The Working for Water programme will sustainably control invading alien species, to optimize the potential use of natural resources, through a process of economic empowerment and transformation. In doing this, the programme will leave a legacy of social equity and legislative, institutional and technical capacity.

**OBJECTIVES**

Through the control of invading alien plants, we shall:

- Enhance water security.
- Improve the ecological integrity of natural systems.
- Restore the productive potential of the land.
- Invest in the most marginalized sectors in South Africa and enhance their quality of life through job creation.
- Develop economic benefits from wood, land, water and trained people.

**THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS**

[Partner logos and names]
23,998 people employed in the programme.
54% of the workers are women.
26% of the workers are youth.
92% of the budget spent within the financial year.
70,660 hectares of invading alien plants cleared.
180,736 hectares of follow-up clearing undertaken.
20 wetlands undergoing rehabilitation work.
313 projects, across all nine provinces.

These are some of the fundamental statistics of the performance of the Working for Water programme during the past financial year. They sketch a picture that indicates that this flagship Government programme continues to play its part in the reconstruction and development of our country.

However, statistics often fail to get to the heart of endeavours. The programme has an exceptional record of targeting the most marginalized in society—the “poorest of the poor”, those living in rural communities, single-headed households, ex-offenders being released from prison, the disabled, and more recently those living with HIV/AIDS.

Now in its sixth year, the programme continues to go from strength to strength. Working in a programme that cuts across so many line-functions is challenging in any circumstance. It takes mature relationships to allow such cross-cutting activities to flourish. I would like to pay particular tribute to our partners, who have all reached out to the programme to allow it to work towards optimizing its operations.

Special mention must be made of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, with whom we have developed a strong partnership to address the rehabilitation of wetlands. Their contribution in ensuring that the programme optimises its contributions to the conservation of biological diversity and the ecological functioning of systems, is also most appreciated.

The national Department of Agriculture must also be singled out for thanks. Invading alien plants are a significant threat to the productive use of land, and this partnership is one of crucial importance to both the Department and the programme. The promulgation of the regulations under the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act was a highlight of the past year.

One of the programme’s more remarkable partnerships is a sexual and reproductive health initiative that has helped to reduce unplanned pregnancies in one of its projects by 85%. This multi-agency partnership also has critical implications for sexually transmitted diseases and other health issues.

It is this spirit of taking an integrated approach to development that has made the programme special. The setting up of the wonderfully successful Santam/Cape Argus Ukuvuka: Operation Firestop Campaign would be another example. My sincere thanks go out to all who have worked so hard to keep the programme on the right track. I would like to make special mention of Ms Jacqui Boulle and Dr Dumisani Magadlela, two of the management staff who will be taking leave of the programme. There is much to celebrate in what has been achieved.

Ronnie Kasrils, M.P.
Chairperson: Working for Water Board
The Executive Committee of the Working for Water programme has made great strides towards forging a sustainable partnership between three Departments that each has a line-function responsibility to combat invading alien plants. It is agreed that we should have one integrated initiative, and that the programme should seek to achieve the greatest net benefit for these and other key stakeholders.

The partnership with the Department of Agriculture in developing the new regulations under the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act was a particular highlight for the programme. It is clear that, in order to succeed in its goal, the programme will need a combination of control measures, education and legislation. Of these, the strengthening of the legal pillar has been identified as a critical need. The CARA regulations, together with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism’s National Environmental Management Act, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry’s National Water Act and its National Veld and Forest Fires Act, can help to meet this need.

Another particularly pleasing development was the way in which the programme has linked up with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and the Rennies Wetland Trust (now the Mondi Wetlands Trust) to extend the work being done in wetland management. Great strides have been made in this critical work, and have been done in ways true to the Poverty Relief Fund.

The programme was honoured to receive the silver award in the 2000 CAPAM awards - a prestigious recognition of the innovation inherent in the programme. The award also signifies the steady progress that has been made in the establishing administrative rigor in the programme. The Working for Water programme is still a young initiative, and allowance has been made for the time it will take to establish a mature management system. But with a budget for 2001/2 that exceeds R400 million, the importance of this cannot be over-emphasized.

We would like to join Minister Kasrils in thanking all those who have made such committed efforts to take this programme forward. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Jacqui Boulle and Mr Dumisani Magadlela for their remarkable efforts, and to wish them every success in their new ventures.
The Working for Water programme continued to improve its general management during the past financial year, and made great strides in certain aspects. High on the list of improvements was in the field of health and safety, where the number of accidents on duty has been significantly reduced.

