

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

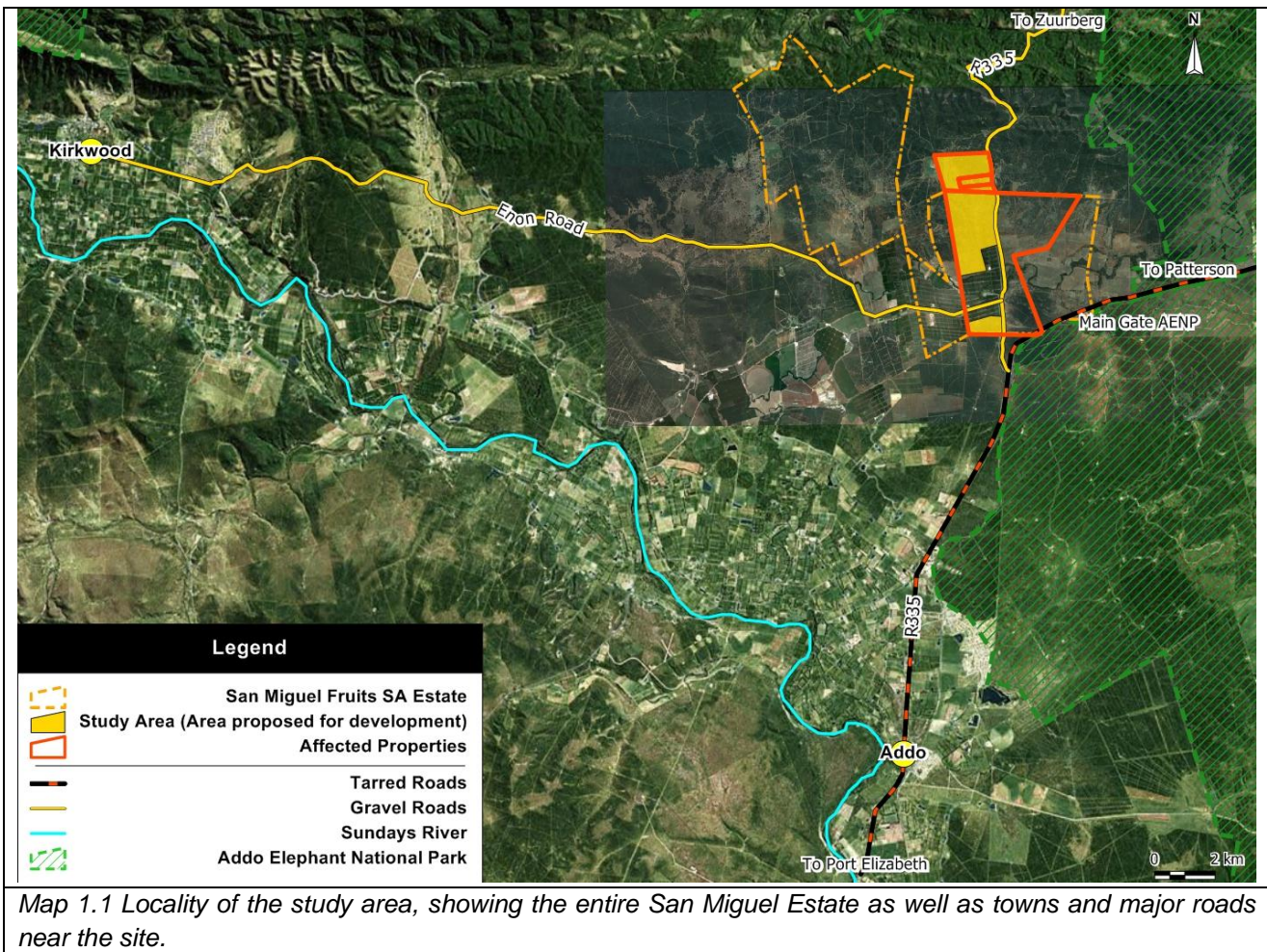
The applicant, San Miguel Fruits SA (Pty) Ltd, is proposing the expansion of existing citrus cultivation operations on the farm known as River Bend Citrus near Addo in the Sundays River Valley Municipality. Subject to the outcome of the specialist studies to be undertaken as part of the EIA process, the applicant proposes to clear a minimum of 300 ha of land for additional citrus cultivation, in a phased manner over a period of four years. The project is proposed to take place on three adjoining properties which form part of the existing River Bend Citrus farming operations, namely:

- Remainder of Farm 82 Wolve Kop (~908 ha),
- Portion 1 of Farm 77 Wellshaven (~22ha), and
- Portion 3 of Farm 77 Honeyvale (~128ha).

