

DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION

NO. 7960

25 September 2026

NATIONAL WATER ACT, 1998

**PROPOSED WATER RESOURCE CLASSES AND RESOURCE QUALITY
OBJECTIVES FOR THE UPPER ORANGE RIVER CATCHMENT**

I, Pemmy Majodina, in my capacity as Minister of Water and Sanitation, and duly authorised in terms of section 13(4) of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), hereby publish for public comment, the notice on the proposed water resources classes and the associated resource quality objectives, in the Schedule hereto and intended to be issued in terms of section 13(1) of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998).

Any person who wishes to submit written comments in connection with the proposed water resources classes and resource quality objectives is hereby invited to do so within 60 days from the date of publication hereof by -

- (a) Posting such comments to the following address:

Department of Water and Sanitation
Private Bag X 313
Pretoria
0001

or

- (b) Emailing such comments to the following address: Ms Lebogang Matlala

Email: matlala@dws.gov.za

Comments must be addressed to the Director: Water Resource Classification and marked for the attention of Ms Lebogang Matlala. Comments received after the closing date shall not be considered.



MS PEMMY MAJODINA
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

DATE: 14-09-2026

SCHEDULE PROPOSED WATER RESOURCE CLASSES AND RESOURCE QUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR THE UPPER ORANGE RIVER CATCHMENT

1 DEFINITIONS

In this Schedule any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) shall have the meaning so assigned and, unless the context indicates otherwise -

“Class I water resource” means a water resource which is minimally used; and in which the configuration of ecological categories of the water resources within a catchment, results in an overall condition of that water resource that is minimally altered from its pre-development condition, and as defined in the Water Resource Classification System Regulations

“Class II water resource” means a water resource which is moderately used; and in which the configuration of ecological categories of the water resources within a catchment, results in an overall condition of that water resource that is moderately altered from its pre-development condition and as defined in the Water Resource Classification System Regulations

“Class III water resource” means a water resource which is heavily used; and in which the configuration of ecological categories of the water resources within a catchment, results in an overall condition of that water resource that is significantly altered from its pre-development condition and as defined in the Water Resource Classification System Regulations

“Discontinuous wetland complex” means a discontinuously channelled valley bottom wetland in which the channel is not continuous throughout the wetland hydrogeomorphic unit and is characterised by both channelled and unchanneled sections

“Water Resource Classification System” means the Regulations for the Establishment of the Classification System, 2010 as prescribed in Government Notice No. 33541 R. 810 of 17 September 2010

“Ecological category” means the ecological condition of that water resource in terms of the deviation of its biophysical components from a predevelopment condition

“Ecological water requirements” in relation to a water resource, means the quantity and quality of water of that resource that is required to maintain the said water resource in its assigned ecological category

“Integrated unit of analysis” means a water resource catchment that incorporates a socio-economic zone, but is defined by a watershed

“Percentile” means the non-exceedance probability of a set of data i.e., at the 95th percentile, 95 percent of values must be less than or equal to the numerical limit; and at 50th percentile, 50 percent of values must be less than or equal to the numerical limit

“Present ecological state” means the current health or integrity of various biological attributes of the resource, compared to the natural or close to natural reference conditions

“Recommended ecological category” means a category indicating the realistically attainable ecological management target for a water resource

“Resource quality objectives” means descriptive qualitative statements and numerical values for the biological, physical, and chemical attributes of the significant water resources throughout the catchments

“Resource unit” means a basic unit of a water resource to which Resource Quality Objectives will apply

“Target ecological category” means the ultimate target to achieve a sustainable system both ecologically and economically, considering the present ecological state and recommended ecological category.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE WATER RESOURCE

- (1) The water resource classes and Resource Quality Objectives (RQOs) are determined for all or part of significant water resources within the Upper Orange River Catchment set out below:

Water Management Area: Vaal - Orange

Drainage Region: C51A-H, C51J-M; C52A-H, C52J-M; D12A-F; D13A – H; D13J – M; D14A – H, D14J and K; Portions of D15G and H; Portion of D18L and K; D21D – G, portion of D21A and D21H; D22A, D22B, portions of D22C and D22D, D22G, portions of D22H and D22J, Portion of D23A, D23C – H and D23J; D24A-H, D24J – L; D31A – E; D32A – H, D32J and K; D33A – K; D34A – G; D35A – H, D35J and K

River(s): Upper Orange River, Modder-Riet River

- (2) The date from which the RQOs will apply shall be the date stipulated in the *Gazette* wherein the final approved RQOs for the Upper Orange River Catchment in the Vaal - Orange Water Management Area will be published.

3 DETERMINATION OF THE CLASS OF WATER RESOURCE IN TERMS OF SECTION 13(1)(a) OF THE NATIONAL WATER ACT, 1998 (ACT NO. 36 of 1998)

- (1) The proposed water resource classes per Integrated Unit of Analysis (IUA), which are in accordance with the Water Resource Classification System, for the Upper Orange River Catchment are as listed in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 1 of Annexure A.
- (2) The IUAs in the Upper Orange River Catchment are listed in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 2 of Annexure A.
- (3) A summary of the surface water Resource Units (RUs) and quaternary catchments are listed in Table 3 and indicated in
- (4) Figure 3 of Annexure A.
- (5) A summary of the Groundwater Resource Units (GRUs) and quaternary catchments are listed in Table 4 and indicated in Figure 4 of Annexure A.
- (6) A summary of the prioritised wetlands is set out in Table 5 and illustrated in Figure 5 of Annexure A.
- (7) A summary of the Water Resource Classes per IUA and Ecological Categories are listed in Table 6 of Annexure A.

4 WATER RESOURCES WITH PROPOSED RESOURCE QUALITY OBJECTIVES DETERMINED

Table 7 of Annexure A provides:

- (i) the listed IUA in the Upper Orange River Catchment for which RQOs are proposed
- (ii) the selected Water Resources (Rivers, Wetlands and Groundwater) for which RQOs are proposed; and
- (iii) reference to subsequent tables that list the proposed RQOs per selected sub-components (quantity, quality, habitat, biota or groundwater) per Resource Unit.
 - a. RQOs for rivers and dams per IUA and RU within the Upper Orange River Catchment are specified in Tables 8 – 17.
 - b. RQOs for priority wetland clusters and systems in selected RUs in the Upper Orange River Catchment are set out in Tables 18- 25.
 - c. RQOs for groundwater in GRUs in the Upper Orange River Catchment are as specified and set out in Tables 26 – 34

The Annexure to this Notice, containing the proposed water resource classes and Resource Quality Objectives, can be accessed from:

<https://www.dws.gov.za/WEM/WRCS/uo.aspx>

Or requested from:

Director: Water Resource Classification
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178 Francis Baard Street
Private Bag x 313
Pretoria
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