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## **Magalies Water continues with its innovative internship programme**

***Waterboard continues to leverage its CAPEX programme to accelerate water sector skills development for a second year***

On 23 January 2014, Magalies Water launched the pilot of the innovative *Magalies Water Capacity Building Programme*. The programme is designed to address the need for skilled and employable workers that Magalies Water and the broader water sector have identified, including engineers, technologists, technicians, artisans, scientists, process controllers, and plant operators, amongst others. Due to the resounding success of the pilot in 2014, the programme has been extended for a second year.

Magalies Water, which supplies water across parts of North West Province, Limpopo, and Gauteng, has a long-running internship programme to build capacity in its own organisation, in the municipalities in their area of supply, and in South Africa as a whole. However, exciting new opportunities for accelerated capacity building were found in the water board's extensive programme to upgrade existing and develop new water infrastructure to meet growing demand over its 42 000 km<sup>2</sup> area of supply. Some of these capital expenditure (CAPEX) projects are part of the Strategic Integrated Projects co-ordinated by the Presidency.

Infrastructure development is well known to be a powerful catalyst in job creation and skills development. However, the *Magalies Water Capacity Building Programme* goes far beyond the standard approach to on-the-job training: the engineering companies and contractors in the CAPEX programme were approached to participate and provide day-to-day supervision, as well as mentorship in civil, electrical, and mechanical work.

South Africa's dire scarcity of skills, from artisans, to technicians and technologists, through to engineers, is of major concern to all parties in the water sector, including government, parastatal, private, and educational role players. The *Magalies Water Capacity Building Programme* is unique in the way that it allows all of these role players to actively derive benefit from supporting the selected interns in their intensive year-long programme.

In addition to technical in-service training that the interns receive, the *Magalies Water Capacity Building Programme* draws on international mentoring best practices to allow for open channels of communication between the interns, their educational institutions, the contractors and professional service providers overseeing the interns, and Magalies Water itself.

This dynamic aspect of the programme allows for skills transfer to take place, not merely on a technical level between contractor and intern, but also between the contractors, educational institutions, and Magalies Water, all the while providing participants with sought after soft skills. Magalies Water continues to be supported by ONYXX Human Capital in the development and implementation of this unique capacity building mentorship programme.

The pilot launched on 23 January 2014, saw seven students across disciplines offered internships for the whole of 2014, comprising four TUT students/graduates and three FET students. Towards the end of 2014 the pilot of the programme was evaluated, the feedback and commitment from the contractors to continue with the programme and with their respective interns was unanimous. This feedback, coupled with the positive developmental results and personal feedback from the interns further reinforced that the programme was fulfilling Magalies Water's commitment to skills development and capacity building, and it was evident that continuing with the programme was key. Magalies Water took the strategic decision to not only extend the number of internships offered in 2015 to ten, but committed to retain all the 2014 interns for a second year if they weren't snapped up through this programme and evaluate it against a two year programme.

Subsequently due to the outstanding success of the programme, of the seven 2014 students, the two civil engineering artisans have found permanent employment within Magalies Water and the two electrical technologists and a civil technician student have found permanent employment outside of Magalies Water, two of them with their respective professional services providers. The remaining 2 students are continuing on the extended second year of the internship programme, and will continue being mentored by their respective professional services providers/contractors. The programme sees the addition of ten new students/graduates offered internships for the whole of 2015, comprising one UP graduate and nine TUT students/graduates. Nine of the new interns will be mentored by new professional service providers to the Capacity Building Mentorship Programme and the one

will be taken on by one of the 2014 contractors. Magalies Water hosted a Graduation and Inauguration Ceremony on 2 February 2015 at their Cullinan Treatment Plant, where their CE, Mr Mboniseni Dlamini thanked all the professional services providers for their support and commitment to the programme and the students.

After a research phase, three learning institutions were selected by Magalies Water to build strategic partnerships with to start the programme, including Further Education and Training in Brits (artisan level); Tshwane University of Technology (technician, technologist level); and University of Pretoria (engineer level).

The recruitment process for the candidates was designed not only to select the best candidates for the job description but also to educate all candidates about recruitment processes in the job market. Apart from two interview rounds, the candidates went through psychometric tests to find the best candidates that fitted the job criteria at three levels: who are they, what drives them, and what do they do?

