

## The Proposed Establishment of the Mbilane River Pedestrian Bridge, Ulundi Municipal Area, Northern KwaZulu-Natal

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

July 2014



#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ Inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) about the proposed project, and to invite them to participate;
- ◆ Provide a brief background on the proposed project; and
- ◆ Explain the aims and objectives of the Environmental Basic Assessment process.



#### WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THIS DEVELOPMENT?

The Department of Transport proposes to establish a a pedestrian bridge over the Mbilane River, Ulundi, KwaZulu-Natal.

In terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations under Section 24(5), 24M and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No 107 of 1998) published in Government Notice No. R. 543 of 2010, the proposed development triggers Listed Activities published in Government Notice No R. 544 and the National Water Act (36 of 1998) for a Water Use License:

GNR 544	Part 11:	<i>The construction of iii) bridges... where such construction occurs within a watercourse or within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse...</i>
GNR 544	Part 18:	<i>The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand ... from i) a watercourse...</i>

Thus a Basic Assessment and Water Use License are required.

The Applicant, Department of Transport, is required to appoint an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to conduct the environmental authorisation process. The Applicant has appointed Green Door Environmental to conduct the Basis Assessment Process for the proposed development.



## **WHAT IS PROPOSED?**

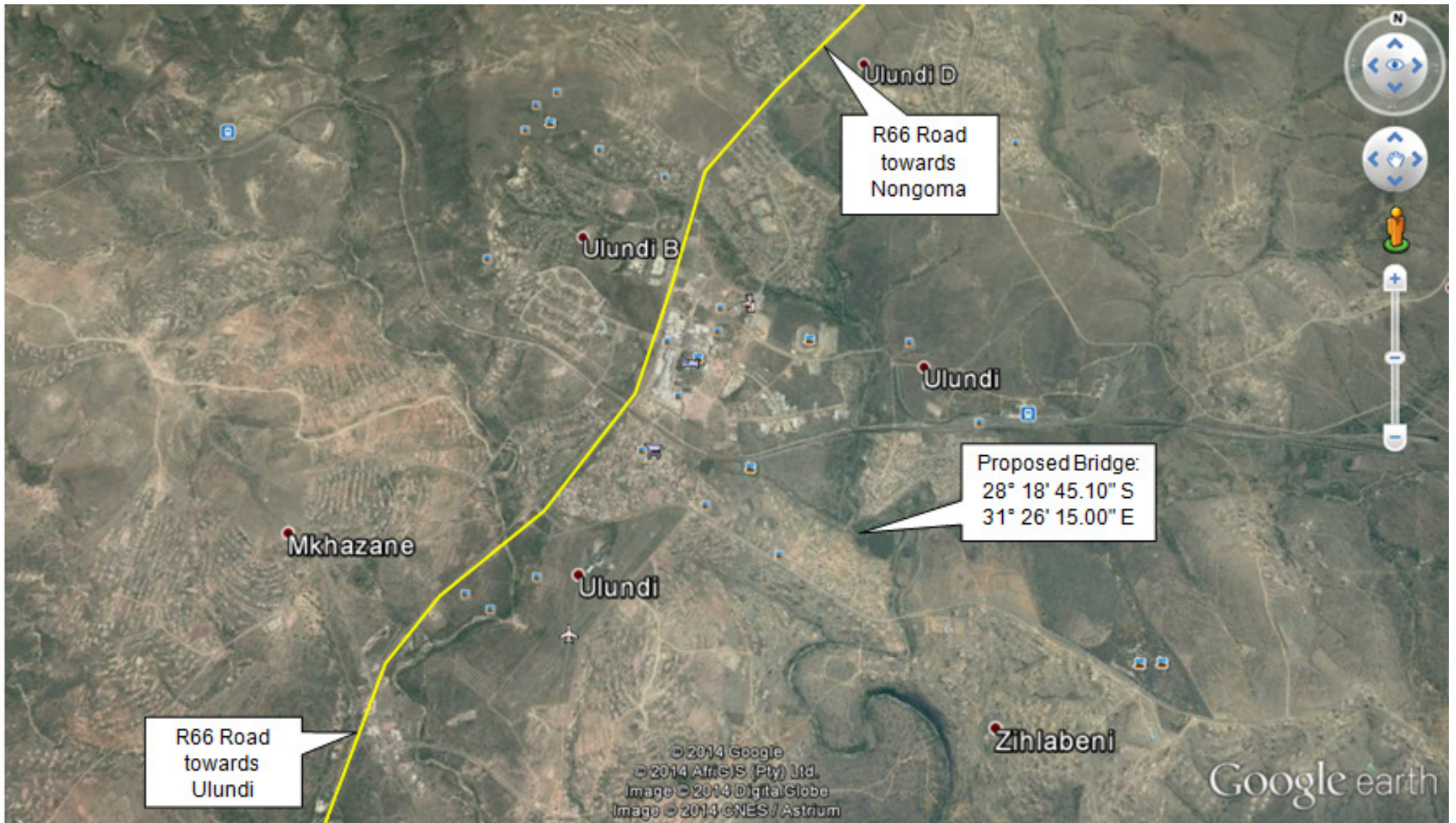
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The Applicant proposes to establish a pedestrian bridge over the Mbilane River, Ulundi, KwaZulu-Natal. Community members living on either side of the Mbilane River struggle to cross it, especially during the wet seasons.

