

# *Chapter 1:* **Introduction**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background and project overview

The EIA for the development of a deep water port at the mouth of the Coega River by the Coega Development Corporation (CDC) and the National Port Authority (NPA), was approved by the then Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Valli Moosa, in May 2002. The approval contained various development components of the initial port development. The Record of Decision encompassed the following components:

- 1) Two berths at the container terminal;
- 2) Two berths at the dry bulk materials facility;
- 3) One berth for the bulk liquids facility;
- 4) Dredging of the approach channel and turning basin;
- 5) Construction of the quay walls and breakwaters;
- 6) Land excavation to create the area for the container terminal and transport corridor;
- 7) Transportation and disposal of excess spoil at the east headline deposition site;
- 8) Construction of a sand bypass;
- 9) Development of infrastructure and service facilities for the future Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) tenants and port users, including: site preparation, transport routes, water and electricity services, waste sites and telecommunications, as well as “areas designated for port related activities and allied industries”.

Subsequently, Records of Decision (RODs) have been received for the construction of a railway line from Coega Station to the Port of Ngqura (dated 29 September 2004) and for the port control tower building (dated 7 September 2004). Transnet has proceeded with components 1 - 9 of the approved port development activities listed above. Construction of most of the seaward components of the port is nearly complete.

In 2006, Transnet undertook a feasibility study for the construction of an additional two berths at the container terminal at the Port of Ngqura and all associated infrastructure required to render the port operational. The scope of the feasibility study includes:

- a) The extension of the existing quay wall at the container terminal (within the existing earthworks area) to accommodate two additional berths for container vessels (i.e. berths D102 and D103);
- b) Construction of an administration craft basin for pilot vessels and tugboats next to the root of the eastern breakwater in the port basin (within the existing earthworks area);
- c) Completion of the container handling area landward of container berths D100 to D103;

- d) All unfinished landside infrastructure (including buildings, security, workshops and the entry plaza) to make the port operational;
- e) The construction of the railway connection from the port to the Coega Station including the station.

The completion of the container handling area, landside infrastructure and rail [items (c) to (e) listed above] is work that has already been approved in the above-mentioned RODs. However, the quay extension (and associated landside infrastructure) and the administration craft basin [items (a) and (b) listed above] were not included in these RODs. These activities now require environmental authorization and are the subject of this EIA process.

CSIR has been appointed by Transnet as the environmental assessment practitioner to undertake the necessary studies in terms of the EIA Regulations (Sections 21, 22 and 26 of the Environmental Conservation Act, No. 73 of 1989). This led to an application for environmental authorization being submitted by CSIR to the national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) in June 2006. Receipt was acknowledged and reference number *EIA 12/12/20/690* was issued by DEAT on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2006 for this application.

## 1.2 Need and justification for the proposed project

The rationale and need for the two key components of the project covered in this EIA process, i.e. the additional two container berths and the administration craft basin, are provided below:

**Container berths:** The requirement for the additional two berths on the container quay is driven by the significant growth that continues to be experienced in the shipping and container industry, growing internationally from 244 million TEU's<sup>1</sup> in 1995 to an expected 445 million TEU's by 2010 and 570 million TEU's by 2015. Rapid container volume growth has resulted in capacity shortfalls and increasing port congestion within South Africa. The Transnet business plan includes the phased development of capacity at the Port of Ngqura from 400,000 TEU's by 2008 (i.e. Phase 1, covered by existing RODs) to a projected capacity of 1,250,000 TEU's by 2015/16 (i.e. Phase 2, covered in this EIA). Phase 2 requires the additional two berths to support the increased volumes and the associated stacking area behind the berths. The supporting infrastructure to be constructed at the port is designed to accommodate the full projected capacity of 1,250,000 TEU's per year.

**Administration craft basin:** An administration craft basin is required to support the marine operations of the port. The main function of the administration craft basin is to provide a sheltered mooring basin for tugs and service craft for the Port of Ngqura and to provide a launching facility for ski boats (e.g. police boats and SANParks boats). No provision will be made for pleasure craft, dredgers or floating cranes. At the time of preparing the EIA for the overall development of the Port of Ngqura (CES, 2001(a)), it was assumed that service vessels for the

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<sup>1</sup> TEU: Twenty-foot equivalent unit, used to describe the volume of cargo.

new port would be accommodated within the existing harbour at Port Elizabeth. Recent development trends (in particular the growth in container traffic) necessitate that these vessels be accommodated within the Port of Ngqura.

It should be noted that these two facilities are independent of each other, in that the extension of the existing container berths, and associated infrastructure, may be deferred in relation to the construction of the existing container terminal and infrastructure; but the administration craft basin will be required to support the operations of the port.

### 1.3 Requirement for an environmental impact assessment

An EIA is a planning tool that identifies the environmental consequences of a proposed project and assists to ensure that the project will be environmentally acceptable and sustainable over its lifetime. The Environment Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989) identifies those activities that require an EIA due to the potential to have a detrimental impact on the environment. The proposed development is one such activity. The EIA is being submitted in terms of Sub-regulation 5(1)(a) - referred to as the EIA Regulations - of Government Notice No. R1183 of 5 September 1997 under Section 26 of the Environmental Conservation Act (No. 73 of 1989).

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism is the lead authority that will assess the development activities. This Department will make the final decision on whether the proposed projects may go ahead or not, and, if so, under what conditions. The department will also use the inputs from all other relevant government departments, for example from the Directorate of Marine and Coastal Management (MCM), the provincial Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism (DEAE&T) as well as others, before a final decision will be made.

### 1.4 EIA team

The CSIR has been appointed by Transnet to conduct the necessary environmental impact assessment process for the proposed administration craft basin and two additional container berths. The key members of the CSIR's team and their roles in this EIA are listed in Table 1.1.

*Table 1.1: Members of the CSIR EIA team*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Role in this EIA</b>
Paul Lochner	CSIR	Project Leader
Ismail Banoo	CSIR	Project Manager
Sandy Wren	Public Process Consultants	Public participation facilitator
<b>Specialists</b>		
Dr Robin Carter	Lwandle Consulting	Marine ecology and sediment analysis
Andrew Pascall	CSIR	Sediment sampling
Roy Bowman	Stewart Scott Int.	Traffic and transportation
Johan van der Walt	Ntshebe Consulting	Socio-economics