

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT APPLICATION FOR INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION AND INTEGRATED WATER USE LICENCE

PROPOSED WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT AND CO-DISPOSAL FACILITY FOR THE MAQUASA EAST OPERATIONS, MKHONDO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide all Interested and Affected parties (I&APs) with information about the proposed project and to introduce and explain the Water Use License Application (WULA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes. This Background Information Document (BID) also aims to explain the public participation process that is prescribed by the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and invites all I&AP's to comment on issues and concerns related to the project.

Introduction and Project Background

Kangra Coal (Pty) Ltd (Kangra) has an existing coal mine located in Driefontein, near Piet Retief in the Mpumalanga Province. The mine is located in the Mkhondo Local Municipality within the Gert Sibande District Municipality. The Maquasa East (MQE) operations include the historical opencast and underground operations under Mining Right (MP)30/5/1/2/2/133MR. Kangra is proposing to construct a water treatment plant as well as a co-disposal facility at their Maquasa East operations. (Refer to Figure 1)

GCS Water and Environment (Pty) Ltd (GCS) has been appointed to undertake the integrated environmental authorisation (IEA) and water use license application (WULA) processes and associated Public Participation Processes (PPP) required for the proposed project in order for compliance with NEMA, the National Water Act

(NWA) (Act 36 of 1998, as amended), and/or Supporting Environmental Management Acts (SEMA's). This background information document (BID) provides the background details for the proposed development, associated exercises undertaken in order to comply with the required authorisation process, and acts as a baseline document for all I&APs.

Project Description

The purpose of the proposed wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is to treat decant water as well as surplus contaminated water within the mining operations. MQE is currently decanting clear groundwater from old underground workings at an average rate of 1 800m³/d. The WWTP will employ 'active' treatment of the wastewater as it was found that passive treatment is not feasible nor possible due to decant point's location, the high flow rates and the discharge quality required. Brine resulting from the WWTP will be piped and stored in a new proposed brine pollution control dam (PCD).

The proposed co-disposal facility falls within the exact footprint of the previously authorised (MDARDLE Ref: 17/2/3/GS-240) MQE Discard Dump. As a result of changing operational requirements, and the lapsing of the previous authorisation, there is now a need to license a new co-disposal facility at MQE.

The co-disposal facility will accommodate discard produced at the beneficiation plant, slurry/filter cake and potentially brine from the WWTP.

The co-disposal facility’s design will be similar to the authorised discard dump: a three-compartment side hill-type facility with a footprint of approximately 65ha. A phased development approach, over a period of 20 years, is envisaged: Phase 1 - 7 years; Phase 2 - 7 years and Phase 3 - 6 years capacity. (Refer to Figure 2)

Project Location

Province:	Mpumalanga
District:	Gert Sibande District Municipality
Local Municipality:	Mkhondo Local Municipalities
Extent:	140 hectares
Zoning:	Mining
Ownership:	Kangra Coal (Pty) Ltd
Current Use:	Mining
Nearest Towns:	Piet Retief
Farm Portions affected:	Remaining extent (RE) of Farm Roodekraal 21 HT. Farm Roodekraal 21 HT RE of Farm Rooikop 18 HT RE of Farm Maquasa 19HT

Project Applicant

Applicant:	Kangra Coal (Pty) Ltd
Representative:	Niketive Dlamini
Address:	Farm Driefontein, Saul Mkhizeville, Mkhondo P.O. Box 745, Piet Retief, 2380

Regulatory Context

National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA)

Section 24 of NEMA requires that certain listed activities, which may have an impact on the environment, trigger the need for environmental authorisation from a relevant authority before commencing with the activities. Such activities are listed under Regulations Listing Notice 1 GNR 324,

Listing Notice 2 GNR 325 and Listing Notice 3 GNR 327 (2014 as amended) of NEMA (as amended).

