



# The Water Dialogues-SA

UPDATE OCTOBER 2007

## WD-SA TIMELINE

### April 2007

- ◆ Forum meeting - Birchwood Hotel
- ◆ Intl. Working Group meeting- London
- ◆ Research posts advertised

### May/June

- ◆ WG workshop for researcher selection
- ◆ Contracting of researchers, preparation of background materials & letters of introduction

### July/August

- ◆ Pilot researchers attend orientation workshop
- ◆ Pilots: planning, fieldwork and data capturing
- ◆ WG dialogue on pilots- Salt Rock

### September/October

- ◆ International Research Meeting - London
- ◆ Pilots: Follow up interviews/ fieldwork

### November-February 2007-8

- ◆ Phase 2: Preparation of background materials, letters of introduction. Planning and fieldwork.
- ◆ Pilots: final write up

### March/April 2008

- ◆ Phase 2 write-ups & WG Dialogue on all cases

### May/June 2008

- ◆ Next WD-SA Forum

## Pilot Case Study Research Conducted

The pilot round of case study research began in earnest in July, and is nearly complete. Research was conducted in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (Mpumalanga), Ilembe District Municipality (KwaZulu-Natal) and Ugu District Municipality (KwaZulu-Natal).

### Selection of Researchers

The process of forming a dynamic research team and creating a comprehensive research plan was a learning experience in and of itself. A careful selection process was followed to ensure all Working Group (WG) members were confident researchers were qualified and would not bias any findings. Following advertising and short-listing, the WG reviewed and commented on all

applications. Then, an innovative process was used: a day long workshop on the project was held with all potential researchers while WG members observed their interactions in group work and other exercises. Ten



researchers were ultimately appointed.

### Organizational Structure

The Water Dialogues South Africa (WD-SA) is primarily concerned with how institutional approaches affect the quality of

water and sanitation service-delivery. To see the full picture, research needed to consider the perspectives of both users and providers. Research teams, consisting of three people for each case study, were divided into two "teams": municipal and users. This typically meant one person was given the task of researching the Water Service Provider (WSP), while the other two conducted research at the community-level in four areas within the WSP jurisdiction.

### Methodology

WSP research employed in-depth, semi-structured interviewing techniques (guided by a detailed list of questions). In addition, various background and financial documents were gath-

## WD-SA's Groundbreaking Forum

On the 3rd of April, 2007, WD-SA hosted 49 stakeholder representatives at its first forum held at the Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg. Delegates were present from the national government, local government, private sector, water boards, NGOs, CBOs, trade unions and more.

The objective of the forum was twofold: to introduce the WD-SA project to active water-sector stakeholders; and, to seek stakeholder input on the design of the research.

The first forum was a resounding success, generating numerous

ideas and debates. It is envisaged a second forum will be held in May/June 2008 to discuss the findings from the first two phases of research.

## Pilot Case Study Research Plan (continued from page 1)



ered to inform the research.

“User” researchers used participatory visual diagramming tools and in-depth interviews to explore a range of issues experienced by the users of water and sanitation services. Using these tools, larger groups of people can actively participate in information-sharing sessions simultaneously. The visual display also allows for review and cross-checking, and provides a useful structure for analysing information.

### Research Impact

An exciting part of The WD is that the results of the research will not just sit on a shelf, but will be discussed and debated widely across the sector through the range of forums and platforms which exist. Information will be analysed and integrated to form an overall analysis of the impact of different institutional arrangements on the delivery of water and sanitation in SA. Both individual case study research reports and an overall WD-SA report will be published and presented to community repre-

sentatives and to the local water service provider.

Report-back meetings will be held in each case study area, with copies of the reports provided to community representatives and to the local service provider.

Since WD-SA is a national project and, as such, unable to follow-up with issues raised at the local-level, the aim of these meetings is to bring together communities and their WSP representatives for a frank discussion which will hopefully result in mutually beneficial relationships.

