



Proposed Development of High Altitude Training Centre in Belfast, Mpumalanga



BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT



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PURPOSE OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

The purpose of this document is as follows:

- It serves as an introduction and description of proposed High Altitude Sports Training Centre (HATC) in Belfast, Mpumalanga
- It provides an overview of the Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment Process.
- It provides notice to potential stakeholders to register as Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) regarding the development of the proposed HATC.
- To obtain the initial comments and contributions by I&APs.

According to Government Notice GN No. R. 385 (2006), "**interested and affected party**" means an interested and affected party contemplated in section 24(4)(d) of the National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998), and which in terms of that section includes –

- (a) any person, group of persons or organisation interested in or affected by an activity; and
- (b) any organ of state that may have jurisdiction over any aspect of the activity.

The purpose of the EIA process is to identify and evaluate potential impacts and to recommend measures to mitigate negative impacts, and enhance positive impacts.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sports and Recreation (DCSR) proposes to develop a world class High Altitude Centre to unearth talent, develop champions and to provide top level support for elite athletes. The proposed development plans to provide the necessary sporting infrastructure for approximately 20 different sports including Soccer, Netball, Swimming, Rowing, Angling and Fly fishing, Rugby, Volleyball, Athletics, Basketball, Long Distance Running, Boxing, Cricket, Tennis, Karate, Judo, Wrestling, Gymnastics, White Water Kayaking and Cycling

Nemai Consulting was appointed as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to complete all requisite environmental processes and seek environmental authorisation, on behalf of the applicant.

PROJECT LOCATION

The site for the proposed development of a High Altitude Training Centre (HATC) is the remaining extent of Portion 3 of the Farm Belfast Town and Town Lands 357, JT (formerly a portion of Farm Tweefontein 300, JT), Belfast, Mpumalanga. The site is approximately 110 hectares in size and surrounds the southern portion of the Belfast Dam (Figure 1).



eMakhazeni (Belfast) falls within the Emakhazeni Local Municipality of the Nkangala District of Mpumalanga and is strategically located between the Johannesburg/Pretoria hub in Gauteng and Nelspruit in Mpumalanga along the N4 Maputo Corridor.

The proposed development site occurs at an altitude of approximately 1850m above sea level which makes it ideally suited for high performance training by elite athletes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The development of the Belfast High Altitude Sport's Centre involves numerous smaller development projects which together form the development programme. The major components of the overall programme will be discussed below. However, it is important to note that this Scoping assessment does not include the upgrade of offsite infrastructure.

In addition, a Waste Licence Application (WLA), Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) and Water Use Licence Application (WULA) will be lodged with the appropriate authorities for environmental authorisation.

An upgrade of the existing Water Treatment Works may be necessary to meet the future supply demands of the town, however this will be addressed in detail in the EIA phase of the project. Similarly, the Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTA) is nearing capacity and a new WWTA may be required off site to deal with the additional pressure. Separate Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessments will be

undertaken for the WTW upgrade and the new WWTW.

The programme of development of the HATC involves three major components:

Services Infrastructure:

This includes the following:

- Constructing any necessary temporary storm water run off cut off drains to protect dam from pollution
- Relocating the power line and potable water pipe from the site
- Expanding the Siyathuthule access road
- Expanding the site access road from the R33
- Constructing permanent irrigation water storage tanks
- Excavating and laying potable water, fire water, irrigation water pipe lines along with ducting for power supply and data reticulation
- Excavating G5 gravel from the onsite borrow pit and stock pile on site for road and building layer works
- Constructing site roads
- Constructing temporary water off take pipelines
- Constructing temporary central contractor camp with necessary water supply

Dam Expansion and Dam Basin Excavation:

This includes the following:

- Constructing a temporary dam to the northern boundary of the site
- De watering the southern portion of the dam (water to be stored in main dam to the north of the site)
- Excavating the rowing lanes
- Constructing the abutments for the northern pedestrian bridge within the water course along with the main bridge
- Constructing main dam inlet road crossing and weir at northern edge of southern wetland
- Removal of the temporary dam
- Cutting wetland channels and carrying out vegetation rehabilitation to the southern wetland.

