

Background Information Document

Proposed upgrading of approximately 10 Km of DR08026 Mbotyi Access Road, Ward 23, Ngquza Hill Local Municipality, OR Tambo District Municipality, Eastern Cape

Notice of intention to submit:

Application for environmental authorisation in terms the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998)

Application for Section 21 water uses as required in terms of the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998)

Register as an interested and affected party: 31 October to 1 December 2025

Overview of development

SANRAL SOC Ltd is proposing to upgrade approximately 10km of the DR08026 access road leading to Mbotyi, from gravel to surface standards, as part of the implementation of the Access Management Plans for the upgrade of National Road N2 Section 20 from km 4.90 to km 15.40.

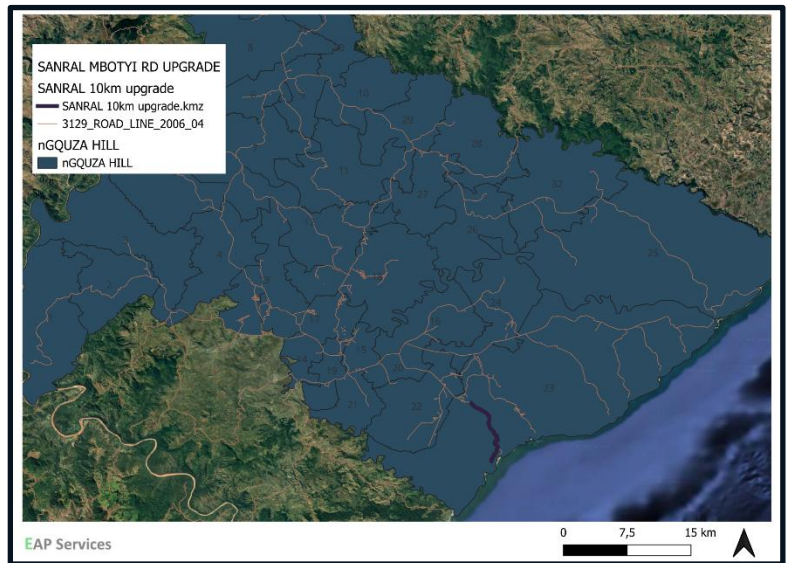
The nearest major town is Lusikisiki (approximately 17.0km to/from CBD); the entire project is located within the Ingquza Hill Local and OR Tambo District Municipalities in the Eastern Cape province.

Approximate coordinates:

Starting (north): 31°24'32.45"S; 29°42'28.15"E

End (south): 31°28'11.69"S; 29°43'44.70"E

Engineer appointed for design of resurfacing and road widening: GG&G Consulting Engineers (Pty) Ltd



Overview of environmental sensitivities

The site falls within 10 km of a formal marine protected area – Pondoland marine protected area. A section of the road will traverse area identified as part of the Pondoland NPAES. The area falls within the Pondoland Centre of Endemism (Figure 1). The road upgrade traverses drainage lines, and the road crosses the Mbotyi estuary (mapped as a NFEPA wetland) (Figure 2)

In terms of the National Vegetation Map, 2024; the road traverses through several vegetation types; From the northern to southern section the route traverses: Pondoland-Ugu Sandstone coastal sourveld (Ecosystems status: *Vulnerable*); Scarp Forest (Ecosystems Status: *Least concern*); Transkei Coastal Belt (Ecosystems status: *Endangered*). (Status as per National Biodiversity Assessment, 2022). (Figure 3) With regards to remnant ecosystems, Transkei coastal belt is excluded from the southern area the road traverses; the majority of Sandstone coastal sourveld is excluded from the majority of the northern area the road traverses (Figure 4). In terms of the Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan (ECBCP), 2019, sections of the proposed upgrade will traverse terrestrial ESA1, CBA2 and CBA1 (Figure 5); sections traverse freshwater ecological support areas (ESA) 1 and aquatic critical biodiversity areas (CBA) 1 (Figure 6).

