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Ravenscourt Ranch (Pty) Ltd

Basic Assessment Report

for the installation of a Fibre Optic Cable, development of ablution facilities, the activation of a borehole with associated electrical and water reticulation, construction of an evaporation pond and various renovations and additions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

August 2018

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ Inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) about the proposed project, and to invite them to participate in the Environmental Impact Assessment process;
- ◆ Provide a brief background on the proposed project; and
- ◆ Explain the aims and objectives of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THIS DEVELOPMENT?

Singita Sabi Sands operates three upmarket tourism lodges on the Ravenscourt Ranch in the Sabi Sands Game Reserve adjacent to the Kruger National Park. The property has been owned by the Bailes family since 1926 and the first of the three lodges, Ebony Lodge, was opened in 1993. Accommodating upmarket clientele means that the facilities and their operation must meet high expectations while still retaining the bush experience and minimising the environmental impact. The developments proposed and described in this document aim to achieve both of these objectives.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

The proposed developments include a number of interrelated and separate components described as follows:

1. Guest toilets at bush breakfast site (24°47'3.95"S, 31°25'3.85"E) (see Figure 1):
 - a. Two toilets with wash hand basins will be installed in a single block, located more than 32m from the edge of the water course.
 - b. Water will be provided via a pipeline from an active borehole located on the other side of a dry watercourse (24°47'1.46"S, 31°25'6.21"E). The pipeline will follow the existing road to the bush breakfast/braai site and will include a crossing of the non-perennial water course (24°47'2.17"S, 31°25'4.73"E). An electric cable will be included in with the water pipeline.
 - c. Water will be stored in tanks in the roof of the ablution facility.

- d. Waste water will be disposed of via a French Drain and soak-away system located outside the buffer of the water course.

