

Background Information Document

In terms of section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998)



Introduction to the project

Somkhele Anthracite Mine (Somkhele) has been a fully operational anthracite mine since 2007 and is operated and owned by Tendele Coal Mining (Pty) Ltd. Somkhele is located approximately 16 km west of Mtubatuba (**Figure 1**), in the KwaZulu-Natal Province and falls within Reserve No. 3 (Somkhele 15822) of the Mtubatuba Administrative District. Somkhele Anthracite Mine has the required surface lease agreement with the Ingonyama Trust Board.

Somkhele intend to extend its existing Luhlanga opencast pit as well as licence its KwaQubuka pit for Mine Residue Disposal (MRD). The Luhlanga pit extension is approximately 18ha. The proposed extension includes an increase in the footprint of the waste rock dump to 50 Ha. The proposed footprint is outlined in Figure 1.

As per National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA) Read with Government Notice 325 (listing notice 2) the following activities are listed and require environmental authorisation.

- 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.
- Activity 17: Any activity including the operation of that activity which requires a mining right as contemplated in section 22 of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act No. 28 of 2002), including—
- (a) associated infrastructure, structures and earthworks, directly related to the extraction of a mineral resource; or
 - (b) the primary processing of a mineral resource including winning, extraction, classifying, concentrating, crushing, screening or washing; but excluding the secondary processing of a mineral resource, including the smelting, beneficiation, reduction, refining, calcining or gasification of the mineral resource in which case activity 6 in this Notice applies.

The disposal of mine residue in mined out voids involves placing discard material and hydraulically placing slurry material into the mined out voids. Mining waste has been classified as waste in respect of which a waste management licence is required in accordance with section 20(b) of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act 2008 (act no 59 of 2008)

- Category A Activity 1 Storage of waste in Lagoons (Mine slurry);
- Category B Activity 8 Disposal of general waste to land (Mine discard); and
- Category B Activity 10 Construction of a facility for waste management.

Any person who wishes to commence, undertake or conduct a waste management activity listed under Category B must conduct a scoping and environmental impact reporting process set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014 (as amended 2017) made under section 24(5) of the NEMA.

Tendele has contracted BlackRock Environmental, as an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), to facilitate their application for Environmental Authorisations for the proposed extension of Luhlanga pit and licencing of waste disposal into KwaQubuka pit void.

A Integrated Water Use application (IWULA) as per the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) (will also be submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). This IWULA will consolidate all the current licenced activities at Somkhele and include additional licences required for the extension of the Luhlanga pit, placing MRD into the pits and licencing of approved mining operations in Area 4 & 5.

The water uses applied for will be
Water uses include:

- 21 (a) Taking water from a water resource;
- 21 (b) Storing water;
- 21 (c) Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse;
- 21 (g) Disposing of waste in a manner which may detrimentally impact on a water resource;
- 21 (i) Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristic of a watercourse; and
- 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.

No additional water allocation will be required as operational capacities will remain unchanged. Water use 21(a) is to change extraction method from above ground pump to borehole pumps.

- 21(g) applications are for pollution control dams and dust suppression
- 21(c) and (i) are for river crossings of haul roads.

GCS Water and Environment (Pty)Ltd (GCS) have been tasked with submitting the IWULA. GCS will also independently review the Environmental application for Luhlanga pit extension and waste application.

Purpose of this document

This Background Information Document (BID), is intended to provide background information about the Environmental Authorisation (EA) / Water Use Licensing (WUL) and provides:

- An overview of the project;
- An overview of the legislative context and an outline of the manner in which the EIA will be undertaken;
- An indication of how interested and affected parties (I&APs) may become involved in the project; and
- The EAP's contact details to whom I&APs may submit their issues or concerns regarding the proposed project

Potential issues associated with the project

Outlined below is a preliminary list of the potential social and biophysical issues associated with the proposed development that have been identified to date:

Vegetation: A vegetation assessment will identify the occurrence of any protected species. Protected trees were identified in the previous vegetation assessment and permits to relocate certain protected species has been already been received from KZN wildlife.

Hydrology: The hydrology will be altered during mining. The impact on water quality and quantity of flows needs to be assessed.

Geohydrology: Mining operations could impact groundwater quantity and quality.

Wetland Assessment: The drainage lines have been assessed by wetland ecologist and no wetlands were identified within the proposed footprint. One wetland has been identified within the KwaLuhlanga Stream. The functionality and impact on this wetland will be assessed.

