

**Assore Ltd: Wonderstone
Limited**

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

**PROPOSED WONDERSTONE
– DRIEKUIL MINING RIGHT
CONSOLIDATION PROJECT,
NEAR OTTOSDAL, NORTH
WEST PROVINCE**

**Background Information
Document**

In terms of the:

Part 1 AND Part 2 of Regulation 29 (GN982, 2014, as amended);

National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (NEMWA)

National Environmental Management Act, Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA) and associated 2017 EIA regulations and listed activities;

National Water Act, Act 36 and 36 of 1998 (NWA) and associated listed activities



Social and Environmental Consultants

Notification Status:	Final
Applicant:	Wonderstone Limited
DMRE Reference:	NW30/5/1/2/2/398MR (Extension with partial inclusion of 397MR)
	NW30/5/1/2/2/398MR (Partial Abandonment)
Mining Right Ref:	NW30/5/1/2/2/398MR
EnviroGistics Ref.:	202110

Purpose of this Background Information Document

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide all Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) with information about the Wonderstone – Driekuil Mining Right Consolidation Project at Wonderstone Limited Mine
- Introduce, explain and initiate the Public Participation Process that is prescribed by the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No.107 of 1998) (NEMA) and the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, Act 28 of 2002 (MPRDA)

We invite all I&APs to comment on:

- The environmental (bio-physical) issues and socio-economic environment and/or considerations
- The proposed Public Participation Process to be followed
- Any other suggestions, comments and/or recommendations.



1.1.1.1 Introduction

Wonderstone Limited (hereafter referred to as “Wonderstone” or “the mine”) is wholly owned by Assore Ltd (“Assore”) and has been mining a uniquely pure Pyrophyllite deposit 300 kilometers west of Johannesburg, outside Ottosdal in the North West Province..

Project Location

Wonderstone has the mineral rights over Portions 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, remainder of portion 15 (a portion of portion 1), 20, 24 (a portion of portion 5), 40 (a portion of portion 41 now known as portion 44) of the Farm Gestoptefontein 349 IO and Portions remainder of portion 1, 2, 4, 7 (a portion of portion A), and the Remainder of the Farm Driekuil 280 IP.

Up until recently the mine has been operating under the legal entitlement, Mining License: ML1-97, converted to Mining Right: NW 30/1/2/2/398 MR (Registered Right dated 23 December 2014). The issued mining right authorises the extraction of Pyrophyllite for a period of 30 years over the farm Gestoptefontein 349IO:

- ☛ Portion 44;
- ☛ Area measuring 135.916ha.

Mining takes place by means of open cast mining, comprising of hydraulic hammering and excavator loading with no drilling and blasting required. **The current mining area is restricted to Portion 44 of the farm Gestoptefontein.**

In addition, WST also holds an approved New Order Mining Right (NOMR) NW30/5/1/2/2/397MR (signed 20 March 2019) over various portions of the farms Gestoptefontein and Driekuil 280IP:

- ☛ Portion 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 24 (portion of portion 5), remainder of portion 15 (a portion of portion 1), portion 20 and portion 40 (a portion of portion 41 now known as portion 44) of the farm Gestoptefontein 349IO;
- ☛ Portions 2, 4, remainder of portion 1, portion 7 (a portion of portion A) and the remainder of farm Driekuil 280IP.
- ☛ Area measuring: 4 595.4239ha

Project Description

Wonderstone Ltd (WST) is applying for the extension of the approved Converted Mining Right CMR (398MR) (CMR) area by adding portions of the approved New Order Mining Right (397MR) (NORM) to the CMR area, with the additional inclusion of a section of Portion 8 of the farm Gestoptefontein 349 IO. At the same time certain portions of approved areas of the NOMR will be abandoned. In addition to this the mine will also be applying for new mining activities as an expansion to the existing WST. For this reason the project, will involve the application in terms of Section 24 of the NEMA, for the development of new activities and secondly for the amendment and consolidation of the exiting EMPr in terms of Regulation 34, read with Regulation 37. The project in question involves the following:

- ☛ Project 1 - The New Project Expansion;
- ☛ Project 2 - The Abandonment and Consolidation of certain Mining Rights’ Areas; and
- ☛ Project 3 The Consolidation and Update of the Current Environmental Management Programmes (EMPr’s)

Project 1: The mine will also be applying for new mining activities as an expansion to the existing WST. The mine will continue mining from the existing Wonderstone Opencast Pit and proposes to include an additional five (5) mining blocks. The mineral to be mined is Pyrophyllite, an aluminium silicate of the phyllosilicate family. The Pyrophyllite is mined by means of opencast mining, with a hydraulic hammer mounted on an excavator that separates the stone natural partings.

Project 2: WST would like to combine its existing mining rights into a single, consolidated right, in an attempt to ease the administrative duties and compliance requirements associated with multiple mining authorisations per site. The mining rights combined (i.e. CMR and NOMR) cover an area of approximately 4 750ha of which just under 30ha has been disturbed by mining activities to date. A large portion of the northern section of the WST mining area on the farm Gestoptefontein 349IO has been rehabilitated.

Project 3: The Application will also include the consolidation and update of the current EMPr’s in terms of Regulation 34, read with Regulation 37, of the NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014.

Applicable Legislation

National Environmental Management Act, 1998

In terms of Section 24D and 29 of the National Environmental Management Act, Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA), as read with the EIA Regulations Process in terms of the NEMA Regulations 326 of 2017 (Regulation 324, Regulation 325 and Regulation 327) a Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment Process is required. The following listed activities are triggered by the proposed development: NEMA:

- ☞ Government Notice 327, Listing Notice 1: Activity 12, 13, 19, 24, and 21D.
- ☞ Government Notice 325, Listing Notice 2: Activity 6 and 15.
- ☞ Government Notice 324, Listing Notice 3: Activity, 4, 10, 12, and 14

The project also triggers activities listed in (GNR) 921 of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act 59 of 2008) (NEM:WA) (Category B: Activity 11) and will require a Waste Management License (WML).

Regulatory Authority: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), Limpopo Region (Klerksdorp office).

A Section 102 of the MPRDA Amendment Application will be submitted to apply for the extension of the Converted Mining Right area by adding Portions of the approved NOMR, and one additional portion of land (portion 8 of the farm Gestoptefontein) areas to the Converted Mining Right area. At the same time the additional proposed areas of the NOMR, portions of the approved portions will be abandoned to allow for future mining. The abovementioned amendment of the Mining Rights, which requires a Section 102 of the MPRDA process, triggers a specific Listed Activities in terms of NEMA and accordingly forms part of this Consolidated environmental Authorisation Process.

The updating of the EMPr will be followed in terms of Regulation 34, read with Regulation 37, of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014.

National Water Act, 1998 (NWA):

Chapter 4 of the NWA specifically addresses the use of water and is a tool for an authority to ensure the implementation of the principle that National Government has overall responsibility over water resource management, including the equitable allocation and beneficial use of water in the public interest, including that a person can only be entitled to use water if the use is permissible under the Act. In general, a water use must be licensed unless it is listed in Schedule I, is an existing lawful use, is permissible under a general authorisation, or if a responsible authority waives the need for a licence. Section 21 of the NWA identifies eleven (11) consumptive and non-consumptive water uses which must be authorised.

Water uses, such as for the Low Grade Stockpile and potential Pollution Control Dam will require a Water Use Licence (WUL).;

Environmental Process and Required Reporting

Project Manager and Environmental Assessment Practitioner: EnviroGistics (Pty) Ltd

EAP: Ms. Tanja Bekker

Qualification: MSc. Environmental Management (RAU, now Johannesburg University)

Professional Registrations: Certified member of the EAPASA (October 2013); SACNASP: Pr.Sci.Nat. Reg No. 400198/09

Experience: 13 Years

The Purpose of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Management Plan

The National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) provides for the identification of listed activities in terms of Section 24. These activities are promulgated under Regulation 326 and Regulation 327 (dated April 2017). The listed activities require an environmental authorisation, granted by the competent authority prior to commencement of these activities. The impacts of any listed activities must be investigated, assessed and reported to the competent authority before authorisation to commence with such listed activities can be granted. These activities depending on the Listing Notice triggered may require either a Basic Assessment Process (for Listing Notice 1 and 3) or a full Environmental Impact Assessment (for Listing Notice 2).

The said project will trigger activities listed under Listing Notice 1, 2 and 3, under the NEMA EIA Regulations, as well as as waste management activities under the NEMWA, which makes provision for an Integrated Environmental Impact Assessment Process. The NEMA prescribes the processes to be followed when compiling the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), in respect of listed activities that forms the legal basis of this authorisation.

The purpose of an Integrated Environmental Assessment is to predict the potential impacts associated with any project. These impacts can be both positive and negative. The assessment has to determine the most suitable management measures to reduce adverse impacts, develop project solutions in consultation with all stakeholders and present the outcomes to the decision makers for consideration. The outcome of the assessment should define the Best Practical Environmental Option (BPEO), which is defined in the NEMA as “the option that provides the most benefit or causes the least damage to the environment as a whole, at a cost acceptable to society, in the long-term as well as in the short-term”.

Public Participation Process or Stakeholder Consultation

Purpose of Stakeholder Consultation

The purpose of the stakeholder consultation process is to:

- ☛ Engage with stakeholders as part of a process to identify the potential social and environmental impacts which may result from the planned upgrade of the EMPr.
- ☛ Develop an understanding of the views, concerns and expectations of stakeholders.
- ☛ Engage with stakeholders to determine the specific management requirements.

Stakeholder Consultation Process

The key objective of public participation during an Environmental process is to assist stakeholders to identify issues of concern and suggestions for enhanced benefits, and to comment on the findings of the updated EMPr. The Public Participation Process is an integral part of the EIA process, and continues throughout the EIA process. For this purpose the process is presented in a systematic approach:

- ☛ **Step 1: Identification of Stakeholders and/or Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs).** Key stakeholders have been identified including:
 - Landowners and/or occupiers of affected land portions.
 - Landowners and/or occupiers located on land portions directly adjacent to the farms where the activities will take place.
 - Government bodies / organs of state that have jurisdiction over the area where the activities will take place.
 - Ward Councillors representing host communities in proximity to the site.
 - The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (e.g. to confirm land claims and if applicable, land claimants will be registered as stakeholders).
 - Associations and non-governmental organisations that might have an interest in the area.
- ☛ **Step 2: Notification of Stakeholder and/or I&APs of the proposed project, via adverts, notices, BIDs to request these parties to register (please see the section on “Be an Integral Part of the Environmental Assessment Process”).**
- ☛ **Step 3: All stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to share their views, raise concerns and clarify their expectations as it relates to the planned activities. Comments and concerns can be submitted in writing. A written record of the stakeholder engagement process, the stakeholder comments and concerns will be compiled into a Report on Results of Consultation, and will be submitted to the DMRE for consideration. All registered stakeholders will be provided with written feedback to address any questions and concerns.**
- ☛ **Step 4: I&APs are provided with the opportunity to review documents and comment on these. I&APs will be provided with 30 days to comment on the draft reports.**
- ☛ **Step 5: All registered stakeholders will be informed of the department’s decision regarding whether an environmental authorisation was granted or not.**

Be an Integral Part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process

Public involvement is an essential part of any environmental process. All comments will be recorded and presented to the project team and regulatory authorities. Registered I&APs will receive feedback on how comments have been taken into account and the outcome of the assessment. They will further receive updates on the status of the project.

How to Register and get involved?

Parties wishing to register as I&APs, who wish to participate by contributing comments, or require additional information, should please register or submit their correspondence in writing to BATHO EARTH Environmental Consulting. Please refer to the Registration Form attached. All relevant comments will be incorporated into a draft and final Basic Assessment Report, which will be made available to all registered I&APs for review and comment.

Project Timeframes and Opportunities for Involvement

Action	Timeline	Comment
Register as a stakeholder	From 20 April 2022 onwards	Care has been taken to include various relevant I&AP groupings. Should there be other stakeholders you would like to be involved in the process, please send their details to the Public Participation Consultants
Review of Draft Scoping Report and Plan of Study.	29 April – 01 June 2022	All registered stakeholders will be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Report.
Submit comments and concerns	01 June 2022	All comments and concerns submitted by this date will be accepted, responded to and included in the Public Participation Report that will form part of the Final Scoping Report
Submit all received comments to the DMRE.	08 June 2022	Submit Final Scoping Report to the DMRE
Review of Draft EIA Report and Environmental Management Plan	Timeframes to be determined on completion of Scoping Phase	All comments and concerns submitted by this date will be accepted, responded to and included in the Public Participation Report that will form part of the Final EIA Report
Submit all received comments to the DMRE.	Timeframes to be determined on completion of Scoping Phase	Incorporate all comment on the Final EIA Report for decision making

Registration Form

Name:		Surname:	
Title:		Initials:	
Organisation / interest:		Capacity (e.g. Chairperson):	
Postal / Residential address			
	Area:		Code:
Contact details	Tel:	()	
	Fax:	()	
	Mobile:	()	
	Email:		
Please mark with an X to indicate whether you would like to participate in the process:			Yes
			No
Preferred method of communication	Email		Fax
Date commented	(DD / MM / YYYY)		
What is your main area of interest with regard to the proposed project?			
What are your points of concern or support for this project?			
Please indicate in which aspects you would require more information			
Please indicate the contact details of any I&APs whom you think should be contacted			
Name:		Surname:	
Tel:	()	Fax:	()
Mobile:	()	Email:	
<p>In order to be registered as an I&AP for this project please return the completed registration form to BATHO EARTH:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BATHO EARTH: Ms Ingrid Snyman or Ms Diana Verster Postnet Private Suit 415, Private Bag x8, ELARDUSPARK, 0047 Mobile: 082 779 2750 (Ingrid) or 073 157 7362 (Diana) E-mail: ingrid@bathoearth.co.za or diana@bathoearth.co.za</p> <p>Thank you for your participation.</p>			