



WHITE PAPER  
ON  
BASIC HOUSEHOLD SANITATION

2001

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## **A INTRODUCTION**

### **A.1 Introduction**

Providing adequate sanitation facilities for the poor remains one of the major challenges in all developing countries. An estimated eighteen (18) million South Africans or three (3) million households do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities. Those who have inadequate sanitation may be using the bucket system, unimproved pit toilets or the veld. In addition there is a disturbing increase in poorly designed or operated water-borne sewerage systems, especially in urban areas.

When sanitation systems fail, or are inadequate, the impact on the health of the community, on the health of others and the negative impact on the environment can be extremely serious as witnessed by the 1.5 million cases annually of diarrhoea in children under the age of 5 and the recent outbreaks of cholera.

Inadequate sanitation facilities and infrastructure combined with unhygienic practices represent South Africa's sanitation problem. The unhygienic practices are clearly the results of:

- lack of health and hygiene awareness;
- lack of sanitation facilities
- inadequate water supplies;
- poor facilities for the safe disposal of waste water and other domestic waste; and
- inadequate toilet and hand washing facilities.

The White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation Policy published in November 1994 highlighted the importance of establishing a national sanitation policy.

In response to the White Paper, a draft National Sanitation White Paper was published in 1996. Even though the draft White Paper was never formally approved it was the first time that a national sanitation policy had been prepared which addressed the needs of all South Africans.

This National Sanitation Policy improves on the initial attempts in 1996 to produce a White Paper and incorporates the knowledge gained in actual implementation of the sanitation improvement programmes since then.

### **A.2 Purpose**

Government has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that all South Africans have access to adequate sanitation. The publication of this national

sanitation policy is an important step in the process of meeting this responsibility and in addressing the problems of inadequate sanitation.

The purpose of this policy document is to:

- highlight the impact of poor sanitation on health, living conditions and the environment;
- articulate government policies on sanitation;
- provide a basis for the formulation of local, provincial and national sanitation improvement strategies aimed at addressing the backlog;
- provide a framework for municipality driven implementation programmes;
- promote greater coherence and co-ordination amongst the different spheres of government and amongst other role players in addressing the sanitation problem;
- ensure that sanitation improvement programmes are adequately funded; and
- put in place mechanisms to monitor the implementation of this policy and sanitation improvement programmes so that corrective action can be taken when necessary.

This policy focuses specifically on the provision of a basic level of household sanitation to mainly rural communities and informal settlements. These are the areas with the greatest need. This policy also deals with the need for an environmentally sound approach to providing sanitation services and addresses the need to protect surface and ground water resources from sanitation pollution through integrated environmental management practices.

### **A.3 Definitions**

In the past, sanitation has been seen primarily as a technical issue (toilet building, providing sewer systems, maintenance etc.) whilst other aspects have been given secondary consideration. It is now recognised that toilets are just one element in a range of factors that make up good sanitation.

Community participation in decision-making, improved health of millions of people, safer living environments, greater knowledge of sanitation-related health practices and improved hygiene are just some of the factors that are central to the development of good sanitation services.

For the purpose of this policy it is necessary to define sanitation and also to give guidance on the minimum acceptable basic level of sanitation:

*“Sanitation” refers to the principles and practices relating to the collection, removal or disposal of human excreta, household waste water and refuse as they impact upon people and the environment. Good sanitation includes appropriate health and hygiene awareness and behaviour, and acceptable, affordable and sustainable sanitation services.*

*The minimum acceptable basic level of sanitation is:  
(a) appropriate health and hygiene awareness and behaviour;*

*(b) a system for disposing of human excreta, household waste water and refuse, which is acceptable and affordable to the users, safe, hygienic and easily accessible and which does not have an unacceptable impact on the environment; and*  
*(c) a toilet facility for each household.*

This policy will focus mainly on the improvement of health and hygiene and the provision of adequate sanitation facilities in households, schools and clinics as well as the collection, removal and disposal of human waste and the related health and hygiene practices.

## **B THE SANITATION PROBLEM**

### **B.1 Overview of the problem**

The negative effects of poor sanitation that this policy aims at alleviating are:

- public health problems;
- environmental impacts and contamination;
- economic impact of poor sanitation; and
- social and psychological problems.

These impacts are discussed in more detail below:

### **B.2 Health problems associated with poor sanitation**

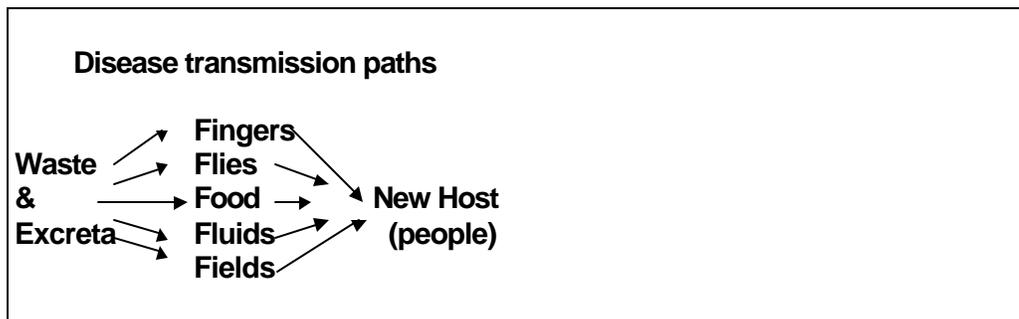
The most common health problems associated with poor sanitation are:

- diarrhoea and dysentery;
- typhoid;
- bilharzia;
- malaria;
- cholera;
- worms;
- eye infections and skin diseases; and
- increased risk from bacteria, infections and disease for people with reduced immune systems due to HIV/Aids.

