

# N3 TOLL ROAD UPGRADE HARRISMITH TO WARDEN

## Public Notice

The South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (SANRAL) has identified the need to improve operational conditions on the existing N3 Toll Road between Harrismith (N3/7X km 37.0) and Warden (N3-8X km 10.9).



## “What is an I&AP?”

An “Interested and Affected Party” (I&AP) means a party contemplated in section 24(4)(d) of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), and which in terms of that section includes –

(a) Any person, group of persons or organisation interested in or affected by an activity; and

(b) Any organ of state that may have jurisdiction over any aspect of the activity.

## Purpose of the Document

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to offer stakeholders initial information regarding the Basic Environmental Assessment Application process that South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (SANRAL) must undertake to improve operational conditions on the existing N3 Toll Road between Harrismith (N3/7X km 37.0) and Warden (N3-8X km 10.9).

The proposed improvements for the project will include several components, such as the construction of seven interchanges, widening of five bridges, widening of one major culvert, and the linking of various accesses to the newly constructed interchanges.

An Environmental Authorisation is required in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act 107 of 1998).

To fulfil these requirements, a Basic Assessment (BA) will be conducted, and an Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) will be formulated by Environamic Environmental Consultants, appointed as independent environmental consultants for the project.

This BA and EMPr will be submitted to the competent authority on behalf of the applicant, SANRAL. The information contained in this document serves the following purposes for stakeholders:

1. Provides an understanding of the proposed project to facilitate informed comments.
2. Clarifies the environmental authorization process for meaningful participation.
3. Assists in identifying environmental issues for investigation during the assessment phase.



## Specialist Studies

Environamic Environmental Consultants have identified several site environmental sensitivities in accordance with the screening requirements for Environmental Authorizations as mandated by the 2014 EIA Regulations.

Based on these site sensitivities, a range of specialist studies have been outlined to assess potential environmental impacts. These detailed studies will span various disciplines, including:

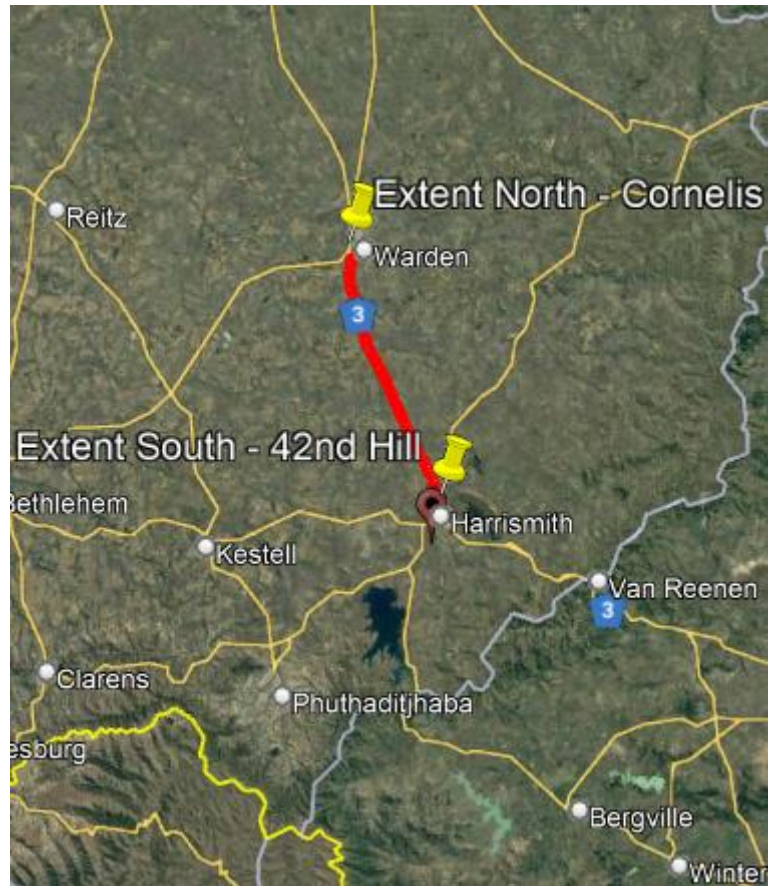
- Agriculture/Land capability
- Archaeological and Cultural
- Civil Aviation and Site Sensitivity
- Freshwater and Aquatic
- Palaeontology
- Terrestrial Fauna and Flora.

