

JADE HILLS FARMING PTY LTD: THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW JADE HILLS DAM

ON PORTION 26 OF FARM STINKFONTEIN 383, CERES, WESTERN CAPE

PRE - APPLICATION SCOPING REPORT AND PLAN OF STUDY



WCDEADP REF: 16/3/3/6/7/2/B5/2/1432/26

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JADE HILLS FARMING PTY LTD

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW JADE HILLS DAM

On Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein 383, Ceres, Western Cape

PREPARED FOR:

Jade Hills Pty (LTD)

P.O. Box 72

Ceres

6835

Tel: 083 256 2567

PREPARED BY:

EnviroAfrica cc

Unit 7, Pastorie Park

Corner of Reitz and Lourens Streets

SOMERSET WEST

7130

Tel.: (021) 851 1616

E-mail: admin@enviroafrica.co.za

INDEPENDENCE & CONDITIONS

EnviroAfrica is an independent consulting firm that has no interest in the proposed activity other than fair remuneration for services rendered. Remuneration for services is not linked to approval by decision-making authorities and EnviroAfrica has no interest in secondary or downstream development as a result of this project. There are no circumstances that compromise the objectivity of this Scoping Report. The findings, results, observations and recommendations given here are based on the author's best scientific and professional knowledge and available information. EnviroAfrica reserves the right to modify aspects of this report, including the recommendations, if new information becomes available which may have a significant impact on the findings of this report.

RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE OF THE EAP

This Scoping Report has been prepared by Bianca Gilfillan of EnviroAfrica cc, an Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) with experience in the compilation and management of environmental authorisation processes in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended).

Qualifications and Experience

Bianca Gilfillan is an environmental scientist with professional experience in environmental management and impact assessment processes across South Africa. Her work includes the preparation and submission of Basic Assessment Reports (BARs), Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (S&EIRs), Environmental Management Programmes (EMPrs), and associated specialist coordination and regulatory compliance processes.

Her experience includes:

- Managing and compiling environmental authorisation applications in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998);
- Conducting and overseeing Public Participation Processes in accordance with the EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended);
- Coordinating specialist studies, including botanical, freshwater, heritage, visual, and geotechnical assessments;
- Liaising with competent authorities and stakeholders, including national, provincial, and local authorities;
- Ensuring compliance with applicable environmental legislation and guidelines.

Bianca Gilfillan has been involved in a range of projects across multiple sectors, including water infrastructure (dams and pipelines), renewable energy developments, residential developments, and conservation-related projects.

Please refer to Appendix L for the CV's of the EAPs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jade Hills Farming (Pty) Ltd is proposing the development of a farm storage dam and associated water conveyance infrastructure on Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383, near Ceres, within the Witzenberg Local Municipality, Cape Winelands District Municipality, Western Cape Province (hereafter referred to as Jade Hills Farm).

The proposed development involves the construction of a new earthfill farm storage dam (hereafter referred to as the Jade Hills Dam), which will have an approximate storage capacity of 110 000 m³, a maximum wall height of approximately 11.1 m, a wall length of approximately 237 m, and an estimated inundation area of approximately 1.7 ha. The total development footprint is approximately 2.0 ha.

The primary purpose of the proposed dam is to store surplus winter water derived from an existing lawful water use allocation associated with the Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme, for use during the dry summer months in support of existing agricultural activities on the property.

The proposed dam will be supplied with water via a new pipeline of approximately 700 m in length from the existing Jade Hills Delivery Point, together with associated operational infrastructure, including a small pumphouse.

Site coordinates (approximate central point of the proposed dam wall): S33°22'31.67"; E19°22'13.15".



The applicant, Jade Hills Farming (Pty) Ltd, who will undertake the proposed development, should it be approved, has appointed EnviroAfrica CC as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to manage the required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and Public Participation Process in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA).

A Scoping Process is being undertaken to present the proposed development to the Competent Authority, commenting authorities, and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs). This Pre-Application Scoping Report identifies the key environmental issues, alternatives, and matters requiring further investigation during the Environmental Impact Assessment phase.

Based on preliminary assessments undertaken to date, the following specialist studies may be required during the EIA phase:

- Biodiversity Assessment
- Freshwater Assessment
- Heritage Assessment

Existing specialist information from a previous application process has been reviewed as baseline information and will be updated or supplemented where necessary during the EIA phase.

Should the Competent Authority authorise the application to proceed to the EIA phase, identified impacts will be assessed in detail, specialist studies will be finalised, and findings will be incorporated into an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for public review and authority consideration.

Based on the issues identified to date and the nature of the proposed development, it is considered appropriate that the application proceed through the Scoping and EIA process, where all relevant environmental impacts and mitigation measures can be fully assessed before a final decision is made.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Name	Role / Responsibility	Date
AA	Bianca Gilfillan	EAP	June 2026
BB			
CC			
DD			
EE			
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ACRONYMS

BGIS	Biodiversity Geographic Information System
CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEA&DP	Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
DWA	Department of Water Affairs
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner
ECA	Environment Conservation Act (Act No. 73 of 1989)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMP	Environmental Management Programme
HIA	Heritage Impact Assessment
HWC	Heritage Western Cape
I&APs	Interested and Affected Parties
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998)
NEMBA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004)
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999)
NID	Notice of Intent to Develop
NWA	National Water Act
ESA	Ecological Support Area
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
WULA	Water Use Licence Application

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Agriculture remains the primary economic driver within the Cape Winelands region and plays a critical role in supporting local economic activity, employment, and long-term socio-economic stability.

Mr Jean Faul is the registered landowner and representative of Jade Hills Farming (Pty) Ltd and is the Applicant for this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. This application relates to the proposed construction of a new farm storage dam on Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383, located approximately 5 km east of Ceres in the Western Cape (hereafter referred to as Jade Hills Farm).

The property was acquired by the current owner in 2013. Historically, the property formed part of a larger farming unit under previous ownership. At the time of subdivision, an existing lawful water use allocation associated with the Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme was transferred with the property. This allocation equates to irrigation of approximately 8.6 hectares.

The Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme originates from the mid-1960s and was formally registered in 1969. The scheme authorises the abstraction of surplus winter water from the Titus River during the period 15 April to 30 September. The scheme has since been upgraded from contour earth channels to a piped distribution system and currently comprises multiple abstraction points serving a number of agricultural properties in the area.

Jade Hills Farm has access to one of these abstraction points, namely the Loxtonia/Jade Hills Delivery Point, which forms part of the existing Rietvalley Scheme infrastructure. Further details are provided in the Water Use Licence documentation (refer to Appendix B2).

Historically, the allocated winter water was not fully utilised on the subject property due to the absence of on-site storage infrastructure and was instead used on neighbouring properties under previous ownership. The current landowner intends to utilise this existing lawful allocation on the property through the construction of a storage dam, thereby improving water security and irrigation reliability during the dry summer months.

The proposed development, therefore, entails the construction of a new earthfill storage dam with an approximate capacity of 110 000 m³, together with associated bulk water conveyance infrastructure. Water will be conveyed from the Jade Hills Delivery Point to the proposed dam via a new pipeline of approximately 700 metres in length.

The proposed dam will provide a reliable water supply for existing agricultural activities on the property, including established fruit orchards located on previously cultivated land. The dam will enable the optimal use of existing lawful water rights and contribute to improved agricultural productivity, long-term farm viability, and local employment opportunities.

A Water Use Licence (WUL) has been issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) authorising the abstraction and storage of water associated with the proposed development. The development will be implemented in accordance with the conditions of the approved WUL.

The Applicant, Jade Hills Farming (Pty) Ltd, will undertake the activity should Environmental Authorisation be granted. EnviroAfrica CC has been appointed as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) responsible for managing the EIA process and associated Public Participation Process in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998)

(NEMA). Sarel Bester Ingenieurs BK is responsible for the engineering design and Water Use Licence process in terms of the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) (NWA).

A previous EIA process was initiated for the proposed development; however, this process was not completed. This Draft Scoping Report forms part of a new EIA application process initiated in 2026, based on an updated project description and supporting information.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY

It is proposed that a farm storage dam be constructed on Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383, located near Ceres in the Western Cape. The purpose of the proposed dam is to store surplus winter water for use during the dry summer months in support of existing agricultural activities on the property.

Existing Water Use Rights and Abstraction

An existing lawful water use allocation equivalent to approximately 8.6 hectares of irrigation is associated with the property through the Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme. Water is abstracted from the Titus River during the winter abstraction period, generally between 15 April and 30 September, in accordance with the operating rules of the scheme.

Please refer to Figure 2 below and Appendix A (Locality Maps) for the location of the existing Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme abstraction point, pipeline network and the Jade Hills Delivery Point.

It is proposed that a new pipeline of approximately 700 metres in length and 150 mm in diameter be constructed from the existing Jade Hills Delivery Point to the proposed dam. Water will flow primarily via gravity to the proposed dam, with pumping infrastructure included where required for operational purposes.

A Water Use Licence (WUL) has been issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) for the proposed development. The WUL includes the following water uses in terms of Section 21 of the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998):

- Section 21(b): Storing of water
- Section 21(c): Impeding or diverting the flow of a watercourse
- Section 21(i): Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse

The property has access to an existing lawful water use allocation associated with the Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme. Details of the allocation are contained in the Water Use Licence documentation included in Appendix B2.

Proposed Construction of the Dam

The proposed development entails the construction of a single new earthfill storage dam for the purpose of storing winter water for summer irrigation requirements associated with existing agricultural operations on the farm.

The proposed dam will have the following approximate dimensions:

Description	Proposed Development
Wall height (m)	±11.1 m
Wall length (m)	±237 m
Dam Capacity (m³)	±110 000 m³
Flooded area (ha)	±1.7 ha

Footprint area (ha)	±2.0 ha
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A pumphouse of approximately 40 m² is proposed on the upstream side of the dam wall, as indicated in Appendix A (Locality and Layout Plans) and Appendix B (Design Drawings).

