

Water and Sanitation in the News

South Africa: Water and Sanitation Department Fails to Transfer 51.5 Percent of Funds Needed for Delivery

The National Treasury's Third Quarter Expenditure Report for the 2014/15 financial year reveals that the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is the worst performing of all national government departments in terms of spending its share of the National Budget.

According to the report, the department has spent only 48.5% of its allocated expenditure for transfers and subsidies, a 10% decline on last year's expenditure for the same period. These funds ought to be transferred to provincial and local authorities to be used for critical water infrastructure rollout, yet incompetence and maladministration has resulted in local and provincial departments being hamstrung in this regard...

Source: allAfrica.com, 16 March 2015

Context

South Africa will certainly not solve its many water problems if the budgets allocated to water infrastructure are not being implemented. Financial resources are desperately needed to build, upgrade and maintain broken drinking and waste water infrastructure – for which DWS has calculated the country would need about R670 billion, but currently only has about half that amount available.

The country's precarious water situation has widely been compared to its energy crisis, where warning signs more than a decade ago, about looming energy shortages due to underinvestment in infrastructure, was ignored until it was too late. At the moment, poor water governance and underinvestment is exacerbating supply problems already magnified by a drought that is plaguing many parts of the country. According to a recent Sunday Times article, 'half of South Africa could be declared an official drought zone.'

Officials in the Western Cape, Free State, Limpopo and the Northern Cape are currently considering applying to be declared drought areas. KwaZulu-Natal was officially given drought status late 2014. The Department of Water Affairs and the various KZN water boards said the country was staring water restrictions in the face unless something was done. Already, municipalities across KwaZulu-Natal have applied strict water restrictions, including not allowing residents to wash their cars or water their gardens. Other provinces could follow suit as the typically dry winter season approaches...



Image by: James Oatway - Sunday Times.

Sibusiso Makhanya, CEO of Mhlanthuze Water, said: "The situation is not dire yet, but it's heading there if we don't get rain before winter." According to research by the Institute of Security Studies released last year, South Africa was already the 30th-driest country in the world....

Source: Times Live, 12 March 2015

Addressing South Africa's water challenges needs a holistic approach. The **WAMTechnology** approach to drinking water and waste water management support is comprehensive as it incorporates all the vital components (e.g. water demand, staff, tools, asset, manuals, training, diagrams, maintenance scheduling, etc.) needed to ensure efficient and sustainable water supply.

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