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The Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions (ASSAR) project uses insights from multi-scale, interdisciplinary work to transform climate adaptation policy and practice in ways that promote the long-term wellbeing of the most vulnerable and those with the least agency.

Climate change is increasingly recognised as a challenge to sustaining the livelihoods and wellbeing of the people in Namibia. Projected temperature increases of 1-4°C and increased variability in rainfall, suggest significant vulnerability to climate change impacts in the semi-arid regions (SAR) of Namibia. In North Central Namibia, climate variability is already a common phenomenon with persistent droughts and floods, and unpredictable rainfall and periods of high temperatures. The variability of rainfall is considered a key climatic element that determines the success of agriculture – particularly for small scale farmers – and consequently threatens food security. North Central Namibia is made further vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to a number of institutional, political, socio-economic, and cultural issues that affect people’s capacity to cope with multiple impacts of climate change.

WHAT WE DID

- ❖ In July 2015 ASSAR’s southern Africa researchers – from the University of Namibia, University of Cape Town and University of Botswana – held a half-day Stakeholder Influence Mapping workshop with national-level stakeholders in Windhoek.
- ❖ The workshop was attended by representatives from the national government, NGOs and academia. The main aim of the workshop was to understand who and what influences implementation of climate change adaptation in North Central Namibia.
- ❖ We used Eva Schiffer’s Net-Map Toolbox¹ to:
 - ❖ Understand which stakeholders are critical to the climate change adaptation (CCA) agenda in Namibia.
 - ❖ Understand the extent to which stakeholders do or don’t interact with one another.
 - ❖ Explore how different stakeholders influence CCA in their region and how they may contribute to strengthening ASSAR’s research process and getting ASSAR’s research findings integrated into policy and practice.

MAPPING OUT STAKEHOLDER INFLUENCE

ASSAR is conducting research to: (1) better understand the current status of vulnerability in the Omusati Region, North Central Namibia; (2) better understand the barriers and enablers of adaptation to climate change; and (3) explore ways to promote effective adaptation across scales.

To achieve this, ASSAR is conducting high-quality, regionally relevant, and stakeholder-driven research that will identify the factors that prevent or enable widespread and long-term adaptation.

While research suggests that adaptation requires actions at multi-level governance, there remains a gap in our understanding of how different stakeholders influence adaptation across multiple scales of governance.

Why map stakeholder influence?

- ❖ To identify stakeholders that are relevant to climate change adaptation in North Central Namibia.
- ❖ To explore how different stakeholders interact with one another.
- ❖ To understand the influence different stakeholder groups have on the implementation of climate change adaptation.



Although there were three different groups of stakeholders (government, researchers and NGOs), the overall findings from this exercise suggest a top-down approach with respect to the CCA agenda with all groups agreeing that national government – particularly the ministries – are amongst the most influential actors. Although the local authorities (and local communities) are perceived much more important by researchers, the national government placed the local communities at the periphery of the network implementing adaptation activities as per direction from the national government.

Strategies or plans aimed at supporting climate change adaptation can be improved with increased understanding of the influence of state and non-state actors across governance scales in enabling and preventing the implementation of adaptation measures.

Key Findings

Government stakeholders perceived:

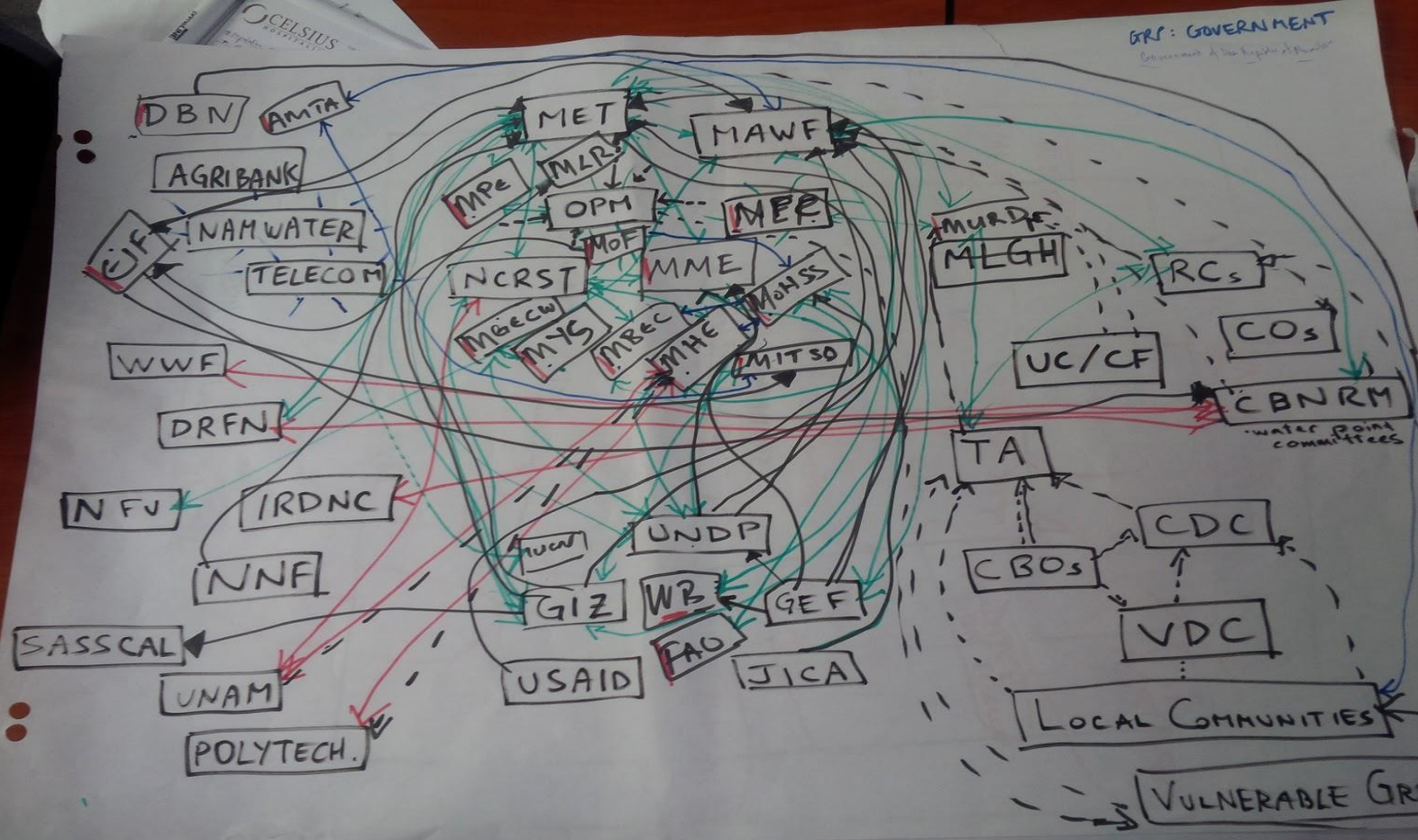
- ❖ National ministries to be the most influential actors because of their direct involvement in planning and decision-making processes.
- ❖ Multi-lateral organisations – like the Global Environmental Facility and the United Nations Development Program – to be the second most influential stakeholder type because of the funding they provide.
- ❖ The local community as having the least influence in CCA and viewed simply as being the passive receivers of decisions taken at higher levels.

Researcher stakeholders perceived:

- ❖ Local governments (i.e. traditional authorities and local communities) to be slightly more influential than national government because they administer budgets and are responsible for implementing actions on the ground.

NGO stakeholders perceived:

- ❖ NGOs and research institutions (including consultancy firms which often help governments to prioritise issues and undertake targeted research) to be as influential as national government given their access to funding and their close relationship with communities and vulnerable groups.



Reflections and Key Learning for ASSAR

- ❖ Visualisations from this mapping exercise provided a simple tool for understanding complex issues of adaptation governance. The content will provide input into ASSAR's ongoing research, particularly our stakeholder engagement and research into use strategies.
- ❖ By building our understanding of stakeholder perceptions of who has influence and who plays important roles in the CCA agenda in North Central Namibia, the exercise helped us to identify new stakeholders that we should engage with in our research.
- ❖ Deepening our understanding of the thoughts and perceptions of these different stakeholders has helped us to explore how best to engage and communicate with stakeholders to maximise the uptake of our research findings.
- ❖ Insight gained from our stakeholders into what we need to do for effective research into use will help the ASSAR team to develop efficient, engaging, and influential research uptake strategies.
- ❖ Finally, as ASSAR is planning to run a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (VRA) exercise with stakeholders in the north of the country, the mapping exercise has helped us to identify groups of stakeholders for the VRA.

In conclusion, strategies or plans aimed at supporting climate change adaptation can be improved with an increased understanding of the influence of state and non-state actors across governance scales in enabling and preventing the implementation of adaptation measures.

With thanks to all the stakeholders from Windhoek who participated in this workshop: Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development, Namibia Energy Institute, Namibia Nature Foundation, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, Southern Africa Science Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management, Desert Research Foundation Namibia and University of Namibia.

¹Net-Map toolbox: Influence mapping of social networks, by Eva Schiffer can be accessed [here](#)

Upcoming Stakeholder Engagement Events in the ASSAR

Stakeholders are invited to actively participate in the following research activities planned for the year 2016:

- ❖ **For North Central Namibia (Omusati Region)**
 - ❖ Vulnerability and Risk Analysis (VRA) Workshop in Onesi Constituency – March 2016
 - ❖ Households surveys on well-being, vulnerability and adaptation – June – July 2016
 - ❖ Focus group discussion with the local community – March 2016, June – July 2016
- ❖ **Activities at the local, regional and national levels**
 - ❖ Key informants interviews on governance of adaptation – March - July 2016
 - ❖ ASSAR's PhDs and Masters Students projects (TBC)



OTHER NEWS ARTICLES ABOUT OUR STAKEHOLDER EVENTS:

- ❖ [How do we perceive relative levels of stakeholder influence?](#) ASSAR's Southern African team explores this question with national stakeholders in Windhoek, Namibia. *By Salma Hegga & Lucia Scodanibbio (August 2015).*
- ❖ [Stakeholder Influence Mapping in the Climate Change Adaptation Agenda: Lessons from Namibia.](#) *By Salma Hegga and Nguza Siyambango (November 2015).*



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