



## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE WELTEVREDEN COLLIERY MINING OPERATIONS WITHIN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT AND STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCE. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

The purpose of this document is to provide:

- A brief description of the project and Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment process that will be followed,
- Information to Interested and Affected parties (I&AP's) about the project and environment application process that will be followed for the proposed expansion of the mine operations;
- To obtain initial comments and contributions from IAPs on the issues relating to the proposed project; and
- Affords stakeholders the opportunity to register as I&Aps;

#### **1. PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Weltevreden Colliery has an approved Environmental Management Programme Report (EMPR) with a Reference No MP 30/5/1/2/3/2/1(262) EM, for its underground mining activities and an Integrated Water Use Licence (IWUL) as mentioned above for the water uses activities. The proposed Weltevreden Colliery Extension is situated in stipulated co-ordinates of a Latitude 26°14'06.77" S and Longitude 29°36'24.17" E. Weltevreden Colliery intends to expand the mining operations to include various properties east of its current mining boundary in order to extend the Life of Mine (LoM). The current Life of Mine (LoM) for Weltevreden Colliery's existing operation ends in 2023 and with the extension project 2037.

The proposed mining methods are a combination of the opencast (via blast, truck and shovel) and underground (bord and pillar) over an Aerial Extent of ~ 2050 ha. Several of the farm portions within Mining Right 10087 are currently not part of the approved EMP of Weltevreden Colliery. The intention of this application is to include these specific farm portions within the approved EMP of Weltevreden Colliery. The expansion project was initially planned for three mining operations, namely:

- Pit 1,



- Pit 2, and
- Pit 3

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN**

- Opencast and Underground Mining at Weltevreden Colliery Extension
- Access and Transportation to Proposed New Site
- Existing Infrastructure to be Utilised
- ROM Stockpile Area and Conveyor belt
- Dirty and clean Water Dam
- Dirty and clean Water Dam
- Potable Water Supply
- Overburden Dumps

## **3. Need and Desirability**

Weltevreden Colliery is an existing underground mine with a workforce of about 150 people. It has been in operations since 1996. The proposed development is within the existing Mining Rights areas except for Portion 13, 19, and the Remaining Portion of the farm Kafferstad 195 IS in which the Mining Right will be applied for.

From the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) (P Mkhondo, 2023) conducted for this project, it was deduced that the rate of unemployment within the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality (STLM) is high even though there are mines in the community. Overall, there are higher expectations amongst the general population regarding the project as a source of employment for the local people. Majority of the locals are likely to benefit from unskilled opportunities associated with the project. The proposed underground mine extension, the development of the opencast mine and additional infrastructure will ensure the life of mine extends up to 2037. This will ensure long term sustainability of jobs in the mine, temporary job opportunities may also arise during construction phase of the project supporting local and regional communities.

The SIA further indicates that during the operation phase, the project will also create employment opportunities requiring both short- and long-term labour in mining, contracting, the plant, engineering, social development, support and safety. It is also expected that employees will come from different places, including local, district and provincial levels. Employees who can secure employment opportunities with the project during operations will also benefit from training and skills development opportunities linked to the mine's Social Labour Plan and on-the-job training experience. According to Climate Change Impact Assessment Report dated March 2023, an estimated 149 personnel will be employed at the Mine, either on a full-time or part-time basis, including contractors.



Authorising the Weltevreden Colliery Extension will enable the operation to continue producing coal with the intention to meet the Eskom demands and export coal markets and contributing to the country's GDP. This project is also in support of the Socio-Economic Review and Outlook (SERO,2018) requirements. The requirements include, but not limited to, speeding up the transition to a knowledge- based and service orientated economy, adopting the appropriate industry development strategies and attracting investment to build infrastructure and stimulate growth in the province (SERO, 2018). The SERO (2018) report further states that in achieving higher economic growth, the province needs to develop the capabilities of the workforce on a broad scale and improved education outcomes could create more investment opportunities, which in turn may increase the employment opportunities and lower the unemployment rate. The mine will ensure Environmental Awareness Programmes, Health and Safety Programmes are developed to train workers on the risk associated with their work and what measures to put in place to minimise the risks.

Majority of the environmental Specialist studies conducted indicate that the development of the underground mine and opencast mining with additional infrastructure will not results in detrimental impacts provided that the mitigation measures and recommendations are accurately implemented, except for climate change impact assessment which has been rated high during operational phase. It should be noted that proper stormwater management will be implemented on site. Clean water will be diverted away from mining areas by means of diversion canals/berms to prevent it from coming into contact with material that has the potential to cause pollution. Development of infrastructure such as, inter alia, Pollution Control Dams and Slurry Handling Facility within the stockpile areas will ensure that potential pollution sources from the opencast mine and the underground mine are managed in an environmental acceptable manner. The mine will also implement progressive rehabilitation.

