



# water & forestry

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Department:  
Water Affairs & Forestry  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## 5 Year Local Government Water Sector Support Plan

2007 to 2011

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## **Introduction**

This 5 Year Local Government Water Sector Support Plan outlines the vision and programmes of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry in support of Local Government.

The main emphasis of this plan is on strengthening local government in terms of both its authority function and water and sanitation services provision function.

In particular the plan focuses on:

- ensuring that water services authorities have the capacity and expertise to accelerate the delivery of water and sanitation infrastructure and regulate service provision and
- improving the performance of water services providers so that all people living in South Africa have access to an appropriate, acceptable, safe and affordable basic water supply and sanitation service.

In order to achieve these objectives a multi-dimensional approach is required as reflected in the Local Government Strategic Agenda which recognises the need to not only support local government but also support those institutions that are supporting local government.

Various programmes outlined in this plan follow a multi-dimensional approach: hands-on support to local government; access to expert resource pools; leadership training; strengthening the capacity of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry Regional Offices; appointing support managers; an action plan for water services human resource development; councillor development; water services peer networks and knowledge management; implementation of the sector wide approach and strong mechanisms for collaboration and co-ordination.

This multi-dimensional approach is reflected in the National Joint Water Services Sector Support Strategy that was developed in consultation within the entire water services sector, including SALGA, dplg and National Treasury, with extensive inputs received from water services authorities themselves. The challenge is to implement this Support Strategy and ensure that local government is able to achieve its targets. Towards this challenge the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry has developed this 5 Year Local Government Water Sector Support Plan.

## **Support objectives**

The Strategic Framework for Water Services identified three major support objectives:

1. To ensure the establishment and functioning of capable, effective and efficient water services institutions.
2. To ensure the development of adequate skills and competencies required in the water services sector.
3. To enable all sector role-players and partners to fulfil their roles effectively.

## Support focus areas

This support plan contains ten focus areas. Each focus area is designed to strengthen the water sector support provided to local government. Whilst all the focus areas contribute towards strengthening local government water services institutions, they are grouped according to the support objectives to which they contribute.

### Support to Local Government Water Services Institutions

- 1 Water services authority support
- 2 Water services provider support

### Development of skills

- 3 Councillor development in water services and resources
- 4 Leadership and management training for water services
- 5 Training support managers
- 6 Skills development, education and training (HRD 2025 vision)

### Enable all sector role-players to fulfil their roles effectively

- 7 Sector-wide approach
- 8 Co-ordination
- 9 Peer networks
- 10 Knowledge management

Whilst the **sector wide approach** and **co-ordination** are addressed in the last part of the workplan, they underpin every focus areas and are critical to the success of the entire support strategy and its implementation via this 5 year plan.

## Support to local government water services institutions

### 1 Water services authority support

#### 1.1 Approach

This support is in line with the Local Government Strategic Agenda Priority 1: Mainstreaming hands-on support to Local Government to improve municipal governance, performance and accountability. The purpose of this support is to continue to develop the capacity of water services authorities to *both* fulfill their authority functions *and* to develop strategic leadership at the authority level related to the provision of water services.

The support is broader than capacity building since it also provides support such as assisting with planning reference frameworks for water services development planning, technical support in undertaking feasibility studies and hands on practical support where required.

The ultimate purpose of support to water services authorities is for each authority to achieve the targets outlined in the Strategic Framework and to strengthen the capacity of authorities so that they are able to: (1) effectively plan their water services to ensure access to all; (2) effectively develop infrastructure to meet these targets; (3) ensure the financial sustainability of the service; (4) make good decisions concerning water services provider arrangements; and (5) effectively regulate water services provision.

The results of the **WSA Checklist** will be utilized by water services authorities to identify compliance and/or performance gaps. This is consistent with the LG5SA, which states that government will: undertake a regulatory compliance audit with local government legislation (with respect to national and provincial government and municipalities).

