

Response to Requirement Notice

(Regional Planning Interests Act 2014, s44)

RPI24/008— Rio Tinto — The Desert Project (EPM 28700)

ATTACHMENT A

Information required for assessment against the SEA Criteria – Schedule 2, Part 5 of the *Regional Planning Interest Regulation 2014*

1.	<p><u>Issue:</u> No GIS data files were also included in support of the application.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u> Provide the GIS data files for the proposed activities identified in section 2 of the RPI Assessment Application Form lodged in support of the application.</p>
2.	<p><u>Issue:</u> Section 4.3 Riparian processes, as contained within the Assessment Application Report dated 29 November 2024 (hereon referred to as the Supporting Information) states:</p> <p><i>Drilling activity in riparian areas will be minimised. Consequently, it is not expected that the proposed exploration activities would have widespread or irreversible impacts on riparian function in the area of activity or the wider tenement area.</i></p> <p>However, the location and area of drill pads and tracks proposed in riverine areas is not clearly identified or quantified.</p> <p>Consequently, it is unclear if minimising drilling activity in riparian areas will be sufficient to prevent widespread or irreversible impacts to riparian areas.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <p>Please take the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Identify the locations (map and coordinates) of disturbance (drill sites and access tracks) proposed within riverine areas.b) Quantify the area of disturbance proposed within riverine areas.c) Provide a description of the impacts of vegetation clearing in riverine areas on the environmental attributes of water quality, riparian processes and wildlife corridors.d) Provide a description of the mitigation and management strategies proposed to be utilised to reduce impacts to the identified environmental attributes.
3.	<p><u>Issue:</u> Section 2.3 Water Supply, within the Supporting Information proposes that water</p>

	<p>may be extracted from groundwater bores. However, it is unclear if this may impact groundwater-dependant ecosystems in riverine areas. It is unclear how section 15(1)(b)(iii) of Schedule 2, Part 5 of the Regional Planning Interests Regulation 2014 is to be achieved if groundwater draw down occurs in the dry season (thereby potentially leading to potential loss of groundwater connection for groundwater-dependant ecosystems).</p> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <p>Please take the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide an assessment of any potential impacts the extraction of groundwater may have on groundwater-dependant ecosystems. b) Provide a description of the mitigation and management strategies proposed to be utilised to reduce impacts to the identified environmental attributes.
4.	<p><u>Issue:</u></p> <p>It is unclear from the Supporting Information how waterway crossings may be undertaken or where they are or how they have been minimised.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <p>Please take the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify the locations of proposed waterway crossings. b) Provide a description of the mitigation and management strategies proposed to be utilised to reduce impacts to the identified environmental attributes.

Company Response:

Please find below information in response to the Requirements Notice for RIDA application number RPI24/008 – Rio Tinto – The Desert Project (EPM 28700).

1.	<p>Issue 1:</p> <p><i>Please find attached shapefile for the proposed activities. Note: The Shapefiles include the full program of work, some of which falls outside of the SEA area. Please see Appendix 1 for map showing program of work with SEA boundary.</i></p>
2.	<p>Issue 2:</p> <p>a) Identify the locations (map and coordinates) of disturbance (drill sites and access tracks) proposed within riverine areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>No drill sites or access tracks are proposed within riverine areas.</i> <p>b) Quantify the area of disturbance proposed within riverine areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>As there are no planned drill sites or tracks in riverine areas, the amount of disturbance proposed within riverine areas is 0ha.</i> <p>c) Provide a description of the impacts of vegetation clearing in riverine areas on the environmental attributes of water quality, riparian processes and wildlife corridors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>As there are no planned drill sites or tracks in riverine areas, there will be no vegetation clearing within riverine areas and will not impact water quality, riparian processes and wildlife corridors.</i> <p>d) Provide a description of the mitigation and management strategies proposed to be utilised to reduce impacts to the identified environmental attributes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>As there are no planned drill sites or tracks in riverine areas, there will be no vegetation clearing within riverine areas and will not impact water quality, riparian processes and wildlife corridors. Although no activities are proposed in riverine areas, the environmental authority is conditions with the “Eligibility Criteria and Standard Conditions for Exploration and Mineral Development Projects v2” (the Code). There are a number of conditions in the Code relating to mitigation strategies for carrying out activities near riverine areas and RTX will comply with the conditions and recommendations under the Code. This is suitable for the types of activities proposed. In addition, under the Code RTX cannot drill, excavate or clear vegetation in standing waters, wetlands or lakes, and cannot drill, excavate or clear vegetation on sloped banks, or from 3m from the top of the bank or 5m from the toe of the bank and cannot drill, excavate or clear vegetation within the levee or on levee banks.</i>
3	<p>Issue 3:</p> <p>a) Provide an assessment of any potential impacts the extraction of groundwater may have on groundwater-dependent ecosystems.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For the proposed activities, there is no requirement for the abstraction of groundwater. If water is needed during the campaign, it will be trucked in from the nearest town or will be provided from the landholder where it is stored in above ground tanks.</i> <p>b) Provide a description of the mitigation and management strategies proposed to be utilised to reduce impacts to the identified environmental attributes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As noted above, there will be no water abstraction during the campaign. There are groundwater dependent ecosystems surrounding the tenement area. However, no groundwater dependent ecosystems are present within the tenement area. Please see Appendix 2 for map of groundwater dependent ecosystems. Additionally, the type of drilling proposed is air core. With this drilling method, the holes are rather shallow, anticipated to reach approximately 50m depth on average based on the available data. At this depth, it is not expected that groundwater will be encountered. Once the hole has been completed, it will be immediately filled and capped preventing any groundwater contamination from the surface. RTX will comply with the conditions of the Code that relate to exploration drill holes, surface water and groundwater contamination.</i>
4.	<p><u>Issue 4:</u></p> <p>a) Identify the locations of proposed waterway crossings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is no requirement for waterway crossings to undertake the proposed activities.</i> <p>b) Provide a description of the mitigation and management strategies proposed to be utilised to reduce impacts to the identified environmental attributes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As there is no requirement to undertake waterway crossings, no specific mitigation strategies are being proposed. However, as outlined in earlier sections there are conditions under the Code relating to waterway crossings and how to achieve these in an environmentally sustainable way and provides adequate mitigation strategies.</i>