

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

FOR

**THE BASIC ASSESSMENT (BA),
MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND WATER
USE LICENSE FOR THE
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMPALA
ZIRCON TEMPORARY BY-PASS 132KV POWERLINE
WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE
MAINTENANCE OF THE EXISTING IMPALA ZIRCON
132KV MAIN LINE WITHIN THE UMHLATHUZE
MUNICIPALITY IN
KWAZULU NATAL PROVINCE**

APPLICANT



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONERS



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1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide information to Interested and/or Affected Parties (I&APs) about the Basic Assessment, Maintenance Management Plan and the Water Use License Application for the proposed construction of the Impala Zircon Temporary By-Pass 132kV Powerline with associated infrastructure and the maintenance of the existing Impala Zircon 132kV main powerline within the jurisdiction of Umhlathuze Local Municipality in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province, South Africa.

This Background Information Document (BID) also aims to explain the Public Participation Process (PPP) that is prescribed by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 as amended published under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) (Act No. 107 of 1998), and National Water Act, 1998 (NWA) (Act 36 of 1998), which invites all Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to comment on issues and concerns related to the project.

Lastly, this BID also provides I&APs with the opportunity to:

- Duly register as an Interested and Affected Parties in the public participation process.
- Understand the Basic Assessment, Maintenance Management Plan, and Water Use License Application in order to participate effectively.
- Raise issues of concern and/or submit suggestions to enhance the proposed project, and
- Contribute local knowledge.

2. INTRODUCTION & PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Applicant (Eskom) intends for the Maintenance and Refurbishment of the Impala Zircon 132kV powerline located in Empangeni, under Richards Bay. The existing I powerline spans approximately 10,582 km in length, but Eskom is only responsible for about 7.6km of this line; the rest of the powerline belongs to the uMhlathuze Local Municipality. The Impala Zircon 132kV powerline is a radial line with no back-feeding capabilities and distributes electricity to approximately 6062 customers. It feeds Cygnus Substation, which supplies all the Esikhaweni networks, uMhlathuze Local Municipality and Lake Qube water pump (LPU).

The 10km powerline is from the North coast of KwaZulu-Natal and is exposed to both industrial and coastal pollution. Therefore, due to the proximity to the coast, this powerline is experiencing severe corrosion and deterioration on tower foundations. Therefore, a temporary bypass powerline is required in order to continue with the Maintenance of the Main powerline.

The proposed temporary 132kV bypass powerline will be approximately 6.01 km in length and will be built on wooden poles as a temporary option, which will allow the Maintenance of the Main powerline. The temporary bypass powerline will be in use for a period of 3 years. The temporary bypass

powerline will run parallel (within its servitude) to the existing Main powerline (approximately 15m apart) and cross the uMhlatuze River, most of the powerline is traverses a sugarcane farm.

Selahle Consultancy and Projects (Pty) Ltd (herein referred to as SCP) has been appointed as the Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs) to handle the BA, MMP and WULA processes. The team has approached this proposal with a great deal of experience in undertaking EIAs and all related Environmental Services. SCP has a team of specialists with the capacity and background to undertake the fieldwork and compile the reports within the required timeframes.

The proposed development requires authorisations under the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) published under NEMA, and the Water Use License Application and Appeals Regulations, 2017 (amended) promulgated under the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) to ensure compliance with Environmental and Water legislation and regulations. The Competent Authorities that would be responsible for processing these applications are:

- Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) – for Basic Assessment Process and Maintenance Management Plan
- Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) – Water Use License Application

3. PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed temporary and existing main powerline routes can be accessed along the N2 and R34 roads. The coordinates to the site are:

Table 1: Project Location Information

PROPOSED TEMPORARY LINE & MAIN LINE	
Province	Kwazulu-Natal
Local Municipality	Umhlatuze Local Municipality
Nearest Town	Empangeni, Richards Bay
TEMPORARY POWERLINE	
Co-ordinates	Start Point- 28°49'10.68" S 31°57'08.14" E Middle Point- 28°47'49.89" S 31°55'59.54" E End point- 28°46'22.34" S 31°56'27.22" E
MAIN POWERLINE	
Co-ordinates	Start Point- 28°50'43.00" S 31°55'49.28" E Middle Point- 28°48'13.80" S 31°56'20.81" E End point- 28°46'05.25" S 31°56'43.18" E

