

Basic guide for
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
COOPERATION
WITH CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT AGENCIES



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INTRODUCTION

Catchment management agencies (CMAs) play a crucial role in promoting the sustainable management of South Africa's water resources, particularly in a country where water scarcity, climate variability, and growing demand place increasing pressure on river systems.

Established under the National Water Act (Act no 36 of 1998) (NWA), CMAs are designed to decentralise water governance, ensuring that decisions are made closer to the communities and ecosystems they affect. By coordinating water use, protecting ecological health, and fostering participation among diverse stakeholders, CMAs help balance competing needs, agricultural, industrial, domestic, and environmental, while safeguarding water security for future generations.

At the time of writing, the country had six CMAs, namely Limpopo-Olifants, Vaal-Orange, Pongola-Umzimkhulu, Mzimvubu-Tsitsikamma, Breede-Olifants and Inkomati-Usuthu.

Local government forms a vital partner in catchment management, functioning as the primary provider of water and sanitation services at community level. Municipalities are uniquely positioned to identify local challenges, enforce by-laws that protect water quality, and engage directly with residents in planning and conservation initiatives. Their involvement is especially important for marginalised communities, which often face disproportionate exposure to polluted water sources, inadequate infrastructure, and limited avenues for participation in decision-making.

Through collaboration with CMAs, local government can ensure that vulnerable groups have a voice in water governance, benefit from targeted interventions, and gain improved access to safe, reliable water services. This integrated approach strengthens social equity while supporting the long-term sustainability of South Africa's catchments.

This guide is primarily intended for local government councillors and officials. Its main purpose is to provide local government with background information on CMAs. The guide further describes mechanisms for cooperation between the two institutions and how local government interaction with CMAs could be promoted.

PART 1: CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

ROLE AND PURPOSE

CMA's are statutory bodies established in terms of Chapter 7 of the NWA to manage water resources at the catchment or regional level. CMA's are responsible for planning, implementing, and managing water resources. Secondly, they are responsible for coordinating the water-related activities of other water management institutions and water users within designated water management areas.

CMA's are governed by governing boards that are established by the Minister. The governing board of a CMA must represent all of the stakeholders affected by water resource activities within the WMA, including local government.

A CMA has a specific mandate to fulfil within its specified WMA. This mandate includes:

- Developing a catchment management strategy (CMS) as a framework for the management of water resources within the WMA, which must be in harmony with the National Water Resource Strategy (NWRS), the national framework for the management of water resources in South Africa
- Coordinating the other water management institutions (WMI's) within the WMA
- Ensuring sustainable water use
- Promoting cooperative governance
- Promoting community participation in water resource management (WRM)



Roles and purpose of CMA's

CMA establishment process

Step 1: Development of a proposal

The CMA establishment process begins with a consultation process involving the stakeholders within a WMA. The stakeholders and community develop a proposal for the establishment of a CMA within their area. The stakeholders mainly comprise the institutions and bodies affected by water resource activities within a WMA. The groups of stakeholders include water user associations (WUAs), local government, non-governmental organisations, farmers, etc.

Step 2: Evaluation of the proposal

The proposal is then submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) for evaluation. The proposal is evaluated against a set of criteria developed by the department. After the evaluation, the proposal is submitted to the Minister for approval, and then it is published in the Government Gazette for public comment. A final draft is then prepared based on the comments received.

Step 3: Advisory committee

After the proposal, the Minister may establish an advisory committee that is tasked with recommending the composition of the CMA governing board. The advisory committee identifies the sectors and other interest groups that should be represented on the governing board. The advisory committee also indicates which institutions should be requested to have representation on the board.

Step 4: CMA governing board

Based on the recommendations of the advisory committee, the minister requests nominations for and appoints the CMA governing board. Local government is the only institution specifically mentioned by the NWA as being critical to the representation on governing bodies. The role of the governing body is to appoint a chief executive officer for the CMA. The CEO, together with the governing body, establishes the CMA institutionally by setting up structures and appointing staff.

