



INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS's intention to introduce a single CMA gathers steam

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The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is powering ahead with efforts to collapse the current nine catchment areas (CMAs) and establish a single catchment area in bid for to improve operational efficiency.

The Department has set itself a deadline of end of the 2018/19 financial year to establish the single CMA. The envisaged CMA will help to manage water resources at a local level, facilitate inclusive water resources management and minimise costs.

A number of internal and external consultations are currently taking place in different regions source comments in a build to the finalisation of the creation of the single catchment area.

The first was the Gauteng Provincial office where an internal consultation session was recently held. Here the Gauteng Provincial Operation staff was given an opportunity to comment on the gazetted business case, as well as explaining how the process should unfold.

The hallmark of the session, which was in the form of questions and answers, was also attended by representatives from organised labour movements, Public Service Association (PSA) and Nehawu.

The presentation by the Project Coordinator, Mr Thivhionali Masindi, shed light on the Department's decision to move from nine CMA to a single CMA to manage water resources in the nine (9) water management areas around the country.

According to Mr Masindi the establishment of the single CMA is in line with the Presidential review of the state owned entities as well as the National Treasury's cost cutting measures.

Mr Masindi added that the decision to create a single catchment area was motivated by concerns of costs associated with running multiple institutions and hence the need to rationalise and align existing institutions as a mechanism to unburden the state of burgeoning service costs.

He said the merge creation of a single CMA would not impact on the water resource management at the catchment management areas.

"The only change will be the governance structure of the CMA. Instead of having 9 governing boards there will be only one governing board," said Masindi.

He added: "The single CMA will allow the nine water management area offices on the decision making process at the local level and community participation will remain central as stipulated in the Water Act."

Masindi said each of the nine water management areas will still be responsible for the development of their catchment management strategy, adding that involvement of stakeholders in the catchment management forums would remain central.



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Asked about how the sector partners were responding to this amendment, Masindi indicated that stakeholder consultation has been an integral part of the water sector institutional reform.

He stressed that the CMA model was supported by all sector stakeholders and even those who had previously expressed concern over the Department's slow pace of implementation of a single CMA.

"The stakeholder engagement was an on-going process. After the internal consultations are completed in the last week of January 2018, we will shift focus to external stakeholders until the CMA is fully established by the end of 2018/19 financial year," Masindi concluded.

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