


**BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT
AS PART OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND WATER
USE LICENCE APPLICATION FOR THE
PROPOSED IBISI INFILL DEVELOPMENT, LOCATED WITHIN WARD 11 OF
UMZIMKHULU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, HARRY GWALA DISTRICT,
KWAZULU NATAL
EIA reference: TBA**

Applicant:	Environmental Consultants:
	
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What is the Background Information Document about?

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, Water Use Licence Application and associated Public Participation Process, the Background Information Document (BID) serves to inform all authorities, stakeholders, and Interested and/or Affected Parties (IAPs) of the applicant's proposed Ibsi Residential Infill Development. The BID provides IAPs with an opportunity to submit any issues or concerns relating to the biophysical or socio-economic environment.

Environmental Impact Assessment in Terms of NEMA

Notice is given in terms of Chapter 6 Section 39 to 44 inclusive of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014, as amended 2017 GN No. R326, Government Notice No. R. 327, 325 and 324, under Chapter 6 Public Participation of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) Act 107 of 1998 that the Applicant, Umzimkhulu Local Municipality, intends to submit an application for environmental authorisation to the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) for the proposed Ibsi Infill Development on Farm portions Remainder of Ibsi Kululwa (0 of 18259) and Portion 5 of Ibsi Kululwa (5 of 18259). The proposed project is located 23km south west of Umzimkhulu town centre along the R56 Regional Road.

The proposed development requires a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in terms of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations of 2014 (Regulations in terms of Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998, as amended). EnviroEdge cc has been appointed as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner in this regard. This first step in the EIA process is the compilation of a Scoping Report which documents the initial findings and Public Participation Process outcomes. The EIA process is summarised below.

