



**BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT
AS PART OF THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR THE
PROPOSED UMZIMKHULU SMALL, MEDIUM AND MICRO-ENTERPRISES
(SMME) DEVELOPMENT, AND ADJACENT TOWNCENTRE BUS AND TAXI
RANK WITHIN THE UMZIMKHULU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, SISONKE
DISTRICT.**

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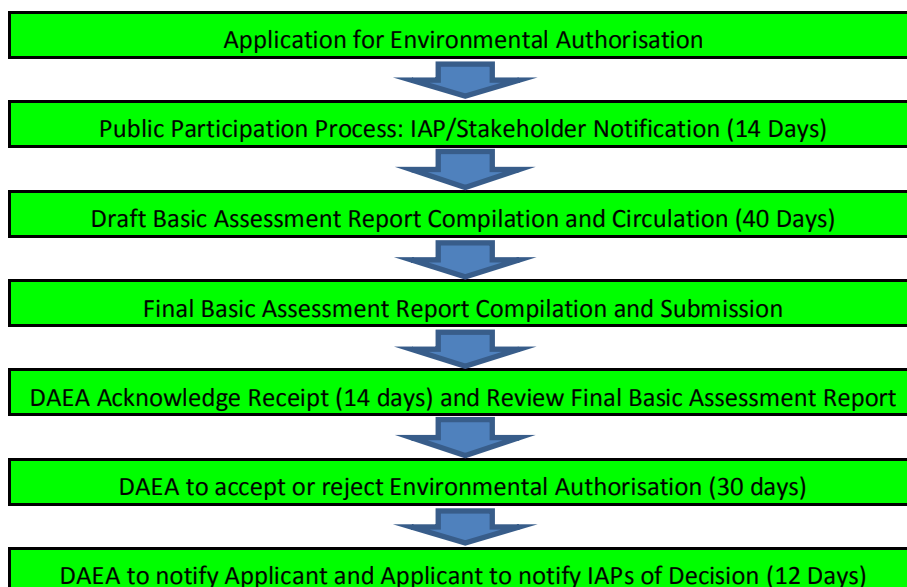
Applicant:	Environmental Consultants:
	
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What is the Background Information Document about?

As part of the Basic Assessment and Public Participation Process, the Background Information Document (BID) serves to inform all authorities, stakeholders, and Interested and/or Affected Parties (IAPs) of the applicant's proposed SMME facility located within the Umzimkhulu CBD. The BID provides interested and affected parties an opportunity to submit any issues or concerns relating to the biophysical or socio-economic environment.

The Basic Assessment Process

The proposed SMME facility, bus and taxi rank requires an Application for Environmental Authorisation in terms of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations of 2010 (Regulations in terms of Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, as amended). As such an application has been lodged with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs and a Basic Assessment is being undertaken by Enviroedge. The Basic Assessment process is summarised below.



Public Participation Process

The Public Participation Process (PPP) forms part of the Basic Assessment process, and helps to ensure that IAPs have an opportunity to participate throughout the process by submitting their comments or concerns. Members of the public have the right to be informed of decisions that affect them. IAPs are provided with an opportunity during this process to submit their issues or concerns regarding the proposed development.

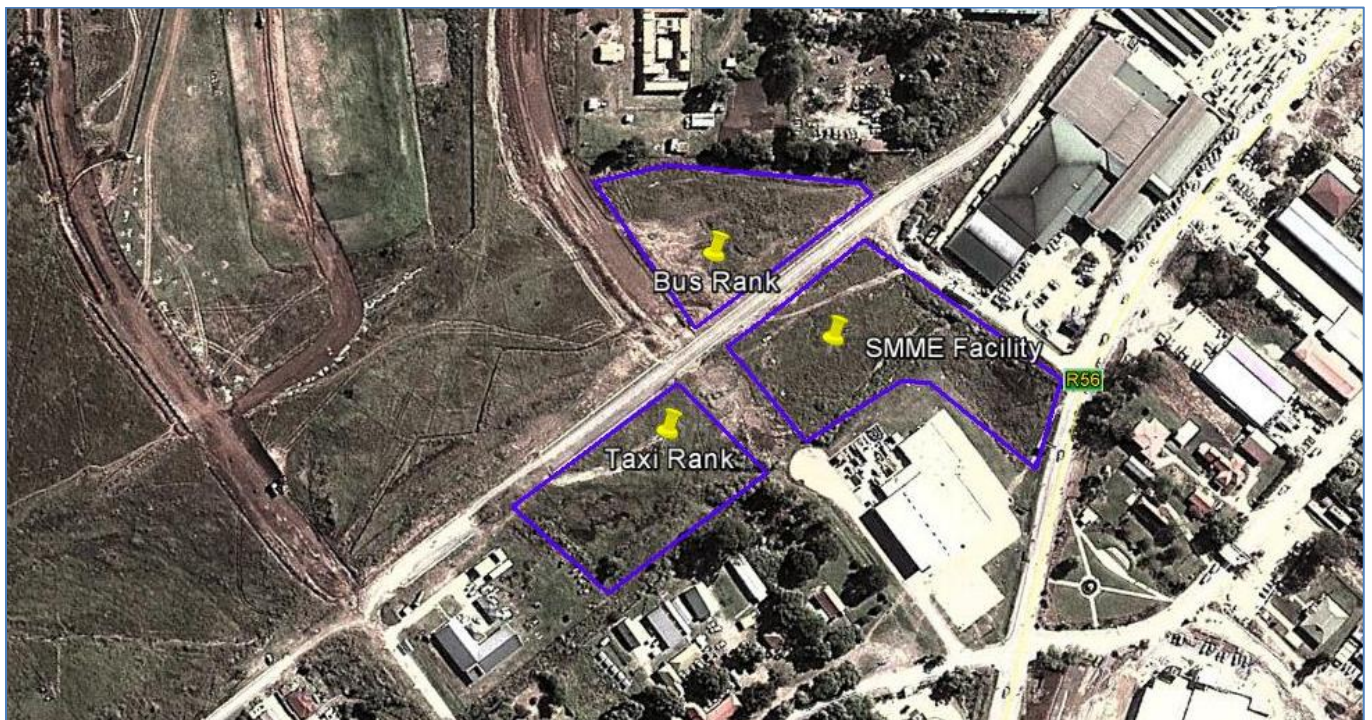
The Project

The Umzimkhulu Local Municipality has proposed the development of a Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprise (SMME) facility, and adjacent bus and taxi rank development which forms part of the new town centre precinct development. The proposed SMME facility aims to create a formalised trading centre for traders within the Umzimkhulu central business district. The proposed site covers an area of 10 344m² and key features include a food court, food hall, trading stalls and halls, administration offices and a training centre.

Adjacent to the SMME facility, and as part of the new town centre revitalisation, it is proposed that a new bus rank and taxi rank is developed within the framework of the recently constructed road network. The proposed bus rank covers an area of approximately 1 100m² and the proposed taxi rank covers an area of 8 659m². The conceptual design for the bus rank includes a service area, offices, ablutions, shops, a bus loading and holding area, and a wash bay. The taxi rank includes taxi loading bays, a taxi holding area, offices, ablution facilities and shops.

The proposed SMME facility is located adjacent to the R56 road, at 30°15'46.00"S 29°56'17.28"E. The proposed bus rank is located at 30°15'44.86"S 29°56'9.85"E and the taxi rank is located at 30°15'47.54"S 29°56'9.72"E.

Figure 1. Location of Proposed SMME Facility, Bus and Taxi Rank



Climate

The study area mainly receives summer rainfall with some winter rainfall. Infrequent frosts do occur. Some valleys are sheltered and may show weak rain shadow effects. The average annual precipitation ranges from 700mm to 1100mm. Temperatures are variable with winter temperatures close to 0°C and summer temperatures in excess of 30°C being a common occurrence.

Topography and Watercourses

The study area is situated within the valley of the Umzimkhulu River. The site has a gentle gradient on an east facing slope with a high point of 732 masl and a low point of 728 masl near the R56 road. The study area drains towards a low point at the eastern edge of the proposed SMME facility, which is then channelled into the Umzimkhulu River. New storm water infrastructure associated with the CBD and road network development is currently being installed. The new stormwater infrastructure should cater for any increased water volumes. The majority of the proposed site falls outside of the 1:100 year floodline, with only the eastern edge of the development falling within the 1:100 year floodline. The entire site is located outside of the 1:50 year floodline.

Geology and Soils

Mucina and Rutherford (2006) describe the geology as acidic, leached, heavy soils derived from Karoo Supergroup sediments and intrusive Karoo Dolerites. Glenrosa and Mispah soils also occur.

Vegetation

The study area falls within the Savanna Biome, and Mucina and Rutherford (2006) classify the vegetation group as Ngongoni Veld (SVs 4). A common feature of this vegetation class is dense tall grassland that is overwhelmingly dominated by unpalatable, wiry Ngongoni grass and a low species diversity. The study area falls on the edge of existing commercial and institutional facilities which are in turn flanked by the R56 Road. *Aristida Junciformis* (Gongoni Grass) was noted to be the dominant species. A wetland delineation and functionality assessment of the wetland system, within study area, revealed a highly altered system which has been reduced in its functionality and compromised in its integrity as a result of anthropogenic activities.

Services

The study area is located near the Umzimkhulu CBD, the R56 road, and within the newly constructed 2129, 2130 and 2131 road network. Powerlines and telecommunication networks were noted near the study area and may require relocation or deviation. The Umzimkhulu CBD is currently in the process of installing new storm water management infrastructure to manage the stormwater within the towncentre.

Register as an Interested and/or Affected Party

Members of the public have the right to be consulted during the Public Participation Process. If you would like to be part of this process, or wish to comment or make contributions regarding specific guidelines, legislation or regulations that are specific to your organisation, please register with the Enviroedge environmental consultant using the contacts details provided.