

What is the Blue Deal: Msunduzi River Improvement Project?

The Blue Deal South Africa Programme is part of the International Blue Deal Programme and is 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 Msunduzi River Improvement Project** is one of the four South African Blue Deal local projects, with the focus being improving the health of the Msunduzi River. The main challenge to the health of the Msunduzi River is the multiple impacts on river water quality of various users and associated parties (municipal, industrial, societal) resulting in a deteriorated water quality that makes the Msunduzi River unfit for use. As such, the project aims to improve the water quality of the Msunduzi River in an integrated manner, through partnerships with different organisations.

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

Activity 1	Assisting in the development of a sustainable business model for the Enviro Champs.
Activity 2	Creating “an integrated Partner & Stakeholder” approach on water quality management and the associated multiple threats, via a “Living Catchment Management Strategy”. <i>The initial focus is on data sharing with all partners and stakeholders with the intention to make this data accessible in the format of a dashboard via the Hydronet system currently used by the Proto Catchment Management Agency (i.e. Water Trading Entity of the Department).</i>
Activity 3	Disaster Management partnership amongst both governmental organisations and industries, including annual drills.
Activity 4	Msunduzi Municipality Sewer System: Institutional and Infrastructure Improvements via Situational Diagnostics to include MuSSA/MPAP, Green Drop self-assessment, SFD, an external review of municipal sewer infrastructure, and assistance with municipal institutional weaknesses via Partners (DWA, DWS, MISA, CoGTA & SALGA).