

## What is the Blue Deal: Combating Pollution in the Crocodile River Project?

The Blue Deal South Africa is part of the International Blue Deal Programme between (i) the Netherlands Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Infrastructure & Water Management and all the Dutch Water Authorities and (ii) the South African national partners (DWS, MISA, WRC, and SALGA) and local project partners on a case by case basis.

The Blue Deal Programme focuses on supporting regional and national governments worldwide to strengthen good water management by sufficient knowledge and expertise, well-functioning organisations and cooperation with key stakeholders. The ambitious goal of the Blue Deal is helping 20 million people in 40 catchment areas around the world to gain access to clean, sufficient and safe water. The Programme will run from 2019 until 2030; with the first phase concluding in 2022.

The **Blue Deal: Combating Pollution in the Crocodile River** project is one of the four South African Blue Deal local projects, with the focus to optimize the functioning of municipal WWTWs discharging into the Crocodile River. The current non-optimal performance of WWTWs discharging into the Crocodile River results in a negative impact on river water quality. The reasons for WWTWs failing regulatory discharge requirements is multifaceted, ranging from Operations & Maintenance, operator numbers and skills, overloading, delayed refurbishments, funding etc. The objective of the project is to improve the operations of six targeted municipal wastewater management systems to ensure the availability of clean water in the Crocodile River Catchment (Mbombela LM: WWTWs White River and Barberton; Nkomaz LM: WWTWs Mhlatikop and Mhalitplaas; Emakhazeni LM: WWTWs Waterval Boven and Machadodorp).

The Key Activities comprising Phase 1 (2019 – 2022) include the following:

Activity 1	The partners involved jointly carry out short and long term institutional and technical assessment and planning of the WWTW systems, including MuSSA, Green Drop, Sanitation Safety Planning and Shit Flow Diagrams. This activity will identify actionables necessary to improve the performance of the municipal WWTWs, achieve regulatory compliance and identify strategic planning information for future requirements. This activity will also be a collaborative activity between the partners and will involve exchange of information and knowledge.
Activity 2	Harnessing innovations for works optimization by exploring potential innovative solutions to address identified challenges. Beside an overview of possible innovations for optimization, this activity will also result in municipalities being enabled to implement solutions identified in activity 1 in order to optimally monitor the selected WWTWs. It will also enable the municipalities to process data gathered from monitoring to plan and lobby for policy thus allowing for the optimal functioning of the WWTWs through development of innovative solutions.
Activity 3	Transfer of skills is an integral activity to ensure sustainable operations of WWTWs for years to come. The activity aims to increase the technical and managerial competency of the officials manning and overseeing the operations of works thereby avoiding future occurrences where works get dilapidated to the point of non-operation. This activity will also be a collaborative activity between the partners and will involve exchange of information and knowledge.
Activity 4	Tabling and tackling institutional prioritization and funding issues that hinder the proper functioning of the municipal wastewater systems. Blue Deal South Africa will lobby its national partners - who have a mandate to support and guide municipal services delivery - for their support and collaboration to address the challenge and make every effort to ensure that institutional prioritization and funding is not an obstacle to WWTW optimization. This activity will also be a collaborative activity between the partners and will involve exchange of information and knowledge.

