

**TMG AQUIFER FEASIBILITY STUDY AND PILOT PROJECT:
EXPLORATORY PHASE EIA PROCESS**

**MINUTES OF FIRST PUBLIC MEETING
Tulbagh Community Hall, Tulbagh, 6 May 2004**

ATTENDANCE:

Attendees:

JA Veschini (Community Safety Forum and Tulbagh Tourism)
 MB Floris (Western Cape Nature Conservation Board)
 WD van Niekerk (Dwarsrivier Irrigation Board; SAPCO)
 A Morris (Omega Boerdery)
 W Syster (Omega Trust)
 F Adams (Omega Trust)
 R Rughubar (Witzenburg Municipality)
 C Swart (Boland District Municipality)

Study Team:

Proponent

Rodney Bishop (City of Cape Town: Bulkwater) RB

TMG Aquifer Alliance

Doreen Februarie (Nosipho Consultancy)	DF
Duma Mningiswa (Nosipho Consultancy)	DM
Karen Shippey (Ninham Shand)	KS
Charl de Villiers (Ninham Shand)	CDV
Penelope Jones (Ninham Shand)	PLJ
Chris Hartnady (Umvoto)	CH

Apologies: none

1 Welcome and Introduction

DF welcomed everyone and outlined the process to be followed during the course of the meeting. She indicated that she would facilitate the meeting and briefly introduced the study team.

DF presented the proposed agenda for the meeting as follows:

- Welcome & Introduction
- Background to the Study (RB)
- Introduction to Hydrogeology and TMG Aquifer (CH)
- The EIA Process (CDV)
- General Discussion
- The Way Forward
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DF then outlined the rules of the meeting and gave an overview of the facilitator's role and the participants' role in the public meeting.

2 Presentation on Background to the Study ~ Rodney Bishop

RB provided a background to the TMG Aquifer study, including water demand management options currently being implemented and other schemes being investigated (Appendix A).

2.1 W van Niekerk queried how the water would be brought to the surface.

CH responded that the water would be pumped in future phases of the project.

2.2 J Veschini stated that information regarding other water schemes and alternative sources should be provided before the TMG is investigated.

RB responded that many alternatives are currently being considered. The TMG Aquifer obtained a high ranking in the City's initial prioritisation of the various schemes. At this stage there will be no abstraction, rather the feasibility of the TMG aquifer will be investigated. He stated that there is potentially a lot of water stored underground in the rock fractures, so it is important to investigate whether this source is viable. He noted that desalination is currently very expensive and it needs to be proven whether abstraction from the TMG Aquifer would be much cheaper.

2.3 J Veschini queried whether desalination would also be investigated in more depth. RB responded that it would, but in a separate study. He added that other water resource alternatives are currently better known, whereas the TMG Aquifer is not well known.

KS added that all the options are 'still on table', but that the one with the most scientific uncertainty is the TMG Aquifer. She stated that the task of the TMG Aquifer Alliance is specifically to investigate this option.

3 Presentation on Hydrogeology and TMG Aquifer ~ Chris Hartnady

CH provided an introduction to hydrogeology and the TMG aquifer (Appendix B).

3.1 J Veschini queried whether impact studies would be undertaken for each node or on a 'global' basis and whether all possible effects on the sub-level and surface environment would be considered.

CH responded that within each target area, various subareas will be defined with a maximum area of 100 hectares. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) will given approximately 28-30 of these to consider, some of which they may approve and others not. Drilling will occur in only approximately 10 of these subareas, but the intention is to obtain approval for as many subareas as possible so that the team has flexibility with regard to where they might drill.

3.2 An attendee raised the concern of the Kamanassie project and its ecological impact.

CH responded that the siting of the Kamanassie project was done very rapidly and without an understanding of the upper and lower parts of the aquifer. The

TMG Aquifer study will focus on the abstraction of water from the deeper aquifer, whereas Kamanassie involved abstraction from a shallower aquifer.

- 3.3 D Moore queried the particular target fault and asked whether a hydro-census had been undertaken in the Tulbagh valley. CH responded by referring to the map and showing that the V3 site was close to Voëlvelei and not that close to Tulbagh. He stated that the hydro-census was only undertaken in the areas close to the target sites.
- 3.3 An attendee queried whether Tulbagh would benefit from water found in the area. RB responded that if there was a good strike in the area, Tulbagh might benefit from this, although there were currently no plans or agreements with the Tulbagh Municipality to use the water to supply the town. He noted that the intention would be to transport the water to Voelvllei Dam where it could be treated. KS added that gaining an understanding of the aquifer in the region would benefit the local authorities.
- 3.4 The attendee noted that Tulbagh does not have a lot of natural springs and queried what the impact of abstraction might be on springs in the vicinity. CH responded that the closest target area to Tulbagh is V3, but abstraction would not occur in the immediate vicinity of Tulbagh.

4 Presentation on the EIA Process ~ Charl de Villiers

CDV provided an overview of the EIA Process (Appendix C).

- 4.1 J Veschini noted that the local people are naturally very protective of their environment. He stated that if water is found in the area, suddenly it may be taken off to Cape Town and there would be a hurried debate as to who is entitled to it. He stated that proper studies of other schemes should also be undertaken. It is not acceptable to assume that desalination is too expensive, the scientific evidence needs to be obtained and made available.

CDV responded that the Draft Scoping Report would provide a detailed background to the selection of the TMG Aquifer scheme for investigation. The report will be lodged in the libraries before being submitted to the environmental authorities, and the public will be informed of the lodging by press advertisements and letters in the post. 21 days will then be given for the public to comment on report. He noted that the report would aim to present the authorities with sufficient information with which to make an informed decision. A project Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and site specific EMPs will also be drafted.

- 4.2 RB stated that the City is aware that the environment is potentially very sensitive and that this project may 'tread on many toes' so it will ensure that every section of the law is upheld and that all stakeholders are kept informed. The intention is to proceed with caution. Boreholes drilled during the Exploratory Phase would not be suitable for exploitation, as the holes would be too small for production pumping. The boreholes will be for observation and scientific monitoring purposes only. He noted that DWAF is the legal custodian of underground water. In order for the City to abstract water for bulk supply purposes, it would need to obtain a permit from DWAF, which would be for temporary abstraction only. A wellfield would also require an entirely new EIA process, including further public participation.

5 General Discussion

- 5.1 An attendee queried who came up with the idea to investigate the aquifer. RB responded that DWAF was aware of this potential resource and should have investigated it themselves or in conjunction with the City.

CH added that it was the hydrogeological community and the hydrogeologists within DWAF who initiated this over many years, and that the idea was then taken up by others.

- 5.2 An attendee queried whether government would fund the scheme. RB responded that since it is a City of Cape Town initiative, the City will have to find the funding for it. The City may request assistance from national government, however.

- 5.3 W van Niekerk stated that with regard to the Voëlvlei Dam, the Tulbagh residents were told many years ago that they would be supplied with water in the future, but this did not materialise. The population of Tulbagh has now grown and would like to expand further, but the town is short of water. He noted that the residents of Tulbagh are concerned about the water supply of Tulbagh, not Cape Town, and queried what must be done to ensure that the town gets adequate water e.g. must residents keep pushing the Municipality.

RB responded that the Tulbagh Municipality should discuss this issue with the City of Cape Town and state that they have an interest in this scheme and its potential for increasing Tulbagh's water supply. DWAF largely serves a regulating role rather than a provider, but will have to license any abstraction.

- 5.4 R Rughubar noted that the Witzenberg Municipality had been listed as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) for this study, indicating that the process is underway for the Municipalities to discuss the benefits of this scheme with one another. RB responded that the Witzenberg Municipality was not, however, involved in the Key Stakeholder Forum.

- 5.5 CDV noted that most of the concerns raised related to the future part of the study involving abstraction. He stated that these concerns would be captured, but could not be answered adequately at this stage. He encouraged attendees to remain involved. KS added that attendees should submit their concerns to Ninham Shand in writing, as all written comments would be appended to the report and viewed by the authorities. She added that Witzenberg Municipality had been invited to the KSF and she encouraged them to send a representative to future meetings.

- 5.6 J Veschini raised the concern that consultants often present their studies to the public and then the I&APs don't hear anything further. He stated that it should be recorded that everyone who has shown an interest now must be consulted in future. He noted that he was mistrustful of consultants, as when new consultants are appointed, the chains of communication with I&APs get broken. He asked that the maps of the target areas be made available on the project website.

KS responded that the team will advertise and send letters to all I&APs regarding the lodging of reports in the library. She stated that there will also be another public meeting to present the findings of the Draft Scoping Report, after which I&APs can submit their written comments. After that, the report will be finalised and submitted to the authorities who will make a decision. All I&APs will then be informed what that decision is. If this project proceeds to the Pilot

Phase, the team will provide I&APs with further detail and a new EIA process will be undertaken. She stated that as long as the TMG Aquifer Alliance were involved, they would ensure that I&APs are kept informed i.e. at least for the next 5 years. After that, it would be the City's responsibility.

6 Way Forward and Closure

DF thanked the attendees for attending the public meeting and for the comments and questions raised. She then briefly presented the way forward, indicating that the next step was the compilation and lodging of a Draft Scoping Report. She stated that all registered I&APs would be notified of the lodging of the report and that minutes of the public meeting would be circulated to all attendees.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was closed at approximately 20h10.