

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
FOR THE PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BY ZAMOKUHLE TRUST NEAR MKUZE, NORTHERN
KWAZULU-NATAL.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The aim of this document is to:

- Provide background information to parties interested in and/or affected by the proposed development;
- Provide information of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process to be followed for the proposed agricultural development by Zamokuhle Trust near Mkuze, Northern KwaZulu-Natal; and
- Indicate how you, as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP), can become involved in the EIA process.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Zamokuhle Trust is planning to establish commercial agriculture (sugar cane) on a site mostly covered with natural vegetation. The proposed project involves the planting of approximately 570ha of irrigated sugarcane. It is the intention of the landowner to allocate 10% of the project to the local community, as well as create 300 jobs with the proposed farming activities.

3. PROJECT LOCATION

The site is located on the farm Kovies No. 18308. The farm is located approximately 12 kilometres north of the town of Mkuze, on the right hand side of the N2. The site is located adjacent to the Pongolapoort Nature Reserve which is located on the boundary of the Pongolapoort dam (Refer to Appendix 1, Locality Map). The study area occurs within quarter degree grid cell 2731DB with the geographical coordinates of the site at 27°31'03.95"S and 31°58'21.48"E.

4. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The Zamokuhle Trust intends to establish a commercial sugar cane farm. The proposed agricultural project will involve the establishment of agricultural land on an area which is covered mostly by indigenous vegetation. As

such, the indigenous vegetation on the proposed site will need to be removed.

Irrigation pipelines will be provided to the new agricultural area and will have a diameter of 400 mm. Some drainage lines will be crossed by the pipelines and will include the removal and deposition of material within 32 m of a water course.

The proposed agricultural project will also involve the provision of haulage roads. These roads are expected to be 4-6 m in width.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) PROCESS - LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In terms of the EIA Regulations published in Government Notice No. R. 982 of 4 December 2014 under Section 24(5), and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended, the intent to carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment Process (in terms of Listing Notice 1 – GN R983, Listing Notice 2 – GN R984 and Listing Notice 3 – GN R985) for the listed activity 9 and 19 of GNR 983, listed activity 13 and 15 of GNR 984 and listed activity 4 and 14 of GNR 985.

GN R983 - NEMA Environmental Impact Assessments Listing Notice 1 of 2014:

Activity 9: The development of infrastructure exceeding 1000 metres in length for the bulk transportation of water or storm water - (i) with an internal diameter of 0,36m or more; or (ii) with a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more.

Activity 19: The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 m³ into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock from (i) a watercourse; (ii) the seashore; (iii) the littoral active zone, an estuary or a distance of 100 metres inland of the high-water mark of the sea or an estuary, whichever distance is the greater.

GN R984 - NEMA Environmental Impact Assessments Listing Notice 2 of 2014:

Activity 13: The physical alteration of virgin soil to agriculture, or afforestation for the purpose of commercial tree, timber or wood production of 100 hectares or more.

Activity 15: The clearance of an area of 20 hectares or more of indigenous vegetation.

GN R985 - NEMA Environmental Impact Assessments Listing Notice 3 of 2014:

Activity 4: The development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13,5 metres, (d)(xii) outside urban areas: (aa) 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 areas of a biosphere reserve.

Activity 14: The development of – (xii) infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 10 square metres or more where such development occurs – within a watercourse (d)(x) outside urban areas (aa) 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 areas of a biosphere reserve.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Process consist of the following two very closely interlinked processes:

- A technical process, which entails the identification and management of possible environmental issues/concerns; and
- A public participation process, which requires public consultation in order to assist in the identification of possible environmental and/or social issues and/or concerns.

6. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

It is anticipated that the following environmental aspects will be significant and will hence be addressed by the Project Team during the assessment process:

- Impacts on vegetation and faunal habitats;
- Impacts on water resources and wetlands; and
- Impacts on the socio-economic dynamics of the area.

Management guidelines will be developed for the abovementioned issues and incorporated in an Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

You are welcome to comment on the above list and provide additional anticipated issues and possible impacts which should be addressed.

7. SPECIALISTS

The Project Team has identified potentially significant issues and will further assess these impacts in terms of their significance in accordance with the guidelines for EIA published by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). The following specialist studies will be conducted:

- Heritage Impact Assessment;
- Ecological assessment; and
- Wetland delineation;

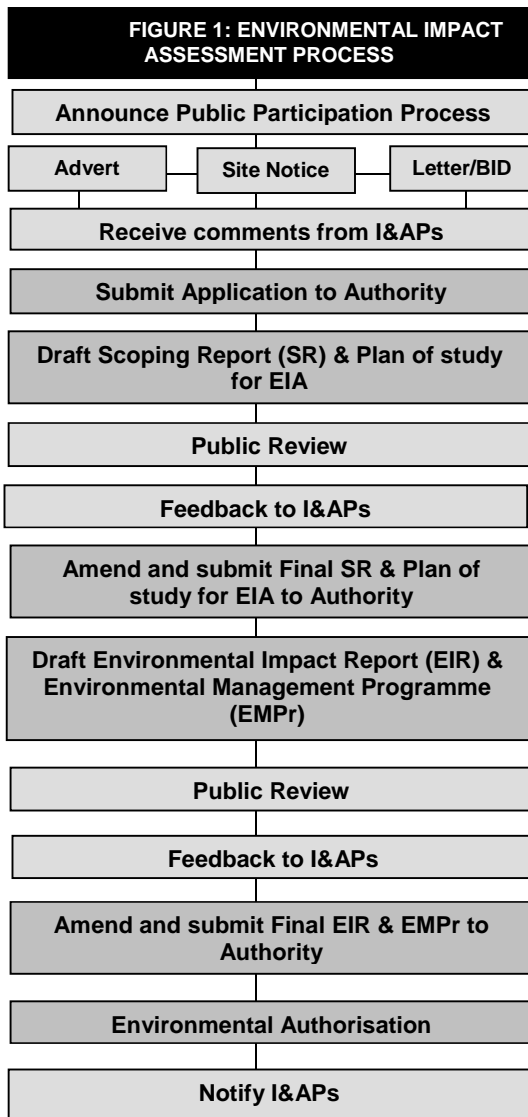
The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA) or other stakeholders may require additional specialists' studies if necessary.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS (PPP)

Public Participation (PP) is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and forms an integral part of the EIA. The PPP provides people who may be affected by the proposed development, with an opportunity to provide comments and to raise issues of concern, or to make suggestions that may result in enhanced benefits for the project.

Comments and issues raised during the public participation process will be captured, evaluated and included in a Comments and Response Report, which will be incorporated into the Scoping Report and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIR). The draft Scoping Report and draft Environmental Impact Report will be made available for public review prior to submission to the environmental authority.

The process to be followed is depicted in Figure 1.



9. APPROVING AUTHORITY

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA) is the relevant authority which will review the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIR). DEDTEA has to reach a decision as to whether, and under what conditions, the project may proceed, based on environmental considerations. An Environmental Authorisation will be issued based on the information provided in the EIR.

10. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Exigent Engineering Consultants has been appointed by Zamokuhle Trust to manage and facilitate the environmental and public participation processes required for the project.

We would like to encourage you to participate in this EIA process. Should you wish to get involved, please complete the enclosed registration sheet and return it on or before 8 May 2015, to:

EXIGENT ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS

Jacquette Adam

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APPENDIX 1. Locality Map

