

Background Information Document for development of a dam on the farms Bismarck 116 MS and Koningsmark 117 MS, connecting pipelines and orchards on Bismarck 116 MS in the Weipe area of Musina Municipality in the Vhembe District



THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

AGES Limpopo (Pty) Ltd has been appointed to undertake the environmental impact assessment process for the proposed dam in an unnamed tributary of the Kongolooop and Limpopo River on the farms Bismarck 116 MS and Koningsmark 117 MS, connecting pipelines and new orchards in the Weipe area, of the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province.

The aim of this document is:

- To provide information about the proposed project.
- To explain the environmental impact assessment and water use license application processes.
- To provide an opportunity for participation in the environmental impact assessment process.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Report will comply with the requirements of the environmental impact assessment regulations No R982, promulgated on 4 December 2014 (as amended on 7 April 2017) in terms of Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act, (Act 107 of 1998).

An Environmental Impact Assessment can be defined as the process of identifying, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social and other relevant effects of the development. The most important objective is to promote development that is sustainable and optimises resource use and management opportunities.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process is a requirement of the National Environmental Management Act, (Act 107 of 1998). The following listed activities under Regulation R983, R984 & 985 of 4 December 2014 (as amended on 7 April 2017) requires a full environmental impact assessment to be conducted and authorization from the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET).

Regulation 983 of 4 December 2014 (as amended on 7 April 2017)

- 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 water course.

Regulation 984 of 4 December 2014 (as amended on 7 April 2017)

- Activity 13 - The physical alteration of virgin soil to agriculture, or afforestation for the purposes 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.
- Activity 16 - The development of a dam where the highest point of the dam wall as measured from the outside toe of the wall to the highest part of the wall, is 5 metres or higher or where the high-water mark of the dam covers an area of 10 hectares or more.

Regulation 985 of 4 December 2014 (as amended on 7 April 2017)

- Activity 12 - 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 within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans.

The Integrated Water Use licensing process (IWULA) is a legal requirement in terms of Section 40 & 41 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) and the Regulations regarding the procedural requirements for Water Use Licence Applications and Appeals (No. R.267 of 24 March 2017). A Water Use License Application will be submitted to Department of Water and Sanitation for the following water uses in terms of the National Water Act:

S21 (a) - Taking water from a water resource

S21 (b) - Storing water

S21 (c) - Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse

S21 (i) - Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse

LOCALITY

The farms are located approximately 50 km west of Musina on the Pontdrift road (R572) - See locality map.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

The activities entail the following:

- Construction of an in-stream dam in an unnamed tributary of the Kongolooop and Limpopo River for the storage of water for irrigation purposes with a main dam wall height of 30 meters, surface area of 245 hectares and storage capacity of approximately 20 575 000 cubic metres. Water will be pumped from the Limpopo River during surface flow according to the existing lawful use. The dam will be built in three phases.
- Construction of three 630 mm pipelines to fill the dam and irrigate the orchards.
- Clearance of approximately 700 ha of indigenous vegetation for orchards. The orchards will be developed in phases.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public participation process is a requirement in terms of regulations 39-44 of the regulations published in GN R982 under section 24(5) read with section 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) as well as the Regulations regarding the procedural requirements for Water Use Licence Applications and Appeals (No. R.267 of 24 March 2017).

The EIA and IWULA processes will be advertised in the Zoutpansberger local newspaper to inform people and request them to register and to identify environmental issues. Site notices will be put up at the entrances to the farms and background information documents will also be provided (hand delivered, posted or e-mailed) to directly adjacent land owners, the municipal councillor of the ward in which the site is situated and any organ of state having jurisdiction in respect of any aspect of the activity.

All issues and comments received from interested and affected parties (I&APs) regarding the EIA and IWULA processes will be recorded and presented to the project team and applicable regulatory authorities. Issues and comments will be taken into account and will be addressed in the Consultation

(Draft) Scoping Report (CSR). The CSR will be made available for comments to all Registered I&APs. If new and relevant information come to light which has not been included in the CSR, then the Final Scoping Report will also be made available for comments. The Consultation Environmental Impact Report (CEIR) will deal with the impacts of the proposed development, on the environment. The CEIR will be made available for comments to all registered I&APs. Again, if new and relevant information come to light which has not been included in the CEIR, then the Final EIA Report will be made available for comments. The final decision, provided by the Limpopo Department Economic Development, Environment & Tourism (LEDET), will be forwarded to all registered I&AP's.

Written comments regarding environmental issues must be forwarded to the office of AGES via e-mail, or fax on or before 11 September 2020.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The vegetation according to Mucina and Rutherford (2005) where the orchards are planned is classified as Musina Mopane Veld and at the dam site as Limpopo Ridge Bushveld. The conservation status of both vegetation units is least threatened. An ecological assessment as well as a riparian vegetation assessment will be conducted and included in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

The annual average rainfall measured over 30 years at Goeree 10 km east of the farms is 295 mm, occurring mostly in the summer months. The study area is located within the quaternary drainage region A71L. The regional topography of the orchards area is classified as undulating plains, with the soils highly suitable for orchards. The topography at the dam site is extremely irregular plains with ridges and hills.

The surrounding land use of the orchards area is citrus and vegetable farming to the north and natural areas used for cattle and game farming to the east, south and west. The dam area is surrounded by cattle and game farming.

PRELIMINARY SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The following environmental issues (positive and negative impacts) will be investigated during the EIA process:

- Impact of dam on geology and salination of irrigation areas.
- Impacts on the ecology of the area (fauna and flora).
- Impact of the construction of the dam on the drainage line (stream).
- Erosion – loss of valuable topsoil because of the development of the orchards.
- Impact on heritage and palaeontological resources
- Socio- economic issues.
- Concerns and issues raised by Interested and Affected Parties.
- Management and mitigation measures to ensure that negative impacts are reduced to an acceptable level and positive impacts are enhanced.

The impacts will be evaluated in terms of the severity, duration, extent, frequency and probability during the operational phase. The methods to be used are internationally recognized and based on facts, experience and expert opinion.

PRELIMINARY TIME SCHEDULE

EIA process announcement and registration of I&AP's:	July - August 2020
Submission of Consultation Scoping Report:	September 2020
Submission of Final Scoping Report:	October 2020
Submission of Consultation Environmental Impact Report:	January 2021
Submission of Final Environmental Impact Report to LEDET:	February 2021
Submission of complete IWULA (Phase 3):	February 2021

WHO TO CONTACT

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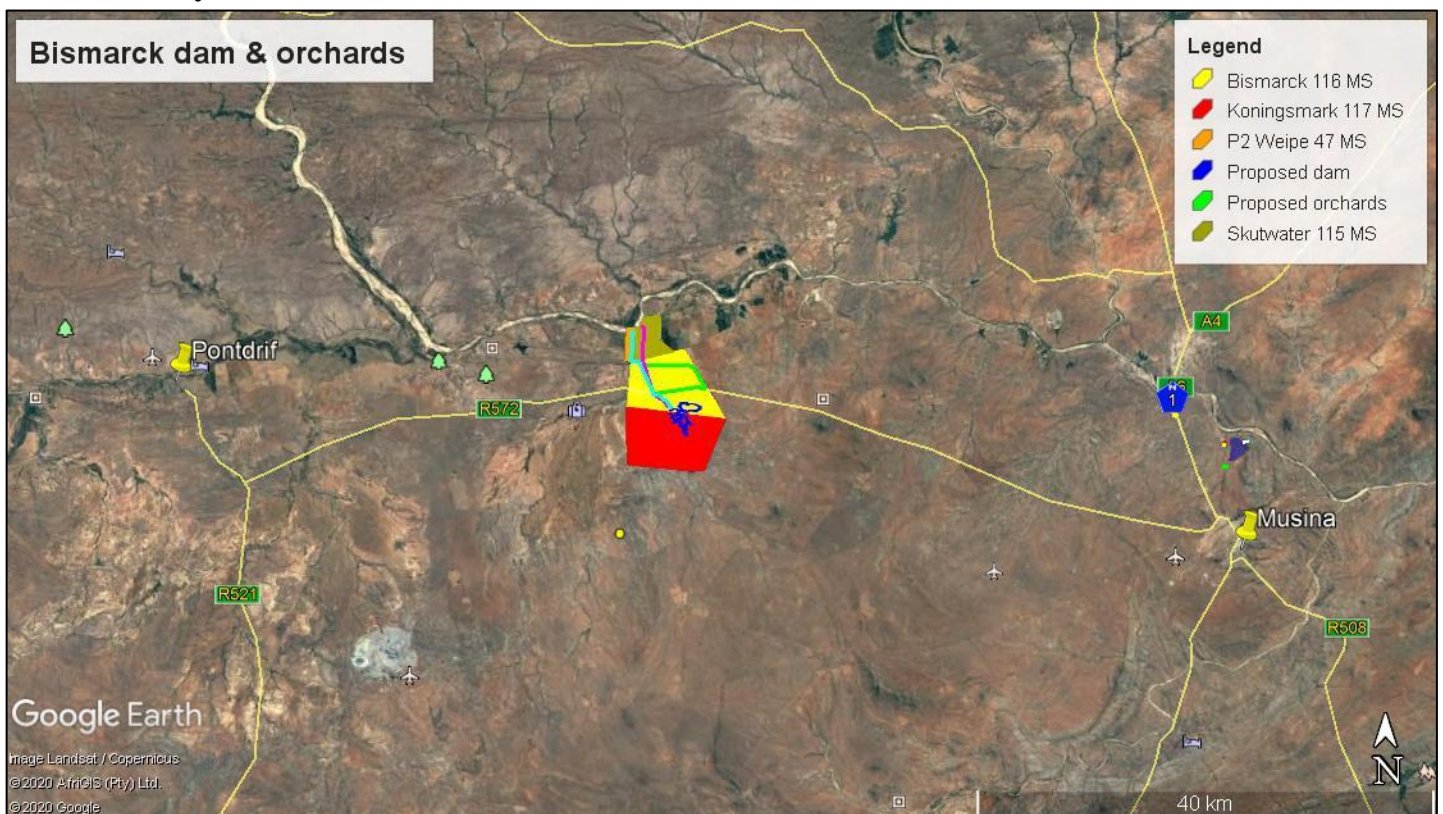
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Locality of the farms



Localities of the proposed activities