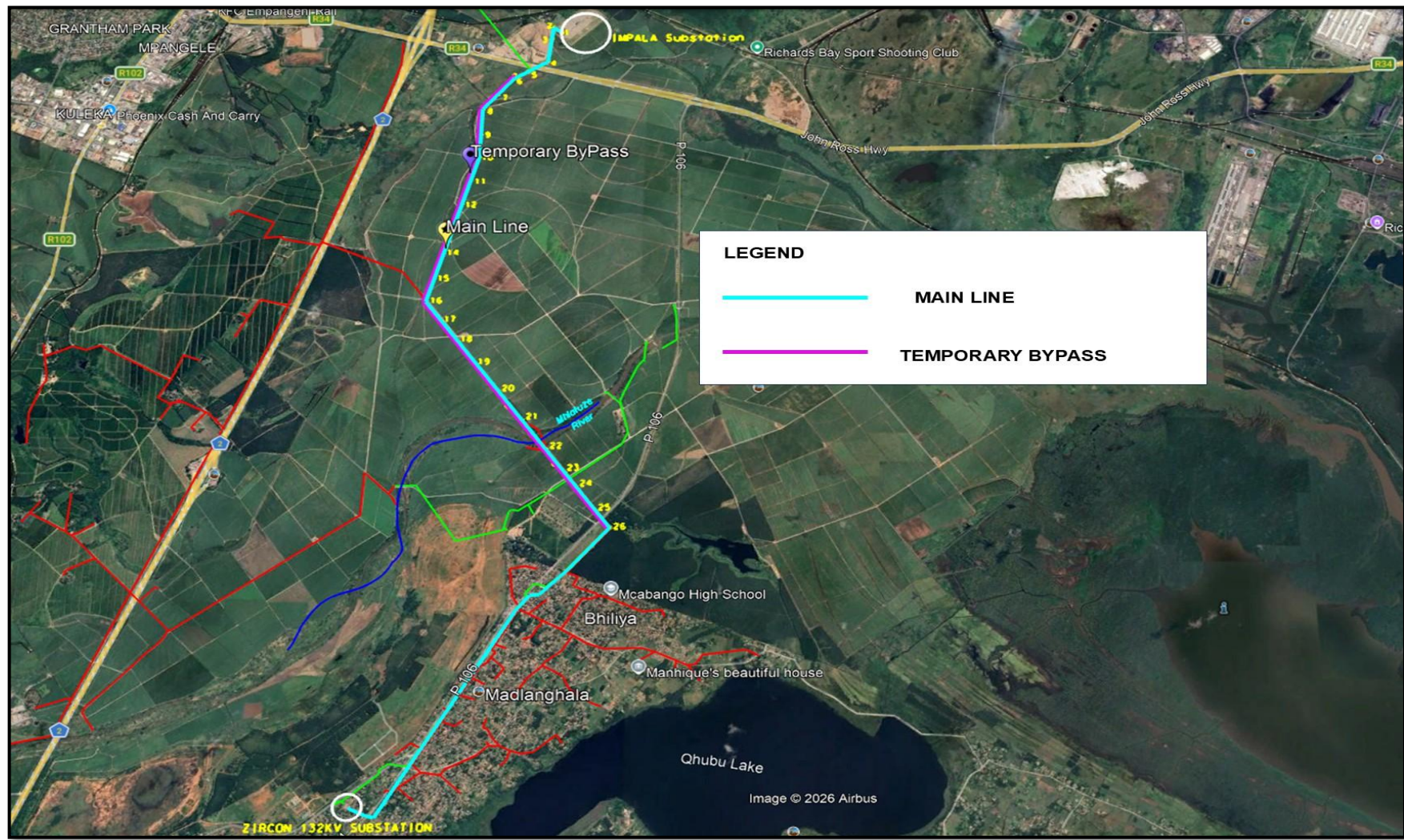


Figure 1: Locality Map

4. BASIC ASSESSMENT, MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN & WATER USE LICENSE APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1 What is a Basic Assessment?

