



DEPARTMENT: WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LICENCE ASSESSMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

25 January 2000

This Policy and Guidelines is for the establishment of long-term committees to advise on water-use licensing. It differs from the establishment of forums, which are viewed as relatively short-lived bodies. The different water uses as outlined in Section 21 of the National Water Act, no 36 of 1998, may have Licence Assessment ACs established to advise on each of the specific water uses. The various Licence Assessment ACs, advising on different water-uses, will therefore have different purposes and functions. Each type of Licence Assessment AC should establish operational guidelines specific to its purpose and functions.

The Terms of Reference and Guidelines for Stream Flow Reduction Activity Licence Assessment Advisory Committees may be used as a proto-type for other Licence Assessment ACs.

Included below is a breakdown of some of the Pro's and Con's to the establishment of Licence Assessment ACs:

#### **Pro's**

- Licence Assessment Advisory Committees are thought to be the best tool, not only in terms of water use licensing, but also for promoting co-operative governance.
- "Round table consensus approach" – all parties have an equal say and are made aware of the requirements of other parties and can therefore deliberate actively, responsibly and simultaneously.
- Licence Assessment Advisory Committees provide a platform for meeting all requirements of statutory bodies.
- All parties involved in the process know the procedure, understand the time periods required to process licence applications and understand the requirements.
- They provide an excellent mechanism for streamlining the licence assessment process.

- They offer the applicant a single point of entry and a single point of exit in the licence application process; i.e. the lead statutory body (e.g. DWAF) takes responsibility of the administration of the licence application through to the granting of a licence.
- A mechanism for dealing with applications is captured in a procedure that all parties are made aware of and can understand (this is not a black-box/non-transparent approach).
- Licence Assessment Advisory Committees allow for a co-ordinated and rigorous approach for dealing with licence applications.
- They provide not only a strategic overview of water resources in general but focus on site-specific areas in dealing with licence assessment.
- Licence Assessment Advisory Committees adjudication of licence applications is reasoned well.

### **Con's**

- The Licence Assessment Advisory Committee process can be time consuming.
- The committee requires members to have skills that aren't necessary available.
- The process is fairly administratively intensive. However, it is more streamlined and rigorous.
- There are budget implications for the statutory bodies concerned.
- Multi-skilled people may be required to attend many meetings. (Multi-skilling may be required from statutory bodies, NGO's, having membership on various Licence Assessment Advisory Committees).