

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE uMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Background Information Document

BACKGROUND

The uMgungundlovu District Municipality (UMDM) has undertaken to develop an Environmental Management Framework (EMF) that builds on the recently completed Strategic Environmental Assessment and Management Plan (SEMP). It is required that information related to key environmental features established in the SEMF is enhanced, specifically in key development nodes and that this understanding of the environmental opportunities is translated into a decision support system that serves to inform sustainable development planning in the District.

It is required that information related to key environmental features established in the SEA is enhanced, specifically in Key Spatial Focus Areas (KFAs) where development pressure is highest. It is further intended that the EMF is gazetted so as to strengthen the role of the EMF outputs in environmental decision making in the District.

The Institute of Natural Resources NPC (INR) has been appointed to undertake the development of the EMF for the UMDM. The INR is a locally based organisation with a sound reputation in integrated environmental management, supported by a wealth of experience in environmental planning and specifically the development of the two existing EMFs within the UMDM.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) with an overview of the scope of the EMF development. The document also summarises the manner in which I&APs may participate in the EMF development process.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Duration: 12 Months (Commenced 31 May 2016)

Project Aim and Objectives: The broad aim of the EMF is to proactively guide municipal planning and support decision making for specific development applications in the UMF in terms of environmental sustainability. This is achieved by meeting the following specific objectives and associated outputs:

- i. The development of user friendly and online Decision Support Tool (DST) that converts environmental constraints and sustainability objectives into easily understood and applied planning guidelines.
- ii. The DST must allow for easy query of spatial information to understand the development constraints on a parcel of land.
- iii. The development meets legal requirements for gazetting the outputs.

The 2012 National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) EMF Guideline summarizes the steps, process and outputs from an EMF of which there are four key phases:

- i. The need for an EMF.
- ii. Status Quo Assessment (including sensitivity analysis, environmental opportunities and constraints).
- iii. Desired State of the Environment.
- iv. Way forward (including specific management zones and guidelines).

The EMF guidelines recognise that the nature of the EMF is context specific. An important aspect of the Inception Phase is therefore defining the terms of reference or scope of work. This step is particularly key in the case of the UMDM given that much of the work required in each of the four phases has been undertaken as part of the Umgungundlovu District Municipality Strategic Environmental Assessment and Management Plan (SEMP).

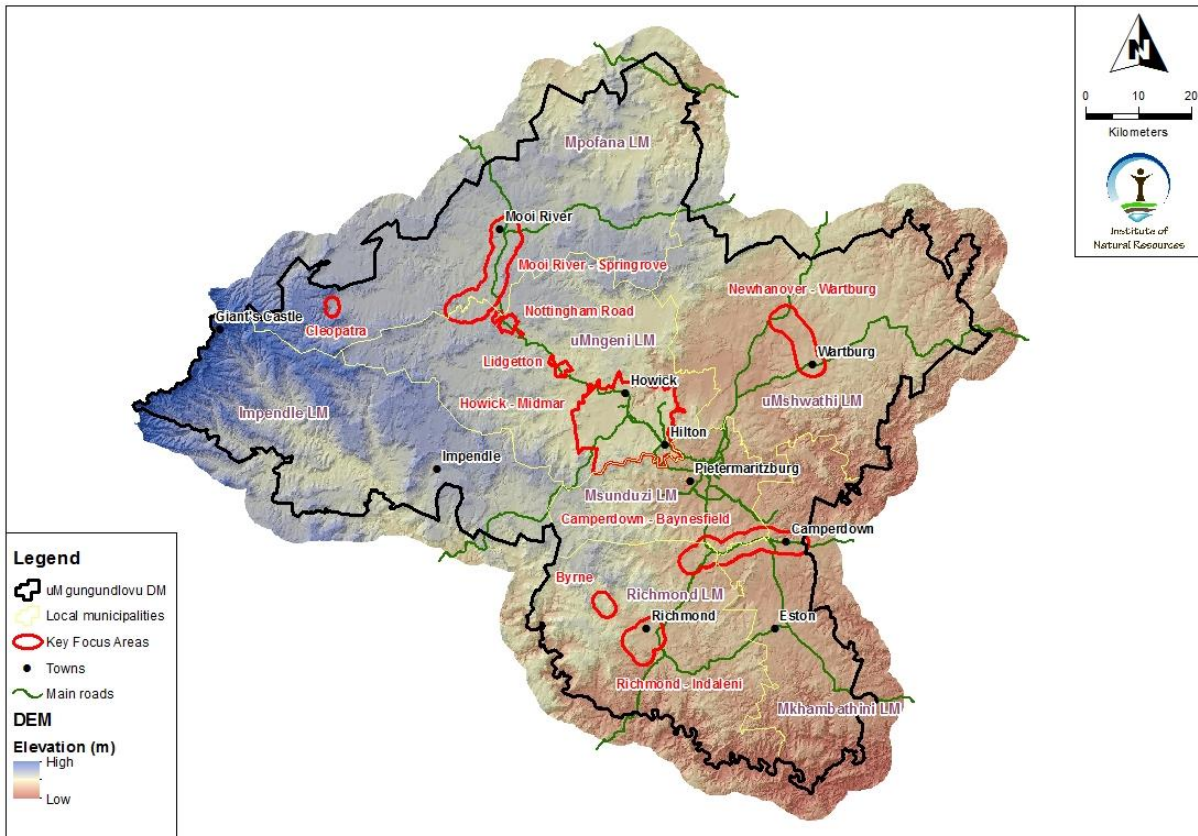
Further to the UMDM SEMP, two fine scale EMFs already exist within the UMDM boundary, these being for the Msunduzi Local Municipality and the Albert Falls Development Node. In view of this context the ToR for the UMDM EMF is very specific and focussed on enhancing the existing understanding of the following:

- a. Surface Water Resources including:
 - Water Production
 - Water Quality
 - Wetlands
 - Flood Zones
 - b. Biodiversity and Natural Resources
 - c. Agricultural Potential
 - d. Service Infrastructure
- i. Consider and account for the existing EMFs as integrated outcomes of the EMF.
 - ii. Refine the boundaries of the KFAs and provide a higher level of accuracy in terms of the key issues/environmental features.
 - iii. Develop an Environmental Information Management System (Decision Support System) that makes the information available in a user friendly GIS format that is integrated into the Municipal GIS system and accessible to a range of users including (planners, decision makers, developers and environmental assessment practitioners).
 - iv. The EMF must specifically include:
 - a. An environmental constraints and opportunities map.
 - b. State the conservation status and environmental management priorities in the area and identified parts;
 - c. Indicate what type of activity or land-uses would be un/desirable in the area or in specific parts of the area;
 - d. Based on the above define environmental control zones in a manner that will identify:
 - Area in which undertaking land use/activities is preferred.
 - Areas where undertaking certain activities will may only be considered subject to acceptable levels of impact assessment
 - Area in which undertaking land use/activities is not preferred.

- v. Draft Land-use management guidelines for use in and incorporation in Municipal Land-use Management Systems.

PROJECT AREA

The UMDM EMF includes 7 Local Municipalities. The study area has been divided into KFAs aligned with the main N3 corridor between Ethekewini and Pietermaritzburg (including linkage to Baynesfield); the Midmar, Howick and Hilton area; and, the small outlying towns of Mooi River/Nottingham Road; Richmond/Byrne; and, New Hanover/Wartburg. The KFA boundary delineation is currently being refined in line with current environmental planning considerations, therefore the study area shown below is indicative of the KFA areas .



Project Area – Indicative KFAs in the Umgungundlovu District Municipality

UNDERSTANDING EMFS

EMFs are a relatively new tool in the field of Integrated Environmental Management (IEM), having been established through inclusion in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations promulgated in terms of Section 24(5) of NEMA and published in July 2006. Like most IEM tools an EMF is designed to support the overall achievement of ‘sustainable development’.

An EMF has the following benefits in relation to the EIA process:

- Provides applicants with an early indication of where it would be appropriate to locate a certain development activity or land-use.
- An EMF consolidates existing information and informs decision makers what additional information is required to consider a development application in a specific location during the EIA process.
- Provides for integrated assessment by considering the implications of a development application for the social, cultural, economic and biophysical components of the receiving environment.

- Facilitates co-ordinated decision making by identifying the legal requirements (permits, and licenses) that need to be obtained to undertake a specific land-use or activity in a particular area. The institutions responsible for administering the relevant legislation is also identified which provides for early engagement with them in the process.
- Provides for the assessment of cumulative issues (not possible at project level) by establishing targets and levels of permissible change for the broader area.

Given the strong spatial focus of an EMF, the GIS based DST provides the system through which the information and understanding generated in the EMF process is made available to support EIA decision making and inform municipal planning. This is the key output for ensuring that an EMF is useful and provides these benefits in a useable output.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS (PPP)

Public Participation is an important component of the EMF development as it provides the mechanism through which I&APs may participate in the process and inform decision making process. The following opportunities will be provided for involvement in the PPP:

- **Registration**
 - I&APs may register their involvement via the link on the INR webpost (<http://inr.org.za/development-of-an-environmental-management-framework-for-the-umgungundlovu-district-municipality/>) or by contacting the INR (details below).
- **1st Public Meeting**
 - *Purpose:* Present EMF development approach and gain input, and provide I&APs with the opportunity to register.
 - *Venue:* UMDM Council Chambers - 242 Langalibalele Street, Pietermaritzburg.
 - *Format:* Overview presentation followed by a question and answer session.
 - *Date and Time:* Tuesday 23 August 2016 from 18:00.
- **2nd Public Meeting (to be confirmed)**
 - *Purpose:* Present the draft EMF and allow for public input and queries.
 - *Venue:* UMDM Council Chambers - 242 Langalibalele Street, Pietermaritzburg.
 - *Format:* Overview presentation followed by a question and answer session.
 - *Date and Time:* Tuesday 23 August 2016 from 18:00.
- **Information, Feedback and Comment**
 - Comment can be made throughout the project duration in writing (English or Zulu) and submitted to the INR via post, fax, e-mail or the INR webpost.
 - The Draft EMF will be circulated to I&APs for comment.
 - Distribution of Final Draft EMF report to all I&APs, both electronically and hard copies (which will be made available at central, publically accessible locations).

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

I&APs are invited to register their involvement in the process by submitting their contact details to the INR.

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