UPGRADING OF THE EXISTING LIFEGUARD FACILITY, UMHLANGA ROCKS, KWAZULU-NATAL:
BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT
EIA REF: DM/0013/2013 Lagoon Drive

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

Terratest (Pty) Ltd have been appointed on behalf of the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality to conduct the environmental services for the proposed expansion of the existing Lifeguard Facility at Umhlanga Rocks, KwaZulu-Natal. The application for Environmental Authorisation conforms to the current National Environmental Management Act, (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations which came into effect on 2 August 2010. According to these regulations, the authorisation of the proposed activity will follow a Basic Assessment procedure.

The following activities contained in GNR 544 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010, will be applied for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and date of the relevant notice</th>
<th>Activity No (s) (in terms of the relevant notice)</th>
<th>Description of each listed activity as per project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GN. R 544 (Listing Notice 1)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>“The construction of: (x) buildings exceeding 50 square metres in size; or (xi) infrastructure or structures covering 50 square metres or more Where such construction occurs within a watercourse or within 32 meters of a watercourse, measured from the edge of the watercourse, excluding where such construction will occur behind the development setback line.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN. R 544 (Listing Notice 1)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>“The construction of structures in the coastal public property where the development footprint is bigger than 50 square metres, excluding – (i) The construction of structures within existing ports or harbours that will not increase the development footprint or throughput capacity of the port or harbour; (ii) The construction of a port or harbour, in which case activity 24 of Notice 545 of 2010 applies; (iii) The construction of temporary structures within the beach zone where such structures will be demolished or disassembled after a period not exceeding 6 weeks.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN. R 544 (Listing Notice 1)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>“The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock or more than 5 cubic metres from: (iv) the seashore; (v) the littoral active zone, an estuary or a distance of 100 metres inland of the highwater mark of the sea or an estuary, whichever distance is the greater, But excluding where such infilling, depositing, dredging, excavation, removal or moving; a) is for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a management plan agreed to by the relevant environmental authority; or b) occurs behind the development setback line.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN. R 544 (Listing Notice 1)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>“The expansion of – (iii) buildings by more than 50 square metres; (iv) infrastructure by more than 50 square metres within a watercourse, measured from the edge of the a watercourse, but excluding where such expansion will occur behind the”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the NEMA EIA Regulations (2010), it is necessary for the applicant to appoint an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) who will adhere to the environmental stipulations and complete the applicable environmental process on behalf of the applicant. In this case, the relevant role players for the proposed development are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Assessment Practitioner</td>
<td>Terratest (Pty) Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent Authority</td>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (DAEA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Public Participation Process, as promulgated in terms of Chapter 6 of the NEMA EIA Regulations (2010) is a fundamental process whereby the proponent, technical team, government authorities, key stakeholders and interested and affected parties (IAPs) can engage in an informed decision–making process.

2. **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The existing facility is situated at Umhlanga Rocks Main Beach within the eThekwini Municipality. Currently the site consists of a double story face brick building which houses the Umhlanga Rocks Surf Lifesaving Club, Aqua Rush Boat Trips, Casea Charters and associated amenities. The site is situated on land owned by The Pearls of Umhlanga; however the facility to be upgraded is a public amenity and as such the upgrading of the site is being undertaken by the eThekwini Municipality. The facility is situated at the following co-ordinates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>Southerly co-ordinate</th>
<th>Easterly co-ordinate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>29° 43’ 29.353” S</td>
<td>31° 05’ 21.04” E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site is located on the promenade at a centralised, well used location that experiences extensive foot traffic associated with members of the general public and the surrounding homes. The beach over which the facility faces is the main beach along the northern stretch of coastline and therefore experiences high volumes of use, particularly during holiday periods.
Figure 1. The locality of the current facility
Figure 2. An artist’s impression of what the expansion and upgrading of the proposed site is to possibly look like
Figure 3. Aerial image of the current facility

Plate 1. The existing Lifeguard Facility
3. **EXISTING AND PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Umhlanga Main Beach has grown in popularity over the recent years. The increase in the number of visitors to the area as well as additional and potential developments, have rendered the current facilities insufficient. The Umhlanga Life Guard facility requires a substantial upgrade to cater for the growing demand.

The proposed structural upgrades will see the building floor space increased from approximately 260m² to 490m² and will include the expansion of the existing parking area, storage facilities and upper floor amenities.

