

# MSB III Mid-Term Review

## Civil Society Organizations

**7**

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## contents

Introduction	2
Relevance	3
Effectiveness	6
Conclusion	11

## figures

Graph 1: The benefit of using CSOs	4
Box 1: Summary of CSO training areas	5
Figure 2: Main challenges with working with CSOs	9

## **Introduction**

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have played a significant role as the voice of communities in South Africa from the time of the anti-apartheid struggle. Based in this history, the EU has a long-standing record of working with CSOs in this country. The Masibambane programme has always sought to promote meaningful participation of CSOs in the water and sanitation sector as one of its key objectives. In MSBIII, the EU entrenched this objective as one of its key outcomes as identified in the EU/SA Financing Agreement (2007):

Civil society organizations are able to provide training and support to, and advocacy in the water sector:

Participation of CSOs in water sector consultative bodies at catchment and other relevant local levels will be essential to assist, implement and support the water for growth and development policies. Masibambane can support CSOs to facilitate appropriate training programmes to targeted local institutions. This will entail support for detailed training needs analyses, the design, execution and evaluation of relevant training programmes. In addition it will be necessary to conduct post training skills assessments to monitor and guide the institutional capacity building programmes.

In order to achieve these outcomes, KPIs under the umbrella of *KPI 10: Enhanced role of Civil Society Organisations* were developed to help ensure that CSOs play a stronger and more meaningful role in the water sector, and to develop their capacity in order that they can take up this role:

- KPI 10.1: Advocacy, lobbying and communication programme developed and rolled-out;
- KPI 10.2: CSO Capacity Building;
- KPI 10.3: Involving communities in Water Resources Management.

Essentially, the goal is to ensure the involvement of community-based organizations in both new water and sanitation projects, as well as in the operation and maintenance phase of schemes.

The specific target goals for the year 2007/08 were the following:

- National workshops to be facilitated for provincial committee members. All nine provincial committees to be actively engaged and municipalities made aware of CSO capabilities;
- 8 CSOs to be accredited, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) training to be provided for the 9 provincial committees;
- 10 CSOs to be trained in Water Resource Management (WRM).

While notable progress has been made towards achieving these goals, a number of areas requiring further consideration still remains.

## Relevance<sup>1</sup>

### *Main Findings:*

Since 1994, the role of CSOs has changed, as they have had to respond to new challenges and the changing South African socio-political terrain. South Africa's democracy is one that values community participation and Masibambane III continues to advocate for the value of CSO participation in order that stakeholders will recognise CSOs as a resource and potential partner in service delivery and thus create space for their participation. Service delivery is at the core of MSB III. In this context, MSB III aims to support CSOs so that they may continue to be relevant to service delivery needs and play a role in the delivery of water and sanitation services. The CSO support programme aims to provide appropriate skills to CSOs and support CSOs as service delivery partners.

