



# CLEAR RIVERS

South Africa is a water scarce country,  
Clean up and protect water resources

Dedicate 67 minutes to cleaning rivers and streams

WATER IS LIFE - SANITATION IS DIGNITY



**water & sanitation**

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION

## Clear Rivers Campaign

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**“South Africa is a water source country, Clean up and protect water resources”**

When rivers run dry, it reminds all of us that water does not come from the tap. It is for this reason that government, business and civil society initiated the Clear Rivers campaign in 2016.

The campaign calls on everyone to dedicate their 67 minutes of goodwill activities towards cleaning up streams, wet- lands, dams, canals and any freshwater source.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in cleaning up the water ecosystems; on any day during Mandela Month.

**This year’s theme for Nelson Mandela Day is, “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are”**



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*It is even more important for people to partake in this campaign as this year has been declared of Nelson Mandela*



## BACKGROUND

South Africa is a water scarce country and rated the 30th driest in the world; with a rapidly increasing population. This is based on its average rainfall of 500mm compared to the world average of 860mm.

South Africa's rainfall is unpredictable and common periods of drought limit the water resources even further. Rivers that used to flow throughout the year are now dry, while others flow only during rainy seasons. Years from now, the demand for water might exceed the amount of available water in our country. This means that we must use and share our water more effectively.

The health of the rivers in our country is threatened by excessive use of the water and the riverbanks. If we pollute the river in one place, we affect the condition of the river for a long distance downstream. A river performs functions such as the ability to clean itself best, when it is healthy.

Therefore, active and responsible citizenry is encouraged across spectrum where people from all walks of life become participants in promoting healthy rivers. The relationship between communities and healthy rivers can never be overstated, as it is community members who must take care of our rivers to ensure that they are not filtered with filthy litter.

The need for water security, particularly in the face of global climate change and a multitude of anthropogenic impacts affecting our rivers, calls for a national and unified approach to protect our rivers, wetlands and broader catchments.

In this way all people can benefit from the added-value products of healthy rivers and can have access to clean water for basic human needs.

It is for this reason that the Department of Water and Sanitation connects South Africans to their sources of water and the natural infrastructure that are crucial for a water secure future. This is done annually, when South Africans are called to clean up rivers and water ecosystems, as part of dedicating their 67 minutes of goodwill, during Mandela Month.

*“South Africa is a water scarce country and named the 38<sup>th</sup> driest country in the world”*

We know that most of those that have no access to piped water use water from various natural water resources such as streams and rivers. The Clear Rivers campaign is one attempt by the Department of Water and Sanitation to ensure clean rivers and allow for poverty stricken communities near rivers to have clean and usable water. In this way, we are ensuring dignity of the poor amongst us as a nation.

This year's Clear River campaign comes during a difficult period in our country and the world in general, with the novel coronavirus pandemic having reared its ugly head. The devastating effects of the virus have made the world to change the way things are done and a new normal is now in place.

The national lockdown announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa and the Regulations that we have to comply with, prohibits large gatherings and encourages social distancing amongst people to avoid the spread of the virus.

Over the years, the Department has been mobilising all sectors of society to join hands in large numbers and go out to clean our rivers and streams but this year it will be different as large gatherings in one place will be avoided. However, the Department still calls out communities, corporate sector and civil society organisation to go out in their respective communities to clean and also prevent rivers and streams pollution.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN

The objective of the Clean Rivers campaign is to undertake a collaborative effort and actively engage communities as well as promoting and creating on-going awareness and education on protecting our water resources. Fostering volunteerism among communities is actively encouraged as part of a proactive approach to protecting our rivers, streams, wetlands and other water ecosystems, given the drought that still persists in large parts of the country.

The envisaged outcomes of the campaign seek to ensure the following:

- Environmentally conscious communities;
- Well informed/ educated communities;
- Pollution free rivers

*“South Africa is a water scarce country”*



## LEGISLATION GOVERNIG THE WATER SECTOR

### 3.1 The Constitution of South Africa

Section 27 (1) (b) of the Constitution of South Africa clearly articulates that everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water.

