



Crowdfunding a secure water future

Jared van Rooyen and Jodie Miller

Stellenbosch, Earth Science, Matieland, South Africa (16469003@sun.ac.za)

As the cost of doing scientific studies increase and the availability and size of grants decrease, the need for creative funding solutions has risen. In 2017, a crowdfunding campaign was run in South Africa to raise both awareness and funds for regional groundwater research. The campaign raised ~€800 from 120 public backers, that were both local and international, over a 5 week period. Several factors attributed to the need for such a campaign and its success. This paper outlines which methods were used to attract public backers through various forms of media, how to manage public perceptions of groundwater research from scientists to members of the public and a statistical analysis of which methods were most effective and why? Backers were divided in degrees of separation from the project representatives and allocated a method of engagement with an associated monetary contribution. Although the monetary benefit of crowdfunding science was the initial goal, various major alternate benefits arose both during and after the campaign. A project that is in the public eye receives both mass scrutiny and support during each phase of it's development, this results in the capability of utilizing a vast public network to acquire groundwater information and samples. This was the first African crowdfunded water research project and may be an important proof of concept for research groups that do important work with tight budgets. The benefits of crowdfunding postgraduate research stem far beyond the sphere of the funded project as well as bridging the gap between a community of interested scientists, members of the public and potentially, in time, government policy