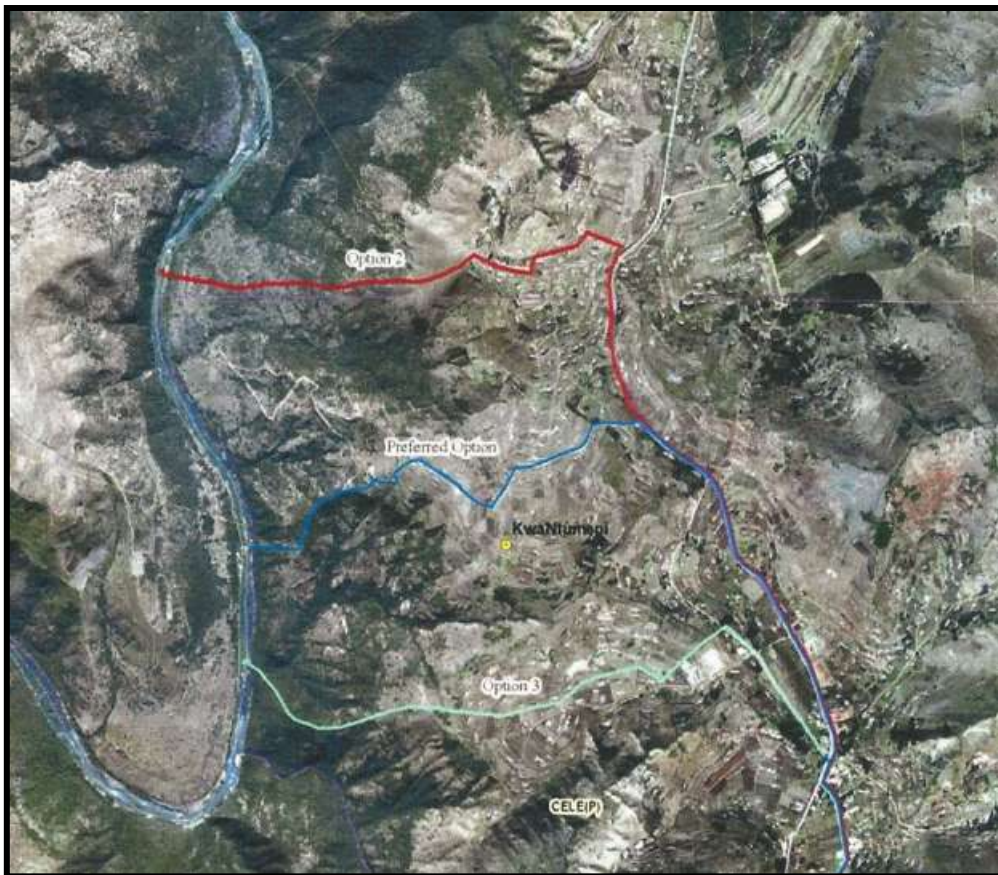


BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

PROPOSED MHLABATSHANE BULK WATER SUPPLY SCHEME PHASE 2 PROJECT, KWAZULU-NATAL

DEA REF NO: DC



OCTOBER 2014

Prepared by:



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide information to interested and affected parties (I&APs) regarding the proposed Mhlabatshane Bulk Water Supply Scheme – Phase 2, KwaZulu-Natal.

Based on guidance from the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), a Basic Assessment for environmental authorisation must be completed. The listed activities in Listing Notice 1 (18 June 2010) of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) are being applied for as per the project description. A Water Use License Application (WULA) in terms of the National Water Act (Act No 36 of 1998) will be triggered by the project scope.

The application for authorisation was made by Triplo4 Sustainable Solutions, as an independent environmental assessment practitioner, on behalf of Umgeni Water. Tripo4 Sustainable Solutions will undertake the Basic Assessment Process with the intention to obtain environmental authorisation for the proposed project.

This document describes the proposed Mhlabatshane Bulk Water Supply Scheme Phase 2 and provides an overview of the environmental authorisation processes. It also provides I&APs with an initial opportunity to register and comment on the proposed environmental process of the project

The Basic Assessment Report with relevant attachments will be available for public review for a period of 40 days as part of the environmental authorisation processes, to provide stakeholders with additional information and further opportunities to raise issues of concern and suggestions for enhanced benefits. Thereafter, the final Basic Assessment Report will be submitted to the DEA for consideration.

Your comments, issues, concerns and suggestions on any aspect of the proposed project, including the technical and public participation processes, will help to focus the application, and will ultimately assist the authorities to make a decision.

Please complete the enclosed comment and registration sheet or contact Triplo4 Sustainable Solutions by mailing or faxing a letter, or by telephone or e-mail, should you wish to receive further information about the proposed project and the BA.

Return address for comments and to register as an Interested and Affected Party:

Attention: Kushela Naidoo

Triplo4 Sustainable Solutions

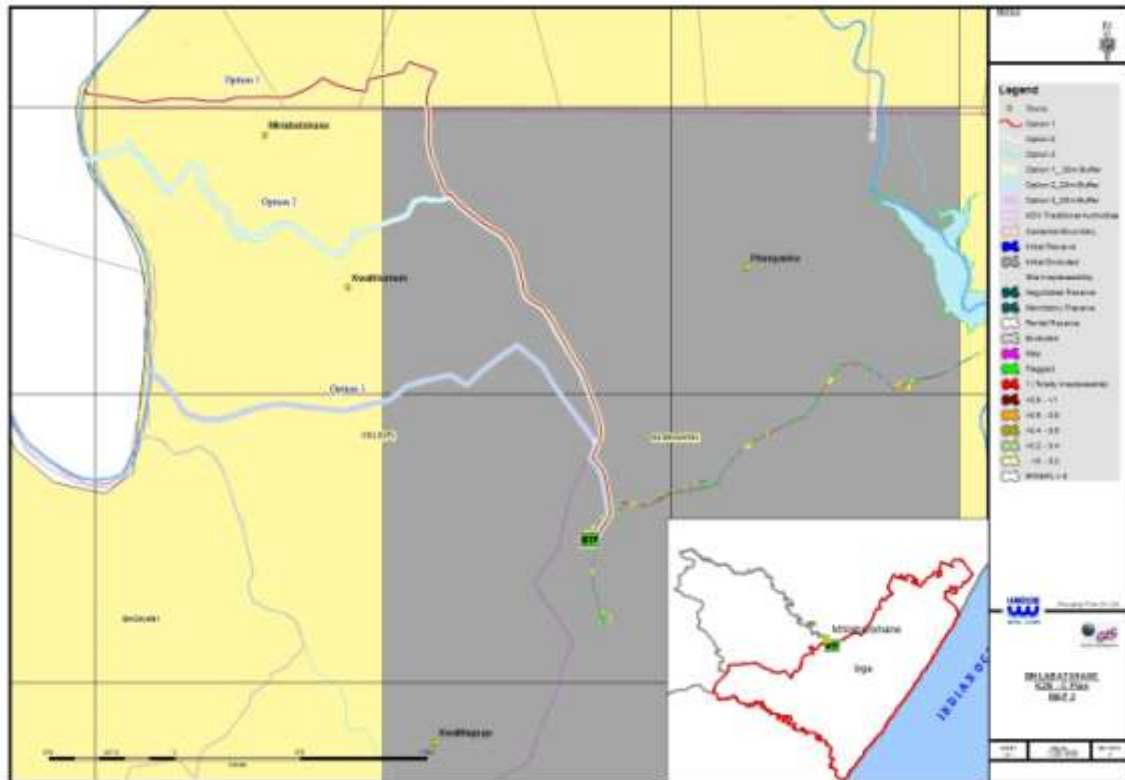
24 Agar Place, Riverside, Durban North, 4051

Office: 031 563 4422 Cell: 082 355 4526 Fax: 032 946 0826

E-Mail: kushela@triplo4.com

LOCATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed Mlabatshane Bulk Water Supply Scheme is to be situated in the Southern KwaZulu-Natal, downstream (east) of the Umzimkulu River and west of the Mhlabatshane Dam within the Ugu District Municipality.



PROJECT MOTIVATION

The project proposes to provide the surrounding community with a source of safe and reliable potable water. Many of these households have not had access to potable water in the past and the ones that did were very unreliable. The project also intends to increase the level of infrastructure in the area in terms of water supply to meet the growing demands.

Numerous temporary employment opportunities will be offered to members of the local community during the construction phase, and labor intensive processes will be used wherever feasible. Increased permanent employment opportunities may also be offered at the water supply scheme due to its increased size and capacity.

PROJECT DETAIL

The overall project, initiated by Umgeni Water, proposes the construction of a bulk water treatment and distribution system to the supply areas in Mhlabatshane and surroundings, together with associated distribution and reticulation networks to meet the current and future water needs in the area. This region falls within the uMzumbi local municipality and has a population of approximately 194 000 people.

This application is only dealing with Phase 2 of the project.

The construction of the Mhlabatshane Dam has been designed to supply a maximum of 4MI/day and a further 8MI/day can be augmented from the Umzimkulu River. Raw water from the Umzimkulu River, along with the 4MI/d from the Mhlabatshane Dam will be treated at the existing water treatment works currently 4MI/d, to be upgraded to 8MI/d. The following infrastructure is envisaged for Phase 2 of the project:

- A River abstraction works and weir on the Umzimkulu River
- A pipeline to a sand trap
- A desilting mechanism
- A pressurised pipeline to the WTW
- A high lift pumpstation
- Storage at the WTW
- Upgrading of the WTW from 4MI/d to 8MI/d

The total pipeline route is about 12.5km for the preferred route as well as alternatives. The Preferred route is approximately 5.4km long. Option 2 is approximately 3.5km long and Option 3 is approximately 3.2km long.

The objective of this project is to establish sub-regional bulk potable water source at Mhlabashane and to provide the bulk conveyance infrastructure to convey this treated water to as large a proportion of the region as is feasible. As such, the project boundaries or footprint is quite flexible. As some of the existing schemes in the region are not reliable and the reticulations do not serve all populations, these aspects will be addressed and the current systems refurbished and / or extended where needed.

Phase 2 of the Mhlabatshane BWSS aims to meet the future demand requirements of the area. Mhlabatshane Phase 2 seeks to ensure basic water service delivery to the rural communities of Mhlabatshane, KwaNtumeni and Phungashe areas involving a proposed weir and pipeline from the Mzimkhulu River to a water treatment plant in the Nlangwini area. Water will be abstracted directly from the Umzimkhulu River, pumped to the existing Water Treatment Works (WTW), which will need to be upgraded, and then fed into the reticulation system via an existing command reservoir. The scope of the project extends from the Mzimkhulu River where a weir will be constructed. The pipeline will traverse of the Mhlabatshane and KwaNtumeni areas to the water works site in the Nlangwini area.

ALTERNATIVES & SPECIALIST EVALUATION

Three different route alternatives being investigated are depicted in blue, red and cyan below.



The Preferred alternative is shown in blue. The three pipeline options shown above all traverse similar landscape and also have similar vegetation cover. Option 2, however, runs largely along private land plots while the Preferred route and Option 3 traverse tribal land.