From the results of the checklist WSAs will develop an **action plan** with water compliance and performance targets that they need to achieve (with respect to their authority function) which will be submitted for Council approval.

WSAs will then be assisted to prepare a **WSA support plan** which will form a part of the broader Municipal Support Plan. This WSA support plan will identify the type of support (expertise, budget, resources) required to achieve water and sanitation targets. This process of identifying support needs and planning may also indicate where additional diagnosis of water services provision issues is required.

The Department of Water Affairs through the Sector Wide Approach (Masibambane) and DWAF Regional Offices (Support Managers, One Stop Shop, and programmatic support) will address the needs identified in the WSA support plan.

This approach is both demand driven and responsive and whilst it focuses on water services authority capacity it compliments the Local Government Strategic Agenda and supports Project Consolidate priorities.

Support programmes will reach across 5 key areas of WSA functionality as indicated below:

### **WSDP support**

WSDP support through both hands on support to WSA planning processes and through access to data from the macro planning framework will continue. This priority is consistent with LG5SA KPA 1 support to the development of IDPs. In order to ensure that this support is properly coordinated with other support initiatives, this support will be coordinated by the Regional Managers.

### **Infrastructure development and MIG support**

Support to infrastructure development and MIG will be driven by both the targets that WSAs have to achieve and sustainability issues. DWAF will be providing support to water services authorities from planning through to implementation of their capital projects. Where required, DWAF will also provide technical support for feasibility studies, assist authorities to comply with MIG conditions, and provide support to fast track project planning, and procuring implementing agents for very large projects.

In terms of the national target that all communities have access to clean water and decent sanitation by 2010, DWAF has developed an extensive backlog information system and is continuously updating and verifying the status of backlogs. Based on Census 2001-updated figures, 60% of basic water supply and 40% of basic sanitation backlogs have been eradicated. A National Water Sector Plan is also being developed. This will be extended and updated with an intervention action plan to urgently address the achievement of the respective targets of 2008 and 2010.

### **Tariffs, subsidies and free basic water and sanitation**

Support in terms of determining tariff structures, allocating equitable share and implementing free basic water and sanitation will be addressed through direct operational support interventions. It is during these interventions that key financial decisions will need to be addressed. In addition tools will be made available to assist authorities to set tariffs.

### **Deciding the most appropriate water services provider arrangements**

Support to section 78 processes needs to increasingly become demand driven where it is more directly linked to water services development planning and direct WSP operational support. Those authorities requiring support in deciding the most appropriate WSP mechanisms can access support through their WSA support plans which will be addressed through hands on specialist support (for example the regional resource pools) accessed through the regional co-ordination mechanism.

### **Support to fulfil the WSA regulatory role**

The support to be provided to water services authorities in order to fulfil their regulatory role (regulating WSPs and the provision of services) is addressed in the National Water Services Regulatory Strategy. This support will include model by-

laws, benchmarks, systems for monitoring WSP performance and contract establishment and management.

## 2 Water services provider support

### 2.1 Approach

Building effective operational and management capacity in municipal WSPs means: understanding the environment in which they operate; spending time with the managers, encouraging and mentoring them; developing their leadership skills; and facilitating a network which ensures ongoing support. Water services provider support therefore comprises a range of support interventions.

Those water services providers that are performing poorly and where service delivery is under threat will be encouraged to access direct operational support. The remainder of water services providers will be able to access support through an overall water services provider support programme based on provider identification of support needed.

### 2.2 Direct operational support to high risk poor performing WSPs

The purpose of this support is to enable a measurable improvement in the performance of municipal water services providers that are high risk in terms of not fulfilling their water services provider functions. It involves strategic operational interventions with highly experienced water services managers who make incisive diagnoses to identify measures for business turn-around.

Direct operational support can only be effectively provided if it addresses the most important operational constraints in a particular context. To be effective support this type of support must provide ***the right solution at the right time***.

