

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF OAKWOOD CHICKEN BROILER HOUSES FOR THE PRODUCTION OF POULTRY WITHIN AMAHLATHI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, AMATHOLE DISTRICT, EASTERN CAPE

NATIONAL WEB BASED SCREENING TOOL REPORT FINDINGS AND RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The National Web based Environmental Screening Tool is a geographically based web-enabled application which allows a proponent intending to submit an application for environmental authorisation in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2014, as amended to screen their proposed site for any environmental sensitivity.

The Screening Tool also provides site specific EIA process and review information, for example, the Screening Tool may identify if an industrial development zone, minimum information requirement, Environmental Management Framework or bio-regional plan applies to a specific area.

Some of these documents can then be accessed through the Screening Tool via links, for consideration during screening.

Further to this, the Screening Tool identifies related exclusions and/ or specific requirements including specialist studies applicable to the proposed site and/or development, based on the national sector classification and the environmental sensitivity of the site.

Finally, the Screening Tool allows for the generating of a Screening Report referred to in Regulation 16(1)(v) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017, as amended whereby a Screening Report is required to accompany any application for Environmental Authorisation and as such the tool has been developed in a manner that is user friendly and no specific software or specialised GIS skills are required to operate this system.

ANCA Foods (Pty) Ltd wish to increase their poultry production and thus require construction of new environmentally controlled chicken broiler house facilities. Two sites are proposed, with each site consisting of eight (8) enclosed broiler houses within a separately fenced-in operational area that includes ancillary buildings such as an office, staff eating and washing area (to meet biosecurity needs), ablution facilities (septic tank) and a water treatment plant. Stormwater infrastructure will include evaporative earth ponds, stormwater channels and dish drains. Each broiler house will be 1800 m² and have a maximum capacity of 42 000 chickens per house. The construction of the broiler houses will require the clearance of approximately 12 hectares of vacant agricultural land.

With regards to water supply, a 50 mm rising main will be utilised to reticulate water from both a borehole, as well as from an abstraction point along the Kubusi River to the broiler houses. Electric pumps will be utilised for both the borehole and abstraction point and will be pumped below the ground to a water treatment plant, and then to the respective broiler house site. The water treatment plant will consist of a flocculation tank, a pH dosing tank and then chlorination going from the water storage to the broiler houses.

In terms of access to the proposed broiler house sites, existing 4 m gravel access roads will be utilised. A 5 m internal gravel access road will be formalised to allow for entry into each broiler house site operational area. Mitre drains will be installed where necessary along the internal gravel access roads. Three-phase electricity is available for the proposed development to tie into.

The proposed Oakwood Chicken Broiler Houses will occur 3.5 km south-east of Stutterheim in the Eastern Cape (Figure 1). The precise co-ordinates of two broiler sites are 32°35'34.79"S, 27°27'29.18"E; and 32°36'18.26"S, 27°28'22.40"E, respectively, within the Amahlathi Local Municipality. The proposed broiler houses will be constructed on erven 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, and 2235. These properties are owned by the Applicant. In terms of access to the proposed sites, existing gravel roads are available. The main watercourse in the area, the Kubusi River (perennial watercourse), acts as the cadastral boundary of the properties that the project falls on.



Figure 1: Aerial locality of the proposed chicken broiler houses.

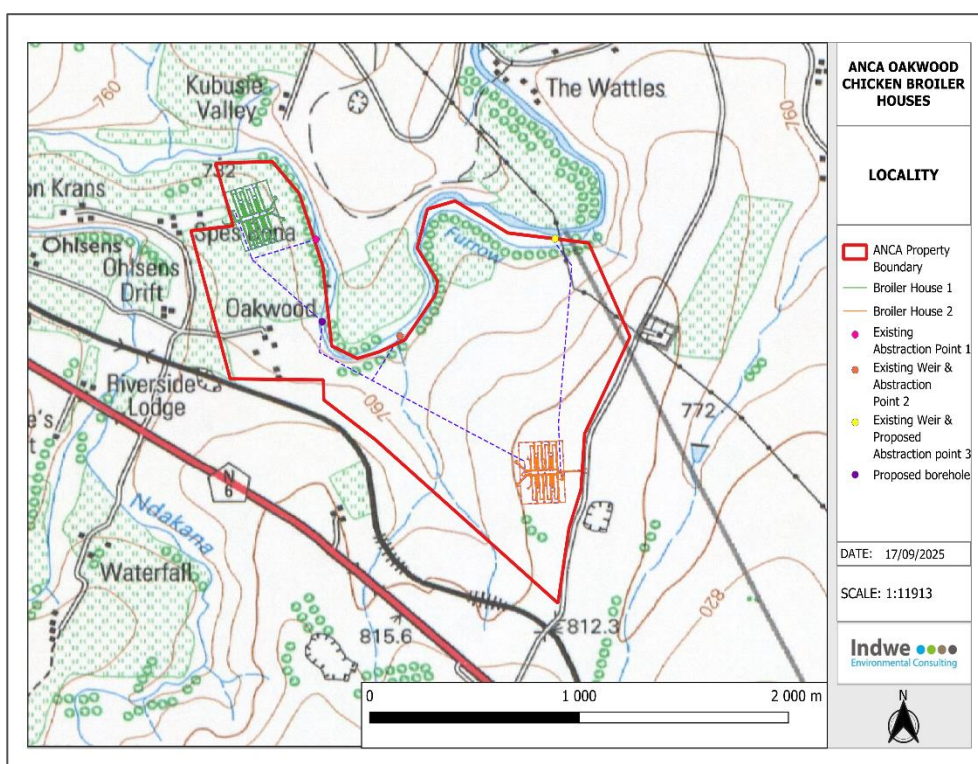


Figure 2: Topographical locality of the proposed chicken broiler houses.