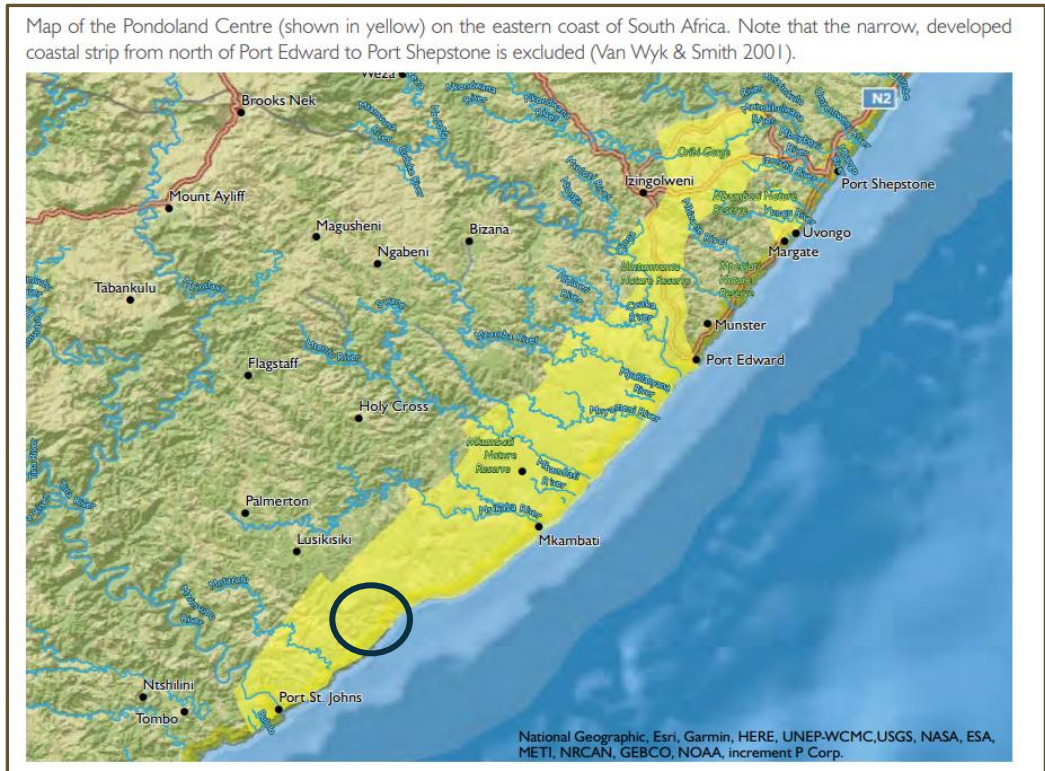


Figure 1: Map of Pondoland centre with indication of area of road upgrade (GRIEVE, K., GRIEVE, G. & BELLSTEDT, D. 2024. Botanical bounty of the Pondoland Centre of Endemism. *Strelitzia* 47. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria)

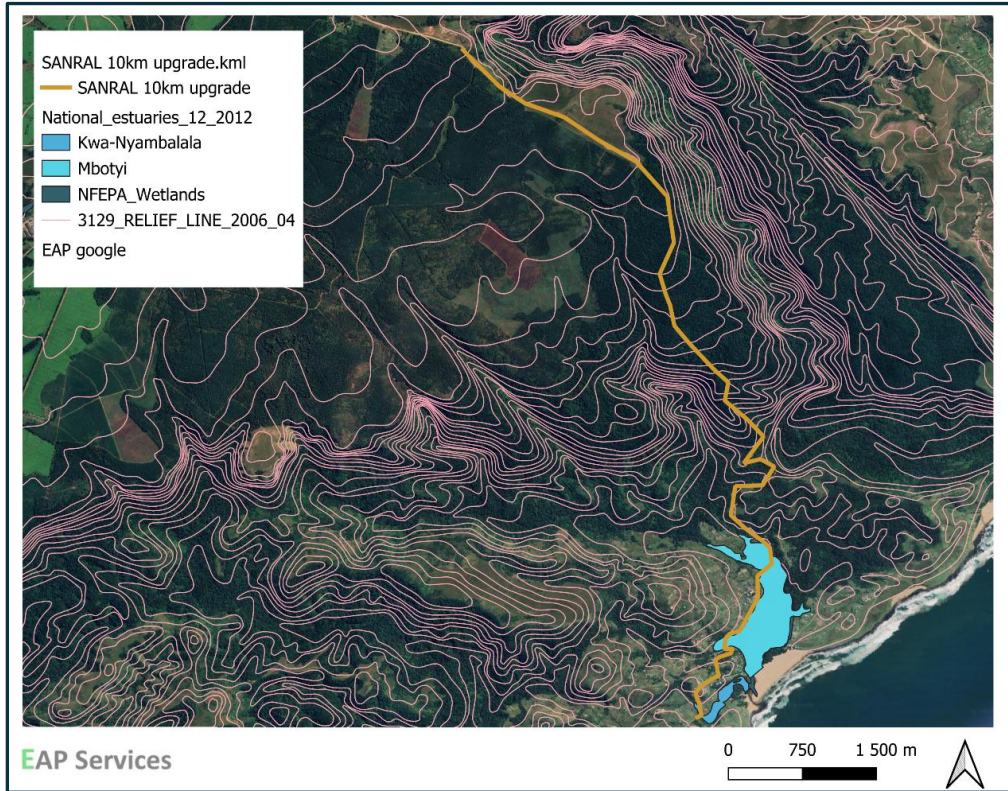


Figure 2: Road upgrade traversing Mbotyi Estuary / NFEPA wetland

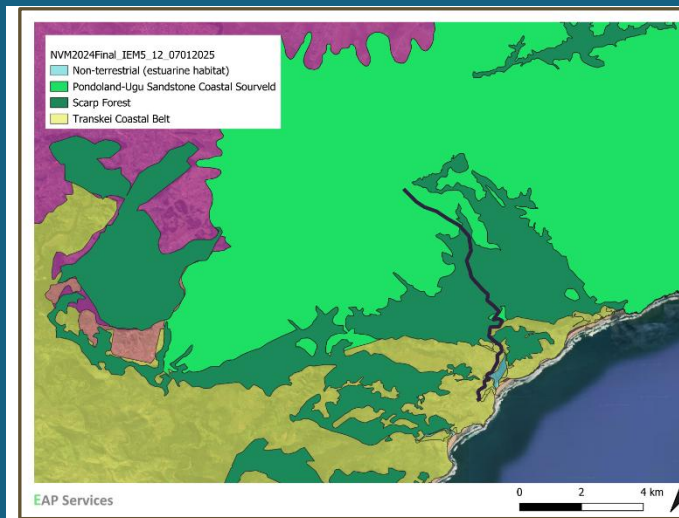


Figure 3: Route traverses Pondoland-Ugu Sandstone coastal sourveld; Scarp Forest; Transkei Coastal Belt (NatVeg Map, 2024)

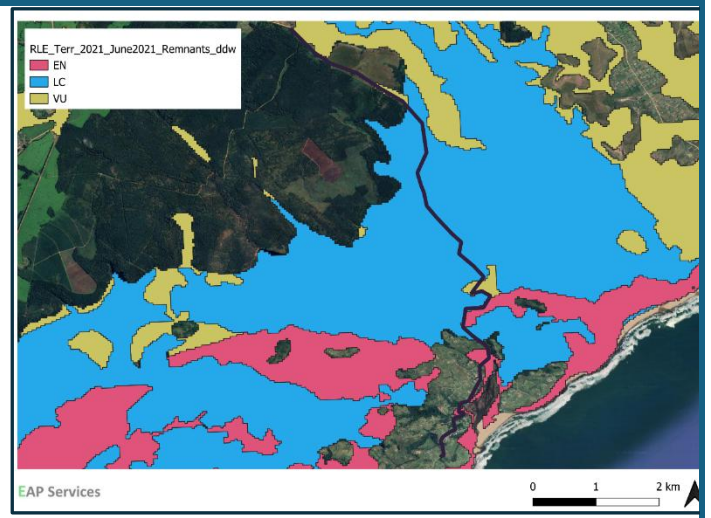


Figure 4: Remnant ecosystems; Note - Transkei Coastal Belt no longer mapped in southern section

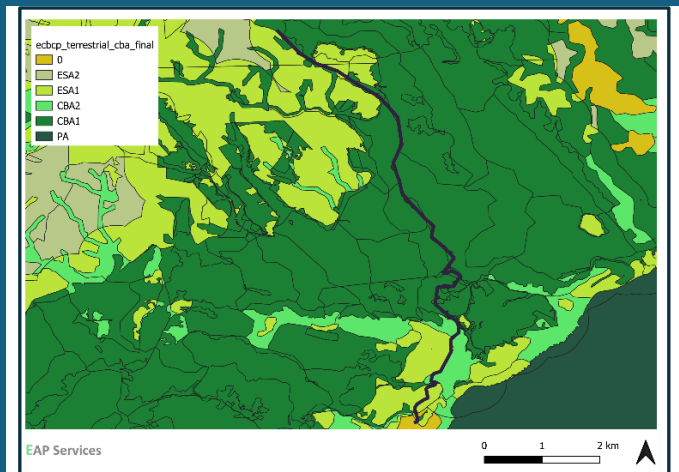


Figure 5: Route traverses Terrestrial CBA1, ESA1 and ESA 2 (ECBCP, 2019)

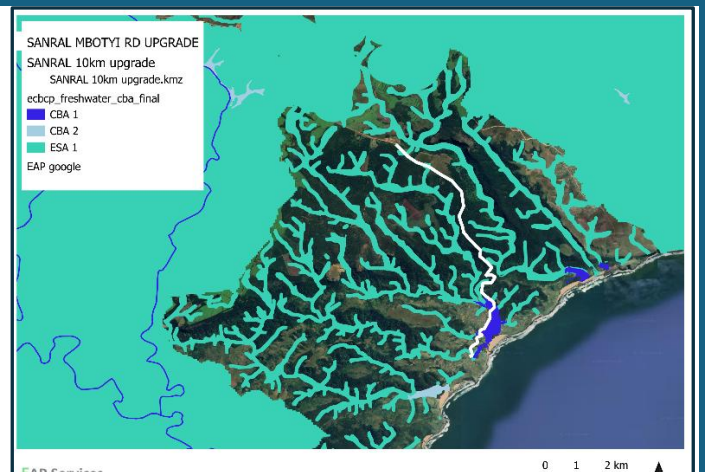


Figure 6: Route traverses Freshwater CBA1, ESA1 (ECBCP, 2019)

The National DFFE screening tool report for the site indicates the following sensitivities:

- Agricultural – Very High
- Animal – High
- Aquatic – Very High
- Archaeology and heritage – Low
- Civil aviation – High
- Defense - Low
- Paleontology – Very high
- Plant – Medium
- Terrestrial biodiversity – Very High

The following specialist studies will be completed for the proposed road upgrade:

	Specialist Assessment	EAP Comment
1	Agricultural Impact Assessment	Not deemed necessary for proposed scope of work
2	Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment	Motivated that no specialist study required; Not deemed necessary for proposed scope of work
3	Archaeological And Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment	Notice of intention to develop (NID) to be submitted to ECHPRA / SAHRA.
4	Palaeontology Impact Assessment	NID to be submitted to ECHPRA / SAHRA. An assessment will be carried out.
5	Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment	A terrestrial biodiversity verification will be carried out and a compliance statement / assessment compiled. Additional studies may be required dependant on outcome of site verification.
6	Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment	An aquatic verification will be carried out and a compliance statement / assessment compiled.
7	Noise Impact assessment	Motivated that no specialist study required; Not deemed necessary for proposed scope of work
8	Traffic Impact assessment	Motivated that no specialist study required; Not deemed necessary for proposed scope of work
9	Geotechnical assessment	Geotechnical surveys will be carried out, as required, by the appointed engineers for the proposed upgrade
10	Socio-Economic Assessment	Motivated that no specialist study required; Not deemed necessary for proposed scope of work
11	Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment	Motivated that no specialist study required; Not deemed necessary for proposed scope of work
12	Plant Species Assessment	A flora verification will be carried out and a compliance statement / assessment compiled. Additional flora studies may be required dependant on outcome of site verification.
13	Animal Species Assessment	A fauna verification will be carried out by and a compliance statement / assessment compiled. Additional fauna studies may be required dependant on outcome of site verification.

Overview of legal environmental requirements

National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA)

The NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations sets out a list of activities that may not commence without environmental authorisation (EA) from the competent authority. The identified NEMA EIA listed activities which require authorisation:

Relevant Basic Assessment Activity(ies) as set out in Listing Notice 1

Activity 12 / 48 Development / expansion -(ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more; where such development / expansion occurs— (a) within a watercourse; (c) ... within 32 metres of a watercourse, — excluding— (cc) activities listed in activity 14 in Listing Notice 2 of 2014 or activity 14 in Listing Notice 3 of 2014... (ee) where such development / expansion occurs within existing roads / road reserves, railway line reserves.

Activity 17 / 54 Development / expansion— (ii) in an estuary;— (e) infrastructure/structures with a development footprint of 50 square metres or more — v) if no development setback exists, within a distance of 100 metres inland of the high-water mark of the sea / estuary, whichever is the greater;

Activity 19 The infilling / depositing of any material of more than 10 cubic metres into, / dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 cubic metres from a watercourse;

Activity 19A The infilling / depositing of any material of more than 5 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 5 cubic metres from— (ii) the littoral active zone, an estuary or a distance of 100 metres inland of the highwater mark of the sea or an estuary, whichever distance is the greater

Activity 56 The widening of a road by more than 6 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre— (i) where the existing reserve is wider than 13,5 meters; or (ii) where no reserve exists, where the existing road is wider than 8 metres;

Relevant Basic Assessment Activity(ies) as set out in Listing Notice 3

Activity 12 The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation ... a. Eastern Cape i. Within any critically endangered or endangered ecosystem listed in terms of section 52 of the NEMBA or prior to the publication of such a list, within an area that has been identified as critically endangered in the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment 2004; ii. Within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans; iv. Outside urban areas, within 100 metres inland from an estuarine functional zone;

Activity 14 / 23 The development / expansion of— (ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more; where such development occurs— (a) within a watercourse; (c) if no development setback has been adopted, within 32m of a watercourse ...

Activity 18 The widening of a road by more than 4 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre...

NEMA listed activities requiring authorisation will be confirmed with the competent authority prior to application submission. The competent authority identified is the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE). A preapplication meeting with DFFE will be requested.

National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998)(NWA)

An application will be submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation for any Section 21 water uses listed in the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) that may require authorisation as identified during the assessment process. The following Sections 21 water uses may require general authorisation / water use license:

Section 21 a – abstraction of water (water required for construction phase; to be confirmed)

Section 21 c – impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse; road will traverse watercourses; within 100 m drainage lines and / or 500m Mbotyi estuary

Section 21 i - altering the bed, banks, course, or characteristics of a watercourse; road will traverse watercourses; within 100 m drainage lines and / or 500m Mbotyi estuary

Note:

Work will not be done on the crossing at Mbotyi Estuary, however resurfacing and widening will be carried out on either side of this crossing.

An aquatic specialist (Dr Anton Bok) will carry out an assessment and then do a risk assessment matrix based on the proposed method and construction requirements; the outcome of this will determine whether a GA / Wul may be required.

Dr Anton Bok has been appointed to carry out the required water use license / general authorisation on behalf of SANRAL SOC Ltd. A preapplication meeting with DWS will be requested.

National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) (NHRA)

In terms of Section 38(1) of the NHRA any development exceeding 5000m² can trigger the need for assessment. A NID will therefore be submitted to the Eastern Cape Heritage Resources protection Agency (ECHRPA) and the South African Heritage Resources Association (SAHRA) and the required assessments will be carried out to inform the sensitivities and required actions for any identified resources identified / high likelihood of occurring within the project area.

National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No.10 Of 2004) , Nature Conservation Ordinance No. 19 of 1974 and National Forest Act (Act 84 of 1998)

An indication will be provided of any NEMBA threatened or protected species (TOPS) / species listed in the Nature Conservation Ordinance No. 19 of 1974 / protected trees listed in terms of the National forest Act.

Public Participation

Notice is hereby given that the applicant (SANRAL SOC Ltd) intends to apply for an environmental authorisation to commence with activities listed in the 2014 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations (as amended, 2017) published in terms of the NEMA. Related applications:

- An application will be submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation for a WUL / GA as required.
- An application will be submitted to the Eastern Cape Heritage Resources protection Agency (ECHRPA) and the South African Heritage Resources Association (SAHRA) for permits as required.

A public participation process will be conducted according to Regulation 41 of the NEMA 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended, 2017). An initial meeting with the community leaders was held on 16 October 2025 to facilitate introduction of the EAP and Engineer to the community.

All interested and affected parties (IAPs) are encouraged to participate in the process.

Register and / or submit initial comments as an IAP within 30 days of this notice to the contact details provided below.

Registration dates: 31 October 2025 to 1 December 2025

A 30-day review and comment period will be provided on the draft basic assessment report and supporting appendices including, inter alia, engineering designs, specialist studies, impact assessment, draft environmental management plan report and the public participation and comments and response report.

Should a full water use license be found to be required a 60-day comment and review period will be provided on relevant information to all registered IAPs.

Application Process for NEMA EA authorisation EA Process Proposed Public Participation		
Schedule	Phase	Target Date
In progress	Identify potential IAPs	October – December 2025
Completed	Initial site visit by EAP	October 2025
Commenced	Initial specialist investigations and planning reports	October – December 2025
Completed	Submit preapplication meeting request and Notice of intent to submit application for NEMA EA to the DFFE	October 2025
We are here in the process	Submit Notice of intent to submit application for NEMA EA to potential registered and interested parties and provided for a 30-day registration of interested and affected parties (IAPs); Distribute background information document to all registered IAPs; Note, relevant organs of state, parastatals, NGOs and site landowners and adjacent landowners will be automatically registered for the assessment process;	October – December 2025
	Placement of Site Notices at the sites to encourage registration of interested / affected parties Advertising the intent to apply for an application for EA in a local newspaper to encourage registration of interested / affected parties. A registration period of 30 days will be provided.	October – December 2025
	Submit initial comments and provide any relevant information / aspects / potential impacts you feel should be included in the assessment.	October – December 2025
	Keep record of all registrations and initial comments in comments and response report	October – December 2025
	NEMA EA application and supporting appendices	

Application Process for NEMA EA authorisation EA Process Proposed Public Participation		
Schedule	Phase	Target Date
Upon completion of verification, details of road upgrade, assessment and EMPr as required	Submit NEMA EA application and supporting appendices to DFFE	December 2025
	Draft Basic Assessment Report	
Upon receipt of NEMA EA reference number	Submit Draft Basic Report and supporting appendices for a 30-day review and comment period by IAPS	December 2025 – January 2026
	Final Basic Assessment Report	
Upon completion of responses to all relevant comments and ensuring final BAR addresses all comments	Update draft and supporting appendices with all comments and responses and submit Final BAR to DFFE for consideration	February 2026
	Decision making phase	
DEDEAT decision making	NEMA application; decision making process is 107 days	March - June 2026
	Notify IAPs of authority's decision (within 14 days of receiving decision)	June 2026
	Appeal Phase	
Decision will be distributed to all IAPs and 20 days provided to submit an appeal on the decision	Submit appeals within 20 days of receiving decision as and if required	July 2026

**The Environmental Assessment Practitioner appointed for the NEMA EA application process:
Claire De Jongh (EAPASA registration: 2021/3519)**

Register to participate in this process by contacting the details provided below.

Claire De Jongh

Tel: 0846074743

Email: claire@eapservices.co.za | admin@eapservices.co.za

Address: 17 High St, Mount Pleasant, Gqeberha, 6070

Project related information will be made available on the following website: www.eapservices.co.za