

## Water and Sanitation in the News

### As South Africa grapples with a power crisis, experts warn that water supplies are the next challenge

The dire situation at a water treatment plant in Pretoria is a sign of things to come. A massive sludge dam was urgently built in 2006 to prevent raw sewage from entering the nearby Hennops River, after the Sunderland Ridge Waste Water Treatment Plant broke down.

It is filled with millions of litres of sewage, which would have otherwise flown into the river. Exacerbating the situation is the problem of the area being dolomitic -- sewage from the dam therefore leaks easily into the ground water. Water treatment experts claim the situation at Sunderland Ridge is indicative of a growing water crisis in the country. They don't believe that government is taking the threat seriously enough. While the city has committed to dealing with the problem as soon as possible, it concedes this could take up to three years...

Source: *ENCA*, 16 Feb. 2015.

### eThekweni Municipality is losing about 237 million litres of water a day

According to the auditor-general's report for the 2013/2014 financial year released last week, these losses amount to R602.6 million. It also admitted it is not winning the war against vandalism of the infrastructure around the city. Spokeswoman Tozi Mthethwa said these acute losses were caused by illegal water connections, vandalism, and leaks not reported timeously...

Source: *Sunday Tribune*, 08 Feb. 2015

### Context

Africa has very high levels of non-revenue water amid water scarcity in many areas. According to the World Bank, "Factors contributing to the prevailing situation of under-maintenance are institutional weaknesses in the wake of decentralization, inadequate attention to technology choice, low pump density, restrictive maintenance systems, and the lack of a supply chain to adequately maintain complex machinery." To meet the Millennium Development Goals, it is estimated that Africa would have to spend \$15 billion annually, four times more than the current spending of \$3.6 billion on water projects.



"This lost water [from leaks] creates additional needs for costly treatment plants, increases the demand for energy from pumping stations, and puts added stress on already strained communities and environments," according to the Northeast Group 2013 report *Emerging Markets Smart Infrastructure: Smart Water*, looked at the smart water infrastructure market in 72 emerging market countries through 2023, including Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The report notes "lost revenue from this water only increases the need for government subsidies, which already are necessary to cover a significant portion of the costs of water in many countries."

Source: *AFK Insider*, 10 Nov. 2014

For communities to enjoy stable supplies of safe drinking water, it is important to ensure that the entire water supply cycle, from abstraction, to treatment, distribution and discharge are done with the correct equipment, that is maintained, and by staff that are technically skilled, with management enabled to lead a team effort.

The **Municipal Assistant™** software system helps to achieve this by facilitating the efficient management functions related to water treatment and supply. The development of the **Municipal Assistant™** was initiated to address the need for an operational information system to assist with the assessment (on component level including cost and lifespan), operations, maintenance (preventive and reactive) and management of water and wastewater facilities and related infrastructure.

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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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