The dam will be located within an existing agricultural area currently utilised for dryland farming. The selected location was identified as the preferred option in order to minimise lifecycle operational costs through the use of gravity-fed water transfer, thereby reducing long-term pumping requirements and associated energy costs.

Agricultural Context

The proposed dam will support existing agricultural activities on the property, including established and operational orchard areas located within previously transformed agricultural land. No new agricultural expansion forms part of this application.

Farm roads serving the agricultural areas already exist, and any irrigation infrastructure will be located within existing disturbed areas and established farm road alignments where practicable.

Access and Services

Access to the proposed dam site will be obtained via existing farm roads. Electricity supply, where required, will be sourced from existing farm connections.

Please refer to Appendix A for locality maps and layout plans, and Appendix B for design drawings.



Figure 1: Locality map of the proposed Jade Hills Dam site in proximity to surrounding towns



Figure 2: Google map indicating the existing Rietvallei pipeline abstraction point, to the existing Jade Hills delivery point and the proposed pipeline from where water will gravitate to the dam.

1.3 WATER USE LICENCE

A Water Use Licence has been issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in respect of the proposed Jade Hills Dam development and associated water use activities on Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383, Ceres.

The Water Use Licence authorises the relevant water uses associated with the proposed development, including the abstraction, conveyance and storage of water derived from the existing lawful water use allocation linked to the Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme.

The proposed development entails the construction of a new farm storage dam with an approximate storage capacity of 110 000 m³, together with associated bulk water conveyance infrastructure from the existing Jade Hills Delivery Point to the proposed dam.

The following water uses, in terms of Section 21 of the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998), are applicable to the proposed development:

1. **Section 21(b):** Storing of water;
2. **Section 21(c):** Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse; and
3. **Section 21(i):** Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.

The proposed dam is located within an episodic drainage feature / watercourse and will be developed in accordance with the conditions of the applicable Water Use Licence and any related approvals issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Further details are contained in the Water Use Licence documentation included in Appendix B2.

2. NEED AND DESIRABILITY

In terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended), the Scoping and EIA process must include a description of the need and desirability of the proposed activity. Consideration of need and desirability requires an assessment of the strategic context of the proposed development, together with broader societal needs, sustainable resource use principles, and the public interest.

The concept of need and desirability relates both to the type of development proposed and the suitability of the location. In broad terms, need refers to whether the activity is required at this point in time, while desirability refers to whether the proposed location is appropriate for the activity. This is aligned with the principle of wise and sustainable land use.

2.1 NEED

This application relates to the storage of an existing lawful water use allocation associated with the property through the Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme. Historically, this winter water allocation could not be fully utilised on the subject property due to the absence of adequate on-site storage infrastructure. As a result, the allocated water could not be optimally used to support agricultural production on Jade Hills Farm.

There is therefore a clear need for the proposed Jade Hills Dam to store available winter water for use during the dry summer months when irrigation demand is highest. The proposed dam will improve water security, enhance irrigation reliability, and enable the efficient use of an existing lawful water entitlement.

The proposed development is not intended to facilitate urban expansion or unrelated land uses, but rather to support and sustain existing agricultural activities on land already utilised for farming purposes. The dam will provide operational resilience during periods of reduced rainfall, recurring drought conditions, and increasing climatic variability, which are of growing importance to the agricultural sector in the Western Cape.

The continued viability of agricultural operations on the property contributes directly to local economic activity, sustained employment opportunities, and the broader agri-economy of the Cape Winelands region. By improving water availability and long-term farming sustainability, the proposed development will assist in protecting existing jobs and supporting future agricultural productivity.

The proposed dam, therefore, represents the responsible and beneficial utilisation of an existing lawful water allocation in support of an established agricultural enterprise.

2.2 DESIRABILITY

The following factors determine the desirability of the proposed Jade Hills Dam and the suitability of the selected site for the proposed development.

2.2.1 LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383 is a relatively small agricultural property situated within the Ceres Valley. The selected site for the proposed dam is located within an existing agricultural area and has favourable topographical characteristics from an engineering and operational perspective.

The proposed location was identified as the preferred option as it allows for the efficient storage and transfer of water while minimising long-term operational costs. The relative elevation of the proposed dam site in relation to the agricultural areas allows for gravity-fed distribution where feasible, thereby reducing pumping requirements, electricity demand, and associated operational costs.

The selected site also provides a practical storage-to-footprint ratio and requires comparatively limited earthworks relative to other potential options on the property. These factors support the economic and technical viability of the proposed development.

The proposed dam is situated close to the existing Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme off-take point and Jade Hills Delivery Point, which will minimise conveyance losses and reduce the extent of new pipeline infrastructure required.

Access to the site will be via existing farm roads and no new access roads are required.

Locality and layout maps are included in Appendix A, design drawings in Appendix B, and site photographs in Appendix C.

2.2.2 COMPATIBILITY WITH THE SURROUNDING AREA

The surrounding area is characterised predominantly by agricultural land uses, including orchards, dryland farming, irrigation infrastructure, farm dams, and associated rural agricultural activities. The broader landscape of the Ceres Valley is strongly agricultural in character.

The proposed development is therefore compatible with the existing and surrounding land uses and will not introduce an incompatible activity into the area. The dam constitutes typical agricultural support infrastructure commonly associated with farming operations in the region.

As the proposed development is located within an existing transformed agricultural landscape, the activity is not expected to materially alter the rural character of the area and is anticipated to have a low visual impact when viewed in the context of the surrounding farming environment.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The current assessment is being undertaken in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA), read together with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended. The proposed development includes activities that may not commence without prior Environmental Authorisation from the competent authority.

In addition to NEMA and the EIA Regulations, the provisions of various other national and provincial statutes may also be relevant to the proposed development and must be considered as part of the environmental assessment process.

The legislation relevant to this study is briefly outlined below.

2.3 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), is the supreme law of the Republic and provides the overarching legal framework for environmental governance.

Section 24 of the Constitution states that everyone has the right:

- to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and
- to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that:
 - prevent pollution and ecological degradation;
 - promote conservation; and
 - secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

The proposed environmental assessment process is intended to give effect to these constitutional principles by ensuring that environmental considerations are appropriately integrated into decision-making relating to the proposed Jade Hills Dam.

2.4 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT (ACT 107 OF 1998)

The National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA), as amended, provides the overarching legislative framework for environmental management in South Africa. NEMA makes provision for the identification, assessment and authorisation of activities that may have a detrimental effect on the environment and which therefore require prior environmental authorisation from the competent authority.

In the Western Cape Province, the competent authority for applicable listed activities is the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP), unless jurisdiction lies with the national competent authority in specific circumstances.

On 4 December 2014, the Minister of Environmental Affairs promulgated the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, in terms of Sections 24(5), 24M and 44 of NEMA. These regulations have subsequently been amended and are read together with the applicable Listing Notices, namely:

- GN No. R.327 – Listing Notice 1;
- GN No. R.325 – Listing Notice 2; and
- GN No. R.324 – Listing Notice 3.

Listing Notice 1 and Listing Notice 3 activities are generally subject to a Basic Assessment Process, while Listing Notice 2 activities are subject to a Scoping and Environmental Impact Reporting (S&EIR) Process.

Based on the current project description and preliminary assessment of the proposed Jade Hills Dam development, certain listed activities in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended, may be triggered. These potentially applicable listed activities are identified in Table 2 below

Table 2: Summary of 2014 EIA regulations triggered

No.	Listed Activities as per Listing Notice 1, 2 and 3 (GN R327, R324, R325)	Applicability to the development
Government Notice R327 (Listing Notice 1)		
12	The development of dams or weirs, where the dam, including infrastructure and water surface area, exceeds 100 m ² in size, where such development occurs within a watercourse.	The proposed development entails the construction of a dam with a footprint and associated infrastructure exceeding 100 m ² within an episodic drainage line / watercourse.
19	The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 10 m ³ into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 m ³ from a watercourse.	Construction of the proposed dam will require excavation and movement of more than 10 m ³ of material within an episodic drainage line / watercourse.
27	The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance is required for a linear activity or maintenance undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.	Based on current site information, the development footprint is located within transformed agricultural land. This activity will be confirmed during the EIA process should any indigenous vegetation clearing of the applicable threshold be identified.
Government Notice R325 (Listing Notice 2)		

16	The development of a dam where the highest part of the dam wall, as measured from the outside toe of the wall to the highest part of the wall, is 5 metres or higher, or where the high-water mark of the dam covers an area of 10 hectares or more.	The proposed dam will have a wall height of approximately 11.1 metres and therefore triggers this activity.
Government Notice R324 (Listing Notice 3)		
12	The clearance of an area of more than 300 m ² of indigenous vegetation within any critically endangered or endangered ecosystem listed in terms of NEMBA, or within a Critical Biodiversity Area identified in a bioregional plan.	The proposed development footprint is located predominantly within transformed agricultural land; however, a small portion of the site intersects a mapped CBA associated with a drainage feature. The applicability of this activity will be confirmed during the EIA phase, subject to verification of the presence of indigenous vegetation within this area.”
14	The development of dams, where the dam, including infrastructure and water surface area, exceeds 10 m ² , outside urban areas, within Critical Biodiversity Areas or Ecological Support Areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans or bioregional plans.	The proposed dam, including associated infrastructure, exceeds 10 m ² and is located outside an urban area within an Ecological Support Area (ESA2).

An application form will be submitted to the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (WCDEADP). On acknowledgement from WCDEADP, the Scoping phase process will be initiated and undertaken to further identify potential issues.

2.5 NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT

The protection and management of heritage resources in the Western Cape are governed by the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA). In the Western Cape Province, the relevant heritage authority responsible for administering the Act is Heritage Western Cape (HWC).

