

Importance of water projects

THE Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) welcomes the gazetting of integrated infrastructure projects by Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Patricia de Lille.

Water infrastructure is one of the key pillars of economic growth which, in turn, responds to the socio-economic needs of South Africans. Water contributes to the economy and job creation. For instance, the irrigated agricultural economy, which accounts for 60% of water-use, has, directly and indirectly, created 8,5 million jobs (2011, Government Communications and Information System report).

For this reason, the department welcomes this gazetting of integrated infrastructure projects by Minister De Lille.

The gazetting of the integrated infrastructure projects comes at a time when South Africa's economy, like many others on the continent, is facing a significant proportion of downturn due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Water infrastructure forms part of the integrated special projects, with the specific aim of creating jobs and assisting with skills development. This is important as many vulnerable communities have been hard hit by the economic impact of Covid-19.

Water and sanitation infrastructure is not only about people having water to drink while maintaining good hygiene practices, but is about helping to grow the economy. The gazetting of the integrated projects will go a long way in holistically ensuring the management of infrastructure in development, as well as the maintenance thereof.

Collectively, the gazetted water and sanitation projects are worth R106 billion in investments spanning across all provinces, with the potential for direct job creation estimated at 25 000.

DWS is painfully aware that there have been unjustifiable delays in the implementation of some water and sanitation infrastructure projects across the country. We apologise profusely for the delays.

We also plead with communities and investors to exercise patience as we fast-track the implementation of the current and upcoming projects.

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