

4.10. PROVINCIAL WATER SERVICES SECTOR PLANS

Water sector planning at provincial level take a variety of forms from regional strategies to multi-year action plans (MAAP). The content of these documents differ equally between provinces. A common feature is the emphasis of meeting sector targets (in terms of service delivery) with limited recognition of the need for support to the sector in meeting these targets. However, some provincial plans do not include delivery targets nor do these present solutions to provincial challenges.

Having adopted the SFWS, provincial sector plans should be aligned to national approaches to developing the sector and its targets. Equally, provincial plans should encompass principles and approaches contained in national support strategies, where appropriate. Therefore, while the basis for rolling out support to the local level through regional and provincial government institutions has been laid, the effectiveness of strategic support initiatives depends on closer alignment of provincial support implementation plans to the SSS, the SFWS and even the Provincial Growth and Development Strategies.

4.11. PROGRAMME SUPPORT

Substantial resources are committed annually to programmatic support at national and provincial level. This support is often provided through Technical Assistance contracts discussed above and focuses around themes rather than specific tasks. The importance of this type of support is the advocacy role it plays in the sector as well as its ability to develop best practice models. Funding for these programmes generally comes from donor agencies through bilateral funding agreements with national departments. In some instances the donor agencies establish programme offices inside support institutions while in other cases funds are pooled and managed through a national department, e.g. the Masibambane approach. The impact of this support on local government is more in the form of programme management support rather than financial support and is less flexible to respond to local demands.

PART B: SUPPORT PRINCIPLES AND ASSESSING SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

5. WSI SUPPORT PRINCIPLES

The following principles, which are either general rules, processes, standards or qualities, will inform the approach to providing support to WSIs in terms of water services:

1. Water services sector support will be aligned with **dplg's** NCBF and general municipal support programmes (such as Project Consolidate and the MSIG) and be outcomes based;
2. All water services sector support organisation will **demonstrate how their support links to the suggested strategic interventions** developed in this SSS which have been aligned to local government and water services performance indicators, and general local government support programmes;
3. The water services sector will ensure that a **single assessment methodology**, including performance criteria, for WSAs and WSPs is developed and that parties to the SSS will not develop any other significant assessments for particular focus areas within the sector;
4. WSI support requirements will be **assessed once a year**, normally in June, to align with the municipal performance management cycle;
5. No support to WSIs will be provided without a **co-assessment of support required** carried out between the WSI to receive support and the organisation providing support, and signed off by the Municipal Manager or the most senior WSI manager. Furthermore, it is recommended as a principle that support requirements identified in this manner should be **included in the WSDP**;
6. WSIs must co-determine **appropriate support mechanisms** and strategic priorities for support at local level;
7. A **single progress reports** per WSI on the implementation of water services sector support must be done quarterly and encapsulate all support being provided to the WSI independent of different support organisations programmes.
8. Capacity must be provided in a manner that **ensures the absorption of support** by municipalities (i.e. develop input capacity and ensure skills transfer within water services institutions to reduce reliance on external support);
9. **Peer support**, where municipalities support and learn from each other, **must be promoted as a priority support mechanism**;
10. **Provincial support implementation plans**, which will be a summary of all the WSI co-assessments which are in line with the SSS, **will be provided as part of the provincial sector plans or sector strategies**;
11. Provincial support implementation plans will:
 - **identify WSAs and WSIs who can support other WSAs and WSIs and twin WSAs and WSI where possible**;
 - **identify and prioritise WSAs with critical water services challenges**;

- will identify and prioritise WSAs and WSIs with capacity gaps and those with the **lowest capacity levels will be prioritised** after those in crisis;
- **identify budgetary requirements** for support;
- Identify parties responsible to provide funds, manage support **and monitor** the effect of support on an annual basis.

6. WSI SUPPORT STRATEGIES

A strategy is a **plan** as to how the sector will provide support. The sector plan, by support objective, is as follows.

