

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS
AND
INTEGRATED WATER USE LICENSE APPLICATION**



**PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE AND INTEGRATED HUMAN SETTLEMENT
(HOUSING DEVELOPMENT) IN DIRKIESDORP, MKHONDO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA
PROVINCE**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

WHAT DOES THIS DOCUMENT TELL YOU?

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide Interested and/or Affected Parties (I&APs) with background information about the proposed housing development in Dirkiesdorp on Portion 3 of the farm Schoonderzigt 68HT, in the Mkhondo Local Municipality (MLM), Mpumalanga Province. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Integrated Water Use License Application (IWULA) Process will be undertaken for the proposed project. The BID further explains how I&APs can become involved in the project, receive information as the EIA progresses, and raise comments and/or concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on the environment. You are hereby invited to register as an I&AP on the project' database by completing and submitting the attached Registration and Comments Form to the public participation office (see details below).

This BID document will help you to:

- Determine if you are interested in and/or affected by the proposed project;
- Better understand the project in order to be able to provide comment; and
- Understand the environmental authorisation process so that you are able to participate effectively.

WHAT DOES THE PROJECT ENTAIL?

The Mkhondo Local Municipality proposes to develop a mix use human settlement (township) at Dirkiesdorp, Mpumalanga province. The proposed development will consist of a 1000 stands with each stand being approximately 400-500 m².

The development footprint for the proposed township development is approximately 305.0339 Hectares (Ha) (Municipal owned land), however it should be noted that only 100 hectares will be used for this development. The proposed township development will consist of mix-use infrastructure, which will include the following:

- Businesses;
- Churches;
- Clinics;
- Municipal Facilities;
- Multi-Purpose Centre;
- Parks;
- Roads;
- Residential dwelling;
- Schools; and
- Sports fields.

Mkhondo Local Municipality will also include the following services infrastructure for the proposed development:

- A sewerage package plant and associated infrastructure;
- Water Infrastructure and
- Roads infrastructure.

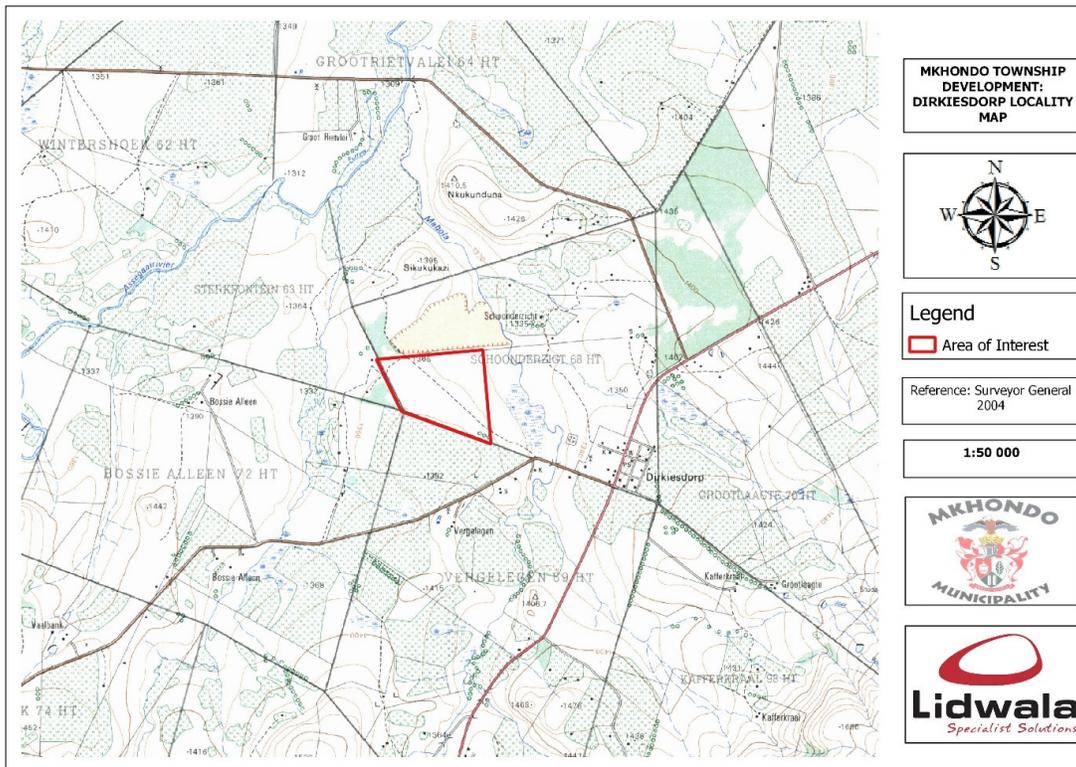


Figure 1: Locality map of the proposed development area

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT?

A number of potential environmental impacts associated with the project are anticipated. As part of the EIA, these potential impacts will be assessed through the following specialist studies, with the allocated specialists:

Specialist Study	Organisation and or Specialist Responsible for the Study
Biodiversity Scoping Study	Lidwala (SA)
Heritage Impact Assessment (Scoping)	J A van Schalkwyk
Wetland Scoping Study	Lidwala (SA)
Social Impact Assessment	Lidwala (SA)

As part of the Scoping Study, desktop specialist studies will identify potential issues which require further investigation within the EIA phase including potential additional studies that may be required. Input from I&APs through the public participation process also provides valuable input in the identification of issues requiring investigation within this EIA process. More detailed studies on potentially significant impacts will be investigated within the EIA phase of the project for each aspect.

WHY ARE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES NEEDED?

In terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (2014) and the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) (NWA), the Mkhondo Local Municipality requires authorisation from the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) for the undertaking of the proposed project. The EIA Regulations are published in Government Notice R982, R983, R984 and R985 of 8 December 2014 in terms of Section 24 (5) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA), the listed activities are set out in Government Notices R983 to R985 and the National Water Act (NWA) activities are listed in GN 19182. In order to obtain an environmental authorisation and the relevant Water Use license for this project, comprehensive, independent environmental studies must be undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

An EIA is a legislative tool that is used to ensure that potential impacts that may occur due to any proposed development are identified before execution, and can therefore either be avoided or mitigated (minimised). In South African legislation the environment includes social, economic and bio-physical aspects (and their interactions) and the EIA must assess these equitably.

Table 1 below shows the listed activities that are triggered by the development. Should you wish to obtain a detailed description of these activities, please contact the Public Participation office (with details provided below).

Table 1: Listed Activities

NEMA	No. R. 983	12	28										
	No. R. 984	15											
	No. R. 985	12	14	15									
NWA	GN 19182.	Section 21 (c)	Section (i)										

Mkhondo Local Municipality has appointed Lidwala Consulting Engineers (SA) (Pty) Ltd, as Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAP), to undertake the environmental studies to identify and assess all potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. As part of these environmental studies, all I&APs are invited to become actively involved through the public participation process.

The EIA process can be divided into 4 distinct phases:

Application and initial notification

During this phase an Environmental Authorisation Application will be submitted to DARDLEA. An initial notification process takes place whereby the public is informed of the proposed development through *inter alia*, newspaper adverts, notification letters, BIDs and site notices, including the Draft Scoping Report.

Scoping phase

The purpose of the scoping phase is:

- To undertake an environmental screening of the surrounding area in order to identify whether suitable alternative sites exist;
- To investigate and gather information on the proposed alternative sites, and the study area in order to establish an understanding of the area;
- To establish how the proposed development activities will potentially impact on the surrounding environment;
- To identify I&APs and relevant authorities by conducting a Public Participation Process (PPP);
- To identify potential environmental impacts that require detailed assessment at EIA phase, through investigation and PPP; and
- To describe and investigate the alternatives that may be considered.

EIA phase

During this phase all issues and proposed alternatives identified in the scoping phase are assessed and rated in terms of their significance. Where necessary, mitigation measures are recommended to reduce the significance of potential impacts. An Environmental Management Programme will then be compiled that will prescribe environmental specifications to be adhered to during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the project, should the environmental authorisation be granted. As with the scoping phase, the PPP is an integral and important part of the assessment phase. Once the Final Environmental Impact Report has been submitted to DARDLEA,

the decision making process will commence.

Environmental Authorisation and Water Use License

Due to the fact that the proposed project encompasses listed activities in NEMA and NWA, both an Environmental Authorisation (EA) in term of NEMA and a Water Use License (WUL) in terms of NWA is required. The EIA process to be undertaken is represented diagrammatically in **Figure 2**.

