

CHAPTER 9 - INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

NEED FOR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The NWA provides for a fundamental transformation of water resources management and governance, with the shifting of authority and responsibility to appropriate and representative regional and local institutions. Such institutions include any organisation or person fulfilling the functions of a water management institution. Typical water management institutions are Water User Associations and Catchment Management Agencies.

The *Institutional Development and Support Main Strategy* is required to address:

- ⇒ International rivers joint management structures and related issues;
- ⇒ Formation of Catchment Management Agencies;
- ⇒ Catchment Forums and Advisory Committees related issues;
- ⇒ Formation of Water User Associations.

RELEVANT IDENTIFIED STRATEGIES

The following specific strategies have been developed further:

9.1 Water User Associations.

No international rivers flow within this ISP area. Although the Orange River is closely linked to this ISP area, these international strategies have been developed through the Orange River WMAs. Refer to the *Orange River System Overarching ISP* for such strategies.

9.1 WATER USER ASSOCIATIONS

Management objective:

To transform existing irrigation boards to Water User Associations (WUAs) or to form new WUAs as required.

Situation assessment:

WUAs are co-operative associations of individual water users who wish to undertake water-related activities at a local level for their mutual benefit (including previous irrigation boards). WUAs must include all water users within their management areas, and are required to prepare business plans and annual reports for institutional performance review. They should ensure that all users are monitored, both in terms of quantity of abstraction and discharge of waste.

The Great Fish River WUA (including Sub-Areas), Kat River WUA and the Sundays River WUA have been established. Van Rynevelds Pass Irrigation Board disestablished and sold their dam to Camdeboo DM for use by Graaff-Reinet, following the cessation of all irrigation. The Koonap Irrigation Board only exists on paper. The formation of the Tyhefu WUA has been significantly delayed because funding for a social consultant was not available to assist the community, which is not yet adequately capacitated⁽²⁰⁾. A Trust is in charge at Tyhefu, and there is no longer an urgency to form a WUA there. There is a requirement for new WUAs to be formed for ex-parastatal schemes, but there is no longer a great urgency to do this as Trusts have been put in place at all these schemes. WUAs to be established in the ISP area have been prioritised.

Greater clarity on the requirements of the WUA formation process is required. There is an extremely high need for DWAF to standardise its process of formation of WUAs for all water users, and to keep such standards for longer periods. Consistent guidelines are required to ensure that the process is clear to all, to remove current stumbling blocks. At present, the guidelines in place are not entirely suitable for the smaller Irrigation Boards.

There is a need for the DWAF to employ social consultants to assist smaller irrigation boards that are experiencing financial difficulties and/or capacity problems with regard to the workshopping and the compilation of their WUAs proposals.

WUAs must be in place before they can take ownership of DWAF infrastructure and assume responsibility for it. Transfer of ownership of branch canals in smaller tributaries is envisaged at Somerset East, Sundays River, etc., once properly established WUAs are in place. Some Sundays River GWS infrastructure will also be transferred.

Up to October 2004, the DWAF could only supply subsidies on bulk infrastructure to resource-poor farmers if they were part of an existing or newly formed WUA. This has been changed, and the policy approved in October 2004 now allows for subsidies to be paid to any suitable statutory body at a collective irrigation scheme.

Strategic approach:

DWAF will continue to encourage and support the formation of WUAs large or small, if necessary providing advice or consulting support towards their establishment. It is important that WUAs function well. DWAF will hand over infrastructure, where appropriate and usually in good condition, to WUAs for local management. The WUAs will also be expected to monitor abstraction and use by its members to ensure a fair distribution of resources. The DWAF, in turn, will monitor the function of WUAs and will offer help as requested. WUAs will systematically be established according to priorities and demands, within the constraints posed by existing resources. Formation of WUAs will continue as soon as there is greater clarity on the required process, and internal capacity problems in the Region have been addressed.

Management actions:

1. Attach a high priority to the forming of WUAs (or possibly other suitable statutory bodies), where the needs of resource-poor farmers have been prioritised, once a scheme has been approved under the DWAF subsidy scheme;
2. Speed up formation of WUAs by assisting smaller irrigation boards (which have limited resources) with the compilation of their WUAs proposals, by financially contributing to the employment of consultants to aid them;
3. Continually update the need to form WUAs and ensure the formation of such WUAs;
4. Where WUAs are in a position to take over infrastructure then this should be transferred, with the proviso that it is in a satisfactory condition, or will be brought into a satisfactory condition by the DWAF in due course;

Responsibility:

The responsibility for developing the details of the WUA strategy lies with the RO, supported by D: Institutional oversight.

Priority:

Establishment of new WUAs in ex-Ciskei areas or the forming of WUAs (or other suitable statutory bodies) where the needs of resource-poor farmers have been prioritised has the highest priority. The priority therefore varies, but is generally high.