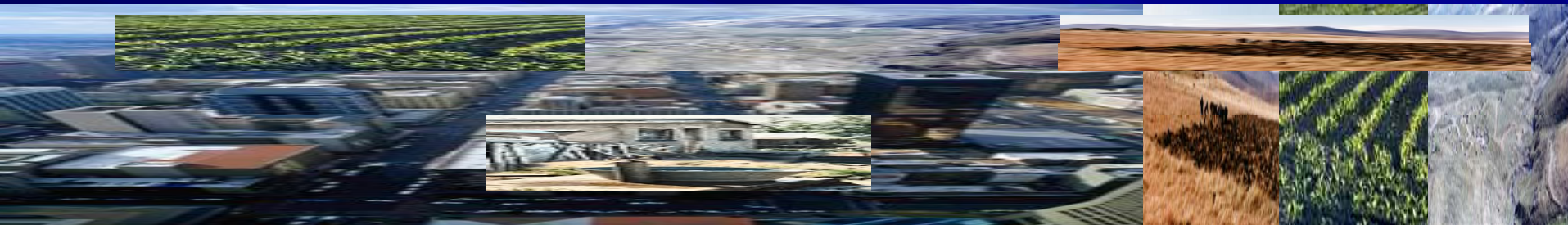


Debunking the capacity myth:

Finding, mobilizing and growing the capacity for water resources management in South Africa



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Water Sector Colloquium, Pretoria, 14 September 2005



Outline of presentation

- Some of the prevailing myths regarding capacity in the SA water sector (HM)
- A slice of the reality regarding capacity in the water sector (HM)
- The reality outside the water sector (JK)
- Approaches being used in other sectors to cope with the new reality (JK)
- Concluding remarks