It is important to note that the Remainder of Farm 82 Wolve Kop measures 908 ha, however, 448 ha of this erf forms part of the River Bend Concession area with South African National Parks (SANParks) and is not being considered for the expansion of citrus production in line with the concession agreement with SANParks (land east of the Zuurberg road). In addition, approximately 110 ha of the Remainder of Farm 82 Wolve Kop is currently being actively farmed for citrus production. The three adjoining properties measure approximately 1 058 hectares in combined extent and this assessment process will focus on 500 ha for the expansion of agricultural activities (indicated by the orange infill in Map 1.1). Map 1.1 below indicates the boundary for the San Miguel Fruits SA (Pty) Ltd agricultural and other operations (orange dotted line). The boundary of the properties, which form part of this assessment process are indicated by the orange infill within the greater San Miguel Fruits SA operations. It is proposed, subject to the outcome of the specialist assessments an additional 300 ha of the 500 ha is cleared, in a phased manner over a period of four years, for citrus cultivation for international export. The affected properties are currently zoned for agriculture and will not require rezoning.

In terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act no 107 of 1998), as amended (NEMAA), and the NEMA EIA regulations, 2010 published in Government Notice R 543, 544, 545 and 546 on the 18 June 2010 in Government Gazette 33306 (as amended), the project requires full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment prior to the commencement of activities on site.

An application for environmental authorisation has been submitted to the Provincial Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT). The applicant has appointed Public Process Consultants as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to undertake the Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment for the project. The environmental assessment needs to show the responsible authority, and the applicant, San Miguel Fruits SA (Pty) Ltd, what the consequences of their proposed activities would be in biophysical, social and economic terms.



1.2 NEED AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROJECT

The area under assessment forms part of an existing working farm in the Sundays River Valley Municipality (SRVM). According to the SRVM Integrated Development Plan (2010/2011) "...the Sundays River Valley plays an important role in the local economy of the Eastern Cape. The area is characterized by high intensity irrigation farming which is largely based on the export market..." (Pg 19). Agricultural development is a key driver in the local economy, with agriculture related industries (agriculture, forestry & fisheries) currently providing approximately 48.6% of employment in the SRVM, while these industries account for 31.2% of the Gross Geographic Product in the area (Pg 38). "Of particular importance to the Municipality is the partnership with the Department of Agriculture regarding the poverty alleviation projects of agriculture coupled with the high agricultural potential in the area." (Pg. 38.)

It is the applicant's intention to build on this important economic base in the SRVM, by making optimum use of the available resources the area has to offer, i.e. the availability of a sustainable supply of irrigation water from the Sunday River Water Users Association canal system; and the suitability / fertility of the soils on the property under assessment. (The suitability of the site for such agricultural activities is supported by past cultivation practices on the adjacent developed portions of the site).

The site is located 15 km from the Enon settlement, and 11 km from the Nomathamsanqua settlement, which provides ready access to a labour force, from communities with a high unemployment rate. By making use of this labour market the proposed development would also support the SRVM's economic vision, of "*A growing economy that provides a sustainable quality of life for its people to eradicate unemployment and poverty in the Sundays River Valley Municipality.*" (SRVM IDP - 2010/2011 - Pg. 34). One of the goals by which the municipality aims to realize this vision is to "*retain and expand the existing base of established business*".

The expansion of the River Bend Citrus farm will result in 325 additional seasonal employment opportunities and 25 direct permanent employment opportunities. The capital investment prior to harvesting of the crop for export is estimated to be approximately R 68 million.