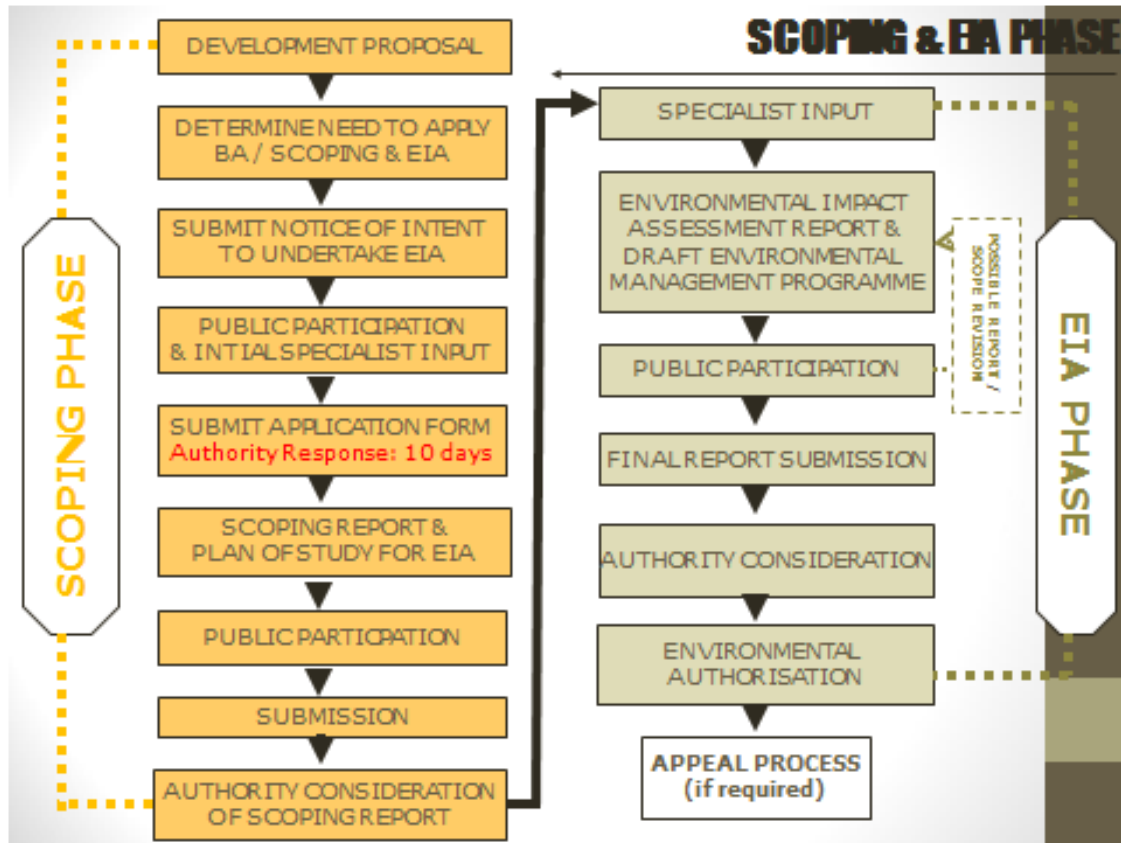


Figure 1: Scoping and EIA Process Diagram

Public Participation Process

The public participation process (PPP) forms part of Scoping and the EIA, and helps to ensure that IAPs have an opportunity to participate throughout the process by providing comments or concerns. Members of the public have the right to be informed of decisions that may affect them. The public is provided with an opportunity during this process to raise issues or concerns regarding the proposed development.

Interested and Affected Parties

All IAPs wishing to become registered as such and receive additional information, as well as an invitation to any public meeting, should one be required, should contact the environmental consultant to register as soon as possible. Registered IAPs will be kept informed of the project developments during the course of the EIA process and comments received will be included in the Scoping and EIA reports submitted to EDTEA.

If you are aware of any IAPs who have not been informed or identified by ourselves, please let us know, so that they too may have the opportunity to register and / or receive information. Any issues, which you would like to raise and have not been identified to date, would be welcomed.

Press notices and roadside posters will notify the general public of the EIA and Water Use Licence (see below) process.

Water Use Licence in Terms of NWA

In terms of Section 21 of the National Water Act (NWA) 36 of 1998, the project will require a Water Use Licence Application (WULA). The residential infill potentially trigger clauses (c) and (i) of the Act ((c) *impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse & (i) altering the bed, banks, course or characteristic of a watercourse*). This will be better determined after consultation with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), as is required by the WULA process.

The public participation process associated with the EIA as described above, will run in parallel with the WULA PPP, as both processes are similar; however, the more onerous process will be followed in each instance where there is a divergence of process.

The Project

Located within in ward 11 of Umzimkhulu Local Municipality (ULM), the Ibisi Township is situated 23km south west of Umzimkhulu town centre, and 90km north of Kokstad. Prior to 2006, the ULM formed part of the Eastern Cape Province under the Alfred Nzo District jurisdiction. Since being incorporated into KwaZulu-Natal, under the Harry Qwala District, there have been a number of administrative and land legal challenges faced by the ULM. One of these challenges involves the formalisation of certain towns and areas within the municipality, to provide for proper land tenure, of which Ibisi is one. To this end, the municipality has identified the need to formalise this area.

The Umzimkhulu Local Municipality have proposed two infill areas for residential development. These areas are an extension of the existing Ibisi town to the north and south. The northern Ibisi infill area is a triangular portion of land which abuts the northern edge of the existing Ibisi town, with the Ibisi Junior Primary School on the southern edge and the Ibisi Police station to the East. The Ibisi River is located on the north east and north west edges of the northern infill. The proposed northern infill covers an area of 176 509m².

The southern infill area is "Y" – shaped, and located along the southern and eastern edge of the existing Ibisi town. Some Ibisi residential houses and a Church are located immediately north of the southern infill. The R56 Road is located along the eastern edge, open veld to the south and the Ibisi River valley to the west. The southern infill covers an area of 307 736m². These infill areas are considered greenfield development. The study area entrance is located at 30°24'46.95"S 29°53'37.59"E.

The project forms part of, and aims to give effect to, the ULM development agenda and the Harry Gwala District Municipality development agenda as specified in their Integrated Development Plans, which identifies Ibisi Township as a Tertiary Node. It also gives effect to the approved precinct plan that was developed for Ibisi Township (Isibiko, 2016). The aim of the proposed development, is to provide for the establishment of a sustainable human settlement on the subject properties, with the key focus being on the formalisation of the Ibisi Township, ensuring land tenure rights of sites and increasing access to land tenure. The proposal aims to contribute towards the development of integrated communities, increase economic opportunities within the community, facilitate spatial transformation and ensure the creation of a sustainable settlement in close proximity to economic opportunity areas, improve the standards of living of the local community, improve security of tenure and grant each household with full ownership of their residential site, and, to improve access to public facilities such as schools, crèches, clinics and economic facilities.

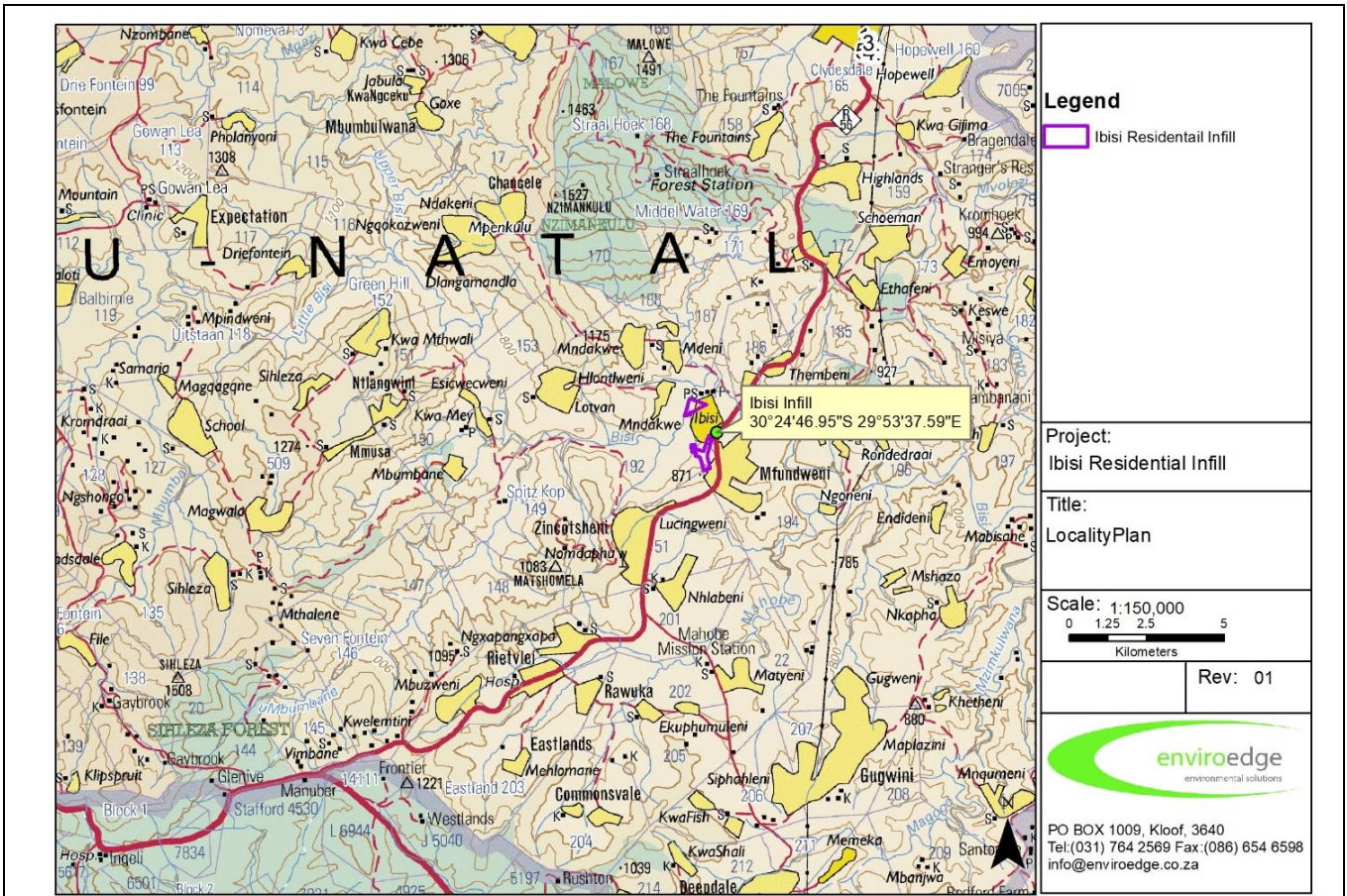


Figure 2. Locality Plan

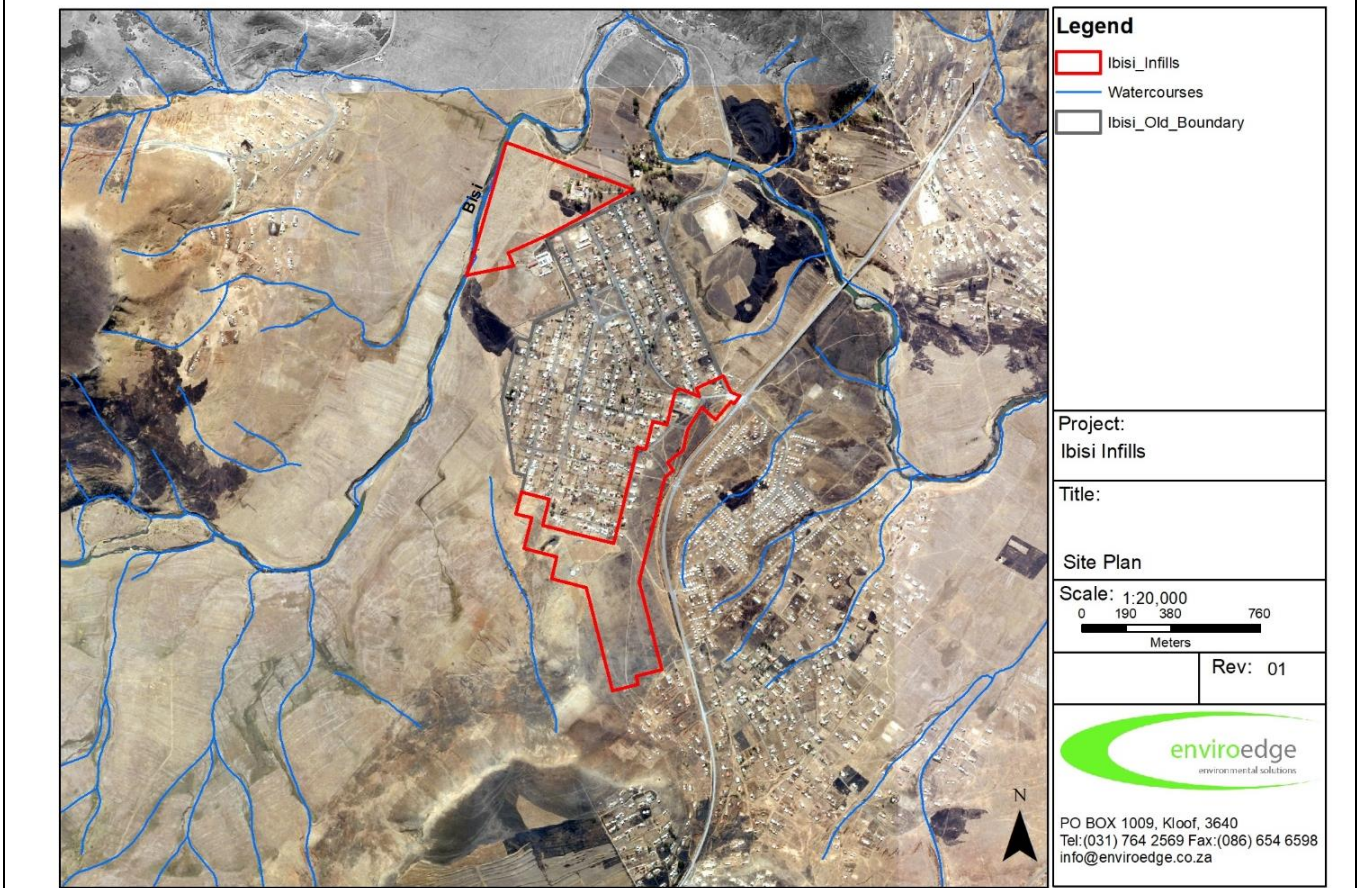


Figure 2. Site Plan

Climate

The study area mainly receives summer rainfall with some winter rainfall. Infrequent frosts do occur. Some valleys are sheltered and may show weak rain shadow effects. The average annual precipitation ranges from 700mm to 1100mm. Temperatures are variable with winter temperatures close to 0°C and summer temperatures in excess of 30°C being a common occurrence.