In terms of Section 38 of the NHRA, HWC may require that a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) be undertaken where certain categories of development are proposed. Section 38(8) further provides for heritage impacts to be assessed as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, in which case a separate HIA may not be required if the assessment is considered adequate.

The proposed development may trigger Section 38 requirements as it may change the character of a site exceeding 5 000 m² in extent.

A Notice of Intent to Develop (NID) was submitted to Heritage Western Cape.

2.6 EIA GUIDELINE AND INFORMATION DOCUMENT SERIES

The Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) has published a series of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guideline and Information Documents to assist applicants, Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs), Interested and Affected Parties, and decision-makers in the implementation of the EIA process.

The following guideline and information documents have informed the current application process, where applicable:

- *Guideline on Transitional Arrangements;*
- *Guideline on Alternatives;*
- *Guideline on Public Participation;*
- *Guideline on Exemption Applications;*
- *Guideline on Appeals;*
- *Guideline on Need and Desirability;*
- *Information Document on the Interpretation of the Listed Activities; and*
- *Information Document on Generic Terms of Reference for Environmental Assessment Practitioners and Project Schedules.*

These guidance documents have been considered together with the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended), and any subsequent applicable departmental circulars or procedural requirements.

2.7 NATIONAL WATER ACT

The National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) provides the legal framework for the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of South Africa's water resources. The Act recognises that water is a scarce and valuable national resource that must be managed sustainably and equitably for the benefit of all users.

A key objective of the Act is to promote the integrated management of water resources while ensuring that water use occurs in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and socially beneficial.

In addition to the requirements of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), the proposed Jade Hills Dam is subject to a Water Use Licence issued in terms of the National Water Act.

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is the responsible national authority for water resource management. Within the relevant catchment area, water resource management functions are undertaken through the Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency (BGCMA), together with recognised local irrigation institutions and water user structures operating in the area.

An existing lawful water use allocation equivalent to approximately 8.6 hectares of irrigation is associated with the property through the Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme. This allocation relates to the abstraction of surplus winter water from the Titus River system in accordance with the operating rules of the scheme.

The proposed development entails the storage and use of this existing lawful water allocation through the construction of on-site storage infrastructure, including the proposed Jade Hills Dam and associated water conveyance infrastructure.

A Water Use Licence was issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation following the Water Use Licence Application process undertaken by Sarel Bester Ingenieurs under WULA Registration No. WU9322. The Water Use Licence authorises the relevant water uses associated with the proposed development and the project will be implemented in accordance with the conditions of the approved licence.

The authorised water uses include:

- Section 21(b): Storing of water;
- Section 21(c): Impeding or diverting the flow of a watercourse; and
- Section 21(i): Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.

The proposed dam footprint is located within an episodic drainage feature/watercourse. The approved Water Use Licence regulates the storage and associated water uses required for the proposed development. Further details are provided in the Water Use Licence included as Appendix B2.

In terms of Chapter 12 of the National Water Act, the proposed dam may constitute a dam with a safety risk, subject to final classification by the Dam Safety Office of the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Should the dam be classified as a dam with a safety risk, the design, construction, operation and maintenance thereof must comply with the applicable Dam Safety Regulations. Any additional approvals required by the Dam Safety Office will be obtained prior to construction.

2.8 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: BIODIVERSITY ACT

The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) (NEMBA) forms part of the broader suite of environmental legislation enacted under the framework of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998).

NEMBA provides for the management and conservation of South Africa's biodiversity, the protection of species and ecosystems that warrant national protection, the sustainable use of indigenous biological resources, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from such resources.

Chapter 4 of NEMBA deals with Threatened or Protected Ecosystems and Species, including the identification of ecosystems that are threatened and in need of protection, as well as species requiring special conservation measures. The Act further provides for the regulation of restricted activities involving listed threatened or protected species.

In terms of Section 52, the Minister may publish a national list of ecosystems that are threatened or in need of protection. These listed ecosystems are relevant to environmental authorisation processes and land use planning.

Based on available biodiversity mapping, the vegetation type historically associated with the site is Ceres Shale Renosterveld, which is classified as Critically Endangered in terms of the national list of threatened ecosystems. However, the proposed dam footprint is located within transformed agricultural land historically utilised for cultivation.

NEMBA is therefore relevant to the current application insofar as biodiversity sensitivities, ecosystem status, potential impacts on indigenous vegetation, and the management of alien invasive species must be considered during the environmental assessment process.

Where applicable, mitigation measures and management actions relating to biodiversity conservation will be incorporated into the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).

3. ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives have been considered during the Scoping phase and these are described below.

3.1 SITE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE PROPOSED DAM

Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383 (Jade Hills Farm) is a relatively small agricultural property situated within the Ceres Valley and is characterised by generally moderate to gently sloping topography with limited suitable dam development opportunities.

A number of practical constraints influence the location of a farm storage dam on the property, including available topography, storage efficiency, proximity to the existing Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme delivery point, construction feasibility, operational costs, and the need to minimise disturbance to productive agricultural land and environmental features.

The proposed site has been identified as the preferred and most feasible option on the property, as it is located within an existing transformed agricultural area and makes use of a favourable basin configuration. The proposed site offers an acceptable storage-to-footprint ratio, requires comparatively limited earthworks, and is positioned at a suitable elevation to allow gravity-fed water distribution where feasible.

The proposed location is also situated relatively close to the existing Jade Hills Delivery Point, thereby reducing the length of new pipeline infrastructure required and minimising conveyance losses.

Based on the above considerations, no other economically or environmentally preferable site alternatives were identified on the property. Accordingly, no other reasonable site alternatives were identified for further investigation during the Scoping Phase.

3.2 ACTIVITY ALTERNATIVES

The purpose of the proposed development is to provide on-site storage infrastructure for an existing lawful water use allocation associated with the property.

No reasonable activity alternatives were identified that would achieve the same objective in a practical and economically viable manner. Continued reliance on the existing system without storage infrastructure would limit the efficient use of available winter water and reduce operational water security during the dry summer period.

At this stage, the proposed farm storage dam is considered the most practical means of achieving the intended objective.

3.3 NO-GO ALTERNATIVE

The no-go alternative entails that the proposed dam is not constructed and the status quo remains.

Under this option, no direct construction-related environmental impacts associated with the proposed development would occur. However, the existing lawful winter water allocation associated with the property would continue to be underutilised, thereby limiting the efficient use of available winter water for irrigation during the dry summer months.

The no-go alternative would reduce opportunities to improve water security, irrigation reliability, and long-term agricultural resilience on the property, particularly in the context of increasing climate variability and recurring drought conditions.

The no-go option would therefore avoid development impacts, but would not realise the agricultural, operational, and socio-economic benefits associated with the proposed storage dam.

3.4 CONCLUSION ON ALTERNATIVES

Based on the information available at this stage of the Scoping process, the proposed dam site on Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383 is considered the preferred and most feasible alternative available on the property.

The selected location makes use of an existing transformed agricultural area, offers suitable topographical characteristics for storage purposes, minimises the extent of associated infrastructure required, and provides operational advantages through gravity-fed water transfer where feasible.

No other reasonable or economically viable site alternatives were identified that would provide the same level of storage efficiency and practicality within the constraints of the property. Similarly, no practical activity alternatives were identified that would achieve the objective of storing and utilising the existing lawful winter water allocation in an efficient and sustainable manner.

While the no-go alternative would avoid direct construction-related impacts, it would not realise the benefits associated with improved water security, agricultural resilience, and long-term operational sustainability on the farm.

Based on the information currently available, the preferred alternative is therefore the proposed development of the farm storage dam at the selected site, subject to the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment, specialist studies, and consideration of comments received during the Public Participation Process.

Alternative locations elsewhere on the property were considered at a desktop level but were not regarded as reasonable due to less favourable topography, reduced storage efficiency, greater infrastructure requirements, increased construction costs and/or the potential for greater impacts on agricultural operations and environmental features.

4. SITE DESCRIPTION

4.1 LOCATION

The proposed Jade Hills Farm Storage Dam and associated infrastructure will be located on Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383, near Ceres, within the Witzenberg Local Municipality, Cape Winelands District Municipality, Western Cape Province.

Site coordinates (approximate central point of the proposed dam site): S33°22'31.67"; E19°22'13.15". Access to the property is obtained via existing public roads from Ceres, with the proposed development site accessible via existing farm roads on the property.



Figure 3: Google map indicating the existing Rietvallei pipeline abstraction point, to the existing Jade Hills delivery point and the proposed pipeline from where water will gravitate to the dam.

4.2 CLIMATE

Ceres experiences a Mediterranean climate characterised by warm, dry summers and cool, wet winters. Rainfall occurs predominantly during the winter months, while summers are generally dry with higher temperatures.

According to simulated historical climate and weather data obtained from Meteoblue.com for Ceres, the average annual temperature is approximately moderate and suitable for intensive agricultural production. The average annual rainfall is approximately 599 mm, with the wettest months generally occurring during winter.

The driest month is typically February, receiving approximately 9 mm of rainfall, while the wettest month is generally June, with average rainfall of approximately 117 mm. Average daytime maximum temperatures range from approximately 15°C in winter to 28°C in summer. Winter night-time temperatures can be low, particularly in July, while summer temperatures are significantly warmer.

These climatic conditions are characteristic of the Ceres Valley and strongly influence agricultural water demand, with irrigation requirements peaking during the dry summer period. This reinforces the need for winter water storage infrastructure, such as the proposed Jade Hills Farm Dam.

Simulated Meteoblue climate diagrams are based on approximately 30 years of hourly weather model data and provide a useful indication of expected temperature, rainfall, sunshine and wind patterns for the broader area. Local topography and micro-climatic conditions may, however, result in some site-specific variation.

