



THE PANEL OF EXPERTS APPOINTED TO REVIEW THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR THE BREACH OF THE MOUTH OF THE LAKE ST LUCIA ESTUARY

Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

08 February 2022



forestry, fisheries
& the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Background

- The Panel was appointed in terms of Section 3A of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No.107 of 1998).
- The Panel is appointed for a period of six (06) months (1st October 2021 – 31st March 2022).



Terms of References

To advise the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment on:

- The significance and impact of the opening of the estuary mouth and how this relates to the implementation of the Global Environment Funds (GEF) 5 project interventions and the St. Lucia Estuary Management Plan;
- The exceptional circumstances, as defined in the estuarine management plan, that led to the decision to open the mouth, including those of an environmental, social, and economic nature;
- The impact of the mouth opening on 6 January 2021 on the functioning of the estuary system and the wetland system, as well as the associated environmental, social, and economic implications; and
- Develop guidelines for the immediate and ongoing management of the system.



Progress (October 2021)

- 05 October 2021 - 1st Panel meeting
- 13 October 2021 - Induction meeting
- 27 October 2021 - 2nd Panel meeting



Progress (November 2021)

- **02-04 November 2021** - Site Visit and meeting with iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.
- **15-19 November 2021** - In-person Stakeholder Consultation meetings in St Lucia:
 - Commercial Farmers, Small Scale Farmers and Sugar Cane Processers;
 - Tour operators and ratepayers;
 - Fishers;
 - Community representatives;
 - Traditional leaders (Inkosi Mthiyane , KwaSokhulu and Inkosi Mkhwanazi, Mtubatuba);
 - Department of Water and Sanitation and Mtubatuba Local Municipality.
- **01-30 November 2021**- Virtual Stakeholder Consultations with scientists and experts (Ecologists, Ichthyologist; Geologists and Hydrologists)



Progress (December 2021)

- **02 December 2021**- Virtual Stakeholder Consultation
 - iSimangaliso Action Group
- **06 December 2021**- Virtual Stakeholder Consultations
 - DFFE (Law Reform; World Heritage Convention; Ramsar Convention; Forestry)
- **07 December 2021**- 3rd Panel Meeting



Progress (January 2022)

- **14 January 2022** - Virtual Stakeholder Consultation meeting
 - DFFE (Integrated Environmental Authorizations; Forestry; Natural Resource Management-Working for Wetlands)
 - KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- **14 January 2022** - Minister's progress meeting with the Panel
- **17-18 January 2022** – 4th Panel meeting;
- **20 January 2022** - Gazette notice calling for members of the public to submit information for consideration by the Panel (30 Days).



Conclusion

- Progress is satisfactory, and the panel expects the final report will be submitted to the Minister by 31 March 2022 for consideration



THANK YOU!

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

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Thank You



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