

**PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A BULK AND RETAIL FUEL
SALES FACILITY, PONGOLA, KWAZULU-NATAL:
BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

EIA REF: DC26/0012/2014



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1. INTRODUCTION

Terratest (Pty) Ltd have been appointed to conduct the environmental services for a proposed establishment of a bulk and retail fuel sales facility on Portion 579/61 and Portion 106/61 of the Farm Pongola 61, KwaZulu-Natal. The application for Environmental Authorisation conforms to the current National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations which came into effect on 2 August 2010. Under these regulations, a Basic Assessment procedure will be followed.

The following activities contained in GNR 544 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010, will be applied for:

Number and date of the relevant notice	Activity No (s) (in terms of the relevant notice)	Description of each listed activity as per project description
GNR 544	13	<p>The activity involves the construction of facilities to store dangerous goods i.e. fuel for wholesale and retail purposes. Storage will not exceed 500 cubic metres. As a result, Activity 13 of GNR 544 is triggered:</p> <p><i>“The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the storage, or for the storage and handling, of a dangerous good, where such storage occurs in containers with a combined capacity of 80 but not exceeding 500 cubic metres.”</i></p>
GNR 544	23	<p>The land is currently used for agricultural purposes and covers approximately 14ha. As it will be transformed into commercial land, Activity 23 of GNR 544 is triggered:</p> <p><i>“The transformation of undeveloped, vacant or derelict land to –</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>i. residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use, outside an urban area and where the total area to be transformed is bigger than 1 hectare but less than 20 hectares; -</i></p> <p><i>except where such transformation takes place for linear activities.”</i></p>

According to the NEMA EIA Regulations, it is necessary for the applicant to appoint an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) who will adhere to the environmental stipulations and complete the applicable environmental process on behalf of the applicant. In this case, the relevant role players for the proposed development are as follows:

Applicant	Marzaan Boerdery
Environmental Assessment Practitioner	Terratest (Pty) Ltd
Competent Authority	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development (DAEA&RD)

The Public Participation Process, as promulgated in terms of Chapter 6 of the NEMA EIA Regulations (GNR 543, 2010) is a fundamental process whereby the proponent, technical team, government authorities, key stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) can engage in an informed decision-making process.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is located on Portion 579/61 and Portion 106/61 of the Farm Pongola 61. The landuse types on the farm currently consist of a Toyota dealership and agricultural (sugarcane) land. The site is situated within the following co-ordinates:

Point	Southerly co-ordinate	Easterly co-ordinate
A	27° 22' 54.559" S	31° 37' 46.460" E
B	27° 22' 56.476" S	31° 37' 40.847" E
C	27° 22' 0.856" S	31° 38' 10.622" E
D	27° 22' 55.312" S	31° 38' 12.470" E
E	27° 22' 51.821" S	31° 37' 49.814" E

