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TERMS OF REFERENCE

The implementation design phase of the National Aquatic Ecosystem Biomonitoring Programme (NAEBP) was initiated in August 1997 by the Institute for Water Quality Studies, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. This programme, subsequently renamed the River Health Programme (RHP), consists of four portfolios, one of which is research and development. The overall objective of the RHP is to develop the procedures and infrastructures for implementation and ongoing maintenance of biomonitoring on a national scale.

Southern Waters was contracted to focus on one aspect within the research and development component, namely on "Ecological reference conditions for riverine macroinvertebrates". The duration of the project was three years from August 1997 to August 2000. Research was to be conducted in the Mpumalanga region and local biomonitoring practitioners were involved in the field component. The results of the project would enable a protocol for the derivation of ecological reference conditions for riverine macroinvertebrates to be developed, which could then be applied to other regions under the guidance of the RHP.

This report, therefore, focuses on the establishment of a protocol for the derivation of ecological reference conditions for riverine macroinvertebrates and is the last in a series of reports related to such reference conditions. Other reports emanating from this project include:

- Delineation of river types for rivers of Mpumalanga, South Africa: the establishment of a spatial framework for selection of reference sites (Dallas & Fowler 2000),
- Ecological Reference Condition Project: Field-manual. Volume 1: General Information, Catchment Condition, Invertebrates and Water Chemistry (Dallas 2000), and
- A Rivers Database and User Manual (Fowler, Dallas & Janssens 2000).