

Project Leadership

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The project is jointly led by FANRPAN and ARC, South Africa.

The Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF)

The CPWF is a multi-stakeholder global program that aims to increase water productivity for agriculture in order to leave more water for other users and the environment (www.waterandfood.org). This project is supported by the CPWF and contributes to its goal.

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Participating Organisations



Limpopo River Basin Focal Project

FANRPAN
Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network



CGIAR Challenge Program on
WATER & FOOD



This project will contribute to reducing poverty and enhancing food, health and nutritional security in the Limpopo River Basin by analysing the status of agricultural water use, access and productivity, and identifying opportunities for improved agricultural water management. The basin has an average rainfall of 530mm/yr, but extreme variability makes agriculture very risky, and underlies high levels of poverty and malnutrition in all four basin countries (Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe).

The total population of the basin is over 14 million. Nearly a quarter of South Africa's population and over 60% of Botswana's live within the basin. Major southern African cities within or adjacent to the Basin include Johannesburg-Pretoria, Gaborone and Bulawayo. The basin is a major location for mining gold, platinum, vanadium, iron, coal and other minerals and mines both consume and pollute scarce water supplies. Half of South Africa's electricity is generated by coal-fired plants within the basin. Large highly-capitalised commercial irrigated farms are found in South Africa and Zimbabwe, using over half the basin's water. Side by side in these two countries, the basin contains huge pockets of poverty as a result of previous policies. In both countries as well as Mozambique, large numbers of poor people try to make a living on small farms having no reliable water supply, degrading soils, and poor market access. The basin contains valuable and productive ecosystems that consist of the mangroves and fisheries of Mozambique to the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (e.g. the Kruger National Park in South Africa), Conservation Areas, Nature Reserves and Ramsar sites. Tourism is a major and growing activity in the basin.

In this complex environment, the potential for major expansion of irrigation is limited. However, if the four basin countries establish effective institutions, they can cooperate to improve access to water by those currently disadvantaged and help people to make productive use of scarce water while also conserving the basin ecosystems.