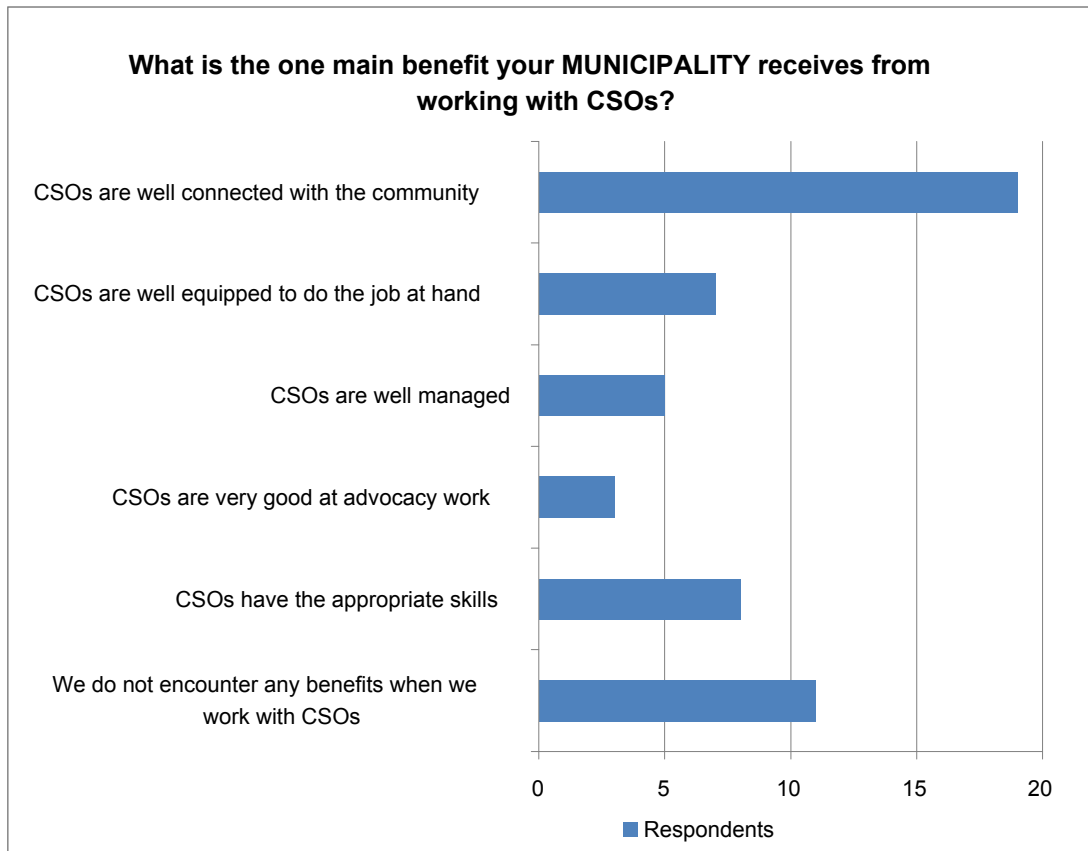
CSO involvement is considered valuable and relevant to service delivery at all levels of government. Because of their proximity to communities, CSOs are considered to be the 'eyes and ears' on the ground. It is this proximity to communities that makes CSOs a valuable partner to government in service delivery. CSOs are closely involved with communities and thus considered to be in a better position to facilitate community involvement. CSOs are the potential link between government and communities. CSOs may raise awareness about issues from the grassroots perspective and in some contexts may be involved in crisis management.

Local government sees major scope for CSO involvement mainly in Local Economic Development (LED) and health issues as well as general water management. They recognize the benefits of using CSOs in service delivery. The following graph illustrates the findings on this from the WSA survey undertaken as part of this review. Although 20.8% saw no benefit in using CSOs, 79.2% recognized the benefits of using CSOs for a number of different reasons.

Graph 1/...

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<sup>1</sup> The extent to which the objectives of MSB III are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, institutional priorities. It also entails an assessment of project coherence in achieving its objectives. i.e. how relevant is what MSB III doing in this area to SA's needs? And how relevant are the activities being performed in this area to what was intended under MSB III?



**Graph 1: The benefit of using CSOs**

Once the space has been created for CSP involvement, it is important that CSO participation is both relevant and applied. The Masibambane CSO Capacity Building Programme is the vehicle to assist CSOs to develop the skills they need to be participants in the water sector. More still needs to be done in addressing the lack of required skills in areas critical to the delivery of water and sanitation services. For instance, our findings show that most CSOs that have been engaged with in the water sector are still weak in project management skills. This has direct impacts on their ability to supply correct documentation, on time.

