

**Launch of Project Consolidate in the Free State**  
**Speech by Ms BP Sonjica, MP, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry**  
**Phumelela Municipality**  
**5 July 2005**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

National Government has the constitutional responsibility to support and strengthen the capacity of local government and to regulate local government to ensure effective performance of its duties. Through Project Consolidate, support is provided to municipalities to ensure that their functions are fulfilled. The Government had recognised the need to support municipalities as they build capacity and decided to establish a Support Unit to identify and 'unblock bottlenecks' that inhibiting the roll-out of services.

On 1 April 2005, the Minister for Provincial and Local Government, Sydney Mufamadi, launched the Project Consolidate, a hands-on programme of support and engagement for local government. Facilitators were appointed to do an assessment of the situation in the municipalities.

The role of the facilitators were to undertake a situational and capacity assessment and in identifying bottlenecks affecting service delivery. Subsequent to this, an action plan had to be developed specifying the supporting interventions required to oversee the successful implementation of the action plan.

### **1.1 Benefits and opportunities of Project Consolidate**

As we launch Project Consolidate in the Free State and especially in Phumelela today we should ask ourselves how this project would improve the lives of our people.

In answering this question, we must realise that local government is faced with a number of complex challenges that will require both long and short term solutions. Be that as it may, Project Consolidate recognises the need to pursue our transformation programme with an increased sense of urgency.

With this structured project and initiative of government actions will be intensified to meet the needs of our people.

Through Project Consolidate we aim at the acceleration of service delivery especially with regard to the implementation of free basic services such as sanitation, water electricity and refuse removal. Project Consolidate aims at providing specific capacity in terms of human resources. Civil, electrical and water engineers are provided to municipalities that do not currently have sufficient resources. They will have to assist with tasks such as assessing the requirements to stabilise electricity and water and sanitation networks.

In dealing with municipal financial viability issues, financial management, fiscal discipline and billing systems, skilled people in the area of municipal finance have been made available to serve in interim management capacities where it has been difficult for municipalities to recruit or retain such capacity.

Other assistance provided is:

- ➔ Training programmes designed to skill municipal employees to utilise recently acquired service delivery equipment.
- ➔ Human resources practitioners have been made available to assist with the tasks such as developing organisational structures that are responsive to the institutional and delivery challenges faced by a municipality.
- ➔ Assessing the skills and competencies of current staff compliments.
- ➔ Legal skills to assist municipalities in terms of labour related disputes which hampered service delivery.

## **1.2 Measuring our Success with Implementation of Project Consolidate**

There is a saying *“What you measure is what you get”*

Through Project Consolidate the Government wants to improve service delivery and hence the action plans compiled for each municipality will be monitored. Consequently the following will be measured on a regular basis:

- ➔ To what extent has infrastructure backlogs been addressed and indigent households be provided with Free Basic Services?
- ➔ How the municipality utilised the MIG allocation and their other revenue sources?
- ➔ How many jobs have been created and to what extent has economic development taken place?
- ➔ To what extent was the community involved in local development?
- ➔ Which plans have been implemented to protect our natural resources?
- ➔ To what extent has institutional capacity been built and are financial viable services being rendered?

## **1.3 Local Context**

Phumelela municipality is one of the identified municipalities under Project Consolidate. DWAF as a National department and in the spirit of co-operative governance is one of the role players involved to ensure that the objectives of Project Consolidate are achieved.

The multi year strategic plan of Government makes provision for targets to be honoured and ensure that all residents have basic services. Services can only be ensured if all spheres of government together with communities are committed to service delivery. Some of the main targets that Phumelela has to implement are as follows:

- ➔ All People to have access to functional basic water supply facilities by 2008
- ➔ All people in South Africa have access to a functional basic sanitation facility by 2010
- ➔ All schools have adequate and safe water supply and sanitation services by 2005
- ➔ All clinics have adequate and safe water supply and sanitation services by 2007
- ➔ All bucket toilets are eradicated by 2010
- ➔ All water services authorities implement free basic water policy by 2005
- ➔ Free basic sanitation policy implemented in all water services authorities by 2010
- ➔ Bylaws are implemented by all water services authorities by 2005

Through the successful implementation of initiatives such as Project Consolidate by all sectors and co-ordinated planning of the three spheres of Government the above targets will be achieved.

## **2 STATUS OF WATER AND SANITATION IN PHUMELELA**

### **2.1 Water and Sanitation Backlog**

Phumelela has a water backlog of 19% of the total population (58,289) while the sanitation backlog is 64%. A total of 3,491 households are still using the bucket system which is totally unacceptable. Funds have now been made available through MIG for the eradication of the buckets. The total MIG allocation for the bucket eradication program for the next three years Phumelela will be R26 880 000. For the 2005/2006 financial year the allocation alone is R3 000 000. The amount is sufficient to eradicate all buckets in the municipal area. Through applying the MIG formula on the MIG allocation to the municipality the target of 2010 for the eradication of the total sanitation backlog in the municipality should be achieved. Authorities must consider their capacity (financial and institutional) to operate and maintain complex

sewage systems when opting for water borne sanitation. Water services authorities must also consider the environmental impact and associated implications in line with the Environment Conservation Act 73 of 1989. Through co-ordinated planning by the three spheres of government the above can be achieved.

The Government is aware that not all the schools in the area have access to clean water and sanitation services. This could have an influence on the health status of a community. School children are vulnerable and needs to be protected. Therefore special effort will have to be made by all spheres of government and stakeholders to ensure that their needs are addressed.

## **2.2 Water Quality**

Drinking water quality has a significant impact on the health of people in communities. According to the World Health Organization, water quality is the single biggest factor impacting on primary health care. Department of Local Government and Housing and CSIR together with DWAF are monitoring the water quality in the Phumelela area on a monthly basis. According to the recent quarterly report – March 2005- the status of the water quality in Phumelela is good. However a concern was raised in terms of their wastewater quality especially in Vrede. The bacterial load is exceeding the norm. Through the Project Consolidate initiative WSA will be encouraged to engage in water quality self regulation.

## **2.3 Water Resources**

According to the Project Consolidate action plan the Municipality has encountered a water shortage. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) has provided support from a variety of funding facilities viz

- ➔ Special Intervention Programme to enlist technical support for the district with demonstrable bias to support Phumelela Local Municipality;
- ➔ R1.3 million leveraged from a donor of DWAF for installation Sanitation facilities

The Department has also indicated willingness to finance ground water studies.

## **2.4 Water Services Development plans and IDPs**

Every Water Service Authority has a duty to all customers or potential customers in its area of jurisdiction to progressively ensure efficient, affordable, economical and sustainable access to Water Services. **(Water Services Act of 1997, Section 11)**

This requires: a proactive approach, pre-thinking, deliberation, understanding.....thus WSD plans are essential. The purpose of a Water Services Development plan is to:

- ➔ Provide a picture of the water services status quo within the municipal area
- ➔ Outline the water services targets for the municipality and plan for future situation
- ➔ Take into account the objective of the provincial growth and development strategy.

The Water services Development Plan must be integrated with the IDP of the municipality as required through the Municipal Systems Act. In the WSDP water supply planning must be integrated with sanitation planning together with municipal planning. From the Free State Water Summit held on 20/21 June 2005 a resolution was taken that the IDP and WSDP must be aligned to the Growth and Development strategy of the Free State.

Phumelela has completed the first phase and achieved the target - that is the completion of the basic WSDP. The basic document consists of the socio economic information, backlog figures, needs and projects. The second phase is the completion of the comprehensive Water Service Development Plan. This should be completed during this financial year and DWAF will comply with its constitutional responsibility to provide assistance.

## **2.5 WSA capacity development support**

As part of the Government initiatives a WSA capacity assessment program is currently being undertaken to assess the capacity of Water Services authorities to efficiently and effectively fulfil their responsibilities. Some of the deliverables of the Project Consolidate program and the capacity assessment process are:

- ➔ To assess the capacity of a municipality in its role as WSA and in particular its readiness to achieve its targets, through implementing MIG and the Free Basic water and sanitation policies
- ➔ Identify capacity gaps, that need to be addressed in order for the municipality to efficiently and effectively fulfil its WSA responsibility
- ➔ To provide support required to address the gaps that exist with regards to legislative compliance

Project Consolidate is launched in Phumelela today where some of the gaps identified are already started to being addressed. The assessment has been conducted and the business plan is in the process of completion. An amount of R400 000 is available for this financial year for the implementation of the project.

## **2.6 Projects**

The projects launched here today are:

### *Memel*

Roads and Storm water project in Ezenzeleni at a cost of R1,8 million of which MIG will contribute R1,2 million. A total 2000 households in ward 6 and 7 will benefit. A total of 200 jobs will be created. The construction will start on 12 July 2005 and it is envisaged that the project will end on 30 December 2005.

### *Warden*

In Zamani in Warden the water purification works will be upgraded. The value of the project is R2.7 million. This is an ongoing project and 1500 households will benefit from this project.

A table has been attached indicating all projects since 1997 being implemented in the municipality area with the jobs created and cost of the projects.

## **3 CONCLUSION**

In closing I wish to state that Government has made through Project Consolidate program hands on support available to municipalities to improve their service delivery. As the Premier has highlighted during the Free State Water Summit, the Free State Growth and Development strategy has already set important milestones for the achievement of the project consolidate objectives.

Let us join forces, minds and ambitions and work together to achieve a better live for all our people in an effective and sustainable way.

I thank you.