

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

**Basic Assessment Process:
Proposed expansion of citrus packing and cold storage facilities in Addo / Sunland
areas, Sundays River Municipality, Eastern Cape**

29 July 2015

CEN Integrated Environmental Management Unit

36 River Road

Walmer, Port Elizabeth 6070

Telephone / Fax: 041 581 2983 / 086 504 2549

E-mail: steenbok@aerosat.co.za

Purpose of the Background Information Document

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to provide stakeholders with additional information, the opportunity to register as Interested and Affected Parties in the environmental assessment process, and to obtain their initial comments on the proposed expansion of citrus packing and cold storage facilities in the Addo / Sunland areas in the Sundays River Municipality, Eastern Cape.

An application for an Environmental Authorisation will be made by the **Sundays River Citrus Company** to the Eastern Cape Provincial **Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT)**, in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 published in Government Notice R.982 of 4 December 2014. This application will be done in terms of activities listed in Government Notice R. 983 and 985 of 4 December 2014, published in terms of Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 1998), as amended.

The purpose of the environmental assessment is to identify potential impacts associated with the development and to recommend measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts and enhance beneficial or positive impacts.

If you would like to participate in the process, please register yourself and / or your organization as an Interested and Affected Party. Submit issues that you feel need to be addressed in the assessment by completing the response form or in a letter or by email to:

**Dr Mike Cohen
CEN IEM Unit
36 River Road
Walmer
Port Elizabeth
6070**

steenbok@aerosat.co.za

All comments must be submitted within 30 days (excluding public holidays) of the date of this notice.

Date of Notice: 29 July 2015

Closing Date for Registration: 31 August 2015

1. The proposed project

1.1 Proposed project description:

Sundays River Citrus Company (Pty) Ltd intends to expand existing citrus packing and cold storage facilities at their Hermitage (near Addo) and Summerville (near Sunland / Kirkwood) packhouses. This will be done through construction of additional packhouses, cold stores, associated infrastructure and upgrades on the properties adjacent to their existing Hermitage and Summerville packhouses. The Hermitage expansion property consist largely of open space and a gravel parking lot, and the Summerville expansion property consists largely of old agricultural lands, and a residence with associated outbuildings (to be removed).

The Hermitage packhouse expansion will involve:

- construction of a 12 000 m² packhouse and offices
- construction of a 1 300 m² staff facility
- construction of internal access roads (6 m wide max.) and a concrete apron around buildings
- an electrical upgrade (expansion) from 150 kilovolts to 1 000 kilovolts capacity
- removal of an off-channel earth-lined storage dam and associated irrigation canal, and diversion of stored water to an existing dam on a neighbouring property.

The Summerville packhouse expansion will involve:

- construction of a 12 000 m² packhouse and offices
- construction of two 12 000 m² cold stores
- construction of internal access roads (6 m wide max.) and a concrete apron around buildings
- an electrical upgrade (expansion) from 150 kilovolts to 1 000 kilovolts capacity.

1.2 Localities:

The property on which the **Hermitage packhouse expansion** will be located is Portion 84 of the Farm Commando Kraal Estate No. 113 (approximate central GPS co-ordinates: 33° 31' 25.97" S, 25° 40' 37.52" E; size: 14.1685 ha – see **Figure 1**). This property is located north of the R336, approximately 3.5 km north-west of the town of Addo.

The existing Hermitage packhouse facility is located on Portion 75 of the Farm Commando Kraal Estate No. 113 (i.e. immediately north-west of the proposed expansion property).

The property on which the **Summerville packhouse expansion** will be located is Portion 47 of the Farm Buck Kraal No. 558 (approximate central GPS co-ordinates: 33° 29' 12.85" S, 25° 35' 15.06" E; approx. size: 13.8 ha – see **Figure 2**). This property is located north of the R336, approximately 3.8 km east of the town of Kirkwood, in the Sunland area.

The existing Summerville packhouse facility is located on Portion 99 of the Farm Buck Kraal No. 558 (i.e. immediately north-west of the proposed expansion property).



