

NOTICE OF A BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND WATER USE LICENSE APPLICATION FOR THE UPGRADE OF LEACHVILLE X2 SEWER PUMP STATION, BRAKPAN, CITY OF EKURHULENI

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

1 July 2022



PURPOSE OF BID

The BID provides you as an interested and/or affected party (I&AP) with project information and briefs any potential I&APs about the application procedures to be conducted for the project and indicates how you can become involved in the process through the public participation process, and raise issues that may concern and/or interest you. You can achieve this by:

- Reviewing the BID and registering as an I&AP by completing the attached registration form (page 6)
- Contacting us/ by sending an email/ chatting to us telephonically
- Giving comments, raising issues/concerns about the project within the given timeframes

You can complete a registration form, write a letter, or call or email Naledzi if you wish to register for the project.

Registrations and comments must be submitted on or before 30 July 2022.

CONTACT DETAILS

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1. BACKGROUND

The City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality proposes to upgrade the existing Leachville Extension 2 Sewer Pump Station situated on Erf 374 next to the New Kleinfontein Road (M56) adjacent to Leachville Township near Benoni in the jurisdiction of the City of Ekurhuleni.

The project requires environmental authorisation in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 07/1998) and its promulgated EIA Regulations of 2014 (GNR 326) from the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) before it can be commissioned. The application process is subject to a Basic Assessment (BA) process in line with Regulation 19 of the EIA Regulations.

A Water Use License Application (WULA) will also be required under the provision of the National Water Act 36 of 1998 (NWA) for Section 21 (c), (i) water uses due to the presence of a wetland on the application site and the potential risk of the project impacting it. The application will be submitted to the Gauteng Department of Water & Sanitation (DWS) and will be subject to a WULA Procedure as set out in the NWA WULA Regulations of 2017 (GNR 267). Both application procedures are subject to a public participation process.

Naledzi Environmental Consultants (Pty) Ltd has been appointed by the City of Ekurhuleni's Design Engineers, Vumesa (Pty) Ltd, as the independent environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) to undertake the authorisation procedures, and will conduct the public participation process.

2. MOTIVATION AND PROJECT DETAILS

Leachville pump station currently services Leachville Township (Ext 2 and 3) and gravitates to the Vlakplaats and Waterval Wastewater Treatment Plants. The pump station has a design capacity of 35 litres / second but experiences high flows influenced by rainwater channelled to sewer manholes resulting in sewer overflows into two emergency ponds and onto the abutting property. To rectify the issue City of Ekurhuleni will construct a new 88 litre/second pump station next to the existing one to cater for current and future demands and to ensure efficient daily operation of the pump station. The existing pump station will operate until the new one is commissioned.

The scope of work will include:

- Construction of a new 950m² sewer pump station with a design capacity of 88 litres per second
- Formalisation of the existing access road to the pump station. i.e. Pave the road to a 3m width, redesign the T-junction with the New Kleinfontein Road.
- Replacement of certain 110mm sewer midblock pipes in Leachville Township with 160mm pipes to accommodate higher flows.

See Page 7-8 for Locality and Site Plan.

3. WHY IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION REQUIRED?

The project is situated within/close to a wetland and endangered ecosystem and therefore involves undertaking listed activities scheduled under GN R. 327 (activity 19) and GN R. 324 (activity 12 and 14) published under the NEMA EIA Regulations (GN R. 326, 7 April 2017). The environmental authorisation is required subject to a BA process for listed activities scheduled under GNR 327 and 324.

