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Background Information Document (BID)

Project: **Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) for the Proposed Establishment & Operation of Two New (Phases A & B) Cemeteries & Street in Rehoboth, Hardap Region**

Environmental Consultant : **Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd**

Proponent: **Rehoboth Town council**

October 2023

1 INTRODUCTION

Rehoboth Town Council (*The Proponent*) is responsible for the planning and management of the establishment of infrastructure in the town, including burial spaces and streets. The Rehoboth Town currently has two existing and operational cemeteries operated by the Town Council. The existing cemeteries are reaching full capacity; therefore, some new sites have been identified for the establishment of two more cemeteries and a street. The locality of the proposed cemeteries facilities is shown in the Land Use map provided in **Figure 1**.

Construction of Cemeteries is a listed activity and in terms of Section 27 of the Environmental Management Act (EMA), No. 07 of 2007, as one of the activities that may not be carried out without an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken and an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) granted.

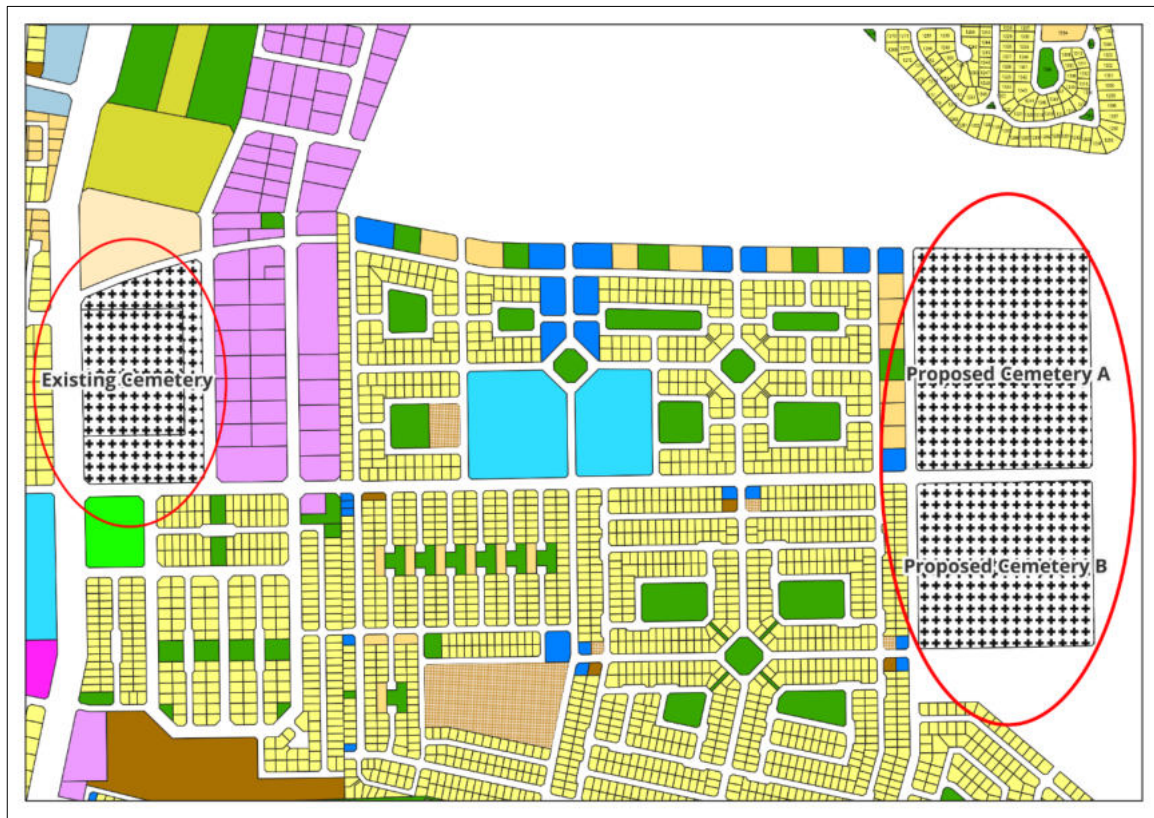


Figure 1: Land use map of Rehoboth Town with the Cemetery sites Erf

2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Background Information Document (BID) is a non-technical document of the Environmental Assessment, which serves the purpose of sharing information with stakeholders and interested and affected parties (I&APs), providing them with the platform to engage, raise issues and submit comments about the proposed activities. The BID is for informing the project stakeholders as well as interested and affected parties (I&APs) of the following:

- Project Location
- Proposed activities of the project
- Environmental Assessment process to be followed.
- How I&APs can be involved

All stakeholders/I&APs are encouraged to submit their comments/inputs/concerns on the proposed project. The comments and concerns/issues raised will be incorporated into the Environmental Assessment Reporting for submission to the Environmental Commissioner at the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) for decision-making on the ECC.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

An ECC application will be submitted to the Environmental Commissioner at MEFT for decision-making before the implementation of the anticipated project.

