

# Groundwater governance in South Africa: A status assessment

**K Pietersen<sup>1\*</sup>, HE Beekman<sup>1</sup>, M Holland<sup>1</sup> and S Adams<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*SLR Consulting (Pty) Ltd, Pentagon House, 669 Plettenberg Road, Faerie Glen, Pretoria, 0043, South Africa*

<sup>2</sup>*Water Research Commission, Private Bag X03, Gezina, 0031, South Africa*

## Abstract

Groundwater governance provisions and arrangements in South Africa were studied at national level and at local level for a highly productive aquifer, the Botleng Dolomite Aquifer. Technical, legal, institutional and operational governance provisions were found to be reasonable at the national level but weak with regards to cross-sector policy coordination. At the local level, basic technical provisions such as hydrogeological maps and aquifer delineation with classified typology are in place but other governance provisions such as institutional capacity, provisions to control groundwater abstraction and pollution, cross-sector policy coordination and the implementation of a groundwater management action plan are weak or non-existent. Adaptation measures to climate change are not yet fully considered in planning. Only at the national level a groundwater strategy and artificial-recharge strategy has been developed but awaits implementation. Most critical management measures are considered, namely:

- The integration of the National Groundwater Strategy (NGS) into the various water-related strategies
- Strengthening of the groundwater regulatory environment
- Strengthening of the institutional capacity

**Keywords:** groundwater, governance, dolomite, South Africa