

1 INTRODUCTION

This document represents the final report of a study commissioned by the Fund for Research into Industrial Development, Growth and Equity to examine the socio-economic impact of the phasing out of asbestos in South Africa. The recommendation to phase out asbestos emerged from the multi-stakeholder National Asbestos Summit held in 1998.

This study is intended to assist NEDLAC constituencies (i.e. government, business and labour) understand the potential socio-economic impacts of the proposed phasing out of asbestos.

The study has followed a 3-phased approach:

- The first phase, Desk Research, focused on an examination of readily available published information relating to the historical background to the use of asbestos; international codes of practice and regulations regarding the safe use of asbestos; alternative fibres and substitute products that could be used to replace asbestos; and building a model of the South African asbestos mining and asbestos using industry sectors
- The second phase involved Field Research and Economic Cost Benefit Analysis. Interviews were conducted with representatives from a variety of organisations operating in the industries where asbestos is currently being used as a raw material input to manufacturing processes. These organisations included: regulatory authorities; research institutions; industry associations; manufacturing, distribution and end user/customer businesses; and labour unions
- The third and last phase was the preparation of this Final Report and the accompanying Appendices to the Final Report document

1.1 FINAL REPORT STRUCTURE

This final report has been structured to facilitate debate and decision-making on the proposal to phase-out asbestos and consists of two separate, complimentary documents: the main Final Report document and the Appendices to the Final Report document.

1.1.1 The Final Report

This document presents a comprehensive overview of the international and South African experience in mining asbestos and using it as a key raw material input in the manufacturing of a variety of industrial and consumer materials and products. Furthermore, it discusses the socio-economic impacts of phasing out asbestos in South Africa. The information that is reflected in this report is a summary of the more detailed information that appears in the appendices to the final report

1.1.2 The Appendices to the Final Report

This document reflects more detailed information that has been extracted from the Phase 1 desk research, the Phase 2 field research and the Economic Cost Benefit Analysis. As such, it compliments and expands on the information contained in the main Final Report document. Ideally, these two documents should be read in conjunction with each other. Having done so, the reader should then be able to function effectively, working with the main body Final Report document on its own.