

DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION

NO. 4987

21 June 2024

**NATIONAL WATER ACT, 1998**

**PROPOSED WATER RESOURCE CLASSES AND RESOURCE QUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR THE USUTHU TO MHLATHUZE CATCHMENTS IN THE INKOMATI-USUTHU AND PONGOLA-MTAMVUNA WATER MANAGEMENT AREAS**

I, Senzo Mchunu, in my capacity as Minister of Water and Sanitation, and duly authorised in terms of section 13(4) of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), hereby publish for public comment, the notice on the proposed water resources classes and the associated Resource Quality Objectives, as set out in the Schedule and intended to be issued in terms of section 13(1) of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998).

Any person who wishes to submit comments in connection with the proposed Water Resources Classes and Resource Quality Objectives is hereby invited to do so within 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice by -

- (a) Posting such comments to the following address:

Department of Water and Sanitation  
Private Bag X 313  
Pretoria  
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Or

- (b) Delivering such comments by hand to the following address:

Department of Water and Sanitation  
Ndinaye Building  
178 Francis Baard Street  
Pretoria

Or

- (c) Emailing such comments to the following email address: Ms Lebogang Matlala

Email: [matlalal@dws.gov.za](mailto:matlalal@dws.gov.za)

Comments must be addressed to the Director: Water Resource Classification and marked for the attention of Ms Lebogang Matlala. Comments received after the closing date shall not be considered.



MR SENZO MCHUNU  
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

DATE: 28/05/24

## SCHEDULE

### PROPOSED WATER RESOURCE CLASSES AND RESOURCE QUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR USUTHU-MHLATHUZE CATCHMENTS IN THE INKOMATI-USUTHU AND PONGOLA-MTAMVUNA WATER MANAGEMENT AREAS

#### 1 DEFINITIONS

In this Schedule any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Act shall have the meaning so assigned and, unless the context indicates otherwise -

“**Class I water resource**” means a water resource in which the configuration of ecological categories of the water resources within a catchment, results in an overall condition of that water resource that is minimally altered from its pre-development condition, and as defined in the Water Resource Classification System;

“**Class II water resource**” means a water resource in which the configuration of ecological categories of the water resources within a catchment, results in an overall condition of that water resource that is moderately altered from its pre-development condition and as defined in the Water Resource Classification System;

“**Class III water resource**” means a water resource in which the configuration of Ecological Categories of the water resources within a catchment, results in an overall condition of that water resource that is significantly altered from its pre-development condition and as defined in the Water Resource Classification System;

“**Water Resource Classification System**” means the Regulations for the Establishment of the Classification System, 2010 as prescribed in Government Notice No. R. 810 of 17 September 2010;

“**Ecological category**” means the ecological condition of that water resource in terms of the deviation of its biophysical components from a predevelopment condition;

“**Ecological Water Requirements**” in relation to a water resource, means the quantity and quality of water of that resource that is required to maintain the said water resource in its assigned Ecological Category;

“**Integrated unit of analysis**” means a water resource catchment that incorporates a socio-economic zone, but is defined by a watershed;

“**Percentile**” means the non-exceedance probability i.e., at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile, 95 percent of values must be less than or equal to the value; and at 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, 50 percent of values must be less than or equal to the value;

“**Present Ecological State**” means the current health or integrity of various biological attributes of the resource, compared to the natural or close to natural reference conditions;

“**Recommended Ecological Category**” means a category indicating the realistically attainable ecological management target for a water resource;

“**Resource Quality Objectives**” means descriptive qualitative statements and numerical values for the biological, physical, and chemical attributes of the significant water resources throughout the catchments;

“**Resource Unit**” means a basic unit of a water resource to which Resource Quality Objectives will apply;

“**Target Ecological Category**” means the ultimate target to achieve a sustainable system both ecologically and economically, considering the Present Ecological State and Recommended Ecological Category.