The specialist studies which have been identified and will be conducted include:

- Ecological Impact Assessment;
- Wetland Impact Assessment;
- Heritage Impact Assessment; and
- Rehabilitation Plan

ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSES

Relevant Environmental Legislation

The below mentioned environmental activities are potentially being triggered by the proposed development, requiring a Basic Assessment Process to be conducted and thus Environmental Authorisation from DEA:

:

Indicate the number and date of the relevant notice:	Activity No (s) (in terms of the relevant or notice) :	Describe each listed activity as per the project description (and not as per wording of the relevant Government Notice) ¹ :
GNR 543, 2010 Listing Notice 1	Activity 9:	<p>The construction of facilities or infrastructure exceeding 1000 metres in length for the bulk transportation of water, sewage or storm water -</p> <p>(i) with an internal diameter of 0,36 metres or more; or</p> <p>(ii) with a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more</p> <p>The proposed pipeline is approximately 5 400 metres in length. It has an internal diameter of 0,396 metres and a throughput of 187 litres per second.</p>
Listing Notice 1	Activity 11:	<p>The construction of:</p> <p>(i) weirs</p> <p>(ii) infrastructure or structures covering 50 square metres or more</p> <p>where such construction occurs within a watercourse or within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse, excluding where such construction will occur behind the development setback line.</p> <p>The weir will be constructed within a watercourse.</p>
Listing Notice 1	Activity 18	<p>The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock from</p> <p>(i) a watercourse</p> <p>Trenching via machinery will be required for the</p>

¹ Please note that this description should not be a repetition of the listed activity as contained in the relevant Government Notice, but should be a brief description of activities to be undertaken as per the project description, i.e. describe the components of the desired development

		laying of the pipeline resulting in infilling and removal of soil from a watercourse
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A person who wishes to commence, undertake or conduct an activity listed in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, or NEMA EIA Listing Notice 1 activities must conduct a basic assessment process.

Basic Assessment Process

The basic assessment process being followed comprises of the following:

- Submission of an Application for Authorization to DEA;
- Public participation Process:
 - Submission of a Background Information Document (this document) to identified stakeholders;
 - An advertisement in the local newspaper
 - Placement of a site notification at the site notifying I&AP's of the proposed activity and inviting them to register; and;
 - Relevant I&AP's consultation to address issues and concerns raised;
- Compilation of Draft Basic Assessment Report for I&AP's review and comments, which will be available for review and comment for a period of 40 days;
- Submission of a Basic Assessment Report and details of I&AP consultation to the DAEA, for a decision;
- Communication to I&AP's regarding the Environmental Authorisation.

Public Participation Process

The public participation process and time frames are summarized as follows:

Announcing the opportunity to participate and register,

- Written notice will be made to registered I&AP's on availability of documents to review as well as associated timeframes
- Distribution of the Background Information Document to all identified stakeholders to announce the project and inviting stakeholders to register as an I&AP and participate in the public participation process;
- Posting of the site notice at the site;
- Advertisement in the local newspaper.

Obtaining initial comment,

- Providing this BID and comment sheets to stakeholders; and
- Capturing all comments in a Comment and Response Report / Issues Trail.

Draft BA Report

- Availability of the draft BA report which will contain a full project description, alternatives considered, and relevant information.

Submitting the final BA report to Authorities, providing a comment period of 40 days (excluding public holidays); and

Submitting the final BA report to DAEA for consideration and communicating the decision to I&AP's.

Your contributions are important

You can get involved in the process:

1. By responding (by phone, fax or e-mail) to our invitation for your involvement in the process;
2. By completing the attached comment form and e-mailing, posting or faxing it to Triplo4 Sustainable Solutions;
3. In writing contacting or telephoning consultants if you have a query, comment or require further project information; and
4. By reviewing and commenting on the BA Report within the allowed 40-day review period.

In terms of the NEMA Regulations (GN 543) you are invited to formally register as an I&AP.

Please note that in terms of Regulation 56 (c), I&AP's need to disclose any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which they may have in the approval or refusal of the application.

Please register by 30 November 2014 by completing the enclosed registration and comment sheet and please declare the interest with regard to the project with your comments.

