

Water use and water resource planning and programmes

Development of the Catchment Management Strategy

In accordance with the National Water Act, the ICMA's first priority action has been to develop a catchment Management Strategy (CMS) as a strategy to manage the water resources in the Inkomati Water Management Area.

The ICMA appointed a consortium of service providers to develop a CMS for the WMA. The process of developing a CMS involves among other processes, consultation with stakeholders and water users in the WMA. The ICMA's Second Generation Business Plan (2007/08/ - 2009/10), clearly indicates that stakeholder participation is critical towards the development of the CMS. This critical participation will be achieved through distribution of information to create awareness and creating representative forums to enable the facilitation of inputs.

A Background Information Document has been prepared and distributed to inform stakeholders about the CMS development process and public participation required.

Focus group meetings have been held to inform stakeholders of the project in order to explain technical concepts and build capacity in water resource management issues. These have proved valuable as farmers and communities felt more comfortable making suggestions and raising concerns in a small forum than a public meeting.

Studies undertaken by DWAF

The Inkomati Catchment Management Agency (ICMA) did not undertake any water resource management functions during the period currently under review due to the fact that the functions have not been devolved to the ICMA yet. However, the ICMA cooperated with the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) on the following studies and programmes conducted in the Inkomati Water Management Area (WMA):

Name of the project	Brief Description
Validation study	The validation study is aimed at checking who uses water .
Verification study	Verification checks from the WRMS system whether the water used is legal or not .
Inkomati water availability study	This intends to find out the amount of water available from the various systems.
Development of a framework for water allocation plan	This is one of the steps required to move towards compulsory licensing. This study will result in the development of a policy framework to guide the process of water allocation.
Water Conservation and Demand Management	This study is aimed at promoting water conservation and demand management.
Feasibility study for resource development in the Lower Crocodile	This study seeks to investigate the possibility of building dams in the system to be able to augment supply. It has been established that the river systems in the Water Management Area are not capable of supplying the requirements during low flow periods. Hence the need to store more water during floods or rainy season for use during low flow periods or drought.
Opportunities for uptake of water for BEE	It is part of the compulsory licensing process. It is aimed at identifying opportunities that can be taken up by HDIs and investigate how this uptake of water can be supported.
Reserve determination studies	The Inkomati Water Management Area is a water stressed catchment. For equitable allocation of water resources to take place, comprehensive reserve determination studies (high level confidence) need to be conducted to establish the amount of water that must be left in the river systems as environmental flow requirements to sustain the ecology as well as basic human needs. All excess or surplus water over and above the reserve is allocable for international obligations and other users.

A Performance Management Policy and System has been developed and workshopped with staff to ensure the understanding as well as effective management of performance in the ICMA.

A job evaluation exercise was conducted for the initial functions of the ICMA and the report to this effect was submitted in the month of August 2006. The report also encompasses a proposal on a job grading and salary system for the institution.

A Payroll system was acquired for the institution effective the 01 January 2007 and the ICMA is currently in the process of finalizing the appointment of a Benefits Administrator.

Benchmarking Programme

The ICMA has a strong emphasis on benchmarking with world-class institutions when it comes to its processes and systems. As part of this Programme, a delegation from the ICMA visited the Kruger National Park in July 2006 to benchmark specifically on Human Resources Policy and Processes. Further visits have been planned as part of this programme.

The ICMA's strategic team, appointed by the CEO, coordinates and manages the benchmarking activities.

Human Resources Challenges for year 2007/08

Going into 2007/08, the following Human Resources activities have been identified to re-affirm Human Resources Management as part of the strategic planning objectives of the ICMA:

- Filling of Critical Leadership Positions
- Further Human Resources Policy Development and Implementation
- Continuous evaluation and improvement of Human Resources Processes and Systems
- Create Awareness on Safety, health and environment issues