## 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE WATER RESOURCE

- (1) The Water Resource Classes and Resource Quality Objectives are determined for all or part of every significant water resource within the Usuthu-Mhlathuze Catchments of the Inkomati-Usuthu and Pongola-Mtamvuna Water Management Areas as set out below:

Water Management Areas: Inkomati-Usuthu and Pongola-Mtamvuna

Drainage Region: W Primary Drainage Region (excluding Eswatini)

River(s): W1 catchment (main river: Mhlathuze).

W2 catchment (main river: Umfolozi).

W3 catchment (main river: Mkuze).

W4 catchment (main river: Pongola) - part of this catchment area falls within Eswatini.

W5 catchment (main river: Usutu) - much of this catchment falls within Eswatini.

W7 catchment (Kosi Bay and Lake Sibaya).

- (2) The date from which the Resource Quality Objectives will apply shall be the date stipulated in the *Gazette* wherein the final approved Resource Quality Objectives for the Usutu-Mhlathuze catchments in the Inkomati-Usuthu and Pongola-Mtamvuna Water Management Areas will be published.

## 3 DETERMINATION OF THE CLASS OF WATER RESOURCE IN TERMS OF SECTION 13(1)(a) OF THE ACT

- (1) The proposed water resource classes, which are in accordance with the Water Resource Classification System, for the Usuthu to Mhlathuze catchments (W1 - 5, and 7) are as listed in Table 1 of Annexure A according to the overall class per integrated unit of analysis; and as illustrated in Figure 1 of Annexure A.
- (2) The integrated units of analysis in the Usuthu to Mhlathuze catchments (W1 - 5, and 7) are listed in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 2 of Annexure A.
- (3) A summary of the resource units and quaternary catchments are listed in Table 3 and indicated in Figure 8 (Annexure A).
- (4) The summary of water resource classes per integrated unit of analysis and ecological categories for the Usuthu to Mhlathuze catchments (W1 - 5, and 7) are as listed in Table 4 (Annexure A).

#### 4 RESOURCE UNITS SELECTED WITH PROPOSED RESOURCE QUALITY OBJECTIVES

- (1) Table 5 (Annexure A) provides:
- (i) the listed Integrated Unit of Analysis in the Usuthu to Mhlathuze catchments for which Resource Quality Objectives are proposed;
  - (ii) the selected Water Resources (Rivers, Wetlands, Groundwater, and Estuaries) for which Resource Quality Objectives are proposed; and
  - (iii) reference to subsequent tables that list the proposed Resource Quality Objectives per selected sub-components (river: quantity, quality, habitat, biota or wetlands, groundwater, estuary) per Resource Unit.
- (2) Resource Quality Objectives for rivers per Integrated Unit of Analysis and Resource Unit within the Usuthu to Mhlathuze catchments are specified in Table 6 (hydrological RQOs), Table 8 (habitat and biota RQOs for High Priority sites) and Table 9 (water quality RQOs for High Priority sites) of Annexure A.
- (3) Resource Quality Objectives for priority wetland clusters and systems in selected Resource Units in the Usuthu to Mhlathuze catchments are set out in Table 10 (Annexure A).
- (4) Regional and Resource Unit specific Resource Quality Objectives for groundwater in priority Groundwater Resource Units in the Usuthu to Mhlathuze catchments are set out in Table 11 with Resource Quality Objectives for groundwater-fed lakes set out in Table 12 of Annexure A.
- (5) Resource Quality Objectives for Estuary components in priority Resource Units are as set out in Table 15 (Annexure A).

The Annexure to this Notice, containing the proposed water resource classes and Resource quality objectives, can be accessed from:

<https://www.dws.gov.za/rdm/WRCS/utm.aspx>

or requested from:

Director: Water Resource Classification  
Attention: Ms Lebogang Matlala  
Department of Water and Sanitation  
Ndinaye Building  
178 Francis Baard Street  
Private Bag x 313  
Pretoria 0001  
E-mail: [matlalal@dws.gov.za](mailto:matlalal@dws.gov.za)