Step 5: Delegation

After the establishment of structures and appointment of staff, the CMA may start performing its initial functions. Depending on capacity, the CMA may have certain functions delegated to it by the DWS.

FUNCTIONS OF CMAS

CMA functions mainly cover WRM activities. They do not play any role in water service provision, which is a local government competence. CMAs can only advise or assist with water service functions or activities that impact the management of water resources. The role of a CMA would be in the areas of interface and prioritisation through water sector consultation. WRM is a national competence, and the CMAs are being established to play this role, while the provision of water is a local government competence, and water service authorities and water service providers play this role.

The functions of a CMA are evolved in a progressive manner. There are initial functions, which the CMAs are expected to perform upon their establishment. The second set of functions is those that will be delegated to the CMAs based on their growth and capacitated. It is anticipated that CMAs will ultimately perform most of the functions currently performed by DWS through delegation.

Initial functions of a CMA

1. Investigate, and advise interested persons on the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of the water resources in its water management area.
2. Develop a catchment management strategy.
3. Coordinate the related activities of water users and of water management institutions within its water management area.
4. Promote the coordination of the implementation of its catchment management strategy with the implementation of any applicable development plan in terms of the Water Services Act (Act 108 of 1997).
5. Promote community participation in its functions.

Through the Minister's consent, a CMA may have certain functions currently performed by the DWS delegated or assigned to it. These functions may include the general management of water resources in the water management area, the powers and duties of a responsible authority, and other powers and duties vested with the Minister that can be delegated.

It is unlikely that these functions would be delegated to the CMAs initially; however, they could be delegated progressively. Depending on the size and capacity of the CMA, some of these functions may be delegated or outsourced to the other WMLs established within a WMA.

INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

GOVERNANCE & DEVOLUTION



- All functions that flow from the powers of a 'responsible authority' progressively assigned
- All outstanding functions which flow from Schedule 3 powers



RESOURCE PROTECTION & MONITORING



Maintenance of the reserve and resource quality objectives



Routine monitoring in the WMA



Auditing of all catchment management activities in the WMA

OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION



Development and operation of water works



Advising the DWS regional office on licence applications



Proactive cooperative governance



Making and collecting water user charges



Registration of current and new water users

Possible sequence for CMA to carry out functions

The following functions may not be delegated to a CMA:

- Setting of water tariffs
- Authorisation of water use

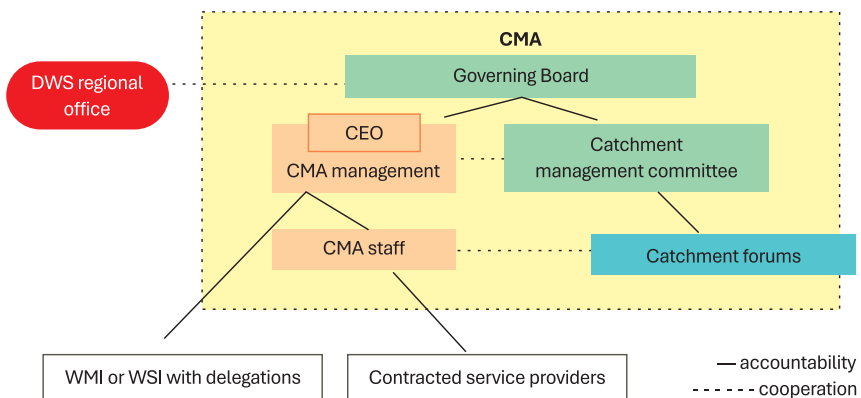
The following powers are only vested with the Minister:

- To make regulations
- To authorise a WMI to expropriate
- To appoint the governing board of a CMA
- To appoint a member of the Water Tribunal

POSSIBLE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Typically, a CMA would have an organisational structure that represents the stakeholders within the WMA, i.e. the governing body, management and staff as well as the functions it performs within the WMA. Depending on the nature of the WMA, a CMA would have catchment committees that assist it in various WRM activities. A number of other WMIs may play this role, e.g. WUAs, catchment forums, etc.

