

## Water and Sanitation in the News

### **Natural resources must be at centre of economic planning**

The country's water predicament is a symptom of a much deeper crisis that goes well beyond the effects of the El Nino phenomenon and can be attended to only through a fundamental shift in economic governance. The crisis is now spilling over to livelihoods, food production and health, affecting entire communities and pushing hundreds of thousands of citizens deeper into poverty. While appeals to save water through wiser use at the household level may be important, they risk missing what is really wrong with water governance in SA.

...If we are seriously concerned about the water crisis, we must reject temporary fixes. We need to start reorganising our economy with a view to supporting a virtuous relationship between human productive activities and ecosystems. The government must put ecosystems at the centre of economic planning. Water, in particular, must be mainstreamed through the various departments, from the national to the local level, so that every infrastructure investment in future is vetted against its effect on water systems.

City managers, urban planners and designers must also come on board to rethink an obsolete distribution system. It makes no sense to keep using precious potable water to flush toilets, wash clothes and irrigate gardens. Industrial policy will need a U-turn. Not only must our reliance on coal and oil be questioned, but also our plans to invest in shale gas and nuclear, two energy systems that exert a heavy toll on natural resources, especially water.

Business's effect on water should also become a subject of public scrutiny, in line with new trends in the field of natural capital accounting. This should be a primary focus for investors because companies that do not take their ecological footprint seriously are unable to generate long-term returns.

Equally, consumers must be made aware of the natural capital embedded in the products they buy. Labels should indicate the effect on natural resources and, ultimately, prices should change accordingly (for instance, via higher taxation for less environmentally friendly produce).

...We need an early-warning system to alert us when our economy goes off track and we need rewards for companies committed to integrating natural resource considerations in their business models, as well as sanctions for those unwilling to do so. Ultimately, we need a plan to phase out an industrial

model that is destroying us all with a view to designing an economic trajectory founded on human and ecosystem wellbeing. The upcoming climate summit in Paris is an opportunity for SA to show that it has learnt an important lesson from this water crisis.

Source: *Business Day*, 30 November 2015

Training and knowledge transfer are some of the most important aspects of the **Municipal Assistant™** system – designed for the guidance and support of operational activities of water and wastewater facilities of Local Municipalities and industrial plant operators; to improve the management and maintenance of treatment and associated infrastructure in order to improve water quality and protect water quantity through the entire natural and industrial water cycle.

Training is not only provided to staff/users, but also to municipal management – as proper water asset & operational management requires a TEAM EFFORT. The MA system is a powerful tool that gives management a daily overview of the operation of the municipality including monitoring capabilities of water treatment operations and results.

Our primary focus is to empower municipal users to access their assets, staff details and the status of their water quality, also keeping Blue and Green Drop assessments in mind. Users are equipped with those essential knowledge and skills that will enhance the capacities of municipalities in meeting their responsibilities of supplying good quality drinking water.



We provide different levels of training which consists, among many others, of the following modules: regulatory framework; water demand management; asset management; support tools - waste water calculator; hydraulics concepts; assets and budgets: cost and lifespan, assessments, reactive & preventative maintenance; Water infrastructure – water care works: general, layout and process; safety and risk assessments; WQ data, flow data, plant efficiency, dosing chemicals; WQ monitoring; Reporting; etc.

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WAMTech are specialists in implementing technology systems for improved governance, focussing on Water and Public Health Information Systems

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