Through the Masibambane CSO Capacity Building Programme, Masibambane III continues to address skills shortages within the CSOs involved in the service delivery of water as per KPI 10.2 Capacity Building. There has been significant CSO training and support as reported by DWAF in its Assessment for the Release of the First Variable Tranche of Funding 2007/2008:

- 30 CSOs have been trained and capacitated in the Free State;
- 18 CSOs trained and capacitated in Limpopo on leadership, computer literacy, facilitation, tendering and resource mobilization, and advocacy and lobbying;
- 5 CSOs trained and capacitated in Gauteng (in Gauteng CSOs have been involved in the river health programme, concentrating on pollution of rivers by industries and

informal settlements on three rivers; CSPs have also been involved in HIV/AIDS mainstreaming projects at various municipalities);

- 19 CSOs trained by Mvula Trust on Health and Hygiene practice through sanitation projects in Gauteng.

Further training and capacity building inputs include the following:

- Mvula has offered a limited training on M&E with respect to rainwater harvesting, and catchment management processes in the Inkomati area;
- In the North West, training focused on capacity building of participants and maintaining healthy relationships with the municipality;
- Through SANGOCO (NW), 24 CSOs participated in the CSO capacity enhancement programme.

Box 1 below shows the summary of areas of training undertaken in different provinces:

Training has focused on the following subject areas:

- *Institutional social development*
- *Health and Hygiene*
- *Leadership*
- *Computer Literacy*
- *Facilitation*
- *Tendering*
- *Resource Mobilisation*
- *Advocacy*
- *Lobbying*
- *Supply chain management*
- *Water and sanitation policy and legislation*
- *Financial administration*
- *Project management*
- *Project design*
- *Health and hygiene*
- *Water leaks*
- *Governance and leadership of the provincial steering committee*
- *Water Resource management*

**Box 1: Summary of CSO training areas**

In so far as involving communities in Water Resource Management as per KPI 10.3, the target was to train 10 CSOs in water resource management. This target was exceeded as 35 CSOs were trained in water resource planning in the Western Cape.

*Key Recommendations:*

Create an enabling environment for CSO participation. Most CSOs are not able to engage with the procurement model, including policies and tender procedures, and this prevents them from becoming involved;

CSOs that have the potential capacity to cope with procurement policies and procedures should be assisted to do so;

Enable engagement with organizations that are already doing interesting and relevant work. While most CSOs are locally-based, (e.g. river-health CSOs), the procurement-based environment makes it difficult for local government to fund or work with these organizations. Alternatives to the procurement path, or adaptations to the procurement model, need to be explored if the participation of CSOs is to be furthered;

Define areas of CSO engagement. CSOs need to define how they see their participation. They need to define what it means for CSOs to be a link between community and government and how that translates into a meaningful partnership with local government for the purposes of service delivery;

Training should be informed by the skills needs of the CSOs in response to local government needs for resources to assist with effective service delivery.

## **Effectiveness<sup>2</sup>**

*Main Findings:*

In the post-apartheid era, CSOs have been challenged to shift their orientation to that of cooperation in their engagement with government and to act as partners in service delivery. Achievement in this regard has thus far been minimal. Progress varies from province to province with some provinces reporting more favorable progress than others.

Within this context, Masibambane III has made slow progress towards delivering on CSO involvement. MSB III continues to recognize the importance of involving CSOs that goes beyond window-dressing. An increase in the number of CSOs involved in water projects and water resource management has been reported. In provinces such as the Western Cape, Limpopo, and the Eastern Cape, the number of CSOs participating in the water sector has increased. CSOs have participated in water consultative bodies and other relevant levels including provincial forums.

Many Water Services Authorities have acknowledged that support for direct engagement with CSOs has allowed them the opportunity to deal with their fears and to consider the capacity, capabilities and standpoint of CSOs. CSOs are progressively considered highly

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<sup>2</sup> The extent to which MSB III's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Basically is MSB III delivering?

relevant in both planning and implementation (e.g. as participants in various water forums and task teams, CSO's are making inputs into strategy planning). In terms of *KPI 10.1: Advocacy, lobbying and communication programme developed and rolled-out*, the following achievements have been recorded by DWAF as part of its Assessment for the Release of the First Variable Tranche of Funding 2007/2008:

