



WORKING FOR WETLANDS REHABILITATION PROGRAMME, FREE STATE

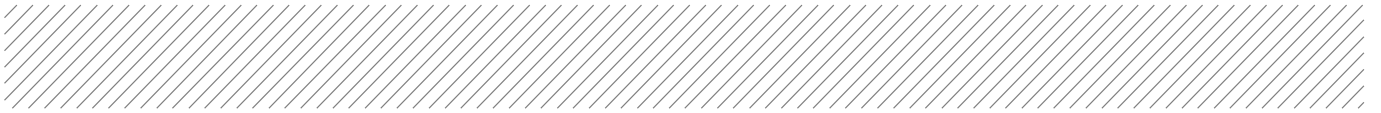
BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FEBRUARIE 2019



Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Environmental Affairs
Water Affairs and Sanitation



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME
Creating opportunities towards human fulfillment



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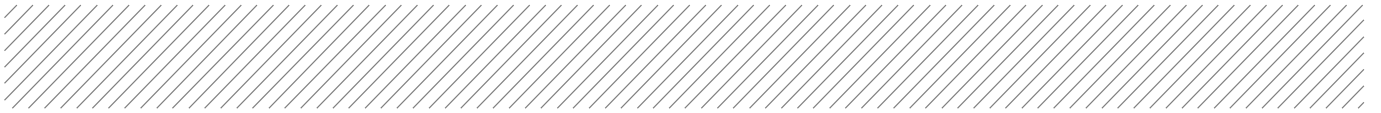
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NEMA requirements for Basic Assessment Reports

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Appendix 1	Content as required by NEMA	Section
3(1)	A basic assessment report must contain the information that is necessary for the competent authority to consider and come to a decision on the application, and must include -	
(a)	(i) details of the EAP who prepared the report; and (ii) details of the expertise of the EAP, including curriculum vitae;	Section 8.2 Appendix D
(b)	the location of the activity, including- (i) the 21 digit Surveyor General code of each cadastral land parcel; (ii) where available, the physical address and farm name; (iii) where the required information in items (i) and (ii) is not available, the coordinates of the boundary of the property or properties;	Section 1.1.1 N/A
(c)	a plan which locates the proposed activity or activities applied for at an appropriate scale, or, if it is- (i) a linear activity, a description and coordinates of the corridor in which the proposed activity or activities is to be undertaken; or (ii) on land where the property has not been defined, the coordinates within which the activity is to be undertaken;	Figure 1 Chapter 6 N/A N/A
(d)	a description of the scope of the proposed activity, including- (i) all listed and specified activities triggered and being applied for; and (ii) a description of the activities to be undertaken, including associated structures and infrastructure;	 Chapter 2 Section 5.2
(e)	a description of the policy and legislative context within which the development is proposed including - (i) an identification of all legislation, policies, plans, guidelines, spatial tools, municipal development planning frameworks, and instruments that are applicable to this activity and have been considered in the preparation of the report; and (ii) how the proposed activity complies with and responds to the legislation and policy context, plans, guidelines, tools frameworks, and instruments;	Chapter 2
(f)	a motivation for the need and desirability for the proposed development including the need and desirability of the activity in the context of the preferred location;	Section 5.1
(g)	a motivation for the preferred site, activity and technology alternative;	Chapter 5
(h)	a full description of the process followed to reach the proposed preferred alternative within the site, including - (i) details of all the alternatives considered;	Section 5.3
	(ii) details of the public participation process undertaken in terms of regulation 41 of the Regulations, including copies of the supporting documents and inputs;	Chapter 4 Appendix B
	(iii) a summary of the issues raised by interested and affected parties, and an indication of the manner in which the issues were incorporated, or the reasons for not including them;	
	(iv) the environmental attributes associated with the alternatives focusing on the geographical, physical, biological, social, economic, heritage and cultural aspects;	Chapter 6
	(v) the impacts and risks identified for each alternative, including the nature, significance, consequence, extent, duration and probability of the impacts, including the degree to which these impacts- (aa) can be reversed; (bb) may cause irreplaceable loss of resources; and (cc) can be avoided, managed or mitigated;	Chapter 7
	(vi) the methodology used in determining and ranking the nature, significance, consequences, extent, duration and probability of potential environmental impacts and risks associated with the alternatives;	Section 3.2
	(vii) positive and negative impacts that the proposed activity and alternatives will have on the environment and on the community that may be affected focusing on the geographical, physical, biological, social, economic, heritage and cultural aspects;	Chapter 7

	(viii) the possible mitigation measures that could be applied and level of residual risk;	
	(ix) the outcome of the site selection matrix;	N/A
	(x) if no alternatives, including alternative locations for the activity were investigated, the motivation for not considering such and	Section 5.3
	(xi) a concluding statement indicating the preferred alternatives, including preferred location of the activity;	N/A
(i)	a full description of the process undertaken to identify, assess and rank the impacts the activity will impose on the preferred location through the life of the activity, including - (i) a description of all environmental issues and risks that were identified during the environmental impact assessment process; and (ii) an assessment of the significance of each issue and risk and an indication of the extent to which the issue and risk could be avoided or addressed by the adoption of mitigation measures;	Chapter 3 and 7
(j)	an assessment of each identified potentially significant impact of risk, including - (i) cumulative impacts; (ii) the nature, significance and consequences of the impact and risk; (iii) the extent and duration of the impact and risk; (iv) the probability of the impact and risk occurring; (v) the degree to which the impact and risk can be reversed; (vi) the degree to which the impact and risk may cause irreplaceable loss of resources; and (vii) the degree to which the impact and risk can be avoided, managed or mitigated;	Chapter 7
(k)	where applicable, a summary of the findings and impact management measures identified in any specialist report complying with Appendix 6 to these Regulations and an indication as to how these findings and recommendations have been included in the final report;	Chapter 8
(l)	an environmental impact statement which contains - (i) a summary of the key findings of the environmental impact assessment; (ii) a map at an appropriate scale which superimposes the proposed activity and its associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the preferred site indicating any areas that should be avoided, including buffers; and (iii) a summary of the positive and negative impacts and risks of the proposed activity and identified alternatives;	N/A – to be provided in the project specific rehabilitation plans.
(m)	based on the assessment, and where applicable, impact management measures from specialist reports, the recording of the impact management outcomes for the development for inclusion in the EMPr;	Chapter 8
(n)	any aspects which were conditional to the findings of the assessment either by the EAP or specialist which are to be included as conditions of authorisation;	
(o)	a description of any assumptions, uncertainties, and gaps in knowledge which relate to the assessment and mitigation measures proposed;	Section 3.3
(p)	a reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity should or should not be authorised, and if the opinion is that it should be authorised, any conditions that should be made in respect of that authorisation;	Section 8.2
(r)	an undertaking under oath or affirmation by the EAP in relation to- (i) the correctness of the information provided in the report; (ii) the inclusion of comments and inputs from stakeholders and interested and affected parties; and (iii) any information provided by the EAP to interested and affected parties and any responses by the EAP to comments or inputs made by interested or affected parties;	Appendix E
(s)	where applicable, details of any financial provisions for the rehabilitation, closure, and ongoing post decommissioning management of negative environmental impacts;	N/A
(t)	any specific information that may be required by the competent authority; and	N/A
(u)	any other matter required in terms of section 24(4)(a) and (b) of the Act.	N/A

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	1
1.1	Introducing the Project	3
2	LEGAL AND PLANNING CONTEXT	7
2.1	Relevant Legislation	7
3	METHODOLOGY	15
3.1	Approach to the Project	15
3.2	Impact Assessment Methodology	18
3.3	Assumptions and Limitations	20
4	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	21
4.1	Public Participation Process	21
5	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	22
5.1	Need and Desirability: National Importance of the WfWetlands Programme	22
5.2	Activities to be undertaken	23
5.3	Alternatives	24
6	BASELINE DESCRIPTION OF FREE STATE PROJECTS.....	26
6.1	Free State Project: Background	26
6.2	Biophysical Environment	26
6.3	Cultural and Heritage Environment	40
6.4	Socio-economic Environment	40
7	IMPACT ASSESSMENT	42
7.1	CONSTRUCTION PHASE	42
7.2	OPERATIONAL PHASE	51
8	CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD	56
8.1	Conclusion	56
8.2	Level of Confidence in Assessment and Recommendation of the EAP	58
8.3	Way Forward	58
9	REFERENCE LIST.....	59

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Typical Interventions

Appendix B: Public Participation Report

Appendix B1: DEA Meeting Minutes

Appendix B2: Landowner Agreements

Appendix B3: Written Notification

Appendix B4: Proof of Delivery

Appendix B5: Comments and Responses

Appendix C: Maps

Appendix D: EMPr

Appendix E: Additional information

Appendix E1: EAP declaration and CV

Appendix E2: Specialist declaration and CV

Appendix E3: Wetland Forum Minutes

FIGURES

Figure 1: Overview of Phase 1 and 2 as part of the planning process	2
Figure 2: Locality map showing the location of quaternary catchments included in this BAR	6
Figure 3: The Working for Wetlands planning process	16

TABLES

Table 1: Project details	3
Table 2: Farm details for Free State projects	4
Table 3: Planning Team for Free State Province	5
Table 4: Relevant Legislation, policies and guidelines considered in preparation of the Basic Assessment Report	7
Table 5: Listed activities triggered by the proposed Free State Projects	9
Table 6: Assessment criteria for the evaluation of impacts	18
Table 7: Definition of significance ratings	19
Table 8: Definition of probability ratings	19
Table 9: Definition of confidence ratings	20
Table 10: Definition of reversibility ratings	20
Table 11: Public Participation Process	21
Table 12: Approach to alternatives for the WfWetlands Programme	24
Table 13: Economic profile of applicable local municipalities	40
Table 14: Socio-economic value of the national WfWetlands Programme	41
Table 15: Impact summary table	57

ABBREVIATIONS

AMSL	Above mean sea level
ASD	Assistant Director: Wetlands Programmes
BAR	Basic Assessment Report
BGIS	Biodiversity Geographic Information Systems
CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area
CPP	Catchment Prioritisation Process
CSIR	Council for Scientific Research
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EA	Environmental Authorisation
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner
ECO	Environmental Control Officer
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMF	Environmental Management Framework
EMPr	Environmental Management Programme
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
ESA	Ecological Support Area
GA	General Authorisation
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Geographical Positioning System
IA	Implementing Agent
I&AP	Interested and Affected Party
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAP	Mean Annual Precipitation
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998)
NEM:BA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (No.10 of 2004)
NEM:WA	National Environmental Management: Waste Act (No. 59 of 2008)
NFEPA	National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999)
NWA	National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998)
NWI	National Wetland Inventory Project
PET	Potential Evapotranspiration
PPP	Public Participation Process
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WfWetlands	Working for Wetlands



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Bedrock: The solid rock that underlies unconsolidated material, such as soil, sand, clay, or gravel (Cowden and Kotze, 2008).

Basic Assessment Report (BAR): A report as required in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations, of the National Environmental Management Act, No. 107 of 1998 (NEMA), that describes the proposed activities and their potential impacts.

Biophysical: The biological and physical components of the environment (Cowden and Kotze, 2008).

Catchment: All the land area from mountaintop to seashore which is drained by a single river and its tributaries. Each catchment in South Africa has been subdivided into secondary catchments, which in turn have been divided into tertiary catchments. Finally, all tertiary catchments have been divided into interconnected quaternary catchments. A total of 1946 quaternary catchment have been identified for South Africa. These subdivided catchments provide the main basis on which catchments are subdivided for integrated catchment planning and management (Cowden and Kotze, 2008).

Development: The building, erection, construction or establishment of a facility, structure or infrastructure, *including associated earthworks* or borrow pits, that is necessary for the undertaking of a listed or specified activity, including any associated post development monitoring, but *excludes any modification, alteration or expansion* of such a facility, structure or infrastructure, including associated earthworks or borrow pits, and *excluding the redevelopment of the same facility in the same location, with the same capacity and footprint*.

Development Footprint: means *any evidence of physical alteration* as a result of the undertaking of an activity.

Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP): The individual responsible for the planning, management and coordination of the environmental impact assessments, strategic environmental assessments, environmental management plans and/or other appropriate environmental instruments introduced through regulations of NEMA.


Ecosystem Services or 'eco services': The services such as sediment trapping or water supply, supplied by an ecosystem (in this case a wetland ecosystem).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): A study of the environmental consequences of a proposed course of action via the process of collecting, organising, analysing, interpreting and communicating information that is relevant to the consideration of that application.

Environmental Management Programme (EMPr): A detailed plan of action to organise and co-ordinate environmental mitigation, rehabilitation and monitoring during the implementation and maintenance of interventions identified under the WfWetlands Programme such that positive impacts are enhanced, and negative impacts are avoided/minimised.

Expansion: The *modification, extension, alteration* or upgrading of a facility, structure or infrastructure at which an activity takes place in such a manner that the *capacity* of the facility or the *footprint* of the activity is increased.

Indigenous Vegetation: Vegetation consisting of indigenous plant species occurring naturally in an area, *regardless of the level of alien infestation* and where the topsoil has not been lawfully disturbed during the preceding ten years.



Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs): People and organisations that have interest(s) in the proposed activities, also referred to as stakeholders.

Environmental Impact: An environmental change caused by some human act.

Implementer: The person or organisation responsible for the construction of WfWetlands rehabilitation interventions.

Intervention: A method of wetland rehabilitation that aims to address the objectives of the particular wetland system, namely to restore the hydrological integrity of the system and support associated biodiversity. It can be in the form of a hard (structures made of hard materials which are fixed (e.g. a concrete weir) or soft intervention (e.g. re-vegetation).

Mitigation: Actions to reduce the impact of a particular activity.

Maintenance: The replacement, repair or the reconstruction of an existing structure within the same footprint, in the same location, having the same capacity and performing the same function as the previous structure ('like for like').

Maintenance Management Plan: A management plan for maintenance purposes defined or *adopted by the competent authority*. [For WfWetlands, this is called a Rehabilitation Plan.]

Public Participation Process (PPP): A process of involving the public in order to identify issues and concerns and obtain feedback on options and impacts associated with a proposed project, programme or development. Public Participation Process in terms of NEMA refers to: a process in which potential interested and affected parties are given an opportunity to comment on or raise issues relevant to specific project matters.

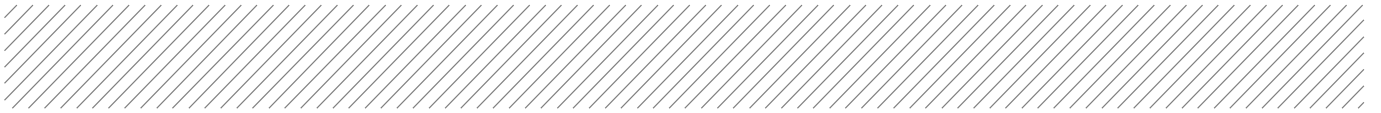
Project: An area of WfWetlands intervention generally defined by a quaternary catchment or similar management unit such as a national park in which a single implementer operates.

Quaternary Catchment: "A fourth order catchment in a hierarchal classification system in which a primary catchment is the major unit" and that is also the "principal water management unit in South Africa" (DWS, 2011).

Rehabilitation: In the context of wetlands, refers to re-instating the driving ecological forces (including hydrological, geomorphological and biological processes) that underlie a wetland, so as to improve the wetland's health and the ecological services that it delivers.

Significant impact: An impact that by its magnitude, duration, intensity or probability of occurrence may have a notable effect on one or more aspects of the environment.

Wetland: "Land which is transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is periodically covered with shallow water and which in normal circumstances supports or would support vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soils." (National Water Act, 36 of 1998) *and* "Land where an excess of water is the dominant factor determining the nature of the soil development and the types of plants living there" (Cowden and Kotze, 2008).



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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Working for Wetlands (WfWetlands) is a government programme managed by the Environmental Programmes (EP) of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), and is a joint initiative with the Departments of Water and Sanitation (DWS), and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF). In this way, the programme is an expression of the overlapping wetland-related mandates of the three parent departments, and besides giving effect to a range of policy objectives, it also honours South Africa's commitments under several international agreements, especially the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The programme is mandated to protect pristine wetlands, promote their wise-use and rehabilitate those that are damaged throughout South Africa, with an emphasis on complying with the principles of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and using only local Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). The EPWP seeks to draw significant numbers of unemployed people into the productive sector of the economy, gaining skills while they work and increasing their capacity to earn an income.

Due to the nature of the project, it is important to note that the very objectives of the WfWetlands Programme are to improve both environmental and social circumstances. The legislation protecting the environment in South Africa was not written with the intention of preventing wetland rehabilitation efforts, but rather of curtailing development in sensitive environments.

Throughout this report there will therefore be sections which guide the reader to understand how the minimum legal requirements (as required by the amended 2014 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations) will be met. It is important to note that the planning cycle of the WfWetlands Programme occurs annually, and continuously builds on existing information (dating back to the early 2000s). Each project cycle occurs within three phases (Refer to Section 3.1), with Phase 1 and Phase 2 occurring prior to implementation. **Figure 1** on the following page provides an overview of how Phase 1 and 2 relate to the basic assessment process.

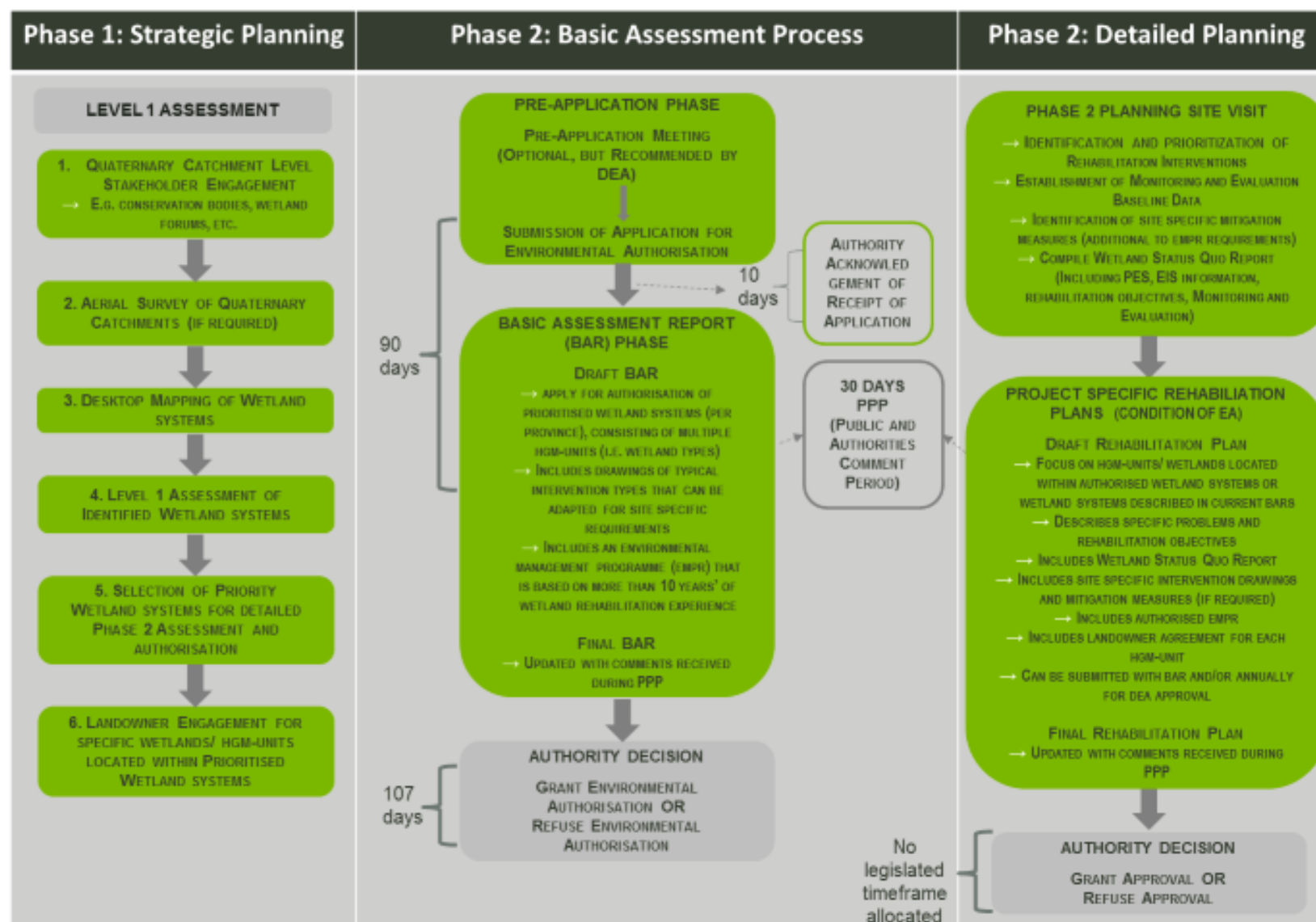


Figure 1: Overview of Phase 1 and 2 as part of the planning process

1.1 Introducing the Project

The WfWetlands Programme is currently managing 48 WfWetlands Projects countrywide, including projects in the Free State Province. WfWetlands has actively been rehabilitating wetlands in the Free State Province since the early 2000s. Priority wetland systems requiring rehabilitation were identified during Phase 1 of the WfWetlands Programme. Catchment and wetland prioritisation assessments were undertaken by the provincial Wetland Specialist/s to identify priority catchments and associated wetlands within which rehabilitation work needs to be undertaken. A review was undertaken to determine local knowledge and identify existing studies of the quaternary catchments in the province. The Programme's current five-year strategic plans were further used as a guide to identify wetlands, as well as data from the National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (NFEPA) project. Decisions on priority areas were informed by input from wetland forums, biodiversity/ conservation plans, municipalities, state departments and various other stakeholders.

1.1.1 Project Location

Based on the above, the following new wetland systems were identified in the Free State Province as shown in **Table 1** and **Table 2** below.

Table 1: Project details

Project Name	Wetland System	Wetland Number	Lat (DDMMSS)	Long (DDMMSS)
Maluti	Wattle Grove -01	C81C-01	29° 5'51.58"S	29° 7'57.68"E
	Wattle Grove -02	C81C-02	28°24'21.33"S	29° 7'0.81"E
	Wattle Grove -03	C81C-03	28°23'35.65"S	29° 8'3.81"E
	Wattle Grove -04	C81C-04	28°23'46.21"S	29° 8'25.77"E
	Helpmekaar -01	C81C-05	28°25'21.47"S	29° 5'51.58"E
	Helpmekaar -02	C81C-06	28°25'19.45"S	29° 6'0.11"E
	Aneks -01	C81C-07	28°25'57.52"S	29° 5'24.57"E
	Boschkloof -01	C81D-06	28°31'7.69"S	28°59'13.28"E
	Boschkloof – 02	C81D-07	28°31'8.29"S	28°58'30.21"E
	Stratherrick 1 & Eskol 01	C81D-11	28° 25' 12.62" S	28° 25' 12.62" E
	Stratherrick 2	C81D-12	28°25' 1.059"S	28° 59' 11.030" E
	Helmanshoek - 01	C81D-19	28°32'4.98"S	29° 0'45.99"E
	Elizabeth-03	C81D-20	28°31'49.69"S	29° 0'20.45"E
	Boschkloof -03 & Raiglea-01	C81D-25	28°31'3.27"S	28°59'55.68"E
	Helmanshoek - 02	C81D-26	28°32'6.78"S	29° 0'27.51"E
	Elizabeth – 01	C81D-27	28°32'14.78"S	29° 1'8.80"E
	Elizabeth – 02	C81D-28	28°32'17.17"S	29° 1'9.65"E

Table 2: Farm details for Free State projects

Project Name	Wetland System	Property Number	21-digit SG code	Property Size (ha)
Maluti	Wattle Grove -01	Farm 656	F015000000000656000000	1473 ha
	Wattle Grove -02	Farm 656	F015000000000656000000	1473 ha
	Wattle Grove -03	Farm 656	F015000000000656000000	1473 ha
	Wattle Grove -04	Farm 656	F015000000000656000000	1473 ha
	Helpmekaar -01	Farm 1103	F015000000001103000000	701 ha
	Helpmekaar -02	Farm 1103	F015000000001103000000	701 ha
	Aneks -01	Farm 1104	F015000000001104000000	350 ha
	Boschkloof -01	Farm 487	F015000000000487000000	695 ha
	Boschkloof - 02	Farm 487	F015000000000487000000	695 ha
	Stratherrick 1 & Eskol 1	Farm 186/10	F015000000000186000010	1926 ha
		Farm 692/01	F015000000000692000001	482 ha
	Stratherrick 2	Farm 186/10	F015000000000186000010	1926 ha
	Helmanshoek - 01	Farm 1851	F015000000001851000000	757 ha
	Elizabeth - 03	Farm 185	F015000000001850000000	835 ha
	Boschkloof -03 & Graigielea -01	Farm 487	F015000000000487000000	695 ha
		Farm 598/60	F015000000000598000060	443 ha
	Helmanshoek - 02	Farm 1851	F015000000001851000000	757 ha
	Elizabeth - 01	Farm 185	F015000000001850000000	835 ha
	Elizabeth - 02	Farm 185	F015000000001850000000	835 ha

1.1.2 Project Team

The Aurecon team, in partnership with GroundTruth, comprises Design Engineers and Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs) who undertake the planning, design and authorisation components of the project. The team is assisted by an external team of Wetland Specialists¹ who provide scientific insight into the operation of wetlands and expert local knowledge of the wetlands. The project team is also complimented by the Assistant Director for Wetlands Programme (ASDs) who are each responsible for a province.

The project team for Free State Province is listed in **Table 3**

¹ These Wetland Specialists are also referred to as Wetlanders in the Programme, and the two terms should be used interchangeably. The individuals are selected based on their expertise in the province, and their involvement in the wetland society of South Africa.

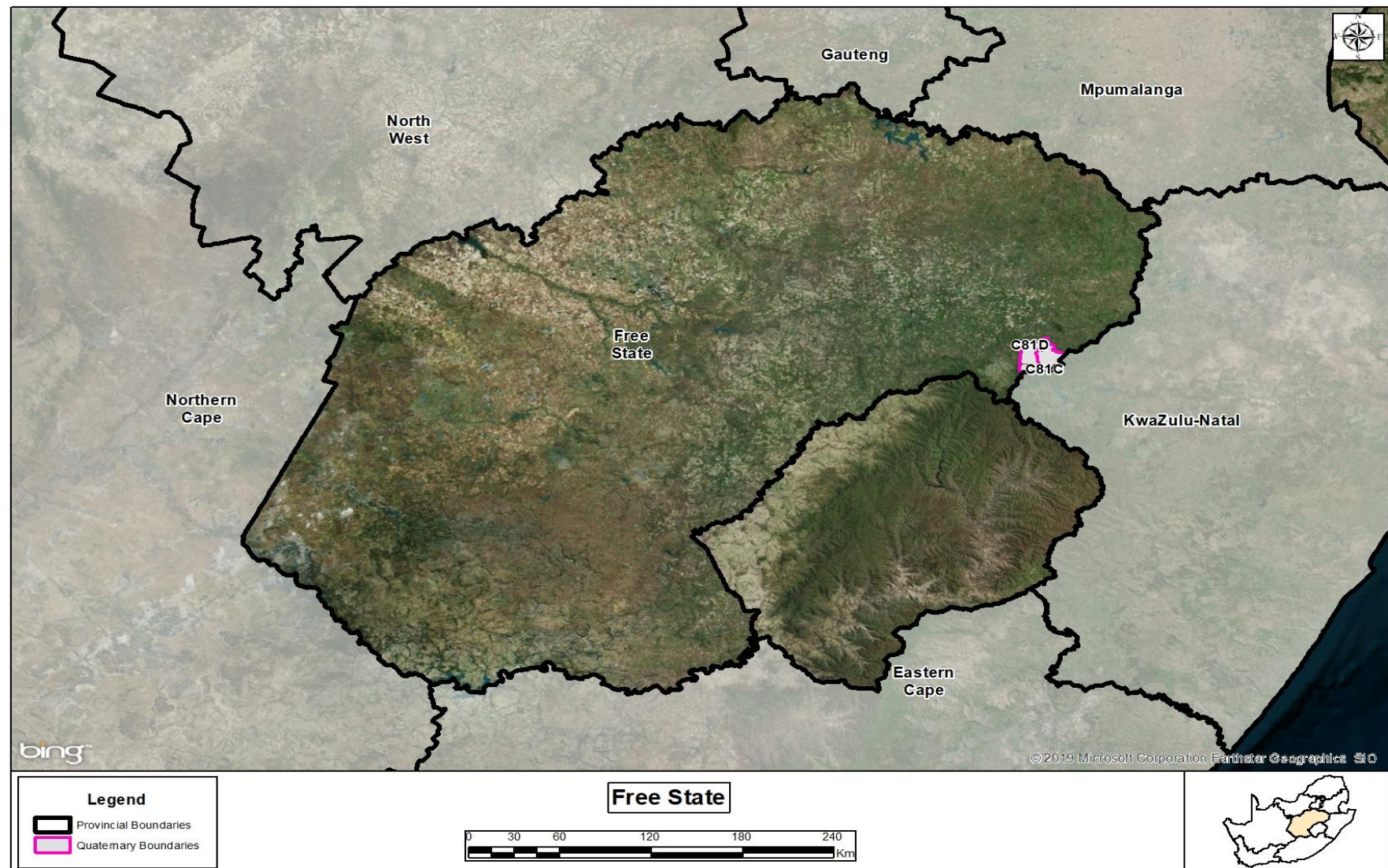
Table 3: Planning Team for Free State Province

Role	Representative	Company
ASD	Mathabiso Letsaba	Department of Environmental Affairs
EAP	Margaret Lowies	Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd
EAP	Noluyolo Xorile	Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd
Engineer	Trevor Pike	GroundTruth
Wetlander	Craig Cowden	GroundTruth

Ms Margaret Lowies has been part of the WfWetlands Programme since 2010 and is involved with the technical planning component for the Free State Province. Ms Lowies' signed EAP declaration and curriculum vitae (CV) can be found in **Appendix E**.

Specialist input is provided within this BAR by the provincial wetland specialist, however a specialist report does not accompany the report. The wetland specialist provides two deliverables, the first being a high-level strategy during Phase 1, and a detailed assessment of the wetland system and proposed interventions at Phase 2 based on the WET-Health methodology. The Phase 2 reports will be included as an appendix to the project specific rehabilitation plans.

Should any heritage resources be identified on site (refer to **Section 6.3**) a heritage specialist will be appointed to undertake the necessary permitting procedures in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA). This will not be required for the Free State Province.



2 LEGAL AND PLANNING CONTEXT

One of the core purposes of the WfWetlands Programme is the preservation of South Africa's valuable wetland systems through rehabilitation and restoration.

South Africa has rigorous and comprehensive environmental legislation aimed at preventing degradation of the environment, including damage to wetland systems. The following legislation is of relevance:

- The National Environmental Management Act, No. 107 of 1998 (NEMA), as amended
- The National Water Act, No.36 of 1998 (NWA), as amended
- The National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999 (NHRA)

Development proposals within or near any wetland system are subject to thorough bio-physical and socio-economic assessment as mandatory processes of related legislation. These processes are required to prevent degradation of the environment and to ensure sustainable and environmentally conscientious development.

Memorandum of Understanding for Working for Wetlands Programme

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been entered into between DEA, DAFF and DWS for the WfWetlands Programme. Through co-operative governance and partnerships, this MoU aims to streamline the authorisation processes required by the National Environmental Management Act (ANo.107 of 1998), the National Water Act (No. 36 of 1998), and the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) to facilitate efficient processing of applications for authorisation of wetland rehabilitation activities.

2.1 Relevant Legislation

There are a host of legal and policy documents and guidelines to consider when undertaking such a project.

Table 4 provides an overview of all the relevant legislation.

Table 4: Relevant Legislation, policies and guidelines considered in preparation of the Basic Assessment Report

Title of legislation, policy or guideline	Applicability to the project	Administering authority	Date
Legislation			
The Constitution of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996)	The WfWetlands Programme is a rehabilitation proposal that aims to protect and conserve South Africa's wetland ecosystems. As such the listed legislation, policies and guidelines are all of relevance to the project.	National Government	1996
National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998, as amended) (NEMA)		Department of Environmental Affairs	1998
The National Water Act (No. 36 of 1998, as amended)		Department of Water and Sanitation	1998
Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (No. 43 of 1983, as amended)		Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	1983
National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999)		National Heritage Resources Agency	1999
World Heritage Convention Act (No. 49 of 1999)		Department of Environmental Affairs	1999

Title of legislation, policy or guideline	Applicability to the project	Administering authority	Date
The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (No. 10 of 2004)		Department of Environmental Affairs	2004
National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (No. 57 2003)		Department of Environmental Affairs	2003
The Mountain Catchments Areas Act (No. 63 of 1970, as amended)		Department of Water and Sanitation	1970
National Guidelines			
EIA Guideline Series, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Guideline 7 – Public Participation in the EIA process, 2012 (DEA, October 2012)Guideline 9 – Guideline on Need and Desirability, 2010 (DEA, October 2014)	The WfWetlands Programme is a rehabilitation proposal that aims to protect and conserve South Africa’s wetland ecosystems. As such the listed legislation, policies and guidelines are all of relevance to the project.	Department of Environmental Affairs	2012 - 2014
International Conventions			
The following international conventions are of relevance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Ramsar ConventionConvention on Biological DiversityUnited Nations Conventions to Combat DesertificationNew Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)	The WfWetlands Programme is a rehabilitation proposal that aims to protect and conserve South Africa’s wetland ecosystems. As such the listed legislation, policies and guidelines are all of relevance to the project.		

