



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE BLESBOKSPRUIT FORUM

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The promulgation of the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) has resulted in the establishment of 19 Water Management Areas (WMA's) in South Africa, which will be managed by Catchment Management Agencies (CMA's). The process to establish a CMA for the Upper Vaal WMA has been initiated and considerable progress has been made in this respect. The success of the Upper Vaal CMA, once established, will depend largely on effective communication with all stakeholders in the WMA to formulate and implement a Catchment Management Strategy (CMS). This can only be effectively accomplished through the establishment of Catchment Forums. The Upper Vaal WMA is therefore comprised of thirteen Catchment Forums, of which the Blesbokspruit Forum (BF) is one.

The Blesbokspruit Catchment is situated in the eastern part of Gauteng and drains an area of approximately 1,000km². Major towns within the catchment include Benoni, Boksburg, Brakpan and Springs in the north; and Nigel, Heidelberg and Balfour in south. The BF was established in 1996 and is regularly attended by relevant government departments, mines, industries, farmers, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, water service providers and the general public. The BF also has a well-established Forum Management Committee (FMC), which coordinates and manages activities on behalf of the BF. Various Task Teams have also been formed focusing on specific water resource related issues. The participation of all people in the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of the water resources of the Blesbokspruit Catchment will be promoted through the BF.

The Terms of Reference for the BF is therefore defined with respect to:

- Purpose of the BF;
- Functions to be performed by the BF;
- Composition and representation on the BF;
- Status of decisions and recommendations;
- Frequency of meetings; and
- Administrative support to the BF.

A Catchment Forum is:

- A group of concerned people who agree, on a voluntary basis, to represent different perspectives of society in the CMA process;
- A formal structure which is related to the CMA process;
- A place where co-operative and consultative water resource management can take place;
- A place where participants provide and share information relating to issues of the water environment; and

- A body that has the capacity to make recommendations to the authorities and other Forum management structures on behalf of the broader body of Forum members.

A Catchment Forum is not:

- A pressure group;
- An activist body; or
- A body which can prescribe or dictate certain actions to participants.

1.2 Vision

To promote a healthy, safe and sustainable environment that is fit for all uses through interactive stakeholder participation within the Blesbokspruit Catchment.

1.3 Mission

To provide a platform to assist in the development of an Integrated Environmental Management Strategy for the Blesbokspruit Catchment through stakeholder participation.

1.4 Objectives of the Forum

The objectives of the BF are:

- To promote the protection, use, development, conservation and management of the environment of the Blesbokspruit Catchment;
- To develop and implement short, medium and long term goals of an Integrated Environmental Management Strategy of the Blesbokspruit Catchment;
- To effectively communicate and inform the goals of an Integrated Environmental Management Strategy of the Blesbokspruit Catchment; and
- To provide the opportunity for all role-players to participate in a forum that is transparent and representative of the Blesbokspruit Catchment.

1.5 Functions to be Performed by the Forum

The functions of the BF are to:

- Strive to ensure that the membership of the BF reflects a broad range of perspectives from different sectors of society and a wide range of interests;
- Strive to ensure that consultation with the broader base of interested and affected parties is maintained and that they be given the opportunity to comment on the BF's deliberations and recommendations;
- Convene regular meetings and inform Forum members timeously of such arrangements; and
- Start, maintain and promote a program to raise awareness on Water Resource Management and strategies.

2 STRUCTURE OF THE FORUM

The BF shall be constituted of a group of interested and affected parties concerned with water resource management of the Blesbokspruit Catchment and should reflect the principles of gender equality and representation of the greater population residing within the defined boundaries of the Blesbokspruit Catchment. Membership of the BF will be inclusive of all individuals, role-players, stakeholders and interested and affected parties within the Blesbokspruit Catchment. From this group of people, the BF members shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson to facilitate Forum meetings.

