A Joint National Water Services Sector Support Strategy

Working together for transformation and effective delivery

Adopted by the Water Sector Leadership Group on the 22 November 2006
Preview: the strategy at a glance

The support strategy (in overview)

**Objective 1:** To ensure the establishment and functioning of capable, effective and efficient water services institutions.

A. **Programmatic support to WSAs.** Strengthen the existing support programmes and improve co-ordination.

B. **Direct operational support to WSPs.** Implement a new focussed and strategic initiative on direct operational support using skilled and experienced resources with political buy-in and practical outcomes-based implementation at a municipal level.

**Objective 2:** To ensure the development of adequate skills and competencies required in the water services sector.

A. **Councillor development.** Strengthen councillor training and undertake on an ongoing basis with a strategic decision making support component.

B. **Leadership training.** Implement a new initiative developing the leadership skills of WSA and WSP managers.

C. **Train regional support managers** as the key coordinators of support at the regional level.

D. **Capacity building through skills development, education, training.** Develop and implement a sector-wide skills development strategy.

**Objective 3:** To enable all sector role-players and partners to fulfil their roles effectively.

A. **Sector wide approach.** Strengthen sector wide approach.

B. **Coordination.** Significantly improve national and regional support co-ordination (including establishment of new coordination structures and posts).

C. **Peer networks.** Strengthen and deepen the peer networks and related initiatives.

D. **Knowledge management.** Strengthen knowledge management initiatives including giving consideration to the establishment of a technical advisory service dedicated to municipal water services.

Implementing the support strategy

An implementation framework, together with a list of priority tasks
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List of acronyms

DPLG Department of Provincial and Local Government
DWAF Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
DWQF Drinking Water Quality Framework
LG5SA Local Government Five-year Strategic Agenda
MFMA Municipal Finance Management Act 2003
MIG Municipal Infrastructure Grant
PFMA Public Finance Management Act 1999
SAAWU South African Association of Water Utilities
SABS South African Bureau of Standards
SALGA South African Local Government Association
SANS South African National Standards
WSDP Water Services Development Plan
Part 1: Introduction, problem statement and principles

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of support

The Local Government five-year strategic agenda (LG5SA) approved by Cabinet, states that national and provincial governments must prioritise support for municipalities. Water services support is a high priority for DWAF. Concrete support actions are identified in this strategy and will be included in DWAF’s strategic business plans. Activities will be focused and streamlined to maximize impacts of support for local government.

The Strategic Framework for Water Services (SFWS) endorsed by Cabinet in September 2003 outlines the vision, goals, and objectives for the water services sector. The overall purpose of support is to assist the sector to realise the sector vision and goals and, more specifically, achieve the targets set out in the Strategic Framework and endorsed by Cabinet in 2003.

**Sector vision: Water is life, sanitation is dignity**

All people living in South Africa have access to adequate, safe, appropriate and affordable water and sanitation services, use water wisely and practise safe sanitation.

Water supply and sanitation services are provided by effective, efficient and sustainable institutions that are accountable and responsive to those whom they serve. Water services institutions reflect the cultural, gender and racial diversity in South Africa.

Water is used effectively, efficiently and sustainably in order to reduce poverty, improve human health and promote economic development. Water and wastewater are managed in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner.
Sector goals
The following goals are set for the water services sector:

1. All people living in South Africa have access to an appropriate, acceptable, safe and affordable basic water supply and sanitation service.

2. All people living in South Africa are educated in healthy living practices (specifically with respect to the use of water and sanitation services) and the wise use of water.

3. Water and sanitation services are provided:
   - equitably (adequate services are provided fairly to all people);
   - affordably (no one is excluded from access to basic services because of their cost);
   - effectively (the job is done well);
   - efficiently (resources are not wasted);
   - sustainably (services are financially, environmentally, institutionally and socially sustainable); and
   - gender sensitively (taking into account the different needs and responsibilities of women and men with regard to water services and sanitation).

4. All water services authorities are accountable to their citizens, have adequate capacity to make wise choices (related to water services providers) and are able to regulate water services provision effectively.

5. All water services providers are accountable, cost-effective, efficient, and viable, and implement appropriate employment and gender equity policies.

6. The prices of water and sanitation services reflect the fact that they are both social and economic goods (that is, pricing promotes access to a basic safe service, encourages the wise and sustainable use of resources and ensures financial sustainability).

7. Water and sanitation services are effectively regulated with a view to ensuring the ongoing achievement of these goals.

The sector targets are given in Concept Note #1.

1.2 Purpose of the support strategy
The purpose of the support strategy is to give effect to the support objectives set out in the Strategic Framework:

1. To ensure the establishment and functioning of capable, effective and efficient water services institutions.

2. To ensure the development of adequate skills and competencies required in the water services sector.

3. To enable all sector role-players and partners to fulfil their roles effectively.

1.3 Focus of support - municipalities
A fully functioning water services sector capable of achieving the sector vision, goals and targets requires a multi-dimensional strategy that is implemented across the entire sector. Implementation of such a strategy requires major resource commitments,
capacity to correctly identify, diagnose and address problems across the sector, well resourced structures within all spheres of government as well as exceptional mechanisms and skills for sector collaboration and co-ordination.

Current resource and capacity limitations were taken into account when designing this support strategy so that it is realistic, feasible and implementable. For this reason, the Support Strategy prioritises those institutions that have the greatest impact on the provision of water services, namely municipalities that are water services authorities and water services providers. It is here that the key challenges are located and where support will make the greatest difference.

However since the performance of local government is dependent upon support from the entire water services sector, this support strategy provides direction to the broader sector and highlights critical capacity that needs to be addressed within the sector. For example, the performance of weak municipal water services providers is not going to improve if they do not have access to specialist water services provider expertise. This expertise does not exist in national or provincial government, or training and research institutions, it primarily exists within a limited number of successful water services providers or within the private sector. Without mechanisms to harness this capacity, it is unlikely that municipal water services providers will access the type of expertise they require to turn around the performance of their water services operations.

1.4 Scope of the strategy - providing a framework for support

Recognising existing support

This strategy recognises the various support initiatives that are taking place within the water services sector to address water services capacity across the different spheres of government and within the broader sector. In particular the implementation of the sector wide approach to ensure that sector support achieves a common set of objectives has resulted in significant resources being made available for institution building. Consequently municipalities, who started with little or no capacity, are now achieving some compliance and performance targets, albeit at varying degrees of success. This strategy does not attempt to replace existing support programmes or initiatives, but rather aims to provide a framework within which support should take place and to guide support initiatives so as to improve their effectiveness.

Utilising a sector wide approach to achieve common support objectives

There are many entities providing support: multilateral and bilateral international agencies, national departments, provincial departments, regional offices of national departments, provincial forums (sector specific and multi-sector), local government associations (SALGA), training institutions, nongovernmental organisations, and municipalities themselves. Although some of these entities are working towards common support objectives, much of the support is still driven by the ‘supporters’ rather than by the support needs of municipalities or by a common set of support objectives.

This support strategy aims to ensure that the sector wide approach is implemented as far as possible for all support provided to municipalities acting as water services authorities and/or water services providers. In this way available resources, support initiatives and existing expertise can be targeted to where it is needed most and to the real water services support needs of local government.
2 Problem statement

The key challenge is for local government to deliver universal, sustainable water services to their communities and to contribute to the economy.

Despite steady progress in addressing water services authority functions in many municipalities, local government generally lacks the necessary resources, structures, systems and expertise to ensure the provision of sustainable and effective water services.

This capacity problem is not only a local government problem, it points to a capacity problem within the broader water services sector.

2.1 Why support is needed

The need for support is evident in the poor performance of municipalities in both the delivery of infrastructure and in the provision of water services.

The national benchmarking initiative, various surveys and audits of the status of water services infrastructure assets and their operation, have highlighted key areas where support is required:

1. Meeting access targets: There is a significant risk that the access targets laid out in the Strategic Framework to eradicate the backlog (set for 2008 and 2010 for water and sanitation respectively) will not be met. Inadequate water and sanitation services are associated with recurring outbreaks of cholera in some areas in South Africa, and other adverse effects. The LG5SA identifies elimination of the basic services backlog and bucket eradication as key priorities.

2. Ensuring safe water: Inadequate access to safe water presents a serious risk to the lives of consumers, as demonstrated clearly by the Delmas drinking water quality crisis.

3. Ensuring that the environment is protected: Untreated and non-compliant discharges from under-capacity or poorly operated waste water treatment works damage the environment.

4. Ensuring effective operations: Lack of reliable access to water and sanitation facilities infringes on the right to access to water.

5. Ensuring sustainability: Services must be provided in a manner that is financially viable and sustainable. Poor asset management, insufficient spending on maintenance and a lack of proper accounting for depreciation, for example, result in water and sanitation services that are not sustainable over the long term.

6. Ensuring customer responsiveness: The ultimate aim of water services provision is that providers should engage with customers and respond to their needs. There is little evidence that water services in South Africa are customer driven at present.

7. Ensuring effective use of resources: The effective use of resources refers to both the value for money that customers receive, as well as the effective use of scarce resources. There is increasing pressure on water resources at present, and so effective use of this resource is vital.

Poor performance in these areas poses significant risks to the population of South Africa, as well as to the environment. Sector performance in each of these areas is reviewed in Concept Note #1.
In order to identify the nature of the support required, it is necessary to understand the underlying causes of poor performance.

2.2 Underlying causes of poor performance

Capacity
A primary cause for poor performance is a lack of sufficient human and financial resources to deliver the necessary infrastructure (capital investments) and to operate and maintain this infrastructure adequately and sustainably.

Lack of strategic management
In most municipalities water services managers are not expected to exhibit the leadership and strategic management skills necessary to create the right incentives and to utilise resources strategically so that their water service operations perform optimally. Water services tend to be viewed as a function rather than as business operating along sound business and management principles. In water words, water services is treated as a technical function rather than as an integrated business.

Insufficient financial resources
Low tariffs and low levels of payment, as well as inadequate allocations of the equitable share within the municipality to water services, all contribute to the inadequacy of financial resources for sustainable operation and maintenance of the water service. This also contributes to inadequate resources for investment in infrastructure (although availability of MIG funds exceeds capacity to spend in many municipalities).

Attraction and retention of skills
Many municipalities struggle to attract and retain the necessary skills at all levels – leadership and managerial skills, technical skills (engineers, technicians and artisans) and operational skills (trained operators). This arises partly from the lack of financial resources (see above), partly from structural constraints (salary levels within municipalities) and partly from issues related to organisational culture (level of initiative encouraged and recognition for initiative). New thinking is required to address these systemic problems within local government. See section 3.3.

