

Lynette Herbst

From: Lynette Herbst
Sent: Friday, 19 August 2022 14:42
Cc: PPP
Subject: Notification of Application for an Environmental Authorisation and Water Use Licence for the proposed God's Window Skywalk Project in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, Mpumalanga Province

Attachments: Proposed God's Window Skywalk project - Background Information Document_English.pdf; Proposed God's Window Skywalk project - Notification of draft BAR for comment_English.pdf

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Dear Sir/Madam

Notice is hereby given in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (amended April 2017), under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (No.107 of 1998) (“NEMA”), that **Mapulana Canyon (Pty) Ltd** (henceforth Mapulana Canyon) proposes the development of the **God’s Window Skywalk** at God’s Window near Graskop in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province.

The proposed activity triggers Listed Activities in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations Government Notice (GN) R983 and GN R985 (as amended in 2017), well as the National Water Act, 1998 (No. 36 of 1998) (“NWA”). Therefore, an Environmental Authorisation (EA) and a Water Use Licence (WUL) are required.

Zutari (Pty) Ltd has been appointed as the independent Environmental Application Practitioner (EAP) to prepare and submit the applications for EA and a WUL to the competent authorities, the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environment Affairs (DARDLEA) and the Mpumalanga Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), respectively.

A **Background Information Document (BID)** that contains more information on the proposed project is attached.

The attached notification letter and BID are also available in Sepedi and Afrikaans. Please contact us if you require these translated documents.

- The Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) is available for comment for 30 days until **Monday, the 19th of September 2022**.
- Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) can also comment on the water uses listed in the BID, but for a period of 60 days, until **Monday, the 17th of October 2022**.

Should you wish to **access the full Draft BAR**, specialist reports, and/or the Environmental Management Programme, please follow this link: <https://www.zutari.com/gods-window/>

Should you wish to be **registered as an I&AP** or wish to comment, please register using the link above or contact the Zutari Public Participation office at:

- **Email:** PPP@zutari.com
- **Phone:** +27 12 427 2235
- **Post:** PO Box 74381, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria, 0040

Kindly extend the notice and invitation to comment to any other I&APs you may be aware of.

Kind regards,

Lynette Herbst *MSc (Environmental Management), Pr.Sci.Nat.*

SENIOR CONSULTANT, COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT | ZUTARI

E Lynette.Herbst@zutari.com W zutari.com



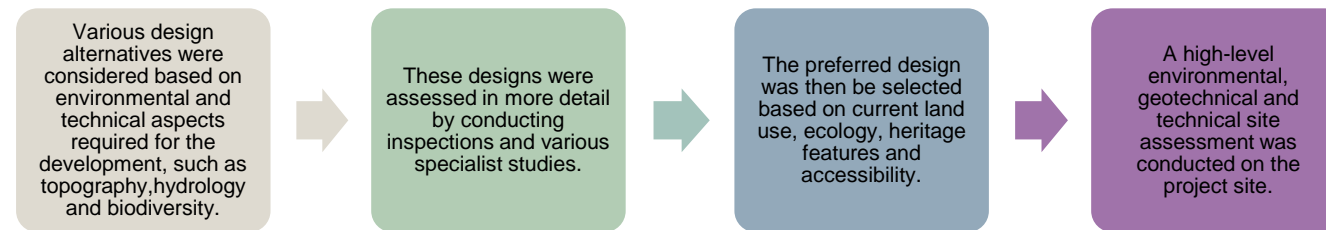
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DISCLAIMER

6. What is a Basic Assessment process?

- ▶ This project requires an EA in terms of NEMA and the EIA Regulations.
 - ▶ Once an application for EA has been made, the BA commences and focuses on a broad range of issues. The BA Report (BAR) must provide sufficient information to facilitate an understanding of these issues.
 - ▶ Specialist input is used to identify the impacts, with ecological (flora, fauna and wetlands), social, heritage and traffic specialists all forming part of the team.
- ▶ The goal of the BA process is to:
 - Assess activities of which the impacts are generally known and manageable
 - Consider the potential environmental impacts of the proposed activity
 - Assess possible mitigation measures
 - Assess whether there are any significant issues or impacts that might require further investigation
 - Invite public comment and input on the proposed project

7. What has been done to date?



8. Why are we sending you this notice?

A development like this requires permission from the Competent Authority to proceed, and anyone who is interested in or potentially affected by the project can take part in the regulatory process.

- ▶ Zutari (Pty) Ltd was appointed by Mapulana Canyon as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to manage the new application for an EA and Water Use License (WUL) for this project.
 - ▶ This includes the Public Participation Process (PPP), in accordance with Chapter 6 of the EIA Regulations.
 - ▶ The PPP is crucial, as the public can help us to identify the possible positive and negative impacts the project might have on people and the environment.
- ▶ A BAR is compiled using all the specialist studies and various other pertinent project information and this report is made available to the I&APs for a period of 30 calendar days. This is referred to as the “public comment period”.
 - ▶ All comments received during the public comment period will be captured in a Comments and Response Report (CRR) which will be incorporated into the final BAR.
 - ▶ The Competent Authority, which is the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs, must give or deny permission for the project after they have assessed the BAR, specialist reports, and comments received from I&APs like yourself.

9. How to get involved

If you would like to register as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) to receive information, if you want to comment on the project, or if you have any questions, please contact us via any of the following channels:

✉	PPP@Zutari.com	✉	PO Box 74381, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria, 0040
☎	012 427 2235		

Should you wish to access the full Draft BAR and WULA report, please use the following link: <https://zutari.com/gods-window/>. Please submit your comments no later than Monday, 19 September 2022 for the Draft BAR and no later than Monday, 17 October 2022 for the water uses. Hardcopies of the reports can be viewed at Thaba Chweu Local Municipality Graskop Administration Unit; Bushbuckridge Tourism and Information Centre; and the God's Window security office.

Background Information Document for the God's Window Skywalk Project

1. What is planned?

Mapulana Canyon (Pty) Ltd, in partnership with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) via a Public Private Partnership Agreement intends to develop a new state of the art tourist facility at God's Window.

The development will include (but is not limited to) a skywalk, a sky bridge, restaurants and dining areas, an auditorium, administrative offices and the upgrading of existing walkways.



The project entails the development of a tourism facility at God's Window. The project will comprise an area of approximately 25 000 m², consisting of a lower and upper level. The tourism facility includes the following main attractions, spaces and infrastructure:

- ▶ A visitor's centre including:
 - Restaurants, dining areas, cafes and cocktail bars;
 - A museum area;
 - Reception lobbies, courtyards and foyers;
 - An auditorium and conference facilities;
 - Lecture rooms;
 - Formalised craft market area;
 - Ablution facilities for staff and guests;
 - Administrative offices.
- ▶ Skywalk viewing area;
- ▶ A skybridge;
- ▶ A “zero gravity” room;
- ▶ Stormwater attenuation pond (to manage stormwater run-off and to prevent erosion);
- ▶ An onsite Wastewater Treatment Package Plant;
- ▶ Formalised parking area (to accommodate light vehicles, buses and taxi shuttles); and
- ▶ Upgrading of the existing pathways.

The facility will also include technical spaces such as IT server rooms, electrical rooms, as well as fire and wet services.

2. Where is it planned?

The project is proposed at God's Window on the Remainder of the farm De Houtbosch 503 KT and Portion 2 of the Farm Lisbon 531 KT. This is in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality in the Ehlanzeni District Municipality of the Mpumalanga Province.

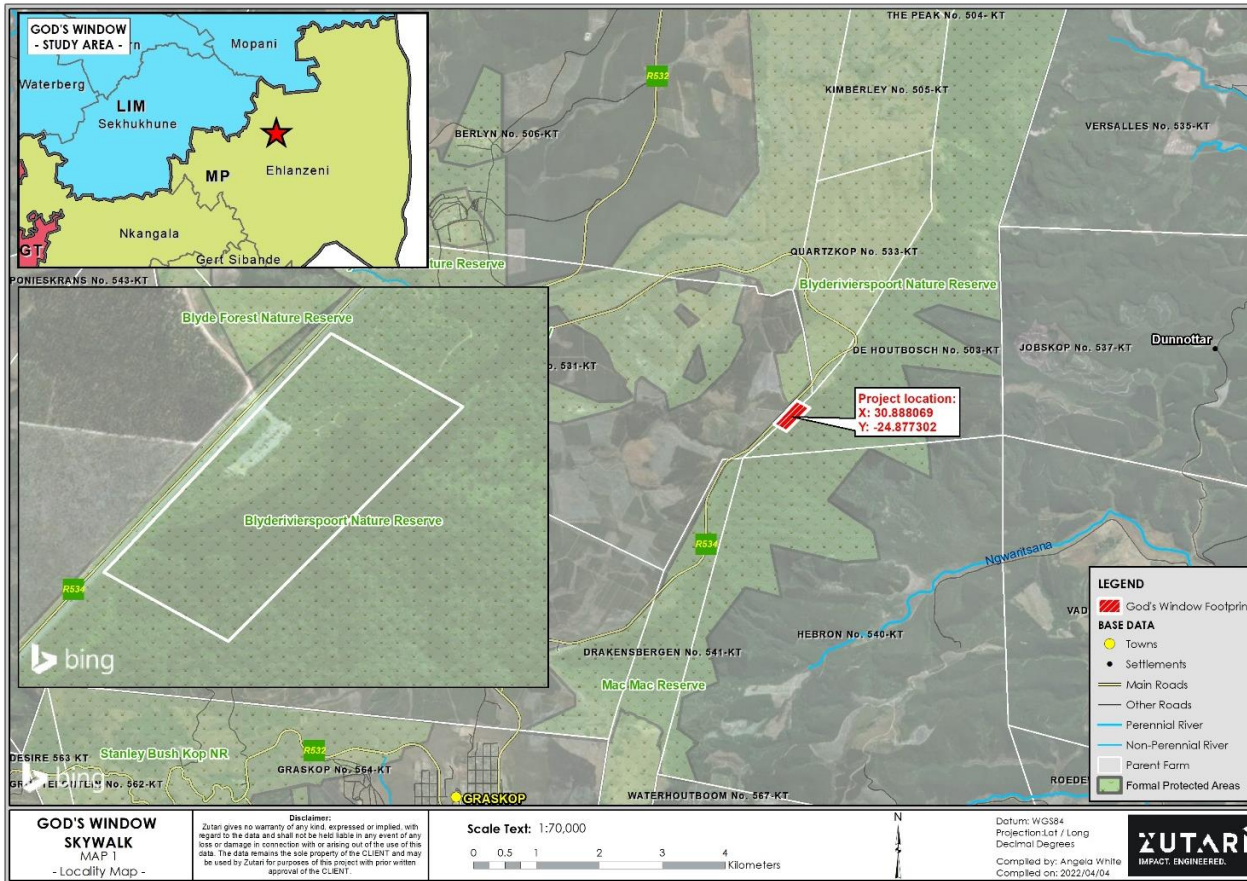


Figure 1 | The location of the proposed project site at God's Window

3. Who is undertaking this Project?

- ▶ God's Window is in the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, which is managed by the MTPA since it is a Protected Area.
- ▶ The land of the entire Reserve has been claimed by four communities.
- ▶ The claimant communities are represented by four Communal Property Associations (CPAs) who, together, form the Blyde Valley 04 CPAs.
- ▶ The four claimant communities are represented by the Maorabjang, Moletele, Setlhare, and Mahubahuba a Bokone CPAs.
- ▶ It is proposed that the God's Window Skywalk Project is managed by a Special Purpose Vehicle involving the CPAs in partnership with the MTPA and other project developers.
- ▶ Thus, the abovementioned Public Private Partnership Agreement has been entered into with Motsamayi Tourism Group (Pty) Ltd for the design, finance, build, operation and transfer of the God's Window Skywalk.