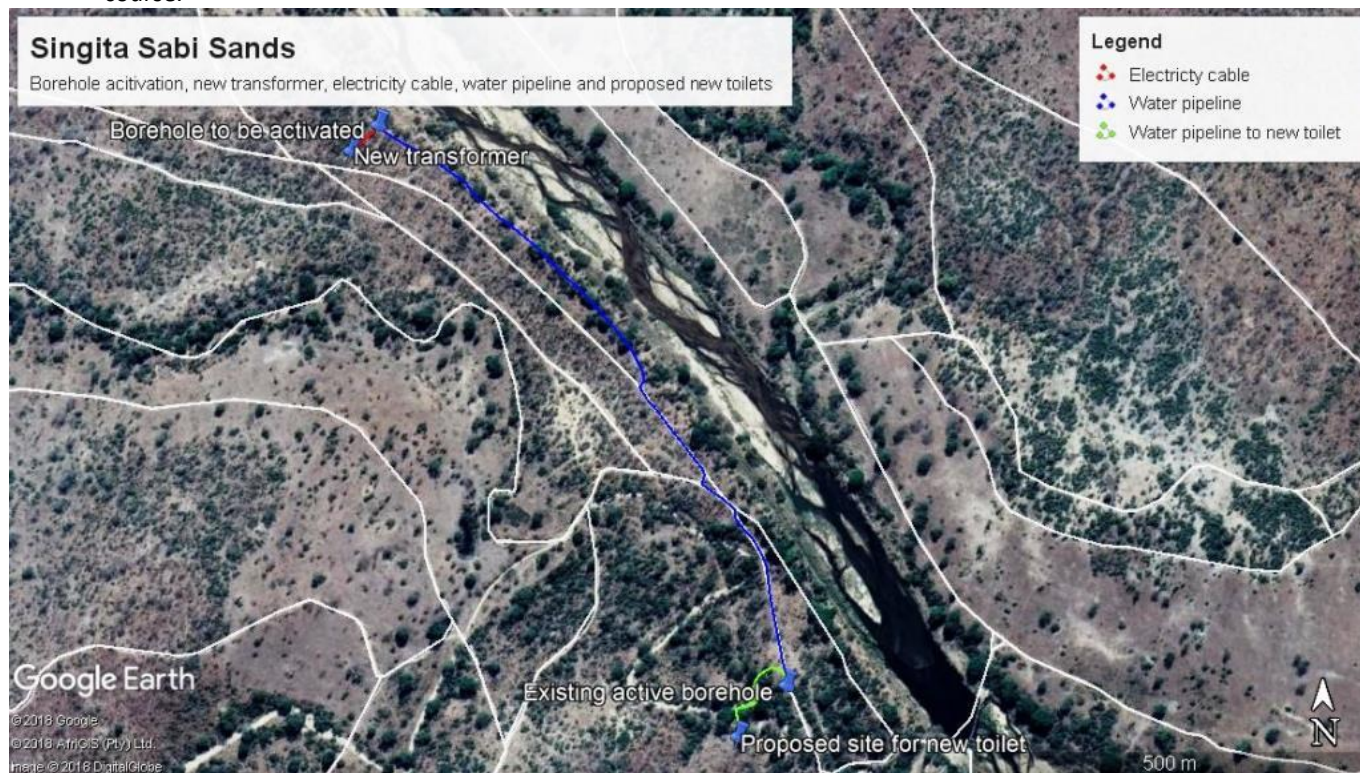


Figure 1: The locality of the borehole to be activated, the associated new transformer and electricity cable (red), new water pipeline (blue), proposed new toilet and water pipeline (green).

2. The activation of an existing borehole and its servicing with electricity and water pipes to augment supply to the lodges (24°46'38.83"S, 31°24'48.05"E) (see Figure 1):
 - a. Electricity will be provided by an existing subterranean electrical line, but which will require an additional transformer and connection (24°46'39.90"S, 31°24'46.86"E).
 - b. A trench of just more than 45m will need to be dug by hand through undisturbed natural vegetation. It will be 30cm wide and approximately 60cm deep.
 - c. A new water pipeline will be installed together with the electricity cable but extended another 30m through the natural vegetation to a point adjacent to the existing road at 24°46'40.78"S and 31°24'47.39"E. From here it will be trenched at the same dimensions immediately adjacent to the road to tie into the existing and active borehole and pipeline near the bush breakfast/braai site (24°47'1.46"S, 31°25'6.21"E).

3. A fibre optic cable (FOC) will be installed from Castleton to Ebony Lodge over a distance of approximately 7km (start point - 24°49'55.05"S and 31°26'31.21"E, mid-point - 24°48'37.92"S and 31°25'53.55"E, end-point - 24°47'13.92"S and 31°25'34.06"E) (see Figure 2 and Figure 3):
 - a. The trench required for the installation will be 30cm wide and 60cm deep, except for the three water course crossings where it will be sunk to 100cm and will be secured to gabions (24°49'38.22"S, 31°26'7.06"E; 24°48'50.78"S, 31°25'55.21"E and 24°48'38.45"S, 31°25'53.47"E).
 - b. The trenching will be immediately adjacent to existing roads except for approximately 3km where it will follow an existing tracer belt that runs parallel to the Ebony – Castleton road.
 - c. It will branch off this route to follow existing roads to the terminal building on the landing strip after which it will follow the road adjacent to the landing strip moving north. The one exception to this is a relatively short length of approximately 230m where the cable will go through natural vegetation from 24°48'11.75"S, 31°25'29.62"E to 24°48'10.53"S, 31°25'21.96"E.
 - d. Manholes will be installed approximately every 100m, i.e. approximately 78 manholes, along the length of the FOC.
 - e. At the northern end of the landing strip it will branch off adjacent to an existing road to service the boom gate, while also branching off adjacent to an existing road to the guest arrivals point at Ebony Lodge.
 - f. From here it will follow the route of existing cabling through a watercourse (24°47'13.91"S, 31°25'33.27"E) and into the entry point at the Lodge.
 - g. Together with the FOC will be an electricity cable that will run in the same trench from an existing transformer near Ebony Lodge (24°47'19.49"S, 31°25'35.57"E) and to the terminal building.