Planning is not practical and does not facilitate rapid delivery
Although many plans have been developed (the Water Services Development Plans, for example), in many cases these have not been of a practical nature which enable municipalities to execute capital projects at the rate required to meet the access targets. In many cases, essential baseline information has not been available (for example, basic asset registers) and targets set are often unrealistic or are not matched to the available resources. Consequently planning exercises are not translating into infrastructure delivery programmes that can meet the 2008 and 2010 targets in a sustainable way. Planning must also address the development of the necessary capacity to deliver and operate the infrastructure. In many cases, financial planning has been poor with the result that the WSDP becomes a capital projects wish list rather than a realistic and financially sustainable plan. Planning for the sustainable provision of free basic water and sanitation services has also, in many cases been poor.

A focus on legislative compliance rather than on performance
There is a tendency to over-regulate public service delivery. The focus on legislative compliance (and the burden of legislative compliance) tends to discourage initiative
and overshadow assessments of good performance and outcomes-based assessments.

2.3 Current support initiatives are not delivering the desired results

Current support initiatives are reviewed in the Concept Notes (see References and bibliography). Although a lot of effort is going into support, and there are some successes, overall the benefits of support do not appear to warrant the current level of activity and expenditure on support. In particular,

- Current support is not provided in terms of a coherent support strategy.
- The allocation of support resources is not strategic. The LG5SA has identified the need to prioritise support.
- Much of the support is uncoordinated. The LG5SA has identified the need to strengthen co-ordination.
- Much of the support is supply driven rather than demand-responsive.
- Much of the support is driven in silos, focussing on only one aspect of the business, with the lack of understanding of the need to managed the business as an integrated whole and that the support priorities of a municipality to improve performance may be quite different to the support being offered.
- There is very little monitoring of the effectiveness of support in terms of outcomes. The LG5SA has identified the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation.
- Support initiatives that have been successful in the past (such as the water services authority capacity building initiatives) have not been sustained.
- It is often expected that support be provided by government officials who may lack the necessary skills and experience to offer practical and effective support to municipal staff engaged in the day to day activities of providing water services to consumers, or by consultants who also may not have the necessary expertise or experience.
- There is a critical shortage of high level strategic skills linked to direct operational management skills.
- There is a notable absence of leadership training and development within the sector. The LG5SA has identified the need for leadership training.
- Current support often does not recognise the central role of the water services manager in securing improved performance.

Nevertheless, much can be learnt from current support initiatives. See, for example, Box 1 below. Further lessons are captured elsewhere in this strategy and also in the Concept Notes.
Box 1: Learning from the direct support provided to Emfuleni

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lessons learned</th>
<th>Implications for Support Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of coordination</strong> was a significant problem that had to be overcome.</td>
<td>The Emfuleni experience strongly supports the benefits of having just one DWAF person acting as the coordinator of support for a particular municipality, liaising with a clearly identified responsible person (the water services manager) at the water services provider level.</td>
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<td>It was recognised during the course of the support initiative that <strong>DWAF itself lacked the technical and human resource capacity</strong> to provide the support that was needed. In effect, DWAF ended up acting as a technical coordinator of support which, in the circumstances, was a much more appropriate role.</td>
<td>Providing direct operational support to water services providers is very likely to be beyond the capacity of DWAF officials who do not have the necessary experience (in most cases they have not, themselves, managed or run water services operations and therefore it is inappropriate to expect these officials to have the necessary experience to meet this need). Consequently, appropriate additional resources for this task will need to be secured.</td>
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<td>Good results were achieved when the right technical competencies and experience were found to address the problem. <strong>Finding the right resource (person)</strong> to both diagnose the problem and provide the solutions was key to success.</td>
<td>It is critical that the appropriate support resources are secured. In particular, if management support is required, then it is critical that the support resource has the necessary track record of effective management support.</td>
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<td>It is important to understand how water services relate to the <strong>broader municipal context</strong> and to address the constraints that may exist at this governance or regulatory level.</td>
<td>Water services support <strong>cannot be addressed in isolation</strong> of the broader functioning of the municipality, particularly with respect to the governance and regulatory functions of the municipality. Water services support must address <strong>water services as a business</strong> in its entirety, including the finances and customer relations aspects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determining the right indicators</strong> by which a successful outcome will be measure is critical. This must form part of the diagnosis phase.</td>
<td>Support initiatives need to be framed within a specific and practical action plan with well chosen indicators by which successful outcomes (of failure to achieve these outcomes) can be measured. That is, <strong>support must be both practical and outcomes based.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Accurate diagnosis</strong> of the problem (cause and not symptoms) is critical, together with the ability to formulate a strategic and practical action plan to resolve the problem.</td>
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3  **Key principles informing the support strategy**

The following principles are value statements that inform how the support will be provided.

3.1  **Focus on outcomes and not inputs**

**Principle #1:** Provide practical support to be measured in terms of outcomes.

The support strategy will be centred around strategic support initiatives which are highly practical and which are directly linked to measurable outcomes within defined timeframes.
3.2 Create an enabling environment for effective performance

Principle #3: Separate governance and operational roles.

It is essential that the governance and operational roles with respect to the provision of water services are clearly separated. This is illustrated in the figure below.

![Diagram of governance and operational roles](image)

Figure 1: Separating the governance and operational roles, and creating clear accountability

Principle #4: Create clear accountability for performance.

Accountability for performance is ensured through the establishment of a performance contract between the Council and the Water Services Provider Manager (where water services are provided by the council itself) and/or through the contract (with a clear services delivery agreement) with an external water services provider (including a municipal or public entity or another municipality).

Principle #5: Ensure water services is managed as an integrated business.

Accountability for performance is only possible where water services is managed as an integrated financially ring-fenced business (revenue, asset management, operations,
customer management) and where a single manager is responsible for the performance of the water services business. The LG5SA stated the following: provide financial management hands-on support to, in particular, low capacity municipalities and improve the capacity to account for public resources. Activities include: Establish shared services and promote knowledge sharing. Hands on support provided to LG in key priority areas of Supply Chain Management; Submission of credible Annual Financial Statements. Improved financial capacity through sharing and retaining of scarce skills. Strengthen transparency and accountability of financial affairs of Local Government. Ensure independent audits.

3.3 Build leadership

**Principle #6: Build leadership to achieve performance excellence.**

The LG5SA has identified leadership development as a key priority.

The support strategy will have, as a key focus, leadership development, based on the following premise: “People who are managed may well lack the inclination to put forth the kind of effort necessary for success – unless they have good leaders. Great leaders get extraordinary results from ordinary people.” (Mariotti, 1998)

Achieving the vision for the water services sector will require a new and different way of doing things. All available resources will need to be creatively harnessed for this end. Strong and effective leadership is necessary. However, the development of the water services sector at the local municipal level has not, to date, placed any significant emphasis on the development of leaders who are passionate about improving water services, who have a vision of what can be achieved, and who are able to inspire and bring out the best in their fellows.¹

**Leadership, organizational culture and performance**

Recently, considerable attention has been given to the important role that organizational culture plays in the performance of an organization, and the role of the leader in creating the organizational culture. It is increasingly recognized that organizations with a culture that builds trust and frees individuals to take initiative will outperform organizations built on hierarchy and “command and control” styles of leadership. A key challenge for leaders in public sector organizations and government is how to create organizational cultures which harness initiative. All too often bureaucracies are characterized by a culture of mistrust, where individuals learn to “play safe” and not to take risks.²

The water services sector faces critical capacity shortages. In this context, it is imperative that the full potential of all people working in the sector is realized. This requires the development of organizational cultures which believe in people and where people are trusted to take initiative. The fundamental challenge facing the leadership in the water services sector is how to create this culture. Almost certainly it will require significant changes in the way we do things. This requires excellent leadership.

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¹ Concept Note #7A (Leadership, a critical success factor) sets out a motivation for the importance of leadership in improving water sector performance at the local government level, and outlines some key factors pertaining to leadership.

² Nancy Kline’s “The Thinking Environment” and literature on exceptional organizational performance asserts that the potential of the individual is best harnessed in a context of trust and belief in the individual’s unique capabilities to decide and contribute in the way they know best to an organisation’s performance (Kline, 2006).
The fulcrum of support – the manager responsible

Principle #7: The fulcrum of support to water services authorities and providers will be the senior manager/s responsible for the performance of the organisation.

Every organization has its own unique situation and challenges. The key actions necessary to obtain the greatest improvement in performance (and the sequence and timing of these actions) will be unique to each organization. For this reason, support aimed at improving the performance of water services institutions (providers and authorities) must be managed and co-ordinated by the manager/s responsible for the organisation’s performance.

The training of the top management will focus on the following aspects:

- improvement of customer services;
- sound management of infrastructure (asset and disaster management, including planning, expansions, maintenance and rehabilitation);
- cost effectiveness, that is, ensuring value for money; and
- leadership, which means (amongst other things) the strength to lead a team in a conflicting environment with the goal of putting the consumer first.

3.4 Build a learning culture

Principle #8: Support will contribute towards building of a learning culture in all institutions across the sector.

Lack of capacity often results in an inability to absorb support, resulting in a vicious circle with no progress. Building a culture of learning where support and resources are made available to share lessons and build upon existing experience is important towards strengthening institutions and ensuring ongoing learning.

3.5 Respond to demand

Principle #9: Support will be responsive to demands but also mediated by issues of national strategic importance.

Support will be targeted to the identified support needs of the sector and in particular local government, based on accurate assessments of problems and gaps to be addressed. In this way it will be demand responsive. However national strategic priorities such as the achievement of the water and sanitation targets will also be part of support programmes.

Creating a culture which puts the consumer first

Principle #10: Putting the consumer first.

Support will work towards the goal of mature relations (true partnership) between consumers, politicians and utilities. Senior management in the water services provider must know that if they don’t render a good service to the consumers then the politicians will be in trouble and their jobs will be on the line.

Achieving a clear separation of roles with accountability for performance will only be possible where a culture exists that puts the consumer first. The top management of water services providers must be clear that they are accountable to their
customers/consumers in the first instance. It is imperative that the consumers’ voice be strengthened and “educated”: then the utilities will be better managed but the consumers will also get a better deal. Poor and inefficient service won’t be tolerated. Quality of service will improve as well as cost effectiveness. One of the key reasons underpinning the success of Joburg Water over the last five years has been the establishment of such a culture (the customer comes first) both within Joburg Water itself and in the relationship between the political leadership in the City of Joburg and the utility.\(^3\)

### 3.6 Allocate support resources strategically

**Principle #11:** Support will be strategic with a view to maximise the outcomes for a given set of limited resources.

The LG5SA states that dplg must identify priority areas of support to local government required of national government and other key stakeholders. With respect to water services, these priorities are (1) ensuring universal access to water and sanitation services, (2) ensuring safe drinking water quality and ensuring (3) sound management of a critical basic service.