Despite these improvements, it is with deep regret that we must report that two workers died in the programme during the past financial year. Ms Constance Mogoro and Ms Mpho Malele were drowned when they were swept away whilst trying to cross a flooded river in Mpumalanga. A poignant consequence here was that the programme’s quest to give opportunities to single-headed households was reflected in each leaving behind an orphaned child.

Two other very disturbing occurrences were the cutting down of indigenous trees in the Rietfontein Nature Reserve in Gauteng, and in the North-West Province. In the former incident, the trees that were cut down were fire-prone pioneer species (Acacia caffra, the common hook-thorn), and the ecological impact was insignificant. In the latter incident, however, the main victims were the white stinkwood (Celtis africana) and the river bushwillow (Combretum erythrophyllum) - a much more serious error. We should see these errors in the perspective that the programme is estimated to have cut down over five billion invading alien plants over the past 5 years, thereby making way for billions of indigenous plants. Nevertheless, these were both reflective of poor management, training and supervision, and steps have been put in place to avoid such incidents in the future.

The programme’s expenditure for the financial year was just over 90% of its budget. Although this is the lowest in our six financial years of operation, the principal difficulty came about through the later-than-anticipated promulgation of the CARA regulations, and the rolling over of that budget to support their implementation during this financial year. On a more positive note, the National Treasury has provided exceptional support to all Poverty Relief Fund programmes, and this has seen the overall expenditure of these programmes double to an average of 92%.

Many of the highlights of the programme are shown in the subsequent pages of this report. There is much to be proud of, for the passion and commitment are strong, and we are making important differences in both the technical and social development fields in which we work. Transformation goals are being embraced. Corruption is being hounded. Delivery levels continue to improve.

One of the areas of greatest concern at the moment is around public perceptions. There was something of an outcry over the CARA regulations listing the very popular street and garden tree, the jacaranda (Jacaranda mimosifolia). It is clear that the programme will have to embark on a stronger educational effort, and to this end a particular effort will be made to do so in schools, national parks and nurseries, leading up to the WeedBuster Week in October (8th – 15th). We also need to improve our use of legal instruments considerably.

The Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) held its final synthesis meeting (for its first phase) in South Africa. It brought together many of the world’s leading specialists in the field, and was a major boost to the discipline in South Africa. More encouraging, still, is the desire of GISP to have its Secretariat of its second phase based in Cape Town. Dr Preston has been asked to be an executive member of GISP.

Prospects for 2001/2 are very good. Our sincere thanks for the exceptional work done by all staff during 2000/1.
LEGISLATION

The promulgation of new regulations under the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (43 of 1983) adds substantial legal capacity to the quest to control invading alien plants. The regulations stipulate plants that must be removed from land (Category 1), plants that can only be grown with a permit (Category 2), and plants that may not be sold or propagated (Category 3). The State has the power to cut down these Category 1 and 2 plants, at the land-owner’s cost and risk. A particular concern is the need to stop people selling land that is invaded by alien plants, to unsuspecting buyers who will then have to pay to have them removed.

EDUCATION

The programme’s educational focus has been on nurseries, national parks and municipalities. The South African Nursery Association (SANA), with Keith Kirsten at the fore, have pledged their full support for the campaign. Ministers Ronnie Kasrils, Valli Moosa and Thoko Didiza attended the launch during the then AlienBuster Week (8-15 October), where they and prominent Cape nursery person, Robert Stodel, dumped invading alien plants that were hitherto being sold in the nursery. WfW’s Faiez Jacobs, in costume, is in the background.

RESEARCH

The programme’s research strategy has been re-formulated to ensure that insights can be applied to support an effective and efficient environmental programme by providing relevant and practical results. Research is being undertaken in the following areas: biological control, ecology, hydrology, resource economics and social development. The picture shows Ms Catherine Wambui Mathenge and Dr Helmuth Zimmerman from the world-class Plant Protection Research Institute, through whom all bio-control work is channelled. It is an excellent partnership, without which we could not succeed.
WETLAND REHABILITATION

In partnership with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the programme allocated a total of R20 million to wetland rehabilitation. The partnership, which embraces private sector-funded support such as the Rennies Wetland Trust, was announced on World Wetlands Day (2nd February 2001). The event was particularly significant in that it marked 30 years’ of work and progress towards the conservation and wise use of wetlands by the Ramsar Convention. The Convention has grown considerably since its inception, to a point where 123 countries are contracting parties and 1050 wetland sites, totalling 78 million hectares, have been designated as Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance. Three of the partnership’s funded projects will take place in internationally recognised Ramsar sites, while another two are in proposed Ramsar sites. Minister Valli Moosa was the Guest-of-Honour.