Item Description	Item of the Project
The validation study is aimed at checking who uses water	Validation study
Validation checks from the WMS system whether the water used is legal or not	Validation study
The intent is find out the amount of water available from the various systems	Inventory water availability study
This is one of the steps required to have towards compulsory licensing. This study will result in the development of a policy framework to guide the process of water allocation	Development of a framework for water allocation plan
The study is aimed at promoting water conservation and demand management	Water Conservation and Demand Management
This study seeks to investigate the possibility of putting dams in the system to be able to augment supply. It has been established that the river systems in the Water Management Area are not capable of supplying the requirements during low flow periods. Hence the need to store more water during floods or rainy season for use during low flow periods or drought	Feasibility study for reservoir development in the Lower Limpopo
It is part of the compulsory licensing process. It is aimed at identifying opportunities that can be taken up by FDI and investors how the water can be supplied	Opportunities for private water for BEE
The Inkomati Water Management Area is a water stressed catchment. For equitable allocation of water resources to take place, comprehensive reserve determination studies (high level conditions) need to be conducted to establish the amount of water that must be left in the river systems as environmental flow requirements to sustain the ecology as well as basic human needs. All excess water over and above the reserve is available for international obligations and other users	Reserve determination studies

- registration of Learnerships
- Building a relationship and registering with the Energy SETA
- Skills needs analysis and Competency-based training to capacitate ICMA staff
- HRD Policy development
- Career management

The HRD strategy was immediately followed by a detailed implementation plan. This strategic focus area, then henceforth, was tasked with the responsibility to ensure the full implementation of this plan. Below is a report on the implementation of phase 1 of this plan, which laid emphasis on bursary intake and capacity building for internal staff:

The **Bursary Intake** for the Institutions as at 31 March 2007 is as follows:

Full Names	Gender	Race	Field of Study	University	Year of Study	Sub-Catchment
External Bursars						
Z.M. Sibiya	M	B	National Diploma in Information Technology	TUT	1st yr	Upper Komati
B. Mogakane	F	B	B. Com Accounting	UCT	1st yr	Sabie-Sand
M.M. Malapane	F	B	B. Sc in Microbiology and Biochemistry	Limpopo University	1st yr	Crocodile
N.C. Lekhuleni	F	B	B. Sc Geology	WITS	1st yr	Crocodile
M.I. Soko	M	B	B. Sc in Microbiology and Biochemistry	Limpopo University	3rd yr	Sabie-Sand
T.G. Hlatshwayo	M	B	B. Sc in Microbiology and Biochemistry	Limpopo University	3rd yr	Crocodile
S.D. Magagula	M	B	B. Sc in Hydrology	University of Zululand	2nd yr	Crocodile
L. Khoza	M	B	National Diploma in Finance and Accounting	TUT	1st yr	Upper Komati
Internal Bursars						
D.W. Nxumalo	M	B	Public Management Certificate	WITS	1st yr	Sabie-Sand

Capacity Building for Staff

The ICMA staff have been involved in various training interventions with institutions of learning, with the sole purpose of skills enhancement to be able to carry out the mandate of the ICMA. A highlight for the institution was the Institutions and Participation's engagement with the Centre for Environmental Management pertaining to training on Integrated Water Resources Management and the overall National Water Act Legislation.

Employee Wellness

Induction workshops were conducted for both the ICMA staff and the Proto-CMA in October 2006; in order to:

- Establish a Common Culture for the ICMA, that of Learning for work excellence
- Emphasize to staff, the understanding of the CMA's mandate and the Business Plan
- Build a cohesive team that will work towards a common vision, that of "water for all in Inkomati"
- Facilitating the sharing of knowledge between the ICMA and the Proto-CMA staff and as such capacitating the ICMA Staff towards understanding the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management

Another Induction workshop took place in the first week of January in Sabie at the Lone Creek Lodge. This was intended to equip staff in the Institution and Participation Focus Area with the requisite knowledge to be able to engage with stakeholders.

Further re-orientation and induction programmes have been planned going into the financial year 2007/08. Some of the training will be done in conjunction with the Department of Water affairs and Forestry.

Policy development and systems

An HR Handbook Manual for CMAs was concluded as at August 2005 to guide Human Resources Process and Policy development for CMAs throughout the country. The ICMA adopted this document to inform all proposed HR Interventions as well as policies to be developed. These guidelines have been the basis for the Compensation and Reward programme of the institution.

