

Basic Assessment Process and Water Use License Application for the Proposed Development of the Victoria Mother and Child Centre of Excellence Hospital, Stepdown Facility and Boutique Hotel on Erf 9194, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

January 2016



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ Inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) about the proposed project, and to invite them to participate;
- ◆ Provide a brief background on the proposed project; and
- ◆ Explain the aims and objectives of the Environmental Basic Assessment Process.



WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THIS DEVELOPMENT?

The Applicant, the Victoria Mother and Child Centre of Excellence, represented by Drs D. Naidoo and R. Takoordeen, specialist paediatricians from the greater Pietermaritzburg area, has proposed the establishment of a Hospital, Stepdown Facility and Boutique Hotel on Erf 9194, PMB, adjacent to the Victoria Country Club in Pietermaritzburg, Msunduzi Local and uMgungundlovu District Municipality, KZN. The proposed hospital development will provide comprehensive maternal, paediatric and neonatal health care services.

In terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2014, under Section 24(5), 24M and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No 107 of 1998), published in Government Notice No. R. 983 & 985 of 2014, the proposed development triggers the following Listed Activities and requires a Basic Assessment process to be conducted:

GNR 983	Part 19	<p><i>"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></p> <p><i>(i) a watercourse...";</i></p> <p>There are two drainage channels with associated wetland areas located on the proposed project site which will be impacted upon by the hospital development.</p>
GNR 983	Part 27	<p><i>"The clearance of an area of 1 ha or more, but less than 20 ha of indigenous vegetation..."</i></p> <p>The proposed project site is approximately 2,332ha in size and is currently undeveloped. It comprises a 0.31ha area of primary Moist Coast Hinterland grassland, a 1.96ha area of secondary grassland, and 0.18ha of drainage channel wetland. The clearing of indigenous vegetation from the site will be required for the proposed</p>

		development.
GNR 985	Part 4	<p><i>"The development of a road wider than 4 meters with a reserve less than 13,5 meters... (d) In KwaZulu-Natal: (viii) In critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans; and (xiii) in urban areas... (aa) in areas zoned for use as public open space.</i></p> <p>The development of an internal road system will be required for the proposed medical facility. The project site falls within a Critical Biodiversity Area as identified in the KZN Terrestrial Systematic Conservation Plan and the Msunduzi Environmental Management Framework. A small portion of the project site falls within a SANRAL road reserve which is currently zoned for public open space.</p>
GNR 985	Part 6	<p><i>"The development of resorts, lodges, hotels and tourism or hospitality facilities that sleeps 15 people or more... (d) In KwaZulu-Natal... (vii) in critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans; (xi) in sensitive areas as identified in an environmental management framework as contemplated in Chapter 5 of the Act and as adopted by the competent authority; (xiii) in urban areas... (aa) in areas zoned for use as public open space... (cc) in areas within 500 meters from protected areas identified in terms of NEMPAA".</i></p> <p>The proposed medical facility will incorporate a Boutique Hotel which will have a minimum of 40 beds. The project site falls within a Critical Biodiversity Area as identified in the KZN Terrestrial Systematic Conservation Plan and the Msunduzi Environmental Management Framework. A small portion of the project site falls within a SANRAL road reserve which is currently zoned for public open space. The project site is also located within 500 meters from the Queen Elizabeth Park Nature Reserve which is a protected area.</p>
GNR 985	Part 12	<p><i>"The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation...(b) In KwaZulu-Natal: (v) In critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans... (viii) On land, where at the time of the coming into effect of this Notice or thereafter such land was zoned open space, conservation or had an equivalent zoning... and (xii) Sensitive areas as identified in an environmental management framework as contemplated in Chapter 5 of the Act and as adopted by the competent authority..."</i></p> <p>The proposed development site falls within a Critical Biodiversity Area as identified in the KZN Terrestrial Systematic Conservation Plan and the Msunduzi Environmental Management Framework. A small portion of the project site also falls within a SANRAL road reserve which is currently zoned for public open space.</p>

Under Government Notice No R. 982 of 2014, the Applicant is required to appoint an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to conduct the environmental authorisation process. The Applicant has appointed Green Door Environmental to conduct the Basic Assessment process for the abovementioned medical facility.

In addition to the above, the proposed development constitutes a Water Use in terms of Section 21 of the National Water Act (36 of 1998) and requires a Water Use License Application, in terms of the following listed activities:

Section 21	S21(c)	<p><i>Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse.</i></p> <p><i>"Causing and "diverting the flow" means a temporary or permanent structure causing the flow of water to be rerouted in a watercourse for any purpose. "Impeding the flow" means the temporary or permanent obstruction or hindrance to the flow of water in a watercourse by a structure built either fully or partially in or across a watercourse The impeding or diverting flow in a river may alter the flow regime, or cause the flow to be redirected, whether temporarily or permanently".</i></p> <p>This activity will be triggered wherever infrastructure is proposed close to a water source, within a wetland or within 500 metres of a wetland. This will be determined during the Specialist Assessments.</p>
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Section 21	S21(i)	<p><i>Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.</i> <i>“Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse means any change affecting the resource quality or flow components within the riparian habitat or 1:100 year floodline, whichever is the greater distance from the watercourse is defined as a Section 21 (i) water use”.</i></p> <p>This activity will be triggered wherever infrastructure is proposed close to a water source, within a wetland or within 500 metres of a wetland. This will be determined during the Specialist Assessments.</p>
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WHAT IS PROPOSED?