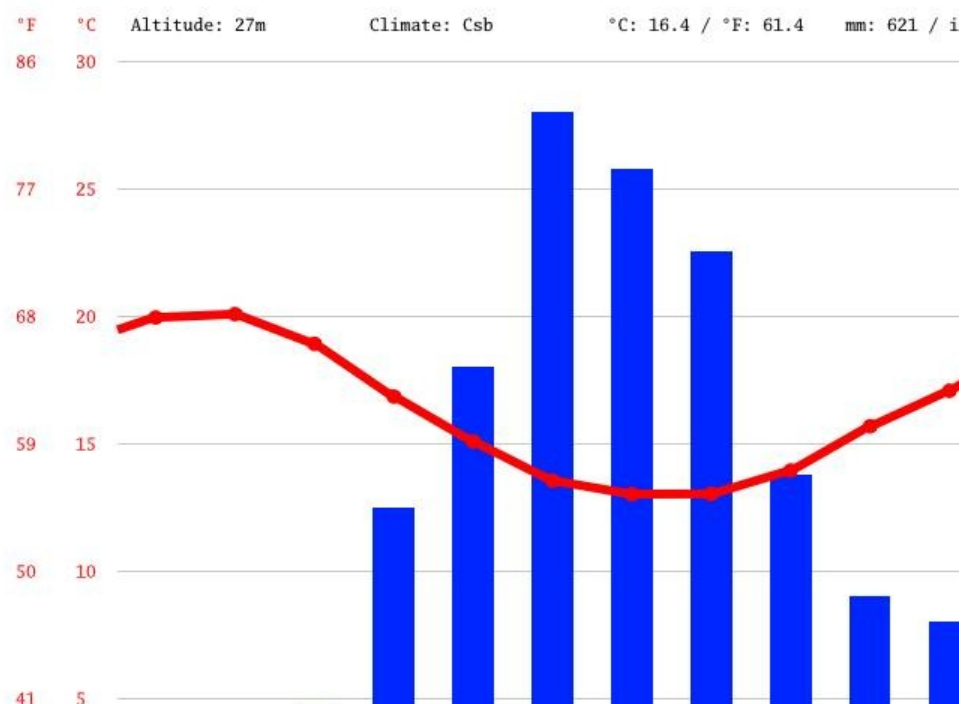


Figure 4: Simulated historical climate data for Ceres, Western Cape, obtained from Meteoblue. The graph illustrates average monthly precipitation, mean daily maximum temperatures, and mean daily minimum temperatures for the broader Jade Hills project area. Data are based on long-term weather model simulations and are intended to provide a regional climatic overview.

4.3 BIODIVERSITY

A Botanical / Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment will be undertaken during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) phase to assess the terrestrial ecological characteristics of the site and determine the potential impacts of the proposed development on biodiversity resources. Existing botanical information from the previous application process will be reviewed and considered as baseline information, where applicable, to inform the specialist assessment.

The Botanical / Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment will identify and evaluate the site's flora, vegetation communities, habitat condition, ecological connectivity, terrestrial ecosystem sensitivity, and the potential presence of species of conservation concern. The assessment will determine the significance of potential impacts associated with the proposed development and recommend appropriate avoidance, mitigation and management measures for incorporation into the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIR) and Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).

4.3.1 VEGETATION

The proposed dam will be located within an area that has historically been utilised for dryland wheat cultivation over an extended period. Aerial imagery and site observations indicate that the proposed development footprint has been substantially transformed as a result of historical and ongoing agricultural practices.

According to the Vegetation Map (CapeFarmMapper), the site falls within the Ceres Shale Renosterveld vegetation type, which is classified as Critically Endangered in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004). However, aerial imagery and site observations indicate that the proposed development footprint is located within long-transformed agricultural land. The presence, extent and condition of any remaining indigenous vegetation within the proposed development footprint will be verified during the EIA phase through a Botanical Assessment.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) Screening Tool indicates that the broader area falls within a Very High terrestrial biodiversity sensitivity zone. This rating is precautionary and based on landscape-scale mapping and does not necessarily reflect site-specific conditions.

Based on current site observations, the proposed dam footprint is confined to previously cultivated and disturbed land. Where practicable, any remaining natural or semi-natural vegetation located outside the approved development footprint will be avoided during the design and implementation of the proposed development.

The ecological condition, sensitivity and botanical significance of the site, together with the potential impacts of the proposed development, will be confirmed during the EIA phase through the findings of the Botanical Assessment.

Please refer to Figure 5 and Appendix D1 for the vegetation mapping, and Appendix C for site photographs.

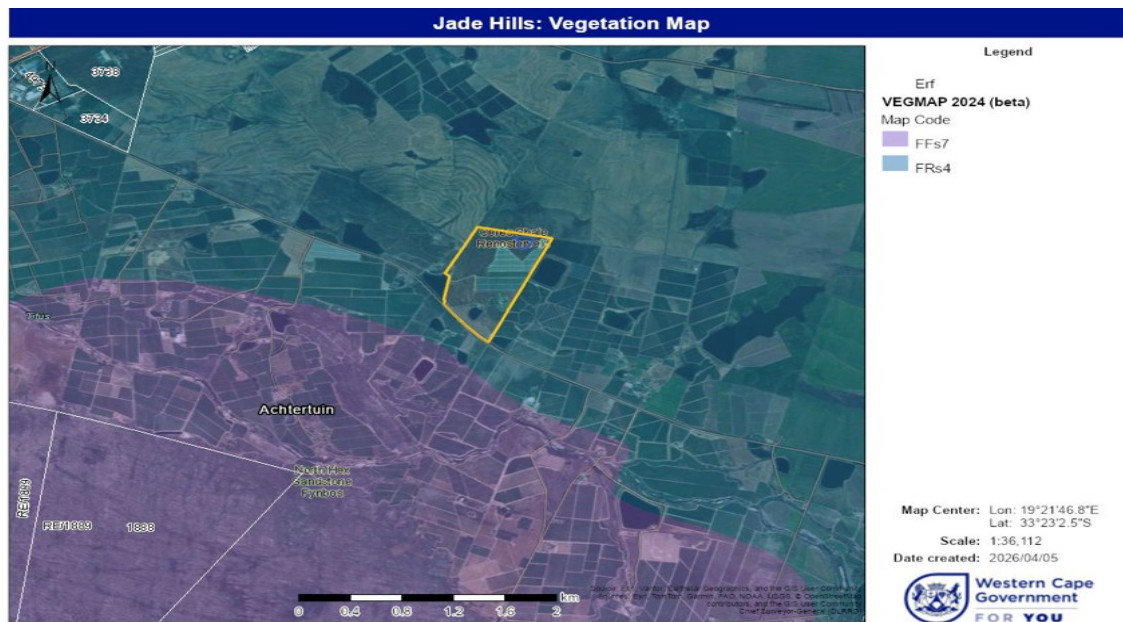


Figure 3: Vegetation Map, Cape Farm Mapper

4.3.2 CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREAS AND ECOLOGICAL SUPPORT AREAS

According to the Biodiversity Overlay Maps available from CapeFarmMapper (refer to Figure 6 and Appendix D2), the proposed dam footprint is located predominantly within an Ecological Support Area 2 (ESA2), with a small portion intersecting a mapped Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA).

Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) are terrestrial and aquatic areas identified as being important for meeting biodiversity pattern and ecological process targets, while Ecological Support Areas (ESAs) support the ecological functioning and long-term persistence of CBAs, protected areas and broader ecological processes.

ESA2 areas are generally regarded as moderately to highly transformed landscapes that continue to provide important ecological functions, including the maintenance of ecosystem services, hydrological processes and landscape connectivity. Although ESA2 areas are generally more resilient to disturbance than CBAs, they remain important from a biodiversity planning perspective and should, where practicable, be managed to maintain their ecological functioning.

The mapped CBA within the proposed development area is limited in extent. The proposed development has, as far as reasonably practicable, been positioned within previously transformed agricultural land to minimise potential impacts on sensitive biodiversity features.

The significance of potential impacts on biodiversity resources, including the mapped CBA and ESA, will be assessed during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) phase through the findings of the Botanical / Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment. Where necessary, appropriate avoidance, mitigation and management measures will be incorporated into the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).

Potential mitigation measures may include:

- Limiting disturbance to the approved development footprint;
- Preventing erosion and sedimentation during construction;
- Managing stormwater runoff;
- Preventing the establishment and spread of alien invasive vegetation;
- Maintaining ecological connectivity where practicable; and
- Rehabilitating temporarily disturbed areas not required for permanent infrastructure.

Please refer to Figure 6 and Appendix D2 for the applicable biodiversity overlay mapping.