### 3.2 The National Water Act (NWA) of 1998 and the Water Services Act (WSA) of 1997

The Acts are complementary and provide a framework for sustainable water resource management while enabling improved and broadened service delivery. The NWA is founded on the principle that all water forms part of a unitary, interdependent water cycle, and should thus be governed under consistent rules. The Act contains comprehensive provisions for the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of South African water resources.

### 3.3 National Water Resource Strategy 2

The National Water Resources Strategy (required under the National Water Act) is also currently under revision. The third iteration of this strategy was due for gazetting in 2018. There is a possibility under consideration in the revision of the legislation that a future strategy will combine water resources, water services and sanitation into an integrated National Water and Sanitation Resources and Services Strategy.

### 3.4 National Water and Sanitation Master Plan

The Plan sets out the critical priorities to be addressed by the water sector in the period 2018 – 2030. It also sets out annual measurable outcomes inclusive of roles and responsibilities, time frames and associated estimated costs. The Master Plan also identifies how performance will be monitored. As a plan, rather than a strategy or policy, the prioritised actions with responsibilities are detailed against which Cabinet, Parliament and the public can hold relevant players in the sector accountable.

### 3.5 National Development Plan

The Plan was launched in 2012 and provides a detailed blueprint for how the country can eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030. The national blueprint articulates that all South Africans will have affordable, reliable access to sufficient safe water and hygienic sanitation by 2030.

*Everyone is encouraged to participate in cleaning up our water ecosystems; on any day during Mandela Month.*







# NATIONAL WATER AND SANITATION MASTER PLAN

The National Water and Sanitation Master Plan notes that river ecosystems are vital for supplying fresh water: they store and transport water and, combined with constructed storage and transfer schemes, bring water to urban and rural areas, irrigate croplands, take away waste and provide cultural and aesthetic services.

Healthy tributaries help to maintain natural flow pulses and flush pollutants from hard-working larger rivers, contributing to the quantity and quality of water supplies. Contrary to popular perception, fresh water owing from rivers out to sea is not wasted but is essential for maintaining healthy ecological systems in estuaries as well as coastal and marine ecosystems, and the social and economic benefits received from them.

## BENEFITS OF HEALTHY RIVERS

In many places in South Africa rural people depend, for their livelihood, on products derived directly from rivers. As a result, their relationship with rivers is close and their need for healthy rivers, critical. The benefits of the healthy rivers are however not only limited to the rural communities but also urban communities who use rivers for recreational practices such as fishing.

### **5.1 Domestic Benefit**

Communities benefit from clean and healthy rivers. Clean and fresh water assists communities in their daily activities including consumption, cooking and washing. The fish that live in healthy rivers can be used as an excellent food source. The dense, indigenous, riparian vegetation around healthy rivers also attracts animals and birds. Communities and even livestock particularly in rural communities stand a better chance of an improved quality of life when our rivers are clean and healthy.

### **5.2 Cultural Benefit**

Communities use clean and healthy rivers to perform cultural rituals, for making sacrifices and for communicating with ancestors. Rivers serve as sacred places for different religious and spiritual practices such as worship and ceremonial cleansing, for example baptism. Fish is an excellent source of food.

### **5.3 Economic Benefit**

Different types of plants grow in and on the banks of our rivers. Some of the plants provide communities with building materials such as roofing for huts and or houses. Communities also use reeds and other wetland vegetation to make baskets, mats, curtain blinds and handbags. Wetland vegetation can help economic development if it is harvested in a sustainable way

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The envisaged outcomes of the campaign seek to ensure the following:

- Environmentally conscious communities;
- Well informed/ educated communities;
- Pollution free rivers;
- Foster responsible citizens who take care of their rivers.

## CLEAR RIVERS CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

There are several activities involved for the event.