- An Implementing Agent (IA), the CSIR, has been appointed to drive and coordinate the CSO capacity building programme;
- The five-year Business Plan for CSOs was finalised through engagements with CSOs such as the Water Caucus and Mvula Trust. Its implementation is expected to begin in the 2008/9 financial year.
- CSO advocacy strategy has been developed. This too was a product of full consultation process. It will be rolled out in the 2008/09 financial year;
- CSO inputs have been incorporated into DWAF WS Regulation strategy.
- A national CSO knowledge sharing workshop was held, where CSOs from various provinces participated;
- A CSO was incorporated into the National WS Regulatory Strategy Task Team;
- In the Western Cape, 30 WSA advocacy and communication plans have been developed and rolled out.
- In Mpumalanga, CSOs were involved in advocacy in 3 WSAs;
- In the Free State, CSOs have been involved in advocacy at 20 WSAs;
- In the Northern Cape the CSO database was rolled out to all local municipalities.
- In KwaZulu Natal, Eastern Cape, North West, Limpopo and Gauteng advocacy are in various stages of development and implementation.

There has also been active participation and engagement of CSOs in the development of Water Services Regulation Strategy, Africa Conference and Water for Growth and Development process.

Where it has been identified that there was lack of citizen's voice, through the Masibambane Programme communities were assisted to establish community organizations. A good example of this is the case of Mpumalanga Province where CBOs were established in 4 villages in the Bushbuckridge Municipality and 7 villages within Nkomazi municipality.

The IA has experienced a lot of contractual difficulties with DWAF. These not only affect the IA response but also the CSOs with which the IA works. This has resulted in the IA facing the frustration of CSOs.

Annual targets of facilitating national workshops with provincial committee members have been met. The national CSO knowledge sharing workshops provided a valuable lesson-sharing platform. A suggestion was made for the consideration of a project management perspective programme that would assist with knowledge sharing between different projects. The program would provide an opportunity to learn from various projects and talk content. It also would ensure that the lesson-learning embedded in capacity building is not neglected.

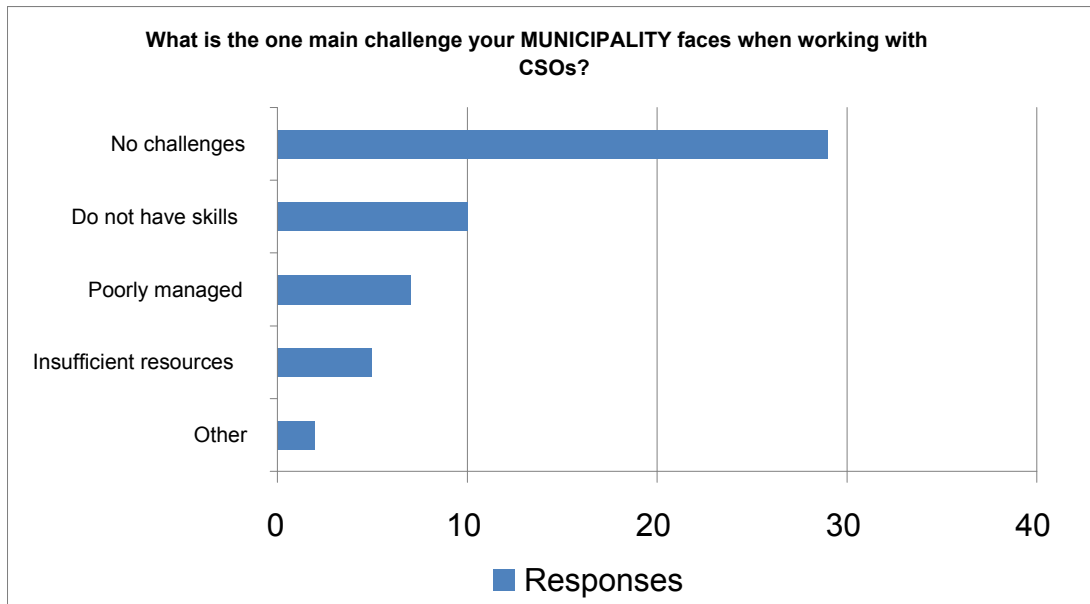
Although there is notable progress in so far as CSO participation and training is concerned, there are still a number of challenges in critical areas that requires attention. There is an evidenced loss of zeal amongst participating CSOs. This is ascribed to the perceived lack of tangible impact of the Masibambane programme. CSO are demoralized and their frustration is growing. They are frustrated towards what they consider to be DWAF's bungling of both its administration and monetary procedure, which undermines CSOs ability to deliver in a sustainable manner.