#### **4. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION**

To obtain the necessary authorization to expand the operations of the mine, overlooked must lodge the following applications with the Competent Authorities as part of the integrated regulatory process:

- Application for Environmental Authorisation (EA) through a Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) process and the compilation of an Environmental Management Programme report (EMPr) in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998; NEMA) and its Regulations as amended;
- Waste Management Licence Application (WMLA) in terms of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act 59 of 2008; NEM: WA) and its regulations as amended;



- Integrated Water Use Licence Application (IWULA) in terms of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998; NWA), including an Integrated Water and Waste Management Plan (IWWMP) ;
- Mining permit application in terms of the Mineral Petroleum Resources Development Act (Act 28 of 2002) (MPRDA); and
- A Heritage Impact Assessment in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999, NHRA) will also be undertaken.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process must be completed and will be conducted as an Integrated EA process encompassing NEMA, NEM: WA, MPRDA and NWA requirements. As the proposed project falls within the ambit of mining, and as such the Mpumalanga Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) is the authorizing department responsible for the Integrated EA process, while the Department of Water and Sanitation is responsible for the Integrated Water Use License Application (IWULA). The following listed activities may be triggered by the development and confirmation of relevant activities will be sought in consultation with the competent authority for final reporting:

## **5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The EIA process, is the process of collecting, organising, analysing, interpreting and communicating information that is relevant for the consideration for each application. The EIA process is used by planning authorities/applicants to obtain an independent and objective view of the potential environmental (biophysical and social) impacts that could arise during the establishment and operation of a project, in this case the operations of the mine. This information serves to provide the competent Authority with sound basis information for their decision-making.

NTC has been appointed as an independent environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) to assist Overlooked with the above-mentioned BA process necessary to obtain the integrated EA for the proposed open cast mine project. The main functions of NTC as the EAP, will be to ensure that the environmental component of the project complies with the requirements of the relevant national, provincial and local legislation. The specialist assessments to be considered as part of the EIA authorisation process, to ensure legal compliance and best practice, will be confirmed with the competent authority and may include inter alia

- Wetland and Aquatic Assessment;
- Biodiversity (fauna & flora) Assessment;
- Social Assessment;
- Groundwater Assessment;
- Climate Change Impact Assessment;
- Air Quality Impact Assessment;



- Noise Impact Assessment;
- Avifauna Impact Assessment;
- Visual Impact Assessment;
- Soil Impact Assessment;
- Surface water Assessment;
- Paleontological Assessment, and
- Heritage Assessment

## **6. THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION PROCESS**

NTC will be responsible for undertaking the required assessments and compiling an EIA report and EMP, IWULA reports. The DMRE will be consulted with in terms of EIA process(es) while the DWS will be consulted in terms of the IWULA, and together form the Competent Authorities responsible for considering the Reports/Applications (approve/reject).

## **7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

Public involvement is an essential part of the environmental assessment process. Stakeholders and I&AP with interest in the project will be identified and notified about the project. All comments received from stakeholders and I&APs will be recorded and presented to the project team and regulatory authorities. In addition, feedback will be provided to the stakeholders on how your comments have been considered in terms of the project planning and implementation, and I&APs will be notified of the outcome of the EIA process.

## **8. HOW DO I&AP'S PARTICIPATION?**

Should you wish to register as an I&AP, or if you know of any person or group that should be included in the public participation process, please complete the attached I&AP registration form and return to NTC. Comments, objections or questions regarding the project should reach NTC on or before by 14 October 2023. Responses can also be made by telephone or in writing (sent to us by fax, e-mail or post). Please ensure that you provide us with your name and contact details.

## **9. AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW**

The draft EIA report will be made available for public review for a period of 30 days and further communication with regards to the availability of the report will be made to registered I&APs. The reports will be made available to the following public places as listed in the table below.

Name of Public Place	Contact Person	Contact Number
----------------------	----------------	----------------



Hendrina Public Library: 44 Kerk St, Hendrina, 1095		013 293 0000
NTC Environmental website: <a href="http://www.ntcgroup.co.za">www.ntcgroup.co.za</a>	Tebogo Mapinga and Jessica Morwasehla	011 462 2022
Overlooked Colliery Alpha (Pty) Ltd: Weltevreden Colliery reception	Rebone Modipa	083 776 0438

**NTC ENVIRONMENTAL (PTY) LTD**

AMP Building | 17 Eaton Avenue | Bryanston | 2191

Tel.: (011) 462 2022; Fax: (086) 6651 864

E-mail: [ppp@ntcgroup.co.za](mailto:ppp@ntcgroup.co.za)

**Contact person:** Tebogo Mapinga/ Jessica Morwasehla