

PART A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Part A of this report comprises two chapters providing relevant background information, as follows:

- **Chapter 1 – Introduction:** Provides background to the proposed project and the Terms of Reference for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The chapter also describes the structure of this document and indicates where copies of the full report will be made available for information purposes; and
- **Chapter 2 – Study approach and Methodology:** This chapter outlines the guiding principles and legislative requirements underpinning the EIA and describes the study approach and methodology. It also provides a summary of the public consultation process undertaken and outlines the way forward in terms of decision-making by the relevant authorities. Specialist studies undertaken during the Impact Assessment phase are listed, and the process whereby the information gathered in these studies was integrated into an overall assessment of the proposed project is described. Assumptions and limitations applicable to the EIA process are listed at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been compiled as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that has been undertaken for the proposed N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway. The proposed project extends over a total distance of approximately 560 km between the N2 Gonubie Interchange (near East London in the Eastern Cape) and the N2 Isipingo Interchange (south of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal) (see Figure 1.1). The compilation of the report has been informed by comments received during the comment period on the Draft EIR. A basic analysis of these submissions is included in the Public Consultation Process Report (see Appendix E of this volume). All comments received on the Draft EIR have been collated in a Comments Report that is included as Volume 5 of this report. It should be noted that all significant changes to the Draft EIR are indicated in underlined text.

This chapter provides background to the proposed project, outlines the Terms of Reference for the current EIA, provides a brief overview of the study process, describes the structure of the report and indicates where copies of the full report will be made available to Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) for information purposes.

1.1 BACKGROUND

A previous EIA for the proposed N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway resulted in the issuing of an environmental Record of Decision (RoD), on 3 December 2003, which authorised the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) to undertake the proposed project. However, numerous appeals were subsequently lodged with the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism objecting to the authorisation granted to SANRAL. On 9 December 2004 the Minister upheld the appeals and set aside the authorisation on the grounds that the appointed environmental consultant did not meet the requirement for independence as contemplated in the EIA Regulations (Government Notice R1183 of 5 September 1997, as amended) promulgated under the Environment Conservation Act, 1989 (ECA, Act No. 73 of 1989). In addition to a number of other items, the Minister's decision also indicated that this did not preclude a new application for environmental authorisation from being submitted.

Following a proposal call by SANRAL in January 2005, SANRAL subsequently appointed CCA Environmental (Pty) Ltd (CCA), in association with NMA Effective Social Strategists (formerly Nomi Muthialu & Associates (Pty) Ltd; NMA), as independent environmental consultant to submit a new application for environmental authorisation and to undertake the required EIA of the proposed project as per the requirements of the ECA EIA Regulations.

1.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CURRENT EIA

The Terms of Reference for the current EIA include the following:

- To undertake a thorough review of the previous EIA process in order to identify appropriate and/or adequate information suitable for use in the current EIA;
- To undertake a comprehensive audit of all the issues and concerns raised during the previous EIA's Scoping Study, Impact Assessment and Appeals phases in order to identify key shortcomings and/or gaps that need to be addressed in the current EIA;
- To formulate Terms of Reference for specialist studies in order to update existing, appropriate information and/or to address identified shortcomings and/or gaps;

- To include a formal public consultation process in the study, which specifically addresses the distribution of information to I&APs, provision of opportunities for I&APs to raise any new issues and concerns and the provision of opportunities for I&APs to comment on the EIA documentation; and
- To ensure the study complies with the relevant requirements of the ECA and the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA, Act No. 107 of 1998), as appropriate.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF STUDY PROCESS

An overview of the study process, highlighting key documentation compiled and submitted, is provided below. A detailed description of the methodology followed during the EIA process is provided in Section 2.2.

1.3.1 APPLICATION FOR AUTHORISATION AND PLAN OF STUDY FOR SCOPING

In April 2005 CCA submitted the required Application for Authorisation forms and a Plan of Study for Scoping, on behalf of SANRAL, to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA; the competent environmental authority - formerly the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism), the Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (formerly the Eastern Cape Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism) and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs. DEA, with due consideration of comments received from the relevant provincial environmental authorities, accepted the Plan of Study for Scoping on 20 June 2005.

