



CASE STUDY

NEED FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

The uMhlathuze Water Stewardship Partnership (UWASP) convenes key government, private sector and civil society stakeholders to actively collaborate on water security solutions for the uMhlathuze catchment in KwaZulu-Natal. Two people are employed full time (by the NBI and WWF-SA respectively), with further support and funding provided by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), a German Development Agency, International Water Stewardship Programme (IWaSP) and additional funding provided by Mondi and Tongaat Hulett. To date, UWASP has undertaken extensive stakeholder engagement with private and public partners to ensure that all can actively participate in the overall partnership and in specific projects of interest. A detailed partnership work plan and governance structure has been approved and implementation of five priority projects commenced in December 2017. The five priority projects address downstream water use efficiency opportunities; agricultural water stewardship practices; ecological infrastructure requirements (alien invasive plant clearing and wetlands); the development of local community environmental champions for pollution control; and enhanced management of the region's coastal lakes and surface water dam.

Progress on some priority projects is detailed below:

1. In February 2018 a study tour to the Inkomati Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA) in Mpumalanga brought together the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and sugar industry representatives (including SA Canegrowers and Tongaat Hulett) to explore the lessons learned in the IUCMA's water monitoring and metering systems. The implementation of a catchment management system and institutional support in the uMhlathuze catchment will benefit DWS's long-term management of the catchment and of Goedertrouw dam, including more effective water use management by the agricultural sector and downstream industry.

2. Scoping work to understand the interrelated waste and water challenges, interests and job creation opportunities for communities in informal areas around the coastal lakes of Mzingazi and Cubhu has commenced. These lakes supply water for domestic and industry users in the Richards Bay area. UWASP is in the process of formalising cooperation with the City of uMhlathuze (CoU) Municipality in order to work together on this community based project and other interventions.

3. A video of the value of the partnership to some of the beneficiaries (Richards Bay Minerals, Tongaat Hulett, Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone, DWS and Grindrod) has been produced through funding provided by the GIZ-IWaSP.

4. A strategic meeting between DWS and the CoU has been arranged to address the refurbishment of the Lake Mzingazi Water Treatment Works in order to better utilise this resource and decrease reliance on Goedertrouw dam.

5. Scoping of existing Alien Invasive Plant Clearing Initiatives and opportunities in the area has been completed and a workshop for all interested parties to improve alignment and coordination arranged.

6. Ongoing investigations into the removal of water hyacinth and possible business opportunities for the existing UWASP projects is taking place.

7. Funding has been provided by GIZ-IWaSP for CoU officials to attend an international water loss conference with capacity development opportunities in Cape Town. Water balance and reticulation work in informal areas has been identified with CoU for GIZ- IWaSP to provide support.

8. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the partnership and the CoU has been developed and is currently being processed in order to proceed with working on projects with CoU staff.

9. Possible wetland rehabilitation sites on sugarcane land have been identified with land managers and basic assessments of rehabilitation requirements has been arranged.

10. Capacity development and mentoring needs and opportunities with key DWS KZN staff and young professionals, related to the management of Goedertrouw dam, have been identified. A MoU will be developed with DWS in order to proceed.