SITE VERIFICATION REPORT

THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF BORROW-PITS THREE FOR THE UPGRADING OF ACCESS ROAD D5010 AND D5021 AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN THE LEPELLE-NKUMPI AND FETAKGOMO TUBATSE LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES, CAPRICORN AND SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES, LIMPOPO PROVINCE (RAL/T1282/2025).

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DOCUMENT SYNOPSIS

Item	Description		
Proposed development and location	Environmental Impact Assessment process for the proposed establishment of borrow-pits three for the upgrading of access road D5010 AND D5021 and associated infrastructure within the Lepelle-Nkumpi and Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipalities, Capricorn and Sekhukhune District Municipalities, Limpopo province (RAL/T1282/2025).		
Purpose of the study	Site Verification Report for the Environmental Impact Assessment process for the proposed establishment of borrow-pit		
1:50 000 Locality Map	Attached as Appendix A1		
Municipalities	Lepelle Nkumpi Local Municipality		
Predominant land use of surrounding area	Vacant		
Applicant	Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL)		
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Date of Report	May 2026		
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Date: February 2026	**Signature:**	**Signature:**	**Signature:**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Roads Agency Limpopo (SOC) Ltd (RAL) is in the process of applying for borrow pit permit from the Department of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (DMPR) Limpopo regional office. The proposed project requires an Environmental Authorization from the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) in accordance with the Mineral and Petroleum Development Resources Act 28 of 2002 and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (as amended), an EA is required and therefore, RAL is undertaking a Basic Assessment Process (BA).

The materials obtained from the proposed borrow pits will be used for the upgrading of Road D5010 in Nkotokwane, including the installation of culverts, the upgrading of Road D5021 between Nkotokwane and Apel, and the construction of a bridge over the Olifants River. Both roads will be upgraded from gravel to a bituminous-surfaced standard.

The proposed road works will cover a total distance of approximately 3.6 km, comprising 2.2 km of upgrades to Road D5010 and 1.4 km for Road D5021. In addition, the project entails the excavation of five borrow pits to provide the necessary construction materials for the road upgrades and bridge construction.

The proposed project is located within the Lepelle Nkumpi Local Municipality, Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province. The said activities are listed in the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations of 2014 (GNR 326) and its associated listing notices (GNR 327,325 and 324) as activities which require environmental authorisation through an Environmental Impact Assessment Process.

Section 24(5) (h) of the NEMA and regulation 16 (1)(b)(v) of the EIA Regulations of 2014 also requires submission of national web based environmental screening tool report (GNR. 960 / 05 July 2019), when applying for an environmental authorisation in terms regulation 19 and 21 of the EIA Regulations of 2014. The Screening Tool Report (STR) is generated from the DFFE's national online GIS-based 'National web-based Environmental Screening Tool and provides detail on the environmental sensitivity, restriction, exclusion or prohibition zones and specific requirements, including specialist studies that are applicable to the proposed development site, based on the national sector classification and the environmental sensitivity of the site.

Before commencing with the BA and specialist assessments, the current land use and environmental sensitivity of the site under consideration, as identified in the STR, must be confirmed by undertaking site sensitivity verification. A Site Sensitivity Verification Report (SVR) is then required in response to the STR through the 'Protocols for Assessment and Minimum Report Content Requirements for Environmental Themes for Activities requiring Environmental Authorisation published in Government Notice Regulation 320 of 20 March 2020 under Section 24 (5)(a), (h) and 4 of the NEMA. This is the SVR which verifies the data contained in the DFFE STR compiled for the proposed development project in Limpopo Province.

1.2 Purpose of the report

This report provides an overview of the following:

- Project location, description and required services.
- DFFE Screening Tool outcomes and identified environmental sensitivity themes related to the project site and type.
- Desktop based analysis of available GIS Databases.
- Motivation and evidence (photos) of either the verified / different use of the land and environmental sensitivity identified in the STR.
- A confirmation / refute on the need for the various specialist study inputs required by STR.
- Any potential fatal flaws that may render the development undesirable at the project location.

1.3 Terms of reference

The general requirements for site sensitivity verification for activities requiring Environmental Authorization have been published in Government Notice Regulation 320 of 20 March 2020 under Section 24 (5)(a), (h) and 4 of the NEMA.

GNR 320 requires that prior to commencing any specialist assessment for the EIA Study, the current land use and the environmental sensitivity of the site under consideration as identified by the national web based environmental screening tool (screening tool), must be confirmed by undertaking a site sensitivity verification. The site sensitivity verification must be undertaken by an environmental assessment practitioner or a specialist.