Significant investments are being made in the provision of safe water supplies for all. However, the health benefit of this investment is limited where inadequate attention is paid to sanitation and to health and hygiene promotion. International experience shows that once people's basic needs are met (especially the provision of clean water), sanitation improvements together with health and hygiene promotion results in the most significant impact on their health.

Sanitation programmes can have these dramatic health benefits because many of the infective organisms are spread from hand to mouth or from hand to food to mouth rather than through drinking contaminated water. Improving hygiene practices and providing sanitation facilities could have a direct influence on a number of important public health problems besetting South Africa. Thus, understanding how infections are transmitted and how to break the cycle of infection are important public health messages.

Most faecal-oral infections are transmitted on hands and during food preparation, rather than through drinking contaminated water directly, as shown in this diagram:



In short, faeces provide food for many organisms that cause diseases in humans. Any action that prevents these organisms from getting to the faeces or from getting onto or into human bodies will help to break the cycle of infection.

### **B.3 The environmental impacts of poor sanitation**

Most human activity impacts on the environment.

Sanitation systems involve the disposal and treatment of wastes. A lack of adequate sanitation or inadequately maintained or inappropriately designed systems can therefore constitute a range of pollution risks to the environment, especially the contamination of surface and ground water resources:

Although water systems are able to tolerate a certain degree of pollution there is a limit to the amount that can be assimilated without causing the water quality to deteriorate to such an extent that the water cannot be used.

Factors that affect the impact of sanitation systems on water quality are:

- size and density of the settlement being served;
- sensitivity (or Class) of the receiving water resource;
- type of sanitation system;
- capacity of the service provider to manage the system; and
- depth to ground water and the soil type.

Pollution resulting from failed or inadequate sanitation systems is associated with:

- water borne disease caused by direct contact with faecal contaminated water and other health risks such as blue baby syndrome in bottle fed infants;
- the growth of aquatic plants (mostly algae), which in turn results in increased treatment costs, reduced recreational value of the water body, possible growth of toxic algae and loss of bio-diversity; and
- depletion of the oxygen in the water column which can also result in a loss of bio-diversity and a complete shift in the natural biota of the stream.

Recent work internationally and in South Africa suggests that in spite of the potential for groundwater pollution from on-site sanitation systems, the concerns about this risk may at times have been overstated. The current view

is that geo-technical conditions will seldom justify a change to water-borne sewerage. Very few soils will create problems that cannot be solved by lining a pit. Even where excavation of rock is necessary, it would still usually be cheaper and more practical to construct Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines than it would be to install and maintain water borne sewerage.

An aim of the national sanitation policy is to promote the environmental sustainability of sanitation systems. To ensure that sanitation systems are designed, constructed and operated in such a way that contamination caused by sanitation systems is restricted to acceptable levels throughout the life cycle of the system, regardless of the chosen technology option.

### ***B.3.1 The economic cost of poor sanitation***

Whilst the financial cost of providing a basic level of sanitation is easily quantifiable, the economic cost of inadequate sanitation on the health of the community and on the environment is not so easily quantified. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organisation has linked investing in sanitation to:

- reduced morbidity and mortality and increased life expectancy;
- savings in health care costs;
- reduced time caring and sick leave (back to work);
- higher worker productivity;
- better learning capacities of school children;
- increased school attendance, especially by girls;
- strengthened tourism and national pride;
- direct economic value of high quality water such as irrigation water for crops; and
- reduced water treatment costs.

The economic impact of poor sanitation services and health and hygiene behaviour was again highlighted during the recent outbreak of cholera in Kwazulu Natal where it was shown that a single cholera carrier has the potential of infecting a whole prison wing.

The potential economic benefit of improving sanitation can be gauged when it is considered that there are an estimated 1.5 million cases reported of diarrhoea in children under the age of 5 every year. This results in huge health expenditures, which could otherwise be avoided through the provision of adequate services.

### **B.4 Social and psychological problems associated with poor sanitation**

Toilets placed at a distance from the home, inadequate communal facilities, inadequate disposal of waste and other poor sanitation practices result in loss of privacy and dignity, exposure and increased risks to personal safety.

It is especially women and the elderly who are the most inconvenienced.

Although the school attendance of girls in schools in South Africa is high compared to other developing countries, it is internationally recognised that poor sanitation facilities at schools can be one of the main reasons for girls to drop out.

## C POLICY PRINCIPLES

### C.1 Policy principles

The principles that will guide this policy and the intervention strategies that will be undertaken to address the sanitation problem are:

#### ***1. Sanitation improvement must be demand responsive, supported by an intensive Health and Hygiene Programme***

Household sanitation is first and foremost a household responsibility and must be demand responsive. Households must recognise the need for adequate toilet facilities for them to make informed decisions about their sanitation options. For users to benefit maximally, they must also understand the link between their own health, good hygiene and toilet facilities.

#### ***2. Community participation***

Communities must be fully involved in projects that relate to their health and well being and also in decisions relating to community facilities, such as schools and clinics. Communities must participate in decision-making about what should be done and how; contribute to the implementation of the decisions; and share in the benefits of the project or programme.

#### ***3. Integrated planning and development***

The health, social, and environmental benefits of improved sanitation is maximised when sanitation is planned for and provided in an integrated way with water supply and other municipal services.

The focal mechanism to achieve integrated planning and development is the municipality driven Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process (of which the Water Services Development Plan is a component).

#### ***4. Sanitation is about environment and health***

Sanitation improvement is more than just the provision of toilets; it is a process of sustained environment and health improvement. Sanitation improvement must be accompanied by environmental, health and hygiene promotional activities .

