



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

12 November 2025

WATER USE AUTHORISATION PROGRESS REPORT

1. Background and purpose

The Department receives and processes water use authorisation application as a legislative requirement in terms of Section 21 of the National Water Act (Act No 36 of 1998). Use of water without authorisation is an offence in terms of Section 151 (1) (a) of the Act and it is punishable by law as provided for in Section 151 (2) of the National Water Act (NWA).

In processing water use authorisation applications, the Department has been set a target of 90 days by the President. The 90 days are reckoned as 90 working days and the count begins when all the required documents (technical reports and administrative documents) have been submitted in full to the Department.

The purpose of this document is to provide quarterly progress to the public with a view to the commitment of the Department to process water use licenses within 90 days.

2. Water Use Authorisation Performance Reporting

2.1 WUA Finalized within 90 days

In quarter 1 (April to June 2025) of the reporting year (2025/26) the Department finalized 80% (355 out of 444 applications) of the Water Use Authorisation Applications within 90 days. During quarter 2 (July to September 2025) the Department finalized 82% (476 out of 577 applications) within the 90 days.

Table 1: Water Use Authorisation Performance Stats for Quarter 1 and 2 2025/26 Financial Year

REGION/CMA	Q1 Total Performance			Q2 Total Performance		
	April – June 2025			July to September 2025		
	Target	Achieved	%	Target	Achieved	%
North-West	56	34	61%	73	53	73%
Limpopo	31	28	90%	53	48	91%
Mpumalanga	82	71	87%	78	68	87%
LOCMA Total	169	133	79%	204	169	83%
Northern Cape	30	28	93%	40	34	85%
Free State	29	28	97%	34	28	82%
Gauteng	27	15	56%	53	48	91%
VOCMA Total	86	71	83%	127	110	87%
BOCMA	30	25	83%	46	38	83%
Western Cape	22	22	100%	51	45	88%
BOCMA Total	52	47	90%	97	83	86%
IUCMA	27	20	74%	31	26	84%
MTCMA	30	24	80%	33	28	85%
PUCMA	80	60	75%	85	60	71%
Grand Total	444	355	80%	577	476	82%

Table 1 indicates that during quarter 1 of this financial year (2025/26) the Department finalized 80% (355 out of 444 applications) of the water use applications within 90 days. This performance constitutes achievement of the target of finalizing 80% of the applications within 90 days. A total of seven (7) Regions managed to achieve the 80% target. Four (4) Regions could not achieve the 80%

target (PUCMA, IUCMA, Gauteng and North-West Region). During quarter 2, the Department finalized 82% (476 out of 577 applications) within 90 days, which represents an upward trajectory in the performance. It is important to note that the target increased significantly between quarter 1 and quarter 2 (from 444 to 577 applications). The number of Regions that meet the 80% targets increased to nine (9) during quarter 2. Only two (2) Regions could not meet the 80% (North-West and PUCMA). However, those Regions are above 70% which is interpreted as partial achievement. Those two Regions received support from Head Office, Chief Directorate WUAM, to ensure that they meet the target in quarter 3 and 4.

2.2 Backlog Water Use Authorisation Applications

Table 2: Backlog Water Use Applications (applications exceeding 90 days and still in process)

REGION / CMA	2023	2024	2025	Total
North-West	0	5	4	9
Limpopo	0	0	4	4
Mpumalanga	0	0	8	8
LOCMA Total	0	5	16	21
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0
Free State	0	3	1	4
Gauteng	1	1	4	6
VOCMA Total	1	4	5	10
BOCMA	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	0	0	0	0
BOCMA Total	0	0	0	0
IUCMA	0	0	0	0
MTCMA	0	0	0	0
PUCMA	0	7	12	19
Grand Total	1	16	33	50

As of 12 November 2025, the Department recorded 50 backlogs. One backlog is from applications that were submitted in 2023, whilst 16 applications are backlogs carried over from the 2024/25 financial year. A total of 33 backlogs is recent, having been accumulated in quarters 1 and 2 of the current financial year (2025/26). The Department is making serious efforts to clear the backlogs to ensure that there is no accumulation. There is an improvement in backlogs as the Department used to record over 1000 applications in the backlogs.

3. Conclusions

The Department is on an upward trajectory in terms of performance on water use authorisation applications and it met its target for quarters 1 and 2 of the current financial year (2025/26). The Department recorded its lowest backlog during quarter 3 (50) as compared to as many as 1000 in 2022. The Department will make more strides to improve the processing rates to more than 90% in the coming financial years.

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