The affected properties, Remainder of Farm 82 Wolve Kop (~908 ha), Portion 1 of Farm 77 Wellshaven (~22ha) and Portion 3 of Farm 77 Honeyvale (~128ha) have a combined extent of approximately 1 058 hectares, with 110 hectares located in the centre of RE/82 Wolve Kop already under cultivation and 448 ha forming part of a concession agreement with SANParks. The farm has existing infrastructure such as offices; workshops; storage sheds; and workers rest-areas as well as ablution facilities, which will accommodate the requirements associated with the increased output on the farm. No additional offices, workshops, storage and packing sheds, ablution facilities or workers areas are proposed on the site. .

1.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR SCOPING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act no 107 of 1998), as amended (NEMAA), and the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010, published in Government Notice R 543, 544, 545 and 546 on the 18 June 2010 in Government Gazette 33306 (as amended), the project requires full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment Process prior to commencement of activities on site.

The application to commence the Scoping and EIA in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010 was prepared and submitted to the Provincial Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT) on **7 February 2012**, and is included in Appendix B of this report. Acknowledgement of receipt of the application dated **22 February 2012** was received from DEDEAT, and project reference number **EC06/LN2/M/12-10** has been assigned to this application.

Chapter Four of this report provides an overview of the listed activities that are triggered by the project proposal. Public Process Consultants has been appointed as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to conduct the Scoping and EIA, including public participation for this application.

1.4 EIA TEAM

This section of the report provides an overview of the proposed EIA project team under the leadership of Public Process Consultants, who has been appointed as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) for the Scoping, EIA and public participation processes.

Table 1.1 EIA Team and Specialists

EIA PROJECT TEAM		
Sandy Wren	Public Process Consultants	EIA Team Leader
Dr Paul Steyn	Public Process Consultants	Environmental Assessment Practitioner and Biophysical Specialist
Wandile Junundu	Public Process Consultants	Community Consultation
Marisa Jacoby	Public Process Consultants	Biophysical Specialist (Vegetation and Fauna)
Dr Johan Binneman	Eastern Cape Heritage Consultants	Archaeology Specialist
Dr John Almond	NaturaViva	Palaeontology Specialist
Brian Colloty	Sherman Colloty and Associates	Wetland Specialist Assessment
TECHNICAL TEAM		
Rory Niven	San Miguel Fruits SA (Pty) Ltd	

1.5 DETAILS AND EXPERTISE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) AND EXPERTISE TO CARRY OUT SCOPING AND EIA

Public Process Consultants was established in 1997 by Sandy Wren. Initially the company was established to focus on the overarching management and integration of the public participation component for Scoping Reports, EIAs and SEAs. Under this role Sandy was actively involved in projects such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment ("SEA") for the expansion of Addo Elephant National Park, SEA for the Coega Industrial Development Zone and Port of Ngqura, the EIA for the Boardwalk Casino and development of a Sustainable Coastal Development Policy for SA. This management and integration role expanded through years of experience to include the management of Basic Assessments, Scoping and EIA Reports. Sandy has over 15 years of experience in the management of Scoping and EIA's as well as Basic Assessment reports for numerous projects within the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Area and beyond, for both public and private clients.

The application for the Venter Fert Composting and Processing Plant project EIA team is being led by Sandy Wren (EIA Team Leader) who will be supported by Dr Paul-Pierre Steyn (Environmental Scientist). Appendix A includes the CV for Sandy Wren and Dr Paul-Pierre Steyn.

The EIA Project Team is being led by **Ms Sandy Wren** of Public Process Consultants, who has over 15 years of experience in Scoping and EIA studies. Sandy is a graduate from the University of Port Elizabeth, majoring in Political Science, Sociology and Industrial and Organisational Psychology. Sandy obtained a BA Honours Degree in Development Studies in 2003 for which she obtained distinctions in courses in Environmental Management. Sandy is a former Regional Director of Idasa (Institute for Democracy in SA). Sandy's EIA project management experience includes, proposed new housing and "estate" type developments, expansion of agricultural related activities (broiler house facilities and citrus production), bulk infrastructure related projects (sewer, stormwater, sewage reticulation works and pump stations) as well as industrial type developments (SA Breweries IBhayi Biogas facility, NiRoVe Paint Stripping and increase in LNG for Umicore).