As at end **March 2007** the following has been achieved:

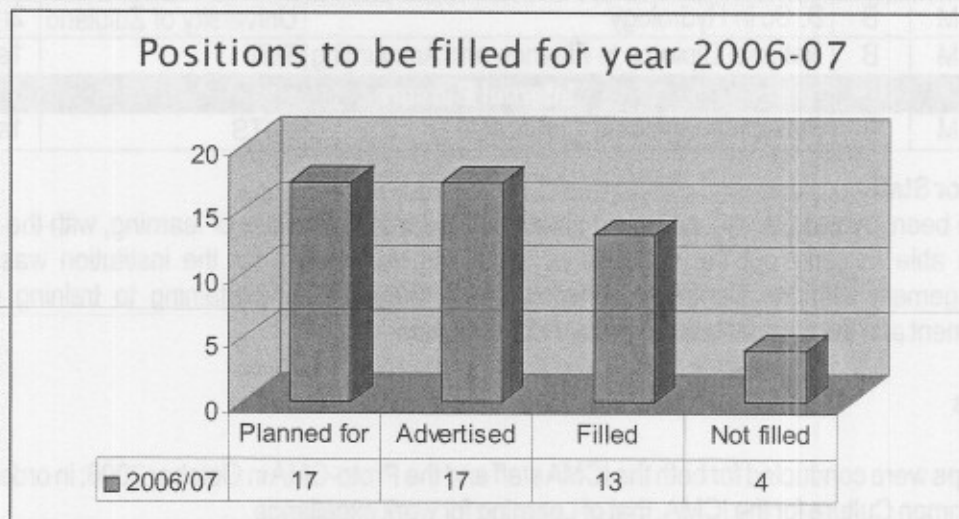
- A transfer task team has been established to manage the coordination of the secondment and transfer process between the DWAF and the ICMA
- The two major unions, the PSA and NEHAWU, were invited to a meeting hosted by the transfer task team, on the 21 February 2007, wherein they were formally informed of the secondment process and the reasons thereof.
- The unions also formed part of the negotiations towards a finalized National Transfer Framework for the DWAF and its Water Institutions.
- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) guiding the Secondment as well as Transfer of functions and the staff who performs those functions has been developed & negotiated between the ICMA and the Mpumalanga Regional DWAF Office.

Home of the ICMA

The ICMA's Offices have been fully established in Nelspruit, effective the 01 August 2006, at Office 301, Caltex Building, 32 Bell Street, Nelspruit.

Staffing

Section 3.3.3 of the Business Plan on Organisational Development and Staffing, stipulates that by the end of financial year 2006/07; 17 new staff members must be recruited and a further 10 staff during 2007/08. An additional 21 would be seconded from the Proto-CMA to the ICMA. The table below shows the results of the recruitment which took place in the financial year 2007/08:



Four (4) positions which were advertised but not yet filled are:

- Executive Manager Corporate and Finance
- Company/Board Secretary
- Marketing and Communications Officer
- HRD Officer

The positions of Executive Manager: Corporate and Finance and Company / Board Secretary were not filled due to the scarcity of people in these specialized fields, despite concerned effort. The institution has considered alternative recruitment practices to further this process and will fill these positions in the next financial year.

Human Resources and/or Skills Development

Capacity building forms part of the National and Sector Skills Priorities for the Energy Sector. In order to align with the National Skills Development Strategy, the Governing Board of the ICMA approved a Human Resources Development Strategy on the 20th of November 2006, which addresses amongst others, the following:

- The critical role of the ICMA in the overall national socio-economic upliftment through skills development
- The necessity to invest and uplift communities in the WMA through a Bursary scheme, Internships, and the

Corporate and Finance

Introduction

Any organization that comes up with a business strategy based on anything other than people, so it has been realised world-wide, is heading for a definite failure. Clearly, the strategic challenges confronting South African organizations are the same as those faced by companies anywhere in the world, especially in this globalising age.

There is a basic need everywhere for people to produce goods or deliver services that the markets want, at the best possible quality and cost. Globally, countries need to strategise for growing interaction with the world beyond one's borders. In the South African Context, however, there are the additional strategic issues of BBEE, unemployment and job creation, employment equity to redress past imbalances the pressing issue of the revitalized focus on customer relationship management; all of which are people focused, demand more from the professional capability of HR practitioners. South Africans must continuously strategise to turn our progressive labour and proactive BEE legislation into strength, rather than a liability.

This fact makes Human Resources Management the pivot on which an organizational strategy's success will turn, and that raises the question of the best way to weave effective Human Resources management into an organization's strategic plan.

The Business Plan (2006/07) clearly spells out the strategic governance objectives relevant to the Inkomati Water Management Area, together with the Water resources, economic, social as well as environmental challenges; amongst which there is emphasis on the establishment of an appropriate organizational culture and governance arrangements as the first priority for the Inkomati CMA. As part of the DWAF's Strategic Planning Workshop (29 Jan 2007), The Minister of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Minister Hendricks raised the following as part of the Internal Flagship Projects for the Department and all other Water Institutions:

- Alignment of the department to address the needs of the sector
- Performance management and signing of performance agreements
- Capacity building and skills development

It is on these facts that the basis for an effective Human Resources Function has been established in order for the institution to position itself to meet the objectives as stated in the Business Plan.