SCREENING TOOL THEME SENSITIVITIES AND ASSOCIATED SPECIALIST ASSESSMENTS IDENTIFIED

According to the Screening Tool Report generated for the site, the following summary of the development site environmental sensitivities is identified below:

Theme	Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
Agriculture Theme		X		
Animal Species Theme		X		
Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	X			
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme	X			
Civil Aviation Theme		X		
Defence Theme				X
Paleontology Theme	X			
Plant Species Theme			X	
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme				X

Based on the selected classification, and the environmental sensitivities of the proposed development footprint, the following list of specialist assessments were identified for inclusion in the assessment report by the Screening Tool Report:

1. Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment
2. Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment
3. Palaeontology Impact Assessment
4. Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment
5. Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment
6. Hydrology Assessment
7. Traffic Impact Assessment

8. Socio-Economic Assessment
9. Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment
10. Plant Species Assessment
11. Animal Species Assessment

The Screening Tool Report notes that ***it is the responsibility of the EAP to confirm this list and to motivate in the assessment report, the reason for not including any of the identified specialist study including the provision of photographic evidence of the site situation.***

SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT UNDERTAKEN AS PART OF THE PROJECT

Taking into consideration the environmental sensitivities identified by the Screening Tool, the specialist assessments identified by the Screening Tool, physical site surveys and verifications as well as the current land use and intended land use (in terms of SPLUMA), the following is noted.

Specialist assessments undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process were as follows:

1. Cultural, Heritage, Archaeological Assessment that addresses the cultural heritage and archaeological theme. Can be found in **Appendix D**.
2. Palaeontological Assessment that addresses the palaeontological theme. **Refer to Appendix D**
3. Aquatic Biodiversity Assessment Report that addresses the aquatic biodiversity theme. **Refer to Appendix D**
4. Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment Report that addresses the terrestrial biodiversity theme as well as the plant and animal species theme. **Refer to Appendix D**

In terms of the remaining specialist assessments that were identified by the Screening Tool, the motivations for not undertaking such are as follows:

1. Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment

Given that no specific assessment protocol has been prescribed, it is accepted that a site sensitivity verification will suffice.

The proposed site area for the chicken broiler houses falls outside of an urban area and the site and surrounding properties have an agricultural zoning. Due to the proposed site area locality in the landscape, which is surrounded by agricultural land, and the topography of the area, it is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant visual impact on the neighbouring properties.

Based on the above information, no landscape/visual impact specialist assessment was undertaken.

2. Hydrology Assessment

A Geophysical Report was conducted by Water Resource Development in August 2024 to evaluate the potential of developing a sustainable groundwater source for the proposed Oakwood broiler houses.

The geology of the area generally comprises mudstones and sandstones of the Karoo sequence that have been intruded by dolerite dykes and sheets.

The Beaufort Group (BG) is the geologically dominant unit in the district. This Group (BG) forms part of the Karoo Supergroup. Dolerite intrusions form massive sheets, dykes and ring-shaped intrusions in this Group (BG). The Group (BG) is divided into two subgroups namely the Tarkastad and Adelaide Subgroups. These Subgroups has been divided into formations. The following formations are present in the study area, Katberg sandstones and dolerite intrusions.

- Katberg Formation
- Balfour Formation

The Katberg Formation is sandstone-rich and is 500 to 1000 m thick. The sandstone is well lithified and varies in composition from fine grained, argillaceous variety to a medium-coarse grained, arenaceous type, horizontally laminated, cross-bedded or massive and on average, comprises approximately 90% of the total thickness. The positive relief features in the landscape are normally composed of dolerite or sandstone. With regards to the Oakwood farm, this is competent sandstone.

Based on the above information, a hydrology assessment was not deemed necessary and therefore was not undertaken.

3. Traffic Impact Assessment

Access to the two proposed broiler house sites is readily available. The two gravel access roads connects to the N6 approximately 3.5 km from Stutterheim.

The proposed development site area occurs within a rural area and the operation of the facility is not likely to contribute to a significant increase in traffic to the area.

Based on the above information, no traffic impact assessment was undertaken.

4. Socio-economic Impact Assessment

Given that no specific assessment protocol has been prescribed, it is accepted that a site sensitivity verification will suffice.

The proposed development will provide employment opportunities to both skilled and unskilled workers during the construction and operation phase. The proposed development will therefore contribute to local economic development as well as regional food security. Only positive socio-economic impacts are expected as a result of the development.

Based on the above, no socio-economic impact assessment was undertaken.

5. Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment

Given that no specific assessment protocol has been prescribed, it is accepted that a site sensitivity verification will suffice.

During the construction phase, the proposed development will generate dust and other minor pollutants, however the ECO will be responsible in ensuring compliance and dust suppression will be mandatory to reduce dust emissions.

During operational phase, the facility is likely to have a negative impact on air quality due to the odour emissions released from the chicken litter generated. However, these emissions are expected to only be exposed to the receiving environment temporarily when the third-party supplier collects and removes the chicken litter, therefore is deemed to not have a detrimental impact on air quality.

Based on the above, no ambient air quality impact assessment was undertaken.