



SOUTH AFRICA SEEKS DANISH EXPERTISE ON WATER

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STRATEGIC SECTOR COOPERATION

Partnering with Denmark for the Sustainable
Development Goals



Water scarcity is a serious problem in South Africa. The average South African uses 230 litres of water a day, which is considerably more than the average Dane. South Africa has been badly struck by climate change and is already among the world's 30 driest countries. A Strategic Sector Cooperation between the Danish Ministry of Environment and Food, authorities in South Africa and the Danish Embassy in Pretoria will contribute towards developing the water supply in South Africa.

“The set-up around the water supply in South Africa is well-considered, but its implementation is lagging behind in the municipalities. Due to Denmark’s experiences, we can offer help in this area, both on a technological level and with advice. Our job is to contribute in areas where the South Africans are already engaged, so that they can reach their goals more quickly,” explains Philip Grinder Pedersen, chief adviser for the Danish Environmental Protection Agency.

WATER EFFICIENCY IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY

The cooperation focuses on five specific areas, these being groundwater, water wastage, water efficiency in industry, water sector financing as well as research and innovation.

In the area of water efficiency in industry, particular focus has been placed on the food industry. In September 2017, representatives from South Africa came to Denmark to visit Danish institutions that work with regulation on water consumption and Danish companies that work with water efficiency. The Danish food industry is a global leader in water efficiency – driven by regulation, high water and wastewater charges and support for public-private partnerships on analyses of production processes and technological development. The Danish ‘triple-helix’ model involves an open and successful collaboration between the public and private sectors and learning institutions. This type of close project and solution-oriented collaboration is of particular interest to the South Africans.

INSPIRATION FROM A DANISH PARTNERSHIP

Christian Hald-Mortensen, special adviser for the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, explains that the hope is that South Africa can learn from the ‘Danish partnership for Resource and water efficient Industrial food Production’ (DRIP).

“The DRIP-partnership is a unique structure in Denmark that brings together technological partners, governmental stakeholders, advisors and water-intensive companies such as Arla and Danish Crown. We would like to convince our partners in South Africa that they should have the same approach to their work on water supply. This would greatly benefit both South Africa and Danish export of water technology,” explains Christian Hald-Mortensen.

“There is a great demand for expertise on water in South Africa, so we experience huge interest in this project from the South Africans,” continues Christian Hald-Mortensen.

A PLATFORM FOR DANISH COMPANIES

One important element in the project in South Africa is to develop a platform for Danish companies so they can contribute, both in the long and short term, with knowledge and products. It is estimated that South Africa has an investment backlog of around 40 billion euro – a massive challenge, but also a great business opportunity. The trade office at the Danish Embassy is benefiting greatly from the network and sector understanding that this partnership has developed.

“Water sector cooperation has given much greater depth and substance to our water sector understanding and qualifies the advice which we can give to Danish companies. The water sector collaboration has further strengthened our foreign policy position in the sector – when the government seeks advice on how to structure financing models for building and restoring water infrastructure they come to us,” explains the Danish Ambassador to South Africa, Trine Rask Thygesen.

The company Kamstrup, which produces advanced water meters, among other products, sees great opportunities in the South African market. *“The cooperation with the water sector project in South Africa has helped us gain a better understanding of the needs of the South African water market. This is crucial to ensure that our solutions create real value for our South African customers,”* says Petrus Van Heerden, director for Kamstrup Africa.



FACTS

South Africa has one of the largest economies in Africa, but the country also has huge inequity between the rich and poor. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, the vast majority of South Africans have gained access to water, but water scarcity still hampers economic development and there are only limited possibilities for increasing surface water abstraction. Groundwater is a suitable alternative in many places, including in Cape Town, which currently only has water for a few months, but on a national level it only covers 15% of consumption.

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