

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study - The Proposed Construction of DR3470: Rooidag Gate (Ou-Cordorn) - Kano Vlei (74km) Gravel Road Standards in the Kavango West Region - Application for Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC)

Proponent:

Ministry of Works and Transport



Project Consulting Engineer:

Tweya Consulting Engineers CC



Environmental Consultant:

**Serja Hydrogeo-Environmental
Consultants CC (*Serja HGE
Consultants*)**

March 2025

1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Works and Transport (MWT) intends to construct DR3470: Rooidag Gate (Ou-Cordorn) – Kano Vlei gravel road standards to improve accessibility in the area. The proposed proclaimed road will start from Rooidag (Ou-Cordorn) to Kano Vlei over a 74km distance, covering two constituencies, namely Mankumpi on the Rooidag Gate (Ou-Cordorn side), with the bigger portion of the road falling along the Ncamagoro Constituency in the Kavango West Region. The locality map and land use (regional constituencies) are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

The road construction will commence upon completion of the project design by Tweya Consulting Engineers, who will administer the construction contract and supervise the construction works. Furthermore, other activities associated with gravel road construction include the abstraction of road construction materials from identified borrow pits and water supply for construction near the road route.

The road is currently a single-track pathway comprising thick sand, making travel difficult, especially for small vehicles (non-four-wheel drive vehicles). Thus, upgrading the sandy-track path to a gravel road is necessary so that the road will serve the purpose of:

- Improving rural and regional accessibility,
- Reducing road user costs,
- Reducing travel times, and
- Improving access to services such as schools and health centers as well as economic centers (farms).

The project will involve inter alia the following:

- Upgrading of the sandy single-track roadway to gravel road standards,

- Provision of and Improvement of drainage facilities and features,
- Upgrading of intersections along the route,
- Establishment of the 30m road reserve.

1.1 Need for an environmental clearance certificate (ECC)

The road construction and associated works such as the abstraction of construction materials and water to supply the road construction works are listed activities in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (2012) of the Environmental Management Act (EMA) No. 7 of 2007 that may not be undertaken without an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC). The listed activities that are relevant to the proposed project activities are as follows:

-Listed Activity 10.2 the construction of the route determination of roads and the design of associated physical infrastructure where -

(a) It is a public road

(b) The road reserve is wider than 30 meters; or

(c) The road caters for more than one lane of traffic in both directions

Associated activities: mining and quarrying activities for sand and gravel from borrow pits

-Listed Activity 3.1 The construction of facilities for any process or activities that require a license, right, or other forms of authorization, and the renewal of a license, right, or other forms of authorization, in terms of the Minerals (Prospecting and Mining Act), 1992.

-Listed Activity 3.2 Other forms of mining or extraction of any natural resources, whether regulated by law or not.

Water resources development – to supply the road construction

-Listed Activity 8.1 The abstraction of ground or surface water for industrial or commercial purposes

Subsequently, to comply with the EMA and its EIA Regulations and ensure environmental sustainability, the Proponent through the consulting engineer supervising (Tweya Consulting Engineers) has appointed Serja Hydrogeo-Environmental Consultants CC (*Serja HGE Consultants*), independent environmental consultants (environmental assessment practitioners) to apply for the project ECC on their behalf.

An application for the ECC is being launched with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT)'s Department of Environmental Affairs and Forestry (DEAF) by Serja HGE Consultants. Upon screening of this Background Information Document (BID), Serja HGE Consultants will be required to prepare an Environmental Scoping Report and Environmental Management Plan & Rehabilitation Plan (EMRP) in an application for the ECC. The required documents (Scoping Report and EMP/EMRP) will be submitted to the MEFT for evaluation and to consider issuing the ECC for the project.

1.2 The Purpose of this document

It should be noted that this Background Information Document (BID) is not an Environmental Scoping Report nor an EMP, but a non-technical summary of the Project's environmental assessment.

The BID is aimed at sharing first-hand summarized information of the proposed project activities. It also provides public guidance and a basis for their participation from the beginning of the environmental process and registers as interested and affected parties (I&APs) raise issues on the proposed activities.

The information obtained from the I&APs will then form the basis of the EIA Scoping Report, and or EMP/EMRP to help the MEFT in making an informed decision and consider the issuance of the ECC.

1.3 Project need and desirability

The DR3470 which starts from Ou-Cordorn to Kano Vlei follows a slight eastern side, then a southern direction, and finally, an eastern direction. This 74km road will efficiently serve the areas along the route, thus providing improved and better access to the surrounding farms, health centers, schools, and public services (growth centers) along and near the route. Thus, the project will serve significant economic activities and services along the road.

Furthermore, the constructed gravel road will ease the access of locals and travelers alike to services, and local farmers to transport their farm produce to market centers such as Rundu and other towns, settlements, and villages with ease.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will involve the upgrading of the existing sandy single-track DR3470 to gravel road standards. The road stretches from Rooidag Gate (Ou-Cordorn) to Kano Vlei Settlement in the Kavango West Region.

The DR3470 starts from Rooidag Gate (Ou-Cordorn) to Kano Vlei, follows a slight eastern side, then a southern direction, and finally, an eastern direction. Furthermore, the road construction to gravel standards will address the problem of small pipe culverts and low-level water crossing structures, the widening of the road to increase capacity, as well as providing additional road structures where applicable.

In addition to the above, the road construction will also address the erosion aspects through the drainage systems to be designed.

Road construction materials from borrow pits with quality material sites (to be identified), as well as sources of nearby raw and fresh water, will be determined.

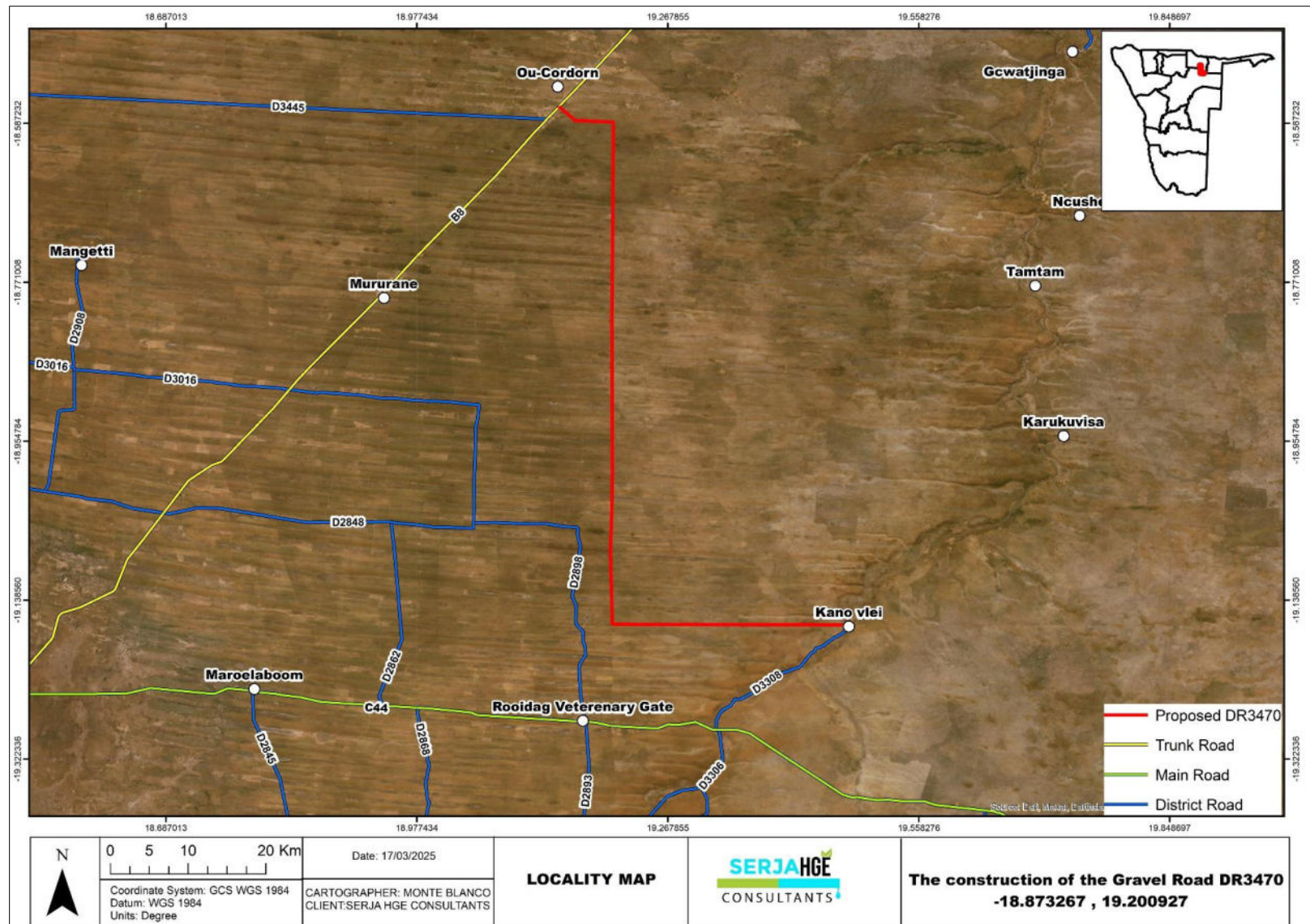


Figure 1: Locality map of the proposed DR3470: Rooidag Gate (Ou-Cordorn) – Kano Vlei in the Kavango West Region