#### ***5. Basic sanitation is a human right***

Government has an obligation to create an enabling environment through which all South Africans can gain access to basic sanitation services.

***6. The provision of access to sanitation services is a local government responsibility***

Local government has the constitutional responsibility to provide sanitation services.

Provincial and national government have a constitutional responsibility to support local government in a spirit of co-operative governance.

***7. "Health for All" rather than "all for some"***

The use of scarce public funds must be prioritised for assisting those who are faced with the greatest risk to health due to inadequate sanitation services.

***8. Equitable regional allocation of development resources***

The limited national resources available to support the incremental improvement of sanitation services should be equitably distributed throughout the country, according to population, level of development, and the risk to health of not supporting sanitation improvement.

***9. Water has an economic value***

The way in which sanitation services are provided must take into account the growing scarcity of good quality water in South Africa.

***10. Polluter pays principle***

Polluters must pay for the cost of cleaning up the impact of their pollution on the environment.

***11. Sanitation services must be financially sustainable.***

Sanitation services must be sustainable both in terms of capital costs and recurrent costs.

***12. Environmental integrity***

The environment must be protected from the potentially negative impacts of developing and operating sanitation systems.

## **D STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS**

The sanitation problem will be addressed by means of the following strategic interventions:

- facilitating the participation of communities;
- promoting health and hygiene awareness and practices;
- development and use of local resources
- upgrading of existing facilities
- adopting an integrated environmental management approach;
- developing a common approach to implementation; and
- undertaking specific programmes to clear the backlog.

### **D.1 Participation of communities**

Community members have a strong interest in choosing a level of service for which they are willing and able to pay and in understanding the benefits of such a decision. Making an informed choice, and being committed to that choice, will only happen if ordinary people participate and have access to relevant information.

The community also has an important role in safeguarding public health and the environment.

There is a false trade-off between rapid initial delivery on one hand and greater levels of investment in social development and capacity building on the other. While promoting ownership may appear to initially slow down delivery, in the long run the increased sustainability more than outweighs the gains made from rapid early delivery.

For this reason community participation is a key requirement in the conceptualisation, selection, planning, design, implementation, operation and maintenance of all projects developed under this policy.

### **D.2 Promotion of health and hygiene awareness and practices**

Whilst there is already a substantial demand for the more obviously beneficial services like water or electricity, sanitation is commonly low on peoples' priorities for improved services. People need to be aware of the benefits of sanitation improvements in order for them to be willing to invest their own resources into those improvements and adopt good hygiene practices.

For this reason health and hygiene awareness and education aimed at increasing the demand for good sanitation and improved hygiene behaviour needs to precede and become an integral part of sanitation improvement programmes. Health and hygiene awareness and education includes:

***Influencing hygiene behaviour:*** There is little public awareness of the strong links between sanitation and health. This must be redressed through an information dissemination programme aimed at promoting awareness of the role of sanitation in health.

Hygiene behaviours to target are:

- personal hygiene: including the importance of washing hands after going to the toilet or changing the nappies of babies, before the preparation of food or the handling of drinking water;
- household hygiene: including the importance of keeping the home and toilet clean, disposal of refuse and solid waste, cleanliness in areas where food is stored and prepared, and ensuring that food and drinking water are kept covered and uncontaminated; and
- community hygiene: including the importance of the whole community working together for better health and a cleaner environment and issues relating to the disposal of excreta, sullage and solid waste (refuse) as well issues relating to the vending of food, the keeping of animals and storm water drainage.

***Dialogue:*** Hygiene promotion requires far more than giving out information and building demonstration toilets. The starting point is to understand current beliefs, perceptions and practices within a particular community. Only with this understanding can relevant messages be developed to bring about beneficial behaviour change.

***Educational programmes*** are required on national, provincial and local levels with strong media coverage, publicity and promotion in schools and clinics. The development and use of participatory methodologies will be promoted and encouraged.

***Linking to other programmes:*** The improvement of water supplies and other services in an area frequently stimulates communities to look at other improvements needed, such as sanitation.

Hygiene information, education and awareness programmes must be developed hand-in-hand with servicing projects. These programmes aimed at developing good hygiene behaviour must start before construction commences and continue well beyond the construction phase.

### **D.3 Development and use of local resources**

Communities and households will accept responsibility and ownership for the sanitation programme if they benefit directly from the programme. This will happen if the use of local resources is encouraged. Local community member's skills will be developed so that they can build the sanitation infrastructure and facilitate the health and hygiene promotion. Where skills already exist, it will be developed further to suit the needs of the specific programme. The use of local building materials and other resources will also be encouraged.

## **D.4 Upgrading of existing facilities**

Where there are already sanitation infrastructure, households will be assisted to upgrade the facilities to ensure that they are safe and hygienic. This will especially be relevant where households have built their own traditional houses and have a toilet facility that needs upgrading.

## **D.5 The adoption of an integrated environmental management approach**

The risk of inadequate or failed sanitation systems has been highlighted earlier in this policy.

To minimise the environmental risk inherent in developing new sanitation systems and to ensure the continued protection of the environment throughout the operations phase, an integrated environmental management (IEM) approach will be adopted for the location, selection, design, construction and operations of all sanitation works with special attention to be given to sewerage treatment plants and solid waste disposal sites.

### ***Integrated environmental planning***

As required by the National Environmental Management Act of 1998 (NEMA), environmental plans, policies and programmes of government departments in all spheres must be co-ordinated and harmonised.

