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# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

**FOR:** THE PROPOSED UPGRADING AND EXPANSION OF FOUR BRIDGES AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE

**LOCATION:** N10 ROUTE BETWEEN GROBLERSHOOP AND LAMBRECHTSDRIFT  
a. Saalskop River Bridge (route km 23) GPS: 21°50'51.70"E 28°45'53.40"S  
b. Kalkwerfslot River Bridge (route km 39.3) GPS: 21°45'44.00"E 28°39'9.30"S  
c. Ezelfontein River Bridge (route km 44.3) GPS: 21°45'25.90"E 28°36'36.50"S  
d. Boom River Bridge (route km 60.6) GPS: 21°41'29.20"E 28°29'40.90"S

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## 1. Project Applicant

South African National Roads Agency Ltd.

## 2. Project Title

Upgrading and Expansion of Bridges and Associated Infrastructure on the N10 National Route between Groblershoop and Lambrechtsdrift, Northern Cape

## 3. Purpose of this Document

This document aims to provide the reader with information regarding the proposed development, as well as the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and public participation processes that are being conducted. The document also aims to equip the reader to participate in the public participation process by requesting and receiving information and raising concerns and issues with regard to the proposed development.

## 4. Project Location and Surrounding Land Use

Widening of four bridges from a current cross section of approximately 7 m to 10.4 m including new Parapets on the N10 route from Groblershoop to Lambrechtsdrift (Figure 1):

- Saalskop River Bridge (route km 23),
- Kalkwerfslot River Bridge (route km 39.3),
- Ezelfontein River Bridge (route km 44.3), and
- Boom River Bridge (route km 60.6).

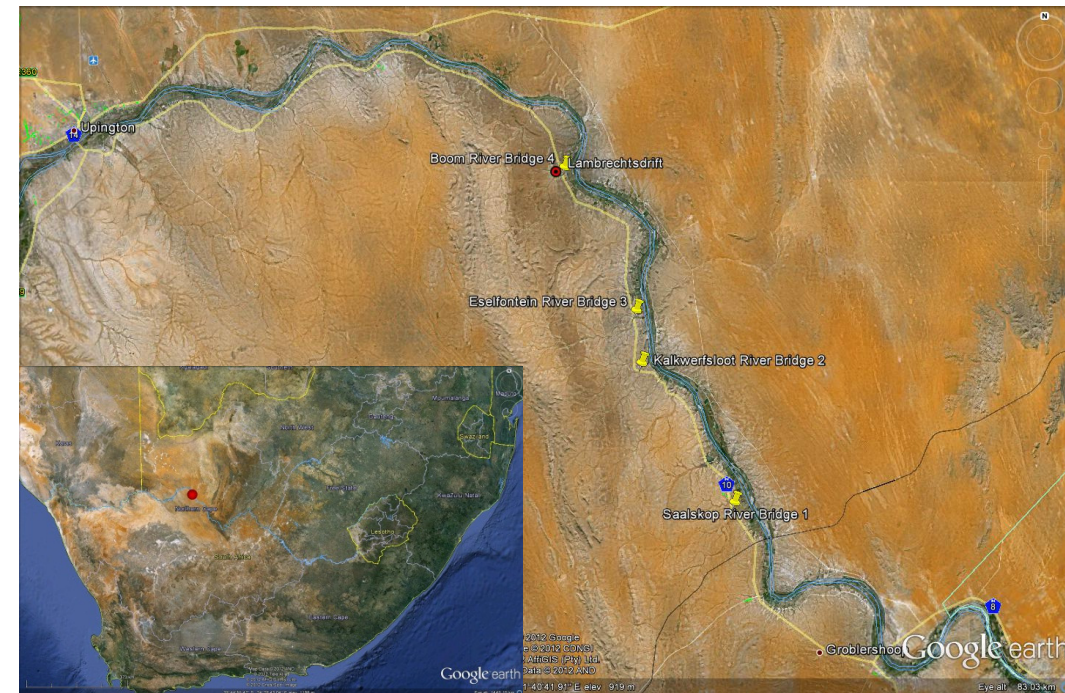


Figure 1: Location of the four bridges on the N10 along the Orange River with Groblershoop in the South East and Upington in the North West. (Google Earth, 2012)

The surrounding area has a rural, agricultural character and land is mostly used for stock farming and where soil is suitable, agricultural cultivation.