Topography and Watercourses

The northern infill area is located to the north east of the village centre at an elevation of approximately 620masl. The Ibisi River is located to the north of the proposed site. Two non-perennial drainage features exist to the east and drain towards the Bisi River. The site is situated on relatively level ground at the base of a west facing slope. The northern infill gradient is gentle with an average gradient of 1:20 in a decreasing north westerly direction. The Ibisi River is located in close proximity to the northern boundary of the northern infill site.

The southern infill area is for the most part, located on an east facing hill side with the north western Y-flank on the west facing slope. Elevation in the southern infill area ranges from 755masl in the southern end and 630masl in the north east. The southern infill gradient is relatively steeper with gradients of 1:3 in the upper southern areas. The Y-shaped configuration divides the drainage catchment into an east and west draining site. The western Y- flank of the southern infill drains towards a non-perennial tributary of the Ibisi River, which meet s the Ibisi River 940m to the north west. The eastern flank drains north east along a eroded stormwater gully which runs parallel to the R56 northwards, towards the Ibisi River.

The Ibisi River is one of two major collector rivers in the Umzimkhulu Catchment, together with the Umzimkhulu River. The study area is located across two quaternary catchments namely T52H to the east and T52G west. The Ibisi River joins the Umzimkhulu River approximately 17km to the south west of the site.

Geology and Soils

Mucina and Rutherford (2006) describe the geology as acidic, leached, heavy soils derived from Karoo Supergroup sediments and intrusive Karoo Dolerites. Glenrosa and Mispah soils also occur.

Vegetation

The majority of the study area falls within the Savanna Biome, and Mucina and Rutherford (2006) classify the vegetation group as Ngongoni Veld (SVs 4). A common feature of this vegetation class is dense tall grassland that is overwhelmingly dominated by unpalatable, wiry Ngongoni grass and a low species diversity.

A small portion of the southern infill area extends into the Midlands Mistbelt Vegetation classification (Gs9). Gs 9 Midlands Mistbelt Grassland forms one of a number of major patches of this vegetation unit. This vegetation unit is also grouped under sub-escarpment grassland and the landscape features are described as forming a hilly and rolling landscape mainly associated with discontinuous eastern facing scarp formed by dolerite intrusions, south of the Thukela River. The vegetation unit is dominated by forb rich sour *Themeda triandra* grasslands which have in turn been transformed by the spread of *Aristida junciformis* (Ngongoni grass). The vegetation unit is described as endangered and one of the most threatened vegetation types in KwaZulu-Natal; only a small fraction is statutorily conserved in a number of reserves.

The study area falls on the edge of the Ibisi River Valley comprising dominantly of open veld grassland. Limited trees are present within the study site with some isolated *Eucalyptus* and *Syringa* present around

the existing Ibisi Police Station. Livestock has also been noted to graze in the area as such, the area has been previously disturbed, and alien invasive weeds were noted along the proposed development periphery. Wetland environments are likely to be located within the low lying Ibisi Valley. A Wetland Delineation and Functionality will form part of the specialist investigations, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.



Services

The study area is located on the northern and southern edges of the existing Ibisi Township, along the R56 regional road. Powerlines, water pipelines and stormwater infrastructure, a rail line and telecommunication networks were noted near the study area. All relevant service providers will be notified as part of the public participation process.

Register as an Interested and/or Affected Party

Members of the public have the right to be consulted during the Public Participation Process. If you would like to be part of this process, or wish to comment or make contributions regarding specific guidelines, legislation or regulations that are specific to your organisation, please register with the Enviroedge environmental consultant using the contacts details provided.