These studies will primarily focus on evaluating environmental impacts that could arise during both the construction and operational phases of the road upgrade.

It's important to note that these reports are an integral part of the Basic Assessment Application process, as required by law. Construction of the works commences after receiving authorization from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE).

### Who to contact for additional information regarding the project?

**Mr. Etienne van der Lith**  
 Tel: 082 781 9454  
 Fax: 086 52 51 007  
[participation@environamic.co.za](mailto:participation@environamic.co.za)



This Background Information Document (BID) serves to outline the various components of the proposed N3 Toll Road upgrade. Its purpose is to facilitate interested and affected parties (I&APs) in gaining an understanding of the potential environmental and social ramifications associated with the project. Additionally, it explains the environmental authorization procedure and underscores the opportunities for public engagement throughout the study's progression.

Further details will be made accessible to all registered I&APs during the environmental authorization process. I&APs will be afforded the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Basic Assessment Report before its submission. A summary encompassing all comments and contributions received will subsequently be presented to the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment for a decision on project authorization.

Furthermore, copies of the reports will be furnished to the Department of Water Affairs (DWA), the Free State Departments of Economic Development, Small Business Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs, as well as the Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality and the Phumelela Local Municipality, inviting their input and commentary.

## The Environmental Authorisation Process

The proposed project necessitates the preparation and submission of both a Basic Assessment (BA) and an Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) to the pertinent authorities for approval. These documents will outline the processes and management measures associated with all proposed project-related activities.

In this regard, SANRAL has enlisted the services of Environamic Environmental Consultants as independent environmental consultants tasked with preparing a BA/EMPr. Their role entails assessing the potential biophysical and social impacts stemming from the proposed project. They will identify these impacts and offer mitigation and management strategies designed to minimize adverse effects and augment project benefits, all within the framework of the project's situational analysis.

The objective is to file an application to fulfil the requisites of the Basic Assessment Process, as stipulated in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Listed Activities (2017) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998). The application will encompass the following activities:

Listed Activity	Description of project activity that triggers a listed activity
<p><b>Government Notice Regulation No 327</b> <b>Listing Notice 1 - Activity 19</b></p> <p>The infilling or deposition of any material of more than 10 cubic meters into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 cubic meters from a watercourse.</p>	<p>Five existing bridges will be widened; several water culverts may be extended to accommodate the new interchanges.</p>
<p><b>Government Notice Regulation No 327</b> <b>Listing Notice 1 - Activity 24</b></p> <p>The development of a road ii) with a reserve wider than 13.5 meters, or where no reserve exists where the road is wider than 8 meters.</p>	<p>Sections of linkage road will have to be constructed to link existing access roads to the newly constructed interchanges.</p>
<p><b>Government Notice Regulation No 327</b> <b>Listing Notice 1 - Activity 56</b></p> <p>The widening of a road by more than 6 meters, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre- ii) where the existing reserve is more than 13.5 metres.</p>	<p>Sections of linkage road will have to be constructed to link existing access roads to the newly constructed interchanges.</p>

Listed Activity	Description of project activity that triggers a listed activity
<p><b>Government Notice Regulation No 324 Listing Notice 3 - Activity 14</b></p> <p>The development of (iii) bridges exceeding 10 square meters in size.</p>	<p>The construction work associated with the construction of new and widening of existing bridges will exceed 10 square meters within the ambient of potentially sensitive areas.</p>
<p><b>Government Notice Regulation No 324 Listing Notice 3 - Activity 18</b></p> <p>The widening of a road by more than 4 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre.</p>	<p>The construction work associated with the construction of linkage roads within the ambient of potentially sensitive areas.</p>

## Project Details

The South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) has identified the need to improve operational conditions on the existing N3 Toll Road between Harrismith (N3/7X km 37.0) and Warden (N3-8X km 10.9). The proposed improvements for the project will include several components, such as the construction of seven interchanges, widening of five bridges, widening of one major culvert, and the linking of various accesses to the newly constructed interchanges.

Primarily, the widening and upgrading activities will be executed within the current road reserve. Additional land will only be requisitioned for segments of the interchanges that extend beyond the existing road reserve, as well as short road sections necessary to link pre-existing accesses with the proposed interchanges.

The implementation and supervision of this construction project for the work required to improve the operational conditions on the N3 Toll Road will be under the purview of N3 Toll Concession (RF) Proprietary Ltd (N3TC). The N3 Toll Road forms part of the Concession Contract between SANRAL and the N3 Toll Concession (RF) Proprietary Limited.

## How I&APs can Participate

I&APs can participate in the Environmental Authorisation Process by submitting their comments in the following ways:

1. Respond to our invitation to register as an I&AP, which will be advertised in local newspapers and by site notices;
2. Fax or e-mail the attached Registration and Comment Form to the relevant personnel at Environamic Environmental Consultants;
3. Review and comment on the Draft Basic Assessment Reports that will be made available to the public for a 30-day commenting period.

Additional I&APs will be identified where possible during the course of the public participation process and will be able to contribute if required.

## Feedback

Communication with Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) will be facilitated through various means, including emails and SMS. The Public Participation process for the Basic Assessment and Environmental Management Programme (BA/EMPr) has been thoughtfully designed to ensure focused engagement with I&APs.

Registered I&APs will receive feedback at key stages throughout the BA/EMPr process, both during its various phases and after the competent authority has issued a final decision. This aims to ensure that I&APs are informed about project developments and decisions made by the competent authority.

Once the Draft Basic Assessment Report and associated documentation have been reviewed and comments have been received from I&APs, these materials will be submitted to the competent authority for a final decision on the project. Following this decision, registered I&APs will be informed of the outcome and provided with information on the process for appealing the decision, should they choose to do so.

# Interaction with Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs)

To ensure that Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) can contribute meaningfully to the Basic Assessment and Environmental Management Programme (BA/EMPr) process, it is crucial that they gain an understanding of the technical aspects related to the project. Thus, it is proposed that all I&APs register upon receiving invitations to do so.

During the public participation process, a Draft Basic Assessment Report will be released for review and commentary, allowing a 30-day window for registered I&APs to provide their input. Comments received during this period will be duly considered and integrated into the Final Draft Basic Assessment Report.