Take-home messages

- On taking a closer look, things may not be what they seem



- Our approaches to capacity building need to catch up with the new realities

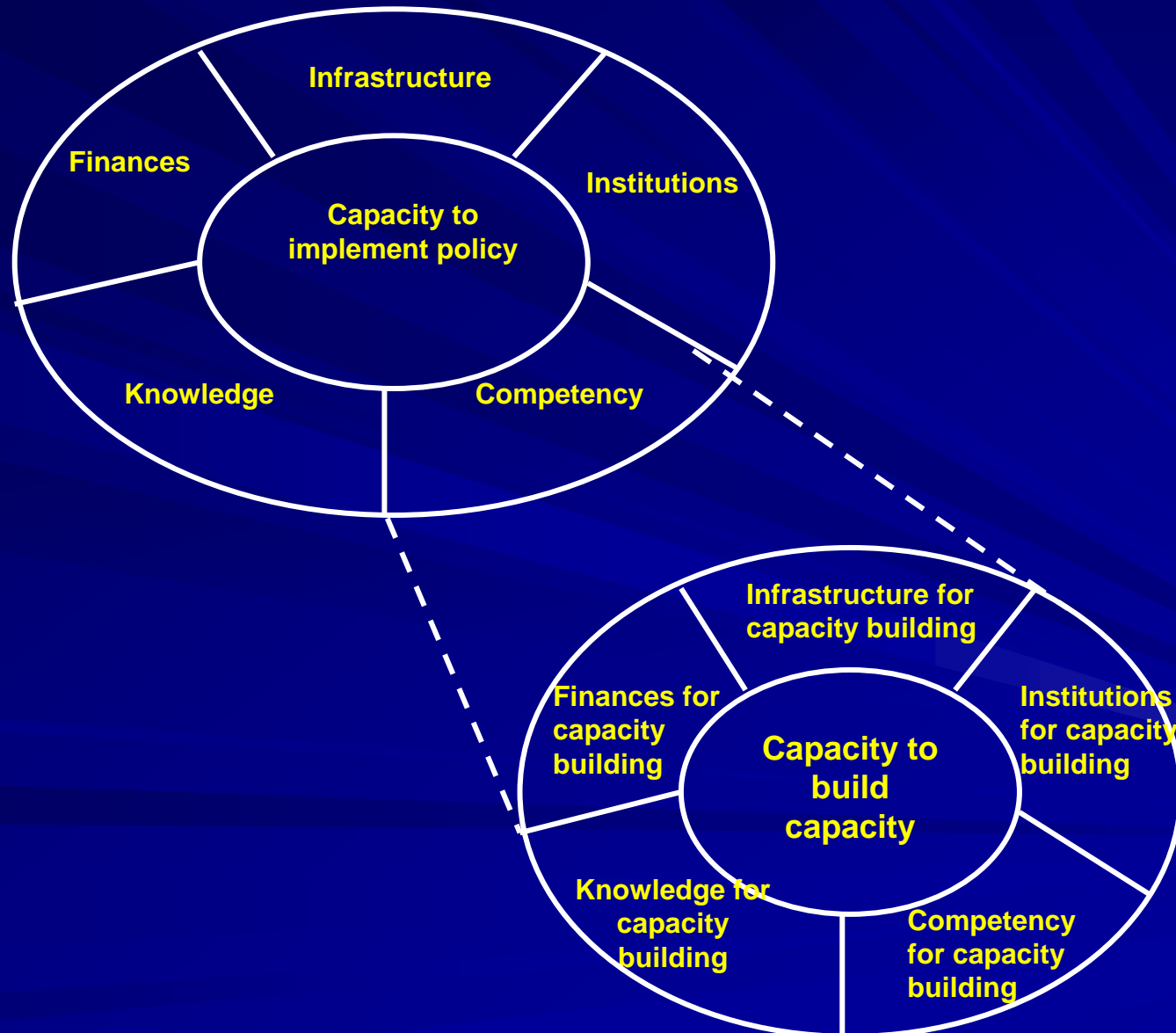
Prevailing myths

M1: Training = capacity building

M2: We don't have enough capacity to implement the water policy

M3: We cannot retain skilled, experienced water professionals in South Africa

Myth 1: Capacity building = training



Myth 2: We don't have enough capacity to implement the water policy

Reality:

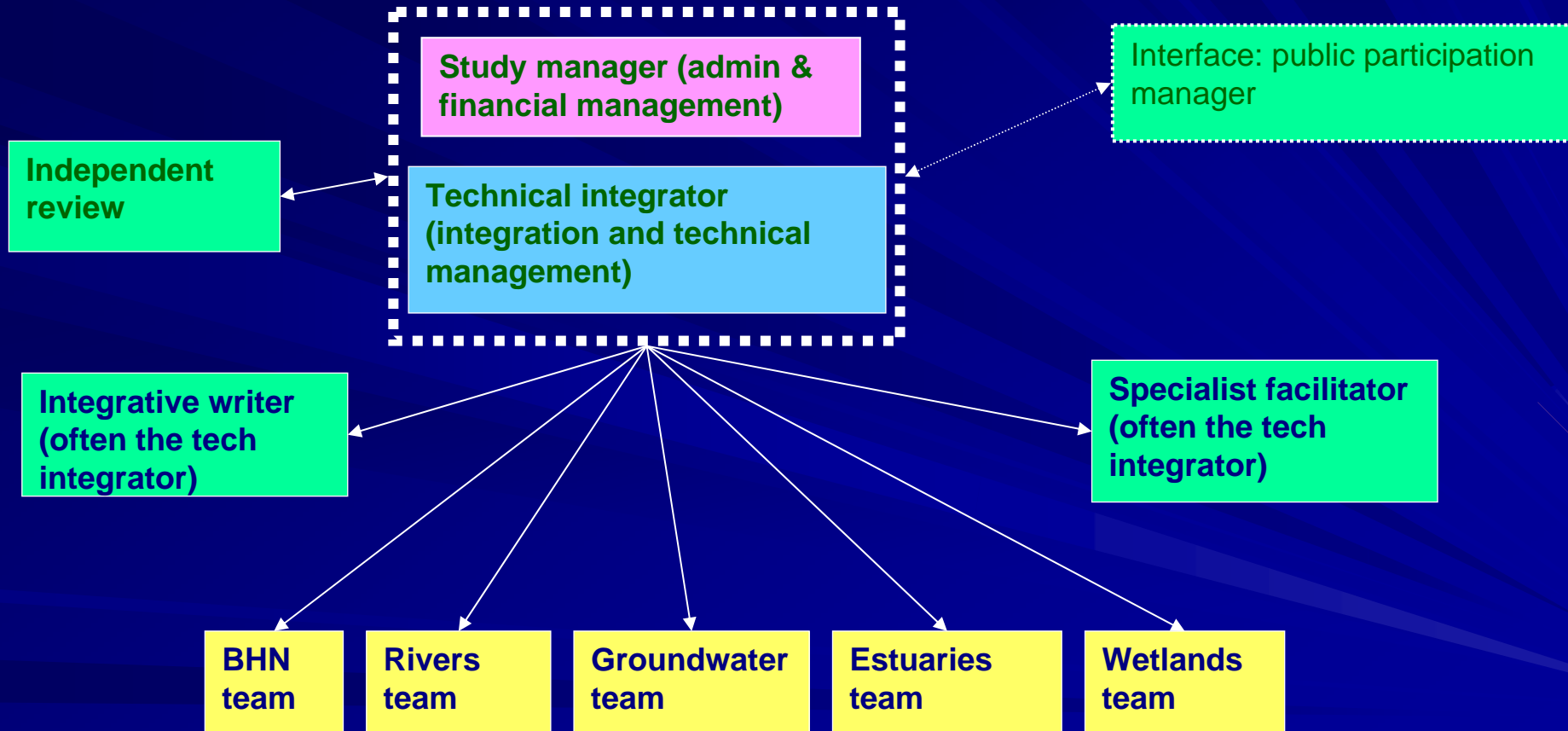
- We are short of capacity in certain key areas/disciplines but not across the board
- We don't have enough capacity to implement the water policy **all around the country, all at once** (but we knew that all along)
- There are several different and sometimes conflicting estimates of capacity requirements and gaps (quantitative and qualitative)

