

1 Introduction and Orientation

Guidelines for the development of
Catchment Management Strategies in
South Africa



1.1 Introduction:

The reason for these guidelines and what this chapter sets out to describe

In South Africa, a vital component of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is the progressive devolution of responsibility and authority over water resources to Catchment Management Agencies, or CMAs. The scale of operation for the CMAs is that of Water Management Areas, or WMAs (National Water Act (NWA); Act 36 of 1998). In terms of the National Water Resource Strategy, 19 WMAs have been delineated in South Africa (Figure 1.1), with CMAs in various stages of establishment (see Appendix 1). The management of water resources is to be detailed in Catchment Management Strategies (CMS) that must be developed for each of the 19 WMAs. Section 10(1) of the NWA makes provision for the drafting of guidelines to facilitate the development of these strategies (see Box 1.3).

Over the past decade, the Department of Water Affairs & Forestry (DWAF) has developed a suite of guideline documents aimed at facilitating IWRM in South Africa (Appendix 2). The following guidelines for the development of a CMS are part of this process. However, they differ somewhat from many of the existing guidelines in that they do not deal with a single issue or topic. In effect they draw on all aspects of IWRM and aim to present an overview of the different strategic processes associated with managing water resources at the level of the WMA.

The aims of the CMS guidelines are:

- to provide an overview of IWRM in South Africa and how it can be implemented at the level of the WMA;
- to provide a framework for developing a CMS;
- to create an understanding of the contents and level of detail needed in a CMS;
- to support an understanding of the processes for developing the CMS (sequence, potential time frames and potential resource requirements); and
- to provide an overview of the approval process (the criteria, process and time frames)

This chapter introduces the guidelines by providing an orientation to the concept of strategic planning and the legislative requirements for a CMS, as well as a route map for finding one's way around these guidelines.

1.2 Why strategic planning?

Strategies have immense power in that they shape how things can and will be done. A strategy is not just about steps to achieve something but also about creating shifts in the way things are done. In South Africa this means explicitly addressing the transformation ideals of achieving **equity, sustainability** and **efficiency**.

Strategies should set the scene, and ask the questions (1) what does this mean? And, (2) what can be done about it? For example, a particular strategic approach is required to bring about equitable water allocation to ensure that the available water is used to reduce the current gap in equity. Potentially, a number of strategic approaches (such as Water Conservation and Demand Management described in Guideline 6.6) can achieve this prior to undertaking compulsory licensing. The authority to do this needs to be given by the CMS. This discussion illustrates that strategic approaches are aimed at creating the shifts necessary to bring about the intentions of the National Water Act (1998). The definition of a strategy, as used in this guideline, is given in Box 1.1.



Strategic planning is needed to honour our commitment to "Some, for all, forever, together". This means addressing issues of equity, sustainability and efficiency.



Figure 1.1

Map of the 19 Water Management Areas – or WMAs – in South Africa. Each WMA will be administered by a Catchment Management Agency to whom IWRM functions will be progressively delegated.

1.3 What is a Catchment Management Strategy in the South African context?

It is important to note from the outset that the development of a CMS by a CMA is a legislative requirement as set out in the NWA (most of the legislative framework for the CMAs is given in Chapter 7 of the National Water Act, and for the CMS in Chapter 2, Part 2 of the National Water Act). In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 of the NWA, the CMAs are responsible for the protection, conservation, development and management of the water resources at the WMA level. One of the first functions of water resource management for the CMA will be the development of a CMS, described in Box 1.2. Indeed, S 8(1) of the NWA states: "A catchment management agency contemplated in Chapter 7 must, by notice in the Gazette, establish a catchment management strategy for the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of water resources within its water management area"

Initial functions of CMAs

The NWA S 80 describes the initial functions of a catchment management agency as:

- 1) to investigate and advise interested persons on the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of the water resources in its water management area;
- 2) to develop a catchment management strategy;
- 3) to co ordinate the related activities of water users and of the water management institutions within its water management area;
- 4) to promote the co ordination of its implementation with the implementation of any applicable development plan established in terms of the Water Services Act, 1997 (Act No. 108 of 1997); and
- 5) to promote community participation in the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of the water resources in its water management area.

What is a strategy?**Box 1.1**

- Strategies are high-order plans that set the strategic action to be followed to achieve medium-to-long-term goals. They should complement a policy and be given effect through detailed plans (such as business plans and work schedules).
- The working definition used in this guide is that a strategy is a means of translating policy into action. The practical application of the concept of a strategy for water resources management varies widely. This guide defines a catchment management strategy as a set of medium- to long-term action programmes to support the achievement of sustainability, equity and efficiency through Integrated Water Resources Management.
- In this sense, the CMS is the interface between policies and projects. Although strategic plans developed at national (National Water Resources Strategy (NWRS)), regional (CMS) and sectoral levels might differ in detail, coherency must be sought. Thus, there should be common thread from the local level strategy to the national strategy.

1.4 Some issues of terminology:**Water Management Areas, catchments, water resources and their interlinkages**

At times the use of different terms regarding water resources management contained in the various policies, acts and guidelines can be confusing. In South Africa, some documents refer to catchments (the geographical unit including the water resources and the land that they drain), whilst others use the term “*water resources*”, which implies just the rivers, groundwater resources, estuaries, lakes, wetlands and dams and not the surrounding lands. This we see in the terms Catchment Management Agencies, Catchment Management Strategies, Catchment Management Plans and Integrated Water Resources Management. These differences partly reflect documents being developed at different times as ideas evolved but more importantly it underscores the fact that IWRM cannot be de-coupled from the surrounding land uses. Thus whilst strictly speaking the CMA is in the business of IWRM, this cannot be achieved without consideration for land- and water-based activities that impact on the resource base. Indeed, this is recognised in the NWA (S 6(1)) which states that the NWRS must “*promote the management of catchments within a water management area in a holistic and integrated manner.*” The CMS is the tool to do this. Thus we suggest that a rational approach is taken so that such terms are interpreted with a view to meaningfully achieve wise water use.

What may be confusing for some is that a CMS is developed as a strategy for a whole WMA, including all its constituent catchments and sub-catchments. In the case of a coastal WMA we may find various small river systems all draining independently into the sea. We still refer to the strategy for the whole WMA as a catchment management strategy. However, dealing with this situation may vary from the approach used for catchments in which rivers converge into one (see Section 2.6 and GL 6.4).
(note: Abbreviation GL refers to the Guideline numbers in Chapter 6)

Catchment Management Strategies in South Africa

Box 1.2

A CMS, developed by a CMA, is a statutory document which provides the vision and the strategic actions to address integrated water resources management. It is based on the best available information. A framework for the CMS is given by the National Water Resource Strategy (NWRS, 2004).

What must the CMA do with respect to the CMS? (see also Box 1.3 and 2.2)

- Part 2 of the NWA requires every CMA to progressively develop a CMS for the water resources within its water management area.
- In the process of developing this strategy, a CMA must seek co-operation and agreement on water related matters from the various stakeholders and interested persons.

The CMS must:

- not be in conflict with the NWRS;
- be reviewed from time to time;
- include a water allocation plan. In this respect, a CMS must set principles for allocating water to
- existing and prospective users, taking into account all matters relevant to:
 - » the protection,
 - » use,
 - » development,
 - » conservation,
 - » management, and
 - » control of water resources.

1.5 An overview of the overall process

In accordance with the NWA, Chapter 2, Part 2 (S9), a CMS must achieve certain things (see Box 2.2). In view of these legislative requirements, the overall sequence for the development of a strategy was conceptualised in three parts (Figure 1.2). This does not necessarily imply that they have to follow strictly in order but it provides the view that the CMS needs to consider what things are like now, what they might be in the future, what the vision is of the catchment inhabitants and strategic ways of getting there.

It is important to note right from the start that the NWA (S 10(2)) clearly stresses the need for consultation with various role-players and stake holders in the development of the CMS (Box 1.3). This section of the Act also emphasizes the role of the Minister, as custodian of the nation's water resources. Note also that the Act (S 11) requires that *"The Minister and the catchment management agency concerned must give effect to any catchment management strategy established under this Part when exercising any power or performing any duty in terms of this Act"*.

