



**Chris Hani District Municipality**  
Proposed Development of CHDM  
Cluster 2 RS1, RS2 and RS6 Water  
Supply Scheme



**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**  
**DOCUMENT**

March 2013

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Fieldwork has been appointed by Uhambiso Consulting Engineers on behalf of the Chris Hani District Municipality to undertake the legally required application process for Environmental Authorisation for the proposed construction of bulk and reticulated water supply infrastructure for rural communities in the area around Xonxa Dam in the Emalahleni and Intsika Yethu Local Municipalities. This Background Information Document (BID) serves as notice of the proposed activities, of the environmental impact assessment process that will take place, and as a request for any comments regarding the Project and EIA process. Should you be interested in registering as an 'Interested and Affected Party' and/or in submitting comments or information on the Project, please use page 4 of this document to register your interest.

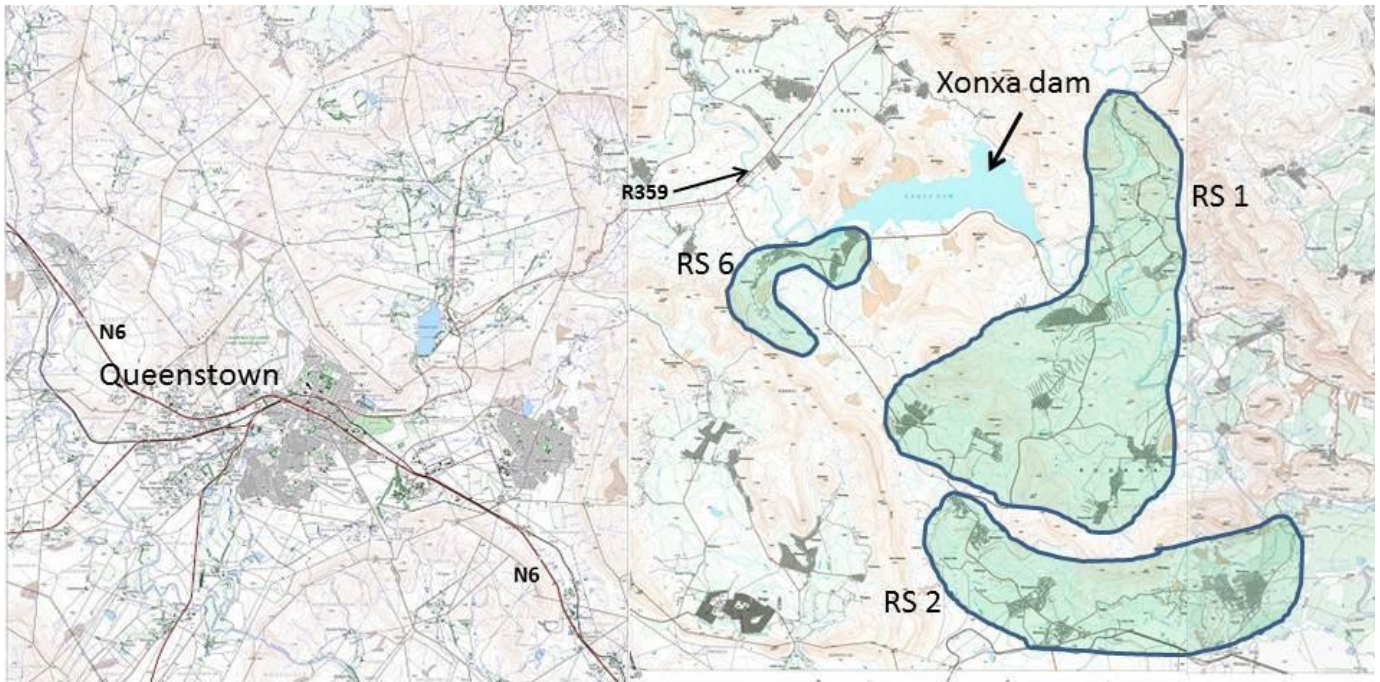
**A public meeting will be held if there is sufficient interest generated in response to the advertisement of the project and/or is requested by local officials.**

**2. PROJECT LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Project is located in the Eastern Cape, near the Xonxa Dam, which is 25 km to the north east of Queenstown. There are elements of the project in both the Emalahleni and Intsika Yethu Local Municipalities both of which lie within the Chris Hani District Municipality (CHDM). The project has three parts which consist of: Regional Scheme 1 (RS 1) to the east and south of Xonxa Dam, Regional Scheme 2 (RS 2) to the south of Xonxa Dam and Regional Scheme 6 (RS 6; originally part of Regional Scheme 2) to the south west of Xonxa Dam (Figure 1). The development of RS 6 and a water supply to the Jiphuta-Makhikhi village complex in RS 1 are considered to be priorities.

The purpose of the Project is to construct bulk and distribution water supply infrastructure for 4,158 households in 32 villages in Wards 1 and 6 of the Emalahleni Local Municipality and Ward 5 of the Intsika Yethu Local Municipality. The Wards consist entirely of rural communities and almost the entire population relies on informal sources of water which results in frequent health problems. The objective of the proposed Regional Water Supply Schemes is to deliver to these communities a "free, safe, basic" water supply that is aligned with RDP standards.

The Project design includes the construction of new boreholes and upgrading of existing boreholes, and the construction of bulk (40 km), and distribution (122 km) water supply pipelines and village standpipes to RDP standards. Construction of pump stations, break pressure tanks, concrete and steel reservoirs, as well as a gravel road to access the reservoirs, boreholes and pump stations in Regional Scheme 1, are included in the design.



**Figure 1: Location of the proposed Regional Schemes 1, 2 and 6 of the CHDM Cluster 2 Water Supply Programme.**

### **3. THE ENVIRONMENT**

The Project is located in a rural environment with traditional villages scattered throughout the area. The topography of the area consists generally of hills and valleys and the area is intersected throughout by numerous water courses and drainage lines. The Wit Kei River is the principal water course in the area, draining into the Xonxa Dam from the north west and exiting the dam to south east. Much of the area is degraded. The vegetation types for the Project area are Tsomo Grassland to the west, south, and east, and Drakensberg Moist Grassland to the south east. Tsomo Grassland is considered a vulnerable vegetation type while Drakensberg Moist Grassland is considered least threatened. The full sensitivity of the general area from a biophysical and human perspective will be confirmed during the environmental impact assessment studies and will be reported accordingly (see below).

### **4. THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT – Chris Hani Region) have confirmed that the project includes 'listed activities' in terms of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (as amended). As such it will be necessary to obtain Environmental Authorisation before any activities can commence. The 'listed activities', as described in gazetted listing notices, relate to: disturbing areas within 32m of a watercourse as listed in Government Notice R544 (items 11 and 18), the construction of roads outside urban areas (item 22) as well as the construction of infrastructure, clearance of vegetation and storage of water in Critical Biodiversity Areas (Government Notice R546: items 2, 4, 12 and 16). Given the scope of the 'listed activities' associated with the project, the application for Environmental Authorisation will need to be supported by a Basic Assessment Report (BAR).

The BAR will be prepared as per Sections 21 -22 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2010 (GNR 543). The purpose of the Basic Environmental Assessment is to identify and assess potential environmental impacts which may arise as a result of the construction and operation phases of the proposed water supply project. This will be achieved through public and stakeholder consultations, literature reviews, field investigations and specialist studies.

An integral and mandatory component of the BAR is Public Participation, whereby interested and affected persons and the public at large are informed of the Project and afforded the opportunity to participate in the EIA process. The EIA

Regulations describe the minimum level of public involvement, including the posting of newspaper advertisements and the placing of a notice board(s) on site, public meetings (if required) and opportunities to review document. Further to these requirements the following have been or will be undertaken:

- An Advertisement has been placed in both the Daily Dispatch newspaper and the local Queenstown newspaper (Rep Newspaper; 5 April 2013). The Notice informs the public of the project and invites them to register as an Interested and Affected Person/Party in the assessment process.
- Noticeboards have been placed at Xonxa village immediately south west of Xonxa Dam, at Tshatshu village to the south east of Xonxa Dam and at Emmangweni village in the south of the project area (7 April 2013).
- A public meeting will be arranged if sufficient interest is generated in response to the advertisements, and/or local officials specifically request a meeting during initial consultation.
- The Draft Basic Assessment Report will be made available for comment before submission to the authorities.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

**Chris Hani District Municipality - Proposed development of CHDM Cluster 2 RS1, RS2 and RS6 Water Supply Scheme.**

**Comments on the Proposed EIA Process, Concerns and Issues**

Your comments on this questionnaire will contribute towards ensuring that the process which is applied to direct the Basic Environmental Assessment is sound and will permit an informed project decision to be taken. **The deadline for receipt of comments is 29 April 2013.** Contact details are provided below.

Name: .....

Contact details: .....  
(email, cellphone etc.) .....

1. Do you wish to be registered as an Interested and Affected Party in the Basic Environmental Assessment Process?

YES  NO

2. Do you have any concerns which you believe should be addressed in the EIA and which you would like to bring to the attention of the EIA team? [Additional space for comments is provided overleaf]

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3. Are there any additional interested and affected parties (I&APs) that you feel should be consulted in the course of the EIA? If yes, please indicate contact name, email, address and/or telephone number so we may contact this person or organisation.

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4. Is the process which is proposed for the EIA in accordance with the principles of Environmental Management which are promoted in South Africa?

YES  NO

If no, describe briefly how you believe the process could be improved:

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

**THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTERING AS INTERESTED AFFECTED PARTIES AND/OR RETURNING  
COMMENTS IS 29 April 2013.**

**Please return your details/comments to:**

Dr Peter Fielding

FieldWork

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Phone: 043 721 0677 Fax: 043 721 1535 Email: [fieldwork@mweb.co.za](mailto:fieldwork@mweb.co.za)