2.1.1 National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998, as amended) (NEMA)

The implementation of various interventions aimed at wetland rehabilitation require Environmental Authorisation (EA) from the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in terms of Regulations pursuant to NEMA, as amended. It has been determined together with DEA that a **Basic Assessment Report (BAR)** will be prepared for each Province where work is proposed by the WfWetlands Programme. The EAs would be inclusive of all Listed Activities for these wetland systems and would essentially authorise any typical wetland rehabilitation activities required during the WfWetlands Programme implementation phase.

The intention is that **rehabilitation plans** would be prepared every year after sufficient field work has been undertaken in the wetlands that have an EA. These rehabilitation plans would be made available to registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) before being submitted to DEA for approval as a condition of the EA for each of the Provinces. The rehabilitation plans would describe the combination and number of interventions selected to meet the rehabilitation objectives for each Wetland Project, as well as an indication of the approximate location and approximate dimensions of each intervention. These interventions would vary but a booklet of typical hard engineering designs is included in **Appendix A** of this report. The rehabilitation plans would also provide site photographs of the general landscape as well as photographs of the proposed locations for each intervention.

The WfWetlands Programme is not a development proposal

It is important to note that the very objectives of the WfWetlands Programme are to **improve both environmental and social circumstances**. The WfWetlands Programme **gives effect to a range of policy objectives of environmental legislation, and also honours South Africa's commitments under several international agreements**, especially the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The legislation protecting the environment in South Africa was not written with the intention of preventing wetland rehabilitation efforts, but rather of curtailing development in sensitive environments. It is important to remember that **the WfWetlands Programme is not a development proposal**, and although this programme technically requires Environmental Authorisation in terms of Regulations pursuant to NEMA, such environmentally positive rehabilitation projects should not need to be assessed for negative environmental impact. Therefore, legislative processes aimed at preventing negative environmental impact through development are really not applicable to a project of this nature and the **project activities that trigger Listing Notices are only being undertaken to benefit the environment**.

2.1.1.1 Listed Activities

The following listed activities, as shown in **Table 5**, have been identified as being applicable to the proposed rehabilitation interventions:

Table 5: Listed activities triggered by the proposed Free State Projects

Listed activity	Description of project activity that triggers listed activity
Listing Notice 1 (GN R983, as amended)	
Activity 12: The development of- i. weirs, where the weir, including infrastructure and water surface area, exceeds 100 square metres in size; or ii. infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more; where such development occurs- a. within a watercourse; c. if no development setback exists, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse.	In order to achieve the objectives of wetland rehabilitation, changes must be made to artificial drainage lines or eroding water channels if the wetland systems are to be returned to their original statuses. The following may be necessary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction of concrete or gabion weirs within a watercourses (wetlands); • The formalisation of stream crossings to ensure that the integrity of wetland systems downstream and upstream of the crossings are protected from further degradation; and • Concrete check walls. •
Activity 19: The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 10 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 cubic metres from a watercourse	Work will be undertaken in wetlands/watercourses with a number of interventions requiring > 10m ³ of material to be excavated or backfilled as part of an intervention.
Activity 27: The clearance of an area of 1 hectares or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for—	The construction of rehabilitation interventions often requires limited vegetation clearance to accommodate the construction process.

Listed activity	Description of project activity that triggers listed activity
(i) the undertaking of a linear activity; or (ii) maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan	
Activity 48: The expansion of- i. infrastructure or structures where the physical footprint is expanded by 100 square metres or more; or ii. weirs, where the weir, including infrastructure and water surface area, is expanded by 100 square metres or more; where such expansion or expansion and related operation occurs- a. within a watercourse; c. if no development setback exists, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse.	In order to achieve the objectives of wetland rehabilitation, changes must be made to artificial drainage lines or eroding water channels if the wetland systems are to be returned to their original statuses. The following may be necessary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expansion of existing concrete or gabion weirs within watercourses (wetlands); • The expansion of stormwater management structures at watercourse crossings, •
Listing Notice 3 (GN R985, as amended)	
Activity 12: The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan. b. Free State (i) Within any critically endangered or endangered ecosystem listed in terms of section 52 of the NEMBA or prior to the publication of such a list, within an area that has been identified as critically endangered in the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment 2004 A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies; iii. On land, where, at the time of the coming into effect of this Notice or thereafter such land was zoned open space, conservation or had an equivalent zoning; or iv. Areas within a watercourse or wetland; or within 100 metres from the edge of a watercourse or wetland.	A number of the wetland systems are situated within the Eastern Free State Sandy Grassland vegetation unit which was classified as “Endangered” in the National Biodiversity Assessment 2011 and the NEM:BA National list of ecosystems that are threatened and in need of protection (GN 1002 of 2012). Work will also be undertaken in the Sterkfontein Dam Nature Reserve ² . Given the nature of the WfWetlands programme work will also be undertaken within or within 32m of a watercourse or wetland. Vegetation clearance is often required to accommodate the construction of a structure and more than 300 m ² of indigenous vegetation might need to be cleared for larger structures.
Activity 14: The development of- i. weirs, where the weir, including infrastructure and water surface area exceeds 10 square metres; or ii. infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more;	In order to achieve the objectives of wetland rehabilitation, changes must be made to artificial drainage lines or eroding water channels if the wetland systems are to be returned to their

² DEA, 2019: South Africa Protected Areas Database (SAPAD_OR_2018_Q4)

Listed activity	Description of project activity that triggers listed activity
<p>where such development occurs -</p> <p>a. within a watercourse;</p> <p>c. if no development setback has been adopted, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse;</p> <p>(b) In Free State:</p> <p>i. Outside urban areas;</p> <p>(aa). A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies;</p>	<p>original statuses. The following may be necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction of concrete or gabion weirs within watercourses (wetlands); • The formalisation of stream crossings to ensure that the integrity of wetland systems downstream and upstream of the crossings are protected from further degradation; and • Concrete check walls. <p>A number of the wetland systems are located within or within 5km of a protected area (Sterkfontein Dam Nature Reserve, Beauchef Abbey Nature Reserve and Maweni Mountain Park)³</p>
<p>Activity 23: The expansion of-</p> <p>i. weirs where the weir is expanded by 10 square meters or more in size;</p> <p>ii. infrastructure or structures where the physical footprint is expanded by 10 square metres or more;</p> <p>where such development occurs</p> <p>a. within a watercourse;</p> <p>c. if no development setback has been adopted, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse;</p> <p>(c) In Free State</p> <p>ii. Outside urban areas</p> <p>(aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies;</p> <p>(gg) Areas within 10 kilometres from national parks or world heritage sites or 5 kilometres from any other protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA or from the core area of a biosphere reserve.</p>	<p>In order to achieve the objectives of wetland rehabilitation, changes must be made to artificial drainage lines or eroding water channels if the wetland systems are to be returned to their original statuses. The following may be necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expansion of concrete or gabion weirs within watercourses (wetlands); • The formalisation of stream crossings to ensure that the integrity of wetland systems downstream and upstream of the crossings are protected from further degradation; and • The expansion of stormwater management structures at watercourse crossings <p>A number of the wetland systems are located within or within 5km of a protected area (Sterkfontein Dam Nature Reserve, Beauchef Abbey Nature Reserve and Maweni Mountain Park)⁴</p>

³ DEA, 2019: South Africa Protected Areas Database (SAPAD_OR_2018_Q4)

⁴ DEA, 2019: South Africa Protected Areas Database (SAPAD_OR_2018_Q4)

2.1.2 National Water Act (No. 36 of 1998, as amended) (NWA)

In terms of Section 39 of the NWA, a General Authorisation⁵ (GA) has been granted for certain activities that usually require a Water Use License; as long as these activities are undertaken for wetland rehabilitation. These activities include '*impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse*⁶' and '*altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse*⁷' where they are specifically undertaken for the purposes of rehabilitating⁶ a wetland for conservation purposes. The WfWetlands Programme is required to register the 'water use' in terms of the GA.

2.1.3 National Heritage Resource Act (No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA)

There have been artefacts/structures that have been identified on site but based on the preliminary design there won't be any impacts. Sections 27, 28 and 34 of the NHRA pertains to the protection of national and provincial heritage sites, protected areas, and structures older than 60 years, and prohibits any impacts to these resources. Section 38 of the NHRA requires that any person who intends to undertake a development as categorised in the NHRA must at the very earliest stages of initiating the development notify the responsible heritage resources authority, namely the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) or the relevant provincial heritage agency. These agencies would in turn indicate whether or not a full Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) would need to be undertaken. The requirements of the NHRA are tabulated below, as well as an indication of their applicability to this project (refer to Table 6).

Table 6: Applicability of NHRA requirements in terms of the proposed wetland rehabilitation activities

NHRA Section	Applicability to WfWetlands
Section 27: National heritage sites and provincial heritage sites	
(18) No person may destroy, damage, deface, excavate, alter, remove from its original position, subdivide or change the planning status of any heritage site without a permit issued by the heritage resources authority responsible for the protection of such site.	<p>The wetland systems proposed for rehabilitation in this Province are not located within any listed national or provincial heritage sites. <u>This Listing is therefore not considered to be applicable to the WfWetlands Maluti project.</u></p> <p>Should any wetland projects identified in the future have the potential to impact on any heritage sites, then the mandatory specialist assessment and permitting processes as prescribed by the authority will be undertaken prior to any rehabilitation work commencing.</p>
Section 28: Protected areas	
(3) No person may damage, disfigure, alter, subdivide or in any other way develop any part of a protected area unless, at least 60 days prior to the initiation of such changes, he or she has consulted the heritage resources authority which designated such area in accordance with a procedure prescribed by that authority.	<p>The wetland systems proposed for rehabilitation in this Province are not located within a protected area as defined by the Act. <u>This Listing is therefore not considered to be applicable to the WfWetlands Maluti project.</u></p> <p>Should any wetland projects identified in the future have the potential to impact on any protected areas as defined by the Act, then the mandatory specialist assessment and permitting processes as prescribed by the authority will be undertaken prior to any rehabilitation work commencing.</p>

⁵Government Notice No. 1198, 18 December 2009

⁶Section 21(c) of the NWA, No. 36 of 1998

⁷Section 21(i) of the NWA, No. 36 of 1998

NHRA Section	Applicability to WfWetlands
Section 34: Structures	
(1) No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority	No structures or parts of structures older than 60 years will be altered or demolished during the proposed wetland rehabilitation activities in this Province. <u>This Listing is therefore not considered to be applicable to the WfWetlands Maluti project.</u> However, should it be determined during the site-specific planning phase that the rehabilitation activities could potentially impact on structures older than 60 years, then the mandatory specialist assessment and permitting processes as prescribed by the authority will be undertaken prior to any rehabilitation work commencing.
Section 38(1): Development categories⁸	
(a) the construction of a road, wall, powerline, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300m in length;	Two small to medium diameter off-take pipelines are planned for an alternative cattle watering point and the rehydration of a desiccated wetland area respectively. The pipelines might exceed 300m in length depending on the final design parameters.
(b) the construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length;	The typical wetland rehabilitation interventions used by WfWetlands do not meet the requirements of the definition of a bridge as adopted by the South African Institution of Civil Engineering ^[1] . Furthermore, even though some of the typical rehabilitation interventions (namely gabion and concrete weirs, see Appendix A) extend across artificial water channels, none of these structures would exceed the threshold of 50m in length. <u>This Listing is therefore not considered to be applicable to the WfWetlands Programme.</u>
(c) any development or other activity which will change the character of a site - (i) exceeding 5 000m ² in extent; or (ii) involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof; or (iii) involving three or more erven or divisions thereof which have been consolidated within the past five years; or (iv) the costs of which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority;	The WfWetlands Programme aims toward restoration and involves wetland rehabilitation measures to restore natural wetland systems by addressing erosion problems and threats to ecological functioning (i.e. maintaining the natural character of the site). The Programme therefore does not constitute a development or an activity that will change the character of a site, but rather involves interventions to reclaim important natural systems at risk of being lost to anthropogenic impact. <u>This Listing is therefore not considered to be applicable to the WfWetlands Programme.</u>
(d) the re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000m ² in extent; or	The WfWetlands Programme does not require that any of the project areas be rezoned. <u>This Listing is therefore not considered to be applicable to the WfWetlands Programme.</u>

⁸ Note that a Section 38(1) development activity only requires the notification of the responsible heritage resources authority, furnishing it with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development. The development activity in itself is not listed i.e. no further action is required unless requested so by the responsible heritage resources authority within 14 days of receipt of the aforementioned information.

^[1] "A structure erected over a depression, river, watercourse, railway line, road or other obstacle for carrying motor, railway, pedestrian or other traffic or services and having a length of 6 m or more, measured between and abutment faces along the centre line of the road at girder-bed level, except that road-over-rail or rail-over-road structure are always classed as bridges." (COLTO, 1998).

NHRA Section	Applicability to WfWetlands
(e) any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority,	The WfWetlands Programme does not constitute any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA. It is a Government rehabilitation initiative. <u>This Listing is therefore not considered to be applicable to the WfWetlands Programme.</u>

It is important to note that even though the proposed WfWetlands Programme activities in this Province do not require any procedures as prescribed by the heritage authority in terms of the NHRA, there is always the possibility that new heritage resource discoveries could be made during the rehabilitation activities. Should any archaeological and/ or heritage resources be exposed during the implementation of the interventions, the Implementation Team will follow the process described in the Environmental Management Plan (Appendix D of the rehabilitation plans). This process includes ceasing the implementation of all interventions in the immediate areas, cordoning off the discovery, notifying the relevant Heritage Authorities of the discovery, and following their recommendations to investigate or secure the discovery.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Approach to the Project

In order to manage the **WfWetlands Programme**, wetlands have been grouped into “projects”, and each **Wetland Project** encompasses several smaller wetland systems which are each divided into smaller, more manageable and homogenous wetland units. These Wetland Projects may be located within one or more quaternary catchments within a Province.

Each Wetland Project is managed in three phases (as shown in the flow diagram in **Figure 3**) over a two-year cycle. The first two phases straddle the first year of the cycle and involve planning, identification, design and authorisation of interventions. The third phase is implementation, which takes place during the second year.

In order to undertake these three phases, a collaborative team has been established as follows. The **Programme Team** currently comprises two subdirectories: a) Implementation and After Care and b) Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. The Assistant Directors for Wetlands Programmes (ASDs)⁹ report to the Implementation and After Care Deputy Director and are responsible for the identification and implementation of projects in their regions. The Programme Team is further supported by a small team that fulfil various roles such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and training. Independent Design Engineers and Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs) are appointed to undertake the planning, design and authorisation components of the project. The project team is assisted by a number of wetland specialists who provide scientific insight into the operation of wetlands and bring expert and often local knowledge to the project teams. They are also assisted by the landowners and implementers who have valuable local knowledge of these wetlands.

The first phase is the identification of suitable wetlands which require intervention. The purpose of Phase 1 and the associated reporting is to identify:

- Priority catchments and associated wetlands/ sites within which rehabilitation work needs to be undertaken; and
- Key stakeholders who will provide meaningful input into the planning phases and wetland selection processes, and who will review and comment on the rehabilitation proposals.

Phase 1 commences with a catchment and wetland prioritisation process for every province. The Wetland Specialist responsible for a particular province undertakes a desktop study to determine the most suitable wetlands for the WfWetlands rehabilitation efforts. The involvement of Provincial Wetland Forums and other key stakeholders is a critical component of the wetland identification processes since these stakeholders are representative of diverse groups with shared interests (e.g. from government institutions to amateur ecological enthusiasts). This phase also involves initial communication with local land-owners and other Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to gauge the social benefits of the work. Aerial surveys of the areas in question may be undertaken, as well as limited fieldwork investigations or site visits to confirm the inclusion of certain wetland projects or units. Once wetlands have been prioritised and agreed on by the various parties, specific rehabilitation objectives are determined for each wetland following a rapid wetland assessment undertaken by the Wetland Specialist.

⁹ Also referred to as Provincial Coordinators (PCs).

