

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Heba Vergruisers CC

PROPOSED MINING ACTIVITIES FOR SAND OVER A 5 HECTAR PORTION OF PORTION 14 OF THE FARM MESKLIP 259 IN THE NAMA KHOI LOCAL MUNICIPAL AREA NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

REFERENCE: NC30/5/1/3/2/10815MP
DATE: JUNE 2020

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Applicant, Heba Vergruisers CC (Heba) propose to mine sand in a section of the Buffels River on Portion 14 of the Farm Mesklip 259, located in the Nama Khoi Local Municipality, Northern Cape. Refer to the Locality Map at Figure 1

The proposed mining activity triggers listed activities in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations of 2014 (as amended), and therefore requires an Environmental Authorisation (EA) from the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR), before mining may commence.

PURPOSE OF THIS BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is:

- To provide interested and affected parties (I&APs) with background information on the proposed project;
- To provide an outline of the Basic Assessment (BA) process that is being undertaken; and
- To provide details on how you, the public, can register as an I&AP, comment and participate on the proposed project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed sand mining is in the form of a simple process that only includes loading and hauling of river sand from the Buffels River. The depth of the excavations in the river bed will be on average 2.5 metres deep and the total mining footprint 5 hectares. The duration required for the sand mining is an initial 2 years with the potential to extend the permit by an additional 3 years. Normally there is also a time delay in the granting of applications for renewal therefore a total period of 10 years may be required.

Refer to the Proposed Site Plan included as Figure 2.

The project can be divided in a Construction Phase, Operational Phase and Decommissioning and Closure Phase.

Construction Phase:

Access to the mine works will be via the N7 and existing farm tracks, which will be used as haul roads and no new road will be developed.

No process water is used in the mining process.

No electricity is used in the mining area.

No infrastructure is present or will be required due to the small scale and simple mining method.

Limited waste management facilities will be supplied. A temporary storage area for used lubrication products and other hazardous chemicals needs to be provided for the collection of the small volume of waste before it is removed to the company headquarters.

Oil/grease/diesel management systems will consist of drip trays for stationary equipment to be provided in the parking and service bay area outside the drainage channel.

Operational Phase:

The operation phase will only involve the loading and hauling of raw river sand. Only one Front End Loader (FEL) will be used for loading and hauling and no processing will take place. The only surface disturbance except for the mining excavation within the drainage channel will be a small stockpile to be placed in the laydown area as mining progresses.

The depth of the mining operations will be on average 2.5 metres as only the top layer of sand is mined. The total mining footprint is 5ha. Backfilling is not an option as the sand is completely removed and replaced over time as it is washed in from upstream.

No industrial or mine waste is generated during the mining process.

No processing will take place except for limited stockpiling and no mining waste or overburden or Fine Residue Dumps (FRD) will be created.

Decommissioning and Closure Phase:

Planning for closure and restoration from the beginning of an operation makes the process easier; waste can be removed as it is created and excavations can be planned so that topography restoration is less complicated, and topsoil can be re-used at shorter intervals. The decommissioning and closure phase at the end of the life of the mine will consist of implementing the Final Rehabilitation, Decommissioning and Closure Plan, included as an Appendix to the BAR.

Figure: Locality plan

contemplated in regulation 2(2) read with regulation 2(3) of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act No. 30 of 2002)

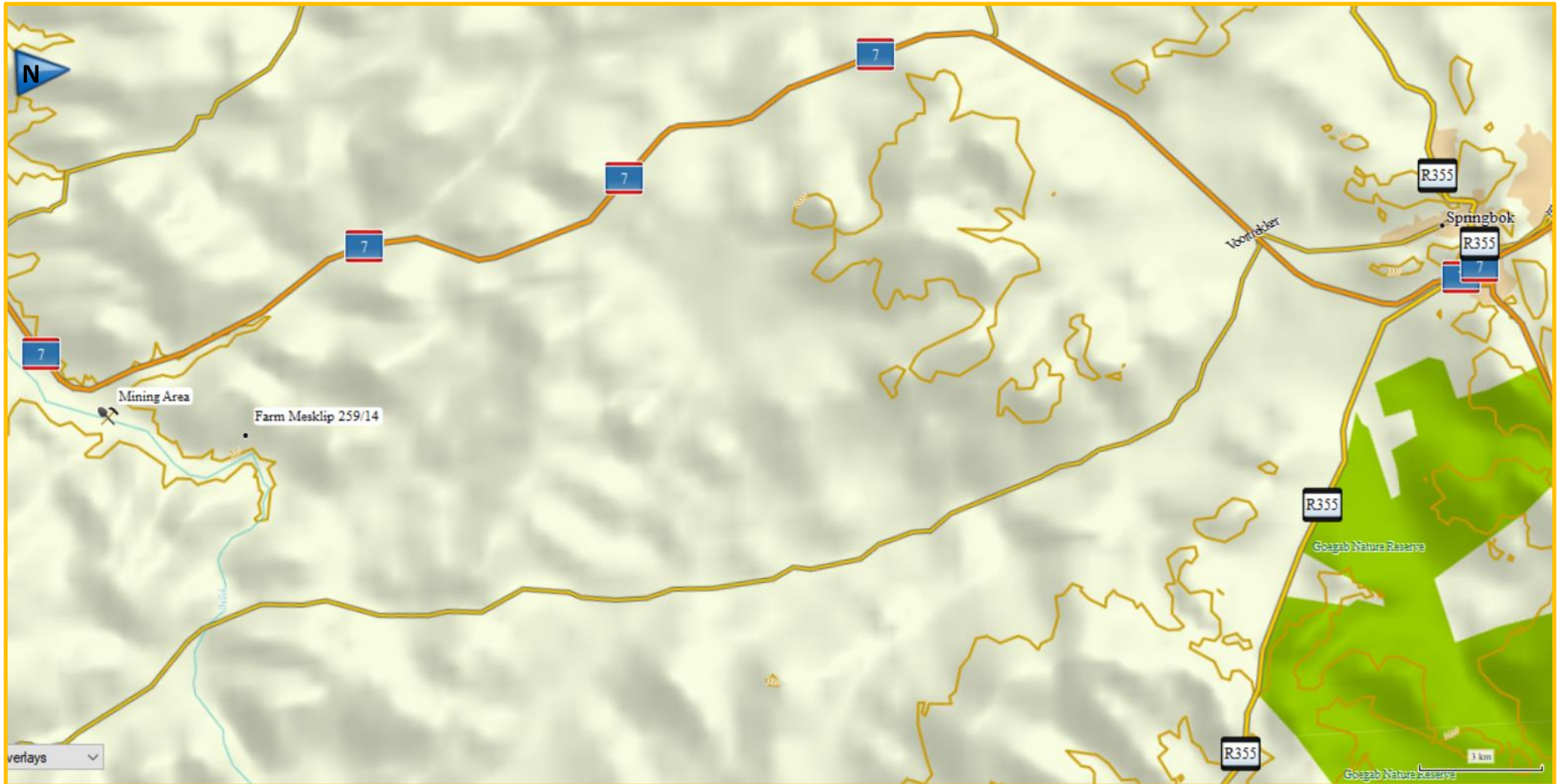


Figure 2: Layout plan

contemplated in regulation 2(2) read with regulation 2(3) of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act No. 30 of 200

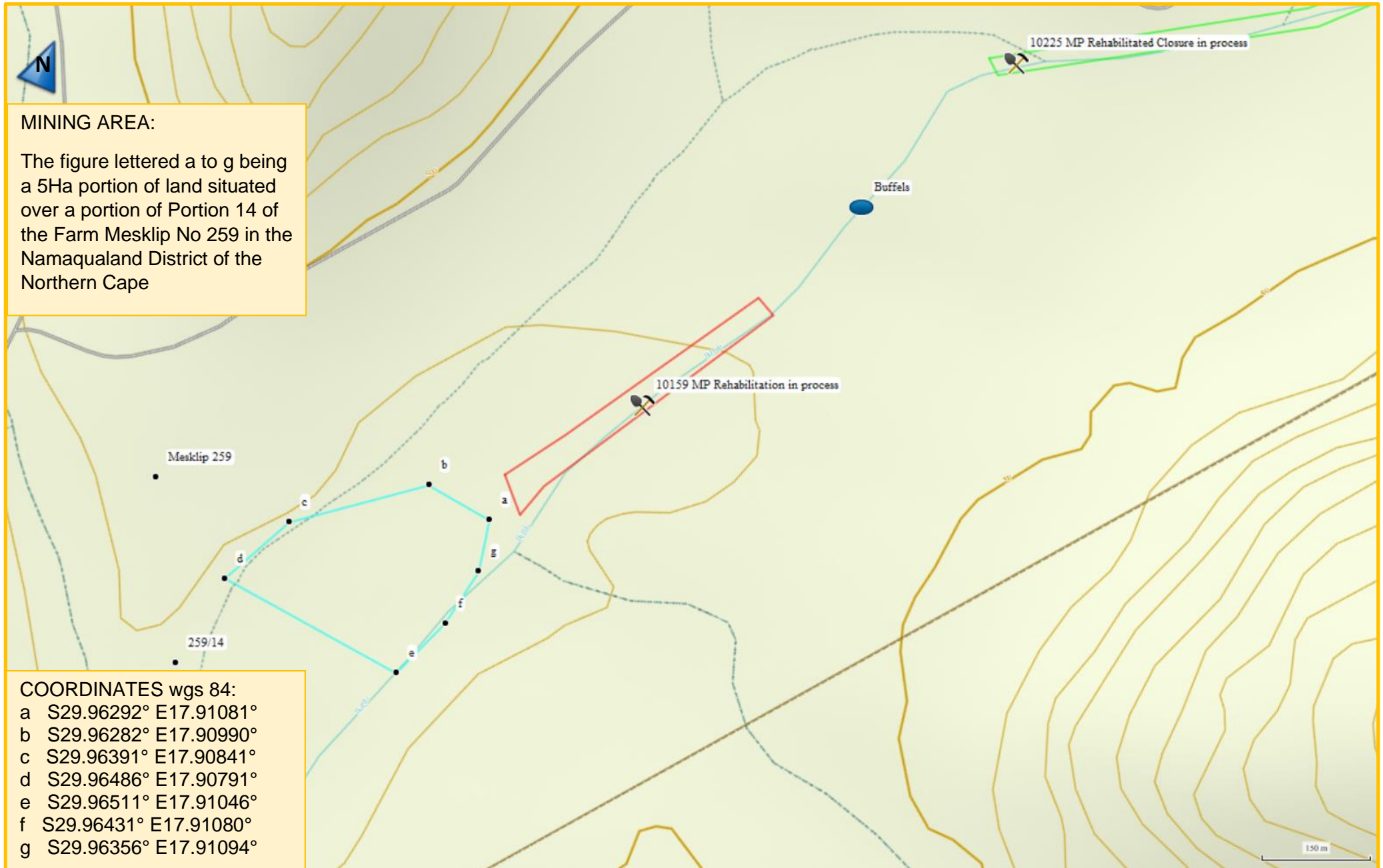


Diagram 3: Landscape showing area under application as well as existing Sand Mining operations



ALTERNATIVES

It is a requirement of NEMA that feasible and reasonable alternatives are considered, including the “No Go” option. The layout and technology of the proposed sand mining project has been determined by the shape, position and orientation of the mineral resource (river sand) to be mined, as shown in Figure 2 above.

There are no reasonable or feasible: location; activity; site layout; technology; or, operational alternatives due to the basic mining methods that are applicable to sand mining.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following potential environmental impacts have been identified and assessed in the Draft BAR:

- Soil compaction from repeated use of access tracks.
- Noise caused by the machinery and vehicles on site, and by vehicles going to and from the mining site.
- Visibility of the sand mining operations.
- Dust emissions from general site activities.
- Removal of sand from river bed impacting on the Buffels River, which is classified as a Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area (FEPA). The adjacent riverine corridor is a Critical Biodiversity Area 1 except for the current mining areas that has been excluded due to transformation.
- Wildlife and vegetation disturbance from front end loader and trucks.
- Impact of stormwater run-off during infrequent rainfall events.
- River sand contamination from hydrocarbon spills.
- Removal of alien invasive plant species such as *Prosopis* sp. (positive impact).
- Socio-economic impact on job security, employment creation and economic spin-offs (positive impact).

BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Sections 24 and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) make provision for the promulgation of regulations that identify activities which may not commence without an Environmental Authorisation (EA) issued by the competent authority, in this case, the Department: Mineral Resources (DMR).

The EIA Regulations, 2014 (Government Notice (GN) R982, which came into effect on 8 December 2014), as amended by GNR 327 (dated 7 April 2017), promulgated in terms of NEMA, govern the process, methodologies and requirements for the undertaking of EIAs in support of EA applications. The EIA Regulations are accompanied by Listing Notices (LN) 1-3 that list activities that require EA. The EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended, sets out two alternative authorisation processes.

Depending on the type of activity that is proposed, either a Basic Assessment (BA) process or a Scoping and Environmental Impact Reporting (S&EIR - also referred to as an EIA) process is required to obtain EA. LN 1 and LN3 list activities that require a BA process, while LN 2 lists activities that require S&EIR.

The proposed project triggers activities identified in terms of LN1 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended by GNR 327 (dated 7 April 2017), thus requiring a BA process:

- Activity 21: Any activity including the operation of that activity which requires a mining permit in terms of section 27 of MRPDA, including - associated infrastructure, structures and earthworks, directly related to the extraction of a mineral resource; or the primary processing of a mineral resource including winning, extraction, classifying, concentrating, crushing, screening or washing.
- Activity 22: The decommissioning of any activity requiring a closure certificate in terms of section 43 of the MRPA.
- Activity 27: The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation.
- Activity 28: Commercial or industrial developments where such land was used for agriculture on or after 01 April 1998 and where such development: (ii) will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare.

Before commencing with the project, the proponent (Heba) is thus required to appoint an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to undertake a BA process and to obtain authorisation in terms of NEMA from the competent authority (DMR).

In addition to EA, a Water Use General Authorisation is required to be obtained from the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation (DWS), as the applicable Water Use activities listed in the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) are:

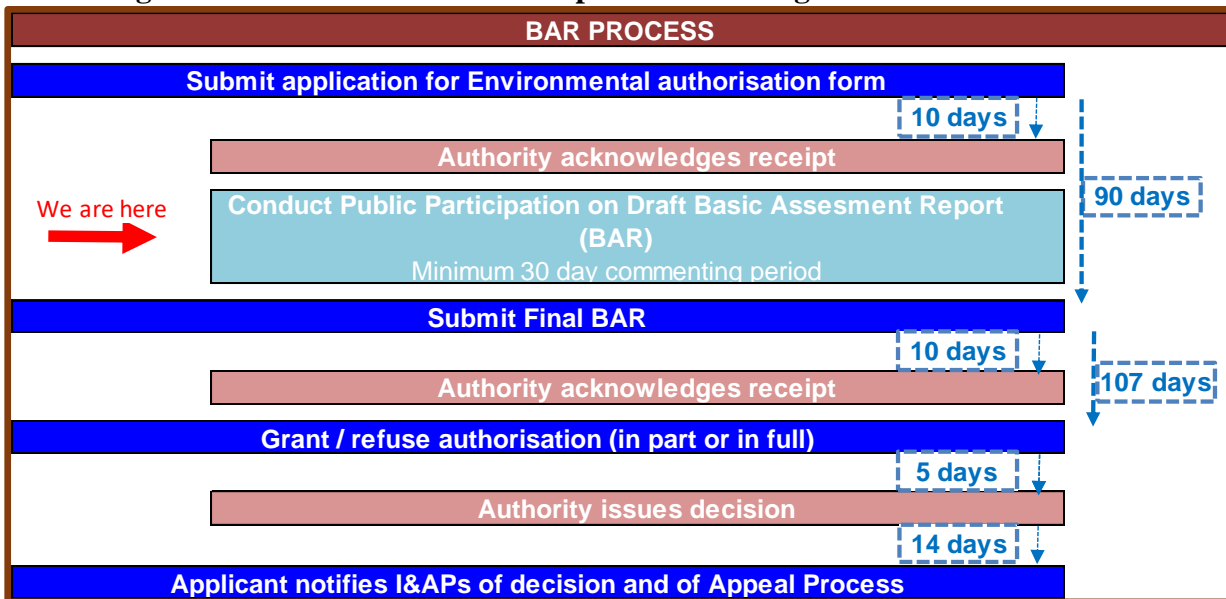
- Section 21(c) related to impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse, and
- Section 21(i) related to altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.

An application for a General Authorisation in terms of GN 509 of 2016 for Section 21(c) and (i) is submitted with the Draft Basic Assessment Report to DWS.

The BA Process:

- Submission of the Application Form to DMR.
- Preparation of the Background Information Document (BID); registered letters & BID to adjacent landowners; and Project Notice with BID to Organs of State.
- Preparation of the Draft Basic Assessment Report (DBAR), Environmental Management Programme Report (EMPr), and Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and mine Closure Plan. The Water Use GA Application is included with the DBAR.
- The availability of these reports will be advertised for the 30-day comment period, with a copy placed in the nearest library. Site notices will be placed, and a copy of the reports will be made available on the EAP’s website (www.greendirection.co.za). The public consultation undertaken will be recorded in the Final BAR, which will be submitted to DMR for consideration.

Refer to Figure 1 for the Basic Assessment process flow diagram.



HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE

If you or your organisation would like to be involved in the BA process please submit your contact details for registration as an Interested & Affected Party (I&AP) on our database on the attached form by **05 June 2020**, as per the details below.

Any submission by I&APs should please include the following information:

- DMR's Reference No. NC30/5/1/3/2/10815MP;
- The I&APs name, contact details (postal address, fax number and e-mail address); and
- An indication of any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which they may have in the application.

Registration forms should be returned to:

Heba Vergruisers CC

NC30/5/1/3/2/10815MP

PO. Box 255, Springbok, 8240;

Email: dmr.comments@vodamail.co.za

Only registered I&APs will continue to be informed about the BA process.

The Public Participation Process (PPP) offers Registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the proposed project and the BA process being undertaken, and provides them with opportunities to:

- Raise issues of concern and suggestions for enhanced benefit;
- Contribute their local knowledge to the project;
- Ask questions related to the project or the BA Process; and to
- Comment on the proposed project and on the documentation made available as part of the BA process.

WAY FORWARD

Supply **registered I&AP** with draft BAR and EMPr. The Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) will be made available to all registered I&AP's, as of **10 June 2020** and the prescribed 30-day Public Participation on the Draft Basic Assessment Report will run to **10 July 2020**.

Comments received on the draft BAR and EMPr will be collated and responded to in a **finalised BAR and EMPr** which will be submitted to the DMR for decision making (along with copies of the original written comments received by our office). Upon receipt of the **decision from the DMR**, all **registered I&APs will be informed of the decision** and of their right to an appeal and the **details of the appeal process**.

REGISTRATION AND COMMENT SHEET

Reference No: NC30/5/1/3/2/10815MP

Please complete this form if you wish to register as interested and /or affected party

Title, Name and Surname:

Postal Address:

Postal Code:

Tel:

Fax:

Cell:

E-mail:

Organisation Represented (if any):

I have the following interest(s) in this application (direct business, financial, personal or other):

Your Comments to be included as part of the Draft BAR

I suggest that the following person(s) should be included in this public participation process [please provide contact details if possible]:

Thank you for your participation