

## 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. The applicant initially proposed to clear a minimum of 300 ha of land for additional citrus cultivation, in a phased manner over a period of four years, however the outcome of the specialist assessments recommends that 263 ha of land is cleared for the establishment of citrus. 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 has focused on 500 ha for the expansion of agricultural activities (indicated by the orange infill in Map 1.1). The affected area can thus be broken down as follows:

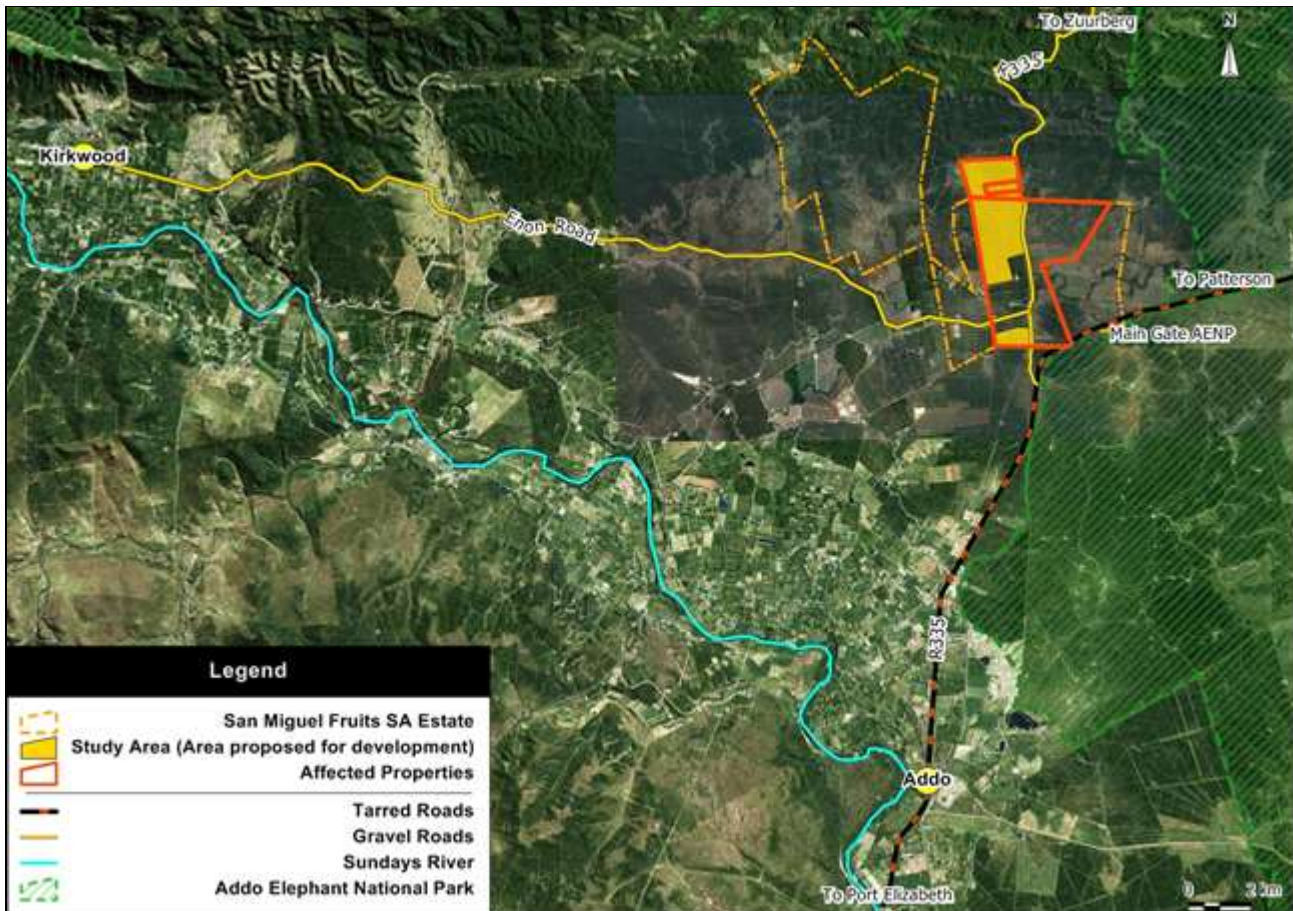
- Total property boundaries = 1058 ha
- SANParks Concession area = 448 ha
- Total area included in this Assessment = 610 ha
  - 110 ha already under cultivation
- Area assessed in this EIA process = 500 ha

Map 1.1 below indicates the boundary for 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 was proposed, subject to the outcome of the specialist assessments that 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.

The applicant 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 decision making authority

(DEDEAT), and the applicant, San Miguel Fruits SA (Pty) Ltd, what the consequences of their proposed activities would be in biophysical, social and economic terms.



Map 1.1 Locality of the study area, showing the entire San Miguel Estate as well as towns and major roads near the site.

## 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 approximately 250 additional seasonal employment opportunities with an annual value of approximately R4 million and 20 direct permanent employment opportunities with an annual value of R600 000. The capital investment prior to harvesting of the crop for export is estimated to be approximately R 70 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.

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

The EIA phase of this assessment process was preceded by a comprehensive Scoping Process and the submission of a Final Scoping Report, including the Plan of Study for EIA, to the Provincial Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT) on **24 May 2012**. Acceptance of the Scoping Report and Approval of the Plan of Study for EIA was received on **9 July 2012**. EIA reference number **EC06/LN2/M/12-10** has been assigned to this application. See copy attached as Appendix B of this report.

All I&APs have been afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the Draft EIA Report which was released for a 30 day review period which extended from 6 November 2012 to 5 December 2012. Acknowledgement of receipt of the submission of the Draft EIA to DEDEAT was received on

the 4 December 2012. See copy of the correspondence attached as Appendix B to this report. Comments received during the review period have been included in the Final EIA Report in preparation of the submission thereof to the DEDEAT for their decision-making.

The project is now at the stage where the Draft EIA and EMPr are being made available for a 30 day I&AP review period. Comments on the Draft EIA will be considered for inclusion in the Final EIA Report prior to submission to the decision making authority.

#### 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 Practitioners for the Scoping, EIA and public participation processes.

**Table 1.1 EIA Team and Specialists**

| <b>EIA PROJECT TEAM</b> |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Sandy Wren              | Public Process Consultants             | EIA Team Leader   |
| Marisa Jacoby           | Public Process Consultants             | Environmental Assessment Practitioner and Biophysical Specialist (Vegetation and Fauna) |
| Wandile Junundu         | Public Process Consultants             | Community Consultation  |
| Dr Johan Binneman       | Eastern Cape Heritage Consultants      | Archaeology Specialist  |
| Dr John Almond          | NaturaViva                             | Palaeontology Specialist  |
| Dr Brian Colloty        | Sherman Colloty and Associates         | Wetland Specialist Assessment   |
| Dr Paul-Pierre Steyn    | Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University | Review of the Biophysical Specialist Assessment   |
| <b>TECHNICAL TEAM</b>   |  |   |
| 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 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).

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

## **1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE EIA PHASE OF THE ASSESSMENT**

This Draft EIA Report was preceded by a comprehensive scoping process that led to the submission of a Final Scoping Report (and Plan of study for EIA) to DEDEAT for approval. The Final Scoping Report was submitted during May 2012. Approval for the Scoping Report and Plan of Study for EIA was received from DEDEAT on 9 July 2012, which marked the end of the Scoping phase of the EIA process. The project then moved into the impact assessment phase of the EIA. A copy of the correspondence from the DEDEAT is contained in Appendix B of this report.

The primary objective of this Draft EIA Report is to present key stakeholders and affected organs of state with an overview of the predicted impacts and associated management actions required to avoid or mitigate the negative impacts; or enhance the positive impacts of the project. This report has been released for a 30 day I&AP review period to enable the authorities and I&APs to provide input and comment before the EIA report is finalised and submitted to DEDEAT for their decision-making. Acknowledgement of receipt of the submission of the Draft EIA to DEDEAT was received on the 4 December 2012. See copy of the correspondence attached as Appendix B to this report.

In terms of legal requirements, a crucial objective of the EIA phase of the assessment is to satisfy the requirements of Sections 31, 32 and 33 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010 (as amended). These sections regulate and prescribe the content of the EIA Report and specify the type of supporting information that must accompany the submission of the report to the authorities. An overview of where the requirements for section 31, 32 and 33 of NEMA are addressed in this report is presented in Table 1.2 below.

Furthermore, the process is designed to satisfy the requirements of Regulations 55, 56 and 57 of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2010 (as amended), which relate to the public participation process and, specifically, the registration of interested and affected parties including the recording of their comments and views on the proposed project. All I&APs on the current database for this EIA (see copy attached as Appendix C) were notified in writing of the release of the Draft EIA Report for a 30 day I&AP review period. All comments received during this review period are included in the

Comments and Responses Trail of Chapter Four of this report and a copy of the comment received is included in Appendix G.

Table 1.2: Summary of where the requirements for EIA Reports (in terms of Section 31, 32 and 33 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2010 (as amended) are provided for in this report.

| <b>Section</b> | <b>Requirement for EIA Report</b>   | <b>Where this is provided in this Draft EIA Report</b>          |
|----------------|---|---|
| (2) (a) (i)    | The EAP who compiled the report   | Chapter 1, Appendix A   |
| (2) (a) (ii)   | The expertise of the EAP to carry out an environmental impact assessment  | Chapter 1, Appendix A   |
| (2) (b)        | A detailed description of the proposed activity   | Chapter 2   |
| (2) (c)        | A description of the property on which the activity is to be undertaken and the location of the activity on the property  | Chapter 3 and Chapters 6 to 9                                   |
| (2) (c) (i)    | A linear activity, a description of the route of the activity   | This is not a linear activity                                   |
| (2) (c) (ii)   | An ocean-based activity, the coordinates where the activity is to be undertaken   | This is not an ocean based activity                             |
| (2) (d)        | A description of the environment that may be affected by the activity and the manner in which the physical, biological, social, economic and cultural aspects of the environment may be affected by the proposed activity   | Chapter 3 and Chapters 6 to 9                                   |
| (2) (e)        | Details of the public participation process conducted in terms of sub-regulation  | Chapter 4   |
| (2) (e) (i)    | Steps undertaken in accordance with the plan of study   | Chapter 4   |
| (2) (e) (ii)   | (2) (e) (ii) A list of persons, organisations and organs of state that were registered as interested and affected parties   | Appendix C  |
| (2) (e) (iii)  | A summary of comments received from, and a summary of issues raised by registered interested and affected parties, the date of receipt of these comments and the response of the EAP to those comments  | Comments and Responses Trail in Chapter Four.                   |
| (2) (e) (iv)   | Copies of any representation, objections and comments received from registered interested and affected parties  | Appendix G  |
| (2) (f)        | A description of the need and desirability of the proposed activity and 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 1 (1.2), Chapter 2 (2.2) and Chapter 5 for Alternatives |
| (2) (g)        | An indication of the methodology used in determining the significance of potential environmental impacts  | Chapter 4   |
| (2) (h)        | A description and comparative assessment of all alternatives identified during the environmental impact assessment process  | Chapter 5 & 10  |
| (2) (i)        | A summary of the findings and recommendations of any specialist report or report on a specialised process   | Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10                                      |
| (2) (j)        | A description of all environmental issues that were identified during the environmental impact assessment process, an assessment of the significance of each issue and an indication of the extent to which the issue could be addressed by the adoption of mitigation measures                         | Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10                                      |
| (2) (k)        | An assessment of each identified potentially significant impact   | Chapters 6 to 10  |
| (2) (k) (i)    | Cumulative impacts  | Chapters 6 to 10  |
| (2) (k) (ii)   | The nature of the impact  | Chapters 6 to 10  |
| (2) (k) (iii)  | The extent and duration of the impact   | Chapters 6 to 10  |

|               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
| (2) (k) (iv)  | The probability of the impact occurring   | Chapters 6 to 10  |
| (2) (k) (v)   | The degree to which the impact can be reversed  | Chapters 6 to 10  |
| (2) (k) (vi)  | The degree to which the impact may cause irreplaceable loss of resources  | Chapters 6 to 10  |
| (2) (k) (vii) | The degree to which the impact can be mitigated   | Chapters 6 to 10  |
| (2) (l)       | A description of any assumptions, uncertainties and gaps in knowledge   | Chapter 1 (1.7), and Chapters 6 to 9 (for specialist studies)                                 |
| (2) (m))      | An opinion as to whether the activity should or should not be authorised, and if the opinion is that it should be authorised, any conditions that should be made in respect of that authorisation | Chapter 10  |
| (2) (n) (i)   | A summary of the key findings of the environmental impact assessment  | Chapter 10  |
| (2) (n) (ii)  | A comparative assessment of the positive and negative implications of the proposed activity   | Chapter 10  |
| (2) (o)       | A draft Environmental management plan that complies with regulation 35  | Part B  |
| (2) (p)       | Copies of any specialist reports and reports on specialised processes complying with regulation 33  | Included in Chapter 6 to 9, water use in Appendix F and specialist declarations in Appendix G |

## 1.7 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The following assumptions and limitations underpin the approach to this Draft EIA report:

- Information provided to Public Process Consultants by San Miguel Fruits SA (Pty) Ltd or their technical representatives is assumed to be correct and valid at the time of the study.
- Where supporting or baseline information was unavailable, a precautionary approach is adopted.