



Media statement by the Bench Marks Foundation

Amplats' information inadequate for proper green study

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Information provided by Anglo American Platinum (Amplats) in its sustainable development reporting (SDR) over a period of 13 years is inadequate to fully assess a mining company's impact on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Releasing a study in its Policy Gap series in Johannesburg today, entitled "Critical analysis of Amplats Sustainable Development Reporting (SDR) from 2003 to 2015", the report examines Amplats' sustainable development reporting from 2003 to 2015.

The study says that it could not find any quantification of residual impacts on habitat types, key species and ecosystems. Also missing was quantification of the mitigation hierarchy, which involves four steps:

- Impact avoidance measures and their ecological benefits;
- Mitigation measures (eg alien species control activities, their surface areas and effectiveness);
- Rehabilitation measures (eg progress of closure plans in surface area, life-after-mining potential use and associated biodiversity); and
- Offset measures (eg residual impacts targeted by offset measures, offset ratios and uncertainties, surface, and effectiveness of the latter, as per international guidelines and best practices).

Executive Director of Bench Marks, John Capel says: "One would expect such aspects to be fully reported on if the company was committed to biodiversity stewardship."

However, the company is praised in the study for its dramatic increase in annual water recycling from 2003 to 2015 (+339%) and its progressive decrease in annual use of potable water from external sources (eg rivers) from 2008 to 2015 (-37%).

Nevertheless, the KPIs disclosed by Amplats were insufficient to provide an accurate and meaningful assessment of Amplats' water footprints and its impact on local communities and water ecosystems, the study found.

“Currently, Amplats’ information on water disclosure is focused on internal risk management for production purposes, not on water availability and quality for farmers, local communities, and the natural environment.

“Additional disclosure is required, notably on the availability of clean water to surrounding communities and businesses (eg farmers), the residual pollution levels of water discharges (grey water footprint), the status of groundwater reserves and the ecological status of receiving freshwater ecosystems (eg surface and groundwater quantity and quality and impact of acid mine drainage),” according to the report.

Another area of focus in the study was that of air emissions. It noted that net GHG emissions had risen from 4 582 kilotons of GHG in 2003 to 70 059 kilotons of GHG in 2015. This represented Amplats’ carbon debt to society, since GHG emissions accumulate in the atmosphere.

The study notes that carbon neutrality, at least for scope 1 (internally generated) emissions, “should be easily reached. They have been reached by many other global corporations. Amplats thus lacks ambition in terms of contributing decisively to the fight against climate change.”

Turning to the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on communities, Bench Marks says in its study that Amplats has shown no sustained decrease in emissions since 2004, although there was a significant decrease of sulphur dioxide from 2003 to 2004.

“Yet how many workers and local communities have been affected? What are the impacted areas? How much will it cost to simply eliminate the emissions sources and exposure risks? Failure to report on this aspect says nothing. The fact that the emission of sulphur dioxide remained at the same level from 2004 to 2015 effectively means a sustained negative impact on communities.”

Bench Marks’ Policy Gap series consists of evidence-based research. The first Policy Gap on the six big platinum producers in the North West Province Bojanala district, noted by the media as seminal research, was launched in 2007. To date, 12 Policy Gaps have been produced, ranging in subject matter from copper, platinum and diamond mining, to relocated communities, the impact of mining people’s health, and the Marikana massacre.

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