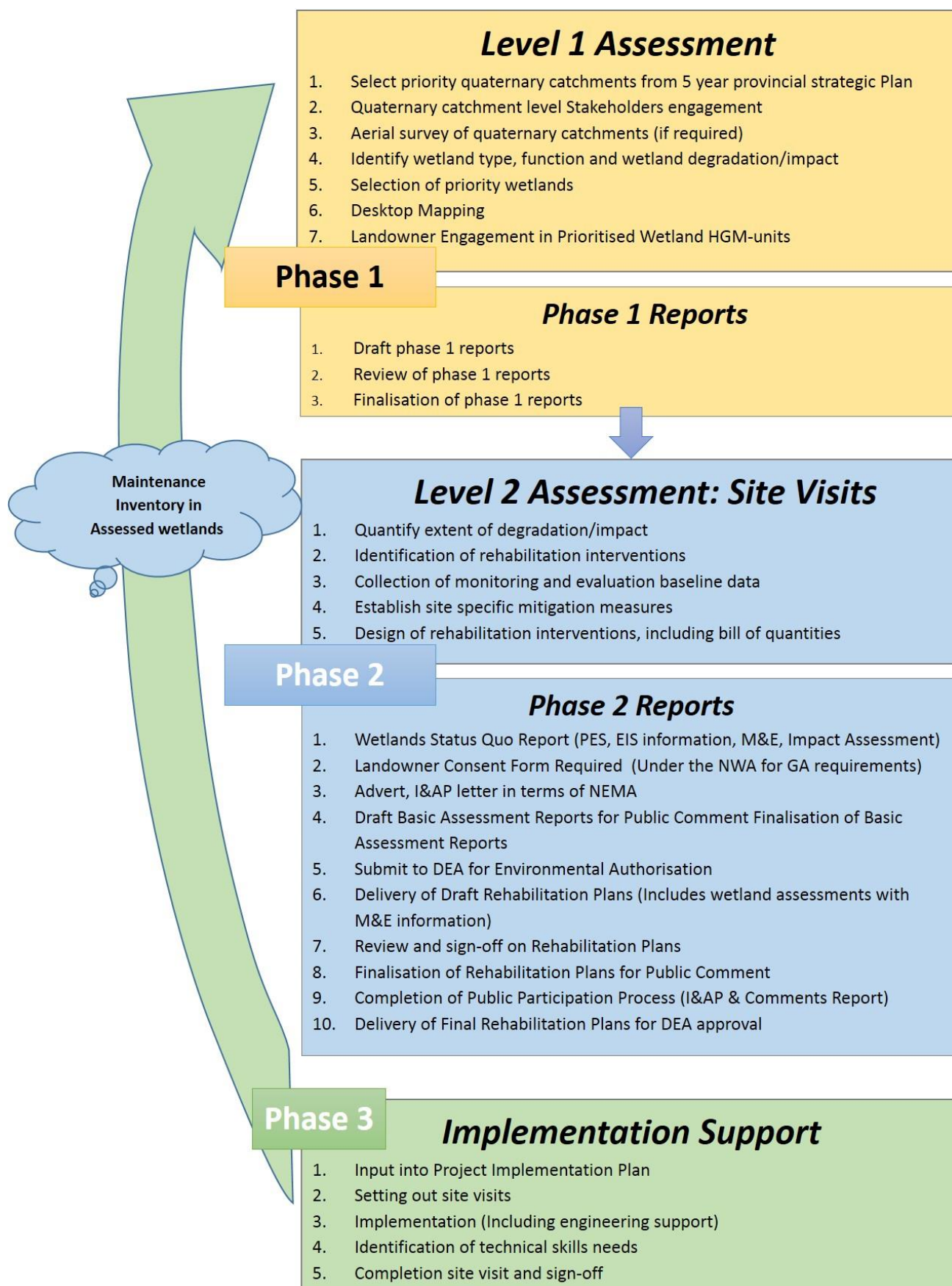


Figure 3: The Working for Wetlands planning process

Phase 2 requires site visits attended by the fieldwork team comprising a Wetland Specialist, a Design Engineer, an EAP, and an ASD. Other interested stakeholders or authorities, landowners and in some instances the Implementing Agents (IAs) may also attend the site visits. This allows for a highly collaborative approach, as options are discussed by experts from different scientific disciplines, as well as local inhabitants with deep anecdotal knowledge. While on site, rehabilitation opportunities are investigated. The details of the proposed interventions are discussed, some survey work is undertaken by the engineers, and Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates and digital photographs are taken for record purposes. Furthermore, appropriate dimensions of the locations are recorded in order to design and calculate quantities for the interventions. At the end of the site visit the rehabilitation objectives together with the location layout of the proposed interventions are agreed upon by the project team.

During Phase 2, monitoring systems are put in place to support the continuous evaluation of the interventions. The systems monitor both the environmental and social benefits of the interventions. As part of the Phase 2 site visit, a maintenance inventory of any existing interventions that are damaged and/or failing and thus requiring maintenance is compiled by the ASD, in consultation with the Design Engineer.

Based on certain criteria and data measurements (water volumes, flow rates, and soil types); the availability of materials such as rock; labour intensive targets; maintenance requirements etc., the interventions are then designed. Bills of quantity are calculated for the designs and cost estimates made. Maintenance requirements for existing interventions in the assessed wetlands are similarly detailed and the costs calculated. The Design Engineer also reviews and, if necessary, adjusts any previously planned interventions that are included into the historical rehabilitation plans.

Phase 2 also requires that Environmental Authorisations are obtained before work can commence in the wetlands during Phase 3. Provincial level BARs and rehabilitation plans are prepared for each Wetland Project. The rehabilitation plans include details of each intervention to be implemented, preliminary construction drawings and all necessary documentation required by applicable legislation. The rehabilitation plans are considered to be the primary working document for the implementation of the project via the construction/undertaking of interventions listed in the Plan.

Phase 3 commence upon approval of the BARs and wetland rehabilitation plans by DEA. The work detailed for the project would be implemented within a year followed by on-going monitoring. It is typically at this point in the process when the final construction drawings are issued to the Implementing Agents (IAs). IAs are currently employed in the WfWetlands Programme and are responsible for employing contractors and their teams (workers) to construct the interventions detailed in each of the rehabilitation plans. For all interventions that are based on engineering designs (typically hard engineered interventions), the Design Engineer is required to visit the site before construction commences to ensure that the original design is still appropriate in the dynamic and ever-changing wetland system. The Design Engineer assist the IAs in pegging and setting-out interventions. Phase 3 concludes with the construction of the interventions, but there is an on-going monitoring and auditing process that ensures the quality of interventions, the rectification of any problems, and the feedback to the design team regarding lessons learnt.

Landowner consent is an important component of each phase in each Wetland Project. The flow diagram, **Figure 3**, demonstrates the point at which various consent forms must be approved via signature from the directly affected landowner. The ASDs are responsible for undertaking the necessary landowner engagement and for ensuring that the requisite landowner consent forms required as part of Phase 1 and 2 of this project are signed. Without these signed consent forms the WfWetlands Programme will not be able to implement rehabilitation interventions on the affected property.

3.2 Impact Assessment Methodology

This section outlines the proposed method for assessing the significance of the potential environmental impacts during the construction and operational phase.

For each impact, the **EXTENT** (spatial scale), **MAGNITUDE** and **DURATION** (time scale) is described. These criteria were used to ascertain the **SIGNIFICANCE** of the impact, firstly in the case of no mitigation and then with the most effective mitigation measure(s) in place. The mitigation described in the EIR represents the full range of plausible and pragmatic measures but does not necessarily imply that they will be implemented. The tables on the following pages show the scale used to assess these variables and defines each of the rating categories.

Table 6: Assessment criteria for the evaluation of impacts

Criteria	Category	Description
Spatial influence of impact	Regional	Beyond a 10 km radius of the candidate site.
	Local	Between 100m and 10 km radius of the candidate site.
	Site specific	On site or within 100 m of the candidate site.
Magnitude of impact (at the indicated spatial scale)	High	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes are <i>severely</i> altered
	Medium	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes are <i>notably</i> altered
	Low	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes are <i>slightly</i> altered
	Very Low	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes are <i>negligibly</i> altered
	Zero	Natural and/ or social functions and/ or processes remain <i>unaltered</i>
Duration of impact (temporal)	Construction period	From commencement up to 2 years after construction
	Short Term	From 2 to 5 years after construction
	Medium Term	From 5 to 15 years after construction
	Long Term	More than 15 years after construction

The **SIGNIFICANCE** of an impact is derived by taking into account the temporal and spatial scales and magnitude. The means of arriving at the different significance ratings is explained in **Table 7**.

Table 7: Definition of significance ratings

Significance ratings	Level of criteria required
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High magnitude with a regional extent and long-term duration High magnitude with either a regional extent and medium-term duration or a local extent and long-term duration Medium magnitude with a regional extent and long-term duration
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High magnitude with a local extent and medium-term duration High magnitude with a regional extent and construction period or a site-specific extent and long-term duration High magnitude with either a local extent and construction period duration or a site-specific extent and medium-term duration Medium magnitude with any combination of extent and duration except site specific and construction period or regional and long term Low magnitude with a regional extent and long-term duration
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High magnitude with a site-specific extent and construction period duration Medium magnitude with a site-specific extent and construction period duration Low magnitude with any combination of extent and duration except site specific and construction period or regional and long term Very low magnitude with a regional extent and long-term duration
Very low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low magnitude with a site-specific extent and construction period duration Very low magnitude with any combination of extent and construction or short-term duration
Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero magnitude with any combination of extent and duration

Once the significance of an impact has been determined, the **PROBABILITY** of this impact occurring as well as the **CONFIDENCE** in the assessment of the impact, was determined using the rating systems outlined in **Table 8** and **Table 9**, respectively. It is important to note that the significance of an impact should always be considered in concert with the probability of that impact occurring. Lastly, the **REVERSIBILITY** of the impact is estimated using the rating system outlined in **Table 10**.

Table 8: Definition of probability ratings

Probability ratings	Criteria
Definite	Estimated greater than 95 % chance of the impact occurring.
Probable	Estimated 5 to 95 % chance of the impact occurring.
Unlikely	Estimated less than 5 % chance of the impact occurring.

Table 9: Definition of confidence ratings

Confidence ratings	Criteria
Certain	Wealth of information on and sound understanding of the environmental factors potentially influencing the impact.
Sure	Reasonable amount of useful information on and relatively sound understanding of the environmental factors potentially influencing the impact.
Unsure	Limited useful information on and understanding of the environmental factors potentially influencing this impact.

Table 10: Definition of reversibility ratings

Reversibility ratings	Criteria
Irreversible	The activity will lead to an impact that is in all practical terms permanent.
Reversible	The impact is reversible within 2 years after the cause or stress is removed.

3.3 Assumptions and Limitations

3.3.1 Assumptions

In undertaking this investigation and compiling the BAR, the following has been assumed:

- The strategic level investigations undertaken during Phase 1 are acceptable and robust.
- The information provided by the applicant and wetland specialists is accurate.
- The scope of this investigation is limited to assessing the over-all environmental impacts that have been identified over time since the WWetlands Programme commenced in the early 2000s. Additional site-specific impacts/ mitigation measures, focusing on the Wetland Unit and proposed intervention, will only be identified during the planning phase and will be included in the applicable rehabilitation plan.

3.3.2 Gaps in knowledge

The planning for the proposed rehabilitation projects is at a wetland system level and the specific details of the interventions that would be required to implement rehabilitation interventions are not available at this stage of the Basic Assessment process. The intention is that rehabilitation plans would be prepared every year after sufficient field work has been undertaken in the wetlands that have an EA. These rehabilitation plans would be made available to registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) before being submitted to DEA for approval as a condition of the EA for each of the Provinces. The rehabilitation plans would describe the combination and number of interventions selected to meet the rehabilitation objectives for each Wetland Project, as well as an indication of the approximate location and approximate dimensions of each intervention.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Public Participation Process

South African legislation and guidelines have formalised stakeholder engagement in the BAR process and refer to it as the Public Participation Process (PPP). PPP forms an integral component of the environmental impact assessment process and enables I&APs to identify issues, concerns, and suggestion through the review of documents/ reports at various stages throughout the BAR process as described in Chapter 6 of GN R982, as amended. For more detail on the PPP undertaken to date (e.g. copies of advertisements, poster locations, comments received, etc.), please refer to **Appendix B**.

Table 11: Public Participation Process

Activity	Description
Pre-application	
Advertisements	Adverts were placed in the national newspapers: <i>Die Rapport</i> (in Afrikaans) and <i>Sunday Times</i> (in English) on 03 February 2019 to allow I&APs the opportunity to register their interest in the project.
Site Posters	Posters, notifying I&APs of the proposed rehabilitation projects, were placed on the boundary fences of the properties and at local municipal offices.
Register of I&APs	The existing provincial I&AP database (from previous planning cycles) has been updated with information from new I&APs responding to advertisements and site notices throughout the application process. Proactive identification of I&APs, municipal representatives, organs of state, competent authorities and surrounding landowners were also undertaken to update the database specific to the new planning year.
Basic Assessment Process	
Availability of BAR for public comment	The BARs were made available for a 30-day comment period from 11 February 2019 to 14 March 2019 on Aurecon's website: http://aurecongroup.com/en/public-participation.aspx . All competent authorities and landowners also received an electronic copy (i.e. CD) of the BAR to review and comment on. Registered I&APs were able to contact Mr Simamkele Ntsengwane if they had problems accessing the documents. Mr Simamkele Ntsengwane was contacted at Tel: 021 526 9560 and/or Email: Simamkele.Ntsengwane@aurecongroup.com .
Written Notification	Written notification was given on 11 February 2019 to all registered I&APs regarding the availability of the BAR. Written notification of the availability of the rehabilitation plans will be provided to all registered I&APs.
Register of I&APs	The register for I&APs will continue to be updated during the Basic Assessment Process.
Comments	<u>A total of 6 comments were received during the public comment period. All comments have been included in a Comments and Response Report (CRR) and is available in Annexure B, with copies of the original comments received. Registered I&APs who submitted comments received a copy of the CRR.</u>

The updated BAR has been submitted to DEA for their decision-making process. Once DEA has made their decision on the proposed projects, all registered I&APs will be notified of the outcome of the decision within fourteen (14) calendar days of the decision and the right to appeal.

5 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

5.1 Need and Desirability: National Importance of the WfWetlands Programme

South Africa is a dry country but is endowed with exceptionally rich biodiversity. The nation has a pressing reason to value the water-related services that wetlands provide. It is estimated that by 2025, South Africa will be one of fourteen African countries classified as “*subject to water scarcity*” (UNESCO, 2000). The conservation of wetlands is fundamental to the sustainable management of water quality and quantity, and wetland rehabilitation is therefore essential to conserving water resources in South Africa.

The guiding principles of the NWA recognise the need to protect water resources. In responding to the challenge of stemming the loss of wetlands and maintaining and enhancing the benefits they provide, government has recognised that, in order to be truly effective, strategies for wetland conservation need to include a combination of proactive measures for maintaining healthy wetlands, together with interventions for rehabilitating those that have been degraded. These objectives are currently being expressed in a coordinated and innovative way through the WfWetlands Programme.

Working for Wetlands pursues its mandate of wetland protection, wise use and rehabilitation in a manner that maximises employment creation, supports small emerging businesses, and transfers skills amongst **vulnerable** and **marginalised** groups. In the 15 years since 2004, the WfWetlands Programme has invested just under R1.1 billion in wetland rehabilitation and has been involved in over 1 500 wetlands, thereby improving or securing the health of over 70 000 hectares of wetland environment. The WfWetlands Programme has a current budget of just over R 130 million, of which approximately 35% is allocated directly to paying wages. Being part of the EPWP, the WfWetlands Programme has created more than 27 000 jobs and over 3.2 million person-days of paid work. The local teams are made up of a minimum of 55% women, 65% youth and 2% disabled persons.

Wetlands are not easy ecosystems to map at a broad scale as they are numerous, often small and difficult to recognise and delineate on remotely sensed imagery such as satellite photos. The WfWetlands Programme houses the National Wetlands Inventory Project (NWI) which aims to provide clarity on the extent, distribution and condition of South Africa's wetlands. The project clarifies how many and which rivers and wetlands have to be maintained in a natural condition to sustain economic and social development, while still conserving South Africa's freshwater biodiversity.

The National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (NFEPA)¹⁰ has used the NWI data to produce the most comprehensive national wetland map to date, called the NFEPA Atlas. This atlas enables the planning of wetland rehabilitation on a catchment scale.

Other activities that form part of the WfWetlands Programme include:

- Raising awareness of wetlands among workers, landowners and the general public; and
- Providing adult basic education and training, and technical skills transfer (in line with the emphasis of the EPWP on training, the WfWetlands Programme has provided 250 000 days of training in vocation and life skills).

¹⁰ Nel, J. L., A. Driver, W. Strydom, A. Maherry, C. Petersen, D. J. Roux, S. Nienaber, H. van Deventer, L. B. Smith-Adao, and L. Hill. 2011. Atlas of freshwater ecosystem priority areas in South Africa: maps to support sustainable development of water resources. Water Research Commission, Pretoria, South Africa.

5.2 Activities to be undertaken

The successful rehabilitation of a wetland requires that the cause of damage or degradation is addressed, and that the natural flow patterns of the wetland system are re-established (flow is encouraged to disperse rather than to concentrate). Approximately 800 interventions are implemented every year in the WfWetlands Programme. Examples of typical interventions are provided in detail in **Appendix A**. The following points provide a summary of the objectives, and activities.

The key objectives of implementing interventions include:

- Restoration of hydrological integrity (e.g. raising the general water table or redistributing the water across the wetland area);
- Recreation of wetland habitat towards the conservation of biodiversity; and
- Job creation and social upliftment.

Typical activities undertaken within the projects include:

- Plugging artificial drainage channels created by development or historical agricultural practices to drain wetland areas for other land use purposes;
- Constructing structures (gabions, berms, weirs) to divert or redistribute water to more natural flow paths, or to prevent erosion by unnatural flow rates that have resulted from unsustainable land use practices or development; and
- Removing invasive alien or undesirable plant species from wetlands and their immediate catchments (in conjunction with the Working for Water initiative).

Methods of wetland rehabilitation may include hard engineering interventions (see Section 5.3 and **Appendix A**) such as:

- Earth berms or gabion systems to block artificial channels that drain water from or divert polluted water to the wetland;
- Concrete and gabion weirs to act as settling ponds, to reduce flow velocity or to re-disperse water across former wetland areas thereby re-establishing natural flow paths;
- Earth or gabion structure plugs to raise channel floors and reduce water velocity;
- Concrete or gabion structures to stabilise head-cut or other erosion and prevent gullies;
- Concrete and/or reno mattress strips as road crossings to address channels and erosion in wetlands from vehicles; and
- Gabion structures (mattresses, blankets or baskets) to provide a platform for the growth of desired wetland vegetation.

Soft engineering interventions (see Section 5.3 and **Appendix A**) also offer successful rehabilitation methods, and the following are often used together with the hard engineering interventions:

- The use of biodegradable or natural soil retention systems such as eco-logs, MacMat-R plant plugs, grass or hay bales, and brush-packing techniques;
- The re-vegetation of stabilised areas with appropriate wetland and riparian plant species;
- Alien invasive plant clearing, which is an important part of wetland rehabilitation (this is supported by the Working for Water Programme).
- The fencing off of sensitive areas within the wetland to keep grazers out and to allow for the re-establishment of vegetation;
- In some instances, the use of appropriate fire management and burning regimes. The removal of undesirable plant and animal species; and

- In some wetlands, it may be possible to involve the community to develop a management plan for wise use within a wetland. This can involve capacity building through educating and training the community members who would monitor the progress. A plan could involve measures such as rotational grazing with long term benefits for rangeland quality.

5.3 Alternatives

“Alternatives”, in relation to a proposed activity, refers to different means of meeting the general purpose and requirements of the activity, which may include alternatives to—

- a) the property on which or location where it is proposed to undertake the activity;
- b) the type of activity to be undertaken;
- c) the design or layout of the activity;
- d) the technology to be used in the activity;
- e) the operational aspects of the activity; and
- f) the option of not implementing the activity.

Due to the WfWetlands Programme not being a development proposal, the use of alternatives as normally applied in terms of the NEMA is not appropriate. As explained earlier in Chapter 3, a comprehensive phased approach is applied each year to identify wetlands with a high rehabilitation priority (Phase 1), rehabilitation objectives for each wetland unit and the most appropriate interventions to achieve these objectives (Phase 2). During Phase 3, these interventions are again scrutinised during setting-out to take into account changes that have occurred within the landscape since the original planning took place. Should any significant changes be required to the intervention, the Project Team will be informed by the engineer to ensure that the proposed design changes would not compromise the rehabilitation objectives identified for the specific wetland. For more information on how alternatives are being considered for the WfWetlands Programme, please refer to **Table 12**.

Table 12: Approach to alternatives for the WfWetlands Programme

Alternative	Applicability to WfWetlands
Site Alternatives	<p>All quaternary catchments within the province are considered for possible wetland rehabilitation work in the earlier stages of the WfWetlands Programme (Phase 1 catchment and wetland prioritisation processes), and only those that meet the prioritisation criteria are selected for the current planning cycle. Wetlands within the selected Quaternary Catchments undergo a similar prioritisation process, which includes a consultation component with the relevant stakeholders and interest groups, and the Wetland Projects presented in this report are those that are finally selected. Wetland Units within each Wetland Project are investigated by the Wetland Specialist and these are selected based on their suitability in terms of the overall WfWetlands Programme objectives¹¹. The earlier site selection processes to determine feasible and reasonable Wetland Projects are described in detail in Section 3.1.</p> <p>All wetland site alternatives have therefore already been considered in the earlier phases of the WfWetlands Programme, and only the preferred wetland systems (site locations) are presented here. For the purpose of this report, no feasible or reasonable wetland site alternatives exist.</p>
Other Alternatives	<p>One form of alternative considered during the WfWetlands Programme is a design alternative, where all possible intervention options that may achieve a desired rehabilitation objective are contemplated during the Phase 2 field work component of a particular Wetland Unit. The design team comprising a Wetland Specialist, a Design Engineer, an EAP, and an ASD (and in some instances other interested stakeholders such as authorities and/or landowners who may attend the site visit) will discuss and select the most appropriate intervention option for a particular problem. Each of the intervention options selected, as well as the determination of</p>

¹¹ Wetland conservation and poverty reduction through job creation and skills development amongst vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Alternative	Applicability to WfWetlands
	<p>the most appropriate location for these within the Wetland Unit are therefore based on expert opinion and are thus considered to be the most suitable and effective interventions to achieve the rehabilitation objectives for the wetland.</p> <p>Decisions regarding the choice of interventions will only be made if EA is granted for a Wetland Project. It is therefore not possible to present the preferred interventions for each Wetland Project in this report. Rather all possible types of interventions are presented as the preferred design alternative and a booklet of potential intervention designs that are appropriate to the WfWetlands Programme is presented in Appendix A The intention is that rehabilitation plans would be prepared on an annual basis and submitted to DEA for approval as a condition of the EA. The rehabilitation plans would describe the combination and number of interventions selected from this booklet for each Wetland Project.</p>
No-Go Alternative	<p>If the no-go alternative is pursued, the prioritised wetlands will continue to deteriorate, resulting in an overall negative impact on aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, habitats and species of conservation significance. In the absence of rehabilitation, the important role of these wetlands in flood attenuation, nutrient retention and water quality amelioration, as well as ecological services will not be realised. In many instances the current degradation results in severe erosion, which may impact on the agricultural or land use potential of adjacent sites, as well as result in sedimentation and eutrophication impacts for downstream users.</p>

6 BASELINE DESCRIPTION OF FREE STATE PROJECTS

6.1 Free State Project: Background

Within the Free State region, wetlands have been subjected to high levels of modification and destruction (Kotze et al. 1995; Macfarlane et al. 2012). The factors contributing towards the degradation of the systems vary greatly, but the predominant impacts include urbanisation, abstraction, dams, cultivation, drainage and over-grazing (Macfarlane et al. 2012). The loss of wetland habitat within Free State is considered to be of concern due to the value of wetlands in terms of contributions to water quantity and quality, supporting unique biological diversity and other ecosystem services (Kotze et al. 2007). Taking into consideration the above-mentioned degradation of wetland ecosystems, it is important that the proposed development attempts to maintain the current levels of ecosystem service delivery, and where possible, enhance the systems' ability to supply these benefits and services.

The WfWetlands programme has done rehabilitation work in the Free State in previous years focusing on Golden Gate, Seekoeivlei and Upper Wilge. The Maluti wetland rehabilitation project is the focus of this report, it is located in the C81C and C81D quaternary catchments near the towns of Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismith in the Free State Province. The focus of the wetland rehabilitation has been the stabilisation of active erosion and the deactivation of drainage canals diverting water out of the identified wetland systems

6.2 Biophysical Environment

The following new wetland systems were identified in the Free State Province (also see **Table 1**) and will be the focus of this Basic Assessment Process. The tables below provide an overview of the biophysical environment of the wetland systems.

- Quaternary catchment C81C:
 - Wattle Grove -01
 - Wattle Grove -02
 - Wattle Grove -03
 - Wattle Grove -04
 - Helpmekaar- 01
 - Aneks-01
- Quaternary catchment C81D:
 - Boschkloof-01
 - Boschkloof-02
 - Statherick-01
 - Statherick-02
 - Graigielea - 01
 - Helmanshoek-01
 - Helmanshoek-02
 - Elizabeth-01
 - Elizabeth-02
 - Elizabeth - 03

Please refer to **Appendix C** for a selection of maps that show the location and biodiversity sensitivity of the above listed wetland systems.

6.2.1 Quaternary catchment C81C and associated wetland systems

Quaternary Catchment C81C	
General description	<p>Quaternary catchment C81C has a catchment size of 25 000 ha and is situated along the northern boundary of KwaZulu Natal and the eastern boundary of the Sterkfontein Dam. The northern parts of the Drakensberg Mountain Range are situated along the southern boundary of the catchment.</p> <p>The catchment drains into two rivers namely the Modderspruit River and the Fraserspruit River with their confluence in close proximity to the northern boundary of the catchment. Drainage continues in a northern direction (Nuwejaarspruit), changing in a western direction where the Nuwejaarspruit joins the Wilge River.</p>
Climate	<p>The local climate is defined by a mean annual precipitation (MAP) of 730mm and a mean annual A-pan evapotranspiration (PET) of 1320mm¹². Therefore, the wetland has a moderately sensitivity to hydrological impacts, as indicated by a MAP to PET ration of 0.55 (Macfarlane <i>et al.</i> 2007).</p>
Geology and topography	<p>The C81C catchment is dominated by mudstone (Tarkastad Supergroup and Beaufort Group) with intermittent arenite outcrops (Molteno and Clarens Formations, Karoo Supergroup) from the Mesozoic Era.</p> <p>Soils in the catchment are dominated by red, yellow and greyish undifferentiated structureless soils with restricted depth, low to medium base status and high erosion potential. Based on WRC 2005 data, the sediment yield for catchment C81C is 20 478 tonnes per annum.</p> <p>In terms of topography the catchment is dominated by undulating hills (average 1600 above mean sea level (MSL) and elevated outcrops of erosion resistant arenite layers. The most dominant topographical feature is the Kerkenberg Mountain with a maximum elevation of 2000m above MSL.</p>
Terrestrial ecology	<p>Habitat classification and vegetation:</p> <p>The northern parts of the catchment consist predominantly of agricultural lands (mostly grain production) and grazing fields and are as such classified as Ecological Support Areas (ESA). The classification transitions to Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA) in the south-eastern portion of the catchment.</p> <p>The northern parts catchment is dominated (+/- 60% coverage) by the Eastern Free State Sandy Grassland vegetation unit which is categorised as “endangered” according to the 2011 NBA and NEM:BA National list of ecosystems that are threatened and in need of protection (GN 1002 of 2012). The vegetation unit is dominated by <i>Eragrostis curvula</i>, <i>Tristachya leucothrix</i> and <i>Themeda triandra</i> with various herb species (Asteraceae family) found interspersed within the grassland. The grassland has a patchy appearance due to the wide range of grazing and fire regimes (Mucina and Rutherford, 2006).¹³</p> <p>The south and southwestern parts of the catchment are dominated by the Low Escarpment Moist Grassland (Least Threatened) which is typically associated with the slopes of the Drakensberg Mountain Range at an altitude of 1300 – 2000 MSL. The vegetation unit consists of tall, closed grassland with <i>Hyparrhenia hirta</i> and <i>Themeda triandra</i>.</p> <p>The Basotho Montane Shrubland vegetation unit (Vulnerable) can also be found in this catchment and is mostly associated with foothills and slopes of the Drakensberg Mountain Range. In terms of the catchment this vegetation unit mostly occurs on the elevated arenite outcrops discussed earlier.</p> <p>Fauna:</p>

¹² Water Resources of South Africa, 2012 (WR2012) (WRC Project No. K5/2143/1). Uppervaal Quat Info WMA 8_July 2015

¹³ Mucina, L. & Rutherford, M.C. (eds), The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland: 348-437. SANBI, Pretoria. (Mucina et al. 2006)

	<p>The Sterkfontein Dam, which borders the C81C catchment to the west, is an Important Bird Area (IBA) hosting at least 237 bird species of terrestrial species rather than waterbirds are of interest (BirdLife South Africa, 2015)¹⁴. Based on a IUCN database area searches the following mammal and bird species can be found in the study area:</p> <p>Mammals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern Mountain Reedbuck (<i>Redunca fulvorufula</i>) – Endangered (Regional Red List status) White-tailed mouse (<i>Mystromys albicaudatus</i>) - Endangered <p>Birds¹⁵:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grey Crowned-crane (<i>Balearica regulorum</i>) – Endangered Black Harrier (<i>Circus maurus</i>) – Endangered: frequents wetland habitats Cape vulture (<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>) – Endangered: associated with high altitude cliffs, unlikely to occur in wetlands Egyptian Vulture (<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>) – Endangered: associated with high altitude cliffs, unlikely to occur in wetlands White-headed Vulture (<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>) – Critically endangered: associated with high altitude cliffs, unlikely to occur in wetlands White-backed Vulture (<i>Gyps africanus</i>) – Critically endangered: associated with open wooded savanna, particularly areas of <i>Acacia</i> and requires tall trees for nesting <p>White-winged Flufftail (<i>Sarothrura ayresi</i>) – Critically endangered: found in flooded peat-based habitats (mostly at 1,100-1,900 m MSL) where vegetation is dense and dominated by sedges (<i>Carex</i> species), although it is occasionally found in pure stands of Bulrush and reeds (Davies <i>et al.</i> 2015)¹⁶</p>
Aquatic ecology	<p>As mentioned the C81C catchment is drained by the Modderspruit and Fraserspruit rivers which are both free flowing according to the NFEPA 2011 dataset. Both rivers have a PES score (Kleynhans, 1999)¹⁷ of “C” i.e. moderately modified and both their catchments are classified as FEPAs (fish sanctuaries for <i>Barbus anoplus</i> (Chubbyhead Barb – Least Concern))</p> <p>In terms of wetland ecosystem type, the central and northern parts of the C81C catchment are dominated by the Mesic Highveld Grassland Group 1 while the southern part (at higher elevation) is dominated by the Sub-Escarpment Grassland Group 3.</p>
Land use	<p>Land use within this catchment includes agriculture (cultivation and livestock grazing), biodiversity conservation, and urban development.</p>
Wattle Grove 01 Wetland System	
Location	<p>The wetland is located within quaternary catchment C81C, in the eastern Free State near the towns of Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismit in the Free State province.</p>
District and Local municipality	<p>Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.</p>
Reason for selection	<p>The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The</p>

¹⁴ <http://www.birdlife.org.za/conservation/important-bird-areas/iba-directory/item/187-sa046-sterkfontein-dam-nature-reserve>. Accessed 22/01/2019

¹⁵ Information sourced from the IUCN Redlist website (<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/>)

¹⁶ Davies, G. B. P.; Smit-Robinson, H. A.; Drummond, I. M. M.; Gardner, B.; Rautenbach, S.; van Stuyvenberg, D.; Natrass, C.; Pretorius, M.; Pietersen, D. W.; Symes, C. T. 2015. Recent records of the White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi* (Aves, Sarothruridae) in South Africa, including details of a survey of high-altitude wetlands in 2013-2014. Durban Natural Science Museum Novitates 37: 62-75.

¹⁷ C.J. Kleynhans 1999. A procedure for the determination of the ecological reserve for the purposes of the national water balance model for South African River. Institute of Water Quality Studies, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Pretoria.

	increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.
Wetland type and size¹⁸	Hillslope Seep 7.58ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	The wetland is located in a terrestrial ESA1 (Free State Biodiversity Plan, 2015)
Land use	Land use is predominantly agricultural with alternating areas of grazing and crop (grain) production.
Wetland problems	The seep's main hydrological driver is the presence of a number of springs or eyes along the hillslope. The farmer has attempted to convert some portions of the seep into surface water areas for cattle to drink from in the form of small earthen dams. The poorly structured soil used for the dam embankments failed in several areas leading to fairly significant gully formation. Various cattle paths have also resulted in preferential flow path within the seep, increasing the risk of concentrated flow and resultant erosion.
Wattle Grove 02 Wetland System	
Location	The wetland is located within quaternary catchment C81C, in the Eastern Free State near the towns of Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismith in the Free State province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.
Wetland type and size¹⁹	Floodplain 87.12ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	The wetland is located in a terrestrial ESA1 (Free State Biodiversity Plan, 2015)
Land use	The land is agricultural land and the wetland areas adjacent to the channel are currently utilised as a source of hay by the land owner.
Wetland problems	The main wetland problem is related to the incision of the main channel within the floodplain. The incised channel results in less frequent, if any, bank overtopping during high flow conditions which in turn leads to the desiccation of the adjacent floodplain wetland features such as abandoned channels and oxbow lakes which are dependent on periodic flooding. It was reported by the landowner that the construction of a dam upstream has exacerbated the incision of the channel. This can be attributed to a decrease in downstream sediment load caused by the instream dam.