- h. A new water pipeline will be installed from a pumped pan at the northern end of the airstrip (24°47'40.88"S, 31°25'18.73"E), using the same trench as the FOC and ending at the terminal building. An addition portion of trenching for approximately 90m will be required from the pan to the FOC trench.

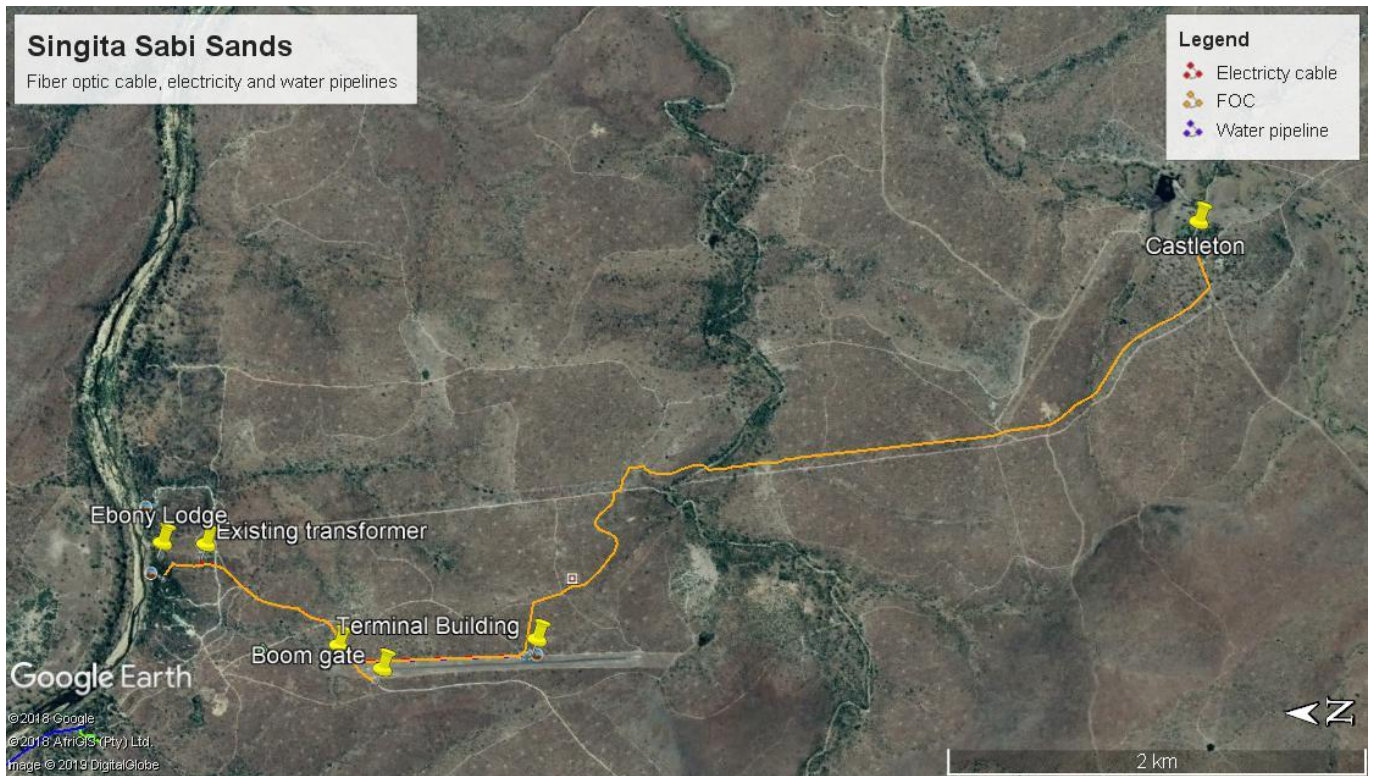


Figure 2: The route of the Fibre Optic Cable from Castleton to Ebony Lodge via the terminal building.

