

Water and Sanitation in the News

SA's water treatment works in critical state

SA's water treatment works are in a poor to critical state and monitoring water quality was also becoming an increasing problem. These were among some of the issues the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research [CSIR] raised on Wednesday.

...CSIR senior researcher specialising in water quality and aquatic ecology James Dabrowski said about half the country's waste water treatment works were in a poor to critical state, due to infrastructure, capacity, and governance issues. Due to urbanisation, the treatment plants could not handle the volume of effluent. "It's an infrastructure problem that will need large amounts of money to sort out."

Other problems related to the manner in which water was managed, with CSIR researchers saying that players in the water sector were responding to problems in a fragmented way. The National Water Act and the Blue and Green drop certification process was helping to create pockets of success, but there were problem areas, it said. "At local government level, there are serious challenges. We are not addressing inefficiencies [in terms of how it is managed]," said Harrison Pienaar, the CSIR's competency area manager for water resources.

Marius Claassen, principal researcher of resource specific scientific measures, reiterated the sentiment, saying it seemed as though government was caught in a "short term spin", where problems were dealt with but there were no long-term solutions. One example of the fragmented response in dealing with problems like water pollution caused by farming was in the lack of integration between the departments of water affairs and agriculture.

Source: News24, 30 July 2015

Context

Leading water scientists say it is no longer debatable that South Africa is experiencing a water crisis given that there are already serious problems in supplying enough water of sufficient quality to meet the country's social and economic needs. The CSIR scientists stressed, however, that there were a range of actions – besides investments into large inter-basin transfer schemes – that could be taken to improve the prospects for both water supply and quality. CSIR water resource competence area manager Dr Harrison Pienaar concurred with the Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS's) assessment that there was no immediate problem

with regards to theoretical water availability, with South Africa still having sufficient resources to meet demand. However, the "crisis, which is not a debate" related to growing quality problems that meant that, in some parts of the country, there was already inadequate water available to meet the needs of citizens, agriculture and industry, or to sustain the country's ecological baseline. CSIR principal researcher specialising in water quality and aquatic ecology Dr James Dabrowski said that, with over 98% of South Africa's available water resources already allocated across various sectors, the country could face a water deficit of between 2% and 13% by 2025, depending on economic performance. However, he stressed that these **future projections did not take water quality into account, despite the fact that water use was "dependent on both water availability and water quality"**. ...Dabrowski warned that **poor water quality was not only a risk to human and ecological health, but would place constraints on its use in energy production, industry, farming and recreation...**

Source: Engineering News, 29 July 2015



The **Municipal Assistant™** software system helps to ensure sufficient quality drinking water and the discharge of safe standard waste water quality by facilitating the correct management functions and maintenance procedures (including preventative maintenance scheduling) at water treatment works. The MA system specifically helps to extend the lifespan of water infrastructure and helps prevent water losses and the need for costly unplanned and premature replacements of broken equipment.

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