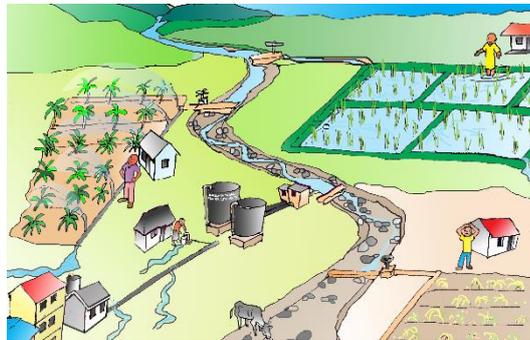


Water User Associations - building blocks for water security

Upper Ruvu catchment, Wami Ruvu Basin



Tanzania’s water policy and law, and institutional frameworks are considered to be some of the strongest in Africa. The hierarchy of roles and responsibilities for water resource management which they set out are shown in Figure 1. However, implementation is slow and this means that vulnerable communities and the economy face growing water insecurity.

This case study documents the water challenges facing farming communities along the Mgeta River in Mvomero District in the Upper Ruvu sub-basin (see Figure 2). It shows why institutional frameworks for water resource management (WRM) need urgent support. In particular, those at the ‘front-line’ of water management: Water User Associations (WUA) and Basin Water Boards (BWB) should receive priority investment to deliver their important tasks of local planning, information exchange, water allocation and conflict mitigation.

Farmers, leaders and officials in Mgeta were unaware of policy, law, roles and responsibilities for WRM and a lack of coordination was leading to conflicts, resource depletion, degradation and hardship for almost 5000 water users. With the support of the Wami-Ruvu Basin Board a WUA is now being established to help address these issues. The case illustrates how a vacuum of information and awareness among professional staff and the public creates huge implementation challenges for Tanzania’s water policy. Awareness and investment at the frontline of WRM to support vulnerable water users should become a priority.

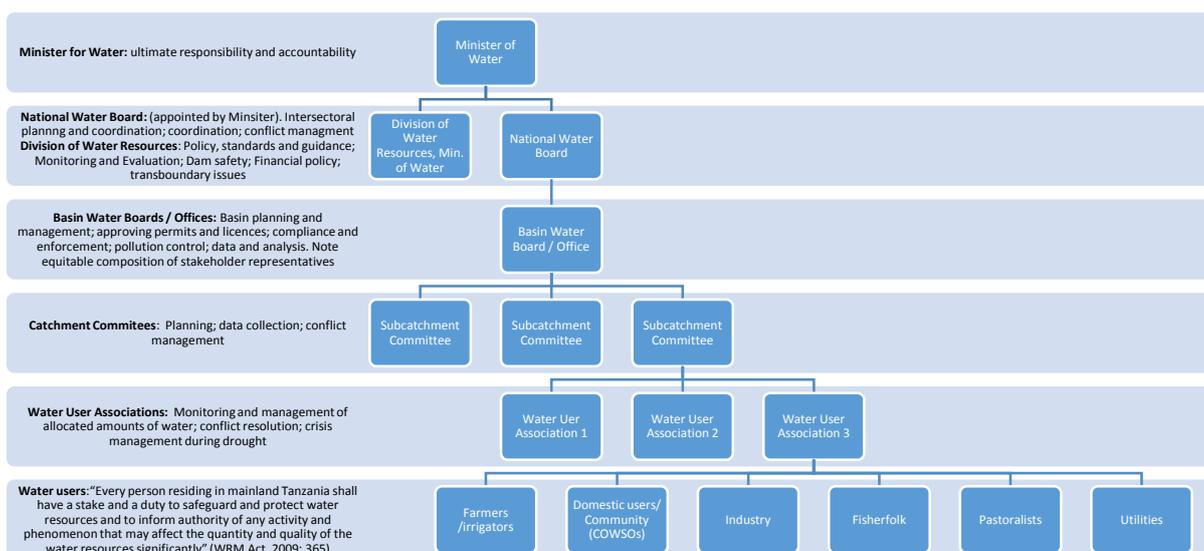


Figure 1. Hierarchy of roles and responsibilities for WRM in Tanzania as specified in policy and WRMA 2009.

This bulletin was produced by the Uhakika wa Maji Programme, a joint initiative between Shahidi wa Maji, TaWaSaNET and Water Witness International. Uhakika wa Maji undertakes high quality action research to generate evidence and advocacy materials to improve water resource management and water security for all Tanzanians.

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