*“Thanks for your visit to Nkobongo. It has made a positive improvement because iLembe District Municipality is now attending to the issue of sanitation here.”*  
Councillor Sibangeni

## First Dialogue around Research Findings a Success

The Working Group (WG) meeting held at Salt Rock Hotel on 27-29 August was successful by all accounts.

Engaging with findings at this early stage follows WD-SA’s mission to have a participatory process at all stages. WG members were able to see data gathered, discuss findings and make recommendations about gaps in information. All three of the first phase of case study reports were circulated beforehand and WG

members were asked for input and to be prepared to discuss the cases at the meeting. WG members were excited to have the information, felt the discussion was productive, and are looking forward to the final reports.

As the meeting was held in iLembe District, WG members were able to go beyond reading papers and visit the research sites. Cllr Sibangeni of Nkobongo welcomed the team and

WG members were able to listen firsthand to community members relating their experiences with water and sanitation delivery.

Perhaps more importantly, some issues identified with provision were discussed and may even be addressed before final reports are published, due to the number of influential people who are WG members.



## SA & Brazil First to Engage in Research

The Water Dialogues -South Africa is under the umbrella of the larger, international

The Water-Dialogues initiative which started at the 2001 International Conference on Freshwater in Bonn. South Africa is one of five participating countries, including Uganda, Brazil, Indonesia, and the Philippines, that have initiated a review process guided by a

multi-stakeholder Working Group.

The WD-SA Coordinator Mary Galvin, SAMWU representative Jeff Rudin, and EMG representative Jessica Wilson recently attended an International Research Meeting in London and discovered South Africa and Brazil are leading the way among the five countries in terms of engaging in research. WD-SA is furthest

along in terms of implementing the WD initiatives, and other countries are looking to SA for advice and lessons-learned as they move into the data collection phase.

Other countries were particularly interested in learning about the participatory research methods employed and the multi-stakeholder dialogues about the data.

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Multistakeholder dialogues  
 on water and the private sector

The Water Dialogues-South Africa is a national multi-stakeholder dialogue process and research project analysing the role of the public and private sector in the delivery of universal water and sanitation in the country. **WD-SA** is part of an international initiative, **The Water Dialogues**. To date, **WD** has been established in Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Africa and Uganda.

Municipalities in South Africa face many challenges in meeting the constitutional requirements to ensure effective, equitable, and sustainable delivery of water supply and sanitation, provided affordably to all. This is taking into account the highly skewed distribution of wealth, service provision, and water resources. In the efforts to address these challenges, a number of different approaches to service delivery including commercial approaches and Private Sector Participation (PSP) have been used.

**WD-SA** provides the opportunity to create a constructive dialogue to identify, critically analyse, and evaluate these approaches leading to greater understanding of service delivery models. It is envisaged that, through its impact on policy, this understanding will improve the effectiveness of service delivery toward the provision of a universal supply of safe water and sanitation.

Find out more on our  
 website!

[www.waterdialogues.org](http://www.waterdialogues.org)

## Working Group Membership

The Working Group has changed since the first forum in April 2007. Some members have left their organisations, and have not been replaced. Some organisations decided not to sign the Code of Conduct, but to remain involved through the Forum. Individuals from other organisations have expressed interest in joining WD-SA's Working Group.

Current members of WD-SA's Working

Group include:

- ◇ Bloem Water
- ◇ Dept. of Water Affairs & Forestry
- ◇ Environmental Monitoring Group
- ◇ eThekweni Municipality
- ◇ JOWAM (Pty) Ltd.
- ◇ South African Local Government Association
- ◇ South African Municipal Workers Union
- ◇ South African Water Caucus

- ◇ The Mvula Trust
- ◇ Water Information Network- SA
- ◇ Water Research Commission
- ◇ Water & Sanitation Services South Africa

*If you are interested in finding out more about WD-SA, please contact us at the numbers or emails above.*