



INTERNET ARTICLE

Blue Deal Crocodile River Partnership continues to make strides towards quality water in the Crocodile River

29 April 2024

The Blue Deal Crocodile River Partnership continues its collaborative efforts to enhance the quality of water and sustainability in the Crocodile River in the Mpumalanga Province. Comprising a diverse coalition of partners including Dutch Water Authorities (DWA), Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA), Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) and the three participating local municipalities of City of Mbombela, Emakhazeni and Nkomazi - their mission focuses on optimizing six wastewater treatment facilities along the Crocodile River. The collective mission is to enhance the operation of the six wastewater treatment facilities and elevating the water quality of the Crocodile River. The river serves as a source of drinking water, sustenance for agriculture, a sacred space for religious rituals like baptisms and let's not forget its importance to the aquatic ecosystem. The six waste water treatment facilities are made up of two plants per participating municipality.

The main aim the Blue Deal Crocodile River Partnership is to achieve Green Drop certification for all participating plants by 2030, ensuring excellent performance in wastewater treatment and better water quality for the Crocodile River.

The recent work visit made significant progress with the completion of three Shit Flow Diagrams (SFD) covering one plant per participating municipality to aid urban sanitation programming. These diagrams visualize the status of urban sanitation services in terms of the flow of waste water. They show how wastewater is treated and where there is room for improvement. SFDs are a useful tool to inform urban sanitation programming. They offer an innovative way to engage stakeholders from political leaders to sanitation experts in a coordinated dialogue about waste water management. Therefore, they provide a powerful tool for communication.

The visit also resulted in on-site training of process controllers through the Buddy Twinning Program which facilitates knowledge exchange to optimize treatment processes. The Crocodile River Partnership goes beyond numbers and plans. It's about collaboration and knowledge exchange. The Buddy Program pairs Dutch superintendents with their South African counterparts. During this Work Visit the Superintendents bundled their strengths to train the process controller that work on the treatment plants. They were trained on how to

SOUTH AFRICA IS A WATER SCARCE COUNTRY





water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



safely optimize the treatment process and to get more results with the limited means available to them.

Additionally, recent advancements in sludge classification at the White River WWTW enable its use in agriculture, promoting sustainability. With this classification the sludge is fit for use in agriculture. Sludge can be used as a fertilizer by farmers. We will promote the newly classified sludge during the next work visit later this year.

Moreover, efforts were made to increase community awareness about wastewater treatment and how their actions can influence the process. Treating wastewater is not merely a responsibility of the municipalities. Citizens also have a responsibility to help and secure a clean crocodile river. People should try and be mindful of what they flush down the toilet. A treatment plant is made to filter faeces and toilet paper out of the wastewater. Wet wipes, condoms and women hygiene products can damage the equipment at the plant. Please be mindful and throw these things in a garbage bin.

Overall, the partnership has once again made significant strides towards achieving their goals. Whether these strides have been in the right direction will be clear after the next Green Drop audit in the third quarter of the year.

Themba Khoza

SOUTH AFRICA IS A WATER SCARCE COUNTRY



Department of Water and Sanitation South Africa



DWS RSA