

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

### **Proposed Cultivation of 99 ha on York Farm, near New Hanover, uMshwathi Local Municipality**

December 2014



#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?**

The purpose of this document is to:

- Inform Interested and Affected Parties (IAPs) about the proposed activities and request their participation;
- Provide a brief background on the proposed activities; and
- Explain the aims and objectives of the Basic Assessment (BA) Process.



#### **WHAT IS PROPOSED?**

The Applicant, the York Landowners Association, wishes to cultivate 99 ha of indigenous grassland on York Farm, for the commercial cultivation of sugarcane, maize and other crops. The cultivation is proposed to make better use of the property in terms of its agricultural potential, as well as to improve the economic viability of all shareholders of the York Landowners Association.

A portion of the profits generated from this commercial production will enable the Applicant to implement improved management of the undisturbed portions of York Farm, e.g. erosion control, improvement of fencing for livestock etc.

York Farm is approximately 767 ha in size and is currently used for grazing by cattle, and mowing for the production of hay. The site is currently dominated by *Aristida junciformis*, which has limited grazing potential, particularly during the winter months.

JEC Environmental Services (JEC) has been appointed by the York Landowners Association to act as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) and conduct the necessary Basic Assessment Process for the proposed cultivation.



#### **WHERE IS THE SITE?**

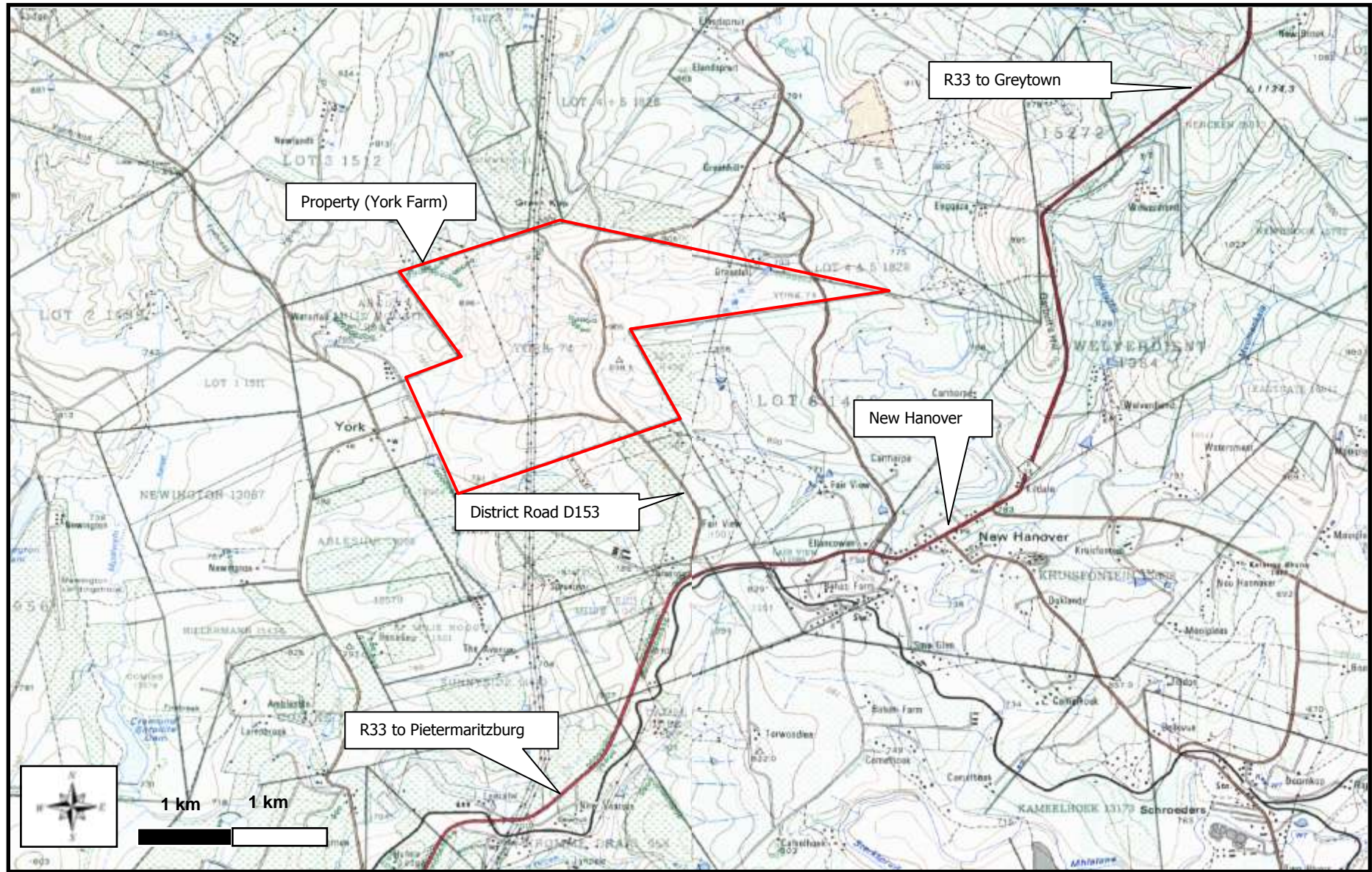
The properties on which the cultivation is proposed are Erf 73, 74 and 75 of York. The site is located approximately 4.5km north west of New Hanover.

The site can be accessed as follows:

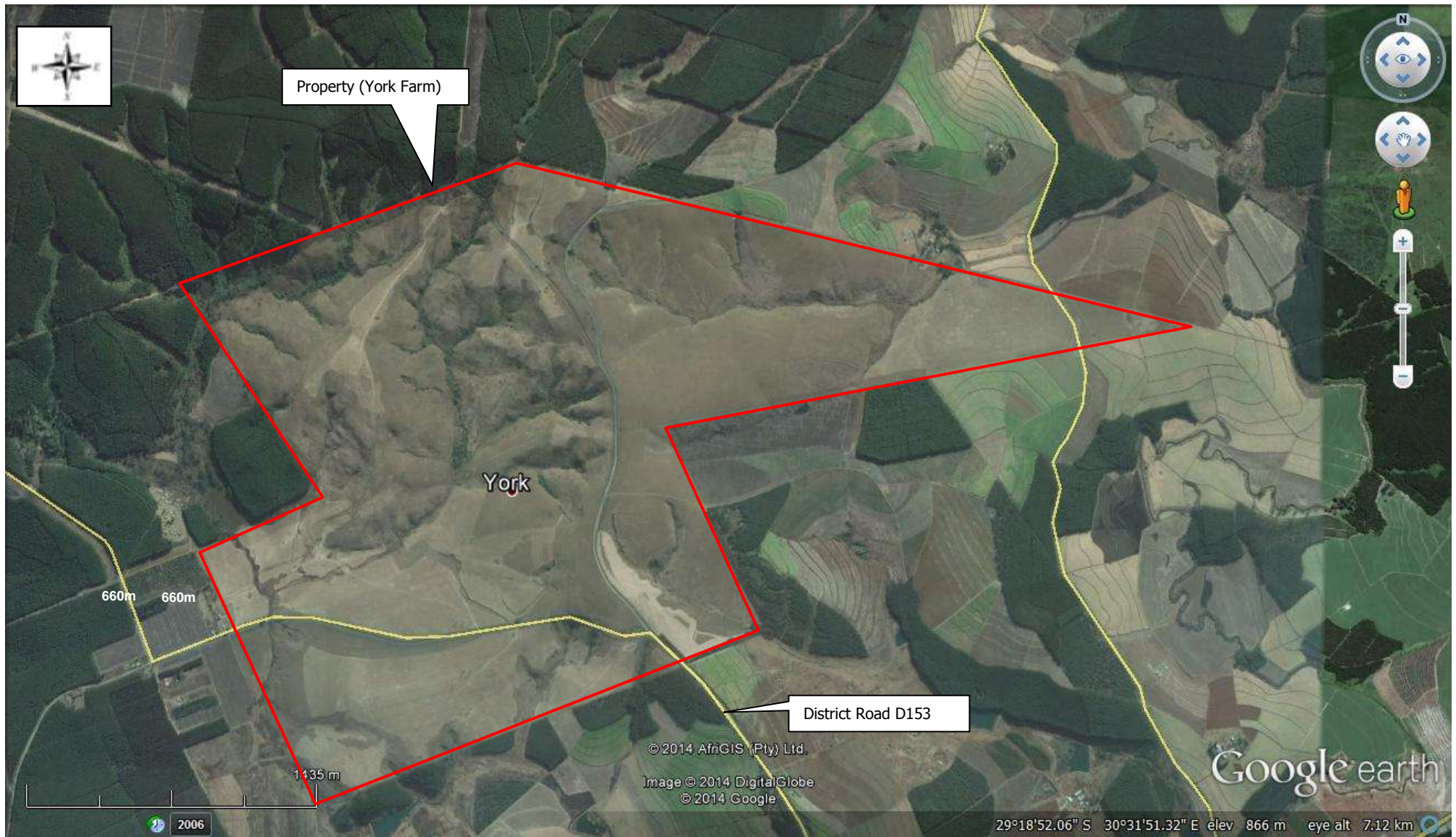
From Pietermaritzburg, travel towards Greytown on the R33. Approximately 2km before New Hanover, turn left onto District Road D153. York Farm is located approximately 2km from the R33 (see Figures 1 and 2).

