



## water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 701 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mr M J Ellis (DA); is attached for your consideration.

  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE:

25/5/10

  
DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

  
MS B R SONJICA, MP  
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE:

25/05/2010

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 701

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 15 MARCH 2010  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 7)

701. Mr M J Ellis (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) (a) What has been her department's involvement with the development of the national Diatom Assessment Protocol (DAP) and (b) what entity is driving the development of the protocol;
- (2) whether her department continues to support the development of this protocol; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether her department has been approached to provide funding for this project; if so, what was her department's response;
- (4) whether her department is currently rolling out its own diatom monitoring project across the country; if so, how does this relate to the ongoing development of the DAP;
- (5) how will her department use the DAP once it is completed?

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**REPLY:**

- (1)(a) My Department has been closely involved in the development of the National Diatom Assessment Protocol as one of the main stakeholders and was part of the Steering Committee for this project.
- (1)(b) The development of the diatom assessment protocol was done through the Water Research Commission.
- (2) My Department fully supports the development of this protocol as it will compliment the existing ecological indices of the National Aquatic Ecosystem Health Monitoring Programme (NAEHMP) and could also be used in the National Eutrophication Monitoring Programme (NEMP), in order to give a better indication of the trophic status of water resources, complimenting the chemical and other algal data.
- (3) Yes. My Department was approached to provide funding for this project but due to various circumstances this request could not be favourably considered.
- (4) The inclusion of a diatom index within the NAEHMP and/or NEMP is currently in the early conceptual phases. Capacity building within the Department and the process of upgrading the Biological Laboratory microscopes required for diatom identification has been started.

It is envisaged that the practical application of the DAP tools will create the opportunity to guide the further development of the DAP and ensure that is effective and accurate.

- (5) The DAP is seen as a complimentary tool for existing indices currently being used to assess the quality of the surface water and as an indicator of the aquatic ecosystem through the national monitoring programmes.

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