Report of the national seminar “Local government implementation of a multiple uses of water approach”

Tshwane, 25th October 2006

By: Tessa Cousins and Stef Smits

Executive summary

The multiple uses of water (mus) approach to water services provision aims to meet people's different water needs in an integrated way. This approach has been gaining broad recognition in South Africa over the last few years, expressed in a range of initiatives in terms of policy, research, implementation and advocacy. In 2005 a national seminar was held in which these initiatives were mapped out. One of the concerns raised was that local government is key to implementation, but they have so far been absent from the discussions about mus. Therefore, this year the seminar was convened by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), the MUS (Multiple Use Systems) project, in partnership with WIN-SA (the Water Information Network of South Africa) and SALGA (the South African Local Government Association), with the objective to look into implications for local government implementation of the mus approach. This particularly revolved around the guidelines for local government implementation of multiple use water services that DWAF is developing. Participants came from a cross-section of institutions: national government departments, provincial DWAF offices and local government, research institutions, NGOs and consultancies. This report provides the key points of discussion of the seminar.

The importance of mus to realising goals of addressing poverty through water was emphasized. However there are still no coherent, agreed upon, national definitions of multiple uses of water, which give clarity while providing flexibility. It is agreed that livelihoods and Local Economic Development (LED) are at the heart of mus, and that the boundaries of that cannot be tightly set. Definitions can become an academic discussion, but are important as they have implications for mandates, and for accounting and funding purposes. Mapping of the different funding streams made it clear that, mostly, combinations of such streams will be needed to implement mus. This is complicated, as the entities who administer them operate at different levels, with different procedures. Integrated Development Plans, in theory, provide a mechanism for alignment between those, but in practice IDP processes are weak. IDPs could be the basis for assessing demand and needs for mus, considering supply issues, and enabling cooperative governance. Combining piped water supply with alternative water sources, especially rainwater harvesting, seem to provide the most practical way forward. The lack of capacity at municipal level and how this may limit the implementation of mus, was raised as a concern. On the other hand, the integrated approach required for mus may also be an opportunity to overcome these problems.

A range of activities were proposed in terms of a way forward. Communication and advocacy for the concept was recommended, targeted at senior decision makers at DPLG and SALGA, as well as at local government level. The guidelines need further elaboration, especially in terms of the mapping of financing streams, and the links with IDP processes. At the same time, piloting of the guidelines should start at municipal level. Such piloting could seek two approaches – one with funding allocated to support it, another working within the reality of the existing funding streams. Pilots could provide the nexus for further collective learning, and for including local government more actively in the further development of the guideline, and in making policy recommendations that flow from learning what is needed to enable the realisation of this approach. Alignment with other initiatives was recommended, the piloting of rain water harvesting being highlighted.

1. Background

The Millennium Development Goals aim to halve absolute poverty by 2015, and also to halve the number of people un-served by improved water supply. Yet the link between improved access to water at the household level and reduced poverty has not been clear. One reason for this is that usually water services are not planned to account for all people's water needs, but often limited to water for domestic uses only. This limits the opportunities for people to develop their livelihoods activities, and may have a negative impact on the sustainability of water services. A "multiple use services" (mus) approach seeks to overcome such problems by providing water services that meet people's multiple water needs in an integrated way. This requires co-operative governance in the planning and delivery of water related developments, but the mechanisms to achieve this are less so.

In South Africa, the need to provide services that meet people's livelihoods needs has been recognised in policy documents. The Water Services Policy & Strategy Directorate of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) has been seeking to take this forward in a practical way, by developing a draft guideline, "*Provision of water for small scale multiple use systems: A Guideline for Municipalities"*. The MUS (Multiple Use Services) project, under the Challenge Program on Water and Food, is an international initiative to undertake action-research on this topic. The Department and the MUS Project convened a national seminar on the topic in August 2005. The seminar showed that the concept of mus is widely recognised, and that a variety of organisations are tackling it. It was apparent that while a mus approach opens up possibilities for more integrated approaches to the problems of poverty and wise water management, it also brings with it complexity. A number of questions therefore arose at theoretical, policy and practical levels, and some key issues for further work and deliberation were identified in the workshop.

The key actor missing from that seminar was local government and its representatives. It was recognised that local government is a critical actor when it comes to implementing mus, because of its role in delivering water services and its role in ensuring coordination. It was agreed that it would be useful to meet again in a year's time, this time including local government. Thus this 2nd national seminar was convened, and jointly hosted by DWAF, the MUS Project, SALGA (South African Local Government Association) and WIN-SA (Water Information Network of South Africa). It was facilitated by a team of members of the MUS project. The seminar was held on 25th of October 2006, at the Environmental Education Centre in the Pretoria Botanical Gardens.

