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SOUTH AFRICA RESHAPES INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS WITH WATER HAVING A SEAT AT THE TABLE

With world population forever increasing, countries and governments are finding ways and means to elevate and move their countries' economies growth. Infrastructure development has been playing a crucial role in human development over centuries from ancient civilizations such as the Aztecs to the more modern terms of developed and developing countries. Whether it be grey or green, infrastructure development always remained 'King' but with green infrastructure of any form receiving 'the lady in red attention'.

Africa though is still lagging to close its infrastructure deficits. The African Development Bank estimates that the continent's infrastructure financing needs will be as much as \$170 billion a year by 2025, with an estimated gap of around \$100 billion a year. Consequently, water infrastructure project development is estimated to require \$64 billion annually to meet the 2025 Africa water vision of water security for all.

This is almost half the total to deliver the molecular compound consisting of polar molecules that have a bent shape for human and natural prosperity!

With the 2025 vision of water security for all, African countries are designing special purpose vehicles and various financing instruments to meet socioeconomic goals. Following years of a steady decline of infrastructure spending, one country that is doing just that is South Africa with the launch of the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium South Africa (SIDSSA) in 2020. The inaugural SIDSSA adopted a robust project process and consultation methodology affectionally known as the Sustainable Infrastructure Development System methodology (SIDS methodology). The methodology includes a vigorous process of project/program identification, consideration, evaluation, approval, and implementation of workable infrastructure to ensure bankability.

The methodology is supported by the minister at the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), and it is un-

dertaken by a highly qualified and technically skilled team of Infrastructure South Africa (ISA). The important function of the evaluation method is to ensure that projects are functional from a financial, inter-sectoral, and needs perspective. As a result, ISA oversees and is responsible for facilitating the innovative structure that is seen as the single point of entry for infrastructure developments in South Africa. At the launch (June 2020), 276 catalytic project submissions were made across six sectors.

'Water has a seat at the table'

With South Africa facing constraints in water security and delivery, 42 water-related projects were presented amongst the initial 276 with 11 deemed ready for fast-tracking and designated as Strategic Integrated Projects (SIP) by the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission under SIP 19: Water and Sanitation and guided by the ISA Water and Sanitation technical working group (TWG). The projects have a combined value of \$6.93 billion and range from the different water infrastructure classes with some investment-ready (the multinational Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands

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Water Project, Gauteng and the Phase 2A of the Mokolo Crocodile River (West) Water Augmentation Project (MCWAP), in Limpopo) and a few still in the preparation stages.

These projects fall in line with the country's Economic Response and Recovery Plan (ERRP) and the economic response plan to COVID-19 which outlines a \$64.56 billion investment drive through the infrastructure fund with the related water projects accounting for 11% of the 10-year plan. South Africa National Development Plan of 2030 envisions "universal and reliable access to water of acceptable quality and quantity in support of a strong economy and a healthy environment for the people". With this only being 8 years away, these projects are significant drivers to an inclusive economy and a water resilient future for all South Africans.