

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SOUTH AFRICA

NEWSLETTER EDITION 3









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Department: Water and Sanitation **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SOUTH AFRICA

PURPOSE OF NEWSLETTER (No. 3 of 4, December 2016)

The purpose of this newsletter is to:

- update you on the development of the IWQM Strategy;
- ii. inform you about the way forward;
- iii. invite you to register as a stakeholder; and
- iv. solicit your comments.

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For more information on the project, please refer to the dedicated project website on the Department's website:

www.dws.gov.za/projects/iwqms

THE IMPERATIVE TO ACT



South Africa faces a wide range of water quality challenges impacting on both surface water and groundwater, originating from both point source discharges, such as industrial processes and municipal Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW), and from diffuse sources due to run-off and infiltration of water from contaminated land. The pollution challenges in South Africa manifest at various scales, differ between catchments, and have different severities of impact. These water quality challenges have the potential to affect the fitness-for-use of the water in our rivers, aquifers and dams. Coupled with increasing demands for limited water supplies and changes in temperature and rainfall due to climate change, water quality deterioration has the potential to have significant impacts on the countries socio-economic growth.

Despite considerable attention being paid by government to Water Quality Management (WQM) over the years, the current state of the country's water resources indicates that the management of water quality has not been as effective as required to ensure that water resources are sustainably used. This is due to a number of complex and interconnected challenges such as balancing socio-economic development needs, on-going uncertainties in governance, challenges with appropriate technical capacity and impacts of global trends like climate change. Water is a key part of the development of all sectors (such as agriculture, tourism, education, housing, industry, etc.) and as such water quality is an important dimension of ensuring that water resources do not constrain the developmental agenda.

Broadly, the challenges can be split into 4 categories (shown in Figure 1).

The necessary tools and knowledge to affect significant change exists and are sufficient to turn the situation around. The challenge lies in co-ordinated and effective action from government, civil society and the private sector.



Figure 1: WQM Challenges

This Integrated Water Quality Management (IWQM) Strategy, therefore, forms a call to action for government, civil society and the private sector, to change the way that water quality challenges are addressed, and to bring about a measurable improvement in the quality of the water in our surface and ground water resources.



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A WATERSHED MOMENT

South Africa is at a watershed moment. For many years there has been an assumption that the country generally has sufficient and relatively easily accessible water resources to support the expectations in socioeconomic development. The recent drought has underlined once again that water resources need to be managed in a conscientious and innovative manner. This especially so when one also considers that the options in terms of large scale infrastructure developments are becoming fewer and that there is an increasing need to improve the way in which our existing resources are utilised.

Economic growth and the need to support the redress of historical social inequities will place further pressure on both water quantity and quality. This will pose a number of difficult questions in terms of water sector demands versus contributions to the economy and the employment opportunities that sectors provide. Furthermore, the country still has a large rural population that has a very direct relationship with the environment and water, and are often exposed to the worst environments. At this watershed moment, we are reminded of the old adage about South Africa's water resource, namely, "too much, too little, too dirty".

SHIFTING GEARS

To move forward, South Africa needs the following:



Figure 2: Shifting gears to improve WQM

- a **change in direction** by benefiting from national and international experience and insights;
- an **increase in speed** by capitalising on the existing strengths in managing water quality; and
- an **increase in momentum** by seizing and employing new opportunities that present themselves.

THE CORE STRATEGIC INTENT

The following were key considerations in the formulation of the IWQM Strategy:

- The strategy should be aligned with the strategic objectives of the policy, while being consistent with broader water and development strategies (NDP, NWRS-2);
- The strategy should focus on a short to medium timeframe, while building a platform for future strategies in line with the policy and visions for water quality management;
- The strategy should prioritize a limited number of critical concerns, while ensuring that other issues are addressed through on-going management or monitoring for future prioritisation;
- The strategy should be relevant at national, catchment and local scales, while ensuring horizontal alignment across sectors and institutions at each scale;
- The strategy should provide the strategic intent and framework for actions to be described in the implementation plans; and
- The strategy should allow for adaptive response to changing circumstances and achievements based on effective on-going monitoring and evaluation, during its timeframe.

THE ROADMAP TO THE STRATEGIC RESPONSES

To effectively address the management of water quality in support of the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Water Resource Strategy (NWRS), there is a real need to elevate water quality management and to clarify the instruments that will need to be used within the DWS and across sectors in an aligned, integrated and cooperative and manner. The vision for water quality management in South Africa is that:

"Government, in partnership with private sector and civil society secure good water quality for all forever"

This is given effect to through a mission that is constructed from five key points. The mission is supported by the WQM Policy Responses which has informed the goals for the IWQM Strategy. Each WQM Goal is supported by Strategic Issues that have been broken up into Strategic Objectives and the Strategic Actions to support the Objectives. These Objectives and Actions were formulated from the assessment phase, which used insights from the Literature Survey, SWOT and Root Cause Analyses, and a number of targeted stakeholder engagements, with both internal and external DWS members. The process from WQM Vison to the Strategic Issues are presented on the next page.

THE VISION

a.Government, in partnership with private sector and civil society, secure good water quality for all forever





STRATEGIC KEY FOCUS AREAS

The strategic approach is, therefore, constructed around three key focal areas (KFAs) namely, fixing priority issues, building capacity and sustaining the existing system of integrated WQM. These have some sense of time frames linked to each but all will have short to longer term dimensions. These will be developed in the implementation plan.



Figure 3: Key Focus Areas

Fix the Priority Issues

This will provide the opportunity to realise success in addressing key issues and will embark on looking at rehabilitation or remediation in critical catchments. This will also entail looking at priority issues that can support the building of capacity and the on-going application of exiting instruments.

Build Capacity

Whilst it is understood that the capacity that the water sector requires will not be in place within the short term, in terms of skills, integrated information and systems, this is an important issue that needs to be driven immediately and continued over time in order to build adaptive management capacity. This also includes the development of cooperative partnerships across government, private sector and civil society.

Maintain the System

The on-going processes that the DWS has in place will continue to be utilised to manage water quality across the country. These instruments and systems may require strengthening over time. This could involve exploring ways in which to improve and simplify some these instruments. This would include a drive to look at where instruments and systems can be integrated between departments in order to improve inter-departmental approaches.

TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is the process that turns strategies into action plans and activities in order to accomplish strategic objectives and goals. As such, implementation is as important, or perhaps even more important, than the strategy itself. Noting the importance of the strategic approach towards implementation, it is critical to develop a clear and structured approach that provides a practical and pragmatic basis from which implementation is enabled.

Implementation does need to be supported by ensuring that there is capacitated staff, sufficient resources, appropriate structures, supportive systems and an enabling culture. It is important to recognise that despite the development of various methodologies and instruments over the last 25 years, all with the aim to enhance water quality management, the status of water resource quality is worsening.

Strategy experts will note that in many instances strategies fail due to the fact that without fully understanding the challenges, and racing to develop and implement various solutions, that there is often an over emphasis on form over function. This results in avoiding addressing real issues like creating improved, efficient and effective action, and that often there is not the creation of active learning environments that enable staff and stakeholders to jointly learn and develop adaptive responses.

There is therefore a need for a change in approach in order to ensure that the trajectory of declining water resource quality is checked, that we start to create the right capacity to strengthen our management of water resources whilst working towards a longer term vision of on-going IWQM that is supported and enabled through adaptive management approaches.

However, whilst there is a need to change our approach to WQM, it must be recognised that there is a well-conceived framework for WQM that needs to continue being implemented. Therefore, the approach does need to be two-fold in carrying on to utilise the existing frameworks for the business of WQM, whilst building and improving for the longer term. At the same time, there is a need to demonstrate success by turning around some key issues as a way of generating passion and support. These approaches can work well together.

