Assessment of Small Scale Water Infrastructure in Nebo Plateau, South Africa

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Key Message
To highlight the impact of poor performance of small scale water infrastructure (SWI) on the rural communities of Nebo Plateau. To date, the critical factors identified are lack of understanding of operation and maintenance of the infrastructures by the end users.

Summary

The Limpopo Basin in southern Africa is marked by erratic and uneven distribution in rainfall, which contributes to food insecurity by affecting crop water availability. It is a critical limiting factor for agricultural crop production. In order to help improve food security and eradicate poverty in Nebo Plateau through increased agricultural production, this study assesses the current state and operation of SWIs in that part of the Limpopo basin. This is being carried out through a questionnaire and field assessments of the SWIs. A literature survey shows that an assessment of these SWIs has never been conducted in Sekhukhune District of the Limpopo Basin. Further, no documentation has been found on how these SWIs are performing.

The preliminary investigation conducted thus far showed that most of the SWIs that were constructed for the community were not operational. The identified non-operational SWIs included boreholes and livestock dams. The poor performance is attributed to insufficient knowledge by the end-
user on their operation and maintenance thereof. The taste of water seems to play a role in the continued use of the boreholes. Some boreholes with salty water have been abandoned or are being used for livestock only in Nebo Plateau.