The Integrated Development Planning process will form the basis of an integrated approach to environmentally sound planning. The Water Services Act specifically requires that details of existing and proposed water conservation, recycling and environmental protection measures must be included in the Water Services Development Plan which is a component of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

The municipality is however not always the most suitable boundary for managing the negative impact of sanitation systems on the water resource. Water resource protection is best managed on a catchment wide basis or aquifer wide basis through the catchment management strategies prepared by catchment management agencies (water management institutions established under the National Water Act). Catchment management strategies must be co-ordinated with all relevant water services development plans adopted in terms of the Water Services Act.

### ***Environmental education***

Sound environmental principles and environmental ethics must be fostered amongst all South African communities. This education must form part of the information transfer that is to accompany all sanitation projects. In addition, communities must be encouraged to become involved in monitoring the quality of their own water resources in order to heighten awareness of pollution. This in turn will lead to the early identification of environmental problems and of those responsible.

### ***Economic instruments***

The principal of "the polluter pays" must be upheld.

Any reduction of receiving water quality should have a value assigned to it and the source of pollution charged accordingly. Users causing pollution should in addition be charged for costs incurred in cleaning up or removing pollution or for repairing associated damage.

Where sanitation-related pollution originates from poor communities, alternative means may be sought to pay for those externalities but steps should be taken to prevent further cases of pollution or contamination. This does not however absolve any community decision-making body from exercising care in the choice of a sanitation system where the environmental consequences are predictable and can be minimised.

### **D.6 Adoption of a common approach to implementation**

The lack of a common approach has been identified as one of the major obstacles to improving sanitation.

The adoption of a common approach involves:

- alignment of policies;
- adherence to norms and standards;
- integrated development planning;
- a package of services approach; and
- agreement on implementation models and technical options.

#### ***Alignment of policies***

The non-alignment of sanitation policies can be a cause of confusion amongst role players. Role players require certainty on matters such as tariff policy, free basic water policy, eligibility for funding, policies guiding the development of bylaws and policies regarding health, hygiene and environmental matters.

A review will be undertaken of municipal bylaws to ensure compliance with regulations regarding sanitation under the Water Services Act and regulations regarding waste water standards under the National Water Act.

An important function of the co-ordinating structures discussed in the next section will be to ensure that the policies of the different national government departments and the different spheres of government are aligned.

#### ***Adherence to norms and standards***

Section 146 of the Constitution provides scope for national government to develop national norms and standards, and frameworks and policies that provide uniformity across the country as a whole for functional areas that fall under Schedule 4 of the Constitution.

Municipalities will be required to submit evidence as part of their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) that prescribed minimum national norms and standards have been and will continue to be met. The prescribed norms and standards are likely to include:

- norms and standards for a minimum basic level of sanitation for households, schools, clinics and other community facilities;
- a requirement for the proportionate provision of sanitation services relative to other services; and
- requirements relating to sustainability (financial, social, technical and environmental).

### ***Integrated development planning and the package of services approach***

There are critical linkages between the provision of health and hygiene education and sanitation services, water supply services, solid waste management and housing.

It is for example not viable to propose reticulated water-borne sewerage for dispersed settlements, nor practical to propose on-site full pressure water supply when there is no adequate provision for disposing of the water.

The current lack of coherence in the sanitation sector is largely a result of uncoordinated planning.

Integrated planning with an increased emphasis on a “package of services” approach will allow for more realistic decisions to be taken with regard to technical options and affordability. This will assist in ensuring that development of the different types of infrastructure and the provision of health and hygiene awareness and education takes place in a more co-ordinated and more sustainable way. The focal mechanism for achieving integrated planning is the municipality driven Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process.

Not only must sanitation improvement programmes be bundled with other inter-dependent services, but the sanitation package must consider the full range of sanitation needs within the community. The sanitation package must thus address not only the needs of households, but also the needs of institutions such as schools, places of worship, crèches, clinics, courts, sports venues and the requirements of public places such as bus stops, taxi ranks, sports grounds and markets.

### ***Agreement on implementation models and technical options.***

There is a wide range of technical options to choose from. These range from various improved latrines, septic tanks, composting latrines to full water-borne flush toilets.

Choice of models however should take into account:

- affordability to the household
- operation and maintenance requirements

- sustainability
- improvements to health
- compliance with environmental protection regulations
- ability of community based contractors to implement

## **D.7 Specific programmes to clear the backlog**

It is unacceptable that an estimated eighteen (18) million South Africans or three (3) million households still do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities.

The specific actions to clear the backlog are to:

- develop plans to address the sanitation problem in all of these communities; by the set target date;
- structure suitable institutional arrangements and agree on roles and responsibilities;
- prioritise the communities with the greatest need;
- set the overall target date by which the backlog must be cleared;
- fund the plan;
- implement the plan; and
- monitor the implementation of the plan.

### ***D7.1 Target date for clearing the backlog***

The target for clearing the sanitation backlog is aligned with the completion of phase 3 of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) of the State President's Office, that is ***by March 2010 all South Africans must have access to a basic minimum level of sanitation***. With adequate integrated planning and integration of resources, it may be possible to reach the target by 2008.

### ***D 7.2 Prioritise communities with the greatest need***

Communities without at least a basic level of sanitation must be identified.

Development programmes cannot however benefit all rural people at once.

Providing at least the basic level of sanitation to those communities facing the greatest health risk due to inadequate sanitation and who cannot afford to meet their own requirements must receive the highest priority.

To maximise synergy of effort, the prioritisation of communities must as far as possible be aligned with the priority areas which are without sanitation services including the development nodes identified in the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) process.

The needs of special groups such as farm dwellers and labourers must also be addressed.

