Fostering Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus Dialogue and Multi-Sector Investment in the SADC Region

“Water, energy and food security are key focal elements for reducing poverty and sustaining development”

The Context

Sustainable development in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) largely depends on goods and services derived from its environment and natural resource base. These resources are crucial in the region’s effort to eradicate poverty. Livelihood strategies and food security for the poor often depend directly on functioning ecosystems and the diversity of goods and ecological services they provide. Increasing population, climate variability and change with its long-term implications for social, economic and ecological systems is an inevitable and urgent challenge.

As the SADC region pursues sustainable growth pathways and structural transformation, the management of its natural endowments and most importantly water, land and energy resources is critical. National Development Plans of SADC Member States set ambitious targets in a variety of sectors including water, food and energy. In order to avoid competition and create synergies between sectoral development agendas, integrated planning and cross-sectoral coordination are crucial.

The SADC Regional Water Policy was adopted in 2005. The Policy is implemented through a rolling Regional Water Programme implemented through 5-year Regional Strategic Action Plans (RSAPs) on Integrated Water Resources Management. The current RSAP IV (2016-2020) consists of 8 programmes, of which one is focused on the Water, Energy, and Food (WEF) Security Nexus.

In order to drive food security, the Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) was adopted in 2014. SADC is working on its implementation through a Regional Agricultural Investment Plan. SADC has also approved the establishment of Regional Agriculture Development Fund to further support implementation of the Policy.

The SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063) was approved in April 2015. This framework is aimed at driving industrial development and has been placed at the core of the developmental integration agenda of SADC. Inherent in this policy is recognition from SADC Member States that industrial development is central to diversification of their economies; development of productive capacity; and the creation of employment in order to reduce poverty and set their economies on a more sustainable growth path.

The WEF Nexus approach in the SADC region

Water, energy and food security are key priority areas for SADC. Integrated planning of water, food and energy sectors and
promoting regional cooperation has been considered as a strategy to simultaneously meet water, energy and food security targets, and to improve natural resource use efficiencies in the region.

WEF security nexus acknowledges that water security, energy security and food security are inextricably linked and that actions in any one area usually have impacts in the others. As the population increases, with increasing demands for basic services, and growing desires for higher living standards, the need for a more efficient utilization of the vital resources (water, land, energy) is required.

**Expected Results**

Two major outputs are expected from the project:
- SADC Regional WEF Nexus Framework
- Prioritized WEF Nexus Investment Projects

The SADC WEF Nexus Framework provides overall guidance and tools to make decisions, coordinate between different sectors and facilitate Nexus investments in the region.

**Duration and Budget**

The first phase of the project has a duration of 3 years (2017-2019) with an estimated budget of Euro 700 000.

**Progress so far (as of September 2019)**

- **SADC WEF Nexus Framework**
  - WEF Nexus Country assessments are completed for 15 of the 16 SADC Member States. The assessments identified opportunities in the countries for WEF Nexus approach.
  - A Regional WEF Governance and Stakeholders analysis carried out. The assessment has provided clarity on the WEF nexus issues that are relevant for the SADC region.
  - A draft discussion paper on WEF Nexus Governance was prepared. The paper identified mechanisms for strengthening WEF nexus governance in the SADC region. The mechanisms are for strengthening WEF sectoral institutional coordination, and for aligning implementation of WEF sectoral policies.
  - A draft WEF Nexus Regional Framework was prepared and was reviewed at the SADC Regional WEF Nexus Technical Dialogue and at the 9th SADC WEF Nexus Dialogue.

- **WEF Nexus Investment Projects**
  - A draft discussion paper on WEF Nexus Investment was prepared.
  - A draft SADC WEF Nexus investment project screening and appraisal tool developed.
  - A list of 15 potential projects was developed to apply WEF nexus approach in the region.

- **WEF Nexus Dialogue**
  - Several regional and global platforms including the 7th & 8th SADC River Basin Organizations (RBOs) workshops, 8th & 9th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogues, 3rd Zambezi Basin Stakeholders’ Forum and the 8th World Water Forum (in Brazil) have been used to engage and consult with stakeholders on the WEF nexus.
  - The 1st SADC WEF Nexus Technical Dialogue was very useful in defining the scope of the country WEF nexus assessments.
  - The 2nd SADC WEF Nexus Technical Dialogue reviewed the draft discussion papers on WEF Nexus Governance and Tool.
  - The Regional WEF Nexus Framework was validated and the WEF Nexus Tool tested.

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