and uncertainties – research and knowledge gaps Filling in interlinkages and gaps in Matrix of knowledge Development of recommendations for research on linkages between climate change and the three topics This will be done in mixed groups Report back to plenary on interlinkages between climate change, human health, water and food security. Plenary discussion of recommendations – setting the research agenda	Group work on: Development of activity plan for the network in working groups based on areas of activity: • Project and proposal groups • Networking application groups • Network establishment groups • Structure and Sustainability group – setting up a network, webpage, future activities within the network • Funding and calendar of events
Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break
Group Work Session – Impacts of climate change on the three areas and for the linkages between them. This is done in theme groups Report back to plenary on key findings – and gaps in knowledge Group work: • Finishing the matrix of knowledge • Uncertainties in climate change knowledge • Assessment of capacity • Impacts on communities and livelihoods • Research areas of common interest	Discussion of paper and presentation for Scientific conference in Copenhagen, 10-12 March 2009 Group work on this Plenary introduction to: • Knowledge sharing in networks (invited guests, successful networks like Danish research networks, GWP, PAEPARD, SANORD)	Report back to plenary and discussion and development of recommendations for future activities including: • Formation of network groups • Input to Scientific conference in Copenhagen • Adoption of workshop statement on objective, ativities and purpose of the network End of workshop
Report back to plenary on findings and input to matrix and capacity assessment.	Group Work Session on: • Brainstorm of ideas and interests in forming a network – what will I	

	get out of it. • Develop objectives and the scope of activities for the network • Assess interest in forming a network among participants Use of network for addressing the "disconnect" between research on climate change and uptake of research by society	
Workshop reception	Workshop Dinner	