

Strengthening governance and institutional structures in the South African water sector

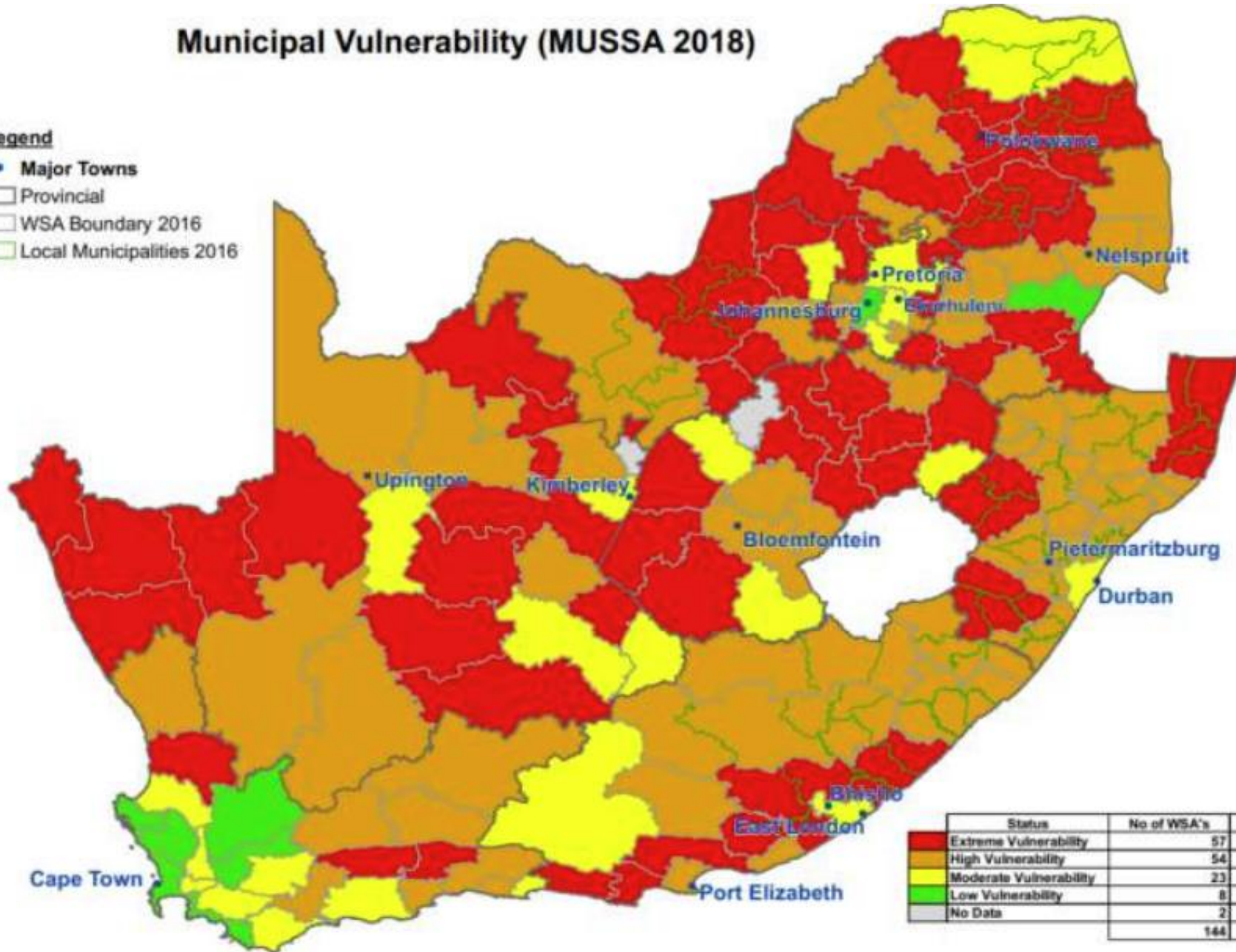
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Some context

- A confused institutional arrangement with gaps and overlaps
- The ministry of water and sanitation is both a player and regulator and conflicted, especially when it comes to regulating the activities of water boards
- The national ministry is responsible for large dams, and the minister is the shareholder of water boards which were initially intended to be potable bulk water providers
- At a municipal level, about 144 municipalities are Water Services Authorities, with the authority to provide water services in their areas of operation, out of a total of 278 municipalities. But government owned water boards are now also WSA's
- The decision as to which municipalities are WSA's lies with the minister of local government and not the minister of water and sanitation
- Only 6% of all WSA's considered themselves to operate at a low level of vulnerability in 2018 and Covid19 has worsened the situation
- There is no economic regulator for the sector and limited capacity or appetite to regulate other aspects of service provision
- It is important to balance the need for efficiency and sustainability, with the need to be responsive to customer's needs

Municipal Vulnerability (MUSSA 2018)

- Legend**
- Major Towns
 - Provincial
 - WSA Boundary 2016
 - Local Municipalities 2016



Status	No of WSA's	%
Extreme Vulnerability	57	40%
High Vulnerability	54	38%
Moderate Vulnerability	23	16%
Low Vulnerability	8	6%
No Data	2	1%
	144	100%

What needs to be done to address institutional issues

- Introduce an independent economic regulator for the sector
- Reduce the number of WSA'S
- Place decisions relating to authority for the components of the water services value chain under one ministry
- Create responsive, viable institutions

Water use issues to address

- Poor water demand management at the municipal level is the key driver of inefficient water use: average NRW is above 40% in SA and per capita gross daily consumption is 237 litres, compared to the world average of 173 litres
- Water quality is dependent primarily on addressing non-point source runoff from informal settlements and non-compliant sewage effluent from municipal treatment works
- The last report on the performance of wastewater management was produced in 2014, before the process was abandoned: only 841 out of more than 1000 sewage treatment plants could be assessed and only 135 were seen as low risk
- The number of informal settlements with inadequate water and sanitation services is growing rapidly

What needs to be done to address water use?

- Communicate more effectively – **secrecy is the enemy of good governance**
- Recognise that communication is a two-way process and create platforms for this to take place
- Address water use inefficiencies at the municipal level
- Recognise the difference between oversight and executive authority
- Improve catchment management through the effective management of land use practices that respond to the competition for land and by recognising the value of ecological infrastructure
- Promote the use of recycled water, ground water recharge, rainwater harvesting
- Price water to signal the need to reduce wastage and excessive consumption, yet make sufficient water available to poor families to meet their basic needs