



BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT



The Upgrading of the Rimer's Water Treatment (Purification) Works, Barberton.

Reference number assigned by Clean Stream Environmental Services: BA2015/01

Purpose of this document

- Overview of the proposed project;
- Overview of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process (EIA) to ensure that Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) understand the process;
- Invitation to I&APs to participate in the EIA process by:
 - ⇒ Indicating their view points, issues and concerns regarding the activity;
 - ⇒ Suggesting alternatives or ways of mitigating negative impacts and enhancing positive impacts.

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Introduction and Legal Requirements

The Umjindi Local Municipality proposes to upgrade the Rimer's Water Treatment (Purification) Works (that supplies Barberton and Umjindi with potable water) from 10MI/d to a total treatment capacity of 15MI/d.

A portion of Rimer's Creek located below the existing weir will also be diverted/rerouted as part of the proposed upgrading.

The Rimer's Water Treatment (Purification) Works is located on the Remaining Extent of Portion 14 of the farm Barberton Townlands 369 JU, within the Barberton Nature Reserve, to the southeast of Barberton. The site can be accessed via a gravel road from Lee Street in Barberton.

The Minister of Environmental and Water Affairs listed in terms of Sections 24(2) and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), a number of activities that require an environmental impact assessment (either a Basic Assessment or a full Environmental Impact Assessment) before undertaking these activities.

The proposed project would involve the following listed activities (Government Notice R983 of 4 December 2014) as identified in terms of Section 24(2), 24(5), 24D and 44, read with section 47A(1)(b) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998:

- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 9:** The development of infrastructure exceeding 1000 metres in

length for the transportation of water or storm water (i) with an internal diameter of 0.36 metres or more; or (ii) with a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more; excluding where (a) such infrastructure is for bulk transportation of water or storm water or storm water drainage inside a road reserve; or (b) where such development will occur within an urban area.

- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 12:** The development of (i) canals exceeding 100 square metres in size; (ii) channels exceeding 100 square metres in size; (iii) bridges exceeding 100 square metres in size; (iv) dams, where the dam, including infrastructure and water surface area, exceeds 100 square metres in size; (v) weirs, where the weir, including infrastructure and water surface area, exceeds 100 square metres in size; (vi) bulk storm water outlet structures exceeding 100 square metres in size; (vii) marinas exceeding 100 square metres in size; (viii) jetties exceeding 100 square metres in size; (ix) slipways exceeding 100 square metres in size; (x) buildings exceeding 100 square metres in size; (xi) boardwalks exceeding 100 square metres in size; or (xii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more; where such development occurs (a) within a watercourse; (b) in front of a development setback; or (c) if no development setback exists, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a water course;- excluding (aa) the development of infrastructure or structures within existing ports or harbours that will not increase the development footprint of the port or harbour; (bb) where such development

activities are related to the development of a port or harbour, in which case activity 26 in Listing Notice 2 of 2014 applies; (cc) activities listed in activity 14 in Listing Notice 2 of 2014 or activity 14 in Listing Notice 3 of 2014, in which case that activity applies; (dd) where such development occurs within an urban area; or (ee) where such development occurs within existing roads and road reserves.

- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 19:** The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 5 cubic metres from (i) a watercourse; (ii) the seashore; or (iii) the littoral active zone, an estuary or a distance of 100 metres inland of the high-water mark of the sea or an estuary, whichever distance is the greater but excluding where such infilling, depositing, dredging, excavation, removal or moving – (a) will occur behind a development setback; (b) is for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan; or (c) falls within ambit of activity 21 in this Notice, in which case that activity applies.
- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 27:** The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except 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.
- **GN R983 – Listing Notice 1, Listed Activity 45:** The expansion of infrastructure for the bulk transportation of water or storm water where the existing infrastructure (i)

has an internal diameter of 0.36 metres or more; or (ii) has a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more; and (a) where the facility or infrastructure is expanded by more than 1000 metres in length; or (b) where the throughput capacity of the facility or infrastructure will be increased by 10% or more; excluding where such expansion (aa) relates to transportation of water or storm water within a road reserve; or (bb) will occur within an urban area.

In order to obtain approval (authorization) for this activity, a **Basic Assessment** must be conducted since the proposed project triggers listed activities identified in GN R983 – Listing Notice 1 (see above).

In addition, a specific procedure must be followed as stipulated in the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, which also requires specific documentation to be submitted.

Once all the required documentation has been submitted and the environmental process completed, the responsible authority must make a decision on the application.

The environmental decision making authority for this application is the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA).

Part of the above-mentioned process is to inform interested and affected parties (I&APs) of the proposed project and to obtain any issues of concern.

Environmental Consultant

Clean Stream Environmental Services was appointed as independent environmental consultant to conduct the required environmental impact assessment and compile the necessary documentation.

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Public Participation

Aim of Public Participation

- To inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and Stakeholders of the proposed project.
- To allow for the registration of I&APs and thereby present I&APs with the opportunity to comment on the project, contribute ideas, raise concerns and review reports.

*In order to ensure that you are identified as an interested and/or affected party; please submit your name, contact information and interest in the matter to the contact person within 30 days of receipt of this document (i.e. no later than **30 March 2015**).*

If you know of any other interested and affected party who should be registered as an I&AP, it would be appreciated if you could forward the relevant contact details to Clean Stream Environmental Services.

Public meeting

At this stage, it is not anticipated that a public meeting will be held. Should this change, the public meeting will be announced and all I&APs will be invited to attend the meeting.

Who are interested and affected parties?

An interested and affected party (I&AP) can be defined as any person, group of persons or organisation interested in or affected by a proposed activity or any organ of state that may have jurisdiction over any aspect of the activity.

The public participation process allows I&APs the opportunity to:

- Obtain clear and accurate information about the proposed activity;
- Indicate their viewpoints, issues and concerns regarding the activity;
- Suggest alternatives or ways of mitigating negative impacts and enhancing positive impacts.

What are the responsibilities of an interested and affected party?

In order to participate effectively, I&APs should:

- Become involved in the process as early as possible;
- Register as I&APs;
- Advise the consultant of other I&APs who should be consulted;
- Contribute towards the design of the public participation process to ensure that it is acceptable to all I&APs;
- Follow the process once it has been accepted;
- Read the material provided and actively seek to understand the issues involved;
- Give timeous responses to correspondence;
- Be respectful and courteous towards other I&APs and the environmental consultant;
- Refrain from making subjective, unfounded or ill-informed statements;
- Recognize that the process is confined to issues that are directly relevant to the application.

Availability of Reports

The following reports will be made available to interested and affected parties for evaluation purposes-

- Background Information Document (BID);
- Draft Basic Assessment Report;
- Final Basic Assessment Report;
- Environmental Authorisation and Reasons for Decision.

A copy of the above-mentioned documents will also be provided on our website: www.cleanstreams.co.za

How to comment

Comments, questions, issues of concern or objections can be made in writing (by fax, e-mail or post). For your convenience, a comment sheet is attached to this document. Should you not be able to provide us with written comment, please give us a call.

If you do not wish to submit comments, please still provide us with your contact details and indicate whether you would like to remain on the mailing list.

Project Description

The Umjindi Local Municipality proposes to upgrade the Rimer's Water Treatment (Purification) Works (that supplies Barberton and Umjindi with potable water) from 10MI/d to a total treatment capacity of 15MI/d.

The Rimer's Water Treatment (Purification) Works is located on the Remaining Extent of Portion 14 of the farm Barberton Townlands 369 JU, within the Barberton Nature Reserve, to the southeast of Barberton (Figure 1). The site can be accessed via a gravel road from Lee Street in Barberton.

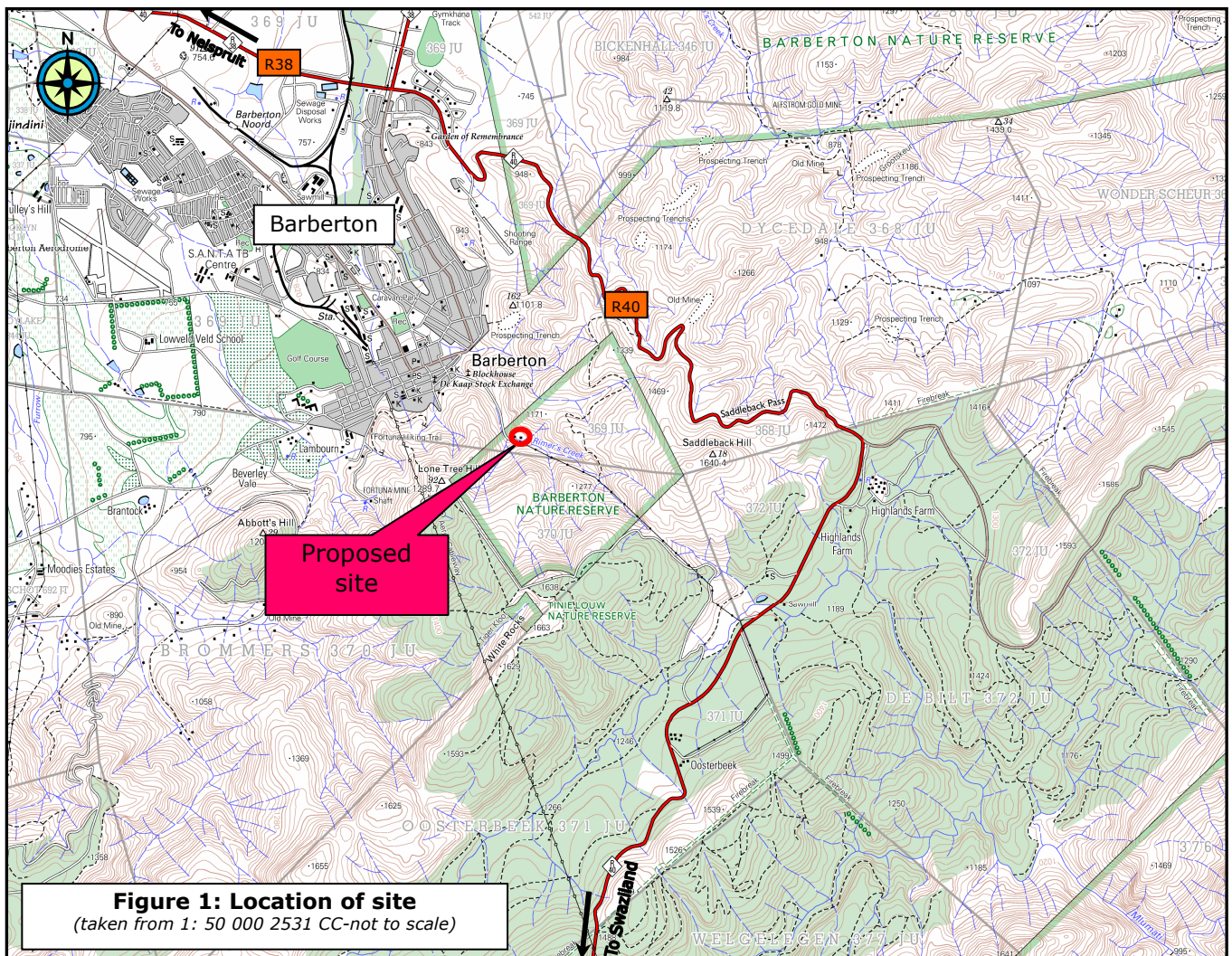
Currently, raw water for the Works is obtained from the Lomati Dam. Water from the Lomati Dam flows through the Saddleback Tunnel and is released into the Rimer's Creek Weir located upstream of the Works. From the weir water is diverted via a steel gravity supply pipeline to the Works. The gravity supply pipeline that transports water directly from the Saddleback Tunnel is currently not being used as a result of corrosion caused by the high quantity of soluble irons in the raw water.

The following infrastructure will be constructed within

the existing fenced works area: new sedimentation tanks with sludge handling, new supernatant facility with recycle pump station, 3 new upflow filters, new chlorine dosing facility and new backwash pump station. A new aeration facility, a new chemical dosing facility and new access road will be constructed outside of the existing fenced works area (Figure 2).

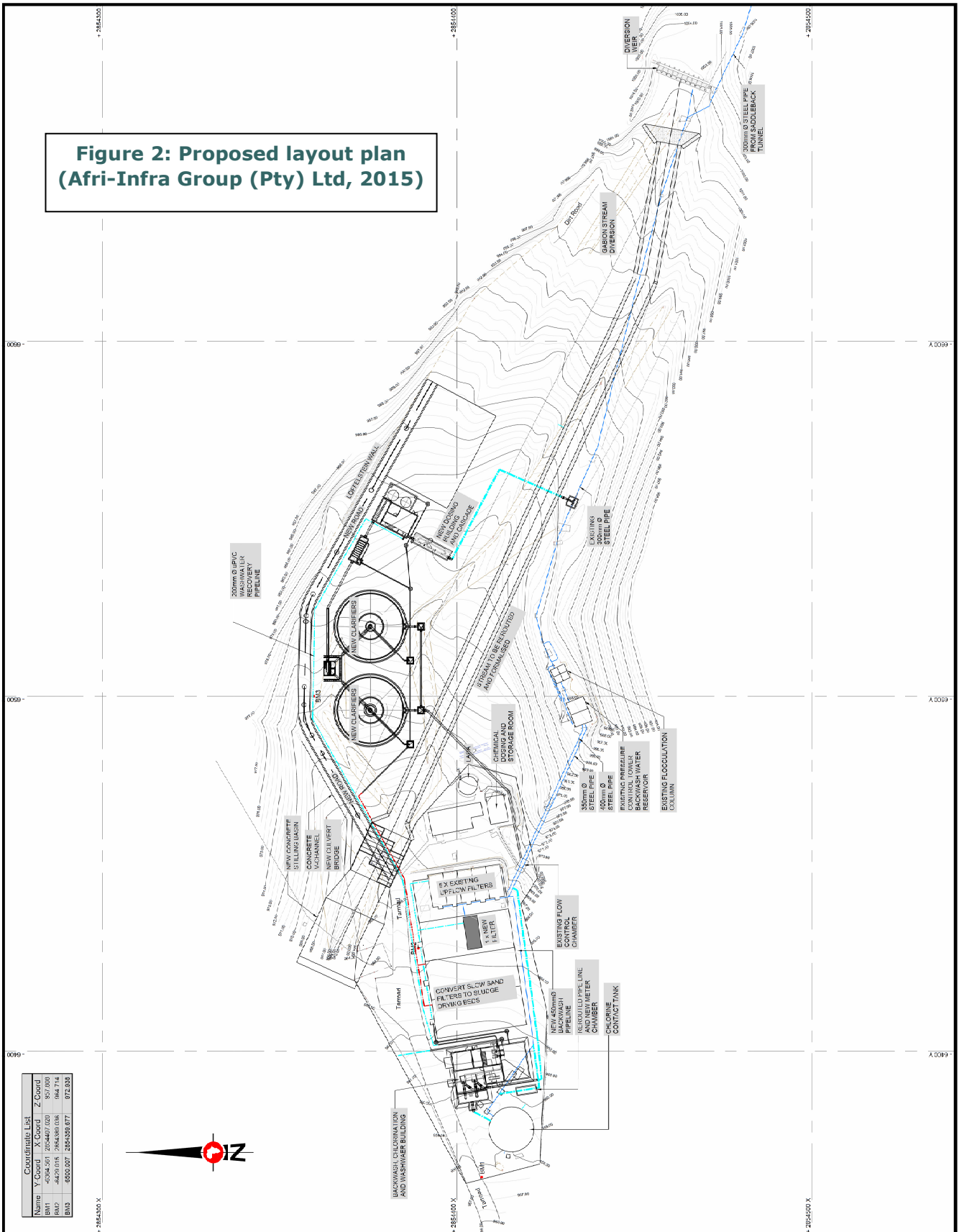
A portion of Rimer's Creek located below the existing weir will also be diverted/rerouted into a reinforced concrete lined channel (3.6m depth, 5.0m width, 275m length) that will be provided with a reinforced concrete stilling basin before the water is released back into Rimer's Creek (Figure 2).

Area within existing fenced works area to be developed = 4200m². Area outside of existing fenced works area to be developed = 8100m² (i.e. for new infrastructure). Area of proposed new access road = 1025m². Diverted/rerouted stream area = 1375m².

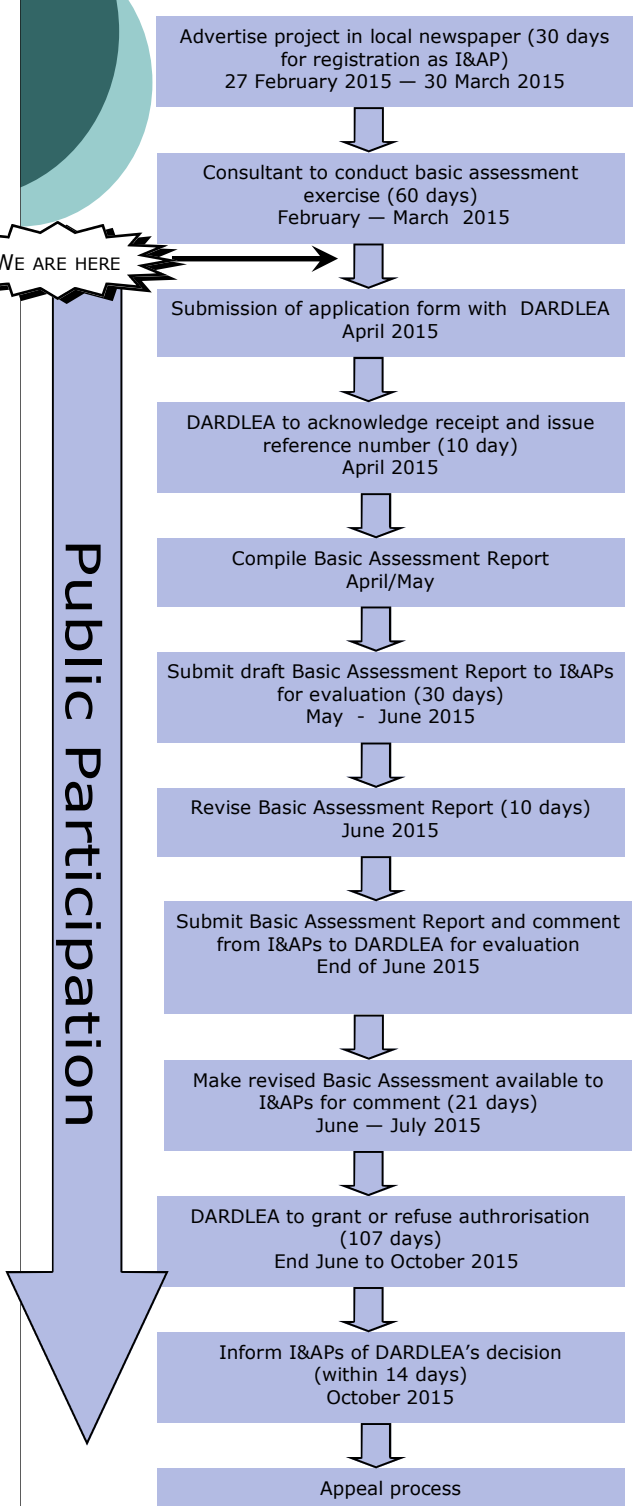


Proposed layout plan

**Figure 2: Proposed layout plan
(Afri-Infra Group (Pty) Ltd, 2015)**



Process to be followed



In order to determine whether approval can be obtained for a proposed activity, a specific procedure must be followed. Government Notice R982 regulates the procedure for the submission, processing and consideration of applications. In short, the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) must apply the following:

- complete an application form (Regulation 16);
- compile a Basic Assessment Report (Regulation 19 and Appendix 1 to the Regulations);
- follow a public participation process (Regulations 39–44).

The process that will be followed by the EAP as well as the anticipated timeframes are attached for perusal. The aim of the process is to ensure that the environmental impacts are considered, the relevant I&APs are consulted and the decision making authorities are provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision.

Information with regards to the following environmental features of the said site will be provided in the Basic Assessment Report:

- Topography
- Geology
- Soil
- Land use
- Natural vegetation/plant life
- Animal life
- Surface water
- Groundwater
- Air quality
- Noise
- Sites of archaeological or cultural interest
- Sensitive landscapes
- Visual aspects
- Traffic
- Sense of place
- Interested and affected parties

The Basic Assessment Report will thus provide information regarding the planned activity, the environmental features of the said site and the public participation process followed. It will also provide an indication of the potential impacts that could result during the construction and operational phases of this project as well as possible mitigation/management measures to be implemented.

PLEASE NOTE: TIME TABLE SUBJECT TO CHANGE THROUGH PROCESS FOLLOWED

*It would be appreciated if you could complete the attached comment sheet indicating your issues of concern and/or objections and could forward this comment sheet to Clean Stream Environmental Services by **30 March 2015**.*

