**REPORT ON KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSION:**

**IWRM MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: EMERGING LESSONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING**

**Summary**

This brief summarises the proceedings of a Community of Practice session on the topic *“Review of the integrated water resources management concept in South Africa: Emerging lessons for future planning”*, held in August 2020. The session had three objectives, being to review the status of the application of IWRM in South Africa, to understand the major impediments to the framework’s implementation in the country, and to draw lessons for the water sector going forward.

The session attracted interest from a wide group of stakeholders from both within TCTA and external participants. External participants were drawn from the Department of Water and Sanitation, Water Research Commission, Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation, CAPNET, CGIAR, and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. The session highlights are summarized below.

The session learnt that IWRM has faced several criticisms, mainly on its vagueness that allows for many interpretations. Owing to its ambiguity, IWRM has been difﬁcult to implement globally. The session commended the efforts of donor agencies for promoting the framework and funding its roll-out. However, despite its wide promotion, IWRM remains amorphous with results of its application to improve policy, programs, and projects leaving much to be desired.

The session learnt that South Africa adopted the IWRM framework early in its democracy, incorporating its core principles into legislation, policies and strategies. Correspondingly, South Africa moved with speed in implementing the framework, using it to address historical injustices of the apartheid regime. The country operationalized the IWRM through four pillars: the constitution, policies, legislation, and appropriate institutions. It was learnt that South Africa’s IWRM implementation slowed down in later years, mainly hampered by lack of capacity and poor establishment of critical institutions, particularly catchment management agencies.

Based on these observations, South Africa can take three lessons forward: customizing the IWRM definition for its unique needs, adequately invest in capacity building, and fast-tracking the establishment of critical institutions (and adequately resource them). These interventions, if effectively instituted, will go a long way to improve the implementation and overall efficacy of the IWRM framework in the country.