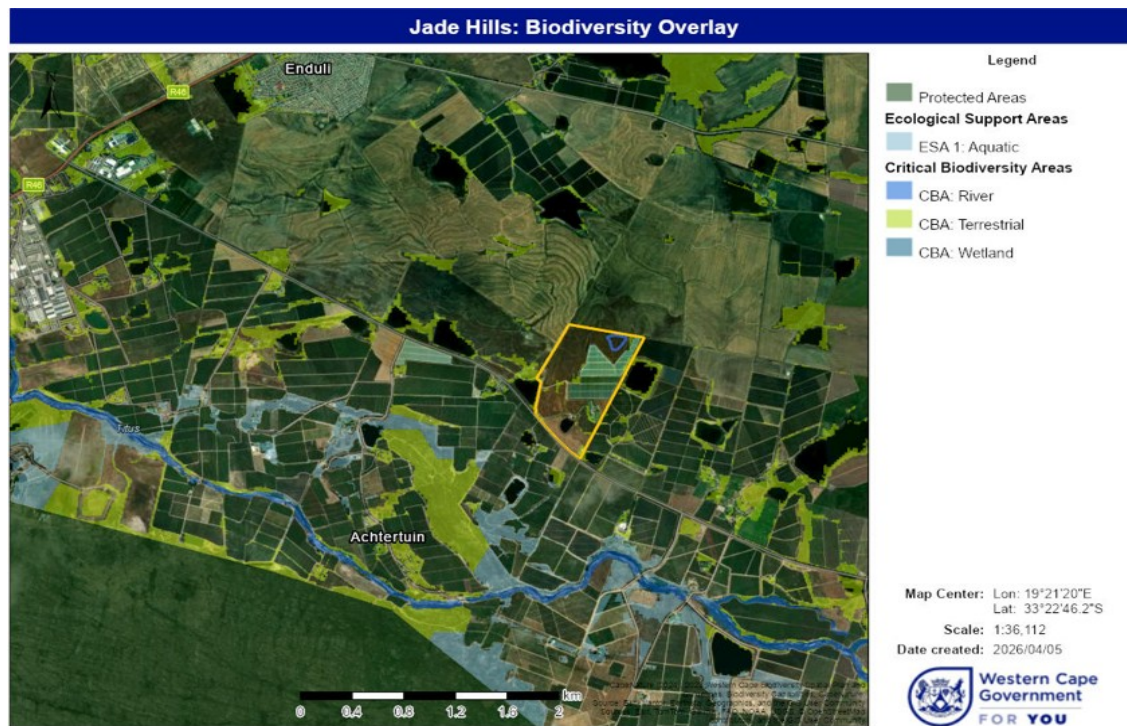


Figure 4: Biodiversity Overlay Map, Cape Farm Mapper

4.4 FRESHWATER

A Freshwater Assessment will be undertaken during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) phase, and the findings will be incorporated into the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIR). The purpose of the Freshwater Assessment is to identify and evaluate freshwater resources that may be affected by the proposed development, including watercourses and wetlands, and to assess the potential impacts on hydrological processes, aquatic ecology, water quality and ecosystem functioning. The assessment will also determine the ecological condition, sensitivity and significance of the affected freshwater features and recommend appropriate avoidance, mitigation and management measures.

According to the Freshwater Resources Map available from CapeFarmMapper (refer to Figure 7 and Appendix D3), the proposed dam footprint intersects a non-perennial drainage line.

The drainage feature is understood to be seasonal or episodic in nature, with surface flows occurring primarily during and following rainfall events. Historical and ongoing agricultural activities within the surrounding landscape may have influenced natural surface water movement through cultivation practices, farm roads, earthworks and associated agricultural infrastructure.

In addition, National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area (NFEPA) mapped wetland features occur within the broader surrounding area, although these do not appear to occur within the proposed development footprint.

The proposed development has therefore been planned within an existing agricultural landscape. The ecological condition, functionality and sensitivity of the non-perennial drainage line and surrounding freshwater resources, together with the significance of potential impacts associated with the proposed development, will be assessed during the EIA phase through the Freshwater Assessment.

Potential mitigation measures may include:

- Limiting disturbance to the approved development footprint;
- Implementing erosion and sediment control measures during construction;
- Designing and maintaining appropriate spillway and outlet structures;
- Preventing contamination from fuels, oils, cement and other construction materials;
- Managing stormwater runoff to minimise downstream impacts; and
- Rehabilitating temporarily disturbed areas not required for permanent infrastructure.

The findings and recommendations of the Freshwater Assessment will inform the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIR) and Environmental Management Programme (EMPr), including any additional avoidance, mitigation or monitoring measures considered necessary.

Please refer to Figure 7 below and Appendix D3 for freshwater resource mapping.

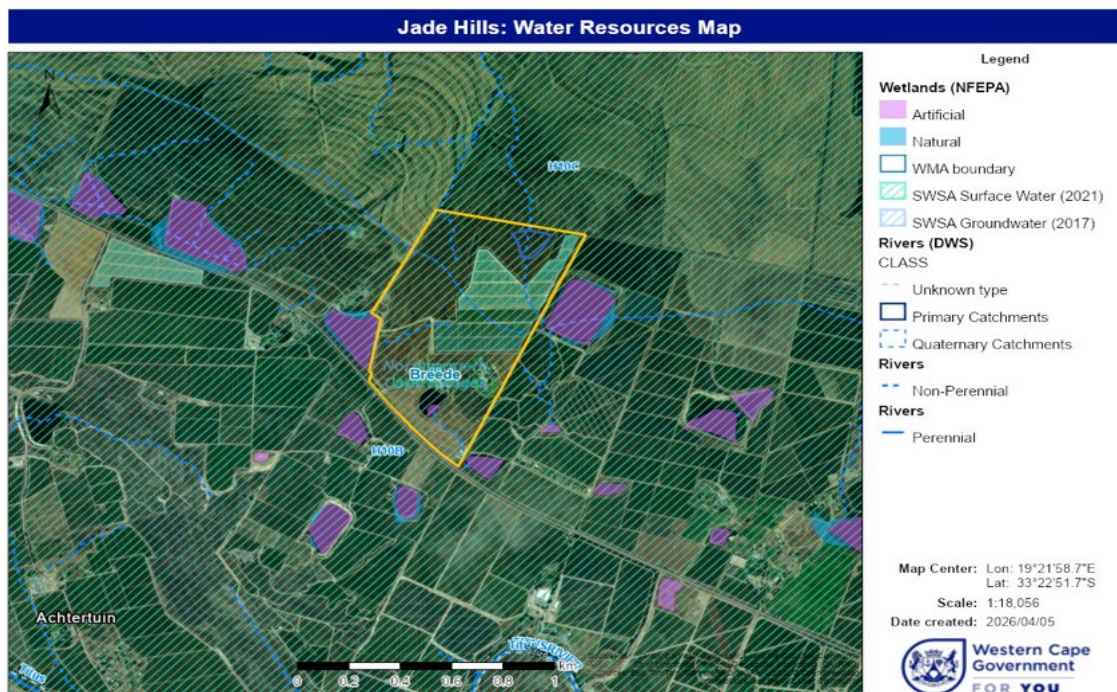


Figure 5: Water Resources Map, Cape Farm Mapper

4.5 HERITAGE / ARCHAEOLOGICAL

A heritage screening process has been undertaken for the proposed Jade Hills Dam development. A Notice of Intent to Develop (NID) was submitted to Heritage Western Cape (HWC) as part of the application process.

The purpose of a Heritage Assessment is to identify and assess any potential heritage, archaeological and related palaeontological resources that may occur within the proposed development area, and to evaluate potential impacts associated with the proposed activity.

4.5.1 HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

The proposed dam footprint is located within an existing transformed agricultural area that has historically been utilised for cultivation. Based on the disturbed nature of the site, the likelihood of significant intact archaeological resources occurring within the footprint is considered low.

No known significant heritage resources have been identified within the proposed development footprint to date. Heritage Western Cape confirmed that no further action in terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act was required for the proposed development.

Should any heritage resources, artefacts, graves, human remains, archaeological material, or fossil material be uncovered during construction, all work within the affected area must cease immediately and Heritage Western Cape must be notified without delay.

4.6 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

4.6.1.1 Cape Winelands District Municipality

The proposed Jade Hills Dam is located within the Cape Winelands District Municipality, an area recognised as one of the most important agricultural regions in the Western Cape and South Africa. The district economy is strongly influenced by agriculture, agri-processing, logistics, and related rural industries, with fruit production forming a significant component of regional economic activity.

Municipal planning frameworks generally support sustainable agricultural development, efficient water resource management, rural employment creation, and investment in productive infrastructure that strengthens long-term economic resilience.

The proposed Jade Hills Dam aligns with these objectives by providing improved on-farm water storage infrastructure to support existing agricultural production, enhance water security, and contribute to the continued viability of farming operations in the district. The project is also expected to generate temporary employment opportunities during construction and support sustained agricultural employment during operations.



Figure 6: Cape Winelands District Municipality¹

4.6.1.2 Witzenberg Local Municipality

The proposed development falls within the Witzenberg Local Municipality, which includes Ceres and the surrounding agricultural areas. Witzenberg has a strong agriculture-based economy, with deciduous fruit production, packing, cold storage, transport, and associated agri-industries forming a major component of local economic activity.

Agriculture remains a key source of employment within the municipality and plays an important role in supporting rural households and local businesses. Water availability and climate resilience are critical factors influencing the long-term sustainability of farming activities in the municipal area.

The proposed Jade Hills Dam will support existing agricultural operations on the property through improved water storage and irrigation reliability. By enabling more efficient use of an existing lawful

¹ <https://municipalities.co.za/>

water allocation, the development will contribute to farm sustainability, agricultural productivity, and the retention of existing employment opportunities.

The proposed development is therefore considered consistent with the broader socio-economic objectives of the Witzenberg Local Municipality, particularly those relating to agricultural support, rural economic development, infrastructure investment, and long-term job sustainability.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Environmental issues and potential impacts associated with the proposed Jade Hills Dam have been identified through desktop review, site observations, available specialist information from the previous application process, and the preliminary Scoping assessment. These issues will be assessed in greater detail during the EIA phase, where required.

The following key issues have been identified:

5.1 BIODIVERSITY IMPACT

The proposed dam footprint is located within historically cultivated agricultural land that has been substantially transformed through long-term farming activities. Available botanical information indicates that little, if any, intact natural vegetation remains within the proposed footprint area.

Potential impacts may include limited loss of disturbed vegetation, disturbance to fauna utilising the agricultural landscape, and construction-related impacts on adjacent areas if not properly managed.

Based on the transformed nature of the site, biodiversity impacts are expected to be localised and capable of mitigation through appropriate environmental controls. Updated specialist verification may be undertaken during the EIA phase if required.

5.2 FRESHWATER IMPACT

The proposed development will intersect a non-perennial drainage feature / episodic watercourse. Construction and operation of the dam may alter local runoff patterns, stormwater movement, sediment transport, and downstream flow characteristics.

Potential impacts may include:

- temporary construction disturbance within the drainage line;
- erosion and sedimentation;
- changes to local hydrological processes;
- pollution risks during construction; and
- alteration of water movement downstream.

These issues will be considered in conjunction with the Water Use Licence authorisation and any specialist freshwater input required during the EIA phase.

5.3 HERITAGE / ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT

The proposed footprint occurs within transformed agricultural land historically utilised for cultivation. Available heritage screening information indicates a low likelihood of significant archaeological resources occurring within the disturbed footprint area.

No known significant heritage resources have been identified within the proposed development footprint to date.

Should any heritage resources, graves, artefacts, archaeological material or fossil material be uncovered during construction, work must cease immediately in the affected area and Heritage Western Cape must be notified.

5.4 LANDSCAPE / VISUAL IMPACT

The proposed development is situated within a rural agricultural landscape characterised by orchards, cultivated fields, farm roads, irrigation infrastructure and farm dams.

As a result, the proposed storage dam is considered compatible with the existing agricultural character of the area. Visual impacts are expected to be moderate to low and largely localised.

5.5 AGRICULTURAL IMPACT

The proposed dam footprint will occupy a portion of existing agricultural land; however, the primary purpose of the project is to improve water storage and support existing farming operations on the property.

The development is therefore expected to provide an overall agricultural benefit through improved irrigation reliability, water security, and long-term farm sustainability.

5.6 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

The proposed development is expected to generate temporary employment during construction and provide indirect long-term socio-economic benefits through support of existing agricultural operations.

Improved water security will assist in maintaining farm productivity, sustaining employment opportunities, and contributing to the local agricultural economy within the Witzenberg municipal area.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Based on the information currently available, the identified impacts are typical of a small agricultural dam development and are expected to be manageable through appropriate design measures, licence compliance, and mitigation contained in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).

The significance of impacts will be confirmed and refined during the EIA phase, where required, through specialist input and further public participation.

6. DETAILS OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) are identified throughout the ongoing Public Participations process. Landowners adjacent to the proposed site, relevant organs of state, organisations, ward councillors and the Local and District Municipality were added to this database. A complete list of organisations and individual groups identified to date is shown in Appendix 4.

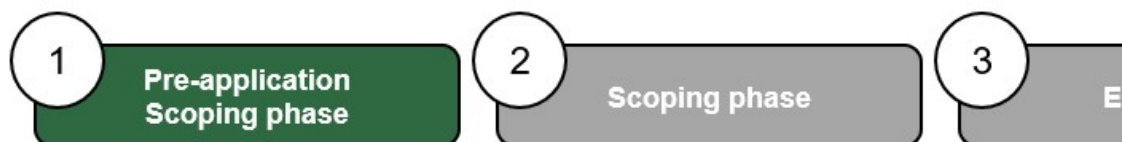
A Public Participation Process (PPP) will be conducted for the proposed development in accordance with the requirements outlined in Regulation 41 of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014. The issues and concerns raised during the Scoping phase will be dealt with in the EIA phase of this application.

As such, each subsection of Regulation 41 contained in Chapter 6 of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014 will be addressed separately to demonstrate that all potential Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) were notified of the proposed development.

The I&APs will have a chance to view and comment on all the reports that are submitted. The figures also indicated what timeframes are applicable to what stage in the process. If required, meetings with key stakeholders will be held.

At the end of the comment period, the EIR will be revised in response to feedback received from I&APs. All comments received and responses to the comments will be incorporated into the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Final EIR will then be submitted to WCDEADP for consideration and decision-making.

Correspondence with I&APs will be via post, fax, telephone, email, and/or newspaper advertisements. Should it be required, this process may be adapted depending on input received during the ongoing process and as a result of public input. WCDEADP will be informed of any changes in the process.



This **Pre-application Scoping Report** falls within the Pre-application Scoping phase as depicted above, which will be submitted to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (WCDEADP)(Western Cape) for consideration, and forms part of the Scoping & EIA process. The purpose of this pre-application Scoping Report is to describe the proposed project, the process followed to date, to present alternatives and to list issues identified for further study and comment by specialists.

Table 1: Public participation process Regulations as per NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)

Sub	Regulations of Chapter 6 of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)	Applicability to the development
Regulation 39 - Activity on land owned by a person other than the proponent		
1.	If the proponent is not the owner or person in control of the land on which the activity is to be undertaken, the proponent must, before applying for an environmental authorisation in respect of such activity, obtain the written consent of the landowner or person in control of the land to undertake such activity on that land.	The Applicant is the landowner / person in control of the property. This requirement is therefore satisfied.
2.	Subregulation (1) does not apply in respect of— a) linear activities; and	Noted. Not applicable to this proposed development.
	b) strategic integrated projects as contemplated in the Infrastructure Development Act, 2014.	Noted. Not applicable to this proposed development.
Regulation 40 - Purpose of public participation		
1.	The public participation process to which the— a) basic assessment report and EMPr, and the closure plan in the case of a closure activity, submitted in terms of regulation 19; and b) scoping report submitted in terms of regulation 21, the environmental impact assessment report, EMPr, and the closure plan in the case of a closure activity, submitted in terms of regulation 23; was subjected to must give all potential or registered interested and affected parties, including the competent authority, a period of at least 30 days to submit comments on each of the basic assessment report, EMPr, scoping report and environmental impact assessment report, and the closure plan in the case of a closure activity, as well as the report contemplated in regulation 32, if such reports or plans are submitted at different times.	As part of the pre-application Scoping phase, a 30-day commenting period will be undertaken. All potential or registered Interested and Affected Parties, including the Competent Authority and Commenting Authorities, will be invited and allowed to submit comments regarding the proposed development.
2.	The public participation process contemplated in this regulation must provide access to all information that reasonably has or may have the potential to influence any decision with regard to an application, unless access to that information is protected by law, and must include consultation with — a) the competent authority;	As part of the pre-application Scoping phase, a notification letter will be sent to — a) The Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (WCDEADP) is identified as the Competent Authority.
	b) every State department that administers a law relating to a matter affecting the environment relevant to an application for an environmental authorisation;	b & c) The following state departments that administer a

Sub	Regulations of Chapter 6 of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)	Applicability to the development
	c) all organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the activity to which the application relates; and d) all potential, or, where relevant, registered interested and affected parties.	law relating to a matter affecting the environment relevant to an application and organs of state that have jurisdiction in respect of the activity to which the application relates: - Department of Agriculture - Department of Water and Sanitation - Department of Water and Sanitation: Water Resource Management – Breede-Olifants Catchment Management Agency (BOCMA) - Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning - Department of Rural Development and Land Reform Spatial Planning - Department of Transport and Public Works - Heritage Western Cape - Cape Nature: Land Use & Conservation Planning - Local Municipality - District Municipality d) All potential, or, where relevant, registered interested and affected parties. The notification letters will be sent to inform the parties described above about the proposed activity/development and to invite their input.

Sub	Regulations of Chapter 6 of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)	Applicability to the development
3.	Potential or registered interested and affected parties, including the competent authority, may be provided with an opportunity to comment on reports and plans contemplated in subregulation (1) prior to submission of an application but must be provided with an opportunity to comment on such reports once an application has been submitted to the competent authority.	During the pre-application Scoping phase, potential and/or registered Interested and Affected Parties, including the Competent Authority and Commenting Authorities, will be notified and given the opportunity to comment on the proposed development.
Regulation 41 – Public participation process		
1.	This regulation only applies in instances where adherence to the provisions of this regulation is specifically required.	Noted.
2.	The person conducting a public participation process must take into account any relevant guidelines applicable to public participation as contemplated in section 24J of the Act and must give notice to all potential interested and affected parties of an application or proposed application which is subjected to public participation by— a) fixing a notice board at a place conspicuous to and accessible by the public at the boundary, on the fence or along the corridor of — i. the site where the activity to which the application or proposed application relates is or is to be undertaken; and	During the pre-application Scoping phase, an English A2-sized notice board will be fixed on the boundary / fence of the site where the activity to which the proposed application relates is to be undertaken. Additionally, multiple English A3-sized notice boards will be placed at various locations around the site.
	ii. any alternative site	There is no alternative site.
	b) giving written notice, in any of the manners provided for in section 47D of the Act, to— i. the occupiers of the site and, if the proponent or applicant is not the owner or person in control of the site on which the activity is to be undertaken, the owner or person in control of the site where the activity is or is to be undertaken and to any alternative site where the activity is to be undertaken	As part of the pre-application Scoping phase, notification letters will be sent to occupiers and persons in control of the site via email and/or mail drops conducted during the site visit.

Sub	Regulations of Chapter 6 of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)	Applicability to the development
	ii. owners, persons in control of, and occupiers of land adjacent to the site where the activity is or is to be undertaken and to any alternative site where the activity is to be undertaken	As part of the pre-application Scoping phase, notification letters will be sent to identified occupiers of land adjacent to the site via email and/or mail drops.
	iii. the municipal councillor of the ward in which the site and alternative site is situated and any organisation of ratepayers that represent the community in the area	As part of the pre-application Scoping phase, a notification letter will be sent to the relevant municipal ward councillor at the Witzenberg Local Municipality. No ratepayer organisation was identified for the community in the area.
	iv. the municipality which has jurisdiction in the area	As part of the PPP phase, a notification letter will be sent to a representative of the Witzenberg Local Municipality and the Cape Winelands District Municipality.
	v. any organ of state having jurisdiction in respect of any aspect of the activity; and	As part of the PPP phase, notification letters will be sent to the following organs of state having jurisdiction in respect of any aspect of the activity: - Department of Agriculture - Department of Water and Sanitation - Department of Water and Sanitation: Water Resource Management – Breede-Olifants Catchment Management Agency (BOCMA) - Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning - Department of Rural Development and Land Reform Spatial Planning - Department of Transport and Public Works - Heritage Western Cape - Cape Nature: Land Use & Conservation Planning - Local Municipality - District Municipality
	vi. any other party as required by the competent authority	Noted. Should the competent authority require any other party to receive written notice, then this will be duly carried out.

