

2nd Round of Public Engagements

Casteel Public Meeting Minutes

DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT
PROPOSED CASTEEL DAM SAFETY REHABILITATION PROJECT, FARM KASTEEL 231-KU, BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Project name	Casteel Dam Safety Rehabilitation Project
Date & Time Meeting	12 July 2023, 10:00
Venue	Tent within the premises of Casteel Thusong Service Centre, next to R40 road.
Chairperson	Marissa Botha, Naledzi Environmental Consultants (Pty) Ltd (Naledzi)
Translator	Mr. Absalom Malope - Sepedi translator Deputy Director from Mpumalanga Dept. Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) situated at the Casteel COGTA offices.
Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Naledzi Environmental Consultants - National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS): Strategic Infrastructure Asset Management (SIAM) including relevant DWS Regional offices. - COGTA - Inkomati Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA) - Bushbuckridge Local Municipality - Ward Committee members - Community and representatives from Moreipuso – and Setlhare Tribal Councils - Development Forum - Headman SS Mashego <p>Please refer to attached signed attendance register as Annexure A.</p>
Circulation	The minutes was distributed to the participants through the Moreipuso – and Setlhare Tribal Council Offices including the relevant ward councillors.
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome and introductions. ▪ Basic Assessment and public participation process. ▪ Project motivation and description. ▪ Specialist Studies. ▪ Key impacts. ▪ Key issues raised during the 1st round of engagements. ▪ Way forward and discussions <p>The full PowerPoint presentation is attached as Annexure B.</p>
Contents of Minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussions 2. Identified action items. 3. Photographic proof of meeting

1. DISCUSSIONS

No	Agenda Item	
1.1	Presentation	
	<p>M Botha welcomed the community, introduced the project team and the translator. The meeting was started with an opening prayer.</p> <p>MB briefly recapped the status quo of the project i.e.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice was given to the public of the commencement of the BA process and called for registration of the I&APs by means a Background Information Document from 17 October until 15 November 2022. • The 1st round of public engagement meetings took place on 25 and 26 October 2022. Naledzi shared the minutes via email to the traditional councils and ward councillors. • The application for environmental authorisation and draft Basic Assessment Report was submitted to DFFE on 28 June 2023. • The DFFE issued the following project reference number 14/12/16/3/3/1/2789. • The Draft BAR is available for public review until 31 July 2023. 	
	<p>The purpose of the meeting was highlighted i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To confirm the final project details. ▪ Discuss the key identified impacts and management measures. ▪ Give feedback on key issues raised at the 1st round of public meetings. ▪ To record any further comments for inclusion in the final BAR and EMPR to DFFE. <p>The project information was shared by means of a PowerPoint Presentation and Mr Absalom Malope provided Sepedi translation. Opportunity for questions and queries were provided after the presentation.</p> <p>Refer to Annexure B for the presentation.</p>	
1.2	Discussion Session	All
1.2.1	The community members confirmed that no rituals were conducted at Casteel Dam. The DWS construction team may continue.	
1.2.2	<p>Speaker Mahlala (Bakone Royal Kraal) stated that human remains were recently dumped into Casteel Dam. The community requests the DWS to fence the dam. Unfenced, the dam remains a security issue for the community.</p> <p>The community also wants access to the water from Casteel Dam.</p> <p>M Botha (Naledzi) responded that DWS is not in the tradition to fence off its dams. DWS requires more time to consider the request and conduct independent consulting. The issue should be treated outside the BA process to avoid creating delays. DWS intend to to give a comprehensive response in this regard at the start of the tender stage.</p> <p>DWS: SIAM is responsible for the operation and maintenance of state dams not the allocation or distribution of water from it. The Department of Agriculture is responsible for the furrow used to transfer water from Casteel Dam to downstream water users.</p> <p>Steven Nhlabathi (DWS) confirmed that the community must apply for a water use license from the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA) if they which to obtain water from Casteel Dam. The IUCMA should be engaged in this regard.</p>	
1.2.3	Speaker Mahlala (Bakone Royal Kraal) confirmed that he is aware of the application process. However, at the last public meeting, the DWS indicated they would talk to the Department of Agriculture and IUCMA about it and give feedback to the community.	

1.2.4	Albert Mohlolo (Setlhare Traditional Council) stated that the presentation and the Basic Assessment Report was well prepared. He highlighted that SANRAL proposes to upgrade the R40 main road. Naledzi must engage SANRAL regarding the Casteel Dam access road upgrade and recommended placement of flagmen and signage along the R40.		
	M Botha (Naledzi) confirmed that the Basic Assessment Report (BAR) acknowledges the proposed R40 road upgrade by SANRAL. Both SANRAL and the contracted consulting engineers, BVi Engineers, are key stakeholders in the process. They have been provided with a copy of the BAR for comment.		
1.2.5	Charity Mkhonto (Bushbuckridge Local Municipality) mentioned that the Basic Assessment Report and presentation states that Casteel Dam provides water to downstream users for irrigation and domestic use.		
	She asked if the DWS were able to confirm who are the downstream communities were and if the water quality had been tested to confirm if its fit for human consumption.		
	M Botha (Naledzi) responded that the water is not tested by DWS: SIAM since it was only responsible to supply raw water.		
	Steven Nhlabathi (DWS) confirmed that DWS was only responsible to provide the raw water allocation for domestic purposes. The Water Services Provider (WSP) was responsible to test and treat the water before distributing to communities. The municipality should determine who is consuming the water downstream.		
1.2.6	Given Nyathi requested people above 35-years of age to be considered for employment opportunities. The two traditional councils should be pragmatic when selecting unskilled and semi-skilled labourers from the communities.		
	Absalom Malope (COGHSTA) explained that the presentation already addressed the matter. A project steering committee (PSC) would be established by the DWS who will deal with the employment/labour selection process.		
1.3	Way Forward and Closure	Presenter	Marissa Botha (NEC)
	The way forward was recapped. Naledzi would prepare the minutes of the meeting and make it available to participants via the tribal council offices and local councillors. The Draft Basic Assessment Report is available for comment until 31 July 2023. Comments may be submitted by completing the Comments Sheets at the meeting, alternatively it can be email to Naledzi after the meeting.		
	Naledzi would respond to all public submissions and would incorporate it into the final Basic Assessment Report for submission to the DFFE. I&APs will be notified of the DFFE's decision once issued.		
	MB highlighted it to be the last project meeting by Naledzi. Once the project is approved, the DWS: SIAM would engage with the community going forward through the project steering committee (PSC).		
	Participants were thanked for their comments and the meeting was closed.		

2. IDENTIFIED ACTION ITEMS

Action Item	Assigned	Completed
Bushbuckridge Local Municipality to confirm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which communities are consuming the water supply from Casteel Dam for domestic purposes. - Is it being treated and tested to ensure its fit for human consumption. 	Charity Mkhonto BLM	Pending.
The Casteel community want access to the water supply from Casteel Dam. IUCMA and Department of Agriculture to advise/guide the community on the WULA process.	IUCMA Thibela Assah	Pending

3. PHOTOGRAPHIC PROOF OF MEETING



Figure 1: 12 July 2023 public meeting gathering under a tent within the premises of the Casteel Thusong Centre. A full presentation was provided to the community by means of a data projector and screen.



Figure 2: Photograph taken from within the tent of Naledzi (Marissa Botha) and translator Mr Absalom Malope present at the 12 July 2023 public meeting.



Figure 3: DWS: SAIM representative Rodney Siwelane (left) and Mr Steven Nhlabathi providing responses to community questions.

Attachments:

Annexure A- Signed attendance register

Annexure B - PowerPoint Presentation