

THE REHABILITATION AND UPGRADE OF NATIONAL ROUTE 1 SECTION 16 BETWEEN WINBURG INTERCHANGE (KM 78.8) AND THE INTERSECTION TO WINBURG STATION (KM 89.0)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

SEPTEMBER 2014

1. INTRODUCTION

This Background Information Document (BID) serves to inform the public of the intention of the South African National Roads Agency (Soc) Ltd to rehabilitate and upgrade the National Route 1 Section 16 between Winburg Interchange (km 78.8) and the intersection to Winburg Station (km 89.0). A Basic Assessment will be undertaken for the proposed activity and environmental authorisation sought. The reference number for the project is 14/12/16/3/3/1/1262. Public consultation is an essential part of the process. You have been identified as an Interested and/or Affected Party (I&AP). All comments from you will be recorded and presented to the project team and regulatory authorities. You will receive feedback on how your comments have been taken into account and the outcome of the assessment.

Chameleon Environmental was appointed by BVi Engineering (Pty) Ltd to facilitate the Basic Assessment and public participation process.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The scope of works will comprise the following:

- This section of the N1 consists of a single carriageway road that has surfaced width of 12.4m. Traffic volumes are currently about 10000 vehicles per day. The roadway will be upgraded from a bi-directional single carriageway to a divided dual carriageway with a median by constructing the new carriageway towards the west adjacent to the existing carriageway.
- The existing N1 road will be widened by adding a 12.4m wide carriageway comprising 2 new lanes in a northbound direction, towards the west of the existing N1 carriageway.
- The strengthening of the existing or additional pavement layers and surfacing to new levels and widths on the existing alignment.
- The horizontal alignment of the new carriageway will follow the existing alignment.
- The existing roadway will require full rehabilitation and some re-grades in places to improve the vertical alignment.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Background Information Document (BID) has been compiled and distributed for the following purposes:

- To notify Interested and/or Affected Parties (I&APs) of the proposed new development;
- To provide a brief project description;
- To describe the Basic Assessment process.

- The new carriageway will require permanent land acquisition as the existing road reserve is not wide enough to cater for the dual carriageway roadway towards the west. The road reserve width will be increased from 32 m to 80 m from km 85.75 to km 90.00.

a. Culverts

Drainage forms an integral part of the rehabilitation and upgrade design. There are 3 large culverts that exceed 1.0 meter in height along this section of road. Most of the culverts function as cattle creeps and not as a drainage structures. All these culverts will be widened to accommodate the new Northbound Carriageway.

b. Bridges

Widening of a one road-over-rail bridge at km 82.6.

c. Mining Areas

There are approximately 6 quarries and/or borrow pits that will need to be opened for this road project in order to provide the necessary material for the upgrade of the road. The Environmental Management Programme Reports for these mining areas will be submitted to the Department of Mineral Resources in Welkom for approval.

3. BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Basic Assessment (BA) process will be guided by the EIA Regulations, 2010 and environmental management principles and objectives of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998). The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations, 2010 were promulgated on 18 June 2010 in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and came into effect on 2 August 2010. Activities identified in terms of Regulation R. 544 may not commence without environmental authorization from the competent authority and in respect of which the investigation, assessment and communication of potential impacts of activities must follow the Basic Assessment procedure as prescribed. The following listed activities could be applicable to this project:

GNR 544: Activity 11, 18, 22, 39, 40, 47

GNR 546: Activity 14.

A Basic Assessment is a process involving consultation with regulatory authorities and other I&APs that serve to inform a decision on whether or not a development is environmentally acceptable.

The National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) will be the final decision making authority with regard to this project with the Free State Department of Tourism, Environmental & Economic Affairs as the commenting authority.

4. STUDY APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The goal of the Basic Assessment is to identify and assess the potential environmental impacts (biophysical and social) associated with the proposed development.

The following tasks are included as part of this process:

- Submit application form to DEA;

- Site visit and desk study of available information and identification of key issues;
- Identify and compile a list of I&APs;
- Compile and distribute a Background Information Document (BID) to I&APs;
- Advertise in the local newspaper notifying the public of the project;
- Synthesis issues for preliminary investigation.
- Compile a Draft Basic Assessment Report and make it available for public comment.
- Submit Final Basic Assessment Report to environmental authorities for approval.

5. SPECIALIST STUDIES

It is anticipated that the following specialist studies will be undertaken as part of the Basic Assessment process:

- Aquatic and vegetation study;
- Archaeological study.

Specialist consultants will be appointed to assess the potential impacts associated with the proposed project.

The aim of this specialist studies are for the specialist to assess the impact of the project actions on the environment. The specialists will analyse the current situation and will assess the potential impacts of the project actions (and feasible alternatives) on various aspects of the particular issue during the construction and operation phases of the proposed project.