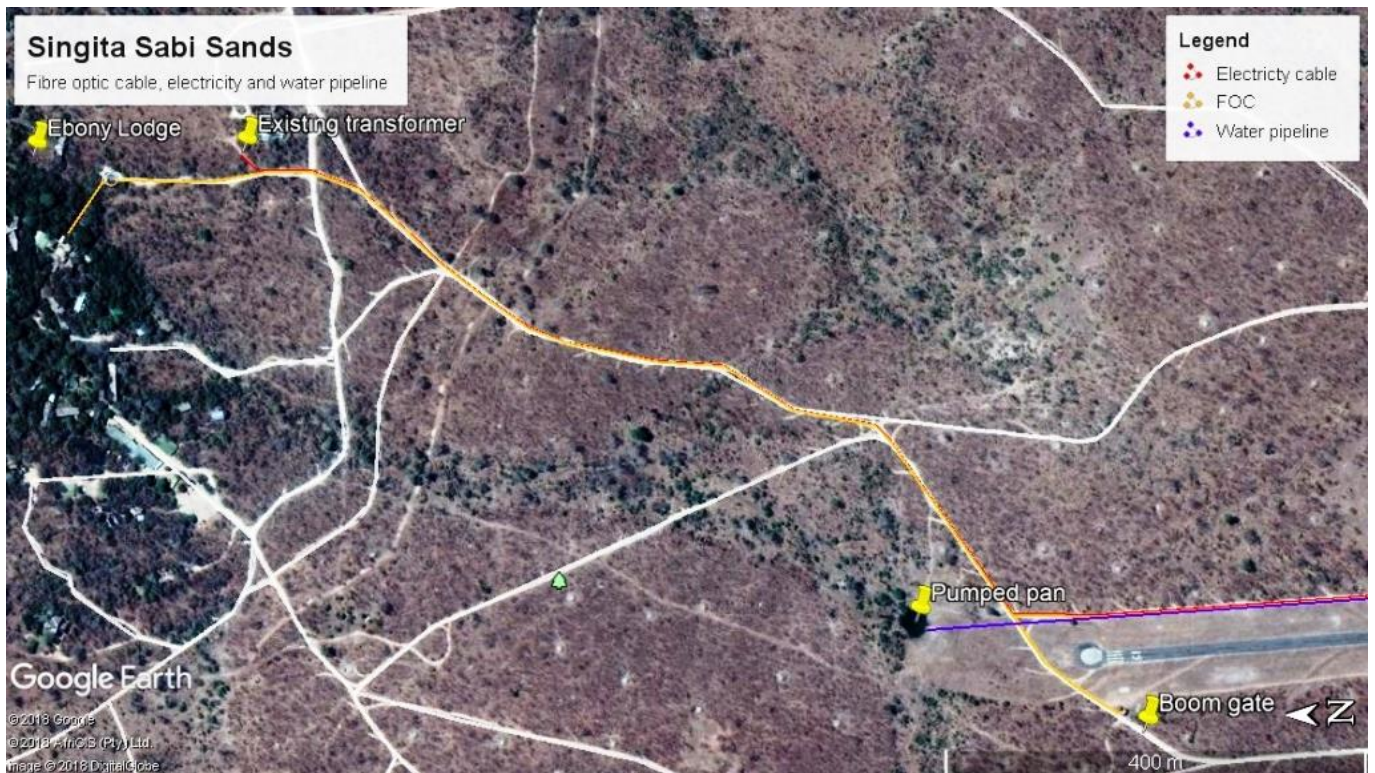


Figure 3: Zoom into the FOC route to Ebony Lodge showing the electricity cable from an existing transformer to the terminal building (red) and the water pipeline from the pumped pan to the terminal building (blue).

