

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION AND PROSPECTING RIGHT IN THE NEWCASTLE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE (DMRE REFERENCE: KZN 30/5/1/2/2/11512 PR)

The purpose of the Background Information Document (BID) is to provide information to assist stakeholders participating in the Basic Assessment process for the proposed project. This BID has been developed to:

- Share information about the proposed project;
- Present the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process that will be followed to obtain an Environmental Authorisation (EA) according to the NEMA and MPRDA
- Provide more details about the Public Participation Process (PPP) which will be followed.

## Project Description

It is Constructo Civil Construction And Mining Services(Pty) Ltd ("Constructo") intention to apply for a Prospecting Right in terms of Section 24 of the NEMA, 1998 (as amended) read with Regulation 19 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (amended in 2021) and in terms of Section 16 of the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act No. 28 of 2002) (MPRDA), as amended by Section 12 of the MPRDA, 2008 (Act No. 49 of 2008), for the environmental authorisation of prospecting activities for the coal mineral. The extent of the area applied for; under the ambit of the prospecting right is approximately 2000 hectares.

The environmental authorisation application was lodged with the Department of Mineral Resources & Energy ("DMRE"). Prospecting activities will enable Constructo Civil Construction And Mining Services (pty) Ltd to determine if economically viable mineral deposits exist within the area being applied for. The identified farms are listed below:

- The Farm Lentevlei 16524HS HS
- Portion 0 of the farm Brack Hoek 2271 HS
- Portion 1 of the farm Brack Hoek 2271 HS

The town of Newcastle is located approximately 5km north west of the proposed prospecting site, under

the jurisdiction of Ward 1 of the Newcastle Local Municipality and Amajuba District Municipality, Kwazulu-Natal Province (refer to Figure 1).

Prospecting activities will enable Constructo to determine if economically viable coal mineral deposits exist within the area being applied for. No mining shall take place, only prospecting.

Assessment of the geological data available has determined that the area in question may have coal mineral reserves. In order to ascertain the above and determine the nature, location and extent of the coal mineral reserves within the proposed area, it will be necessary that prospecting activities be undertaken. The prospecting activities will also determine if there are any features that may have an impact on the economic extraction of coal.

## Basic Overview of Prospecting Activities

The application is for both non-invasive and invasive methods of prospecting. The overall objective of the prospecting program is to identify the nature and extent of the target mineral (coal) which can potentially be economically mined in future. Prospecting activities will be undertaken over a period of 5 years. The prospecting activities will take place in the form of initial non-invasive prospecting activities (e.g., desktop studies, aerial surveys

and literature reviews), followed by invasive prospecting measures such as drilling and thereafter sampling. Invasive methods are those which will impact on the land whilst non—invasive methods do not.

The cores (NQ size; i.e. 75.7mm hole diameter) will be drilled to intersect the expected mineralization zone and will be logged by the geologist. At least 10 holes will be drilled at depths averaging 100 metres over the entire ~2000 hectares application area. The intersected mineralized zone will be sampled and sent to the laboratory for quality determination. This data will form the basis for the geological modelling and financial evaluation. The current estimated life of the proposed prospecting activities is five (5) years.

### **Infrastructure Requirements**

Using desktop studies, geological mapping, Geophysical Survey, core drilling together with all associated infrastructure and activities. These include site establishment (access to site and establishing drilling equipment), pegging of drilling sites, drilling of exploration boreholes, logging and sampling of drilled cores, plugging drilled holes and site rehabilitation.

### **Needs and Desirability for the Proposed Prospecting Right**

Assessment of the geological data available has determined that the area in question may have coal mineral reserves. In order to ascertain the above and determine the nature, location and extent of the coal mineral reserves within the proposed area, it will be necessary that prospecting activities be undertaken. The prospecting activities will also determine if there are any features that may have an impact on the economic extraction of these minerals.

The data obtained from the prospecting of coal (if sufficient reserves are discovered) will be necessary to determine how and where the coal will be extracted and how much economically viable reserves are available within the proposed prospecting area. Should sufficient coal be found in the project area, Constructo would, only then, be in a position to apply for a mining right or mining permit.