¹⁸ The approximate size of each wetland system is provided as the intention is to positively influence the entire area through the implementation of smaller interventions. Since the specific interventions required to address specific problems are only determined during Phase 2 site visits, the actual intervention footprints will only be available for inclusion in the rehabilitation plans which will also be made available to registered I&APs for review before being submitted to DEA for approval.

¹⁹ The approximate size of each wetland system is provided as the intention is to positively influence the entire area through the implementation of smaller interventions. Since the specific interventions required to address specific problems are only determined during Phase 2 site visits, the actual intervention footprints will only be available for inclusion in the rehabilitation plans which will also be made available to registered I&APs for review before being submitted to DEA for approval.

Wattle Grove 03 Wetland System	
Location	The wetland is located within quaternary catchment C81C, in the eastern Free State near the towns of Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismith in the Free State province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.
Wetland type and size²⁰	Depression 11.05ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	The wetland is located within and ESA1, according to the Free State Biodiversity plan (2015)
Land use	The wetland and surrounding area is primarily used for grazing (cattle). There are also a number of homesteads to the southwest of the wetland. A dirt road passes the wetland to the north.
Wetland problems	The wetland is well-vegetated with mostly indigenous grass species and does not show evidence of notable erosion (which can predominantly be attributed to the nature of the wetland, i.e. an endorheic depression wetland without channelled inflow). The main wetland problem is the presence of alien invasive species along the west and north-eastern boundaries of the wetland. Given that the wetland relies strongly on interflow and groundwater recharge (due to a lack of a larger catchment contributing surface flows) the alien invasive species in close proximity to the pan are potentially of significance and their removal will aid in the quantity of groundwater recharge available to the system.
Wattle Grove 04 Wetland System	
Location	The wetland is located within DWS quaternary catchment C13C, in the north-eastern Free State near the towns of Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismith in the Free State province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.
Wetland type and size²¹	Depression 3.89ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	The north-eastern half of the depression is located within a CBA1 with the remainder falling in an ESA1 (Free State Biodiversity Plan, 2015)

²⁰ The approximate size of each wetland system is provided as the intention is to positively influence the entire area through the implementation of smaller interventions. Since the specific interventions required to address specific problems are only determined during Phase 2 site visits, the actual intervention footprints will only be available for inclusion in the rehabilitation plans which will also be made available to registered I&APs for review before being submitted to DEA for approval.

²¹ The approximate size of each wetland system is provided as the intention is to positively influence the entire area through the implementation of smaller interventions. Since the specific interventions required to address specific problems are only determined during Phase 2 site visits, the actual intervention footprints will only be available for inclusion in the rehabilitation plans which will also be made available to registered I&APs for review before being submitted to DEA for approval.

Land use	The wetland and surrounding area is primarily used for grazing (cattle). Dirt roads road pass the wetland to the west and north. .
Wetland problems	<p>The wetland is well-vegetated with mostly indigenous grass species and does not show evidence of notable erosion (which can predominantly be attributed to the nature of the wetland, i.e. an endorheic depression wetland without channelled inflow). The main wetland problem is the presence of alien invasive species along the west and north-eastern boundaries of the wetland. Given that the wetland relies strongly on interflow and groundwater recharge (due to a lack of a larger catchment contributing surface flows) the alien invasive species in close proximity to the pan are potentially of significance and their removal will aid in the quantity of groundwater recharge available to the system</p> <p>In addition to the presence of alien invasive species, there is also a significant and actively eroding gully bordering the northern boundary of the wetland. This leads to excessive sedimentation where flow from the gully enters the wetland.</p>
Helpmekaar 01 Wetland System	
Location	The wetland is located within quaternary catchment C81C, in the Eastern Free State near the towns of Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismith in the Free State province
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.
Wetland type and size	Hillslope seep 0.17ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	The wetland falls in an ESA1 (Free State Biodiversity Plan, 2015).
Land use	The wetland and surrounding area is primarily used for grazing (cattle) and cultivation of feedstock.
Wetland problems	The wetland is a minor seep draining into a large floodplain system. A combination of trampling by cattle, preferential overland flow and poor soil structure resulted in the majority of the seep eroding to form a large gully. While little can be done to reinstate the seep's functioning, it is critical in halting erosion before it impacts significantly on the floodplain wetland system.
Helpmekaar 02 Wetland system	
Location	The wetland is located within quaternary catchment C81C, in the Eastern Free State near the towns of Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismith in the Free State province
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	This wetland provides valuable habitat for wetland-dependant species, a number of which are threatened/Red Data Listed species of high conservation significance. Conservation of wetlands inherently provide protection for threatened vegetation types. Wetlands provide a range of important wetland ecosystem services, from sediment trapping and erosion control to stream flow regulation and water purification which is relevant to the downstream areas
Wetland type and size	Hillslope seep 0.99 ha

Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	The wetland is located within a CBA1 (Free State Biodiversity Plan, 2015)
Land use	The wetland and surrounding area is primarily used for grazing (cattle).
Wetland problems	<p>The following wetland problems were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trampling around a watering point created by the farmer • Cattle paths along the seep resulting in notable erosion • Erosion of the entry point of the seep's flow into the floodplain system, threatening the surrounding floodplain wetland features • Sedimentation in the floodplain system due to erosion of the seep
Aneks 01 Wetland System	
Location	The wetland is located within quaternary catchment C81C, in the Eastern Free State near the towns of Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismith in the Free State province
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.
Wetland type and size	Channelled valley- bottom 4.64ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	The wetland is located within a CBA1 (Free State Biodiversity Plan, 2015)
Land use	The wetland and surrounding area is primarily used for grazing (cattle). There are numerous small dams upstream of the wetland. The land to the south and southwest of the system is used for feedstock production/cultivation.
Wetland problems	<p>The following wetland problems were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gully formation linked to upstream dams and nearby cultivation activities • Numerous cattle paths crossing the system • An existing hard structure built by the farmer which is causing scouring of the channel banks

6.2.2 Quaternary catchment C81D and associated wetlands

Quaternary Catchment C81D	
General description	<p>The major feature of the C81D catchment is the Sterkfontein Dam which is located on the Nuwejaarspruit, a tributary of the Wilge River in the upper catchment area of the Vaal River. The dam which was commissioned in 1977 forms part of the part of the Tugela-Vaal Water Project and the Drakensberg Pumped Storage Scheme and it covers approximately 60% of the C81D catchment.</p> <p>Approximately 70-80% of the catchment falls in a protected area (Sterkfontein Dam Nature Reserve) and is therefore mostly characterised by indigenous montane grassland grazed by antelope with a few informal dirt roads and small residential structures surrounded by planted <i>Eucalyptus spp.</i> There are small impacts in the form of fences, limited dirt roads, soil erosion and small areas affected by alien invasive species (principally <i>Seriphium plumosum</i>,</p>

	<p><i>Eucalyptus spp.</i>, <i>Salix spp.</i> and <i>Acacia mearnsii</i>). The northern parts of the catchment have historically been used for crop cultivation (prior to the declaration of the reserve in 1987).</p> <p>Sterkfontein is a relatively new Provincial Nature Reserve and was created as a result of the dam construction. In the early 1960's it was determined that the capacity of the Vaal Dam would not be sufficient to cater for the water needs of the Gauteng region. As a result, the Tugela-Vaal scheme was developed to pump water from the Tugela River via the Sterkfontein Dam to the Vaal Dam. Sterkfontein Dam was to act as a reservoir for the Gauteng industrial area. The Dam, a joint project of the Department of Water Affairs and Eskom, was completed in 1986 and is included in the international register of the world's largest dams. On completion it was the world's second largest earth wall and the largest without a spillway (Taylor, 2004)²².</p>
Climate	<p>The local climate in this summer rainfall area is defined by a MAP of 735.8mm and a mean annual PET of 1797.7mm. The high-lying areas may receive snowfall in winter with temperatures often falling below the 0°C mark during the peak of winter (June to July)²³.</p>
Geology and topography	<p>The majority of the northern and central parts of the catchment are dominated by mudstone from the Beaufort Group (Tarkastad sub-group, Mesozoic Era). The more mountainous south and south-western parts of the catchment are underlain by arenite of the Molteno and Clarens Formations (Karoo Supergroup, Mesozoic Era). The southernmost parts of the catchment consist of Drakensberg Basalt (Karoo Supergroup, Mesozoic Era).</p> <p>The quaternary catchment is characterised by red, yellow and / or greyish soils with low to medium base status. The soils as classified as undifferentiated structureless soils (SANBI BGIS, 2017). Soil cover becomes shallow with extensive rock outcrops to the southern mountainous areas of the catchment</p> <p>The catchment varies around 1700m to 2000m above MSL. The major topographical feature in the landscape is the Sterkfontein dam and then as mentioned there is a transition to the more mountainous southern parts.</p>
Terrestrial ecology	<p>The historical dominant vegetation type present would have been a combination of two bioregions, namely the Drakensberg Grassland and the Mesic Highveld Grassland bioregions. Each bioregion comprises characteristic vegetation groups, including the Northern Drakensberg Highland Grassland (Gd 5, Least threatened), Lesotho Highland Basalt Grassland (Gd8, Least threatened) and Eastern Free State Sandy Grassland (Gm 4, Endangered) vegetation groups (SANBI BGIS, 2017). The majority of the Eastern Free State Sandy Grassland group has however been replaced by the construction of the dam with predominantly Northern Drakensberg Highland Grassland and</p> <p>The entire C81D catchment was identified as an IBA because it supports a number of highly threatened grassland species. The northern boundary of the IBA lies 13 km south-west of Harrismith. In the south, the IBA was expanded in 2014 to include the whole escarpment down to Oliviershoek and thus link with the Maloti Drakensberg Park IBA (SA064), which is already formally protected with management plans. The expansion incorporates a Cape Vulture <i>Gyps coprotheres</i> breeding colony and an additional vegetation type in the form of a section of Northern KwaZulu-Natal Moist Grassland (with wooded kloofs). The IBA hosts at least 237 bird species. Although the dam in this IBA is sizeable, the notable birds are terrestrial species rather than waterbirds. The CWAC counts have been discontinued mainly because there were usually only a few hundred waterbirds.</p> <p>This area supports breeding Southern Bald Ibis <i>Geronticus calvus</i> and a colony of breeding Cape Vultures; both species are the most frequently encountered threatened bird species in Sterkfontein Dam Nature Reserve. The area potentially also supports the highly threatened grassland specialist Rudd's Lark <i>Heteromirafra ruddi</i>. Other threatened species recorded in the IBA that are easily overlooked, and possibly more common, are Half-collared Kingfisher <i>Alcedo semitorquata</i> and Short-tailed Pipit <i>Anthus brachyurus</i>. The area is important for eight species</p>

²² W.A. Taylor, 2004. Factors influencing productivity in sympatric populations of Mountain Reedbuck and Grey Rhebok in the Sterkfontein Dam Nature Reserve, South Africa. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pretoria.

²³ http://www.saexplorer.co.za/south-africa/climate/harrismith_climate.asp, date accessed 2017-11-08

	<p>of cisticolas, which frequent the small grassy vleis in higher-lying areas. Western Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> has also been recorded. The small patches of Afrotemperate forest support Forest Canary <i>Crithagra scotops</i> and Bush Blackcap <i>Lioptilus nigricapillus</i>.</p> <p>The reserve is also known to hold the following threatened or endemic reptiles including the sungazer lizard (<i>Smaug giganteus</i>) (VU), Breyer's long-tailed seps (<i>Tetradactylus breyeri</i>) (VU) and the Drakensberg dwarf chameleon (<i>Bradypodion dracomontanum</i>). The Sterkfontein dam has been stocked with the rare largemouth yellowfish <i>Barbus kimberleyensis</i>. African wild cat <i>Felis lybica</i>, armadillo <i>Oryzomys afer</i>, oribi <i>Ourebia ourebi</i>, serval <i>Leptailurus serval</i> and Lesueur's hairy bat <i>Myotis lesueuri</i> occur in the surrounding grassland. ²⁴</p>
Aquatic ecology	<p>As mentioned the Sterkfontein Dam covers a large portion of quaternary catchment C81D resulting a catchment dominated by an aquatic habitat. The aforementioned does however not contribute significantly to strictly aquatic diversity as the water body is quite uniform. It has however been reportedly stocked with the rare largemouth yellowfish <i>Barbus kimberleyensis</i> which does contribute to the conservation of an indigenous fish species. The dam also contributes to habitat diversity within a landscape that would've been predominantly terrestrial.</p> <p>The wetlands within the catchment consist mostly of small seeps and valley bottom systems draining towards the dam. There are also numerous mountain headwater and upper foothill streams draining north towards the dam from the more mountainous southern parts of the catchment.</p>
Land use	Land use in the catchment was historically characterized by livestock grazing and limited cultivation. Current land use is mainly in the form of nature and wildlife conservation as well some cultivation.
Boschkloof-01 Wetland System	
Location	This wetland system is 21km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 26km away from Harrismith which are both located in the Free State Province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.
Wetland type and size	Hillslope 8.12ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	Important Bird Area, PA according to the 2015 Free State Biodiversity Plan but outside PA based on DEA, 2019: South Africa Protected Areas Database spatial dataset.
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation) with a number of gravel roads.
Wetland problems	<p>The following problems are affecting the wetland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old contour berms across the majority of the seep • Erosion related to a road crossing to the south of the seep
Boschkloof-02 Wetland System	
Location	This wetland system is 22km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 26km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.

²⁴<https://www.birdlife.org.za/conservation/important-bird-areas/iba-directory/item/187-sa046-sterkfontein-dam-nature-reserve>, accessed 2018-01-23

District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti a Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system. The wetland systems also play an important role in creating a more diverse habitat composition surrounding the Sterkfontein Dam and IBA.
Wetland type and size	Channelled Valley-Bottom 11.24ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	Important Bird Area, PA according to the 2015 Free State Biodiversity Plan but outside PA based on DEA, 2019: South Africa Protected Areas Database spatial dataset.
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation), gravel road.
Wetland problems	The main wetland problem is a channel that has been dug through the system causing the natural meandering channel through the wetland to become redundant. This resulted in various secondary impacts such as erosion and a drop in the water table (resulting in desiccation and shifts to terrestrial vegetation species).
<i>Statherick 01 and Eskol 01 Wetland System</i>	
Location	This wetland system is 16km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 21km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti a Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system. The wetland systems also play an important role in creating a more diverse habitat composition surrounding the Sterkfontein Dam and IBA. This wetland also specifically aids in sediment trapping prior to runoff entering the Sterkfontein Dam
Wetland type and size	Channelled valley-bottom 6.75ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	Important Bird Area, PA according to the 2015 Free State Biodiversity Plan but outside PA based on DEA, 2019: South Africa Protected Areas Database spatial dataset.
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation)
Wetland problems	The main wetland problem is active headcut erosion resulting in a deep gully eroded to bedrock level. There is also a small contour dam in the upper portion of the HGM unit which may contributed to a reduced sediment load feeding the downstream portion of the system. The area was historically used for crop cultivation which might have been the initial cause of the current wetland problems, another possible cause is wave action associated with fluctuating water levels within the dam.
<i>Statherick 02 Wetland System</i>	
Location	This wetland system is 16km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 21km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.

District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	This wetland provides valuable habitat for wetland-dependant species, a number of which are threatened/Red Data Listed species of high conservation significance. Conservation of wetlands inherently provide protection for threatened vegetation types. Wetlands provide a range of important wetland ecosystem services, from sediment trapping and erosion control to stream flow regulation and water purification which is relevant to the downstream areas.
Wetland type and size	Channelled valley-bottom 1.12ha.
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	PA (Provincial Nature Reserve), IBA
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation)
Wetland problems	The main wetland problem is active headcut erosion resulting in a deep gully eroded to bedrock level. The area was historically used for crop cultivation which might have been the initial cause of the current wetland problems, another possible cause is wave action associated with fluctuating water levels within the dam.
<i>Boschkloof -03 and Graigielea – 01 Wetland System</i>	
Location	This wetland system is 16km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 21km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system. The wetland systems also play an important role in creating a more diverse habitat composition surrounding the Sterkfontein Dam and IBA.
Wetland type and size	Unchannelled Valley-Bottom 5.44 ha.
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	Important Bird Area, PA according to the 2015 Free State Biodiversity Plan but outside PA based on DEA, 2019: South Africa Protected Areas Database spatial dataset. A portion of the HGM unit also falls within the Craigielea Hunting Lodge which has been declared a protected area in 2001.
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation)
Wetland problems	Wetland problems include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A road crossing along the upper section of the HGM unit • A small earthen dam with up and downstream erosion • Major gully formation north (lower section of HGM unit) of the fence between the two properties
<i>Helmanshoek-01 Wetland System</i>	
Location	This wetland system is 16km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 21km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.