Applicable Listed Activities for this application is:

#	Activity Description
Listing Notice 1 (GN R327)	
9	The construction of pipelines with a Ø of more than 0.36m and throughput of more than 120l/s, for the supply of water/stormwater reticulation for the co-disposal facility.
10	The construction of pipelines with a Ø of more than 0.36m and throughput of more than 120l/s, for the supply of process/waste/return water or effluent reticulation for the co-disposal facility and the discharge pipeline from the wastewater treatment plant to the Heyshope Dam.
19	The construction of both projects may result in the infilling/depositing and the removal/moving of more than 10m ³ of material from a watercourse.
24	Various new 16m wide haul roads is required for the proposed new CDF, and the total length of these roads will exceed 1km in length.
25	The construction of a wastewater treatment plant with a maximum throughput capacity of 4 500m ³ per day.
27	The proposed activity footprint is approximately 65ha in total extent, as such, the clearance of potentially indigenous vegetation for the construction of the proposed wastewater treatment plant, brine PCD and co-disposal facility will be approximately 68ha which is in excess of the 1ha threshold.
Listing Notice 2 (GN R325)	
6	The construction and operation of the wastewater treatment plant, brine PCD and co-disposal facility requires a Water Use License for the water uses triggered in terms of Section 21 of the NWA.
15	The proposed activity footprint is approximately 65ha in total extent, as such, the clearance of potentially indigenous vegetation for the construction of the proposed project will be approximately 68ha which is in excess of the 20ha threshold.
Listing Notice 3 (GN R324)	
12	The proposed project falls within a Critical Biodiversity Area, as such, the clearance of potentially indigenous vegetation for the construction of the project will potentially exceed the 300m ² threshold.
14	The proposed project falls within a CBA and NPAES Focus area. The development footprint encroaches on various watercourses and as such the proposed structures to be constructed will exceed the 10m ² threshold.

National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act 59 of 2008) (NEMWA)

Section 20 of NEMWA requires that certain listed waste management activities, need a waste management license from a relevant authority before commencing with the activities. Such waste management activities are listed under Regulations GNR 921 (as amended).

Applicable Waste Management Activities for this application is:

#	Activity Description
Category B	
7	The proposed co-disposal facility entails the “The disposal of any quantity of hazardous waste to land”.
10	The proposed project entails the construction of a facility for an activity governed by the regulations.
11	The proposed project entails the establishment of a “residue stockpile”.

Considering the above, a full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (S&EIR) process is to be undertaken.

National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998) (NWA)

A Water Use License Application is to be compiled and submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) to ensure the legality of the proposed project’s water uses. The Water Use License Application will be conducted for the project in parallel with the EIA and EMP process for any activity in terms of Section 21 of the NWA.

The water uses triggered as part of the project which require authorisation in terms of Section 21 of the NWA involves:

Section 21:	
(c)	Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse
(f)	Discharging of wase or water containing waste
(g)	Disposing of water in a manner which may detrimentally impact on a watercourse
(i)	Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristic of a watercourse

National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) (NHRA)

The protection and management of South Africa’s heritage resources are controlled by the NHRA. Historically important features, such as graves, archaeology and culturally significant symbols, spaces and landscapes are protected by the NHRA. A permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) is required in terms of Section 38 of the NHRA for certain categories of development, which the proposed activities trigger. An application in this regard will thus be lodged during the EIA process.

Structure of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process

The EIA is a legislative tool used to ensure that the potential environmental impacts that may occur due to the proposed development are avoided or mitigated, if authorisation is granted. The ‘environment’ includes social, economic and biophysical aspects which the EIA must assess equitably.

The EIA process is divided into two phases, the Scoping Phase and the Impact Assessment Phase.

Scoping Phase:

The Scoping Phase aims to:

- Investigate and gather information on the proposed site, to establish an understanding of the area.
- Establish how the proposed development activities will potentially impact on the environment.
- Identify IAPs and relevant authorities by conducting a Public Participation Process
- Identify potential environmental impacts through investigation and PPP.
- Describe the proposed project and potential Alternatives.