***D 7.3 Develop plans to address the sanitation problem in all of these communities by the target date***

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP), of which the Water Services Development Plan is a component, is the mechanism that empowers stakeholders to select the “basket of programmes and projects” that address their priorities and to set the time frames within which these priorities will be addressed.

It is also through the IDP process that the basket of selected programmes is financed at municipal level through the expenditure envelope comprising of the municipal budget, the commitments of the line departments through the IDP process, commitments of donor organisations and non-governmental organisations, and public-private partnerships.

The requirement of this policy is that the funding and other resources necessary to incrementally achieve full sanitation coverage of at least a minimum basic level of sanitation by the target date must be committed in the IDP.

***D 7.4 Institutional, funding and monitoring arrangements***

Institutional, funding and monitoring arrangements are dealt with in the following sections.

## **E INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The improvement of sanitation is everybody's business and should not be seen as a government-sponsored top down programme. The role players who could contribute towards a sanitation improvement programme include:

- householders and communities (first and foremost);
- community based contractors;
- local government;
- provincial government;
- national government;
- the private sector, including funding institutions, consultants, contractors and materials and equipment suppliers; and
- non-governmental organisations.

One of the main obstacles to the effective delivery of acceptable sanitation in the past has been the lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the various role players.

Specifically there has been a lack of consistency of policy, funding and implementation between the different spheres of government and between the different national government departments responsible in various ways for addressing the sanitation problem. The full benefit of the community, the community based contractor, private sector, NGO involvement has also not been maximised.

### **E.1 Constitutional responsibilities**

The institutional arrangements between the different levels of government for the promotion and provision of effective sanitation must be guided by the Constitution, which stipulates that:

- a municipal council is responsible for promoting a safe and healthy environment and ensuring the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; whilst
- national and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions.

### **E.2 The roles and responsibilities of municipal government**

The recent reforms of municipal government places local government in a central role in integrating programmes to achieve synergistic development in a participatory and decentralised manner while reflecting actual priorities as they manifest themselves on the ground.

It is the municipality who is in the first instance accountable for the provision of sanitation services and, through its Environmental Health Practitioners, to promote health and hygiene awareness and to monitor the health of its communities.

The municipality is similarly responsible for ensuring an environmentally safe approach to sanitation and for monitoring the impact of the sanitation process on the environment.

The municipality must also take responsibility for driving the process set out in this policy at local level, for creating an enabling regulatory environment through its municipal bylaws, and for taking responsible decisions on levels of service to ensure that they are both appropriate and affordable.

The main roles of municipal government in implementing this policy and in addressing the sanitation backlog and to address sanitation on a sustainable basis are to:

- create a demand for sanitation improvement through health and hygiene awareness programmes;
- identify local sanitation improvement needs;
- prioritise these needs;
- plan within the IDP/WSDP process to respond to these needs, including the need for health and hygiene awareness and for sanitation services, together with the needs for other services as an integrated package of services, where appropriate aligned with the development of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISDRS) nodes;
- align their budgets to achieve the planned objectives;
- ensure that sufficient and appropriate human resources are available to execute the plan including the development of building skills within the community;
- implement the plan;
- monitor and report on the results; and
- ensure sustainability.

Because of the pivotal role of local municipalities, it is clear that the success of this policy is inextricably linked to the commitment of local government to the approach and to the target.

### **E.3 The roles and responsibilities of provincial government**

Many municipalities will need assistance and guidance to develop the capacity required to prioritise, plan and implement programmes under this policy. The province will be key agents in supporting the municipalities in achieving their objectives and in ensuring that local municipalities perform effectively. The province can provide support to municipalities in a number of areas, including financial, human resource and technical.

The primary roles of the province relating to this policy are to:

- monitor legislation through the National Council of Provinces;
- ensure compliance with national policy and norms and standards,
- develop enabling provincial legislation and norms and standards;
- co-ordinate regional planning;
- promote integrated development and inter-departmental co-ordination;  
and
- monitor progress.

Furthermore, certain provincial departments, such as the provincial departments of the environment, local government, education, health and housing are the implementation arm of their national counterparts.

#### **E.4 The roles and responsibilities of National Government**

The generic roles and responsibilities of national government are:

- establish legislation, policies, norms and standards;
- co-ordinate and monitor national programmes;
- provide support to other spheres of government;
- regulate service provision;
- intervene where there is a lack of capacity; and
- provide advocacy and guidance.

At a national level the roles of all of the national departments must be clarified and co-ordinated to avoid duplication, especially the roles of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, the Department of Provincial and Local Government, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Housing, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and the National Treasury.

##### ***E.4.1 The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry***

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry is the custodian of the Nation's water resources and is also the custodian of the National Water Act and the Water Services Act.

In accordance with a Cabinet decision, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry is responsible for co-ordinating the involvement of national government in the sanitation sector.

The Department will also, together with the other national level role players, be responsible for:

- developing norms and standards for the provision of sanitation;
- co-ordinating the development by the municipalities of their Water Services Development Plans as a component of their Integrated Development Plans (IDP);
- providing support to the provinces and municipalities in the planning and implementation of sanitation improvement programmes;

- monitoring the outcome of such programmes and maintain a data base of sanitation requirements and interventions;
- providing capacity building support to provinces and municipalities in matters relating to sanitation;
- providing financial support to sanitation programmes until such time as these are consolidated into a single Department of Provincial and Local Government programme; and
- undertaking pilot projects in programmes of low cost sanitation.

#### ***E.4.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Provincial and Local Government***

The Department of Provincial and Local Government is the custodian of the Municipal Systems Act and the Municipal Structures Act.

Matters relating to provincial and local government systems and structures fall within this department's ambit.

This department will take primary responsibility for:

- promoting the development by the municipalities of their Integrated Development Plans (IDP);
- ensuring that provincial and local governments have the capacity required to fulfil their functions;
- the co-ordination, together with the National Treasury, of the provincial and local governments equitable share and municipal infrastructure grants;
- provision of financial support to sanitation programmes; and
- monitoring of such programmes and maintaining a data base.

#### ***E.4.3 The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Health***

The vision of the Department of Health is a caring and humane society in which all South Africans have access to affordable, good quality health care.

The Department of Health will, in co-operation with the provinces, take primary responsibility for:

- co-ordinating information relating to public health (this includes media liaison and communication);
- co-ordinating the planning and interventions aimed at influencing the health and hygiene behaviour of communities and at creating a demand for sanitation services through health and hygiene awareness and education programmes;
- standardising existing and prepare new norms and standards relating to health aspects of sanitation and water supply;
- preparing educational curricula relating to health and sanitation;
- supporting municipalities in employing sufficient and appropriately skilled environmental health practitioners (EHP);
- providing development orientated training and other capacity building interventions to EHPs;

- monitoring compliance with health legislation, regulations and norms and standards;
- co-ordinating interventions when a crisis poses a regional or national health risk (such as a cholera epidemic);
- providing a systematic approach to the provision of sanitation facilities in clinics, hospitals and other health installations;

#### ***E.4.4 The roles and responsibilities of National Treasury***

The responsibility of National Treasury relates to the funding of the different departments and spheres of government.

Treasury will take primary responsibility for:

- funding arrangements such as the allocation of the equitable share and the various grants to provinces and municipalities;
- monitoring of the financial policies and performance of national departments, provinces and municipalities; and
- development of financial policies, norms and standards and guidelines.

The funding arrangements that influence this policy are dealt with in the next section.

#### ***E.4.5 The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Housing***

The Department of Housing is responsible for, amongst others, developing national policy, including norms and standards, in respect of housing development and for co-ordinating the application of the housing subsidy that is administered by the provincial housing departments.

The concept "housing development" is pertinent to this policy and includes:

- permanent residential structures with secure tenure; and
- potable water, adequate sanitation facilities and domestic energy supply.

The Minister of Housing has prescribed a minimum level for each type of service for subsidy purposes. The minimum level of service prescribed for sanitation is a VIP per household (erf) unless the situation, such as the soil conditions, dictate otherwise.

Additional details of the housing subsidy are dealt with in the next section.

#### ***E.4.6 The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education***

The National Department of Education is responsible for the development of curricula while the Provincial Departments are responsible for the provision of school facilities, which includes school toilets and other sanitation facilities.

The roles and responsibilities of the National Department of Education towards the improvement of school infrastructure, of which adequate sanitation is an important component, are:

- development of norms and standards for school infrastructure;
- improving the funding levels for capital development;
- development, implementation, co-ordination, alignment and monitoring of policy for capital investment in education;
- development of support systems as well as capacity building at provincial level; and
- development and maintenance of information systems to support the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of capital investment in education.

The Department of Education will, together with the Department of Health, develop curricula, guidelines and other support mechanisms required by teachers and other educators to take up the important issues relating to health, hygiene and sanitation in their classrooms.

Furthermore, the Department of Education together with the Department of Health, introduced the *Health Promoting Schools Programme* in South Africa. The provincial departments are responsible for implementing this the health promoting schools strategy. The following strategies provide a framework for developing health promoting schools and sites of learning:

- developing education and school policies which support health and development, and well-being;
- creating safe and supportive teaching and learning environments;
- strengthening community action and participation through enhancing and expanding the relationship between sites of learning and the community;
- developing personal skills of all members of the school community for optimal development; and
- re-orienting health and hygiene support services towards accessible, integrated, systematic, preventative and health promotion approach.

#### ***E.4.7 The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Public Works***

The Department of Public Works acts as the implementing agent on behalf of national and provincial government departments when facilities, including schools and clinics, are constructed or rented.

This Department manages the following functions as implementing agent:

- planning of projects to construct facilities (usually buildings);
- administering projects; and
- managing facilities for client departments.

The Department thus has an important responsibility in ensuring that adequate provision is made for sanitation facilities in government and public buildings, especially in the schools, and for ensuring that norms and standards are complied with.

However, all Departments (police, correctional services, defence etc.) remain responsible for the sanitation services within their installations. At local level, the municipality and at national level, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, will assume responsibility for the public networks where it exists.

The Department of Public Works is also responsible for implementing the community based public works programme.

#### ***E.4.8 The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism***

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism is responsible for the protection of the environment.

This Department will take primary responsibility for:

- developing policies, guidelines, procedures and norms and standards relating to the impact of sanitation systems on the environment; and
- monitoring environmental impacts of sanitation systems; and
- monitoring compliance with environmental management procedures and guidelines.

### **E.5 The private sector**

Government cannot effectively address the huge sanitation backlog alone. The involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organisations in addressing the sanitation problem is encouraged.

The role of the private sector can include:

- planning, design and construction of sanitation infrastructure;
- the water services provider or municipal services partner function;
- manufacturing and supplying toilets; and
- financing higher levels of infrastructure than government is prepared to fund.

**NB. Every effort must be made to encourage the development of construction teams and businesses at the community level.**

### **E.6 Non-governmental organisations**

The role of non-governmental organisations can include:

- health and hygiene awareness promotion and education;
- training and capacity building;
- facilitating community participation;
- implementing community based sanitation improvement projects;
- developing community based construction teams; and
- monitoring the implementation of programmes.

