



The National Water Act

The National Water Act (No. 36 of 1998) provides a framework to ensure that water resources are protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled in an integrated way.

The Act recognises that water belongs to the whole nation for the benefit of all people. The three key principles within the Act are: Sustainability, Equity, Efficiency.

National Water Resource Strategy

The National Water Resource Strategy describes HOW our water resources will be protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled.

It sets out the strategies, objectives, plans, guidelines and procedures for the overall management of the national water resource. It must:

- Determine how much water must be 'reserved' for basic human needs and for the environment called The Reserve
- Provide for international obligations (water resources shared with neighbouring countries through international agreements)
- Provide for future water needs

- Provide for water for strategic use (for example national power generation)
 - Determine how much water is available in each water management area (allocatable amount)
 - Provide for inter-catchment water transfers to provide for areas that are short of water
- It also determines water **management areas**; sets principles for water conservation and water use; sets targets for water quality for different water resources; and provides for the establishment of water resource management institutions.

Catchment Management Strategy

The purpose of the Catchment Management Strategy is to:

- set principles for allocating water to existing and new water users
- provide the framework for managing water resources within the water management area
- ensure that water resources in the water management area are protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled

The Catchment Management Strategy must be in harmony with the National Water Resource Strategy. It must take into account the requirements of the Reserve, international obligations, water for

strategic, water for future use and inter-catchment transfers that are outlined in the National Water Resource Strategy. It must contain a water allocation plan which outlines how water will be allocated in the water management area. The Catchment Management Strategy must also enable public participation in managing the water resources in the water management area.

Catchment Management Agency

A Catchment Management Agency manages water resources within its water management area. The primary purpose of establishing a CMA is to involve local communities in water resource management. Some of the functions of a CMA for its water management area are to:

- develop a catchment management strategy
- co-ordinate the activities of water users and water management institutions
- co-ordinate implementation of the catchment management strategy with other water related plans
- promote community participation in the management of water resources

Water User Association

A Water User Association is a grouping of water users who 'co-operate' in undertaking water-related activities at the local level for their mutual benefit. A single sector association comprises a group of similar users, for example emerging farmers, and acts in the interests of those farmers. A multi-sector association comprises a group of different users, for example industry, farming, mining and so on, and acts in the interests of the different users.

What does water use mean?

- taking water from a water resource
- **abstraction**
- **storing water**
- activities which **reduce stream flow** such as commercial forestry
- **discharging waste water** or water containing waste into a water resource
- **controlled water use** such as irrigating land with water containing waste, or power generation activities which alter the flow of a water resource
- **changing the flow of a water course** such as obstructing or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse
- **pumping ground water**
- **using water for recreation** purposes



water affairs

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Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT