

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW DAM AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AS PART OF THE
UPGRADING OF THE BULK WATER SUPPLY SCHEME TO AMSTERDAM, MPUMALANGA

Reference number assigned by AdiEnvironmental cc: EIA2017/01

Purpose of this document

- Overview of the proposed project;
- Overview of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process (EIA) to ensure that Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) understand the process;
- Invitation to I&APs to participate in the EIA process by:
 - ⇒ Indicating their view points, issues and concerns regarding the activity;
 - ⇒ Suggesting alternatives or ways of mitigating negative impacts and enhancing positive impacts.

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Introduction and Legal Requirements

Gert Sibande District Municipality intends to construct a new dam and abstraction facility in either the Gabosha River or the Thole River in order to improve the delivery of potable water to the Amsterdam and Kwathandeka communities. As part of the project, a bulk water pipeline will be installed from the dam site to the existing Amsterdam Water Treatment (Purification) Works (WTW) while a distribution pipeline will be installed from the WTW to Amsterdam/Kwathandeka.

The Minister of Environmental and Water Affairs listed in terms of Sections 24(2) and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), a number of activities that require an environmental impact assessment (either a Basic Assessment or a full Environmental Impact Assessment) before undertaking these activities.

The proposed project would involve the following listed activities (Government Notice R983, R984 and R985 of 4 December 2014) as identified in terms of Section 24(2), 24(5), 24D and 44, read with section 47A(1)(b) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998:

- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 9:** *The development of infrastructure exceeding 1000 metres in length for the bulk transportation of water or storm water—(i) with an internal diameter of 0.36 metres or more; or (ii) with a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more; excluding where—(a) such infrastructure is for bulk transportation of water or storm water or*

storm water drainage inside a road reserve; or (b) where such development will occur within an urban area.

- **GN R983—Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 12:** *The development of (i) canals exceeding 100 square metres in size; (ii) channels exceeding 100 square metres in size; (iii) bridges exceeding 100 square metres in size; (iv) dams, where the dam, including infrastructure and water surface area, exceeds 100 square metres in size; (v) weirs, where the weir, including infrastructure and water surface area, exceeds 100 square metres in size; (vi) bulk storm water outlet structures exceeding 100 square metres in size; (vii) marinas exceeding 100 square metres in size; (viii) jetties exceeding 100 square metres in size; (ix) slipways exceeding 100 square metres in size; (x) buildings exceeding 100 square metres in size; (xi) boardwalks exceeding 100 square metres in size; or (xii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more; where such development occurs (a) within a watercourse; (b) in front of a development setback; or (c) if no development setback exists, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a water course;- excluding (aa) the development of infrastructure or structures within existing ports or harbours that will not increase the development footprint of the port or harbour; (bb) where such development activities are related to the development of a port or harbour, in which case activity 26 in Listing Notice 2 of 2014 applies; (cc) activities listed in activity 14 in Listing Notice 2 of 2014 or activity 14 in Listing Notice 3 of 2014, in which case that activity applies; (dd) where such development occurs within an urban area; or (ee) where such development occurs within existing roads and road reserves.*
- **GN R983—Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 19:** *The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 5 cubic metres from (i) a watercourse; (ii) the seashore; or (iii) the littoral active zone, an*

estuary or a distance of 100 metres inland of the high-water mark of the sea or an estuary, whichever distance is the greater but excluding where such infilling, depositing, dredging, excavation, removal or moving – (a) will occur behind a development setback; (b) is for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan; or (c) falls within ambit of activity 21 in this Notice, in which case that activity applies.

- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 24:** The development of—(i) a road for which an environmental authorisation was obtained for the route determination in terms of activity 5 in Government Notice 387 of 2006 or activity 18 in Government Notice 545 of 2010; or (ii) a road with a reserve wider than 13.5 meters, or where no reserve exists where the road is wider than 8 metres; but excluding—(a) roads which are identified and included in activity 27 in Listing Notice 2 of 2014; or (b) roads where the entire road falls within an urban area.
- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 27:** The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for (i) the undertaking of a linear activity; or (ii) maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.
- **GN R984 – Listing Notice 2, Listed Activity 15:** The clearance of an area of 20 hectares or more of indigenous vegetation, excluding where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for - (i) the undertaking of a linear activity; or (ii) maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.
- **GN R984 – Listing Notice 2, Listed Activity 16:** The development of a dam where the highest part of the dam wall, as measured from the outside toe of the wall to the highest part of the wall, is 5 metres or higher or where the highwater mark of the dam covers an area of 10 hectares or more.
- **GN R985—Listing Notice 3, Listed Activity 4:** The development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13.5 metres.
- **GN R985—Listing Notice 3, Listed Activity 14:** The development of - (i) canals exceeding 10 square metres in size; (ii) channels exceeding 10 square metres in size; (iii) bridges exceeding 10 square metres in size; (iv) dams, where the dam including infrastructure and water surface area exceeds 10 square metres in size; (v) weirs, where the weir, including infrastructure and water surface area exceeds 10 square metres in size; (vi) bulk storm water outlet structures exceeding 10 square metres in size; (vii) marinas exceeding 10 square metres in size; (viii) jetties exceeding 10 square metres in size; (ix) slipways exceeding 10 square metres in size; (x) buildings exceeding 10 square metres in size; (xi) boardwalks exceeding 10 square metres in size; or (xii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more where such development occurs - (a) within a watercourse; (b) in front of a development setback; or (c) if no development setback has been adopted, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse; excluding the development of infrastructure or structures within existing ports or harbours that will not increase the development footprint of the port or harbour.

In order to obtain approval (authorization) for this project, a specific procedure must be followed as stipulated in the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, which requires specific documentation (Scoping Report and Environmental Impact Assessment Report) to be submitted.

Once all the required documentation has been submitted and the environmental process completed, the responsible authority must make a decision on the application.

The environmental decision making authority for this application is the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA).

Part of the above-mentioned process is to inform interested and affected parties (I&APs) of the proposed project and to obtain any issues of concern. You are hereby invited to register as an I&AP and provide input with regards to the proposed activity.

Environmental Consultant

AdiEnvironmental was appointed as independent environmental consultant to conduct the required environmental impact assessment and compile the necessary documentation.

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Public Participation

Aim of Public Participation

- To inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and Stakeholders of the proposed project.
- To allow for the registration of I&APs and thereby present I&APs with the opportunity to comment on the project, contribute ideas, raise concerns and review reports.

*In order to ensure that you are identified as an interested and/or affected party; please submit your name, contact information and interest in the matter to the contact person within 30 days of receipt of this document (i.e. no later than **23 March 2017**).*

If you know of any other interested and affected party who should be registered as an I&AP, it would be appreciated if you could forward the relevant contact details to AdiEnvironmental.

Public meeting

At this stage, it is not anticipated that a public meeting will be held. Should this change, the public meeting will be announced and all I&APs will be invited to attend the meeting.

Who are interested and affected parties?

An interested and affected party (I&AP) can be defined as any person, group of persons or organisation interested in or affected by a proposed activity or any organ of state that may have jurisdiction over any aspect of the activity.

The public participation process allows I&APs the opportunity to:

- Obtain clear and accurate information about the proposed activity;
- Indicate their viewpoints, issues and concerns regarding the activity;
- Suggest alternatives or ways of mitigating negative impacts and enhancing positive impacts.

What are the responsibilities of an interested and affected party?

In order to participate effectively, I&APs should:

- Become involved in the process as early as possible;
- Register as I&APs;
- Advise the consultant of other I&APs who should be consulted;
- Contribute towards the design of the public participation process to ensure that it is acceptable to all I&APs;
- Follow the process once it has been accepted;
- Read the material provided and actively seek to understand the issues involved;
- Give timeous responses to correspondence;
- Be respectful and courteous towards other I&APs and the environmental consultant;
- Refrain from making subjective, unfounded or ill-informed statements;
- Recognize that the process is confined to issues that are directly relevant to the application.

Availability of Reports

The following reports will be made available to interested and affected parties for evaluation purposes-

- Background Information Document (BID);
- Scoping Report;
- Environmental Impact Report;
- Environmental Management Programme Report;
- Environmental Authorisation and Reasons for Decision.

A copy of the above-mentioned documents will also be provided on our website: www.adienvironmental.co.za

How to comment

Comments, questions, issues of concern or objections can be made in writing (by fax, e-mail or post). For your convenience, a comment sheet is attached to this document. Should you not be able to provide us with written comment, please give us a call.

If you do not wish to submit comments, please still provide us with your contact details and indicate whether you would like to remain on the mailing list.

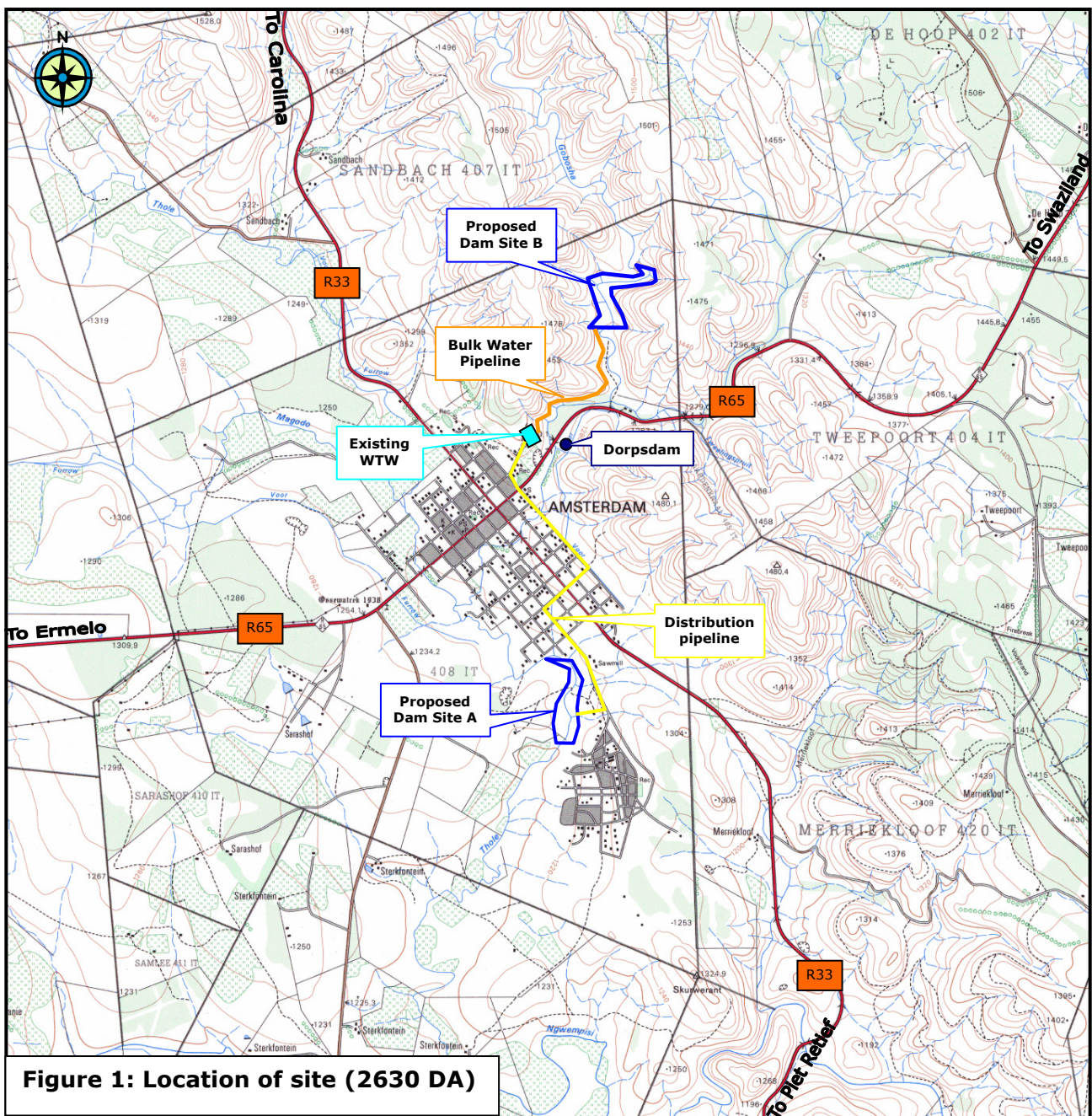
Project Description

Gert Sibande District Municipality intends to construct a new dam and abstraction facility in either the Gabosha River or the Thole River in order to improve the delivery of potable water to the Amsterdam and Kwathandeka communities.

Two possible dam sites were identified, namely Dam Site A and Dam Site B (Figures 1 and 2). Proposed Dam Site A is located in close proximity to Kwathandeka within the Thole River. Proposed Dam Site B is located upstream of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam WTW within the Gabosha River. Both sites are located on the Remainder of Portion 11 of the farm Amsterdam 408 IT.

As part of the project, a bulk water pipeline (orange; Figure 1) will be installed from the dam site to the existing Amsterdam Water Treatment (Purification) Works (WTW) while a distribution pipeline (yellow; Figure 1) will be installed from the WTW to Amsterdam/Kwathandeka. In addition, the Dorpsdam will be desilted and the Amsterdam WTW upgraded. Figure 2 provides an aerial view of the proposed water scheme.

The pipelines will also be located on the Remainder of Portion 11 of Amsterdam 408 IT and within the Amsterdam/Kwathandeka urban area.



Proposed scheme layout

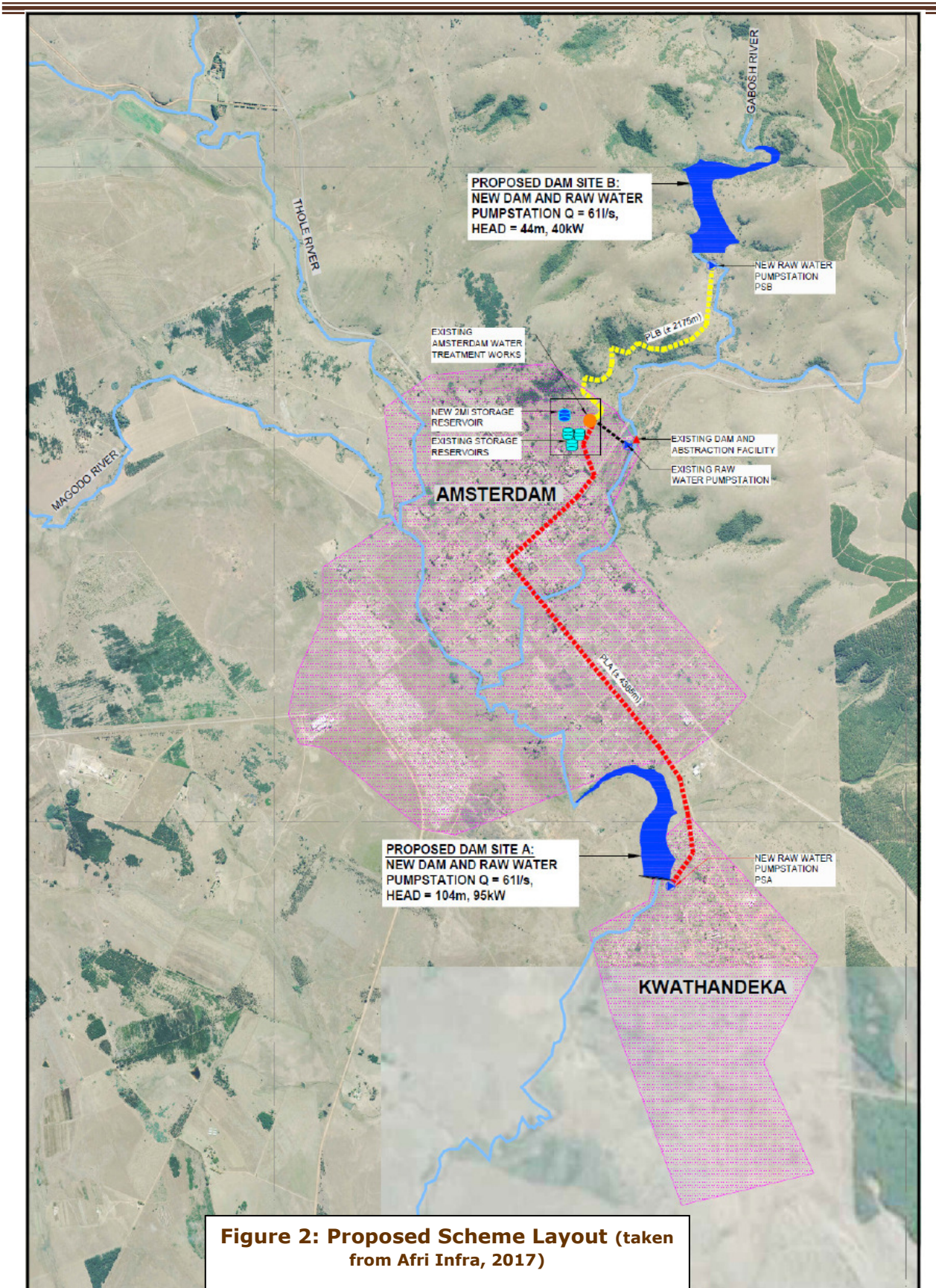
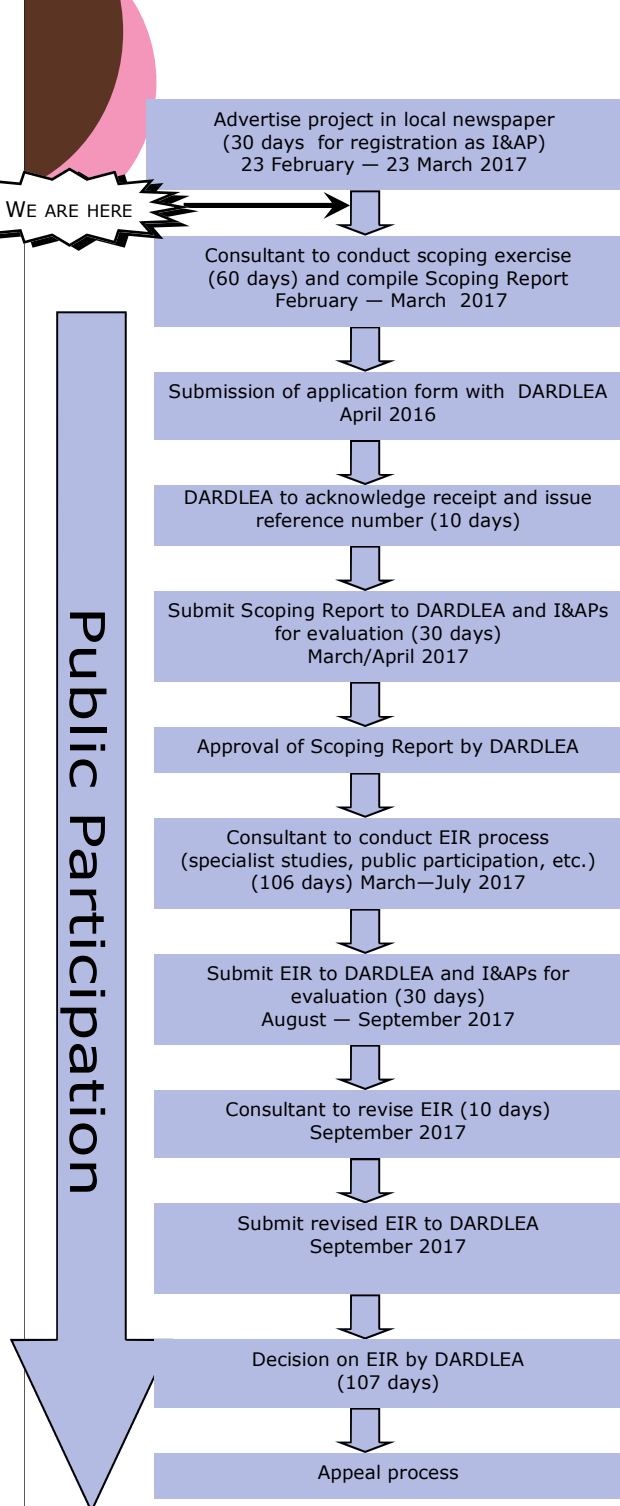


Figure 2: Proposed Scheme Layout (taken from Afri Infra, 2017)

Process to be followed



PLEASE NOTE: TIME TABLE SUBJECT TO CHANGE THROUGH PROCESS FOLLOWED

In order to determine whether approval can be obtained for a proposed activity, a specific procedure must be followed. Government Notice R982 regulates the procedure for the submission, processing and consideration of applications. In short, the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) must apply the following:

- complete an application form (Regulation 16);
- compile a Scoping Report, Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Management Programme (Regulations 21–23 and Appendices 2, 3 and 4 to the Regulations);
- follow a public participation process (Regulations 39–44).

The process that will be followed by the EAP as well as the anticipated timeframes are attached for perusal. The aim of the process is to ensure that the environmental impacts are considered, the relevant I&APs are consulted and the decision making authorities are provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision.

Information with regards to the following environmental features of the said site will be provided in both the Scoping Report and the Environmental Impact Report:

- Topography
- Geology
- Soil
- Land use
- Natural vegetation/plant life
- Animal life
- Surface water
- Groundwater
- Air quality
- Noise
- Sites of archaeological or cultural interest
- Sensitive landscapes
- Visual aspects
- Traffic
- Sense of place
- Interested and affected parties

The Environmental Impact Report will thus provide information regarding the planned activity, the environmental features of the said site and the public participation process followed. It will also provide an indication of the potential impacts that could result during the construction and operational phases of this project as well as possible mitigation/management measures to be implemented.

*It would be appreciated if you could complete the attached comment sheet indicating your issues of concern and/or objections and could forward this comment sheet to AdiEnvironmental by **23 March 2017**.*