Current vacancy rates in some SA government departments

| Dept | Posts | Posts filled | Vacancy rate |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Agriculture | 3363 | 2 380 | 29.2% |
| <i>DWAF</i> | 23 431 | 17 660 | 24.6% |
| Health | 1 569 | 1 334 | 14.98% |
| DEAT | 1 229 | 896 | 27.1% |
| Education | 887 | 636 | 28.3% |

Generic technical team composition for comprehensive RDM determination

(from RDM Capacity Audit report 2003)



Specialist capacity gaps 2003-2005 for RDM determinations related to riverine ecosystems (person-years).

| Discipline | Required by 2005 | Available in 2005 (not f/t) | Probable gap in 2005 |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Fluvial geomorphology | 0.72 | 0.45 | -0.27 |
| Hydrology | 1.46 | 5.25 | -0.46 |
| Riverine ecology | 0.42 | 7.85 | 2.73 |
| Botany | 0.72 | 0.75 | 0.03 |
| Fish | 0.72 | 5.7 | 3.73 |
| Invertebrates | 0.72 | 6.1 | 4.38 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River hydraulics | 1.5 | 1.7 | -0.75 |
| Water quality | 1.14 | 5.2 | 1.66 |

Capacity gaps 2003-2005 for RDM supporting disciplines (person-years)

| Discipline | Required by 2005 | Available in 2005 (not f/t) | Probable gap in 2005 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Hydrologist | 3.323 ¹ | 5.25 | - 2.323 |
| Freshwater quality specialist | 2.204 ² | 5.2 | 0.596 |
| RDM study manager | 1.965 ³ | 3.35 | - 0.765 |
| RDM technical integrator | 5.108 ³ | 2.95 | - 4.008 |
| Social assessment specialist | 0.48 ³ | 0.6 | 0.12 |
| Resource economist | 0.54 ³ | 1 | - 0.54 |
| Public participation manager | 0.84 ³ | 1.15 | - 0.14 |

1. Includes hydrologist capacity required for rivers, estuaries, wetlands and basic human needs studies

2. Includes freshwater quality specialist capacity required for rivers and basic human needs

3. Includes supporting capacity required for rivers, wetlands, estuaries, groundwater and basic human needs

From: National audit of capacity requirements for RDM determination (2003)

On taking a closer look...