1.3.2 SCOPING STUDY

A Scoping Study was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the ECA EIA Regulations (Government Notice R1183 of 5 September 1997, as amended). The findings of the Scoping Study were presented in the Final Scoping Report (FSR), which was submitted to the relevant environmental authorities for consideration during March 2007.

1.3.3 PLAN OF STUDY FOR EIA

A Plan of Study for EIA (see Appendix A) was submitted to the relevant environmental authorities in April 2007. DEA accepted the FSR and Plan of Study for EIA during May 2007 and requested that SANRAL submit an EIR which should comply with the requirements of Regulation 8 of the ECA EIA Regulations (see Appendix B).

1.3.4 SPECIALIST STUDIES

Suitable, independent specialists were thus duly commissioned, between May and July 2007, to undertake 13 specialist studies on potential impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project, as per the Terms of Reference formulated in Chapter 9 of the FSR. Specialist studies were undertaken in the following fields: vegetation and flora; fauna; aquatic ecosystems; soils, land use and agriculture; social; tourism; cultural and historical heritage; noise; air quality; visual; traffic; planning/development; and economic. Draft specialist reports were subjected to external peer specialist review, which informed the compilation of the final draft specialist reports.

1.3.5 COMPILATION OF FINAL EIR

The key findings of the specialist studies undertaken to assess the potential biophysical, social and economic impacts of the proposed project and the alternatives brought forward for further investigation were presented in the Draft EIR. The report integrated and synthesised the results of the specialist studies and other relevant, available information and provided an overall assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed project and the identified feasible alternatives. The findings of a comparative assessment of alternative route alignments and toll plaza locations were presented and recommendations were made in terms of mitigation, enhancement and management measures that would be applicable to the further planning, design, construction and operation of the proposed project (if authorised). The Final EIR has been compiled with due consideration of comments received during the Draft EIR comment period and responses provided by the EIA project team, relevant specialists and SANRAL, as appropriate, and additional input received from the aquatic ecosystems, social and planning/development specialists.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The Final EIR comprises five separate volumes, namely a Main Report (Volume 1), three volumes containing the Specialist Reports (Volumes 2 to 4) and a volume containing the Comments Report (Volume 5).

1.4.1 VOLUME 1: MAIN REPORT

The Main Report comprises five parts, containing 16 chapters, the contents of which are outlined in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Structure of the Main Report

CHAPTER	CONTENT
Executive Summary	Provides an overview of the findings of the EIA.
PART A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
Chapter 1	Introduction Provides background to the proposed project and the terms of reference for the EIA. The chapter also describes the structure of this document.
Chapter 2	Study Approach and Methodology Provides an overview of the study approach and methodology for the EIA, with a focus on the legislative context and guiding principles. <u>Provides the objectives of the study and summarises the public consultation process undertaken and the way forward in terms of decision-making by the relevant authorities.</u> Assumptions and limitations applicable to the EIA process are also listed.
PART B: PROJECT INFORMATION	
Chapter 3	General Project Information Presents general information on the legislative framework for tolling of national roads, the rationale for tolling, the motivation for the proposed project and toll sections. Information on operation and maintenance aspects and the empowerment strategy of the proposed project is also provided.
Chapter 4	Project Description Provides a detailed description of the proposed scope of work along the various road sections of the proposed project.
Chapter 5	Consideration of Alternatives Provides a summary of the various alternatives considered in the Scoping Study phase and gives a detailed description of the identified feasible alternatives assessed in the Impact Assessment phase of the EIA.

