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Water Governance in Zambia: The Case of the Kafue River Basin

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Abstract

Water is critical to Zambia's sustainable development and poverty eradication, but, as the population increases, there is a corresponding increase in the demand for the available resources making it imperative to reduce on potential competition. The challenge is to ensure sustainable, efficient and equitable management and use of the scarce water resources, but a growing literature indicates lack of proper governance in the water sector is the main factor causing the loss of possible potential that could be harnessed from Zambia's existing water resources.

The Kafue River Basin plays an important role in Zambia's economic development: it is host to more than 40% of the Zambian population and drains the major industrial, commercial and agricultural areas of Zambia. The complex web of consumptive and non consumptive uses of the waters of the Kafue River generates a strong intersectoral competition and the lack of proper governance mechanisms in the basin, which affects the allocation and use of the common water resources, sharpens the existing conflicts.

In this context, the research aims at conducting an institutional analysis of the regimes that govern the use of water resources in Zambia as applied to the specific case of the Kafue River Basin waters. The practical implementation of the regulatory provisions will be analysed and the study will explore how the different institutions deal with consumptive and non-consumptive uses of the waters of the Kafue River. The study will, thus, concentrate on the analysis of the stakeholders' objectives and interactions to individuate on one side the endowments and on the other side the discrepancies with the current regulatory framework, that would require a substantial institutional change to re-align the social/stakeholders' goals and the institutions that govern the Kafue's waters.

The study will be based on a stakeholder consultation process conducted via direct interviews and questionnaires. Through these consultation processes solid policy recommendations could be produced to fill the gaps identified which will, in turn, enhance the water management of the Kafue River Basin concurrent to the institutional framework and relevant stakeholders' objectives.

Keywords: Kafue, river basin, water governance, Zambia