

**01 September 2023**

**RE: NOTICE OF THE APPLICATION FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORIZATION AND A WASTE MANAGEMENT LICENCE FOR THE PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AT THABA CHROME MINE (REF: “MR 115”)**

This Background Information Document (“BID”) provides information to Interested and Affected Parties (“I&APs”) and Organs of State about potential decisions that may affect them and to be afforded an opportunity to influence those decisions, should they deem it necessary, in the Environmental Authorisation and Waste Management Licence Application processes associated with the proposed activities at Thaba Mine.

**BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT**

Thaba Mine plans to upgrade the existing processing plant to extract both Chrome and Platinum Group Metals (“PGM’s”) from both run of mine as well as from tailings stored at the existing Tailing Storage Facility (“TSF”). Tailings from the TSF and tailings from material processed from the continuation of mining of other opencast pits will be deposited (backfilled) into one of the Opencast Pits (Pit 2 (ML1)). The upgrade of the processing plant will result in additional infrastructure requirements. These include the construction and upgrade of:

- Stormwater channels,
- Clean and dirty water systems,
- Pipelines and a return water dam (“RWD”),
- Process water dam upgrade,
- Affected Stormwater dam at the TSF upgrade (already authorised under the current WUL),
- RWD at the TSF upgrade (if necessary) (already authorised under the current WUL),
- New RWD at the processing plant.
- Drilling of boreholes, including scavenger boreholes,
- Extraction of water directly out of the pits (pit dewatering),
- Dump stockpile area next to existing TSF,
- Dump stockpile area at additional hydro mining station at the plant (next to the new RWD)
- A 26.65 Mega Watt (“MW”) photovoltaic (“PV”) solar power plant to be used at the mine, and

A summary of the activities associated with the application is given below:

**26.65 MWp PV SOLAR POWER PLANT**

The existing 1 MWp PV Solar Power Plant will be upgraded to 26,65 MW PV Solar Power Plant and will cover an area of approximately 38 hectares in total (11 ha on the Southern portion and 27 ha on the Northern portion). Power will be used by Thaba Mine for mining and processing purposes, and power production above the power



requirements of the mine will be exported to ESKOM (the application to export to ESKOM is in process), and or third party off takers.

## **TSF**

The tailings at the existing TSF (the TSF is already authorised in the Environmental Authorisation with reference number: LP 30/5/1/2/2/115 (115) EM) will be re-treated to extract residual Chrome and PGM's.

## **IN-PIT DEPOSITION**

Tailings from the TSF and the continuation of mining from current and future pits will be deposited (backfilled) into the Opencast Pit 2 (ML1) for an estimated period of 10 years.

## **DAMS, STORMWATER, PIPLINES, WATER STORAGE AND BOREHOLES**

- (i) A new Return Water Dam (RWD) near the Plant will be constructed and have HDPE lining.
- (ii) At the TSF the existing RWD, which is already lined with a HDPE liner, will be upgraded if necessary and lined (the dam is already licenced in the existing WUL with reference number: 03/A34F/ACGIJ, for up to 10,000 m<sup>3</sup>, it is anticipated that this capacity will not be exceeded).
- (iii) At the TSF the existing Affected Stormwater Dam will be upgraded to increase the capacity from approximately 8,000m<sup>3</sup> up to 38,000m<sup>3</sup> and a HDPE liner will be added (the dam is already licenced for a capacity of 38,000m<sup>3</sup> and is referred to as a Pollution Control Dam (Stormwater Dam 1) in the existing WUL with reference number: 03/A34F/ACGIJ, this capacity will not be exceeded).
- (iv) Upgrading and installing new stormwater channels and pipelines for clean and dirty water (dirty water channels will have a HDPE liner).
- (v) Up to 2.5 Megalitres (2,500 m<sup>3</sup>) of water will be stored in a process water dam (or potentially a 2.5 ML Hydrex Dam) near the processing plant.
- (vi) 5 Scavenger boreholes will be drilled at the TSF to extract groundwater to contain any potential leachates from the TSF, the water will be used in the processing plant.
- (vii) 6 Boreholes will be drilled (3 boreholes at the rehabilitated backfilled pit and 3 at the Pit 2 (ML1) where the in-pit deposition of tailings will take place). The purpose of the boreholes is to extract groundwater to contain any potential leachates from the TSF, the water will be used in the processing plant.
- (viii) Water will also be extracted directly out of the pit.