The site sensitivity verification must be undertaken with the use of:

a) A desktop analysis, using satellite imagery or any available means.
b) A Preliminary on-site inspection; and
c) Any other relevant information

The outcome of the site verification must be recorded in the form of a report that: -

a) Confirms or disputes the current use of land and the environmental sensitivity as identified by the screening tool, such as new developments or infrastructure, the change in vegetation cover or status etc.
b) Contains motivation and evidence (e.g. photographs) of either the verified or different use of the land and environmental sensitivity; and
c) Is submitted with the relevant assessment report in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations.

1.4 PROJECT LOCALITY

The proposing borrow pit is located on Portion 0 of Farm Spelonk 478 KS, within the Lepelle Nkumpi Local Municipality, Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province. The central coordinates are 24°23'2.04"S 29°43'34.92"E.



Figure 1: Locality Map

2. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONERS

2.1 Details of the EAP

The on-site sensitivity verification was undertaken by Dr. Patrick Sithole, Kholofelo Magopa and Engel Chilundo. This Site Verification Report has been prepared by the team from QEMS. Details of the EAP are reflected in table 1 below.

Table 1: EAP details

EAP	Dr. Patrick Sithole Registered EAP (EAPASA) Registered Pr.Sci.Nat. (SACNASP)
Address	7 Munnik Avenue, Sterpark Polokwane, 0700
Contact details	Cell: + 27 15 297 8658/+27 76 859 8796 Email: sitholetp@qems.co.za

2.2 Expertise of the EAP

A Registered natural scientific professional (SACNASP – Environmental and Chemical scientist), Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAPASA), social and sustainability expert with 24 years of experience, Patrick Sithole specialises in Strategic Environmental, Social and Sustainable Development projects, Climate Change and Health, Environmental Management issues and Construction Supervision of all infrastructural projects. Dr Sithole is also involved in vegetation clearance and pest control projects along infrastructural projects e.g. roads, railway lines, power lines, golf courses and buildings like complexes, houses, malls, etc. Patrick has very strong business development mindset that has seen him winning and working on projects across Africa and in Europe. His key experience includes the following areas; Environmental (Natural Resource) Management; Environmental Compliance; Social Facilitation and Consultation; Compensation of Land Claims; Climate Change; Climate (Change) and Human Health; Air Quality Management; Renewable Energy; Waste Management; Land Rehabilitation; Water Quality/Demand Management; Strategic Environmental Assessment; Waste Water (sewer) Treatment; Project Management; ISO 9001 andISO14001; Vegetation Control Bush Clearance (Invasive plants)

3. PROJECT LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 NEMA

Table 2: Triggered activities

Listing Notice and Activity Number	Description	Relevance
GNR 327 Listing Notice 1, Activity 21(a)	Any activity including the operation of that activity which requires a mining permit in terms of section 27 of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act No. 28 of 2002), including — (a) associated infrastructure, structures and earthworks, directly related to the extraction of a mineral resource [,]; or [including activities for which an exemption has been issued in terms of section 106 of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act No. 28 of 2002)]	The proposed establishment of a borrow pit entail the extraction of gravel material for the purpose of D5021 and D5010 road upgradation.
GNR 327 Listing Notice 1, Activity 27	The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for— (i) the undertaking of a linear activity; or (ii) maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.	The proposed project entails the clearance of 4.90 hectare of indigenous vegetation.

GNR 324 Listing Notice 3, Activity 12e(ii)	The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan. e). Limpopo i. Within any critically endangered or endangered ecosystem listed in terms of section 52 of the NEMBA or prior to the publication of such a list, within an area that has been identified as critically endangered in the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment 2004; ii. Within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans; or iii. On land, where, at the time of the coming into effect of this Notice or thereafter such land was zoned open space, conservation or had an equivalent zoning	The area falls within the CBA1.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

4.1 Vegetation

The study area is characteristic of the semi-arid savanna (bushveld) biome typical of Limpopo Province. It is defined by gently undulating plains interspersed with occasional low hills, representative of the broader Limpopo interior landscape. The vegetation comprises open to moderately dense woodland, dominated by woody species such as Vachellia (formerly Acacia) spp., Combretum spp., and, in certain areas, Colophospermum mopane. The herbaceous layer is primarily composed of grasses, with Eragrostis and Digitaria species being the most prevalent.

