

Environmental Basic Assessment for the rehabilitation of the regional road R61, Section 3, between Cradock (km 24.2) and Tarkastad (km 75.0).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

August 2012

INTRODUCTION

Notice is given in terms of Regulation 54 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2010 (GN No. R543) under Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) as amended, of the intent of the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) to submit an application for environmental authorisation to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) for the planned rehabilitation of the regional road R61, Section 3, between Cradock (km 24.2) and Tarkastad (km 75.0).

In terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (2010), an application of this nature requires that a Basic (Environmental) Assessment be undertaken. Arcus GIBB have been commissioned by WorleyParsons RSA, on behalf of SANRAL, to undertake this Basic Assessment (BA).

Since the proposed activities will constitute a linear development of longer than 300 m, input will also be required from the South African Heritage Resources Authority in terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA). GIBB is managing this process.

Material for the construction of the road will be sourced from five borrow pits and one hard rock quarry along the R61. In terms of the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) a mining permit must be applied for. Since this is a SANRAL project, the exemptions provisions of Section 106(1) of the Act will apply, thus the use of the materials sources is also subject to the preparation of an Environmental Management Programme compiled in accordance with Regulation 51 of the MPRDA for the hard rock quarry and the borrow pits that are envisaged to be used. The application for the use of these mines is in process and will be submitted to the Department of Mineral Resources.

PROJECT DETAILS

WorleyParsons RSA has been appointed by the SANRAL as consulting engineers for the project.

The project involves the rehabilitation of the regional road R61, Section 3, between Cradock (km 24.2) and Tarkastad (km 75.0) in the Eastern Cape Province.

The entire project from km 24.2 to km 75.0 is a winding road with a narrow cross section and very limited passing opportunities. The scope of the project includes the widening of the roadway (± 5.0 m) itself and the widening of all stormwater structures along the entire project. The existing road reserve is approximately 32.0 m.

A major part of the road section marked for rehabilitation is located inside a Critical Biodiversity Area (category: terrestrial CBA 2 - elsewhere termed "Important CBA") as mapped by the Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan 2007. Construction work will largely be limited to the existing road reserve of 32 m width, except for occasional short sections where improvements to the road alignment require the expropriation of small strips of land from private landowners. Respective negotiations regarding fair compensation have been initiated.

There are 13 river or stream crossings along the project, falling into 9 different erven. Water use authorisations from the Department of Water Affairs for the road works in and near the river crossings will be applied for following the principle of integrated environmental management that is observed during this project.

THE NEED FOR A BASIC ASSESSMENT (LISTED ACTIVITIES)

The National Environmental Management Act, No. 107 of 1998 (NEMA), prescribes that an environmental impact assessment process must be followed for certain activities that are deemed to have a potentially negative effect on the environment.

"Listed activities" fall into two categories: those that require Basic Assessment (BA) and those that require full EIA. The proposed development requires a Basic Assessment as it includes these activities:

- *GNR 546 (19) of 2010*
The widening of a road by more than 4 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre.
In Eastern Cape: Outside urban areas, in:



Critical Biodiversity Areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans;

- GNR 546(24) of 2010
 The widening of a road by more than 6 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre -
 (i) where the existing reserve is wider than 13,5 meters;
 or
 (ii) where no reserve exists, where the existing road is wider than 8 metres –
 excluding widening or lengthening occurring inside urban areas.

- GNR 544(39) of 2010
 The expansion of bridges within a watercourse or within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse, where such expansion will result in an increased development footprint: bridge-river-crossings along the project will be widened to suit the road cross section.

There are no activities proposed that would trigger the need for a full EIA.

THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Basic Assessment (BA) procedures are based on the principles of Integrated Environmental Management, which, in short, comprise:

- Pro-active planning,
- Informed decision making,
- A transparent and participatory approach to development,
- A broad understanding of the environment, and
- Accountability for decisions and the information on which they are based.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS AND HOW TO REGISTER AS AN I&AP

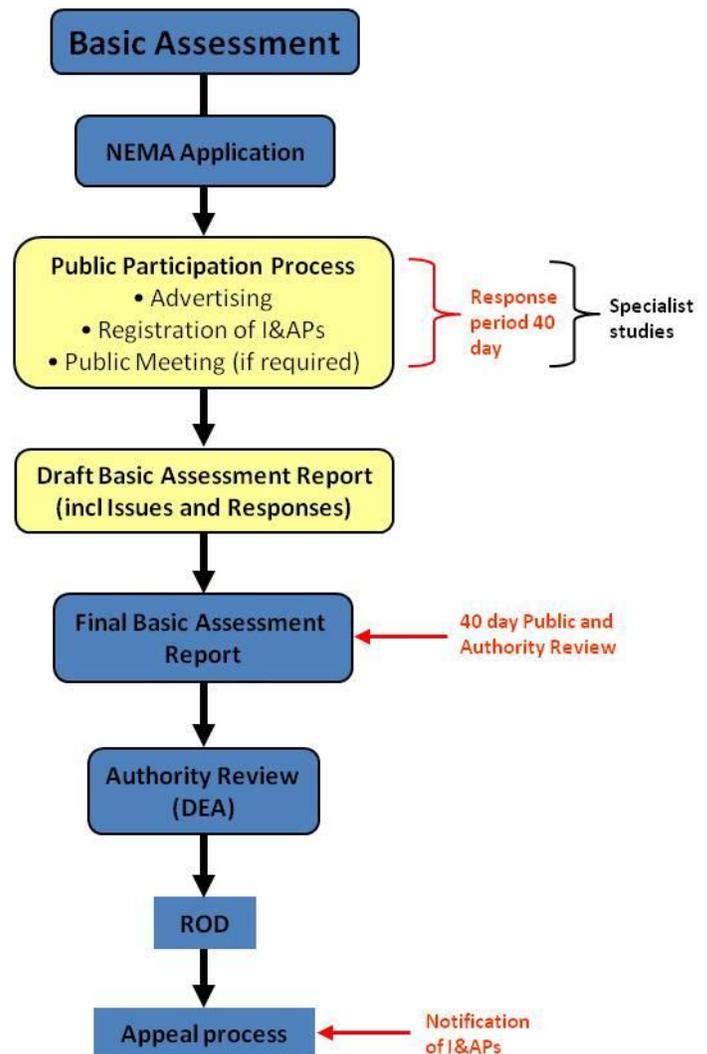
The EIA Regulations specify that a public participation process must be conducted as an integral part of the BA.

The following activities are proposed for this BA:

- Placing notice boards at the proposed sites.
- Advertising the process in a local newspaper.
- Giving written notice to:
 - the landowners and occupiers of the site
 - owners and occupiers of land adjacent to the site
 - the municipal councillor of the affected ward;
 - the municipality which has jurisdiction in the area; and
 - organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of any aspect of the activity.

The key objective of the public participation is to provide I&APs with an opportunity to flag issues, and provide comment on the proposed activity. Issues of concern and suggestions raised by I&APs will be recorded and responded to in the draft Basic Assessment.

The diagram below presents the process flow for this Basic Assessment.



DETAILS OF EAP CONDUCTING THE BA

Dr. Norbert Klages (Sr. Environmental Scientist)

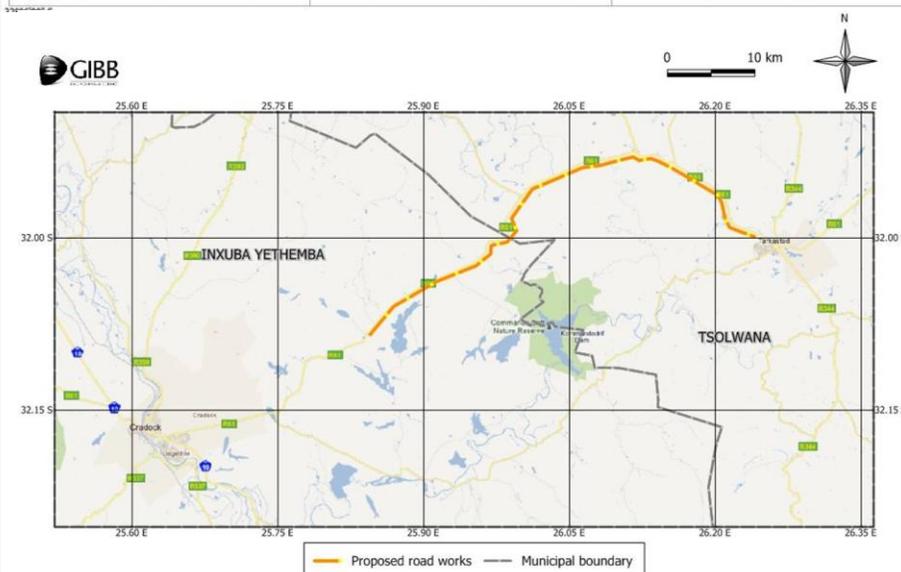
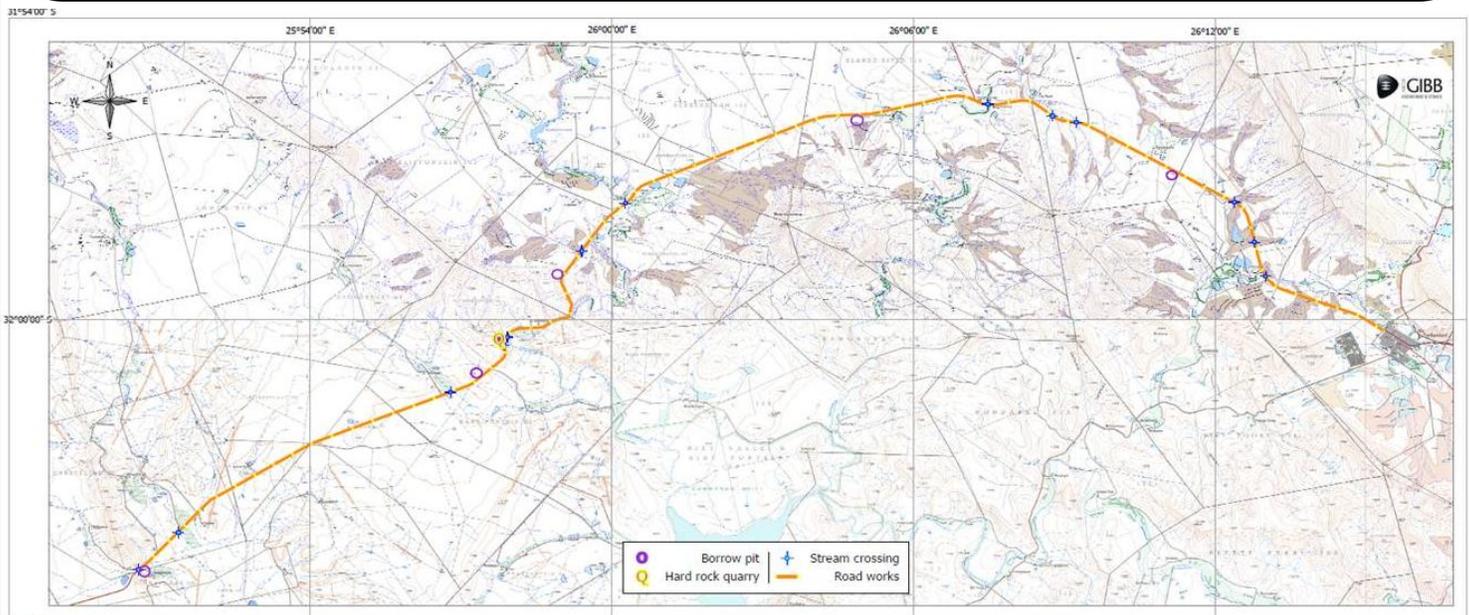
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YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED

Should you wish to express your views regarding this proposed development, please feel free to register as an Interested & Affected Party (I&AP) and send us your written comments. The names of all registered I&APs, together with the comments received will be incorporated into the Basic Assessment Report submitted to DEA. Registered I&APs will be kept informed of future developments in the process.

Please note that the I&AP registration and comment period will run from 24 August – 03 October 2012. Should you wish to register please submit your name, contact information (address, telephone number, e-mail address, postal address) and written comments to GIBB (see details below) before the end date. A comments form is supplied at the back end of this notice for your convenience, but feel free to add extra pages if needed. **Email submissions are preferred**, but posted comments will be accepted.

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Figures 1 and 2: Location of proposed rehabilitation works. Positions of stream crossings requiring water use license applications, as well as positions for the borrow pits and hard rock quarry are also provided.