Building, Sports' Fields and Stadia construction:

This involves the following:

- Site clearance
- Constructing individual facilities including all associated playing fields, parking and landscaping in phases across the site

ALTERNATIVES

The 2010 EIA regulations require that feasible project specific alternatives are identified

(including the “do nothing” option). Due to the combination of requirements necessary for the proposed development, including high altitude and access to a dam for rowing and canoeing facilities, the proposed development has no site alternatives. Alternate layouts will be assessed together will ‘do nothing’ alternative.

ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION PROCESS

In terms of Government Notice No. 544, R545 and R546 of 18 June 2010, promulgated in terms of Section 24 of the National Environmental Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), the DCSR is required to undertake a Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment process, as the following activities are triggered (Table 1).

Table 1: Listed Activities

Authority	Legal Reference	Listed Activity*
Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism	GN No. R544 of 18 June 2010	9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 18; 20; 22; 26; 27; 28; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 47; 55
	GN No. R545 of 18 June 2010	5; 15
	GN No. R546 of 18 June	2; 4; 6; 10; 13; 14; 16; 17; 19; 24

*Detailed descriptions of listed activities can be provided on request

Figure 2 below shows the environmental authorisation process. Currently, we are at the Public Participation and Scoping Review which provides Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) with the opportunity to comment on the draft Scoping report.



Figure 2: Environmental Impact Assessment process

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The notification process for the Scoping and Environmental Impact assessment involves the following:

Placement of notice boards
Distributing the Background Information Document (BID) to all landowners within 100m of the proposed HATC site)

Provide written notices to:

- Landowners
- Ward councillors
- Municipalities
- Organisations such as Rate Payers associations, NGOs etc.
- Provincial Departments having jurisdiction

In accordance with Regulation 56 (1) of Government Notice No. R. 543 of 18 June 2010, Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) are granted an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Scoping Report for Proposed Development of the High Altitude Training Centre in the following manner:

Public Open Session

A Public Open Session will be held so that I&APs can comment on the proposed development. The details of the Open Session are as follows:

	Venue	Date	Time
Public Open Session	Emakhazeni (Belfast) Town Hall- 25 Scheepers Street	28 October 2011	14h00 - 18h00
	(Next to the Municipal Buildings)		

Review of Copies of the draft Scoping Report:

Copies of the Draft Scoping report will be lodged at the following places for review from **14 October 2011 until 24 November 2011** –

Location	Address	Telephone No.
Emakhazeni Local Municipality (Reception)	Scheepers Street, Belfast	013 253 1121
Emakhazeni Public Library	Scheepers Street, Belfast	013 253 1121 (ext. 121)

All comments received from I&APs on the draft Scoping Report will be incorporated into the final Scoping Report. The final Scoping Report will be available for comment by registered I&APs between **28 November 2011 and 12 December 2011**. The final Draft Scoping Report will then be submitted to the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (DEDET) on the **14 December 2011**.

SPECIALIST STUDIES

The following Specialist Studies will be undertaken as part of the EIA phase and will be included in the Draft EIA report.

- Fauna and Flora Biodiversity Study;
- Heritage Impact Assessment;
- Visual Impact Assessment;
- Agricultural Potential Study; and
- Social Impact Assessment.
- Wetland and River Delineation Study
- Bio-Monitoring
- Infrastructure Study
- Geotechnical Study
- Floodline Determination

REGISTRATION AS I&AP

In order to ensure that you are registered as an I&AP, please submit your name, contact information and interest in the project by completing the attached Reply Form. You can also provide your comments on the Reply Form. The time period for returning the Reply Form to Nema Consulting and registering as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) is:

14 October 2011 – 24 November 2011



ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL CONSULTANTS

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Reply Form Registration as an Interested and Affected Party

(Complete and return by 24 November 2011 to Vanessa Brueton)

Date:			Official use	
Name of organisation: <i>(if applicable)</i>			Date received:	
Name & Surname:			Our reference:	
Address	Postal:	Physical:		Status
Tel No:				
Cell No				
Fax No:				
Email:				
Registration as an I&AP:			Yes	No
<u>Please include the contact details of any possible other I&APs you might be aware of:</u>				
<u>Comments:</u> <i>(note - additional pages may be included if the space provided is insufficient)</i>				