The selected candidates were chosen to benefit from the programme and training initiatives in preparation for the job market, and it was identified in which areas they will need support. Once the students start, they and their mentors drawn from the Magalies Water infrastructure programme contractors will be guided by psychologists specialised in mentorship programmes, to enhance their relationship and make it effective for learning.

The mentees' soft skills training focuses on team dynamics, relationship building, conflict management, stress management, diversity management, and time management skills. Those who later on will have to register for their profession (technicians, technologists, 'engineers) will be prepared for this registration process.

Not only will the interns be trained, but also the mentors. The mentor training focuses on how to transfer skills, in terms of both technical skills and soft skills. Contractors and professional service providers on contracts for Magalies Water will be involved in the programme and in this way be capacitated.

With this ground-breaking programme, Magalies Water is living its vision of being an organisation that plays a key role in capacity building and in the water sector and in job creation in South Africa.

**ENDS**

# **Background information for editors**

## ***Magalies Water***

The waterboard Magalies Water was established in 1969, mainly to supply the needs of the platinum mines in the Rustenburg and Thabazimbi areas. For this purpose, the Vaalkop Water Treatment Works was constructed next to the Vaalkop Dam with an initial capacity of 18 Megalitres per day (MI/d). Currently the entity's infrastructure traverses three provinces: the North Wes (Bojanala), Limpopo (Waterberg) and Gauteng (part of Tshwane). The Magalies Water area of supply spans 42 000 square kilometres. Growth in water demand in the area of supply has resulted in the extension of the organisation's infrastructure and footprint in order to deliver water in bulk to these areas.

Magalies Water currently owns and operates the Vaalkop, Wallmansthal, Klipdrift and Cullinan Water Purification plants. In addition, Magalies Water also operates the Temba Water Purification Plants on behalf of City of Tshwane (CoT)

## ***Infrastructure Development***

Magalies Water has an extensive infrastructure programme for the upgrading of existing water infrastructure and for the development of new infrastructure. The total capital expenditure is in the order of 2 Billion ZAR. Some of the Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) projects are part of the Strategic Integrated Projects coordinated by the Presidency.

## ***Infrastructure Development and Skills Development***

Infrastructure development is a catalyst to job creation and skills development. Magalies Water plans to leverage their CAPEX programme to accelerate skills development in the water sector. The general skills that Magalies Water and the broader water sector have identified as a need are Engineers, Technicians, Technologists, Artisans, Scientists, Process Controllers, and Plant operators among others.

## ***Magalies Water Capacity Building Programme***

The waterboard Magalies Water has recognized the need for capacity building in its own organisation, in the municipalities in their area of supply and in South Africa as a whole. Already before the launch of the Magalies Water Capacity Building Programme, Magalies Water has been taking on interns.

Magalies Water:

- strives to be an organisation that plays a key role in capacity building and in the water sector and in job creation in South Africa;

- sees advantages in having a pool of interns that can feed into a higher calibre of young employees, who have been preselected, trained and mentored in work related to their own organisation;
- sees advantages in making experienced workforce enthusiastic about transferring skills and training them how to do so.

Magalies water therefore decided that capacity building for students and unemployed graduates will be part and parcel of the infrastructure CAPEX programme, in first instance at artisan, technician and technologists level, soon to be followed by engineering students.

**Table 1 Organisations who offered mentorship 2014**

Ultimate Dynamic	Civil Engineering Contractor
MDC Murray Dickson & Safe Cred Joint Venture	Civil Engineering Contractor
PCI Africa	Mechanical contractor
D.J.J. Conradie & Partners cc	Electrical consulting Engineer
CSVwater	Consulting Engineers

**Table 2 Organisations who have committed to mentorship 2015**

Baitseanape Consulting Engineers	Consulting Engineers
Endecon Ubuntu	Consulting Engineers
Moedi wa Batho	Consulting Engineers
UWP Consulting	Consulting Engineers
LTE Consulting	Consulting Engineering
PCI Africa	Mechanical contractor
CSVwater	Consulting Engineers

The students will be working in the engineering companies where the design works will be done for the Wallmansthal, Vaalkop, Mafenya, Pilensberg and Tzaneen projects where after they will commence with site works on these sites.

As in the pilot, many organisations are involved, and students are from different disciplines and levels, the organisation of the programme is fairly complicated, but also continues to offer ample opportunity for learning.