

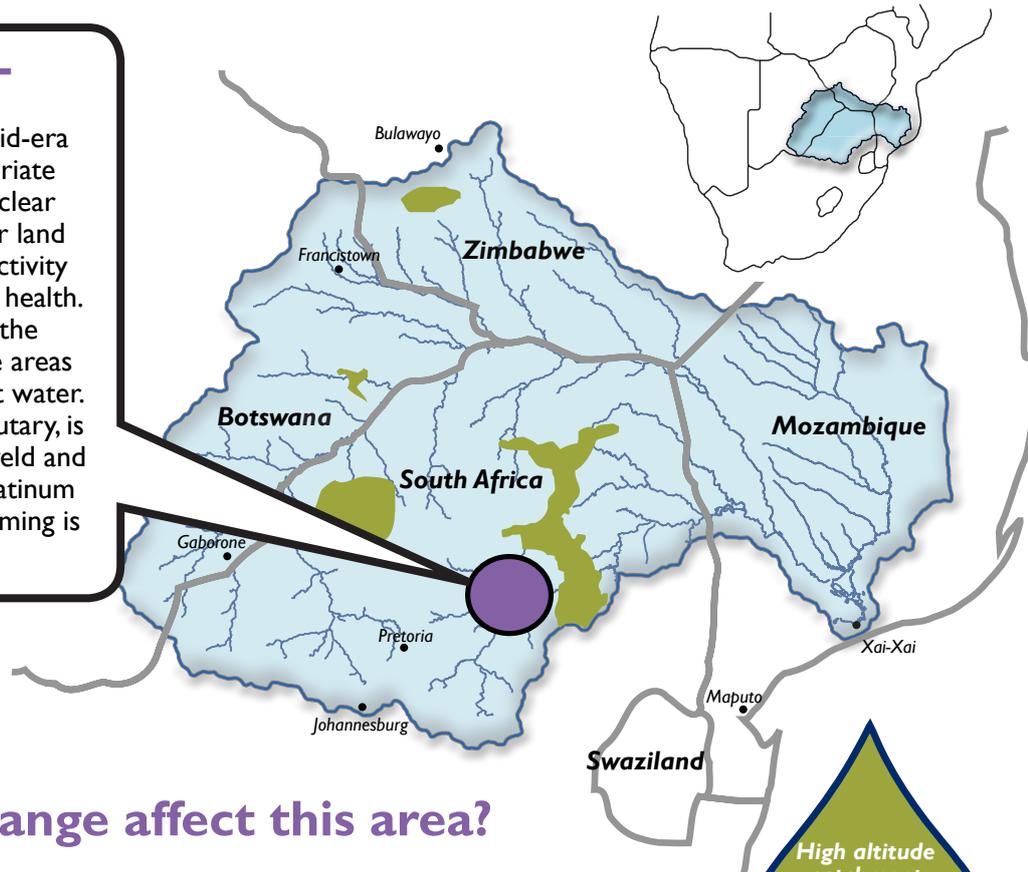
RESILIENCE ACTION AREA 7: Middle Olifants – Former Lebowa Homeland Area (South Africa)

THE LIMPOPO RIVER BASIN: IDEAS FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

AREA SNAPSHOT

This densely populated, former Apartheid-era homeland is characterized by inappropriate agriculture and governance, such as unclear tenure and ownership rights. These spur land degradation, reducing ecosystem productivity while fostering poverty and poor human health.

Along with important biodiversity in the Sekhukhuneland grasslands, high-altitude areas such as the Wolksberg provide significant water. The Olifants River, a major Limpopo tributary, is polluted by industrial effluent from Highveld and Gauteng. Commercial agriculture and platinum mining are important but subsistence farming is the economic base.



How will climate change affect this area?



CLIMATE CHANGE

- Increased temperature
- Lower rainfall and shorter rainy season

High altitude catchment areas are the main sources of water, producing 100 times more than low-lying areas.



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- Increased evaporation
- Water quality worsens with declining flows
- Declining soil moisture and vegetation



HUMAN & ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

- Severe land degradation diminishes productivity
- With increasing desertification, biodiversity declines
- Potential for water conflict
- Declining food security and human health

WE HAVE THE POWER TO ADAPT

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Take action when demand exceeds supply, e.g. Oliphants River abstraction

Identify alternative economic growth and livelihoods

Promote sustainable, climate-smart development

Remove alien vegetation and invasive species



Prevent spills and improve waste, sewerage management



Improve soil water conservation

Strengthen governance, especially water resources and infrastructure



Legislate conservation of Sekhukhuneland grasslands

LEARN MORE

THIS CASE STUDY features one of eight Resilience Action Areas described in Risk, Vulnerability & Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin (2015). Produced by One-World Sustainable Investments for the USAID Southern Africa Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin (RESILIM) program, the report is available at <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1860/risk-vulnerability-and-resilience-limpopo-river-basin-synthesis-0>. RESILIM collaborates with government and nongovernmental institutions across the four basin countries to improve water management, promote biodiversity, and support climate change adaptation.

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