A Basic Assessment is an environmental impact identification, evaluation and mitigation conducted under the EIA Regulations, which were published under NEMA. It applies to activities that are listed under Listing Notice 1 and/or 3 of these Regulations, which are considered to have a low to moderate potential environmental impact. Basic Assessments are undertaken where the impacts are less likely to have significant impacts on the receiving environment.

The process involves the preparation of a Basic Assessment Report (BAR), which outlines the nature and scope of the proposed development, describes the existing environmental conditions, identifies and assesses potential environmental impacts, and proposes mitigation measures. An Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) is also developed to guide the implementation of mitigation and monitoring measures. Public participation is a key component of the Basic Assessment process, and stakeholder engagement must be documented within the BAR. The completed report is then submitted to the relevant competent authority, which in this case is the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) for decision-making. Figures 2 & 3 illustrate the process of the Basic Assessment Process and the Public Participation Process to be conducted.

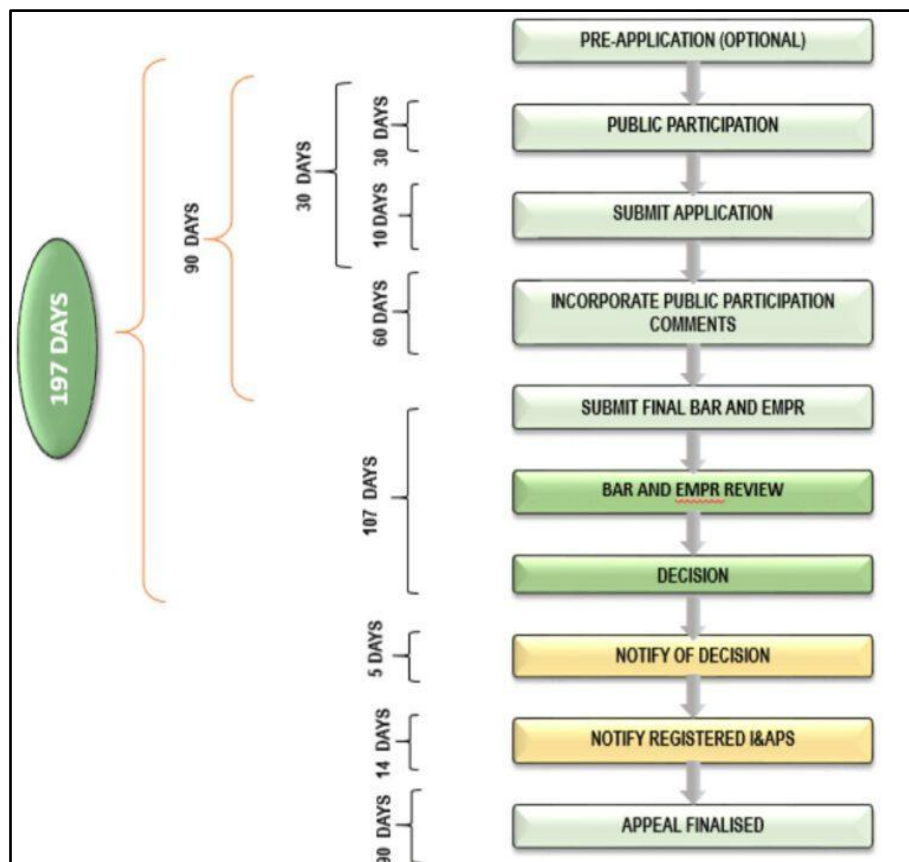


Figure 2: Basic Assessment Process

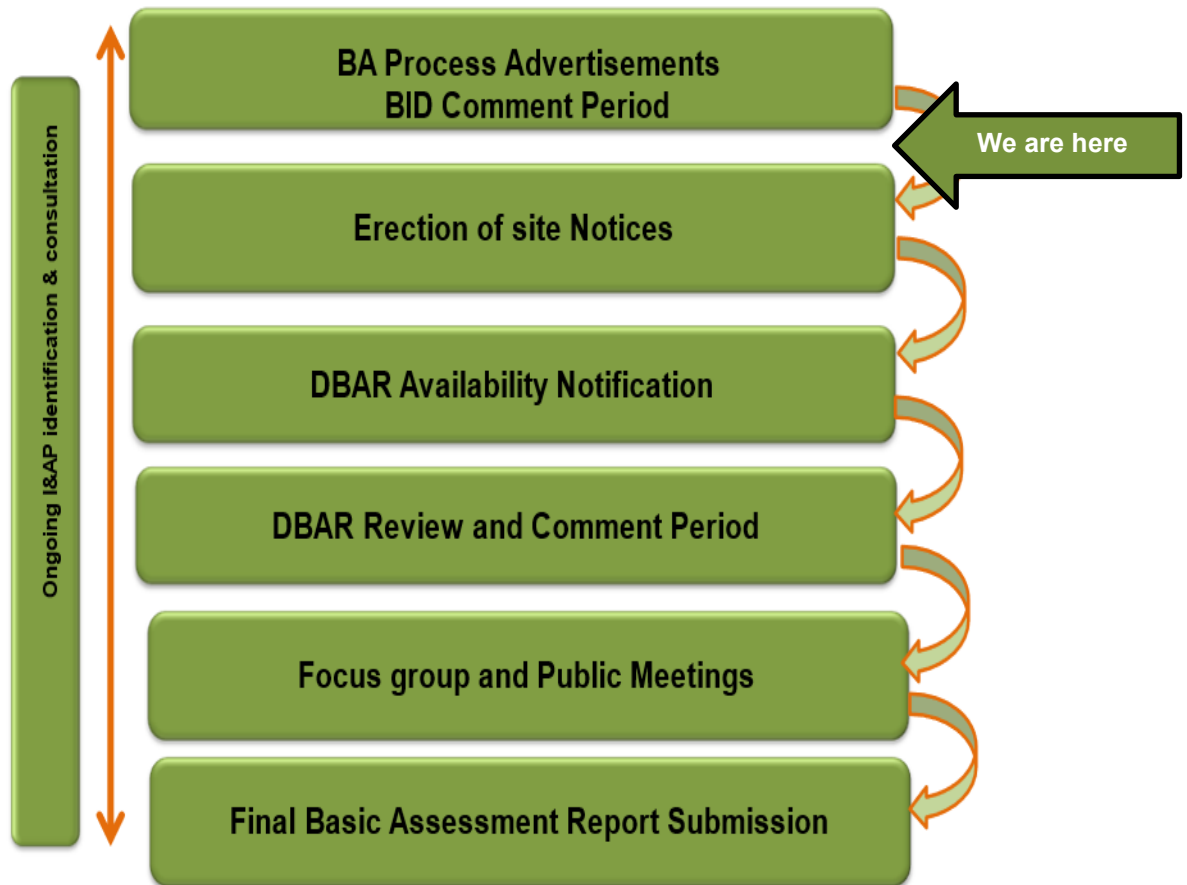


Figure 3: Public Participation Process for Basic Assessment

4.2 What is a Maintenance Management Plan

A Maintenance Management Plan (MMP) is a structured plan that outlines how the infrastructure will be maintained and refurbished. It describes the procedures and responsibilities for maintaining the infrastructure in a safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible manner.

The Maintenance Management Plan (MMP) is compiled primarily to meet the requirements of Section 28 of NEMA, which relates to the duty of care and remediation. Moreover, the MMP is undertaken in accordance with environmental best practices and in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended) promulgated under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998).

The Maintenance Management Plan (MMP) describes the mitigation measures and identifies the specific role players that will be responsible for implementation of the mitigation measures, to ensure that impacts on the environment are minimised during all phases of the proposed maintenance.

As aforementioned, the proposed development has a section of maintenance and refurbishment of the Main Powerline and this activity require to an Adoption of a Maintenance Management Plan by the

competent authority. Figure 4 below depicts the process that would be followed during the adoption process:

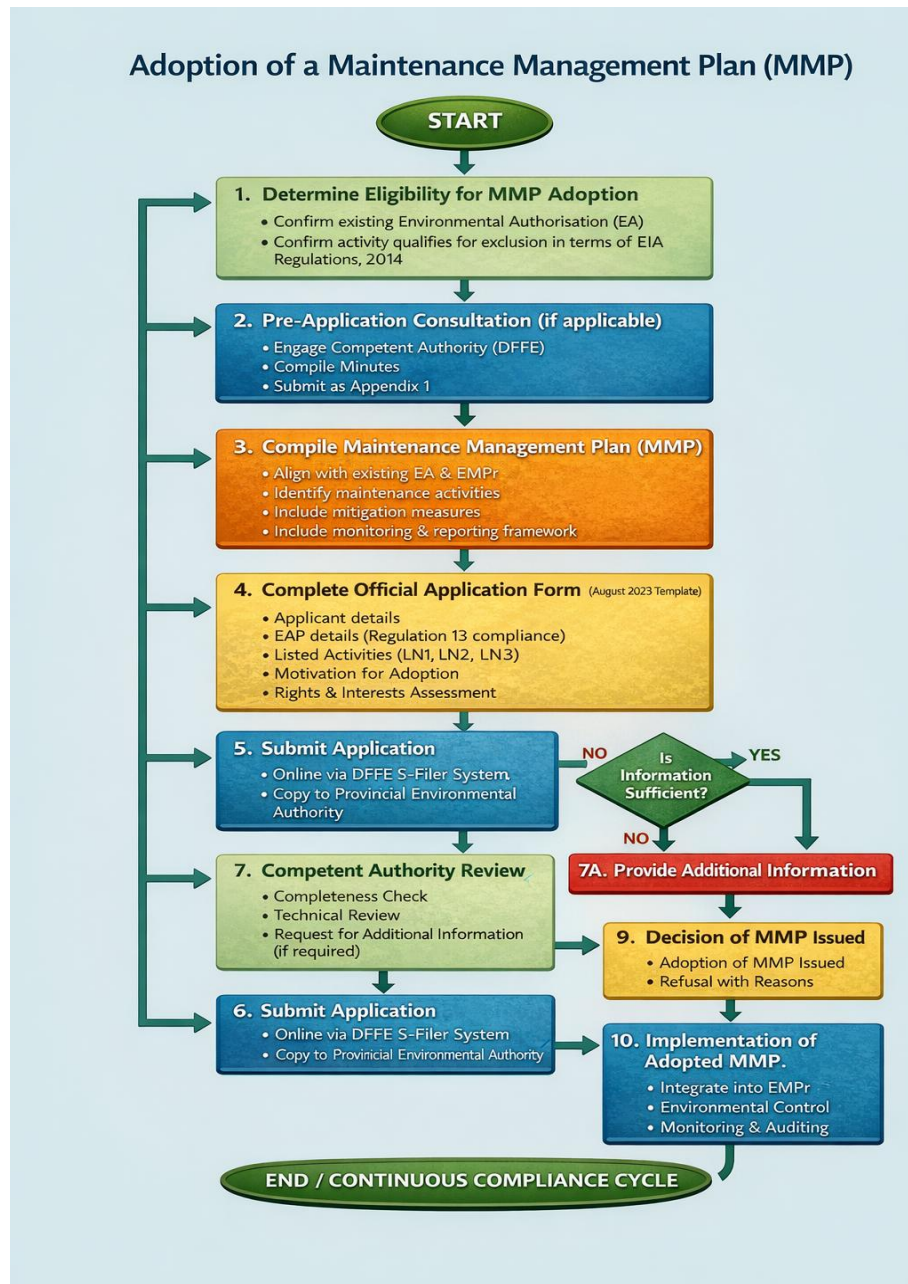


Figure 4: Maintenance Management Plan

4.3 What is a Water Use Licence Application?

The Water Use Licence Application is undertaken in accordance with the Water Use License Application and Appeals Regulations, 2017 (amended), promulgated under the National Water Act – NWA (Act 36 of 1998). The NWA was created in order to ensure the protection and sustainable use of Water Resources in South Africa.

