

Parched days coming

By [Shaun Smillie](#)

30 Mar 2016

Nineteen years from now South Africa will be facing severe water shortages as demand outstrips supply despite planned government interventions, according to a study to be released today by the Institute for Security Studies.



© Jozsef Szasz-Fabian – [123RF.com](#)

The study's findings suggest that agriculture, municipalities and industry will be drawing 18.9-kilolitres of water, up from 15.6 in 2014.

This represents a gap between usage and supply of 0.57-kilolitres. According to the research, agriculture is South Africa's largest water consumer, with 8.9-kilolitres in 2014, followed by municipalities at 5.6-kilolitres and industry at 1.1.

Another big water consumer, the study found, was electricity generation, which uses 2% of water consumed in South Africa.

One other factor influencing water usage was a rising GDP, said researcher Zach Donnerfeld. Citizens with higher incomes were less concerned about conserving water since they could pay for it.

The researchers said remedial strategies would have to involve the raising of existing dam walls and the construction of new dams. This could increase the amount of water available for use to 3.5-kilolitres by 2035.

"On paper these reconciliation strategies don't look good but it is not impossible to turn this around.

"But it will require additional planning and strategies from the government, industry and individuals," said Donnenfeld.

These included using renewable energy, infrastructural repairs by municipalities and more advanced agricultural practices.

However, Professor Michael Muller of Wits University said plans that would ensure South Africa's water security until 2035 were already in place.

The main concern was more with delays in construction on projects such as the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme.

Another problem is that 55% of municipalities could not provide sufficient information regarding their levels of non-revenue water.

The study said ground water was an under-utilised resource.

Source: The Times

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>