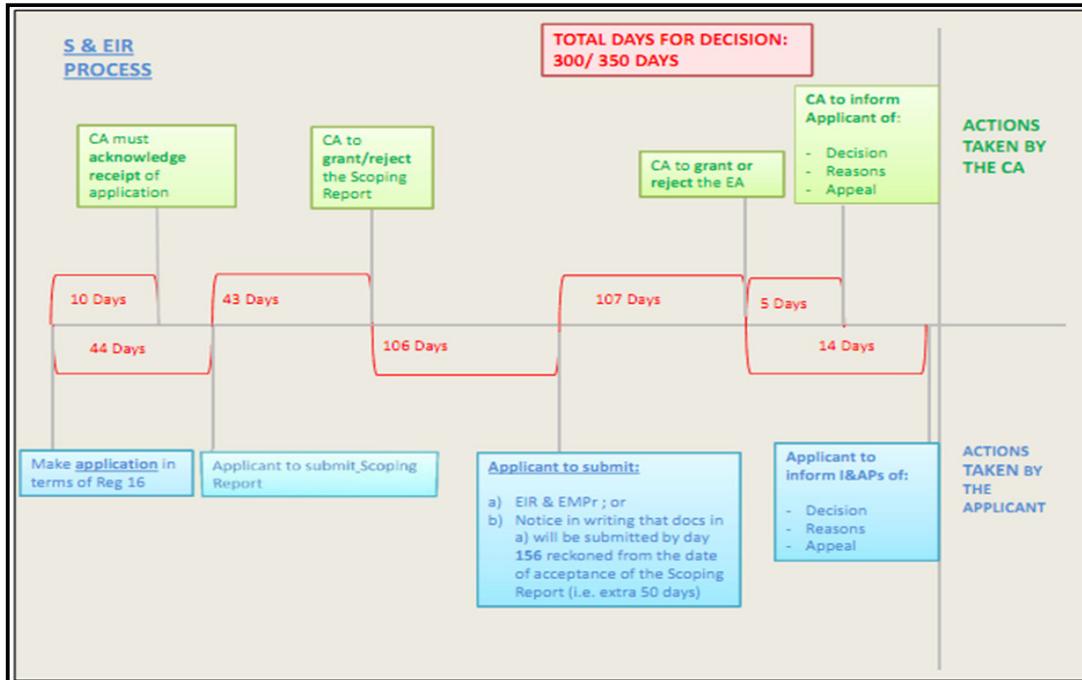


Figure 2: EIA process

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

It is important that relevant I&APs are identified and involved in the public participation process from the outset of the proposed project. The inputs received from I&APs form an integral part of the EIA and IWULA processes and will also assist the decision-making authorities with their decision-making. To ensure effective public participation, the process includes the following steps:

- STEP 1: Advertise the EIA and IWULA Process (Posters/BID's/local/community newspaper)
- STEP 2: Register I&APs and key stakeholders on the database (on-going)
- STEP 3: Consultation with, and transfer of information to, I&APs through consultation, public meetings, open days, or focus group meetings

STEP 4: Record and respond to all comments, issues and concerns raised by I&APs within a comments and response report, which will form an integral part of the EIA Reports

STEP 5: Invite I&APs to comment on the EIA Reports (30-day comment period)

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

1. By responding (by phone, fax or e-mail) to our invitation for your involvement which will also be advertised in a local newspaper.
2. By mailing, faxing or e-mail the attached comment form to Lidwala SA.
3. By attending the meetings to be held during the course of the project. Should you register as an I&AP you will be invited to attend these meetings. The meeting dates will also be advertised in a local newspaper.
4. By telephonically contacting Lidwala if you have a query, comment or require further project information.
5. By reviewing the EIA and IWULA Reports within the 30-day review periods and sending your comments to Lidwala ***(It should be noted that one can still review the documentation outside this 30-day window).***

If you consider yourself an I&AP for this proposed project, we urge you to make use of the opportunities created by the public participation process to become involved in the process. Your input into this process forms a key part of the environmental studies and we would like to hear from you to obtain your views on the proposed project. Should you wish to register as an I&AP, have any comment, or comments on the proposed project, please contact the public participation office (see details below).

COMMENTS, QUERIES AND RESPONSES

Direct all comments, queries and responses to:

Lidwala Consulting Engineers (SA)

 P.O. Box 32497, Waverley, 0135

ATTENTION:

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