## **PROCESSING PLANT**

The tailings re-treatment facility entails upgrading and expanding existing infrastructure and facilities which will include the following:

- (i) upgrading the existing chrome recovery plant,
- (ii) constructing a new secondary (fine) chrome recovery plant,
- (iii) constructing a new PGM concentrator (Milling and Flotation ("MF") 1 MF2 circuits),
- (iv) upgrading existing services to support the three process units,
- (v) a new tailings load station will be constructed (hydro mining station) whereby approval is required for dump stockpiling on a stockpile area (stock pad) with a footprint of approximately 225m<sup>2</sup>.



## LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

### Procedure applied to the application

As the project activities require the extension of existing activities within the Mining Right boundary, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be required in compliance with:

- the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No.107 of 1998) (NEMA) for the authorisation of listed activities contained in GNR 983, GNR 984 and GNR 985 of 4 December 2014, published in terms of Sections 24(2), 24 (5), 24D, 44 and 47(A) (1)(b) of the NEMA and
- the National Environmental Management Waste Act, 2008 (Act No.59 of 2008) (NEMWA) for the authorisation of waste management activities contained in GNR 921 of 29 November 2013 (GNR 921), as amended, published in terms of Section 19(2) of the NEMWA.
- the National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998), Section 21. The Water use licence application (“WULA”) the following water activities will be applied for:
  - Section 21 (a) taking water from a water resource.
  - Section 21 (b) storing water.
  - Section 21 (g) disposing of waste in a manner which may detrimentally impact on a water resource.
  - Section 21 (j) removing, discharging or disposing of water found underground if it is necessary for the efficient continuation of an activity or for the safety of people.

### Applications submitted to competent authority

An application for authorisation in terms of the NEMA and NEMWA, as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 has been submitted on 1 September 2023 to the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (“DMRE”).

### Listed activities and water use activities applied to the application

The listed activities which have been applied for include GNR 983 Listing Notice 1 Activity 21F, 36 and 67, GNR 984 Listing Notice 2 Activity 6 and 19 under NEMA, and GNR 633 Category B: Activities 9, 10 and 11 under NEMWA.

### Legislation associated with the application

South African legislation requires that a Scoping Report (“SR”) and an Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) be compiled in accordance with Regulation 21 to 24 of Chapter 4 of GNR 982. To do so Shangoni Management Services (Pty) Ltd (Shangoni) has been appointed as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) in terms of Regulation 12 of GNR 982, to undertake and manage the processes to apply for the required environmental authorisations. Furthermore, Shangoni meets the requirements of an EAP contemplated in Regulation 13 of GNR 982.



## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### Comment period

The Draft Scoping Report are available to the public for review for a period of thirty (30) days, from 1 September to 1 October 2023. An electronic copy of the Draft Scoping Report will be posted on Shangoni's website ([www.shangoni.co.za](http://www.shangoni.co.za)) for public comment for the same period of thirty days. The Scoping Report will also be made available at the Thabazimbi Municipality. E-mail or fax your comments to Shangoni (details provided below) by no later than 1 October 2023.

### Information required from I&APs

- To provide information on how the activities that are being applied for will impact them.
- To provide written responses stating suggestions to mitigate the anticipated impacts of each activity.
- To provide information on current land uses and their location within the area under consideration.
- To provide information on the location of environmental features on site and to make proposals as to how and to what standard the impacts on site can be minimized.

### Where to obtain more information

To obtain additional information, please contact the EAP at the details provided below.