The impacts will be assessed in terms of various criteria such as extent, duration, intensity and whether the impact is positive or negative. The significance of the impact will then be determined through a synthesis of the various criteria used. The specialist will also recommend mitigation actions that they believe can materially affect the significance rating of impacts.

6. AUTHORISATION

DEA will consider the final Basic Assessment and will either issue an authorisation with or without conditions, or reject the proposed project. The authorisation issued by the DEA will be distributed to I&APs as part of the appeal period. An appeal period of 30 days will be provided by DEA. Formal, motivated appeals should be lodged with the Department. The results of the appeal process will then be made known to the public through the distribution of a final feedback letter.

7. COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION

It is proposed that the project will be put out to tender once the authorisation is received from DEA. Construction cannot commence without authorisation from the environmental authorities. Any enquiries regarding the tender or employment opportunities should be directed to the applicant.

8. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Please contact Chameleon Environmental if you require further information on the application and or activity. Please submit your name, contact information, interest and relevant issue in writing before or on the 5 October 2014. The contact details are:

CHAMELEON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

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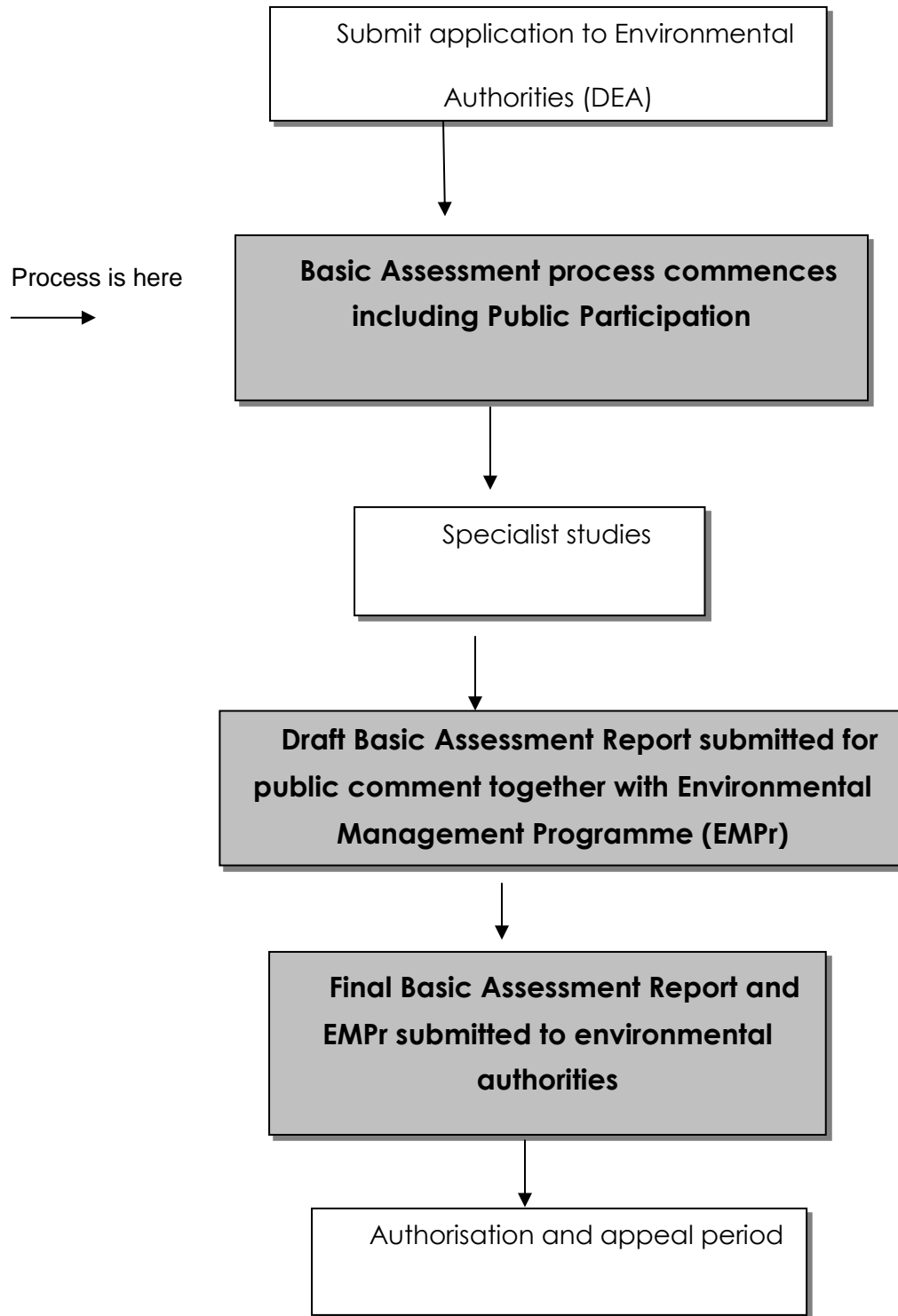


Figure 1: PROPOSED BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS