

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT & INVITATION TO COMMENT:

Proposed Special Development Projects on National Route R61, Section 8 from Mthatha to Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape.

AIM OF THIS DOCUMENT

The aim of this Background Information Document is to provide people affected by and interested in the proposed project with information about this project, the process being followed and to provide them with an opportunity to be involved in the EIA process.

Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) may raise issues of concern. These will be examined and included in the Reports.

The findings of the EIA will be provided to DEA for final decision making, as to whether or not the project should go ahead and if so under what conditions.

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Your involvement in this process is critical, and will help ensure that all relevant issues are raised and assessed in the EIA process



BACKGROUND

SANRAL (South African National Roads Agency Ltd.) is proposing the construction of various safety improvements on Section 8 on the R61 National Route from Mthatha to Lusikisiki, in the Eastern Cape Province.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Notice is hereby given in terms of Regulation 54(2) published in Government Notice No. R543 under Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA), of the intent to submit two applications for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

1. The first EIA will be for section 1 from Mthatha to Misty Mountain (18km)
2. The second EIA will be for section 2 from Misty Mountain to Umgazi (57km)

Coastal & Environmental Services has been commissioned to undertake the Environmental Impact Assessments. You are hereby invited to register as an Interested & Affected Party (I&AP).

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The Government Notice R.543 in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No 107 of 1998) identifies activities in terms of 24(2) (a) and (d) which may not commence without an authorisation from the competent authority Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). In order to apply for authorisation for the investigation, assessment and communication of potential impacts of the activities must follow the procedure as described in regulations 27 to 36 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, (2010), promulgated in terms of section 24(5) of the Act.

The proposed projects are subject to **Basic Impact Assessments** in terms of the following listed activities:

GN 544 No 11 (iii), (vi), (xi)	The construction of (vi) bulk storm-water outlet structures, (xi) infrastructure covering 50 square meters or more; where such construction occurs within a watercourse or within 32 meters of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse.
GN 544 No 18 (i)	The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic meters into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock from (i) a watercourse
GN 544 No 22 (i), (ii)	The construction of a road, outside urban areas, (i) with a reserve wider than 13.5 meters or, (ii) where no reserve exists where the road is wider than 8 meters
GN 544 No 39 (iii), (v)	The expansion of (v) bulk storm water outlet structures; within a watercourse or within 32 meters of a water course, where such an expansion will result in an increased development footprint.
GN 546 No 4 (a) ii (ee)	The construction of a road wider than 4 meters with a reserve less than 13.5 meters (a) in the Eastern Cape, (ii) outside urban areas, (ee) in critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority.
GN 546 No 19 (a) ii (ee)	The widening of a road by more than 4 meters (a) in the Eastern Cape, (ii) outside urban areas, (ee) in critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority.

The following Specialist studies will be conducted to identify all relative impacts and recommend possible mitigations:

- A Heritage Impact assessment
- Palaeontological Impact Assessment

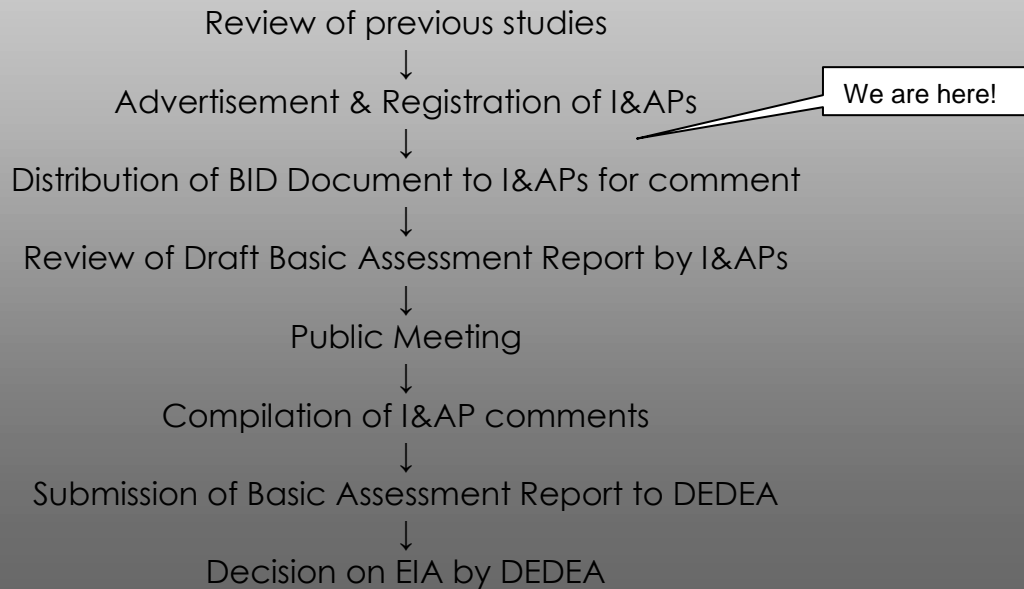


Figure 1: The two affected road sections between Mthatha and Port St Johns in the Eastern Cape. EIA 1 is from point A to B. EIA 2 is from point B to C.

APPROACH TO BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORTS

The process required for the proposed projects is a Basic Environmental Assessment. This process serves primarily to inform the public and relevant authorities about the proposed projects and to determine any impacts. Should all impacts and issues be adequately addressed in the reports, they will serve as the final documents. However, if not, the process will proceed into the next stage which is a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

Process for the Basic Assessments



HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

A Public Participation Process (PPP) is being conducted as part of the environmental process. The aim of the PPP is to allow everyone who is interested in, or likely to be affected by the proposed development to provide input into the process.

The Public Participation Process will include:

- Advertisement in the local newspaper
- Notice board on site
- Circulation of the BID (this document) to all identified I&APs
- Comments period
- Review of the report by all registered I&APs and DEA (National)
- A public meeting