Support provided in terms of this strategy will be strategic in enabling the municipalities and key stakeholders to achieve the sector vision, goals and targets by maximising the outcomes for a given set of resources, with a view to sustainable service delivery. This principle implies that support efforts should be directed to areas where the impact on outcomes will be greatest, that is, where support will make the most difference.

**Principle #12:** Support resources will be concentrated.

Support resources will be concentrated in a few key strategic initiatives that will make the most difference rather than being spread thinly over a wide range of activities.

### 3.7 Institutionalise capacity

**Principle #13:** Capacity will be institutionalised.

Support initiatives will develop capacity within the institutions that require it so that reliance on external support is reduced over time.

### 3.8 Be transformative and address the whole business

**Principle #14:** Support will be holistic.

Support for the water services function will be based on the understanding that water services is an integrated business with multiple and linked functions (including, but not limited to, customer relations management, asset management, operations management, financial management, human resource management).

**Principle #15:** Support will be transformative.

Through the institutional reform process, assisted by the support framework, water services institutions will be transformed in order to ensure effective, efficient and

\(^3\) A case study of the Joburg Water management contract is currently being undertaken.
sustainable services provision, taking cognisance of the need and desire to reflect the cultural, gender and racial diversity in South Africa.

3.9 Be coordinated and aligned

Principle #16: A sector-wide approach will be followed.

Support will be undertaken in terms of a sector-wide approach as developed through the Masimbambane programme, building on these strengths and taking note of the weaknesses as revealed through the Masimbambane Reviews (particularly relating to monitoring and evaluation).

Principle #17: Support will be coordinated.

In terms of the LG5SA, The office of the Premier and Premiers Coordinating Forum must assume overall accountability for coordinating and monitoring the hands-on support to municipalities. This will be done through municipal support action plans. Water services support will be coordinated through the DWAF regional offices. Municipal support action plans for water services will be developed (called Provincial Sector Support Implementation Plans). These will be based on individual Municipal Water Services Action Plans developed by each water services authority and/or provider. See section 7.

Different support initiatives will be brought together and properly managed so that support meets the needs of the sector, and in particular water services authorities and municipal water services providers. The objective of co-ordination is to ensure that support is based on real needs and is properly planned to avoid duplication and fragmentation, and to achieve targeted support where outcomes and resources are optimised.

Principle #18: Support will be aligned with related initiatives and programmes.

The support strategy for water services is being aligned with:

- the Cabinet-approved local government five year strategic agenda;
- DWAF National Water Services Regulation Strategy;
- DWAF National Water Services Institutional Reform Strategy; and
- other relevant initiatives.
Part 2: The Support Strategy

Overview

This part of the strategy address “the what” (what support will be provided) and “the how” (how this support will be provided) questions. Questions related to implementation (who will provide the support, when this will be done and with what resources) are addressed in Part 3 (Linkages and Implementation).

The support strategy comprises two major initiatives, supported by another eight initiatives as shown in Figure 2.

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**Objective 1**: establishment & functioning of capable, effective & efficient water services institutions

- **1A** Programmatic support to WSAs
- **1B** Direct operational support to WSPs

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**Objective 2**: development of skills

- **2A** Councillor development
- **2B** Leadership development
- **2C** Training support managers
- **2D** HRD 2025 vision

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**Objective 3**: role-players effective

- **3A** Sector-wide approach
- **3B** Co-ordination
- **3C** Peer networks
- **3D** Knowledge management

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Figure 2: Key components of the support strategy

**Objective 1**: To ensure the establishment and functioning of capable, effective and efficient water services institutions.

A. **Programmatic support to WSAs.** Strengthen the existing support programmes, increase demand responsiveness and improve co-ordination.

B. **Direct operational support to WSPs.** Implement a new focussed and strategic initiative on direct operational support using skilled and experienced resources with political buy-in and practical outcomes-based implementation at a municipal level.

**Objective 2**: To ensure the development of adequate skills and competencies required in the water services sector.
A. **Councillor training.** Strengthen initiative and undertake on an ongoing basis.

B. **Leadership training.** Implement a new initiative developing the leadership skills of WSA and WSP managers.

C. **Train regional support managers** as the key coordinators of support at the regional level.

D. **Capacity building through skills development, education, training.** Develop and implement a sector-wide skills development strategy.

**Objective 3:** To enable all sector role-players and partners to fulfil their roles effectively.

A. **Sector wide approach.** Strengthen sector wide approach.

B. **Coordination.** Significantly improve national and regional support coordination (including establishment of new coordination structures and posts).

C. **Peer networks.** Strengthen and deepen the peer networks and related initiatives.

D. **Knowledge management.** Strengthen knowledge management initiatives including giving consideration to the establishment of a technical advisory service dedicated to municipal water services.

Each of these components is discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

### 4 Programmatic support to WSAs

#### 4.1 Introduction

This strategy recognises the important differences between the **authority** functions of a water services authority and the **operational** functions of a water services provider, as set out in the Water Services Act. This part of the strategy deals with support for the **authority** functions which will be addressed through a programmatic approach that is both supply and demand driven.

In many cases, a municipality may be both the water services authority and the water services provider. In these cases, the municipality will be able to receive both the programmatic support for the authority function set out in this section as well as the direct operational support set out in the following section. In these cases, it is particularly important that the two kinds of support are integrated. Where direct operational support is being provided, the programmatic support must be provided within the context of the action plan established for the water services function (see section 4).

#### 4.2 Purpose

The purpose of this support is to continue to build the capacity of water services authorities to both fulfill their authority functions and to develop strategic leadership at the authority level related to the provision of water services.

The ultimate purpose of support to water services authorities is for each authority to achieve the targets outlined in the Strategic Framework and to strengthen the capacity of authorities so that they are able to: (1) effectively plan their water services to ensure access to all; (2) effectively develop infrastructure to meet these targets; (3) ensure the
financial sustainability of the service; (4) make good decisions concerning water services provider arrangements; and (5) effectively regulate water services provision.

4.3 **Approach – supply and demand driven within a collaborative framework**

The approach to water services authority capacity building draws on the experience and builds on the strengths of the various water services authority support programmes (such as WSDP support, capital programme support, etc.) whilst at the same time increasing the demand-responsiveness of the approach.

The support will focus on the five functional areas of authorities (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Functional areas of a WSA**

4.4 **Increasing demand responsive support**

It is proposed that the following approach be utilized to strengthen a demand responsive approach to water services authority support.

a) **WSA Checklist:** The results of the WSA Checklist are utilized by water services authorities to identify their own compliance and/or performance gaps. This is consistent with the LG5SA which states: undertake a regulatory compliance audit with local government legislation (with respect to national and provincial
government and municipalities). All key areas identified where compliance with local government legislation is absent.

b) **WSA internal assessment**: Water services authorities will be encouraged to undertake an internal assessment utilising the existing capacity assessment tool (where preferred) so that they can identify the specific support interventions they need and the estimated resources required for these interventions.

c) **WSA support plan**: Based on the findings of the internal assessment, authorities will prepare a water services authority support plan which outlines the following:

- the compliance and performance targets they need to achieve (with respect to their authority function);
- the type of support required to achieve the targets (for example access to legal expertise, support to establish an information system, financial expertise, support to a decision making process, etc.); and
- the time frame for the support, plus the resources and budget required.

d) **Access support resources**: The WSA support plan will serve as the basis for accessing financial resources and expertise to implement the plan. In this regard both the authority and the DWAF regional support manager can use the plan to identify appropriate expertise and to channel the necessary resources for the implementation of the plan.

e) **Implementation of support plan**: Upon accessing the necessary financial resources (which are managed through the sector wide approach and regional co-ordination), the authority will implement its support plan. Sector partners will fulfill a coordinating role in assisting the authority to access the expertise and systems and tools required.

f) **Reporting performance**: The authority will report annually on its performance (one integrated report on water services performance which goes to DWAF as regulator and is available to the public, that is, consumers) which includes progress against its planned performance (set out in the WSDP) and the key performance indicators set out in the Strategic Framework (as elaborated in the National Water Services Regulation Strategy).
4.5 Role of regional coordination in WSA support

In order to ensure that support is demand driven and based on the real needs of water services authorities, support has to be coordinated at the regional level. This is particularly important in terms of how national support programmes interact with authorities so as to avoid duplication, overburdening, and support interventions that are not properly targeted.

The purpose of regional support co-ordination is to achieve the following:

a) Gain an understanding of water services authority support needs (focus areas, expertise required, and resources) based on their WSA assessments and support plans;

b) Feed this knowledge into the sector wide approach for support so that sector support objectives, support programmes and resources can be properly aligned to support needs (that is, to assist with national resource allocation for support);

c) Ensure that support provided through national support programmes is targeted at authority support needs and is delivered at the right time (coordinating programme support so that authorities receive what they need when they need it as opposed to the current approach where much of the support is provided when a particular programme is implemented);

d) Optimise authority support resources within the province, through common support programmes where appropriate, such as joint bylaw workshops, WSA peer sharing on particular topics that are of common interest, contracting expertise that can be utilized across authorities, which support is based on needs identified in the WSA support plans

e) Monitor the impact of water services authority support, both in terms of national programmes and direct hands on support and feed back lessons, strengths and weaknesses to the 'support partners'; and

f) Review water services authority targets within the WSDPs to assess progress in authority capacity development and to ensure ongoing alignment of support programmes to support needs.

In order to achieve the above objectives, it is proposed that Regional Support Managers are appointed (see section 7.3).

4.6 Nationally driven WSA support programmes

A major emphasis has been given by DWAF and other sector partners to providing water services authority support through nationally driven programmes, such as infrastructure development support (through the MIG programme with a myriad of supporting guidelines and tools); section 78 support (through the National Joint Response Team, comprising DWAF, SALGA, dplg and NT); WSDP planning support (which also includes macro planning and project planning support); free basic water support; sanitation support; (policies and other); and regulatory support (model bylaws, benchmarking).

There will always be a place for nationally developed support programmes to: (a) assist municipalities to comply with legislation and regulations, (b) ensure optimisation of
support resources; and (c) ensure consistency in the content of programmes and in the quality of support. However, in many instances the purpose of national programmes is to provide an induction and to assist water services authorities to establish a function, or undertake a process. Thus most of these programmes are not intended to be ongoing, with the exception of water services planning support where DWAF fulfils a critical role in terms of macro planning, providing a reference system and offering hands on planning support in terms of infrastructure development.

The extent to which existing ‘supply driven’ programmes continue to be run from the national level, be it from DWAF Head Office or from collaborative initiatives such as the National Joint Response Team (NJRT) or MIG Support Programme, will depend on the impact of the support on authorities’ ability to perform their functions and achieve their targets.

