



## **MP STREAM ENVIRONMENTAL AND SAFETY PLANNERS (PTY) LTD**

Reg No: 2021/318370/07

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID) BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (BAR) PROPOSED CITRUS PLANTATION ON PORTION 5 OF THE FARM DUMA 201-JU, CITY MBOMBELA MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

#### **PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

MP Stream Environmental and Safety Planners (Pty) Ltd was appointed by AEONIK FARMS SEQUOIA (Pty) Ltd to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment [Basic Assessment Process] in terms of Regulations 19 to 20 of the Regulations compiled in terms of Chapter 4 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations of 2017, for this project which will be registered with the Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Land & environmental Affairs (DARDLEA).

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to inform interested and/or affected parties (I&AP's) of the Environmental Basic Assessment Process (BA) that will be conducted for the proposed clearing of indigenous vegetation for citrus plantation (macadamia).

In addition to supplying information about the proposed Project, this BID will also provide I&AP's with the opportunity to:

- Register as stakeholders in the public participation process; and
- Provide initial comments on the proposed project.

#### **BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

AEONIK FARMS SEQUOIA (Pty) Ltd is the Developer of the proposed clearing of indigenous vegetation for citrus plantation. The proposed project seeks to clear less than 20 hectares (19.9ha) with a total extent of approximately 220 hectares.

The applicant will refurbish and repair the depilated infrastructure that entail repairing the existing access road, re-trenching the existing chalets, replacing the old deck, upgrading the staff house, and establishing firebreaks (Does not constitute listed activities in terms of NEMA).

#### **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Basic Assessment (BA) process for this assessment will be conducted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA) 2014 EIA regulations (GNR 982, of 14 December 2014), as amended

The NEMA 2014 EIA regulations (as amended) list activities that may have a significant impact on the environment, and which consequently require

In terms of the Environmental Regulations promulgated under the National Environmental Management Act (Act. No. 107 of 1998), the EIA will be conducted for the proposed development in terms of the new Environmental Impact Assessment [EIA] Regulations, 2017.

The main activity (amongst others) potentially associated with the proposed project, calling for a BA process to be followed, is the following:

- *GNR 327 (Listing Notice 1) Item 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 required for – (i) the undertaking of a linear activity.*
- *GNR 324 (Listing Notice 3) Item 12 i The clearance of an area of 300 square metres 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:
 
  - (ii) within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans.
  - (f) In Mpumalanga:
    - aa. A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies;
    - bb. National Protected Area Expansion Strategy Focus Areas;
    - cc. World Heritage Sites;
    - hh Areas within 10 kilometres from national parks or world heritage sites or 5 kilometres from any other protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA or from the core area of a biosphere reserve, where such areas comprise indigenous vegetation;*

COMPETENT AUTHORITY The Competent Authority, as described according to the EIA Regulations 2014, for this proposed project is the Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Land & Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) which will ultimately be responsible for providing a decision on whether the proposed Activity will be granted Environmental Authorisation (EA) in terms of NEMA.

#### **WHAT IS A BASIC ASSESSMENT?**

A Basic Assessment is a planning and decision-making tool used to identify the environmental and social consequences of a proposed project, before the development takes place. The purpose of the BA is to describe the potential consequences of the proposed development in environmental, economic and social terms. Public issues and concerns must therefore be identified timeously so that these can be recorded and responded to in the BA. All comments received in writing are included in the submission to DEA for their consideration. During the BA Process, a Draft Basic Assessment Report will be released. Once the public and authorities have had adequate opportunity to review the draft report and submit comments on its content, a Final Basic Assessment Report will be submitted to DEA for a decision.

#### **THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

Public Participation will be for this proposed project.

The key objective of public participation during this BA will be to provide I&AP's with sufficient and transparent information on an on-going basis in order to ensure effective participation throughout the process. As part of this public participation process the I&AP's will be provided with the opportunity to comment on the findings of the Basic Assessment Report, which will be made available for public review during the process.

It is important that relevant I&AP's are identified and involved in the public participation process from the outset of the proposed project. In order to ensure effective public participation, the public participation process includes the following steps:

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS FOR BASIC ASSESSMENT**

##### **PHASE 1**

Notification of commencement of BA Process

Primary purpose is to notify the IAP's of the project and invite them to register for the project, and include them in the following activities:

- Advertise the EIA Process (local or regional press)

- Notification/Invitation letters to identified stakeholders, IAP's and Organs of State informing & inviting them to become a part of the Public Participation Process
- Distribution of the BID

## **PHASE 2**

Basic Assessment Process Consultation with & transfer of information to Stakeholders & IAP's in order to identify issues associated with the proposed project. Consultation will be undertaken through:

- Telephonic conversations
- One-on-one interviews (where required)
- Focus Group Meetings (where required)
- A draft Basic Assessment Report will be made available for a period of 30 day for review and comment
- A public meeting will be held (where required)

## **PHASE 3**

Decision Making

Registered stakeholders and I&AP's will be informed in writing of the Authority's decision regarding the project.

- There is an appeal period during which I&APs have the opportunity to appeal against the Environmental Authorisation (EA).
- This appeal period commences, within 14 days of the date of the decision on the EA.
- You will receive personal notification, once registered, by fax or e-mail of all documents available for comment, and due dates for comment at every stage.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Public participation is the backbone of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. The principles of NEMA govern most aspects of Basic Assessments, including public participation. These include the ongoing provision of sufficient information (in a transparent manner) to Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs).

During the Public Participation Process, input from the proponent, technical experts, government authorities and the general public will be gathered to result in a better understanding of the project for all involved, and more informed decision-making throughout the process.

IAPs will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings of the Draft Basic Assessment Report and findings of any Specialist studies during the specified comment period.

To receive further communications regarding the development, please register by sending the completed datasheet.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN OF I&AP**

In terms of the EIA Regulations, your attention is drawn to your responsibilities as and I&AP:

- In order to participate in this BA process, register yourself on the datasheet.
- Inform any other parties (neighbours, friends, colleagues, etc) who may be interested and/or affected by the proposed project about the EIA process and encourage them to become involved.
- Ensure that any comments regarding the proposed project are submitted within the timeframes.

- Disclose any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which you may have in the approval or refusal of the application for the proposed clearing of vegetation for orchard plantation (macadamia)

## Proposed site: Citrus Farm



