

EIA PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSED WALMER GQEBERA HOUSING DEVELOPMENT – ERF 11305

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT



RUMP/marw

BID No: 45764 (11305)

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process has commenced to assist the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (NMBM) in determining the extent and significance of the environmental consequences associated with the proposed development on erf 11305, Walmer within the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, Eastern Cape.

Notice of an Environmental Impact Assessment Process is given in terms of regulation 54(3) of the regulations published in Government Gazette No. R543, under Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No.107 of 1998), of intent to carry out the proposed activity.

Issues of concern and potential environmental and social impacts will be evaluated during the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide a brief description of the project and EIA process that will be followed, and to obtain initial comments and contributions from Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) on the issues relating to the proposed development.

Findings of the EIA, including concerns raised by IAPs, will be submitted to the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs & Tourism (DEDEAT) for consideration.

IAPs are hereby invited to comment on the environmental, social and economic issues relating to the proposed housing development. Your comments will ensure that relevant issues are evaluated and will form part of the Assessment. Kindly complete the registration form at the end of this document and send (either via email, post or fax) to Wanda Marais at SRK Consulting, to register your interest in the proposed activity and provide your input.

Your comment on this document must reach SRK Consulting by **12:00 on 12 September 2014**.

Wanda Marais, SRK Consulting

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DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (NMBM) proposes the construction of low cost housing and associated facilities and infrastructure on erf 11305 Walmer, within the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, to cater for the overflow of residents currently living in informal settlements in the Walmer Gqebera area.

Approximately 1400 residences are proposed, but this number will depend on the environmental and other constraints of the site and layout agreed to by the beneficiaries.

The development will connect onto existing bulk services infrastructure in the area.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The EIA process for this assessment will be conducted in accordance with Government Gazette No. R543 in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) Environmental Impact Assessment regulations.

The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) EIA regulations list activities that may have a significant impact on the environment, and which consequently require authorisation from the relevant environmental authority. The regulations further specify the assessment process, and the information, that is required to enable DEDEAT to make a decision regarding the activity.

Activity 15, listed under the NEMA EIA regulations (GN R 545), is the main activity associated with the proposed extension, calling for an EIA process to be followed:

GN R.545 Item (15): Physical alteration of undeveloped, vacant or derelict land for residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use where the total area to be transformed is 20 hectares or more, except where such physical alteration takes place for (i) linear development activities, or (ii) agriculture or afforestation.

This project entails the alteration of undeveloped land on Erf 11305 (which totals 43.7 h) to provide formal housing and associated services.

WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

An EIA is a planning and decision-making tool that is used to identify the environmental consequences of a proposed project, before the development takes place.

The purpose of the EIA is to demonstrate to the authorities and the proponent what the potential consequences of their choices will be in environmental, economic and social terms. Public issues and concerns must therefore be identified timeously so that these can be evaluated and incorporated into the final design if necessary. The EIA consists of two phases. The first phase is a Scoping Study, which identifies potential issues which need more detailed investigation. The second phase is the EIA phase, where detailed investigations of the issues identified during scoping, are undertaken.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is the cornerstone of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. The principles of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) govern most aspects of EIAs, including public participation. These include the ongoing provision of sufficient information (in a transparent manner) to Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs).

During the Public Participation Process, input from the proponent, technical experts, government authorities and the general public will be gathered to result in a better understanding of the project for all involved, and more informed decision-making throughout the process.

During the Scoping phase of this project, the key objective of public participation is to provide IAPs with an opportunity to provide comment and input in the planning phase of the project. Issues of concern and suggestions raised by IAPs will be addressed and responded to as required in the Scoping Report, and IAPs will also be given the opportunity to comment on the findings of both the Scoping and EIA Reports and findings of the Specialist studies during the specified comment periods

IAPs will be provided with a 14-day comment period in which to raise issues and / or concerns in response to the Background Information Document. A draft Scoping Report (DSR) will be compiled and will be available for public comment for a period of 30 days, whereafter the Final Scoping Report (FSR) including Comments and Responses from the public will be submitted to DEDEAT. Once we have received confirmation from DEDEAT that we may proceed to the Impact Assessment Phase, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) will be compiled and be made available for a 30 day comment period. Thereafter the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), together with all comments and responses from the public will be submitted to DEDEAT for decision. IAPs will be notified in writing of any decisions made by DEDEAT after submission of the FEIR.

Please note that communications regarding the process and the availability of reports will only be sent to

registered IAPs. To register for the process, and thus receive further communications regarding this development, please register by sending the signed registration sheet at the back of this document, together with your contact details and nature of interest, to SRK Consulting.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Who is doing the EIA?

In terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations, an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner must be appointed to conduct the EIA. SRK Consulting has been appointed to conduct the EIA. SRK will identify and assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed activity by conducting an objective and independent EIA in which all the relevant information and opinions of Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) will be collected and passed on to the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs & Tourism (DEDEAT). In this way an informed decision-making process can take place.

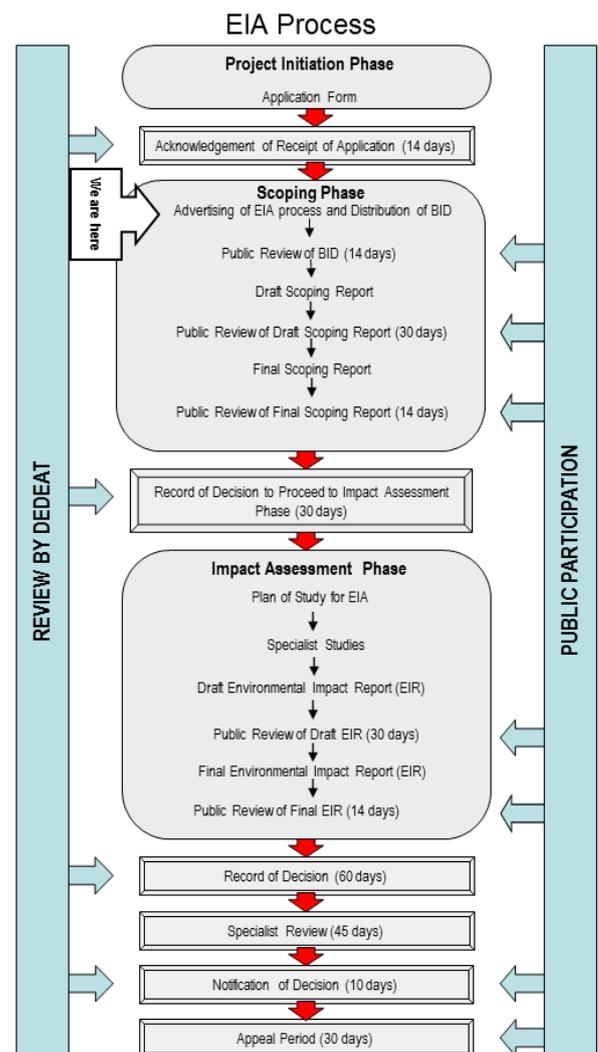


Figure 1: The EIA Process and stages where public comment will be invited



Figure 2: Location of the proposed Walmer Gqebera Housing development

