

Bench Marks Foundation – Policy Gap 9

Response by Anglo American 16 Sept 2014

Anglo American has noted the report by the Bench Marks Foundation entitled “Policy Gap 9” which examines the environmental legacy of coal mining operations in the Witbank / Emalahleni area of South Africa.

We recognise that our industry has a major environmental and social footprint and should expect to be judged by high standards. Among our Group-wide standards is the Anglo American Environmental Way which: sets out a consistent approach to responsible environmental management; prescribes practices to be followed by all our operations; and supports our vision for minimising harm through the design, operation and eventual closing of operations in an environmentally responsible manner.

Our stringent social performance standards are set out in the Anglo American Social Way, which sets out requirements for engaging with communities and supporting socio-economic development. Core requirements of the Social Way include our Group-wide complaints and grievances mechanism for local communities, and community consultation using our award winning [Socio-Economic Assessment Toolbox](#). In addition to our own standards, we adhere to national environmental legislation and share the government’s aim of achieving a sustainable and safe mining industry. Compliance against all of these requirements is subject to regular internal and external audits and, where non-compliances are identified, corrective action plans are put into effect.

In the Witbank area we have been a major investor in social and environmental projects – we list some examples below:

- We have invested R1.4 billion into the eMalahleni Water Reclamation Plant, which treats water from four mines in the area to potable standards and pumps up to 30 million litres of water per day into the municipal reservoirs for water supply to more than 80, 000 members of the community of eMalahleni. The plant has recently been expanded to take care of water management in our mines post closure.
- We have invested in environmental research in partnership with various environmental bodies and tertiary institutions. One such project is Fungcoal – where we have partnered with the University of Stellenbosch. The project will in the long term reduce the amount of topsoil that we require for rehabilitation (one of the issues raised in the study)
- We are looking to promote innovative and sustainable solutions: our Kriel mine is trialling floating wetlands as a sustainable ecological system using native plants to remove pollutants from water bodies on rehabilitated mine land.

We accept that there are challenges still to address and we welcome constructive criticism of any shortcomings when fair. However, we would point out that there are factual points of detail and implied liability in the report that we would contest.

Our approach is to address issues openly and to attempt to resolve them through constructive dialogue and partnerships with government, the community and civil society. In that spirit, we will maintain open lines of dialogue with Bench Marks Foundation to discuss the matters raised in the report.