4. The following components at Ebony Lodge (see Figure 4):
 - a. Four (4) additional staff ablution facilities at Ebony Lodge varying in size from 4.04m² to 12.33m² and totalling 32.65m². All are within 32m of an adjacent watercourse.
 - b. A new guest gym facility just to the north of the existing boutique shop and wine cellar (24°47'18.69"S, 31°25'37.88"E) covering an area of 215m². A new raised board walk will connect the new gym with both Ebony and Boulders Lodges (see Figure 5 top).
 - c. Three new staff houses of 63m² and 2 x 48m² at 24°47'14.67"S, 31°25'25.62"E and 24°47'15.08"S, 31°25'23.02"E respectively. The latter coordinates are for an existing staff house against which the two news ones are to be built to the north and south of the existing one.
 - d. A new Lapa of 70m² at 24°47'16.91"S and 31°25'22.68"E.
 - e. An additional room of 56m² to an existing house at 24°47'15.99"S and 31°25'22.68"E.



Figure 4: The locality of the proposed new staff ablutions and houses at Ebony Lodge, the new gym and raised boardwalk (in light yellow) and the proposed new boma at Boulders Lodge

5. A new boma of 180m² including guest ablution facilities (24°47'13.50"S, 31°25'41.75"E) at Boulders Lodge (see Figure 4).
6. Additional facilities at the Castleton Camp including (see Figure 5):
 - a. New evaporation pond for waste water treatment (24°49'43.63"S, 31°26'19.56"E).
 - b. Convert existing treatment room into reception area and store. Add additional 2x new treatment rooms under existing trees totalling 40m² (24°49'54.99"S, 31°26'35.50"E).
 - c. Extend existing gym to create additional workout space totalling 40m² (24°49'55.16"S, 31°26'33.76"E).
 - d. Link new gym extension to yoga platform under trees totalling 16m² (24°49'55.35"S, 31°26'33.78"E).
 - e. A staff swimming pool and braai facility totalling approximately 60m² (24°49'56.60"S, 31°26'33.42"E).
 - f. A new gravelled road of 192m x 3m (start 24°49'56.43"S, 31°26'31.88"E; mid 24°49'58.96"S, 31°26'33.99"E; end 24°49'59.76"S, 31°26'37.03"E).

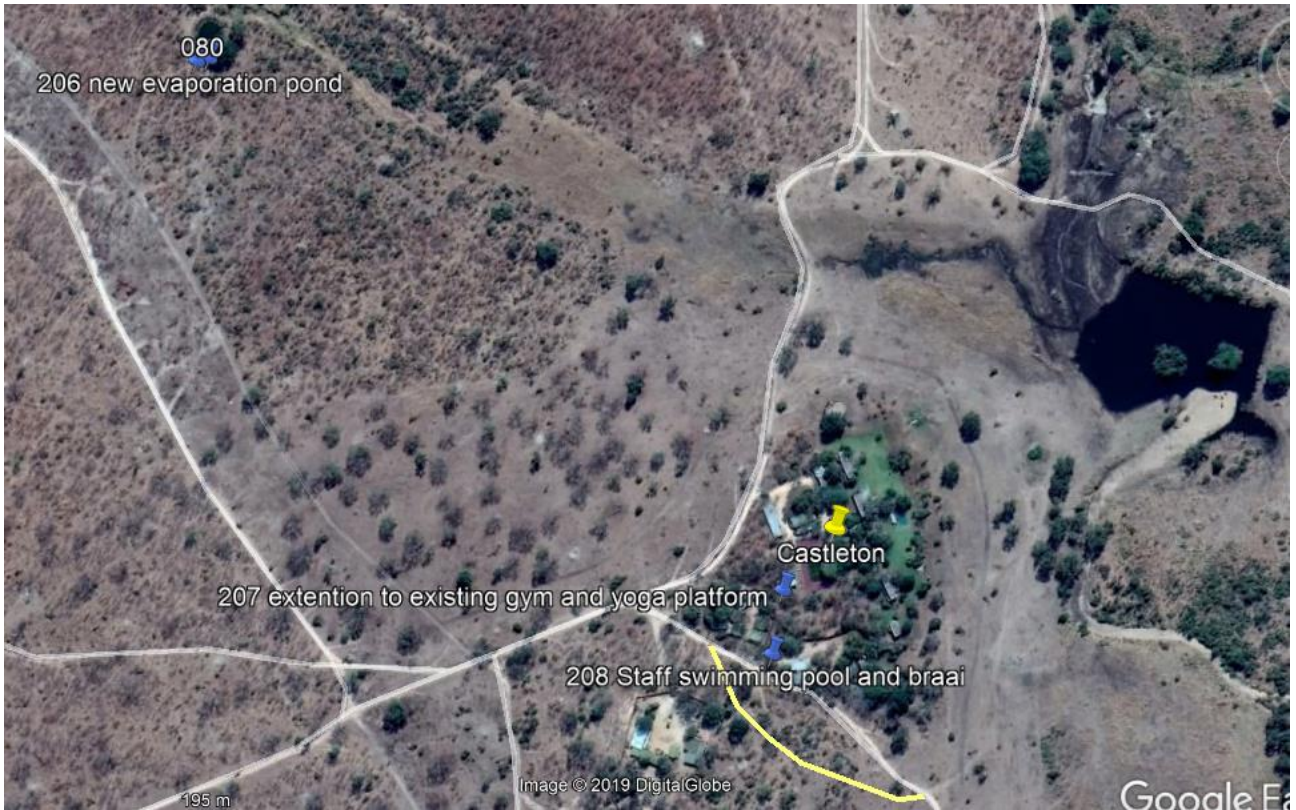


Figure 5: Proposed additions to Castleton with the new road in light yellow

WHERE IS THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT?

The proposed development is planned to be located on Ravenscourt within the Sabi Sands Game Reserve (coordinates provided above). The site is within the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, the Ehlanzeni District Municipality and the Mpumalanga Province (see Figure 6).

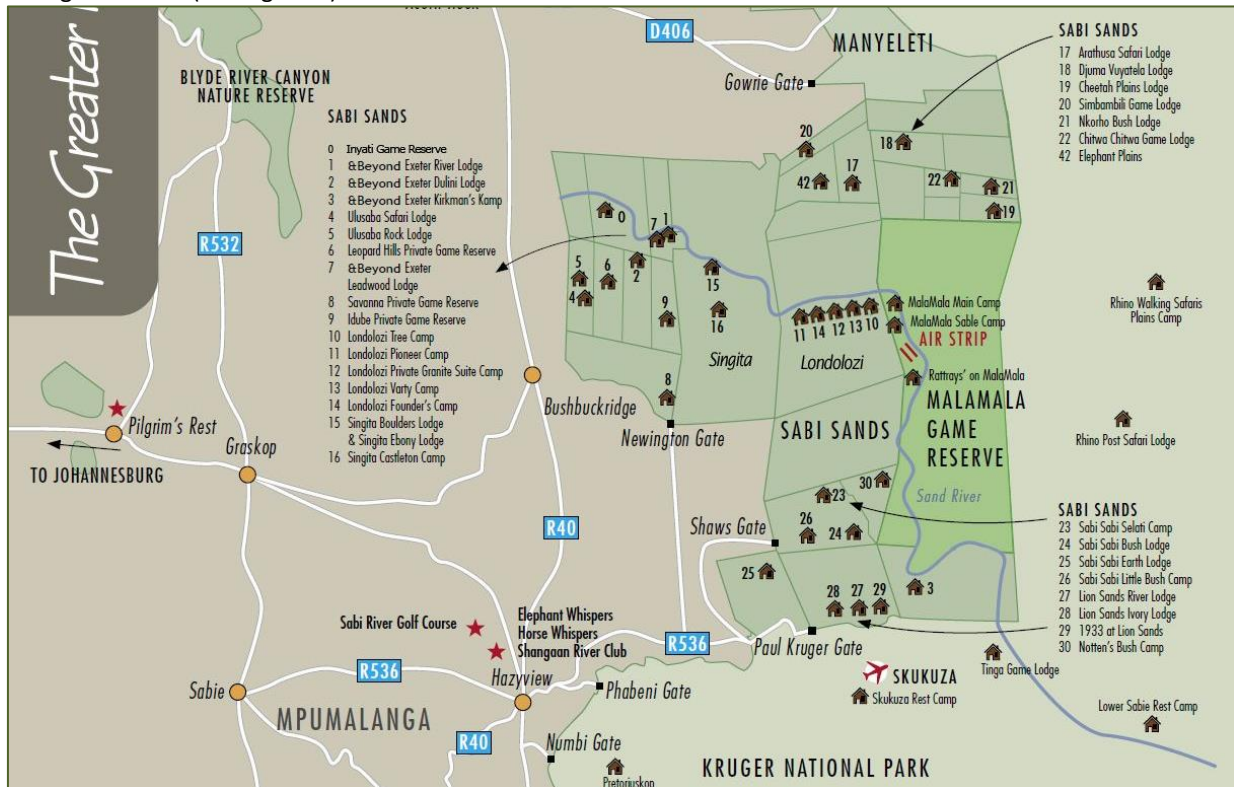


Figure 6: Location of the proposed development on the property Ravenscourt in the Sabi Sands Game Reserve (see 15 – Ebony and Boulders Lodges, and 16 – Castleton).

WHY IS A BASIC ASSESSMENT NECESSARY?

The following Listed Activities have been identified as being relevant to the proposed developments discussed above:

Activities under Listing Notice 1 (National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998, GN No. 983, GG 38282 of 4 December 2014, as amended in GG 40772, GN No. 327 of 7 April 2017):

Listed Activity 19:

The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 10 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 cubic metres from a watercourse;

Activities under Listing Notice 3 (National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998, GNR 985, GG 38282 of 4 December 2014, as amended in GG 40772, GN No. 324 of 7 April 2017):

Listed Activity 12:

The clearance of an area of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation
f. Mpumalanga

iii. On land, where, at the time of the coming into effect of this Notice or thereafter such land was zoned open space, conservation or had an equivalent zoning or proclamation in terms of NEMPAA.

Listed Activity 14:

The development of (ii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more; where such development occurs-

- (a) Within a watercourse;
 - (b) In front of a development setback; or
 - (c) If no development setback has been adopted, within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse; -
- i. Outside urban areas: (aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies

Listed Activity 17:

The expansion of a resort, lodge, hotel, tourism or hospitality facilities where the development footprint will be expanded, and the expanded facility can accommodate an additional 15 people or more.

(f) Mpumalanga

(i). Outside urban areas:

(aa) A protected area identified in terms of NEMPAA, excluding conservancies.

Listed Activity 26:

Phased activities for all activities-

- i. Listed in this Notice and as it applies to a specific geographic area, which commenced on or after the effective date of this Notice; or
- ii. Similarly listed in any of the previous NEMA notices, and is it applies to a specific geographic area, which commenced on or after the effective date of such previous NEMA Notices- Where any phase of the activity was below a threshold but where a combination of the phases, including expansions or extensions, will exceed a specified threshold. All the areas as identified for the specific activities listed in this Notice.

In addition to the above the proposed developments are considered to be water uses under the National Water Act 36 of 1998, specifically:

Section 21. Water uses

(c) impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse;

(g) disposing of waste in a manner which may detrimentally impact on a water resource;

(f) discharging waste or water containing waste into a water resource through a pipe, canal, sewer, sea outfall or other conduit and

(i) altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)?