To ensure that you are kept informed of progress with the project and the opportunity to participate, please register on the project's stakeholder database by either:-

- emailing the project team (<u>iwqms@pegasys.co.za</u>);
- registering on the IWQMS DWS website (<u>www.dws.gov.za/projects/iwqms</u>); or
- responding to the accompanying reply sheet.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Consultation and communication with stakeholders forms an essential part of the development of the IWQM Strategy and during the last two months, the Department embarked on the IWQM Strategy Provincial Roadshows, with the aim of soliciting specific inputs for the finalisation of the IWQM Strategy and the development of the Implementation Plan. These workshops were organised with the support from the DWS Provincial Offices, proto-CMA and CMA (where established). Key stakeholders in each province were invited to attend. The workshop dates and the attendance for each event is reflected below:

No.	PROVINCE	CITY FOR WORKSHOP	WORK SHOP	STAKEHOLDER ATTENDANCE
1	Eastern Cape	EAST LONDON	12 th October 2016	43
2	Free State	BLOEMFONTEIN	14 th October 2016	26
3	Northern Cape	KIMBERLEY	18 th October 2016	31
4	KwaZulu-Natal	DURBAN	25 th October 2016	34
5	Gauteng	PRETORIA	28 th October 2016	55
6	Mpumalanga	NELSPRUIT	1 st November 2016	56
7	Limpopo	POLOKWANE	4 th November 2016	68
8	Western Cape	CAPE TOWN	9 th November 2016	35
9	North West	RUSTENBURG	18 th November 2016	34

The stakeholder workshops saw a range of stakeholders from mining, agriculture, academia, business, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), community forums, provincial Departments (DWS, DEA, DMR, DAFF, COGTA, National Treasury) CMAs and proto-CMAs attend the sessions which allowed for robust discussion's around the state of water quality and water quality challenges in the Country. The IWQM Strategy was well received with the stakeholders providing critical inputs to strengthen the IWQM Strategy. Stakeholders also provided inputs to inform the Implementation Plan.

The key observations and inputs obtained from the Provincial Workshops were:

- The support the Department can draw on from its stakeholders;
- The need for capacitation, not only of DWS staff, but the sector as a whole; ٠
- The need for a higher level of accountability, both of the Department and of the polluters, through improved compliance, monitoring and enforcement;
- The critical need for improved communication and information dissemination; and
- The need for the implementation of the Waste Discharge Charge System (WDCS).

The inputs received from the provincial workshops will be incorporated into the Strategy over the next months.





WAY FORWARD

In order to give effect to the vision, mission, goals and objectives outlined in the strategy, a number of key actions were seen as priorities by the sector stakeholders. Some examples include:

- ✓ Institutionalising and embedding the new approaches to WQM.
- ✓ Fast-tracking the establishment and capacitation of the CMAs in order to develop and implement the Catchment Management Strategies.
- ✓ Development and finalisation of IWQM Plans for key catchments.
- ✓ Capacitation of WQM officials to perform their key functions.
- ✓ Updating data and information systems to strengthen WQM regulation.
- ✓ Formalisation of partnerships with both private sector and civil society to unlock capacity, skills and finances, however, more importantly, to bring the partners on board to co-create solutions for WQM.
- ✓ Implementation of the Waste Discharge Charge System

These actions, together with the large number of other valuable inputs received during the engagements which took place, will be developed further in the implementation plan.

The WQM Policy and IWQM Strategy will be finalised based on the inputs from the stakeholder processes in February 2017. In a parallel process, the WQM Policy will also be gazetted for public comment in 2017.

An inter-departmental workshop is scheduled for early next year, which aims to bring together those Departments that impact water quality (DMR, DAFF, DEA, COGTA, Human Settlements etc.), are affected by water quality (DEA, DoH, etc.) and those that can support and raise the profile of good WQM (Education, Treasury, etc.).

A National Symposium on WQM will also be held in Gauteng in April 2017 (details of the symposium will be provided early next year). The symposium aims to address the implementation of the finalised WQM Policy and IWQM Strategy and will look to showcase case studies for pragmatic implementation.