Sandy continues to play a key role in the management of various public participation processes associated with the Coega Project (Proposed Regional Hazardous Waste Site Facility; Proposed Bulk Liquid Storage and Handling Facility in the Coega IDZ: Marine Servitude and Pipelines in the Coega IDZ), as well as various renewable energy projects (wind and solar).

Dr Paul-Pierre Steyn, Environmental Scientist, has a BSc (Botany & Zoology), BSc Hons (Botany), MSc Botany and PhD Botany awarded by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). In 2009 Dr Steyn completed his thesis on: The Ecophysiology of the agarophyte *Gelidium pristoides* towards commercial production. From the period 2000 to 2006, Paul was a contract lecturer in the Botany Department of the NMMU, as well as an independent specialist consultant for the SAB Institute for Environmental and Coastal Management. During this period Paul provided specialist consulting services on coastal projects (Mossel Bay Coastal Walk Way), bio-monitoring (Ngqura Port bio-monitoring); and ecological specialist services for various housing, resort, and mining related developments. Paul joined Public Process Consultants in 2007 as an Environmental Assessment Practitioner and has subsequently managed various Basic Assessments, Scoping and EIAs, EMPr's, and provided Environmental Control Officer services for numerous projects in and beyond the NMBM boundary (Sundays River Valley Municipality and Kouga Municipality). Paul has successfully acted as an independent EAP as well as provided specialist biophysical input (flora, fauna and wetlands) for various agricultural developments (broiler houses, citrus and crop production), estate and residential housing, mixed use type developments (Amanzi Country Estate, Winterhoek Park Extension, The Stables development), bulk infrastructure projects (water, sewer, roads and sanitation), renewable energy projects (solar), industrial developments (Umicore, NiRoVe, and SA Breweries) and mining applications.

A curriculum vitae for Sandy Wren and Paul Steyn is attached as Appendix A of this report.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT

This Scoping Report forms part of a series of reports and information documents that will be issued during the EIA process for the proposed agricultural expansion on River Bend Citrus.

The Scoping Phase of the EIA refers to the process of determining the spatial and temporal (extent) boundaries for the EIA, as well as the key issues to be addressed in the environmental assessment. This is done through a parallel process of public consultation and specialist consultation involving the selected specialists, and a review of relevant background literature on the development (Local and Regional Planning Frameworks, EC Biodiversity Conservation Plan (ECBCP), and Subtropical Thicket Ecosystem Plan (STEP)). This is done in order to focus the environmental assessment on key issues requiring assessment and to identify reasonable and feasible alternatives.

The primary objective of the Scoping report is to present (to key stakeholders and affected organs of state) an overview of the project, including key issues that require assessment in the EIA Phase and to allow the opportunity for the identification of additional issues that may require assessment in EIA phase of the assessment. Issues raised in response to requests to register interest in the project were included in the Draft Scoping Report which was made available for a 30 day review period. Comments received during the Draft Scoping Report review period have been included in the Final Scoping Report.

In terms of legal requirements, a crucial objective of the Scoping Process is to satisfy the requirements of Regulations 28 and 29 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010. These sections regulate and prescribe the content of Scoping Reports and specify the type of supporting information that must accompany the submission of the Scoping Report to the authorities. In this Scoping Report, such supporting information is included in the Appendices. Table 1.2 below indicates how the requirements of these regulations are met by the different sections of this Scoping Report.

Furthermore, the scoping process is designed to satisfy the requirements of Regulations 55, 56 and 57 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010, which relate to the public participation process and, specifically, the registration of interested and affected parties and the acknowledgment of their comments and views on the proposed project.

Table 1.2 Summary of where requirements for a Scoping Report (in terms of Section 28 and 29 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010) are provided for in this report.