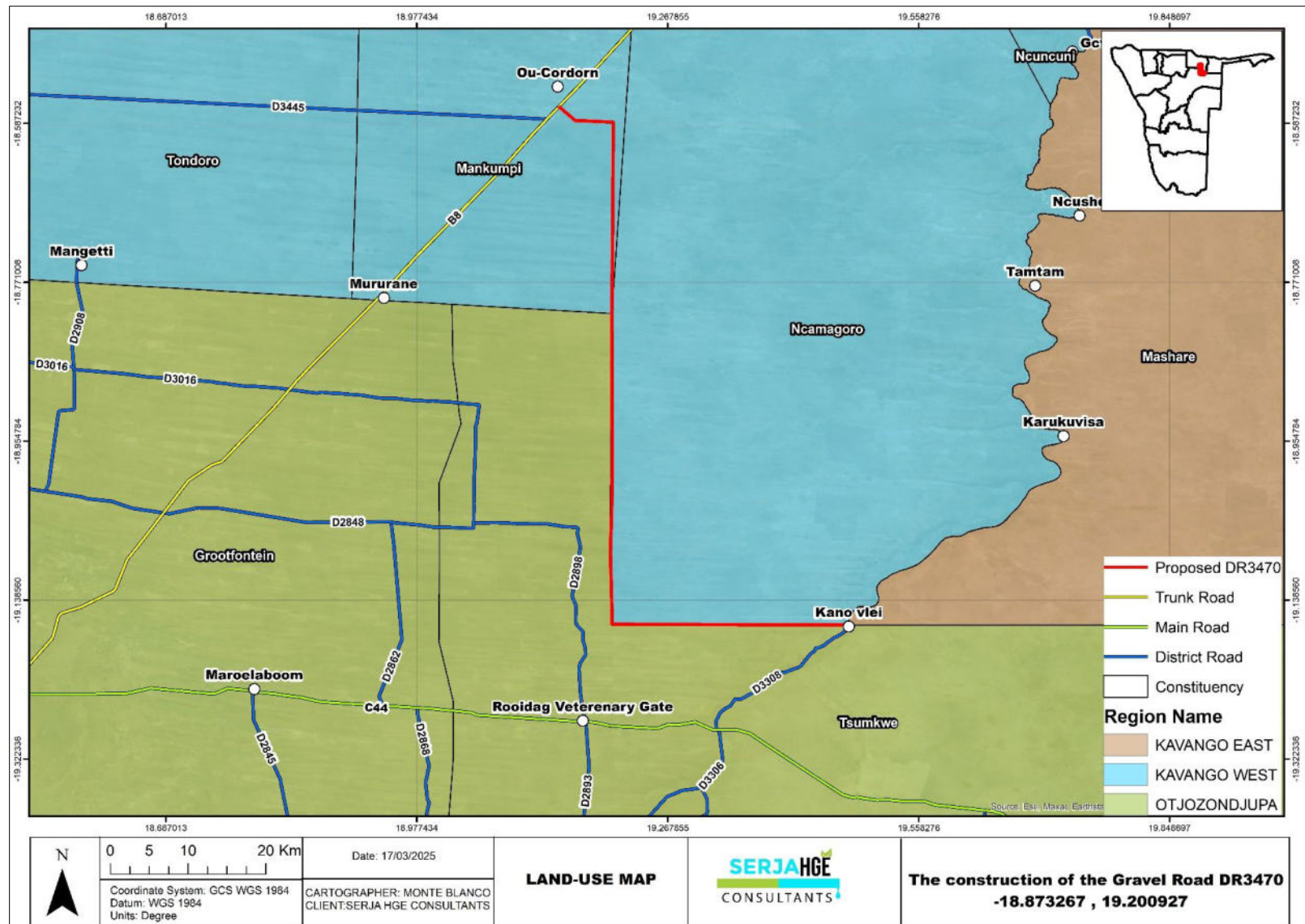


Figure 2: The land use map for the DR3470 with the electoral constituencies

2.1 Resources and Services Infrastructure

2.1.1 Human resources

The road construction will potentially employ between 100 and 200 people or more. The workforce will likely comprise safety officers, the resident engineer, the contracts manager, the land surveyor, quality control technicians, maintenance artisans, general foremen, operators, laborers, security guards, etc. Priority for employment (semi to unskilled labor) will be given to the locals.

2.1.2 Contractors' Accommodation

The project workforce will be accommodated in camps along the road. This is to ensure that workers commence work on time without the need to transport workers from and to homes daily. However, where possible local labourers will be commuting to the site from their homes, within a reasonable distance.

2.1.3 Water supply

The water supply for the project will be assessed during the EIA Study, i.e., surface water or drilling of new boreholes for the project along the route. The water will be likely stored in a lined earth dam between Ou-Cordorn and Kano Vlei. The water will be used for the actual road works (concrete) and human consumption (drinking water) on site.

2.1.4 Fuel supply

Diesel will be used for machinery and equipment, and a fuel generator to ensure an uninterrupted fuel supply to the project. The fuel will be stored in a 23,000-liter temporarily installed fuel tank at a selected point along the DR3470 to ensure uninterrupted supply during construction.

2.1.5 Occupational health and safety

All project workers will be supplied with appropriate and adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) while carrying out project activities onsite. The site will also be equipped with at least five fully furnished first aid kits.

2.1.6 Accidental fire outbreaks

The site vehicles, campsites, and machinery will be equipped with fire extinguishers in case of accidental fire outbreaks.

2.1.7 Waste Management (Solid Waste)

All waste generated from the project activities will be sorted, stored on-site in designated waste containers, and transported to an approved solid waste dumping site in the project area (such as Tsumkwe, Rundu, and or Grootfontein).

2.1.8 Human waste/sanitation

The appointed contractor will establish portable toilets for the workers and project-related visitors. The toilets will be emptied according to the manufacturer's instructions and as regularly as deemed necessary.

3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The construction of new roads is associated with some impacts, both positive and negative, and these are as follows:

3.1 Positive impacts (benefits)

-Socio-economic development through temporary job (employment) creation in the area during the road construction phase to over 200 people or more.

-Improved accessibility: better road connections enhance accessibility to remote rural areas, facilitating transportation of goods and services, and access to healthcare and education centers in the area.

-Economic development: better roads can stimulate economic growth by attracting investment, promoting tourism in this part of the Kavango West Region, and to other neighboring regions, and facilitating the movement of goods and people.

-Safety: The new road with improved design and signage can enhance road safety, thus, reducing the risk of accidents and fatalities.

-Social cohesion: the road will improve connectivity that can strengthen social ties within rural communities by enabling easier access to economic points (markets), schools, healthcare centers, and other social services.

3.2 Potential negative impacts of road construction

-Soil and water pollution: improper handling of wastewater may lead to pollution of surrounding soils and eventually water resources systems (through wastewater runoff and infiltration).