Impact Assessment Phase:

During this phase, all issues/impacts and proposed alternatives identified in the Scoping Phase are assessed and are rated in terms of their significance. Where necessary, recommendations are made for the mitigation of potential negative impacts, or enhancement of potential positive impacts.

An Environmental Management Programme will also be compiled that will prescribe environmental specifications for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the project. As with the Scoping phase, a PPP is an integral part of the Assessment Phase.

Public Participation Process

The Public Participation Process (PPP) aims to inform a wide range of I&APs (*any person or organisation that has a direct, business, financial, personal or other interest in, or may be directly or indirectly affected by, the proposed project*) about the proposed development and the environmental process to be followed. It is a tool to allow the public to exchange information and to express their views and concerns on the proposed development for which the EIA is being conducted. The PPP assists in identifying potential issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the impact assessment by highlighting relevant information to be included in the assessment. PPP enables more accurate and descriptive analysis and helps to focus and enhance decision-making.

The EIA will be open and transparent to the public through this process with all registered IAPs continuously updated on events throughout the process. All contributions from IAPs must be fully documented, evaluated and responded to in the EIA.

Activities of the PPP:

The public is invited to register as an I&AP and take part in the PPP through:

- Media Notices placed in newspapers
- Distribution of the BID
- Site notice boards
- Public Open Days/Focus Group Meetings (as appropriate)
- Submission of comments on the media notices, BID, Draft Scoping and Impact Assessment Reports

How you can participate:

Interested and affected parties I&APs may forward their written comments along with their name, contact details and an indication of any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which they have in the application by post or email to:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - CONTACT DETAILS	
Contact Person(s):	Gerda Bothma 011 803 5726
Email:	gerdab@gcs-sa.biz
Postal Address:	PO Box 2597 Rivonia Johannesburg 2128



Next steps:

The Draft Scoping Report, which details the project, the baseline conditions of the affected area and the potential impacts identified, will be available for public review from 24 November 2023 until 16 January 2024.

This report will also describe how the EIR will address issued and concerns raised during the assessment process.

Copies of the Report is available for review as follows:

- **Printed Copies:**
 - Piet Retief Library, 10B Retief Street, Piet Retief
 - Maquasa East Security Office, Maquasa East Mine, Driefontein
 - Thusong Service Centre, Driefontein Community
- **Electronic Copy:**
<https://www.gcs-sa.biz/public-documents/>

We will inform you of the dates and venues of any meetings to be held during the public consultation process.

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.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE
As per the requirement of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI), Act No.14 of 2013 you are herewith notified that you may exercise your right to leave the Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) List. Should you elect to remain a part of the I&AP List for the project, it will be accepted that you have consented to being a part of the list and that your personal information will be noticeable to any GCS Water and Environment (Pty) Ltd employee engaged with the public participation process. All such employees agree not to make use of such personal information for whatsoever reason, without obtaining the consent of the relevant person(s). As such, by participating in this process, you consent to the use of your contact information and comments for the purposes of the authorisation and licensing processes as per the regulations.

