



## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

### Project Introduction:

- **This Background Information Document (BID) provides you, as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP), an overview of the proposed project.**
- **The BID invites you, as an I&AP, to participate in the required Public Participation Process.**
- **The BID provides you, as an I&AP with an opportunity to contribute and participate in the formulation of the Scoping and EIA Reports.**
- **The BID also provides you, as an I&AP an opportunity to provide the project team with your comments, concerns and objections to the proposed project.**

Ntshovelo Mining Resources (Pty) Ltd, a subsidiary of Mbuyelo Coal (Pty) Ltd, has appointed Geo Soil and Water cc (GSW) as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to assist with undertaking the necessary authorisation and amendment processes for Vlakvarkfontein Coal Mine. In turn GSW has appointed EIMS as well as various specialist sub-consultants to assist with compiling the necessary reports and undertaking the statutory consultation processes, in support of proposed extensions to the Vlakvarkfontein Coal Mine.

It is anticipated that several listed activities contained in the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA), National Environmental Management Waste Act (Act 59 of 2008) (NEMWA) and National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) (NWA) will be triggered by the proposed extension.

### Aim of the Background Information Document (BID):

The aim of the BID is to:

- Provide an overview of the Environmental Authorisation/Licensing Applications as well as the public participation processes which will be undertaken for the proposed extension of the Vlakvarkfontein Mine as well as the proposed amendments to existing authorisations/licences;
- The Integrated EIA process shall be undertaken in terms of Chapter 6 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (GNR 982) promulgated under the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998 – NEMA) as amended. A full EIA process will be followed which involves a Scoping phase which is the ‘feasibility’ and largely desk-top assessment stage of the project, followed by more detailed assessments in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) phase;
- Allow I&APs the opportunity to obtain a broad understanding of the proposed project and to request or share information; and
- Provide details on how I&AP’s can register their interest with and submit comments on the project. It is important to note that only registered I&AP’s will receive further communication regarding the project for the duration of the EIA process (i.e. invitation to review and comment on the Scoping and EIA Reports).

### **LOCATION, SCALE, AND EXTENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:**

The proposed project area is located on portions 5, 13, and 18 of the Farm Vlakvarkfontein 213 IR. The proposed mining extension area is located 23km east north east of Delmas, and approximately 15km west of Ogies within the Victor Khanye Local Municipality. The N12 highway passes to the north of the mining area. Please refer to locality map at the end of this BID.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Ntshovelo Mining Resources (Pty) Ltd (hereafter referred to as Ntshovelo) wishes to establish extend the mining operations at the Vlakvarkfontein Coal Mine. The proposed extension will include open cast mining operations, using the roll-over method, onto portion 5 of the farm Vlakvarkfontein 213R. Furthermore, the new proposed mining operations is likely to necessitate the relocation and re-establishment of the existing ancillary infrastructure associated with the current mining operations, including the pollution control dam and the administrative structures. Ntshovelo also wishes to establish a new coal processing plant (wash plant) to decontaminate the run-of-mine coal. The proposed extension of the mine and new coal processing plant will be located within the Mining Right boundary.

The proposed project includes inter alia the following application processes with associated activities:

- **New Integrated Environmental Authorisation and Waste Management Licence (WML) (Scoping and Environmental Impact Report (S&EIR)) for:**
  - Proposed new mining area extension
  - New coal processing plant
  - New water treatment facility;
- **New Integrated Water Use Licence (IWUL) for:**
  - Discard (wash plant waste) disposal
  - New water treatment facility;
- **Section 102 Amendment**
  - Revised Mine Works Programme to include proposed mine extension and coal processing plant; and
  - Revised consolidated EMPR to include proposed mine extension and coal processing plant and wash plant.

### **LISTED ACTIVITIES APPLICATION:**

The proposed project must be authorized in terms of a number pieces of South African environmental legislation, namely:

- The Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA, Act No. 28 of 2002);
- The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act No. 107 of 1998);
- The National Environmental Management Waste Act (NEMWA, Act No. 59 of 2008); and
- The National Water Act (NWA, Act No. 36 of 1998).

Where relevant, these pieces of core legislation stipulate the required studies, reports and legal processes to be conducted and the results thereof submitted to the relevant authorities for approval prior to commencement. It is anticipated that the following approvals will be required:

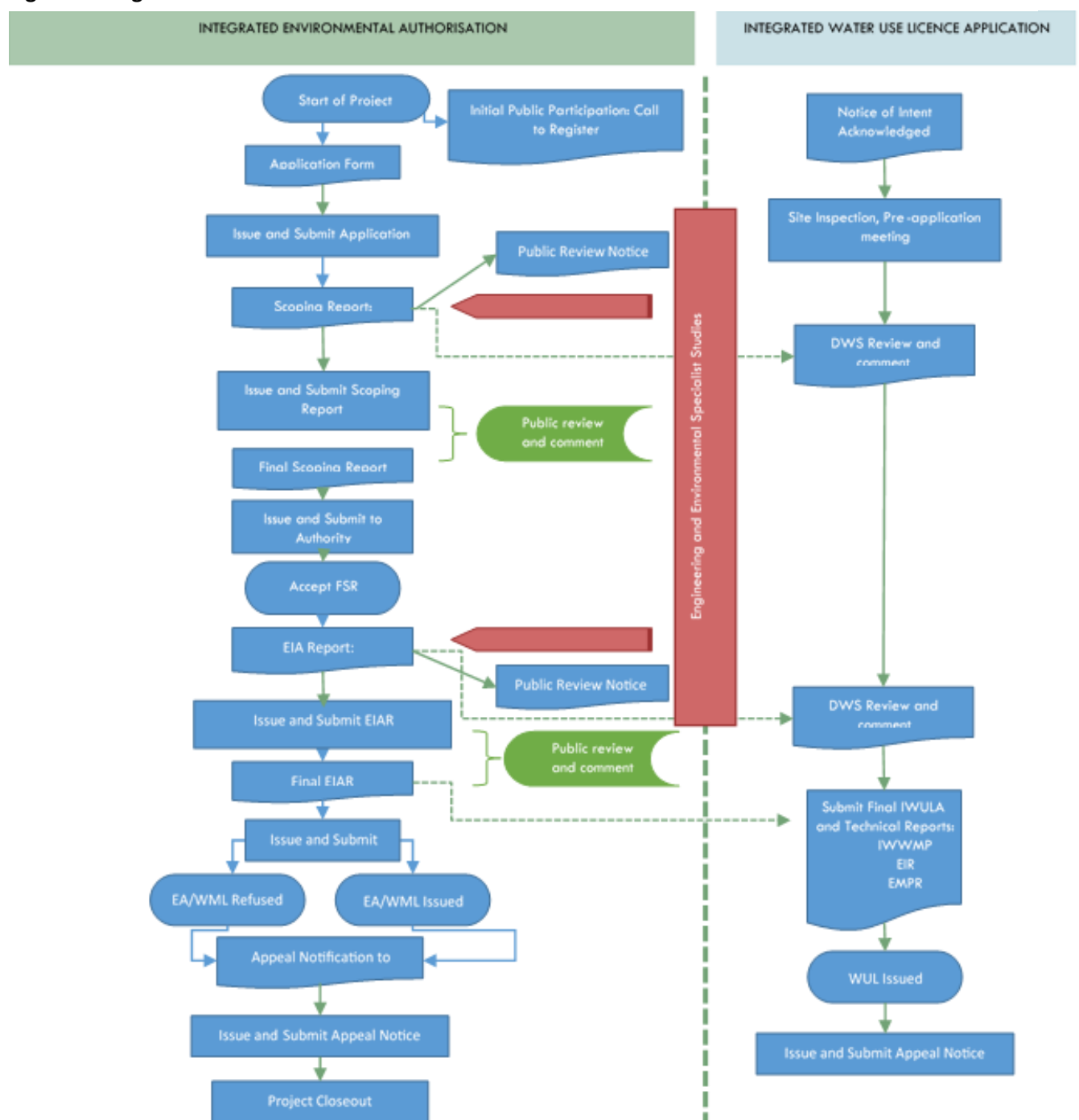
- Environmental Authorisation (EA) in terms of the 2014 NEMA EIA regulations (GNR 982, GNR 983, GNR984 and/or GNR 985);
- Amendment to existing EMPR and Mine Works Program in terms of the MPRDA (Section 102);

- Waste Management Licence (WML) in terms of the NEMWA (GNR 921, Category B11);
- Water Use Licence (WUL) in terms of the NWA (Section 21 water uses); and

The following listed activities, in accordance with the above pieces of legislation, are currently anticipated to be triggered by the proposed extension and new coal processing plant on Vlakvarkfontein Coal Mine. The applicability of each of these listed activities (or the requirement for any additional listed activities) will be assessed during the initial Authority consultation process as well as during the scoping phase.

