

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	XVIII
DISCLAIMER BY THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR REGULATOR.....	XIX
TABLE OF CONTENTS	XX
LIST OF FIGURES.....	XXIV
LIST OF TABLES.....	XXVIII
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 THE WONDERFONTEINSPRUIT CATCHMENT (H. COETZEE)	1
1.2 GOLD AND URANIUM MINING IN THE WONDERFONTEINSPRUIT CATCHMENT AND ENVIRONS (F. WINDE).....	2
1.2.1 Goldfields and gold mines of the area	2
1.2.2 Gold deposition.....	3
1.3 URANIUM MINING (F. WINDE).....	4
1.3.1 Historical development.....	4
1.3.2 Uranium occurrence.....	5
1.4 RADIOMETRIC EVIDENCE FOR SEDIMENT CONTAMINATION (H. COETZEE)	6
1.5 BACKGROUND TO THIS PROJECT (H. COETZEE AND P. WADE)	7
1.6 SCOPE OF THIS REPORT (H. COETZEE)	9
1.6.1 Produce an inventory of contaminated sediments, to include locations, volumes and the total reservoir of radionuclides, as well as other toxic components.....	10
1.6.2 Look at the potential for the liberation of these toxins from the sediments, given the potential variations in physicochemical conditions in the river	11
1.6.3 Establish a real-time monitoring capacity for the short-term variations in physico-chemical parameters and monitor these continuously for a significant time period.....	11
1.6.4 Determine the contributions of the different source areas and, where possible, individual sources to the polluted waters and sediments within the catchment.....	11
1.6.5 Future remediation plans	11
1.6.6 Additional areas covered by the project:.....	12
2 IMPACTS OF GOLD-MINING ACTIVITIES ON WATER AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY IN THE WONDERFONTEINSPRUIT CATCHMENT (F. WINDE)	13
2.1 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEWATERING OF DOLOMITIC GROUNDWATER COMPARTMENTS	13
2.2 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH POINT DISCHARGES OF MINE EFFLUENTS	15
2.2.1 Discharge of fissure water from underground mine workings	15
2.2.2 Discharge of water used in mining processes ('process water')	16
2.3 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH UNCONTROLLED RELEASE OF WATER FROM DIFFUSE SOURCES	16
2.3.1 Other diffuse sources of uncontrolled release of water	19
2.3.2 Controlled release of waste water from point sources.....	20
2.3.3 Accelerating karst-related ground movements	22
2.3.4 Diverting stream flow into a pipeline	22
2.3.5 Internal use of fissure water by the mines	23
2.3.6 Import of water from areas outside the catchment via water service providers.....	23
2.4 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ALTERING OF RUN-OFF COEFFICIENTS OF OCCUPIED SURFACE AREAS	23
2.5 OTHER (INDIRECT) MINING-RELATED IMPACTS	24
2.6 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REWATERING OF FORMERLY DEWATERED AQUIFERS.....	24
2.6.1 Cessation of pumping fissure water into the Wonderfonteinsspruit.....	25
2.6.2 Increasing water levels in formerly dewatered compartments	25

2.6.3	<i>Ground-stability aspects</i>	27
2.6.4	<i>Water-quality aspects</i>	30
2.6.5	<i>Groundwater hydrodynamics</i>	31
3	INVENTORY OF URANIUM SOURCES AND PATHWAYS IN THE CATCHMENT	
	(F. WINDE)	35
3.1	BACKGROUND	35
3.2	SOURCES OF URANIUM POLLUTION IN THE WONDERFONTEINSPRUIT CATCHMENT	36
3.2.1	<i>Gold mining-related 'on-site sources' of uranium</i>	36
3.2.2	<i>Gold mining-related 'off-site sources' of uranium</i>	37
3.2.3	<i>Non- gold mining-related sources of uranium</i>	39
3.3	PATHWAYS AND MECHANISMS OF URANIUM MIGRATION FROM MINING SOURCES INTO THE ENVIRONMENT.....	40
3.3.1	<i>Dissolution of uranium from solid phases</i>	40
3.4	TRANSPORT OF URANIUM ALONG THE AQUEOUS PATHWAY	42
3.4.1	<i>Uranium from underground sources</i>	42
3.4.2	<i>Uranium from processed ore</i>	43
3.4.3	<i>Uranium from active and decommissioned slimes dams</i>	44
3.5	TRANSPORT OF DISSOLVED URANIUM WITHIN THE FLUVIAL SYSTEM	46
3.5.1	<i>Immobilisation processes in the Wonderfonteinspruit</i>	47
3.5.2	<i>Possible mechanisms of remobilisation of uranium in the Wonderfonteinspruit</i>	52
4	IDENTIFICATION OF CONTAMINANTS AND CONTAMINATED SITES (H. COETZEE AND G. NTSUME)	54
4.1	RESULTS.....	56
4.1.1	<i>Tier-1 risk assessment</i>	56
4.1.2	<i>Quantitative analytical results determined using X-Ray Fluorescence</i>	58
4.2	COMPILATION OF SEMIQUANTITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA	59
4.3	IDENTIFICATION OF CONTAMINANTS OF CONCERN	63
4.4	DISTRIBUTION OF URANIUM IN SEDIMENTS IN THE CATCHMENT.....	67
5	SOURCE APPORTIONMENT – RADIOGENIC LEAD-ISOTOPIC STUDY OF SELECTED SEDIMENT SAMPLES FROM THE CATCHMENT (H. COETZEE AND M. RADEMEYER) ..	69
5.1	LEAD ISOTOPES IN MINING ENVIRONMENTS	69
5.2	ANALYTICAL METHODS.....	70
5.3	RESULTS.....	70
5.4	CONCLUSIONS	72
6	IDENTIFICATION OF SOURCES OF WONDERFONTEINSPRUIT RIVER WATER USING SULPHUR AND STRONTIUM ISOTOPES (U. HORSTMANN AND M. RADEMEYER)	73
6.1	GENERAL	73
6.2	SAMPLE PREPARATION	73
6.3	S-ISOTOPE ANALYSIS.....	73
6.4	METHODOLOGY OF $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ ANALYSIS BY EA–GC–CF–IRMS (FROM PDZ APPLICATION NOTE 5).....	74
6.5	SR-ISOTOPE ANALYSIS.....	74
6.6	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	75
6.7	CONCLUSION	79

7	SPECIATION DETERMINATION OF HEAVY METALS AND URANIUM – BCR PROTOCOL SEQUENTIAL EXTRACTION (H. COETZEE, M. RADEMEYER AND G. NTSUME)	80
7.1	PHILOSOPHY OF SEQUENTIAL EXTRACTIONS	80
7.2	SAMPLE SELECTION	80
7.3	METHOD.....	81
7.4	DATA PROCESSING	81
7.5	RESULTS.....	82
7.5.1	<i>Discussion</i>	85
7.5.2	<i>Implications for understanding the transport of uranium</i>	86
7.5.3	<i>Speciation of metals</i>	87
7.5.4	<i>Radionuclide and other metal concentrations</i>	87
8	TEMPORAL VARIATION IN HYDROCHEMISTRY OF STREAM WATER – RESULTS OF A CONTINUOUS MONITORING STUDY (F. WINDE, H. COETZEE AND G. NTSUME)	88
8.1	METHOD (H. COETZEE).....	88
8.2	RANGE OF PARAMETER VARIATIONS THROUGHOUT THE MEASUREMENT PERIOD (F. WINDE)	89
8.2.1	<i>Water temperature</i>	90
8.2.2	<i>pH-value</i>	90
8.2.3	<i>Electrical conductivity (EC)</i>	91
8.2.4	<i>Redox potential (Eh)</i>	91
8.3	DYNAMICS AND PATTERNS OF TEMPORAL VARIATION (F. WINDE)	91
8.3.1	<i>Water temperature</i>	91
8.3.2	<i>pH-value</i>	95
8.3.3	<i>Electrical conductivity</i>	98
8.3.4	<i>Redox potential (Eh)</i>	100
8.4	RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MEASURED PARAMETERS (F. WINDE)	103
8.4.1	<i>Parameter interactions based on monthly-average time series</i>	103
8.4.2	<i>Relationships between parameters based on time series of real-time measurement</i>	108
8.5	RESPONSE OF PARAMETERS TO EVENTS (F. WINDE)	110
8.5.1	<i>Event on 28/12/2002</i>	111
8.5.2	<i>Event series in January 2003</i>	111
8.5.3	<i>Events of 11/5/2003</i>	115
8.6	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (F. WINDE).....	116
9	RISK ASSESSMENT (P. WADE, F. WINDE AND H COETZEE)	119
9.1	SUMMARY.....	119
9.1.1	<i>Chemicals of potential concern</i>	119
9.1.2	<i>Exposure assessment</i>	119
9.1.3	<i>Toxicity assessment</i>	119
9.1.4	<i>Risk characterisation</i>	119
9.2	INTRODUCTION.....	119
9.2.1	<i>Overview (General problem at site)</i>	119
9.2.2	<i>Site-specific objectives of the risk assessment</i>	121
9.2.3	<i>Overview of study design</i>	121
9.2.4	<i>Site background</i>	125
9.2.5	<i>Site identification</i>	125
9.2.6	<i>Site description</i>	126
9.2.7	<i>Map of site</i>	126
9.2.8	<i>General history</i>	126

9.2.9	<i>Historical studies of the site</i>	126
9.2.10	<i>Significant site reference points</i>	127
9.2.11	<i>Organisation of a risk assessment report</i>	128
9.3	PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS	128
9.3.1	<i>Process issues</i>	128
9.3.2	<i>Conceptual model</i>	128
9.3.3	<i>Process model</i>	131
9.4	IDENTIFICATION OF CHEMICALS OF POTENTIAL CONCERN	134
9.4.1	<i>Process issues</i>	134
9.4.2	<i>Source characterisation</i>	136
9.4.3	<i>Identification of contaminant of potential concern</i>	137
9.4.4	<i>Summary of chemicals of potential concern</i>	137
9.5	ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMISTRY OF URANIUM.....	138
9.5.1	<i>Atmospheric processes</i>	138
9.5.2	<i>Aquatic processes</i>	139
9.5.3	<i>Terrestrial and aquatic fate of uranium</i>	141
9.6	EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT	146
9.6.1	<i>Characterisation of exposure setting</i>	146
9.6.2	<i>Identification of exposure pathways</i>	146
9.6.3	<i>Fate and transport in release media</i>	147
9.6.4	<i>Quantification of exposure</i>	150
9.6.5	<i>Identification of uncertainties</i>	150
9.6.6	<i>Summary of exposure assessment</i>	150
9.7	TOXICITY ASSESSMENT	151
9.7.1	<i>Health effects of uranium and uranium compounds</i>	151
9.7.2	<i>Minimal risk levels (MRLs) of uranium</i>	151
9.7.3	<i>Health effects by route of exposure</i>	151
9.7.4	<i>Discussion of health effects by observed symptoms</i>	154
9.7.5	<i>Regulatory limits</i>	156
9.7.6	<i>Summary of toxicity information</i>	159
9.8	RISK CHARACTERISATION — SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND TABULATION OF THE RISK CHARACTERISATION.....	162
10	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (H. COETZEE)	166
10.1	THE IMPACTS OF MINING AS SEEN IN ANALYTICAL DATA.....	166
10.2	ISOTOPIC DATA.....	166
10.3	TEMPORAL VARIATIONS AS DETERMINED USING REAL-TIME CONTINUOUS MONITORING	167
10.4	RISK ASSESSMENT	167
10.5	MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM PREDICTIONS	168
10.6	METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	170
10.7	RECOMMENDATIONS	171
11	REFERENCES.....	172
	APPENDIX – ANALYTICAL DATA	184