

REVIEW REPORT

Peer review of the Basic Social Assessment (desktop study) for the proposed Pongola River Bridge

(RHDHV reference number: T01.PZB.000310)

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Environmental Assessment Practitioner:

Royal HaskoningDHV – *Basic Social
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1. INTRODUCTION

Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV) compiled a Basic Social Assessment (BSA) Report (desktop study) as part of the Basic Assessment (BA) process for the proposed Pongola River Bridge in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. The Pongola River divides two Local Municipalities (LMs) – the Umhlabuyalingana LM and the Jozini LM. The proposed bridge will link these two municipalities.

Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs) draw on inputs from a range of scientific disciplines, with the benefit of translating good theory into good practice (DEAT, 2002). As a requirement when specialist studies are conducted “in-house” by the same consultant who conducts the environmental impact assessment process, the said specialist studies need to be externally reviewed.

This review was done by

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Declaration of independence

I, Hilda Bezuidenhout, confirm that I have no conflicting interests in the undertaking of the proposed activity, that I am independent and conduct my work in an objective manner, that I have the necessary expertise to conduct studies of this nature and that I will disclose any information I have that may influence the decision on whether the application for environmental authorisation, of which this study forms a part, should be authorised or not.

2. REVIEW METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this review a checklist was compiled using a number of sources to determine whether the BSA complied with all requirements. A Basic Social Assessment, as opposed to a Social Impact Assessment (SIA), does not involve any stakeholder consultation and is purely a desktop study, with impacts identified and rated by the specialist only. Therefore, the checklist used for SIA was adapted to apply to BSA.

The following sources were used to compile the master checklist (used for SIA), from which the checklist below for BSA was derived:

- Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for SIA, 2003 (ICGP)
- Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects (Vanclay, Esteves, Aucamp & Franks, 2015)
- EIA Regulations, 2014: Appendix 6 – Specialist reports
- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Information Series 4: Specialist studies
- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Information Series 13: Review in EIA
- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Information Series 22: Socio-Economic Impact Assessment
- PhD thesis titled “Social Impact Assessment as a tool for social development in South Africa: An exploratory study” by Aucamp (2015)

In addition, two lists of social variables as identified by Vanclay (cited in DEAT, 2006) and the Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for SIA (2003) respectively, were used to ensure that all potential social impacts of the development were identified and assessed for all four the project stages.

3. REVIEW CHECKLIST

Based on the sources listed in the previous section, the following checklist was used for the review.

Table 1: Review checklist

Report section	Aspect included/considered in BSA report	Yes/No
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist details, including expertise and specialist declaration of independence • Terms of reference/scope and purpose of report: 1) assumptions, limitations, uncertainties, gaps in knowledge; 2) indication of what wasn't done, but could have improved the study, had there been sufficient time and/or funding; and 3) statement on how uncertainty was dealt with • Study method used and report format • The date and season of the site investigation/field work and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment (mostly not applicable to SIA, but report content requirement as per EIA Regulations, 2014 – Appendix 6) 	Yes, some
Legal framework and guidelines <i>(recommended)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of legal mandate to address social issues in EIA: 1) Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; 2) National Environmental Management Act; 3) NEMA Principles; and 4) Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations • Indication of non-existence of legal SIA requirements in EIA • List of documents consulted and adhered to: 1) Social Standards or Guidelines – local and international; and 2) Principles of good SIA practice 	No, but not required
Project description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the proposed project • Confirmation of study area • Use of maps, figures, tables and graphs to improve readability, accessibility and interpretation • Knowledge of the typical impacts of projects of this nature 	Yes
Baseline study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and economic baseline description (status quo) of the potentially impacted areas (receiving environment) • Inclusion of data from variety of sources such as census data (for demographic profiles), Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs), Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plans (SDBIPs), Employment, Growth and Development Plans (EGDPs), etc. • Background description of local historical setting of project and rich picture of local cultural context, as well as demographics • Levels: National, Provincial, District and Local (municipal) 	Yes
Assessment methodology	A description of the assessment and rating methodology used in the SIA process and preparation of the report, including the use of the following generic criteria of the activity: Extent, Duration, Intensity/severity, Mitigation potential, Acceptability, Degree of certainty/likelihood, Status (positive or negative), Legal impact, and subsequent significance rating	Yes
Scoping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and description of activities likely to cause social and cultural impacts (social change processes) • Identification and description of potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, both positive and negative (preferably consulting the two lists of social variables as identified by Vanclay (cited in DEAT, 2006) and the Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for SIA (2003) to ensure that all possible impacts have been identified) 	Yes