## 5. Brief Project Description

The site camp would be established either within the road reserve or the appointed contractor would negotiate larger areas with adjacent land owners. It would consist of site offices, chemical toilets, material storage areas for cement and crushed stone, plant storage areas, concrete mixing areas and sleeping facilities for the security guard.

The construction process would entail the following. A mechanical excavator would need access to the riverbeds to prepare and excavate foundation footings. Eroded areas within the river beds and banks would be filled with spoil material. Concrete would be batched and mixed on site. Concrete footings would be cast. Existing concrete balustrading would be removed and temporary protection installed. Steel reinforcing and shuttering for support piers would be constructed. Then support piers would be cast. Steel reinforcing and shuttering for bridged deck slab would be constructed and bridge deck would be cast. New concrete balustrading would be installed. At last shuttering and all cement and concrete spillages would be removed.

Traffic on bridges would be accommodated in half widths during the course of the project.

Water would be needed during this project mainly for concrete mixing. An application for an allocation of approximately 750 kl per month for the duration of six months will be submitted to the !Kheis Local Municipality.

## 6. Need and Desirability of the Activity

Due to increased traffic on the N10 the current bridge cross sections shows some serious safety concerns. The bridge widenings are required to ensure safety to the travelling public.

## 7. Alternative Sites

As the project entails the widening of exiting bridges, the only alternative available is the do nothing option.

## 8. Applicable Legislation & Applications to be Submitted

Government Notices R 543 and R 544, published in Government Gazette No 33306 (dated 18 June 2010) in terms of Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No 107 of 1998 (as amended) are applicable. The thresholds defined in Regulation 544 will be crossed by the development. The applicant is a parastatal. Therefore an application for environmental authorisation has been submitted to the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

The listed activities that are most likely to be applicable to the proposed development include, but are not limited to:

- Regulation 544, Activities 18 (i), 39 (iii), and 40 (iv)

The upgrading and widening of the bridges are existing activities and would therefore possibly not need to submit water use applications to the Department of Water Affairs in terms of the National Water Act 1998 (Act No 36 of 1998). DWA has been identified as a stakeholder in this application and communication with DWA regarding this matter will take place.

## 9. Specialist Studies

The following specialist studies are being conducted on the study area:

- A heritage impact assessment or desktop study
- A Palaeontological study
- A vegetation study
- A freshwater ecology study

Results from these studies would be included in the basic assessment report.

## 10. The Environmental Impact Assessment Process

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) process is conducted by an independent environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) in order to identify and manage the possible environmental impacts of the proposed development. It ensures that environmental considerations form part of the planning of the development and aids the competent authority in deciding whether a development should be authorised or not.

The public participation process (PPP) forms an important part of the EIA process, as it ensures that the concerns of all the Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) are taken into consideration.

After an application for environmental authorisation through a basic environmental impact assessment has been accepted by the competent authority, potential I&APs are identified and notified of the proposed development and the EIA process. I&APs are requested to register, and to raise their issues and concerns about the proposed development. Public invitations for involvement in the EIA are also issued by means of media advertisements and public notices in order to ensure that all potential I&APs are notified. All I&APs who respond to the notices in writing are registered on a database and their comments and concerns recorded for inclusion in the relevant reports.

The basic assessment report, which is compiled shortly after the initial public notification, examines possible alternatives with regard to the proposed development and identifies environmental impacts that could possibly result from each alternative. These impacts are then assessed and mitigation measures proposed, and the most favourable option is recommended. An environmental management programme (EMP) is compiled with the report and stipulates the measures that are to be taken during the planning, construction, operational and closure phases of the development to ensure that positive environmental impacts are enhanced and negative impacts mitigated.

When the relevant reports have been compiled, it will be made available in draft format for public perusal. Registered I&APs will be informed and invited to comment. Comments received during this phase will be included in the final reports, which will be made available for comment again. When the commenting periods on the final reports lapse, it will be submitted to the competent authority, together with all comments received.

Each invitation to comment will be subject to a deadline, by which time the EAP will assume that all comments have been received. These deadlines must be adhered to in order for the process to flow smoothly.

All I&APs are hereby invited to get involved in the EIA process by responding to media advertisements or public notices, attending public meetings, if any are held, and reviewing and commenting on the draft and final reports within the commenting periods that will be provided. Any queries, comments or requests for further information can be directed telephonically or in writing to the EAP (contact information on p. 1).