This is a new initiative for which a **national resource pool** consisting of individuals with high-level experience and expertise in water services provision will be created. It involves the diagnosis of provider problems, the development of a **WSP Action Plan** for turn-around and intensive hands on support to implementation. The support will be managed by the DWAF regional support manager (initial engagement, overall oversight of process) and linked to Municipal Support Plans. Whilst the support will focus on the provision function (well functioning services is the outcome) it will also address authority functions to the extent that these impact on service provision, and will link with relevant water services authority support.

### 2.3 The creation of a national resource pool

The creation of a national resource pool of individuals that is highly-skilled in water services provision is necessary because:

- Proper diagnosis and relevant management support requires the right skills and experience;

- This expertise is a scarce resource (people who have successfully run a water services business); and
- It is more efficient to procure this expertise centrally into a single draw-down facility.

The national resource pool will play an important role in terms of operations assessment (good accurate diagnosis) and implementation monitoring. This central resource will also play a role of co-ordination between the various regions ensuring consistent management support for the provision of water services.

## 2.4 Develop capacity of water services providers

The purpose of capacity building support for water services providers is to ensure that they are enabled to provide effective, efficient services within a sustainable business model.

Water services providers will be encouraged to analyse their performance according to available data from a number of sources including the WSA Checklist, the National Municipal Water Services Benchmarking Initiative and other regulatory performance information systems.

Effective business planning is critical to improving water services provider performance. DWAF will advocate and support a process of business planning to support improved performance. All water services providers are required to prepare a water services provider business plan and DWAF will provide support to this process on a demand-driven basis.

All water services provider support will be co-ordinated through the regional support managers who will ensure alignment with other support programmes prior to implementation of support.

## 2.5 Regional resource pools

Regional resource pools will be created and/or the existing DWAF Technical Assistance Contracts strengthened, ensuring that the *practical* skills sets and *competencies* and *experience* necessary to support the implementation of the WSA and WSP elements of the municipal action plans are adequate.

## Development of skills

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### Councillor development in water services and resources

The LG5SA states that SALGA must intensify its support to the political leadership of municipalities and that all councillors must participate in councillor training. It further states that government will implement a practically focused induction programme for councilors and senior Municipal Managers. DWAF's Councillor Development Programme in water services and resources will support these initiatives.

The purpose of the councillor development programme is to empower councillors to actively participate in water services development planning and other processes with a view to making informed and wise decisions affecting water services. Councillors need to have a full understanding of the water services authority roles and responsibilities as well as the water services business. Within this understanding they need to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of their constituency and comply with national norms and standards.

The councillor development programme comprises both training and strategic sessions to empower decision making. It will become an institutionalised responsibility within DWAF as the sector leader to ensure that responsibility is taken for designing and developing a comprehensive and intensive water services development programme for councillors over their full five year term.

Implementation of the programme will take place through the DWAF regions, co-ordinated by DWAF national, but with the support of all sector partners as appropriate. Implementation may include regional training / strategic sessions (where districts are brought together) as well as sessions at district level.

#### **4 Leadership and management training for water services**

The Five Year Local Government Strategic Agenda identifies leadership development and the professionalisation of management as a key intervention to improve performance. Within local government there is often a limited appreciation of the water services business and what is required for effective performance.

This support is based on the premise that the leadership and management capacity of the water services provider manager is a key determinant of water services performance. As such these managers are a high priority target of leadership and management training.

Leadership and management training will also benefit regional support managers as well as other key leaders within the sector.

DWAF will lead the development and implementation of the water services leadership and management programme, utilising acknowledged leaders in the fields of leadership development and water services management respectively. It will combine leadership principles (vision, initiation of change, inspiration, staff development and passion) and best practice management principles (planning and translation of strategy into action, engaging and directing, organising, effectively allocating resources, communication, and accounting for performance). These will be integrated with leadership and management expertise specific to the water services business.

#### **5 Training support managers**

A **regional support manager** will be appointed in each of DWAF's regional offices. Their primary role is to ensure effective support by identifying synergies (making effective use of resources), coordinating support, engaging directly with water services authority and provider managers, identifying and sharing lessons learned, and procuring support for local government as and when required.

These regional support managers will be employed at an appropriate level of seniority and with the appropriate skills, competencies and leadership capabilities to ensure a strong, responsive, co-ordinated programme of support to local government. A specific recruitment process and training programme will be developed and implemented for these regional support managers. The training programme will focus on leadership development, facilitation skills, and knowledge management practices.

In addition to the training programme, appropriate support for these managers will be available so that they can effectively fulfil their responsibilities. The development of the one-stop shop concept is part of this broader support.

## 6 Skills development, education and training (HRD 2025 vision)

Currently, South Africa lacks adequate human resources necessary to implement all the provisions of the National Water Services Act and the Strategic Framework for Water Services. There is a need to build a more skilled base of human resources in the water sector.

While significant numbers of local authorities have strived to meet the regulatory challenges that have been set, experience has shown that the process of goal-directed organisational "human resource skills mapping" related to "new" areas of functioning has not really taken place yet. Many of the local authorities are still structured and operate in terms of traditional public administration approaches. While there may be a general sense of what is required, the detailed skills and related implications of the functions of water services provision and governance are not necessarily clear to local authorities.

In order to address these issues DWAF intends to embark upon an intensive process of developing a Sector-Wide Action Plan for Skills Development. This will be done in consultation and collaboration with sector partners and the ESETA and WSETA. The Department has developed a 2025 vision for Human Resource Development and the plan will indicate short to medium term objectives towards achieving this vision.

DWAF is also committed to engaging with the relevant SETAs for water to ensure that the needs to the sector are being met by the training and qualifications frameworks that are in place. This will be carried out in parallel to the development of the Action Plan for Skills Development.

The implementation of the action plan will involve a concerted effort to ensure that opportunities for mentoring, training and education are made available to municipal

water services officials in particular. It is recognised that learning opportunities will need to be marketed to officials in order to generate demand.

A schools advocacy programme will also be supported by the Department which aims to encourage school-leavers to consider a career in the water sector and to pursue a suitable path of study which enables this.

## Enable all sector role-players and partners to fulfil their roles effectively

### 7 Sector-wide approach

The sector wide approach is a collaborative effort between the water sector and donors with the aim of strengthening the water and sanitation services sector in South Africa as a whole. Since 2000 DWAF has been following a sector-wide approach to national planning, reporting and budgeting. This approach has been implemented through the Masibambane programme.

The sector wide approach requires planning and budgeting to achieve a *common set of objectives and targets*. These objectives and targets are outlined in the Strategic Framework for Water Services (SFfWS). In order to implement the sector wide approach, the allocation of resources, expertise and support must be geared towards these common set of objectives and targets within the local, provincial and national spheres.

This requires the following:

- A **consolidated budget** (of all donor and government resources) which allocates resources to the common set of objectives and targets. (Masibambane workplan and budget)
- A consolidated **5 year national water sector plan** which is developed and reviewed on an annual basis. This plan supports the implementation of the Local Government Strategic Agenda and is informed by 9 **provincial water sector plans** which are built on the WSDPs and IDPs of WSAs.
- The sector has committed its resources to prioritising the support needs of local government. In order to facilitate the co-ordination and alignment of support, **municipal support plans** inform **provincial water sector support implementation plans** which are then fed into this **5 year local government water sector support plan**.
- Annual reviews of provincial and national plans will be conducted to inform learning and where necessary course correction and adaptation.
- The sector wide approach requires structures to ensure co-ordination. This is dealt with under the next section on Co-ordination.

## 8 Co-ordination

The DWAF model of local government support is collaborative and co-operative. As such it requires significant communication and participation between DWAF national and regional offices, local government and other sector stakeholders. In order to avoid fragmentation and duplication the DWAF support given to local government will be co-ordinated.

The following structures and protocols will support this co-ordination and collaboration:

- A **national task team** will be established in DWAF with a mandate to ensure that local government receives streamlined, relevant, effective support from the Department. It is envisaged that it will be located at a senior level in the Department.
- A **national support co-ordinator/manager** will be appointed by DWAF to ensure that national support programmes are targeted to the support needs of local government as communicated by the Regions. The national support manager will support the regional support managers and ensure that their requests and support requirements are addressed. This manager will also ensure that the resource (financial and expertise) requirements identified in Provincial Water Sector Plans are accommodated in the sector wide approach budget and plans on an iterative basis.
- DWAF regional offices are directly responsible for co-ordinating water services support to local government and are thus the primary inter-face with local government by the Department. **Regional support managers** will be appointed to manage and co-ordinate support for a defined portfolio of water services authorities. These support managers will fulfil the role of both 'director of support' and relationship manager. They will be responsible for identifying and arranging appropriate support for water services authorities and providers, as well as monitoring the impact of support initiatives. They will also play a critical interface role between sector stakeholders locally, provincially and nationally as well as between other support initiatives. Through the regional support managers DWAF aims to significantly improve co-ordination of support and optimisation of support resources to the benefit of local government. The Provincial Sector Support Implementation Plans are the co-ordination and management tool that regional support managers will utilise to identify and respond to local government water services support needs.
- There are **provincial and national sector collaboration structures** which are supported by DWAF and major sector stakeholders. These structures meet on a regular basis to co-ordinate support, exchange information, dialogue on policy issues and sector priorities and plan and report on sector programmes and initiatives. These structures and related process will continue to be strongly supported and in particular to be led by the imperatives in the Inter-Governmental Relations Framework Act.

- **Cross-sector collaboration:** DWAF will continue to engage with key sector partners such as DPLG, National Treasury and SALGA on a regular basis in terms of key initiatives and sector priorities.

## 9 Peer networks

Peer networks provide their members with an opportunity to review their practice in a supportive environment, to share good practice and to deepen understanding and insight. Learning is a constant process and the most powerful learning is that which produces insights into complex problems and the way in which we interact with them. The purpose of the networks is thus to contribute to effective management water services and to address the learning and development needs of the managers in the sector.

DWAF facilitate the successful functioning of WSA and WSP peer networks, including:

- District Water Services Managers Forum
- National WS Municipal Benchmarking Initiative
- Water Services Provider Network
- City Water Services Managers Forum

Where there are unmet demands for peer learning amongst water services managers and other water services stakeholders, DWAF together with SALGA will encourage the development of additional networks.

## 10 Knowledge management

DWAF in collaboration with the sector is committed to giving much greater attention to the effective dissemination of knowledge resources with a view to their effective use in practical situations. In this regard the Department will utilise the One-Stop-Shop Concept, the regional support managers as well as electronic tool boxes for water services authorities and water services providers.

A key role for the Department as sector leader is to collaborate with those institutions that are fulfilling knowledge management functions and to ensure that the best practice information and lesson learning needs of water services authorities and water services providers are met by these institutions. In this regard efforts will be made to strengthen linkages with the Water Information Network and e-WISA.

## **Conclusion**

DWAF is committed to intensive programmes of actions in 10 focus areas over the next 5 years in support of the development of local government in the arena of the provision, regulation and overall management of water services.

DWAF is adopting an innovative, multi-dimensional approach to developing the local government water sector which includes a suite of approaches such as hands-on operational support in high-risk provision cases, the development of water services leadership and management capacity, a multi-annual programme of councillor development, focussed and responsive programmatic support and sector-wide planning, budgetting and implementation. DWAF is directing its resources in a co-ordinated, planned and focussed manner towards achieving measurable improvement in the delivery of water services by local government. It is doing so in full support of achieving the targets for water services set out in the Strategic Framework for Water Services and the Local Government 5 Year Strategic Agenda.