In extending the objective of water resource management, the NWA provides for the establishment of other WMIs whose role is to assist the CMAs in managing water resources. In the establishment of these institutions, certain institutional arrangements are fostered between these institutions and the CMAs. Depending on their capacity, these institutions may assist CMAs with a number of functions, for example, the use of forums to promote stakeholder participation and the use of catchment management committees to solve local water resource issues within a WMA. These institutions include catchment forums, catchment management committees, water user associations and international bodies.

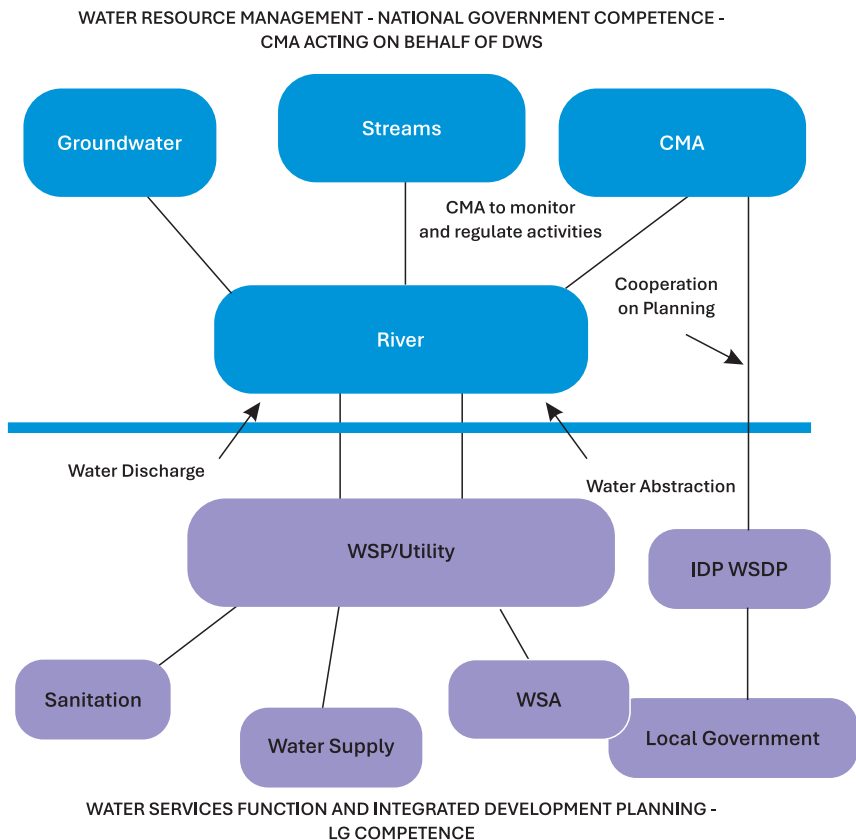



A generic institutional-organisational structure for CMA operation. (Source: DWS)

PART 2: INTERFACE BETWEEN CMAS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The roles and functions of CMAs indicate a number of areas that warrant cooperation with local government. It is critical that local government institutions prioritise interaction with CMAs, as a number of their functions are dependent on relations with them, particularly water service functions.

In terms of CMAs, it should be understood that they have no function in the provision of water services, but they can be a means to the effective provision of this service by local government institutions. The roles and functions of the CMAs are purely related to water resource management (WRM).





The most important point to note is the advantage that cooperation between these two institutions brings to each other. Cooperation between the two institutions provides an opportunity for shared information. This information may be critical for making decisions about planning and water management.

CMA REGULATORY ROLE

In terms of the Constitution and the NWA, the CMAs are given powers to manage and regulate water resources. CMAs operate within a specific sphere of government through a particular piece of legislation linked to a government department (DWS) with constitutional mandates. This gives the agency powers that are vested in DWS. The implications are that a CMA, based on the powers conferred to it by the Act, will manage and regulate the water use activities of all stakeholders within a specified water management area, including local government. However, this does not overlook the fact that local government institutions represent an independent sphere of government. Therefore, a cooperative approach is necessary.

INTERFACE ON WATER USE REGULATION

Water use, as an area that impacts water planning, exposes a number of areas that warrant cooperation between the CMAs and local government institutions.

