



the Olifants, Olifants-Doom and Vaal systems in 2010. The DWA will thereafter progressively classify significant water resources in other catchments.

Who should implement?

The Department of Water Affairs through the Directorate: Water Resources Classification, is responsible for ensuring that the WRCS is implemented and Management Classes are gazetted accordingly;

The outcome of the classification system provides water resource managers with specific targets which must be met by addressing the impacts associated with various water use activities within a catchment.

Once an MC has been determined, it is the responsibility of all water users to manage the impacts of their water uses by complying with water use authorisation conditions in order to meet the requirements of the MC;

How will the water users be aware of what is happening?

Comprehensive stakeholder engagement will be held at each step of the process.

What links does the classification process have to other initiatives already taking place in the Department?

The classification process is not carried out in isolation from other initiatives currently underway, but is integrated within the overall planning for water resource protection, development and use.

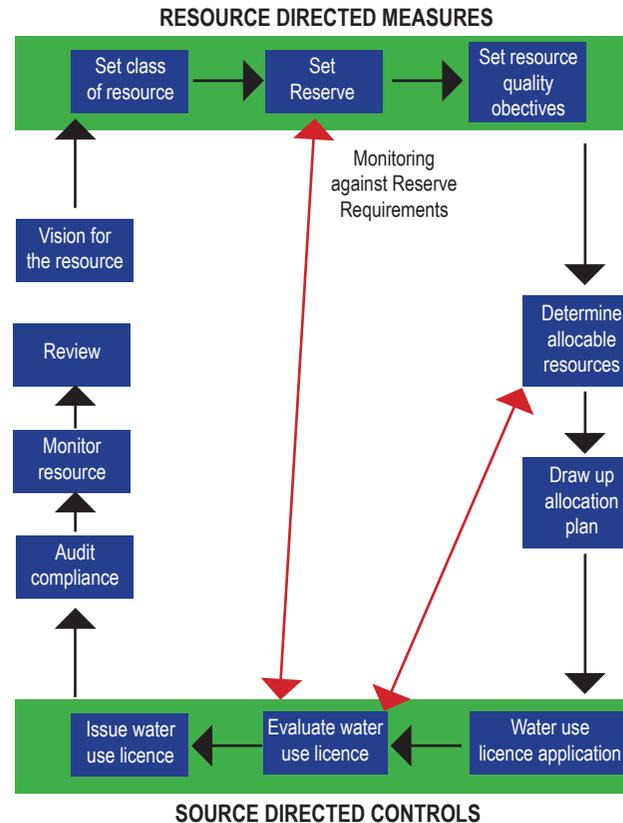
What is the current status and implementation plan for the classification system?

The development of the WRCS has culminated into Regulations for the Establishment of the Water Resource Classification System, published as Regulation 810 in Government Gazette 33541 dated 17 September 2010.

The publication of these regulations will result in the phased implementation of the WRCS in priority catchments.

PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES

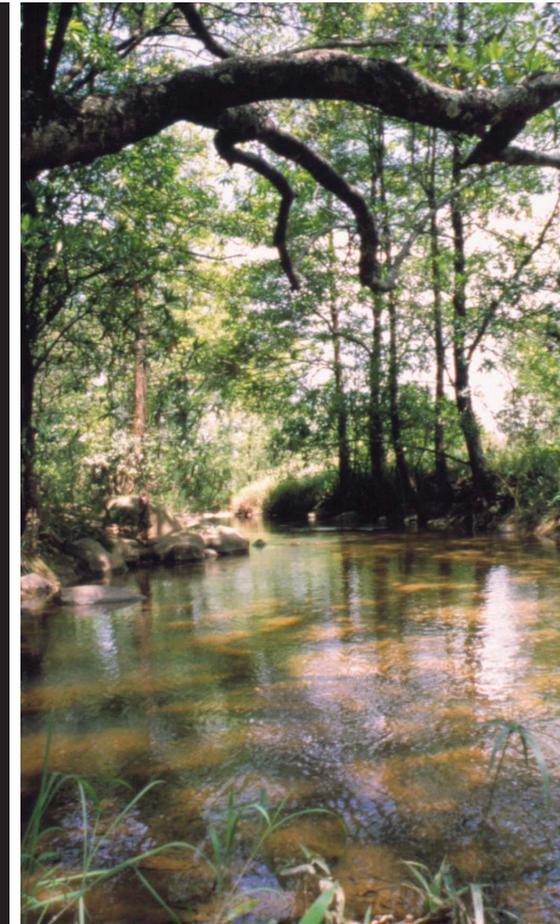
The schematic representation illustrates the process of classifying water resources as the first step towards balancing the protection of water resources against the use thereof within an Integrated Water Resource Management framework.



