

Tongaat Hulett Sugar Refinery Ltd Stakeholder Forum
Minutes of the 57th meeting held at 11:00 on Wednesday 26 June at 11am
at 444 South Coast Road and via MS Teams Online

Present: (as per attendance register)

Mr Ashley Annapan (AA)	Tongaat Hulett
Ms Nolwandle Gcaba (NG)	Ward 64 Councillor Admin
Mr Santosh Hansraj (SH)	eThekwini
Mr Gavin Hegter (GH)	Ward Councillor
Mr Randy Hurilal (RH)	Tongaat Hulett
Mr Cameron Israel (CI)	Tongaat Hulett
Ms Katelyn Julie (KJ)	eThekwini Health
Ms Cebile Mdletshe (CM)	Tongaat Hulett
Ms Zama Mhlongo (ZM)	Tongaat Hulett
Ms Thokozani Mkhize (TM)	Tongaat Hulett
Ms Ntobeko Ndlovu (NN)	Tongaat Hulett
Ms Jesita Reddy (JR)	Tongaat Hulett
Mr Navin Ramjuan (NR)	Tongaat Hulett
Mr Siphon Shangase (SpS)	eThekwini Environment and Health

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Ashley Annapan
AD	Ayanda Duma
AS	Akash Singh
BM	Bongani Mthembu
CF	Chris Fennemore
CI	Cameron Israel
CM	Cebile Mdletshe
DD	Des D'Sa
GH	Gavin Hegter
IN	Iris Ngubane
JR	Jesita Reddy
KJ	Katelyn Julie
MM	Mdu Mndebele
MS	Martin Souwitzsky
NG	Nolwandle Gcaba
NM	Nishan Maharaj
NN	Ntobeko Ndlovu
NNx	Nondumiso Nxumalo
NR	Navin Ramjuan
PF	Pat Fleuriot
PM	Philisiwa Mpantsha
PN	Phumulani Ngema
RH	Randy Hurilal
SH	Santosh Hansraj
SN	Sifiso Nxumalo
SpS	Siphon Shangase
TM	Thokozani Mkhize
VV	Victor Vitches
ZM	Zama Mhlongo
ZR	Zyven Rambakus

Secretariat

Mrs Rose Owen (RO) Phelamanga

Apologies

Mr Nishan Reddy (NR)	Tongaat Hulett
Ms Iris Ngubane (IN)	Tongaat Hulett
Mr Zyven Rambakus (ZR)	Tongaat Hulett
Mr Martin Souwitzsky (MS)	Resident

ACTION

<p>1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>1. RO welcomed everyone and thanked THS for attending the meeting.</p> <p>2. Introductions were made.</p>	
<p>2. APOLOGIES</p> <p>1. Apologies were noted and recorded above.</p>	
<p>3. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA</p> <p>1. The draft agenda was presented, accepted and adopted.</p>	
<p>4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2023</p> <p>4.1. Confirmation of minutes</p> <p>The minutes having been circulated were confirmed as a true reflection and signed.</p>	
<p>5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES</p>	

ACTION

5.1. THS MHI Status

1. AA informed the meeting that the MHI report is being done by an external consultant. The report should be available in the next week.
2. The consultant will share it to eThekweni Fire Dept by the end of July. RO requested that when this occurs, that THS give eThekweni Health a heads up to ensure they receive it from the Fire Department.

6. ETHEKWINI SAP OVERVIEW

1. SpS gave an overview of the SAP requirements and processes.
2. Tongaat Hulett Refinery have an SAP; as part of their compliance they provide a report to the municipality.
3. Stakeholders have 21 days to comment on the report.
4. RO to share the eThekweni presentation and the THS presentation.
5. THS received their first STP in 2002, this has subsequently been changed to an SAP. The current SAP is valid from 10 January 2022 to 30 December 2026, 5 years.
6. SpS outlines the process for receiving an SAP, once a business has an SAP it has to comply with various items, this includes an annual review report and meeting.

