



## water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

2011 -04- 07

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Reference: 2/1/5/1

### MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 585 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above question asked by Mrs H N Ndude (Cope) is attached for your consideration.

*[Handwritten signature]*  
ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 2/04/2011

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED ✓

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MRS B E E MOLEWA, MP  
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 9/05/11

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 585

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 07 MARCH 2011  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 04)

**585. Mrs H N Ndude (Cope) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:**

Whether, with reference to the 2009-10 annual report, her department has succeeded in achieving greater access to accredited laboratories to test water quality for the Blue Drop Certificate Programme; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW599E

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**REPLY:**

Yes, the accreditation process of municipal and commercial water quality laboratories falls outside of the Department's mandate, however we ensured that through consultation with the National Laboratory Association (NLA) and the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS), the need for credible analyses is prioritized. It should be noted that the process of accreditation is triggered by the laboratory itself and when it qualifies it does not automatically mean that the laboratory can claim overall accreditation. A laboratory will be accredited for the analyses of a particular determinant and not for all parameters stated under the national standard.

The Department also consulted laboratories together with NLA to discuss means of an incremental approach towards overhauling the current situation where only a few laboratories are accredited for various determinant analyses. Participation in Proficiency Testing Schemes (PTS) (an international requirement for accreditation) was encouraged to allow municipalities to have access to laboratory analyses of higher credibility. A Municipal Water Quality Laboratory Strategy is being finalised to:

- o Pave the way from PTS participation towards accreditation for all water quality laboratories;
- o Mandatory registration with the Department to ensure municipalities have access to credible laboratories; and
- o To optimize relationships between municipal water quality regulation and the laboratory accreditation authority.

The Department further included the need for credible analyses as a key requirement of both the Blue Drop (Drinking Water Quality) and Green Drop (Wastewater) Certification programmes to further emphasize the need for credible results. The municipal response to these requirements (*Credibility of Water Quality Analyses*) was generally positive since municipalities commenced procuring laboratory services from those complying with the incentive-based regulation prerequisites.

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