

Draft Mine Water Management Policy Drawn Up

Department of Water and Sanitation, Issued 10 July 2017

The Draft Mine Water Management Policy has been published in Government Gazette 40965 for comment. The water and sanitation department drew up the draft policy to set down its position on mine water management including acid mine drainage (AMD). The proposed policy also aims to provide measures on protection of water resources from prospective, operational and historical mine activities that have negative impact on water quality. The draft policy focuses on integrated approaches to mining closure, apportionment of liabilities, optimum use of appropriate and cost-effective technology, classification and differentiation of mines, promotion of sustainable mining development, user commitment to sustainable water resource protection, environmental vigilance and continuous improvement, institutional arrangements on infrastructure management/transfer after mine closure and reuse of treated mine water, including AMD. Some of the policy principles include the need for a legislative provision on institutional arrangements of infrastructure management/ transfer post mine closure to ensure proper transfer, the development of a national mine water strategy, the application of the polluter pays principle to mine water in all its forms and strengthening of policy to differentiate between the different categories of mines. The draft policy emphasizes that the mine water problem will not be solved by a single intervention but will require the integrated implementation of a range of measures including considering using treated mine water for operations and/or providing it to municipal networks "which should be led by pragmatic and progressive policies and legislations". Sabinet Cape Town Office