



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Enquiries: H Muller
Telephone: 012-336-6568
Reference: 6/2/2

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 1506 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mrs A T Lovemore (DA); is attached for your consideration.


DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE: 18/6/10


DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


MS B P SONJICA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 21. 06. 2010

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 1506

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 21 MAY 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 14)

1506. Mrs A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) Whether, with reference to non-compliance with national standards by municipalities responsible for wastewater treatment works, any deadline was set for submission by these municipalities of action plans to deal with their shortcomings; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether her department has adequate staff to assess the proposed action plans; if not, why not; if so, what are the details of the process to be followed by her department to ensure the implementation of the proposed action plans;
- (3)(a) what process is followed to determine the funding required to effect improvements at wastewater treatment works in each province, (b) when will the figure for each province be available and (c) how will her department ensure that the funding is used to deal with the shortcomings at wastewater treatment works?

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REPLY:

- (1) Yes, deadlines for site specific wastewater risk abatement action plans are set through regulatory interaction with non-complying municipalities. This would include situations where directives are issued or where the targeted risk-based initiative were introduced as a regulatory means towards sustainable improvement. My Department commenced with consultation with relevant Provincial Heads of Departments to facilitate a more decentralised approach towards the facilitation of wastewater risk reduction action plans and implementation (As per recommendations by the Portfolio Committee of Water and Environmental Affairs). It is envisaged that provincial-based improvement targets will be set through this process which will necessitate a renewed focus on wastewater risk abatement action plans.
- (2) No, there is currently not adequate staff dedicated to the task of assessing municipal waste water risk abatement plans however, my Department has a two pronged approach to addressing this problem.
 - Firstly, by the recent introduction of a program to train some of the existing technical and scientific staff (for example pollution control officers in regions) to be more effective in the wastewater services regulation programme.
 - Secondly by recruitment and selection of additional staff to strengthen the regulation function.
- (3)(a) It must be emphasised that funding of WWTW is a municipal responsibility and my Department is concerned that many municipalities allocate insufficient funds to the sanitation function.

It is also not only the capital investment that is needed but proper asset management, institutional arrangements and most importantly proper qualified and skilled staff. For some time now, my Department has been concerned about the neglect in sanitation infrastructure including the WWTWs and we undertook a comprehensive assessment of the infrastructure needs of municipalities. This process was based on the actual projects as identified by municipalities but due to a lack of comprehensive planning at many municipalities these lists are still regarded as incomplete.

- (3)(b) As further verification and follow up work is needed it is reckoned that by end of August 2010 more accurate estimates can be available.
- (3)(c) As stated above in (3)(a) it must be noted that water services is a municipal function and municipalities should allocate sufficient funds from their budgets to sanitation and WWTWs in particular. Part of this function should be regarded as an economic service and sufficient funds should be generated from own income as well as appropriate use of the Equitable Share allocation to fund such services. Currently there is no national fund for the refurbishment of WWTWs although limited funds from the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant has been allocated to sanitation bulk infrastructure.

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