



## POLICY & PRACTICE BRIEF

### Building Strong Networks for Collective Action

# TAKING THE LEAD

**In South Africa, collaboration and networking are important components of co-operative governance, fostering collective action for the greater good. Discover how various sectors can work together effectively, overcoming government boundaries, and explore recommended partnerships to drive positive change.**

Working together and fostering collective action are not just theories; they are fundamental principles enshrined in South Africa's Constitution. Co-operative governance obligates different government spheres to collaborate. Since 1994, legislation has empowered the emergence of participatory democracy, giving rise to forums spanning various departments and even private enterprises. Catchment Management Forums, Water and Sanitation Forums, Community Police Forums are some examples of these.

Collective action is based on the idea that multiple contributors are needed to achieve a shared goal, requiring a degree of self-organisation. Networking therefore naturally arises from collective action. Key components of collective action involve decision-making, rule-making, implementation, and adherence monitoring.

Self-organisation occurs when major resource users collaboratively create and adapt rules governing participants' involvement, strategies, obligations, monitoring, sanctioning, and conflict resolution. This principle is rooted in the belief that communities historically managed local resources for their own mutual benefit, emphasizing the tendency of individuals to collaborate in specific situations.

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The desire to collaborate extends beyond government departments, involving shared practices amongst sectors, including the private sector and funders. These shared practices often define various platforms for collaboration such as:

- Multi-stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) such as the Intergovernmental (IGR) Planning Forums and District Development Planning Forums under the District Development Model (DDM).
- Resource Management Forums, including Catchment Management Forums (CMFs) and Water and Sanitation Forums
- Networks such as Agroecology Networks and “Tala Table” Network.
- Partnerships, as with Private Public Partnerships (PPPs).



The **Giyani Local Scale Climate Resilience Programme (GLSCR)** is an innovative initiative aimed at enhancing water utilization, building community resilience, and promoting sustainable economic growth in the Giyani region. Through collaborative partnerships, innovative solutions, community engagement, and rigorous monitoring, the program strives to address the challenges posed by climate change and ensure a more resilient and prosperous future for local communities.

By adopting a holistic and inclusive approach, the **GLSCR** serves as a model for other regions grappling with climate-related water challenges, contributing to broader global efforts toward a sustainable and climate-resilient future.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for supporting collaboration include:

### Encourage Collective Action

Prioritize collaboration and collective action as a first step in governance and community development.

### Facilitate Self-Organization

Promote self-organizing systems where resource users collectively create and adapt rules for the benefit of all stakeholders.

### Diverse Collaboration Platforms

Explore a range of collaborative formats, including Multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs), forums, networks, and partnerships to suit different needs and contexts.

### Private Sector Engagement

Encourage private sector involvement in collaborative efforts to tap into diverse expertise and resources.

### Cross-Sector Partnerships

Foster partnerships that span government departments, private enterprises, and funders to address complex challenges holistically.

### Regular Evaluation

Continuously assess the effectiveness of collaborative initiatives, adapting strategies as needed for optimal outcomes.

### Inclusive Governance

Ensure that governance structures are inclusive, allowing all relevant stakeholders to participate and contribute to decision-making.

### Resource Management

Focus on responsible resource management, guided by collective action principles, for sustainable development and shared benefits.



#### Water Research Commission

Virginia Molose – virginiam@wrc.org.za  
www.wrc.org.za

#### Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD)

Derick du Toit – derick@award.org.za

#### Tsogang Water and Sanitation

Kenny Phasha – kennypasha@tsogang.org

#### University of Western Cape

Prof Nebo Jovanovic – njovanovic@uwc.ac.za

# WWW.WRC.ORG.ZA