Key information provided in this report includes:

- Institutional Establishment process
- Office layout
- Staffing
- Human Resources Development / Skills Development
- Employee Wellness
- Compensation and Benefits
- Benchmarking on HR Process
- HR Challenges for 2007/08

Institutional Establishment process

One of the primary challenges for the ICMA in its first year of operation related to the institutional establishment processes. Organisational challenges that have been identified by the Governing Board were as follows:

Building legitimacy: The success of the CMA depends on the building of relationships with water users and other institutions within the Water Management Area. This made it critical for the Institutions and Participation division of the institution to be classified as a priority in terms of the initial phase of filling the ICMA positions- hence all eight (8) positions; classified as critical under the Institutions and Participation division, were to be filled within the first year of operation of the CMA.

Rate of transfer/delegation of functions to the CMA: The importance of the transfer of functions from the DWAF to the ICMA is stipulated as part of the evolution of functions for the ICMA in the Business Plan. The challenge for the current financial year was for the ICMA and the DWAF, to facilitate as well as obtain union support for the transfer of functions to the ICMA, which would then result in the transfer of staff to perform those functions. This was based on the National Transfer Framework that would guide the transfer of staff from the DWAF to Water Institutions, including the ICMA. The secondment process, preceding the transfer, was to be undertaken after informing the Trade Unions and a consensus is reached so as to get the ICMA in full functional mode.

Future search process

This is the participatory vision process of the ICMA starting from the sub-region and culminating in a vision for the entire catchment. This process involves all water users of the catchment.

The programme is run in cooperation with the Environmental Agency in the United Kingdom. The concept champion is Dr John Colvin who is the Manager of the Environmental Agency. The main funding of the programme is from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DWAF.

As part of the development of the CMS (Catchment Management Strategy), the project is run by Cinnabar Consulting, who are specialists in Future Search, and Inhlakanipho Consulting, who are the professional service providers for the development of the CMS.

The process started with the briefing of staff and the Governing Board in order to secure their buy-in to the concept as it is a new one.

Future Search is mandated:

- To develop a vision for the sub-catchments and the entire water management area.
- To create an awareness of the entire river system and link down-stream and upstream water users.
- To build an appreciation of interdependencies between different communities on the water resource.
- To create awareness of the full uses of water including the environmental reserve, this normally does not receive attention.
- To identify participants in the Future Search workshops.

Five (5) workshops in the three sub-catchments were planned as follows:

Sabie Sand	2 workshops
Crocodile	1 workshop
Upper & Lower Komati	2 workshops

Alongside this programme, there is skills development training for staff of the ICMA. The ADWUSA capacity building program is also sponsored by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and will be run by Dr John Colvin.

- Elukwatini Community Hall – Elukwatini
- Matibidi Community Hall – Matibidi
- Sabie Municipality Offices – Sabie
- Casteel MPCC- Casteel
- Thulamahashe Civic Centre- Thulamahashe
- Dwarsloop Civic Centre- Dwarsloop
- Meriam Mogakane Community Hall- Acornhoek

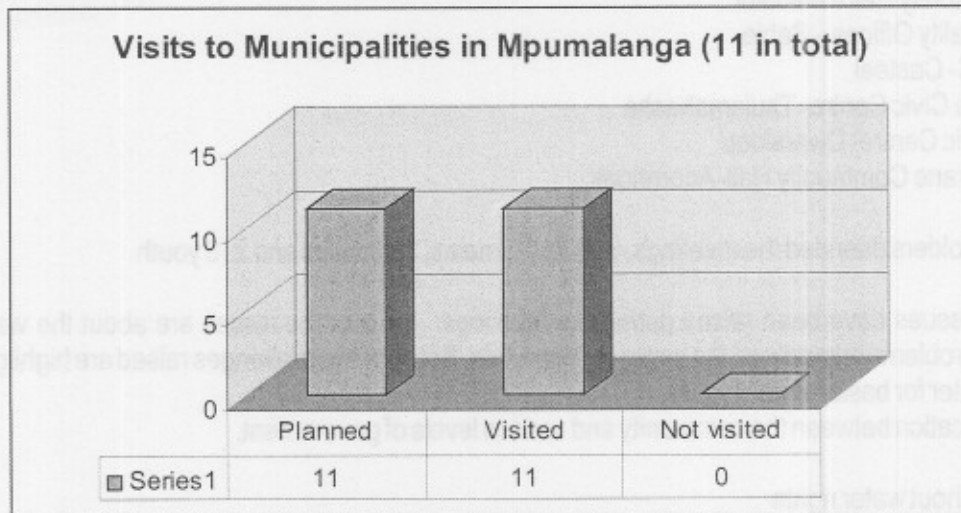
A total of 919 stakeholders attended the meetings, with 584 females, 335 males and 218 youth.