The triggered activities and applicability to the project include:

Activity 19 (GNR 327) refers to infilling/removing/depositing any material of more than 10m² into/ from a watercourse. **The new pump station will be located within a wetland and require the removal of 183.6m³ of unstable soil material to construct the pump station foundations.**

Activity 12(c)(i)(ii) (GNR 324) refers to the clearance of an area of 300m² or more indigenous vegetation in (c) Gauteng (i.) Within any critical endangered or endangered ecosystem listed in terms of section 52 of NEMBA; (ii) Within Critical Biodiversity Areas or Ecological Support Areas (ESA) identified in the Gauteng Conservation Plan or bioregional plans. **The pump station will require the removal of 950m² of Tsakane Clay Grassland (threatened ecosystem) and falls within an ESA as identified in the Gauteng Conservation Plan vers. 3.3 and Ekurhuleni Bioregional Plan.**

Activity 14 (ii)(a)(c)(iv)(v) (GNR 324) refers to the development of infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10m² or more which occurs within a watercourse in (c) Gauteng (iv) Sites identified as Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA's) or Ecological Support Areas (ESA's) in the Gauteng Conservation Plan or in bioregional plans; (v) Sites identified within threatened ecosystems listed in terms of the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 - **The new pump station and associated infrastructure has a physical footprint of more than 950m², falls within a wetland in Gauteng, in an area identified as an ESA a threatened ecosystem (Tsaskane Clay Grassland) in terms of the Gauteng Conservation Plan and NEMBA.**

See Page 9 for Photo Plate showing the site.

The above-listed activities have been confirmed with GDARD and a project reference number allocated (Gaut. 002/22-23/E3249).

4. BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The BA process is a legislative tool used to identify the potential environmental impacts that may occur due to the project and to ensure that these are avoided or mitigated if environmental authorisation is granted. Its main purpose is to inform the competent authority and the public of the environmental consequences of the project through a BA Report and to recommend mitigation measures in an Environmental Management Programme to manage/avoid these. The process comprises the following basic steps (see Figure 1 for a basic illustration of the process):

- Site sensitivity verification, Specialist Studies
- Engage GDARD
- Provide I&APs opportunity to register on the project database and circulation of the BID
- Publicise the project in the local newspaper and place onsite notices
- Draft the Basic Assessment Report (BAR) and Environmental Management Programme (EMPr)
- Apply for environmental authorisation to the GDARD
- Release the draft BAR and EMPr to registered I&APs for 30 days of public review
- Update the BAR and EMPr based on I&AP comments and submit the final documents to GDARD
- GDARD will review the reports and decide on the application within 107 days.

The process will investigate and gather information about the application site and any potential negative environmental impacts through site investigations, desktop analysis and the use of tools such as Geographic Information Systems including specialist investigations to assess the site as well as information gathered from the public and relevant commenting authorities through the public participation process. The potential impacts will be assessed, ranked and recorded in the BAR and mitigation measures to minimise the negative impacts to acceptable levels recommended.

The EMPr will prescribe the environmental specifications to be adhered to during the construction and operation of the project. The BAR and EMPr will be subject to a 30- day public review before it is submitted to GDARD for decision-making.