The BF shall also elect an FMC, which will consist of a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson as well as one person from the BF to represent the relevant water use sectors within the Blesbokspruit Catchment. The Blesbokspruit FMC shall be directly responsible to the BF and will be limited to bona fide members of the BF. The Blesbokspruit FMC will be responsible to (including other aspects):

- Facilitate communication and understanding between all interested and affected parties within the BF and other structures within the Upper Vaal WMA;
- Organise all administrative requirements necessary for the functioning of the BF;
- Oversee, monitor and co-ordinate the activities of the BF; and
- Adhere to the BF Terms of Reference and other relevant procedures.

The BF shall constitute a Monitoring Committee (MC) whose function it is to manage all activities related to water resource monitoring within the Blesbokspruit Catchment, including:

- Surface water quality monitoring (Chemical, Microbiological and Biological);
- Groundwater quality monitoring; and
- Hydrological monitoring.

The MC shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson to facilitate MC meetings.

The Blesbokspruit FMC can appoint Task Teams responsible for specific functions. It is envisaged that Task Teams may be established as the need arises, while existing Task Teams may be dissolved once their task has been completed. Task Teams shall be directly responsible to the Blesbokspruit FMC. Task Teams must be chaired by a bona fide member of the Blesbokspruit FMC.

It is the responsibility of the BF, FMC Chairpersons or elected FMC members to represent the BF at the Vaal Barrage Catchment Executive Committee (VBCEC) as and when meetings are held.

Registered BF and FMC members are required to attend all meetings and activities. If the respective member is unable to attend all meetings and activities, a nominated proxy must attend on the member's behalf. Non-attendance by the member, or their respective proxy, is unacceptable and will be recorded as Absent Without Apology in the BF minutes.

3 PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT

The period of appointment to all positions within the BF will be reviewed every two (2) years. However, to ensure continuity, some or all of the elected members of positions within the BF may be asked to serve voluntarily for a longer period.

4 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS OF THE FORUM

- The BF will meet two (2) times per year to review the activities of the Blesbokspruit FMC and the various Task Teams;
- The BF MC will meet four (4) times per year to review aspects relating to water resource monitoring;
- The BF will convene an Open Day every two (2) years; and
- The Blesbokspruit FMC and Task Teams will meet on a more frequent basis as deemed necessary.

5 FORUM MEMBER STATUS

The BF is a fully transparent forum and is open to attendance by all interested and affected parties residing within the catchment. All relevant information will be available to members directly or via the reservoir website (www.reservoir.co.za). Members of the BF will not be allowed to make statements to the media on behalf of the BF or any of its members. Only the Chairperson and/or Vice-Chairperson of the BF or FMC will be allowed to make statements to the media. If any member of the BF wishes to discuss an issue at a Forum meeting, details must be forwarded to the Chairperson prior to the meeting being held.

6 STATUS OF DECISIONS

The BF's purpose is to advise, monitor, recommend and make suggestions to the Blesbokspruit FMC which in turn will be channeled through the FMC to the appropriate CMA structures where final decisions will be taken. It is the Blesbokspruit FMC's responsibility to give feedback of all relevant decisions to the members of the BF and its structures. The recommendations of the BF and its structures will be by simple majority. Minority views will be recorded. In addition, the BF has the right to take recommendations to the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry should it be deemed necessary.

7 ADMINISTRATION

7.1 Secretarial Services

It is expected that secretarial services will be provided by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to assist the BF in the execution of administrative functions. The Secretary will arrange meetings, prepare documentation and record the proceedings of meetings. However, if this is not possible, then the relevant Chairperson of the BF or Blesbokspruit FMC should provide the necessary secretarial services.

7.2 Sponsorship and Finances

All members of the BF should be responsible for contributing towards the sustainability of the BF. This can be done through sponsorship of forum meetings, providing venues for meetings or funding catering requirements.

7.3 Amendments to the Terms of Reference

The following procedure should be adhered to when making amendments to the BF Terms of Reference:

- The proposed change or addition must be submitted to the Blesbokspruit FMC;
- The submitted document should be circulated to all members of the BF; and
- A majority vote at a BF meeting will secure approval for changes or additions to the BF Terms of Reference.

8 TERMS OF REFERENCE APPROVAL

The BF Terms of Reference is hereby approved, and adopted on behalf of the BF, by the following signatories:

BF Chairperson

Date: _____

Blesbokspruit FMC Chairperson

Date: _____