- NEMA GNR 984: Activities 6,12;
- NEMWA GNR 921: Category B11.
- NWA: Section 21 (c) and (i) water uses and Section 21(g)

**Figure 1 Integrated EIA Process**



### **TYPICAL IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE ACTIVITIES:**

Potential impacts resulting from the proposed project may include inter alia:

- Impacts on surface water resources;
- Impacts on groundwater resources
- Potential impacts on wetlands and aquatic ecology;
- Potential environmental pollution;
- Impacts on heritage and fossil resources;
- Impacts on health and safety;
- Impacts on air quality;
- Noise impacts;
- Blasting impacts; and
- Social impacts.

The above-mentioned impacts should not be construed as the only impacts that will be identified during the course of the EIA. Based on public consultation, specialist input and further detailed assessments, additional impacts will likely be identified and assessed.

All potential impacts will be identified and assessed following an impact assessment methodology guided by the requirements of the NEMA EIA Regulations (2014). The broad approach to the significance rating methodology is to determine the environmental risk (ER) by considering the consequence (C) of each impact (comprising Nature, Extent, Duration, Magnitude, and Reversibility) and relate this to the probability/likelihood (P) of the impact occurring. This determines the environmental risk. In addition, other factors including cumulative impacts, public concern, and potential for irreplaceable loss of resources, are used to determine a prioritisation factor (PF) which is applied to the ER to determine the overall significance (S).

Furthermore, based on the identified impacts and their ratings, mitigation and management measures are recommended for the applicant and these are included in an Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) towards ensuring that any negative impacts that cannot be avoided are minimised and managed in a manner that is not detrimental to the environment, and positive impacts maximised.

Specialist studies will be undertaken to guide the assessment of the potential impacts, namely: Hydrogeology, Hydrology, Blasting, Air Quality, Social, Noise, Soil and Waste Classification. Any additional specialist studies required by the Competent Authority will be undertaken if necessary and relevant existing specialist studies will be utilised to inform the study.

### **HOW TO GET INVOLVED:**

Should you feel that you may be interested in or affected by this project, it is essential that you register as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) in which case you will be kept informed regarding the project and afforded an opportunity to participate in the process. Please note that only registered I&APs will be included in future correspondence regarding the project and associated updates.

You may register an I&AP in any of the following ways:

1. Complete the attached I&AP registration form and questionnaire and return it to EIMS via email, fax or letter; and
2. Via telephone call addressed to the contact person stipulated at the end of this document.

I&APs are invited to submit any comments, queries or concerns regarding the project within the stipulated timeframes provided. Comments may be submitted by registered I&APs in any of the following ways:

3. Complete the attached I&AP registration form questionnaire and return it to EIMS via email, fax or letter; and
4. Submit written comments in a format of your choosing to EIMS via email, fax or letter.

It is important to note that the EIA process is guided by legally stipulated timeframes and as such, in order to ensure your continued and valuable involvement in the project, we request that your registration requests and any preliminary comments are submitted to EIMS (contact details provided below) by **no later than the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017.**

Please note that further to the above, all registered I&APs will also be notified in due course of the availability of the Scoping Report and Environmental Impact Report upon which comments will be solicited.