The proposed development of the Victoria Mother and Child Centre of Excellence medical facility is an initiative by previously disadvantaged medical professionals to provide mother and child hospital care services in the greater area of Pietermaritzburg and in KwaZulu-Natal as a whole. The key drivers of this project are Dr. Doshen Naidoo and Dr. Raksha Takoordeen, both specialist paediatricians from Pietermaritzburg.

The proposed hospital facility will provide comprehensive maternal, paediatric and neonatal care services. It has been identified that South Africa has a serious lack of dedicated paediatric facilities, with only one such facility in the country, the state funded Red Cross Hospital in Cape Town. This compares dismally to the 23 children’s hospitals in Canada, 19 in Australia, 20 in Germany and 157 in the United States. The development and operation of a dedicated mother and child medical facility in Pietermaritzburg is not only unique and innovative but is a desperately needed service in KwaZulu-Natal.

The proposed development will include a 147 bed hospital providing specialised mother and child health care, a 50 bed Stepdown Facility, a 40 bed Boutique Hotel and 20 medium density on-site staff apartments.

It is anticipated that the hospital will incorporate the following medical facilities:

- A High Care and Intensive Care Unit (including Neonatal Intensive Care)
- Maternity Unit
- Paediatrics Unit
- Casualty/Trauma Unit
- Short Stay Facility
- Surgical Unit

Supporting services will include radiology and pathology, a fertility/embryology unit, ambulance service, a pharmacy, coffee shop and consulting suites. There will be overnight facilities available for families, a mother and child concept shop, and adequate parking.

The proposed development site is located at the GPS coordinates 29°34’25.67”S and 30°19’47.45”E, on Erf 9194, Pietermaritzburg. The property is approximately 2.332 ha in size and is located between the Victoria County Club and the Queen Elizabeth Park Nature Reserve (Refer to Figure 1 for the locality map).

The property was originally earmarked for medium density residential housing, as part of the larger Victoria Country Club Estate. An Environmental Assessment process was undertaken in 2003 for the originally proposed residential development and a positive Record of Decision (RoD) was granted on the 9th February 2004 (EIA ref number EIA/2771). Construction of the residential development did not however commence, and the RoD has subsequently lapsed. The Applicant has now identified the property, Erf 9194, PMB, as a potential site for the hospital development and is undertaking a new Environmental Basic Assessment process (this process) for the development of the facility.



WHERE IS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT?



Figure 1: Aerial map showing the location of the proposed development site, Erf 9194, Pietermaritzburg (Google Earth).



Figure 2: Conceptual Design of the Proposed Victoria Mother and Child Centre of Excellence (bva Architects).



WHAT IS THE AIM OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA)?

The Basic Assessment process aims to:

- ◆ Inform and involve all potentially Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) of the proposed development;
- ◆ Identify the potential impacts (positive and negative) that the proposed development may have on the ecological and socio-economic environment;
- ◆ Provide recommendations based on the identified impacts and conduct further specialist studies if necessary; and
- ◆ Provide the DEDTEA with enough information to make an informed decision regarding the proposed development.



WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE EIA PROCESS FOR BASIC ASSESSMENT?

The Basic Assessment process can be described as follows:

1. *Application Form:*
An official Application Form is required to be completed and submitted to the Competent Authority. This Form provides information on the property, a description of the proposed development and lists the relevant listed activities which are triggered by this proposed development.
2. *Public Participation:*
The general public and relevant Authorities are notified of the proposed development through newspaper adverts, site notices and direct consultation. Alternative methods will be employed to inform those I&APs who may be illiterate, disabled or otherwise disadvantaged. Should you be aware of anyone who might be interested in this project, but has not been notified, please send the relevant contact details to Green Door Environmental. This Background Information Document will be circulated to neighbouring landowners, relevant authorities and any other persons registered as I&APs following the adverts and site notices.
3. *Identification of Impacts and Alternatives*
Environmental issues, concerns, development constraints and possible development alternatives will be identified using professional judgement, project information, experience of similar projects, a review of available literature, site visits, and consultation with authorities and the public.
4. *Impact Evaluation*
The significance of environmental issues will be evaluated in terms of their expected extent, intensity, duration and probability of occurrence.
5. *Mitigation and Management Measures*
Measures to manage and minimise impacts to within acceptable levels, as well as measures to maximise the socio-economic benefits associated with the development, will be identified and recorded in the Basic Assessment Report. An Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) will be compiled to facilitate the implementation of mitigation measures.
6. *Reporting*
The Basic Assessment Report and Draft EMPr will be made available for review and comment by all I&APs and relevant authorities. A Final Basic Assessment Report and EMPr will be compiled and will include comments received on the circulated Basic Assessment Report.
7. *Authority Decision*
The Final Basic Assessment Report will be used by the Competent Authority as the basis for the decision on whether the proposed development should be approved or not.

2. The following potentially interested and affected parties should also be contacted:

Name:
Organisation:
Tel Number:
Email:
Address:
Name:
Organisation:
Tel Number:
Email:
Address:

3. Additional comments?

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Should you be aware of anyone who might be interested in this project, but may be illiterate, disabled or otherwise disadvantaged, please send the relevant contact details to Green Door Environmental.

Thank you