6.1. ENSURE FUNCTIONAL, EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WSIs

- Support organisations will establish close relationship with WSIs to be part of WSI support assessments which will take place around June of each year;
- The basis for sector support to WSIs will then exclusively be a summation of support identified in WSDPs and IDPs (see Principle number 5 in section 5 above) and conversely all funding and grants, including in-kind support, must not fund support matters outside of the WSDP;
- The sector will only provide support if support requirements have been identified in terms of WSA functional areas and WSI key performance indicators (both output indicators) **AND** office infrastructure, systems, procedures and staff requirements (input indicators) to ensure sustainability i.e. an ability of the WSA to continually revise plans, update electronic information systems and manage service providers on an annual basis without the same support being repeated.
- Provincial support implementation plans, as a chapter in the provincial sector strategy or plan, will be a key instrument in collating support needs and the preferred support mechanisms per WSA as expressed in their WSDPs. Provincial support implementation plans must thus add value by collating, analysing and ranking:
 - WSAs AS A WHOLE that do not require support and could support others, require support and those that are in critical need of intense support
 - functional areas (output indicators) that need critical support (then medium support and no support) and suggest the benefits of programmatic support to these areas;
 - reasons or input indicators from the most common to less common cause for lack of performance progress and suggest benefits of programmatic support to these matters (see 6.2 below if input indicator relates to a lack of skills or staff).
- Despite the principles and strategy that support requirements will be demand led (through assessment and inclusion in WSDPs), a supply led approach will also be adopted in terms of broad key performance areas of LG supported by national government (e.g. municipal transformation, financial viability, service delivery, LED, good governance, free basic services etc.). However, the discussion on comparing supply and demand led support must be organised at provincial level to ensure integrated support to a WSI.

6.2. ENSURE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADEQUATE SKILLS-BASE AND COMPETENCIES

At a national level, the plan of the most important initiatives will be to:

- Complete the Sector Skills Plan, which is based on a skills audit, and then prioritise WS-related skills required for the country.
- To raise awareness amongst engineers and technicians around the importance of technical mentorship according to ECSA guidelines before going into WSI management positions and then lacking technical experience even through a technical qualification has been obtained. (It is this lack of mentorship that creates the biggest needs for skills transfer to take place under technical assistance contracts);

At provincial level, the plan will be to:

- Single out and prioritise the WSI requirements of staff and skills (input indicator) and provide a provincial programmatic approach to the gap through:
 - hands-on support by seconding full time staff;
 - twinning WSI staff with a pool of provincially identified engineering mentors to mentor staff according to ECSA requirements. In certain cases re-training of staff may be required.
- And, in the case of any “technical assistance” support mechanism contracts (see sections 4.4 and 4.6 above) at national, provincial or local government levels, **skills transfer plans** will be developed between the support organisation and the service provider of the technical assistance.

6.3. CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR SECTOR PARTNERS TO FULFIL SUPPORT ROLES

- All support organisations attend designed information sessions and sensitivity training on local government structures, decision making systems, planning and financial reporting timeframes and procedures;
- Water sector officials attend provincial, district and local PMU meetings for MIG and other monthly management meetings in WSAs ensuring streamlined collaboration and strengthening hands-on support;
- Encourage water services departments to conduct training with WSA councillors and ward committees on water services matters (capacity to act as a WSA, S78, fault reporting, bulk water supply contracts, capital programme, WSDP, policies and bylaws, gender in water, HIV/Aids, appropriate technology and the environment) to strengthen Water Services Authority regulatory function and civil society participation in "self-regulation".

7. ASSESSING AND PROVIDING SUPPORT TO WSIs

7.1. ASSESSING CAPACITY: WSAs

WSA capacity must **first** be assessed by using **output** indicators using:

- The **dplg** general KPIs that have been converted in to water services general KPIs
- The extent to which the WSA is fulfilling governance responsibilities related to the Water Services Act or made progress with regards to the broad functional areas i.e. policies and bylaws, planning, reporting, infrastructure, finance, health and hygiene, regulating WSPs;

The general KPIs are not being collected by any particular organisation to date but, not with standing, these KPIs are legally required to be part of the IDP. This information should thus be included in IDPs and then obtained from IDPs.

The Regulatory Strategy recommends a developmental approach to regulation as the *practice* of water services regulation is in its infancy in South Africa. Under this approach regulation will commence with obtaining information with regards to access to basic services (as opposed to all legislative requirements as per the Water Services Act). Assessing capacity in a WSA must thus take cognisance that some of the information or "output" indicators being assessed will also be required from the WSA by DWAF regulatory staff.

NT and StatsSA have numerous reporting requirements related to financial matters. Water sector partners and representatives providing support should familiarise themselves on how LG financial matters are reported to these two organisations and, where possible, obtain LG financial information from these two bodies.

After the "output" indicators above have been obtained, municipalities/WSAs must then be grouped according to SALGA's approach which prioritises municipalities as follows:

- Those that do not require support and could support other WSAs using a nationally support incentive scheme;
- Those that require support (as output indicators allude to the municipality still being in its development phase);
- Those that are in crises and require urgent intervention.

Secondly, in the latter two groups of WSAs, capacity must then be assessed using **input** indicators, i.e. looking at the municipal staff, budgets, systems, procedures and design standards and standard engineering documentation. The water sector has not gone to this level of assessment before, but other organisations have done studies on