Visual: With the extension of the waste rock dump a visual assessment will be conducted

Potential positive **social impacts** will occur as the Life of Mine (LoM) will be extended by 27 months

Project description

Somkhele is an operational mine and is currently mining resources in what is referred to as Luhlanga and KwaQubuka areas. A mining right was granted to Luhlanga and KwaQubuka in May 2012. Somkhele intends to extend the northern end of the Luhlanga pit by approximately 18ha. (**Figure 2**). The project will require the extension of the waste rock dump. Waste rock is the stripped material above the coal seam which needs to be removed in order to access the coal.

Luhlanga pit extension will yield an additional 2063524 t RoM which will increase the Life of Mine (LoM) by 27 months.

The environmental authorisation for Luhlanga was granted in 2012 (KZN30/5/1/2/3/2/1/216EM) through the Minerals Resource Petroleum Act (MPRDA). During this authorisation process the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) revealed that low, moderate and moderate-to-high impacts would result from the proposed mining activities.

The significance of these impacts could be reduced to a level of acceptable risk through the implementation of sound and feasible management measures (GCS EIA Report 2012).

In the 2012 report the following impacts were assessed:

- Flora;
- Groundwater;
- Social Assessment;
- Soil, Land Use and Land Capability Impact Assessment;
- Surface Water Assessment;
- Visual Impact Assessment; and
- Air Quality Assessment.

All these studies and associated management plans are still relevant to the current operations at Luhlanga as well as Luhlanga pit extension and MRD deposition.

The Environmental Assessment Process

The proposed activities constitutes listed activities in terms of Listing Notice GNR. 325 of the EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended 2017). The Licencing of waste in the KwaQubuka pit triggers category B of the listing outlined in NEMWA. Both these activities require a full scoping and EIA process set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations made under section 24(5) of the NEMA.

The objectives of the Environmental Assessment Process are to:

- Develop an understanding of the project area;
- Develop an understanding of the proposed development and how it's related activities may potentially impact on the surrounding environment;
- Identify relevant authorities and I&APs to engage in the Public Participation Process (PPP);
- Facilitate the dissemination of information to the relevant authorities and IAPs and provide them with an opportunity to raise issues or concerns related to the project;
- Identify potential issues and environmental impacts;
- Assess the significance of the potential environmental impacts identified;
- Describe and investigate alternatives that have been and / or could be considered; and
- Provide feasible mitigation measures to address any significant impacts identified.

The above objectives are achieved through the evaluation of the proposed activity, the undertaking of the PPP and the submission of the relevant information and documentation to the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR), all of which are further discussed in the subsections which follow.

- Site assessment;
- Survey of the potential ecological issues;
- Survey of potential technical issues;
- Identification of issues related to surface water;
- Identification of issues related to ground water
- Identification of issues related to vegetation; and
- Identification of potential social and economic issues; and Consideration and assessment of feasible alternatives.

Notification

The following section details the manner in which stakeholders will be engaged with during the scoping and EIA Process.

An advertisement has been placed the Zululand Observer and Isoliswe on 12-13 November respectively.

In addition, I&APs will be notified of the project and opportunities for interaction by means of:

- Placement of notices on-site; Site notices placed on
- E-Mail invitation to identified I&APs; and
- Distribution of BIDs (this document) to identified IAPs. The BID document will be distributed by E-Mail and/or registered mail



Public Participation

Public involvement is an integral part of the scoping and EIA process aims to include I&APs in the process by notifying them of the proposed project and encouraging them to raise their issues and concerns.

The following entities have been identified to date as key stakeholders in the project:

- uMkhanyakude District Municipality;
- Mtubatuba Local Municipality;
- Department of Forest and Fisheries;
- Ingonyama Trust;
- Department of Water and Sanitation;
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife; and
- Ward Councillors and Traditional Leaders.

Additional I&APs will be identified during the course of the PPP.