7. REPORTS

7.1. THS Performance Review 57

[See annexure link to .pdf presentation]

7.1.1. Refinery History

1. NR gave a brief background to the history of the refinery at the site. He noted the slide required an update to include the Business Rescue that began in 2022.

7.1.2. Business Review

1. In Nov 2023 as part of the Business Rescue, “Vision Parties” was identified as the new as Strategic Equity Partner, they are bidding to acquire complete control of THL.
2. PCF has confirmed funding has been extended to allow for stable operations until transition to the new owners which is expected within the next 6–12months. It was noted there are various legal compliance requirements to be met, such as different competition commissions within not only South Africa but also, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia. There are a number of requirements and stages to be completed, unfortunately they are not able to report on those as this is all with the Business Rescue organisation.
3. The THS Strategic focus continues to remain on operational efficiencies and sustainability efforts around energy, water and effluent
4. THS diversification strategies are being considered, into other revenue streams is currently being integrated within the framework of the sugar industry masterplan. This includes ethanol, bioplastics and biomass integration
5. The Refinery’s primary focus is on energy reduction and the displacement of coal via biomass and other alternatives.
6. Good production performance year to date, resulting from investments at sugar mills, and focus on efficiencies.
7. They have had ongoing struggles with sales.
8. Renewed focus on cost reduction and efficiency improvement projects.
9. There has been an improvement in the overall yield to 97.46% the target was 95.5%
10. Similarly the volume efficiency has is 97% the target was 96%
11. There was 1 environmental compliant.
12. Unfortunately they exceeded the target for effluent and their coal t/day.

7.1.3. Steam and Power

1. Various Capital Investment projects have been completed, this has improved the energy efficiency of the plant and allowed the site to have no blackouts.

ACTION

2. There are long term sustainability projects where the site is looking at boiler replacement – alternative fuels is one option. A new turbo alternator would allow THS to be completely off grid without burning more coal.
3. The team is investigating biomass as well as they have extensive experience in this having been through this process in Pakistan, in addition they are not limiting their investigations to the sugar industry but other industries that have look at alternative fuels.
4. There are further energy efficiency projects such as the mechanical vapor recompression and the cooling crystallisation.

7.1.3.1. Coal

1. A reduction in coal consumption is critical to the sustainability of the business.
2. Steam projects have been identified to reduce coal consumption.
3. Ongoing issues with Transnet supply has the site unfortunately not able to undertake a rail road split. All coal is received to site via road. THS has to second guess if Transnet is going to send any rail carts and this has caused frustrations on site.
4. THS have engaged Transnet as rail is their preferred delivery strategy. Transnet have indicated they are currently reinvesting, however, the turn around is expected to be around 5 years.
5. Additional offloading site has been commissioned to reduce congestion.
6. There is a project to increase coal storage on site, which allows for fewer road deliveries.

7.1.4. Performance Trends

1. Coal to melt has seen an ongoing improvement.

7.1.4.1. Emissions

1. The current SAP is valid to 30 December 2026.
2. Emissions standards are aligned with the legislative requirements.
3. All boilers are under 50MW – classified as small boilers.
4. The main boiler stack services boilers 1, 2, 5. This currently provides 80-90% of the plant steam requirements.
5. Improvement noted since start-up, attributed to boiler overhauls completed
6. Exceedance during April 23 due to analyzer being offline (maintenance shut)
7. Outage on SO₂ analyzer due to flue gas sample drier failure, long lead time item
8. Replacement project for analyzer system in progress.
9. SO₂ and PM¹⁰ trend show ongoing improvements.
10. Testing of all boiler stacks was re-done during July 2023.
11. This was undertaken to confirm improvements post boiler refurbishment projects.
12. Results are positive and have been submitted.
13. THL have embarked on investigating alternative dry stack abatement technology, in conjunction with Howden SA. Assessments done at the Refinery in May 2024.
14. Current coal supply the sulphur is below 1%. This has ensured low CO₂ emissions.
15. There was only 1 environmental compliant in the last year.

7.1.4.2. Water and Effluent – COD Monitoring Update

1. Project for Recovery/treatment of Tanker effluent has been presented. The capital investment is R20 million. Further work required to improve feasibility/ ROI.
2. Sugar loss to effluent has improved as some of the root causes have been identified and addressed. Further work is planned during annual shut.
3. Further projects being investigated: RO recovery of dilute brine, Vapour condensate recovery (completed).
4. Technical study looking at the options for the Effluent Dam rehabilitation complete, capital investment of R20m required.
5. Water usage has decreased.
6. Trade effluent has decreased.
7. River monitoring for the COD has shown consistency between upstream and downstream.

ACTION

8. They are in the process of applying for a Water Use Licence, previously they required only a permit. They now have to comply with a WUL.
9. Part of this has been a conceptual design for a weir and a conceptual design for river bank protection.
10. NR noted that despite their efforts for water use management there have been numerous water shortages/outages from eThekweni recently, which forced them to supplement with bottled water. They are considering doing a SANS 241 conversion on their river water to potable water.

7.1.4.3. Waste Recycling

1. Ongoing recovery of recyclable materials has seen improvement in waste management.
2. This has also shown improvement in packaging processing to reduce waste material.

7.1.4.4. Environmental Noise

1. The next environmental noise monitoring is due in July 2024. The previous monitoring in 2022 no exceedances were noted.

8. DISCUSSIONS

1. GH asked if THS had any information regarding rumours that Transnet was going to be doing canal upgrades, noting that THS were considering a weir and river bank protection?
2. NR gave a background, that he has been in the area for many years. He noted that in the floods of 1987 (Demoine) the refinery lost a lot of its parking area. The municipality then had plans for a canal drawn up. They have seen those plans, but it was never implemented. That weir, or remnants there of that has been built on has been in existence pre 1960. The THS old WUL from DWA supports that. In terms of canalising the river, THS is looking to the municipality to follow through on those plans. For THS they had a water use permit and have been asked to apply for a WUL, then came the recertification of the weir. THS have gone back in history to determine the weir and they have found conceptual drawings but no engineering construction that could be validated and vetted. The second thing that has come out of the WUL, as they are in the 1 in 100 year flood plane, there must be river bank protection, so THS has engaged BOSCH projects who have experience in this area of flood protection to draw up conceptual design to protect their facility. In terms of the canal aspects, they need to still engage with the Municipality and other Inter-Governmental Departments.
3. GH followed up that he had no heard anything formal, but had been approached by local persons who had indicated they had been in talks with Transnet. He noted it should fall under Municipality but he indicated Coastal has no money for it, and it is not in his ward. The person he was talking to was saying the work would go up river to his ward to the railway bridge.
4. RO noted that Transnet always indicates they only have responsibility up to a point and the rest is municipality.
5. NR noted the drawings for canals have been out for some time, when they did their due diligence for the WUL it was shown to them, however nothing has happened. NR raised a concern that not only THS but the entire area is under threat.
6. GH noted that a neighbour has back filled the river and this will impact the river in the event of heavy rain.
7. NR responded that there is a property owner who shares a boundary with them in parallel with making presentation he backfilled the land, THS have engaged their legal department. This is due to the weir design and the need for that area for maintenance of the weir. The neighbour indicates he has backfilled to prevent illegal occupancy. The manner in which it was done they have had to engage legal and KZN EDTEA to investigate.
8. SH asked about the analyzer comparisons and understand if other industries are using the same, he requested further clarity.
9. NR noted it was particularly with the SO₂ analyzer. The PM¹⁰ works. the problem for SO₂ when they purchased it 12 years ago the technology was very new and the learning curve was sharp to operate and maintain. It was a first generation device. They have found it is failing regularly.

