

Environmental Basic Assessment for the proposed rehabilitation of National Route 6, section 4 at Penhoek Pass. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

March 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 Limited (SANRAL) to submit an application for environmental authorisation to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) for the planned rehabilitation of National Route 6 Section 4 Penhoek Pass (km 52 to km 66,2).

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 South African National Roads Agency Limited (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.

One hard rock quarry and one borrow pit situated along the N6 have been chosen for the supply of the road building material. In terms of the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act a mining permit must be applied for. 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 pit that are envisaged to be used. GIBB is preparing the EMPr along with the Basic Assessment for the road upgrade.

PROJECT DETAILS

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

The project involves the rehabilitation of National Route 6, section 4, south of and at Penhoek Pass between

kilometres 52.0 and 66.2. This section of road is between Queenstown and Jamestown in the Eastern Cape Province.

The scope of the project includes the lengthening of the existing climbing lane from the foot of the pass (at km 61.2) to the summit (at km 65.9). The effect of this will be an overall widening of the roadway by approximately 5.0 m. The cross section in the pass will be two 3.5 m lanes in a northerly direction and one 3.7 m lane south with two 1.0 m paved shoulders and a 2.5 m concrete drain.

The section of the road before the Penhoek Pass will only be rehabilitated. Construction work will largely be limited to the existing road reserve of 32 m width, except for very short sections on the hill side of the pass where improvements to the road alignment require the expropriation of very small strips of land from private landowners. Respective negotiations regarding fair compensation have been initiated.

The scope includes the widening of stormwater structures along the entire project where appropriate. All 450 mm diameter pipes will be replaced. No watercourses are being crossed by the road section under investigation, and it is never closer than 32 m from any wetland.

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.



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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 544 (47) 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.

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

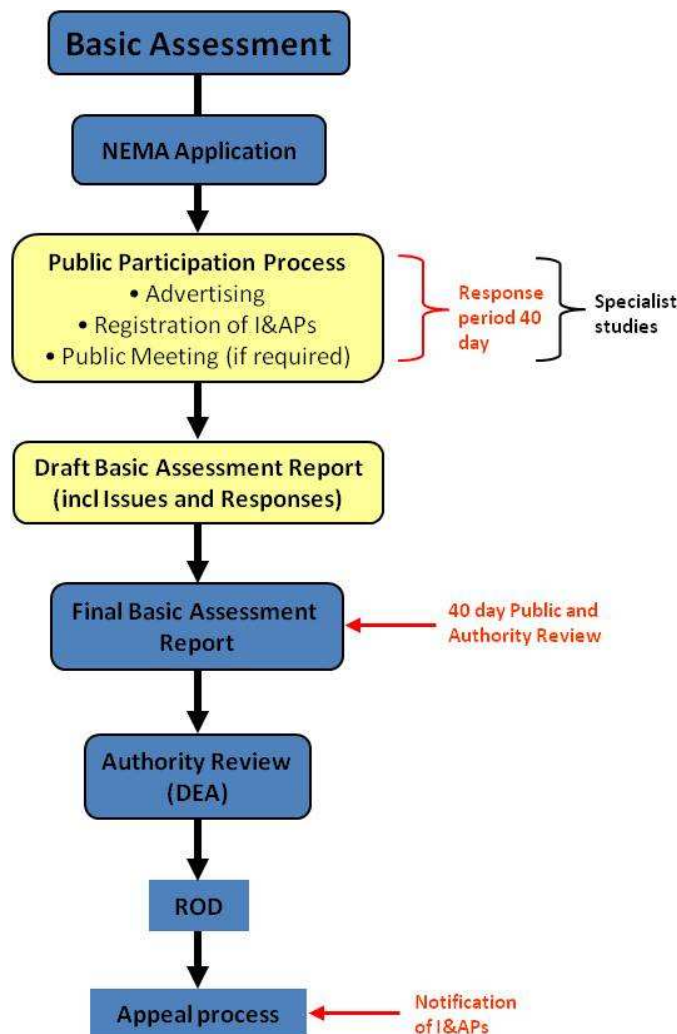
The EIA Regulations specify that a public participation process must be conducted as an integral part of the BA.