Impact assessment and rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per EIA Regulations, 2014 – Appendix 6: description of identified sensitivities of the site related to the activity and its associated structures and infrastructure, identification and description of any areas to be avoided, including buffers, and a map superimposing the activity, including associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental (social) sensitivities of the site, including areas to be avoided and buffers. Adapted to be made applicable to SIA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ description of the impact of the activity (including associated structures and infrastructure) on the social environment and its sensitivities, including areas to be avoided and buffers, if applicable ◦ a map superimposing the site of the activity (including associated structures and infrastructure) indicating sensitivities, areas to be avoided and buffers, if applicable • Description and rating of the likely impacts (including secondary and cumulative impacts) • Description and evaluation of alternatives • Including specifically the following important aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Description how the different segments of the community are likely to respond ◦ The goal of all projects should be sustainable social development ◦ Human Rights need to be considered ◦ Indigenous, Traditional, Tribal and other land-connected peoples should be acknowledged and given specific attention – Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) ◦ Whether there will be in-migration ◦ Whether regional development issues were considered in the study ◦ Any environmental justice issues must be fully described and analysed 	Yes
Mitigation measures	<p>Identification of measures to enhance positive social impacts and mitigate negative social impacts, including (<u>where possible and applicable</u>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommending changes in proposed action or alternative • Providing suggestions about compensation • Measures to discourage dependency on the proponent • Measures to promote active involvement of people • Suggesting partnerships between civil society, government and the private sector • Measures to increase capabilities and productivity of people • Measures to mitigate impacts on family stability • Measures that will contribute to poverty alleviation • Addressing inequality issues • Proposing benefit agreements • Proposals for economic development processes • Suggestions regarding employment creation • Suggestions regarding contributing to education/skills development • Potential establishment of infrastructure • Description of potential conflict and recommendation of resolution processes • Development of coping strategies in community for dealing with non-mitigatable impacts • Contribute to skills development and capacity building in community • Advise on appropriate institutional and coordination arrangements for all parties 	Yes
Recommendations	<p>Recommendations must include, <u>as appropriate</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the project should be authorised from a social point of view • Which mitigation measures must be included in the EMP and/or environmental authorisation, should the project be approved • Measures to support communities with change • Establishment of a grievance mechanism • Development of an Impacts and Benefits Agreement (IBA) • Development of a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) • Establishment of partnerships to implement the SIMP • Implementation of ongoing social performance plans • Closure plan • Any monitoring requirements, including who is proposed as funder of ongoing monitoring 	Yes
Bibliography	Full reference list and identification of all sources of information used in the report	Yes

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report provides a very comprehensive baseline study and gives a clear enough picture of the prevailing social and economic conditions of the area.

The impact assessment section is comprehensive and detailed, and the reviewer is satisfied that the potential impacts of the proposed development were identified and addressed.

The following additional items can be included for the sake of clarity and to enhance the report:

- Brief description how a BSA differs from a SIA.
- Specialist expertise and declaration of independence.
- Terms of reference/scope and purpose of report:
 - Assumptions, limitations, uncertainties, gaps in knowledge;
 - Indication of what wasn't done, but could have improved the study, had there been sufficient time and/or funding; and
 - Statement on how uncertainty was dealt with.
- Description of legal mandate to address social issues in EIA:
 - Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;
 - National Environmental Management Act;
 - NEMA Principles; and
 - Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.
- Indication of non-existence of legal SIA requirements in EIA.
- Whether the project should be authorised from a social point of view.
- Which mitigation measures must be included in the EMPr and/or environmental authorisation, should the project be approved.

In conclusion, the Basic Social Assessment Report is of good quality and all the important content requirements were met.

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