The objectives of the seminar were:

- To consider the implications for local government implementation of a Multiple Use Services (mus) approach to water.
- To draw lessons from diverse perspectives and experience, to inform taking mus as an approach forward

This report provides the proceedings of the workshop, including the key points of discussion and the action list for the way forward.

2. Proceedings

The detailed agenda of the workshop can be found in Annex 1.

2.1 Welcome, introductions and objective

The meeting was officially opened by Abri Vermeulen of DWAF, Director of Water Services Policy and Strategy, who referred to the background of this seminar. He stated the importance of water for multiple uses, both in terms of supporting people's livelihoods, and in contributing to sustainable services delivery.

Tessa Cousins from AWARD (the Association for Water and Rural Development) welcomed participants on behalf of the MUS project.

Vusi Dlamini from AWARD then asked participants to introduce themselves, stating not only their names and designations, and where they were from, but also to state a key question they brought to the meeting. *A full list of participants can be found in Annex 2.*

The following interests prevailed among the participants:

- to learn from experiences by local governments in the multiple use approach
- to develop ideas how local governments can take multiple uses forward
- to develop partnerships for joint learning and exchange of experiences
- the link between multiple uses of water and water resources management
- financing mechanisms and cost recovery for multiple uses
- the link between multiple uses and mini-irrigation
- roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders to roll out multiple uses
- links between South African experiences and international ones on multiple uses
- integrating mus into IDPs

The opening session ended by a short recap of last year's meeting on multiple uses by Stef Smits (IRC). In this presentation he referred to the background mentioned in the previous section. *The PowerPoint presentation is available on request*

2.2 Introduction to implementing mus at local government level

Bheki Ngubo (DWAF Water Services Policy and Strategy) introduced the national guidelines for the provision of water for small scale multiple uses, which DWAF is developing at the moment. A draft of the document had been sent to all participants before the meeting. His presentation showed the overall outline of the document, the steps that have been taken to develop it, and the steps to follow to finalise it. *The PowerPoint presentation is available on request*

This was followed by a presentation by Renee van Aardt (Nemai consulting) about a research project that is starting, which is commissioned by the Water Research Commission (WRC), about the productive use of piped water. This is expected to provide additional insights to feed into the development of the guidelines.
The PowerPoint presentation is available on request

Taken together, these form the basis of the current thinking around how multiple uses of water can be taken forward at local government level. The presentations raised some points for clarification.

- It was suggested that DPLG and the ARC (Agricultural Research Council) be included as stakeholders for involvement in the guideline, and this was accepted..
- There is confusion on the term “piped water”. This refers basically to water which is primarily provided for domestic purposes through piped bulk and reticulation schemes.
- A call was made to distribute last year’s report to all participants, who are new. That report has a list of all other initiatives, including ongoing research on the topic.

The national perspectives on local government implementation of multiple uses, were complemented by two stories of practical experiences with mus at local government level, in order to ground the meeting in reality, as we proceeded.

Sipho Mlambo from Bushbuckridge Local Municipality told the story of a village in BBR. In this community, rainwater harvesting tanks were piloted with funds from the Department of Agriculture (DoA), with the aim to promote gardening. And indeed, many households have started to engage much more in such livelihoods activities as compared to neighbouring villages. However, the users do not harvest only rainwater with the tanks, but use the municipal reticulation systems to fill them too. In that way, they function as extra storage tanks at household level. A side effect of that is that people with tanks use much more water, leaving other villagers, and other villages who share the tank, without water. This also places a big financial burden on the Municipality, as the users do not pay for that water. The Municipality does not want to forbid the tanks, as there is a clear benefit for the households. The case shows that unintended consequences can result from interventions, and the need for coordinated planning, and for a more holistic approach to water by the municipality and the village.

Hanke du Toit from DWAF Northern Cape related the story from a community in the Kgalakgadi District Municipality. In this area, groundwater quality wasn’t suitable for drinking, so the idea was to connect the community to the pipeline of the Kalahari East Water Users Association. They wanted to use the DWAF Fund for Resource Poor Farmers to cover for the capital costs, and a subsidy on water tariffs. However, the subsidy turned out to be for irrigation only, whereas many users needed it for livestock. DWAF felt that it shouldn’t matter whether it is for livestock or irrigation, as in the Northern Cape, there is no irrigation, but livestock is important for people’s livelihoods. This case shows the importance of clarity of financial mechanisms to provide for multiple uses of water.

