

## 22. MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

The RHP is specifically designed to **assist environmental decision makers with the management of South Africa's freshwater resources**. Hence the results obtained through data collection, analysis of results and interpretation and reporting on environmental trends should lead to **management actions** where these are required. Such management actions can only realistically arise from what the RHP is designed to monitor and assess.

The RHP is primarily **a tool for keeping “a finger on the pulse” of long-term environmental trends** such as the gradual deterioration in water quality and ecological integrity and the possible causes or sources of these. Hence, where this has been shown to occur, the RHP can contribute to **a management plan which addresses these issues**. The formulation and implementation of this management plan should involve all the stakeholders and interested and affected parties in an integrated manner, with clear roles and responsibilities assigned to each (Figure 7).

After discussion with your PIT, the next step in initiating such management actions is to identify the possible causes and sources of the ecological and water quality deterioration. Once these have been established, **contact the parties concerned and present your RHP findings**. These should be in the form of a report clearly showing the RHP results and an interpretation of these. Through a **participatory process**, managerial solutions may be reached and mitigatory measures can then be implemented, without resorting to legal litigation. However, if this fails, then the situation requires the attention of government authorities.

The RHP is also a **monitoring tool designed to “red-flag” environmental problems** detected at monitoring sites. Where your RHP has detected a severe ecological impairment due to a major catastrophic event (e.g. a pollution spill), the results can be used as **preliminary evidence** to initiate a more detailed investigation. The RHP can also be used to monitor the long-term ecological recovery of such impacted sites and assess the effectiveness of the rehabilitation measures.

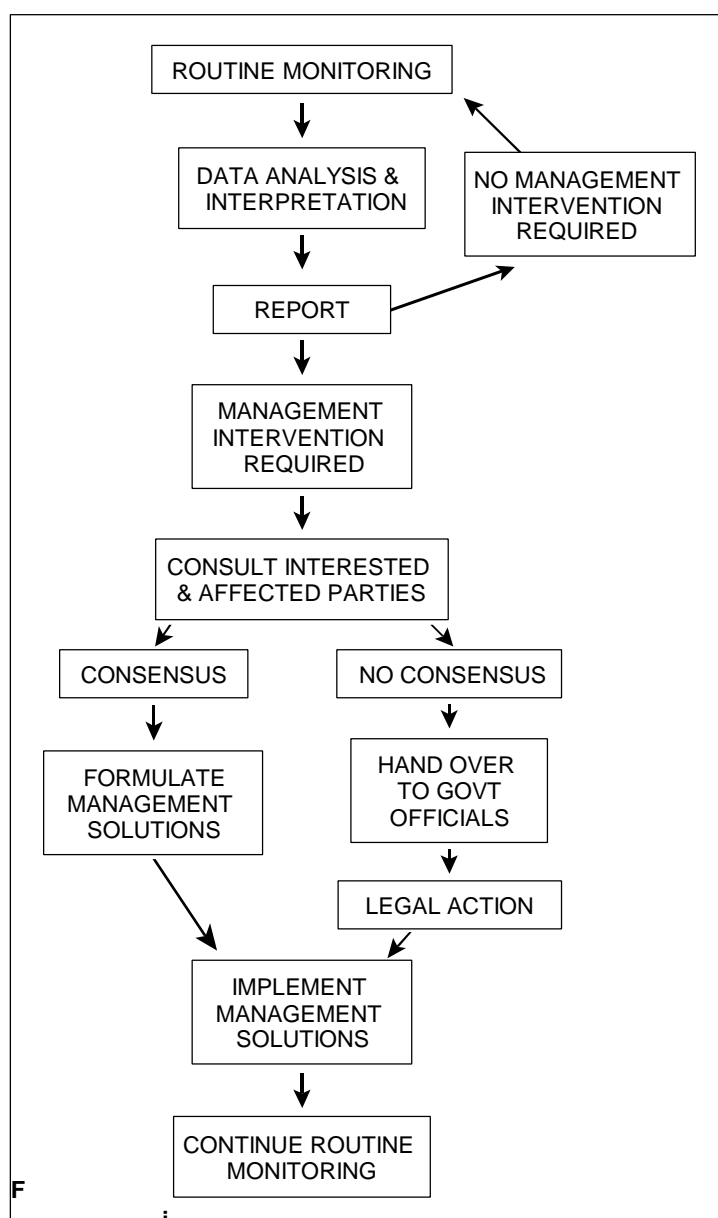


Figure 1. A diagram for the instituting management actions for the RHP.

**Non-compliance** by industry to Environmental Impact Assessment permit conditions or DWAF permit conditions may also be detected through the RHP monitoring and bring about management interventions to protect the river system from further degradation. The relevant DWAF and provincial environmental affairs officials should be alerted to this immediately. Municipal and local council officers should also be informed.

If a consultative management solution is not reached, then **legal litigation** is required. This is the domain of the DWAF, environmental affairs and local council officials. Where such legal litigation is called for, it must be remembered that your RHP results obtained from the various indices do not have legal standing in a court of law. For this, **legally recognised methods of gathering environmental evidence** must be used. These normally involve the collecting of water samples by an externally approved agency for chemical analysis at an accredited laboratory.

**See legal context section (section 2) for more information on the RHP and the law.**