GPS co-ordinates for the centre of the site are as follows:

- 29° 20' 00" S;
- 30° 29' 24" E.



**FIGURE 1: Location of York Farm, near New Hanover (Extracted from 1:50 000 Topographical Map 2930AD and 2930BC)**



**FIGURE 2: Aerial Photo showing location of York Farm, near New Hanover (Extracted from Google Earth)**



## **WHAT ARE THE ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS?**

In terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (2010, as amended) promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), certain Listed Activities are specified for which either a Basic Assessment Process (Government Notice (GN) R 544 and GNR 546) or a Scoping and EIA Process (GNR 545) is required.

The following Listed Activity in GNR 546 (Listing Notice 3) is applicable to the proposed cultivation:

Listing Notice 3 (GNR 546):	Item 14:	<i>The clearance of an area of 5 hectares or more of vegetation where 75% or more of the vegetation cover constitutes indigenous vegetation...(a) in KwaZulu-Natal, (i) in all areas outside urban areas.</i>
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## **WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS?**

The Basic Assessment Process can be described as follows:

1. Submission of Environmental Authorisation Application Form:

The EAP has completed the official Environmental Authorisation Application Form and submitted it to the relevant office of the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA). The Application Form includes relevant maps and declarations from the EAP and Applicant. The DEDTEA will acknowledge receipt of the Application Form and will assign the Application a reference number.

2. Public Participation:

Neighbouring landowners, relevant Authorities, community groups and the general public will be notified of the proposed activities through newspaper adverts, site notices and direct consultation. This Background Information Document (BID) forms part of this stage.

3. Identification of Impacts and Alternatives

Environmental issues, concerns, development constraints and possible development alternatives will be identified using professional judgement, project information, experience of similar projects, a review of available literature, site visits, and consultation with the Applicant, authorities and the public.

4. Impact Evaluation

The significance of environmental issues will be evaluated in terms of their expected extent, intensity, duration and probability of occurrence.

5. Mitigation and Management Measures

Measures to manage and minimise impacts to within acceptable levels, as well as measures to maximise the socio-economic benefits associated with the development, will be identified in the Basic Assessment Report.

6. Environmental Reporting

A Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) and Draft Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) will be compiled and will be made available to all IAPs and relevant Authorities for review and comment.

7. Authority Decision

Following receipt of comments received on the Draft BAR, a Final BAR will be compiled and will be submitted to the Competent Authority (DEDTEA) for consideration and decision-making. The timeframe for decision-making from the DEDTEA is 76 calendar days from the date of submission of the Final BAR.

All registered IAPs will be notified of the decision, as soon as it is made available by the DEDTEA. The decision will also be published in the same newspaper used for the initial notification at the outset of the Basic Assessment Process.



## HOW CAN IAPS COMMENT ON THIS APPLICATION?

The need for public input and involvement is of critical importance. All IAPs (neighbours, authorities, organisations etc.) are invited to comment on the proposed activity. Comments can be communicated to us by email, fax or post at any stage throughout the process. Please ensure that initial comments on this document are submitted to us by **Friday 23 January 2015**.



*Contact name and address for comment:*

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Tel: 033 – 9400 450 / Fax: 086 219 9059

P O Box 239, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

<b>Title:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>		<b>Surname:</b>		<b>Initials:</b>
<b>Representing (Organisation / Property Name):</b>					
<b>Interest in project (please tick applicable box)</b>	Authority / Government Department	Neighbour	Local Organisation	Competitor	Other (please specify) .....
<b>Postal Address:</b>					
				<b>Post Code:</b>	
<b>Tel Number:</b>			<b>Cell Number:</b>		
<b>Fax Number:</b>			<b>Email:</b>		

**Please record your issues regarding the proposed cultivation on York Farm, New Hanover:**

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**Please notify us of any other potentially interested and affected parties that we should contact:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Organisation:</b>
<b>Tel Number:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Organisation:</b>
<b>Tel Number:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	

**Thank You**