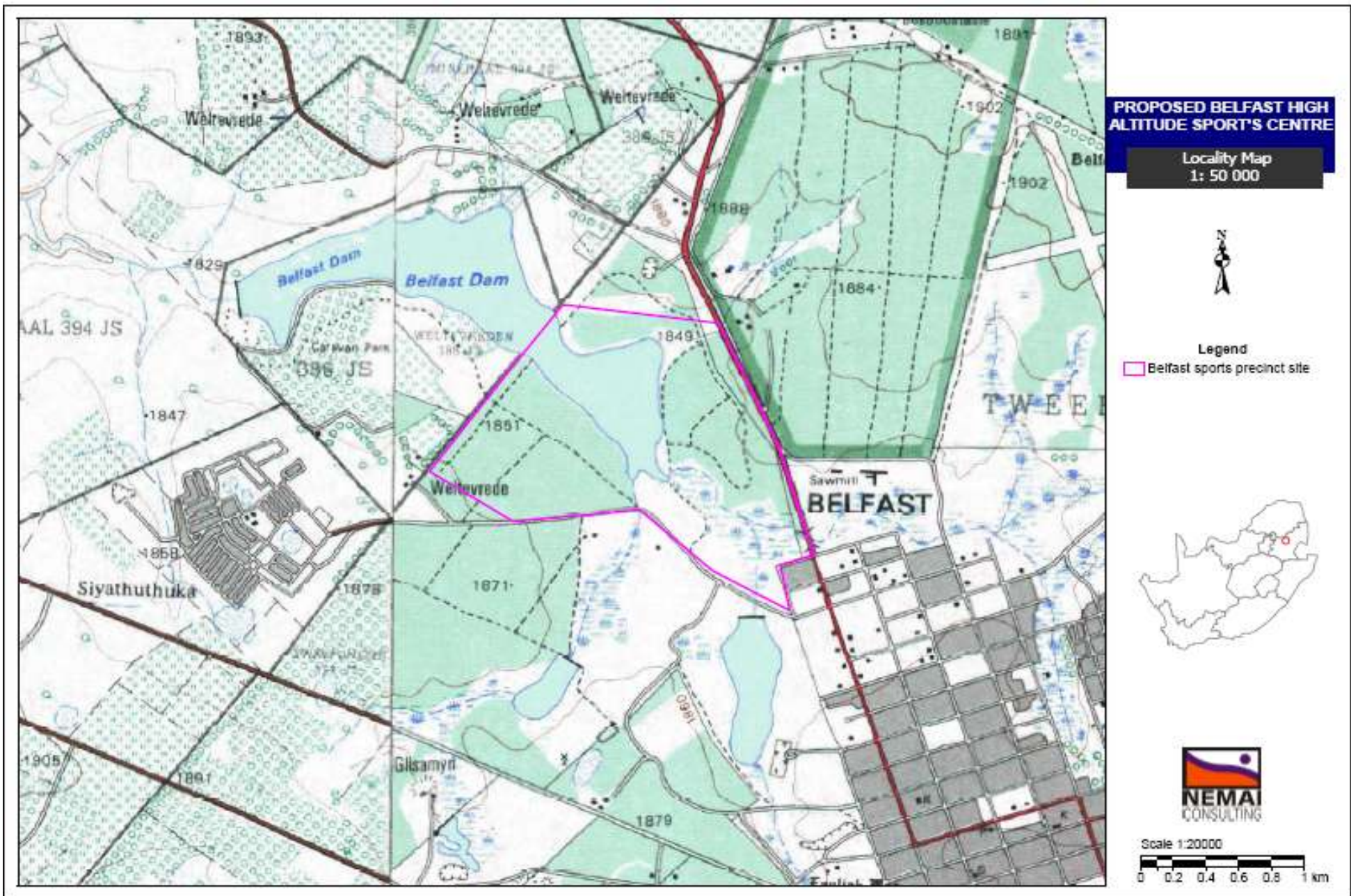


Figure 1: Location of proposed development of HATC in Belfast, Mpumalanga

CONTACT DETAILS

For any queries pertaining to the project, please contact the Environmental Assessment Practitioner below:



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Contact:

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Thank you for your participation