

MALUTI-A-PHOFUNG MUNICIPALITY



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

GLOSSARY

In this document the terms used and explained below refer specifically to Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality which includes the municipal areas of Harrismith, Kestell and Qwaqwa.

ALIEN PLANTS: Species that migrate into or are deliberately or accidentally introduced into a community that has the potential to harm the environment. It may also be termed non-native species or invasive species.

ALIEN FISH: Non-native stock of fish introduced into dams and rivers which may harm the environment

AFFORESTATION: Process of planting areas of land with trees

BIODIVERSITY: (biological diversity) it is the biological wealth or capital that helps to keep us alive and supports our economy. It supplies us with food, fibre, energy, raw materials, industrial chemical and medicines.

BIOSPHERE: It is the zone of the earth where life is found. It consists of parts of the atmosphere, water and groundwater sphere (hydrosphere) and mostly soil, surface rock and sediments (lithosphere) on the bottoms of oceans and other bodies of water, where life is found.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS: The rights of every citizen which are enshrined in the constitution of the country which cannot be taken away. These include the fundamental human right to life, clean environment, education, the freedom of movement and speech e.t.c

DEFFORESTATION: The act of cutting down or burning of the trees in an area

ENVIRONMENT: All external conditions and factors, living and non-living chemicals and energy that affect any living organisms or other specified system.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: Statement of intent and principles in relation to overall environmental performance, providing a framework for the setting of objectives and targets.

EIA [Environmental Impact Assessment]:	Refers to the process of identifying, predicting and assessing the potential positive and negative social, economic and biophysical impacts of a proposed development project. The EIA includes an evaluation of alternatives; recommendations for appropriate management actions for minimising or avoiding negative impacts and for enhancing positive impacts; as well as proposing monitoring measures.
HAZARDOUS WASTE:	Any solid, liquid, or containerized gas that can catch fire easily, is corrosive to the skin tissue or metals, is unstable and can explode or release toxic fumes, or has harmful concentrations of one or other toxic materials that can leach out.
ILLEGAL DUMPING:	Dumping of waste of all types in non-designated areas
LAND DEGRADATION:	Decrease in the ability of land to support crops, livestock, or wild species in the future as a result of natural or human-induced processes
LANDFILL:	Waste disposal site on land in which waste is spread in thin layers, compacted, and covered with fresh layer of clay each day
POLLUTION:	The presence of chemicals at high enough levels in air, water, soil or food to threaten the health, survival, or activities of human beings or other living organisms.
PROACTIVE:	A person or policy controlling a situation by making things happen rather than waiting for things to happen and then react.
REMEDIATION:	Process of making something better, removing harmful effects.

RIPARIAN:	Having to do with stream sources or rivers
TRANGRESSORS:	People who go beyond their limits or what is legally acceptable.
TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE:	The sustainable interaction among the economic, social and environmental objectives of development of a place.
WETLAND:	land that is covered all or part of the time with freshwater such as swamps or marshes, excluding lakes. An example is the Monontsha wetlands.

1. INTRODUCTION

The local municipality recognises that our operations have an effect on local, regional and global environments. As a consequence of this, the management of the Maluti-A-Phofung (MAP) Local Municipality is committed to the continuous improvement in environmental performance and to prevent pollution. Environmental regulations, laws and codes of practice will be regarded as setting the minimum standards of environmental performance.

2. PREAMBLE

The environmental policy will:

- *Encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between the local community and their environments*
- *Promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere*
- *Stimulate the health and welfare of local community,*
- *Continually educate and train employees in environmental issues and the environmental effects*
- *of their activities*
- *Minimise the environmental impacts of new developments and aim to include environmental*
- *considerations in investment decisions through effective strategic planning*

3. VISION

The MAP Local Municipality will strive to make our environment clean and healthy and to live in harmony with our cultural, spiritual and physical surroundings.

4. MISSION

To achieve the vision the municipality will always set guidelines and lead in implementing high environmental standards for all stakeholders, investors, developers and all departments/offices in the local area through legislation, rules, and bye-laws.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

This policy is set to provide the minimum guidelines for the achievement of the vision and mission of the local municipality.

Sustainable use:

If environmental concerns are ignored, growth and development may lead to short term improvements in overall living standards. However, they will lower the quality of life of the people especially in poorer environments such as MAP and degrade the natural resource base. To avoid this, environmental policy must address the harmonious development of the local areas in a sustainable manner to achieve the goals of environmental triple bottom line of environmental, economic and social sustainability (RSA, 1997)

6. SPECIFIC POLICIES

The policy will cover the following fundamental environmental issues:

6.1 WATER

6.1.1 Maluti-A-Phofung local municipality will continually monitor and assess the environmental impact of the application of pesticides and herbicides in normal operations of groups or individuals or institutions on the environment including humans and animals in the local area.

6.1.2 The municipality will discourage individuals or groups or institutions from sand mining in rivers in the area of jurisdiction of the municipal council through

involvement of the local community and enactment of rules and regulations to that effect.