**Environmental Impact Management Services (Pty) Ltd**

**Contact Person: Cheyenne Muthukarapan**

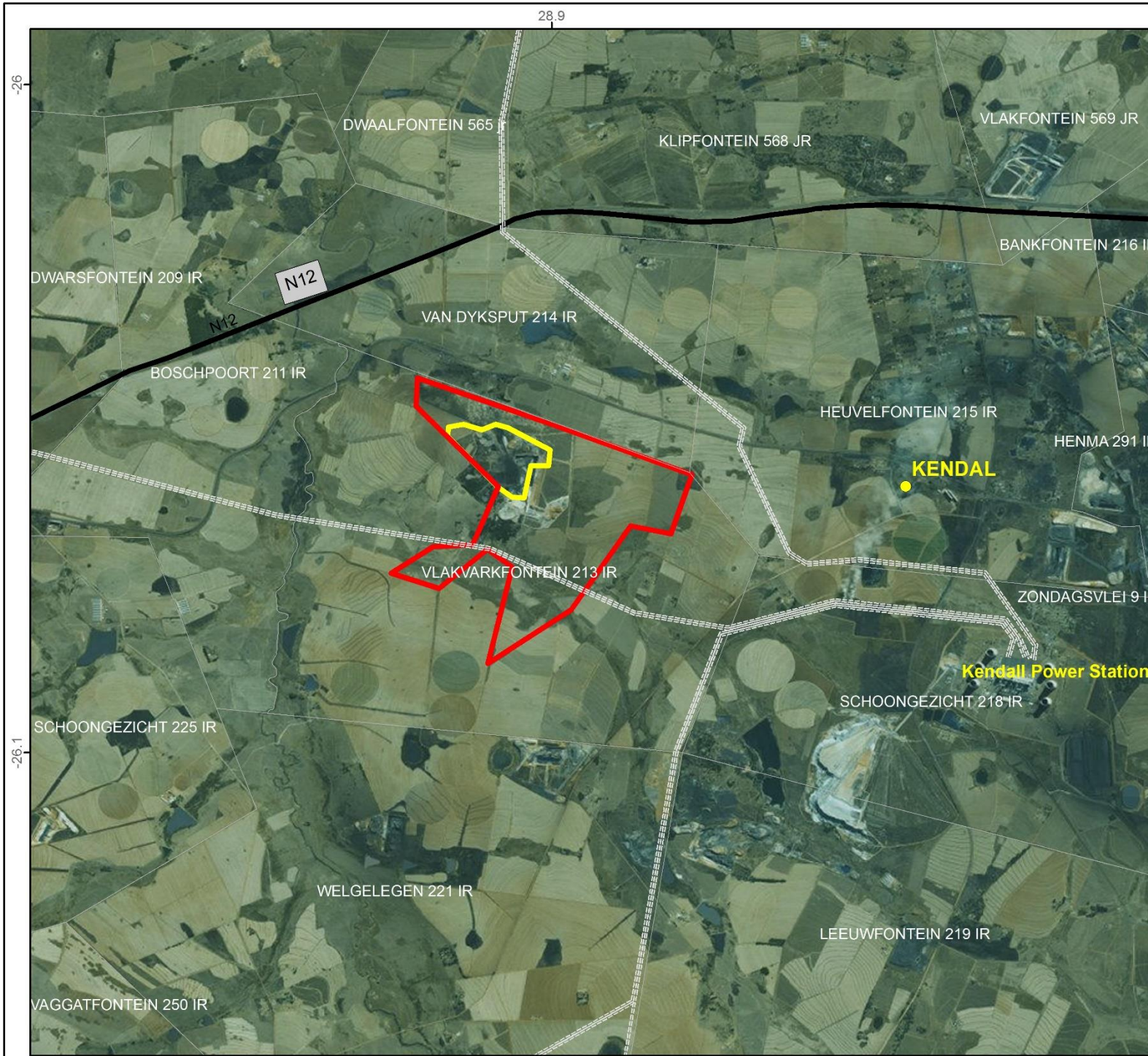
**EIMS Reference Number: 1188**

**Postal Address: P.O. Box 2083, Pinetown, 2123**

**Telephone: (011) 789 7170 / Fax: (011) 787 3059**

**E-mail: [Vlakvarkfontein@eims.co.za](mailto:Vlakvarkfontein@eims.co.za)**





## Locality map

Vlakvarkfontein EIA Extension

### Legend

- Mining Right Boundary
- Proposed Opencast Boundary
- Farm Boundaries
- Towns

### Infrastructure

- Transmission Lines
- Major Roads



0 1.5 3 Km

Scale: 1:60 000



### Data Sources:

ENPAT 2000; CSG, ESRI

Coord System: GCS WGS 1984

Datum: WGS 1984

Units: Degree

Ref: 1188\_Locality map

Date: 2017/07/25

EIMS Ref: 1188

Compiled: SS

Reviewed: JPM

Approved: LW

