

## MINUTES OF MEETING

**CLIENT** : KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport  
**PROJECT** : Sani Pass Road Upgrade – Phase 2  
**PROJECT No** : J27344  
**PURPOSE** : Project Meeting No. 7 – Sani Pass Public Meeting  
**PLACE** : Underberg Primary School Hostel  
**DATE & TIME** : 06 December 2008  
**MINUTE TAKER** : Sanusha Govender

NAME PRESENT	REPRESENTING	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Johan van der Walt (JW)	ACER Africa	johan@ntshebe.co.za
Randall Gross (RG)	African Development Economic Consultants (pty) Ltd (ADEC)	rangross@aol.com
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Elsa Pooley	Heritage	hessa5@telkomsa.net
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Motlatsi Phasumane (MP)	Albizia Tours	albiziatorns@mweb.co.za
Boy Mzimela (BM)	Dept of Environment Mokhotlong	mphasumane@yahoo.com
Irene Hatton (IH)	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	mzimelab@kznwildlife.com
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Mark Graham (MG)	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	johnc@kznwildlife.com
Mzilo Trust (MT)	Ground Truth	mark@groundtruth.co.za
Fonda Lewis (FL)	HESSA	trustmilio@yahoo.com
Rob Lindsay (RL)	Institute of Natural Resources	LewisF@ukzn.ac.za
Mojela Letsie (ML)	KZN DOT	robert.lindsay@kzntransport.gov.za
Delia Gardener (DG)	L.M.P.S. - District Commander	
P.M. Tsita (PT)	Landowner	deliagardner@acutts.co.za
Mohlabana Tsumane (MT)	Lesotho Local Govt	
Charles Major (CM)	Lesotho MOPWT	
Gardi Major (GM)	Major Adventures	Info@majoradventures.com
Malerato Phakisi (MP)	Major Adventures	Info@majoradventures.com
Obakeng Pienaar (OP)	Mokhotlong – Administration Manager	mphakisi@yahoo.co.uk
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Stephen Piper (SP)	Ndizani Civil Works	pienaaro@ndizanicivilworks.com
Angela Waller (AW)	Pied Piper Expeditions	vulture@telkomsa.net
Simone Suchet (SS)	Resident	info@majoradventures.com
Russell Suchet (RS1)	Sani Lodge	info@sanilodge.co.za
Kobus Van Der Berg (KB)	Sani Lodge	info@sanilodge.co.za
Raymond Reynolds (RR)	SDCTO	chairman@drakensberg.org
Eddy Gademan (EG)	Semenya Furumele	raymond.reynolds@sfte.co.za
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Mike Clark (MC)	Tour Guide	mclean@sai.co.za
Carolyn Schwegman (CS)	UFA Phofela Biosphere	
Russell Stow (RS)	WESSA	afromatz@telkomsa.net
Tarryn Henstra (TH)	Arcus GIBB	rstow@gibb.co.za
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### APOLOGIES

None

### ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

None

**Minuted by:** S. Govender

**Approved by:** R. Stow

Item No.	Comment By	Comment
<b>OPENING &amp; PRESENTATION</b>		
1.	RS	<p>Welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the public meeting for the Proposed Upgrading of the Sani Pass Road (Phase 2). RS then discussed the structure of the meeting and presented an agenda and then delivered a Power Point Presentation which detailed the proposed project and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) currently being undertaken for the project.</p> <p>RS highlighted the following key points during his presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project team comprises the Department of Transport as the proponent; the Joint Venture between SSI, Ndizani Civilworks and Semenye Furumele Transportation Engineers as the project engineering team; and Arcus GIBB as the project environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) with a team of specialists</li> <li>• The project is currently in the Scoping Phase of the EIA which aims to identify and describe potential environmental impacts. This phase would not attempt to assess the impacts and hence answers and solutions to some of the problems and/or issues were not available at this stage.</li> <li>• The impacts and issues identified during the Scoping Phase of the EIA and would be assessed during the Impact Assessment Phase</li> <li>• The project has local, national and international impacts and interests</li> <li>• The project faces many challenges</li> <li>• Alternatives were being considered and which would be subject to revision as the project progressed</li> <li>• The proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass Road is recognised in planning frameworks and policy documents such as the Kwa Sani Municipality and Maluti Drakensberg Integrated Development Plans (IDPs)</li> <li>• Two (2) other EIAs (i.e. relocation of the border post and development of additional units at the Sani Pass Hotel) are currently in progress along the P318, in addition to the continued construction of Phase 1 of the Road.</li> <li>• The intention is to utilise the existing borrow pits for Phase 1 for the Construction of Phase 2</li> <li>• Closing date for comment on the Draft Scoping Report was 23 January 2008.</li> </ul>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>		
2.	DG	<p>Stated that she was unsatisfied with the way the construction on Phase 1 had progressed to date in terms of delays in construction, inconvenience to the public and impact on the environment, and wanted surety that a similar situation would not occur during the construction of Phase 2.</p> <p>DG also questioned the construction methods and whether the engineers had looked to international road construction of similar mountain passes for ideas and solutions.</p>
	EG	<p>Established contractors with joint venture partners would be commissioned to undertake the construction of Phase 2. This would ensure that skills were transferred.</p> <p>EG explained that the Joint Venture would oversee the contractors to ensure the Sani Pass Road: Phase 2 was upgraded to the design specifications.</p> <p>EG further indicated that the project engineers had done research into similar pass construction projects from around the world.</p>

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			RS	Emphasised that the construction of the upgraded Pass Road is unique and the "first of its kind". As such, very few similar cases exist where one could draw knowledge from, and therefore, the upgrading of the Pass Road would require innovative engineering.	
3.	DG	DG stated that the engineers and contractors in Phase 1 have faced numerous unforeseen challenges which have resulted in delays and poor quality construction. The engineers need to ensure the mistakes experienced during Phase 1 are not repeated during the construction of Phase 2.	RS	Noted.	
4.	RS1	Questioned what the overall cost for upgrading the Sani Pass will be?	EG	The upgrade will cost approximately R 360 million.	
5.	MC	Who is responsible for funding the project?	EG	The Department of Transport will fund the project.	
6.	DG	Queried the current borrow pit situation for Phase 1 and raised the concern that the construction on Phase 1 seems to have ceased due to the lack of available materials. If Phase 2 was reliant on these same borrow pits for material, the construction process could encounter the same problems.	RS	Indicated that the construction of the road required different grades and types of suitable material sources of which were very limited in the surrounding area. Once identified, applications have been lodged with the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) to obtain a permit to excavate the area. These very specific materials could then be mined and transported to the construction site.	
			JW	Explained that the situation for the borrow pits for Phase 1 was as follows: - An application was submitted to the DME for the borrow pits a year ago. The areas identified for the borrow pits contained adequate quantities of the appropriate materials to construct both Phase 1 and 2 of the project. However, the application had not been approved as yet and this was the reason for the delay with the construction.	
7.	DG	Raised the concern that the Phase 1 project had not been properly planned and that there may not be materials available for the construction. This would cause inconveniences and delays to the local road users and the tourism industry.	RS	Noted that this project had no involvement in Phase 1 and as such, could not answer or comment on issues and concerns related to Phase 1. RS suggested that all comments and queries regarding Phase 1 be forwarded to the Environmental Control Officer (ECO) assigned to the project. The construction of Phase 1 was entirely separate to the EIA being conducted for	

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					Phase 2.
8.	MC	Agreed, the problems experienced in Phase 1 should be mitigated against in planning the Phase 2 construction.			
9.	CM	Queried whether the construction period would extend into 2010.	EG		Yes, it would.
10.	GM	Suggested that the DOT be considerate of the potentially large influx of tourists that may visit the Sani Pass during 2010. The DOT must consider the inconvenience and the potential loss of income to local tourism operations should the Pass be closed or under construction during this time.	RS		Noted. The DOT would be made aware of the conflict.
11.	RS1	Stated that although there is no doubt that there will be benefits from the project, there is insufficient proof that the project is economically viable.	RS		Indicated that an economics specialist has been appointed and has begun a study to determine the economic viability of the project.
12.	MC	The EIA should investigate alternative routes to Sani Pass to link South Africa and Lesotho.	RS		Responded by noting that although one of the motivations for the project was to improve links and access between the two countries, there were other motivations which focussed specifically on the Road - such as its condition. Developing a new route would not address the degradation of the Pass which is currently impacting negatively on the surrounding environment as well as jeopardising the safety of those using the Pass. This meant that focus could not be moved away from the Sani Pass, and as such, the possibility of developing an alternative route into Lesotho was not an option. Determining different routes into Lesotho was not the scope or intention of the study.
13.	SM	One of the main motivations for the upgrade was that it would provide a shorter route from Maseru to KZN and would provide an accessible link road between the Free State and KZN. There was some scepticism about this statement as although the distance may be shorter, the route would much slower and more difficult. It was believed that the route through the Free State and around Lesotho would remain a much faster although longer route.	RS		Noted that the route from the Free State through Maseru to KZN may not be as practical as going around Lesotho, however, the upgraded road would significantly shorten the distance between Mokhotlong, Pietermaritzburg and Durban.
14.	DG	Suggested that stone masons be used on the Sani Pass as has been done on the Swartberg Pass. She noted that the Swartberg Pass required low maintenance.	RS		Responded say that using stonemasons to maintain the Sani Pass was not sustainable in the long term due to limited material availability to continuously maintain

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					the road. In addition, employing a permanent work force would not address or correct the current degradation of the Sani Pass.
15.	MC	Commented that previously the Basotho people used to clear the road by hand which was thereby kept in a reasonably good state. The lack of maintenance over the last few years has led to the extreme degradation of the road.	RS		Noted the comment and agreed that maintenance on the road was lacking and was partly the cause of the degradation of the Pass.
16.		Noted that the new IDP may change the current land demarcation, which may affect which municipality would have the jurisdiction over the Sani Pass.	RS		Noted.
17.	AW	Suggested that a permanent maintenance team be established on Sani Pass. Noted that the road from Sani Pass to Mokhotlong was well maintained by the Lesotho government and had never degraded to the poor state that the Sani Pass is currently in.	RS		Noted.
18.	MC	Agreed that the road should be continually maintained.	RS		Noted.
19.	SP	Expressed the opinion that he believed that the current state of the road was endangering the lives of all of those who used it and that the road could not be allowed to continue to degrade. As all of the operators depended on the Pass to sustain their tour businesses they should be concerned about the long term sustainability of the Pass.			
20.	SS	Stated that she believed that Alternative 3 was the best option for the road. Although the Draft Scoping Report stated that this option would only allow 4x4's to access the road, this may not necessarily be true. If the road was maintained, 2x4 cars would be able to travel up and down the Sani Pass as has been seen in previous years.	RS		Noted that everyone was in agreement that something needed to be done to sustain the road and prevent further degradation of the environment. Stated that although it would be impossible to meet everyone's demands or requirements, the design process would attempt to reach a reasonable compromise.
21.	CM	Stated that once upgraded as proposed, there was the possibility that people would treat the Road as a "highway" and speed and behave recklessly.	RS		Noted that it was not the intention of the project to create a "highway". The road design also had to be considerate of structural, engineering and environmental constraints and therefore would not be designed like a "highway". These constraints would assist to reduce speeds.

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22.	GM	Highlighted that over the Easter weekend some 2000 4x4 'self drives' venture up the Pass. If the road was upgraded these drivers would likely to go elsewhere for the experience.	RS	Noted.	
23.	MC	Commented that he believed that a compromise could be found that did not involve hard surfacing the Pass. He noted that if the correct material was used to surface the Pass and it was maintained properly, all types of vehicles would be able to use the road.	RS	Noted.	
24.	KB	Noted that these kinds of projects often exceed the anticipated budget and expected return and therefore a cost benefit analysis should be undertaken. He further commented that the project team should learn from the mistakes of similar type projects and build in mitigation measures. He pointed out that there are numerous examples of poorly rehabilitated roads and that care must be taken to ensure the same mistakes did not occur on the Sani Pass.	RS	Noted.	
25.	KB	Noted that the Kwa Sani Municipality had divulged that tourism has substantially increased employment in the area.	RS	Noted.	
26.	MC	Advised that increased trade should not be used as a motivation for the project as Sani Pass used to be a "booming trade route" until trade was stopped because of the lack of customs services at the Border Post.	RS	Noted.	
27.	AW	Questioned who could be contacted should there be any incidences during the construction of Phase 2 which needed to be reported.	RS	An Environmental Control Office (ECO) would be responsible for addressing environmental issues on the site. The Resident Engineer (RE) would be responsible for management of the construction issues. An information board would be displayed on site detailing the responsible parties should they need to be contacted.	
28.	DG	Questioned whether the landowners of farms which had been identified with possible borrow pits would be forewarned before the borrow pits were commissioned.	RS	Confirmed that the process for obtaining permits for borrow pits required the landowner's consent unless the land was expropriated. In either instance, the landowner must be informed.	

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			JW	Commented the contractors would not be permitted to mine in private land without the owner's acknowledgement and consent.	
29.	JW	Suggested that he discusses the issues raised at this meeting which relate to the Phase 1 project at the next meeting with ACER Africa and the Resident Engineer for Phase 1. Requested that anyone with any further queries raise these with him after the meeting.			
30.	PT	Commented that the Lesotho officials were honoured to have been invited to the meeting and hoped their input would be considered and that communication between the two countries would continue. She stated that the people of Mokhotlong valued the Sani Pass as the quickest route to South Africa and supported the upgrading, particularly with regards to the hard surfacing of the road.	RS	Thanked the officials for attending the meeting and for providing input.	
31.	KB	Noted that the new IDP may change the current land demarcation, which may affect which municipality would have the jurisdiction over the Sani Pass.	RS	Noted.	
32.	RG	Requested the co-operation of all present with regards to collecting information for the economic study.	ALL	Agreed	
<b>CLOSURE</b>					
33.	RS	Thanked all present for attending and with no further issues for discussion, closed the meeting.			