4. Listed activities

The following Listed Activities will be applied for in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (GN R 982 of 2014 as amended), and water uses in terms of the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998).

No.	Listed activity
GN R983 of 2014 (Basic Assessment [BA])	
12	Infrastructure, dams and weirs with a physical footprint of 100 m ² or more within 32 m of a watercourse.
19	The infilling or depositing, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, pebbles, or rock from a watercourse.
25	Treatment of effluent, wastewater or sewage.
27	The clearance of indigenous vegetation.
30	Any process or activity identified in terms of section 53(1) of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act.
GN R985 of 2014 (Provincial BA)	
10	Infrastructure for storage and handling of a dangerous good within a protected area.
14	Dams, weirs, infrastructure or structures within 32 m of a watercourse, inside a protected area.
National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998)	
21(a)	Taking water from a water resource.
21(b)	Storage of water.
21(c)	Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse.
21(f)	Discharging waste or water containing waste into a water resource.
21(i)	Altering the beds, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.

5. I heard of this project years ago. Why is this process happening again?

The MTPA was granted an Environmental Authorisation (EA) by the Department of Environmental Affairs (now, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment) to develop the God's Window Skywalk project on 5 June 2015 (ref. no. 14/12/16/3/3/88). Due to various delays in the start of construction, the finalisation of the Public Private Partnership Agreement and change in architectural designs, and since the EIA Regulations were amended during this period, the project needs to undergo a new EA process to ensure it is valid, applicable and addresses all current impacts and aspects related to the proposed development.

19 August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION AND WATER USE LICENCE FOR THE PROPOSED GOD'S WINDOW SKYWALK PROJECT IN THE THABA CHWEU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

MDARDLEA reference no.: TBC

Notice is hereby given in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (amended April 2017), under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (No.107 of 1998) ("NEMA"), that Mapulana Canyon (Pty) Ltd (henceforth Mapulana Canyon) proposes the development of the God's Window Skywalk at God's Window near Graskop in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province. The proposed activity triggers Listed Activities in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations Government Notice (GN) R983 and GN R985 (as amended in 2017), well as the National Water Act, 1998 (No. 36 of 1998) ("NWA"). Therefore, an Environmental Authorisation (EA) and a Water Use Licence (WUL) are required. Zutari (Pty) Ltd has been appointed as the independent Environmental Application Practitioner (EAP) to prepare and submit the applications for EA and a WUL to the Competent Authorities (CA), the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environment Affairs (MDARDLEA) and the Mpumalanga Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), respectively.

A Background Information Document (BID) that contains more detailed information on the proposed project is attached.

- ▶ The Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR), compiled in terms of the NEMA and the EIA Regulations GN R 982 of 2014, as amended, is now available for comment for a period of **30** days until Monday, the 19th of September 2022.
- ▶ Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) can also comment on the water uses listed in the BID, but for a period of **60** days, until Monday, the 17th of October 2022.

Should you wish to access the full Draft BAR, please use the following link:

<https://zutari.com/gods-window/>

Or view a hardcopy at the following locations:

- ▶ Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, Graskop Administration Unit
- ▶ Bushbuckridge Tourism and Information Centre
- ▶ At the God's Window security office

Should you wish to be registered as an I&AP or wish to comment, please register using the link above. Alternatively, contact the Zutari Public Participation office at:

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- ▶ **Post:** PO Box 74381, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria, 0040

Kindly extend the notice and invitation to comment to any other I&APs you may be aware of.

Yours faithfully

Lynette Herbst
Public Participation Coordinator

Natanya Whitehorn
Environmental Assessment
Practitioner

