



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: CX Zwane
Telephone: 060 542 1108
Reference: 6/2/2/6

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION NO 402

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(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 26)

★402. Mr N G Myburgh (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

Considering the fact that most of the wastewater treatment plants of the Republic are fast reaching tipping point, coupled with the deteriorating state of water purification systems as illustrated by the most recent Blue and Green Drop Reports, what steps has his department taken to establish the true status and efficacy of (a) wastewater treatment facilities and (b) water purification plants across the Republic?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

The Blue Drop and Green Drop Audits serve as the best available data of the true status and performance of wastewater treatments and water treatment systems in the country. The Green Drop Report was released in April 2022. The Blue Drop Report will be released at the end of September 2023. The results of the Blue Drop Report will be augmented by the No Drop Report focusing on water use efficiency, which will be released later this year. Each comprehensive drop report is released every two years, with interim reports done in the alternate year. The next comprehensive Green Drop report will be released in 2024, along with interim Blue Drop and No drop reports.

These reports serve as regulatory tools to improve municipal drinking water quality, wastewater management as well as water conservation and demand management. The reports keep the public and stakeholders informed and updated with credible data and information about the state of water and sanitation services in the country.

The detailed reports, which are shared with Water Service Authorities, identify what needs to be done to address shortcomings. In addition to being a regulatory mechanism, the assessments provide

municipalities as owners of the infrastructure with advice and guidance on how to improve their water and sanitation services.

- (a) The Green Drop Audits were conducted by 24 audit panels comprising of 2-3 qualified wastewater professionals. Inspectors qualified after achieving a threshold examination score. The audit scorecard was designed to consider evidence against 5 Key Performance Areas (KPAs): A: Capacity Management; B: Environmental Management; C: Financial Management; D: Technical Management; and E: Effluent and Sludge Compliance. Each KPA and sub-criteria carry a different weighting based on the regulatory priorities. The audit period under review was 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

A wastewater system that achieves $\geq 90\%$ Green Drop score, is regarded as excellent and is then allocated the prestigious Green Drop status. A system that achieved $< 31\%$ is regarded as a dysfunctional system which would require appropriate interventions. [Note: The audit covers the sewer network, sewer pump-stations, and treatment systems. On-site sanitation is not part of the audit.] A physical Site Inspection Assessment (TSA) is done at 1 to 2 systems to confirm the findings of the desktop audit. The TSA score (%) reflects the physical condition of the sewer collector network, pumping stations, treatment plant and point of discharge.). The Department of Water and Sanitation can report a 100% audit coverage of all identified Water Services Institutions for this audit period. The audit covered 144 Water Services Authorities (850 systems), 12 Department of Public Works (115 systems) and 5 private- and state-owned organisations (30 systems), totalling 995 wastewater networks and treatment work.

The 2022 Green Drop report found 334 out of 850 (39%) municipal wastewater systems in 90 municipalities (63% of the 144 water services authorities) to be in critical condition, receiving Green Drop scores of 30% and below. The Department then issued non-compliance notices to these 90 municipalities, requesting the municipalities to submit corrective action plans to address the shortcomings identified in the Green Drop report. Those municipalities which did not submit corrective action plans have been issued with directives compelling them to submit such plans. Criminal charges have been laid against some of the municipalities which have not submitted corrective action plans.

- (b) The Blue Drop audits were conducted by 26 audit panels comprising of 2-3 qualified water professionals. Inspectors qualified after achieving a threshold examination score. The audit scorecard was designed to consider evidence against 5 Key Performance Areas (KPAs): 1: Capacity Management; 2: Drinking Water Quality Risk Management; 3: Financial Management; 4: Technical Management; and 5: Drinking Water Quality Compliance. Each KPA and sub-criteria carry a different weighting based on the regulatory priorities. The audit period under review was 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, resulting in a Blue Drop score issued in 2023.

A water supply system that achieves $\geq 95\%$ Blue Drop score, is regarded as excellent and is then allocated the prestigious Blue Drop Certification status. A system that achieved $< 31\%$ is regarded as a dysfunctional system and would trigger appropriate regulatory interventions [Note: The audit covers the delivery and distribution networks from abstraction to the water treatment works to the points of use].

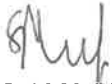
A physical Technical Site Assessment is done at 1 to 2 systems to confirm the findings of the desktop audit. The TSA score reflects the physical condition of the raw water handling system (abstraction facility, pumps and pipelines), the water treatment plant (inlet works to disinfection and sludge treatment), and distribution system (command reservoir/s or tower/s, including pumpstations and bulk pipelines).

The Department has developed a regulatory performance dashboard that will reflect the results of the above audits together with other key indicators addressing finance and governance. This dashboard will be hosted on the Integrated Regulatory Information System and will be accessible to the public. This dashboard will also indicate support and regulatory action taken to address non-compliance and poor performance and will have capital projects linked to systems where these are required to address the poor performance.


While the reports are effective in providing the true status as well as the aspects that municipalities have to address in order to improve performance, this does not help where municipalities do not respond to the report, the notices and directives due to poor management. This can only be corrected by leadership.

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DRAFT REPLY: RECOMMENDED/ ~~NOT RECOMMENDED/ AMENDED~~


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 04/09/23

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
DATE: 8 / 9 / 23