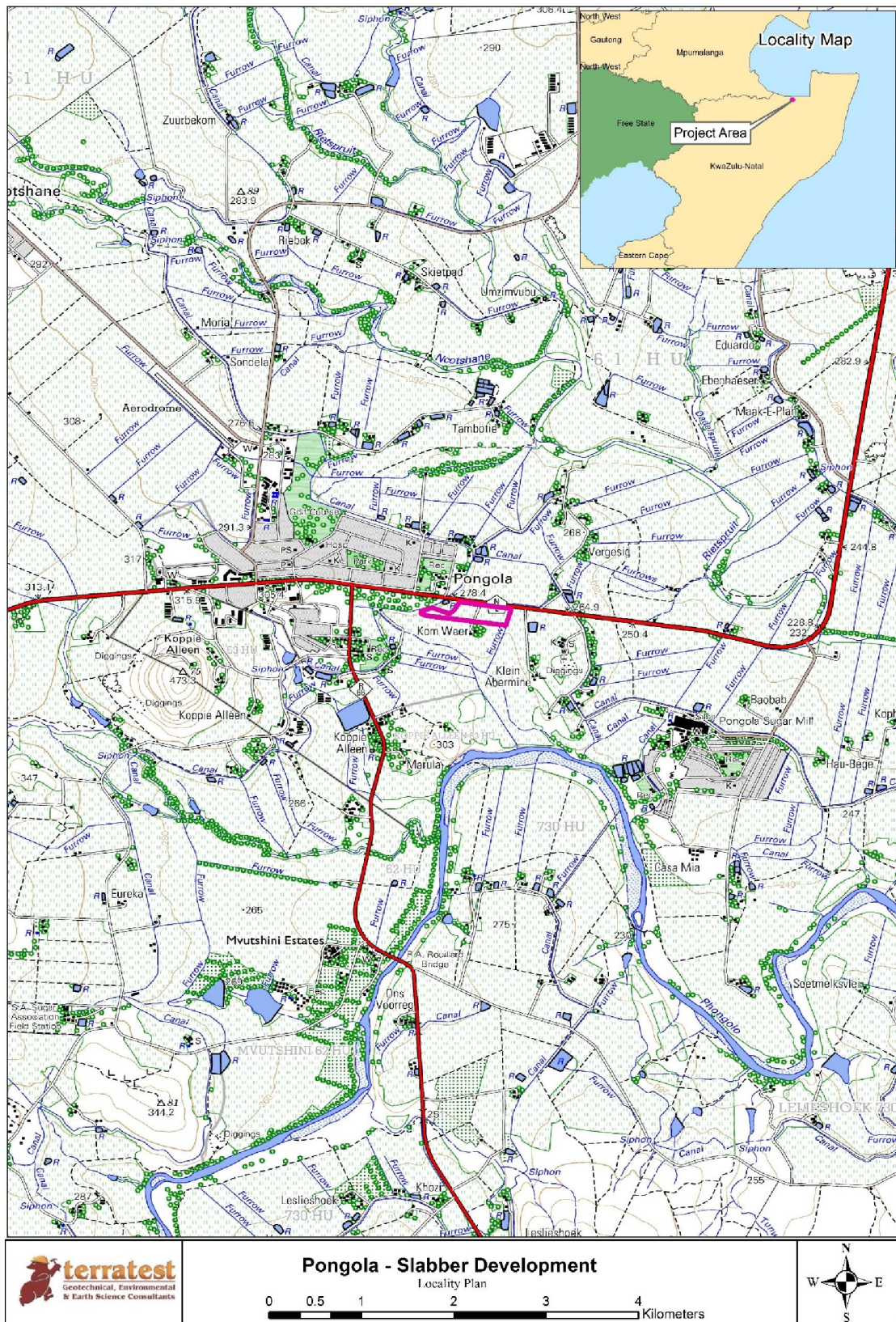


Figure 1. The locality of the farm on which the development is proposed

3. EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The site predominantly consists of sugarcane plantation and the associated amenities. The site is bounded to the north by the National Route 2 (N2), north, east and south by agricultural land, and to the west by a Toyota Dealership.

4. PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The proposed infrastructure will include the construction of a bulk and retail fuel sales facility with associated infrastructure, including a retail store. The development will act as a truck stop for traffic along the N2.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPE OF WORK

The Basic Assessment process that will be followed is in accordance with the NEMA EIA Regulations. The EAP is required to conduct the environmental application process and manage the public participation process, which is currently underway. Terratest (Pty) Ltd will perform the following:

1. Identify key stakeholders, authorities and municipalities, environmental groups and interested or affected members of the public, hereafter referred to as IAPs.
2. Compile a detailed Background Information Document (BID) for the proposed development, providing details to IAPs of:
 - a. The listed activities that trigger the EIA process;
 - b. The scope of work;
 - c. The locality and current land use at the site;
 - d. A detailed site description;
 - e. The EIA process to be followed; and
 - f. The opportunity for IAPs to comment on the project.
3. Advertise the environmental application in a newspaper applicable to the region, namely: 'The Zululand Observer';
4. Place a poster/posters on the site;
5. Obtain landowner's consent
6. Where necessary, attend Public Liaison Committee (PLC) meetings and workshops;
7. Host a Public Open Day, if necessary, providing details of issues identified by the EAP, stakeholders and IAPs;
8. Record all comments of IAPs and present such comments, as well as responses provided by Terratest, in a full Comments and Responses Report, which will be included in the Final Basic Assessment Report that will be submitted to the DAEA&RD;
9. Circulate all IAP comments to the project team;

The draft Basic Assessment Report will be made available to all relevant stakeholders and registered IAPs for further comment, before the final BAR is submitted to the DAEA&RD.

6. GENERAL SITE DESCRIPTION

a. Vegetation

The vegetation of the greater Pongola region has been classified by Mucina and Rutherford (2006)¹ as Delagoa Lowveld. Delagoa Lowveld is predominantly found in the Mpumalanga Province and Swaziland, with a marginal distribution in KwaZulu-Natal. The vegetation consists of dense trees or tall shrubs which often form thickets. The undergrowth consists of grass species, a wide variety of forbs, and herbs. The conservation status of this vegetation classification is vulnerable, with a up to 1/3 of the vegetation having been transformed due to cultivation. However it is to be noted that the entire site on which the development is proposed, is completely transformed as a result of the agricultural practices on site. As such little to no indigenous vegetation is found on site and will therefore not be impacted upon.

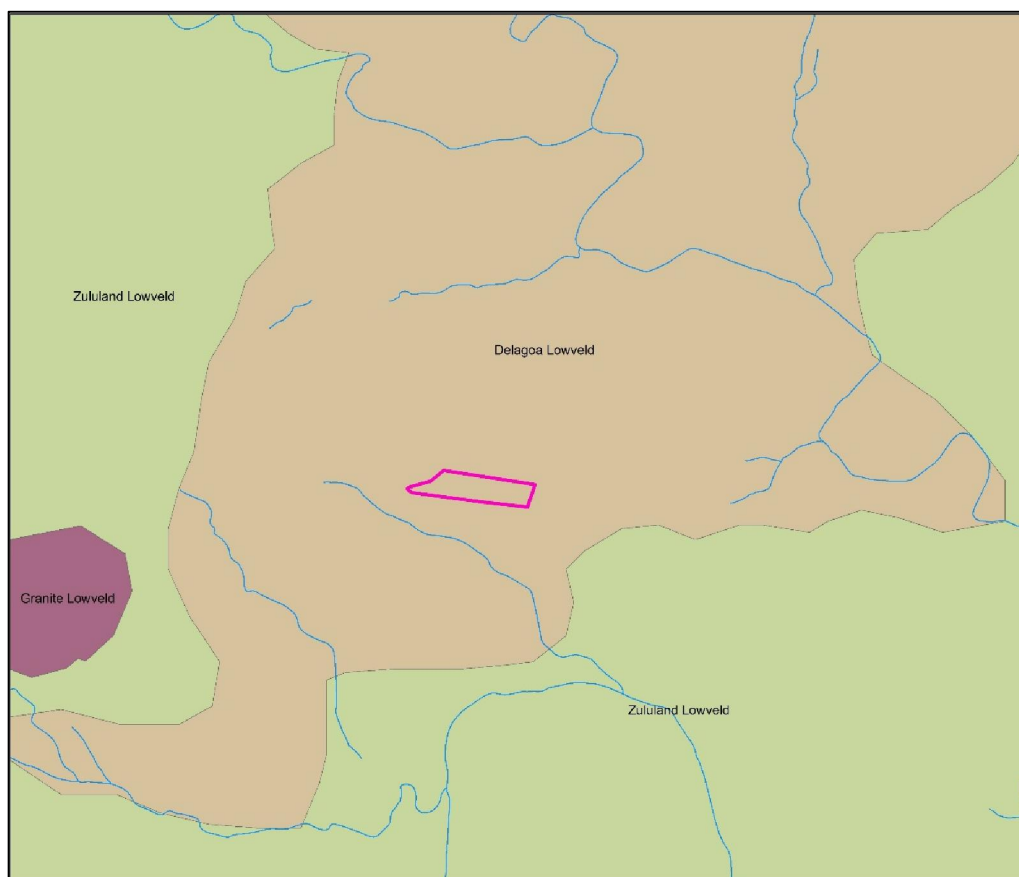


Figure 2. The location of the proposed site within the Delagoa Lowveld vegetation classification

¹ Mucina, L. & Rutherford, M.C. (eds) 2006. The Vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. Strelizia 19. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.

b. Heritage

According to the National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999, provisions are made to protect national heritage resources and this forms an integral part of the environmental assessment process. It is unknown at this stage what archaeological findings may be found at the proposed development site. Amafa is KwaZulu-Natal's heritage authority. An application has been made to this authority and a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) will be conducted, if required, in order to assess the cultural and heritage significance of any findings. This specialist study will be included in the Final Basic Assessment Report.

c. The Social Environment

Pongola town is situated along the N2 which is a major transport link which connects South Africa with Swaziland and Mozambique as well as KwaZulu-Natal with Mpumalanga. The site experiences a significant amount of vehicular traffic (heavy vehicles) associated with its locality on a National Road as well as the localised agricultural sector.

d. Geology and terrain

The geology of the site consists of Karoo Supergroup shale and to a lesser extent sandstone layers that are punctuated by sheets and dykes of Jurassic Dolerite. The soils include Sterkspruit, Swartland and Estcourt soil forms which are characteristically rich in sodium and are susceptible to erosion. The terrain of the area is relatively flat but punctuated with kopjies.

e. Photos



Plate 1. Access to Portion 579/61 and Portion 106/61 of the Farm Pongola 61



Plate 2. The N2 along which the proposed development will be situated



Plate 3. The Toyota dealership to the west of the proposed development



Plate 4. Sugarcane crops to the north, south and east of the proposed development

7. HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

Every proposed development has the potential to significantly affect the natural and social environments, both at, as well as surrounding the proposed site. For this reason it is imperative that you as a stakeholder or an interested and/or affected party (IAP) comment on the proposed project and **highlight issues or concerns** that you feel need to be considered during the proposed planning and implementation process. Should you wish to register as an IAP or should you have any comments regarding the proposed development, please **state your interest** in the proposed development along with any **comments or queries** you may have.

A registration form is attached.

PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A BULK AND RETAIL FUEL SALES FACILITY, SLABBER DEVELOPMENT, PONGOLA, KWAZULU-NATAL

BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

REGISTRATION FORM

Name:
Surname
Address:

Postal Code:

Tel No:
Fax No:
Cell No:

e-mail :

Please state your interest in the proposed project:

Comments (add extra pages should you need):

Do you require any additional information?

Other parties which you think should be included in the process:

Your comments are highly appreciated, and will be included in the final report to be submitted to the decision-making authorities.

PLEASE RETURN TO:

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Please Detach and Return to Terratest