



NATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY CABINET

The Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Edna Molewa has welcomed the approval of the National Waste Management Strategy (NWMS) by Cabinet on 09 November 2011 for implementation. The NWMS is a legislative requirement of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008) that aims to achieve the objects of the Waste Act.

Minister Molewa described the development of the Strategy as an important milestone in the process of implementing the Waste Act and in establishing an integrated approach to waste management across government and our broader society. The Minister said that South Africa faces particular challenges in relation to waste management that require a coordinated effort by government and stakeholders.

Addressing these challenges will not be easy, given the capacity and resource constraints we face as a developing country with large income inequalities and competing development priorities. Nevertheless, the implementation of the waste management hierarchy and achievement of the objectives outlined in this strategy is integral to achieving a sustainable future and a better life for all South Africans, emphasised the Minister.

The legacy of inadequate waste services, poorly planned and maintained waste management infrastructure, and limited regulation of waste management, persistently threaten the health and wellbeing of everyone in the country. Addressing this legacy and its negative environmental and social consequences advances people's constitutional right to a healthy environment. The NWMS aims to redress the past imbalances in waste management.

The development of the NWMS has been guided by a consultative process, including public participation and consultation with relevant national and provincial departments. Involving stakeholders in the process has been more than merely a legislative requirement, since crucial aspects of waste management, such as waste separation and recycling, are performed by households, businesses and organisations outside of government.

Consultation with government departments, provinces and municipalities has ensured that the NWMS is an integrated strategy for the whole of government, and is aligned with institutional capacity and intergovernmental systems.

The objects of the Waste Act are structured around the steps in the waste management hierarchy, which is the overall approach that informs waste management in South Africa. Therefore, the NWMS follows the waste management hierarchy approach.

The waste management hierarchy consists of options for waste management during the lifecycle of waste, arranged in descending order of priority: waste avoidance and reduction, re-use and recycling, recovery, and treatment and disposal as the last resort.

Implementing the waste management hierarchy and achieving the objects of the Waste Act will require coordinated action by many players, including households, businesses, community organisations, NGOs, parastatals and the three spheres of government.

Implementing the waste management hierarchy requires a shift in consciousness, attitudes and behaviour for businesses, organisations and households. It also requires a country wide infrastructure to enable re-use and recycling. Partnerships around effective waste management must have concrete expression in local collaboration around initiatives to improve waste management. Industry, organisations and households have a critically important role to play in managing their own waste streams.

The NWMS is structured against a framework of eight goals. An action plan that sets out how the goals and targets will be met forms part of the strategy, and the actions include roles and responsibilities for different spheres of government, industry and the civil society.

The eight goals are:

- Promote waste minimisation, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste
- Ensure effective and efficient delivery of waste services
- Grow the contribution of the waste sector to the green economy
- Ensure that people are aware of the impact of waste on their health, well-being and the environment
- Achieve integrated waste management planning
- Ensure sound budgeting and financial management for waste services
- Provide measures to remediate contaminated land.
- Establish effective compliance with and enforcement of the Waste Act

For each goal a target for 2016 has been stipulated. For instance, under goal two the target for 2016 is 95% of urban households and 75% of rural households must have access to adequate levels of waste collection services and 80% of waste disposal sites must have permits.

The goal to grow the contribution of the waste sector to the green economy intends to stimulate job creation and broaden participation by SMEs as well as marginalised communities in the waste sector. In line with the Green Economy Plan, measures will be implemented to strengthen and expand the waste economy so that it can generate and sustain jobs as well as formalise existing jobs in the waste economy. The targets for 2015 are to create 69 000 new jobs in the waste sector and 2600 additional SMEs and cooperatives participating in waste service delivery and recycling.

Raising awareness levels on issues of waste is also highlighted as a goal in the strategy. This extends to existing platforms, new initiatives, coordinated outreach efforts as well as waste being strengthened as a topic in the school curriculum. It is envisaged that awareness and recognition

programmes around waste should ultimately result in visibly cleaner towns and cities, a reduction in illegal dumping, and the successful implementation of separation at source programmes.

Some of the tools identified for the implementation of the NWMS include a waste classification and management system, norms and standards, licensing, industry waste management plans, extended producer responsibility, priority wastes and economic instruments.

Goal 8 which deals with effective compliance with and enforcement of the Waste Act seeks to extend the current Environmental Management Inspectorate's capacity so that it can enforce the Waste Act. Government will systematically monitor compliance with the Waste Act, which includes regulations published in terms of the Act, licences, industry waste management plans and integrated waste management plans. Business and civil society have a vital role to play in creating a culture of compliance, and in reporting instances of non-compliance.

The NWMS will be implemented from the date of approval, but most activities will only start in 2012.

To access the National Waste Management Strategy click on the link below:

http://www.environment.gov.za/Documents/Documents/2011Nov10/nationalwaste_management_strategy.pdf

To access the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008) click on the link below:

<http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=97351>