

REFERENCE: 16/3/3/6/7/1/D2/19/0141/24
DATE OF ISSUE: 28 JULY 2025

The Municipal Manager
% The Director: Civil Engineering Services
THE GEORGE MUNICIPALITY
PO Box 19
GEORGE
6530

E-mail: ikoegeleberg@george.gov.za

Dear Sir

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRE-APPLICATION BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED
UPGRADE OF THE GWAIING WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS ON THE REMAINDER OF ERF 464,
GEORGE**

1. The abovementioned pre-application Basic Assessment Report (Ref: 464/UGR/GWWTW/01/24) dated 21 July 2025 and received by this Department on 24 July 2025, refers.
2. This letter serves as an acknowledgment of receipt of the abovementioned document on **24 July 2025**.
3. Please note that this Directorate will peruse the pre-application BAR and endeavours to issue comment within the timeframe provided by the EAP i.e. **by 27 August 2025**.
4. Please note that a listed activity may not commence prior to an environmental authorisation being granted by the Department.
5. Kindly quote the above-mentioned reference number in any future correspondence in respect of this matter.
6. This Department reserves the right to revise or withdraw initial comments or request further information from you based on any information received.

Yours faithfully

Danie Swanepoel Digitally signed by Danie
Swanepoel Date: 2025.07.28 10:10:34 +02'00'

HEAD OF COMPONENT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT SERVICES: REGION 3
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

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- (1) EAP: Mr. Michael Bennett
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REFERENCE: 16/3/3/6/7/1/D2/19/0141/24
DATE OF ISSUE: **28 August 2025**

The Municipal Manager
% The Director: Civil Engineering Services
THE GEORGE MUNICIPALITY
PO Box 19
GEORGE
6530

Attention: Mr. Jannie Koegelenberg E-mail: jkoegeleberg@george.gov.za

Dear Sir,

**COMMENT ON THE PRE-APPLICATION BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED UPGRADE
OF THE GWAIING WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS ON THE REMAINDER OF ERF 464, GEORGE**

1. The abovementioned pre-application Basic Assessment Report (Ref: 464/UGR/GWWTW/01/24) dated 21 July 2025 and received by this Department on 24 July 2025, refers.
2. The Directorate: Development Management (Region 3) ('this Directorate') has reviewed the information contained within the pre-application Basic Assessment Report ('pre-app BAR') and provides the following comment:

2.1. Water Use License Amendment Application

The documentation in respect of the application for amendment of the Water Use License ('WUL') for the Gwaiing Wastewater Treatment Works ('WWTW') in terms of the National Water Act, Act 36 of 1998 ('NWA') (Ref: WU38758) was submitted to this Directorate on 19 August 2025 for comment for a period of 60 days.

According to sub-section 24C(11) to the National Environmental Management Act, Act 107 of 1998, as amended ('NEMA') "a person who requires an environmental authorisation which also involves an activity that requires a licence or permit in terms of any of the specific environmental management Acts (i.e., NWA), must simultaneously submit those applications to the relevant competent authority or licensing authority, as the case may be, indicating in each application all other licences, authorisations and permits applied for".

In light of the above, it must be ensured that the application processes in terms of NEMA and the NWA are synchronised. In this regard, it is advised that your appointed EAP and / or the consultant responsible for the Water Use Authorisation ("WUA") process liaise and consult with one another. Furthermore, the information in respect of the application for the amendment WUL (including information from the WUL amendment public participation) must be included in the BAR.

NOTE: The Directorate will provide separate comment on the application for the amendment of the WUL. The comment will be issued within 60 days from the date of receipt of the documentation in respect of the application.

You are reminded that if these processes are not properly aligned, the lack of synchronisation; omission of any reports/information; or delay as a result thereof, may prejudice the success of the application for environmental authorisation.