Water use

Water use refers to all of the activities that have a direct or indirect impact on the:

- Source of water
- Quantity of water in the resource
- Quality of the water in the resource
- Environment surrounding the resource

The NWA refers to water use as the following activities:

- Taking water from a water resource (abstraction)
- Storing water
- Activities which reduce streamflow (e.g., forestry)
- Discharging waste or water containing waste into a water resource
- Controlled activities (activities that impact detrimentally on a water resource, e.g., irrigating land with water containing waste, or power generation activities which alter the flow of a water resource)
- Changing the physical structure of rivers and streams (altering a watercourse, obstructing or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse)
- Removing underground water
- Using water for recreational purposes

Local government undertakes the water use functions of taking water from a water resource (abstraction), discharging wastewater into a water resource, and changing the physical structure of rivers and streams (altering a watercourse, obstructing or diverting the flow of water in the watercourse). In these cases, municipalities may build a dam in the river or pump water directly from the river. These municipal water use activities become the driver of cooperation with the CMA.

Authorisations

The management of water at this level is undertaken through authorisations. Depending on the extent of impact the water user has on the resource, they may be required to register as low impact users under general authorisations (who may require licences in certain instances) or be required to apply for water use licences as high impact users. In most cases, local government water-related functions have a high impact and therefore require water use licence applications with the relevant authority, i.e. DWS or a CMA.

Certain conditions apply to the licences that are issued by the relevant authorities. These conditions include the period during which the licence will apply and the conditions that will ensure that the activity does not have a negative impact on the resource. In terms of the NWA, all water users should comply with the conditions of their licences. Failure to comply with the condition means that the authorities may withdraw the licence and may also prosecute the user. However, in the spirit of cooperative governance, prosecution is not encouraged until all other avenues have been exhausted.

INTERFACE ON PLANNING AND STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

At this level of relations, cooperation is based on strategy and planning, which is fundamental for all possible relations between institutions. Local government needs to align its integrated development plan (IDP) strategy with the catchment management strategy (CMS), which is a framework for the management of water resources by the CMA.

The CMS, in its visioning process, has to take into account the IDP, which is made up of sector plans that have implications for the intended vision of the resource, e.g., water sector development plans, therefore catering for the vision at the local level and vice versa. The CMS will enable local government to make decisions that are critical for the provision of water services and planning.

PART 3: MECHANISMS FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE

Most of the mechanisms indicated are centred on the CMAs and local government taking a proactive role in promoting cooperative governance. Local government institutions must examine these mechanisms and assess how they can be applied within their specific environments.

CMA ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS MECHANISMS

Based on the identified areas of cooperation, local government institutions must develop approaches for collaboration with CMAs. This should be encouraged by local government taking part in the CMA establishment process. In order to ensure that there is full representation of all local government structures, participation in the CMA establishment process should be extended to include the administrative level of local government management.

Mechanisms during the CMA establishment process

The CMA establishment process is evolving to include pre- and post-establishment phases. It is therefore critical that local government be involved at both of these phases. The role of local government during these phases should be clear, and should also reflect the various roles that it represents, i.e., the planning role, the water services role, the stakeholder role, and the democratic representative role. Therefore, the approach for local government participation cannot be the same as for other institutions.

Local government may assist in the CMA processes by providing the necessary information, as well as making presentations and clarifying their various roles to create more understanding of local government within the CMA.

Pre-establishment

This is the phase that should set the scene for future engagement with local government within the WMA

- **The initiation phase**

This is the awareness creation phase for the public among all of the relevant stakeholders, including local government. It is critical that, at this phase, the involvement of local government not be limited to the political level; it should also include the administrative level. It is the role of local government to ensure that this happens. This has an institutional development element (with the opportunity to build awareness and capacity within municipalities), as well as creating

relationships between the proposed CMA and municipalities. It is during this phase that local government institutions should begin to understand their roles within the CMA process, as well as how they could grow this understanding within their municipalities.