Feedback

Feedback will be provided to I&APs via letters or direct communication, if requested, and in the Draft scoping and EIA Reports. The PPP proposed for undertaking the Scoping and EIA has been designed to ensure that interaction with I&APs is focused yet comprehensive. The need for a public meeting or one-on-one meetings will be confirmed during the Assessment Process. All I&APs contributions will be reflected in the Impact Assessment Report. I&AP comment and feedback can be provided in different ways. These include:

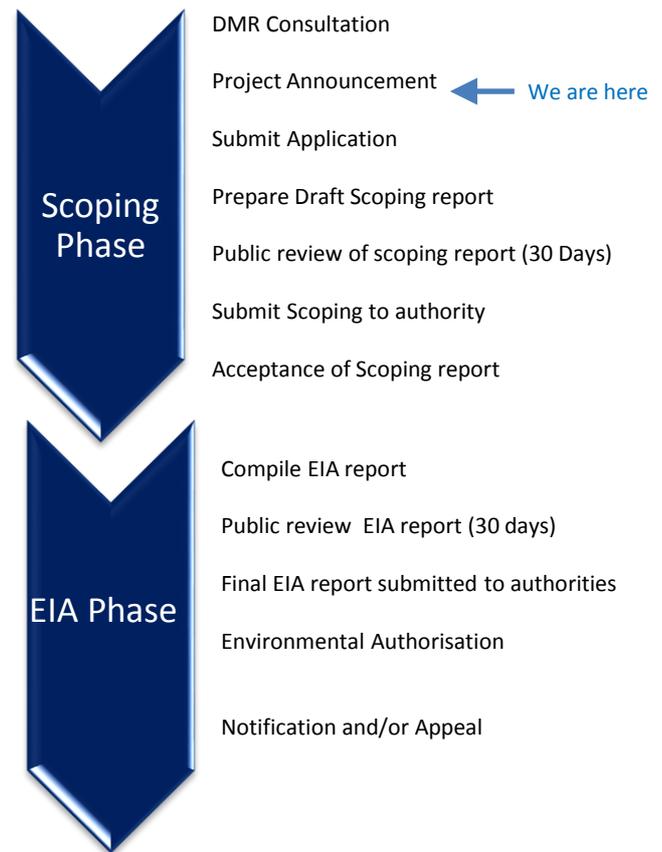
- By direct written (facsimile, email, post) and telephonic submission;
- Discussion from one-on-one meetings; or
- Through community structures.

Interaction with IAPs

I&APs are afforded the opportunity to understand the physical and issues associated with the project so they can meaningfully participate in and contribute to the Environmental Impact Assessment process. At this stage of the project, other than the BID, the following is proposed:

- Holding a public meeting, should sufficient interest be generated in the project;
- Compilation of a Draft scoping Assessment Report to be made available for public review and comment
- Compilation of draft EIA report for public review and comment.

Public Participation Phases



Submission to the DMR

Following receipt of I&APs comments on the scoping and EIA Report, the application for Environmental Authorisation, along with the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation will be submitted to the DMR for a decision on the proposed project. Once a decision has been made, all registered I&APs will be notified of the decision, as well as of the procedure to appeal the decision, should they wish to do so.

Submission to the DWS

An integrated water use licence application will be submitted to the DWS for approval. This application will include all I&AP comments. Once a decision is made all registered I&APs will be notified of the decision.



Should you require any additional information or have comments about the proposed development please contact **Christopher Wright from Blackrock Environmental** at:

Tel: 083 500 0205
Fax: 086-4131169
Email: chris@blackrock-env.co.za

13 Rockview Road
Amanzimtoti
4016





Figure 1: Locality Map of Somkhele Anthracite Mine





Figure 2: Layout of Luhlanga Pit Extension

**Environmental Assessment For Luhlanga pit Extension (Boxcut Zero)
Interested and Affected party registration**

Please complete this form to register as an Interested and Affected Party.
Please feel free to attach additional pages of comment to this document if sufficient space has not been provided.

Name	
Postal Address	
Telephone Number	
Cell Phone Number	
Fax Number	
E-mail Address	
Organisation/Department that you represent	
Position within organisation/Department	

What is your interest in the project?

Do you have any comments or concerns about the proposed project?

Do you require further information? If so, please indicate the type of information.

Other Contacts: If you know of anyone else who should be informed about this project, please could you provide their details in the table below (space has been provided for an additional two contacts):

Name		
Organisation		
Postal/e-mail address		
Contact number		

Thank you for taking time to comment on this project. Please could you fax, mail or e- mail this document and any accompanying pages to

Tel: 083 500 0205
Fax: 086-4131169
Email: chris@blackrock-env.co.za

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