



14 October 2019

Dear Sir / Madam,

**WORKING FOR WETLANDS REHABILITATION PROJECT
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS:
AVAILABILITY OF BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORTS AND REHABILITATION PLANS FOR COMMENT**

This letter is available in any of the official languages on written request.

Our previous communication of 06 June 2019 regarding the availability of the Draft Basic Assessment Reports (BARs) and Rehabilitation Plans for the above-mentioned project has reference.

Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd is lodging new applications for Environmental Authorisation with the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) for the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces. Due to an unforeseen delay during the submission of the finalised reports for these projects, the previous application lapsed, requiring new applications to be lodged with the Department. The June 2019 reports have subsequently been updated for the current 30-day public comment period required for the new application processes. All comments received during the previous application process are available in Appendix B of the Basic Assessment Reports.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

WfWetlands is a government programme managed by the Natural Resource Management (NRM) directorate of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), and is a joint initiative with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). The programme is mandated to rehabilitate damaged wetlands and to protect pristine wetlands throughout South Africa. Emphasis is placed on complying with the principles of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) which seeks to draw significant numbers of unemployed people into the productive sector of the economy, gaining skills while they work and increase their ability to earn an income.

The Aurecon team comprises Design Engineers and Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs) who undertake the planning, design and authorisation components of the project. The Aurecon Team, in partnership with GroundTruth, is assisted by an external team of Wetland Specialists who provide scientific insight into the operation of wetlands and bring expert and often local knowledge of the wetlands. The project team is also complimented by the Assistant Director for Wetlands Programmes (ASDs) who are each responsible for provincial planning and implementation.

2. THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT, NO. 107 OF 1998 (AS AMENDED) (NEMA)

2.1 Basic Assessment

In terms of the environmental management principles of NEMA certain activities that may have a detrimental impact on the environment (termed Listed Activities) require Environmental Authorisation (EA) from DEA. Many of the activities associated with the rehabilitation of the wetland are listed Activities in terms of Government Notice Regulation (GN R) 983 Listing Notice 1 and GN R985 Listing Notice 3 of NEMA (as amended):

- **Listing Notice 1:** Activities 12, 19, 27 and 48
- **Listing Notice 3:** Activities 12, 14 and 23

In terms of GN R982 (as amended), activities identified in Listing Notices 1 and 3 require a Basic Assessment (BA) process to be undertaken during which potential biophysical and socio-economic impacts are identified and assessed. Aurecon has undertaken this process on behalf of WfWetlands, and separate BA applications for each of the provinces listed in the table below, has been submitted to the DEA for consideration.

Province	Project	Nearest Town(s):
Eastern Cape	Amathole	Seymour
Gauteng	Gauteng North	Pretoria
KwaZulu-Natal	iSimangaliso	St Lucia
Limpopo	Soutini-Baleni	Giyani

The provincial level Basic Assessment Reports (BARs) provide the findings of the associated investigations and are available for public comment. The BARs describe the wetland systems that were identified as priorities for this planning cycle, together with the baseline information on the quaternary catchment.

2.2 Rehabilitation Plans

The project specific wetland rehabilitation plans include specialist reports prepared by the Wetland Specialist (which provide a site description, detailed baseline information, and the wetland context within the greater catchment). The rehabilitation plans also include the proposed interventions, objectives, their design details and specification, and proposed locations. Project specific rehabilitation plans were compiled for each project and describe the combination and number of interventions selected to meet the rehabilitation objectives for each Wetland Project, as well as an indication of the approximate location and approximate dimensions (including footprint) of each intervention.

3. THE NATIONAL WATER ACT, NO. 36 OF 1998 (NWA)

Activities associated with the rehabilitation of wetlands may constitute “water use” in terms of the NWA and may therefore require general authorisation or licenses from DWS. In general, a water use must be licensed unless:

- It is listed in Schedule one (1) of the NWA,
- It is existing lawful use,
- It is permissible under a General Authorisation (GA), and
- If a responsibility authority waives the need for a licence.

In terms of Section 39 of the NWA, a GA has been granted for certain activities that are listed and usually require a Water Use License. Such a GA (i.e. GN R1198 of 18 December 2009) exists for wetland rehabilitation as long as the activities are for conservation purposes.

4. OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

Public Participation procedures are specified as a minimum requirement (Section 41 of GN R982) of the BA Process and must ensure that all Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) (including State Departments) have an opportunity to participate. Accordingly, notice is hereby given of an additional 30-day public participation process (PPP) on the draft Basic Assessment Reports and Rehabilitation Plans. The BARs and Rehabilitation Plans will be made available for a 30-day comment period from **14 October 2019 until 12 November 2019**.

The reports will be available from 14 October 2019 for download from the Aurecon Website: <http://aurecongroup.com/en/public-participation.aspx>. Please be aware that you will be required to register on the website and then again on the project to access the documents. Should you have any trouble accessing the documents,

please do not hesitate to contact Mr Simamkele Ntsengwane (details below).

I&APs have until **12 November 2019** to submit their comments on the BARs and rehabilitation plans to the EAPs below. I&APs should refer to the relevant province and specifically the wetland project (if applicable). Please include your name, contact details and an indication of any direct business, financial, personal or other interest that you may have in the applications in your submission.

Contact Person:	Mr Simamkele Ntsengwane	Miss Franci Gresse
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5. WAY FORWARD

Following the 30-day public comment period, the BARs and rehabilitation plans will be updated by incorporating any I&AP comments received on the reports (where relevant), All comments received during the first application have been incorporated in the BARs and Public Participation Reports . All comments will be recorded and responded to in a Comments and Response Report which will be circulated to all who have provided comment. The updated BARs and/or rehabilitation plans will then be submitted to DEA for their decision. Once DEA has made their decision on the proposed projects, all registered I&APs will be notified of the outcome of the decision within fourteen (14) calendar days of the decision and the right to appeal.

Yours sincerely
AURECON



Franci Gresse

Senior Environmental Practitioner
Aurecon, Environment and Planning Services