



INTERNET ARTICLE

The Regional Bulk Infrastructure Programme

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The implementation of Regional Bulk Infrastructure Programme (RBIP) plays a critical important role in ensuring that we provide a sustainable and holistic value-chain of water supply and sanitation infrastructure, according to the Minister of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Nomvula Mokonyane.

Addressing the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) on the 10th of June she said that bulk infrastructure is now part of the targets and actions for Vision 2030, which are the guiding principles of the National Water Resource Strategy Two (NWRS2.)

The focus on the roll-out of bulk raw water infrastructure developments has changed significantly in the new National Water Resource Strategy 2 (NWRS2). Significant emphasis is placed on the principles of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) in the NWRS2. As part of IWRM, bulk infrastructure is highlighted and the strategy also gives considerable emphasis on the establishment of regional water utilities whose main function is bulk infrastructure.

This needs to be viewed in conjunction with the fact that all regions have significant bulk infrastructure needs, but for different drivers or reasons according to their specific circumstances. In the Western Cape and Northern Cape, for example, the key driver of bulk infrastructure is water scarcity. In Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, the key driver is to enable the provision of services to households with backlogs in services.

Considering all the drivers, DWS estimates that the provinces with the largest water services bulk infrastructure needs are the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. The roll-outs of bulk infrastructure projects are specifically addressed as Perspectives per Water Management area, which highlights the specific requirements of bulk infrastructure in more detail, whereas in the past the NWRS mainly focused on the water resources for each water management area.

In an effort to provide clarity on a broad and expansive topic, it should be noted that the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) is not limited to bulk raw water infrastructure but includes bulk infrastructure for the provision of water services. This includes small water resources (i.e. small dams), bulk raw water, bulk potable water and effluent sanitation infrastructure. "RBIG, however, does not fund bulk projects for metros and focuses on bulk projects in all other areas."

DWS Minister Nomvula Mokonyane announced that this financial year the Department will be spending in excess of R6 billion through our Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant on various projects across the provinces to address these infrastructure challenges. "We shall also focus our attention on Acid Mine Drainage with the view of turning this environmental hazard into an opportunity to produce water," she added.

In Mpumalanga, DWS will be spending an amount of R286 million towards water infrastructure development and maintenance this financial year. Projects that will benefit in this programme include the Msukaligwa Regional Water Supply Scheme, Amsterdam and Sheppmore bulk water schemes, Carolina/Selobela Water Supply Scheme, and Emalahleni



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Bulk Water Supply Upgrade, as well as the Northern Nzikazi Bulk Water Scheme among others.

The Eastern Cape will receive an amount of R1, 2 billion during this financial year. These funds will address the challenges of bulk infrastructure in the areas of OR Tambo District Municipality, the King Sabata Dalinyebo Local Municipality water supply scheme and sanitation, the Xhoxa Bulk Water Supply in Chris Hani, the Mbizana Bulk Water Supply in Alfred Nzo and many others across the province.

This will include the intervention in Makana where work to support and complete the Nooitgedacht Coega Low Level Scheme is underway.

In Limpopo the Department will be implementing a total of eight regional bulk infrastructure projects totalling R955 million including projects in the Mopani and Water Berg as well as Vhembe and Sekhukhune District Municipalities, which includes the Bulk Distribution System to be connected to the De Hoop and Nandoni Dams, respectively.

The North West Province will receive an amount of R757 million to implement various infrastructure development and maintenance schemes in Greater Taung Local Municipality under the Dr. Ruth Mompati District Municipality.

This budget will thus address challenges with ground water quality, including inadequate bulk supply. Other projects include the Pilaesberg Bulk Water Supply Scheme which will benefit various municipalities for both domestic and industrial water supply.

The challenges in the Madibeng Local Municipality will also be addressed.

The Northern Cape will receive an amount of R341 million for its Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant projects. Several bulk water schemes are currently under construction; these are the Namakwa Bulk Water and the Heuningvlei Bulk Water Supply Schemes which will ensure sustainable water supply to Springbok and the surrounding towns as well as the John Taolo Gaetsewe Municipality, respectively.

The construction of the Kalahari East Pipeline Extension and the Vaal Gamagara Bulk Water Supply Projects will also be pursued.

KwaZulu-Natal will receive an amount of R1, 4 billion, this financial year.

Among the schemes to benefit through the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant in KwaZulu Natal are the Lower uThukela Regional Bulk which will deliver potable water southwards to local developments and rural communities. This will also link into the existing Umgeni Water North Coast Supply system supplying 586 thousand people with water.

The Raising of Hazelmere Dam will augment the water supply to the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast for domestic use and irrigation downstream of the dam. The Jozini-Ingwavuma Bulk Water Supply Project will provide the Jozini Local Municipality with sustainable water supply.

The Free State province will receive R484 million for their Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant projects for this financial year.

The province is currently implementing ten projects which are all aimed at increasing its capacity for water supply through augmentation and refurbishment of water infrastructure.



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Critical of these projects is the size optimization, routing and integration of a pipeline to supply water to Mangaung Metro Municipality directly from the Gariep Dam on the Orange River.

Gauteng will receive R349 million for its projects. Currently there are two projects being implemented under Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant. These are the Sedibeng Regional Sanitation and Westonaria Regional Sewer Schemes. The Sedibeng project was initiated due to spillages of raw sewage into the Vaal River.

The Westonaria Regional Sewer Scheme covers parts of the City of Johannesburg Metro, Randfontein, Westonaria and other projects that were initiated to address the backlog of Sanitation Services. The other two Strategic Projects are Syferfontein and Lion's Park. These will be implemented to unlock infrastructure development in the south and north of the City of Johannesburg, respectively.

In the Western Cape, the Department recently completed an exercise to determine the bulk water and sewerage infrastructure needs for the Western Cape for the next 15 to 20 years.

To date, the Department has invested R533 million through Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant and Accelerated Infrastructure Community Projects with a further R194, 8 million allocated for the 2015/16 period.

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