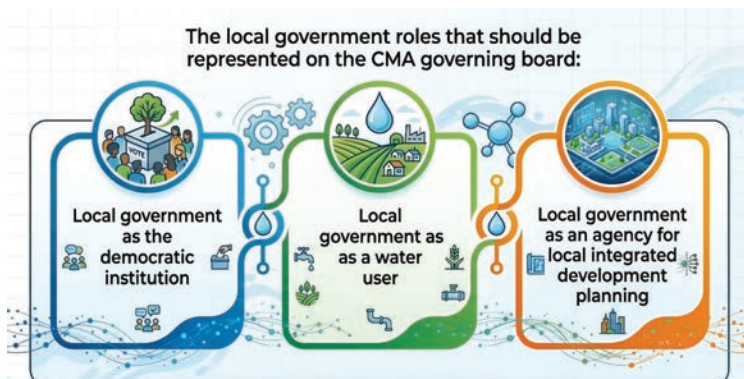
- **The CMA governing board**

While it is understood that the CMA governing board should reflect all the stakeholders within a WMA, the Advisory Committee making recommendations to the Minister should take into account that the various roles of local government should all be represented on the governing board. All of the various roles played by local government cannot be represented in one seat.

It is critical for local government to take up these issues with DWS.

The following roles should be represented in the governing board:

- **Local government as the democratic institution in the area.** Local governments are democratically elected institutions. The implications are that, within a WMA, they will also represent a number of stakeholders and ordinary individuals who may be affected by the CMA process. Local government institutions therefore have dual roles, i.e., a role as a representative of stakeholders within their jurisdiction, and a role based on their functions as water service providers and integrated planners.
- **Local government as a water user.** Local government institutions, based on their functions, extract water and discharge wastewater. Their function has implications in the management of the resource by the CMA, and local government representation for this aspect is therefore critical.
- **Local government as an agency for local integrated development planning.** Local government institutions, through the Municipal Systems Act, are responsible for IDP within their areas of jurisdiction. IDP encompasses other activities that may have an impact on the water resource, e.g., spatial development. This role of local government should also be recognised on the board.



Post-establishment

Once the CMA has been established within a water management area, the role of local government is largely at the operational level, as the CMA prepares to perform its initial functions. It is critical that the structures and relationships created during the pre-establishment phase are translated to assist as mechanisms for cooperation in the initial functioning of the CMA.

The mechanisms and structures will thereby cease to become part of the establishment process and become structured cooperative mechanisms for cooperative relations with local government.

Although there are imperatives for cooperation by CMAs and local government, the mandates, priorities and capacity limitations of most municipalities indicate that CMAs should take the main responsibility for promoting and enabling cooperative governance around WRM between these institutions. It is therefore likely that CMAs will be the main drivers for the establishment of the following mechanisms, although with time and the building of local government awareness and capacity, this process should become a partnership.

- **Institutional mechanisms**

The institutional mechanisms established with local government have to be developed in a manner that they cover all areas and functions that may impact the functions as well as the intended objectives of water resource management. These are:

- ***Governance, accountability and representation.*** The CMA governing board must have local government representation, although the nature of this representation is not clear. It is clear that the diverse interests of typically 10 to 20 municipalities within a WMA must be represented by a limited number of board members (probably less than 3).
- ***Legislative and policy alignment.*** Local government may establish bylaws around a range of activities that affect water resource management. CMAs have an interest in ensuring that these are aligned with (or at least are consistent with) WRM legislation and approaches. The development of model bylaws may contribute to this, but a CMA may take a proactive role in evaluating municipal bylaws in the WMA and advocating changes where these may be inappropriate from a water resource management perspective.
- ***Coordinate strategy development.*** The NWA requires the CMS to be aligned with other development plans. In relation to local government, this would mean alignment with the IDP, which encompasses a number of plans impacting water resource management.

The strategy alignment with the municipality should be based on an agreed approach between the CMA and municipality. It may include:

- Participation/involvement by relevant staff from municipalities in CMS development process and CMA staff in IDP development processes, through the relevant forums.
- Informal meetings between the CMA and municipal planning sections to identify and resolve areas of inconsistency.
- Formal reviews and comments on draft CMSs and IDPs.
- An active process of joint strategy development, from initiation to development of relevant parts of CMSs or IDPs.


