

## Urban Waste Water Governance in South Africa: A Case Study of Stellenbosch

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**Abstract :** Due to climate change, population growth and rapid urbanization, the demand for water in South Africa is inevitably surpassing supply. To address similar challenges globally, there has been a paradigm shift from conventional urban waste water management &ldquo;government&rdquo; to a &ldquo;governance&rdquo; paradigm. From the governance paradigm, Integrated Urban Water Management (IUWM) principle emerged. This principle emphasizes efficient urban waste water treatment and production of high-quality recyclable effluent. In so doing mimicking natural water systems, in their processes of recycling water efficiently, and averting depletion of natural water resources.&nbsp; The objective of this study was to investigate drivers of shifting the current urban waste water management approach from a &ldquo;government&rdquo; paradigm towards &ldquo;governance&rdquo;. The study was conducted through Interactive Management soft systems research methodology which follows a qualitative research design. A case study methodology was employed, guided by realism research philosophy. Qualitative data gathered were analyzed through interpretative structural modelling using Concept Star for Professionals Decision-Making tools (CSPDM) version 3.64.&nbsp; The constructed model deduced that the main drivers in shifting the Stellenbosch municipal urban waste water management towards IUWM &ldquo;governance&rdquo; principles are mainly social elements characterized by overambitious expectations of the public on municipal water service delivery, mis-interpretation of the constitution on access to adequate clean water and sanitation as a human right and perceptions on recycling water by different communities. Inadequate public participation also emerged as a strong driver. However, disruptive events such as draught may play a positive role in raising an awareness on the value of water, resulting in a shift on the perceptions on recycled water. Once the social elements are addressed, the alignment of governance and administration elements towards IUWM are achievable. Hence, the point of departure for the desired paradigm shift is the change of water service authorities and serviced communities&rsquo; perceptions and behaviors towards shifting urban waste water management approaches from &ldquo;government&rdquo; to &ldquo;governance&rdquo; paradigm.

**Keywords :** integrated urban water management, urban water system, wastewater governance, wastewater treatment works

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