## ***E.6.1 Co-ordination mechanisms***

### ***E.6.1.1 District or Metropolitan level***

The District Municipality or Metro as the Water Services Authority, or the Local Municipality when this is more appropriate, will be responsible for co-ordination and integration at the local level. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process is the mechanism for attaining this integration between role players at the local level as well as between municipalities and their provincial and national government counterparts. Within the IDP, the Water Services Development Plan (WSDP) should provide the basis for sanitation provision and operation.

### ***E.6.1.2 Provincial level***

Co-ordination of sanitation interventions at the Provincial level will remain the responsibility of the provincial government and will continue to be achieved through the Provincial Sanitation Co-ordinating Forums. Representatives of the district and metro municipalities and the relevant national government departments will participate on these forums which will be chaired by provincial representatives.

### ***E.6.1.3 National level***

Co-ordination of sanitation interventions by national departments is currently achieved through the National Sanitation Task Team (NSTT). In order to achieve greater alignment between sanitation and other municipal infrastructure programmes the sanitation co-ordination structure will be re-established as a sub-committee of the Municipal Infrastructure Task Team (MITT). The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, as national sphere co-ordinator will be responsible for convening the sanitation sub-committee and will ensure participation by all relevant stakeholders.

To give effect to the Cabinet decision that the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry must fulfil the role of national co-ordinator, the National Sanitation Co-ordination Office (NASCO) will be absorbed into the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry with the creation of a Sanitation Directorate.

## **F THE FUNDING OF SANITATION IMPROVEMENT**

### **F.1 Sources of funding for sanitation improvement**

Lessons learnt from the DWAF sanitation programme is that basic sanitation facilities can be provided at a cost below R1000 per household. The cost of operating these services is approximately R5 per household per month or R60 per household per annum.

The sources of funding available to a municipality include:

- the Equitable Share subsidy;
- infrastructure grants; and
- the municipalities own revenue.

In addition, under certain conditions first time house owners are entitled to a once off housing subsidy.

#### ***F.1.1 Equitable Share subsidy***

The Equitable Share is defined as the sum of unconditional transfers flowing from national to local government.

The Equitable Share subsidy was introduced to allow the local government sector to overcome the burden of service delivery to the very poor. In particular, it is calculated to ensure that the operating cost of basic services can be covered. However, the Constitution indicates that intergovernmental transfers like the Equitable Share cannot be conditional, which means that municipalities have been known to use the subsidy for other purposes. Nevertheless, in any instance where the cost of service delivery exceeds the amount that is billed to very poor households, the understanding is that the subsidy will be used to contribute towards the general operating account of the municipality.

#### ***F.1.2 Infrastructure grants and the requirement for rationalisation***

Public investment programmes have been beset by co-ordination and communication problems.

Communities frequently complain of a weak link between their priorities and the investments fast tracked payments, which is often linked to clearing the budget before the financial year-end.

If municipalities are going to be responsible for driving development, then municipalities must have effective control over their resources.

The municipal infrastructure investment framework (MIIF) responds to these issues and highlights the need for reform of the fiscal mechanisms and the need for a closer linkage between the fiscal changes and the other policy initiatives.

It is intended that funding for all types of residential infrastructure will in future occur through a single, integrated grant to be known as the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Grant (MIIG) rather than the separate sector specific channels often routed through national departments under the current system. This 'single pot' will be distributed between municipalities through a formula mechanism that generates three-year allocations for individual municipalities.

The phased introduction of these reforms will be managed through the annual Division of Revenue Act.

Existing financial obligations (projects in process) will however be honoured and National Departments will be given a period of at least three years to complete the on going municipal infrastructure projects.

Currently the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry provides a once-off sanitation subsidy. This is divided into R600 for community development and R600 for the basic toilet structure. The total subsidy is therefore R1200. There may continue to be a need for dedicated funding for specific projects and programmes, for instance the demonstration of low cost sanitation interventions.

The implications of this rationalised funding approach for meeting the sanitation backlog are:

- municipalities will drive the implementation programmes;
- infrastructure transfers to municipalities will be efficient;
- infrastructure transfers to municipalities will be predictable (for a three year window which is sufficient for most contracts with private sector contractors);
- municipalities will be responsible for allocating the funds between infrastructure projects and will thus be empowered to prioritise; and
- municipalities will be fully accountable within nationally prescribed norms and standards and cannot decide not to accept transfer of the infrastructure once the construction has been completed.

### ***F.1.3 Municipalities own revenue***

The issue of cross subsidisation between "rich" and "poor" households is very often highlighted in the policy debate.

A broad assessment of municipal income in rural areas, that is the areas with the greatest sanitation need, indicates that it is only in the case of electricity that direct cost recovery is applied. There is little evidence of cost recovery in other services such as water, sanitation, and refuse removal.

Intergovernmental transfers currently carry most of the cost while service

providers such as Eskom, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry or the relevant provincial departments carry the shortfalls.

For all practical purposes the total cost of service provision in rural areas, even the higher levels of service, with the exception of electricity, is currently subsidised.

Cost recovery in many areas is a matter that must receive urgent attention.

#### F.1.3.4 Sanitation tariffs

The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry has under Section 10 of the Water Services Act prescribed norms and standards for tariffs for water services. The Minister has prescribed that a tariff set by a water services institution for the provision of sanitation services to a household must:

- (a) support the viability and sustainability of sanitation services to the poor;
- (b) recognise the significant public benefit of efficient and sustainable sanitation services; and
- (c) discourage practices that may degrade the natural environment.

Municipalities are however responsible for setting their own tariffs within these norms and standards.