Reason for selection	The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system. The wetland systems also play an important role in creating a more diverse habitat composition surrounding the Sterkfontein Dam and IBA.
Wetland type and size	Unchanneled valley-bottom 1.94ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	PA (Provincial Nature Reserve), IBA
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation)
Wetland problems	The main wetland problem is slope failure features with resultant excessive downstream sediment deposition
Elizabeth -03 Wetland System	
Location	This wetland system is 16km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 21km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	This wetland provides valuable habitat for wetland-dependant species, a number of which are threatened/Red Data Listed species of high conservation significance. Conservation of wetlands inherently provide protection for threatened vegetation types. Wetlands provide a range of important wetland ecosystem services, from sediment trapping and erosion control to stream flow regulation and water purification which is relevant to the downstream areas. The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.
Wetland type and size	Hillslope seep 0.45ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	PA (Provincial Nature Reserve), IBA
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation)
Wetland problems	The system is impacted by a large gully which resulted from headcut erosion. There is a downstream geological control point i.e. the system cannot be incised further. The focus is therefore on trapping sediment in the gully and stabilising the headcut. There are also numerous wattle trees along the drainage line.
Helmanshoek-02 Wetland System	
Location	This wetland system is 16km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 21km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	This wetland provides valuable habitat for wetland-dependant species, a number of which are threatened/Red Data Listed species of high conservation significance. Conservation of wetlands inherently provide protection for threatened vegetation types. Wetlands provide a range of important wetland ecosystem services, from sediment trapping and erosion control to

	<p>stream flow regulation and water purification which is relevant to the downstream areas. The wetland systems also play an important role in creating a more diverse habitat composition surrounding the Sterkfontein Dam and IBA.</p> <p>The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.</p>
Wetland type and size	Hillslope Seep 0.22ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	PA (Provincial Nature Reserve), IBA
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation)
Wetland problems	The system is impacted by headcut erosion and slope failure (mass erosion on the south facing slopes. There is also a number of wildlife crossings and watering areas which contributes to the degradation of the system. The system has a downstream geological control with a significant sediment dome forming. The focus of intervention is thus to stop any remaining headcut erosion into the remainder of the system.
Elizabeth-01 Wetland System	
Location	This wetland system is 16km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 21km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	This wetland provides valuable habitat for wetland-dependant species, a number of which are threatened/Red Data Listed species of high conservation significance. Conservation of wetlands inherently provide protection for threatened vegetation types. Wetlands provide a range of important wetland ecosystem services, from sediment trapping and erosion control to stream flow regulation and water purification which is relevant to the downstream areas.
Wetland type and size	Hillslope Seep 0.89ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	PA (Provincial Nature Reserve), IBA
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation)
Wetland problems	The main wetland problem is minor to moderate headcut erosion.
Elizabeth-02 Wetland System	
Location	This wetland system is 16km from Phuthaditjhaba and roughly 21km away from Harrismith which both are located in the Free State Province.
District and Local municipality	Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality. Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality.
Reason for selection	<p>The catchment is classified as a high-water yield catchment which feeds into the Wilge and eventually Vaal system. The Vaal system supplies large parts of Gauteng with water. The increase in infiltration rates and retention times of runoff (which are typically outcomes of wetland rehabilitation) will contribute to sustained water supply to the Vaal system.</p> <p>The wetland systems also play an important role in creating a more diverse habitat composition surrounding the Sterkfontein Dam and IBA.</p>

Wetland type and size	Hillslope Seep 0.26ha
Conservation status (terrestrial and aquatic)	PA (Provincial Nature Reserve), IBA
Land use	Nature Reserve (conservation)
Wetland problems	Wetland problems are restricted to minor erosional features. There is also a number of bramble bushes growing in slightly desiccated zones along the HGM unit.

6.3 Cultural and Heritage Environment

As the project aims to rehabilitate wetlands threatened by erosion, no impact is expected to occur on cultural or historic features. However, should any such features be identified during the Phase 2 site visit, a heritage specialist will be consulted, and the relevant heritage authorities will be notified.

6.4 Socio-economic Environment

Table 13 below provides a summary of the socio-economic profile of the local municipalities within which the proposed wetland rehabilitation projects will take place. Being part of the EPWP, the WfWetlands Programme has created more than 27 000 jobs and over 3 million person-days of paid work by using local SMMEs to implement the approved wetland rehabilitation plans. Local teams generally consist of a minimum of 55% women, 55% youth and 2% disabled persons.

The EPWP focus on local unemployed people with the intent of making them part of the productive economic sector, assist with skills development and increase their capacity to earn an income. In terms of basic education and training of adults and skills transfer, the WfWetlands Programme has provided 250 000 days of training in vocation and life skills.

Table 13: Economic profile of applicable local municipalities

Social or economic category	Maluti a Phofung
Young (0-14)	32,7%
Working age (15-64)	62%
Elderly (65+)	5,3%
Dependency ratio	61,2
No schooling	8,9%
Higher education	7,9%
Matric	26,8%
Unemployment rate	41,8%
Youth Unemployment rate	53%
No income	13,5%
R1 - R4,800	9%
R4,801 - R9,600	13,7%
R9,601 - R19,600	23,7%
R19,601 - R38,200	20,7%
R38,201 - R76,4000	9%
R76,401 - R153,800	5,2%
R153,801 - R307,600	3,3%
R307,601 - R614,400	1,6%
R614,001 - R1,228,800	0,4%
R1,228,801 - R2,457,600	0,2%
R2,457,601+	0,1%

Source: http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=964

The anticipated benefit of the WfWetlands Programme nationally is presented below in **Table 14**.

Table 14: Socio-economic value of the national WfWetlands Programme

Aspect	Response
What is the expected capital value of the activity on completion?	R 130 000 000
How many new employment opportunities will be created in the development and construction phase of the activity/ies?	120 ²⁵
What is the expected value of the employment opportunities during the development and construction phase?	R54.4 million in wages
What percentage of this will accrue to previously disadvantaged individuals?	70%

²⁵ Employment opportunities are created only during the construction phase and for many of the projects there are already EPWP teams (team size averages around 20-35 individuals) working on them. However, Working for Wetland principles ensure that a very large percentage of those employed are from local communities.

7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The WfWetlands Programme has been rehabilitating wetlands across South Africa since the early 2000's and are considered to be specialists when it comes to working in sensitive wetland environments. Their significant experience and knowledge is actively being transferred to Implementing Agents and Contractors not only verbally by the provincial ASDs, but also through training and the use of important tools such as the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr). It must be noted that the EMPr is considered a living document and is updated on a regular basis to incorporate lessons learned and/or in response to changing environments (legal, biological, etc.). In addition, the requirements of the EMPr are supplemented with site specific mitigation measures, included in the relevant rehabilitation plan, as identified by the wetland specialist and EAP during the Phase 2 planning site visits.

This chapter focus on the key potential impacts (direct, indirect and cumulative) that have been identified for the WfWetlands Programme over time. For each impact assessed, mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce and/or avoid negative impacts and enhance positive impacts. These mitigation measures are also incorporated into the EMPr to ensure that they are implemented during the planning/pre-construction, construction and operational phases. The EMPr forms part of the BAR (**Appendix D**), and as such its implementation will become a binding requirement should environmental authorisation be received from DEA.

The following subsections assess each impact according to the construction and operational phase in which they are likely to occur. It should be highlighted that this assessment does not consider the decommissioning of the proposed interventions. The purpose of the implementation of a specific intervention is to rehabilitate the affected wetland system and prevent further degradation. Furthermore, many of the soft interventions are made from biodegradable materials (see **Appendix A**). If these begin to degrade, they will not have a negative impact on the system. The hard interventions serve as a more permanent feature within the wetland, as the sensitive environments (which includes dispersive soils in some of them, for example) could be negatively impacted by new soil disturbance activities when removing interventions. Maintenance surveys are undertaken by WfWetlands and if a hard structure should begin to lose its function/ require maintenance, the intervention would be reconsidered either for maintenance, or the need to redesign the structure in response to landscape changes.

7.1 CONSTRUCTION PHASE

7.1.1 Job creation

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	<p>One of the primary objectives of the WfWetlands Programme is to create jobs and to teach transferrable skills to unemployed members of the local community so that they can be drawn into the permanent job market.</p> <p>The potential impact of this is significant and has a number of indirect positive impacts such as improvement in quality of life of the workers, increased spending in the local economy and the support of small business in the local area.</p> <p>Cumulatively, the impact of the WfWetlands projects is judged to be of high positive significance. The programme has a budget of approximately R130 million per annum, has created in the region of 27 000 jobs and transferred skills to numerous previously unskilled persons.</p> <p>Should the project not be authorised or implemented, the potential jobs would not be created. Where projects already have active teams implementing interventions, this would have a high negative impact as the contractors would not be able to keep their teams busy. Where projects do not have</p>			

	active teams, the impact would however be neutral as the impact would not be worse against the baseline, i.e. jobs would not be taken away, they just would not be created.		
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative
Type	Positive	Positive	Negative
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific
Magnitude	Medium	Low	High
			Zero
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term
Significance	MEDIUM (+)	HIGH (+)	High (-) Neutral
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible
Mitigation measures			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the required project workers are sourced from local communities and that maximum employment numbers are maintained throughout the project duration. Project implementers to support local businesses (e.g. local quarry owners to obtain rock for gabions) where possible. 			

7.1.2 Fire risk

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	Construction usually takes place in the dry months when the danger of veld fires is highest. There is a possibility that construction workers could light a fire on site that could become out of control. The risk of this happening is assessed to be low, although the significance in terms of the economic damage that could be caused (especially in a commercial forestry area) is high. Adequate site supervision would considerably mitigate this impact.			
	Fires are part of a natural biophysical cycle in most ecosystems and are therefore likely to still occur without the construction activities of the WfWetlands construction teams taking place.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Negative	Negative	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Low	
Duration	Short-term	Short-term	Short-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (-)	LOW (-)	LOW (-)	
Probability	Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	
Confidence	Sure	Sure	Sure	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that workers are aware of the potential for fires and the damage that could be caused.• Ensure that a fire response procedure is in place and that all dry season work is organized in liaison with the landowners so that it fits into their firebreak/fire protection programme.• Provide designated smoking areas if necessary• Ensure basic firefighting equipment is on site and that at least one staff member is trained in firefighting				

7.1.3 Nuisance impacts

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	Construction can result in nuisance impacts, particularly for landowners. These impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Noise from construction activities, personnel and vehicles.An increase in the amount of litter being generated.Dust.Security concerns such as theft or leaving gates open.Non-use of sanitation facilities.Temporary loss of access to areas due to construction activities.			
	Given the isolated working environment (i.e. far from communities and public routes), the relatively few number of people on site and constant supervision by the project implementer, the above impacts are likely to be of low magnitude.			
	Should the project not be authorised or implemented, no nuisance impacts would occur.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Negative	Negative	Neutral	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Zero	
Duration	Short-term	Short-term	Long-term	
Significance	LOW (-)	VERY LOW (-)	NEUTRAL	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain	
Reversibility	Reversible	Reversible	Reversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">All site workers to undergo environmental induction training (“toolbox talks”) before undertaking work so that they are aware of the various environmental requirements.Landowners should be consulted regarding the placement of stockpile sites and toilets as well as access routes. This must be indicated on the site and site camp layout plan.Ensure that gates are kept closed. When in doubt, the landowner should be consulted.Follow the EMP with regard to sanitation facilities, waste management, noise and site managementUtilise local labour wherever possible to reduce potential friction within the community caused by bringing outside personnel in.Ensure that all workers wear the yellow/blue attire indicative of WfWetlands personnel so that they are not mistaken for trespassers.				

7.1.4 Heritage resources

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	No significant heritage resources within the wetlands were identified during the desktop research, I&AP interactions or site visit (where rehabilitation work has been undertaken in the wetland in previous years) for the proposed projects.			
	Given the low likelihood of heritage sites being disturbed and provided that construction is immediately stopped should a heritage resource be encountered then the magnitude of this impact should be zero.			
	Should the interventions not be implemented, natural weathering would still occur. However, given the low potential of heritage resources in the area, this is anticipated to remain neutral for the no-go alternative.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Negative	Negative	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Zero	Zero	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	VERY LOW (-)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite	
Confidence	Sure	Sure	Sure	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Should any heritage resource or suspected resources be identified during the Phase 2 planning site visit, a suitably qualified heritage specialist shall be consulted.Should any artefact or suspected artefact (including fossils and grave sites), or any site of cultural significance be encountered during construction, then the Contractor must immediately stop work in the vicinity of the artefact and alert the relevant authorities. The area around the discovery shall be cordoned off until such time that work is authorised to proceed.				

7.1.5 Worker safety

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	Alien clearing requires very specific training and involves high risk equipment such as chainsaws. It sometimes involves large trees and therefore extreme caution needs to be exercised.			
	Crime and poor water quality could also have a negative impact on worker safety and health, especially in urban areas.			
	Furthermore, workers may also come into contact with dangerous animals such as snakes or even predators when working in conservation areas.			
	If the interventions are not implemented, the construction workers will not be affected by the dangers associated with working within the selected wetlands.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Negative	Negative	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Zero	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (-)	LOW (-)	NEUTRAL	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">All site workers to undergo specific safety training before undertaking this work so that they are aware of the various risks and measures to be taken in emergency situations.Where required, security teams must be provided to protect the teams on site.Follow Occupational Health and Safety requirements.Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shall be worn at all times on site.				

7.1.6 Flora and fauna

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	<u>Habitat disturbance</u> Habitat disturbance during the construction stage is typically temporary. In addition, most species are relatively tolerant of disturbance and would be able to utilise the similar alternative habitat available in the study area. The area of habitat loss is also likely to be small and limited to the immediate surroundings of the intervention being constructed.			
	<u>Disturbance of protected species</u> Construction activities could potentially result in disturbance to habitats required by protected species. It can however be almost completely mitigated by liaising with the appropriate conservation bodies whose local representatives can advise on appropriate measures and construction timeframes.			
	<u>Alien species invasion</u> A potential construction-related impact on vegetation is the possibility of an increase in alien invasive species due to disturbance and weed seeds being brought in with borrow and construction material.			
	The no-go alternative would mean that the positive impacts identified above would not be realised. Continued wetland degradation and habitat loss is likely to result in exponential increase in the significance of the no-go alternative, leading to an eventual loss of biodiversity and disruption of floral and faunal ecosystems. In addition, it would also negatively affect the achievement of conservation objectives for the area.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Negative	Negative	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Low	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (-)	LOW (-)	MEDIUM (-)	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Likely	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Sure	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Should any protected species occur on site, the ASD and project manager or implementer must liaise prior to site establishment with the relevant conservation body to determine measures required during the construction period to limit potential disturbances to protected species.Should any protected species need to be removed or relocated, e.g. indigenous tree ferns, the appropriate permits shall be required. These activities shall take place under strict guidance from the ASD and/or appropriate authority.Limit the construction footprintImplement the provisions of the EMPr regarding stockpiling material, site demarcation, site access and vegetation clearanceEnsure that rehabilitation takes place after construction as per the measures detailed in the EMPr				

7.1.7 Aquatic ecosystems

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	<u>Temporary alteration of flow characteristics</u> Construction must often take place in areas that are permanently saturated. This requires that water be diverted away from working areas, leading to temporary alterations in the existing flow characteristics within the wetland. Water diversion is typically done using sand bags to slow/block flow and then a pump to remove water and discharge it further downstream. This can result in a slight drying in the working areas which might affect aquatic organisms. The impact will however be of a temporary nature and is unlikely to significantly alter flow characteristics or lead to long-term changes in drainage patterns (volume, velocity, seasonal flow variation etc.).			
	<u>Sedimentation</u> Construction activities can result in additional sediment ending up in the watercourse (e.g. due to earthworks or breakage of sandbags used to divert water away from working areas) as well as an increase in suspended solids. Increased sediment loads can result in silt build-up downstream, increase the turbidity of the water and result in habitat changes. However, as wetlands are typically low-energy systems, much of the excess sediment is likely to be trapped before it is washed far downstream. Also, given the limited nature of the earthworks, sedimentation is not anticipated to occur to a significant degree.			
	<u>Pollution of watercourses</u> Construction activities close to a watercourse/wetland carry the attendant risk that construction-related pollutants could end up in the wetland system. Typical pollutants include hydrocarbons (e.g. from fuel leaks, shutter oil and lubricating fluid spills), litter, cement and contaminated wash-down water. The volumes of potentially polluting substances used on WfWetlands projects are however very low compared to typical construction activities.			
	<u>Disturbance of wetland vegetation and stream banks</u> Some disturbance to stream banks and wetland vegetation will be inevitable in order to construct the proposed interventions. This impact generally occurs on a small scale and can be mitigated via good management practices and proper rehabilitation measures.			
	Pursuing the no-go option would result in the current negative ecosystem impacts continuing. These impacts would include desiccation, erosion, channel incision, etc.			
	Pre-Mitigation		Post-Mitigation	
Type	Negative		Negative	
Extent	Site Specific		Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium		Low	
Duration	Long-term		Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (-)		LOW (-)	
Probability	Definite		Definite	
Confidence	Certain		Certain	
Reversibility	Irreversible		Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work shall predominantly take place during low rainfall periods.• Flow diversion should not cause secondary impacts such as scouring, erosion, sedimentation and changes to flow characteristics• No foreign vegetation matter (e.g. mulch) shall be allowed on site (especially from alien species).				