A WULA is required when an activity falls under Section 21 of the National Water Act, which identifies 11 different water uses that require authorisation. These include taking water from a resource such as rivers, dams, or boreholes; storing water in reservoirs or dams; impeding or diverting water flow in a watercourse; and engaging in streamflow reduction activities like commercial afforestation. Other regulated uses involve controlled activities such as irrigation with wastewater, discharging waste into a water resource, and disposing of waste in a manner that affects water bodies. Additionally, activities such as altering the bed, banks, or course of a watercourse, removing or discharging groundwater, and using water for recreational purposes may also require a licence.

Therefore, the proposed project also involves the impeding of the stream /river or diverting of the flow of the river as well as altering the bed, banks of a watercourse, which will trigger Section 21 (a), (b), (c), (f) and (i) of the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998), as promulgated on the 20th of August 1998.

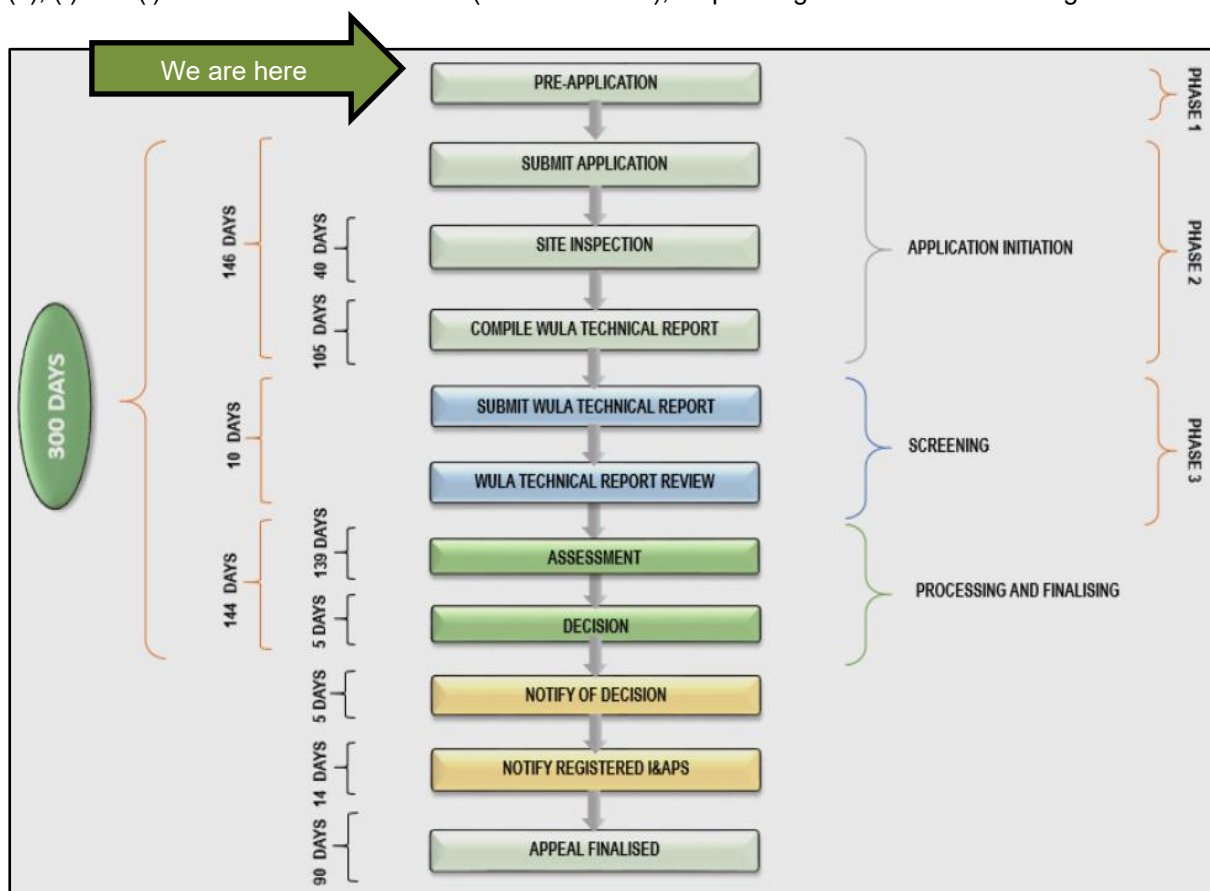


Figure 5: Water Use License Process

5. LISTED ACTIVITIES IN TERMS OF THE EIA REGULATIONS, 2014 AS AMENDED, AND NWA (ACT 36 OF 1998)

In terms of Section 24 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), a legal framework is provided for the regulation of activities that may have a significant impact on the

environment. This framework mandates that such activities must be assessed and authorised through an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process before they may commence. These activities are referred to as "listed activities" and require an Environmental Authorisation (EA) from the relevant competent authority. The listed activities are detailed in Government Notices 327 (Listing Notice 1), 325 (Listing Notice 2), and 324 (Listing Notice 3).

