

BASIC ASSESSMENT, WATER USE LICENCE APPLICATION PROCESS AND AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT BAR FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A RESIDENTIAL AREA IN LOTHAIR, WITHIN MSUKALIGWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY; MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

29 JULY 2019

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) with information on the Basic Assessment (BA) process and Water Use Licence Application being undertaken by SAZI Environmental Consulting cc on behalf of Transnet SOC Ltd for the proposed development of a residential area in Lothair, within Msukaligwa Local Municipality; Mpumalanga Province.

This BID also provides I&APs with the opportunity to register as stakeholders and comment on the proposed project. The purpose of a Basic Assessment is to identify and evaluate potential impacts associated with the proposed development and to recommend measures to avoid or reduce negative impacts and to enhance positive impacts. The decision-making authority for the Environmental Authorisation is the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), and the Department of Water and Sanitation is the competent authority for issuing the Water Use Licence.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Swaziland Rail Link is a trans-border rail link project between South Africa and Swaziland and is a joint inter railway strategic initiative between Transnet SOC Ltd and Swaziland Railway. The development of the link between Lothair in South Africa and Sidvokodvo in Swaziland, aims to create a dedicated General Freight Business (GFB) corridor for Transnet whilst providing much needed additional capacity for Swaziland Railway. The new link will also provide Swaziland with a dedicated export line to the strategically important Region and will encourage businesses to switch from road to rail.

Transnet SOC Ltd noticed that there are several households in the Lothair area that are living close to the proposed Railway and this may affect them negatively therefore they propose to resettle the affected households to Portion 9 of the farm Bloemkrans no. 121 IT, in Lothair; within Msukaligwa Local Municipality; Mpumalanga Province. The residential development area will consist of 6 households with

approximately 65 dwellings, currently there are 6 households identified with approximately 16 structures and the developer will be replacing like for like or better.

The proposed development footprint is approximately 2.7 ha and is within the farm that Transnet has already purchased. As part of the development, water services will be rendered in a form of boreholes and ablation system will be in form of septic tanks. Access to the proposed development site will be obtained from a gravel road that will be constructed to join the current tar road (R33), which is less than 1km in length and 2.5m wide from the Lothair Primary school. The proposed development site is located in an area zoned for farming purposes as per Msukaligwa Local Municipality Spatial Development Framework (SDF), and it is also close to the Lothair Industrial, commercial, residential and Transnet Freight Rail Timber Loading sidings.

PROJECT LOCALITY

The proposed development site is located in Lothair Town within the Msukaligwa Local Municipality in the Gert Sibande District Municipality of Mpumalanga Province. It is bordered by Ermelo to the West, Silindile Township to the East, and Amsterdam to the South (Figure 1). The site is within Ward 12 and portion 9 of farm Bloemkrans no 121-IT(-26.396142°; 30.420092°).

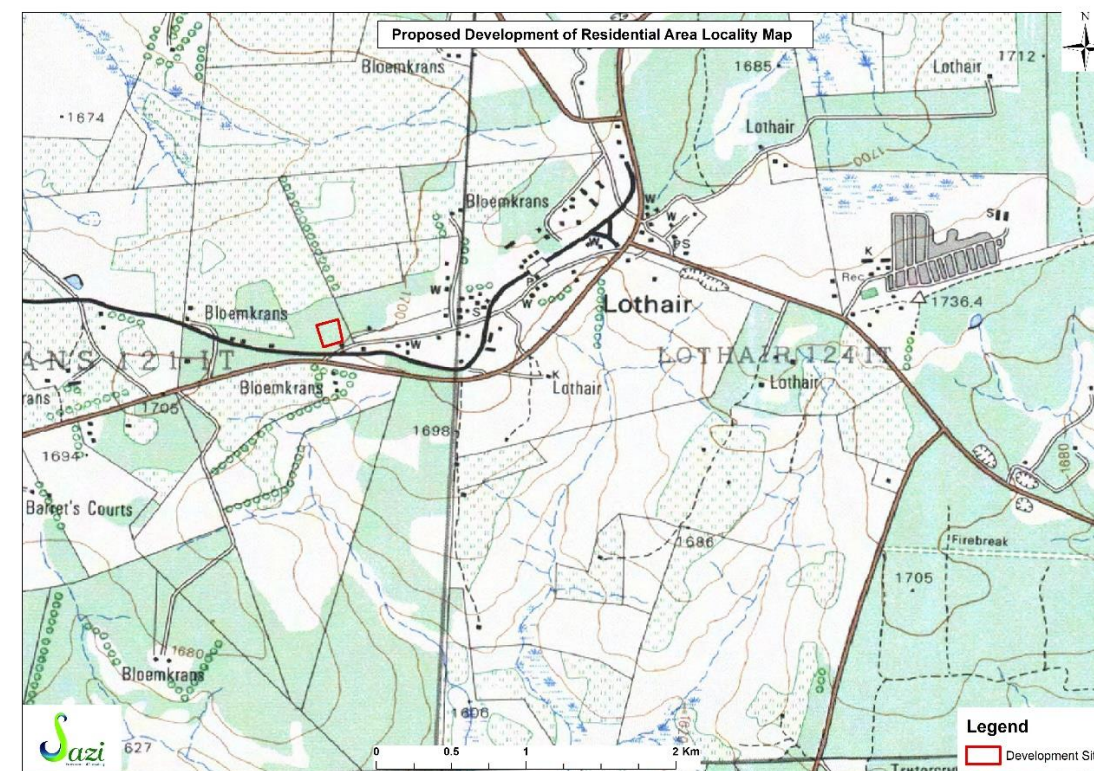


Figure 1: Locality Map of the proposed Project area.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and associated regulations, Transnet SOC Ltd is applying for Environmental Authorisation (EA) from the Department of Environmental Affairs for the proposed project through the undertaking of a Basic Assessment process as recommended in GN R.326 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations of 2017. The proposed activity is listed under GN R. 327 (Activities 27 and 28) and GN R. 324 (Activities 12) of the EIA Regulations 2017 which stipulates that a Basic Assessment process be undertaken, with full consultation with the stakeholders, commenting authorities and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs). In addition, in accordance with the requirements of the National Water Act (No. 36 of 1998), Transnet SOC Ltd is applying for a Water Use Licence according to Section 21 (a) and (g).

SPECIALIST STUDIES

The following specialist studies have been undertaken as part of the Environmental Authorisation process:

- Biodiversity Assessment;
- Geohydrology Studies;
- Heritage Assessment; and
- Noise and Vibration Studies.

NEED AND DESIRABILITY OF THE PROJECT

Transnet SOC Ltd intends to provide housing for 6 households with approximately 65 dwellings. The individuals whom will be relocated are going to be given better shelter with electricity, better ablution systems, clean water and easy access to the surrounding areas (such as schools and transport).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS (PPP)

Public Participation Process (PPP) is any process that involves the public in problem solving and decision-making. This process forms an integral part of the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure. The PPP provides people who may be interested in or affected by the proposed project, with an opportunity to make suggestions that may result in enhanced benefits for the project. Comments and issues raised during the PPP will be captured, evaluated and included in the Comments and Response Report (CRR), which will be incorporated in the Basic Assessment Report (BAR) and made available for public review.

The following processes will be followed when executing the PPP:

- Site notice placements (~4);
- Advertisement in a local newspaper;
- Public Meeting/ focus group meeting;
- Existing stakeholder database will be used to retrieve available relevant stakeholders, and registered I&APs;
- Emailing the BID report to relevant stakeholders and I&APs; and
- Hand deliver of BID notification to interested parties that do not have access to the internet.

INVITATION TO REGISTER AS AN I & APS

You are invited to register as I&APs to be kept informed on the project activities and provided with further opportunities to comment on the project. More documents will become available during further phases of the Environmental Authorisation process. Your comments will ensure that all issues of concern are incorporated.

Should you have any question or suggestions or wish to raise any concern during this stage of the Environmental Authorisation process, please complete the enclosed registration sheet, write a letter, call or email the person below;

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Tel: 010 442 4795

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All documents will be available on the internet at www.sazienviromental.co.za/publicdocuments and www.sazienviromental.co.za