This strategy recognizes the need for some of the national water services authority support programmes to continue combined with hands on support, such as WSDP support, infrastructure development, and regulatory support. Support to address financial decision making and water services provider decision making should be addressed through hands on support, drawing on the lessons that have been learnt through the national programmes.

Programmatic support will be provided within the framework of regional coordination, and only be undertaken through the regional support managers.

Programmatic support related to each of the water services authority functional areas is set out below.

**WSDP support**

WSDP support through both hands on support to WSA planning processes and through access to data from the macro planning framework will continue.\(^4\) (This priority is consistent with LG5SA KPA 1 support to the development of IDPs.) In order to ensure that this support is properly coordinated with other support initiatives, this support will be coordinated by the Regional Managers.

**Infrastructure development support**

Support to infrastructure development must be driven by both the targets that WSAs have to achieve and sustainability issues. As the sector Department responsible for ensuring that water services infrastructure complies with national norms and standards, DWAF has a responsibility to provide support to WSAs from planning through to implementation of their water services projects. Where required, DWAF also needs to provide access to technical support for feasibility studies, assisting WSAs to comply with MIG conditions, project planning, and procuring implementing agents for very large projects. Where DWAF regional offices do not have the capacity to provide the type of support WSAs require, they need to ensure that WSAs can access the necessary expertise.

Capacity within the sector (particularly within DWAF regional offices) to monitor progress against the water and sanitation targets and to correctly identify constraints to infrastructure delivery needs to be urgently addressed

\(^4\) It is proposed that a Concept Note on Planning Support be prepared by Fred Van Zyl’s Directorate to outline current planning support provided from macro planning data to hands on support at municipal level. It is particularly important that other support programmes and Regional Managers gain a thorough understanding of this support.
**Tariffs, subsidies and free basic water and sanitation**

Support to water services authorities in terms of determining their tariff structures, allocating equitable share and implementing free basic water and sanitation is best addressed through the direct operational support interventions. It is during these interventions that key financial decisions will need to be addressed. See section 4.

In addition there are some tools available to assist authorities to set tariffs, however if an authority is requiring support with financial decision making such as tariffs and equitable share allocation then hands on support is more appropriate rather than nationally driven programmatic support.

**Deciding the most appropriate water services provider arrangements**

Following the work of the National Joint Response Team to provide support to section 78 processes, a range of supporting tools, guidelines and lessons learnt are available.

The supply driven approach was appropriate initially to assist water services authorities to understand the purpose of the section 78 assessment process, however support needs to increasingly become demand driven where it is more directly linked to water services development planning and direct WSP operational support (see section 4).

Where authorities require support in deciding the most appropriate WSP arrangements (mechanisms), this support should be identified in their WSA support plans and addressed through hands on specialist support accessed through the regional co-ordination mechanism.

The role of sector partners and DWAF at the national level should decrease over time as the regional sector partners increase their capacity to access resources and expertise.

**Support to fulfil the WSA regulatory role**

The support to be provided to water services authorities in order to fulfil their regulatory role (regulating WSPs and the provision of services) is addressed in the National Water Services Regulatory Strategy. This support will include model by-laws, benchmarks, systems for monitoring WSP performance and contract establishment and management.

## 5 Direct operational support to WSPs

### 5.1 Purpose

This is a new support initiative aimed at making a direct improvement in the performance of municipal water services providers through strategic interventions.

### 5.2 A focus on operations - fit for purpose & unique to each WSP

The process set out below is fundamentally different to the programmatic support set out in the previous section. Whereas the programmatic support to Water Services Authorities is based on a standard set of competencies and practices that are required by all WSAs (for example, good planning), direct operational support can only be effectively provided if it is context specific and if it addresses the most important operational constraints in a particular context. Effective support in this context must provide **the right solution at the right time**. This requires a particular approach which is different to the approach set out in the previous section.
5.3 The approach

The direct operational support initiative will follow this approach:

1. Support will be managed by the regional support manager (initial engagement, overall oversight of process).

2. Support will be voluntary and based on requests by municipalities for support. The support team must have the support of the Municipal Manager, working through the WSA manager in first instance. The necessary political support must also be in place.

3. Support will focus on outcomes (effective services for customers) which will be measured.

4. Support will address the whole business (holistic, multidisciplinary).

5. Support will be customised to each water services authority / water services provider circumstance.

6. Support will focus on the provision function (well functioning services is the outcome) but will also address authority functions to the extent that these impact on service provision, and hence link with, where appropriate, the programmatic support provided for water services authorities (see previous section).

7. Water services institutions will be transformed in order to ensure effective, efficient and sustainable services provision, taking cognisance of the need to reflect the cultural, gender and racial diversity in South Africa.

8. Water services authority and water services provider managers will assume accountability and responsibility for performance.

9. Sustainable capacity will be built at the water services provider level.

5.4 Support process

The process to be followed is as follows (see Figure 5):
Figure 5: Direct operational support to WSPS - the process

1. **Initial engagement.** Support will be provided on request from a municipal water services provider (that is, the support provided is voluntary and not obligatory). The initial engagement, between the DWAF regional support manager and the municipality must ensure that there is full buy-in from the municipality to the support process (as outlined below). The regional support manager will assist with the recruitment of the appropriate diagnostics resource and oversee the support process. The role of the regional support manager is discussed in section 7.3.

2. **Correct diagnosis.** A key step in the process is the correct diagnosis of the underlying causal problems (rather than the symptoms) and the framing of practical and realistic solutions. This diagnosis can only be carried out by people with the appropriate skills and experience, notably, demonstrated experience in managing water services operations successfully.

3. **Develop action plan.** The proposed solutions are written up into an action plan which includes clear targets (measurable outcomes), implementation steps and interim milestones (which can be monitored), with the resource and support requirements clearly identified.

4. **Support implementation.** The resources required to support implementation are secured and the action plan is implemented with the necessary support.

5. **Monitor performance.** Performance is monitored (interim milestones and outcomes).

6. **Iteration.** The diagnosis and action plan is refined as appropriate in the light of new information coming to light and monitoring takes place until the targeted performance is achieved, or it is recognized that other substantial obstacles are
preventing the achievement of the required performance. In the latter case, stronger regulatory measures or institutional reform may be necessary.

This process may also address governance issues (the enabling environment) if necessary, in which case the process will draw on the support available from the programmatic support approach outlined in section 4.

### 5.5 Critical success factors

The above support process will only be successful if the following critical success factors are in place (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Direct operational support to WSPS – critical success factors**

**A. Leadership and skills training for regional support managers.** The role of the newly created regional support managers is critical to the success of this initiative. For this reason, a leadership and skills training programme specifically for these regional support managers will be instituted. See section 6.4.

**B. Regional support managers are in place.** Not only must the regional support managers be in place, they must also operate at the right level of seniority (to engage with water services authority managers) and with the right aptitude and leadership skills (see above). Regional support managers will be involved in the initial engagement with municipalities, recruitment of the appropriate diagnostic skills, oversight of the support process and monitoring of outcomes. The role of the regional support managers is discussed in more detail in section 7.3 below.

**C. Ensure full buy-in.** Getting the buy-in of the senior management and politicians is a critical success factor. This means that there must be engagement with the Municipal Manager, the Chief Financial Officer, the Corporate affairs (Human Resources Manager) and the Chief Technical Officer,
as well as the members of the Mayoral Executive Committee (especially the members responsible for Finance and Technical) – see Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Understanding water services as an integrated business**

D. **Source appropriate expertise** (diagnostics phase). Accurate diagnosis of both the causal factors of poor performance and practical means to address these is key to success. This requires particular strategic expertise (combined with direct management operational experience) which is a rare commodity in South Africa. The importance of sourcing the right expertise for this step cannot be over emphasised.

E. **Practical action plan with key outcomes identified.** The action plan must address the underlying causes, must be practical and the defined milestones and outcomes must be able to be monitored. Implementation of the action plan must yield the desired results (that is, the diagnosis and solutions must be correctly framed (see above).

F. **Source appropriate expertise.** Further expertise will be required to support the implementation of the action plan. The action plan will have specified what is needed very clearly. Again, it is critical that the appropriate resources are sourced for this purpose. The expertise must have the requisite experience and competencies for the required tasks (fit for purpose). The competencies required may be different from those required in the diagnostics phase, and are likely to be more technical in nature (for example, water treatment expertise, financial management expertise etc).

G. **Performance audits.** Actual performance will be monitored. Performance will be subject to external audits to ensure the robustness of outcomes. External regulatory performance audits will be used for this purpose wherever possible.

5.6 The creation of a national resource pool

Building effective operational and management capacity in municipal WSPs means:

- understanding the environment in which they operate;
spending time with the managers, encouraging and mentoring them;

developing their leadership skills; and

facilitating a network which ensures ongoing support.

The creation of a national resource pool is necessary because:

- Proper diagnosis and relevant management support requires the right skills and experience;
- This expertise is a scarce resource (people who have successfully run a water services business); and
- It is more efficient to procure this expertise centrally into a single draw-down facility.

The role of a national resource pool

The national resource pool will play an important role in terms of operations assessment (good accurate diagnosis) and implementation monitoring. This central resource will also play a role of co-ordination between the various regions ensuring consistency in terms of management support.

Twinning arrangements on their own are not sufficient

An approach which relies only on twinning arrangements with mature WSPs is not sufficient. The reasons for this are as follows:

- even “capacitated” WSPs have limited capacity to spend time with weaker WSPs as they have their own challenges to meet (and are often themselves short of capacity);
- the approach, if used on its own, might create inconsistency and unfairness in terms of the support intensity (some regions have no capacitated WSPs);
- Managers in weaker WSPs desperately need mentors who will come to visit them on a regular basis benefiting as much from psychological support as from technical and management skills.

Attributes of task team members

The attributes of the task team members will need to be the following:

1. Concrete hands on experience of municipal operations in a similar environment;
2. Concrete experience of management of a municipal department or utility requesting passing on experience;
3. Ability to mentor and support rather than directing;
4. Psychological finesse and patience in order to adapt to challenging environments; and
5. Tenacity, perseverance and results orientation, even (and especially) in a position of management support and not direct management.

Profile of the members of the central task team

1. Programme coordinator: this is the coordinator of the central task team and the programme. He requires a long and large experience of municipal/utility operation in terms of water and sanitation S services and excellent leadership capability.
2. Operations expert: this person has a long and successful experience in terms of operations: water and sanitation networks, water treatment works, wastewater treatment works, telemetry systems etc. Under this expert there will be various experts specialized in works, networks etc.

3. Finance expert: this person has a deep understanding and significant experience of water services finances and tariffs.

