



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE



Water is life and sanitation is dignity

DWS through WRC trains professionals to plug the skills shortage challenge in the water sector

23 March 2015

The Water Research Commission (WRC), which has recently been appointed as the implementing agent to facilitate the Empowerment Project on Water Resource Management for the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), has taken the lead in training professionals in the water sector to take on the increasing challenges facing the country.

Skills shortage in the water sector is a major challenge.

The need for highly skilled professionals in the water sector ranges across the board, with an urgent demand for, among others, hydrologists, computer programmers, civil and hydrological engineers, economists, mathematicians, scientists, fitters and turners, boilermakers, plumbers and health workers.

With South Africa facing massive water problems, the country has an urgent need for highly skilled professionals in the water sector.

“As water resources become increasingly scarce, we need more effective administrative and political institutions for water planning, development and management,” says Dr Gerhard Backeberg, WRC Executive Manager: Water Utilisation in Agriculture.

According to the then Department of Water Affairs’ (now Department of Water and Sanitation) National Water Resource Strategy (NWRS) of 2013, the country is in dire need of professionals in the water sector. Then, it needed about 3 000 engineers (at a 57% vacancy rate) and 7200 health and hygiene/environmental health practitioners. It also had vacancies for 23 000 management staff and 4 000 artisans and technicians.

The WRC has taken up this challenge by making the development of a skilled water science force a key organisational priority.



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

In the science and technology domain, the WRC has managed to support the training of some 500 Masters and PhD students each year.

The WRC has also been placed in charge of the FETWater programme, which was set up in 2002 to develop and transfer critical knowledge to create a critical mass of water scientists.

The programme, which will run up to 2017, has already aided in the training of 1 052 water professionals in the country.

Ike Motsapi and WRC

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

For more information contact: DWS Media Liaison Director Sputnik Ratau on 082 874 2942.

For media releases, speeches and news visit the Water & Sanitation portal at:

www.dwa.gov.za