

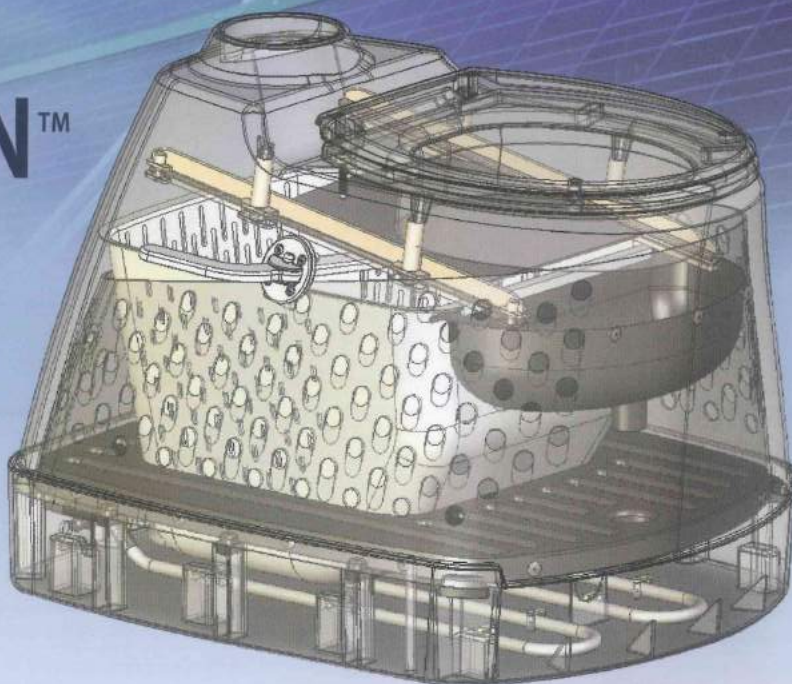


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Turning water losses into saved

W&S Africa reports on the project that aims to reduce Emfuleni Municipality's total water demand by 15%.



Water is among the most valuable resources on the African continent. The current demand far exceeds sustainable supply levels. Water planners forecast that South Africa will face severe water shortage if the usage is not reduced immediately. At the southern tip of Africa's inland water supply lies the Orange-Senqu catchment area which provides parts of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia with water. One of the largest water supply systems to this region is the Vaal River system, a tributary of the Orange River (which originates as the Senqu in Lesotho).

The large population of Gauteng and surrounding areas, and approximately 60% of South Africa's economy, relies on water from the Integrated Vaal River system.

Extensive studies conducted by the National Department of Water Affairs have shown that the current water use from this water supply system is not sustainable. To address this growing imbalance, the National Department of Water Affairs has set a 15% water savings target for municipalities located in the region to be achieved collectively by 2014.

The partnership project does not only aim to fix leak-

"The three-year project aims to significantly reduce the amount of water wasted through leakages and thereby save Emfuleni money"

Thembi Mkhize, Emfuleni's Metsi-a-Lekoa water services unit

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Emfuleni Water Conservation Project has recently been signed by the Emfuleni Municipality and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German, British and Australian governments, as well as Sasol.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, chief director for Emfuleni's Metsi-a-Lekoa water services unit, Thembi Mkhize, explained the environmental and financial importance of this partnership: "The three-year project aims to significantly reduce the amount of water wasted through leakages and thereby save Emfuleni money.

By the end of the third year, a 15% reduction in total water demand would equate to an annual reduction of 12 million kilolitres (12 billion litres) or expenses of some R 62 million, compared to the 2010 baseline." The water conservation and demand management project was officially launched as part of the Gauteng Water Sector Forum, held at Gallagher Estate.

ABOVE Delegates who signed the MoU for the Emfuleni Water Conservation Project. From left: Dr Horst Vogel, head of programme at GIZ; councillor Greta Hlongwane, mayor of Emfuleni Local Municipality and Maurice Radebe, group executive: Corporate Affairs, at Sasol

ages in public and private water systems, but also intends to increase public awareness of water issues and conservation measures through school and community education programmes. Apart from the local importance, this intervention also carries a regional aspect.

According to Lenka Thamae, executive secretary of the Orange-Senqu River Commission, "As Emfuleni sources its water from the Orange-Senqu catchment area, water which is saved in this municipality can be used elsewhere as needed. Moreover, after successful implementation of the project, the design and idea can be replicated in many other municipalities in southern Africa which face the same challenges as Emfuleni."

This partnership serves as another example of the importance of the involvement of business in development. Through partnerships such as the Emfuleni Water Conservation Project, a win-win situation is created for involved parties. The Emfuleni municipality, GIZ Transwater SADC and Sasol can all benefit from the know-how and skills of their partners. Moreover,

revenue

partnerships are of special importance to the private sector as they demonstrate collective action on a shared risk in a sound economic, social and environmental way.

Sasol New Energy's manager for Sustainable Water, Andries Meyer, explains the importance of the partnership for the company: "Water management is a key priority for our business in terms of it being a critical resource for our operations.

Through this partnership, we can minimise unnecessary water losses from the Vaal system and ensure that water security is improved. The Emfuleni water conservation partnership is part of Sasol New Energy's water stewardship programme and underlines our commitment to sustainable water management."

About Emfuleni

An estimated 1.2 million citizens make Emfuleni Municipality the fourth largest municipality in Gauteng. The municipality gets its water from the Vaal River



ABOVE FROM

LEFT Lenka Thamae, executive secretary of the Orange-Senqu River Commission; Horst Vogel, head of programme at GIZ and Andries Meyer, Sasol New Energy's manager for sustainable water

is one of the Water Service Authorities in Gauteng that have realised the importance of managing their leakages, and other aspects of non-revenue water, and are beginning to implement water demand management measures to address the aforementioned challenges.

About GIZ

GIZ is owned by the Federal Republic of Germany. Through its operations around the globe, it supports the German government in the fields of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education. GIZ supports people and societies in shaping their own future and improving their living conditions. In this partnership, GIZ operates through the SADC and ORASECOM and on behalf of Germany, the United Kingdom and Australia. **35**

system. Water losses from potable water distribution systems remain a major issue when examining the overall water wasted throughout the country.

Emfuleni Local Municipality

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