

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER

The ACCRA Group



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PROPONENT:

uMzimkhulu Local Municipality



UMZIMKHULU
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
KWA-ZULU NATAL

169 Mzimkhulu Mlonyana Street,
uMzimkhulu

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEZWENI TOWNSHIP ESTABLISHMENT FOR uMZIMKHULU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Department of Human Settlements, uMzimkhulu Local Municipality, and local communities have identified the need for subsidized housing on a portion of the Farm Bezweni No. 18223. This township development will address the growing housing demand in the area and generate job opportunities during all construction phases. The proposed project requires a Basic Assessment Report (BAR) to be conducted as per the Government Notice No. 326 EIA Regulations, 2017, Appendix 1. Therefore, an Environmental Authorization through a Basic Assessment Process is required before commencement of the proposed project for: *Listing Notice 1, GNR No. 327 (Activity 9, Activity 10, Activity 24, Activity 27 and Activity 28)*.

2. PURPOSE OF THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide Interested and Affected Parties (I & APs) with a background information pertaining to the proposed project and to introduce the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process to be followed. It also aims to inform I & APs on how to fully participate in the EIA process and encourages active attendance at meetings as well as to respond to documents distributed for review. It further indicates the important role of public participation during the assessment phase, as input from I&APs contributes to ensuring that all potential issues are considered within the study. The issues raised by the I&AP will be examined and included in the Reports as the project unfolds.

3. NEED AND DESIRABILITY

The Bezweni township establishment forms part of the uMzimkhulu Local Municipality's strategic plan for subsidizing the Bezweni farm and urgently generating houses for the homeless living in poverty in Ward 16. There is a high demand for houses for the locals since most of the uMzimkhulu homesteads are mud huts. The IDP 2022-2023 identified the uMzimkhulu Local Municipality as the most populated municipality within the Harry Gwala District, with a population of 220,620 comprising 101,416 males and 119,203 females as per the census 2022. According to the Harry Gwala District Environmental Management Frameworks (2018), uMzimkhulu Town (and the adjoining Clydesdale peri-urban area) is considered the primary node, both administratively and economically, in the municipal area.

Rietvlei, Riversdale, and Ibisi are considered secondary nodes, serving as rural service

centres. Other settlements like Mountain Home, Glengarry, Ntsikeni, and Ncambele (Gowan Lea) can be seen as minor service centres. The proposed development will assist low-income housing as it will be implemented in close proximity to areas of opportunity. As an example, the proposed site is located near the hospital and this will serve as an advantage to the proposed township establishment as it means that the locals will now have access to the main sewer town connection. The proposed site is located near the road to make it easy and convenient to access places such as towns, schools, or hospitals thus limiting the need for mobile clinics.

The SDF 2023/2024 highlights that there is still a high unemployment rate in uMzimkhulu. The proposed project will create economic opportunities thus increasing the employment rate. The proposed project will open job opportunities during the construction period. The job opportunities will not only be limited to the construction sector but more people will be employed when the proposed site becomes a full residential area as more sectors will follow up (such as agriculture, retail, or transport). The Bezweni township establishment can serve as a centre for economic activity, providing space for businesses, commercial establishments, and industrial zones. This can create job opportunities for residents and stimulate economic growth within the municipality.

4. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The project area is situated at Bezweni Farm Housing in uMzimkhulu town, within the Harry Gwala District of KwaZulu-Natal. Access to the area is via the P749 road. The study site is currently vacant and is bordered by Nyenyezi SP School and uMzimkhulu Hospital. The proposed project aims to support the development goals of the uMzimkhulu Local Municipality. The establishment of the township will meet some of the growing housing demand in the municipality and generate job opportunities during all construction phases.