The challenge of funding was highlighted more often than any other issue. Funding for projects was reported as coming in as late as three months before the CSO is expected to close the project. Late funds puts undue stress not only on the finances of CSOs but their ability to deliver quality services. For CSOs, starting a fiscal year a quarter late has a huge impact on the quality of service delivery. Furthermore, the state of funding for CSOs has a negative impact on the morale of CSOs.

Although there is improved consciousness on the need to engage CSOs in service delivery, participation of CSOs at local government level is generally still slow and not satisfactory. Most municipalities are not clear about the meaning and the value of public representation and participation. However there are minorities of municipalities who are making headway.

CSOs are trying to position themselves as service providers. Insurmountable obstacles in securing appointments from municipalities often thwart their efforts. DWAF is supposed to facilitate this but it has not successfully done so. CSOs are still expected to compete with the private sector to bid for projects. CSO cannot compete with the private sector. There are a number of explanations for this. CSOs, many times, do not possess the same capacity, human and financial, as the private sector. Other reasons for their lack of success in positioning themselves as formidable local government partners is the recurring view that CSOs and municipalities do not understand each other. CSO see local governments as being way too bureaucratic, while local government often still regard CSOs as "*rabble raisers*". Municipalities are still very skeptical of CSOs. Municipalities are used to engaging with the private sector and prefer consultants because of the view that the private sector service providers are neutral participants whereas CSO are likely to be bringing in their own agendas. CSOs lack the capacity to compete for municipal tenders and find the procurement requirements of municipalities too stringent.

Figure 2 below illustrates that the majority of WSA who responded to our survey see no challenges in working with CSOs. Yet this view has not translated to positive engagement with CSOs.



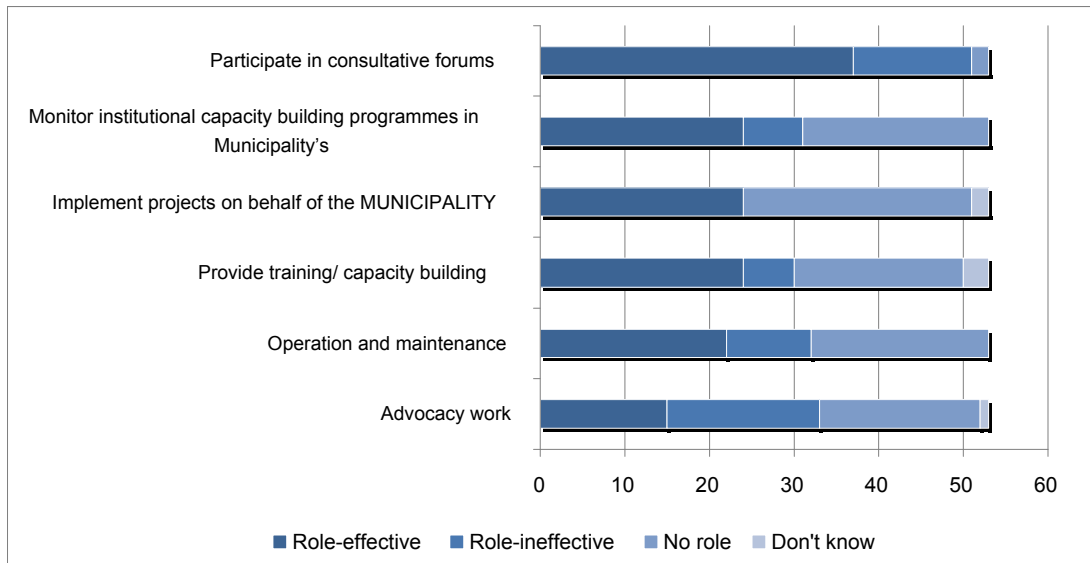
**Figure 2: Main challenges with working with CSOs**

The capacity building component of the Civil Society Support Programme has done very little to make an impact in this regard. While CSOs are independent of the state, their very presence and survival depends on government e.g. on laws governing CSOs, and perhaps more importantly on government attitudes towards CSOs. It is important that a conducive and supportive climate for CSO participation is provided particularly at local government level and that a space for CSO participation is created.

There is still concern over the definitions of and understanding of what is meant by CSO involvement and understanding the role of CSOs in service delivery. This is considered another factor explaining the timid efforts by local government to engage CSOs. There is confusion still with the role of ward committees and community development workers. Community development workers are still used or regarded to be doing the same role as CSOs. However, the CSO role is distinct from that of ward committees. This confusion continues despite the fact that both the Civil Society Advocacy and Communication Strategy and the Masibambane Civil Society Strategy define in detail who CBOs and NGOs (CSOs) are. They also clearly state how they differ from ward committees.

Equally there is confusion within municipalities as to the value that CSOs can add. There is still yet no common understanding amongst stakeholders in the sector of the role envisaged for civil society, nor indeed why there should be a role at all. There is still difficulty in defining CSOs role in relation to local government service delivery priorities. The WSAs surveyed as part of this review identified the following roles that CSOs play and assessed their effectiveness.

*Graph no.1: What roles do CSO's perform and how effective are they?*



CSO involvement is seen as sporadic, particularly when issues are hot. There is also a perceived lack of coherence among CSOs. CSOs do not speak with one voice. Sometimes there is conflict amongst themselves. The conflict is usually over CSO budget and funding; issues such as who is getting more work and why. Smaller CSOs also feel that they are not benefiting from the Masibambane project as much as the bigger CSOs. The larger CSOs are considered to be monopolizing the stage. It is the same CSOs that benefit from programmes like Masibambane and other similar programmes. This conflict amongst CSOs spills over to their ability to present a united voice. This detracts from their impact and participation in government service delivery programmes and also partly explains the slow pace in improving CSO participation.

One of the reasons why CSOs cannot always speak with a single voice is that CSOs embody a rich diversity in terms of purpose, size, structure and capacity. However, despite this concern, CSOs do feel that the Masibambane Programme is succeeding in bringing together CSOs from different streams i.e. service delivery, advocacy, and environmental groups who are now working together in both the water resources and water services field. But there is a need to see an increase in the number of and diversity in CSOs participating in the Masibambane Programme.

CSOs' expectations also need to be managed. Despondency identified within the CSOs is as a result of, among other factors, over-expectations on the part of the CSOs. CSOs need to define their own role, and understand their capabilities within the context of the service delivery agenda.

Lastly, the accreditation of CSOs is also central in improving the chances of CSO participation in service delivery at local government. However, the accreditation process is painfully slow. Only one organization has received its accreditation status thus far. Clarity is still needed on the issue of accreditation. Clarity between accreditation of individual and

accreditation of organization must be established and benefits of accreditation clearly spelt out.

*Key Recommendations:*

- Further interactions are needed with Local Government to further promote the role of CSOs and the potential value CSOs can bring to service delivery. SALGA must be engaged on how local government could be supported to be more open to CSO participation.
- Capacity building with CSOs must continue. CSOs are challenged with high turnover of staff that necessitates ongoing capacity building. Capacity building and empowerment is cardinal to the enhanced role of CSOs.
- The issue of organizational accreditation must be looked at. Clarity of the process of accreditation must be established.