#### F.1.3.5 Access to a free basic level of service

Current government policy requires that the very poor be given access to a free basic level of service.

Under this policy it is clearly important for the municipality to have clear guidance on the minimum technical standards and health and hygiene promotion standards that will satisfy the criteria provided in the definition provided for a basic level of service.

The National Sanitation Task Team will as a matter of priority develop these guidelines for different settlement densities and geological conditions in consultation with other stakeholders.

## **F.2 The housing subsidy**

The housing subsidy is targeted at individual households. The subsidy can be utilised to provide houses and, under certain circumstances, a portion of the subsidy amount could be applied to provide internal engineering services. Currently the once-off housing subsidy amount of R 16 000-00 per beneficiary and can be accessed in formalised townships. Registered ownership of the property in the name of the beneficiary is compulsory. Beneficiaries who enjoy informal land rights to the property they occupy may also access the subsidy. The latter is accommodated in terms of the National Housing Programme referred to as Rural Subsidies: Informal Land Rights.

The concept “housing development” includes the provision of potable water, adequate sanitation facilities and domestic energy supply. Therefore, it has become common for a disproportionate portion of the housing subsidy to be utilised for the provision of basic services at the expense of the amount of funds available for the super structure – hence the small dwellings.

The Minister of housing has prescribed certain minimum norms and standards to limit the proportion of the subsidy that is utilised for the services component.

The alignment of the housing development programmes with the provision of the basket of services through the mechanism of the Integrated Development Plan is essential to avoid duplication of subsidies and the construction of houses without services.

The demand for equity in the distribution of funds to rural areas where there is existing basic shelters needs to be improved. This has given rise to proposals for a rural housing improvement grant. Attention therefore should be given to the improvement or upgrading of existing facilities to promote health while at the same time providing new sanitation facilities where required. This could, if adopted, provide a basis for sanitation improvement for traditional rural households.

### **F.3 The Integrated Development Plan as an interim integrating mechanism for the alignment of funding**

Given the unconditional nature of the Equitable Share and the rationalisation of the infrastructure grant system under MIIF and MIIG, it is evident that the municipality has a great deal of discretion in the composition of the service delivery packages, the levels of service and the manner in which these are funded.

The mechanism for deciding on priorities and for steering and co-ordinating service delivery is the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process.

Central to the preparation of effective IDPs is that the municipality should prepare a sound Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP), of which the Water Services Development Plan (WSDP) will be a component, indicating not only how services will be provided but how they will be operated.

Even though the IIP is a component of the IDP process, it can and must be developed as a separate initiative if the IDP is not in place.

In order to plan for addressing the sanitation backlog, the Integrated Investment Plan must at least show:

- the existing service levels available to households;
- proposed new service levels per household;
- health and hygiene education to be provided;
- estimated capital and recurrent costs of providing these services;

- cost to households for service payments;
- availability of grant funding;
- the implications for the overall municipal budget; and
- how the service impact of the investment will be measured and monitored.

Projection of the Integrated Investment Plan to the target date for clearing the backlog will be evidence of compliance with the overall objectives of this policy.

## **G MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY**

The progress of the strategic interventions developed under this policy must be monitored and evaluated.

The following broad categories of monitoring are required:

- the involvement of communities;
- the promotion of health and hygiene awareness and education;
- the impact of sanitation improvement programmes on the health of communities;
- compliance with the integrated environmental management approach and the environmental impacts of sanitation systems;
- development of common norms and standards, guidelines and other tools;
- programmes to clear the backlog;
- integrated development plans as well as the Water Services Development Plan and Integrated Investment Plan components;
- the allocation, application and management of funds; and
- the construction of sanitation facilities.

### **G.1 Key performance indicators**

Key performance indicators will be developed for each of the broad categories.

Data collection and measurement will take place at the lowest practical level, whether it be the municipality, the Regional Office of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry or the Provincial Departments of Education, Housing, Health.

The data collected must be evaluated, interpreted, summarised and reported on to the various spheres of government through the coordination structures. These structures are developed at local level to drive the Integrated Development Plan, the Water Services Development Plan (WSDP), Provincial Forums and at the National Sanitation Task Team.

The target is a turn around time of 30 days for municipal to provincial reporting against the key performance indicators and a further 30 days for provincial to national reporting.

### **G.2 Crisis reporting**

Identified crises, such as potential national health risks, environmental disasters, or malpractice and project or programme failures must be reported immediately to the relevant national department for intervention.

### **G.3 Computer systems**

A common data base accessible by municipalities as well as provincial and national government will be developed as a platform for the sharing of performance monitoring information.

## H CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

The problem of inadequate sanitation is one of negative impacts on the health and social well being of communities, on the environment and on the economy of the country.

The sanitation problem will be addressed by means of the following strategic interventions:

- facilitating the participation of communities;
- promoting health and hygiene awareness and education;
- adopting an integrated environmental management approach;
- developing a common approach to implementation; and
- implementing specific sanitation construction programmes to clear the backlog.

Local government will take the leading role in implementing the policy while provincial and national government will support local government.

Coordinating structures will be strengthened to ensure programme integration across sectors and across spheres of government.

Funding mechanisms will be rationalised to empower local government and to ensure that prioritisation is decentralised and that communities are involved up front in project and programme development.

The Integrated Development Plan processes, and where this is not yet fully developed, the Integrated Investment Plan component of that process, will be used as the focal mechanism to integrate funds, packages of services and role players.

Systems and key performance indicators will be established to monitor and evaluate the progress of the strategic interventions.

***The vision has been agreed, there is much to be done, we must now urgently mobilise and rally to action.***