

## April : Harvesting rainwater makes good business sense

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Harvesting rainwater makes good business sense in many parts of South Africa, and would help many treatment plants ensure a sustainable supply of water. This is the word from Rainwater Invest, which has helped organisations as large as Vodacom and Rand Water to assess or implement rainwater harvesting systems.



*Rainwater installation system by Rainwater Invest*

Louis de Lange of Rainwater Invest says that a good system typically pays for itself in four years. "However, for many companies, cost is no longer the main issue," he observes. "They are investigating rainwater harvesting not just to save on their bills, but to help ensure a continuous water supply. They simply cannot afford to stop production because of water shortages."

Rainwater Invest's cutting-edge software calculates that a medium-sized treatment plant in George or Sabie could harvest 30% of its annual water needs. The optimal capacity for a plant of this size is a 40 kilolitre system.

These calculations apply to a plant using about 250 000 litres of water per month, and with a roof size of about 1000m<sup>2</sup>. Rainwater Invest's software allows them to track rainfall trends in any part of the country over the past 50 years, before predicting the future supply. They also consider the organisation's water usage, water quality requirements, the size of the catchment areas, and other factors important to the organisation, before simulating the viability of various systems.

"Water harvesting is not equally beneficial everywhere in the country," says Louis. "However, it is an important strategy to consider, if you want to ensure that your company does not face water shortages at some point in the future."

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**Source: Dolphin Bay Chemicals**