A third case was mentioned from Newcastle in KwaZulu Natal, where the municipal supply system was used for small-scale productive uses. However, that resulted in over-use of the system, and the municipality had to cut it back.

2.3 The discussion

On the basis of this background, and the practical cases that were presented, the group identified 4 areas of concern around local government implementation of mus. These were:
- definition and scope of multiple uses of water
- roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and mechanisms of integrating these

- assessing demand and supply for multiple uses
- financing mechanisms and cost recovery of multiple uses

The participants then discussed each of these areas, using an "open space" methodology. Participants could participate in any group, for as long as they wished to. The results were presented back in plenary.

2.4 The way forward

Finally small groups worked in ideas, encouraged to think 'out of the box" for taking what emerged from discussions forward into future action. These were presented in plenary, and, where agreed, responsibilities for action were assigned.

3. Discussion Digested

During the reporting back, many areas of overlap were found between each of the themes. Therefore, this section does not report back on each of the areas separately, but tries to pull out the key points within and across themes.

3.1 Definitions and terminology

It was noted that we use different definitions and terminology. We talk about "multiple uses" and "productive uses of water". The key point, however, is the benefits: livelihoods and LED (Local Economic Development). But can we come to a common terminology? An attempt was made to categorize benefits into:

- agricultural uses (gardening, livestock)
- micro-enterprises (hair saloons, brick making etc). In this latter, we can even distinguish primary production (brick making for example) from services

A **common definition** could not be found. It was suggested that we rather then seek an **integrated description**, as the different practices cannot easily or captured in a definition, but could usefully be listed and categorized.

It was agreed that the reason for seeking clarity here is not academic, but is related to issues of boundaries of mandates, and because of accounting. Definitions can determine what subsidies can be accessed, or what funding mechanisms apply. It was agreed that the definition should be something like basic-plus.
There is no clarity on how much water this basic-plus level entails – and this would probably need to be developed for different category of activities.

3.2 Funding streams

Definition is critical when it comes to funding streams at municipal level. The group dealing with this issue started with a discussion between people based at municipal, provincial and national levels, confronting the very practical problems municipalities face regarding financing even the basic domestic requirements for water, and maintaining water systems. The initial response from municipal actors was that mus places an extra load on them. The point about mus being an opportunity to bring other resources and capacities to bear on water provision could be acknowledged, but also seems rather theoretical to them at this stage.

The group mapped the various funding streams available at municipal level.:

Funding stream	For what	Remarks
Agriculture (CASP)	Food plots, rainwater harvesting and food security	R40M/yr
MIG (Municipal Infrastructure Grant)	Capital costs of infrastructure to provide basic levels of service. Part of the MIG funding can go into municipal capacity, for example to support a programme management unit	All departments channel their funds through this. Before allowing any funds for higher levels of service, all basic services need to be provided. Municipalities don't always understand how allocatiosn are made form MIG (not transparent to them). DWAF to discuss with DPLG whether MIG could accommodate multiple uses.
O&M funds	Operation and maintenance	When there are higher levels of service, O&M costs will be higher.
Equitable share	?	?
Cost recovery from users	Operation and maintenance costs	Cost recovery is very little, even though in some rural areas users are able to pay, but not in all. Some people claim to be basic users, but are actually making money out of water without paying. On the other hand, the poor are often not able to pay, not even when they have productive uses. How do you deal with that?
MSIG	Capacity building of local government.	This is outputs-based, so can be linked to, e.g., MIG programmes. This fund is currently under spent.
Borrowing money		Municipalities have very little opportunity to do this.

This mapping is not complete (e.g the DWAF subsidy to resource poor farmers is not included), and may not be quite accurate. It will be important to complete this and identify where there are possibilities for funding multiple uses of water, especially through combinations of sources. In that way, departments can act within their mandate, but think more broadly. It was also suggested to engage with treasury around funding water. Why not establish a unit within treasury focusing on funding

water, like for the 2010 Soccer World Cup? We can assert the importance of water and rural poverty to South Africans as marching that of a World Cup!