**Conclusion**

Ensuring effective civil society participation is a key to strengthening governance and creating a more responsive state at local level. While there has been notable progress in the involvement of CSOs, it is still limited, with participation at national government level fairing better than at local government levels. Also, the CSO sector continues to be represented by the same minority of CSOs. Attempts to involve new organizations must be made.

Perceptions of CSOs are still poor and negative. There are still barriers to the entry of CSOs to service provision due to excessively cumbersome and demanding contractual procedures by local municipalities. The legislative framework is presently not conducive for CSOs to contribute to sustainable service provision within local municipalities. Procurement policies need to be looked at to explore the options for making them more accessible to CSOs.

Challenges of sustainability need to be considered. In the absence of donor funding, will DWAF be able to sustain the CSO support programme?

It is recommended that the programme be re-orientated and strengthened to accommodate CSOs in a much more meaningful way and also to make sure that Masibambane continues to be a CSO and stakeholder-driven programme.

List of interviews

- 1) Rets Dolamo Mvula Trust FS
- 2) Mr Silas Mbedzi- DWAF Catchment Management Directorate
- 3) Ms Rosetta Simelane- DWAF
- 4) Ms Helen Moremong- DWAF
- 5) Mr Jerry Phalane – Rural development Support Network
- 6) Mr Bryan Ashe – South African Water Caucus
- 7) Dr Leila Smith \_ Mvula Trust
- 8) Mr Frans Themba- Operation Hunger
- 9) Mr Xola Mlandu – CSO Chairperson
- 10) Mr Xola Ntobongwana- Mvula Trust KZN

Literature Reviewed

- 1) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: Volume II. Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July-Sept 2008)
- 2) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: North West Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July- September 2008)
- 3) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: Northern Cape Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July- September 2008)
- 4) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: Mpumalanga Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July- September 2008)
- 5) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: KwaZulu Natal Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July- September 2008)
- 6) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: Limpopo Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July- September 2008)
- 7) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: Free State Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July- September 2008)
- 8) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: Gauteng Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July- September 2008)
- 9) The MSB III Water Sector Programme: Eastern Cape Regional Report Summary. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008/2009 (July- September 2008)
- 10) MSB III Water Water Sector Programme: Volume II: DWAF Regional Reports. 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2008/09 (April – June 2008)
- 11) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Western Cape Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)
- 12) MSB III Water Sector Programme: North West Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)
- 13) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Northern Cape Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)
- 14) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Mpumalanga Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)
- 15) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Limpopo Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)
- 16) MSB III Water Sector Programme: KwaZulu Natal Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)

- 17) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Gauteng Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)
- 18) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Free State Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)
- 19) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Eastern Cape Regional Report Summary. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/09 (April- June 2008)
- 20) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Vol I: Consolidated Water Sector Report. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008/2009. (April – June 2008)
- 21) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Limpopo Regional Report Summary. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2007/08 (October-Dec 2007)
- 22) MSB III Water Sector Programme: North West Regional Report Summary. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2007/08 (October-Dec 2007)
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- 25) MSB III Water Sector Programme: Eastern Cape Regional Report Summary. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2007/08 (October-Dec 2007)
- 26) MSB III Water Sector Programme. Volume I Consolidated Water Sector Report 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Oct- Dec 2008)
- 27) MSB III water Sector Programme Western Cape Regional Report Summary: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Jan- March 2008)
- 28) MSB III water Sector Programme North West Regional Report Summary: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Jan- March 2008)
- 29) MSB III water Sector Programme Mpumalanga Regional Report Summary: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Jan- March 2008)
- 30) MSB III water Sector Programme Limpopo Regional Report Summary: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Jan- March 2008)
- 31) MSB III water Sector Programme KwaZulu Natal Regional Report Summary: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Jan- March 2008)
- 32) MSB III water Sector Programme Gauteng Regional Report Summary: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Jan- March 2008)
- 33) MSB III water Sector Programme Free State Regional Report Summary: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Jan- March 2008)
- 34) MSB III water Sector Programme Eastern Cape Regional Report Summary: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/2008 (Jan- March 2008)