The area shows signs of disturbance due to human activities such as grazing and settlement, resulting in patches of degraded vegetation and localized soil erosion, including the formation of small erosion gullies. Bush encroachment by indigenous woody species is evident in some areas, along with the presence of occasional alien invasive plants. Overall, the vegetation ranges from moderately intact bushveld to disturbed open shrubland.

4.2 Geology and Soils

The study area falls within the interior of Limpopo Province and is underlain by geological formations typical of the region, primarily consisting of ancient crystalline basement rocks associated with the Kaapvaal Craton. These rocks are dominated by granites, gneisses, and related metamorphic lithologies, which have undergone prolonged weathering over geological time.

The resulting soils are generally shallow to moderately deep and vary from sandy to loamy textures, depending on the degree of weathering and local topography. In some areas, particularly on lower-lying terrain, clay-rich soils may occur. Soil fertility is typically low to moderate, with limited organic content, which is characteristic of semi-arid savanna environments.

Drainage is generally moderate to good on elevated and gently sloping areas, while poorly drained conditions may occur in localized depressions. Evidence of surface crusting and localized erosion, including the formation of small gullies (dongas), is present in disturbed areas, primarily as a result of overgrazing and surface runoff.

4.3 Climate

The study area experiences a semi-arid to sub-tropical climate typical of the interior of Limpopo Province. The region is characterised by hot summers and mild to cool winters, with a distinct seasonal rainfall pattern.

Rainfall occurs predominantly during the summer months (October to March), often in the form of short-duration, high-intensity thunderstorms. The mean annual precipitation in the area generally ranges between approximately 300 mm and 500 mm. Winters (May to August) are typically dry, with little to no rainfall.

Temperatures are generally high during summer, frequently exceeding 30°C during the day, while winter temperatures are moderate, with cooler nights that may occasionally approach low single digits. Frost is rare but may occur under certain conditions in low-lying areas.

Evaporation rates are relatively high throughout the year, often exceeding precipitation, which contributes to the semi-arid conditions and influences vegetation patterns and soil moisture availability.

4.4 Land use

The project site is located within a vacant and previously disturbed area, with no formally protected or sensitive habitats identified during the site assessment. No protected or threatened floral species were observed on site at the time of the survey. Similarly, no endangered or threatened faunal species were recorded within the study area. The site supports a relatively low diversity of species, which is consistent with the disturbed nature of the environment and ongoing land use practices.

The area is currently utilised by the local community for grazing and the harvesting of woody vegetation, which has contributed to reduced vegetation cover and habitat simplification. As a result, ecological sensitivity is considered low, and the anticipated impact of the proposed project on biodiversity is expected to be minimal.

4.5 Historical Vegetation pictures

Google Earth historic images from the years 2003, 2007, 2013, and 2026 were analyzed to assess the land use changes and environmental conditions of the proposed site over time. The analysis revealed that there have been no significant changes to the area throughout these years (Refer to figure 2-5 below. In terms of vegetation, the area is covered by natural vegetation.



Figure 2: Vegetation historical image for 2003



Figure 3:Vegetation historical image for 2007



Figure 4:Vegetation historical image for 2013



Figure 5:Vegetation historical image for 2026

4.6 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 6:Indigenous trees observed on site



Figure 7:Types morphology observed on site



Figure 8:Disturbed vegetation



Figure 9: Types vegetation on site

5. SITE SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION METHODOLOGY

QEMS has conducted a desktop analysis using satellite imagery of the project site including online GIS based database tools. QEMS conducted a site visit on the 20 August 2026 to confirm or dispute the STR findings and compile this report.

5.1 DFFE Screening Tool Report (STR) Findings

Table 3:STR specified environmental themes and required specialist studies

Environmental Sensitivity Themes	Sensitivity	Motivation for sensitivity
Agricultural Theme	High	08. Moderate 09. Moderate-High
Animal Species Theme	Medium	Aves-Aquila rapax Reptilia-Kinixys lobatsiana
Aquatic biodiversity Theme	Low	Low Sensitivity
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme	Low	Low sensitivity

Civil Aviation Theme	High	Dangerous and restricted airspace as demarcated
Defence Theme	Medium	Medium Military and Defence Site
Paleontology Theme	Medium	Features with a medium paleontological sensitivity.
Plant Species Theme	Low	Low Sensitivity
Terrestrial biodiversity Theme	Very high	CBA 2 EN_Sekhukhune Plains Bushveld

Based on the information gathered through the desktop study (GIS based spatial tools) for the year 2003, 2013, 2013 and 2026, site inspection for the proposed development on the 20 August 2026, not all of the identified sensitivities are expected to apply.