**Environmental Assessment Practitioner:** Shangoni Management Services (Pty) Ltd.

**Contact person:** Colleen van der Merwe

**Tel:** 012 807 7036

**E-mail:** [Colleen@shangoni.co.za](mailto:Colleen@shangoni.co.za)

**Fax:** 012 807 1014

**Postal Address:** P. O. Box 74726, Lynnwood Ridge, 0040



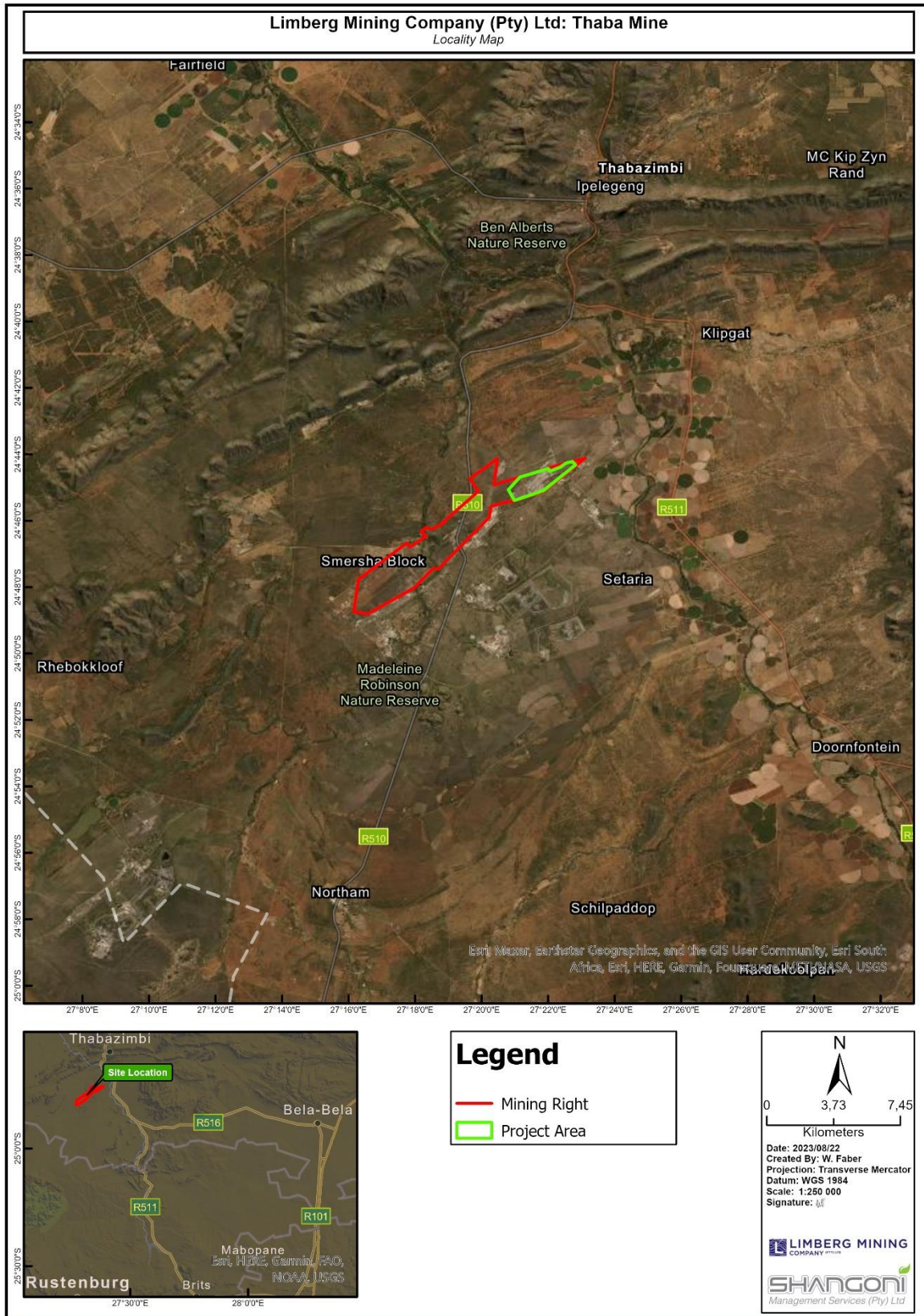


Figure 1: Locality map for the proposed activities at Thaba Mine



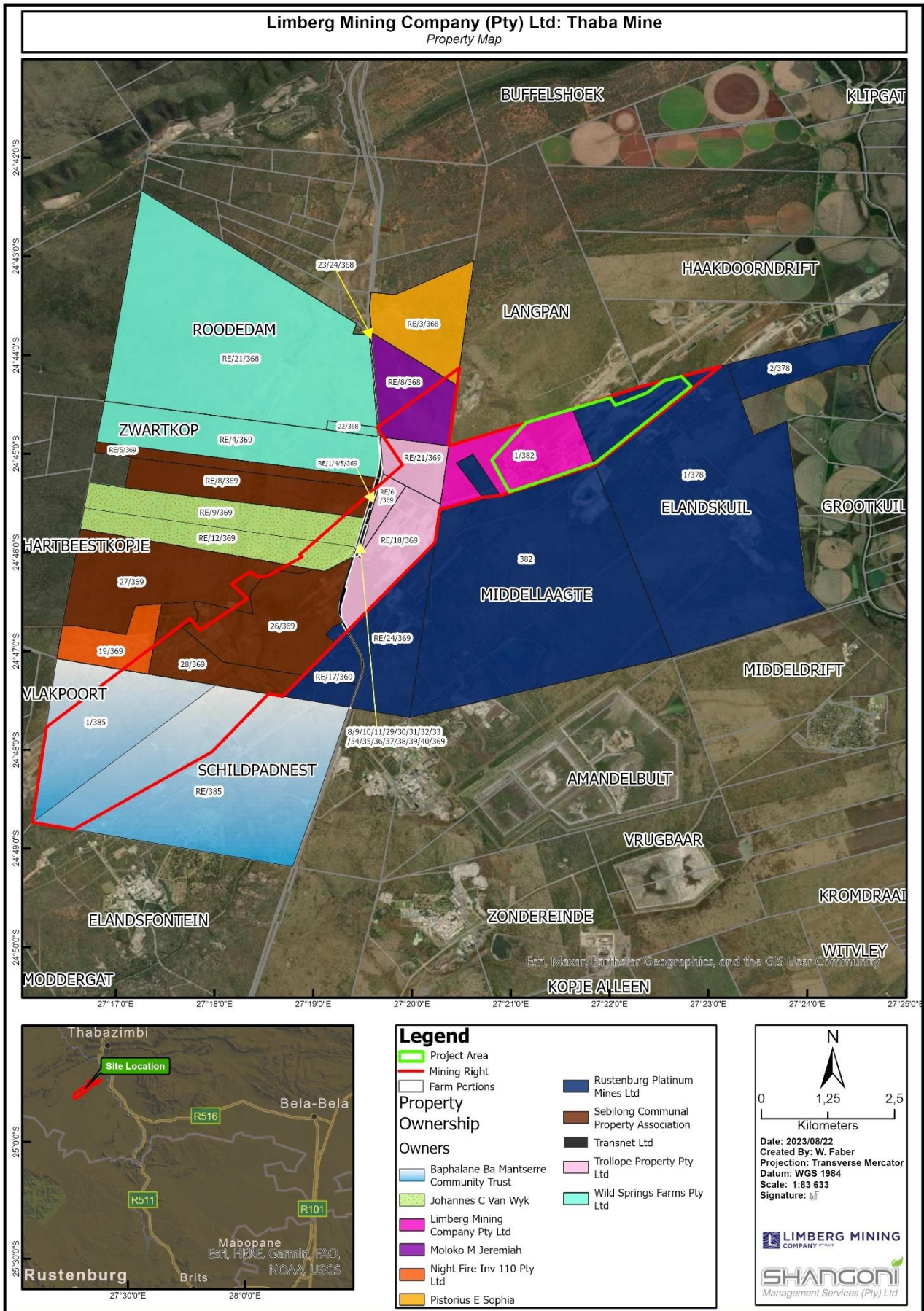


Figure 2: Thaba Mine property map



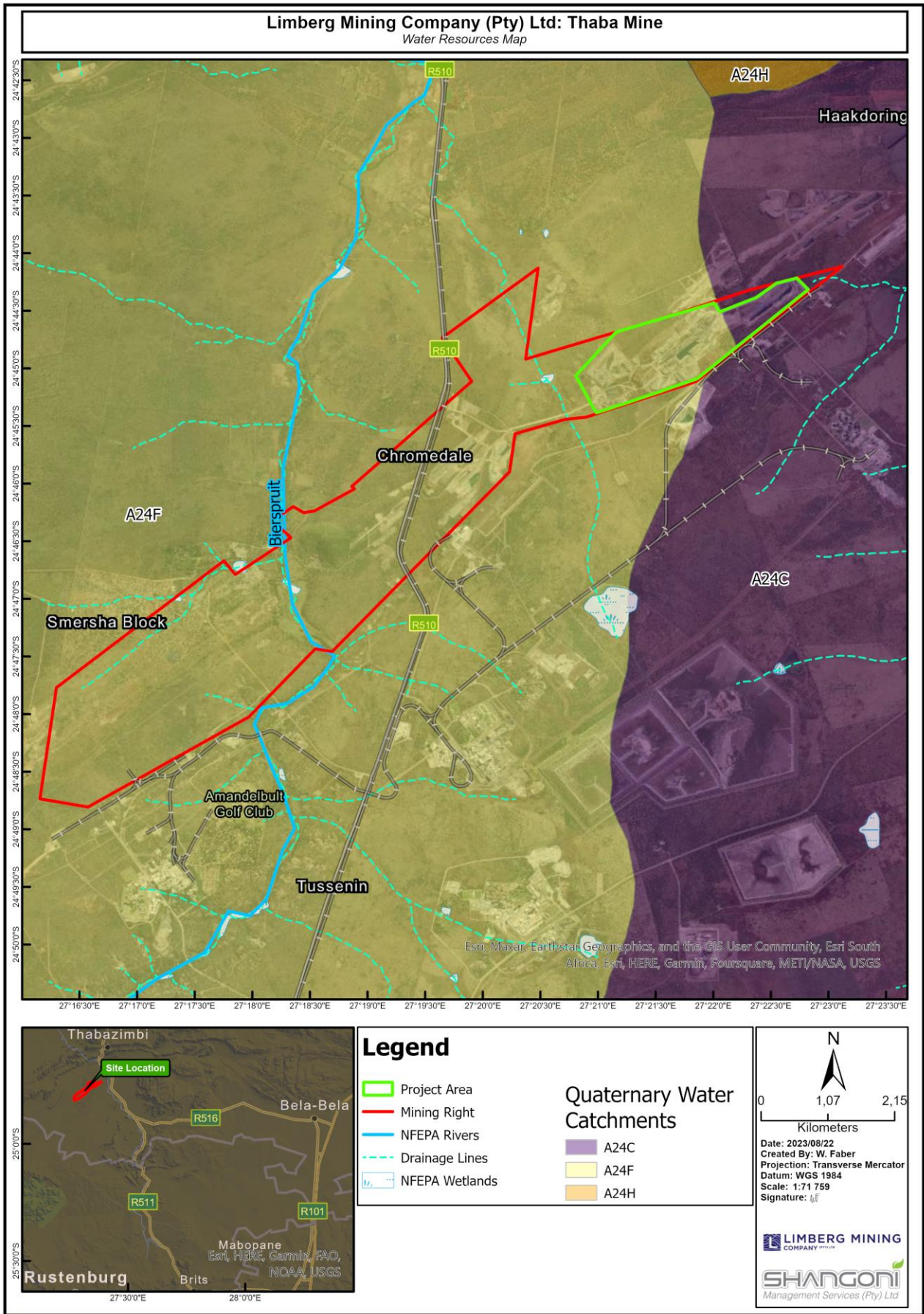


Figure 3: Thaba Mine water resources map



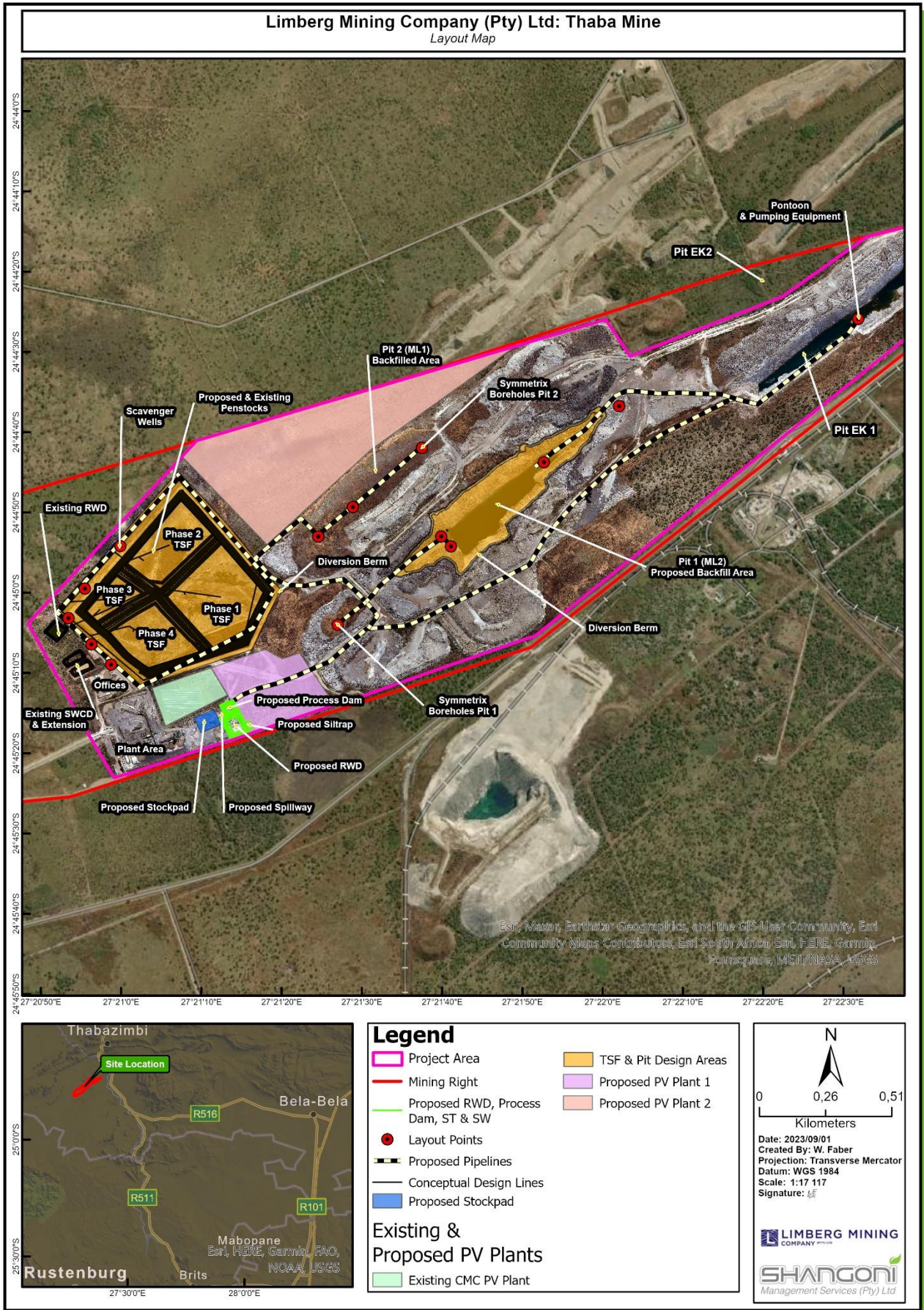


Figure 4: Layout plan for the proposed activities at Thaba Mine





## REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete this form and return it to Shangoni Management Services (Pty) Ltd to ensure that you are registered as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP).

By answering the questions below, you will help us to develop a better understanding of your information requirements. The form also gives you the opportunity to make comments regarding the project. Additional pages may be attached should this be required.

### I&AP Details:

Full name and surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details:

Tel (w): \_\_\_\_\_ Tel (h): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of communication:  fax  e-mail  post

Preferred telephone number:  cell  home  work

Organisation/Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm name, number and subdivision or  
 Street Address (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions

1) Where did you get information about the proposed project?

Newspaper advertisement  notice board  flyer  other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2) Do you represent a company/organisation or is your interest on behalf of yourself?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3) Do you know of anyone that is affected by the proposed activity who was not informed of the project? (Please provide contact details)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4) Do you have any specific concerns or comments regarding the proposed project?

YES

NO





**NOTE:**

Please forward completed forms to Shangoni Management Services (Pty) Ltd. by no later than 1 October 2023.

**Environmental Assessment Practitioner:** Shangoni Management Services (Pty) Ltd

**Contact person:** Colleen van der Merwe

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