Quite a number of issues have been raised during the meetings. Most of the issues are about the water services as black communities have problems primarily on the water services side. Some of the challenges raised are highlighted below:

- Not enough water for basic human needs
- Poor communication between the community and various levels of government.
- Water trading.
- Buying land without water rights
- Destruction of the wetlands by new development.
- Lack of water for emerging farmers and no secondary storage for them where they have access to water.
- Some dams cater for commercial farmers only.
- Delays in the transformation of irrigation boards into WUAs
- Poor water quality in the villages.
- Lack of funding of poor emerging farmers

Programme on awareness creation

Sediba Awareness Campaign



Stakeholder perception, as identified through the risk assessment process, has been an area which had to be responded to in terms of development of programmes. Sediba campaign, therefore, was intended to create awareness and build good relationships with stakeholders in the catchment.

Objectives of the Campaign

The campaign had the following passionate objectives:

- To create awareness on the existence of the ICMA.
- To create awareness on the importance of water.
- To introduce and expose participants to water resource management as against water services.
- To identify opportunities for economic use.
- To initiate water conservation and demand management culture
- To start an endless dialogue about water.

This campaign has been run in 15 different communities in the entire WMA. The targeted stakeholders included the following:

- Local Government Councilors
- Ward Committees
- Women and Youth
- CDWs
- Traditional Authorities
- Commercial and Emerging Farmers.

The campaign covered the whole of the catchment and meetings took place in the following areas:

- Ka Bokweni Community Hall – ka Bokweni
- Lundanda Primary School – Nsikazi
- Matsulu Community Hall – Matsulu
- Msogwaba Community Hall – Msogwaba
- Nelspruit Civic Centre – Nelspruit
- Louville Government Offices – Louville
- Mzinti Holiness Church – Mzinti
- Schoemansdal Community Hall – Schoemansdal
- Driekoppies Community Hall – Driekoppies
- Ka Maqhekeza Municipality Offices – ka Maqhekeza
- Ka Hoyi Community Hall – ka Hoyi
- Mooiplaas Youth Centre – Mooiplaas

The ICMA is also cooperating with the Agency on the programme for Adaptive Water Governance for Sustainable Growth and Development in South Africa (ADWUSA).

The overall purpose of ADWUSA is to support the development of integrated water resources management (IWRM) in the Inkomati WMA by building capacity for co-operative and adaptive governance across the IWMA;

So, by and large, the cooperation includes both visioning and capacity building. We are looking forward to identifying and cooperating with institutions that have best practices in the U.K and Australia, within this programme.

The broad intention is to build a network of organizations around the ICMA that will add value to the development of this institution. During the period under review, it has become clear that there are institutions that are willing and ready to team up with us in building both a successful organization and a capable organization to achieve social equity, environmental sustainability and economic efficiency.

Strategic Focus Areas

Our strategic priorities are divided into four areas, namely, water use, water resource planning and programmes, institutions and participation and lastly the corporate and finance area. The organizational structure has been informed by the initial functions as contained in the National Water Act and the functions performed by the Proto-CMA. A report on the activities of the various strategic focus areas follows.

Institutions and Participation

The strategic focus area is firstly responsible for strategy and programme interpretation of the three spheres of government and ensures alignment of the ICMA's strategies and plans with therewith. Secondly, it is responsible for fostering sound intergovernmental relations, communication and informing the stakeholders of the programmes of the ICMA.

Transformation of irrigation boards into water user associations

INKOMATI WATER MANAGEMENT AREA: OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS (MARCH 2007)

The transformation of Irrigation Boards to Water User Associations, is not the responsibility of the ICMA. However, the ICMA cooperated and collaborated with the DWAF in some of the activities. The ICMA, fully established, is of the view that the functions be delegated to it.

will have to strengthen cooperation with like- institutions in Mozambique as part of the implementation of the strategic objectives as set by the Minister. This matter will receive high priority in the next financial year.