Participation in strategy/plan development processes is the minimum level of engagement acceptable, possibly supported by informal meetings or formal review (where problems are identified). Even this requires capacity from both institutions, which is often likely to be missing. From the perspective of water resource management, the CMA must engage with the IDP process. Furthermore, the CMA should make every effort to engage municipalities in the CMS process, possibly through dedicated bilateral or multilateral local government forums, particularly where a municipality has limited capacity. It should be acknowledged that, although ultimately desirable, the likelihood of joint strategy development is limited in the short to medium term, except where there is a real driver for this alignment, possibly related to severe water shortages or water quality problems.

- **Institutional structures**

This refers to the structures that the two institutions may develop as vehicles to drive cooperation. These structures will be developed mainly to drive some of the institutional mechanisms above, as well as creating a link between the two institutions on matters that may directly affect each other. However, it should be stated that not all of them might be suited for CMA and local government cooperation, particularly on specific institutional issues.

Cooperation may be facilitated by the establishment of bilateral or multilateral bodies with consultation, coordination or joint decision-making responsibilities. In the context of CMAs and municipalities, a number of options are possible, including:

- **Local government catchment management committees.** Such a committee may be established by a CMA with all of the municipalities within the WMA to facilitate the coordination of activities and alignment planning (and possibly even joint decision-making).
- **Catchment management forums.** These are forums that provide an opportunity for different stakeholder groups in an area of a WMA, including local government, to be consulted and resolve issues. Although this is an important vehicle for participation and it is critical for municipalities to be represented, it is not particularly suited for the specific type of interaction necessary to foster cooperative governance between CMAs and municipalities as government institutions.
- **Routine bilateral meetings.** These are meetings that may be set up between relevant



components of a CMA and components within a municipality to focus on specific areas of common interest, such as planning, water supply and waste discharge, or waste management. These meetings should occur regularly (3 to 6 monthly) and could be deemed to be technical committees with a mandate to identify and resolve areas of common interest or conflict. This is potentially resource-intensive from the CMA's perspective, but may be critical in dealing effectively with larger municipalities and metros.

What are catchment management forums?

Catchment forums are multi-stakeholder platforms for collaborative water management, bringing together diverse groups like residents, government, NGOs, and businesses to discuss issues, share information, and make decisions about a specific river or water catchment area. They serve as a space for dialogue, conflict resolution, and coordinated action to protect water resources and improve water quality. For more information, refer to the section on Further Reading.

OTHER ISSUES FOR CMA/LOCAL GOVERNMENT COOPERATION

Organisational design

The establishment of cooperative governance mechanisms between CMAs and municipalities will generally require human and/or financial resources from the CMAs as the key proponent of this cooperation (at least initially). CMAs should address this explicitly in their organisational design, particularly in terms of the organisational structure and business plan. A CMA should establish a dedicated component (with adequate resources) to promote and support the development of relationships and cooperative mechanisms with local government within a broader institutional development, stakeholder participation, and coordination group.

Delegation and contracting

Cooperation can also become institutionalised through the delegation or contracting of functions to local government, particularly where the latter has capacity and/or is already performing similar activities. A CMA should consider delegating or contracting certain functions to suitable municipalities, particularly where these will not have major ramifications if they are not appropriately implemented.

Financial arrangements

All municipalities will pay water use charges for WRM costs, which will go either directly or

indirectly (through a bulk service provider) to their CMAs. The setting of charges on local government and the possible payment for services rendered (under delegation or contract) provides an important opportunity to develop cooperative relations. This will continue to be a point of potential conflict, and the development of financial arrangements between CMAs and municipalities must therefore be done in the most transparent and consultative manner possible, without jeopardising the financial viability and sustainability of either CMAs or municipalities.