2.2. Process in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999

According to the pre-app BAR the proposed Biosolids Beneficiation Facility ('BBF') will be approximately 30 000m² (3ha) in extent and will be located outside the current fenced area of the Gwaiing WWTW. As such, it is reasonable to expect that the proposed BBF will trigger Section 38(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 ('NHRA'). It is understood that a heritage specialist has been appointed to submit a Notice of Intent to Develop ('NID') to Heritage Western Cape ('HWC'). In this regard, please be advised that from 1 September 2025 all applications in terms of Section 38 of the NHRA to HWC must be submitted via the South African Heritage Resources Information System ('SAHRIS'). Please be reminded that where studies are required by HWC that the relevant report must comply with the minimum report requirements specified in Appendices 1 and 6 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 ('EIA Regulations, 2014') (Government Notice No. R. 982 of 4 December 2014, as amended).

Section 38 of the NHRA sets out the requirements regarding the integration of the decision-making process with that of the EIA Regulations, 2014; however, under the proviso that the necessary information is submitted and any comments and recommendations of the relevant heritage resources authority (HWC) with regard to such development have been provided and taken into account prior to the granting of the authorisation. Further to the above:

- An application for Environmental Authorisation, must include, where applicable, the investigation, assessment and evaluation of the impact of any proposed listed or specified activity on any national estate referred to in section 3(2) of the NHRA, excluding the national estate contemplated in section 3(2)(i)(vi) and (vii) of that Act.
- Where Section 38 of the NHRA is triggered, the Standard Operating Procedure between Heritage Western Cape and this Department must be followed. If Section 38 is applicable to the proposed development, then the proponent/applicant is required to submit a Notice of Intent to Develop ("NID") to Heritage Western Cape and attach a copy to thereof to the EIA application form. If Heritage Western Cape requires a Heritage Impact Assessment, the Heritage Impact Assessment must be undertaken as one of the specialist studies of the EIA process to be undertaken in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014.

2.3. Stormwater Management Plan

It is understood that the details of the roads and stormwater infrastructure will be developed during the detailed design phase. According to the pre-app BAR a new stormwater system will convey stormwater through concrete pipes which will drain to the existing maturation ponds (via the inlet works) from the concrete slabs of the BBF.

According to the Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment for the BBF dated 14 May 2025, the southern portion of the BBF slopes more steeply towards the south (towards a drainage line – HGM 4). Therefore, it is expected that stormwater from the southern portion of the BBF will drain towards the drainage line and subsequently towards the Gwaiing River.

In light of the above, it is required that a preliminary stormwater management plan be compiled and included in the BAR. The plan must also address how stormwater during heavy rainfall events will be accommodated and managed to prevent erosion, especially along HGM 4 identified in the Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment. The plan must also detail contingency plans for events where contaminated water may enter the respective stormwater infrastructure and respective watercourses.

2.4. Proposed Biosolids Beneficiation Facility

According to the pre-app BAR the proposed BBF will receive dewatered sludge from the WWTW. The sludge will be placed on concrete platforms which will have a total development footprint of 30 000m² (3ha) for the various stages of sludge processing. It is understood that two sludge disposal options are being considered i.e., producing fertilizer and composting (not preferred).

It is understood that the proposed BBF will have approximately 13 000m² (1.3ha) of translucent roof sheeting ('greenhouse') structures. However, the total development footprint of the concrete platforms will be 3ha (30 000m²). It is therefore evident that 1.7ha of the proposed BBF will remain uncovered which raises concern regarding the contamination of stormwater, groundwater and areas downstream of the BBF during heavy rainfall conditions.

With reference to 2.3 above, the stormwater management plan must also address contamination of stormwater emanating from the proposed BBF.

A further issue which must be addressed is the risk of the proposed facility to the biosecurity of specific land-uses in proximity to the WWTW (i.e., agricultural land-uses; poultry facilities etc.). Notwithstanding the roof area, the risk of access to the BFF and mitigation measures aimed at preventing the spread of harmful organisms must be addressed in the BAR and EMPr.

2.5. Reuse of treated effluent

It is understood that three options for the reuse of treated effluent have been identified namely:

- Option 1: tie into the Outeniqua WWTW reuse system through the Garden Route Dam indirect potable reuse (IPR) system;
- Option 2: implementation of an independent industrial reuse system from Gwaiing WWTW; and
- Option 3: Implementation of an independent direct potable reuse (DPR) system from Gwaiing WWTW.

Notwithstanding the information that Option 1 is not viable since the bio trickling filter process train will be demolished. No information regarding the infrastructural requirements for the various options to realise the implementation thereof has been provided. It is therefore unclear whether identified options and their associated structures and infrastructure will require environmental authorisation prior to the implementation thereof.