4. Revenue and customer services expert: this person has managed the revenue function as well as the customer care services of a large municipal water and sanitation department or utility. It might be necessary to recruit under this person one specialist for revenue and one specialist for customer services; and,

5. Institutional design and human resources, with particular focus on organizational culture, motivation and incentives (new ways of running a municipal business more effectively).

Ideally, most of these experts should have worked together at least with the Programme coordinator.

| Text Box: Modus operandi (what a typically support process will look like) |
| (an elaboration of the process set out above) |

The team will develop a methodology for assessment/diagnosis. This might look as follows:

**Request**
- Request made to the task team by the regional support coordinator.

**First visit**
- Meet key stakeholders (inception) & explain
- Undertake assessment (diagnosis) – 3 to 5 days for a WSP
- Develop a practical action plan with WSP manager
- Present action plan to key stakeholders
- Obtain commitments to plan
  - Political sponsor (portfolio chair)
  - Management sponsor (MM)
  - Project manager (WSP manager)

**Post visit**
- Identify key contact / responsible person in task team
- Secure support for plan (support plan)
- Monitor progress
- Follow-on visits
- Reporting

### 5.7 The creation and/or strengthening of regional resource pools

For similar reasons, as identified above, regional resource pools will be created and/or the existing Technical Assistance Contracts strengthened, ensuring that the practical
skills sets and competencies and experience necessary to support the implementation of the municipal action plans are adequate and in place.

5.8 Making effective use of available capacity

Public sector capacity
Capacity within other public providers (including municipal and public entities) will be used where appropriate. Attention will be given to clear contracting with appropriate allocation of risks and responsibilities. Twinning arrangements will be explored where appropriate.

Private sector capacity
Although the long term aim is to have an effective public sector which plays a significant role in delivery water services, in the short and medium term the capacity shortages are critical and are having an adverse impact on the performance of the water services sector. In this context, the use of private sector capacity is essential. Even at present, the private sector is making an important contribution to effective performance in the sector, being involved in consulting, construction contracts, build-operate-train-transfer contracts, service contracts (for example, meter reading), management contracts (and management support contracts), lease contracts and, in a couple of cases, concession contracts.

The most significant need in the sector is for improved management of water services delivery. In this context, consideration will be given to the increased use of management contracts, with a view to developing and transferring management skills to the public sector over time. Important lessons can be learnt from the Johannesburg Water management contract.

In addition to this, the role of support services contracts for rural water schemes has also been successful. This has been documented in the case of the Alfred Nzo (de la Harpe, 2004).

Community-based organisations
The capacity of community-based organisations to both support and implement (operate) services will be harnessed wherever appropriate.

5.9 Procurement
Public sector procurement policies and legislation are designed to promote effective procurement which ensures value for money. However, the procedures can be time consuming. The resource pools (at the national and regional levels) are proposed with a view to expediting procurement at the same time as ensuring that the right resources are made available for support. That is, instead of procuring on a case-by-case basis, procurement is done on a pooled basis. In addition to this arrangement, municipalities may require support to assist them contracting in the public sector, the private sector and community-based organisations to support service delivery (see previous section).

6 Skills development
The LG5SA states that government will roll out an unprecedented national capacity building, training and support programme to local government over the next 5 years. Key elements of the water services component of this programme are set out below.
6.1 Councillor development

The LG5SA states that SALGA must intensify its support to the political leadership of municipalities and that all councillors must participate in councillor training. In terms of this strategy, DWAF will actively support SALGA in this task as indicated below.

The LG5SA states that government will implement a practically focused induction programme for councilors and senior Municipal Managers. The councillor development programme set out below will be aligned with this initiative.

The purpose of councillor development is to empower councillors to actively participate in water services development planning and other processes with a view to making informed and wise decisions affecting water services. Councillors need to have a full understanding of the water services authority roles and responsibilities as well as the water services business. Within this understanding they need to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of their constituency and comply with national norms and standards. The current councillor ‘inductions’ are not sufficient to ensure this level of empowerment and capacity building of councillors.

It is therefore proposed that councillor development (which comprises both training and strategic sessions to empower decision making) becomes an institutionalised responsibility within DWAF as the sector leader. This will ensure that responsibility is taken for designing and developing a more comprehensive and intensive water services training and development programme for councillors over the full five year term.

The development of the training content and materials needs to be undertaken at a national level to ensure consistency and high quality. Providing strategic sessions linked to the training needs to be co-ordinated by the Regions. It is important that municipal officials are part of the councillor development programme to share knowledge and information about their water services challenges and to empower councillors to gain a greater understanding of issues requiring decisions.

Implementation of the programme will take place through the regions, co-ordinated by DWAF, but with the support of all sector partners as appropriate. Implementation may include regional training / strategic sessions (where districts are brought together) as well as sessions at district level.

Resources for the design and development of the programme, as well as implementation, will be secured through the sector wide approach.

6.2 Leadership and management training for water services

The cabinet approved Five Year Local Government Strategic Agenda (see Concept Note 3b) identified leadership development and the professionalisation of management as a key intervention to improve performance. Within local government there is often limited appreciation of the water services business and what is required for effective performance.

This element of the support strategy is based on two strong premises:

- Sound leadership is needed on the part of water services provider managers to effect significant performance improvement.
- A support strategy that does not address leadership will fail as it is water service provider managers in their leadership capacity that are ultimately responsible for water services performance.
The foundation of these premises is set out in Concept Note 7 (Leadership) as well as in the key principles informing this support strategy (see section 3).

DWAF will lead the development and implementation of a water services leadership and management programme. The key principles and elements of this programme will be as follows:

1. The program will be developed and implemented by acknowledged leaders in the fields of leadership development and water services management respectively in South Africa.

2. The programme will skilfully combine leadership principles (vision, initiation of change, inspiration, staff development and passion) and best practice management principles (planning and translation of strategy into action, engaging and directing, organising, effectively allocating resources, communication, and accounting for performance). These will be integrated with leadership and management expertise specific to the water services business.

3. The programme will be outcomes-based, creating competencies and encouraging behaviours that will lead to significant change in leadership and management within the water services sector in South Africa with a view to significantly improved performance in the water services sector.

4. The programme will employ a sound pedagogy using a blended approach of action learning, coaching and mentoring learning modalities.

5. The programme will be modular and suitable for part-time enrolment with intensive blocks interspersed with on-the-job learning.

6.3 Mentoring and coaching

Mentoring and coaching programmes will be developed and implemented at a number of levels:

- Mentoring and coaching of WSA and WSP leaders and managers; (see section 6.2 above)
- Mentoring and coaching of young engineers and technicians; and
- Mentoring and coaching of the regional support managers (see section 6.4).

A number of initiatives are already in place (see Concept Notes #5, #5a and #5b).

Mentoring and coaching will also be an important component of the HRD 2025 Vision (see below).

6.4 Training regional support managers

The regional support managers have a key role to play in ensuring effective support by identifying synergies (making effective use of resources), coordinating support, engaging directly with water services authority and provider managers, identifying and sharing lessons learnt etc.

It is important that the regional support managers are employed at the right level of seniority and have the appropriate skills, competencies and leadership capabilities.

For these reasons, a specific recruitment process and training programme will be developed and implemented for these regional support managers and the national support coordinator. The training programme will focus on leadership development, facilitation skills, and knowledge management practices.
In addition to these, the appropriate support for these managers must be available (so that they can do their jobs effectively) and steps will be taken by DWAF to ensure that this is in place. The development of the one-stop shop concept will be part of this.

6.5 Skills development, education and training (HRD 2025 Vision)

Context

It is widely recognised that South Africa suffers from a serious skills shortage, which in turn affects the water services sector’s ability to meet its goals and targets (see section 1). It is also likely that the skills shortage will become more acute in the future. For example, DWAF is in the process of establishing up to 19 Catchments Management Agencies and a National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency. It is projected that these institutions will need to employ between 400 and 800 new members in the next 8 years. If one also considers the current professional technical staff age profile, in terms of which many experience people will be retiring in the next 5 to 10 years, then it is clear that significant capacity building and skills development initiatives are needed urgently. Further factors aggravating the skills shortage problem are the problems of staff retention – often related to remuneration – and competition with other industries to attract new talent to the sector (for example, the impact of the World Cup on the demand for civil engineers).

Most of the current initiatives are focussed on meeting technical skills needs. The need for sophisticated management skills and abilities has not adequately prioritised. What is needed are leader-managers who have the ability to plan, communicate, allocate resources appropriately and make arrangement to fulfil the plan, and to assume responsibility and accountability for the success of the plan, including attracting, motivating and retaining staff and making other arrangements necessary to secure the required resources. Additionally the modern manager needs to ensure that they are creating the correct climate for performance and developing the next levels of leadership within the organisation. In other words, the challenge is far more than a technical skills shortage, though this in itself is also very important.

Initiatives to address the skills shortage - HRD 2025 Vision

Numerous constraints to skills development have been identified (see Concept Note 5). The HRD 2025 Vision is an initiative to deal with these constraints and complements the Government’s skills development initiative, namely, the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA). The 2025 Vision initiative is a comprehensive project focussed on meeting the skills requirements of the sector. It makes use of inputs from existing and past initiatives (for example, the WSSLG sub-committee for capacity building study and the WRC reports) as well as undertakes its own initiatives to build a comprehensive picture of the current state of affairs.

The 2025 initiative established a task team:

- To identify key skills needs; (This is consistent with the LG5SA skills audit.)
- To identify innovative and fast track solutions to meeting these needs over the next 20 years; and
- To coordinate initiatives.

DWAF chairs Task Team and is driving the process.

This umbrella initiative will also draw on the outputs and outcomes of other related initiatives which have taken place in the past or are currently underway. For example:

- Municipal Capacity Assessments undertaken in terms of the LG5SA.
- Local government competency framework developed in terms of the LG5SA.
• The WSSLG Training and Skills Development Sub-Committee commissioned a “Strategic Options to address Constraints and Challenges to Skills Development in the Water Services Sector” study aimed at assessing skills gaps and shortcomings in terms of Water Services Authority and Water Services provider functioning, and formulating a strategy to address these gaps and shortcomings. A number of reports have been produced (skills gaps, skills development constraints, business plan to address constraints). However, the proposed business plan (developed more than a year ago) has not been implemented to date.

• The Water Research Commission has commissioned a study to conduct an assessment of Training Programmes and Capacity needs for the Water Sector. The overall goal of the project is to compile a comprehensive inventory of all relevant water sector training courses related to degree/diploma/short training courses (accredited and, where available, non accredited), offered by public and private sector training providers (including providers of higher education), to assess capacity needs as well as skills gaps of Water Services Authorities, Water Boards, Water Services providers, Catchments Management Agencies, Water Sector Regulators and the South African Water Research Community. Where appropriate, the study will identify the mechanisms related to the quality assurance as well as monitoring such courses as part of the database. This study is in progress.