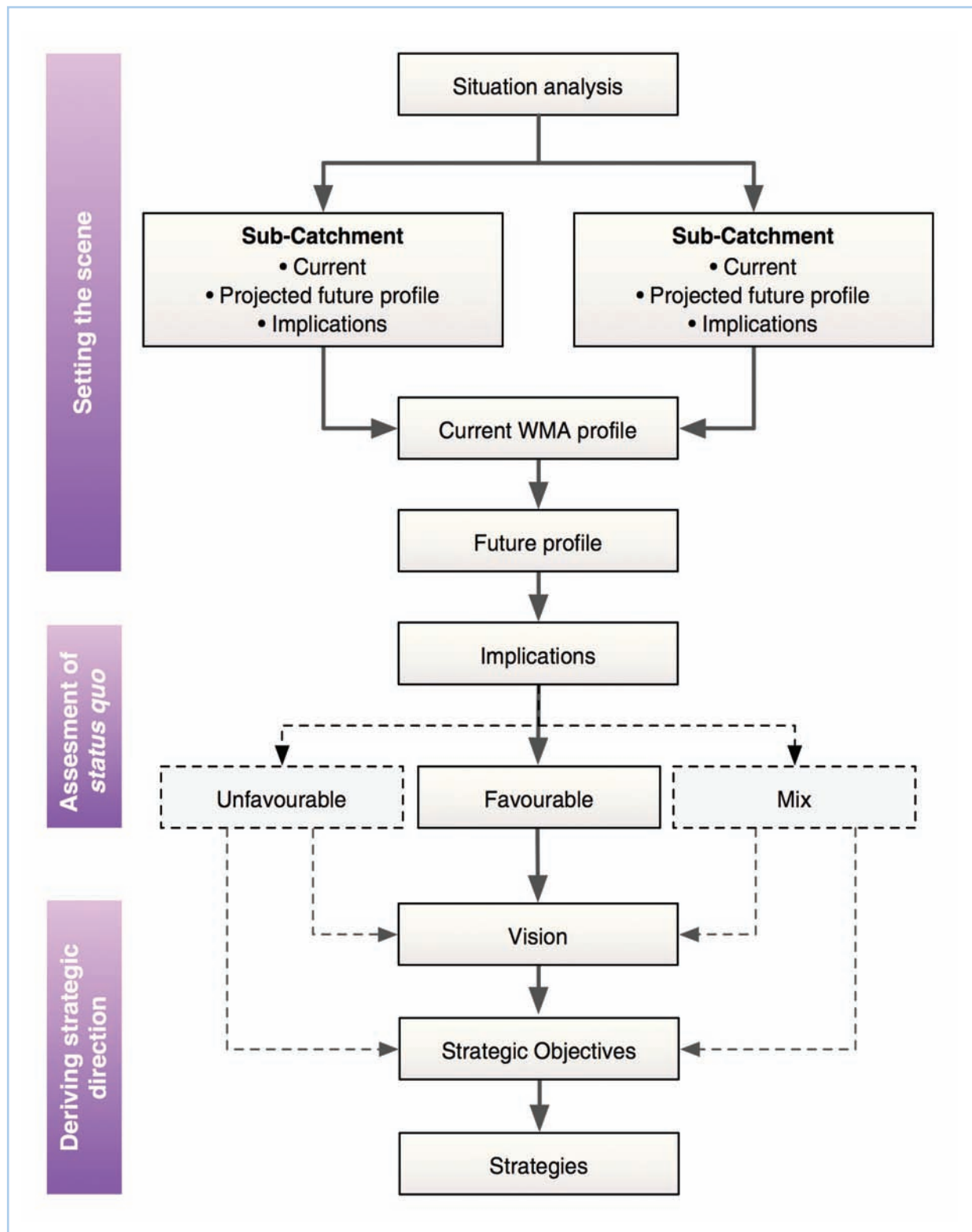


Figure 1.2

An overview of the development of a CMS. In order to develop appropriate context-specific strategies, the wider context in the WMA must be understood and assessed. It is in developing a common understanding of the state of the WMA and where it is going that a future vision can be developed. This vision — effectively a high-order strategic statement — provides the basis for the CMS.

Guidelines for and consultation on Catchment Management Strategies (NWA, No 36 of 1998)

Box 1.3

- 1) The Minister may establish guidelines for the preparation of catchment management strategies.
- 2) In developing a catchment management strategy, a catchment management agency must consult with
 - a) the Minister;
 - b) any organ of state which has an interest in the content, effect or implementation of the catchment management strategy; and
 - c) any persons, or their representative organisations
 - i) whose activities affect or might affect water resources within its water management area; and
 - ii) who have an interest in the content, effect or implementation of the catchment management strategy.
- 1) A catchment management agency must, before the publication of a notice in terms of section 8(5)(a), refer to the Minister for consideration and determination, any proposed component of a catchment management strategy which in the opinion of the catchment management agency
 - a) raises a material question of policy; or
 - b) raises a question concerning
 - i) the relationship between the Department and other organs of state; or
 - ii) the relationship between organs of state and their respective roles in developing or implementing a catchment management strategy.

1.6 Generational Catchment Management Strategies

Although more fully addressed in Chapter 4, it is extremely important to note that the catchment management strategies will be **generational** in nature meaning that no CMS will be complete from the start. Moreover, the CMS is not a static planning instrument as it will be reviewed and improved over time. These issues are clearly recognised in S 8(3) of the NWA, which notes the following:

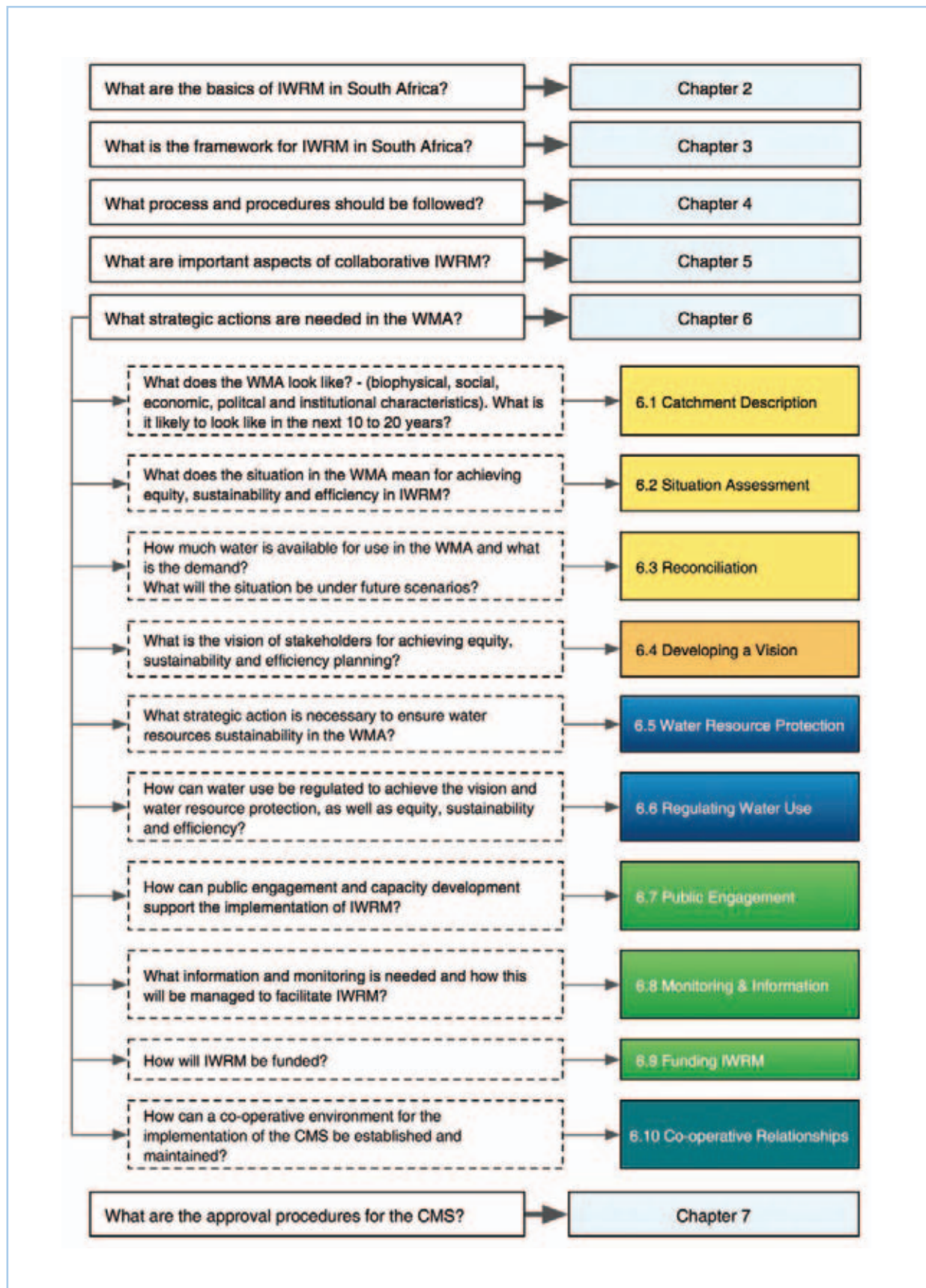
A catchment management strategy

- a) may be established in a phased and progressive manner and *in separate components over time*; and
- b) must be reviewed at intervals of not more than five years.

An important issue to note here is that the CMA will be responsible for functions that are **delegated and assigned progressively** over time. This clearly signals that the CMA will oversee the development of the CMS in **collaboration** with DWAF. The extent of responsibilities will thus change over time as functions are delegated or assigned.

The contents of these guidelines were developed based on the engagement and generous inputs of national and regional stakeholders at various contact sessions held over 14 months. This included a collaborative session with the newly-established Inkomati CMA Board. The structure of the document and chapter contents reflect many of the issues and questions that participants felt should be addressed in a guideline of this nature.

In summary, this guideline presents the CMA with background for developing a CMS (Chapters 2 – 5), and a framework for preparing core strategies of the CMS (Chapter 6). The guideline should be used in conjunction with the series of DWAF guidelines that have been produced over the past decade (see Appendix 2). Reference to these documents is also made in Chapter 6. An overview of the structure of the guideline is presented in Figure 1.3.

**Figure 1.3**

Road map to the CMS guidelines. The scheme shows how the guidelines are structured. Colour-coding is maintained throughout for easy reference.

The underlying principles, contents and roles and responsibilities are dealt with in **Chapter 2**. Additionally, how the CMS can address specifically the issues of sustainability, equity and efficiency is also elaborated.

Chapter 3 provides the overall framework for the CMS and the objectives and outcomes associated with each component of the strategy. The issue of timing and sequence are the subject of **Chapter 4**.

Chapter 5 addresses the very important issues of collaboration, participation and capacity development. Much of the information in this chapter provides the basis for stakeholder engagement. **Chapter 6** is the essence of the guideline. It is here that the core sub-strategies that comprise a CMS are provided. The chapter thus consists of **ten guidelines** (see Guidelines 6.1 – 6.10).

Each guideline follows the same format:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Objective and outcome
- 3) What you need to know to develop the sub-strategy
- 4) Potential contents of the sub-strategy
- 5) Checklist; and
- 6) A procedural diagramme which offers a summary of the process needed to develop the sub-strategy.

They have been written in such a way that the “Objective and outcome”, together with the sections “Contents of the sub-strategy” and “Checklist” can serve, we hope, as part of a terms of reference for a drafting team.

Chapter 7 addresses the approval process of the CMS by DWAF.

Finally, it is important to note that this guideline cannot be a comprehensive guide, nor can it be everything to everyone. Its contents will be informed and refined as CMAs experiment with different options and mechanisms for implementing their IWRM.