Figure 1: Google Earth aerial image showing location of proposed Hermitage packhouse expansion (property outlined in red). At present, the property includes: open space; an off-channel earth-lined storage dam with associated irrigation canal (to be removed), and a gravel parking area.



Figure 2: Google Earth aerial image showing location of proposed Summerville packhouse expansion (property outlined in red). At present, the property includes: old agricultural lands; a residence with associated outbuildings (to be removed); composting facility with associated structures (business has been closed, structures to be removed), and an off-channel earth-lined storage dam.

2. Environmental Assessment Process

2.1 Identified Listed Activities in terms of the EIA Regulations:

The Minister of Environmental Affairs has in terms of Sections 24 and 24D of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998, NEMA), as amended, listed the activities that require an environmental assessment. The following activities are subject to a **Basic Assessment** process in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, made under of Section 24(5) of NEMA, as amended 2014, and published in Government Notice R. 982, 983 and 985 of 4 December 2014. The competent authority is the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT).

Please note: Listed Activities described below refer to the total development footprint of the Hermitage and Summerville packhouse expansions, combined –

GN R. 983 Item 8: *The development and related operation of hatcheries or agri-industrial facilities outside industrial complexes where the development footprint covers an area of 2 000 square metres or more.*

Description: The construction of two 12 000 m² packhouses with offices, two 12 000 m² cold stores, a 1 300 m² staff facility **plus** associated roads and infrastructure i.e. a development footprint of more than 49 300 m² consisting of agri-industrial facilities, to be built in an agricultural area.

GN R. 983 Item 27: *The clearance of an area of 1 hectares or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for –*

- (i) the undertaking of a linear activity; or*
- (ii) maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan.*

Description: A total development footprint area exceeding 5 hectares is to be cleared for Hermitage and Summerville packhouse expansions.

GN R. 983 Item 28: *Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments where such land was used for agriculture or afforestation on or after 01 April 1998 and where such development:*

- (i) will occur inside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 5 hectares; or*
- (ii) will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare;*

excluding where such land has already been developed for residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional purposes.

Description: Land at the Hermitage packhouse expansion property has not been actively used for agricultural purposes in the past ten years. Land at the Summerville packhouse expansion property has not been actively used for agricultural purposes since 2012. Development will occur outside an urban area, where land has largely been developed for agricultural purposes, and the land to be developed will likely exceed 5 hectares in size.

GN R. 983 Item 43: *The expansion and related operation of hatcheries or agri-industrial facilities outside industrial complexes, where the development footprint of the hatcheries or agri-industrial facilities will be increased by 2 000 square metres or more.*

Description: The expansion of existing agri-industrial facilities i.e. Hermitage packhouse and Summerville packhouse, in an agricultural area, where the development footprint will be increased by more than 49 300 m².

GN R. 983 Item 47: *The expansion of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity where the expanded capacity will exceed 275 kilovolts and the development footprint will increase.*

Description: Electrical transmission from from existing 150 kilovolts to 1 000 kilovolts capacity for both Hermitage and Summerville packhouse expansions.

GN R. 985 Item 4: *The development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13,5 metres.*

(b) In Eastern Cape: (ii) Outside urban areas, in:

(ee) Critical biodiversity areas as identified in systematic biodiversity plans adopted by the competent authority or in bioregional plans;

(gg) 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, excluding disturbed areas...

Description: Roads approx. 6 m wide are to be constructed at the Hermitage and Summerville packhouse expansion sites. The Hermitage site is classed as a Terrestrial CBA2 (Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan, 2007). The Summerville site is classed as a Terrestrial CBA2 and an Aquatic CBA2 (ECBCP, 2007). Both sites are located within 10 km of the Addo Elephant National Park.

GNR. 985 Item 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.*

(a) In Eastern Cape...province:

(i) Within any critically endangered or endangered ecosystem listed in terms of section 52 of the NEMBA or prior to the publication of such a list, within an area that has been identified as critically endangered in the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment 2004;

(ii) Within critical biodiversity areas identified in bioregional plans...

Description: A total development footprint area exceeding 300 square metres (i.e. exceeding 5 hectares) is to be cleared for Hermitage and Summerville packhouse expansions. Both sites are included in the historical extent of Albany Alluvial vegetation (AZa 6), which is an Endangered vegetation type and a threatened ecosystem according to NEMBA. The Hermitage site is classed as a Terrestrial CBA2 (Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan, 2007). The Summerville site is classed as a Terrestrial CBA2 and an Aquatic CBA2 (ECBCP, 2007).

2.2 The Basic Assessment Process:

The Basic Assessment Process identifies and assesses potential impacts, then provides mitigation measures to reduce the anticipated negative impacts. Appropriate public participation process is undertaken as part of this process. The Basic Assessment ends with recommendations for authorisation and under what conditions.

2.3 Some identified issues / impacts:

As we progress with the environmental investigations we will identify potentially beneficial and adverse impacts. All identified issues will be subjected to an assessment to determine if they are significant and if they require additional investigation. Possible mitigation measures will also be provided to reduce the anticipated adverse impacts. Based on our preliminary investigations, we have identified the following issues:

- Biodiversity impacts
- Socio-economic impacts
- Pollution impacts: noise, air, soil, surface and groundwater pollution.

2.4. Description of tasks within the Basic Assessment Process:

An application for Environmental Authorisation will be submitted to the competent authority, namely the DEDEAT, for this project.

Public participation starts with announcing the proposed project, and registration of Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs). Newspaper advertisements and site notices have been placed, and *notifications are also sent to identified stakeholders* »» which is where we are in the process.

A Basic Assessment Report is compiled that considers inputs from stakeholders, I&APs and specialists, in terms of:

- potential impacts of the activity on the environment;
- whether the impacts can be mitigated, and if so, to what extent, and
- whether there are any other significant issues / impacts to be investigated.

Once the Basic Assessment Report is compiled, it is then submitted for a **30 day review period** to registered I&APs and stakeholders. This enables you to comment on the draft Basic Assessment Report and accompanying draft Environmental Management Programme.

Your comments are incorporated and the reports are then finalised.

These final reports are submitted to the DEDEAT for consideration.

The DEDEAT reviews the documents and decides whether the project can proceed or not – their decision is known as an Environmental Authorisation (EA).

A copy of the EA is made available to you to consider, along with the reasons for the decision made. If you disagree with the decision, you are provided with information on how to lodge an appeal.

3. How do you participate?

Every proposed project and/or development has the potential to significantly affect the natural and social environments, both at, as well as surrounding the proposed development site. While some of the impacts will have an adverse impact on the environment, others will have a beneficial impact.

For this reason it is imperative that you as an Interested and/or Affected Party (I&AP) comment on the proposed development, and raise issues or concerns that you feel needs to be considered during the proposed planning and implementation process.

This can be done by completing the attached registration form and submitting it to the contact details as reflected.

Upon submission of the registration form to CEN IEM Unit, you will be registered as an I&AP, and be included on an I&APs database which will ensure that you receive future project information and notifications regarding reports available for public comment.

If you intend to register as an I&AP or forward comments regarding the proposed development, please submit your completed registration form (see form, below) to CEN IEM Unit by **31 August 2015**.



CEN IEM UNIT

36 River Road, Walmer, Port Elizabeth, 6070

Fax: 086 504 2549

Email: steenbok@aerosat.co.za

REGISTRATION / COMMENT SHEET

Basic Assessment for the proposed expansion of citrus packing and cold storage facilities in Addo / Sunland areas, Sundays River Municipality, Eastern Cape

29 July 2015

I wish to register as an Interested and / or Affected Party and request that the following issues receive attention during the assessment process

Closing date for comments: 31 August 2015

Name of Respondent: _____

Organisation / Company: _____

Address: _____

Fax Number: _____

Tel Number: _____

Email: _____

Please use additional sheets as necessary.

Signature: _____

Date: _____