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An Approach to Account for Multi-Level Governance in Land and Water Access for Poverty Reduction in the Limpopo Basin

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Key Message

Water and land policy innovations for poverty reduction has to take into account the broader context in which they take place both horizontally and vertically i.e., across policy sectors (considering various policy frameworks that may be related to them, even only indirectly) and across governance scales.

Summary

Analyzing the governance of an issue consists of studying the different formal and informal institutional and policy arrangements around which both public and non-public actors interact. Very often it implies bearing in mind a broader picture than the one immediately surrounding the specific issue we are most directly interested in (in our case, pro-poor mechanisms in land and water access) and being aware that there may be some unexpected interactions between several policy sectors. Paying attention to this requires acknowledging that there may be a gap between the level of official declarations and the reality as it appears in actors' practices. The public policy analysis (PPA) tradition is particularly suited to account for such a gap but so far has been neglected to describe concretely the "state at work" or the "politics from below" in the African countries. This PPA tradition also recognizes the necessity to focus on various governance levels, which is particularly crucial in developing countries

where the influence of international norms is particularly high. We expect, however, to find that regional, national and local levels are not simply implementing international prescriptions but do have an agenda of their own. Therefore our goal is to really focus on the multi-level interactions of these different scales. Finally, since no policy measure ever takes place in a vacuum, we emphasize the necessity of considering the broader context both historically as in the other WPs but also horizontally (interactions across policy sectors) and vertically (multi-level interactions) like in our case.