

Turnaround plan for water and sanitation

Marking his first 100 days at the helm of the national water and sanitation portfolio, Minister Gugile Nkwinti, outlined his plans to instil a culture of achieving more with less in the department to better manage the manner in which money is being spent.



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Nkwinti has already developed a five-pillar turnaround strategy to address issues of service delivery. It includes a national water resources and services authority, national water resources and services regulator, water resources and services value chain, water resources and services master plan, and institutional rationalisation and organisational alignment.

To further reduce spending, the minister announced that instead of appointing service providers for construction work, the construction unit of the department will be utilised for infrastructure projects of the department.

This, he said, is intended to reduce unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

Nkwinti said some of the challenges that the department has been grappling with has been municipalities who receive grants from the department and their inability to spend their allocated funds.

Hot water

“In some instances, they either spend irregularly, a phenomenon which has gotten the department in hot water with the Office of the Auditor General,” the minister said.

To avert the situation, Nkwinti has taken an initiative to engage National Treasury and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to address the perennial problem of billions of municipal grant funds.

In a bid to ensure that service delivery is accelerated, Nkwinti has engaged various stakeholders across the country to listen to their needs.

Clanwilliam Dam project and other projects

Nkwinti said the raising of the dam wall at Clanwilliam Dam in the Western Cape should be prioritised as a matter of urgency, so that the project can start in October.

“The issue of budgetary constraints should not be seen as a hindrance to the project. Instead, the project will be done by the department’s construction unit,” Nkwinti.

The minister also decried the plight of the people of Giyani and resolved that their situation will be attended to, as the Giyani Intervention Project will be on his to-do list.

A turnaround plan to prioritise Nandoni pipeline and a 35-megalitre command reservoir in order to increase water sourcing is also on the cards.

A new bulk line will be connected into the existing village distribution reservoirs and household connections.

Fundraising for the 50 distribution reservoirs and household reticulations will be undertaken, and local people will be more involved in subcontracting and employment.

The 38 villages, which are excluded from the intervention, will also be considered.

The minister also announced that he will visit all the project sites to assess progress being made and engage communities to hear their concerns.

To further improve how the department is run, Nkwinti has streamlined the organogram of the department, pending engagement with unions.

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