Sub	Regulations of Chapter 6 of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)	Applicability to the development
	c) placing an advertisement in— i. one local newspaper; or	An English advertisement will be placed in the <i>Witzenberg Herald</i> .
	ii. any official Gazette that is published specifically for the purpose of providing public notice of applications or other submissions made in terms of these Regulations;	Noted. Not applicable to this proposed development.
	d) placing an advertisement in at least one provincial newspaper or national newspaper, if the activity has or may have an impact that extends beyond the boundaries of the metropolitan or district municipality in which it is or will be undertaken: Provided that this paragraph need not be complied with if an advertisement has been placed in an official Gazette referred to in paragraph (c) (ii); and	Noted. Not applicable to this proposed development.
	e) using reasonable alternative methods, as agreed to by the competent authority, in those instances where a person is desirous of but unable to participate in the process due to — i. illiteracy;	Noted. In instances where a person desires to participate in the process but is unable to do so due to illiteracy, disability, or any other disadvantage, and makes such a desire known to the EAP, then reasonable alternative methods will be used, as agreed upon by the competent authority.
	ii. disability; or	
	iii. any other disadvantage	
3.	A notice, notice board or advertisement referred to in subregulation (2) must— a) give details of the application or proposed application which is subjected to public participation; and	The written notices — specifically, notification letters, notice boards, and advertisements — that form part of the pre-application Scoping phase's 30-day commenting period will contain details of the proposed application, which is subject to public participation. Please refer to Appendix 4 for proof of the written notices.
	b) state — i. whether basic assessment or S&EIR procedures are being applied to the application;	
	ii. the nature and location of the activity to which the application relates;	
	iii. where further information on the application or proposed application can be obtained; and	
	iv. the manner in which and the person to whom representations in respect of the application or proposed application may be made.	

Sub	Regulations of Chapter 6 of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)	Applicability to the development
4.	A notice board referred to in subregulation (2) must— a) be of a size of at least 60cm by 42cm; and b) display the required information in lettering and in a format as may be determined by the competent authority.	The notice boards measure 60cm by 42cm in size and display the required information in a legible format.
5.	Where public participation is conducted in terms of this regulation for an application or proposed application, subregulation (2) (a), (b), (c) and (d) need not be complied with again during the additional public participation process contemplated in regulations 19 (1) (b) or 23 (1) (b) or the public participation process contemplated in regulation 21 (2) (d), on condition that— a) such process has been preceded by a public participation process which included compliance with subregulation (2) (a), (b), (c) and (d); and b) written notice is given to registered interested and affected parties regarding where the— i. revised documents as contemplated in regulation 19 (1) (b); ii. revised documents as contemplated in regulation 23 (1) (b); or iii. environmental impact assessment report and documents as contemplated in regulation 21 (2) (d); may be obtained, the manner in which and the person to whom representations on these reports or plans may be made and the date on which such representations are due.	Noted. Noted. Noted. Noted.
6.	When complying with this regulation, the person conducting the public participation process must ensure that— a) information containing all relevant facts in respect of the application or proposed application is made available to potential interested and affected parties; and b) participation by potential or registered interested and affected parties is facilitated in such a manner that all potential or registered interested and affected parties are provided with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the application or proposed application.	Noted. Noted.

Sub	Regulations of Chapter 6 of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)	Applicability to the development
7.	Where an environmental authorisation is required in terms of these Regulations and an authorisation, permit or licence is required in terms of a specific environmental management Act, the public participation process contemplated in this Chapter may be combined with any public participation processes prescribed in terms of a specific environmental management Act, on condition that all relevant authorities agree to such combination of processes.	Noted.
Regulation 42 - Register of interested and affected parties		
1.	A proponent or applicant must ensure the opening and maintenance of a register of interested and affected parties and submit such a register to the competent authority, which register must contain the names, contact details and addresses of— a) all persons who, as a consequence of the public participation process conducted in respect of that application, have submitted written comments or attended meetings with the proponent, applicant or EAP; b) all persons who have requested the proponent or applicant, in writing, for their names to be placed on the register; and c) all organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the activity to which the application relates.	A register of interested and affected parties was opened and is maintained.
Regulation 43 - Registered interested and affected parties entitled to comment on reports and plans		
1.	A registered interested and affected party is entitled to comment, in writing, on all reports or plans submitted to such party during the public participation process contemplated in these Regulations and to bring to the attention of the proponent or applicant any issues which that party believes may be of significance to the consideration of the application, provided that the interested and affected party discloses any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which that party may have in the approval or refusal of the application.	This subregulation will be communicated to registered interested and affected parties during the public participation process.

Sub	Regulations of Chapter 6 of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2021)	Applicability to the development
2.	In order to give effect to section 24O of the Act, any State department that administers a law relating to a matter affecting the environment must be requested, subject to regulation 7 (2), to comment within 30 days.	State departments that administer laws relating to environmental matters relevant to the application, as well as organs of state with jurisdiction over the activity, will be notified of the proposed application and invited to comment within 30 days. Should comments not be received within the prescribed timeframes, it would be assumed that no comments are forthcoming.
Regulation 44 - Comments of interested and affected parties to be recorded in reports and plans		
1.	The applicant must ensure that the comments of interested and affected parties are recorded in reports and plans and that such written comments, including responses to such comments and records of meetings, are attached to the reports and plans that are submitted to the competent authority in terms of these Regulations.	Comments of interested and affected parties are recorded together with the responses in a Comment and Response report (CRR) and where applicable, incorporated into reports and plans.
2.	Where a person desires but is unable to access written comments as contemplated in the subregulation due to— a) a lack of skills to read or write; b) disability; or c) any other disadvantage; reasonable alternative methods of recording comments must be provided for.	Noted. Where a person desires to but is unable to access written comments due to illiteracy, disability, or any other disadvantage, and makes such a desire known to the EAP, then reasonable alternative methods of recording comments will be provided.

7. PLAN OF STUDY FOR THE EIA

7.1 TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

Due to the nature of the proposed development, there are a number of activities that will still need to be undertaken during the next phase of the project. The proposed process is described as follows (this follows from a Scoping process to be accepted by the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (WCDEADP):

The NEMA application form will be submitted to WCDEADP along with the Draft Scoping Report, which will also be made available for viewing and comment for a 30-day comment period. Comments received during the Public Participation Process (PPP) will be incorporated into the Final Scoping Report, to be submitted to WCDEADP for a decision. The following is a list of tasks to be performed as part of the EIA Process. Should the process be modified significantly, changes will be copied to WCDEADP.

Table 2: EIA process – Timeline

EIA Process	
Task	Timeframes
Notify members of the public through existing Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP) databases, site notices, and a newspaper advertisement about the intention to submit a National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) application for the proposed development as part of the Public Participation Process (PPP) phase.	July 2026 – August 2026
Distribute a Pre-application Scoping Report to registered Interested and Affected Parties and Commenting Authorities for their comments.	July 2026
Submit NEMA application and Draft Scoping Report (DSR) and Plan of Study for EIA to WCDEADP and distribute to registered I&APs and Commenting Authorities for comment.	August 2026
Submit the Final Scoping Report (FSR) and Plan of Study to WCDEADP for a decision.	September 2026
Receive approval for the FSR and the Plan of Study for EIA.	October 2026/ November 2026
Undertake/further specialist studies (if required) and compile the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for public comment based on specialist information.	November 2026/ December 2026
Submit Draft EIR for public comment.	January 2027
Receive responses to the Draft EIR.	February 2027
Preparation of a FINAL EIR and submission to WCDEADP.	February 2027

**Timeframes provided are estimates and are subject to change. They serve as a tentative indication and may be adjusted as the process progresses.*

7.2 CRITERIA FOR SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

As a result of the environmental issues and potential impacts identified in Section 6, the need for the following specialist studies has been identified:

- Biodiversity Assessment
- Freshwater Assessment
- Heritage / Archaeological & Palaeontological Assessment

Specialist studies are at various stages of completion—some are ongoing, others have been conducted, and some have been concluded. The findings of some of the studies have already been included in this report; however, the studies will be finalised and the findings included during the EIA phase.

The impacts of the proposed activity on the various components of the receiving environment will be evaluated in terms of duration (time scale), extent (spatial scale), magnitude and significance as outlined in Table 3. These impacts could either be positive or negative. This includes an assessment of the alternatives, including the option of not proceeding with the proposed development (see Section 4).

The magnitude of an impact is a judgment value that rests with the individual assessor, while the determination of significance rests on a combination of the criteria for duration, extent and magnitude. Significance, thus, is also a judgment value made by the individual assessor.

In addition to determining the individual impacts against the various criteria, the element of mitigation, where relevant, will also be brought into the assessment. In such instances, the impact will be assessed with a statement on the mitigation measure that could/should be applied. An indication of the certainty of a mitigation measure considered, achieving the end result to the extent indicated, is given on a scale of 1-5 (1 being totally uncertain and 5 being absolutely certain), taking into consideration uncertainties, assumptions and gaps in knowledge. Cognisance of the minimum report content requirements of the various specialist assessments as per the Assessment Protocols (Government Notice 320, Government Gazette No. 43110 of 20 March 2020).