5. Kobwa

A number of high level meetings have been held with KOBWA and the working agreement includes issues around information sharing between the two institutions, data management, operations, training for technicians, and joint studies for the purpose of information generation as well as issues relating to governance.

This cooperation is led by the Chairpersons of the Board of the two institutions namely Ms Nyakane Maluka T.P and Mr Knox Nxumalo. The two Boards met at Berg-en-dal to look at the areas of cooperation as stated above. This cooperation includes staff exchange programmes to enhance learning amongst officials from both sides.

As KOBWA's main purpose is to develop and manage the resources in line with the Inco-Maputo agreement, the ICMA cooperates with them in the management of the South African water allocation based on the treaty. To achieve this, the ICMA participates in the Komati Joint Operation Forum.

6. Implementing the twinning agreement between South Africa and Netherlands

The ICMA has played a critical role in implementing the agreement reached between South Africa and Water Boards in the Netherlands. During the period under review, a high level delegation visited the ICMA to ensure that there was a common understanding on the nature and intentions of the agreement.

The key objectives of the agreement include mutual understanding and interest in the regional water management in both South Africa and the Netherlands; providing a framework for future cooperation in terms of focus areas, priorities, institutional arrangement, training approaches and associated costs.

Engagement around these areas has laid the basis for strategic cooperation between the institutions of both countries. Effectively, the ICMA is actively participating in a gainful exchange of learning experiences and capacity building for both staff and governing board members on:

- Developing and implementation of the catchment management strategies;
- Strategies for effective cooperation with local, provincial and national government;
- Development of regulating and controlling systems; and
- Sharing experience on decentralized local water management approaches in the Netherlands.

As a way of seeking to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, a number of activities were agreed upon by the two parties. The preparations and way forward thereof included exchange programmes between the ICMA administration and its Netherlands counterparts, a visit to Netherlands by the governing board during the next financial year, May 2007 and Board governance training.

7. Environmental Agency (U.K)

As part of the visioning process in the development of the Catchment Management Strategy, the ICMA has partnered, since March 2006, with the Environmental Agency from the United Kingdom to assist in the development of the WMA vision as required by the CMS development process.

The Environmental Agency, led by Dr John Colvin, has appointed a specialist professional service provider called Cinnabar to guide in the visioning strategy entitled "future search". This visioning process includes visiting all our sub-catchment areas to discuss the vision of the sub-catchment and also to develop the vision of the entire water management area.

As the project manager, Dr Colvin received funding from the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) to co-ordinate the future search workshop programme and to follow this with a further programme of capacity building work for the Inkomati CMA. The FCO will also fund a second IWRM expert from the Environment Agency.

DWAF have funded John Goss and Dumisani Ncala, from Cinnabar to design, deliver, record and evaluate the future search workshops.

The two-day strategic planning session was a milestone in the life of the ICMA in that it defined the strategic role of the organization in promoting inter-governmental relations and ensuring alignment with the country's development priorities. Equally critical, was its involvement of the water users in the planning process so that they own the product after the process is complete.

Since the strategic planning session was all-inclusive and participatory, it has also contributed meaningfully to ICMA strategy alignment with the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, the IDPs of municipalities in the water management area including their WSDPs thus creating an interface between water resources management and water services. In the same breath, the aspirations of water users themselves were taken into consideration. Participatory planning enabled the institution to be relevant to the needs of all the stakeholders in the catchment.

Reflecting on the two-day session, participants were in agreement that the planning session has indeed been a groundbreaking exercise, confirming that the ICMA was traversing the correct path towards achieving its goals as set out in the Business Plan.

3. Board training

The support by Institutional Oversight Directorate of the DWAF Head Office has been unparalleled. Among other things, the appointment and capacity building among the governing board members to enable them to guide the strategic corporate governance of the ICMA has been a strong basis from which the Board has been able to perform their functions successfully.

To ensure that key strategic processes and governance mechanisms are in place, the division has ably guided the development and approval of key policies critical to running a successful organization. The Institutional Oversight also continued to provide hands-on support in respect of the development of the Catchment Management Strategy for the water management area.

4. Cooperation with SADC countries

The period under review has also witnessed the ICMA taking proactive efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals and NEPAD primary objectives – addressing the current challenges facing the African continent, including escalating poverty levels and underdevelopment.