3.3 (Mis)-match of roles and responsibilities

It is clear that in financing multiple uses one would need to combine funding streams. However, as the different sector departments have different organizational structures, which do not match at the level of different spheres of government, and this turns out to be quite difficult. For example, the Department of Agriculture is based at provincial level, and water services are planned at municipal level. That makes alignment of financing more difficult. It may also result in other confusion about each other's roles and responsibilities. This confusion sometimes also is around in defining the roles and responsibilities of communities.

3.4 Integrated planning

In addition to knowing what the funding streams are, one also needs to look at the mechanisms to apply for these funds. IDPs play a crucial role in this. MIG, as the most important funding stream, is based on the IDP. For agricultural projects, mechanisms are slightly different, as they are identified by the provincial level. Still, they try to seek alignment with the IDPs.

In reality, it is also felt that, although the mechanisms for integration are there, such as IDP and WSDP (Water Services Development Plans), they do not always turn out to be so integrated. There are various reasons for that:

- Different sector departments contribute to the IDP from a sectoral perspective. They often follow sectoral planning procedures with the communities. This leaves communities sometimes confused.
- The integration then only happens with few officers in, for example, the IDP unit of a municipality. Then, the integration only happens on paper, not from community level upwards.
- Detailed information coming from communities gets "lost" in the process. For example, when assessing demand for water, this ideally should be done on the basis of their livelihoods needs and opportunities. But this level of detail is not usually present in IDPs.

It is also noted that the WSDP only focuses on water services, not at other water uses. A recent change is that at provincial level "water sector plans" are developed, which aim to seek more integration as they are fed by the IDP and the WSDP. It was proposed that Water Development Plans may be more useful in overcoming the divisions between water services and water resources management, and in enabling cooperative governance.

3.5 Supply considerations

When planning for multiple uses, we should not only look at the demand, but also to supply possibilities. A "benchmark demand" of 50-150 lpcd is often mentioned. At the lower end, there is probably little concern about supply in terms of available water resources; at the higher end, it could become more difficult. But, in general, the key concern in terms of supply isn't in the availability of water resources, but rather in the

types of water services that can supply water for multiple uses. Two basic scenarios need to be distinguished:
1) a scenario where communities have existing services up to RDP standards,
2) where communities do not have that level of access yet.
In the first scenario, in practice it will be very difficult or expensive to upgrade to higher levels of service. For example, most bulk lines have been designed up to a level of around 60 lpcd. That only leaves limited spare capacity. In such cases, water for productive uses, probably needs to come from alternative sources. These could include:
1) grey water – this is happening already at household scale, but the scope to augment that in rural areas is limited, as there is only limited water;
2) reuse of treated wastewater – this also happening in peri-urban areas, but again the scope for that in rural areas is less, and
3) rainwater harvesting – this seems to offer most opportunities in rural areas.

The technology and methods for that are well-known and documented and even subsidies for that are available. Concerns, as shown in the case from Bushbuckridge, are also there. In the second scenario, supply could be better based on demand. But, alternative sources, where possible, should also be encouraged. A note was issued that we shouldn't only look at design quantities. It seems that distance and time to collect water, are the driving factors for the actual quantities used.

3.6 Skills and capacities

In general, capacity at municipal level is lacking. For many key processes like the IDP, they rely on consultants. This is a generally recognized need, not unique to multiple uses of water. Various studies have been done on the skills profiles of municipalities and the gaps in those. For water, it seems there is especially a lack of technical staff, but also for those with experience in social mobilization processes. It is not only that skills are lacking, also absolute numbers of staff. In some cases there are only two community facilitators for an entire municipality. The question is where that leaves us for the mus approach: do we have to drop the idea because of lack of capacity, or do we see it as an opportunity, as it would allow especially for coordination and integration, and hence of pooling of expertise between departments and levels. Especially at district municipality level, it is possible to get such pooling happening.

3.7.Feed-back into policy

It was proposed that municipalities should not only implement policy, but also operationalise it, and thus should ideally be more active participants in policy, especially in aspects such as guideline development. If it is found that policies are difficult to operationalise, then feed-back needs to be given to the national level. In taking the multiple use policy forward, this must be considered.

4. The Way forward

The following list for taking the discussion forward was developed.

What	***Who***
Communication and advocacy	
1. Communication strategy for the new policy guidelines, including translation into local languages, and making it accessible through various means, not Internet only	?
2. Using fora for awareness raising and advocacy among local governments. Partially this can be done through the provincial fora. In addition, it should be targeted to senior officials at DPLG and SALGA.	DWAF (Thoko Sigwaza) will put this on the WSSLG agenda, and raise it in the provincial fora. Barbara Schreiner (DWAF) will also do advocacy with other stakeholders such as DPLG and SALGA.
3. Developing/using advocacy material. Especially video material could be useful to get buy in from stakeholders.	IRC (Stef Smits) will share advocacy material, including video material from other countries, which is available through the global MUS Group, and share it with DWAF.
Piloting	
4. The guideline process intended some piloting, and it is agreed that pilot the mus approach with local governments is very important. Participants saw this as being the nexus for future joint learning. They suggested also: - Ensuring the link with the current piloting of rainwater harvesting - Ensuring that the pilot not only focuses on multiple use systems, but also improved IDP processes. This could then include hands-on support in planning. - Using this forum as a reference group to which feed-back would be provided from the pilots. - Thinking about the funding mechanisms of the pilot. Two approaches were suggested – one with funding allocated to support it, another working within the reality of the existing funding streams.	DWAF (Nino Manus) with the piloting planned as part of the process of guideline development. This will be done together with Thoko Sigwaza (Masibambane). Others who showed clear interest in being part of the pilot include AWARD (Vusi Dlamini) and The Mvula Trust (Philip Davids). Nino would also get in contact with a broader group from the forum for ideas on how to carry out the piloting phase.
Guidelines	
5. The current guidelines have started mapping funding streams. This needs to be finalised, including funds from other sector departments.	DWAF (Nino Manus) is responsible to ensure that this happens.
6. The section of the guidelines that deals with "how to" questions of planning demand and supply, should be further	

What	*Who*
aligned with the IDP procedures, so that it can easily fit into the IDP and doesn't become a parallel structure.	
Actions at local government level	
7. Improving feed-back mechanisms in the IDP, by ensuring that the review of projects submitted by stakeholders is brought back to them.	Local governments
8. Ensuring that capacity building on community water projects does not only for steering committee members but includes all the users.	Local governments
9. Developing water pollution control strategy. There are programmes from DWAF focusing on sanitation. But there are other problems. Local governments need to deal with that.	Local governments
10. Improving rainwater harvesting at municipal level. An example from the Karoo was given.	
Financing	
11. Look into other ways of cross-subsidizing water supply. Where it doesn't exist, we could double the price of water in urban areas, and use the money for generating subsidies in poor rural areas.	It was mentioned thought that such measures already exist in many parts of the country.

5. Closure

In a short round of evaluation, participants were asked to reflect on whether their questions had been answered. The following feedback was given:

- lots of inputs have been generated which can feed into the guidelines, both in terms of opportunities and constraints for local government to take the mus approach forward
- there is more clarity on the financing mechanisms. But more work is needed there
- this is a good forum for networking
- we have now taken the first steps to start implementing the approach. This won't happen overnight, but we need to continue our way, especially to start piloting at municipal level
- this is a good way of integrating water services and water resources at a practical level
- there is more clarity on alignment of policies and programmes within DWAF, and between DWAF and Department of Agriculture. The is also more clarity that there is a role for the Department of Agriculture. We now need to find ways forward for integration and not hide behind laws
- the focus on IDP for mus seems to be correct

- multiple uses of water is indeed a needs-based approach. So we need to develop participatory ways of understanding those needs
- the only point of concern was still the limited participation of local governments in the event. Those who were there were excellent in contributing, but it is a pity that not all local governments who were invited managed to attend.

On this note, Tessa Cousins closed the meeting. She also stated her satisfaction with the outcomes of the meeting. She expressed that it wasn't clear whether next year a similar seminar would be organized. But, as the process of the guidelines development would go further, and pilots be established, surely, this forum could provide a good sounding board for that.

Acknowledgements

We kindly acknowledge the financial support for the seminar by:
The Water Services: Directorate Policy and Strategy of DWAF
The MUS (Multiple Use Systems) project, part of the Challenge Programme on Water and Food (CP-WF).

Annex 1: Programme of the meeting

8.30 – 9.00	Arrival, registration, tea
9.00 – 9.30	Welcome Introductions Setting the scene and re-cap of the 2005 seminar
9:30 – 10:30	Presentation and discussion on the draft document: "Provision of water for small scale multiple use systems: a guideline for municipalities" Identification of key areas of discussion
10.30 – 11.00	TEA
11:00 – 11.30	Sharing experiences from local governments.
11.30 – 1.00	Open space around key areas of discussion
1:00 – 2:00	LUNCH
2:00 – 3:30	Identifying way forward Closure

Annex 2: list of participants

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