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

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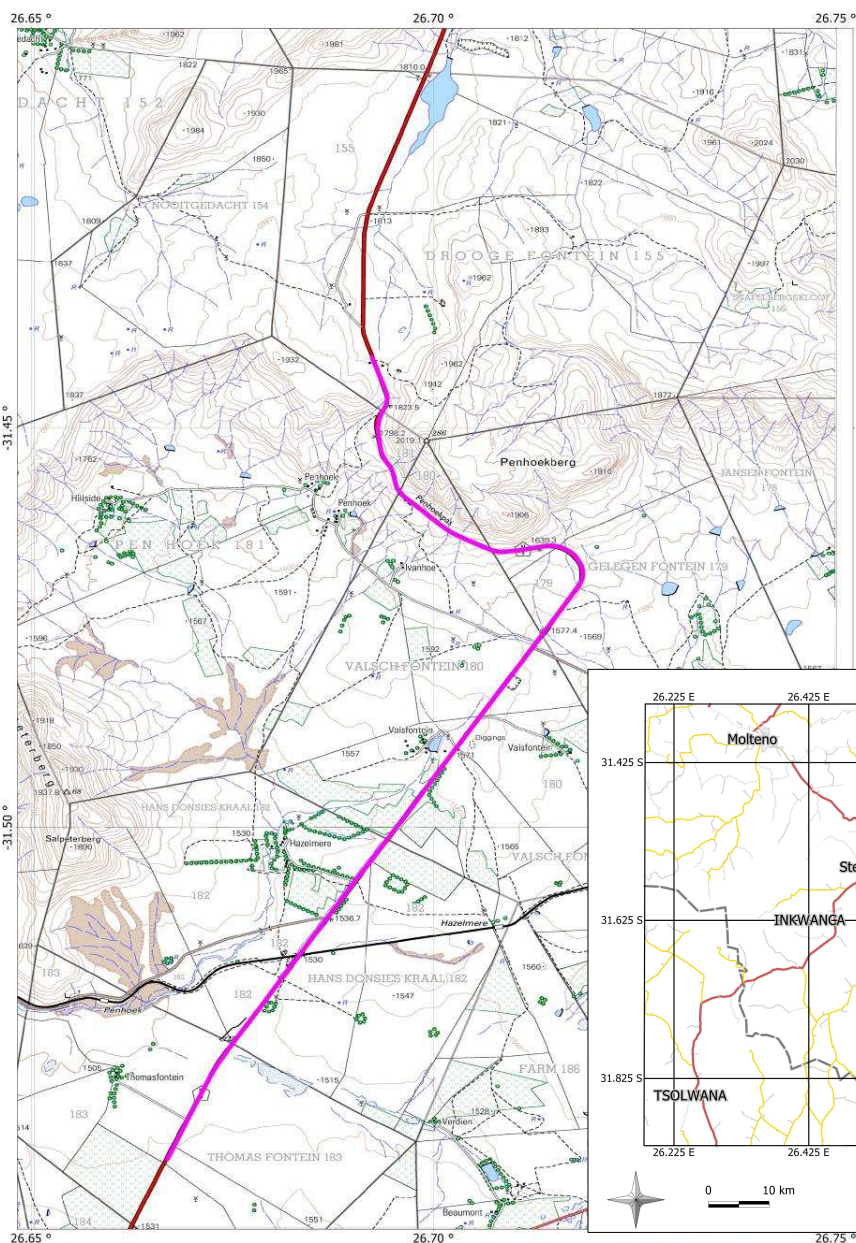
Response section

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED

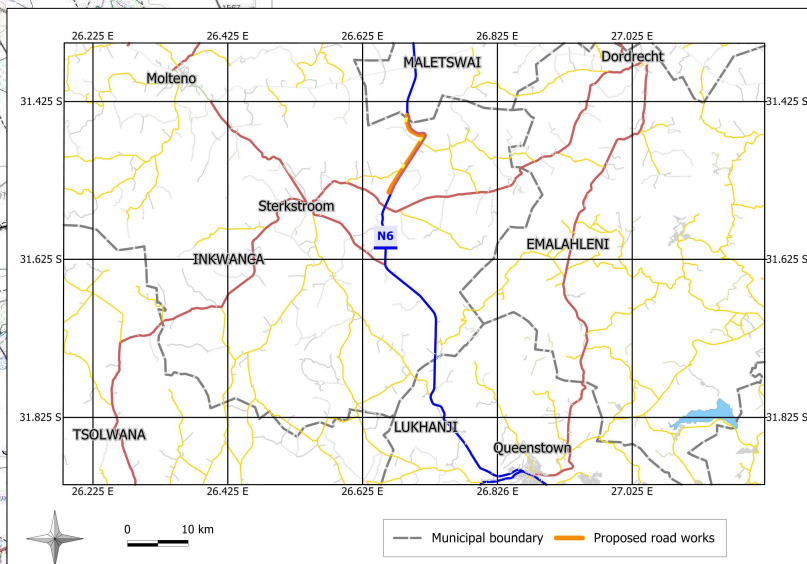
Should you wish to express your views regarding this proposed development, please feel free to register as an Interested & Affected Party (I&AP) and send us your written comments. The names of all registered I&APs, together with the comments received will be incorporated into the Basic Assessment Report 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 15 March – 26 April 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.



Response section

I&AP details

Name	
Organisation	
Designation	
Telephone number	
Physical address	
Postal address	
Fax number	
Email address	

Comments

Contact

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