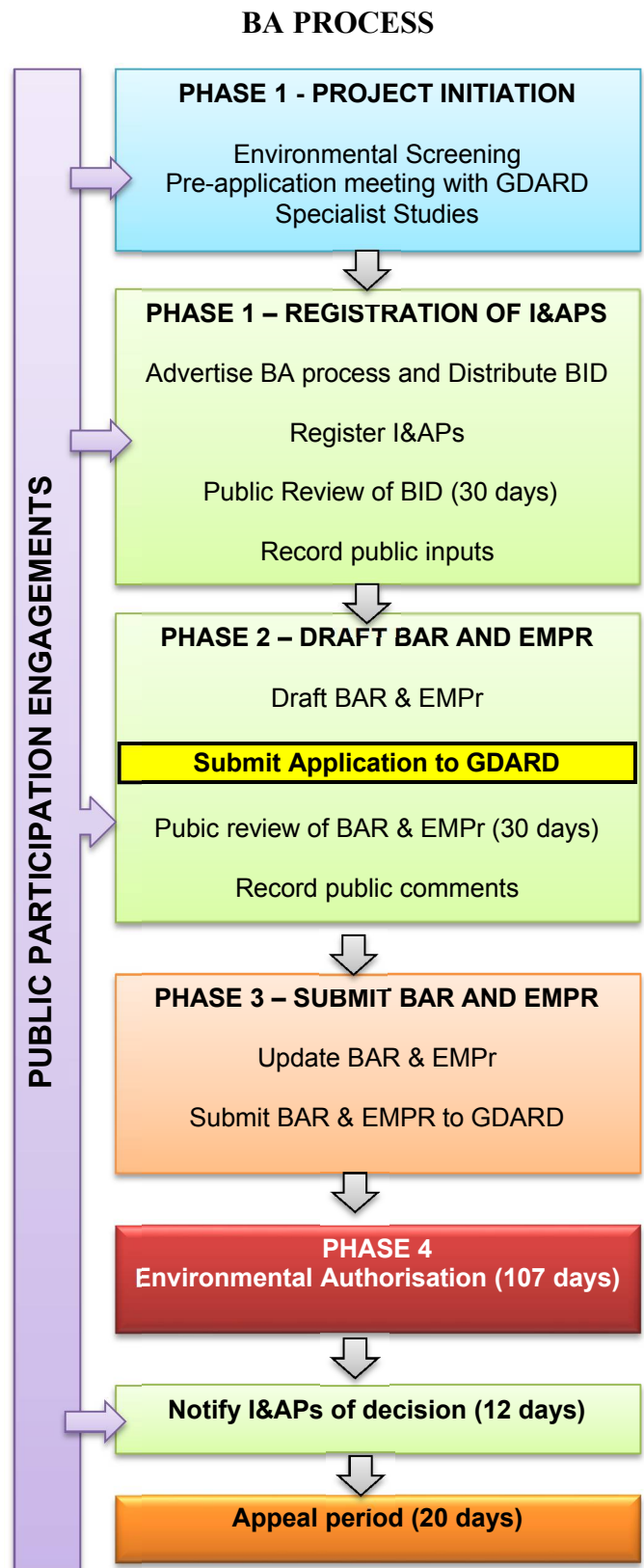


Figure 1: Basic BA Process flow diagram

5. WATER USE LICENSE APPLICATION

The new pump station site and road upgrade is situated within a wetland; the activities trigger Section 21 water uses defined in the NWA. A WULA will be required in terms of section 40 of the NWA. The application will be made to DWS: Gauteng Regional Office (Upper Vaal Water Management Area) for the following water uses:

- Section 21 (c) Impeding the flow of water in a watercourse (pump station site in a wetland)
- Section 21 (i) Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse (pump station site in a wetland)

The basic WULA procedure steps include:

- Pre-application engagement with DWS
- DWS site inspection
- Application submission to DWS
- Compile and submit a Water Use Technical Report to DWS
- DWS evaluation and assessment
- DWS issue decision (water use license)
- EAP inform the registered I&APs of the decision.