• The development of an effective Water Chamber in the ESETA (Skills and Education Training Authority) which will fulfil its role is assisting the sector to develop skills. (This is being addressed as part of the HRD 2025 Vision initiative.)

**Assessment**

Although there are several well considered initiatives to address the skills shortage, they are focussed primarily on closing technical (functional) knowledge gaps without a conscious focus on strategic management and leadership skills such as are necessary for leading complex business units. According to the WSSLG working group, current initiatives have had an impact in terms of increasing operational skills levels and technical skills but have had limited impact on higher level skills. The danger is that current initiatives focus on sustaining the current approach and are unlikely to meet the sector’s challenges. There is a lack of appreciation of “levels of work” described by Drotter and Charan (2001) and Jaques (1994) which are key to the selection and development of leadership in the modern organisation. These are “strategic level skills” and include skills such as the ability to translate strategy, allocate resources efficiently, inspire staff, communicate with internal and external stakeholders, select and develop the next generation of managers and ensure good corporate governance.

Additional concerns are:

• A comprehensive skills analysis has been done by the task group but not enough emphasis seems to have been placed on the strategic functioning of the organisation. The view is that the sector suffers from a lack of functional and technical skills with little emphasis placed on the functioning of the organisation. There is a gap with regards to an assessment of levels of work and strategic level leadership skills.

• An additional short-coming is a lack of a retention strategy. The sector experiences a higher labour turnover rate than the general labour market but little assessment has been done on causes (except for attributions to retirement and medical reasons).
• A further problem is the integration of skills development with a broader human resources strategy, which begins with recruitment and includes performance management and remuneration and rewards. In the private sector such initiatives and programmes reside within a broader Talent Management Strategy.

• Unit standards have not been developed for many of the functions and there is a lack of consensus amongst municipalities on skills required.

Specific initiatives to be implemented (including the approach)

1. Improve leadership and co-ordination of skills development by obtaining an annual funding allocation and employing a skills development coordinator at a Chief Director level with two support staff.

2. Communicate to municipalities’ training that is available.

3. Acceleration of the development and implementation of the HRD 2025 vision and strategy. Develop action plan for the sector for the HRD 2025 Vision, which includes the co-ordination of donors

4. Leadership development initiative (see section 6.2).

5. Improving skills transfer to new graduates and other through development of mentoring and coaching programmes, making use of all available experience (for example, retired engineers). Expand the SAICE programme, both in terms of more engineers being mentored and in terms of a wider range of skills being mentored. See section 6.3.

6. Improving the functioning of the job market by matching skills offers (young graduates, people needing practical training to complete certification programmes etc.) with skill needs. For example, better coordination of placements of technical staff into municipalities (see section 8.3). This is consistent with the LG5SA priority of supporting municipalities to fill vacant senior management posts.

7. SETA and in-service training. Training will be demand driven. The goals of in-service training (FET and HET) should be clear – ensuring sufficient staff with appropriate competencies to manage water services at municipal, provincial and national level. Initiate an intervention programme for ESETA to get learnerships working properly. DWAF will consider employing/contracting somebody to drive this programme. The establishment of a Water SETA should be considered. South Africa Qualification Authority and the National Qualification Framework (unit standards, etc.) to be taken into account. Draw on information from municipal support plans. Human Resource colleagues must assist in getting the message across of what is needed and support Local Government to establish what they need in terms of skills and what they have to do to comply with the regulatory environment of the sector.

8. Making better use of existing resources. Think about alternative ways of delivering the skills, for example, shared services centres, district municipalities, private sector, draw down facilities, etc.

9. Curricula (tertiary institutions). Engage with universities and technikons on the relevancy of their curricula to the needs of Government and the sector.

10. Schools programme. It is important to develop awareness of importance of water services and career opportunities within water services. The HRD 2025 Task Team is developing and implementing a schools programme with these aims in mind.
7 Sector collaboration and cross cutting support initiatives

7.1 The sector wide approach (sector collaboration)

The sector wide approach is a collaborative effort between the water sector and donors that support the sector. The purpose of this collaboration is to support and strengthen the water and sanitation services sector in South Africa as a whole. Through the Masibambane programme, three provinces were targeted to support the proper functioning of local government in terms of the current policy and legislative framework. This programme brought together much of the donor funding as well as the programmes of those donors. In addition the programme brought together the experience of the various programmes in supporting local government.

Within this strategy the sector wide approach fulfils a key purpose in ensuring that the sector more effectively responds to the support needs of municipalities that are water services authorities and providers. This will be achieved through an iterative process of integrating municipal support needs into the sector programme objectives so that funding and support can be specifically targeted to those needs.

![Diagram of the sector wide approach]

**Figure 8: The sector wide approach**

1. **Policy**. For the sector wide approach to be successfully implemented, the entire sector must be committed to achieving a common set of goals and objectives. The Strategic Framework for Water Services (SFWS) provides the vision, goals...
and targets for the water sector in a comprehensive policy framework which is designed to be achieved through a collaborative approach and collaborative investment that is consistent with the sector wide approach. In line with the sector wide approach, this support strategy is directed by the policy objectives set out in the Strategic Framework. In order to implement the sector wide approach, the allocation of resources, expertise and support must also be geared towards the achievement of the targets and goals of the Strategic Framework.

2. **Budget.** The sector wide approach facilitates donor co-ordination and brings resources together into a **consolidated budget** that can be allocated to the achievement of common goals and objectives. In this way resources are targeted to agreed sector priorities.

3. **Consolidated programme.** The bringing together of resources allows the water sector, lead by DWAF, to plan longer term programmes that address the real needs of water services authorities and water services providers. These real needs must be identified in a consolidated programme and supported with the necessary budget and resources. This is a strategic exercise based on a macro level status quo assessment of water services authority, water services provider and the overall water services sector needs. Sufficient resources must be allocated to support the establishment and functioning of capable, effective and efficient water services institutions, both in terms of funds channelled to municipalities to implement their municipal support plans and in terms of resources (expertise, support structures, etc.) to support municipalities to achieve the targets outlined in their support plans. The consolidated programme reconciles the achievement of strategic objectives with available budget.

4. **Performance indicators.** The indicators and targets to be achieved through the sector wide approach need to be clearly identified. High level targets are identified in the policy and recorded in the national programme and provincial plans. Water services authority and water services provider milestones and indicators must be identified in the municipal actions plans and supported which inform the provincial plans and national programme.

5. **Provincial sector support implementation plans and monitoring.** The PSSIP have a key role to fulfil in ensuring sector collaboration, accessing expertise, facilitating co-ordination and monitoring support. They are also a mechanism to monitor support progress and identify gaps where further support is required. Provincial structures need to monitor municipal performance of both authorities and providers against a set of milestones and indicators. This is a critical component of the sector wide approach to ensure continuous improvement.
Figure 9: Implementing the sector-wide approach from policy to action plans

The sector wide approach needs to be broadened to all the provinces and needs to be promoted as an approach where common objectives are identified for all sector partners. There tends to be a lack of understanding of the sector wide approach, what it aims to achieve and how it should be implemented.

Critical to the success of the sector wide approach is access to sufficient funding to support water services sector plans. Support needs identified in municipal support plans should become a driving force in determining common objectives and resource needs. Supporting the proper functioning of water services authorities and the improved performance of municipal WSPs must remain a priority of the sector wide approach.
7.2 National support co-ordination

Whilst support co-ordination amongst sector partners is facilitated through the sector wide approach, DWAF has a key role to play in ensuring co-ordination of support activities on a day to day basis. This is particularly important in terms of co-ordinating support through Municipal Action Plans and ensuring co-ordination across sector departments.

At a National level a National Support Manager will be appointed by DWAF to ensure that national support programmes are targeted to the support needs of local government as communicated by the Regions. The primary role of the National Support Manager is to support the Regional Support Managers and ensure that their requests and support requirements are addressed. It is also to ensure that the resource (financial and expertise) requirements identified in Provincial Water Sector Plans are accommodated in the sector wide approach budget and plans. The National Support Manager is thus a senior level appointment with leadership qualities and strategic ability to translate problems and needs into practical support. The position also requires sufficient authority to secure resources and expertise on a national basis to support the provinces and local government water services programmes and action plans.

An Integrated Local Government Support Co-ordination Task Team will be established comprising the Regions and led by the National Support Manager. At a Regional level support will be co-ordinated through the already established sector co-ordination/collaboration forums or as determined by the Regions. Regions will call on different Head Office Programme Managers for support, for example if sanitation support is needed, Regions will contact the National Sanitation Programme Manager for such support. Head office will draw up a directory of contacts for use by Regions. National and regional coordination (see also below) must also address the current non-alignment of support processes.
A further important role of the national support manager and regional support managers (see below) is to ensure good communications between national, provincial and local government, between sector partners (see sector collaboration above) and between water services authorities (for lesson learning – see peer networks below).

7.3 Co-ordination of local support (regional support managers)

The approach set out here for the coordination of support is based on lessons learned from the review of existing support programmes, as well as recognising the need to ensure greater consolidation of support in line with Project Consolidate. It is premised on the fact that DWAF Regional offices are directly responsible for co-ordinating water services support to Local Government and that the role of DWAF Head Office is to support the DWAF Regions to fulfil their functions. DWAF and water services sector support to Local Government will therefore follow the following structure (see Figure ).

The central points of contact between supporting partners in the water services sector and Local Government are the DWAF Regional Offices. The responsibility of the DWAF Regional Offices is to support implementation at Local Government level. This co-ordinated approach must also be seen in the context of the sector wide approach which involves all sector partners.

![Diagram: Demand driven co-ordinated support](image)

**Figure 11: Demand responsive co-ordinated support**

The key principle is that each water services authority or provider manager must have a **single point of contact** with the DWAF Regional Office for all support needs.

To this end, each region will ensure that one or more support manager positions are established. Each **support manager** will be responsible for managing and co-ordinating the support for a defined portfolio of water services authorities. The support manager can be thought of as both the **director of support** and a **relationship manager**. Whenever a municipal water services authority or provider has a need for support, the authority or provider manager would call the regional support manager and
explain the problem or challenge that needs to be addressed. It is the task of the support manager to identify and arrange for the appropriate support to be provided, either from DWAF regional office, or from DWAF head-office or from other draw-down resources that may be available (see sections 5.6 and 5.7).

It is therefore essential that the support manager has the necessary competencies to understand and interpret the support needs, and to arrange for the appropriate support resources. This requires problem solving skills, management expertise, ability to delegate, strong co-ordination and organisation skills as well as the ability to monitor performance and identify support interventions where progress is not being made. The support manager also needs to play a critical interface role between sector stakeholders locally, provincially and nationally and thus needs to have strong leadership qualities. For this reason, the support manager should be seen as the “strongest link”, and should be at a high level of seniority within the DWAF structure. See section 6.3.

This approach of utilising regional support managers will lead to a well co-ordinated, demand responsive support approach. However, the success of the approach will depend on both:

- the competency of the support manager; and
- the quality of support resources available to the support managers.

**A key task of the regional support manager - optimising the use of support resources**

The regional support manager can play a key role in optimising the use of support resources through:

- Lesson learning;
- Having a thorough understanding of the status quo of water services institutions within the province and their support needs
- Identifying and realising support synergies; and
- Anticipating support resource needs.

**Anticipating support needs – the role of provincial support plans**

Provincial Sector Support Implementation Plans (PSSIPs) are currently being developed. These will address the water services authority and provider support requirements based on the expressed support needs of water services authorities and providers. These plans will assist the support managers to determine the nature and extent of support requirements, as well as manage and co-ordinate support. Support requirements need to be passed on to DWAF head-office for planning purposes and to guide the development of support objectives and the allocation of support resources.

It is important to stress that these support plans will not drive or govern the actual support provided. The actual support provided will be in direct response to support requests made by water services authority and provider managers. The provincial support plans are a planning tool in terms of which regions can anticipate the kind of support resources (nature and extent) likely to be needed. In practice, actual support requests are likely to differ from those set out in the plans, due to unforeseen eventualities. For example, a water services authority might have anticipated a certain support need (for the next year) in its support plan, but in reality another much more important support need may arise during the course of the year. There thus needs to be flexibility in terms of implementation of Provincial Sector Support Implementation Plans to ensure that priorities are addressed.
7.4 Peer networks and knowledge management

Peer and knowledge networks are reviewed in Concept Note 4e. Key points are summarised in the text boxes below.

**Peer networks**

**Text Box: The City Water Managers Forum**
The City Water Managers' Forum (CWMF) is an initiative of the water managers of the nine municipalities forming part of the South African Cities Network (SACN). It aims to facilitate debate on key topical issues facing the water sector in these municipalities; to provide a mechanism for communication and keeping up to date with sector developments; and to promote best practice management of water in the major urban areas of South Africa. It meets three times a year.

Assessment: Demand: Regular attendance to forum by all senior managers indicates high demand. Funding and cost: Funded by members. Travel and facilitation costs, approximately R30 000 per annum per member. Effectiveness: Positive feedback from managers, examples include catalyst for initiatives deepening cross-learning (for example, on asset management)

**Text Box: District Water Services Managers’ Forum**
The District Water Services Managers’ Forum (DWSMF) is an information sharing, learning and action research network of water services managers of district municipalities that are water services authorities in areas other than District Management Areas (DMAs) (22 in all). It aims to facilitate debate on key topical issues facing the water sector in these municipalities; provide a mechanism for communication and keeping up to date with sector developments; and promote best practice management of water in the (predominantly) rural areas of South Africa.

Assessment: Demand: Good attendance by water services managers indicates demand. Funding and Cost: Funded by WRC, approximately R300 000 per year including action research. Effectiveness: Good feedback from managers and extension of WRC contract with facilitators indicate success

**Text Box: Water Services Provider Network**
The Water Services Provider Network (WSPN) was launched by SALGA in March 2006 and aims to empower water services providers to address the many challenges they face by harnessing the expertise and knowledge of established providers to build the capacity of newly appointed providers. The pilot phase includes eight municipalities.

Assessment: Demand: Good attendance at initial workshops indicates interest. Funding and cost: Funded by SALGA and voluntary time by established providers. Cost not known. Effectiveness: To early to assess, success will depend on availability of time and resources from established providers.

**Lessons learnt**
- Peer to peer networks have proved to be very effective mechanisms for sharing knowledge, best practices and lessons learned. These operate well when they are self-initiated and funded. However, there is also an important role for
catalysts to help initiate these forums (as played, for example, by the WRC and SALGA).

- No peer-to-peer network exists for water services managers who are not part of the Cities Network (CWMF), District Network (DWSMF) or Water Services Provider (WSP) network.

**Way forward**

Care should be taken to avoid duplication of water services provider networks. Ultimately, water services provider managers should decide what works best for themselves. Local water services provider managers not current participating in peer-to-peer networks should be asked if they are interested.

There is much value to be gained from deepening and strengthening these networks. Whilst this could be facilitated through increasing the resources made available to these networks, it is ultimately more sustainable if these networks grow organically and are self-funded.

**Knowledge management**

**Text Box: Water Information Network – South Africa (WIN-SA)**

The Water Information Network – South Africa (WIN-SA) is a knowledge management initiative designed to serve the water sector, with the aim of ensuring that the body of knowledge in the sector is well managed, readily accessible and appropriately applied, leading to improved decision-making and performance, especially of local government. WIN have, *inter alia*, commissioned and published a series of papers on best practices. For further detail, see www.win-sa.org.za

**Assessment:**

*Demand:* Rich array of relevant water services related knowledge and information is available on their web-site. *Funding and cost:* Funded by WRC, DWAF, SALGA and Masimbambane. Annual cost not known. *Effectiveness:* Website and published materials are good quality and have been well received. WIN can play a very effective role in making relevant information available to sector stakeholders.

**Text Box: e-WISA**

e-WISA is an electronic information initiative undertaken by WISA in partnership with others. E-WISA was launched in May 2006.


**Other knowledge networks** also exist for local government more generally. These include the SA Cities Network and the Local Government Knowledge Sharing Programme (see www.dplg.gov.za)

**Lessons learnt**

- The ongoing WIN initiative to document best practices and make these widely available is very valuable.
- However, although a rich store of information has been collated, it is arguable that these resources are not being effectively disseminated and used.
• Care also needs to be taken to avoid duplication of effort between WIN and e-WISA. These can work well as complementary initiatives provided there is a spirit of cooperation and good ongoing communication between the people leading each initiative.

**Way forward**

Much more attention needs to be given to the effective dissemination of knowledge resources with the view to their effective use in practical situations. In this respect, the role of skilled regional support managers is likely to be very important.

### 7.5 Technical advisory services

**Text Box: Existing technical advisory services**

A **Small Water Systems Technical Assistance Centre (TAC)** was very recently established (May 2006) as a collaborative effort between, amongst other, the Water Research Commission, the Department: Water Affairs and Forestry, the Water Institute of Southern Africa, the South African Local Government Association, DPLG and the Development Bank of Southern Africa. The mission of the Technical Assistance Centre is to assist, support and improve small water systems in South Africa by addressing problems in a practical and hands-on fashion, thereby ensuring sustainability of these systems and ultimately a better quality of life for all people served by the small water and wastewater treatment systems. (See Annotated Bibliography for further details.)

**Assessment:** Demand: Too early to assess. Funding and cost: unknown. Effectiveness: Too early to assess.

**Others water services-specific advisory services.** There appear to be no other advisory services set up specifically for water services in South Africa.

A **Technical Assistance Unit (TAU)** supports the work of the Public Finance teams in government. Over the past year, the unit has addressed blockages in key projects such as the funding of community projects, social housing, partnerships in the public health sector and reviewing infrastructure delivery. Over the next three years, the unit will focus on facilitating the implementation of programmes especially in the Social Services Cluster and the Crime Prevention and Justice Cluster, promoting effective management and good governance. The unit is co-funded by the European Union. (For further information, see [www.treasury.gov.za](http://www.treasury.gov.za).)

**Assessment:** Demand: The unit is very active. Donor funded. Annual budget: unknown. Effectiveness: This unit has a good track record.

Consideration will be given to the establishment of a Technical Advisory Service dedicated to municipal water services provision.

### 7.6 Guidelines and tools

National government departments, research institutions, municipalities, water services authorities (WSAs), water services providers (WSPs) and various other organisations within the water services sector have developed a range of tools designed to support WSAs and WSPs to fulfil their functions. These tools need to be made more accessible and in some cases the usability of tools needs to be addressed. The report “Strategy and Recommendations for Improved Usability and Dissemination of Water Services Authority and Water Services Provider Tools, August 2006” provides a strategy for guidelines and tools for WSAs and WSPs. In particular it recommends peer sharing of tools developed by municipalities and the need to make resources and expertise available.
available to ensure that that this sharing takes place. It also recommends that the tools identified in the WSA and WSP inventories are made available electronically and through the DWAF Regional One Stop Shops.

Key activities to support WSAs and WSPs in terms of guidelines and tools should commence with the following:

- The establishment of web-based WSA and WSP "official" toolboxes as part of DWAF’s website to ensure that all official existing tools are accessible (for example water services tools and guidelines that have been developed and approved by DWAF and other government departments);
- A systematic process of accessing WSP systems, tools, procedures, job descriptions, policies and other supporting mechanisms from municipal WSPs as well as other WSPs such as water boards, and establishing a mechanism (peer networks) to inform municipal WSPs of what tools are available;
- Development of an ongoing repository of WSA and WSP tools (namely all available tools including those that are not in an electronic format) which is maintained and kept up to date (preferably with links to the developers of tools so that they can post updated versions of their tools); and
- Identification of individuals who can provide support in utilising particular tools (for example a tool related to treatment works will require someone with practical experience with treatment works) and who are cross referenced in the Inventories and electronic toolboxes.

DWAF as sector leader will take responsibility for the development and management of the official WSA and WSP electronic tool boxes and for allocating the resources to maintain the toolboxes on an ongoing basis.

Additional WSA and WSP tools will be development and maintained by the WSPs themselves. The peer networks will be used for the dissemination of these tools (see section 7.4). Funding from the sector wide approach (Masibambane) should be made available to WSPs and to the peer networks to facilitate the development and dissemination of these WSP tools.

**Part 3: Linkages and implementation**

8 Linkages to other initiatives

8.1 The local government five-year strategic agenda

Cabinet has approved a five-year strategic agenda for local government (LG5SA) with three key strategic priorities as follows:

**Strategic Priority 1:** Mainstreaming hands-on support to Local Government to improve municipal governance, performance and accountability.
Strategic Priority 2: Addressing the structure and Governance Arrangements of the State in order to better Strengthen, Support and Monitor Local Government.

Strategic Priority 3: Refining and Strengthening the Policy, Regulatory and Fiscal Environment for Local Government and giving greater attention to the Enforcement Measures.

Specific tasks are set out under key performance areas. Linkages between these tasks (and the overall agenda) are highlighted throughout this strategy. A summary of the strategic agenda is provided in Concept Note 3b. A review of the agenda itself, as well as the linkages identified and references in this strategy will show that there is a strong alignment between the support initiatives set out in this strategy and the priority initiatives identified to support local government more generally. (A search for the text string “LG5SA” in this strategy document will reveal the most important linkages.)