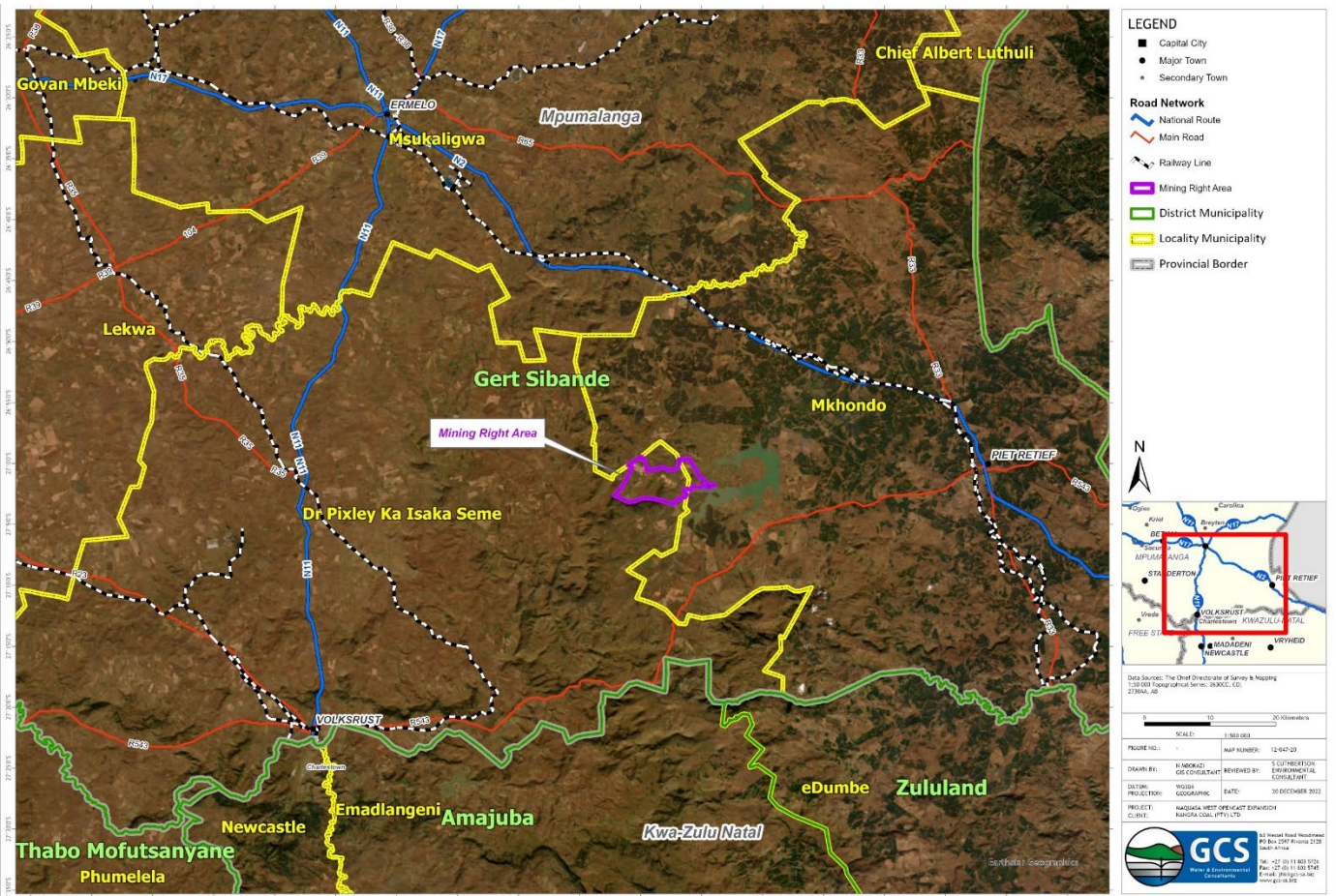


Figure 1: Site Locality Map and Regional Boundaries

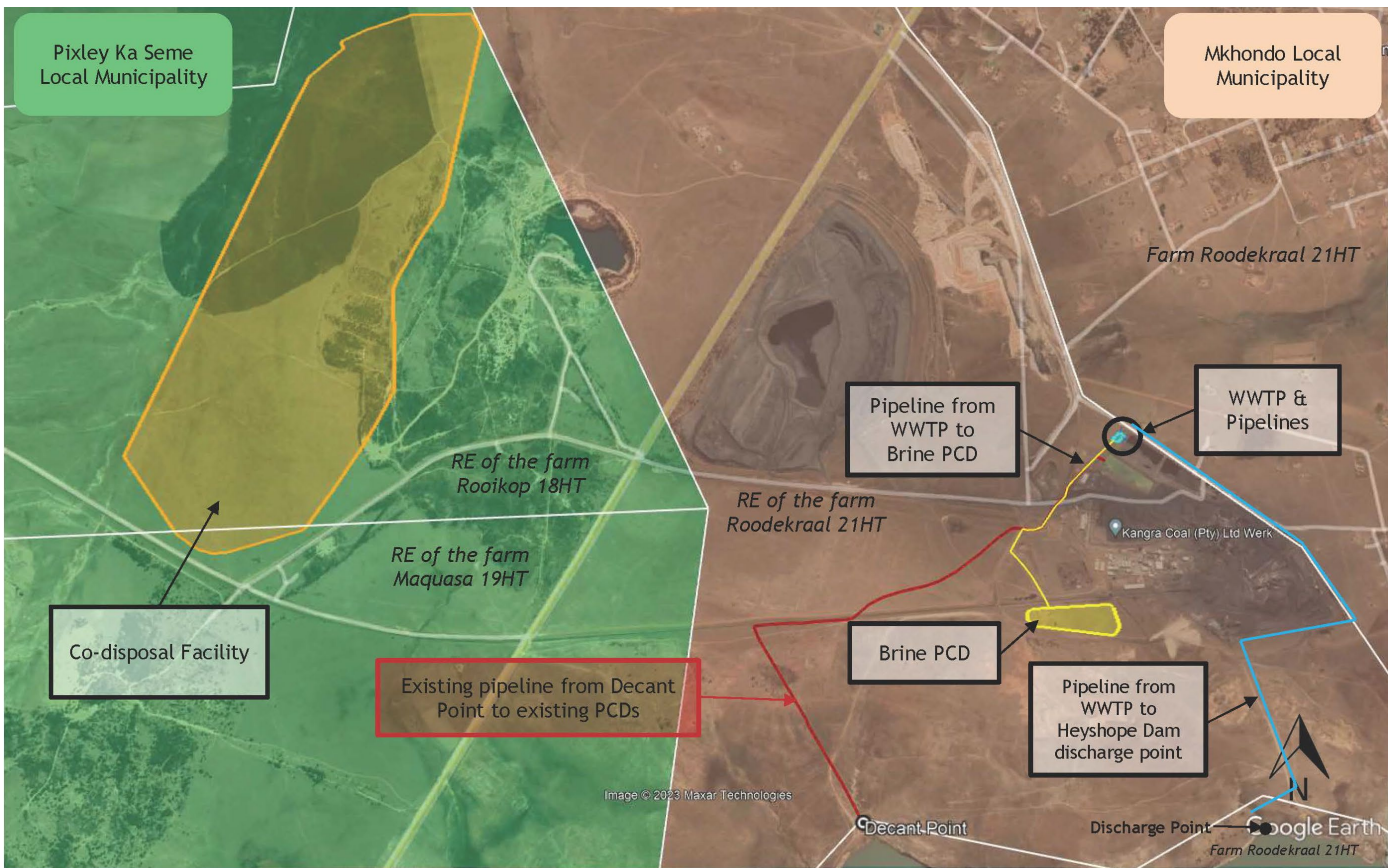



Figure 2: Site Layout of proposed project

		Kangra Coal (Pty) Ltd Piet Retief, Mpumalanga Background Information Document				
		I&AP Comment and Registration Form GCS Ref No: 22-0161				
Name:		Surname:				
Organisation / interest:						
Postal / Residential address						
		Area:			Code:	
Contact details		Tel:	()			
		Fax:	()			
		Mobile:	()			
		Email:				
Please mark with an X to indicate whether you would like to participate in the process:						
Yes, I would like to participate in this process and receive periodic updates					<input type="checkbox"/>	
No, I am not interested in participating and do not wish to receive further information					<input type="checkbox"/>	
Preferred method of communication		Email		Fax	Post	
Date commented		(DD / MM / YYYY)				
Please indicate any issues, comments and concerns with regards to the proposed project						
Please indicate in which aspects you would require more information						
Please indicate the contact details of any other I&APs whom you think should be contacted						
Name:		Surname:				
Tel:		Fax:		()		
Mobile:		()				
Email:						
In order to be registered as an I&AP for this project, fax, mail, or e-mail the completed registration form to Gerda Bothma at: Tel: (011) 803 5726 Email: gerdab@gcs-sa.biz Post: PO Box 2597, Rivonia, 2128						