Consultation and comment

The institutions may agree to informal consultation and/or formal comment on particular issues of joint interest. This is particularly important in terms of various permitting or authorisation processes, including the authorisation of water use by CMAs (which should be in line with the development objectives of municipalities) and land use development by municipalities (which should consider the water resources impacts). This should be based on clear resource requirements and timeframes to avoid delays in the processes.

Information sharing and exchange

Both CMAs and municipalities will need to collect information about the water resources and catchments in their areas of jurisdiction. The sharing and exchange of water resources and catchment information should be promoted between CMAs and municipalities, both to avoid duplication and to build a common understanding of the issues. Where possible, this should be associated with joint planning of the systems for data acquisition and information management, to facilitate transfer.

Awareness, capacity building and support

In order to create institutions that foster cooperative governance, it is critical that institutions themselves create internal conditions that are conducive for cooperative governance. CMAs should drive a process of WRM awareness creation and focused capacity building within the municipalities in their WMAs, focusing appropriately on the political leadership, municipal management and officials.

PART 4: PHASING OF COOPERATION

Based on the nature and the environment under which local government institutions function, it is critical to note that cooperation between the two institutions may not be a short-term process. CMAs are also new institutions; therefore, a phased implementation process should be considered. The phased implementation process is influenced by a number of factors, including capacity, an understanding of institutional roles and functions, institutional priorities (particularly for local government), etc.

The earlier chapters of this document indicated that the CMA establishment process has phases of different activities leading to the establishment of a complete institution. CMAs are established against the background of well-established local government institutions in terms of the South African governmental system. It would therefore be to the CMAs' advantage to play a proactive role in cooperating with local government as they go about establishing themselves. (However, this does not imply that local government should not play a proactive role.) Therefore, in all of the phases of CMA establishment, local government should be seen as the critical stakeholder.

CMA ESTABLISHMENT PHASES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COOPERATION

Phase 1 (pre-proposal)

The CMA establishment process begins with the initiation of the participation process. This initiative aims to develop relationships with and increase knowledge of stakeholders and interest groups within the WMA. It is during this process that all stakeholders develop a common vision on the establishment process of the CMA. The different stakeholders may establish a catchment forum as a vehicle for their participation in the process. The success of such a forum is based on the premise that all stakeholders are represented on it.

Local government cooperation in phase 1 (pre-proposal)

All local government institutions within a WMA where a CMA is established should be part of the preproposal stage. While it is accepted that within a WMA there may be one or two district municipalities plus four or five local municipalities, these institutions should have a body that they will use as a vehicle to ensure full local government participation in the process. Local government institutions may form a local government forum. This forum should be part of the general catchment forum. However, this is not a prerequisite, and local government may be part of the bigger catchment forum within a WMA instead.

The local government forum, at this stage, should focus on having municipal officials being the drivers of local government participation in the process. Municipal officials, based on their attendance in the forums and their positions within their institutions, are in a better position to market and create awareness of CMAs within their municipalities. They would be able to become a reference point for local government participation in the process for their respective municipalities.

At this stage, bilateral meetings may be established with the key municipalities within the WMA. This particularly refers to municipalities with anticipated high impacts on the resource. The bilateral meetings should set the scene and be able to deal with the exceptions of all parties involved, as well as begin to highlight areas of cooperation.


The catchment forum representing all stakeholders and a local government forum representing all local government institutions within a WMA may together establish a committee, such as a catchment steering committee. This committee would assist the stakeholders in developing a proposal for CMA establishment.

Phase 2 (post-proposal)

Phase 2 of the CMA establishment process is focused on establishing the CMA governing board, which should be representative of all the sectors/stakeholders affected by water resource activities. This is done through the establishment of an advisory committee by the Minister. The advisory committee, based on an assessment process of a WMA, will make recommendations to the Minister on the composition of the governing board, i.e., the sectors that should be represented on the CMA governing board. If the Minister is satisfied with the sectors of the governing board and other factors, a CMA governing board may be established. The governing board role at this stage will be to appoint the CEO and together establish the institution by appointing managers and staff for the CMA.