8.2 Municipal and water services support linkages

The approaches to support for municipalities (in general) and water services (specifically) complement each other as they use the same modalities but have difference focuses (see Figure below).

![Diagram of Local government strategic agenda](image)

Figure 12: Complementary support initiatives for municipal and water services support

8.3 Direct placement of staff in municipalities

Various initiatives (both generic to the municipal sector and specific to water) to place technical staff in municipalities are currently in the process of being developed or are already underway. These are described in Concept Note 5b (Placing engineers in municipalities). The Five Year Local Government Strategic Agenda (LG5SA) identifies two key tasks: prioritising short to long term technical hands-on support to less capacitated municipalities, and coordination and streamlining of these initiatives.
Making technically experienced people available to municipalities will make a positive impact and complement the support to be provided through this support strategy, we hope.

### 8.4 Linkages to the regulation and reform strategies

The linkages between the support, regulation and reform strategies are shown in the figure below.

**Figure 13: Key strategic initiatives (support, regulate and reform)**

#### 8.5 Linkages between water services and water resources

This strategy is developed to support the improvement of performance by water services authorities and water services providers. The strategy does not address water resources. The interface between water services and water resources is clearly explained in the draft National Water Services Regulation Strategy and is not repeated here.

### 9 Implementing the strategy

#### 9.1 According to focus areas

Implementation of the strategy will be according to the different focus areas outlined under each of the support objectives, for example, programme support to WSAs, direct...
operational support to WSPs, leadership development, councillor training, regional manager training, etc.

Risks, assumptions, resource requirements, restructuring within the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, collaborative structures required, detailed actions, and roles and responsibilities will be outlined in a Water Services Sector Support Implementation Plan. It should be noted that some of the focus areas require restructuring within DWAF as well as much closer collaboration with sector partners. What follows is a high level outline of implementation priorities for each of the key focus areas.

9.2 Redirecting existing support resources

Not all of the support identified above should be considered to require additional resources. Some support costs are already budgeted for. The costs of new initiatives or strengthening of existing initiatives can be partially funded through the redirection and concentration of existing support resources. Alignment of objectives of the sector wide approach to the support objectives outlined in this strategy will also ensure that consolidated funds are directed to the support initiatives and priorities outlined in this strategy.

9.3 Timing

Implementation of this strategy is considered by the sector to be a matter of urgency particularly in terms of providing support to municipalities that are water services providers. In this regard priority needs to be given to putting in place the necessary support managers, expertise to support municipal diagnoses and resources to assist water services provider managers to turn their businesses around. Planning to put in place these resources needs to commence with immediate effect so that the resources are available within the first quarter of 2007.

9.4 Support to water services authorities

Much of the programmatic support to water services authorities is already in place; however with it is likely that the WSA Support Plans will require hands on support to achieve WSA targets over the next three years. The strategy advocates the following National Programmes to continue and where necessary be strengthened. Implementation details will be outlined in the Implementation Plan:

- WSDP National Support Programme delivers support required, as per WSA Support Plans (DWAF)
- Infrastructure Development Support is provided, as per WSA Support Plans (DWAF as part of broader sector support through MIT)
- WSAs have received Regulation Handbook induction (DWAF)
- WSAs provided with support to regulate their WSPs (see Regulation Strategy)
- National WSA support programme established (through SWAP)

Initial priorities:

Priorities that need to be addressed within the first quarter of 2007 include the following:

- appointment of a national support manager (this is dealt with in more detail under Support Managers below).
- appointment of regional support managers (this is dealt with in more detail under Support Managers below).
- WSA internal capacity assessments of prioritised WSAs (aligned with dplg assessments) undertaken (water services authorities with DWAF and dplg support as required).
- WSA support plans completed as part of Municipal Action plans (water services authorities with DWAF support if required).
- Financial resources and expertise in place against WSA support plans (through SWAP).

9.5 Direct operational support to water services providers

Provision of direct operational support to water services providers is a new initiative and will require a detailed implementation plan to determine resource requirements and how these resources should be deployed. The success of this support is dependent upon a number of inter-related initiatives including the appointment of the national and regional support managers, utilising the sector wide approach to align resources to the objectives of WSP support, as well as the creation of a national resource pool to undertake WSP diagnoses.

Initial priorities:

Priorities that need to be addressed within the first quarter of 2007 include the following:

- Establishment of a national resource pool (DWAF to establish with advice from SALGA and municipalities).
- Identification of expertise for regional resource pools (municipalities and DWAF).
- Initiation of process to determine poorest water services provider performers to be prioritised for diagnosis and identification thereof (DWAF, dplg, SALGA).
- Diagnoses undertaken in a number of priority municipalities.
- WSP action plans developed.
- Financial resources and expertise made available to support the implementation of the WSP action plans (DWAF with sector partners as appropriate through SWAP).
- Monitoring of implementation of Action Plans taking place and corrective actions undertaken as necessary.

9.6 Councillor development

Councillor development is necessary to ensure that councillors as the key decision makers within local government are able to make good and informed water services decisions. This initiative which combines training with strategic sessions to link topics to direct challenges and processes taking place in their municipalities needs to be carefully planned.

Initial priorities:

Priorities that need to be addressed within the first quarter of 2007 include the following:

- Development of a Terms of Reference for the design of the programme content and development of the approach to ensure that councillors are both ‘trained’ and empowered to address water services strategic decision making.
- Identification of a councillor development ‘champion’ at national level to work with the National Support Manager.

By the end of the second quarter of 2007:

- The content of the first year of training and strategic empowerment sessions should be developed.
- Support to be provided to regions to set up dates and prepare for implementation of the councillor development programme.

9.7 Leadership development

Without the necessary leadership skills to lead and manage water services institutions and those institutions that support them, the water sector will not achieve its targets and goals. The envisaged leadership training programme must be in place to provide leadership training to water services managers as a parallel process to support initiatives.

Initial priorities:

By the end of the first quarter of 2007 the following must have taken place:

- Service provider contracted to design leadership course based on water services manager needs (DWAF to procure in collaboration with sector partners)
- Leadership programme is designed (service provider with sector partners input)
- 40 water services provider managers enrolled in leadership programme (managed by DWAF but under the guidance of sector partners including SALGA, dplg and National Treasury as a collaborative initiative)

By the end of the second quarter of 2007:

- the first leadership module must be implemented and evaluated
- coaching arrangements must be in place for each water services provider manager (for a period of least 1 year)

This leadership programme may also be used as additional training for the regional support managers.

9.8 Establish and train Regional Support Managers

One of the most important initiatives within this support strategy is the establishment of positions for the national and regional support managers.

Initial priorities:

Priorities that need to be addressed within the first quarter of 2007 include the following:

- Support manager posts to be created at national and regional levels including job descriptions which are exclusively dedicated to co-ordinating and managing support to water services authorities and providers (DWAF).
- National and regional support managers identified and/or recruited (DWAF).
- Training programme for regional support managers developed (service provider under guidance of key sector partners).
- Regional support managers trained (From training sector drawing in appropriate water services expertise within sector).
- Regional support managers are coached (ongoing for a minimum period of one year) (expert coaches).

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry has the responsibility for recruiting and training support managers.

9.9 Refining and implementing HRD 2025 Vision

The priorities for the first quarter of 2007 are to ensure that:
- an action plan is developed for the HRD 2025 Vision;
- training opportunities are communicated to municipalities;
- specific actions/initiatives are undertaken whereby the ESETA / WSETA delivers skills training required by the water sector;
- steps are taken to implement the Schools Advocacy Programme.

It is important that the Action Plan ensures that the functioning of the job market improves through matching skills offered with skills that are needed thus reducing the number of vacancies within water services authorities and water services providers. All of the activities related to refining and implementing the HRD 2025 Vision must be undertaken by the relevant sector partners led by DWAF.

9.10 Strengthening the sector wide approach

Since the sector wide approach unifies the objectives of the support strategy and ensures resources to support these objectives it is imperative that DWAF together with its sector partners (in particular its donors) consolidates the objectives and budget for the sector wide approach in support of this strategy as early as possible. In support of the sector wide approach the following activities must take place within the first quarter of 2007:
- Support objectives defined in sector programme for 3 to 5 year period.
- Resources allocated to support objectives (and to water services authorities and municipal water services providers according to support and action plans).
- Sector forums established in all provinces.
- Provincial sector support implementation plans developed that ensure access to the necessary resources and expertise in support of municipal action plans.
- Monitoring and reporting mechanism established to report on water services authority targets and municipal water services provider performance against benchmarks (and roll ups of these in the sector wide programme).

All of the above activities include the sector partners with DWAF fulfilling a leadership role.

9.11 Improving co-ordination

Priority activities to improve co-ordination are captured in items 9.7 and 9.8. More detailed activities will be outlined in the Implementation Plan and will specify particular roles and responsibilities of the different sector partners in terms of co-ordination of support efforts.
9.12 Supporting peer networks

The major priority in terms of supporting peer networks is to ensure that the networks have the necessary resources so that they can be brought together and effectively facilitated. This needs to be addressed in the sector wide programme and associated consolidated budget.

9.13 Improving knowledge management

Priorities for the first quarter of 2007 include the following:

- The sector needs to appoint an information dissemination champion that will have the resources and capacity to keep municipalities informed of water services knowledge and tools that are available. This requirement was highlighted as an urgent need by representatives from a SALGA focus group.

- The recommendations of the report ‘Improving the Usability of WSA and WSP Tools’ need to be implemented, particularly those recommendations related to establishing electronic access to existing WSA and WSP tools.

- Terms of reference to establish and populate the WSA and WSP toolboxes, together with the necessary resources should be in place at the beginning of 2007 so that the toolboxes are fully operational by the end of the first quarter.

- The directory of experts to assist in different functional areas that will serve as a backup to utilising tools and can also serve as a pool of resources to support water services authorities and water services providers should be completed and accessible to municipalities.

9.14 Preparation of the implementation plan

Preparation of the Water Services Sector Support Implementation Plan whereby responsibilities are allocated within timeframes and supported by the necessary resources is the most important step towards ensuring that the objectives of this strategy are achieved. The Implementation Plan will be prepared together with key sector partners.

10 References and Concept Notes

10.1 References


DWAF. 2006d. Water services provider support strategic implementation framework: key findings emerging from the expert focus groups. May 2006.

10.2 Concept Notes

During the developing of this support strategy, a series of Concept Notes were written for the purposes of reviewing initiatives and resources which were relevant to this strategy. Many of the concepts in the strategy are elaborated in these Concept Notes. The concept notes are indexed here and are available from DWAF.

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**Local government support**

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**Strategic agendas**

| Concept note #6a | A strategic agenda for water services in the cities in SA. |

**Support propositions**

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