- Soils shall be stockpiled according to the different soil layers as per the soil profile in order not to mix layers of leached and organic soils.
- Stockpiles and revegetated areas shall be covered with mulch or cloth (geotextile) and kept moist.
- Implement the provisions of the EMPr regarding stockpile location and site management.
- Sandbags used to temporarily divert water shall be in a good condition to prevent additional sedimentation and/ or failure.
- Sand/ earth to fill the bags shall be obtained from and returned to existing excavation points where feasible.
- Soil required for the construction of interventions shall be stabilised as per the engineer's recommendations to counteract dispersive tendencies.
- Water abstracted above the General Authorization limits must be authorized by DWS prior to such abstraction taking place.

7.1.8 Sourcing borrow material

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	Borrow material (earth and rocks) is not always sufficiently available on site and has to be sourced elsewhere. This can have a negative biophysical impact to the area where it is sourced. The cost of construction also increases the further the material source is located from site. It is therefore important that borrow material is sourced as close to site as possible			
	The WfWetlands programme qualifies under Section 106 of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (No. 28 of 2002, as amended).and is allowed to source material on the property where the wetland is located. Other sources of material include decommissioned dam walls and man-made berms which are no longer required.			
	Should the borrow material not be required, the potential impact would be neutral.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Negative	Negative	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Zero	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (-)	LOW (-)	NEUTRAL	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the provisions of the EMPr.• Any quantities in excess of the minimum requirements for a borrow pit licence will require authorisation through Department of Mineral Resources.• Borrow areas will need to be properly re-sloped and re-vegetated after use.				

7.1.9 Work within conservation areas

Phase		Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	A number of the wetland systems for the Maluti Project fall within conservation areas which are in a pristine or near pristine/natural state and therefore require a more astute attitude on the part of the implementers in terms of avoiding impacts on the surrounding environment. Thus, terms of negative impacts, the conservation status of an area can increase the significance of an impact and might therefore require more stringent or different prevention and mitigation measures.				
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative		
Type	Negative	Negative	Negative		
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific		
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Zero		
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term		
Significance	MEDIUM (-)	LOW (-)	NEUTRAL		
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite		
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain		
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible		
Mitigation measures					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Close cooperation is required with the conservation authorities. Any specific requirements need to be included in the applicable wetland rehabilitation plan.Implement the provisions of the EMPr.					

7.2 OPERATIONAL PHASE

7.2.1 Changes in land use

Phase		Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	The increase in wetland area may have both positive and negative impacts for landowners. Wetlands are often utilised for grazing during the dry season and an increase in wetland area will thus improve grazing conditions for the farmer. However the increase in wet areas may also make previously accessible areas inaccessible for farming purposes. The extent and magnitude of this impact will depend to a large degree on how much value each individual landowner places on wetland conservation. It is however assumed that if the landowner is willing to allow wetland rehabilitation to take place on their property that they see the value in the WfWetlands Programme and are willing to accept the increase in wetland area.				
	Potential positive impacts associated with increased wetland area and improved grazing conditions would not be realised should rehabilitation activities not be implemented. Furthermore, drained wetlands are often more susceptible to erosion, resulting in the removal of fertile topsoil and thereby reducing the agricultural potential of the site.				
	Pre-Mitigation		Post-Mitigation		No-go Alternative
Type	Positive and Negative		Positive and Negative		Negative
Extent	Site Specific		Site Specific		Site Specific
Magnitude	Medium		Low		Medium
Duration	Long-term		Long-term		Long-term
Significance	LOW (+)		MEDIUM (+)		MEDIUM (-)
	MEDIUM (-)		LOW (-)		
Probability	Definite		Definite		Likely
Confidence	Certain		Certain		Sure
Reversibility	Irreversible		Irreversible		Irreversible
Mitigation measures					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure good access for landowners in the form of crossing points, where such measures be of the lowest impact type and design possible.• Provision of watering points for stock to minimise extensive trampling in the wetlands (especially in the wetter times of year).					

7.2.2 Increased water storage and reduced treatment costs

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	Wetlands can offer valuable stream flow regulation and filtration services. By restoring wetland area, it is likely that downstream users will benefit by having a more reliable and possibly cleaner source of water. In addition, by addressing erosion, wetland rehabilitation can decrease the amount of sediment downstream. This can help to reduce water treatment costs for downstream users and will also reduce the sedimentation of downstream water storage facilities such as dams.			
	The no-go alternative would mean that the positive impacts identified above would not be realised. In addition, the water retention and storage potential of the system and catchment would continue to decrease, while damage to properties and infrastructure resulting from flood events would increase. Furthermore, with lower water quality in the systems, more human treatment processes (i.e. water treatment plants) would be required to ensure that water is fit for human use which would require significant engineering and procurement cost.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Positive	Positive	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Medium	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (+)	MEDIUM (+)	MEDIUM (-)	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
• No mitigation measures are proposed				

7.2.3 Reduced soil erosion

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	<p>By reducing exposed ground surfaces and surface runoff velocity, the sediment load in surface runoff is reduced, thereby contributing to better water quality in the sub-catchment area.</p> <p>If the proposed interventions are not implemented, erosion would continue and even accelerate over time. This would reduce the agricultural potential of farmland, as well as increase damages to properties and infrastructure during flood events.</p>			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go alternative	
Type	Positive	Positive	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Medium	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (+)	MEDIUM (+)	MEDIUM (-)	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	

Mitigation measures

- No mitigation measures are proposed

7.2.4 Employment opportunities

Phase		Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	Ideally, the skills learned by the project team during the construction phase – such as how to work with concrete, build gabions etc. – can be used to assist them to find permanent employment.				
	If the interventions are not implemented, and the teams are not provided with these skills, the impact will be neutral as there will be no change to the <i>status quo</i> .				
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative		
Type	Positive	Positive	Positive		
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific		
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Zero		
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term		
Significance	MEDIUM (+)	MEDIUM (+)	NEUTRAL		
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite		
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain		
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible		
Mitigation measures					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">No mitigation measures are proposed					

7.2.5 Public safety

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	<p>Interventions such as gabion weirs, for example, could potentially be used for stream crossings or a swimming hole by local communities which could potentially have serious health and safety risks. However, the purpose of the rehabilitation interventions is not to provide watering holes or public infrastructure, but to trap sediment (i.e. filling up dongas, erosion channels, etc.) and reduce overland flow-velocities.</p> <p>It is possible that even if the interventions are not implemented, the individuals who might be at risk from the use of the wetlands would still be at risk in degraded wetlands. It is even possible that degraded systems could have hidden risks such as stuck branches or boulders that could become dislodged.</p>			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Negative	Negative	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Medium	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (-)	LOW (-)	MEDIUM (-)	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Likely	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	

Mitigation measures

- Consult with landowners and the local community to ensure that they are aware of, and educated in, the ecological values and sensitivity of the wetland environments, as well as the exact location of the intervention structures to be implemented.

7.2.6 Ecosystem functioning

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	<u>Restoring wetland corridors</u> In areas where wetlands have been artificially drained, restoration can result in the re-wetting of areas and link up previously wet areas, thus creating and extending a network of wetland areas. These wetland corridors can provide valuable refuges for wetland species and allow for greater ecosystem connectivity.			
	<u>Changes in water quality and quantity</u> More natural stream flow patterns within the wetland, as well as an improvement in water quality and quantity (due to improved ecosystem services) can be expected after rehabilitation. This improvement in water quality and a more reliable supply of water is particularly important given the water scarcity that faces South Africa.			
	Should the proposed interventions not be implemented, the wetland systems selected as priority wetlands for rehabilitation, would continue to degrade. This degradation would lead to a loss in ecosystem services, and could result in large downstream impacts such as flooding.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternatives	
Type	Positive	Positive	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Medium	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (+)	HIGH (+)	MEDIUM (-)	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Likely	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Sure	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Note: The interventions identified for the proposed rehabilitation project were identified during a screening process that was undertaken to ensure that the most suitable intervention was identified, developed and assessed for each rehabilitation site. During this screening process, the project team also took into account environmental, social and economic considerations, as well as the rehabilitation objectives identified for the wetland.Should these interventions not be implemented, the current rate of degradation at the assessed wetlands would continue and, in some cases, even result in the permanent loss of the integrity and functioning of these systems. It would also not be possible to achieve the rehabilitation objectives identified for the wetlands. Without the implementation of wetland rehabilitation as part of the WfWetlands project, the overall programme objectives²⁶ and the EPWP requirements would not be realised.No mitigation measures are proposed.				

²⁶ Wetland conservation and poverty reduction through job creation and skills.

7.2.7 Flora and fauna

Phase	Pre-Construction	Construction	Operational	Decommissioning
Impact description	<u>Increased habitat</u> Increasing the wetland area through rehabilitation will result in an increase in habitat for wetland-dependent species. This is a positive impact, especially in light of the fact that a number of the Free State wetlands are utilised by the vulnerable and endangered species			
	<u>Increased biodiversity</u> A large proportion of the natural vegetation in the greater area has already been lost to forestry and agriculture. Restoring wetland habitat will help to increase the species richness of the overall area by encouraging the re-establishment of wetland species.			
	<u>Change in species composition</u> In wetlands that have been subject to desiccation, plants that are tolerant of drier conditions are likely to have become established. With the restoration of the wetland, these species are likely to be replaced with wetland-adapted vegetation. This change in composition reflects a shift back to historical species composition and is thus considered positive.			
	Should the interventions not be implemented, the positive benefits described above would not be realised. The fauna and flora would respond to the wetland degrading and would likely result in a loss of biodiversity.			
	Pre-Mitigation	Post-Mitigation	No-go Alternative	
Type	Positive	Positive	Negative	
Extent	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific	
Magnitude	Medium	Low	Medium	
Duration	Long-term	Long-term	Long-term	
Significance	MEDIUM (+)	MEDIUM (+)	MEDIUM (-)	
Probability	Definite	Definite	Definite	
Confidence	Certain	Certain	Certain	
Reversibility	Irreversible	Irreversible	Irreversible	
Mitigation measures				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Note: The interventions identified for the proposed rehabilitation project were identified during a screening process that was undertaken to ensure that the most suitable intervention was identified, developed and assessed for each rehabilitation site. During this screening process the project team also took into account environmental, social and economic considerations, as well as the rehabilitation objectives identified for the wetland.Should these interventions not be implemented, the current rate of degradation at the assessed wetlands would continue and, in some cases, even result in the permanent loss of the integrity and functioning of these systems. It would also not be possible to achieve the rehabilitation objectives identified for the wetlands. Without the implementation of wetland rehabilitation as part of the WfWetlands project, the overall programme objectives and the EPWP requirements would not be realised.No mitigation measures are proposed.				

8 CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

8.1 Conclusion

Based on the above, it is the opinion of the EAP that the positive long-term bio-physical and socio-economic aspects of the project as a whole greatly outweigh the minor negative construction related impacts, particularly since effective mitigation measures to reduce the negative impacts exist. There are no indications to suggest that the preferred alternative will have a significant detrimental impact on the environment. Instead, a long-term positive impact is anticipated. This is discussed in further detail below:

Construction Phase:

It is most likely that all identified construction related impacts would be limited to the duration of this phase. Impacts on the bio-physical environment are generally considered to be of **Medium (-)** to **Low (-)** significance, which can be reduced to **Low (-)** and **Very Low (-)** with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. Construction related impacts can generally be very effectively managed through the implementation and regular auditing of an EMPr. Given that no significant heritage resources have been found for these project sites to date, the anticipated impact on heritage resources is **Very Low (-)** which can be mitigated to **Neutral**. The impact on the socio-economic environment is expected to be **Medium to High (+)** due largely to the creation of jobs and up-skilling of local workers.

Operational Phase:

Potential Operational Phase related impacts for both the bio-physical and socio-economic environments are generally considered to be of **Medium to High (+)** significance. These positive impacts are expected to arise due to the following:

- Improved wetland habitat for red data species;
- Improved wetland services (which has benefits for downstream as well as local users); and
- Empowering of local community.

The impacts detailed above in **Chapter 7** are summarised below in **Table 15**.

Table 15: Impact summary table

COLOUR KEY			
High Negative	Red	Neutral	White
Medium Negative	Orange	Low Positive	Light Blue
Low Negative	Yellow	Medium Positive	Blue
Very Low Negative	Light Yellow	High Positive	Green
Construction Phase: Description of Impact	Significance of Impact		
	Preferred Alternative		No-Go
	No Mitigation	With mitigation	
Job creation	Medium (+)	High (+)	Medium (-) Neutral
Fire risk	Medium (-)	Low (-)	Neutral
Nuisance impacts	Low (-)	Very low (-)	Neutral
Impact on heritage resources	Very low (-)	Neutral	Neutral
Worker safety	Medium (-)	Low (-)	Neutral
Flora and fauna	Medium (-)	Low (-)	Medium (-)
Aquatic ecosystem impacts	Medium (-)	Low (-)	Medium (-)
Sourcing borrow material	Medium (-)	Low (-)	Neutral
Work within conservation areas	Medium (-)	Low (-)	Neutral
Operational Phase: Description of Impact			
Changes in land use	Low (-)	Medium (+)	Medium (-)
	Medium (-)	Low (-)	
Increased water storage and reduced treatment costs	Medium (+)	Medium (+)	Medium (-)
Reduced soil erosion	Medium (+)	Medium (+)	Medium (-)
Employment	Medium (+)	Medium (+)	Neutral
Ecosystem functioning	Medium (+)	High (+)	High (-)
Flora and fauna	Medium (+)	Medium (+)	Medium (-)
Public safety	Medium (-)	Low (-)	Medium (-)

8.2 Level of Confidence in Assessment and Recommendation of the EAP

Based on the information provided in this report, the outcome of the impact assessment and the supporting documentation it is the recommendation of the EAP that authorisation be granted for the following reasons:

- a) The proposed rehabilitation activities are likely to have significant positive bio-physical and socio-economic benefits, not just for the local community for the whole country.
- b) Effective mitigation measures exist to manage the limited negative impacts that were identified.
- c) The proposed rehabilitation activities are in line with the principles of NEMA (in particular: people and their needs – particularly women and children – are placed at the forefront of development via the EPWP; the development can be considered to be socially, environmentally and economically sustainable; the environmental impacts of the activity are not unfairly distributed and the potential environmental impacts have been assessed and evaluated).
- d) The WfWetlands Programme is an important part of the government's EPWP and given that the impacts of the proposed activities are not likely to be detrimental to the environment, this programme should be supported in the spirit of co-operative governance.

It is recommended that the following conditions should be included by the Department of Environmental Affairs in the Environmental Authorisation (should a positive decision be reached):

- Mitigation measures listed in this BAR should be referenced as conditions of approval.
- Construction activities must take place in accordance to the requirements of the attached EMPr, which also includes general requirements from the WfWetlands Best Management Practices Plan.
- Regular auditing of the EMPr must take place.

Please find a signed EAP declaration signed in **Appendix E**.

8.3 Way Forward

The work proposed in the above-mentioned wetland systems will be further detailed in a project specific Rehabilitation Plan, consisting of work that will be planned for the following years' implementation cycle.

Each Rehabilitation Plan will include a detailed description of the wetland system, the problems affecting the wetland as well as the proposed rehabilitation strategy. Input into this report is provided by the project engineer, wetland specialist, EAP, and WfWetlands ASD. The Rehabilitation Plan will also include the engineering drawings and bill of quantities of the specific intervention planned to address the site-specific issue.

A general Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) (**Appendix D**) is included in both the BAR and Rehabilitation Plan and provides a set of guidelines and requirements for the implementing teams to ensure that each intervention does not do unnecessary harm to the environment. Where site-specific mitigation measures are required, these will be included in the intervention booklets provided as an annexure to the Rehabilitation Plan.

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