

National Water Week: An opportunity to tap into new standards

South Africa can significantly improve water and energy efficiency by aligning its tap labelling programme with international standards, according to a [new study](#) by the South African National Energy Development Institute (Sanedi) and Clasp.



Source: Supplied

The report, titled *In-depth Assessment of Water Efficiency Opportunities in South Africa*, was released ahead of National Water Week marked on 20 to 26 March, which aims to raise awareness and call to action renewed value for this scarce resource.

In 2018, the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan identified a water supply deficit of 17% by 2030 for the country, putting water efficiency under the spotlight at a time when parts of the country were feeling the pinch of prolonged drought conditions.

The master plan also targets developing a water efficiency labelling scheme for taps and fixtures by 2025 in line with international standards.

New standards could solve SA's water crises

The report found that standards for taps and showerheads could address the country's link to water and energy crises by

reducing the use of water and electricity needed to heat some of that water.

In response to this goal, the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) Special Committee, participated in the International Standards Organisation (ISO) project to develop an ISO standard for water labelling systems. The SABS considers the standard, once published, to be applied to establish a water efficiency labelling program in South Africa.



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In establishing a water efficiency labelling program, there must be “uniformity between the requirements of all related South African National Standards (SANS) and international tap standards. Therefore, the gap analysis performed in this study aims to present recommendations to allow for such uniformity,” the report states.

“This report seeks to advance water and in turn, energy efficiency in South Africa by making recommendations for alignment to international standards which have improved efficiency globally. It encourages a “flow follows function approach” in the labelling and standardisation of taps and installations,” said Ashanti Mogosetsi project manager for appliance standards and labelling at Sanedi.

South Africa predominantly imports commercially available taps. To solve the problem of inefficient water use - which can typically increase utility bills - countries are increasingly standardising taps and fixtures to maximise water-saving.

Labeling programme implementation could enhance water efficiency

Among the recommendations of the report are that, when South Africa implements the labeling programme as per the master plan, water flow rate targets should be set to improve water efficiency, while labelling should be defined by the function of the faucet.

The report suggests the best minimum and maximum flow rates that would not compromise the user's experience. It recommends that the South African National Standards should introduce uniform descriptions of tap types and consider where the taps will be used as well as their functions. It also warns of unintended consequences in which flow rates are reduced to save water but users end up showering longer, for example.



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Toilets, taps and showers typically consume 40 to 60% of the total annual potable water use in domestic and commercial areas. This is why water efficient fixtures installed in taps for various users typically save water, energy and costs in both commercial and residential buildings.

“We encourage South Africans to engage with the report and take steps to align their plumbing needs with the country’s evolving regulatory framework. Conserving water also conserves energy, which reduces your annual water and electricity bills,” Mogosetsi said.

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