In addition to the above, Section 41(1)(a) of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) is also applicable. Therefore, the proposed development triggers several listed activities under the above-mentioned legislation and will be assessed accordingly. Below are the triggered listed activities by the proposed development.

Table 2: Listed Activities Triggered by the Proposed Development

Application Required	Environmental Authorisation	Maintenance Management Plan	Water Use License
Competent Authority	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	Department of Water and Sanitation
Triggered Activities	Government Notice No. 327 of 2017(as amended)	Government Notice No. 324 of 2017(as amended)	National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998)
	Listing Notice 1: Activity 19	Listing Notice 3: Activity – 12 & Activity 14	Section 21 (c) & (i)
	Government Notice No. 324 of 2017(as amended)		
	Listing Notice 3: Activity – 12 & Activity – 14		

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The public participation process during the BA, MMP & WULA phases will enable I&APs to influence the course of the technical investigations and to review the findings of the independent studies that are undertaken. The environmental consultants will correspond directly with registered I&APs at various stages during the process to keep them informed of progress in the study and the timing of opportunities to be involved. The steps in the public participation process are outlined below:

- Letters of invitation accompanied by this BID and comment sheet will be distributed to adjacent landowners within a 500m radius from the area of the proposed development and alongside or in proximity of the route, key individuals and organisations, announcing the project and inviting their comments.
- Placing an advertisement in the local newspaper (Zululand Observer) announcing the proposed project and providing an opportunity to comment.

- Site notices will be erected at strategic places along the property in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations, to announce the project.
- Key stakeholders in the area will be informed by telephone, e-mail or facsimile.
- All issues received from stakeholders will be captured in the Comments and Response Report (CRR), which will be used to screen and prioritise issues for evaluation.

6.1 Your comments are important.

Your comments will ensure that all relevant issues are evaluated in the BA, MMP & WULA phases. You are requested to complete the enclosed registration form and comment sheet. Use the contact details below in this document to make any comments or raise issues.

6.2 How to become involved

- Respond (by phone or e-mail) to our invitation for your participation, which has been advertised in the printed media.
- WhatsApp, fax, or e-mail the attached Registration and Comment Form to Selahle CP.
- Contact us telephonically should you have a query, comment or require further project information.
- For more information about the project, scan the QR code below.

By completing and submitting the accompanying registration and comment form, you automatically register yourself as an I&AP for this proposed project, ensuring that your comments and/or concerns raised regarding the proposed project will be noted. The public participation consultants will respond to all comments and queries received during the course of the project:

Selahle Consultancy & Projects Pty Ltd

Contact Person: Sinnah Mhlongo / Bothale Phiri

Tel No : 011 026 2560

WhatsApp No : 079 569 5277

Fax No : 086 532 0398

Email : ppp@scprojects.co.za

Postal : P. O. Box 1059, Halfway House, 1685



6.3 Next Step

Interested and Affected parties should register on or before **Tuesday, 7 April 2026**, in the first round of Stakeholder engagement to raise issues about the proposed project. The next step is the release of the draft BA Report and the MMP, which will detail the project, baseline conditions of the affected area, and the issues and concerns raised so far. It will also describe how the report will address the concerns raised. Copies of the report will be placed in public venues for review. Registered I&APs will be informed where to review the report and will be given 30 days to comment on the report.

Information regarding Public Meetings and the Review of the Draft Basic Assessment Report and Draft Maintenance Management Plan will be made available at your earliest convenience. If you wish to raise any initial issues or concerns regarding the proposed project, or if you would like to register as an I&AP, please contact the Public Participation office as detailed above.