

Draft Terms of Reference for the WSLG Strategic Task Team on Water for Growth and Development v1

Preamble

The draft Strategic Framework for Water and Growth and Development (version 6: 18th November 2008) has emphasized that the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) has set in motion a course of action to ensure that there is sufficient water, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, to support South Africa's path of growth and development. There must be sufficient water for the country to achieve its 6% economic growth target. At the same time, every person in South Africa must have access to potable water. And these two goals may be achieved only by not compromising the ecological sustainability of the resource.

The Department has also embarked upon rigorous water assessment studies referred to as Reconciliation Strategies to achieve reconciliation of supply and demand for both water scarce areas as well as those experiencing relatively high levels of demand. These strategies aim to ensure a supply of water at adequate levels of assurance within the constraints of affordability and appropriate levels of service to users and protection of current and possible future water resources. Thus far, six strategies have been undertaken in the major urban centres and in July 2008, the Department commissioned reconciliation strategies for every town in the country due to be completed by 2011.

The Department also appreciates that whilst it invests in schemes to assure water supplies, it is also required to strengthen its focus on water conservation and water demand management, especially since a very basic cost analysis shows that there is a greater return on investment through water loss control and water use efficiency than supply-side interventions. A major source of water loss is ageing infrastructure exacerbated by poor operations and maintenance at a municipal level and analysis shows that this state of affairs is a multi-faceted problem including a lack of managerial and technical skills and funding. The Department will strengthen its efforts to support this sector in a bid to reverse this dire situation; it becomes an even more crucial intervention when one factors in the pollution of water sources due to faulty wastewater treatment works.

The notion of water for development alludes to the role of water in the alleviation of poverty and people's constitutional rights to have access to a source of safe and reliable drinking water. The Department is deeply concerned about the persistent backlogs in particular parts of the country although it has achieved the Millennium Development Goal to halve the backlog of access to basic water and sanitation services in 2005 and 2008 respectively. The Department is also very aware of the anomalies in water distribution, where people reside adjacent to water sources and yet have no access to these. The Department will achieve the target of ensuring that every person has access to safe and reliable supply of

drinking water although it has to reconsider how this can be achieved. It is the Department's recommendation that the service backlogs, which are predominantly situated in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and the North West province, are prioritised and addressed through a combination of short-term interventions such as rainwater harvesting and the further exploitation of groundwater sources, which may necessitate a policy change. Ultimately, a balance needs to be struck between large and small-scale infrastructure projects.

Water for Growth points to the relationship between water availability and the forms of economic activity that are dependent on available water supply of varying levels of quality depending on the technologies being used. The Department's position is that it would like to support the country's economic growth target of 6% but this cannot be at the expense of the ecological sustainability of the resource or people's primary needs. It wishes to be responsive to the needs of the different economic sectors and this can only be achieved if these sectors factor in water implications (supply and impact of use) at the outset. Rather than being an add-on or afterthought, the Department sees the need for water to be mainstreamed and placed at the nucleus of all planning decisions, whether these be within the public or private sector. Water can only support economic growth, without compromising primary needs or ecological sustainability if, and only if, it is adequately factored in.

Apart from ensuring water availability for growth purposes, the Department is very mindful of water use behaviour that impacts negatively on both water resource quantity and quality. It is currently exploring a potential mix of mechanisms to change this behaviour, which include regulatory instruments, market-based instruments, self-regulation, and awareness and education, and it will match appropriate mechanisms to mitigate offending behaviour. The Department is satisfied that it is taking the required course of action to ensure that it has the right kind of information at its disposal to make better informed and calculated decisions and trade-offs with respect to water in support of cross-sectoral planning and development initiatives. The rolling out of the Reconciliation Strategies to all parts of the country will ensure that the Department is able to anticipate and address future demand without any one area of water need— social, economic and ecological – being compromised.

Over the past 6 months, the Department has been working intensively on the development of the Strategic Framework. During this phase, the emphasis has deliberately been on internal debate so as to ensure that the Department has strong ownership of the process and can play its role of the sector leader and Water for Growth and Development (WfGD) champion. The time has now come however when the debate needs to be "cast" much wider to a broad range of stakeholders in the water sector as a whole. It is therefore entirely appropriate now to establish a Strategic Task Team working under the auspices of the Water Sector Leadership Group. This is done in clear recognition of the fact that to

achieve the lofty objectives of Water WfGD will only be possible by means of a highly coordinated and collaborative effort of the sector as a whole!

Overall Purpose

To finalise, via a consultative and collaborative process, the Strategic Framework for Water for Growth and Development and thereafter develop a practical programme of action to ensure that the Framework is implemented.

Objectives

In support of the overall purpose of this STT, the following objectives will need to be achieved:

1. To oversee the development of the final draft Strategic Framework (SF) for submission to the Cabinet Lekgotla early in 2009
2. To develop and implement a comprehensive programme of communication of the SF(once approved by Cabinet) to the sector
3. To design a consultative process whereby a practical programme of action to achieve implementation of the SF can be developed
4. To oversee this process and finalise the programme of action

Membership

The proposed membership is as follows:

- DWAF WfGD Champion: Mr. Harrison Pienaar
- SALGA
- DPLG
- NT
- DBSA
- DoA
- DME
- WRC
- SAAWUAs
- Inkomati CMA????
- DEAT
- Eskom
- SAAWU
- NAFU
- Agri SA
- Chamber of Mines
- BUSA
- Donors
- TCTA
- SETAs

- Civil Society: water services and water resources!
- Other DWAF: ????????
- Specialist consultants??
- International experts??

The STT will elect its own chairperson.

The STT will also have the authority to co-opt members on an ad hoc basis when needed.

If a quorum is considered to be necessary it will consist of ??????????????????.

Frequency of Meetings

As and when needed.

Agendas

Once this STT has been convened and the terms of reference confirmed, then a workplan will be developed which will give effect to the objectives set out in the terms of reference. The agenda will thereafter focus on implementation of items identified in the workplan. The workplan will need to be submitted to the WSLG Exco for comment.

Linkages

In view of the overarching and cross-cutting nature of WfGD, it will be important that open lines of communication are maintained with all of the other STTs. Where necessary, bilaterals can be arranged. The other STTs that are currently in place, or will be established early in 2009, are as follows:

- Asset management
- Financing of the water sector
- Water conservation and demand management
- Regulation
- Institutional reform/review
- The National Water Resource Strategy
- Skills development
- Rethinking the sanitation paradigm (being addressed by the National Sanitation Task Team)

Secretariat

The secretariat for the STT will be provided by DWAF Sector Collaboration.