Significant progress has been made in the area of promoting the concept of sustainable management of water resources to support Africa's development with SADC countries such as Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland. In respect to Swaziland, guided by the governing board, the ICMA has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Komati Basin Water Association

4.1. Lesotho

The Mountain Kingdom is in a process of establishing catchment management agencies. A part of their point of reference is the ICMA. We have held a meeting with them at Ingwenyama Lodge in September 2006 where it was agreed that the ICMA will cooperate in assisting in the establishment process.

This assistance will be by way of sharing experience in the establishment itself, the development of the catchment management strategy, and the involvement of communities in the IWRM.

In line with the expectations of the DWAF, that institutions of the Department need to play a role in the development of SADC, the ICMA is ready to assist the Mountain Kingdom in its endeavours.

4.2 Mozambique

As part of building a cooperative relationship amongst countries dependant on the Inkomati River, during the launch of the ICMA on November 2 2006, we invited the Minister of Public Works and Housing from Mozambique to this critical function. The Honourable Felicio Zacarias graced this august occasion. Delivering his speech during the launch, The Minister appreciated the role played by South Africa in fostering regional cooperation in shared water courses and showing commitment to the implementation of the Inco-Maputo agreement.

As we develop programmes guided by the Departmental strategic focus areas, primarily the external strategic flagship projects of the Minister with reference to the strategic engagement with other African countries on water and forestry issues, in particular the relationships within our region, through our institutions and participation focus area, we

Achievements

1. The Launch of the ICMA

The official launch of the ICMA by the Honourable Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Ms Lindiwe Hendricks took place on 2nd November 2006, fifteen months after the appointment of the Governing Board. This marked a watershed moment in the implementation of integrated water resources management in South Africa.

For the first time in the history of the country, through the CMAs, the management of water resources will have community involvement at the centre of implementation as envisaged by the National Water Act.

The Act places emphasis on transformation, equity and redress, taking into account the involvement of water users, including the historically disadvantaged communities, in decision-making processes affecting their lives. Since the ICMA is the first Catchment Management Agency to take off in South Africa it therefore suffices to claim that it is indeed a pioneer in the field of integrated water resources management implementation.

This important event took place at Inkomazi, Mpumalanga Province, which has a history of activism in demanding water for historically disadvantaged individuals for their productive use. The launch in the area signified government's association with the poor of the catchment whose voice has not been heard before. This relationship, which started through the launch, has put the ICMA in a position where it has to place the poor in the centre of its programmes as directed by the Honourable Minister.

Quite remarkably, both Mozambique and Swaziland, in line with the spirit of the Interim Inco-Maputo Agreement, managed to send their representatives to the launch as the ICMA shares water resources with these two respective countries.

In her own words, the Honourable Minister emphasized, "the launch was a step in joining other countries of the world in implementing a resolution agreed to at the Real World Summit in 1992, which was further reinforced at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa".

"The coming to life of the ICMA will ensure that critical decisions regarding water resources would be made at the lowest appropriate level – which is the intention of the Act"

In the main, the operations of the ICMA find expression in the sentiments of the Honourable Minister, including serving the interest of equity, corrective action and optimum use of water as contained in the ICMA's vision statement – water for all in the Inkomati.

Giving effect to the vision, the catchment management strategy development has consistently demonstrated a considerable bias in favour of balancing the water requirements to reflect the interests of various stakeholders with the need to ensure the effective management of the catchment area.

2. Participatory planning

During the financial year under review, amid structural challenges, the ICMA operated under clear governance and operational frameworks as required by the legislation. As a new organization, the ICMA has a responsibility to position itself to be in the centre of the resolution of challenges of access by the HDIs and promotion of efficiency and sustainability. In order to achieve this, the ICMA felt it necessary to involve, consult and cooperate with water users in the planning process, as required by the National Water Act.

The strategic planning session that took place on the 1st and 2nd March 2007 brought together the ICMA governing board members and ICMA staff in Berg-en-Dal, Malelane where the Second Strategic Business Plan and its accompanying Strategic Operational Plan were discussed by the governing board.

In pursuit of the spirit of participatory planning, the ICMA management invited:

- Officials from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (Regional Office and Head Office).
- Irrigation Boards,
- Mpumalanga Provincial Government
- Representatives of emerging farmers in the catchment area and
- SALGAMpumalanga and others.