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPE OF WORK**

The Basic Assessment process that will be followed is in accordance with the NEMA EIA Regulations (2010). The EAP is required to conduct the environmental application process and manage the public participation process, which is currently underway. Terratest (Pty) Ltd will perform the following:

1. Identify key stakeholders, authorities and municipalities, environmental groups and interested or affected members of the public, hereafter referred to as IAPs.
2. Compile a detailed Background Information Document (BID) for the proposed development, providing details to IAPs of:
   a. The listed activities that trigger the EIA process;
   b. The scope of work;
   c. The locality and current land use at the site;
   d. A detailed site description;
   e. The EIA process to be followed; and
   f. The opportunity for IAPs to comment on the project.
3. Advertise the environmental application in a newspaper applicable to the region;
4. Place a poster/posters on the site;
5. Obtain landowner’s consent;
6. Attend Public Liaison Committee (PLC) meetings and workshops where necessary;
7. Host a Public Open Day, if necessary, providing details of issues identified by the EAP, stakeholders and IAPs;
8. Record all comments of IAPs and present such comments, as well as responses provided by Terratest, in a full Comments and Responses Report, which will be included in the Final Basic Assessment Report to be submitted to the DAEA;
9. Circulate all IAP’s comments to the project team.
The draft Basic Assessment Report will be made available to all relevant stakeholders and registered IAPs for further comment, before the final BAR is submitted to the DAEA.

5. GENERAL SITE DESCRIPTION

a. Land use and Vegetation

The vegetation in the greater Umhlanga region has been classified by Mucina and Rutherford (2006) as KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Belt. However, little to none of this vegetation is left on the proposed site. The area surrounding the facility that is to be upgraded consists of hard paved surfaces and landscaped gardens that were established during the construction of the promenade along the beachfront.

The predominant land use of the area is for tourism and for use as a public amenity.

Plate 2. Paved surfaces and landscaped gardens behind the site

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Plate 3. Landscaped gardens adjacent to the existing facility consisting of indigenous vegetation of a limited diversity

b. Heritage

According to the National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999, provisions are made to protect national heritage resources and this forms an integral part of the environmental assessment process. Amafa AkwaZulu-Natali (Amafa) is KwaZulu-Natal’s heritage authority and an application has been made to this authority. However it is highly unlikely that any archaeological findings will be found at the site due to the developed nature of the site. If Amafa deems it necessary, a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) will be conducted in order to assess the cultural and heritage significance of any findings. This specialist study will be included in the Final Basic Assessment Report.

c. The Social Environment

The Umhlanga Rocks Node is located 18 km from the Durban CBD. The surrounding land use is characterised by general commercial, general residential and special zoning and has, within the last few years, undergone intensive redevelopment.²

The eThekwini Municipality’s Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2012/13 – 2016/17 aims to provide a well-rounded planning document specific to numerous sectors throughout the Municipality. The Municipality’s delivery plan is organised into eight separate but related plans. One plan is to develop,

manage, sustain and regulate the Built and Natural Environment. To direct and manage the use of the built and natural environment the municipality will have to ensure the sustainable and integrated growth and development. In this way, citizens will be able to access and use resources to meet their needs without compromising the amenity for others and the resource base of the Municipality in the present and in the future. Included in this plan is the upgrading and expansion of necessary public amenities and infrastructure, which is planned through the expansion of the existing Lifesaving Facility.

d. Geology and terrain

The geology of the greater Umhlanga region is dominated by sandstone, tillite, shale and gneiss. The soils are shallow over hard sandstones and deeper over younger, softer rocks.  

The terrain of the region is gently undulating with the construction of the present facility having been undertaken on the periphery of the backshore of the beach.

e. Photographs of the site

Plate 4. The parking lot of the existing facility, both of which are to be expanded and upgraded

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Plate 5. The entrance (west of the coastline) to the Umhlanga Rocks Surf Lifesaving Club

Plate 6. The terrain, development and adjacent lifesaving building to the north of the facility
Plate 7. A view (to the south) of the existing facility

Plate 8. The promenade which runs above the facility and provides the main access to the Umhlanga Rocks Surf Lifesaving Club
6. **DO I PARTICIPATE?**

Every proposed development has the potential to significantly affect the natural and social environments, both at, as well as surrounding the proposed site. For this reason it is imperative that you as a stakeholder or an interested and/or affected party (IAP) comment on the proposed project and **highlight issues or concerns** that you feel need to be considered during the proposed planning and implementation process. Should you wish to register as an IAP or should you have any comments regarding the proposed development, please **state your interest** in the proposed development along with any **comments or queries** you may have before the **20th May 2013**.

A registration form is attached.

Plate 9. A panoramic view of the facility and the surrounding built environment
**REGISTRATION FORM**

Name:  
Surname  
Address:  
Postal Code:  
Tel No:  
Fax No:  
Cell No:  
e-mail:  

Please state your interest in the proposed project: 

Comments (add extra pages should you need):  

Do you require any additional information?  

Other parties which you think should be included in the process:  

*Your comments are highly appreciated, and will be included in the final report to be submitted to the decision-making authorities.*

**PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN THE 20th MAY 2013 TO:**  
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