A broad approach has been taken to wetland rehabilitation and it includes addressing the causes of the degradation and ensuring commitment from land-owners to undertake follow-up actions. Awareness, research, monitoring and evaluation components are also included within the scope of the funding, in order to ensure that future rehabilitation projects benefit from lessons learned during the current projects. The main activities include: the removal of invading alien vegetation; the construction of structures to stop erosion and trap sediment, and the blockage of drainage channels in order to re-flood previously drained areas. Assistance is being provided by provincial conservation departments, non-government organisations and the private sector. Activities such as construction of gabions and clearing of aliens have been designed to be labour intensive, in order to impact on poverty.

SELF ASSESSMENT

The self-assessment programmes standardise operations nationally and enable project managers to assess themselves against agreed-upon WfW standards. The objective is to improve technical and social performance across the board. One project in each region has been selected to be an initial role-model project for their region. Other project managers are sent to the role model to get a vision of the desired practices. The programme is making great strides to improve its training – and essential step if it is to offer genuine exit possibilities to workers. Here, a disabled worker sharpens tools in a demarcated area.
HIV/AIDS
Since the Working for Water programme works with those living in poverty, and focuses on rural areas, it is likely to have higher than average levels of infection in its ranks. The policy is to treat everyone as if they are HIV positive. The programme has introduced “universal precautions”, and is working towards role-model interventions in pilot projects, which will be widely applied as soon as properly evaluated.

SECONDARY INDUSTRIES
The drive to optimise the use of the wood harvested in the programme (along with the cleared land, additional water and trained people that we “produce”) is starting to show results. At the recent Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstfees in Oudtshoorn, the programme and its partners exhibited some of their “WoodWorks” wares: Droomboom rustic furniture (from Wilderness/George), Natural Décor Creation’s garden screens (from Rivieronderend), Riverside Crafts (Botrivier) and Genadendal Natural Crafts took over R40 000 in orders and direct sales.

CHILD-CARE
The Department of Social Development is partnering the programme in setting up or supporting crèches and other forms of child-care for the children of workers. The Mother City Queer Project (MCQP) kindly donated thousands of toys for the crèches. Here André Vorster (MCQP) and WfW’s Boniswa Mangcu sort the toys before distributing them to crèches throughout the country.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
The implementation of best practices, following well-developed management plans, is essential if we are to gain long-term control of invading alien plants. Implementation depends on the existence of systematic technical management plans, which need to be adapted to develop site-specific practices. Some of the best work has been done through Rand Water – undoubtedly the Water Board that has embraced the Working for Water programme most strongly thus far.
The Santam/Cape Argus Ukuvuka: Operation Firestop Campaign has had many magnificent successes. The bottom line has been that over 1,500 people are employed, and there have been no major fires or mudslides around the Table Mountain chain since the Campaign begun. The Campaign has also put particular effort into fire-fighting in poorer settlements around the mountain, and two informal settlements in the Cape Flats. The achievements in the Joe Slovo settlement have been spectacular. Built under powerlines and utilizing all available space, the community was largely defenceless against fires.

In December 2000, 960 shacks burned down, and Eskom suffered R1.5 million damages, when a fire swept through the area. Ukuvuka and the City of Cape Town have engaged with the community to re-build the shacks to allow fire-fighters to get to the fires, and have kept away from under the powerlines. A green belt, in which sports fields and vegetable gardens will be located, is being established. Fire-fighting equipment and training (including with Minister Ronnie Kasrils) are further reducing the risks. We salute all involved in this pioneering initiative.
A GLOBAL ISSUE

The Global Invasive Species Programme held its “Synthesis Meeting” at the end of the first phase of operation, at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in September 2000. It brought together many of the world’s leading experts in the field, and stimulated discussion on the efficacy of the Working for Water programme. While many compliments were given, many delegates expressed disbelief that a country could spend so much on controlling existing invading alien plants, and yet do so little to prevent new invasions. Professor Jeffrey Waage heads the new GISP team for its second phase. It is possible that the Secretariat for GISP will be based in Cape Town.

The threat of invasive alien species to free and fair trade cannot be over-estimated at this stage, for we are still ignorant of the magnitude of the risks. The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom was a case in point. By the end of March 2001, the estimate of the damage that this invasive alien virus would cause in the UK alone, was R135 billion (£12.5 billion) – primarily through the impacts on tourism, travel, trade and agriculture. It did not include the many associated costs, such as the very negative reactions to the pyres of burning carcasses or the losses in other countries (eg. tour operators). The threats of deliberate introductions of invasive species are very real. So too is the likelihood that free and fair trade will be circumvented through citing the risks of potential invasions.

New Zealand sets the pace in terms of steps taken to prevent new invasions by alien species.

New Zealand’s Airport Control for Invasive Alien Species

The New Zealand Government take the preventative measures to combat potential invasive alien species very seriously. A visitor flying to Auckland will encounter the following:

- A video on invasive alien species will be shown on the plane just prior to arrival in Auckland.
- There will be adverts on the threats posed by invasive alien species the in-flight magazine.
- They will have to sign a declaration that they have no potentially invasive species with them.
- There will be messages broadcast over the airport speakers every five minutes, saying that there is still time to dump any such material in one of the many bins provided for this. (The material is incinerated.)
- There will be many prominent posters, telling visitors why it is crucial to dump dangerous materials.
- They will be met and interviewed by a large (20+) and well-trained team of border post inspectors and assistants.
- The inspectors and assistants will have several sniffer-dogs to back up their inspections.
- There will also be state-of-the-art X-ray machines to back up the inspectors and the dogs.
- There are big fines for those caught (eg, there was a R30 000 fine for taking through a mango infected by fruit-fly).
Out of the 54 commonwealth member states, South Africa was this year lauded for its excellence with the Silver CAPAM Award in the form of the *Working for Water* programme. The programme was one of ten finalists, rubbing shoulders with innovative public sector initiatives in, amongst others, Australia, India, Singapore and Canada. *Working for Water* was a silver award winner, second to India’s State Poverty Eradication Mission. The CAPAM International Innovations Awards programme theme is “service to the public”. This theme focuses on the ways in which Government and their agencies provide services to their citizens. This was Working for Water’s 25th national or international award.

Implementation manager Mr Mbongeni Mondlane, led the programme’s submission.

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**COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (CAPAM)**

**International Innovations Awards 2000**

Out of the 54 commonwealth member states, South Africa was this year lauded for its excellence with the Silver CAPAM Award in the form of the Working for Water programme.

The programme was one of ten finalists, rubbing shoulders with innovative public sector initiatives in, amongst others, Australia, India, Singapore and Canada. Working for Water was a silver award winner, second to India’s State Poverty Eradication Mission. The CAPAM International Innovations Awards programme theme is “service to the public”. This theme focuses on the ways in which Government and their agencies provide services to their citizens.

This was Working for Water’s 25th national or international award.
Estimated percentages of invading alien plant cover per quaternary water catchment and the location of the programme's 313 projects.

TOTALS FOR RSA:
EMPLOYMENT 21,713
WORKERS 91%
CONTRACTORS 6%
MANAGEMENT 4%
YOUTH 24%
WOMEN 54%
DISABLED 1%

INITIAL CLEARING (ha) 168,758
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 162,706

PERCENT INVASION
0% / No Data
0.1 - 1.0
1.1 - 5.0
5.1 - 10.0
> 10%

State Boundaries
Provincial Boundaries
Towns
Working for Water Projects

Figures indicated are for those at the end of the year. Work stops in certain provinces during some months of the year.

NORTHERN PROVINCE:
TOTAL JOBS 1,580
INITIAL (ha) 24,147
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 33,757

MPUMALANGA:
TOTAL JOBS 2,290
INITIAL (ha) 33,395
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 27,724

KWAZULU-NATAL:
TOTAL JOBS 7,071
INITIAL (ha) 20,942
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 36,497

EASTERN CAPE:
TOTAL JOBS 2,937
INITIAL (ha) 8,307
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 7,661

SA NATIONAL PARKS:
TOTAL JOBS 1,355
INITIAL (ha) 18,784
FOLLOW-UP 19,022

NORTH-WEST PROVINCE/GAUTENG:
TOTAL JOBS 1,428
INITIAL (ha) 7,574
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 2,008

FREE-STATE:
TOTAL JOBS 204
INITIAL (ha) 229
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 959

NORTHERN CAPE:
TOTAL JOBS 990
INITIAL (ha) 29,188
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 11,312

WESTERN CAPE:
TOTAL JOBS 3,961
INITIAL (ha) 27,751
FOLLOW-UP (ha) 44,796

PARTNERSHIPS:
TOTAL JOBS 2,182
INITIAL (ha) 343

TOTAL:
TOTAL JOBS 23,998
INITIAL (ha) 170,660
FOLLOW-UP 183,736