

INVITATION AND SAVE-THE-DATE

Wednesday, 24 February 2021 – 2.30 to 4.30 pm GMT (Dakar time)

*Digital Transformation Challenges and Opportunities for
West African Transboundary River Basin Development Organisations
Transboundary Collaboration on the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin (SMAB)*

Virtual Think Tank Roundtable (Webinar) with the SADC Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI)



On the initiative of OMVG, the Gambia River Basin Development Organisation (RBDO) together with its Blue Peace partners (SDC, UNCDF, GWH) and in partnership with several global and regional partners and RBDOs, the Pôle eau de Dakar (PED, Dakar Water Hub) and the Geneva Water Hub (GWH) are co-organizing a programme of virtual roundtables and pilot actions to explore how the digital transformation can help RBDOs boost their power as connectors and catalysts for prosperity and peace, while managing inherent risks and barriers including cybersecurity. Learning and insights from this programme will enrich a Strategic Foresight Discussion Document prepared under the aegis of the Global Observatory for Water and Peace.

During the second half of 2020 a series of virtual roundtables (webinars, see [RT1](#), [RT2](#), and [RT3](#) and working sessions) were attended by more than 500 participants. As an outcome of these roundtables a pilot action was initiated in support of OMVG's future Integrated Development Master Plan (PDDI) to enhance integrated data management (incl. groundwater) using digital tools and methods that can be replicated in other basins, including within the ongoing Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin (SMAB) regional dialogue.

On the joint initiative of the 4 States and 2 RBDOs (OMVS, OMVG) of the [SMAB](#), a Regional Working Group was established in April 2020 to develop cooperation mechanisms for the concerted development and management of the SMAB's groundwater and surface water resources, with support from GWH, the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat, UNESCO-IGRAC, PED and many others, with financing from SDC and the EU.

In the context of the above West African initiatives, an exchange with SADC-GMI and SADC RBDOs would be very timely and valuable as there is strong interest in learning from SADC-GMI's successful experience to improve groundwater management in SMAB region and beyond in the Sahel. Topics would include SADC-GMI experience with knowledge, capacity and financing at national and regional levels (incl. through digital platforms and for young professionals); use of digital technologies and participatory approaches (incl. for its regional groundwater portal, community of practice and private sector platform); transboundary aquifer management in the Limpopo River Basin; and how SADC-GMI plans to harness new approaches/innovations.

The virtual, interactive exchange in roundtable format will take place on 24 February 2021 from 2:30 to 4:30 pm (GMT, Dakar), 4:30 pm (Pretoria) by Zoom with simultaneous translation in French, Portuguese and English. A more detailed agenda, recommended readings and Zoom link will be provided by 15 February.

With support from