6. VERIFICATION OF THE DFFE STR FINDINGS

This section of the SVR serves to:

- Verify the land use and sensitivities identified in the STR.
- Confirm/refute the need for various specialist inputs called for in terms of the STR.
- Motivation and evidence of either the verified or different use of land and environmental sensitivity.

6. STR FINDINGS, DESKTOP ANALYSIS RESULTS AND EAP COMMENTS

6.1 Environmental sensitivity themes applicable to project and site

The environmental sensitivity themes identified through the STR, including the comments of the EAP and desktop analysis are all summarized below in Tables 5-13.

Table 4: Sensitivity Theme 1: Agricultural

Environmental Theme	Sensitivity				DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation	Relevant (Yes/No)	STR Specialist Study Required
	Very high	High	Medium	Low			
Agricultural		X			08. Moderate, 09. Moderate-High	Yes, compliance statement	
(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings							
There is no evidence of ongoing agricultural activities along the proposed site, the area has an open woodland refer figure 2-5 of the historical photographs above. Therefore, the sensitivity rating for Agricultural is refuted to be low.							
(b) Desktop Analysis							
The historical imagery indicated that there are no agricultural activities taking place near the proposed site.							

Table 5: Sensitivity Theme 2: Animal Species

Environmental Theme	Sensitivity				DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation	Relevant (Yes/No)	STR Specialist Study Required
	Very high	High	Medium	Low			
Animal Species			X		Aves-Aquila rapax Reptilia-Kinixys lobatsiana	Terrestrial Impact Assessment	
(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings							
No animals were observed during the walk down. The area is heavily degraded due to residential area, excessive grazing. No wildlife species were observed only domestic animals. The findings of the screening tool are therefore refuted to low. Terrestrial Impact Assessment study has been undertaken.							
(b) Desktop Analysis							
The STR findings show Aves-Aquila rapax and Reptilia-Kinixys lobatsiana							

Table 6: Sensitivity Theme 3: Aquatic Biodiversity

Environmental Theme	Sensitivity				DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation	Relevant (Yes/No)	STR Specialist Study Required
	Very high	High	Medium	Low			
Aquatic Biodiversity				**X**	Low Sensitivity	Aquatic impacts assessment study	

(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings
There is no any aquatic sensitivity within 500m and 32m of the proposed area. Therefore, the sensitivity rating for aquatic biodiversity is accepted.
(b) Desktop Analysis
The STR finding shows low sensitivity of Aquatic biodiversity theme.

Table 7: Sensitivity Theme 4: Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

Environmental Theme	**Sensitivity**				**DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation**	**Relevant (Yes/No)**	**STR Specialist Study Required**
	Very high	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**			
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage				**X**	Low sensitivity	Heritage Impact Assessment	
(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings							
Therea are no features of archaeological or cultural heritage importance found on the proposed site. The site does not show any sign of previous settlement. However, artefacts which are buried deep underground may be exhumed during construction phase. If that's the case a proper channel of notifying LIHRA/ SAHRIS will be followed. Even though no archaeological features were found on site, heritage impacts study has been undertaken. The findings of the screening tool report are therefore accepted.							
(b) Desktop Analysis							

An analysis of historical Google Earth imagery did not identify any heritage related features within the proposed development site. There was no visible evidence of old buildings, ruins, infrastructure remnants, or former settlement patterns that might suggest previous human occupation or historical land use.

Table 8:Sensitivity Theme 6: Civil Aviation

Environmental Theme	**Sensitivity**				**DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation**	**Relevant (Yes/No)**	**STR Specialist Study Required**
	Very high	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**			
Civil Aviation		X			Dangerous and restricted airspace as demarcated	No	
(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings							
There are no civil aviation facilities within 8 km of the proposed site. The development also does not involve the construction of tall structures that could interfere with aircraft flight paths. Accordingly, the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) considers the potential impact on civil aviation to be low. The STR rating is therefore adjusted to low, and no further assessment is required for the Civil Aviation theme.							
(b) Desktop Analysis							
There are no military bases / facilities within the vicinity of the project site.							

Table 9:Sensitivity Theme 7: Defence

Environmental Theme	Sensitivity				DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation	Relevant (Yes/No)	STR Specialist Study Required
	Very high	High	Medium	Low			
Defence			**X**		Military and Defence Site	**No**	
(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings							
There are no military bases / facilities within the vicinity of the project site. The impacts of the development on defence are deemed to be low by the EAP. Therefore, the STR finding is disputed to low. No further assessment is required or deemed necessary for the Defence theme.							
(b) Desktop Analysis							
There are no military bases / facilities within the vicinity of the project site.							

