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MONTHLY ARTICLE

UMBHAYI HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

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UMBHAYI COMMUNITY

Umbhayi is an informal settlement located in the periphery of Tongaat, North of Durban. In October 2016 the construction of formalized housing brought hope, smiles and happiness to the residents of this settlement.

This development was initiated by the eThekweni Department of Human Settlements after the Ward Councillors and senior community members approached the municipality and highlighted the urgent need for service delivery in the Umbhayi settlement. The community has been living in an on-going struggle in the past. The development aims to construct 779 Reconstruction & Development Programme (RDP) houses. Each unit will be 48.2 sqm with the capacity of supporting services such as electricity and water. This will eradicate the issue of fatalities which have been caused by illegal electrical connections

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Umbhayi settlement is located in an area that is surrounded by environmental sensitives. As such an Environmental Authorization (EA) has been issued by the Department of Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA). A condition of the EA states that site has to be monitored by an independent Environmental Control Officer (ECO). In order to keep in line with the legislation, the eThekweni Department of Human Settlements appointed Hanslab Environmental Consultants as the ECO.



Image Source: Hanslab (Pty) Ltd, 2019



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ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL OFFICER

The role of an Environmental Control Officer is to monitor all construction activities on a development site. They ensure that the respective Contractor is in compliance with all authorizations and/or permits. Site-specific requirements and mitigation measures which have been assessed and investigated in an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) and approved by the Department are also monitored in order to ensure compliance.

Image Source: Hanslab (Pty) Ltd, 2020

These regulations and requirements are stipulated in legal documents issued by the regulatory bodies such as a project specific EA and Environmental Management Programme (EMPr). The EA authorizes the activities associated with the development from an environmental perspective. This document outlines the terms of reference and conditions that must be adhered to by the authorization holder which will then filter down to the appointed Principle Contractor. The EMPr is a site-specific document composed by a qualified Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP). This document outlines site specific potential environmental impacts and their respective mitigation measures in relation to each activity and phase of the development. These phases include Pre-Construction, Construction and Post construction.



INTERGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Hanslab Environmental Consultants in collaboration with the eThekweni Department of Human Settlements are working towards improving the social and economic environment by providing housing for the community of Umbhayi. Whilst performing our scope of works, we aim to improve the biophysical environmental sustainability and integrity.

Image Source: Hanslab (Pty) Ltd, 2020