



FACT SHEET

Western Cape Water Users Platform

A collaborative platform driving joint action, trust and practical solutions to secure water resilience for millions in the Western Cape of South Africa.

CONTEXT

Cape Town's 2018 drought underscored the need for collaborative governance of the Western Cape's water system that spans national, provincial and local levels. Effective water management requires coordinated efforts across areas like catchment management, infrastructure maintenance and invasive species clearing.

A 2023 hydro-economic study of the Western Cape Water Supply System, led by the World Bank, National Treasury and the Department of Water and Sanitation, found that infrastructure augmentation alone cannot secure water resilience. Trust in the system and strong institutional relationships are essential to attract public and private investment.

In response, the Economic Development Partnership (EDP) was commissioned to launch the Western Cape Water Users Platform to strengthen trust, improve resource management and build a resilient water system capable of withstanding future crises.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Strengthen resilience in the enhancing stakeholder collaboration; addressing shared challenges like supply assurance, alternative water integration, and climate adaptation; and building trust and mutual accountability between diverse water users in the Western Cape Water Supply System.

INNOVATION

The Platform's adaptive governance approach creates a neutral space for diverse stakeholders to share ideas, reconcile differences, and co-create solutions. By bridging formal and informal processes, it aligns institutional mandates and fosters collaboration beyond traditional governance frameworks.

STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

Through the Platform, the EDP provides a neutral space for key stakeholders—irrigation boards, municipalities, and government departments—to address shared challenges.

By fostering open dialogue and building trust, mandates and efforts can be aligned and complemented, collective action to tackle issues such as water quality, infrastructure maintenance, and climate change resilience becomes possible. Quarterly meetings and ad-hoc engagements support formal decision-making processes, ensuring that solutions are practical and inclusive.



EXPECTED RESULTS

The Water Users Platform is designed to expedite the delivery of practical solutions to pressing challenges. The strengthened trust between diverse stakeholders – including government authorities, municipalities and the agricultural sector – is essential for aligning efforts and addressing shared concerns effectively.

Ultimately, the Platform's collaborative approach is expected to enhance the resilience of the Western Cape Water Supply System. Increased resilience of this system will ensure a sustainable and reliable water supply to over four million residents and critical economic sectors in the Western Cape. Through joint problem-solving and coordinated action, the initiative contributes to the long-term health and sustainability of the region's water resources.

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