Table 10:Sensitivity Theme 9: Palaeontological

Environmental Theme	Sensitivity				DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation	Relevant (Yes/No)	STR Specialist Study Required
	Very high	High	Medium	Low			
Paleontological			**X**		Features with a Medium paleontological sensitivity	**No**	
(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings							

During the site assessment, no evidence of paleontological resources was identified such as any visible fossiliferous rock formations**,** exposed sedimentary layers, or fossil remains within the proposed development footprint. However, the review of SAHRIS Palaeo Map available at https://sahris.org.za/map/palaeo shows that the proposed site falls within the area of low palaeo sensitivity. According to SAHRIS these sensitivities no further study is required. Therefore, the finding of the STR is refuted to low.
(b) Desktop Analysis
The review of SAHRIS Palaeo Map available at https://sahris.org.za/map/palaeo shows that the proposed site falls within the area of low palaeo sensitivity. According to SAHRIS these sensitivities no further study is required.

Table 11:Sensitivity Theme 10: Plant species

Environmental Theme	**Sensitivity**				**DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation**	**Relevant (Yes/No)**	**STR Specialist Study Required**
	Very high	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**			
Plant species				**X**	Low Sensitivity	Terrestrial Impact Assessment	
(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings							
Shepherd's Trees (Boscia albitrunca) protected plant has been identified. A terrestrial impacts study has been undertaken. The findings of the screening tool are therefore accepted.							
(b) Desktop Analysis							

According to STR findings the following area has low sensitivity of plant species.

Table 12:Sensitivity Theme 12: Terrestrial Biodiversity

Environmental Theme	**Sensitivity**				**DFFE Screening Tool Report Motivation**	**Relevant (Yes/No)**	**STR Specialist Study Required**
	Very high	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**			
Terrestrial Biodiversity	**X**				CBA 2, EN_Sekhukhune Plains Bushveld	Terrestrial Impact Assessment	
(a) EAP Comments based on Site Visit Findings							
The proposed site is within CBA 1 and EN_Sekhukhune Plains Bushveld; therefore, a terrestrial biodiversity study will be undertaken.							
(b) Desktop Analysis							
The STR finding the subject site is within the very high CBA1 and EN_Sekhukhune Plains Bushveld.							

7. SPECIALIST STUDIES

This section provides the list of specialist studies identified by the DFFE Screening Tool Report and studies to be commissioned after conducting a site verification.

7.1 Specialist studies recommended by the STR

- Agricultural Impact Assessment
- Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment
- Paleontological Impact Assessment
- Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment
- Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment
- Hydrology Assessment
- Geotechnical Assessment
- Socio-Economic Assessment
- Plant Species Impact Assessment
- Animal Species Impact Assessment
- Traffic Impact Assessment
- Radioactivity Impact Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment

7.2 SPECIALIST STUDIES COMMISSIONED (DEEMED NECESSARY)

- Heritage and Paleontological study
- Terrestrial impact Assessment
- Agriculture Compliance Statement.

8. ANY FATAL FLAWS

In conducting this environmental screening and site verification, no major concerns considered fatal were identified.

9. ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The findings of this Site Verification Report (SVR) are based on the available project information, the site verification undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), and GIS-based desktop data for the project site. A public participation process will be

carried out, and all inputs received will be considered in informing decisions regarding the nature and extent of the required specialist studies.

The spatial data contained in the National web-based Environmental Screening Tool used to generate the STR, according to DFFE, has been collected as accurately as possible. Although the greatest care has been taken to ensure that the data is up to date and spatially accurate, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and its entities give no warranty, express or implied, as to the accuracy, reliability, utility or completeness of this data.

10. CONCLUSION

This SVR was prepared for the proposed development of borrow pit. The said proposed development will be located on Portion 0 of farm Spelonk 478 KS within the Lepelle Nkumpi Local Municipality, Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.

The environmental screening and verification exercise was conducted based on available project information, the site inspection conducted by the EAP and specialists and a desktop analysis of the project site.

These are the possible environmental authorization processes identified based on the project scope of activities. The project authorization requirements include:

- An Environmental Authorisation from the DMPR subject to a Basic Assessment Process.

The above environmental authorization processes will be integrated as far as possible.

Based on the environmental screening exercise and site verification conducted for the project the following specialist studies will be conducted:

- Heritage and Paleontological study
- Terrestrial impact Assessment
- Agriculture Compliance Statement