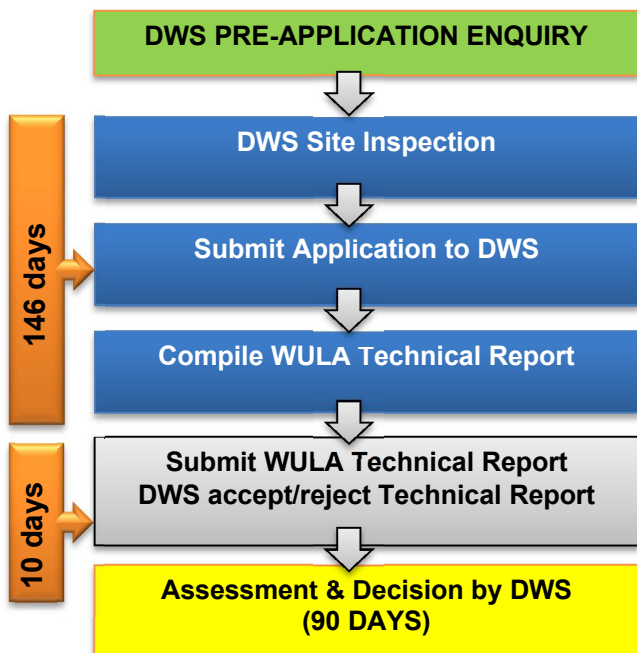


Figure 2: Basic WULA Procedure flow diagram

6. ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY AND SPECIALIST STUDIES

Based on the EAPs site verification, the following confirmed environmental sensitivity themes are considered applicable to the project site and require the below specialist investigation:

- Aquatic Biodiversity Sensitivity Theme because the site is situated within a wetland
- Terrestrial Biodiversity (animals, plants) because the site falls within:
 - An Ecological Support Area 1 in terms of the Gauteng Conservation Plan version 3.3 and 2012 Ekurhuleni Bioregional Plan;
 - The threatened ecosystem is the Tsakane Clay Grassland per the National List of Threatened Ecosystems.

Based on the above-confirmed themes the following specialist studies will be commissioned:

- Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment
- Aquatic biodiversity Assessment (Wetland Delineation)
- No Heritage Impact Assessment or Palaeontological Study will be commissioned for the project.

A walkthrough of the site was conducted on 9 June 2022 to screen the site for heritage resources and none were found to warrant a heritage study. The new sewer pump station site is also 950m² and below the 5000m² activity threshold requiring a heritage impact assessment. Furthermore, the construction of the new pump station will not intrude into the bedrock where features of Palaeontological significance may be located.

The application site was also previously assessed for heritage resources by the City of Ekurhuleni in 2018 for the development of Leachville Ext 2. No heritage resources were found.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS (PPP) PLAN

Public participation is a key requirement of the BA process and needs to be conducted in line with the NEMA EIA Regulations (Regulation 39-44). The PPP aims to engage I&APs and provide an opportunity for the expression of public views on the environmental impacts of the applications. All public issues and views on impacts are documented, addressed and responded to in the BA process and incorporated into environmental reports for consideration by GDARD and DWS. It is therefore important that relevant I&APs are identified and involved in the PPP from the beginning of the process to help focus the BA process plan.

PPP Plan - 1st Round - I&AP Registration, Circulation of BID for 30-day review and comment

The project will be announced to the public through the following means:

- 1 July 2022 - Advertisement in the Brakpan Herald, placement of on-site notices
- 1 July 2022 – The BID (this document) will be available on the Naledzi website (www.naledzi.co.za/publicdocuments)
- 1 – 30 July 2022 - Distribution of the BID to I&APs for 30-day public review and comment

2nd Round – Release Draft BAR and EMPR for 30-day review and comment

The second round of consultation will entail the following:

- August 2022 - Newspaper advertisement in the Brakpan Herald local newspaper
- August 2022 - Emailing of notification letters to registered I&APs of the availability of the draft BAR and EMPr
- August – September 2022: Availability of BAR and EMPR for 30-day public review and comment on the Naledzi website;
- September 2022 - Site Inspection with GDARD and DWS

I&APs will be informed of the GDARD decision by email and have an opportunity to review a copy of the decision.

Invitation to Register as an I&AP

You are invited to register as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) for **30 days, from 1 to 30 July 2022**, the BID is presently available for review and submission of comments regarding the proposed project.

I&APs are requested to please provide comments together with their name, contact details and an indication of any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which they have in the application, to the **contact person provided on page 1**, within the specified period. The preferred method of communication is either by telephone or email correspondence, which will allow tracking of submissions.



Figure 3: Google Earth Satellite imagery showing the location of the existing Leachville Ext 2 sewer pump station



Figure 4: Google Earth Satellite Imagery showing the location of the new sewer pump station (yellow polygon), road upgrade (black) and midblock pipes to be replaced (pink line). The majority of the pipes to be replaced are located within a road reserve and an urban area.

