

MINUTES OF MEETING: CONSULTATION WITH THE PUBLIC

Public Consultation Meeting on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) for the Gibeon Upgrade Project

Date: 23 September 2025

Time: 11:00 – 13:00

Venue: Gibeon Community Hall, Hardap Region

1. Attendance

The meeting was attended by 35 people in total (see attached meeting attendance):

- Representatives from the directorate of Rural Water Supply: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform
- Gibeon community members
- Chairpersons of farms along the pipeline route
- Lana Consultancy (independent consultants appointed by NamWater)

2. Opening and Purpose of the Meeting

The meeting commenced at 11:00 with a welcome by Lana Consultants, who explained that NamWater intends to upgrade the existing water pipeline in Gibeon. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Inform stakeholders about the proposed project;
- Present the ESIA and ESMP process;
- Obtain feedback and concerns from the community; and
- Obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the community to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of the project, understand its potential impacts, and are given the opportunity to provide input before implementation.

3. Presentation by Lana Consultants

Lana Consultants presented the Background Information Document (BID) and provided an overview of the Gibeon Upgrade Project. Key points highlighted included:

- **Pipeline Upgrade:**
- A new pipeline will be installed while the existing one will remain in place. The current pipeline is very old and records more than 40 breakages annually, necessitating

replacement. The new pipeline will be placed 3–5 metres from the existing line, within the same registered servitude, and the existing service road will be utilised for installation and future maintenance. Therefore, no additional land will be required for the project.

- **Legal Requirement:**

The ESIA is a legal requirement to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism. Lana Consultancy, as an independent entity, was appointed by NamWater to carry out the assessment.

- **Social Awareness:**

Community members were cautioned that large construction projects often bring in external workers, which may increase risks of social misconduct. Parents were urged to advise their children, particularly young girls, to remain vigilant.

- **Contractor Camps:**

Contractors will not be permitted to camp on private farms. Designated camps will only be allowed in Mariental or Gibeon.

- **Translation**

To ensure inclusivity and full participation, Ms Desiree Beukes from the Directorate of Rural Water Supply interpreted the meeting proceedings from English into Afrikaans. This was essential as the majority of attendees preferred Afrikaans, enabling all participants to understand the project information clearly and contribute effectively to the discussions.

4. Community Questions and Concern

The meeting was opened for public input. Concerns and suggestions were raised in chronological order as follows:

- i. **Employment Opportunities:** The project should prioritise job opportunities for local community members.
- ii. **Meter Installation:** Households located on the opposite side of the road should also have their water meters installed on their side for easier access.
- iii. **Water Tariffs:** A community member asked whether the new pipeline would reduce water tariffs.
 - *Response (Lana):* The replacement project will not affect tariffs; its purpose is to improve supply reliability and reduce interruptions caused by frequent breakages.

- iv. **Prepaid Water System:** Farmers requested the introduction of a prepaid system to pay for water in advance based on usage.
- v. **Acknowledgement of Breakages:** Community members noted that the frequent pipe breakages have been raised in previous letters to NamWater and welcomed that the project now addresses the issue.
- vi. **Responsibility for Water Losses:** A question was raised about whether communities are expected to pay for water losses caused by pipeline breakages.
 - o *Response (Lana):* Consumers are only liable for leakages within their property boundary. General pipeline losses are the responsibility of NamWater.
- vii. **Challenges for Elderly Residents:** Elderly community members face difficulties in travelling to payment points, reinforcing the case for prepaid systems.
- viii. **Water Meters Access:** Concerns were raised about water meters being locked with padlocks, preventing households from monitoring consumption. Community members requested access to read their own meters.
- ix. **Inclusive Employment:** Employment opportunities should not only target the youth but also the 36–59 age group, who possess valuable skills and experience.
- x. **Water Billing Inequity:** Concerns were raised that some community members pay regularly while others do not, creating unfairness in billing.

Additional Clarification:

- Community members were informed that the new pipeline will be laid 3–5 metres from the existing line, within the same registered servitude.
- The existing service road will continue to be used for installation and maintenance.
- As a result, no additional land acquisition or resettlement will be required for the project.

5. Responses by Lana Consultants

Lana Consultants responded as follows:

- The project is scheduled to commence in approximately one year, leaving sufficient time to review community inputs (e.g. prepaid systems) before implementation.
- The consultation is also part of obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the community. Stakeholders were assured that they have the right to provide feedback and either accept or reject the proposed project.
- The old pipeline will remain in place until the new pipeline is fully operational, after which it will be decommissioned.

- Community members were informed that all concerns raised during the meeting will be documented and incorporated into the Scoping Report and the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). These will be formally submitted to NamWater as part of the ESIA process.

6. Conclusion

The meeting was successfully conducted, with active participation from community members. Concerns and suggestions were duly recorded for incorporation into the ESIA and ESMP process. Lana Consultants reiterated that the project's ultimate goal is to improve water supply reliability for Gibeon and surrounding areas.

FPIC was formally obtained from the chairpersons of the communal resettlement farms located along the pipeline route, namely Vaaldam, Soutput, Falkenhorst, Hobby Garden Pos 1, and Tafelkop. This ensures that directly affected stakeholders have been fully informed of the project, understand its potential impacts, and have provided their consent for the project to proceed.

The meeting adjourned at 13:00.