



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

The race to make waste water treatment plants viable is on high gear

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The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has shifted its objective of ensuring that Waste Water Treatment Plants (WWTPs) are viable into top gear.

DWS was, since the first planning meeting earlier in the year, able to assemble a second gathering where the scope of work and project plan were presented and discussed.

According to DWS' Dr Khonanani Khorommbi, Acting Chief Executive Officer for the Vaal Proto Catchment Management Area (CMA), who is in charge of the department's intervention programme to assist municipalities to function to the best of their abilities, most planning work is ready to be implemented. In preparation for field work, it was required that a stakeholder strategy be developed for the project. "As a result, municipalities undertook to develop local plans that would feed into the water management area strategy," noted Dr Khorommbi.

He added that at the same time it was agreed that the DWS will hold one on one meetings with individual municipalities and finalise the scope of work, which indeed was accomplished.

Dr Khorommbi also pointed out that since municipalities did not submit stakeholder plans, it has been decided that DWS will develop one for implementation in consultation with the Water Service Authorities (WSA).

Also, the department succeeded in sourcing quotations and issuing orders for parts to refurbish the WWTPs. The next phase is to move into site and introduce contractors to municipalities.

He added: "There is other repair work that has been done by DWS which did not spend from this project's budget and I cannot report on it".

Accordingly, improper waste water disposal is not a problem that is only connected with developing nations like those in the country, South America or Asia. It is also something that has to be assessed in some regions of first world countries.

There are 152 Water Services Authorities (WSAs) across the country that operate and manage waste water treatment works and the wastewater collection systems in South Africa. These WSAs are responsible for 824 Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW). These WWTPs are registered on the departmental Waste Water Quality Regulatory System, the Green Drop System (GDS), which is a web based system.

There have been major complaints of pollution reported before DWS intervened. The major challenge in meeting compliance is associated with ageing infrastructure that is meant to treat the collected sewer from households and industries operating in these municipalities. Over and above that, the rate at which some of these towns are developing by means of housing



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developments which are ultimately connected to the sewer line, results in the WWTW being overloaded and making it difficult to operate optimally; this results in non-compliance. However, of particular concern is that non-compliance in effluent translates into higher potable water treatment costs considering that potable water is abstracted from the very same water resources where these WWTWs discharge effluent into.

Ike Motsapi