Local government cooperation in Phase 2 (post-proposal)

As an existing precursor to raise awareness of local government issues, the local government forum from the preproposal stage may be used to continue local government coordination for representation on the CMA. The political section of local government, i.e., the councils, has a major role to play in this process. The local government forum, through coordination with all of the municipalities and other local government structures, e.g. the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), will make recommendations to the advisory committee on the institutions that should represent local government interests in the governing body. Secondly, this body may make recommendations on issues to consider about local government representation on the board, taking into account the various roles that local government has, based on its mandates.



Based on the first two phases of the CMA establishment process, the outcomes of cooperation with local government institutions should be:

- Local government understanding of the CMA establishment process, their roles and functions.
- Full participation of both the political and administrative wings of local government.

Phase 3 (post-establishment)

Cooperation at this stage between the institutions is largely based on the functions that these institutions will be performing. These are gradually implemented in a phased manner. Most of these activities will be taking place at an administrative level of engagement. However, there should be continued cooperation at governing body level to provide high-level strategic direction on cooperation.

Phasing at administrative level

CMA functioning begins with the initial functions that they perform immediately after their establishment. The initial functions will be followed in a phased manner by the functions of managing water use and ensuring equity. The final phase of functions for the CMA will be that of responsible authority for the authorisation of water use.

a) Initial function cooperation

The initial functions of CMAs are centred on the regional management of water resources and ensuring stakeholder participation in the management of these resources. Section 80 of the NWA describes the initial functions of a CMA as:

- Developing a catchment management strategy
- Coordinating the activities of users and water management institutions within the WMA
- Aligning the catchment management strategy and water service development plans of local government institutions
- Promoting community participation in water resource management

Local government institutions in this phase should be part of the process, particularly in terms of strategy development and the alignment of strategies. This should be done through a coordinated strategy development process. Local government institutions should provide specific structures that would form part of the process.

It is critical for local government at this stage to develop internal components that will focus on promoting and developing alignment with CMAs. These should further promote awareness, capacity building and support within the municipalities.

This phase is mainly based on promoting awareness and the coordination of activities, as well as setting the frameworks for cooperation in various water resource related activities.



Local government plays an important role in ensuring that there is participation by all communities in the catchment in water resource management.

b) Management of water use cooperation

This is the phase in which the CMA begins the actual management of the water resource within its WMA by managing, implementing, cooperating and ensuring water availability. Some of the activities at this level include water allocation planning, determining water resource directed measures, supporting other water management institutions, financial planning for the CMA, and long-term strategic planning for the CMA.

In terms of local government, cooperative relations should be specific to the activities performed by local government. Local government should be prepared to have a bilateral body that is function-specific with the CMA. The district municipalities would have bilateral bodies related to integrated development planning and spatial development planning. The local municipalities should be prepared to have bilateral bodies on water services planning, as they develop water

service development plans.

This phase is based on the actual implementation and development of bilateral structures that are specific to institutional functions and issues arising through cooperation.

c) Authorisation (responsible authority)

This is the phase where CMAs begin to regulate water use as responsible authorities. The functions in this phase include registering water use, authorising water use (licensing), setting, billing and collecting water use charges, monitoring authorisation requirements, compliance, co-regulation and cooperative agreements.

Cooperation with local government at this stage is largely based on authorisations (licence applications) and cooperation on the setting of charges for water resource use (abstraction and discharge). Local government institutions may want to use the different structures developed during the other stages to engage a CMA on a number of issues, e.g., decisions on tariffs, regulation, etc.



CONCLUSION

Several CMAs are in the process of being established. Their development comes within an environment where there have been other institutions that have existed for a longer period. They may therefore meet difficulties in their progressive development.

It is critical that local government institutions assist the CMAs as new institutions in the functions that they will perform for the benefit of all stakeholders affected, including the communities represented by local government. These communities are a priority in terms of integrated water resource management strategic objectives.



FURTHER READING

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GLOSSARY

CMA	Catchment management agency
CMS	Catchment management strategy
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
IDP	Integrated development plan
NWA	National Water Act
NWRS	National Water Resource Strategy
WMA	Water management area
WMI	Water management institution
WRM	Water resource management



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