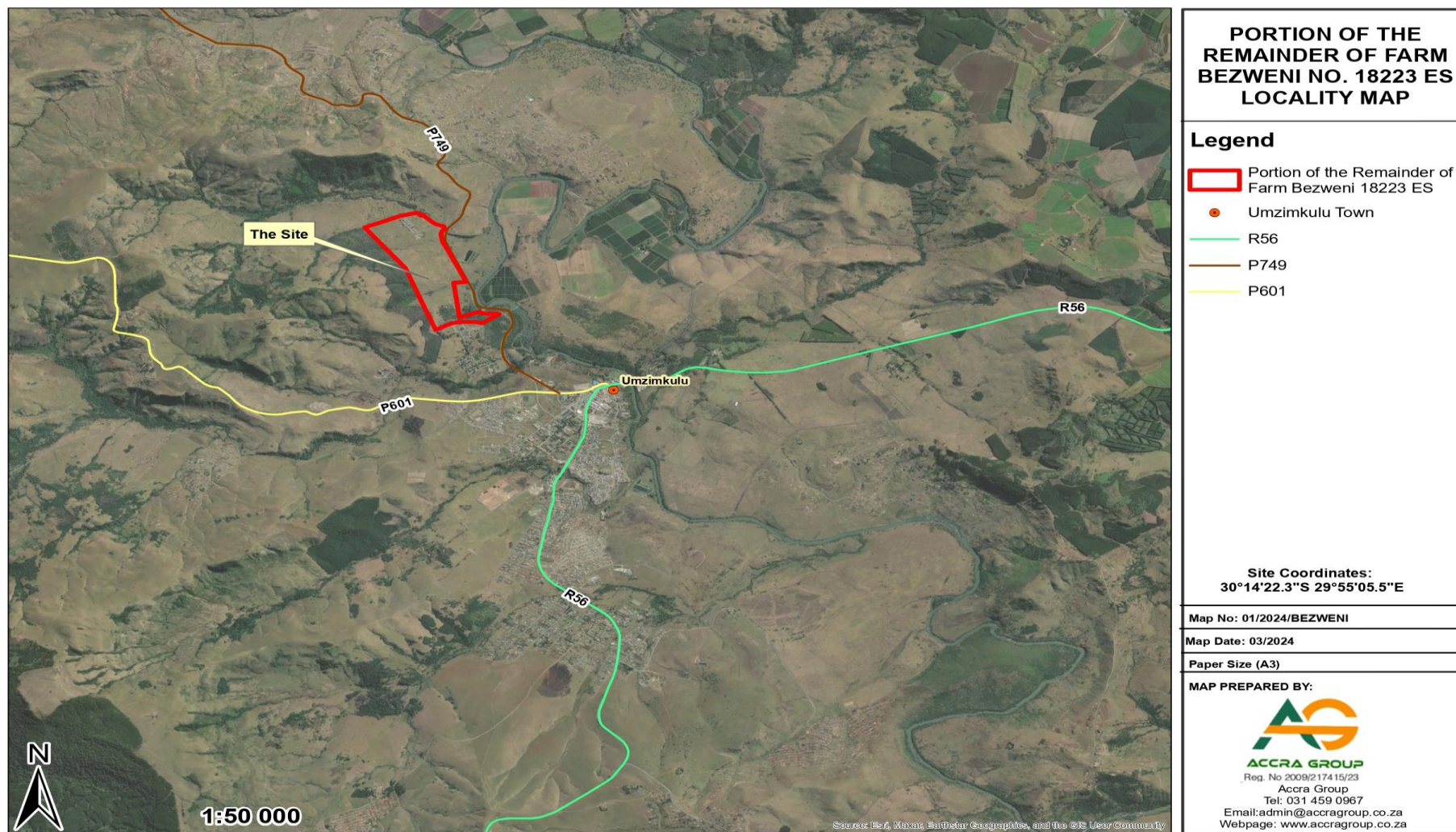
The Bezweni housing development has a total land size of approximately 300ha, with approximately 677 residential stands and other stands reserved for government, business/commercial and own space purposes. The project will consist of the construction of bulk infrastructure including roads, installation of water pipelines, sewer and stormwater.