In light of the above, clarity is required regarding the location / route, size and development footprint any link infrastructure from the Gwaiing WWTW to the existing receiving infrastructure to realise the implementation of the proposed reuse of treated effluent.

2.6. Operation and Maintenance Manual

It is noted that the Operations and Maintenance Manual ('OMM') for the current Gwaiing WWTW has been included in the BAR. In this regard, it is advised that the OMM must be updated to

address any operation and maintenance issues which may be experienced by the upgraded facility.

2.7. Implementation programme

Please note that, in accordance with the provisions of the EIA Regulations, 2014, a period for which the environmental authorisation is required must be provided. This period must be informed by the operational aspects and the non-operational aspects of the proposed development.

In this regard, the timeframes for the commissioning of the various phases are described in Section J: 2.5 (pg. 104). It is understood that the final phase (Phase D) is estimated for commissioning by year-2051 based on a population growth of 4%. It is unclear how this is justified in light of the fact that the proposed commissioning for Phase C and D will fall in future Municipal IDP cycles, and the availability of funding cannot be demonstrated at this stage. Furthermore, it is noted that the EAP recommends that the environmental authorisation have a validity period of 30 years to allow enough time for the proposed upgrades to be undertaken as required to match population growth, the rehabilitation of the site and allow for the defect liability period to complete. This aspect will be considered; however, please note that it may not necessarily be approved as such.

2.8. Environmental Management Programme:

The contents of the EMPr must meet the requirements outlined in Section 24N (2) and (3) of the NEMA (as amended) and Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations, 2014. The EMPr must address the potential environmental impacts of the activity throughout the project life cycle, including an assessment of the effectiveness of monitoring and management arrangements after implementation (auditing).

This Department has reviewed the EMPr as included and received as part of the pre-application BAR. The following aspects must be addressed:

- *Operational Aspects*

The EMPr must specifically deal with the operational aspects of the proposed activities including the monitoring and reporting during the operational phase.

- *Environmental Auditing*

According to the EMPr the Environmental Control Officer ("ECO") must undertake a final inspection (audit) six months of completion of construction activities. Please be advised that a clear distinction must be made between an environmental monitoring report (to be compiled by the ECO) and an environmental audit report (to be compiled by independent person with the relevant environmental auditing expertise). In this regard, please note that the environmental auditor cannot be the EAP or the ECO. Furthermore, take note of the auditing requirements with regard to environmental authorisations and EMPr's under Regulation 34 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended). In this regard, the EMPr must be amended to ensure compliance with the requirements. The contents of the environmental audit report must comply with Appendix 7 of the EIA Regulations.

Further to the above, the EMPr must specify the intervals for the submission of the independent audit reports. Please be advised that in accordance with Regulation 26(e) of the EIA Regulations, 2014 the frequency of auditing compliance with the environmental and EMPr may not exceed intervals of five years.

● **Notices to the Competent Authority**

With due consideration of the proposed implementation programme in respect of the various phases, the EMPr must include a section dealing with notifying the competent authority in respect of the commencement of and conclusion of the various phases (temporary pause of construction activities) of the proposed upgrades. Temporary pause notices must also describe any measures that may be required to prevent the degradation of the environment including, but not limited to, issues such as erosion, pollution etc.

3. Please note that a listed activity may not commence prior to an environmental authorisation being granted by the Department. It is an offence in terms of Section 49A of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act no. 107 of 1998) ("NEMA") for a person to commence with a listed activity unless the competent authority has granted an environmental authorisation for the undertaking of the activity. A person convicted of an offence in terms of the above is liable to a fine not exceeding R10 million or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 10 years, or to both such fine and imprisonment.
4. Kindly quote the above-mentioned reference number in any future correspondence in respect of this matter.
5. This Department reserves the right to revise or withdraw initial comments or request further information from you based on any information received.

Yours faithfully

 pp **Francois Naudé** Digitally signed by Francois Naudé
Date: 2025.08.28 15:38:15 +02'00'

HEAD OF COMPONENT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT SERVICES: REGION 3

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

(reference: 16/3/3/6/7/1/d2/19/0141/24)

Copied to:

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