- Stakeholder engagement with corporate South Africa, in a bid to find partners and participants of this volunteer initiative;
- Sector mobilisation;
- Communication activities that will include advocacy on the need to protect freshwater ecosystems;
- Awareness and educational activities;
- Clearing campaigns that will see community volunteer activities in a bid to clear up pollution from dams, rivers, wetlands, streams and across the freshwater ecosystem.
- SHARE (Campaign Toolkit)
  - o Access to campaign collateral that individuals, corporates, schools and other organisations can download for their own use. Collateral proposed:
  - o Facebook, Twitter, Email signature, Web banner/s, posters, Podcast/s – possible interviews with relevant stakeholders, Blogs;
  - o Water dialogues on water conservation, water demand management, protecting water ecosystems and related topics.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND TARGET AUDIENCE

### Stakeholder engagement

- Collaborate with corporate, organised and community stakeholders for advocacy on protecting freshwater ecosystems.

### Target Audience

- Individuals and communities;
- Corporates;
- Civil society;
- Schools and academic institutions;
- Faith based organisations;
- Government departments.

## MEDIA and CONTENT

### Key Messages

- Know where your water comes from.
- We have a responsibility to conserve and protect rivers, dams, wetlands and the environment.
- Let us keep our rivers, wetlands, streams and all freshwater ecosystems clean
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- Report pollution of rivers and fresh water ecosystems to the DWS Hotline on 0800 200 200

### Communication Protocol

Information is a prerequisite for effective communication with communities. To effectively deliver on its communication goals, the Department of Water and Sanitation is committed to improve the availability of information to all those residing in South Africa, whether citizens or visitors.

### Media Target Audience

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Target audience	Channels
Public	<p>All platforms will be used – especially those that are specific and targeted to the lower LSM's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream Broadcast Media</li> <li>• Community Media (Radio and Print)</li> <li>• African Languages stations</li> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Social Media</li> </ul>
Media	<p>Media is a critical partner in the multi-step flow of information to the rest of stakeholders and the public and in this regard various platforms will be utilised including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media engagement – (talking to editors)</li> <li>• Media releases – (regular releases)</li> <li>• Media briefings / special briefings – (where necessary update communities through the media)</li> <li>• Op-eds – (ensure that the voice of government is heard)</li> </ul>
Youth	<p>All platforms guided by the preferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-line communication including social media</li> <li>• Mainstream broadcast media</li> <li>• Clean up events</li> </ul>
Business (Private) Sector, Labour & Civil Society	<p>Stakeholder engagements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toolkit</li> <li>• Briefs</li> <li>• Correspondences</li> <li>• All normal platforms including broadcast and on-line communication</li> </ul>
Internal Audiences (Department of Water & Sanitation, Water Entities and Municipalities)	<p>Government is the largest employer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue internal communiques</li> <li>• Use departmental internal channels (Intranet/mass staff emails)</li> <li>• Submissions and Emails</li> </ul>





**Media engagement**

Sharing information through engagement programmes with the media;  
 Develop interview schedules;  
 Publicise the outreach programmes;  
 Give updates of key activities throughout this period; and  
 Develop statements on each of the interventions of the campaign.

**Media Implementation Plan**

PRE EVENT ACTIVITIES	
Outcome	Activity
	Development of key messages for review
News stories	Production of intranet articles
Opinion Pieces	Production of opinion pieces on river cleaning and anti- pollution
Media Liaison	Develop and implement an interview schedule Draft media advisory to invite media to the build- up events as well as events to take place during the duration of the campaign Managing media RSVPs Do media follow ups
Media Monitoring	Monitoring of the coverage of the activities as well reporting from the media

DURING THE EVENT	
Outcome	Activity
News stories	Production of articles
Media Liaison	Media liaison/ facilitation of media interviews. Attend to media queries/requests on the projects
Social Media	Updates on the activities

POST EVENT ACTIVITIES	
Outcome	Activity
Content development	Media statement, opinion pieces and internet articles
Media Monitoring and analysis	Media analysis to see the impact the clean up projects had in the media