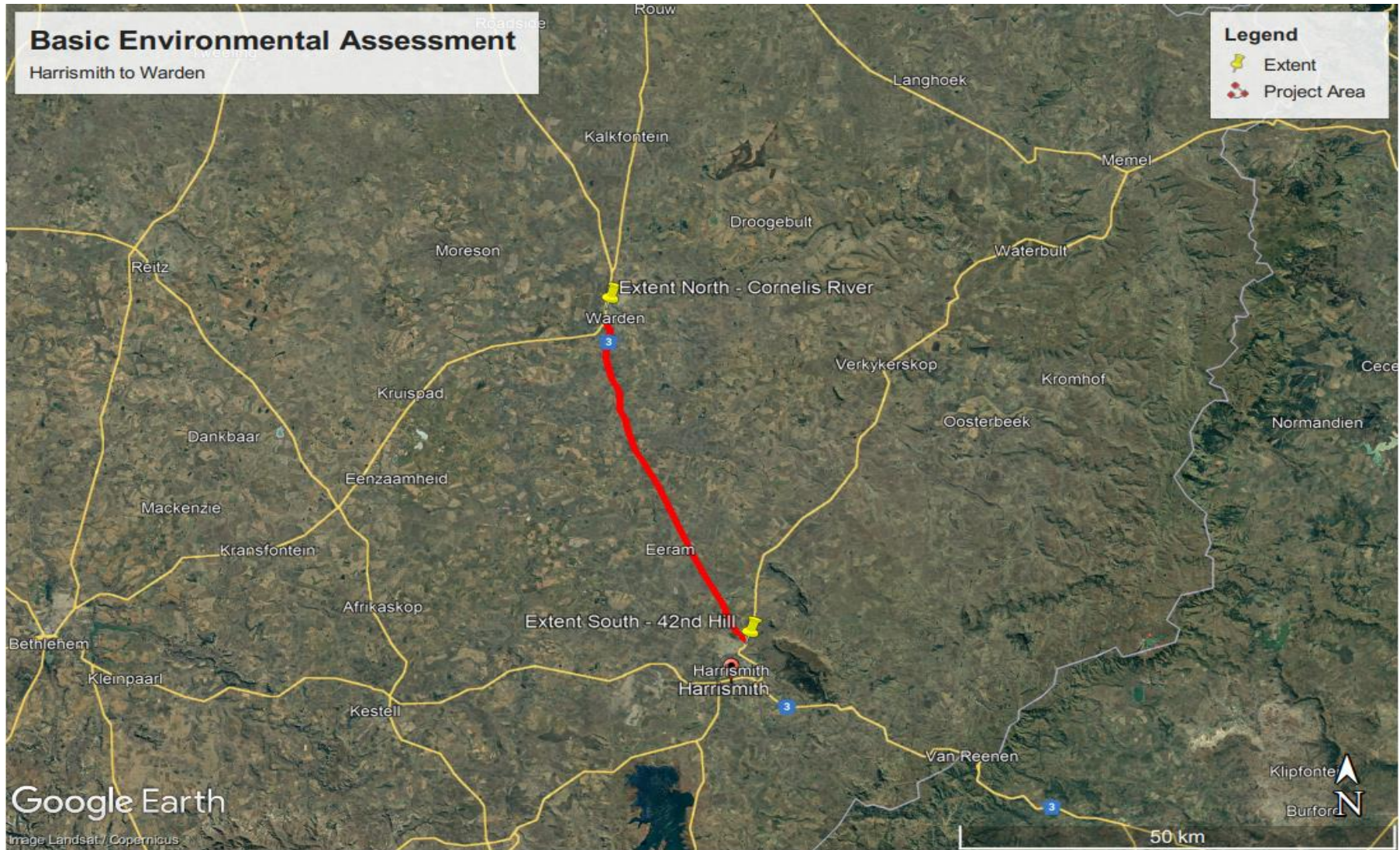
To facilitate transparency and understanding, a summary report listing the comments from I&APs, along with explanations of how each comment has been addressed, will be compiled. This document will be included in the submission to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) for approval.

Relevant documentation will be made accessible through Environamic's website at [www.environamic.co.za](http://www.environamic.co.za).

The following entities have been identified as key stakeholders in the process thus far:

- Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality
- Phumelela Local Municipality
- Neotel
- Spoornet
- Shell
- South African Heritage Resources Agency
- Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority
- Free State Departments of Economic, Small business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs
- Departments of Water and Sanitation - National and Free State Province
- Surrounding community members and landowners
- Eeram Boerevereniging.

Figure 1: Google Earth Project Map



# Stakeholder Registration and Comment Form

I would like to receive further information and notifications during this process and request that you please register me on your database as an interested and affected party.

Date:	
Full name:	
Organisation & Role:	
Postal address:	
Work/Day Tel Number:	
Work/Day Fax Number:	
Cell phone number:	
E-mail address:	

Comment: (Please feel free to attach additional pages if required.)
