

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)



THE UPGRADING OF NATIONAL ROUTE 1 SECTION 17 BETWEEN WESTLEIGH (km 77.8) AND HEUNINGSPRUIT (km 101.6)

ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION APPLICATION PROCESS AND WATER USE LICENCE JANUARY 2020

Applicant: South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL)
Environmental Assessment Practitioner: Information Decision Systems (Pty) Ltd

INTRODUCTION

This Background Information Document (BID) serves to notify the public of the intention of the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) to apply for environmental authorisation, under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Mineral And Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (MPRDA) (as amended) for the proposed upgrade of the National Route 1 Section 17 between Westleigh and Heuningspruit.

In addition, a Water Use Licence Application will be lodged in terms of Section 21 of the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) with the Department of Human Settlements and Water and Sanitation (DHSWS).

Information Decision Systems (Pty) Ltd (IDS) has been appointed by Worley Parsons RSA (Pty) Ltd on behalf of SANRAL as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to undertake the process required to apply for Environmental Authorisation from the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF).

As the proposed activity will involve watercourse crossing and located within 500m of a wetland, IDS will apply for the required Water Use Licence from the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation (DHSWS), in accordance with the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998), as amended.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide members of the public with information about the proposed project. This information will allow readers to:

- Determine whether they are an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP).
- Understand the project in order to provide informed comments.
- Understand the applicable environmental authorisation process in order to participate meaningfully.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

SANRAL is responsible for improving, managing and maintaining the network of national roads which act as the “economic arteries” of South Africa. The need for the project arose from increased traffic volumes on the N1-17 route and declining levels of service on the existing 3-lane carriageway facility. The existing road pavement also requires some rehabilitation measures at this stage. The upgrading of the N1 route to a 4-lane dual carriageway is presently under construction on the southern side of Kroonstad, whilst the N1 route further north from the Koppies Interchange to the Kroonvaal Toll Plaza already exists as a 4-lane undivided carriageway since its original construction in the 1980’s.

The applicant’s main objectives with the current project are to provide future traffic capacity by upgrading the existing section of the N1-17 to four lanes, either as a 4-lane undivided single carriageway with a median barrier, or a 4-lane divided dual carriageway road.

The proposed road upgrade is associated with the following activities;

- Proposed upgrade to a four (4) lane facility;
- Realignment of the eastern ramps of the diamond interchange to tie in with the proposed upgrading of the road to a 4-lane facility;
- Widening of the one (1) road-over-rail bridge (rail underpass) and two (2) road-over-river bridges (river underpasses);
- Extension and construction of precast drainage culverts, as well as eight (8) major culverts;

GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES

The project is located on National Route 1 Section 17 immediately north of Kroonstad in the Free State Province. The project is located in the Fezile Dabi District Municipality within the Moqhaka Local Municipality and Ngwate Local Municipality. The project stretches over a distance of approximately 23.8 km. **Table 1** below indicates the geographic coordinates of the starting and end points of the proposed upgrade.

Table 1: Geographic coordinates of the proposed road upgrade

	Latitude (S)	Longitude (E)
Starting Point	27°36'31.73"S	27°15'38.60"E
End Point	27°25'22.47"S	27°22'36.09"E

Although the proposed work will take place within an existing route, the site is however situated within environmental sensitive areas which suggest the need for environmental authorisations and water use licence. The National Route 1 Section 17 is situated within Critical Biodiversity Areas, Ecological Support Areas, Degraded Areas, wetlands, rivers and potential heritage sensitive resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION PROCESS

Environmental authorisation is being applied for from the national Department of Environmental Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) (Act No. 108 of 1998) and the 2014 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations as amended in April 2017.

Basic Assessment Process

The road upgrade activities triggers listed activities in Listing Notice 1 (GN R. 327) and Listing Notice 3 (GN R. 327) of the EIA Regulations 2014 as amended in April 2017. Consequently, these activities require the undertaking of a Basic Assessment inclusive of technical studies and public participation.

Listed activities triggered by the road upgrade activities are indicated below;

Number and date of relevant notice	Activity Number Triggered
Government Notice, No. R. 327, April 2017 (LN1)	19, 56,
Government Notice, No. R. 324, April 2017 (LN3)	12, 18, 23

POTENTIAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are various issues and associated potential positive and/or negative impacts associated with the proposed project. I&APs are invited to raise issues of concern and to submit comments. These issues will be investigated during the Basic Assessment process; and relevant associated impacts identified and assessed, and mitigation measures proposed.

WATER USE LICENCE APPLICATION

The WULAs to be submitted will deal with construction activities that involve the following:

- Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse. (**Section 21(c) & (i)**)
- Activities within 500 m from a wetland boundary, as identified in GN 1199. (**Section 21(c) & (i)**)
- Altering the bed, banks course or characteristics of a watercourse. (**Section 21(c) & (i)**)

INVITATION TO COMMENT

Public participation enables people who are interested in or affected by the proposed project to highlight issues or concerns that need to be addressed during the planning and assessment processes. If you would like to participate in this Environmental Authorisation application process and receive all relevant correspondence, you are requested to register as an I&AP with IDS. Written comment may be submitted via mail, fax or e-mail (details below).

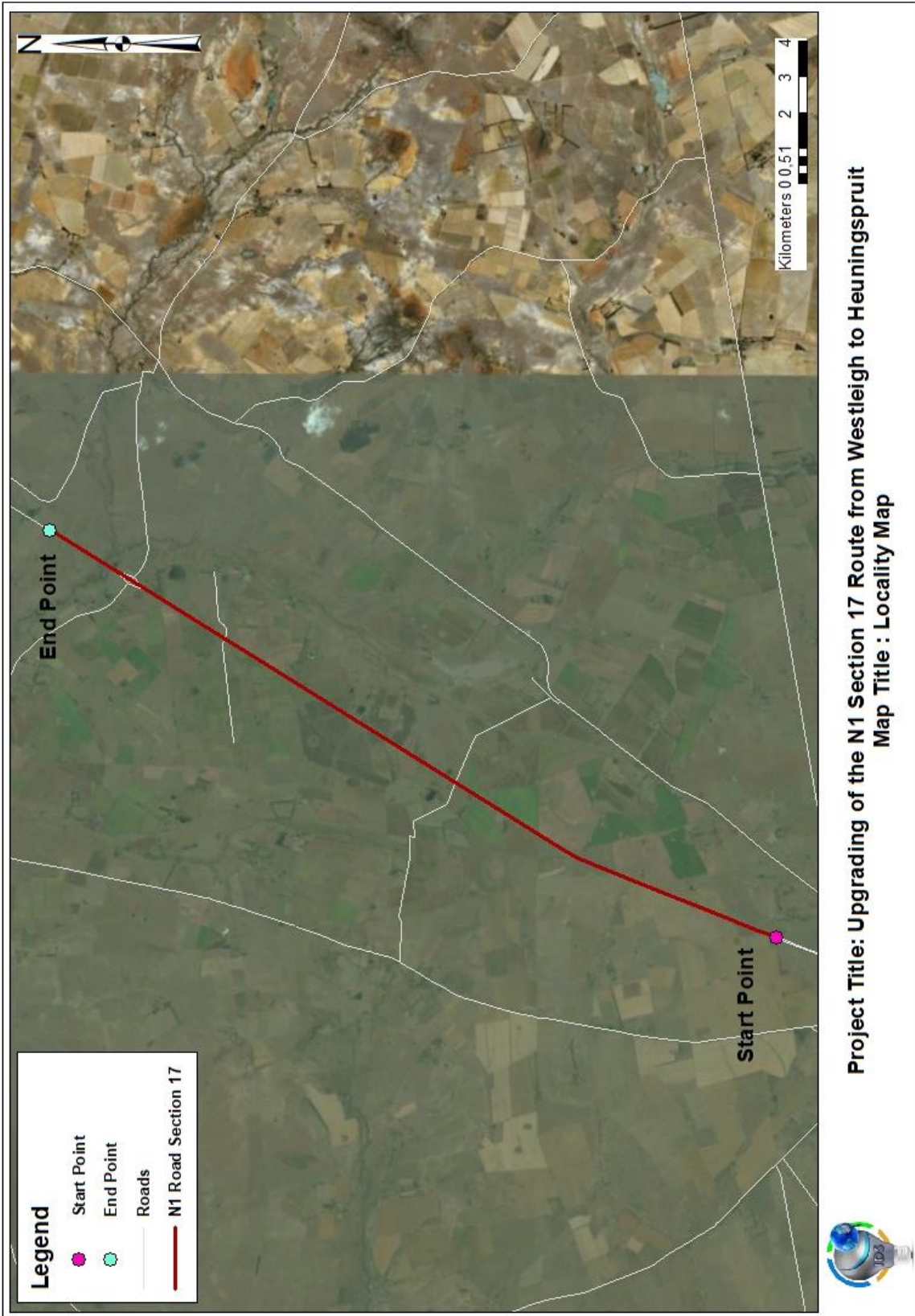
The deadline for comment in this first round of public consultation is **7th February 2020**. Thereafter, all registered I&APs will be notified of the availability of the draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) and will be afforded thirty (30) days to review and submit further comment.

FOR REGISTRATION, COMMENT AND ENQUIRIES:

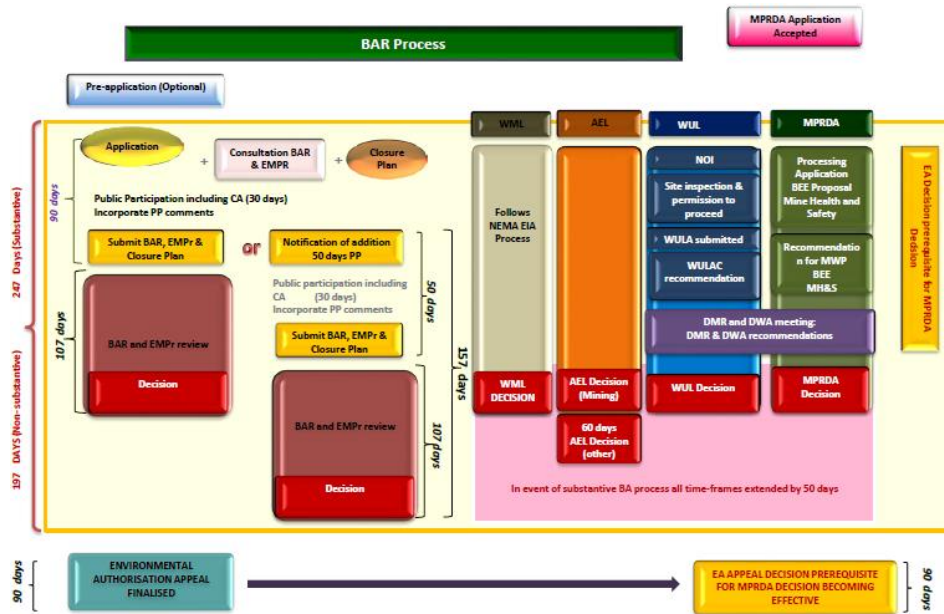
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LOCALITY



BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS



WATER USE LICENCE APPLICATION

Regulation	Steps in processing of water use licence application	Maximum Days allocated	Cumulative days	Responsible
0	Pre-application enquiry	0	0	Applicant/Responsible
1	Application submitted	1	1	Applicant
2	Responsible authority acknowledges receipt of the application	10	11	Responsible Authority
3	Applicant confirms arrangements for site inspection with an allocated case officer	5	16	Applicant
4	Site inspection to confirm water uses, determine information requirements and the need for public participation	20	36	Responsible authority/applicant
5	Confirm requirements for water use licence application technical report based on site visit and meeting	5	41	Responsible Authority
6	Compilation, consultation and submission of water use licence application technical report by applicant	105	146	Applicant
7	Reject/Accept water use licence application technical report	10	156	Responsible authority
8	Assessment	139	295	Responsible authority/applicant
8	Decision and communication to applicant	5	300	Responsible authority