Refer to Figure 1 for a locality map.



## WHERE IS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT?



**Figure 1:** Aerial Map showing the location of the proposed bridge site and the surrounding land uses (Source: Google Earth).



## **WHAT IS THE AIM OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA)?**

The Basic Assessment process aims to:

- ◆ Inform and involve all potentially Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) of the proposed development;
- ◆ Identify the potential impacts (positive and negative) that the proposed development may have on the ecological and socio-economic environment;
- ◆ Provide recommendations based on the identified impacts and conduct further specialist studies if necessary; and
- ◆ Provide the Competent Authority with enough information to make an informed decision regarding the proposed development.



## **WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE EIA PROCESS FOR BASIC ASSESSMENT?**

The Basic Assessment process can be described as follows:

1. Application Form:

An official Application Form is required to be completed and submitted to the Competent Authority. This Form provides information on the property, a description of the proposed development and lists the relevant listed activities which are triggered by this proposed development.

2. Public Participation:

The general public and relevant Authorities are notified of the proposed development through newspaper adverts, site notices and direct consultation. Alternative methods will be employed to inform those I&APs who may be illiterate, disabled or otherwise disadvantaged. Should you be aware of anyone who might be interested in this project, but has not been notified, please send the relevant contact details to Green Door Environmental. This Background information Document will be circulated to neighbouring landowners, relevant authorities and any other persons registered as I&APs following the adverts and site notices.

3. Identification of Impacts and Alternatives

Environmental issues, concerns, development constraints and possible development alternatives will be identified using professional judgement, project information, experience of similar projects, a review of available literature, site visits, and consultation with authorities and the public.

4. Impact Evaluation

The significance of environmental issues will be evaluated in terms of their expected extent, intensity, duration and probability of occurrence.

5. Mitigation and Management Measures

Measures to manage and minimise impacts to within acceptable levels, as well as measures to maximise the socio-economic benefits associated with the development, will be identified and recorded in the Basic Assessment Report. An Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) will be compiled to facilitate the implementation of mitigation measures.

6. Reporting

The Basic Assessment Report and Draft EMPr will be made available for review and comment by all I&APs and relevant authorities. A Final Basic Assessment Report and EMPr will be compiled and will include comments received on the circulated Basic Assessment Report.

7. Authority Decision

The Final Basic Assessment Report will be used by Competent Authority as the basis for the decision on whether the proposed development should be approved or not.



## **WHAT POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS HAVE INITIALLY BEEN IDENTIFIED?**

The following issues have been identified as potentially problematic and will, amongst other issues, be investigated during the Basic Assessment Process:

- ◆ Impacts on the Mbilane river; and
- ◆ Erosion during and after construction.