### **Potential Environmental Impacts Associated with the Proposed Project**

Potential impacts relate to:

- » Soil loss - The establishment of access and the surveying with pegging of the drilling sites may result in the stripping of soils if the site establishment is not properly conducted. This may result in the loss of soils and erosion that may render the area unusable. During site establishment, machinery and vehicles used for the prospecting operation may result in hydrocarbon leakages, which may result in the contamination of the soils within the access tracks, campsite and drilling sites.
- » Air quality - the establishment of the site, movement of machinery and drilling activities will include localised dust due to drilling activities. Surface wetting and dust chutes, where required, shall be implemented.
- » Vegetation removal - The establishment of the site (access to drilling sites and actual drill holes) would result in the removal of vegetation cover if the establishment is not done correctly. Rehabilitation efforts are to be implemented.
- » Noise – noise associated with the movement of drilling machinery, vehicles and overall drilling activities within the prospecting area is also anticipated. Working hours are to be controlled accordingly.
- » Soil and groundwater pollution - Exposure of soils during drilling by the stripping of vegetation and soils may cause erosion,

which may lead to increased silt loads in surface water runoff. This may result in the contamination of the clean water environment. Waste generated from the site may result in the contamination of surface and ground water should water and waste management not be effective.

- » Socio and economic impacts – prospecting activities may result in positive socio-economic opportunities in terms of local employment opportunities.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment Process**

Listed activities identified in GN 517 EIA Regulations (amended in June 2021) apply to the proposed coal prospecting project. The prospecting right application itself falls within the ambit of Listed Activity No. 20 of GN 517 Listing Notice 1 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (amended June 2021). In terms of the applicable legislation, a Basic Assessment (“BA”) process is required (see Figure 4 for the basic assessment process diagram).

ZN Geo Services (Pty) Ltd, an independent environmental consultant, has been appointed to undertake the above authorisation process on behalf of Constructo Civil Construction And Mining Services (Pty) Ltd (“Constructo”).

For this proposed project, the competent authority is the provincial Department of Mineral Resources & Energy (“DMRE”). Civil Construction And Mining Services (Pty) Ltd can only commence with activities if or once an Environmental Authorisation (“EA”) and Prospecting Right has been granted by the DMRE.

### **Public Participation Process**

The aim of the Public Participation Process (“PPP”) is to allow interested and affected parties (“I&APs”) the opportunity to gain an understanding of the project and consider all facets of the proposed prospecting activities. The PPP will:

- » Provide I&APs with information about the proposed prospecting activities and associated potential impacts;
- » Allow I&APs the opportunity to provide input, such as concerns or queries, on the proposed project; and
- » Incorporate the input raised by I&APs in the study and ultimate decision-making process.

The following activities will take place during the public participation process:

- » Advertising the EIA Process (in local press): (i) Advertisements will be placed in the local newspaper and (ii) site notices will be placed at the project site and surrounds.
- » Registering I&APs and key stakeholders on the database. A call for stakeholders to register on the project database will be made through the advertisement and site notices, as well as through letters of notification.
- » This Background Information Document (“BID”) will be distributed to I&APs (by-hand and via e-mail, or post/fax where necessary) informing stakeholders of the EA and Prospecting Right Application being applied for by Idwala and other pertinent information as detailed herewith.
- » The Draft Basic Assessment Report (“DBAR”) will be made available for a 30-day public and authority review period. Stakeholders will be informed of the availability of the Draft Basic Assessment Report through the advertisement, site notices and letters of notification. The DBAR will be made available at a public venue in close proximity to the site and online (via a Dropbox link).
- » Recording all comments, issues and concerns raised by I&APs and preparation of a PPP report and Comments & Responses Report (“CRR”).
- » Updating of the Basic Assessment Report taking into consideration all comments received; and
- » Submission of the Final Basic Assessment Report (“FBAR”) to the DMRE for

acceptance so the DMRE can make a decision on whether or not to grant the prospecting right.

### Getting Involved

Surrounding communities, government and other stakeholders such as traditional authorities, community leaders, and others are invited to register as I&APs.