Section	Requirement for Scoping Report	Where this is provided in this Draft Scoping Report
28. (1) (a) (i)	details of the EAP who prepared the report	Appendix A
28. (1) (a) (ii)	the expertise of the EAP to carry out scoping procedures;	Appendix A
28. (1) (b)	a description of the proposed activity	Chapter 2
28. (1) (c)	a description of any feasible and reasonable alternatives that have been identified	Chapter 5
28. (1) (d)	a description of the property on which the activity is to be undertaken and the location of the activity on the property, or if it is —	Chapter 3
28. (1) (d) (i)	a linear activity, a description of the route of the activity; or	This is not a linear activity
28. (1) (d) (ii)	an ocean-based activity, the coordinates where the activity is to be undertaken	This is not an ocean based activity
28. (1) (e)	a description of the environment that may be affected by the activity and the manner in which the activity may be affected by the environment	Chapter 2 and 3
28. (1) (f)	an identification of all legislation and guidelines that have been considered in the preparation of the scoping report	Chapter 4
28. (1) (g)	(g) a description of environmental issues and potential impacts, including cumulative impacts, that have been identified;	Chapter 2, 3 and 6 and to be assessed in full in the Draft and Final EIA
28. (1) (h)	details of the public participation process conducted in terms of regulation 27(a), including —	Chapter 4
28. (1) (h) (i)	the steps that were taken to notify potentially interested and affected parties of the application;	Chapter 4
28. (1) (h) (ii)	proof that notice boards, advertisements and notices notifying potentially interested and affected parties of the application have been displayed, placed or given;	Appendix C
28. (1) (h) (iii)	a list of all persons or organisations that were identified and registered in terms of regulation 55 as interested and affected parties in relation to the application; and	Appendix D

28. (1) (h) (iv)	a summary of the issues raised by interested and affected parties, the date of receipt of and the response of the EAP to those issues;	Chapter 4
28. (1) (i)	a description of the need and desirability of the proposed activity;	Chapter 1
28. (1) (j)	a description of identified potential alternatives to the proposed activity, including advantages and disadvantages that the proposed activity or alternatives may have on the environment and the community that may be affected by the activity;	Chapter 5
28. (1) (k)	copies of any representations, and comments received in connection with the application or the scoping report from interested and affected parties;	Appendix E
28. (1) (l)	copies of the minutes of any meetings held by the EAP with interested and affected parties and other role players which record the views of the participants; and	No meetings held to date. Meetings with key I&APs to be held during DSR review.
28. (1) (m)	any responses by the EAP to those representations and comments and views;	Chapter 4: Issues and Responses Trail
28. (1) (n)	a plan of study for environmental impact assessment which sets out the proposed approach to the environmental impact assessment of the application, which must include —	Chapter 6
28. (1) (n) (i)	a description of the tasks that will be undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment process, including any specialist reports or specialised processes, and the manner in which such tasks will be undertaken;	Chapter 6
28. (1) (n) (ii)	an indication of the stages at which the competent authority will be consulted;	Chapter 6
28. (1) (n) (iii)	a description of the proposed method of assessing the environmental issues and alternatives, including the option of not proceeding with the activity; and	Chapter 6 for methods of assessing environmental issues and Chapter 5 for Alternatives
28. (1) (n) (iv)	particulars of the public participation process that will be conducted during the environmental impact assessment process;	Chapter 6
28. (1) (o)	any specific information required by the competent authority; and	None requested to date
28. (1) (p)	any other matters required in terms of sections 24(4)(a) and (b) of the Act.	The Scoping and EIA process takes into consideration IEM principles as contained in NEMA
28. (2)	In addition, a scoping report must take into account any guidelines applicable to the kind of activity which is the subject of the application	Chapter 4

28. (3)	The EAP managing the application must provide the competent authority with detailed, written proof of an investigation as required by section 24(4)(b)(i) of the Act and motivation if no reasonable or feasible alternatives, as contemplated in sub regulation (1)(c), exist.	The Scoping and EIA Report is proof of the assessment process and Chapter 5 for alternatives
29.	The EAP managing an application must submit 5 copies of the scoping report compiled in terms of regulation 28 to the competent authority, together with —	Copies have been submitted as per the instructions of the competent authority.
29. (a)	copies of any representations, and comments received in connection with the application or the scoping report from interested and affected parties;	Appendix E
29. (b)	copies of the minutes of any meetings held by the EAP with interested and affected parties and other role players which record the views of the participants; and	No meetings held to date. Meetings with key I&APs to be held during DSR review.
29. (c)	any responses by the EAP to those representations and comments and views.	Chapter 4, Issues and Responses Trail