FURTHER INFORMATION

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**IMPLEMENTATION OF
A WATER RESOURCE
CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**



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BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

It is recognised that some water resources by virtue of their ecological importance may require a high level of protection, whereas other water resources may serve the country's developmental and economic growth needs. In keeping with the Constitutional requirement for sustainable development, all water resources must be able to sustain their use. Chapter 3 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998), "NWA", is devoted to the comprehensive protection of water resources and provides a series of measures intended to achieve this protection such as the classification of water resources. In response, the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) has established a Water Resources Classification System (WRCS) that is formally prescribed by Regulations in terms of section 12(1) of the NWA. The WRCS is a step-wise process whereby water resources are categorized according to specific classes that represent a management vision of a particular catchment by taking into account the current state of the water resource and defining the ecological, social and economic aspects that are dependant on the resource. The implementation of the WRCS therefore requires taking into account the social, economic and environmental landscape in a catchment in order to assess the costs and benefits associated with utilization versus protection of a water resource.

The WRCS defines three water resource classes, reflecting a gradual shift from resources that will be minimally used, to resources that are heavily used by taking into consideration the social and economic needs of all who rely on the water resource. The WRCS forms part of a wider suite of resource directed interventions aimed at securing an appropriate balance between the use and protection of water resources. The subsequent classification of water resources represents the first stage in the protection process and will result in the determination of the quantity and quality of water required for ecosystem functioning as well as maintaining economic activity that relies on a particular water resource.

Water resources must be classified into one of the following classes:

Class I water resource is one which is minimally used & the overall ecological condition of that water resource is minimally altered from its pre-development condition

Class II water resource is one which is moderately used & the overall ecological condition of that water resource is moderately altered from its pre-development condition

Class III water resource is one which is heavily used and the overall ecological condition of that water resource is significantly altered from its pre-development condition

Procedure for determining the class of a water resource:

1. Delineate the units of analysis & describe the status quo of the water resource;
2. Link the socio-economic & ecological value & condition of the water resource;
3. Quantify the ecological water requirements & changes in non-water quality ecosystem goods, services & attributes;
4. Determine an ecologically sustainable base configuration scenario;
5. Evaluate scenarios within the IWRM process;
6. Evaluate scenarios with stakeholders;
7. Gazette the class configuration

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Water Resource Classification System (WRCS)?

- Set of procedures, formally prescribed by Regulations, for determining different Classes of water resources, and commonly referred to as Management Classes (MC).
- To determine the MC, the WRCS lays out a set of procedures grouped together into seven steps that when applied to a specific catchment, will ultimately assist in the process of maintaining a balance between protecting our water resources and using them to meet economic and social goals. The final outcome of the classification process is a set of desired characteristics for each of the water resources in a given catchment.
- The 7-step classification procedures are outlined in supporting technical guideline documents available on the

following link:
<http://www.dwa.gov.za/Documents/Policies/WRPP/default.htm>

Why do we need to classify water resources?

The determination of class for a water resource represents the first stage in the protection process.

What is a Management Class?

The Management Class, which will range from minimally used to heavily used, essentially describes the desired condition of the resource, along with the degree to which it can be utilised.

What will the classification process encompass?

The process begins by using the WRCS to define the current state of the water resource (or part thereof) in terms of the ecological and biophysical elements. A consultative process is then embarked upon whereby the classification system is used taking into account all the ecological, social and economic aspects, to define a future desired state.

What are the end results of the classification process?

Management Classes, EITHER Class I, II, or III
Reserve
Resource Quality Objectives (RQO's)

What is the Link with Reserves and RQOs?

The MC of a water resource sets the boundaries for the volume, distribution and quality of the Reserve and RQO's and therefore informs the determination of the allocatable portion of a water resource for use. RQOs are a set of narrative and/or numerical management objectives defined for any particular resource.

What will happen to the existing Preliminary Reserves?

These remain in place until it is superseded by a gazetted MC, Reserve and RQO's for that particular water resource (or part thereof).

When will the WRCS be implemented?

DWA has been preliminary classifying water resources to date. The implementation of the WRCS, as prescribed by the Regulations to establish a Water Resources Classification System, will follow a phased approach with implementation initially scheduled for