Table 3: Criteria used for evaluating impacts

Criteria	Category
Nature of impact	This is an evaluation of the effect that the construction, operation and maintenance of a proposed dam would have on the affected environment. This description should include what is to be affected and how.
Duration (Predict whether the lifetime of the Impact will be temporary (less than 1 year) short term (0 to 5 years); medium term (5 to 15 years); long term (more than 15 years, with the Impact ceasing after full implementation of all development components with mitigations); or permanent.	Temporary: < 1 year (not including construction) Short-term: 1 – 5 years Medium term: 5 – 15 years Long-term: >15 years (Impact will stop after the operational or running life of the activity, either due to natural course or by human interference) Permanent: Impact will be where mitigation or moderation by natural course or by human interference will not occur in a particular means or in a particular time period that the impact can be considered temporary

Criteria	Category
Extent (Describe whether the impact occurs on a scale limited to the site area; limited to broader area; or on a wider scale)	Site Specific: Expanding only as far as the activity itself (<i>onsite</i>) Small: restricted to the site's immediate environment within 1 km of the site (<i>limited</i>) Medium: Within 5 km of the site (<i>local</i>) Large: Beyond 5 km of the site (<i>regional</i>)
Intensity (Describe whether the magnitude (scale/size) of the Impact is high; medium; low; or negligible. The specialist study must attempt to quantify the magnitude of impacts, with the rationale used explained)	Very low: Affects the environment in such a way that natural and/or social functions/processes are not affected Low: Natural and/or social functions/processes are slightly altered Medium: Natural and/or social functions/processes are notably altered in a modified way High: Natural and/or social functions/processes are severely altered and may temporarily or permanently cease
Probability of occurrence Describe the probability of the Impact <u>actually</u> occurring as definite (Impact will occur regardless of mitigations)	Improbable: Not at all likely Probable: Distinctive possibility Highly probable: Most likely to happen Definite: Impact will occur regardless of any prevention measures
Status of the Impact Describe whether the Impact is positive, negative (or neutral).	Positive: The activity will have a social/ economical/ environmental benefit Neutral: The activity will have no affect Negative: The activity will be socially/ economically/ environmentally harmful
Degree of Confidence in predictions State the degree of confidence in predictions based on availability of information and specialist knowledge	Unsure/Low: Little confidence regarding information available (<40%) Probable/Med: Moderate confidence regarding information available (40-80%) Definite/High: Great confidence regarding information available (>80%)
Significance (The impact on each component is determined by a combination of the above criteria and defined as follows) The significance of impacts shall be assessed <u>with and without mitigations</u> . The significance of identified impacts on components of the affected biophysical or socio-economic environment (and, where relevant, with respect to potential legal requirement/s) shall be described as follows:	No change: A potential concern which was found to have no impact when evaluated Very low: Impacts will be site specific and temporary with no mitigation necessary. Low: The impacts will have a minor influence on the proposed development and/or environment. These impacts require some thought to adjustment of the project design where achievable, or alternative mitigation measures Moderate: Impacts will be experienced in the local and surrounding areas for the life span of the development and may result in long term changes. The impact can be lessened or improved by an amendment in the project design or implementation of effective mitigation measures. High: Impacts have a high magnitude and will be experienced regionally for at least the life span of the development or will be irreversible. The impacts could have the no-go proposition on portions of the development in spite of any mitigation measures that could be implemented.

Table 4: The stated assessment and information will be determined for each individual issue or related groups of issues and presented in a descriptive format in the following table example or a close replica thereof

Impact Statement:		
Mitigation:		
Ratings	Duration	
	Extent	
	Intensity	
	Probability of impact	
	Status of Impact (Positive/negative)	
	Degree of confidence	
Significances	Significance without Mitigation	
	Significance <u>WITH</u> Mitigation	
Indication of the certainty of a mitigation measure considered, achieving the end result to the extent indicated, is given on a scale of 1-5 (1 being totally uncertain and 5 being absolutely certain), taking into consideration uncertainties, assumptions and gaps in knowledge:		
Legal Requirements (Identify and list the specific legislation and permit requirements which are relevant to this development):		

7.3 ASPECTS / IMPACTS TO BE ASSESSED DURING THE EIA PHASE

In accordance with Appendix 2(1)(h) of the NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended), the following key environmental aspects and potential impacts have been identified for further consideration during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) phase. These aspects have been identified through the Scoping process and informed by the available baseline information, specialist input and the Public Participation Process.

The following aspects and potential impacts will be assessed during the EIA phase:

- Terrestrial biodiversity, including potential impacts on vegetation communities, habitat condition, ecological functioning and species of conservation concern;
- Freshwater resources, including potential impacts on the non-perennial drainage feature, hydrological processes, water quality, sediment transport, stormwater management and downstream flow characteristics;
- Agricultural land use, including the permanent loss of a small area of cultivated land and the implications for existing farming operations;
- Heritage resources, including archaeological and palaeontological considerations, where applicable;
- Visual character, including changes to the existing rural agricultural landscape;
- Socio-economic considerations, including temporary construction employment, support for existing agricultural activities and improved long-term water security;
- Cumulative impacts, particularly in relation to water resource utilisation and water storage infrastructure within the broader catchment; and

- Compliance with the approved Water Use Licence (WUL) and any other applicable statutory authorisations, including operational requirements, monitoring obligations and licence conditions.

The identified impacts will be assessed in terms of their nature, extent, duration, intensity, probability and significance before and after mitigation. Appropriate avoidance, mitigation and management measures will be identified where necessary, and any residual impacts will be evaluated.

The EIA phase will also include a comparative assessment of the identified alternatives, including the No-Go Alternative.
alternative.

7.4 ALTERNATIVES TO BE ASSESSED DURING THE EIA PHASE

In accordance with Appendix 2(1)(h) of the NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended), the alternatives identified during the Scoping phase will be comparatively assessed during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) phase.

The following alternatives will be assessed:

Preferred Development Alternative

The preferred development alternative comprises the construction of the proposed Jade Hills Farm Storage Dam at the selected location on Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383. The preferred layout has been identified based on engineering feasibility, storage efficiency, operational practicality and the objective of minimising disturbance to previously transformed agricultural land and environmental features.

No-Go Alternative

The No-Go Alternative entails that the proposed farm storage dam is not constructed and that the existing situation remains unchanged, with no additional on-site water storage infrastructure being developed.

The alternatives will be comparatively assessed during the EIA phase in terms of their environmental, social, economic and technical implications to determine the preferred alternative.

8. CONCLUSION

Jade Jade Hills Farming (Pty) Ltd proposes the development of the Jade Hills Farm Storage Dam on Portion 26 of Farm Stinkfontein No. 383, near Ceres, within the Witzenberg Local Municipality, Western Cape.

The proposed Jade Hills Dam will comprise a new earthfill farm storage dam with an estimated storage capacity of approximately 110 000 m³, a maximum wall height of approximately 11.1 m, and a wall length of approximately 237 m. The dam will inundate approximately 1.7 ha at full supply level, within a total development footprint of approximately 2.0 ha.

The structure will include associated outlet works, spillway infrastructure and a small pump house to facilitate the controlled storage and use of water in accordance with the applicable Water Use Licence (WUL).

The dam will store surplus winter water derived from the existing lawful water use allocation associated with the Rietvalley Irrigation Scheme. Water will be conveyed to the dam via an approximately 700 m pipeline from the existing Jade Hills Delivery Point.

Stored water will support existing agricultural activities on the property, including established orchard areas situated on previously cultivated and transformed land. No new agricultural expansion forms part of the current application.

The Scoping Phase has identified the key environmental themes requiring further investigation during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) phase. These include terrestrial biodiversity, freshwater resources, heritage resources, visual character, agricultural land capability and cumulative water resource considerations. Specialist assessments will be undertaken during the EIA phase to evaluate the significance of potential impacts and to identify appropriate avoidance, mitigation and management measures.

The Public Participation Process undertaken as part of the Scoping Phase provides Interested and Affected Parties and commenting authorities with an opportunity to identify issues of concern and contribute to the assessment process. All comments received during the Scoping Phase will be considered and, where relevant, addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIR).

Based on the information available at this stage, the proposed development appears to be technically feasible and capable of being accommodated within an existing transformed agricultural landscape, subject to the findings of the specialist assessments, the outcome of the Environmental Impact Assessment, and compliance with all applicable legislative requirements.

It is therefore recommended that the application proceed to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) phase in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended).

9. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SCOPING PHASE

Positive Findings / Anticipated Benefits

- Water Security – The proposed dam will improve on-site water storage capacity and irrigation reliability during the dry summer period.
- Agricultural Sustainability – The project will support the continued viability of existing farming operations.
- Efficient Use of Existing Water Rights – The development will facilitate the beneficial use of an existing lawful winter water allocation.
- Climate Resilience – Additional storage capacity will improve resilience to drought conditions and rainfall variability.
- Employment Support – Existing agricultural employment opportunities are expected to be sustained through improved water security and farm productivity.
- Temporary Construction Employment – Limited short-term employment opportunities may be created during the construction phase.
- Land Use Compatibility – The proposed dam is compatible with the surrounding agricultural landscape and existing rural land uses.
- Operational Efficiency – The selected location facilitates gravity-fed water distribution where practicable, thereby reducing long-term pumping requirements.
- Regulatory Alignment – The proposed development is supported by an approved Water Use Licence and will be implemented in accordance with the applicable licence conditions.

Potential Environmental Issues Requiring Further Assessment

- Freshwater Resources – Construction within a non-perennial drainage feature may affect local hydrology, water movement and aquatic ecological functioning.
- Loss of Agricultural Land – A small area of cultivated land will be permanently occupied by the proposed dam.
- Terrestrial Biodiversity – Potential impacts on vegetation, habitat and associated fauna require assessment through the Botanical / Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment.
- Visual Character – The proposed dam may introduce a permanent change to the existing agricultural landscape.
- Construction-related Impacts – Temporary impacts associated with dust, noise, traffic, erosion and construction activities will require appropriate management.
- Cumulative Water Resource Considerations – The cumulative implications of additional water storage infrastructure within the catchment will be assessed as part of the EIA process.

10. WAY FORWARD

All identified issues will be assessed in greater detail during the EIA phase, supported by specialist review where required and further public participation. The EIA will assess impact significance, mitigation feasibility, alternatives, cumulative effects, and compliance with applicable legal requirements.

The findings will provide the Competent Authority with sufficient information to make an informed and legally defensible decision regarding the proposed Jade Hills Dam development.