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process aims to:

- ◆ Inform and involve all potentially interested and affected parties (I&APs) of the proposed development;
- ◆ Identify the potential impacts (positive and negative) that the proposed development may have on the ecological and socio-economic environment;
- ◆ Provide recommendations based on the identified impacts and conduct further specialist studies if necessary; and
- ◆ Provide the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) with enough information to make an informed decision regarding the proposed development.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE EIA PROCESS FOR A BASIC ASSESSMENT?

The EIA Basic Assessment process can be described as follows:

- Submission of Notice of Intent to submit a Basic Assessment Report:**
A "Notice of Intent to submit a Basic Assessment Report" is required to be completed and signed by the applicant and Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) and submitted to the Mpumalanga DARDLEA.
- Application Form:**
An official Application Form is required to be completed and circulated with the Basic Assessment Report to a number of authorities including Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency, the Local & District Municipalities, etc. It provides information on the property, a description of the proposed development and lists the relevant listed activities which are triggered by this proposed development.
- Public Participation:**
The general public are notified of the proposed development through newspaper adverts (Mpumalanga News and the Lowvelder) and site notices placed at Newington and Shaw's Gates and through direct consultation. This Background information Document will be circulated to neighbouring landowners, relevant authorities and any other persons registered as I&APs following the advert and site notice and a contacts data base will be compiled and maintained throughout the process.
- Identification of Impacts and Alternatives**
Environmental issues, concerns, development constraints and possible development alternatives will be identified using professional judgement, project information, experience of similar projects, a review of available literature, site visits, and consultation with authorities and the public.
- Impact Evaluation**
The significance of environmental issues will be evaluated in terms of their expected extent, intensity, duration and probability of occurrence.
- Mitigation and Management Measures**
Measures to manage and minimise impacts to within acceptable levels, as well as measures to maximise the socio-economic benefits associated with the development, will be identified and recorded in the Basic Assessment Report.
- Reporting**
The draft Basic Assessment Report and any other Specialist Reports, such as a Heritage Impact Assessment, will be made available for review and comment by all I&APs and relevant authorities. A Final Basic Assessment Report will be compiled and will include comments received on the circulated draft Basic Assessment Report.
- Authority Decision**
The Final Basic Assessment Report will be used by DAEARD as the basis for the decision on whether the proposed development should be approved or not.

WHAT POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS HAVE INITIALLY BEEN IDENTIFIED?

The following issues have been identified as potentially problematic and will, amongst other issues, be investigated during the Basic Assessment Process:

- ◆ No significant impacts during the planning phase;
- ◆ During construction: limited disturbance to indigenous vegetation and wildlife, as well as non-perennial water courses.
- ◆ Negative impacts during the operation phase: limited disruption to the hydrology of non-perennial water courses and potential contamination of the water table.

Note that the above may be avoided and/or mitigated to a large extent and the assessment process will investigate and report on how this may be achieved. It will also identify other potential impacts currently not evident.

HOW CAN I&APs PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCESS AND COMMENT ON THESE DEVELOPMENTS?

The need for the involvement of interested and affected parties (I&APs) is of critical importance. All I&APs (neighbours, authorities, organisations etc.) are invited to comment on the proposed development. Comments can be communicated to the EAP by post, telephone, fax or email (contact details are provided below).

In order to ensure that your comments are addressed and incorporated into the draft Basic Assessment Report, please ensure that you register and we have received your comments by the 2nd March 2018. Please use the structure below to guide your inputs into this process. You will be notified when other related reports are available for review and comment as well as to other steps in the process.



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Title:	First name:	Surname:	Initials:
Organisation:		Designation:	
Address:			
Postal Code:			
Tel No:		Cell No:	
Fax No:		E-mail:	

COMMENTS:

- The following issues must be addressed in the basic assessment of the proposed development:

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- Please add the following persons to your list of interested and affected parties:

Name:	Organisation:
Telephone:	
Address:	
Name:	Organisation:
Telephone:	
Address:	

3. Any other comments:

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Thank you for your participation.