-Habitat destruction: excavation of road construction borrow pits can lead to the destruction of natural habitats for plants and animals. This can disrupt local biodiversity and reduce the availability of resources for animals and people.

-Soil erosion: the removal of large amounts of soil and vegetation from borrow pits can increase the risk of soil erosion, especially during heavy rainfall events.

-Depletion of local groundwater table: excavation of borrow pits may affect the local water table, leading to changes in groundwater levels. This can impact the availability of water for vegetation that relies on groundwater as a water source in the area.

-Land use change: the conversion of natural landscapes into borrow pits can permanently alter landscapes, affecting the aesthetic value of the area.

-Deforestation: road construction may require clearing of trees and vegetation along the route, leading to habitat loss.

-Potential displacement of properties such as fences, pipelines, and or homes to allow for sufficient road reserves.

-Air pollution by potential dust from unpaved areas owing to the movement and operation of heavy vehicles and machinery and excavations.

-Impact on air quality: dust and particulate matter generated during excavation of materials (sand and gravel) and transportation can compromise air quality in the surrounding area.

-Water pollution: runoff from roads can carry pollutants such as oil, salt, and heavy metals into nearby streams and rivers, impacting aquatic ecosystems.

-Noise associated with the movement of heavy machinery and trucks can disturb locals and animals.

-Disruption of hydrological systems by borrow pits can alter natural drainage patterns, causing changes in surface water flow and potentially exacerbating flooding or drought conditions in the area.

-General environmental pollution through mishandling of project-related waste associated with the project.

-Occupational and community health and safety: improper handling of materials and equipment may cause health and safety risks to workers and locals. Community safety can also be compromised by unfenced borrow pits or abandoned borrow pits (that are not properly rehabilitated to safe conditions)

-Archaeological or cultural heritage impact: borrow pits may impact local cultural heritage sites or traditional land use practices, potentially leading to social tensions or conflicts between the contractor and communities.

The impact management and mitigation measures will be provided in the EMRP for implementation.

4 EIA PROCESS STEPS

The following steps are followed for this EIA Study:

- Step 1: Project initiation - compilation of the BID, ECC application and registration at the DEAF, and development of stakeholders list.

- Step 2: Baseline assessment - Literature and legal review of applicable data sources.
- Step 3: Ongoing Public Consultation and facilitation (throughout the EIA process)

The EIA notifications will be placed in 2 newspapers for two consecutive weeks in the *New Era and Windhoek Observer* on the 19th & 26th of March 2025.

- Step 4: Information sharing - Circulation of the BID to pre-identified stakeholders/I&APs and the public who request EIA registration.
- Step 5: Public consultation meetings, site visits, and assessment. Two community consultation meetings will be held in Kano Vlei and Ou-Cordorn Settlements on the Thursday of the 10th of April 2025.
- Step 6: Compilation of the Draft Environmental Scoping Assessment Report and Environmental Management & Rehabilitation Plan (EMP/EMRP), and Review of documents.
- Step 7: Final EIA Reporting and Submission of the Scoping Report and EMP/EMRP to the Environmental Commissioner at MEFT for evaluation and consideration of the ECC.
- Stage 8: Follow-up with MEFT on the status of the evaluation of the submitted EIA documents and decision on the ECC.

4.1 Details for consultation and engagement meetings

The consultation and engagement meetings will be held in the project area as per the following details:

Meeting 1

- **Date:** Thursday, 10 April 2025
- **Time:** 10h00

- **Venue:** Kano Vlei Settlement (Ncamagoro Constituency)

Meeting 2

- **Date:** Thursday, 10 April 2025
- **Time:** 14h00
- **Venue:** Ou-Cordorn Settlement (Mankumpi Constituency)

4.2 Comments submission and deadline for comments

All concerns, issues, and/or comments should be put in writing (email, short messages (SMS) WhatsApp) or handwritten letters) to be considered in the Scoping Report as well as in the Draft EMP/EMRP.

Contact Persons / Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs):

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The last date for registration as I&APs and or to submit comments, concerns, and issues is **Friday, 25 April 2025.**