CHAPTER	CONTENT
Chapter 6	The Affected Environment Provides a description of the key characteristics of the biophysical, socio-economic and cultural-historic environment in which the proposed project would be located. Relevant project-related planning, legislative and policy aspects are also discussed.
PART C: ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED WORKS ALONG THE ROAD SECTIONS	
Chapter 7	Assessment: Gonubie Interchange to Ngobozi Describes and assesses the potential impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed works, including physical toll plazas, between Gonubie Interchange and Ngobozi.
Chapter 8	Assessment: Ngobozi to Mthatha (Ngqeleni) Describes and assesses the potential impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed works, including physical toll plazas, between Ngobozi and Mthatha (Ngqeleni).
Chapter 9	Assessment: Mthatha (Ngqeleni) to Ndwalane Describes and assesses the potential impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed works, including physical toll plazas, between Mthatha (Ngqeleni) and Ndwalane.
Chapter 10	Assessment: Ndwalane to Ntafufu River Describes and assesses the potential impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed works, including physical toll plazas, in the greenfields section between Ndwalane and the Ntafufu River.
Chapter 11	Assessment: Ntafufu River to Lusikisiki (Magwa Intersection) Describes and assesses the potential impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed works between the Ntafufu River and Lusikisiki (Magwa Intersection).
Chapter 12	Assessment: Lusikisiki (Magwa Intersection) to Mthamvuna River Describes and assesses the potential impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed works, including physical toll plazas, in the greenfields section between Lusikisiki (Magwa Intersection) and the Mthamvuna River.
Chapter 13	Assessment: Mthamvuna River to Isipingo Interchange Describes and assesses the potential impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed works, including physical toll plazas, between the Mthamvuna River and the Isipingo Interchange.
PART D: ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC PROJECT-SCALE AND TOLL FUNDING-RELATED ASPECTS	
Chapter 14	Vegetation and flora, Aquatic ecosystems, Social, Traffic diversion, Noise and Air quality Describes and assesses, as appropriate, specific issues relating to vegetation and flora, aquatic ecosystems, social, traffic diversion, noise and air quality aspects at a project scale and/or in relation to toll funding.
Chapter 15	Tourism, Economic and Planning/Development Describes and assesses specific tourism, economic and planning/development issues at a project scale and/or in relation to toll funding.
PART E: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Chapter 16	Conclusions and Recommendations Provides conclusions and recommendations to the EIA. Conclusions on the evaluation of the overall ecological, social and economic sustainability of the proposed project are also provided.
REFERENCES	Provides a list of references used in compilation of the report.
APPENDICES	Supporting Appendices include a copy of the Plan of Study for EIA, correspondence to I&APs after submission of the FSR (including correspondence received from I&APs during the specialist studies stage), NMA's Public Consultation Process Report on the Impact Assessment phase of the EIA and SANRAL's letter of commitment regarding the development and implementation of a Biodiversity Offset agreement.

1.4.2 VOLUMES 2 TO 4: SPECIALIST REPORTS

Volumes 2 to 4 contain the specialist reports, which reflect the findings of the 13 specialist studies undertaken as part of the EIA process.

1.4.3 VOLUME 5: COMMENTS REPORT

The Comments Report includes the following: Comments and Responses Tables; a list of I&APs; copies of adverts and correspondence to I&APs during the Impact Assessment phase; attendance registers and pictures of Public Open Days; copies of all the written comments received on the Draft EIR; and Addenda to the aquatic ecosystems, social and planning/development specialist reports. The Comments and Responses Tables incorporate comments received by the closing date for comment on the Draft EIR, with responses provided by the EIA project team, relevant specialists and SANRAL, as appropriate. Comments received after 22 January 2009 ("late" submissions received from the public and authorities) are not included in the Comments and Responses Tables but are appended to Volume 5, as appropriate.

1.5 AVAILABILITY OF THE REPORT

Copies of the full report will be lodged in the following public libraries/venues for I&AP information purposes:

Eastern Cape

East London Central Library	Tabankulu Library
Gonubie Library	Port St Johns Library
Komga Library	Lusikisiki Information Centre
Butterworth Public Library	Ingquza Hill Municipal Offices (Lusikisiki)
Dutywa Public Library	Flagstaff Information Centre
Mthatha Public Library	Ingquza Hill Municipal Offices (Flagstaff)
Mhlonto Municipal Offices (Qumbu)	Bizana Library
Umzimvubu Municipal Offices (Mount Ayliff)	Matatiele Library
Nyandeni Municipal Offices (Libode)	

KwaZulu-Natal

Kokstad Public Library	Cragieburn Library
Harding Public Library	Scottburgh Memorial Library
Ezinqoleni Municipal Offices (Izingolweni)	Park Rynie Library
Durban Central Reference Library	Umzinto Library
Isipingo Civic Library	Pennington Library
Isipingo Beach Library	Hibberdene Library
Athlone Park Public Library	Umtentweni Library
Amanzimtoti Library	Port Shepstone Library
Kwamakhuta Library	Uvongo Library
Kingsburgh Library	Margate Library
Umkomaas Library	Southbroom Library
Adams Mission Library	Port Edward Library

The full report will also be made available on the websites www.ccaenvironmental.co.za and www.nra.co.za.