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide written comment on the draft reports as it is made available, and these comments will be incorporated into the final reports submitted to the DMR. Attached herewith is a Comments and Registration form, and you as a stakeholder is welcome to complete the form and return it to ZN Geo Services. Registration on the project database also means that your details may be shared in the public domain as our reports will contain a project I&AP database and the CRR which records written comments received from stakeholders.

As a registered stakeholder, you will also be notified as the project progress; up to and including when a decision has been made by the DMR on the EA and prospecting right applications.

There will be a public meeting located at NOFTA Hall (address: 7B Nightingale Street, Lennoxton; Newcastle) on the 9<sup>th</sup> Of November 2023 and starting at 9:00am.

The draft basic assessment report (DBAR) will also be available at the Lennoxton Public Library situated on 16 St Brunos Street, Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal (27 October 2023 – 27 November 2023)

The DBAR can also be downloaded from the following DropBox link:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/a1hybq4vbsjn7bit8ro7f/h?rlkey=clb452nxs9jv2scdt1w7sj4wa&dl=0>

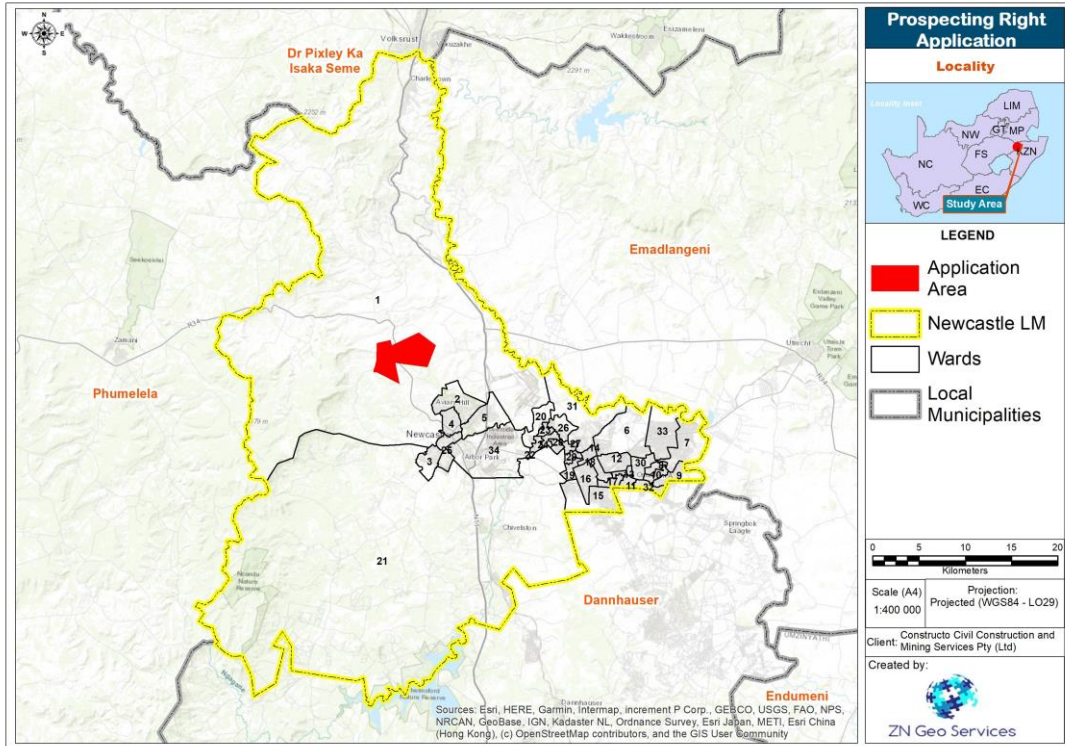
### How to get involved?

All persons who wish to take part in the Public Participation Process by commenting on or raising any concerns regarding the development are invited to do so through the following means:

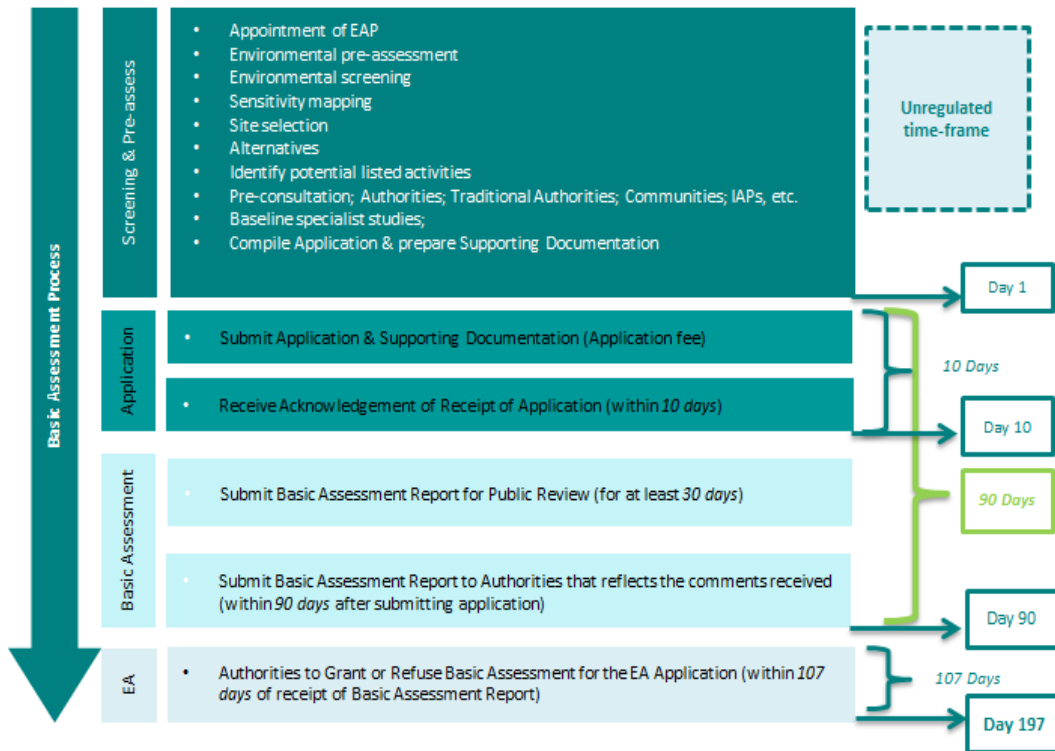
1. Registering as an Interested and Affected Party (in writing at the details provided below);
2. Submit any comments in writing on the response sheet attached to this document if you have any (and return to us within timeframes provided; and
3. Review the Draft Basic Assessment Report, when it becomes available, and raise any concerns or comments in writing within the timeframes provided.

### Contact Details for Registering as an I&AP and Commenting on the Proposed Project

Contact: Hloniphile Dlamini (Environmental Assessment Practitioner)  
E-mail: [projects@zngco.co.za](mailto:projects@zngco.co.za)  
Cell/ Mobile: +2773 470 2961  
Fax: +2786 620 3833



**Figure 1: Locality Map**



**Figure 2: Basic Assessment Process**

**COMMENTS AND REGISTRATION FORM: KZN 30/5/1/2/2/11512 PR**

Please provide your complete contact details:

Name and Surname:	
Organisation and Designation:	
Physical Address:	
Postal Address (if differ to the Physical Address):	
Contact Number (Landline and/or Mobile/Cell):	
E-mail Address:	

Would you like to register as an interested and affected party (I&AP)?

**YES**

**NO**

*Please Note: Once registered on the project database, your details may be included in public documentation.*

Please state your interest in the Proposed Project (insert additional pages if necessary):

Please list your questions, views or concerns regarding the Proposed Project (insert additional pages if necessary):

Please provide contact details of other persons who you may regard as a potential I&AP:

*(Include Name & surname, contact number, email, etc.)*

**Contact Details for Registering as an I&AP and commenting on the proposed project**

Hloniphile Dlamini (Environmental Assessment Practitioner)

E-mail: [projects@zngco.co.za](mailto:projects@zngco.co.za) ; Cell/ Mobile: +27 73 470 2961; Fax: +2786 620 3833