

DIGBY WELLS
ENVIRONMENTAL

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Environmental Regulatory Processes for Sasol Syferfontein Block 4 Mine Expansion and Proposed Powerline

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Project Number:
SAS1744

Prepared for:
Sasol Mining (Pty) Ltd

For any project related information, please contact:

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1 PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

Sasol Mining (Pty) Ltd (Sasol Mining) proposes to extend the existing Syferfontein Mine into the adjacent Block 4 reserves towards the north-west of the current Syferfontein Mine. As part of this proposed expansion project Sasol Mining also needs to construct a powerline which will fall within the existing Syferfontein Colliery Mining Right Area.

This Background Information Document (BID) has been developed in order to:

- Share information about the proposed project;
- Present the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process to be undertaken according to South African legislation;
- Provide more detail about the Public Participation process which will be followed; and
- Explain which specialist studies will be carried out as part of the EIA.

1.1 Appointed Environmental Assessment Practitioners

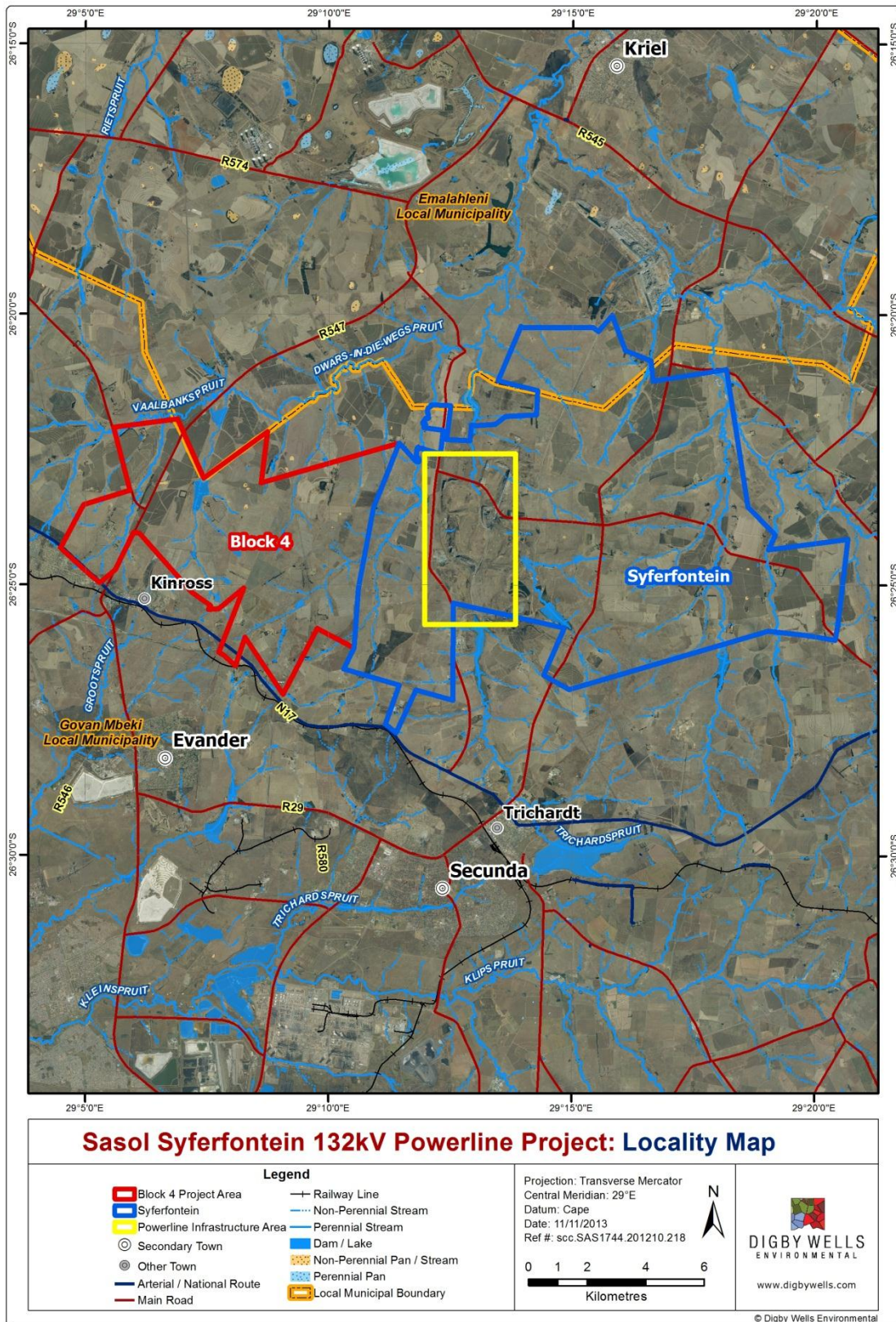
It is important to investigate potential impacts the proposed project might have on the environment and people. Sasol Mining appointed Digby Wells Environmental (Digby Wells) as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to complete the required environmental components for the proposed project.

2 BACKGROUND

The Syferfontein Colliery was established in 1989 with the purpose of co-supplying coal to Sasol Synfuels in Secunda. Sasol Mining has devised a sustainable strategy to keep the Secunda Synfuels operational for the next forty years and beyond. In an effort to realise this strategy Sasol Mining is in a process to replace all the current collieries. As part of this strategy, Sasol Mining plans to expand their Sasol Syferfontein colliery by applying for a Mining Right in terms of the Minerals and Petroleum Resource Development Act, 2002 (Act 28 of 2002) (MPRDA) to mine the number four lower coal seam in the Syferfontein Block 4 coal reserves.

2.1 Syferfontein Locality Setting

The proposed project is situated in the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality (GMLM) in the Gert Sibande District (GSD) in the Mpumalanga Province. The Sasol Block 4 area's affected farm portions are located approximately 12 km north of the town of Secunda and approximately 11 km north-east from the town of Kinross within the south western Mpumalanga province (see Plan 1).



Plan 1: Syferfontein Local Setting

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In order to optimise their reserve utilisation and coal supply to Sasol Synfuels, Sasol Mining is proposing to expand their operations into the Block 4 coal reserves. It is planned to mine the above mentioned reserve using the underground bord-and-pillar mining method. In addition to this, Sasol Mining will use a method for high extraction, known as the Nevid Mining Method. This method ensures that there will be minimal disturbances above ground. The Tweedraai reserves are the entry point to the Block 4 reserves and currently forms part of the Syferfontein Mining Reserve area. The Block 4 and Tweedraai reserves will be accessed by means of an adit in the highwall of the existing Syferfontein mine (known as the Tweedraai area). Existing infrastructure located on the existing Syferfontein Tweedraai mining area will be used to serve the Sasol Syferfontein Block 4 mining area.

For the proposed expansion project, more power is needed. Currently, power is supplied to the mine via two 132 kilovolts (kV) powerlines from the Quintus substation. From the main mine substation, power is transferred via 22 kV powerlines along the east and west banks of the old open cast pits to the adits' substations, where power is further stepped down to 11 kV for the mining operations. To support the Block 4 expansion Project, Sasol Mining is proposing to construct a 132kV powerline over open cast rehabilitated land within the existing Syferfontein mining area which stretches across the farms Tweedraai139 IS, Zwakfontein 120 IS and Van Schalkwyksrust 118 IS. Existing tar and dirt roads will be used to gain access during the construction and operational phase (for maintenance of the powerline servitude).

4 ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

4.1 Legislation

For the proposed project the following authorisation processes need to be completed in order to adhere to the required legislation:

- Sasol Mining will be applying for a Mining Right in terms of the Minerals and Petroleum Resource Development Act, 2002 (Act No. 28 of 2002) (MPRDA). The Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) is the decision making authority for the Mining Right application.
- For the construction of the 132kV powerline a Basic Assessment (BA) will be compiled in accordance with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act no. 107 of 1998) (NEMA). The construction of the powerline is a Listed Activity in terms of Government Notice R. 544, 18 June 2010, Activity 10, which refers to "the construction of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity –outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33kV but less than 275 kV". The Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (DEDET) is the decision-making authority for the BA.

- The Syferfontein Block 4 expansion area will require an Integrated Water Use Licence Application (IWULA) in terms of the National Water Act, Act 36 of 1998 (NWA). Department of Water Affairs (DWA) is the decision making authority. The Following water uses will be applied for:
 - S21.(a): taking water from a water resource;
 - S21.(c): impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse;
 - S21.(i): altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse; and
 - S21.(j): removing, discharging or disposing of water found underground if it is necessary for the efficient continuation of an activity or for the safety of people.

4.2 Specialist Studies

Specialist studies will be conducted for the proposed project to identify potential impacts on the environment and people. Results of these studies will be shared with stakeholders for their comment. The various specialist studies that will be conducted include the following:

- Geohydrological
- Soils
- Surface water
- Wetlands
- Noise
- Archaeology
- Fauna and Flora
- Social baseline
- Visual and Topography
- Aquatics

4.3 Public Participation

Stakeholders affected by or who are interested in the proposed project are invited to register as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) in order to become involved in the Public Participation (PP) process for the project . The following anticipated upcoming dates are important to note for the PP process going forward:

- Availability of BA Report (NEMA) for public comment: March 2014
- Availability of the Scoping Report (MPRDA) for public comment: March 2014
- Stakeholder meetings to be held during the public comment period for the BA and Scoping Reports: April 2014

Registered I&APs will be informed about availability of reports and scheduled stakeholder meetings via their preferred means of communication (SMS, email, post or fax). Contributions from stakeholders will assist in informed decision-making for authorities and provides information to be considered by the project team and specialists conducting studies. All comments can be submitted using the contact details which appear on the cover page or as part of the Comment and Registration Sheet attached to this BID.