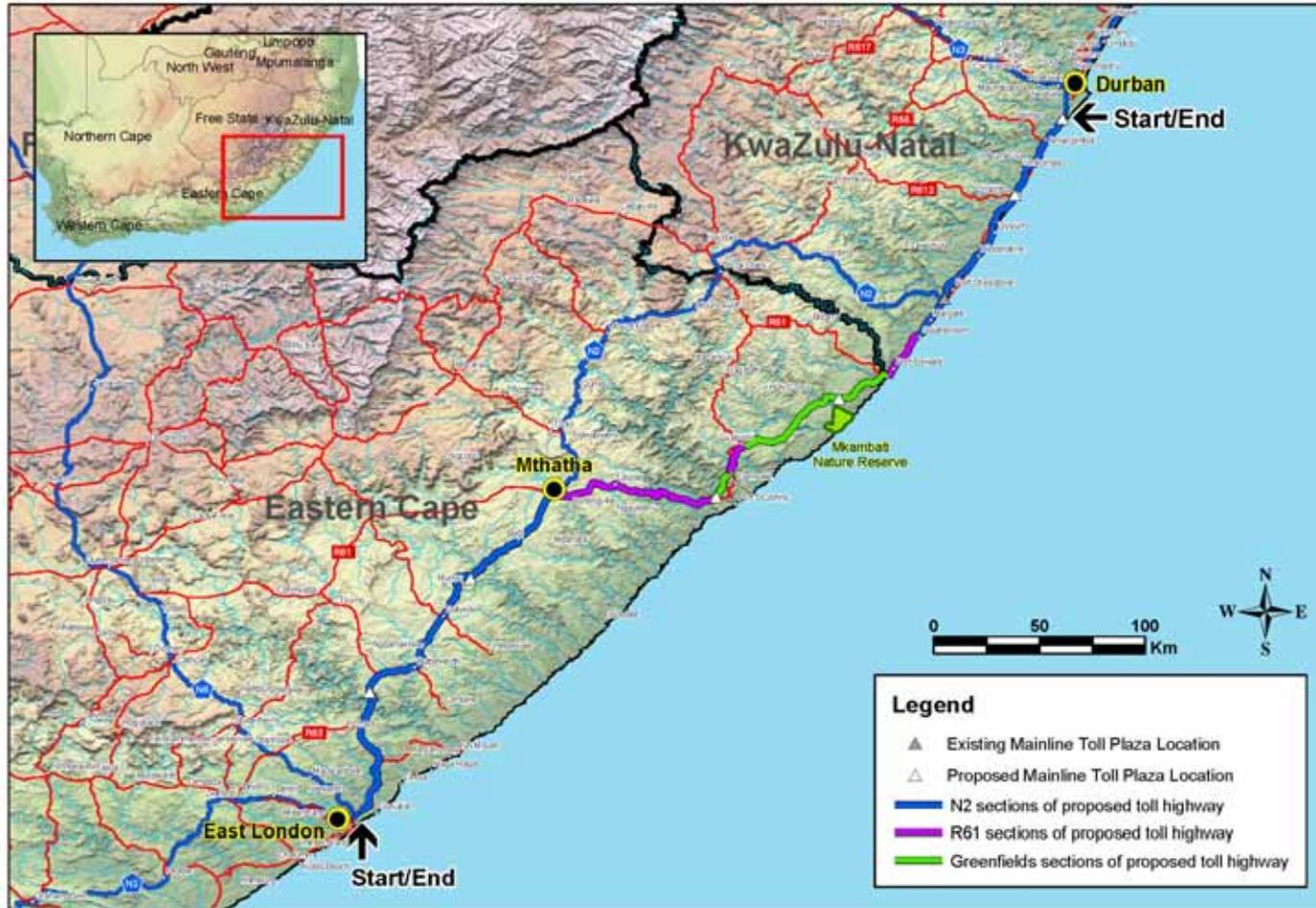


Figure 1.1: The proposed N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway route between the Gonubie Interchange (Eastern Cape) and the Isipingo Interchange (KwaZulu-Natal)