

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

PROPOSED EXXARO BELFAST RESETTLEMENT PROJECT, EMAKHAZENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to register as interested and affected parties in the National Environmental Management Act, No. 107 of 1998 (NEMA) and National Water Act, No 36 of 1998 (NWA) Processes and to obtain their initial comments on the proposed project.

The purpose of the Basic Assessment is to identify and evaluate feasible alternatives and potential impacts, and to recommend measures to avoid or reduce negative impacts and enhance positive impacts. The decision-making authority is the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs in accordance with the NEMA as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014.

The purpose of the application submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is to allow the DWS the opportunity to regulate all water uses such as the taking and storing of water, impeding and/or diverting the flow of water or diversion activities, or waste discharges into a water course.

Please register yourself as an interested and affected party and submit your comments on the proposed project.

Either complete a Response Form, write a letter, call or e-mail the public participation office.

Public Participation office

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YOUR COMMENT IS IMPORTANT

Your comment on any aspect of the proposed project, the Basic Assessment, its Public Participation Process and issues that need to be investigated, will help focus the process and assist the authorities in their

Background

Exxaro Coal Mpumalanga (Pty) Ltd is proposing to establish a resettlement village of approximately 9 hectares as part of their RAP for the Belfast mine. The site is located north of the N4 freeway approximately 11.5 km from Belfast Town and 10 km east of the N4 & R33 interchange. The settlement is proposed on portion 13 of the farm Zoekop 426 JS, part of the remainder of the farm Paardeplaats 425 JS, and portion 13 of the farm Leeuwbank 427 JS. The area proposed is situated in an undeveloped rural area with no existing water, sewerage, internal roads and storm water infrastructure.

The project will consist of a residential component with 32 x 2500 m² plots and the rest being left open for grazing and other potential agricultural uses as may be required by the community to be resettled. The intention is to reserve 500m² per plot for residential and outside buildings with the remaining 2000m² for food production in the form of a combination of poultry, trees, dryland cropping and a homestead vegetable garden. Water for the households will be obtained

Who is doing the Basic Environmental Impact Assessment?

Aurecon has been appointed as independent consultant to conduct the Basic Assessment and NWA processes. Aurecon is familiar with the project area, and is known for its independence in assessment of impacts and assisting stakeholders to contribute to the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Legal requirements

Government Notices (GN) No. R 983, R984 and R 985 of 2014, promulgated in terms of the NEMA, lists activities that may not commence without a Basic Assessment (BA) process and environmental authorisation from the competent authority, in this case the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (MDARDLEA). An application to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) will also be required due to the close proximity of the plots to the wetlands.

Please note that some project details may change as engineering investigations proceed.

The relevant listed activities are as follows:

GN R 983, Activity 27: *“The clearance of an area of 1 hectares or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is require for –*

- (i) The undertaking of a linear activity; or*
- (ii) Maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.”*

GN 983, Activity 28: *“Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments where such land was used for agriculture or afforestation on or after 1 April 1998 and where such development:*

- (i) Will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare.”*

GN 985, Activity 12: *“The clearance of an area of 300 square meters or more of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan:*

- (c – ii) Within a critical biodiversity areas as identified within bioregional plans”*

As per section 21 of the National Water Act 36 of 1998, an application to Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) will be submitted for the following activities as listed in Section 21 of the National Water Act 36 of 1998:

- 21 (a) – Taking water from a water resource*
- 21(c) - impeding and/or diverting the flow of water;*
- 21(g) - disposing of waste in a manner which may detrimentally impact on a water resource;*
- 21(i) - altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.*

What is a Basic Environmental Impact Assessment?

A Basic Assessment is an impact assessment process used to assess potential negative and positive consequences of a proposed project, and recommends ways to enhance positive impacts and to avoid or reduce negative impacts.

The BA process will include:

- a) Stakeholder Engagement;
- b) Environmental assessment of current site conditions;
- c) A description of the proposed activity;
- d) Description of the environment that may be affected;
- e) Description of need and desirability of the proposed activity;
- f) Identification of alternatives; and
- g) Description and assessment of the significance of environmental impacts.

Consideration of authority and stakeholder comments forms an intrinsic part of the Basic Assessment process.

Authority decision-making and a public appeal opportunity will occur after submission of the final Basic Assessment Report to the authority.

Process to be followed

During the public participation phase, it is usual to consult with:

- Relevant authorities at various levels;
- Relevant stakeholders;
- The proponent; and
- The public at large.

The following activities will be utilised to achieve the aforementioned objectives:

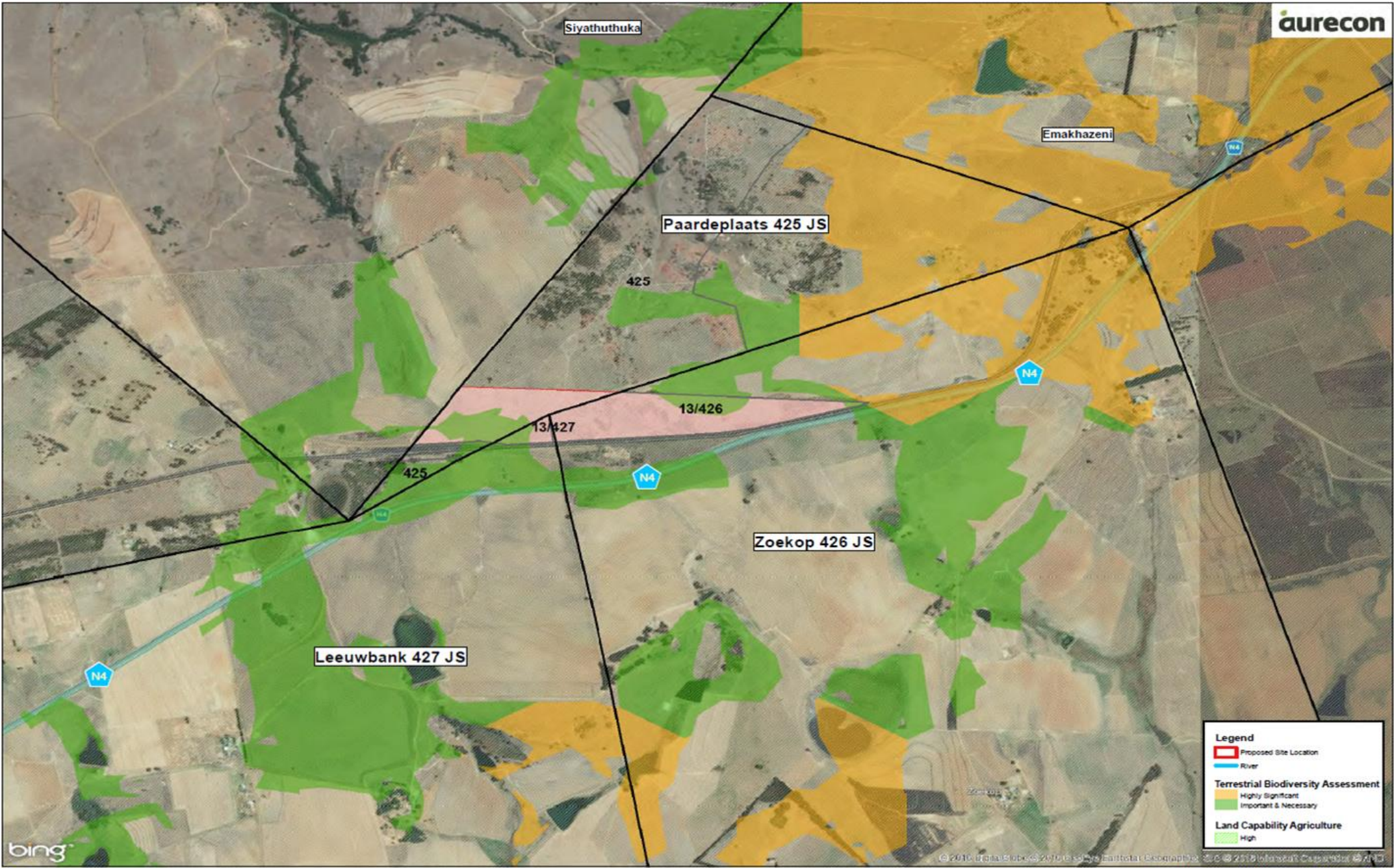
- Advertising: On-site and in a local newspaper;
- Supplying people with an opportunity to comment and register as interested and affected parties; and
- The Draft Basic Assessment Report will be made available at the Emakhazeni Public Library or will be provided on a CD if requested. I&APs will be notified when the document will be available for review and will then have a 30-day opportunity to comment on the Draft Basic Assessment Report prior to submission.

Once the decision has been made by the Competent Authority, letters will be distributed to notify the registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) of the decision and where it will be available to review.

Siyathuthuka

Emakhazeni

Proposed Site Location



Legend

- Proposed Site Location
- River
- Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment**
 - Highly Significant
 - Important & Necessary
- Land Capability Agriculture**
 - High

**BASIC ASSESSMENT FOR THE
PROPOSED EXXARO BELFAST RESETTLEMENT PROJECT
INVITATION TO REGISTER AND COMMENT, MAY 2016**

Please complete and return to Aurecon in order to be included in the public participation process:

PO Box 3135 Nelspruit, 1200
Fax: 013 753 2116

Tel: 013 752 7055
Anne-Mari.White@aurecongroup.com

TITLE		FIRST NAME	
INITIALS		SURNAME	
ORGANISATION			
POSTAL ADDRESS		POSTAL CODE	
TEL NUMBER		FAX NUMBER	
CELL NUMBER			
E-MAIL			

Yes, I would like to participate in this Environmental Authorisation Process YES

No, I am not interested NO

COMMENTS: (please use separate sheets if you wish)

1. The following must be considered in the Basic Assessment Process:

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2. Please add the following colleagues/friends to the mailing list:

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We thank you for your participation