5. ACTIVITY LOCATION

The proposed development will be located on the property described as Portion of the Remainder of Farm Bezweni no. 18223.

The location of the proposed development is contained below.

Figure 1: Map indicating the locality of the site.



6. **Relevant listed activity Regulation GN No.327-(Listing Notice 1)**

- **Activity 9:** The development of infrastructure exceeding 1 000 meters in length for the bulk transportation of water or storm water.
- **Activity 10:** The development and related operation of infrastructure exceeding 1000 meters in length for the bulk transportation of sewage, effluent, process water, waste water, return water, industrial discharge or slimes.
- **Activity 24:** The development of a road.
- **Activity 27:** The clearance of an area of 1 or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation.
- **Activity 28:** Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments.

7. **BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

What is a Basic Assessment Process?

A Basic Assessment (BA) is a process of collecting, organising, analysing, interpreting and communicating information that is relevant for the consideration of a particular application. BAs are undertaken where the impacts are less likely to have significant impacts on the receiving environment. BAs are used by planning authorities/developers to obtain an independent and objective view of the potential environmental (biophysical and socio-economic) impacts that could arise during the construction and operation of the proposed development. This information needs to provide the Competent Authority with a sound basis for their decision-making. Environmental management and mitigation measures are also identified through the BA process.

National Environmental Management Act (NEMA)

In terms of the Environmental Regulations promulgated under the National Environmental Management Act (Act. No. 107 of 1998), the BA will be conducted for the proposed development in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment [EIA] Regulations, 2017

8. **YOUR INVOLVEMENT**

The involvement of Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP's) is essential in the public participation process. I&AP's may participate by registering with the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) as per the details contained herein:

The ACCRA Group

Contact Person: Ms. Siphelelisiwe Gugulethu Ngobese

Cell: 031 459 0710 / 082 075 3891

Email address: admin@accragroup.co.za or enviro@accragroup.co.za

The Public Participation Process will include:

- Advertisement in the local newspaper
- Notice board on site
- Circulation of the BID (this document) to all identified I&APs
- Review of the report by all registered I&APs and the relevant authorities
- A public meeting (**as and when required based on the interest shown**)

The I&AP are requested to complete the I&AP registration and feedback form as per the below:

**INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES (I&AP) REGISTRATION AND FEEDBACK FORM
BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSED BEZWENI TOWNSHIP
ESTABLISHMENT FOR UMZIMKHULU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

DETAILS OF THE EAP

TO:	Miss. Siphelelisiwe Gugulethu Ngobese
COMPANY:	The ACCRA Group
POSTAL ADDRESS:	P O Box 52271, Berea Road, 4007
PHONE:	031 201 0710 / 082 075 3891
FAX:	031 201 8939
EMAIL:	admin@accragroup.co.za

From (Your Name):	
ORGANISATION/COMPANY & ADDRESS:	
PHONE:	FAX:
EMAIL:	
Your particular area of interest in the project:	
Organization Represented (If Applicable): Capacity (e.g. Chairperson, member, etc.)	

1. Do you have any concerns about the proposed development that you think should be addressed in the Report?

NO _____ **YES** _____

If "yes" please list your main areas of concern in point form

2. What do you consider may be positive and/or negative effects of the proposed development on the local residents, land owners and road users?

3. What do you consider may be positive and/or negative effects of the proposed development on the local economy and service infrastructure and services?

4. What do you consider may be positive and/or negative effects of the proposed development on the biophysical environment (during construction and operation), geology, agriculture, biodiversity and local ecology?

5. Is there any other information you feel should be included /considered in the assessment of the proposal?

6. Do you have any other comments?

7. Please provide details of other possible I&AP's that need to be informed of the proposal.

Please add more pages if necessary
Please complete and return by: