National Water Law and Policy Framework, South Africa

Proposed in 2000

Background
Since 2000, South Africa’s water policy has undergone rapid changes. The National Water Resources (NWR) strategy has adopted a framework to deliver safe drinking water to 14 million people who do not have access to drinking water. The National Water Policy is transformational. It not only redresses problems of the past but also helps build a better future.

Objectives:
The purpose of policy is to promote equitable access to water, redressing past discrimination by equivalent water distribution across the country, facilitating social and economic development, and protecting aquatic and associated ecosystems.

Approach
The National Water Policy provides a two-tier approach to the development of strategies to facilitate the management of water resources. One is an NWR strategy that includes an ecological component, including water conservation and management, and a social and economic component, i.e. international rights and obligations, estimates of present and future water requirements, integrated management by forming objectives for the establishment of institutions and determination of the interrelationships between institutions involved in water resource management. The second is the catchment-management strategy, which sets out the objectives, plans, guidelines and procedures for the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of water resources.

Outcome:
This policy ensures the approach of involving stakeholders in water resource management and includes sustainability and water-resource management in South Africa.

Additional/ Further information:
Karodia H. Weston. 2001, South Africa’s New Water Policy and Law