- The capacity shortfalls, in this field and others, may not be as bad as we thought or predicted.
- *However.....almost all of the technical capacity is still located outside the public sector, and will remain so*

Myth 3: We cannot retain skilled experienced people in the water sector

Reality:

- We have great difficulty in retaining skilled, experienced specialists and technical managers in the **public sector**,
- but
- there is still capacity in the South African water sector as a whole –
 - The challenge is to find innovative ways to mobilise that capacity (before international consulting groups and donor agencies mobilize it for projects outside SA!)

Reality Outside the Water Sector

“ Alas things are not what they used to be”

Opening words in the Prysse Papyrus, about 600 years old, the oldest manuscript in existence

Most civilizations in the world have collapsed because of institutional implosion and not because of wars or revolutions

International perspective

- The current idea of a job was invented during the Industrial Revolution.

- It has become out of synch with the need for flexible employment and information-based economies

- Organizations are being transformed from a structure built out of jobs to a field of work needing to be done



- The work needing to be done no longer fits the traditional job description
- Skills and expertise have become a commodity, it can be bought and sold:
 - it is the UK's biggest export product
 - Saudi Arabia has imported 3 million skilled workers and has built cultural villages for them

- Public sector staff establishment is leveling off or decreasing
- Employment of consultants is increasing
- The traditional view of government functions is changing – political control can be retained if management and implementation is outsourced

Africa perspective

- 70 000 highly qualified and skilled people leave Africa annually (World Bank)
- 60% of medical students in Ghana who qualified between 1986 and 1995 have left the country



- In Zambia only 400 of the 1600 medical doctors are still in the country

South African perspective

- Post-1961, jobs have been politicized and skills not considered to be a strategic resource. In 1961 SA's economy was stronger than that of Japan!
- Post-1994: Politicization of jobs and the loss of skills coincided with job losses of unskilled workers
- Public sector consultancy spending increased to R21 billion in 2004/5
- Dual public service is developing

- The institutional and capacity constraints of policies are not defined prior to their adoption and implementation
- “Capacity readiness” of provincial and local governments not pre-determined
- Policies place a huge administrative burden on existing limited capacity
- Impact of HIV/AIDS is the highest at the middle management level
- 74 of 231 local authorities do not employ any technical experts

Approaches to Deal With the New Reality

OPTIONS:

- **Drift** - Go with the flow
- **Defensive Innovation** – Preserve the old in new circumstances
- **Innovation without change** – Adopt the new rhetoric but with token change
- **Crisis management** - Reactive response
- **Comprehensive approach** – capacity building and management of strategic resource

Initiatives by Government

- Review of skills of the senior management service – housing, education, health, justice
- “Scarce skills allowance” to retain and recruit – minerals and energy, WC: transport, agric., public works
- Mentoring
- Training
- Importing scarce skills

Guiding Principles

- Refrain from crisis management and *ad hoc* initiatives
- See the interrelationships between issues – systems thinking
- Focus on the real causes of capacity constraints and not on the symptoms
- **Capacity building = enabling work environment** (processes, systems, support) + **training**

Lessons from Multi Sector Capacity Building Programmes

- Integrated Provincial Support Programme (IPSP)
- DPSA
- Public Service Reform Programme (PSP) –
DPSA, PSC, SAMDI
- Infrastructure Delivery Improvement Programme
– Nat. Treasury, DoE, DoPW, DBSA,
CIDB, Provinces

Lessons of Experience

- Follow a programme cycle approach
- Establish management capacity in the department – PMU- traditional project management not adequate
- Procurement is a component and not the solution
- The planning and design phase is critical – assessment is important
- Assessment to identify the causes of capacity constraints
- Adequate risk analysis and mitigation

- Do not use standard packaged models but unique incremental solutions focusing on the causes of the problems
- Identify key leverage points and use these as the basis for interventions
- Buy-in and commitment at different levels
- Alignment and institutionalisation
- Stakeholder management
- Development of “enabling environment tools”
- Monitoring and evaluation

The big question(s)

During 1994-1998, the water sector mobilized around the water reform process...

Isn't it time all the players (public, private and academic) mobilised around a shared vision for capacity building?

And if so, let's

- Find inspired and inspiring leadership
- Ensure long-term commitment from institutions across the sector
- Value skills and expertise as a strategic resource
- Find innovative ways to utilize this resource
- Learn from others

Thank you.....

