

WWS

THEME 4: WATER USE AUTHORISATION

MINISTERIAL INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH WATER & SANITATION SECTOR

10 NOVEMBER 2018 - BIRCHWOOD HOTEL



WATER IS LIFE - SANITATION IS DIGNITY



water & sanitation



UMGENI



100 Nelson Mandela Centenary



THEME 4: WATER USE AUTHORISATION

1. Background

- Water use Authorisation is a key competency enabling the Department to achieve its mandate and strategic objectives including amongst others water resource management, equitable access to water resources, meeting international obligations, contributing to economic development.
- Despite the function being critical the Department has not been able to meet the expectations of the potential water users in the terms of processing turnaround times.
- A lack of a defined process, prescribed timeframes and defined information required has led to prolonged correspondences with applicants, resulting in water use authorisation backlogs over the years. Backlogs in water use authorisations create problems with regard to possible illegal water use and delay the commencement of economic activities.
- The Department in the recent past has initiated and implemented a number of initiatives in order to fast track finalisation of the water use licence applications. The first key intervention is the Water Use Licence Regulations published in March 2017. The Regulations prescribe the timeframes for the applicants to compile the requisite information and the Department to process the applications.
- The Department have also developed an online portal, the electronic water use licence application and authorisation system (E-WULAAS). The E-WULAAS allow for applicants to submit applications on line and for the Department to process the applications.
- The interventions implemented have yielded positive results whereby there is an improvement in reduction of backlogs. Currently the Department has less than 200 applications in the backlog. The ideal situation is to have no applications in the backlogs.
- The Minister has given specific instructions to ensure that the backlogs are cleared by March 2019 and to ensure it does not recur as follows:
 - i. The delegations for approving water use licences have been assigned to a Deputy Director General, who considers the licences weekly.
 - ii. Dedicated water use licensing units be established at Regions and Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs).

- iii. The internal turnaround times be revised based on water use sectors, with agriculture and forestry taking 70 days, Infrastructure projects by State Owned Companies 90 days, local government and property developments 115 days and mining and industry 144 days.
 - iv. The Water Use Licence Regulations be revised to address concerns from the stakeholders.
- The other area of concern is that the Department receives a sizeable number of amendments resulting from licence conditions that are not easy to implement. The water use stakeholders are expected to contribute by means on comments on generic licence templates.

2. Challenges

- The sector is requested to make inputs aimed at enhancing the interventions that are already in place and coming up with entirely new interventions that can contribute to improving the efficiencies in processing applications.
- It should be borne in mind that the function is highly technical and open to appeals, thus interventions should be within the relevant legal framework.
- Stakeholders' concerns should be noted and addressed.