In terms of the Environmental Management Act (EMA) No.7 of 2007 and its 2012 EIA Regulations, the proposed project triggers listed activities that cannot be undertaken without an ECC.

The relevant listed activities as per EIA regulations are as follows:

- *11.2 Construction of cemeteries, camping, leisure and recreation sites.*
- *10.1 (b) The construction of public roads.*

The Proponent is, therefore, required to obtain an ECC prior to the commencement (implementation) of operations on the site. To fulfill the legal requirements, the Proponent

has appointed Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd (Environmental Consultants), to conduct the required Environmental Scoping Assessment (ESA) process and submit the ECC application to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry (DEAF) at the MEFT for evaluation and consideration for the ECC.

4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

4.1 Project Plan, Activities, and Resources

Once an ECC is issued and all administrative and technical requirements are completed, the Proponent may begin with the construction works, and associated activities on site. The site will be prepared for construction and installation of necessary service infrastructure and structures required for the cemeteries and the street.

The construction works for the cemeteries will be outsourced to an appointed contractor through the Council's Procurement Procedures. Therefore, the Council cannot predict the exact number of people to be employed by the contractor during this phase, as the contractor is likely to provide its own workforce. However, it is strongly advised that employment preference for unskilled (and skilled, if available) works should be given to the Town's residents.

The following service and infrastructure as provided below will be required for the project activities:

- **Health and Safety:** Adequate and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to all project personnel. Standard first aid kits will be readily available onsite.
- **Hazardous waste:** Any fuel/oils spills occurring during construction will be carefully removed and stored in standardized containers for disposal at approved hazardous waste management facilities.
- **Solid waste:** Sufficient waste containers will be made available on-site during construction works, as well as waste containers set up appropriately for public use at the sites.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The ESA and EMP methodology applied for this project takes into account the provisions of the EIA Regulations, 2012, and the Environmental Management Act No. 7 of 2007. The overall objective of the ESA is to identify potential negative impacts associated with the proposed project that shall be assessed and provide potential effective mitigation measures for implementation.

The main objectives of this ESA are but are not limited to:

- Identification of potential impacts associated with the proposed project.
- Consultation with I&APs and relevant authorities and provide them with an opportunity to participate throughout the ESA process.
- Assess the significance of issues and concerns raised.
- Compile the ESA report addressing all potential identified issues and impacts.
- Draft an EMP that includes impact management and mitigation measures.

5.1 Potential impacts

The following potential impacts have been identified:

Positive:

- Social: gathering of families to give their loved ones a respectful and dignified burial process in a comfortable place.
- Employment: creation of jobs to the locals (temporary work for the construction phase, and permanent / contractual work for cemetery maintenance and security).
- Controlled pollution and improved management of cemeteries in the Town by using the newly drafted EMP for the new cemeteries.
- Access Road to the Cemeteries from the new street.

Negative:

The following potential negative impacts may be anticipated:

- Impact on water resources (groundwater pollution).
- Loss of biodiversity through site workings.
- Physical land (soil) disturbance.
- Archaeological resources impact through inadvertent unearthing of archaeological sites.
- Health and safety risks during site preparation/construction
- Environmental pollution (waste generation).
- Potential social conflicts (related to the cemetery set up and use) if no sufficient and inclusive consultations are done.

The potential impacts listed above are pre-identified, and therefore, should not be deemed as final or the only ones. Other potential impacts will be identified as the ESA process progresses i.e., upon site visit and consultation with the public (I&APs). All impacts and public concerns/comments will be incorporated and addressed in the Environmental Assessment Scoping (ESA) Report and EMP.

5.2 Public Consultation

Public consultation is an important part of the EA process. During the consultation process, I&APs are given an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns about the project's activities.

To comment or receive further information on the project, please register with Excel Dynamic Solutions (Pty) Ltd as an I&AP before or on **Monday, 05 November 2023**.

Public Consultation meeting details will be communicated with all the registered interested and affected parties.

For comments and/or further information requests, please contact the EDS Consultant at the contact details provided below:

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