



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
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MEDIA STATEMENT

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WATER SECTOR ANTI-CORRUPTION FORUM LAUNCH MARKS A DECISIVE STEP IN SAFEGUARDING SOUTH AFRICA'S WATER RESOURCES

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and the Department of Water and Sanitation have launched the Water Sector Anti-Corruption Forum (WSACF) as an arm in the fight against corruption in the water sector.

The establishment of the forum follows the findings from 16 Special Investigating Unit (SIU) proclamations related to the Department of Water and Sanitation. With nine investigations completed and seven still active, the need for a coordinated anti-corruption response in water management has become urgent and undeniable.

The WSACF is anchored in Pillar Six of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS), which focuses on protecting vulnerable sectors and strengthening integrity systems. By adopting a risk-based approach, the forum will drive investigation, prevention, and enforcement measures to ensure that South Africa's water resources, vital for sustainable development, are shielded from corruption and mismanagement.

The WSACF is a strategic intervention aimed at developing tailored solutions to address corruption risks in the water sector. By adopting a risk-based approach, the forum will focus on investigation, prevention, and enforcement to safeguard South Africa's water resources, which are essential for sustainable development.

The WSACF also aligns itself with the goals of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which focuses on water security and sustainable development. It also supports the

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6, which aims to ensure the availability and sustainable management of clean water and sanitation for everyone.

This initiative aligns with what the NACS terms as the whole-of-society approach, which seeks to enhance and mobilise the inclusive participation of the public sector, private sector, civil society, and academia to prevent and combat corruption.

Key Objectives of the WSACF

- Support anti-corruption initiatives in the water sector.
- Foster collaboration among stakeholders to combat corruption effectively.
- Coordinate law enforcement efforts to enhance investigative capacity.
- Ensure tangible outcomes, including prosecutions, civil recoveries, and administrative actions.
- Implement prevention measures to mitigate fraud and corruption risks.
- Promote accountability within anti-corruption agencies through multi-stakeholder oversight.

A Whole-of-Society Approach to Corruption Prevention

The WSACF embodies the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 vision of a corruption-free South Africa while supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which ensures access to clean water and sanitation for all. The forum brings together a broad coalition of stakeholders, including:

- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Chapter 9 Institutions
- Civil Society Organisations & Water Activists
- Private Sector Representatives
- Public Sector (Government Departments, Municipalities)
- Regulators
- Traditional & Religious Leaders

- Organised Labour
- Water Conservation & Environmental Groups

This collaborative model strengthens accountability, closes gaps, and implements measurable and actionable prevention plans. Importantly, the forum will also hold anti-corruption agencies accountable, ensuring transparency and effectiveness in their operations.

A Proven Model for Fighting Corruption

The WSACF builds on the success of other sector-specific anti-corruption forums, including:

- Health Sector Anti-Corruption Forum (HSACF) – Launched by the President on 1 October 2019
- Infrastructure & Built Environment Anti-Corruption Forum (IBACF) – Launched by Minister De Lille on 25 May 2021
- Local Government Anti-Corruption Forum (LGACF) – Launched by Minister Dlamini-Zuma on 20 September 2022
- Border Management & Immigration Anti-Corruption Forum (BMIACF) – Launched by Minister Dr Leon Schreiber on 25 March 2025

“As South Africa experiences water shortages in various parts of the country, we must move to ensure that we draw the lessons from our investigations. Water affects every living being, making it imperative for us to make fighting corruption in the sector a collective effort. The launch of the Water Sector Anti-Corruption Forum is a decisive step in protecting one of our nation’s most precious resources. Water is life, and corruption in this sector threatens not only service delivery but also the dignity and well-being of our people. Through this forum, we are sending a clear message: corruption will not be tolerated, and those who undermine the integrity of our water systems will face the full might of the law,” said Mr Leonard Lekgetho, Acting Head of the SIU and Chairperson of WSACF.

The Minister of Water and Sanitation, Minister Pemmy Majodina emphasized the importance of being proactive and strengthening anti-corruption efforts in the water sector.

“When corruption infiltrates the water sector, it does not simply distort procurement processes or inflate invoices. It dries up taps, delays infrastructure, contaminates rivers and erodes public trust. In a water-scarce country such as South Africa, corruption is not a victimless crime. It is a direct assault on human dignity and development. Every rand lost to corruption is a rand not spent on fixing leaks, expanding supply schemes or protecting our freshwater ecosystems”.

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