



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### Capacity to manage inland waters enhanced

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Capacity in government to manage inland waters from an ecological perspective has been upgraded. This follows the earmarking of the sharing of responsibilities by three government departments for this purpose.

The three departments, who will be spearheaded by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), include the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF).

According to the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), which is at the forefront of this process in a campaign called the Freshwater Ecosystem Network, the three departments have been allocated responsibilities as follows:

- DEA will manage aquatic biodiversity for conservation, threatened and protected species and also administer aquatic ecosystems' processes for conservation purposes.
- DWS will focus on aquatic systems with emphasis on availability and quality of water.
- DAFF will manage marine fisheries.

Herewith follows reasons for these moves:

#### **DWS** – why the need for aquatic scientists for inland waters?

- National Water Act – sections specifically dealing with Resource Protection and Health
- The focus of DWS on aquatic system is different to DEA – the latter has more a conservation focus unlike DWS which looks at availability and quality of water
- How: need scientists and technical support that are trained in appropriate fields, regular surveys of river health and water quality; scientists must use databases and scientific literature to advise senior management, scientists collaborate with scientists at partner agencies (including DEA, SAIAB, Universities)
- Scientists have a responsibility to advise on legislative issues – water use licenses, general authorisations, Listed Activities, Resource Management Plans for dams

#### **DEA** – why the need for aquatic capacity for inland waters?

- Manage aquatic biodiversity for conservation purposes of threatened and protected species, focus on FEPA's
- *How: need scientists and technical support trained in appropriate fields (fish, aquatic inverts, riparian vegetation, wetlands etc.), need regular surveys of species and*



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*associated threats, scientists use databases and scientific literature to advise senior management, scientist collaborate with scientists at partner agencies (including SAIAB, Universities)*

- Manage aquatic ecosystems processes for conservation purposes
  - *How: need scientists and technical support that understand how ecosystems (rivers, lakes, wetlands) function and what threatens them (e.g. for dams it'd be excessive abstraction, catchment degradation, alien species). Need regular surveys using appropriate monitoring tools; scientists use survey, database and literature information to advise senior management*
- Scientists have a responsibility to advise on legislative issues – provincial ordinances (e.g. fish stocking permits, aquaculture), NEMBA (TOPS, Alien species regulations)

### **DAFF – why the need for aquatic capacity for inland waters?**

- Lack Acts and Regulations for freshwater fisheries, but have substantial capacity for managing marine fisheries using Marine Living Resources Act
- Have recognised the need and value to include inland fisheries as part of their mandate. Fisheries include recreational, subsistence and commercial fisheries, of which recreational is very valuable at present. Also acknowledge that they have no capacity at present in this field as staff is fully committed to managing marine fisheries, including Mari culture and are preparing an inland fisheries policy
  - *How: in future if DAFF is going to manage inland fisheries effectively; it will need sufficient scientists and technical support that are trained in this field*

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