

CALL FOR MORE COMPLIANCE IN MANAGING WASTE

While South Africa has made great strides in the last 20 years to address management compliance, the water industry remains problematic, unsustainable and unable to achieve legislative goals and targets in its current state.

Statistics from 2012 released by the Department of Environmental Affairs show an estimated total of 108 million tons of waste is generated nationwide. General waste accounts for around 59 million tons, unclassified waste 48 million tons, and hazardous waste the remaining one million tons. Of all the waste, only 10% is recycled while the rest is landfilled.

“Our current lack of recycling facilities and great dependency on landfills – most of which are not compliant – means that we are rapidly running out of space to contain our waste,” says I-CAT Environmental Services manager Rachelle Stofberg.

The National Waste Management Strategy (NWMS) was developed and subsequently implemented by government in 2012. It is a legislative requirement of the National Environmental Waste Act of 2008.

Stofberg says that most of the time frames for achieving goals set out in NWMS have not been met. “In cases where particular standards have been developed, we see a slow progression by industry to comply with the latest regulations.”

Hazardous waste is not being classified in accordance with SANS 10234, nor classified within 180 days of generation, she says. “General, hazardous and recyclable wastes are still being mixed. Unfortunately, this demonstrates little commitment to compliance.”