- 6.1.3 Communities living around wetland areas will be educated on the sensitivity and value of the wetland and encourage the local community to protect the wetlands failing which penalties may be instituted against offenders.
- 6.1.4 Notwithstanding the importance of agriculture to the community, the municipality will guard against agricultural and biological pollution, by groups and individuals or institutions from wilfully polluting the environment through their activities.
- 6.1.5 The municipality will adhere to existing national and provincial policies on the introduction, prevention and removal of alien fish stock and alien plants which are found to have negative impacts on the environment including indigenous fish stock and vegetation of the local area.
- 6.1.6 Abandoned mines will be identified and plans will be put in place to rehabilitate such places or action will be taken to prevent such abandoned mines from becoming a threat to humans and animals.
- 6.1.7 **SANITATION:** The municipality will adhere to provincial directives and regulations in terms of sanitation and involve the community in keeping the environment clean at all times.
- 6.1.8 It is the right of all community members to obtain access to clean water and therefore the municipality will endeavour to provide clean water to every stand or at least get water within 200m from their place of residence.

6.2 AIR QUALITY

- 6.2.1 It is constitutional right of every citizen or resident in the local area to clean air. The municipality will therefore be committed to reduction of emissions from industries protect the environment, the people and the animals from air pollution through adherence to national, provincial and local legislation and by-laws where they exist. If there are no legislation to protect the environment these legislation may be introduced without delay.

- 6.2.2 The municipality will ensure that offending odours from industries, homes or any other source will be discouraged and strict legislation put in place to improve the air the community breaths
- 6.2.3 The municipality will strive to find a more efficient equipment and environmentally friendly method of using domestic coal to minimize indoor pollution and environmental pollution due to the use of domestic coal.
- 6.2.4 The local municipal management is committed to minimizing the negative impacts of the use of coal therefore coal dumps would be treated as solid waste and managed as such.
- 6.2.5 The municipality is committed to the reduction of industrial and other emissions throughout the municipal area.

6.3 WASTE MANAGEMENT

- 6.3.1 The local municipality will adhere to the local and provincial directives with regard to waste management and comply by landfill regulations
- 6.3.2 The municipal council will ensure the strict adherence to the rules and regulations pertaining to the transportation of hazardous waste through its area of jurisdiction
- 6.3.3 **Permitting of landfills;** The municipality will comply by all national and provincial laws and regulations pertaining to landfills and strict laws and regulations shall be enacted to safeguard the establishment of illegal landfills or in granting private landfills where it is absolutely necessary.
- 6.3.4 Private waste sites: individuals or groups or institutions may apply to the municipality for permission to establish private waste sites on condition that valid reasons are given and that full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) have been conducted before the permit is granted
- 6.3.5 Waste collection services shall be the responsibility of the municipality which may have the right to outsource this service to the public
- 6.3.6 Illegal dumping shall be discouraged throughout the municipal area through rigorous awareness campaigns and education

6.4 LAND USE

- 6.4.1 Overgrazing: Maluti-A-Phofung is sensitive to environmental degradation and therefore will guard against overgrazing by farmers and individuals or any institution.
- 6.4.2 Land degradation: Any form of land degradation, soil erosion and land invasions in the municipal area will not be tolerated.
- 6.4.3 Conflicts over land use: Where there are conflicts over the use of land the municipality may use all available peaceful instruments to resolve the problem.
- 6.4.4 Special permits may be obtained by any individual or group or institutions who wish to mine the soil for brick making from appropriate designated office or officer at MAP.
- 6.4.5 The granting of permits for brick-making is subject to the permit holder undertaking to close and level all holes and scars inflicted on the environment.
- 6.4.6 The municipality will endeavour to relocate the brick makers from their existing operational bases to a new environmentally friendly space for such businesses.
- 6.4.7 All scars left on the environment may be rehabilitated with or without the support of the illegal brick makers.

6.5 BIODIVERSITY

- 6.5.1 The municipal management is sensitive to riparian and wetland destruction and efforts will be made to minimize the destruction of the environment as a natural resource.
- 6.5.2 Notwithstanding that tourism is a priority economic sector to the municipality the negative impacts of tourist activities should be minimized and community tourism awareness campaign should be instituted.
- 6.5.3 A forestation and deforestation should be defined and marketed vigorously for the benefit of the community.

6.5.4 The municipality in collaboration with other stakeholders will protect the environment from loss of diversity.

7. MUNICIPAL REGULATORY MEASURES

Municipal regulatory measures must ensure compliance and secure cooperation in meeting policy objectives in order to enhance the quality of the environment and control environmental impacts. Sustainable measure for environmental management can be grouped into three general categories:

7.1 Direct Measures

These measures take the form of laws, regulations and directive prescribing behaviour. Direct measures can be proactive, designed to prevent or pre-empt environmental impacts, or reactive, designed to deal with impacts that have already occurred.

7.2 Pre-emptive regulatory measures

- a register of hazardous substances and processes
- permitting conditions
- environmental charges and incentives
- integrated planning regulations

7.3 Re-active regulatory measures

They include:

- compensatory payments
- responsibility for remediation and clean up costs
- administrative controls
- rehabilitation and mitigation programmes
- criminal prosecution of transgressors and their judicial punishment, including:
- fines

- imprisonment
- alternative sanctions
- conflict resolution
- appeals
- liability

Some measure can be either proactive or reactive depending on their use. Examples include:

- monitoring the record emissions or discharges at source or to establish ambient levels in air or water
- negotiation and mediation
- Environmental Management Programmes (EMP)

7.4 Effective direct measures require:

- A regulator with the capacity to set and maintain norms and standards
- An efficient enforcement system to ensure adherence to norms and standards